

A Christmas Box



Christmas is a time for children. The Christmas cards and scraps shown in this case reflect other areas of the exhibition: drawing slates, toys (distributed by Santa Claus), alphabets and alphabet blocks, relief models, toy theatre, indoor and outdoor games, and the annual treat – the pantomime.

Christmas cards date back only to 1843, when Sir Henry Cole commissioned a card designed by John Calcott Horsley, R.A. They rapidly became popular in the Victorian era, especially when the development of chromolithographic printing gave rise to an explosion of colour. Christmas cards often combined colour printing with embossing, mica flecks, lace paper or perforated borders, and moving parts. The 22 examples shown (items 137–140, 142, and 143) date from c.1870 to 1910. Despite the piety of the Victorians, secular imagery was much more common than religious. *Ye Christmas pantomime* (item 142) is a pop-up card, opening to show the inside of the theatre and its stage.

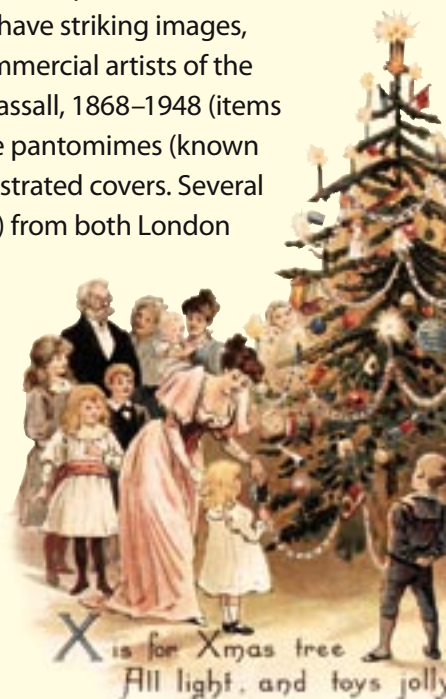
Chromolithographed scraps were usually embossed, glazed, and die-cut. They were produced (mainly in Germany) in sheets, with each separately die-cut image connected to the next by a narrow tab. They were designed to be cut out and used for adorning screens and boxes as well as scrap books and albums. The sheet of scraps of toys (item 141) shows 18 cut-out scraps. 'The Father Christmas Sleigh' (item 151), one of *Six charming relief models. A delightful occupation for the young*, published by Raphael Tuck & Sons (the most famous producers of scraps in Britain) and printed in Germany, forms a three-dimensional model. The other scrap shown (item 152) is a large single scrap of a toy-laden, mica-flecked Santa Claus with children dancing around him.



F. Warne & Co. in 1894, shows an affluent family with servants enjoying a traditional Christmas, with C for Cracker, M for Mince Pies, P for Plum Pudding, and Q for Quadrille. The problem of the letter X is solved by Xmas Tree.

Early 20th-century pantomime posters (items 50–52, 91, and 92) usually have striking images, designed by the major commercial artists of the time, among them John Hassall, 1868–1948 (items 50 and 51). The texts of the pantomimes (known as books of words) had illustrated covers. Several are shown (items 145–150) from both London and provincial theatres.

The Father Christmas ABC (item 153), published by



X is for Xmas tree
All light, and toys jolly



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this exhibition can be bought from

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