

Dating Pictures of Robinson Enock.



The two images above are called Carte-de-visite (CDV) photographs.

'Carte-de-visite (CDV) or cartes, are the small paper on card photographs, they measure typically 10.2 x 6.2cm, and the photograph which was pasted on to the card was roughly cut to about 9.0 x 5.7cm. They are described as sepia in colour (dark brown), but most have now faded to a yellow brown. The photographers details are usually printed or embossed on the lower front, or on the back of the card.

They were produced in vast numbers, and the format was used worldwide.....They were used from 1859 onward, and a variation was still being used up to about 1908 (no real cut-off date).' – **Roger Vaughan**¹

Robinson's photographs were taken by Oldham & Cooper, who had a studio based in Birmingham. To try and date these photos, I conducted a search on both the Internet and eBay for other Oldham & Cooper CDV's, and discovered two card designs: red border with square edges, and brown border with curved edges.

Examples of each design are shown below.

Red Borders with square edges.



These cards were most likely produced in the 1860s.

All cards produced during this period had square edges.

By 1865 designs included ribbon and scrolls, crowns, and copies can be had statements, but the main design kept to the middle of the card.

From 1868 on, the design becomes more intricate, but still quite simple.²



Brown borders with curved edges.



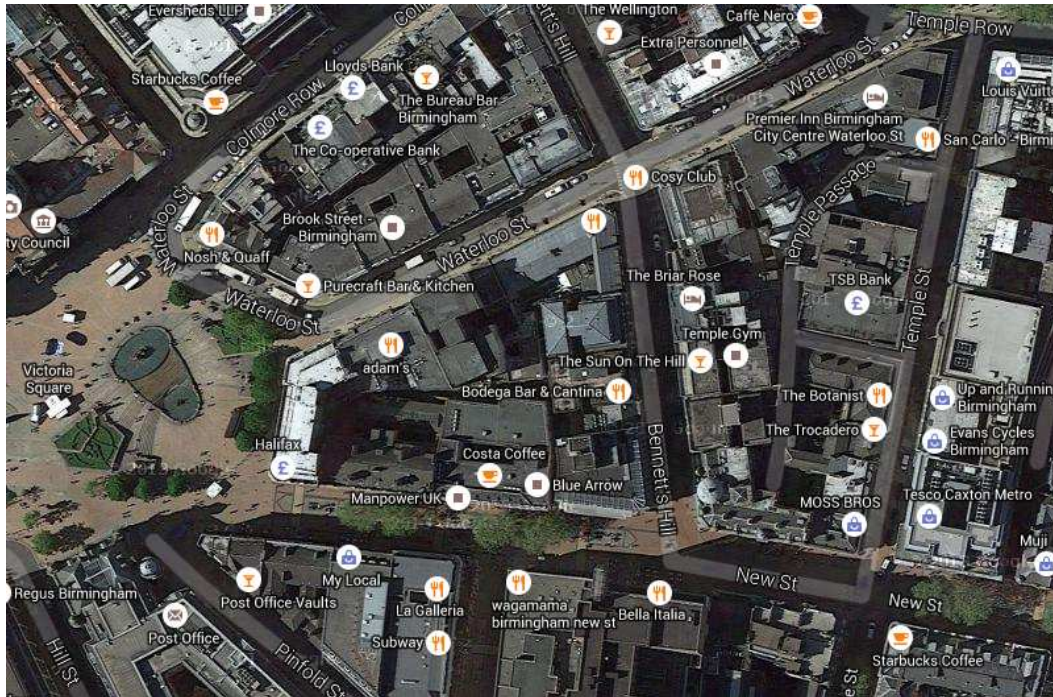
Between 1872 and 1879, round edged corners gradually replaced square edged corners.

Multiple fonts and a logo suggest that these examples were produced between the mid to late 1870s, as this style was common to so many cards in the 1880s.³

Hugh Watson, a photographer based in West Bromwich, was using a similar design when his studio closed in 1872.⁴



There is a distinct difference between the two designs: the addresses on the reverse. The 'red' cards have two addresses: New Street & Bennetts Hill, and the 'brown' cards only list one: New Street. Having two addresses suggests that the photographers had two-studios, but upon inspection of a map of Birmingham, it becomes clear that it is in fact the same studio, but had entrances on both streets.



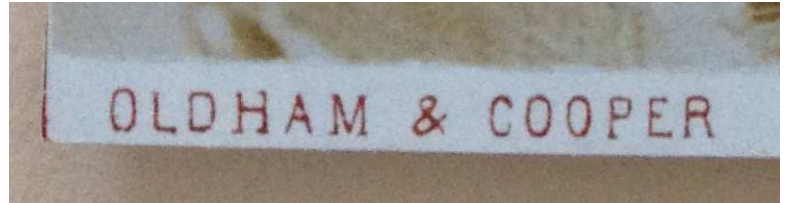
Page 504 of the 'Photographic News' dated 19th October 1866 provides the earliest evidence of the photographers operating from Bennett's Hill.⁵

I have managed to find seven entries for Oldham & Cooper in Kelly's trade directories published between 1867 and 1880. My findings are below:

Directory entries found via Ancestry⁶:

- 1866 – Oldham & Cooper – Bennett's Hill
- 1867 – Oldham & Cooper – Bennett's Hill
- 1868 – Oldham & Cooper – Town Hall Chambers, 86 New Street
- 1872 – Oldham & Cooper – City Chambers, 82 New Street
- 1873 – Oldham & Cooper – City Chambers, 82 New Street
- 1876 – Oldham & Cooper – City Chambers, 82 New Street
- 1878 – Oldham & Cooper – City Chambers, 82 New Street
- 1880 – Oldham & Cooper – City Chambers, 82 New Street

There are no entries in any directories after 1880, indicating that the company was no longer active. I have, however, found a CDV credited solely to William Cooper, so maybe he continued solo.



The picture on the left is a cropped photograph of the original CDV, so the border isn't shown. Above is a closer view of the text, and on the left hand side, a portion of the border is visible – both are red.

The colour suggests that the picture would have been mounted on a card similar to the cards shown on page 2.

Taking everything in to account, I would say that this picture was taken some time between 1866 and 1867.



Fortunately, this is a full view of the original CDV.

Text and border appears brown, and has rounded edges similar to the examples shown on page 3.

Taking everything in to account, I would say that this picture was taken some time between 1872 and 1879.



Fortunately, there are other people in the picture above. The boy on the right is Robinson's nephew, Roy Wilson, who was born in 1900. Roy looks to be around the age 5 here, so probably dates from the mid 1900s.

References.

1. Information taken from <http://www.rogerco.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/type/carte.htm>
2. Information sourced here: <http://www.rogerco.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/time/back60.htm>
3. Information sourced here: <http://www.rogerco.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/time/back78.htm>
4. Information found here: <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/STS/Stsphts.html>
5. This edition of 'Photographic News' can be read here: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=sPIV1meB9rIC&pg=PA504&dq=cooper,+photographers,++bennetts+hill,+birmingham&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjK-LOgNfLAhUC1hQKHRJJDDkQ6AEINDAA#v=onepage&q=cooper%2C%20photographers%2C%20bennetts%20hill%2C%20birmingham&f=false>
6. UK, Midlands and Various UK Trade Directories, 1770-1941.