



George Howard's Cards

- Elaine Well I'm talking to George Howard, who many of you will be familiar with as she produces the most beautiful, original hand-made cards and these can be found at various AIKB events and also at other sources. So hello George, first of all how long have you lived here in Brittany?
- George Well Elaine I've been here since 2002 so that... in August in fact, so that's about eleven years now and, uh.....
- Elaine What actually brought you here?
- George Well my husband and I were living in North of London, Potters Bar, and we decided that we wanted to upsize our property and couldn't find anywhere, not within our budget, so I'd been coming over here for, well we'd both been coming over here for holidays around the Guerledan Lake um, and we decided that we would invest the money in a property over here and try living and working out here instead.
- Elaine So when did you start producing your own cards?
- George Three years ago in fact, in 2011. I run a little business here as an auto-entrepreneur called Laniscat Graphics. My training was in graphic design when I came over here, and I wanted to do something more locally rather than just working for my old clients in the UK and I set up Laniscat Graphics to do stationery and posters and that kind of thing. But with my lack of French at that stage I thought I'd just gradually build up my own client base here and learn the French vocabulary which was pertaining to graphics. And then got the confidence to be able to talk about and manage my subject in French as well. From that I decided that, um, a light bulb went on in my head and then I just wanted to produce products with my own images on and I thought well the lowest overheads would be greetings cards because I wouldn't have much money to set me up. From there I decided to go down to the market at Le Bon Repos Abbey on Sunday mornings and see if I could get a pitch there and then just try out selling my cards and see where we went from there.
- Elaine For me it's your bold colours and the sort of definitive outline that makes the cards quite distinctive and unique, where do you

actually get your ideas?

George I get my ideas from all around me. I do try to channel information I receive from people, the subjects that they like - cats are a very very popular subject and so I then go and I either take photographs of cats or draw pictures of cats and then with my wonderful computer I computerise my cats and then I can change the colours of the cats and, and then I get them printed for me in small numbers so then I can test them out and see what people want to buy. But really I listen to my customers and a lot of people like animals and birds and so I'm gradually building up a wide range of those subjects because that's what people are wanting to buy...and the colours... well I also know that people love bright colours so I tend to intentionally include that in my work.

Elaine Well they are certainly very distinctive cards...um..I think child labour comes into things?

George Yes that's true...um...I have a seven year old daughter who goes to school in Laniscat and she, probably for the last 4 years, has been drawing continually at every opportunity. Every moment she gets spare at home she loves to draw, and she comes up with lots of ideas from her head like lots of children and I love the naivety of children's drawings and I encourage her whole-heartedly to do them for me and we have a big pile and every now and then I choose one particular one that I think will get people interested. So we have three in the collection now of Millie's bright drawings and like to do a lot more...and there's often quite a market for childrens' style drawings as well - childlike drawings as well - and I also like to include photographs in my cards as well.

Elaine So finally, where can people buy your cards?

George Well this is my third and final year down at Bon Repos because I've decided to target more specialised markets and maybe a slightly wider area. Doing a monthly coffee and cards morning - a coffee cards day I should say - and I'm doing that from home...but more exciting there's an English shop now in Gouarec and it's run by Janet and it's called Diverse and it's near to the AKB offices and Janet has very kindly agreed to stock my cards, so it's my first outlet, which I'm very excited about and they've been in there a couple of weeks. So you can buy them from Janet.

Elaine Excellent! Thank you very much George for your time and the very best of luck in your ventures and I'm sure that your cards will just go from strength to strength, and thank you very much for sparing the time to talk to us today.

