

# Factsheet

## Yeoman Warders

No one is exactly sure where the name Beefeater came from but it would be absolutely correct to say the men guarding the Tower prefer the title Yeoman Warder. In fact the full and proper title is Yeoman Warder of Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress the Tower of London, and Members of the Sovereign's Body Guard of the Yeoman Guard Extraordinary.

- There are 35 Yeoman Warders at the Tower plus the Chief Yeoman Warder and Yeoman Gaoler.
- To qualify as a Yeoman Warder you must be a former long serving Senior Non Commissioned Officer from the Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Marines.
- Yeoman Warders are erroneously called 'Beefeaters'. The most likely explanation is that Yeoman Warders were given a daily ration of meat for their duties. Records show that even in 1813 the daily ration for the thirty men on duty was 24lbs of beef, 18lbs mutton and 16lbs of veal!
- As well as their duties at the Tower, Yeoman Warders also attend the Coronation of the Sovereign, lying-in-state, the Lord Mayor's Show and other state and charity functions.
- New Yeoman Warders are sworn in on Tower Green after the Tower has closed to the public. The oath of allegiance dates back to 1337. After the ceremony the new recruit joins the other Yeoman Warders and his health is toasted by the Chief Yeoman Warder from the ceremonial punch bowl.
- The pewter bowl dates back to 1725 and was a gift from Yeoman Warder Wilkins who was found to be earning a living as an innkeeper in Southwark when he should have been on duty.
- The Chief Yeoman Warder toast new recruits with the words, May you never die a Yeoman Warder. Originally the post of Yeoman Warder was sold for 250 guineas. £250 went to the Yeoman Warder on his retirement and the rest to the Constable who appointed him but, if the Yeoman Warder died in post, the Constable inherited the whole amount!

- There are two uniforms for the Body. The Ceremonial Uniform is worn for State Occasions; for example, when the monarch visits the Palace or for any state occasion that the Body attends. It is predominantly red and gold with red stockings, white ruff and black patent shoes.
- For everyday wear, the Yeoman Warders wear a blue undress uniform. There are two weights - for summer and winter - and this is the uniform visitors will see day to day when they come to the Tower.