



AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

JAN/FEB '05

ABBA COMMITTEE

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

NOVEMBER SHOW AND TELL

We had a really enjoyable Show and Tell night on 30th November - four speakers, but really five talks, which filled the evening up very well.

First cab off the rank was Klaus, on the building of his Norwalk Island Sharpie. I had the impression, from Australian Amateur Boatbuilder, that these were a quick boat to build, but not so. Probably the outside shell may be a bit simpler than more traditional hulls, but everything else is the same, believe me. Klaus spent four years on his project, starting with a scale model (a sensible move). He had a very complete set of photographs, computer projected, on every aspect of the building. Many of the shots had captions or details overprinted as well. Photography is clearly another hobby for Klaus.

The shots started with several of the model before moving on to cover fitting the ballast to the bottom, laminating the fin and rudder blades, fitting bulkheads, the building frame, sheathing,

painting, fitting out, vacuum-bagging, laminating the deeply cambered coach roof, rigging and launching. But wait! There was more. Despite it being a well-proven design, the ballast was not right. Klaus had to cut some off at the stern end, using a special band saw. This must have been very tricky because lead melts when you machine it, and may re-set around the tool, but he managed it. It was a very extensive building exercise all round.

Klaus followed this up straight away with an equally full set of pictures of his road trip and subsequent cruise on the ES Murray River. They travelled and cruised in convoy with friends in a couple of conventional, Tupperware yachts and there were plenty of photographs of the unavoidable, cross-country drive. They used the boat as a caravan each night on the road, of course. The pictures were so good they made the drive seem like fun all the way. Having done it more times than I care to count, I'm not so sure about the fun level of the trip anymore, but

it's something all Australians should do at least once. Even if you're not towing anything, driving yourself means that you have wheels at the other end, instead of having to hire a car when you get there.

There were extensive shots of launching, I think near Goolwa, mooring up in the adjacent reeds and several moody, artistic fog shots. Then they motored out to the locks and down into The Coorong where again extremely attractive shots of The Coorong, sand dunes and the adjacent beach predominated. Then it was back onto Lake Alexandrina and the river proper, including pictures of the town of Mannum and the vintage riverboat, "Oscar W". all told the boats covered 178km, I think each way, taking two weeks upstream and one week on the return. An excellent feature of Klaus's presentation was the inclusion of frequent maps, always including the course taken. It turns out that this was fairly easy for Klaus as he chiefly had to down-load his GPS at the end of each day to show where they'd been. They certainly added to the professional aspect of this excellent presentation.

After this Mike Wade came on to report progress on his John Welsford "Navigator". We actually saw this project in its very early stages as a Toolbox visit quite a while ago. It's not finished yet, but Mike has made good progress so far. He referred to some (small) mistakes he's made along the way and let us into his secret for neat scarf joints - he uses a router, not a planer, bolted to a jigged baseboard and apparently gets first class results every time. There's no short cut for the glueing and clamping part of it, however. He also jigs a bandsaw to make circular cuts in plywood, mainly for reinforcing patches in his case. Mike also told us of his system to seal the centreplate bolt, using "O" rings.

Peter Marshal, who came on next, also had a cure for pivot bolt leaks, this time fully screwed-down end caps. But Peter's main ambition is to build a fully traditional, 12' clinker ply dinghy,

with sailing rig. He's chosen the plans for a boat from the west coast of Tasmania and the only hold-up is the supply of the desired Huon Pine for ribs and planks. HP is no longer cut from standing trees any more, it has to come off the forest floor where there's still some available. I believe quite a bit of it comes from in and around Lake Pedder. He's been waiting some months already and there's none in sight yet. He could get furniture grade HP but wants better and so is still waiting. I must admit, the grain has to be perfect both for ribs and for traditional clinker planks that are going to be rivetted together without any epoxy, just the good, old-fashioned way. Estimated cost of the Huon is around \$3 500. Another Tasmanian timber that's used is celery top but Peter will only be satisfied with the best Huon pine. Did you know that the tree takes up to 2 000 years to grow?

Chris Davis finished up the evening with a run down on how far he's got re-building the historic "Argosy". This carvel-planked yacht won the first Fremantle-Bunbury race, when it was only one-way, in 1948. Chris took her over in a fairly sorry state some time ago (quite a few years, actually) and now has the hull shell just about ready for fit-out. Along the way he built a magnificent workshop to house the project and many expensive tools to fill it. Most of the planks seem to have been in pretty good nick, but many broken ribs had to be sistered up. Chris developed a steel bending frame to make it easier to pop steamed ribs into place - even so, many consist of three laminations. He also told us how he cleaned half a century of engine oil out of the bilges - it seems that the secret is a goo by Peerless, called Active Dot Cleaner. (I might try it on my carport brick paving) Chris was able to show quite a few photographs of "Argosy" as she was originally, a gaff-rigged cutter with long, overhanging bowsprit and main boom. She'll be really something to see if he can get there.

After that we had coffee and a lot of individual conversations to round out a fine evening. Let's hope the next one, in about a year, is as good. Thank you to all four presenters for bringing us up to date in such an entertaining fashion.

THE DOINGS AT AUSTAL-IMAGE

On the 18th Dec we visited John McKillop's work place at what was once Image Marine at Henderson. Forget the name change; it's still the same place and they still build aluminium boats there. We'd rather have gone there the week before, but that was the Austal Xmas party so we went a week later - only about half a dozen were able to attend this close to Xmas, but we had a good visit anyway.

Three vessels were under various stage of construction under cover and a fourth, larger, one had just been launched and was tied up at the jetty. So we had a fair bit to look at. First there was a pair of catamarans at very embryonic stages of construction. These are to be ferries in Guadalupe (look it up in the atlas, Virginia). One will be vehicle-passenger, the other will be passenger only, but they're to the same basic design. They're about 45m long and to be powered by not two, but four High Speed diesels of 2 000 kw each. The hulls are so narrow that fitting two diesels in each, side by side, is impossible, so they are placed one ahead of the other, a little off set to port and starboard to allow one long prop shaft and one short one in each hull. They drive two jet units in each hull. I noticed that the stern sections were almost square, no doubt to create the room needed for this arrangement. They are shaped like absolute butter knives at the sharp end, and expected to be capable of 39 knots.

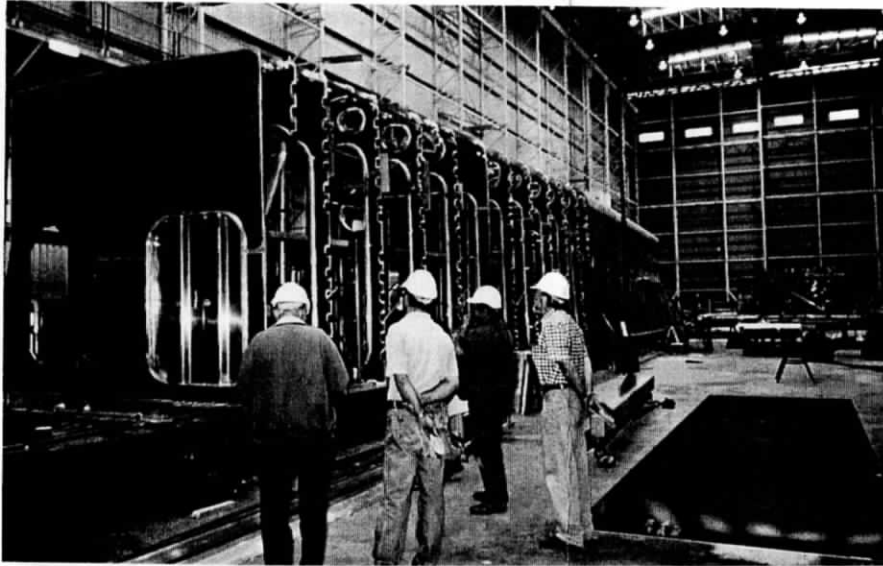
The hulls were still upside down and only partially skinned so it was a good opportunity to study the basic construction. For each boat the hulls were still separated and the bridge decking was under construction nearby. The hulls will be rolled to upright later, the bridge deck lifted between them and then welded into place. I was quite intrigued with the innumerable small frames in the construction (see photos), especially below the waterline. (these boats are so light yet stable that very little is carried below the waterline, so the lost space is not much of a

problem). All framing is very light - about 5 mm thick - but there's a lot of it. The actual engine beds were the exception; they appeared to be 25 mm thick. You'll note the wine-glass bow sections in one photo - that's to lead into the surface-piercing bow bulbs, of course. The bridge decks are made parallel structures to simplify frame cutting, etc, so at the bows the hulls flare out inwards to meet the bridge deck. John estimated that hull materials would weigh between 130 and 150 tonnes, which doesn't seem a lot for 45 m of vessel.

The other vessel under cover was a motor yacht, cleverly disguised as a workboat (perhaps to fool the pirates?). Somewhat shorter than the ferries at 38m, this is an almost complete monohull, externally painted and partially fitted out internally. Although Image is fitting out the crew's quarters, etc, etc, the Italian owner will bring in his own cabinet makers to fit out the owner's suites - should make for some interesting language problems! She will have twin engines and twin props under shallow tunnels in the hull and the whole engine room can be sealed off for automatic fire fighting in the event of an accident. The huge stern deck is being dressed in Sikaflexed teak and will hold two small boats, serviced by a single crane/derrick. The bridge is w-i-d-e and filled with control screens although steering will apparently be achieved by a simple joy-stick. Everywhere this boat has a lot of room for her crew of 4 and passenger complement of about 6

The last vessel we saw was the new "True North", already launched, a replacement for an existing North West charter vessel of the same name. She wasn't open for us to board, unfortunately, but will be on January 15th, probably after you read this. This is a big ship, with accommodation for about 36 passengers, all no doubt in great comfort, and a holiday aboard would be really something. The two stern decks, delightfully empty when we called, will become

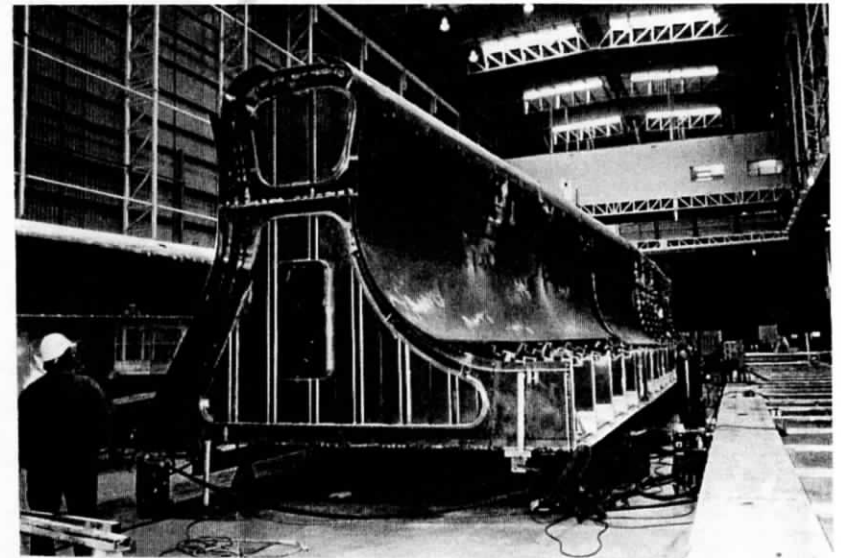
A VISIT TO AUSTAL-IMAGE



The party inspects one of the four ferry hulls near the stern. Note the extremely rectangular sections here.



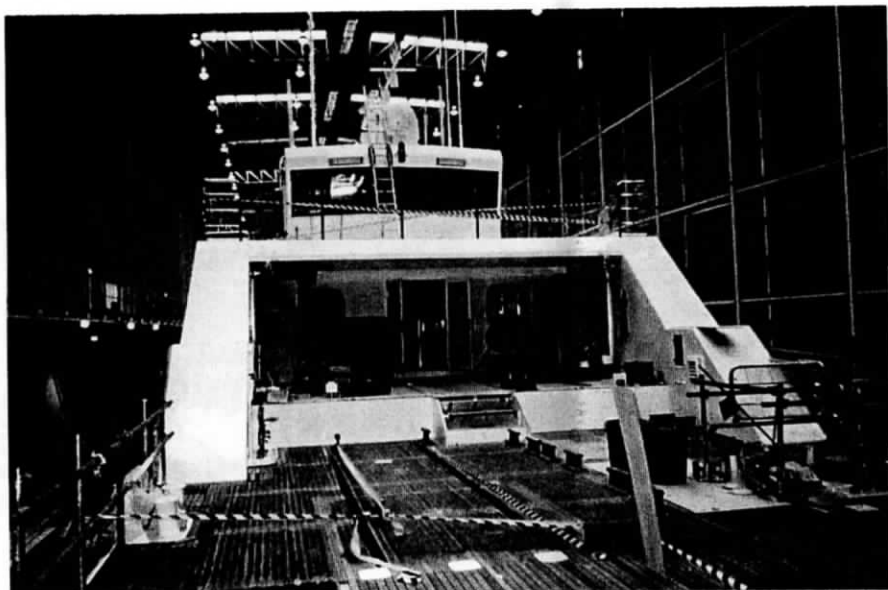
Close-up of some of the frames and part-frames. Grinding and cleaning along all edges where welding is due evident.



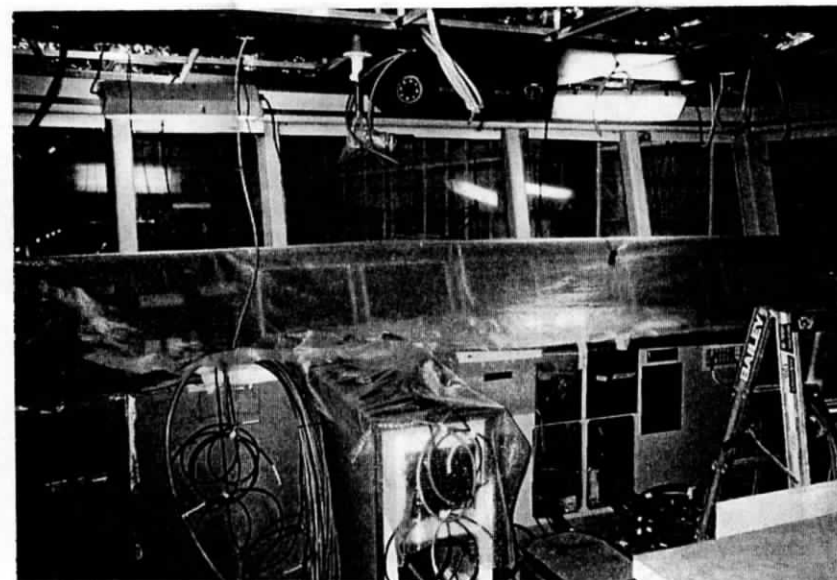
Ferry hull from the bow (bow still to be fitted). Note the shape to fair into the bulb and the inner face flaring in to meet the bridge deck.



From the bow, the near-complete Work Boat-Style Yacht. Observe the huge anchor recesses. Small figures on left give scale.



Accommodation and bridge, viewed from the stern. Two boats will go about here. Sikaflex still to be cleaned off most decking.



The wide bridge. About eight video display screens in place but much else to be done.



"True North" afloat, from the bow. A big boat.



"True North's" two boat-handling derricks on the upper stern deck. They lift boats from either this deck or the lower one.

rather cluttered with three small boats each. These are launched by one of two very compact, hydraulic derricks mounted on the upper deck. Water sports and excursions will clearly be favoured activities on this boat, with ample storage for SCUBA gear (including bottle re-charging), fishing rods and so on arranged around the rear decks too.

So ended our visit to Austal-Image, with just a glimpse up the beach to the main Austal buildings with the huge, 127 m trimaran destined for the Canary Islands (upper works painted appropriately in Canary yellow) afloat outside. Many thanks for the visit, John - it was most enjoyable, as was the cup of coffee in the staff mess at the end.

ADMINISTRATION NOTES

Our next **TECHNICAL MEETING** won't be the last Tuesday in January, but the following Tuesday, 1st February. This was decided to be sure of steering clear of any Australia Day events. The speaker will be El Presidente, himself, speaking on design aspects, specifically, "Hull Lines and Buoyancy Factors". This is the first of about three occasional lectures by Geoff, and not too hard to follow - even I've mastered it at one time. It will certainly lead to a better understanding of your boat, or planned boat. That's at RPYC Junior Club, 7.30 for 8pm. For the following meeting we're expecting Alf Smallwood of Adhesive Technologies.

February's **TOOL BOX VISIT** will be to Graham Lahiff's Wooden Boat Works at the western end of Slip St, Victoria Quay, Fremantle, on Saturday, 12th Feb, at 2pm. I've already had a look there, and he's got a lot of good projects on the go. This visit will be well worthwhile.

SECRETARY - yes we still need a replacement for John McKillop. Volunteers please contact the committee. The responsibilities are minimal but currently include mailing this newsletter every second month.

LIBRARY - We need a home for Geoff's share of this; he's running out of space. The alternative we're considering is to dispose of it to buyers 'cos most members don't seem to read it, anyway.

CALENDAR

TUESDAY 1st February, Technical Meeting. Geoff Leggatt on design. RPYC, 7.30 for 8pm.

SATURDAY, 12th Feb, Toolbox to Wooden Boat Works, Slip St, Fremantle, 2pm.

COMMITTEE MEETING, 17th February.

FOR SALE:

Vintage launch, "Remara", built Arther Bishop, 1950, in very sound condition. Full details are to be found on the web site, <http://www.eftel.com/-lachlanconey> This seems to be a bargain at \$19 500. Contact Jeff Coney, 9397 5060, or 0408 946 827, or J.Coney@murdoch.edu.au

And now a mystery: Nicole Jones-Major (Email, nicole_jonesmajor@hotmail.com) is looking for a **MISSING AUSTRALIAN KETCH**, "Blue Laguna" (or Lagoonier) about 40' long with about 6 portholes each side, originally in a blue painted band. Age about 50 years, last seen New Zealand, Jan, '98. Anyone who's had any contact with this vessel in the last 50 years is asked to contact Nicole, who fears it may have been used in illegal activities in the late '90s. This distress call is probably from the E.S. but it won't hurt to keep an eye out here.