

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

Celebrating the Postwar Recovery: the 1951

Festival of Britain

Julie Gottwaldová

Plzeň 2019

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni
Fakulta filozofická

Katedra germanistiky a slavistiky

Studijní program Filologie

Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi

Kombinace angličtina – ruština

Bakalářská práce

**Celebrating the Postwar Recovery: the 1951 Festival
of Britain**

Julie Gottwaldová

Vedoucí práce:

PhDr. Alice Tihelková, Ph.D.

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Fakulta filozofická Západočeské univerzity v Plzni

Plzeň 2019

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2019

Poděkování:

Chtěla bych poděkovat PhDr. Alici Tihelkové, Ph.D. za poskytnutou pomoc při vedení mé bakalářské práce a její rady. Patří jí velké díky za usnadnění hledání zdrojů, a především za její rychlé reakce. Také bych chtěla poděkovat panu Richardu Peallingovi za zodpovězení otázek, týkajících se Festivalu.

Contents

- 1 Introduction.....6**
- 2 Life in the 1950s.....9**
- 3 The Beveridge Report13**
 - 3.1 Unemployment14
 - 3.2 Education.....15
- 4 Government regulation17**
 - 4.1 Imigration.....18
- 5 The beginning of the Festival.....21**
 - 5.1 Parts of the exhibition23
 - 5.2 Initial responses.....29
- 6 Opening ceremony32**
 - 6.1 Responses after opening.....33
- 7 Closing the Festival.....35**
 - 7.1 Preserved buildings36
- 8 Conclusion39**
- 9 Endnotes.....41**
- 10 Resumé 146**
- 11 Resumé 248**
- 12 Appendices.....48**

1 Introduction

Written from the perspective of social history, this Bachelor thesis deals with the postwar recovery during 1945-1951 and the role of the Festival of Britain in 1951. World War II marked the lives of million people, with aeroplane attacks on Britain having destroyed a large number of houses, buildings and schools. People suffered from food shortages and hunger was a widespread problem. British people suffered both physically and mentally. World War II caused the death of millions of people across Europe and around 30.000 of Londoners. The aim of the Festival, organized by the post-war Labour government, was to prove to people that there was a future worth working for, celebrate the British arts, design and industry.

The purpose of the thesis is to discuss the role of the Festival of Britain in the context of the first post-war decade and explore which broader values were reflected in its organization.

The bachelor thesis is historical and it is not divided into a theoretical and practical part, but it includes an interview with Mr Richard Pealling, a retired British teacher living in the Czech Republic, who visited the Festival on person in 1951. The thesis is divided into several chapters and subchapters. The first chapter deals with the election held in 1945, won by Clement Attlee's Labour Party, and the gradual implementation of its promises such as to secure the full employment, build new houses and create a new National Health Service. It describes people's lives after the war through the lack of food tackled by means of rationing. Furthermore, it discusses the returning soldiers' difficulty in integrating back into ordinary life and deals with the post-war house building programme.

Chapter Two describes the Beveridge Report, introduced by Labour Party, and its benefits to the people of Britain. The British public suffered from a large number of diseases, yet many could not afford treatment. However, this changed in 1948 when the new National Health Service was introduced, which

provided free admittance to doctors, dentists, opticians and hospitals. It contains two subchapters, unemployment and education. Full employment was a necessary part of improving the economic situation in Britain and work in industry was the best opportunity. The second subchapter deals with “*The Education Act*” and the introduction of free education to children until the age of 11.

The following Chapter Three describes government regulations mostly through food and clothes rationing and due to the coldest winter in 1947, even the use of the heating and electricity. This chapter contains a subchapter concerning immigration. It describes difficulties of black people and how they were impacted, among others, by the regulations on accommodation and so on.

Britain's economy was slowly improving, but the mood was still downcast. The government discussed the Festival before the war, but it was implemented in 1951. The credit for the Festival's realization belongs to the Labour Party, which was in power from 1945-1950. The Festival was a National Exhibition intended for the purpose of encouraging a feeling of recovery in Britain. Chapter Four describes the beginning of the Festival. The aim was to change melancholic mood, rebuild bombed areas and show to people new world of arts, technology, science and industrial design. This chapter contains two subchapters, the parts of exhibitions and initial responses to the Festival. It describes exhibition in South Bank site, East London, new construction of buildings such as The Skylon, The Dome of Discovery, The Telekinema, gorgeous gardens and so forth. The work contains initial responses, which were not very positive from the beginning, because people wanted to give money to the house-building programme.

Chapter Five deals with the Festival opening. It was launched by King George and enormous ceremony followed by the massed bands, gun salute, flags and group singing. People were curious and stood long guesses to see the Exhibition. The subchapter contains responses after the opening and most

negative opinions changed. People were glad to celebrate the post war recovery thought the Festival and everyone found something that impressed them, even the weather was bad. The Festival represented better future as shown through industrial revolution, arts and design.

Chapter Seven deals with the closing of the Festival. The Festival lasted 5 months and had around 10 million visitors. The Festival offered the opportunity to showcase its talent to several artists, builders and caused happiness of large number of people. In 1951 Winston Churchill won the election again and decided to destroy the Festival buildings, because he considered the Festival as socialist piece of work. The subchapter describes the preserved building and artworks, but the only building preserved to this day is the Royal Festival Hall in which are concerts are still held. In 2017, moreover, the famous sculpture The Sunbathers was discovered, restored and placed at the Royal Festival Hall

Several sources and professional publications were used to write the bachelor thesis. Most information regarding the World War II were drawn from David Kynaston's book with the title: *A World to Build*. The book deals with the lives of people in the period of the war and post war recovery. Other used book was written by Andrew Marr with the title: *A history of modern Britain*. Information regarding the Festival was drawn from Barry Turner's book with the title: *How the 1951 Festival of Britain shaped the modern age*. Other sources were obtained from the Internet, for example, the National Archives or articles from BBC NEWS.

2 Life in the 1950s

World War II lasted six years and one day. The war began on September in 1939, and ended on September 2 in 1945. Large number of people died, almost 80 million. (The History Blog) Over a week after Adolf Hitler shot himself on 30 April 1945 in Berlin, there started two days of celebration. People did not have to hide at home any longer, so they took to the streets. Enormous crowds were waiting to hear Winston Churchill's speech in all the main city centers, especially in central London. In his short speech he announced the end of the war in Europe. (Kynaston 2008: 6-7)

Britain was governed by Labour, Conservative and Liberal politicians. Winston Churchill served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1940–45, 1951–55) and belonged to the Conservative Party. He carries merits for the military victory, thanks to his war strategy and passion. He collaborated with Clement Attlee, member of the Labour Party, who served under him and became a Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. (Jenkins, 2019) One of the representatives of the left was Harold Laski, who was the Labour chairman although his father was on the Churchill side. (Marr 2007: 5-6)

The general election took place in 1945 and all people over the age of 21 could vote. (Marr 2007: 3) The political parties launched their campaigns and traveled to cities to make speeches. The Conservative campaign was based on Winston Churchill's activities military victories and scare tactics; nevertheless, the Labour Party claimed that Churchill was successful war leader, but the war was over and Britain needs change. Churchill often neglected Conservative interests and was interested in war strategies. Meanwhile the Labour Party was more interested in the home front. (Addison, 2011) The Labour Party promised to secure full employment, build houses and create a new National Health Service. (Kynaston 2008: 19-20) Attlee was British Labour Party leader and defeated Winston Churchill in the general election in 1945 (BBC, 2014) because people believed that The Labour Party could ensure social insurance to abolish

poverty, ensure child allowances and tried to end mass unemployment.(Black 2008: 153)

The government of 1945-50 is considered as one of the most successful British administrations ever. Attlee created a better health service and welfare state¹. He wanted a social revolution, create a British socialist commonwealth. The introduction of the welfare state was largely on the work of the economists John Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge. (Marr 2007: 8)

The Labour party won the 1945 election and Attlee became Prime Minister. Attlee wanted to improve Britain's economic situation, but the funds were almost exhausted. Britain needed to demobilize the armed forces so British colonies began to seek independence. (Marr 2007: 36-37)

Attlee's plan to create better Britain, included housing construction, full employment and National Health Service, which was extremely demanding and cost a large amount of money. Britain was dependent on the United States and the Labour Party decided to send John Maynard Keynes (the economist) to Washington to request a loan of about 6 billion dollars. America refused and submitted a different proposal to Britain, which was strict, but Britain needed the money. Keynes obtained a 50-year loan of 3,75 billion dollars at 2 per cent interest. America demanded to make convertible pounds for dollars since the start of the loan, which caused the United States economic control over Britain. (Marr 2007: 11-16)

The Labour Party promised to change the people in charge, but they had almost no power over the Bank of England. The same people remained in leadership. (Marr 2007: 67)

Although World War II ended, Britain was devastated. German aeroplane attacks destroyed everything that was in their way. London suffered enormous

¹ Welfare state= a system that allows the government of a country to provide social services such as healthcare, unemployment benefit, etc. to people who need them, paid for by taxes

losses. Approximately 29,890 Londoners were killed and 50,507 injured. The war caused that the export markets were lost and Britain was hit by massive expenditure. (Black 2008:148-151) People had almost nothing, no frozen food, no flavoured crisps, no teabags. Supermarkets were destroyed and everything was on the ration (meat, clothes, sugar, butter, tea, biscuits). (Kynaston 2008: 19) People had to register with a local shopkeeper to get the rationed meat, ham, bacon or other food. They received coupons on the basis of which was food established, even clothes. Waiting for the necessary goods caused long queues. Food rations were reduced by the Ministry of Food, and later, they began to diminish even the bacon and eggs. The situation was critical and large number of people were lacked access to adequate nourishment. People from the working class did not have enough money, so they could not afford spend much on food. The society was divided into classes. The middle class could even afford to buy fruit while others barely had bread. (Kynaston 2008: 106-110)

A million houses were destroyed, damaged by bombing, especially in London. A large number of people lost their home. The Labour Party's next step was house building, which was a lengthy process and many people still had no place to live. (UWE, 2009) It was difficult to find accommodation; furthermore, the soldiers returned from the war and had no place to live. It is ironic that they fought for their country in which they could not find a home. (Kynaston 2008:101) A group of people called Vigilantes² found a solution to this problem by taking control of any unoccupied house and provided it to people in need. (Kynaston 2008: 72)

Most people still did not have a home, which led to so-called squatting³. In the autumn of 1946, nearly 45,000 homeless people took control of the

² Vigilante = a person who tries in an unofficial way to prevent crime, or to catch and punish someone who has committed a crime, especially because they do not think that official organizations, such as the police, are controlling crime effectively.

³ Squatting = unlawfully occupy an uninhabited building or settle on a piece of land

deserted huts, flats and other shelters. They settled in varied camps, even if they were in close proximity to prisons. (Marr 2007: 71)

The Women's Voluntary Service offered up hot drinks to squatters and police supplied tea and coffee. Other needed goods like blankets, cigarettes, food were collected for the families. Local authorities banned the police to help squatters. Squatters protested and send a letter to the King, but arguments about losing their position in waiting for new homes forced them to stop protesting. (Marr 2007: 72)

The war disrupted the family life, broke relationships and large number of young, frustrated servicemen were lost in darkness cities. Some of soldiers returned to their families, but it was hard for them to get back into everyday life. Children did not recognize their father's behavior, appearance. Despite being previously in love, the war changed them, and the quarrels forced them to divorce. Amount of divorces increased from 12 314 to 60 190 (in 1944 to 1947). Some of the men were POW (prisoners of war) and due to incarceration had mental breakdowns. (Kynaston 2008: 97)

However, there were not only divorces, in 1947 more than 400,000 wedding ceremonies took place and over 881,000 children were born. (Marr 2007: 73)

In 1946, the Labour Party built more than 1 million new homes, 80 % were local authority owned. (Wheeler, 2015) In 1946, the "*New Towns Act*" came into force, allowing the construction of 12 new cities. The government had the power to select areas of land for town building. The purpose of building new towns was to reduce overcrowding. (Parliament UK) The government also introduced new subsidy scales for local authorities which gave them a financial motivation to build blocks of flats of four floors or more, as long as they had lifts. (Kynaston 2008: 157)

3 The Beveridge Report

People lived under unfavorable conditions and diseases were almost under control. Diseases such as scarlet fever and tuberculosis had spread and medical services were needed, but due to financial inability most people could not afford a remedy. (Kynaston 2008: 20)

In 1911, Lloyd George, established a system of National Health Insurance, but it did not work well. Under the leadership of Clement Attlee, the Labour Party ensured new welfare state indicated in the Beveridge Report designed by William Beveridge, member of the Liberal Party. The Labour Party introduced the National Health Service, headed by Aneurin Bevan, the Minister for Health in 1948. It gained a free admittance to doctors, dentists, opticians and hospitals. Beveridge's report provided vitamin supplementation to pregnant mothers, milk, oil and orange juice for free. (Holborn, 2017)

Under these circumstances, people could afford the treatment they needed. In 1948, Bevan participated in the entry into force of "*the National Assistance Act*", which helped abandoned people to ensure at least a soup with a piece of bread. (Kynaston 2008: 148)

The Labour Party secured the participating of all taxpayers in social insurance, which ensure the fuse to all the people in the country. People could retire five years earlier, at the age of 65 and families got a certain amount of money each week, after the birth of the other child. (Crowcroft, The National Archives) The National Health Service allowed better care for mainly working women, who were not given proper care during the war. (Black 2008: 156)

"*The National Insurance Act*" protected the population from the financial problems of illness, unemployment and old age. People from 16 to 65 (women in 60) would be compulsory to make flat-rate contributions to the state in return for benefits. Beveridge proposed an old age pensions to be phrase in over a 20year period. (Kynaston 2008: 148)

Approach to the health care was free, all hospitals (local authority or voluntary), cottages were to be nationalized. (Kynaston 2008: 146) The new health boards took charge of 2,751 of Britain's 3,000 hospitals run by charities or local authorities, which were now nationalized. (Campbell, 2016) It means that the system would have regional boards, but it would be under the Ministry of Health and a single politician would be responsible for every hospital in the land, bar. Doctors were afraid of this system, all paid by state and no private fees. They were afraid of losing a large amount of money, which led to the proposal of the salary according to the number of people treated, but some refused to take part in this system. (Marr 2007:65-66) Pay beds would permit consultants to connect private practice with working for the National Health Service. Doctors, dentists and opticians would not be tolerated to buy or sell practices, but would not be set on a full-time salary basis.

"*The Bevan's Act*" included the construction of Health Centers, which would make it easier for people to look for medical care. (Kynaston 2008:146-148) Prisoners of war were employed to build a thousand of local National Insurance offices around the country. Money for the voluntary hospitals was formed from investments, charity events and gifts, which was the best way of keeping the hospitals clean. People suffering from various diseases like cancers, toothache, ulcers and other kinds of illness had no longer worry that they would not be treated. (Marr 2007: 64-67)

3.1 Unemployment

One of the many other problems that people faced was unemployment. The National Health Service would not work, if unemployment prevailed in Britain. The aim was to ensure work. Upwards of four million soldiers returned from the war were taken out of active service. The men were the heads of their families, they were the ones who made money. The war forced women to took care of their family and work, often in factories. However, in 1946 the number of women employed has reduced to 5,8 million from 7,2 million. (Kynaston 2008: 97-99)

The Labour Party tried to improve unemployment, and work in the industry gave the opportunity people to work. A large number of people work in heavy industries such as steel, iron, gas, coal and railways. (BBC NEWS) The steel production was necessary in agricultural machinery, mining machinery, power plants and industrial products of all kinds. Full employment was a necessary part of building a welfare state and was an integral part of the way of improving the standard of living. During the war, unemployment amounted to up to 1.5 million people. (The National Archives) The construction of a new railway gave work 681,000 people in 1948. Railway nationalization conducted to gradual standardization of carriages and in 1951 with the introduction of the all-steel British Railways Mark 1 (Black 2008: 155-156)

3.2 Education

Work in education was another opportunity to reduce unemployment. Education was especially important for those who wanted to have a high job position. Schools such Eaton, Harrow, Winchester educated only 5 percent of the inhabitants, mainly political leaders. One civil servant described children in way of dividing to three categories (golden, silver and iron children). (Marr 2007: 45-46)

The Board of Education was replaced and minister was in charge of the local education authorities and controlled them. The number of education authorities were decreased from 315 to 146. The educational systems of England and Wales were separate from Scotland and Northern Ireland. "*The Education Act*" of 1944 established the system of three main categories: grammar, secondary modern, and technical schools. Children would be selected pursuant examination at the age of 11 called the "eleven-plus". (Encyclopedia Britannica) The government's "*White Paper*" promised equal opportunities, diversity of provision without impairment of the social unity. The school could help the child develop creative abilities and prepared the child for a real life. (Kynaston 2008: 28)

Rab Butler was the president of the Board of Education. "*The Education Act*" known as "*the Butler Act*" concerning to England and Wales made available free primary and secondary education for all scholars in 1944. The claim was to offer equal opportunities for children of all age groups. (Parliament UK) Children under the age of 15 could study for free. (BBC NEWS) Education ensured that unemployment had been reduced by giving teachers a job. (The National Archives) Minister of Education until 1947 was Ellen Wilkinson, who managed to introduce free school milk and ensure studding for children under the age of 15 instead of 11. Wilkinson also managed to progress school building programme. (Kynaston 2008: 150)

Attlee's plan regarding education did not go as he expected; it was something of a failure for the government. The lack of textbooks and qualified teachers was the result of the small budget allocated. (Marr 2007: 106)

4 Government regulation

The winter of 1947 was unbearable for many people, due to a large number of restrictions. The whole Britain was covered by snow, the roads were impassable and the railways were closed. Despite the fact that it was the coldest February in 300 years, people could not even turn on the heating at home, when they were cold. The government limited the use of heating and electricity. As a result of the cold weather, people had to stop working and they were spending time at home, wearing as many clothes as possible. (Marr 2007: 33-34) The number of non-working people grew to 1,75 million people, which led to limitation the electricity for five hours. Even the newspapers were cut down in size due to newsprint ration. These restrictions, regarding the using of heating and electricity lasted until the end of April, when snow drifts began to disappear. (Kynaston 2008: 194-200)

People suffered from a lack of food, because everything was on the ration, even bread. Rations were getting considerably smaller. (Kynaston 2008: 108) These times are described as starvation, peasant diet based on potatoes and bread. (Marr 2007: 33) The main goal was to keep people in Britain working, warm and fed, which was not so easy, as Britain produced much less coal than before the war. (Marr 2007: 69) Food ration led to the emergence of a black market. People exchanged and sold the necessary goods here (eggs, milk, butter, cheese). Prices on the black market were considerably cheaper. (Kynaston 2008: 254)

The clothes ration was in the year 1947 commonplace, children were wearing grey shorts, home-made jumpers, men were wearing grey suits, hats and women were dressed in housecoats. Clothes produced during the war was called "utility clothes", intended to save material. The main colours were dull, grey, dark blue or dark brown. Some men were avoiding invitations to drink parties and women restaurants, because they were ashamed of their clothes. People also complained that children tended to grow far too fast for the coupons

and pregnant women were encouraged to adapt their ordinary clothes (Marr 2007: 53-54)

A fashion revolt began first in Paris, when Christian Dior introduced a new collection of clothing. Most women wanted a new Dior collection, the new look could return them their new freedom, but the government forbade it. However, the royal family bought the Dior clothes despite the government order. (Marr 2007: 84-85) In 1949, clothes rationing was over and clothing manufacture expanded rapidly. (Hennessy 2006: 18)

People did not want to merely work, they also wanted to have some pleasure, but it was sort of difficult in 1947. Only 0.2 per cent of the adult population owned a television and in 1950 by 4 per cent of the population. Despite that, there existed regulation about films or Walt Disney cartoons. People were not to travelling abroad for holidays, because they had less time on holiday, and less money to spend to. Only 3 per cent of people could travel abroad, so they spent time traveling around the Britain and visiting holiday camps. Holiday camps had existed before the war, often run for employees of a particular company, but Billy Butlin began building amusement park with hunted houses, helter-skelters, with a swimming pools, theatres and cinemas, where families could spend time together. He offered entertainment, good food and a large amount of activities. Two years, after the war ended, he became a millionaire. (Marr 2007: 85-86)

4.1 Immigration

In 1947, white faces were everywhere; approximately 95% of the population. The situation changed due to the 1948 British "*Nationality Act*", which allowed some 800 million people to enter the United Kingdom. (Marr 2007: 41) From the 1948 until 1962, immigrants were coming into Britain from the Commonwealth and colonies. Ministers talked about poverty and diseases in black communities so it was not easy for people of different color. Newspapers were reporting worries about their sexuality, cleanliness and criminality. On

boarding houses there were signs like “No dogs, no blacks, no Irish”. The most of colour people lived in the poorest inner-city areas.

Peoples’ perceptions of individual migrant groups were ironically summarized by historian Andrew Marr in the following way: “First of all, be white, and second, if you can not be white, be small in number, and third, if all else fails, feed the brutes.” (Marr 2007: 195)

By the late fifties, hoping to get more job opportunities and start living a better life, immigrate about 36,000 people. The behavior of some migrants as illegal drinking on the streets, selling drugs or black men having a relationship with white prostitutes, due to the lack of control of prostitution, could cause unrest among the white race. Accommodation was another part of problems for the immigrants; housing was privately rented and dependent on the time spent in the areas. Landlords were usually refusing to rent their house to black people. (Marr 2007: 192-197)

The Labor Party had a large number of plans for the turn of 1947-1948. Although the Cold War broke out in 1947, the wedding of Prince Philip of Greece and Princess Elizabeth was held. Britain feared that the Communists would take over part of Europe. (Kynaston 2008: 224-226)

Despite the fact that the economy was better than before the war, the country was running out of money. The government was not sure how to spent the remaining money. Due to the Cold War⁴, Britain supported the army by contributing amount of money to NATO and the fear of runaway costs was huge. By 1949, the government raised income by a tenth. Inflation had increased from 3 per cent in 1949-50 to 9 per cent by 1951-52. The Labour Party was losing political support in the country. (Marr 2007: 108)

In 1950, the election began again. The Parties started with their campaigns and speeches. The warnings concerning coming a hydrogen bomb

⁴The Cold War= war between the US and the Soviet Union, lasting 45 years

increased the panic, so people were more for Winston Churchill's Party, due to his war experiences and strategies. Most of ministers and politicians worked under pressure, spent hours and nights working. The main problems were frequent hard-drinking and heavy smoking. Most of them later got into health problems, which led to career termination at an early age. The exception was Winston Churchill, who continued work into late old age and in 1951, won the general election again. (Marr 2007: 105-125)

Winston Churchill continued the house building programme and by the end of 1953, managed to build 300,000 houses a year. (Hennessy 2006: 20) The completion of housing construction provided people with roof over the head and unemployment was reduced to a minimum. (Marr 2007: 108-109)

5 The beginning of the Festival

The government was trying to persuade the country that there was a future worth working for. People complained about long queues, restrictions and lack of food. There was a melancholic mood among British citizens and the Festival was intended to change it. The Festival had been discussed during the war and the political target was the reconstruction and rejuvenation of Britain. (Turner 2011: 10-12) The first version of the Festival was suggested in 1943 by the Royal Society of Arts as an international exhibition to mark the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Gerald Barry, famous editor of the *Week-end Review* wrote an open letter in the *News Chronicle* to Stafford Crips, then President of the Board of Trade urging that the exhibition should be held in London in 1951. (Conekin 2003: 28)

Adrian Forty, newspaper editor, claimed that: "As reconstruction and reform were not distinguished in the Labour Party programme, the Festival could not fail to be a celebration of both, and that was how it was understood by the majority of visitors. "(Conekin 2003: 4)

The Festival was a national exhibition intended to encourage a feeling of recovery and manifest Britain's contribution to civilization past, present and future in the arts, technology, science and industrial design. It was financed mostly by the government with a budget of £12 million and the main organizer was Labour cabinet minister and leader of the House of Commons, Herbert Morrison. (The History Press) The final, scaled down version of the Festival was approved by the government in 1947 with Herbert Morrison in charge of the domestic front and economic planning, which earned him the title of "Lord Festival". (Conekin 2003: 33) Morrison was a progressive socialist and had principal responsibility for supporting morale on the home side. Contrary to his colleagues he did not want to ruin the social system. The idea of celebrating the post-war recovery and point the way to a better future had enormous appeal for him. (Turner: 2011: 19)

Mr Jordan, wealthy businessman claimed that the reason why he wanted the Festival was to give people a jerk, because they were too worried. (Turner 2011: 197)

The Festival had to be different from the past and looking towards the future. The unpleasant memories of the past, the hungry thirties or earlier moments in the country's history of industrialization and class conflict, were not highlighted in the Festival. Instead, social harmony was described as timeless in the Festival, with the theme of the industrial revolution as downplayed. The idea of the past was trans-historical and trans-class time in which British people came upon the shores of the British Isles. (Conekin 2003: 49-50)

The Festival of 1951 was to be an act of national autobiography, people from all villages, cities and towns were ready to make this traditional event better and write the year of 1951 into their memories. (Conekin 2003: 17) The future according to the Festival, would be a time where a more educated rational people would have equal access to all sorts of knowledge, from the internal structure of a molecule to the latest ideas in farming, and the nation would make a contribution to the world as the rational negotiator of postwar struggles. (Conekin 2003: 45)

Michael Frayn described the Festival in the following words: "It marked the ending of the hungry forties, and the beginning of an altogether easier decade, it may perhaps be likened to a gay and enjoyable birthday party, but one at which the host presided from his death-bed". (Turner 2011: 19)

The Festival was primarily designed for people in Britain; nevertheless, it attracted a large number of tourists and it visited many overseas visitors, although it did not represent anything foreign. (Conekin 2003: 28) In July, 90 delegates for the International Federation of Housing and Town planning Conference and visited the Festival. (British History, 1994)

Traveling in 1951 was complicated and there was a lack of passenger trains, busses and cars were in unpleasant shape, which complicated the transport. There were also difficulties in finding accommodation for tourists, as there was still a lack of hotel rooms in Britain and London was the only town with hotels of first-class standard. Foreigners were not allowed to use their own car or rent it, they could travel around the England on local buses or they could use the vehicles. These half day or day trips around Britain were successful opportunity of earning money. (Turner 2011: 161-163)

The Festival was held to mark the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851 opened by Queen Victoria in Hyde Park. The credit for the success of the Great Exhibition was attributed to Prince Albert, the royal sponsor. The Festival of 1951 should surmount the New York World's Fair of 1939 in the section of technical achievements and the Paris Exhibition of 1937 in aesthetic excellence and personal charm. (Turner 2011: 11-13)

There were two ways for joining the Festival team. One was to know the right people or to know the inexpensive method between a bright idea and its realization. As Director of Architecture was appointed young architect at the age of 39, Hugh Casson to design the South Bank buildings and riverside. (Turner 2011: 27-30) He was chosen for his skills and because he was a well-connected figure who combined to a high degree the qualities of charm, ambition and determination. He was responsible for a group of more than 40 architect and designers and they were predominantly middle-class men. (Kynaston 2009: 8) A large number of buildings were designed in the International Modernist style. (The History Press)

5.1 Parts of the exhibition

The government agreed on a minimum area of 300 acres. To find such a space was challenge, but Lord Ramsden, a former Conservative Prime Minister chose central London. The main site of the Festival was built on the South Bank of the Thames on a 27 acres area between Waterloo Bridge and Hungerford

railway bridge. (Turner 2011: 13-15) In this part of London, old Victorian buildings had been untouched since the war bombing and divided by a railway. Work in this site was challenging for builders due to the heavy rain in 1950/1 which raised the water in Thames. It was rebuilt into new public space, the South Bank site. (The History Press) The reconstruction of buildings, cleaning canals, tree, shrub and hedge planting was challenging, but the builders made it, transformed the bombed site are into lovely gardens, building into museums, libraries and art galleries. (Turner 2011: 144-145)

New constructions were built to house exhibitions, exploring landscape, industry, science and the British character and people stood long queues to visit the Festival. The South Bank involved the Royal Festival Hall (See Appendix, number 2), designed by architects Sir Robert Matthew and Dr Leslie Martin with 2,900-seater designed by Lucienne and Robin Day (The History Press) and with platform for an orchestra of 100 people and a choir of 25 people. (South Bank Centre)

The Dome of Discovery, which was the largest dome in the world at the time, standing 93 feet tall with a diameter of 365 feet. There were held exhibitions on the topic of discovery such as the New World, the Polar regions, the Sea, the Sky and Outer Space. (Johnson, Ben) The number of materials used had to be limited due to shortages so it was primarily made of concrete and aluminum, which gave the Dome its “futuristic sparkle” along with its entrance. (Conekin 2003: 52) The building of the Dome was hard work in tough conditions. The workers wore winter clothes and gloves because painting with cold hands was not pleasant. It was dark, cold and almost no light inside and one lamp had only 100 Watts. (Turner 2011: 74) When the building was completed, it became one of the most popular. Inside was a telescope with the display of a 74-inch. The Dome included a modern weather forecast which could predict the weather for the next twenty-four hours. There was also the sea section, where a large model of a blue whale was exposed. (Turner 2011: 129-133) The Dome contained exhibits on synthetic dyes, electrical instruments,

mutation of species, physiology of sex, a megatherium or ground sloth, a developing embryo and many other things. Ralph Tubbs (the engineer) designed an escalator for the royal family and VIP guests which facilitated and accelerated access to the building. It was the biggest span in the world, high 365 feet and people stood in long queue and were waiting hours to get in. (Kynaston 2009: 6-11)

Mr Richard Pealling, a retired British teacher born 14 June 1943 in Edgware Middlesex, now London Borough of Barnet, visited the Festival in 1951 and described the Exhibition in the following words: "The Dome included restaurants in which a meal of fish and chips cost one shilling entrance to Saturday Morning pictures was six pence and a worker might earn five pounds a week. But it was something special though was said a lot about Britain was that a key exhibit was The Mallard a steam engine, at a time when most railways were moving to electrification and diesel power."

The architects, builders and planners were endeavoring to built a vision of a better future for Britain, orderly and modern after the chaos of the war. The most remembered symbol of the Festival's modernity was the award-winning tower, the Skylon. (Conekin 2003: 53) The Skylon was built next to the Dome and it was a vertical cigar shaped tower supported by cables which gave the impression that it was floating upon the ground, especially at night when it was lit from the inside. (See Appendix, number 3) The Skylon was designed by Philip Powell and Hidalgo "Jacko" Moya with the veteran structural engineer Felix Samuely. It was one of the most notable features of the London skyline. Visitors could see 300-metre high steel construction built by Painter Brothers of Hereford. The construction took three months and was moved to London by lorry. The evening before the official opening the Festival, a student named Philip Gurdon climbed to the near top of the Skylon. (BBC NEWS, 2011)

People could visit the Lion and the Unicorn Pavilion. The exhibition included bulls, horses, sheep, goats and other animals. The Farm exhibition was

even offering drinking milk straight from the cows. In the craft section people could see the way of adapting crafts to domestic practicalities. (Turner 2011: 131-134)

The Festival pride was also in acting plays at St James's Theatre like *Caesar and Cleopatra* and at the open-air theatre in Regent's Park they played *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (Turner 2011: 199)

Another attraction on the South Bank was the Telekinema, a 400-seat state-of-the-art cinema run by the British Film Institute, designed by architect of the Lawn Road Flats in Hampstead, W. Wells Coates. The Telekinema was a grey, oblong structure, far removed in style from the traditional flamboyant high street cinemas and the interior was highly innovative. (Turner 2011: 209-210) There was the required technology which could screen films, including 3D films, polaroid eyeglasses and sizeable screen television which made the Telekinema the most popular attractions on the South Bank site (Glancey, 2008) and half a million people were willing to pay a separate admission charge of two shillings. (Turner 2011: 214)

On the South Bank, people could visit Misha Black's luxurious Regatta restaurant, decorated with molecular and crystalline motifs on furnishing and tableware. (Conekin 2003: 57)

There were also three major book exhibitions, in Glasgow, Edinburgh and the third was at the Victoria and Albert Museum supported from the Festival budget. The exhibition included science, travel, poetry, history, sport and books for children and manuscripts. There was also exposed the first book ever printed in the English language. Smaller exhibitions were sponsored by local authorities or professional organizations. (Turner 2011: 179)

Next part was the Exhibition of Live Architecture at Lansbury in Poplar, the East End of London. In 1948, Frederick Gibberd wrote a letter to the Festival's Council for Architecture suggest and wanted to take a bomb-damaged

area and rebuild it as an exhibition. He was one of the four contributing architects and was authorized to design the shopping centre and market square. (Turner 2011: 169-170) Gibberd was appointed as Planner to Harlow New Town and was the most committed designer. He was described as “Britain’s leading architect-planner of the era”. (Dunnett/Powers 2018: 6) He built 400 new houses, a mix of two- and three-bedroom flats and houses with relatively spacious kitchens. The festival visitor, Mrs Garred was most excited about the bathroom, no more waiting on Saturday morning at the public bath for the future tenants. He also built a pub at each end of Market square and the district was surrounded by small shops. There were also two churches and two schools. A symbol of civic pride was a clock tower in the market place in which people could climb up and saw the view on westward was towards the City and Tower Bridge, to the south was the Dock and the Thames and the north was Crystal Palace. However, climbing was deemed to be dangerous so the staircases were closed. The main problem was that large part of this exhibition was not finished in time for the opening of the Festival. (Turner 2011: 172-174) The Exhibition involved the Building Research Pavilion, Town Planning Pavilion and a building site showing houses in diverse levels of completion. Only about 10% of the number of visitors were interested in Live Architecture as the main exhibition, around 580 people per day.

Center to the Fun Fair part of the Festival was Battersea Park in Upriver and consisted of Pleasure Gardens, rides and open-air entertainment. There were hundreds of chairs around where people could rest. (Johnson, Ben) The Fun Fair offered a Big Dipper, Skywheel, Flyo Plane, Bubble-Bounce and Water Splash. Battersea’s boast and joy was the Grand Vista with trees, lake with fountains lined by two colonnades designed by John Piper.

In the Grand Vista were held fireworks for the twice weekly and on the lakeside, stage were acrobats and high wire performers. People wearing fancy dress on carnival nights did not have to pay.

Battersea was a triumph and it was kind of miracle that the work was finished under adverse circumstances. The work at Battersea Park was affected by weather, which was constantly rainy. Around 20 per cent of the potential working time had been lost due to rain. Water of the Thames was rising at a terrifying rate and the river was higher than the footpath so people called it "Batter on the Sea. (Turner 2011: 99-102)

A large number of people were involved in making the Festival a success. Laurie Lee was a successful writer, poet, novelist, journalist and made many Festival's official guide catalogues. Around sixty painters and twelve sculptors were authorized to work by the Arts Council. The painters received clear instructions regarding the size for a picture which should be enormous, among 45 and 60 inches. The Arts Council promised five prizes of £500 for the best works. The prize won Lucian Freud for *Interior Near Paddington*, an image of bespectacled man in a raincoat. Next awards of £500 received William Gear, Robert Adam, Robert MacBride and Elinor Bellingham-Smith. The reason of this work was that the sixty paintings were exposed in the exhibition in 1951 and were offered to the new local patrons. The exhibition traveled twelve provincial cities and the paintings were exposed in museums, schools, hospitals, health centers and libraries. (Conekin 2003: 36-37)

The Open-Air Exhibition of International Sculpture was in Battersea Park and around thirty sculptures were on the South Bank site. One of the interesting sculptures was *The Islanders* (See Appendix, number 4) made by Siegfried Charoux or *The Water Sculpture* made by Richard Huws which was kept in perpetual motion by a succession of buckets filling, tipping and emptying into each other exposed on the South Bank. Britain spent around £10,000 on sculptures. (Turner 2011: 193)

According to Robert Burtow, an art historian, the Exhibition offered an opportunity to show that sculpture could be an integral aspect of urban space

without being assigned the decorative function typical of architectural sculpture. (Conekin 2003: 38)

Even though the main area of the Festival was in central London, it was a nationwide event with exhibitions in numerous cities and towns across Britain. This included “Farm and Factory” exhibition in Belfast, the Land Travelling Exhibitions and the Industrial Power Exhibition in Glasgow at the Kelvin Hall. (Johnson, Ben) The main theme of exhibition in Glasgow was heavy industry but it was not very popular. Organizers had been expected around 700.000 visitors, but the exhibition visited around 282.000 people. Newspapers *Evening Time* described the industry exhibition as a failure and people claimed that it was oppressively noisy, too obscure, too orientated towards men and did not understand what it was all about. One journalist wrote an article about the exhibition and said: “If you are one of the neurotic kind, the Kelvin Hall is no place for you.” (Word Press)

During the summer ship *Campania* travelled around Britain. From the official opening on 5 May to 6 October, the *Campania* sailed a round trip to Dundee, Newcastle, Hull, Bristol, Cardiff, Plymouth, Glasgow, Birkenhead and Belfast. (Turner 2011: 160)

5.2 Initial responses

Around 58 per cent supported the idea of the Festival and 28 per cent were against. Most people were persuaded that the festival was good idea. The budget was already spent so the public hoped it would be worth it. Newspapers like *Standard* and *Daily Express* wrote several articles concerning the Festival. Charles Wintour was famous writer and editor of the newspapers *Standard* and criticized the Festival, but later changed his mind and began to apologize for the things he wrote against the Festival. Other publications were much more positive. Paul Wright, the newspaper editor, arranged for Gerald Barry large number of interviews and wrote plenty articles for magazines and newspapers about the Festival. (Turner 2011: 109-110)

Many people thought that the Festival was waste of money before it was opened. They believed that money should be spent on housing, because many houses were still destroyed due to Second World War. Some people criticized the Riverside Restaurant, the Royal Festival Hall and even the furniture in the Café for being overly garish. They also complained about the entrance to the Dome of Discovery, which cost five shilling. Despite all this, the main Festival visited more than 8 million people. (Johnson, Ben)

Mr. Pealling described the idea of the Festival in the following words: “It was a good idea to organize the Festival. Austerity continued long after the war, for example I have a memory of having one egg a week and I think the cheese ration was about one hundred grams. Sweets, chocolates were strictly rationed. Everything was taxed, for example an entertainments tax on cinema and theatre seats. In the 1951 budget the standard rate of income tax was increased from 45 per cent to 47.5 per cent and the purchase tax on televisions were doubled from 33 per cent to 66 per cent. The highest rate of purchase tax was 90 per cent. Nobody expected peace time conditions to be restored overnight but six years after the war it was very depressing. National Service had been increased from eighteen months to two years and my father who had served in the war had been placed on the Z reserve list to potentially be called back. The country needed to be cheered up. Of course, everything went wrong in the sense that the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950 sent the price of raw materials rocketing as the Americans bought every supply in sight and there were strikes on the site since the workmen knew they had the government over a barrel. There were import quotas on things like German cameras and my father could not buy a book on the New York International Chess Tournament 1927 since there were no dollars to buy non-essential items. The foreign travel allowance for the United States was ten pounds and for Europe I think twenty pounds. In spite of everything the Festival opened on time.

Most of the Conservative Party members disdained the Festival and refused to visit the South Bank because they wanted to spent the money to building new houses. (Turner 2011: 115)

Mr. Pealling described the Conservative Party in the following words: “The Conservatives were complaining about the shortage of housing but in reality, there were more homes under construction in 1951 than are being built today. Also, these homes were low cost often council homes giving people a decent place to live unlike today where most homes built are luxury homes in terms of price. The impact on the housing programme was very marginal and I said earlier people needed a morale boost and this is the one thing the government could do.”

6 Opening ceremony

The Festival was opened to the public in May 1951 and lasted until September. It was opened in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the Great Exhibition in 1851. (Johnson, Ben) It was not only designed to demonstrate to the world Britain's economic recovery, it was also an attempt at national recovery. Its ambition was to attract people, who could raise levels of the national economy by bringing the money to flow throughout Great Britain. (Conekin 2003:26)

The Festival was launched by King George in a broadcast from the St Paul's Cathedral where he announced the opening of the festival. Large number of people had slept outside St. Paul's Cathedral on pavements with blankets, supply of hot drink and food to give enthusiastic start to the bid of a nation to rise above post-war perils and hardships. The colours of the Festival were red, blue and white, and encouraged visitors to a better mood. (The Advertiser)

Later in the afternoon, the Archbishop of Canterbury announced the Festival venue. It was broadcast by the B.B.C. and it was followed by church bells, the massed bands, drums and pipes of the Brigade of Guards beat tattoo and group singing. All lights were turned off due to the flag ceremony, which lasted ten minutes. Drummers of the Royal Fusiliers were dressed in scarlet tunics and they played the National Anthem "Abide with Me" and "Auld Lang Syne" and all lights were turned on again. (The Guardian Archive) The ceremony was conducted by the ringing of church bells and with 41-gun salute, fired at the Tower of London and in Hyde Park. (Turner 2011: 119-120)

During the Festival, every day were released from the South Bank fifty-one balloons with voucher for free entry to the Exhibition and finder were invited to write for their Festival tickets to Mr Ratcliff, the correspondent. (Turner 2011: 223)

6.1 Responses after opening

After the Festival was opened, the press reaction was unexpected and pleasant, even the *Express* and *Standard* wrote positively about the Festival. Various newspapers including *The Times*, published optimistic articles that the Festival might be the turning point for the post-war recovery. Harold Nicolson, powerful critic described the Festival in the following words: “I had expected the exhibition to provide beauty and power. I had not expected it to be the very soul of wit. In place of the cemetery I had dreaded I found a maternity home. [...] It is the most intelligent exhibition I have ever visited. I have never seen people so cheered up or amused in spite of a fine drizzle of rain.” (Turner 2011: 127-129)

“To me the Festival of Britain represented the spirit of optimism, which was then among the British people, who had fought so hard, and endured so much. A better future was within our grasp and we were ready to accept the challenge of building a new Britain.” Barbara J. Walsh, festival visitor (Turner 2011:1)

Some critics claimed that the Exhibition of Live Architecture at Lansbury was kind of failure. (Turner 2011:175) Although the visitors had different feelings about the Festival, no one could contradict that the Festival of Britain was a major and most significant national event since the war. For one group of people, looking backwards, it meant the reward after six years of war period, for other group, looking forward, it was long-awaited revival as a major force after post war difficulties. It was kind of a minor miracle that there was a Festival for everyone to see. (Kynaston 2009: 7)

Mr. Pealling described his Festival visit in the following words: “My parents decided that instead of a holiday we would go twice to the Festival. We lived in Elm Park about fifty minutes by District Line train from Westminster station. I liked the Skylon and the Dome of Discovery. Do not forget the Battersea Pleasure Gardens which were part of The Festival and the Emmet Railway

which I liked a lot. My annoyance was that I wanted to queue for a special Crown piece 5 shillings but my parents would not wait in the queue.”

Gerald Barry was skilled editor of *the Week-end Review* from 1930 to 1934. He was the Festival’s originator and Director General and one of the progressive, public spirited, high minded people.

He described the Festival in the following words: “After more than a decade of voluntarily imposed austerity we deserve it, and it will do us good. But the main purpose of the Festival is, all the same, strictly serious. It is intended as an act of national reassessment. [...] It will put on record the fact that we are a nation not only with an amazing past, but also an amazing future. It will help to put us on our toes, to raise our morale at home and our prestige among other nations. (Kynaston 2009: 8)

People were impressed by all the inventions and they did not know where to go first. Thousands of people saw themselves for the first time in their life on live television in the Telekinema, watched 3D movies and had fun. The Festival caused that architecture has been talked and written about by people who even they are not architects. The Festival spirit took hold across the Britain, barely anyone left out on a Festival carnival. It was written in almost all newspapers, magazines and leaflets. Gerald Barry was editor of *the News Chronicle* newspaper in which the festival was often written.

The Festival was an opportunity to promote British companies outside the country so the government used four buses as “ambassadors” to travel 4.000 miles across cities in Europe, such as Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Holland, France and Luxembourg without mechanical difficulties. (The Telegraph)

7 Closing the Festival

The Festival on the South Bank stayed open until midnight and was ended by the official farewell and the official closing ceremonies were held the following day. (Turner 2011:220) This event lasted 5 months and it was enormous success and achieved a profit. The final number of visitors at the Festival was over 10 million people, at the South Bank it was 8.455.863 and at the Festival Gardens it was around 7,355,213 people. (The Guardian Archive) The record day was 22 September, when South Bank visited 158.365 people. (Turner 2011: 221)

The Festival had shown that landscaping work and design could create a visual relationship between new buildings and roads. (Atkinson 2012: 198) During the Festival's last day, the South Bank side was visited by 65.000 people. The Festival closing was accompanied by community singing with the massed bands of the Brigade of Guards and it continued with a brief announcement and the festival flags were move down. It was really over and the Archbishop of Canterbury described the Festival in the following words: "A good thing for all of us, it had brought encouragement just when it was needed." (Kynaston 2009: 16)

King George opened the Festival on 3 May 1951, but due to his health problems he could not attend the final ceremony. This event caused rebuilding the bomb-damaged area on the South Bank side in the most visited place for 5 months. The official aim was to portray British goods through all points of life from the home, to industry, transport and school.

The Battersea Park was visited by 8 million people. Some people described the Festival as a "real family party". Everyone had played a part in the Festival. (BBC News)

Mr Pealling described the Festival atmosphere in the following words: "In one sense people enjoyed the Festival and it cheered the up. On the other hand,

people contrasted the drudgery of day to day life with an image of what the future might be but a future that seemed to be getting further away with things like televisions being snatched from them by tax rises and continued austerity Imagine a lot of Czechs going to a foreign travel exhibition under the Communists knowing that would not see these things.”

Dr Fisher described the Festival in the following words: “The Festival has set the standard by which we shall face the future. The Festival, like the Dome of Discovery itself, was marked by imagination and ingenuity...and a pride for what Britain has achieved in all things. “(BBC News)

7.1 Preserved buildings

After the Festival was closed, the Conservative Party with Winston Churchill, newly elected the Prime Minister considered the Festival as a piece of socialist propaganda, success of the Labour Party and refused to leave South Bank as it was. The Conservative Party ordered to remove almost all vestiges of the Festival, (Johnson, Ben) but Barry was against, however he had no power as Director General and no longer commanded attention in high places. (Turner 2011: 230)

The Telekinema became home to the National Film Theatre in 1952 and was making large amount of money but in 1957, the building was destroyed and the National Film Theatre moved. (Glancey, 2008) Although the Skylon was believed to be magical, Winston Churchill decided to demolish it and claimed that it was a symbol of the Labour government's imagination of a new and socialist Britain. (Glancey, 2008) After 50years, the BBC Radio 4 programme Front Row discovered that the Skylon had been bought by a west-London scrap metal dealer, with a few fragments turned into souvenirs. The Museum of London owns collection a brass ring plate featuring the names of Skylon's creators Powell and Moya which was mounted beneath the Skylon. The sculpture's wind cups are the only bit known to have survived, but they are owned by a private collector. Although the Skylon was destroyed, the restaurant

on Level 3 of Royal Festival Hall carries the name of the statue. (South Bank Centre, 2017)

Instead of the Dome and the Skylon, there stands the National Theatre, the Hayward Gallery and the Shell building. Almost everything was destroyed and the only preserved building was the Royal Festival Hall and there are held concerts until today and the building become protected. (The Telegraph) In the Level 2 Foyer, Blue side at Royal Festival Hall near the Southbank Centre shop you can visit "*The Story of 51*" created by Hemingway Designs and there you can find some photography of the Festival along with a 3D model and interesting information about the Exhibition. There are also cabinets giving you an idea of the vast range of memorabilia inspired by the Festival, from homewares to toys and a silk scarf. (South Bank Centre, 2017) What was left of the Festival was sold in public action. (Turner 2011: 231)

Some people agreed with Winston Churchill that the Festival was socialist. Hugh Casson was the director of architecture, but his daughter Dinah said about the Festival: "It was absolutely socialist and I think they were quite right to regard it as a socialist creep." (BBC News)

Mr. Pealling described the Conservative Party's command to demolish most of the exhibits in the following words: "The Festival showed modern things I did not think of it as socialist it simply showed what a competent government could organize, even against all the odds. At the time of The Millennium Dome I was very annoyed when people said this proved that today no government was capable of organizing such things. Well an incompetent government cannot just look at Brexit. I think Churchill would have demolished the Festival Hall if he could have. The Skylon would have been an excellent landmark and the way it was demolished was an act of vandalism. What was in first place? Well the foundation stone of The National Theatre with nothing the being built for over fifteen years and, eventually The Shell Building which regularly wins prizes for the ugliest office block in Europe. The great site and opportunity were largely

squandered. I have a Crown Piece. This was the first issued since the Coronation in 1937. Also, I bought the two stamps at the local post office. The total failure to build either the National Theatre or another concert hall for at least twenty years shows how lethargic the incoming government was. “

Peter Laszlo Peri's sculpture *The Sunbathers* decorated the exterior wall of the Waterloo Station for five months, but after the Festival was closed, it disappeared. In 2016, someone recognized this sculpture and the experts confirmed its authenticity. The sculpture required restoration before it could be returned to public display. Now, *The Sunbathers* are back on the South Bank, in the Royal Festival Hall. (See Appendix, number 5, number 6)

Josephine O'Donnell described the sculpture in the following words: „I remember *The Sunbathers* as a child, climbing on them in our sunken garden at the front of our hotel; I used to call them Adam and Eve. “(South Bank Centre, 2017)

Although the Conservative Party ordered to remove almost all vestiges of the Festival, the Exhibition was opened for 5 months and showed people the beauty of art, technology and science.

8 Conclusion

The purpose of this Bachelor thesis is to discuss the role of the Festival of Britain in the context of the first post-war decade and explore which broader values were reflected in its organization.

The Festival was held in 1951 in Britain and lasted 5 months. It was organized by the Labour Party headed by Clement Attlee in honor of celebrating 100 years of the Great Exhibition in 1851 and in order to change the post-war mood in Britain.

The author was able to summarize the most important findings from the period 1945 - 1951 and the Festival, which took place in 1951. The thesis also contains an interview with Mr Richard Pealling who visited the Festival on person in 1951 and his views were very useful for exploring work.

The thesis describes the lives of people after World War II and its main goal, to focus on the celebrating the 1951 Festival of Britain. The author further focused on the initial planning and the purpose of the Festival. The thesis deals with the steps of the Labour Government, the important people involved in the Festival planning, the construction of the Festival buildings, the rebuilding of destroyed areas by bombing into the beautiful gardens, and also describes the responses of journalists, politicians, and the Festival visitors. The author clarifies the purpose of buildings and what the Festival visitors could see or try out.

The work describes the change of people's opinions after opening the Exhibition to the public and most of the negative responses turned positive. However, not all opinions have changed after the Festival opening, Winston Churchill still had a negative view of the Festival. The work also focuses on the reasons of Winston Churchill and clarifies the destruction of the Festival buildings and describes the surviving statues and buildings of the Festival.

To the question, if the Festival was meaningful, it is difficult to answer, but the work includes a visitor count of about 10 million people, so we can say that the Festival was not a waste of money and that it showed to many people the beauty of art, industry technique and gained the popularity of the vast majority of visitors.

9 Endnotes

Addison, Paul (2011). BBC NEWS [online]. Why Churchill lost in 1945. Politics in peacetime. Available from:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/election_01.shtml

Atkinson, Harriet. The Festival of Britain. A land and its people. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84885-792-6.

BBC NEWS (2011) [online]. Skylon, Festival of Britain centrepiece, and Hereford. Available from:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/herefordandworcester/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_9407000/9407405.stm

BBC NEWS (2014) [online]. History – Clement Attlee. Available from:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/attlee_clement.shtml

BBC NEWS (2019) [online]. Labour Reforms – The Welfare State 1945-1951.

Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zt4hvcw/revision/6>

BBC NEWS [online]. 1951: Festival closes to applause. Available from:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/30/newsid_3161000/3161521.stm

BBC NEWS [online]. The Labour Reforms – The Welfare State 1945-1951.

Education Act 1944. Available from:

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zt4hvcw/revision/6>

Black, Jeremy. The making of modern Britain. The Age of Empire to the New Millennium, second edition. Chalford: The History Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-7509-4755-8.

Bloxham, Andy (2011). The Telegraph [online]. Festival of Britain 1951: A tonic for the nation. Available from:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/8270351/Festival-of-Britain-1951-A-tonic-for-the-nation.html>

British History (1994) [online]. The Lansbury Estate: Introduction and the Festival of Britain exhibition. Available from: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols43-4/pp212-223>

Campbell, Denis (2016). The Guardian [online]. Nye Bevan's dream: a history of the NHS. Available from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jan/18/nye-bevan-history-of-nhs-national-health-service>

Conekin, Becky. The autobiography of a nation. The 1951 Festival of Britain. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003.

Crowcroft, Robert. The National Archives [online]. Attlee's Britain 1945-1951. Available from:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/attlees-britain/>

Dunnett, Mc Gregor Harding/Powers, Alan. 1951 Exhibition of Architecture. New York: Routledge, 2018. ISBN 978-1-138-77598-5.

Encyclopedia Britannica [online]. Education. Education Act of 1944. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/education/Education-Act-of-1944>

Glancey, Jonathan (2008). The Guardian Archive [online]. Skylon: is there a point in rebuilding it. Available from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/artblog/2008/jul/09/skylonwhatsthepointofrebu>

Handl, Jan (2016). Historie blog [online]. Druhá světová válka stručně a přehledně. Available from: [https://www.historieblog.cz/2016/07/druha-svetova-
valka-strucne-a-prehledne/](https://www.historieblog.cz/2016/07/druha-svetova-valka-strucne-a-prehledne/)

Hennessy, Peter. Having it so good. Britain in the fifties. London: Penguin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-00409-9.

Holborn, Margaret (2017). The Guardian [online]. Beveridge report – archive 1942. Available from: [https://www.theguardian.com/gnmeducationcentre/from-
the-archive-blog/2017/nov/01/beveridge-report-archive-1942](https://www.theguardian.com/gnmeducationcentre/from-the-archive-blog/2017/nov/01/beveridge-report-archive-1942)

Jenkins, Roy (2019). Encyclopedia Britannica [online]. Clement Attlee Prime Minister of United Kingdom. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Clement-Attlee>

Johnson, Ben. Historic UK [online]. The Festival of Britain 1951. Kelvin Hall, 1951. Available from: [https://www.historic-
uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Festival-of-Britain-1951/](https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Festival-of-Britain-1951/)

Kynaston, David. Austerity Britain 1954-57. A world to build. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008. ISBN 978-0-7475-8540-4.

Kynaston, David. Family Britain 1951-57. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009. ISBN 978-1-4088-0083-6.

Marr, Andrew. A history of modern Britain. London: Macmillan, 2007. ISBN 978-1-4050-0538-8.

Parliament UK [online]. Improving towns. Available from: [https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-
heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/overview/newtowns/](https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/overview/newtowns/)

Parliament UK [online]. The Education Act of 1944. Available from:
<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/educationact1944/>

South Bank Centre (2017) [online]. The Sunbathers return to Southbank Centre. Available from: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/blog/sunbathers-return-southbank-centre>

South Bank Centre [online]. History of Southbank Centre. Available from: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/about/what-we-do/history-southbank-centre>

The Advertiser [online]. British Festival opens. Available from: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/45716096>

The History Press [online]. The Festival of Britain 1951. Available from: <https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-festival-of-britain-1951/>

The National Archives [online]. Attlee's Britain 1945-1951. Employment. Available from: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/attlees-britain/employment/>

Turner, Barry (2011). The Telegraph [online]. Festival of Britain: fun that forged the future. Available from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/8466866/Festival-of-Britain-fun-that-forged-the-future.html>

Turner, Barry. Beacon for change. How the 1951 Festival of Britain shaped the modern age. London: Aurum Press Limited, 2011. ISBN 9781-84513-5249.

U.S. History [online]. The Cold War erupts. Available from: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/52a.asp>

University of the West of England (2009) [online]. Domestic Architecture 1700 to 1960. Post-War Housing, 1945-1960s. Available from:
https://fet.uwe.ac.uk/conweb/house_ages/flypast/section11.htm

Wheeler, Brian (2015). BBC NEWS [online]. A history of social housing. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-14380936>

Word press [online]. Glasgow's Forgotten Exhibition: The Festival of Britain at 1951. Available from:
<https://kelvinhallproject.wordpress.com/2016/04/07/glasgows-forgotten-exhibition-the-festival-of-britain-at-the-kelvin-hall-1951/>

10 Resumé 1

The theme of this bachelor thesis is „Celebrating the Postwar Recovery: the 1951 Festival of Britain”. The target objective of this work was to describe the 1951 Festival of Britain, the atmosphere, the buildings and its purpose.

The thesis also contains an interview with Mr Richard Pealling, a retired British teacher, who visited the Festival on person in 1951.

The author describes the Beveridge report and establishing a system of National Health Insurance, unemployment and also focuses on education which was not very good at the level at that time.

The thesis deals with the regulations of the government through smaller rations of food as well as electricity and heating restrictions. People's mood was melancholic so the Labour Government began planning the Festival to cheer people up. The Festival was a national exhibition intended to encourage a feeling of recovery and show to people the beauty of the arts, technology, science and industrial design. This is followed by the description of the parts of the Exhibition, responses, opening ceremony launched by King George and also describes the end of the Festival the development of events after Winston Churchill's re-entry into power in the year 1951.

11 Resumé 2

Tématem této bakalářské práce je „Oslava poválečné obnovy: Festival Británie v roce 1951.“ Cílem práce bylo popsat Festival Británie, který se konal v roce 1951 v Británii, jeho atmosféru, budovy a účel Festivalu.

Práce také obsahuje rozhovor s panem Richardem Peallingem, bývalým britským učitelem, který v roce 1951 navštívil Festival v Británii.

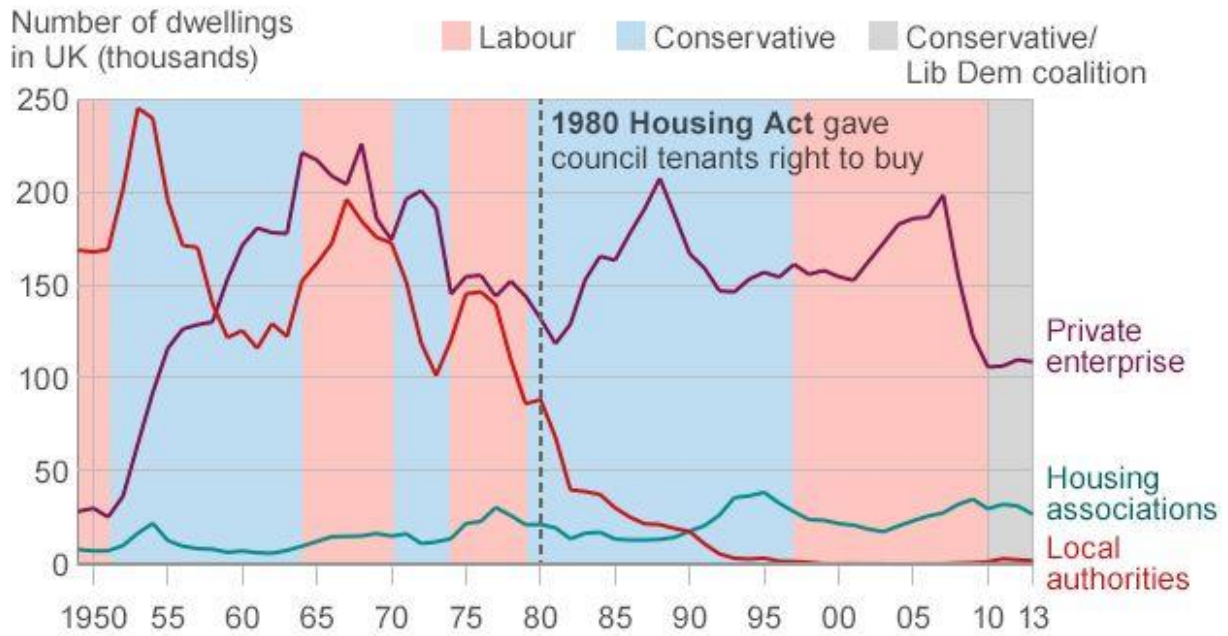
Autor popisuje Beveridgeovu zprávu a zřízení systému Národního zdravotního pojištění, snížení nezaměstnanosti a zaměřuje se také na vzdělávání, které nebylo v té době na vysoké úrovni.

Tato bakalářská práce se také zabývá vládními nařízeními a omezeními skrze přiděly potravin, oblečení a také omezením používání elektřiny a topení. Popisuje poválečnou náladu lidí a plánování Festivalu, který měl rozveselit obyvatele Británie. Festival byl Národní výstavou, která měla ukázat lidem krásu umění, techniky, vědy a průmyslového designu. Dále následuje popis částí výstavy, reakce na Festival a ceremoniál, který byl zahájen králem Jiřím. Popisuje také ukončení Festivalu a vývoj událostí po opětovném nástupu Winstona Churchilla k moci v roce 1951.

12 Appendices

Appendix 1

New homes built by private and social sectors, 1949-2013



Source: Dept for Communities and Local Government



Source: Wheeler, Brian (2015) A history of social housing. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-14380936>

Appendix 2: The Royal Festival Hall



Source:

A London Inheritance. A Walk Round The Festival Of Britain – The Upstream Circuit. Available from: <https://alondoninheritance.com/tag/dome-of-discovery/>

Appendix 3: The Skylon tower



Source:

Johnson, Ben. Historic UK. The Festival of Britain 1951. Available from:
<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Festival-of-Britain-1951/>

Appendix 4: The Islanders



Source:

A London Inheritance. A Walk Round The Festival Of Britain – The Upstream Circuit. Available from: <https://alondoninheritance.com/tag/dome-of-discovery/>

Appendix 5: The Sunbathers



Source:

South Bank Centre. The Festival of Britain remembered. Available from: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/about/what-we-do/1951-festival-britain-remembered>

Appendix 6: The Sunbathers



Source:

Historic England. You Saved the Sunbathers! Available from:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/get-involved/protect/save-the-sunbathers/>