

Donovan News

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Celebrating Fourteen Years of Donovan & Associates

Autumn 1994

... keeping in touch with clients and other friends ...

Historians' skills are not localised

Donovan & Associates has taken on another client in Canberra since the previous *News*, - the Australian Protective Service. In winning the project we were able to convince the client that we could complete the job satisfactorily, although our home office is in Adelaide. We had already demonstrated that we were able to satisfy clients throughout south-eastern Australia after having completed the history of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, and undertaken work for Hymix Australia in Sydney and Roche Bros in Melbourne.

The fact that the Donovan & Associates' home office is in Adelaide is of little real consequence in our ability to undertake projects to the complete satisfaction of clients anywhere in Australia. It is a relatively simple matter to establish our presence in the city where the client's head office is located. The skills that we have developed are readily transportable and, indeed, over more than 20 years of researching and writing history we have worked in every capital city in Australia - except Hobart - and have become familiar with the most important repositories in these cities. Moreover, several of our projects have been national in scope, e.g., our history of Australian National and F.H. Faulding & Co.

At the same time in the course of any project, particularly the history of a company or organisation, the types of questions that a historian must ask of sources and informants are generally similar from one part of Australia to another. So, aspects of management secession, the impact of technological development, the significance of government legislation and a host of other issues are common to organisations throughout Australia, the only differences being details of their impact on the various organisations.

The most persistent theme of the *Donovan News* is the versatility of historians and the idea that their skills can be used in a multitude of ways. The portability of historians' skills through-out Australia is another aspect of this versatility.



PROJECT UPDATE

The **Donovan & Associates'** work schedule continues to be a busy one with several continuing projects and some new ones having begun since the previous *News*.

The history of the Pastoral Board of South Australia is a part-time project which will continue for another 18 months yet although 1994 is the year of the centenary. An early highlight of the centennial celebrations was a barbeque at Holowiliena Station in the southern Flinders Ranges on the Sunday after Easter. It was attended by present and past members of the Board, local pastoralists, guests from the Farmers' Federation and the Conservation Council. The first lease on Holowiliena Station was taken out in 1852, by William Warwick: it is now leased by William's descendants, Richard and David Warwick and has the distinction of being the longest continual occupation by one family of a grazing lease in South Australia. Peter Donovan took advantage of the occasion to meet many of the potential readers of the history and to glean valuable information.

The Heritage Survey of the Flinders Ranges continues and has another 12 months to run. During the summer we have been concentrating on identifying likely heritage items from documentary evidence before undertaking the fieldwork during the autumn and winter months.

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Project Update, continued

D & A is continuing with its oral history of the Australian Medical Association. In addition to interviews in Sydney we have now conducted interviews in Adelaide and Melbourne with others to follow in other major centres.

As mentioned in the previous *News*, D & A is undertaking a new publishing venture with a collection of stories from historians. The manuscript is currently at the printers, with a publication date planned for the early part of the new financial year.

New Projects

Although not exactly a new project (it is now five years since D & A completed the draft) the history of Australia's leading pharmaceutical company, Faulding, will be published in 1995. Management did not consider the original timing appropriate for the publication of the history, primarily because of major initiatives both in Australia and overseas which had only recently been commenced. Moreover, the company was to celebrate its 150th anniversary within a few years. The impending sesquicentenary of Faulding in 1995 has prompted moves to have D & A update the history which is to be a cornerstone of the company's celebrations.

In addition to the continuing projects, **Donovan & Associates** has won some fascinating new projects since the previous *News*.

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MANAGING THE ARID LANDS



The history of South Australia's Pastoral Board and the unit which supported it is a fascinating one although the essential role of the Board remained relatively mundane until at least the 1960s. Until that time, the work of the Board was essentially clerical, comprising the setting and collecting of pastoral rents

and supervising lease transfers: the field work was concerned primarily with the visual inspection of leases and the persuasion of pastoralists to destock paddocks considered to be overgrazed.

Thereafter, however, the work of the Board reflected the influence of science and technological change on the industry and an increased awareness of the need to conserve fragile environments, all of which was reflected in both government policy and the recruitment of university-trained personnel who were primarily concerned with the assessment and management of the arid lands rather than the flocks and herds of the pastoral industry.

So, the major theme of the story is the changing attitude towards the land by politicians, pastoralists and South Australians generally, from a resource to be exploited to one that had to be managed carefully. In part this change reflected a greater understanding of the nature of the arid interior by pastoralists and others and the development of means to manage the land more efficiently than before: it also reflected an increase in competing interests for access to the arid regions.

This project is not a history of the pastoral industry in South Australia, although the history of the industry provides the necessary background for the story of the Board.

FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE

The complementary nature of much of the historical work of Donovan & Associates is another recurring theme in the *News*. This is evident also in the manner in which our work on the history of the Pastoral Board complements our work on recording and documenting the heritage of the Flinders Ranges. The pastoral industry has been one of the longest, continuous economic activities undertaken in the Flinders Ranges and the physical evidence of this remains from the earliest times. This evidence, reflected in such items as homesteads, woolsheds, and watering troughs, even the location of these one to another, illustrates significant developments in the industry over time, much of which is also reflected in the history of the Pastoral Board.



Providing Security for Australia

The Australian Protective Service (APS) will celebrate its 10th anniversary on 20 October 1994. However, while only 10 years old in its present form, the ancestors and functions carried out by the APS go back to 1935 at least, with the formation of the Defence Establishments' Guard, and which became the Peace Officers' Guard in 1942. Officers of the Guard were appointed under the *Peace Officers' Act* of 1925, so if the Act becomes the measure, the history extends back to 1925.

But what is the APS? Very few Australians seem to be aware of the Service, although many would have seen its officers. On 1 January 1994 the APS had a strength of 967 uniformed officers. The APS is responsible for security at 59 stations throughout Australia. These include airports in each state ranging from the small Coolangatta airport to those at most of the capital cities; immigration detention centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, with the Immigration and Reception Processing Centre at Port Hedland in northern Western Australia; there are the top secret joint defence facilities at Pine Gap and Nurrungar; communication stations at Exmouth and Geraldton; and a major defence establishment at Salisbury in South Australia. APS officers guard Parliament House in Canberra along with diplomatic and consular premises in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria; they also guard several official establishments, the Lodge and Government House in Canberra and Admiralty and Kirribilli Houses in Sydney. In addition to guarding such premises, APS officers also perform a variety of *ad hoc* tasks, by providing escorts to deportees and travelling art exhibitions or guards for aircraft of visiting dignitaries.

The history of the formation and development of the APS is fascinating although the essential service provided by the APS is a simple one. At one level the history reflects the federal government's endeavours to establish an efficient law-enforcement authority, with the Peace Officers' Guard becoming Commonwealth Police, then joining with the ACT Police to form the Australian Federal Police (AFP) before the Protective Service Component of the AFP was separated to become the APS. The APS's push for commercialisation also reflects the government's policy of economic rationalism.

At another level the history touches upon major issues that have impacted upon modern-day Australia such as the growth and effect of terrorism in Australia. A major role of the APS is to provide security at major airports and at diplomatic and consular properties. The APS also provides guarding services at the centres established to hold Cambodian and other boat people so the history is also influenced by the current immigration debate in Australia.

So, the history of the Australian Protective Service is more than a simple chronicle of the development of a government agency. It is also a unique insight into part of modern Australian history and the manner in which major world events affect ordinary Australians.



New Projects, continued

Immediately before Christmas 1993 D & A was commissioned by the Department of Defence to undertake a heritage assessment of the Laboratories Area of the one-time explosives factory at Salisbury, in South Australia. This was part of larger works associated with the rationalisation of the site by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO). Having already undertaken a heritage survey of Salisbury and noted the heritage significance of the larger site we were delighted for the opportunity to study the history and significance of the explosives factory in greater detail.

D & A won another major new project prior to Christmas when it was commissioned to write a history of the Australian Protective Service (APS). Coincidentally the APS provides security at DSTO at Salisbury. This history has been commissioned to mark the 10th anniversary of the APS in October 1994.

D & A has also been involved in a major oral history project initiated and co-ordinated by Beth Robertson, the Oral History Officer at the Mortlock Library of South Australia. This project is concerned with recording reminiscences of women's political activity and represents one of many projects undertaken as part of the celebration of the Centenary of Women's Suffrage in South Australia. June Waters has been managing the D & A contribution to the project.

As with previous copies of the *News*, copy-editing is by Bernard O'Neil and the cartoons are by Stephen Stanley.

WHEN COMMISSIONING A HISTORIAN - be aware of the purpose of the history

Writing history is not a dark science, therefore commissioning a historian should not be a problematic task. A person does not need to know all about architecture before hiring an architect to design and supervise the construction of a new building, nor is there a need to know all about public relations before holding discussions with a public relations consultant. The important issue in each instance is for the client to be clear about the purpose of the project and the budget that can be committed, and to be prepared to discuss matters with the consultant. So it should be with the commissioning of a historian.

Too frequently, however, those wishing to commission a history simply approach a historian saying, 'We want a history written. What will it cost?' This is a bit like approaching an architect and saying, 'We want a new building. What will it cost?' The architect can design and supervise the construction of any type of building - from a house, to a shop, a factory or an office - so it is important to determine first of all the type of building that is required and the purpose for which it is to be used. So, anyone commissioning a history should have an idea of the type of history that is required. A celebratory history will be different from a detailed history of record; a history designed as a marketing tool, will differ from one required for management purposes.

The commissioning agent also needs to have a budget in mind. An architect must be informed whether the agent wants, or can afford, a simple cottage, a large mansion or anything in between. So too, a historian can produce different products for any particular purpose - from a small brochure to a large book if the history is to help with marketing, for instance.

In addition to the budget, those hoping to commission a history must also inform the historian when the product is required because this also has an important bearing on what the historian can produce. Thus, the client cannot reasonably expect a 150,000 word history of record if the historian has only six months in which to prepare the manuscript.

So, what people should be saying to a historian is, 'We want a history and are prepared to spend \$x. What would we get for that sort of money?' Alternatively, those wishing to commission a historian might show the historian another book and say, 'We want a history of about this size and quality and we want to use it for this particular purpose. How much will that cost us?' Answers to such questions will provide the basis for discussion which will help to ensure that the historian knows what is required and the client knows what can be expected.



Historians look at the big picture



DONOVAN and ASSOCIATES

History and Historic Preservation Consultants

P.O. Box 436, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051

Phone (08) 270 1770

Fax (08) 270 1770

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