

AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

MAY/JUNE '00

ABBA COMMITTEE

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Contact any of these four people for clarification of association activities.

THAT STICKY STUFF

Our guest speaker at the meeting of March 28 was Alf Smallwood, principal of Adhesive Technologies Ltd, and as such, state distributor for WEST System Epoxies and accessories. Alf is an affable fellow with an interesting way of gaining his audience's attention at the outset - he offers beers all round before starting. What can we ask this bloke to talk on at the next meeting?

As Alf explained, WEST epoxy was developed by the Gougeon brothers in Michigan to provide a moisture and vapour barrier and hence prevent dry rot in timber. In the process they developed an epoxy that did not rely on the evaporation of solvents in the hardening process. This meant that no voids were left in the material at the end. All that was around twenty five years ago, but even today the brothers direct 30% of profits to product development.

When I first used WEST System I'm pretty sure a mixing ratio of 5:1 by weight was the only quoted mixing ratio. However, Alf was able to show special pumps for resin and hardener, working in the volume ratio of 4.6:1 and this would no doubt suit people who don't have accurate scales. For some time two different hardeners have been available - 205, Fast, for cool temperatures (say less than 20 degrees C) and 206, Slow, for warmer conditions, but the mixing ratios are the same.

To meet its original purpose, it's a fairly thin and mobile laminating-type resin which needs fillers to adapt it to a glueing medium and there are three different ones available depending on the application. Microfibres make the strongest, gap-filling glue, using cotton strands and colloidal silica. It's extremely strong but not easy to plane or sand flush. At the other end of the scale there are thermo-plastic balloons (looking like a biscuit coloured

powder) which are very light (specific gravity of 0.4) and make an excellent filler and fairing agent. In between the two there are microspheres, which are also plastic balloons (a white powder) which include colloidal silica and provide both glueing and filling properties.

Alf did warn that like all epoxies, WEST System is vulnerable to ultra-violet attack and needs to be covered by either paint or a varnish containing good UV filters. He also screened a short WEST System video which, although a bit basic in its presentation, covered all the techniques for timber saturation, glueing and filling very succinctly. In addition, Alf had a table-full of various pamphlets and books

ranging from the basic How-to-use theme to specific projects as specialised as carbon fibre spars and water tanks. There was extensive audience participation in the form of questions and-discussion all through the talk and I don't think the beer had loosened any tongues, people were seriously interested in the subject. It seemed that most of those present had experience with modern timber construction, to a greater or lesser degree, and were very anxious to compare notes. This made it an enjoyable and educational evening for all present and the talk obviously filled a need for most of the association's membership. Alf's visit was very much appreciated.

TOOLBOX VISIT, 8 APRIL

This month's visit was to the Roleystone home of Ye Ed, Mike Beilby, where curiously enough, no building is currently taking place. There were however my two boats completed earlier, "Isis", a 20' replica Victorian river launch and "Miss Mosman", an Oughtred-designed Acorn 15 pulling boat. To these two were added three small visitors to make it an excellent small boat day. Chris Davis towed up the 35 year old GP14, "Merry Jest", originally built by member, Mike Igglesden, Clive Jarman car-topped his ply kayak, "Maid of Pligh" and the Leggetts, Peter and Geoff, did the same with the 9'3" dinghy they're building for "Restless III". This dinghy has already exceeded the gestation period of an elephant, but it's almost finished and displays exquisite workmanship.

Although they make light of it, the Leggatt dinghy is clearly a labour of love with not a join gap to be found anywhere. When Peter inadvertently sanded through the outer veneer of skin ply while fairing, down near the top

chine, he immediately chiselled the area out and glued in a small patch of replacement veneer fitting it so well it was almost invisible. The design is a beamy, bouyant double chine which Geoff drew up in his professional role as a naval architect, and is completely double skinned, mostly in 1/4" coachwood ply. As can be imagined, it's not light, but is intended to remain robust and idiot-proof for years. Peter talks about circumnavigating Rottneest in it and sleeping aboard (There's just room for two on the floor formed by the inner skin), and I tend to think one could almost reach Mauritius in it in all but the worst weather. The double skin provides plenty of storage through no less than seven large inspection ports.

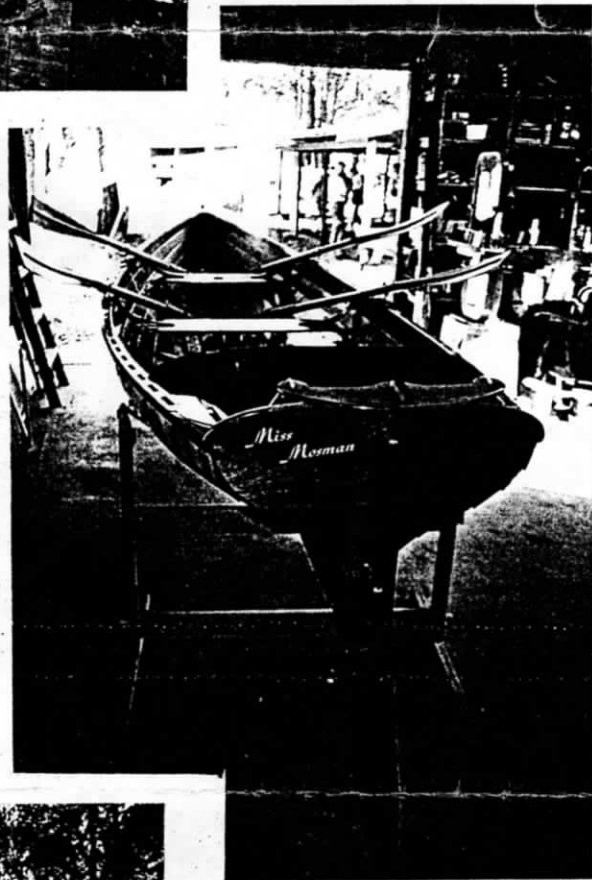
So much for the youngest boat on the day. The oldest was clearly the Igglesden-owned but Davis-housed GP14, built in 1965, a true plywood original. "Merry Jest" is still complete and sailable, but doesn't get a lot of exercise these days in Chris's hands.

MOSTLY THE TOOLBOX VISIT



Nobody brought pennies for the two-up school, so they played with inspection ports - only joking, actually the experts are considering the finer points of the Leggett dinghy.

Mike's Acorn 15, glued clinker, double-banked pulling boat. Spoon-blade oars were professionally made in Tasmania.

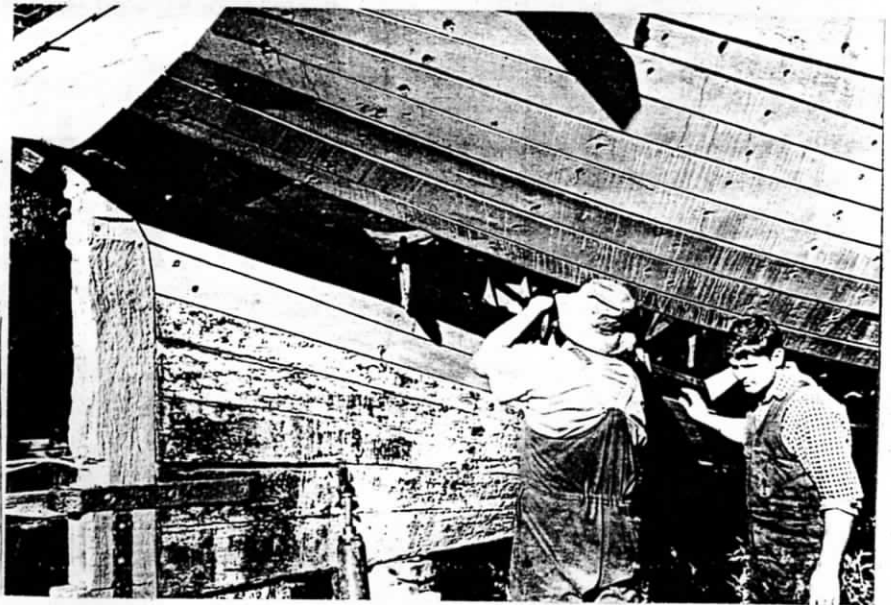


Counter-sterned, Victorian river launch, also by Mike, uses 3hp Simplex two-stroke. This one's cold-moulded ply.



"Maid of Pligh", a beautiful single chine sea kayak by Clive Jarman, gets the once-over from Chris Davis.

And now, two shots from Echuca, on the Murray, where they're doing a complete rebuild of the old P.S. "Hero". Still planking at the stern (right) but already caulking at the bow (below).



She was officially burnt years ago, but only to the waterline and the new vessel will incorporate the original lower planks while replacing the upper ones along with all the ribs.

Originally built by Mike to replace a slightly heavier GP called "Tintookie", she initially needed lightening herself which explains the unusual choice of gelutong timber in the centre case. Mike won State titles in the boat in '68 and '69 and the National title in '69 as well. He sold the yacht in '74 but re-acquired it on the death of that second owner. It's a long time since she raced but she does go for a fun sail occasionally. She was presented on her trailer with mast and boom erected but we chickened out of hoisting a sail in case the wind came up. The hull is still in excellent condition even if the deck displays a few water stains.

Clive's "Maid of Pligh" is a single chine, one man kayak which travels on a special cradle tied to the roof rack of a small van. The cradle includes a rear roller which makes it possible to get the hull on or off *singlehanded* - neat! The boat has all the usual kayak accessories including a separate hatch for stowage of camping gear, a skirt for the crew to shed water, a mast step for a small, unstayed mast and sail and a high-aspect, folding rudder. It's light enough that a one-man lift is very easy; a perfect adventure kit.

In the garage we had my Acorn 15, a double-banked pulling boat by Ian Oughtred. This is a glued clinker construction, a method I found easy and satisfying although one needs a lot of special, long reach wooden clamps for glueing the laps. When the hull is planked up it's rigid enough not to need ribs although some people add them for effect. Some laminated floors across the keel support the floorboards and provide some stiffness, as do the three thwarts. Although I've fitted the external runners needed for leeboards I have yet to organise a sailing rig for this long, narrow boat. I have, however, recently added a rudder because the boat is too long and narrow to manoeuvre well

under oars. The oars, incidentally, I had made in Tasmania. Good oregon was unobtainable here at the time, and I lacked the tools to make really good spoon blades, so I did a bit of relief teaching and bought them - they're beautiful.

My other boat, "Isis", a turn-of-the-century counter-sterned river launch, was completed about 1994. In England the originals were and are, powered mostly by steam but their American counterparts (called "fantails") were often pushed by petrol or naphtha engines so I have no guilt about running a small, 3hp Simplex two-stroke which was given to me. Had the engine been bigger I'd have built the Phil Bolger "Wooden Boats" design exactly but at 23' it was way too big for my engine. So I shrank the design to 20' and made the ends even finer to minimise wave making. The result goes to a displacement of about 750kg, fully loaded and the little engine handles the load with a small amount of power in reserve. She's built in cold-moulded ply, three skins of 4mm gaboon don't weigh too much, and decked fore and aft with ply concealed beneath fake teak planks. There's Brazilian mahogany in the coaming and seats while jarrah has been used for the rubbing strips, external keelson and the floorboards. The whole is surmounted by a full-length green and white-striped canvas awning supported on brass and stainless-steel framing which dismounts for towing and storage.

As you can see, we had a wide range of small boats available for people to see and those who attended had no trouble filling in the afternoon, such was the interest generated. Thanks are extended to Clive, Chris, Peter and Geoff for bringing their boats to the outer suburbs to complete the exhibition. Next time we'll be back to one large project boat.

OUR NEXT GUEST SPEAKER.

Our next evening meeting will be held at MBSC on Tuesday 30 May and we will be addressed by naval architect, Len Randall. I think Len's been the state's leading small boat designer since I was a kid, at which time I think he was the only designer. Certainly he's been around a long, long while. The exact format of the talk is yet to be determined but it should revolve around his earlier and smaller designs of chief interest to the recreational boat-builder. He will prove to be a mine of information with a fund of interesting stories.

JUNE TOOLBOX VISIT

Our next toolbox visit will be to the workshop of member, Steve Key, who is building a Frers 40 yacht in the almost-inner suburb of Orange Grove. Unlike an already well-known Frers 40, "Hitch-hiker", this yacht will be set up for reasonable cruising comfort, including a dog-house rather than a flush deck, with the option of some racing as well. Steve purchased the boat as fibreglass shell and deck, the two not even bonded together. Kim Swarbrick worked with him in designing an interior and other details and the boat is currently at the stage of internal fit-out. The address: 214 Maddington Rd, Orange Grove, between 2 and 5pm on Saturday, 10 June.

ADMIN NOTES.

As a follow-up to our talk with Alf Smallwood, when he offered trade prices on WEST system products to members, we are in the process of producing membership cards so members can take advantage of the offer. While the idea of producing leaflets to promote ABBA to be distributed among boat designers and their agents is proceeding, we have also decided to mail copies of this newsletter to non-members who attend meetings again and people joining for the first time in the last three

months of the financial year (and we're into that period now) will have their membership covered for the full next year. Now we can't say fairer than that, can we? If you know of a likely member, RECRUIT 'EM! there's room for more members.

We've been offered a free stall at the next Perth Boat Show and if we can think of some ideas for display, and can staff it, we'll take it up. Contact a committee member if you have any ideas or can help man it in late August.

LIBRARY PURCHASE: We've been asked to get "Wooden Boats - a restoration and maintenance manual" by John Scarlett, and will take steps to locate and purchase it. Copies of the three main WEST System manuals (following Alf Smallwood's talk) will also be added to the library.

CALENDAR

It's been confirmed that evening meetings will be regularly held on the last Tuesday of the months of May, July, September, etc, and toolbox visits will be on the second Saturday of the following month in each case. Accordingly, the next meetings will be:

Tues, 30 May, 7.30 for 8.00pm, at MBSC.
Len Randall on small boat design.

Sat, 10 June 2pm to 5pm.
214 Maddington Rd, Orange Grove.
Steve Key's Frers 40 yacht.

Monday, 19 June, 7.45 pm.
Committee meeting.