



Teddy bears by Margaret Tempest. Posted in 1949. A popular subject, reflected in a price of up to £18.

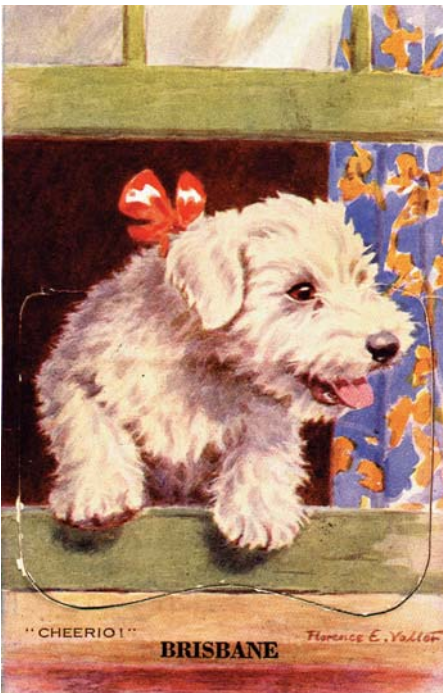


Beautiful, embossed greetings card. Post-1902. £6-8. Angels are a collected subject by themselves.

Beginner's Guide to Collecting Picture Postcards

The collecting of postcards is an enormous industry giving great pleasure to tens of thousands of people nationwide. Specialist postcard and collectors fairs abound and many of these can be found in our Diary Pages. Most antiques shops and centres carry stocks and wherever you go you can always find collectors browsing through the cards. We hope that in this three-page guide readers who have as yet not been bitten by the bug may find an incentive to set out on a very absorbing pastime.

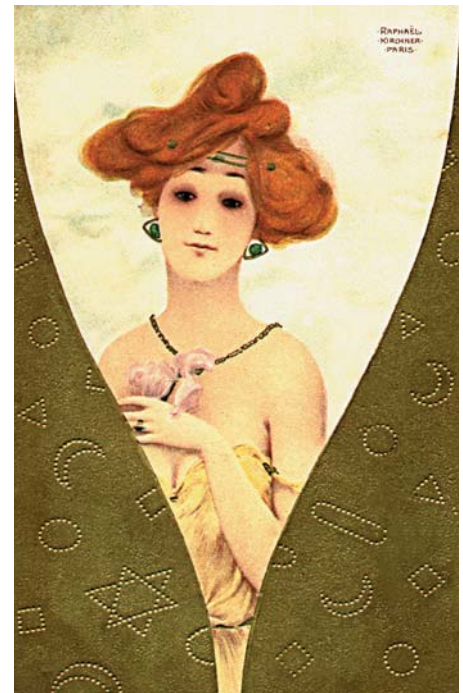
Written by Heidi Melhuish Images by Geoff Powell



Popular novelty 'pull-out' by Florence E. Valter. Published around the late 1940s-early 50s. £4-5.



Pretty glitter postcard for Christmas, post-1902. £6-8.



'Jewel', an Art Nouveau card by Raphael Kirchner. £75.

Postcards Market & Price Guide Postcards Market & Price Guide Postcards

The collecting of old picture postcards really began in the 1950s and grew in popularity in the 1970s. The hobby is alive and well today, and this article attempts to help those who wish to begin collecting. It mainly refers to cards published before the Second World War.

The first postcards, which were plain, were published in Austria in 1869. These were followed shortly afterwards by the first picture postcards, and as their use and popularity grew the British Post Office officially accepted them in 1894. Until 1902, these cards had an undivided back, where the address was written, with a small blank space on the front for the message.

In the early part of the twentieth century there was a huge craze for sending postcards. Many people saved the cards in albums. With telephones still a rare luxury, sending a postcard was the quickest way of getting a message from village to village and across the country. There were as many as five or six deliveries a day. Millions of cards were posted, mainly in Britain, Europe and the USA.

Due to low prices for most cards, in picture postcard collecting there is something for everyone. They cover almost every subject from dogs to disasters, battleships to boxing. Artist cards are one of the most popular collecting areas. The word 'artist' when used in terms of postcards means an artist who produced some images specially for postcards. Some artist cards can be as little as fifty pence, others are up to £600. Most are affordable, though, and can be quite easy to find. Subjects range from Art Nouveau to soldiers, pretty country landscapes to Bonzo the dog. Some of the most popular artists are Louis Wain, Florence Upton, Harry Payne, Mabel Lucie Atwell, and A.R. Quinton.

Erotic postcards are widely collected. Glamour cards are often just the head and clothed shoulders of a pretty Edwardian lady; erotic cards are either photographs or artist-drawn pictures of semi-clad or nude ladies. They can be quite 'naughty' and people who think of the Edwardians as prim and starchy are amazed how risqué some of their postcards are. Often they were too blatant or suggestive to send through the post which explains why so many are blank or have a message but no stamps or address. Cards like this are getting difficult to find. They are very popular in the USA and those that come up at auction here are often bought for high prices by collectors from America. Amongst the most popular artists are Raphael Kirchner, Xavier Sager, Herouard, and Ellam. Photographic nudes, of which there are many fakes, are usually French. These cost around £12 for the best examples.

Film star postcards are extremely popular, the most collected stars being the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy and Marilyn Monroe. The 'Picturegoer' series is particularly sought-after. There are literally thousands of cards featuring Edwardian actresses, as the ladies gave them out as promotional material. These are seldom more than £1-2 a card. Theatrical and cinema cards which carry genuine autographs are far more costly. Greetings cards form a large percentage of the postcards available to the collector. These are often sepia or black and white photos of flowers and a short verse. The deckle-edged cards from the 1920s are very common and should cost about fifty pence. If you wish to collect animal postcards you will find many greetings cards featuring dogs, kittens and birds. Some cards, especially those for Christmas, are particularly beautiful, often include glitter or gold embossing, and usually feature a traditional Father Christmas, angels, or children.

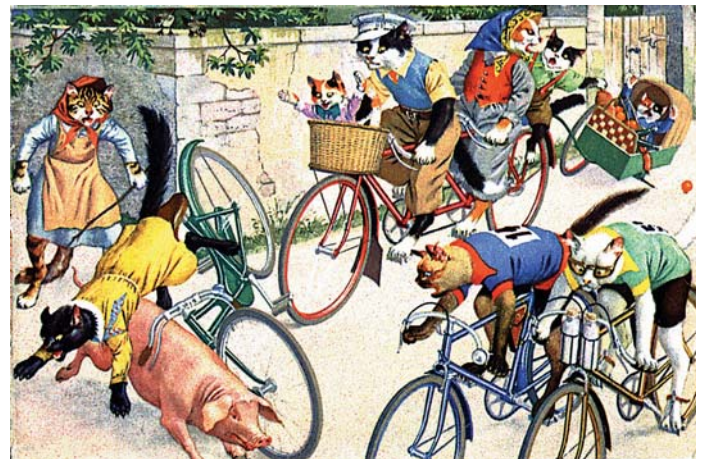
Topographical (street scenes) postcards are perhaps the most keenly collected and are an important primary source for local historians. Here prices can be quite high for rare cards. The most sought-after cards are those with good, clear views, preferably real photographs as opposed to a machine print, with plenty of human activity. A common postcard of an empty town centre is worth maybe a few pounds, whereas a less common card with people, horses, children, etc. can fetch over £25. Cards that reach these prices are



Film star postcards are extremely popular, the most collected stars being the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy and Marilyn Monroe. The 'Picturegoer' series is particularly sought-after. Marilyn Monroe card, probably from the early 1950s. £12-15.



Art Deco card by Phyllis Cooper, part of a series. The golly amongst the toy adds further interest. £8-10. circa late 1920s.



Amusing scene with cats. Unfortunately it is unsigned. Amongst the most popular animal cards are those which depict the animals dressed in clothes and performing human actions. Posted in 1959. Price £3-5.

COLLECTING & PRICING INFO

generally from the 1900s to 1910s, but some collectors are now beginning to save post-war topographical cards, as many towns and villages have changed greatly in the last fifty years. These cards can usually be found for about fifty pence. Nostalgia plays a big part in this collecting area!

Novelty cards include hold-to-light, where parts of the picture, for example of Father Christmas riding through the night sky, appears to be illuminated when held up to a window. Other novelties have pull-outs, a long strip of paper fixed under a flap on the front. The paper folds in concertina fashion and usually carries various black and white views of a town. Some cards have a strip on them to strike a match; others are decorated with real hair and look quite bizarre.

Postcard collecting is fun; searching through dealers' boxes for that special card, or discovering something new is all part of the pleasure of collecting.

Collecting Information

Where to find postcards

Postcard dealers can be found at almost any antique fair or flea market. There are also special postcard fairs, most of which tend to be quite small. The large postcard fairs in big cities can be overwhelming for the beginner. Postcards vary in price from dealer to dealer. There is a price guide, the *Picture Postcard Values* book, which lists every subject with a price estimate. Some dealers price below these suggested figures, others ask a lot more. Postcards can also be found in auctions, usually in large lots. There are also postcards for sale on the internet.

Information for collectors

Picture Postcard Values compiled by J.H.D. Smith. Annual price guide published by IPM, 39 The Rookeries, Marks Tey, (Colchester CO6 1DY. Telephone 01206 212223. *Picture Postcard Monthly* and *Picture Postcard Annual* is published by Reflections of a Bygone Age, 15, Debdale Lane, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5HT. Telephone 0115 937 4079.

Postcard clubs

There is probably a postcard club in your area which organises various activities; for example the Torbay Postcard Club holds an annual fair. For information contact Linda Toplis 01626 360396. There is also The Postcard Club of Great Britain, c/o Mrs. D. Brennan, 34, Harper House, St. James's Crescent, London SW9 7LW. Telephone 0171 771 9404.

The price guide refers to cards in perfect condition with no tears, creases, etc.



'La Mer fleurie' by Raphael Kirchner. The bathing suits are pure fantasy. 1910s. £25-30.



Every Day in Every Respect; I am getting Better and Better.

G. E. Studdy produced many images of Bonzo. Postmarked 1923. £6-8.



Real photograph of Shepperton United, 1922-23 season. My grandfather is in the front row, first on the right. £4-6. Perhaps this card could suggest a collecting theme for a budding young footballer or soccer fan.



Pretty Edwardian 'bathing belle'. £8-10. Postmarked 1904.



Advertising card by Beatrice Mallet, published by Tuck and Sons. Difficult to value. £10-15. 1920-30s.