



Above: Cabinet card by Robinson & Thompson showing ten medals, including one of which we also have the actual medal.

**W**INNING has always been something to be proud of, so when photographers were awarded medals they loved to illustrate them on their cards; as more medals were won, more were illustrated. But who won what? Who were the champions? Or were those that illustrated their medals just the ones that were the best at advertising?

The information in this article is derived solely from information printed on the mounts of carte de visite and cabinet cards and therefore represents what the photographers themselves wanted their clients to know. It does not include information from books and other sources which may well identify additional awards. Earliest and latest dates are added where they are clear enough to be read. The archive has examples of cards from 312 photographers who publicised that they were awarded prizes related to photography. These awards ranged from medals (gold, silver and bronze), plaques, £100 cash, £25 cash, diplomas, certificates, honourable mentions, 'noticed in the press', 'complimented by the Marquis of Ripon', FRPS, MRPS and Queen's prizes.

By far the most popular medal was presented by the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society which was founded in 1833 in Falmouth. Over 21% of the 312 photographers listed won one or more Watt medals from the Society (the front of the medal has a bust of James Watt of steam engine fame). However, the society awarded medals for many subjects besides photography so it is important to look at the engraving on the rim of the medal to see what the achievement was for. The silver medal illustrated is engraved 'DAVID HEDGES FOR STUDIES OF ANIMALS 1875'.

# Cartomania 5: Medals on Cards

By Ron Cosens



*With thanks to the people who contacted him after his last article about dating photos, Ron Cosens continues the story of his Carte de Visite archive with - The Talented, the Proud, the Pretentious and the Medal Magpie*

## The Talented - Who were the Winners?

My full list of 312 photographers is too long to print here so just the top 33 are listed - all of them having won ten medals or more. Henry Peach Robinson and Son were clearly the outright winners with a haul of 130. Byrne and company from Richmond in Surrey coming second with 97 and W. W. Winter of Derby coming third with 65. Interestingly, the only other person in the UK to achieve over 100 photographic awards was F. J. Mortimer, a prominent figure in photography in the early 1900s and editor of the *Amateur Photographer*. He won at least 124 medals but is not included in the list as he was not a professional studio photographer.

Victorian photographers who noted ten or more awards on their carte de visite and/or cabinet card mounts are shown in the table opposite. If you would like the full list of medal winners, please contact me at [www.victorianimagecollection.com](http://www.victorianimagecollection.com)

## The Proud - tracking progress

Mostly, photographers produced several different card designs over a period of time showing the increasing number of awards. The photographer with the most card designs was W. W. Winter of Derby who had ten different 'backs'. However, there were really only six different designs as five of them were identical except for the banner heading which stated the number of medals won (i.e. 34, 44, 57, 58 and 60).

Coming in second equal were three photographers with eight different medal designs on their cards.

Photographer	Main Studio	No.	Earliest	Latest	Includes
Robinson, Henry Peach & Son	Tunbridge Wells	130	1881		
Byrne & Co	Richmond, Surrey	97			
Winter, W W	Derby	65	1884	1893	
Sutcliffe, Frank Meadow	Whitby	62	1881	1894	
Sawyer, Lyddell	Newcastle	52			
West, G	Southsea	40	1883		
Harrison, W M	Falmouth	30		1900	
Lafayette (James Scott Lauder)	Dublin	29	1849	1897	
Wilson, George Washington	Aberdeen	27	1853	1891	
Hedges, David	Lytham	26	1872	1897	
Whaite, T G	Carlisle	23	1880	1889	
Warneuke	Glasgow	21		1894	
Chaffin, Jonathan	Taunton & Yeovil	20	1874	1898	£50 cash
Diston, Adam	Leven	20	1871	1887	
Lord, R H	Cambridge	20	1886	1894	
Whaley, F	Doncaster	19	1887	1896	
Auty, M	Tynemouth	16	1884	1890	Diploma
Hogg, J Henry	Kendal	15	1872	1891	
Crooke, W	Edinburgh	14	1886	1892	
Auty & Ruddock	Tynemouth	13	1884	1888	
Frost, Robert	Loughborough	13			
Mendelssohn, Hayman Selig	Newcastle	12	1880	1887	
Terras, John	Markinch	12	1885	1893	
Wane, Marshall	Douglas, IoM	12	1865	1877	
Bruton, J E	Douglas, IoM	11	1870	1884	
Lewis, Abel	Douglas, IoM	11	1870	1884	
Treble, Charles F	London	11		1894	
Gillard, William	Gloucester	10	1872	1885	
Harrison	Lincoln	10	1868	1882	
Moffat, John	Edinburgh	10	1855	1897	£100 prize
Robinson & Thompson	Liverpool	10	1886	1890	
Slingsby, R	Lincoln	10	1868	1882	
Werner & Son	Dublin	10	1887	1889	

These were J. Henry Hogg of Kendal, W. M. Harrison of Falmouth and R. H. Lord of Cambridge. Ralph Herbert Lord's designs are the most interesting of the three and are shown here to illustrate the way in which designs progressed and, amongst other things, helped to identify chronology and dates.

### The Pretentious

Maybe a few photographers overdid the self promotion just a little too much. Le Chevalier La Fosse (A. F. Lafosse) of Manchester showed off his five photography medals but also added illustrations of two non-photographic awards as well: the Order of Constantine

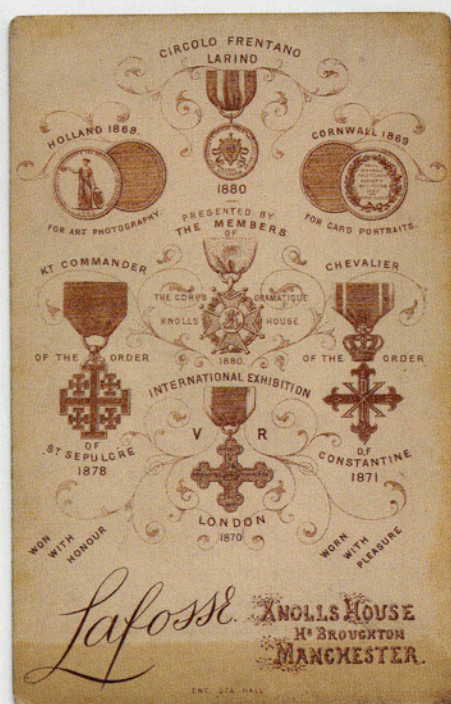
(a Brotherhood) in 1871 and a Kt. Commander of the Order of St. Sepulcre (a Catholic order) in 1878. In his defence, it was not unusual for photographers at that time to display emblems of other societies such as the Masons and the Oddfellows. Maybe it was his use of a French title in Manchester that wins him my pretentious runner up award.

But, most clearly the definite winner in the pretentious class is H. W. Watson of Gloucester who proudly shows off nine medals - well done. But on closer inspection it is clear that they were all won by someone else - William Gillard who owned the studio before Watson took over!

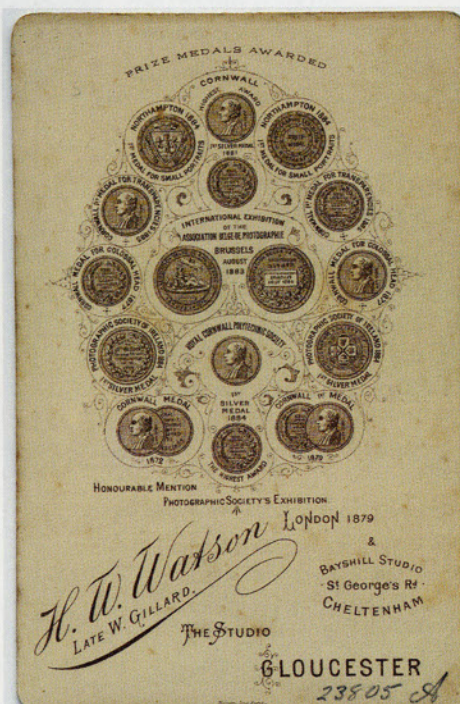




Above and opposite page:  
Eight cartes in  
chronological  
order showing R  
H Lord's winning  
ways



Far left:  
Lafosse's  
cabinet card  
showing two  
non-photog-  
raphy  
medals.



Left: Mr  
Watson's  
delusion.

## The Medal Magpie - Collecting the Real Thing

Last but not least, medals for photography do not turn up very often so it is always a real pleasure to find one - especially when it is actually illustrated on a card mount. Examples of medals in the archive which were won by Victorian professional photographers include

Henry Peach Robinson (5)

David Hedges (6)

Robinson & Thompson (1)

William Mayland (1)

Details are shown on the opposite page

Other medals held, which were won by well known people in photography, include

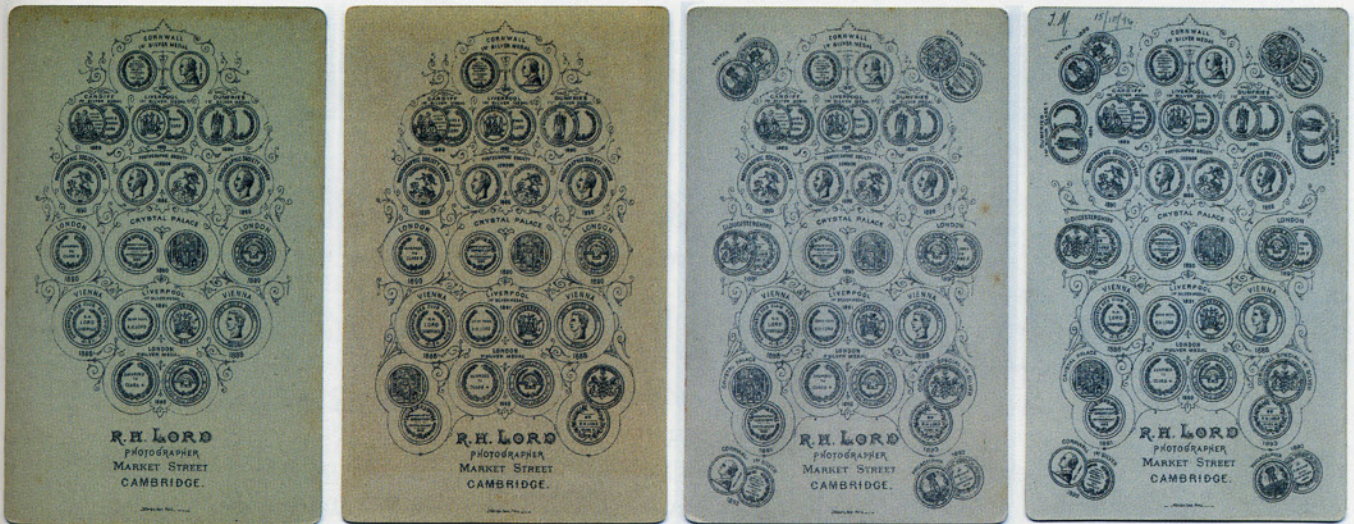
Newman & Guardia (2) - camera designers

Fred Judge (2) - post card photographer

F J Mortimer (124) - editor of Amateur  
Photographer

So there we have it - the cards do not lie! If anyone can add to the information provided about card designs or about the location of Victorian photography medals, please do get in touch.





1	H P Robinson	Londini 1862	Class XIV	Bronze 75mm diameter
2	H P Robinson	1865 Dublin International Exhibition	Section XXX	Bronze 75mm diameter
3	H P Robinson	1876 Philadelphia International Exhibition		Bronze 75 mm diameter
4	H P Robinson	1880 Photographic Society of London Exhibition		Bronze 63mm diameter
5	H P Robinson	1887 Photographic Society of London Exhibition		Bronze 63mm diameter
6	D Hedges	1874 Bengal Photographic Society	Animals	Bronze 50mm diameter
7	David Hedges	1875 Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society	Animals	Silver 45mm diameter
8	David Hedges	1877 Amsterdamsche Photographen Vereeniging		Bronze 41mm diameter
9	D Hedges & Sons	1888 Gloucestershire Photographic Society	Class 16	Bronze 44mm diameter
10	Hedges & Sons	1891 Gloucestershire Photographic Society	Class 12	Bronze 44mm diameter
11	D Hedges & Son	1896 Cheltenham Photographic Society	Animals	Bronze 38mm diameter
12	Robinson & Thompson	1888 Borough of Oldham Exhibition		Bronze 45mm diameter
13	William Mayland	1873 Photographic Society of London Exhibition		Bronze 63mm diameter



Above: Three medals awarded to David Hedges: 1874 Bengal, 1875 Cornwall (silver), 1877 Amsterdam.





Above: Cabinet card by David Hedges identifying six medals from the collection.



Above: Carte de visite by HP Robinson identifying three medals from the collection. Robinson stopped showing his medals after this card design as there were, apparently, too many to illustrate.



Above: Three medals awarded to H. P. Robinson: 1862 London, 1865 Dublin, 1876 Philadelphia.