



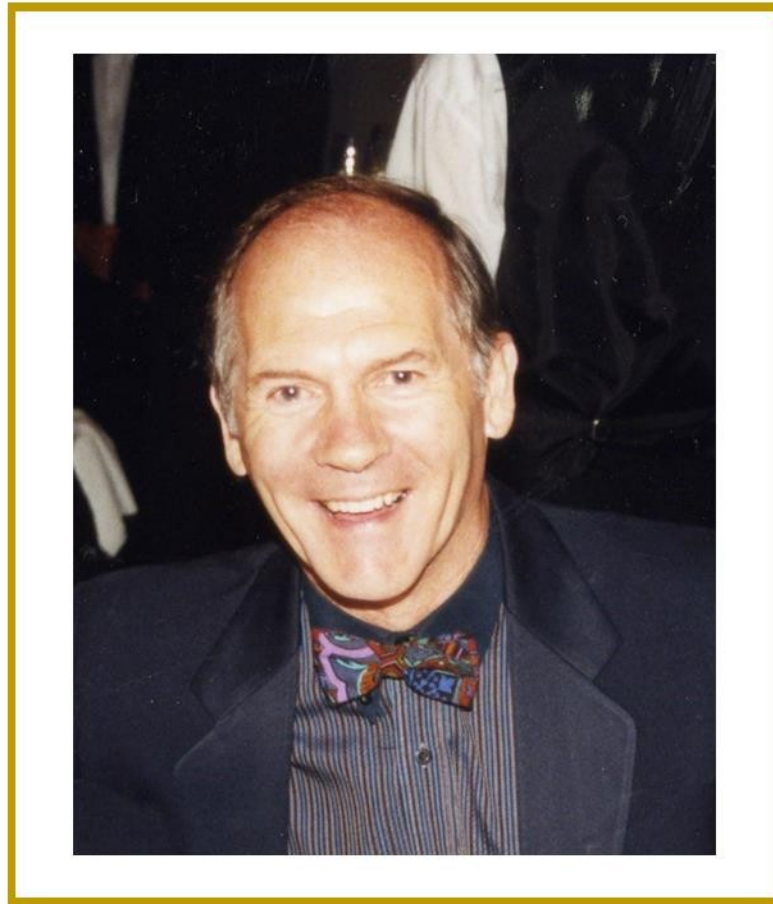
***Decision Makers of Armadale  
Oral History Project***

**Former City of Armadale Councillor  
Deputy Mayor 1992 to 1993  
1981—1997  
1997—1999**

**Terry Holton**



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Culture and the Arts



### **Ex Deputy Mayor Terry Holton**

**Interviewer:** Julia Kay Wallis

**Transcribed by:** Julia Kay Wallis

**Date:** 27 June 2014

**Time:** 62 min

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## Decision Makers of Armadale Oral History Project

**CITY OF ARMADALE SHIRE PRESIDENTS, MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS 1977 – 2014****INTERVIEWED FOR THIS PROJECT**

Decision Makers of Armadale interviewee

Terry Holton

MUNN	Jeff	1975	1979
		1981	1990
		1995	29.5+
CUMMING	Alexander (Alex)	1970	1977
FOKKEMA	Spike	1979	1986
		1993	1999 13 years
HOLTON	Terry	1981	1997
		1997	1999 17.5
STUBBS	Roger Charles	1984	2003 18.7
ZELONES	Henry	1989	1997
		1999	20.5+
REYNOLDS	Linton	1989	2011 22.5
STEWART	James (Jim)	1989	2009 22.5
REARDON	Susan (Sue)	1990	1993
KNEZEVICH	John	1991	2009
HART	Patricia ( Pat)	1992	1996
		2003	11.5+
CLOWES-HOLLINS	Vivienne (Viv)	1993	2005
COMINELLI	Alison	1997	2007
HODGES	Trudi	1997	2005
HOPPER	Deborah (Deb)	1997	2005
TIZARD	Robert (Bob)	2003	2011

**MAYORS**

STUBBS	Roger	1992	1996
		1997	2001
FOKKEMA	Spike	1996	1997
REYNOLDS	Linton	2001	2011
ZELONES	Henry	2011	current

**DEPUTY MAYORS**

REARDON	Susan	1991	1992
HOLTON	Terry	1992	1993
HART	Pat	1993	1996
MUNN	Jeff	1997	2011

**The Kelmscott Road Board was formed in 12 December 1895**  
**The Armadale-Kelmscott Shire Council was formed on 1 July 1961**  
**The Armadale Town Council was formed 1 January 1979**  
**The Armadale City Council was formed 16 November 1985**

### Deputy Mayor & Councillor Terry Holton, 1981 – 1997, 1997-1999

*This is the log of a transcript of an interview with former Councillor, Mr Terry Holton who served with the City of Armadale from 1992 to 1996 and later in 2003 to 2011. He served as Deputy Mayor from 1992 to 1993. The interviewer was Julia Kay Wallis and the interview was conducted on the 27 June 2014 in the office of Holton Connor Architects & Planners of West Perth.*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proper Names</b>
00:00	Introduction to interview	Terence John Holton
00:32	Personal background	England Subiaco Hollywood Australia Hills Mount Nasura Kelmscott Commonwealth Government Department of Works Councillor
03:38	Nominating to Council	President Child Care Facility Kelmscott River Road Parents & Citizens Association Kelmscott Primary School City of Armadale Councillors Shire Town Council Armadale Town Council Cr E Waring-Smith Cr E Rushton Cr R Howard-Smith Cr H Zelones
07:02	Impressions of Council and Councillors	Mayor Cr I Blackburn Council Chamber Dunhill Jull Street Jackson Constructions
11:02	Council Committees and development	Council Planning Committee Chairman Community Services Committee Armadale Approving Committee State Government Homeswest

		Council Councillor
13:08	Professionalism of Councillors	Library City Librarian Cr I Blackburn Mayor Cr R Stubbs Funeral Parlour Armadale Kelmscott
18:43	Topical issues of the day	Araluen Country Club Councillors Council Chambers City Administration Building Centenary Chairman Centenary Committees Town City Minnawarra Historic Precinct Geoff Green Chairman Redevelopment Committee Armadale School Congregational Church Australia State Government Department of Works Building Management & Works Minnawarra Park Australian Broadcasting Corporation Cr Errol Green Lotteries Commission Armadale Signal Box Tourist Centre War Memorial Historical Committee Governor Premier
30:09	Demands of being on Council	Mayor Deputy Mayor Apex Lions Rotary Chairmen
35:56	Other issues – recreation and tourism	Armadale Pool Kelmscott Pool Western Australia

		President Tourist Association Regional Tourist Group Heritage Country Tourism Association Serpentine-Jarrahdale Mundaring WA Tourism Association Hills Araluen Country Club Araluen Park Armadale Japan China Armadale Kelmscott Bunbury Australind East Perth Armadale Bunbury Holland
42:11	The role of Mayor	Deputy Mayor Cr I Blackburn Mayor President Planning Department
43:48	The new Council building	Minnowarra Park Council
47:13	Changes on Council and training	
49:08	Community Services Committee	Chairman Recreation Centre Committee City of Swan City of Coburn Armadale Library Patricia Walker President Local Government Library Association
53:35	Reflections on being on Council	Armadale Salter's Point Manning
54:36	Advice to new Councillors	Council City Roleystone Ward Armadale
57:27	The future for Armadale	Albany Highway South West Highway Kelmscott City of Perth

Gosnells  
Canning  
Belmont  
Heritage Committee  
Heritage Inventory  
Canning River  
River Road  
Brookton Highway  
River Road

INTERVIEW ENDS 01:01:44

**Deputy Mayor & Councillor Terry Holton, 1981 – 1997, 1997-1999**

*This is a transcript of an interview with former Councillor, Mr Terry Holton who served with the City of Armadale from 1992 to 1996 and later in 2003 to 2011. He served as Deputy Mayor from 1992 to 1993. The interviewer was Julia Kay Wallis and the interview was conducted on the 27 June 2014 in the office of Holton Connor Architects & Planners of West Perth.*

**Okay, Terry so what's your full name?**

Terence John Holton.

**And where you born in WA?**

No, my family emigrated from England in 1959. We initially settled in Subiaco - in fact, in Hollywood. My parents came to Australia purely to give their children a better life. I think that was purely the intent. Dad was a truck driver. Mum was a bus conductor. I suppose I was 14 when we left. I think I had turned 15 as soon as I arrived or within a month of arriving. So it was significant because I was unhappy about losing all my friends and shifting out to a new country entirely. But it is the best thing I ever did. So we settled in Subiaco. Eventually I met my wife on a bus going to training when I was learning to be an architect. From that, we finally got married, lived in Subiaco for a while, had one child and then decided to shift out into the Hills. So we bought a block of land at a cost of I think of about £600 in Mount Nasura – what is now Mount Nasura, which was Kelmscott then. Then soon after I graduated I designed my own house so we shifted there in 1970 so that's – I've now been in exactly the same house for 44 years.

**What was the area like in the seventies?**

Very rural - I say "rural" in the sense that certainly none of the major shopping centres were there. It's hard to be precise, but it was a very pleasant place to live. We just enjoyed life there and bringing our children up.

**But you would have commuted from there into the city to work?**

Yes. Originally I was employed by the Commonwealth Government Department of Works as an architect so I was commuting there initially by bus but as I was employed by the Commonwealth Government until 1980, so it was another further ten years and then I joined a fairly significant architectural firm in 1980 which was the same year I became a Councillor. So it was a fairly significant year for me.

**And what led you to nominate for Council?**

As we were settling into the district I got more and more involved in local activities which would have been – I was president of the child care facility in Kelmscott in River Road; I then became president of the P&C<sup>1</sup> Association of the Kelmscott Primary School, so you can see I got more and more involved. Then I was asked as an architect to sit in on an advisory committee for architectural planning matters for the City of Armadale. I suppose that was probably about 1979 and I realised then I could probably do a better job than some of the councillors that I was dealing with so, as a result, they ... I think they had a spill of council<sup>2</sup> [in 1981] and upgraded from a Shire to a Town and, as a result, all the positions became vacant and I took the opportunity of running for Council then and subsequently won.

**Do you know who you would have replaced from that area?**

I can't remember to be honest. I'm just trying to see whether ... You can see here the Armadale Town Council was formed on 1 January 1979 and that resulted in a spill of councillors and, as a result, there was a whole new range of councillors that came on. I think Liz Waring-Smith<sup>3</sup> is one I did replace when she stepped down I think. She was actually a neighbour of mine as well so she was great. I came on Council with Betty Rushton<sup>4</sup> and ... I can't remember actually. It's interesting because Reg Howard-Smith<sup>5</sup> is listed there as a Councillor in 1981 but he wasn't on Council when I got on in 1981 so I'm not certain whether those figures are correct. Henry Zelones<sup>6</sup> I think came on later. Yes, he came on a little bit later. [PAUSE] Okay, so I think that probably covers it, but no, Reg Howard-Smith wasn't on Council then which is interesting. I don't think these figures are quite correct but I may be wrong.

You see it's interesting when you see that I'm down [as Councillor from] '81-'97 [1981-1997] and '97 to '99 [1997 to 1999].

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<sup>1</sup> Parents & Citizens' Association

<sup>2</sup> For a 'council spill' all positions are declared vacant and nominations are called to form a new council.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Elizabeth Janet Smith served as a Councillor for 4 years (1978-1981).

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Melva Rushton served as a Councillor for 8 years (1981-1989).

<sup>5</sup> R J Howard-Smith served as a Councillor for 1 year (1980-1981).

<sup>6</sup> Henry Anthony Zelones served as a Councillor for 22 years (1989-1997 and 1999-2011). He was elected Mayor in 2011.

**Yes, because there was another spill then, was there?**

No. It was because I lost an election by two votes. I appealed and won the appeal. It was quite an interesting exercise so I was missing from Council for about three months while the appeal went through and then kicked the bloke off and went back on myself. That was a fairly interesting thing which we might discuss that later on, anyway.

**07:02 So perhaps we can have a chat about the sort of people who were on Council. I think the Mayor was Ian Blackburn wasn't it?**

Yes, Ian. I had a lot of time for. He was caring, he was dedicated to the district and he was wonderful to work with. As you appreciate, the Mayor is selected by the councillors so you virtually had to get a block of Councillors to support you to be the Mayor. So it was always an interesting problem.

It was also interesting when I first got on Council. You used to go in the Council Chamber and you had free cigarettes on each of your spots [place at the meeting table] and even the Dunhill [brand of cigarettes] donated a clock to Council for their support as well. So you had an important cigarette lobby actually at Council and we very quickly got rid of all that. You can imagine nowadays how that would be frowned upon. I have never smoked in my life. I found it actually abhorrent to actually go into a Council Chamber where everybody was smoking and getting free cigarettes as part of the deal. So things have changed!

We of course were meeting originally in the old building. I don't know if you realise the old building is the one that faces Jull Street and it was built in the mid-60s early 70s. It is still there and it has been heritage listed. It was not that old but it quickly outgrew the size of the Council and the staff requirements so they had to build a new one. Being an architect I think they asked for my opinion and I said well look, I have got to be careful because I've got to declare an interest. A builder we dealt with, they actually put the project out eventually as a design and construct and Jaxon Constructions won the contract and employed my firm to design it. That caused me some problems of, I suppose, declarations of interest and making sure I was squeaky clean. There was certainly never any criticism in that respect at all. Sometimes being an architect and being involved, you can be criticised, but I at least did the right thing and made sure that I stayed totally out of any decisions regarding the Council.

It caused me a problem being an architect for quite a while. I came under criticism with the redevelopment of the shopping centre [Armadale Shopping City] whether it should be on the west side of the railway or whether it should be on the east side of the railway. Eventually it went ahead on the east side of the railway. But my firm was involved in one of the developments and I always declared an interest but it was always suggested that some Councillors were being underhand in how they dealt with the subject of which was the right shopping centre to go ahead. So there were some issues there. I think one of the problems with being an architect is you always get issues of conflict of interest and you have to deal with that somehow.

**But you were actually invited to give them a hand with the development or planning. Is that correct?**

**11:02** Prior to being on Council, but when I was on Council I served on a number of committees but one of them was obviously the Planning Committee. But in the end, I found it more comfortable to go into a different type of committee so I didn't have to worry about any influence being directed or even any conflict of interest being directed to me. So I became Chairman of the Community Services Committee which dealt with different sorts of things obviously, rather than the Planning Committee which always caused problems because you were dealing with approvals for building works and building designs. I still was involved in a lot of work in the Armadale district particularly with shopping centre developments, housing developments, which all had to be approved by Council. It doesn't help if you are actually on the Approving Committee so even if you do declare an interest you still have to walk out of the room or at least make sure you are not involved in the discussions.

**So it sounds as if there was a fair bit of development going on?**

There was. Mostly – it was a fast growing area at the time. I think I was involved in several unit residential developments both for the State Government, people like Homeswest<sup>7</sup> and private development. We did quite a few shopping centres and show room type developments at that time. It caused some conflict with being on Council and doing these. I found it actually harder to get approvals through Council, because I was a Councillor, than normal. Because they were very well aware of my position and they wanted to make sure that they were never under any

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<sup>7</sup> Low cost rental accommodation provided by the Western Australian Government's Department of Housing

criticism that I hadn't declared interest or hadn't influenced Council unduly because of my position.

**Okay so how did you feel about your fellow Councillors? How professional did you feel that they were?**

I felt quite often there was too much politics going on but that always happens and that happens at any level of politics. But probably I think they are more professional now than probably what they were. I was highly thought of within the technical staff because I could talk the right language and particularly in the planning and building area. They'd often come to me for advice or I'd talk to them for advice. If they had some ideas, then quite often I'd help them get over those ideas.

Even the library, my neighbour actually was the city librarian and I became honorary display organiser in the library. So I used to go down on weekends and help put up displays and illustrate things for them because I'm an artist as well and in that respect so I used to draw things they wanted to be on display so it was good fun.

I had a very good relationship with all the staff but I think there was a fair bit of – I wouldn't say conflict. There are always two camps in Council and that's a bit like local government or any government I suppose where you've got two philosophies of support and I guess I tended to support Ian Blackburn. Others supported the other person who might want to be the Mayor which might have been (Roger) Stubbs<sup>8</sup> or there were quite a few there that were always fighting for Mayor so it was an interesting time. Roger Stubbs was certainly one that always wanted to be Mayor and there was a lot of conflict in the voting procedure every year for the selection of Mayor.

I'm not a political animal so if a particular Councillor wanted to get something through Council he'd go around trying to gain support and I would never give anybody support. I would treat each matter on its merits and deal with it that way. As a result, I probably wasn't that popular at the Council because I didn't actually go to any particular camp. I kept my own method of assessing things and

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<sup>8</sup> Roger Charles Stubbs served as a Councillor for 18.7 years (1984-2003). He served as Mayor for 8 years from 1992-1996 and from 1997-2001.

supporting things so no one quite knew how I was going to vote when the vote came for items that might be a problem sometimes.

There were some strange things that were got through Council because of voting as a block and I would never vote in any block. I would always hold my vote and they wouldn't know until the hands went up. Or if it was a secret ballot, the ballot went out. So it was an interesting time. I just felt I couldn't actually – I didn't want to be seen to be supporting any particular block or any particular group in Council. I wanted to keep my own – I suppose, what's the word? Certainly I didn't want to deviate from any particular avenue I was going down. If I had ratepayers that wanted my support I'd again, talk to them and treat each one on its merits. Not vote just for the sake of voting as a block.

**Do you think then that there were times when those sorts of personal factions (if I can put it that way) actually had a detrimental effect on decision-making?**

Oh, it often does. [In] the long term view it probably all balances out in the end. But there were things that were approved which you may not be happy with. I mean an example might have been – there was a relocation of a funeral parlour that was up in Armadale. They bought a new block down in Kelmscott. [*Ambulance siren*] They lobbied all the Councillors to get approval. Some of my local ratepayers were a little upset because of the parking and access and as a result there was an undertaking by the funeral parlour that it wouldn't grow and it would only be a small – now it's a major problem in Kelmscott because there was not enough space for parking; there was inadequate room on the site. It's a nice funeral parlour – a nice business but it's always caused a conflict in the area. That was only obtained, approval [was] obtained by a group vote, or be it part of a faction.

**18:43 What other controversial things do you remember from your time?**

I think major developments often became controversial. Araluen Country Club as a development was probably was one of the major controversial things and caused a lot of heartache with many of the Councillors that lived near the development, saying we don't want this sort of thing up in the Hills. It was very controversial. It caused massive numbers of rate payers to turn up at Council decisions. The Council Chamber wasn't big enough to accommodate them. Yet, I think now after looking back, the approval was given and everybody felt the right approval was

given and no one would criticise the Country Club development now as being not the right thing to do.

I think the [Armadale Shopping City] shopping centre was another issue that caused controversy. I've mentioned before, whether it should be built on one part of the town or the other part. I think in the end the right decision was made. It's more comfortable still in the centre of the town.

198- ... was it 1988 we became a City? Sorry '85, that's right, sorry. That coincided with the completion of the new administration building and the Centenary [Australia's bi-centenary] was also then so it was quite a major issue when we became a City. There was no conflict there but it was a major change in the approach of Council to being a much more sophisticated and much more professional Council. The ceremony was quite important. I was Chairman of the Centenary Committee [in 1995] and it was designing new logos; designing all sorts of things. It was a major milestone in the Council coming from a Town to a City. As a regional centre it started its growth then so 1985 I think was a milestone year.

It was about the same time we actually developed the Minnowarra Historic Precinct. That was an interesting one because Jeff [Green] was on my committee but I was Chairman of the Redevelopment Committee for the Minnowarra Precinct. Two things were involved, the shopping centre that was being redeveloped was right where the old heart of the city was (or the old heart of the town if you like) where we had the old school, the old Armadale School, the old Congregational Church and all those sort of things and they were to build over those sites. So after a lot of discussion we undertook to try and relocate those buildings to retain the original heritage core near the Council building.

We had two major buildings we wanted to keep and restore. One was the old Armadale School - the original school building - and we did that by relocating it in one piece. And it was the first time a brick building in Australia was relocated in one piece. Jeff and I got a committee together and a lot of people on the committee were actually Councillors so it wasn't just - it was independent, but it still had the support of Council.

So we talked to a lot of people because there were no funds. We had no funds so everything was virtually being done by donations in various ways, and there were

crane operators donating their time; there were steel fabricators donating their materials. We talked to the State Government Building Department which might have been – I'm trying to think whether it was the Department of Works or Building Management and Works. They've changed their name so many times but they actually sent out a structural engineer to talk to us to say it can't be done. We had this group meeting and the structural engineer turned up and he was so wrapped up in our idea that he then donated his time to design the structure to support it because you have to virtually put a complete structural steel frame underneath and brace the whole thing before you lift it. It took four 50 tonne cranes to lift it and we had the low loader which was donated as well. So the whole thing was a magnificent development by the community.

The day it was shifted it was quite amazing. We had to prepare the site as well where it was going. It was going in Minnowarra Park and I think the ABC<sup>9</sup> did a magnificent coverage of it so it got a lot of TV [television] prime-time [viewing] and we could produce videos of it. So it was a major point about the development of Armadale, that we were trying to preserve some of the historical core as well as doing new developments.

It still amazes us. Nobody would do it nowadays but we actually shifted it and then it got plonked on the site, you see. It looked pretty scruffy when it was first done. We then had complaints from local residents saying there is this lovely new building in Minnowarra Park, new lakes and everything else and they've plonked this horrible old building in front of it. Of course, I being a Councillor was taking it rather personally and Chairman of the Committee. I think I took two weeks off work to help restore it; to help Jeff Green and quite a few others. So we spent a fair bit of time restoring it to make sure that it did brighten up the front of Armadale.

At the same time we actually got some funds to demolish the old church which was a Congregational Church, the early Congregational Church which I think was built about 1900 [1903]. That couldn't be relocated in one piece so it was demolished and rebuilt so all the materials were restored, all the roof materials, the timberwork and all the floors, all restored and then rebuilt. Jeff's father was a builder. Jeff Green's father was a builder, Errol Green<sup>10</sup>. He was actually a Councillor on

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<sup>9</sup> Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Errol Green served as a Councillor for 4 years (1978-1981).

Council originally before I got on. So he donated his time to building it and we managed to get some funds from the Lotteries Commission to help build it. Then we had that being built and the old school being built or relocated and being restored and then we linked the whole lot together with brick paving and landscaping and so on.

Now it has become the historical heart of Armadale and that little old church which is probably not much bigger than our two offices combined has more weddings in it than anywhere else in the world. It has weddings every weekend. So it has become a major historic impact within the core of Armadale. We are very proud of it actually and every time we go past it because the landscaping now made it look as if it has always been there. I don't know if you've been up there yourself or not?

**Yes. I have and I noticed that there's a memorial wall as well.**

Yes we built the memorial wall for – hold it. You are thinking now – there was another project we did which was relocating the – which was the old Signal Box and turning it into a Tourist Centre and we got funds to extend that and that's got a memorial wall. Is that the one you are thinking of?

**No, I'm thinking of the different – the war dead. I think there's three or four –**

Oh, you are thinking of the War Memorial one?

**Yes. The War Memorial.**

That is another part of Minnowarra Park.

**Yes. Was that built at about the same time?**

That was restored later. That was an earlier building that was restored later on. So I've been involved in a lot of these things. The Tourist Centre is again in the heart of Armadale and I designed the extensions so it actually had the original character of the old turn of the century Signal Box. It's a very popular part of Armadale. So I had quite an involvement in a lot of historic buildings and that's why I've always maintained an interest in the history of the district. I am still serving on the Historical Committee [CHAC, Community Heritage Advisory Committee (now Group)] which is – what do they call it? It is a community historical group anyway and I still regularly go to meetings there and serve independent of Council – as a community representative.

**So what other things did you do for the Centenary as well as the moving of the buildings? You had celebrations as well, didn't you?**

There were celebrations mostly – I mean we had the Governor come and open and carry on and the Premier of the day and so on. It was mostly to do with the development of those celebrations and there were a lot of activities going on at the time as well. Gee. It is going back too many years now but it was quite – at the time of course I was doing too many other things as well. I'm trying to chair these meetings so there were a lot of things going on but mostly organised by the Council staff I think. Yes, there were lots of things going on there.

**30:09 How did you find the time to be on Council as well as work?**

Well, [in respect to] my children I supposed caused me some conflict with my wife about that time when I used to come home from work and say: "Oh hello kids, goodbye kids," and head off to Council meetings. I think at the time I probably put too much time into it and not enough time with my family. At the time there were some – I think my children felt that they weren't being dealt with by me as a father quite as closely as they should have been. But that didn't happen for that long. You don't realise sometimes what you do. You can spend a lot of time in the community but you don't necessarily spend special time with your own family. Now I am a grandfather and have four grandchildren and I spend a lot of time with them, even though I'm working.

**But being the Mayor, would that have taken up even more time? Because you were saying that -**

I would never have run for Mayor because I'd have problems with business and running my own business and so on. And it does – it takes up an enormous amount of time. I was Deputy Mayor for a couple of years [1992-1993] but that doesn't take up so much time but I did find it took more time than normal because I virtually deputised for the Mayor [Ian Blackburn] on a number of occasions and found that even running meetings occasionally if the Mayor wasn't there, you had to run the Council meetings. It was quite good.

It is interesting because prior to getting on Council I was also on Apex [Apex Clubs of Australia are community service clubs] which was a community organisation and they teach you a lot inadvertently about public speaking. So, in a sense, it gives you more confidence when you do go on Council that you can deal with things like

running meetings and public meetings, speaking in public and so on. I think some of those community groups do a lot to prepare you for things like that – whether it's Lions, whether it's Apex, whether it's Rotary and so on. They all, I think, prepare you for a different function in life.

As you are aware, I was on for 18 years and in the end after 18 years on Council and nine years with Apex I felt that I could get up in any community forum and speak publicly and express my point of view or run meetings. I had quite a reputation as a chair person in committees of getting through committees [agenda items] quickly so some chairmen actually let the meeting just ramble on whereas I tried to keep it exactly to the point and get through the meetings in a reasonably – [good time].

It's interesting because when we first got on Council we used to have meetings that went on until midnight - Council meetings, committee meetings. In the end, a few of us got together and said, "Look it's time that the [administration] staff did their agendas differently and their agenda must always give a recommendation to Council."

They didn't used to. So, we made it that when they prepare their agenda, they give a recommendation to say, "That's my recommendation to Council. Take it or leave it." Most of the time wasting was not having a recommendation. You would have a report from the staff and then you just spend two or three hours discussing the report before you formulate a recommendation.

You know yourself, it's not that easy to formulate a recommendation at any time; formulate the words that be acceptable either from a regulation point of view or there is a whole series of problems that could occur legally, orally, politically unless you word each recommendation right. So it used to take hours and hours and hours of committee time and Council time formulating recommendations whereas because the staff then put so much time in it beforehand and put the recommendations forward, our meetings dropped down from four or five hours to one to two hours so they are even quicker and slicker. So it makes a lot of difference if you have good staff who are prepared to put recommendations to Council in the right format.

**And how long did you have the papers for? You obviously got the papers before the meeting?**

Yes. And in those days we didn't have computers so it would depend on receiving them beforehand and spending time to go through them. Things have changed now and it's a lot easier and a lot quicker to get agendas and even the committees I now serve on, Council committees I do serve on, advisory committees, we get the minutes and the agendas in electronic form way before the meetings so it makes life a little bit easier.

**35:56 I've just remembered another thing that was quite controversial and that was the pool? Were you involved in assessing that at all?**

That had been done before we got on Council. The controversial thing was a little bit later on. The Armadale Pool was built prior to me coming on Council which was in the late 1970s. I think so that had been done. We had a controversial issue with the Kelmscott Pool because once you built the Armadale Pool there was a strong move particularly by the staff to demolish the Kelmscott Pool. The Kelmscott Pool was always a money-losing facility and it didn't meet current standards and so on but it had a heritage listing in the sense it was the first pool that was built in Western Australia. I think it was built in the early fifties – '52 [November 1957] or something like that. So it actually was listed as a heritage facility – I won't say building – heritage place and the locals were very against demolishing it. Eventually Council won out on that one and then it was turned into a memorial type facility for the pool in the district. I think it has all long gone now and people have forgotten. It was at the time quite a problem.

**So you weren't asked to sort of assess it? Because I believe it was getting a bit run down but your firm or you weren't asked to have a look at it?**

No. It is something that we don't do many swimming pools anyway. I've done a few designs over the years. [*Loud traffic noise*]

The other area I got strongly involved with was the tourism. I became President of the Tourist Association for many years. I think it was 20 years [that] I was the President of the Tourist Association. So all through those years I set up a Regional Tourist Group which was the Heritage Country Tourism Association which extended from Serpentine-Jarrahdale up to Mundaring and a bit beyond Mundaring. So we had monthly meetings of that. I think that did a lot of good. It helped tie a lot of councils together that were trying to do their own thing and the

WA Tourism Association wasn't really tying those things in, so it was a regional group. We actually were very successful but eventually I think it finally fell by the wayside because it was dependent on each council donating funding every year to keep it going to produce brochures, to produce support meetings, provide staffing for it. But over the 20 years I ran it, I found it was quite successful. It tied a lot of important people together in tourism.

**So which areas of Armadale did people visit most?**

Mostly the Hills area. I am thinking now of things like Araluen Country Club, Araluen Park. There was a lot in the centre as well because what we were trying to do was people were quite often catching trains out to Armadale and virtually getting off at the railway station and finding they had no idea where they had to go. So there was a heritage walk that was created around the centre. There was a significant tree walk<sup>11</sup> as well that was developed. You developed a series of historical plaques to at least indicate where things are or were. There are still a lot of heritage buildings scattered all through the Armadale area that we are trying to link to guide people. People would go to the dams and go to the water features. I mean we get tourists from Japan and China who have never seen an orchard so you take them out to the orchards so there are all sorts of things like that. It was quite a popular day, I suppose, to trip out from the city, from Perth.

**You mentioned the train. Did that come into your planning at all? Trying to sort of make sure that the train line was always accessible?**

Not really. I think there was a move to try and keep the heritage stuff going – the steam trains<sup>12</sup> and so on. I think there were moves to try and improve the quality of the train service so you ended up with express trains from Armadale and Kelmscott and also to maintain the – what's the train that heads down to Bunbury – the Australind - because that is a major stop. It goes virtually from East Perth to Armadale and then virtually down to Bunbury so it became an important stop. We get friends visiting us from overseas, from Holland for instance, where they head down to Bunbury and they get on the train at Armadale so it becomes quite a tourist

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<sup>11</sup> The City of Armadale bicentennial heritage project: a trail of notable and significant trees, 1988

<sup>12</sup> Suburban steam locomotives were replaced by diesel engines in 1968.

point. But, you can go from Perth to Armadale and then down to Bunbury. So that's the main, I think, area of concern [the train link] that we want to maintain.

**42:11 Okay thanks. Can I ask who you were Deputy Mayor with? You mentioned you were Deputy Mayor – was that Ian Blackburn?**

Ian Blackburn yes.

**Right. I'm just wondering why being a Mayor was such a coveted role considering it would have taken up so much time?**

Why does anybody want to be anything? I think people like to feel important. Why do people want to be President? Why do people want to be anything? I think there's two reasons. One is I think the importance of the role. But the second part is probably because you want to put more back into the community. I think there are those that feel it is important to be recognised in the community. There are also those who feel it is important to give something back to the community.

I always felt that I didn't want to be Mayor. I didn't want that significant role but I did want to put a lot back into the community. So my role was more to provide a means of communicating with my rate payers but equally well using my skills as an architect and planner and probably heritage understanding to put something back into the community and making sure that the developments we do get were high quality. Unfortunately, some of the more recent ones aren't but I think we set the ground rules to try and maintain a high quality of development, particularly through the Planning Department.

**43:48 So, how long did it take you to plan the new Council building, that whole area?**

Well usually, interesting because there was – I'm just trying to remember – there was a fairly significant design stage that involved master planning the [civic] area and providing options to Council. The options were: build a new building or redevelop the existing building, and, in building a new building there were two [alternative] sites and the development of Minnowarra Park [to consider] and show the potential for future expansion. So there was a [master plan] scheme that says keep the old building and redevelop it and perhaps put extra storeys on it and extend it, or build a new building and then keep the old building for other community purposes, office purposes and eventually I think that's the way Council

went by building a new building behind it [the 1969 building] overlooking the park and retaining the old building front there [on Jull Street].

So that took probably 10 -12 months of design work and then detailed documentation and another year of building so it was probably two years, two and a half years I suppose overall. I can't remember but I think it was virtually about 1983 or '84 through to when construction was completed in 1985 so it was probably two years you are looking at anyway, minimum.

**It still looks quite new.**

Yes at the time I think – I have concerns about the quality but I couldn't do anything about that because I was being employed by the builder virtually so I couldn't be involved in maintaining the [construction] quality, but I felt that the quality of what they built wasn't what I would expect. I think the problem with design and construct is where your builder takes control of the project rather than the designer and builds it the cheapest way he can do within the budget that allowed. So if the Council's got a two million dollar budget then it's the builder's job to keep them within that budget, but in doing so the quality drops.

In fact our firm was employed just recently to upgrade the exterior of the building because the original quality really wasn't good and you would probably notice we've actually re-faced the building completely with composite aluminium panelling and it really has given a whole lift. There's been a lot of revamping the interior as well which we haven't done. This firm is only a small firm but it does do 90% of our work's probably local government work. We do local government work throughout the State and enjoy doing it because people are great to work with.

**47:13 Okay, so you were on Council for a long time. Did you notice if there was a change in the people coming on Council from when you started?**

Yes and no. A lot of the people coming on Council were becoming more professional but they were a little bit dominated by probably the teaching profession. You find that often - prior to them coming on Council it was dominated a little bit by the local orchardists and people that were in the rural community and as it [the Council] developed then more professional people came on Council: quite often representing the teaching profession or- representing - what else? Certainly there were financial accountants and so on. You are getting a whole range of

professional people coming on Council. I think that helped lend it to a more professional way of running the Council. I think that's probably more so today.

**So you didn't have any training as a Councillor when you got on?**

No, but that subsequently came not long after I got on Council where you were sent off to training. I went through one of those training courses probably next time I got re-elected [1997]. So it came on and I think it was a good thing as well.

**So is there anything else we haven't discussed that you think we should? We can have a little pause if you like?**

**49:08** No I'm just looking and seeing what else I was involved in. I was involved in so many committees. I was very much involved in the recreation side of things because I was Chairman of the Community Services Committee and therefore became the representative on the Recreation Centre Committee. I chaired that as well. So there were other areas you got involved in and got to understand the problems of running things like that.

It's interesting the period I spent, particularly as Chairman of the Community Services, has been more beneficial to my business now in understanding how councils operate. How their departments work and we are doing studies for different projects now for the City of Swan where we are looking at trying to create a hub combining the library building with their recreation building with their community building and trying to create one facility. We did the same thing with the City of Cockburn.

Understanding how important it is to start linking council buildings together: so you link a library; you link recreation [facilities]; you link community halls together and try and create a single building which is successful in the sense that the public only has to go to one point of contact and people within that organisation then understand how it best works. We are working with the City of Swan at the moment in much the same thing where the library staff are now being trained to provide an information repository for all of council. So they are not just dealing with books; they are not dealing with libraries; they are dealing with council information. Where you go to get building advice; where you go to get planning advice; where you go to get advice on recreation or advice on even obtaining pensions and things like that. So there is a different role now. That was part of what

we were doing in those days. It was trying to establish points of contact and common things that would work quite well.

It wasn't that long ago we were actually employed to design the Armadale Library which was within the new shopping centre. So again, it just helped understanding how it best works in a shopping centre and how it links together with shopping centre activities.

**So where was the library before that?**

The library was a brick building adjacent to the current Council. If you look at the new Council building the library buildings were to the left of that. That library was relocated into the new [Armadale Central]shopping centre probably now two or three years ago<sup>13</sup> and the old library was fitted out to provide further accommodation for Council staff [Technical Services] so the Council staff relocated and it became an office building.

**And do you think it [the library] works in a shopping centre?**

Yes, it does. It doubled its number of people going in in the first twelve months. It is a different approach. I've always been involved in libraries and I think even in those days we were designing libraries and the city librarian, Patricia Walker, was President of the Local Government Library Association and asked me to be guest speaker at one of their annual functions. It was quite interesting to have the opportunity of explaining how I believe libraries should be designed. I might add that I think I learnt more about library design from Pat Walker than anybody else! Because we were neighbours and she understood, as I say, I was helping out in the library. So you learn.

**53:35** Your whole life's experiences develop from a number of things like that. My 18 years on Council taught me more about life than anything else I think.

**Oh right! So you don't regret it then?**

No, not at all. I think you learn a lot about yourself and you learn a lot about the district you live in and probably that's the reason we're still living there. We've lived in Armadale for 44 years. We actually bought another house to shift at one stage down in Salter's Point area, Manning, Salter's Point area. Because we are so involved in the community - still and the church – all those sorts of things, we

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<sup>13</sup> The Armadale Library relocated in January 2010 to the Armadale Central Shopping Centre.

never got around to shifting so we are still in the community. We are still part of the community and I think that's the key to enjoying your life is being part of the community.

**54:36 So have you got any advice to new Councillors?**

I think initially listen, listen to your [administration] staff - talk to your staff - understand how it [council] operates. Too often Councillors go to Council meetings but don't really understand what they are dealing with and all they deal with is the – they think they are the front line between the rate payers and Council and to represent the rate payers but they're not. They are more than that and I think the very first thing I learnt is you are not there just to represent your Ward rate payers or residents, you are there to represent the whole City and you are there to make sure that the whole City develops well and works well and works for all rate payers and residents in the City, not just your little group.

One of the real problems initially was the battles between the Councillors representing different Wards to make sure their Ward got a fair cut or a more than fair cut of the funding that was available. Particularly things like the Roleystone Ward, they had to get as much money as they can get for the development of Roleystone. But they didn't look at the whole picture and what's best for the City as a whole. They are only interested in their own patch. I think one of the first things you've got to learn is you are not just interested in your own patch. You are interested in what is the future of Armadale.

I think that's the first thing you've got to learn and you can only learn that by talking to the staff and understanding them. Drop in and talk to the staff. Talk to them about what their expectations are. I always did that and I think it taught me a lot. When the staff put something up to Council you understand what they are on about. I think there's no restrictions in that respect. You shouldn't be restricted to just going to Council [meetings]; you have got to understand your staffing. You might have, I don't know what there is there now probably 150 staff now, but you need to know what their concerns are, what they want because they are not there just to earn money. They are there to do a good job. I think job satisfaction is just as important for them as it is for you.

**57:27 And you mentioned the future for Armadale. How do you think it will travel now, the Council and the future for Armadale?**

I think it's got a good future. It has its problems. *[Interruption]* The future of Armadale? I think Armadale is at the cross roads of two important roads, the Albany Highway and the South West Highway and that's why it developed. There's always been a conflict between Kelmscott which should have been the core of the city and not Armadale and even if Armadale was the core, why wasn't it called Kelmscott because Kelmscott was the old historic centre? So in a sense, that's always been a conflict. But the combination of two major highways and a railway has always caused problems of restrictions on development as it has with the City of Perth.

There were strong feelings that you should be able to build a bridge over the railway and develop over the railway and I think that at the moment it is one of the restrictions that is restricting the redevelopment or the expansion of Armadale. I think the area to the west of the railway has always been a poor area. In my day it was important to try and redevelop that and come up with a master plan for the future of Armadale.

It's close to the City of Perth. It's a major junction heading down south and I think it's going to develop. It's an important hub and it is more distinctive in itself than most other local authorities. If you look at Gosnells, Canning, Belmont, they don't have a distinctive centre to them. They have a shopping centre or an administration centre but there's nothing distinctive whereas Armadale does have a distinctive centre and if you can draw upon that and develop it, then you are well on the way to creating a great place to live.

One of my major things that wasn't mentioned, is my concern about maintaining the heritage of Kelmscott. I was on the Heritage Committee when we put together the Heritage Inventory and I chaired that. That was an important point because it also drew attention to the principal heritage buildings and the original core – heritage core - was in Kelmscott along the Canning River, River Road. There are many buildings in that area that extends up to Brookton Highway which are heritage buildings.

I felt very pleased when I got off Council that eventually Council agreed with my concept of creating a heritage precinct for Kelmscott so that any future development in Kelmscott had to give recognition to the heritage and designed to

match the heritage buildings in that or fit into the landscape and the streetscape of that area. In particular, River Road and its adjoining roads there are now strong heritage requirements for that. There are other areas in Armadale which we felt very strongly about preserving but unfortunately they are in highly commercialised areas and are unlikely to be preserved. But I think it is important to preserve the heritage as part of your way forwards.

**All right. Thank you very much.**

Anything else?

**I think that's it. Great!**

**END OF INTERVIEW      01:01:44 minutes**