

## **A Brief History of Woodcraft Manningham**

The Club arose out of an amalgamation of the Doncaster Carvers club and the Central Woodturners.

### **1. Doncaster Carvers**

The Carvers commenced as a special interest group within the Victorian Woodworkers Association, a body whose members were either woodworking professionals, designers and teachers, together with a few serious hobbyists.

The first meeting was held in February 1992 and early members included Bryan Thompson, Herb Ghemling, Judy Wheeler, Jean Carson Gray, and in subsequent years the group was led by Bryan Thompson and Greg Williams.

The first meeting was at the Rosanna Uniting Church hall and after a few meetings moved to the Templestowe High School woodworking workshop, and later moved to the Templestowe Uniting Church and subsequently the Doncaster High School. As the carvers were meeting in the Doncaster area they decided to call themselves the "Doncaster Carvers".

In 1994 discussions occurred between four woodworking groups with a view to forming a group of clubs all using a common workshop. An amalgamation in 1995 with the Central Woodturners resulted in the formation of Central Woodcraft at Manningham.

### **2. Woodturning section (Central Woodturners)**

The Yarra Turners, which commenced about 1981, was a small suburban club that met as a discussion group in member's homes or at Len Smith's business which was then in Ivanhoe but later moved to Croydon. Len acted as an instructor. The group desired a "hands-on" club facility, and in 1986 approached Jim Walker who was in charge of the pattern making shop at RMIT in it's Queensbury Street building. As possibly one of the first "hands-on" club, with access to twelve lathes, an initial membership included the Yarra Turners together with staff and students in the Queensberry Street building was put together in 1986 and first met in the pattern-making department on 21 May 1987 as the Central Woodturners, with Max Marshall, Keith Towe, Graham Deane together with six others including Keith Little and Jim Walker listed as attending. The first president was Max Marshall, first secretary Keith Towe and the initial treasurer Graham Deane. Listed members at that time also included Cliff Walsh, Vic Oberg, Dick Nixon, Len Smith, Jim Marshall, Peter Black, together with Jim Walker, soon after included Max Jensen and Rob West.

### **3. Amalgamation.**

In about 1994 the Central Woodturners became aware that the facilities at RMIT were likely to be no longer available in the medium term, and at the same time members Ken Barker, Jack Jones and Don McLean heard that an old school building in East Templestowe was vacant and its future uncertain, possibly for demolition by it's new owners the local Council. Meetings with a number of woodworking clubs occurred during 1995 and ultimately the Doncaster Carvers and Central Woodturners joined together, and a new Ladys Turners group formed. Together they developed our current club rooms over the next two years with the assistance of the local Council. After restoration and renovation of the old school building the first meeting in the new clubrooms was held in September 1997. Council staff had assisted in obtaining funds from a State government program for the equipment fitout.

In subsequent years the amalgamated club was known as Central Woodcraft at Manningham composed of a number of independent special interest groups operating under a management committee, and in 2005 it was restructured and renamed Woodcraft Manningham and became an Incorporated entity.

### **Subsequent Development and Activities.**

\*Our annual contribution to the Australia Day function in the city commenced in 1998.

\* The Australian Woodturners Exhibition was initiated by early Club woodturners led by Keith Towe, and the Club has continued to be involved in the sponsorship and administration of the Exhibition for many years.

\* The Carving group implemented an annual week-end "Carve In" program in 1995, for anyone interested in the craft, and have been responsible for it since.

\*Box making groups commenced in 2004- lead by Ken Morrison and Reg Orr.

Courses for members and the community have been held for a number of years.

\*The carved pediment over the Clubrooms entrance, designed by member Jean Carson Gray, was completed led by Bryan Thompson, and officially unveiled by the local mayor in Oct 2005.

\*The monthly Club Night commenced in 2007.

\*Scroll saw/pyrography commenced in 2008- driven by Bruce Hensell.

\*At our 20 year celebration in 2006 early founders Jim Walker, Vic Oberg, Max Jensen, Cliff Walsh, with Vic Wood were our special guests. Unfortunately our 30<sup>th</sup> celebration in 2016 was overlooked. 2017 was the twentieth year at our Manningham site.

### **Club presidents.**

Doncaster Carvers:-

1992-1995 Led by Bryan Thompson

Central Woodturners:-

1986-88 Max Marshall

1989-90 Jim Walker

1991-92. ?

1992-93 Keith Little

1994-95 Jack Jones

1996-97 Ken Barker

1998-99 John Wheeler

Central Woodcraft at Manningham:-

1997-2000 Ken Barker

2001-02 Mal Carlson

2003-04 Robert McNamara

(acting president Charlie Chamberlain)

Woodcraft Manningham:-

2005-06 Tim Gale

2007- 08 Keith Higgins

2008-09 Kevin McCarthy

2009-16 Bruce Hensell

2016 – John Paine

### **Life Members**

Ken Barker

Jack Jones

Bryan Thompson 2007

Ken Morrison

Greg Williams

Bruce Hensell 2018

### **Clubhouse building**

Built in 1874, one of the few known survivors of an 120 students standard plan Education Department single room school.

1917 additions of a timber entrance, cloakroom and storeroom with a teachers residence adjacent.

1934 electric light provision.

Between 1954 and 1963 multiple school buildings including 13 classrooms existed on the site, the maximum capacity of 570 students in 1974.

The East Templestowe Primary School closed in 1993.

(from Merv Serpell- a student in the

40's)