

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

## Milestones are worth celebrating

**D**onovan & Associates celebrated its 25th anniversary on 16 December 2005. The celebration was low key, but enjoyed no less for that. As a history business often called upon to assist organisations celebrate milestones by means of commissioned histories, it was satisfying to mark a milestone of its own. If nothing else it indicated that the firm's work continues to be appreciated. It was also satisfying to reflect on the number and breadth of projects completed in the 25 years and the contribution this has made to historical understanding.

The **D&A** principles are historians and are only too well aware that milestones do not always coincide with significant developments within an organisation. They also know that milestones attained are no guarantee of continued success. FH Faulding lost its identity after being taken over by another company soon after celebrating its 150th anniversary: it was fortunate that **D&A** had the opportunity to record this history. Similarly the Australian Protective Service rejoined the Australian Federal Police, but not before **D&A** related its history. Fortunately, **D&A** recorded the story of Australian National before the organisation ceased to exist. **D&A** wrote a history of the day-labour aspects of the one-time Commonwealth Department of Works, but the story of the architectural staff has been lost.

In one instance, **D&A** began work on the history of a company that was later taken over by a rival with headquarters elsewhere. The new owners sought to make economies by scuttling the history project. This meant that another fascinating story is unlikely to be told.

Milestones are worth celebrating, but they should not be the only rationale for the commissioning of a history. An impending merger, restructure, or a major commercial success may also act as triggers. Then again, there need be no other reason than that it is a good thing from time to time to record the history, the triumphs and the disappointments, and the contributions of individuals to the organisation. History is soon lost once people retire or an agency is sold or restructured.



## D&A's Scope of Work

**A**s the accompanying article indicates, milestones in the history of an organisation rarely correspond with noteworthy features or neat time frames. So the work of **D&A** continues much as before, with new projects succeeding those completed.

The history of Adelaide Airport was completed in October and became available on the occasion of the dinner to mark the opening of the new passenger terminal on 7 October. The history of the Western Australian Nurses Memorial Centre was completed and launched in Perth on 15 November. Details of both books are given on page 4.

Meanwhile other work continues.

June Donovan continued her work as the cultural heritage officer with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) at Edinburgh in South Australia, and at Fisherman's Bend and Maribyrnong in Victoria. June made a visit to Woomera in November to record and assess DSTO objects on loan to the Heritage Centre there.

(Continued on page 2)

### Scope of Works (Continued)

June spoke about her work to members of the Historical Society of South Australia on 7 October. This work is due for completion early in 2006.

**D&A** has continued to undertake interviews for the National Library's 'Eminent Australians' program. Recent interviewees have been potter Jeff Mincham and wood sculptor Andrew Steiner.

New projects commenced since the previous *News* include a history of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation in Sydney which commemorates 50 years of operation early in 2006. The other major project is a history of Johnson & Johnson which celebrates 75 years of operation in Australia in 2006.

**D&A** is once again sponsoring athletics in Australia. Both June and Peter Donovan have been appointed field judges to officiate at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in March 2006.

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Projects featured on page 3.

1. Roche Bros
2. Real Estate Institute
3. Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
4. FH Faulding
5. Highways Department
6. Tip Top / Buttercup
7. AW Baulderstone
8. Australian Submarine Corporation
9. Australian National
10. Stained Glass in South Australia
11. Australian Barley Board
12. Australian Protective Service
13. Sacred Heart College
14. South Australian Gas Company

## Pymont People

**A**ustralia's Defence Science and Technology Organisation and its predecessors have had a presence in Sydney since 1956 when the Royal Australian Navy Experimental Laboratory was established at Rushcutters Bay. This was one of several research institutions that amalgamated on 28 January 1975 to form the Defence Science and Technology Organisation. The laboratory moved to the Royal Edward Victualling Yard at Pymont late in 1984. This gave laboratory staff direct access to a deep water wharf.

There is an irony about DSTO-Sydney that has done a great deal to mould the culture of staff. Pymont is an inner suburb of Sydney, the most populous Australian city and the location of the head offices of major Australian companies. In contrast, DSTO-Sydney is one of the smaller sites and something of an isolated outpost in the DSTO structure, with the line of responsibility to Edinburgh, an outer suburb of Adelaide in South Australia.

Nevertheless, staff of DSTO-Sydney have made a major contribution to defence science in Australia, particularly relating to Royal Australian Navy requirements. Staff developed particular expertise in analysing naval exercises and systems, and equipment requirements for the Navy. Expertise in sonar research led to close involvement in drawing up specifications for the Huon-class minehunters and the Collins-class submarines that have been built in Australia. Staff scientists developed concepts for mine-sweeping and sonar interception systems that have been commercialised and are in service with several navies world-wide.

Work practices have changed during 50 years in accordance with client demands and new technologies. Early research in deep sea oceanography has given way to research in shallow littoral environments; lengthy periods spent in sea trials have been replaced by greater use of computer simulation; research into battlefield acoustics has grown from that into sonar research.

The history has been commissioned to mark 50 years of DSTO-Sydney and its predecessors, and to highlight its role within the larger Defence Science and Technology Organisation and Australian defence science generally. In this instance, though, there is particular urgency in compiling the story because the site was sold in June 2003 and, with the expiration of the current lease in 2007, the organisation is to move to new premises at the Australian Technology Park at Redfern. The relocation into new premises away from Sydney Harbour but close to other scientific organisations will bring undoubted benefits, but also new challenges. Also, it is certain that the move will hasten changes to the DSTO-Sydney culture, thereby underscoring the importance of recording its history before this happens.



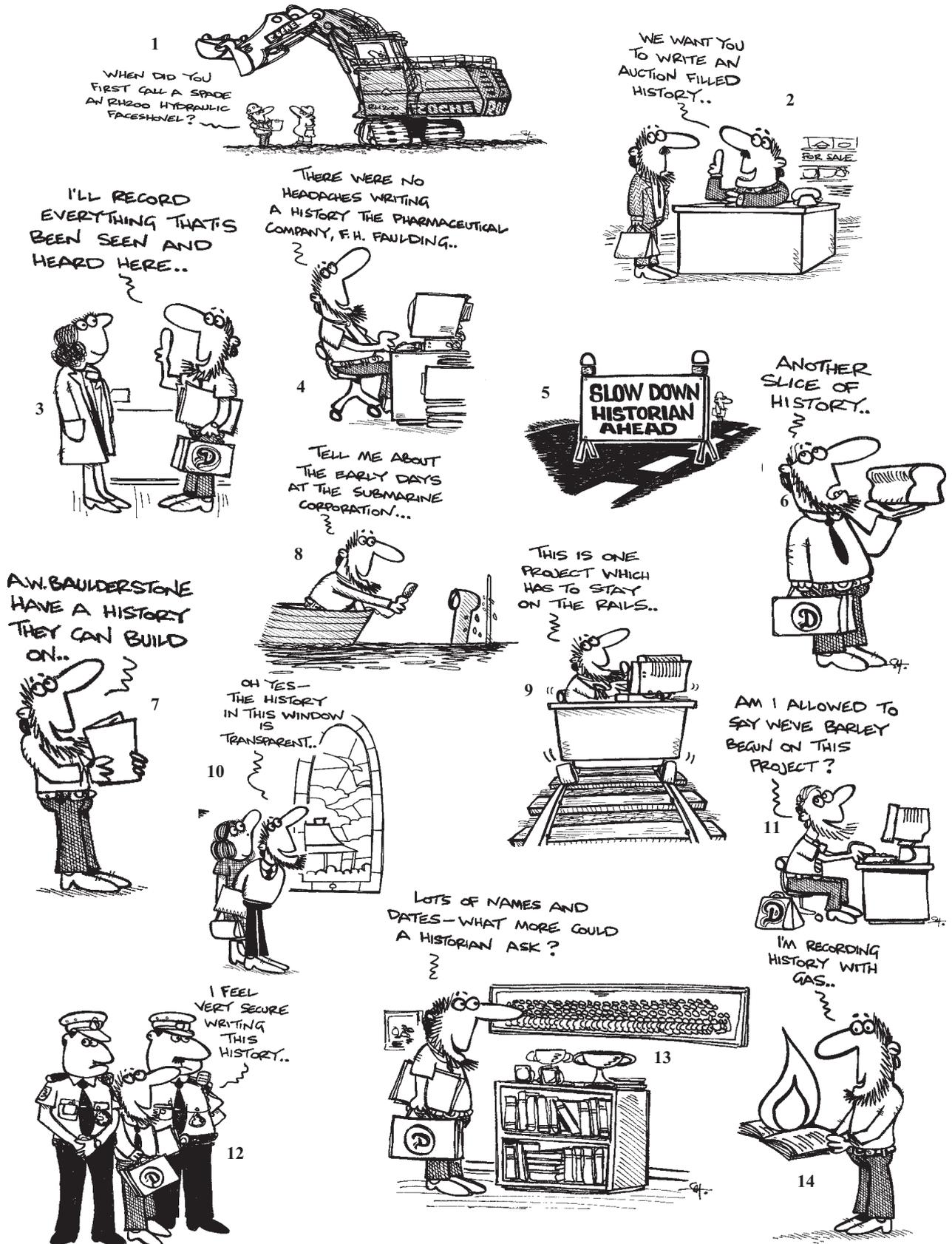
*Above: HMAS Tobruk moored in front of the DSTO offices and laboratories at Pymont.*

*Right: SAS Blackhawk helicopters using the DSTO building for exercises prior to the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000.*

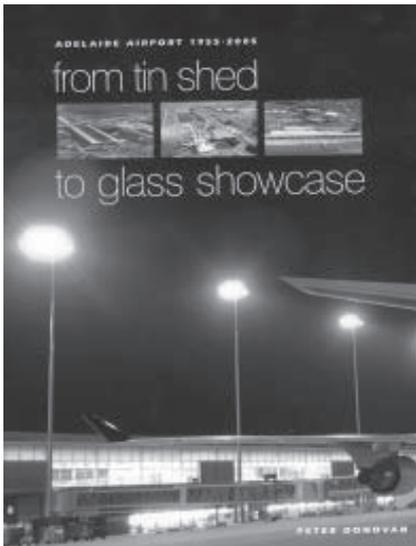


## Stanley's View

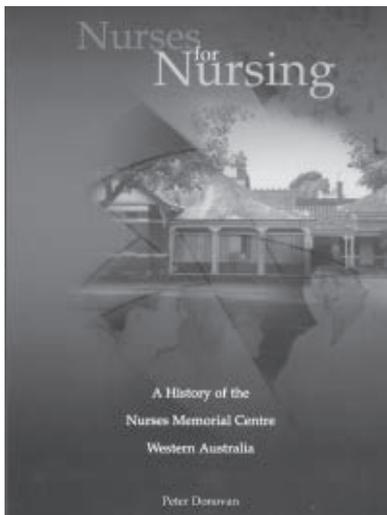
**S**tephen Stanley has recorded the features of **Donovan & Associates'** first 25 years in his own inimitable way. The following reflect some of the significant history projects.



## New Publications

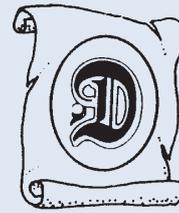


*Adelaide Airport 1955–2005: from tin shed to glass showcase* by Peter Donovan was published by Adelaide Airport Limited. The book is in hardback, measures 280 mm x 210 mm, has xvi + 216 pages, an index, and is illustrated in colour.



*Nurses for Nursing: A History of the Nurses Memorial Centre Western Australia*, by Peter Donovan was published by The Western Australian Nurses Memorial Charitable Trust. The book is in hardback, measures 235 mm x 165 mm, has xii + 164 pages and index, and is illustrated in colour, and black and white.

Copy editing of *Donovan 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 mainland 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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