

Palace Stories: A Puzzle Worth Piecing Together

Step into the grandeur of Britain's royal past with Palace Stories — a beautifully crafted puzzle inspired by the iconic buildings cared for by Historic Royal Palaces and the stories of the monarchs and people who've lived in and looked after these palaces. Designed for those who appreciate a good story and a great puzzle, this tapestry-like design brings history to life, one piece at a time. Whether you're a seasoned puzzler or simply enjoy quiet moments of reflection, Palace Stories offers a satisfying journey through centuries of intrigue, romance, and royal tradition.

TOWER OF LONDON: A Story in Every Stone

Situated near the City of London, the Tower of London has served various purposes over the centuries, including a royal residence, prison, treasury, and military stronghold. Today, it houses the Crown Jewels and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also famous for its Yeoman Warders (Beefeaters) and ravens.

The Royal Menagerie

Established at the Tower of London in the reign of King John (1199-1266), the Royal Menagerie was once home to a wonderful collection of wild animals given to kings and queens of England by foreign rulers. The Menagerie continued to grow over the centuries, with various wild and exotic animals into Queen Victoria's reign when they were finally moved to what is now known as ZSL London Zoo.



The iconic 'Beefeaters'

Yeoman Warders, famously nicknamed "Beefeaters," have long symbolized Britain and the Tower of London. Their name likely stems from their alleged privilege as royal bodyguards to feast on the king's beef. Drawn from the Armed Forces, each Warder swears an oath of allegiance dating back to 1337. Today, they uphold centuries-old traditions like the nightly Ceremony of the Keys while serving as guides to millions of visitors.



The Ravens of the Tower

King Charles II decreed that the Tower of London must always keep at least six ravens or the kingdom would fall. Today, Harris, Jubilee, Poppy, Edgar, Georgie, Chaos, Henry, and Poe live under the care of the Ravenmaster, a Yeoman Warder devoted to their well-being. Their diet includes mice, chicks, rats, and raw meat, with biscuits soaked in blood as a treat. With attentive care, abundant food, and a secure enclosure, these legendary birds remain loyal residents of the Tower of London.



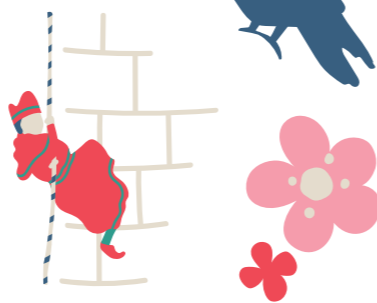
The Great Escape!

Ranulf Flambard, Bishop of Durham was found guilty of extortion and imprisoned in the White Tower in 1100-01. Flambard was the Tower's first high-profile prisoner and its first escapee. A rope was smuggled to him in a gallon of wine; he got his guard drunk and escaped from the White Tower by shimmying down the rope that had been smuggled into his cell in a wine casket.



Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot

On 5 November 1605, Guy Fawkes was caught red-handed with 36 barrels of gunpowder and matches in a cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament. He was taken to the Tower, interrogated then tortured, probably on the rack. He eventually confessed and was sentenced to a traitor's death of being hung, drawn and quartered.



HAMPTON COURT PALACE: A Story in Every Stone

Originally built by Cardinal Wolsey, as a medieval manor house along the River Thames, it was later acquired by King Henry VIII and became his primary residence. Hampton Court Palace is known for its magnificent Tudor kitchens, beautiful gardens, and famous maze.



A Shared Sweet Tooth

Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn shared a love of strawberries and would have enjoyed sweet moments picking and eating the fruit within the Tudor orchards at Hampton Court Palace. Anne Boleyn refused to be Henry VIII's mistress, driving the king to seek a divorce and make her queen. Their romance ended tragically when Henry ordered her execution.



King Henry VIII's Stags

Home Park, adjacent to Hampton Court Palace and the River Thames, was primarily used by Henry VIII as hunting grounds and a deer park. Covering an area of 750 acres, it has remained unspoilt since it was first opened to the public in 1894 and has a rich and varied eco-system providing a habitat for wildlife, including fallow deer which descended from Henry VIII's original herd.

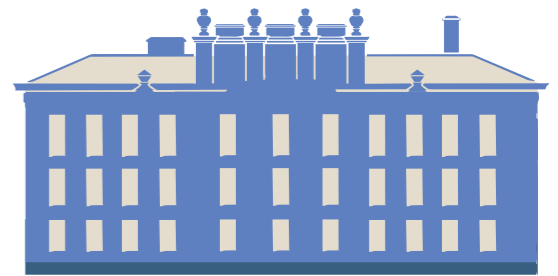


King William III's Great Maze

The maze at Hampton Court Palace is perhaps the most famous in the world and was planted in 1690 for William of Orange. The high hedges, secluded benches and winding paths made the maze a place where members of the royal court could go for privacy and where gentlemen could entertain ladies without the eyes of the world watching them. The maze was planted as part of a formal garden layout known as the Wilderness.

KENSINGTON PALACE: A Story in Every Stone

Birthplace and childhood home of Queen Victoria, this elegant palace is where she first laid eyes on Prince Albert. Originally a royal residence for King William and Queen Mary in the 17th century, it was later enlarged by the celebrated architect Christopher Wren. Queen Anne added the exquisite Orangery in 1704—today a charming restaurant and tearoom—while Queen Caroline and King George II transformed the palace into a hub of lavish Georgian court life.

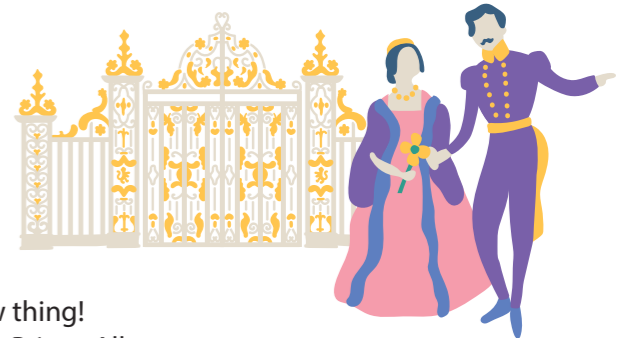


Queen Victoria and her love of Prince Albert

Victoria, one of Britain's most iconic monarchs, ruled during a transformative era that still bears her name. Her husband, Albert, was her greatest source of joy and strength. After his death from typhoid in 1861, she mourned for 40 years, earning a reputation for solemnity. Yet her wedding-night diary reveals a different side — a lovesick newlywed overwhelmed by happiness and affection.

The Golden Gates

These magnificent 19th century gates, known as the Golden Gates, are adorned with golden filigrees and are a significant iconic landmark to Kensington Palace, famously used for the floral tributes to Princess Diana after her death in 1997.



A Victorian Christmas

For the Victorians, the Christmas tree was a very new thing! Lots of other countries had them for a long time, but Prince Albert popularised the German tradition of Christmas trees in Britain. Queen Victoria's family each had their own Christmas tree - decorated and displayed on tables with the recipient's presents around the base. The Victorians are responsible for introducing many of the Christmas traditions we celebrate today.



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