

Redcliffe and District Woodcraft Society Inc (QLD)

On his epic circumnavigation of Australia in 1799, Matthew Flinders made a descriptive notation of 'Red Cliff Point' on the Moreton Bay map being drafted. Subsequently John Oxley made a recommendation regarding suitability and the first settlement in Queensland was established in 1814 near the present site of Redcliffe, a satellite city 28 kilometres NNE of Brisbane. However, a lack of food and water on the peninsula led to the settlement of Brisbane the following year.

In 1992, observing the population growth on the Redcliffe peninsula, three members of the Woodturners Guild of Queensland decided to gauge the community support for a woodcrafting club. A meeting was held and with around 30 attendees the Peninsula Woodcraft Club was established. This evolved into the current Club, the Redcliffe and District Woodcraft Society Inc (Photo.1).

A modest shed in the Redcliffe Showgrounds became the Club's first home. Members' meetings and traditional woodcraft activities including woodturning, carving, scroll sawing and pyrography were the main activities. The Club still uses these premises for its Annual Competition and Exhibition conducted in conjunction with the Redcliffe Show.

The success and accompanying growth of the Club over the first decade were rewarded by Redcliffe City Council offering expanded premises in the form of the disused Humpybong Scout and Guide Hall. After substantial modification and refurbishment, the new premises on the corner of Oxley Avenue and Lamington Drive were opened. Shortly afterwards the local Triton Club merged with the Club, further expanding the membership.

New activities and changing workplace regulations over the years have necessitated further development of the Club's premises, addition of new sheds and improved dust control systems.

The Club has developed its capabilities to salvage timber from fallen and removed trees. A WoodMizer horizontal



Photo.1: A third of the members pose for the camera

bandsaw converts logs to roughsawn stock. With the recent modification of the log bed system it can now accommodate even the very short logs supplied by local tree loppers. To avoid lifting injuries the Club recently purchased a secondhand forklift.

While the Club's success is due to many individuals and organisations, two special alliances need to be mentioned. The Moreton Bay Regional Council has supported the Club with facilities and maintenance since its inception, plus supplying logs for milling and the occasional timely help. The Club is honoured to have as its Patron, Mr Vic Verrecchia, the principal of Vicmarc Machinery, manufacturers of world class lathes and woodturning accessories.

Activities

The Club is open from 8am weekdays with Tuesdays being the high activity and special meetings days. The musical instruments group and box making group meet on Thursdays (Photo.2). On other weekdays, members pursue various individual and group activities.

Activities at the Club's premises include slabbing and timber preparation, box making, cabinetmaking, intarsia, musical instruments, pyrography, traditional and power woodcarving, scroll sawing, furniture restoration, toymaking and woodturning. The Club's musical instruments section is very active, not

Photo.2: Members of the Club's musical instrument section — Graham McDougall, Maurice Coutanceau, Richard Scriven, Vincent Rungo on drums and Ben de Chermont



only in the specialist area of manufacture of stringed instruments but also in staging concerts, planned and impromptu, at Club meetings and functions (Photo.2).

The Club's Annual Competition and Exhibition is conducted in conjunction with the activities at the Redcliffe Show. The competition attracts around 100 entries in the traditional woodcraft categories, competing for prizes donated by local businesses. The event is supported by live displays of turning, carving, scroll sawing and pyrography as well as the sale of members' woodcraft items. Woodwork items raffled at the show are specially made by skilled members.

Each year the Moreton Bay Regional Council, previously Redcliffe City Council, conducts its signature Garden and Lifestyle Expo in the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens. The Club has developed a portable display unit incorporating live demonstrations, examples of members' best works and a sales table. Static displays of exemplary woodcraft are provided to local libraries upon request.

To make all workshop activities safer for members, the Club has comprehensive training and competency programmes for individual members covering all machines where there are deemed to be injury risks. The Club also quarantines certain work stations where there is a perceived high level of operator awareness required for successful machine operation (such as the WoodMizer). Access to these machines, even for assistants, is strictly controlled and restricted.

Through group endeavours, support is provided to several charitable activities, particularly LifeFlight (originally known as CareFlight) and underprivileged children in remote areas. For LifeFlight, the Club has a top-turning day where toy spinning tops are produced in large quantities and sold at outside functions, with the monies being donated. For the children, with assistance from Followmont Transport, in excess of a thousand toys are distributed prior to Christmas to outback hospitals from Doomadgee in the north to Mount Isa in the west and south to Barcaldine and Blackall.

For further information regarding the Redcliffe and District Woodcrafters Club, please contact the Secretary, Mr Ian Ross, E-mail: redcliffewoodcraft@gmail.com or call the Clubhouse, Ph: 07 3889 4695.