

# [The first year of the daguerreotype:]

## Ste Croix in London, 1839.

R. Derek Wood

[published in *History of Photography*, Spring 1993, Vol.17 (1), pp. 101–7]

*The Times*, 14 September 1839: “THE DAGUERREOTYPE.  
– The first experiments made in this country with the instrument and process of M. Daguerre were exhibited yesterday [sic] by M. St. Croix, who has just arrived from Paris, in the presence of a select number of scientific men and artists... The place of exhibition was No. 7, Piccadilly, nearly opposite the southern crescent of Regent-street, and the picture produced was a beautiful miniature representation of the houses, pathway, sky, &c, resembling a beautiful mezzo tint. The experiments were perfectly satisfactory”.

### September and October in London

On 14 September 1839 reports appeared in several newspapers<sup>1</sup> about the first display in London of the apparatus and method used to produce daguerreotypes. The demonstration had been given the previous day of Friday 13th September at 7 Piccadilly, London, by a Frenchman called St. Croix.

In Paris, it had been only six days earlier, on Saturday 7th September that the first public demonstration had been given before a large audience by Daguerre himself: an event that had been very swiftly, although briefly, reported from the just arrived French papers in *The Times* on Tuesday 10 September, and in considerable detail in the *Morning Herald*<sup>2</sup> the day before St. Croix’s demonstration. Processing equipment and technical data required to produce images could have been available in Paris for only an extremely short time before St.Croix came to England. Even so,he obviously already had technical confidence enough to demonstrate the process to anyone on payment of a fee. Could he have just been simply a self-taught first amateur? He came to, and disappeared from London with a great lack of clues as to his identity.

Three days after St. Croix’s display to the press and some other invited guests at his lodgings, another exhibition began on Monday 16 September “and every succeeding day”. In fact those days seem to have been just for the rest of that week. Two shillings was the entrance fee and the place was No. 246 Regent Street, ‘the Argyll Rooms’, not a great distance from the Polytechnic. No name of the person doing the demonstration was given in the first advertisement in *The Globe* of Saturday 14 September 1839, or a few days later in *The Times*, but it did appear that the daguerreotype apparatus had been ‘made in Paris under the immediate direction of M. Daguerre’ and it was also stated that

---

<sup>1</sup> (a) The passage quoted is from *The Times*, Saturday, 14 September 1839, p.4 (but not in a second edition printed later that day). Other reports appearing the same day were in (b) *Morning Herald*, p.3.

(c) *Morning Chronicle*, p.3. (d) *The Globe*, p.3. (e) One paper published in the evenings, managed to make its report available at the end of the actual day of the demonstration: *The Sun*, Friday Evening, 13 September 1839, p.2

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, Tuesday, 10 September 1839, p.4c. *Morning Herald*, Thursday, 12 September 1839, p.3d

some daguerreotype views of London would be shown. So who – apparently with some connection with Daguerre himself? – was exhibiting at the Argyll Rooms? It is a little surprising perhaps to learn from a reviewer of Memes' English version of Daguerre's Manual writing in the *Literary Gazette* of 21 September that

It happens, very opportunely, that a French Gentleman, M. St. Croix has arrived in London from Paris; and, at the Argyll Rooms, every day, publicly goes through M. Daguerre's process. We 'assisted' the other morning at one of these lectures or exhibitions....<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that the unnamed advertisements saying the apparatus used at the Argyll Rooms was made 'under the immediate direction of M. Daguerre' were placed by St. Croix, or – as it seems he did not speak English<sup>4</sup> – by an English associate. So where else would St. Croix have obtained the equipment but at the Giroux et Cie in Paris? 'The crowd at Giroux's shop is immense' and many were disappointed, it was said, 'at the price (about 400 francs) of the apparatus!!'.<sup>5</sup> Giroux, a relative by marriage to Daguerre, had a contract to produce cameras carrying a notice that it was 'The Daguerreotype made under the direction of the inventor in Paris by Alphon. Giroux'. A straight-forward statement about such a camera and processing equipment would have been read without a second glance in any other country: but in Britain, where steps to acquire a patent had been set in motion, it was different. So, were the advertisements regarding the daguerreotype apparatus at the Argyll Rooms a mere simple factual statement; or could St. Croix have been trying to puff-up his status? [No easy judgement can be made: not enough facts are available, but the issues need to be discussed later.]

At the end of that week at the Argyll Rooms, St. Croix advertised in *The Times*<sup>6</sup> that as well as demonstrating apparatus and daguerreotype views, he would at midday and 3.00pm on the following Monday of 23 September try a 'new experiment' of obtaining a portrait. Two shillings was again the cost of entrance to this demonstration, but this time it was to be at St. Croix's apartment at 7 Piccadilly. Two days later on Wednesday 25 September 1839, St. Croix began demonstrating at the 'Royal Gallery of Practical Science'. Commonly known as the Adelaide Gallery, it was just off Trafalgar Square in Adelaide Street at the corner of the entrance into Lowther Arcade between St. Martin's Church and the west end of The Strand. It is not known when or how St. Croix organised the invitations to the press and other 'scientific and literary gentlemen' to attend his special first demonstration on 13 September but one person there was 'Mr Clarke, of the Lowther Arcade, who has done a great deal himself in the construction of apparatus for photogenic drawing from nature upon paper'.<sup>7</sup> According to the reporter from *The Globe*, Clarke had been very impressed by the apparatus brought to London by St. Croix: "he felt pleasure in yielding the palm to Mr. Daguerre, from whose invention all the others stood at an immeasurable distance." The Superintendent of the Adelaide Gallery, at Lowther Arcade, was listed in Robson's London Directory as a Mr. C. Payne, so maybe the man at St. Croix's press demonstration was E. M. Clarke, an optical

<sup>3</sup> *Literary Gazette*, 21 September 1839, p. 605

<sup>4</sup> *London Saturday Journal*, 2 November 1839, Vol.2, pp.283–5. "M. de Ste. Croix being unacquainted with our language, was assisted by an English lecturer, who explained the process as it proceeded..."

<sup>5</sup> *Literary Gazette*, 14 September 1839, p.590

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, Saturday, 21 September 1839, p.1. Advertisements are generally printed on the front page but sometimes on p.2. Newton and Berry's notices quoted appeared on the second page of the newspaper.

<sup>7</sup> *The Globe* (London), 14 September 1839, p.3d

instrument maker, with premises in Agar Street only two minutes from the Gallery. If the Adelaide Gallery had actually organised St. Croix's trip to London, then surely he would not have given the first demonstrations in his apartment and at the Argyll Rooms. But St. Croix's opening demonstration at the Adelaide Gallery on 25 September began an association for the place with the daguerreotype which surely could not have been without influence on the fact that the well known studio of Antoine Claudet was opened above the Gallery in June 1841.

Some time during the two weeks that St. Croix had been demonstrating the daguerreotype apparatus and technique in London, the patent agency Newton and Berry of Chancery Lane must have gone along to see what St. Croix was doing, for on the following Saturday, 28 September, they had a Notice published in *The Morning Herald* and in *The Times* drawing attention to the fact that a patent had been sealed by Berry for the exclusive right to use the daguerreotype in England. They wanted to emphasize one particular point:

We think it right to state that legal proceedings have already been taken against certain parties for publicly exhibiting this invention, more particularly as the failure of such exhibitions and the imperfect specimens which they have produced in illustration of this extraordinary process, will deceive the public and injure the proprietors of the patent.

Furthermore, said Newton and Berry, they were arranging for the lecturer in Chemistry J. T. Cooper to demonstrate for them the daguerreotype technique at the Polytechnic Institution at 309 Regent Street. Cooper being, they said, 'perfect master of the art, will do ample justice to the discovery'.

On Monday 30 September in the first available issues of the same two newspapers following Newton and Berry's warning, St. Croix or the management of the Gallery placed an advertisement:

THE DAGUERREOTYPE. – This beautiful process will be SHOWN by Mr. DE ST. CROIX TODAY and tomorrow, at 1 o'clock precisely, for the last time, in consequence of a threatened injunction for the infringement of an alleged patent

The one shilling price of admittance to all the attractions of the Adelaide Gallery also covered St. Croix's two supposed 'last time' events to be held on 1st and 2nd October. When these two days moving from September into October had passed, a notice was again put by Newton and Berry into *The Morning Herald* and *The Times* to appear both on the Wednesday and Friday, 2 and 4 October. It was the same warning as had appeared the previous Saturday except that they added (no doubt with some satisfaction) that the 'certain parties' exhibiting the daguerreotype against whom they had taken legal action "have since advertised that they have stopped the same in consequence thereof".

Despite that firm wording it is worth looking back to St. Croix's advertisement at the beginning of the week: it appeared he would be showing the daguerreotype for the last time in consequence of a *threatened* injunction. It turned out that his demonstrations at the Adelaide Gallery were not delayed for many days, and indeed may not have stopped at all. For between the publication of Newton and Berry's last two Notices an advertisement appeared on Thursday, 3 October: 'Daguerreotype. M. DE STE CROIX is making preparations to open the exhibition of this wonderful process at the Royal Gallery of Practical Science upon an improved plan, with increased convenience to

gratify the public curiosity'. The following week, certainly by Tuesday 8 October, Ste Croix was showing 'this extraordinary and highly interesting process, daily at two o'clock', at the Adelaide Gallery with advertisements appearing throughout the week in *The Morning Herald*, *The Times*, and *The Athenaeum*. From the same time in mid-October at the top of Regent Street in the Polytechnic Institution, J. T. Cooper was also, with the sanction of Miles Berry, giving lectures on the daguerreotype. They took place on alternate days three times weekly also at 2.00pm. On intermediate days at 3.00pm 'the pictures only' were shown.<sup>8</sup>

*The Times* of Monday 14 October revealed that 'M.de Ste Croix begs to inform the British Public that he can only remain a short time in England for the purpose of showing the extraordinary and interesting process known by the above name [daguerreotype] which he does daily and most successfully at 2 o'clock at the Royal Gallery of Practical Art Adelaide-street'. As before no extra charge was made to observe his demonstration of producing a daguerreotype apart from the one shilling general admission charge for all the attractions in the gallery. The short time remaining for him at the Adelaide gallery was indeed only to the end of that third week of October 1839. So the last advertisement to appear in London, in *The Times* Thursday 17 October, and *The Morning Herald* of 19 October, that mentions St. Croix at the Adelaide Gallery is: 'Daguerreotype...will only be shown during the remainder of the present week by M. De St. Croix.' In that week's *Athenaeum* on Saturday, 19th October, an advertisement submitted by the Adelaide Gallery no longer mentions St. Croix. Instead a surprising claim: 'The only Specimens of the Daguerreotype in England, executed by M. Daguerre himself, are to be seen at this institution'. This same advertisement referring to Daguerre's own specimens appeared weekly in *The Athenaeum* for six weeks and occasionally in *The Times*<sup>9</sup> during that period.

#### [St. Croix's Daguerreotypes]

The weather was not very good while St. Croix was in London so the number of good quality Daguerreotypes produced by him would not have been vast. Some descriptions appeared in the contemporary press:

'The view chosen from the window of M. de St. Croix's apartment, embraced the upper part of Regent-street, from Piccadilly, towards Jermyn-street...before the arrival of any visitors, that gentleman had occupied himself by attempting a *tableau d'interieur*, formed by placing a washhand stand, with china and glass vases, a hassock, a towel, and other objects presenting different surfaces, and had been quite as successful as in the trial made before us'.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 10 October, 12 October 1839. *The Athenaeum*, 12 October 1839. By December (*The Athenaeum*, 14 December 1839) Cooper continued to incorporate the daguerreotype into his wide ranging lectures.

<sup>9</sup> *The Times*, 23 and 28 October; 4 and 11 November 1839. The phrase 'executed by M. Daguerre himself' did not appear in the October advertisements in *The Times* or in *The Athenaeum* after 30 November. These advertisements speak of 'specimens... executed' so are unlikely to refer just to a Giroux camera and processing equipment covered by the usage of the word 'Daguerreotype' in 1839. Also a variation of the advertisement in *The Athenaeum*, 23 November 1839, p.893 says 'Daguerreotype – The beautiful specimens of the highly interesting art'.

<sup>10</sup> *Morning Herald*, 14 September 1839, p.3d. The report in *The Globe* said three were taken that day: 'two were views of the houses in Piccadilly, opposite to M. St. Croix's rooms, and one of a wash-hand-stand'

‘at the Argyll Rooms...a deluge of rain wrapping the whole scene in gloom...from the preparation of the plate (a matter of exceeding nicety and importance) to the fixing of the image (that of the opposite building), occupied above two hours’.<sup>11</sup>

‘We had an opportunity of examining three plates, during our visit to the Adelaide Gallery; two being views of interiors, and one of Regent Street’.<sup>12</sup>

‘at the Adelaide Gallery... A view of Regent Street, another of St. Martin’s Church, a third of household furniture, with a Daguerreotype picture reflected, are shewn; but the most striking production is a picture of a section of the lecture-room itself, with a bust of Faraday on the bench, which is quite delightful’.<sup>13</sup>

In 1972 in an Arts Council Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, five daguerreotypes were on display as having circumstantial evidence for being taken by St. Croix.<sup>14</sup> Two show Rouen Cathedral and three London scenes: Parliament Street, the National Gallery on the north side of Trafalgar Square, and St. Martin’s Church clock-tower. The last two were purchased by the Science Museum the following year.<sup>15</sup> The half-plate daguerreotype of St. Martin’s church spire is incised on the back with the words ‘Londre 1839’ – strangely without a final ‘s’. The provenance and intermediate ownership of this and other daguerreotypes attributed to St. Croix is, unsurprisingly, not satisfactorily documented. Even so, it does fit very well with a daguerreotype mentioned in the weekly *Literary Gazette* 12th October 1839 as displayed at the Adelaide Gallery (immediately behind St. Martin’s) and so surely could have been taken close to 1.00pm within the last two weeks of September or first week of October, 1839. Fortunately an excellent photograph was taken by the Science Museum of the daguerreotype image in 1971 as it became fainter in the course of that decade and was weak when the author was considerably given an opportunity to closely look at the daguerreotype in 1979.<sup>16</sup>

A considerable amount of contemporary correspondence has survived from 1839 in which paper photographs and daguerreotypes are mentioned, yet St. Croix’s visit to London was notably unrecorded. We can be pleased therefore for extensive preservation of W. H. F. Talbot’s correspondence where is found a letter written on Monday 5th October 1839:

<sup>11</sup> *Literary Gazette*, 21 September 1839, p.605.

<sup>12</sup> *London Saturday Journal*, 2 November 1839, Vol.2 (44), pp.283–5

<sup>13</sup> *Literary Gazette*, 12 October 1839, pp.653–4

<sup>14</sup> *From today painting is dead: The Beginnings of Photography*, prepared by D. B. Thomas, Arts Council of Great Britain, London (1972) p. 24, exhibit Nos 48a – 51.

<sup>15</sup> Science Museum Photography Collection (London). Inventory No.s 1973–280 (i) and (ii). Also photographs of the daguerreotype taken in 1971 by the Science Museum, Negative No.s 1141/71 (National Gallery) and 1142/71 (St. Martin’s). ‘Parliament Street’ is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

<sup>16</sup> The author is grateful for the time and attention given by John Ward (Curator of the Photographic Collection) and for permission of the Science Museum to reproduce figure 4 (their negative No.1142/71).

I have made acquaintance with M. St. Croix who exhibits the Daguerre process at the Adelaide Gallery – he certainly makes bungling work sometimes, but at other times he succeeds, enough to let one see that it is not difficult to execute it very well but the chief embarrass is, that London plated copper will not answer (nobody knows why) and that it is necessary at present to import the plates from Paris.<sup>17</sup>

The sequence of events in London known to us regarding St. Croix's part in the early history of the daguerreotype have been given. However, many questions remain, for except from those events in London, the identity of St. Croix has remained a complete mystery both in England and France.

#### Threatened Injunction.

In publications dealing with the early years of photography it is common to find statements that Miles Berry obtained an injunction or lawsuit to stop the use of the daguerreotype in London by St. Croix. It is not too difficult to understand how such firm accounts came to be written, for there are some contemporary statements certainly open to that interpretation, especially when emanating from the seemingly most authoritative (but maybe most suspect) source of Newton's *London Journal and Repertory of Arts and Sciences*. Nor is it impossible to understand how apparent confidence about an injunction can coexist with confusion about when, or if, St. Croix stopped. The whole uncertainty does therefore need to be put to rest: St. Croix was threatened with an injunction, but he did continue, as we have seen. The weekly gossip column in *The Athenaeum* on 26 October 1839 was not far from the truth with their report that 'Mr. St. Croix, at the Adelaide Gallery, was for a time stopped; though, under advice, he has now resumed his exhibition'. Perfect proof cannot be provided by negative results when searching legal records of the period preserved at the Public Record Office in London. Even so it is worth recording that this researcher was unable to find any injunction granted or lawsuit brought by Miles Berry (or associates) relating to the daguerreotype in 1839, even though the same search methods have been capable of positive results in not-dissimilar cases in later years.<sup>18</sup> This author would indeed have been surprised to have found any such lawsuit at that period: because, although the very unspecific<sup>19</sup> title of the patent had been sealed on 14th August 1839, legal status was not absolute until a customary six months had passed before the specification of the patent would be enrolled on 14 February 1840. Sometimes such legalities might be considered mere minutia of history, but this writer believes that the hiatus of six months in patent practise between title and specification has a wide general significance in the early years of photography in England. W. H. F. Talbot was very aware of the consequences regarding priority of publication of that six month period and even used a related method when publishing papers in academic journals. It is Talbot's interest in exactly that situation in

---

<sup>17</sup>W. H. F. Talbot's MS letter dated 5 October to Lady Elizabeth Feilding, Royal Photographic Society's Collection at Bath, quoted in Gail Buckland, *Fox Talbot and the Invention of Photography*, Scolar Press, London (1980), p.57

<sup>18</sup>R. D. Wood, 'The Daguerreotype in England; Some Primary Material relating to Beard's Lawsuits', *History of Photography*, Vol.3 (1979), pp.305–9.

<sup>19</sup>One farcical aspect of the first year of the daguerreotype in England is that the title provided no clue to it being Daguerre's technique, but was a widely spread reference only to the reproduction of images in the camera obscura. And although details of the specification were not legally revealed until February 1840, the technique was available from Daguerre's Manual on sale in London at end of September 1839.

patenting that gives an accidental glimpse of what happened when Miles Berry threatened to obtain an injunction against St. Croix. Writing to Sir John Herschel on 7 December 1839 he reveals:

I will write to Town & enquire whether Daguerre has yet enrolled the specification on his patent. Six months are allowed, but that time must be nearly expired. The last I heard of it was, that he had by his agent applied to the Lord [sic] Chancellor for an injunction to restrain the Adelaide Gallery from showing the process, but although the application was exparte, the Chancellor refused to do so.<sup>20</sup>

To sum up. Miles Berry threatened to obtain an injunction to stop St.Croix, but legal action was refused: there was no lawsuit.

St.Croix as Artiste and his camera.

The French *Journal des Débats* in September 1839 reported the first London demonstration of the Daguerreotype as by ‘M. de Sainte–Croix, artiste français’<sup>21</sup> – although the cited original report in the London *Sun* had spoken merely of ‘a French Gentleman.’ If we work on the assumption (lacking any other clues) that St Croix had more contacts with art circles than scientific, then where would it lead us? An entirely unstudied group of artist/engravers in London had taken an interest in photogenic drawing early in 1839. There was William Havell and James T. Willmore, and more especially John Pye with an antagonistic concern about the daguerreotype patent.<sup>22</sup> They could offer an avenue to explore to discover the identity of St. Croix. The reporter from the *Morning Herald* who was at St. Croix’s press demonstration on 13 September left with the understanding it was ‘M. de St. Croix’s intention to make pictures with the Daguerreotype of the finest edifices and relics of antiquity which we possess in this kingdom.’ Assuming he truly was an artiste, it would be not entirely impossible that he could have been encouraged to come to England to obtain views as part of N. M. Lerebours’ earliest plans for artists and writers to gather material from many countries for Lerebours’ own *Excursions Daguerriennes*. But certainly this would put Lerebours’ first daguerreotype activities to an unexpected early date, for it does not seem to have been earlier than 13 September that Messrs.Lerebours advertised: ‘Daguerréotypes may be had, perfectly similar to that presented by M. Daguerre to the Institute, with all its Apparatus for 350 francs – An Apparatus much smaller and more simple is sold for only 250 francs’. The earliest production of cameras and processing equipment depended first

<sup>20</sup> Letter dated 7 December 1839, W. H. F. Talbot to J. F. W. Herschel, Herschel Collection HS17.299, Royal Society, London. Letter also published in Gail Buckland, *Op.cit.* (1980) pp.58–59. For a little on Talbot’s awareness of some consequences of the six month hiatus see his letter to Herschel dated 12 September 1839 (Royal Society HS17.297, and Buckland pp.55–6).

<sup>21</sup>The author is grateful to Pierre Harmant for this report from *Journal des Débats*, 16 September 1839, p.4, and for his comments regarding Ste. Croix in letter Pierre Harmant to R. D. Wood dated 4 Novembre 1979.

<sup>22</sup>For Willmore and Havell see *Literary Gazette* 1839, pp.187, 201, 203–4, 215, 236. John Pye’s letter dated 4 October 1839 to Daguerre in Newton’s *London Journal of Arts and Sciences*, Vol.XV([1839–]1840), No.XCIII, [November] 1839, pp.183–4 and more accessible in Helmut and Alison Gernsheim’s *L. J. M. Daguerre*, Dover Publications, New York (1968), pp.146–7. Pye and Willmore were originally of the Birmingham School (*Dictionary of National Biography*). John Pye (1782–1874) had professional connections in Paris (indeed seems to have known Daguerre) and so is a good potential candidate for having some involvement with St.Croix’s activity in England.

on the release of Daguerre's Manual; although there could be variation between different models because no adequate measurements were given in the diagrams in the Manual. Three firms (Susse, Giroux, and Lerebours) issued the Manual under their own cover, and at the same time produced the first cameras along with the processing equipment in Paris. Indeed Susse frères in Place de la Bourse seem to have had cameras on sale (along with the Manual) a few days before Giroux et Cie's official product was available, which, complete with Daguerre's manual, was surprisingly not until the first week of September.<sup>23</sup> Although of limited value, there does exist in the *Morning Chronicle* of 14 September 1839 one short description by an eyewitness of the camera used in London by St. Croix: 'the camera—obscura employed was, when drawn out, about two feet long, and about one foot in height and breadth. The metallic plates used for the production of the drawings were about twelve[!] inches by eight.' The surviving daguerreotypes attributed to St. Croix are 4.25 x 6 inches: half-plate size. Maybe that fact would be significant if there was good evidence that Susse or Lerebours cameras were that size, for the few Giroux cameras that still exist are whole-plate.<sup>24</sup> But, as we have already seen, St. Croix's advertisements when he was at the Argyll Rooms during the third week of September saying his apparatus was made 'under the immediate direction of M.Daguerre' provides the best evidence: for it points to him as having a camera from Giroux. Such a camera would have fixed on it a sign in French saying 'No apparatus is guaranteed if it does not bear the signature of M. Daguerre and the seal of M. Giroux.' The Daguerreotype, made under the direction of the inventor in Paris by Alph. Giroux'<sup>25</sup> [Fig.5]. Of course, St. Croix may have been a complete amateur who happened to have purchased from Giroux rather than Susse frères, but if it makes more sense that he started out with the advantage of insider knowledge (or indeed came to England to sell daguerreotype kits) then the chance is high that his connections were in some way with Giroux.

[Paris and Daguerre's Manual.]

Is it possible that St. Croix could have left for London from Paris before Daguerre's Manual on the technique was available? When St. Croix arrived in London an account in the *Morning Herald* characterised him as 'a friend and pupil of M. Daguerre', and the reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, while showing uncertainty in several aspects, had understood that 'M. S. de Sainte Croix' (the only time an indication had been given of another part of the name) '...had been deputed by M. Daguerre to exhibit and explain his interesting and valuable discovery in this country'.<sup>26</sup> However, in the middle of October

<sup>23</sup>Advertisements for both Daguerre's Manual and Cameras. Susse frères: 5 Sept., 1839 in *Journal des Débats*, p.4, and *La Quotidienne*, p.4. Giroux et Cie: 7 Sept., 1839 in *Journal des Débats*, p.4, and *La Quotidienne*, p.4 (Advance-notice about production of a camera, without manual or prices, was given by Giroux in *Gazette de France*, 21 August 1839, and *La Quotidienne*, 23 August 1839, p4). Messrs. Lerebours: *Journal des Débats*, 13 Sept., 1839, and *Galignani's Messenger*, 14 Sept 1839, pp.2,4.

<sup>24</sup>But that fact regarding Giroux whole-plate cameras is not conclusive as article 5 of Giroux's Contract dated 22 June 1839 with Daguerre authorizes him (on condition that Daguerre is consulted) to 'manufacture the apparatus in different sizes'.

<sup>25</sup>See fig.5. Giroux's apparatus and the label are illustrated well in Beaumont Newhall's introduction to *An historical and descriptive account of the various processes of the daguerreotype and the diorama by: Daguerre* [ie. facsimiles of one French and one English version printed in Paris of Daguerre's Manual], Winter House, New York (1970), p.17. Article 3 of Giroux's contract with Daguerre dated 22 June 1839 uses the phrase that 'Giroux et Cie are authorised by M.Daguerre to announce that the apparatus is manufactured under his direction' and article 4 says 'the apparatus will bear a printed label or signature of Daguerre and Giroux'.

<sup>26</sup>*Morning Herald*, 14 September 1839, 3; *Morning Chronicle*, 14 September 1839, 3



1839, Daguerre, replying to an enquiry from Miles Berry, wrote regarding St. Croix, 'this gentleman is totally unknown to me': and then, oddly, added 'that he [St.Croix] left Paris before he knew how to execute the process'.<sup>27</sup> Was this last remark just an expression of Daguerre's irritation, or could it have some basis? If Daguerre had been told when St. Croix went to London then he would have been able to surmise the likely extent of St. Croix's practical knowledge of his own technique. The remark can re-emphasise our realisation that St. Croix's successful demonstration of the Daguerreotype technique in London on 13 September 1839, was an achievement not equalled by other first amateurs in Paris who had more opportunity to learn the technique at first hand. When had such opportunities arisen for St. Croix?

The invention of the Daguerreotype was announced in Paris at the beginning of January 1839. The irrepressible and influential drama and art critic Jules Janin<sup>28</sup> was one of the few lucky people who saw some of Daguerre's earliest examples before publishing at the end of January his own enraptured welcome to the new epoch in his weekly journal *L'Artiste*. However, the method used to produce the 'ingénieux miroir de Daguerre' continued to be secret. By the time the Chamber of Deputies voted at the beginning of July to grant a pension to Daguerre seven months had passed: Janin, although still retaining his wonderment at the daguerreotypes displayed to the Deputies, was by then less ebullient in having to express impatience that the process had not yet been revealed.<sup>29</sup>

On Monday 19 August 1839<sup>30</sup> a special joint meeting of the Académie des Sciences and Académie des Beaux-Arts was held at the Institut de France in Paris to officially release the secrets of Daguerre's technique. Instead of Daguerre, the lecture was given by the leading Scientist and Secretary of the Academy of Sciences, François Arago, who had already done so much to facilitate government and public recognition for Daguerre. It was a straight lecture without any practical demonstration. Is it conceivable that St. Croix was amongst the excited crowd spilling out of the building? If so, he was no doubt more technically competent than most (except professional scientists such as Dr. Donné) in Paris who immediately attempted to obtain pictures. Because of the importance of the design and use of a processing box for pretreatment of the silvered plate with iodine vapour and another for using mercury vapour after exposure, the information about Daguerre's process revealed in Arago's lecture was barely sufficient in practice. A

---

<sup>27</sup> Letter dated October 18 1839 from Daguerre in Paris to Miles Berry published amongst a group of interesting correspondence between London and Paris in *London Journal of Arts and Sciences*, "Vol.XV 1840", No.XCIII, pp.179–185. Part XCIII must be the November 1839 issue, and seems to have actually been available in the last week of October 1839. This monthly journal concerning patents was edited by Miles Berry's partner William Newton (1786–1861). [*deleted from proof of the article*: Like law publications, the volumes are dated according to the law-sitting year beginning with Michaelmas term on 1 October: two volumes yearly covered October to March then April to September, each with seven undated parts (one month out of six was a double-numbered issue).]

<sup>28</sup> Jules G. Janin (1804–1874), *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, Vol.26, 331–8, Paris (1861), reprinted Copenhagen (1966). Janin ('capricieux, pétillant, de verve, de saillie') was drama critic of *Journal des Débats* since 1831, but also indefatigably wrote for several other Paris periodicals.

<sup>29</sup> Jules Janin, *L'Artiste*, 27 January 1839, Vol.2 (2nd Series), No.11, pp.145–8 and 14 July 1839, Vol.3 (2nd Series), No.11, pp.181–2. Events involving the daguerreotype in 1839 in Paris are described by Beaumont Newhall in *Latent Image*, Anchor Books, New York (1967), pp.86–105; and H. and A. Gernsheim, *Daguerre*, London (1956), New York 1968), pp.81–104.

<sup>30</sup> Arago's lecture of 19 August 1839 was reported in *Journal des Débats*, 20 August 1839, pp.1–3; *Galignani's Messenger* [English-language newspaper published in Paris], 20 August 1839, p.3; Jules Janin, reported with disappointment over the complicated technique, in *L'Artiste*, 25 August 1839, Vol.3 (2nd Series), No.17, p.277–83; *The Globe* (London), 23 August 1839, p.3.

Manual by Daguerre was in course of preparation, but Daguerre obviously soon became aware that meanwhile practical demonstration was needed to counter bad publicity. He must already, at the beginning of August, have given one private demonstration of the technique to Giroux as part of their Contract.<sup>31</sup> Then, after disappointment about the complicated nature of the technique was expressed by Janin in *L'Artiste*, during the last week of August Daguerre suddenly visited Janin and invited him, and friends who happened to be there, to come to his own studio for a private demonstration<sup>32</sup> of the Daguerreotype process. Could St. Croix have been an acquaintance of Janin who witnessed this private display? Or, we even need to ask, could he have been an associate of Giroux? If none of these, then the much more likely and only opportunity he could have had to witness the technique would be amongst an audience of about 120 people who went to the palais d'Orsay for a specifically practical public demonstration given by Daguerre on Saturday 7 September.<sup>33</sup>

'On the day of my first meeting on the Quai d'Orsay, I was astonished to see my brochure in everyone's hands, while I myself did not have a copy.'<sup>34</sup> Daguerre's Manual would provide a description sufficient enough for a technically accomplished person to make practical headway, but as we can see from the above words of Daguerre, his Manual could hardly (as pointed out by Pierre Harmant from that and other fresh evidence) have been issued in Paris before the fifth day of September, and probably not even until the morning of 7 September immediately before his demonstration. At this point we should recall St. Croix had to obtain chemicals and equipment, make his first exposures and tests of the process before leaving Paris, then (maybe) take some successful daguerreotype views enroute in Rouen,<sup>35</sup> ready to set-up his first demonstration in London by Friday 13 September.

Is it surprising that 'although he makes bungling work sometimes',<sup>36</sup> yet several of his very early daguerreotypes taken under difficult trial circumstances have, it seems, survived for 150 years? Daguerre might have thought St. Croix must have left Paris 'before he knew how to execute the process' because Daguerre was told, or guessed, St. Croix had left at a date earlier than the day when any manual was first available. But we should also consider that, on the other hand, Daguerre's Manual arrived in London as fast

---

<sup>31</sup>Article 10 "Immediately after the acceptance of the Bill by the Chambers, M. Daguerre undertakes to initiate M. Giroux personally into the secret of his invention in all its details...". E. Epstein's translation of Contract, *Photographic Journal*, 1938, Vol. 78, pp. 28–35. (Complete contract is also translated in H. and A. Gernsheim's *Daguerre* (1968), pp. 189–91).

<sup>32</sup>*L'Artiste*, 1 September 1839, Vol. 4 (2nd series), No. 1, pp. 1–3.

<sup>33</sup>*Journal des Débats*, 8 September 1839, p. 2; *La Quotidienne*, 8 Sept. 1839, p. 3; *Galignani's Messenger*, 9 Sept. 1839, p. 2; *Courrier des Théâtres*, 11 Sept. 1839, pp. 2–3; *Morning Herald* (London), 12 Sept. 1839, p. 3; *The Times*, 10 Sept. 1839, p. 4. Daguerre gave two more demonstrations at the palais d'Orsay on Wednesday 11 September and Saturday 14 September 1839. Another opportunity to obtain direct information was on Wednesday 4 September when Daguerre discussed his technique at a meeting of the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale at rue du Bac in Paris. reported in *Le Constitutionnel*, 6 September 1839, 1–2, and 'Description du procédé de M. Daguerre, et de la manière d'en faire usage' in the September 1839 issue of the *Bulletin Société d'Encouragement*, Vol. 38 (1839), 342–9.

<sup>34</sup>Pierre Harmant, 'Daguerre's Manual: a Bibliographic Enigma', *History of Photography*, Vol. 1 (1977), pp. 79–83

<sup>35</sup>Two Rouen daguerreotypes attributed to Ste Croix were exhibited in London in 1972 (Ref. 14). This writer, not having any opportunity to examine them, is unable to make any worthwhile report on those plates or regarding St. Croix in Rouen.

<sup>36</sup>W. H. F. Talbot's words in Buckland, *Fox Talbot*, 57

as St. Croix.<sup>37</sup> The preface of J. S. Memes' translation into English is dated 13 September. It was advertised in London in *The Globe's* evening edition that day with the comment 'This work was published in Paris on Saturday' (ie. original French edition, Saturday, 7 September in Paris). This can hardly have been a premature announcement as a review of this manual could be read in the weekly *Literary Gazette* on 21 September 1839. Another translation of the Manual published in London by William Strange was certainly over hastily announced: 'In the press and will be published in a few days, price 3s. M. DAGUENE's [sic] PROCESS OF DAGUENOTYPE [sic], or Philographic [sic] Drawing...London, W. Strange, 21, Paternoster-row.' Apart from signs of having been too hurriedly prepared, this advertisement again certainly shows the speed with which work could begin in London on producing Daguerre's Manual, as it appeared in the same issue of *The Times* of 14 September in which St. Croix's first demonstration was reported. Thus there is yet another possibility (but not a strong possibility because none of the reports about him while in London mention the Manual in any way) that St. Croix left for London close to the time Daguerre's Manual was issued for the simple reason that he had been involved in some way with the printing or publication of the Manual in Paris and then its delivery to translator and printers in England. Excellent research has been done by Pierre Harmant<sup>38</sup> on the subject of the publication of Daguerre's Manual in Paris, while the mechanism by which translations and illustrations were very quickly prepared for sale in England remains neglected.<sup>39</sup>

[St. Croix as Amateur or Agent?]

The name of St. Croix (or 'Ste Croix' or 'De Sainte Croix' as he was also often called in 1839) in the history of the daguerreotype is tantalising because his secret would seem to require an explanation either that he must have had significant connections in Paris (we are not surprised that Miles Berry asked Daguerre if he knew St. Croix), or [*deleted by editor* – an equally intriguing contrariwise – ] that he was an immediate prime amateur – one who might thus have figured as a too-good-to-be-true character in our cultural inheritance if he had felt any need to be a self-publicist. Pierre Harmant has pointed out to the writer that the day St. Croix's first demonstration in London was reported in *The Times* (14 September) is the Catholic feastday of the Holy Cross, in France called fête de Ste Croix. Maybe this is just one of those coincidences quite common in life, yet it is also not inconceivable that 'De Ste Croix' was thus deliberately adopted as a name to hide his true identity: a situation that might have applied if he was really an agent to sell silvered plates or apparatus in England for Giroux, or was carrying out a surreptitious publicity campaign for Daguerre.

[end of text as published, but see the following addendum about original ending]

---

<sup>37</sup>It is common to find items from Paris publications reprinted in London papers after an interval of four days. The weekly *Athenaeum* in their issue of 24 August 1839 printed a report with byline "Paris 21st August" about Arago's lecture of 19 August, and *The Times* of 10 September passed on brief news from Paris publications about Daguerre's demonstration held on 7 September: even that example of only three days between event in Paris and brief news item in London could sometimes be beaten, for *The Times* on Saturday 26 October 1839 was able to report "We have received by express the Paris papers of Thursday, with our usual correspondence".

<sup>38</sup>Harmant, 'Daguerre's Manual', 79–83

<sup>39</sup>An appendix in Beaumont Newhall's *...Daguerre*, New York (1971), pp.267–277, provides a bibliography of 32 known editions of Daguerre's Manual in a wide range of languages. Helmut Gensheim specifically described the English editions in *The Photographic Journal*, Vol. 90A (1950), pp. 308–310.

## Addendum

[The article submitted to *History of Photography* had two additional short paragraphs at the end making first a comparison of Ste. Croix with Gouraud in America (this discussion was developed into a separate essay on 'The Arrival of the Daguerreotype in America') and final thoughts, as follows, on Ste Croix to provide a link with the article by Peter James' which had been planned to follow this essay in *History of Photography*: for one function of this essay was to set the scene for a companion article (on pages 107-115) by Peter James on 'Ste Croix and the daguerreotype in Birmingham', linked by an editorial title of 'The Enigma of Monsieur de Sainte-Croix'. The original ending which is restored below for this online presentation was deleted by the editor of *History of Photography* after informing the writer]

If the above observation and argument – it should be called 'Harmant's hypothesis' – is irresistible, then our transatlantic comparison would not be Seager but with François Gouraud, 'Daguerre's Agent in America' ... [a short section on situation regarding Gouraud]... England was the only country where a patent had been obtained for the daguerreotype process, so an agent for Giroux in England would have to be undercover. Ste. Croix could have been, in Pierre Harmant's words, "un agent publicitaire occulte de Daguerre ou Giroux".<sup>40</sup>

After London: who and where was Ste.Croix?

Regarding the individual Ste. Croix, speculation is not just a pleasant pastime ( let us not stop to wonder if another Frenchman, Antoine Claudet, could have had any connection with Ste. Croix),for hypotheses are necessary in pointing towards new avenues to explore. Even so, however much we do speculate about the identity of Ste. Croix, his journey and enterprise in England will remain difficult to comprehend for one simple reason: he did not speak English.<sup>41</sup> In 1839 the daguerreotype could be perceived as a Magic Mirror – 'Dans ce miroir magique, la nature se reflète dans toute sa vérité naïve et un peu triste'.<sup>41</sup> But the man Ste. Croix has not been reflected forward from that first year of the daguerreotype. He was 'totally unknown' to Daguerre, and remains so to us. If any personal information was recorded by those who met him in London it is yet to be discovered. Daguerre's 'secret' was not released at the most appropriate time as the high light levels of the summer could extend for only a few more weeks: so the first enthusiastic amateurs had a short first season for their first trials of Daguerre's process. At the end of October in England, Ste. Croix was unlikely to continue to take views as the poor light of winter arrived. Where was he the following summer? Did he never daguerreotype again, or, unawares, are his activities known under another name? It has been quite simple to assume that Ste.Croix must have disappeared from history by returning to France directly from London at the end of October 1839. Yet, as we can now learn from work of Peter James, Ste. Croix did go in the opposite direction.  
[original ending]

<sup>40</sup> Letter dated 8 Octobre 1991 from Pierre Harmant (Charenton-Le-Pont, France) to R. D. Wood (Bromley, England)

<sup>41</sup> Jules Janin, *L'Artiste*, 14 July 1839, Vol.3 (2nd Series), No.11, pp.181–2

## Figure Captions.

[The following 5 figures were submitted to *History of Photography* but only one (daguerreotype of St Martin's) was published],

Figure 1. 7 Piccadilly (top), and Argyll Rooms, 246 Regent Street (bottom). (*John Tallis's London Street Views 1838–1840*, Nattali and Maurice, London (1969), Parts 25 and 4)

Figure 2. Advertisements from *The Times*, 17 September (top), 21 September (centre), 8 October 1839 (bottom).

Figure 3. Two advertisements from *The Athenaeum*, 12th October 1839, p.782 <sup>8</sup>.

Figure 4. St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Church. Half-plate Daguerreotype attributed to St. Croix, 1839: cf. *Literary Gazette*, 12th October 1839, pp.653–4. Shows uncorrected lateral reversal of the image. (Courtesy of the Science Museum. London <sup>15,16</sup>)

Figure 5. "The Daguerreotype made under the Direction of the Inventor in Paris": Label<sup>24,25</sup> on Giroux Daguerreotype Camera in George Eastman House Collection. (see Beaumont Newhall, Introduction to *...Daguerre*, Winter House, New York (1970))