

Donovan News

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

The Future of History

The Age of 22nd September 2001 featured an article under the title 'The Future of History'. It canvassed issues with which teachers and academic historians have grappled for several years, viz., the apparent waning of interest in Australian history in schools. It proposed no remedies to reverse the decline in interest.

Perhaps history, like energy and good health, is wasted on the young. We have long contended that history makes little sense until people have experience of life and the world, and an eagerness to learn the reasons for contemporary matters and issues. Learning about history must move from the known to the unknown, as in any branch of knowledge. The study of revolutions and dictators might prove popular at high school because of an inherent excitement in the subject matter, but the maturity required to appreciate the issues means that few students gain any real appreciation of the their ramifications.

By contrast, we continue to be delighted at the level of interest in history beyond the schools and universities: it is this that has sustained **Donovan & Associates** for more than 20 years. Much of our work has been concerned with explaining to people the history of their community, company or organisation. Clients have seen merit in commissioning us to undertake this work, and we have had no lack of willing participants keen to assist us.

Historical research associated with heritage projects and the interpretation of places and artefacts has been another staple of **D&A** from its inception. The interest in heritage conservation and the popularity of history museums also indicate an increased and abiding interest in history. Once again, it is an interest in history that is directly relevant to people.

More recently, **D&A** has been concerned with historical research associated with native title issues. The resolution of such issues, with their ramifications, is among the most fundamental matters facing contemporary Australians and an understanding of history is essential for this.

History has a great future.

THE FUTURE
OF HISTORY -
HM - THAT'S
WORTH
MUSING ON...



D&A's Scope of Work

Donovan & Associates continues to make history.

The history of the De La Salle Brothers in Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand is to be launched in Melbourne on 26th November.

The manuscript for the history of Tip Top Bakeries has been edited and is presently being prepared for publication.

Similarly, our history of real estate agency Jackman & Treloar is presently being readied for a launch of 4th December.

A new history, that of the Engineering Employers Association Group Training Scheme, written and produced by **D&A**, was launched on 14th September. Additional details are provided on page 2.

Since the previous *News*, **D&A** has begun work on the editing and production of a collection of essays on the social development of the Tea Tree Gully area since World War II. This is an initiative of the Tea Tree Gully Library as part of the City's contribution to the Centenary of Federation.

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D&A recently lodged with the Defence Estate Organisation the draft report of the Conservation Management Plan for the Salisbury Defence Site.

Since then we have begun work on a conservation management plan for the associated former Smithfield Magazine Area. The complex of magazines was built at the same time as the former explosives factory at Salisbury.

The area has now become surplus to the requirements of the Department of Defence. D&A has been commissioned to provide advice on how the site might be developed, while conserving structures of evident heritage value.

Launching into History

The immediate future promises to be a bumper time for history buffs. In addition to the launch of the histories written and/or produced by D&A people, we will be attending the launch of two other books. In November there is the launch of the National Trust's initiative, *SA Greats*, a volume featuring biographies of those notable South Australians featured on the bronze plaques in the footpath along part of North Terrace. Several D&A people contributed to the volume.

The *Wakefield Companion to South Australian History* is to be launched early in 2001. It includes more than 600 entries on aspects of South Australian history. It is truly a collaborative effort with contributions from many South Australian historians, several of whom are associated with D&A.

Little Histories make Sense

D&A's most recent publication records 20 years of apprentice training by the Engineering Employers Association, South Australia (EEASA). EEASA's Group Training Scheme has been an innovator in training engineering apprentices and a model for other agencies in Australia.

The Scheme started in 1981 at a time when many apprentices were 'out of trade' and yet, ironically, there were prospects of future skill shortages. It was initiated at the suggestion of the South Australian government and was assisted by training grants from state and federal governments. Companies had traditionally been responsible for training apprentices, but were finding increasing difficulty in doing so because of the economic, industry and labour reforms of the 1980s. EEASA gradually assumed this responsibility as industrialists appreciated that the training provided by the Scheme was superior to that which they could provide.

Traditional trade-training based on 'time-served' gave way to accelerated modular training that reflected industry career pathways. EEASA had no training facilities of its own, but arranged for instruction by other agencies and for 'host companies' to provide apprentices with their practical experience. There was an emphasis, too, on developing leadership qualities, with apprentices being expected to undertake personal development courses such as those offered by the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme.

Those managing the Scheme developed links with schools, on the one hand, to ensure the better preparation of school-leavers wishing to move into industry, and with tertiary institutions, on the other, to enable graduates to receive accreditation towards university degrees.

The Scheme has been remarkably successful. Sixteen apprentices were indentured in 1981; 104 in 2001. Many graduates have taken responsible positions in industry. The Scheme's development has been a product of the immense workplace reforms since the 1980s; its success has laid the foundation for ongoing change.



Engineering Employers Association South Australia Group Training Scheme: 1981—2001 was written by Mary-Louise Geyer and Peter Donovan. It was produced by Donovan & Associates for EEASA. It is softback, measures 295 x 210 mm, has 34 pages and is illustrated in colour.

Serendipity

Good historians are like good detectives. They work by gathering evidence, trying to establish patterns and using these to formulate questions that will help build their case. The work is generally slow and methodical. Occasionally, though, intuition, honed by experience, leads them to make a breakthrough that facilitates their work.

Such a situation occurred during the course of our work at the Salisbury Defence Site when our persistent questioning led us to an asset register that provides detailed documentation of the site in the mid-1960s, including basic information about each building's construction and subsequent alterations, accompanied by a photograph and a plan. The collection was located in a remote corner of the DSTO storage area. It complements another valuable source that features drawings of each building as constructed in 1942. Such discoveries are heartening.

Once, we sought information about Baker's Flat, a small Irish community that once existed on the fringes of the early copper mining town of Kapunda in South Australia. The readily available information had been culled from memoirs, but lacked substance. A feature of the history was the landlord's appeal to the Supreme Court for an order to evict the squatters. We noted that he had been required to commission a survey of the area. Indeed, one of the more colourful stories associated with Baker's Flat concerned the squatters' rough handling of the surveyor. This story prompted us to approach the Supreme Court in the hope that records of the case were available. Fortunately, they were. They included copies of the survey noting the location of cottages, and provided a list of the occupants.

On another occasion we were asked to document the history of Fort Glanville that had been built in the early 1880s to help protect Adelaide. Volunteers associated with the fort had spent almost 20 years gathering information about the fort but had been unable to discover its specifications and plans. Their mistake was in considering the fort as a building, and located at Glanville. However, prior to its construction it was described as the Port Adelaide fort, and its location was often given as Point Malcolm. Moreover, it was planned as an engineering structure rather than a building. Soon after commencing the project we 'discovered' the original plans and specifications in the Engineering and Water Supply Department.

While serendipitous, such revelations are generally the product of methodical research and constant questioning and, again, highlight the benefits of having a professional historian involved in projects.



Faulding in History

There have been many significant changes in the corporate landscape in Australia during 2001. One of the more noteworthy has been Mayne's acquisition of pharmaceutical company, Faulding. Some of Faulding's activities will continue, but the history of the company begun in 1845 has effectively ceased.

A feature of the recent history of the company was its successful move into international markets, particularly in the United States. The overseas subsidiaries are to be sold as part of the new arrangement.

South Australia and Adelaide has lost the headoffice of another major company.

Fortunately, **Donovan & Associates** had the opportunity to record the history of Faulding at the time it celebrated its 150th anniversary. This has ensured that the memory of Faulding, that of longtime owners the Scammell family, and those who contributed to its development, will be preserved.



History Preserved

Longevity is no guarantee that companies will be immune from a fate similar to that which has befallen Faulding. This is one reason why we warn against waiting for an anniversary or celebratory occasion to commission a history of an organisation.

Donovan & Associates has recorded the history of several companies that no longer exist, at least as separate entities, and has helped ensure that their history is secure.



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

PO Box 436, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051
Phone/Facsimile: (08) 8270 1770
e-mail: p_donovan@optusnet.com.au