Reviving The William Liddell Collection

Logistics

Artwork and designs for trains, planes and ships
This Logistics themed book focuses on artwork, design sketches and drawings generated for Liddell’s clients in the transport industries. There are 123 plates that record designs and sketches for 33 different shipping lines, 15 train lines and 7 airlines located in countries across the world, countries include, Australia, Canada, Greece, Japan, Jamaica, New Zealand, Norway, Puerto Rico, Rhodesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States of America. The collection provides a significant record of evolving shipping branding throughout the first seven decades of the twentieth century reflecting the fortunes and misfortunes of major shipping lines. The artwork and technical skill of the individuals who worked on the development and refinement of these designs is highly skilled and creative. The William Liddell Collection provides a unique and fascinating insight not only into the ever-changing fortunes of the great shipping lines of the world but also into the working practices of designers, technicians and weavers of the Irish linen industry.
A short story of skill and excellence

Within the archive a collection of eight plates of artwork and designs for Cunard White Star and Cunard White Star cover the transition period from these shipping lines operating as single companies to their merger in 1934. The companies had their roots in the nineteenth century. Ship owner Samuel Cunard from Halifax, Nova Scotia founded the Cunard Line in the mid-nineteenth century. The original name of the company was the British North American Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company changing to the Cunard Steamship Company Ltd. by 1879. John Pilkington and Henry Wilson founded the White Star Line in 1845 in Liverpool. By the end of the nineteenth century the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company had purchased the company. The White Star Line merged in 1912 with Cunard who owned 60% of the shares. In 1929 Cunard bought the remaining 40% subsequently White Star Line became defunct in 1934. These eight plates are of special interest in that they record some of the final designs of the Cunard Line, the White Star Line and the early designs of the newly merged Cunard White Star Line. These plates document design work undertaken in the final days of these companies (1910s–1930s) when they operated independently and of the merged company post 1934.

The earliest plate in this collection of plates is for the Cunard Line [4-10-009]. This is the only design for this period of Cunard’s history and has been drafted in the Glasgow Style of the 1910s, although not explicitly dated. A beautiful hand sketched napkin design of elongated stylised flowers, stems and leaves, this is a design in development showing the layout of the centrepiece, the asymmetric segment of a mirror-repeated corner and an indication of the border design. The symmetry of this design is stunning, four mirror lines intersect the centre of the napkin with the design rotated and reflected through 90 degrees. This is the only plate in the entire archive that has been executed in this elegant style with such a pure symmetry.
The four plates of _White Star Line_ designs show two designs for a centrepiece, one of which is a detailed point paper diagram dated 1924 (5-08-021) and the other a preliminary sketch with a scrap of point paper attached to indicate scale (5-08-022). There is a painted design sketch of a corner and border design (5-08-002), a section of the actual point paper design for this sketch is held in the Linen Centre, Lisburn Museum. Finally there is an image of a complete proof cloth for a tablecloth design including the centrepiece, scattered stars and borders (5-08-020). The proof cloth would have been woven with an unbleached linen warp and dyed red linen weft, thus showing up any flaws in the design or the card cutting. The plates reveal two potential centrepiece designs for this tablecloth. The _William Liddell_ Company supplied linen ware for the _White Star Line_ ships the _Olympic_ (1911), the _Hornblende_ (1915) and the _Mauretania_ (1919). One of the centrepiece designs is dated “1924”, consideration of the operational commencement dates of the ships and the dating on the plates the _White Star Line_ designs were most likely developed during the 1920s, prior to the Cunard merger in 1934. The final three plates are of early designs for the merged _Cunard White Star Line_. The first plate is of a detailed point paper plan of a napkin design for the _Cunard White Star Line_ (6-14-002). The second plate records a design influenced by 1930s constructivist styling with a combination of geometric lines and a highly stylised floral image (4-07-010). The third plate records a design in a similar style to the form of a sketch drawing of a napkin design with “Cunard White Star” placed within the border design (4-07-008). The typographic styles of these two napkin designs are quite different. The _Cunard White Star Line_ became defunct in 1947 dating these designs between 1934-1947.
A SHIPPING YARN

Union Castle Line

A short story of design persistence

Union Castle Line was a British Shipping Line that operated a fleet of passenger liners and cargo ships between Europe and Africa from 1900 to 1977. It was formed from the merger of Union Line and Castle Shipping Line. Union Castle named most of their ships with the suffix ‘Castle’, were well-known for their lavender hulled liners with black and red funnels and for running a strict schedule between Southampton and Cape Town.

The archive holds a collection of eight plates for a tablecloth and napkin design for the Union Castle Line. This collection illustrates beautifully the tenacity of the designers as they experiment with design elements for the Union Castle Line order. The design development stages through from early sketches to the production of the proof cloth are recorded.

Initial line drawings or rough sketches of the Union Castle Line logo[3‑14‑015], border and corner designs are reminiscent of a Gothic architectural style with strong reflective symmetries[3‑14‑018, 4‑07‑002, 4‑07‑014]; these drawings show experimentation with layout, composition and centrepiece placement. An alternative painted floral design with soft flowing ribbons and realistic bouquets of roses was sketched and recorded but no further development is evident in the archive[4‑007‑002]. The preferred Gothic-styled designs were developed into accurate working designs that include woven structural notation[3‑14‑020].

These designs were finally translated into precise technical instructions in large-scale point paper [squared] format[2‑16‑004], which would have been used to guide the card cutting process. The punched cards would be attached to the Jacquard loom for the weaving of the proof cloth[4‑07‑003]. The proof cloth was always woven in an unbleached linen warp with a bright red dyed weft to allow the identification of faults in the design. This lengthy and laborious design and production process preceded the introduction of electronic Jacquard design in the early 1980s.
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Logistics

Union Castle Line

Design development sketch.

Line sketch.

Painted sketch and line drawing.

Proof cloth.

Line sketch.

Design development drawing on tracing paper.
LOGISTICS GALLERY

Shipping Lines

Nelson Line


The Charente Steam Ship Co. Ltd.

LIVERPOOL, UK

Plate dated “May 1960”.

Clan Line

FOUNDED IN LIVERPOOL, HEADQUARTERS IN GLASGOW, UK

Founded in 1877 to operate routes between Britain and Bombay via the Suez Canal. In 1881 operations expanded to South Africa and by 1894 to the Persian Gulf and North America. The company went into liquidation in 1987.

Khedivial Mail Line

Steamship Company under this name until 1936.

The Natal Line of Steamers

LONDON

Bullard King & Co. introduced the Natal Direct Line of Steamers in 1879.

Jahre Line

A cruise ferry line operating on routes to and from Norway between 1961–1990.

Jamaica Direct Fruit Line

LONDON TO KINGSTON 1929–1980

Changed name to Jamaica Producers Steamship Company in 1935.

Clan Line

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The Charente Steam Ship Co. Ltd.

LIVERPOOL, UK

Plate dated “May 1960”.

Established in 1871 but roots were in the Thomas and James. The company was sold in the early 1920s to a group of Liverpool based ship owners.

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New Zealand Steamship Company
CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Prince Line
FORMED IN 1883

Porto Rico Line
CARIBBEAN
Archibald H. Ball founded the British-flagged New York and Puerto Rico steamship company in 1885.

The Pacific Steam Navigation Company
HEADQUARTERS LIVERPOOL, UK
Founded in 1838. A commercial shipping company that operated in the Pacific coast of South America. It was the first company to use steam ships for commercial traffic in the Pacific. In 1965 the company was ended and remaining vessels rebranded.

Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O)
LONDON, UK
A British shipping and logistics company established in 1837. Merged with the Orient Line in 1960 to form P&O-Orient Lines.

NYK Line
NIPPON YUSEN KABUSHIKI KAISHA, JAPAN
One of the oldest and largest shipping companies in the world.

Nordenfjeldske Dampskibsselskab Steamship Company
TRONDHEIM, NORWAY
This Norwegian shipping line operated steamships on the western coastline of Norway between Trondhjem, Bergen, Stavenger and Newcastle. Established in 1857 and liquidated in 1989.

The Orient Line
2-19-008

The Orient Steam Navigation Company
PRE-MERGER WITH P&O IN 1960

Grimaldi Lines Navigation Company
HEADQUARTERS TURIN, ITALY

Orient Line
2-19-008

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Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand

Known as the “Southern Octopus” in the late 19th century. By the early 20th century it was the largest shipping line in the southern hemisphere. Liquidated in 2000.

United States Shipping Board

1917 to 1934 Established during World War 1 to build and operate merchant ships to support U.S. war efforts.

United States Lines

An American transatlantic shipping company that operated a cargo service 1921 to 1989 and ocean liners until 1969.

Royal Mail Lines

1839–1932

Wilson Line

HULL, UK

Founded in 1822 in Hull to import iron ore from Sweden with a fleet of sailing ships. By the early 1900s the Wilson Line was the largest private shipping line in the world.

Ward Line

USA

Operated from 1841 to 1954. Originally the company's steamers linked New York City with Nassau, Havana and the Mexican Gulf ports.
Train Lines
**Airlines**

- **Southern Pacific Lines**
  - USA
  - Logo was used between 1930s and 1950s.

- **Eastern Airlines**
  - USA
  - Logo used between the mid-1930s and late 1950s.

- **Olympic Airlines**
  - Greece
  - Founded in 1957 and operated until 1990.

- **Air New Zealand**
  - New Zealand
  - Founded in 1940 as Tasman Empire Airlines Limited and renamed Air New Zealand in 1965.

- **Trans World Airlines**
  - USA
  - Trans World Airlines was a major American airline from 1924 to 2001 when it was acquired by American Airlines.

- **TWA Saudi Arabia Air Lines**
  - Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
  - Saudi Arabian Airlines was founded in 1945. TWA operated the airline under a management contract.

- **Continental Airlines**
  - USA
  - Major American airline based in Houston, Texas. Established in 1934, it ceased operations in 2012 when it merged with United Airlines.

- **Eastern Airlines**
  - USA
  - Major American airline from 1926 to 1991.

- **Olympic Airlines**
  - Greece
  - Founded in 1957 and operated until 1990.

- **Air New Zealand**
  - New Zealand
  - Founded in 1940 as Tasman Empire Airlines Limited and renamed Air New Zealand in 1965.

- **TWA**
  - USA
  - Trans World Airlines was a major American airline from 1924 to 2001 when it was acquired by American Airlines.

*NEW DESIGN 1960* etched above the logo.