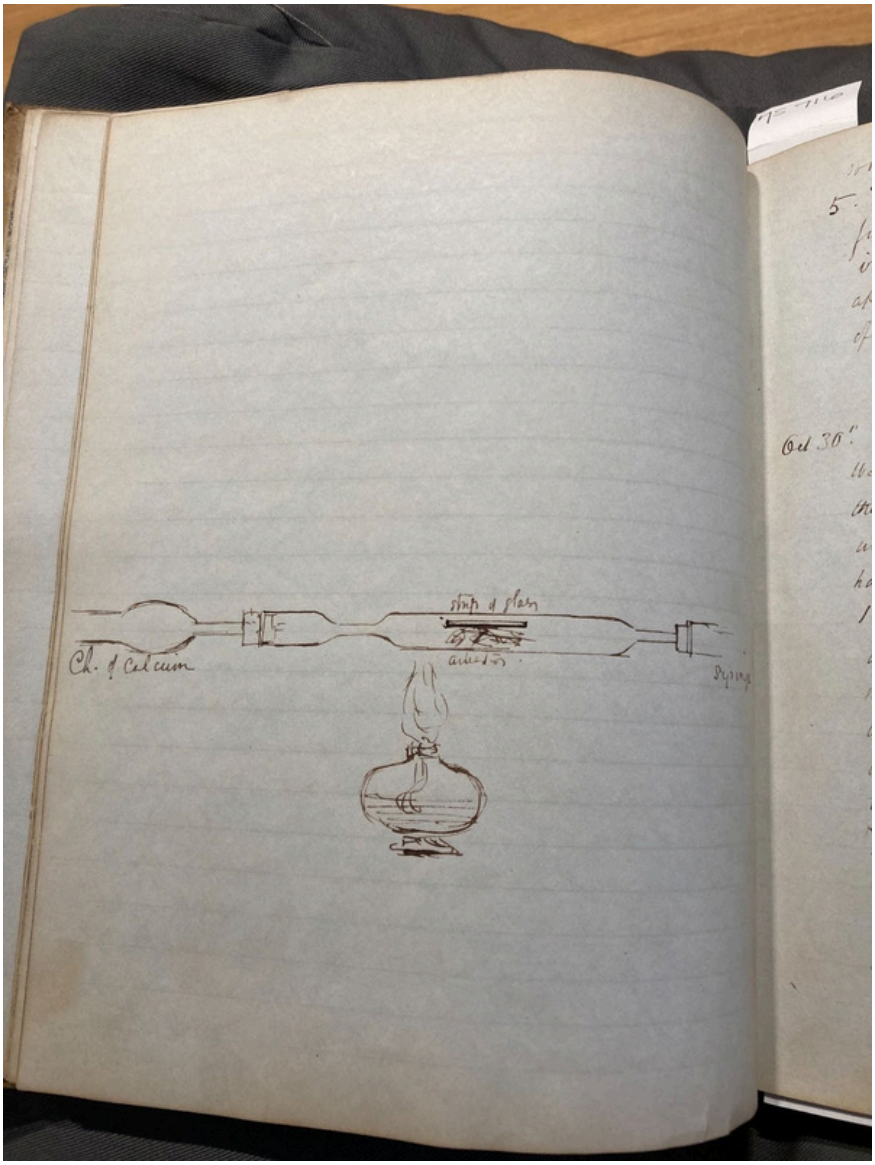
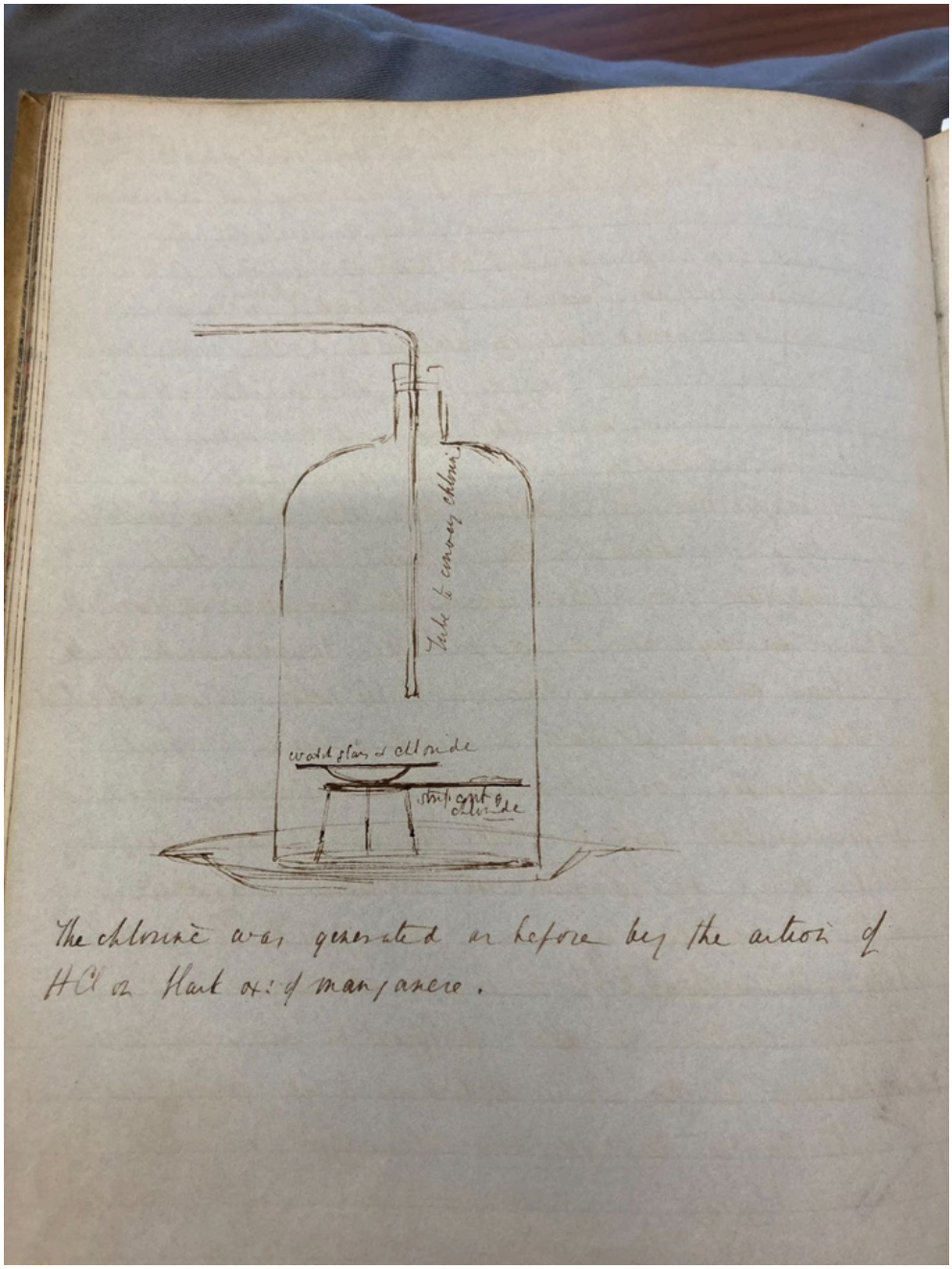
# Appendix: Inspiration. George Shaw's Story.

George Shaw collaborated with many scientists and industrialists in nineteenth century Birmingham and beyond. He worked with metallurgist Dr John Percy (1817 -1889) on early experiments with photographic materials. Their notebook, titled LIGHT, is in the collection of Science Museum Group and contains John Percy's neat handwriting, contrasted with Shaw's messier hand at right angles with interesting scientific illustrations.






Images from John Percy's Light Notebook, courtesy of the Science Museum Group

Shaw was an expert in electro-metallurgy, supporting new inventions such as John Stephen Woolrich's magneto-dynamo and applying his knowledge of metallurgy to daguerreotype photography.

Image: John Stephen Woolrich's Magneto Dynamo, used for electroplating. Courtesy BIrmingham Museums Trust

More information and images about the impact of Shaw's work on electrometallurgy and photography is here;

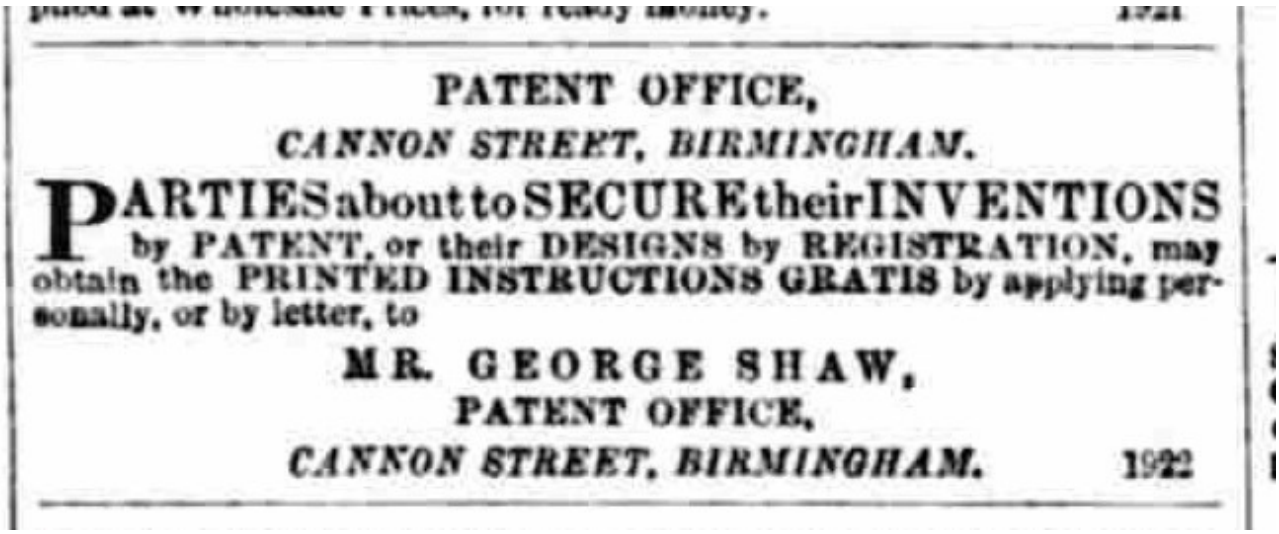
Faster photographs: Electroplate and the daguerrotype | National Science and Media Museum

And an academic journal about this research is here;

https://dx.doi.org/10.15180/232014


Electroplating, Elkington’s Works, Birmingham, 1844 courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust

Alongside his work as a patent agent, advising inventors on their designs and completing technical drawings, George Shaw also lectured extensively in many public institutions in Birmingham, including at the Mechanics Institute where he was vice-president in 1841 and further afield in London at the Royal Society.



PATENT OFFICE,

*CANNON STREET, BIRMINGHAM.*

PARTIES about to SECURE their INVENTIONS by PATENT, or their DESIGNS by REGISTRATION, may obtain the PRINTED INSTRUCTIONS GRATIS by applying personally, or by letter, to

MR. GEORGE SHAW,
PATENT OFFICE,
*CANNON STREET, BIRMINGHAM.* 1922

Birmingham Journal, 1853.

He communicated the latest advances in science and chemistry to a public audience in the city, lecturing on electro metallurgy, water, magnetism and photography amongst other subjects. He was committed to knowledge for all as part of the committee for the Shakespeare Rooms, Birmingham's first free public library.

Shaw made early daguerreotype photographs with his family and colleagues.

Daguerreotype photograph by George Shaw, (l-r) Rebecca Shaw, George Shaw, Prudence Richards and Elizabeth Silver Shaw. c. 1844. Private collection.

These show the people who supported him, the city he worked in and the qualities of the materials he used.

Daguerreotype photograph by George Shaw, New Street, Birmingham. c. 1844. Private collection.

Daguerreotype photograph by George Shaw, Francis Marrian, Die Sinker and Electroplater. c. 1844. Private collection.

Shaw also worked in the landscape as an artist making photographs and watercolours with his colleague, landscape painter Frederick Henry Henshaw who is famous for his depictions of trees. Shaw's landscape negative photographs are in the collection of Musee D'Orsay and can be searched here:

https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections

Frederick Henry Henshaw, A Forest Glade, Arden, Warwickshire. Oil. 1844.
Courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust

Shaw made watercolours on sketching trips to North Wales with Henshaw;

George Shaw, Valle Crucis Abbey, Watercolour on Paper, 1857. Private Collection

Shaw was a director of Birmingham Waterworks Company from 1862 and brought clean, safe water to the city.