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Full transcript of an interview with

**DOUGLAS WOODWARD**

On 24 April 2007

by Peter Donovan

for the

**HISTORY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**  
**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

Recording available on CD

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**Interview of Doug Woodward, employee of Electrolux in South Australia, by Peter Donovan on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at Regency Park.**

DISK 1

**This is disk one of an interview with Doug Woodward. Doug is currently working with Electrolux here in Adelaide. Doug will be speaking with me, Peter Donovan, for the purpose of recording some of the history of Electrolux and its predecessors for the project initiated by the History Trust of South Australia and facilitated by the State Library of South Australia.**

**On behalf of the Director of the History Trust of South Australia, Doug, I'd like to thank you for agreeing to participate in the program. Doug, you do understand that the copyright of the interview is shared by you and the History Trust?**

Yes, I do.

**This being so, may we have permission to make a transcript of this recording, should the History Trust decide to make one?**

Yes, you can.

**We hope you'll speak as frankly as possible, knowing that neither the recording nor any transcript produced will be released without your authority. This interview is taking place today, the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007, at the Electrolux factory at Regency Park.**

**Righto, Doug, now we can begin and get into it. Can we just start saying how old are you?**

I'm 60 years old.

**Now, when did you start with the company?**

I started with the company in 1967 as a sheet metal worker. After a time here I was made leading hand sheet metal worker in the fabrication shop, which produced air conditioners. Though it was Simpson's Limited them days, air conditioners were made under the Pope brand. From there – I spent two to three years in that division.

**So where was that?**

That was at Dudley Park, and this is the cooking plant now. Then I decided to get married. Those days there wasn't much overtime around so I decided to leave the company and I joined another company. After five years with another company I

came back to Simpson's at Dudley Park and resumed my role there, until I was required to go in 1979 on the dishwasher project team.

Now, the dishwasher project team was based at our Beverley washing machine division and I've been with the dishwasher division ever since.

**When did you start making dishwashers?**

We officially started producing dishwashers here in 1981. Nineteen eighty the factory was built at Regency Park. There was one reason the factory was built at Regency Park was that it was a government incentive. Regency Park had just been opened as an industrial area. STA was the first place built here and the dishwasher division was the second place built here. It was hoped that once the dishwasher division was built here more industry would come into Regency Park, and as you can tell today Regency Park is full of industry now.

**During that period you were on the project team, what were the issues you had to deal with? The company presumably wasn't making dishwashers.**

No. The main issue was it was an unknown product that was never produced in Australia before. Simpson's did import dishwashers from about 1975–1976 onwards, and these were made by Bosch in Germany and M..... Simpson, the owner of Simpson's them days was a great friend of Alfred Bosch and they had an agreement to bring dishwashers in under the Simpson brand. These were brought in up until '80, when it was decided to build a factory here. Our first dishwashers were virtually a copy from the Bosch design and yes, we have many issues and one of the main issues was when we produced the liner were we going to weld the liner or were we going to lockseam the liner, and it was all unknown quantities them days.

**So what expertise did you have to draw upon? How do you design a flowline like that? Where do you get your presses from, ..... and dies?**

We had our own tooling organisation and the presses were built in Sydney and we had a lot of help from Sydney in designing. We had our own design team to design the dies and all that here. Well, I mean Simpson's has been making whitegoods for years. They do their own designing on their washing machine parts and everything else. Like I say, but it was a similar copy to a Bosch so we knew what they were looking for to start with.

**So that first one, how much of it was Australian, other than the design, in terms of just the components and the materials?**

The first dishwasher we had here would have been I'd say a good 90 per cent of it would have been produced with Australian components. Like I say, there's only certain dishwasher components that are built in certain factories around the world because it's a specialised part. For instance, the soap dispenser and the rinse-aid dispenser, that's a specialised part that factories are not geared to make and they've got to be made in volume to keep the cost down. We used to get those from Europe. They sold the dispensers to every other dishwasher manufacturer in Europe as well. Most of the wiring harnesses and the looms were made here; all our plastic control panel parts were made locally as well. All the baskets for the dishwashers were produced over in Victoria at a place called Stokes [Appliances Ringwood Victoria]. So basically 90 per cent of the product was produced and made in Australia.

**Just quickly jumping forward to 2007, how does the model that's coming off the line now differ from that first model?**

Oh, the model today compared with the first model, if you remember when you were a lad and Meccano set, you imagine them now, little nuts and bolts and parts screwed together, compared with what you've got today, it's day and night. The machine, the first dishwashers weighed about 60-odd kilos, where they weigh about 42 kilos now, so there's a lot of change gone on. The dishwasher we're producing in this factory today I can say to you it is equal and as good as any dishwasher produced in the world. For the volume of water it uses, our first dishwashers for instance used to use 40-45 litres of water to run one main wash; today we only use 16 litres of water. They've virtually improved way out of proportion to what it was when we first produced dishwashers. We had over 100 people in the factory when we first started producing dishwashers here, we landed up getting down to about – I think we got 80 people on the shop floor now producing 640 dishwashers a day. Like I say, over 100 people when we first started struggling to produce 300 a day. It's changed immensely in the years.

**When you moved over here, what was your job, when we started up?**

When I joined the project team I joined the project team as a model maker because of my sheet metal work background, pretty hard to find model makers those days. I was instrumental in making the first metal liners, the stainless steel liners. Once the project finished, I stopped in the dishwasher area here in the quality department and I

was running the test carousel and I was team leader of all the inspectors. We had a lot of inspectors over here.

After two to three years doing that job I was asked to join the corporate audit division. Now, Simpson's decided to start another department up and it was called the corporate audit department, which they had a selection of people that would go round to every plant in Adelaide and audit the whitegoods they were producing, and it was a separate identity to Simpson's, they wanted to keep it separate. So I joined that department. I was there three years doing auditing the dishwashers, washing machines, dryers and even cooking products, there was a group of us that used to do that. Then after three years I was asked to come back permanently in the dishwasher division in the quality department and I've mainly been involved with reliability testing, the warranty call rate – we've got to keep the warranty call rate down, so I was responsible for maintaining the components were the right components, the quality, the components wouldn't break down because the cost of warranty goes up. The other thing was that when we first introduced our quality policies here I was involved in helping to produce the quality policies, and I'm still involved in making sure those quality policies are still upheld in the factory.

The other thing that I've been heavily involved in is passing product knowledge on to our technical services division, like mainly for the last 15 years I've been involved in doing service training around Australia with the service technicians and in New Zealand as well. I've really been heavily-involved in our service department as well.

**So just prior to joining Electrolux – I suppose I could probably work out how old you are doing the mathematics, but what did you do beforehand?**

Before – well, Electrolux ....., I started my apprenticeship in 1962, five-year apprenticeship, with Ruby Owen and Kemsley as a sheet metal worker, and then when I finished that I went straight to Simpson's at Dudley Park. Those days, if you'd done an apprenticeship, once you finished the apprenticeship you were advised to leave that place and they called it you were a 'journeyman': you went to different places to get more skills on your trade. So I landed up going to Simpson's, and like I said I was at Simpson's for a few years then I left because I was getting married and I needed to get more money because of building a house. So virtually it's only basically two jobs I've had since I left school.

**That's pretty good.**

And a lot of people say, 'Why stop at a place so long?' The reason you stop at a place so long – you're happy in the place, you're happy with the job you're doing.

**Okay, the company's given you a job. What else has it done for you? Have there been other supports around there? Has there been a social club here, for instance?**

Well, if we go back in history, when I first started at Simpson's at Dudley Park it was more or less a family company. If your father worked there you'd land up working there, you know, and it just progressed through. Everybody basically knew everybody, once a month they would have a Saturday social function in the hall they had over at Dudley Park. If you didn't go up and get tickets on a Friday you'd miss out on the social on the Saturday night.

When I first started at Simpson's they were doing a lot of overtime there. Now, a lot of people wouldn't work overtime. Now, M..... Simpson thought, 'Well, why won't they work overtime?' 'We've got to go shopping.' So in the canteen he installed more groceries in the canteen so you could buy your groceries at work rather than leave work and you could still work overtime. They even had a barber there that you could go and get your hair cut in the week. You know, he used to think of the people. He even had a priest or nominated church leaders would come round once every week or two weeks and just walk around the factory and talk to the people. But no, we've had a social club here as well in the dishwasher division.

And this dishwasher division's a bit unique compared with the other divisions. Most people that start here, they're pretty well screened before they come to see if they will assimilate with everybody else and it's just like a group. We don't have problems here like union problems or anything like that; it's basically just a happy group. But from day one when I first started here there's more and more different ethnic backgrounds coming in and they seem to assimilate pretty well here. So as for the union, there was one time where there was no question that you had to be in the union at Simpson's, it was just a closed shop. But since the law's changed and that's gone away there's not too many people here that are in the union anyway.

**How many unions have you got on-site?**

One. It's basically the one union we have here- well, it's basically the one union on the shop floor and like if any of the quality or engineer people want to be in a union it's the Professional Engineers' and Architects' Union, which no-one seems to ---. I suppose the reason they don't bother, we don't have the strife. Everything can be



worked out without having the union or anything coming down. But the blokes in the union, the union leaders are quite welcome to come down here when they want.

**So what is the union?**

It's the AMWU,<sup>1</sup> I think it is. It's the same one for all the divisions. Like I say, when we used to have it was a closed shop the union used to come down once a month and all that. When the announcement was made that they were going to close the division the union came down and they worked out with the union what they needed to do and all that. We've never had problems here, ever gone on strike or anything.

**You said people are largely screened when they get here or before they get here.**

Yes.

**How does that happen? What's the churn of staff – just quickly, how many different groups have you got out there, other than yourself who are the longest-serving people and how long have they been there?**

There would be three out there that's been there as long as I've been here, and then we've got another group that's been here 20 years. When we first started here, everybody that first started here, when they needed more people they knew someone that wanted a job and there's one lad that works in the inward goods store, he had some nephews that worked here. I even had a nephew that worked here. He was only supposed to be here part-time but he was here 12 years, and that's how it started, that people knew people that wanted jobs and they got them jobs here. It wasn't until later on when the people here didn't know anybody that wanted a job that they started through the employment section. We used to have our own personnel department that used to – same as any place now, they have their own personnel department, they want people of course they get interviews and that; but now it's all done through job centres and that and if we require anybody here they just phone up the job centre and say we require some casuals and they send them down.

**With the different ethnic backgrounds, you said there's no real problem there, but how do people communicate with language, or do they go off in their little groups and have lunch?**

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<sup>1</sup> AMWU – Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union.

Most of them can speak English but they all know – like we've got Vietnamese here, we've got Mongolians, we've got Chinese, we've got all different types of people, Bosnians, we got Serbs, we got everybody – and everybody gets on together. If they've got a problem with English, well, they know someone in their group and if there is a communication problem with the team leaders or the supervisors with that person, there's usually someone that can speak their language that they get to one side and then they work out what the problem is. So no, it's pretty good here.

The only other thing you did notice over the years you have noticed that we used to have barbecues and then there'd be like the Muslims don't eat pork and all that, and then you'd have to just cater for different needs, that's all. But on the whole everybody gets on together.

**Were women a part of the team from day one?**

Yes.

**Are there special jobs for women?**

Well, there are, like you've been round the factory today: they're not going to give women the heavy jobs. I mean, I know it's equal opportunity, but there are jobs women can't do and jobs they can do. No, most of the women, they all basically do all of the – everybody does the same jobs here, women and blokes, but like on the flowlines and that where it's heavy women won't go over there because the parts are a bit awkward and heavy to handle. But as on the packing line, the carousel, the control panel line – – –. Well, I've got to admit, I'd say the control panel line is heavily – mostly women have done that type of job. They seem to be more aware what they've got to do than the blokes do. Like I say, mainly on the control panel line where we do a lot of wiring, so women do that.

**How often do people change jobs?**

Well, they rotate them around.

**So people there can do just about any job on the floor?**

Yes. Well, they've got what they call a skills matrix and they get paid on what modules they can do. So the more modules they do in the factory then their pay rate goes up. But everybody can't do every job, but most of them can rotate around to other jobs. Every four hours they usually swap them around on different jobs, and that's just to take the boredom out of it as well and the monotony as well.

**So you took me round there and you've been speaking of 'team leaders': how many team leaders have you got out there? What's the sort of pyramidal structure out there?**

Well, you've got a team leader for each department, so you've got a team leader on the packing line, one on the carousel, got one on the final line, one on the cabinet line, one control panel line, so you've got about six or seven team leaders and two supervisors out there.

**And how does a person get to become a team leader? They're tapped on the shoulder?**

No. If they've got a team leader there and the team leader might leave or go to another position, then the way they look at a team leader they look at the group of people who can do the most jobs, who is the most competent, who's got communication skills. Will that person get on with everybody else if they're team leader? That's the way they do it, you know.

**You suggested that you got this matrix, skill matrix. So how do people get to have new skills? Do they put their hand up and say, 'Well, I want to do this'?**

Well, they put their hand up to the team leader and they say that I'd like to learn this job and that, and then that's the way it starts. Then they're tested on that afterwards if they're competent in doing that, then they do one module and then they do another module and when they've done so many modules their pay rate changes. But that's gradual, over time. And they usually get someone from HR department comes down and goes through the modules with them to make sure that they're competent doing all those jobs.

**Has there been any education from outside where people are sent off to TAFE<sup>2</sup> or any other educative area outside?**

The company, whether it was Simpson's, Email or Electrolux, have had courses where they've sent people out to do different courses and that. If it's needed, they will send them out to do these courses. If someone thinks they need more computer skills or anything like that, they'll send them out to a course to do that. We've had times where lads wanted to step on to do engineering degrees or something like that, the company would let them go to school. If they went to school then if they passed

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<sup>2</sup> TAFE – Technical And Further Education.

they would refund their money back, so the company's pretty heavily-involved with helping if you want anything like that.

**Has there been much chance to go between different divisions, or if you make dishwashers your skills are there, or you want to go and make stoves or dryers or something like that?**

Well, put it this way: if you're employed in one division and you want to go to another division, whether they send you across or you apply to go, that's about all; if not, you'll stop where you are. Most people like to – they hear about the other divisions and they will stop here, and *vice versa* in the other divisions. What's been happening lately – well, I say 'lately'; since Electrolux took over – they want a workforce that they can rotate around. Like if, for instance, we're making a lot of dishwashers and dryer season – see, when they produce dryers it's a seasonal work. They sell a lot more dryers in the winter than you do in the summer. So you've got a group of people there and you've got too many people in dryers. So what they would do, they'd send some over here while the downturn's there and *vice versa*, and that's why they're trying to get the employees that work on the shop floor, get them to know the basic knowledge of all their products so they can just rotate them around when they need them in different areas.

**Did you notice any change when Electrolux took over? When did it take over?**

Electrolux took over in 2002. I'm not quite sure, I think it was about 2002. I'm only thinking about when email took over Dishlex, that was in 2000. Could have been 2002, 2003 I think Electrolux took over.

Oh, not to start with, but I'd say once they've got their feet under the table it was – I mean, all the signs were changed overnight, it was really regimented. When Electrolux took over, as from the Monday it was known as 'Electrolux' and every plant that was associated with Electrolux here or interstate all the signs were changed over that weekend so on the Monday it was all Electrolux.

One thing about Electrolux, what they do do because it's a worldwide company, they've got a standard set-up for everything. Their logo's standard all round the world. If you go to one of their plants in Europe, the plants are all laid out the same. What they look at, if they transferred you to another plant, you can just walk in there and it's no different than the plant you're in, it's just to make it easier for everybody. But we did learn, we soon learnt with Electrolux, Electrolux are a business and

they're here to make money, and from day one all the divisions were told that they would be checked to see if they were viable; and Electrolux are here to make money for their shareholders, they're not – no sentiment with Electrolux.

We were surprised that we were closing down; we thought one of the other divisions might be before us, but that wasn't to be. These decisions were all made from Europe. But you can't blame Electrolux because they're closing plants here. They're closing plants in Europe as well. They even closed their own vacuum cleaner plant in Sweden down and sent it to Eastern Europe. I suppose they're here to make profit for their shareholders.

**Do you have any Electrolux people in the division or are they still the old Simpson people?**

No. When Electrolux took over they sent two people over from Europe. One was the supervisor of the shop floor and one was in our quality department and, especially this division, it was Electrolux full-on all the time: 'Electrolux this, Electrolux that', and we had the Electrolux people coming over but none of the other divisions did, it was only the dishwasher division. But those two people are not here now, they've left and moved on, but no, there's no ---. We might get the head people from Electrolux come over once in a while, they might come to the factory. Very rarely now, so no, you don't see many Electrolux people from Europe any more here.

**Changing things quite radically, what's the typical day out there? When does the day start, when does the day stop, how does it start, how does it stop?**

Okay.

**Who's the first on, what's the first machine to start going?**

Okay. Well, the official clock-on time is 7 o'clock on the factory floor. Now, we might have people that come in at 6 o'clock and it's mainly to turn on the compressors, the flowlines I showed you that make the lining on the inner door panels, they might start an hour earlier so there'd be some people here about 6 o'clock ready to start, but most people start at 7. They start work at 7 o'clock; at 10.30 they stop and have smoko and that goes till quarter to 11.

**Does everybody stop at that stage?**

Yes.

**So what happens, do you just flick a switch and everything just grinds to a halt there and then?**

Yes. The factory floor stops for a quarter of an hour. Like the office and that doesn't. The factory floor stops at 10.30 till quarter to 11, and then they go back to work, and then they have lunch at 1 o'clock till 25 past 1. Now, you might ask why they have their lunch at 1 o'clock when most places have their lunch at 12. Well, many years ago they took a vote here that they would sooner have lunch an hour later, because when they went back to work they were only back at work two hours before they knocked off to go home, so they liked that better.

There is one thing about this factory: it's not regimented like the other factory, 'You do this, you do this, you do this.' If everybody out there wants to have half-hour for smoko and less for lunch and they put it to a vote, they'll do it. It's not 'This is the policy.' No, that's the one reason they started lunch later so it wasn't long before they knocked off.

**And they knock off at?**

Three-thirty.

**Why? Why not start at 9 and go till 5?**

No. That's another thing, that when we first started at this place the starting hours were 8 o'clock till 4. I don't mind starting at 8, I've been used to starting at 8 and 8.30 and working back till 5 at night. But the mentality out there is that if you've got to come to work you've got to come to work. You don't want to be here longer than you have to be here, so they would prefer to start early and knock off early, so that's the reason they finish at 3.30. That gives them time to pick their children up from school and things like that. But it's always been the same here: the quicker you start, the quicker you can finish. They'd prefer to do that than start later and work later.

**So who determines these things? Normally it would be a union would be in on those sorts of discussions and whatever.**

Well, it would have been years ago. But we've got what we call a consultative committee and there's a person picked from each area that's on this committee. Now, if everybody decided they wanted to do something like that, like they'll get the feeling from their people, then we'd have a consultative committee meeting with the manager and it would be brought up, and basically if they agreed then we'll do it. I

can't remember anything here that the consultative committee have gone for that's ever been knocked back. They have the radio on in the factory all day. They take a vote on what station they want. Might not be what *you* want but it's what they want, and the vote goes on because you'd have, at one time, every second person had a radio in the end, it was just all over the place. So they decided we'd just have the one radio on over the speakers and we'd put it to the vote what station. So they put it to the vote what station they want and that's it. Very rare you'd try and get the union come into it or anything like that, so no, we've got this, like I say, consultative committee that come up with anything, or even the company.

Well, you did mention about what happens if you're short of parts and all that. Well, we've had times here when we have run out of parts and because they're coming from overseas it's not our fault, it's not anything to do with the supply department, it could be a strike on the wharf or something like that. So then they decide, 'Well, we can get the parts tomorrow but we haven't got anything to work, so I think we'd better tell them to take a day off.' So then they get the consultative committee involved and explain what's going on, then the consultative committee goes out and speaks to the people before anything's done.

**What have been the most serious issues that have been here whilst you've been here, Doug? Have there been any strikes?**

No. (pauses) Oh, when I say 'no' I can't – no, I can't remember any strikes here that have laid off everybody here at all. Everything's been worked out. I mean, I know in the early days we had problems with our big presses and people were sent home, but they would come to some arrangement where they could use some of their holiday leave or their rostered days off, they'd never go short. And there's one thing about this place here: if you didn't have any rostered days, if you didn't have any holidays, they would transfer those people to another division till things got fixed up here. No, I can't think of anything really serious here that's ever happened. It's not like the other divisions – no, it's very rare. If people have got to be stood down they all get paid some way. Even they used to – years ago they used to even advance their pay if it's not – –. No, never, no-one's ever gone. If it got that bad they've sent them to another division, but no-one's gone without anything.

**How about supplies? When was the last time the place ceased because of lack of components or steel or whatever? Does it happen very often – once a year, twice a year, ten times a year?**

Well, probably maybe once a year it could happen. At the moment we're geared up to build so many machines before we finish. Now, if we're short of parts we're in strife because we can't turn the vendor back on. Steel, for a start: that's nearly a year ahead of itself to produce the steel for us. Well, we had a problem today where we ran out of capacitors for the dishwashers and we managed to get some from a vendor in Sydney. But the vendor we get them from is in India and to get those here, if we'd have ordered them, they wouldn't have come here before we've closed down. That is one of the biggest problems we've got. Everything's being bought from overseas now. If they've got a problem ---. And they don't believe in stockpiling; you buy as you need it and we've had some narrow escapes here with parts. But you could say at least once a year they might be down for a day with a part they can't get.

**You've got stacks of washing machines out there, so this is the distribution centre for the washing machines, the dishwashers.**

The dishwashers. No, no, that's what we call our warehouse.

**So where do they go from there?**

The dishwashers, when they're produced they're picked up and they go in the warehouse and then trucks come in, pick them up and they take them to our distribution centres. Now, the distribution centres are all round Australia, like big warehouses around Australia where it's not just dishwashers; it's everything that Electrolux produce. Even the imported stuff goes to warehouses in each State. So the reason we've got these lying around now that you can see is that we're geared up to produce so many by the end of the month. They will be sold, but the orders are not there for them to be distributed out yet so we're just building up what we can here but they'll be shipped out pretty soon.

**Is the company – how many people were working here when it was really flat chat? Did the company put on things like support for child – I don't know, what? – kindergarteny sorts of things to look after children?**

No.

**Was there a creche or anything like that?**

No. No. When this was flat out – this was when we were producing for GE as well – we were producing about 800 dishwashers a day and that was plus GE, and like I said there was about 30-odd ---. We used to have would have been about 40-45 indirect people. Now, when I say 'indirect people' that's the research and



development, reliability, the stores people, maintenance, engineering and quality, there would have been about 40–45 people here. Would have been about 160, 170 people here I suppose them days. And as for creches and all that, no. No, there was nothing like that here. It's never been done, they've never done that sort of thing. Even in the Simpson and that days they didn't.

**Who runs your canteen? Is that a little contractor?**

Oh, it's a private contractor that runs the canteen. They run the canteen here, Beverley washing machine division and the cooking division over at Dudley Park. Yes, a private contractor runs those. Years ago they used to run their own canteens, but now they've got a private contractor does that, so — — —.

**Models have changed over time. Where are the designs made or done?**

We've got a design department in Sydney at a place called Riverwood. That's the main headquarters, that used to be the main headquarters for Email and now it's Electrolux. But they're building two new places in Sydney: one at Moorebank, which will be for distribution and the call-taker centre – we've only got one call-taker centre for all of the Electrolux in Australia now; and the technical services department, and they're building a brand new office complex to house all the sales and marketing and design. That's all done in Sydney.

Design, when we say 'design', basically it's only facial designs most of the time that's been done, it's just a face-lift on the dishwasher. The main plumbing and hydraulic system on the dishwasher we've taken from Europe, and because Electrolux owns so many different brands in Europe they've got the licence to use their hydraulic system. Basically, what we're doing with our dishwasher at the moment is a copy of what they're putting into dishwashers in Europe. So we just get the system. Electrolux idea is, 'This system's been proven, the warranty calls on this is low, just put it straight into your dishwasher and you should have the same effect.'

**What's the last time you had a design change? What's the impact out there on the floor? Have you got to change dies, change presses, change — — —?**

Oh, you've got to change.

**So how long does it take to get a new one implemented?**

Well, the last change we made was what you're seeing now: it's basically the hydraulic system on the bottom, and that was just a matter of making new dies to

assemble all these parts and basically just fit some to what we've already got anyway. But probably three to six months it'd take to get it organised and up and running.

**..... .. run out of questions here, Doug, but what happens when the plant closes? Have you got a job when this closes down?**

No. When the plant closes down on 4<sup>th</sup> May I'll be here another week and then I'll be leaving the company. I'm going to America for four weeks' holiday. When I come back I haven't really thought about it yet. I could retire but I don't think I will. I've already spoken to someone at one of the job places and they told me to come and see them, and I might even take up some part-time work. Apart from that ---.

**How about all those other people out there I saw today?**

Oh, right. Okay.

**What's going to happen to them?**

The other people out there. Well, when it was announced, last Christmas they were all given the letter to say do they want a redundancy or do they still want a job, and the ones that decided they wanted a redundancy were granted a redundancy; the ones that wanted a job they were told that they would be found jobs in one of the Electrolux divisions somewhere, and so basically everybody out there got what they wanted. They told them that just after Christmas, so they're happy, they come to work. The ones that are getting a payout, they're happy they're getting a payout, the ones that are getting a job they know where they're going so they just come to work as normal and they're just doing their job. Where the uncertainty is, when they're told they haven't got a job or they have got a job and then – that's when the problems start, they don't want to come to work and that. So at least here everybody's basically got what they wanted, which was good. And most of the lads out there that are taking a package, they're quite confident, they said, they're going to get a job.

**Has the company given them any assistance to get another job?**

Yes, they do. For starters, they've had like superannuation people that the company go through, they've been down and they've explained the superannuation, what they need to be doing – like people in my situation, where I can take mine. They've had job centres and that come down to get them signed up in what they want to do. In fact, some of them out there are going – every couple of days one of them is going out for a job interview somewhere and they're not stopping anybody do that.

**Just on a personal note, do you have any major roles outside the company? Boss of Rotary or starter for the Crows?**

No, (laughs) no, not really, no. My wife, she's a supervisor down at Meals on Wheels down at Woodville and so they're all looking forward to me coming down there helping them when I retire. But no, not really. I used to be a president at Simpson's Old Timers. That was a club that was formed years ago.

**There you go, I was asked to ask you about that.**

Yes, I'm heavily-involved in that, I'm still on the committee there.

**Tell me a little bit about that, how long's that been going? What does it do?**

Well, Simpson's Old Timers started in 1923, I think it was, and it was basically they used to call it a 'smokers' club' and it was mainly for the men, where they would have a do once a month and anybody employed by Simpson's at Dudley Park, to join the Old Timers you had to be employed at the company for 15 years, and after your 15 years you could join the Old Timers, and it was basically a men's club. They got together once a month and they used to call it a 'smokers' evening' and they'd have a bit of a do. They might have a sports night, they might even arrange to go down the brewery and have a look around the brewery and it was just a common artery for the blokes that had been there a few years. But it also included that once you retired you were an honorary member, so you didn't pay any fees or anything but you were still a member and you went to these dos and it was basically – well, it still is: it's a club for people who've worked at Simpson's for many years and we have dos once every second month and the people turn up and they just have a chat about years gone by or read off the list the ones that have died, and it's just stemmed from years ago.

Now women are members as well because the women work in the workforce as well. Like I say, after 15 years you're eligible to join. And I've been a member since after I was here 15 years. I've been president for two terms and, like I say, I'm on the committee as well. No, you meet people you've known – you know, I'm still involved with people that I knew when I first started with the company. Well, I mean everybody's getting on. But it's just people to get together. Like when I finish here I'll still be a member and get together with those people. We have a mystery trip once a month and we go out, and you don't know where you're going. And we have an annual dinner once a year and that's where most of them go, to the annual dinner once a year, and they chat about old times and all that.

But those days are gone now, and there's less and less people joining because you've got to be here – now they've dropped it down to 10 years and a lot of the young ones wouldn't join anyway because they reckon there's too many old people there. So where it was really for Simpson's, it's carried on with Email. But Kelvinator's have got the same thing: they've a reunion once a year with all the people that used to work at Kelvinator's as well.

**I was intrigued that you said that you're not getting too many young people in.**

No. It's ---.

**Symptomatic of the area from which the new employees are drawn, I suppose.**

Oh, I don't know. I think it's the culture as well. Like years ago it was a family concern, but today with all the different ethnic backgrounds and that they've got their own interests and all that, it's not the same. Even the Australian lads and all that now, you know, some of them have been here 10 years and they get a letter. 'No, don't want to go with those old people.' Where years ago it used to be a big deal, if you could get in you're a member. So no, they don't want to do that now, and with this division closing down then Beverley closing down in February that only leaves Dudley Park where they've only got a few members there, so they've got more honorary members in the Old Timers Club now than they got members paying fees into it, so try and keep it going with most of the people on the committee are retired now, honorary members, they don't work in the divisions – I'm about the last one – and it's just kept going that way.

The Simpson family, they're heavily-involved in it as well, they support it with some money and all that. They usually come to the dinner once a year.

**Has Electrolux been supportive?**

Well, I've got to say yes. Each year we would go, whether it's Simpson's or Email or Electrolux we would go and ask them – because they always used to give us \$1200 a year for the dinner in Simpson days, and then when Email took over they carried on doing that, and then when Electrolux took over they're doing it. But the reason they're doing it's because the people making the decisions have come from the Simpson days, you know, like in the accounts and all that; I don't know what's going to happen in the future because most of those people have gone and it's the Electrolux be people doing it, and if they don't know what the tradition is they're not

going to bother about doing it. So Tony Simpson, we've managed to get hold of him and he's going to come on our committee, so at least he can go forward and talk to them about it as well. So I don't know. We can see in the future here that though this place is closing and Beverley are closing everybody's saying that Dudley Park will eventually close and Electrolux will just use this as a – though you can buy Electrolux, it'll be only imported products coming out of Sydney.

**So what's going to happen to this facility?**

I think this facility will be sold off. Well, I know it's going to be sold off; I don't know who it's going to be sold to, but I know that there is one company that will probably lease half of this and someone else will probably lease the other side of it. So it won't be pulled down because you can't build houses here because it's an industrial area, but I believe one company, someone has bought this and there's a company will lease one side and they'll probably lease the other side out to someone else.

**So what's happening to all the equipment, is that going off somewhere?**

All the equipment will be sold off. That will be sold at auction. And I think the condition of buying the stuff at auction is if they buy it they've got to take it out as well, so yes, most of that will be going out. I'm not sure about some of the small stuff; might be that they might be keeping our spare parts division because if we need to – run out of any parts they've got the tooling to do it. They'll farm that out to different vendors to do their parts.

**Anything you want to say there, Doug, without me prompting you?**

Not really.

**It's been a good journey, though?**

Yes, it has. I would have still been here another five years but for them closing down. No, the company's looked after me.

**Has it given you any trips overseas?**

Oh, I've been to New Zealand.

**To see other plants elsewhere?**

No, no, because I've [been] more or less heavily-involved in service training with the service technicians and, like I say, every year I basically set my own agenda. I went to each State and doing service training with the new features on the dishwashers and that was with – I usually take one of the technical service reps. They've got a rep for each product and I usually go with them, and I've been in contact with the service supervisors in each State, and we'd meet up once a year and go through things and they'd get their service techs in and we'd spend four hours going through problems and new features on the dishwasher. No, it's been good, and I've spent some time in New Zealand with the company.

**I'm running out of disk space here there, Doug, so thank you very much for that.**

That's okay.

**That'll be terrific.**

No worries.

END OF INTERVIEW.