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Images: © Jackie Conkie at Smail's

Exclusive range of birthday cards created at Smail's Printing Works

A traditional Borders-based printing press protected by a national conservation charity has just been employed to create a brand new range of cards to mark the 40th birthday of a specialist Scottish stationer.

Paper Tiger has partnered with Robert Smail's Printing Works in Innerleithen, which is the oldest working commercial letterpress printer in the UK, to design, print and typeset 10 unique designs, using methods that date back to the Victorian era.

Robert Smail's Printing Works is cared for by the National Trust for Scotland and is an example of Scotland's industrial heritage, and continues to take on commercial jobs to this day. The exclusive range of greetings cards celebrate 40 years of Paper Tiger and follow ten unique designs, all hand-crafted by the expert team at Smail's.

The cards have been printed on an original 1953 Heidelberg press using historic typefaces from Smail's extensive collection. All cards feature two-colour prints and have been ran through the press twice as part of a detailed printing process.

Michael Apter, owner of Paper Tiger said: "We're delighted to have partnered up with Smail's to bring our customers an exclusive range of letterpress cards. This is something we've been planning since March last year, and we're excited to see this come to fruition after such a difficult year with the pandemic. This partnership combines retail and market knowledge with design, print and typeset skills – the cards are a true artform from start to finish.

"The original process at Smail's is truly unique, and the quality of these cards has exceeded our expectations."

Jack Conkie, Composer at Robert Smail's Printing Works said: "In this, the Trust's 90th birthday year, it has been lovely working with Paper Tiger to produce this letterpress range which marks their 40th. We've worked closely with Michael to ensure the designs were everything he wanted and more. The process, although timely, is so rewarding and we're thrilled that Paper Tiger chose us as their printer."

The hand-crafted range of birthday cards can be bought at Smail's Printing Works, in the Paper Tiger store and online.

Smail's Printing Works and gift shop will reopen to members of the public on Friday 30 April, in line with the easing of lockdown rules.

For more information on visiting Robert Smail's Printing Works go to www.nts.org.uk, and for more information on Paper Tiger visit www.papertiger.co.uk.

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Editor's Notes:

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to 'the National Trust'. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or 'the Trust'.

