

Outreach & Community Involvement

Annual Review 2010



A look back on 2010

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. These magnificent buildings are bursting with all the stories that have unfolded within their walls and it is the aim of the Outreach & Community Involvement team to ensure that people, especially those at risk of social exclusion within our local communities, can engage with our stories and share their own. Our strategy is to widen engagement with our heritage by reaching out to those disadvantaged groups and individuals less likely or able to visit on their own. In the current economic climate, we feel that the impact of our work has the potential to be greater than ever.

As well as engaging with people who would otherwise not come to the palaces, the team also initiates wider community events that benefit a larger public. By focusing on local needs we seek to contribute towards social cohesion. Each team member develops their expertise across the sites, often with specialist service providers already based within the local areas: our Community Partners. We are as inclusive as possible, seeking to root our work within our exhibitions and displays rather than outside the mainstream.

We are not social workers but our work does have a social context, exploring and sharing stories in inspirational places. What we do is aimed at improving people's lives; increasing self-confidence, lifting spirits, encouraging creativity, involving and bringing together people from different generations, cultural backgrounds and perspectives to access and add a layer to our shared heritage. Sometimes this happens in very small ways, sometimes there is greater involvement and longer-lasting impact.

By continually evaluating the impact of our projects and programmes we can be sure that the way in which we are working suits the needs of the participants. Although the quality of the outputs is important, integrity in the process of our work is even more so. Throughout 2010 there have been some inspired – and inspirational – projects and programmes both on and off-site. Internal and external evaluation endorses our belief that we have done more of a consistently higher quality than ever before, enabling Historic Royal Palaces to have a wider and deeper impact in the world.

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Our audiences

Adults

In 2010 adults took part in projects, events and visits designed to be inspirational, informative and inclusive. Citizenship ceremonies at Hampton Court, the Tower of London and the Banqueting House gave people the opportunity to have a life-changing moment in iconic British buildings. Reminiscence projects (linked to the debutantes exhibition at Kensington and the Crown Jewels at the Tower) gave people the chance to share their memories and feel a personal connection with the palaces.

Off-site talks brought all of the palaces into community venues, and creative art projects using ceramics, fabric, copper and photography enabled people in nursing homes to experience Hampton Court's history in ways which were intellectually and physically stimulating.

A storyteller brought the tale of the Tower's Koh-i-Nûr diamond to life for adults from a range of cultures and backgrounds; elders helped to knit a throne at Kensington; creative writing inspired by Kew Palace was used in the re-presented Temple of the Imagination; and new resources for ESOL groups helped people engage with the palaces by looking at both the past and present... and so much more.



Youth

During 2010 we pursued new and extended ways to raise the aspirations and confidence of young people in our boroughs through engagement with our sites. Kensington's Enchanted Palace experience provided privileged opportunities for young people to respond to the exhibition whilst having their work within the main exhibition, through a knitted throne, inspired graffiti, and curating an entire Cabinet of Curiosities. An extensive project with a Pupil Referral Unit created striking silhouette sculptures for Kensington Palace gardens. In-depth evaluation highlighted levels of engagement beyond its predetermined objectives and supported the value of such work in the future.

The Banqueting House celebrated 'Graduation' ceremonies in a magnificent setting for the completion of special projects with our Community Partner IntoUniversity (IU). Other IU groups considered careers in heritage through personal presentations from our own varied staff.

Young people also took part in a number of workshops which produced new elements for the Temple of the Imagination at Kew.

The Youth Panel continued their much valued commitment feeding into the important building and re-representation plans at Kensington. Watch this space!

Children and families

It's been a busy year, with children and families engaging with our palaces in many different ways:

Parents and toddlers from Jigsaw under 5s centre had the opportunity to contribute to our fabulous Enchanted Palace knitted throne, as well as creating beautiful knitted Christmas tree decorations for the room in which it sits.

Children at the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital have been able to engage with Kensington's stories, and even design their very own fantasy room, thanks to the production of an activity pack that will be available on the wards for the next 2 years.

Families at Kew enjoyed interactive workshops exploring the palace as a home with help from a specially made puppet of historic chef Patrick Lamb.

Work with our Community Partner IntoUniversity continues to flourish, with a series of exciting FOCUS weeks taking place, ranging from Shakespeare and journalism at the Tower, to maths at Hampton Court. Not to mention designing a stunning and fantastically feathery Christmas tree for the Enchanted Palace.



Intergenerational

The year began with the culmination of an intergenerational project at the Tower of London. Inspired by the Constable's Installation, grandparents and grandchildren shared stories, learnt about the Tower, the Constable's keys and the Crown Jewels, and worked with an artist to make special objects representing their families.

In the middle of 2010, a major new educational and community project was piloted: Palace Explorers. This project sees the Education and Outreach & Community Involvement teams at Historic Royal Palaces working together to engage local schoolchildren with Kensington Palace, whilst also reaching out to their families to encourage them all to feel a connection with the palace. With fun sessions for parents and children, celebration events and resources, Palace Explorers will finish its current programme with a fashion show at Kensington in summer 2011, before moving on to the Tower of London for the next stage of the pilot.



Access

We continued to work with our Access Panels at the Tower, Hampton Court and Kensington Palace to improve the visitor experience for disabled people at all our palaces. One of our initiatives this year was to produce an HRP-wide access guide so that visitors to one palace could easily find out about access at the others. As part of this project we commissioned some specific photography of disabled visitors at all five palaces.

At the end of August we welcomed back Connaught Opera to Hampton Court Palace for three performances to elderly and disabled groups from the boroughs of Richmond and Kingston. People with learning disabilities took part in a Feast project at Kew growing their own vegetables in the Queen's Garden.

Last spring we produced some films in British Sign Language for our website: five clips per palace covering basic visitor information, delivered by a member of our Access Panel dressed in appropriate period costumes. This innovative idea won us a Jodi Award in December for Digital Access Online.



Cross audience

Our large, free summer event programme provided opportunities to work with new organisations as well as old friends, whilst reaching a broad audience.

Music for an Enchanted Palace at Kensington was part of Exhibition Road Music Day, and provided an opportunity for local young people to perform with professional musicians. Visitors were led on a journey through four centuries of music and created new song-writing and compositions on the day in honour of the Palace's princesses.

Archaeology & Discovery Weekend at the Tower once again gave people the chance to get 'hands on' with history, hunt for treasure on Tower Beach, learn about the secrets and skills of archaeologists and conservators, and try new crafts.

The Banqueting House marquee at the West End Live event in Leicester Square featured activities inspired by the 350th anniversary of Charles II's accession to the throne, and the restoration of the monarchy.



The Party at the Enchanted Palace event saw dancing, storytelling and art activities bring Kensington's stories beyond its walls and out into the gardens. This event also featured a community dance performance, inspired by the Enchanted Palace, and choreographed by English National Ballet's learning team.

These events attracted thousands of visitors, and helped people discover our stories in exciting and entertaining ways.

Our year concluded with our annual community carol service at the Tower of London - a chance to meet up with people from earlier in the year, look back on all that has happened, and look forward to the next twelve months.



Project in focus: The Enchanted Palace and the community

With parts of Kensington Palace closed as they undergo a massive representation ahead of a spring 2012 re-opening, in 2010 the remainder of the State Apartments were transformed into the Enchanted Palace. Theatre and fashion designers worked with curators to turn palace stories into fantastical installations in the grand rooms, taking people on a journey to discover seven princesses associated with Kensington. This exciting and innovative project seemed too good an opportunity for community groups to miss, and so right from the start it was planned to have exhibits made by the local community on display alongside historic items and A-list designers' creations.

About three months before the palace opened, toddlers, teenagers and adults of all ages started work in earnest on what has proved to be one of the most popular features of the Enchanted Palace – the knitted throne. Yes, a knitted throne! Rather than an ancient gold and velvet chair behind a rope, the exhibition experience required a throne that everyone could sit on, and the theatre designers felt that a woolly throne would be both accessible and unusual. Working with our Community Partner Stitches in Time, the groups learnt the stories of the palace as they cast off and on with their needles and yarn.

Children were asked to think of what princesses might dream of – and were then given permission to draw their ideas all over the walls of the staircase leading to the State Rooms for all visitors to enjoy... and be intrigued by!

For a group of young people from one of our other Community Partners – Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit – it was outside the palace that their work would be seen by thousands. The beautiful Cradle Walk around the palace's sunken garden needed to be 'enchanted' and so, working with the artist Emma Rios, the young people rose to the occasion, and took inspiration from history to create stunning silhouettes to hang on archways. It is hoped that when the Enchanted Palace ends, these silhouettes will move to the grounds of the Pupil Referral Unit's newly built educational facility.

At the end of 2010, other groups of all ages worked on new additions to the Enchanted Palace's Cabinet of Curiosities. Through artistic direction from Frances Kiernan, Laura Prideaux and Maria-Theresa Fernandez, the Cabinet now exhibits their beautiful creations inspired by journeys, both through life and around the world.

The Enchanted Palace has seen community exhibits woven seamlessly into a major mainstream exhibition, and has given many people the opportunity of not only being engaged with the stories of the past, but seeing their work admired by thousands of people each week.



2010: Our work, our reach

Between January and December 2010 the Outreach & Community Involvement Team organised projects at all five of our palaces. A full list of every project, talk, workshop or event, for every group we have worked with, would fill several pages, so here are just some of our activities over the last year which have involved thousands of people in our communities.

Key:

Tower of London

Hampton Court Palace

Banqueting House

Kensington Palace

Kew Palace

Accross Historic Royal Palaces

Crown Jewels reminiscence project
 Citizenship ceremony
 Local and international history booklets
 ESOL resources
 Local reduced price entry promotion
 One-off visits by groups to the Tower
 Archaeology & Discovery Weekend
 Intergenerational regalia project
 Pupil Referral Unit short film project
 Research into Reduced Price Entry Scheme

Ceramic reliefs project
 Citizenship ceremony
 Connaught Opera performances
 Visits and talks on and off-site
 ESOL resources
 State Beds project

Activities at West End Live event
 ESOL resources

Banqueting House history booklet
 Visits and talks on and off-site
 Citizenship Ceremony
 IntoUniversity 'Graduation Ceremony'

Debutantes reminiscence project
 Party at the Enchanted Palace event
 One-off visits to the palace
 ESOL resources
 IntoUniversity graduations
 Enchanted Palace PRU hoardings
 Prince's Drawing School Saturday club
 Enchanted Palace staircase drawings
 Hospital activity booklet for children
 Storytelling sessions for children
 Cabinet of Curiosities 'Journey Journals'
 Cabinet of Curiosities paper dresses
 Enchanted Palace knitted throne
 Knitted Christmas tree and decorations
 Hospital adolescents origami project
 Enchanted Palace history booklet
 Music for an Enchanted Palace event
 Palace Explorers family learning sessions

Youth Panel
 Thomas More girls project
 IntoUniversity 'Careers in Heritage' day

Feast: vegetable growing and crafts
 Temple of the Imagination workshops
 ESOL visits and resources
 Home at Kew Palace workshop
 Visits, talks and workshops on and off-site

Access leaflet for all five palaces
 British Sign Language films
 'New Citizen's Guide' booklet
 Presentations at conferences and seminars

Our work focuses on engaging people in the local area near our palaces, who would not normally come to them because of social, cultural, financial or physical reasons.

At Historic Royal Palaces, we try to balance depth of engagement with breadth of reach. It is important to us that all of the people we involve have a high quality experience, whether that be at a one-off public event attended by thousands of people or a three month project with a handful of participants. Our targets are not about the number of people we work with, but rather about the way we work with them.

In 2010 we engaged over 20,000 people through Outreach & Community Involvement activities. A further 6,500 people used the Tower of London's reduced price entry scheme - promoted by the Outreach & Community Involvement team - which is available to residents of the Tower's local borough.

- **Over 2,000 people were engaged through workshops, talks, visits, community events and other projects**
- **Over 7,000 people were reached through resource booklets about the palaces**
- **Over 11,500 people attended our free public events**
- **Over 6,500 people used the Tower of London's local reduced price entry scheme**

Every project we undertake is unique, but all of our work is guided by three core principles:

- **Fulfilling Historic Royal Palaces' Cause: to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built.**
- **Ensuring that our activities fulfil learning and social outcomes.**
- **Where possible, linking our work with the priorities of our local areas.**

Evaluation

We evaluate all of our projects as a matter of course, making use of both qualitative and quantitative evidence. We review all of our evaluation work on an annual basis. Our evaluation is guided by our Evaluation Strategy, and primarily uses the 'Impact Evaluation Model', although different models are used when appropriate.

In 2010 we were very grateful to receive financial support from 3i, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Hilton Foundation. Their generosity has helped make many of our projects possible, particularly at Kensington Palace.

Our Community Partners:

Our Community Partners are organisations in the boroughs near the palaces with whom, through working together on a regular basis, we have built particularly strong relationships:

West London Action for Children with Chelsea Jigsaw
Centre for Children and Families

Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit

Open Age

Kingston Learning Disability Services

Clement James Project and IntoUniversity

Chelsea & Westminster Health Charity

Stitches in Time

www.hrp.org.uk/outreachandcommunity

