2015 promises to be a very special year for Historic Royal Palaces, particularly for Hampton Court Palace, which will be celebrating its 500th birthday. Cardinal Wolsey, King Henry VIII’s trusted advisor, began work on the building in 1515. As Wolsey fell from grace, Hampton Court became the Tudor monarch’s pleasure palace and 500 years later, the palace retains the magnificence and splendour of its royal past.

In 2015, Hampton Court Palace will host a year of celebrations offering visitors the chance to explore 500 years of history in a single day. To celebrate the 500th birthday, the palace will be specially decorated and costumed interpreters will bring Hampton Court to life, involving visitors in the gossip and intrigue of the court. Spectacular events will take place throughout the year, offering visitors the chance to travel back in time with live performances, music, storytelling and family trails, alongside the iconic building has onto the palace façade will tell the story of how the iconic building has changed over the past five centuries. In the summer, the Magic Garden, a new adventure playground inspired by heraldry and featuring ‘royal beasts’ including lions, dragons and unicorns will open for children of all ages. Even Henry VIII’s wine fountain (faithfully recreated) will be flowing for the occasion!

At our other palaces, visitors will be able to enjoy a range of special exhibitions, events and activities. Guided tours of our newest property, Hillsborough Castle in Northern Ireland, will be available throughout the summer, as work continues towards our long-term vision to open up this fascinating royal residence for everyone to enjoy. We will also be taking ‘Tudors on Tour’ to Tatton Park in May.

We look forward to welcoming you to one (or more) of the palaces this year!

Michael Day
Chief Executive,
Historic Royal Palaces

Welcome to the Historic Royal Palaces’ press office

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace and Hillsborough Castle. Our aim is to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built. That’s where we come in…

We want to make sure that you know about everything we have planned. We know that you are immersed in deadlines and working under pressure, so this guide is aimed at helping you get the most out of us.

Find out who you can interview about our exciting upcoming projects, how to organise a press visit and how we facilitate filming and photography.

If you’re looking for a story or inspiration check out our plans for the year ahead!

Get in touch! Call the Press Office on +44 (0)203 166 6166 or email press@hrp.org.uk. We even tweet at @HRP_PressOffice.

Facebook pages and tweeting 1000 years of history.

The press office handles all media enquiries related to the palaces, from issuing news stories and photographs of our exhibitions to facilitating documentaries and feature films (including Pirates of the Caribbean!), manning our
Hampton Court Palace’s 500th birthday

2015 marks the 500th year since Cardinal Wolsey began to build Hampton Court Palace. For half a millennium, the palace he built to entertain a pleasure loving King Henry VIII has stood on the bank of the Thames: a symbol of power, prestige and majesty.

The palace has been a witness to the honeymoons of Henry VIII, Mary I and Charles II, and the birth and baptism of Henry VIII’s much longed for heir. It has been the setting for confrontations and private meetings between Mary I and Elizabeth I; Elizabeth and her many suitors; Charles I and Cromwell. It is the place where Jane Seymour died, where Charles I was imprisoned, and where William III suffered a fatal accident. Shakespeare performed in the Great Hall; Handel played in the Chapel Royal, and Jerome K Jerome’s Three Men in a Boat got lost in the famous maze.

This is a place where history was made - a centre of royal life for over 200 years, and a building which is still full of life today as one of Britain’s most popular and best-loved visitor attractions. A highly skilled team of craftspeople, gardeners, surveyors, conservators and curators help to preserve the building and its contents for future generations. In this, the palace’s 500th year, we will be bringing the epic sweep of its history to life, offering visitors the chance to experience 500 years of history in one day, and celebrating the survival of this magnificent building.

Programme

Join us as we celebrate our 500th year with an exciting series of displays, special events, and activities for all the family. The palace will be ready for a big celebration, and the famous wine fountain will flow once more, as we offer up a toast to 500 years of Hampton Court from Easter.

Explore 500 years of history in a day with our best ever programme of immersive live performance: from Easter, the palace will be peopled with Kings, Queens and courtiers, bringing Hampton Court’s history to life throughout the courtyards and gardens. Witness Catherine Howard’s attempted flight towards Henry VIII to save herself, stumble upon Charles I and Oliver Cromwell deep in conversation, and see Elizabeth I’s giant porter brought to life in the Tudor rooms he once guarded, where his portrait now hangs.

Our 500th birthday season begins at Easter with spectacular weekend of celebrations, culminating in a state of the art 3D film projection onto the palace’s south façade, and taking a kaleidoscopic journey through the building, re-modelling and life of the palace in four ‘movements’.

In the Tudor State Apartments, a digital tapestry - inspired by the Great Hall’s magnificent Abraham tapestries - will explore the ‘warp and weft’ of Hampton Court Palace’s history.

Over the May Bank Holiday weekend, a ‘Time Quake’ quest will be held for families, inviting visitors to travel back in time and meet some of the key characters who have shaped the Hampton Court’s history. Specially written for the anniversary year by author Damien Dibben, an exciting reward awaits those who complete the journey!

The summer will see two large garden parties staged, celebrating a ‘palace of two halves’ and giving visitors the opportunity to explore great moments from Hampton Court’s past. Bringing the Tudor palace to life, King Henry VIII will put on a show to impress the ambassadors, with a magnificent Tudor joust, dancing in the Elizabethan knot garden, and the Tudor Kitchens cooking up a storm. Meanwhile, in a special Baroque themed weekend, masques, music and merriment will ring out across the palace’s beautiful formal gardens.

Throughout the year, we’ll be recruiting young people and families to help us create a ‘new history’ of Hampton Court – in film! A year of ‘movie making’ activities and workshops will culminate in the creation of a film by Aardman Productions, telling the story of one of Britain’s most famous palaces, using the words of the visitors who join us in 2015.
for over 900 years the Tower of London has dominated the City of London and is still one of the capital’s most prominent landmarks and a world-famous visitor attraction. Throughout its long history, the Tower has served as a royal palace and fortress, prison and place of execution, an arsenal, royal mint, menagerie and jewel house. Today, London’s great royal fortress is home to some of the most potent symbols of British history: the Yeoman Warders, ravens and Crown Jewels.

Around 1078, William the Conqueror began work on a great stone palace with walls 15 feet thick, known since the medieval period as the White Tower. It now houses a collection of historic royal arms and armour belonging to the Royal Armouries, including the magnificent armour of Henry VIII. The striking outer defences of the fortress were established and enlarged by subsequent monarchs to create the 22 towers that make up the Tower of London today, and in Victorian times the first Duke of Wellington, Constable of the Tower between 1826-52, drained the stagnant moat and restored the two Chapels Royal within the Tower which had fallen into decay.

Today over 3 million visitors a year immerse themselves in one thousand years of British royal history and heritage at the Tower of London, making it the UK’s most visited historic attraction.

Throughout 2015 a number of new projects will commence at the Tower, from conservation of the historic fabric of the buildings to new exhibitions and displays.

The Banqueting House on Whitehall is the sole surviving complete building of Whitehall, Palace, the sovereign’s principal residence from 1530 until the reign of King William III. Whitehall Palace was once the splendid Tudor residence of King Henry VIII, the Banqueting House is a later addition to the palace built by the renowned 17th century architect Inigo Jones for King James I to hold state occasions including masques, plays and state banquets. Sadly, the majority of the palace’s buildings were lost in the devastating fire of 1698 leaving just the Banqueting House remaining.

The Banqueting House is perhaps most famous for being the site of the execution of King Charles I in 1649, the only member of Britain’s monarchy to be executed. Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector then made the palace his official residence until his death in 1658. In 1660 the Restoration of King Charles II to the throne made the Banqueting House a royal palace once again.

The famous painted ceiling by Sir Peter Paul Rubens was commissioned by King Charles I in 1629 to celebrate the glorification of his father James I. The canvasses have decorated the ceiling of the Banqueting House since 1635 and are the only Rubens paintings to remain in their original location.

2015 will see the beginnings of important conservation work getting underway to the exterior of this significant building. Contact the press office for opportunities to learn more about our plans, to talk to one of our experts or to arrange a visit to view the stunning ceiling.

Once a countryside retreat for King William III and Queen Mary, Kensington Palace was at the epicentre of royal life in the 17th and 18th centuries, and played host to the courts of the late Stuart and Georgian monarchs. A royal residence for over 300 years, with long associations with fashion, the palace is now home to some of the most famous treasures in the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection, often to be seen on display in exhibitions within the splendid State Rooms.

The Queen’s State Apartments - amongst the oldest rooms in the palace - are home to a display about the later Stuart monarchs, from the Glorious Revolution to the death of Queen Anne. Meanwhile, the story of the glittering court of King George II and Queen Caroline is brought to life within William Kent’s opulent King’s State Apartments. Last year saw the Privy and Presence Chambers in these rooms returned to their original Georgian interiors after a major restoration project.

Queen Victoria grew up at Kensington Palace, and the “Victoria Revealed” exhibition explores her life and reign in the rooms where she took her first steps. Told in her own words, and inspired by extracts from her private diaries and correspondence, this exhibition features displays of personal objects and artworks to form an intimate picture of the life of a remarkable woman.

Of course, Kensington Palace’s royal connections reach into the twentieth century. ‘Fashion Rules’, a dress exhibition focusing on the impact of these three royal women in their fashion heydays, 2015 will be the last chance to see this exhibition, which will close at the end of the year.

Kensington Palace is the sole surviving royal palace to have been a countryside retreat for a dynasty, and the first Royal residence to be acquired by King William III for his queen, Queen Mary, and named Kensington Palace. Set within the iconic gardens at Kew, step into this tiny dolls house of a palace and experience the joys and sorrows of King George III and his family, told through an engaging soundscape and displays of fascinating personal artefacts. Originally built in 1631 for a Flemish merchant, it was first acquired for royal occupation by King George II who thought it very suitable as a lodging for his three eldest daughters, Anne, Caroline and Amelia. In 2015, join us as we share some of the untold stories of the young Georgian princesses who called Kew their home, and discover some of the accomplishments required of the daughters of the king.

In our recently restored Royal Kitchens, open the door to a lost space, left untouched since Queen Charlotte’s death at the palace in 1818, and delve into the tale of these historic royal kitchens, the servants who worked in them and the finer points of Georgian cuisine.

Just a stroll away lies Queen Charlotte’s cottage, a rustic retreat built in 1770, where the royal family enjoyed picnics and peace in a tranquil corner of Kew Gardens. Inside, the cottage’s Print Room is hung with over 150 satirical engravings, mostly after William Hogarth, whilst the Picnic Room upstairs is decorated with paintings of trailing nasturtiums and convolvulus, believed to be the work of Princess Elizabeth, the most artistic daughter of George III.

Kew Palace
Hillsborough Castle holds a unique place in its role in the Peace Process in the 1970s, from its humble beginnings in the 1770s to generations to share and enjoy. The gardens are widely accessible for future visitors to explore the important historical role it has played, and opening up areas of the castle that have previously been inaccessible to members of the public, ensuring Hillsborough Castle becomes a leading visitor attraction in Ireland.

Our long term plan will see the estate opened up for the benefit of the whole community and will give a richer experience to visitors exploring the castle and its history whilst it continues its role as the official royal residence for HM The Queen in Northern Ireland and residence for the Secretary of State.

With initial building works due to commence in 2015, Historic Royal Palaces’ plans for the castle not only include a new Clore Learning Centre but will also see an estimated investment of £12-15m for new visitor facilities, a new car park and opening up areas of the castle that have previously been inaccessible to members of the public, ensuring Hillsborough Castle becomes a leading visitor attraction in Ireland.

In 2013, Lucy was appointed as joint Chief Curator in Historic Royal Palaces where she has previously spent six years as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings for English Heritage as well as stints at The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and Glasgow Museums. She has written numerous books about history and presented a number of history documentaries for the BBC for Historic Royal Palaces; most recently, ‘The First Georgians’ and ‘Tales from the Royal Bedchamber.’ In 2015 Lucy will be fronting a new BBC documentary celebrating 500 years of Hampton Court Palace.

Meet our experts

Lucy Worsley, joint Chief Curator

Dr. Lucy Worsley joined Historic Royal Palaces as Chief Curator in 2003, and has a first-class degree in history from Oxford and doctorate in architectural history from Sussex. She previously spent six years as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings for English Heritage as well as stints at The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and Glasgow Museums. She has written numerous books about history and presented a number of history documentaries for the BBC for Historic Royal Palaces; most recently, ‘The First Georgians’ and ‘Tales from the Royal Bedchamber.’ In 2015 Lucy will be fronting a new BBC documentary celebrating 500 years of Hampton Court Palace.

Maria Jordan, Treatment Conservation Supervisor

Maria has worked for Historic Royal Palaces for over fourteen years, working on the conservation of the State bed collection, the tapestry collection and the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection. Her published research predominantly concentrates on conservation of State Beds and Tapestries, but she has also contributed to research in costume. She is an active member of the ICON: Institute of Conservation and was chair of the Textile Group 2009-2012.

Tracy Borman, joint Chief Curator

Tracy Borman, joint Chief Curator (with Lucy Worsley), studied and taught history at the University of Hull, and was awarded a PhD in 1997. An acclaimed author, she has written a number of historical biographies, from Elizabeth’s Women: the Hidden Story of the Virgin Queen, to 2014’s Thomas Cromwell: The Untold Story of Henry VIII’s Most Faithful Servant. She is also Chief Executive of the Heritage Education Trust, a charity that encourages children to visit and learn from historic properties. In 2015 Tracy will be leading on a project to create a magic garden for families in the gardens of Hampton Court Palace, inspired by the palace’s rich history and the sights and smells of the Tudor court.

Elizabeth McKay, Chief Learning and Engagement Officer

As Chief Learning & Engagement Officer Elizabeth delivers Historic Royal Palaces’ new strategy to reach out to new and delight current audiences with new programmes, big national events and increased digital interaction. Prior to joining us in 2013, she worked as a director in regional theatre before becoming Associate Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company, where she was Director of the RSC Complete Works Festival and the World Shakespeare Festival (for London 2012). She has commissioned and produced multi-art form projects across the UK and in over 20 countries worldwide, with a particular focus on the Middle East. She holds an MA in History from Cambridge University and an Honorary Doctorate from Oxford Brookes.

Deborah Shaw, Head of Creative Programming

Deborah leads the team responsible for creative and interpretive content across our palaces - from exhibitions to public programming, special events and artists’ commissions. Prior to joining us in 2013, she worked as a director in regional theatre before becoming Associate Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company, where she was Director of the RSC Complete Works Festival and the World Shakespeare Festival (for London 2012). She has commissioned and produced multi-art form projects across the UK and in over 20 countries worldwide, with a particular focus on the Middle East. She holds an MA in History from Cambridge University and an Honorary Doctorate from Oxford Brookes.

Graham Dillamore, Gardens and Estates Operations Manager

Graham’s expertise at Historic Royal Palaces extends back over 20 years, starting as an apprentice gardener in Kensington Gardens and progressing to Head Gardener for TRH Prince and Princess of Wales at Kensington. Now working at Hampton Court Palace as Gardens Operations Manager, his achievements to date include the restoration of the palace’s stunning William & Mary era Privy garden and the joining of three放开 avenues in Home Park. In 2015, Graham and his team will be overseeing the logistics of the Magic Garden installation at Hampton Court Palace.
2 – 4 May 2015

Historic Royal Palaces will be taking the Tudor court on the road for the first time in 2015!

Over the May Bank Holiday weekend, King Henry VIII and his courtiers will take up residence at Tatton Park, Cheshire, one of the country’s most complete historic estates, celebrated for its Tudor Old Hall.

Most summers in Tudor times, the monarch and the royal court would embark on a Royal Progress, travelling around the realm whilst staying in the castles and manor houses of nobility. The local population would be expected to receive the King or Queen and host elaborate events in their honour, with great displays of pageantry taking place alongside feasting and music.

Tudors on Tour will recreate some of the most spectacular celebrations that would have been enjoyed by Henry VIII, bringing the Royal Progress to life in the 21st century! Visitors will get the chance to join the court and meet costumed interpreters portraying key personalities from Henry VIII’s reign. A spectacular jousting tournament will also be staged for His Majesty’s pleasure.

Hands-on activities and demonstrations will enable people of all ages to explore all the varied aspects of 16th century life, from arts and crafts to martial skills and Tudor healing practices! A bustling marketplace will showcase traditional crafts including wood carving, stone masonry and blacksmithing, with an armourer and leather worker also displaying their skills. The weekend will offer a unique opportunity to experience all the splendour of the Tudor royal court on tour!
Filming at Historic Royal Palaces

Historic Royal Palaces has hosted some exciting filming events over the years, from large-scale major feature films to historical documentaries and news crews covering new discoveries made by our Curatorial or Conservation teams.

The Tower of London has been spotted over the past year in Doctor Who (50th Anniversary edition), the BBC’s landmark Christmas drama ‘Gangsta Granny’, and the 2014 feature ‘Muppets Most Wanted’. The beautiful sunken garden of Hampton Court can also be seen in the 2014 biopic of Stephen Hawking, ‘The Theory of Everything’.

Last year Historic Royal Palaces embarked upon its first partnership documentary series with BBC4, ‘Majesty and Mortar’, presented by historian Dan Cruickshank. The series explored the architectural history of palaces and how these fascinating buildings have shaped societies. In 2015 we'll be delving into Hampton Court’s many historical stories as the palace celebrates its 500th year.

We have a wide range of locations available, from the vaulted medieval chambers of the Tower to the sumptuous Baroque interiors of William and Mary’s Hampton Court, allowing us to tell the story of 1000 years of royal history through details as diverse as graffiti etched into stone walls by defiant Tudor prisoners and elaborate Grinling Gibbons woodcarvings. Outside, from manicured lawns to mazes and moats, we’ve got the location to suit your needs.

What’s more, with a team expert spokespeople on hand who research, care for and bring to life the unique stories of these incredible royal residences, we'll always try to find someone to fulfil your on-camera requests!

If you would like to make an enquiry about filming at the palaces, please contact the Press Office. Further information about filming opportunities can be found on our website at: http://www.hrp.org.uk/NewsAndMedia/filmingandphotography.

Digital Media

Social media

Each year Historic Royal Palaces engages millions of people on social media with the history and stories from our palaces. Our six palaces are represented on both established and emerging platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, G+ and Tumblr. Like, follow or subscribe to us for the latest news, photos and facts from the palaces.

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https://plus.google.com/+historicroyalpalaces/posts
Tumblr: historicroyalpalaces.tumblr.com

Blogs

Go behind the scenes in the world of our Curators, Conservators and Gardeners in three specialist blogs that tell the untold stories of our palaces’ past and present. Find out why our conservators spent 100 hours dressing a bed (conservation100.hrp.org.uk), what our curators found beneath the floor boards (blog.hrp.org.uk) and how you grow apricots in April (gardenersblog.hrp.org.uk).

Multimedia content

We tell old stories in new ways through the use of a broad range of multimedia content including photos, videos and gifs. We produce multimedia content to support exhibitions, events and anniversaries, and can work with you to supply or produce content which fits your needs.

Just looking for b-roll? We have broadcast quality footage of Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace and the Tower of London available for purchase.
How do I...?

Online at www.hrp.org.uk/newsandmedia you’ll find our latest press releases, factsheets on the palaces and more information on filming and photography. But to make it even easier, here are the answers to a few common questions...

Q I’ve been commissioned to write a piece about Hampton Court Palace; do I get complimentary tickets?
A If you’ve been commissioned to write about us, we can organise complimentary press tickets. Complete the application form on our website at www.hrp.org.uk/newsandmedia and email it to us at press@hrp.org.uk.

Q My editor needs a photograph of Kensington Palace to accompany the Fashion Rules exhibition review I’ve written. What do I do?
A Easy! We photograph all our big events and stories, as well as behind the scenes work at the palaces, so first check our online gallery at www.hrp.newsteam.co.uk. Here you can browse through shots of the all the palaces, then download hi-res versions immediately, free of charge, direct to your computer. If we haven’t got what you’re looking for go to www.hrp.org.uk/newsandmedia to find out how to set up your own photography at the palaces.

Q I want to find out more about the role of the Duke of Wellington at the Tower of London – who should I ask? How do I go about setting up an interview with an expert?
A Call us! If we can’t answer your questions ourselves, we will ask our experts, whether this be one of our curators, a tapestry conservator, a gardener or one of our costumed guides. If you need more detailed information we can arrange an interview for you with the person you need.

Q I’ve been commissioned to film a documentary about Charles I at Banqueting House. How do I go about it?
A Go online to www.hrp.org.uk/newsandmedia where you’ll find everything you need to know, from background information about filming and application forms to how you can obtain pre-recorded broadcast quality footage of the palaces from us.

Remember you can also call the Press Office on +44 (0) 203 166 6166; email us at press@hrp.org.uk or tweet us @HRP_PressOffice.
Historic Royal Palaces

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Tower of London
Hampton Court Palace
Banqueting House
Kensington Palace
Kew Palace
Hillsborough Castle

We help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built.

We raise all our own funds and depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers.

www.hrp.org.uk