Fifty Years of the Railway

Poster in Britain and Ireland

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FIFTY YEARS OF THE RAILWAY POSTER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

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"The most neglected field of study in terms of the relative scale of effect it has had on those using the railways has been that of poster advertising".

J.T. Shackleton - The Golden Age of the Railway Poster.

When one reads about the railways and their histories it is normally from a technical viewpoint, with the whole area of imagery and indeed poster advertising being virtually ignored; yet, this area is of great importance. Indeed the Railway Poster can, in fact, tell us a great deal about the railway companies themselves: the pride they had in their services, their image of themselves and the image they chose to present to the public, even though this image may not necessarily have been a true reflection of reality. As is true of all advertising the railway poster, more often than not, presented the public with a 'utopian' view of the world, which despite being somewhat outrageous is nonetheless reassuring and comforting. Michael Palin, in his book *Happy Holidays*, aptly describes the Britain created by the railway poster,

> ...... it is a timeless world in which skies are always partly cloudy, suggesting moderation and temperance. The weather is as British as briar pipes and flannel trousers, a little dull perhaps but never dangerous. The countryside, carefully preserved by this equable climate echoes its harmony. Hills and valleys are green and well watered, landscapes are delightfully proportioned and quite free from any stain of progress. Whenever humans are depicted, which is not often, they too are delightfully proportioned. Harmonious heterosexual couples with 1.5 children. The men are slim, angular Biggles clones, the women generally pert

1

and wholesome. It's a Utopia, a Britain on which partly cloudy skies never set and in which the Industrial Revolution never happened; a jigsaw-puzzle world from which strife and ill health are absent, where everyone smiles and no one coughs or cheats.

This description would not be far off in describing the image of Ireland created by its Railway Posters. Particular examples which spring to mind would be a series of three posters issued by the Great Southern Railway in 1928 (Plates 22,23 & 24,Chapter Four) which will be examined later on.

This essay attempts to uncover what is by all accounts a mystery surrounding old Irish railway posters. It is a subject which has remained neglected despite an avid interest in Irish Railways by the growing number of railway enthusiasts in the country.

While it would be desirable to be able to look solely at Irish railway posters this would be an almost impossible feat, for several reasons. One of the primary reasons being the lack of available material. Another being that when one is looking at something, in this case poster design, it is important to be able to draw comparisons with what was being produced elsewhere in respect of style, format, use of type and colour and so on. For these reasons among others it has been decided to look not alone at the Irish railway poster but also at it's British counterpart.

Britain has a tremendous reputation in the art of poster design and its railway companies are well known for producing high quality design. In particular the London Transport Company who, despite many attempts by other companies to outdo them, have remained the forerunners. It was the London Transport Company who is responsible for 'discovering' the immense talents of Edward McKnight-Kauffer.

But before looking at the posters themselves Chapter One will examine the history of the Railway itself in order to lay a foundation for discussing its posters. It will look

2

look at railway history in general and then take a brief look at both British and Irish railway histories.

Chapter Two concerns itself with the beginning of railway advertising, from the opening of the **Surrey Iron Railway** in 1801. It describes how the various developments in printing and the changing role of the railway itself in society have, in turn, influenced the development of railway advertising and indeed the railway poster, from the functional letterpress poster to the more complex and competitive colour lithograph.

Chapter Three will examine the railway poster in Britain. As already mentioned, the British railway poster is well known. Many notable artists and designers have produced work for the Railway companies there. Among the more well known posters are John Hassall's jolly fisherman in **Skegness is SO bracing** for the Great Northern Railway, produced in 1908, also his **No Need to Ask a P'liceman** which he produced for the London Underground in the same year. Both typify Hassall's humourous approach. Another notable poster is Edward McKnight-Kauffer's **London History at the London Museum,** 1922, for the London Underground. These posters, among others, will be looked at in this chapter.

Researching the Irish Railway poster, which comprises Chapter Four, provided the most difficulties, as railway advertising here in Ireland has been very poorly documented and few posters have actually survived. The most successful contact was with the Irish Railway Record Society, a voluntary organization of railway enthusiasts with Headquarters at Heuston Station, Dublin. Even here the historical value of the railway poster has been neglected, if not completely overlooked. It was in the IRRS archives that a reasonable number of old posters, included in Chapter Four, were eventually located. The majority of these are from the mid 1950s - the early years of CIE (Coras Iompair Eireann). Some older ones, including a wonderful series of three posters by the Great Southern Railway dated 1928, were also found.

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER ONE
The Coming of the Railway

It is true to say that the history of the Railway Poster has, from the beginning, followed that of the railway itself, making it virtually impossible to talk about one without some reference to the other. It is important to be able to view the posters in some kind of context, particularly an historical one. For that reason it is useful to take a brief look at the history of the Railways in order to lay down a foundation for discussing the posters themselves.

> **Railway n**. Tracks or set of tracks of iron or steel rails for passage of trains of carriages or trucks drawn by locomotive engine and conveying passengers and goods; tracks of this kind worked by single company; organization and persons required for their working.
> *Railway as defined by the 'Oxford Dictionary of Current English', published by the Oxford University Press, 1978.*

As early as the sixteenth century stretches of wooden track were built in many parts of Europe, mostly in the vicinity of mines, along which horses pulled or, indeed, men pushed trucks laden with coal or mineral ore. However railways as we generally think of them began in Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In 1801, the **Surrey Iron Railway** with its horse-drawn trucks was opened to the public for the transport of goods on the payment of a toll. Eight years later, in 1809,

Richard Trevithick opened a circular section of track near the present site of Euston Station in London to demonstrate his steam locomotive *Catch me who can.* In 1813 the steam locomotive *Puffing Billy* was used in a Durham colliery. But it was not until 1825 that the world's first steam-hauled public railway company for passengers and goods opened - **The Stockton and Darlington Railway.** The steam engine used was called *Locomotion* and was designed by English engineer and pioneer of steam locomotion, George Stephenson (1781-1848) who in 1829 was involved in the development of the much celebrated locomotive *Rocket.*

Elsewhere in the world railways were also beginning to emerge. In 1828 France opened its first railway; 1830 saw one in the United States of America; Ireland's first railway, the **Dublin-Kingstown Railway,** opened in 1834; and the following year Germany's first railway opened. By the 1870s the bulk of our railway network had been completed worldwide and the railway had become the most important medium of communication in the world. Great Britain also led the the rest of the world in the development of underground railways. The very first urban underground railway opened in London on January 10th 1863. This railway used steam locomotives and open trucks. The first electric locomotive, designed by the German Werner von Siemens, was demonstrated in 1879 and electric traction especially for the underground was introduced soon after. However, most railways continued to be steam hauled until the 1950s when large scale conversion to electric or diesel motive power was made. In fact, the County Donegal Railways was the principal innovator of diesel passenger railcars in the British Isles, which it introduced in 1931. The Republic of Ireland was the first country in Europe to be completely dieselised in 1965.

The effects of the railway on society were numerous. Firstly, they brought about great changes in the distribution of the population, allowing people more freedom to move around. Country people were able to move towards the industrial centres for

employment. Secondly, the railways themselves created employment both in their construction and in their running. Also small towns with railway stations sometimes became important industrial centres. Finally, the railway virtually created holiday resorts like Brighton and Scarborough in Great Britain and Tramore and Bray here in Ireland, it allowed city people the opportunity to travel to coastal towns, whether for a day excursion or for a fortnight's holiday, with considerable ease.

From the opening of the **Surrey Iron Railway** in 1801, Britain continued to lead the way in railway development. The Surrey Iron Railway differed very little from the numerous other horse-drawn waggonways throughout the country except that the public had access to it on the payment of a toll. Britain's and indeed the world's first steam-hauled public railway company, **The Stockton and Darlington Railway**, engineered by the famous pioneer of steam locomotion George Stephenson (1781-1848), was opened on September 27th 1825. This was followed just a few years later by the opening of a second line from Liverpool to Manchester. The locomotive used on this line was the famous Stephenson's *Rocket* . London's first railway, **the London and Greenwich Railway**, opened in 1836.

The railway continued to develop at a staggering rate throughout the country in the following years, with the route mileage hitting approximately 8,000 by 1850. With this a great number of individual railway companies sprang up all over Britain.

The year 1923 was a very significant one in the history of the British railway, for it was in that year that the numerous small railway companies, which had been built up prior to the First World War, grouped into four new companies:

1. LNER - London North Eastern Railway
2. LMS - London Midland and Scottish
3. GWR - Great Western Railway
4. The Southern Railway.

With the outbreak of the Second World War railway development came to an almost abrupt halt. When, in 1945, the war had ended and peace had again returned,

it was apparent that the railways in Britain and indeed elsewhere in the world, would never be the same again. The privately owned railway companies, exhausted by the strain on both their machinery and workforce and lacking in funds which would allow them to rebuild their services, were unable to mount any opposition to nationalization. So on January 1st 1948 the **London North Eastern** (LNER), **London Midland and Scottish** (LMS), **Great Western** (GWR) and **Southern Railway** Companies became **British Railways**, which was in turn to become simply **British Rail**.

Great Britain also boasts the world's first urban underground railway, The **Metropolitan Railway Company,** which opened its first line from Bishops Road, Paddington to Farringdon Street on January 10th 1863. The following year another company, the **Metropolitan District Railway** was set up. Although the Board was comprised mainly of Directors from the Metropolitan, the two *were* separate, but the intention was for an eventual amalgamation. Both companies continued to expand although Metropolitan District's progress was slower. In 1890 the first Electric railway opened, **The City and South London Railway,** which ran from King William Street in the city ,under the Thames, to Stockwell.

In 1933 the London Transport Board incorporating the London Underground Group was formed and was consequently nationalized in 1948 alongside British Railways. And today, the London Underground with its six deep level tube lines and three subsurface lines is still the most extensive metropolitan railway system in the world.

Just nine years after the opening of the Stockton and Darlington line in Great Britain, Ireland's first steam-operated railway was opened. This line, opened on December 17th 1834, connected Dublin with the fine new harbour at Kingstown, now known as Dun Laoghaire. The first locomotive used on this line was the *Hibernia*. Although it was planned that this line was to carry freight, its real success was with the transport of passengers. With the availability of regular trains, Dublin people moved from the city to towns along the coast. The Dublin-Kingstown Railway, as it was called, did not remain as a short local railway for long. It was extended in sections to Wicklow and Wexford and eventually to Waterford.

As in Britain the railway mania of the 1840s affected Ireland with numerous schemes being introduced nationwide. In 1839, five years after the opening of the Dublin-Kingstown line, the **Ulster Railway** opened linking Belfast and Lisburn. In 1844 Dublin was linked to Drogheda and by 1855, with the building of the famous Boyne Viaduct, the **Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway** was opened. The railways between Dublin and Belfast, with others in Ulster, were eventually joined to form one company, **The Great Northern Railway**, however a large number of its lines have since closed.

The South of the country also developed and the first part of the line between Dublin and Cork was opened in 1846, with Cork being reached three years later, in 1849. **The Great Southern Railway**, as it chose to call itself, had no great shortage of funds and was therefore well built. This can be clearly seen in the many remaining bridges and stations. Indeed, Great Southern Railway's main Dublin Terminus at Kingsbridge, now called Heuston Station, is one of the country's finest buildings. By 1851 Galway too was linked to Dublin and there were now nearly 840 route miles of

9

railway in Ireland. By 1920 the route mileage had hit its maximum of 3,442, after which it declined and now stands at approximately 1,550 (these figures include lines both North and South of the border).

The pattern of Irish Railway development has from the beginning followed closely that of Great Britain, with the gradual absorption of small companies by larger ones. By 1925 all railways lying wholly in the Free State were unified into the Great Southern Railway. Eventually the railways both in the South and North were nationalized. **The Great Southern Railway** serving the South and the **Great Northern Railway** the North.

The Great Southern Railway lasted two decades, until 1945 when it merged with **The Dublin United Transport Company**, which operated all the Dublin City buses and trams, to form **Coras Iompair Eireann** (CIE). In 1950 the Grand Canal Company was taken into CIE giving the country a National, multi-faceted transport company.

In the intervening years the process of change has continued. In 1978 the company (CIE) was reorganised with a holding company (CIE) and three subsidiaries for the three main businesses:

1. Bus Atha Cliath - Dublin Bus
2. Iarnrod Eireann - Irish Rail
3. Bus Eireann

Over the years slumps in the economy and the growing competition from other forms of transport have resulted in the closure of many railway lines. We have seen the introduction of express trains and Dublin now boasts an electrified rail system - Dublin Area Rapid Transit, the DART.

In transport, the process of development and change will never end. "This process,

10

accelerated by the pace of technological advances and the progressively more exacting demands for transport will present an on-going challenge for the generations to come." *Irish Rail, "The evolution of Transport in Ireland"*

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER TWO
The Beginning of Railway Advertising

Up until the beginning of the nineteenth century railways had no real need to advertise. This is probably due to the fact that at this time the railways were still, in the main, private concerns. When however, they began to offer their services to the general public as an alternative to the existing modes of transport they began to produce and distribute promotional leaflets and posters. Initially the Railway companies were concerned first and foremost with giving the public information: announcing the opening of new railway lines or stations, giving details of special excursions or fares and issuing timetables. The early railway poster was more concerned with its 'function' rather than its 'aesthetic' value. "...with communicating the essential complexities of railway operation to the public rather than promotional ballyhoo." *J.T. Shackleton - The Golden Age of the Railway Poster*.

There are two main types of Railway poster - the Letterpress Poster and the Pictorial Poster. The former is basically a scaled up version of the handbill, used most often for the communication of information such as special excursions, fares, alterations to timetables or lines, warning notices (Plate 1) and so on, simply a functional poster. The Pictorial Poster, on the other hand, has more visual impact and it is through the use of the pictorial poster that the railway companies have encouraged holiday and tourist traffic in the most effective way.

Plate 1
Warning Notice
Great Southern & Western Railway
Ireland, 1907

Initially the Railway Companies employed relatively unknown artists to design their posters, but when they realized the extent of the impact these posters were having they began to employ the skills of nationally and internationally recognized artists to produce the railway posters.

Probably one of the earliest printed railway notices is this Toll sheet of freight charges (Plate 2) issued by the Surrey Iron Railway, the world's first public railway, in 1804 just three years after it opened. This handbill, coarse in its design, has more in common with the proclamations and broadsheets of the eighteenth century than it would have with advertising as we know it. It was not until the opening of George Stephenson's Stockton and Darlington line in the autumn of 1825, that railway advertising as such, really made its debut. Even still the handbill which announces its opening (Plate 3), like the Toll Sheet from the Surrey Iron Railway, harks back to the eighteenth century broadsheet. It is interesting to note that the Stockton and Darlington railway line was controlled by a Quaker family, the Peare's, which would account somewhat for the restraints on design.

By about 1840 the railway notice was becoming a little more interesting, in that there had begun the integration of text and illustration, firstly in newspapers but also in posters. This was done by means of woodcut illustration. This method of printing, which involved engraving an image onto a block of wood, inking and lifting the image from the woodblock, was perfected by the English artist Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) and remained the principal method of printing illustrations until photo-engraving became practical in the 1880s.

Railway Companies made full use of the new development. It was not only inexpensive but also produced some very good results, allowing posters to be more attractive to the public than they had been previously when they contained nothing but type.

13

SURREY
Iron Railway.

The COMMITTEE of the SURREY
IRON RAILWAY COMPANY,

HEREBY, GIVE NOTICE,. That the BASON at *Wandsworth*, and the Railway therefrom up to *Croydon* and *Carshalton*, is now open for the Use of the Public, on Payment of the following Tolls, viz.

For all Coals entering into or going out of their Bason at Wandsworth,	per Chaldron,	3d.
For all other Goods entering into or going out of their Bason at Wandsworth	per Ton,	3d.

For all GOODS carried on the said RAILWAY, as follows, viz.

For Dung,	per Ton, per Mile,	1d.
For Lime, and all Manures, (except Dung,) Lime-stone, Chalk, Clay, Breeze, Ashes, Sand, Bricks, Stone, Flints, and Fuller's Earth,	per Ton, per Mile,	2d.
For Coals,	per Chald. per Mile,	3d.
And, For all other Goods,	per Ton, per Mile,	3d.

By ORDER of the COMMITTEE,
W. B. LUTTLY,
Clerk of the Company.

Wandsworth, June 1, 1804.

BROOKE, PRINTER, No. 35, PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

Plate 2
Toll Sheet
Surrey Iron Railway
Britain, 1804

THE
STOCKTON & DARLINGTON
RAILWAY COMPANY
Hereby give Notice,

THAT the FORMAL OPENING of their RAILWAY will take place on the 27th instant, as announced in the public Papers.—The Proprietors will assemble at the Permanent Steam Engine, situated below BRUSSELTON TOWER*, about nine Miles West of DARLINGTON, at 8 o'clock, and, after examining their extensive inclined Planes there, will start from the Foot of the BRUSSELTON descending Plane, at 9 o'clock, in the following Order:—

1. THE COMPANY'S LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE.
2. The ENGINE'S TENDER, with Water and Coals.
3. SIX WAGGONS, laden with Coals, Merchandize, &c.
4. The COMMITTEE, and other PROPRIETORS, in the COACH belonging to the COMPANY.
5. SIX WAGGONS, with Seats reserved for STRANGERS.
6. FOURTEEN WAGGONS, for the Conveyance of Workmen and others.

☞ The WHOLE of the above to proceed to STOCKTON.

7. SIX WAGGONS, laden with Coals, to leave the Procession at the DARLINGTON BRANCH.
8. SIX WAGGONS, drawn by Horses, for Workmen and others.
9. Ditto   Ditto.
10. Ditto   Ditto.
11. Ditto   Ditto.

The COMPANY'S WORKMEN to leave the Procession at DARLINGTON, and DINE at that Place at ONE o'clock; excepting those to whom Tickets are specially given for YARM, and for whom Conveyances will be provided, on their Arrival at STOCKTON.

TICKETS will be given to the Workmen who are to dine at DARLINGTON, specifying the Houses of Entertainment.

The PROPRIETORS, and such of the NOBILITY and GENTRY as may honour them with their Company, will DINE precisely at THREE o'clock, at the TOWN-HALL, STOCKTON.—Such of the Party as may incline to return to DARLINGTON that Evening, will find Conveyances in waiting for their Accommodation, to start from the COMPANY'S WHARF there precisely at SEVEN o'clock.

The COMPANY take this Opportunity of enjoining on all their WORK-PEOPLE that Attention to *Sobriety* and *Decorum* which they have hitherto had the Pleasure of observing.

The COMMITTEE give this PUBLIC NOTICE, that all Persons who shall ride upon, or by the sides of the RAILWAY, on Horseback, will incur the Penalties imposed by the Acts of Parliament passed relative to this Railway.

* Any Individuals desirous of seeing the Train of Waggons descending the inclined Plane from BRUSSELT, and in Progress to BARNESLEY, may have an Opportunity of so doing, by being on the Railway at St. HELEN'S AUCKLAND not later than Half past Seven o'clock.

RAILWAY-OFFICE, *Sept. 19th, 1825.*

ATKINSON'S Office, High-Row, Darlington.

Plate 3
Opening Announcement
Stockton & Darlington Railway
Britain, 1825

Still, however, little or no thought or effort was put into the actual design of the posters. The Railway Companies simply supplied the copy and how it was laid down was completely at the discretion of the individual printer. As a result the integration of illustration and text was rarely, if ever, harmonious, with illustration blocks merely being placed as a substitute for a line of type. The block was rarely used to its full potential as a basis for an interesting design. Plate 4 shows a railway poster which has employed this type of illustration.

This was to change with the full-scale advent of the colour-lithograph poster at the end of the last century. Lithography was by no means a new process; it had been invented a century before by the Austrian Alois Senefelder for the purpose of reproducing musical scores cheaply. Lithography basically involves first of all drawing on a stone with a special greasy chalk or ink. The stone is then treated with a wash of dilute acid and coated with gum arabic before being sponged with water and inked. The area of stone carrying the drawing takes the ink while the remaining areas repel it. Finally paper is pressed onto the stone and the image is lifted. Colour-lithography involves the use of several stones or blocks. In commercial printing these days a metal plate is used instead of a stone but the process remains fundamentally the same. Lithography has been used by many of the great poster artists: Jules Cheret (1836-1933) who was probably the first to exploit the medium; Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) and Alphonse Mucha (1860-1930), to name but a few. It was with this development in printing that an actual poster designer rather than a compositor became responsible for the marriage of type and illustration.

The use of the colour-lithograph can be said to have 'revolutionized' the art of poster design. The pictorial colour-lithograph poster reached its peak between the two world wars and the Railway Companies ranked among its most prestigious patrons.

Plate 4
Carlisle Races
Newcastle & Carlisle Railway
Britain, 1846

The production of colour pictorial posters by the railway companies was reserved for the advertising of such services which would continue - services which were relatively 'long-term', for example popular holiday resorts, while lesser events such as once-off excursions were still publicized by the more cheaply produced letterpress poster. Initially, even when the railway companies did produce colour pictorial posters they tended to be very staid and conservative, straightforward and utilitarian in their design. This too was perhaps a direct result of the costs involved. It is an interesting point to remember that, as already mentioned, by the 1870s the railway had become the single most important medium of transport in the world. Therefore competitive advertising was not altogether an essential requirement, as the railway companies held the monopoly on transport, the train at the time being the 'easiest', 'fastest' and 'cheapest' way of getting from A to B.

There is evidence to suggest that at this time the railway companies tended to "preach to the converted", placing their advertisements where only those who had already chosen to travel by train could see them. But with the onset of "The Age of the Automobile" at the beginning of the twentieth century the railway companies had to become more competitive in their approach to advertising in order to convert the ever-growing number of motor-car enthusiasts. It was at this stage that the Railway Poster really took off, becoming more competitive and emphasizing the speed and reliability of the railway over the automobile.

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE
Britain's Railway Posters

Although this essay is primarily concerned with Irish Railway Posters. This chapter will take a brief look at British Railway Posters for two main reasons. Firstly, not only did Britain lead the way in railway development but it is also famous for its railway posters, particularly those produced by the London Transport Company. Secondly, it would be virtually impossible to look at Irish Railway Posters critically without being able to compare them with what was being produced elsewhere.

When one thinks of old railway posters it is quite likely that the first to come to mind would be the many wonderful examples produced by London Transport over the years. By the 1920s London Underground had earned itself the reputation as one of the leading patrons of high quality poster art, having first employed the pictorial poster as a medium for advertising in 1900. This is due, by in large, to the influence of one man - Frank Pick. Pick believed that the outward appearance and image of a company was of the utmost importance. He firmly believed that appearance and function went hand in hand and that what was good should look good, that "....good design was good business". (Michael Palin - *London Transport Posters*). Percy Bradshaw in his book *Art and Advertising* wrote of Frank Pick: "He has mapped out delightful and economical excursions for the working class family, he has robbed the Wet Bank Holiday of its former terrors and he has given imaginative artists a free hand in proving that art and advertising are inseperable terms."

Frank Pick was born in Stamford, Lincolnshire in 1878. The son of a draper, he trained as a solicitor. He joined London Underground in 1900, having previously worked with the North Eastern Railway Company. By the time he retired from London Transport in 1940 he had become the company's Vice Chairman and had more than any other individual changed the face of Public Transport in London. He died in 1941.

It was as London Transport's Commercial Manager that Frank Pick commissioned the calligrapher Edward Johnston, in 1916, to design a new typeface for the exclusive use of the company. This was a very daring step which showed great foresight on Pick's behalf. The typeface which Johnston produced was a sans-serif face based as far as possible on geometric shapes (circles and squares) and is predecessor to *Gill Sans* and numerous other sans-serif typefaces. *Johnston San-Serif* (Plate 5) was initially designed as a poster typeface but was quickly adapted for more general use in catalogues and leaflets etc. First used in 1919, it remains the official typeface of London Transport to this day.

Frank Pick set very high standards across the board, which resulted in a co-ordinated look, from the sans-serif typeface used on all printed material to the architecture of stations. Pick commissioned the architect Charles Holden firstly to modernise some existing stations and later to design new ones including the company's headquarters.

Pick commissioned posters primarily from well established artists but he is also known for commissioning relatively unknown artists. One such 'newcomer' who really made a name for himself through the work he did for London Transport was the American-born Edward McKnight-Kauffer (1890-1954) who had moved to Europe in 1913. McKnight-Kauffer's first commission from Frank Pick for London Underground was in 1915. But the one poster which more than any other gave Kauffer the

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrst
uvwxyz
1234567890(&£.,:;'!?-*)

JOHNSTON'S RAILWAY TYPE

Plate 5
Johnston San Serif
Edward Johnston
London Transport, 1916

recognition he deserved was his **London History at the London Museum** (Plate 6), which he produced in 1922.

This poster takes as its theme the Great Fire of London, which Kauffer has treated in a somewhat cubist manner. The use of geometrical decoration is typical in Kauffer's posters. The use of flatly applied colour (in this case yellow and orange) is also something of a trademark. This poster is a fine example of 'less is more', with simplicity most definitely the key here. Kauffer has placed the main image centrally in the composition leaving a good deal of the picture plane free of any image - a realisation by Kauffer that it is not necessary to fill every available space in order to create a successful piece of design. It is also illustrative of the influence of the Japanese Print on Poster design.

The London Museum Poster informed the public that the nearest stations to the Museum were Dover Street and St. Jame's Park Station. This is something seen a lot in the posters commissioned by Frank Pick for London Underground - the viewer being shown the destination and told how to get there. This poster is very striking, striking in its simplicity perhaps! It was reprinted in 1966 to mark the centenary of the Fire of London. Another poster by McKnight-Kauffer for the London Underground is **Power - the nerve centre of London's Underground** which he designed in 1930, at the height of his career (Plate 7). This poster is typical of his mature style of poster design, as too is his poster **The Quiet Hours** (Plate 8), again for the London Underground and produced the same year.

Looking at both of these posters it is easy to compare McKnight-Kauffer to Adolphe Mouron Cassandre (1923-1968). In **The Quiet Hours** we can see how he was, like Cassandre, influenced by such artists as Leger and Delaunay. We see the ubiquitous disk motif (also in **Power**). Also similar to Cassandre's work is the use of vanishing

Plate 6
London History at the London Museum
Edward McKnight-Kauffer
London Underground, 1922

Plate 7
Power - The Nerve Centre of London's Underground
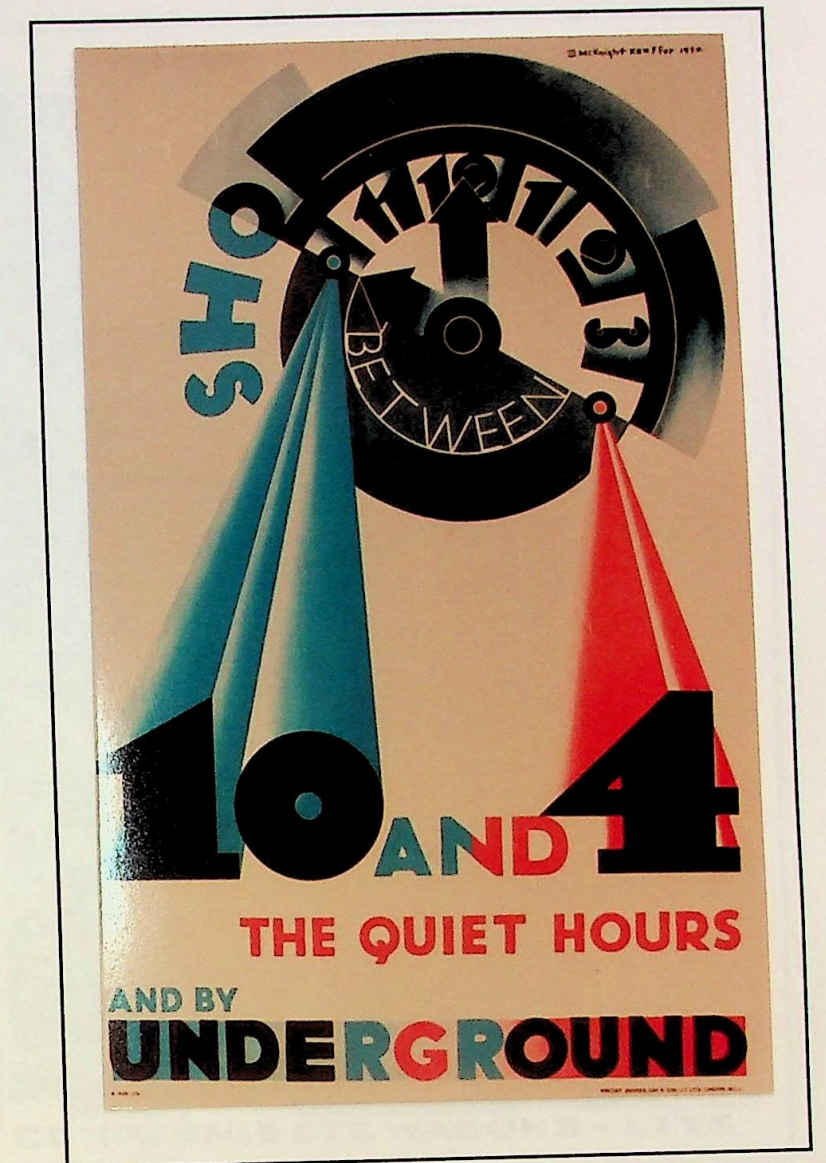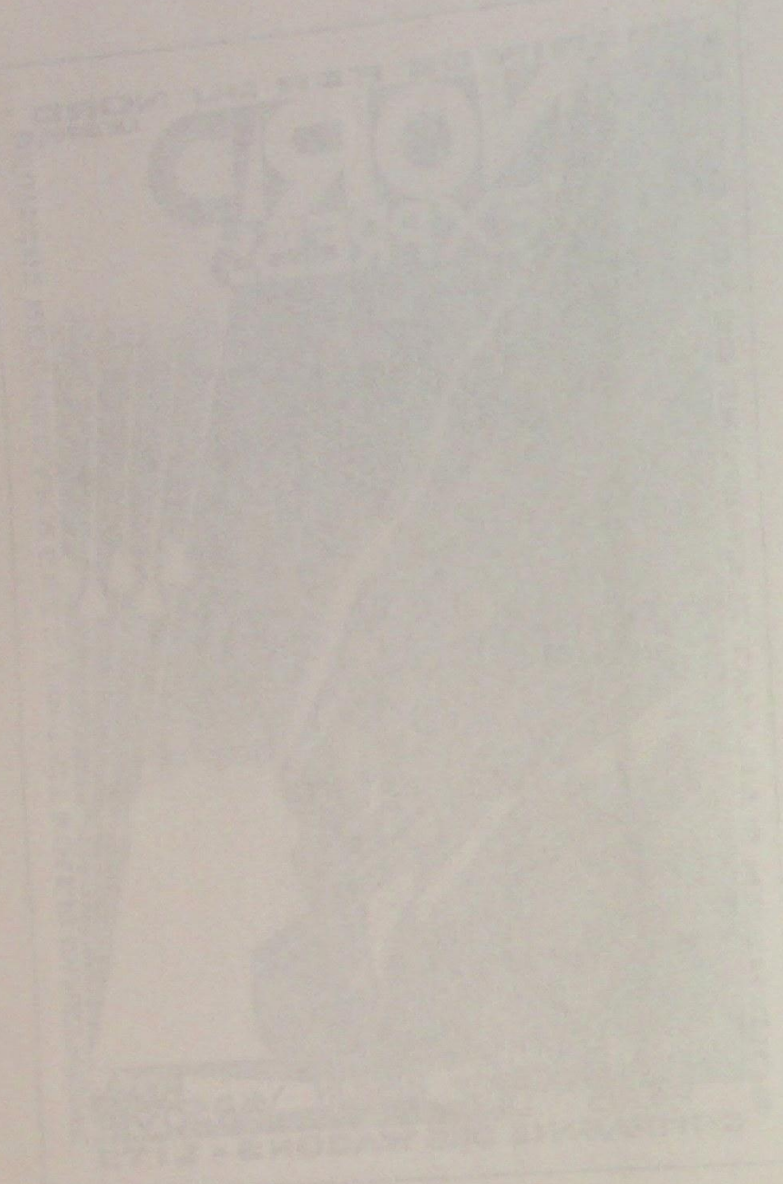Edward McKnight-Kauffer
London Underground, 1930

Plate 8
The Quiet Hours
Edward McKnight-Kauffer
London Underground, 1930

Plate 9
Nord Express
A.M. Cassandre
1927

perspective, note the treatment of the numbers **10** and **4.** The gradation of colour and the split-colour lettering (**O** and **N**) are also seen in the posters of Cassandre, for example Plate 9 **Nord Express** which Cassandre designed in 1927. **Power**, in particular, shows Kauffer returning to a minimalist sort of rendering. The only elements used are those that are absolutely essential to put across the message - another device used by Cassandre. Power itself is emphasized in the poster by the depiction of a strong muscular arm and hand. Kauffer, like Cassandre, also uses a limited pallette, which he pushes to its full potential. Kauffer has also included the London Underground logo.

This poster (**Power,** Plate 8) does not actually advertise anything. The London Underground's monopoly on traffic allowed for the absence of a specific commercial message in some of its posters, entrusting the design totally at the discretion of the artist. Kauffer has certainly taken advantage of this freedom in designing this poster, creating a poster which is both severe in design and use of colour.

Edward McKnight-Kauffer, like Cassandre in France, was imaginative and successful in adapting contemporary developments in painting and posters.

Probably the most memorable of all Railway posters was produced by the Great Northern Railway (Britain) in 1908. The jolly fisherman of **Skegness is SO bracing** (Plate 10) was created by John Hassell (1868-1948) and is typical of his bouncy facetious style. This poster proved to be so popular that it continued to be used well into the days of the London North Eastern Railway and right up until the end of the 1930s. It was later reissued as an anniversary celebration poster (1968).

The Jolly Fisherman has become autonomous with Skegness, so much so that the town authorities have since erected statues of him. Hassell himself explained later that

19

Plate 10
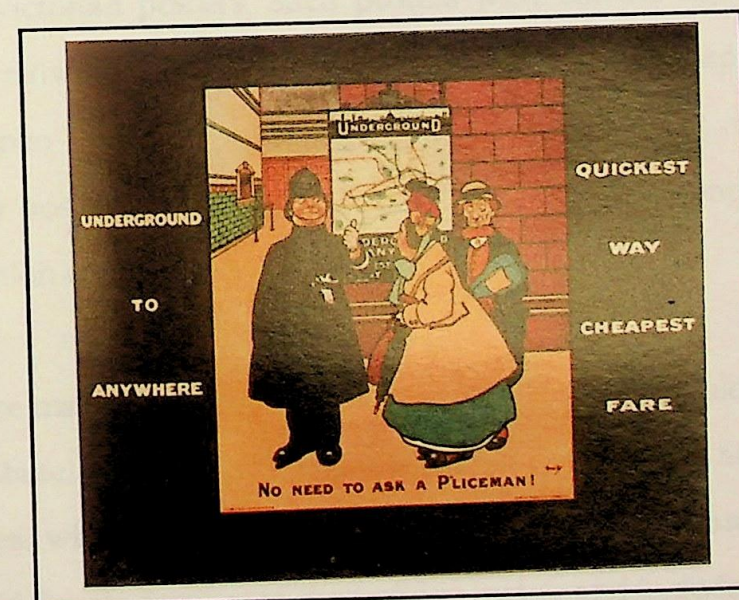*Skegness is SO Bracing*
John Hassell
Great Northern Railway, 1908

Plate 11
No Need to Ask a P'liceman
John Hassell
London Underground, 1908

its design "had something to do with Romulus and Remus jumping over the little walls of Rome, and Skegness with its glorious air and sands making people jump without anything to jump over".

The poster certainly creates an air of excitement about the resort as too does the use of the primary colours: red, blue and yellow. Hassell has used a bold sans-serif typeface for the rendering of the company name, GNR, which he has outlined and added a drop shadow, all helping to emphasize it.

John Hassell also produced work for the London Underground. **No Need to Ask a P'liceman** (Plate 11) is another Hassell classic and a contemporary of **Skegness is SO bracing**. This poster illustrates how easy it is to use the Underground and holds true today. The poster depicts a Victorian couple asking a policeman for directions. The policeman, who incidently resembles the jolly fisherman, says nothing and points at an underground map. As in **Skegness is SO bracing** Hassell has used flat colours. The illustration, which contains the wording 'No Need to Ask a P'liceman' is placed on a very dark (almost black) background with the copy reversed out and placed in an unusual manner to either side of the illustration, creating a landscape format. The use of caricatures which predominate in Hassell's humourous posters were by no means typical of Edwardian and Victorian posters. Such posters were for the most part restrained and factual. British railway posters remained conservative in their approach promoting good healthy open air family pursuits. Michael Palin's account of the Britain depicted in the railway posters, which has been quoted in chapter One, doubles as a fairly accurate description of British railway posters in general.

John Hassell's style was to influence many artists, one of whom was Frank Newbould, who in the 1930s paid indirect tribute to Hassell's ability to capture character in his series of posters **East Coast Types,** which he produced for the London North Eastern Railway. These posters depicted figures familiar to the holiday maker and included

The Donkey Boy, **The Scottish Fisher Lass** and **The Deck-chair man** (Plate 12). Newbould, like Hassell, has used flat colours, which along with the outlines (presumably based on a photograph) are very simple. The deck-chair man's blue sweater and hat and the bold red stripes of the deck-chairs are set against a beige and sepia background. The town and people which make up the background are silhouetted against the sky.

Other similar series were produced by the LNER in what was a prolific period for poster design - the 1930s. These included **East Coast Frolics** also by Frank Newbould (Plate 13 shows No. 1 of the series) and **East Coast by LNER** by Tom Purvis (Plate 14 *The Bath of Psyche*). Both of these posters illustrate a similar style of rendering, playing on the use of flat coloured shapes making up the image. The colours used are strong and vibrant and, again, type is kept to a minimum. **The Bath of Psyche** plays heavily on negative space and is, alongside **The Deck-chair man**, a favourite of this writer. Other such series include **East Coast Occupations** and **Havens and Harbours**, both by Frank H. Mason.

Not all railway companies were fortunate enough to find themselves a 'Hassell' type artist and many settled for 'scenic' type posters. The illustrations, naturally, varied from artist to artist although all created a peaceful and idyllic view of the particular place. The format, on the other hand, remains the same for most posters, with the illustration framed and taking up most of the picture plane (some later posters have the illustration bleeding to the edge of the page). Type is placed beneath the image, in most cases, and usually just consists of the place name and railway company name. Plates 15 and 16 are typical of this type of poster. Plate 17, **St. Paul's Cathedral London**, is slightly different in that it actually depicts the railway itself, along with the hustle and bustle of city life. The composition is very interesting with the immense grandeur of St. Paul's Cathedral dominating the city's skyline. There is an interesting

East Coast Types
No.5 The Deck-chair Man
Travel cheaply by L·N·E·R

Plate 13
East Coast Frolics - No. 1
Frank Newbould
L.N.E.R., 1930s

Plate 14
East Coast by LNER-The Bath Of Psyche
Tom Purvis
L.N.E.R., 1930s

Plate 15
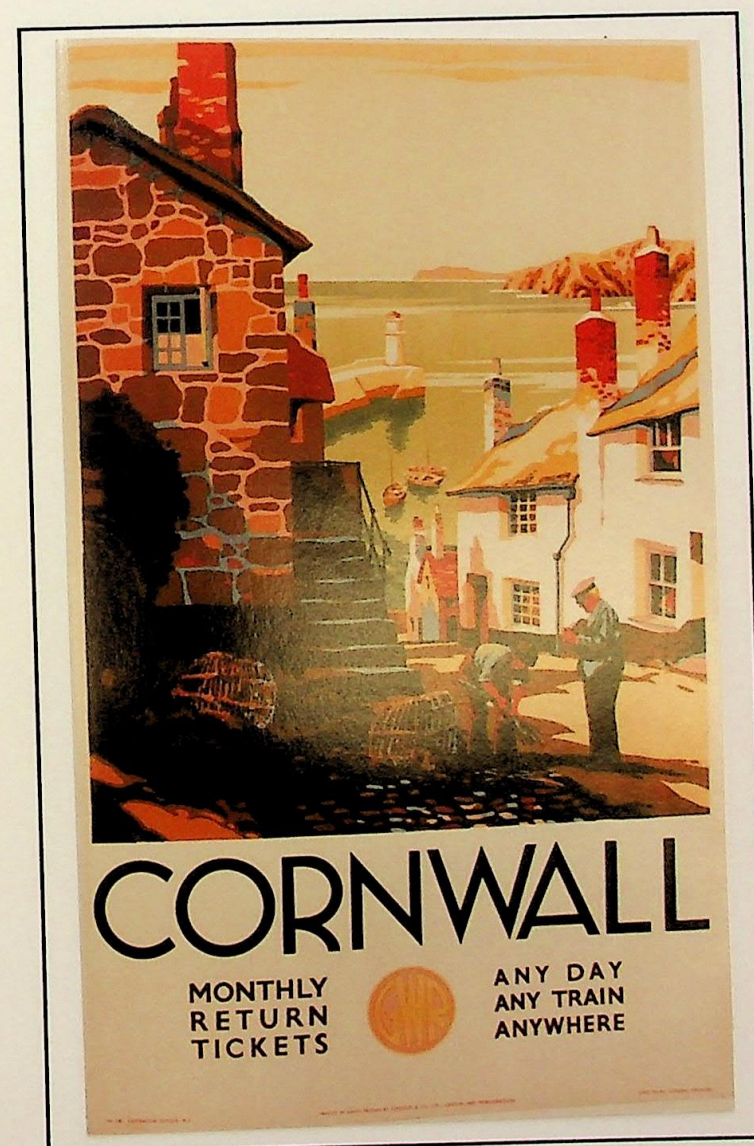*Cornwall*
Great Western Railway, c.1940

CORNWALL

MONTHLY
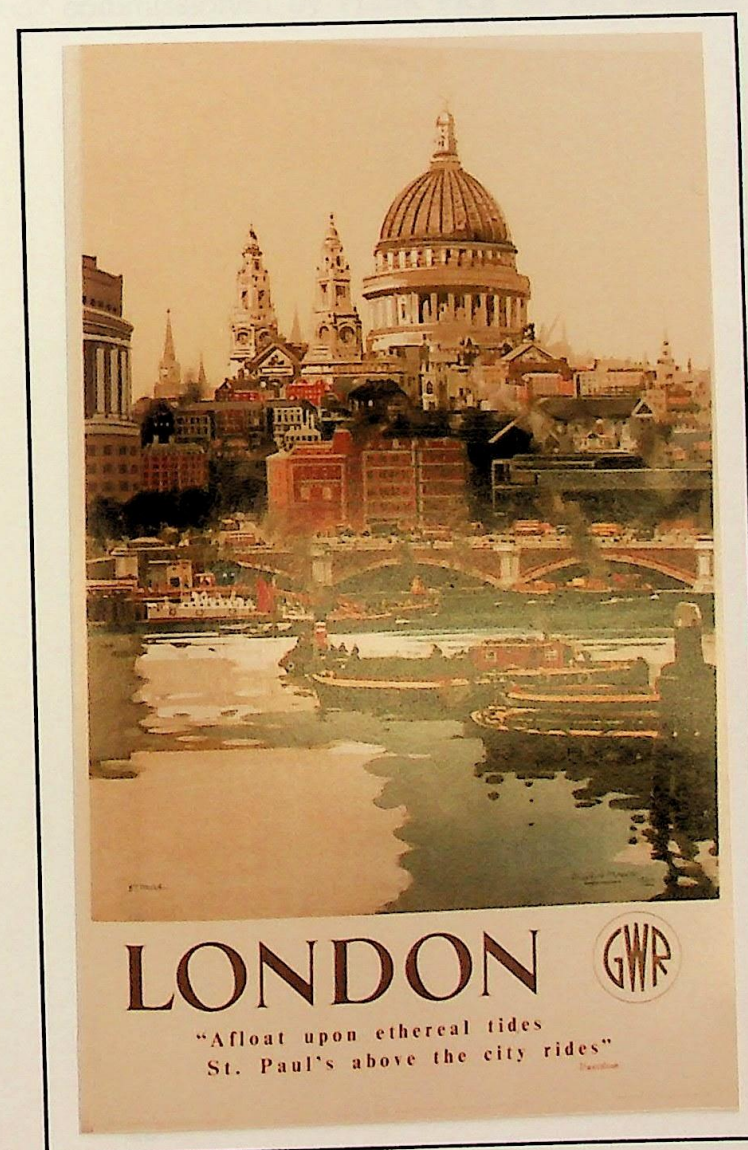RETURN
TICKETS

ANY DAY
ANY TRAIN
ANYWHERE

Plate 16
Snowdon
Sydney Lee
London Midland & Scottish Railway , c.1940

SNOWDON
from Llyn Llydaw
NORTH WALES
LONDON MIDLAND & SCOTTISH RAILWAY

Plate 17
St. Paul's Cathedral, London
Frank H. Mason
Great Western Railway, 1947

use of colour with the more sombre greys and browns being broken and enhanced by the subtle use of the primaries. The artist responsible is Frank H. Mason. The poster was produced in 1947, in the last year of Great Western Railway's existence. The London Midland and Scottish Railway went even further, by employing the more orthodox tallents of Royal Academicans, for example Augustus John , Irish artist Sir William Orpen, Sir Bertram MacKennal (PLate 18) and Sir D.Y. Cameron (Plate 19).

It is with the 'scenic' type poster that we draw most comparisons between the British and Irish railway posters. As we will see in chapter Four, Irish railway companies too employed the talents of 'fine artists' in producing their posters.

It is hard to believe that such posters were contemporary with the likes of McKnight-Kauffer's Power and The Quiet Hour commissioned by Frank Pick for the London Underground (Plates 7 & 8).

Plate 18
Speed
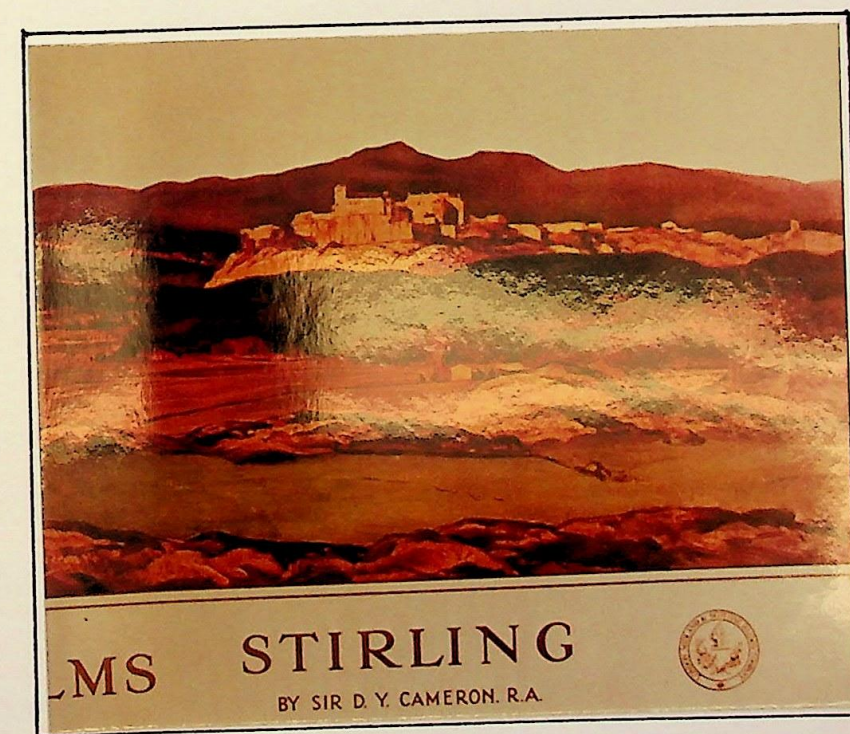Sir Bertram MacKennal
London Midland & Scottish Railway, 1924

Plate 19
Stirling
Sir D. Y. Cameron
London Midland & Scottish Railway, 1924

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FOUR
Irish Railway Posters

Railway advertising here in Ireland has not been well recorded at all. In fact, locating old Irish Railway Posters, particularly pictorial posters, has proved to be an extremely difficult task, as no gallery, museum or library holds a collection. It seems that the Irish Railway Poster had a very short lifespan, existing only until the next one was posted.

After making several visits to the Irish Railway Record Society Headquarters in Heuston Station, Dublin, for purposes of researching this thesis a small number of posters deep in the archives were discovered which had been overlooked as being worthless. The majority of these are from the 1950s and the early days of CIE. Although many of these posters cannot be said to be pleasing to the eye, or indeed illustrative of a good sense of design, the fact remains that they are, nonetheless, Irish Railway Posters and therefore part of Irish Railway history. They illustrate the image of Ireland as it was then concieved by the Railway Companies involved and thus presented to the public both at home and abroad.

It was decided to include all the Irish Railway posters which have been locate, not because of the quality of design, although some are well designed, but because they should not be overlooked. These posters are part of our history and should, therefore, be collected and recorded.

23

The Railway Poster can and does tell us a great deal about the Railways themselves and the image they presented to the public. Whether this image is good or bad is neither here nor there. When a poster is badly designed and cheaply produced this suggests several things; one of these perhaps a lack of funds. Without the necessary finance a company could ill afford to employ the skills of a designer or printer to produce high quality posters. Another reason for poor design is lack of competition. With one company holding the monopoly for an area competitive advertising and publicity is not altogether essential, another reason is perhaps simply a lack of enthusiasm or indeed organization within the company itself.

This poster (Plate 20) **Tours of Connemara** for the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland advertises tours to Connemara, Galway, Achill and the West of Ireland. The actual date is unknown but it is believed to be turn of the century prior to 1925 anyway, when the Great Southern Railway took control of all railways within the Free State. The artist, one J. Hugo d'Alesi, has signed the work in the bottom left hand corner. This poster uses hand-rendered lettering and draws heavily on celtic patterns. The treatment of the word 'Connemara' is particularly unusual and is alongside the border, used in the bottom right of the composition, reminiscent of the illuminated manuscript of which Ireland boasts a strong and colourful history. The use of a Roman typeface 'chiselled' in stone for the name of the Company suggests a sense of permanence and power. It is ironic that the Midland Great Western Railway was taken into Great Southern Railway in 1925. Other symbols of Ireland used are the 'harp' and 'shamrock'. Illustrated are six painted scenes of Western Ireland:

    i. The Cliffs of Achill Isle

    ii. Kylemore, Connemara

    iii. Ballinahinch, Co. Sligo

    iv. Lough Gill, Sligo

    v. Killery Bay *near* Leenane, Connemara

    vi. Clonmacnoise (AD 543)

Plate 20
Tours in Connemara
J. Hugo d'Alesi
Midland Great Western Railway (Ireland) c.1900

The use of the stone archways as framing devices is also very interesting as, too, is the effect of the laid down photographs, one with its corner upturned.

The Donegal Railway Company poster (Plate 21) for the **North-West of Ireland**, which was produced circa 1910/12 (the general manager named on this poster is R.H. Livesy, he was succeeded by Henry Forbes circa 1912 therefore dating this poster prior to that date) uses a similar approach, combining several scenes of the area in the one poster. An unusual point here is that one of the scenes actually depicts a train travelling through 'Barnesmore Gap'. The train is rarely, if ever, seen in posters produced in the early years of the twentieth century.

The illustration in the bottom right-hand corner of the composition hints at the popular leisure pursuits of the time - Shooting, fishing and golfing, all primarily male pursuits. This reflects the social life of the era. This poster like the 'Midland Great Western Railway' poster, draws on celtic patterns (left and bottom right of poster). Also present is Ireland's national emblem, the 'shamrock', which inconspicuously surrounds the 'Donegal Railway Company' crest. Heraldry was very popular among the railways with each company having its own colourful crest.

The type and the use of banners is reminiscent of the Wild-West, in particular the manner in which the wording "North-West of Ireland" is treated, again the type is hand rendered. Interesting too is the use of drop-shadows and the gradation of colour within the type, a device used alot by McKnight-Kauffer and Cassandre later on (see Plates 8 and 9). The way in which the banners break out of the picture frame is also interesting, as too is the break up of the picture plane with the type taking up approximatly a quarter of the composition and placed a quarter distance from the top. Another feature is how the type and borders overlap the illustrations, this is also seen in the Midland Great Western poster (Plate 20). All in all the composition is well balanced,

Plate 21
The North-West of Ireland
Donegal Railway Company (Ireland) c.1910/12

with an interesting use of type, shape and colour resulting in an aestheticlly pleasing poster.

Both the afore mentioned posters are similar in style to early 1900 Railway posters in Britain, for example this poster (Plate 22) produced by the **North Eastern Railway** for the Yorkshire Coast. Here, too, the artist, who incidentally has not signed the piece, has chosen to illustrate several scenes instead of choosing just one. The Donegal Railway poster has particular similarities, with the use of banners, crests and drop-shadow lettering. Plate 23 is another example of the same style of poster.

In 1925 the Great Southern Railway took control of all railways lying within the Free State and in 1928 it produced these three wonderful posters: **Ireland - For Entrancing Scenery** (Plate 24), **Ireland - The Fisherman's Paradise** (Plate 25) and **Ireland for Your Holiday** (Plate 26). It is believed that this series of posters was produced by the Great Southern Railway in conjunction with the Government in a drive to promote Ireland as a tourist destination, following the upset of the Civil War (1922/3).

The illustrations in all three posters are by the same artist, Walter Till, one depicts Killiney Bay, Co. Dublin; the other Innisfallen, Killarney; and the third, a father and son fishing by a river, in what is a very 'Irish' landscape. The illustrations can be said to depict an image of Ireland through it's 'peaceful' landscape. The countryside is unspoilt by the presence of the railway. Fishing has always been, and still is, one of Ireland's foremost tourist attractions and activities with many great lakes and rivers all around the country. These posters illustrate this, particularly Plate 25 **Ireland - The Fisherman's Paradise**. The other two posters subtly hint at the subject, with **Ireland for Your Holiday** having two tiny fishing boats out in the bay.
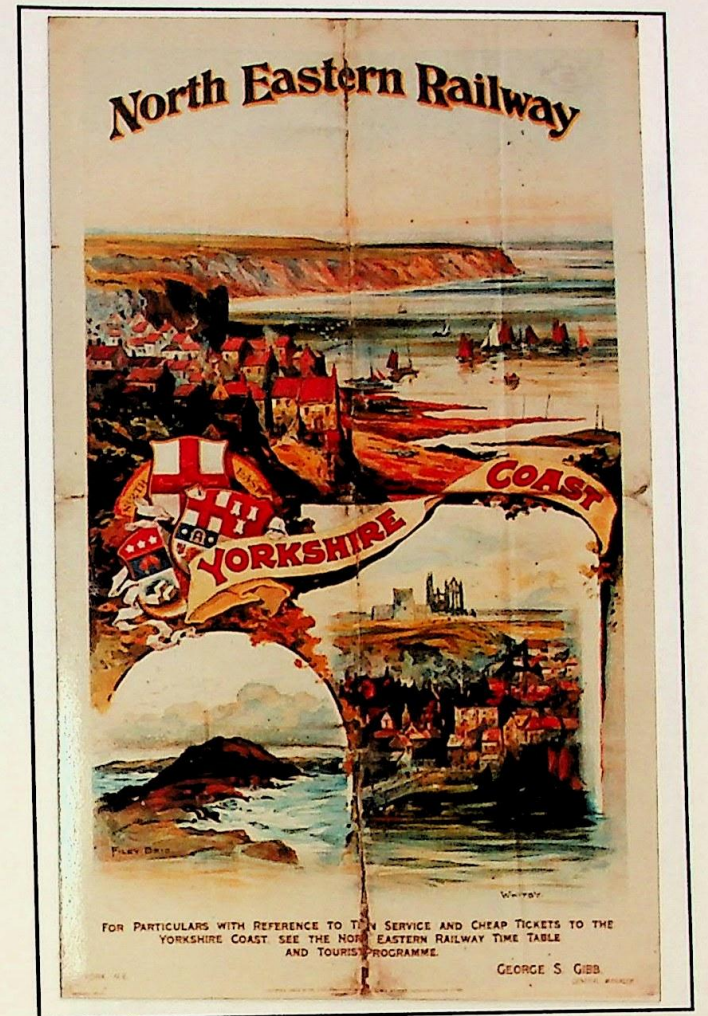
Plate 22
Yorkshire Coast
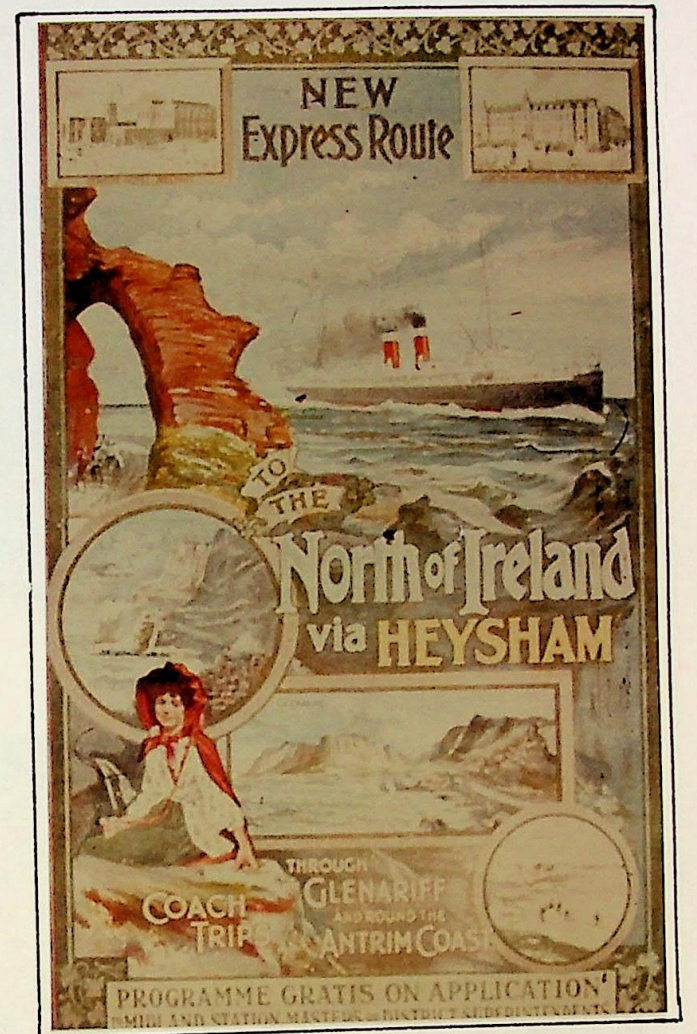North Eastern Railway (Britain), early 1900s

Plate 23
North of Ireland
Midland Railway, early 1900s

Plate 24 (Top)
Ireland - For Entrancing Scenery
Walter Till
Great Southern Railway (Ireland), 1928

Plate 25
Ireland - The Fisherman's Paradise
Walter Till
Great Southern Railway (Ireland), 1928

Plate 26
Ireland For Your Holiday
Walter Till
Great Southern Railway (Ireland), 1928

The format of all three posters is the same: landscape as opposed to the usual portrait format normally used for posters, with the image area framed and taking up the greater part of the composition. Type is placed above and below the image. The bottom panel is the same for each poster, containing the company name and particulars, which are set justified. The subtitles, 'For entrancing scenery' and 'The Fisherman's Paradise' (present on only two of the posters) give the illusion of also being set justified in that the words 'scenery' and 'paradise' are centered below the first line with rules placed on either side to make up the line length. This brings great order to the posters.

The typefaces used are similar on all three posters and have been hand rendered, this accounts for slight variations on the typefaces. The designer has used the same typefaces on **Ireland - For Entrancing Scenery** (Plate 24) and **Ireland - The Fisherman's Paradise** (Plate 25). The titles and company name are in a bold serif face, which in this case is *Cooper Black,* a contemporary typeface. The use of a bold , outline face printed in a contrasting colour (applicable to all three posters) gives more definition and prominence to what is quite obviously the most important wording of the posters. All other type is rendered in an extended sans-serif typeface, modelled on *Johnston Sans-serif,* designed by Edward Johnston for the London Underground in 1916 (see Plate 5, Chapter Three). As has been already mentioned *Johnston Sans-serif* was predecessor to many sans-serif type faces including *Gill Sans*. This face lends itself well to use in catalogues and leaflets as well as posters as it is a very legible face.

The typeface used on **Ireland for Your Holiday** (Plate 26) is again a bold sans-serif typeface, in this case characteristics of *Verona* are apparent, notable are the downward serifs on the 'E' and 'L'. *Verona* was designed by Stephenson Blake in 1913.
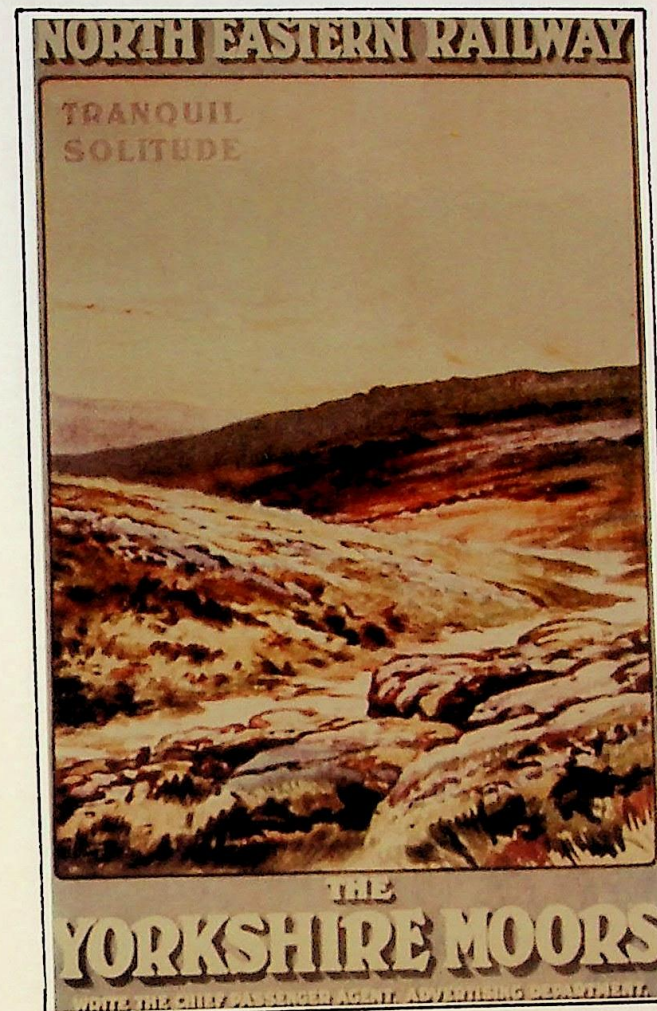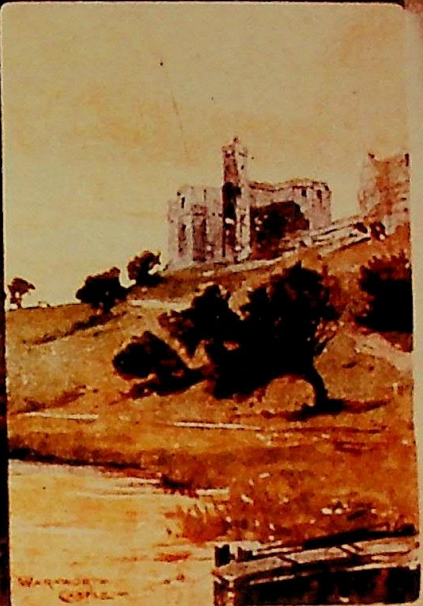
Plate 27
Yorkshire Moors
North Eastern Railway (Britain), c.1930

Plate 28
Land of Lore and Legend
North Eastern Railway (Britain), c.1930

Plates 27 and 28 show *Verona* in use in British railway posters of the same period, both were produced by the North Eastern Railway Company. Plate 27 **Yorkshire Moors** is similar also in layout to the Great Southern Railway posters. Here, too, the image area is framed and takes up the greater part of the composition with type placed above and below.

There is an elegant use of colour in these posters. The border colours do not overpower those of the illustrations. The rustic colour used for the border of **Ireland for Your Holiday** is very rich and has obviously been selected to compliment the illustration. There is also a rich use of colour in the illustrations themselves. The artist, Walter Till, has used a colourful pallette. Till's treatment of the subject matter is the same in all three posters. The elements water (river,lake and sea) and mountains are present in all three, the mountains which take up the background are simply rendered while the foreground is very detailed. Till has also managed to capture the reflective quality of water. In each case the area of water is placed in the middle-distance. In Plates 24 and 25 Till has employed framing devices, the tree and the fisherman's rod.

These posters are a fine example of how railway companies here in Ireland, as well as in Britain and elsewhere, employed the illustrations and paintings of 'fine artists'. These posters use little type as a rule for it is the image which speaks loudest - as the saying goes, *A picture is worth a thousand words*.

Here in Ireland, probably the most well known artist whose work appeared on railway posters is Belfast artist Paul Henry (b.1876). The work for which he is best known is his "atmospheric peopleless landscapes of the West of Ireland with bog reflections and turbulent clouds"(Paul Henry *Further Reminiscence*) . Henry's Irish landscapes were known worldwide and he is believed to be the first modern Irish painter to give rural Ireland an image of itself. Unfortunatly, it has been impossible to locate an

28

example of a railway poster by Paul Henry. However, Plate 29 gives one an idea of his style of painting, which is very spacious and atmospheric, creating a beautiful image of Ireland. Henry's style of painting would lend itself well to poster design.

The Great Southern Railway lasted twenty years, until it merged to become part of Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE) in 1945. It is from this third stage of Irish railway development, more precisely the mid-1950s, that the remainder of posters come. Some of these posters actually advertise coach tours, as opposed to rail tours, but as they were produced by the same company and in some cases the same artist, they have been included.

The illustrations on the next two posters which will be considered are signed by the artist Costelloe (Plates 30 and 31). Whether Costelloe is responsible for the actual overall design of posters, or just the illustration, is not known. Unlike the three Great Southern Railway posters the illustrations take up the entire picture plane, with the type overlayed onto the image.

In **Ireland, Holiday Travel by CIE** (Plate 30), from 1954, the artist has chosen an aerial view of what looks like Killiney Bay, which shows the railway line running along the coast. The use of an aerial view compliments the 2-dimensional picture plane. The train itself is seen travelling away into the distance. Also illustrated is a CIE motor coach. There are quite a number of people on the beach which suggests the area's popularity. The type is overlayed onto the image and in this poster the heading 'IRELAND' is in a serif typeface, which looks to be hand rendered, as there are some peculiarities about the serifs and line widths, particularly on the 'E' which appears off-balanced. The remainder of the type is placed on a banner at the base of the poster and is set in a strange face which bears no relation to the style of illustration or the poster heading.

29
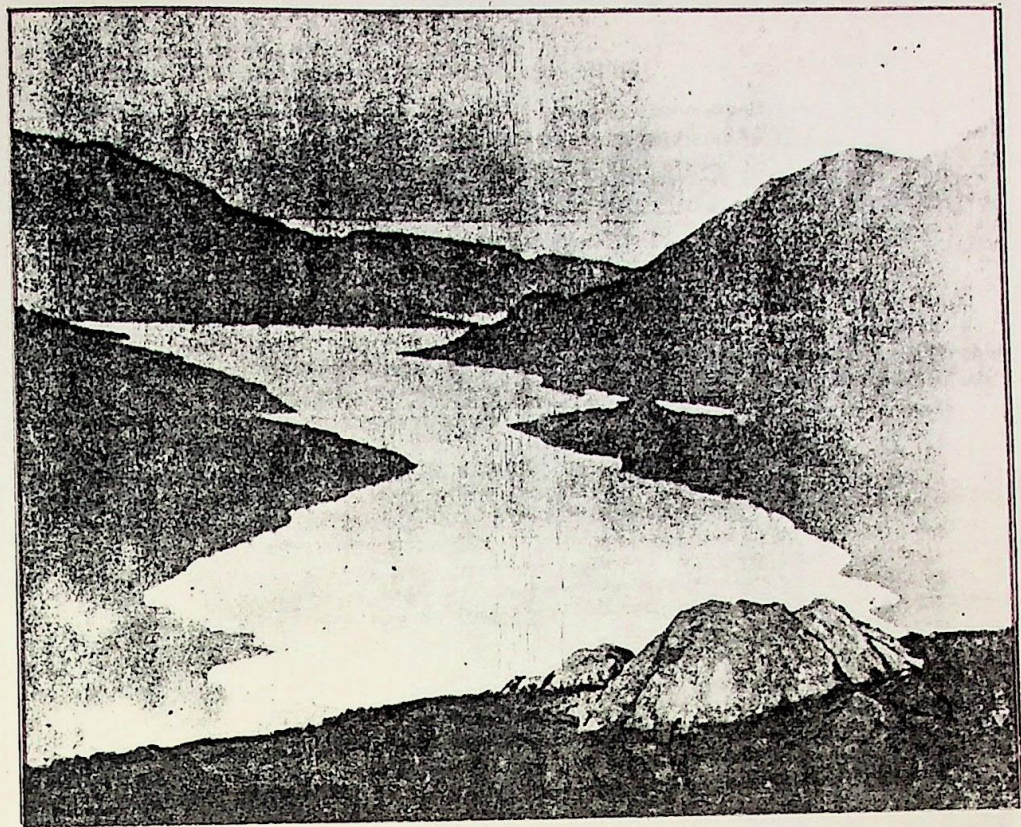
Plate 29
Dawn Killary Harbour
Paul Henry
c.1900
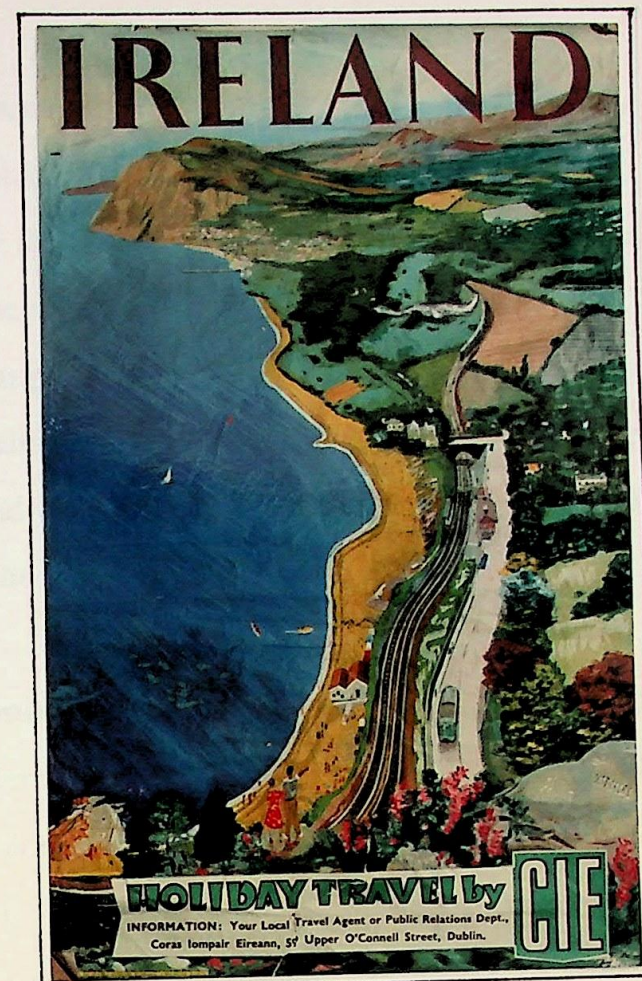
Plate 30
Ireland, Holiday by CIE
Costelloe
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1954

Plate 31
Tour Connemara by CIE
Costelloe
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1954

Costelloe has employed the use of flat colour to which he has added texture and detail in certain areas. The colours themselves: blues, greens and browns provoke a cool, fresh image. It is interesting to compare this treatment of the subject with Walter Till's rendering of the same scene, Killiney Bay, thirty years previously (Plate 26), which is more 'painterly'. This 'painterly' approach is also seen in the English posters (Plate 15 and 16). The artist's name chiselled in the rock in the bottom right of the composition is reminiscent of the Midland Great Western Railway poster (Plate 20) which was produced at the beginning of the Twentieth Century.

In the second of these posters **Tour Connemara by CIE** (Plate 31) produced the following year (for coach tours), the rendering of the illustration is more detailed and appears more true to life. Although Costelloe has used perspective the area of road is still very flat. The type, in this case placed to the bottom of the poster, is again over-layed and combines a brush-script with a bold sans-serif face. The choice of colour for the type is again related to colours in the illustration. The use of colour in Plate 30 is more successful than that of Plate 31. Costelloe has made use of the entire picture plane in both of these posters.

The next group of posters (plates 32, 33, 34 & 35) are all by the Dutch designer Gus Melai, two of which advertise CIE coach tours (plates 34 & 35). All four posters are fairly similar in style and differ a great deal from anything else we have seen so far in the design of Irish railway posters. Melai has attempted to design the poster in its en-tirety rather than combining type with a 'pre-executed' illustration. He has obviously been influenced by what had been (and was being) produced elsewhere. There are similarities with the posters of McKnight-Kauffer and Cassandre, particularly in **Ire-land - Travel in Comfort** (Plate 33), produced in 1955. Here Melai has used vanishing perspective with the train itself having reached the vanishing point as is evident only by the trail of smoke. We see the placement of text on a diagonal line (also in Plates 32
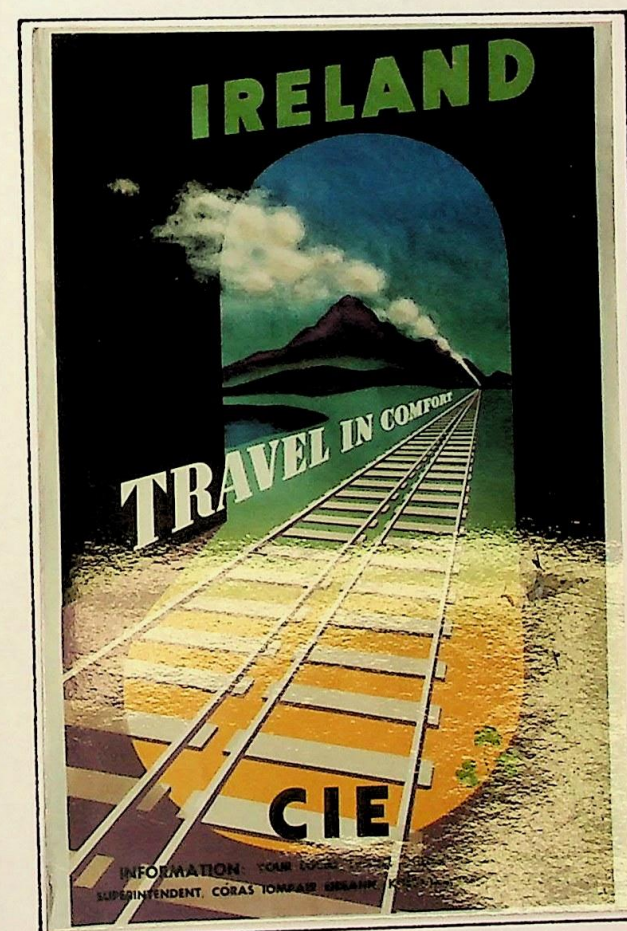
Plate 34
Coach Tours in Ireland (Shamrock)
Gus Melai
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1955

Plate 35
Coach Tours by CIE (Coach)
Gus Melai
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1955

and 35). Both devices were used alot by Cassandre and his contempories a decade or two before (Vanishing perspective can be seen in Plates 8 & 9 and Plates 36 & 37 show text placed on the diagonal). The wording 'Travel in Comfort' also follows the line of perspective. The combination of both serif and sans-serif typefaces has worked well.

Melai has utilized flat shapes in creating this pleasing composition; the railway tracks themselves are an interesting decorative device. He has also used flat colour, playing heavily on light and shade. Also reminiscent of Cassandre and McKnight-Kauffer is the use of gradated colour, here from blue through green to yellow. This combination is also seen in the background of **Ireland-Circular Train Tours** produced the previous year (Plate 32). The use of colour in this poster, purple and black, is an interesting combination. Purple seems to have been a favourite of Melai; he has used it in Plate 35 also. Perhaps it reflects the heather coated Irish landscape?

In **Circular Train Tours** (Plate 32) Melai has used a railway signal as the basis for its design, with the word 'IRELAND', rendered in a bold sans-serif condensed face, actually making up part of the signal. This angular, block-like use of type is seen in Bauhaus design. Melai has hinted at the presence of a train by including a smoke trail yet again, over which he has placed type. All type in this poster is sans-serif.

Plates 34 and 35 illustrate posters designed by Melai for CIE Coach Tours that were both produced in 1955. Both are very similar in their execution drawing heavily on symbols of Ireland as graphic images, the shamrock and round tower in one and a map of Ireland in the other, into which has been placed a representational landscape. A notable difference between these and the previous posters is that the image does not bleed off the page instead it is left 'floating' within the poster area. In Plate 34 some of the text is placed on a diagonal line, while plate 35 places sans-serif type on

31
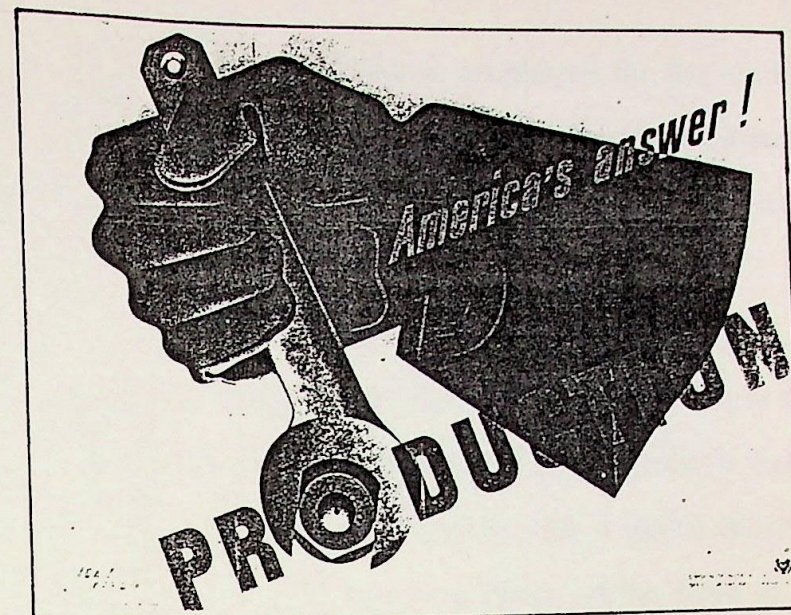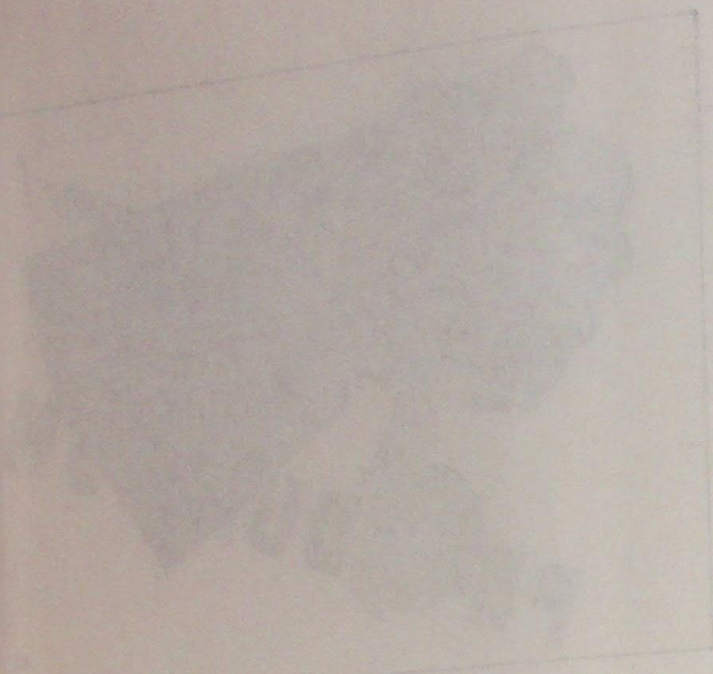
Plate 36
America's Answer - Production
Jean Carlu
1942

Plate 37
L'Intransigeant
A.M. Cassandre
1925
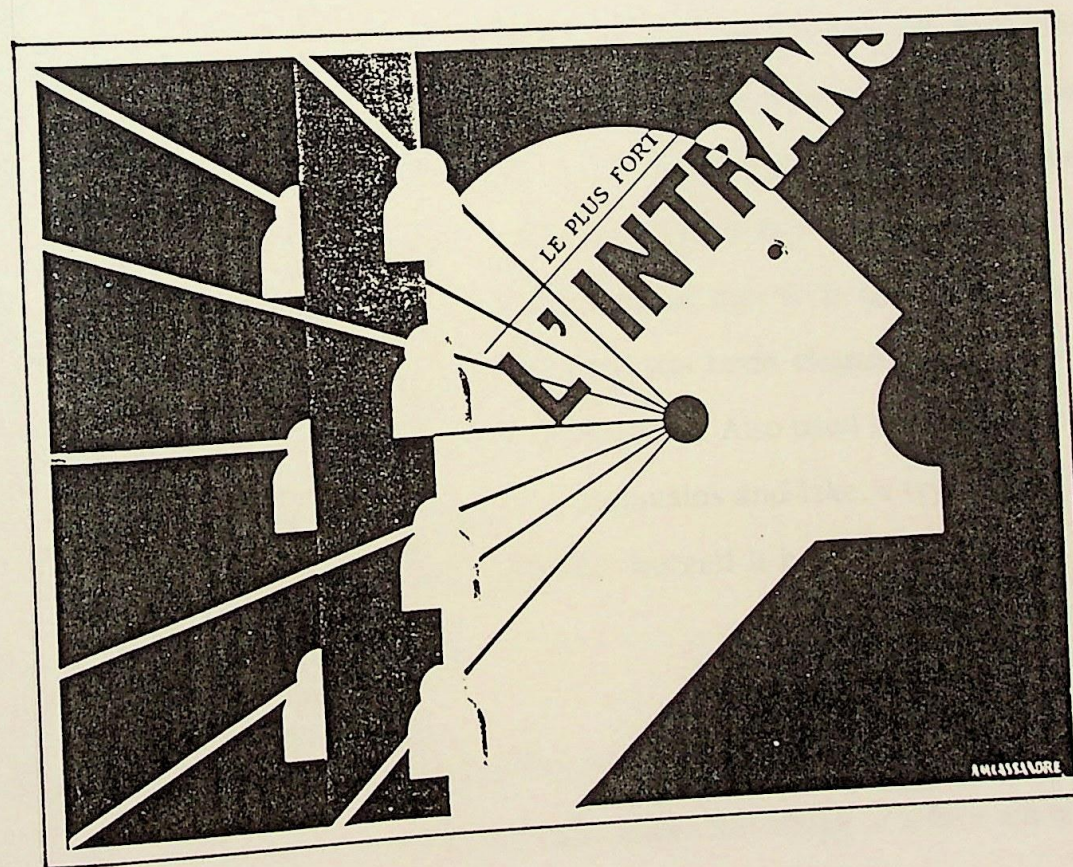
the horizontal. Also used here is a derived uncial typeface, employed for the rendering of the word 'IRELAND'. In both these posters along with **Circular Train Tours**, Melai has included the old CIE logo (affectionately known as the 'flying snail' and used until the 1960s).

The last three posters for discussion were produced by CIE in 1956 (Plates 38,39 and 40). All are signed by the artist/designer Curran with one advertising coach tours (plate 38). Here the illustration, which depicts Bunratty Castle with a motor-coach in the foreground, takes up the entire picture plane. (Note the name on the front of the coach "The Shannon", as CIE named all their coaches after Irish rivers. See also Plate 35 "The Moy") Type is placed in a block at the base of the poster. The heading 'IRELAND' is reversed out and set in a serif face.

Similar to this poster (Plate 38) is the poster in Plate 40, in its rendering and use of illustration. Here Curran, like Melai, has made use of vanishing perspective. The composition is split into three: background, middle-distance and foreground. The train occupies the middle-distance. Again, there is a minimal use of type, which is the case in all the Irish posters. Like the British posters it is the image which takes precedence. In this case the heading is placed at the top of the poster and is set in a less bold face than the previous one. The extended line of the 'R' is quite interesting breaking the formality of the Roman caps. The type has been elegantly employed. There is a strong use of verticals, horizontals and diagonals. Also used is vanishing perspective. The landscape depicted, with it's trees, mountains and lake is typically Irish. The train itself does not impose on the landscape, instead it has become part of it. This poster is by far the most successful.

Completely different in approach is Ireland Welcomes You (Plate 39), also by Curran. The shamrock shape placed over the 'blazing' sun creates the image of a face while
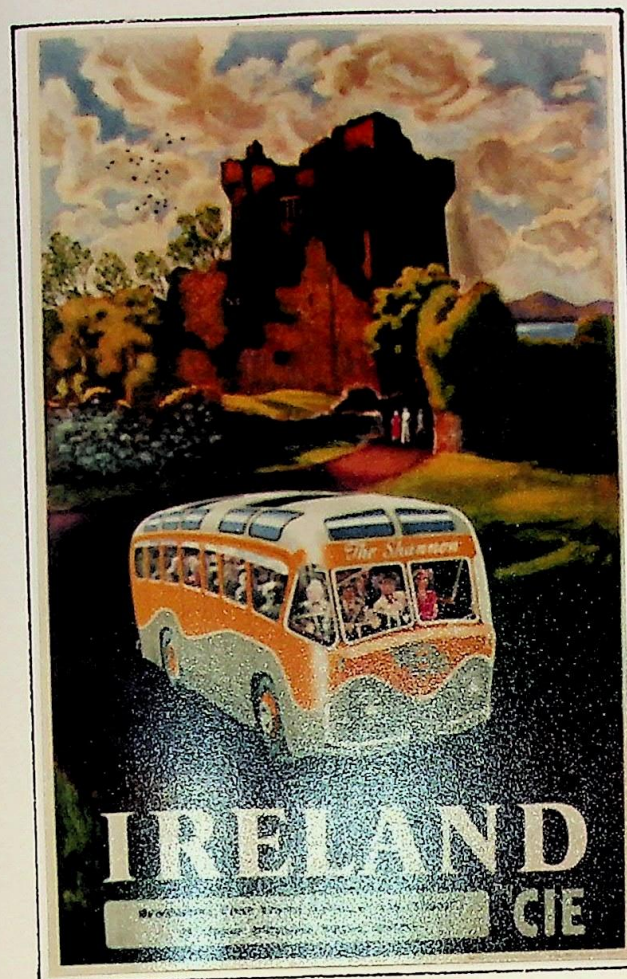
Plate 40
Ireland by CIE
Curran
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1956

the flourishes on the 'I' and 'D' of Ireland suggest open arms - thus illustrating the title in a somewhat "gimmicky" manner. The 'blazing' sun and Curran's choice of colour suggest a climate unfamiliar to this country. Beneath this Curran has placed a more realistic illustration of a train (again set in perspective), the combination, is not altogether successful.

Although Ireland did not produce posters of the same calibre as those produced by London Transport (to be fair, London Transport posters, with few exceptions, were out in a class of their own) it still did produce some good work which for the most part equalled the standard of what was being produced by other railway companies in Britain. The Great Southern Railway posters (Plates 24, 25 & 26) are particularly good examples. These posters are as good if not better than alot of what was being produced in Britain. In terms of layout the G.S.R's use of a landscape format was unusual, portrait formats were more the norm in poster design. These posters show continuity in both layout and use of type. Use of colour, too, was well thought out, with border colours being extracted from the illustrations. In British posters the illustration was more likely to be placed on a bland white background. The Irish posters show a fine understanding of design and have employed the superb talent of artist Walter Till whose images of Ireland as unspoilt and peaceful follow the ideals of the day. As has been already mentioned, railway companies in Britain and Ireland employed the talents of 'fine artists'. Railway posters in Britain and at home created a 'utopia'. Like their contemporaries in Britain, these Great Southern Railway posters illustrated healthy open-air pursuit. Rarely, if ever, is the railway itself seen as responsible for destroying the landscape.

Irish railway posters continued to follow developments in poster design in general. Designers working in Ireland were quite obviously aware of what was being produced elsewhere, particularly in Britain. This is evident in the posters designed by Gus Melai

in the 1950s. These particular posters show similarities to the posters of McKnight-Kauffer and Cassandre.

As already mentioned all the Irish railway posters that were discovered in the process of this research were included in order to give as broad an idea as possible of what was produced by the railway companies here. Plates 41 through 49 make up the collection. Plates 42, 47 and 49 see the introduction of photography in Irish railway poster design. Plate 47 combines photography and illustration, unsuccessfully however. This poster is very cluttered and it is hard to determine what is important and what is not. The colour combination, too, is unattractive.

In general Irish railway posters tended to be very impersonal in comparison with their British counterpart. As seen in Chapter Three the British railway companies (London Underground, Great Northern Railway and London North Eastern Railway in particular) created characters, adding personality to their campaigns. For example the jolly fisherman of Skegness created by John Hassall for the Great Northern Railway in 1908 (Plate 10), the helpful policeman in **No Need to Ask a P'liceman** (Plate 11), also by John Hassall, for the London Underground. Also the L.N.E.R. **East Coast Types** (Plate 12) from the 1930s, all friendly figures familiar to the holiday-maker.

Plate 41
Diesel Trains Cut Time
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1955

Plate 42
Ross Castle, Killarney
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1954

Plate 45
Dublin by CIE
Coras Iompair Eireann, 1955

Plate 46
Bundoran - Visit Ireland
Date & Company unknown

Plate 47
Ireland - Dine While You Travel
Coras Iompair Eireann, c.1955/60
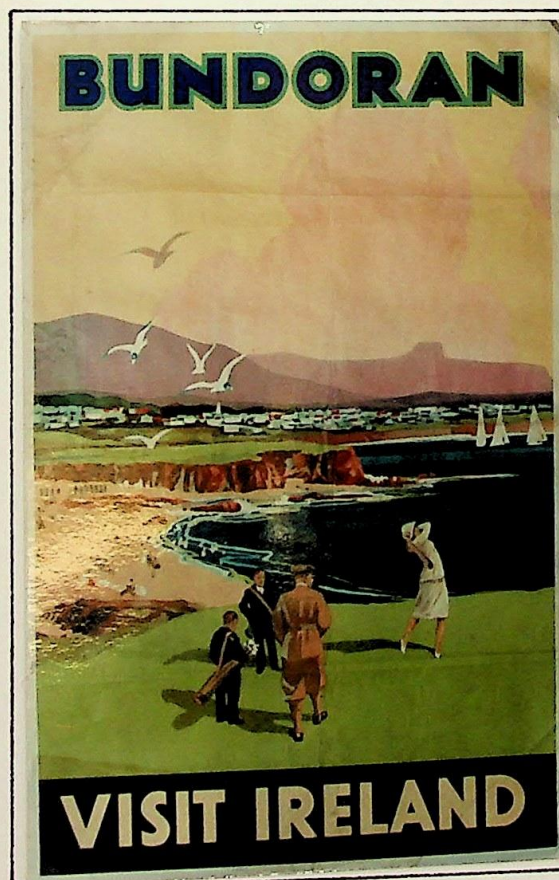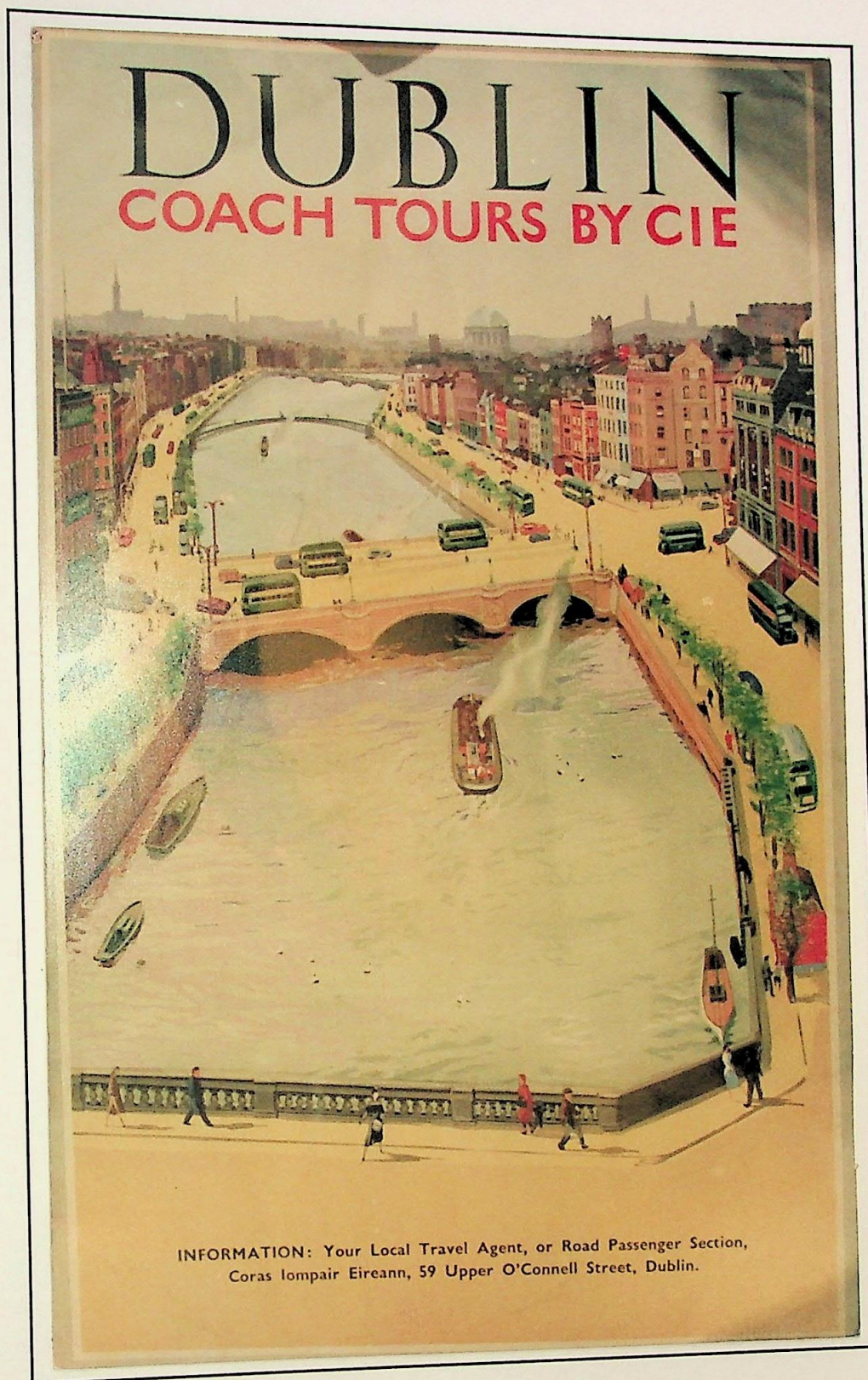
Plate 48
Dublin Coach Tours by CIE
Coras Iompair Eireann, c.1955/60

Plate 49
CIE Rail Hostess
Coras Iompair Eireann, c.1955/60

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have taken a look at history, by considering the coming of the railway, examining both Britain and Ireland's railway histories. Chapter Two discussed the beginning of railway advertising, looking at how the railway poster has developed over the years and how its objectives have changed. Initially it announced the arrival of a new and alternative mode of transport. Later when the railway had established itself as the most important form of transport its advertising changed emphasis. With a monopoly situation in existence, railway companies concerned themselves, first and foremost, with communicating information to the public. With the arrival of the Age of the Automobile the railway companies found themselves with stiff competition. The motor-car gave people a new freedom. Railway companies had to become more competitive in their approach to advertising, they not only had to fight for a new clientele but also to retain that which they already had. It was as a result of this forced competitiveness, coupled with the developments in printing that caused the railway poster to 'take-off'. The railway poster has been influenced not solely by the changing role of the railway itself in society, but also by the developments and trends in the art world in terms of printing and style.

Chapters Three and Four have looked at the railway posters of both British and Irish railway companies and have taken specific examples from each country, looking closely at them as pieces of design, analyzing such things as style and format.

I have also attempted to draw comparisons between posters from the two countries. With the countries close proximity and historical connections, these are several.

In looking at more recently produced railway posters, particularly in Britain, one can see a return to more creative and decorative graphic design. In his book *Happy Holidays*, Michael Palin suggests that we are "...going through one of those aesthetic cycles in which decorative artwork and richer, more experimental graphic design is returning."

Since McKnight-Kauffer's realization that one does not have to cram every available space in order to create a successful piece of design, simplicity has become almost a formula for good poster design. The best posters are, more often than not, those which carry a clever idea, simply portrayed. One of the finest examples was produced, unsuprisingly, by the London Underground. **The Tate Gallery by Tube** (Plate 50) reiterates this theory - SIMPLICITY IS THE KEY!
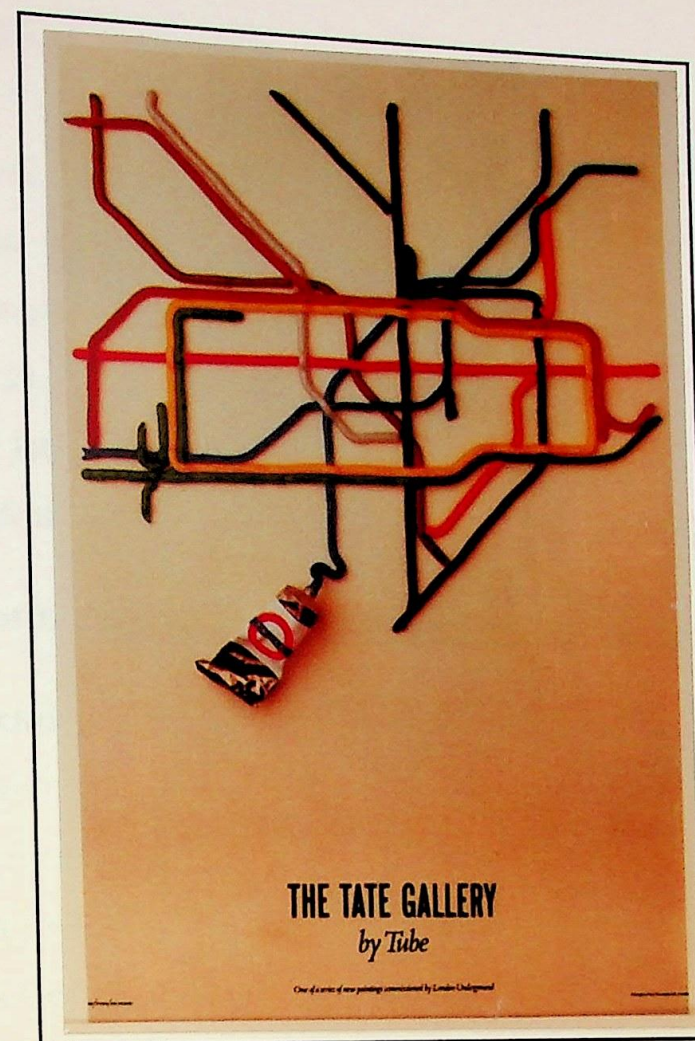
Plate 50
The Tate Gallery by Tube
London Underground, c.1980

INDEX TO PLATES

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