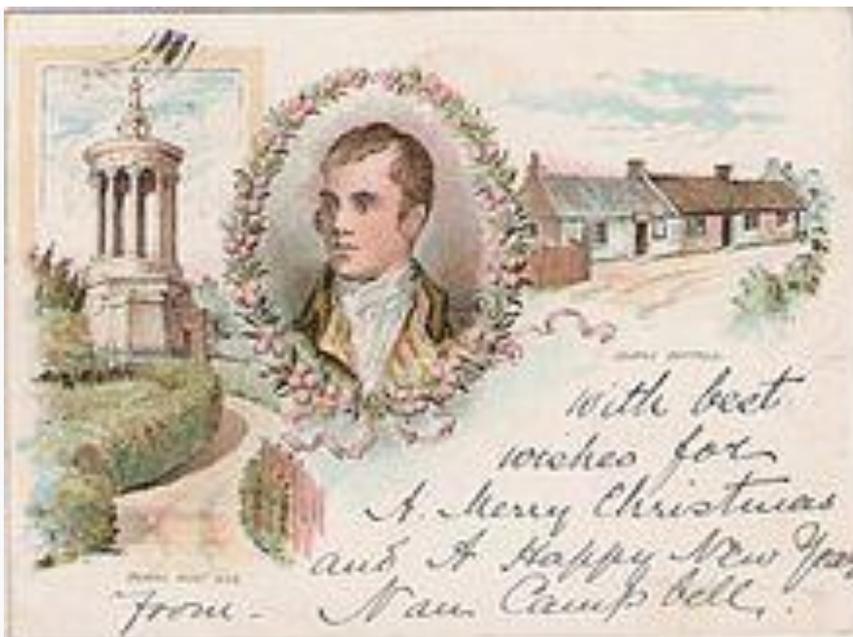


## A Bit about Postcards

A **postcard** is generally a rectangular piece of thick paper or thin cardboard intended for writing and mailing without an envelope. The earliest known picture postcard was a hand-painted design on card, posted in Fulham in London by the writer Theodore Hook to himself in 1840, and bearing a penny black stamp. He probably created and posted the card to himself as a practical joke on the postal service, since the image is a caricature of workers in the post office. The study and collecting of postcards is termed *deltiology*.



*Example of a court card, postmarked 1899, showing Robert Burns and his cottage and monument in Ayr*

The first known printed picture postcard, with an image on one side, was created in France in 1870 at Camp Conlie, a training camp for soldiers in the Franco-Prussian war. The cards had a lithographed design printed on them containing emblematic images of piles of armaments on either side of a scroll topped by the arms of the Duchy of Brittany and the inscription "War of 1870. Camp Conlie. Souvenir of the National Defence. Army of Brittany".



In the following year the first known picture postcard in which the image functioned as a souvenir was sent from Vienna. . Cards showing images increased in number during the 1880s.

## Controversy

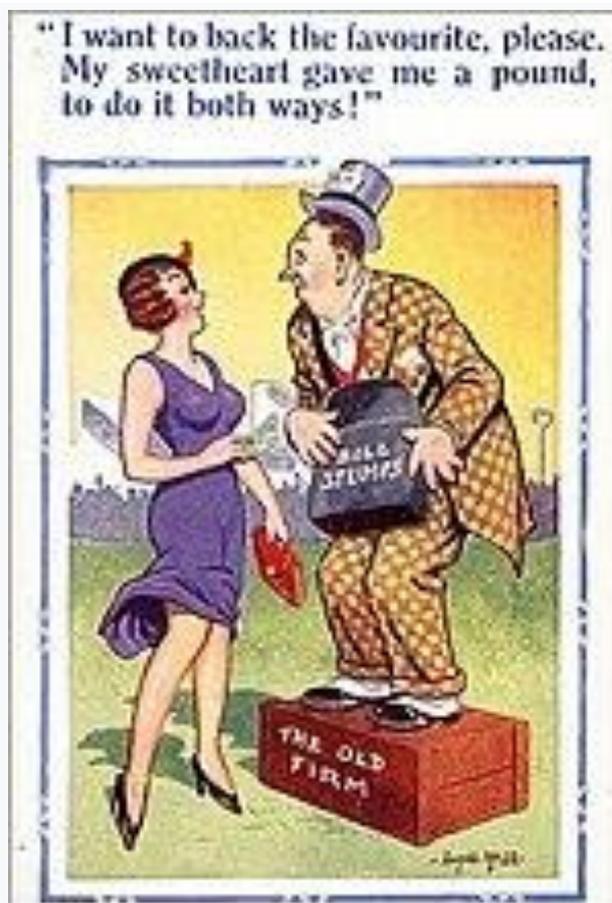
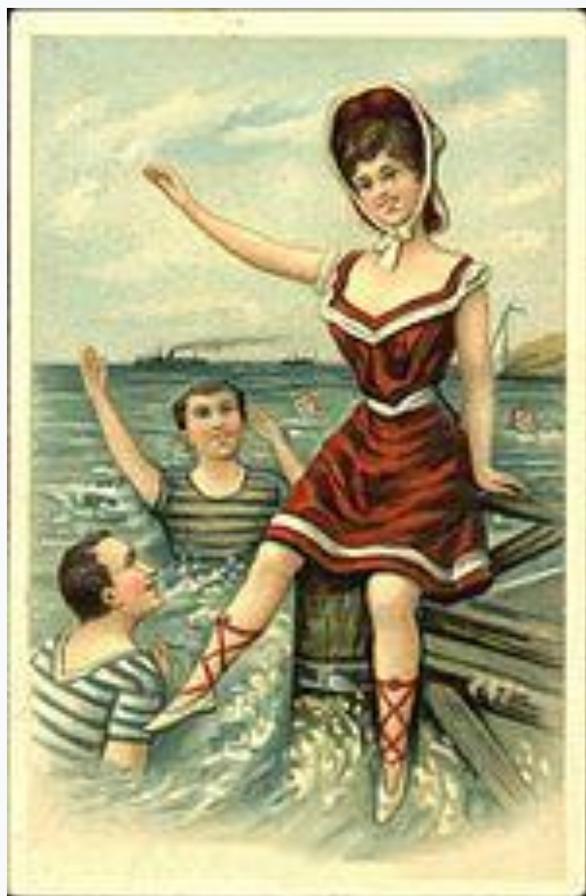
The initial appearance of picture postcards (and the enthusiasm with which the new medium was embraced) raised some legal issues. Picture postcards allowed and encouraged many individuals to send images across national borders, and the legal availability of a postcard image in one country did not guarantee that the card would be considered "proper" in the destination country, or in the intermediate countries that the card would have to pass through. Some countries might refuse to handle postcards containing sexual references (in seaside postcards) or images of full or partial nudity (for instance, in images of classical statuary or paintings).

## World War I

Before the outbreak of the First World War, the trade in picture postcards was firmly established with numerous categories and themes available. People purchased them, not just to convey messages to friends and relatives but also to collect and save the cards in special albums. When war erupted in August 1914, picture postcards were already the perfect medium to provide a link between the men on active service and their families and friends at home. Throughout the war, postcard publishers, printers, photographers and artists helped to boost the morale of the people both at home and the troops on the war fronts.

## British Seaside Postcards

With steam locomotives providing fast and affordable travel, the seaside became a popular tourist destination, and generated its own souvenir-industry.



*A seaside postcard. A typical "saucy" postcard by Donald McGill*

In the early 1930s, cartoon-style saucy postcards became widespread, and at the peak of their popularity the sale of saucy postcards reached a massive 16 million a year. They were often bawdy in nature, making use of innuendo and double entendres and traditionally featured stereotypical characters such as vicars, large ladies, and put-upon husbands, in the same vein as the *Carry On* films.

However, during the 1970s and 1980s, the quality of the artwork and humour started to deteriorate and, with changing attitudes towards the cards' content, the demise of the saucy postcard occurred.