

Donovan News

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

Imaginative History

Good historical writing is imaginative—the emphasis being on the writing, rather than the history. Historians must be true to their sources and may be limited to some extent in what they write by the facts and information at their disposal. They do not have the freedom of fiction writers to write whatever they wish, for instance. However, they are constrained only by their imagination in the manner in which they research and write.

The historian is generally free to choose the theme of the book and demonstrate a measure of individuality. Geoffrey Blainey's innovative approach to the often-told story of the European settlement of Australia promoted the concept of 'The Tyranny of Distance' to encapsulate many features of Australia's history. Most educated Australians know of the concept, although comparatively few would have read Blainey's book.

Research provides another opportunity for innovation. In all instances there are essential sources that must be consulted whatever the proposed theme. For example, a historian commissioned to write the history of an organisation, would be remiss in not consulting relevant annual reports. But any source may be deemed to be appropriate and some of the most innovative history has been based upon new approaches to sources. The historian, Russel Ward, used Australian folk songs to exemplify his ideas about the development of a distinct Australian identity.

Historians have an opportunity to display imagination in the presentation of their material. For instance, illustrations should not be used simply to break up text, but may be used as an attractive way of providing information. The surveyor's sketch plan of station improvements on a pastoral lease are certainly more interesting and attractive than a page of descriptive prose.

Finally, experienced historians—and we at D&A believe we are in that category—are in a position to offer advice about the attractive design and presentation of the book. In most instances there will be little or no great difference between the cost of good and boring basic design. All it needs is a little imagination.



D&A's Scope of Work

D&A has completed interviews for the oral history of the Australian Medical Association. The material is to be curated as part of the Oral History Collection of the State Library of South Australia.

The history of Roche Bros, Australia's leading contract miner has been completed. *The Roche Approach* was launched at a black tie function in Melbourne on 30 November 1998 in association with the presentation of the Australian Constructors' Association's 'Services to Construction Award' to Ken Roche.

The research and writing of the history of Murray River Wholesalers Pty Ltd is almost complete.

So too is the work associated with the oral history of the Department of Transport and the gangs who have worked on the Birdsville Track.

D&A continues to undertake historical work for the Attorney-

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work for the Attorney-General's Department in the matter of native title claims in South Australia.

D&A has begun work on several new projects since publication of the previous *News*.

Once again D&A worked as sub-consultants to Hassell Pty Ltd in Adelaide. In this instance we provided heritage advice on the gardens at the stately home, Carrick Hill, in suburban Springfield, as part of a management plan for the future of these gardens.

D&A has been commissioned to write a history of ACTEW, the Australian Capital Territory's electricity and water provider, ahead of the proposed sale and possible division of the corporation.

We are also involved in writing a history of the De La Salle Brothers in Australia. The Brothers have been primarily identified with teaching, but have also been involved in the provision of support for disadvantaged youth.

The Australian Barley Board has engaged D&A to compile a history of its activities. The Board celebrates 60 years of operation in 1999, when it is to be restructured and

Men with Class

The history of the De La Salle Brothers extends back more than 300 years to 1682 when John Baptist De La Salle, a Catholic priest of Rheims in France, gathered together a group of men whom he trained to be school teachers. The need for teachers for the less privileged meant that the Congregation grew rapidly until checked by the excesses of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution when it was reduced to three communities, all of them outside France. The resurgence of the Brothers in France co-incided with the accession of Napoleon to power. Thereafter, the Brothers spread throughout the world, opening their first school in Australia in 1906 at Armidale in New South Wales.

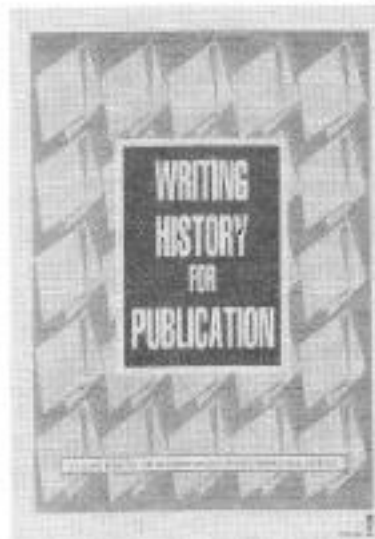
The Brothers went on to establish schools in each state in Australia—except Tasmania—and in New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Since 1906 they have been closely identified with, and played an important role in, many developments in Catholic education in Australia, including the establishment of the Australian Catholic University. They have been leaders in developing education in Papua New Guinea, particularly through training teachers. The number of Brothers has declined since the 1960s and they have been forced to withdraw from many of their schools. However, in this they have reflected changes within the Catholic Church in Australia and elsewhere.

The particular mission of the Brothers to the poor and disadvantaged prompted the establishment of Boys Town at Beaudesert in Queensland, and, later, the Kids Help Line; the Brothers established San Miguel in western Sydney to provide emergency care for families in crisis; and they have a school for Aboriginal children at Balgo Hills in remote Western Australia.

WE TEACH THE BOYS
CHRISTIAN VALUES—
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE—
AND HOW TO PLAY
FOOTBALL...



Published Recently



Writing History for Publication by Peter Donovan. Published by the South Australian Government. The book is softback, measures 210mm x 295 mm, has vi+182 pages, and is illustrated in black and white. It is a textbook for use in the Advanced Diploma of Arts (Professional Writing) course offered by the Adelaide Institute of TAFE.

Providing Life's Essentials

ACTEW, the provider of the Australian Capital Territory's electricity, water and sewerage services celebrated its 10th anniversary on 1 July 1998. Though ACTEW itself is only a decade old, its history, including that of its predecessors, extends back to the very foundation of Canberra and the ACT. Indeed, the general location and shape of the ACT was determined by the need to provide a catchment area for a water supply for the national capital.

The early provision of the essential electricity and water services for the ACT is closely identified with the physical development of Canberra. The power station built at Eastlake was the first public building in Canberra, and its major purpose was to provide power for the pumping station near the Cotter Dam to pump water to Canberra. This early history is also bound up with that of the federal government departments responsible for development works in the Territory. The Canberra Electricity Supply was part of the Department of the Interior until 1963, when it became an autonomous entity known as the ACT Electricity Authority (ACTEA). The Water Branch formed part of the Department of Works and remained with that department—and its successors—until 1988, when, with the imminent approach of self-government for the ACT, it was joined with ACTEA to form ACTEW. The new authority became the ACT's largest Government Business Enterprise (GBE) and one of the most significant businesses in the ACT.

ACTEW remains a rare organisation in Australia in that it provides electricity, water and sewerage services. In all states, the providers of electricity and water services have been discrete organisations.

The recent history of ACTEW has been closely associated with the development of the national electricity grid, the breaking up of the traditional monopolistic electricity utilities in the states and the push for greater competition which flowed from the federal government's acceptance of the Hilmer Report. The new economic climate has caused a re-assessment of ACTEW's future. Consultants have suggested that its small size means that it cannot compete effectively in the marketplace, and have recommended that its services be privatised.

Once again, D&A have become involved in recording the history of an organisation before it undergoes significant change.

..AND I THOUGHT
CANBERRA ONLY
PRODUCED HOT AIR..



In the news

D&A received attention in the local press and radio following upon its recommendations for the future management of the Adelaide Parklands. The previous *News* noted our work as sub-consultants to Hassell Pty Ltd in the preparation of a management strategy for the Adelaide Parklands. The media were intrigued that we recommended that consideration be given to nominating Colonel Light's plan for the City for the World Heritage List. The reports failed to appreciate the subtlety that the whole of the plan, not just the Parklands, were the subject of the recommendation.

Welcome

Donovan & Associates welcomes **Dr Pauline Payne**, current President of the Association of Professional Historians, who has been engaged as a sub-consultant to help with the history of the Australian Barley Board.

Ruth Donovan began working full-time with D&A in July. She has been used as a research assistant in several projects to gain broad experience before embarking on post-graduate studies.

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

By Special Appointment

June Donovan was appointed an inaugural member of South Australia's State Records Council which was established under the *State Records Act 1997*. State Cabinet approved the nominations for membership on 19 May 1998 and the Council held its first meeting on 16 June. The Council consists of nine members, with June being appointed as a member of the public who is a frequent user. The general purpose of the Council is to oversee the operation of the Act and to approve the disposal schedules for government records that are the responsibility of State Records. The appointment is for a period of three years.

Peter Donovan has also received a significant appointment, though one of a very different nature. In September 1998 he was appointed by Athletics Australia to be one of three Chief Judges for the Long and Triple Jump at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Peter has long been associated with Track and Field and has officiated at major meets around Australia in recent years. Last April he was invited to attend a course in Brisbane organised by the International Amateur Athletic Federation for potential Area Technical Officials for the Oceania region and was one of six Australians to pass the exams held at the conclusion of the course.



A Good Experience

Libby Sexton, a student of the Applied History course at Adelaide University undertook a month's work experience with **D&A** during November. She spent most of her time in Canberra, working on the history of ACTEW.



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 has since undertaken work for clients throughout southeastern 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

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