

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

History needs to be recorded

A regular theme of the *Donovan News* highlights the fragility of history: that there is the danger that it will be lost if it is not recorded. This may not be an issue with national or state history, but it can be an issue with the histories of companies and organisations with which people identify closely, often over many years.

Another regular theme is that there is no perfect time to record the history of a company or organisation. The impending celebration of an anniversary is often the spur to commission such a history, but history rarely falls into neat time-frames and there is no guarantee that companies and organisations will continue until a significant anniversary or milestone. Several years ago **Donovan & Associates** was commissioned to write a history of Murray River Wholesalers (MRW) immediately after it was acquired by a rival, but while the MRW management remained in place and had funds for such a project—at least for the research and writing. Soon, however, the former managers left the new company and administration moved to another state. The new management had no interest in the history of its former rival and aborted the project. The history of MRW that extended back 70 years was lost along with that of a significant primary producers' cooperative group and the vagaries of exporting primary produce to the United Kingdom.

The advice of renowned Australian historian Sir Keith Hancock to fellow historians is pertinent to managers of companies and organisations regarding the commissioning of a history. Hancock suggested that there comes a time when historians must back their judgement that they have sufficient material to sustain a comprehensive story, and begin to write, confident in their beliefs. While they might not have all the answers, simply by writing their stories they will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and enable others to learn from these stories:

The history we write will contain flaws. Other historians will expose them. We ourselves shall rectify some of them. The advancement of knowledge will be achieved in the process of questioning, answering and debating. [W.K. Hancock, *Professing History*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1976, p. 12]

Similarly, managers should not wait for an ideal time to commission a history of their organisation. If there is a good story it should be told lest it is lost and while there are those who can appreciate it and learn from it.



D&A's Scope of Work

D&A continues to be busy, with new projects succeeding those completed.

D&A's history of Johnson & Johnson in Australia and New Zealand, *Johnson & Johnson: 75 Years of Caring*, was launched in Sydney in early December 2006. Details are on page 4.

June Donovan recently completed another project for the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO). This was concerned with gathering material about achievements of DSTO scientists and their predecessors for a publication showcasing the work of Australia's defence scientists. More recently she has been engaged to assist with the staging of an exhibition at DSTO, Edinburgh, as part of celebrations commemorating 100 years of defence science in Australia.

D&A is involved with DSTO in a separate project. This brief is to write a history of Australian defence science since 1907. See page 3.

Meanwhile work continues on a history of Morris Wake, his ancestors and successors, and their contribution to agricultural settlement on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula. The book is to be published during the latter part of 2007.

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Other work features a collaborative project with Bernard O'Neil. This involves writing a history of the Friends of the State Library of South Australia to mark the 75th anniversary of that organisation in 2007.

D&A has also been commissioned by the Adelaide City Council to prepare the text for an illustrated book on the heritage of North Adelaide. The book is due for publication later in 2007.

The D&A principals were delighted to learn late in 2006 that Ruth Donovan, who previously worked for the firm, completed her PhD through the University of Western Australia.

The degree is to be conferred at the graduation ceremony on 14 March. Ruth's thesis was concerned with the evolution of 'Public History' in Australia, i.e. history undertaken by historians working outside academic institutions.

Friends and historians

Historians are generally observers and recorders of movements and issues. However, Professor William Keith Hancock — quoted on page 1 — was an activist. In 1932 he became alarmed at the South Australian government's Depression economy measure of slashing funds for the Public Library's acquisition program and drew attention to the consequences of this in a letter to the *Advertiser*. Others shared his concern and rallied to form the Friends of the Public Library of South Australia at a public meeting in the Adelaide Town Hall on 25 July 1932. The object of the Friends was to raise money to assist with acquisition of books. Later, as the economy improved, the Friends changed their focus to provide the Library with rare and valuable books and material that the Library would not normally acquire. It continues to do this.

Hancock was born in Melbourne on 26 June 1898. Educated at Melbourne Grammar School and the University of Melbourne, he attended Balliol College, Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar in 1922 and graduated in 1924 with a first-class honours degree in Modern History. He returned to Australia as Professor of Modern History at the University of Adelaide that year and remained until 1933 when he took the chair of History at the University of Birmingham. He became a renowned authority on British Commonwealth history and was knighted in 1953. He returned to Australia in 1957 as Director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University in Canberra. He retired in 1965, but later wrote the important local history *Discovering Monaro* in 1972, and *Professing History* in 1976. Sir Keith Hancock died in August 1988.

Tasmanian Exporter of the Year

Johnson & Johnson's Australian operations comprise several subsidiaries. Perhaps the most unusual of these is Tasmanian Alkaloids, based in Westbury, Tasmania. The company was incorporated on 21 April 1975 as a subsidiary of an American pharmaceutical company, Abbott Laboratories, that became involved in poppy cultivation in the early 1970s for production of codeine. Abbott harvested its first trial crop in March 1972 with commercial production beginning in 1974.

Johnson & Johnson acquired the company on 30 November 1982 to secure codeine supplies for its production facility in America.

Since then, Tasmanian Alkaloids' scientists have developed and patented a new opium poppy named 'Norman' that produces only thebaine, one of three alkaloids found in opium poppies and necessary for producing Buprenorphine. The first commercial crop of the Norman poppy was harvested in 1998.

Tasmanian Alkaloids in 2007 has contracts with as many as 500 farmers who produce poppies from which the company produces up to 75% of the world's share of thebaine and about 15% of the world's legal morphine. Tasmanian Alkaloids is a major Johnson & Johnson success story, and a winner of several Tasmanian export awards.



Top: Poppy capsule and seeds
Middle: Field officer in poppy crop
Bottom: Harvesting a poppy crop

Defence Science in Australia

Australia's Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) can trace its origins back to 15 April 1907, when the federal government instructed Cecil Napier Hake to proceed to England to gather information and make recommendations concerning the establishment of a cordite factory in Australia. The idea was to enhance Australia's independence from overseas' defence materiel suppliers. Hake later became the commonwealth's Chemical Advisor and established a laboratory at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne in September 1910.

This laboratory, later known as the Defence Standards Laboratory, was joined with the Aeronautics Division of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research formed at Fishermans Bend, Victoria, in 1939; the Weapons Research Establishment founded at Salisbury, South Australia, in 1947; and later, the Royal Australian Navy Experimental Laboratories to form the DSTO.

Innovative defence science has been undertaken at each of those establishments to ensure Australian defence scientists continue to enhance Australia's defence capability.

Scientists at the Weapons Research Establishment were involved in guided weapons research and Australia's venture into space. They built and launched the WRESAT satellite on 29 November 1967, making Australia the third nation to build and launch a satellite into orbit.

Major defence innovations that have been exported include the Barra sonobuoy system, the IKARA missile and the Australian Minesweeping and Support System (AMASS). The Jindalee 'over-the-horizon' radar network provides radar surveillance over Australia's northern approaches.

Not all innovations have been associated with strictly defence issues. The 'Black Box' flight recorder carried by all airliners was developed by scientists at the Aeronautical Research Laboratories, where another team assisted with the development of the Tee Visual Approach Slope Indicator System to assist pilots landing aircraft that do not have instrument landing systems. Scientists of the Defence Standards Laboratory developed the 'wet' electrophotographic process that became the basis of modern photocopiers. The development of

the Laser Airborne Depth Sounder (LADS) has been used widely in civilian surveys of vast areas of coastal seabeds.

The economic benefits of other innovations have been more difficult to quantify, but no less important for that. Work on fatigue testing of Australia's F/A-18 fleet of aircraft has extended the life of each aircraft with savings of more than \$1 billion; similarly, the development of a composite bonded repair system for aircraft has also succeeded in extending the operational lives of aircraft and resulted in saving millions of dollars. Australian scientists in association with local industry developed anechoic tiles for the Collins-class submarines.

Indeed, numerous Australian companies have been built on the commercialisation of DSTO's innovations: many of them have been founded by scientists trained within the DSTO.

DSTO scientists, through their own work and collaboration with peers in other countries, continue to ensure that Australia's Defence Force remains well equipped and well informed to meet issues in the local environment.



WRESAT satellite



Australian-designed IKARA missile

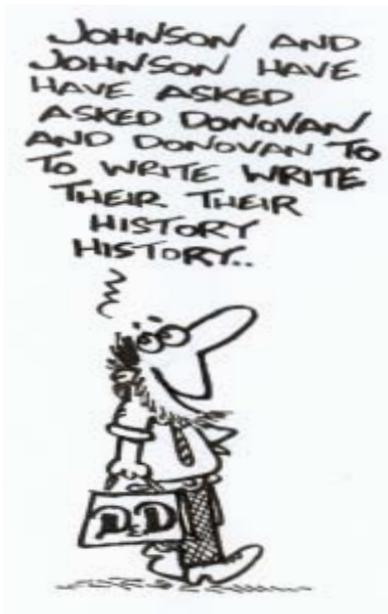


Receiving antennae for the Jindalee over-the-horizon radar

New Publication



Johnson & Johnson: 75 years of caring, Australia and New Zealand by Peter Donovan was published by Johnson & Johnson Medical Pty Ltd, North Ryde, NSW. The book is hardback in large landscape format, measures 240 mm x 315 mm, has xii + 228 pages, is illustrated in colour, and has a bibliography and index.



'If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us! But passion and party blind our eyes and the light which experience gives is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us!'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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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