

Donovan News

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... Donovan & Associates: established in 1980 and still making history ...

Do we need History?

There is an old adage that those who forget lessons of the past are condemned to repeat its mistakes. This applies to leaders of organisations as well as to leaders of society generally. People come and go in any organisation, and all make a contribution whether for good or ill. But the value of any accumulated knowledge is quickly lost unless efforts are made to record these contributions.

Clearly, history does not repeat itself, and knowledge of the past will not provide ready made answers to future challenges; in Mark Twain's words, history does not always rhyme. However, those with an understanding of the manner in which their organisations have developed, or an appreciation of the manner in which situations have arisen, will be better equipped to make sound decisions affecting the future.

A comment in the January-February 1982 issue of the *Harvard Business Review* is as relevant today as it was when written. A correspondent recounted the story of 'the CEO of a prominent company [who] scoffed at a business historian who was attempting to explain some possible applications of business history. "I don't want people wasting time on the past," he declared. "I'm trying to get them to pay attention to the future." "Then," replied the historian, "you can be replaced by an 18-year old!"

A sense of history is important. It helps people to understand the present and their place in it. History gives people a sense of identity. All people have a past and they become disoriented and alienated if they lose contact with it. This is an essential problem faced by refugees and migrants in a strange land.

A sense of history is as appropriate to organisations as to individuals. An appreciation of the past makes it easier for managers to confront, understand, and manage change, for there is no change that does not have deep roots in the past. Moreover, a sense of history can help to identify those factors that might foster or hinder desired change within any organisation.

An appreciation of the past is an important first step in the preparation of any business plan.

*We would certainly be much the poorer
without history*



The *Donovan News* returns to publication after a hiatus of several months. The hiatus does not represent hard times, rather it reflects the opposite. The past several months have been extremely busy and meant that resources were diverted from producing the *News* to undertaking projects in hand. This bumper edition will bridge the gap and bring readers up to date with recent **D&A** stories.

Oral History

The National Library of Australia has engaged **Donovan & Associates** to assist with another of its oral history programs. We are interviewing former members of Federal Parliament, particularly those able to reflect on their time in the original Parliament House. **D&A** has interviewed Dr David Kemp, his brother Senator Rod Kemp, Senators Andrew Bartlett and Nick Bolkus and Independent MP Ted Mack.

D&A has continued with the National Library's program of interviewing key personnel involved with Australia's major financial institutions. Most recently, Peter Donovan interviewed Donald Sanders, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia (1975–1987) and Managing Director of the Commonwealth Bank.

These interviews can be accessed on the internet through the National Library's home page.

Recent interviews conducted for the State Library of South Australia under its 'Eminent Australians' program have been with conservationist Dr Barbara Hardy and Olympic gold medal cyclist Mike Turtur.

Driving government

Governor-General Quentin Bryce launched our COMCAR history at the ACT depot on 11 August 2010. This history provides a unique insight into aspects of Australia's history. The nature of the Commonwealth car service has meant that it has been associated with many significant events in Australian history.

Commonwealth drivers and their cars were part of the pageantry at the opening of both the provisional Parliament House in Canberra in 1927 by the Duke of York and the new Parliament House by his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, in 1988. The drivers and cars have been associated with Australia's Olympic and Commonwealth Games. The June 1966 shooting of Federal Opposition Leader Arthur Calwell occurred while he was in a Commonwealth car; drivers were providing services to delegates to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting when the Hilton Hotel in Sydney was bombed on 13 February 1978; and the bombing of the home of a Family Court judge in 1984 occurred while a driver was waiting to collect the judge. The increased threats of terrorism following Australia's participation in the 1990 Gulf War led to the introduction of the so-called 'jelly bean' fleet of different coloured cars and the abolition of the distinctive 'C' number plates that served to identify

a passenger as a minister or distinguished visitor and perhaps a likely terrorist target.

The history of the service also provides insights into particular Prime Ministers. Andrew Fisher's secretary recounted:

Mr Hughes [Attorney-General in 1910] would sometimes dash into the Prime Minister's room and ask for the car to go down and meet his daughter who would be arriving by steamer at an early hour in the morning or late at night. On one occasion, he was told that the driver had gone for the day and there was no way of getting in touch with him. 'Well, how am I going to get down to meet my daughter,' asked 'Billy' in a most aggrieved manner. [Malcolm Shepherd, NAA CRS, A1632, p. 154]

Colleagues of Prime Minister William McMahon were bemused by his constant use of the telephone and were not surprised when his car was the first to be fitted with a telephone.

The view of Australia's history provided by that of COMCAR is an interesting alternative to that provided by political histories.



Clockwise from top left: (a) Prime Minister Andrew Fisher in the rear right-hand seat of the first Commonwealth car. (Photo courtesy of the State Library of South Australia) (b) The motorcade through Sydney streets in honour of the Apollo 11 astronauts, 31.9.1969. (c) Commonwealth cars outside New Parliament House, Canberra

The Real Thing: a bottler of a history

The commission to write the history of Coca-Cola in South Australia is an example of the importance of continuity in business. **D&A** had first approached the company suggesting the idea in 1990. The timing was inauspicious, being soon after the local Coca-Cola Bottlers had been acquired by Sydney-based Coca-Cola Amatil.

Though Coca-Cola Amatil had little interest in pursuing the history at that time, Peter Griffith, with the assistance of long-term employee Adrian Miller, ensured that many local records were kept and later deposited in the State Library of South Australia.

The idea remained dormant until Peter Carey, originally employed by Coca-Cola Bottlers in 1983, returned to Adelaide as State Manager in 2007 after having served as its Tasmanian manager. He succeeded in convincing those to whom he reported that completion of the project would be a good way to recognise many now aging former employees on the 70th anniversary of the production of Coca-Cola in Adelaide: it began in a factory in Philip Street, in September 1939.

D&A was asked to undertake the project and Alison Painter and Peter Donovan began work in November 2008.

The story provides a unique view into the history of South Australia. Coca-Cola is but one player in the recent history of Australia's soft drink manufacturing industry. Chronicling and explaining the rise of Coca-Cola to market leadership describes an aspect of the history of South Australia's soft drink industry since 1939, and reflects that of Australia generally.

Like that of Australia's large modern bakery groups – previously documented by **D&A** – it is a story of the consolidation of small family-owned soft drink manufacturers – many with regional monopolies – into ever fewer owners, and ultimately to one or two large national companies.

The story of the Adelaide Coca-Cola bottler must be seen in the context of Australia's corporate history, in which many innovative South Australian companies established by prominent businessmen – in this case Coca-Cola Bottlers – have merged or been taken over by larger corporations, most of them based in the eastern states.

The project was greatly facilitated by the collection of records previously undertaken by Adrian Miller that enabled **D&A** to complete the project so that the book could be launched on 30 November 2009.



Top left: Delivery and sales vehicles of Coca-Cola Bottlers on Adelaide's west parklands with the Thebarton Plant in the background, February 1988.

Below left: A Coca-Cola delivery in the Flinders Ranges.

Caterpillar People

Donovan & Associates embarked on a new project early in 2009, involving a history of the Elphinstone Group of companies.

The basic story is fascinating. Dale Elphinstone left school after Year 9, completed an apprenticeship in 1970 as a diesel mechanic with William Adams Tractors Pty Ltd, the Caterpillar dealer for Victoria and Tasmania.

Dale left William Adams in January 1975 to establish a tiny business servicing and modifying equipment for underground mining. His big break came in 1985 when he won the tender to build a wheel-loader for Que River Mines in Tasmania. The challenge was huge, but the company built a loader that was world class and took it to a new level of operation. Orders for loaders, underground trucks and other machines grew, and equipment was sold to underground mines in Australia and around the world. The company used Caterpillar components and so, as an original equipment manufacturer, established a close relationship with Caterpillar Inc.

This relationship with Caterpillar helped Elphinstone to acquire William Adams when the dealership became available in 1987. The association strengthened in 1995, when Caterpillar acquired 50% of the underground mining manufacturing business: it acquired the remaining 50% of the business in 2000.

The sale of the manufacturing business enabled Dale to diversify his business interests and invest in other businesses that he believed could use Caterpillar equipment. These currently include: Haulmax, which manufactures heavy-duty long-range mining trucks; Gekko Systems, a supplier of minerals processing plants to the mining industry; Exergen, a company formed to develop technology for dewatering brown coal; and Coote Industrial, a diversified engineering company that manufactures locomotives and rolling stock.

Another aspect of the story is the immense benefit that Dale Elphinstone and his enterprises have brought to the City of Burnie. His companies have provided employment for many local people, both directly and as employees of contractors and suppliers.



Employees of Dale B Elphinstone Pty Ltd with the first R1500 LHD [Load, Haul, Dump] unit that was completed in early 1986.



A later R2800 LHD.



Dale and Cheryl Elphinstone with the 500th LHD unit, destined for Western Mining.



National Pharmacies

The previous *News* indicated that **Donovan & Associates** had been commissioned to write a history of the Friendly Societies Medical Association (FSMA) — trading as National Pharmacies. The rationale for the project was the centenary of the organisation that is to be celebrated in 2011. The history is virtually complete and is soon to move to the production stage.

The history of National Pharmacies provides yet another perspective on South Australia's history. It documents the recent history of friendly societies in South Australia and also that of the pharmacy industry. The friendly society association is of particular interest and reflects the significance of these societies during a time before governments assumed responsibility for social welfare. British Prime Minister Gladstone is reported to have stated that if anyone wrote the history of the British nation and omitted from it a reference to the friendly societies' movement, that history would be altogether inadequate and

incomplete. The same could be said of the history of South Australia, and the role of the Friendly Societies Medical Association.

The history explains the effects of changes to friendly societies as governments introduced social support such as unemployment and sickness benefits and the pharmaceutical benefit scheme. It underscores the fact that history is continually evolving and that significant events do not always occur in neat time periods.

One of the most significant developments in National Pharmacies' history occurred on 28 February 2009, when FSMA became a wholly independent organisation, no longer an entity controlled by affiliated friendly societies. This highlights the notion that historical milestones do not always happily coincide with anniversaries — with the implication that impending anniversaries should not be the key reason for commissioning histories.



Above: The current head office of National Pharmacies in Gawler Place, Adelaide, before refurbishment of the building.

Above left: The Friendly Societies Medical Association dispensary on North Terrace, Adelaide, 1913. (Photo courtesy of the State Library of South Australia)

Left: Staff of the Blackwood store participating in the local Christmas pageant, 1991.

6870: The Book

Donovan & Associates is currently writing a book that records the history of a group of Roseworthy Agriculture College graduates. The group is based upon the First Year class of 1968 that completed the Roseworthy Diploma of Agriculture in 1970, with some of them completing the Roseworthy Diploma of Agricultural technology the following year. It includes some of the class who transferred to the oenology course in 1970 and other 'friends'. The book will tell the story of their time at Roseworthy and their achievements since graduation. It will provide a particular view of the recent history of South Australia and the agriculture industry in particular.

The remarkable feature of the 6870 group is the strong bond that emerged between them, maintained largely by the annual publication of a magazine to which each person contributed and kept colleagues informed of their challenges in embarking on careers and families.

Roseworthy Agriculture College itself has undergone significant changes since the last of the 6870 group graduated. It became a College of Advance Education, admitted women to courses, became part of the University of Adelaide, lost the oenology course and gained a veterinary science course. All this means that the experiences of the 6870 group are now history.



*Above: The Class of '68 in their final year, 1970.
Below: The Class of '68 in 1996.*



Mary MacKillop and D&A

Those of us at **D&A** were delighted to hear of the Pope's plans announced in mid-February to canonise Mary MacKillop as Australia's first saint. **Donovan & Associates** was closely involved in local events associated with her impending beatification, when, on 23 June 1993 we were appointed in association with The Marketing Centre to prepare a 'State Strategy to Promote and Interpret the Life and Achievement of Mary MacKillop'. The project was given a sense of urgency when, on 7 July 1993, Pope John Paul II announced that he was to beatify Mary MacKillop at a date to be determined.

The project involved identifying key sites in South Australia associated with Mary MacKillop. The most significant sites were (a) the schoolhouse at Penola, where Mary established her first school, at the request of her spiritual director Father Julian Tenison Woods, and where she accepted her first recruits to the congregation; (b) the chapel of the early motherhouse at St Mary's College, Franklin Street, Adelaide, where she was excommunicated; and (c) the chapel and crypt at the later motherhouse at St Joseph's School, Kensington, acquired with assistance from Robert and Johanna Barr-Smith, and where she lived when not visiting schools run by her sisters. The project report was completed and submitted on 30 September 1993.

D&A had no further involvement in ongoing projects, but was delighted to learn that the major recommendations of the report were implemented. These included the development of an interpretation centre at St Joseph's College, Kensington designed by Barry Rowney, who had been part of our team, and another in association with the Woods-MacKillop Schoolhouse at Penola, on the site of the former presbytery. Interpretation of the site at St Mary's College was more problematic because the school had been transferred to the Dominican sisters, and it remains part of a thriving school.

Grave History

Donovan & Associates returned to Adelaide's historic West Terrace Cemetery late in 2009, this time to identify more than 300 of those interred who have interesting stories — and were not already identified — and to document 75 of these in detail. The project was part of the ongoing initiative of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority to heighten interest in the historic cemetery, encourage additional visitation and enrich visitors' experiences and thereby assist with its maintenance.

This was **D&A's** third project associated with the Cemetery. We were part of a multi-disciplinary team involved in developing a conservation management plan in 1988 and in 2003 we were commissioned to develop a set of guidelines to assist lessees to choose monuments appropriate to the Cemetery's heritage character.

The latest project complemented a great deal of historical research already undertaken to document the history of the Cemetery and to identify graves of those whose stories reflect aspects of the history of South Australia. The team undertaking the project comprised Alison Painter, Bernard O'Neil, June Donovan and Peter Donovan. All are very familiar with South Australia's history. This was vital to the first part of the project that involved identifying those people not already known, who might have significant stories. This involved a detailed inventory of grave sites, noting likely prospects, taking of notes to guide library research and the compilation of a list of more than 500 names, pared down to 470 that justified more extensive research. This list was complemented by another of 258 names already held by the Adelaide Cemeteries' Authority.



Things worth keeping – or at least knowing about

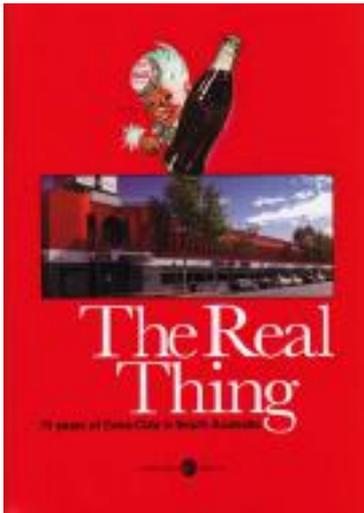
Donovan & Associates has continued to be involved in the heritage assessment of the built environment. The Adelaide City Council approved another assessment of the City's built heritage in January 2008. **D&A** was engaged to undertake the work: the team comprised Dr Susan Marsden, Dr Bridget Jolly, Carol Cosgrove, Lothar Brasse, June Donovan and Peter Donovan, all of whom were already very familiar with the history of the City: indeed, Susan Marsden and Peter Donovan had been involved in the first heritage survey in 1980–82. The role of the team was limited to establishing whether or not particular places satisfied the local heritage criteria in Section 23(4) of the *Development Act 1993*.

The Council extended the scope of the project in May 2008, which meant that it was not completed until February 2009. Since then the Adelaide City Council has sought public consultation on the list of buildings that the Council recommended should be added to the City's local heritage list.

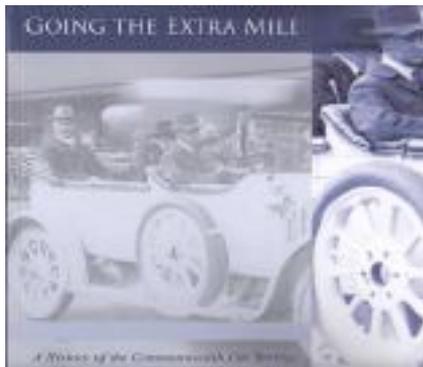


The heritage assessment team. Standing, from left: Peter Donovan, Susan Marsden and Lothar Brasse. Sitting, from left: June Donovan, Carol Cosgrove and Bridget Jolly.

New publications



The Real Thing: 70 years of Coca-Cola in South Australia was written by Alison Painter and Peter Donovan and published by Coca-Cola Amatil. The book is hardback, 270mm x 200mm, has xiv + 186 pages, is illustrated in colour, and has a bibliography and index.



Going the Extra Mile: a history of the Commonwealth Car Service, 1910–2010 was written by Peter Donovan and published by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. The book is softback, 230mm x 230mm, has viii + 224 pages, is illustrated in colour and black and white, and has a bibliography.

Donovan & Associates marked another milestone on 16 December 2010 with the celebration of its 30th anniversary. It is grateful to 'associates' and clients who have made this possible.

Copy editing of *Donovan News* is by **Bernard O'Neil**.
Cartoons are by **Stephen Stanley**.
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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 Australia on projects that have involved research in all parts of the country, and overseas in some instances.

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
- * Genealogical searches

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