

Charles Cheetham Vevers - a photographic man

By Ron Cosens

I collect photographic ephemera whenever I can. Those old letters, bills and quotes contain so much information as well as, sometimes, being works of typographical art in their own right. Ephemera can show you the sender, the recipient, their addresses, signatures, products and lots more. Over the last couple of years I have been able to buy ephemera addressed to Charles Cheetham Vevers, an interesting photographic man from Yorkshire. All of it is dated from the 1890s.

Recently, I received a call from our trusty Tailboard editor, David Gardner, whose friend had come across a dealer with over 150 bits of paper related to a Mr C C Vevers - same dealer; small world. This turned out to be the remainder of the archive which, luckily from my point of view, David knew would be just up my street. One phone call to the dealer and the archive was secured. Yet another benefit of PCCGB membership.



The first job to do was to put all of the items in date order and list them on an Excel spreadsheet. There are 275 in all, dating from 1890 to 1898, with many of the senders having names that club members will instantly recognise. A selection of interesting extracts is shown below and a list of ALL of the items can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/b7cdopv>

Correspondence in the archive consists of items sent to C. C. Vevers or to his accountant (A. Nicholson) or his solicitors (Fosters). The correspondence from Charles was, of course, spread around the UK and even overseas and has, almost certainly, been lost forever.

This archive shows that Charles was an interesting, energetic and hard negotiating business man.

C. C. Vevers was born in Horsforth near Leeds in the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1868 and it is said that he started up in business by borrowing some funds from a relative, Henry Vevers, a surgeon from Hereford. However, when Henry died in 1901 the beneficiaries of his will called in the loan.

Charles advertised in various trade directories and it is interesting to see how he described himself from time to time

■ 1892. Photo Apparatus Manufacturer at 12, Market Street, Horsforth, and Residing at Woodbottom Cottage, Horsforth

■ 1893. Photo Apparatus Manufacturer, 12, Market Street, Horsforth

■ 1898. Camera Maker, 163, Briggate, Leeds

■ 1901. Photo Appliance Manufacturer, Grand Arcade, Leeds

The loan from Henry Vevers was called in around this time (see <http://tinyurl.com/a52fl7f>). This event must have been a traumatic one for Charles especially as he had previously gone into a legal agreement with his creditors in 1897

■ 1902. Furniture Broker, 39, Grand Arcade, Leeds and Photo Materials, 54, Grand Arcade, Leeds

■ 1903. December 8th: The Edinburgh Gazette reports as bankrupt a Charles Cheetham Vevers, residing at 7, Melville Grove, Woodhouse and carrying on business at 13, North Street, both in the city of Leeds, furniture and general dealer

■ 1910. Photographer, 213, Upper Town Street, Bramley

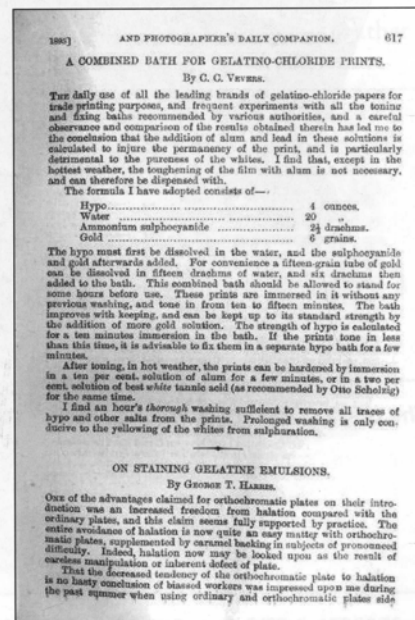
■ 1912. Photographer, 213, Upper Town Street, Bramley

■ 1920. Cinema Slide Maker, 213, Upper Town Street, Bramley

Charles manufactured or assembled cameras and magic lanterns and other photographic equipment in 1892 as well as running a fancy store selling books, toys etc. He appears to have advertised his first studio at 12 Market Street, Briggate in Leeds in 1893. He was also an author and publisher of at least a dozen 'how to' photographic books.

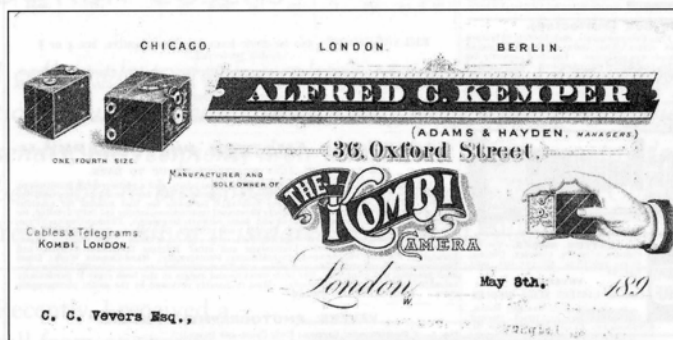
An article published in the British Journal Photographic Almanac and Photographer's Daily Companion in 1895 shows his interest in photographic chemistry.

At a later date, some of his adverts from the 1898 BJA



tise on their letterheads and stationery as wholesale dealers, when in fact they are nothing but retailers." [Letter consists of five pages (one missing!) setting out terms of business - RC]

1893 S H Brittain & Co (Makers of metal dark slides, plate holders etc.) - "Price for springs enclosed - 4/2 per gross"

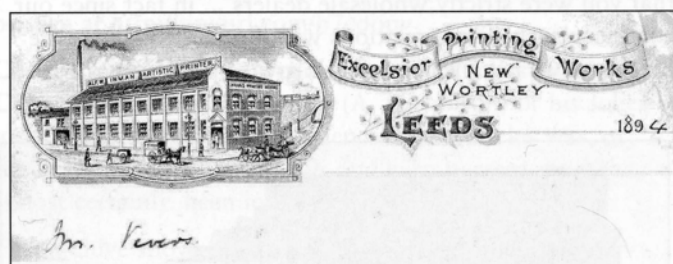


1893 J Theobald & Company (magic lanterns) - "We extremely regret that we are unable to meet you in regard to the Unique and Favourite lanterns, but we think we informed you that they cost us a great deal more than the price you offer us. We shall be glad to buy them in any quantity, if we could only get them at the same price. ..." [Pushing too hard? - RC]

1893 Fordham & Co (photographic mount manufacturers) - "In reply to your order for olive cdv & Cab GBE(?), the best price we can do waterproof boards for is 15/6 & 31/6 respectively nett. The last lot you had were a special line which we cannot repeat"

1894 Excelsior Printing Works, New Wortley, Leeds - "My office boy has just told me that you called yesterday when I was away. I should be pleased to do your work but must make my own [profit] out of it, besides having the pleasure of doing the work, and at the figure you name I could not get that. To stitch through the back"

1894 Ross & Co (manufacturing opticians) - "In reply to your letter yesterday we beg to state that unfortunately we have absolutely closed out advertising list for the present year and are therefore unable to take an advertisement in



your new catalogue even on the basis of a contra account;"

1894 A Dehors, France (camera & lens manufacturers) - "I cannot understand your bad tenacity than you set for to sold my facture of 3 February 1896 of francs 441. A honest merchant he do not made that. I think that is an error. In the hope of to receive the total of my facture, I am your faithfully xxx" [This is verbatim - work that one out! - RC]

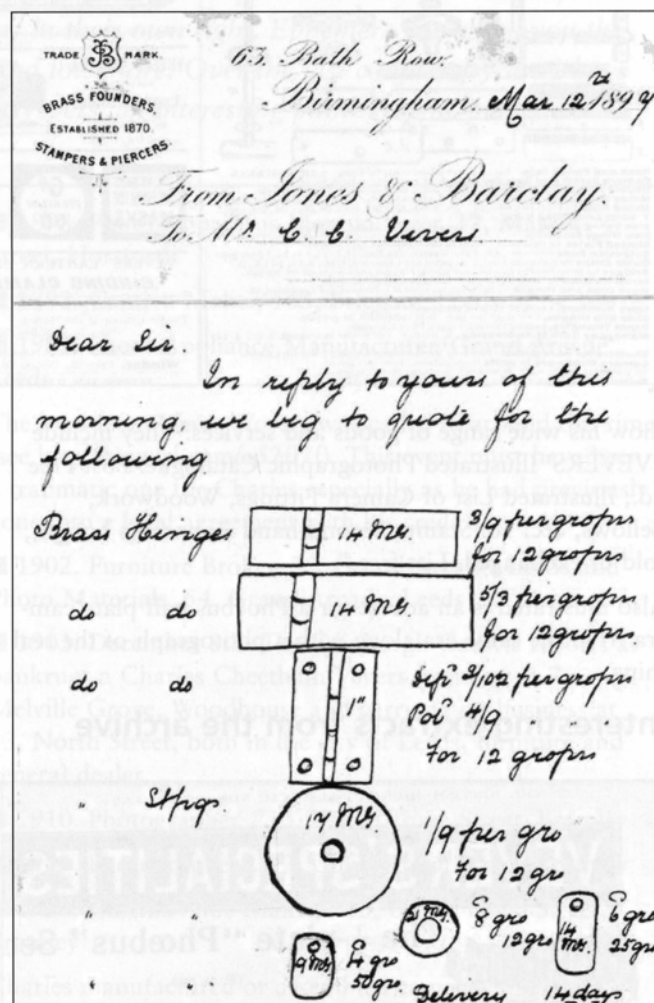
1894 Leopold Weber (studio backdrop painter) - "I am forwarding forthwith 16 Paper Backgrounds, the best selected from the lot. If these do not suit you I am afraid I can-not paint them any better. Kindly send money at once

as I am short by cash as you may imagine by the price....."

1894 Jones & Barclay (brass founders) - "In answer to your enquiry we beg to quote you as under...." [See illustration with drawings - RC]

1894 Jones & Barclay (brass founders) - "We do not see where our ridiculously high and fancy prices come in....."

1894 The Infallible Exposure Meter Company - "We are



very much obliged by your order to hand but it is quite out of the question for us to allow 33 1/3%. Our usual terms are 25% but we will allow you 27 1/2% for this order and 30% for a dozen or upwards. We send.... " [Success! - RC]

1895 J Theobald & Company (magic lanterns) - "We are extremely desirous of obtaining your order for these and as we now have got a very large stock made up having been manufacturing all the spring and summer we are prepared to offer you very special prices for immediate orders. For instance"

"As regards cameras we have now got at the bottom of this matter. The man who made these for us has got into difficulties some 3 months ago we advanced him £50 which he was to have repaid us by this week. He has failed to do so and I can get neither money nor goods out of him and are left in the lurch. He has overdrawn his bank account and they are ??? him as well."

1895 A Richmond Turner (electrical engineer) - "In reply to yours of even date as I am maintaining the whole affair for 12 months free I could not do it for less,...., but I will

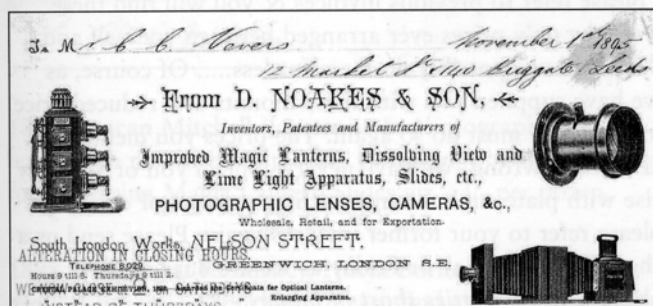
meet you another way . I will allow you a discount off estimate of 5% for nett. cash on completion of job. Your early reply will oblige as I could do yours before the large order I am commencing here.” “ESTIMATE - To supply and erect the whole material required to light your new premises in Briggate with 21 16 CP lamps and wire and switch and cut outs for enlarging lantern, fixed as follows - Window 6 16 CP lamps [etc.]..... for the sum of £15-0-0.” [Quote includes window, doorway, shop, storeroom, outer office, landing, office, stockroom, lavatory, No. 1 room, No.2 room, darkroom and enlarging room - RC]

1895 The European Blair Camera Co. Limited (agent for Blair Camera Co. and Boston Camera Mfg. Co.) - “We are obliged by the receipt of your esteemed order No. 3786 for one Bullseye Camera, which ...”

1895 W H Tomkinson (photographic dealer, chemist & mechanic) - “Replying to your favour we have pleasure in sending you sample Uno Mano as requested”

1895 D Noakes & Son (inventors, patentees and manufacturers of magic lanterns, lenses, cameras etc.) - “We send herewith sample Inter Regulator Pattern to screw into Jet lock. Our Special Discounts off this article are 33¹/₃% for orders of 1 dozen or more or 50% off orders for 1/2 gross”

1895 J H Newey (camera bellows) - “In answer to yours of this morning, I am compelled to decline your order at 2/3d each for half-plate bellows. My best terms are 2/6d



each for 50 or 2/4d each taking 100. I cannot supply for less at present price of leather”

1896 Nutt & Co (printers) - “..... quotations as below, and 3000 pamphlets printed ‘Practical Amateur Photography’, 80 inside pages, 2 gummed sheets & 4 page cover. Cover Lith in 1 colour & printed in blue. Samples, paper enclosed. Complete @ £7-5-0d per 1000.” [Vevers’ own publication]

1896 J Theobald & Company (magic lanterns) - “.... We think that you are making a mistake in saying you purchased a No. 2 camera from Germany cheaper, we think you mean France. We cannot accept your order for the 6 No. 1 cameras at 27/6d each and we are sorry we cannot do so for the No. 2 for which you offer 67/6d. The very lowest price that we could take for this camera is 70/- and for the small one to take 6 slides 50/9d and we should only take yours at these prices on the distinct understanding that we draw from these goods for months nett from date of invoice - not from the end of the month. Of course we are aware that you know where to get these goods from as well as we do & find there has only been some little unpleasantness which is preventing you from getting them direct. You know the trouble it is to get goods from these people”

1896 Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway - “I am in receipt of your letter of the 8th inst and if when you purpose [sic] visiting places upon this Company’s line with the object of writing up descriptive articles for publication in the Leeds Weekly Mercury, I shall have pleasure in forwarding you the necessary passes. - Chas J Nicholson, Passenger Superintendent.”

1896 Johnson Matthey & Company Limited (bullion dealers) - “We are in receipt of your postcard in which you request us to give you a wholesale price for Chloride Gold in 15 gr. tubes.”

1896 H Graham Glen (photographer and Collotype printer) - “In reply to your enquiry 500 Collotypes 6x5 £1-9-6 and 1,000 £2. A design nicely got up will cost about 7/6 extra subject to 10%. Hoping to be favoured with your order.”

1896 W B Fordham & Sons Limited (wholesale agents) - “Quote: Swimming frog 6/-; climbing monkey 8/-; monkey drummer 4/6; Magic book 3/-. Walking elephant to follow” [fantastic toys RC]

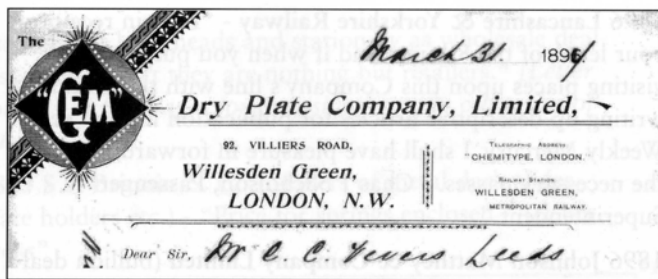


1897 Photography (magazine) - “In reply to your favour of the 8th inst., we beg to say that our price for 26 insertions of a quarter page advertisement in ‘PHOTOGRAPHY’ is £1-2-6 per insertion, as per enclosed tariff, and we should require cash in advance, for which we should be pleased to allow you a discount of 5%.”

1897 Hazell, Watson & Viney (advertising agents) - “We have pleasure in sending herewith, as requested, a copy of your letter and order for advertisements in the AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER” “COPY OF [Vevers’] LETTER Dated Mar 8/97 “Dear Sirs, I am prepared to order 13 inserts 1/4 page at the 52 insertion rate in The A.P. as an experiment. It is a long time since I used your Journal as a medium and should now like to give it a trial. I enclose order for 13 insertions at 25/- nett and will send copy, which can go in at once, on hearing your acceptance. Yours faithfully, (signed) C.C. Vevers.”

1897 A E Hoyles & Co (background artists) - “Herewith I forward you the bond for £50. I should be glad to know whether you cannot allow me half the premium (10/-) as it appears to me what with one thing and another I shall be a good deal out of pocket before I get any return. Should be much obliged if you could do this, Yours truly, E C Jackson”

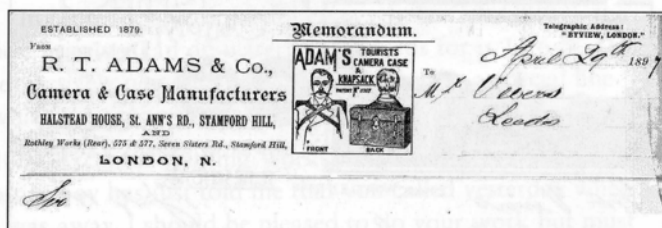
1897 Gem Dry Plate Company Limited - “... we are sending your order today. Enclosed are Dummy Boxes, samples etc.”



1897 Photographic News (Journal for Amateur Photographers) - "... we beg to say, as an exceptional thing and in the hope that you will renew the advert at scale rates, we are prepared to book you for 13 insertions at 15/- each for prompt monthly settlement. Please send us your 'copy' by return." [Success again - RC]

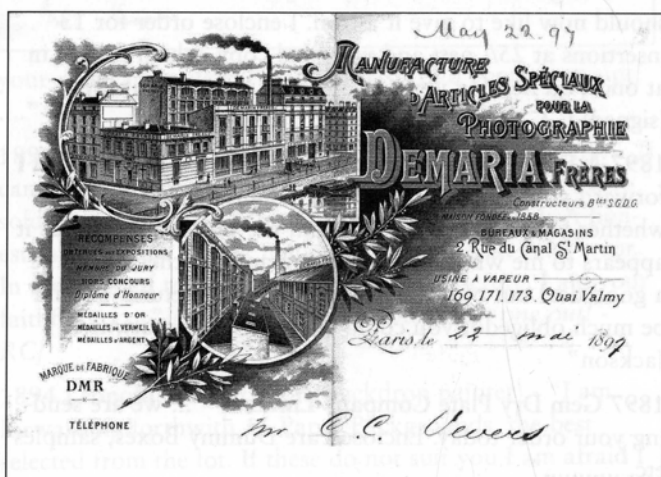
1897 R T Adams & Co (camera & case manufacturers) - "Sir, we have stayed Mr. Cherry from taking Proceedings for Recovery of our debt owing by you for 1 month from date. If we do not hear from you with Cheque to settle before this, no further notice will be given. As regards your Statement, our a/c is incorrect. We must inform you our Monthly Statements have been rendered month after month and this is the first time you have complained."

1897 Andrew Riddell (photographic requisites) - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "I will consult with my agent and see if there is no redress I have against Vevers for the way



he has pestered me about this account and the affront contained in your letter. I have told him twice that the account is paid and I have his receipt for it."

1897 Demaria Freres (manufacture d'articles speciaux pour la photographie) - "We beg to inform you that we have received notice from Messrs. Walter Foster, Solicitors, Leeds, that you had consulted them with reference to your affairs & requesting us to let them have as soon as possible a statement of our account with you. This we have sent but we would be glad to receive some information from you on the subject & you will understand that, under such circumstances, we should request you to send us the amount of your order of 14th inst. before forwarding.



Awaiting the favour of your reply. We remain, dear Sir, Yours truly, Demaria Freres" [So polite in the circumstances - RC]

1897 Wellington & Ward (manufacturers of photographic papers and films) - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "We are in receipt of yours of the 2nd inst. enclosing order for the account of Mr. C. C. Vevers. As you are doubtless aware we still have an amount (as per enclosed statement) to Mr. Vevers debit. We shall be glad to know if we supply this last order, what guarantee we have of payment, and from whom and when we may expect same." [CCV still ordering goods - RC]

1897 Archibald Rider (agent for films) - "Your card of the 21st. inst. addressed to the Kinetograph Co. has just reached me. This was a business I ran last year but which I had to discontinue as the goods did not satisfy me. I would like to supply you with cinematograph films for you to make your own negatives & positives and, in Swiss film, have by far the best on the market. Dr. Smith's apparatus is not yet ready." [A change of product line - RC]

1897 Stone & Co (mounting board manufacturers) - "There is evidently some slight error in prices you mention in yours of yesterday. I have turned up my order sheet for January 28th /97 on which date you gave me an order. I quoted you 3/- 4/- & 5/- per 100, you referred to your price list and said if I could do them at 2/9 1/4; 3/6 1/2; you would have 1000 of each and that the 5/- for 1/1 was right - please refer to previous invoices & you will find these were the only prices ever arranged between yourself and I. We could not possibly do them for less..... Of course, as we have supplied you with these mounts at a reduced price formerly we must do so again. The prices you mention are utterly wrong. We have never supplied you or anybody else with plate sunk mounts at these prices, nor could we, please refer to your former invoices again. Please send us a cheque by Thursday or Friday as we are hard up & oblige." [Both parties short of money - RC]

1897 W B Fordham & Sons Limited (merchants) - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "re C. C. Vevers - can you inform us when a first dividend will be paid out of this estate?"

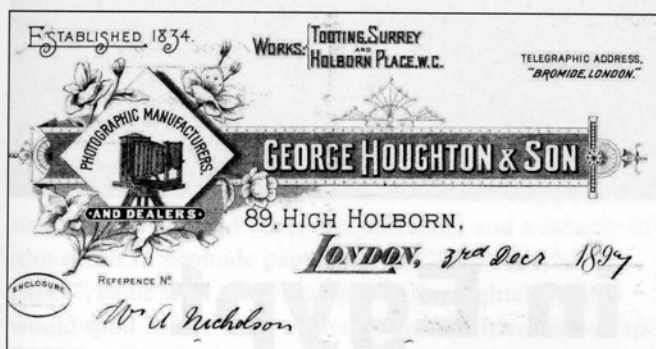
1897 Philipp Wolff (cinematographic films & apparatus) - "The film you returned to hand. I cannot let you have films on approval when you keep them such a long time. If my other customers did this where should I be? 'Brides First Night' is £6/10/0 nett. I have it in stock, it is about 150 ft. long. Awaiting your esteemed commands." [Is CCV keeping approvals a long time and duplicating them? see letter from Archibald Rider 1897 - RC]

1897 Anglo American Photo Import Office (cinematographic film importers from France) - "... We have only in stock the 60 to 75 feet and if you want any of 40 feet films, you must give us your order some days before. As suggestive films, all the excentric [sic] scenes are good. All our prices are cash with order and we take the engagement to take back the films you do not like, provided they are not spoiled at all, that is without any rays and cracks. As very suggestive subjects, we can named the numbers 152, 153, 157 to 168 and The Wedding Night, of which we enclose you a sample. All the others you named are very interesting and comical." [Imported French films - RC]

1897 British Journal of Photography - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "Herewith we enclose your receipt for dividend - re Vevers. We enclose you a cash statement for advertising in our Annual - but cannot attain payment from Vevers as the business has been assigned to you, perhaps you will remit the amount. We cannot rely on his promises nor can we understand why he should order anything without the consent of the assignee. Kindly let us know if you will remit, or we must consult our solicitors. It seems to us that he ought not to order anything if he has no means of paying. ..."

1897 George Houghton & Son (photographic manufacturers) - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "We beg to enclose amended receipt. Kindly excuse our miscalculation."

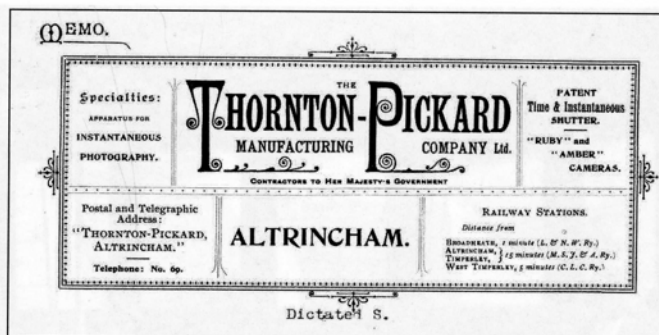
1897 Eastman Photographic Materials Co Ltd - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "..... We herewith send you request for dividend due to us on account of above @ 3s/4d in the £ and amounting to £3.6.8....."



1898 Duncan Mitchell (lanternist & photographer) - "I have much pleasure in drawing your attention to my prices for Colouring Magic Lantern Slides viz - 3/- per dozen."

1898 West Coast Residency, North Borneo (government medical officer) - "Enclosed please find cheque for £5.0.0 in payment of the following goods which be good enough to forward per first steamer, in tin lined case, to above address, via Singapore where they must be transhipped...." [List included seven photographic books, hand camera lens, view finders, chemicals etc. - RC]

1898 Thornton Pickard (apparatus for instantaneous photography) - "Mr. Scott informed us of your conversation with him respecting a quotation for 50 of our Time and Instantaneous Shutters. We should be pleased to receive your order for these and regret that our previous quotation was not satisfactory to you. On going further into the matter, we find that we could supply you with either the 1 1/2" or 5/8" size of Time and Instantaneous Shutter made in polished mahogany, of our best style, complete with Speed Indicator, and Ball and Tube, for 13/3 each net. We believe that it is possible at the present time to obtain a cheaper Shutter of another make, but we should like to point out that our Shutters have been the means of making many a Hand Camera a success, which would not have been so had our Shutter not been fitted. As you are aware, these Shutters are as perfect as it is possible to make a Shutter, and we believe the photographic public are always prepared to pay a little more for an article which is known to be faultless. We hope to hear from you....." [Thornton Pickard being less than modest! - RC]



1898 Dawbarn & Ward Ltd (publishers & wholesale agents) - To A Nicholson (accountant) - "... we do not see our way to make any offer for the stock of Mr. Vevers books. All but 5/6d worth of the balance are still in stock, and the bulk are the sixpenny books for which there is very little sale indeed."

1898 A Nicholson (accountant) to all creditors - "Re C. C. Vevers, Leeds. Under a Deed of Assignment, a final dividend of 1/10d in the pound has been declared herein, and will be paid....."

1899 F Mitchell & Co (engineers) - "We shall have this lathe ready for delivery by the 17th inst. and shall be glad in the meantime to receive remittance as we have to make this rule. we would point out that we guarantee the lathe and should you wish to return it which is very unlikely, will at once refund your money." [Still buying - RC]

In the new century Charles somehow managed to resurrect his business, albeit with a change in his product range, and he was still advertising a studio in Leeds up to 1938.

Charles Cheetham Vevers died in Belfast in 1946.

Notes

I am always looking for more information on Charles Cheetham Vevers and any examples of his photographs, literature or hardware - thanks.

I would like to thank the following people for helping me in the compilation of this article:-

Members David Gardner, Phil Bennett and Eric Evans who located the ephemera and provided some biographical data; member Marcel Safier from Brisbane, Australia for finding more biographical information; descendant Chris Vevers from Canberra, Australia for permission to use the cabinet card portrait by C. C. Vevers.

Other sources

Vevers Genealogy: <http://tinyurl.com/a52fl7f>

A short video of CC Vevers: <http://tinyurl.com/atld8dt>