



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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Our September Meeting **Howard Speed – *Early South*** ***Australian Photography and*** ***Photographers***

What an informative talk we had last month, complete with some amusing details!

Photography officially began in 1840. At first the images were printed directly onto metal (called “Daguerreotype” photography). These were beautiful reproductions but were always the wrong way around. To remedy this, the world’s first photographic negative was produced on glass in 1854.

William Liddell was an early photographer in South Australia, coming here from NSW in the 1850s. It had been his intention to make his livelihood from this, but unfortunately these were bad economic times, and few people could afford to pay what amounted to more than a week’s wages for a photo. Another early photographer was Prof. Robert Hall, a man of dubious credentials! He was better known as “Peg-leg”, as he required a prosthetic limb.

A problem with most of the early photos was that they had no documentation, such as the photographer’s name, the date and the identity of the subject. The earliest known documented S.A. photo was of Sir Henry Ayres in 1847/48 at Burra. The photographer’s name was not documented, but is believed to be G. B. Goodman, a travelling Daguerreotype photographer. The earliest documented landscape was of the Port Adelaide Wharf in 1850 by Robert Tennent. Tennent and his friend, William Millington Nixon worked together for a time, but Tennent later moved to Victoria, then Tasmania. Many of his photos survive, housed in repositories in four states.

Townsend Duryea, an American photographer,

was born in 1823. He was one of the world’s first professional photographers, starting a business in 1840 at Brooklyn. He arrived in Victoria in 1852, carrying on a thriving business in Ballarat until moving to Adelaide in 1855, soon after the Eureka Stockade. He set up his studio on the corner of Grenfell and King William Streets. William M. Nixon worked for him before opening his own studio. Duryea became Australia’s first royal photographer when he photographed Prince Alfred in Adelaide, in 1867. Another important work, held at the State Library, was his collage of the attendees of the Old Colonist’s Banquet in 1871. Many of his photographs are important illustrations of Colonial South Australia. Sadly, Duryea lost everything, including 50 – 60 thousand glass negatives in a fire in April 1875. He moved to NSW soon afterward, where he died in 1888. The State Library holds a portrait of him, dated 1870.

Meanwhile, William M. Nixon specialised in mother and baby photos at his new Adelaide studio. Two of his sons were also travelling photographers. A photo of the construction of the telegraph to Port Darwin (C1871 – 72) is an important work by Joseph Nixon, as is the earliest photo of Aboriginal men in 1874. The two men were from Coopers Creek. Samuel Nixon travelled to NSW, where he photographed the Fish Traps at Brewarrina in the 1860s. The Fish Traps are the oldest man-made structure in the world, dating back 40,000 years.

Photographer, Philip Marchant produced the first dry-glass negative plates using all Australian materials, which he marketed in 1881. He was a very skilled photographer and produced a seamless double portrait of himself as both customer and photographer.

The first female photographer in South Australia was Harriett Norman, at Mt Gambier. She began doing retouch work for her employer, eventually

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learning the whole trade. She went on to manage the business until 1891. Others were Mary Davis and Elizabeth Just. Just was in partnership with Rushton, and had a studio at 150 Rundle St.

In 1856 the South Australian Society of Arts had been established in Adelaide. This was the first such society in Australia, and it included photography. In 1901 a photographic exhibition was held in their rooms on North Terrace, which was attended by around 1600 people – an astounding turnout!

When metropolitan railways moved more than people

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 28 June 1930, page 16

HEAVY TRANSPORT

On behalf of the S.A. Portland Cement Company, Messrs. H. Graves and Co., carriers, of Adelaide, transported a rotary roaster from the Oaklands railway-station to their works at Brighton yesterday. The roaster, measuring 43 ft. 5 in., with a diameter of 8 ft. 4 in., and weighing 28 tons, was landed by the Harbors Board floating crane from the motor ship Tisnaren a fortnight ago. As permission could not be obtained by Messrs. Graves & Co from the Highways Department to use the roads from Port Adelaide to Brighton, it was necessary for the Portland Cement Company to have the roaster railed to Oaklands. It was then transhipped (sic) to Messrs. Graves & Co.'s vehicle and drawn by a team of 22 horses, supported by an auxiliary team of eight horses, and was taken over district roads to the cement works. Naturally a team of horses of this magnitude attracted considerable attention, and many cameras were to be seen on the route.

This, of course could not happen these days as the metropolitan rail has been redeveloped to move people, not goods.

When the railways were developed a major aim was to aid development, not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the state.

Railways were developed to enable goods produced to be delivered to consumers, farmed goods to markets, manufactured goods to retailers and in many cases to ports for export.

The development of the railway line to Marino and eventually to Willunga serviced primary producers

and manufacturers.

Layouts of the major railway stations at Edwardstown, Oaklands, Brighton and Marino all show goods sheds and sidings where railway trucks could be loaded and unloaded.

The layout at Edwardstown shows connections to Pengelly's furniture factory, while the layout at Marino shows connections to the cement works,

As new suburbs were constructed new railway stations were opened for passengers only, for example, Emerson in 1928 and Marion in 1954.

Eventually the development of motor vehicles and better roads meant that goods could be delivered directly to their destination without the use of the railway and those parts of the infrastructure remained unused for many years. It was in 1963 that the siding to Pengelly's was removed while the siding and crane at Oaklands went when the station was demolished following the construction of a new station near Morphett Road.
John Hoult

News from the Marion Heritage Research Centre

The MHRC is open throughout the year except January, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10am - 4pm. Visitors are always welcome and there is plenty to keep you interested.

Watch out for our events in the Marion Libraries' What's On! booklet, the local newspaper or this newsletter.

Tuesday 22nd October: 'Southern Africa: Where history & nature meet' talk by Major Chris Roe.

For more information please call the Heritage Research Centre on 7420 6455.

Marion Historical Society

Next meeting:

Our Annual Christmas Lunch

Meet at 12pm for a 12.30 start on

Sunday 24th November,

at the Marion Sports Club.

RSVP please by Wednesday 20th.

phone Ian 82985585 or email:

marionhistoricalsociety@gmail.com. Partners are, of course, welcome.

The program for next year will be given out at the lunch.

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