

= Kent Ridge Park =

Kent Ridge Park is a 47 hectare public park in western Singapore , between the National University of Singapore and the Singapore Science Park . Due to its undisturbed habitat and abundant plant life , it is a popular venue for bird watchers and eco tourists .

During the Second World War , a hill in the park was the site of one of the last and fiercest battles fought by the Malay Regiment against the invading Japanese army , the Battle of Bukit Chandu (also known as the Battle of Pasir Panjang) , 12 - 14 February 1942 .

The park was officially opened in 1954 , and was gazetted by the National Heritage Board as one of 11 World War II sites in Singapore in 1995 . It is one of over 300 parks managed by Singapore 's National Parks Board , NParks .

= = History = =

The area occupied by Kent Ridge Park and the National University of Singapore was formerly known as Pasir Panjang Ridge , and was originally a lowland evergreen rainforest . The park 's natural vegetation now consists of groves of Tembusu , Acacias and Dilleniaceae . When the first settlers arrived in Singapore in the early 19th century , they grew crops such as rubber , pepper , gambier and pineapple on the ridge . During World War II , it was used as a fortress by the British in the defence of Singapore . Many of the plantations were destroyed or abandoned during the Japanese Occupation (1942 - 1945) , allowing the crops to grow wild .

On 23 February 1954 , the Governor of Singapore , Sir John Fearn Nicoll unveiled a plaque which declared the area had been renamed Kent Ridge to commemorate the visit by the Duchess of Kent and her son , the Duke of Kent , on 3 October 1952 . The plaque was erected at the junction of what is now Kent Ridge Road and South Buona Vista Road .

The park contains Bukit Chandu , alternatively known as Opium Hill (in Malay) , after the opium processing factory owned by the British East India Company that was at the foot of the hill until 1910 . During 12 - 14 February 1942 , it was the site of the Battle of Bukit Chandu , fought by the 159 survivors of the Malay Regiment led by Lieutenant Adnan Bin Saidi against the 13,000 men of Lieutenant-General Mutaguchi Renya 's 18th Division . The Malay Regiment 's position on the hill was overrun by the Japanese and the battle ended in hand-to-hand combat after the last few defenders ran out of ammunition . All the officers except one , Lieutenant Abbas Abdul Manan , and most of the men , were massacred in the aftermath .

= = The park today = =

Formerly used to house senior British Army officers , the last remaining black and white colonial bungalow at 31K Bukit Chandu has been restored and converted into a World War II war museum called Reflections at Bukit Chandu , commemorating the war and those who fought in it . Originally there were two smaller bungalows below 31K , but they were demolished in 1987 to make way for a public parking lot . There are three life-size statues and a plaque outside the museum , honoring the Malay Regiment and commemorating the lives of those who died .

Kent Ridge Park , Labrador Park , and the war museum , are part of the Pasir Panjang Historic District , which focuses on WWII battlefield events in western Singapore . Together with Fort Siloso at Sentosa and The Battle Box at Fort Canning , they serve as a reminder of an important chapter in Singapore 's modern history . Near to the park 's children 's playground there is a heritage site marker , showing where the 1942 Battle of Pasir Panjang was fought .

The park also has some decommissioned military artillery - two M114 155 mm howitzer guns and an AMX 13 Light Tank on permanent display , donated by the Ministry of Defence , part of its adoption of the park as an Army Green Park in support of the National Parks Board " Adopt a Park " scheme to inculcate a greater ownership among the public of local parks and greenery (do note that they are no longer there on display as of December 2015) . The park 's facilities include fitness corners , look-out points , a nature trail , a multi-purpose court and a

canopy walk . The highest point of the park is 61 metres above sea level , from where there is a panoramic view of the coast of Pasir Panjang and some of the Southern Islands , approximately 5 km off the south @-@ western coast of Singapore . Islands such as Pulau Bukom and Pulau Semakau are visible on a clear day .

Kent Ridge park , Telok Blangah Hill Park , and Mount Faber Park are part of the Southern Ridges trail that links all 3 parks via connecting bridges and paths .

= = Plant and animal life = =

The park is managed by the National Parks Board , and is open daily to the public . Admission is free except for entrance to the war museum . The park is accessible via entrances on Vigilante Drive and Pepys Road , off Pasir Panjang Road . Most of the remaining wild part of the park comprises secondary forest with plants native to Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia such as tembusu , angkana , white leaf fig , common pulai , Singapore rhododendron , pitcher plants , cicada tree and simpoh air .

The trails through the park , including one for mountain biking , run almost parallel along the ridge . There is a natural pond with fishes and turtles in the north @-@ west of the park . A 280 @-@ metre long canopy walk was completed in the eastern part of the park in October 2003 , linking Kent Ridge Park to the war museum , Reflections at Bukit Chandu , enhancing the park 's and museum 's accessibility to the public . Along the walk , there are information boards providing educational information on the flora and fauna in the park . At the half @-@ way point , there is a shelter for visitors to take a short break or to enjoy a scenic view of Normanton Park and the National Parks Board 's plant nursery .

It is one of four popular birdwatching sites on mainland Singapore along with Pasir Ris Park , Fort Canning Park and Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve . Birds found in the park include : white @-@ crested laughing thrush , collared kingfisher , white @-@ bellied sea eagle , banded woodpecker , pink @-@ necked pigeon , blue @-@ tailed bee @-@ eater , white @-@ breasted waterhen , and spotted dove .

Eco @-@ tours and heritage tours are regularly organised by various special interest groups such as the Nature Society Singapore and the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research , for students and the general public .