

UPSTREAM - THE LAND

- 1 Chicheley Street Gate
- 2 Information and Post Office
- 3 Fairway Café
- 4 Station Gate, Escalator Hall for Underground below
- 5 The Land of Britain and The Natural Scene
- 6 The Country
- 7 Minerals of the Island
- 8 Power and Production
- 9 The '51 bar
- 10 Sea and Ships
- 11 Dome of Discovery
- 12 Transport
- 13 Regatta Restaurant and Embankment Gate
- 14 The Skylon
- 15 Nelson Pier
- 16 Administration Block

DOWNSTREAM - THE PEOPLE

- 17 The People of Britain
- 18 The Lion and the Unicorn
- 19 The Unicorn
- 20 Television
- 21 Telecinema
- 22 Locomotive Exhibit
Turntable Café below
- 23 Police and First-Aid
- 24 Homes and Gardens
- 25 Courtyard
- 26 Administration and Staff Canteen
- 27 Royal Festival Hall
- 28 Seaside
- 29 1851 Centenary Pavilion
- 30 Shot Tower
- 31 Waterloo Bridge Gate
The New Schools and Design Review below
- 32 Harbour Bar
- 33 Health
- 34 Thameside Restaurant
- 35 Sport
- 36 Rodney Pier

Festival of Britain South Bank Tour

ELAIN HARWOOD, ANNIE HOLLOBONE
AND ALAN POWERS

AS soon we pushed through the turnstiles and past the impatient attendants, there was a surprise, a sudden sense of space and leisured gaiety.' (Patrick O'Donovan and Hugh Casson, commentary to *Brief City*, 1952).

'We wanted to get our effects inside the exhibition, so that as soon as people went through the gates they were in an extraordinary, huge, exciting toyshop right in the middle of London, with different views coming to them and at them all the time.' (Hugh Casson).¹

York Road entrance: Gordon Tait of Burnet Tait and Lorne. The high entrance over a footbridge from Waterloo Station is distinctive for its tall laminated trusses made of timber given by British Columbia and designed by the Timber Development Association. The interior of the Rocket cafeteria underneath was by Kenneth Cheesman, where the trusses formed giant braces,



figure 1 The view from the York Road entrance (The Architectural Press)



figure 2 Inside The Rocket, mural by Betty Swanwick (Crown copyright NMR)

and there was sculpture by Mitzi Cunliffe and Peter Peri.

Chicheley Street entrance and offices, plus Fairway Café and Minerals Pavilion: Michael Grice of the Architects' Co-Partnership, with Ove Arup and Partners. This included offices for Festival management staff, a VIP lounge with its own garden, the entrance from Chicheley Street and screen to road. The offices were housed in eight individual 'boxes' (also known as 'carry cots' and designed by ACP partner Kenneth Capon) suspended over a solid ground floor and overlooking a courtyard garden, and following the curve of the road behind. They were screened from York Road by a high steel scaffold set with canvas tetrahedral 'flags'.

'... a tetrahedron without the bottom, in canvas, screens, and I thought, 'Well, that's easy to make.'

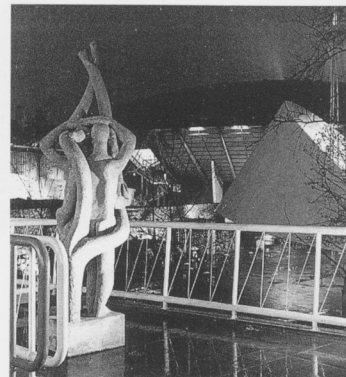


figure 3 Mitzi Cunliffe, *Root Bodied Forth*, looking towards the Land of Britain and Dome of Discovery (The Architectural Press)



figure 4 The Fairway (The Architectural Press)

1. Hugh Casson, 'Putting on a Show', RIBA Christmas Holiday Lectures, 1951-2; 2 January 1952, p.64; RIBA Manuscript Collection.

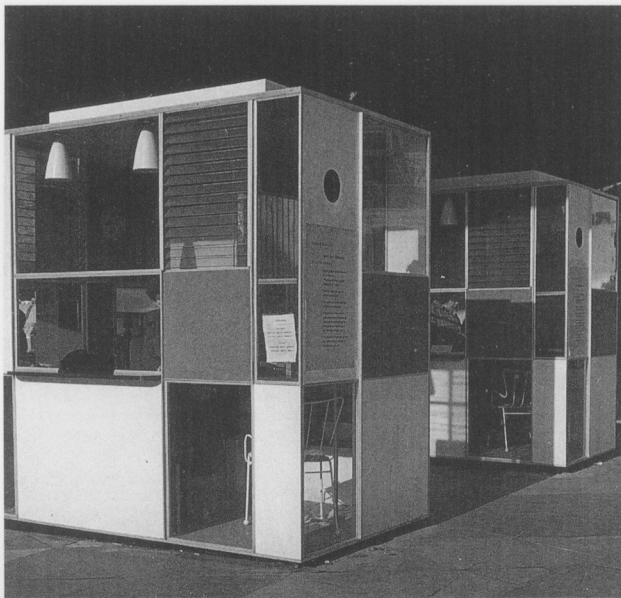


figure 5 Payboxes at Chicheley Street entrance (The Architectural Press)

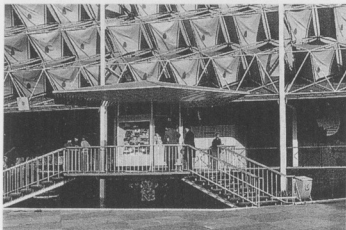


figure 6 York Road screen and kiosk (The Architectural Press)

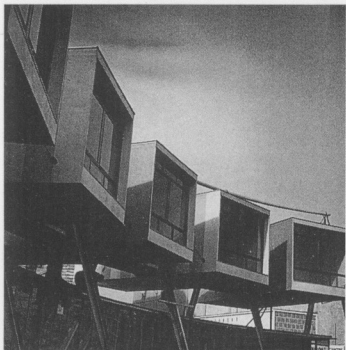


figure 7 The 'Carry Cot' offices by Chicheley Street (The Architectural Press)

One doesn't realise. So anyway, they're to be in canvas, these diamonds, and it was pointed out to me that canvas stretches, so much percent in the warp, and so much percent in the weft. So, you know, it seemed to me interesting but somewhat theoretical. But in fact, all the canvas was in diamonds, of which there were thousands, and were attached by springs which were made and designed by Terrys, of the angle poise. That lot had a slightly different tension to this lot, and the actual canvas things themselves not just a simple piece, you don't cut a diamond of canvas. No. No. We had to get them made by some sailmakers called Rase and Lapforth (Michael Grice)²

Alongside, the Minerals Pavilion was conceived as a truncated tetrahedron clad with concrete coal-faced blocks and mounted on a podium covered with grass which concealed the main exhibition space – 'a coal mine turned inside out', as *The Times* put it.³ A high-level walkway linked the building to the Power and Production Pavilion (see below).

Entrances to *The Land of Britain* and *The People of Britain* sections, with Turntable Café: H.T. Cadbury-Brown. Assistants: on the Land side, R.W. Finch, on the People side Elizabeth Dale and Peter Softley, who also helped with the general layout of the Concourse. Assistant for Turntable Café, R.W. Finch. Interiors by V. Rotter, James Gardner and (for the café) Bliss and Subiotto. Landscaping for 'Land' by Peter Youngman, with water garden by J. Kasamoto, for the rest Frank Clark and Maria Sheppard with Cadbury-Brown. Sculpture, *Woman with Pitcher*, in Turntable Café by Anna Mahler. Seated figure in pool by Heinz Henghes. Sculptures on Concourse by Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth (*Contrapuntal Forms*), and David MacFall. Julian Trevelyan mural in the Turntable Café. 'Felix Topolski did a huge history of the British Empire, [*Cavalcade of Commonwealth*] under the arches. It was absolutely enormous, about 30 feet high, by about 60 feet long.' (Hugh Casson).⁴

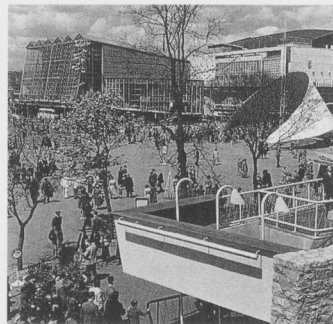


figure 8 The Concourse, looking towards the People of Britain and Transport (The Architectural Press)

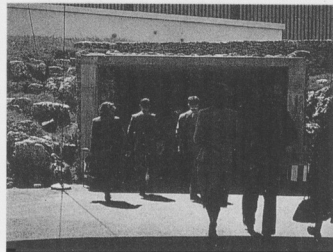


figure 9 Entrance to the Land of Britain (The Architectural Press)

2. Michael Grice: National Sound Archive. National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives, interview by Alan Powers, March 2000.

3. *The Times*, Festival of Britain Supplement, n.d. c.8 May 1951, p.6.

4. Hugh Casson: National Sound Archive. National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives, interview by Cathy Courtney, February 1990. F1089–90. We are grateful to the Casson family for permission to quote from this interview.

The concourse truly came into its own at night, when it became the centre for impromptu dancing. The axis was determined by the position of the entrances from Waterloo and from the Bailey Bridge. 'Here we made use of a trick. We decided to try to make people think, when they came to the main piazza, that the buildings that in fact were on the other side of the Thames were at the far end of the piazza. That meant that we had to pretend that the river was not there. We lowered the level of the main assembly place or piazza by two feet, and at the end we put fountains ... You see a terrific view, but you cannot walk to it because the river is in between, and so you get the best of both worlds.' Whitehall Court was decorated with lights, so that at night it became 'a sort of fairy castle suspended in the air.' (Hugh Casson).⁵ It is indicative of the Festival's sense of history that Cadbury-Brown went to Versailles to research the development of fountain jets. But he also wanted gas jets underneath to create flames. This was deemed too dangerous by the authorities, so instead there were gas torchères, and smaller jets creating a 'mist'.

The alternative to perambulating the concourse was to follow one of the two prescribed routes through the exhibition, and Cadbury-Brown designed two aluminium cones as porticoes to these routes, one red, one blue. For the 'Origins of the People' he designed a glazed Miesian building that formed a dignified and uncluttered entrance. A tortuous route then threaded between the arches of Hungerford Bridge, while to the side he designed a little café with a Japanese garden. On the other side, the 'Origins of the Land' was by contrast rough and totally enclosed, designed to express a geological rockfall in reinforced concrete.⁶ Cadbury-Brown wrote that 'the most up to date idea which I have been nursing was some reinforced brickwork spanning a 12' opening (just for the heck of it) and

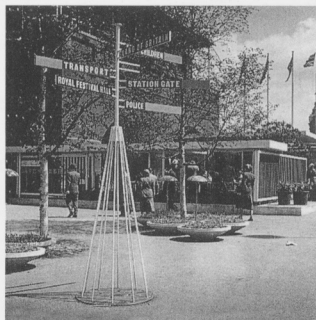


figure 10 The Turntable Café, with portable signpost by Robin Day and Milner Gray (The Architectural Press)

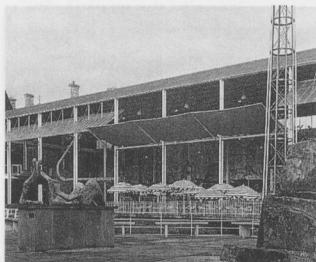


figure 11 The Natural Scene and The Country pavilion from the Fairway, with the Dairy Bar, and Henry Moore's Genesis (The Architectural Press)

today the contractors talked me into having a hidden steel beam behind.' (H.T. Cadbury-Brown)⁷

The Country pavilion: Brian O'Rorke, assisted by Gordon Lie and Colin Laird. Display design by F.H.K. Henrion. 'An outsize Dutch barn' (Brian O'Rorke).⁸ R.T. James and Partners, structural engineers, Peter Youngman landscape. This simple building was in two sections: one dedicated to 'The Natural Scene' had as its centrepiece a great plaster tree; the other, 'Countryside', had to cope with large numbers of animals

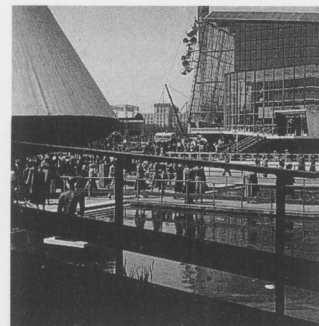


figure 12 Looking across the Concourse from the People of Britain, Heinz Henghes's sculpture in the pool below. (The Architectural Press)

figure 13 Tractor Display inside The Country pavilion (The Architectural Press)

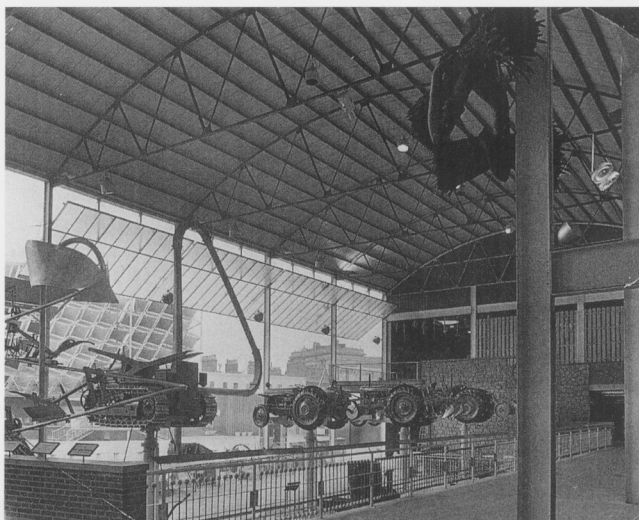




figure 14 Minerals of the Island (Mining) and Royal Pavilion (The Architectural Press)

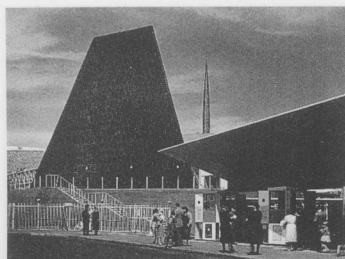


figure 15 Minerals of the Island (Mining) (The Architectural Press)

figure 16 Power and Production, featuring the 'biggest glass window in the world', with County Hall behind (The Architectural Press)



kept on site, from prize cows to hives of bees. 'The agricultural pressure group said they couldn't have the same horses all through the exhibition, had to change the breed every week. So Henrion had to put in his budget, this sort of thing ... Then he had to find somebody to make a huge bee, about 14 foot long, which was quite difficult. What sort of fee do you pay them? How long is it going to take? And what are they going to make of it? You see these were all totally new problems.' (Hugh Casson)⁹ 'The service requirement seemed particularly complex: the valuable horses which arrived without horseshoes and for which daily transport had to be provided to take them to Hyde Park for exercise; the daily delivery of plankton from the Lake District as a diet essential to all the live fish exhibits; or the breeding of 5,000 butterflies, a year in advance, so that a new batch could be supplied once a week for the "Live Butterfly" window: this in turn made it necessary to organise Boy Scouts all over

the country to dig up the appropriate wild flowers which alone would feed the particular butterfly species, delivered in that week ... Over five months, five thousand prize animals – bulls, cows, horses, sheep, goats, chickens and ducks – had to be exhibited as they were so valuable that none of them could be shown for longer than a few weeks.' (F.H.K. Henrion).¹⁰ On the ground floor was a Dairy Bar selling milk.

'In front of the building is a sunken stream, meandering naturalistically among reeds and boulders; beyond it the visitor can see into the open side of the building.' (The Times)¹¹

'The 'Country' Pavilion has a faintly Japanese air, perhaps only because the whole thing is based on long, narrow shapes, bound into firm rectangles – a most accomplished design, this.' (John Summerson)¹²

Power and Production Pavilion: H.J. Reifenberg and G. Grenfell Baines of BDP, engineer F.J. Samuely. Sculpture on the wall of the western hall representing electricity, heavy and light industry by Karel Vogel. The building was entered from the Raw Materials Pavilion to the east, at first floor gallery level. It was thus possible to look down on the large industrial exhibits and out over the river through a completely glazed west end, claimed by the manufacturers Pilkington's to be the largest sheet of glass in the world. The external bas-relief was by Karel Vogel and the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts. On the first floor was a self-service cafeteria, The Whistle.

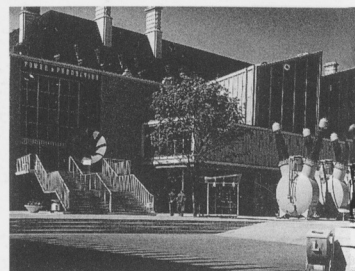


figure 17 The entrance to Power and Production (The Architectural Press)

The '51 bar and Roof terrace: Leonard Manasseh, assistants Ian Baker and Lois Hutchings, Felix Samuely engineer. This scheme began as a competition for a restaurant, won by Manasseh in November 1949 out of 67 entries and with Patrick Gwynne as a close runner up. It was curtailed when the budget for the South Bank was cut in 1950, and Manasseh was left to design just the bar. 'The brief was to make a coherent and unified whole out of the following miscellaneous requirements – a luxury bar and roof terrace, a substation, a block of public lavatories ... their planning had to prevent any unorthodox entry from Chicheley Street.' (Leonard Manasseh).¹³ Manasseh did his own landscaping. The attenuated female figure, sculpted in concrete by Daphne Hardy Henrion and as skeletal as the building, is now in Manasseh's own garden at Highgate. 'Recalling the curious lanky grace of the Dinkas in the Sudan' (*Illustrated London News*)¹⁴

The Bailey Bridge and Regatta Restaurant. Misha Black and Alexander Gibson of the Design Research Unit. A temporary footbridge was erected by the Royal Engineers from the bottom of Northumberland Avenue leading directly to the site, and was one of the busiest entrances. 'As the South Bank is part of London that people ordinarily do not

go to very much we must try somehow to link the South Bank with the North Bank and make it easy to go from one to the other.' (Hugh Casson).¹⁵ At its southern end it was supported on the steel frame of the restaurant, a precast, pre-stressed structure with an aluminium roof. There were platforms on two levels, the upper one a semi-open bar and promenade deck overlooking the river, with a restaurant (again with an open-air section) below, and a garden behind it, complete with a transplanted 40' tree and a pool. 'The Zecora acununata on the Regatta Restaurant came into leaf in late May, dropped its leaves in Autumnal display in early July and broke into spring foliage in August', (Frank Clark, landscape designer.)¹⁶ The kitchens were underneath. Copper abstract piece by Lynn Chadwick. Mural on terrace by Laurence Scarfe, and on restaurant wall (in ceramic) by Victor Pasmore. This was the centrepiece for Mark Hartland Thomas and Helen Magaw's scheme of furnishings and tableware using patterns inspired by X-ray crystallography.

'The slick decorative Regatta Restaurant makes great play with its flights of steps and reminds me to say that stairs, steps, ramps and overhead ways are brilliantly handled throughout the exhibition.' (John Summerson)¹⁷



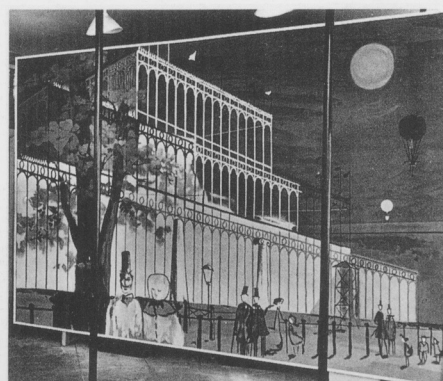
figure 18 Installing the Zecora acununata outside the Regatta Restaurant (Gerald Barry archive)

9. Hugh Casson, National Sound Archive Pro89-90.
10. F.H.K. Henrion, 'The Agricultural and Country Pavilion', in Banham and Hillier, *A Tonic to the Nation*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1976, pp.106-7.
11. *The Times*, Festival of Britain Supplement, n.d. c.8 May 1951, p.6
12. John Summerson, *New Statesman and Nation*, 12 May 1951, p.529.
13. Leonard Manasseh, notes prepared by the architects for a lecture given by Casson at the RIBA on 24 March 1950. They are in A3/6, PRO WORK 25/43 A3/6.
14. *Illustrated London News*, May 26, 1951, p.856.
15. Hugh Casson 'Putting on a Show', Christmas Holiday Lecture, RIBA, 2 January 1952, RIBA Archives, p.57.
16. Frank Clark, in Festival of Britain, Final Report no.3; A1/A3/8, PRO WORK 25/53.
17. John Summerson, *New Statesman and Nation*, 12 May 1951, p.529.



figure 19 The landward flank of the Regatta Restaurant, looking towards Sea and Ships and Nelson Pier (The Architectural Press)

figure 20 Julian Trevelyan mural in The '51 bar (Crown copyright NMR)



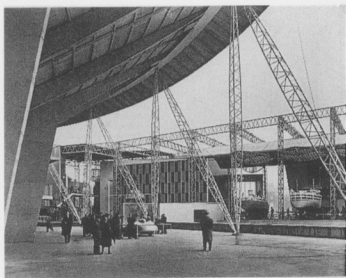


figure 20 The Dome of Discovery, with Sea and Ships beyond (The Architectural Press)



figure 21 Sea and Ships (The Architectural Press)

18. *Architectural Review*, vol. 110, no. 656, August 1951, p. 89.

19. Explanation accompanying the competition entry by Powell and Moya, assisted by Martin Hurley and James Gowan, A4/C7, PRO WORK 25/43.

20. Hugh Casson, 'Putting on a Show', *RIBA Christmas Holiday Lectures, 1951-2*, 4 January 1952, p. 93; *RIBA Manuscript Collection*.

21. 'Critic' in *New Statesman*, 5 May 1951, p. 497.

22. John Summerson, *New Statesman and Nation*, 12 May 1951, p. 529.

Sea and Ships Pavilion: Basil Spence.

Interior designers James Holland and Basil Spence. This was constructed as a largely open structure, of 40-45 ft high latticed frames at 20 ft centres. Murals, flags, sculptures, and model ships were suspended from the main structure. The upper levels had concrete floors surfaced with ships decking, cork or rubber. The story of shipping was dealt with in six sections: the history of sailing ships, the marine engine and its development, the principles of mechanical propulsion, shipbuilding, special ships and fisheries. One of the main features was a 40' square relief sculpture of *The Islanders* by Siegfried Charoux. Other art included murals by John Hutton, Tristram Hillier, James Boswell (Fisheries), G. Skolly (Shipbuilding); Neptune sculpture by Keith Godwin, a mobile fountain, *Windjammers*, by Richard Huws, and a fountain by Maurice Lambert. The ship models were by Bassett Lowke Ltd.

'Sums in miniature the multi-level-internal-external type of planning in which the exhibition specialises.' (*Architectural Review*)¹⁸

Alongside, the Nelson Pier built by the LCC included a self-service cafeteria, *The Skylark*, also designed by Spence.

figure 22 John Hutton's mural at the Sea and Ships Pavilion (Crown copyright NMR)

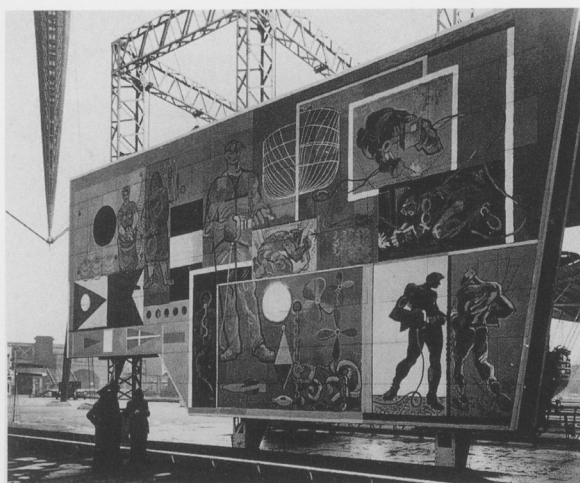


figure 23 The Dome of Discovery, with Power and Production in the foreground, Sea and Ships to the left (London Metropolitan Archive)

Vertical Feature – Skylon, by Powell and Moya, engineer Felix Samuely.

'To act as a pointer or beacon and to be the main vertical element in the exhibition. To be clearly visible by day and by night.' (Powell and Moya)¹⁹ It was nearly 300ft high, and its width was 70ft at the pylon.

'Skylon was put up in a scaffold 30ft high, then hauled up on to an immense ice cream cone, and then built up on top with little panels, each panel about the size of a door.' (Hugh Casson)²⁰

'The Skylon is a cone of light in a dark world.' (*New Statesman*)²¹

'a silly toy, a pretty toy and a dangerous one, whose merciless descending point is luckily just out of reach', (John Summerson, *New Statesman*)²²

'Its precision and elegance make it a fitting symbol for an exhibition at which the world of modern science is lavishly on display.' (*The Times*)

'And the Skylon? Well, that was a simple formula in three dimensions, a clear statement in steel and aluminium and wire. Every part of it did precisely the job it was designed to do. And what was that? Why, simply to hang upright in the air and astonish.' (Patrick O'Donovan and Hugh Casson, commentary to *Brief City*, 1952)

Transport: Arcon (Rodney Thomas). The form was determined by the requirement to display 'full-sized examples of locomotives, cars, aeroplanes and portions of ships ... the endeavour has been to

express the character of each form of transport differently, but at the same time design the building as a whole.’ (Rodney Thomas)²³ There were five sections in two main buildings, one large, one small, hugging the Hungerford Bridge as the most appropriate place to exhibit transport.

The Dome of Discovery: Ralph Tubbs. Assistants Michael Patrick, Frank Tischler and Keith Bennett. ‘The basic concept of this dome, the largest in the world, is to contrast the visual solidarity of a series of sweeping horizontal galleries of reinforced concrete with the extraordinarily lightness of the vast aluminium saucer dome which spans out and beyond all the galleries and which is supported on very light tubular steel struts.’²⁴ It was also the largest aluminium structure erected by that date. The dome was built up of ribs, in three directions and thus triangulating the structure while allowing it some flexibility to move. Geometry, particularly circles and cones, played an important part in the design, for the concrete exhibition galleries formed a series of concentric circles underneath the circles of the aluminium ribs. Much of the exhibition material was crammed into the Dome, as it was the only truly dark space on the site.

John Ratcliff claimed that it grew out of the concept of a giant ‘Big Top’.²⁵ For Casson it was ‘a great brain, that is why we kept it rather dark inside. The idea was that we know very little even now about what is going on in the world, and so the inside of the dome is dark, like ignorance, with occasional patches of light where there are sparks of knowledge, where people have found out things.’²⁶ It was rather more than twice the size of the Perisphere at the New York World’s Fair of 1939–40, or, as Tubbs claimed later ‘it was twice the length of the axis of the Albert Hall’.²⁷ ‘If one is to have a dome in

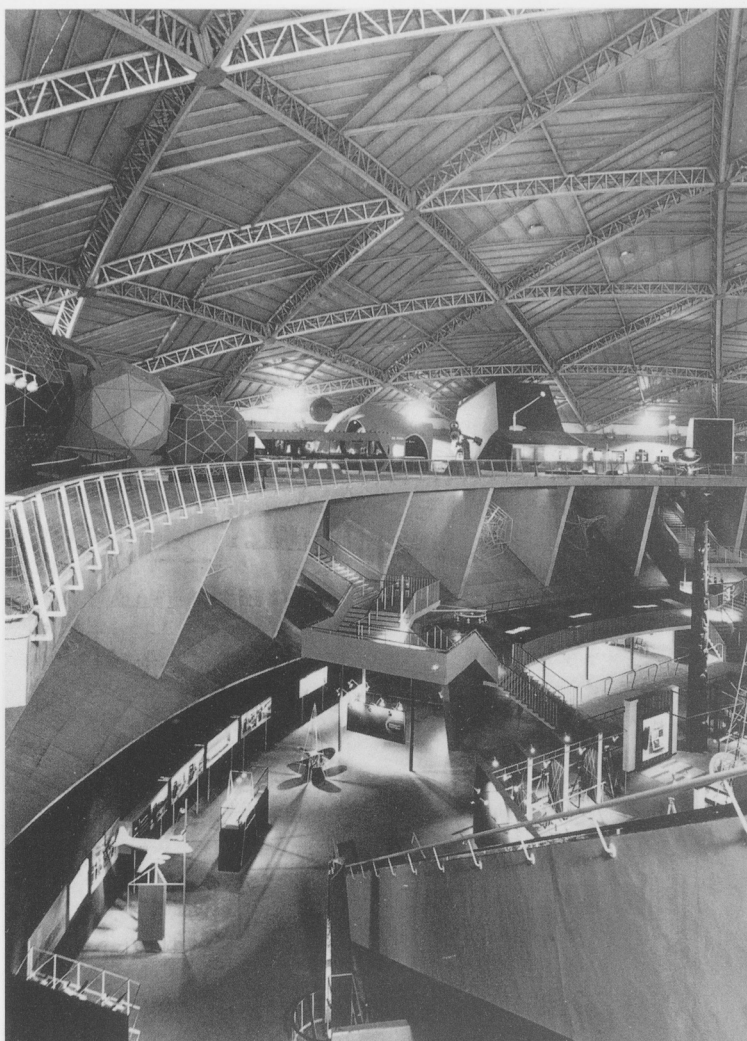
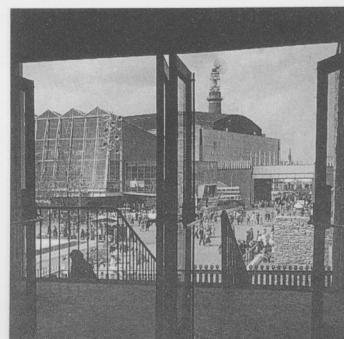


figure 24 Inside the Dome of Discovery (The Architectural Press)

an exhibition it has to be the largest dome in the world. We wondered how large to make ours, and someone said that 365 was an easy number to remember, and so we said we would make it 365 feet.’ (Hugh Casson)²⁸

‘It was the largest dome that had ever been built. It was rather like a ship. It was a live thing, it moved and strained with the changes of weather and temperature. Its roof was both carried and tethered by these slender spars that were hinged and could move and give a little when the wind caught the side of the building. The side walls supported nothing. They were no more than curtains against the light and weather and they were not the

figure 25 Looking across to Transport, with the entrance to the Downstream section to right under Hungerford Bridge (The Architectural Press)



23. Rodney Thomas, from notes prepared by the architects for a lecture given by Casson at the RIBA on 24 March 1950. A3/6, PRO WORK 25/43 A3/6.
24. Ralph Tubbs, in PRO WORK 25/43.
25. John Ratcliff, 'Architects and the Festival of Britain', in *A Tonic to the Nation*, p.110.
26. Hugh Casson, 'Putting on a Show', RIBA Christmas Holiday Lectures, 1951-2; 31 December 1951, p.21; RIBA Manuscript Collection.
27. Ralph Tubbs, in Fay Sweet, 'Oh brave new world that had such buildings in it', *The Independent*, 8 May 1991, p.19.
28. Hugh Casson, 'Putting on a Show', RIBA Christmas Holiday Lectures, 1951-2; 2 January 1952, p.59; RIBA Manuscript Collection.
29. G.W. Stonier, *New Statesman and Nation*, 28 April 1951, p.473.
30. John Summerson, *New Statesman and Nation*, 12 May 1951, p.529.
31. Hugh Casson, National Sound Archive F1089-90.
32. Conversation with Sir Peter Shephard, 6 October 2000.

same distance from the edge all the way round. You could walk round this thing and at every pace the proportions, the shape and the view changed. It was not simply a gigantic mushroom. It was a considered work of art as well as an achievement in engineering.' (Patrick O'Donovan and Hugh Casson, commentary to *Brief City*, 1952)

'A curved silver lid against the blue, and of course the biggest dome in the world, or what would it be doing here?' (*New Statesman*)²⁹

'A saucer dome nearly four times as big as that of Santa Sophia is not necessarily four times as impressive and, in fact, as you enter, might just as well be a flat girder roof.' (John Summerson)³⁰

Outside, 'there was a sort of Arctic Theatre, and [some husky dogs] gave a performance every hour. They sort of came in artificial snow, and barked, and were fed, and had to be exercised every day.' (Hugh Casson)³¹

Lion and Unicorn Pavilion: R.D. Russell and Robert Goodden. Assistants John Morton, K.G. Browne, T.M. Lupton. Russell and Goodden also did the interiors. Engineers R.T. James and Partners. Consultant for Lamella roof, E.

Lewis. The Lion and Unicorn Pavilion was unusual in that Robert Goodden and Dick Russell designed both the building and the display, with texts by Laurie Lee to a brief by Hubert Philips. It truly caught the English spirit in all its ambiguity and whimsy. Peter Shephard recalls seeing drawings by Casson for the pavilion much as built, and has suggested that he had a firm hand in its evolution; certainly the name was his.³² The structure was a steel frame carrying a Lamella timber truss roof of English oak, which overswept the side walls in an upwards curve that served to

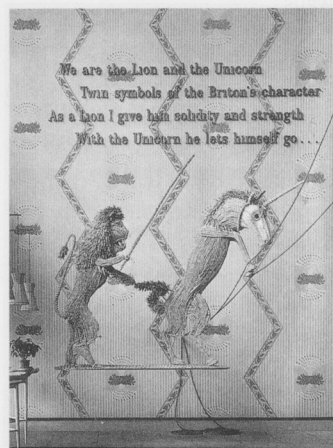


figure 28 Fred Mizen, Corn figures of the Lion and Unicorn (The Architectural Press)

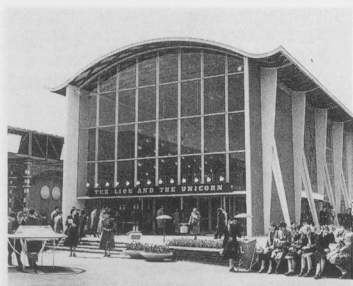
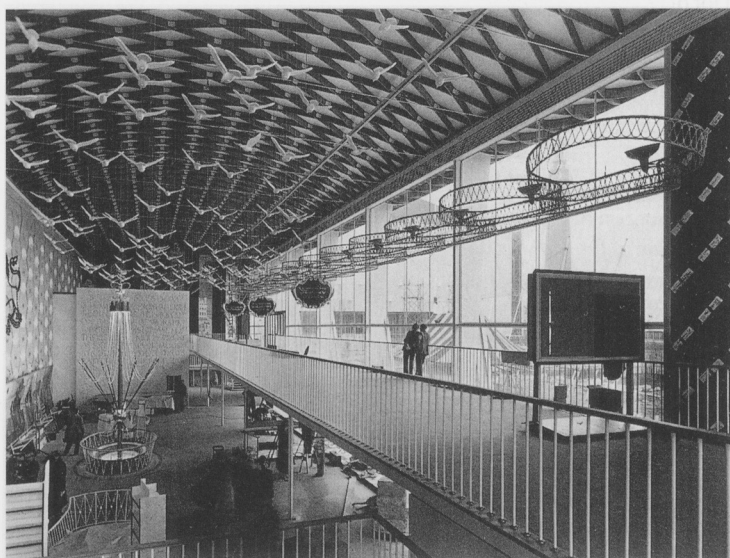


figure 26 The Lion and Unicorn Pavilion (The Architectural Press)

figure 27 Inside the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion (The Architectural Press)



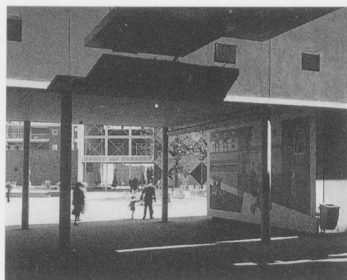
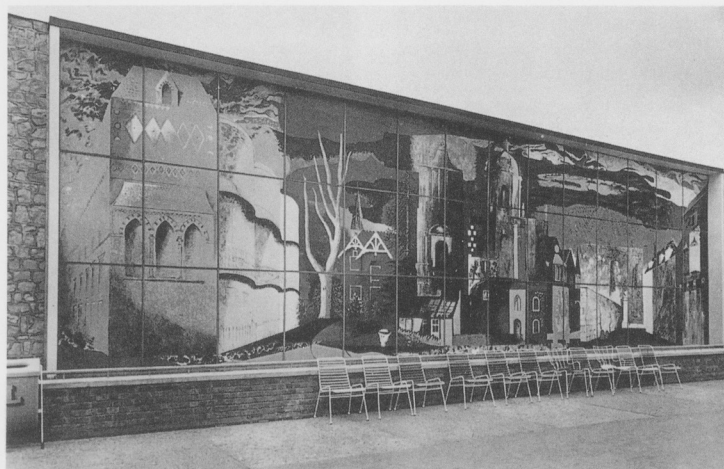


figure 32 Looking from under Television, with mural by Peter Bender, through the courtyard to Homes and Gardens, and with Edward Mills's Administration Building behind (The Architectural Press)



figure 33 Entrance to Homes and Gardens (The Architectural Press)

figure 34 John Piper, *The Englishman's Home*, in Homes and Gardens (Crown copyright NMR)



Hinton, landscaping by Peter Shephard. Features included stereoscopic films using a modified Dudley system of polarisation, requiring glasses, and a new form of borderless screen developed by Coates (and later used by Ernő Goldfinger for his Odeon, Elephant and Castle). The availability of non-flammable film by the end of 1950 enabled the projection box to be incorporated within the body of the auditorium, which was rectangular for acoustic reasons, and clad in a 'quilted' finish under a framework roof described by Coates as a 'lobster claw'.

'Wells Coates's 'Television' and his 'Telecinema' are both excellent, probably, indeed, the most mature and finished architecture on the site and the only architecture that surrenders nothing to decorative facility. These form two elements in a wonderfully pretty group, planned like an old village, with a green along which are ranged the dainty porticoes and courts of Homes and Gardens.' (John Summerson)³⁷

Homes and Gardens: Denis Clarke Hall/Bronek Katz and Reginald Vaughan. Assistant Ursula Meyer. Katz and Vaughan conceived their pavilion as a Dutch barn, with subsidiary structures of tubular scaffolding clad in asbestos and brick. They designed the interiors themselves. Sculpture by John Matthews, mural, *The Englishman's*

Home, by John Piper. Landscaping by Peter Shephard, incorporating gilded bronze sculpture by Jacob Epstein in the pond outside the tea garden – the Garden Café. The entrance range was designed by Denis Clarke Hall in canvas.



figure 35 Looking to the Shot Tower, with Homes and Gardens on the right and the rear of the Royal Festival Hall (detailed by Trevor Dannatt) to the left (The Architectural Press)

'You are confronted, in despite of the invitation extended by the bold inscription, not with a doorway but with a blank wall, given some degree of formality by a piece of sculpture centred on it. As you move forward there is a sense of gathering confinement, which is suddenly dispelled a few paces further on by an unexpected view to the left, across a lawn, a sunken pool, a sculptured figure and the distant shot-tower – a playback, as it were, of the view you have lately left.' (Architectural Review)³⁸

Downstream Landscaping: Peter Shephard. Winkfield Manor Nurseries, Ascot. 'The landscape work consists of the design of all the space between the buildings, walks, terraces, paving, steps, and of the gardens in this space, flowerbeds and boxes.' Shephard's best-known work here was the moat garden outside the Unicorn tea-room, the moat protecting the plants and ensuring nobody could

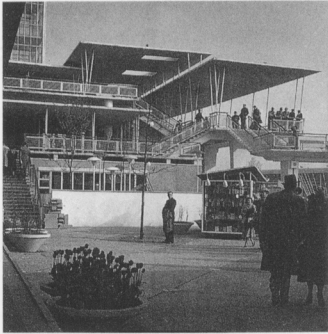


figure 36 The Exhibition entrance from Waterloo Bridge (The Architectural Press)

leave without paying for their tea. 'I looked around for some big, beautiful boulders, and found some in a Yorkshire quarry which I placed along the concrete edges of the pool. I strewed the edges of the water with the boulders. When the Festival closed the boulders were rescued, and found their way to schools and housing schemes – I kept meeting them for years afterwards.'³⁹ He also landscaped the former dock area by the Shot tower, with a sculpture by Karin Jonzen.

Thameside Restaurant, Harbour Bar, Health, The New Schools, Nursery vaults exhibition and walkway to Royal Festival Hall: Jane Drew of Fry and Drew.

'At first the only decision that was made was that most of the restaurants should be on the riverbank. As no riverbank had been built at that time, it meant that we need not fret about that for a few

months.' (Hugh Casson).⁴⁰

Maxwell Fry didn't want to get involved in the Festival as he didn't think architecture should be 'a temporary affair'. But Drew considered that it was 'a great opportunity to try out things.'⁴¹ The site included the vaults under Waterloo Bridge. Assistants J.C. Todd, Z. Borowiecki, C.S. Knight, M. Pain, S. Gardiner, with interiors by Ward and Austen (restaurants), Peter Ray (health hall), Neville Conder (schools and vaults). Engineers, Ove Arup and Partners. The restaurant was well supplied with art – a mural screen by Ben Nicholson, *Turning Forms* by Barbara Hepworth, *Birdcage* by Reg Butler, and a fountain by Eduardo Paolozzi – the first time that Paolozzi had ever exhibited anything.

'I had an idea that instead of having a flat mural it would be nicer for Ben's mural to curve. Ben thought this would be a marvellous idea. [He] said to me would I please see that all the workmen who were putting up his mural wore white gloves. So I went off to Selfridges and got I think five dozen pairs of white gloves. Ben said to me that I hadn't put a curved glass in front of his curved thing, but of course I hadn't any money. But I said I could put a ha ha, with pebbles. And I saw him off on a train to St Ives quite happy, but he got out half way home and phoned me. He said I only put those pebbles there to give the public some ammunition to throw

FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN SOUTH BANK TOUR

38. *Architectural Review*, vol. 110, no. 656, August 1951, p. 96.

39. Conversation with Sir Peter Shephard, 6 October 2000.

40. Hugh Casson, 'Putting on a Show', RIBA Christmas Holiday Lectures, 1951–2; 2 January 1952, p. 59; RIBA Manuscript Collection.

41. Jane Drew, National Sound Archive. F8637–8. Lecture at Courtauld Institute, London, 10 November 1995.

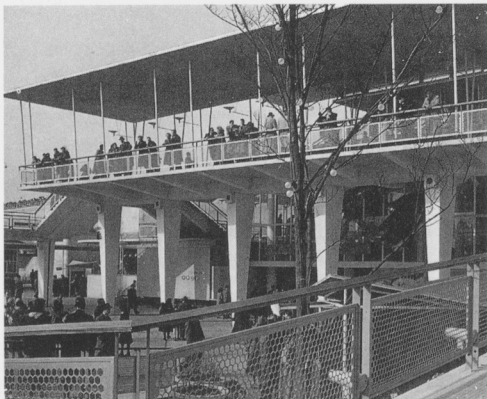


figure 37 Thameside Restaurant (The Architectural Press)



figure 38 The Broadwalk, Thameside Restaurant (The Architectural Press)



figure 39 Walkway to the Royal Festival Hall for those not visiting the Festival (The Architectural Press)

at him! I pointed out they were all cemented down.' (Jane Drew)⁴²

This section incorporated the entrance from Waterloo Bridge, under a feature tower. 'I did what was then completely new, I had an all glass lift. In order that people could go up and see. A viewing tower in which people could see everything and be seen.' (Jane Drew)⁴³ The lift had a hanging mobile at its summit by Lynn Chadwick. 'This was a building in the form of just a framework. I put in these canvas triangles, like a ship's sails you know, like the little sails you have in a yacht, in the front ... But the mobile, that's where I found that it is impossible to have a mobile in the top of this tower, you see, and the wind was blowing through, and although the bits were very heavy, it still wasn't very satisfactory.'⁴⁴

The Thameside Restaurant, raised over the river wall, enjoyed spectacular views, and was retained as a café for the riverside walk until the self-service facility was built in the lower floor of the Royal Festival Hall in 1962–4. The Thameside Restaurant was entirely prefabricated, for speed. 'We got the girls who made the aeroplane wings to come up and they took less than a week to assemble that roof. It was an

aluminium surface, just like an aeroplane wing. It came up on lorries from Bristol.' (Jane Drew)⁴⁵

Sculpture, *London Pride*, by Frank Dobson, near main entrance to the Royal Festival Hall.

Sport: Gordon and Ursula Bowyer.

Assistants Ward Koss and John Reid with Kenneth Grange as graphic and display designer; engineer Lawrence Kinchington. Gordon and Ursula Bowyer (née Meyer) had earlier helped on Homes and Gardens, and were initially invited only to design the interiors for Sport. This was the last section to be begun, because it was dependent on the completion of the river wall. Drew's assistants were too stretched to produce a detailed design for this section, so the newly married Bowyers took on the whole section. 'If the Design Panel were all under 45, our team were all under 30.

Anything was possible in those days ... Our brief was to tell the story of Sport in Britain and to include every conceivable one but naturally giving more prominence to soccer, cricket, tennis and golf than fencing, beagling and falconry. Some historical material was included, especially about the ones that started in Britain – a surprising number. This meant trips to Lords, Wimbledon, etc to borrow exhibits; to visit a real tennis court and see what it looked like and to select the latest well-designed sports equipment – the COI made sure of that! We decided to form a series of double height space frames viewable from ground and first floor levels which would accommodate a high proportion of the exhibits. These were glazed where necessary and protected from above by canvas awnings. There were also a number of free-standing independent displays between the main structure and the river. Stairways were planned at each end of the building and a viewing platform projected over the river. Some sports of course, have very little equipment and here we had to use various

42. Jane Drew, National Sound Archive.

43. Jane Drew, National Sound Archive.

44. Lynn Chadwick, National Sound Archive. National Life Story Collection, Artists' lives, interviewed by Cathy Courtney, April-May 1995. C466/28.

45. Jane Drew, National Sound Archive.

figure 40 Sport (The Architectural Press)



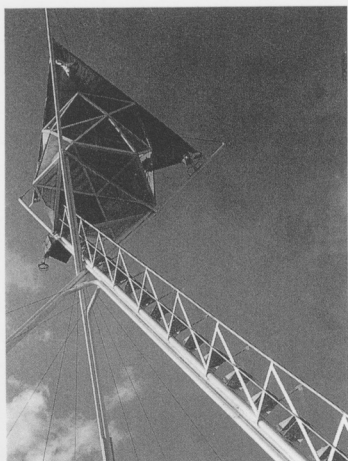


figure 44 Crow's Nest, Seaside
(The Architectural Press)

48. A3/6. Notes supplied by section architect for Casson's lecture. PRO WORK 25/43. Anthony D. Hippisley Cox, 'I enjoyed it more than anything in my life', in *A Tonic to the Nation*, op.cit., p.88.

49. Edward Mills, notes supplied for Casson's lecture, 24 March 1950, in A3/6, PRO WORK 25/43.

50. Ruari McLean, quoted in *A Tonic to the Nation*, p.17.

figure 45 Administration Building and Waterloo Road Screen
(The Architectural Press)



through it to the garden beyond, but actually watch the displays well clear of the circulation route.

Seaside: Eric Brown and Peter Chamberlin. 'Six tapered tubular steel masts, braced and guyed by cables. Booms stick out to support inverted pyramids of canvas, which create a velarium canopy, and have to be supported by very heavy concrete foundations. In addition there is a small bar, restaurant and viewing point over the landing stage, supported by two continuous lattice girders designed to resemble the structure of a seaside pier' (Peter Chamberlin). Festival rock ('How do those letters get inside the sticks of rock? What was it that the Butler saw?'), donkey rides and Donald McGill postcards represented the 'essentially English' seaside.⁴⁸ Part of the structure was retained as a walkway and viewing platform until the Royal Festival Hall was extended in 1962. Brown and Chamberlin also designed the buildings on the Rodney Pier alongside.

'The British Seaside was celebrated in a crowded corner by the river, a mixture of rock shops, of roundabouts, of donkeys, of pointless models that merely pleased, of bright temporary awnings and bits

of rope and netting. Altogether it somehow captured that inexplicable lift of the heart, that hurrying into sandals and sports shirts, that placid sitting on the sands, that brief forgetting of the office and factory which happens when the British go down to the seaside for their holidays.' (Patrick O'Donovan and Hugh Casson, *Brief City*, 1952)

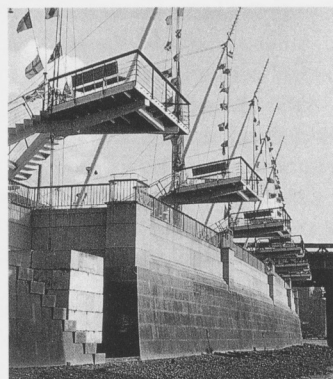


figure 46 The River Wall, Seaside
(The Architectural Press)

Administration and Staff Canteen:

Edward Mills. A long, horizontal building below Waterloo Bridge, incorporating a screen that shielded the exhibition site. Mills conceived the building as 'a backcloth, light and colourful in appearance but not distracting from the varied shapes of the purely exhibition designs.'⁴⁹ It comprised a steel frame set over the brick basements of shops formerly on the site. It contained the first-aid point, maintenance workshops, electric substations, staff rooms and a canteen.

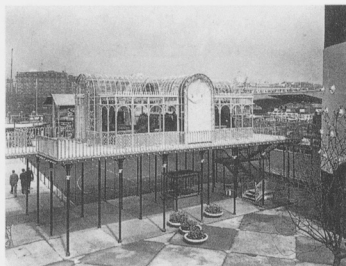
Building for the BBC and GPO:

Drake and Lasdun. A small structure for outside broadcasts and technical facilities, set under the terrace to the Royal Festival Hall. Engineer Walter Goodesmith.

'Personally, on that first morning when first saw the Festival looking across the river from Charing Cross Station, it was so utterly beautiful and exciting that I wept.' (Ruari McLean)⁵⁰

display techniques to overcome this, produced by two very talented artists and designers, Henry and Joyce Collins. Their boxing figure in stitched leather, slightly over life-size, was superb. I'm not sure that I ever quite forgave Sir Hugh Casson for acquiring this at the end of the Festival!' (Gordon Bowyer)⁴⁶

Shot Tower, The Centenary Pavilion and transformer room: Hugh Casson and Leslie Gooday. The only building for which Casson accepted full responsibility was for the remodelling of the 1826 Shot Tower already on the site as a lighthouse and pigeon loft, with a steel platform on top used for demonstrating radar. 'Inside, ... we thought about having a fountain, or waterfall, but couldn't get the pressure. In the end we had a lot of dangling balls.' (Hugh Casson).⁴⁷ An army anti-aircraft gun carriage was mounted on top that allowed the radar dish to circulate through 360 degrees and to rise from horizontal to vertical. An old brick



FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN
SOUTH BANK TOUR

figure 41 The 1851 Centenary Pavilion
(The Architectural Press)

building alongside was retained as a control room. A centenary display commemorating the 1851 Great Exhibition was held in a small structure reminiscent of the Crystal Palace, placed high to demonstrate 'its elegance and frailty'.

Boat building display and garden: Hugh Casson and Leslie Gooday. Peter Shephard landscape, R.T. James and Partners engineers. A covered display of boat building, developed only in 1950, using a surviving dock retained on the site. The circulation was planned so that visitors approaching the boat building shed should see

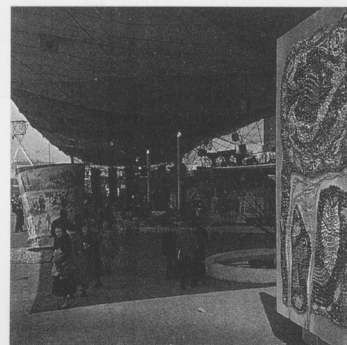


figure 42 The Riverwalk, Seaside. Painted bollard by James Fitton
(The Architectural Press)

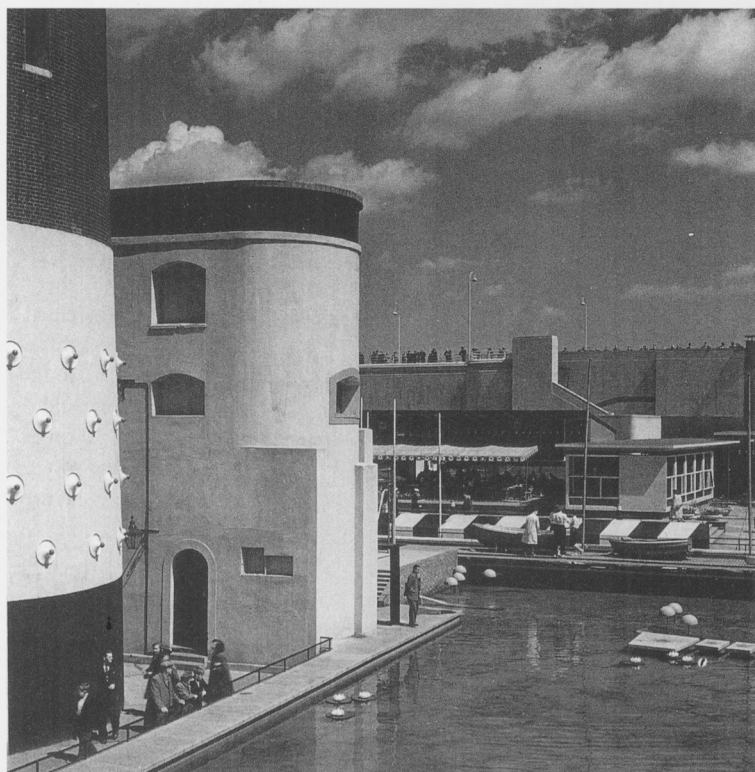


figure 43 The Boat Pool, with Shot Tower to left and Waterloo Bridge beyond
(The Architectural Press)

46. Gordon Bowyer, September 1998.

47. Hugh Casson, 'Putting on a Show', RIBA Christmas Holiday Lectures, 1951-2; 4 January 1952, p.84; RIBA Manuscript Collection.