



The Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition: Science, Art and Productive Industry: The History of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851

Hermione Hobhouse

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The Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Crystal Palace which housed it together became a British icon, a symbol of free trade, and a national success funded not only by taxes but by public subscription. Though the Palace itself was banished to Sydenham, to leave Hyde Park free for Londoners, the Commission was re-invented under Prince Albert to spend the profits for the advancement of British industry. The Commissioners first established South Kensington with its Museums and Colleges of Art and Science, the Albert Hall and the Royal College of Music, and then moved into the training of scientists and artists. They assisted in the expansion of the British School at Rome, and for over a century 1851 Scholars have been contributing to British scientific discoveries. This book celebrates 150 years of the Commission's work, fired by the "application of art and science to productive industry", a story of some success and permanent record, yet a pilgrimage not without its episodes of dissension and controversy.

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