

A logo that tells a story



The Kilfrost logo captures the exuberance and optimism of the 1950s, the decade it was created.

Its design tells the story of the company's international outlook with its roots in an era of innovation. The letters look like they flow straight from the artist's paintbrush, which gives them a dynamic and forward-moving appearance. This fluidity combined with a covering of snow suggests that, no matter how cold it gets, the Kilfrost letters will continue to flow.

This painted style of lettering evokes the spirit of aviation. Talented servicemen and professional civilian artists used this style for nose art paintings on air force planes in WWII. These paintings were a way to identify friendly units, and flight crews chose painted pinups with messages and memories of home to bring the planes luck.



Nose art on WWII US air force planes

The iconic Ray-Ban Aviator sunglasses logo also features a painted style of lettering. The sunglasses became famous worn by screen legends including James Dean and Tom Cruise (who wears them in the Top Gun movies). The Aviators were originally designed to protect US air force pilot's eyes while flying, then after the war ended both Ray-Ban and Kilfrost made the transition from military to commercial production.



The iconic Ray-Ban logo



The fluid spontaneity of this style of painted letters reflects the more relaxed attitudes in this post-WWII era, as people now looked to a future of peace and opportunity. Technology was creating exciting new possibilities like air travel for business and pleasure. The 1950s became the “Golden Age” of flying. The arrival of television brought visions of faraway countries that ignited aspirations for travel and fuelled a spirit of adventure. Kilfrost was a part of this as the products were now used by commercial airlines and by expedition teams to the Antarctic and Greenland.

This was a decade of prosperity when more people than ever before had disposable income that they could spend on everyday and luxury items. The advertising industry became big business, and signwriters were busy painting signs along every high street. Many products and their signwriting-style logos became classic household favourites when rationing ended and luxuries like chocolate, ice cream and breakfast cereal were no longer exotic treats.

NO SUGAR NEEDED
Kellogg's Walls Cadbury's
Hotpoint Butlin Coca-Cola

Script-style logos of the era

While some of the logos have their roots in the 1800s, we've come to associate these brands with the 1950s because advertising and the new consumer culture made them popular with a mainstream audience. The Coca Cola logo first appeared around 1900, but we're more likely to associate it with the 1950s American Dream of 'opportunity, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'.

These logos are in a lettering style known as casual script. An example of this is the font 'Brush Script', which was designed in America in 1942. The letters look like they're created with a brush loaded with paint, and not the pen nib of formal calligraphic script styles.

Kilfrost's casual script lettering features snow over the word 'frost', which is an example of 'typography parlante'. This term comes from 'architecture parlante' or 'talking architecture', which describes buildings that look like their function. Examples are the big doughnut near LAX and the big hot dog in Coney Island. The definition of the word typography is the style and arrangement of letters, so typography parlante means that the letters look like the word's meaning.

*Casual
Script* *Formal
Script*

Brush Script and Edwardian Script



Typography parlante was very popular in this era of exuberant optimism and there are lots of examples in signwriting and lettering books of the mid-20th century.



Examples of typography parlante. Speedball Text Book: Lettering, Poster Design, for Pen or Brush by C. Howard Hunt Pen, 1941.

Typefaces and lettering styles reflect the mood of the time they are popular in, like fashion or architecture. The decades before the Kilfrost logo saw the sensible 'keep calm and carry on' Gill Sans typeface (1928) and the traditional, formal Times New Roman (designed for The Times newspaper, 1931) become popular. Casual scripts and extra ornamental details fell out of favour towards the end of the 1950s when the 'less is more' minimalism of Modernism and typefaces like Helvetica came into vogue.



Examples of typography parlante. Speedball Text Book: Lettering, Poster Design, for Pen or Brush by C. Howard Hunt Pen, 1941.

A female graphic designer in Newcastle Upon Tyne designed the Kilfrost logo in the 1950s. We don't know her name as the archives were lost in a fire, so we'd love to hear from you if you know anything about her?

In summary, there's more to the Kilfrost logo than meets the eye. It's a visual representation of the technology that keeps industry flowing in frozen weather conditions and it tells the Kilfrost story originating in an era of optimism and innovation.

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