

Brent Museum and Brent Archives: Exhibitions and Projects 2011

Brent's Post-war Pre-fabs

This project ran from April-July 2011.



Like many other places across the UK, Brent saw the construction of hundreds of units of pre-fabricated housing following the Second World War, to replace bomb-damaged buildings and provide homes for returning troops and their families. This project aimed to create a proper record of this fascinating and significant part of the borough's post-war social history, by collecting digital copies of photographs and recording oral histories with former residents of the borough's pre-fabs.

The original publicity for the project ran as follows:

Towards the end of the Second World War, it became clear that there was a pressing need for new homes across the country to replace those destroyed in the war. The Government decided that temporary factory-made bungalows should be produced until sufficient new homes could be constructed.

We know that there were around 850 of these temporary homes in the former Boroughs of Wembley and Willesden, many on the edges of parks or on former sports grounds, from Kingsbury, Sudbury and Alperton to Gladstone Park, Brondesbury and Harlesden, but we do not know very much about most of the sites.

Do you remember the "pre-fabs"? Did you live in one? Brent Archives needs your help to create a proper record of this important time in our local history.

If you have any memories,

photographs or memorabilia you would like to share to record your part in the story of the pre-fabs, please contact the Archives on 020 8937 3541 or archives@brent.gov.uk.

Communicating through Cats: The Art and Mind of Louis Wain

In partnership with Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum and Archive and Chris Beetles Gallery.

The exhibition ran in Brent Museum's Special Exhibitions Gallery from 5 May- 29 October 2011.



The original publicity for the exhibition read as follows:

'Communicating Through Cats: The Art and Mind of Louis Wain' celebrates one of Brent's most famous artists. Best known for his distinctive 'humanistic' cat drawings, Louis Wain was a household name at the turn of the 20th century.

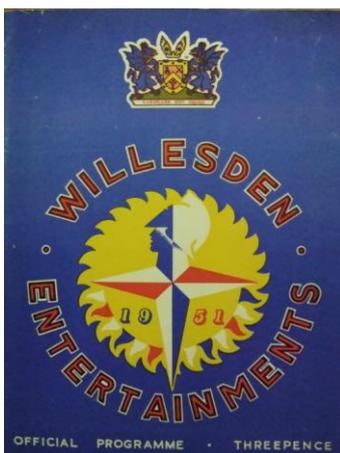
Over the past 100 years, understanding and appreciation of Louis Wain's art has varied dramatically. His work has been described as 'charming' and 'humorous' as well as 'psychotic' and 'disturbed'. 'Communicating Through Cats' explores how the artist saw the world during a life troubled by tragedy and mental illness, and considers how different responses to his work reflected fashions of the time.

The exhibition includes work selected and supplied by Chris Beetles Gallery, St James's, London, and loans from the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust and the Wellcome Library.

A free programme of adult and family events and activities will be running alongside the exhibition so take a look at the listings to see what is on and we are also running school sessions. Volunteers will be running lunch-time tours of the exhibition on the last Wednesday of every month, starting at 12pm.

Story of London: 60th Anniversary of the Festival of Britain

This exhibition and events ran during August 2011.



2011 was the 60th anniversary of the Festival of Britain, which was a national exhibition which opened in London and around Britain in May 1951. At that time, shortly after the end of World War II, much of London was still in ruins and redevelopment was badly needed. The Festival was an attempt to give Britons a feeling of recovery and progress through a celebration of national achievements in the field of art, design, science and industry, and to promote better-quality design in the rebuilding of British towns and cities following the war. Although the principal exhibition site was on the South Bank of the River Thames near Waterloo Station, celebrations were also held across the UK.

As part of the Mayor of London's Story of London festival, the Museum of London worked with a number of local museums across London to curate an exhibition about the Festival of Britain celebrations on the South Bank and in each local area, and to host celebration events based on the local activities of 60 years earlier.

Brent Museum hosted an exhibition in the foyer at Willesden Green Library Centre through August 2011, as well as an 'Indoor Street Party' on 24 August, including a family session on 1950s fashion, food and entertainment, and a display of Indian folk dancing by dancers from Brent's ENCEE Academy, as a reinterpretation of the folk dancing displays held in Willesden in 1951. The ENCEE dancers also took part in the celebration event at South Bank on 28 August.



The original publicity ran as follows:

The Story of London festival celebrates the capital as a place of heritage and culture.

This year the Museum of London has teamed up with the Southbank Centre to mark the 60th anniversary of the Festival of Britain.

Brent Museum and Archives are taking part in the celebrations to recapture the spirit of the Festival celebrations that took place 60 years ago.

The Festival of Britain centred around a national exhibition promoting the economic and social recovery of the country after the Second World War.

The main celebration was held on the south bank of the river Thames, but other events were organised across Britain, including in Brent.

What's on when?

The exhibition will be in the foyer, Willesden Green Library Centre from 1 to 31 August 2011.

Indoor Street Party - Wednesday 24 August, 1pm to 4.30pm

On 24 August join us to re-enact Brent's Festival of Britain's celebrations at our indoor street party.