

Donovan News

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

An Industry Leader

Donovan & Associates has long believed that companies and organisations with a significant history should tell others about it. After all, businesses that have existed for many years in the face of economic and industry changes have learned strategies to survive and thrive. They have undoubtedly learned how to service clients satisfactorily.

So, we believe that it is worth celebrating D&A's 20 years in business in 2000, after being registered on 16 December 1980. This represents a major achievement, even in world terms.

People have been recording history since the creation of writing. There have been many professional historians who have worked outside universities, including Geoffrey Blainey who, in 1954, wrote *The Peaks of Lyell*, the story of the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company, and who continues to record the histories of companies such as Pacific Dunlop. However, the stereotypical historian in Australia remains a university academic. Few have considered history as a legitimate business pursuit. **Donovan & Associates** has been seeking to change this perception for 20 years.

Practitioners in the United States of America are generally considered the pioneers of so-called 'Public History' which seeks to promote historical scholarship outside universities. The first national conference on 'Public History' in America was convened in Montecito, California in April 1979. Participants agreed to form a steering committee that created the new National Council on Public History at the succeeding national conference in Pittsburgh in April 1980. The formation of **Donovan & Associates** was contemporaneous with, though independent, of the development in the United States. Subsequently, however, D&A studied developments there and remains abreast of them through membership of the National Council on Public History.

There may be some history businesses world-wide with a greater financial turnover than D&A, but there are very few that are older or with greater depth and breadth of experience. We believe we have a legitimate reason for pride in our achievements.



D&A's Scope of Work

Donovan & Associates has been successful over 20 years because of the diversity of the work it has undertaken and the professional manner in which it operates. It continues to be very busy and to broaden its experience thereby.

Research and writing has continued on the history of the De La Salle Brothers in Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. Research trips were required to New Zealand, Brisbane and Melbourne, in addition to continuing work in Sydney. The manuscript is due to be completed at the end of June, with publication expected in late 2000.

The history of Tip Top Bakeries also continues, with recent visits having been made to bakeries in Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra while working in Sydney.

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D&A continues to provide historical services to the South Australia Attorney-General's Department.

We have virtually completed our work for the planning study associated with the 'Parklands 21' concept, which aims to designate a second ring of inter-connected parklands and open spaces around the Adelaide metropolitan area.

New work since the previous *News* sees our return to Keswick Barracks to provide historical and physical documentation of three buildings on the site. Several years ago we completed a conservation plan for the Keswick Barracks and later returned to document in more detail several buildings marked for development.

More recently we were asked by Allom Lovell, Architects, of Brisbane to document Army Drill Halls in South Australia, as part of their national study. This project, too, builds on our earlier work in documenting drill halls in the state.

Please note: Successive acquisitions of our original Internet server means that **Donovan & Associates** has a new email address:

p_donovan@optusnet.com.au

Chronology of a History Business

In any business there are key dates, developments and projects. Some may have predated the formal foundation of the organisation: others may have been modest. However, they all helped to establish the culture of the organisation and played a part in its development. A selection of milestones that mark the development of **Donovan & Associates** include:

1972: Peter Donovan's first publication was an article on 'The Great London Dock Strike, 1889' in *Labor History*, in November.

1978: Peter Donovan was commissioned to undertake the 'City of Unley Heritage Survey'.

1978: Publication of Peter Donovan's first book, *Port Wakefield and District: a history*.

1980: Peter Donovan attended the International Centre for Conservation in Rome.

1980: Peter Donovan was awarded the first Northern Territory History Award.

1980: Peter and June Donovan registered **Donovan & Associates** on 16 December.

1982: Peter Donovan's visit to the United States and meeting with public historians there.

1983: D&A acted as a publisher for the first time with *A Guide to Stained Glass Windows in and about Adelaide*.

1986: Publication of *The Unquenchable Flame*, D&A's first corporate history.

1987: D&A's heritage work was recognised by a National Trust Heritage Award.

1988: The manuscript for our history of Alice Springs was a prize winner in the ABC Bicentennial Manning Clark Local History Awards.

1992: D&A publish *So, You Want to Write History?*

1993: D&A was engaged by the Tourist Commission to develop a strategy to promote the life of Mary McKillop.

1996: D&A's project on transport history for the State Library of South Australia appeared on a CD-ROM.

1998: June Donovan was appointed an inaugural member of the State Records Council.



Influential People

Donovan & Associates constantly reiterates the importance of people in history. It is only with hindsight that the particular influence of individuals becomes apparent. There have been several key people who influenced the foundation and development of D&A. Most would be oblivious to this influence, but it was very real nevertheless.

Russel Ward, of the University of New England and author of the influential *The Australian Legend*, was probably more instrumental than most in making history fascinating for Peter Donovan. Russel's career also provided an example of steadfastness in the face of adversity. Other influential historians have been Len Turner, Professor of History at the Royal Military College and an expert on World War I, and George Rude, Professor of History at Flinders University and renowned for his history of the crowd in the French Revolution, both of whom facilitated Peter's career as a historian.

Graeme Pretty, Senior Curator of Anthropology and Archaeology at the South Australian Museum, introduced Peter and June Donovan to heritage conservation, after they volunteered to work on an archaeological dig at Roonka, near Blanchetown. David Saunders, Professor of Architecture at the University of Adelaide, continued this education by introducing Peter and June to Australia's built heritage, and supporting Peter's application to attend the International Centre for Conservation in Rome in 1980. Consulting archaeologist, Dr Eleanor Crosby, reinforced the idea that there was a role for consulting historians while Phil Cantelon and Bob Pomeroy, pioneers of Public History in the United States of America, helped us realise the potential of a history business.

Several clients have also had a significant influence on D&A. Bob Mierish, managing director of civil engineers, A.W. Baulderstone Pty Ltd, and Dr Don Williams, chief executive officer of Australian National and later, the Australian Submarine Corporation, had us focus on the importance of business principles. Bill Scammell, chairman of Faulding, impressed upon us the importance of people in any organisation, even a public company: Jim Roche, of Roche Bros, embodied the features of a successful family company.

The lessons and example of these and a host of others, too numerous to name here, have helped D&A succeed in what continues to be a specialist business. Their example has been complemented by assistance from those who have worked for D&A and who have been acknowledged previously.



Welcome back

We welcome Ruth Donovan back to D&A. Ruth started working for us as a research assistant in 1998, before returning to university to complete an Honours degree in History. She did this successfully, graduating with First Class Honours and being a joint winner of the Jim Main History Prize. Her thesis examined the Housewives Association of South Australia, a consumer-protection lobby before the introduction of consumer-protection legislation. An article based on the thesis has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*.

Ruth has been engaged in all aspects of the business since her return and we look forward to her gradually assuming greater responsibilities.



Ruth Donovan at her graduation.

Professional Endeavours

Donovan & Associates has always been eager to promote the idea of history as a business, and has always given staunch support to historians' professional organisations.

Indeed, even before D&A's registration, Peter Donovan was involved in discussions with fellow consulting historians concerning the foundation of an association to provide collegial support for the growing number of historians working outside the universities. This led to the foundation of the Association of Professional Historians (APH) in early 1981 —the year following the foundation of the National Council on Public History in the United States. The APH was the first organisation in Australia for trained historians who were primarily involved in work outside the universities. Peter Donovan was the Association's inaugural president, and has served a second term since. Peter, with others, was also influential in the development of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations (ACPHA), after similar professional organisations were established in the other states.

In the course of promoting itself and its services, D&A has always promoted the idea of Public History before potential clients, and the benefits of belonging to the APH to potential historians. D&A has provided work for several historians, and has insisted, as a matter of policy, on recruiting members of the APH.

IT'LL BE TOUGH DECIDING
WHO GETS TO WRITE THE
HISTORY OF THE HISTORIAN'S
ASSOCIATION..



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



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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