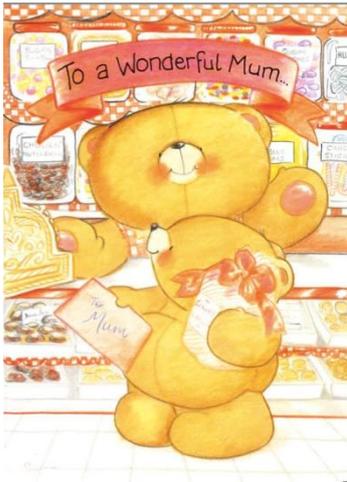


Press Information: Monday 25th November 2019

#cardtokeep campaign: harnessing the emotional power of greeting cards!

Amanda Fergusson, CEO of the Greeting Card Association, is available for interviews



As it celebrates its 100th anniversary, the GCA wants to hear your stories about sending and receiving greeting cards – from birthday and Christmas cards from late parents or grandparents to the first card your 30-something son or daughter sent you as a child!

The Greeting Card Association (GCA), the UK industry body representing the greeting card industry, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and wants to hear from members of the public about their experiences sending or receiving greeting cards. In this digital age, the GCA wants to champion the important role greeting cards play in all our lives – from a nation that sends more cards than any other.

“We want to hear from people about their own experiences of sending or receiving cards, as we add to our archive,” says Amanda Fergusson, Chief Executive of the GCA. “For example, someone might still have birthday or Christmas cards they received from their late parents or grandparents or treasured cards sent to relatives during times of war. Or a Valentine’s Card from that oh-so-secret admirer! We’d love to hear your stories and see your cards.”

People can upload photos or scans of their cards to the GCA Instagram ([@gca_uk](#)) using the hashtag #cardtokeep, #GCA100 or via email 100years@gca.cards. With their agreement, some of the stories and cards will be shared on www.thinkingofyouweek.cards, the website for the GCA’s annual initiative designed to inspire people to create a wave of love, caring and happiness by sending greeting cards to different people during the week.

With the help of some of its members – which include a wide range of publishers from international brands through to small creative local businesses, as well as High St retailers – the GCA has created an archive this year of greeting cards from across the decades. Designs from the 80s and 90s everyone will recognise (and might still have at home!) like Purple Ronnie, Groovy Chick or Athena as well as some outstanding examples of slightly more risqué or unPC designs from the 50s and 60s.

“The collection of cards we have already drawn together this year offers a fascinating insight into changes in tastes and attitudes,” says Amanda. “Greeting cards are such a reflection of the times in which they were created – for example those from the earlier 20th century are delicate and subtle, while by the time we reach the 1960s and 1970s, designs are bright and more striking, with their use of neon.”

The archive already has rare items too like the first Valentine’s card sent to ‘Ann’ at Hartwell House in Aylesbury nearly two centuries ago and one of the first ever commercially produced Christmas cards, published in 1843 by Sir Henry Cole, the founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Thinking of You Week

This initiative has been running for the last six years every September – and it’s proved so successful, the GCA’s counterparts in the US have adopted the idea! It is supported by Royal Mail who produce a special Thinking of You Week postmark and retailers including nationals like Paperchase and Scribbler alongside many independents throughout the regions.

“In this fast-paced world where people are often glued to their smartphone or tablet, it’s easy to forget what a wonderful feeling it is to receive – and send – a hand-written card,” says Amanda. “Texts and emails have their place but it makes people feel far more special and cared for to receive a card someone has spent time choosing for them – with the perfect image and/or words – and writing even just a simple message of warmth and friendship inside.

“Social media is brilliant for giving us an immediate insight into what friends and family might be experiencing. And what better way to act on that, than by sending them a card to show you care! That is something particularly prevalent among Generation Z and Millennials (18-34 year olds), who realise that to send a special message to someone they really care about, then sending a card is best. This is a trend being seen on both sides of the Atlantic.”



Then there’s the science...

Sending cards generates positive feelings and wellbeing – and that’s backed up by scientific research! In 2017, tests carried out under laboratory conditions by independent scientific research company Mindlab, on behalf of the Royal Mail, showed clearly there was a greater positive emotional response to handwritten letters and cards when compared to digital messages like email or social media. A group of volunteer mums took part in the study where their emotional brain activity was measured in response to different stimuli, recording twice the amount of happiness towards letters and cards than digital messages (see Notes for Editors below).

Who’s sending cards?

According to GCA’s own research (*UK Greeting Card Market Report 2019**), the UK greeting card industry is valued at over £1.7 billion at retail, with over three-quarters of these sales coming from what are called ‘everyday’ cards – birthday, occasions cards and also blank for your greeting, usually with a catchy message or eye-catching design on the front.

“There is plenty of evidence to show that Generation Z and Millennials (18-34 year olds) are fully engaged with cards and buy more volume than any other generation,” says Amanda. “This is an incredibly positive trend for the future of our industry. We still have a way to go to catch up with the US though – the US Postal Service reported 44 million extra cards were sent between 2017 and 2018 – which they say is due to Millennials.”

The British market is witnessing an increase in people spending money on cards for close friends and family while a growing area is pet cards – those being sent to or from a cat or a dog to a human! With the tough pressures on the high street too, it’s encouraging to see that more than 94% of sales come from individuals going out to the **shops** to buy their cards. Online sales of greeting cards accounted for up to 6% of the overall card market, mainly personalised.

** UK Greeting Card Market Report 2019 – carried out on behalf of the GCA by independent research company Echo Research, an award-winning market data company.*



Notes for Editors

Greeting Card Association (GCA) www.greetingcardassociation.org.uk. The Greeting Card Association is the trade association for the greeting card industry. Its aims are to represent, promote and celebrate this wonderfully innovative sector. The GCA has been the voice of the greeting card industry since 1919 and today comprises over 450 member publishers, specialist suppliers and retailers, large and small. It places particular focus on helping small creative businesses. An independent not for profit organisation owned by its members, it provides help, advice, support, specialist resources and membership services.

Thinking of You week (dates) www.thinkingofyouweek.cards. This is an international initiative to promote the emotional power of greeting cards “to create a wave of love, caring and happiness around the world”.

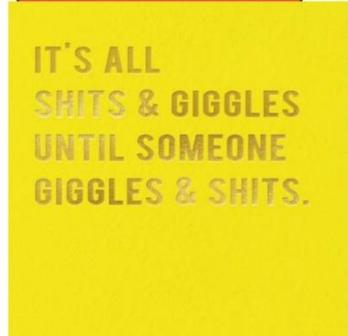
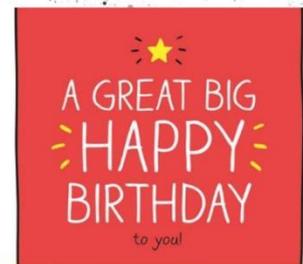
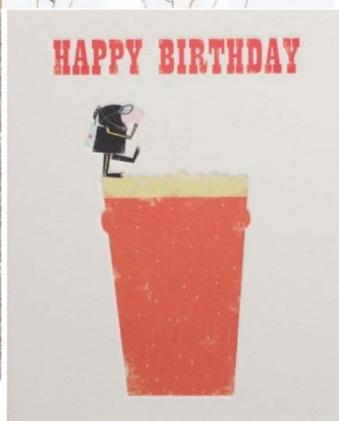
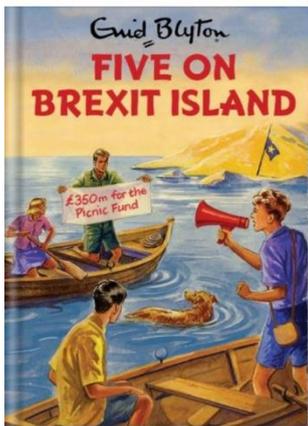
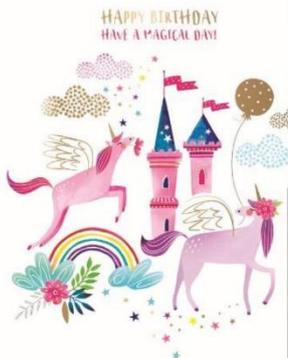
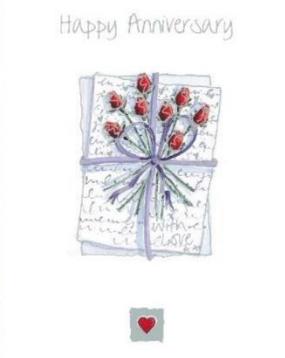
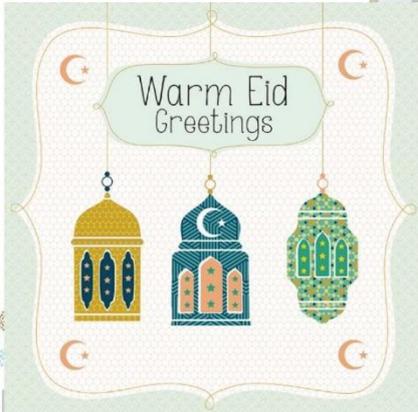
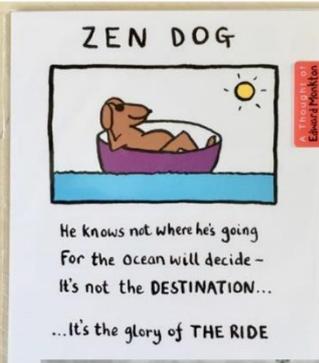
Mindlab research – carried out in 2017 on behalf of the Royal Mail. As part of the study, emotional activity was measured in response to different stimuli. The experiment involved volunteer mums being fitted with a cap and electrodes, which measured changes in voltage caused by cognitive activity in the brain. The electrical activity in the mums’ brains saw a greater positive emotional response to handwritten letters and cards when compared to electronic messages such as social network messages and emails. The Implicit Association Test saw mums having to associate words representing either happiness or sadness with cards and letters and electronic messages. Mums recorded twice the amount of happiness towards letters and cards to social media messages and three times more than email. They did not respond positively to tweets at all! Read the story [here](#).

www.greetingcardassociation.org.uk

2000s-2019



Despite being in his sixties, he still found it highly amusing to ring people's doorbells and run away.



1960s-1990s



1920s-1950s

