

AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

OCT/NOV '99

ABBA COMMITTEE

Geoff Leggatt,	President,	ph 9410 1422 (Wk)	9367 3595 (Hm)
John McKillop.	Secretary,	ph 9410 1422 (Wk)	9313 7442 (Hm)
Chris Davis,	Treasurer,	ph 9222 5664 (Wk)	9387 5042 (Hm)
Mike Beilby,	Newsletter,	ph 9397 6209 (Hm)	

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

FIRST TOOLBOX VISIT

Our first toolbox visit was held on Saturday, 11th August, and it was to the workshop of our treasurer, Chris Davis. We must have had at least twenty visitors during the course of the afternoon which was very good for a first effort, but the attendance was more than matched by the quality of Chris's presentation. While the efforts Chris had put in beforehand, to ensure that the afternoon was a success, were much appreciated by all visitors, the committee hopes that future hosts aren't deterred by the extra effort put in by Chris and his wife, Leonie, on this occasion. The prime requisite for future hosts is to have a boat under construction or restoration and not so much rubbish on the floor that we can't walk around it. That's all I'm promising you if and when there's a visit to the editorial workshop, anyway.

And what did we see at Chris's place? Well, Chris is restoring nothing less than the inaugural winner of the Fremantle

to Bunbury ocean race, the 29' cutter, "Argosy". She was designed, and building commenced, before the second world war by Ted Luck, when still in his teens. Building anything over 20' long, by traditional methods is a gargantuan task for an amateur of any age but for a teenager, well, the mind boggles. His design process was the ultra-traditional one, I might add, based on a half-model and resulted in a peculiarly deep hull at the nearly-plumb stem, where the draft must be about 18". Other than that the design is quite conventional for between the wars. War service saw the young Ted in the Ninth Division and he appears to have come through unscathed, as did his future crew members, Arthur Darnell, Gordon Royle and Bill Cockburn. "Argosy" was completed quite promptly after the war, and as I said, went on to win the first Bunbury race as a curtain-raiser to a long career as a racing and cruising yacht.

Ted passed away in the eighties and the

boat had several owners before Chris acquired her in 1987. The carvel jarrah planks were and are in excellent condition but internally quite a few ribs had cracked and Chris attended to these long before he had a backyard shed to house his project. While she was still at RPYC he stripped the hull and many half ribs were steamed and laminated into place between the existing ribs to keep the hull tied together, and a frame and awning was made to cover the undecked hull before it was returned to a mooring. Time, as they say, passed, and it was only when the awning canvas threatened to give up the ghost that Chris went to stage two.

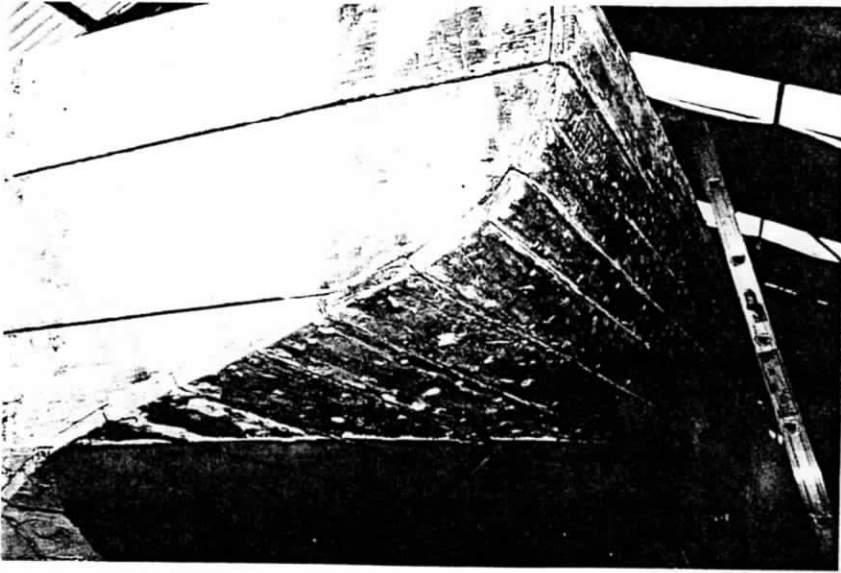
Stage two was building the backyard workshop, about which little was said on the day, but it must have been quite a task itself, providing as it does, ample head room over a deep-keeled yacht and lots of room for storage and machine tools down each side. It's brick, with double doors at each end, a high steel framed cathedral roof and an epoxy painted concrete floor you could eat your dinner off. A minor part of stage two, incidentally, would have been the construction of a cradle for the boat. This is built on a steel base welded up from rectangular sections using material about 8" by 6" . Six adjustable struts and pads can then be set up to support the hull in question. The whole can be dismantled to components small enough to be trucked down to the water so that it's available there whenever the boat needs to come out for maintenance.

Stage three was the removal of the boat from the water for the second time, by Cammy-lift, followed by trucking home to Wembley and installing in the shed. A low-loader was needed to truck the yacht home with a crane at the end to remove it from the truck and lower onto the cradle. Access was via a back lane and getting the machinery in there must

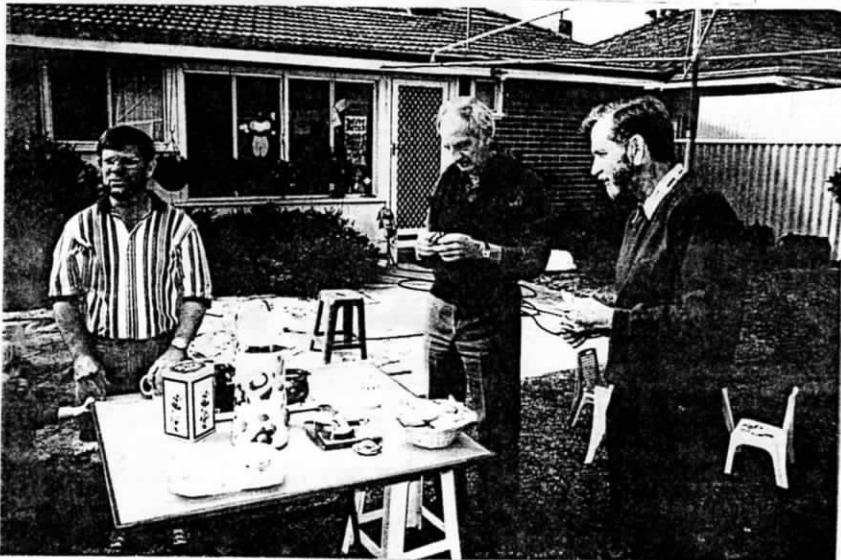
have been a real shoe-horn job, but it was just possible to manoeuvre the crane so that the boat was half in the workshop as it was lowered onto the cradle, which was then wheeled into the workshop fully on rollers of round steel bar, on which it is still sitting. Work has proceeded at a fairly leisurely pace since then, Chris not being one to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar. Much paint has been removed and the caulking dragged out before raking out the seams fully and re-caulking. Because jarrah moves more than most timbers between its wet and dry states the seams are currently showing gaps of between 3 and 5 mm and it's difficult to know how much to dampen the planking before caulking again.

Following some attention to the plank ends where some screws are loose, and to the keel fastenings, Chris will have to start on a complete new fit-out; deck, cabin, cockpit and internals. He has the spars from her second, marconi-rigged incarnation but since he wants to restore her to the original gaff format some of the spars will need replacing as well. The bowsprit and boom should be O.K., I'm not sure about the mast and a new gaff will be needed - oh, and sails, of course. Not a job for the faint-hearted! Chris has already stocked a large lean-to beside the workshop with most of the timber he will need, in fact he could almost build a replica, now he just has to tackle the rebuild in reasonable bite-sized pieces.

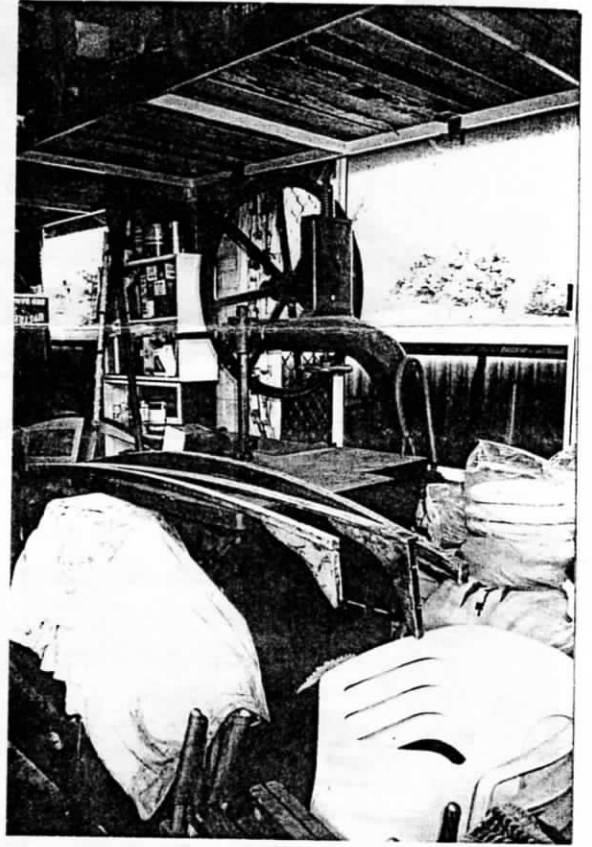
The mention of bite-sized reminds me of the scrumptious afternoon tea the visitors were offered by Leonie, too. All in all it was a most enjoyable visit leaving most of us in awe at the strides Chris has made so far and of the even greater ones he still has ahead of him. We can only wish him the best of luck with the rest of the project.



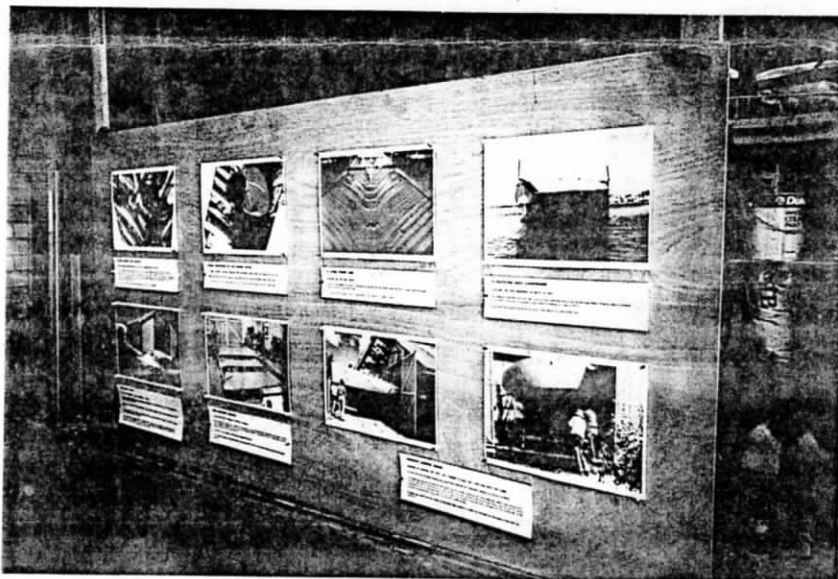
Jarrah certainly lasts. Even the plank-ends at the transom are near perfect.



At the refreshment table - (L to R) Chris Davis, Mike Igglesden and Rob Sewell.

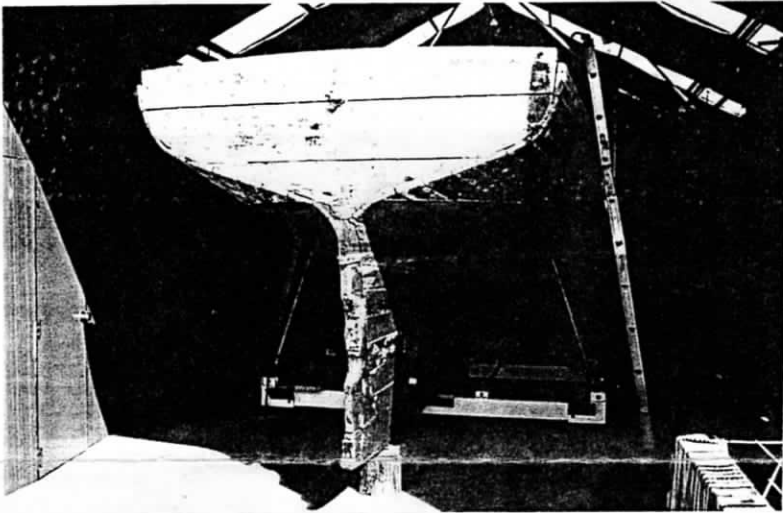


Waiting quietly in the wings; an old but massive bandsaw.

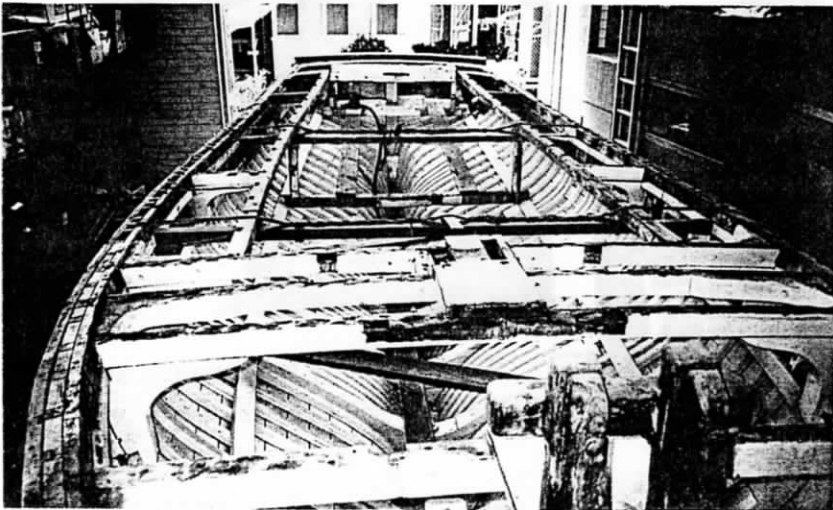


One of three photo-display boards.

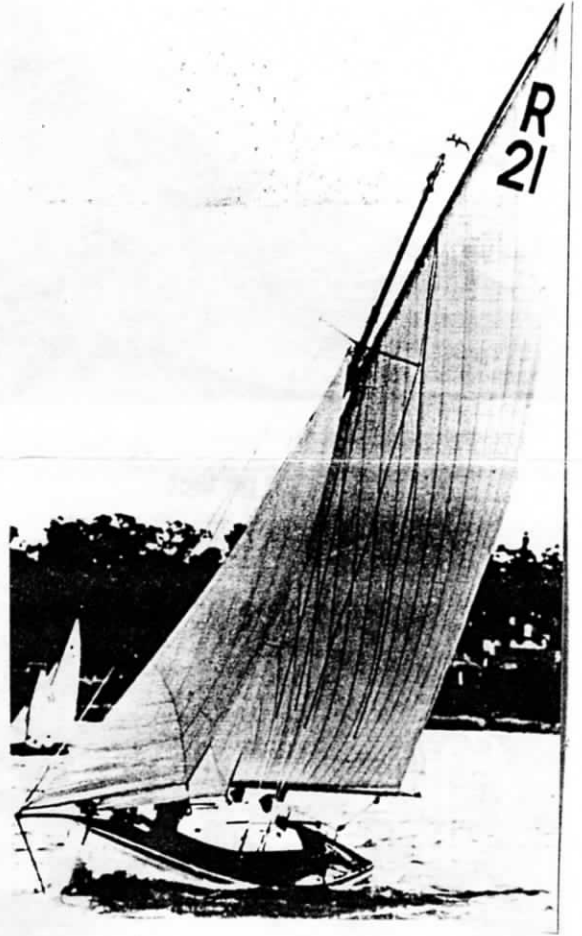
THAT DAY AT CHRIS'S - THE VISUALS



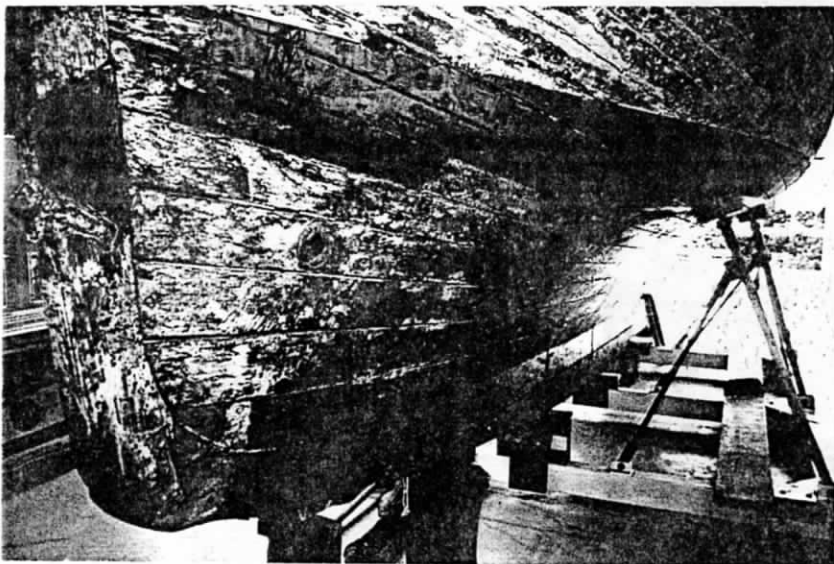
Argosy's deep keel extends right to the stern.



Very neat and tidy inside, new ribs, etc. Almost time for the deck!



Argosy in her hey-day. A beautiful sight.



That deep fore-foot. Even the bobstay tang is several inches under water. A nice firm turn of the bilge.

LAST MEETING

At our last meeting, on 31st August, life member and Curtin boat design lecturer, Kim Klaka spoke about cruising his 10.4m van der Stadt cruiser-racer on both the west and east coasts. "Panache II" dates to about, I think, the mid-eighties, so she looks more racer than cruiser but the Klakas were very comfortable aboard her although a cut-down mainsail was employed, making the rig virtually a masthead, and this also allowed a simplification of the backstay system.

Although Kim was keen to see the east and west coasts he had neither the time nor inclination to sail the north or south ones so some overland was employed. Consequently the west coast cruise was from Fremantle to Dampier and the boat was then trucked from Dampier to Mooloolooba, on the Sunshine Coast and relaunched. She was then sailed north to the Whitsundays followed by south to Jervis Bay and was finally put back onto a truck in Botany Bay for the road return to WA. This meant a total cruising distance of some three thousand miles in the one year.

Amongst his more important pieces of kit Kim had VHF and HF radios, two GPS units, a mobile phone (most use in port, I would think), an autohelm, depth sounder, a 200w electrical inverter (for charging laptop computer, etc.), a depth sounder and solar panels which did most of the battery charging. The toolbox also sported a cordless drill and a gas soldering iron.

Throughout his talk on the effectiveness of all the various systems on board, Kim was constantly making the point that in the marine situation only the best equipment should be purchased and relied on. For him, anything less broke down long before the cruise was over. About the only exception to the rule was the anchor light, where an ultra-cheap light from Dick Smith performed so

well that the spare ones purchased at the same time were never needed. In all other areas you get what you pay for, and if you pay for less you spend extra time repairing things, sometimes endlessly as in the case of Kim's anchor light deck plug and his main switch panel, and Kim's still looking for the best switch panel. One item I wouldn't have expected to be a problem, apparently, can be the marine toilet. It seems most are only good for weekenders and will give trouble constantly over a long cruise and fixing them is no fun! Fortunately, Kim had fitted a Lavac Zenith before setting out and it lasted. The Volvo 2003 engine performed its task well, Kim said, due to regular professional servicing, slavish attention to clean fuel and not running the engine too hard.

One excellent idea would appear to be in the dinghy department, where a Tinker Tramp doubles as dinghy and emergency inflatable. It costs as much as the two units combined, so no saving there, but it only needs the space of one, and deck space is always at a premium. With sails, Kim has had no trouble with a Mylar, furling headsail but his second-hand, cut-down main has needed constant attention despite being well overhauled before departure and the sail saw more than its fair share of temporary repairs under stickyback sailcloth along the way.

Kim also had an interesting caution to relate relative to GPS units. Many people use them, or claim to use them, in remarkably tight situations with accuracy. Kim found that his two identical units gave results differing by up to 200 metres, probably due to locking onto different satellites, so he uses them for the big picture only and does his fine detail navigation by eyeball. All in all, it was a fascinating talk with as much interest the armchair sailors as the diehard salts.

NOVEMBER TOOL-BOX VISIT.

Following our highly successful visit to Chris Davis's restoration project in September, our November port of call will be a factory unit in Yanchep, where Bruce Taylor is building an Adams 40. This large cruising yacht has been on the go long enough to make the gestation period of an elephant seem but a moment in time. Bruce started the job about 18-20 years ago but had one or two major breaks in building due to business commitments. However, the project was always there in the background and work is currently proceeding apace.

The steel hull is complete with 4mm skin on 50mm X 6mm frames and Bruce is currently fitting out the interior, so there is plenty of boat for us to see and discuss. At 40' X 13', the yacht is a huge project for an amateur and it says a lot for Bruce's tenacity that he is still on task.

WHERE: Unit 1, 4 Stevenage St, Yanchep Industrial Area, (behind Lagoon Realty)

WHEN: Saturday, 6th November, 2pm to 5pm.

Don't let the distance out to Yanchep put you off; it will be a very worthwhile visit.

OCTOBER ABBA MEETING.

The chief item at the October meeting will be a talk by the Principal of the Fremantle-based Wooden Boat Works. The project was originally established by the Maritime Heritage Association, with Brian Phillips in charge, in a small space between the Leeuwin workshop and the Historic Boats Museum on Victoria Quay. Eventually the Museum resumed the space and the Works, now under Graham (Tupp) Lahiff, moved to much larger premises in Slip Rd, where it now operates full time. Tupp will be on hand to give us full details of how his school operates - the restoration exercises, the new boats which are built and the courses available both to individuals and to groups.

WHERE: ABBA Meeting, Mounts Bay Sailing Club, (upstairs, far end)

WHEN: Tuesday, 26th October, 8pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE

We're still having some difficulty identifying each other at meetings and we would ask all people attending to make sure they fill in the attendance sheet at each meeting. If it is not passed to you during the meeting, then please fill it in before you leave. In addition, we're going to organize a set of name tags and ask people to wear these during meetings. These will certainly help at the conversation-over-coffee stage later each evening.

LIFE MEMBERS : We're not sure that we have an up to date list of these members. Anyone who qualifies is asked to contact the treasurer, Chris Davis, to make sure they are listed properly.

LIBRARY PURCHASES: None have been requested as yet. There will be a suggestion box into which requests can be placed, a boon for those who can't afford the phone call.

QUESTIONNAIRE: We're going to ask all members to complete one of these relevant to their present and past boat-building projects and experience. We won't use the information to put the hard word on people to host toolbox visits or anything of that kind, but we feel it will be useful to know the background of all our members, especially when it comes to catering to special interest groups, etc.

TOOLBOX VISITS: It was decided that the Association would see that basic tea, coffee and biscuits would be on hand at these visits, as at evening meetings. Hosts are welcome to supply finer fare if they so desire but it was felt that there should be no compulsion to cater for refreshments.

ABBA CALENDAR

Association Meeting

Tuesday, 26th October, M.B.S.C.

Toolbox Visit

Saturday, 6th November, 2 -5pm.

Unit 1, 4 Stevenage St,
Yanchep Industrial Area,
(behind Lagoon Realty)

Committee meeting and copy closing

Monday, 15th November.