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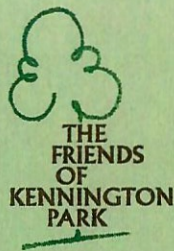
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*The Friends of Kennington Park is a voluntary group working hard to improve the park. We cannot continue its transformation without your urgent support, so please join or make a donation now. And help us to create a park to be proud of.*

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# Bricks and Water

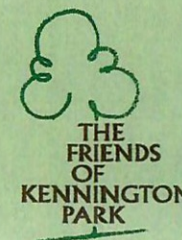
*The stories behind Kennington Park's buildings,  
monuments and fountains*



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by Rob Pateman

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## Written in stone

Kennington Park is a beautiful open space. But not all of the features that make it so distinctive are from the natural world.

It boasts several buildings, monuments and fountains that are both ornament to the park and testament to its history. They reflect moments of national importance and the needs of local people, marking the changes in both.

This booklet explores their stories.

## The stamp of authority

In 1848, thousands of Chartists assembled on Kennington Common demanding electoral reform. Realising that such a large meeting space

so close to Westminster was a potential threat, the authorities enclosed the land to form south London's first public park.

Prince Consort Lodge was originally built for the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the command, and expense, of Prince Albert, President of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes.

Designed by Henry Roberts, the Lodge showcased model houses designed 'for the occupation of four families of the class of manufacturing and mechanical operatives, who usually reside in towns.'

After the Exhibition, the building was meant to be used as a gate lodge on Primrose Hill, but it was relocated to Kennington Park because of the park's association with the Chartists. It was a very visible piece of evidence that action was being taken –

*This plan of the Lodge shows that a surprising number of rooms and facilities were fitted into a relatively small space. The total living space for each family was around 40 sq metres – considered quite spacious by the standards of the day.*

*Prince Consort Lodge opened to the public in 1853, a year before the park did. It is a legacy from the Chartist rally on Kennington Common, and marks the Common's transition into Kennington Park.*

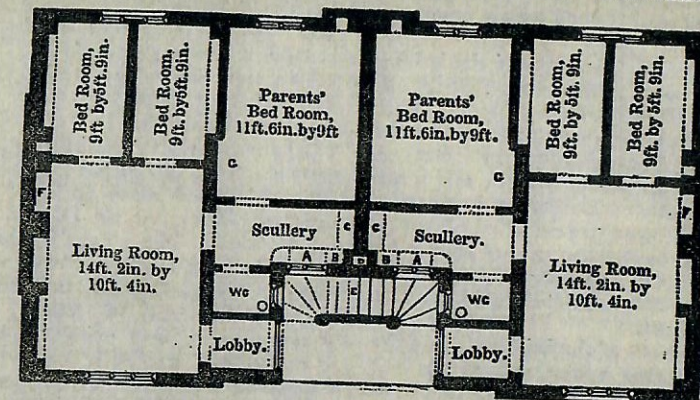


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## THE BUILDER.

311

### PLAN OF MODEL HOUSES FOR FOUR FAMILIES.



SCALE OF 0 5 10 20 30 40 FEET.

#### REFERENCES.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| A, Sink, with coal-box under.                   | E, Staircase of slate, with dust-place under. |
| B, Plate-rack, over entrance to dust-shaft, D.  | F, Cupboard warmed from back of fire-place.   |
| C, Meat-safe, ventilated through hollow bricks. | G, Linen closet in this recess, if required.  |



and by Royalty no less – to improve the lot of the masses.

### All mod cons

By the standards of the day, the building offered spacious and efficient accommodation at low cost.

There were two tenements on each floor, each arranged on the same plan. This meant the design could be used over two or four storeys with no alterations necessary, other than the strengthening of the supporting walls.

The layout of the model houses fitted a lot into a relatively small space – but they were considered quite spacious at the time.

Each dwelling was approached from the central open staircase and entered via a private lobby leading into the living room. There were three separate bedrooms, each with its own access 'to provide for that separation which, with a family, is so essential to morality and decency.'

The individual rooms boasted a number of refinements. The living room had a cupboard heated by warm air and a picture rail and the scullery had a coal bin, plate rack, sink, ventilated meat safe and rubbish shaft. Most luxurious of all was the flushing water closet.

### Revolutionary by design

Hollow bricks used for the walls and partitions were laid in parallel courses without headers, creating such a smooth surface that internal plastering wasn't necessary. They also ensured 'dryness, warmth, durability, security from fire and deadening of sound' and were twenty five percent cheaper than normal bricks. The total cost of the four dwellings was £458.



*One of three mosaics at the top of the Lodge that often go unobserved. They feature the date of the Great Exhibition and the initials of Victoria and Albert.*



No timber was used in the first floor or the roof, improving the building's resistance to fire.

### A working building

In 1859, the Lodge became the first "café" in the park, when the park keeper was given permission to build a small fixture to the rear porch from which his wife sold ginger beer, lemonade, soda water, biscuits, fruit and sweetmeats.

It has since been used as a home for the park attendants, for park stores and offices and dressing rooms for sports teams. It was given a new lease of life in 2003 when it became the offices for national tree charity, Trees for Cities, who still occupy it today.

*Prince Consort Lodge is more than just a model; it has influenced housing design and construction around the world. Eighty four dwellings, based on the original 1851 design, and built at Cowley Gardens in Stepney still survive. Others, that owe much to the original design, were also built in Hertford, Warrington, The Hague, St Petersburg and Brussels.*



## A cup of tea and a slice of cake

As soon as it opened the park drew large numbers of visitors but there was nowhere for them to get any refreshments.

The park keeper's wife spotted the gap in the market and did a roaring trade from the back porch of the Lodge, until Joseph Gatti was given permission to erect a purpose built marquee in 1861. It's possible he was related to Carlo Gatti, a Swiss entrepreneur who first made ice cream available to the general public and who ran a string of low cost cafés and two well known music halls.

The café was 'a substantial wooden structure supported on brick piers about five feet apart, with two windows and glass doors in front and a glazed door at each end.'

*The first purpose built café is just visible here, to the right of the Slade Fountain, with an eager queue of thirsty gents waiting outside. This picture was taken looking into the park from the south-western gate.*



But in 1888 the lease was withdrawn for non-payment of rent and the building demolished the following year.

## Café days

The council saw the need for a larger café than Mr Gatti's marquee and turned to its own architects' department. The result was the Arts and Crafts style café that still exists today.

It opened in Spring 1897, with a Mr Cameron providing hot and cold drinks, biscuits and cakes. When it closed its doors for several years in the 1990s, due to wranglings over the lease, it fell into disrepair before refurbishment by the current leaseholder brought it back into use in 2002. A wooden terrace was added soon after and the café has once again become a much loved part of the park.

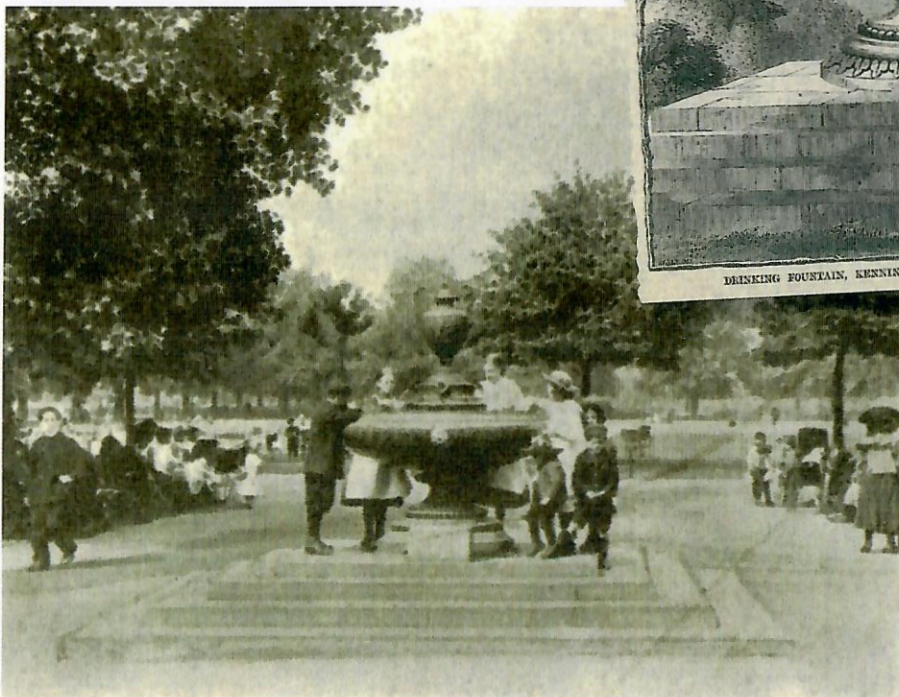
*Today's Arts and Crafts style café opened in 1897, making it one of the earliest refreshment houses still in use today.*





## Thirsty work

The café wasn't only the only source of refreshment in the park. With the new gymnasium opening in 1861 (now the site of the children's playground), there were lots of thirsty children in need of a drink. The only place they could get a free drink however, was a drinking trough for horses and cattle nearby.



*A few years after Slade's death, his widow visited the park and was appalled to see local children climbing all over the fountain. By 1910, when this picture was taken, behaviour had obviously improved.*

Local resident Felix Slade offered to pay for a drinking fountain. Slade was a proctor of Doctors Commons (lawyer) and had inherited a fortune from his father. He was an avid art collector with a particular passion for glass; in his Will he left 944 pieces of glass to the British Museum. He also founded scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge and played a major part in the creation of the Slade School of Fine Art.



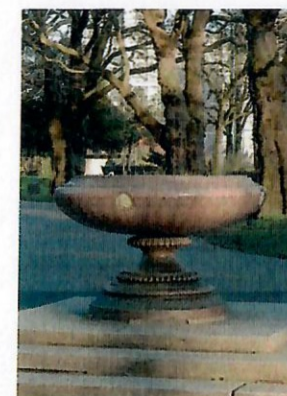
## An ornamental oasis

The design depicted figures from the Old Testament. It was adapted by Charles Driver, a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Architects, from the work of an Italian artist included in 1851's Great Exhibition.

The figures of Hagar and Ishmael were included in bas relief while those of Jacob and Rebecca formed part of the decoration of the huge vase placed on the top of the fountain.

It is unclear when it ceased to be a working fountain, but time has taken its toll. The Hagar and Ishmael relief was stolen in 1863 but the vase itself fared better, surviving until the 1950s.

Although it is unlikely ever to be a working fountain again, specialist cleaning might be possible at some point in the future.



## Legs crossed

Having made provision for park users to quench their thirst, the authorities overlooked the inevitable consequence: the need for toilets. And when they realised their mistake, women weren't considered. The unit placed at the St Agnes Place gate in 1868 had four urinals only.

The ladies had a long time to wait too; the women's toilet block in the north field didn't appear until 1890. Six years later, the urinal unit was replaced by a red brick block that was converted to children's facilities in 2006, when the playground moved to its present site. At the same time, the women's block was converted to accommodate facilities for both sexes.



*The base of the fountain was 'a bowl of Aberdeen red granite, highly polished, and inlaid with medallions of coloured marble' showing Slade's monogram (above), coat of arms and the date. The whole piece was placed on four granite steps.*



## The lost treasure

Of all the man-made features in the park, the Tinworth Fountain has fared worst of all. The 'stump' visible today, tucked away near a little used entrance to the park, is a sad remnant of a once glorious work of art by a highly esteemed sculptor.

It was a large ornamental fountain made with the unglazed buff-coloured terracotta used by the Royal Doulton Pottery for making garden ornaments. Designed by John Sparkes, headmaster of Lambeth School of Art, it was exhibited at the 1872 International Exhibition in Kensington.

Its central shaft was covered with bas relief decoration and supported a fountain bowl surmounted by a taller, slimmer column. On the top of this

*The Tinworth Fountain in its original position, between Prince Consort Lodge and the Gymnasium (where the children's play-ground is today).*



*Tinworth's work, usually terra-cotta panels, shows biblical scenes, reflecting his own fundamentalist beliefs.*

*Examples of his work can still be seen in York Minster, the Museum of Garden History and above the*

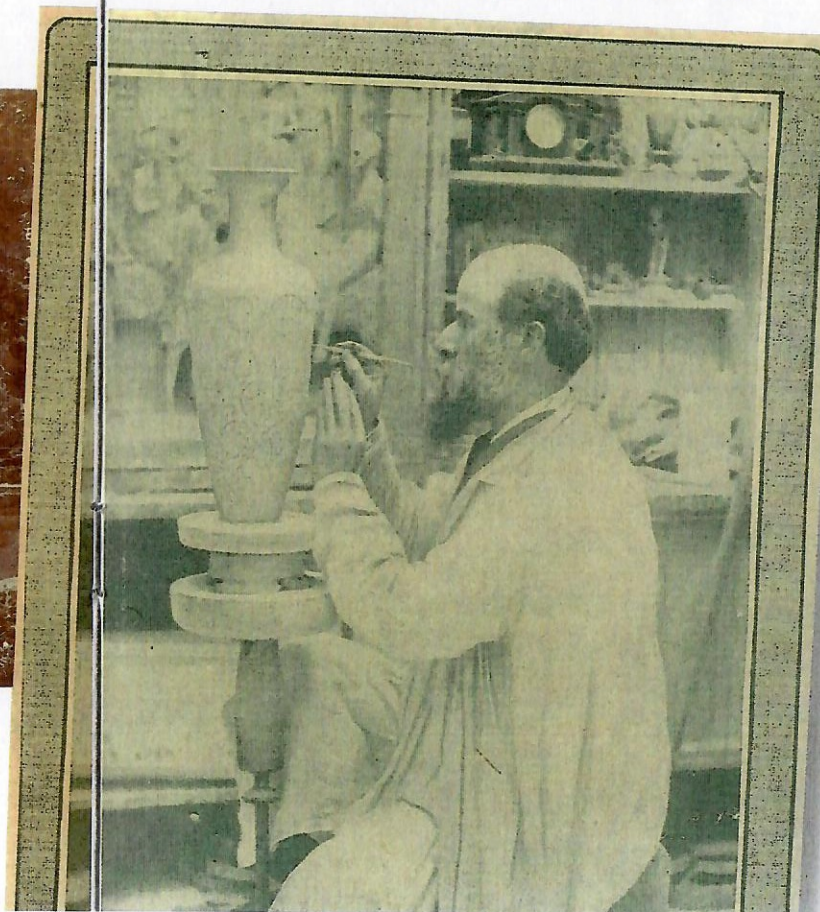
*former Doulton factory door in Black Prince Road. George Tinworth (right) at work in the Doulton studio.*

column was a sculpture featuring a man carrying a cross and a woman and child.

The sculpture, called the Pilgrimage of Life, was created by renowned sculptor George Tinworth.

## Local boy makes good

Born in 1843, Tinworth grew up in extreme poverty in Walworth. The son of a wheelwright, Tinworth harboured dreams of being a sculptor from an early age and, in 1861, started evening classes at Lambeth School of Art. Three years later he entered the Royal Academy, and exhibited his first Royal Academy piece in 1866. From there he became resident sculptor at Royal Doulton's



*The Pilgrimage of Life, the sculpture at the top of the fountain.*



Lambeth factory, a position he held for the rest of his life.

The Pilgrimage of Life was donated by Henry Doulton and the fountain became the centrepiece of the park's elaborate panelled garden in 1872. Bomb damage during World War II meant its bowl had to be removed; it has not functioned as a fountain since. The sculpture sustained some damage but was lost to vandalism in 1981.

Restoration would be a complex and expensive task; specialists have advised that cleaning it might do more harm than good.

## Marching home

The remnants of the Tinworth Fountain do little to honour its creator, but the park does have an impressive memorial to local soldiers who lost their lives during World War I and II.

In 1923 London County Council granted permission to the 1/24th and 2/24th Battalions The London Regiment (The Queen's) to erect a memorial to their officers and men who fell in the Great War. It was unveiled in 1924.

The memorial, twelve feet high and made of Portland stone, shows the regiment's badge of a lamb and crossed sword, surrounded by a wreath. The inscription names the battalions and where they fought – France, Flanders, Salonika and Palestine.

Additional plaques dedicated to 1/7th and 2/7th Battalions were added to the sides of the memorial later, as were battle honours from World War II, although the date they were added is unclear.

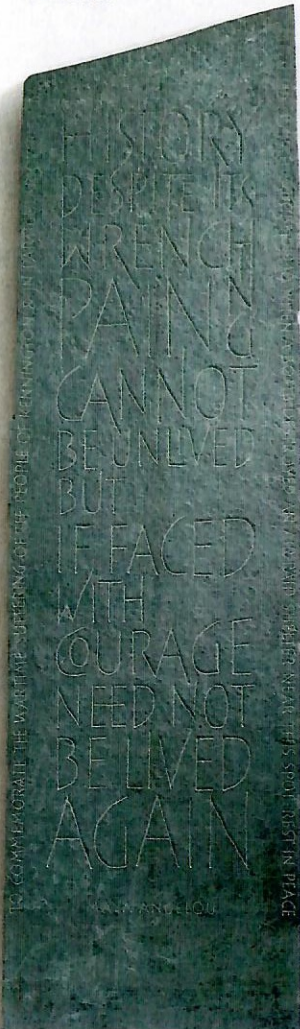
The memorial still provides a focus for local people, the British Legion and the Territorial Army during the annual Remembrance Day service.



*The war memorial originally featured a sculpture, perhaps of bronze, of a collection of weapons – machine gun, rifle, bayonet, hand grenades – draped with a flag or ceremonial colours. This has since been lost, although when and how is not known.*



*The civilian memorial recalls the park's darkest moment. Television coverage of the unveiling spread the news far and wide. Many survivors and relatives of the victims came forward to attend a special service to mark the 70th anniversary in 2010.*



## Remembered

In World War II the north field was turned over to vegetable allotments and the south field to a trench air raid shelter. On 15th October 1940, part of the shelter took a direct hit from a bomb.

No official death toll was announced at the time but the figure is now believed to be 104 fatalities. Most of the victims were women and children, the youngest aged just three months. It was Lambeth's worst World War II incident.

Their sacrifice went unacknowledged until the Friends of Kennington Park resolved to install a permanent memorial in the park in 2002. The stone, funded by Lambeth Opportunities Fund, was unveiled on October 14th 2006.

Made of Caithness stone, the memorial was designed and created by local sculptor Richard Kindersley, who also created the memorial to London's civilian casualties at St Paul's Cathedral.

In 2010, it was the focus of a special service marking the 70th anniversary of the tragedy.

## Changing landscape

The park's other buildings reflect changes in its management and the local environment.

By the 1930s, Prince Consort Lodge, home to the park keeper, was in need of significant internal repair and refurbishment. The cost of bringing it up to the standards of the day was significant, so in 1938, a purpose built Park Keeper's Lodge was built in the north east corner of the park.

It housed the park keeper until the 1990s, when council cutbacks abolished the position. Left empty, the Lodge soon became home to a

succession of squatters who remained there until eviction in 2005. It currently hosts a community bee keeping project, and the honey it produces is on sale in the park's café. In a taste test, a London Standard journalist described the honey as smelling and tasting of jasmine and gave it four out of five.

The extension of the park to the east by eighteen acres in the 1960s meant that more people and equipment were needed to maintain it. The Park Depot built behind the café, opened in 1964, providing offices and space for stores and vehicles.



A purpose built wooden shelter was erected in the 1930s, and between 1950 and 1963, an electricity sub-station and ventilation shaft for the Northern Line was built on the park's western boundary.

Kennington Park's man-made features are as vital a part of the park as the plants, trees and shrubs – and deserve the same respect, care and protection. Without it, they could suffer the same fate as the Tinworth Fountain. We can ensure that doesn't happen so they can survive and brighten up the park for generations to come.

*The Park Keeper's Lodge (below left), seen from the corner of St Agnes Place – currently home to some busy bees, source of Kennington Park honey.*



*Three in a row – the Tinworth Fountain, Civilian Memorial and Prince Consort Lodge.*