Experience A Royal Welcome at Buckingham Palace this summer

This summer visitors to Buckingham Palace will experience what it is like to attend an event at the invitation of Her Majesty The Queen. Through special displays and film throughout the 19 State Rooms, they will see the work of Royal Household staff in welcoming the tens of thousands of guests who come to the Palace for a reception, State Banquet, garden party or Investiture each year. All the elements that make these occasions so unforgettable are brought together in A Royal Welcome, the theme of this year’s Summer Opening of Buckingham Palace, from Saturday, 25 July 2015.

For the first time, and for this summer only, visitors can follow in the footsteps of Heads of State, Prime Ministers and all the other guests from every walk of life by entering the Palace’s State Rooms through the Grand Entrance. They will pass the Australian State Coach, displayed at the Grand Entrance Portico, where Her Majesty departs and returns to Buckingham Palace by carriage for ceremonial processions. It was most recently used to carry The Duke of Edinburgh and Señora Rivera de Peña, wife of the President of the United Mexican States, in the arrival procession of the State Visit in March 2015.

The Palace Ballroom is set for a State Banquet, with the table dressed with silver-gilt centrepieces and candelabra from George IV’s magnificent Grand Service. The detailed preparations required to create such a spectacle, including the arrangement of 2,000 pieces of cutlery for 170 place settings, are captured in specially commissioned time-lapse film. The footage was recorded over ten days before the State Visit of the President of the Republic of Singapore in October 2014 – there have been 110 State Visits during The Queen’s reign. Other film shows the work of Royal Household staff, including chefs, footmen, pages, florists and housekeeping staff, who ensure the highest standards of presentation and delivery for The Queen’s guests.

To give a sense of the behind-the-scenes preparations for a State Banquet, displays recreate part of the Dresser’s workroom, and the Palace kitchens, pantries and wine cellars. The Dresser’s workroom shows a hat worn by Her Majesty during the State Visit of the
President of Singapore at different stages of the production process. A beautiful pale-grey silk dress by Angela Kelly Couture, worn by The Queen for the State Banquet in honour of the President of Singapore, is displayed with a roll of the fabric and the sewing machine used to make it. A number of other dresses created by distinguished British designers and worn by The Queen at State Banquets are exhibited, among them an exquisite white sleeveless dress of duchesse satin by Sir Norman Hartnell, worn in 1969 and 1971, a white silk-crêpe dress by Stewart Parvin from 2011, and an apricot-coloured dress of silk georgette and lace by Hardy Amies, worn in 1999. A selection of outfits worn by Her Majesty at garden parties is shown in the Music Room overlooking the Palace garden.

Items of personal jewellery worn by The Queen at official occasions are on display, among them pieces passed down through the Royal Family and gifts to Her Majesty to mark special occasions. The Kokoshnik Tiara, worn at the State Banquet in honour of the President of Mexico this year, is made up of 488 diamonds set into 61 graduated platinum bars. It was originally created as a 25th wedding-anniversary gift for The Queen's great-grandmother, Queen Alexandra, consort of King Edward VII. It is shown with Queen Mary's Dorset bow brooch, on display for the first time. This diamond brooch was a wedding gift to The Queen's grandmother, Princess Mary, on the occasion of her marriage to King George V in 1893, and was given to Princess Elizabeth by Queen Mary as a wedding present. The diamond Coronation necklace and Coronation earrings were made for Queen Victoria in 1858 and have been worn by Queen Alexandra, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth and Her Majesty The Queen at their coronations.

During a State Visit it is customary for gifts to be exchanged on the first day as a symbol of goodwill between the two countries. On display are gifts received from the Heads of State of Jordan, China, Nepal, Austria, France and the USA, presented during State Visits to Buckingham Palace between 1960 and 2015. In 2014, the President of Singapore gave The Queen a group of porcelain plates decorated with scenes of places and symbols relating to Singapore. A traditional Mexican clay sculpture of a Tree of Life, presented by the President of Mexico, incorporates a little figure of The Queen waving and a number of British landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Tower Bridge and Big Ben.

Anna Reynolds of Royal Collection Trust, curator of A Royal Welcome, said, 'A visit to Buckingham Palace at the invitation of The Queen is an extremely special experience. Through the displays and film presentations, we show the planning, preparation and presentation that make these occasions so magnificent and so memorable.'

Ends

A Royal Welcome is part of a visit to the Summer Opening of the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace, 25 July – 27 September 2015.

#royalwelcome

The exhibition is accompanied by the publication A Royal Welcome by Anna Reynolds. It is available at £9.95 from www.royalcollection.org.uk/shop and from Royal Collection Trust shops in London and Edinburgh, and at £12.95 from all good bookshops.

Families visiting the Palace can enjoy a new multimedia guide for children aged 5–12 and join in a host of activities in the new Family Pavilion on the Palace's West Terrace, overlooking the garden.
Advance tickets and visitor information:
www.royalcollection.org.uk, T. +44 (0)20 7766 7300

1-YEAR PASS
Enjoy free re-admission for a year if you buy your ticket directly from us.

A selection of images is available from www.picselect.com

For further information and photographs, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, press@royalcollection.org.uk.

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 13 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 is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SCO39772).