



AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

November/December 2010



Paul and Chris help unload the amahs for Harry's trimaran at Legend Boatbuilders

CROCODILE COUNTRY

At last! A “How I benefited from my boat building project” talk. That’s right, Klaus Sussenbach told us all about a recent North-West Kimberley cruise aboard a yacht he’d actually built himself at our last Technical Meeting on 29th September. Of course, it’s not as recent a build as I thought. I was still thinking “Charlotte” had only been finished in the last few years. How wrong I was! How time flies when you’re having fun. It turns out that Klaus launched his boat as long ago as 1998, having commenced it two and a half years previously, in 1996. That’s pretty fast building for a 26’ yacht, especially since this was before the availability of a kit for this model.

The vessel is a 26 foot Norwalk Island Sharpie, designed by Bruce Kirby in the US with plans, and more recently, kits, via Robert Ayliffe in Mt. Barker, Sth Aust. The NIS

series covers lengths of 18’, 23’, 26’, 29’, 31’ and 43’ long – quite a range of choice. Klaus’s boat is about optimum for between one and four people to cruise in. All the series are flat-bottomed, North American style sharpies and are rigged as cat-ketches with unstayed rigs and centreboards allowing very shallow water operations. The word “cat” defines the lack of any jibs etc ahead of the first mast, a favourite rig of many Americans. A ketch has two fore and aft sails set on separate masts, the forward one being the larger. If the aft was the larger it would be a schooner. Without jibs the mainmast is a long way forward, only a foot or two from the stem.

In this case the masts are of Carbon-fibre which is about two thirds of the weight of aluminium, making rigging and un-rigging quite a lot easier. They are both hinged in

deck level tabernacles and having no shrouds, are quick to set up. Klaus uses tabernacles of his own design and construction which allow the masts to rotate and to fold down without removing the booms. In 2005 I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of hours on the original NIS 26 on Chesapeake Bay as part of a US tour. That particular boat had the earlier ally masts and well stretched sails, limiting its ability to point high to windward but I guess "Charlotte" would have less problems.

I didn't note the exact beam of the 26 but it's just narrow enough to be trailerable and draws 0.4m of water, board up, and a generous 1.8m, board down. It has 500kg of ballast in the hull and is very stable with the board up or down. The main and mizzen sails total 31.6 sq metres of area. I think Klaus said he uses a mizzen staysail between the masts at times, too. Klaus has an outboard auxiliary motor which was used a fair bit on the Kimberley trip, about 75 hours using 180l of fuel, due to confined waters and strong tides. He carries 100l of water and 25l of gas and can carry about 300kg of provisions. He has a battery charger and solar panels although the latter, being fixed, can't always be properly aligned to the sun. Also carried are three radios, VHF, 24Mg and a Single Side Band for weather forecasts. There're two depth sounders, one of them for fishing, and no less than four anchors. What he really needed to keep these supple and folding properly was a grease gun, which he didn't have!

Over the years Klaus has cruised, mostly single-handed, about 7,700km in areas as far apart as Goolwa, S.A. and the Kimberleys. On this occasion he trailed "Charlotte" to Derby and launched her there, in company with friends on three other, more conventional, yachts. They very quickly found that the high rise and fall of tide dictated the cruising decisions for them, especially as to departure and arrival times. After all the range can be 11m at Derby itself and is pretty impressive anywhere along the Kimberley coast. This can result in some very high velocity flows around the intricate coastline. The high rise and fall, combined with the scarcity of sand beaches, meant that

Klaus didn't use his shallow draft facility at all – all four boats were frequently pictured anchored safely out in deep water. Dinghies were constantly in use to get ashore each day. There were many slides of map sections showing the routes taken, day by day, all being in sight of land, and these constantly reminded the viewer of how convoluted the coastline is.

The picture talk started with shots of the boat on the trailer, on the road and on the hardstanding with the others at Derby. Then we started to find out what the Kimberley coastline is all about, with frequent shots of the rugged, rocky coastline with numerous waterfalls and tidal pools along with beautiful sunsets. There were two or three shots of the resident crocodiles, none of which threatened our heroes. At at least one spot they all went ashore to inspect aboriginal rock paintings of an unknown age, but I observed at least one Wandjina figure, making it very old indeed. As it happened, commercial tourist boats of all sizes up to quite large, like "True North", were frequently enjoying the same anchorages, although Klaus felt the paying passengers saw much less than he did for their money.

The little party sailed and motored up to 40nm per day, frequently a lot less, using a Chart Plotter on GPS, eventually turning around quite near Kuri Bay and retuning to Derby. Towards the later stages of the return the others went ahead, leaving Klaus on his own. Eventually he returned to Derby and hit the bitumen again to return to the mundane metro area. The closing shots of the show showed the hull upside down, being cleaned of marine growths which had accumulated quite markedly in the month or so in which the normal trailer-sailer operations had been suspended. Klaus reported that the common copper-based anti-foul (which he had presumably used) was mostly useless.

And so ended a very pleasant insight into how the more adventurous half lives once they've finished their dreamboat. Many thanks, Klaus – we wish you a great time in the future aboard "Charlotte".

NEW FOR OLD

On Saturday, Oct 9 we were privileged to see a very unique project emerging under Brian Phillips' hand at Legend Boat Builders in Naval Base. Basically Brian is building a new, wooden H28 yacht using modern methods and adhesives, but it's still a timber vessel. The "H" stands for Herreshoff, the design coming from the pen of L. Francis Herreshoff in 1943, a transom-sterned, carvel-planked cruiser/racer of 28' length. Of the many H-series designs, the 28 is probably the best known of all. Indeed, the world's largest club fleet remaining (11) races right here at South of Perth every season, some 67 years after the design's inception.



Although originally for carvel planking, this boat is being built in cold-moulded ply, using three skins of 6mm gaboan held together with Epicraft epoxy. This hull would probably be quite strong enough on its own but since two or three bulkheads are needed to establish cabins and divide off forepeaks, etc, these sorts of things formed the basis of the building jig, along with all the necessary laminated stringers, many of which have to support seats and cockpit soles and so on. Two or three beautifully laminated frames are also permanently in place in the forward and stern areas and would have completed the building jig. I don't think any temporary frames or stringers were involved at all.

The moulding of the ply would have been relatively easy in the forward areas but became progressively more difficult towards the stern because this very traditional design uses full hollow garboard sections of quite small radius curves. Eventually in the rudder

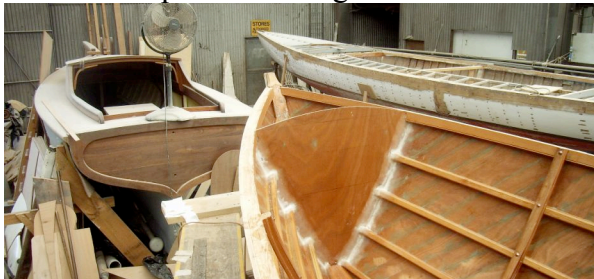
area Brian switched from the 6mm ply to solid timber (plantation-grown Fijian mahogany) planks because they would take steaming. He also steamed a few of the ply planks although he warned that the ply needed only a very short time in the steam box. And I presume the steamed planks had to be temporarily fitted to the hull to set the shape before being removed and glued down. The staples used for holding the planks in place while epoxy set were originally steel and all had to be removed. Later Brian and his offsider switched to stainless steel and these staples remain in the skin since they don't rust. The hull was then sheathed with 'glass in epoxy resin, WEST system I think.

Needless to say, the hull was skinned while upside down and no doubt faired then also, then turned upright for interior cleaning up, varnishing and fitting out. As we saw it, it was ready for internal fitout of bunks, galley, the head, etc, before decking, coach house, cockpit appointments and so on. Outside, the hull was apparently finished a pale blue, but this was only a fairing coat over two coats of white undercoat. Closer inspection showed that the blue had largely been rubbed back to the white in the process of sanding away with "torture boards" by hand. Only the lowest areas remaining were still blue. The boat will eventually be set up with an electric auxiliary motor driving through an offset prop shaft, thus avoiding a drag-inducing cut out in the rudder.



And to show how professional Brian and his partner are, the build time has been just under twelve weeks so far! You or I would need at least a year for the same job. Seems like she should be finished well before Xmas.

Although I'd have picked Legend as a mainly modern boat builder, about half the workshop area was occupied with old wooden boats in various stages of restoration, plus a large, modern scratch-built catamaran in ply being built solo, full time by Craig Wilson. All of these lease space from Legend.



Delta (L) and Flame ahead of the H28

Directly ahead of Brian's project was a small Old Gaffer, "Delta" which proudly sails with the number OG1 as the first of the fleet. She is part-owned by Brian and one, Brian Axell, and seemed to be in for some minor refurbishment. Beside "Delta" was "Flame", the 22 sq. metre racer, originally built by Peter Leggatt's father. This elegant, long racer was in for a much more extensive rebuild and was already stripped back to the bare planks. Punched-out copper roves suggested an exercise in re-ripping was taking place inside but it seems the owner is not at all well and may have difficulty continuing.



A more remarkable restoration is well under way beside the main exhibit. This appears to be a clipper-stemmed ketch in the Herreshoff tradition. The Cape Vlaming, owned by Ian Curfey (?), was originally a fishing boat then converted to a yacht. After quite a career she was brought in to Legend for a total rebuild and extension. It sounds as if half her timber has been replaced. In addition her hull was

stretched by about 6' in the region of the stern post, before re-planking, taking her up to around 38' – and the lines are still perfectly fair! It looks as if the draft has been extended to over 6', too. This could justify a new sail plan.

Craig, who addressed us on the subject of winter maintenance a while ago, is building a 15m cruising cat to the design of Schonning in the Eastern States. Although kits are available, he's building this one from scratch. The hulls and bridge deck are complete but there's a long way to go. Even working full time, as he is, Craig expects to be going until around Xmas, 2011.

Then there was the arrival of Harry's trimaran amahs, brought down from the hills for faring by a local expert. I'd have thought they were already pretty good but Harry's a perfectionist.



Right at the end of the visit Brian backed in his current Old Gaffer, "Hughie's Girl". This boat looked immaculate apart from one small scratch but was actually built eight years ago. I don't think she was in for much work although her spars were already laid out beside, including her laminated, bent gaff. He told me that this was done so that the luff of the mainsail would present a smooth curve all the way to the peak. You've got to admit, Brian knows how to stretch the rules!

It was certainly an amazing visit with heaps to see, although pretty crowded for photography, and one can only marvel at Brian's standard of workmanship and speed of working. Many thanks.

ADMINISTRATION NOTES

ABBA COMMITTEE

President	Paul Thompson	0419 193 605	Vice Pres.	Rosemary Nayler	9455 1470
Sec/Treas	Chris Davis	9387 5042	Editor	Mike Beilby	9397 6209
Library	Mike Rogers	9527 7313	Asst Editor	Jay Niven	9291 8460

NEXT TECHNICAL MEETING

This evening happens on Wednesday, November 24, 7.30 for 8pm, in the Committee Room of South of Perth YC. The speaker will be Harry Speight, completing a talk he started the meeting before last, on strip planking. On the first occasion he explained the basic technique very well with examples of conventional hulls built on male moulds. Now he describes the method as applied on his Farrier trimaran. In this instance the hull is built in port and starboard halves, decks included, in female moulds. The main hull, incidentally, displays both convex and concave areas, so it's not a basic exercise this time. Even so, it's not impossible for a first-timer, as Harry proves. And don't forget the evening meal at the club if you're that way inclined.

DECEMBER TOOLBOX MEETING

This time we re-visit the maritime museum of Barry and Doris Hicks. For those who haven't seen it, it's hard to believe that a gem like this could exist in an eastern suburbs backyard, but it does. 49 Lacey St, Cannington, to be precise, and we get to visit it on Saturday, December 11, from 2pm to 4pm. Most, but not all, of the display exists in an extended garage/workshop and includes tools and fittings mostly from the sailing ship era. There's a great deal of ropework and oodles of replica pulley blocks, mostly made by Barry and his son, Robin, since they enjoyed contracts to help rig both the Endeavour and STS Leeuwin. To supplement all this there's always a fine collection of Brian Lemon's museum-quality scale models in a range of scales, ranging from a large, suitably grubby Clyde puffer, through the wartime commando vessel, "Krait", down to small West Australian historical vessels like the "Gem". In a lean-to beside the museum proper there's usually a small boat to be restored and further back in the yard, under rudimentary cover, three or four rowing eights and fours! Not to be missed.

AND THE FUTURE?

Well that's it, folks. We've run out of ideas for both Technical Evenings and Toolbox Visits. We need some fresh ideas. If you've got a project at home you'd either like to show us, or talk about at an evening, please let us know. Alternatively, if you've any ideas for outside visits or speakers please share them with the committee and we'll make the necessary contact. (don't suggest the Met. Bureau, we've tried that one) If you can't come to the Nov. meeting on the 24th, and you've got an idea, then please ring one of the committee members.



If undelivered, please return to:
50 Valley View Rd,
ROLEYSTONE 6111