

## THE 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

This year [2014] marks the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the announcement, at a joint meeting of the Academies des Sciences and the Beaux-Arts on 19 August 1839 in Paris, that the daguerreotype process was given 'free to the world' as a gift from the French. Although the daguerreotype proved very popular with the public, it was mainly used by professionals and the 'Calotype' process [coincidentally invented at the same time] by William Henry Fox Talbot, was preferred by the amateurs.

In September of 1847 Roger Fenton [a lawyer] founded the world's first camera club in London.

The oldest known **Australian landscapes** were taken in 1849 at Port Adelaide, Burra and the Mid North [possibly by a tourist named Robert Tennant] but there is some debate about this claim.

Since about 1863 the SA Society of Arts [now Royal Society of Arts] introduced photography into their annual exhibitions, attracting professionals such as Townsend Duryea and Henry Jones. Over the years both men won prizes in various sections. Credit must be given to this Society for accepting photography so early in our history.

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1885, at the office of Mr. Flegeltaub [a photographic dealer in Freeman Street], interested amateurs formed the **South Australian Photographic Society** – the first constituted photographic body in S.A. At first this group mainly pursued the sciences, such as physics, chemistry and astronomy, but later the members conducted exhibitions.

The **Adelaide Camera Club** [founded in 1899] absorbed the 'Society' in 1911 and this grand old club became the sole survivor of both World Wars and the Great Depression, when other clubs were forced to close.

After World War II the booming economy saw a number of new clubs start. These new clubs lacked knowledge and experience so drew upon the Adelaide Camera Club for speakers and judges. Unfortunately this took up Adelaide's own valuable club time, so in 1960 Mr. Doug Mullins [who became president of the Adelaide CC] immediately began to facilitate this matter. As a result on **February 1<sup>st</sup> 1962, the South Australian Photographic Federation was founded** to administer activities for all the clubs in South Australia.

Currently the 'Federation' is assisting new clubs with advice and encouragement regarding constitutions, judges and speakers as the latest technology stimulates people to pursue and develop the skills needed to create great photographs.

The historical display of photos at the 2014 SAPF Annual Exhibition endeavours to portray amateur photography in SA from the earliest landscapes to the London Portrait Club [typical club in 1860's] then the Society of Arts [first exhibitions] to the Photographic Society, Adelaide Camera Club and finally the South Australian Photographic Federation. Thus amateur photography in Adelaide has a continuum reaching back 150 years.

The exhibition committee sincerely thanks the State Library of SA, Art Gallery of SA, the SA Photographic Federation, Adelaide Camera Club and private collectors, for their cooperation and assistance.

**Howard Speed, SAPF Historian - 2014**