

Donovan News

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

Remaining informed

The principals of **Donovan & Associates** visited Victoria, Canada, in April to attend the annual conference of the National Council on Public History (NCPH), a North American association for public historians. Peter Donovan had been invited to present a paper on public history practice in Australia and was one of a panel of three speakers discussing the practice of public history internationally. James Lide of History Associates Incorporated (HAI), Washington, spoke about the practice in Germany and the United Kingdom, while Fred Hosking, the president of Public History Inc., Ottawa, spoke about the discipline in Canada. Philip Cantelon, the president of HAI and one of the founders of both that company and the NCPH, chaired the session.

Attendance at the conference provided the opportunity to remain abreast of public history practice in North America, to renew acquaintances with leading practitioners met during the course of previous visits to the United States, and to meet new leaders.

The occasion enabled the Donovans to meet David Lowenthal once again. David is the author of the influential book on the manner in which people interpret the past, *The Past is a Foreign Country*. They first met David at an ICOMOS conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, and hosted him when he visited Adelaide several years later.

June and Peter Donovan later travelled to Toronto, Canada, to meet John Silburn, the principal of Restoration Engineering, and a former colleague at the International Centre for Conservation in Rome (ICCROM). John continues to teach conservation practice and the Donovans visited the workshops of Algonquin College at Perth where students learn about conservation of wood and masonry.

The principals of **D&A** have always made a point of remaining informed of current practices concerning their core business and remaining open to others' ideas. This has ensured that they continue to provide good value to their clients.



D&A's Scope of Work

Donovan & Associates has continued to be busy during the past six months.

D&A completed a second project in the Snowy Mountains, this time for the New South Wales' National Parks and Wildlife Service. In this instance the task was to provide advice on the management of former Snowy Authority assets within the Kosciuszko National Park. A report appears on page 3.

June Donovan was contracted to implement recommendations she made while working as the cultural heritage officer with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) at Edinburgh.

Peter Donovan began work on a new history of the City of West Torrens. The publication of this book is to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the City, the second metropolitan local government body to be established. This book extends the history Peter completed in 1986 and includes the amalgamation of the City of West Torrens with the Town of Thebarton.

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D&A also began a series of oral history interviews for the National Library of Australia under its 'Eminent Australians' program. Interviews completed to date include Dr John Daly, university professor, sports historian, one-time national track and field coach and manager of several track and field Olympic teams; and Dr Basil Hetzel, internationally renowned for his research into public health and iodine deficiency, one-time Chancellor of the University of South Australia and Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia. Dr Hetzel was voted one of Australia's 100 living icons during the course of the interview program.

D&A has continued to provide advice on records disposal schedules prepared for various government agencies.

D&A has garnered several new projects since the previous *News*. The firm has been asked to write a history of the Western Australian Nurses' Memorial Centre for its successor, the Western Australian Nurses' Memorial Charitable Trust; this marks D&A's first project for a Perth-based client. D&A also has a contract with Adelaide Airport Ltd to write a history of the Adelaide International Airport to mark its 50th anniversary on 16 February 2005 and to coincide with the opening of the new passenger terminal later in the year. In addition, the firm is undertaking a scoping study for Murray Irrigation Ltd in preparation for a social history of irrigation in the company's area of operations: this will take D&A back to Deniliquin in southern New South Wales.

Looking for Sergeant Smith

The Donovans took the opportunity of their visit to North America to continue on to Europe to build upon their research project concerning Australian bakers and World War I. Research had indicated that there was no ready evidence extant of the actual bakeries used by the Australians, but they were able to visit some of the areas where the bread was sent. In order to provide a greater sense of purpose, they decided to try to find the grave of a young South Australian, who had been a subject of their research, and had been killed in the conflict.

Joseph William Smith was the son of an artilleryman attached to Fort Largs in South Australia. He had been born in Port Adelaide on 15 September 1888, but had grown up in Kapunda after his parents took up the license of the Railway Hotel there. He joined the postal service after completing school and worked in Kapunda and Adelaide, before transferring to the Customs Department at Port Adelaide.

With an eye to enlisting in the 1st Australian Imperial Force, gaining a non-commissioned officer's rank and serving overseas, Joe Smith had spent time studying in the 12 months prior to enlisting about Christmas 1915. He embarked for overseas service on 11 April 1916 with the 48th Battalion and was made a grenade instructor on arrival in camp at Salisbury Plains in England. He was one of 12 to return to England as a bomb instructor in early 1918 after serving on the French and Belgian fronts. He was acting sergeant-major when he was killed in action in France on 18 September 1918, on the first day of a major allied offensive on the Hindenburg Line in the Somme Valley.

Joe Smith is buried in a small communal cemetery in the tiny village of Jeancourt, to the north-west of St Quentin. The village changed hands on three occasions during the course of fighting in 1917-1918. Joe shares the cemetery with 372 British soldiers, six Canadians, 115 other Australians and 168 Germans.



Sergeant Joseph William Smith and his headstone in the Jeancourt Communal Cemetery, France.

The Man to Snowy River – Part 2

Donovan & Associates returned to the Snowy Mountains in the latter part of 2003, this time working for the New South Wales' National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). In this instance, the purpose was to provide advice on the conservation of former Snowy Mountains Authority (SMA) sites within the Kosciuszko National Park. The NPWS Act requires the Service to protect items and places of cultural, as well as those of natural value.

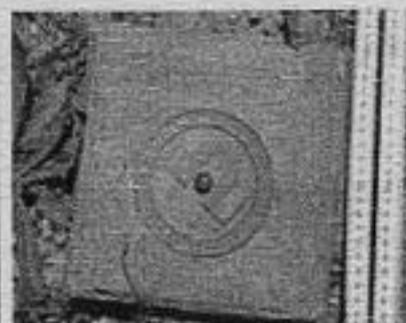
The Snowy Mountains Scheme had been included in the Register of the National Estate, largely because of the Scheme's engineering excellence, but also because of its immense social value. Hundreds of European refugees and migrants were brought to Australia soon after World War II to work on the Scheme. In many instances, one-time bitter enemies were thrown together in remote camps and were expected to work together. They did so, for the most part.

Unfortunately, there is little that remains to reflect this rich social heritage. The camps in which men — and many women — lived and interacted with one another were only ever temporary affairs and the SMA sought to rehabilitate the sites once the camps were moved. Still, the former camp sites, some of them once home to hundreds of workers and their families, remain the sites that most readily identify with the Scheme's social history.

The chief features that testify to the location of former camps are the excavations to provide level sites for huts, tents and roadways, some building foundations, buried items such as pipes and septic tanks, and scattered rubbish. Much of this is normally hidden by undergrowth, but at the time of the project was clearly visible because of the fires that had devastated the National Park 18 months earlier. The main advice concerning these sites was to clean up surface rubbish and leave the bush to reclaim them once more, but retaining the evidence of occupation.

The most prominent former sites were the several spoil dumps containing material excavated from tunnels. They are the only surface evidence of the subterranean tunnels except for the portals and, from a heritage point of view, are akin to the spoil dumps at old mining sites.

The spoil dumps are undoubtedly intrusive elements in the natural landscape, but are of some heritage merit. Fortunately, most of these are stable and are unlikely to contaminate streams. Moreover, the size of many of them makes their removal unsustainable economically, even if this was considered appropriate. The main heritage recommendation was to ensure their stability so that they do not damage the natural heritage further.



A survey marker on the site of the Island Bend township.



Portion of a fireplace and foundation at the site of the 3-Mile Creek barracks camp.



A view of the spoil dump near the Happy Jacks Dam, with part of the dam wall in the foreground.



The chassis of a dump truck at the toe of a spoil dump near the Tamut-Tooma Adit.

United States' Relations

Donovan & Associates has long had a close relationship with History Associates Incorporated (HAI) of Rockville, Maryland. Peter Donovan first met Phil Cantelon, the co-founder and president when he visited the United States in 1982.

The two businesses are of a similar age, undertake similar work but are of a different scale. In 1986 the *Forbes* magazine ranked HAI as number 302 of the 500 fastest-growing private companies in America.

An anticipated meeting in 1984 had to be aborted for family reasons, but the contact was renewed in 1987, when the Donovans attended an ICOMOS conference in Washington, and again in 1990, *en route* to the ICOMOS conference in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Phil visited Australia in 1989, spoke at seminars in Melbourne and Adelaide, and met those associated with D&A at the time.

Ruth Donovan spent time with Phil and HAI in 2003 while researching aspects of public history practice for her PhD thesis.



HAI personnel in Victoria for the NCPH conference, James Lide and Phil Cantelon, with former HAI staffer, Anne Rothfeld.

The cartoon is 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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