

Factsheet

‘Grace and Favour’ at Hampton Court Palace Suffragettes, Soldiers and Servants 1750 – 1950 Exhibition

- After King George II’s final visit to Hampton Court Palace in 1737, no other monarch lived at the palace. Members of the royal family did continue to reside there, however, including the Dukes of Gloucester, Kent and Clarence (later King William IV) who were all allocated residences in and around the palace and its estate in the 19th century.
- Between 1797 and 1830 the Duke of Clarence lived in Bushy House with Mrs Dorothy Jordan, a famous actress of her day and their brood of ten children. Even after his marriage to Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen at Kew Palace he continued to reside at Bushy House with his wife, Amongst his numerous offspring, Elizabeth Emily FitzClarence, found at home at Hampton Court, living in the ground floor of the East Front of the palace.
- Eventually the palace was sub-divided into apartments of varying sizes. Initially 53 homes were created that were known as ‘Grace and Favour’ residences. The apartments and houses were allocated by the Lord Chamberlain to individuals who had served the monarchy or their country in recognition of their dedicated service.

Palace Community Life

- There was a strict ‘pecking’ order amongst the ‘Grace and Favour’ ladies, many of whom assumed the rank of their deceased husbands.
- As well as ‘Grace and Favour’ residents, there were also other tenants living at the palace. Official warrants were allocated to the palace’s workforce, including the Vine Keeper, electricians, lamplighters, members of the palace fire brigade and so forth, who were vital to the smooth running of the palace, and adding to the unique blend of palace community. The Vine Keeper and Gardens and

Estates Manager are still granted accommodation within the Palace grounds to this day so that they can keep a close eye on their charges.

- Hampton Court had very successful football and cricket teams consisting of palace residents & employees. In the early 1920's they won numerous awards, with the football team Champions of Division I in the Kingston League for three successive years.
- The palace founded its own Infant's School 1877 in Tennis Court Lane. Alongside the children of palace staff and local people, palace residents the young Russian Romanov princes and princesses, who lived at Wilderness House next to the maze, also attended the school. It closed its doors in the early 1950s and later become home for the palace security team.
- Pets were not permitted, a rule that created friction between residents. In 1880 a petition was sent to the Lord Chamberlain's Office to prevail on him to change the rule that dogs were not to be kept in the palace. He refused to alter the rule but as a concession, permitted the keeping of 'lap dogs'. One can only assume some ladies had larger knees than others as German Shepherds or Golden Retrievers were listed as 'lap dogs'!
- Letters to the Royal Household provide insight into the characters, community life and relationships at the palace. On 28 May 1893 Mrs Dalison wrote in earnest to the Lord Chamberlain about the indecorous behaviour of a fellow resident's servants. In a detailed letter she complained: "Soldiers and Whatman, the Boatman's son, continually spend nights or long periods of time shut up with the maids in the attics". The Lord Chamberlain would likewise write to residents and in 1892 set out his concerns to Mrs Barkly about certain irregularities in her apartment, in particular, "...the unseemly indecorous behaviour of young men who are reported to be residing in your rooms...and your neglect of sanitary conditions". In 1900 he also commented "Those decayed ladies are somewhat difficult to deal with - they all seek better things gratis".
- One long-term resident was Miss Millicent Gordon who holds the record for being the only 'Grace and Favour' resident to have lived in the palace for over one hundred years. During Miss Gordon's residency the apartment was neither modernised nor updated and, notably, had no bathroom. In 1941 the Housekeeper wrote on Millicent's behalf to request the installation of a bath.

Her application, nevertheless, was turned down. Miss Gordon's longevity was not taken into consideration and she had to manage without a bathroom for a further eight years until her death in October 1949, aged almost 105 years.

- Miss Baly, the new 'Grace and Favour' resident of the Banqueting House in 1864 was horrified to find that the rooms were decorated with nude figures. She wrote to the Lord Chamberlain that "...I find very objectionable the large undressed figures in the frescoes on each side of the fire place and venture to suggest that they should be either draped or clouded in such a manner as render them appropriate decorations for a drawing room".
- The 'Grace and Favour' residents had various means of getting around the palace. One such mode of transport was the 'Push', an old sedan chair mounted on wheels and drawn by a chairman. It was mainly used by the ladies for going out in the evening to dinners or parties from one part of the palace to another. Later, they would also have used 'bath chairs', wicker seats with three wheels, two of these chairs can still be seen in the palace stores.
- The Chapel Royal provided further concerns for residents. In 1884, one lady wrote "I feel obliged to mention that on several occasions lately there have been sad mistakes by the Organist on the one hand and the Chaplain on the other...I fear the Queen may hear of it or the newspapers get hold of it..." Sir Horace Beauchamp Seymour (1791-1851) a single, dashing, former Battle of Waterloo war hero moved into the palace in 1827. A spate of 'fainting' episodes followed in the Chapel Royal during the services, where the strategically placed 'helpless' victims managed to fall into his arms. After the third successive Sunday of fainting fits, the epidemic was brought to a halt by his aunt, also a resident, who pinned a note to the Chapel door warning any other would-be sufferers that Branscombe the Dustman would henceforth be carrying them out of the Chapel Royal! By the following Sunday the faintings had ceased.
- The Suffragette movement had a deep impact on the palace. Some of its residents were militant supporters and in February 1913 the palace was closed to the public for seven months "owing to the fear of damage by women suffragists". There were also extra policemen employed to guard the palace during the height of the potential threat.

Some Famous Palaces Residents

- **Grand Duchess Xenia** (1875-1960) was the daughter of Alexander III, Emperor of Russia; sister of the assassinated Tsar Nicholas II, and widow of Alexander Michael, Grand Duke of Russia. In 1919 George V sent HMS Marlborough to rescue her and her family from the Russian Bolshevik revolution. She lived in Wilderness House next to the maze. Xenia was the highest-ranking member of the White Russian aristocracy in London and as a result Hampton Court became an important place of pilgrimage for Russia's exiled society. Visitors were astonished at the simple life that she led during her twenty-three years tenure at the palace. Her simple reply was: 'The Russian Revolution took almost everything from me, but the Bolsheviks left with me with one privilege – to be a private person'.
- **Professor Michael Faraday** (1791-1867) was granted the house that now bears his name as a result of his important scientific achievements. In 1831 he pioneered electro-magnetic induction and thus effected the transformation of electricity from scientific curiosity to a powerful world-embracing technology, but sadly it did not reach as far as his house and as late as 1930 residents were petitioning the Lord Chamberlain for its installation! This perhaps explains this comment in a letter from him to a friend in 1858: "We are now at Hampton Court, in the house which the Queen has given me. We shall use it in the summer months, and go into town in the cold weather and the season. I believe it will be a comfortable pleasure for the years that remain of life; - but hope for a better house shortly..." Indeed, the palace first began installing electricity in the palace during 1909 but many parts remained powerless for decades after this.
- **Princess Sophia Duleep Singh** (1876-1948) lived in Faraday House, opposite Hampton Court Green, as a Grace and Favour resident. She was the daughter of Duleep Singh, Maharajah of the Punjab until 1849 when he surrendered the region to the British Empire along with the famous Koh-i-noor diamond. Princess Sophia lived there with two of her sisters, Bamba and Catherine. The princesses raised funds during both world wars for Indian soldiers, and to a greater or lesser extent, were active in the Suffragette Movement at both local and national levels. Sophia has been described as a 'suffragette fanatic' and as a member of the Tax Resistance League, was fined several times and had jewellery confiscated for non-payment of taxes. The 1934 edition of Women's Whose Who listed 'the Advancement of Women' as her only interest.

- The famous Antarctic explorer, **Sir Robert Falcon Scott** (1868-1912) was married in the palace's Chapel Royal on 2 September 1908. He was 40, and his bride, Kathleen Bruce, a famous sculptor in her own right, was 28. Kathleen was living in a 'Grace and Favour' apartment in the palace with her aunt, Mrs Zoe Thomson. In 1915 a 'Grace and Favour' warrant was granted to Scott's mother, Hannah, who lived in Apartment 44 (currently part of the offices of the Palace Director), until her death in 1924. Curiously, some years later it was allocated to Ernest Shackleton's widow, Lady Emily, who lived there from 1930 until her death in 1936. Shackleton (1874-1922), a fellow famous Antarctic explorer, served in 1901 as a junior officer under Captain Scott in Discovery.
- A celebrated and much-loved 20th century figure, **Lady Baden-Powell**, moved into her palace apartment in 1942. She was heavily involved in the Scouting Movement that her husband had founded. Lady Baden-Powell's response following the offer of a palace apartment in 1942. "I was astounded; I had never dreamed of such a privilege being accorded me'. The apartment was 'a bit dilapidated' because of the war but most importantly would be 'home'". She described how, during the war, she survived a bomb, which exploded causing her ceiling to collapse in 1944.

"I've often thought I should like to live at Hampton Court. It looks so peaceful and so quiet, and it is such a dear old place to ramble in the early morning before many people are about". Jerome K Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*, 1889.