

THE MANY FACES OF WINDSOR CASTLE



The Round Tower of Windsor Castle

Windsor Castle was built by William the Conqueror and is the oldest and largest continually inhabited castle in the world. Once a defensive fortress, it is now:

- a palace for conducting state business and grand occasions;
- a visitor attraction, since the end of the 18th century when visitors could walk around the castle's precinct;
- and a royal home.

Royal Palace

The Castle's state apartments are used for official state business. State banquets are held in St George's Hall, where the setting of the table takes two days because exact precision is needed. Several different measuring rulers are used to perfect the appearance of the table.



The Waterloo Chamber

The Waterloo Chamber commemorates heroes from the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. The room is where Investitures are held, which are ceremonies when members of the public are awarded an honour by The Queen. The Knights of the Garter celebrate being bestowed with this highest order of chivalry by taking lunch with The Queen here. They also have their own special room in the Castle called the Garter Throne Room, where there is an ivory throne that was made for Queen Victoria.



The Garter Throne Room

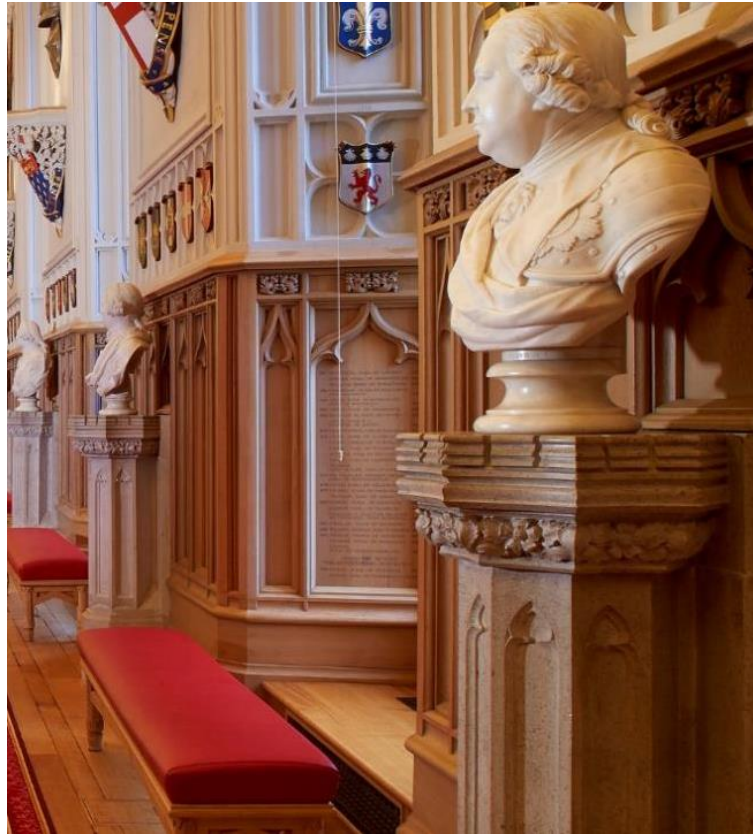
The Knights process on foot, from the State Apartments to St George's Chapel, for the Garter Service. In the Chapel their banners hang high over the pews, each representing a Knight of the Garter and their own seat in the Chapel.



The Quire in St George's Hall

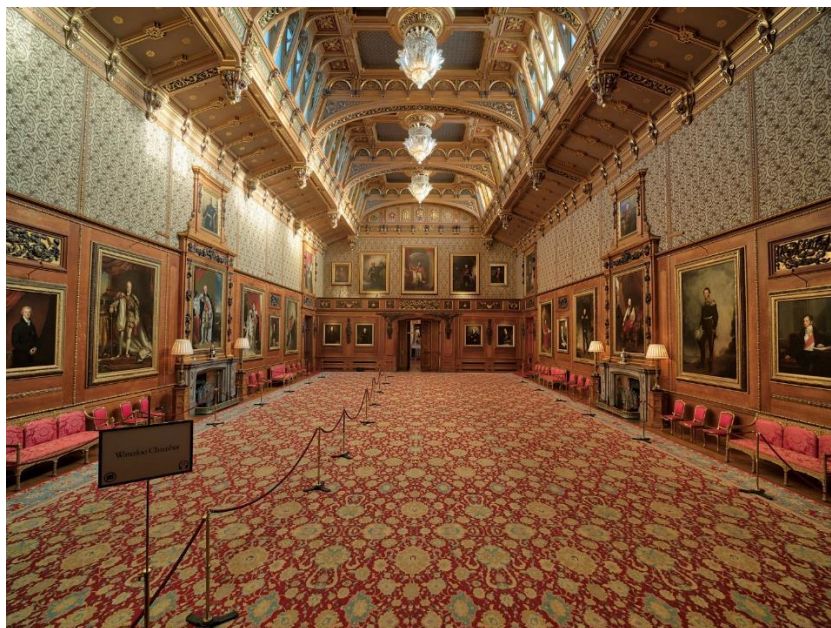
Visitor Attraction

On a visit to Windsor Castle you can walk the Ceremonial Route and see St George's Hall where the names of every Knight of the Garter are etched along the walls, and the ceiling is bedecked with more than 1,000 shields of Knights of the Garter. Prince William, Duke of Cambridge holds the honour of being the 1,000th Knight of the Garter.



Names of the Garter Knights in St George's Hall

In the Waterloo Chamber you can see the largest seamless carpet in the world, which was made by inmates of Agra prison, in India, for Queen Victoria. During the fire of 1992 it took 50 people to roll it up for removal!



The Waterloo Chamber

Behind the military portraits that line the walls of the Waterloo Chamber, lies a row of enchanting pictures (painted on wallpaper) of fairy-tale characters! During the Second World War, the valuable portrait paintings were removed and these whimsical pictures replaced them. They were painted to form a backdrop to the many pantomimes enacted by the young Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret to help raise funds for the war effort!



Pantomime pictures in the Waterloo Chamber

The King's Drawing Room, part of the Historic Route, is richly decorated in scarlet and gold. The decoration on the ceiling is mirrored by the pattern of the carpet – the two are in perfect symmetry. Built under the reign of Charles II to emulate the baroque style of the French Palace of Versailles, the rooms became smaller as visitors progressed closer to the monarch. Only the most important guests were invited all the way to the monarch's bedchamber – for the *levée and coucher* ceremonies – where they would watch the king arise from or go to his bed!



The King's Drawing Room

The ornate, calm blue-hued Queen's Gallery contains significant works from the Royal Collection, which is held in trust by The Queen as Sovereign for her successors and the nation.



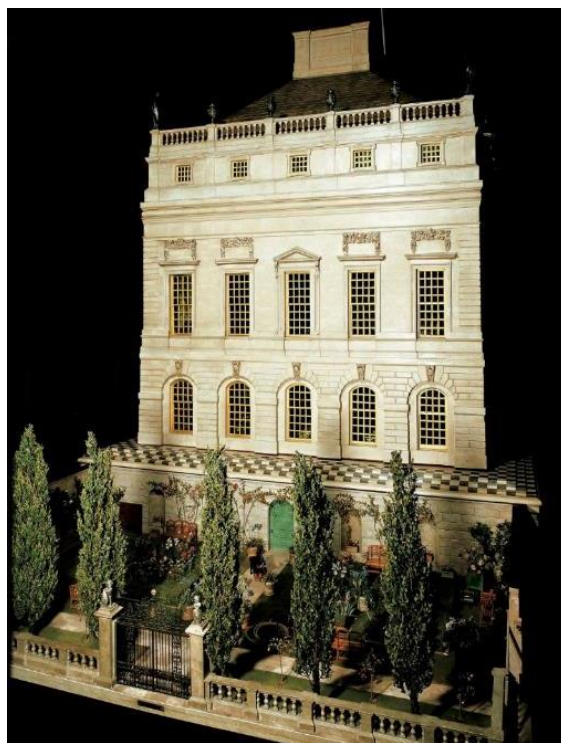
The Queen's Gallery

We admired a well-known painting by Anthony van Dyck featuring a young Charles II with his siblings and their enormous mastiff hound.



The Five Eldest Children of Charles I

You can also see Queen Mary's Dolls' House – a perfect miniature regal townhouse equipped with running water, a wine cellar, a lift, a library filled with miniature classics, and even model cars with real Rolls Royce engines!



Queen Mary's Dolls' House

Changing the Guard is a familiar sight. The Household Division (made up of the Grenadier, Coldstream, Scots, Irish and Welsh Guards) protects The Queen at Windsor Castle.



Changing the Guard Ceremony in the Lower Ward

The Royal Standard is flown at Windsor Castle when The Queen is in residence. The size of flag flown depends on the weather, and ranges from the size of a bath towel (known as the storm flag) to the largest, which is three times the size of a tennis court! The Royal Standard features England's three lions, Ireland's harp and Scotland's lion rampant. Wales's banner does not appear on the flag because Wales is a principality in its own right.



The Royal Standard

Our national flag is known as the Union Flag and should only be referred to as the Union Jack when flown at sea.

Royal Home

The Queen has three official residences: Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. She traditionally spends April and most of June at Windsor.

The Castle has always been a true 'home' for The Queen.



King George VI and his family at Windsor Castle, 1940

During the Second World War, the young Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret were sent to Windsor Castle for safety, while their parents remained at Buckingham Palace in a gesture of solidarity with the people of London living in danger during the Blitz.

Today the Castle is where The Queen spends most weekends with her dogs and out riding her horses in the Castle grounds. It is also a place where she can spend time with the Royal Family.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2006 © Jane Bown