

Lille Restores its Wallace Fountain for 150th Anniversary



Place Léon Trulin,
59800 Lille
FRANCE

Wallace fountains were installed in Lille as early as 1889. Thanks to the Hallez-Duhamel bequest of 1924, others were acquired from the Val d'Osne foundry, the company that owned the molds and the rights to fabricate the cast iron fountains first produced in 1872 and donated to the city of Paris by Richard Wallace.

It is unknown what happened to these early fountains, but it is clear from one historic photo that an existing fountain was damaged during WWII at the battle of Lille in 1940 when German soldiers set up a cannon next to an existing fountain. One of the caryatids was badly damaged.



In 2021, the City of Lille temporarily removed the only remaining Wallace Fountain from its previous location on Place de Béthune to restore it. It was repainted from brown to the traditional dark green of the original Paris fountains. The city allowed the Anne-Cécile Viseux studio to bring it back to life. A city-hall representative stated, “We had to salvage parts from other Lille fountains that were lying around in municipal workshops and carry out genuine historical work based in particular on archive images”.

The restoration project, carried out with the help of municipal plumbers, involved restoring the fountain's water supply system to working order and adding a device for dispensing water on demand.

In 2022, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first Wallace fountains, the city reinstalled this remarkable piece of heritage at its new location, Place Léon Trulin, near the Lille Opera House. The fountain enhances its architectural setting and is now back to its original beauty and its purpose to provide free access to drinking water for all.

If anyone has additional information about the history or origin of this fountain, please share it by contacting us at admin@wallacefountains.org.

Source: Ville de Lille, Antoine Gontier
Photos : Zoom Lille, Stanislas Dendievel, Ville de Lille