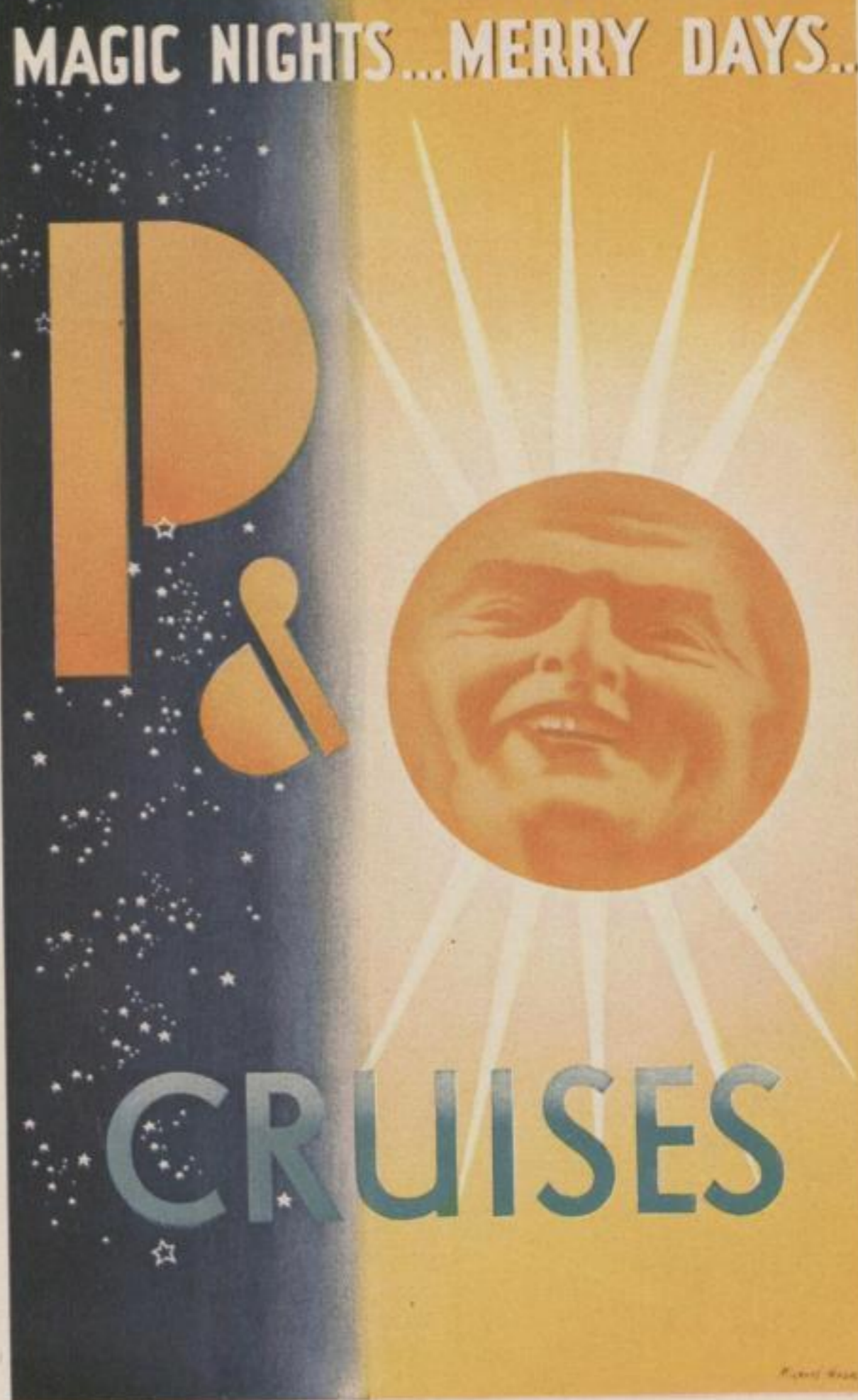


in a paradox. Advertisements in the style of the last century were used. Old-fashioned illustrations, discarded scripts, forgotten tracteries and unintentionally amusing borders were intended to catch the eye, and the text read: "This is the way it was formerly. To-day it is out-of-date and unsuitable. Neither would the Shell of 1900 be suitable for the cars of 1937. Therefore, we have constantly improved Shell in order to suit it to modern times and modern requirements." However, the brilliant inspiration did not achieve its purpose. It was strange and out of reach. It had no appeal. Then one hit upon the idea of expressing the contrast not in words, but in the drawing. This was the birth of the double-headed figures, basically serious in spite of their humour, that transformed a happy thought into a gigantic advertising success. Brian Robb, long known as an illustrator of "Punch", was responsible for the drawings. Excellent texts recalled the old expressions and catchwords, which, when coupled with those of to-day, were revived to a new and vigorous life.

Far more drastic and directly witty is the advertisement series for Greys cigarettes. And the reason is that for all its progress, for all its daring, British advertising has one great weakness. It is often blunt, incredible and meaningless through exaggeration and the use of superlatives. The word "best" is the most overused in the English advertising vocabulary. Here Greys advertising strikes with a masterly hand.

They show scenes in which people with categorical exuberance shower praises on Greys cigarettes in a thousand ways. These effusions are interrupted with the simple, ironic statement, "We merely maintain that Greys cigarettes are very good cigarettes". That was the beginning. It was not more specific. The second half of the series had a more definite aim and hit the mark. The result of this was a number of extremely apt parodies of some of the best known advertisers in England.

The humour that has been achieved here in Frank Ford's drawings—but also in the accompanying copy—can only be comprehended by those fully conversant with the English language



Plakat Entwurf MICHAEL HORAN Design Poster

and the unfortunate practices of certain advertisers. But the contrast which we show already gives a reflection which is visible and understandable to everyone; a reflection of the liberating light of humour, unique and incomparable. So England laughed, and the parodied firms could not help laughing too. Moreover people began to smoke Greys cigarettes and to search for their latest advertisement in the newspaper before they looked at the political news of the day.

In these lines there has even scarcely a mention of the artists and their achievements, as such, in the field of commercial graphic art. Are they un-