

H A Tregellas Medal

Congratulations on winning this year's H A Tregellas Medal. Below is just a little bit of information by Melbourne stereo worker Keith Hutchings APSA about the man to who this award is dedicated.

Harold Aubrey Tregellas

by Keith Hutchings

APSA

Each year when the Southern Cross International Exhibition of Stereo Photography is held the best slide from a new exhibitor is awarded the H A Tregellas Medal - donated by the Australian Stereoscopic Society.

Harold Aubrey Tregellas, Member No. 120 of the Stereoscopic Society (Australian Section), as the folio group was then called, was known as "HAT" as he used only his initials after comments on both print and slide folios circulated by the Society during his lifetime.

His close friends affectionately called him HAT. Other members used his nickname at their peril.

Harold's interest in stereo photography started in the early 1900s when his school teacher father purchased a stereo viewer and several boxes of stereo views for use by both his school and his family.

He graduated from Bendigo High School and became a pharmacist's apprentice. He worked long hours and studied at the Bendigo School of Mines at night.

He joined the UK based Stereoscopic Society in 1924 and became Secretary of the Australian Section of the Society in 1927, a position he held for 42 years - until his death in 1969. H A Tregellas was the heart and sole of stereo photography in Australia for over four decades.

During the strict wartime food rationing in Britain, Harold Tregellas organised food parcels that were sent to British members of the Stereoscopic Society. This was greatly appreciated and is given due recognition in the "History of the Stereoscopic Society" by K.C.M. Symons published in 1985 and still available from the UK Division of the Society.

He was a great ambassador for stereo photography having served an apprenticeship in photography under his father who was an accomplished photographer.

Harold Tregellas was a bachelor and by profession the pharmacist in charge of the dispensary at the Footscray Hospital close to Melbourne. He was a Fellow of the College of Pharmacy.

He lived alone in a small Council unit which he later purchased. His main interests were his work as a pharmacist, stereo photography in all of its many

forms, ice skating, skiing in the Victorian snowfields and hiking. He was a founding member of the Victorian Ski Club and a member of the Melbourne Walking Club. He combined his interest and took many fine stereo prints in the snowfields. For a time he was also a keen amateur movie maker, but his great love was stereo photography.

After he retired all of his interest centred around stereo photography.

His collection of stereo equipment and stereo images was extensive as was his knowledge of stereo photography. He was known to haunt secondhand shops, pawn shops and markets looking for anything stereo.

I first met "HAT" in 1963-64 after a chance meeting with Jack Frawly and Dick Courtney (former members of the Stereoscopic Society who have both now passed on) who gave me the telephone number of his unit in Arden Street, North Melbourne.

I telephoned the number to inquire about joining the Stereoscopic Society and was invited to visit him one Saturday afternoon and was instructed to bring 10 slides with me for his appraisal to see if my work was good enough to be accepted as a member of the Society and enter the Society Folios.

I can remember sitting opposite this small wispy man with glasses, a hearing aid and sparse blond hair. He spoke in a very quiet voice and I sat in trepidation awaiting his verdict.

Eventually, after a long nervous wait he delivered his verdict and I was relieved to learn that my work was of an acceptable standard and was to become a member of the Society and allocated Membership No. 723.

That was the beginning of a long and enjoyable association with "HAT" and I spent many hours in the ensuing years viewing and exploring his wonderful array of stereo equipment. His unit was stacked from floor to ceiling with equipment to the extent that his bedroom had just enough room for him to get into his bed by going around tables and boxes.



Harold retired in 1963 at aged 65. In 1964 he undertook a world trip and was well received by fellow stereo photographers around the world. The stereo photograph in the previous page was taken while he was in England in 1964. Harold is on the left with UK member Mr Spargo.

He was a diabetic and in his later years had sight and hearing disabilities.

Harold and I became good friends. After he returned from his world trip he became “housebound” as he did not own a car. As my work took me all over the State of Victoria I frequently took Harold with me on “day trips” while I attended to my business. I enjoyed his company and I know that he enjoyed the opportunity to escape the confines of his unit.

I shall always remember my meeting with “HAT” as one of the great moments of my life. We became close friends and this association introduced me to an elite group of people who have been among my dearest friends.

One Saturday morning in January, 1969 Wally Smallman (now deceased) was unable to get a response to HAT’s doorbell. The police were called and on forcing entry they found that Harold had died in his sleep. His age at the time of his death was around 73. So ended an era of Australian Stereo photography over which he had dominated for more than 42 years.

Harold Tregellas died on the eve of the first Stereo Convention to be held in Melbourne, an event he had been eagerly awaiting since the idea had been mooted in the 1st Stereo Convention of the Stereoscopic Society in Canberra two years earlier. Harold, was unable to attend the Canberra Convention though this would have given him the opportunity to meet many of the Folio participants whose work he had viewed and with whom he had corresponded over the years.

In due course his sister (Mrs. Fry) contacted myself and gave me details of his Last Will and Testament.

All his antique and vintage equipment was to be collected by Robby Robertson of Sydney and given to the National Library in Canberra. The later dated items were to be given to a brother in Caulfield (Victoria) for disposal by sale to members of the Society.

Norm Peters and I, together with Ben Betts and Harry Brown (now deceased) met at the Unit one Friday afternoon to pack and sort the collection. I can clearly remember two cars and my station wagon each taking two complete loads of equipment to a storeroom to await collection by Robby Robinson.

The collection was duly taken to Canberra where it has remained in the National Library in accordance with Harold’s final wishes. It is not known how often his collection has been displayed. A letter on the Stereoscopic Society’s files indicated that the collection (or part of it) was on display in the late 1976 when the display prompted inquiries regarding the activities of the Society. Part of the collection was again on display during 1997.

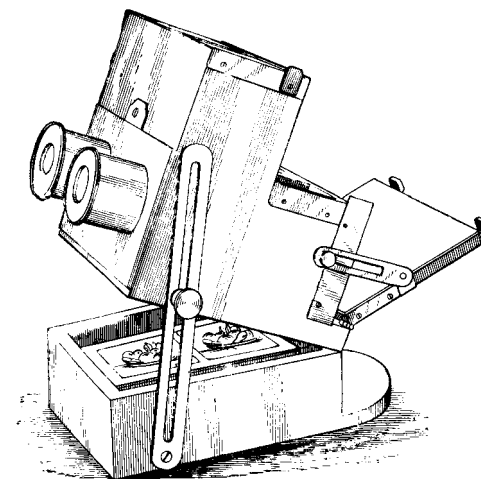
Arrangements were made for the collection to be displayed during the 1998 Australian National Stereo Photography Convention in Canberra where attendees at the Convention will be given an extensive private viewing.

Shortly after his passing his sister Mrs. Fry made a bequest of \$200 to the Stereoscopic Society to be invested so that the interest would provide a perpetual trophy to be awarded by the Society in memory of its founder. The trophy was to be called the “Harold A Tregellas Memorial Trophy for Stereoscopic Photography”.

Initially the trophy was awarded at the Melbourne National Salon held during the annual Royal Agricultural Show (Victoria) and on the demise of this competition it was decided that this trophy would be donated by the Stereoscopic Society (Australian Section) to the Sydney Stereo Camera Club as one of the awards for the annual Southern Cross International Exhibition of Stereo Photography.

Thus the name Harold Aubrey Tregellas or “HAT” as he is still called today (even by many who never met the legend) has remained synonymous with stereo photography in Australia for more than 80 years.

VALE HAT - Gone but not forgotten.



Ives Stereo Photochromoscope from H A Tregellas Collection
at the Australian National Library in Canberra