

**u3a Bike Ride
Three Waterloo Churches
Friday 29 July 2023**

The Waterloo churches were built in the 1820's to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815.

There are four in the Borough of Lambeth and we would be visiting three of these. The four churches in Lambeth are: St Luke at Norwood; St Matthew at Brixton; St Mark at Kennington; and St John at Waterloo

After our statutory photograph taken at the start of the bike ride in Brockwell Park, we set off to see three of the four Waterloo churches in Lambeth.

From the Brockwell Lido starting point we cycled through the park to St Matthew Road and crossed the road into the gardens surrounding the church.

There was no-one about this time; on a previous ride in March 2022 we were invited in and saw the stained glass panels made by the local artist Anthony Moo-Young. We looked at the picture on my phone instead.

Then we made our way via the backroads, Railton Road, Leeson Way to Loughborough Park Road, and to our first new coffee shop, as recommended by Alex.

This was the *TGS Arada Café* in Vassal Road, a place tucked away in a corner so well that although we have cycled past it many a time, we never gave it a glance, usually continuing on to Kennington Road and *Due Amici*.

However, of late the coffee there was mediocre, at best.

But here oh my, what a welcome!! Coffee with a biscuit and the added pleasure of Alex's wife joining us. She was almost persuaded to get her bike out as well.

We were able to sit outside and Alex told us the local history of the cat lady with 28+ cats; the different style houses around this square; and the cafe as a local place of good food and company.



It was difficult to leave and we were almost tempted into having two cups of coffee.....but it was a cycle ride and not a coffee tasting ride.

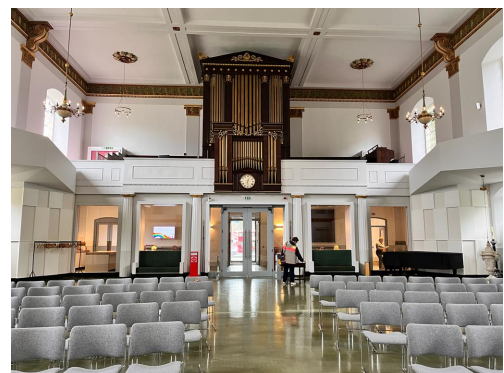
It was a short cycle ride to Kennington Park where we stopped to read the History of Kennington Park at the Kennington History Hut:

- * A disaster during the Second World War disaster (see NOTES below)
- * Charlie Chaplin's story; and
- * The local Henry Moore sculpture nearby on the housing estate, which we saw on a previous tour of the Moore statues.



Via Kennington Park we reached **St Mark Church**, where we were able to read the history of this church. Then came a longer ride to St John, built in 1824, the last Waterloo Church on this ride. We entered via the side gate into the garden, **St John's Church Gardens**.

This time the church was open and we could go inside and see the newly restored interior as well as the restored Feibusch Painting. A German born, Jewish artist Hans Feibusch (1898-1998), was commissioned to paint a crucifixion for the church in 1951, when the church was re-dedicated as the Festival of Britain Church.



Onwards to Ev, our regular place for lunch - where we all were had various plates with delicious fresh food. No coffee, just fresh juice.

From there each of us made our various way home. It was a sunny day, a good cycle temperature and of course lots of chatting.

Distance: probably 6-7 miles, it didn't feel far.

Riders: Felicity, Jane, Mark, Tony, Alex and Niesje

Ride Leader: Niesje

Group Convener: John Clements

Report: Niesje de Boer, July 2023

NOTES and FURTHER INFORMATION

Here are some more useful links:

* A list of the Waterloo Churches in London

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Commissioners%27_churches_in_London

* St Mark Church, Kennington

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Mark%27s_Church,_Kennington

* Octavia Hill

<http://www.octaviahill.org/>

* **St Mark Church**, is an Anglican church on Kennington Park Road near the Oval tube station.

The church is a Commissioners' church, receiving a grant from the Church Building Commission towards its cost. Authorised by the Church Building Act 1824, it was built on the site of the old gallows corner on Kennington Common.

Badly bombed during WWII, the church was restored through the efforts of the post-war Vicar, the Rev Wallace Bird, and reopened in 1949. The church is listed Grade II*


* **St John's Church Gardens** The site lies on the former churchyard of St John's Church Waterloo. The churchyard was originally converted into a garden in the 1870;s and Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the National trust was actively involved in turning the site into a new public space. Some remnants of the original church yard remain, notably the perimeter walls and large tombs alongside a later war memorial on Waterloo Road.

The Second World War disaster

See panel.

Acknowledgement:

Information from Wikipedia




The Blitz began on **7th September 1940**, when **950 aircraft** attacked London, dropping thousands of bombs. 57 consecutive nights of terror **killed 30,000** people and **injured 50,000**.

The **most terrible day** in Kennington's history came on **Tuesday 15th October 1940**.

At 8pm, a flimsy **air raid shelter**, dug as a grid of trenches under the Park's south field, took a **direct hit** from a World War II bomb, which **killed over 100** local people and seriously injured many more.

Rescuers could only identify **fifty bodies** by name, including the **entire Banks family** from Bowling Green Street and at least six residents of Offley Road. The wet ground was treacherous and the shelter walls **collapsed**. So they had to leave the remains of another 54 local people in the ground. It was **Lambeth's worst** bombing tragedy.

In **2005**, the **Friends of Kennington Park** resolved to install a **permanent memorial** to those who died. They commissioned local sculptor **Richard Kindersley** to design the **monument** (left). He carved it out of Caithness stone, and added the inspiring words of



Look closely ...

In this picture, Mrs Bowley **holds the hand** of her **rescu**. She had been **trapped** in a wre. to the Park