

Donovan News

Number 20

Spring 1997

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

Ten Years of *Donovan News*

This issue completes ten years of publishing the *Donovan News*. The occasion represents an appropriate time to reflect on developments during that decade.

The first *Donovan News* was a pedestrian issue with little real focus, or expectation that the initiative would continue. However, it attracted sufficient favourable comment to warrant a successor. Since then it has become an important vehicle for communicating with clients, colleagues and friends and in highlighting the many skills and services that historians have to offer.

The twenty issues of the *News* detail the many projects undertaken by **Donovan & Associates** during the past ten years and the diversity of clients for whom we have had the pleasure to work. Together, they encapsulate the recent history of the firm.

A great deal has happened during the past decade. Although **D&A** had been in existence since 1980, its future, even eight years on, was probably as tenuous as that of the first *News*. However, like the newsletter, the business has continued to develop and to become increasingly focused. Ten years ago heritage work was fundamental to the existence of the business. It continues to be important, but endeavours have been made to build upon our expertise in commissioned histories and other areas of historical research. In this regard we have been gratified to have completed projects for clients in many parts of south-east Australia, and to become familiar with resources and historical repositories throughout Australia.

One of the features of the firm has been its flexibility. In large part this has been due to the establishment of a network of experts upon whom we have been able to draw for specific expertise. We have also established links with other historians who have been willing to assist with particular projects.

We are delighted to highlight many of the features of the past ten years in this issue and, at the same time, acknowledge those who have helped to make **Donovan & Associates** a success.

JUST THINK—
ONLY ANOTHER
10 YEARS AND
IT'LL BE OUR
CENTENARY!



PROJECT UPDATE

Several of the projects mentioned in previous issues of the *News* have now been completed and two of them have been published recently.

Our history of the River Red Gum forests (near Deniliquin in southern New South Wales) was published in April.

National Assets, the history of Asset Services, was published in mid-November. The book includes details of the sale of Asset Services to P&O Services, but publication could not be completed before the actual sale on 30 September. Prior arrangements were made to ensure that copies would be delivered to those who had worked for Asset Services during the past five years and to others who were interested in the organisation. It was fortunate that these arrangements were made given the later dismantling of the Department of Administrative Services of which Assets was once part.

Most of the remaining interviews for the oral

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Project Update continued

history of the Australian Medical Association have been completed. We have interviews from all states except Tasmania. The interview program will be completed in December 1997.

The heritage survey of the District Council of Victor Harbor was completed and submitted in mid-November.

June and Peter Donovan were involved in editing and producing the most recent issue of the journal of the Oral History Association of Australia, which was distributed at the biennial conference of the Association at Alice Springs in September.

NEW PROJECTS

Interviews will commence soon for an oral history of the Birdsville Track. Like our earlier project on the Strzelecki Track, we will focus on the work of constructing, upgrading and maintaining the Track.

D&A is also undertaking research for the South Australian Attorney-General's Department associated with native title claims in South Australia. This work builds upon our extensive historical knowledge associated with outback South Australia.

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

Murray River Wholsalers

Work has commenced on a history of MRW Merchandisers Limited, as previously reported. This represents another 'rescue' mission by D&A. MRW—previously Murray River Wholsalers—was acquired by Ruralco, which is based in Sydney, early in 1997 and lost its separate identity in September when the takeover was completed. Fortunately, provision was made to record the history of MRW before it was lost. It is a history worth preserving, particularly because of the insights it provides into the development of rural business in South Australia.

MRW began in 1921 when seven Riverland co-operatives combined for the purpose of buying things such as fencing, chemicals and animal products at cheaper prices than they could obtain individually. MRW later arranged to sell products of these co-operatives, particularly into overseas markets.

MRW remained essentially a 'co-operative of co-operatives' until the 1980s when increased competition from pastoral houses encouraged it to admit small rural businesses. The nature of MRW changed radically as it became increasingly identified with small country merchandisers under the Town and Country banner. Similar groups developed interstate and it became increasingly difficult to deal with product suppliers. MRW decided to increase its strength by expanding interstate, first of all into Victoria, then New South Wales and Queensland. Later still endeavours were made to co-operate with similar groups with strong regional identities in other states.

The strategy proved difficult in the face of intense competition from national rivals. Ultimately negotiations took place with Ruralco which agreed to acquire MRW.



A History of the Millewa Group of River Red Gum Forests by Peter Donovan. Published by the Forest Research and Development Division, State Forests of New South Wales, the book is softback, measures 208 mm x 294 mm, has xvi + 112 pages, and is illustrated in black and white, and colour.



1. BARRY ROWNEY 2. BERNIE O'NEIL
 3. PAMELA RUNGE 4. MARY GEYER
 5. PATT SUMERLING 6. ALISON PAINTER
 7. DANIEL FAZIO 8. PETER DONOVAN
 9. JUNE DONOVAN 10. LEONIE RANDALL
 11. STEPHEN STANLEY



The success of **Donovan & Associates** during the past ten years has been helped by the contributions of many people and the flexibility which their services have provided. They include:

Barry Rowney, who lectures in Architectural Conservation at the University of Adelaide and continues to provide the architectural expertise for our heritage projects;

Patricia Sumerling, who has few peers in the detailed property research required for heritage surveys and has been an integral members of our survey teams;

Bernard O'Neil, who has undertaken several joint ventures with **D&A** and is continuing to do so as a member of the team researching for the Attorney-General's Department;

Alison Painter, who has been associated with many **D&A** projects and is currently part of the team working for the Attorney-General's Department;

Daniel Fazio, who helped with our history of Payneham Primary School and later returned to Flinders University to complete post-graduate studies;

Mary Geyer, who joined the team as a joint author of our history of Hindmarsh-Woodville and is now helping with research for the Attorney-General's Department;

Leonie Randall, a sports historian, who gave us an edge for our history of the Wakehurst Golf Club;

Pamela Runge, who worked on several projects before moving to Canberra and working for the Australian Heritage Commission—where she had charge of a **D&A** project on one occasion—and the ACT's Heritage Branch; and

Stephen Stanley, who has been illustrating the *News* since the third issue, and has illustrated two of our publications. He is a professional cartoonist, whose Lafferty strip appeared for many years in the *Advertiser* and other newspapers and exemplified his delightful sense of history.

Key Clients

Donovan & Associates has had the pleasure of working for a diverse group of valued clients in the decade since the appearance of the *News*. They include:

Australian Government

Asset Services * Australian Army * Australian Heritage Commission * Australian Protective Service * Department of Administrative Services * Department of Defence * Department of Housing and Construction * National Museum of Australia.

State Governments

Attorney-General's Department (SA) * Department of Environment and Planning (SA) * Department of Housing and Construction (SA) * Department of Road Transport (SA) * State Forests (NSW) * State Library of South Australia * South Australian Tourist Commission.

Local Government

City of Adelaide * City of Enfield * City of Hindmarsh-Woodville * City of Port Augusta * City of West Torrens * City of Marion * City of Salisbury * City of Port Adelaide * District Council of Victor Harbor * Municipality of Peterborough * Town of Alice Springs.

Other

Australian Council of National Trusts * Australian Medical Association * Australian National Railways Commission * Australian Submarine Corporation * BHP Long Products Division * CSR Ltd * Cobdogla Irrigation Museum * Connellan Airways Trust * Electricity Trust of South Australia * F.H. Faulding & Co * Giles & Giles, Chartered Accountants * Goodman Fielder * Hassell Architects * Hymix Australia * Lindsay Point Almonds Pty Ltd * MRW Merchandisers Ltd * National Environmental Consultancy * Narwietooma Pastoral Co * National Trust of Australia (SA) * Norman Waterhouse & Mutton, Barristers and Solicitors * Oakhill College * Payneham Primary School Council * Real Estate Institute of South Australia * Roche Bros * Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital * Sacred Heart College * SAGASCO Resources * Wakehurst Golf Club.



DONOVAN & ASSOCIATES

History & Historic Preservation Consultants

Donovan & Associates is a consulting firm which specialises in matters relating to aspects of historical research, writing and historic conservation. The firm undertakes a wide variety of tasks based upon these specialties. Major projects completed by the firm include large commissioned histories and heritage studies, recording of oral history, and providing advice on records management.

Donovan & Associates was established in 1980 and since that time has undertaken work for clients throughout south-eastern Australia on projects that have involved research and work in all parts of the country.

Donovan & Associates' services include:

- Corporate and institutional histories
- Regional and local histories
- Heritage surveys and assessments
- Land tenure research
- Oral history programs
- Advice on cultural tourism
- Advice on historical displays

PO Box 436, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051
Phone/Facsimile (08) 8270 1770

Key Publications

Published commissioned histories, a specialty of Donovan & Associates, now total thirty and encompass a broad range of subjects and organisations. Among those of the past decade are:

Waltzing Matildas: the Men and Machines of the 2/9th Australian Armoured Regiment * *Alice Springs: Its History and that of the People who made it* * *Defending the Front Door: A History of the Northern Territory and its place in Australian Defence Strategy* * *Real History: a history of the Real Estate Institute of South Australia, 1919-1989* * *School's Out: A History of Payneham Primary School* * *Highways: a history of the South Australian Highways Department* * *The Long Haul: A history of Australian National* * *Failure of Triumph by EJ Connellan* * *'An ornament to the city': A History of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital* * *Changing the Guard: A history of the Australian Protective Service* * *The Faulding Formula: a history of F.H. Faulding & Co.* * *'In the Interest of the Country': a history of the Pastoral Board of South Australia, 1893-1993* * *From Park Land to Sea Coast* * *Acorn to Oak Tree: Oakhill College, 1936-1996* * *The Strzelecki Track: Lifeline to the Corner Country* * *Buttercup and Baking: The history behind Quality Bakers Australia* * *In the Marist Tradition: Sacred Heart College, Adelaide 1897-1997* * *Out of the Rough: A history of Wakehurst Golf Club* * *A history of the Millewa Group of River Red Gum Forests* * *National Assets: A history of the Commonwealth government's day labour organisation, 1901-1997.*



TIL RECORD EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN SEEN AND HEARD HERE...



LOTS OF NAMES AND DATES - WHAT MORE COULD A HISTORIAN ASK?



WE WANT YOU TO WRITE AN AUCTION FILLED HISTORY...



AH YOU'RE OUR HISTORIAN - SORRY - I THOUGHT YOU WERE TRYING TO INVENT A NEW METHOD OF WRITING HISTORY...



Key Projects

Donovan & Associates has undertaken a broad range of historical projects in addition to the published histories commissioned during the past ten years. These include:

A Six-stage Development and Management Plan for the Homestead Park Pioneer Museum, Port Augusta * **An Oral History of Collison & Co., Patent Attorneys** * **Peterborough Heritage Survey** * **Heritage of Sedan, South Australia** * **City of Marion Heritage Survey** * **City of Salisbury Heritage Survey** * **An Oral History of Giles and Giles, Chartered Accountants** * **Conservation Plan for Keswick Barracks** * **Sunnybrae Farm: a history** * **The Railway Heritage of South Australia** * **State Strategy to Promote and Interpret the Life and Achievements of Mary MacKillop** * **An Oral History of the Adelaide Gaol** * **The Local Heritage of Marion** * **An Oral History of the Australian Medical Association** * **A Heritage Assessment of the Laboratories Area, DSTO, Salisbury** * **An Architectural Assessment of the Laboratories Area, DSTO, Salisbury** * **HMAS Encounter Conservation Study** * **An Oral History of Lindsay Point Almonds Pty Ltd** * **A Heritage Assessment of Drill Halls at Alberton, Beulah Park and Somerton Park** * **Flinders Ranges Heritage Survey** * **Mining in Australia** * **A Heritage Survey of the District Council of Victor Harbor.**

THIS'LL BE A GROUND BREAKING HISTORY..



HI LITTLE HERITAGE FELLA..



TELL ME ABOUT THE EARLY DAYS AT THE SUBMARINE CORPORATION...



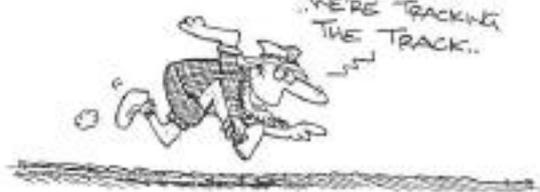
THE FLINDERS RANGES HAS HERITAGE COMING OUT OF THE ROCKS..



IF WE HAVE A DEVELOPMENT WITH ONE SPONSOR'S 'DICKY'.. TWO VALUES IS BETTER..



..WE'RE TRACKING THE TRACK..



DON'T WORRY THERE ARE A LOT OF PUTS ON AN ALMOND FROM.. DON'T WORRY YOU'RE GOING ARE A LOT OF PUTS ON AN ALMOND FROM.. DON'T WORRY..



THIS IS ONE PROJECT WHICH HAS TO STAY ON THE RAILS..



HISTORIAN/ FIRST CLASS REFER DONOVAN REQUESTING FOR CONSERVATION DUTIES..

