

25 October 2021

Costumes worn by Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret in wartime pantomimes brought together for the first time in Christmas display at Windsor Castle

This festive season, Christmas decorations will transform the State Apartments at Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and a special display at Windsor Castle will bring together costumes worn by Her Majesty The Queen and Princess Margaret during wartime pantomimes. Exclusive tours will give visitors a behind-the-ropes experience at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, while family activities will bring royal Christmases to life for children and adults alike.

Christmas at Windsor Castle

**Special display: *The Princesses' Pantomimes*
25 November 2021 – 31 January 2022**

During the Second World War, Her Majesty The Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) and Princess Margaret spent much of their time in Windsor, safely away from the bombing in London. Between 1941 and 1944 they performed in and helped to stage a series of Christmas pantomimes to raise money for the Royal Household Wool Fund, which supplied knitting wool to make comforters for soldiers fighting at the Front.

Visitors to Windsor Castle this Christmas will have the unique opportunity to see six rare surviving costumes worn by the teenage Princesses during these wartime performances. Brought together for the first time, the costumes will be displayed in the Waterloo Chamber where the pantomimes were originally performed 80 years ago.

The costumes that survive today were worn by the Princesses during the final two pantomimes – *Aladdin* (1943) and *Old Mother Red Riding Boots* (1944). In the title role of 'Aladdin', Princess Elizabeth wore a gold brocade and turquoise jacket with turquoise dungarees and matching hat, all of which will be on public display for the first time, while Princess Margaret wore a red silk dress and matching jacket to play 'Princess Roxana'. The striking red and gold embroidered tunic worn by their fellow cast member to play 'The King' and another costume combining pieces worn by both Princesses will also be on display.

Three costumes worn in *Old Mother Red Riding Boots* will be on display for the first time. Princess Elizabeth wore a long-sleeved pink satin and lace dress to play 'Lady Christina Sherwood' and later donned a chintz shirt, trousers and sunhat for a seaside scene, in which Princess Margaret wore a blue taffeta dress with cream lace bloomers to play 'The Honourable Lucinda Fairfax'.

Also on display in the Waterloo Chamber are the 16 large-scale and colourful pictures of fairy-tale characters that were pasted around the walls to decorate the space for the pantomimes. The pictures have been revealed for visitors to see 75 years after they were covered up at the end of the war, when paintings by Sir Thomas Lawrence that had been removed for safekeeping were returned.



Also at Windsor Castle this Christmas:

- Visitors to Windsor Castle between **25 November and 3 January** will see the State Apartments decorated with shimmering Christmas trees, twinkling lights and festive garlands. A highlight will be the magnificent **20-foot-high Christmas tree** in St George's Hall, taken from Windsor Great Park and dressed with hundreds of iridescent glass and mirrored ornaments.
- The **Semi-State Rooms**, created as opulent private apartments for George IV and now used by members of the Royal Family for official entertaining, are now open to visitors for the winter months and will feature a spectacular Christmas tree in the Crimson Drawing Room.
- On 4, 11, 18, 20 and 23 December, families can enjoy **drop-in festive storytelling sessions** in the State Apartments. Taking inspiration from the pantomime costumes on display, weekend **arts-and-crafts activities** in the Castle's Learning Centre will give children the chance to design their own costumes, make pantomime-themed Christmas decorations and make a stage for pantomime characters to perform on.
- Available throughout December, **Exclusive Evening Tours** offer a behind-the-ropes experience in the State Apartments. Led by an expert guide, visitors will discover more about the Castle's 1,000-year history, enjoy a glass of champagne and receive a complimentary copy of the official souvenir guidebook. Tours are available to book now at www.rct.uk.
- **Great Kitchen Tours**, available from 30 December to 9 January, will give visitors a guided tour of the oldest working kitchen in the country, which is not usually open to the public. Built in the reign of Edward III, the Great Kitchen has remained in use for over 750 years and is still used today for State occasions hosted by The Queen. Tours are available to book now at www.rct.uk.
- The Undercroft Café, located in the oldest surviving medieval space in the Castle, will be serving a **festive-themed winter menu** throughout December.

Christmas at the Palace of Holyroodhouse

3 December 2021 – 3 January 2022

- The **festive decorations at the Palace of Holyroodhouse** will include a 15-foot-high Christmas tree in the Great Gallery, adorned with shimmering decorations and sparkling lights, while the Great Stair leading to the historic State Apartments will be draped with twinkling velvet garlands, glistening berries and seasonal foliage.
- In the Royal Dining Room, the **table will be laid with pieces from a silver service** presented to King George V and Queen Mary in 1935 to mark their Silver Jubilee, and decorated with flowers, wreaths and spires of faux candied sugared fruits.
- In the **Mary, Queen of Scots at Christmas Family Activity Day** on 18 December, children will discover how Christmas was celebrated at the Palace over 400 years ago. Families can step back in time to learn a curious game called 'The Feast of the Bean', create a pomander to make the air smell sweet, listen to traditional fiddle music and pick up a family activity trail.
- **Exclusive Evening Tours**, available between 18 and 30 December, offer a private view of the State Apartments after hours, including the West Drawing Room, which is used by members of the Royal Family as a private sitting room and not usually open to the public. Tours include a complimentary glass of champagne, a mince pie and a copy of the Palace's souvenir guidebook. Tours are available to book now at www.rct.uk.
- In the **Café at the Palace**, visitors can enjoy homemade mince pies, Christmas cake and mulled wine or treat themselves to a **Christmas-themed afternoon tea**.

Winter Guided Tours at Buckingham Palace

5 November 2021 – 30 January 2022

- With their gilded ceilings and glittering chandeliers, the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace provide a magnificent setting for many of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection. A **Buckingham Palace Guided Tour**, available between 5 November and 30 January, gives visitors the opportunity to explore rooms used by members of the Royal Family for official entertaining, including the Ballroom, Throne Room, White Drawing Room and Music Room, when the Palace is not usually open to the public. Tours are available to book now at www.rct.uk.
- This winter, **Family Guided Tours of Buckingham Palace** are also available for the first time. Specially designed for children, these fun-filled tours highlight stories about the Palace and its history that little ones will love and make a memorable day out for all the family. Family tours are available to book now at www.rct.uk.

Christmas shopping

Browse for Christmas gift inspiration in the **Royal Collection Trust shops or online** at www.rct.uk/shop, where luxurious hampers, food hall favourites, traditional Christmas decorations and sustainable stocking fillers make perfect presents. For book lovers, ***A Royal Christmas*** (£12.95 from Royal Collection Trust shops) is the first official publication to explore the festive traditions of generations of the royal family, through more than 150 objects, photographs and documents from the Royal Collection and the Royal Archives.

Ends

Images are available from mediaselect.pa.media or via WeTransfer. For more information and images please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, press@rct.uk.

Christmas at Windsor Castle is from 25 November 2021 to 3 January 2022. ***The Princesses' Pantomimes*** display is from 25 November 2021 to 31 January 2022. Christmas decorations, ***The Princesses' Pantomimes*** display and **family activities** are included in the price of admission. **Exclusive Evening Tours** cost £70 for adults and are available on selected dates between 11 and 30 December 2021. **Great Kitchen Tours** cost £8 for adults and are available as an add-on to a standard Castle ticket between 30 December 2021 and 9 January 2022.

Christmas at the Palace of Holyroodhouse is from 3 December 2021 to 3 January 2022. Christmas decorations and **family activities** are included in the price of admission. **Exclusive Evening Tours** cost £40 for adults and are available on selected dates between 18 and 30 December 2021.

Buckingham Palace Guided Tours cost £65 for adults and are available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 5 November 2021 to 30 January 2022. **Family Guided Tours** cost £65.00 for adults and £37.50 for children (under-fives go free) and are available on Saturdays and Sundays from 6 November 2021 to 31 January 2022.

Tickets and visitor information: www.rct.uk, Windsor Castle +44 (030) 123 7304, Palace of Holyroodhouse +44 (030) 123 7306, Buckingham Palace +44 (030) 123 7300.

Notes to Editors

Royal Collection Trust, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The Queen. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes. Royal Collection Trust's work is undertaken without public funding of any kind.

The Royal Collection is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for her successors and the nation, and is not owned by The Queen as a private individual.

Admission to Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SCO39772).