



# AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

March/April 2010



A kayak, side mounted, at Paul's for fastening of deck to hull

## ANOTHER SHOW AND TELL

On the 27<sup>th</sup> January we held our first Show and Tell evening for a couple of years and there was no shortage of volunteers. We filled the evening so well that Harry Speight fell off at the end and his planned talk on strip planking will be expanded to become a full evening's dissertation on the subject some months later in the year.

Mike Rogers was the first to entertain us – and he's one of the few of us who's already practised strip planking and needs no introduction to the technique. This time his project is a Phil Bolger "Chebacco", once again in Pawlonia strip plank. The design is a 19'8" x 7'5" x 1' (plate up) cat-rigged yawl, from the north east of the US. The bottom is a flat panel but the sides are flared and bowed, hence the strip planking. In typical fashion he's completed the hull planking in only two months, but this time not without incident. It seems he was using a nail gun to temporarily

edge fasten the planks (one of his tricks for fast work) and managed to shoot himself in the chest! Apparently only a flesh wound, but maybe he should heed the signs on some tradies' trailers: "Nail Gun in use, Keep Clear".

Mike has also, in the last couple of years, done a cruise on a Thames Sailing Barge as part of an English holiday and he had good pictures of these fascinating, antique craft. They were usually 80' – 90' long, very boxy in the mid-ships section to maximise hold capacity, powered by a huge, sprit-rigged mainsail (a fore and aft sail), a top sail and three jibs, plus a very small gaff mizzen used only to assist the steering. Up to WWII they worked all up and down the English east coast and into the Thames Estuary, manned only by two men, often a man and a boy. These days quite a few are in preservation and enjoy two

or three sailing races each year as well as doing charters and cruises.

Then it was on to Chris Sebire who, a couple of years ago, completed an Iain Oughtred, 12' "Wee Rob" canoe. Not having any computer pictures to project, Chris described himself as being at the budget end of boat building, but that's not the point. He's done a delightful job of this small boat and his description was well illustrated with photos and plans. He also had an Oughtred catalogue. The canoe is glued lapstrake or clinker, using only 4mm gaboony ply and Chris mentioned that the planks were so flexible that when planing the chamfers for the overlaps he had to shift from a plane to a drawknife. I think I used a spokeshave because of the same problem on 6mm planks on my Acorn 15. Many listeners were horrified when Chris described how he built it in his lounge room, but if there's nowhere else, why not? He's recently finished a small rig for the canoe, too. It's only 2/3 of the plan size and in the photos that still looked big enough on such a small hull.

Rosemary and Paul Nayler continue to work on their VdS Dogger class yacht at the Maylands Slipway – this vessel is too big for any lounge room, too big for most backyards these days, so it's continual trips from Canning Vale to the river for them. Rosemary's been struggling for some months trying to enlarge undersize limber holes in rock-hard timber (probably wandoo). These holes allow bilge water to drain from one frame section of the hull to the next, but if too small they block up with rubbish and that's what was happening. The Naylers were eventually able to hire an industrial-strength, right angled drill which would work in the confined space and enlarged the holes with hole saws, but the wood was so hard the drill was pretty knocked around by the end of the exercise. Now they can get on to more productive jobs.

Kit building was covered by Bob Hopkins, who's building a Barrie Armstrong designed Redfin 22 which he started in April '08. This is a 22' trailer-sailer in stitch and glue, using 9mm gaboony ply. The kit included all pre-cut

ply panels although some have needed "adjustment" to fit properly. The 2.4m panels are butt jointed to make up the length, then drilled and stitched together with wire or plastic ties before 'glassing together permanently, followed by tie removal and filleting with filler mix. I'm not sure if the building instructions specify this next bit, but it makes sense – Bob developed the skin only to halfway from keel to deck at first, then built in bulkheads, watertanks (it's water ballasted) and other frames, bunks and so on while bending over the side was minimal. Then he skinned it up to the gunnel and went on to decks, cabin and cockpit. He made the point that the instructions to pre-coat the ply with two coats of epoxy resulted in panels which were very difficult to bend when fitting on the boat, especially the cabin top in this case. Sounds as if it might be better to leave the coating to last. This project, in City Beach, will be the subject of our next Toolbox Visit in April.

Ron Lindsay then brought us up to date with his "Kiewa" marathon. This 40' auxiliary "lugger" was built in 1913 by the Lawrence family of boat builders, to whom Ron is related, hence the interest. She was planked in NZ kauri and so has survived better than expected, but it's still a plank by plank, rib by rib rebuild. She was acquired from the Claremont Boat Museum (the old Mews boatshed) and trucked home to Wanneroo, where she sat for about ten years. Finally she was moved again to Steve Handley's Fremantle Boat Manufacturers where Kevin Hart took a particular interest in the old boat. First he preserved the shape with internal and external false framing. This then allowed the removal of all the old ribs and even the keel, stem and stern posts. These latter were cleaned up, new timber added as necessary and then refitted. Planks were removed two or three at a time and splined back to original widths before going back on the boat. In a complicated process Ron was able to acquire some more kauri in NZ although it's not supposed to be exported any more. By this time, not surprisingly, funds were running low and Kiewa had to be trucked back to Wanneroo. There was a lean-to shed awaiting

her but the roof was too low so she went under tarpaulins while the shed was rebuilt. This took about a year but finally she was under cover again and re-ripping commenced, still helped, I think, by Kevin Hart. They used a very flash, two element electric steamer for the ribs and found that a little detergent in the water made the steaming more effective. Even so, some ribs had to be laminated because they are mostly 40mm x 20mm – pretty big. Now all the ribs are in as are the sheerstrakes and engine bearers. A new Volvo of 75hp is ready to go on these. It's much more compact than its two predecessors, an Ailsa Craig and a Gardner, and so should

deliver a bit more space below decks. Ron is now cogitating over the availability of various metals, particularly bronzes for the hardware. He's finding even copper nails and roves are hard to get these days. But one thing seems certain; he'll get there some time.

By that time the clock was nudging ten and Harry, who had supplied the computer, agreed to put his own talk off to a later evening when he can more fully describe the gluey process of strip planking. In the meantime we are indebted to Mike, Chris, Rosemary, Bob and Ron for their equally interesting contributions.

## CARBON COPY? A RETURN TO CARBON COURT

It's not much of a pun, I know, but the best I can manage at the moment, because that's where we went to see Paul Thompson's projects at his "Art on the Move" workshop on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> February, for the second time. (We were last there in August '08)

Although he has a couple of extra boats in the loft awaiting work, the chief items of interest were Paul's continuing rebuild of a launch of about 20' loa and his most recent discovery, the joys of laying up fibreglass kayaks.



The launch may not appear to have progressed very far in the last seventeen months or so, but in actual fact quite a bit of work has been done, but plenty more remains ahead. The stem post has been removed, rotten segments cut out and replaced with sound ones and then it has been fitted back into the bow. Rotten ends to the bow planks

have been removed and fresh jarrah scarfed in to restore the length. The keel has had additional timber glued to it to extend its depth a little and the stern has been shortened by enough to remove rotten material from the stern planks.



Now Paul is just starting the process of re-ripping. He's not just going to sister-up to existing ribs, the old ones will later be removed completely. The new ones are going in exactly midway between old sites, where the best material is in the planks for fastening. And because he's working single-handed, he's made up temporary U-clamps to hold ribs in the curve while laminating glue sets, etc. These U-clamps (adjustable for width) are temporarily screwed to the old ribs while doing their job of holding down the new ones.

Each rib will be laminated from three layers of 5mm Tassy oak, in situ, before removal for clean-up and riveting back in place. At the time of our visit just one rib half was completed ready for fastening in place, so Paul's got a fair way to go.



He also had his steamer fired up to demonstrate its effect. This uses a HWS tank, LPG fired, to an overhead box where the timber to be softened is held. The demonstration used a 5mm laminate of Tassy oak and after about an hour Paul took it out and attempted to tie knots in it. The first try was a bit too enthusiastic and it broke but the resulting halves were able to be twisted through 180 degrees and/or rolled through remarkably small radii. The steps will be to steam, clamp into the boat to set the curve, remove to glue with epoxy, clamp back in place while epoxy sets, remove to clean up and seal and then rivet permanently in place – slow but super-solid. So each rib will end up about 30mm wide by 15mm deep and totally rigid.

There was also out for inspection a single cylinder Yanmar diesel of fairly compact dimensions, with a horizontal cylinder. Checking against the photo in the Sept/Oct '08 newsletter I think it's different from the motor we saw that trip, (and Paul confirms this) which appears to have been a vertical cylinder model. The new motor is more complete, well, totally, actually, and probably has done less running. I didn't photograph it this time around, 'cos at the time I thought it was the same one.

But that's not all. Paul recently acquired, from the City of Stirling's Tip re-cycling facility, the deck and hull mould for a standard kayak. There was nothing wrong with them and the cost was only \$80. He's now laid up three kayaks and explained the process in some detail.



First the mould has to be washed clean and polished with a silicone-free polish (I think Canauba Wax is a favourite), followed by a coat of PVA release agent. The lay-up starts with a coat of coloured resin gel-coat which will become the coloured exterior surface of the boat. Then, while the gel is still a bit tacky, the structural lay-up is applied, usually using polyester resin, and glass cloth. Paul didn't say what weight of cloth he uses but that depends on the size of the job and the strength requirements anyway. While laying up it's possible to add extra layers of cloth to reinforce or strengthen critical areas such as cockpit openings, handholds, etc.

The deck and hull are done separately of course and any overhang beyond the edge of the mould is trimmed off with good quality scissors before it cures too much. (not so easy if you're using Kevlar instead of glass) It's then possible to separate the moulding from the mould, with care. For joining hull and

deck Paul first tried it in the open but soon decided the shells were too flexible to be a good proposition. So now he returns the shells to their moulds and bolts the two together (there are bolt holes in the flanges, correctly aligned). Then using 100mm glass tape he fibreglasses the inside seam, working through the cockpit aperture. To facilitate this he has an edge-on stand to hold the canoe on its side, allowing gravity to work for the job, not against it. It's necessary to use sticks and prodders to reach up into the bow and stern, but it works. Out of the moulds now, a 50mm strip of glass tape is resined to the outside of the joining seam. To keep this neat it's done between strips of masking tape, using resin pigmented black. I guess he removes the tape well before the curing stage!

Paul wasn't able to get the necessary moulds for cockpit coaming and seat, but as he had an existing kayak he made two moulds off that, thereby dodging the necessity to make male plugs in wood first. Then the seat and coaming are laid up as before and 'glassed into place. The seat would use a fairly heavy lay-up to support the canoeist's weight and is adjustable in Paul's kayaks. Obviously he was fortunate to get the original moulds at the price he did but the savings only start there. Materials for a kayak are about \$300 and it sounds as if Paul can pop one out in a weekend. I'm not sure what one costs in the

shops, but there can't be any change out of \$2000.



Paul also put on a sausage sizzle, aided by Pete Russel who did most of the cooking. Knowing it was coming up, I took care not to eat too much for lunch earlier. Peter Leggatt once again attended to afternoon teas and coffees and on this occasion he'd brought along scones and jam as well! So the fifteen or twenty members who attended were very well taken care of. Thanks a lot, fellas. It made a great afternoon.



The interior of Paul's launch awaits re-ribbing

# ADMINISTRATION NOTES

## ABBA COMMITTEE

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## MEMBERSHIP

Chris Davis has just sent me a membership list showing all members, and out of that, those who are financial. And guess what? Only about a third of members have paid their paltry \$20 for this year! This is really a very poor show, chaps, and we could use the money for room hire, computer projectors, etc. so hear this; Chris will send me another membership list after the next Technical Meeting and I will compare this with my Emailing list and prune the latter down to a realistic size. I fear a lot of dead wood is going to come off. So the message is, become financial by the next TM or off you go. If you can't attend then mail it to Chris at: C Davis, Treasurer, ABBA,  
9 Johnson St, Wembley, 6014.

Note: Chris has moved from 5 to 9 Johnson St. It's actually next door – I suspect 7 is buried under builders' rubble.

## NEXT TECHNICAL MEETING

This will be on Wed 31<sup>st</sup> March, 7.30 for 8pm in the Committee Room of SofPYC. The guest speaker will be member, Mike Igglesden talking about his life in boats starting with early days when he was still a Pom in England and up to his restoration and ownership of his present Old Gaffer. It should make very interesting listening. Don't forget the Club evening meal if you're so inclined.

## NEXT TOOLBOX

The Joys of Kit Building is the subject of this visit. It's to Bob Hopkins' workshop at; 3 Tranmore Way, City Beach, where he's putting together a Redfin 22 trailer-sailer kit. Bob spoke about this a little at the Show and Tell night but it will be much clearer to see it in the flesh (or plywood). That's from 2 to 4pm on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> April. See you there.

## BOAT SHOWS

At the last TM it was decided not to support the Fremantle Boat Show this year (end of March) as it was just too hard to man the stand and contribute to the gate manning as well over three days. So that's off. However, there is the one day show at Claisebrook on 7<sup>th</sup> March. As it happens, that date will have come and gone by the time you read this so I have, today (17<sup>th</sup> Feb) Emailed all of you with details from the C of P. I'll probably photo copy a few more Association flyers for distribution at the show. Let's hope we get, or had, a few boats on display.



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