



VICTORIAN FASHION IN ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

Workshop Two – 10th July 2024

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University of
Central Lancashire
UCLan

RECAP OF THE WORKSHOP IN JUNE

- I introduced myself and my ongoing research on local history in Lancashire and my role as project lead for the Dating Antique Photographs Project at UCLan funded by the Institute of Creativity, Communities and Culture.
- I then took you on a history of photography from early experiments in France in the 1820s to the gold rush of photography in the 1830s to 1850s.
- We then explored the different photograph types across the second half of the nineteenth century from ambrotypes to cartes de visite to cartes postale. We looked at background and setting to help determine the age of photographs.
- We then ended with an interactive session during which I helped you date the antique photographs you brought with you.



Brandon Taylorian
(Project Lead)

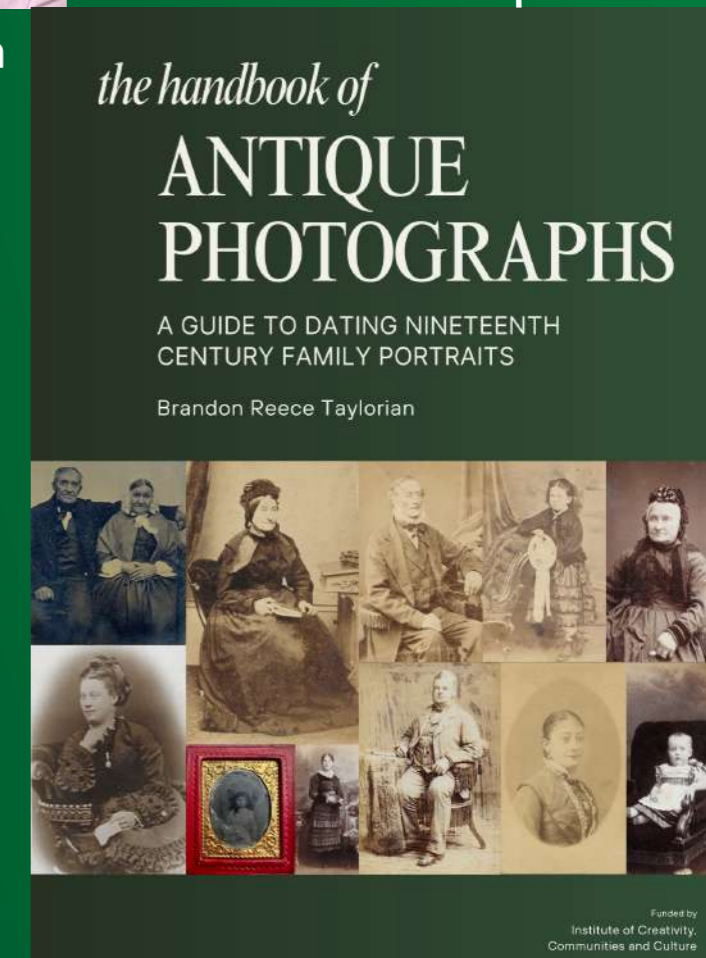
Available resources in the room:

Samples of antique photographs from across the nineteenth century.

Helpful books about dating antique photographs.

The Handbook of Antique Photographs.

Make sure you have a copy of the Handbook!



AIM OF TODAY'S WORKSHOP

- To explore the history of photography in the twentieth century.
- To delve into Victorian fashion trends and use this knowledge to make notes on our photographs.
- We will also look at what items subjects in Victorian portraiture used to hold and their significance.
- We will explore methods of sorting, storing and preserving antique photographs.
- Finally, we will begin to ask ourselves why a particular photograph was taken – just for fun or for a special occasion?



Carte de visite by A. & G. Taylor, photographers to the Queen.



Carte de visite by E. Greaves of Halifax.



PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

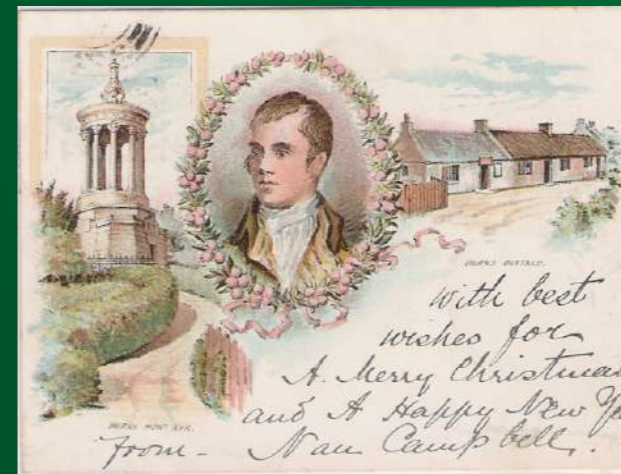
Postcards, Wartime & Changing Tastes

GOLDEN AGE OF POSTCARDS

- Images of the newly-built Eiffel Tower in 1889 gave impetus to the postcard.
- But it was the period between 1902 and 1914 when postcards became an international craze. For example, 7 billion postcards were mailed worldwide in 1905 alone.
- This form of near-instant communication — the postal service could guarantee next day delivery — meant that people could send messages from the mundane to the mischievous to the mysterious.
- Although the rumblings of war in Europe slowed down postcard production, the fad did not stop entirely and cards were still used for propaganda purposes and to boost troop morale.
- Studying and collecting postcards has become a hobby for many — the technical term for which is deltiology.



Obverse and reverse side of a postcard sent by Elizabeth Ann Kellett to Miss Ann Prescott of Preston Road, Euxton, 1906.



Postcard featuring Robert Burns and his cottage and monument in Ayr, 1899.



First picture postcard, 1870.

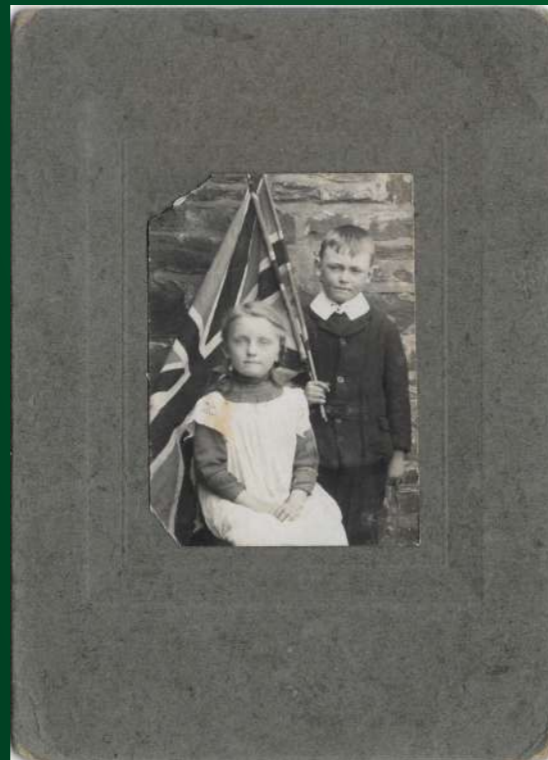
PRE-WAR PORTRAITS



Portrait of Ellen Prescott, 1910.



John Prescott with his brother Henry and two bridesmaids at his wedding to Elizabeth Ann Kellett, 1907.



Circa 1915. Notice the small photograph attached to the much larger card.



Portrait of Agnes Prescott, 1910. Notice how the vignette effect is still popular by the end of the Edwardian era.



Portrait of Thomas Prescott dressed as an altar server, 1912.

WARTIME PORTRAITS

- With personal cameras becoming popular and mass produced at the beginning of the twentieth century, soldiers could use photography for a personal history of wartime, rich in biographical features with the motivation to record their experiences.
- However, Allied officials eager to control the “official view of war,” banned personal photography in 1915 and instead established sanctioned photographic units.
- Soldiers snapped pictures whenever possible, despite the disapproval of their senior ranking officers, in order to return with a collection of memories.



Portrait of Henry Prescott, 1916.



Portrait of Henry Prescott alongside a medical officer "Somewhere in the Doings-Ruins", 1916.



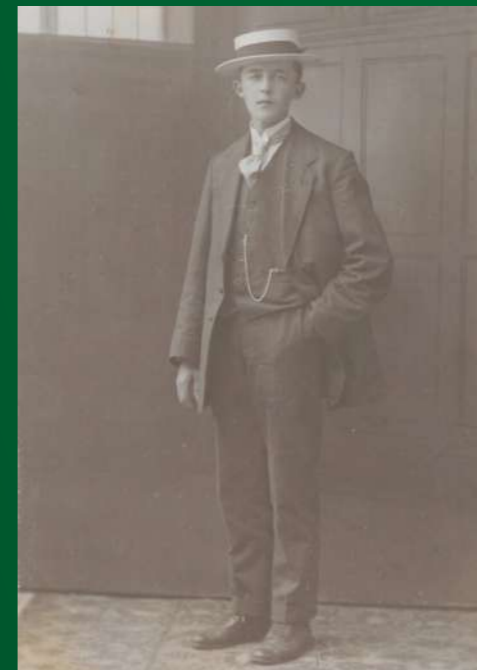
Henry Prescott during World War One, 1917.

INTERWAR PORTRAITURE

- Portraits resurfaced after the war years, continuing with the popular postcard format.
- With soldiers returning home from war or young widows remarrying, wedding photographs, again often using a postcard format, became a staple of British family photo collections.
- However, the concept of capturing by photograph the wedding event itself came about only after the Second World War during the "wedding boom."
- These twentieth century portraits are what will form the bulk of most British family collections and are a treasure trove for family history research.
- Roll Film with multiple exposures were used until 1934.



The Wedding of Francis McMellon and Agnes Prescott at Whittle-le-Woods, August 1919.



Portrait of Thomas Prescott on a postcard, 1921.



Portrait of sisters Elizabeth and Monica Warbrick on a postcard, 1933.

WARTIME & POSTWAR PORTRAITURE

- Portrait-taking of soldiers persisted in the Second World War so you are likely to find these types of photographs in your collection.
- Weddings persisted throughout the war years but the festivities were indeed constrained due to rationing and of course young women had to wait for their fiancés to gain leave for weddings to take place.
- You will find postcard portraits in your collections from this era because young women used to have their images taken to send to their loved ones fighting abroad.
- It was also during this time that what I call "white border photographs" became very popular thanks to the Kodak Brownie camera.
- These will likely be numerous in your collection from the twentieth century, especially from the 1930s to the mid-to-late 1960s. These photographs were often small and always in black and white.



A basic Brownie camera.



White border photograph of the wedding of Harold Prescott and Elsie Cowburn, 3rd July 1940.



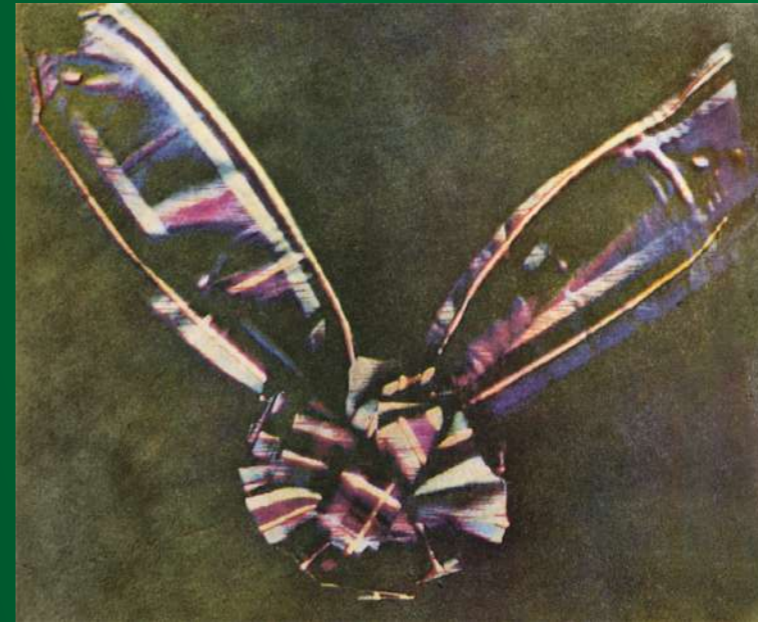
Portrait of Henry Livesey in military uniform, 1940.



Portrait of Monica Warbrick taken during WW2 for her fiancé George Bolton, 6th September 1944.

COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHY

- English photographer Thomas Sutton took the first colour photograph in 1861 of a tartan ribbon.
- However, colour photography remained niche and colour paper prints were very difficult and expensive to make.
- Only in 1935 did colour photography become commercially viable when Kodak introduced Kodachrome film. The image was a slide which is a positive image in colour on the film exposed in the camera.
- Kodak later introduced Kodacolor film which grew in popularity in the 1960s due to it being reasonably priced for photographers. The film gave colour negatives that could be printed on to Ektacolor Paper in a lab or even in a home darkroom.
- Colour photographs then became the norm for optional white border photographs through the 1960s to the early 1980s.



A tartan ribbon, the first colour photograph taken by Thomas Sutton using James Maxwell's method in 1861.



A Kodachrome colour photograph of San Francisco in the 1930s.



White border colour photograph of Hilda Warbrick with her daughter Louise on holiday, 1973.

MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY

- 35mm Film was used from 1934 to the early 2000s, Polaroid from 1948 to the early 2000s and digital cameras since 1969 to the present day.
- Disposable cameras by Fujifilm became popular from 1986 while instant cameras by Polaroid reached their peak in the early 1990s.
- However, by the mid-to-late 1990s, digital cameras had become commonly available to the general public, rendering companies like the Polaroid Corporation redundant which went bankrupt in 2001.
- Since then digital cameras have become confined to professional photographers with most people using their smart phones to take digital images, many of which remain unprinted.



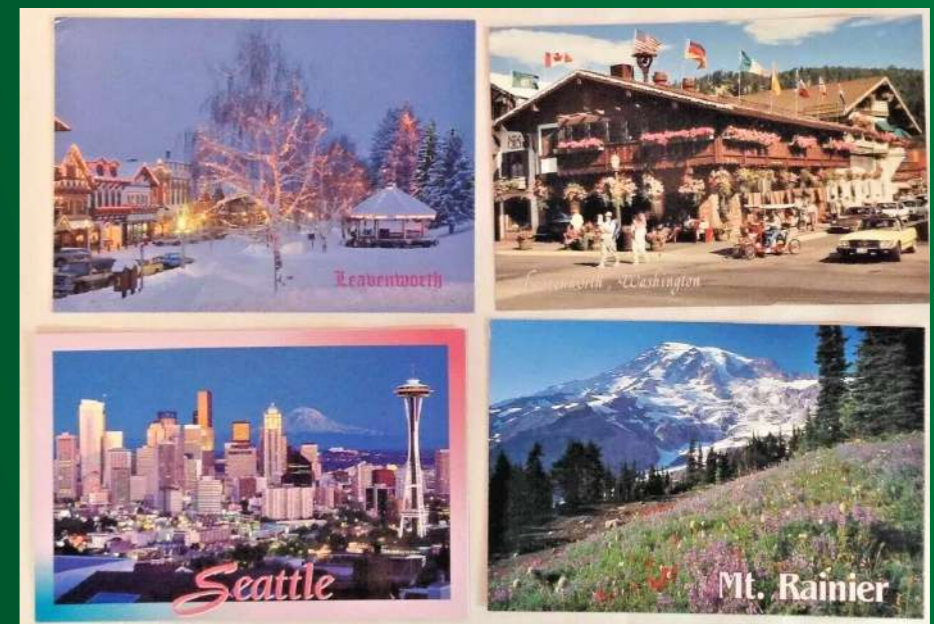
Example of a polaroid photograph from the year 2000.

THE FATE OF POSTCARDS

- Alongside the popularity in postcards from the early 1900s, the hobby of collecting stamps (philately) saw its popularity rise from the middle of the twentieth century.
- The popularity of postcards began to slowly decline after the Second World War, being referred to as "the poor man's telephone."
- Publishers made efforts to revive postcarding by creating glossy, colourful postcards which sustained their use into the 1990s and early 2000s until the rise of social media in 2007.
- Since then, the closure of many long-established postcard printers has taken place including J Salmon Ltd in 2017.



Stamp collection book.



Some American postcards from the 1990s.



ATTIRE

Carte de visite of young woman but with no details of photographer

EXAMPLE OF SPOTTING FEATURES

Estimated date: 1858

Notice the very plain background/setting which indicates an earlier photograph and not taken in a study but at the couple's home.

The line border and frame style are common for other ambrotypes.

Notice how the man places his arm around his wife and lets his hand hang, indicating a state of relaxation which is unusual for Victorian portraits.

The man wears a large cravat, waistcoat and blazer.



Notice the damage to the top of the collodion positive sustained over time.

The lady's hair has a centre parting and she wears a bonnet. She wears crinoline and a shawl.

There is gilding present on the lady's wedding ring.

Consider the provenance of a particular item to help corroborate its age. For example, this ambrotype can be traced back to 1858 by whom it was passed down to through inheritance.

WOMEN'S FASHION



Circa 1870



Circa 1883



Circa 1897

WOMEN'S FASHION

Line and decoration

- 1845-1850: Sleeves fairly close-fitting.
- 1845-1852: Skirts smooth and bell-shaped.
- 1850-1865: Bodice above crinoline cut to mould figure.
- 1850-1867: Crinolines.
- 1870-1880: Complicated designs; mixture of colours and materials in same dress; lots of trimmings, frills, ribbons, stitching, buttons and fringing.
- 1880-1885: High, jutting bustle; princess line (no separation at the waist); waist tight, long, coming to point.
- 1880-1890: Tight corsetry; 'natural history' decoration on hats and dresses.
- 1890-1900: Tailored suit with blouse; jet and lace; skirts plain and fashion emphasis on top half of body.

Remember from the previous workshop:
these are only general rules and should not be used as the sole determiner of a photograph's age.



Carte de visite of lady from Bradford wearing a high jutting bustle taken by Albert Sachs, circa 1883.



Carte de visite of Agnes Bamber née Moon taken by Tattersall & Rogers of Accrington, 1881.

WOMEN'S FASHION

Bodice, sleeves and skirt (1843-1870)

- 1843-1852: Sleeve fitted fairly close to arm; smooth, bell-shaped skirts.
- 1850-1855: Skirts increasingly full.
- 1850-1865: Bodice cut to mould figure.
- 1854-1864: Epaulettes, often braided.
- 1855-1865: Cage crinoline.
- 1860-1865: Sloping shoulder; wide, long sleeves.
- 1860-1866: Upper sleeve puffed, low-set.
- 1865-1870: Skirts less full.



Ambrotype of Agnes Moon wearing crinoline, bonnet and shawl, 1858.



Carte de visite of lady from Bradford taken by Thomas Charles Bridges.

WOMEN'S FASHION

Bodice, sleeves and skirt (1868-1900)

- 1868-1875: Sloping bustle; flat-fronted skirts.
- 1870-1880: Simple bodice, high-set sleeves.
- 1870-1875: Cuirass (breastplate) bodice.
- 1870-1880: Sleeves higher, set in at shoulder.
- 1880-1885: High bustle.
- 1880-1890: Figure-fitting bodice buttoned to throat.
- 1887-1993: Narrow sleeves, peaked at shoulder.
- 1890-1900: Elaborate blouses, boleros, jackets , jacket-style dress bodice; three-quarter sleeve, frilled; overskirts disappear; simpler skirts, smooth over hips, flared, gored.



Carte de visite of lady from Preston by J Monk, circa 1880.



Carte de visite of young girl from Bradford taken by George Rushforth.

WOMEN'S FASHION

Head and neck

- 1843-1852: Hair in dangling side ringlets, bun at back; bonnet with ties and forward-pointing brim; small, white indoor caps.
- 1850-1864: Plain hairstyles, smoothed back into bun from central parting; high necklines, small collars and brooches.
- 1855-1865: Central parting, ears covered.
- 1864-1870: Ears exposed; chignon hairstyle.
- 1868-1880: Princess Alexandra style fringe; ornate hairstyles, artificial hair; back of head echoes shape of back of skirt.
- 1870-1880: Varied necklines, frills, scarves, jabots.
- 1880-1890: Some fringes, often crimped, tousled, straggly.
- 1890-1900: Hats often small, firmly centred; hair often in bun, fringes rare; loop or coil of hair at back of head.



Carte de visite of lady from Halifax by Ezra Greaves.



Carte de visite of a member of the Moon family wearing the Princess Alexandra fringe taken by Edmund Eccles of Bury, circa 1876.

MEN'S FASHION



Circa 1869



Circa 1882

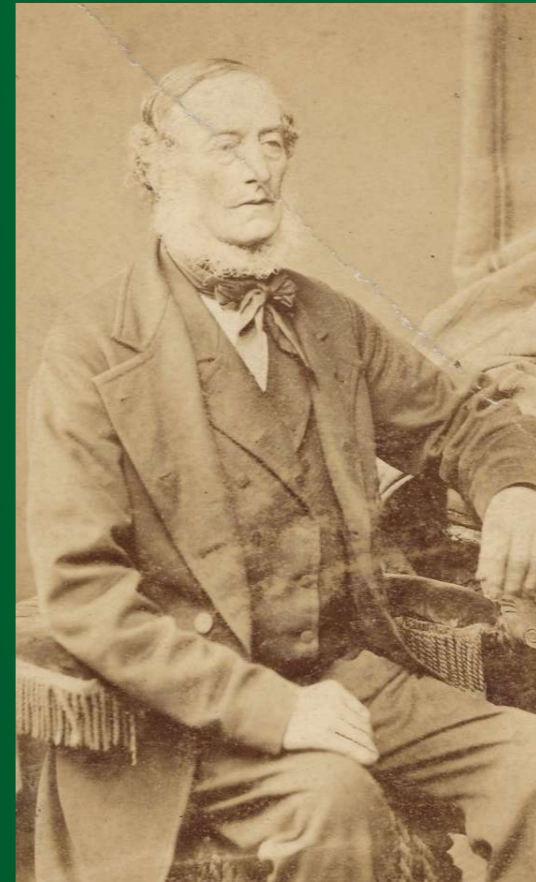


Circa 1897

MEN'S FASHION

Trunk and limbs

- 1843-1855: Tight suits, cut close to body; fancy waistcoats.
- 1843-1863: Dark jacket with light trousers.
- 1848-1875: Waistcoats may not match.
- 1855-1872: Raised side seams on trousers.
- 1864-1871: Lounge suits with deep cuffs.
- 1868-1875: Short jackets for younger men.
- 1870-1880: Suits tighter, often double-breasted.
- 1890-1895: Peg-top revival.
- 1890-1900: Lounge suit very popular; baggier look to suits; dinner jacket; cummerbund; pressed trousers; yoked Norfolk jacket.



Carte de visite of man from Chorley taken by Berry Brothers, circa 1869.

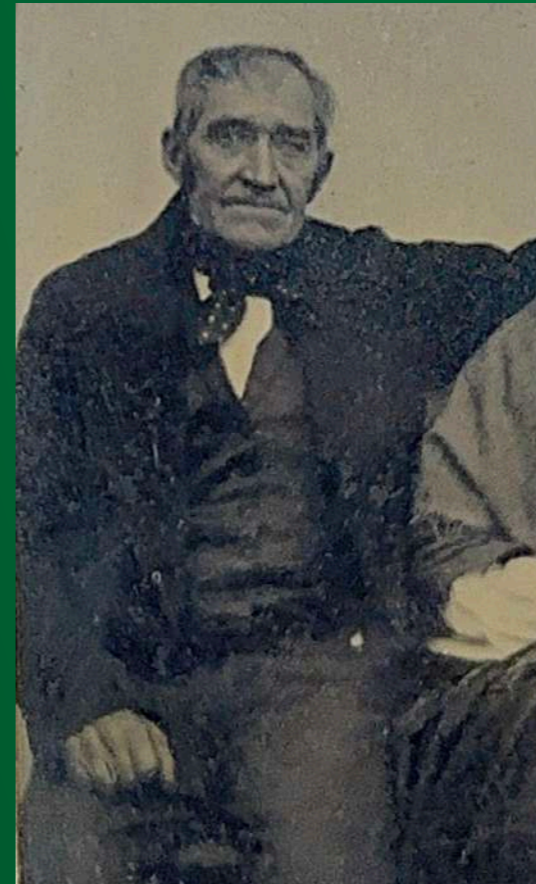


Carte de visite of man from Bradford taken in The Eclipse Photographic Rooms.

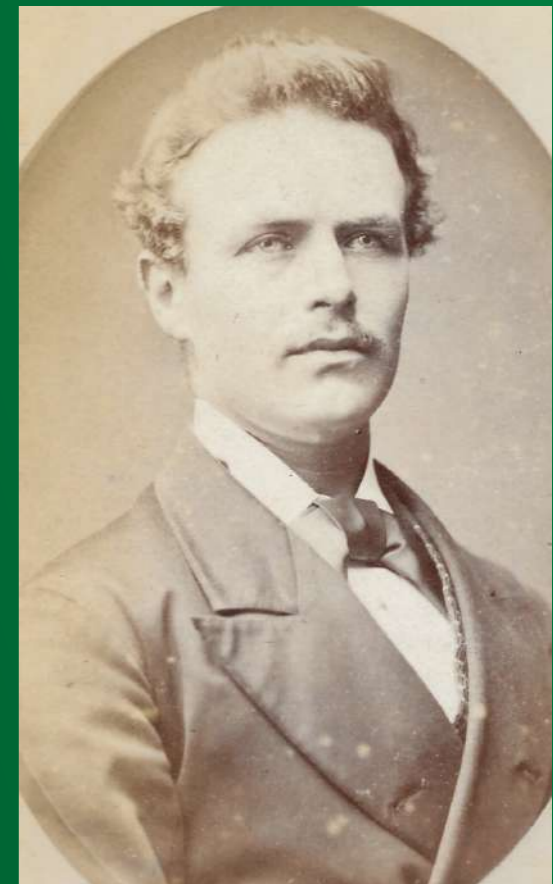
MEN'S FASHION

Head, neck and feet

- 1843-1848: Very high top hats.
- 1843-1852: High coat, shirt collars, large cravats.
- 1843-1864: Flat sided top hat brims.
- 1850-1860: Highish crowned top hats; large, loose cravats.
- 1858-1872: Top hat crowns often low; pudding-basin bowler.
- 1864-1871: Narrower ties.
- 1865-1900: Curved sides to top hat brim.
- 1871-1881: Spats.
- 1876-1882: Boaters become popular.
- 1885-1900: Top hat crowns often low; very high shirt collars (reaching 3" in 1899).



Ambrotype of Ralph Moon wearing waistcoat and large cravat, 1858.



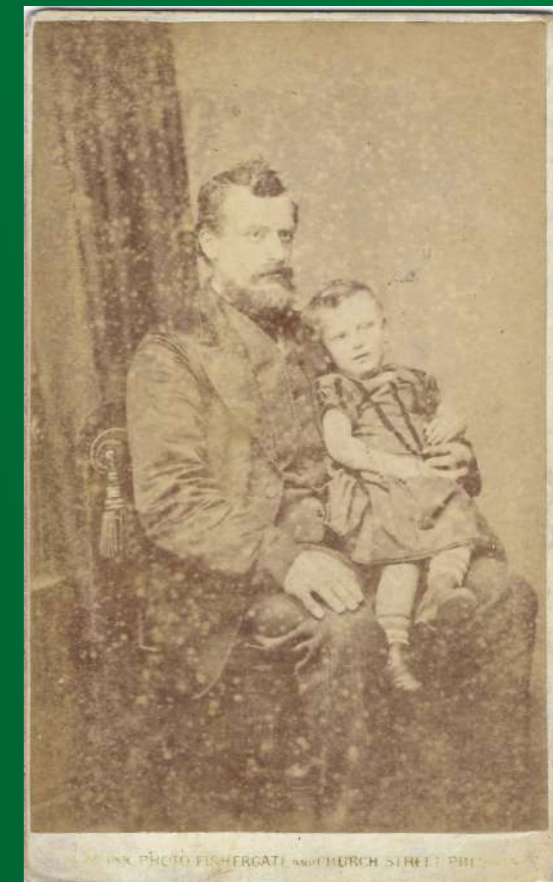
Carte de visite of man from Bradford taken by Albert Sachs.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

- 1843-1851: Full-length trousers for boys.
- 1848-1865: Short crinolines for girls, showing pantaloons.
- 1850-1900: Trouser length according to age (dresses for very young boys).
- 1860-1880: Height of taste for dressing sisters alike.
- 1870-1880: Elaborate and complicated girls' dresses.
- 1870-1900: Sailor suits for boys.
- 1880-1900: Sailor top with skirt for girls.
- 1885-1900: Smocked yokes common; Little Lord Fauntleroy look popular.
- 1890-1900: Some lace-up shoes; sombre, adult-looking clothes for both sexes; occasional off-the-shoulder shift, bare feet and legs for babies.



Carte de visite of young boy in dress taken by W. H. Ledgard of Bradford. The practice of breeching — the occasion in which a boy was first dressed in breeches or trousers — was common in the Western world until the early 20th century. Boys remained unbreeched until an age that varied between two and eight.



Carte de visite of a father with likely his unbreeched son from Preston taken by J Monk.



ITEMS AND PURPOSE

Carte de visite of woman taken by T. Illingworth of Halifax

COMPOSITION

- Is the subject sitting or standing?
- Are they leaning against a chair?
- Is the subject holding any items? Do those items hold any symbolic significance?
- Might there be a special purpose for which the portrait was taken?
- What occasion might the portrait have been taken to commemorate?



Carte de visite of man seated beside a table with book.



Carte de visite of woman holding a book.

COMPOSITION

- 1858-1870: Seated subjects often reading.
- 1860-1870: Full-length figure (standing or sitting), feet visible.
- 1865-1875: Interior-to-exterior view through window or arch.
- 1867-1878: Seats used more for leaning on than sitting.
- 1869-1888: Three-quarter length figures.
- 1885-1900: Head and shoulders shots.
- 1890-1900: Vignettes come into use.



Carte de visite of woman leaning against a chair, 1872.



Carte de visite of young woman leaning against a chair covered in fur taken at Rembrandt House, Manchester, by R. Banks.

ITEMS

- 1885-1900: Bicycles sometimes used as props.
- Holding a letter or book common.
- Holding a tissue.
- Holding a basket of flowers or fruit.
- Holding a hat.
- Furs and cushions sometimes used for decoration or leaned against.



Vignette postcard featuring a woman carrying a tissue, 1897.



Carte de visite of lady holding a basket of feathers by T. Illingworth of Halifax

PURPOSE

- Anniversary portrait
- First Holy Communion portrait
- Coming-of-age portrait
- Wedding portrait
- Mourning portrait: became popular in the 1860s following Queen Victoria pictured following the death of Prince Albert in 1861.
- Just for fun!
- Taken as a gift.
- Portraits of couples, of siblings or portraits of individuals.
- Family portraits



Obverse side of a *carte de visite* of Elizabeth Moon commemorating her First Holy Communion, 1865.



Carte de visite of Agnes Moon in mourning after the death of her husband Ralph, 1863.



The 1858 ambrotype of Ralph and Agnes Moon may have been taken as a gift for their teenage granddaughter Mary Moon whose name is written on the reverse side.



5 MINUTE INTERLUDE

*Portrait of child by Queens photographer
(must have been taken after 1886)*

An antique photograph album is the central focus, lying on a light-colored, marbled surface. The album's cover is a faded, yellowish-brown color with a decorative title page. The title, "Album", is written in a large, ornate, gothic-style font, surrounded by delicate floral and vine illustrations. Several vintage photographs are scattered around the album. One is a small, square black and white photo of a man in a suit standing next to a vintage car. Another is a larger, rectangular black and white photo of a group of four people—three women and one man—standing outdoors in front of trees. A third is a vertical, sepia-toned oval portrait of a young man in a dark suit. Below these, there's a color photo of two people standing in a field. To the right, a larger, rectangular color photo shows a young child in a white dress standing in a field. In the bottom left corner, a pair of white, textured gloves is visible, resting on a stack of papers. The overall scene is a collection of historical photographic artifacts.

SORTING, STORING & PRESERVING ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

HANDLING ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

- The first principle is that we should focus on directly touching the antique photographs the least amount possible.
- It is best to wear clean, cotton gloves when handling old photographs.
- Touching the print side of an old photograph with your fingers leaves behind oils that can damage.
- There are two approaches when it comes to what to do with antique photographs in traditional albums: leave them be or take them out.
- I opt for the latter approach for reasons of both preservation and easier viewing the reverse side without causing damage to the photograph.



Image by Meg MacDonald.

- This is because the longer the photographs are left exposed in albums, the more they will deteriorate over time. The photographs are more likely to suffer from discolouration, scratching and other marks, damaged edges or even become torn.
- Plus, the albums themselves are precious items that deserve their own care and preservation which can be more difficult when they are filled with photographs.
- If the photograph is stuck down, there are a few options for you to try...

UNSTICKING OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

- Use a piece of unwaxed dental floss and run it between the picture and the album page with a gentle sawing motion.
- Un-du is an adhesive remover that should help with safely removing photographs. It comes with an attached tool to help you get the Un-du solution safely under the photo to help release it. It is safe for use on the back of the photos, but be careful not to get it on the images themselves.
- Slide a micro spatula gently under the edge of the photograph and then use a hairdryer on its lowest power setting but medium heat to heat the spatula as you slide it slowly under the photo. This may heat the glue enough to help you remove the photo safely from the album. Be careful to keep the hairdryer pointed away from the photo itself.



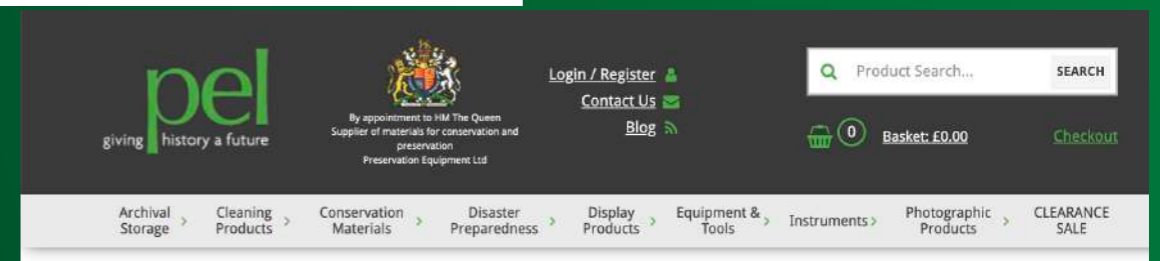
PRESERVING ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

- Remove any glue, tape, staples, rubber bands or paper clips from your antique photographs before placing them in acid-free plastic wallets. The photographs need to be kept separate from each other so each needs an individual wallet.
- If you wish to frame your old photographs, have the photograph duplicated and frame the copy as putting the original on display under glass will make it fade over time. Keep the original away from light as much as possible to preserve it.
- Additionally, ensure you or the professional framer you pay use acid-free mats to keep the photograph from touching the glass and acid-free backboards to avoid the image deteriorating over time.



PRESERVING ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

- For smaller antique photographs, you can purchase A5 acid-free plastic wallets. Otherwise, A4 acid-free plastic wallets will suffice.
- You can purchase envelopes for placing your old photographs in but I think this defeats the purpose of viewing the photographs.
- Transparent but acid-free plastic wallets serve to both protect and display antique photographs so that they can be equally enjoyed and preserved.
- Keep photographs out of attics, garages, and basements where they'll be subject to extreme temperature fluctuations and excessive humidity. The best place to store them is in a file on a bookshelf or filing cabinet to ensure their safety.



Visit www.preservationequipment.com for a wide range of preservation and archival products.

SORTING ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

- Once you have collected your materials for preservation and storage, the task of sorting your antique photographs awaits you.
- This is not something that should be rushed, but instead taken slowly and enjoyed.
- There are four stages to sorting your antique photographs that I will now go through.
- These stages are designed to ensure your antique photographs are preserved and categorised but also displayed for enjoyment.



Some websites suggest labelling old photographs by writing on the reverse side but I would definitely avoid this.

SORTING STAGES

1

Make high quality scans (best at 1200 DPI) of each your antique photographs so that you have digital copies on your computer. In the caption, add a year (month or day if you can) and then give a short description of who is in the photograph and where they are. This will help with sorting your physical photographs.

2

For each of your acid-free plastic wallets, insert one photograph and to the outside of the wallet attach a sticky label and write on it the date you think the photograph was taken and other key details such as who is in the photograph and where it was taken.

3

Place the plastic wallets into a lever arch file which not only allows you to sort the photographs from earliest to newest but also gives them greater protection and makes them easier to view.

4

You should then begin to fill in your log sheets which will allow you to add a longer description for each of your photographs. You may wish to assign your photograph with a code so you can easily identify each and to distinguish between different family collections in your possession.

REMAINDER OF TODAY'S WORKSHOP

- Now begin to fill out the Log Sheets for each of your photographs by using the techniques shown.
- Use the handbook available to you and help each other by comparing your photographs.

1

Categorise the photograph by photographic method or mount type to ascertain its era of origin

2

Consider features in the background and setting of the photograph including composition, purpose and items

3

Consider the attire of the subjects in the photograph to help corroborate the era

4

Consider the photographer who took the photograph; is their logo elaborate or simple?; where was their studio?

5

Use family history resources to help determine the identity of the subjects and add more context

Antique Photograph Log Sheet Example

Mount type and description of photograph subjects

Mount type - *Ambrotype*

Description - *Ambrotype portrait of husband and wife Ralph and Agnes Moon taken at Woodcock Hall. "Mary Moon 1858" marked on reverse side.*

Key features for helping with date estimation

Clothing features - Mr Moon wears a large dotted cravat and Mrs Moon wears crinoline and a bonnet. Mrs Moon's ring has been touched up with a hint of gold, a type of gilding that was a common practice among those who developed collodions, usually to emphasise jewellery.

Background and composition - the simplicity of their clothing and the setting.

Curious is how Mr Moon has placed his arm behind (though not around) his wife with his hand left hanging, thus showing a sense of relaxation.

Photographer - likely taken by Mr Robert Pateson who was as a collodion photographer in the autumn of 1858. Mr Pateson people's homes.

Estimated date of photograph

Estimated date - *1858*

the handbook of ANTIQU PHOTOGRAPHS

A GUIDE TO DATING NINETEENTH
CENTURY FAMILY PORTRAITS

Brandon Reece Taylorian





THANK YOU FOR
ATTENDING

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*Carte de visite of man by Albert
Sachs of Bradford.*