

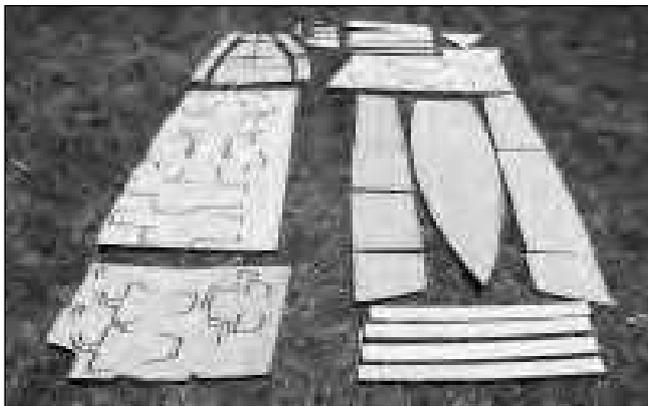
Norwalk Island Sharpie

NEWS

by ROBERT AYLIFFE

New! Precut Kits!

KITS are here! The first precut kit has arrived, for the NIS18. It's for a 1/2 sized model to be trial built by Kerry Kirke, the first NIS18 Yawl and kit builder, so we can debug it as quickly as possible. The model kit looks like becoming a standard option with the plans, so builders can get a feel for how all the components go together before they assemble the real boat. He has ordered his plans for the full size boat, the Yawl version to be built in the early part of next year.



NIS18 Yawl builder Kerry Kirke's first ever 1/6 scale model kit. The precut models kits will be available to all plans purchasers and builders.

Chris Dearden owner builder of NIS23 *Sardine Chopper* called today to tell me he is forming a Radio Control NIS18 model owners and builders group. The models, because of the smaller cut out sizes and he relatively large minimum computer bit sizes, can't be router cut. So we're giving the software to a laser cutter to work the finer detail that's required.

Brett Avery, our brilliant Norwalk Islands Sharpies Sail Maker from the Binks sail loft is prepared to make the small sails and the masts can be sorted locally.

The planning work that Frans Walschotts at Cape Boatworks has done is just great. There will be improvements as we go along, of course, but the big work has now been done.

The current orders in study packs and plans for the NIS18 is about two times all the other models together, (the next is my beloved 23) and all but one of them in the past three months have been for the split rig versions. Bruce Kirby, all those years ago predicted this. He could see that the world was changing. The ability to have a well designed, easily built, capable pocket cruiser that could be trailed behind a small car, and stored under a car port instead of gobbling money on a mooring would, he suggested, revolutionise sail boat ownership.

These are exciting times.

NIS Owner Builder groups

We are now planning Norwalk Islands Sharpies owner builders groups, hopefully in each state, so that if there is no room to build at home, you can join a group and share the rent (and the fun of building together) on a disused warehouse or shed in your area.

In addition, NISBOATS can now supply at significant discounts, premium Bote Cote Epoxy resins, glass fabrics, gaboon ply, trim timbers, spars, tabernacles, sails and fittings and the new custom NISboats /Premier trailers.

(This is ONLY available to owners of Norwalk Islands Sharpies plans or boats.)

New NIS trailer design

The first of the new trailers designed for Norwalk Islands Sharpies is now on the road.

Though the old designs worked well, they had, we thought, more mass than was necessary and they always seemed a bit high. After 10 years it seemed right to go back to the drawing board.

Peter Chronis, from Premier Trailers in South

Australia and I talked about it by phone, email and short meetings for some months, sent drawings back and forth and then finally sat down together for the best part of a day at Peter's house and went through it all with a fine tooth comb.

We are really proud of the result.

The prototype is being used with my NIS23, *Charlie Fisher*. The boat height above the road has been reduced by around 2/300mm, and the overall weight of the boat and trailer has dropped by about 200kg. You can now almost step into the cockpit, and the trailer weight difference is noticeable. The action of the boat sliding on and off the trailer is easier too, as we found at the ramp just before this years Goolwa Meningie Race.



Newly developed NISBOATS/PREMIER trailer is approx 200mm lower than original and 200kg lighter. Easier to launch and retrieve from. Available to suit each size.

Our trailers, as well as having a number of exclusive NIS flat bottom specific features continue the respected Premier features, including very high construction standards, C Channel rather than box section framing (no hidden rust traps) heavy hot dip galvanising and for and aft axle sub frame adjustment for balancing.

With the exception of the NIS18, which only requires a single axle, all the trailers are tandem, have new low profile tyres, underslung axles, a spare wheel, swing up type jockey wheel, mechanical disc brakes on the smaller trailers and on the NIS26 and above, breakaway electric driver initiated brakes as required by law and common



Forward view of new trailer for Norwalk Islands Sharpies.

sense. With these trailers, pretty much all the rig fits under the flare of the hull shape; great for negotiating drive ways!

There are a couple of minor changes to be made before it's as good as we reckon it possibly can be, and then after we register the designs, the trailers will be available for sale in all the sizes in the new year.

RACING

Goolwa Meningie Race 05

There was, as Jack Robins (HillBilly Hoot singer and picker par excellence), and Randall Cooper (famed Goolwa spar maker and boat rigger) pointed out something to defend. The Goolwa Meningie race is the longest freshwater race in the Southern Hemisphere.

Last year we had started over 20 minutes behind the fleet yet still took line honours after 69 kilometres across the two lakes.

This time we started on time and were making very happy progress through the fleet when, broad reaching in light air, we got a sudden gust. The boat heeled and reacting to an increase in helm pressure I leaned out, hauling as I did on the Ronstan tiller extension.

Never really trusted it.

Trust the Gut. That joint snapped! With the sudden lightening of tiller load, I rolled over the side of the speeding boat, still clutching at that dumb tiller extension.

A kilometre offshore, and in the water really focuses the mind!

Initial embarrassment gave way to the observation that I was floating lower than I would have liked in the cold fresh lake water. I also felt concern that Jack was alone on a boat he had never sailed before, with all sail up in increasingly gusty conditions. In addition, the racing traffic was all round, scooting past us. I shamefacedly confess to being grumpy, yelling 'encouragement' at Jack from my watery home. I hope he did not really hear, and if he did, I publicly apologise!

As the minutes wore on, and the fleet sailed past, I also realised that, no matter how he got caught as he sorted it out, he and the boat were going to look after each other just fine. The 200 years heritage of the working boat was shining through when it really mattered.

It was only a matter of time.

I also noticed that the very expensive 'Tilley' brand hat I was wearing was determined to stay on; they are guaranteed to. The 'Tilley' hat even comes with a replacement policy if it should wriggle off and float away. Brilliant!

Boats zipped past as I waved them on; two, *White Pointer*, a Binks 25 from Goolwa and *Cool Change* from Christies Beach Yacht Club insisted on turning back, off their racing course and checking that the bobbing head and waving on arm was only waving and not just bobbing. I really do appreciate their interest, made me feel less forlorn in that increasingly cold, choppy wide brown water as poor Jack was trying to manoeuvre my boat, under sail in freshening conditions, to pick me up.

Easier said than done. He finally got close enough to throw me a line and then got the rope ladder, which I always have at the ready, over the side.

Easier said than done alright! I now weighed at least 20kg more than my usual clumpen bulk, by virtues of previously warm, now wet clothing. Getting up that rope ladder and into the moving, rolling boat was a diverting chore.

I had been in the water 25 minutes.

Adrenalin kicks in of course. Once I was back in the boat we wasted no time deciding that there *was* a race to be sailed!

We were now LAST!

In the wind my wet clothes started to really chill me down. Fortunately we were running easily by now and I was able to leave the boat to Jack while I got changed in to dry warm clothes, out of the wind in the cabin.

Suffice it to say that we did complete the race, and worked our way well back into the fleet by the time we got to the finish line. I expected to get a right shellacking from the other crews; to my delight and interest everyone present, from the Meningie Club officials to the other crews were simply genuinely interested in the hows and implications of the incident, and concerned that I was not hurt. It was almost worth having had the accident happen to experience the other side of what is often a bully boy event, the post race bulldust that goes on. Both Jack and I were really impressed.

I guess it's only those who have not been out there doing it that fail to realise the vulnerability of all of us who race and cruise in such varied and

sometimes rugged conditions. We KNOW, in spite of all care and precautions, Murphy's young brother, Unexpected, is waiting around the corner!

I am glad it happened. I'm fitting foot straps in the cockpit, and next time we will all be wearing lifelines. AND I will also be fitting a new, non gristle tiller extension!

Buoyed by our new friendships, Jack and I had a glorious sail back to the narrows at Narrung after the presentations, in company with *White Pointer*, *Cool Change* and Michael O'Reilly on *Oh Really*, his 7.5m Farr Sport Boat.



We had a glorious sail back to the Narrows at Narrung, under fully reefed main.

I suddenly remembered the last time I had seen Michael. It was last year's Dauntless Cup, sailed in the lakes in what became gusting to 50kts (measured at the Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club Club House).

All I could see of his boat, as we rounded Rat Island, was the mast, sticking out of the water, and his crew clinging to it as the rescue boat struggled to take them off. Our crew never laughed at his misfortune, then. What goes round ...

Thanks Michael for your friendship, too.



Hero of the race, Jack Robins helms *Charlie Fisher* back across Lake Albert to Narrung; the GPS hitting 9kts on following waves.

The crew of NIS23 *Charlie Fisher* take pleasure in thanking all who were involved with this years Goolwa Meningie Race for their kindness, during and after the race.

We strongly commend it as a special racing experience and as an event where you will be among sailors and officials who are big enough to encourage rather than to knock, and who will make all entrants very welcome, during the race, after the race and amongst new and old friends back in the reeds at Narrung, a magical 'overnight' on the way home!



Sunday morning at the wharf in Narrung.

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