

# A peep into the Victorian Image Collection

## Part 4 – Children with toys

By Ron Cosens

The collection consists mainly of cartes de visite (cdv) and cabinet cards (cabs) which are supplemented by some later portraits on postcard mounts up to the WW1 era.

Last time we looked at ladies with hats; this time we go to the younger generation and enjoy some lovely photographs of children with Victorian and Edwardian toys. However, which toys belonged to the children and which ones belonged to the photographer; it is impossible to tell.

To start with, here is a snapshot image of a lady (with a hat of course!!) from about 1905 showing a young boy in the background actually playing with a wooden hoop in the street.

Alongside is a formal studio shot of a youngster with the same type of toy which was popular in Victorian times and went out of fashion soon after the First World War.

Looking through the collection there are many different toys on view. The most popular ones are definitely dolls for the girls and boats for the boys.

Another very popular toy was represented by the horse, which is not surprising as it was such an important part of everyday life. Examples range from the magnificent rocking horses to smaller pull-along horses on wheels as well as even smaller standalone equine toys.

Other popular toys photographed include buckets & spades, balls, bats, books, skipping ropes, whips, guns, tinplate people & vehicles and a variety of cuddly animal toys from cats to dogs to sheep.

Interestingly, pictures of teddy bears on cartes de visite or cabinet cards are very rare. Teddy bears were developed, apparently simultaneously, by toymakers Morris Michtom in the United States and Richard Steiff in Germany in the early years of the 20th century; just as cdv and cabs were being phased out. Teddy bears were named after US President Theodore 'Teddy' Roosevelt.

One aspect of photographing children will be fully appreciated by most members, it is hard to get them relaxed and in focus; and to have their toys in focus as well is a real bonus. This was particularly difficult in the 1860s and 1870s.

The following gallery illustrates just a few of the happy kids with their amazing toys from 1860 to about 1910. But remember that, in Victorian times, boys often wore frocks up to the age of six or seven after which time they were 'trousered'.



Little girl wearing nautical hat [H.M.S. Swift] & holding her wooden hoop (cab c1904 Ludlow)



Two siblings with their [early] teddy bear & dolly (cab c1909 London)



## Gallery

All photographs are more than 110 years old and have been dated from studio details; not from a knowledge of the history of toys.



*Very early outdoor image of boy with his bat and ball (cdv c1860 location unknown)*



*Charlotte Penelope Chambers with her badminton racket and shuttlecock (cdv 1866 Torquay)*



*Alfred with his drum (cdv 1866 London)*



*A fine horse on wheels (cdv c1888 Middlesbrough)*



*Pretty girl with her doll in a wicker pram (cab c1903 Leicester)*



*Gee up and ready to go (cdv c1889 London)*

You can find more of these wonderful images on the dedicated page on the PCCGB website:  
[pccgb.net/a-peep-into-the-victorian-image-collection](http://pccgb.net/a-peep-into-the-victorian-image-collection)

further images and information are available from  
[ron.cosens@btinternet.com](mailto:ron.cosens@btinternet.com)  
 or [www.cartedevsite.co.uk](http://www.cartedevsite.co.uk)