Handout for those interested in joining the Greeting Card Industry:

The UK leads the world in greeting card innovation and design, with other countries looking to us for the latest trends. We export our cards all over the world.

In 2019 we spent £1.7 billion on greeting cards in the UK. This provides income for artists, writers, publishers, printers, retailers and many others.

Card sending remains a strong a British tradition; we send more cards per capita than any other nation. Cards are a good tangible way of keeping in touch and mean more than a social media message which are sent all the time.

Fascinating fact: 18-34 year olds are sending more cards than a generation ago. This trend is being seen in USA too – Millennial's were responsible for the 44m more cards sent in 2018 according to the USPS.

Still Interested:

1. Research the industry for free: a good starting point is to use the GCA's free online resources, https://www.gca.cards/blog/ which are open to everyone and include:
   1.1. How can you become a greeting card artist https://www.gca.cards/becoming-a-greeting-card-designer-a-guide-for-artists/
   1.2. How can you become a greeting card writer https://www.gca.cards/the-gca-guide-to-becoming-a-greeting-card-writer/
   1.3. To work in the industry visit https://www.gca.cards/jobs/ to find companies looking for artists or writers.
   1.4. Learn more about protecting your designs: https://www.gca.cards/licensing-and-copyright-uk-laws-governing-ownership-and-rights-to-material/
   1.5. Do speak to a legal expert if you are entering into an agreement, there are some specialist legal companies who are members of the GCA https://www.gca.cards/directory/?_sft_supplier_service=legal-services
   1.6. Learn about preparing your artwork for a printer https://www.gca.cards/preparing-files-for-print-introduction/
   1.7. Visit the GCA Members Directory to find companies you may want to approach, and to find new cards to buy! https://www.gca.cards/directory/
   1.8. And lots history of card sending e.g. https://www.gca.cards/valentines-day-history-stats-and-facts/
   1.9. More about the card industry can be found on the Thinking of You Week site https://www.thinkingofyouweek.cards/the-greeting-card-community-keeping-in-touch-during-lock-down/

1.10.   Cards are an important way of expressing emotion, particularly when isolated from loved ones. See film made by GCA members during lockdown, *Send a Card, Deliver a Smile*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zzve-3OvL-c

2. If you are designing your own cards - do not ask family and friends for feedback (they love you, so of course they are slightly biased!). Ask the retailers who will be your customers. Test your cards by selling them at a local craft market before launching to the trade.

3. Keep your risk and costs low: print a small amount to start with, perhaps working with a digital printer who can do small runs and source the board, envelopes and cello wrap for you. Use the drop down boxes in the GCA Members Directory to help you find printers https://www.gca.cards/directory/?_sft_member_type=supplier

4. Talk to GCA members offering services to support artists wanting to sell or license their artwork to companies.https://www.gca.cards/directory/?_sft_supplier_service=design-services

5. Read the greeting card trade press such as Progressive Greetings and Greetings magazines, use it to help build your database of retailers. Take advantage of the opportunities for free marketing to the trade whenever you launch new ranges. Always send a high resolution image with your press release. Also subscribe to the online magazine https://www.pgbuzz.net/news/

6. Visit the trade fairs for free to research the market and with an eye to exhibiting when you launch your business. https://www.gca.cards/popular-trade-fairs-for-greeting-card-publishers/

7. Good luck! And do think about joining the GCA as you will then have access to additional resources and networking events. https://www.gca.cards/join/

Fascinating facts

- In the UK we spent £1.7 billion on greeting cards in 2019, according to the Greeting Card Association's annual report.
- £187m of those sales are for Valentine's Day, Mother's day, Easter and Father's Day cards*.
- In 2019 we bought 24 million Valentine's cards in the UK, and increase of 9% on 2018!*.
- 77% of card sales are 'everyday', sent for birthdays and other occasions throughout the year.*
- There is an increase in 'all occasion' cards, sending cards to people just to say hello, share a joke, image provoking a memory, express how you feel, thinking of you, with further increases during the pandemic lockdown of 2020.
- Thinking of You Week, started in the UK in 2014, has now spread to the USA and Australia. https://www.thinkingofyouweek.cards/
- Greeting card are a leading British Creative industry; we lead the world in innovative design and export our cards all over the world.
- Cards are a good tangible way of keeping in touch, and mean more than a social media message which are sent all the time.
- 18-34 year olds sending more cards than a generation ago. This trend is being seen in US too – Millennial's were responsible for the 44m more cards sent in 2018 according to the USPS.

*Source: Greeting Card Association Annual Market Report