

History at Hampton Court Palace

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What to see and do

The Palace

Henry VIII's Apartments

Henry VIII's Apartments contain two of the King's largest and most decorated public rooms (the Great Hall and the Great Watching Chamber), the King's Council Chamber, and the Processional Route which link the rooms together. The rest of Henry's rooms and his private apartments were either altered or demolished during the 1680s when the palace was modernised by Sir Christopher Wren.

Despite having been altered many times since the 16th century, the Apartments are unique and spectacular survivors from the Tudor court and give a real sense of how the inside of Henry VIII's Hampton Court may have looked. Today they contain furniture and information to help increase understanding of what it was like to live at Henry's palace.

The Processional Route leading from the Great Watching Chamber to the Council Chamber is hung with works of art from the Tudor period.

Henry VIII's Kitchens

Henry VIII's Kitchens offer students a wonderful insight into life at court during the reign of Henry VIII. Unlike other parts of the palace, students are free to touch all of the objects on display in the kitchens.

The entrance to the kitchens is in Master Carpenter's Court.

Chapel Royal (*please note this area is subject to close due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#)*)

We ask that learning groups enter the Chapel Royal by the main entrance on the ground floor, which is reached by following Henry VIII's Kitchen route past the Wine Cellar and then turning right.

The Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace has been in continuous use for over four hundred and fifty years. It was the scene of some of the great events in the life of Henry VIII. In 1537 his son, Prince Edward was baptised here, in 1541 Henry learnt of the infidelity of his wife Catherine Howard whilst at chapel and in 1545 Henry married his last wife Katheryn Parr here.

The Chapel Royal is divided into two parts, the Royal Pew upstairs and the Chapel proper. The Royal Pew is part of Henry VIII's Apartments and was where the monarch and his companions would sit.

Much of the interior of the chapel and the Royal Pew dates from the Stuart and Georgian periods, however the ceiling of the chapel is Tudor and remains one of the most spectacular sights at Hampton Court Palace.

Teachers are asked not to give talks to their groups in the chapel. Chapel Royal Stewards are usually on hand to answer questions.

This remains an active place of worship and we would ask you and your students to respect this by not taking photographs and by behaving in an appropriate manner in and around the chapel area. Unfortunately, visitors in costume are not allowed entry into the chapel.

Essential information for your visit

William III's Apartments *(please note this area is subject to close due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#))*

William III's Apartments are possibly the finest set of baroque apartments in the world. Built for King William III (1689 – 1702) by Sir Christopher Wren, they are presented and furnished as visitors to Hampton Court would have known them in 1700. The apartments are a complete set of both public and private rooms, their layout reflecting the social and political hierarchies prevalent at the time.

The Georgian Story

These rooms were designed by Sir Christopher Wren for Queen Mary II (wife of King William III) however they were incomplete at the time of her death in 1694. Many of the greatest artists and designers of the time contributed to the interiors including William Kent, Sir John Vanbrugh and James Thornhill.

These apartments are now home to the Georgian Story which tells the history of the house of Hanover and the Georgian Kings and Queens.

The Cumberland Art Gallery *(please note this area is subject to close due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#))*

Discover magnificent artworks from the Royal Collection in the new Cumberland Art Gallery. The gallery occupies a newly restored suite of rooms designed by William Kent for a Georgian prince. After two years of meticulous research, Kent's Cumberland Suite has been returned as closely as possible to his original scheme.

Mantegna's Triumphs of Caesar *(please note this area is subject to close due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#))*

Created in northern Italy by the artist Andrea Mantegna for the Gonzaga family probably between 1485 and 1506, the paintings were purchased by King Charles I and brought to England in 1630. The series of nine paintings, show an imaginary triumphal procession arriving in ancient Rome, complete with captured jewels, women and elephants. They are considered to be some of the most important Italian Renaissance paintings in the world. If you wish to view these paintings, please check the opening times at the Information Centre on the day of your visit.

Base Court

Base Court was originally built by Thomas Wolsey. It is a statement of huge wealth and status, as all the rooms around this courtyard were lodgings for guests – which gives us some idea of the scale of Wolsey's household.

Clock Court

Clock Court is the centre of the palace. To the north is Henry VIII's Great Hall and to the south a colonnade designed by Wren that leads to William III's Apartments. The astronomical clock shows the time, month, date, sign of the zodiac, phase of the moon, and the times the moon crosses the meridian – the latter being useful for travel as it provided details of the tide affecting journeys by river.

There are a number of other courtyards that are open to the public. Do feel free to explore them all, they offer interesting glimpses into life at the palace.

The Gardens

The gardens surrounding Hampton Court Palace are vast and varied in style.

Chapel Court Garden *(please note this area is subject to close due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#))*

This is a fantastic recreated Tudor garden, based on Henry VIII's privy gardens at Whitehall Palace. The plants here (including herbs and flowers) would all have been available in 16th century England and the central path is guarded by a row of King's beasts.

The Privy Garden

This area has been reconstructed as it was in 1702, when William III was on the throne. This was a very private area and very few people other than the King would have ever gained admittance. The Privy Garden represents a formal style of gardening and uses a lot of symmetry.

The Great Vine *(please note this area is subject to close due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#))*

One of Hampton Court's most famous features, the Great Vine was planted in 1768 by the celebrated landscape gardener Lancelot "Capability" Brown. It continues to produce a good crop every year.

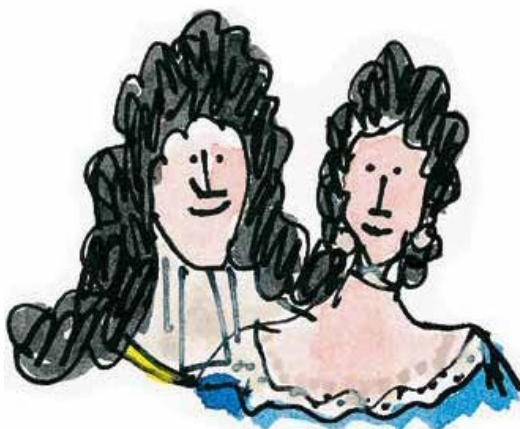
The Royal Tennis Courts

Not to be confused with Lawn Tennis, Real Tennis goes back centuries. It was enjoyed by Henry VIII, Charles I, William III and Prince Albert among others and is still played here today. *(Open summer months only and may be closed at short notice for tennis events).*

The Maze and Magic Garden *(please note the Maze is closed due to COVID-19 restrictions please check our closures page [here](#))*

The Maze and Magic Garden are not included in your subsidised schools rate. For more information on these areas please visit our website or call +44 (0) 33 3320 6000.

Further information and key-stage specific resources can be found on our website [here](#).



Essential information for your visit

HRP Teacher Resources

Hampton Court Palace timeline

1494	Giles Daubeney, later Lord Chamberlain, leases and modernises the medieval manor of Hampton Court.
1515	A year after leasing Hampton Court, Thomas Wolsey begins rebuilding on a grand scale, converting Hampton Court into a lavish palace.
1523	Henry VIII's former tutor John Skelton writes that, 'The King's Court should hath the excellence. But Hampton Court hath the pre-eminence'.
1529	Henry VIII's royal workmen take over building works at Hampton Court Palace.
1530	Henry VIII and his councillors send the first letter threatening a break with the Papacy to Rome from the palace.
1537	Queen Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife, gives birth to Prince Edward. He is baptized with great ceremony in the Chapel Royal, but she dies soon after due to complications from the birth.
1540	Henry VIII's divorce from Anne of Cleves is signed at the palace. It is also where Henry VIII marries his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, and she is proclaimed queen.
1541	Catherine Howard's earlier sexual liaisons are revealed to Henry VIII at Hampton Court. She is interrogated and kept under house arrest in the palace.
1543	Henry VIII marries his sixth and final wife, Kateryn Parr, in the Chapel Royal.
1603	Shakespeare and his company the 'King's Men' perform plays in the Great Hall for King James I.
1604	James I calls the Hampton Court Conference which commissions the King James Bible.
1689	Sir Christopher Wren demolishes large parts of the Tudor palace and begins building a new palace for King William III and Queen Mary II.
1760	George III becomes king. He abandons Hampton Court as royal residence and it begins to be divided up into grace-and-favour apartments.
1838	Queen Victoria opens the gardens and state apartments to the public free of charge.
1944	General, later President, Eisenhower plans the Normandy landings in Bushy Park.
1984	Prince Charles, speaking at Hampton Court, calls for 'a new harmony between imagination and taste and in the relationship between the architects and the people of this country'.
2012	The palace was the venue for the Road Cycling Time Trials in the London 2012 Olympics, where GB athlete Bradley Wiggins won gold.
2015	The palace celebrated 500 years since the first stone of the palace was laid.

For more information on the history of Hampton Court Palace, please visit our website [here](#).