

INTRODUCTION

Over the last five years Jeremy Gardiner has travelled from Ilfracombe in North Devon to St Margaret's Bay in Kent, exploring and painting the dramatic cliffs, rocks, bays and harbours of the south coast.

Gardiner's coastal landscapes are based on an intimate knowledge of his subjects, built on first-hand experience and an interest in their underlying geological and cultural history. This is conveyed through working methods that involve building up the picture surface and scouring back the layers, echoing the action of the elements on the coast itself.

This body of work has been marked by a focus on the more recent history of his landscape subjects, partly informed by a longstanding interest in twentieth century travel posters, guidebooks and postcards. These have suggested viewpoints and inspired the inclusion of more prominent topographical detail within Gardiner's familiar combination of abstracted patterns, strongly contrasted colour and intricate surface texture. The paintings also reflect an

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Exhibition text – large print

awareness of artists who have shared his fascination with this constantly evolving shoreline, from William Daniell to Wilhemina Barns-Graham.

Jeremy Gardiner – Working Methods

Gardiner's work is founded on direct experience of a location. He has been painting the Dorset coastline for thirty years and has explored it on foot, from the sea and the air. For newer subjects he has also immersed himself in the locality, walking and looking, trying to understand the underlying terrain, while teasing out stories of people, processes and events that have shaped the landscape. He always begins with pencil drawings made on the spot but develops the paintings in the studio, filtering those initial experiences through memory and imagination.

Shaped poplar wood panels are gouged, under-painted and built up with strips of ply and Jesmonite (a gypsum composite acrylic resin). Gardiner then matches his subject to the shape of the panel or elements that are revealed in the initial stages. Chance is an important factor in this process of discovery; Gardiner does not know

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exactly what may emerge. Every painting has its own limited colour palette informed by his recollections and experiences of the subject. Gardiner will work on a number of panels at the same time, revisiting each one until he feels they can be left for later review and development.

Paint is built up in layers. These can be covered and then revealed by chiselling, sanding or the removal of strips of ply. The surface becomes three-dimensional, complex and irregular; the paint appears weathered and organic. This method also gives an element of surprise: Gardiner will come across things when sanding, glimpses of an earlier stage in the painting's evolution. If he feels a picture has stalled he can tear off strips of ply to reveal a new shard of colour and a new direction. Occasionally Gardiner will return to the original landscape to add the finishing touches.

Posters

While making his tour of the south coast Gardiner has been considering how these landscapes have been portrayed in popular art. During the inter-war years the railways carried millions of visitors to seaside resorts while motor transport brought previously remote destinations within reach. Visitors were beguiled by colourful, stylized posters that presented an idyllic vision of the British coast and climate. Nearly a century later many are still captivated by the imagined world of these posters.

Gardiner has studied the viewpoints chosen by poster artists and in some cases this has informed his own compositions. He has also adopted the flat colours of the posters to portray some man-made features in the landscape.

Gardiner is fascinated by the vision of the British seaside created by this synergy between the resort, the railway company and the artist. Thinking of posters promoting Swanage in his own collection he comments: "Resorts wanted to advertise their locations and the natural environment and Swanage sparkles in those pictures, who

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could resist? But the reality is that the British seaside becomes a fantasy for everybody, a land no one can define or remember, of landscapes and endless summers that probably never existed”.

Shell posters have a distinct status for Gardiner: “the railway posters focus on the urban environment of the seaside, buildings and people and sunshine. Shell for me are more esoteric and exotic. A folly, it could be the Great Globe or Clavell’s Tower, is a surreal encounter. Many of the artists that were employed to create those posters are not producing something for a council or the executive board of a railway company, they are given the freedom to make unique artworks, so the Shell poster is a kind of talisman for a site”. Shell posters by Paul Nash and Graham Sutherland of Clavell’s Tower and the Great Globe have inspired new paintings by Gardiner.

Works on Paper

Works on paper have always been an important part of Gardiner's practice. They are usually developed alongside the works on panel and provide an alternative approach to the same subjects. During his recent travels Gardiner created a series of views of the Dorset coast, a subject he has returned to time and time again: "the baseline for all my work, the one place I go back to". These became the Twenty Stations of the Dorset Coast, a series that references the stages on a processional route recorded in the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō (1833) by Japanese woodcut artist Hiroshige.

Gardiner begins with a precise but minimal line drawing capturing, but also abstracting, key features in the landscape. Two are created for the subject and each becomes the basis for four new works on paper. Gardiner explains this as a method to explore "different solutions to the same problem: there's an infinite number ... four is enough". The two drawings may use the same viewpoint but different elements are emphasised.

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His method for the works on paper is similar to the panel paintings. There are still layers of the paper support, Jesmonite is built up and rubbed back and incisions are made to reveal underlying texture and colour. The compositions are immediately familiar from the panel works but variations in the colour palette and surface treatment make us look at the subject in a new light.

For these works Gardiner also uses marbling as a source of patterning. Just as tearing away strips of ply and scouring to reveal hidden layers brings an element of chance to the panel paintings, so the limited control over the marbling process has uncertain results, but with skilful application it can evoke clouds, ripples or the strata in rocks.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Valley of the Rocks, Lynmouth Bay, Devon

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

Jeremy Gardiner

Ilfracombe Harbour from the Torrs, Devon

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Gardiner has an interest in the artists who have preceded him on his tour around the coast. These include William Daniell (1769-1837) who chose a similar view of Ilfracombe for *A Voyage Round the Coast of Great Britain*, a series of prints which recorded the entire coast of Britain between 1813 and 1823. This same view has been used by poster artists and postcard photographers over the years. The bright oranges and blues used here were inspired by the arresting colours of railway posters.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Low Tide, Boscastle, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Jeremy Gardiner

Atlantic Breakers, Bedruthan, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

Jeremy Gardiner

Godrevy Light, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Jeremy Gardiner

The Crowns, Botallack, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

What at first sight may seem to be a largely abstract painting, on closer viewing reveals the rocky cliffs and ruins at Botallack. Creamy

Jeremy Gardiner: South by Southwest, Coastal Landscapes

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rectangles on the left echo similar shapes surrounding the engine houses that once served mine shafts running out half a mile under the sea. Surface texture suggest the waves that surge around this shore in rough weather.

Jeremy Gardiner

Porthcurno from the Minack Theatre, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Jeremy Gardiner

Copper Lode, Trewavas, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

Choice of colour is important in Gardiner's work. It is used to suggest light and weather effects, here evoking bright sunlight falling on ruined engine houses. The colours may also have a symbolic meaning, in this case the coppery tones suggesting the underlying mineral ores which fed Cornwall's historic mining industry.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Breakwater, Mullion Cove, Cornwall

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

Gardiner's interest in the history of his subjects and the ways in which they have been recorded in postcards, guidebooks and posters means that his paintings are sometimes informed by appearances from the past.

This view of Mullion Cove could have been made when the stone piers of the harbour were first constructed in the 1890s. All references to 20th century development are omitted, giving a sense of timelessness and calm.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Kingswear Castle and Flagstaff, Devon

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

Kingswear Castle stands at the entrance to the River Dart. Gardiner's chosen viewpoint hides much of the modern developments around Dartmouth leaving a scene not much changed in centuries. On the opposite shore Dartmouth Castle and the tower of St Petroc's church are contrasted against the olive green of the wooded hillside. Abstract shapes break up the composition but also emphasise the shapes of the shoreline, hills and buildings.

Jeremy Gardiner

The Pier, West Bay, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

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Jeremy Gardiner

Lulworth Crumple and Stair Hole, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2016

Gardiner has long had a fascination with the geology of the landscapes he paints. In this work the underlying layers are brought to the surface in the spectacular folded strata of the Lulworth Crumple. Beneath the layers of pigment, abstract shapes and surface texture, the topographical details of Stair Hole and Lulworth Cove are still clearly recognisable.

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Jeremy Gardiner

At Lulworth Cove a Century Back

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

In this painting Gardiner is consciously presenting an historical view of Lulworth, as it might have appeared in a guidebook or postcard from the early 20th century. The naturally regular curve of the bay, the surrounding cliffs and the coastguard cottages are clearly present but much of the picture is concerned with the balance of abstracted shapes superimposed over the view, all presented in a limited and carefully toned palette of colours.

Jeremy Gardiner

Winter Gales, Mupe Rocks and Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

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Jeremy Gardiner

Worbarrow Bay and Mupe Bay from Flowers Barrow, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Gardiner's view is taken from Flowers Barrow, an Iron Age earthwork which is gradually falling into the sea through coastal erosion. In the centre of the painting, picked out in lime green, is a later defensive construction – a Second World War pillbox. The contrast between the sombre navy sea and the bright greens of the abstract forms lends a dramatic intensity to the painting.

Jeremy Gardiner

Morning, Chapman's Pool, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

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Jeremy Gardiner

Early Evening, Great Globe, Durlston Castle, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Gardiner is an admirer of the posters produced by Shell between the wars. Graham Sutherland's poster of the Great Globe depicts a subject Gardiner has known for decades. This painting replicates the blue of Sutherland's sky and the green of his surrounding vegetation, although the view is looking down and towards the sea from the west with the encircling steps picked out in black. For the globe itself, Gardiner cut back to the bare wood of the panel before adding tones to match Sutherland's colour palette.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Great Globe and Stone Tower, Durlston Castle, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Here the Great Globe is viewed from the east in a more expansive setting that includes the turret of Durlston Castle, perched on the hill's summit.

Jeremy Gardiner

The Two Bays from Durlston Head, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

This painting looks across Durlston Bay towards Peveril Point, its coastguard cottages tiny among the receding contours of the Dorset coast. Beyond is Swanage Bay, defined by the cliffs of Ballard Point, the forms of the Pinnacles and Old Harry chalk stacks contrasted against the white cliffs. Further still is Bournemouth, silhouetted on the horizon. The title and composition were suggested by a postcard in Gardiner's collection.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Swanage Bay from Peveril Point, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Swanage was home to Gardiner's family for generations and it remains an important place for him. This is a view he has contemplated many times over the years, which finally inspired this sweeping vista of the bay. Bright spring sunlight picks out details such as the pier, moored boats, chimney pots and the Wellington Tower. These tiny details are contrasted against the large blue shape on the right which emphasises the vast scale of the sky. The chalky blue and white colouring of this painting was suggested by Gardiner's interest in the frescoes of Piero della Francesca (c.1415-1492).

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Jeremy Gardiner

Quayside and Kiosk, Swanage Bay, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Gardiner was conscious of Verney Danvers' poster while developing this painting. Unlike the poster, Gardiner's work does not have to sell the location, but instead embodies a personal connection with the subject based on first-hand experience, memory and emotional connections, filtered through his complex working methods.

The quay, scattered boats and use of Ballard Point as a backdrop are similar to Danvers' poster, but Gardiner is remembering a cold day devoid of people and a view brought vibrantly to life by intense spring sunlight. There is also an element of history for Gardiner here: the kiosk where he has purchased tickets for boat rides around the Isle of Purbeck from three generations of the Marsh family, and the surviving tramway rails (suggested in the foreground) installed to transport stone in the nineteenth century.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Ballard Down and Promenade, Swanage, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

This view of the beach at Swanage is a favourite with postcard photographers. Gardiner owns a whole sequence of cards which show the development of the promenade from modesty-preserving bathing machines to rows of beach huts and a beach thronged with 1960s sunbathers. Gardiner's painting is characteristically empty of people and uses a restricted palette of white, blues and greens. The rubbing back of the surface to reveal layers of colour beneath echoes the weathering of the painted wood of boats and beach huts.

Jeremy Gardiner

Chalk Stacks, Dorset

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

A view of the Pinnacles, chalk stacks off the Dorset coast between Swanage and Bournemouth.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Stag Rock, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

Jeremy Gardiner

The Key to England, Dover Castle, Kent

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2018

Jeremy Gardiner

The White Cliffs of Dover, Kent

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

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Jeremy Gardiner

South Foreland Lighthouse, Kent

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

The White Cliffs of Dover are loaded with cultural significance, often taken as a symbol of British indomitability: 'this fortress built by Nature'. Yet, as in Gardiner's painting, where they are shown gleaming against an electric blue sea, they are also a welcome sight for travellers. The intense colouring of the sea was achieved through the build up of multiple paint layers, while the rectangular shapes above the cliffs give a sense of enormity to the sky, heightened by the minute scale of the lighthouse itself.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Pegwell Bay, Kent, A Recollection

Acrylic and Jesmonite on poplar panel, 2019

One of Gardiner's favourite 19th century paintings is *Pegwell Bay, Kent: A Recollection of October 5th 1858* by William Dyce (1806-1864), which he sees as 'a painting about time and memory, the brevity of the passing moment in comparison to the vastness of geological time'. The location has since changed dramatically. Gardiner was captivated by the nearby hover port, which closed after less than twenty years' use in 1987. The white approach markings that guided the hovercraft are still visible in the foreground, but the eerie atmosphere reminds us of the fleeting nature of human interventions in the landscape when compared to the millennia which have shaped the underlying rocks.

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Jeremy Gardiner

Bats Head IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£5,200

Jeremy Gardiner

Ballard Point from the Stone Quay III

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£4,300

Jeremy Gardiner

The Two Bays from Durlston Head IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£3,800

Jeremy Gardiner

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Durdle Door II

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£5,500

Jeremy Gardiner

The Great Globe from the North III

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£4,300

Jeremy Gardiner

Kimmeridge III

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£5,200

Jeremy Gardiner

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Kimmeridge Bay as seen from Clavell Tower IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£3,800

Jeremy Gardiner

Lulworth Cove IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£5,500

Jeremy Gardiner

Pinnacle and Haystack IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper, 2018

£5,500

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Jeremy Gardiner

St Oswald's Bay IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper

£5,500

Jeremy Gardiner

Swanage Bay and Promenade I

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper, 2018

£4,300

Jeremy Gardiner

Worbarrow Tout IV

Watercolour with Jesmonite and acrylic
on handmade cotton rag paper, 2018

£5,500

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Kenneth Rowntree (1915-1997)

BEA to Britain

Poster for British European Airways, 1950

Artist's collection

Gardiner's portrayals of the chalk cliffs of Sussex and Kent are partially inspired by this BEA poster designed by one of his tutors at Newcastle University during the 1970s. Rowntree's white cliffs are included as archetypal national features along with thatched cottages, cricketers, oak trees, church steeples and patchwork fields.

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Kenneth Bromfield

Swanage

Poster for British Railways, 1960

Artist's collection

Bromfield's poster also makes use of the repeating pattern of beach huts, one of several layers of detail that gradually lead the eye onward to the distant cliffs of Ballard Point. The foreground foliage adds an air of Mediterranean warmth.

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Guidebooks from Jeremy Gardiner's collection

Gardiner finds that these guides have a very useful application even a century after they were published:

'Like everyone else exploring in the 21st century I've got apps on my phone, but with the advent of GPS and the ubiquitous mobile phone, there will be a decline of printed materials. There's something about a printed guide or an Ordnance Survey map that connects you with the landscape in many different ways. What they do is help me select my subjects. I've got a number of Ward Lock guides, they help me understand and think about how other people would have looked at these picturesque places in the past.'

Ward Lock Red Guide – St Ives, Carbis Bay and Western Cornwall, 1940-41

Artist's collection

Ward Lock Red Guide – Swanage and South Dorset, c. 1957

Artist's collection

Ward Lock Red Guide – Torquay and South Devon, 1927-28

Artist's collection

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Our Beautiful Homeland - Canterbury, Winchester, Isle of Wight, Swanage

Gresham Publishing Company Ltd, c1920

Text by Edward Thomas, Sidney Heath and Canon Danks, illustrations
by Ernest Haslehust

Artist's collection

*Our Beautiful Homeland – Exeter, Heart of Wessex, Dartmoor, Bath &
Wells*

Gresham Publishing Company Ltd, c1920

Text by Sidney Heath and Arthur Salmon, illustrations by Ernest
Haslehust

Artist's collection

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Beautiful England – Swanage and District

Blackie & Son Ltd, 1915

Text by Sidney Heath, illustrations by Ernest Haslehurst

Artist's collection

Vision of England Guide – Isle of Wight

Paul Elek, 1947

Text by Aubrey de Selincourt, drawings by Kenneth Rowntree

Artist's collection

Postcards from Jeremy Gardiner's collection

Some of these cards have inspired viewpoints and titles for Gardiner's south coast paintings. He says: 'For me a postcard is a snapshot in time. I collect postcards of very specific locations that may have been photographed over decades and turned into postcards, so I notice subtle changes from one decade to the next ... Those changes I sometimes borrow and incorporate into the pictures I am painting'.

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Sawyer's View-Master viewer and reels

View-Master stereoscopic viewers were developed in America in the 1930s and became popular after the Second World War. They used reels of 14 paired transparencies which, when seen through the viewer, gave an effect of three-dimensional depth. Gardiner sees their images as a stylised facet of a single moment in the past of a familiar landscape. The stereoscopic effect loads the subject with detail and meaning that he can imagine and recreate in his paintings. This Model C Bakelite viewer was made between 1946 and 1955 and belonged to Gardiner's father.

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Paul Nash (1889-1946)

Kimmeridge Folly, Dorset

Poster for Shell, 1937

Shell Heritage Art Collection

Nash's poster shows Clavell's Tower, built on the cliff above Kimmeridge Bay in 1830 to serve as an observatory and folly. Nash plays with scale, exaggerating the wall and shoreline rocks against the cliff. The tower is picked out by sunbeams like a coastal beacon, the whole assemblage taking on a surreal intensity. In Gardiner's work on paper *Clavell Tower from Kimmeridge Bay III* (below) the colours and textures of the cliffs are echoed in the tower making it appear as an extension of the natural landscape.



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Graham Sutherland (1903-1980)

The Great Globe, Swanage

Poster for Shell, 1932

Shell Heritage Art Collection

Shell was adventurous in its choice of poster artists and gave them almost complete freedom in developing their designs. This meant that unusual and challenging imagery was sometimes displayed on the sides of Shell's delivery lorries: the 'people's art gallery'.

This poster features the forty-ton stone folly installed in the grounds of Durlston Castle in 1887. Before working on the poster Sutherland had been impressed with Paul Nash's surrealism-inspired book illustrations. Shorn of its carving and inscriptions, the globe gains a strangeness which would surely have pleased Nash.

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John Armstrong (1893-1973)

Near Lamorna

Poster for Shell, 1952

Shell Heritage Art Collection

Armstrong's poster is another one admired by Gardiner, who considered developing a body of work based solely around the landscapes depicted in Shell posters. In the end imagery of the south coast found in a range of popular art forms have influenced his choice of subjects for this project. When Gardiner visited Lamorna he chose to paint the quay down in the cove itself rather than seek out Armstrong's clifftop vista.

John Armstrong designed five posters for Shell and also painted a mural for the dining room at Shell-Mex House in London. He moved to Lamorna in 1945 and over the next ten years its landscape and plantlife was an important influence on his work.

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Verney Danvers (1895-1973)

Swanage

Poster for British Railways, 1955

Courtesy National Railway Museum/Science & Society Picture Library

Danvers' poster follows the classic inter-war fashion for simplified landscapes rendered in strongly contrasted areas of flat colour and could easily have been produced twenty years earlier. Danvers stressed the importance of colour in his book *Training in Commercial Art* (1926):

'Broad flat treatment is the best, especially for posters of small size. Make your poster sunny and crisp. Remember the harassed man of the town. When he has a chance to think about his summer holiday, his mental picture of an enjoyable time is all the more enhanced by the contrast he sees in your poster. Keep this in mind – idealise your illustration. Let it create a longing to be there.'