
THE QUEEN'S GALLERY
BUCKINGHAM PALACE

PLAIN ENGLISH SCRIPT



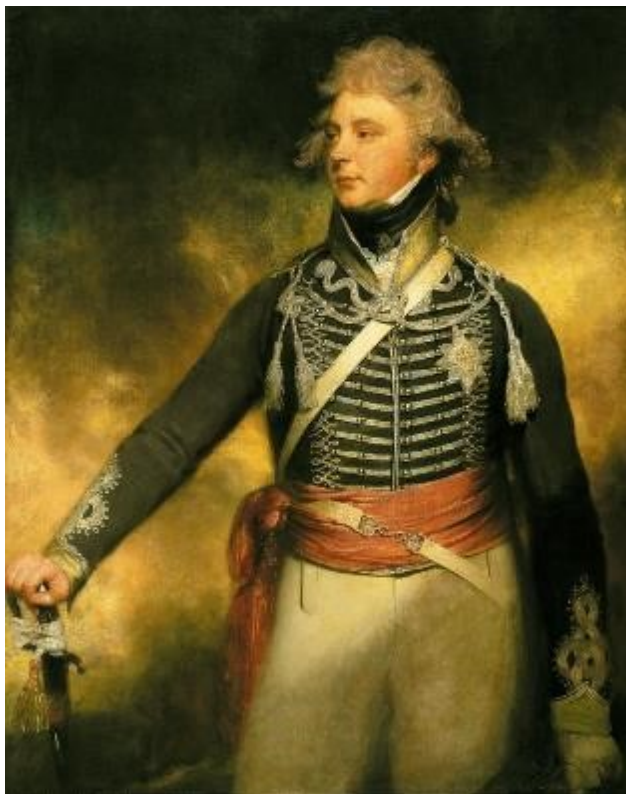
GEORGE IV: ART AND SPECTACLE

Welcome

Welcome to the Queen's Gallery, and to our exhibition *George the Fourth: Art and Spectacle*. These notes contain the same information as the audio-description provided for hearing visitors. They are adapted from a script produced by ATS with information from a number of experts whose names are included at the end of these notes.

Stop 1

Sir William Beechey, *George IV when Prince of Wales*, 1803, RCIN 400511



We are often told that George IV was a fashion-loving, pleasure-seeking, womaniser who ate too much. But there is much more to George than that. This exhibition allows us to explore him and his interests, through the objects he collected himself.

This portrait of George was one of his favourites. He is wearing the uniform of a soldier in the 10th Dragoons. They were given the name the 'Prince of Wales Own Regiment' in George's honour before he became king, but he never led them into battle. The artist shows him as a handsome young man. We know that he loved this

portrait because a print was made which was based on it, and he gave a copy of it to one of his closest friends. He said it was the best print that had ever been made of him.

This exhibition shows many different sides of George. He loved military uniforms but he also collected and commissioned many of the finest works of art in the Royal Collection. His enjoyment of theatrical displays changed the way royal ceremonies were carried out for a long time. These notes cover 24 key exhibits. They are the ones included on the multi-media tour, so there is a headphone symbol on their label.

Stop 2

Alfred Edward Chalon, *Princess Charlotte of Wales*, c.1817–19, RCIN 405449



Princess Charlotte was the only child of George and his wife, Princess Caroline of Brunswick. George married Caroline in 1795 – his father, George III, told him he had to. He was seriously concerned about his son's wild lifestyle and increasing debts. He made a final demand to George: 'settle down, or I will not pay your debts'. Princess Charlotte was born a year later. In this picture she is about 20 years old.

The painting is by Alfred Edward Chalon. He was a Swiss painter and was particularly famous for the way he painted different materials: here he paints the fur on her cloak very cleverly and its shiny gold embroidery. The feathers in Charlotte's hair are beautifully painted.

Charlotte is wearing a wedding ring. She married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg in May 1816. Their marriage was very happy but it lasted a very short time: Charlotte died just over a year later in November 1817, just a few hours after giving birth to their only child. The child was a boy but he was stillborn.



Here is a painting of her funeral which was published in 1818.

The Funeral Ceremony of Her Royal Highness The Princess Charlotte of Wales and Saxe Coburg (after James Stephanoff)
RCIN 750746

George was devastated by the loss of his daughter. She was next in line to the throne and would have become queen instead of his niece Victoria. People across the country mourned Charlotte's death. Businesses closed, and cloth-sellers sold out of black velvet. The whole nation was in shock. Charlotte was buried at Windsor Castle with a beautiful monument in St George's Chapel in her honour. The money to pay for it was donated by the general public.



Here is an image of the *Monument to Princess Charlotte in St George's Chapel, Windsor*.

Although George was close to his daughter, he had a terrible relationship with her mother. On the wall to the left, you'll see a satirical print.

British School, 19th Century, *The Kettle calling the Pot ugly names*, published 23 Sept. 1820, RCIN 751290



The royal couple had an outstandingly unhappy marriage. It had been organised by George's father. George and Caroline disliked each other from the moment they were introduced. Very quickly they stopped having anything to do with each other. They had relationships with other people and everybody knew about

this.

This cartoon was drawn in 1820. It shows them as a pot and a kettle, boiling on the fire, calling each other terrible names. Caroline had been living a separate life on the Continent since 1814, but she came back when George became King. She wanted to become the Queen. George

tried to stop her by asking the government to make a law to cancel their marriage and take away Caroline's right to become Queen. This was called the Pains and Penalties Bill. But it was unpopular with the public, and was dropped by Parliament. Even so George decided to shut his wife out of his coronation at Westminster Abbey, which took place on 19 July 1821. Caroline was banned from even entering the Abbey. Caroline fell ill that day and died three weeks later.

If you would like to find out more about George's life, see the Timeline of his life at the end of these notes.

Stop 3

Thomas Rowlandson, *Who kills first for a Crown*, 1790, RCIN 810385



Around the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries there was a huge increase in the production of prints making fun of famous people. George was often the subject of their jokes. There is no doubt that these images changed the way that history sees him. This one pokes fun at George as Prince of Wales, and also at his French

friend, the duc d'Orléans. Along the top there is a royal stag, wearing the British crown, being chased by hounds with human faces. George rides behind them as Master of Hounds. The signpost points the way to Windsor and in the distance we can see Windsor Castle. Below this, the duc d'Orléans sounds his hunting horn. His pack is bringing down the French royal stag, and he is on his way to the royal Palace of Versailles.

It was published in May 1790, when the duc d'Orléans was suspected of encouraging a revolution in France for his own benefit. He was not the direct heir to the French throne, but if the Bourbon monarchy fell, he would be next in line. And George had tried to replace his father by becoming Regent two years earlier when George III was ill.

What is very surprising is that George himself bought this cartoon. It seriously criticises his behaviour, but George may have taken it as a compliment. His hounds are all lined up in order and, they are not actually attacking the stag (which stands for his father): they are only chasing

it. On the other hand, the French hounds are attacking their stag and are very viciously bringing it down. The French part of the cartoon shows Orléans' mistress (with the plumes in her hair) looking back towards him. Also, the two huntsmen are dressed very differently. George is dressed smartly and fashionably but Orléans is shown in the uniform worn by a postillion –p someone who rides one of the horses pulling a royal carriage. This tells us that he's someone who rides with the royal party but is not a member of that party. He is shown as a much less impressive figure than George.

George paid three shillings for this print. The price is still visible, bottom right.

Stop 4

Alexandre-Auguste Robineau, *The Fencing-Match between the Chevalier de Saint-Georges and the Chevalier d'Eon*, c.1787–9, RCIN 400636



This is a celebrity fencing display held at George's London residence, Carlton House, when he was Prince of Wales. George himself stands just left of centre wearing a fashionable hat. His guests are watching two of the most famous fencers of their day. On the left is the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, from

Guadaloupe, and on the right, in the black dress, the Chevalier d'Eon.

The Chevalier d'Eon was born Charles d'Eon in 1728. He had a glittering military career, and became close to the French royal court. Throughout his life, he sometimes dressed as a woman. When his work as a royal spy brought him into disgrace he left France and came to England. In London, d'Eon took on a female identity and was known as the 'Chevalière' rather

than the 'Chevalier'. She lived so successfully as a woman that the landlady who kept house for her for 14 years did not know that she had been born a man.

The Chevalier de Saint-Georges led an equally fascinating life. He came from Guadeloupe in the Caribbean and moved to Paris as a child. He was a very good violin player and was celebrated across Paris because of his musical talents, playing with all the leading orchestras. He knew Mozart and was a composer himself. He was also celebrated as a fencer.

Stop 5

Jane Austen, *Emma: a novel in three volumes*, 1816, RCINs I083626, I080108, I080109



This is the presentation copy of Jane Austen's novel, *Emma*. It was presented to George when he was Prince Regent by the author herself at the end of 1815. This was shortly before the novel's official publication. The Prince's copy had been lovingly bound in red morocco, which is a type of goatskin. The Prince of Wales's badge, with its heraldic feathers, is at the top of the spine on each volume.

George was a great fan of Austen's work: he had copies of all her novels in each of his libraries. A short while before she gave George her novel she had been invited to take a tour of the library in Carlton House with the Royal Librarian, James Stanier Clarke. She had a lovely tour with him, during which he just happened to mention that she would be very welcome to dedicate her next published novel to the Prince Regent. Naturally she said yes, although we know George was not at all her favourite person. Austen had been very upset by the treatment of his wife, Princess Caroline.

Her first idea for what to write in the book was to make it short and to the point: 'Dedicated by permission to HRH the Prince Regent'. But her publishers did not approve. They thought this was too short and did not flatter the Prince Regent enough. So they carefully rewrote it for her. The full dedication in this first edition, reads: 'To His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, this work is, by his Royal Highness's permission, most respectfully dedicated by His Royal Highness's dutiful and obedient humble servant, the author'.

It is unlikely that Jane Austen really approved of these words, but it seems she agreed that this is what would be printed.

Stop 6

John Hoppner, *Franz Joseph Haydn*, 1791–2, RCIN 406987



George IV was very interested in music. He took cello lessons, and as a child had studied keyboard with the famous composer Johann Christian Bach. So he was delighted to welcome another famous composer, Joseph Haydn, at court during his two visits to London in the early 1790s.

Haydn composed a tune for a march which he named the *Prince of Wales' March* in George's honour. And George in return commissioned the artist John Hoppner to paint Haydn's portrait. The first thing we notice about this portrait is that it is unfinished. This gives it a very lively

character. It also draws attention to the great strength of Hoppner's portrait painting, which is his broad, decisive and bold touch.

The story goes that the Prince of Wales went to look at it while it was still being painted. He said that it was such a good likeness Hoppner should leave it just as it was. But in reality it is more likely that Haydn simply left London before it was completed. George would have been in no hurry to pay for it. He had a habit of commissioning more art than he could fit into his London home, Carlton House. So the portrait remained unfinished in the artist's studio. It was only paid for and delivered after Hoppner's death.

Stop 7

Giovacchino and Pietro Belli, *Arch of Constantine*, c.1808–15, RCIN 43918



It was usual for British gentlemen in George's time to finish their education by making the 'Grand Tour' of Europe. They travelled through France and Switzerland, across the Alps, and into Italy, where they would admire the great architecture of Roman times. This is a model of the arch that was erected in Rome for the Emperor Constantine in AD 315 and it was a highlight of the tour.

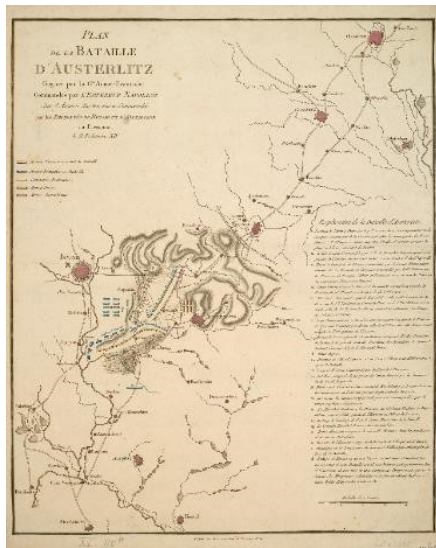
George was heir to the throne and was not allowed to leave the country. So for him, this was a really important representation of a place he would never

be able to see in person. The model is carved from the finest white Carrara marble, with the sculpture on top made of gilt bronze. It recreates the arch of Constantine as splendid as it was when it was first built. The sculpture is a figure of the Emperor himself, riding in a golden horse-drawn chariot. The real sculpture was lost a very long time before this model was made.

This model is far superior to the usual models of ancient monuments which were brought home by tourists as souvenirs. They were usually made of cork. This is one of a set of three, which includes the arches built for the Emperors Titus and Septimius Severus. The model of the arch of Septimius Severus is on display opposite. They were made over a period of ten years by the Italian silversmiths Giovacchino Belli and his son Pietro. George bought them in 1816, and gave them pride of place on pedestals in the windows of his library at Carlton House.

Stop 8

Plan de la bataille d'Austerlitz, 1805, RCIN 712608



The early years of the 19th century were dominated by the Napoleonic Wars. George followed closely the military campaigns of the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte as well as the actions of the forces fighting together against him. This is a plan of the Battle of Austerlitz. It took place in December 1805 and was a great victory for the French. It completely changed the balance of power in Europe. Austria was defeated and was forced into an alliance with France. Before Austerlitz the country had been part of the coalition opposing Napoleon, which included Britain.

George was an armchair soldier, which he found very frustrating. He really wanted to lead the army, and to hold a military post. His brothers all trained as soldiers, but George was not allowed to fight because he was heir to the throne. He eagerly bought anything that gave him information about Napoleon's victories and defeats.

In the centre of the map just to the right is the town of Austerlitz, in pink. To the left of it is raised ground which was held by the Austrian and Russian forces. The French forces wanted to take this ground. Napoleon made sure that word got round that his army was weak and was not ready for battle – he was deliberately misleading his opponents. He launched the charge and the French army was able to capture the raised ground and to push the Austrian and Russian armies back. In this way they inflicted a major defeat on their opponents.

The armies are colour-coded: the French are blue, with the French cavalry in green, the Austrians are yellow and the Russians orange.

George followed the lead-up to the battle very closely. At Brighton Pavilion, he laid out maps so that Napoleon's advances could be plotted and the land over which the battle was likely to take place could be surveyed. He predicted an allied victory and a French defeat. When the newspapers started to arrive, saying that Austerlitz had been Napoleon's victory and that

France had won, he put them all in his pocket so that nobody could find out the true outcome of the battle.

Stop 9

Jean-Baptiste Isabey, *The Congress of Vienna*, 1815, RCIN 451893.a



This impressive wash drawing shows the Congress of Vienna, which was convened when the Napoleonic Wars were over. It first met in 1814 and continued into 1815. The aim of the Congress was to sort out the borders of European countries again, to ensure peace and stability.

The French artist Jean-Baptiste Isabey made separate portraits of all the people who attended and then put them together in his studio.

The drawing shows a very specific moment, on 3 February 1815, when the Duke of Wellington arrived to take over the leadership of the British delegation. He is arriving on the far left of the drawing. Wellington was replacing British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh who is seated right at the centre, leaning back in his chair with his legs crossed.

George bought this picture in 1820 when it was being exhibited in London. It had been commissioned by the politician Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, who was attending the Congress on behalf of France. The artist had worked closely with Napoleon, and George was fascinated by anything associated with him. George also thought of himself as one of the architects of peace in Europe. At the time many other people saw him in this way too. George would have seen this detailed and skilfully made wash drawing as a record of his victory and his important role in ensuring peace in Europe.

Stop 10

Attributed to Adam Francois van der Meulen, *The Building of Versailles*, c.1680, RCIN 406554



Throughout his life, George was very interested in France and its history, and in particular the court of Louis XIV, who reigned from 1643 to 1715. This picture, by the Flemish artist Adam Francois van der Meulen, shows the massive building works taking place at his palace at Versailles. The

main palace complex is in the background. In the centre foreground, Louis XIV, dressed in gold, inspects the plans for a magnificent new forecourt. They were drawn up by his architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart who is the figure in black at the centre of the group.

The painting is fascinating because it gives us an insight into what a building site looked like in the 17th century. On the left a lime pit is being stirred. In the centre right there are stone carvers who are creating the regular blocks of stone. And on the extreme right there is a building with a winch, probably used to lift the stones up to the top of the building.

George greatly admired the elegance of the monarchy in France before the Revolution. He loved the grandeur of Versailles and wanted to achieve the same splendour through his own architectural projects. When he became King, George IV had opportunities to do that with his transformations of Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace. But when he bought this painting he was 'only' the Prince of Wales and 'only' had Carlton House. This was a grand but relatively small townhouse in London. He could make changes to the interiors at Carlton House, but there was no opportunity to build on the scale of Versailles.

Stop 11: Carlton House

William Westall, *The South Front, Carlton House*, c.1819, RCIN 922169



When George was 21 he came of age, and Carlton House was given to him as his private residence, along with a small budget to spend on getting new furniture for it. In fact he spent the next 40 years rebuilding, refurnishing and redecorating it. Carlton House went through an ever-changing series of interiors that became more and more elaborate throughout George's life.

Adam Weisweiler, *Commode*, RCIN 2596



This mahogany cabinet is in the French style. The beautiful gilt-bronze mounts were created by Adam Weisweiler in the 1780s. Its relatively small size perfectly suited the scale of Carlton House, allowing space to hang paintings above.

Set of two English pedestals, RCIN 2592



Two giltwood pedestals sit on either side of the cabinet. They were made in England, but in the French style. They support some impressive French gilt-bronze candelabra, whose bases are entwined with snakes.

Candelabra, RCIN 2692



During the 1780s and 1790s, the Carlton House furnishings were almost all found and supplied by the French dealer-decorator, Dominique Daguerre. He had worked at the French royal court before the Revolution. He used his very wide network of contacts to fulfil George's passion for French interiors.

While George was Prince of Wales, Carlton House was a private residence. But in 1811 George III's mental health got worse and he was unable to fulfil his duties as King. George became Prince Regent, and Carlton House became the centre of court life.

Charles Wild, Throne Room at Carlton House, c.1818, RCIN 922178



This is a watercolour by Charles Wild, showing the Throne Room at Carlton House in around 1818. The throne is at the far end, under a red velvet canopy. Pedestals and candelabra like those displayed here are all around the room.

In the 1820s it was thought that Carlton House should be demolished. A group of artists were brought together to make images of a large number of the smaller works of art in the house, including items like candelabra, pedestals, clocks and porcelain. George's advisers could then



use them to choose pieces to be moved either to Windsor Castle or to Buckingham Palace for the new interiors there.

The candelabra, illustrated to the left, were first taken to St James's Palace, but then in 1915 they were moved to Buckingham Palace. For information about George's life and residences see the Timeline at the end of these notes.

Stop 12

Sèvres Porcelain Factory, *Pot-pourri* vase, 1758–9, RCIN 2360



George collected huge quantities of Sèvres porcelain, made in Paris in the 18th and early 19th centuries. This *pot-pourri* vase, in the shape of a ship, is the highlight of his collection.

Making a vase like this from porcelain was very difficult. The upper part, which forms the sails, was made by piercing the porcelain to look like a net.

The porcelain had to be fired several times as each new colour was applied. The fact that an object as fragile as this has survived is remarkable in itself. In fact, only about 20 of these vases survive at all.



George admired the jewel-like colours – the deep lapis lazuli blue and vivid green. The scene on the front, in the style of the Flemish painter David Teniers the Younger, was a perfect fit with his collection of Old Master Dutch and Flemish paintings.

Sèvres were famous for their gilding techniques. On this vase the gold has been applied and then textured. Their attention to detail was one of the things that made them stand out from their competitors.

The other reason George loved pieces by Sèvres was that their factory was closely associated with the French royal family. This particular vase had actually been owned by Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV. After the French Revolution George saw himself as the guardian of French royal history.

Stop 13

Peter Paul Rubens, *Landscape with Saint George and the Dragon*, 1630–35, RCIN 405356



George had a passion for Old Master painting. This picture was one of his most highly prized possessions. It was originally bought for the royal collection by Charles I in the mid-1630s. It was sold after his execution, but George bought it back in 1814. Its connections

with the royal family and its subject –Saint George – both really appealed to him.

The painting was made by Rubens as a reminder of his visit to London. The landscape makes us think of the River Thames, with Lambeth Palace in the background. It also tells the story of St George and the Dragon, in which the figure of St George looks very much like Charles I. In this way it is a tribute by the artist to his English royal patron.

It was one of the most important paintings for George IV and his collection. In the list of art works at Carlton House it was valued at 3,000 guineas, which was an enormous amount of money at the time. And its connection to Charles I made it particularly important. George would have felt duty-bound to buy back a painting which had belonged to his ancestor. The name shared by St George and the Prince may have suggested to George that there was a link between King Charles and the future King George IV. It was also important to him because of the artist. In the whole of his collection the artist whom George probably admired the most was Rubens, although he was closely followed by Van Dyck and Rembrandt. This painting placed this great artist in an English context, which would have made it even more special.

Charles Wild, *The Crimson Drawing Room, Carlton House, 1816*, RCIN 922176



Rubens's painting was displayed in one of the grandest interiors at Carlton House, the Crimson Drawing Room. This is a watercolour by Charles Wild, showing the room as it appeared in 1816. Rubens's painting is hanging on the left.

Stop 14

Breguet Et Fils, *The 'Sympathique' clock*, 1814, RCIN 2861



This is a very unusual design of a clock and a watch working together. It was specially made for George when he was Prince Regent in 1814 by a father and son working together in Paris in a company known as Breguet Et Fils. It cost the incredible sum of 11,500 francs and it became one of their best known inventions. At this time watches were unlikely to keep perfect time, running a little fast or a little slow. The idea behind this combination was that at night the watch would be placed in the cradle above the clock, as it is here. At midnight a small pin attached to the clock mechanism would insert itself into the watch to make sure

that the watch was also set to midnight. It was a way of making sure that the clock and watch always showed the same time. Breguet himself called this type of mechanism 'sympathique' or sympathetic – which here means 'working together in harmony'.

We know for certain that George used it, because the watch was sent off to be repaired or re-gilded at various times during his life. He was obviously keen to try out this interesting mechanism.

The Breguets were famous for bringing new ideas into clockmaking in the early 19th century. Among the pieces George got from them was a clock combined with a barometer and another longcase clock that actually had a little chimney in the back and a small fire-burner in the bottom. This was intended to stop the case warping when the temperature changed outside.

Stop 15

Jingdezhen, China, *Pair of Pagodas*, c.1800–25, RCIN 812.1–2



This is a pagoda made from Chinese porcelain and mounted with French gilt-bronze mounts.

It was one of the extraordinary foreign objects that George bought for Brighton Pavilion, his pleasure palace by the sea.

Charles Moore, *Brighton Pavilion, Steyne Front*, RCIN 918154



Here is an image of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton. The architecture on the outside was inspired by Indian palaces.

John Le Keux after Augustus Charles Pugin, *Brighton Pavilion, Banqueting Room*, 1838, RCIN 708000.aq



But inside, because of his love for Chinese art, George filled the palace with bamboo furniture, Chinese porcelain and wonderful lighting fixtures, based on dragons. It was a pure fantasy world.

Robert Seymour, *The Great Joss And His Playthings*, c.1829, RCIN 751279



Satirists like Robert Seymour focused on George's love of exotic styles in order to make fun of him. George often appeared in these cartoons wearing Chinese dress, because it was such an unusual taste at the time.

Stop 16

David Teniers the Younger, *Peasants dancing outside a Tavern*, c.1641, RCIN 406363



George was a keen collector of 17th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings, which he displayed at Carlton House. This picture by David Teniers the Younger is the perfect example of George's taste for scenes of common country people by the Flemish Old Masters.

In the left-hand foreground a middle class family have come to admire the peasant dance. A cheerful country person is coming to invite one of them to dance, but she is looking rather hesitant about it. A very lively dance is going on in the background, with the central couple really throwing themselves into it. They are all dancing to music from a bagpiper who is standing a little bit higher up under the tree. The old man leaning on his stick is probably too old to be dancing, so he just looks on at the scene. On the right-hand side there is a couple who looking like they are getting rather amorous – the man looks like he is trying to get his hand under the woman's skirt. There is a bottle of wine spilling out on the floor. On the far

right-hand side are the results of all this excess: a man is staggering up against the fence, leaning his head against it and vomiting.

Charles Wild, *The Rose Satin Drawing Room, Carlton House*, 1818, RCIN 922181



This is a watercolour showing the painting on display in the grandest room at Carlton House, the Bow Room, which looks out onto the garden.

George IV had absolutely no problem hanging a painting with scenes of peasant life in such a rich room. The fact that the subject was peasant life

did not matter to him. But it did matter that the scenes were painted by David Teniers rather than by some lesser artist. In the list of art works in Carlton House this painting is described as 'powerfully coloured and executed with great spirit and freedom of pencilling' (they called a paintbrush a 'pencil' in those days). The skill of the painter was really important to George.

Stop 17

François Girardon, *Equestrian statue of Louis XIV*, c.1696, RCIN 31359



This large bronze shows the French King Louis XIV as a military hero, leading his troops into battle.

One of George's agents bought this for him. This agent was actually his pastry chef, François Benois. He was French so was able to travel freely between England and France. He bought a huge number of French works of art for George.

Benois saw this piece and wrote a letter describing it to the Prince Regent. He thought that it was too large for Carlton House but George wrote back and told him to buy it. He managed to find a space for it on the top floor of the house in the armoury. It would have looked very

impressive alongside George's collection of arms and armour, and his military heroes.

In 1826 George had this highly decorated stand created specially for it. It has scenes from Louis' military victories on it, which George greatly admired.

Stop 18

Rundell, Bridge & Rundell, *The Diamond Diadem*, 1820–21, RCIN 31702



This crown is perhaps the best known piece of Her Majesty The Queen's jewellery. It appears on British coins and postage stamps. It was made for George IV's coronation, which was one of the grandest events ever staged in this country.

The king wanted a crown combining the rose of England, the thistle of Scotland and the shamrock of Ireland. But the College of Arms, who are the official keepers of crowns, decided this would not be right for a crown used in the coronation ceremony. Instead George took the idea of the national flowers and wove them into this diamond circle. The crown is made from 1,333 individual diamonds, including a large four-carat pale yellow diamond which sits in the middle of the cross at the front.

It was traditional for any stones used in the coronation to be specially hired for the day. In this case the bill for the crown was just over £8,000, including £800 for the hire of the stones. In the end George decided that he wanted to keep it just as it was for his coronation, so he bought the stones.



George wore the crown over a large velvet hat, during the ceremony before the coronation. He also had a hand in designing his coronation robes, which were inspired by Elizabethan and Jacobean costume.

George IV's coronation surcoat, 1820–21, RCIN 62955



George's coronation 'surcoat' is in the case to the right. It is a short red velvet cape, richly decorated with gold embroidery and sequins. It would have come down just above his knees. It cost an enormous amount of money, particularly considering it could hardly be seen under his mantle, which was even more spectacular, as can be seen in the portrait below.

Sir Thomas Lawrence, George IV, 1821, RCIN 405918



Altogether, George IV's coronation cost £240,000. George III's had cost just £70,000.

John Whittaker, *Ceremonial of the Coronation of George IV*, 1823, RCIN 1005090



The king hired the printer John Whittaker to record the coronation in the splendid souvenir volume displayed below the crown. It was printed in gold leaf on luxury vellum (made from animal skin) from Japan, and its illustrations were hand-coloured. Only a few copies were made and they were so expensive to make that Whittaker went bankrupt.

Stop 19

Hawaiian, *Cape ('ahu'ula)*, c.1824, RCIN 69994



The object in the centre of the case, with all its wonderful colour, is a cape from Hawaii. It was a gift to George IV in 1824. It is made from a net woven with fibres from a plant similar to a nettle, which was then decorated with vivid red, yellow and black feathers.

They are not dyed: they are the natural colours of two

birds found in Hawaii.

In Hawaiian tradition the red colour was linked with the highest rank. Their name for these pieces is *'ahu'ula*, which means 'red garments' and the red colour was a symbol of the wearer being the chieftain. The yellow feathers were rarer, so they became the most highly prized.

This is one of six capes and two full-length cloaks presented by the King and Queen of Hawaii, King Kamehameha II and Queen Kamāmalu. They visited London to improve diplomatic relations between Britain and Hawaii (which were then known as the Sandwich Islands). In fact the King and Queen had left Hawaii in 1823 and travelled to England simply intending to meet George IV, but no invitation had been sent to them. So when they arrived they caused quite a sensation.

King Kamehameha II and Queen Kamāmalu at the opera, RCIN 750809



This is a picture of the King and Queen visiting the opera. They were the first Hawaiians ever to visit England. The Queen especially was a very striking figure as she was over six feet tall. Unfortunately, the King and Queen never managed to meet George IV. A date was organised for them to do so, but before the meeting could happen both the King and Queen caught the measles. They had no immunity to this disease and very

sadly they both died within a few days of each other. Their coffins were sent back to Hawaii draped in their own feather cloaks, which must have been a very sad sight, but it shows how important the cloaks were in Hawaiian culture.

Stop 20

Sir David Wilkie, *I Pifferari*, 1827, RCIN 405861 and Sir David Wilkie, *A Roman Princess Washing the Feet of Pilgrims*, 1827, RCIN 405096



George greatly admired the art of Scottish painter David Wilkie. The artist's early works were inspired by Teniers and other 17th-century Flemish masters, and so they fitted well with the rest of George's collection. Pictures like this one, painted after Wilkie visited Europe, with lots of detail of people and places, gave George a feeling that he had been on the journey himself.

These make up a pair of paintings dealing with everyday life in Italy. They are very typical of the time soon after the Napoleonic Wars, and the beginnings of a strong revival of the Catholic Church.

Painters drew attention to the religious devotion of ordinary people, particularly in Spain and, as here, in Italy. Here we see shepherds from Calabria and Abruzzo. They came into towns, particularly Rome, just before Christmas and played in front of the shrines to the Virgin Mary set up along the roadside. They were known as 'pipers' which is '*pifferari*' in Italian.

The idea was that they were like the shepherds who visited the manger when Jesus was born, and that their music would ease the Virgin Mary's pain when she was giving birth.



The painting that goes with it, on the left, shows a ceremony that took place in the Church of Santa Trinità dei Pellegrini in Rome. Here women from noble families washed the feet of pilgrims, just as Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples.

Stop 21

Attributed to David Roentgen, Desk, c.1785, RCIN 293



This desk was bought for George IV in Paris in 1820 by his agent and pastry chef François Benois. The look is typical of the pieces that George collected: it is covered in beautiful mahogany and has gilt-bronze mounts. But the desk is unusual because there is a very surprising mechanism inside it which springs forward and opens up to reveal several compartments and a reading slope. The

desk is full of small drawers and hidden compartments. Roentgen, who made this desk, was famous for his clever designs of mechanisms like this, using springs, weights and pulleys and even clockwork to create very unusual pieces of furniture.

Because the mechanism inside the desk was so complicated it was delivered in six separate cases. Eventually it was put on the top floor of Carlton House next to the King's bedroom. He probably enjoyed playing with the mechanism.

Stop 22

Philip Rundell, *Shield of Achilles*, 1821, RCIN 51266



This is an enormous piece of silver gilt, almost a metre in diameter. It is known as the Shield of Achilles and is one of the high points of George IV's silver collection. Silver gilt is silver with a thin layer of gilding over the top so it appears as though it's made from solid gold. We think it was made for George IV's coronation, although no bill for it survives.

It was designed by sculptor John Flaxman and crafted by the royal goldsmiths Rundell, Bridge & Rundell. The design is based on a shield described by the Ancient Greek poet

Homer in his poem, the *Iliad*. Flaxman read the poem in Greek, the language it was written in.

Apollo, the Sun God is in the centre of the shield, riding out in his four-horse chariot. The horses seem to leap out of the shield towards the viewer. Behind him is a sunburst filled with stars, and the moon, which represent the passing of time. Around the central circle there are scenes of people involved in different activities: weddings, hunting scenes, the harvest, arguments and fighting. Around the edge of the shield we see the waves of the ocean. This design is intended to show the world as it was known to the Greeks at the time.

The Shield of Achilles is part of what is called the 'Grand Service'. This is a wonderful collection of silver gilt designed both for dining and display, which George put together over a number of decades. It contains some 4,000 items and a selection of them are displayed here on the buffet.

One of the reasons behind George's collecting the Grand Service was his fierce rivalry with Napoleon. He knew that Napoleon ate from a gold plate, so George created this magnificent dining service so that he too would be seen eating from a gold plate.

The Grand Service is still used today. It appears at state banquets hosted by Her Majesty The Queen.

Stop 23

Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Pope Pius VII*, 1819, RCIN 404946



The portraits displayed on this wall are from a group which George IV ordered to be painted. They were hung in a room in Windsor Castle which came to be known as the Waterloo Chamber.

Napoleon was first defeated in 1814. Following this defeat George IV began to think about how he would honour the monarchs and warriors responsible for overthrowing Napoleon, along with the statesmen who rebuilt Europe afterwards. He asked Sir Thomas Lawrence to create full-length portraits of the monarchs and their generals, and three-quarter length portraits of the diplomats who re-established European borders.

One of the most striking is this portrait of Pope Pius VII, as Head of the Papal States. At this date being Protestant was the whole foundation of the British royal family, which meant being against the Pope. But Pius VII was different – he was the Pope who had defied Napoleon. When Pius refused to offer Napoleon public support, Napoleon invaded Rome and imprisoned him in ever harsher conditions.

By asking for Pius's portrait to be included George was paying tribute to the Pope's role in the restoration of Europe, and his defence of the Christian faith against the French revolutionary forces. The portrait is considered to be Lawrence's masterpiece.

George IV was a very keen collector of great portrait painting of the past, particularly from the 17th century. He owned superb paintings by Rubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt. Thomas Lawrence was skilful enough to compete with the great masters of the past, and for this reason he became George's favourite contemporary portrait painter. With this portrait Lawrence was



competing with the absolute best of all time, including Titian and Velázquez, two great portrait painters who had depicted Popes.

Lawrence had learned from those artists how to handle paint in a very lively way. This painting gives the impression not only of what the Pope looked like, but what he looked like in motion, as his face turned, or his mouth moved, or as the light was caught in his eyes.

The Waterloo Chamber was completed during the reign of George's successor, William IV.

Stop 24

Sir Thomas Lawrence, *George IV*, 1821, RCIN 405918



In 1821, after ten years as Prince Regent, George was finally crowned King. This was the moment that George had been waiting for and working up to. He wanted his coronation as George IV to be a magnificent occasion showing respect to his country. This painting shows him wearing his luxurious coronation robes, which he had played a big part in designing.

The portrait was painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, now Principal Painter to the King. It presents George not only as the monarch of Britain, but also as a great statesman of Europe.



This is known as the 'Table of the Great Commanders of Antiquity'. It is a highly unusual piece of furniture commissioned by Napoleon from the Sèvres porcelain factory in 1806. The whole table is made of porcelain. At its centre is a portrait of Alexander the Great, surrounded by legendary generals from the ancient world, including Constantine, Trajan, Caesar, and Hannibal. The table top can be rotated through 360 degrees. Louis XVIII presented the table to George, following Napoleon's defeat and the restoration of the French monarchy.



A coronation portrait was obviously a very important painting, so it is surprising to find that Lawrence painted it on a second-hand canvas. A close inspection of the area around King George's head reveals that the portrait has been repainted.

There is a slight halo around his hair which is there because the portrait was painted over an earlier portrait of George, in which he was wearing the robes of the Order of the Garter.

When he updated George's costume Lawrence also updated his hairstyle, to make it a bit more up-to-date and fashionable.

Stop 25

Conclusion



When George became King in 1820 he achieved the role for which he had been preparing for so long. This portrait shows George as the king he wanted to be. But is not the king that George actually was. He was increasingly unwell, and became increasingly unpopular.

The way he treated his wife was seen as ungentlemanly and scandalous. He was also one of the people blamed for the brutal action taken to break up a political meeting at Peterloo in Manchester, where a number of people had died.



He was criticised for being out of touch and for spending so much money on rebuilding Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, at a time when so many people across the country were experiencing real poverty.



George hid himself away in a small cottage in Windsor Great Park, where he lived with his mistress, Lady Conyngham. He lived a country lifestyle, fishing and riding around the Great Park in a cart. But at the same time he left behind a fabulous collection of paintings, porcelain, silver gilt, furniture, prints, drawings, books, and manuscripts – objects which today make up one of the great foundations of the Royal Collection.



This is the final stop on our tour. We hope you have enjoyed the exhibition.

This script has been compiled from a tour produced by ATS with information from the following experts from Royal Collection Trust: Kate Heard, Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings; Kathryn Jones, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts; Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures; and Emma Stuart, Senior Curator of Books and Manuscripts.

To find out more about works of art in the Royal Collection, please visit our website at rct.uk. You can also find out about future exhibitions there. Keep in touch by signing up to our e-Newsletter or by following us on Facebook and Instagram. Please remember that you can return to The Queen's Gallery, free of charge, for a year, by converting your ticket into a 1-Year Pass. Just sign the back and ask a member of staff to stamp it before you leave.

Please turn the page for the Timeline.

Timeline



1762

Birth of George, Prince of Wales, eldest child of George III and Queen Charlotte

Richard Brompton, *George IV when Prince of Wales*, 1777, RCIN 405067



1783

Aged 21, George is given Carlton House and an annual income of £50,000, on top of income from the Duchy of Cornwall worth £12,000

William Westall, *The South Front, Carlton House*, c.1819, RCIN 922169



1785

George secretly marries the Roman Catholic widow Mrs Maria Fitzherbert. He did not have his father George III's permission to marry, so the marriage was not valid in English law

Richard Cosway, *Mary Anne Fitzherbert*, c.1789, RCIN 420928



1788

Regency Crisis: George III becomes ill but recovers before Parliament can agree on the appointment of a Regent

Thomas Rowlandson, *Filial Piety*, 1788, RCIN 810287



1789
French Revolution



1795
George marries Caroline of Brunswick but the couple are soon estranged

Henry Singleton, *The Marriage of George IV when Prince of Wales*, 1795, RCIN 405845



1805
Admiral Lord Nelson defeats Napoleon's fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar

William John Huggins, *The Battle of Trafalgar: I. The Beginning of the Action: The 'Victory' Breaking the Line*, 1833, RCIN 407180



1811
George III's mental health deteriorates and George becomes Prince Regent

Henry Pierce Bone, *George IV when Prince Regent*, 1816, RCIN 421859



1811–25
Construction of Regent Street, linking Carlton house to Regent's Park

After G.H. Jones, *Regent Street*, RCIN 702519



1814

Napoleon abdicates and is exiled to Elba, but later returns to power during the Hundred Days

Paul Delaroche, *Napoleon at Fontainebleau on 31 March 1814*, 1846, RCIN 405838



1815

Napoleon is finally defeated by allied forces at the Battle of Waterloo

Denis Dighton, *The Battle of Waterloo: The Charge of the Second Brigade of Cavalry*, 1815–17, RCIN 404825



1817

George's daughter, Princess Charlotte, dies in childbirth

Alfred Edward Chalon, *Princess Charlotte of Wales*, c.1817–19, RCIN 405449



1818

George's mother, Queen Charlotte, dies

Thomas Gainsborough, *Queen Charlotte*, 1782, RCIN 401007



1819

The Peterloo Massacre in Manchester



1820

George III dies and the Prince Regent becomes George IV

Sir Thomas Lawrence, *George IV*, 1821, RCIN 405918



1821

Trial of Queen Caroline

British School, 19th Century, *The Kettle calling the Pot ugly names*, published 23 Sept. 1820, RCIN 751290



1821

Coronation of George IV

After F.P. Stephanoff, *George IV in his royal robes*, 19 July 1821, RCIN 750784



1822

George IV becomes the first British monarch to visit Scotland since the Act of Union in 1707

Sir David Wilkie, *George IV*, 1829, RCIN 401206



1823

The Royal Pavilion at Brighton is completed

Charles Moore, *Brighton Pavilion, Steyne Front*, RCIN 918154



1824

George appoints architect Sir Jeffry Wyattville to remodel Windsor Castle

Charles Wild, *Windsor Castle: The Upper Ward*, c.1819, RCIN 922096



1825

George IV appoints architect John Nash to transform Buckingham House into the main royal palace in London, as it is today

Joseph Nash, *Buckingham Palace from the South East*, 1846, RCIN 919892



1826

Carlton House is demolished

Humphry Repton, *View from the Principal Floor of Carlton House*,
1808, RCIN 917091



1830

George IV dies

Sir Francis Chantrey, *George IV*, 1830, RCIN 93005