

## Palace of Holyroodhouse

The Palace of Holyroodhouse is Her Majesty The Queen's Official Residence in Scotland and is the setting for state ceremonies and official entertaining. During The Queen's Holyrood week, which usually runs from the end of June to the beginning of July, Her Majesty holds investitures in the Great Gallery, audiences in the Morning Drawing Room and a garden party and entertains around 8,000 guests from all walks of Scottish life.

At the start of Her Majesty's visit, the Palace forecourt is transformed into a crowded and colourful parade ground, where 700 guests stand to watch the enactment of an ancient ceremony – the Presentation of the Keys of the City of Edinburgh. While The Queen is in residence, the Scottish variant of the Royal Standard of the United Kingdom is flown and the Royal Company of Archers forms her ceremonial bodyguard.

Occasionally the Palace is used by the Royal Family at other times of the year. In September 2010 The Queen received Pope Benedict XVI in the Morning Drawing Room during his official visit to the United Kingdom. The Royal Family also stayed at Holyroodhouse at the time of the wedding of Zara Phillips, The Queen's granddaughter, in Canongate Kirk, on 30 July 2011.

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### The Kings and Queens who shaped the Palace

#### **David I (r.1124-1153)**

The origins of the Palace of Holyroodhouse lie in the foundation of an Augustinian abbey in 1128 by David I. A new building programme had begun by c.1195 and continued until c.1230 and extensive monastic buildings were added to accommodate the large community, including cloisters, a chapter house, a refectory and guest houses. The enlarged foundation prospered, and from an early date contained royal chambers for use by the sovereign. By the time Edinburgh became the capital of Scotland in the 15th century, kings chose to reside at the abbey, surrounded as it was by parkland, rather than at the more exposed Edinburgh Castle.

#### **James IV (r.1488-1513)**

James IV frequently stayed at Holyroodhouse, and it was he who first decided to convert the royal lodgings into a palace, partly because he was keen to provide a suitable residence for himself and his new bride Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII.

#### **James V (r.1513-1542)**

Further construction of the Palace took place during the reign of James V. Work began in 1528 on a huge tower to provide new royal lodgings at the north-west corner of the Palace. Equipped with a drawbridge and probably protected by a moat, the tower provided a high degree of security and is the oldest part of the Palace surviving today.

### **Mary, Queen of Scots (r.1542-1567)**

One of the most famous residents of the Palace of Holyroodhouse is undoubtedly Mary, Queen of Scots. The daughter of James V, Mary came to live at Holyroodhouse in 1561. She married both of her Scottish husbands in the Palace – Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, in 1565, and James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell, in 1567, and in her own apartments, she witnessed the murder of her secretary, David Rizzio, at the hands of a group led by the jealous Lord Darnley, on 9 March 1566.

### **James VI (r.1567-1625)**

Mary's son James VI took up residence at the Palace in 1579 and carried out extensive repairs. By the time his consort, Anne of Denmark, was crowned in the abbey in 1590, a large court was in residence, and the household numbered some 600. From 1603, however, when James succeeded to the English throne as James I and the court moved to London, the importance of Holyroodhouse faded, and extensive renovations had to be made when the King returned to Edinburgh in 1617.

### **Charles I (r.1625-1649) and Charles II (r.1660-1685)**

The Palace and abbey were renovated further in 1633 for the Scottish coronation of James's son, Charles I, where the coronation was to take place. In 1650 the Palace was occupied as a barracks by Oliver Cromwell's troops following his triumph over the Scots at the battle of Dunbar and was extensively damaged by fire. The rebuilding process began in earnest in 1671, during the reign of Charles II.

### **James VII (r.1685-1688)**

Although Charles II never actually stayed at the newly rebuilt Holyroodhouse, his brother James, Duke of York, took up residence in 1679 and again in 1681-2. His interest in the Palace continued after his succession to the throne in 1685 as James VII of Scotland and II of England. Two years later, he issued a royal warrant commanding that the Abbey Church, as Chapel Royal, be converted for Catholic worship and used as the chapel for the revived Order of the Thistle, the highest order of chivalry in Scotland.

### **Bonnie Prince Charlie**

The later Stuart kings showed little interest in Holyroodhouse, though Prince Charles Edward Stuart (1720-1788), better known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, brought the Palace to life again briefly in 1745 when, he seized Edinburgh for the Jacobites and set up court at the Palace. Holyroodhouse became the symbolic residence of the Stuart Prince in his Scottish capital – he conducted his official business in the Palace and he lunched in public view.

Despite the new attention focused on Holyroodhouse, little effort was made to maintain the Palace during the 18th century, and the condition of its interior gradually worsened. In 1758, in order to strengthen the roof of the Abbey Church, stone slabs were placed over the vaulting, but this extra weight hastened its collapse ten years later, leaving it in ruins.

### **George IV (r.1820-1830)**

The visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822 marked a turning point in the history of Holyroodhouse as a royal residence. George IV was the first reigning monarch to visit the country since Charles I in 1633. Although the King never stayed at Holyroodhouse, he visited several times, and considerable improvements were made to the Palace before his arrival. Interest in the Palace increased following the King's visit, and funds were found for further improvements; floors were renewed and the southern end of the Palace was refaced.

### **Queen Victoria (r.1837-1901) and Prince Albert**

Queen Victoria had a great deal of affection for Holyroodhouse ever since her first visit there in 1850 and she insisted those areas which were still in a dilapidated condition be renovated. The main parts to receive attention were the old royal apartments on the first floor. David Ramsay Hay, Edinburgh's leading interior decorator, cleaned the spectacular plasterwork ceilings and repainted them in rich colours. Queen Victoria stayed at Holyroodhouse for the last time in 1886. The frequent visits she made helped to reinstate the Palace as Scotland's premier royal residence.

### **King George V (r.1910-1936) and Queen Mary**

During the reign of King George V Holyroodhouse came to life again, and after the First World War an extensive programme repairs were undertaken to ensure that the Palace became a regular royal residence. The State Rooms were redecorated and the bathrooms and kitchens thoroughly modernised. At the same time the importance of Charles II's State Rooms was recognised and the public tour was extended to include these as well as the apartments of Mary, Queen of Scots which had been open to visitors from the mid-18th century.

The Palace was selected as the site of the Scottish National Memorial to King Edward VII, unveiled by George V in 1922, and the forecourt was enclosed within richly decorated wrought-iron railings and gates. The cost of the repairs led to a review of the Palace's role and it was recognised as the Sovereign's official residence in Scotland.

### **King George VI (r. 1936-1952) and Queen Elizabeth**

King George VI and his consort Queen Elizabeth were regular visitors to Scotland. They visited Holyroodhouse in 1937 and then continued the tradition of regular visits, usually accompanied by their daughters Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret Rose.

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### **Did you know?**

- The Palace covers 10 acres. The gardens cover 8 of these.
- There are 289 rooms in the Palace (including corridors and landings). The biggest is the Great Gallery which measures 44.5 metres long.
- The Palace has 387 windows and 51 clocks.
- Since the 15th Century, nine monarchs have used the Palace, including Her Majesty The Queen.
- There are 106 members of the staff who work there. No one lives there except when The Queen is in residence.
- The Garden Party is the largest annual event held at the Palace. Some 8,000 guests are invited, and 15,000 cups of tea, 42 gallons of iced tea, 9,000 strawberry tarts and 7,000 sandwiches are consumed. The buffet table is 150 metres long.
- The oldest part of the Palace is the James V tower built in 1528. This is where Mary, Queen of Scots lived. The Abbey attached to the Palace was built in 1128 and is the oldest part of the site.
- The Queen's Gallery opened in 2002 and is the newest addition to the Palace. The newest part of the Palace is the Throne Room which was redecorated, with a new ceiling and panelling, including the monogram of George V and Queen Mary in the corners, in 1929.

- The last monarch to live there permanently was James VI of Scotland. Once he became James I in 1603 he only returned to the Palace once in 1617. King Charles I was crowned in the Abbey in 1633 and George IV visited Edinburgh in 1822 but he did not stay in the Palace. Queen Victoria started to use the Palace from 1850 and it has been used by each successive monarch since.
- There are more than 3,000 pieces in the Holyrood Silver Service. Each guest has their own salt and pepper set. The Silver Service was gifted to King George V in 1936 to celebrate his Silver Jubilee and cannot be used anywhere else but the Palace. There are a number of dinner services that are used, depending on the occasion.
- One oak tree was used to panel the walls of The West Drawing Room, which is The Queen's formal sitting room.
- The Ceremony of the Keys takes place when the monarch arrives at the Palace and has taken place since 1822.