

Historic Royal Palaces Banqueting House



“His majesty received us in a great hall newly built for public spectacles, royally adorned with marvellous tapestries and gold.”

Venetian ambassador on a visit to Banqueting House, 1625



Picture perfect

Create classic moments on this irreplaceable stage

When asked to design King James I a new banqueting house, the talented Inigo Jones turned to the harmonious principles of classical architecture.

Jones envisioned an elegantly proportioned double cube, calculated to meet the ancient Roman idea of perfection. Literally – the perfect space.

Jones' architectural gem would later become an artistic marvel, when Charles I added Peter Paul Rubens' magnificent ceiling paintings.

Today, the beauty and scale of this spectacular venue continue to inspire its guests, just as they did for the kings, queens and courtiers who have celebrated and banqueted here since 1622.

Whatever your occasion, our first-class events team is here to help you create that classic experience your guests will always remember.



Unforgettable, by design

Staged in a space purpose-built for entertainment, ceremony and spectacle, Banqueting House events have been leaving an impression for nearly 400 years

1581

Queen Elizabeth I hosts entertainments at Whitehall Palace connected with her marriage negotiations. She creates a temporary banqueting house on this site.

1622

A stunning new banqueting house is completed, giving King James I a spectacular setting for hosting elaborate court masques. He hosts numerous performances, each more extravagant than the last.



1649

A defiant and dignified King Charles I, found guilty of treason, is executed on a scaffold outside the Banqueting House before thousands of onlookers.

1654

New head of state, Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell receives ambassadors from Holland. Receptions were probably little different from those of previous kings.

September
1660

The embassy of the Prince de Ligne, a Spanish ambassador, is one of the first and most sumptuous visits in support of the newly restored monarchy.

1689

King William III and Queen Mary II accept the throne here in the presence of the assembled Lords and Commons.



1636

Court masques cease because the smoke and candles used in elaborate performances threaten to damage the precious, newly installed, Rubens' ceiling paintings. The king continues to hold diplomatic meetings in Whitehall Palace's most prestigious reception room.

May 1660

Both Houses of Parliament give speeches here declaring their loyalty to Charles II as the monarchy is restored.

1662

Russian ambassadors visit King Charles II 'all clad in vests of several colours, with buskins, after the Eastern manner; their caps of fur; tunics, richly embroidered with gold and pearls, made a glorious show'.

1796

George III, Queen Charlotte and five of their daughters attend a Handel Commemoration Festival. Charitable concerts are a constant feature here into the 19th century.

Today

Royalty, statesmen, celebrities, charities, businesses and private individuals continue to use the Banqueting House for occasions of all kinds.





Main Hall

Miraculous
Irreplaceable
Revolutionary



Main Hall



Capacity

500 for reception
380 for dinner

The space

Specially created for entertaining in 1622, the Main Hall remains as versatile and inspiring as ever. Spacious enough to accommodate large receptions, awards ceremonies and dinners, yet intimate for smaller personal celebrations, this light and quiet room boasts wonderful acoustics and magnificent pillars soaring toward one of the world's great masterpieces: Rubens' irreplaceable ceiling.

Features

- One of London's most desirable event spaces
- Peter Paul Rubens' priceless ceiling paintings are breathtaking (see p12)
- Guests make an entrance via a beautiful entry hall and grand staircase
- Immaculate facilities include easily accessible toilets and cloakroom

“Strange how a good dinner and feasting reconciles everybody.”

Samuel Pepys, 9 November 1665

A palace story

After the previous banqueting house burned down, King James I was looking for a sumptuous and elegant replacement. He turned to the talented Inigo Jones, a highly regarded architectural advisor. Jones drew on the geometry of ancient Roman, or classical, architecture to design a building that created a sensation.





“It was the noblest masque of my time to this day, the best poetrye, best scenes, and the best habitts.”

Sir Henry Herbert, who attended a masque here in 1634

The versatile Main Hall

For centuries, royal palaces have relied on the ‘great hall’ to accommodate all kinds of occasions: sumptuous receptions, theatrical performances, moving concerts, riotous celebrations and, of course, banqueting.

Whatever your vision – we will help you transform this space into a special experience your guests won’t forget.

So call us to share your ideas. Or come and see this dazzling space for yourself.

For over 20 years we have helped our clients deliver successful events of every type in the Main Hall – from fundraising dinners to fashion shows to milestone parties and celebrations.



A miracle masterpiece

From the moment they were installed, Peter Paul Rubens' masterful ceiling paintings have inspired revellers, dignitaries and all who gather beneath them.

King Charles I commissioned the Flemish artist to glorify his father, King James I. Installed in 1636, Rubens' paintings are a celebration of James' life and wise government and depict absolute belief in the 'Divine Right of Kings'.

It's also a miracle they survive today. In 1698, a careless maidservant left some linen to dry next to a charcoal fire, setting fire to Whitehall Palace and burning it to the ground. Only a gate and the Banqueting House – with its spectacular ceiling – survived.



James I entertained his court here for years with incredible royal masques. These elaborate performances were something of a cross between a ball, theatre and a fancy dress party.

Following defeat in the Civil War, King Charles I was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. His last moments were spent here as he stepped out through a large window on the north side of the hall and onto a scaffold. He was executed before a crowd of thousands, provoking a 'dismal universal groan'.



After 11 years of joyless Parliamentary rule the monarchy was restored in 1660 and Charles I's son returned from exile. Charles II's triumphal procession wound through London to the Banqueting House, where both Houses of Parliament declared their loyalty.



In the footsteps of kings

A stage for some right royal dramas, Banqueting House has long been a place where history happens

The first and only couple to rule England jointly had their crowning moment here. William of Orange and Mary, elder daughter of deposed James II, were offered the throne at Banqueting House.





Intimate
Atmospheric
Lively

The Undercroft

The Undercroft

Capacity

380 for reception
120 for dinner

The space

The intimate atmosphere of this vaulted space offers guests a pleasant complement to the soaring, majestic Main Hall. Once enjoyed as a drinking den by King James I and his riotous, party-loving courtiers, it still serves as a wonderful space for drinks receptions and late night parties.

Features

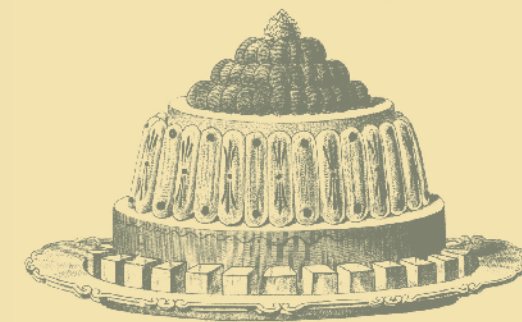
- Kitchen is easily accessible on the same floor
- Air cooling for convenient temperature control
- Late-night drinking sessions aside, it is also a wonderful space for large dinners

A palace story

The Stuart kings occasionally used the Undercroft to escape public life. It was often used for gambling during the reign of Charles II. Diarist John Evelyn described one unlucky evening in 1664 where he, as well as 'the King, Queen-Consort and Queen Mother', won 'only a trifle'.

"Since Bacchus, thou art father
Of wines, to thee the rather
We dedicate this Cellar
Where now, thou art made Dweller."

Dedication at its opening by playwright Ben Jonson, 1623





“From initial contact to the post-event administration, the team at Banqueting House were superb. Helpful, informative, flexible and engaging, they played a key role in the success of the event.”

More than a pretty space



We pride ourselves on giving all our clients first-class service. In fact, nearly a quarter of our business comes from regular clientele.

Whether you are a seasoned events professional or someone planning a personal celebration, be assured you will enjoy all the support you need to create an unforgettable experience for your guests.

Our hire fee includes:

- A personal event manager
- Pinpoint lighting in the Main Hall
- Beautiful flowers in the entry hall
- Meet and greet security staff
- Pre and post event cleaning

So call us to discuss your event, or why not come and see us?

Space specifications

Main Hall

Capacity
500
Reception
380 Dinner



- Nearby kitchen facilities on ground floor
- Immaculate facilities include easily accessible toilet and cloakroom
- Disabled access available via adjoining building (please book in advance)

The Undercroft

Capacity
380
Reception
120 Dinner



- Air cooling
- Kitchen facilities available on same floor
- Immaculate facilities include easily accessible toilet and cloakroom
- Disabled access available

Getting here

By tube or rail

Located on Whitehall in central London, the Banqueting House is a short walk from Westminster, Charing Cross and Embankment Underground and rail stations.

Car parking

Ample car parking is available in the area.

Contact us

T. 020 3166 6152
E. banquetinghouseevents@hrp.org.uk
www.hrp.org.uk/HireAVenue

Banqueting House
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Giving history a future

By hosting your event at Banqueting House you're not only contributing to the upkeep and protection of this magnificent building and its splendid grounds, but also to the conservation of four other very special historic buildings.

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. Our aim is to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society in five of the greatest palaces ever built.

Your event directly supports this mission, as we raise all our own funds and count on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers in our continuing work to conserve these palaces and their stories for future generations.

In good company

We are pleased to invite you to discover some of the benefits of corporate partnership with Historic Royal Palaces.

Every year, we entertain and engage millions of visitors. Every day we are forming new relationships, as we help people explore the stories of the five famous royal palaces in our care. At Historic Royal Palaces our business is very much about welcoming people, and creating surprising, enriching experiences they will never forget.

So, whether it is sponsoring a blockbuster exhibition, lending support to an award-winning outreach or education programme or getting involved in one of our corporate partnership schemes, you can be sure we will welcome your employees and clients with the same panache we do our visitors and guests, while offering you exclusive benefits and opportunities not found anywhere else.

We have designed partnership packages to help you access the royal palaces in ways that will best meet your company's aims. But you will also receive a highly individual range of benefits, tailor-made to suit your interests. We can inspire your employees with exclusive events, private views and volunteering opportunities. And we can help you build client relationships and extend your networks in a variety of ways – from the use of our breathtaking

venues to exclusive exhibition openings and supporters' dinners.

For more information please contact us on 020 3166 6321 or email development@hrp.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

Corporate gifts

If you are looking for an unusual and unique gift for your guest, may we suggest that you look to Historic Royal Palaces for inspiration. All our products are inspired by our five magnificent palaces, so we know you will find just the right gift for your event, whether you are searching for one special present or entertaining a large number of guests.

If you would like help in choosing gifts, our experienced team can discuss individual requirements. We pride ourselves in offering high quality products, unrivalled customer service and working with all our customers' varied requirements to provide the complete gift service.

Please visit our website www.historicroyalpalaces.com or contact us on 020 3166 6857 or corpgifts@hrp.org.uk



Tower of London

Breathtaking fortress and iconic symbol of a world city



Hampton Court Palace

Hosting magnificent and unforgettable events since 1514



Banqueting House

One of London's most desirable venues and home to the irreplaceable Rubens' ceiling



Kensington Palace

Where style meets power, this elegant royal retreat enchants and surprises



Kew Palace

A hidden gem of a palace tucked away among beautiful royal gardens

