

DUNORLAN FOUNTAIN DUNORLAN PARK, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT

*A Report on the Fountain and Gardens to Assist with the
Repair and Reinstatement of the Fountain, and the
Rejuvenation of the Public Park*

by

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DUNORLAN FOUNTAIN, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT

Dunorlan House, to the east of Royal Tunbridge Wells in Kent, was built in 1862 to the designs of a local, little known architect named William Willicombe for an Australian evangelist and business man called Mr Henry Reed. The style of the house was a rather heavy-handed Italianate, with rather awkwardly proportioned French chateau-style roofs. Henry Reed also commissioned Mr Robert Marnock to landscape the grounds. Apparently Mr Reed was not fond of the house and left in 1871, supposedly for another house named Dunorlan in Harrogate. The house was demolished in 1958 and little remains of the gardens, now a public park.

In the year that the house was completed the grounds were to be adorned sculpture, a summer house and an elaborate fountain. The fountain was designed and made by James Pulham (c.1820-1898). This fountain comprised a large circular basin, or rather a quatrefoil shape, the square corners of the basin rim supporting four cherubs or tritons blowing shell trumpets. In the centre of the basin was a pedestal supporting two bowls, the lower larger than the upper, and the whole surmounted by a female figure with one arm raised and bent above her down-turned head, a copy, evidently, of *Hebe* by Antonio Canova. The fountain has since lost the figure and the tritons, (although parts of their heads are kept in store at the Tunbridge Wells museum) and is in a poor state of repair.

James Pulham followed his father into the manufacture of Portland cement and artificial stonework. Attracted by the narrow outcrops of Eocene clay that encircle the London basin, Pulham built a house, Pulham House, in Broxbourne in Hertfordshire in 1845, and a factory for the production of artificial stone vases, urns, fountains etc. in both terracotta and in composite stone which he named 'Pulhamite'. Information about James Pulham and his work is readily available in an article by Sally Festing in the *Garden History Society Journal*, Spring 1988, vol. 16, page 90 ff, in a chapter entitled: 'Great Credit Upon the Ingenuity and Taste of Mr Pulham'. According to Festing, Pulham was one of the three great terracotta specialists of the day. He produced a range of work, but apparently specialised in artificial rockscapes. It appears that he worked with Robert Marnock (1800-1889) at Bury Hill, Henley on Thames (*Ex. Info.* Brent Elliott), and at a garden at St. Michael's Convent in Streatham, originally the home of Henry Tate, the sugar magnate. Here Marnock created a similar garden to the one at Dunorlan, laid out on several levels with trees, lawns and a miniature lake, and where Pulham created a rockery.

James Pulham died in 1898 and under the direction of his son James R. Pulham, the firm gradually abandoned the use of artificial stone and the name Pulhamite came to be a label for their terracotta instead (ref. p.189).

The fountain

James Pulham exhibited the fountain in the 1862 Exhibition. There it was seen and described by a Mr Llewellyn Jewitt. He wrote: 'Mr Pulham exhibited in 1862, among other things, a large fountain, for a gentleman's grounds near Tunbridge Wells, many features of which, particularly the life size figure of Hebe which surmounts it, and which is perfection in burning, were very successful'. (Jewitt: *The Ceramic Art of Great Britain*, 1878). Fortunately Jewitt illustrated the top part of the fountain, the figure on her pedestal, and one of the tritons.

The base plinth, which supports the larger bowl and the figure, is ornamented with seahorses, figures, swags, tritons, dolphins, naiads and other figures from Renaissance marine imagery. It is said, by Sally Festing, to be a copy of a marble fountain at Villa Petraia in Italy by Il Tribolo. According to John Davis, an expert in period garden ornament, the main bowl and base are made of Pulhamite and the figures and applied ornament are terracotta.

The gardens

Sally Festing's article tells us that Reed did not like his house in Kent and left in 1871. He had two other houses called Dunorlan, one in Harrogate and one in Tasmania but nothing is known of these. *The Kent Courier*, February 26th 1999 asserts that he moved back to his Harrogate home. Fortunately, the sales catalogue of 1872 survives. The catalogue details and illustrates a 'Luxuriant Avenue of Deodaras and Douglas Picea, leading from an elegant Grecian temple to a handsome stone basin and fountain'; also a 'waterfall over foliaged rocks spanned by a rustic bridge', which Festing thought very much Pulham's style (Festing *op.cit* p.94).

Three Victorian accounts of the garden are illuminating. One by a Mr Edward Luckhurst, published in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, Oct 21, 1875 p365, describes the landscaping, planting, tree specimens and garden structures at length. Here is an extract which concerns the fountain and gives the flavour of the place:

'At the bottom is a fountain, bold and elegant in design with an expanse of turf around it in fine proportion to its size. At the top a temple and, at intervals along the sides, groups of statuary and openings affording views of the rosery and the lake; groups of shrubs and other important features all attracting the eye, so as to afford a continuous and pleasing variety.'

Clearly the fountain was one of many features in an elaborate landscaped garden which included the temple mentioned above, a statue of the Lady of the Lake, a rocky cascade (also by Pulham?), a kitchen garden, conservatory, and vineyard!

Another account, by a Mr J. Robson published in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* November 29 1864, pp 435-6, describes how the 'handsome basin' contained overflow from the lake, keeping its water 'at all times fresh and pure.' He wrote that the basin also contained a piece of sculpture 'said to be of some artistic merit and, like others of its class, the fountain could be made to play from a supply furnished by artificial means, but without this its position, and the fine avenue of Deodars pointing to it, gave it a fine appearance.'

As to other aspects of the landscaping, Robson went on: 'The ground rises from on the opposite side from the basin, and the avenue ending there, the summerhouse with another shrubbery formed a very good termination. The summer house or grotto being slightly elevated, the rising ground with the lines of fine trees looked remarkably well, while the mansion and the sloping ground in front of it was also seen to great advantage.... I believe the formation of the grounds, together with some artistic work, is from the designs of Mr Marnock.'

It would be interesting to know how Marnock, a respected landscape gardener of the 'natural school' championed by William Robinson, and Pulham collaborated on the project.

The Gardners' Chronicle of October 22 1881 p 526, gives the following helpful account:

'There are figures placed within the lines of trees, and near the bottom of the avenue there is a fountain, the centre figure of which is 25' high. The height and proportions of the different figures are in strict harmony with the base of the fountain. There are four figures with trumpets which, when there is a strong force of water are very attractive, and eight dolphins, while there are two basins continually flowing over into the base of the fountain.'

Conclusion

The fountain was clearly once part of an elaborate landscaped garden, and was intended to provide a focus within that landscape. The fashion for 'numerous tall water squirts' had originated with the fountains at Crystal Palace in 1851, and after the Second Exhibition of 1862 such things proliferated, with tritons and figures available 'off the peg' (see examples appended). Nevertheless Pulham's fountain was probably larger and more elaborate than many. Parts of the fountain survive, including some pieces of the heads of the tritons, according to Dr Michael Rowlands, Curator of the Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery, and with the survival of the illustrations, replacement of the missing parts of the fountain would be possible. A number of specialist architectural firms (e.g. Julian Harrap) and stone and terracotta manufacturers (Ibstock Hathernware and Shaws of Darwen) could take on the work. Marian Williams, development officer at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, is co-ordinating plans to restore the park and fountain.

Susie Barson
English Heritage
April 1999

Sources

Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener November 29 1864 p.435 and 436; Oct 21 1875 p.365

Gardeners Chronicle Oct 22 1881

Dunorlan Sales Catalogue 1872, Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery

Ceramic Art in Great Britain, L.Jewitt (1878), figs 819, 821-824, Broxbourne Terracotta

James Richards postcards, Fountain and Temple at Dunorlan, 1905

List of illustrations

Lithograph of the Dunorlan estate showing the fountain, from the 1872 sales catalogue

The fountain, avenue and temple at Dunorlan c. 1905

Broxbourne terracotta fountain with figure of Hebe, from *Ceramic Art in Great Britain* 1878 p.246

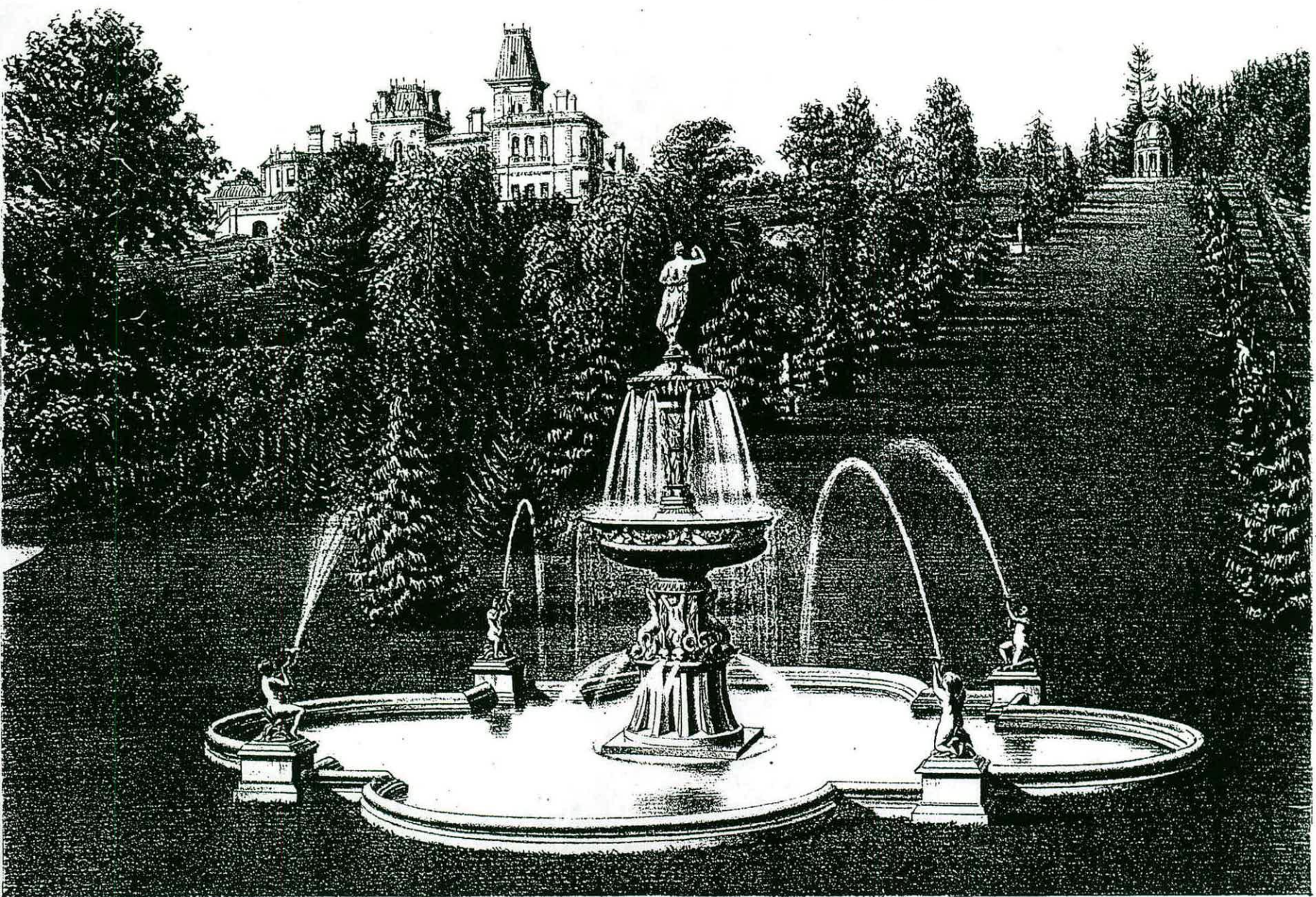
Broxbourne terracotta figure of a triton from *Ceramic Art in Great Britain* p 248

A photograph of the fountain without the figure of Hebe, c. 1980, by John Davis

Four pages from the Pulham catalogue, 1915, showing the centre of the fountain, the whole fountain and the jets (from the Royal Horticultural Society Library, Vincent Square)

Eight photographs of the figure of Hebe, from the collection at the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute, Somerset House, Strand, London.

Copy of a lithograph of the Dunorlan estate from the 1872 catalogue of the
sale of Dunorlan
(Dunrobin "ells" "useu" and art Gallery)



The Fountain, Avenue, and Temple at Dunrobin, circa 1905
(Dunrobin Castle Museum and Art Gallery)





Fig. 819.

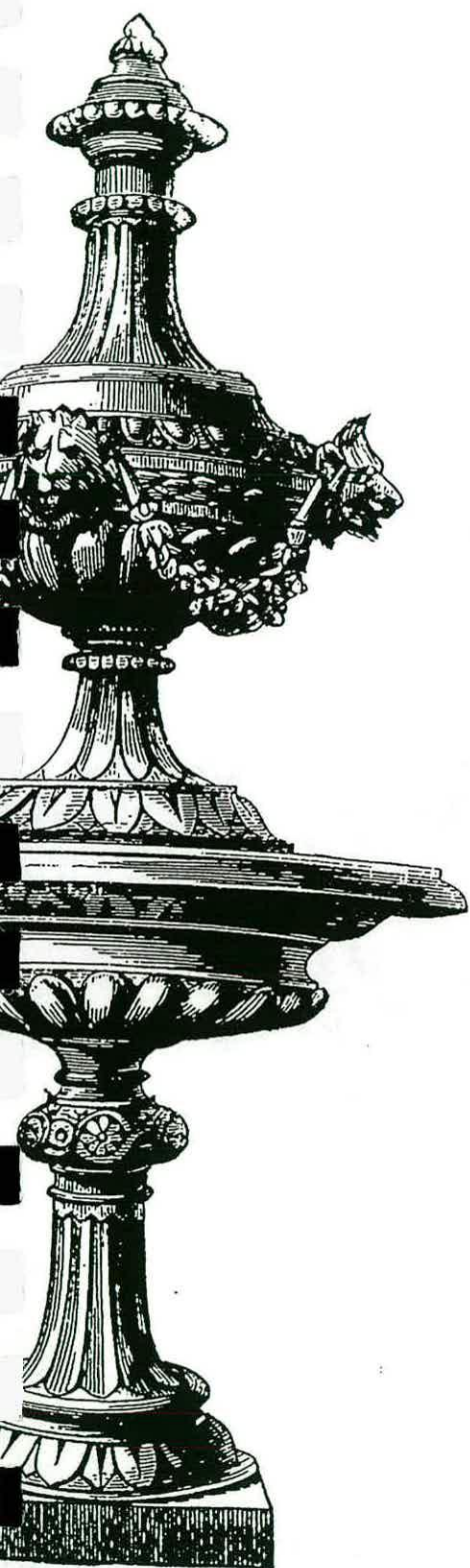
Bristol ware, and sanitary ware, all the usual and many additional articles are made; and ridge- and roofing-tiles, sewerage-pipes, garden-edgings, paving-tiles, and facing-bricks of various colours, are staple productions. Terra-cotta gas-stoves are extensively made and are of admirable construction. Some of the patterns are in high relief, and others, in addition to the relief, are perforated, and have a striking and pleasing effect. Two of these are shown on Figs. 817 and 818. The mark used is the words *GEORGE SKEY WILNECOTE WORKS NR TAMWORTH*, in an oval impressed in the ware.

COVENTRY.

At Stoke, near Coventry, and other places in the district, are old-established coarse brown ware works.

NUNEATON.

The works were established about 1830, by Mr. Peter Wager Williams, upon the site of what evidently had been very old pot-works, but of which no record appears to exist. At first there were two distinct manufactories, of which one was worked by his eldest son, John Williams, who sold it to his three brothers, Peter, Charles, and James, by whom it was carried on under the style of "Caroline Williams." It afterwards passed by purchase into the hands of Mr. J. Rawlins, and was taken by "Messrs. Broadbent and Stanley Brothers," by whom it was considerably extended. The other manufactory was carried on by Mr. Walter Handley, at whose death it passed to his son-in-law, Mr. David Wheway, at whose decease it was incorporated with the other, and carried on jointly by Broadbent and Stanley Brothers. In 1871 Mr. Broadbent retired from the concern. The goods included terra-cotta vases, chimney-pots, &c.; coloured paving-tiles for geometric designs; garden-edging,



Figs. 821 to 824.—Broxbourne Terra-Cotta.

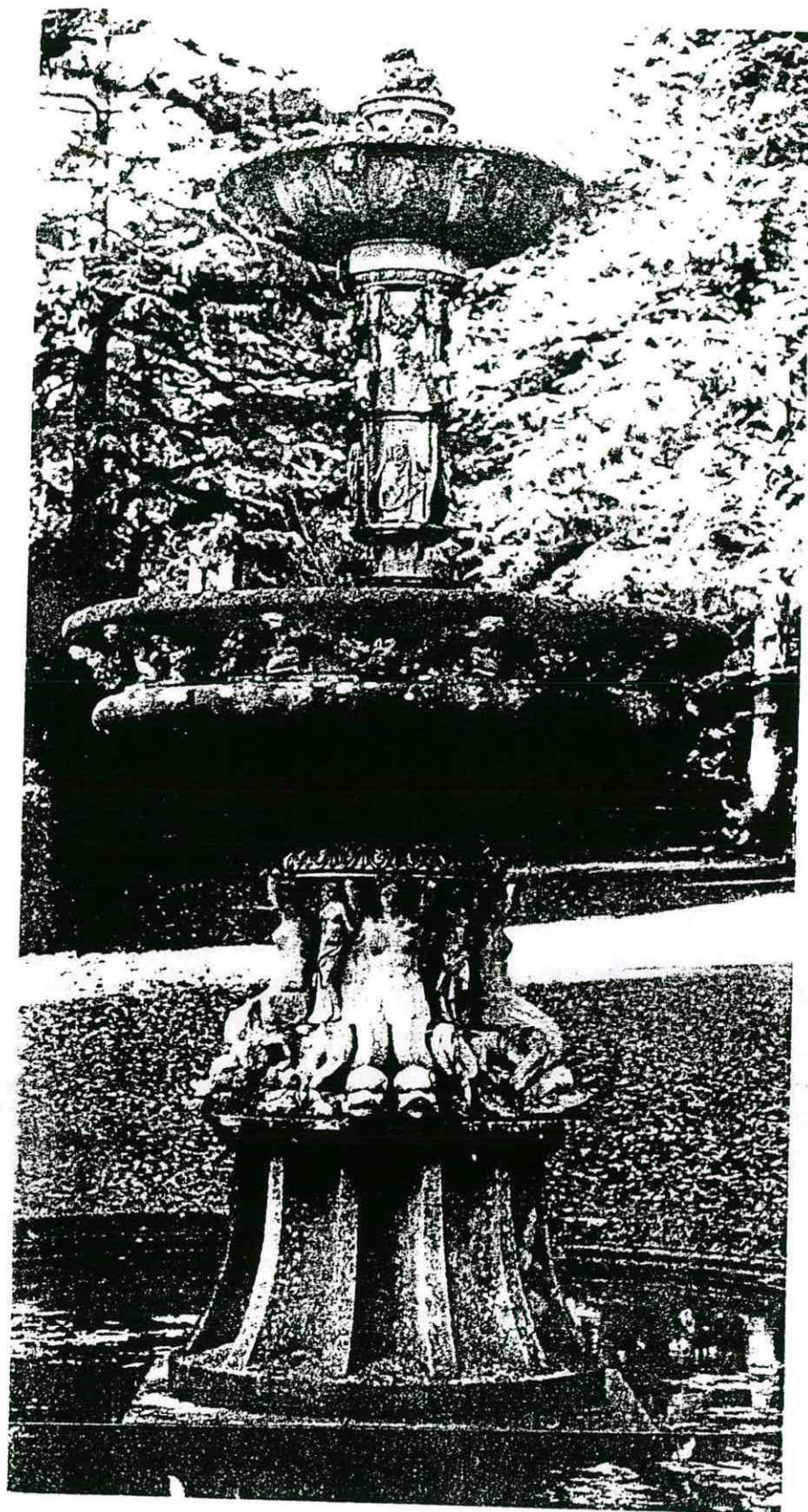
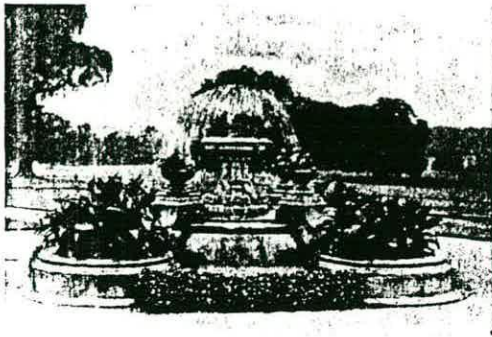


Figure 4.
Pulham's
fountain at
Dunorlan Park,
Tunbridge Wells
Photo: John Davis



FOUNTAINS

MANY of the smaller fountains shown in this section are suitable either for the Conservatory or the Garden.

FOR the outdoor fountain, it is necessary to build a brick or

concrete basin, upon which to fix the Pulhamite stone kerb. The concrete portion of the basin must be sunk into the ground to allow a finished depth of from 1ft. to 2ft. 6ins. or more, according to the size of the basin. A small brick chamber should be built outside the basin to contain the tap and turncock. A "draw off" tap must be placed in this chamber, so that the pipes may be emptied during frosty weather, otherwise they are liable to burst.

THE prices quoted do not include plumber's work or fixing. We prefer to undertake this work, and recommend clients to take advantage of our services, as fountains are difficult to fix properly, and, if done by inexperienced men, are sometimes unsuccessful. Heights of centres are measured from water line.

WE have a variety of designs for larger fountains, and are pleased to submit photographs when desired.

WHEN ordering jets it is necessary to state what pattern is required. Jets and connecting nipples are made to a standard thread for each size. Extra jets can be ordered at any time by quoting the letter, or size of nipple. "A" size is made for a supply pipe of not less than $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch; "B" for $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch; "C" for $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch; and "D" for 1 inch, inside diameter, for lead or copper pipe. The nipple must be soldered to the pipe, or a special nipple can be supplied to screw to an iron pipe.

IT is important that the following particulars should be given :—Size of supply pipe, whether lead, copper or iron; diameter of basin into which the jet is to play; the height of the central figure or ornament.

JETS can also be made to any special design, prices of which can be had on application.

No. 445
DUNORLAN CENTRE
Height 2ft. 9ins.
Price according to requirements.

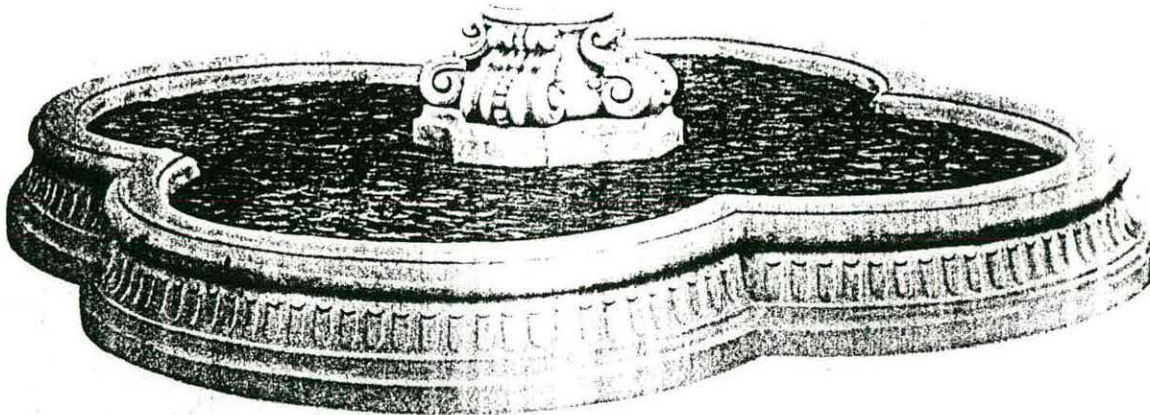


No. 445

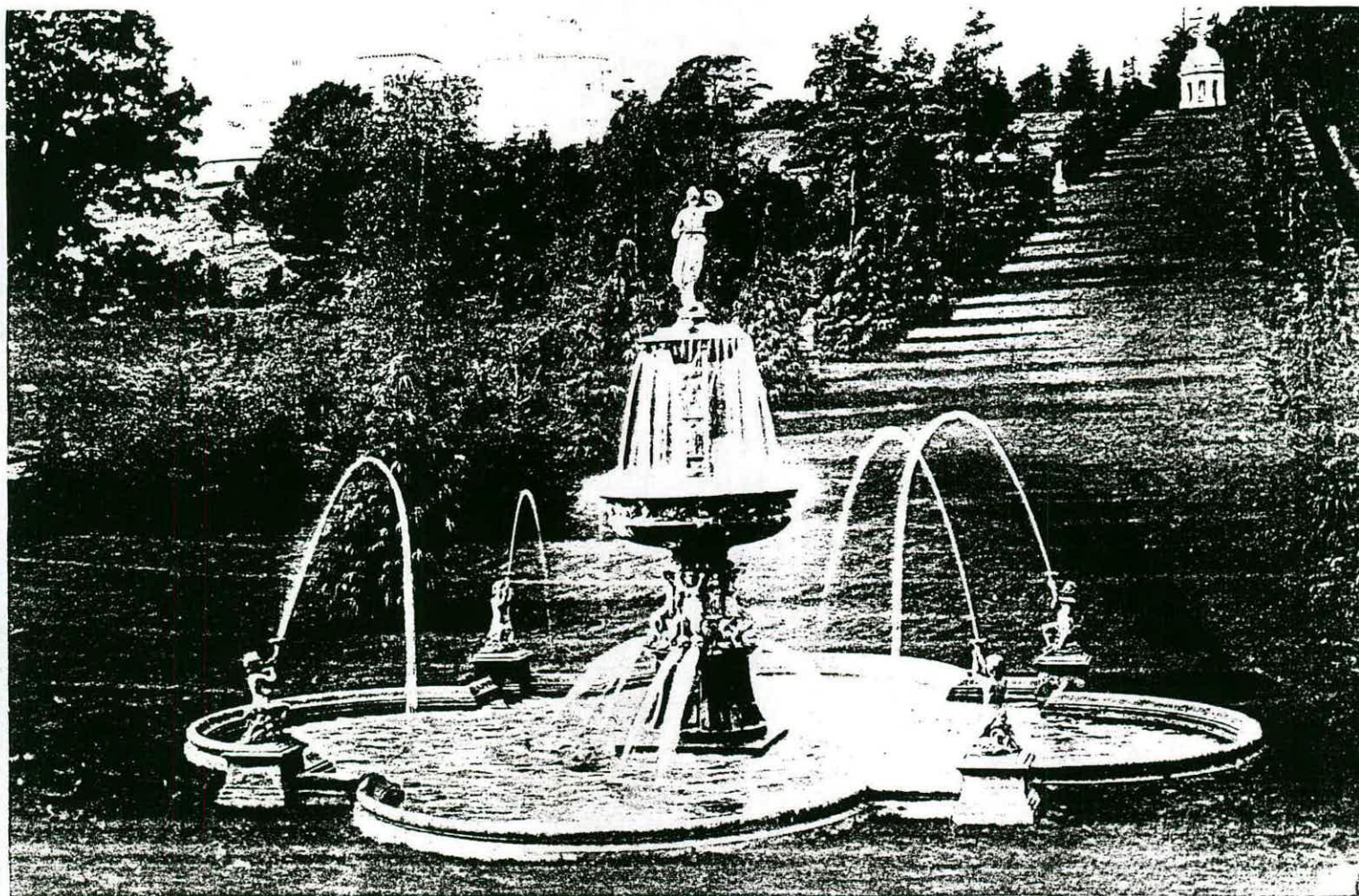


No. 446
SHEFFIELD FOUNTAIN
Diameter of basin 7ft. 6ins.
Height of centre 3ft. 9ins.
Price £30 0 0

A suitable playing figure can be substituted for the floral centre.



No. 446



N. 434 DUXORLAN FOUNTAIN
 Diameter of water basin 70ft.
 Price by arrangement.



No. 20
Single Hole Jet
Prices

A ..	3/9
B ..	4/9
C ..	7/-
D ..	9/-



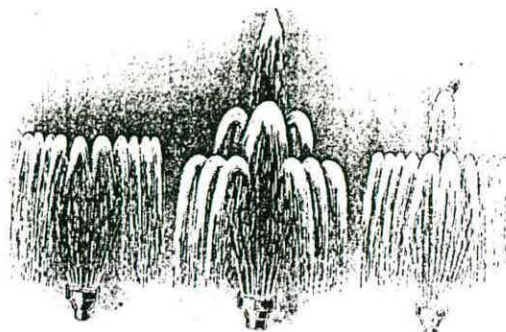
No. 21
Two Hole Jet
Prices

A ..	4/-
B ..	5/6
C ..	7/6
D ..	11/9



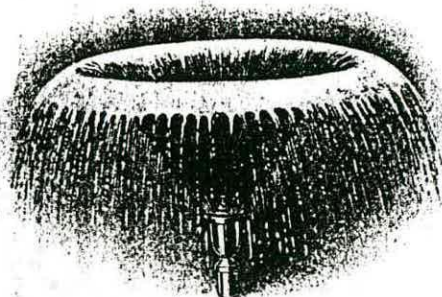
No. 22
Three Hole Jet
Prices

A ..	5/-
B ..	6/3
C ..	9/-
D ..	13/6



No. 23
Rose Jet
1, 2, 3 or 4 rows of holes.
Prices

A ..	8/6
B ..	10/6
C ..	20/-
D ..	26/-



No. 24
Convolvulus Jet
Prices

B ..	23/-
C ..	35/6
D ..	46/-

No. 25
Combination of
the Dome and
Convolvulus Jets
can be supplied
Prices

C ..	61/6
D ..	85/-



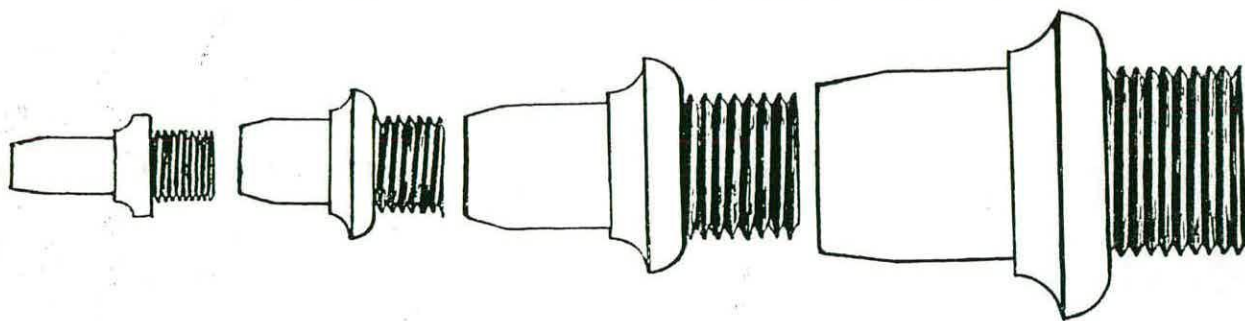
No. 26
Dome Jet
Prices

B ..	23/-
C ..	35/6
D ..	46/-

No. 27 Barkers Mill (revolving) Jet. Prices on application.

No. 28 Umbrella Jet. Prices A 10/- B 12/6 C 22/6 D 28/6

Brass connecting nipples for lead and copper pipe, to fit Jets A, B, C and D.



A .. 1/8 B .. 2/6 C .. 3/4 D .. 4/9



Hebe

Antonio Canova

218003



Hebe (marble - h. 65 in.)

by Antonio Canova



THE VIRTUE.

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MARQUESS OF BATHURST.

ON THE COLLECTION OF THE MARQUESS OF BATHURST, AT CHATELAIN, AT CHATELAIN.

FRANCIS & CO.

ENGRAVED BY W. H. MOSE.

218005



Hebe (marble - h. 65 in.)

by Antonio Canova

218004



Hebe (marble h. 166.5 in.)

Antonio Canova

Academy 1817

owned "The Age of Neoclassicism" Burlington House Sept - Nov. 1972 Cat. No. 317



128.

HEBE

Marble and gilt metal.

158 x 74 x 82 cm

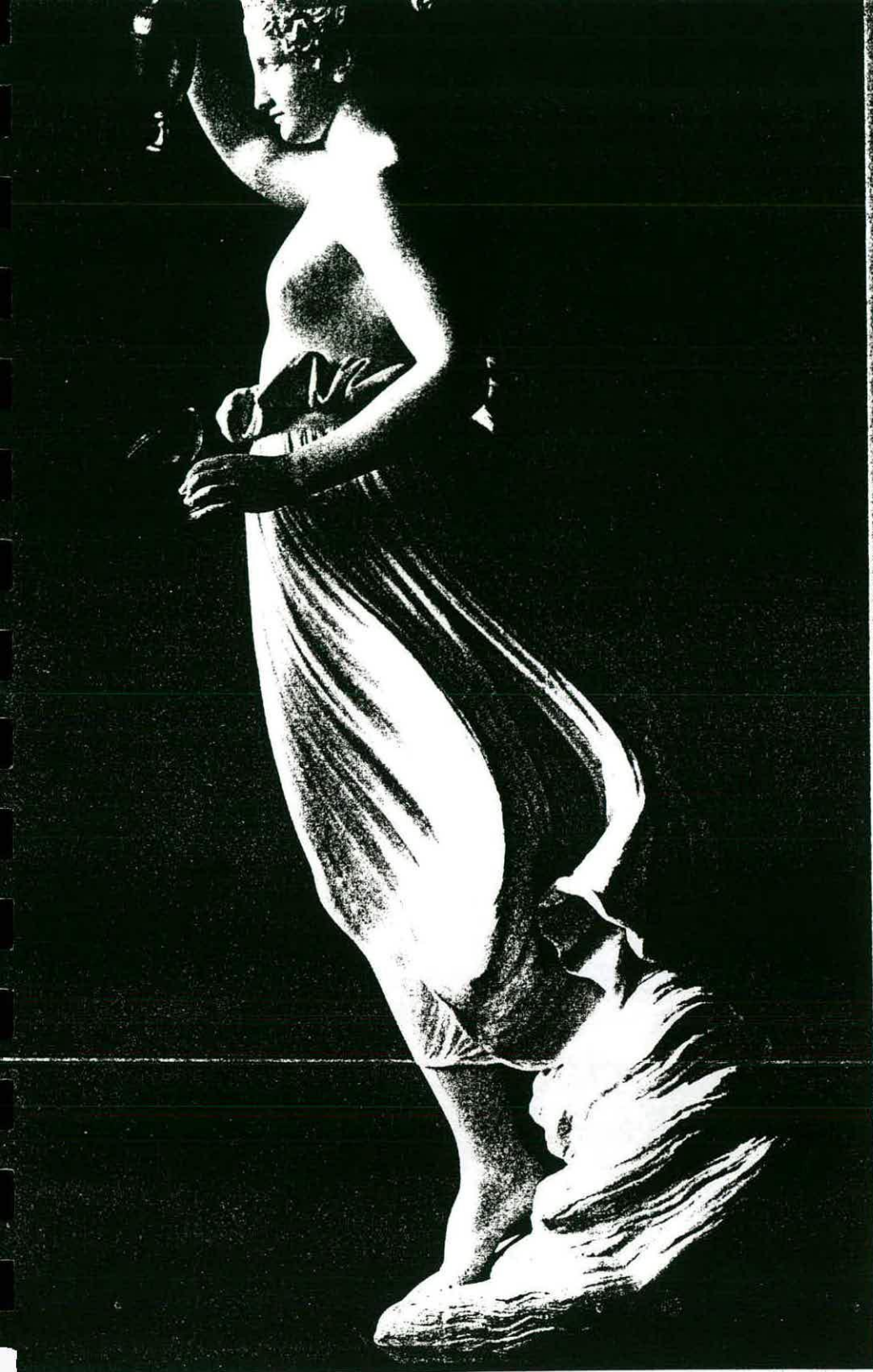
St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum

Joints from an old restoration are visible on the shoulder, the wrist, the ring-finger and the little finger of the right hand, on the wrist and little finger of the left hand, on the second toe of the left foot, and on the left-hand folds of the gown. The support for the ewer is missing. At several points the edges of the folds in the gown are damaged.

Hebe is one of Canova's best-known works. Four versions of the statue were executed at different times. The first was commissioned by the Venetian Giuseppe Giacomo Albrizzi at the end of 1795; the *modello* was executed in the spring of 1796, and the marble completed by the end of the year. This statue was acquired by the King of Prussia, Frederick William III, in 1830 and is now in the Berlin Nationalgalerie.

In spite of its splendid finish, the *Hebe* was criticised in some quarters, especially for its lack of facial expression. Canova

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Spirar qui ogni pupilla crede
E la gonna investir che frettolosa
Si spiega ondeggando e indietro riede:
E natura, onde legge ebbe ogni cosa
Che pietra e moto in un congiunti vede
Per un istante si riman pensosa

(Every eye believes life breathes here / And eagerly follows the skirt that in haste Flow-

metal)

Museum, Venice &
March-Sept. 1992

(P.T.O.)



119

Italian, 19th Century, after Antonio Canova (1757-1822)

HEBE

White marble, on green marble spiral twist column with overlapping foliage and octagonal foot

Figure: 112cm: 44in

Column: 90cm: 35½in

In Canova's first design for *Hebe* the youthful goddess was shown supported by clouds. Two examples of this version were carved in 1796 (Berlin Nationalgalerie) and 1800 (Hermitage, St. Petersburg). Contemporary opinion of the statue was generally favourable, but Canova was criticized from certain quarters for his treatment of clouds. They were considered a Baroque vestige out of keeping with pure classical convention.

Two other examples of Canova's *Hebe* were made in which the clouds were substituted by a traditional tripod. One commissioned by John Campbell, 1st Baron of Cawdor and finished in 1809 is at Chatsworth. Another executed for the Contessa Veronica Guarini di Feltre (1816-17) is in the Pinacoteca Civica, Forlì. This version met with even greater acclaim and inspired several poetical descriptions of the figure's grace and movement.

Exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1808 (1800 version), so French commentators objected to the use of colour: the bronze cup and ewer (present in all four versions). The present marble gives an idea of how the composition would have looked without these additions.

The sculptor Adamo Tadolini (1788-1868), one of Canova's studio assistants, is known to have made copies of the Chatsworth statue, one in 1825 for the Duke of Ossena and another in 1845-47.

Another example of this model signed by Cesare Laj (b. 1848) was sold in these rooms 5 March 1987 as lot 307W.

Literature: Antonio Canova, Venice, Museo Correr, 1974, cat. nos. 128-9, pp. 264-73.

£12,000-18,000

SOTHEBY'S SALE LONDON

22nd November 1994