

## Christmas cards

The Textile Museum has a few examples of old Christmas cards in its collection, of which this is one.

The idea of sending Christmas cards began in 1843 when Sir Henry Cole (founder of the Victoria & Albert Museum and a keen supporter of the Penny Post) asked an artist friend J C Horsley to design a card for Cole to send to his friends instead of writing a letter. It took several decades for the idea to become popular. The postal service was developing at the time with the use of trains to carry the mail.

Our card was printed by Raphael Tuck & Sons of London. Their first Christmas greeting card was made in 1871. In 1880 the firm launched a nationwide contest for the best Christmas card design, receiving over five thousand paintings, which gives some idea of the enthusiasm for the idea. In 1893 the company were granted a Royal Warrant which enabled the Tuck cards to have the message 'Art Publishers to Her Majesty the Queen'. Our card doesn't have this detail, so it would seem that this card probably dates from the 1870s or 1880s.

All at the Newtown Textile Museum wish you a happy Christmas this year and into the future.