

The earliest picture postcard in our collection dates from July 1906, and is one of a series of black and white paintings of island scenes. In 1907, Kodak introduced a camera with a postcard-sized film, allowing photographers to produce small runs of their own 'Real Photo' cards. This technique also allowed city studios to create 'portrait' postcards for customers. Although these had postcard markings on the back, they were produced in small numbers and were usually destined for the family album rather than a postbox.



*Kelp burning at Kenavara around 1920. Burning dried seaweed in U-shaped pits to make kelp ash continued in a small way on Tiree into the 1920s. This sort of 'ethnic' image was popular with visitors to the island.*

Two-tone photographs of the island, however, rarely did justice to the landscape. For a while, hand-painted black and white photographs became popular, particularly after textured 'linen' cards captured the market in the 1930s. The (Koda)'chrome' era of shiny, brightly coloured cards began in 1939 and continues to the present day, although colours have become more subtle in recent times.



*UPPER LEFT | A tinted, black-and-white photograph of a thatched house in Moss: either Taigh Màiri Ann' an Rìghe or Taigh Iain a' Mharsanta.*

*UPPER RIGHT | A portrait postcard taken around 1920. On the reverse is written "To dear Aunt Katie with love from Kath". One of a collection from Mannal House.*

*LOWER LEFT | A tinted black-and-white photograph of Tràigh Bhàigh 'Crossapol Beach', dating from the late 1940s. Note the radio aerials in Scarinish.*

*RIGHT | A postcard of Scarinish harbour from the 1950s. Note the two puffers at the pier and the hotel before the 'Lean-To' bar and dining room extension had been added.*



Mona MacDonald (later MacLean) took over the shop on the corner of the pier road in Scarinish from her mother Margaret. Taking advantage of its position near the ferry terminal, 'MacDonalds' was the first outlet on the island to sell newspapers and a range of souvenirs for visitors. She also produced a series of postcards based on her own photographs of the island from the 1950s to the 1980s.

The first two decades of the twentieth century was the 'Golden Age' of postcards. In the year 1909, 800 million postcards were sent in Britain. They remained popular until the turn of the twenty first century, when their use plummeted in the face of competition from mobile phones and social media.