

# SISTER ELAINE BALFOUR-OGILVY 1912-1942

Elaine Balfour-Ogilvy was born in 1912 in Renmark, one of five children of Harry L.S. Balfour-Ogilvy (veteran of the Boer War and WW1) and Jane Keyes, a teacher at Renmark Primary School prior to her marriage. After receiving her education in Renmark and Adelaide, Elaine began her nursing training in the Adelaide Children's Hospital and in 1940 enlisted in the A.I.F. as a Sister in the Australian Imperial Nursing Service. In 1941 she embarked for overseas service.

In Singapore she was a member of the 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station tending thousands of casualties during heavy shelling and bombing until the Japanese occupation of Singapore looked inevitable.

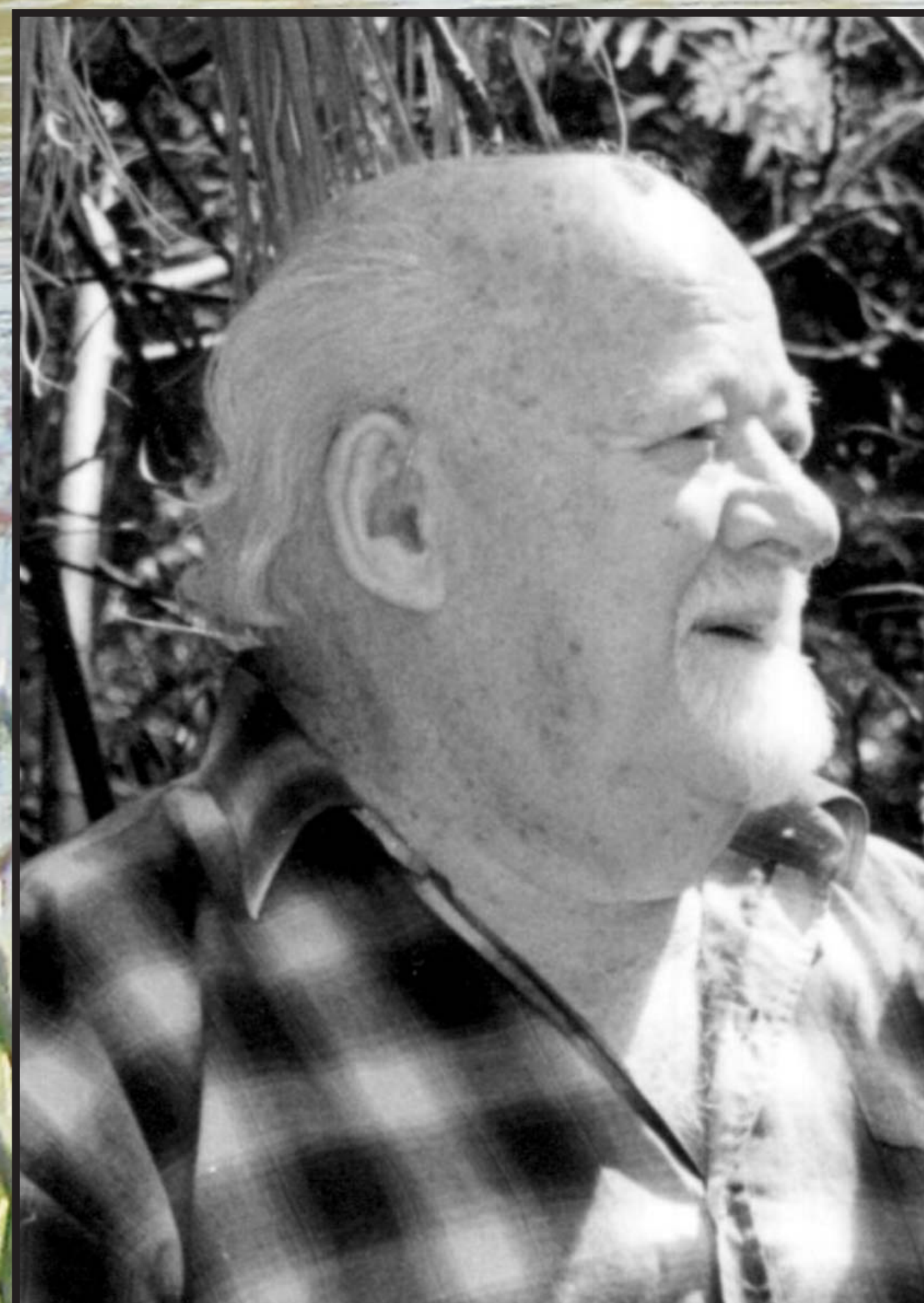
Sister Balfour-Ogilvy and other nurses and civilians boarded a coastal vessel, the Vyner Brooke which became separated from its convoy. The Japanese attacked the steamer on February 14, 1942 when it was ten miles off shore from the village of Muntok in the Bangka Straits. Elaine was one of twenty-two nurses and a number of civilians who made it to shore in a leaky lifeboat.

Once ashore the civilians walked to the village of Muntok while the nurses stayed to look after the wounded. On February 16 they were found by a party of Japanese soldiers who told them in sign language to form a line including the wounded and walk into the sea; they were machine-gunned from behind. This tragic event became known as the Bangka Straits Massacre.

Elaine's life is inspirational and her memory is commemorated by schools in the form of an amenities room, honour board and scholarship in addition to a Loxton street and the Renmark Children's Library.



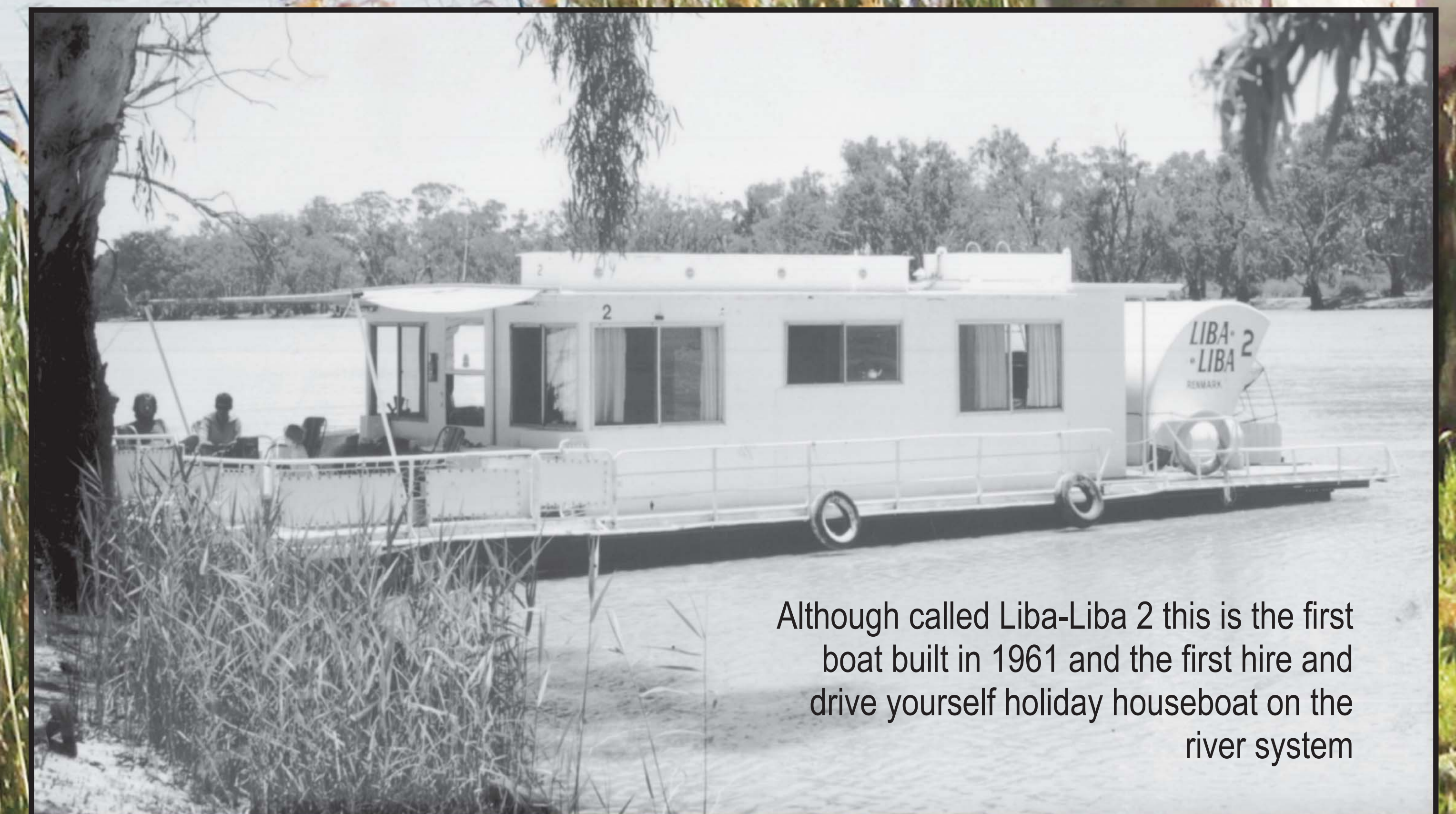
## HOME OF THE FIRST HOUSEBOAT



In 1961 a catamaran was developed by F. Ian Showell of Renmark and Michael Kempe of Lindsay Point (near Paringa), as a tourism venture. Ian Showell was an ideas man and entrepreneur and the seed for this project came from seeing tourist boats (possibly in Egypt on the Nile) during his WWII Airforce service. The proto-type consisted of two steel pontoons filled with a foam material for emergency floatation. Self contained accommodation to accommodate six was built on steel framework. This first boat was powered by a Farmall tractor engine to two paddlewheels at the stern.

A year later Ian Showell bought out his partner and over the next 30 years improved on his original design and with his family and dedicated staff developed the Liba-Liba fleet of up-market houseboats to 30. Other people took advantage of the concept and built their own with different designs and drive mechanisms but Liba-Liba stayed with the paddle wheels. In 2021 Libas can still be seen paddling the river 60 years on. This totally new holiday option revolutionised river focussed tourism in the Murray Darling system and it has become a multi million dollar industry.

Ian Showell OAM died 8 August 2001.



Although called Liba-Liba 2 this is the first boat built in 1961 and the first hire and drive yourself holiday houseboat on the river system