



THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN

in 1951 transformed the way people saw their war-ravaged nation. Giving Britons an intimate experience of contemporary design and modern building, it helped them accept a landscape under reconstruction, and brought hope of a better world to come. *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People* travels beyond the Festival's spectacular centrepiece at London's South Bank, to events held the length and breadth of the four nations, to which hundreds of the country's greatest architects, artists and designers contributed. It explores exhibitions in Poplar, Battersea and South Kensington in London; Belfast, Glasgow and Wales; a touring show carried on four lorries and another aboard an ex-aircraft carrier. It reveals how all these exhibitions and also plays, poetry, art and films commissioned for the Festival had a single focus: to unite 'the land and people of Britain'.

Drawing on ten thousand previously unseen sketches and plans, photographs and fascinating interviews, Harriet Atkinson unveils how the Festival made the whole country an exhibition ground. Everything was on show from homes to farms and factories, and the land itself. She reveals the Festival's genesis in wartime propaganda and international exhibitions and how the events gave people a good time while presenting the nation as a model democracy as Britain entered the Cold War. Ultimately, the Festival served to rekindle a downtrodden population's love for a disfigured landscape. *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People* is a compelling exploration of these unparalleled events.

HARRIET ATKINSON was educated at University of York, the Courtauld Institute and the Royal College of Art. She was co-editor of *The Banham Lectures*, and contributor to Findling & Pelle's *Encyclopaedia of World's Fairs and Expositions*. She has written for various journals of art and design, as well as for *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. She is Research Fellow at the University of Brighton and lives in London with her husband and two children.

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WITH A FOREWORD BY MARY BANHAM