

Donovan News

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

History lessons for trainee managers

An appreciation of the history of an organisation and the industry in which it operates will enable managers to build upon the wisdom of their predecessors. Although most managers are familiar with the paradigms of the life cycle of organisations, an understanding of the cycle is no substitute for an appreciation of the unique history of a particular organisation. This uniqueness means that decisions appropriate for one organisation may not be appropriate for another.

Courses for trainee managers should include a component that helps them to gain an appreciation of the history and culture of the organisations and industries in which they work.

As well as being given an appreciation of skills and styles of management, trainees should also be given a sense of history. Perhaps a valuable practical exercise in any management course would be for trainees to compile a history of their organisation, to try to isolate the factors that have made it successful, to identify and analyse the critical decisions that were taken, and to try to define the roles and impacts of the good and not-so-good leaders. Another valuable exercise would be to have trainees try to define and explain the culture of their organisation, to highlight the positive aspects and the negative features: a SWOT analysis with the emphasis on history.

Another important part of a management course might also be an historical introduction to industry issues. Most managers, for instance, would probably benefit from an introduction to labour history as it would help them gain a better understanding of the attitudes and motivations of unions and workers. Trainees might also benefit from an introductory history of the industry in which they operate, along with an understanding of how and why it has developed particular characteristics and traditions.

A history component in management training courses would help trainees to become more aware of the intangible factors which impact on their activities.



PROJECT UPDATE

Most of the endeavours of **Donovan & Associates** since the previous **News** have been concerned with projects already in train and reported in earlier issues. Several have been brought to completion.

The project documenting buildings in the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) Laboratories Area at Salisbury was completed on schedule in November 1994. Baulderstone Hornibrook, one of **D & A's** earliest clients has since begun constructing the new building there.

D & A's history of Faulding, Australia's international pharmaceutical company, was launched in May 1995 to mark the 150th anniversary of the company. The handsome volume was designed and produced by Motiv Design in association with Wakefield Press.

The overview history of mining in Australia prepared by **D & A** for the Australian Council of National Trusts and, through it, the Australian Heritage Commission, was completed at the end of May. The report comprised more than 300 pages: with 24 copies being required by the client, the physical production in itself became a major task.

Continued on page 2

Project Update continued

The heritage survey of the Flinders Ranges is virtually complete and will be submitted to the State Heritage Branch at the end of June. The report of this project will be publicly launched by the Minister for the Environment on 6 September.

The history of the Pastoral Board of South Australia is also nearing completion. The project is expected to move to the production stage in September for a launch in early December 1995.

Other continuing projects include the centenary history of Sacred Heart College with Bernard O'Neil, and the history of Quality Bakers Australia. Work on these projects will continue into 1996.

Work also continues on the documentation of local heritage sites within the City of Marion.

New Projects

Although our attention at **Donovan & Associates** since the previous **News** has been on continuing projects, new projects have also been commissioned.

One new project, now completed, had **Donovan & Associates** preparing the site histories of three Army training depots in metropolitan Adelaide for the Department of Defence.

Donovan & Associates has been asked to write the history of the Wakehurst Golf Club. Work on this project will be completed early in 1996 and a book launch is expected in 1997.

A SLICE OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

The commission to write a history of Quality Bakers Australia — the makers of Buttercup bread — provides the opportunity to explore another significant aspect of Australia's history. The story is a fascinating one because of the importance with which people have invested bread and baking. This was reflected in the strict regulation of the industry until recent times. In addition to regulations imposed by various Food Acts, bakers had to contend with both the regulation of the price of bread and the hours during which they could bake and deliver their product.

Quality Bakers Australia, a subsidiary of Goodman Fielder Limited, is Australia's largest baking company measured in terms of output, but is followed closely by the only other national manufacturer, George Weston, the makers of Tip Top bread. Together the two companies produce almost 50% of Australia's bread, with small hot bread shops and in-store bakeries together accounting for 30% to 40%. So, the story of Quality Bakers mirrors the story of the bread industry in Australia.

In one sense Quality Bakers is less than 10 years old, having been formed in 1986 after the amalgamation of the Goodman, Fielder Gillespie and Allied Mills groups to form Australia's largest food company. However, the roots lie deep in the past, particularly with the more aggressive flour milling companies which diversified into baking during the 1950s in order to guarantee markets for their flour when their export markets declined.

The early part of the story is concerned with the coalescence of hundreds of small bakeries into larger units, many of which were then acquired by the several milling groups. There were many factors encouraging the rationalisation. The rapid population growth after World War II required the building of new bakeries and the modernisation of older plants all of which required investment at a level which only the more visionary bakers were willing to make. The latest plant generally gave these bakers increased capacity which encouraged them to acquire smaller competitors. The development of supermarkets in the 1960s and the decline in home deliveries also encouraged the growth of larger bakeries.

A major goad to rationalisation was the entry into bread baking in Australia by the British-based Weston group, with its policy of acquiring the most efficient bakeries so that it might produce bread at the lowest cost. This acted as a spur to bakers to grow so as to be able to compete more effectively or to sell to milling groups such as Allied Mills, Fielders or Gillespie Bros.

During the 1950s, baking remained very much a craft industry, with bakers delighting in taking honours at shows, although there was very little variety in the bread produced. Competition was minimal, with government restrictions ensuring that individual bakers enjoyed a monopoly within their areas.

However, baking is now a manufacturing industry like many others with managers and market analysts rather than craftsmen dictating what should be produced. There is a wide variety of bread produced, but in very few plant bakeries. The manufacturers now compete strenuously for market share.

The history of Quality Bakers Australia therefore provides another unique view of Australia's recent history.

ANOTHER
SLICE OF
HISTORY.



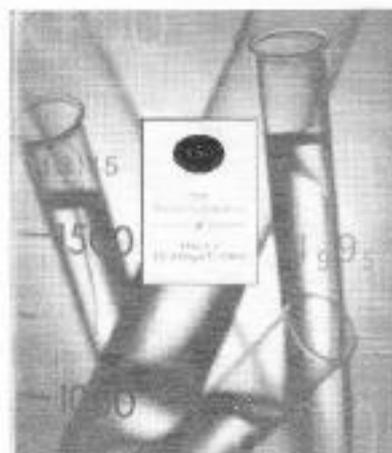
A New Publication

The latest publication with which **Donovan & Associates** has been associated is the history of F.H. Faulding and Co., Australia's oldest pharmaceutical manufacturing and wholesaling company, which appeared in May 1995. A feature of this book is the chapter by Dr Ed Tweddell, the current managing director, which elaborates on Dr Tweddell's vision for the company's immediate future and complements the historical section which documents the features of the company's 150-year history.

The publication completes our association with Faulding which began in 1988. Since that time the company has changed

greatly. Management has changed, its manufacturing in Australia has been consolidated at ultra-modern facilities at Salisbury and the company has become truly international.

The Faulding Formula: A History of F.H. Faulding & Co. Limited. was written by Peter Donovan and Ed Tweddell and published by the company. It was produced in hardback, measures 230 x 270 mm, has 180 + xii pages and is liberally illustrated in full colour.



Vale, Old Parliament House

Donovan & Associates was disappointed to learn of the closure of Old Parliament House as a museum at the end of June. In 1976, while working for the South Australian Museum, Peter Donovan with Barry Rowney undertook a detailed historical and architectural study of the building for the Public Buildings Department. This was at the time when the government was considering options for the building. The study represents one of the first detailed heritage conservation plans to be undertaken in South Australia.

Peter and Barry cannot claim to have made any startling revelations about the history of the building but they did confirm that portion of the original Legislative Council building survived major alterations and extensions at the time when South Australia gained its two-chamber Parliament.

Barry Rowney went on to become an inaugural member of the Constitutional Museum Trust and, in this capacity played a major role in later conservation works to prepare the building for use as the Constitutional Museum, later renamed Old Parliament House.



Odds and Ends

The need to research aspects of the Quality Bakers story took Peter and June Donovan to Melbourne in May. During the course of the visit Peter spoke about working as a consulting historian at a meeting of the Victorian Professional Historians Association. He also represented the South Australian Association of Professional Historians at a meeting with members of other State associations to advance the proposal for the formation of a National Council of Professional Historians Associations.

Although stepping down as president of the Association of Professional Historians at the Annual General Meeting in April, Peter Donovan remains a member of the executive committee.

June Donovan was re-elected to the executive of the South Australian branch of the Oral History Association of Australia at its recent Annual General Meeting.



June Donovan with Jane and Richard Warwick at Holowilena Station during the course of fieldwork.

Copy-editing of the **News** is by Bernard O'Neil. The cartoons are by Stephen Stanley.

WHEN COMMISSIONING A HISTORIAN — be aware of the time required

Clients intending to commission a history must appreciate the time needed to research and write the manuscript and also for its publication. Too frequently clients decide within 12 months of an anniversary that they would like to have a published history with which to celebrate the landmark, unaware that it can take up to six months simply to turn a manuscript into a book.

Histories can be of any length and detail and some historians are able to work more efficiently than others because of the experience and knowledge that they bring to a project. However, six months full-time work is the absolute minimum that a client should allow for the research and writing of a history that is sufficiently comprehensive as to be something of which all can be proud.

Realistically, the client should provide a longer period, even if the historian works full-time on the project: a PhD thesis normally takes from two to three years to be written. An experienced historian should be able to work very efficiently, particularly on a tightly focussed subject such as the history of an organisation, but would probably require at least 12 months for the project. The longer period allows the historian to work around the temporary unavailability of sources and informants and permits the historian to feel more confident about having searched all or most of the available sources. It also provides the historian with more time to think about the key issues and themes and to formulate plans for writing.

But having a completed manuscript is only half the project. Another six months is required to turn a manuscript into a book. The client needs to ensure that the manuscript contains nothing that is libellous or defamatory. Then the manuscript needs to be edited to eliminate the writer's idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies and to ensure that the prose conforms to a high standard.

Once the client has arranged for a designer and publisher to produce the work and has decided upon its detailed specifications, there remains four months for the publication process. This includes page layout and the regular checking of galleys, page proofs and dye-lines and index compilation before plates are made and the publication goes to press.

The production of a history will progress far better and be of a higher quality if it is not driven by artificial deadlines such as anniversaries which place unnecessary pressures on the historian and those involved in its publication and create the preconditions for mistakes to occur.

HISTORIANS ARE
MARATHON RUNNERS
NOT SPRINTERS..



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