



**The History of the Construction of the Redcliffe Golf  
Course and the Formation of the Redcliffe Golf**

*An extract from a talk given by Club Life Member Dave Ridgway to the Redcliffe Historical  
Society, August 2006.*

In 1934, when the M.R. Hornibrook Company was building the Hornibrook Highway (now the Houghton Highway), the Directors of that Company thought that establishing a golf course at the northern end of the bridge, could be a feasible proposition. Accordingly they purchased 166 acres of what was mostly farming land.



The Hornibrook Highway to Clontarf  
1936

In the early 1930's Clontarf, with access only from Anzac Avenue, was the most remote area on the Redcliffe Peninsula. When the highway across Hayes Inlet was completed it brought about a remarkable change to Clontarf, which now became the front door to the Peninsula, and a great area for a golf course.

The land was first surveyed in 1864, and in 1866 Charles Kislingbury purchased 124 acres in the area for 124 pounds. Then a year later John Anderton bought 40 acres – also for one pound an acre. This land changed hands many times over the years, and a comparison of prices is interesting. That area purchased for 40 pounds in 1866, was sold to Robert Scott for 506 pounds in 1917. This piece of real estate changed hands on five more occasions, before it was part of the land purchased by Hornibrook in 1934.

In the early days, most of the land was used for farming, with sugar cane the main crop. In fact it does appear that the cane farm on this site was the first in Queensland. However, the land was to prove to be unsuitable for cane and production ceased by the end of the century. From that time till 1934 the land was used mainly for farming and dairying.

There are still remnants of the floor of what was probably a pig sty near our 12th fairway.

Then early in 1935 the Hornibrook directors brought together a group of Brisbane businessmen, who then formed the Peninsula Country Golf Club.

As the Hornibrook Highway neared completion, both labour and machinery were plentiful and construction of the course commenced in March 1935.

The Clubs first management committee read like a who's who of Brisbane society and all were personal friends of Manuel .R. Hornibrook! They included W.A. Jolly, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Sir Edward Macartney and Leonard Power. M.R. was also there and his brother Reg, was the clubs first captain.

The Country Club then purchased the golf course, which included the total 166 acres, for 1450 pounds from the Hornibrook Company and the course was officially opened on 29th August 1936. One of the committee's guests on that day was William Morris Hughes, the one-time Prime Minister of Australia.

Five wells complete with windmills were constructed to irrigate the greens and tees. Two of the windmills on the fourth and fifth holes were still in operation in the early 1960's. A comprehensive drainage system was installed throughout the course, parts of which are still in use today.



William Morris Hughes putting out  
at Redcliffe Golf Course  
August 1936

The club house, the pro shop and three course shelter sheds were built using materials left over from buildings that were used while building the Highway. Two of those sheds are still on the course to this day.

Stan Francis designed and supervised work on the course, which was so well thought out, that the layout remained the same till the 9th and 10th were changed in 1985.



The first clubhouse at Redcliffe Golf Course.

Prior to his involvement in the Redcliffe Course Manuel Hornibrook (M.R.) was a keen bowler, and in fact he was the President of the Queensland Bowling Association. He played his first competitive game of golf on the Club's opening day and he was hooked! On the day after the Peninsula Opening Day, the Courier Mail gave him the headline, – "Bowler's President – now Golfer".

This was the start of a great career for M.R. in golf administration. He was the President of Peninsula for ten years and also served on the Committee at Royal Queensland. He went on to become President of the Brisbane Golf Association and of the Queensland Golf Council and in 1965 as a reward for his services he was granted life membership of the Queensland Golf Union.

The Clontarf Course was very popular after the war and during the early 1950's and was acclaimed by both amateurs and professionals, as one of the best in the land. However in the early 1950's M.R. was playing most of his golf at the "Royal" Club. Membership of the Peninsula Club began to fall and by 1956 it became known that The Peninsula Country Golf Club did have some financial problems.

Meantime at Royal Queensland the members also thought that they had problems, as their course was leasehold and that lease was due to expire in 1966. It was then, probably on the

advice of M.R. that the R.Q. Committee looked at the freehold land at Clontarf and maybe the "Royal Charter" could be transferred there.

Then in April 1957, at special meetings of both clubs, it was agreed that a merger of the two clubs would take place. Royal Queensland would accept Peninsula's assets and liabilities. R.Q. members would become Redcliffe Members and vice-versa. It looked a great proposition for all!

But some ten months later a special general meeting of R.Q. members, reversed the merger idea. Evidently their lease was now not in question, and now having paid Peninsula's debts, they owned a great piece of freehold land at Clontarf. Now as the Peninsula Club floundered, the new owners promoted the course almost solely for social golf!

Over the next few years R.Q. sold many blocks of land they considered superfluous to their needs and because of what they did at the time, the course suffers from the lack of a close by practice fairway.

However, there was still a group of keen local golfers who were determined to keep golf alive in Redcliffe. Under the guidance of Dick Wightman, with supporters like Frank Luddy, Col Bainbridge, Trilby and Kingsley Misso and Mick Ryan, a public meeting was held on September 15th 1960 and the Redcliffe Golf Club was formed. Frank Luddy was elected President, Roy Spann as Captain and Sir Manuel Hornibrook was announced as the Club's first Patron.

Royal Queensland granted the Club blocked times for fixtures, and the Club staged its opening day on October 2nd 1960.

The Ladies at Clontarf had continued to play since the demise of Peninsula and they duly elected their first Committee, with Dorothy Jones as Captain and Joyce Barrett as President.

Although we were still basically just a social club, membership increased steadily and as Saturday fields neared 100, it soon became evident that the Club could not survive using blocked times. R.Q. were approached and after over six months of negotiations the Committee obtained a ten year lease which was signed on September 1st 1966. The lease required the new club to pay 1000 pounds a year, for the first three years. The course equipment was valued and the Club agreed to pay for this at 600 pounds a year for the next eight years, as part of the agreement we paid all Council rates and could make no changes to the course without the OK of R.Q.

Early in 1967, 21 year old Denis Brosnan was appointed our club Professional at \$1.00 a day retainer. Denis, who is now an Honorary Life Member of the Club, and his staff served the Club well for the next 25 years.

It was a big change for the Committee, who all had to play a part under the Presidency of Alf Harbottle, in looking after the course and club house. Improving the course was a big priority but this could not be done without water! Approaches were made to the Redcliffe City Council and they agreed to let the Club use effluent from their treatment works. This supply was duly turned on at a memorable club function on October 10th 1970. From that very day, the state of the course improved remarkably.

Membership was growing, and we had to hold our popular functions at venues away from the Club. A new 25 year lease was signed in 1971 and with the OK from R.Q., the Committee decided to go ahead and build a new Club house.

In another big step in 1971 we appointed a full time Secretary Manager at a yearly salary of \$4,500.00.

The Committee gained terrific support from many “tradesmen members” as work proceeded in building the new club house, over the top of the old one. In September the old club house was dismantled and what we could not sell, we burnt in the club house car park! On October 14th, the new premises were opened by the Queensland Golf Union President, Frank Foley. It is interesting to note that the opening day event in 1972 was won by youngster, Wayne Grady, and his father Des.



Club membership continued to increase, trading was good and the Committee’s thoughts now turned to purchasing the freehold of the course. R.Q. was first approached in 1974 and the Committee’s persistent inquiries finally bore fruit when the landlords in 1978 intimated that they could decide to sell. At the A.G.M that year Members voted to go ahead and purchase the course, which also now included some 92 acres at the Northern end of the course. That 92 acres of land did prove to be a stumbling block as the members were unwilling to finance its purchase. Then early in 1980 the Redcliffe City Council agreed to buy it.

Royal Queensland agreed to sell us the remaining land including the golf course, for \$340,000 and the Trustees duly signed the contract on April 19th 1980. Under the terms and conditions of sale the Club paid a \$20,000 deposit, with the remainder to be paid over the next four years at a ten percent interest rate.

To assist with the financing of the course, a levy of \$100 for men and \$75 for ladies, was introduced. It was also decided to make available paid life memberships. The levy was not popular with everyone and at the end of the year total membership had dropped by some 9%. However, this drop was short lived and there was an increase of 16% over the next two years.

Throughout these years the Committees continued to improve the course and at the A.G.M. in 1983, Members gave the go ahead to make major changes and improvements. Under the direction of Paul Barber and with assistance from the Commonwealth Employment Programme, this modernization of the course was completed in 1985.

Meantime in 1984, the Club paid Royal Queensland a final payment of \$270,000.

In 1985 the Club celebrated its silver anniversary, and to mark the occasion, nine continuous days of fully sponsored competition were staged. A memorable Anniversary Dinner was held on Sunday November 3rd, and a time capsule was laid down, to be opened on our 50th birthday in 2010.



In 1988 the Club really entered into the spirit of our Nation's Bicentennial Year. To commemorate the occasion six great social functions were staged, along with many special golfing days. The award winning Bicentennial Halfway House on the "fourth hill" was built almost totally by tradesmen in the club, and was financed totally by Members and friends of the Club.

Whilst we have had some great golfers come through our ranks only a few have won a National Title, or gone on to enjoy great professional success.

On June 8th 2001, the Club opened its "Wall of Fame", which featured the photos and the records of sixteen of our golfers who were selected in a State or National Team, or won a State or National individual title.

It was always realised that the Club had to move with the times, and it was another step forward when the members, at the A.G.M. in 2002, decided to spend \$1,500,000 to completely upgrade and enlarge the club house. The major improvement was completed during the following year.

Throughout the forty six years that we have been a Club our progress has been made possible by the vision and the efforts of some long serving committee men. There is no doubt this process will continue and the future of the Club is only limited by the enthusiasm and efforts of it's members and staff.