



Friends of
Donnelly Village Inc

ABN: 82 455 926 896

www.friendsofdonnelly.org.au

Friends of Donnelly Village Inc

Annual General Meeting 28 January 2024

Chair's Report

I am writing this at Donnelly having time just 'to be' on the verandah. On checking the museum for donations, comments in the visitor book, damp proofing pots needing emptying etc, I realized we have now been FODV Inc for ten years since 2013, plus the few years of the 'History Committee' from 2010, when we were part of a group of people who bought the village and a few of us came together to ensure we collected and conserved the social and industrial history of the place. I thought I would list some of our achievements and activities in those 14 years.

- 2011 the History Committee met with Ian Wilson, Chair of Manjimup Historical Society to get some background on setting up our heritage group. Ian has been a much-appreciated supporter of our group over the years.
- 2012 Wheatley Pty Ltd allowed us to use one of the school classrooms for our museum;
- We pinned up a few items, photos and articles collected from websites and started reaching out to the ex-residents and workers 1948-1978.
- 2013 We met with John Tillman and encouraged him to reprint his book about the Donnelly for sale at the Reunion and then in the General Store.
- 3 August 2013 We held a Reunion for Ex workers and residents 1948-1978. Approx 120 people attended and shared photos, stories and some objects for our collection; we learned about Martin's Corner and the Wheatley Forestry Settlement too.
- 2014, a couple of Help Ex German backpackers carefully scraped off years of dirt from the classroom ceiling and the room was repainted by a group of owners at an Owners Weekend.
- 2014 FODV became incorporated, and we set up a website and Facebook site Friends of Donnelly.
- 2016 FODV approached Minister for Regional Planning re future of the Donnelly Mill
- We held a meeting at DRV with various government, local authority and tourism reps re doing something with the Mill. The DPLH agreed to commission a Conservation Management Strategy for the Mill (Palassis Architects) completed in 2016.
- Since then, we have regularly lobbied DPLH re next steps re the Mill.
- We are grateful to Shire of Nannup for a number of Community Fund allocations which have allowed us to purchase a video camera and recorder and contribute towards paying for oral history files to be edited and developed into video vignettes.

- 2017 we held the first of our Australian Heritage Festival events in May: *“Milltown Days: Women at the Donnelly 1948-1978”* Speakers were Grace O’Neil, Jacqui Perry, Marg Jenaway and Carol Steele.
- September 2017 Jenny Mills officially opened our Museum which had been curated by Mike and Cindy Spight – a huge amount of work that in 2020 attracted a Highly Commended for Museum Fitout under \$20,000 from AmaGA.
- 2018 Australian Heritage Festival: *“Of Men, Mill and Diamond T’s: The Donnelly 1948-1978: My Culture, My Story”* with Phil Jenaway and Tim Larsen
- 2018 Reunion and Milestone Celebration: 70 years since the village was pegged in 1948. 60 years since the Elizabeth Karri was transported and placed in Kings Park as part of the National Tree week in 1958. 40 years since the mill closed on the 30th June 1978. Dinner Dance and celebratory tree planting by John Tillman.
- 2018: DPLH invited us to meet with them re the future of the Mill. A separate group was formed to lobby for the renewal and renovation of the Donnelly Mill Save Donnelly Mill 2018 Inc with founding members Sally and Tony Paulin, Mike and Cindy Spight and Tom and Jacqui Deering.
- 2018 We entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Monohan Trading Pty Ltd/Wheatley Village Pty Ltd re support/provision of classroom for museum and FODV activities.
- 2019 Australian Heritage Festival: *Back to the Donnelly - trails, tall tales and days gone by “* with Jacqui Perry and Tim Larsen
- 2019: Installation and opening of **FODV Heritage Trail** by Tony Dean, Shire President, Nannup. Project managed by Tony Paulin with Ric Cairns of Brandino Designers, funded by Lotterywest.
- 2020 We received a WA Heritage Award for community contribution to heritage.
- 2021: Australian Heritage Festival: *Living Life by the Whistle*. Celebrating installation of steam whistle by Paul Crouchley
- We were part of the pilot project for Collections WA
- 2022: Cottage Bites project was initiated and is ongoing. Developing a picture frame of story and photo about individual cottages. Frames and printing funded by Shire of Nannup Community Grant.
- 2022 Thanks to Susan and Ray Moss we have a copy of the Donnelly River Cookbook which we have permission to copy and sell. We have raised about \$1200 through cookbook sales so far.
- We received \$3000 Chart Funding to purchase an interactive TV for the Museum.
- We installed air conditioning in the museum to provide heating in winter to improve visitor experience!
- We became a registered Charity listed by the Australian Charity and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC). We explored obtaining deductible gift recipient status and will revisit this again in 2024.
- 2023: Australian Heritage Festival: *A kid's eyeview - growing up at the Donnelly, a WA timber mill town*. With Tim and Kathy Larsen and John Tillman. So well received, they did a reprise in Bridgetown the following week, many thanks!
- 2023: We published 250 photos on eHive, an online museum collection site. These are just some of the thousand or so photos that we have scanned and catalogued over the years.
- 2023: Sally Paulin was invited to speak about FODV’s Donnelly projects at the WA Historical Society Conference in Bridgetown.

- 2023 Interactive TV Project: We received a \$1900 grant for training volunteers from Fed Govt and \$3300 from Shire of Nannup to purchase software. We also received \$11,300 WA Heritage Grant for TV project and training working with Rikki Clarke, Creative Spaces.
- 2023 Jacks Shack: we entered a joint application with Heritage Skills Association WA for funding of \$100,000 from Forestry Funding to dismantle, move and rebuild the shack off of the road reserve. Funding round was oversubscribed, and our application was unsuccessful. we will consider applying for Round 2 in early 2024. This project included provision for training workshops to develop heritage building skills in WA. Trackcare are eager to be part of the project offering volunteer labour. Initial site works were carried out in January 2024 by Mike and Cindy Spight. We have development approval from Shire of Nannup and Department of Heritage.
- We are awaiting news of an application for \$15,000 grant from Responsible Wood Organisation, due February 2024, Funding would be used for Jack's Shack project.
- Kudos to Chris Smyth who has been very active in various FODV projects and following up and making some successful funding applications including to Shire of Nannup and Heritage Council
- Jacqui Perry has been carrying out research at the Battye Library and Records Office over several years and has amassed a large collection of information which we hope to make more accessible to members via electronic means.
- We have a collection of oral history videos which we are keen to add too – when we have time! One of our members, Sally Puzey has the video camera and recorder at Donnelly River Village and is ready to record interviews.
- We are considering using Collections WA to display our collection online. Volunteers will be needed to assist with this project.
- Australian Heritage Festival 2024: We are planning to hold an exhibition of paintings by Betty Blair Bunning and other artists in the Workers Club, May 19 2024.

There are possibly things I have missed but, looking back, all of the above is our achievement as a very small group of people who have earned the trust of the ex-Donnelly timber community whose stories we seek to record and tell for posterity. We have also developed good relations with nearby historical societies through sharing info and learning together. Our rewards are demonstrated in the faith the ex-residents have in our endeavours, their willingness to contribute their time, ideas, photos, treasured belongings and stories and to gently let us know when we have made a mistake!

More volunteers/members are always welcome!

Thanks to everyone on the committee and the wider support network for continuing to have faith in our projects going forward.

Best wishes

Sally

Sally Paulin

Chair, Friends of Donnelly Village Inc.

chair@friendsofdonnelly.org.au

Mob 0434350183