



MacDonald Gill's 'Great Circle' world map

GILL, Leslie MacDonald.

Cable & Wireless Great Circle Map. Mark Your Cables Via Imperial.

London: Edward Stanford for Cable & Wireless, 1945. Colour printed map. 980 x 1220mm. Laid on canvas

£15,000

A superb poster map on an 'azimuthal' or Great Circle projection, showing the world in one great sphere with London at the centre. The objective is to show the paths of radio beams from London to the far reaches of the Empire in straight lines. On this projection the radio waves to Sydney pass over Moscow correctly, whereas on a Mercator Projection map a straight line would cross Arabia. As the map was commissioned by Cable and Wireless the decorative borders relate to their business, with a background of pylons. The four corner roundels depict: 'SS Great Eastern 1865', which laid the first lasting transatlantic telegraph cable in 1866; 'A Modern Cables Ship'; 'A Wireless Transmitter'; and 'Mobile Telegraph Sta. (Mediterranean)'. The two smaller roundels show 'Cable loading into Boat' and 'Cable Transfer Gear'. Leslie MacDonald Gill (1884-1947), younger brother of Eric Gill, specialised in graphic design in the Arts and Crafts style. His most important commission was from the Imperial War Graves Commission, designing the script used on Commission headstones and war memorials, including the 'Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme'. He produced a number of maps, two of which appeared in the British Library exhibition 'Magnificent Maps in 2010: 'The Underground Map of London' (1914) & 'Tea Revives



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the World' (1940). This was Gill's last poster map. It appears in two versions: this, the first, has an exhortation to send telegrams 'via Imperial' (Imperial and International Communications Company Limited, a sister company to C&W); in the second this is replaced with 'Britain the World Centre'.

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