

Boro

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General Notes

- 1897–1899: Boro' Advertising Co. founded by Abraham Emanuel Abrahams “with a barrow and an assistant”, briefly operating from the Theatre Royal, Stratford before moving to own premises.
- 1920: Borough Theatre Bill Posting Co. Limited purchased by Odhams Press for £250,000 from founder A.E. Abrahams. Abrahams moves into business develop the Regal cinema chain, [first opening the Regal at Marble Arch](#) (later to become the Odeon Marble Arch) in 1928 before developing this, with his son, into a small London chain. The opening of the cinema as documented in a ‘[Regal Souvenir Supplement](#)’ in Kinematograph Weekly which included a profile of Abrahams, noting that he ‘was one of the first to recognise that “it pays to advertise”’, no doubt a subtle reference to whatever he’d paid them for the supplement!
- Played a role in the evolution of [Picadilly Circus as a hotbed of illuminated advertising](#) which gained momentum in the 1920s.
- 1930s: Charles J. Lytle leaves Odhams Press to found his advertising agency C. J. Lytle Ltd. He is last listed in a Boro' advertisement in 1933, and is not mentioned in an advertisement dated 1938. “In 1961 C. J. Lytle Ltd became the second advertising firm to float on the London Stock Exchange. However this was not enough to save the company and in December 1965 shareholders decided to wind it up.”
- [1947](#): Borough Bill Posting Co. owned by Odhams Press, Ltd. “Lord Southwood and the present Sir John Ellerman combined together in 1937 to purchase from the Inveresk Paper Co. the latter's controlling interest in Illustrated Newspapers, Ltd. This is the company which owns the Taller, Sphere, Drapers' Record and other periodicals and also, through a subsidiary, the Illustrated London News and the weekly Sketch... The publisher was responsible for titles including Illustrated, John Bull, Horse and Hound, News Review and several women's papers. It is a well-mixed lot, for Debretfs Peerage is another of its assets. The company has also large printing works in Long Acre and at Watford, and in still another direction owns the Borough Bill Posting Co., one of the biggest concerns of its kind.”
 - Interesting to note John Bull among the titles above given their use of painted wall signs. Also, possible connection to Sunday Illustrated.
- Hackney Archives in their Bryant & May (Brymay) collection have [evidence of relationship](#) between the match manufacturers and Borough Bill Posting..

Timeline

Year	Name	Address(es)	Notes	Reference
1896	N/A	N/A	No apparent listings in street directories.	1896 London Suburbs street directories
1899	N/A	N/A	Abraham Emanuel Abrahams sentenced to nine months for conspiring to print and distribute material promoting divers drugs as a means of abortion on behalf of client Madame Frain's Medical Institute.	Police records and press article
1900	Boro' Advertising Co.	Theatre Royal, Stratford, E	Not listed in subsequent issue of same publication, September to December 1900. Founder is E.A. Abrahams.	The Poster, Directory of Leading Billposters, March to August 1900
1902	Boro Advertising Co,	11 to 15 Great Eastern Road, The Grove west side	Listed as bill posters & contractors	Stratford 1902 Post Office Trade Directory Street Listing
1906	Borough Theatre Bill Posting Co Limited	11, 13 & 15 Great Eastern Road.	Listed as bill posters	Essex street directory
1910	Borough Bill Posting Company	Stratford	Erection of 3,000sqft bill posting as part of general election	The apostle of free labour: the life story of William Collison
1911 (May)	Borough Bill Posting	New York	Dispute relating to a site secured for the posting of their bills. Not clear if this is same firm.	Stockham v. Borough Bill Posting Co.
1912	Borough Theatre Bill Posting Co Limited	73 & 524 Romford Road	Listed as bill posters, TA "Abrahamend;" TN 1490 East	Stratford 1912 Commercial Trade Directory
1914	Borough Theatre Bill Posting Co. Limited	73 Romford Road	Listed as bill posters	Essex street directory
1919	Borough Theatre Bill Posting Co. Limited	61 Romford Road	Listed as bill posters. Advertisement boasts of 10,000 sites.	London Suburbs street directory

Year	Name	Address(es)	Notes	Reference
1920	Borough Theatre Bill Posting Co. Limited	N/A	Purchased by Odhams Press for c.£250,000. E.A. Abrahams. Abrahams moves into business develop the Regal cinema chain.	Kensington Post
1927	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO,	57-59, Long Acre, London, W.C. 2	This is the address of Odhams Press.	1927 Kinematograph Year Book
1927	Boro' Electric Signs	57, 58 & 59 Long Acre	Advertising ('Say it in letters of Fire!') lists proprietors as Odhams Press, and general manager as Charles J. Lytle.	1927 Kinematograph Year Book p232
1928	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO,	57-59, Long Acre, London, W.C. 2		1928 Kinematograph Year Book
1928	Boro' Electric Signs	57, 58 & 59 Long Acre	Advertising ('Boro' Signs Made Piccadilly Famous!') lists proprietors as Odhams Press, and general manager as Charles J. Lytle.	Kinematograph Weekly
1929	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1	First reference to this address	1929 Kinematograph Year Book
1931	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1		1931 Kinematograph Year Book
1931	Boro' Electric Signs	12-16 Wilson Street, Long Acre, London, W.C.	First reference to this address	1931 Kinematograph Year Book
1933	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1	Advertising ('Use a Boro' Electric Sign!') lists proprietors as Odhams Press, and general manager as Charles J. Lytle.	1933 Kinematograph Year Book
1933	Boro' Electric Signs	Chester Street, Manchester	First evidence of expansion outside of London (with exception of New York)	1933 Kinematograph Year Book
1934	Boro' Electric Signs	N/A	Complete work on the neon lighting for newly-opened Paramount Theatre Cinema, London Road, Liverpool.	National Museums Liverpool
1935	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1		1935 Kinematograph Year Book

Year	Name	Address(es)	Notes	Reference
1935	Boro' Electric Signs	Ranelagh Road, S.W.1 Chester Street, Manchester		1935 Kinematograph Year Book
1936	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1		1936 Kinematograph Year Book
1936	Boro' Electric Signs	Ranelagh Road, S.W.1 Chester Street, Manchester A. B. Row, Birmingham 4 14, Blenheim Terrace, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2 30 Gordon Street, Glasgow C 1	Major expansion across UK	1936 Kinematograph Year Book
1937	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1		1937 Kinematograph Year Book
1937	Boro' Electric Signs	5 locations, as 1936, with change of address in Manchester to Pollard Street		1937 Kinematograph Year Book
1938	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1	Advertising ('A good film and a clever poster on Boro sites will fill up the house') lists proprietors as Odhams Press, but no mention of Charles J. Lytle.	1938 Kinematograph Year Book
1938	Boro' Electric Signs	5 locations, as 1937		1938 Kinematograph Year Book
1939	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1	Advertising ('A good film and a clever poster on Boro sites will fill up the house') lists proprietors as Odhams Press.	1939 Kinematograph Year Book

Year	Name	Address(es)	Notes	Reference
1939	Boro' Electric Signs	5 locations, as 1937		1939 Kinematograph Year Book
1940	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	Ranelagh Road, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1		1940 Kinematograph Year Book
1940	Boro' Electric Signs	5 locations, as 1937		1940 Kinematograph Year Book
1942	BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	10-14, Macklin Street, Drury Lane, W.C.2 “Badminton” Gloucester Road, Kingston Hill, Surrey	Surrey location was a “temporary war address”	1942 Kinematograph Year Book
1942	Boro' New Electric Signs (see Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd.)	Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd. (Franco Signs), Colindale Avenue, Hendon	First mention of Franco Signs. Boro' Electric Signs still listed under SIGNS (Illuminated)	1942 Kinematograph Year Book
1944	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.. BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	2 locations, as 1942	‘Proprietors Odhams Press Ltd’ included in listing. Use of ‘Borough’ coincides with apparent sale of Boro' Electric, so perhaps a means of differentiating the companies, or Boro' brand also sold.	1944 Kinematograph Year Book
1944	Boro' New Electric Signs (see Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd.)	Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd. (Franco Signs), Colindale Avenue, Hendon	Boro' Electric Signs still listed under SIGNS (Illuminated)	1944 Kinematograph Year Book
1945	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	2 locations, as 1942	‘Proprietors Odhams Press Ltd’ included in listing.	1945 Kinematograph Year Book
1945	Boro' New Electric Signs (see Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd.)	Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd. (Franco Signs), Colindale Avenue, Hendon		1945 Kinematograph Year Book

Year	Name	Address(es)	Notes	Reference
1946	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.. BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.	2 locations, as 1942	'Proprietors Odhams Press Ltd' included in listing.	1946 Kinematograph Year Book
1946	Boro' New Electric Signs, Ltd	294, Colindeep Lane, Hendon N.W.9	Franco-British Electrical Co. are still trading, from 25 Oxford Street, but connection to Boro' not highlighted as before.	1946 Kinematograph Year Book
1947	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.	Holborn House, 112, High Holborn, W.C.1	Also appear as BORO' BILLPOSTING CO. in Bill Posters section	1947 Kinematograph Year Book
1947	Boro' New Electric Signs, Ltd	25 Oxford Street, W.1	Address now matches that of Franco-British Electrical Co.	1947 Kinematograph Year Book
1948	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.	Holborn House, 112, High Holborn, W.C.1	Also appear as BORO' BILLPOSTING CO. in Bill Posters section	1948 Kinematograph Year Book
1948	Boro' New Electric Signs, Ltd	25 Oxford Street, W.1	Also listed under companies supplying fluorescent material Franco-British Electrical Co. now listed at 15-17, King St., St. James's, S.W.1	1948 Kinematograph Year Book
1949	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.	Holborn House, 112, High Holborn, W.C.1	Also appear as BORO' BILLPOSTING CO. in Bill Posters section	1949 Kinematograph Year Book
1949	Boro' New Electric Signs, Ltd	25 Oxford Street, W.1	Also listed under companies supplying fluorescent material	1949 Kinematograph Year Book
1950	BOROUGH BILLPOSTING CO.	Holborn House, 112, High Holborn, W.C.1	Also appear as BORO' BILLPOSTING CO. in Bill Posters section Reference still made to Proprietors Oldham Press Ltd	1950 Kinematograph Year Book
1950	Boro' New Electric Signs, Ltd	25 Oxford Street, W.1	Only listed under companies supplying fluorescent material	1950 Kinematograph Year Book
1965	Borough Bill Posting Co. Ltd	None	Appeal against planning decision at Harrow Council rejected	Development committee minutes, 9 December 1965

Boro on Ghost Signs



[Photo: [Roy Reed](#)] Corner of Killyon Road and Wandsworth Road, SW8, with reference to C. J. Lytle at 57 Long Acre. 1928 is the last date that Boro were based at the Long Acre address and [Sebastien](#) has dated the Nestle slogan to the first half of the 1920s.



Detail of ghost sign for Germolene at Newington Green, London, N16, with reference to C. J. Lytle at 57 Long Acre. 1928 is the last date that Boro were based at the Long Acre address.



Detail of top of Gillette ghost sign on Grays Inn Road showing Stratford as location, and boasting of 10,000 sites. The business was only based in Stratford for the first 20 years of the 20th Century and there is Boro' advertising from 1919 (Kelly's London Suburbs directory) boasting of the same number of sites, so this is likely contemporary to that, and just pre-dating the sale to Odhams with associated more to Long Acre.



Boro Advertisements

KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY

FEBRUARY 3, 1927

Say it in letters of Fire!

TO be really attractive, the electric sign for the front of your kinema must be specially designed to embody the latest improvements in electrical publicity.

We can construct the sign, supply flasher and switch-gear, instal & erect complete.

Give us particulars of what you have in mind, and we will prepare the design and estimate without obligation on your part.

BORO' ELECTRIC SIGNS

Chas. J. Lytle - General Manager
(Proprietors, Odhams Press Ltd.)

57, 58 & 59, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

Phone: Gerrard 9870 (14 lines). Wires: "Borokilpo, Rand, London."

KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY

JULY 27 1928

Make your Cinema as famous as Piccadilly Circus



Photo by Aeroflex Ltd., London

Draw your crowd
by the method
which appeals to
them. They love
movement and
light. They come
to your show for
that reason.

Attract them by a good moving electric sign.
It is the greatest attention-compelling publicity
in the world. It has light, colour, movement
and novelty.

But come to the firm that made Piccadilly Circus famous-by-night. Then
you can be sure of the right design, the right effect,—and the right sign.
We can construct, fix and maintain outside your own theatre,—or we can
supply and maintain the sign and find the site, all at a fixed rental. Full
particulars cost you nothing. Consult

Chas. J. Lytle,
General Manager.

BORO' ELECTRIC SIGNS

(Proprietors Odhams Press Ltd.)

57 59, LONG ACRE, W.C.2.

Telephone : Gerrard 9870 (14 lines).

Telegrams : Borobilpo, Rand, London

USE A BORO' ELECTRIC SIGN

We have Outstanding Sites in your Neighbourhood

To make your Cinema known, and remembered—use an electric sign. We have outstanding sites available in all districts; on main roads; at busy cross-roads; wherever crowds and traffic pass. Let us design a striking sign for you, and erect it where it will advertise you nightly to thousands of people—at a surprisingly low weekly rental. Write to us, or telephone for further information.

CHAS. J. LYTLE : *General Manager*

Ring
VIC. 8131

THE BORO' BILLPOSTING CO.

Proprietors : Odhams Press, Ltd.

RANELAGH RD., GROSVENOR RD., LONDON, S.W.1

British Studios. 377

**A GOOD FILM
AND A
CLEVER POSTER
ON
BORO
SITES
WILL FILL THE HOUSE**

RING UP VICTORIA 8131

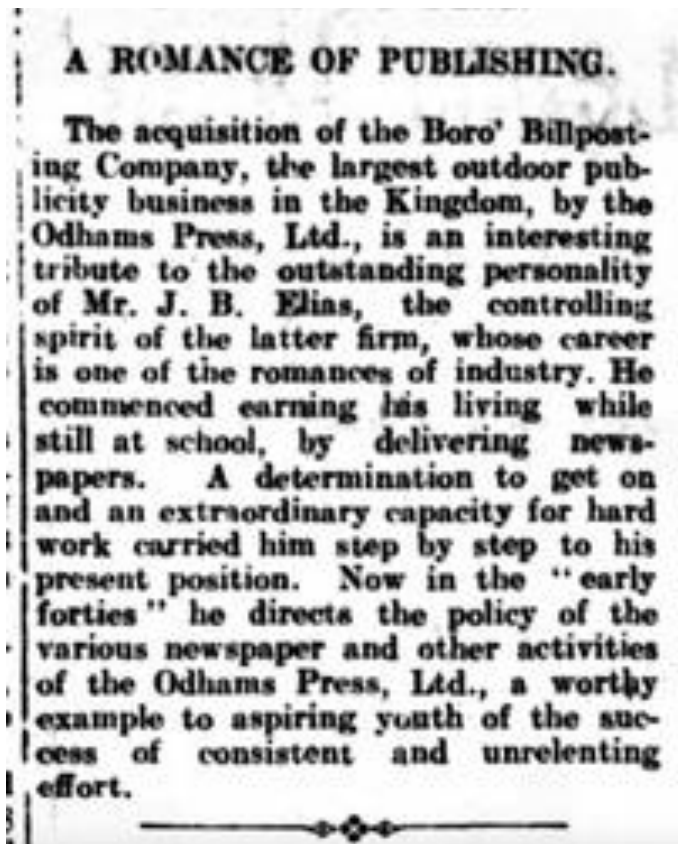
BOROUGH BILLPOSTING COMPANY
(PROPRIETORS ODHAMS PRESS LIMITED)

RANELAGH ROAD, GROSVENOR ROAD, LONDON, S.W.1

LONDON MANCHESTER LEEDS BIRMINGHAM BRIGHTON

1938 Kinematograph Year Book p377 and 1939 Kinematograph Year Book p247

Articles & Clippings



1920, Kensington Post



1927, New Zealand publication

County of

202

London--continued.

57

110

World Record Bill Posting?

This is an account of some events ahead of December 1910 election from “[The apostle of free labour : the life story of William Collison, founder and general secretary of the National Free Labour Association, told by himself](#)”

I was walking down the Kingsway when I came across the hoarding which enclosed the New London Opera House. It was an ideal hoarding for our manifesto, rising flush from the ground, and sufficiently high to enable the bill to be placed convenient for folks of all statures to read it, and long enough to be a splendid advertisement. So someone else had evidently thought, for it was covered with the posters of a well-known periodical.

I made up my mind that that hoarding must be covered with the National Free Labour Association manifestos, and quickly, too. Many London elections were taking place the following Saturday, and our appeal to the working men in such a central position, down which a million people passed daily, could not fail to exercise some effect.

There was a man wandering round with a paste-pot, from whom I found that the hoarding had been rented by the proprietor of the magazine direct from the builders, but that he had sublet it to the Borough Bill Posting Company, and that between the expiry of one contract and the beginning of another there was a week's unprofitable interregnum for the Bill Posting Company.

Armed with this information, away I went to Stratford, and was fortunate to find the managing director of that Company in his office. I at once laid my card on the table and showed him my hand by disclosing all the information I had. "Now then," I said, " how much for one clear week — the entire length of the hoarding to be covered with our manifesto, framed top and bottom with double-crown streamers (that is, single letters each the size of a double-crown bill, twenty-four inches by eighteen inches), and start away with the work at once?"

He made a mental estimate which for rapidity of calculation and generosity of margin for profit would have won the admiration of a "Cocker." But I was not disposed to quibble, and said at once, "Done — and do you see the work is done smart to time."

And so it was, and well done, too. For he went beyond his contract, and tastefully blocked in all the spaces between each sheet with blue paper, so, what with the mammoth posters, separated by bright blue columns, and the big blue streamer letters above and below, an ugly hoarding was turned into a thing of beauty.

It was two hundred and fifty feet long by twelve feet high, with a superficial area of three thousand feet, and it held the proud position of being the largest hoarding in the Kingdom during this General Election. As a solus site it was unique, and formed a splendidly attractive medium for setting forth in bold detail the grievous injustice dealt out to Free Labour by the most Trade Union-ridden Government of modern times. Thousands flocked to it daily from all parts of London and the provinces, and as an advertising " draw " it stood out alone among the thousands of attractive London hoardings. This billposting feat was one of the outstanding features in the shortest and most strenuous political campaign within our memories.



HOARDING OF THE NATIONAL FREE LABOUR ASSOCIATION.

The hoarding was 250 feet by 12 feet, with a superficial area of 3,000 feet, and occupied a most prominent position in Kingsway, London, during the General Election, December, 1910.

Contact

If you have any more information about Boro, especially their involvement with painted wall signs, then please get in touch.

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Thanks

Reaching this point would not have been possible without the help of [Lucy at Ghost Signs from Bygone Times](#), [Roy Reed](#), and [ID on Twitter](#). Thank you for your assistance and continued support.