



# Osnabrücker Papierwaren-Fabrik

## Earliest "OPF" cards in England

By George Webber

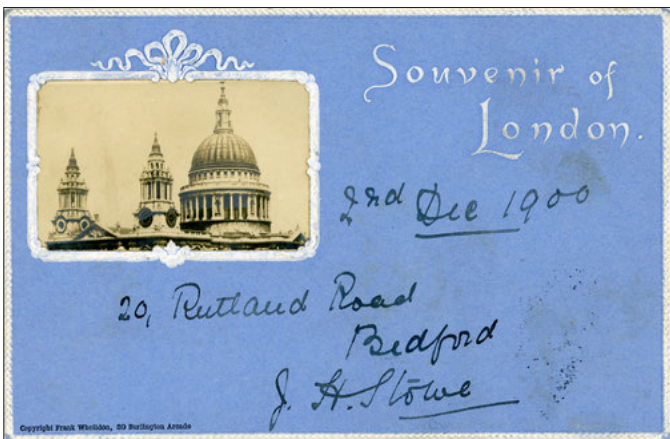
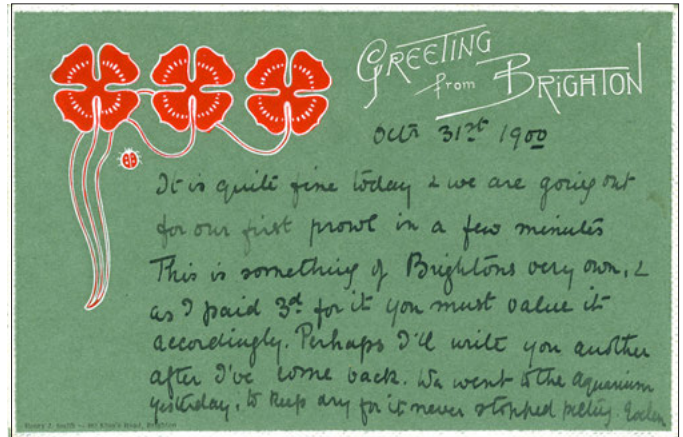
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In TPA #20 Helfmried gave us an account of the Berlin "Luxuspapier" firm OPF. He reported difficulty in finding cards printed by them and quotes an OPF entry in *Anthony Byatt's* "Picture Postcards and their Publishers". However the OPF entry in this book does need some revision and amplification.

London was not the only location for these early OPF cards. There is one for Brighton dated October 31st 1900, published by *Henry J. Smith* (see separate Byatt entry). The writer of the card says she paid the **very** high price of three pence each! There is no explicit mention of OPF. (♣)

In England "OPF" started in 1900 and not 1901. I have two embossed photo cards of London dated 2nd December 1900. They are both "Copyright Frank Wheildon, Burlington Arcade". A point to note that there is no mention of OPF on these early 1900 cards. Later on the same cards appear without the "Copyright Frank Wheildon" but with the usual trefoil OPF trademark on the back. (♣)

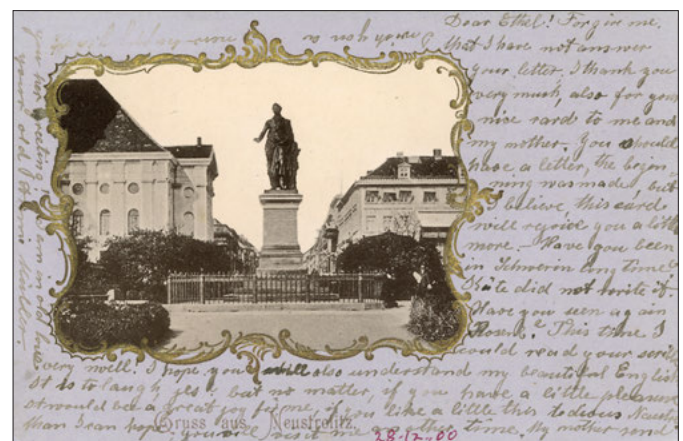


Possibly, at first, it was general OPF practise not to put their trademark on their very best cards. (Their cheaper lightweight colotype cards had trademarks) This might account for the difficulty in finding the quality OPF cards today?

Probably OPF started out in England by licensing their cards to local high quality dealers and did not initially put their trademark OPF on the cards. Later on, about 1901, the dealers name was removed and the OPF trefoil was put on the address side.

(♣) I show here a "Gruss aus Neustrelitz" card of OPF type quality. The card is heavyweight and the embossed photo has a very elaborate surround, but there is no mention of any publisher. Was this OPF?

Finally we have this "Groeten uit Amsterdam" card. This has **exactly** the same border to the embossed photo as the London card, but there is no mention of OPF or anybody else! (♣)



Information welcome on how many other publishers put out this type of luxury card, combining

- an embossed photo
- using **very** heavy card (varies from about 50% to 100% heavier than usual)
- with an elaborate decorative surround to the photo?

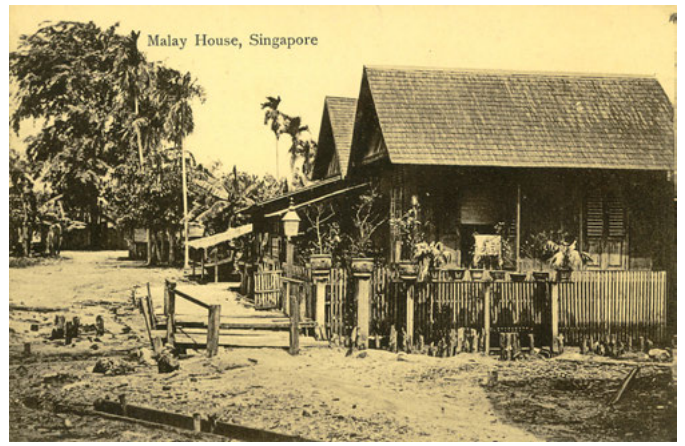
I wish it were clear whether Byatt had seen the rich range of OPF cards quoted or whether he was working from an OPF promotional list? There is a difference between what the manufacturer offers and what the retailer decides to accept. The "animal cards in silver frames on coloured leatherette board" quoted, seem particularly exotic? It would be interesting to know if anybody has seen such a confection?

Demand for such luxury cards was limited in England, they seem to thrive in 1901/02 with a middle class market, then disappear gradually from 1903 on, as the working class took up PPC's.

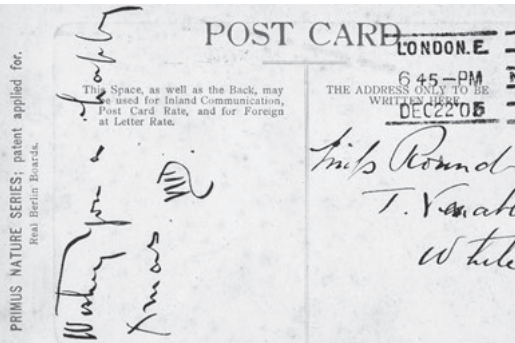




Luxury greetings from **Bruxelles, Belgium**. Quite dark card board with steel-engraved caption in white, inserted bromide photo of a monument, the white floral ornamented border looks hand-painted and was pasted onto card, which I understand to be difficult. Plus the typical (for OPF) embossed "painted white" border. The dark green card wasn't very suitable to write on. No OPF logo found. Mailed to Berlin in June 1906. Surely an expensive card then.



In contrast to the card on the left, here now a quite plain (sepia/duotone on bright brown card) colotype printed view from Singapore. **Malay House**, card no. 13 for local publisher Koh & Co. Not postally used, divided back. Below the dividing line we find a typical OPF trefoil logo together with a FF logo which stood for the (two) Formstecher's who took over OPF later completely. Guess this was a repeat order from Koh & Co.



OPF card?? **Primus Nature Series; patent applied for. Real Berlin Boards** imprinted. Address side layout looks like OPF. Heavy card, picture side brown, plate sunk to carry bromide photo, caption steel-engraved. Poor quality (damaged) photo of a park. Sold with photo insert or blank? Card p/u Dec. 1905.



From a dealer's cheapo box comes this flag card from **Argentina**. Published by an anonymous publisher who used a triangle logo with Z. F. B.(uenos) A.(ires) inside, often seen on cards from Argentina. Knackstedt & Näther printed also for this firm. Although the card shows not the previously described embossed border, I treat it as "OPF suspect". It is heavily embossed, again with hand-painted ornaments and inserted bromide photo (of President J.A. Roca?). OPF was quite busy in South-America. Walter sent christmas greetings from (sunny) Argentina home to Leipzig, Germany, and had problems writing on the uneven (embossed) address side. Someone removed the stamps and with it the postmark. It is a divided back card but with full UPU imprint. Guess it dates from around 1905.

**Alexandria - The column of Pompejus**. Egypt was also a favourite market for OPF. This card is really a production masterpiece! A combination of embossing and relief printing. Heavy card with rough surface, some bright red-purple colour sprayed onto to improve the relief look. Center space between (heavy embossed) columns cut out. The address side with typical Egyptian UPU layout printed on a separate sheet and then pasted onto the relief card = no problem to write on the (now even) address side anymore. Bromide photo (of average quality only) carefully cut out to fit into the space between columns. Guess this was indeed an expensive item. Some undated handwriting, sent inside letter. - OPF logo's are often imprinted in really small size and can be overlooked easily.

