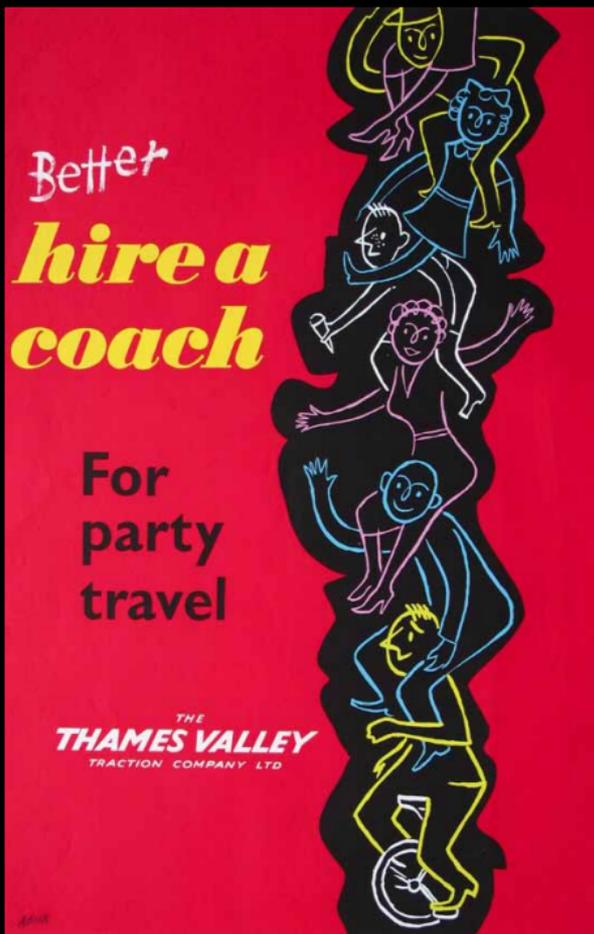


Buyer's Guide

Mid-century travel posters

Whether it's the humorous graphics of a 1960s London Transport poster or the evocative typography of a 1950s TWA flight poster, there's something about vintage travel posters that appeals to a sense of nostalgia in every mid-century fan. Recent years have seen a surge in popularity in the travel poster genre and we asked *Karen Lansdown* of *Travel on Paper* (travelonpaper.com) to share her advice on buying.



Who are the great names in mid-century poster design?

It seems unfair to name names when there were so many great graphic artists working during this period. Before the digital revolution, posters were used for everything – they gave designers the opportunity to get their work seen. Most artists signed their work so it's possible to identify. Abram Games, Tom Eckersley and Hans Ungers are all favourites of mine and I have posters by Edward McKnight Kauffer, Guy Georget and Royston Cooper that I wouldn't part with.



Left: 'Robinson' for The Thames Valley Traction Co., c.1960. Above: E.H.K. Henrion, 'The Changing of the Guard' for London Transport, 1936.

What is it that draws you to their work?

I am most drawn to the humour, inventiveness and colour in 1950s poster design. The classic British Rail poster of waving palm trees in Torquay or a family on the beach in Cleethorpes is what most people think of in terms of the travel poster. These are incredibly sought after and quite hard to find. When photography began to be used in posters, the style changed – designers used bolder brush strokes and more eye-catching graphics and it's these posters that I enjoy collecting. The use of silkscreen offered a brighter palette and designers like Tom Eckersley and companies like BOAC made the most of these new opportunities, producing witty and clever designs full of colour. Abram Games is one of the best exponents of this style, most evident in his work for London Transport.

Can you tell us about Abram Games and his travel poster designs?

Abram Games was given his first freelance commission by London Transport in 1937 when he was 23. As a Londoner and non-driver, he spent many hours travelling on buses and was familiar with the posters of McKnight Kauffer, Fred Taylor and other artists commissioned by Shell and London Transport. His motto was "maximum meaning, minimum means" and over the years he developed a new format poster whereby a message was communicated with immediacy, so that it was subconsciously retained. Games went on to become one of the greatest poster designers of the twentieth century. He designed the logo for the Festival of Britain and the posters he produced around this time are some of his most collectable. His work for London Transport in

Previous: 'Robinson' for The Thames Valley Traction Co., c.1960. Above: E.H.K. Henrion, 'The Changing of the Guard' for London Transport, 1936.

the late 1950s and '60s is simple and effective, and although they are quite different in appearance to the posters he produced earlier in the decade, they communicate their messages just as efficiently. Abram Games produced posters for clients including London Transport, GPO, Shell, BOAC, Guinness and British Railways. His 1951 'See Britain by Train' poster recently sold for £1,200.

Are there many 'named' poster designers?

Poster designers were commercial artists, often freelancers, and although many signed their work, their names are not widely known. As interest grows in poster design, more research into the artists and designers is published and it's becoming easier to identify their work. Auction websites and online archives are good sources of information.

Has the market for mid-century travel posters changed in the time you've been trading?

Markets are constantly changing and part of the fun of collecting is finding something new to add to your collection. Over the past few years airline posters have become increasingly popular – maybe it's because the luxury has gone from air travel and the 1950s clipper class and super-jets hark back to a more glamorous era. Airline posters by David Klein, Stan Galli and Joseph Binder all now fetch high prices at auction. Prices are not as high as shipping posters

Right: Keenan for Eastern Counties Omnibus Company. All photographs courtesy of Travel on Paper, travelonpaper.com.

