

# Donovan News

Number 5

Celebrating Ten Years of Donovan & Associates...

Autumn, 1990

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

## OUR BUSINESS IS HISTORY

This year, 1990, marks the tenth year of operation of **Donovan & Associates**. It is a milestone of which we are proud because there have been few, longer-lived businesses in Australia that have specialised in providing history services.

It has been an exciting decade that has seen us successfully complete a multitude of different projects in many parts of Australia. And there has not been one project that has not helped us extend our expertise, and thereby make us better qualified for each new challenge.

Heritage work formed the mainstay of our earlier work and took us to all parts of South Australia, and included a major project in New South Wales. We have documented and assessed all types of items and have remained conversant with philosophical and legal developments in heritage conservation in Australia and overseas.

The latter part of the decade featured histories of a number of South Australia's regions and leading companies and organisations that has enabled us to extend our understanding of Australian history in general, and particularly that of organisational

development, much of which we have been able to apply to our own situation.

Thank you to all who have helped make **Donovan & Associates**. Building upon the experience of our first decade we are confident that we can provide even better service in succeeding decades.



## PEOPLE

**VALE** to **Pamela Runge** who has left us for a time to work at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. We were sorry to see Pamela leave, but for some time have been conscious of the lack of work in South Australia for which she is particularly qualified. Her task in Canberra is to research, catalogue and curate the Museum's Aviation collection, with particular attention to those items collected and given to the Museum by Austin Byrne. A major part of Pamela's brief also calls for her to conduct a number of interviews with Austin Byrne. This is the type of work that particularly appeals to Pamela and we are delighted that she has been given to opportunity to extend her experience and competence.



*Pamela Runge and Barry Rowney looking for some of Adelaide's heritage*

*People, continued*

**AVE** to **Barry Rowney** who has joined us in three current projects. Barry is an architect with a Master's degree in town planning, and with particular expertise in heritage conservation. The new association renews one that began about fifteen years ago when Peter Donovan and Barry worked together on the Ngaiawang Folk Province Heritage Study, which was one of the earliest heritage projects undertaken in South Australia under the National Estates Grants programme instituted by the Whitlam Labor government.

Barry resigned from Hassell Architects so that he could work on the project. Following a slow year after the project funds were exhausted, Barry went on to become one of the Trustees of the Constitutional Museum - later the History Trust - and Senior Heritage Architect in the State's Heritage Branch, until taking up a lectureship in Architectural History at the University of Adelaide.

In between **Donovan & Associate** projects, Barry is to spend a month from mid-April in Syria with other members of an archaeological team from the Australian National University, measuring and drawing an ancient Forum; after returning for a month he is to go to Gubbio in Central Italy to measure and draw an ancient theatre, for a team from Adelaide University.

**Bernie O'Neill** recently started work at the Department of Mines and Energy to extend the scope of his earlier study, bringing it up to date. Bernie also has the distinction of recently being elected to the executive of the Association of Professional Historians.

OH YES -  
YOU CAN JUST  
ABOUT SMELL THE  
HERITAGE HEREBOUTS..



In each case the project team included Peter Donovan, Barry Rowney, Pamela Runge and June Donovan. In the case of the Marion survey we were particularly charged with advising Council on the heritage significance of two vineyards that it owns. We engaged Dr Geoffrey Bishop to provide advice on this.

Geoffrey is uniquely qualified for such a task. He comes from a horticultural family and hold a PhD in horticultural science. Though working as a biologist with the Department of Environment and Planning, he has researched the horticultural and viticultural history of South Australia and has written three books concerned with viticulture and winemaking.

Both surveys gave us the opportunity to hone our skills of assessing and documenting items considered worthy of being included on the Register of State Heritage Items, while at the same time enabling us to remain informed about current policies concerned with the registration of items.

## LOCAL HISTORY IS NOT TRIVIA

**Donovan & Associates** has written a great deal of local history. Our first book was a short history of Port Wakefield and District; we have followed that up with a two volume history of the Northern Territory, another about Alice Springs, and one of West Torrens. And in recent years Peter Donovan has helped teach a course, Writing Local History, at the Adelaide College of TAFE.

Frequently local history - even the corporate history that we write - is the only history that our audience reads.

So it is that we always endeavour to show how major, outside developments have shaped local events, and how all history, local or not, is part of a rich and gigantic tapestry, where all can be used to help explain the past and peoples' place in it.



## TOMORROW'S HERITAGE

**Donovan & Associates** recently completed two heritage surveys in metropolitan Adelaide in mid-April. The first of these concentrated on the central business district of Salisbury in the far north of the metropolitan area, the second covered the whole of the City of Marion to the south. The City Councils were the clients in each instance.

## OUTBACK AIRLINE

Eddie Connellan founded one of Australia's most remarkable air services in 1939. Based in Alice Springs in Central Australia it served upwards of 150 stations and outback centres. The changing nature of the service and demands made upon it, and changes in the industry forced him to sell the airline in 1980.

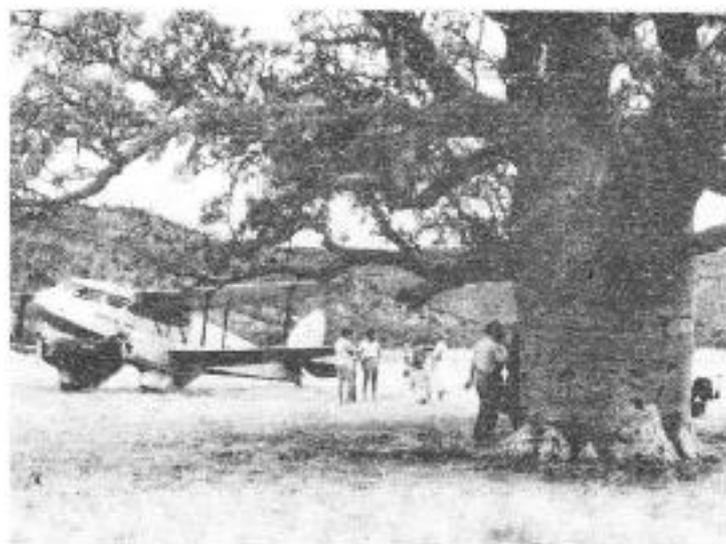
Having relinquished his airline, Eddie determined to write its story, but died in December, 1983, before it could be published. His son has commissioned **Donovan & Associates** to prepare the finished manuscript for publication.

It is a fascinating story at several levels. First of all it is a partial autobiography of a remarkable man. Besides founding and managing an airline, Eddie became a successful pastoralist, businessman, and for a time served in the Territory's Legislative Council. His story provides a unique perspective on much of the history of the Northern Territory from 1939 to 1980.

He always remained an idealist, and all that he did was focussed on the need to develop the Territory and to mitigate the problems of isolation. To the very end he insisted that his air service continue with its so-called development services, even though they were clearly uneconomic.

At a second level, Eddie Connellan's story provides insights into the history of general aviation in Australia. He learned to fly in the barnstorming days between the wars and knew personally all of those who helped found Australia's aviation industry. His aircraft and pilots were used exclusively by the Alice Springs Royal Flying Doctor Base from its foundation in 1939 until 1965, and underpinned the success of the RFDS in Central Australia.

Finally, the story of Connellan Airways, later Connair, is the story of a private - family - company, struggling to expand with all the problems associated with the need to re-equip with up-to-date technology and to find an appropriate management structure.



*A typical stop for a Connellan pilot in the early 1950s (Ian Leslie photograph)*

### People, continued

**Allison Painter** was also re-elected to her position as Membership Secretary of the Association. She has completed the bulk of her work on the REI project but has had plenty to do with a number of small research jobs, and helping with the Highways Department project when she can.

**Alan Merchant** is the one to whom we are grateful for screening and sizing the photographs for the **News**.

Many readers will recognise the hand of **Stephen Stanley** behind the cartoons.

## HONOUR ROLL

We like to assure clients that we have a network of talent upon which we can draw when we need extra or complementary expertise.

During our first ten years we have had occasion to call upon the assistance of numbers of people and have been very grateful for their contributions. They include:

**Noreen Kirkman** who worked as a joint author on our history of the South Australian Gas Company. This was our first company history and our first attempt at joint authorship.

**Drs Leith MacGillivray and Kay Rollison** researched and wrote part of the historical section of our report on the European heritage sites in the vicinity of the Mound Springs Region of northern South Australia. **Graham Boulter** provided valuable assistance with the field work.

**Helen Proudfoot** provided research assistance for us in

*Honour Roll, continued*

Sydney as part of our project identifying European heritage sites within the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area.

**David Hawkins and Joanne Foale** have provided drafting assistance at times. David has provided most of the building plans, including those for our development plan for the Homestead Park Pioneer Museum at Port Augusta. Joanne's expertise lies with maps, including those for our History of Alice Springs.

**Roma Hodgekinson** provided extra historical expertise, and **Lothar Brasse** the architectural expertise for our conservation study of the Port Adelaide Customs House.

**Hamish Ramsey** provided architectural and engineering advice for our conservation study of Mine Square Cottage at Kapunda.

**Graham Taylor** photographed windows for our book on South Australian stained glass.

**Sue Dahlenburg** designed our logo.

**NEW PROJECTS**

**Donovan & Associates** commenced several new projects since the publication of the previous News.

Mention has been made on the previous pages of the heritage surveys of Salisbury and Marion.

Both surveys were completed in mid-April, though the Salisbury project has moved into a second stage concerned with the remainder of the City. This second stage is programmed to commence on 1 July.

Early in 1990 Barry Rowney and Peter Donovan were also commissioned by the Australian Heritage Commission to undertake a typological survey of churches in the metropolitan area of Adelaide. This survey will be undertaken during the middle and latter part of the year. It's aim is to develop a tool for assessing items on the National Estate Register.

**Donovan & Associates** broke new ground early in 1990, with

its commission to write a history of the South Australian Highways Department which was merged with the Department of Road Transport in the latter part of 1989. This will be our first departmental history, and will tell the story of South Australia's Highwaymen from 1926 to 1989.

**Donovan & Associates** was recently asked to help produce the first annual report of the Connellan Airways Trust which was established to help minimise the problems of isolation in remote parts of Australia.

**NEW FAX**

**Donovan & Associates** has recently installed a fax machine to be able to provide a better service to clients. For the immediate future our fax number will be the same as our phone number, viz.

**(08) 270 1770**

**DONOVAN and ASSOCIATES**

*History and Historic Preservation Consultants*

P.O. Box 436, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051

Phone (08) 270 1770

Fax (08) 270 1770

**We offer a number of services, including:**

- **Corporate, Institutional and Biographical History**
- **Regional and Local History**
- **Oral History Programmes**
- **Heritage Survey and Assessment**
- **Advice on Cultural Tourism**
- **Advice on Archives and Records Management**
- **Litigation Support**
- **Editing of Reports and Manuscripts**
- **Manuscript and Report Preparation**
- **Public Relations, Display and Education**

# Donovan News

Supplement . 5

## BIRTH of a HISTORY BUSINESS

### **Beginnings are important**

When we talk to potential clients we are at pains to stress the importance of the origins of any organisation, and the need to document these. This applies to all organisations, even those younger than our own.

Many organisations are established and developed on the strength of hunches or because of particular circumstances, and often with little formal planning. If early decisions were written down, it was likely to be on the backs of envelopes or serviettes and were rarely preserved in archives: many now remain only as memories. At the same time those active in the foundation of any new enterprise are frequently not those best qualified to direct its later development and are soon retired or replaced.

The early days of any organisation are always exciting. It is a time when the most fundamental decisions are taken that shape the organisations' culture, before the bureaucracies and procedures are established.

### **Beginnings have deep roots**

Another dictum that we often highlight is that any development or change often has deep roots in the past, and that it is important to understand the roots to appreciate something of the tree.

Certainly, in our own case important

developments took place long before the official formation of Donovan & Associates. We would like to take the opportunity of our ten-year anniversary to indulge a little and illustrate something of this notion as it applies to our own history.

### **Birthdate**

The Department of Corporate Affairs records our birthday as 16 December, 1980. However, the idea for Donovan & Associates was planted long before that, at least as early as 1969, soon after Peter Donovan began tutoring History at the Royal Military College at Duntroon.

At that time the Royal Military College was affiliated with the University of New South Wales through the Faculty of Military Studies. During the course of the year Peter learned a little about the University of which he was technically a staff member. One thing that intrigued him was that a number of Science faculties had developed a business arm and consulted to private enterprise: he believed that historians



## **2 • Supplement**

should be able to do the same. He raised the issue on several occasions in later years but received little encouragement. However, the notion persisted.

Peter had only a one year appointment to the Military College, so in 1970 took a position as a Tutor in History at the Flinders University of South Australia, where George Rude was Professor.

Another major development took place the following year, when Peter married June Waters. At the time June was the secretary to the Regional Director of Civil Aviation with skills that admirably complemented those of Peter. Later that year, the two began working as volunteers on the archaeological dig at Roonka on the River Murray near Blanchetown. It proved to have far-reaching consequences.

### **Career change**

Originally Peter Donovan had expected to become an academic historian and had enrolled as a higher degree student while working as a tutor. However, the expansion of the Universities that occurred in the late 1960s did not persist long into the 1970s. Peter resigned his tutorship

early in 1973 in order to complete his degree as a full-time student: his thesis concerned the history of South Australia's Northern Territory. It turned into the type of project that consultants long for: he began researching the Territory's history in 1970, and has been doing so regularly ever since.

In 1975, as the writing of the thesis drew near an end, Peter Donovan took a position with the South Australian Museum. Graham Pretty, the Senior Curator of Anthropology and Archaeology had secured funds under the early National Estate Grants Programme to examine the feasibility of establishing a new type of conservation park that would seek to interpret all the significant historical developments in South Australia: the notion of the project had developed from the Roonka dig.

This became a significant career move and introduced Peter and June Donovan to the notion of heritage conservation, and the role that historians might play in it.

### **First Heritage Unit**

The so-called Ngaiawang Folk Province Feasibility Study continued for three years, and developed what could be termed South Australia's first Heritage Unit. At its peak it included a number of professionals. In addition to Peter Donovan, the historian, the team included Barry Rowney, an architect, Kristin Truman, a surveyor, two research assistants and a secretary.

The project was primarily concerned with identifying and documenting items of heritage significance within two large parts of South Australia, the first, to the west of the River Murray south from Morgan and west to the top of the Ranges, the second in the area



of the South-East from Robe to Mount Gambier.

The project had to be wound back after the National Estate Programme was suspended following the election of the Fraser conservative government. The unit contracted, but continued to undertake significant work, one of the most important projects being the assessment of the State's Old Legislative Council Building: this was perhaps the most authoritative heritage assessment of any building, in South Australia to this time, and effectively the first stage of its conservation and redevelopment as the Constitutional Museum, later Old Parliament House.

First on, Peter Donovan became the last to leave the Ngaiawang Folk Province project, and for a time tried his hands at several things far removed from History. However, his work for the South Australia Museum meant that he was admirably placed to take advantage of the reinstatement of the National Estate Grants Programme in 1977, and early in 1978 was commissioned to undertake the Heritage Survey of the City of Unley.

#### Another landmark

The Unley project proved to be another significant development in the prehistory of Donovan & Associates on a number of accounts.

At one level, the project served to broaden Peter Donovan's experience as a historian. One of the officers at the Corporation, Geoff Codling, resigned to become District Clerk of Port Wakefield, which at the time was approaching its centenary. He asked Peter Donovan to compile a short history of the town to help mark the occasion. There was little money in



the project, but it provided valuable experience and became the vehicle for the publication of Peter Donovan's first book, in 1978.

The Unley project also served to confirm Peter and June Donovan's commitment to heritage conservation. An Australian chapter of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) had been established in 1977: Peter Donovan joined the organisation after its meeting in Robe, South Australia, in February, 1978.

Following the completion of the Unley project, Peter Donovan began working for David Saunders, the Professor of Architecture at the University of Adelaide and recently elected Chairman of Australia ICOMOS. David had secured grant funds to study the heritage of industrial buildings in South Australia: Peter Donovan was primarily concerned with providing a general historical background appropriate for the study of different industries. This was published in 1979 as *An Industrial History of South Australia*.

Soon afterwards, in 1979, Peter Donovan took up a contract with the Department of Environment, to help establish the State's Heritage Unit:

#### **4 • Supplement**

Barry Rowney became the Senior Heritage Architect, and the first effective head of the fledgling unit. The primary function of the unit was to administer the State's Heritage Act, and which meant establishing the Register of State Heritage Items.

Peter Donovan moved from there to a contract with the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory), again documenting sites. This provided another part to the jig-saw when he and June met Dr Eleanor Crosby who was engaged on other work for the National Trust. Eleanor was an executive member of the Association for Consulting Archaeologists, and unknowingly reinforced the notion of a career for consulting historians.

Late in 1979 Peter and June travelled to Rome, so that Peter could study at the International Centre for Conservation (ICCROM).

#### **A watershed**

The International Centre became crucial to the formation of Donovan & Associates. It introduced both Peter and June Donovan to the international perspectives of heritage conservation and membership of the North American Association of Preservation Technology, through the insistence of colleague, Richard Byrne from Canada, and which ultimately led to communications with the National Council for Public History and several of its executive members in the United States.

Peter Donovan had become aware of ICCROM during his period with the South Australian Museum, and took the opportunity while at Unley to enquire about the possibility of studying there. By this time it had

become evident that career opportunities were available in the area of heritage conservation and that there were few practitioners in Australia with evident qualifications.

Peter Donovan became only the second Australian to take the Architectural Conservation course, the first having done so ten years earlier.

The period in Italy proved to be an enriching experience in many ways. It also provided the perfect opportunity to plan for the future, and during this period Peter and June Donovan decided to implement the idea that had been germinating for several years, and to establish a history consultancy, building upon their special interest in heritage conservation. In the event, it simply meant formalising the manner in which they had been working for several years.

Peter Donovan had been awarded the first Northern Territory History Award in 1979 which carried with it a stipend to permit him to write a companion volume to his early history of the Northern Territory. This project gave him and June the chance to establish the new firm following their return to Australia in August, 1979.

Donovan & Associates' registration on 16 December, 1980, marked the end of the beginning.

