

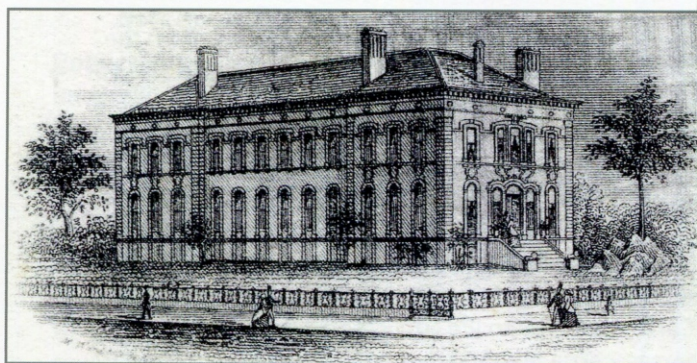
Unusual Photographic Studios - sheds, tents, carts and carriages etc. etc.

By Ron Cosens and Allan Collier

Studio owners over the years have come from a cross section of society; including the rich, the poor and the innovative.

The ability to make and sell photographs did not rely solely on a good solid, town centre, bricks and mortar location.

Not all studios were like the one built by the famous photographer, Oliver Sarony of Scarborough. Shame that the building no longer exists – it is now a car park!



Illustrated on the back of some of Sarony's carte de visite mounts

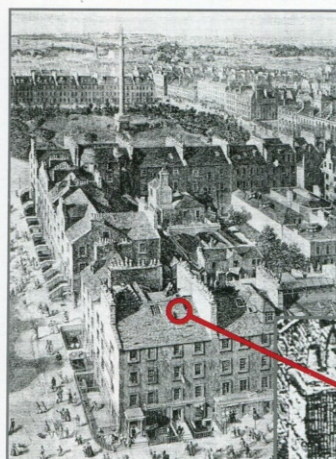
From the very early days many photographers were able to take their trade to their customers – some doing this in combination with a permanent address in town or in a village.

Let's take a look at a few examples of some of the more unusual 'studios' from the early days onwards. Also, in some cases, we can have a look at the people that ran them.

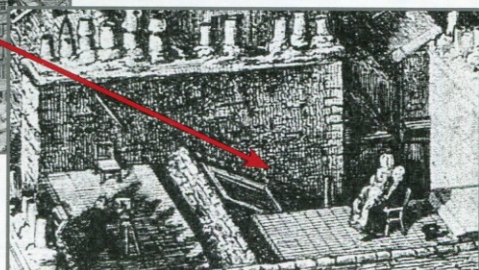
James Howie at 45 Princes Street, Edinburgh (1845)

A very early, four-part, bird's eye engraving of Edinburgh by Joseph W Ebsworth made in 1845 appears wonderfully detailed. On zooming in and looking more closely there can be seen the rooftop of a photographic studio with two people having their portraits taken out of doors.

The studio at 45 Princes Street belonged to James Howie.



Ebsworth's 1845 view to the North from the Scott Monument Gallery



James Sugg of Exmouth (1819-1875)

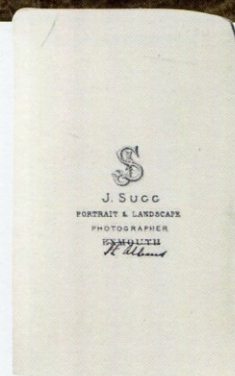
James Sugg was an interesting character who was born in Exmouth in Devon in 1819.

In 1841, at the age of 22, he married Ann Williams and by 1845 their first son was born. His son, named William Thomas Sugg, later became a photographer in Yeovil according to the 1871 census.

However, in 1851, James Sugg was a 'reading and billiard room keeper' at the Beacon Public Rooms in Littleham on the outskirts of Exmouth. He was still living at the Reading Rooms in Littleham in 1861 and in the Assembly Rooms there in 1871. His niece, Theresa Colard lived with him and his family and she was recorded as a photographic assistant.

James did have a permanent studio in Exmouth and he advertised as being at the Railway Station Parade from 1866 until 1873. He then moved to St. Albans (see altered photo mount) where he set up at College Green. James died a few years later in 1875.

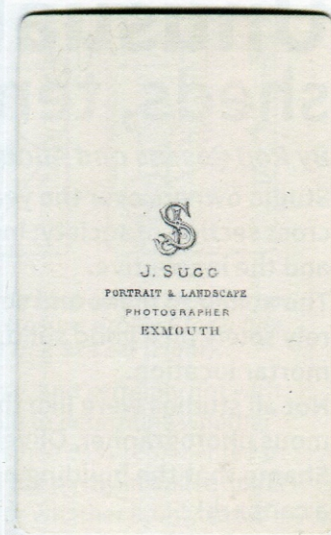
From the picture below (probably early 1860s) it would appear that James took photographs using his mobile 'studio' which looks as if it was pushed along by hand. One can only assume that his photographic enterprise was, therefore, based near home in Littleham and this was what subsequently encouraged him to open a studio in Exmouth town.



It is interesting to note that his carte de visite mounts bore the location 'Exmouth' but did not have a specific address – which was the usual style of nearly all other photographers at that time.

continues over

Unusual photographic studios (continued)



Martyr & Morgan of London (active 1865-1870)

The connection between Cobham James Joseph Martyr and John Henry Ballard Morgan combines a most unusual studio as well as a most unusual and intertwined life story. They were in fact half-brothers who were born to the same mother, Mary Jane Macdonnell; Martyr in India and Morgan in Somerset in England.

The Martyr Story: Mary was born in 1817 in Roscommon, Ireland and married Joseph Martyr in Madras in India in 1836. Unfortunately, he died two years later but Cobham was born there in 1838.

Cobham Martyr, by the age of 26, had travelled to the USA and enrolled in the 3rd Regiment, New Jersey Cavalry of the Union Army but by March 1865 he went AWOL and later that year he was in London and involved in the Revolving Studio at 143 Queens Road, Bayswater. The studio closed in 1870.

By 1872, Cobham was trading as Insley & Martyr back in the USA in New Jersey. He died in the USA in 1900.

The Morgan Story: Mary, the widow, returned to England and married again to the Reverend John Morgan at Bathwick, Somerset in 1844. John Henry Ballard Morgan was born in Pyecombe in Sussex in 1848 and was still living there in 1861.

By 1865, at the age of 17, he was in London and involved in the Revolving Studio until it closed in 1870.

By 1900 he was in Seattle and he died in Illinois in 1937 at the age of 89.

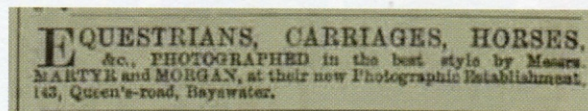
The 'Rotary Photographic Studio' appears, from the carte de visite picture of it, to be in a built-up area – but possibly on some adjacent open ground.

The studio was a most innovative, unique and amazing contraption as it was capable of being rotated so as to take full advantage of the available daylight.

The pair advertised in the Kensington & Paddington Directory in 1866 and mentioned 'all kinds of portraits, from 'Cartes de Visite' to life size; croquet & cricket groups, horses, carriages and equestrian portraits, taken on the ground'. They also advertised in the Times newspaper on at least 3 occasions.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, there is a horse and carriage in the picture of the studio.

Here is an example of their advertisement in the *Illustrated London News* on the 21st April 1866 – but no mention of a revolving studio!

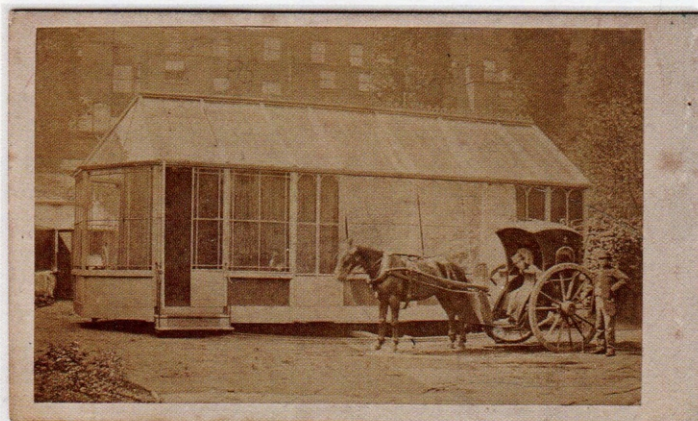


Illustrated London News - Saturday 21 April 1866

Another interesting advertisement along the same lines was placed in the *Daily (London) News* on Wednesday the 16th May 1866. They also advertised autographed cartes de visite of George Peabody for sale.

Peabody was a famous merchant banker and philanthropist and the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) has an example of this actual carte de visite in its collection under the reference Ax18246.

Martyr & Morgan was the only firm to advertise from this address so it is not known what happened to the studio when the partnership broke up in 1870.



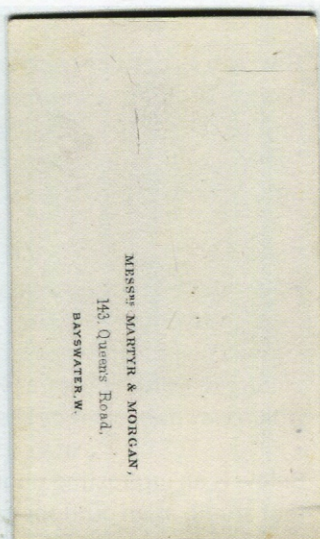
The Rotary Studio of Martyr & Morgan



Daily News (London) - Wednesday 16 May 1866



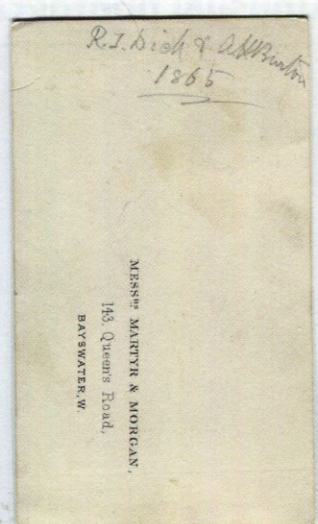
Martyr & Morgan
Rotary Studio
143, Queens Road,
Bayswater, W.



MESSRS MARTYR & MORGAN,
143, Queens Road,
BAYSWATER, W.



Martyr & Morgan
Rotary Studio
143, Queens Road,
Bayswater, W.



MESSRS MARTYR & MORGAN,
143, Queens Road,
BAYSWATER, W.

Nicely dated cdv 1865

Note the words "Rotary Studio"

Robert Vine Harman of Bromley (active 1865-1901)

Robert Vine Harman was born in 1838 at West Wickham in Kent. In the 1861 census he was recorded as a carrier and his father was a 'Carrier Postmaster and Parish Clerk'. He set up as a photographer in 1865 and he was, of course, well familiar with carts and carriages.

By 1870 he was advertising his studio at 75 High Street, Bromley which was just a few miles to the north of West Wickham.

Only a very few photographers advertised the service of photographing 'Gentlemen's Residences' as it was necessary at that time to process negatives immediately – hence the need for a mobile darkroom.

Having it illustrated on his photographic mounts was excellent marketing no doubt and a very unusual thing to do.

Robert was at the same address in the 1871 and 1881 census returns and by 1891 he was at 55 High Street, Bromley with his son Herbert and daughter Elsie, both working with him in the business. Other outlets were opened for short periods in Beckenham and Wallington.

By 1911 he was a piano tuner and in 1921 he died in Bromley leaving £142 (about £5,500 equivalent). His obituary in *the Bromley & Kent Mercury* on the 14th January 1921 reflected on his valued involvement with the Tower Hamlets Volunteers and with the Hervey Lodge of Freemasons.

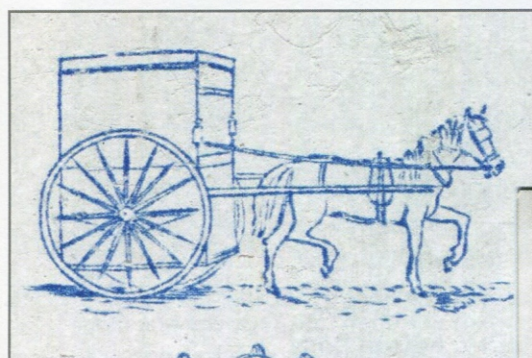


Scalby Mills Tent – Photographer Unknown (1880s)

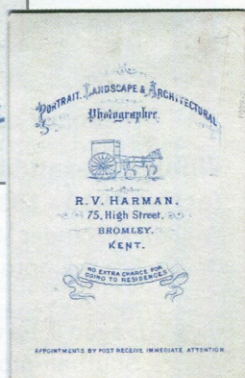
Some photographers relied on the tourist trade to make a living and in this case an unknown photographer has pitched his humble tent near the Scalby Mills Hotel & Tea Gardens about two miles north of Scarborough in North Yorkshire.

This fascinating image (above) is from a series of Victorian pictures published by James Valentine of Dundee who would employ photographers to go out and photograph specific views throughout the country so that they could publish them as albumen prints or, later, as postcards. The Valentine collection is now in the care of St. Andrews University who were very helpful in sharing their thoughts about this view.

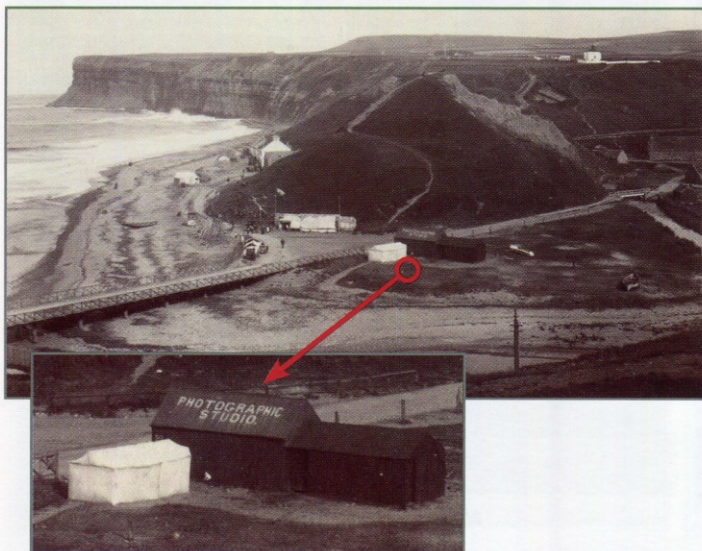
It is probably unreasonable to assume that the photographer in the tent had anything to do with Valentines but might have just set up a (very) temporary 'studio' near the Tea Room to tempt the tourists.



R V Harman carte de visite taken
about 1870



Unusual photographic studios (continued)



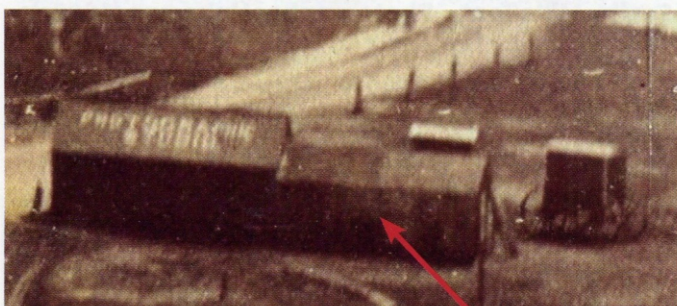
Old Saltburn Hut – Photographer Unknown (1890s)

Saltburn is a seaside resort in North Yorkshire; just to the east of Middlesbrough and Old Saltburn is a much older hamlet just a mile or so away.

In pre-Victorian times it was well known for its smuggling activities and the row of cottages in the picture was built specifically for customs officers to live in. By the 1890s, when these pictures were taken by a freelance photographer on behalf of James Valentine in Dundee, Old Saltburn was starting to establish itself as a tiny resort for local tourism. There are swing boats on the sand and the line of tents in the centre of the picture have signs advertising 'Tea, Refreshments & Hot Water'. A local delicacy would have been 'Fat Rascalls' which were small, round, very rich cakes made of flour, butter and currants. Nearby is a shed-like, wooden building with PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO clearly written in bold capitals on the roof. Interestingly, it is not clear who would be able to read that when nearby.

The long-distance view (below) of the same area shows the structure at a different time and on close inspection we can see what looks like a mobile studio cart parked outside.

This must have been a temporary, seasonal business only as there would not have been any visitors in the winter.

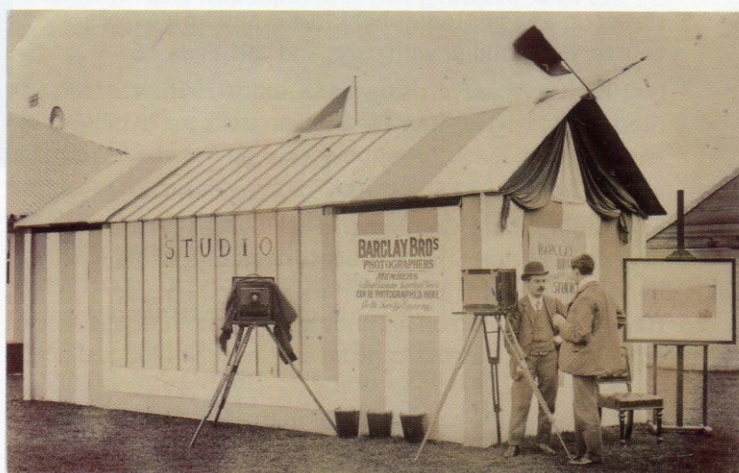


Barclay Brothers (active 1897 - 1910)

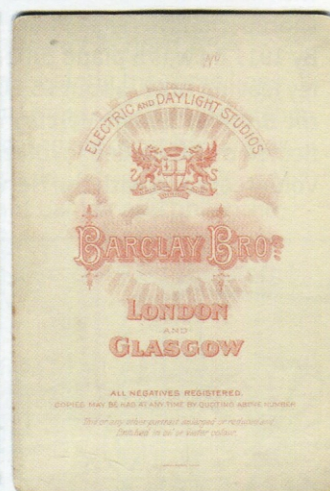
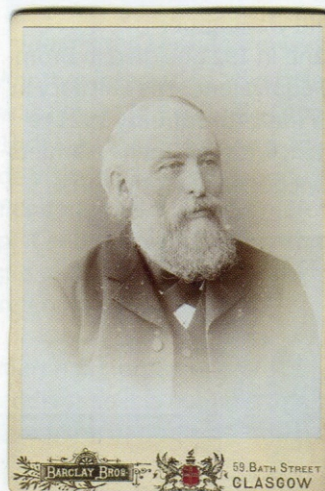
Barclay Brothers advertised various studios from the period 1897 to 1910 in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cardiff, Birmingham and Manchester but their main outlets were in the E.C. area of London.

The firm was a partnership between Alfred & Edgar Barclay who also had a warehouse and dealt in fine art (per the PhotoLondon website). They also dealt in portraits of famous people and the National Portrait Gallery holds a picture of Hardinge Stanley Giffard, 1st Earl of Halsbury which was published by the brothers.

Below is an interesting photograph of their temporary, tent studio at an outdoor gathering. Although it is not possible to read all of the signage on the side of the tent it does include the words 'Members can be photographed here'. The magnificent cameras and the framed photograph outside (far right) indicate that they also took pictures other than portraits. The obligatory fire buckets of water (or sand) are ready in case of any emergency.



Barclays Brothers studio tent - early 1900s



Cabinet card by the Barclay Brothers

William Alexander Michelson Ross (active 1910 - 1931)

William Alexander Michelson Ross was born in 1883 in St. Denys, Southampton.

By 1891, aged 8, he was living at 21 Dover Street, St Mary's, Southampton with his father Alexander M Ross, his mother Maria Ross and his younger brother Fred, aged 5.



Studio at Shrewton - postcard c 1920

In 1906 William had a studio at 19 Princes Street, Yeovil trading as Ross & Co. He advertised postcards for sale of a fire and of a tree struck by lightning and later he advertised for 'Canvassers and a trustworthy lad'.

In 1908, William married Rose Wilhelmina Langdon from Yeovil and they went on to have two sons and a daughter; Harold, Gwendoline and Cecil.

By 1910 William was advertising a studio at 16 Wyndham Street in Yeovil but the 1911 census shows him as a photographer, working on his own account from home, with his family at 82 Earle Street, Yeovil.

In 1913 William advertised again from Earle Street 'Your photo on beautiful Xmas or post cards ... agents wanted'. Sometime just before or during WW1, William moved to the village of Shrewton on Salisbury Plain, just over 40 miles east of Yeovil. It was from here that William operated his UNUSUAL STUDIO.

Below is a postcard of William and his tent with the notice stating W Ross of Yeovil. He was on Salisbury Plain ready to take pictures of the soldiers - many of whom would have been getting ready to go off to war.



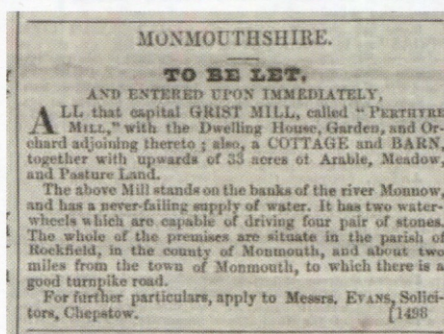
Postcard c1917. William Ross is third from the left at an army camp on Salisbury Plain

This would have been a good earner with so many soldiers waiting to go to the front. Many of us would have seen the great number of WW1 postcards of service men and women from that time. There must have been a strong desire to show themselves in uniform to their friends and family.

By 1939 William was a grocer and general dealer at the Supply Stores, High Street, Shrewton, Wiltshire. William died in 1957 leaving £4,977 (about £96,500) to his widow.

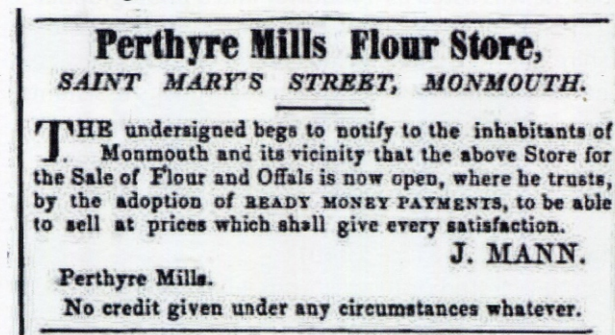
James Mann (1816 - 1902)

James Mann was born in 1816 in the village of Marr near Doncaster, the son of a farmer named George and his wife Ann. He has not been found in the 1841 census but he married Ann Sabina Mason (born Bentley Yorkshire) in 1849. In 1850, there was an advert in the Hereford Times offering a smallholding to let called Perthyre Mill in Rockfield Parish in Monmouth in Wales.



**Hereford Times
- Saturday 16
March 1850**

A year later, James at the age of 35, was listed in the census as a corn miller living with his wife Ann at that address and by 1853 he was offering flour and offal for sale with 'no credit given'.

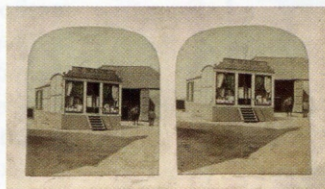


Monmouthshire Beacon - Saturday 15 October 1853

By 1856, James was advertising to re-let the property but he was still living there in 1861 and was advertising again in 1864 to re-let.

Sometime within this period, James acquired a mobile photographic studio which is pictured below. The 'skirt' around the bottom would have covered the wheels, the room at the front is the entrance and showroom and the room at the back is the actual studio. They would have been towed in tandem. In the background of the photograph there is, what appears to be, a farm building.

**Right and below:
James' mobile
studio - one half
of a stereo card
photograph**



continues over

Unusual photographic studios (continued)

MONMOUTHSHIRE.
PERTHYRE MILL, ROCKFIELD.
2½ Miles from Monmouth.
MESSRS. GRAHAM & CO.
Are instructed
TO SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
On the above Premises, on TUESDAY, 15th of MARCH,
1864, the property of Mr. James Mann, who is
leaving England, the whole of his neat and useful
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE,
Feather Beds, Flour Sacks, Weighing Machine and
Weights, Implements in Husbandry, Rick of Clover,
Hogsheads and other Casks, two large Mashing Tubs,
Trams, &c., &c.,

Monmouthshire Beacon - Saturday 27 February 1864

By the end of February the same year he sold up many of his belongings at auction and advised that he was 'leaving England' (probably meaning 'leaving for England')

James, aged 55, cannot be found in the 1871 census but he appears to have moved from Wales back to his roots in Yorkshire. Ann, his wife, died in Doncaster in 1880 so, by 1881, he was listed as a widower and a photographer living at Sandall Brickyard, near Kirk Sandall, Doncaster, Yorkshire. His household included Annie Selina Howarth (19) and Elizabeth Trout (16) as photographer's assistants and Amy Fox (16) as a housemaid / domestic servant. James was still at the same address in 1891 and retired sometime before 1901. He died in 1902 at the age of 86.

William Hayes (1871 – 1940)

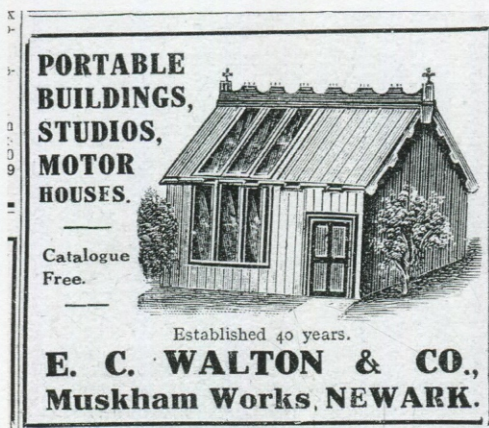
William Hayes' studio still exists but it has a VERY interesting history.

Originally the studio was opened in 1902 in the garden of 76 Monkgate in York – it cost £39 to build.

However, discharges from the nearby Gas Works chimney decided William to move and he chose the small village of Hutton-le-Hole, about 35 miles north on the North Yorkshire Moors.

Having bought the land he was told it would be cheaper to MOVE his studio than to build a new one so, on the 23rd April 1911, two fully laden carts set forth from York and arrived a day and a half later with the studio on board. It was then erected at Beck Garth in Hutton-le-Hole.

Here is an advertisement for a portable studio which is rather similar.



PORTABLE BUILDINGS, STUDIOS, MOTOR HOUSES.
Catalogue Free.
Established 40 years.
E. C. WALTON & CO.,
Muskham Works, NEWARK.



The Hayes studio in Beck Garth in 1985 – note the camera outside

Fortunately, William's son Raymond, also a photographer, allowed the studio to be moved yet again to the nearby Ryedale Folk Museum of historical buildings where it stands today to the delight of all visiting photo-historians.

(With thanks to the book *William Hayes, York Photographic Artist* by Terry Buchanan.)



The studio at the Ryedale Folk Museum at Hutton-le-Hole



Palace Railroad Photograph Car Co

Here is a fascinating example of a studio on a train.

The back of this carte de visite gives some clues as to the methodology used as it must have been very impractical to have taken portraits in an old, shaky carriage whilst on the move.

In those days, trains would have stopped for extended periods at stations for loading and unloading freight and for taking on supplies and water for the engine.



Palace Railroad Studio carte de visit reverse

This would have enabled the photographer to take pictures whilst the train was stationary and, maybe, do some other tasks between stations whilst the train was on the move.

The picture on the back of the mount actually shows someone having their portrait drawn or painted. It may well have given the photographer, also, the opportunity to take pictures of the residents of the towns where the train stopped.

Whatever the method, the image of the lady on the front of the cdv mount shows that the photographs produced were of a very satisfactory standard. Investigating further on the internet shows that there were several other railway studios in action in the USA around this time.



Palace Railroad cdv obverse



Henry William Taunt's studio on the Thames pre 1886

Henry William Taunt (active 1862 - 1891)

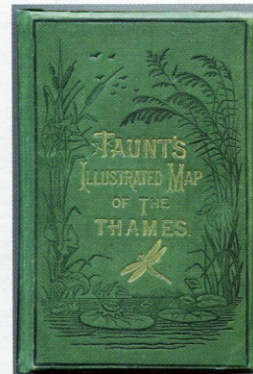
This amazing image comes from the book 'Taunt's Illustrated Map of the Thames' (Fifth Edition) dated 1886. The book maps the length of the River Thames and has many tipped in albumen prints to enhance the text and the maps – a brilliant book.

This was obviously a perfect way to move along the length of the Thames and superseded Taunt's previous method of a boat with a canvas cover and a tent for sleeping in each night on the river bank.

Taunt opened his first studio at 32 Cornmarket Street in Oxford in 1862, added another at 9 & 10 Broad Street in 1875.

He expanded to 81 Easton Street in High Wycombe in 1874.

The firm became a Company in 1891 and advertised until at least 1924.



Floating Sunbeam Gallery – USA (1880 - 1884)

This image (below) of an unusual studio is shown on the website of the University of Washington.

David R. Judkins operated his 'Floating Sunbeam Gallery' studio between 1880-1884 in the Seattle area.



London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company (1893)

This is a most prestigious, temporary building illustrated in an exhibition brochure. No further details now as more may be included in a forthcoming article.



London Stereoscopic & Photographic temporary studio at the FORESTRY EXHIBITION in 1893

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER UNUSUAL STUDIOS?

If so, please contact Ron Cosens.

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Additional biographical research by Allan Collier - allancollier17@btinternet.com author of *Secure the Shadow – Somerset Photographers 1839 – 1939*