



Press Release
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Exhibition reveals the serious side of Heath Robinson – and uncovers a lost heyday of literary illustration

- Heath Robinson is best known for his humorous illustrations – but saw himself as a serious artist, illustrating stories by literary greats of his time
- Exhibition reveals how illustrators adapted to important changes in printing technology
- The show, at the Heath Robinson Museum in Pinner, celebrates an era when illustration of literary magazines was at its height

He's best known for his illustrations of imaginary machines that execute simple tasks in amusingly complex ways – but Heath Robinson had a serious side, as a new exhibition demonstrates.

The exhibition, titled *Modernist Magazine Illustration: Heath Robinson's Artwork for Short Stories and Magazine Covers*, lifts the lid on Robinson's illustrations for Nash's Pall Mall Magazine and Good Housekeeping Magazine. The illustrations were published between 1925 and 1936, giving Robinson a respite from the need to be funny all of the time.

The work includes illustrations for stories and articles by many of the leading authors of the time, including Laurence Housman, JB Priestley, John Masefield, HG Wells, AJ Cronin, and Richmal Crompton.

At this time, Robinson's illustrative style reflected significant changes to printing technology, which had transformed possibilities for illustrators.

Nash's Pall Mall Magazine and Good Housekeeping Magazine were sister publications, both produced in the UK by Hearst's National Magazine Company. Nash's Pall Mall Magazine was a literary magazine while Good

Housekeeping was (and still is) a lifestyle magazine covering a range of topics.

They were published in a larger format than typical British magazines and were printed on a new type of printing press that had two sets of cylinders. These technological advances meant that illustrations could be printed in black and white, with one colour.

“In response, Robinson developed a new and modern style of illustration that took advantage of both the page size and the addition of a colour to black and white drawings,” says exhibition curator Geoffrey Beare. “He was also very adept at combining dramatic illustrations with story text on a double-page spread.”

The exhibition brings together 18 of Heath Robinson’s original illustrations in the style he developed at the time. These are accompanied by illustrations in a similar style by his contemporary Leslie Ilingworth, and by the inclusion of several original magazines from the period.

“This exhibition celebrates literary magazines of the 1920s and 30s, and the illustrators who enhanced them, within the context of a developing print technology impacting artists’ styles,” says assistant curator Hannah Whyte. “Artists like Heath Robinson were highly creative in adapting their artistic styles to the technology of the time, which posed restrictions while also adding new possibilities.

“To some extent, this is a lost art: Illustrations adorning stories, articles and covers were part of the culture surrounding literary magazines, an art form specific to the period that we do not see much of nowadays.”

The exhibition runs from March 30 until June 23 at The Heath Robinson Museum, Pinner Memorial Park, [50 West End Lane, Pinner HA5 1AE](https://www.heathrobinsonmuseum.org).

www.heathrobinsonmuseum.org

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NOTES TO EDITORS

For all press enquiries, please contact Jamie White as detailed below.

Museum Opening Hours:

Thursday – Sunday from 11am to 4pm

Open Easter Monday, April 1

Admission

Special Exhibition entry is included in the standard cost of museum entry.

Tickets can be purchased on walk-in or prebooked online at the [Heath Robinson Museum Website](http://www.heathrobinsonmuseum.org), www.heathrobinsonmuseum.org.

Social Media

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter: @heathrobinsonmuseum

ABOUT THE HEATH ROBINSON MUSEUM

Heath Robinson lived nearby in Pinner from 1908-18, some of the most productive years of his life.

Situated in Pinner's Memorial Park next to the historic West House, the Museum complex has created a thriving artistic, cultural, and community hub in the region.

The Museum provides a permanent home for the Heath Robinson collection of original artwork and other artifacts. In addition to the permanent exhibition chronicling the life and works of Heath Robinson, the Museum has a rolling program of Special Exhibitions. These focus on highlights of the museum's extensive collection of William Heath Robinson's work as well as showcasing other renowned artists and illustrators.

www.heathrobinsonmuseum.org

Registered Charity Number: 1086567

Heath Robinson Museum, Pinner Memorial Park, [50 West End Lane](#), [Pinner HA5 1AE](#)



Illustration by Heath Robinson for *I'll Tell You Everything* by JB Priestly and Gerald Bullett, published in *Nash's Pall Mall Magazine*, 1932



Illustration for *Dickens Is Not Dead* by John van Durten, published in *Nash's Pall Mall Magazine*, 1934