

# A peep into the Victorian Image Collection

## Part 6 – Horses

By Ron Cosens

The collection consists mainly of Victorian cartes de visite (cdv) and cabinet cards (cabs) between 1860 and 1904 when both formats started to be replaced by the cheaper postcard format.

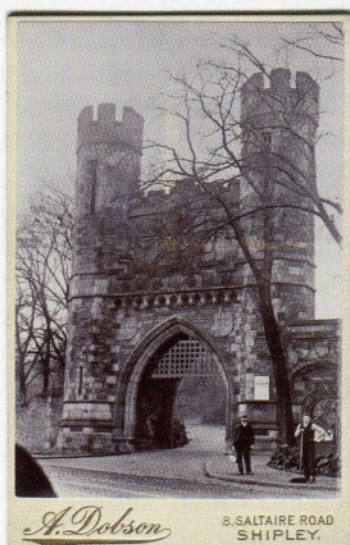
Although the vast majority were of portraits, other subjects were tackled by photographers from the very early days.

The horse (and donkey) were such integral parts of daily life that it is not surprising that some photographers, even in the largest cities, took equine photographs and some even had dedicated studios – see images on the right.

But let's start with the tail end!

Pollution from the back of transport today is a serious issue but in the Victorian era it had mixed blessings – it certainly needed clearing away in the towns but the end product was also great for the roses; my father was often sent out to “follow the horses” when he was a lad.

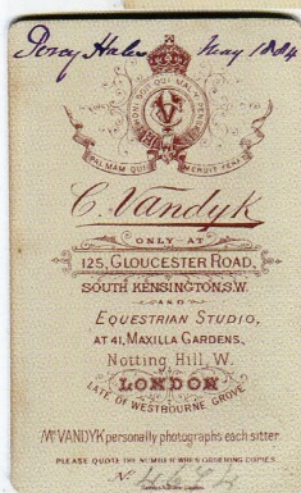
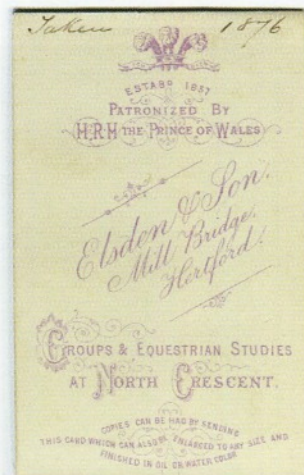
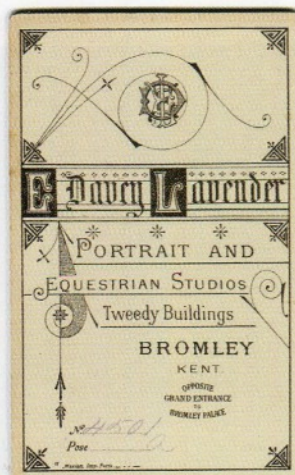
The two images below are remarkable.



Why did photographer Dobson of Shipley make a cabinet photo of a street scene and then subsequently copy part of it into a cdv of a humble road-sweeper – whose pal with a pail was not included; who would pay for that?

A wonderful insight is also given on this subject in the book ‘Munby, Man of Two Worlds’ with a factual entry from his diary of 1862:

“... a girl named Margaret Cochrane is a crossing sweeper at Charing Cross, and has been so, to my knowledge for several years. She says she is fourteen but she looks much older. She sweeps ... the densest part of the wide throng of hurrying carriages. She plies her daring broom under the wheels, which bespatter her with mire as they fly; she dodges under the horses’ heads. And is ever ready to conduct the timid lady or nervous old gentleman through the perils of the crossing; she is wet through her thin clothing when it rains; she is in the street all day, the lowest and least protected ...”



So now let's look at some Victorian horses of many shapes and sizes; and performing their various rôles.

### Gallery

All photographs have been dated from studio details; not from any knowledge of horses.



Probably a vicar on his rounds (cdv c1862 Wetherby)



Farmer David Fairbank, Merion, Bradford (cdv c1865 Bradford)





Side saddle for the lady (cab c1903 Westbury)



Never too young to learn (cab c1898 Aston)



The travelling grocer (cab c1903 Cleckheaton)



In for repairs (cab c1904 Location unknown)



Off for a day out – but careful where you tread (cab c1899 Ellon)



Ready for work – but spot the onlookers (cab c1901 Esslemont)



Off to see the sights (cab c1895 Isle of Man)



One for the future (cab c1905 Chapel en le Frith, Derbyshire)

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)