

Ventnor Heritage Centre has within its archive a small selection of postcards that fall loosely in the humorous category.

None really match the famous saucy cards produced by Donald McGill, a large collection of which can be viewed in the Ryde Museum, but they nevertheless form an engaging window on seaside humour in the first half of the twentieth century. Occasionally, the messages on the back of the cards, penned by the senders, add to their interest.



The upper card in this article is blank on the reverse, but the design of the card is rather unusual in that it contains two separate images. The sideways image on the right depicts a young woman reading as she sits alone on a seat on Ventnor's cliffs. The main image, though, shows a young man cuddling his sweetheart at the other end of that same seat, plainly to the dismay or embarrassment of the young woman who is still sitting at the other end.



The lower card depicts a young couple fast asleep in bed, with hands clasped tightly round each other. In this instance, the card has a message on the back. The writer asks if the recipient is going out alone that afternoon and whether they could join up for a little walk. The names of writer and recipient are Kate and Bee, so apparently two women. One might think that this makes the choice of card rather strange, but it is possible that they were just looking to meet young men and the choice of card was a largely innocent 'take' on the search for sweethearts.

The majority of the postcards in the archive relate to the period from 1900 to 1914. This was when the famous Donald McGill began to draught his first designs, ultimately generating some 12,000 over more than fifty years. The era of the true saucy postcard started in the early interwar years and extended until his death in 1962. He once faced prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act of 1957, but later contributed evidence to Parliament so that the law could be amended.

Michael Freeman, [Ventnor & District Local History Society](http://www.ventnorhistory.org.uk), from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre

**There are more postcards of this kind on display in Ventnor Heritage Centre for this season. Entry is free to all, with opening hours Wednesday to Saturday, 10am -1pm**