

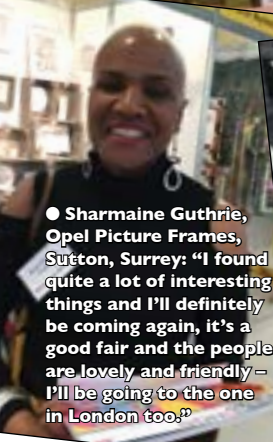


BCTF REVIEW

● Commended – Joanna Martin, Curlew Cottage, with Ged Mace



● Just Because... – Shelley and John Rapley, Snapdragon Designs



● Sharmaine Guthrie, Opel Picture Frames, Sutton, Surrey: "I found quite a lot of interesting things and I'll definitely be coming again, it's a good fair and the people are lovely and friendly – I'll be going to the one in London too!"



● Helen Simpson, Willis & Simpson, Whitby: "I love Snapdragon's cards and have had bespoke ones made for us."



● Winner – Kathy Starr, Dilly & Pink



● Highly Commended – Clare Free, Our Funny Family



● Speech – Henri Davis



Winners are in the pink

BUYERS AND SUPPLIERS ALIKE HAD A GOOD SHOW AT THE BRITISH CRAFT TRADE FAIR WHICH CONCENTRATES SOLELY ON UK-MADE PRODUCTS, AND HAS SEEN A MARKED INCREASE IN GREETINGS EXHIBITORS IN RECENT YEARS, WHO WERE ALL CONSIDERED FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL CARD AWARDS.

A GREAT show at the British Craft Trade Fair was crowned by the awards ceremony with Dilly & Pink's wide range of highly-commercial designs winning the Greetings Card prize.

Our Funny Family's colourful cartoons were highly commended with the linocut illustrations from Curlew Cottage getting the commended certificate, and Snapdragon's laser-cut 3D cards picking up the judges' special Just Because... award. While the specialist show dedicated to Britain's designer-makers has been running for 43 years, this was only the second time the Greetings Card Awards have been made and they were part of the presentations at the end of the second day of the fair organised by PSM Ltd, which ran over April 2-4 at the Yorkshire Event Centre in Harrogate.

The huge range of different designs across more than 70 greetings exhibitors out of 430-plus at the fair gave the judges – Greetings Today editor Tracey Bearton; GCA President Ged Mace, and retailer Caron Naylor from The Gift House at Blacker Hall Farm, near Wakefield – a tough task to match their criteria of originality, commercial viability and wow factor.

Having whittled them down, all stands on the long list were visited at the show at the Yorkshire Event Centre in Harrogate, to come up with a short list from which the winners, who will all receive publicity in Greetings Today, were chosen.

The other six who made the shortlist were 1790 Cards, Faye Stephens, Flying Teaspoons, Life & Soul Designs, Lucy Alice Designs, and Perkins & Morley.

Having received her award from Ged, a delighted Kathy Starr, of Dilly & Pink, said: "We're over the moon to have won the Greetings Today card award at BCTF, it's a very welcome validation of what we're doing.

"It does sometimes feel like we're in a very crowded market

so it will be fantastic if this helps bring us more exposure." The accolades were a perfect end after starting with a very useful breakfast presentation from Giftware Association Chairman Henri Davis on her first-ever visit to the BCTF.

Henri was wearing her retail buyer's hat to give insights into their thought process about what they are looking for with new products, and the expectations from suppliers.

"At its most simple," Henri said, "as a buyer what I want from a supplier is some one who has great product that's relevant to my customers, gives great service, and offers new, innovative products from time to time. That's it!"

She also pointed out that preparation is key, with the need to understand what products the retailer sells very important, as is knowing how their buying cycle works – if they only look at Christmas products in January and you submit your items in March, they won't even be considered for almost a year – and be clear about cost prices and margins.

And Henri gave a very simple example of how to calculate margins – if your cost price including materials and your time is £50, for a 50 per cent margin the retailer will double that to £100 and add VAT at 20 per cent, taking the price in the shop to £120.

She also spoke on how suppliers can be seen, mentioning picking the shows they attend carefully as buyers visit those they feel have relevant exhibitors, appearing in pre-show trade press and catalogues with adverts and editorial submissions, and entering industry awards.

Emma Richards, from the Government's Intellectual Property Office, followed up with a talk on IP and how to protect it – videos of both presentations can be seen on the Greetings Today Facebook page, along with more photos from the show.

www.bctf.co.uk

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BCTF REVIEW

From retail to wholesale BCTF Greetings Awards winners – Dilly & Pink

SISTERS Helen Whiteley and Kathy Starr are the people behind handmade card publishers Dilly & Pink. Following a honours degree in visual studies and a career in retail Kathy opened her Gifted store in Thaxted, Essex, specialising in handmade, British-made, fair trade and recycled gifts, jewellery and cards. Kathy has always made cards and jewellery to sell in the shop, so Dilly & Pink, was a natural progression.

"We launched Dilly & Pink at the British Craft Trade Fair in 2013 and the business has been growing and learning ever since.

"We knew cards were a booming sector from our experience with Gifted – when we opened 15 years ago we just had a single spinner of cards but now have a whole section dedicated to them, stocking a wide range of categories.

"I think the popularity is a reaction to the digital age, a carefully-selected beautiful card is still a special thing to receive.

"Gifted gives us a retailers' perspective when we're designing for Dilly & Pink, that's why we offer age cards – from one to 100 – occasions, relations, seasonal as well as lots of birthday and everyday.

"I think the fact that we cover most of the occasions and ages helps us stand out as a small card producer, plus we trial all the cards in the shop so are confident they sell well.

"We're over the moon to have won the BCTF award, it's a very welcome validation of what we're doing."

The Dilly & Pink range is quite diverse in style with some cards featuring Kathy's illustrations and others having a more graphic feel, and pattern and colour play an important role too.

They are all printed on premium quality recycled board, some textured white, some ribbed kraft, with wholesale prices from £1.

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Rocking a new career BCTF Greetings Awards Highly Commended – Our Funny Family

OUR Funny Family will be a new name to readers but, having gained nearly 19,000 Facebook fans in just nine months and with her cartoons picking up thousands of likes on social media, Clare Free decided to launch her designs as cards that focus on the funny side of being a parent.

Clare is a well-known rock and blues guitarist and vocalist with three acclaimed albums under her belt but she felt she was away from home too much on tour while her older two children were little.

So, when her third baby came along she was looking for a new career.

While she was on maternity leave last spring, Clare had some ideas for cartoons and,

although she had never drawn anything before, she had a go at illustrating them herself.

Initially, they were black and white drawings. She shared the first one on her Facebook page in April 2016. Her friends liked it, so she drew more. By June her following had grown to around 700 and Clare was getting more confident so she tried adding colour to the cartoons.

Her following went through the roof: "I just couldn't believe how many people started following me – big companies like the Bounty parenting advice people started sharing my cartoons and they were being liked and shared all over the world."

Clare launched her range of cards featuring the cartoons in February 2017, and the British Craft Trade Fair was her first trade show outing to introduce retailers to the concept, where they went down very well.

"I'm thrilled to bits, and a bit stunned by being highly commended in the awards," said Clare. "I'm really enjoying doing the cartoons and I'm delighted other people enjoy them too."

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www.ourfunnyfamily.co.uk

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