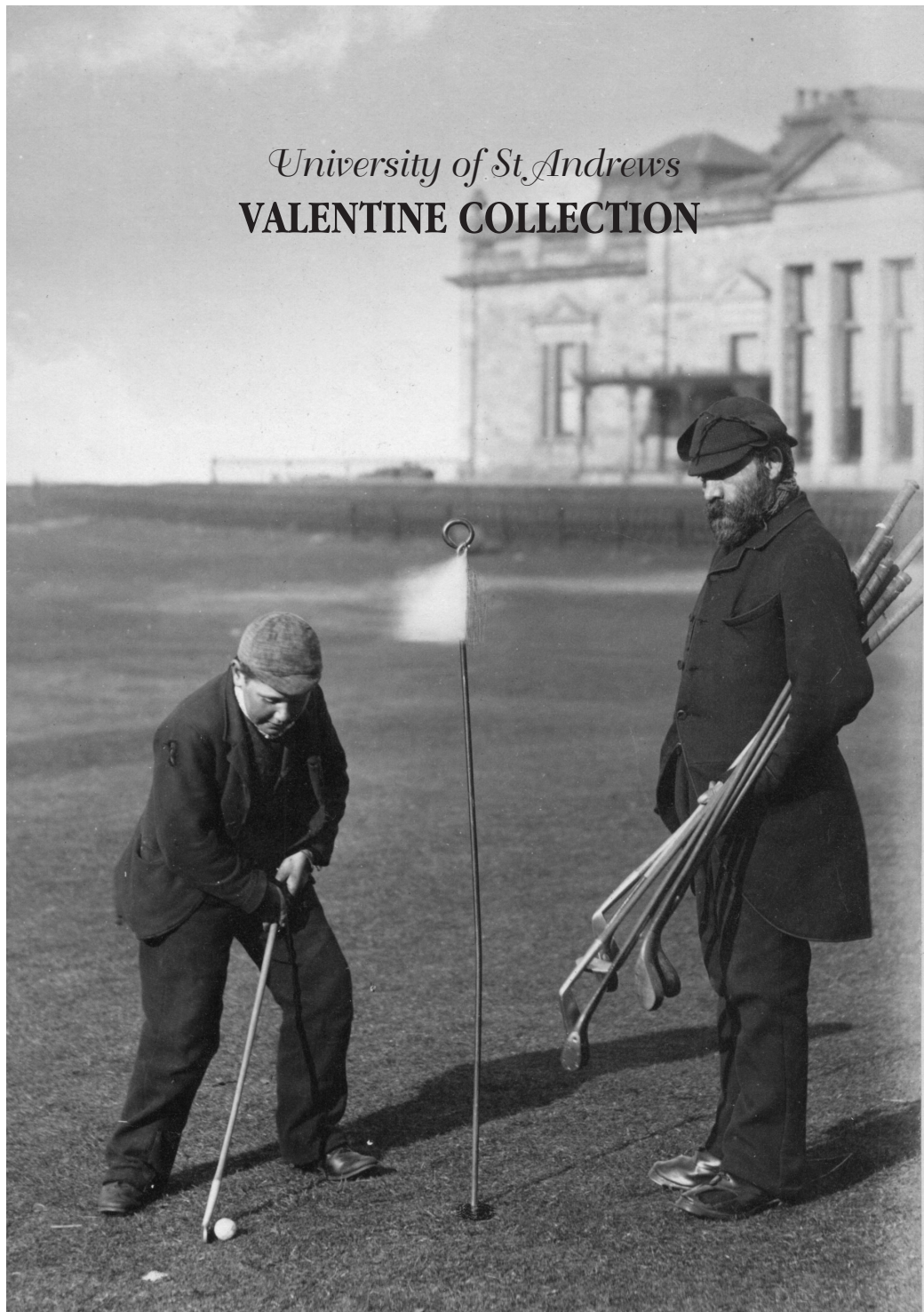


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St Andrews University Library
1999

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VALENTINES OF DUNDEE

In 1851 James Valentine (1815-1879) added portrait photography to the activities of his established Dundee business which had been based previously on the engraving, printing and supply of business stationery. Presumably his initial intention was to supply a local market and, so far as can be judged from the surviving examples, his product was similar to that of many other local photographers throughout the country. The enterprise, however, was a successful one and in 1855 he erected one of the largest photographic glasshouses in Britain.

In his literature, James Valentine described the glasshouse as "fitted up with every convenience for the comfort of visitors. It is well ventilated; and arrangements are made for keeping up a warm temperature, both in the Dressing-Rooms and the Studio, so that Portraits can be taken with comfort in all seasons and states of the weather... Those pictures I am able to produce in all sizes, from a Portrait for a finger-ring to 18 inches, the largest size ever directly produced... "



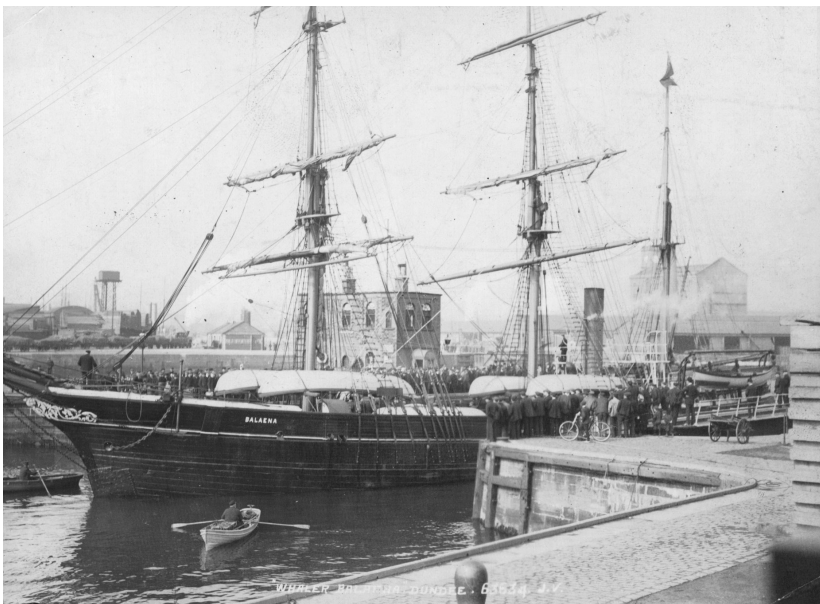
In the early 1860s Valentine decided to follow the example of George Washington Wilson of Aberdeen in selling topographical view photographs. Four main factors seem to have resulted in a rapidly expanding and thriving concern, giving rise to a Royal Warrant as "Photographer to the Queen" in 1868 and the eventual opening of a large printing works at 152 and 154 Perth Road in Dundee. Those factors were firstly James' own exceptional organisational and presentational skills; secondly the entry into the business of his eldest son by his second marriage, William Dobson Valentine; thirdly some instruction in landscape photography in the studios of Francis Frith at Reigate; and finally the innovative use of a barouche cleverly converted to function as a mobile darkroom, necessary until the invention of the dryplate.

The business was now aiming at the national middle and upper class tourist market, with the production of both drawing room albums containing selections of photographs arranged geographically, and individual landscape prints. The latter were available in a choice of sizes - cabinet (8"x 6" approx.), imperial (12"x 8" approx.) and card (4"x 3" approx.). Stereoscopic views, being popular at the time, were also produced. Prices ranged from sixpence for a small print to fifteen guineas for an album bound in the finest morocco. In the nineteenth century the Valentine views concentrated on the genteel tourist sights, initially in Scotland,

moving on to England in 1882 and in the next twenty years to fashionable tourist spots abroad including Jamaica, Madeira, Norway, New Zealand and Tangier.

James died in June 1879, and was succeeded by his sons William Dobson Valentine (1844-1907) and George Dobson Valentine (1852-1890). In practice, however, their father's failing health had meant they had effectively taken over most of the responsibility for the day to day administration of the firm during the previous year. George concentrated on the portrait studio work until 1884 when, because of ill health, he went to New Zealand, where he became one of the early landscape photographers in that country. It was William who took control of the landscape side of the business in Dundee, doing pioneering work in large scale photographic processing and in photo-mechanical printing. In 1851 his father employed 14 workers, but by 1886 William had expanded the work force to 100. His decision in 1897 to enter the picture postcard market, however, was in a few years to increase the size of the firm tenfold. Prior to this decision a few hundred negatives had been added to stock annually, but this also increased by a factor of ten. The general standard of photography suffered a sharp decline and the standard photo-mechanical method of reproduction for postcards was frequently crude, although the firm returned to purely photographic processes before the First World War.

From the turn of the century onwards, Valentines employed a considerable number of photographers who worked on location from the spring to the autumn and then spent the



winter months processing the results. They also employed a large number of artists (about 40 in 1907), one of whose tasks was the retouching of views. This included the addition or removal of features in order to update or improve the saleable qualities of an image. Thus fountains were turned on or off, Dundee buses appeared in some very unusual places and various animals obviously ventured far and wide on travels of their own! Also from 1900, and possibly earlier, images were bought in from local and national photographers and agencies.

Although nowadays we tend to think of Valentines as postcard publishers, they described themselves as 'photographic publishers', reproducing a great variety of photographic goods - single framed images, albums, view books and booklets, pictorial greetings cards and a wide range of photographic novelties including their innovative children's cut-out books. From 1910 to 1914 trade suffered severely because of a price war with German postcard publishers, a battle which Valentines might well have lost had it not been for the outbreak of the First World War. The latter nonetheless had very serious effects on the business, although the firm did continue to show profits. It was during this period that the firm entered the greetings card market in a significant way, a development which was eventually to displace Valentine's postcard trade completely. Their overseas branches were sold off to local management in 1923, and in 1929 they closed the portrait side of the business in Dundee, to concentrate mainly on postcards. Trade gradually picked up again and the firm began to expand, adding a new factory on the Kingsway on the outskirts of Dundee in 1937. At the height of the season as many as a million postcards a week were produced. The real photographic postcards were printed by an automated partly home-built machine which incorporated the processes of printing, developing and fixing to produce 28 cards on one sheet.

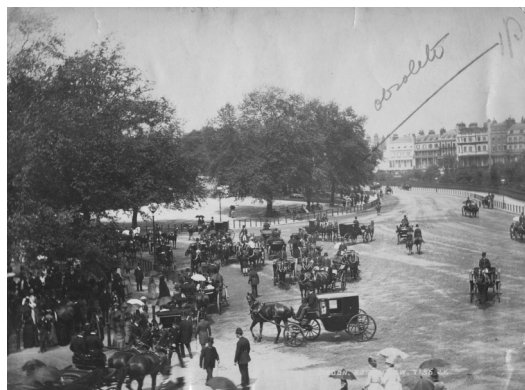
By the 1950s, however, the commitment to postcard publishing was waning, and the greetings card market became predominant, resulting in fewer photographic views being registered. No new monochrome topographical views were registered after July 1966 and it was decided that, after 1967, no more monochrome postcard views would be published either on the firm's own account or on commission. The number of postcard views available was reduced to approximately a tenth (all in colour); postcard publishing ceased entirely three years later, after which the colour transparencies were sold to other publishers. Valentines did continue to publish from photographic originals in a limited way, but their use was restricted to greetings cards.

While the reduction and eventual cessation of photographic postcard publishing was taking place, the family control of the firm was also slipping away. An association with John Waddington & Co Ltd of Leeds began in 1960 and became a take-over in 1963. They in turn sold off Valentines to Hallmark Cards Inc. of the United States in 1980. On 28 October 1994 the long association of Valentines with the city of Dundee came to an end when the factory of the greetings card company closed its doors for the last time. The company's headquarters had been transferred to Bath, manufacturing to near Dublin and distribution to Bradford, during a run-down of the facilities in Dundee which had stretched over more than a year. It is therefore through the images themselves and their continuing story that Valentines will remain forever 'Famous throughout the World'.

THE VALENTINE ARCHIVE

The archive of the firm's British monochrome view business was transferred to St Andrews University Library in 1971, the official handover taking place in December of that year after some initial sorting within the library.

At its height, Valentine's collection of original monochrome negatives, with views from Land's End to John o' Groat's as well as many places overseas, was without doubt the largest and most universal ever established in Great Britain. Although only about a fifth of it survived the firm's practice, initiated in 1931, of discarding many out of date views, the archive still remains an impressive monument to the firm's success and provides an important resource for social historians and other researchers.



The archive continues to grow, partly by diligent purchasing since it came to St Andrews, and also by the generous donations of a few individuals eager to see gaps in the collection filled and the images made widely available.

The primary outlet for the views produced was the leisure and tourist market, and the subjects were the scenes associated with this. Fishing was regarded as attractive, agriculture very much less so, and industry was rarely portrayed. Stately homes, historic

ruins, great open spaces, beaches, the grandeur and curiosity of nature, and great engineering feats formed the basis of the firm's repertoire.

The view registers for the British topographical series survive from 1878 to 1967 in forty folio volumes recording over half a million views. Unfortunately, there are very few records relating to the business aspects of the firm, resulting in a lack of information about the firm's employees or commissioned artists.

In addition to the topographical series there are also several thousands of privately commissioned views, taken mainly since the mid 1920s. The archive also contains various series of special views, such as those of the Empire Exhibition in 1938 and the Festival of Britain series of 1951, together with many samples of their later fancy cards, including the 'Sunshine Comics' as the saucy seaside cards were known in the trade. Very few overseas views remain; those negatives entered in the cabinet registers which were held in Dundee were destroyed by the firm in 1961.

The images, totalling approximately 120,000, survive in a wide variety of formats, including loose prints, proofs, albums, postcards, glass and film negatives, all in a broad range of sizes.

DATING VALENTINE MONOCHROME IMAGES

The years and reference numbers given in the following pages are extracted from the original Valentine view registers for the British topographical series which survive ostensibly from 1878 to 1966. The dates are of registration rather than of photography or publication. Occasionally Valentines substituted a later image of the same scene at the same number. This silent substitution is difficult to discern, except for any other evidence revealed within the contents of the photograph itself (e.g. transport, dress or development of flora). Also, in the imperial and first cabinet register some entries have been pasted over with a slip of paper giving the title of a completely different image. This substitution, silent or not, took place mainly before 1900.

Although the first cabinet register records the images with numbers JV-1 to JV-1713 in 1878, many of them were actually photographed and allocated their numbers prior to that year (possibly in earlier registers). The beginning of the cabinet registers may have coincided with a major reorganisation of the firm as William and George Valentine took over from their father. The images registered between 1878 and 1881 are grouped together in the register under 1881, and the intervening years have been allocated approximately according to the evidence of the photographs (*see p.9). It should be noted, however, that Valentine's extensive use of retouching artists can sometimes make the use of internal evidence hazardous. The dating of a particular image therefore can often be an inexact science!

The dating of an individual postcard can present similar difficulties. Valentines entered the postcard market at least nineteen years after beginning their image registration, and many of the images previously available as individual prints (view scraps) were then reproduced in postcard form. In later years too, images were frequently used some years after they were registered. It follows that registration numbers cannot be used as firm evidence for the date of publication of any particular postcard. They provide one terminus, but beyond that they must be used in conjunction with the other dateable postal history features of the postcard, such as an 'undivided back' or earliest postmark. Many of the earlier postcards were printed without their reference number, adding further to the difficulties.

The simple numerical cabinet sequence (1-99999, 200000-224649) which runs from 1878 to 1934 contains an indiscriminate mix of views of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland as well as a few overseas views. After 1934 numbers with the prefixes A, B, or D were used for Scottish views; G, H, K, L or M for English; R for views of Ireland and the Isle of Man; and W for Wales. These alphanumeric series span the years 1934 to 1966.

It should be noted that a second numerical sequence of imperial sized views was registered between the years 1880 and 1888 approximately. It covers the numbers from 1 to 8216, and it can be important to know whether an image has an imperial or cabinet reference number when estimating the date. When the number is followed by the letter X, it usually indicates that the image is from the imperial sequence. The X, however, is used inconsistently and the most reliable method available to us is to verify the entry in the appropriate register. An approximate year division for imperial numbers follows at the end of the cabinet listing on page 12. No view register is known to survive for the card sequence. Fortunately, entries from this series do not appear to have been used very often for the numbering of images on postcards.

With a few exceptions, the overseas views were assigned to other sequences whose registers are not preserved in St Andrews University Library and which were probably not housed in Valentine's Dundee office.

The view register covering the years 1908 to 1912 (numbers 61014 to 74339) was rewritten before coming to the library and the information giving the exact year division lost. The divisions for this period are therefore approximate and are estimated on the basis of regular additions. (** see page 10)



VALENTINE VIEWS: REGISTRATION DATES

CABINET SEQUENCE

| YEAR | VALENTINE NUMBERS |
|-------|--|
| *1878 | 1-1713 |
| *1879 | 1714-1868 |
| *1880 | 1869-2107 |
| *1881 | 2108-2338 |
| 1882 | 2339-3145 |
| 1883 | 3146-3924 |
| 1884 | 3925-4781 |
| 1885 | 4782-5702 |
| 1886 | 5703-6870 |
| 1887 | 6871-7838 |
| 1888 | 7839-8457; 9500-10669 |
| 1889 | 10670-11787 |
| 1890 | 11788-13888 |
| 1891 | 13889-15716 |
| 1892 | 15717-17983 |
| 1893 | 17984-19945 |
| 1894 | 19946-22029 |
| 1894 | Pictures on postcards officially approved in Great Britain, the British Post Office being one of the last to take such action. 'Undivided back'. Message same side as picture - the back being reserved for the address and stamp. Privately printed postcards which could be used with an adhesive stamp allowed. (1/2d from September 1894 until June 1918, when raised to 1d. NB Some special cards in this period (eg appliqué) were liable to higher letter rate of 1d.) |
| 1895 | 22030-23957 |
| 1896 | 23958-25792 |
| 1897 | 25793-27715 |
| 1897 | 16 June. Writing a message on the address side of a card no longer formally forbidden. Valentines decide to enter the postcard market. |
| 1898 | 27716-29905 |
| 1898 | Postage Committee Report of 31 October 1898 recommended that the current card heading 'THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE' should be changed to 'THIS SIDE FOR THE ADDRESS'. |
| 1899 | 29906-32484 |
| 1899 | 1 November. Post Office allows use of larger Continental or Universal Postal Union size postcard. |
| 1900 | 32485-34736 |
| 1901 | 34737-36696 |
| 1902 | 36697-38587 |
| 1902 | January. 'Divided back' permitted by Post Office. Some local publishers added dividing lines to their old stock - look for different colour line or one not parallel with sides. |

(* see page 7)

1903 38588-41858
 1904 41859-46436
 1905 46437-52518
 1906 52519-57070
 1907 57071-60252
 1907 May. Valentines start to produce their own real photographic postcards.
 1908 60253-61013

**1908 61014-63074
 **1909 63075-65894
 **1910 65895-68713
 **1911 68714-71532
 **1912 71533-74339
 1912 74340-74350
 1913 74351-78117
 1914 78118-80289
 1915 80290-81248
 1916 81249-81430
 1917 81431-81507
 1918 81508-81538
 1919 81539-83204
 1920 83205-84692
 1921 84693-85757
 1922 85758-87533
 1923 87534-90916
 1924 90917-93924
 1925 93925-97656
 1926 97657-99999
 200000-200960
 1927 200961-203804
 1928 203805-205864
 1929 205865-208470
 1930 208471-211448
 1931 211449-215545
 1932 215546-219417
 1933 219418-224436
 1934 224437-224649

A1-A1586
 1935 A1587-A3545
 1936 A3546-A5007
 1937 A5008-A6522
 1938 A6523-A7727
 1939 A7728-A9560
 1940 A9561-A9606
 1941 A9607-A9613
 1942 A9614-A9617
 1943 A9618-A9622
 1944 A9623-A9644
 1945 A9645-A9652
 1946 A9653-A9847

G1-G2271
 G2272-G4378
 G4379-G6007
 G6008-G8257
 G8258-G9999
 H1-H993
 H994-H3043
 H3044-H3124
 H3125-H3131
 H3132-H3137
 H3138-H3147
 H3148-H3266
 H3267-H3271
 H3272-H3907

R1-R117
 R118-R216
 R217-R609
 R610-R1007
 R1008-R1293
 R1294-R1567
 R1568-R1574
 R1575-R1577
 R1578
 R1579-R1584

W1-W438
 W439-W619
 W620-W1095
 W1096-W1383
 W1384-W1730
 W1731-W2101
 W2102-W2111
 W2112-W2113
 W2114-W2115
 W2116
 W2117-W2232



(** see page 8)

| | | | | |
|------|------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1947 | A9848-A9999 B1-B518 | H3908-H4815 | R1585-R1737 | W2233-W2523 |
| 1948 | B519-B1205 | H4816-H6323 | R1738-R1897 | W2524-W2660 |
| 1949 | B1206-B2536 | H6324-H8283 | R1898-R2027 | W2661-W3093 |
| 1950 | B2537-B4156 | H8284-H9999 K1-K455 | R2028-R2226 | W3094-W3507 |
| 1951 | B4157-B5506 | K456-K2485 | R2227-R2323 | W3508-W3817 |
| 1952 | B5507-B7400 | K2486-K4973 | R2324-R3323 | W3818-W4191 |
| 1953 | B7401-B8830 | K4974-K7225 | R3324-R4059 | W4192-W4802 |
| 1954 | B8831-B9999 D1 | K7226-K9366 | R4060-R4528 | W4803-W5695 |
| 1955 | D2-D1333 | K9367-K9999 L1-L1556 | R4529-R4825 | W5696-W6330 |
| 1956 | D1334-D2197 | L1557-L3784 | R4826-R5029 | W6331-W6606 |
| 1957 | D2198-D2942 | L3785-L5905 | R5030-R5277 | W6607-W6891 |
| 1958 | D2943-D3604 | L5906-L7650 | R5278-R5540 | W6892-W7155 |
| 1959 | D3605-D4849 | L7651-L9857 | R5541-R5822 | W7156-W7611 |
| 1960 | D4850-D6195 | L9858-L9999 M1-M996 M1501-M1829 | R5823-R5988 | W7612-W7943 |
| 1961 | D6196-D7130 | M997-M1490 M1830-M3860 | R5989-R6231 | W7944-W8133 |
| 1962 | D7131-D8016 | M3861-M4163 M4251-M5304 M5751-M5901 | R6232-R6342 R6551-R6566 | W8134-W8319 |
| 1963 | D8017-D8366 | M4164-M4180 M5307-M5329 M5902-M6654 | R6343-R6351 R6567-R6589 | W8320-W8415 |
| 1964 | D8367-D8728 | M4181 M6655-M7430 | R6590-R6594 | W8416-W8611 |
| 1965 | D8729-D8802 | M7431-M7610 M7647-M7650 | | W8612-W8639 |
| 1966 | D8803-D8828 | M7611-M7646 | | W8640-W8642 |



APPROXIMATE YEAR DIVISION OF IMPERIAL SEQUENCE

| | |
|------|-----------|
| 1880 | 1-1751 |
| 1881 | 1752-2127 |
| 1882 | 2128-3048 |
| 1883 | 3049-3906 |
| 1884 | 3907-4959 |
| 1885 | 4960-6004 |
| 1886 | 6005-7131 |
| 1887 | 7132-8048 |
| 1888 | 8049-8216 |

There are also several colour series which were allocated numbers with two or three letter prefixes. For example:

AT - Scotland; ET - England; RT - Ireland and the Isle of Man; WT - Wales

The archive contains examples of these and other series such as PAT (privately commissioned Scottish views). When Valentine ceased postcard production in the late 1960s, the various colour series were disposed of piecemeal to other firms. No registers for these series are extant within the archive and it is for this reason that the dating information given is restricted solely to the earlier monochrome views.

Photographs

Front cover: Golfing ("Donald Blue"),

St Andrews (JV-14052) ca.1891

*p. 3: High Street, Dundee (JV-16752)
registered 1892. Electric tram ways in
Dundee only from early 1900s.*

*Conclusion - silent substitution -
photograph ca.1903*

*p. 4: Whaler 'Balaena', Dundee harbour
(JV-63634) ca.1909*

*p. 6: Rotten Row, London
(JV-7156) ca.1887*

*p. 8: The Sands, St Andrews
(JV-75753) ca.1913*

*p. 10: York Minster, west front
(JV-2543) ca.1882*

*p. 11: Deerstalking - The Start, Glen Tilt (JV-1X)
The first imperial number
- registered 1880 but could be earlier,
further research necessary.*

*p. 12: Mr E Heath, Sales Manager, Valentine &
Sons Ltd., arriving from Croydon with photographs of the coronation ceremony of George VI on
12 May 1937.
Postcards were printed and on sale in London by lunchtime the following day.*



The Valentine archive is only one part of the varied photographic collections held by St Andrews University Library. Ranging from an internationally renowned collection of very early photographic images to the works of contemporary photographers, it includes several complete archives of the work of individual photographers and covers an extraordinarily wide subject range. Scottish landscape is a particular strength.

Altogether the department holds in excess of 700,000 images, and the collection is increasing continually by both purchase and gift. The images are currently the subject of a major digitisation project, and the resulting image base, which will be under development for several years, can be accessed via the library website at <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/specialcollections>

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Visits to the archive for study or viewing purposes can be arranged. For an appointment or for further information regarding the Valentine or other photographic collections please contact:

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