

# CHRISTINA BROOM, HER WORK AS A PHOTOGRAPHER

## SYNOPSIS

### THEME:

This thematic postcard exhibit shows life in London, England from 1903 to 1939 as photographed by a very remarkable lady working in a male dominated society. Christina, who was completely self-taught had started to take pictures at age 40, sold many of her photos to newspapers and magazines. Turning these pictures into postcards and publishing them herself enabled her to support her family. Of the more than 2,500 pictures that Christina took in this time period with her standing ¼ plate box camera, then a half-plate box camera many have been printed as postcards. The production amounts of her postcards range from one up to unknown at this time.

### SCOPE:

This exhibit incorporates postcards, both mint and used, showing pictures from early street scenes, Royalty, military, portraits, and boat races. When she printed her postcards, Christina used the name "Broom" before 1912 and changed it to "Mrs. Albert Broom" after 1912. She had set up her booth in front of the Royal Mews and very quickly became known to members of the Household Cavalry. After becoming the Household Brigade's official photographer, a position she held from 1904 to 1939, she was also introduced to King Edward VII and he give her special facilities at the Royal Mews as a small recognition for her services.

When the nation went to war in 1914, Christina was called upon to record the preparations. For many young men her postcard was the last picture taken to send back home to their families. The soldiers were charged a tuppence (two pence) per postcard. During one night in 1914 she and her daughter printed 1,000 postcards for the soldiers.

### MATERIAL AVAILABILITY:

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War One has caused Christina Broom's once forgotten pictures to be exhibited in the Museum of London where the world's largest collection is held. Relatively few are found in private hands as the Guards Museum, London; the National Portrait Gallery; the Imperial War Museum, London; the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh; the Royal Maritime Museum, Greenwich; and several other museums have collections of her pictures.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Book, "Soldiers and Suffragettes: The Photography of Christina Broom" by Anna Sparham, Philip Wilson Publishers, London 2015; companion to Free Exhibition at Museum of London Docklands June 19 – Nov 01, 2015

"Christina Broom" & "Mrs. Albert Broom" information and images on the Internet

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Christina Broom (1862-1939)

She is credited to be Great Britain's first female press photographer. Completely self-taught, at the age of 40 she became the sole provider after her husband, Albert Broom suffered a severe injury in 1896 that prevented him from working. From 1903 until Albert's death in 1912 of tuberculosis, this very determined petite lady sold her pictures to many city newspapers and magazines. She continued to print & publish her very own pictures as postcards and was able to support her family. Winnifred Broom, her daughter quit school at 14 to assist her mom. More than 2,500 pictures were taken by Christina with her standing ¼ plate, then half-plate box camera at a time when postcards were all the rage. She reprinted the images that would sell to the public. The production amounts of her postcards range from one up to unknown at this time.

Plan:

Arial font is thematic – Times New Roman font is postcard information. The significant items will have a red border around them.

1. Early Photographs
2. Official Photographer
3. The Royal Mews
4. World War One (1914-1918)
5. Life After The Great War

Her envelope  
for the postcards  
people bought.



Christina Broom photographed by her daughter, Winifred Broom, with her half-plate camera prior to King Edward VII's funeral, May 1910. Copyright, Museum of London. This picture was used on her official press photographer's pass.

**Mrs. ALBERT BROOM,  
92, MUNSTER ROAD,  
FULHAM, LONDON.**

**Photographs of  
THE ROYAL MEWS,  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE.**