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Edgars Zvirgzdiņš about his radio postcards collection

Edgars Zvirgzdiņš: My name is Edgars Zvirgzdiņš. I'm a designer and here you are looking at my grandfather's collection of radio amateur cards. Or it was not the collection, it was their library of connections made across the world. I think for me it was amazing because I saw all my childhood, I saw these cards sitting in this cabinet made for them and I would take one or two out, but once I had to move out the collection from the house when my grandpa died I understood what kind of like, material this is. This is an archive of, this ephemeral material which is a little like snapshot of graphic design and art and this state in which we see here in like 60s, 70s.

Whenever someone over the world, somewhere around the world you make a connection, you send your station code to that connection and you write down, for example, what time, what kind of technical aspects of the connection made around the world, the wavelength and things like that. And you write down with which station you have connected. Then you send it to the central bureau which sends it further to, for example these came all through Moscow, because they sent, they didn't know the exact address where they were sending, but they were sending it to the connection on the other side of the world. There are a lot of like self-made cards or ones which you can see that they have either gone to an artist to produce it for them, because this was their business card, this was something which a lot of them were really proud about. And you see some, like, for example screen-printing techniques using metal ink which you think, wow, they have gone out and spent quite a bit of money to have this really nice card printed. Whereas someone used an advertisement card for radio technicians, batteries, which is interesting as well.

Yeah, and these are like mass-made, these are like from Soviets, you get these kind of, like, for example, propaganda. From Soviet Union you don't see a lot of custom-made, you either have low-budget hand-made, which they basically had drawn for example using ball-pen themselves, all of the graphs there and things like that.

From what I spoke to my grandfather I know they couldn't talk about politics because of the USSR. So I didn't know how it was in the Western world, but here you spoke about the weather, which is kind of funny, and I know that they had learned to beep in Morse code one of the Latvian songs, which they were allowed to do so they would just beep out that. Well, my grandpa he was basically a maths and physics teacher, and he taught a couple of other subjects, and he ended up like, starting a computer class there as well, so it's like early, you know early computers which were TV screens and you could connect.

They did speak as well. Here is Cornish amateur radio station, G3HBR and they are saying "very pretty voice, do please send me your QSL card," which is these cards, "Diana, or my dxcc, all yours." So obviously he spoke to a girl from using this radio. But what how that would sound is like two Morse codes beeping at each other, so that's for, it would be amusing to listen even to that.

For me I think it kind of reminds me of when I was a kid, when I first got internet I really liked going on internet relay chat which is IRC, and basically it was a way how to connect to a lot of people from around the world in an instantaneous way. Maybe today that could be Reddit or I wouldn't say Facebook because you're limited to your friends and friends of friends, but somewhere where you can, basically are thrown into this huge mass of people who you can find like-minded people, so I think we think of like Reddit which has overtaken in a way IRC or forums, then yeah, that could be like those aspects.



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