



THE KING'S MESSENGER. A.D. 1482

Postwandbilder

Entwurf JOHN ARMSTRONG



MAIL COACH. A.D. 1794

GPO Decorative poster

Design: JOHN ARMSTRONG



ROYAL MAIL. A.D. 1931

and the latest results of experience, for which business had been experimenting and struggling for decades in the domain of advertising. But the Post Office could not be simply placed in the same position as a private business undertaking.

While a manufacturer could succeed by advertising in palming off his goods on someone, it was, and still is, senseless for the Post Office to persuade someone to instal a telephone who has no need of it. It can also not persuade anyone to send a telegram who has no occasion to do so. The Post Office can merely demonstrate to the public, in a cogent way, occasions when a telephone or a special telegram would prove advantageous. This situation prevents its advertisements from degenerating into "puffs".

The Post Office is also exposed to public criticism. Every British subject feels that he is not only a user and employer but also a partner in this institution. And if, later, statistics prove that an advertising campaign was a failure, this is branded as a squandering of public funds. Hence the Post Office refrains from indulging in bold ventures on which many private undertakings could easily embark.

All that explains why the British Post Office's advertising is so carefully thought out, well weighed and well balanced. But it does not explain why it is nevertheless not dull, but extremely fascinating and attractive. Perhaps that cannot be explained at all, unless by the commonplace, adopted in Great Britain and especially in this case, that advertising, even if it is done by an official department, can only be successful if it is managed by experts and artists.

In this case, this wise principle has been especially taken to heart. The advertisements which have appeared in the press—last year through the go-ahead agency A. Pemberton Ltd. under the supervision of their studio manager S. A. Knight—have, for all their variety, an impressive and unusually personal note which is anything but monotonous. They are either seriously convincing or else gaily attractive, but, in any case, catching. The numerous pamphlets for various purposes are all carefully got up and pleasing in external appearance, while the contents are clear and instructive. The posters are something more. They are creative documentary proofs of culture, and very attractive. They are used to decorate the walls of many post offices and of schools to which they are supplied along with explanatory booklets. Men like McKnight