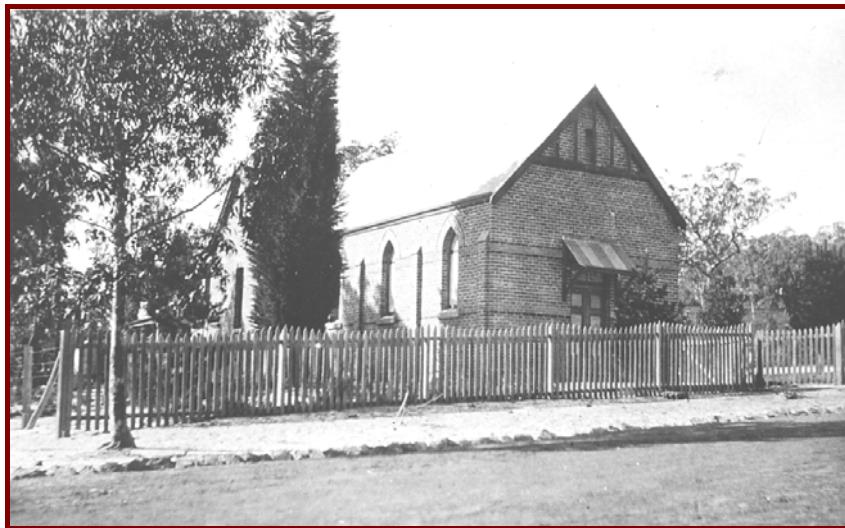


# The First One Hundred Years in Armadale

A History of the  
Armadale Congregational Church

Compiled by John Shaw



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# A HISTORY OF THE ARMADALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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## PREFACE

*This history of our church has been compiled with the assistance of quite a number of people. To get the story going I had to scrutinise the minutes from 1918 to 2000 (the first minute book is missing) and the notes of prominent features and important events from which the story was written.*

*The period up to 1920 has been covered as best she could by Mrs June Dunstan who did research in 1987. We are very pleased that we were able to find her so that she can be part of the celebration.*

*There is a dearth of information because records have not been preserved and the people involved in earlier years are not now available to be interviewed either through death or we are not able to locate them.*

*I would like to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Mrs Anna Sheehan in completing the typing of the "story from the minutes", to Mr John Bramford for continuing the typing to completion of the book and to Mr John Pengelley for the professional way in which the book is presented. Also to those who have submitted articles at our request and whose names appear on them.*

*I have tried to be as accurate as possible but there may be some who on reading this could say, "That is not quite correct". As an example, in one instance I have had two different versions and have stuck to one because of the certainty of one of the informants. Please accept my apologies if some of the statements made do turn out to be a bit inaccurate. It could also be possible that I have misunderstood what has been said.*

*I trust that readers will find this book set out to your satisfaction and that its content will prove to be interesting and informative.*

*John Shaw.*

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## FOREWORD

When one thinks of the events that have happened over a hundred-year period, it can be mind blowing. The advancement in technology and knowledge of the human race has been remarkable during this century.

Often one is inclined to overlook a more important aspect of human relationship though as we look through the history books and relate personal experiences in our human growth.

The history of the church is, of course, a story well worth relating, especially as this publication endeavours to record the story, lives and service of those people who were and are dedicated to bear witness for their Master and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. The very first minute book of the church is missing and this book covered a period of some 18 years. Over the one hundred years covering the life of the Armadale Congregational Church, there have been many wonderful servants who committed their lives in service and witness and if there have been any omissions, then please accept our apologies.

I have no doubt there has been a time of real blessing as well as times of testing within the life of the church. As you read this book our prayer is that you will be blessed as we endeavour to assist you in recalling fond memories of your time with the Armadale Congregational Church. Maybe this brief record will help the present generation to realise the importance of the witness in the years gone by, as well as appreciating the heritage that has been handed down to us that makes up "The Armadale Congregational Church Story".

In dedicating this book, can I draw upon a fine old tradition of this church whereby each year at the AGM thanks have been recorded, expressing our love and obedience to Almighty God for His loving guidance through the years, acknowledging that it is only by His grace that this church is able to witness - "to all who pass by".

*Pastor Paul G. Fricker - February 2001*

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## INTRODUCTION

"The first church in Armadale was built by the Congregational Union of Churches in 1903.

A Congregational minister, Joseph Serls, started driving out from Claremont to Kelmscott by horse and cart in 1890 to conduct services. He decided to settle in the district and took up land on the Albany Road towards Bedfordale in 1899. Mr Serls first preached in Armadale as a Lay Preacher in 1897 and it is recorded that he had forty people at a service held in 1899, about half of them being people travelling by.

A meeting was held in February 1900, which resulted in the formation of the Congregational Church in Armadale. The first portion of the church building was completed in 1903, on a site in Third Road donated by Thomas Saw, who also gave £100 towards the project. Mrs Serls and the school teacher, Mrs Morgan, also boosted the building fund by walking many miles collecting pennies towards it.

A carpenter and builder named Keast constructed the original church, which was enlarged in 1907, a manse also being erected on adjoining land in Church Avenue.

Joseph Serls gave his services as Lay Preacher and Pastor to the district without payment for over sixty years, until shortly before he died in 1952".

(Inserted by courtesy of History House and city council of Armadale)

This has been a story that needs to be told and preserved for generations to come. It is a story of people, through the years, who have all had the vision of a church in Armadale. From the early days, this church, the people not the building, have followed the plan God set out and which is continued today, by their faithful commitment to Him and His people.

We celebrate in February 2000 to 2001 our centenary, not of the building of the church from bricks and mortar but from the building up of a congregation of people willing to serve their Lord in the area of Armadale. May we never lose sight of the vision the first members of this congregation had, to create a community with Christ as its cornerstone.

Grace and Peace be to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## ARMADALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - THE FIRST 20 YEARS

### **Written and researched by June Dunstan in 1987**

#### **PROLOGUE**

The recorded history of a church can never portray its true worth to a district.

The church's influence within the community, the lives it touches and the souls saved through its witness, are the intrinsic factors that ultimately determine its usefulness to God and man.

Mere bricks and mortar are but the outward expression of man's reaching for the infinite, the overt symbol of faith.

A church building is a place in which Christians gather for public worship. It is a haven from the pressures of the world, where the troubled spirit can find peace and strength. But it is the congregation, those faithful ones whose belief and trust in God is expressed in their care and concern for others, which makes up the true church, the body of Christ.

The founding fathers of the Armadale Congregational Church, pioneers of the district, were very much like the children of Israel.

Their faith had brought them safely through the many dangers of a hazardous ocean voyage, across half a world, to a promised land, which was yet an alien country full of hardships, toil and sorrow.

But it was also a land of opportunity where a man could reap the rewards of his own labours, stake his claim on a plot of land and bring up his children far from the slums and smoking factory chimneys of industrialised Britain.

Some of the early Armadale Congregationalists have had their names written into the history of the State. But many others have come and gone without trace now, in the memories of men. Yet, while their names may be forgotten, their influence lives on in the lives of others and their good works have surely been recorded in the Book of Life.

This potted history of the early years of the Armadale Congregational Church, written in the year of our Lord 1987, is an attempt only at putting some of the documented facts and fragmented information that outlines the development of the church through the early 1900's. It is a tribute not only to the founders of the church, but also to all those who have served and worshipped there over the years.

Despite changing times and the restless nature of man the Armadale Congregational Church has survived and flourished. The last decade has seen an unprecedented resurgence of interest and the Spirit of God is evident in the faithfulness of His people.

But now the old church is too small to hold the growing congregation of worshippers who regularly attend Sunday services. The Manse, which last year was converted to a Christian School, is scarce able to contain the numbers of young students enrolled.

## **MOVE TO NEW PREMISES**

The little village church, which once stood alone in the quiet solitude of the Australian bush, has now become a valuable commercial site in the bustling shopping precincts of the newly declared City of Armadale.

So, after a great deal of prayer and meditation, the decision was made to sell the property to developers. And the little old church, which has served the Lord's purpose for nearly eighty-five years, will soon be demolished.

Shortly the congregation will move to new and much larger premises in the heart of the residential area of Armadale and bounding on Forrest Road.

The last service in the old building will be held in February 1987.

**MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GO WITH HIS PEOPLE**

## **IN THE BEGINNING**

The history of the Armadale Congregational church is inextricably bound up with the history of the district and its people.

The townsite of Armadale was first surveyed in the year 1830.

It was then a remote outpost from the main settlement of the Swan River Colony and the 20-mile journey, by horse and buggy, along rough bush tracks, took many hours. But despite the apparent hardships new settlers were soon attracted by the rural charm of wooded hills and fertile valleys. And a government offer of free land for the price of a survey was the chance of a lifetime for the early pioneers.

One of the first settlers to the district, Mr Thomas Saw, arrived from England aboard HMS Trust in 1848 and took up a grant of land at the base of Neerigen Brook Valley. He later became one of the founders of the Armadale Congregational Church and donated the land on which the church was subsequently built.

The completion of the rail link from Perth to Armadale in 1855 brought an influx of settlers to the district, including orchardists, timber workers, shopkeepers and tradesmen. And soon a small township sprang up close to the railway station.

## THE FIRST SERVICE

Although small groups of neighbours sometimes gathered together for worship at private homes, the growing number of families in the district were still without a church or a preacher.

The first official Congregational service in the district is said to have been conducted in 1890 by the Rev Joseph Serls, from Claremont, who made the twenty-mile journey by horse and cart.

When he later moved to Armadale with his family and took up land close to the township, he became a lay-preacher for the district. Mr Serls was to give more than half a century of voluntary service to the Congregational churches in the Armadale Kelmscott Shire.

Early services were held in the Mechanics Institute, known locally as "the old hall" and a service held in 1899 is said to have drawn a congregation of over 40 people, many of whom were travellers passing through Armadale on their way to the south west.

## FOUNDATION MEETING

At the turn of the century moves were made to build a Congregational church in the Armadale Township. Unfortunately, most of the early records of the church have been lost or destroyed. While some sources give the date of the foundation meeting as February 1900... a single faded page from an exercise book gives witness to a meeting held on February 17, 1901

Thereon is recorded the following account which appears in the form of an official minute, though unsigned.

## ARMADALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

### **Copy of original handwritten minute on formation of the Armadale Congregational Church**

The basis of church membership was drawn up by **the Rev George Herrington** and adopted by those who formed this church this **17th day of February 1900**.

*Congregational Churches hold it to be the Divine Will that believers in Jesus Christ should voluntarily assemble together to observe religious ordinances to promote mutual identification and holiness and to advance the Glory and worship of God through Jesus Christ and believe that a society having these objects in view in its foundation is a Christian church.*

*Entertaining these views and holding in communion with the entire Church of God all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity which derived from the Sacred Scripture have been taught from the early apostolic age: Viz: - The existence of the One God revealed to us as the Father (in the Bible), the Son and the Holy Spirit; The total depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall; The atonement and forgiveness of sin by the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross; The necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the duty of believers to give evidence of their faith in Christ by cultivating holiness of heart and life. We whose names are now enrolled hereby form ourselves into a Christian church resolving by the help of Divine grace to conform ourselves to the precepts of the Gospel, to live in harmony and in the exercise of mutual Christianity.*

17th February 1900

## FOUNDING MEMBERS

Mr Joseph Serls	<i>Transferred from Claremont 1899</i>
Mrs Mary L Serls	<i>Ditto</i>
Mrs Martha A Keast	
Mrs Hannah E Saw	
Mrs J M White	<i>Transferred from Claremont</i>
Mr John E White	<i>Ditto</i>
Miss A C Batt	
Miss May Butcher	
Miss Cora M E Anderson	
Mrs S Prout	
Mr Earnest A Batt	
Mrs F A Saw	
Mrs A R Morgan	
Mr W Keast	
Mrs E Stevens	
Mr Edgar Urin	
Mr Thomas Turner	
Mrs W Butcher	
Miss Grace Batt	



*Sunday school - 1907*

Back row: C Rivers, J Lovell, E W Serls, Tom Turner, J K Ewers (junior), Mr Ewers, Rev Potts, J Serls (superintendent), Edie White, Ivy Marsh, Mr Watkinson, M Saw, Morna Potts, B Knight, V Marsh, A Smith, - Smith.

Middle row: May Millard, Lilly Lovell, Mrs Serls, Mrs Keast, Lucy Saw, Edie Serls, C Keast, Turner, Turner, N Livingstone, Daisy Serls.

Front row: E Sharp, Vi Serls, May Halliday, N Knight, M Marsh, D Marsh, M Goddard, Kate Kerrison, L Kerrison, Ada Knight, A Saw, Kate Millard, L D Serls.

Mr Serls Back 6<sup>th</sup> from left. Note some people missing.

## CHURCH BUILT IN THIRD ROAD

Mr Thomas Saw made a gift of the land in Third Road and donated 100 pounds toward the building project. Other members also contributed to the foundation fund. The women's fund-raising effort are said to have been greatly boosted by the untiring dedication of Mrs Morgan and Mrs Serls who both walked many miles collecting donations of one penny upward.

Mr Keast, a qualified carpenter and builder, was commissioned to build a modest church, the first part of which was completed in 1903.



*Early picture of the old church*

## GROWING MINISTRY

The building was enlarged in 1907 and a manse erected on an adjoining block in Church Avenue. In 1912, the deacons of the church were listed as Brothers Serls, Saw, Mills, Briggs, March, W J Turner and H Turner.

At a meeting in December of that year the deacons granted funds to complete the pulpit.

In 1913, approval was given and plans passed for the building of a Sunday school at Wungong on a quarter acre block donated by Mr Hendy. Later that same year, plans were accepted for the installation of a gas plant in the Armadale Church. The plant, invented by Mr L Lan, was to be installed at a total cost of 12 pounds. This fee included the fitting of light bulbs inside the church and one in the porch.

The district and the Pastorate were both experiencing a period of solid growth and to meet the needs of parishioners in outlying areas application was made for three blocks of land at East Jandakot, now Forrestdale and a 1-acre lot at Wungong.

## CHURCH CENTRE OF COMMUNITY LIFE

With the population of the district growing steadily, new families were joining the church while some of the earlier members had moved from the district.

A reunion, held to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the church and a decade of service brought many of them back as visitors for the occasion.

The church property at this time was valued at the tidy sum of One Thousand Pounds. But times were hard for most people and the average Sunday offerings were around Two pounds Seven Shillings.

Though its boundaries were widespread Armadale was a close-knit community and the church was the centre of social as well as spiritual life. The Ladies Guild was a strong, well established group of hardworking women who helped organise socials, picnics, concerts, jumble sales and fetes.

Other community organisations in the district were also encouraged to use the church buildings. The rental charge was minimal but it carried the proviso that there be no smoking or dancing allowed.

The deacons had accepted full responsibility for the ministry at Wungong and the little church was completed by 1914. And in March of that year, the need for an assistant pastor for the district was recognised with the appointment of Mr A Sleep, as assistant to the pastor, the Rev P Bray.

## SUCCESSION OF PASTORS

It seems that the pastorate experienced some difficulty in keeping its ministers.

The foundation pastor, the Rev Eager stayed only briefly in the district and in the succeeding years up to 1914, there were to be seven more salaried pastors appointed.

The Congregational magazine, "The Drill", some copies of which are held at History House Armadale, list as pastors: B C Wieland, Egan Lee, The Rev McPhee, W Touchall, G Potts, R Chapman and the pastor at the time Rev P Bray.

With Mr Bray's resignation in late 1914, there was an unfortunate turn of events, which was ultimately to threaten the unity of the church.

With war clouds gathering in Europe and some of the men already on their way to the front a special meeting was held on December 15th 1914, to consider the appointment of a new minister.



*Church after addition of transept and showing dress style of day*

Those in attendance at the meeting were Mesdames Burgess, Orton, Butcher, Bullen, W Saw, Millard, Briggs, Serls, Miss Datron and Messrs Turner, Richards and Briggs: with Mr Serls in the chair and Mr Turner taking the minutes.

The meeting advised that the Rev J Beukers had signified his willingness to accept the position at the same salary as his predecessor, the Rev Bray. Mr Bray had been receiving One Hundred and Sixty Eight Pounds clear, per annum. The widely scattered pastorate was still being traversed by horse and buggy and the stipend included an annual allowance of Twenty Five Pounds for horse feed.

However it was agreed that even this modest stipend would be stretching the church finances to the limit. The other Congregational churches in the surrounding district were in much the same boat. So the churches decided to join forces and share the services of a pastor. With the other four churches, Bedfordale, Wungong, Kelmscott and Roleystone sharing the cost Armadale's financial contribution to the combined pastorate was to be Six Pounds, Nineteen Shillings and Seven Pence. Mr Beukers was subsequently sent for and he and his family were welcomed to the church at a social evening held on March 9th, 1915.



*Can anyone identify this organ?  
Probably new in Edwardian times*

The Secretary at this time was Mr Skenies, the Choir master Mr Richards, Organist Miss M Saw and Assistant Organists, the Misses May Beatie and Isobel Saw. Church meetings were held monthly "on the Thursday of the Full Moon".

## WAR BRINGS CHANGES

Concern about the bitter fighting in Europe and about the local men and boys caught up in it was the thing uppermost in the minds of the people at this time.

A move was made to erect a Roll of Honour in the church bearing the names of those men who had been sent to the front.

Amid the horrors of Gallipoli and the fearsome trenches of France a parcel from home was like a gift from heaven. So the women of Armadale formed a Soldiers Comfort Society, which met, at the church every week.

In 1917, the President of the group, Mrs Burgess, read a letter signed by some of the boys at the front who had been lucky enough to receive a gift parcel from the women. At that time there were about 30 men and boys from the small congregation recorded as being on active service.

But the distractions of the war and changing community attitudes brought other problems for the church and by 1918, the combined pastorate was running into trouble. There was talk of a split in the home missions and a call for a full logistical and financial appraisal. This was a sad and disunified time for Congregationalists in the district.

The pastor, Mr Beukers tendered his resignation claiming that he had been badly treated by members of the district committee.

Some Armadale members voiced indignation at this turn of events and officially extended their sympathies to Mr Beukers for the treatment he had received.

Accordingly a resolution was sent to the district committee demanding that a special meeting be held to discuss the pastor's resignation, with the Secretary of the Congregational Union being asked to preside. But unhappily this request was refused and the rift between the churches widened. Mr Beukers was paid 2 months salary in lieu of holidays and preached his last sermon in Armadale on May 5th, 1918.

Thereupon Armadale Church notified the Congregational Union of its intention to withdraw from affiliation with the other congregations.

Fortunately however, a move for reconciliation, later that year, saw the four churches of Armadale, Kelmscott, Roleystone and Bedfordale in partnership again, whereupon Mr B G Edwards was appointed temporary preacher at a stipend of Five Guineas per month. The year ended on a much brighter note, not just for the church, but also for the nation.

In November 1918, the world celebrated the end of hostilities in Europe and the "war to end all wars" was over. A special Thanksgiving Service was held at the church on November 19th to celebrate the signing of the Armistice Agreement.

Early in 1919, the reconstituted district committee employed a new Minister, the Rev Frank G Smith of Moora. The Rev Smith agreed to the decent fee of One Hundred and Seventy Five Pounds plus the usual Twenty-Five Pounds horse allowance.

He was welcomed to the district and took up his ministry in April 1919.

While earlier in the century the church had been the pivot of village life, providing both spiritual guidance and social distraction, post-war Australia, like post-war Britain was witnessing a new cynicism towards religion.

The conflicts within the church and the apathy outside caused a dramatic falling away and by the end of 1919, membership was at an all time low.

Founding members, who had been responsible for the establishment of a vital close-knit congregation, were now growing old and some had already passed away. Many of the younger generation, feeling disillusioned with the futility of war and restless with a newfound independence, were now seeking their entertainment outside the confines of the church.

## **APPEAL FOR NEW COMMITMENT**

Early in 1920, Pastor Smith made an impassioned appeal from the pulpit for an increase in the spiritual life of the church.

The message must have hit home for shortly thereafter there was an obvious resurgence of interest and renewed Christian commitment.

Tenders were called for the painting and renovating of the outside of the church and a quote of Eight Pounds Ten Shillings was accepted.

Fundraising started in earnest with the women of the church sewing, knitting, baking and making jam. A Fete held in May 1920 raised a total of Forty-Two Pounds, Nineteen Shillings and Two Pence. It was a tidy sum for those days and a new polished jarrah pulpit was donated to the church by a Mrs Grahams in memory of her son who had been killed in the war. Badly needed repairs to the church "Privy" which had been condemned by inspectors from the Health Department, were approved and carried out.

The deacons sought a loan for the erection of a church parlour. To meet the loan a special "Brick Appeal" was held with cardboard bricks being sold for Sixpence each.

A special reward of Six Shillings was offered for the person who could sell the most bricks and a list was drawn up of those parishioners willing to donate three pence per week to the building fund.

The church was meeting the challenge of a new era with optimism and enthusiasm.

*This ends the section written and researched by June Dunstan.*

*The record from here has been compiled from minute books by Mr John Shaw - church secretary until February 2000*

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## RESULTS OF RESEARCH DONE IN BATTYE LIBRARY

*Taken from the Executive Minutes of the Congregational Union*

- 10/07/1900** Advice from Cannington Mission to the effect that Armadale had been given a block of land. (This would be the one in Jull St, which was sold in July 1920)
- 16/10/1900** Baptist delegation to Congregational meetings expressed their appreciation of the work done by the Congregational Union and a desire for continued prosperity. This was reciprocated.
- 13/11/1900** Cannington Mission wrote asking permission to form church memberships at Cannington, Victoria Park, Kelmscott and Armadale. This was agreed to.
- 30/01/1901** Advice from Armadale that land opposite the Govt. School had been donated and requesting the Union arrange for it to be surveyed.
- 11/12/1900** A block of land was available at Kelmscott.
- 1901** "West Australian" newspaper cuttings pasted in minute book - "Considerable progress has been made in Armadale, Kelmscott, Cannington and Victoria Park in the last six months. Church fellowships have been formed with numbers amounting to 81 persons, all of whom are in full membership".
- The Executive expressed its appreciation of the work done by the Mission Agent, Mr B C Wieland and those working with him in the district.
- 7/10/1902** That Mr Egan Lee be engaged as Home Mission Agent to take charge of the work at Narrogin Brook, Armadale and Kelmscott. Mr Wieland to confine his work to Cannington and Victoria Park.
- 10/2/1903** Armadale Church foundation stone laid.
- 1902-1903** Union Annual Report - four church buildings opened in the metro area, including Armadale where there was a regular evening service and a fortnightly morning service.

Following is a copy of some statistical returns taken from Battye Library records.

NOTE : No membership shown for 1900.

### Statistical returns for Armadale

Year	Average attendance inc children	Members M	Members F	Adherents	SS Teachers	SS Children
31/7/1900	38	Nil	Nil	20	1	35
31/3/1901	48	4	11	35	-	-
30/9/1901	55	6	12	70	4	25
9/1902		18 total				35
9/1903		24 total				30
3/1904	50	11	14	70	4	33
9/1904	35	9	9	50	4	44
3/1905	?	9	8	14	5	49

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## THE POST WAR ERA 1920 AND ON

The commencement of this decade saw the church experiencing very difficult times financially yet the London Missionary Society received support. This was testament to the known fact that the Lord blesses those who have a concern for the mission field.

The church lighting caused some problems at this same time and the gas plant that generated the lighting was dependent on the supply of carbide, reference in minutes often at this time being made to the cost of the carbide. When a room was added the gas plant needed to be moved further away due to safety reasons and to comply with the Health Department Regulations at that time. The plant needed to be well maintained and obviously was costly to run. Eventually this was replaced with the electricity that finally made its way to the small community in Armadale, but not without some controversy. A supplementary roll was established in March 1919 to list those who " while unable to be active members, desire to retain some connection with the church". Numbers recorded was 48 with a supplementary 14. In the following year numbers dropped to 20 members with 11 supplementary. A considerable decrease in times that were already very difficult.

Numbers seemed to fluctuate for a few more years although from 1918 to 1922, during the ministries of Rev Beukers and Rev Smith, the indication was that frequently there would be additions to the membership, however attendance at the monthly business meetings was between 5 and 12, obviously the very dedicated ones willing to serve the Lord and continue the work in His church.

Mr J A Richards, who served a long time as the Choirmaster offered his services to the church during the pastor-less period between the Rev Beukers and Rev Smith and was accorded heartfelt thanks for his services.

The Choir was an integral part of the congregation and although no record can be found in the minutes about the number of choir members it seems that they continued to sing for their Lord for quite some time.

In these years of the early twenties, one of the church rules appears to be that members were to attend the communion service regularly and an attendance roll was kept by the pastor. To be eligible to be a deacon at this time one had to have been a member for three months also over the age of 21 and presumably male.

As a result of a man not being available to be secretary, Mrs T M Burgess took on the role for some time. Subsequently a Mr Adams, who had transferred his membership from a Methodist church, was immediately co-opted on to the diaconate for three months so that he could become secretary and relieve Mrs Burgess. Nominations for deacon at this time were required also to be posted on the church door.

In September 1919, the Sunday school was reporting 50 scholars and 5 teachers, a rather large number for what was still a relatively small community. At this time also, long before the lighting problem had been solved with electricity, permission was given for a telephone to be installed in the manse.

In December 1919, Mr J W Turner resigned as treasurer after 7 years serving in this position and there was special mention made in the minutes of the great appreciation the congregation sought to express to Mr Turner for his services. It was also decided to sell the Block of land in Jull Street that the church owned and this was finally disposed of in July 1920 for £65.

The exterior of the church was renovated and painted and a room was added in 1920 at a cost of £182-19-6. In June of this same year the finances improved and the pastor's stipend was increased by 10% but by September difficult times has struck again and the church was in debt to the value of £13. In the month of September a ballot of church members was also taken "on the proposed Union with the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches". The result in the Armadale Church was 9 against and 4 in favour and the motion was defeated.

The church members in 1921 also wanted to obtain new hymnbooks but finances were a continuing problem. Members and regular attendees were asked to buy their own books, thus leaving the church to buy enough for visitors. This did not in fact seem to be a success, however the hymnbooks came into use.

In 1921, a decision was made to sing as a chant the Lord's Prayer at services and to also appoint the pastor as a deacon.

## ELECTRICITY ARRIVED

In June 1922, electricity was contemplated for the town of Armadale. In May 1923, the financial situation of the church was still quite bad. The congregation was yet desirous of having power installed in the church and a contractor was engaged. Part payment was made and then the job was stopped until an agreement could be reached for the payment of the remaining work to be done. Payment was guaranteed and in order for work to continue, money was borrowed from the "threepenny fund". The manse was not included in the contract and the minister at the time took it upon himself to have the work done, whereupon he was severely reprimanded and told he must pay for it himself.

Subsequently the Rev Smith must have resigned for in August 1923, the Rev G Morris is recorded in the minutes as chairing his first business meeting although there is no record of a welcome taking place.

The congregation appears to have grown in mid 1924 as it is recorded that three dozen hymnbooks and a hymn board were authorised to be purchased. It is not clear what actually happened but in the minutes of 3rd December 1929, the church thanked a lady for buying a board for an amount of seven shillings and sixpence and presenting it to the Church.

One of the regular overhead expenses for the church during these times was interestingly the purchase of chaff for the pastor's horse and in April 1925 it was minuted along with the use of a motor car and so the horse and the horseless carriage were used in service alongside each other. Most likely the horse needed to in fact go further distances than the motorcar, as roads suitable for its travel were still needed to be built.

In the same year a move was made to "bring the Sunday school and church closer together" by forming a committee, two each from church, youth group and Sunday school. Scholars subsequently arranged a social for all.

In September 1925, a deputation from the Masonic lodge waited on the church meeting to ask for permission to use the church for their meetings. This was granted. The times of the church evening services were altered according to the seasons. In summer to try and escape the heat they were scheduled at 7:30pm and then changed to 7:00pm in cooler times.

April 1926 saw the resignation of Rev G Morris, who had served the church since August 1923. He ministered a second time from August 1931 to July 1934. In reading through the minutes, it is surprising to note that with one exception in those early years, a pastor arrived within a month or two of the previous man leaving. Prior to the new pastor arriving at this time it was decided that Bedfordale Church was to combine with Armadale commencing from when the new pastor arrived. The Rev Lincoln Sullivan arrived in August 1926.

In these years, the church involved itself in social affairs, for we read in the minutes that a petition was being circulated to call for the 6 o'clock closure of hotels. A retiring offering was also taken up to send to the Armenian Relief Fund and Save the Children Fund. Whether they were two separate funds at this time is not clear. The treasurer's report following did not give any information about amounts received or spent.

In May 1927, a Young Men's Society was talked about. It seems there was also discussion about discontinuing the morning service, presumably during December, as it was holiday time and many members may have been away. The decision was made though to carry on.

In January 1928, Rev Sullivan informed the meeting that he had received a call from the Leederville Church and requested discussion. It has been suggested that nowadays this is virtually unheard of. An hour long discussion ensued and the meeting was adjourned for one week. No firm decision was arrived at but the District Council was to consider it the following night. It seems from the April 1928 minutes that Rev Sullivan consequently left under a cloud, although later minutes record that he was asked to preach at Harvest Festival Services in February 1930.

In June 1928, Rev Thomas Loose was called and he was present to sign the July minutes on the 7th August 1928 (again no welcome was recorded in the minutes).

In November 1929, Miss Isobel Saw concluded 10 years as organist and in December Mr H Beard was appointed choirmaster. There were problems finding preachers for the morning service at this time. Rev T Loose was the pastor but as he was involved as a circuit pastor other people needed to be found to assist in this area. This would be exacerbated by the departure of Rev Loose in February 1930, only 19 months after he started. Miss L Turner became the organist at this time until March 1933.

## 1930's

In April 1930, the office of Assistant Secretary was established, obviously to assist the Secretary in his many tasks of the time. Some interesting matters were recorded in the minutes of the time and in this same month a record was made of an infestation of fruit fly in the Manse peach tree.

Later in this year, in August, a Mr B Saunders was called to the oversight of the district churches and in September of that year he was welcomed by the fellowship.

A couple of months after this the ladies of the church were affiliated with the Congregational Women's Assoc. (CWA). Also at this time the new pastor moved that the church rules be checked against the Constitution of England and Wales Congregational Unions and the WA Congregational Union Rules.

Twenty four years after its construction, in 1931, there was a request made to the Lands Department to search for the Title Deeds for the Manse. At this time there also was a weeknight meeting being held at Westfield.

In April of this same year, Mr Symes tendered his resignation, after having served as acting secretary from 1923, even though he was not a member of the church. This was as a result of there being no-one else available. He was appointed as the secretary a couple of months after this and judging by the style of handwriting in the minute books he was secretary on and off until September 1929 when Mr B Cross took over. In the same month of April 1931, a call was made to Rev G Morris, which was accepted and resulted in him serving his second term in the Armadale District commencing in August 1931. In this same month it was noted in the minutes that the depression was having a detrimental effect on the church finances. The district committee was advised that the church could not maintain its quota.

The social activities of the church continued and it was reported that a tennis club was active amongst the church folk in these early years of the 1930's.

Sometime during the years 1931 to 1935 the minute books were damaged by water and from August 1931 to January 1935 they became impossible to read, therefore very little is known about this period in the church history.

The next minute book starts in September 1931 recording a petition being presented for signing on "world wide war disarmament". In November of this same year the admission of junior members was discussed along with authority being given for the purchase of a members roll book (presumably the one we still have).

The minutes for December 1931 were also difficult to read but there were two points of interest noted. First that the pastor "make further enquiries before the church commits itself to the Second Coming Association" and second "that the adherents be asked to attend the regular meeting of the church and can vote on all matters except the Constitution". The latter point was in fact a notice of motion, which was then passed at the January 1932 meeting.

The long difficult times financially had now improved and in August 1933, the church notified the district committee that they could raise their contribution to the minister's stipend to £8-5-0 and no more.

In March 1934 an appeal was to be made to "relieve the distress which prevails in the South West Group Mission". In May, Rev Morris went to Collie for a month of ministry. It was well received and he commended the Armadale Church and CE Society for their faithful prayer support and also passed his thanks on to the lay preachers for carrying on the ministry of the circuit.

In January 1934, a motion had been passed that communion collections be set-aside for the London Missionary Society Widows and Orphans Benevolent Fund. In May of that year a notice of motion was notified that at the June meeting the January motion would be rescinded to "create a general benevolent fund to be operated upon at the will of the membership assembled from time to time".

The last entry in the minutes about Rev Morris was in June 1934. Rev T O Bryant was inducted as pastor at the church anniversary on Monday evening meeting on September 24.

*(End of that minute book - Ed)*

The minute books beginning February 1935 exhibit beautiful copperplate writing by a new secretary. Though there is no notice of the appointment, it is obvious that the writer was Mr B Cross jnr and his handwriting has left its own mark in the church's history.

Also early in this minute book (12/6/35) is a record of the presentation of the Communion Table that still has a central place in our church. The article written by Mr H Beard for "The West Australian" newspaper is glued in to the minute book and is reproduced in this record. (See page 14)

In December 1935, there was much pleasure expressed over the application for acceptance as a Home Missioner and Ministerial student by one of the members, Mr Wilfrid Aldridge.

In the 1920's the church choir was mentioned as having been in continuous operation over many years. In May 1936, there is a note saying that there are problems keeping it going because of apathy of the musically inclined members.

An interesting insight into the attitude of Christian people towards Sunday organised sport is revealed in June 1936, when a protest letter was sent to the Armadale Cycling Club and a favourable reply was received a couple of months later in August.

Throughout the minute books, regular mention is made of the celebration of church anniversaries and harvest festivals. In August 1928 an entry is found which indicates the year and month of the official establishment of the church. To quote: "The meeting decided to hold the 25th anniversary on Sunday and Tuesday the 23rd and 25th of September". Undoubtedly at this time there may have been original members still present and so it would be interesting to note that the record could be fairly accurate but yet still adding to the confusion as to the actual dates recognised and as to why.

In May 1953 the record of the "Golden Jubilee" date is given as 20th and September and deacon's minutes of 14/9/42 show discussion of the "39th anniversary of the Armadale Church".

*(These minutes are obviously referring to the opening of the church building - Ed)*

In April 1937, there is a note that delegates be re-appointed for discussions about Church Union. It is not clear what "Church Union" is being discussed. Church Union (Uniting Church) did not come until 1977.

In May 1937, the area of Armadale and Kelmscott included Westfield as it is recorded that the Westfield Church was to be opened. There is no record of when it was discontinued. It was after the pastorate broke up and would have been in the early seventies.

November 1937 saw an important decision made concerning the Sunday school. A trial was to be made of the "Sunday school starting at 10:15am and overlapping the regular morning service to 11:15am with the object of attracting the older children to take an interest in the church service, thus providing a connecting link at a critical stage in the development of the young lives".

A large pulpit Bible was presented to the church in March 1938 and could quite possibly be the well-worn copy that we still have today.

## Memorial to Pioneers.

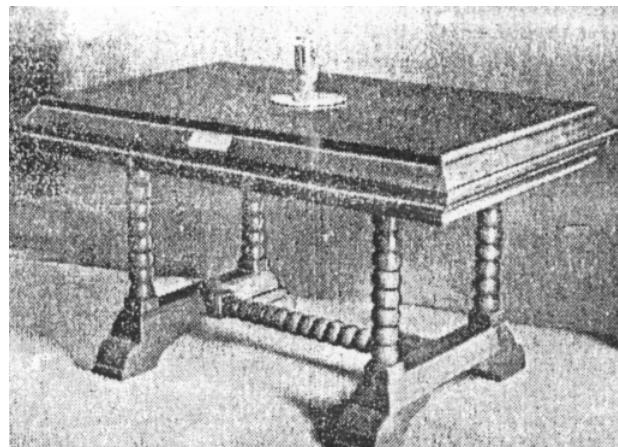
July 1935

Armadale Church

Forty-seven years ago, on April 1, 1888, a boy of twelve timidly approached a farmer in the streets of Perth and asked for a job. Upon being asked if he did not consider himself much too small to do farm work, his only reply was, "You try me". A tentative arrangement was made and the boy journeyed in a sort of coach to Kelmscott, to the farm of Mr William Butcher. Recently this boy, now Mr B V Cross, one of the leading orchardists of Bedfordale, testified to the sterling Christian character of his first employer. The occasion was the unveiling during the morning service on June 23 at the Armadale Congregational Church of a fine Communion table the gift of the sons and daughters of William and Hannah Butcher. The table was a beautifully worked example in massive jarrah and bore the inscription: - "Congregational District Churches Pioneer Members. Dedicated by the sons and daughters in sacred memory of our loved parents William and Hannah Butcher, who departed this life June 10 1895 - July 14 1934. Forever with the Lord".

Mr Cross spoke feelingly of the influence of that early experience upon his life and of the true spirit of worship, which was so strong a feature in the Butcher household. He then passed on the history of the founding of the Congregational church at Kelmscott, which was the parent of all the district branches. In those days there was no public building of any kind in the district and services were held in the home of Mr Thomas Buckingham who took a large part in all services regularly for several years, helping and inspiring each other.

*How they stuck together. There was a kitchen quite apart from the house and this was set apart for the purpose. "Here, said Mr Cross, the friends gathered. What comfort their fellowship afforded and the example their conduct and fervour was to their dependents and employees", was stressed by the speaker. He then told of the coming of the Rev Mr Dunstan, recommended to Mr Butcher by the Perth people and of the growing need for a more permanent place where other meetings could be held. Thus it was that a small hall - the back part of the present Kelmscott Public hall came to be erected by mutual endeavour. It was opened on September 3, 1891. Following this, a school was started at Bedfordale and was opened by Mrs Butcher. So the good work went on, extending to Armadale and Roleystone. All acknowledged the wise leadership of Mr and Mrs Butcher and the death of the former in 1895 was indeed a sad blow. But Mrs Butcher never wavered in her good work. She kept right on in quiet loving service until the beginning of that illness, which after two years of patient suffering ended in her death in July of last year. "In the name of the sons and daughters" said Mr Cross as the large congregation reverently rose, "I dedicate to the service of God this table whereon shall be placed for future assemblies who gather to meet with their Lord, the elements associated with the Holy Communion".*



Mr J White, who acknowledged the gift on behalf of the members of the church spoke of the loving service of Mrs Butcher. Perhaps the duties, he said, in which she took the keenest delight, were those connected with the preparation of the elements for the communion service and in the beautifying of the table. The beautiful silver vase that formed part of this gift was very fitting, as many worshippers who did not intimately know Mrs Butcher would remember her for the loving care she was known to bestow upon the flowers she grew especially for the Lord's table.

The Rev T O Bryant preached on the lasting value of Christian service, paying a high tribute to the character and influence of this splendid mother and pleading that his hearers should also rise to be witnesses. Relatives of the Butcher family assembled in large numbers to take part in the ceremony, some of them travelling for a considerable distance. The church was full and music fitting the occasion was rendered by an augmented choir. Mrs Fred Saw, who joined the church on the same day as Mrs Hannah Butcher, was to have unveiled the table, but was prevented owing to indisposition.

In November 1938, a move was made to have the district committee discuss the redistribution of churches of the District, the circuit being too large for one man to do full justice. Rev T O Bryant was the pastor at this time and he didn't conclude his ministry term until July 1939. In August of that year Pastor J E Shepherd commenced the work for the Lord in the area.

The church building at this time was to receive a little enhancement with protracted discussion taking place about the finance and building of a porch to the church. It was decided to build the porch at the cost of £66. In the November 1939, Rev Bryant conducted a dedication service of some note for these extensions.

There has been very little information regarding the number of members recorded in the minutes through the last years and so it is of interest to note that in December 1939 there were 20 members recorded. Also there are many occasions when people are not recorded as having come into and left membership.

## 1940's

Socials were a large feature of the life of the church. There were plenty of instances of people being appointed to organise special social gatherings, particularly for the raising of finances for various reasons such as the general fund, church cleaning fund, porch building, brick wall building and hall building. There were also quite frequent appeals to raise funds to alleviate financial problems.



**Sunday school Scholars in 1946  
(Beth Miles (Franklin))**

In October 1942, another roll book was to be purchased with no indication given as to what might have happened to the previous one purchased. Members were requested to write their names in it at the next Communion Service.

November minutes said it was to be brought up to date by including past members and in December it shows the church as having 24 members. In this same year the Christmas morning service was to be held quite early at 7:30am.



***The Old Manse in later years***

"War Risk Insurance" came into consideration during the Second World War as the record in June 1942 shows. At this same time Pastor Shepherd was to conclude his ministry and the Rev R Pretty would be commencing on the 3rd Sunday in August so another era was to commence.

September minutes show the heading "Members and Adherents business and fellowship meeting". Also that "all business of a routine and administrative nature be left to the deacons". Further perusal of succeeding minutes does not seem to indicate that this actually occurred.

A feature of the business meetings during these years was the interesting topic for addresses to the members that were given at the conclusion of the business side of the meeting, examples of which are:

- "Mr Nobody as told in the O.T."
- "Music in relation to worship"
- "The Christmas date in the church calendars"
- "John Chinaman"

The 1943, the Good Friday service was at 8:00pm.

It was agreed at that time that the pine trees growing around the church be cut down. There was no reason given for this action.

Rev Pretty was released one Sunday per quarter to assist other Congregational Churches without pastors. In September 1943, Mrs Geddes and Miss Iris Saw (later Mrs Gordon Morcombe) were appointed organists subject to consent. Apparently Mrs Geddes did not accept and Miss Saw did accept.

The financial position of the church improved considerably as in December 1943, there was £32-0-8 in the general fund and this continued over subsequent years. The Armadale contribution to the Ministers Stipend fund was increased from £9 to £10-5-0 per month. A year later it was recorded that the Minister's Stipend should be raised statewide.

An indication of the spiritual condition of the church is shown in the August and October 1945 when concern was raised about a man in a difficult financial position and the assistance the church may give. Unfortunately there is no indication of the outcome.

In July 1946, a new organ was donated as a memorial gift and the old one given to Roleystone church.

In July 1947, a tennis court was built alongside the church.

In November 1948, three communion chairs were donated by the Ladies Guild as "a memorial to Mrs Millard, who gave lifelong service and devotion to the church". No doubt these are three of the chairs we still have today.

As was common after World War II in many places, the church was asked by the Education Department to lease rooms to them for school classes and this was agreed to.

## 1950's

As the congregation grew, the necessity to appoint ushers in the beginning of this decade was made. This is now a continuing ministry in the church and also a very integral one though it has now taken on a more informal role of welcoming people at the door.

Some difficult times were to descend in the area of Congregational Church government during the 1950's, as it appears that no members meetings were recorded between 7th December 1950 and 26th May 1953. Changes did in fact take place during this period as pastors changed. Rev Lincoln Sullivan was recorded to have been serving the church in December 1950, but in the next record of minutes in May 1953, Rev Clifford Jones is now in the position of pastor. It is therefore unclear as to what transpired during these years.

A proposal to build a hall was made in October 1953. Mr Vern Pascoe tabled plans for a timber building in November 1954. Discussion included the building of a cement brick structure. It was decided to have a brick making machine built and this was obtained in February 1955 at a cost of £2-10-0 but it wasn't until December 1956 that work got underway. It was almost 2 years after this that steel trusses were purchased for the roof. A tender was therefore accepted for \$2567 from a church member, Mr Graham in July 1958. The hall was opened by the then State Premier, Mr A R G Hawke in March 1959. The Hall has since been pulled down along with the church, the latter having been relocated in Minnawarra Park in Armadale.



*Old church relocated to Minnawarra park*

The minutes of November 1954 show the last signature of Rev Clifford Jones and in February 1956 Rev Ewan Watts entered his first signature in the minute book. Only three business meetings were held in that time. There was no record of a call or arrival or Mr Watts or the departure of Mr Jones.

Mr Williams was chairman at this time and a Covenant had been entered into.

*"We do here, in the Name and Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, solemnly give ourselves to Him and to each other in covenant, resolved to walk with God and with each other and to live day by day in all the engagements of life according to His example and teaching and in all the privileges and duties of Christian fellowship, worship and service as He shall direct and enable us".*

In July 1956 a eulogy was written for Mrs Grahams, specifically referring to the work and influence she had given over a very long period to the church. Also co-operation with the Church of England resulted in a house to house "every person canvas" for the district. The Archibald Cross memorial tablet was also placed in the church.

Lay preachers classes conducted by Mr Watts were to commence in February 1957. In July 1957 it was decided to produce a monthly newsletter and information from all departments would be sought. The church was now also entering the commencement of the modern era of technology as the first mention of a tape recording of sermons was made.

In December 1957 the Bosma family name made its debut in the church records and much to the honour of their commitment to both the Lord and His church, members of the family still attend the church today. Members of this family also currently serve on the mission field and are supported by the congregation both financially as well as in prayer.

*(This marks the end of another minute book - Ed)*

It was decided in June 1958 that an envelope system of giving should be instituted. One person would keep names of contributors and issue the envelopes. The other would know only the number on each set of envelopes and the amount promised which would be credited to the number on the envelope.

## 1960's

In December 1960, a bookcase was installed in the porch for the hymnbooks as a memorial to Mr A Miles (this is probably still in use).

In October 1962, there were 24 active members and 8 on the supplementary roll.

Rev Ewan Watts last recorded signature is 8th October 1962 in the minute books and a pastor-less period followed until 17th January 1964 when Rev Glen Lock commenced his ministry.

Record is made of the departure of another member to join the ministry. Mr Arthur Payne left in May 1965 to train for the Baptist Ministry. He is still involved in this, being pastor of Karratha Baptist Church and Superintendent of the Northern area churches. Arthur had been the Youth Leader at Armadale.

A benevolent fund was established once again from monies subscribed at the communion service. Mr Jim Bosma - now Rev Dr Jim Bosma - was appointed Sunday school Superintendent in December 1963. He is now Australian Director of European Christian Mission and a very acceptable preacher of the Word.

In August 1941, a welcome in to membership was extended to Mr W G Morcombe with "the hope that the stay amongst us would be a long and happy one". It certainly was a long one. He was elected secretary the following month and remained in this role until June 1966, remaining as a deacon. In June 1968, he with Mrs L B Miles were elected life deacons and in August Mr and Mrs Morcombe moved to Rowethorpe Aged Persons homes. Judging by the comments made, their stay was a very greatly appreciated addition to the ministry of the church. Mrs Miles left the district in October 1968.

In May 1966 the Sunday school report showed 75 children on the senior roll and 55 in the kindergarten.

In March 1967 the Bramford name first appears on the attendance list and in June, Mr Bramford was made a deacon and in October, Sunday school superintendent. In June 1968, Mrs Bramford was

appointed organist, a position she has held since and more recently has been playing the piano for services as an alternative to the organ. The modern era had its influence once again at this time, as Mr Ted Bailey became secretary thus ending the era of handwritten minutes.

An important decision was made in September 1968 in respect of giving to missions and 10% of general offerings would be allocated. This is still continuing to this day. The Hammond organ was also purchased for \$1330 at this time and is still owned (though not used) by the church today.

Mr John Richardson was appointed assistant pastor also in September 1968. He then became involved in Bible Society work as Field Representative. He has been ordained as a minister of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. As a result of ill health he is now no longer involved in a ministry.

In this year, the Meckering Earthquake rocked the state and caused some minor damage to the church.

*Sunday school scholars circa 1970*

A kitchen was added to the church property in May to June 1969. Also 80 Hymns of Faith books were purchased at this time and a meeting was held at which all the district churches were represented, to discuss Rev Glen Lock's theological concerns, which made him feel he should resign from the church and from the WA Congregational Union.

In April 1969, a visitor's book was purchased. This is now almost full.

December 1969 saw the commencement of a series of meetings about Church Union and also our relationship with the Congregational Union of WA. This culminated in a 15 to 2 vote against continuing that membership in March 1974. A "de-mission" service was held at 11am Sunday 30th June at which representatives of the Congregational Union were present. The minutes go to great lengths to give reasons for the church's decisions and credit must go to the Secretary at the time, Mr E S Bailey. In June 1972, the church voted 18 to 3 against the Congregational Union becoming part of the Uniting Church.



The move in June 1969 to separate from the Congregational Union was based mainly on theological differences of opinion but also because of, to quote the original minutes, a "growing dissatisfaction with the Union, because the vital, helpful, spiritual, evangelistic lead has been non-existent. Monies given through allocations have been used to maintain an existing dead organisation. Instead of outreach... churches have been closed. The growing relationship with the World Council of Churches..." and more. The theological differences as outlined in February 1974, concerned interpretation of the scriptures about the virgin birth, miracles, the second coming, salvation and infant baptism. This church differed from the liberal, humanistic view of the Congregational Union.

In December 1969, the start of the disbanding of the district committee occurred when Armadale carried unanimously a motion that "we become a separate identity both from Kelmscott and Roleystone Congregational Churches". The motion was also moved and carried that the church becomes an incorporated body. The final act occurred in 1972, when Roleystone broke away from Kelmscott.

## 1970's

A long pastor-less period ended when Rev Hedley Thyer started as a part time pastor in September 1971. In May 1973, he and Mrs Thyer transferred membership to Armadale and he became chairman of the church meetings. His tenure ended in December 1979, when they left to pioneer a new work in Darlington. The congregation was grieved to hear of his death at a relatively early age in October 1990. Mr Thyer preached regularly from the time of his arrival at Armadale.

In February 1973, it was considered that the church should be actively involved in running a "Mission to Armadale". A committee was formed consisting of representatives of all auxiliaries of the church to discuss the matter. This committee met in May. The family camp was held where the proposals were thoroughly discussed and received with enthusiasm.

In May 1974, the initial moves were made to form the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) to include churches that did not go into Church Union. These were Armadale, Kelmscott, Beckenham, Rivervale, Roleystone and other Christian Fellowships. In time the number in the Fellowship became nine. In September 1975, the church agreed to join the FIEC.

As a result of this church having left the Congregational Union and was now regarded as a strong evangelical church, the Baptist Union notified us that they would not now start a work in Armadale. The FIEC broke up in March 1997 and subsequently in 1998 we became an associate member of the Baptist Churches of Western Australia. This entitles us to full benefits except voting at assembly business sessions and non-participation in denominational committees.

At the Annual General Meeting of July 1974 it was recorded that great appreciation was expressed to Mrs B J Saw for her work as Secretary of the Ladies Guild for 23 years. Mrs Saw still worships with us today.

In February 1975, a traumatic meeting occurred when a motion was debated "that the church **not** take part in the Women's World Day of Prayer". There were those who considered that the Roman Catholic Church had far too much influence in the content of the programme and therefore we should not be part of it. The motion was defeated and this resulted in the resignation of eight members including the long serving Mr E S Bailey who had started in June 1968. Mr John Bramford was subsequently appointed as Secretary.

In February 1975, a monthly service was started in Forrestdale.

Baptismal gowns still found today in our storeroom are perhaps the ones that were made by the ladies in November 1976.

During the seventies many families came into the church. Some only stayed for a short time but a few are still with us. Bill and Judy Sampson came and Bill had two spells as treasurer and was also our FIEC delegate. Today Judy is the chairman of the Dale School Board. They have served the church faithfully for a long time.

On September 1978, a music group was formed called "New Creation" but it disbanded in March 1980. In this same year the churches outward vision was confirmed when a Sunday school was started in Mundijong and a Junior Christian Endeavour (JCE) in Challis school on Wednesdays.

In May 1976, Mrs Margo Attwater was appointed missions representative in the church and she continues to hold this position until this day. Her faithfulness in corresponding with workers on the field, in which we are particularly interested, is an example to us all.

## 1980's THE CHURCH RELOCATES

In February 1979, returned missionary John Simons, with wife Gladys was appointed Associate Pastor. At the end of the year Hedley Thyer resigned as pastor and John became our full time pastor. It was during his time that the church started to seek larger premises and the church also rented a manse in Harrison Road so that the School could use the Manse at the church. He continued as pastor until ill health forced his resignation in November 1985.

In May 1981, the first minute about sale of the church property was written. The next month the offer was increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000. In August 1984, an offer was made to purchase the drive-in theatre on Forrest Road, the church and school location today.

In March 1982, the church recognised that members had a responsibility toward adherents and newcomers by making them welcome and introducing them to members. They were also encouraged to invite them into their homes or visit them on a friendship basis. It was agreed that members would be



*Members of the congregation in the 1970's*

responsible for new people in their immediate area. Lists of members and adherents were drawn up and the district was divided into seven areas with members being requested to visit new contacts, the elderly, etc.

In December 1982, Mr Hans van Asselt commenced as "assistant to the pastor". The records show that he has taken a lot of weight from Pastor Simons' shoulders, which included visitation and the Bible study for the young people. He was also studying at the West Australian Bible College. Lately he has concluded studies at the Baptist Theological College and has been youth pastor for some years at Gosnells Baptist church.

A look through the minutes of the 1970's and 1980's indicate a very live and active church. In addition to the normal officers, the Annual General Meeting appointments and reports show the outreach involved. Sunday schools at Armadale, Forrestdale, Mundijong, Armadale Young people (High Schoolers) and Young Adults, Junior Christian Endeavour, Forrestdale JCE, Armadale Good News Club, Gwynne Park JCE, Homemakers, Young Marrieds and Ladies Guild.

The pastor's annual report says:

*"Mr Simons said that there was a lot for which to praise the Lord and that the work was generally encouraging. The emphasis was on Bible Teaching. It had been a year of consolidation with a good atmosphere at the services. The morning services, especially, are very well attended but not so good in the evening. He felt that there was a need for more Members to attend and good quality required as well as quantity. **Assistant Pastor:** Mr Simons has welcomed the great help and encouragement of Mr H Van Asselt in this role. **Deacons:** He enjoyed the fellowship with the deacons and looked forward to their meetings together. **Future for the work:** More teaching of the Word was needed. Also more space was required in the church and we need to look ahead and plan for the future, - Think BIG! Plans were in hand for an outreach campaign in September.*

**Prayer:** This was most important in the church's life and something we need to encourage in our own life. Sacrifices have to be made for a quiet prayer time and we need to spend time in prayer. Great results come from prayer and blessing. We also need to uphold the evening services in prayer. Mr Moses commented that he was pleased to hear that our church is known for its Bible teaching".

In August 1981, Emmaus School asked for use of our premises for the year 1982, or until they have their own buildings. This was granted. In July 1983, Dale Christian School commenced in our premises.



**Front of Church  
in later days**

In March 1983, a new piano was obtained at a cost of \$2290 and also the weekly church bulletin was commenced. In this same year, consideration of amendments to the constitution took up quite a lot of time.

In December 1982, considerable discussion took place about the formation of home fellowship groups. The aim was that Home Fellowship Groups would be the place where new people could be taken so that they can be better known and also get to know the church people. There were two groups formed with the meeting being held fortnightly in homes.

June 1983 has a note that seating accommodation was becoming taxed because of large attendances. Consideration was being given to alterations to the building and purchasing additional seating but first inquiries would be made concerning the future of the church property. It was thought 30 to 40 extra seats could be provided at very little extra cost by rearranging the front of the church. This was done and proved satisfactory.

In early 1984, the church started looking around for land on which to build. A deposit was paid on Eighth Road land on 28th April 1984. This obviously fell through because another offer was made to purchase the Dale Drive-in (150 Forrest Road) for \$90,000 and ask for \$205,000 for the church property. Apparently the title deeds had been lost according to the Titles Office notice in the West Australian of November 1984 and a duplicate would be issued. A second offer of \$105,000 was made to TVW 7 for the Dale Drive-in property in October 1984. A reply was a long time coming and a further approach was made in February 1985. In April a verbal agreement by TVW 7 to sell was received.

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Negotiations with Waterways Farm for the church to be re-erected there as a memorial to the architecture at the start of the century were taking place at this time also.

A note in the minutes of February 1985 tells us that the church at this time was so full that the pulpit was to be moved out to make room for more seating. Where does the minister go? To the communion table!

Concern was expressed in April 1985 about the possibility of being turned out of the church by the new owner, Mr Colli. On being approached by Mr Henk Van Asselt he said he would allow twelve months grace - at \$300 per month.

The first guidelines of plans sent to the architect were much more extensive than the building that was erected, no doubt because finances would not allow it.

September 1985 minutes reveal that very slow progress was being made with the finalisation of the sale of the church and purchase of Dale Drive-in. Mr Moses had been doing a lot of negotiating with State and Local government officials. The Government Town Planning Department gazetted approval for the change in zoning of the old drive-in on Forrest Road in September. The Shire Town Planning subcommittee gave its approval to allow the Dale Christian School to move to the site in early October and in December 1985, the Armadale Shire gave final approval to build the church and school.

In this period, Pastor Simons had to resign due to ill health and the church set about trying to find another pastor. Pastor David Kernohan commenced on 6th April 1986.

In July and August of 1986, the building committee got down to discussing the nitty gritty of the church building project. At this time the building supervisor (Mr Neville Castlehow) brought up that cost for the building of the church (known as the "hall" because it was envisaged that a church would be built in 5 to 6 years) and classrooms would be \$195,000. This caused much dismay and the building committee began to discuss options:

1. Postpone building of hall
2. Postpone building of school
3. Deletions of plan to cut costs
4. Commence building in faith
5. Combination of some of the above

It is evident that considerable deletions were made when one reads what was planned and compare that with what we have in our present church (hall). We are currently no nearer now to building the church than in early April 1987, when the hall was opened at greatly reduced cost. There were 59 members at the time.

The classrooms for the school were to cost \$63,000 and plumbing, electrical and site works made up the total estimated cost.

There was a short period when the church services had to be held in a public hall because the old premises were no longer available. During the time all the planning was going on in respect of the hall and school, the church programme continued to function. Attendances at services were so high that in July 1986, the congregation had to move into the old church hall, which made things even more difficult for the school operating in the same building.

In the period March 1980 to September 1990, 78 persons became members including 13 on 27th September 1983. The latter group would mostly have been from other churches.

The early part of 1987 was taken up with long discussions about the running of the school including the school constitution. The School had been running itself as the "Dale School Association" under some control by the church, but moves were being made to bring it even more under the control of the church. There were legal loopholes that could cause problems for the church. In May 1987, the Association members voted for the dissolution of their organisation. The church would take over with parent representatives in a minority on the School board and a parents and friends group would be formed.

Pastor David Kernohan resigned in June 1987 and thus began another search for a pastor.

The school affiliated with the Christian Community Schools in February 1988. This is an Australia wide organisation in existence for the spiritual and organisational benefit of Christian Schools.

A call to Rev Neville Blackhall of Queensland was made and accepted by him in August 1988. He commenced in February 1989. Rev Glen Lock had exercised a six month interim ministry concluding in May 1988.



**Congregation in 1988**

The coming of a new pastor caused the church to look at housing alternatives. It was finally decided to build a manse on the church property at a cost of approximately \$62,000. Meantime a lease of the property of one of the members was arranged for the first six months of 1989, while the manse was being built.

Pastor Blackhall made a request that prayer chains be set up to bring before the Lord specific but confidential matters concerning the physical, emotional or otherwise well being of the members and adherents.

Also discussed, were a comprehensive visitation programme and the use of the "Christianity Explained" course of witnessing. A care committee was formed to assist those in difficult financial circumstances. The church also took part in an extensive distribution of Bibles in the local area.

A shed was built to store necessary equipment mainly for the school and also the oval was laid out for the school use at an estimated cost of \$21,000.

## **1990's**

The September 1990 members meeting was presented with a list of the developmental costs by Mr P Moses.

1985	Land and buildings purchased. Rezoning of site, approval to develop	\$ 105,000
1986	Stage 1, hall and four class rooms	\$ 140,000
1987	April, church hall dedicated	
1989	Manse constructed	\$ 65,000
1990	Oval and basketball court Named Hedley Thyer oval	\$ 12,000
1991	Stage 2 & 3, classrooms and ancillary buildings	\$ 210,000

Then followed the administration building for the school at a cost of \$250,000 In January 2000, a new pre-school and kindergarten building was be-installed at a cost of \$200,000.

In November 2000, approval was given for the erection of buildings to accommodate a "middle school" to cover years 7,8,9 and 10. This was done after much detailed investigation by a sub committee of the school board.

The State Education Ministry is encouraging primary schools to extend to the concept of middle schooling to enable a smoother transition from primary to high by the students. This will mean the provision of two classrooms plus manual training, home economics and science rooms.

It is envisaged that the building will be prefabricated the same as the kindergarten and located on the Neilson Street frontage as shown in the block plan on page 58.

In February 1991, it was decided to purchase the "Person to Person" witnessing course on video produced by Scripture Union in England (used by two groups).

In December 1991, a request was received that we allow an Aboriginal Group to use our church for a Christian meeting. This was agreed to. The arrangement lasted twelve months after which the group disbanded, but has recently re-grouped in a public hall.

Mrs Broomfield, one of our members, encouraged couples to attend "Renewing Love" seminars from time to time.

The manse finished up representing a fortress due to the large number of times it was broken into during the 6 to 7 years Rev and Mrs Blackhall were in residence. They also sustained severe flooding one time when the sewerage pumping station in Forrest Road broke down and the sewerage flowed in reverse up the pedestals. All the floor coverings had, understandably, to be renewed at this time.

In May 1992, a very significant service was held when nine people partook of the ordinance of believer's baptism. Rev Glen Lock baptised Rev Neville Blackhall who then immersed all the other candidates including his wife. In April 1998, three persons were baptised.

In July 1992, considerable discussion took place about the content and format of the services, mainly the morning. In the end, nothing of any consequence was done. The first indication of an ongoing generational problem in the church occurred in the middle of 1992, when a committee was set up to evaluate the quality of Scripture in Song Choruses which were being sung. Several meetings of the committee were held and came up with a list of choruses approved for use. The music group promptly rejected it. Also the church decided to have a song service commencing at 9:50am while people were entering the church. The music group insisted that the singing be an integral part of the service and so it has remained and taken increasing prominence through the service.

In February 1993, discussion centred on the large signboard located at the corner of Forrest Road and Neilsen Avenue. It was suggested that it could be turned around to face a more appropriate outlook (straight down Forrest Road) and used to display a text in large letters. Words were prepared so that it can be changed three times per year - DO YOU KNOW JESUS?, YOU CAN KNOW JESUS and JESUS CAN SAVE YOU.

The preparation of the structure (which was previously used to advertise drive-in films) took some considerable time but it still stands as a silent witness to this church's stance concerning the necessity of people making their peace with God. A "Wayside Pulpit" type board has also been erected which has eye catching and succinct statements changed monthly.

Dale Christian School had a change of Principal when Dr Brian Knowles retired and Mr Raymond Shanhun commenced in June 1994. Mr Shanhun did not seek re-appointment at the end of his five-year contract, in fact serving five and a half years and Mr Fred Galsworthy was chosen to succeed him commencing in January 2000.

Dale Christian School had its ten-year anniversary celebrations in July 1993, with a commemorative dinner and Mr David McGill, Australian Director of Christian Community Schools Ltd (CCS) from New South Wales as a guest speaker.

In that same month, long time elder, deacon, Sunday school superintendent and church builder, Mr Neville Castlehow passed into the presence of his Lord after a long illness. This prompted the church into seeking Armadale City Council permission to establish a memorial garden on the property. Mr Castlehow's ashes are buried and a plaque placed at the foot of a lemon scented gum tree.



*Inside of new Church as it was when built in 1987*

It was good to see one of our members, Miss Rosalie Ansell, enrol for a two-year Bible Study course at the New Tribes Mission College in New South Wales commencing February 1994. In February 1998, Melissa Castle, another young member, commenced study at Perth Bible College.

In February 1994, the school sought permission to erect an administration block. The church approved this project. In March 1995, approval was granted for the school to obtain a loan of \$150,000 for building and furnishings. The building was opened in March 1997.

An important meeting for our Christian groups was the Seminar on copyright held with two members attending. A lengthy report was given to the church about what must and must not be done in respect to music.

A searching discussion was held at the May 1994 meeting, when the case for and against having ladies on the diaconate was tabled. On the August meeting it was notified that the deacons had decided not to pursue the matter any further. Deaconesses will be invited to attend from time to time, however this has not yet occurred.

Also at that meeting, a motion to extend a call to Rev Blackhall for a third term was not passed meaning that his ministry would conclude at the end of January 1995. Rev and Mrs Blackhall continued living in the Manse for nearly two years while he was in secular employment and until they moved into their own house in the Rockingham area.

There is also a minute of appreciation of the work of Mr and Mrs Ansell in our church over the period of more than 24 years in Sunday school, Diaconate, Ladies work and finance. Their four girls were active in the youth work and one (Lynette Dawson) in WEC work in Thailand and Cambodia presently. Like Blackhalls, the Ansects also moved elsewhere.

As a result of the decision to not call Rev Blackhall for a third term, moves were made to investigate the calling of another pastor. The Elder, Mr Geoff Hayles was appointed to head up the activities concerning this matter. He called a meeting of representatives of the various interests within the church. There were three or four men who came and preached and discussed the pastorate without result.

However Rev Glen Lock agreed to provide an interim pastorate for a period commencing 1st August 1995 for three days per week.

In February 1997, eighteen months later a call was made to Pastor Paul Fricker of Derby Baptist Church. This was accepted and Pastor Fricker commenced his ministry with us in June 1997.

In early September 1994, an evangelism crusade was held where Mr George and Mrs Rita Galieh were invited to minister. 2000 leaflets were distributed in the district plus other advertising. Counselling classes were also conducted. The Friday night youth meeting saw young people from other churches present and there was a good response to the appeal. At other meetings, although the attendance included non-Christians, the response was limited at the time. We can only trust that the seed was sown in the hearts of those who did not know the Lord.

The church also took part in the Billy Graham Global mission, which attracted 700-1000 people on three nights to Minnawarra Park for satellite transmission of Billy Graham's addresses. However there was not a very great response at that time either. This occurred in April 1995. The church was also involved in the Franklin Graham Festival at Burswood dome in 1998 and the main response here was from the children.

In November 1995, the church took over the school diesel bus (which had become redundant) to use it for the Youth work and any other needs. The bus was sold in August 2000 and hired buses will be used in future. Also it was decided that the Armadale Congregation Chronicle, a long running monthly newsletter would be discontinued.

Moves to beautify the ground started to come to fruition at this time, when 20 loads of soil were spread over the semi circle area in preparation for planting lawn, trees and shrubs and reticulation was also installed.

In February 1996, Sunday evening services were suspended because of low attendances.

After 12 years as Chairman of the School Board, Mr David Brown handed this over to Mrs Judy Sampson. Very great appreciation of his work was expressed at the AGM in November 1997. Mrs Sampson has continued to be very effective and warm hearted in her chairmanship of the Board. In April 1999, the Board asked for church approval to erect a building to house the pre-primary and kindergarten children (Early Childhood Unit) to satisfy Education Department directives that such provision be made by 2001. This approval was given and the building plus toilets were made operational in January 2000.

1998 saw the Centenary Planning committee get down to business, producing an ambitious programme of celebration. This was later amended to provide for fewer activities to reduce the cost.

Two highly successful children's holiday activity clubs were held in 1999 school holiday times. Large numbers of children were regular in attendance over each of the five days it was held and much learning about God, Jesus Christ and the Word was achieved.

As stated early in this record under the heading 'Foundation Meeting' on page 4, there is some confusion as to the actual date, so we decided to include both dates in the celebrations by commencing in February 2000 with a special morning service and weeknight meeting at the re-built old church in Minnawarra Park. Then on Sunday February 25th 2001, a special meeting will be held with an afternoon tea to mark the commencement date, which has the most documentary support, at which the Centenary Book will be launched.

The annual General Meeting date was permanently changed from November to August to more closely align with the close of the financial year, especially because of the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax.

The finances of the church were shown to be not in good shape. We have lost some members and a number of adherents and this has unfortunately reflected on the amount of support given to our three missionary families and other organisations. The church membership is 49 and church attendance through 1999-2000 has averaged 52 adults and 35 children.

The deacons have commenced using the portfolio system of operation where one takes responsibility for each of the following areas of church life: worship and music, discipleship, evangelism, development and maintenance.

The pastor and elders will continue to concentrate on the spiritual leadership and pastoral role.

No doubt there are some matters which could have been reported and which stick in the mind of older people who will be reading this section of the book. Please forgive my lack of inclusion of these.

The church has had many ups and downs, good times and those not so good, but through it all the Lord has done His Work - souls saved, believers built up in the Faith through fruitful preaching and teaching of the Word. For this we give Him all the praise and glory due to His name. May His Holy Spirit continue to find fertile soil in which to work in the future.

## PASTORS OF ARMADALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Commenced	Details	Completed
1900~	Rev E Serls, Inaugural chairman for meeting which commenced the church - first minute book missing.	
	Rev Egan-Lee (Name supplied by Mrs J Saw from family records - first pastor to the church).	
	Rev Touchell, the first minister to occupy the manse (Name supplied by Mrs J Saw from family records).	
1907~	Rev J Alexander Walsh (Information obtained from Mrs J Saw from old family wedding certificate).	
1911~	Rev Reginald E Chapman (Information supplied by Mrs J Saw from old family wedding certificates).	
9/3/1915	Rev John Beukers	I/5/1918
23/7/1919	Mr B G Edwards (resigned due to ill health)	
18/2/1919	Rev Frank G Smith	Apr 1923
5/6/1923	Rev G Morris	Apr 1926
Jun 1926	Rev L Sullivan	Jan 1928
Jun 1928	Rev L Loose	Feb 1930
Aug 1930	Rev B Saunders	Apr 1931
Aug 1931	Rev G Morris	Jun 1934
Oct 1934	Rev T O Bryant	Jul 1939
Aug 1939	Rev J S Shepherd	Jun 1942
Aug 1942	Rev R A Pretty	May 1947
Jul 1947	Rev L Sullivan	Apr 1953
May 1953	Rev C T Jones	Sep 1955
Feb 1956	Rev Ewan Watts	Mar 1963
Jan 1964	Rev Glen Lock	Dec 1969
July 1971	Rev Hedley Thyer (temporary and part time till Jun 1973) became member; appointed pastor Feb 1975	
Jan 1980	Pastor John Simons	Oct 1985
Oct 1985	Associate Pastor Hans van Asselt (part time)	1987
Feb 1986	Pastor D Kernohan (assistant Pastor Hans van Asselt)	Jun 1987
Dec 1987	Rev Glen Lock (interim)	May 1988
Jan 1989	Pastor Neville Blackhall	Jan 1995
Aug 1995	Rev Glen Lock (interim)	Jun 1997
Jun 1997	Pastor Paul Fricker	

## YOUNG PEOPLES - CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR

This worldwide youth organisation Christian Endeavour (CE) was first mentioned in the minutes of May 1934. As with so many other aspects of our church life, there is very little information available aside from what is in the minutes and a bundle of church reports that have survived. (1967 to 1978)

It would seem that CE was thriving during the above-mentioned years and particularly during Rev H Thyer's ministry, as he was an enthusiastic supporter of CE and became both state and national president.

The YP group (later known as YA) at Armadale in 1972 had reasonable numbers but lacked leadership and was struggling. Then some people allowed the group to meet in their home and things began to improve. Officers were appointed and the group commenced being involved in church services and visiting Karnet prison and Whitby Falls hostel. They were also involved in beach missions and the CE convention.

Then in early 1972, the group moved to the manse and Rev Thyer took over the leadership role. Numbers had grown from 14 to 30. Three were in Perth Bible Institute (now College) and involvement in outreach continued.

In 1974, the Intermediates separated from the YP, which allowed the two groups to function in accordance with the principles suitable for each age range, thereby retaining some older ones who felt out of place in the composite group. However, there were times when activities were shared. The YP group stabilised to about 12 or more in number. Planning meetings were held each quarter. The programme had a consistently devotional emphasis, which resulted in the young people becoming more and more confident in leading their meetings.

Visits to and from other groups from soundly based evangelical churches were arranged, on average, twice per quarter and full support was given to the church missionary activities and the church services. A camp was held where the young people were taught how to lead a person to Christ. Subsequent reports continue in similar vein, showing constant Christian growth and maturity, with the 1975-76 report speaking of several Friday nights throughout the year fully set aside for home visitation round Armadale. In 1976, there was a change of name of CE groups round Australia. Intermediates (the younger teens) became Young People (YP) and Young People (the older teens and twenties) became Young Adults (YA).

The 1976-77 report continues to show strong spiritual and numerical growth. Visitation, evening service leading and youth teas on a monthly basis continued and also organising the Youth Festival CE Rally attended by 240 people from churches south of the river. Attendances at the meetings that year averaged 30 plus.

The following reports do not include a YA report. What happened? One can only hope it was received too late for inclusion. Surely the group would not have collapsed suddenly. It seems, from talking to Rev Simons, that this group split into young men's and young women's Bible Study groups.

## **JUNIOR CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR**

The first record I can find of JCE is in the 1967-68 Annual Report, which says that JCE recommenced in September 1967 at 3:30pm on Wednesdays after school. When JCE resumed after the summer holidays there were 35 on the roll and an average attendance of 22.

There were difficulties in 1970, which caused the meetings to be held only during the second half of the year. JCE was not again sighted in the reports until July 1975 when 25 children of an age range 6-12 attended. During the remaining 6 months enrolment reached 54. At the beginning of 1976, the group was split into two: 6 to 8 yrs and 9 to 12 yrs. They joined together for missionary nights when films were shown.

These groups provided opportunity for YA's to be involved in leadership and six people responded to this challenge. The 1976-77 report shows further expansion and further opportunities for YA's to be involved. JCE became three groups - grades 1, 2 & 3, grades 4 & 5 and grades 6 & 7.

As well as providing good spiritual instruction, the social activities kept the interest of the children. These included a visit to the local hospital, involvement in the State CE talent quest; winning prizes; winning the sports day shield, attending the State CE Rally. The National President was very impressed with what he saw on a visit to this church. The 1977-78 report showed that the three groups were still operating with equal success to the previous year.

## **FORRESTDALE JCE**

This commenced on the 8th March 1976 when 15 children attended. The first meeting was apparently chaotic which caused considerable angst amongst the three lady leaders. A male attended the next time to assist with the discipline and things were a bit better. Even so, early on the children were shouting down the speakers, "Don't give us that Bible rubbish" and "You can't prove God is real". Later it was "If God made Satan why can't He control him?" showing that some children were taking things more seriously.

The second year brought greater encouragement even though there was a drop in numbers from an average of 28 to 13 due to families leaving the district and also netball practice. Those children attending developed in their knowledge of the Lord and His Word, led the meetings and took part in chain prayer. But it was difficult for them to prepare "papers" and they reneged on it at the last minute.

Another problem was teenagers hanging around the hall, which caused a lot of concern. At one stage there was a police patrol in operation. Monthly church services, family outings and progressive teas were the means of keeping good contact with the parents. A cause for concern was that the children leaving Grade 7 did not go to the Armadale YP group. Some however, continued with Sunday school.

## **INTERMEDIATE (later YPCE)**

The earliest records available (1967/68) show that a combined churches group which included Inters and YP's was holding meetings at Armadale with an average attendance of 35. In February 1968, a separate Inters group commenced in Roleystone and a little later a combined churches group of YP's started. Its location is not stated.

In June 1969, it is recorded that an Inters group was operating in Armadale church hall and goes on to tell of the activities in which it was involved, including rallies, crusades, film evenings, hikes and barbecues.

May 1971 report showed 18 as average attendance and the next year 20, the Inters being very shallow and treating the things of God as a joke and calls for prayer that "the young people will hunger and thirst after righteousness and be filled".

By 1975 with numbers at 15 to 20, "It is good to see the Lord at work in some lives as evidenced by the type of talks being presented each week". 1976 report showed 25 to 30 attending and 1977 average 32 and up to 38 with a high standard of meeting being maintained and a varied programme adding to the interest. 11 moved up to YA.

## **FORRESTDALE**

During the 1960's and 70's there was active participation by Armadale people in Christian service in the Forrestdale area.

Mr and Mrs Castlehow commenced a Sunday school on 11th Feb 1968. 20 children were attending of which 11 were from Armadale. The numbers increased to 43 on the roll in the first year with an average attendance of 30. Bible drill and quizzes formed part of the programme as well as the class time.

The parents were very co-operative, some bringing their children and generally being very friendly.

By the third year, numbers had decreased to 30 enrolled because some of the boys were going to football instead of attending Sunday school. A primary department was established in the third year with 10 children involved. Also special interest was created in missionary enterprise with financial support being given to 2 people closely connected to the church.

In 1971, a house-to-house visitation took place where the workers were very encouraged by the response from the parents. The annual report of May 1972, showed attendance of 26 primary school, 36 older school including 10 Bible Class. The 1972 report speaks of older children receiving Christ and sharing their experiences with others. Enrolment and attendance was about the same as the previous year. A picnic and river trip helped keep up the interest.

A street stall held outside the Forrestdale hall in aid of missionary support created considerable interest.

The May 1975 report spoke of a kindergarten of 34 and 5 staff and of the keenness of parents to have their young children taught Bible stories but not the older ones. Grades 4 and upward children are less keen to attend and the parents are not encouraging them to do so. The attendance was down to about 12 and in 1976 down further to 7 with 20 in the kindergarten.

In 1976, monthly family services were started as a faith venture but the attendances were fairly low. An appeal was made for Armadale people to engage in a visitation drive to try and get more children to attend. No mention is made of Forrestdale SS in the 1977-78 report and there are no further reports.

Mr and Mrs Castlehow and their team, which has included David and Jenny Brown, Bernard and David Bosma, Alison Reed, Kaylene Pritchard, have had discouragements and also rewards but never-the-less continued to faithfully to serve the Lord while the opportunity was there.

## Dale Christian School

*Written by David Brown*

In the last third of the last century there was a subtle but determined push to make public education “secular” as had been legislated by the founders of this State. The idea was for the “State” to take control of the education system that had previously been the sole role of the “Church”.

What in reality happened is that the State copied the principles of education laid down by the church and a form of Christian based education with prayers and scripture was taught. Up until 1974, there were only 3 truly independent “Christian” Schools in Australia all started by Dutch immigrants (eg Rehoboth) plus the traditional church based Grammar Schools.

From 1975 till today a great number of independent Schools have started, partly due to the change in Government funding arrangements of the early 1970’s, enabling people of average incomes to afford an independent education of their choosing that had been only available to the wealthy.

Dale Christian School was founded in 1983 by the Armadale Congregational Church. It began with 21 students and two teachers in the vacant manse adjacent the old church site in Church Avenue and transferred to the present 2.4 hectare site in Forest Road in 1986.



***Children play as new classrooms are built***

Out of recognition for the way in which the emphasis of public education had drifted away from biblical principles, concerned parents established Dale as a place where the Christian home and its teachings would be complemented.

From those early days, the vision and faith of the founding families and the support and commitment of the church, has seen a steady growth in numbers until the School has now over 200 students and 20 staff for the 2001 year. The Lord has always been keenly sought every each step of the way. The road has been rocky at times but the number of people who have prayed for the School has meant that the Lord has been pleased to bless.

The school has also been a focal point for Christians around the district to rally together and many friendships that otherwise would not have been possible have flourished. The opportunity to share the Gospel with families presents itself daily in the common bond of educating our children.

Educational ideas are constantly changing and will continue into the new century but the Dale Christian School will be there to provide the platform for children to be educated in a way that will honour and respect the things that the Bible holds to be important for the child of God.

Please join with me in supporting the School as it launches into the new century and that the aims and objectives of the School will remain firmly focused on the Lord as we still have time to educate our children so that they may “Grow Up Into Christ”.

*David Brown  
Feb 2001*

## Armadale Congregational Church - Dale Christian School - 1999

Written by Mrs Lyn Miller - Teacher 15 years

Dale Christian School is a ministry of the Armadale Congregational Church. It commenced in July 1983 as the result of the vision of a number of church members and the need of a group of parents connected with the church.

The school operated in the church hall in Third Road for the remainder of 1983 before moving into the manse at the beginning of 1984 where it remained for two years. At the beginning of 1986 the school was relocated to its present site.



**Scholars who attended during first year of operation of school**

removalist or teacher as we grew, spread and rearranged rooms and moved. However, I have many happy and special memories of the early years when we turned disasters into successes as on the occasion of the library flood, when all staff and children were filling bags with sand and sweeping water to stop the water doing too much damage in the library. When we wanted to plant seed for the oval we cleared the ground of stones and pieces of bitumen with a "Stone-a-thon". A hard task turned into a fun event.

The tenth anniversary celebrations were a highlight with a weekend of celebration and fun. There have been so many terrific concerts and fetes when the whole community, parents, children and staff became involved.

From small humble beginnings Dale Christian School has developed into an attractive, modern school that has lovely classes and surroundings. There is very little left today to remind us of the drive-in and its bitumen waves that put a huge strain on the band-aid supply.

We praise the Lord for his generous provision of our wonderful facilities. Many faithful church members, both past and present, have laboured hard physically and in prayer to enable the progress of Dale Christian School. I consider it a huge privilege to have been part of the Lord's work at Dale over the past 15 years. It has certainly been the source of great joy for me. What a wonderful outreach this little school is in our community. Your vision, perseverance and care have made a difference.

The Lord willing, may we continue to see Dale serve the community for many years to come.

Mrs Mavis Creagh was the first head teacher serving the school for the first three years. Mrs Margaret Hewitt and Mrs Lyn Miller filled the head teacher roll for 6 months each of 1987. Dr Brian Knowles became headmaster in January of 1988 serving in this capacity until July 1994. He was replaced by Mr Raymond Shanhun.

The school has grown enormously from two small classes in the first eighteen months, to eight classes of about 25 children, from kindergarten to Year 7 in 1999.

Facilities were fairly primitive in the early years and sometimes I wondered if I was a



*Lyn Miller Mavis Creagh (Goodlet) Margaret Hewitt*

## "THE DRILL OF THE FOOTHILLS"

Rev Beukers was inducted to the district ministry at Kelmscott Church on Sunday March 5th 1915 and welcomed to Armadale on the following Tuesday. He was well versed in the art of journalism. The publication with the above title was first published in April 1915 and was an integral part of his ministry during the three years 1915 to 1918. It helped keep local people informed of the activities of Christian people elsewhere as well as being a local bulletin or news sheet for the churches of the district Committee which included the preaching roster.

Pastor Beukers visited the wheat belt area including Pithara and Dalwallinu to organise mission work there and much success was experienced. He was away on 6 occasions totalling 60 days, which the district committee considered was difficult to sustain.

Record is made in the Nov/Dec 1917 copy of the 6th annual report of the district committee; one item of interest is that there were 200 children attending the 5 Sunday schools. Another tells that each Sunday provision is made for six and seven services per week, three of which are taken by the pastor on Sunday (plus some week days at out-stations) and laymen do the rest. Difficulty was experienced filling the pulpit but services continued. It is also recorded how an extraordinary winter had affected the attendances one particular year.

Other branches of the church work continued. Sunday school under Mr Serls; Women's Guild under Mrs Serls, Soldiers Comfort Society under Mrs Burgess. Annual church reports were submitted, "under the dire darkness of war and as a church we have been greatly affected". An item in another edition tells of men having gone into the services without having been officially farewelled and "God bless you" said to them. Deep concern was felt and the church was called together to discuss it; the outcome being a public farewell attended by local government personnel and representatives from other organisations, in which 22 men were given an appropriate send off.

An article entitled "Current History" complains, "Home Mission machinery has grown too expensive for our denomination". Appeals for financial support were not heeded, so an auction of produce at the annual reunion of churches was held to assist the district churches Fund, which paid the travelling expenses etc, incurred in the work.

It also gives the train times from and to Perth to assist people in their travel arrangements to the reunion. Local and eastern states dignitaries were to be present. Also there is a detailed account of the work in the Bunbury area.

A note of interest concerns the Wongong Church – "Fortnightly services continue and the ministers are taken out there by horse and trap by a Mr Mills". There is still a relic of that church on the corner of Rowley Rd and Eleventh Rd - a set of steps. The entrance faced Eleventh Rd.

There follows a long article about SDA'S and another about RC's.

There were articles in each issue about the "Soldiers' Comfort Society" and 41 parcels were sent with more ready to go - September issue 1917.

In more than one issue Rev Beukers has written strongly about the drink problem, as it affected the troops and those at home. Mrs Beukers introduced a temperance pledge book to the JCE. Several children signed it. Following that, 87 children of all ages and persuasions have been to sign and on Sunday Aug 20 1916, they were invited to a morning service where Rev Beukers spoke to them and then they stood while he prayed for them.

Mention has been made of the journeys by horse and trap taking ministers to services. A story from Roleystone is a good illustration of the difficulties encountered.

'On a recent Sunday it happened that Roleystone and Kelmscott seemed likely to be without a preacher. The one appointed intimated that it was inconvenient for him to come and application was made to the Lay-preachers' Association. No preacher was available and Mr Fancote, who had agreed to drive the preacher to Roleystone said that no-one had come by the train that Sunday morning.

"I'll get Mr Savage", he said to the pastor, but Mr Savage was on his block, 3 miles beyond Roleystone Church, trying to keep the bush fires within bounds. Nothing daunted, Mr Fancote got his Sunday clothes, put them in the trap and set out to find Mr Savage. He located him somewhere in the forest a

quarter of an hour before service time. Mr Savage was as black as a lump of charcoal, but there was no help for it. He washed himself in the creek, changed his garments behind a tree and drove back with Mr Fancote to where the shepherd-less flock was waiting'.

An interesting note tells of the services beginning at 6:45pm instead of 7:00pm. "This enables visiting soldiers and others who have to go by the 8:09 train to Perth to be present. It also enables preachers who come from the city to get back at a reasonable hour. It is a very full days work for a man to leave the suburbs at 8am and not get back until midnight when he comes to take a couple of services. We've got to cherish our preachers, for they are getting scarce".

## THE STORY OF THE OUTSTATIONS

### WONGONG (not WUNGONG) MISSION

It should be noted that this name was spelt and pronounced as above by my wife's grandparents (the Leonards, who were members of this church). At the beginning of this article I desire to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Ian Boersma for additional information to that which I had derived from Armadale History House. (There is a more detailed paper by him presently placed in History House). One set of Wongong minutes 1921 to 1928, occasional reference in Armadale Cong minutes and "The Drill of the Foothills" a monthly magazine edited by Rev John Beukers in the 1915-18 period. I have included Wongong in the Armadale report because Mr Serls and others gave a lot of support to this group. Mr Serls for 33 years until shortly before he died in 1952.

It appears that the first Christian worship services were held under a gum tree and conducted by Mr Serls. The small parcel of land for the building on the corner of Eleventh and Rowley roads was donated by the landowner and it was opened on Saturday 15th November 1913. There is a set of steps showing this building faced Eleventh Road still there February 2001.

Early records show that in May 1919, a petition was sent to the State Education Dept to commence a school in the building. An inspector was sent to look at it and suggested sundry alterations be made. Mr Serls and Mr Briggs were authorised to do them but the department refused to accede to the request.

In 1915, services were held on Thursdays at 8:00pm and Sundays at 7:30pm. It seems there was difficulty in maintaining the services because of the weather, though a Sunday school anniversary was held in mid July.

In September "The Drill" reported, "It is impossible to do anything at Wongong. Only a few people live in the locality, they are all a distance away from the church building, the flats have been under water most of the time and there has been a good deal of sickness.

Sometimes there has been a preacher and no congregation and the reverse has also happened. It is to be hoped that the next two months will be more favourable and that the congregations will get to the church and find that the preachers have kept their appointments".

In 1916, services were every Sunday and once a fortnight a weeknight service. Sunday school was regularly held during the period 1915,16 & 17 due to the faithfulness of three ladies. Junior Christian Endeavour was also on the programme for children but it ceased in late 1916. In 1917, the services had reduced to fortnightly meetings at 3:00pm Sundays, though it seems there was a period when services must have ceased as a report in "The Drill" stated "it was felt desirable to endeavour to hold services again at Wongong".

Name and Constitution	
This Church shall be known as the Wongong Congregational Church. The membership of the church shall be open to any person giving credible evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who is endeavouring to live according to His precepts.	Mary Weston
Emmeline Bodicourt	Mr H. Weston
Mary J. Smith	Mrs A. Weston
François Roberts	Mr A. Mally
R. G. Bellingham	Mrs H. Mally
Clara E. Roberts	Mrs K. Shaw
John H. Kirk	Mr H. Leonard
William J. Smith	Mrs M. Leonard
Doris Bellingham	Mrs Masters
Arthur A. Mally	
Edith E. Graham	
Janet B. Mercer	
Mr J. Serls	
Mrs M. J. Serls	

### Constitution of Wongong Church

In November 1921, the church debt had been paid off and in March 1922, the district committee of the four other Congregational Churches of the area (Roleystone, Kelmscott, Armadale and Bedfordale) claimed all the finances of Wongong, which resulted in considerable dissension. The Wongong people refused and in June decided that no offerings would be taken, just donations would be received for the upkeep of the buildings. In May it was decided that they would carry on the Mission separately from the District Committee. I have not seen any other reference that this church was in the District Committee. The Dec 1923 annual report shows a list of members that will be included, with Mr Horace Weedon as secretary. The Weedons, Maltbys, Shaws and Leonards all migrated from England (from the same church) in the early 1920's. Mrs Maltby had been a member of the Huddersfield Choral Society and had a magnificent contralto voice - she was the Wongong choir mistress. Her daughters, Esther and Grace also had lovely soprano voices. These families came out under the group settlement scheme and started life in Australia on the Peel Estate which proved a disaster and within a few short years they moved into the Armadale area close to Wongong - Weedons and Leonards to properties on 7th Road and Maltbys and Shaw's on the flats near the railway line in the Wongong area. Maltbys later moved to Bedfordale.

In 1925, a motion was passed to add a room to the church building, which was duly built and later it is recorded that the church was lined. In November 1928, a porch was added to the entrance of the building.

In January 1927, a Sunday school, picnic was held at Serpentine Fall's with a total of 60 children and adults attending. There is also a story from February 1918 about a picnic at Wongong Bridge, Bunbury Road (Waterways Farm now). Harvest Festivals and church anniversary services were a regular feature on the church calendar and were very much a feature of the church as were, it seems, very frequent social gatherings. Lantern lectures to which people paid an entrance fee seemed to occur almost every month. Their purpose was to reduce the church debt.

Mr Serls was a strong supporter of the work and attended regularly to conduct services. It is recorded on 9th Oct 1927, that he had completed 9 years of service. In April of that year he was offered a payment of twenty pounds but refused and after some discussion, a horse and sulky was purchased for him at a cost of 25 pounds. On one occasion he gave an address on "The Jew and the Signs of the Times" which led to him being asked to speak on this subject a number of occasions.

It is recorded that on Oct 1927, an egg and flower service was held when the donations of eggs filled a kerosene case, which was sent to the Perth Public Hospital (now Royal Perth). In Dec 1927, the records show "a very happy but sad event occurred". One of the male members was married to a lady from elsewhere and they moved away from the district.

A wooden kero case was a very common feature of pre 1950's. It contained two 18-litre tins of kerosene used mainly for lighting. The boxes made very good shelving and the tins made very good buckets.

One of the events fondly remembered by local residents was the Harvest festival, at which time a display of produce would be set up at the front of the church. The produce, mainly fruit, would be donated to the church (probably sold off). The photograph album of Jack and Winnie Kirk contained a snapshot of one such display. Jack and Winnie Kirk also recall that a silver tree was a regular feature at this type of festival.

The church must have grown in stature because In December 1928, the Congregational Union asked the church to send delegates to the annual meetings.

A document dated 28/9/1928 makes reference to "Mr J Serls - Wongong Pastor".



*Wongong Sunday school - 1939*

After the death of Mr and Mrs Bodicoat the locals had two memorial plaques made and hung these in the hall. When, in the 1950's the hall fell into disuse, these plaques were recovered by their grandson, Jack Kirk. In 1988, Jack donated them to be hung in the reconstructed Armadale Congregational Church in Minnawarra Park.

Mr Serls retired from his involvement at Wongong in 1948 and died in 1952.

From May 1951, the hall was hired for the purpose of holding worship services by a small group of Dutch migrants who had recently arrived in Western Australia and who later formed the Free Reformed Church of Armadale. At this stage the Congregational Church was no longer using the hall for worship services and there was talk of relocating it. The locals wanted to keep it for socials, so they were very pleased that it was being used again. The Free Reformed Church used the hall for approximately one year, but as their numbers increased, they were pressed to find another venue.

Jack and Winnie Kirk remember the preacher using a large pulpit Bible in the church. Some time between 1955 and 1958, the Kirks visited the church and found that vandals had damaged it. Ceilings and wall lining had been attacked and the Bible had likewise been treated in an undignified manner.

The recollections of Julie Grayson, who lived on 13 Eleventh Road, are as follows: "The church came into use again during the early fifties. Mr Searle was the minister who visited from Byford. Mr Searle gave a service each Sunday and Sunday school operated for several years.

- 1953: The names of the following members are entered into a roll dated 8/11/1953:  
E E Grahams (Armadale), R Johnson, M Clark, R Pollard, E Johnson, M Lister, B Johnson,  
M Wainwright, T Smith, A Smith, S Robins, J Murray, D B Murray, (indecipherable), R C Smith,  
C J Smith (Armadale) and H Leonard.
- 1954: At a special church meeting held on 21/2/1954, a constitution was adopted for the Wongong Congregational Church. Rev Ewan M Watts signed the constitution as moderator and Mrs D B Murray signed as secretary.

In 1963, the church was no longer in regular use and subject to vandalism. A letter from Rev F G Searle of Byford, who had a lot of involvement at Wongong, indicates that it was to be dismantled on 9th March 1963. The materials were to be re-used mostly for the Roleystone Conference Centre. The memorial plaques are now in the old church in Minnawarra Park.

Mr Jeff Green of Armadale History House recalled seeing an old hall in the yard of the Roleystone Congregational Church around this time. He believed that it was there only temporarily and was being used for revivalist meetings or something of the sort. He said that it is possible that this was the former Wongong hall, as it fitted the general description of that building.

Mrs Kate Regan observed that the hall was no longer being used to the extent that it had been because television was changing people's social habits and that when the district lost its hall the community drifted apart. "And when the church was removed - I think it was removed up to Roleystone or somewhere, I'm not sure what became of it, it became a boy scouts or something like that - of course the whole district just fell to pieces because there was no meeting place".

## BANJUP

With the Armadale Church being established the people looked for the opportunity of supporting groups of Christians in the surrounding areas.

A separate article has been written about Wongong from research done in a minute book photocopy and "Drill of the Foothills" at History House.

Banjup is also featured in "The Drill", having a Sunday school and church service held in the home of my wife's paternal grandparents, Moyles, until they left the district. When this occurred the meeting place was three miles further from Armadale, which made it very difficult for the minister and lay preachers to the extent that it had to become much more self-sufficient. Transport was much more basic than now. A story is told of a speaker going out from Armadale in very heavy rain and being soaked to the skin on arrival and so were many of the Sunday school children. It was an anniversary. The start and finish times of this work is not known. The above event took place during Rev Beukers time.

## WESTFIELD

The Congregational work commenced on 11th May 1937. The church was built on a property donated by a local identity situated near the end of Westfield Road. Across the road was the school and two tennis courts. Not far away was the home of Mr and Mrs Ralphs to which was attached the Post Office and this was close to the Westfield railway siding. Mrs Ralphs was very influential in the district and a faithful supporter of the church and Sunday school. The Armadale - Jandakot - Fremantle line was closed in 1964, along with a lot of other lines around the State.

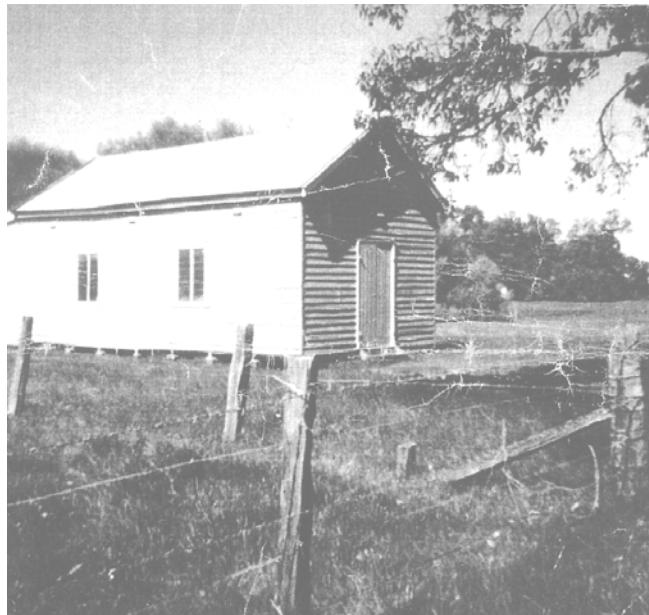
The church building erected in 1936 was also the local community hall where dances, card parties etc plus church services and Sunday school and of course tennis and school were an integral part of the local life.

There has been a comparatively recent change in the configuration of the roads. Westfield Rd becomes Hesketh Rd, which terminates at Poad St - formerly Seventh Rd (western end). Lake Rd in that area is on the old Westfield Rd alignment. Brigade Rd is also on the Westfield Road alignment.

The church has recently been turned into a house and is located in the triangle between Lake and Brigade roads. A cheese factory was built nearby, but has been demolished and a brick fire station is situated across the road.

There aren't a lot of entries in the Armadale Congregational minutes about Westfield, which was one of the outstations. One says that the old Wongong organ was given to Westfield in July 1967, which could be an indication of when Wongong closed. Another states that the Armadale deacons were to take over the work in February 1970.

One informant says that services in the 1950's were held monthly with the attendance of 20-30. The Sunday school consisted mainly of four families with 15 or 16 in attendance. We have a photo showing about 24 children, which is undated. This number reduced to about 6 before it closed. In former years they walked, but in later years they were picked up and rode in the back of a Ute (it would not be allowed now).



*Westfield church building*



*The children of Westfield Sunday school*

Sunday school anniversaries were always held for a number of years, complete with a tiered platform for the children to sit on. After the event, participants would adjourn to a home for refreshments.

The Roleystone Congregational YPSCE attended from time to time on Wednesdays to encourage the local young people.

It is not known when the work closed, however it would have probably been in the early 1970's. Record is also made of Armadale people visiting Whitby Falls hostel for men and Karnet prison.

## Armadale Congregational Church Ministry - 1964-1969

### The Ministry of the Rev Glen L Lock and Mrs Roma Lock

I received a call to come to the Armadale district pastorate in mid-1963. After much prayer and searching to discover which Armadale it was - we firmly believed that it was God's will that we accept the call and move from South Australia to Western Australia. I had three churches in my South Australian pastorate (Coomandook, Ki Ki and Coonalpyn) so another pastorate of three churches was not something new.

We came a little like Abraham - not knowing where we were going, save knowing that we were in His Will. The churches took a complete step of faith - not having met the man they had called and we also took a step of faith, having never met the people we had been called to serve. We both believed that this partnership in Ministry was "God ordained".

Surprisingly, both the pastorates in South Australia and Western Australia, have a common link in the Rev John Beukers. His photograph was in the vestry of the Coomandook Church and the same photo was in the Armadale Church! Before he came to Armadale (1912-1915) he had served in the Coomandook pastorate! So we too, came, as he did, but 50 years later to serve the people of this area.

The ministry of the Armadale Church was intertwined with the ministry of Kelmscott and Roleystone during this period.

THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE was initially responsible for the pastorate of Armadale, Kelmscott and Roleystone. The members of the committee were elected from each church. The churches were autonomous, but were responsible for the supplying the finance for the operations of the pastorate as a whole. By late 1969, because of the numerical growth in the population of the district, each church had enough members to consider having their own pastor. The committee was disbanded in June 1970 after many years of faithful service.

CHURCH SERVICES. In 1964, there were five church services each Sunday, - Armadale, Kelmscott, Roleystone, Westfield (monthly) with Forrestdale added later. A Roster of competent lay-preachers assisted Glen by taking some of the services. Combined services in the evenings, were held in rotation at each of the churches with the young people often assisting.

The Armadale Church was regarded as the centre of the pastorate and retained the manse, because it was next to their church.

SPECIAL SERVICES - AT ARMADALE - were regularly held to attract the non-Christians parents of the Sunday school Scholars, CE and Youth Group Members. Among these were Special Mother's Day Service - with the Children taking part; Family Services; Christmas Family Services; The 'Renewal of Marriage Vows' (June, 1969) and Community Services - eg CWA and St John's Ambulance.

HOUSE CHURCH was held weekly with up to thirty attending. There was an emphasis on prayer and outreach to the district. Topics discussed were biblically based and often of a practical nature. Missionary speakers were welcome visitors. A ladies Bible study commenced some time later.

BAPTISMS. On Sunday, 21st May, 1967, Glen baptised a group of thirteen adults from the three churches. It was a combined witness to the Saving Grace of Christ. The service was held in the Dalkeith Baptist Church, where the pastor was Arthur Payne. Arthur and Jane had left the Armadale Church to train for the Baptist ministry in 1966. They are still in ministry and are in the northwest of WA. Other baptisms have taken place since this first service.

The first baptisms were a pivotal point in the whole of our ministry among the three churches. The Holy Spirit was bringing deep conviction among both young and old. This led eventually to the open confession of their faith and was a continuing spiritual influence in the life of the churches.

MISSIONARY INVOLVEMENT. There was an emphasis on world-wide missionary work throughout 1964-1969. Increased support for missions was evident in each church. A further direct response to the missionary message was the number of young people who trained at PBI and moved on to further ministry at home and overseas - eg John Richardson, who became a pastor and for two years was Glen's Assistant pastor; Jim and Nellie Bosma who served with the European Christian Mission and today Jim is the Australian Director. Glen was a lecturer at PBI - Perth Bible Institute and served on the council of the college.

The Sunday school collected money for the London Missionary Society's (LMS) Missionary Ship the "John Williams" - part of the LMS outreach in the Pacific. LMS was the World-wide Congregational Missionary Society.

One Sunday a month, a missionary tea, followed by a service, was held at the Roleystone Church, The young people of Armadale supported this each month. The Church Life discussion groups grew out of the missionary emphasis.

'MISSIONS' to reach the community were planned by a special committee as regularly as possible. The responses were pleasing. Eg Aerial Missions - 1964; Billy Graham film - July 26th 1968. Involvement in the Leighton Ford Crusade in 1969; Evangelistic Crusade at Armadale in March 1969 by singing evangelist - Rev Paul Chang. There were others but these were the largest undertaken.

THE LEIGHTON FORD CRUSADE - 22-29 March 1969. The three churches were fully involved in all aspects of the crusade. The District Crusade Committee was thorough in their preparation and tireless in their thoroughness. The church provided ushers, choir members, counsellors, transport with a nightly bus; prayer meetings were held - before, during and after the crusade. This all created an enthusiasm for outreach that continued long after the crusade was over.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR JUNIOR - CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR - In October 1967, Mrs J Bailey, assisted by Mrs S Bramford and Mrs M Saw, began the Armadale JCE. In Dec 1967, the Armadale JCE came first in the State CE Sports Day, with Susan Black the champion girl. Success followed as the members sat for the CE Exams. Many achieved excellent results.

INTERMEDIATE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR began in April, 1969, meeting on Friday evenings. As the juniors graduated, there needed to be a CE group to encourage them to go on.

YOUNG PEOPLE - The YP's were a very enthusiastic, active group, interested in missions and assisting in Services. Their keenness is evident in the numbers that are still active in Christian service.

SOUTH SUBURBAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP - The SSYF was formed in early 1964, when it was found that most of the churches 'South of the River' had evangelical pastors. About one hundred young people from Victoria Park, East Cannington, Rivervale, Armadale, Kelmscott and Roleystone formed this combined group. This resulted in rallies, youth camps and other activities to encourage them in their Christian life. As a direct result many of these, many of the "Young People" are still in active Christian ministry today. Several entered missionary service and some the Home Ministry.

SUNDAY SCHOOL The Armadale SS, as a direct result of the DVBS, grew to 150 scholars from kindergarten to high school students. With a change of service time, the SS was at 9:45am to 10:45am and the Service at 11am. This largely solved the problem of space and recruiting teachers. The Sunday school anniversary was three services - normally on one Sunday, followed by a prize giving night on the following Friday. An anniversary tea was also on that evening. The evenings were popular with families - especially in 1967, when it became a fancy dress evening!

- Cradle Roll was begun in July 1965 - thus maintaining a complete link with entire families.
- Special Cradle Roll Service was held when the little ones were welcomed in the kindergarten department of the Sunday school for the first time.

DAILY VACATIONAL BIBLE SCHOOL (DVBS or also known as Holiday Club). The DVBS was first held in the September holidays for five mornings from 9:30am-12pm in 1964 in the Armadale church hall. The DVBS continued for six years to 1969 and attracted children from the state school scripture classes, as well as the Sunday school. As the years passed the numbers attending daily rose from sixty to one hundred and twenty. There was no charge - only a plate of morning tea. Mrs Lock planned and prepared the material for teaching the Bible lessons and the craftwork for the children.

She had a team of dedicated Helpers. The DVBS catered for Children from Grade 1-7. High School students were willing to come and assist with supervision and help in any way they could. Mothers came and assisted with the morning tea. Later we heard that the Armadale DVBS was the first to be held in Western Australia!

**SCRIPTURE IN SCHOOLS.** Glen, with able help, maintained a full schedule of scripture classes in Armadale, as well as Kelmscott and Roleystone. As the district population grew, it was not uncommon at Armadale for the teachers to have from sixty to ninety students in a class! Some classes were so big that they were transferred to the Armadale church hall. A pianist came and helped teach simple Christian songs and choruses. Glen took the classes at the Armadale high school on his own.

**LADIES WORK.** The ARMADALE LADIES GUILD met regularly and was active in raising money for the various projects of the church. In 1967, they published a recipe book to sell. Two Fêtes - i.e. sale of crafts, produce, jams, etc - were held in May and September. Each year a special Ladies Day Service was held in thankfulness to God for the ministry of women in the Armadale Church. HOMEMAKERS began on the 20th March 1967 under the guidance of Mrs Jean Bailey. The meetings regularly attracted a large group of non-Christian women and we trust that the friendship shown and the Word of God presented, reached the hearts and lives of the women who came. A large group of church women were actively involved in the yearly planning and preparation. Attendances ranged from sixty to one hundred and forty! - depending on the topic of the speaker for the evening. The aim of Homemakers was to reach the women in the community and that was certainly achieved.

**CHURCH CAMPS - FAMILY CAMPS.** Camps were arranged for the older primary **and** high school children by Ted and Jean Bailey. In June 1967, with a committee, the Baileys arranged the first ARK Family Camp at Point Peron. In 1969, the Family Camp (May 30-June 2) discussed the theme "Handling the Gospel in the Armadale Shire". The result was ideas and suggestions that enabled each church to reach out in the years that have followed. The practical outcomes of each camp were appreciated by all who attended them. The fellowship between the churches grew as a result.

**YOUTH CAMPS** were arranged by the various youth groups within the churches and contributed to the outreach of each of the groups.

"**OUTSIDE MINISTRIES**" were undertaken by the churches. They were many and varied. People from Armadale were involved in - Services at the Karnet prison; Whitby Falls "Sunday school" church. Pilgrim House - the Congregational Home for the Aged at East Fremantle; The Over 60's Club - first begun by Rev Ewan Watts, as a church and community ministry, but later it became only a community group. Up until then (1968) the pastor gave devotions and Christian activities were part of each meeting. It was held in the Armadale church hall.

**CO-LABOURERS - TOGETHER WITH GOD.** The work accomplished during our six years in the pastorate could not have been done without the willing, enthusiastic help of so many from each of the churches. This report has been written in acknowledgement of their sacrificial help and fellowship in the Gospel.

I submit this resume of our time of Ministry with thankfulness to God for allowing us to share in this important period of the life and ministry of the Armadale Church.

*Pastor Glen Lock*

#### **Mrs Roma Lock adds:**

The installation of the new kitchen at the manse in 1964 cost \$1552. The old lean-to was removed and a new kitchen, laundry, bathroom and toilet replaced it. It is the same one now used by the restaurant but the laundry is now the cool room, bathroom the office. The toilet has an outside door on to the ramp at the back.

The floor covering is the same one as was put down in 1964. The tiles were industrial weight and guaranteed "never to wear out".

The kitchen could have been 'opened' in March 1964 - we lived in the manse without the above facilities for at least 6-8 weeks!

"Numbers" in the district, i.e. population, in 1964 was only 4,500 approximately! Congregational, Anglican and Catholic were the only churches. We saw the district "mushroom" over the six years we were here. There was a tremendous influx of UK Migrants living in two or three estates eg Landall. Initially there were no Australians or other nationalities there at all.

## A Pastor's Wife Remembers

### Helen Thyer Johansen

In Matthew 12:19-21 we read of the warning not to lay up treasures for yourself where moth and rust corrupts, "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also".

In November 1974, Hedley and I received a call from the Armadale Congregational Church to enter into full time ministry, this meant for us a big challenge in the Lord's work. We had already been on part time ministry since July 1971, which meant much travelling from Darlington where we lived to Armadale each Sunday for lunch and dinner at night. This gave us a wonderful opportunity to meet up with folk in a great way and to get to know them more personally. We also travelled each Friday night to Youth Group.

When the invitation came for a move to Armadale to the manse it was met with some resistance from myself. Hedley and I had just moved into our new home in Darlington and I had made up my mind that I would take some moving until one morning as I was polishing the front step of our home the Lord spoke to me regarding Matthew 12:19-21. He touched my heart and I had no argument with Him. He humbled my heart and I knew that Armadale was where we were meant to be.

Hedley remained teaching at Wesley College during our stay at Armadale and so enabled us not to be a burden on the church financially and so we commenced work at the Armadale Congregational Church. It is very hard for me to mention all the wonderful experiences we had during our service for the Lord in this church. We endured pain as well but in it all, the Lord was always there. God is a righteous God and He is just and He kept us through all these things. He gave us much blessing. Psalm 7:17.

For myself, I enjoyed all aspects of the work. The ladies Bible studies were a real inspiration. It was great encouragement to see the women coming each week to study God's Word. Having babies and small children didn't deter them from meeting each week. The youth group also was a great inspiration. Our aim was to have these young people dedicate their lives to the Lord wholeheartedly. Now in the year 2000, we still see many of these people serving the Lord in a real purposeful way. They had the exuberance and excitement of life and they also had the caring and loving attitude towards the older people in the church. One of the things that gave us great joy was to see respect and love for the Lord but also to the senior members in the way they mingled and spoke to as many as they could after the service (a real sign to us of church working in their hearts).

There is not enough room here to express all the joys we had at Armadale Congregational Church. There were so many blessings. Hedley would often say, "We are so blessed".

In 1979, we had to make plans to leave this work. It was very sad to make the move. Hedley's mother passed away and we knew there were new needs and obligations family wise for the future. We left with heavy hearts but we also knew that God's plans for the future were in His hands.

Sometime after Hedley had been called to be with the Lord in 1990, the church decided to name one of the school ovals "The Hedley Thyer Oval". It was a great honour to bestow upon his memory but the greatest honour is to know that his name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Finally the words of Psalm 92:1-4 will always be with me. We are meant to be thankful to the Lord and to sing His praises and to declare His steadfast love in the morning and His faithfulness by night.

*Helen Thyer Johansen*

## Pastor John Simons

### February 1979 - November 1985

My wife Gladys and I, with our three teenage children, returned from missionary service in Malawi, Africa, in 1978 and in December of that year I was asked to take a morning service at the Armadale Congregational Church, followed by lunch with Helen and Hedley Thyer in the church manse. A short time later, I was asked to consider joining the church as an associate pastor, which I accepted and began work in February 1979. At the end of that year, Hedley resigned and I accepted the position of pastor as from January 1980. My family and I moved into the manse next door to the church (now the Manse Restaurant in Church Avenue).

The church had a very active programme. Besides the regular Sunday services, there was the All Age Sunday school, Teen Scene, Christian Endeavour, Youth Camps, Scripture in schools. Ladies Guild. Young Marrieds, Homemakers, Craft, Mid week Bible Study and Prayer Meeting, KYB Ladies' Bible studies and Carols by Candlelight at Christmas. Shirley Bramford lead the choir, which was always much appreciated and the musicians were committed people.

Forrestdale Sunday school, Mundijong Happy Hour and Challis Good News Club were other regular activities conducted by church members.

The leadership of the church was committed and hardworking. The deacons were: Neville Castlehow, John Bramford (church secretary), Joan Saw, Peter Moses, John Ansell, Garth Butcher and Harvey Richardson. Mr Pascoe had served faithfully for many years as Treasurer before the Lord called him home. Others were always available for the practical jobs including Henk van Asselt, Arnold Brolsma and many others.

Youth work was always a strength of the church. One of the highlights of 1979 was the participation of the young people and Pastor Thyer in the music and choir of the National Christian Endeavour convention held in Perth. Hans van Asselt who had been a valuable youth leader for sometime, was appointed Associate Pastor in October 1982. The young people were a happy lot. Some of them went to study at Bible College. Many were active in leadership in the church activities and much of this was attributed to the strong Christian Endeavour programmes of previous years.

Emmaus School when it started used the church hall, the kitchen area and sometimes even the sitting room of the Manse. Later they obtained their present property in Bedfordale and moved there.

The church started Dale Christian School in 1983. As the school developed during that year it was found necessary for us to move out of the Manse into a rented house in Harrison Road so that the school could use the Manse for classrooms.

As a pastor I found the congregation, on the whole, to be happy, alive, willing and committed to the work, which was the fruit of their commitment to God. The church grew and to accommodate the increase, the old type pulpit was removed, the platform was reduced in size, the foyer extended and cry room added.

With the growth of the church, it became evident that we needed to find another property. It was also an opportune time to sell because of the development of the Armadale shopping complex. The property was sold but we were able to still use the buildings until the present property was purchased.

Mr Jim Bosma, a member of the church who now serves as President of the European Christian Mission (ECM) often visited to speak to the congregation. We were always challenged and blessed by his visits and preaching.

The work was very encouraging and there was a lovely spirit, but due to ill health and with much regret, I had to resign in November 1985.

Gladys and I praise God for the memories of nearly seven years of blessed times of good fellowship with the people of the Armadale Congregational Church.

*John Simons*

## **Armadale Congregational Church**

### **Hans and Yvonne van Asselt**

As the Armadale Congregational Church celebrates its centenary this year, its impact upon the local community may never be fully catalogued nor evaluated. The full impact of the Congregational Church on the Armadale district and the people who have been associated with this church rests ultimately with the Lord Jesus Christ whom they have served.

Our involvement with the Armadale Congregational Church was during the last decades of the Twentieth Century and has brought us varied and challenging experiences.

### **General Overview**

The van Asselt family began attending the Congregational Church in Armadale during 1968, the year that both Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated and wheat belt town of Meckering was flattened by an earthquake. My association with "Armadale Cong" was to last another twenty-two years. Then, I attended a thriving Sunday school, youth group managed by Mr Neville Castlehow and the church pastored by Reverend Glen Lock.

After somewhat of a "wilderness" experience, I returned with my wife to attend the "Cong" church in 1974. In 1978, the church under the direction of Reverend Hedley Thyer extended an invitation to me, to become a leader in the Young People's group and assist Mr N Castlehow. The following year I was given the responsibility of leading the YP group.

In 1980, Rev John Simons replaced Rev Thyer as pastor of the "Cong" church and in late 1982, I became the "Assistant to the Pastor" on a part time basis. Four years later Pastor David Kernohan replaced Rev Simons and the church called me to become the "Associate Pastor" on a part time basis and I was inducted on the 6th April 1986. It was also during this time that I commenced some study at the West Australian Bible College (Wattle Grove).

By May of 1987, I ceased a large part of my ministry at the Armadale Congregational Church to commence full time study. The membership committed themselves to supporting me two days a week during my study programme. I continued to have oversight of the youth work during my study. It was during this time, that Reverend Neville Blackhall who was called from Queensland and started his ministry at "Armadale Cong" church.

I completed my Diploma and Bachelor of Arts in Biblical studies in 1990. That was also the year that I commenced as part time Chaplain at Roleystone District High School. We received a call to become the youth pastor at the Gosnells Baptist Church beginning in 1991 and so our involvement at the Armadale Congregational Church came to an end. Our children continued to attend the Dale Christian School.

### **Reflections**

The time spent at Armadale Congregational Church is a time that we look back on with many fond memories. Our journey toward full time pastoral work had its genesis at the "Cong" church in the midst of many fine Christian people, some of whom we still call good friends. Our journey with the youth has been particularly gratifying over the years; most continue to walk in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The privilege of working with the pastors and working among people at Armadale have enriched us and assisted me in becoming a pastor.

In the early days, the preaching at Forrestdale, a work sustained by the Castlehow family, was invigorating. No less were the FIEC. Easter Youth camps, at Dryandra and Cunderdin where young people were encouraged and many renewed their faith in Jesus Christ. The encounter camps at Keswick to build young Christians in the faith became the water shed for other camping programmes by other churches. The involvement in the CE movement was a challenge and I cannot forget the rally we organised at the River Road hall. Many other events come back to mind, too many to recount here.

The Youth Ministry was a team event and I worked with many faithful leaders during my years at Armadale.

During my time within the leadership team at the "Cong" church many changes occurred: the commencement of Emmaus Christian School, the Dale Christian School, the relocation of the church from the centre of Armadale to the rebuilding programme at the old drive-in site that the church had purchased.

The years at Armadale Congregational Church were good years, not all easy, however we can testify to God's faithfulness. Overall those years have helped to shape us both and our family, it was a privilege to share in the journey of many wonderful people at the "Cong" church.

*Pastor Hans and Yvonne van Asselt*

## Reflections from a Pastor

### Pastor Neville Blackhall (1989-1995)

I was called to be the pastor of the Armadale Congregational Church from early 1989 until we concluded our ministry in early 1996. I have endeavoured to recall some of the highlights during that time. One should begin at the beginning with our trip from Queensland to Perth. We, that is Tricia, Matthew (17 years) and myself departed Ipswich early in January, taking a leisurely trip down the East Coast of Australia as far as Adelaide where we put the car on the Indian Pacific and we enjoyed crossing the Nullarbor to Perth by rail.

We were given a great welcome at the East Perth railway station. Looking out the carriage window, Tricia recognised Neville Castlehow from photographs that Shirley Bramford had sent across to us. We were taken to the Bramford's for breakfast and then to Fifth Rd to the house that was home until the Manse was built. The Rev Glen Lock, who had served as interim pastor before we arrived, conducted the induction service.

The initial attendances were boosted by folk who had left the Kelmscott Church of Christ. There was a lot of enthusiasm in those early days and we were impressed by the number of young people involved in the church. Worship was a key involvement of the church, worship always being the reason for our existence. The Sunday morning service was the strength and motivation for the church, the evening service was not as strong. Sunday school and Christian Endeavour provided strength in teaching and training the children and young adults. Because the eldership had been voted out of office just prior to our arrival, the deacons became responsible for the day-to-day administration and some pastoral care within the fellowship. The church was affiliated with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), which gave fellowship with other like-minded Christians. FIEC camps, picnics and other social outings were held and exchange pulpits within the group were arranged on a regular basis.

Many of our church folk attended the Keswick meetings each year. One of the most powerful and challenging speakers at Keswick was Charles Price. He gave us all much to consider of the next period of time. A group of adults were trained in child evangelism ministry early in 1990 and this led to a new direction of our work amongst the children. Later a number of folk were trained to use a booklet 'Knowing God Personally' as an effective tool for personal witness and visitation.

George and Rita Galieh came to us for evangelistic outreach, this proved to be a great blessing with people giving their lives to Christ and others rededicated their lives to Jesus.

Dale Christian School was expanding fast under the leadership of Dr Brian Knowles. The school was obviously meeting the need for such an institution in the area. There was an effective school board and an enthusiastic group of parents. It is good that the church at Armadale is celebrating one hundred years of existence and influence; the buildings and surrounding landscaping are impressive and are a testimony to the neighbourhood.

May the church always be at the centre of the area, providing help and direction for people's lives. Remember the main function of the church is to lift up the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and his never-ending faithfulness to us. The hymn 'Great is Thy Faithfulness' is a reminder of all that he has done for us and of our need to praise and worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

Let us remember those who have served in the Armadale Congregational Church in recent years... Rev Hedley Thyer, Pastor John Simons, Pastor David Kernohan, Pastor Glen Lock. Remember those who filled the roles of elders, deacons and for those folk too numerous to mention individually who have faithfully served and been involved in all the ministries of the church. Praise God for their faithfulness.

Ephesians 6:10 'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the whole armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes'. God bless you for the future and may He allow you to leave your mark as a strong influence for the cause of Christ and His Church.

*Neville Blackhall*

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## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS (PAST AND PRESENT)

### Ladies Guild by Joan Saw

I joined the Ladies Guild in 1948. It comprised a group of ladies who met twice a month for fellowship. As it was the only organisation for ladies of the church it consisted of all ages. Our aim was to serve the church in any way we could, cleaning, providing flowers, repairing articles and also providing them when the need arose. Meetings always opened with devotions, prayer, hymn, Bible reading and devotional talk, closing with a hymn and prayer. We had visiting speakers, demonstrations, visited other guilds, enjoyed annual picnics and held fetes. These fetes were very popular as only genuine homemade goods were sold. The money we made was spent on providing necessities for the church mostly. We also enjoyed fellowship with the guilds of churches of other denominations in our district from as far south as Mundijong and north to Maddington.

In those days Armadale, Kelmscott and Roleystone were served by the one minister and worked together. Many were the socials, concerts and church services we enjoyed. Although in other ways there was great rivalry between the towns, never was that element present in the churches.

I don't know when the Guild was first started as the minute books before my time are not available (see editor's note at end of article) but I believe it was formed so that the ladies of the church could meet, have fellowship and help the church in any way they could, as well sharing a caring and friendly time together. Many were the services provided for the church such as cleaning, communion preparation, flowers and supper after the socials and concerts. We also prepared the church anniversary teas and men's fellowship teas. Travel wasn't easy as very few had cars, some had horses and buggies and many walked miles to church.

As time went on the guild was able to provide the church with many useful and necessary items, crockery, cutlery, urns, teapots, jugs, curtains for the pulpit and stage, doormats, offering bags, pedestal fan, medical kit, heaters for church and pulpit, blinds for the church and also the hall, carpet runners for the church, communion trays (still in use) kitchen cupboards, curtains for the stage in the hall, stackable chairs for hall, Bibles, hymnbooks, trestle tables, vacuum cleaner, as well as helping with finance for new pews and a new organ.

Beyond all this, food parcels were sent to England to help the elderly with goods that were in short supply after the war. This was continued for many years. Our missions were not forgotten then, as many a donation was made to them. We also sent food parcels to the Red Cross. Many a time when the church was unable to meet its share of the minister's salary we gave what finance we had.

Our fetes were held once a year, then twice a year as we found the opportunity this way to use our talents and raise finance to help. Our stalls were stocked with real home made cakes, jams, pickles sweets, toffee apples, second hand clothes, home grown plants, children's clothing and of course aprons, which were much in demand from serviceable overalls to fancy afternoon tea aprons as we all wore them. There were no nurseries around where we could buy plants so our garden stall was popular. The only way we could plant our gardens was by exchanging cuttings and bulbs with our friends and neighbours. There also was no K-Mart to buy cheap clothing. We had to hire the Town Hall for our fetes so when it was proposed that we build our own hall we felt the need to help. Of course our afternoon teas were very popular with feather light cream sponges, scones, cakes and delicious sandwiches.

Around this time we were very conscious of the poor state of the manse kitchen, which was a wooded addition to the brick building, about half the width and lower than the rest of the house, very dingy and inconvenient with a wood stove which made it unbearably hot. We brought this to the notice of the Kelmscott and Roleystone Guilds and together we made a big effort to provide finance to improve it. After we had raised 782 pounds we brought it to the notice of the men with the stipulation that the money be spent on the kitchen. Eventually in the middle of the 60s the kitchen was dismantled and a brick addition the full width of the house was built, providing a spacious kitchen and living area. We had lots of good times sharing with other guilds during this period. Of course we always enjoyed visiting them when they held their 'At Homes' as well as their visits to us, so we had continual fellowship. During the period our membership grew from 10 to well in the 30s.

We also shared with the Kelmscott and Roleystone Guilds visiting the Armadale Kelmscott Memorial Hospital visiting all patients with a few words a card and maybe flowers and at Christmas we gave each one a handkerchief. We also (Armadale only) visited regularly the Hillview Nursing Home.

The Good Neighbour Council approached us with a plea that we visit new arrivals. This was a time when many migrants came to Australia and we were kept busy taking flowers and maybe a few vegetables from our gardens, giving a warm welcome. This service we performed for many years.

In 1957, we were asked to arrange a Women's World Day of Prayer in our district. This we did each year and then shared the responsibility with the other churches.

As time went by we found it was better to hold Street Stalls, so eventually Fêtes were phased out, then these too were replaced by personal giving. This personal giving is still carried on in the Friendship Club, which has taken over from the Guild. We still give to missions and it is wonderful to be able to continue this feature, which has been constant in the Guild.

One duty that many of us enjoyed was arranging and providing flowers for the services each Sunday. God gave us this wonderful country with good growing conditions for flowers, so we shared them with others. We also provided flowers for weddings and to those of our congregation at "No Charge" but for others, a small fee to cover any cost incurred.

Yes, the Ladies Guild has been an integral part of our church. We all enjoyed what we did and were grateful that we were given the opportunity to serve our Lord in the best way we could. It is certainly true that the more you put into a thing the more you get out of it. Personally I would like to say that my life has been enriched through my association with the church and especially the Guild. I give thanks to God for giving me the opportunity.

Joan Saw

#### **Editor's Notes:**

Mrs Saw was secretary of the Ladies guild for 23 years until July 1974. She was also on the diaconate from 21st September 1969 to 10th December 1987.

The first reference about Ladies Guild I could find in the minutes was on 2nd November 1926 when Rev Lincoln Sullivan "called the ladies together to try to reform the organisation".

On 2nd October 1928, the church cleaning was left in the hands of the Ladies Guild.

#### **Siem Bosma's Recollections**

My earliest recollections of involvement in the Armadale Congregational Church, centres on the Sunday school.

It was about 1956, when after a church service, I was approached by the SS Supt, Graham Cowell, a fine young man, asking me if Wim, my younger son, only 2 ½ years of age, could join the Sunday school kindergarten. I thought he was too young, but Graham said, "No, that is OK". So from that time on I became interested in the SS. Not everything that happened pleased me!

When time for my first SS anniversary came, I suffered my first shock. I was astonished to see the gifts that had been given to the little boys - toy guns! And there they were running around "shooting" at each other. The horror of the war was still very fresh in my mind and I went home, not knowing what to do or think; but never mind, "I overcame that".

By now I had joined the Ladies Guild and these ladies were busy every SS anniversary to provide the supper for the children, a service that was appreciated by all.

I became a teacher in the SS and later was appointed Assistant Supt, a position I held for 1 or 2 years, when, without warning, the superintendent left and I was called upon to fill that position. I was terrified!! I didn't even have time to pray about it.

However the next few years, though challenging, were fulfilling and with the cooperation of other staff members, the SS grew in numbers and we gradually changed some of the practices that had been in place for a number of years. One such change was to cease the annual visit of Santa Claus each Christmas. The costume for this personage was kept under the church platform and would be brought out each year for some father to wear and play the part. This practice I did not like as part of our SS Christmas celebration and I vowed to get rid of it, much to the consternation of the teachers, "But it has been a tradition Mrs B, for years", cried the teachers.

However, Mrs Cowie (who took the Kinders) and I decided to replace Santa Claus with a traditional Christmas scene, with the manger, crib with a baby doll, etc. It seemed much more appropriate to focus on the coming of the living Christ than a fantasy old gentleman, especially in our SS situation.

Anniversaries were the highlight of our SS year. The children practised special songs for the occasion and to save the cost of individual books, the words were printed on large pieces of brown paper purchased by Mrs Cowell, Graham's mother, from the butcher. A visiting speaker was engaged for the two services. The morning service was for the younger children and the afternoon for the senior school. The teachers too, were "encouraged" by their "stubborn Dutch woman Supt" to practise and present 1 or 2 items. Coming from Holland meant many of the songs were new to me, so I had to spend time learning them myself before bringing them to the children. So Mrs Michael, a lady from the Ladies Guild and a church member would play the piano in her home and me singing. I would pray and say to the Lord, "Lord if you want me there, you have to help me". And he did.

One year we had a fancy dress anniversary that was a great success. In later years the anniversaries were held in the hall at the back of the church and as the number of children increased, the men of the church decided to build a tiered platform on which the children sat, stood and sang. It saved space and the children were much more visible to the congregation. Once the hall came into use the ladies prepared the supper in the supper room, between the church and the hall and after the prize giving and the singing of the "goodbye" song, supper would be served. It was a very nice atmosphere everyone did enjoy themselves.

Another very much looked forward to activity was the SS picnic. This was held at Coogee Beach where a big tent would be put up and once again the ladies of the Guild would be working hard. Parents, children and friends all had a great time playing games, etc.

After about 5 years in the SS, I had to leave this work and I was asked to lead a Bible class for older children. I started to teach the Bible Class, still connected to the SS. After the singing we would cross the road and sit in Mrs Miles front room. Mrs Miles was a member of the church and Ladies Guild and a very helpful lady. Mr John Bramford became SS Supt at this time. As well as teaching the Bible Class to young people, I also became involved in teaching Scripture in several classes in the local government school. After I left the class, Jim took the oldest boys and girls for Bible study in the manse.

On looking back, I marvel at how the Lord took me, a Dutch lady, struggling with an unfamiliar language and placed me in a position where I had to read, speak and teach. I would not have chosen that course but He did and He enabled.

Praise His Name!

*Siem Bosma*

## **Thirty Five years with Armadale Cong**

### **John Bramford**

I first came to Armadale in March 1965, when I got a job as a bus driver at the Armadale MTT depot where K-Mart Auto section is now. For a start, the rest of the family was in Albany and I was staying with my brother in law at Inglewood. There was a dearth of rental accommodation at that time in Armadale.

After finishing at the driving school in East Perth, I came out to the depot and among the first people that I met were Harry Beard and George Saw. George told me that there was a house to let in Third Road but it was in too dirty a condition to be let but that his wife Joan knew more about it. He took me to his home and introduced me to Joan. At that time little did I know that Harry Beard and Joan and I would be serving together on the diaconate of Armadale Congregational Church. As a result of what Joan and George told me I was able to rent the house by doing the cleaning and painting of it.

While I did this Shirley and the children stayed in Albany but finally on Anzac Day, which was a Sunday, Shirl came up from Albany to join me. It was fairly late in the evening when she arrived and I was on a meal break. As we stood on the veranda of the house that is now used by the RC Church we could hear the singing coming from the old Cong Church and they seemed to sing like a bunch of Methodists.

We were both born and bred Methodists and we were concerned because we learned there was no Methodist Church in Armadale. We decided we would attend the Armadale Congregational Church for one service and Gosnells Methodist for the other service. The following Sunday we attended the morning service at Armadale, liked what we found there and some how we never got around to going to Gosnells Methodist!

Glen Lock was the pastor and he put the church on a sound footing, one based on the truth of Scripture. However he was not able to continue due to the liberal attitude of the Congregational Union at that time. When he left, the pastorate broke up when Kelmscott announced it could no longer be a member of the Union. Armadale decided to aim for independence but did things according to the rules and we became an incorporated body and secured our title deeds. We then withdrew from the Congregational Union.

Over the years we have had several lengthy spells with no pastor and several times the fellowship was hurt by splits in the membership. Some of these splits were due to doctrinal differences, some by different attitudes to policy such as finances and the school. Some were no doubt due to personality clashes with people seizing on an issue for an excuse.

The church went ahead under Hedley Thyer with a great growth in the youth work. In those days when I was in my forties I seemed to be the old man around the place. Christian Endeavour underwent a revival at that time and it was a sound basis of the work.

During my time here, I have been able to serve as Sunday school superintendent, secretary, treasurer, elder, FIEC delegate which took in editorship of Fellowship in Focus and FIEC secretary.

On the first occasion that we attended the church the congregation was only small and there were very few men. There were I think seventeen members most of them ladies, quite a few of them elderly. We are indebted to those people for having kept the church alive through a very lean and difficult time. Of the people who were in the congregation on that day, we still have Joan Saw and Siem Bosma with us and Lilian Geddes has recently departed this life to be with the Lord.

When we came to Armadale, the Sunday school was very large. Everyone sent their kids to Sunday school. We used to bring kids down from Bedfordale and Forrestdale for Sunday school in cars and the parents would pick them up after the church service. Then sometime around 1968, Neville Castlehow and his family came to live in Armadale and they started up Sunday school in Forrestdale and continued it for many years.

FIEC started with great enthusiasm as former denominational churches sought fellowship with like-minded congregations faced with pressure from liberal organisations. However after that threat waned so did the enthusiasm and apathy and splits soon appeared. Some churches preferred to have fellowship with churches that were close to them while others sought to impose conditions on membership that were quite contrary to the spirit of the original FIEC and the organisation was therefore disbanded.

We have suffered the same problems that other evangelical churches have suffered. When we were perceived as having a crash hot preacher people flocked to us. When another church had the 'right' preacher the many people left and went there. Perhaps it is time evangelicals started to ask "What can I do for the church rather than what can I get out of it".

The Dale Christian School, which was started under somewhat unhappy circumstances, has also had its ups and downs but now seems to be working on a very sound basis.

Over the years many people have worked very hard in the church, so many that I feel that if I start naming names I am bound to leave people out who should be included. However I would like to thank John Shaw for his hard work over the years and his effort in putting this history together.

*Unless the LORD builds the house,  
its builders labour in vain.*

*Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
the watchmen stand guard in vain.*

We need to be guided by the Holy Spirit if we are to be effective and we need to have sound knowledge of The Word of God if we are to true to Him.

*John Bramford*

### **Shirley Bramford**

Shirley and John Bramford and children Stephanie, Maxine, Peter and Kathryn arrived in Armadale in 1965. It wasn't long before Shirley took on the role of organist for the morning service when Roseanne Percival (nee Herbert) married and moved away from the district. She continued playing regularly until as recently as May last year (2000).

John had several terms in office as secretary, treasurer, Sunday school superintendent and elder over many years.

The children were involved in the various youth groups and when they reached young adulthood took on leadership roles until they left the district.

Shirley and John produced and printed the monthly Armadale Congregational Chronicle from 1983 to 1995.

### **Choir**

As I recall it was in 1972 that a choir was formed with a handful of primary school-aged children. They learnt and practised songs on Friday evenings and gave pleasure to the congregation when they sang in the Sunday morning services. Mrs Sybil Jones assisted with their training.

When the choir had been in existence for a year we had a "birthday" party to celebrate. I had the children write a verse about the choir. The late Rev Hedley Thyer was our pastor at the time which gave rise to rhyming words such as choir, Thyer, higher and (church) spire. Hedley was one of our greatest fans and always encouraging. On a few occasions we went to other churches to entertain.

The choir helped with concerts and social evenings to raise funds for a new piano that was purchased in February 1983.

Our biggest achievements were the performances of two cantatas. First was a Christmas cantata and later on, "Saints Alive!" which is the story of the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost. With Susie Ridderhoff (nee Short) at the piano and several other instrumentalists, it was quite a triumph for all concerned.

Gradually as members moved away from Armadale for one reason or another and other activities took precedence, sadly the choir disbanded.

The dedication and discipline of the choir members was very much appreciated and I'm sure we all have many good memories of happy times together as we served the Lord in music and song.

*Shirley Bramford*

## **Memories from John and Helen Ansell - 1970-1994**

Accompanied by our daughters, Lynette 9, Rosalie 7, Pauline 5 and Jocelyn 2, we arrived in Armadale in January 1970 after 10 years service at Roelands Native Mission. We were made very welcome and invited to rent the manse, which had been vacated the day before by Rev Glen Lock and his family. This was a wonderful provision for us and during the 12 months we resided in the manse, we enjoyed our involvement in the church.

Before long, John was teaching in the Sunday school and the older girls joined the classes. When Jocelyn was old enough, Helen also became a teacher and when John Bramford became church secretary, John became superintendent. We enjoyed fun times with picnics at Coogee beach, which included ice-cream, watermelon and red sticky buns on strings. One year we had a winter picnic and went to Glen Eagle National Park, another year it was too wet and we just had it in the hall. After a number of years in the Junior Sunday school and the kindergarten, Helen had a time of leading the kindergarten, which was great.

Ladies guild was a new experience for Helen and although somewhat awe-inspiring at first, in time many rewarding friendships resulted. The ladies were a happy group to be a part of and many times we let our hair down and dressed up to entertain the over 60's and fed them on cream cakes and other delicacies.

Christian Endeavour played a big part in our lives. The girls were all involved and when Rev Hedley Thyer became the pastor, he encouraged the young people and CE really took off. It was a wonderful training environment for all involved. In January 1980, John and our four girls were in the choir for the Australian CE convention held at Wesley College. This was a wonderfully exciting and inspiring time for all involved and worth all the hours of travelling and practice.

Bible studies were appreciated. At first we met with Kelmscott and Roleystone Congregational churches as cottage fellowships, alternating homes each week. Later when Hedley and Helen Thyer and their family joined us, the home groups were separated and we met at the manse.

Church cleaning is something we would rather someone else did. Helen took it on not knowing she would still be doing it 12 years later. It brought many insights of people's expectations and appreciation. There were rewards, like seeing the brass vase you had spent so long polishing, filled with dozens of beautiful roses or other lovely flowers, giving pleasure to the congregation. Renovations with brick dust and sawdust are better forgotten and oiling the hall floor, well, it did look better for a week or two.

In 1972, Mrs Shirley Bramford enlarged her musical skills by beginning a church young peoples' choir from among the children and teens of our families and two dads as tenors. The height of our development was when we persevered with Christmas or Easter cantatas. One of our young ladies Susie Ridderhoff (nee Short) provided piano support and we were righteously proud of her.

Our girls were all involved in the music groups that came and went during the years. These were happy times with players often practicing in our home, with some playing in the church services praising God with their talents.

Rosalie assisted Neville and Margaret Castlehow for a while at Forrestdale Sunday school as did Pauline on occasions. On one of which, she was introduced to Ian Squire whom she later married, the ceremony being held in the church hall in Church Ave in December 1986. Ian and Pauline are involved in their church at Serpentine where they teach Sunday school and Ian is a deacon.

In 1980, John was asked to begin an outreach Sunday school at Mundijong using the old Uniting Church building. Lyn Lang and Helen also helped. This went quite well and we had to recruit Jennifer Simons and Pauline to help with the children. Once a year the parents were invited to attend an anniversary service, which was always well attended and lots of fun. Mundijong gave us three encouraging years until we handed the work back to the Uniting Church.

In time, John became a member of the diaconate and took on the role of mission's deacon until 1994 when we relocated to Singleton by the coast.

Homemakers was another involvement, which was always enjoyable and friendly. It had lasting results and the experience gained has proved very helpful when setting up a Homemakers group in the new Comet Bay Baptist group to which we now belong. In fact recipes gathered then are still being passed on and enjoyed.

Know Your Bible study groups were very rewarding, not only helping the women who attended to better understand God's Word, but allowing us to encourage each other and understand each other's needs as we prayed and sought God's help together.

Our daughters were all baptised during their years at Armadale. Lynette worked in Kalgoorlie as a Dental Therapist later married James Dawson in the new church building in January 1988. She and Jim with their three children have spent a number of years with Worldwide Evangelism for Christ in Thailand and now are working in Cambodia. We visited them earlier this year.

Rosalie works with Main Roads and also with Aerial Missions as their voluntary secretary two days per week. She also helps with a church kids club. Jocelyn works for a solicitor and also is a leader in her church youth group.

We are very thankful to the Lord for the 24 years we shared in the Armadale Congregational fellowship. For the wonderful training our girls received and the faithful teaching we all enjoyed and the many lasting friendships we all made and still value.

## **Homemakers**

### **Lyn Lang**

My first introduction to the Armadale Congregational Church was through the Homemakers group. Mrs Margaret Ellison took me along to my first meeting and I can remember being welcomed at the door by Margaret Castlehow and Jean Bailey whose warm smiles put me at ease. I was a new Christian and, prior to this, had struggled to find a constant Christian fellowship as the services in the S J Shire then, (30 years ago) were on a 'hit and miss' monthly basis. It seemed that every time I hit on a service, I missed the congregation. Many times it was just me and the minister, so how wonderful to discover this warm and lively group of Christian women. Homemakers became something I looked forward to. At that time Homemakers was run, most capably, by Sybil Jones, who also had the responsibility of Women's Guild. I can remember the day I was approached by Mrs Thyer to consider taking on the running of Homemakers to relieve Sybil. I was appalled at the idea, but before I could refuse, Helen said 'Now Lyn' before you answer, think about it. Don't do it because I believe you can do it, or because you may or may not believe you can do it, just do it "as unto the Lord". "Will you pray about this and let me know?" Well I did and took a huge step of faith "as unto the Lord".

Subsequently the next month found me contemplating a blank programme just two days before the next meeting. About to consume my last fingernail, Sybil rang with a speaker for the night plus several ideas to explore for the remaining agenda. Faithful Lord and faithful friends was the attitude that characterized the Homemakers ladies. Whether asked to do a devotion, or door duty or the dishes, there was always a willing response. I have located in my cookbook some feature recipes 'circa' 1974 done by some of the ladies: - "Apricot Dainties" by Jan Moses "Peanut Popcorn" by Norma Broomfield; and many others less legible. Each recipe had a "Seed Thought" included, which was a verse of Scripture. There was also a great spirit of endeavour to be found amongst the ladies whenever the unexpected happened. A last minute cancellation occurred one meeting. Undaunted, Siem Bosma, Shirley Bramford and Helen Thyer volunteered to substitute with a few songs - no worries about rehearsals! Now the Three Tenors they were not, but in my grateful relief they sounded like a heavenly choir. On another occasion the projector would not work and Mr John Brighton was to show us slides of Israel. After a fair go at it and after patiently listening to our unsolicited and helpful advice, Mr Brighton put the tangle of cords to one side and said "Let's have a quiet word to the Lord about it". We hushed up; he prayed and lo! the projector worked".

In recalling these events, how I thank the Lord for this wisdom in placing me there as a young Christian, for I was richly blessed and benefited from those simple demonstrations of faith.

*Lyn Lang  
Homemakers*

## Ruth Iggleston Remembers

My earliest memory of Armadale Congregational Church was as a primary school student when we used to walk over the road and use the church for scripture. I seem to remember a scroll painted across the front of the church with the words "Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness". Prior to that, my sister can remember going to the church for sewing. I think Rev Watts would have been the minister in those days.

In our late primary school years, we were invited to go to Sunday school and my teacher's name was Audrey Payne. We continued to go to Sunday school in our early teenage years. There were wonderful Sunday school picnics, where we would all come early and get lots of food ready, then go off in the bus together to Coogee. The slicing of the lovely cold watermelons always went well as we sat around in our bathers with our towels wrapped around us spitting pips on the lawn and waiting for the signal that our lunch had "gone down" and we could all go back in the water.

Rev Glen Lock and his wife Roma came to take up an appointment at the church in 1963. In the meantime, my husband Steve had been going to the Westfield Sunday school, which had been resurrected, by Evan and Astrid Gwyne from the Roleystone Congregational Church. Steve came to the church when he was 11 or 12 and his teacher, Jim Bosma used to drop him home after church in his very distinctive green Nash car. One morning, a small child dashed out in front of the car and poor Jim thought he had killed him because he was knocked across the road and into the ditch. When his parents were told, the poor child got a belting for being on the road.

Eventually, we got too old for the Sunday school and started to help out with the kindergarten children under the steady and gentle guidance of Mrs Cowie. Melody Garratt, Maureen Pascoe, Mary Manfield and I were together, teaching and trying so hard to get the little children to sing up big for the Sunday school anniversary. Even if they could sing lustily at every practice, you had no guarantees that they wouldn't get stage fright on the day, but they generally loosened up when the prizes were given out.

Christian Endeavour on a Friday night in the hall would have started in the sixties and some of the names I can remember from that time would be Jenny Cowie; Colleen and Christine Woolridge; Jeff Green; Bernie, Wim and Margaret Bosma; Neil, Lloyd and Graham Bailey; Maxine and Peter Bramford; Ingrid and all the Van Assets; Ron Borich; Chris Keevil; Lyn and all the Ansell, Jenny Galloway; Phil Sara; Graeme Wren; Bob Rankin; Chad Pearce; Chester, Alison and Miranda Wilson; Carolyn and Kim Roberts; Arnold Brolsma and Francis and Tom Bolland.

The evening services were always well attended by the young people and we were invited to pray with the leader and speaker in the supper room prior to the service. Sometimes the young people took the entire service and the tempo would step up, a few different instruments appearing such as Ron Borich's piano accordion. Christian Endeavour had been good training for this sort of responsibility because we had to lead the meetings and often give talks. We also went singing Christmas Carols sitting on hay bales on the back of a truck, visiting prisoners at Karnet prison farm, entertaining them with the Splattergaskets miming such songs as "The Flying Doctor" and "As I was Driving in my Cadillac" and the general outings like roller skating, ice skating, concerts, Christian Endeavour conventions, ten pin bowling, progressive dinners and the Billy Graham Crusade.

Every month, the church would combine with the other churches and hold the evening service at either Roleystone or Kelmscott or Armadale and we got to know people like the Galloways, the Gwynnes, the Attwaters and the Buckinghams. Rev Lock used to drive us up to Roleystone to the Youth Tea and Sunday Service. I can remember sitting in the back seat singing "Nearer My God to Thee" which was actually a comment on Glen's driving.

Steve remembers that in the paddock next to the church at Kelmscott, there was a beautiful big watermelon growing which they watched with drooling lips. Eventually, it grew to the right size and they picked it, carted it all the way to the beach house and cut into it only to find it was a pig melon.

As time went on, the people in the youth group got older and began to drive and buy cars. Ron Borich for instance had a wonderful Triumph car that had a dicky door on the passenger side. The sight of Colleen falling from his car as he turned the corner of Albany Hwy near the Neerigen Inn will stay with us for a long time.

The older youth group would often meet in different houses like the Richardson's house in Kelmscott (John, Joy and their Mum), Alan and Jenny's house in Byford, the Bosma's and for some time in the home of Arthur and Jayne Payne in Tredale Ave. Arthur was a teacher at the high school and made the mistake of saying to Steve: 'Well, if you know so much, why don't you come and teach the class'. Steve, who was a bit of a wiz with all things electrical, promptly did. We even went as far a field as the Beckenham Church and met Bev Greep, John Barendrecht and David Zanich.

Another aspect of church life became the older Sunday school children, who were referred to as the Teen Scene and met in the Manse on a Sunday morning. This was in the time when Rev Hedley and Helen Thyer were at the church and John and Gladys Simons took over after them. Then, there were the camps that were held. The one that sticks in my mind was one that was held at Lake Cooongoop when I was fourteen. I had been praying for some time that people would become Christians at the camp and ended up becoming one myself and finding out first hand that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 9).

Looking back, I have to say they were wonderful years that I was associated with the Armadale Congregational Church and we were really blessed to know the faithful people who attended there such as Ted Bailey with his orange blossom in his suit lapel and his "Pause a Moment" cards in the hymnbooks.

*Ruth Iggleston*

### **Jim Bosma**

I started attending the Armadale Congregational Fellowship at the age of 11 soon after the arrival of my parents as migrants to Australia from the Netherlands in May 1955.

Mum Bosma had been converted 2 years previous at a Baptist church in the Netherlands and was keen for the family to attend an evangelical Baptist church in Australia. It soon became apparent that the nearest Baptist church was in Victoria Park 25 kilometres away. As it wasn't practical for Dad Bosma to take a family of five (soon to become 6) on a scooter to church over that distance, we looked for a local place of worship. The only evangelical church in Armadale at the time was the Congregational church where Rev E Watts was the minister.

The highlights of my time at the Congregational Church were my two baptisms one at the age of 14 when all the children "were done" when my parents became actual members. The second was at 16 after my conversion at the Billy Graham crusade, when I asked to be baptised by immersion, which took place at the East Fremantle Baptist Church, as the Congregational Church didn't have facilities for baptism by immersion at that time.

I remember with fondness prior to my conversion, the Sunday school classes given to me and a class of fidgeting boys by Mr Morcombe, a very senior, but loving and committed Christian. Later I joined the junior groups.

Later I also became involved with teaching at the Sunday school and was appointed superintendent in 1963. The SS picnics were also a highlight each year at Coogee Beach. At this time I was challenged about Bible College and studied at PBC during 65/66 with a view of going into the Baptist ministry. During this time Rev Glen Lock gave opportunity in lay preaching at Armadale, Kelmscott and Roleystone churches to develop a teaching and preaching gift. It was also a privilege and blessing to be involved in the house group meetings between the three churches.

In my final year at PBC it became clear through a visit of Poldi Storfer, an European Christian Mission missionary, to the college, I should consider working with ECM. In that final year I also met Nellie Olieman, who came from the Netherlands in 1965 and through the witness of Mum Bosma came to a conversion experience and joined the church fellowship and went through PBC 67/68.

Nellie and I were married in the church 28th December 1968 and were commissioned from the church to serve with ECM in the Netherlands in August 1969. Both Nellie and I have been greatly blessed through our association with the church fellowship right up to the present time and want to thank the believers for standing with us in prayer and financial support in our 32 years of ministry with ECM.

Be assured of my prayers.

*Jim Bosma (Absentee member)*

## A Few Personal Memories of the Armadale Congregational Church

### Beth Franklin (nee Miles)

My association with the Armadale Congregational Church began in April 1940, when my parents bought a property in Bedfordale and we moved there to live. At that time, Mr and Mrs Ben Cross conducted a small Sunday school in the Bedfordale Hall on a fortnightly basis. I recall walking up there on the 5th

Sunday of the month, to find no one there! We attended the 11am Services in Armadale, but not the evening ones because of blackout restrictions and petrol rationing. At this time I believe the minister was Mr Shepherd. In 1943, we moved closer to Armadale and we became much more involved in the life of the church, my mother with guild and Sunday school and myself with Sunday school, Christian Endeavour and choir. About this time the Rev Pretty came to be our minister and we had a time of spiritual growth, the endeavour flourished until the young men were called up.



***Beth Miles (Franklin) and her Sunday school class of 1947 all done up in their Sunday best***

the anniversaries, when we all, in our finest, sat on a specially erected platform which seemed to reach the roof. The kindergarten held their own anniversary at the afternoon service, while the senior school took the morning and evening service, with a prize giving during the week. On the departure of Mr and Mrs Pretty, I took over the conduct of the anniversaries and Harry Beard became our organist. In 1949, I had the privilege of attending the Inaugural meeting of the Congregational Youth Fellowship in Canberra and subsequently, with Jean Symes (Shearing) formed a fellowship in Armadale. This functioned well, with over 20 members, (most of whose names are on a separate sheet). We ran several successful concerts to raise money to build a hall. Members attended Easter and ecumenical youth camps at Point Peron and also, during our two periods without a minister (between Rev L Sullivan and Rev C Jones and again, between Rev Jones and Rev Ewan Watts, I believe), members conducted a monthly church service. Rev L Sullivan followed Mr Pretty.

Rev C Jones came from Busselton and was very keen that our fellowship should become a Christian Endeavour. However, after my marriage to Eric Franklin, the fellowship disbanded. During the early 1950's, the back room of the church was lent to the school as a classroom, causing some mirth when wedding photos came up with "multiplication tables" on the wall behind the happy couple! In 1957, having felt a call to the ministry, Eric Franklin (and family) moved to Mullewa, to become a Methodist Home Missioner. Methodist, because they had the resources etc to train a minister, which the Congregational did not have. At what time my father, Mr Albert Miles, became a trustee of the church, I do not know, however, when he died in 1960 the bank froze the church account! Mrs Miles continued to live in the house diagonally opposite the church until she moved to Rowethorpe in either 1969 or 1970, where she passed on in 1972.

In the early 1950's we had a combined choir under the leadership of Mrs L Knuckey, with Harry Beard at the organ. This group sang for church anniversaries and special services at the three churches - Armadale, Kelmscott and Roleystone.



***Having fun at a fellowship concert in 1950***

## **Some thoughts on my days with the Armadale Congregational Youth Fellowship**

### **Vern Pascoe**

During the late 1940s and early 1950s a Congregational Youth Fellowship (CYF) group operated in the Armadale Congregational Church. Beth Miles and Jean Symes were instrumental in setting this in operation.

There were several Congregational Youth Fellowships at this time, e.g. Armadale, Queens Park, Trinity Perth, North Perth, Leederville, Subiaco, Claremont, Cottesloe and Fremantle and there was also a group at Bunbury Congregational Church.

These youth groups would meet for a combined Easter camp, mainly at a site in Point Peron and on one occasion, at the old army camp at Northam (1949). About once every two months we would meet at one of the churches for a camp reunion and share fellowship and a meal together. The Armadale group generally fluctuated from 15 to 25 members, sometimes a little more. At the camps and reunions it was usual to have about 100 or so gather together.

Some of the names I recall as being members at Armadale over the years were: Beth Miles, Jean Symes, John and Elizabeth MacLennan, Phil Bowring, Desma and Margaret Cross, Peter and David Cross, Barbara Cross, Ivor, Ned, Mavis and Edna Thomas Andy and Sandy Small, Clive Inder-Smith, Tony, Ena and Ramona Kalajzic, Lorna Sargent, Delys Champion, Neil Thompson, Hilton and Margaret Chadwick, Jean and Betty Whittaker, Audrey Curnow and Shirley Gibney.

At that time, Rev Lincoln Sullivan was the pastor and the three churches in the area, namely Armadale, Kelmscott and Roleystone were united as a district group sharing the one pastor under the auspices of the district committee.

The youth fellowship would meet in the small room at the rear of the Armadale Church on Friday evenings, commencing with a devotional period, followed by some form of fellowship activity. As a group in those days, we learned to make our own entertainment, there was no television and getting about was not as easy as it is today in the year 2001. We would often spend our leisure time, holidays, etc. as a group on various outings, picnics and other activities.

As the group grew, we felt that there was a need for a hall large enough for other activities, such as playing badminton, etc. I believe this was the thinking of the church generally to have a hall in which to hold its various functions. The fellowship decided to raise money towards this venture by holding concerts in the district and to get started I believe the Ladies' Guild advanced us the sum of £30.

We set about putting together a variety concert with various songs and short sketches and after much learning and many rehearsals, we were ready to produce our first performance. The church allowed us to set up a stage and rig up curtains at the front of the church for the occasion, although I don't know whether all the church members were in agreement to using the church for this form of activity. We spent hours pasting paper together and painting scenes to form the scenery. On one of the scenes someone had accidentally stepped on the painting of the moon before it was completely dry and so a dusty footprint was highlighted on the moon that night.

The first concert was a rousing success and for the next concert we hired the Armadale town hall and quite a considerable amount of money was raised towards the goal of our own hall. John MacLennan was the motivating force behind these concerts and greatly encouraged us in these activities.

I cannot remember whether we held one or two concerts in the Armadale Hall, but we also held one in the Kelmscott Hall and one at Gosnells. We did not have a good turnout at Gosnells, but the Kelmscott hall was packed to capacity. It was at the time when the old East Perth Power Station, our only source of electricity, would break down about every fortnight and on this particular night no electric lighting was available in the town. We were blessed that Mr Wilfred Beard at that time was an Inspector with the Metro Bus Company and based in Armadale. Mr Beard had access to batteries and lighting and also, being a radio ham, was able to set us up with lights and our various needs to make for a very successful night. Mr Beard helped us out in this way during all of the concerts and his brother Harry provided the music on the piano.

We were a close-knit group of youth and these activities together with our Christian walk and the backing of our parents gave us a purpose of working and playing together. In those days we met regularly with other groups from the various Congregational churches and this helped us to reach out beyond our own church borders.

In the early 1950s the various Congregational fellowships decided it would be great to have our own campsite, rather than having to hire a site for Easter and other functions. The Roleystone Church offered us the opportunity to build on land behind their old church. To start with, some of the young men and youth from the various fellowships gave a hand to the Roleystone men to help build a room on the back of that church. In the meantime, the various youth fellowships decided to have a Queen Competition to raise money to final camp. The idea was to have a Miss Congregationalist crowned at the end of the competition. Mavis Thomas was the entry from the Armadale Congregational Church and, together all the fellowships raised money by organising various functions over several weeks or months. The opportunity came to purchase some old army huts that were being sold cheaply down near Kwinana. With the help of Malcolm Ogilby from Trinity Fellowship and his father (who was a builder), these were purchased, dismantled, re-designed and erected on the Roleystone site as our ablution block, conference hall and kitchen and two dormitories. Members of the CYF and helpers carried out all the work. The fellowship at Armadale was abandoned about 1954, as most of the leading members were by now either married and moved away or about to get married, so we could afford less time spent together in this way. During those years biennial national conferences were held and delegates from each state met together to share in fellowship, Bible study and to plan the work of CYF for the future years. Together with nine others I attended one conference at Point Lonsdale in Victoria in 1951 and my wife-to-be who was state secretary at the time and myself together again with others, attended one at Morialta in South Australia in 1953.

State Executive meetings were held at Trinity Church on a regular basis. We did not have a dress uniform as such but uniformity of dress - white shirt and grey trousers for males and white blouse and pale blue skirt for females. For those who could afford it there was a royal blue blazer with the CYF insignia on the breast pocket.

Members had a badge which depicted the ship Mayflower on a light blue background, surrounded by the words Congregational Youth Fellowship in a dark blue circle mounted on a gold coloured vertical bar. We marched with other youth groups on Empire Day and for the visit of the Queen.

Each month, one Sunday evening service was set aside as a youth service. Members of the fellowship would sit up in the front of the church facing the congregation and take part in the leading of the service. Eventually Rev Sullivan encouraged some of the fellowship to also give the address and thus it developed that the fellowship were responsible for conducting the whole of the service during these evenings and we were greatly encouraged to read and study the Word.

The Hall at the back of the church was eventually built and paid for. Mr MacLennan senior with the occasional help of some of the youth, particularly Neil Thompson spent many hours making cement bricks for the project and a builder, Mr Arthur Grahams, was subsequently employed to erect the structure which was well used over many years, although the Armadale fellowship was dissolved in about 1954.

Vernon Pascoe

## Memories

### Malcolm Shoosmith

My memories of Armadale Congregational Church go back to early primary school where I spent at least part of a year in a class in the back room of the church building. It must have been a small class!

The cement brick hall was built at a later time and I have memories of working bees pouring the cement into the moulds that then lay to cure in the yard.

The yard was an automatic short cut for anyone coming down or going up Church Ave - we never went to the corner. We did however, at nighttime quicken our steps coming up Third Road until we were past the graveyard.

Living across the road from the church led us to joining in the life of the congregation. I attended Sunday school and can well remember old Mr Morcombe as my teacher. We collected each year for the "John Williams" missionary supply ship and received an extra book as a yearly prize. Our Sunday school anniversaries and picnics, as well as fetes always featured a wooden keg of ginger beer with its wooden tap. Later as a young man with a car, I had the job each Sunday morning of driving out to the back blocks of Forrestdale, picking up Sunday school students. The old car got a battering as a runabout for youth group as well. The last Sunday or each month was a combined youth tea and missionary speaker / service at Roleystone and there were always plenty needing lifts.

I remember we had holiday Bible clubs in the hall at the Armadale Church - a lot of fun and well attended.

The fetes each year were great events. My mother was always on the second hand clothing and before and after each fete the clothes piled up at home. Those items un-sellable were often stripped of buttons and zips and bagged for one of the local garages as grease rags.

The church was always there - a neighbour to us. As a young lad the Sunday school and youth work were great to use. As a newly born Christian at the age of 17, it was only natural that my spiritual home was across the road.

Glen Lock, when prevailed upon by those with more Baptist and Church of Christ backgrounds, preached on believers' baptism by full immersion - and along with several others who accepted the challenge, I was baptised. Unfortunately, even though it was a common practice in early Congregational churches, ours didn't have a baptistery so it was across to Dalkeith Baptist Church whose minister, Arthur Payne, had been a local teacher and had an association with our church. There Glen baptised us into Christ.

Of ministers, the two I knew best were Ewan Watts - a fine gentleman who was very kind and fatherly. Then Glen Lock who became a close family friend and to whose ministry I owe much of my early Christian growth.

When I first heard of the Reverend John Beukers I was able to draw on the very clear and full memories of Mrs Maude Turner, who as a young woman had been a member of his congregation. I also have on my library shelf a copy of Beukers autobiographical work "From Fo'castle to Pulpit" and a 1916 issue of his magazine "Drill of the Foothills". At that time a portrait of Beukers hung in the manse at Coonalpyn South Australia; out on the Dukes Highway east of Adelaide. It had its place there because he was the only minister at the time who had died serving that parish. It was in this house in 1943, at the age of 78 that he ended an eventful life as a sailor, man of nature, preacher, writer and editor. His date of birth in Holland from the vague references in his writing seems to be about 1865. He was a member of a large family, typically in the Dutch way dominated by his father who was a staunch Calvinist. When he was 13 or 14 John ran away from home and went to sea on a windjammer as a lowly cabin boy. For five or six years he stayed at sea, sailing over much of the world's oceans. The only book he had on board was the Bible, over which he spent many hours. His working life was hard and demanding and his shipmates quick to tease him about his Bible reading habits. He was however to carry vivid memories of his life at sea and carried it into his writing. By the early 1890's he appears in South Australia, at a time of drought and depression. Feeling called to preach he formed a bush mission and as their agent, toured far and wide. He spoke in sheds, bunkhouses, churches and street corners - from the Murray River to the Alice Springs telegraph line. He faced small and large audiences, from rough bushies to violent publicans. As a missionary he was tolerated by most but not exactly welcomed. He married his first wife and with her, joined a socialistic settlement of twenty-four families. They toiled together trying to make their settlement work as well as preaching on every Sunday that an opportunity arose. In 1896 he buried his wife "and the gloom of her grave overshadowed every hope he had cherished and dimmed every vision that had shone about his path".

He left Adelaide in the same year as a passenger on the SS Innamincka bound for Albany. With some shipboard friends he set off to the gold fields. The lure of easier money left him at Hines Hill where he went to work on a railway gang. This outdoor life was his joy and delight. After some time, he moved on to Perth, working with a survey gang. In Perth he began to enter into the preaching life of the tiny Congregational Church community. The 5th of March 1915 saw him inducted as the pastor of the Armadale Congregational Church after he had previously served at Bunbury, Boulder Road and Victoria Park churches. For his five years of service at Armadale, he is vaguely remembered, as indeed most ministers are. But Beukers was unique as a minister and a man through his writing, which has left us a valuable record of his time there. As a person he was remembered as a biggish man, quite solid and very strong. The years in the bush had left him toughened and bronzed. His flattish face was adorned by

a greying brown beard, well trimmed but effusive. He was remembered as a bit of a rough diamond, looking rather scruffy in dress. Photos show him with an old shapeless hat and wide legged trousers, the usual coat and waistcoat topped off with a clerical collar.

His voice apparently showed little hint of his Dutch ancestry, being clear, strong and powerful. He was not over expressive with his hands when speaking. He was remembered as an entertaining speaker. Although a man of strong character, he had a kind and gentle side to his nature. He had a fatherly touch with children, being remembered for the way he would stride down the aisle of the church to kiss the infant daughter of one of his congregation. His sermons were down to earth and hard hitting. He drew on real life stories for illustration. The close proximity of the war raging near his homeland was a particularly emotive issue. The content of his sermons reflected his Calvinistic view of moral issues and he preferred to touch on topics of righteous living rather than being overly evangelistic. He spent much of his time in service to the Armadale district in general, often being seen riding his bike around the far reaches of the district. This was a time of poor roads and a district with its fair share of hilly areas, but he loved the open air and revelled in getting out. He could be seen every morning walking down through the bush to a spot on the Neerigen Brook to bathe in the open air. He took a great interest in the scouting movement, helping to form and run a troop. He was a keen participant in every hike and camp that was organized. He was a popular speaker at gatherings, detailing his wide experiences in the outback, at sea and in his homeland.

But Beukers main claim to fame lay in his intellect and in his literary ability. Though he had no tertiary education and the bulk of the education he did have was in the Dutch language, he nevertheless had an excellent grasp of the English language.

*Malcolm Shoosmith*

## Recollections of the Westfield Church

### John Gibson

This is a resume of some of the history of the Westfield Congregational Church and my mothers involvement therein. It was built on land donated by my grandfather, who came from Germany. Built in 1936 by Mr Beard and Tom Brixey, assistant who I believe donated some or all of their labour.

Between 1941 and 1946, I was a student at Westfield Primary School, which was located directly opposite the church. We children could walk across the road to have Scripture lessons. I went to Sunday school all my primary school years. Two people I recall used to build a portable stage for years end to give out presents. As each name was called out we would receive our present, a Bible or Christian book. One year we went by train to Mosman Park for a picnic. I became a Christian on 1st January 1956 at Keswick convention, Kalamunda.

I immediately joined the Christian Endeavour movement. We used to go to Roleystone Congregational Church for this and for services also to Armadale Church. The Roleystone group would come to our services and vice versa. We also held mid week meetings.

Rev Watts was Minister at this time, Brian Powell was Sunday school teacher and Narelle Brown - daughter of Glad and Allan Brown Narelle was the Sunday school pianist

Dear Mrs Ralphs was the main highlight, also pianist of the church. Max Joyner, who transported cattle and farm produce, would deck his truck out with seating and take the Sunday school children to Coogee for a Sunday school picnic. Parents and friends would all go for a lovely day of fellowship together.

The Westfield Church was also used as a community functional centre from weddings to birthday parties, to card socials and as an electoral polling office.

This church was very dear to me and was my first Christian home. I remember going on Saturdays and repairing the wooden pews. It was such a holy place for me in those first weeks after my conversion to Christ and I felt God's love surrounding me.



**Westfield State School - 1940**

## Reflections from John Shaw

My first contact with Armadale Congregational Church was in December 1975, when I commenced work as caretaker of the Serpentine Baptist camp. The previous caretaker, Mr Ed Plumb, had been involved with this church and had left a Congregational hymnbook on a bench in the house. I thought I should return it, even though my intention was to find a Baptist church to attend. After that Sunday evening service, I was made welcome by Mr John Bramford and Mr Neville Castlehow and later Mr John Ansell. When my wife arrived later that month we felt very comfortable attending the evening service. We appreciated the warmth of fellowship and the fact that right from the start people would talk to us. This is something that does not happen in so many churches when we have deliberately stood around to make ourselves available. We were also impressed with the older teenage group who took an active part in the evening service and because some of them came and spoke to us oldies - a very pleasant experience!

There was a period during the 1980's when we had very little contact as we had become members at Rockingham Baptist, but come retirement in December 1990, we recommenced regular attendance, including the morning service and attending prayer meetings and the monthly missionary prayer meetings. During Rev Blackhall's ministry in March 1992, we were received into membership of the church.

In August 1993, I became acting secretary until I could be appointed at the AGM, a position I held until AGM 1996, when I became assistant secretary to Mr David Browne, then secretary again at AGM 1998 until January 2000. During my first term as secretary we were pastor-less for 18 months, a period that meant I had the responsibility of finding speakers for our morning services. I am truly thankful to God and the men who helped us out during that period.

As I read the eulogy of Mr H Beard in the minutes, my thoughts went to the three men I have mentioned earlier in this article.

When writing about the Forrestdale Sunday school and reading in the Armadale Church annual reports of the faithful work that Neville Castlehow, his wife and the team did there, I empathised with them, because I was involved in the same type of work elsewhere. But not only was Neville doing this work but he also led the JCE in Armadale until May 1976 when Arnold Brolsma took over. Not only was he a spiritual builder of the church but a physical one as well because he built extensions on the old church and supervised the building of the present church hall. Prior to coming to Armadale in June 1968, Mr and Mrs Castlehow were engaged in Christian service amongst Aboriginal people NE of Kalgoorlie on the Warburton track. Neville went home to his eternal rest on 3rd July 1993. Margaret (now Mrs Radbone), with her husband, Roger carries on in ministry with us.

Mr John Bramford has been deeply involved in our church life since March 1967 and continues to be so. Church treasurer, secretary, Sunday school superintendent and elder are areas in which he has served. He has born the brunt of the many ups and downs of this church's life during that time. His wife, Shirley has served faithfully as organist over many years until recently and has established and trained choirs for special occasions, been a deaconess, an assistant at Friday night youth activities and is still ladies secretary and Bible Society representative in the church.

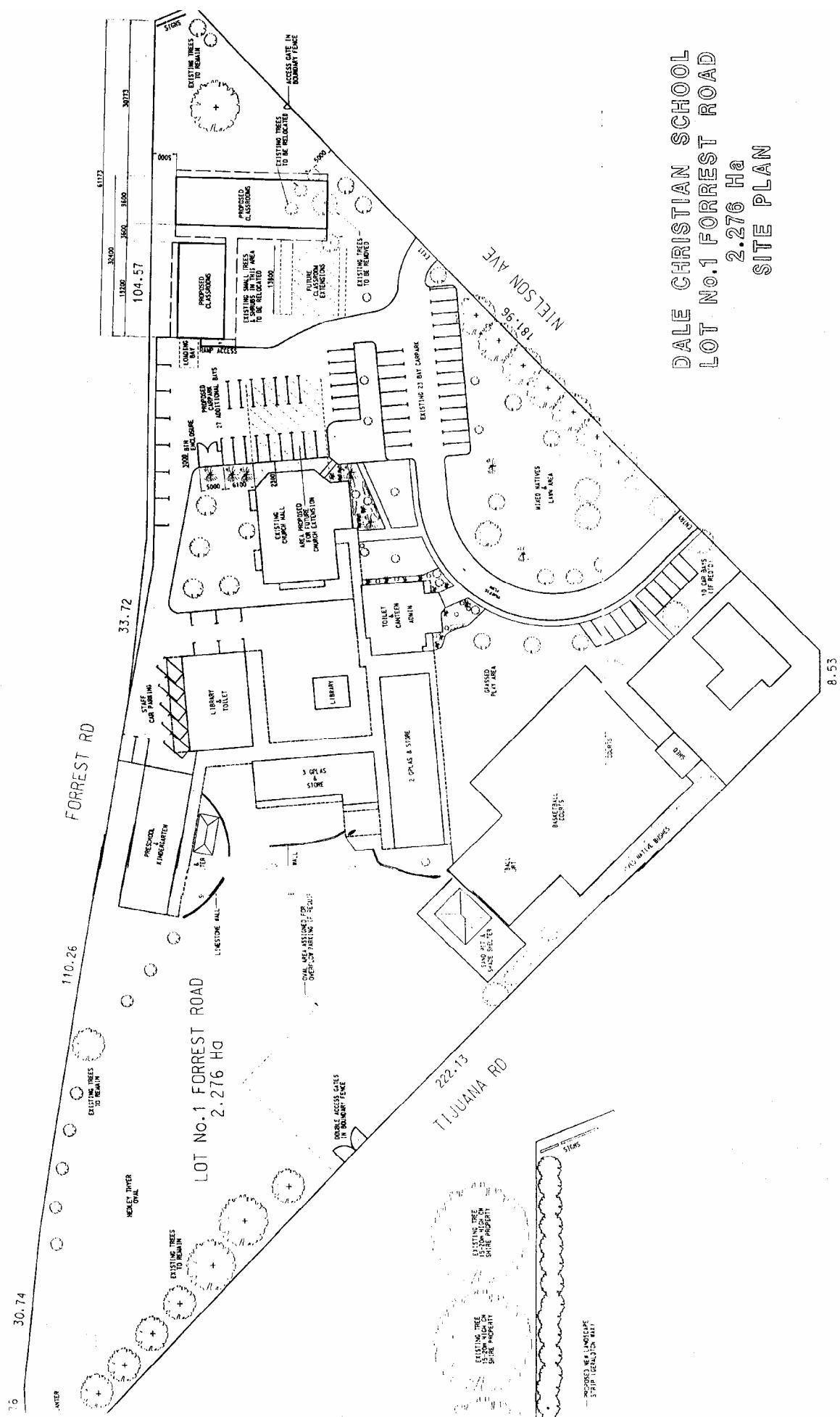
Mr John and Mrs Helen Ansell and family were involved in the Aboriginal work at Roelands mission (where I had contact with them while working in Collie) and in July 1971, came into membership in this church. The following year, John was appointed SS superintendent and held that appointment for a number of years. He was also involved in the promotion of mission awareness in the church and led missionary prayer meetings for some time. Mrs Ansell for nearly twelve years, undertook the important work of church cleaning and I remember reading a very appreciative note in a church secretary's report of her work. She has also been kindergarten superintendent, assistant secretary, assistant treasurer and leader of the KYB ladies Bible class until they moved out of Armadale in 1994.

There are many others who have served the Lord with equal dedication, but I have specifically referred to these three couples because of the hand of friendship extended to us on our arrival and which has continued since.

John Shaw

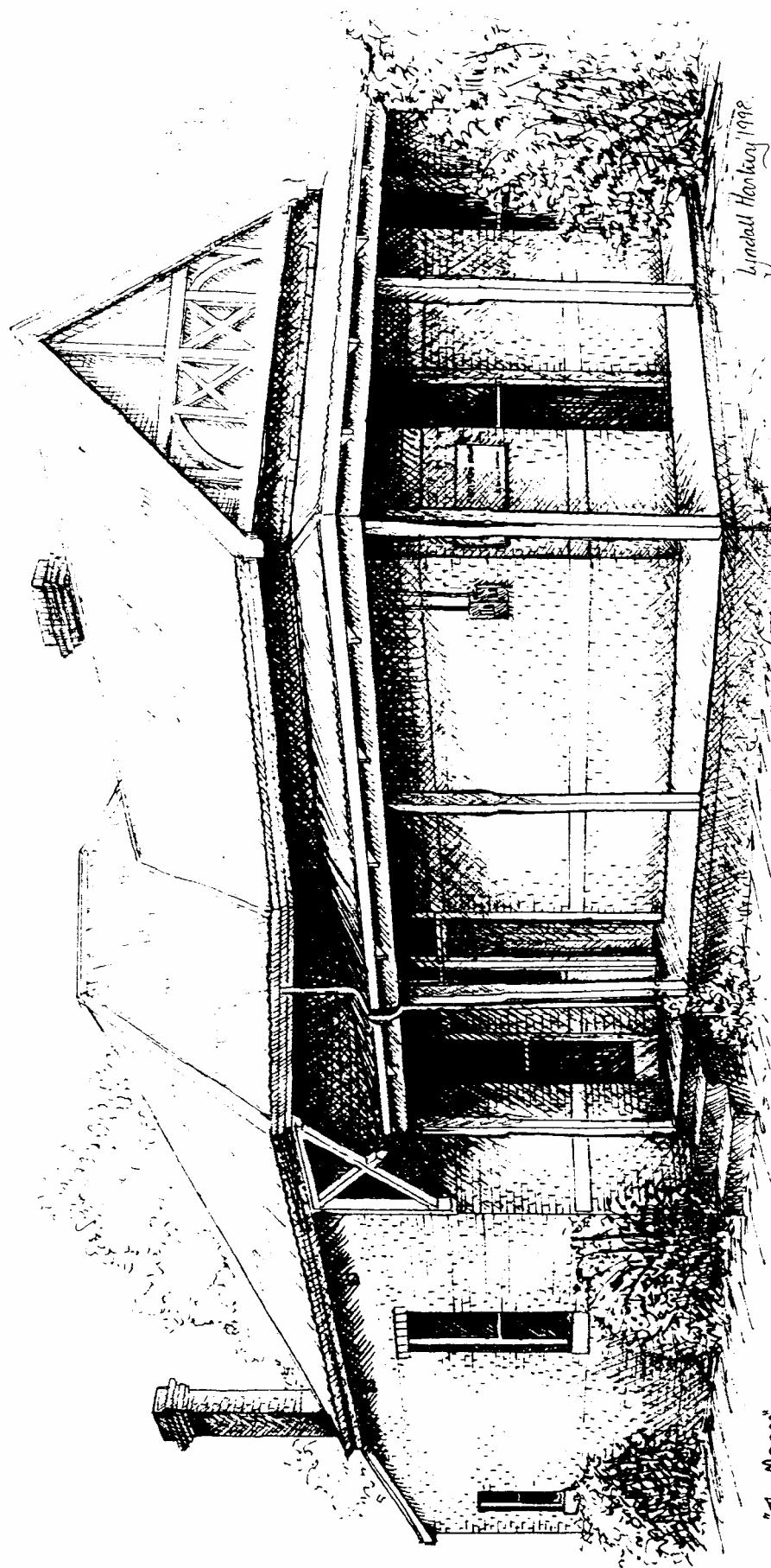
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## SITE MAP



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## THE OLD MANSE



"The Manse"  
Dale Christian School 1983

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## OLD CHURCH



*Front view of old church*



*Inside view of old church*

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## ACCRONYMS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
CCS	Christian Community Schools
CE	Christian Endeavour
CWA	Congregational Women's Association
CYF	Congregational Youth Fellowship
ECM	European Christian Mission
JCE	Junior Christian Endeavour
KYB	Know Your Bible
LMS	London Missionary Society
PBC	Perth Bible College
RC	Roman Catholic
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SSYF	South Suburban Youth Fellowship
WEC	World Evangelical Crusade
YA	Young Adults
YP	Young People
YPCE	Young Peoples Christian Endeavour
YPSCE	Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavour

**Note:** Some changes to the text were made before printing in order to promote better consistency between the materials collected from the great many sources and to better accommodate "current practice" with respect to capitalisation and punctuation. It is hoped that these changes assist the readability and no offence will be taken if "minor editorial liberties" have been taken. *John Pengelley (typesetting & printing)*