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Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations.



The Great Front Door of the Hall; Paxton's; Crystal Palace enclosed full grown trees in Hyde Park.

The **Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations** or **The Great Exhibition** (sometimes referred to as the **Crystal Palace Exhibition** in reference to the temporary structure in which it was held), an [international exhibition](#), took place in [Hyde Park](#), London, from 1 May to 15 October 1851. It was the first in a series of [World's Fairs](#), exhibitions of [culture](#) and [industry](#) that became popular in the 19th century. Famous people of the time attended, including [Charles Darwin](#), [Karl Marx](#), [Samuel Colt](#) and the writers [Charlotte Brontë](#), [Charles Dickens](#), [Lewis Carroll](#), [George Eliot](#), [Alfred Tennyson](#) and [William Makepeace Thackeray](#).

BACKGROUND.

The Great Exhibition of Products of French Industry organised in Paris, France, from 1798 to 1849 were precursors to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations was organised by [Prince Albert](#), [Henry Cole](#), Francis Henry, [George Wallis](#), [Charles Dilke](#) and other members of the [Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce](#) as a celebration of modern [industrial](#) technology and design. It was arguably a response to the highly effective [French Industrial Exposition of 1844](#): indeed, its prime motive was for Britain to make "clear to the world its role as industrial leader".^[1] Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's consort, was an enthusiastic promoter of the self-financing exhibition; Although the Great Exhibition was a platform on which countries from around the world could display their achievements, Britain sought to prove its own superiority.

A special building, nicknamed [The Crystal Palace](#), or "The Great [Shalimar](#)",^[4] was built to house the show. It was designed by [Joseph Paxton](#) with support from [structural engineer Charles Fox](#). Six million people—equivalent to a third of the entire population of Britain at the time—visited the Great Exhibition. The average daily attendance was 42,831 with a peak attendance of 109,915 on 7 October.^[6] The event made a surplus of £186,000 (£18,370,000 in 2015),^[7] which was used to found the [Victoria and Albert Museum](#), the [Science Museum](#) and the [Natural History Museum](#). The remaining surplus was used to set up an educational trust to provide grants and scholarships for industrial research; it continues to do so today.^[8]

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