



# AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

NOV/DEC '01

## ABBA COMMITTEE

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<b>John McKillop.</b>	<b>Secretary,</b>	ph 9437 6666 (Wk)	9313 7442 (Hm)
<b>Chris Davis,</b>	<b>Treasurer,</b>	ph 9222 5664 (Wk)	9387 5042 (Hm)
<b>Mike Beilby,</b>	<b>Newsletter,</b>	ph 9397 6209 (Hm)	

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

## A LIFETIME IN THE GAME

Kim Swarbrick was our guest speaker on the night of the 25th Sept and what a lot he had to impart! The subject: his life in boating. He actually started the story long before his own birth year of 1951, beginning with his grandfather, having come from the Eastern States, in Albany in 1910. There he was a lumper and coaler at the wharf as well as a fisherman with a penchant for sailing, so much so that he was one of the founding fathers of the Princess Royal Sailing Club. He went to Nornalup in 1920 to fish the inlet but became involved with government bridge building in the area and even operated a launch supplying the bridge builders with materials for the projects along what is now the main South Coast road.

When the bridges were finished the family stayed on in the area, Kim's father and uncles operating a guest house. The guest house idea fitted in well with boating and the family first had "Alice", an excursion boat, doing trips

around the estuary. Then in 1934 a well-known boat builder in Gerry Asquith arrived and helped the family build the "Lady Walpole", their next excursion boat. This became father Tom's apprenticeship in boat building, although he was obviously very capable with his hands, anyway. The family then built a small fleet of hire dinghies to go with the guest house. These were initially varnished and must have looked very smart that way, but even in cloudy Walpole the sun took its toll and paint soon replaced the varnish.

Kim came along in '51 and when most of the other kids would have still ridden a horse to school, (or caught a bus) Kim rowed a boat. One of his earliest memories is of the commencement of the Walpole Yacht Club, its initial fleet being retired heavyweight Sharpies from Perth in 1957, that being about the time that Viv Downing started lightweights there. Through this period, '40's

to '60's, the family was also involved in sawmilling in the area, and yet another excursion boat, "Reliance", was built.

Then in 1962 was commenced another "Reliance", this time a copy of the yawl which won no less than three Bermuda races. She was 40' by 11' by only 4' draft, with a centreboard in the best North American tradition. Kim commented that she was a real handful when sailing downwind. The building stages were temporary frames with temporary ribbands over them, then steamed ribs inserted before final planking, spruce above the waterline, jarrah below. The spruce seams were splined but the jarrah ones were traditionally caulked to allow for movement when wet.

In 1965, with "Reliance" still a year short of completion, the family moved to Perth to commence a full time boat building business, initially in Carrington St, Nedlands, then moving to Osborne Park. One of the business's first projects was to rebuild the old "Kirribilli" into Rolly Tasker's first "Siska" (another yawl). This was followed by two van der Stadt "Doggers", three "Carmens" and two launches before the move into fibreglass production took place.

The famous Sparkman and Stephens 34 was being produced in England at the time and one of Kim's uncles visited there, purchased one of two moulds, shipped it home and production commenced. Not long after, about 1970, Kim designed the Spacesailer 24 in his bedroom, a plug and mould were produced and this design became a second string in the business's bow. Then about another year on they started building S&S 30's as well. Photographs Kim showed of the works at

this period typically showed six or eight boats at various stages of completion, the business was very busy. It's worth noting that Edward Heath's S&S34 won the Hobart race in '69 and although they didn't see an immediate leap in orders, demand did increase gently from then on. Eventually about 100 were built, with at least a third going east. One brief but highly significant event about this time was the visit by the world famous designer, Olin Stephens, to Perth, no doubt to inspect the S&S34 production line. He actually got down on the lofting floor with Kim for several hours' highly valuable tutelage which Kim ranks as extremely important in his development as a naval architect.

In addition to the Spacesailer 24, Kim designed 18', 20', 22' and 27' variants and these were duly plugged, moulded and produced as well. Also in the early '80s the S&S34 mould was made available for amateur hire so that others could save money by laying up their own hulls. Finally the "S" series was developed; a boat which made no concession to the IOR rule and was set up principally for speed. The S80 was 8 metres long and very popular, to be followed by the S111 (which despite its racing pedigree, found much favour amongst Queensland charter boat operators) and the S99. Since the closure of the family business Kim has designed two more - S97 and S125. About 25 S97s have been completed in Bunbury, but only about two 125s so far. Kim was also able to show us, on the large TV screen, prints of most of his designs, including the latest variants with bulb keels and so on. All in all it was a very full talk making an extremely entertaining evening. Many thanks, Kim, it was most enjoyable.

## RETURN TO A GLUED LAPSTRAKE PROJECT

On the 7th October we were back at Clive Jarman's workshop to help him turn over the hull we'd seen in a much more embryonic form only four months previously. He's building an Iain Oughtred "Eun Mara", 21' of glued lapstrake (or glued clinker, call it what you will) sailing yawl. Back on the 9th of June it was a neat building jig with only two and a half planks per side fitted over the stem, keel and stern post. Quite an impressive bit of work, even at that stage, but with a long way to go.

But when we got there this time, what an advance! The hull was completely planked up and painted, albeit still upside-down. That was the point of our visit - to provide enough muscle to turn the shell over to upright. With bigger vessels this is often done with lifting slings designed to roll the shell over at the same time, but Clive didn't have much clearance above the hull for slings and had calculated the hull weight at under 250kg, anyway. So raw muscle it was to be, with the building moulds and frames left inside (some were to be permanent, anyway). When we turned over my 20' "Isis" a few years ago, I separated the shell from all the moulds and left them on the building jig, but this meant the shell had to be lifted much higher to clear the jig and get it out of the workshop.

For Clive's exercise the hull was basically to be rolled to one side and then carried back and shored up on the base frame, not even leaving the workshop at all. When we arrived the workshop had already been emptied of "Maid of Pligh", bandsaw, lathe and saw-bench/planer, giving much more working space. The building moulds had already been released from the floor frame and she was just sitting there, ready to roll over. A couple of ropes lay over the hull for the use of helpers to control the roll rate and save it from falling

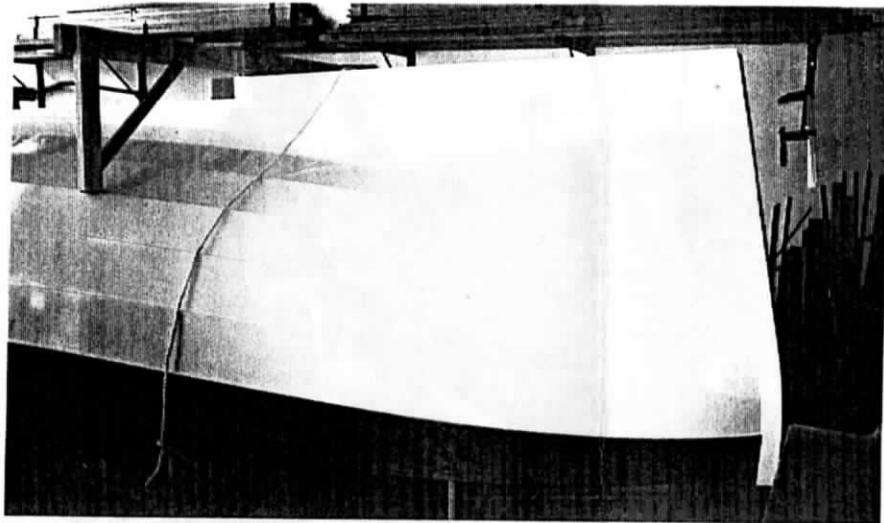
against the adjacent work bench (and squashing lifters, you never know, Clive may want to call on them again, sometime).

And that's how it happened. The hull was lifted a few inches to allow the roll to be started within the confines of the building frame, because the space beside was judged to be a bit narrow, and with most of the weight being taken at the ends, the shell was gradually turned onto mattresses Clive had layed down on the adjacent concrete floor; I don't think the arresting ropes had much work to do at all. It would have been a different story had the 240kg of external lead ballast been bolted into place beside the centre case, of course, but at this stage the ingots were still stacked up against a side wall, and will be offered up to the keel later.

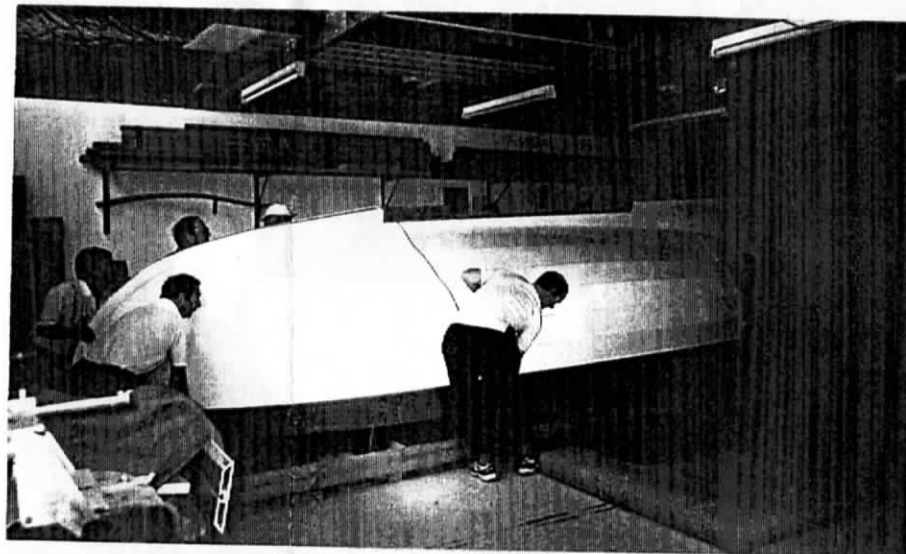
There was then a short pause while two nylon lifting straps were fed under the shell and lifting bars inserted through end loops. Then with four bods per strap the hull was easily lifted sideways back over its floor frame, where it was lined up fairly central. Clive had a pair of external frames ready and these were inserted under the hull, one end at a time, and clamped down to the floor frame to stop them rolling over. Being a clinker hull, these only need to contact at the keel and two plank-lands, one each side, but the whole weight comes onto only about six square inches of carpeted contact, however. I thought these frames looked a bit on the light side but once they were clamped to the floor frame they became much more solid.

Then it was Linda's turn. A bottle of champagne would have been a bit premature (after all, the pundits judge this stage to be only halfway to a completed boat) but she climbed aboard with the aid of a short stepladder and proved that the structure would carry her weight without a creak or a

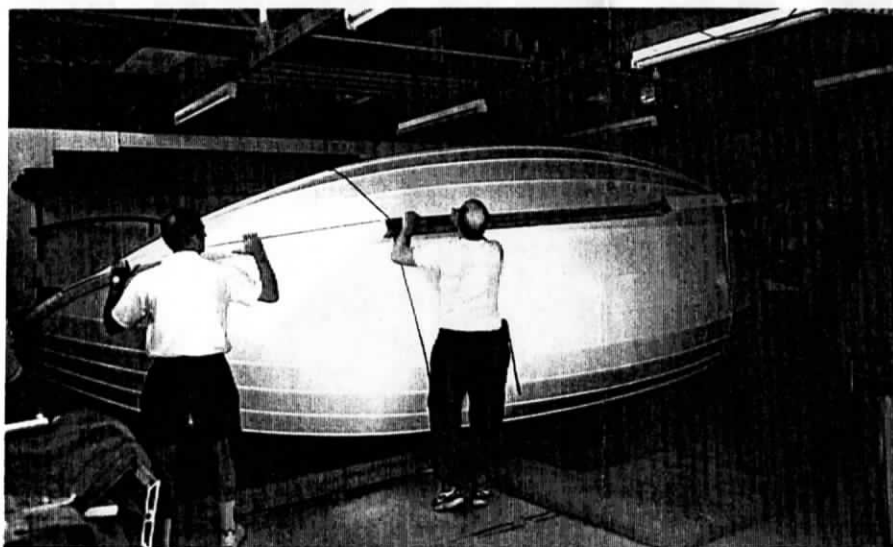
## WHERE BRAWN BEAT BRAINS



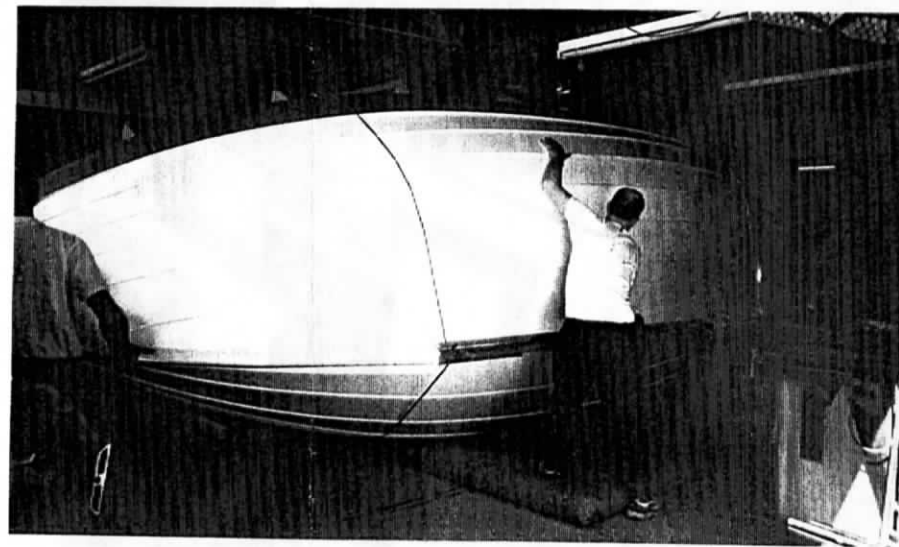
Before the move. There's a large area of deadwood at the stern. Note also, one of the frames intended to keep the hull upright, temporarily perched on the bottom.



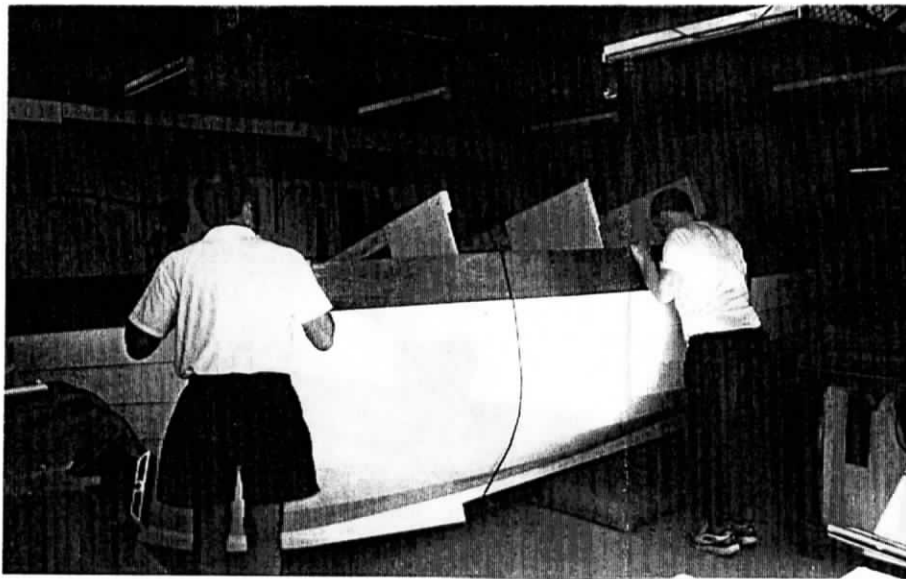
The first lift - to the outside of the building jig. Note arrester rope, in case hull tries to roll too fast.



Now she starts to come over gently.



A little more and the weight is taken on the mattress.



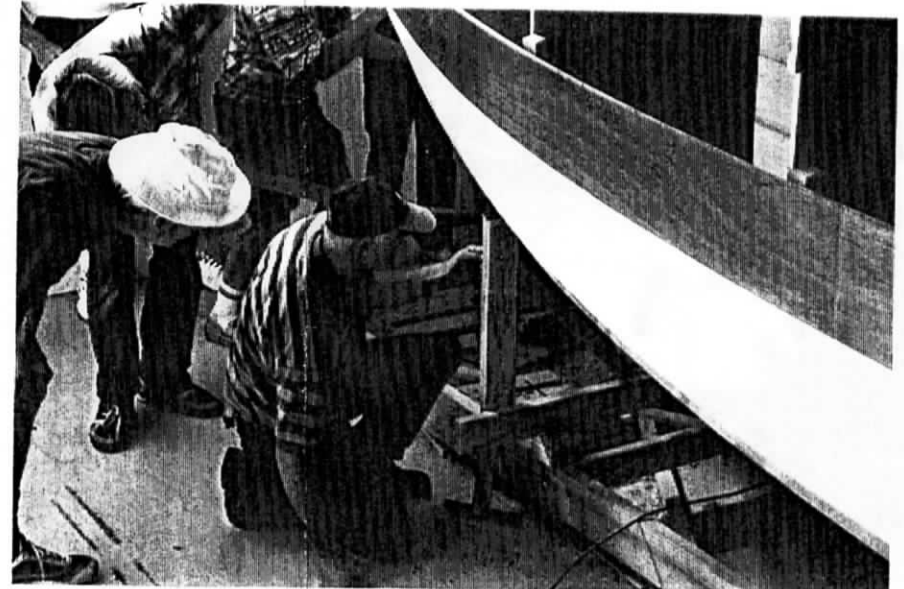
Now she's sitting on one bilge and we can all take a breather.



John McKillop takes the strain on one lifting strap to lift her back over the building jig.



Ready for the lift back over the jig. All the temporary frames can be clearly seen.



Clive checks one of the frames holding the hull upright and level. Still to be clamped down.

groan. Modern epoxy is marvelous when it comes to creating a solid, homogeneous vessel. It might as well be one piece of wood. A drawback, if you can call it that, is that there's no removing individual components such as planks or ribs for replacement should rot set in, as they used to be able to do in the old days. However with modern chemicals

that's not a problem anyway. The whole exercise was over in an hour, giving plenty of time to sample Linda's lavishly laid out afternoon tea in the back garden afterwards. It was a pleasant afternoon helping a mate with one of the best hobbies in the world. Who's next?

### **NEXT GENERAL MEETING**

Now sit up and pay attention, down the back there! 'Cos the next general meeting will NOT be held at MBYC. We will be addressed by Tony Horniman of the 12 Volt Shop, Welshpool, on the subject of low voltage electrics. And to maximise the range of products needed to illustrate the talk, it will take place at the 12 Volt Shop itself - Unit 4, 12 Kewdale Rd, cnr of Orrong Rd. That's on Tuesday 27 Nov. We hope the change of venue doesn't make life too difficult for members but it should make for a much better talk.

### **NEXT TOOLBOX VISIT**

There's a small change to this event, too. Normally the event would be held on the second Saturday of December, but our host would prefer it a bit earlier, so the visit will be on Saturday, 1st December. The fella who's hosting us is Nigel Winter and his project is a largish sea kayak in strip plank. Most of us are familiar with Clive Jarman's

chine-built sea kayak but we've never had a chance to learn the pros and cons of strip planking - which is odd because it's a very popular form of construction in other parts of the world, although I can imagine it results in glue up to the armpits if you're not careful. Nigel lives at 83 Dotterel Wy, Yangebup, so that's the place to be on Saturday, 1st Dec, especially if you're into smaller, wooden boats.

### **CALENDAR**

#### **TUES, 27 NOV.**

Low voltage electrics, from Tony Horniman.  
The 12 Volt Shop,  
U4 / 12 Kewdale Rd, (cnr Orrong Rd)  
Welshpool, 7.30 for 8 pm.

#### **SATURDAY, 1 DEC.**

Toolbox visit to Nigel Winter's workshop,  
to see strip planked sea kayak.  
83 Dotterel Wy, Yangebup, @ 2 pm.

#### **MONDAY, 10 DEC.**

Committee meeting.

### **BOAT NAILS, FOR SALE.**

Chris Davis has in his current possession a large quantity of monel metal boat nails; the barbed, annular ring type things. Trouble is, they're pretty big, 3" by 10g to be precise so they're no good for small canoes and such. But boat nails in monel metal are like the proverbial hens' teeth these days and Chris feels that some one must have a use for them and is prepared to release them for a very reasonable price.

Ring him at home on 9387 5042 and you could score the bargain of the year.