

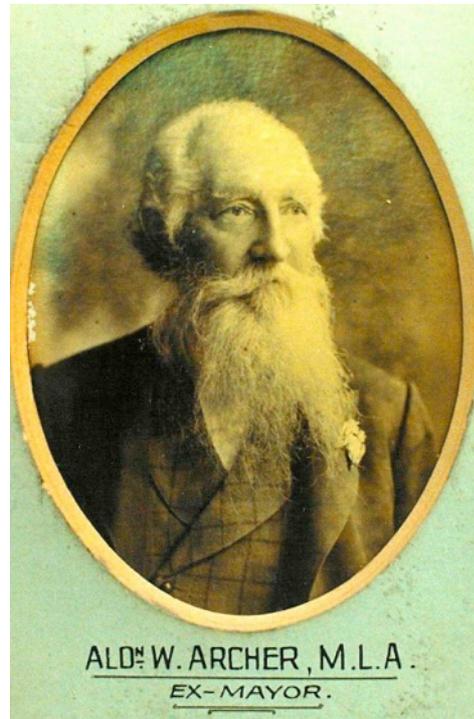


## William Archer

William Archer (1831-1925) served on Burwood Council as an alderman and Mayor and was also the local member in State parliament from 1898-1904.

The Municipality of Burwood was incorporated by proclamation in the Government Gazette on 27 March, 1874. The first Council was elected on 9 June of that year. William Archer was a member of the first Council and has a street named after him.

Archer began his working life as a pageboy at Kensington Palace. He later joined the Navy, fought in the Crimean War and migrated to Australia in 1857, where he became a businessman involved in a variety of projects from horses and real estate to coal mines and railway construction. He settled in Burwood when it was still a village and became known as 'the grand old man of Burwood' because of his service as a member of the council and his work for the municipality.



Archer witnessed a tragedy in Burwood. In 1894, Burwood's newly elected mayor William Paisley, took drastic action to combat a financial crisis during a state-wide economic downturn. His decision to reduce expenditure enraged Council clerk, William Redfearn, who took his £25 wage cut as a personal slight. Armed with three revolvers, Redfearn confronted Paisley in the Council Chambers and fired several shots at Paisley, before turning the weapon on himself. Although seriously wounded, Paisley managed to flee the building and take refuge in the nearby house of fellow alderman, William Archer. He died the following day.

Archer gave evidence on 16 February 1894 at the inquest into the death of alderman Paisley and stated he saw the deceased at 8:30 on Monday morning as he was going to the council chamber. Paisley was staggering along, supported by Mr Hawkins, with his hand to his head and bleeding freely. Paisley called out, "Oh, Archer, he's shot me in four places," and "I'm done for." The jury found that Paisley died from shock to the system resulting from pistol shots fired by William Redfearn, since dead.

Archer lived in the same house in Railway Parade until his death in 1925 at age 94.