

Essential information for your visit

This booklet has been prepared to provide lead teachers with all the information they will need to plan a successful trip to the Banqueting House, Whitehall.

Please read it carefully; and share appropriate information with your accompanying adults and students where necessary.



A brief history

The Banqueting House, formerly a part of the Palace of Whitehall, now destroyed, was built by famous architect Inigo Jones in 1619 to be the setting for royal masques – an elaborate form of court entertainment which was a cross between a ball, a play and a fancy dress party.

The Banqueting House is perhaps most famous as the site of the execution of Charles I. King and Parliament had battled for years over the rule of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and, in 1649, the king lost. On 30th January at 10am, the king was led out to a specially built scaffold outside of the Banqueting House and it was here that he was beheaded and the monarchy abolished for eleven years.

After this, the Banqueting House was used as an ambassadorial reception room until 1689 when the royal family ceased to use Whitehall as a residence. In January 1698, the entire palace was burnt to the ground, all except the Banqueting House and the Holbein gates. The palace was never rebuilt and the Banqueting House was consequently used for various functions; a chapel for the Horse Guards during the 19th century and a museum in 1893.

Top Things to see

- **The Rubens Ceiling:** This masterpiece ceiling painting of Peter Paul Rubens is one of the most famous from a golden age. Four enormous canvasses measuring between 28x20ft and 40x10ft are a symbol of the divine right of James I and his son, Charles I.
- **The Site of Charles I Scaffold:** The place where a king was killed and Britain turned into a republic for eleven years

Useful Information

If you experience any difficulty during your visit, please call the Operations Team on **020 3166 6646**

To discover more about the Banqueting House during your visit, please feel free to ask any of the warding staff who will be happy to answer your questions.

How to find us

The Banqueting House is on the corner of Horse Guards Avenue and Whitehall – immediately opposite Horse Guards Parade.

London Underground

Nearest stations:

Westminster – turn right out of the station, first right into Whitehall and walk along until you come to the Banqueting House which is approximately half way up on the right hand side.

Embankment – go out of the Embankment Entrance, turn right, cross Northumberland Avenue, turn right into Horse Guards Avenue, walk past the Ministry of Defence and the Banqueting House is approx. 100 yards down on the corner of Horse Guards Avenue and Whitehall.

Charing Cross – proceed as for the train (see below).

By train

Charing Cross – turn left out of the station's main entrance, towards Trafalgar Square. From there walk down Whitehall for about 5 minutes and the Banqueting House is on the left.

By bus

Bus Routes – 3, 11, 12, 24, 53, 87, 88 and 159.

Please note that there isn't any parking for coaches next to the Banqueting House.



Map

