

Factsheet

Kew Palace 'Top Ten' Artefacts

Many personal objects and artefacts belonging to or relating to George III and his family, reflecting their many interests and tastes, are displayed at Kew Palace. Below is a brief introduction to some of these fascinating and pertinent possessions of the Georgian Royal family:

- **Kew Palace 'Baby House'**

Traditionally held to have been built between 1780 and 1790 for the children of George III. They then gave it to the children of one of the King's sea captains. Contains items probably made by the Princesses. The decoration of the Dolls' house, or 'Baby House' as they were known then, is similar to that of the first floor rooms at Kew Palace c1804, including green verditer wallpaper with matching border, paint-grained doors and skirting boards and fitted carpets. The 'baby house' is displayed in the King's Breakfast Room along with other artefacts relating to George III's childhood and the interests and pursuits of his children.

- **George III Wax Head**

A copy of the original made by Madame Tussaud herself in early 1800. This incredibly striking image of the King is the closest visitors will come to seeing the real George III. It is the first object seen by palace visitors, displayed as a bust in the Ante-room to the King's Library.

- **George III's Waistcoat**

Worn towards the end of the King's life, the waistcoat bears unidentified stains which provide a moving connection to George III's suffering. The King died at Windsor on the 29th January 1820. The waistcoat is displayed in the Queen's Dressing Room.

- **'Eau Rouge' Bottle**

This early 19th Century glass water bottle was found intact at Kew during an archaeological dig beside the palace on the site of the lost wing, where King George was kept in close confinement during periods of illness. It once

contained rose-coloured mineral water, so coloured by its iron content, from the Pouhon well at Spa in modern Belgium. George III is known to have taken to the waters in the Spa town of Cheltenham to aid recovery from his first illness. This rare find is now displayed in the King's Library.

- **Frederick, Prince Of Wales And His Sisters Making Music At Kew By Philippe Mercier C.1733**

This painting depicting Frederick, Prince of Wales (George III's father) and his sisters playing musical instruments with Kew Palace in the background was painted by Phillip Mercier. Never displayed at Kew Palace before, it hangs in the King's Breakfast Room. (Lent from the Astor Collection, Cliveden (The National Trust)).

- **Harpsichord**

Made by Burkat Schudi in 1740, this harpsichord was owned by Frederick, Prince of Wales and then passed to his son George III. Both George and Queen Charlotte were extremely passionate about music, in particular they adored the work of Handel, and they played the harpsichord amongst other instruments. Music was a constant in the royal household. The harpsichord is a focal point of the Queen's Drawing Room, where music recitals were often held when the Royal family were in residence.

- **Queen Charlotte when Princess Sophie-Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz By Johann Georg Ziesenis 1760-65**

(1760-65). This portrait of the young princess is likely to have been sent to George before their betrothal. Charlotte is depicted in Germany, with a miniature of the King on her wrist. At just seventeen years of age she was married the day she arrived in London. This beautiful image of the young Queen hangs in the King's Library.

- **Silver Filigree Rattle**

This silver rattle was given to baby George, Prince of Wales (future George IV) in 1763 when he was six months old by his governess, Lady Charlotte Finch. An extremely clever woman and close confidante of the Queen, Charlotte Finch was governess to the royal children for 30 years. She was fondly known by the children as 'Lady Cha'. Both George III and George IV were educated at Kew Palace.

- **Egg-Boiler**

This egg-boiler was part of a silver-gilt breakfast service presented to George III by his five youngest daughters on his sixty-sixth birthday, 4th June 1804. It is inscribed with the ciphers of George and the daughters who gave it to him. The piece reflects two characteristics of the King's personality: his love of precision and his frugal eating habits.

- **Queen Charlotte's Chair**

This is the chair in which Queen Charlotte is believed to have died on the 18th November 1818. The Queen died in her bedroom at Kew Palace, confined to her chair because she could not lie down. She rested her head on a pillow on a table in front of her. Princesses Augusta and Mary and Prince Frederick were with her and she died holding the Prince Regent's hand. To be returned to the Queen's Bedroom for display. Nearly two centuries later the chair has been returned to Queen Charlotte's bedroom her at Kew.