

BRITISH AIRWAYS

# highlife

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OCTOBER 2010

INSIDE  
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Page 111

*The British Art Issue*  
Guest edited by  
*Tina Turner*

*Your insider's  
guide to LONDON'S  
Biggest ART Show*

*Oh, I do like to be beside the Sea Side!*  
Cornwall, Fife, Suffolk and  
Eastbourne - the places that  
inspired Brit Art

*And Dame Vivienne Westwood  
ON STRIPPING OFF in the Sand dunes*

*Plus: Bring Back the Postcard!*

# POSTCARDS ON THE EDGE

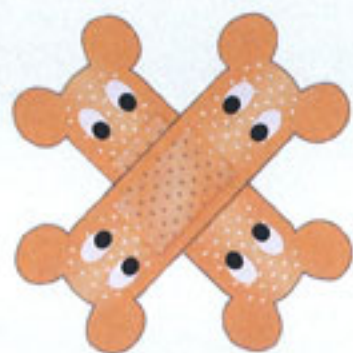
As we launch our campaign to preserve the great holiday tradition of sending postcards, **Stephen Bayley** recalls our 150-year love affair with them, while celebrity names lend their support with a miniature work of art. And if you want to own one, turn to page 56...

**I** sometimes muse about life in that distant age before ATMs and mobiles. When I started travelling – student flights on a Comet 4c and a tent in my backpack – I took travellers' cheques and a phone call home required queuing for a suffocating cabin in a Post Office.

Now my children don't even use the word 'mobile'. To them it's just a phone: there isn't any other sort. And if money doesn't grow on trees, it certainly comes out of holes in the wall. I'm not saying it was better then. We are better off now in every way. But there is one thing travellers have lost – the simple pleasure of writing postcards.

It was a standard rite of being abroad: a trip to buy a bunch of cards. Stamps had to be bought in tobacconists. Or maybe that was just in France. Then settle into a café to perform two epistolary tasks: the gratification of anxious parents and the annoyance of jealous friends. This is now nearly a thing of the past. A TripAdvisor ([tripadvisor.co.uk](http://tripadvisor.co.uk)) survey showed that just 11 per cent of travellers still send postcards home while 60 per cent use text.

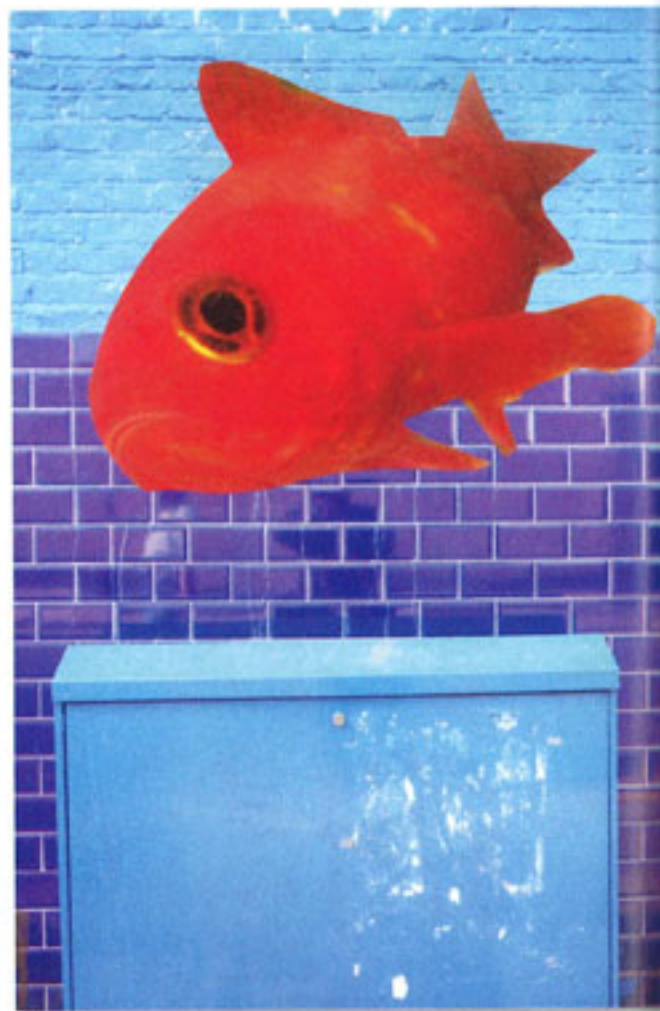
Like the ashtray, which faces extinction because of smoking laws, the postcard is a minor art form that struggles to



GILES DEACON FASHION DESIGNER



STELLA VINE ARTIST



DAVID BAILEY PHOTOGRAPHER

survive. Facebook, email, texting and tweeting have deskilled communications and impoverished our visual culture. But no new medium has ever completely succeeded its predecessor and the easier it becomes to send electronic tosh, the better will be appreciated the charm of a well-written postcard. Generally speaking, the easier it is to communicate, the less art goes into the communication.

Postcards were patented in the US in 1861. In 1894 the Royal Mail allowed picture postcards in Britain. The growth of the postcard describes exactly the growth in popular travel with all its yearnings and aspirations. Archives of postcards are pop history at its most evocative. Between 1900 and 1960 you can trace the broadening of the traveller's horizon from black-and-white Frinton-on-Sea to polychrome Rio, as jet turbines replaced steam boilers as sources of locomotive energy.

In their day, postcards were an ink-age instant messaging. They encouraged the transmission of image and data across borders. Sometimes these images were subversive: you could, if you wished, send a Riviera nude to an address in the Vatican. There was the option of hopeless exoticism: the Miami Seaquarium perhaps. Or they could be matter of fact: I have

one of my own showing Manchester's Ringway, circa 1968, with a baggage truck and a BEA Vickers Vanguard spooling up. These now have the haunting properties of a fragment of rotting Tudor fabric.

But if the images have a sentimental value, so too does the text. Writing postcards is an art because it requires wit and discipline. But choose right, write well and you will have created a brilliant advertisement for yourself. That's why I like them so much. Or put it this way: is there anybody who does not enjoy receiving postcards? What would you prefer through your letterbox, a work of art or a flyer for a kebab house? If you are still sending postcards, keep it up. If not, start again now.

### PS from Tracey Emin

*My father has been a tremendous influence on me. He would send me postcards from every place he went so I could share the magic of his journey as the postcard landed on the floor. I am a big postcard sender, mainly pictures of cute kittens. In this day and age, when so many people text and email, I am asking you to revive the tradition of the postcard. It's not difficult. The words 'I miss you and I love you' would be enough. >*



MANOLO BLAHNIK DESIGNER



MIKENNA AND SAVANNAH MILLER FASHION DESIGNERS



JACK VETTRIANO ARTIST



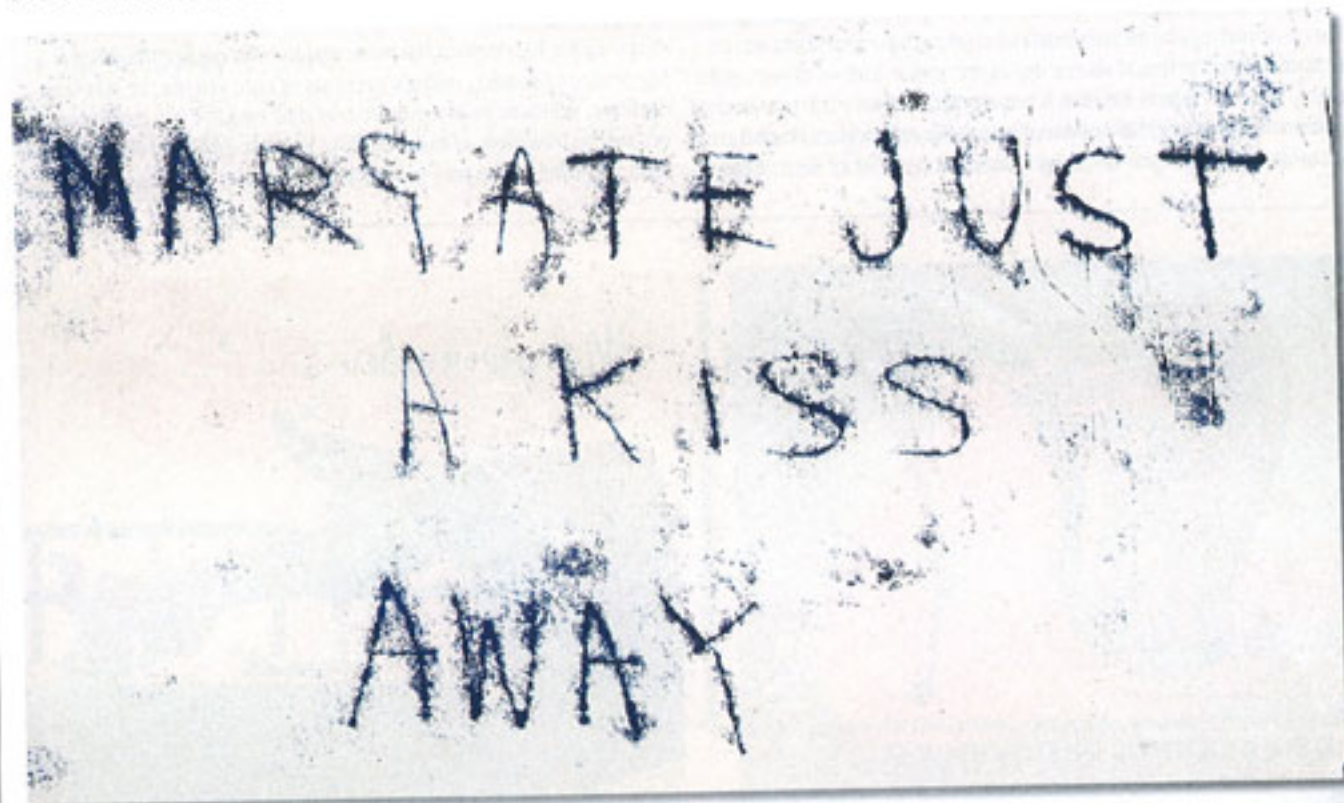
ROB RYAN ARTIST



PATRICK HUGHES ARTIST



IRENE PRADA ARTIST



TRACEY EMIN ARTIST



LAURA BAILEY MODEL



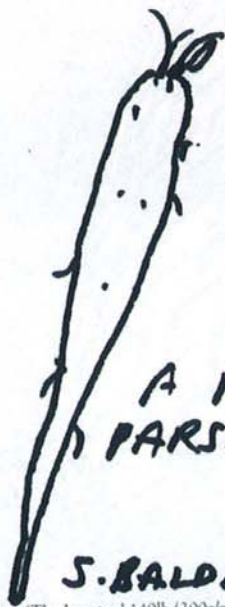
GORDON RAMSAY CHEF

BLACKADDER 5 - THE POSTCARD

BLACKADDER: Explain it again...

BALDRICK: You have to write a postcard, full of thoughts.

BLACKADDER: Surely more your territory: as every thought you've ever had could fit on a postcard + still leave room for a pretty picture of a parsnip.



A PRETTY  
PARSNIP

J. BALDRICK.

'The Langton' 140lb (300g/m<sup>2</sup>) Not (CP)

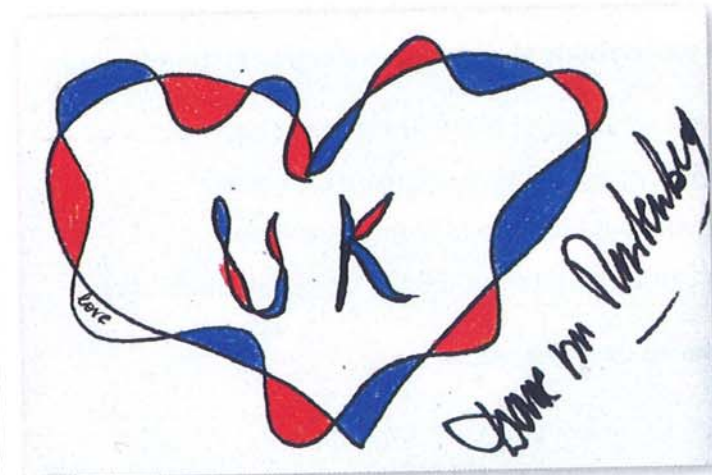
Richard  
GWIN.

2010.A.D.

RICHARD CURTIS CO-FOUNDER OF COMIC RELIEF



AXEL SCHEFFLER ILLUSTRATOR



DIANE VON FURSTENBERG FASHION DESIGNER

### THE HIGH LIFE AUCTION

Want to own one of these miniature works of art? Then head to [bahighlife.com](http://bahighlife.com) where you can bid for these and other signature postcards by Tom Jones, Florence and the Machine, Daisy de Villeneuve and Marcus Wareing among others.\* All money raised from the auction will go to Flying Start, BA's new charity partnership with Comic Relief UK. Together they are working to help transform the lives of vulnerable children living in cities across the UK and the world's poorest countries. You can also help to give children a flying start in life by donating your unwanted spare change onboard. To find out more, visit [ba.com/flyingstart](http://ba.com/flyingstart).

### WIN A LUXURY SPA BREAK

Support our campaign by sending us a postcard from your travels. You could win a three-night break for two at Hotel Martinhal in the Algarve, worth £900, including flights, accommodation, breakfast and spa treatments\*\*. Write to: High Life, Cedar Communications, 85 Strand, London WC2R 0DW.