

# DO IT YOURSELF STATIONERY

HENRI DAVIS explores stationery's current obsession with DIY and personalisation



mt tape, Stone Marketing

STATIONERY users tend to fall into two distinct camps: those who just want a notebook to write in with a pen that works, and users who really care about what their stationery looks like and want it to reflect who they are. This article is absolutely not about the first type!

When I was at school we personalised our stationery with names of sporting idols and pop bands with stylised writing like graffiti, doodles, flowers and geometric patterns. From notebooks to geometry sets, pencil cases to wooden pencil boxes, satchels to backpacks, nothing escaped our attention.

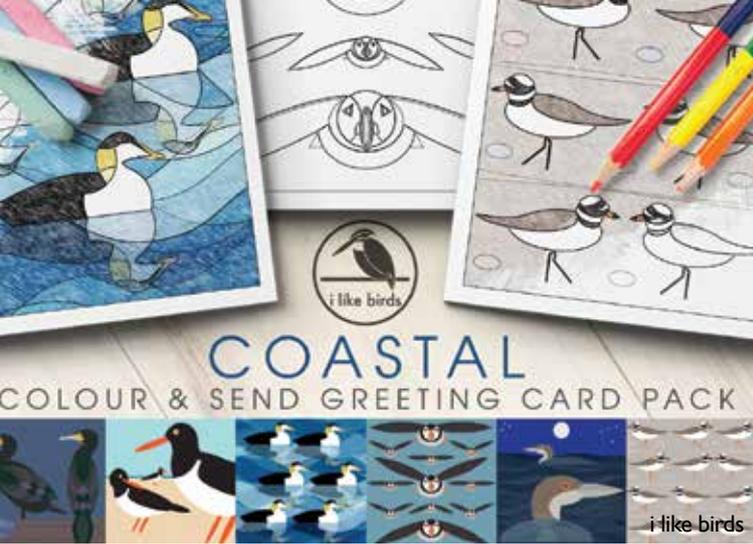
Fast forward to 2017 and it is all the rage again. But this time with adults. Maybe we have always wanted to do this, and now we have 'permission' because it is back in fashion. And this time round, manufacturers supply the kit to help us indulge our creativity, be that sticky pictures, numbers or letters, or pens that will write on any surface. And this is not about appealing to children.

These products are very much aimed at those who want to customise a product to their exact requirements.

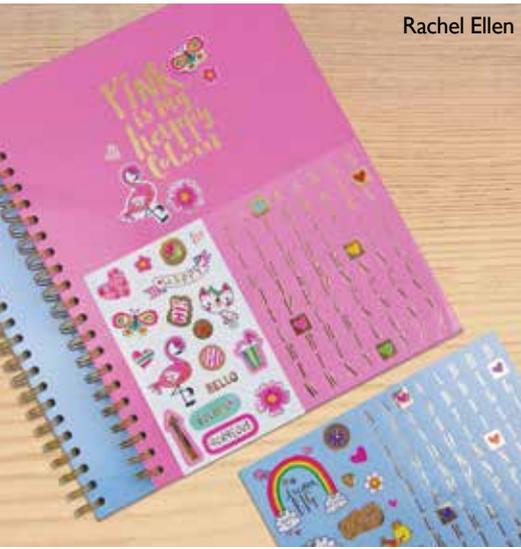
The stationery, card and craft markets are much more closely linked these days than 20 years ago, and they influence each other a lot. In the early 2000s scrapbooking was a significant trend in the craft market. The trend came over from America and revolved around personalising pages of albums in ways that linked to the pictures being kept. The market was worth millions, with pre-made packs of themed papers, inks, paints, markers, stickers; and retailers would devote a significant amount of space to this area.

Scrapbooking shares ground with the current journaling trend in many ways, except journaling tends to be more word based. However, these can be annotated with pictures, doodles and other paraphernalia. 'Bullet journaling' in particular has become really popular recently, focusing on schedules, to-do lists, and goals per week, month or even year.

“THE STATIONERY, CARD AND CRAFT MARKETS ARE MUCH MORE CLOSELY LINKED THESE DAYS THAN 20 YEARS AGO, AND THEY INFLUENCE EACH OTHER A LOT.”



Stone Marketing



Rachel Ellen

One product that seems to embrace all of this perfectly is the Busy Days Planner from Boxclever Press because it combines the worlds of planning, scrapbooking and journaling. As well as a week-to-view diary, the planner also includes pages for each month, to note 'Hopes, plans and dreams' and 'That was the month that...' with space to record memories, goals and plans. The planner has been designed so that users can customise it as much or as little as they want, adding photographs and mementos directly into the planner, as well as their own cover design. Because it is bound with a flexible disc binding, users can easily remove and add pages.

At the recent Home and Gift Harrogate I noticed that Rachel Ellen, the well-known card publisher, had several products on her stand that encouraged users to personalise their notebooks by including sheets of lettering, stickers and fun images, and an organiser with a cover to which you could add your name.

Likewise with colouring, which in 2015 became a huge craze linked to creativity and de-stressing, and took the stationery world by storm. WHSmith cited it in its half-year figures as one of the major areas of sales growth for the period for the

business overall. And while it was colouring books to start with, two years on we are now seeing colour-in card packs, pencil cases, posters and backpacks.

The customisation trend is encouraging retailers to broaden their product offer and many are starting to stock chalk markers, glass markers, washi tape and various stickers so they have a selection of products available for use on all sorts of surfaces including paper, glass and balloons.

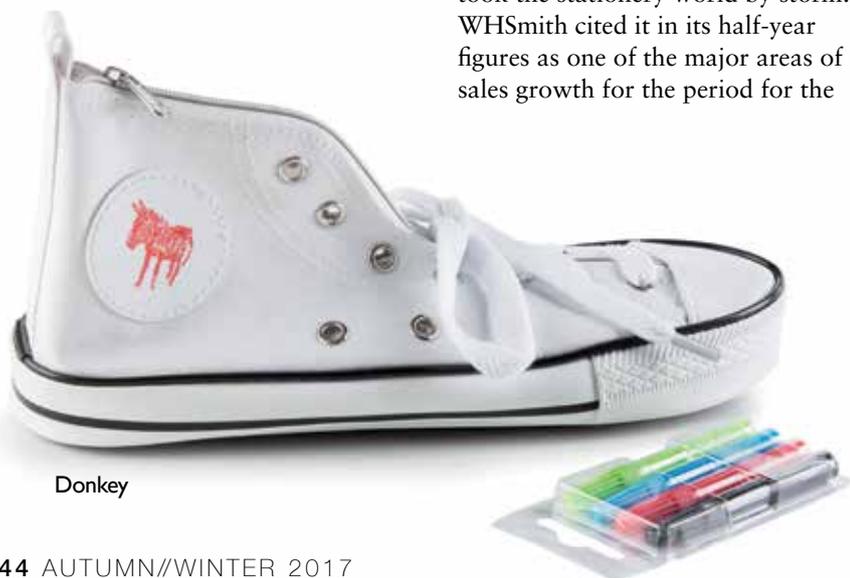
Retailers are seeing this as a way of engaging with customers, and Hobbycraft has a monthly blog which focuses on different projects. I've spotted two blog posts this year related to personalising stationery – one for notebooks and one a wedding scrapbook. They specify what accessories you need to create the finished article and then how to do it.

Personalisation takes it one step further, and is a strong trend in its own right. Once upon a time personalisation involved a white sticky label with your name written on it or, if you were very flash, a DYMO tape where you squeezed the letters out as evenly as possible. Now it can be anything from buying a product online and having your name or initials added, to having photographs printed on the covers.

Leuchtturm1917 offers personalised notebooks, in a choice of two fonts, one modern and one more traditional. As a German company, that can be an expensive option because of the postage costs, but in the UK various businesses offer this service, such as Prelogram and Pen Heaven. Leuchtturm1917 also runs in-store promotion days, offering a free print service with each purchase.



Smiggle



Donkey



Stone Marketing



Rachel Ellen

There are frequently large queues, with some customers buying up to 10 books at a time.

Paperchase offers personalisation of its bestselling notebooks and diaries online. Customers choose from a selection of typefaces to write either a fun or inspirational message, or their own name.

Kikki.K is a relatively new entrant to the UK market, but is really embracing the idea of DIY stationery with some products focused very particularly on this. Its DIY Sticker Book contains lots of stickers, tags, quotes and envelope sealers in different formats and styles, while the Paper Lovers Book contains things like notepaper, envelopes, cards, cake toppers and bookmarks.

And hot off the Smiggle press and new for Back to School 2017 is its DIY range of wallets, sticker badge sets and backpacks, which can be coloured in to suit each customer's style.

Illustrating the increasingly fluid boundaries between the craft and stationery markets, ExaClair, the UK supplier of Clairefontaine, has just launched its Paper Touch pads. Users have everything they need in one kit to decorate a table for a dinner party or kids' party. The pads, each with 12 sheets of double-sided card, provide crafters with the means to create coordinated menus, coasters, confetti, gift boxes, place tags and mats.

Being able to make your mark on your stationery is a strong trend in 2017. As suppliers and retailers develop increasingly clever and appealing products to keep customers happy, it shows no sign of disappearing any time soon.



Leuchtturm1917



Boxclever Press