History Page

1940s

Film Collection

During the 1940s, the British Council was a very different organisation operating in a very different political and social climate. As part of its programme then it was concerned to promote an idea of ‘Britain and Britishness’ – and did so by becoming an enthusiastic commissioner of documentary films. Over 120 films were produced as 'cultural propaganda' to counteract anything the Nazis might throw out and to refute the idea that ours was a country stuck in the past. These films were designed to showcase Britain to the rest of the world, at a time when Britain itself was under attack.

Seen by millions of people in over 100 countries worldwide from the 1940's to 1960's, they present an historic snapshot of Britain, portraying its industry, its landscapes, and its people.