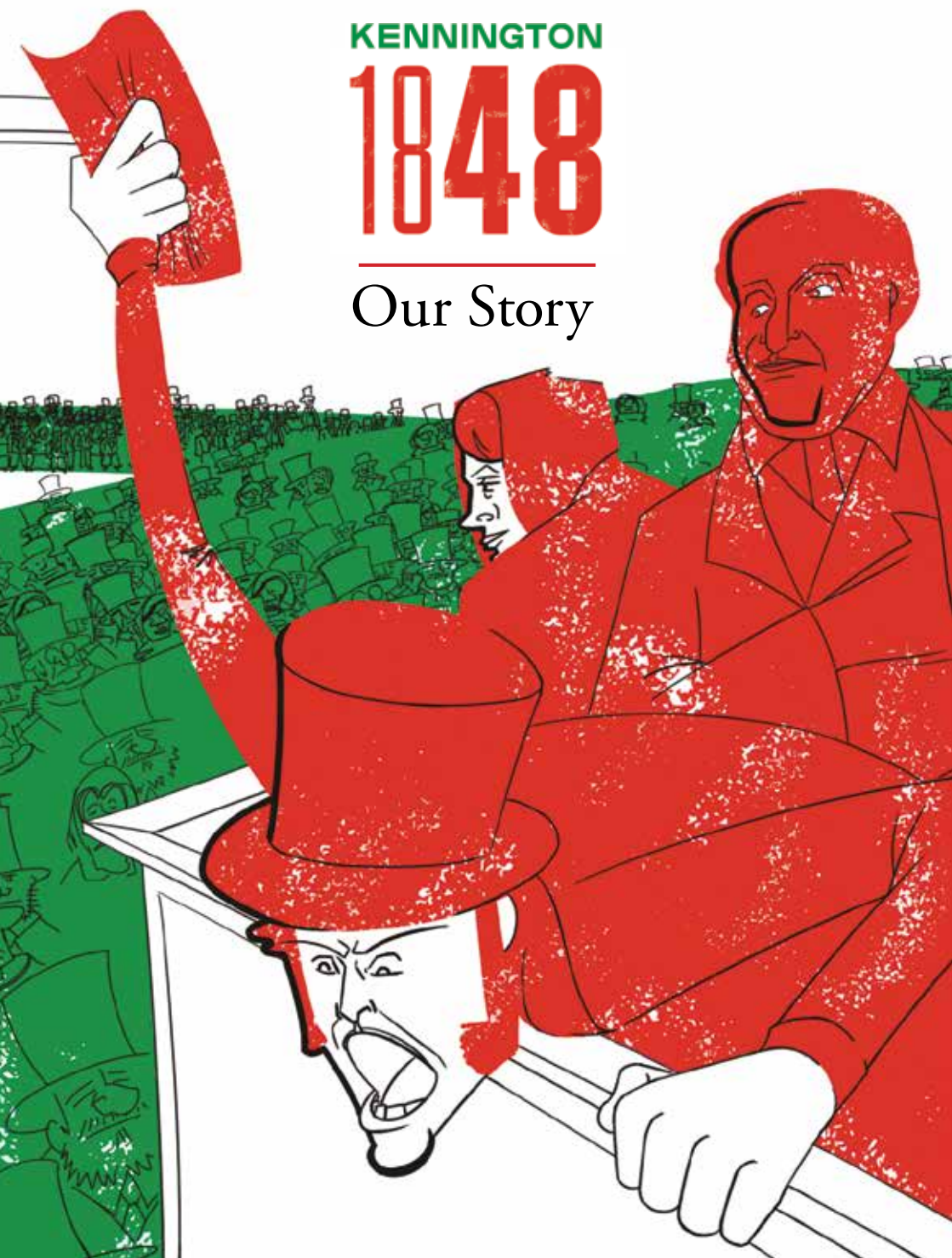


KENNINGTON

1848

Our Story



KENNINGTON

1848

Our Story

Dedicated to **Tom Collins** (1967 - 2019)
the voice of Feargus O'Connor for the
Kennington Chartist Project.

“Go on, conquering and to conquer,
until the People's Charter has gloriously
become the law of the land!”

The **Kennington Chartist Project** was initiated in 2018 by local residents, to celebrate the legacy of the 1848 Chartist rally on Kennington Common.

This first volume of **Kennington 1848** is called **Our Story**. It is an introduction to what happened in Kennington in 1848, and an account of our project in 2018.

The next volume of **Kennington 1848** is called **Another Look**. There, we explore in greater depth the people and place that contributed to this significant event.

The **Kennington Chartist Project** is supported by the Friends of Kennington Park, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the Lipman-Miliband Trust.



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and the Lipman-Miliband Trust



The Lipman-Miliband Trust

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In the spring
of 1848 as
revolution
and unrest
raged across
Europe ...



CHARTIST DEMONSTRATION!!

"PEACE and ORDER" is our MOTTO!

TO THE WORKING MEN OF LONDON.

Fellow Men,—The Press having misrepresented and vilified us and our intentions, the Demonstration Committee therefore consider it to be their duty to state that the grievances of us (the Working Classes) are deep and our demands just. We and our families are pining in misery, want, and starvation! We demand a fair day's wages for a fair day's work! We are the slaves of capital—we demand protection to our labour. We are political serfs—we demand to be free. We therefore invite all well disposed to join in our peaceful procession on

MONDAY NEXT, April 10,

As it is for the good of all that we seek to remove the evils under which we groan.

The following are the places of Meeting of THE CHARTISTS, THE TRADES, THE IRISH CONFEDERATE & REPEAL BODIES:

East Division on Stepney Green at 8 o'clock;
City and Finsbury Division on Clerkenwell
Green at 9 o'clock; West Division in Russell
Square at 9 o'clock; and the South Division
in Peckham Fields at 9 o'clock, and proceed
from thence to Kennington Common.

Signed on behalf of the Committee, JOHN ARNOTT, Sec.
(Signed and Sealed)

**Kennington Was at
the centre of the
fight for social
justice in Britain.**

CAUTION! KENNINGTON COMMON.

WHEREAS a MEETING is called to assemble on KENNINGTON COMMON, on MONDAY next, the 13th instant, and Information has been received that large bodies of Persons intend to proceed thence from Place to Place, whereby the peaceable Subjects of Her Majesty are likely to be alarmed, and the public Peace to be endangered:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That Persons will not be permitted to march or move in Procession through the Streets, in large Bodies, at any unseasonable hour.

AND CAUTION IS HEREBY GIVEN to all well-disposed Persons not to attend or join any such Procession.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN, that all necessary measures will be adopted to prevent Persons from marching or moving about in large Bodies, and effectually to protect the public Place, and to suppress any attempt at the Disturbance thereof.

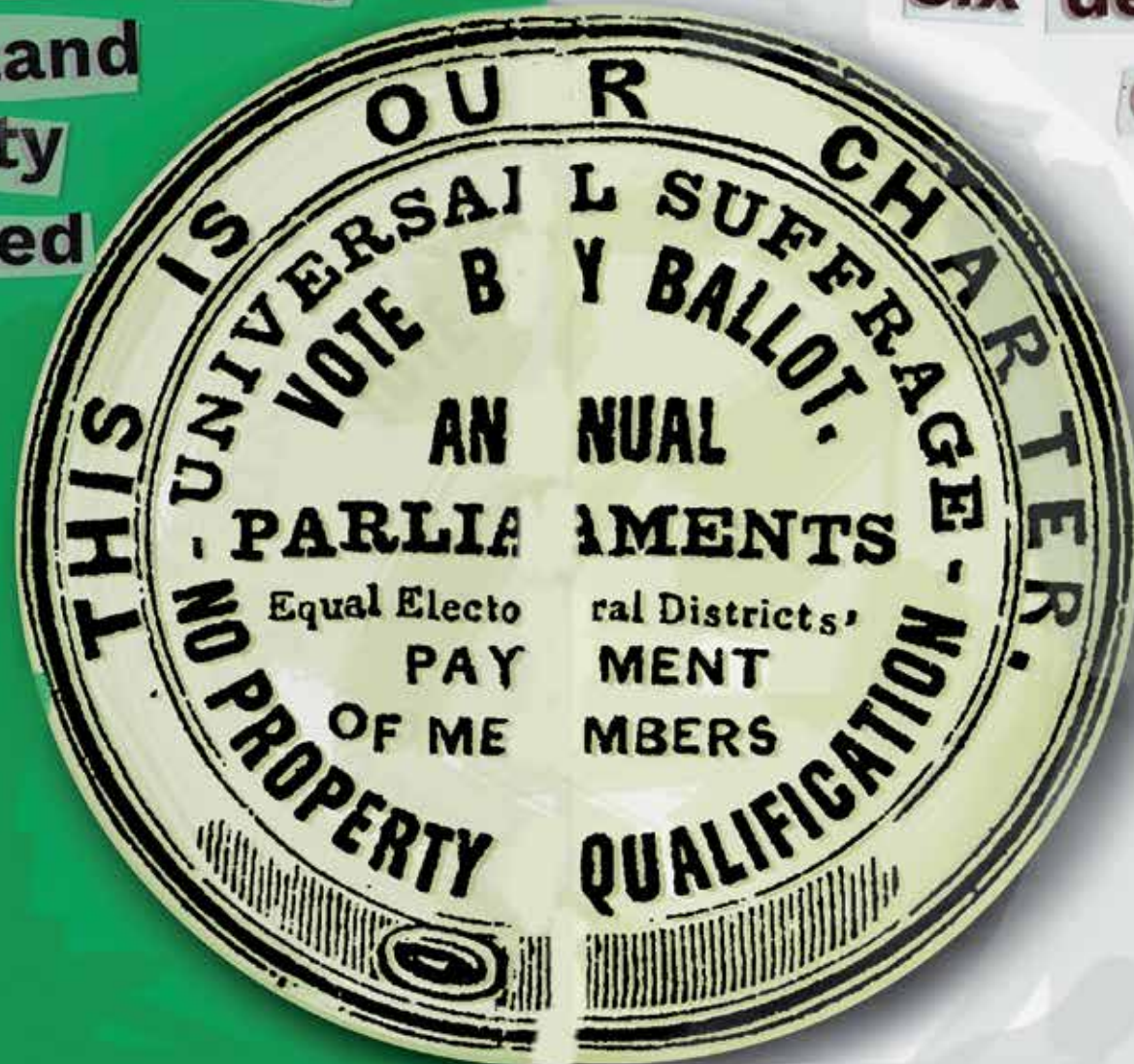
By Order of the Commissioners of the Police
of the Metropolis.



ON THE 10TH OF
APRIL 1848 TENS
OF THOUSANDS
OF PEOPLE
GATHERED ON
KENNINGTON
COMMON
DEMANDING THE
RIGHT TO
VOTE.

The Chartist movement was a popular campaign, at a time when only those with land and property were allowed to vote.

Working people came together behind the Charter's six demands for democratic reform.



© 2019 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

... and the radical black activist William Cuffay, later deported to Tasmania for plotting against the government.



The authorities feared

REVOLUTION!

They brought 8,000+
troops into the city, with
2 weeks' rations.

They signed up 85,000
volunteer special
constables.

The Bank of England,
British Museum and other
major buildings were
fortified with spikes,
sandbags and muskets.

The Queen was sent to the Isle
of Wight for her own safety.

The authorities took control
of the telegraph (imagine the
Prime Minister closing down
the internet today).

Major bridges were
barricaded...

The Chartists met at other outdoor spaces across London and marched to Kennington:



The crowds arrived on the Common with banners and flags flying.

The leadership were divided.

Cuffay wanted the march to continue to Parliament and was prepared to fight.

But Feargus O'Connor feared a massacre and agreed a compromise.

The Chartist petition was delivered to Parliament by a small delegation.

O'Connor addressed the crowd and called for calm. The crowd dispersed.

Some tried to force their way across the bridges, but violence that day was mostly averted.



The Six Points of the Charter and when they were achieved

THE
PEOPLE'S CHARTER;
BEING THE
OUTLINE OF AN ACT
TO PROVIDE FOR THE
JUST REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE OF
GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE
COMMONS' HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT:
EMBRACING THE PRINCIPLES OF
UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE,
NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION,
ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS,
EQUAL REPRESENTATION,
PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, AND VOTE BY BALLOT.

PREPARED BY A COMMITTEE OF TWELVE PERSONS,
SIX MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND SIX MEMBERS
OF THE LONDON WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION,
AND ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM.

May. 1838.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION,
BY H. HETHERINGTON, 126, STRAND;
SOLD BY CLEAVE, 1, SHOE LANE; WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD;
AND MAY BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION

To remove the ruling that only property owners could be MPs



Achieved: 1858

VOTE BY BALLOT.

Voting in secret at the ballot box,
so voters couldn't be threatened or bribed



Achieved: 1872

EQUAL REPRESENTATION,

To make electoral constituencies a fair size
for the number of people living there.



Achieved: 1885

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS,

So that not only rich people could afford to be MPs



Achieved: 1911

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE,

Initially only a 'vote for every man 21 years of age,
of sound mind, and not undergoing punishment for crime'.



Votes for all men (and some women): 1918
Votes for all achieved: 1928

ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS,

A general election every year!



Not achieved

Soon after the 1848 rally, the common was turned into a park.



The park was laid out for 'polite and civilised recreation'.

The 'enclosure' of the common took an act of parliament, supported by the vicar of St Mark's church and some local property owners.

The change gave the authorities greater control of the space.

People, activities, and political meetings considered 'undesirable' became easier to regulate.

Public debate was not allowed except by prior permission.



Kennington Park, S.E.

**In the late 20th Century
the park again became
a site of gathering and
protest including:**

Anti-Apartheid Assembly

Gay Pride

Irish Solidarity Movement

Protest Against Educational Cuts

Kurdistan Rally

Lambeth Fightback Rally

Promotion of Racial Equality

Queen's Regimental Association

National Union of Students Rally

Vietnamese Community Event

Dockers March

Youth Rights Campaign

Campaign for a Free Education

CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament)

Nigerian Democratic Assembly

Anti Poll Tax March

Methodist Women's Celebration

Campaign against Militarism

Integration Alliance (Disability Rights)

Trades Union Congress

Brixton Arts Festival

Brian Douglas March for Justice

Mayday March and Rally

Nigerian Socialist Hospitals

Refugee Council Festival

7th Day Adventists Pathfinders

African Liberation Support

Liverpool Dockers & Reclaim the Streets

Over the years local people have marked the anniversary of the 1848 rally with small events and publications.

1948

Wearside Echoes
Chartism Caught Hold
100 Years Ago

London Le Focus Won

1898

THE DUNDEE ADVERTISER
MONDAY, APRIL 11, 1898.

FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.
BY SPECIAL WIRE.

The attempt of Mr Herbert Stead, Warden of the Browning Settlement in Walworth, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Chartist demonstration on Kennington Common by a procession proved rather unfortunate. The procession proved rather unfortunate. The afternoon was wet, and the hour of assembly was not fixed till the day before. The result was that when the procession started from Walworth at half-past two it consisted of only some 25 or 30 persons, and it never increased. One youth carried a banner at the head of the small crowd, and another held aloft a sandwich board on which was printed "Jubilee of the Chartist Demonstration on Kennington Common." It was intended at one time that speeches should be delivered in the vicinity of the Park, but the weather prevented this, and after the procession marched along the Kennington Park Road it returned to Browning Settlement to a comfortable cup of tea.

Sir Henry Irving has purchased two plays by an American author. The great actor has a large stock of unwanted plays in his

1997

Kennington Park
The Birthplace of
People's Democracy

Stefan Szczelkun

1998

Return of the Common Spirit, Kennington Park, 10th April 1998

2008

THE SPRINGTIME OF THE PEOPLES

Celebrating the 160th ANNIVERSARY of the CHARTIST rally on KENNINGTON COMMON 10th April 1848

by Rob Paseman
Published by The Friends of Kennington Park, 2008

1948 & 1898 © The British Library | 1997 Stefan Szczelkun, later published by Pasi Tense | 1998 © Stefan Szczelkun | 2008 Cover image © Mary Evans Picture Library

However there is still no permanent monument to the 1848 rally in the park today...

2018

LIBERTY is NEAR!

#kennington1848

In the spring of 1848, as revolution and unrest raged across Europe, Kennington was at the centre of the fight for social justice in Britain. Tens of thousands of people gathered on Kennington Common on the 10th April, demanding the right to vote.

The Kennington Chartist Project celebrates our local park's dramatic place in the history of protest and democracy.

1848 - 2018

KENNINGTON CHARTIST PROJECT

In 2019, at a time of
#Brexit
#PeoplesVote
#Migrants
#MeToo
#5050Parliament
#BlackLivesMatter
#LGBTQ
#StopFundingHate
#Climate
and many other campaigns

while some fear the
breakdown of democratic
values

its time to ask...

What

is

the

legacy

of

Kennington 1848

today?

The Kennington Chartist Project

*“... the latest chapter of the
Kennington 1848 story”*

In 2017 a few local residents began talking about the upcoming 170th anniversary of the huge 1848 Chartist rally on Kennington Common. We formed a steering group, and sought the support of the Friends of Kennington Park, the Lipman-Miliband Trust and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In early 2018, the Kennington Chartist Project was born, and so began an intensive year of research, organisation, education and celebration.

The 170th Anniversary of the Great Chartist rally

On the 10th April 2018, the exact 170th anniversary of the great Chartist rally, the Kennington Chartist Project launched with a commemoration in the park. Four flag bearers symbolically recreated the 1848 march of the four divisions of London Chartists: from Russell Square, Clerkenwell Green, Stepney Green and Peckham Fields to Kennington Common. Our flag bearers carried banners emblazoned with Chartist slogans and declarations of solidarity with campaigns for under-represented people today. Local historian S I Martin spoke about William Cuffay's involvement in London Chartism, and Tom Collins gave a rousing rendition of Feargus O'Connor's famous 1848 speech which concluded “Go on, conquering and to conquer, until the People's Charter has gloriously become the law of the land!”

Workshops, walks and talks

Our workshops team was made up of local artists, a historian, a musician, a poet, and a story-teller. In 2018 we worked with a total of 90 children



from local primary schools, in intensive full-day workshops as part of their 'Rights and Respect Agenda' programme. Students from St Joseph's, Ashmole, Wyvil, Vauxhall and Herbert Morrison used archival material to write their own charter of demands. Then they created banners and sang songs, using the slogans they had devised. A separate series of youth workshops with Southside Young Leaders' Academy used spoken word and printmaking to explore historic fights for rights, and young people's concerns today.

We ran eight guided walks – several led by Marietta Crichton Stuart, historian and chair of the Friends, who through scrupulous research, has become an expert on the 1848 Rally. Walks by anarchist print project Past Tense and local artist/author Stefan Szczelkun brought radical perspectives. Gardener/activist Carole Wright led a Black History Month walk – her own reflections on radical local history, including the Rastafarian temple on St Agnes Place.

Among the six illustrated talks throughout the year, the renowned Chartist historian Malcolm Chase gave an engaging introduction to Chartism hosted by St Mark's Church, followed by S I Martin enthusing about William Cuffay; Katrina Navickas bringing London Chartism alive; and Dave Steele analysing the famous daguerreotype photo of the 1848 Rally, comparing the size of the crowd to festival crowds today. The essays in the second volume of *Kennington 1848: Another Look* are a further exploration of these themes.

Take part! A day of workshops, participation and action in Kennington Park

On 7th July 2018, hundreds of people came to Kennington Park for a vibrant day with banners, poetry, printmaking, debate and local history. This day was a culmination of the outreach and youth workshops that we had been running in and around Kennington. Young poets from Poetic Unity treated us to a blistering 'Personal Political' set. There was a colourful display of handmade union banners by veteran banner-maker Ed Hall, and an engaging debate about the legacy of Chartism today with journalist Paul Mason, Gail Cartmail of Unite union and Dr Katrina Navickas of the University of Hertfordshire. The choir of St Mark's

Church sang Chartist songs, and there was a chance to print your own poster of the famous engraving of the 1848 Rally. Young people from Southside Young Leaders' Academy learned about black Chartist leader and orator William Cuffay, and delivered their own speeches. Event volunteers – 28 in total – worked hard on the day to make it all possible.

Researching local Chartists

Our volunteer research group has been delving into the Lambeth Archives, researching local people who paid into the Chartist Land Company, an 1840s lottery scheme to provide a plot of land and a cottage in the country for working people. Through the Land Plan we've discovered local Chartists and their jobs, mapped where they lived, found out about their politics, what jobs they did and where they worked, and what became of them. Some of this research is presented in the second volume of *Kennington 1848: Another Look*, in the chapter 'Back to the Land.'

The Kennington 1848 Archive

Throughout the project, we have been building up an online archive of all things Kennington and Chartist, to give access to historic documents and show how the Chartist rally has been commemorated over the years. There are iconic historic images, audio recordings of the talks, and short films. Explore it online at: www.kenningtonchartistproject.org



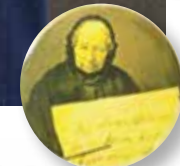
Our 10th April launch event began with the arrival of the flags of the four divisions, with Chartist slogans and declarations of solidarity with campaigns today. Read on ...

“ As a Black woman born in Lambeth and raised in Kennington, the importance of Chartism is significant. My old primary school teacher, Mr Seaton, used to take my class to the park every week, and explain how its correct name is Kennington Common, and that it was the birthplace of democracy for the working class. William Cuffay, he was noted in the *Times* about the Chartists as ‘the black man and his party.’ If there was a list in those days of the 100 most influential people, Cuffay would be right up there at number one ...”

Carole Wright
Local resident, artist and activist



Flag-bearer photo by Carole Wright



“ I’m really pleased that we are able to celebrate this. It’s important to keep in mind how hard we had to fight to have a democracy and how we should continue to value it. History from before has been celebrated here today ...”

Anonymous

Anne Knight © 2019 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

“ We found that Kennington 1848 is a story that people really connect with. A lot of people were amazed to hear that this happened in their local park. One of the most exciting things about the Kennington 1848 story for me is the way that the park we have today is bound to this moment in history, and to the history of protest in public space. At a time of increasing pressure on public space in London, and cuts to funding of local parks, it's vital that local histories help to shed some light on the situation today.

Throughout the project we've been looking not just at the event here in Kennington in 1848, but how that event has resonated with people over the years. The Kennington Chartist Project is our version. It's the latest chapter of the Kennington 1848 story. But now, the story continues ...”

Richard Galpin
Kennington Chartist Project
co-founder & Project Manager



“ Inspiring and reassuring – the struggle for democracy, freedom and justice has a long history. This event has emphasised all its importance and continuing relevance ... it makes me feel that protest for our rights has a long, proud history – as relevant today as in the past ...”

Anonymous

“For the children to understand where voting comes from, why we have that right. To look back in history and understand that it was right here in Kennington, near our school, that big day. All they were fighting for, the consequences some people faced and why they had to fight for it ...”

Teacher, Wyvil Primary



“First – I’m inspired by this park as it is now, and the work of the Friends of Kennington Park. We can underestimate the fantastic resource that parks represent for people. And this is a brilliant example of how parks can be used for shared benefit. Thanks to all the volunteers who have made this possible. As an important working class slogan says, ‘Give us bread, but give us roses’ ...”

Anonymous



THE KENNINGTON CHARTIST PROJECT



“Listening to the young poets express their concerns was particularly moving. The marquees with the banners and printmaking were especially visually powerful ...”

Anonymous

“I was impressed by the poets who delivered wonderful performances – they touched and inspired the people who were there ...”

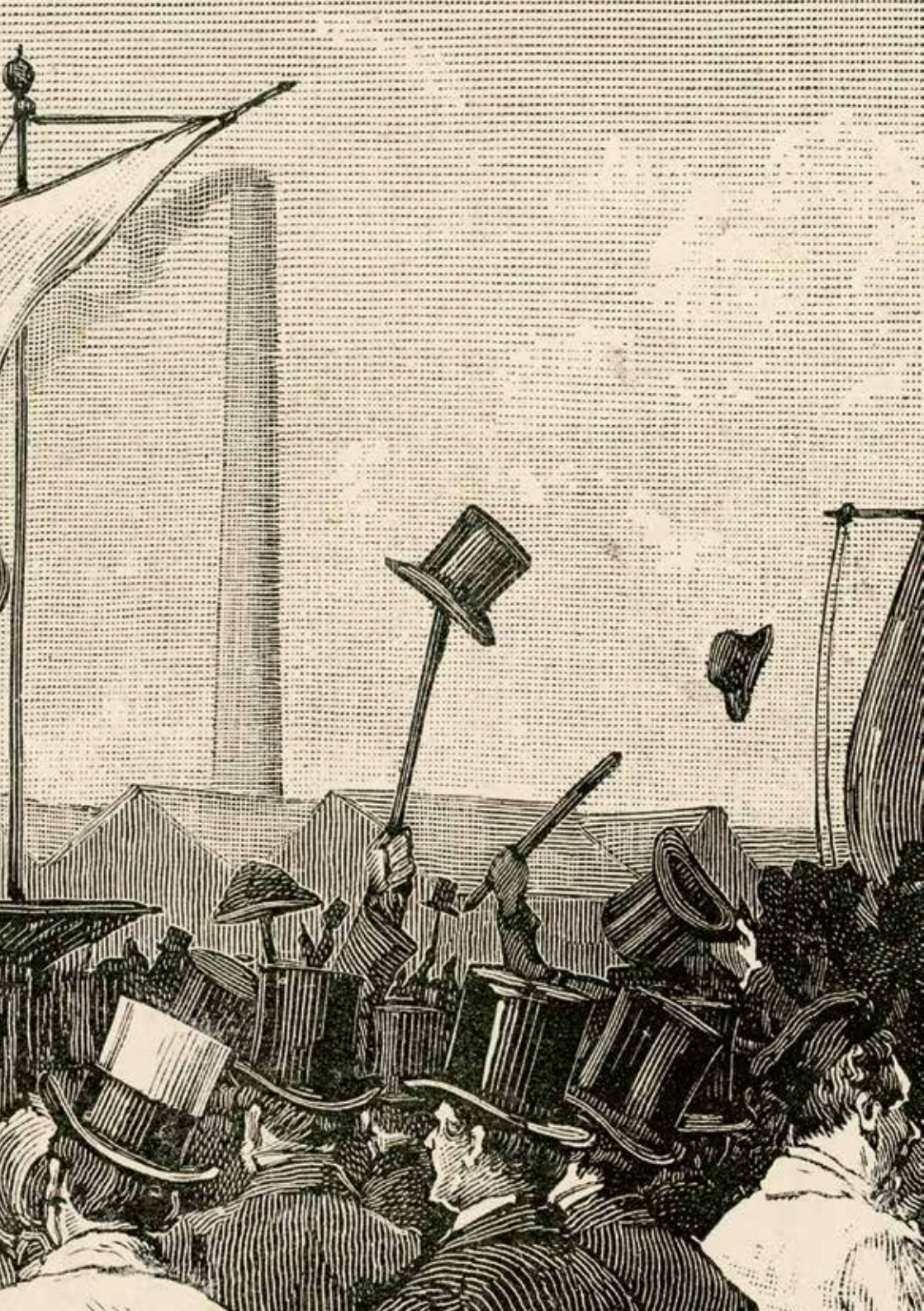
Anonymous



“Great to see such an important movement in British history commemorated – and so many people learning about it for the first time. If we forget these aspects of our history, we endanger our present and future.”

And I was blown away by the screen-printing – such a strong association with protest movements in the 60s, 70s and 80s. A great range of ways of raising awareness ...”

Anonymous



The Story of the 10th April 1848

by Mark Crail

*“... a sight such as was never witnessed
in this vast metropolis before”*

London in 1848 was a dirty, smelly, polluted place. Its primitive sewage system had long since been overwhelmed by its soaring population, while the sulphurous smoke of its coal fires turned buildings and lungs black with soot.

But after overnight rain, the morning of 10th April 1848 dawned bright and sunny. At the Literary and Scientific Institution just off Tottenham Court Road, where the Chartist Convention was meeting, there was a palpable sense not just of spring, but of revolution in the air. By 9 o'clock that fine Monday morning, the delegates had assembled and a large crowd wearing the red, white and green colours of the Convention was milling around the entrance.

This was to be the Chartist movement's greatest show of strength. The plan was to march from central London and assemble in huge numbers at Kennington Common. They would hear the movement's great orators and march in force across the river to Parliament to present a massive petition demanding the right to vote for all men, not just those who owned land and property.

The People's Charter, with its six demands for democratic reform, had been at the centre of campaigns for a decade. Indeed, the ideas behind it had been at the core of radical politics for half a century by the time the London Working Men's Association first launched the Charter in 1837.

The first petition in 1839 had 1,280,000 signatures; but it was dismissed out of hand by Parliament. This sparked an armed uprising in Newport, South Wales, ending in the death of more than twenty protestors and the transportation of its leaders to Australia. When a second still larger

petition, more than six miles in length, was similarly rejected in 1842, the ensuing unrest and strikes led to further repression and arrests.

So, by 1848, few Chartists had any illusions that this third great petition, claimed by their leader Feargus O'Connor to have nearly 6 million signatures, would win parliamentary support. What divided them was how to proceed after it was rejected. Some even argued that the Chartist Convention should establish itself as an alternative parliament – a move which would inevitably lead to confrontation.

That Monday morning, as they prepared, O'Connor was already warning that confrontation was doomed to fail and would only strengthen the government's hand. The procession should go ahead and he would lead it, he promised, but it could not be followed by a march on Parliament by the crowd.

As he was speaking, two specially built carriages arrived. The first, drawn by four farm horses decked out in red, white and green tricolours, was to carry the petition. A second, twenty feet long, with six horses, festooned with Chartist slogans, and with banners flying, was for the delegates.

Shortly after 10 o'clock O'Connor took his seat at the front of the carriage beside George Julian Harney, the editor of the *Northern Star* newspaper and Ernest Jones, the best known of the radical leaders. They set off amid much excitement, along Goodge Street and Tottenham Court Road, supporters marching behind eight abreast while others cheered from the pavement.

Reaching Holborn, the procession halted at the Chartist National Land Company, where the petition – five bundles of paper each nine or ten feet in circumference – was lashed to the wagon. Then they headed down to Blackfriars Bridge, the crowd increasing at every step.

By 11 o'clock the procession had reached Elephant and Castle and as they marched down what is now Kennington Park Road, a huge contingent from Stepney Green joined them. Then the West Division from Russell Square, and the City and Finsbury Division, walking from Clerkenwell Green, joined the procession. Still the crowd was "peaceable and well conducted," as the *Illustrated London News* reported.

By 11.30, the carriages arrived at an already crowded Kennington Common. A reporter for the *Northern Star* noted that the windows of

every house overlooking the Common were crowded with spectators. Waiting to welcome the Chartists were 5,000 Irish Confederates and Repealers, standing in military order beneath a green banner embroidered with a harp and the motto 'Erin go bragh' – Ireland for all eternity. They stood alongside the ranks of London trade unionists, each trade with its banners and emblems.

The delegates' carriage headed for the centre of the Common surrounded by a vast cheering crowd. The wagon carrying the petition drew up in front of the Horns Tavern, where the Jobcentre Plus now stands on Kennington Park Road. As the delegates got down, a man pushed his way through and asked O'Connor to go to the tavern where the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Richard Mayne, was waiting. Mayne showed O'Connor the preparations the authorities had made to deal with trouble and warned in no uncertain terms that a march on Parliament would not be permitted.

This was no idle threat. The government was thoroughly prepared. It had mobilised 4,000 police officers to deal with the march, reinforced by no fewer than 85,000 special constables. The 80-year-old Duke of Wellington had drawn up the plans for the army to defend the capital. He had brought up 8,000 regular troops from barracks, armed infantrymen, cavalrymen with sabres, and artillery with cannons. Wellington had even evacuated the royal family to the Isle of Wight. He had reinforced the Bank of England, Buckingham Palace and the British Museum with booby-traps, sandbags and spikes, and a garrison to repel attacks. And crucially, as the great body of Chartists had crossed the Thames on its march towards Kennington, the bridges behind them had been sealed, creating defensive bottlenecks against even the most determined attacks.

O'Connor emerged from his meeting with Mayne to huge cheers. Superficially, the scene remained one of hope and excitement. Banners and flags flew, declaring 'The Charter. No surrender,' 'Liberty is worth living for and worth dying for' and 'The voice of the people is the voice of God.' Mounting the main carriage, now the speakers' platform, Christopher Doyle, who chaired the meeting, declared it "one of the most glorious sights I have ever had the pleasure of witnessing," adding that it was "a sight such as was never witnessed in this metropolis before."

But it fell to O'Connor to talk the crowd down.

He began by reminding them of his 25 years' service to the cause and of the warnings that, in leading this procession, he would be shot and killed. He urged them not to put their cause at risk by giving the authorities the excuse for violence – "You know that I have all my life been a man of courage, of firmness, of resolution; but how should I rest in my bed this night if I were conscious that there were widows awake mourning for husbands slain?" he asked. "How should I feel if I thought that by any act of mine I had jeopardised the lives of thousands, and thus paralysed our cause? How, I ask, would you feel if you were conscious that you had been parties to my death?"

The Chartist executive, O'Connor told them, had agreed that the crowd should not march into collision with an armed force. Rather, a delegation, that he would lead, would take the petition to Parliament. He declared: "I will present your petition, and I will make your voice heard throughout the length and breadth of the land."

As word of the decision to abandon the march on Parliament spread, some in the crowd made clear their disagreement. The black Chartist William Cuffay and others demanded the crowd should march behind the petition until confronted by the military before withdrawing the petition altogether. But these activists were swiftly shouted down and the crowd formally adopted the petition by a show of hands.

At 1.15pm, the meeting was declared over, and the petition bundles loaded into hackney cabs to take them to Parliament. The crowd dispersed as it began to rain. The *Illustrated London News* reported: "at two o'clock, not more than 100 persons were to be seen upon the Common" and, "by a quarter past two, a stranger to the day's proceedings would never have guessed, from the appearance of the neighbourhood, that anything extraordinary had taken place."

But the day was not yet over.

As the crowd arrived back at Blackfriars Bridge on their way home, they were met by a wall of mounted police who refused to allow them to pass. They pressed on, pushed forward by the growing numbers behind them, only to be driven back. Eventually, amid arrests and much shouting, at about 3.30pm, the police line gave way. The crowd surged across the

bridge, but broke up in the face of a horse patrol with sabres drawn.

Mounted police dispersed a smaller crowd at Westminster Bridge, so that all was peaceful by the time the cabs arrived and O'Connor delivered the petition to Parliament.

Three days later, a committee of the House of Commons reported the petition contained fewer than 2 million signatures – just a third of the number claimed by O'Connor. Moreover, they alleged, numerous consecutive signatures had been written in the same hand, and by such unlikely Chartists as Wellington, and even Queen Victoria. Whatever the true number – and O'Connor was almost certainly exaggerating – MPs had no more intention of acting on this petition than on either of its predecessors.

Throughout that summer, however, the Chartist threat remained very real. More special constables were sworn in. All over the country, Chartists were drilling in military manoeuvres and in Bradford there were serious disturbances. Violent protests took place in London, notably at Bishop Bonner Fields in Bethnal Green. On 10th August, at the Orange Tree pub in Holborn, police broke into a Chartist meeting and arrested those present for plotting an armed uprising. Among those jailed and later transported was the militant workers' rights activist, William Cuffay; aged 61, he would spend the rest of his life in Tasmania.

In the years after 1848, the Chartist cause declined as economic and political circumstances changed; it would not again be able to mobilise a monster meeting on the scale of that held at Kennington. But more than 170 years later, Kennington's place in the long fight for the right to vote remains supremely iconic.

Mark Crail runs the Chartist Ancestors website (www.chartistancestors.co.uk) and is the author of *Tracing Your Labour Movement Ancestors (Pen & Sword, 2009)*

DRAFT CHARTER for a **Kennington 1848** **Commemoration**

The Kennington 1848 commemoration should explore the following themes:

ASSEMBLY acknowledge Kennington Park as a place where people have gathered for the purposes of activism and democracy / citizens' assemblies / debate / protest.

ACTION engage people as active citizens / encourage active participation / community action / positive change.

DEMOCRACY the history of democracy / representation of the people / the Chartist legacy / building consensus / embracing diverse views / a platform for under-represented people.

COMMON Kennington Park and its specific history as a common / common rights / common purpose.

CELEBRATE Keep the unique spirit of place alive through participatory celebration.

PERPETUATE Continue and protect the park's historic use as place of assembly, activism and democracy for future generations.

Charter for a Kennington 1848 Commemoration

Kennington Chartist Project and the Friends of Kennington Park are making plans for the next commemoration as we look towards the 175th anniversary of Kennington 1848, in 2023.

Through our 2018 'Open Call' we asked people to contribute ideas for a memorial or commemoration to the 1848 Chartist rally. Ideas included a statue of William Cuffay, a monument to the 'birthplace of democracy', a virtual memorial, a spoken word app, and events such as tree planting, a picnic and a festival.

What we learned is that the story of Kennington 1848 resonates with people in a way that cannot be easily reduced to a single monument. What interests many people is not just the 1848 rally alone, but the wider traditions of assembly, activism and democracy linked to the place.

Using what we have learned, we have drawn up this draft charter. We think of it as a set of collective values in the spirit of the movements which shaped this story. It sets out the ambition which our commemoration should aspire to meet, and sets the agenda for developing a more detailed brief.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in taking this ambition forward.

We welcome your response to help shape the conversation. We think this is the right approach – do you?

Let us know at: charter@kenningtonchartistproject.org



Acknowledgements

KENNINGTON 1848: OUR STORY & ANOTHER LOOK

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Do you want to know more about the London Chartist and what happened on Kennington Common in 1848?

The next volume of **Kennington 1848** is called **Another Look** and is available in print at Friends of Kennington Park events. Or you can download a pdf at www.kenningtonchartistproject.org



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