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Illustrated London News Collections, 1842–2003



## About British Online Archives

British Online Archives (BOA) is one of the UK's leading academic publishers and online repositories. Hosting over six million records, carefully sourced from private and public archives, such as The National Archives (UK) and British Library, our unique primary source collections cover over 500 years of world history.

They boast extensive documentation from across the globe, providing invaluable source material for students, educators, and researchers working within a range of scholarly disciplines, including history, politics, sociology, and international relations. Our fascinating digital holdings offer insights into global historical events and trends, typically through a British lens. They serve to broaden our understanding of history, and help us to make sense of contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political landscapes.

## Our Partners

We work closely with various archives, including:



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The London Archives



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## BOA and *The Illustrated London News*

Founded in 1842 and remaining in circulation until 2003, *The Illustrated London News (ILN)* was a pioneering and remarkably successful venture in print media. One of the earliest examples of the weekly illustrated newspaper, it detailed key events and trends in British and global history, developing a distinctive—typically exquisite—visual style. The *ILN* remained committed to technological innovation, printing, for example, the first colour newspaper in 1855 and later embracing photography.

Over time, the *ILN* either acquired or launched several “sister” publications—*The Graphic* (1869–1932); *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (1874–1970); *The Sketch* (1893–1959); *The Sphere* (1900–1964); *The Tatler* (1901–1965); *The Bystander* (1903–1940); *The Illustrated War News* (1914–1918 and 1939); *Britannia and Eve* (1929–1957); and *London Life* (1965–1966).

BOA has brought together the extensive back catalogues of these publications, as well as that of the *ILN*. These fascinating resources allow students, educators, and researchers across diverse scholarly fields to explore a near-endless variety of events, trends, and themes, both British and international. Our skilled editorial team has tagged these collections comprehensively, making them easy to search and explore! Indeed, our *ILN* collections are accompanied by a range of excellent supplementary materials, such as contextual essays penned by leading scholars, as well as articles and videos produced by the BOA team.

We are delighted to take this opportunity to showcase our *ILN* collections—we hope that you enjoy perusing this brochure as much as we have enjoyed compiling it!

## The Illustrated London News, 1842–2003

Explore one of the most eye-catching and pioneering ventures in British print media.

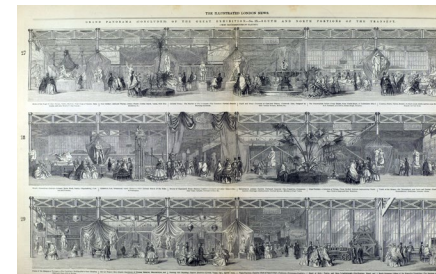
The *Illustrated London News* (ILN) was founded in 1842 by Herbert Ingram. Whilst working as a newsagent and printer, he noticed two trends: papers featuring woodcut engraved illustrations tended to sell better and people frequently requested “London news”, as opposed to a specific publication. Advancements in printing technology, such as faster rotary presses, helped Ingram translate his vision of “illustrated news” into a reality. This vision proved timely and lucrative. **The first edition of the ILN, which appeared on 14 May, 1842, sold 26,000 copies.** Priced at sixpence, it carried 32 illustrations and covered the “Great Fire of Hamburg” along with Queen Victoria’s first masquerade ball.

By 1855, 130,000 copies were being sold weekly, a figure that had more than doubled by the early 1860s. The paper targeted a broadly middle class readership, with Ingram’s embrace of liberalism ensuring that it backed reformist agendas, such as the plight of industrial workers and the need for better public amenities and urban infrastructure. Yet because Ingram embodied the Victorian ideal of the “self-made man”, the *ILN* was equally capable of sympathising with big business. It likewise espoused Britain’s imperial project. **This impressive resource enables students, educators, and researchers to explore an almost endless variety of historical events, concepts, and trends, British and otherwise.**



“

*the Illustrated London News [. . .] marked a revolution in the gathering and representation of news through its pioneering use of pictorial reportage.*”  
(Margarita Cappock, 2000).



The *ILN* surveyed cultural trends, reviewing literature, music, and theatre. The Great Exhibition (1851) was documented in detail with intricate panoramas by Richard Beard.



Coverage of global conflicts was a salient feature, from the Crimean War (1853–56), to unrest in the Middle East, to the “Suez Crisis” (1956), and the Vietnam War (1954–75).

### Key Data

Released by BOA: 2025

Coverage Covers: 1842–2003

Volume Count: 162

Document Count: 7,113

Image Count: 257,048





## ***The Graphic*, 1869–1932**

Encounter some of the most important innovations in nineteenth and twentieth century European art.

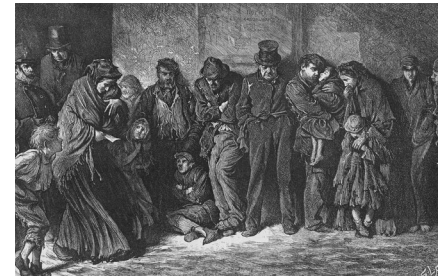
Founded in 1869 by artist and social reformer, William Luson Thomas, *The Graphic* remained in circulation until 1932. It reflected the conservatism and imperialism of Britain's ruling classes, yet Thomas's social conscience set the paper apart from more right-leaning titles, such as *The Sketch* and *The Sphere*. Innovatively, *The Graphic* highlighted poverty, homelessness, and public health—Thomas encouraged his illustrators to roam London for authentic subjects. The paper focused on **politics, international relations, religion, science, as well as the arts and literature**. This collection includes over 90,000 images from nearly 2,684 issues, published between December 1869 and April 1932.

*The Graphic* featured work by celebrated artists and writers, including the pioneering painter, director, and composer, Hubert Herkomer; the satirical and fantastical illustrator, Sidney Herbert Sime; the distinguished sculptor, Malvina Hoffman; the pre-eminent author, Victor Hugo; and the celebrated English novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy. Given the quality and quantity of its artistic content, its wide-ranging commentary, and its vivid depictions of everyday life, *The Graphic* captured **the dramatic transformations in British society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries**. It will benefit those exploring themes in cultural, social, political, and, indeed, colonial history.

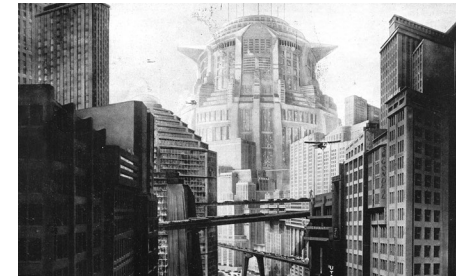


“

*The success of The Graphic caused the most extraordinary movement.*  
(W. L. Thomas, 1888).



Encouraged by Thomas, artists captured everyday life for Britain's poorest. In “Houseless and Hungry” (1869), Luke Fields depicted London's destitute to prompt social reform.



It updated readers on science and technology. By the 1920s, it was documenting the impact of refrigerators on domestic life and how skyscrapers had transformed cityscapes.

### **Key Data**

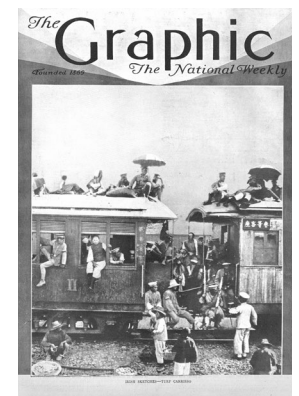
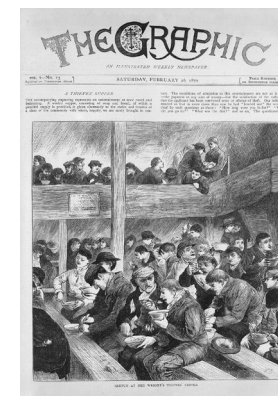
**Released by BOA: 2023**

**Coverage Covers: 1869–1932**

**Volume Count: 60**

**Document Count: 2,684**

**Image Count: 90,266**



## ***The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 1874–1970***

Nearly 100 years of sports, art, leisure, and country living.

After its establishment in 1874, *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* became one of several “sister” publications of the *ILN*. The magazine was known as *Sport and Country* from 1943. From 1957 until its last issue in 1970, it was titled *Farm and Country*. For almost a century, it reported on agriculture, hunting, sports, and the leisure activities of Britain’s landowning classes. Though it developed a particularly strong focus on farming, it also printed articles on literature, music, and theatre, featuring contributions from some of the country’s most prominent artists and writers. This collection boasts over 160,000 images from more than 3,800 issues dating from February 1874 to December 1970.

This periodical featured articles on foxhunting, shooting, polo, yachting, and golf, as well as on the Oxford-Cambridge boat race. Readers also received frequent updates on horse racing. Over time, its coverage evolved—whilst earlier issues printed and discussed work by celebrated authors, such as Bram Stoker and distinguished playwrights, such as Noel Coward, later editions highlighted the modernisation of farming and agricultural machinery. Owing to its eclectic coverage and longevity, this collection provides key material for students, educators, and researchers exploring the histories of sport and of Britain’s countryside. It will also appeal to those investigating the history of science and technology.

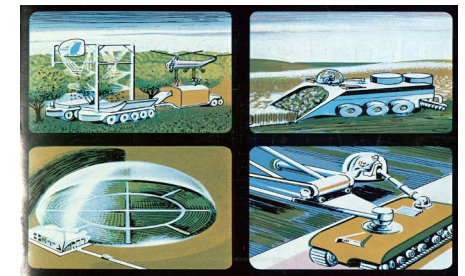


“

*We trust always to be on the side of Art, whether its exemplar be the humblest supernumerary or the most distinguished “star.”*  
(*The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 February, 1874).



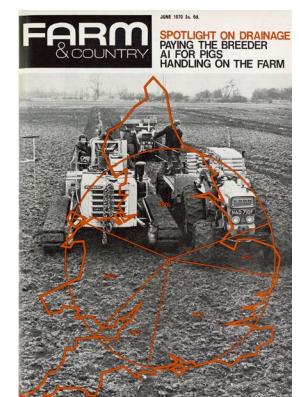
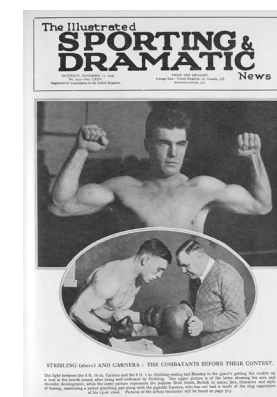
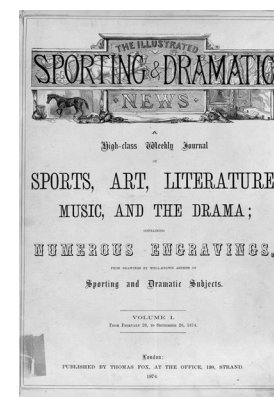
In 1908, London hosted the Olympics for the first time. *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* followed the games closely, printing reports on, and photos of, the action.



This periodical highlights the growing role of technology in daily life. Later issues explored new working practices in British agriculture and the rise of digital technology.

### **Key Data**

**Released by BOA: 2023**  
**Coverage Covers: 1874–1970**  
**Volume Count: 97**  
**Document Count: 3,870**  
**Image Count: 169,230**





## The Sketch, 1893–1958

Explore the social and cultural transformations of the twentieth century, through the lens of British high society.

First published in 1893, *The Sketch* was established by Clement Shorter and William Ingram (former editor and managing director of the *ILN*). It focused on British high society, attracting a wealthy audience. Replete with photographs and illustrations, and featuring contributions on fashion, literature, and gossip, *The Sketch* provided extensive coverage of aristocratic and celebrity culture for nearly seven decades. Generally, the paper adopted a light-hearted tone. This collection contains over **145,000 images** from over **2,600 issues** of *The Sketch*, published between May 1893 and December 1958.

*The Sketch* provided a platform for major artistic and literary movements. For example, it published the first short stories by **Walter de la Mare** and **Agatha Christie**, and introduced George E. Studdy's cartoon "Bonzo the Dog", later of international fame. It also printed theatre and literary reviews, including recurring columns, such as "The Literary Lounger" and "Novel in a Nutshell". Like other *ILN* titles, notably *The Sphere* and *The Bystander*, it remained a defender of Britain's imperial project, often reflecting the racist and xenophobic attitudes of the time. This collection offers valuable material on **art, literature, and print culture**. It likewise illuminates the significance of **colonialism, imperialism, and slavery** within elite British circles.



“

*The sole purpose of The Sketch is to pleasantly occupy a few minutes otherwise tedious. Should it amuse, we shall rest content.*  
(*The Sketch*, 4 October, 1893).



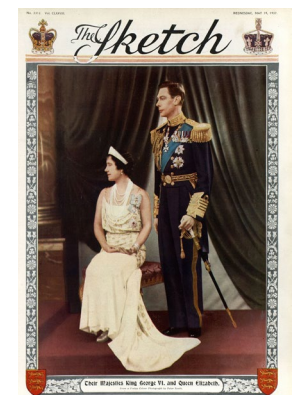
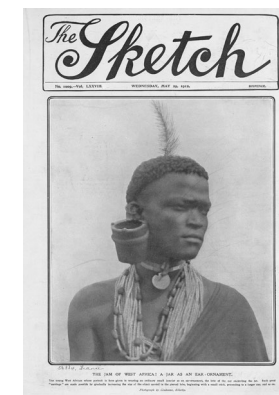
*The Sketch* reported extensively on the Second World War, surveying the realities of rationing and the need for clothing adaptations to ensure safety during blackouts.



The paper was pro-establishment. Its "On Which the Sun Never Sets" column focused on Britain's empire. It featured uncritical accounts of West African slavery.

### Key Data

Released by BOA: 2022  
Coverage Covers: 1893–1958  
Volume Count: 64  
Document Count: 2,670  
Image Count: 146,106





## ***The Sphere*, 1900–1964**

Survey over sixty years of British and global history, from the world wars to the decline of the empire.

Established in 1900 and in circulation until 1964, *The Sphere* was owned by the *ILN* for most of its existence. Clement Shorter, a former *ILN* editor, founded the publication. From its first issue, it adopted a determinedly international outlook, aiming to “hold pictures and thoughts from all lands”. Upon its release, it was praised as “a striking advance in illustrated journalism” due to the artistry and beauty of its presentation. It soon became popular. Covering nearly seven decades, from the turn of the twentieth century until the “Swinging Sixties”, this collection includes over **138,000 images from over 3,000 issues of *The Sphere***. These were published between January 1900 and June 1964.

*The Sphere* was patriotic and pro-establishment, remaining supportive of the British monarchy and empire. It reported extensively on world events, such as the rise of communism, the First and Second World Wars, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It featured articles on a wide range of prominent figures involved in the arts, sciences, and politics, such as Albert Einstein, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Golda Meir, and John Ruskin. It also featured contributions from well-known literary figures, such as the acclaimed children’s author, A. A. Milne, and the prolific journalist, Charles Graves. This collection contains excellent material for those exploring **British social history, military history, and the legacies of colonialism**.



“

*The centre of The Sphere will be in London, but its surface will hold pictures and thoughts from all lands.”*  
(*The Sphere*, 19 March, 1966).



*The Sphere* came to market itself as “The Empire’s Illustrated Weekly”. It surveyed life in Britain’s colonies, espousing the aloof, patrician attitudes of elite settlers.



During the 1940s, it focused on military technology, regularly profiling planes, submarines, and warships, alongside updates from the African, European, and Pacific fronts.

### **Key Data**

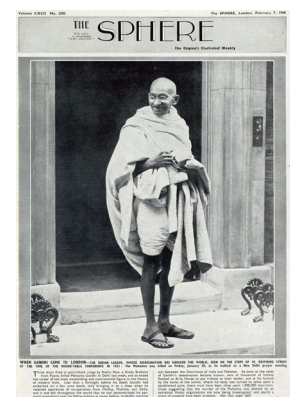
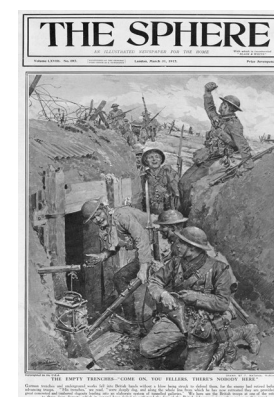
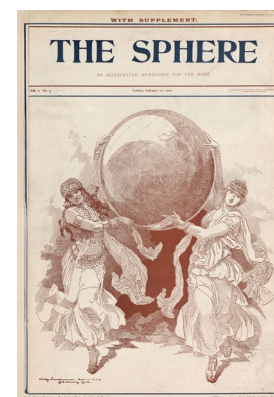
**Released by BOA: 2023**

**Coverage Covers: 1900–1964**

**Volume Count: 65**

**Document Count: 3,340**

**Image Count: 138,640**

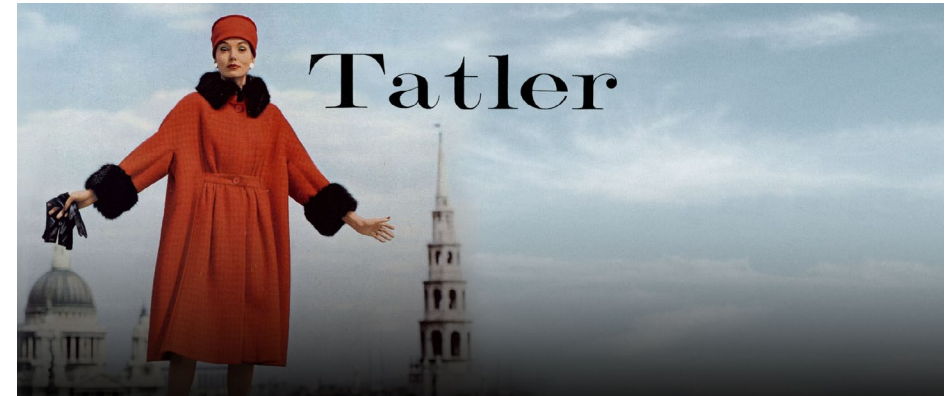


## The Tatler, 1901–1965

Explore British high society, from the turn of the twentieth century to the “Swinging Sixties”.

Established in 1901, *The Tatler* was one of the various publications owned by the *ILN*. Established by Clement Shorter, a former *ILN* editor, it targeted an affluent audience. Published weekly and surviving the world wars, *The Tatler* (renamed *The Tatler and Bystander* in 1940) reported on British high society. From the outset, it adopted a conservative outlook and style, noting in its first issue that “the public mistrusts originality”. Over time, it evolved. In October 1965, it was re-launched as *London Life*, a publication that became emblematic of Britain’s “Swinging Sixties”. This collection contains **over 210,000 images from 3,000 issues of *The Tatler***. These were published between July 1901 and September 1965.

Focusing mainly on fashion, theatre, and sports—especially cricket and golf—*The Tatler* entertained readers with news and gossip about Britain’s leading socialites, including actors, aristocrats, and athletes. It featured articles on American and European movie stars, such as **Anita Page** and **Marlene Dietrich**; on sports figures, such as tennis champion, **Kathleen McKane Godfree**; and on political leaders, including **Winston Churchill**. It also included contributions from influential theatre critics, such as **James Agate**, as well as illustrations by artists, such as **Henry Mayo Bateman**, the celebrated caricaturist. This collection yields valuable source material for students, educators, and researchers exploring British society during the early-to-mid twentieth century.

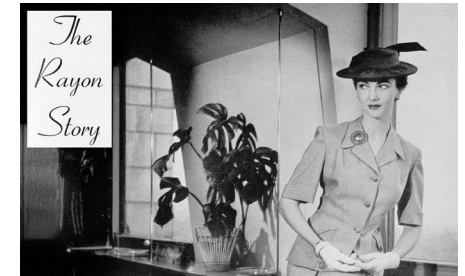


“

We wish our **TATLER** to take a permanent place in public esteem, living and dying week by week throughout the ages.”  
(*The Tatler*, 3 July, 1901).



*The Tatler* was named after Richard Steele’s older publication (1709–11). Shorter aimed for lasting impact, publishing weekly to earn the public’s support.



*The Tatler* spotlighted high fashion, reporting on trends in London and Paris. It printed a plethora of clothing advertisements and even addressed sustainability concerns.

### Key Data

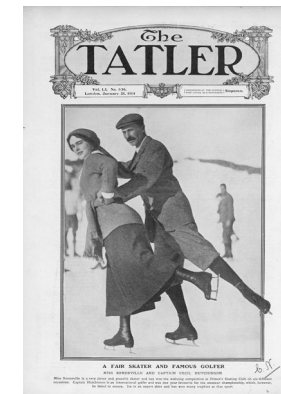
Released by BOA: 2022

Coverage Covers: 1901–1965

Volume Count: 65

Document Count: 3,277

Image Count: 213,211





## The Bystander, 1903–1940

Discover the attitudes, interests, and leisure activities of Britain's social elite at a time of profound cultural and social change.

*The Bystander* was established in 1903 by George Holt Thomas, the son of illustrator, social reformer, and founder of *The Graphic*, William Luson Thomas. In 1940, *The Bystander* merged with its sister title, *The Tatler*. It thus became known as *The Tatler and Bystander*. Much like its successor, *The Bystander* focused on British “high society”, appealing to a conservative, affluent readership. Supplying light-hearted reading, it featured articles on fashion, theatre, and sports, reflecting everyday life amongst Britain's social elite, its coverage typically defined by a suitably whimsical, satirical tone. This collection includes over 122,000 images collated from nearly 2,000 issues of *The Bystander*, published between December 1903 and October 1940.

Within its pages, one could find the latest gossip on the aristocracy, advice on antiques, and reports on the fishing and hunting seasons. It also provided a platform for some of the most influential writers and artists of the day, publishing short stories by celebrated authors, such as Daphne du Maurier and Hector Hugh Munro—better known by his pseudonym “Saki”—as well as contributions from cartoonist and humourist, Bruce Bairnsfather, notably his popular “Old Bill” cartoons. *The Bystander* yields exciting and valuable material for those working in the fields of literary studies, the history of art, and social history. It is likewise a rich resource for those exploring the themes of colonialism, ethnicity, and race in modern history.

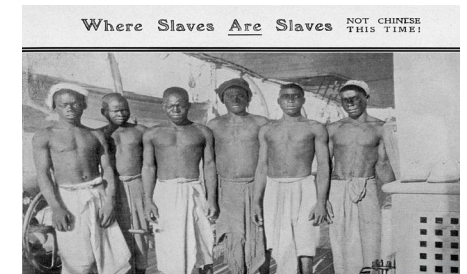


“

*The Bystander shall not be glanced through and then thrown away, but read as well.*  
(*The Bystander*, 9 December, 1903).



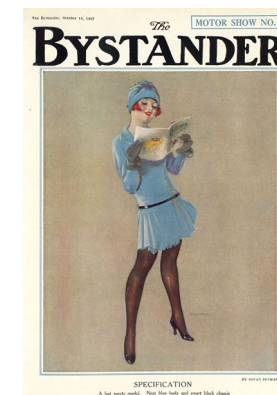
Bairnsfather's “Old Bill” cartoons captured the humour and resilience of soldiers during the Great War. His work grants key insights into the British outlook during the conflict.



Despite its jovial, satirical tone, *The Bystander* was supportive of the British establishment and empire, perpetuating xenophobic stereotypes and even trivialising slavery.

### Key Data

Released by BOA: 2023  
Coverage Covers: 1903–1940  
Volume Count: 38  
Document Count: 1,849  
Image Count: 122,841





## Illustrated War News, 1914–1918 and 1939

Observe the transformation of modern warfare for combatants and those behind the front lines.

Released during the First World War, *The Illustrated War News (IWN)* was an offshoot of the *ILN*. Published weekly between 1914 and 1918, the *IWN* re-appeared, briefly, throughout November 1939, the opening year of the Second World War. Staunchly patriotic, its coverage related to military matters, focusing on Britain's armed forces and national defence. The *IWN* covered a range of topics, from new military technologies to humanitarian aid efforts, from armament manufacturing to the experiences of Prisoners of War. It also highlighted the often overlooked roles of animals on the front lines and in the rear-guard. It reported on multiple fronts—air, land, and sea—and on key theatres of conflict, including Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

The paper portrayed all of this through a combination of full-page illustrations and photographs. This collection includes over 9,000 images from 195 issues of the *IWN*, published between August 1914 and April 1918, and in November 1939. The paper featured work by many well-known war artists, such as Richard Caton Woodville Jr., Henry Charles Seppings Wright, Charles Eddowes Turner, and Bryan de Grineau. This collection sheds light on the British war efforts and their portrayal in the media. It illuminates modern warfare and offers insights into how conflict was experienced by civilians and combatants. It will benefit those interested in colonialism, military history, and social and cultural history.

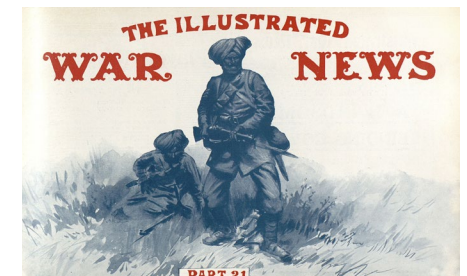


“

Buy “*THE ILLUSTRATED WAR NEWS*” and you will find every page of the greatest interest, beautifully reproduced . . . ”  
(*The Bystander*, 15 November, 1939).



The *IWN* showcases the diverse roles that women played during the World Wars, including their work in the armed forces, in munition factories, and their humanitarian efforts.



It reveals the participation of people of colour and colonial soldiers in British and Allied forces, including Algerians, Māori, and Caribbean and Indian volunteers.

### Key Data

Released by BOA: 2023

Coverage Covers: 1914–1939

Volume Count: 6

Document Count: 195

Image Count: 9,176





**Britannia and Eve, 1926–1957**

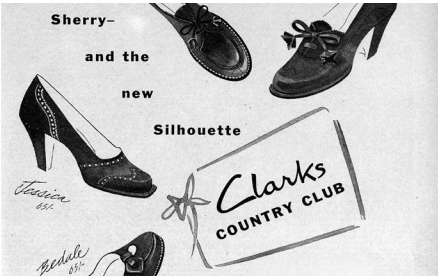
A window onto the changing role of the “modern woman” in early-to-mid twentieth century Britain.

Formed in 1929, following a merger between *Eve: The Lady’s Pictorial* (established in 1926) and *Britannia* (established in 1928), *Britannia and Eve* was one of the various “sister” titles owned by *The Illustrated London News* (ILN). *Britannia and Eve* marketed itself to a predominantly female readership, especially to wealthy and conservative women. Throughout its run, it maintained a particular emphasis upon fashion, beauty, and the home, featuring contributions from some of the most influential female artists and writers of the time. This collection contains over **35,000 images from more than 350 issues of *Britannia and Eve*** and its predecessors, *Eve: The Lady’s Pictorial* and *Britannia*, published between June 1926 and January 1957.

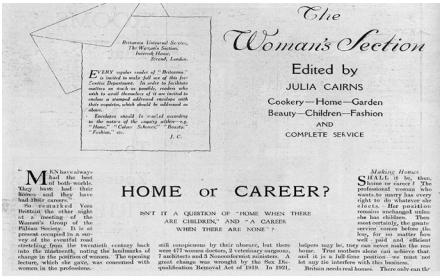
Unlike other ILN periodicals, *Britannia and Eve* appeared monthly. It was therefore longer, with **each issue often exceeding 100 pages**. It became well-known for the quality of its illustrations and for its wide-ranging content. For example, it **printed articles and stories by the esteemed writer, Laura Troubridge**, author of *The Book of Etiquette* (1926), which emerged as an important text amongst young, upper-class Britons. *Britannia and Eve* also featured contributions by **Joanna Cannan**, a popular author of children’s fiction and detective novels, and by the diarist, politician, and arts patron, **Violet Bonham Carter**. Given its popularity, eclecticism, and influence, *Britannia and Eve* provides significant insights into key facets of modern social history.



“
 The most beautiful, witty, and well-informed magazine British journalism has yet produced.”
 (Britannia and Eve, 26 April, 1929).



Britannia and Eve featured adverts targeting affluent readers, promoting brands still familiar today, such as Boots, Clarks, Debenhams, Kodak, Rowntree’s, and Schweppes.



The magazine surveyed contemporary fashion trends, as well as critical social debates of the mid-twentieth century, such as those surrounding women’s roles at home and at work.

Key Data

Released by BOA: 2023

Coverage Covers: 1929–1957

Volume Count: 30

Document Count: 354

Image Count: 35,520





London Life, 1965–1966

Discover the social and cultural transformation of Britain during the “Swinging Sixties”.

Launched in 1965, *London Life* was a reincarnation of *The Tatler* (1901–1965). *London Life* was a radical departure from its predecessor, which catered to a wealthy, conservative readership. Its successor endeavored to “reflect all aspects of the life of London”. In Britain, the 1960s were an era of profound social and cultural change, witnessing significant developments in gender relations, fashion, music, and attitudes towards drugs and sex. Throughout its brief existence, *London Life* proved adept at conveying the spirit of the “Swinging Sixties” in the world’s “capital of cool”. Encompassing over 4,000 images, this collection contains 63 issues, published between October 1965 and December of the following year.

*London Life* reported on music, cinema, sexuality, and the thriving nightlife of London’s West End. Its pages reflected the increasingly multicultural nature of British society during the mid-1960s, highlighting the diversity of the capital’s restaurant scene and the emergence of a more eclectic media landscape and audience. It featured interviews with cultural icons, such as Paul McCartney and Mick Jagger, as well as contributions from rising stars, such as the supermodel, Jean Shrimpton, and the popular entertainer, Anita Harris.

*London Life* remains emblematic of 1960s counterculture, offering key insights into Britain’s cultural revolution and the rise of the “permissive society”.

Key Data

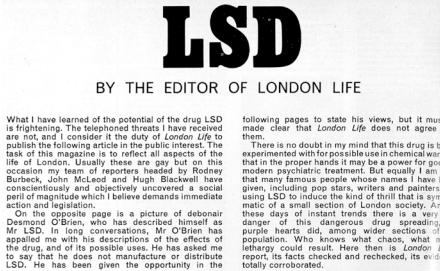
- Released by BOA: 2022
- Coverage Covers: 1965–1966
- Volume Count: 2
- Document Count: 63
- Image Count: 4,008



“The task of this magazine is to reflect all aspects of the life of London.” (London Life, 19 March, 1966).



With articles on social issues, such as urban poverty and teenage pregnancy, *London Life* showcased the glamour of the 1960s, whilst also spotlighting ongoing inequality.



*London Life* documented the hedonism of the city’s club scene and counterculture. Articles discussed London’s “first psychedelic club” and debates surrounding LSD.

