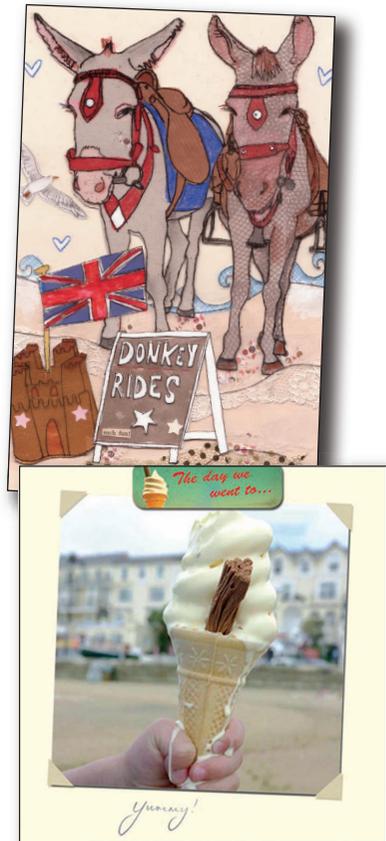


For Queen & Country

British nostalgia and patriotism are crowning card designs at the moment as images of delicious afternoon cream teas, garden fetes, British street parties, HRH the Queen, iconic London scenes, rosy childhood seaside memories and the 'Make Do and Mend' 1940s wartime spirit sit proudly among the Union Jack motif.

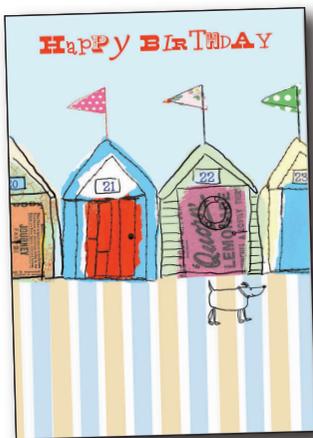
With the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympic Games due in 2012 and the Royal Wedding this April, our nation is flying the flag 'for Queen and Country' and celebrating all that makes Britain great.

PG discovers seven 'reigning' greeting card design trends and reveals how many are ruling Britannia.



Vintage Vacation

Oh I do like to be beside the seaside! - Donkey rides and sandcastles on British beaches, buckets and spades and brightly coloured beach huts, those were the days of happy family holidays before charter flights abroad.



The Vintage Vacation trend has emerged from a nostalgic swing towards all things British and childhood memories. Card images in chalky ice cream pastel colours of delicious Mr Whippy ice creams and Fab lollies, camper vans and camping, sunny picnics and boating on the river... not forgetting those hazy days pottering in rock pools at the seaside... resonate with quintessential nostalgic charm of memories of a bygone era and simpler times.



INSPIRATIONS

Michelle Wood, product manager for Camden Graphics (UKG):

"At Camden we're children of the 70s, so many of the card designs and looks are from that era. We wanted The Day We Went To range to remind people of the 'good old days'."

Seaside holidays are a popular topic. There were no cheap flights in the 70s so most families went to the English seaside. The unpredictable weather, the packed beaches, donkeys, ice creams melting too fast, jamming the car full of things we didn't even need.

Another topic that people identified with was school and sports days in the summer, racing on the playing field, trying to keep an egg balanced on a spoon, or trying not to fall over in the three-legged race."



CLOCKWISE:

- Donkey rides on a Beach Life design from Alice Palace.
- A nostalgic design from The Day We Went To range from Camden Graphics (UKG).
- Abacus' Posies and Petals range features images of gorgeous hazy days around Britain.
- Carry on camping from Dots and Spots.
- Sailing on to card racks, Art Cards Cornwall's Betty Boyns range.
- Retro lollies from Jenny Wiscombe's Sugar range.
- British beach huts with a 1950s feel from Lou Mills' Animal Magic collection.



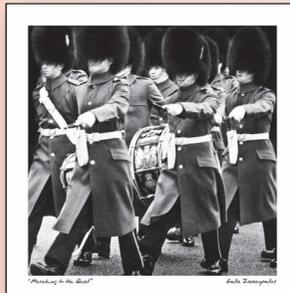
London Life

This 'British invasion' blends London's charm and cheekiness, traditions and trends. Buckingham Place, the London Eye, Big Ben, Route Master buses, even tube stations get a look in as iconic London images sweep on to card designs. Urban scenes, architecture and skylines in graphic prints, beautiful vintage Art Deco poster styles or sharp photographic imagery is a British cultural celebration as patriotic events such as the Olympic Games and the Royal Wedding strengthen our current love of all things British.

INSPIRATIONS

Soula Zavacopoulos, director for The London Studio:

"It's cool to be British again. It is a trend that comes in and out of fashion ignited by popular culture and current events. In 1977 the trend was ignited because of the Queen's Jubilee. Fashion later played a huge part in re-igniting the trend with Alexander McQueen's Union Jack boots and clutch bag hitting the runway in 2008 and Dolce & Gabbana using the Queen as their style icon. However, this



time around, as we head towards the Royal Wedding and the Olympic Games in 2012, the emphasis is being placed on London imagery in particular.

As our company is called The London Studio, we are fitting in with the trend already! After winning Black and White Photographer of the Year we published the True London range – artistic and timeless black and white shots of London."

TOP TO BOTTOM:

- A London Tube sign is one of many iconic London photographic images in Heart Of A Garden's London Calling range.
- A London landscape from Alice Palace's Skyline range.
- The hustle and bustle of the Capital on a design from Hotchpotch.
- Full Colour Black's latest photographic range, Amazing Places, was taken by award-winning travel photographer 'Mr Smith'.
- True London from The London Studio was published after director, Soula Zavacopoulos, won Black and White Photographer of the Year.
- Landmarks is a range of three-dimensional London scenes from Pink Pineapple.

Tea Dance Florals

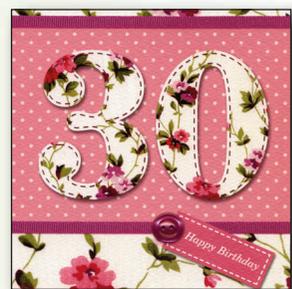
Cath Kidston has been sowing the seeds of this trend since the early 90s, but with the present influence of British wartime nostalgia, Blitz street parties and scrumptious afternoon cream teas, greeting cards are now flourishing with 1940s and 50s delicate tea dance dress floral prints this spring.

Transported to the era of the Land Girl and Vera Lynn, the sweet and dainty floral prints are pretty and feminine that hint at a romanticism of a bygone era. The vintage-inspired floral patterns embrace the nostalgic mood with muted colours and cottage-garden blooms or faded florals are given a contemporary twist by adding graphic pattern and vibrant hues.

INSPIRATIONS

Cheryl O'Meara, director for Design Rocks!

"I think whenever there is worry and uncertainty about the future, as there is with our current political and economic backdrop, we look back to more nostalgic 'safer' times for comfort. Nostalgic designs and innocent florals give us that warm fuzzy Enid Blyton feeling where everything was carefree and life was a picnic with 'lashings of ginger beer!' Even though the 40s were incredibly difficult financially for most people with rationing and a post war economy, I think we also love the idea of camaraderie and community that came with the post war effort. It's no surprise that the 'Keep Calm & Carry On' statement, bunting, cup cakes and street parties are trendy again. It's all part of the nostalgia for British communities pulling together and making the best of tough times."



TOP TO BOTTOM:

- Delicate floral print are used to enhance this robin image from Design Rocks!
- Launched at Spring Fair the Bow Hemian range from Jodds.
- A Fifties Florals card from Museums & Galleries.
- Caroline Gardner's new Wise Words range utilises a vintage floral style.
- Age cards from Aiiroo's Vintage Florals collection.
- Tiny rosebuds feature heavily in CardMix's Lily-Be range.

Trends And Inspirations

Home Spun

At the heart of the 'Make Do and Mend' mood that has embraced Britain since the initial dark days of the recession is the celebration of British crafts. Lovingly homemade textiles like knitting, embroidery and crochet have boomed in recent years as Britain's unite in a nostalgic wartime spirit that has seen them tightening their belts by tearing up and remaking second-hand clothes or rejuvenating soft furnishings and trying to reconnect with home life. Haberdashery such as buttons, ribbons and bows squirreled away in the bottom of the sewing box, add personality and fun to the story.

INSPIRATIONS

Sunil Vishin, director of openboxdesign:

"The current widespread interest in all things vintage and its direct link with things homemade, handcrafted and British traditional skills has encouraged this trend to evolve. For us at openboxdesign the attraction of crochet and knitting is both visual and emotional - we love the associations with comfort, family, individual creativity and links across the generations. What could be nicer than cool grannies knitting for new babies, granddad's fab tank top or snugly blankets passed down through the generations. With our Close Knit range it's all about 'spreading the love' to those that mean most to you and who make your world just that little bit more comforting."

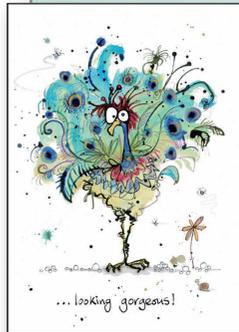


TOP TO BOTTOM:

- Crochet images feature on the Close Knit range from Open Box Design.
- A homemade textile montage from Paper Rose's Stitch Club range.
- Macramé, lace and various haberdashery feature in Hotchpotch's Bella collection.
- A delicious image made from textiles from Abigail Mill.
- Fabrics and stitching give character to Pootle's cards.
- Baby booties on a Freddie and Freya design from CardMix.



Peacock Plumage



With its decadent plumage and impressive feathered display, the beautiful but ostentatious peacock is an ideal muse for card designers. Peacocks proudly strutting their fanned tail on parade or the distinctive pattern in a peacock's feathers are spreading on to cards bringing a touch of elegant glamour and opulence to the designs. The rich and intense brilliant blues, turquoises, greens and purples of the arrogant birds also satisfy a yearning for vibrant and elevating colours.

INSPIRATIONS

Sarah Watts, managing director for Penny Kennedy:

"I visited the Frankfurt Paperworld/Christmasworld show a few weeks ago and, in Christmas designs especially, there was an abundance of peacock colours and designs... it is interesting that in tough times these beautiful birds influence the design

world - probably an instant way of lifting spirits and adding that touch of luxury! I think people are beginning to embrace colour again and a peacock being the ultimate in flamboyance and colour is a marvellous vehicle for this.

In this season's Nina Campbell range the lead design, Paradiso, features a beautiful Bird of Paradise... not surprisingly the design has been incredibly popular. We used a Bird of Paradise rather than a peacock for our design as it represents Joyfulness. It was a wonderful way to add lots of colour to the design. Also people aren't so sceptical of bringing Birds of Paradise into the home."



TOP TO BOTTOM:

- A kooky Peacock from Bug Art.
- The subtle use of Peacock plumage on a Wishing Well design.
- A Portobella card from Twice As Nice.
- Nina Campbell's Paradiso design on stationery from Penny Kennedy.
- A proud Peacock from Cianna Cards.
- Splashed with beautiful colours, a peacock from Inkdrops' Moments range.

Scandinavian Cool



The Christmas jumper was back with a vengeance this winter. Nearly everyone (including men) under the age of 25 wore the 'must have' knitted woolies featuring Scandinavian snowflake motifs. The retail king of delicious food packaging, Marks & Spencer, presented the Scandinavian folk designs on its festive biscuit and chocolate tins, Accessorize was a winter wonderland of Scandi patterned chunky knitwear and Heals reflected a Scandinavian simplicity with a red and white colour scheme and a retro, homespun feel to its home and table decorations.



Inspired by the vintage

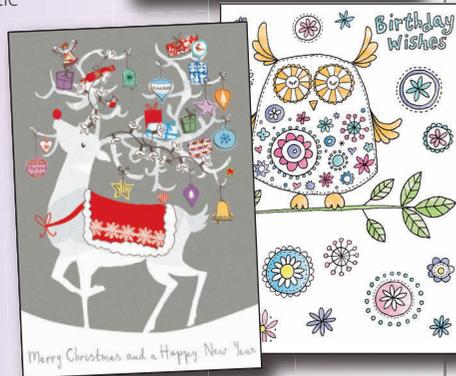
mountain ski lodge and the blossoming Christmas markets, greeting cards have cosied up to this Nordic folk trend with images of forest animals and evergreen trees set in pared-down repeated folk patterns in either warm ruby wine colours or ice cream hues.



INSPIRATIONS

Rosie Brady,
photographer/designer for **Rosebud Photography:**

"A lot of the Scandinavian designs have filtered down from the ever increasing popularity for Christmas markets within the UK originating mainly from the Baltic States. Interiors have also played a large part in bringing the trend to the forefront with its clean and simplistic designs which is the essence of the style. Retro ski wear, especially chunky knitwear with simple motifs such as reindeers, reveal a yearning for a time of traditional homely Christmases."



TOP TO BOTTOM:

- Woodland scenes in a Scandinavian style from Ceri Darwent.
- Rosebud Photography's Christmas collection captures traditional imagery in a fresh way.
- Urban Graphic's Melodika range has a folk-feel.
- A design from Hotchpotch's Shaker range.
- Paper Rose's new Folktales range was part inspired by Scandinavian design.
- Reindeers are strongly represented in the Scandi trend: A card from Quire's Lemon Lou range.

Tea With The Queen



The present surge of a love for vintage Britain has collided with 'reigning' Royal and patriotic events such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee next year, Kate and William's royal nuptials and the Olympic Games.

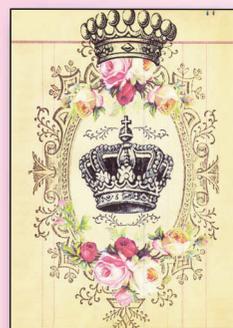
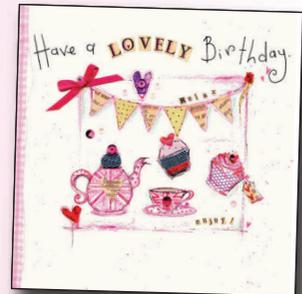
Reminiscent of post-war street parties, the Queen's Coronation in 1953 and afternoon tea, delectable mouth-watering treats are served on beautiful cake stands and a refreshing brew in beautifully patterned china cups but are also blended with a rise in imagery of heraldic crowns and Union Jack flags, a symbol of traditional British values and beliefs.



INSPIRATIONS

Clare Harris, founder of **Talking Tables:**

"The trend has been driven by the forthcoming British celebrations – we've got a lot to look forward to with the Queen's Jubilee, the Olympics and of course the Royal Wedding. This has coincided with the fashion for all things vintage and retro – afternoon tea has returned with a vengeance and we hope to see street parties heading the same way. The trend is also right for the times because of its upbeat and positive styling – the nation needs some cheer! We also seem to be turning a corner in terms of patriotism – we've got a lot to be proud of as a country and we're happy to celebrate it. Our 'British Street Party' range combines the very best of British – the Union Jack, one pound coins, Blue Tits and Corgis, florals and gingham in red, white and blue, and of course lashings of quirky, tongue in cheek British humour."



TOP TO BOTTOM:

- A 'crowning' design from CardMix's Stephanie Rose collection.
- The Royal Mr & Mrs design from Love Hart.
- Mint Publishing's Cool Britannia range is smothered in Union Jacks and bunting.
- A beautiful Dollface design from The Art Group.
- The Street Party collection from Talking Tables includes Corgis and royal paraphernalia.
- A design from the Enchanted Palaces Collection from The Art File.