

London Since 1948



How did life change for people in Britain since 1948?

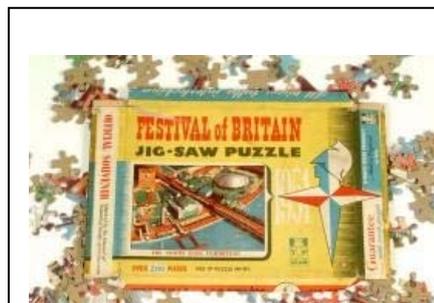
The Second World War officially ended in August 1945. By the end of the war, huge areas of London and the rest of Britain had been destroyed by bomb damage. The British people faced the massive task of having to rebuild the country and work to build a better future.

1948 Olympics



This metal pin badge shows famous London landmarks

Britain held the 16th International Olympics in 1948. The last Olympic Games had been held before the Second World War, in Berlin, in 1936. The London Games were mostly held in Wembley Stadium and did not cost a lot to organise as Britain was still suffering from the effects of the Second World War. Food was still rationed at this time. One of the aims of the Games was to help different countries work together and help people overcome the horrors of the war. Not all countries were invited to take part though – Japan and Germany were not included.



1951 The Festival of Britain



The Festival of Britain was held on the South Bank in London. It was intended to cheer people up and make them feel more optimistic. The years after the war ended were still very difficult. There were still shortages of food and materials and people still had to live with rationing. The Festival of Britain aimed to show how Britain was ready to step into the future. The Royal Festival Hall was built as a permanent structure.

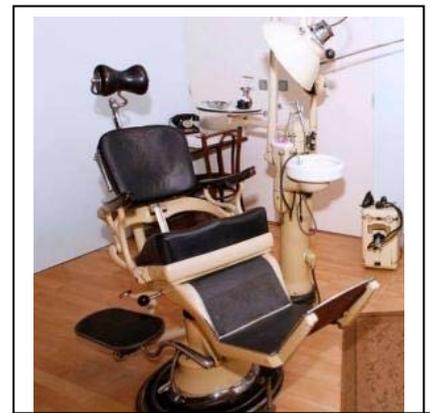
1953 The Coronation

Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in June 1953. Many people held street parties to celebrate this event. More people were starting to own black and white televisions and thousands watched the ceremony.



The Welfare State

The National Health Service (NHS) was established in 1948 as part of Clement Attlee's Labour government. For the first time, all people were able to visit a dentist or doctor without paying. The aim was to make Britain a fairer place to live and make sure all people could receive medical treatment if they needed it.



This chair dates to the 1950s and was owned by Basil Taylor.

Fashion



Carnaby Street in London during the 1960s. It had lots of fashionable shops.

Fashions were always changing and the decades after the Second World War ended were particularly exciting. After clothes rationing ended in 1949 people were able to buy more interesting clothes. Rock and roll became popular in the 1950s and this influenced the types of clothes and hairstyles people wore. Designers like Mary Quant helped make mini skirts very popular during the 1960s. Some of the famous models included Twiggy. London was at the centre of this fashion world.

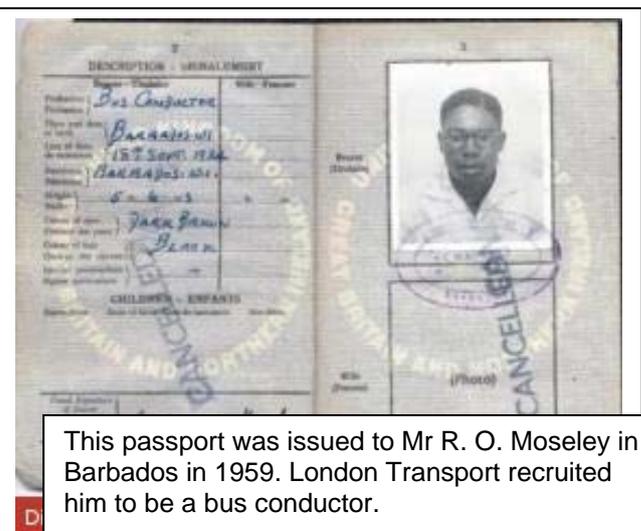


This dress was made in 1964 and was printed with the heads of The Beatles.

Digital Image © Museum of London

Immigration

One of the significant changes in Britain since 1948 has been immigration by people from different countries. After the war Britain had a shortage of people able to work to rebuild the country. Many people from the Commonwealth were invited to Britain to work in the newly created NHS or for London Transport (among many other places). The first group of 500 immigrants from Jamaica arrived in 1948 on the Steam Ship Empire Windrush. People from many countries have moved to Britain since 1948. London has become a lively city that celebrates many different cultures.



This passport was issued to Mr R. O. Moseley in Barbados in 1959. London Transport recruited him to be a bus conductor.

Phyllis Sylvester's recording of her experiences of racism in the 1950s and 60s – [Go to audio](#)