

Greetings

from a witty, cheeky, intelligent and ever-curious graphic artist called Brian Fitzpatrick. Born in Barugh Green in 1932, he smiled his way through life illustrating the spartan '50s and swinging '60s, all this to end abruptly in 1974. From his primary school in Barugh Green he went to Holgate Grammar School where he showed an early talent for drawing but was adept at science, French and was an all-round sportsman.

Barnsley Art College beckoned and then full-time employment at 22 years old with Bamforth & Co. Ltd, the Holmfirth publishers, for 20 years

and had a lovely time!.....



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

**Brian
Fitzpatrick**

Laburnum
Terrace,
Barugh Green,
Darton.

Holgate Grammar School gave Brian a strong foundation for the traditional style of training at Barnsley College of Art & Design where his draughtsmanship was worthy of note. His studies will have included pictorial composition, design, anatomy, architecture and history of art.

You will soon realise on reading the many achievements of this local lad whose urbane wit and lively turn of mind was created from the union of Harriet Elton and Frank Fitzpatrick. In the span of just one generation a father who worked on Parkgate Seam at Woolley Pit saw his son lead quite a different lifestyle from his own. His mother had a greater affinity with Brian, as she worked in the colour laboratories at ICI Huddersfield. Brian's sister Maureen was born in 1945 and still resides in Darton. Frank Elton, their cousin, whose father worked for LMS, recalls Brian's auburn hair and noted how many of the characters in his cartoons had a similar 'thatch' to his own!



Brian middle row on right



BARNSELY AND DISTRICT HOLGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

REPORT FOR TERM ENDING

December 22nd 1948

Name Fitzpatrick B. Age 14

Form 5F

School Year 1948 1949

Position in Form 1

No. of Pupils in Form 27

REFERENCE	DATE	MARK	REMARKS	MARKER
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE				
ENGLISH (Reading, Composition, Grammar, Spelling)				
HISTORY			Good. Good book. Answer	R. B. G.
GEOMETRY				
ART				
CRAFTWORK				
PHYSICS			Very Good - always keen	R
CHEMISTRY				
CIVIL				
FRENCH				
LATIN		144	1	Good. He is a very bright student.
GERMAN				
CONTEMPORARY DRAWING				
ARITHMETIC		73	2	He is a very bright student.
ALGEBRA				



The keen minds of Arnold Taylor (L) and Brian Fitzpatrick

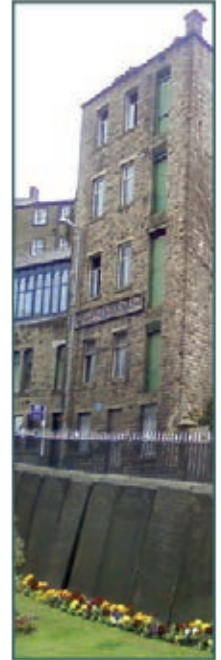
Postcards have their place in social history. English holiday-makers who defy wind and rain escape to seaside gift shops with their rotating postcard holders. Envious families at home eagerly await news of the travellers, cards received AFTER they have returned, depending on post and destination accuracy (who packs an address book?!). Images of big wives, small husbands, inflatable rubber rings and over-inflated dresses balanced on mantelpieces until they fell down the gap at the back. Also pinned to works notice-boards, a symbol of freedom! Although not sophisticated humour, they needed a keen mind to create....

Graphic designers also possess agile minds and abundant curiosity, no less Brian, who certainly had a caricaturist's mentality. He always carried a small sketchbook to note scenes for his repertoire of cartoons.



His confident maturity perpetuated the Bamforth media ethic of communicating the sadness and, latterly, the hilarity of real life. He easily stepped into the shoes of Douglas Tempest, Bamforth's first artist who spent 40 years in the job from 1911, and was mentored in 1954 by Arnold Taylor who had an even longer association, becoming a director in the publishing firm. It was Taylor (Uncle Arnold to Brian's daughters Jane and Louise!) who honed and refined some 'initial rawness'. However, he did realise the potential of this Barnsley lad who relished a challenge. Imagine the responsibility of joining the 80-year-old Bamforth's dynasty at the tender age of 22 years!

Frank Elton also remembers visiting Brian at Station Road, Holmfirth and being surprised at the modest size of the studio, considering the scale of their output to be seen in every seaside town and also abroad. The Bamforth Factory which operated for a hundred years was a complex media empire with laboratories for processing, studios for photographs and dressing rooms for clients and actors. The printworks have now made way for apartments, but the Bamforth sign still proudly indicates the building that remains standing. Now sadly shabby and dilapidated, but a welcome roost for pigeons, it is a far cry from its pioneering portrait photography heritage, when the camera was only a rich man's toy. One of their early employees who started work at 14 years old remembers they were sent to the 'doctor who lived up the hill from the works' with factory accidents such as sprains or cuts. Whisky was dispensed on employees' sore gums by Bamforth's housekeeper and she sent them across the road to the dentist if they needed an extraction at a cost of 2/6p, paid by their employer James Bamforth of Cartwell, Derbyshire. Son of a painter and decorator, James's reputation as a leading local portrait photographer laid the foundations for the business in 1870 when he initially supplied backgrounds for Magic Lantern Shows. These could throw a beam 2000 feet and also produce as fine a picture as the colour film cine projectors of today. Local girls were employed to hand-colour the black and white positives and bind them into slides.



Bamforth's Building
Station Rd Holmfirth.

double
lens
magic
lantern



Colour was always Bamforth's signature strength. They perfected the novelty slide and with the flick of a lever, they could transform a drab garret scene into an enchanted floral bower.

Their business expanded quickly in the 1870s, utilising 5,000 feet of studio space and producing a stock of 2m slides, such was the scale of their lantern slideshow operation. These exotic shows were used to illustrate lectures, stories and convey moral messages such as moderate alcohol consumption. Bamforth liaised with Riley's of Bradford towards the end of the 19th century and collectively produced a catalogue to rival Hollywood USA in both volume and quality. They were the first firm to make Kinematograph films for public entertainment. The joint endeavours of Bamforth's skill in editing, storytelling with actors, props, costumes and backdrops matched Riley's film-making prowess. They were already producing 75-foot films before this fruitful collaboration that saw the creation of approximately 50 films - 'Boys Sliding', the risqué 'Love in the Tunnel' and 'Leapfrog' being the early ones at the turn of the century and to be found in the archives of The Yorkshire Film Archives in York. Other themes were custard-pie throwing and whitewash slinging with Holmfirth locals taking on parts; the town sometimes had to halt trading for these capers. The bank manager even sanctioned using his premises for a mock raid. No stuntmen were used but an unlucky cameraman was injured by a shotgun prop.



kiss in the tunnel



leapfrog



On James Bamforth's death in 1911, (the year Tempest joined the company) his offspring, Janie, Edwin and Frank took the business forward with hymn and song cards increasing in popularity due to the First World War of 1914. The demand for film declined, due to the chemicals used for celluloid reels being needed more urgently for munitions. Families wanted to send sentimental messages to their loved ones at the Front but in 1902 the government had sanctioned the use of one half of the address side of the postcard for correspondence. Subjects as diverse as The First Flying Machine, The Railways, the 1911 Coronation and Womens' Rights featured prior to the war; the demise of The Titanic in 1912 was marked with a set of six cards and local pit disasters were also commemorated. War cards had themes of 'rallying the flag', 'remembrance' and 'comic relief', a term we use today in a very different context. These cards were patriotic responses to the Great War and in 1916 censors prohibited images of H.M. Ships being depicted for security reasons.

50 years later the Blackpool Postcard Censorship Board had control of Bamforth's material but for quite different reasons. Arnold Taylor and his 'student' had to toe the decency line!



When saucy postcard firm caught mood of a nation in wake of Titanic tragedy

Brian's surviving daughter Louise recalls an instance of censure by her grandfather Stanley. Not for reasons of prudery but his disapproval of his son's cartoon in the Barnsley Chronicle on 14th December 1957 concerning Stanley's colleagues at the pit. The comment penned by Brian was deemed offensive by his father for obvious reasons. Brian had some anti-establishment views and when asked to join the Masons later in life, he gave his answer via an explicit cartoon depicting their 'peculiar habits'. Another Chronicle sketch in the 24th August 1957 edition names his father's pit and was pitched at Woolley Pit's female employees' language. Fitzpatrick women came in all shapes and sizes but were usually ample, blonde and beautiful like Joan, his childhood sweetheart. A stylish window dresser who worked for Wilsons in Barnsley, she also took part in their fashion shows. Brian encouraged her to attend night-classes at the Art College where she showed real talent in landscape and floral studies which she exhibited in Holmfirth.



Brian's cutting wit



Brian and Joan



A deltiologist's dream auction!



The early postcards' trademark of sentimentality gave way to a lighter mood between the wars with Tempest, Taylor and even Fitzpatrick spanning at least three decades of very naughty humour. Calendars, greetings and photographic view cards evolved and Derek Bamforth followed his father Edwin with the studio staying active until the early 1990s. Dennis of Scarborough became the new owners until 2000 when Fresh Faces of Leeds bought the limited company name.

In the 1950s a new optimism in Britain prompted a spirit of freedom and sexual barriers eroded. On the 17th February 1994, Christies of South Kensington, London auctioned The Bamforth Archive of original Artwork for Comic Postcards. 40 of Arnold Taylor's cards went for a record £1800 because one card had not passed the Blackpool censors. Brian's son-in-law made the notes (left) in his catalogue of Fitzpatrick sales, testament to the popularity of the saucy seaside postcard and the skill of a small group of artists producing designs that sold 27-30 million cards in the '50s. Brian Fitzpatrick and Arnold Taylor were the main contributors for the next 20 years. Brian addressed such taboos as full-frontal breasts and pregnancy to match Taylor's punchline 'girls who indulge—BULGE!' and Brian's 'If it's so lovely, why have you shoved it up your jumper?'. Fifties cards were sent to Australia and USA in envelopes, not for prudish reasons but because postmen pinched them if they knew the contents! Cards were also sold in Portugal, Canada, France, Belgium and Holland.



When they met, Brian and Joan were young and fancy free ... for a while! National service loomed and whilst being 'vetted' by the RAF, Brian was found to have a shadow on his lung. He spent a whole year at a fever hospital in Cottingham, Hull.

Maureen, his sister, remembered that she could only see him through the gate for fear of infection. Joan also made weekly visits and when Brian recovered from TB and on securing the Bamforth job AND a house, they decided to tie the knot in 1954, and were married in Barnsley Registry Office and then caught the bus to Holmfirth for lunch! They had Jane (also a graphic designer) in 1960 who sadly died in 1992 and Louise who lives near Joan, now 81, in Holmfirth.

Luckily Brian was able to return to his team sports when fully fit and was a member of Huddersfield & Barnsley Town Boys & YMCA, Barugh Green and Worsborough FCs. He also played cricket and badminton.

From early schooldays Brian showed skills in French, a subject that requires a sound grounding in English language, a good memory for vocabulary and an outgoing nature to be brave enough to speak it! The family seized the chance to travel, rare in the '60s but being a fluent speaker took away the fear that most of the rest of us have to travel. Spain beckoned for exotic holidays and they travelled long distances by car to Llanca on the Costa Brava, their favourite destination where they rented a villa. Many friends and artists joined them. He was a real family man. Louise has inherited his great love of travelling and climbed both Kilimanjaro & Mont Blanc, the latter being a 'pick and crampon job!' she recalls.

Brian's love of cars was legendary and he owned a Daimler Sovereign in 1974 when he died. He had an Austin Healey Sports car in the early days, the speed of these mirroring his zest for life. He sought out new experiences and thrived on recording amusing social situations, these observations bringing a smile to many faces. His saucy images and captions were his forte and we cherish the memory of Brian Fitzpatrick, the Barnsley-born and bred graphic designer of note.

didn't he do well?

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



Keen travellers, Brian and Joan motored to Majorca and Minorca in their Austin Healey. Also in the '50s whilst travelling from Southern to Northern Spain they took their car on a Dakota plane and found their beloved Llanca.



Fitzpatrick sketches.



BIBLIOGRAPHY ...

- Alderson, Frederick *The Comic Postcard in English Life*, David & Charles.
- Scott, Brenda *Where the Pratty Flowers Grow; voices from Holmfirth*, Yorkshire Art Circus.
- Hearn, Marcus *Bamforth's Collection of Saucy Postcards*, Constable.
- Worrall, Sylvia *Postcards of South Yorkshire*, Frank Morely Books.
- Holt, Tonie *Picture Postcard Artists*, Longman.
- Bridgeman, Harriet and Drury, Elizabeth (eds) *Beside the Seaside, a Picture Postcard Album*, Elm Tree.
- Green, Benny *I've lost my little Willy. A celebration of Comic Postcards* Elm Tree .

NEWSPAPERS/ MAGAZINES

- Holme Valley Express* 5th April 1994
- The Examiner Weekly News* 7th June 2011
- The Express* 14th February 1970
- The Lancashire, Yorkshire Railway Society magazine* February 2010
- Yorkshire Post Magazine* 13th May & 26th August 2006 & 7th April 2012
- Christies catalogue* 17th February 1994
- Picture Postcard Monthly* September 1995
- Barnsley Chronicle*

©Anne Nicholls for Barnsley Art on Your Doorstep 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Katina Bill, The Tolson Museum, Huddersfield
 Steven Dorrill, Huddersfield University Film Studies
 Peter Carr, Holmfirth Picturedrome
 Ruth Patman, Yorkshire Film Archives
 and most grateful thanks to Louise Maxwell and Joan Fitzpatrick



STAMP
OF
APPROVAL

