

# Victorian tissues

## Not something to be sniffed at!

by Ron Cosens

*How come that so many Victorian cartes de visite and cabinet cards are in such good condition considering that they are all well over 100 years old? One of the reasons is because they were originally recognised as being fragile as well as vulnerable to damp conditions, grubby fingers and too much sunlight.*

The Victorian Photographers used several means to protect their precious photographs and these included

- presenting photographs in specially made and printed cardboard boxes
- mailing photographs in specially designed and stiffened envelopes - is nothing new?!
- providing glassine pockets to put the photographs into
- selling albums especially designed to house cartes de visite and cabinet cards
- picture frames of all shapes and sizes
- special forceps made for safely extracting photographs from albums.

However, there was one other fascinating method of protecting those precious memories. By about 1875 someone decided that it would be a good idea to gum a piece of paper, usually made of tissue, to the back of the photo mount and to fold it over the front of the mount to protect the image. However, by 1901 these tissues started to fall out of use, presumably because of the expense of buying them and the time required to glue them to the carte de visite mounts of the day. It also became obvious that 99% of the tissues were ripped off and thrown away prior to

*Macnab of Glasgow –  
CdV back and tissue*

the photograph being slipped into the slots in the custom designed albums that were universally in use.

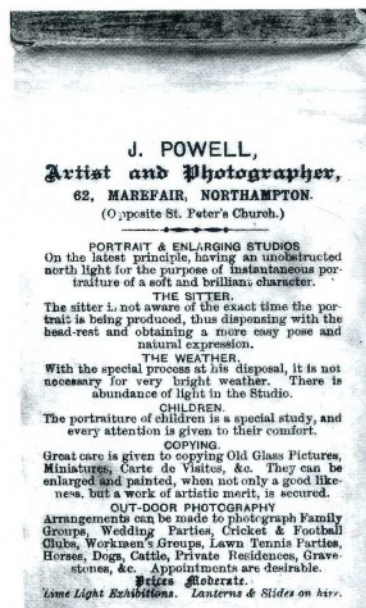
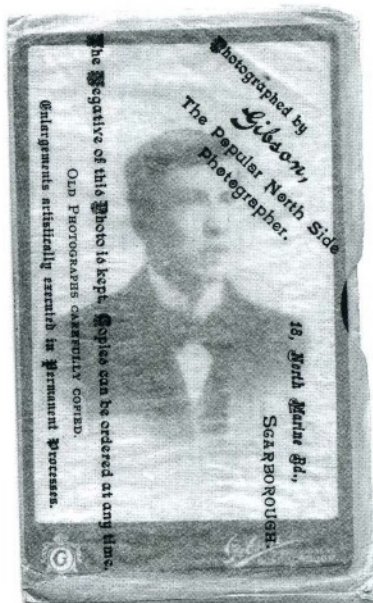
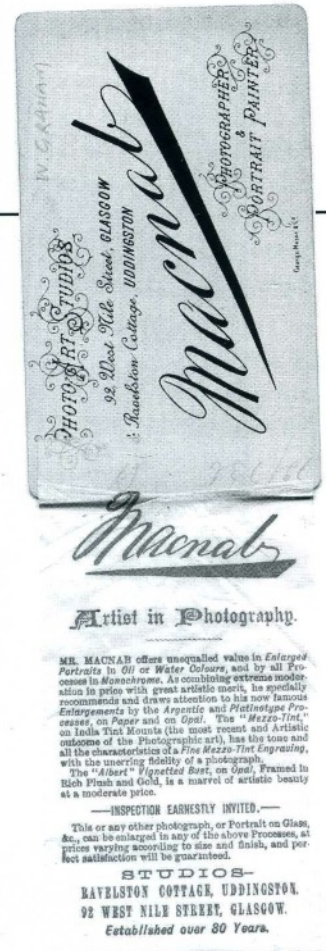
It was not long after their introduction that the tissues started to be pre-printed with all of the usual marketing information that was often found on carte de visite mounts such as

- the photographer's name and address
- services and processes offered
- medals awarded
- images of studios etc.
- instructions regarding proof copies etc.

Some tissues, however, were solely decorative and they fall into several distinct categories such as copies of the designs that were printed on the backs of carte de visite and cabinet card mounts; classical ladies, cherubs, angels etc.; birds; children; oriental subjects.

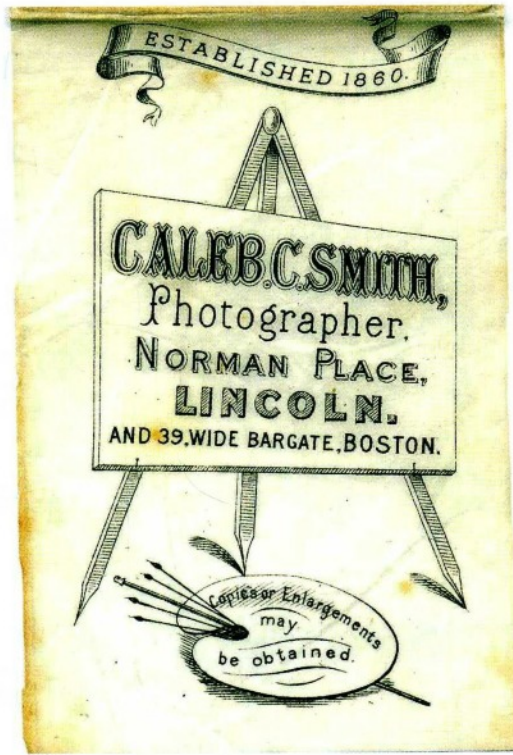
The analysis in this article is based on a collection of 481 tissues attached to Victorian photographic mounts - 330 tissues on cartes de visite and 151 tissues on cabinet cards. Many tissues were printed without a printer's name on them (44% of the sample) - but from the number of examples seen, some of these tissues were obviously produced on a national scale whilst others were supplied entirely locally. Tissues with printer's names represent the remaining 56% of the total studied and the range of firms involved was surprisingly quite few in number - see table 1, page 49.

Interestingly, over 99% of all tissues which have printers' names on, and which are held in the archive, were used by English photographers with only one customer in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. Very strange. However, tissues were also used abroad.



*Above left: A protective cdv pocket - the photograph clearly visible within.*

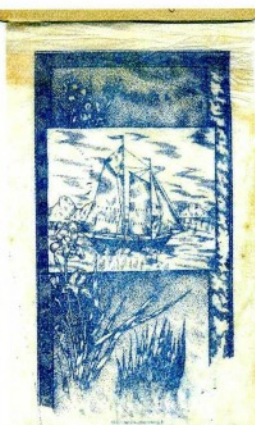
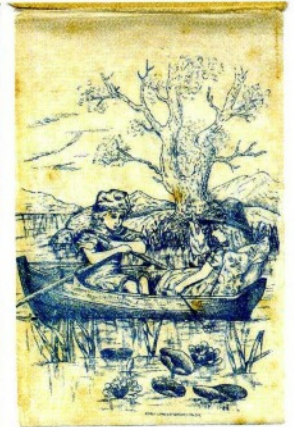
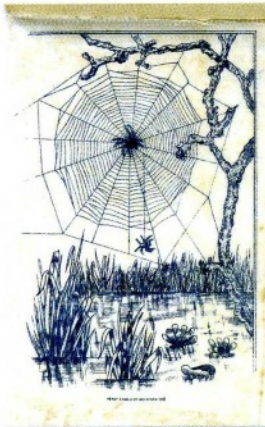
*Top right: Instructions, instructions, instructions!*



Left: Typical oriental design and an 'arty' easel & palette design

Below: Lund tissue designs numbers 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54

Bottom: Lund tissue designs numbers 55, 56, 57, 60 and 61



It is noteworthy that some designs were sold by more than one firm. For instance both the popular Windmill design (see below) and the Spider Web design (see below) were printed and sold by Lund and by Fallowfield, which indicates that there must have been a connection between the two firms. Other designs were also sold by more than one producer such as the 'Bamboo & Two Birds' by both Marion and Abraham, and 'Lady with Star' by REG G E & C and by Fallowfield.

### The Lund empire

As can be seen from the table on page 49, the most prolific producer was, by far, Percy Lund & Co. of Bradford who sold tissues in the UK as well as supplying customers abroad in New Zealand, Malta and Bermuda - and probably many other countries as well.

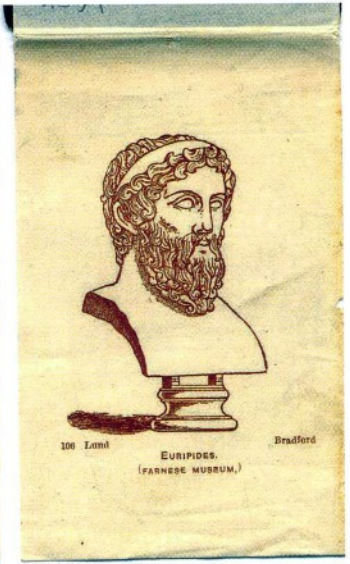
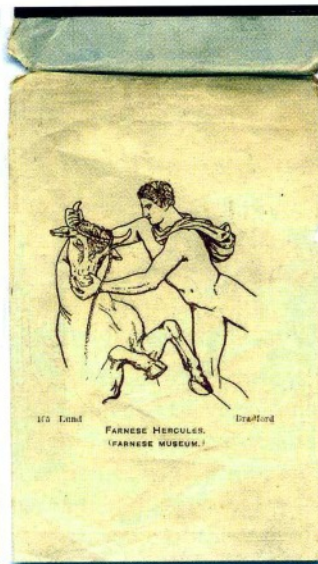
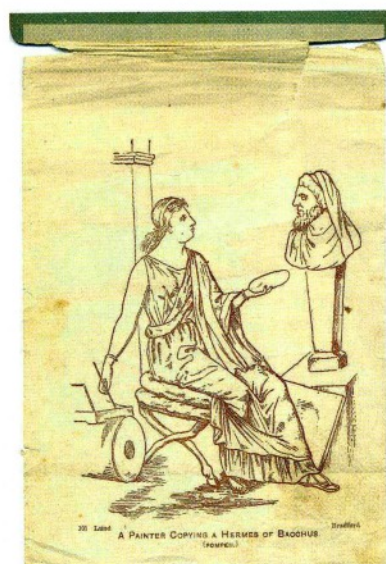
Percy Lund & Co. produced two main series of tissue designs as well as having other connections with the pho-



Above: Lund tissue designs numbers 62, 63, 65 and 70

Left: Lund tissue designs numbers 73, 76 and 77

Below: Lund tissue designs numbers 101, 102, 105 and 106



tographic trade; they sold photographic forceps for extracting cartes de visite from albums, published the Photographer's World in the 1880s, sold studio props and furniture, printed and published the splendid Penrose Annual from 1895 until 1994 AND they became leading printers of postcards in Bradford from the early 1900s as the picture postcard craze took off.

Graham Hall from Bradford is the leading researcher on

the Lund empire; he introduced his 2009 biography of them thus:

The printing industry has been massively important to the city of Bradford for well over a hundred and fifty years and despite a diminishing number of companies involved in such work, particularly over the last thirty years or so, the area continues to employ a substantial amount of people within it. To single out one local company which has

not only been at the centre of the industry locally but nationally as well, with a world-wide reputation, we merely have to turn to Lund Humphries.

They became leaders in many aspects of printing - pioneers in fact - and were certainly looked upon by their peers as one of a handful of companies nationally who were at the very peak of high quality printing, being innovators setting standards recognised throughout the world. Their reputation became second to none, eventually employing over four hundred people.

For details of the tissues in the Victorian Image Collection that were produced by Lund, see table 2 below.

Interestingly the designs were printed on cabinet card size tissues and on carte de visite size tissues BUT although the designs were basically the same for both sizes the quality of the drawing of the cdv tissues was far inferior. So, whilst tissues, or even the remnants of them, can help us to date our cartes de visite they are rarely seen in their original, undamaged state. Nevertheless, they are little works of art and a gallery of designs is shown.

■ *Should anyone have examples of the missing Lund tissue designs or the names of any other tissue printers, please do let me know and get in touch at [www.cartedevsite.co.uk](http://www.cartedevsite.co.uk) or 01751 477790.*

**Table 1: the range of firms involved**

Exact name (in alphabetical order sorted by Short Name)	Short Name	No. of Designs	No. of Different Customers
Abraham London	Abraham	3	4
Adams & Co London	Adams	2	2
REG E B	B	5	11
BEECROFT READING	Beecroft	1	1
De Gruchy & Co London	De Grouchy	3	18
De Gruchy & Co London EC	De Grouchy	1	1
REG G E & C	E	6	7
ELLIS QUEEN'S ROAD	Ellis	1	1
FALLOWFIELD LONDON	Fallowfield	5	4
Hill Siffken & Co Ltd North Road London N	Hill Siffken	1	1
GEO HOUGHTON & SON LONDON	Houghton	1	1
Lund Bradford	Lund	4	5
P L & CO BFD (founded 1887)	Lund	1	1
P Lund & Co BRADFORD (founded 1887)	Lund	1	1
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD (founded 1887)	Lund	20	41
PERCY LUND & Co Ltd BRADFORD (founded 1895)	Lund	1	3
PERCY LUND, HUMPHRIES & Co Ltd BRADFORD (founded 1896)	Lund & Humphries	1	1
Marion & Co	Marion	1	2
Marion, Imp. Paris	Marion	7	9
Marion, Imp. Paris Copyright	Marion	1	1
Marion, Imp. Paris Depose Copyright	Marion	1	1
REGD B P & S Co	P	3	4
Reeves & Hoare, London	Reeves & Hoare	1	9
ST PAUL'S PRINTING & LABEL Co BIRM	St Pauls	1	1
Unknown printer	Unknown	?	?

**Table 2: tissues in the Victorian Image Collection produced by Lund**

Exact company name	Lund's Code	Description of design	Date Range
P L & CO BFD		Fancy	1887-1895
P Lund & Co BRADFORD		Script	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	50	Spider's web	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	51	Lady with palette	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	52	Windmill	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	53	Bird & flowers	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	54	Boy & girl in boat	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	55	Lady with lamp on steps	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	56	Boy & girl with seaweed	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	57	Ship & irises	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	60	Cherub in circle	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	61	Cherub with book	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	62	Cherub with fir trees	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	63	Face & scroll	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	64	Child in circle with daisies 420G	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	65	Girl, moon & pinecones	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	70	Lady with holly	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	73	Lady with flowers in hair	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	76	Girl on fence	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD	77	Girl with sheep	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co BRADFORD		Script - photographer name & address etc.	1887-1895
Lund Bradford	101	Painter & Bacchus	1887-1895
Lund Bradford	102	Maiden painting	1887-1895
Lund Bradford	105	Hercules	1887-1895
Lund Bradford	106	Euripides	1887-1895
PERCY LUND & Co Ltd BRADFORD	60	Cherub in circle	1895-1896
PERCY LUND, HUMPHRIES & Co Ltd BRADFORD	63	Face & scroll	1896-1903c