

AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

FEB/MARCH 2000

ABBA COMMITTEE

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

SHOW AND TELL EVENING, 14th Dec.

In shifting to a programme of Jan, March, May meetings your committee realized that we were faced with a three month gap between meetings and that this, in the words of "1066 and All That" would be A BAD THING. So the idea of a low-key December meeting was formed.

Low key it may have been, but it was an extremely pleasant evening, just the same and went on longer than we ever imagined it would. Speakers were asked to talk for five minutes or so on some project, past or present, with photographic illustration where possible. The six volunteers easily filled in two hours so they all comfortably exceeded their five minutes but no-one was complaining. Photographs were projected by a variety of hi-tech methods including video, colour slide and Chris Davis's ingenious adaptation of a video camera to project prints through a TV screen.

First Clive Jarman introduced us to his sea kayak called, wait for it, "Maid of Pligh" (I wish I'd thought of that one), from first frames to a Blackwood River camping trip and showed

us the double-bladed paddle he has since made but not yet used. Then it was the turn of Klaus Sussenbach with the building of his 26' Norwalk Island Sharpie. This talk was illustrated with a video which was very complete itself and required no narration. Klaus takes his film-making as seriously as his boatbuilding and the finished effort showed evidence of a lot of editing and titling. The boat sails slick as a weazle, too.

This was followed by yours truly with two boats, an Acorn 15 pulling boat and a turn of the century Victorian river launch replica. The Acorn, an Ian Oughtred design, was pretty straight forward, but as I'd had to first draw up the river launch I was also able to show the scale test model I'd built before attempting the full-size construction. Then Chris Davis altered the pattern a little by talking about two generations of his family's boats, using the contents of two or three photo albums and covering at least fifty years. The saga started, I think, with a small, tin dinghy (sardine tin?), went through the

competitive phase of Rainbows (Rainbow No. 3), 14' dinghies and GP 14s before settling down to older cruiser restoration. I had no idea the Davis clan had been so dedicated to boating - good on yer, guys!

Geoff Leggatt then described the dinghy he's designed for his father's yacht, "Restless" and which the two of them are building. It's an attractive little multi-chine boat which should motor, row and sail well. However the number of extra stiffening pieces (each pair of chines has

its own breast hook, for instance) led a couple of wags to suggest that it might need its own launching davitts. The evening was rounded off by John Spoor who showed photos of an unusual, bi-pod mast he'd seen on a visiting cruising yacht. The funny thing was that, with its narrow base, it still needed a full complement of standing rigging to look after it.

All in all it was a great evening. Let's hope we can repeat it in the not-too-distant future.

THE RETURN OF K.K.

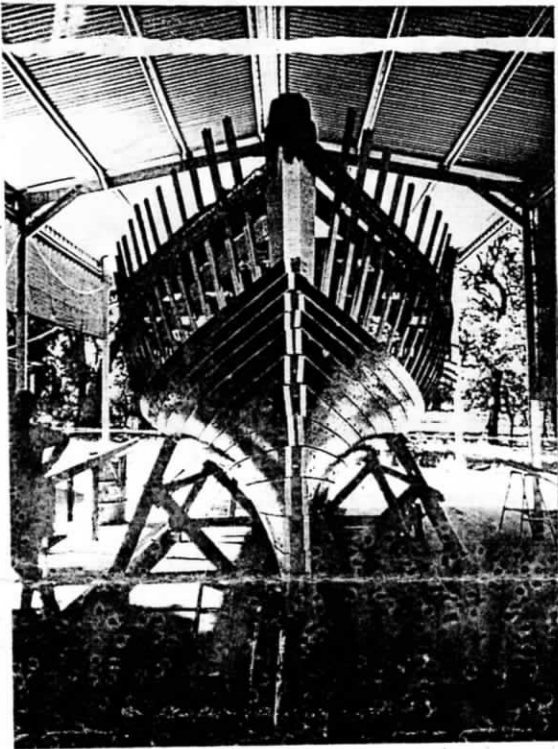
Kim Klaka returned to the January meeting to deliver the second part of his cruising lectures, this time on weather prediction and navigation. Unfortunately the evening was not well attended, probably our smallest yet. Perhaps everyone had other things on in this holiday period, or maybe it was just the absence of a newsletter to remind people. Whatever, those of us who were able to make it had a good time and learnt a lot as well.

After reminding us of the general nature of his cruise (only five nights at sea in the year meant a lot of landfalls, hence a lot of navigation) Kim went straight to the problem of weather forecasting. He pointed out that this problem dominates the cruising scenario 100% of the time and he found it best to identify 24 to 36 hour weather trends in order to plan his, admittedly short, passage legs. One of Kim's more powerful tools was a Weatherfax facility, plugged in between single side-band radio and his lap-top computer. This provided constantly updated information, in map form, at both sea level and mid-altitude, although downloading and printing off took some minutes each time. Once the map was printed off, interpretation begins and this becomes as much an art as a science. For a start, winds are stronger for a given spacing of isobars as one sails north, and the east and west coasts of the continent generally require different

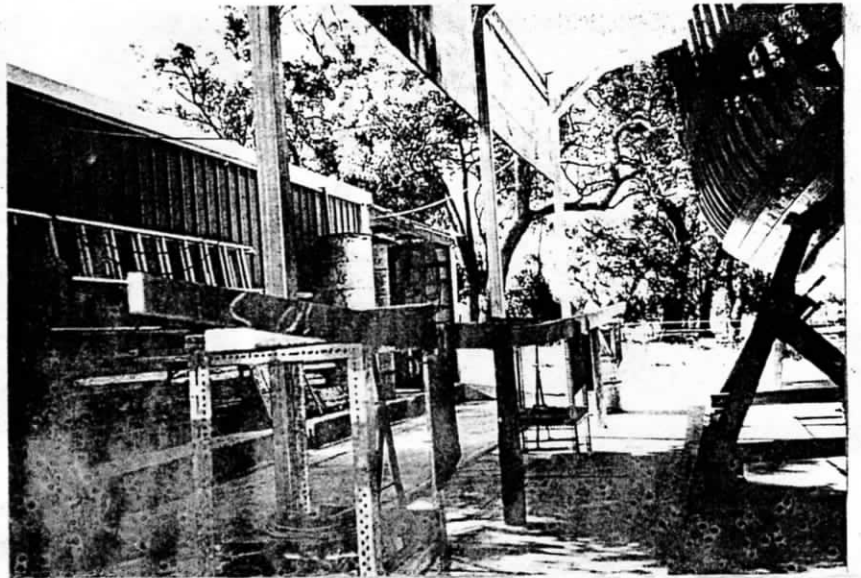
interpretations as well. Fronts are not marked on the Weatherfax maps, either, and have to be calculated from the little kinks in the isobars! And after all the prediction, of course, one still has to stick a head above deck and confirm that the conditions really match the available data, because often they don't.

Having shown the art in weather forecasting, Kim then introduced the navigation theme by pointing out that that it was more art than science, too. So there's another misconception of mine shot to hell. Although Kim has a couple of GPS units, and uses them, it is with caution as he finds they are only good to within about 300m. Charts themselves, on the other hand, can be 1500m out. Doesn't that cheer you up? Tides, even, can vary by up to 25% over quite short distances. Quite obviously the hairiness of entering unknown anchorages which are poorly charted and with camouflaged lead marks can provide a fund of stories capable of filling many evenings. Three or four examples from each of the east and west coasts had to suffice on this occasion. West coast currents are generally pretty weak, seldom exceeding half a knot while those on the east coast may easily reach four knots and that can make a huge difference to where you end up. And for very precise navigation there's the added problem that datums can vary between charts and onto the GPS as well. West coast datums commonly

ROD WALLIS'S PROJECT



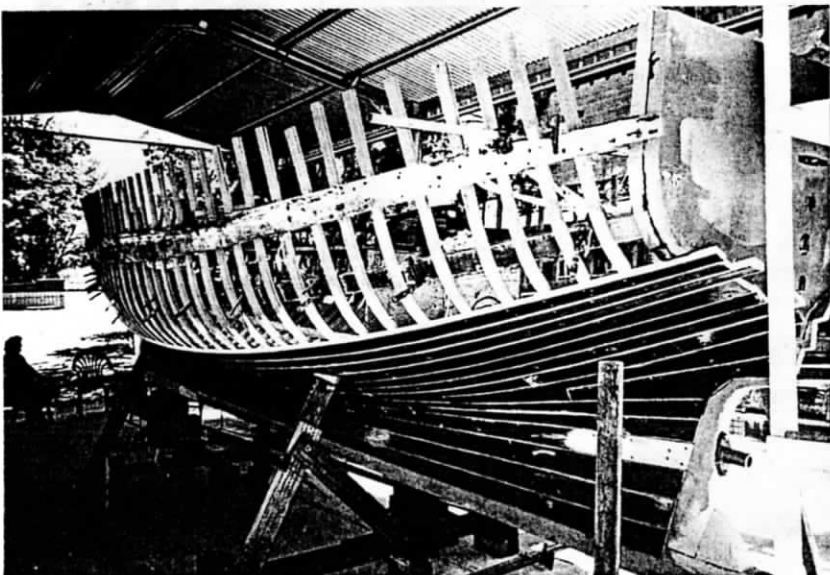
The long deep keel is exaggerated in this bow shot and Everdured planks gleam in the light.



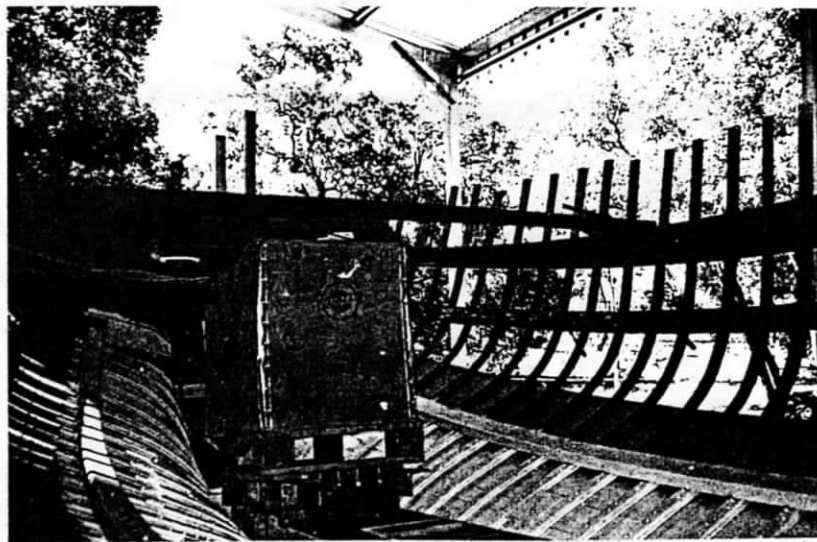
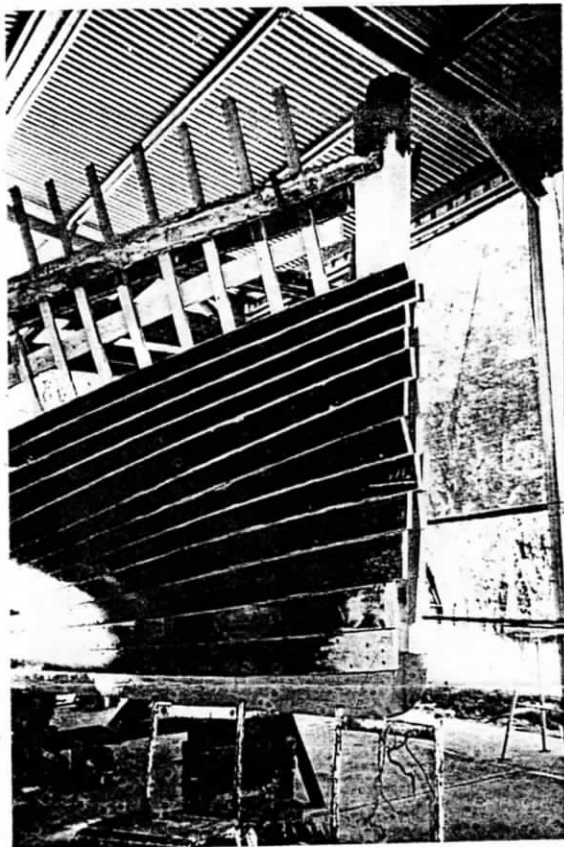
An extended bench is a must for shaping planks.



Every one of these ribs is new, and all the planks will be, also.

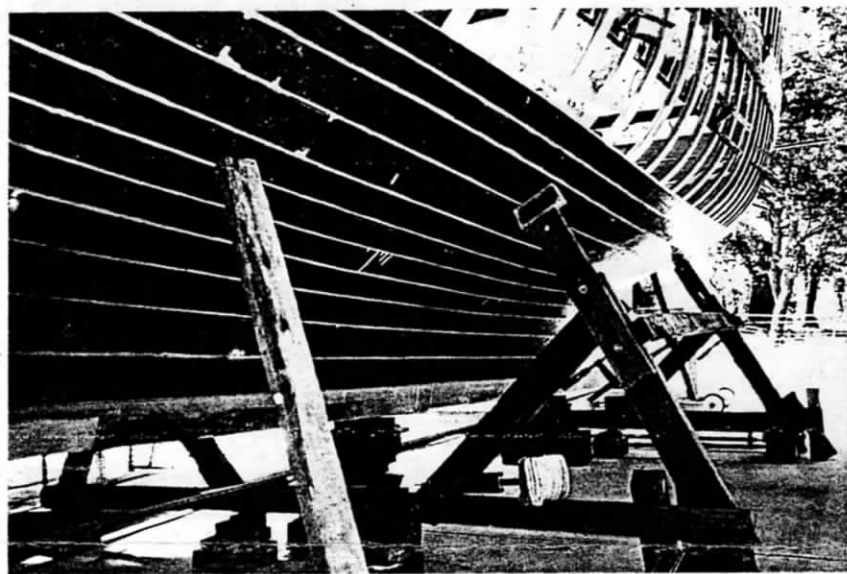


An old beamsheaf temporarily holds the ribs in position.



The box houses the Yanmar diesel,
temporarily perched on steel bearers.

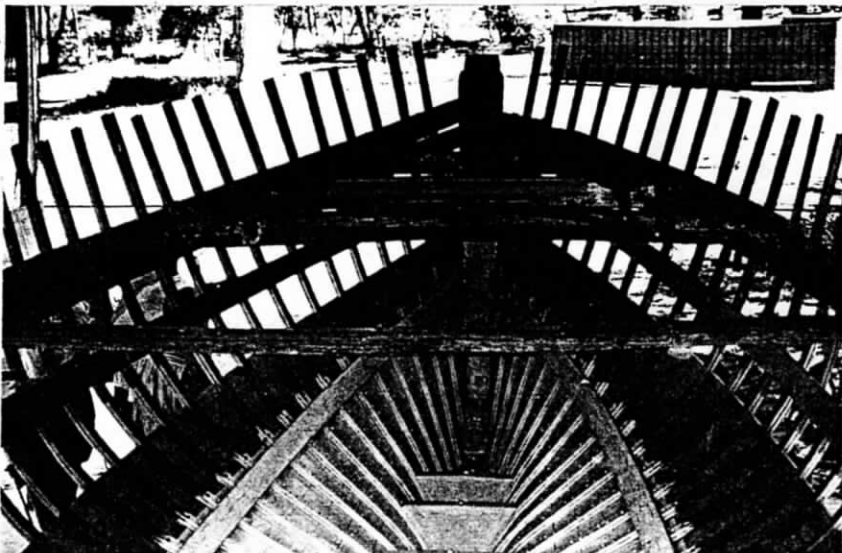
The deep stem is evident here.
Keel is original.



The hull is securely jugged in position.



Every nook and cranny was well
examined by our members.



An interior shot illustrates the
complexity of the original construction.

vary by around 100m from chart to chart, for example. Although "Panache" cruised without radar, Kim reckons it would be handy especially for tracking rain squalls.

Perhaps the most chilling piece of Kim's advice,

however, was for the yachtsman to always have a "Plan B" available when choosing an anchorage in case weather causes the first choice to become untenable. It left me admiring the bravery of all who go down to the sea in ships. All told, another fascinating evening.

TOOLBOX VISIT: ANOTHER OLD TIMER.

I used to think that those "replace every plank and every rib restorations" which used to be the meat and drink of Classic Boat Magazine were either pure fiction or confined to original "J" class yachts in the yard of Camper and Nicholsons and owned by millionaires. Not so. After a visit to the home of Rod Wallis I can confirm that this sort of lunacy is practised around here, by at least one amateur.

Rod has a project in which only the keel, the sternpost and a couple of stringers remain original and he was kind enough to invite Association members to view it in February at his home in Baldivis. At 26' the boat is not all that big, but the care and detail going into the rebuild means the project is huge for a single amateur.

The boat measures 26' by 9' beam and will displace about 4.5 tonnes, including a tonne of ballast, when it re-enters the water. Unfortunately the boat's original history is not known. Rod knows the three most recent owners, all of whom had it in a non-floating condition, but the trail ends there, although it has been called at various times "New Norcia", "Florence" and "Plympton".

Rod found the boat at the Maylands Slipway about four years ago and took her home to his then residence in Dianella. Since the rottenness of the stem threatened the survival of the whole boat, he replaced this item first, then all of the ribs, a few at a time, were replaced with new karri ones. The transom would have been done at about this time too. The ribs all had to be steamed even though they were laminated,

mostly in pairs (threes toward the stern). A supply of suitable jarrah for planks was not immediately forthcoming until Rod impressed on Bunnings officials the demands of traditional boat-building and now he has enough straight-grained material for his needs. Planks were initially replaced only a few at a time, to preserve the shape but he's now planked from the keel to the turn of the bilge and all of the higher planks are off. A couple of original stringers and beam-shelves are clamped in place to hold the shape and look after all those rib-ends. A couple of rib-ends were actually broken off by the weight of water pooling in a covering tarpaulin while in Dianella but with the space available at Baldivis (moved into nine months ago) Rod's built a custom steel boat-port, 12m by 6m by 4.5m high, over a good clean concrete floor, with a long bench down one side which is invaluable for preparing the full-length planks.

Rod is not following the original planking pattern since he thought little of the widths of some of the original lower planks, so the originals are of no value as patterns. Instead he's planking her as a new boat, spiling every plank to meet its predecessor and leaving fairly small caulking gaps. Each plank is scarfed to full length, using Epicraft epoxy, before finishing to shape and sealing with paint on the inside and Everdure on the outside. Only then is it rivetted to the boat.

When the planking's finished the fitting-out fun will begin. Rod has plans to finish her as a cabin launch and will raise the gunwhale line a little to improve internal space, and there's a new 28hp Yanmar, still boxed, waiting in the bilge, already.

However, on reflection, I suspect that the boat was originally built as a power-sail fishing boat. The original topsides planks showed the nail holes associated with a reinforcing pad for pulling craypots and the hollow garboard married to a dead-straight keel suggest a boat designed for sailing, but not for racing around buoys. However, with a tonne of ballast she'll be a very comfortable little launch, too. Maybe Fisheries Dept records would show the use of

those names and give some hint as to the boat's origins.

All in all, it was a very interesting visit, capped off with a great afternoon tea, courtesy of Karlene and Rod. Those of us who were lucky enough to see the project can only wish Rod the best of luck as he presses on towards the eventual launching.

ADMINISTRATIVE.

Sad to say, the chief topic on the agenda at the last committee meeting was the poor attendances at both the January evening meeting and the toolbox visit to Rod Wallis's place. Attendance at the December Show and Tell meeting was pretty good, despite the time of year but was weak at both the post-Xmas events. Since there was no newsletter immediately before the latter two events to advertise them, that suggests one reason for the low numbers - you all just forgot! The reason for no newsletter, of course, is that it also had to advertise the December Show and Tell, which was a one-off event and the problem will sort itself with this issue.

However, there is a suggestion I could make; if you're not already using one of those big, wall-hanging, planning calendars, get one now! I never bothered while I was working but since retiring my lifestyle has become sufficiently irregular that it's now essential and I don't know how I ever got by without one before. If you haven't already got one, hang one on the kitchen wall, tie to it one of those pens that will write uphill and use it. Don't wait to retire, do it now.

On the other hand, the problem may not be as simple as the above. We may need more members (well, it would be a good idea anyway). Certainly there must be many more amateur boat building projects across the metro area than we have members. For some of these builders it's a pretty solitary occupation, and

fair enough. For quite a few others, however, the opportunity to network and get ideas would be invaluable. These are the people we need to attract, so if you know any builders who are not in our group, do make sure they know about it, won't you? In the meantime we're going to make up a small pamphlet, singing our praises, and take steps to distribute it through outlets such as Boat Books in Axon St, Subi, and some of the E-S distributors of plans, etc, such as Duck Flat Wooden Boats, not to mention some local timber suppliers. Maybe Boat Books could find room for a poster, who knows?

And what's to come? Our next guest speaker, on the 28th March, will be State distributor for WEST (Wood Epoxy Saturation Technique) products, Alf Smallwood. These days there's not much you can't do with modern epoxies and the WEST system is one of the best. This will be a must for wooden boat builders. The next Toolbox visit will be at the editor's place, 50 Valleyview Rd, Roleystone on 8th April. It will complement the Smallwood talk in displaying four different small wooden boats, all of them having used epoxy. See you there.

CALENDAR

28 March, 7.30 for 8.00 - Alf Smallwood on WEST system products. At MBSC, upstairs, at the Kings Park end of building.

8 April, 2.00 to 5.00, Toolbox visit to Mike Beiby's, 50 Valleyview Rd, Roleystone. Four small wooden boats.

10 April - Committee Meeting at Geoff's.