



Paul Seaman looks at

'KIRCHNERS'

Aylmer Bettington described this scene as 'Buss' end of packing case' [Imbros 1916]. This aviator's art gallery displays both pages from 'La Vie' and postcards. The large painting of a nurse is 'Little Sister' by Raphaël Kirchner. The scene is typical of many RFC and RNAS officers' billets.

:CCI Archive/Bettington Album

The history of the simple 'postcard' is long and somewhat involved. From a slow start in the early 1800s their use as a means of the cheap and (later) cheerful means of sending messages blossomed in the later part of the century. Now, it is recognised that the 'Golden Age' was the period between 1890 and 1919. Generally, before that time, because of the cost of production, cards were relatively expensive to buy and, at first, were not really recognised by postal authorities. The introduction of improved printing techniques brought down their initial cost and postal recognition meant that they could be sent at reduced rates. Originally, the cards carried a simple illustration plus limited space for a message on one side and a blank face for the address on the other. Later they developed to have one side entirely taken up

by an illustration and the other divided to allow for both the address and brief message. This short article is about the illustrations.

Postcard illustrations range from scenic views through comic pictures to photographs of scientific marvels of the period (cars, railway trains, ships and aeroplanes) to reproductions of works of art with all sorts of variations of each type being produced. Here, we are concerned with 'glamour' cards. Originally these were reproductions of photographs of artistically posed nude ladies and were avidly collected by Edwardian 'gentlemen'. With the arrival of good quality coloured printing artist drawn, and painted, cards made their appearance. By 1914 these were produced cheaply in vast quantities and the 'Golden Age' of postcards had arrived. The soldiers

COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 **Les Obus Pacifiques:** Xavier Sager. [Fantaisies trichromes] Paris (Série 130, No 687) – a card advertising 'Wellcome' shoe heels!
- 2 **Trottin montmartrois:** Léo Fontan. 'L-E', R. et Cie, Paris.
- 3 **French Girls:** Maurice Pépin. Delta, Paris. (Série 30, No 149)
- 4 **Les Baigneuses:** Jean Jam. Librairie de l'Estampe, Paris. (Série 75, No 7)
- 5 **L'aviation:** Mathilde Herouard. I. Lapina, Paris. (No 6022)
- 6 **Vent debout:** Mathilde Herouard. I. Lapina, Paris. (No 2727)
- 7 **Théâtreuses:** Maurice Millière. 'L-E', R. et Cie, Paris. (No 5007)
- 8 **Parisian Girls:** Suzanne Meunier. 'L-E', R. et Cie, Paris. (No 5018)
- 9 **Miss Red-Cap:** Raphaël Kirchner. The Delta Fine Art Co, London. (un-numbered)
- 10 **La Mer Fleurie:** Raphaël Kirchner. 'L-E', A.Leroy et R.Cremieu, Paris (No 21)
- 11 **Ma Marraine:** Raphaël Kirchner. Delta Fine Art Co, London. (un-numbered)
- 12 **La première volette:** Raphaël Kirchner. 'L-E', A.Leroy et R.Cremieu, Paris.

A group of 62 Sqn officers enjoying the pages of 'La Vie Parisienne', April/May 1918. Left to right: Lt P.V.G. Chambers; Lt C.H. Arnison MC; Capt T.L. Purdom MC; Lt A.V. Sutton (Equipment Officer).

:J.R. Gordon (62 Sqn Album)

