

Palace of Westminster

Visitor Route Tour Script

Houses of Parliament
Democratic Access Tours
Tours Office

2017 Issue

Introduction

The purpose of this script is to provide an outline of the topics that should be covered by those guiding on the Visitor Route of the Houses of Parliament. It is not intended to be recited by rote; once learned, guides should use their discretion to include additional information and add to their presentation with appropriate anecdotes. Please attempt to adjust both the content and delivery of the tour to suit the needs of individual groups. Closures of certain areas along the Visitor Route may also require you to cover some topics elsewhere than suggested here. The essence of the script is to cover what you should know and explain.

The tour should reflect what Parliament is and does. We know that most of our visitors are initially mainly interested in the history and art & architecture elements, but at the heart of the reasons for which we offer tours is the need to ensure that visitors leave with a greater understanding of the work that is done here and the impact it has on their lives. You **must** therefore cover the work of both Houses, explaining the passage of bills, the work of Members, and the role of committees etc. It is also to be hoped that the story of Parliament, properly told, will emphasise the value and importance of the right to vote which most of our visitors possess.

The script is presented in two parts; on the left of each page is the knowledge you must have and cover on each tour; on the right of each page are optional details, anecdotes, and background information, which you may add in as you wish and according to the type of group you are leading.

The thread which runs through the script is that of the story of the development of the universal franchise, using as prompts as far as possible the historically themed decoration along the route, which is broadly in chronological order from the Lords' end to the Commons.

Occasional deviations in the timeline are sometimes necessary. However, inevitably the script will develop further over time, so if you have any suggestions for improvement, anecdotes, or information you feel should be included, please forward these to the Tours Project Officer.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Some notes on guiding

Meeting and greeting your guests

Stop 1: Norman Porch

Stop 2: Robing Room

Stop 3: Royal Gallery 1

Stop 4: Royal Gallery 2

Stop 5: Prince's Chamber

Stop 6: Lords Chamber 1

Stop 7: Lords Chamber 2

Stop 8: Peers Lobby

Stop 9: Central Lobby

Stop 10: Members' Lobby

Stop 11: 'No' Lobby

Stop 12: Commons Chamber

Stop 13: St Stephen's Hall

Stop 14: Westminster Hall

Some notes on guiding

The mechanics of the Route

It cannot be emphasised enough that the palace was not designed for tours or large numbers of visitors, as it is also a working building. In order to ensure that the public have the best possible experience and that Members and staff are not inconvenienced, your ability to control your group and to co-operate with other parties on the route is vital.

Please meet your group in Westminster Hall and escort them back along the Line of Route to the Norman Porch, bypassing the House of Lords Chamber via the Not Content Lobby en route.

Tours must run in a smooth sequence to avoid blocking any parts for other visitors, no matter how tempting it is to hold your group in an interesting area. The Commons Chamber can comfortably accommodate four groups at the same time, but if you are blocking the entrance, or the area around the Table of the House, no-one else can get in. Plan your tour in such a way that, for example, you mention in advance the Petition Bag, or the damage caused by Black Rod to the door to the Commons, so that these can be pointed out in passing rather than in situ, causing a blockage.

You should aim to spend 4 minutes at each stop along the route, using the additional information to pad out the main text where necessary (or use spare time for questions), and be ready to move along when you see the group ahead of you move off. Do ask that questions be kept to a minimum during the tour; you can take them at the end, in Westminster Hall.

Please do not occupy the rear benches in the chambers; these are reserved for the security staff to walk along. Visitors must stand, but dispensation has been obtained from both Houses for the very frail, and persons taken ill, to sit briefly in either Chamber at your discretion.

Talking to your group

It makes no difference how much you know if people cannot hear you; and if they cannot hear you, they will drift away, causing problems for security. Some visitors will try to stand near the front for the tour and ask questions, making it easy to exclude others in the back of the group. Please try to be inclusive of all your guests so that everyone can be involved.

You should have enough confidence in your knowledge to be able to stand facing the group and talk about items (e.g. paintings) which are behind you, without turning your back on your guests. If you turn around they will not be able to hear you.

Security issues

It is vital that you assist security staff in their task by keeping your group together and separate from others. Don't talk and walk at the same time; you will lose visitors as they will not be able to hear you and will drift away, or spread out into a vague line into which others could easily slip. Announce when you are moving off to the next stop, move quickly, and gather your group together when you arrive at it.

You should perform head counts at the following points: in Westminster Hall, Central Lobby, Norman Porch; in the Lords' Chamber (to ensure nobody has slipped out via the Prince's Chamber; on the way in to Members' Lobby (Ditto, via Central Lobby or Lower Waiting Hall if the toilets have been used); and finally in St Stephen's Hall.

You may then leave your group unattended at the end of their tour in Westminster Hall as this is a public area. (On occasion your permit may give you instructions to escort visitors to meeting, committee or dining rooms after their tour; this should be done by the most direct route).

Always follow the instructions of security staff. Please do not question such instructions. If you are unhappy with an instruction, follow it nonetheless; the Tours Office can take up any issues arising after the end of the tour.

Emergencies and first aid

You should ensure that you are familiar with fire exits at all points along the Route. If you are not, please contact the Tours Office for training. In the event of a fire you should first follow any instructions of security staff; in the absence of these, evacuate your group immediately by the most direct Route *away from the fire or other incident.*

Your primary duty of care is to yourself and to your guests. It is possible that if there is an external security threat you will be kept inside the palace with your group. Please remain with them at this time. Do not leave them for other duties without first ensuring that they are accompanied and reassured.

First aid can be summoned via any member of the security staff, who should also be used to summon ambulances if required. In emergencies you can also use any internal telephone to contact the Police Control Room on 3333. If in doubt, don't hesitate; make the call.

Children

You should not accept unaccompanied children (under 16 years old) on your tour; there should always be a responsible adult present. You should never touch children, no matter how relaxed the situation may seem. Parents may give consent but it is wiser to refrain. *However, if a child is putting themselves or others at immediate risk, or you need to evacuate and a child is uncooperative, you should assist whilst having minimal contact.*

General

Beware old chestnuts. You will, in your time, overhear many stories about the palace; treat them with suspicion unless they are in this script.

Classic ones include the distance between the red lines in the Commons' Chamber, and the phrase 'it's in the bag'; the origin or reason behind both is quite definitively unknown (they still have a place in the script, but as traditions, not fact). The Tours Office will happily undertake research on anything else you hear and wish to know about.

Please remember that you are required to remain entirely impartial on all matters during your tours, whatever the makeup of your group.

Absolutely no comment of a partisan political nature, or referring to matters such as sex, race, nationality or religion should be made except where specifically mentioned as a matter of fact within this script. Failure to observe this may lead to you being offered no further tours.

Beware jokes on these subjects, too; what you hope is light hearted may not be taken as such, and we receive more complaints about this than any other aspect of guiding. There is a wealth of historical humour available for use (e.g. the sayings of Churchill or Disraeli); don't be tempted to use the latest reports in the media to raise a laugh.

Meeting and greeting your guests

You will meet your guests in Westminster Hall and obtain a permit from the Tour Coordinator at the desk; your guests will have the main Special Permit (should they have forgotten it, your permit will be accepted as their authority to enter). You will receive details such as the name/nature of the group and any special requests or requirements (e.g. group to be taken to a dining room after the tour / wheelchair required) just before the tour starts. After your tour, please sign in at the desk to show that you have finished and hand in your permit.

*Please arrive at least **ten minutes** before the advertised start time, like your guests, who will be pointed to their meeting point by the Duty Co-ordinator or Security staff. The Co-ordinator may occasionally ask you to start a tour early, or take a different group, according to daily circumstances; please follow their instructions.*

- Welcome your party to the Houses of Parliament and introduce yourself by name. If you work for the palace in another capacity you may wish to describe this briefly
- Give a brief Health and Safety talk – ask visitors to stay close to you at all times and follow your instructions and those given by security staff in an emergency
- Ask visitors to turn off mobile phones and not to take photographs except at the end of the tour
- Request that non-religious or illness related headwear be removed during the tour (this is traditional, not enforceable)
- Advise that visitors may not sit on the benches in either chamber
- Advise that the tour will take around 75 minutes and that due to the nature of the space the group will have to keep moving; therefore where possible please keep questions to the end, when there will be space and time to answer them
- Please be aware that children should never be touched except with the express permission of parents or guardians, or to prevent them from coming to harm (e.g. in evacuations)

Religious headwear for example includes that worn by Sikhs & Rastafarians. Illness related headwear might include that worn by cancer patients during chemotherapy.

Stop 1: Norman Porch

Welcome to the Houses of Parliament. During our tour today I will be showing you some of the most important areas of this palace, in which Parliament meets, and explaining what Parliament is and does, what it has meant to different people at different times, and how it came to be what it is today.

There has been a palace on this site for nearly one thousand years; originally, it stood on a thorn covered island formed by the Thames and the branches of the river Tyburn – Thorney Island. Over the centuries buildings have come and gone, but in some shape or form a palace has been in continuous existence since King Canute began building here in the first half of the 11th century. Most of the buildings you will see on our tour were built in the mid-19th century following a fire, but you will also see today some of the earlier buildings such as Westminster Hall, begun in 1097 by William Rufus, son of William the Conqueror.

We are currently standing in Norman Porch, so called because it was originally planned to have statues of Norman Kings and Queens here. The grandest entrance to the Palace of Westminster is the Sovereign's Entrance beneath the Victoria Tower. The steps leading up it are known as the Royal Staircase. The monarch proceeds up these steps on her way to the Robing Room prior to the Queen's Speech during the State Opening of Parliament, where she lists the government work that both Houses will work on in the coming year.

Through history, Parliaments had been called wherever the King's person may be, but gradually settled in this royal residence. In 1512 Henry VIII abandoned the palace as a home and eventually settled in York Place, which he confiscated after Wolsey's downfall and developed into the Palace of Whitehall. The Palace of Westminster thus became the permanent home of Parliament.

After the 1834 fire, a Parliamentary committee decided that Parliament should be rebuilt in a Gothic or an Elizabethan style. A competition to redesign the palace was won by Charles Barry (knighted in 1852), who used the Tudor Gothic style so that the new Parliament would be in harmony with the surviving buildings. In the end, Sir Charles spent some 15 years between 1837 and 1852 working on his design and its construction, and even after that some building work continued. Rebuilding commenced in 1840; the Lords Chamber was completed in 1847, and the Commons in 1852.

River Tyburn now totally underground, ran from Hampstead via what is now Regent's Park and Green Park.

King Cnut (Canute) 1016 – 1035 it is here that one chronicler sets his famous attempt to hold back the waves.

16 October 1834, a fire broke out in the palace after an overheated stove used to destroy the Exchequer's stockpile of tally sticks set fire to the House of Lords Chamber. Westminster Hall was saved thanks to fire-fighting efforts and a change in the direction of the wind. The Jewel Tower, the Undercroft Chapel and the Cloisters and Chapter House of St Stephen's were the only other parts of the Palace to survive.

Jewel Tower - fortunately all of the major records of the Lords were being kept in the Tower when the fire broke out; hence the survival of documents such as Charles I's death warrant etc. The Commons records were not so fortunate. Both are now stored in the Victoria Tower. The Jewel Tower is now in the care of English Heritage and open to the public.

The Porch was named for its proposed decorative scheme based on Norman history but was unfortunately never completed. Edward the Confessor is shown in the middle of the first stained-glass window, with the centre of the second window showing Queen Victoria seated in a chair of state. They are surrounded by heraldic banners and supporters.

Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860); other notable works include the Manchester Athenaeum, Manchester City Art Gallery, the Treasury Building in Whitehall, the Reform Club, and the Royal College of Surgeons

Palace of Whitehall The only surviving part is the Banqueting House in Whitehall, which may be visited by the public.

Permanent home but Parliament does not have to meet here; it can still meet anywhere, and could and would do so if anything befell the building.

Although much has changed over the centuries, Parliament still consists of three elements: the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Sovereign. Each has an important and distinct role in the governing of the country. Parliament is responsible for passing new laws and for keeping a check on the executive – government ministers and their departments of state. The House of Commons and the House of Lords are some of the busiest legislative chambers in the world.

Queen Victoria is depicted twice in the room: as a young woman in the stained-glass window, and near the end of her life, sitting on the throne of the House of Lords, in a copy of a 1900 painting by Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant which hangs on the eastern wall. The 16 plinths, originally intended for Norman monarchs, now holds the busts of prime ministers who have sat in the House of Lords, such as the Earl Grey and the Marquess of Salisbury.

Norman Porch contains the busts of some of the Prime Ministers who have sat in the House of Lords or been raised to the peerage thereafter:

1st Earl of Chatham 1708-1778 (*William Pitt the Elder*) enlarged Royal Navy for wars against France and Spain, gained Canada & French West Indies, expelled French influence in India

2nd Marquess of Rockingham 1730-1782 *In opposition, supported independence for American colonies; as Prime Minister, died while negotiating peace with them*

1st Viscount Sidmouth 1757-1844

1st Baron Grenville 1759-1834

2nd Earl Grey 1764-1845 *Great social reformer (Reform Acts of 1831, 1832; Factory Act, abolition of slavery)*

1st Duke of Wellington 1769-1852 *Hero of the wars against the French, including the Spanish Peninsula and Waterloo; also fought in India. Not as popular as a Prime Minister, reactionary, opposed reform and Catholic emancipation.*

2nd Earl of Liverpool 1770-1828 *Took over after the assassination of Spencer Perceval*

4th Earl of Aberdeen 1784-1860

Lord Palmerston 1784-1865 *Negotiated peace at end of Crimean War; secured Belgian independence; gained Hong Kong during Opium Wars*

14th Earl of Derby 1799-1869

1st Earl of Beaconsfield 1804-1881 (*Benjamin Disraeli*) *Introduced great social improvements, eg in education, housing, public health (water/refuse), trade unions (abolition of eg children as chimney sweeps)*

3rd Marquis of Salisbury 1830-1903 *Highly successful Victorian PM. Period in post saw obtaining as British possessions Cyprus, Rhodesia, E African colonies, & (via Boer War 1899-1902) South Africa. Introduced free education for all British citizens.*

5th Earl of Rosebery 1847-1929

Lord Home of the Hirsel 1903-1996 *Renounced peerage as 13th Earl of Home to become PM. Later given life peerage as titled above.*

Stop 2: Robing Room

The Sovereign still summons, opens and dissolves Parliament, much as the Norman kings did, but Parliament now sits by law. The State Opening of Parliament usually takes place in May / June and marks the start of the Parliamentary year.

The Robing Room is principally used by the Queen for the State Opening of Parliament. It is in here that she puts on the Imperial State Crown and her ceremonial robes before making her way to the House of Lords to deliver the Queen's Speech, which sets out the government's agenda for the year. The focus of this richly decorated room is the Chair of State; it sits on a dais of three steps, under a canopy carved with the rose of England, the thistle of Scotland, the shamrock of Ireland and Queen Victoria's monogram.

The Victoria Tower was completed in 1858 and was for many years the tallest square building, and tallest secular building, in the world; its gateways are wide enough to allow the Queen's Coach to drive through for the State Opening. It houses the records of Parliament, including master copies of all acts of Parliament since 1497 (earlier ones held by the National Archives in Kew).

Victoria was Queen at the time of the rebuilding of the palace, the monogram VR (*Victoria Regina*) appears throughout the palace as do numerous emblems of the historic connections with the royal family, particularly the Tudor rose and portcullis.

Thomas Crapper's design, one of the oldest flushing toilets in the UK is through a hidden door in the Robing Room.

King Arthur is the decorative theme of the room, considered by many Victorians to be the source of their nationhood. Five frescoes painted by William Dyce between 1848 and 1864 cover the walls, depicting allegorical scenes from the legend. The chivalric virtues Fidelity and Courage were also to be depicted but the work was never done as the artist died - Franz Xaver Winterhalter's portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert hang in their place.

Starting in the top right corner as we enter the room and working clockwise - the virtues are courtesy, religion, generosity, hospitality and mercy. These are all represented through scenes from the tales of King Arthur and his court, and repeated in the frieze, with the shields emblazoned with the arms of the Knights of the Round Table. 18 bas-reliefs beneath the paintings are carved in oak by Henry Hugh Armstead.

The Commons Chamber was destroyed by bombs during the Second World War, and so for several years the Lords sat in the Robing Room and gave over their own Chamber to the Commons for their regular sittings. The room was quickly fitted up for the purpose; temporary division lobbies and galleries and even a replica of the Woolsack were installed in the room. Between 1941 and 1944, the state openings of new sessions also took place in the Robing Room. The Lords returned to their own Chamber on 29 May 1951.

Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, born in London in 1812, the son of a French draughtsman. Most of the elaborate detail, furnishings and fittings throughout the building were introduced in the 19th century by Pugin, a very important figure in the revival of Gothic architecture in England. He also designed several Catholic churches, including Birmingham Cathedral (St Chad's), St. Oswald's Church in Liverpool and St George's Cathedral in Southwark. Pugin was the first person to be married in the latter on 10 August 1848 to his third wife Jane. Towards the end of his life, Pugin was in Royal Bethlem Hospital (now the Imperial War Museum), known as Bedlam and eventually taken home to Ramsgate by Jane, where he died in Sept 1842.

Charles Barry, in his designs for the new palace after the fire of 1834, which according to the rules of the competition had to be submitted pseudonymously, adopted the portcullis as his identifying mark. The use of the symbol in the new palace was considerable. It is found literally thousands of times carved in stone and wood, stamped on leatherwork, on books in the Commons Library and on curtains and wallpaper.

The Robing Room also plays host to a stage and podium when international dignitaries give addresses in the Robing Room.

The paintings (clockwise from right of windows)

Courtesy – **Sir Tristram harping to La Beale Isoud** (Isolde, daughter of the King of Ireland, who had cured his poisoned wound)

Religion – **The Vision of Sir Galahad and his Company** Of all the Knights of the Round Table, only Sir Galahad, Sir Percival and Sir Bors were pure enough to succeed in the quest for the Holy Grail

Generosity – **King Arthur unhorsed spared by Sir Launcelot** Arthur made war on Launcelot after learning that he and Guinevere, his queen, were lovers. Unhorsed by Sir Bors, Arthur is spared by the intervention of Launcelot, who begs the king to cease the strife

Hospitality – **The Admission of Sir Tristram to the Fellowship of the Round Table**

Mercy – **Sir Gawaine swearing to be merciful and “never be against Ladies”** Angered by a knight who slew his hounds, Gawaine knocked him down and prepared to strike of his head, ignoring his pleas for mercy. As he swung, the knight's lady threw herself upon him, and it was her head which came off. Full of remorse, Gawaine swears never to deny a plea of mercy again, and that he will fight for all ladies in their quarrels.

Queen Victoria

Prince Albert

The carvings (clockwise from right of window)

Sir Galahad's soul borne to Heaven, Sir Galahad imprisoned by the Tyrant, Sir Galahad & Sir Percival & Sir Bors, Sir Galahad receives the sword with the strange girdels, Sir Galahad brought unto the Siege Perilous, Sir Lancelot leaving Dame Elaine, King Arthur carried in a barge to Avillon attended by Queens, Sir Mordred slaine and King Arthur wounded to death, The Misadventure of the Adder: Beginning of the Battaile, The Knights of the Round Table vowing to seek the Sangreal, King Arthur conquering the marvailous Gyant, King Arthur wedded to Guenever, How King Arthur gathe his sword Excalibur, Battaile with King Lot, Arthur Crowned King, Arthur Recognised as King, Arthur delivered unto Merlin, The Birth of King Arthur in the Castle of Tintagelle.

Bronze portrait bust of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II wearing the crown of state by sculptor Oscar Nemon cast from an original plaster made in the 1960s during sittings with the Queen when Nemon had a studio within St James's Palace. Nemon also crafted the statue of Winston Churchill in Members' Lobby.

Stop 3: Royal Gallery 1 (royal memorial side)

The development of Parliament has often been a struggle between the status quo and those who believed they had a right to be better represented. By 1215, the year Magna Carta was sealed, theoretically not much had changed under the Feudal System; nobles were only there to serve and advise as the king wished. However, the king often also wished to tax them to fund his enterprises; this was the case under the unpopular King John. John was unsuccessfully trying to keep hold of his family's possessions in Normandy and Western France, and the consequent military campaigns led him to demand more oppressive taxes.

The resentful barons rose in revolt and, wielding their military might, captured London and forced a furious King John to seal the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215 using the Great Seal of the Realm.

Magna Carta has been used to underpin the constitutions of many legislatures around the world, and some of its provisions such as *Habeas Corpus*, by which no free man may be imprisoned or have his property confiscated without prior trial by his equals, are justly famous. However, it by no means gave rights to the bulk of the people in the country. In fact, it affected only the powerful barons at a time when very few people indeed were 'free' in the eyes of the law. Nonetheless, it is of vital importance in the story of Parliament, because it represents the first time that a king recognized (albeit under threat of force of arms) that his authority could be limited in writing; in other words, that he had to listen to (and recognize the rights of) a section of his people, when they wanted it and not just when he did. It was a first step on the long road to universal enfranchisement.

The barons rose again in 1265, under Simon de Montfort, this time trying to garner popular support by summoning a Parliament with increased representation for what we might today call the 'middle classes' – towns, counties, lesser clergy etc. But Parliament's popularity and power really took off under Edward I; he introduced the right to petition, whereby anyone with a grievance or request could bring it to the King's attention via Parliament. It did not take long before Parliament realized that this gave it great power; the King needed money, which it could withhold unless he granted their petitions. This is a theme that was to be repeated many times over the next few hundred years. There is still a petition bag in the Chamber of the House of Commons today.

King John *brother of Richard the Lionheart, and of Robin Hood fame.*

Great Seal of the Realm *- a seal that is used to symbolise the Sovereign's approval of important state documents*

Magna Carta *this is a facsimile; the British Library has two original copies, the cathedrals of Lincoln and Salisbury one apiece.*

Edward I *also summoned the 'Model Parliament' of 1295, which broadened representation by calling together prelates, magnates, two knights from each county, two burgesses from each town, and representatives of the lower clergy. Although its members were 'commoners' the actual House of Commons comes from the Norman French word for communities (communes). The "Model Parliament", the first official Parliament of England, met in 1295, and almost all subsequent English Parliaments and then, after 1707, all British Parliaments have met at the palace.*

<p>Some of the most famous campaigns in history used petitions as one way to get their voices heard and raise awareness of their campaign (suffragettes; the chartists and the anti-slavery campaign to name but a few). Today, e-petitions which reach over 100,000 signatures are usually debated in the second debating chamber of the House of Commons, Westminster Hall.</p> <p>From the 13th century, knights and town burgesses were called to join the landowning lords in council, and eventually - from 1341 - these began to meet separately, gradually becoming what we know today as the House of Commons. As time passed the principle of calling Parliaments wherever the King's person might be was gradually replaced by a settled meeting place – often here, at what was one of the main Royal residences: the Palace of Westminster.</p>	<p>Asking your MP to present a petition to the House of Commons is possible as long as it is in the correct form. You can also now use our e-petitions site: petition.parliament.uk to petition the House of Commons and the UK Government. The House of Commons Petitions Committee is responsible for scheduling debates on petitions. It can also decide to investigate petitions and has the same powers as any other Select Committee. The UK Government responds to all petitions presented by MPs with its position on the issue raised. It also responds to e-petitions which reach over 10,000 signatures.</p>
<p>Stop 4: Royal Gallery 2</p> <p>The Royal Gallery is used for important state occasions, such as visiting statesmen from abroad when addressing both Houses of Parliament, as well as for receptions in honour of foreign dignitaries. World leaders including President Clinton of the US, President Sarkozy of France and Chancellor Merkel of Germany have addressed both Houses of Parliament in the Royal Gallery. This is another space in which members of the Lords can meet with members of the public and pressure groups on issues of interest – the wifi throughout the palace means that it is a productive work space.</p> <p>Several portraits of monarchs and their consorts line the walls of the Gallery. The stained-glass windows which were damaged by bombs during the Second World War have since been repaired, and show the arms of the Kings of England and Scotland.</p> <p>The decorative scheme of the Royal Gallery consists of important moments in British military history. On the walls are two large frescoes recording significant moments from the Napoleonic Wars. Painted by Daniel Maclise, <i>The Death of Nelson</i>, which shows the Admiral dying, shot on board <i>Victory</i> at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.</p> <p>The fresco opposite shows the meeting of the Duke of Wellington and the Prussian Field Marshall Blücher at La Belle Alliance inn after their victory against Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.</p>	<p>A decorative element with military undertones are the eight statues that flank the three doorways and the bay window of the Gallery, sculpted by John Birnie Philip. Each depicts a monarch during whose reign a key battle or war took place. They are: <i>Alfred the Great</i> and <i>William the Conqueror</i>; <i>Richard I</i> and <i>Edward III</i>; <i>Henry V</i> and <i>Elizabeth I</i>; <i>William III</i> and <i>Anne</i>. The panelled ceiling above features Tudor roses and lions, and the stained-glass windows show the coats of arms of the Kings of England / Scotland.</p> <p>Daniel Maclise's paintings - <i>The Death of Nelson</i> (depicting Lord Nelson's demise at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805) and <i>The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher</i> (showing the Duke of Wellington meeting Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815). The murals deteriorated rapidly after their completion due to a range of factors, such as an imperfect water-glass technique, atmospheric pollution, and today they are almost monochrome. The rest of the planned frescoes were cancelled, and the walls are filled with portraits of royalty from George I onwards.</p>

Stop 5: Prince's Chamber

This chamber is a working ante-room to the Lords' Chamber, where before and during debates Peers can confer with each other. Work here often includes discussion and compromise over amendments to bills, or how to make compromises during 'ping pong' with the House of Commons. Writing desks are provided with pens and paper under the red covers. Doorkeepers keep count of who goes in & can also pass on messages to peers; messages are also left here for them to pick up. From here you can easily access the division lobbies of the House of Lords and a number of other important offices.

The theme of the Prince's Chamber is Tudor history, and 28 oil portraits painted on panels around the room depict the dynasty. They are the work of Richard Burchett and his pupils, and their creation entailed extensive research, contributing to the founding of the National Portrait Gallery. 12 bronze bas-reliefs are set into the wall below the portraits, executed by William Theed in 1855–57. Above the portraits are copies of six of the ten Armada tapestries, depicting the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

The room also contains a statue of Queen Victoria seated on a throne and holding a sceptre and a laurel crown, showing that she both governs and rules. At her side are allegorical statues of Justice (with a bare sword) and Clemency (offering an olive branch). The sculptural ensemble is made of white marble and carved by John Gibson in 1855.

Henry VIII's desire to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was a decision that would lead him to reject papal authority and initiate the English Reformation. Henry's Reformation Parliament, which sat from 1529 to 1536, fundamentally changed the nature of Parliament and of English government. The King summoned it in order to settle what was called his 'great matter', which the Papacy in Rome was blocking.

Henry VII 1457-1509 (*Henry Tudor*) Founder of the Tudor dynasty, defeated Richard III at Bosworth.

Elizabeth of York 1465-1503 *His wife; the first Tudor Queen.*

Arthur Prince of Wales 1486-1502 *Eldest son; died before achieving the throne.*

Catherine of Aragon 1485-1536 *Arthur's widow; later the first wife of Henry VIII. Failed to bear Henry any surviving sons, just a daughter, Mary, so he divorced her in favour of Anne Boleyn.*

Henry VIII 1491-1547 *famously married 6 times, dissolved the monasteries & became head of the Church of England as a part of the break with Rome.*

Anne Boleyn 1507-1536 *Henry's mistress, later Queen. Mother of Elizabeth I, she failed however to produce a son. Charged with treason after Henry tired of her, she was executed in the Tower.*

Jane Seymour 1509-1537 *Married Henry a few days after Anne's execution. Bore him a son, Edward, later Edward VI, but died 12 days later.*

Anne of Cleves 1515-1557 *A marriage of political convenience to Henry, arranged by his chancellor Thomas Cromwell, Henry was appalled and dubbed her the 'Flanders Mare'. He soon divorced her but became amicable afterwards.*

Catherine Howard 1521-1542 *Introduced to Henry by her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, Catherine found Henry repulsive and conducted a series of affairs, for which she was beheaded and buried next to her cousin Anne Boleyn.*

Catherine Parr 1512 – 1548 *Henry's sixth and final wife, who outlived him by one year. She was also the most married English queen, with four husbands.*

Edward VI 1537-1553 *Came to throne aged 9; died six years later. Under his reign the protestant reformation was consolidated.*

Mary I 1516-1558 (*'Bloody Mary'*) *Sought to re-establish Catholicism; rigorously persecuted Protestants; married King Philip of Spain; childless; imprisoned her sister Elizabeth.*

Philip II of Spain 1527-1598 *Married to Queen Mary and until her death joint sovereign of England and Spain. Sent the Armada against Elizabeth's England in 1588*

Elizabeth I 1533-1603 *Restored Protestantism to England; reign saw a flowering of the arts, invention and exploration. Died childless.*

Louis XII of France 1462-1515 *Henry VIII's sister Mary Tudor married Louis at her brother's behest.*

Princess Mary 1496-1533 (*Mary Tudor*) *After Louis' death Henry wished her to marry Louis' son Francis; however, she refused and married Charles Brandon.*

Parliament still existed only by the monarch's will, but Henry and his immediate successors knew that they could best effect their will through the assent of Parliament in statute. A century later the country was thrown into turmoil when the co-operation between the King and the other two parts of Parliament catastrophically broke down.

Relations between Catholics and Protestants remained unrepaired and as the last Tudor monarch Elizabeth I died without issue, the crown passed to James VI / I. After James ascended the English throne, he soon reinforced strict penalties against Catholics. Although he was Protestant, as the son of the late Catholic, Mary Queen of Scots, Catholics were hopeful that her son would be more sympathetic to their plight.

However this was not the case and resulting Catholic disillusionment with the new King led to the Gunpowder Plot on 5th November 1605, which hoped to wipe out the establishment and trigger a popular uprising.

Robert Catesby and Thomas & Robert Wintour had plotted to assassinate James I and his Government at the State Opening of Parliament (Guy Fawkes only joined them later). The plotters hired a cellar directly beneath the House of Lords but details of the plot were leaked and a search of the cellars found Guy Fawkes with 36 barrels of gunpowder hidden beneath firewood.

An analysis of the gunpowder found that it had 'decayed' and probably would not have gone off in any case. To this day, however, the Yeomen of the Guard still ceremonially search the cellars of the Palace of Westminster prior to the State Opening of Parliament. The Yeomen of the Guard are a bodyguard of the British monarch. They are the oldest British military corps still in existence and still wear red and gold uniforms of Tudor style.

Duke of Suffolk 1484-1545 *As Charles Brandon, married Mary Tudor without Henry's permission; surprisingly, both were forgiven and he was raised to this title*

Marchioness of Dorset 1517-1559 *(Frances Brandon) daughter of Mary Tudor & Suffolk; married Marquess of Dorset, mother of Lady Jane Grey*

Lady Jane Grey 1537-1554 *unwillingly proclaimed Queen by Edward VI's protector, the Duke of Northumberland, after Edward's death, in an attempt to ensure a Protestant succession; deposed by Mary I after only nine days & executed aged 17.*

Lord Guildford Dudley 1535-1554 *Son of the Duke of Northumberland, married to Lady Jane Grey as part of his father's plans for the Crown. Executed before his wife.*

James IV of Scotland 1473-1513 *Married Henry VII's eldest daughter, Margaret Tudor, thus legitimising the claim to the English crown of their descendant James VI. Killed at the Battle of Flodden, fighting the English.*

Princess Margaret 1489-1541 *(Margaret Tudor); after the death of James IV married Archibald Douglas (annulled 1527), then Henry Stewart.*

Earl of Angus 1489-1557 *(Archibald Douglas) power-broking husband of Margaret Tudor.*

James V of Scotland 1512-1542 *Still an infant when his father died at Flodden; the country was ruled by regents, firstly the Earl of Angus, next the Duke of Albany, then Angus again (aided by Henry VIII). In 1528 James forced Angus to flee abroad and burnt his sister at the stake. Married the Catholic Mary of Guise, with whom he had Mary (Queen of Scots); broke treaty with Henry, allied with France; defeated by Henry and died shortly thereafter.*

Mary of Guise 1515-1560 *Ruled as regent for her daughter Mary after the death of James V. Married Mary to Francis II of France; under French pressure clamped down on Protestants, leading to revolt, in which both France and England became involved.*

Francis II of France 1544-1560 *Husband of Mary Queen of Scots; the marriage possibly never consummated, he died young; she returned to Scotland.*

Lord Darnley 1545-1567 *(Stuarts) had aspirations to crowns of England and Scotland; married Mary Queen of Scots after death of Francis II; they had one son, James (VI of Scotland and I of England).*

THE CARVINGS

The visit of the Emperor Charles V to Henry VIII Occurring just before the Field of the Cloth of Gold (see below), this made a mockery of it as Henry was already looking beyond peace with France. The Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain is greeted by Henry at Windsor, with St George's Chapel in the background.

Edward VI granting a charter to Christ's Hospital Edward founded Grammar Schools such as Christ's Hospital (still extant today) with money from confiscated church lands. His reign also saw the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer.

Lady Jane Grey is shown here studying with Roger Ascham, also tutor to Elizabeth I

Sebastian Cabot visiting Henry VII John Cabot and his son Sebastian were Genoese merchants settled in Bristol who persuaded Henry VII to let them search for lands not yet claimed by Spain. John discovered Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, Sebastian is shown here leaving for his third voyage, when he reached Hudson's Bay.

Catherine of Aragon pleading her case (against her divorce from Henry VIII). He based this on her earlier marriage to his dead brother Arthur.

The Field of the Cloth of Gold In 1518 Henry VII and all the other powers of Europe signed a treaty designed to bring in a universal and lasting peace, as a part of which he travelled to France to meet Francois I. The gathering was a lavish spectacle, with feasting and jousting, and a high point of Henry's reign. The peace, of course, did not last long.

Sir Walter Raleigh laying down his cloak for Elizabeth I, the famous scene where Raleigh, poet, sailor and explorer, uses his cloak to cover a puddle for the Queen.

Elizabeth knighting Sir Francis Drake, explorer and naval hero, was knighted at Deptford on his return from circumnavigating the globe in the Golden Hind. He was appointed Admiral of the Fleet during the war with Spain of 1585 and defeated the Spanish Armada.

The death of Sir Philip Sidney fighting in aid of the Protestant Netherlands in their attempt to break free from Catholic Spain. Sidney, poet and warrior, mortally wounded, chivalrously passes his own water bottle to another dying soldier. See also below.

Mary Queen of Scots leaving France for Scotland, after the death of her husband Francis II.

The escape of Mary Queen of Scots from Loch Leven Castle. Following the rising against her by Scottish nobles after her marriage to Bothwell, Mary was imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle and made to abdicate. She escaped a year later but her army was defeated and she was forced into final exile in England.

The murder of Rizzio -Mary's unpleasant and unpopular husband Lord Darnley was persuaded by Protestant plotters that her much loved Italian secretary, Rizzio, was also her actual lover; he and others murdered him in front of her.

Sir Philip Sidney's widow, Lady Frances Sussex, founded Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where Oliver Cromwell was later an undergraduate. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Cromwell's embalmed body was exhumed, and his head impaled on a spike on Westminster Hall, to be blown off 20 years later. In the mid-20th century an embalmed and worm-eaten skull, generally accepted to be Cromwell's (there are other claimants), still with the iron-clad point of a spike through it and its nose crushed (as was Cromwell's reported to be during the act of decapitation) was for the second time offered to his old college, which took it and buried it in a secret location beneath the floor of its chapel.

Stop 6: Lords' Chamber (by the throne)

We are now in the Chamber of the House of Lords itself, please do not sit on the benches. As you can see, the Lords is predominantly decorated in red, whilst green is the colour of the Commons. The upper part of the chamber is decorated by stained glass windows and six allegorical frescoes representing religion, chivalry and law.

Each Parliament – the period between elections for the House of Commons – is divided into sessions of roughly a year's duration. At the start of each session, the Queen comes to open Parliament, attended by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Great Chamberlain, the Earl Marshal, and two Peers carrying the Sword of State and the Cap of Maintenance.

The Queen addresses both Houses of Parliament from this throne, designed by Pugin, with Prince Philip at her side. Already in attendance here are the Lords – archbishops and bishops in their copes; Peers and Peeresses in scarlet robes and ermine; bewigged judges; the Diplomatic Corps in an assortment of uniforms.

Once the Queen is seated, the Commons are summoned to attend; as the monarch may not enter the Commons Chamber, the Commons must come to her here. To this end, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod is sent to fetch them. Arriving at the door of the Commons, he finds it slammed shut in his face by the Serjeant at Arms – a vivid and living reminder of the Commons' historic claim of its right to exclude the monarch from its deliberations. Only after Black Rod has knocked three times is the door re-opened and is he able to deliver his summons.

In one end of the Chamber sits the ornate Canopy and throne, which the Sovereign may theoretically occupy during any sitting, although in reality they only use during the State Opening. Other members of the Royal Family who attend the State Opening use Chairs of State next to the throne, and peers' eldest children are always entitled to sit on the steps of the throne. In front of the throne is the Woolsack, on which the Lord Speaker sits. It is thought to have been introduced in the 14th century to reflect the economic importance of the wool trade to England. Over the years its stuffing changed to hair but in 1938 it was restuffed with wool from Britain and the Commonwealth.

The Lords Chamber has the grandest interior as it is where the three elements of Parliament (Commons, Lords & Sovereign) come together. The 22 carat gold leaf of the throne and canopy was Pugin's masterpiece.

The Chamber's ceiling is divided into 18 panelled compartments, each showing ancient emblems such as the white hart of Richard II. The monarchs of England & Scotland were depicted in the original stained-glass windows by Pugin, but these were lost during WWII & their 1950 replacements show the coats of arms of Peers between 1360 and 1900.

The frescoes in the Chamber represent the spirits of Justice, Religion and Chivalry, viewed by the Victorians as cornerstone virtues, which are strongly represented here and elsewhere in the palace (e.g. Arthurian legend in the Robing Room).

The Lord Speaker, established by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, has taken over many of the responsibilities of the ancient office of the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Speaker is elected by Members of the House of Lords to serve a maximum of two five-year terms. The role of the Lord Speaker is to represent the House and to assist, but not to rule, on procedural matters. The first Lord Speaker, Baroness Hayman, took up her new role on 4th July 2006. She was followed by Baroness De Souza and it is now currently Lord Fowler.

Clerks assist with the procedure of the House.

Following the Blitz, which destroyed the chamber of the House of Commons, the Lord's chamber was occupied by the Commons. The Lords temporarily used the Robing Room during the reconstruction.

The throne - apart from the main throne there is a second, smaller, one, originally made for Queen Alexandra. This is placed alongside the main throne in the centre alcove when Prince Philip accompanies the Queen. The alcove to the Queen's right, with the Prince of Wales' feathers, is where he sits; the one to the left, designed for Prince Albert, is now where the Princess Royal sits.

<p>The Lord Speaker presides over debates in the House of Lords, but unlike the Speaker in the Commons, they do not control them. The Members in the Lords regulate their own discussions. Once the Commons are assembled at the bar, the most Gracious Speech (‘The Queen’s Speech’) is read by the Queen; it is, however, written by the government of the day, and describes its programme of work for the year ahead.</p> <p>There are over 800 members of the House of Lords, mainly life peers appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Any British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen who is a UK resident and taxpayer over the age of 21 is eligible to be nominated or can apply to become a member, via the independent House of Lords Appointments Commission. Government peers sit here (to the left of the throne), opposition peers here (to the right), and the bishops here (only bench with arm rests). The cross benches (at the bar of the House) are where those Peers who do not belong to any political party sit.</p> <p>There is a strong and effective disabled lobby in the Lords, disabled members can sit on the accessible mobile bench. The independence of many of the Peers and their wide ranging expertise helps in their principal tasks of introducing bills. There is no overall party or government majority in the Lords, so compromise and working together is essential.</p> <p>The Chamber is now fitted with microphones so that Members can stand by their seats to speak and the benches have hidden speakers. The Lords Chamber was also the first to let cameras in, in 1985. The side galleries above are for visitors with an invitation from a member of the Lords, all other visitors must sit in the public galleries. Anybody can apply for access to the public gallery, and the proceedings of the House are also easily available through Hansard, the BBC Parliament channel, the internet and other sources.</p>	<p>The armorial bearings running beneath the side galleries are of the sovereigns from Edward III and Lord Chancellors from 1377; those beneath the Strangers Gallery are of archbishops and archbishopsrics, and of the Royal Houses from Saxon to Hanoverian times.</p> <p>Leader of the House of Lords is a member of the Cabinet of the United Kingdom who is responsible for arranging government business in the House of Lords. The role is always held in combination with a formal Cabinet position. Six of the last nine Leaders have been female, with the current being Baroness Evans of Bowes Park. The Leader of the House has the responsibility of reminding the House of rules and facilitating the Lords' self-regulation, though any member may draw attention to breaches of order or failure to observe customs. The Leader is often called upon to advise on procedures and points of order, and is required to determine the order of speakers on Supplementary Questions, subject to the wishes of the House.</p> <p>The statues above the galleries represent the 16 barons and 2 bishops known by name to have been present at the signing of Magna Carta. This document, fundamental to English law (and underpinning many other constitutions around the world) was forced upon King John (1167-1216) by barons tired of his demands for funding for disastrous campaigns, amongst other issues.</p>
<p>Stop 7: Lords' Chamber (group in benches)</p> <p>The daily business in the Chamber of the House of Lords includes questions to government ministers on matters of policy, consideration of proposed legislation, which may be amended or rejected altogether, and general debates on policy or other matters of concern.</p>	<p>The Lords may not amend legislation on fiscal matters, and other Bills already passed by the Commons can only be delayed by a year or so. They do not oppose laws proposed in a government election manifesto as these are seen to have been approved by the electorate.</p>

Ministers frequently make statements here, which are followed by a short period of questions from Peers. Ministers from each government department sit in the Lords.

Many members have considerable experience in industries, professions and organisations and they are able to put this experience to good use during debates in the chamber, which the public can attend. Often, they continue to be active in their fields and have successful careers in business, culture, science, sports, academia, law, education, health and public service. They bring this knowledge to their role of examining matters of public interest that affect all UK citizens. Currently, there are about 800 members who are eligible to take part in the work of the House of Lords. The majority are life peers. There are currently 210 Baronesses out of a total of 804 members of the Lords. Others include 26 archbishops and bishops and 92 hereditary peers. Peers are called to the House of Lords with a writ of summons.

Members spend more than half their time in the House considering bills (draft laws). All bills have to be considered by both Houses of Parliament before they can become law. During several stages, all members can examine each bill, line-by-line with no time limit (unlike the Commons), before it becomes an Act of Parliament (actual law). Because the members of the Lords are often experts in their fields, they can bring their real-world experience to bear on draft laws and look in detail, making sure the final law is effective and workable.

Investigative select committees are involved in the scrutiny of the government. They take a long-term cross-department look at how the government works – looking at the bigger picture. One-off committees look in depth at individual issues such as artificial intelligence, the charity sector or the future of the Arctic. Members also scrutinise the work of the government during question time and debates in the chamber, where government ministers must respond. In the 2015-16 session, members held the government to account with 8,294 oral and written questions and 203 debates on issues ranging from the UK and the EU to treatment of LGBT citizens worldwide. The public is welcome to visit and sit in the galleries overlooking the Chamber during business.

Constitutional Reform Act 2005 Included reform to the office of Lord Chancellor (transfer of judicial functions to the Lord Chief Justice), establishment of a Lord Speaker, removal of Law Lords from the legislature into a separate Supreme Court and a new independent judicial appointments commission. The UK now has a separate Supreme Court as a result of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005.

The House of Lords has persuaded the government to make policy changes on a diverse range of issues. These include - reversing cuts to tax credits for working people on low incomes, ensuring children with special needs and disabilities have access to mainstream education, insisting on parity of NHS treatment for physical and mental illness etc.

Members use their extensive individual experience to investigate public policy. Much of this work is done in select committees - small groups appointed to consider specific policy areas. In the 2015-16 session, House of Lords select committees produced 27 reports on subjects including the process of the UK's exit from the EU, the implications of the Scotland Bill, genetically modified insects and the BBC charter review. Many select committee meetings involve questioning expert witnesses working in the field which is the subject of the inquiry. These meetings are open to the public

Life peers: The majority (about 700) of members are appointed for their lifetime by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister. Any British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen who is a UK resident and taxpayer over the age of 21 is eligible to be nominated or can apply to become a member, via the independent House of Lords Appointments Commission.

Archbishops & bishops: 26 Church of England archbishops and bishops sit in the House. When they retire as bishops their membership of the House ceases and is passed on to the next most senior bishop.

Elected hereditary members: The House of Lords Act 1999 ended the right of most hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House. (There are currently 92 hereditary peers. The Act decreased the membership of the House from 1,330 in October 1999 to 669 in March 2000.

Stop 8: Peers' Lobby

Members enter here for oral questions, the beginning of business each day when government ministers are grilled from all sides of the House about what the government is doing. The area as a whole serves as a meeting space for members of the Lords to work together on bills or raise issues of importance.

Although Parliament had established some of its early rights and privileges by the 14th century, and confidently asserted them, the civil wars which tore the country apart from the mid-15th Century onwards (the Wars of the Roses) decimated much of its membership and left the monarch with vastly enhanced power; by the time that Henry Tudor took the throne in 1485 his opposition was either dead, in prison, or keeping a very low profile. The Tudors proved themselves adept at controlling Parliament, and for long periods during their reigns avoided calling it at all. Nonetheless, they understood the importance of keeping Parliament happy, and during the reign of Henry VIII it was vital for him to secure their support during the upheaval of the Reformation and for his wars abroad – and, indeed, for his various divorces and marriages.

By 1642 tensions between the authoritarian Charles I and his Parliament had been rising for some time, and a Grand Remonstrance criticizing King Charles' rule and demanding reform had been passed through the Commons. On 4th January 1642 Charles I arrived with armed troops to arrest on charges of treason the five MP's he held most responsible for this. (Please forward guide to the painting of Charles I and Speaker Lenthall to avoid stopping and blocking the corridor.)

As his soldiers stood visible just outside the Commons chamber, Charles seated himself in the Speaker's chair before an outraged Commons and called out the names of those he sought. They had been tipped off, however, and already fled by boat down the Thames; and Charles therefore demanded of the Speaker, William Lenthall, to know where they were.

The paintings (from 1st left as you leave Peers' Lobby, then clockwise):

Burial of Charles I at Windsor Castle 9th February 1649: the executed Charles I is laid to rest in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Although Henry VIII is also buried here, the normal burial place for English monarchs was Westminster Abbey.

The Expulsion of the Fellows of Oxford Colleges for refusing to sign the Covenant to extirpate Popery - Oxford was a Royalist stronghold during the Civil War. This scene is set in Christ Church College; any member of the colleges who refused to swear to submit to the authority of Parliament was expelled.

Basing House defended against the Parliamentary army October 1645: the seat of the Marquess of Winchester was the scene of a ferocious defence by Catholic Royalists against the Puritan Roundheads

Charles I raising his standard at Nottingham 22 August 1642: the opening act of the Civil War. Charles has his arm around his 12 year old son, later Charles II.

Speaker Lenthall asserting the privileges of the Commons Lenthall kneels before Charles I.

The setting out of the Train Bands from London to raise the siege of Gloucester 1643 and the war is going the Royalists way; Gloucester is besieged and about to fall. Inspired by their preachers, the London Train Bands – apprentices – form a militia and successfully march to the relief of the city.

The embarkation of the Pilgrim Fathers for New England 1620: Nearly 20,000 persecuted English Puritans travelled to the New World in the space of a few years, forming the origins of New England.

The parting of Lord and Lady Russell 1683. Falsely accused with complicity in the Rye House Plot to assassinate Charles II, Lord Russell (a long-time opponent of the Duke of York, Charles' brother, later James II, hence his being framed) was executed in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

<p>Lenthall infamously replied ‘May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct of me, whose servant I am; and I humbly beg Your Majesty’s pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what Your Majesty is pleased to demand of me’.</p> <p>This occasion was the first and last time that a monarch has crossed the bar of the House while the Commons was sitting; even today, when the Queen comes to open Parliament and address both Houses, she does so not in the Commons but in the House of Lords with the House of Commons present.</p>	<p>The five MP’s were Pym, Hampden, Holles, Haselrig and Strode.</p> <p>Cromwell (1649 – 1658) perhaps as a result of this incident made the Speaker the first citizen in the land, and he is still today the third Commoner, after the Prime Minister and the Lord President of the Council.</p> <p>George VI (1936 – 1952) came to re-open the restored chamber after its destruction by German bombs in 1941, conducting the ceremony in Westminster Hall. He did however take a tour of the Chamber before the official opening.</p>
<p>Stop 9: Central Lobby</p> <p>Welcome to Central Lobby, where you can rest on the benches here (<i>except those near the desk and the entry to the Serjeant at Arms’ offices</i>).</p> <p>The Central Lobby is the heart of the Palace of Westminster. It lies directly below the Central Tower and forms a busy crossroads between the House of Lords to the south, the House of Commons to the north, St. Stephen’s Hall and the public entrance to the west, and the Lower Waiting Hall and the libraries to the east. Its location halfway between the two debating chambers has led constitutional theorist Erskine May to describe the Lobby as ‘the political centre of the British Empire’.</p> <p>Constituents may meet their Members of Parliament here or ‘lobby’ an MP or Lord. You don’t need an appointment; the desk will attempt to contact the Member for you, and if available, a doorkeeper will take them a note telling them that they have a visitor – although this does not mean that they have to come out to see you – so it is always best to make an appointment first. Central Lobby is also the principal thoroughfare between the Chambers and offices, and as such MPs and Lords can often be seen here.</p> <p>Above the doorways we see mosaics depicting the patron saints of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom: St George for England, St Andrew for Scotland, St David for Wales and St Patrick for Ireland. These parts of the UK now have devolved governments of their own. Devolution is the delegation of power from a central government to local bodies. This process has been asymmetric, in that different levels of responsibility have been given to each devolved government.</p>	<p>Lobby from the mediaeval Latin lobia, lobium lodge; a porch, ante-room, hall or corridor, esp. (in Parliamentary context) one open to the public & where one can meet e.g. MPs. Hence the verb to lobby, to seek to influence, to solicit support.</p>

These bodies are constitutionally subordinate to the UK Parliament, but do have wide-ranging powers over education, health and prisons.

Every day when the House of Commons is sitting, business in the Chamber is begun by the Speaker processing through Central Lobby with the Serjeant at Arms carrying the Mace – without which the Commons may not sit - and entering the Chamber. At State Openings, the Members of the Commons pass through this Lobby into the Lords Chamber for the State Opening, led by the Speaker and Black Rod, who has been sent to summon them. Central Lobby is very much the hub of the palace – it even has its own Post Office, where Members and staff of the Houses of Parliament can post their letters. Cameras are often set up here to broadcast news as you may have seen on TV.

(Please forward guide to the painting of Mary and William in the corridor leading to the Commons.) The Stuarts who had succeeded to the throne after Elizabeth I, failed to understand the importance of maintaining good relations with Parliament which led, firstly, to the great Civil War under Charles I, and then later to the deposition of his son James II, when Parliament – in the ‘Glorious Revolution’ - invited James’ protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange, to invade and take the Crown. Parliament was determined that it should not have to fight a monarch for its privileges again, and so the principles of parliamentary independence and the limiting of the power of the monarch were enshrined in the Declaration of Rights of 1689, which continued the process of creating a Constitutional monarchy by preventing a monarch from ruling without Parliament.

Parliament had emerged ascendant from Civil War and the Glorious Revolution, and the relationship between Crown and Commons was pretty much set as it is today. The struggles of the next few centuries would be of a different nature, as British society and the makeup of its people underwent dramatic changes, with revolution in France and the Industrial Revolution in Britain.

The three Reform Acts of the 19th century had extended the vote to every man in the country including criminals but yet women were still denied the vote. Pressure for enfranchisement rose and women took more direct action through the radical group Women’s Social and Political Union. These actions included vandalism and even bombings. The women became known as suffragettes, from the word ‘suffrage’ – the right to vote.

Devolution *the Scotland Act 1998 established the first Parliament in Scotland since 1707. The executive is headed by a First Minister who is held to account by the Scottish Parliament. This Parliament can vary the basic rate of income tax by 3% from that set by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Government of Wales Act 1998 established a National Assembly of Wales, with more restricted powers than that for Scotland. However since then, more power has been devolved and assembly was given the power to rename itself to Welsh Parliament under the 2017 Wales Act. Those matters which are not ‘devolved’ are known as being ‘reserved’, remaining the responsibility of the Westminster Parliament. These include defence and foreign policy.*

West Lothian Question – *refers to whether MPs from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, sitting in the UK House of Commons, should be able to vote on matters that affect only England, while MPs from England are unable to vote on matters that have been devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly.*

Statues (on ground)

1st Earl of Kingston Russell 1792-1878 *Twice Whig Prime Minister, his career fluctuated somewhat; introduced legislation to improve conditions in Ireland, & Factory and Public Health Acts; in between, however, became scapegoat for such ills as the Crimean War.*

2nd Earl of Granville 1815-1891 *Long-serving Parliamentarian but not of particular note.*

William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1898 *four times Prime Minister, disliked by Queen Victoria for what she saw as coldness (‘He speaks to me as if I was a public meeting’), on entering Parliament Gladstone was very much a Tory of the day, opposed to reform (e.g. abolition of the slave trade), but by the 1860s he had converted to the Liberal Party. His administrations extended voting rights, made voting secret, gave legal status to Trade Unions, made education more widely available; all of which made him very popular with the lower classes. He was also very concerned with the Irish Question, and had mixed fortunes in reaching settlement there; the issue of Home Rule in fact split his party.*

Although violent protests were suspended during WWI, the issues had not gone away and their extensive war work had given them an even greater hunger for their rights.

In the windows surrounding Central Lobby you can see metal grilles. Following the 1834 fire, these grilles were originally built to cover the windows in the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons Chamber, to ensure that MPs were not distracted by the sight of women watching them at work. In 1908 two suffragettes chained themselves to a grille as a protest, with a cry of 'We have listened behind this insulting grille too long!' It had to be removed from the window to allow the women to be cut off in a committee room. The grilles were finally removed permanently from the gallery and placed here in Central Lobby following a vote in the House of Commons in August 1917.

In 1918 over eight million women over the age of thirty were given the vote if they were a member or married to a member of the Local Government Register, a property owner, or a graduate voting in a University constituency.

1st Earl of Iddesleigh 1818-1887 *Much admired for his oratory by Disraeli, with whom he sided on reform issues, he held several senior posts in government.*

Statues (in niches) are of Kings and Queens of England and Scotland from Edward I.

First female MP the first woman elected to Parliament was Countess Markiewicz for Sinn Fein, but she did not take her seat. The first female MP to actually take her seat was Viscountess Nancy Astor.

The floor on which they stand is tiled with Minton encaustic tiles in intricate patterns and includes a passage from Psalm 127 written in Latin, which translates as follows: 'Except the Lord build the House their labour is but lost that build it'.

Frescoes in Members' Corridor from 1st left as you enter, then clockwise

Alice Lisle concealing fugitives after Sedgemoor 1685 the deeply unpopular James II was facing challenges to his rule, including by Charles II's illegitimate, but acknowledged, son, the Duke of Monmouth]. Lady Alice Lisle gave shelter to some of the fugitives following the Duke of Monmouth's defeat at the battle of Sedgemoor. She was arrested, tried before Judge Jeffries, and executed after an unfair trial. Given her age, this caused outrage and such incidents contributed much to James II's later enforced abdication.

The last sleep of Argyll 1685 Just as Monmouth rose against James II in England, so did the 9th Earl of Argyll in Scotland. Defeated, captured and condemned, this scene shows a former ally (now one of those who had condemned him) entering his chamber to find him sleeping like a child on the eve of his execution, which affected this turncoat greatly.

The Lords and Commons presenting the crown to William and Mary in the Banqueting House 1689, following the deposition of James II; the Clerk of the House of Commons (in black) reads the Declaration of Rights. The Banqueting House, through which Charles I walked to the scaffold, still stands in Whitehall.

The acquittal of the Seven Bishops 1688 The final straw for those opposed to James II; the trial of 7 bishops including the Archbishop of Canterbury on a charge of libel. The trial was held in Westminster Hall and lasted one day before their acquittal; on the same day as the latter the leaders of the Whigs and Tories invited William of Orange to invade

General Monck declaring for a free Parliament 1659 Following death of Cromwell and the failure of his son and successor, Richard, to emulate his strong leadership, the country risked chaos again. The powerful General Monck took control and by this declaration set the stage for the decision to restore the monarchy

The landing of Charles II at Dover 1660: upon the restoration of the monarchy. Note the glaring error – the Union Flag is the post-1801 variant, including the red diagonals of Ireland.

The Executioner tying Wishart's book round the neck of Montrose 1650. James Graham, 5th Earl and 1st Marquis of Montrose, fought in Scotland for the Royalist cause in the civil war. Captured and condemned by the Scottish Parliament, it also decreed that when he was hanged a copy of his Chaplain Dr Wishart's account of his earlier campaigns should be tied around his neck.

Charles II assisted in his escape by Jane Lane after the Battle of Worcester 1651 After this defeat, the future King Charles II had to escape from the armies of Parliament, leading to a series of adventures which gained him much romantic popularity then and later, including that involving hiding in the Royal Oak (of the numerous pubs of that name) with him disguised as a servant of Colonel Lane. with that officer's sister. Jane. riding pillion as his 'mistress'.

Stop 10: Members' Lobby

(Please do not touch the statues) This is Members' Lobby, the working ante-room to the Chamber just like Princes' Chamber is for the Lords. Here there are message boards with pigeon holes for notes to be left for MPs while they are in the Chamber or in Committee meetings, if there is something in one of the slots, the MP's name is automatically illuminated. On the opposite side of the Lobby is a Letters Board, with much the same function.

The Vote Office supplies Members with Parliamentary papers, including Hansard, and just off the Lobby is the Members' Post Office. Also nearby are the Whips' offices. The party Whips are responsible for making sure their MPs follow party policy and every week issue a list of the business that is to be debated. When their attendance is essential an item is underlined three times - a three line whip. Whips also act as the eyes and ears of the party leaderships, keeping their ear to the ground and reporting back on the mood of Members; and they operate the pairing system, whereby if an MP has an important reason for being absent from a vote, the whips approach their opposite number in the other party and arrange for one of their MPs to be absent as well, thus cancelling each other out in the vote.

This may sound strange, but is in fact very sensible and fair, and vital in order to enable MPs to carry out their many other Parliamentary and constituency duties without being constantly called back to the Chamber; it is also a very human measure, allowing MPs time off to recover from illness, or to attend to family matters, without risking the loss of an important vote.

This room was extensively damaged when the Commons Chamber was destroyed by bombs on May 10th and 11th 1941, and was rebuilt in simplified style when contrasted with its 19th century original. The arch (*indicate*) leading into the Chamber itself is known as the Churchill Arch, as it was at his suggestion that it was rebuilt from the rubble of the original as a monument to the ordeal of the war – and as a reminder to future generations of the fortitude of those who stood firm through those times.

Damage is being slowly but surely caused to both the finish and, in Churchill's case, the structure of the castings.

Members the term is confusing. Strictly speaking, a Member can be either an MP or a Peer, but in popular usage within Parliament (as in the name of this room) it tends to refer only to members of the Commons, not the Lords.

The Doorkeeper's Chairs on either side of the Churchill Arch contain a lever for setting the division bells ringing. Doorkeepers guard the entrance to the Chamber whenever the House is sitting. The Principal Doorkeeper, who sits in the chair on the right, also keeps a snuff box for any MP who desires a pinch before entering the Chamber. The snuff is specially milled for the Commons; the box is made of oak saved from the Chamber after the Blitz; and the names of the senior doorkeepers are inscribed on its lid.

Whip the term comes from hunting – the 'Whipper-in' of a hunt who controls the pack of hounds.

Statues other than Churchill's**Benjamin Disraeli (see N.P entry)**

Arthur Balfour 1848-1930 *Conservative Prime Minister 1902-1905; concerned with improving education and the defence of the Empire. Devised the Balfour Declaration, giving Jews a home in Palestine; helped draw up Treaty of Versailles ending WWI; represented Britain at the fledgling League of Nations (predecessor of the UN)*

Herbert Asquith 1852-1928 *Liberal Prime Minister 1908-1916. Introduced pensions for most over 70, Parliament Bill (restricting powers of the Lords & establishing supremacy of Commons), Irish Home Rule Bill.*

Clement Attlee 1883-1967 *introduced much social change, e.g. NHS, New Towns, nationalisation of industry; independence of India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), & Burma (Myanmar); Deputy Prime Minister in Churchill's wartime coalition government.*

Bust of Sir Anthony Eden 1897-1977 *Conservative Prime Minister 1955-1957; after a glowing early career, served under Churchill during the war, then succeeded him as PM in 1955. Thereafter his career went into decline, with the disastrous Suez Crisis occurring during his incumbency.*

<p>Here also are bronze statues of former Prime Ministers, Churchill, David Lloyd George and Clement Attlee. You will notice that one foot on each has been burnished bright by the hands of MPs, who used to rub their favourite for luck as they enter the Chamber. Opposite Churchill stands the statue of Baroness Thatcher, the first living person to be so honoured here by the House.</p> <p>As you pass through the doors to the Chamber, you will see that there is some damage to it just beneath the grille on the right hand door. This is directly connected to the fact that the monarch may not enter the Commons; at the State Opening, the Commons come to her in the Lords. To summon them, The Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod is sent, but finds the door symbolically slammed in his face; he must knock on it with his staff before he is admitted and able to deliver his summons.</p>	<p>James Ramsay Macdonald 1866-1937 <i>One of the founders of the Labour Party and first Labour Prime Minister 1924 & 1929-1931, of humble origins but a brilliant orator, his career was marked by ups and downs – unpopular opposition to WWI, consequences of the worldwide economic depression and his forming of a coalition with the Conservatives, which alienated many supporters.</i></p> <p>David Lloyd George 1863-1945 <i>Coalition PM 1916-1922 (first Welsh PM). Great Liberal social reformer introduced National Insurance Bill (making this compulsory against sickness and unemployment for workers). Made it possible for women to join the WWI workforce. After Asquith resigned he became PM and a highly successful wartime leader.</i></p> <p>Bust of Edward Heath <i>This was also unveiled during his lifetime, but differs in not being a full body statue.</i></p>
<p>Stop 11: ‘No’ Lobby</p> <p>Unlike many countries, Parliament has never adopted an electronic system of voting; and usually, contrary to popular belief, it is the Speaker who assesses the opinion of the House and it is only when he or she is unsure of the mood, or their view is challenged, that there is there a physical count; this is when the House ‘divides’.</p> <p>MPs are not required to be in the Chamber all the time that the house is sitting; they may be busy with Committee work or on constituency business. However, they need to remain in and around Westminster in case a vote or division is called by ringing the division bell. This sounds throughout the Parliamentary estate – and also in various other establishments around Westminster, including some pubs, restaurants and private houses. Once a division bell sounds, MPs have eight minutes to make it to the voting lobbies; to make this easier, lifts throughout the parliamentary estate are barred to other staff for this period once a division bell has sounded.</p> <p>Please forward guide to avoid blocking desks / doorways. Originally, Members were probably counted where they sat but the tradition then grew up that those voting for the motion (Aye) would leave and those voting against (Noes) would stay.</p>	<p>Voting was first by acclamation, which gave the louder voiced an unfair advantage.</p> <p>Division Bell e.g. sounds in the Red Lion, Whitehall, where behind the bar can be seen a notice instructing staff not to turn it off! It also rings in the Albert Pub on Victoria Street, upstairs on the right by the bar.</p> <p>A historic shortage of seats in the Chamber led to the belief that some people who would otherwise vote with the Ayes remained with the Noes for fear of losing their place; and in 1601, after a Bill for the Stricter Observance of the Sabbath was rejected by a margin of 106 Noes to 105 Ayes it emerged that a “No” member had physically held an “Aye” down in his seat while the vote was counted. Albeit Sir Walter Raleigh saw nothing wrong with this, and admitted to having done it often himself!</p>

The fire of 1834 made the consideration of changes possible, and a report in 1835 suggested that both Ayes and Noes leave the Chamber to be counted in separate lobbies; this is the system that is still in use today. Now when there is a vote or division, a bell rings and Members either enter the No Lobby, where we are now standing, or the Aye Lobby opposite.

To speed things up, MPs exit through one of three aisles depending on the initial letter of their surname, to have their names ticked off as they pass by a clerk; a teller also counts them back into the Chamber. To ensure a proper count, these doors (*indicate*) are bolted into a semi-shut position during divisions, so that MPs can only pass through one at a time. The Lords vote in a similar way, but instead of Ayes and Noes they register ‘Contents’ and ‘Not contents’.

Hansard (since 1909) has listed how members have voted in divisions. Furthermore, the proceedings and debates in committee are also published in separate volumes. For many years the House of Commons Hansard did not formally acknowledge the existence of parties in the House, except obliquely, with Members' references to other Members of the same party as 'hon. Friends', but in 2003 this changed and members' party affiliations are now identified. The Hansard of the House of Lords operates entirely independently of its Commons counterpart, but with similar terms of reference. It covers parliamentary business in the House of Lords Chamber itself, as well as the debates in the Moses Room, known as Grand Committee. Parliamentary Written Answers and Statements are also printed.

Stop 12: Benches of Commons chamber

The Commons Chamber looks very different to that of the Lords. It was rebuilt after the bombing of 1941 and has a less ornate style – although even prior to 1941 it was less ornate than the Lord’s Chamber. The custom of using green extends back 300 years but nobody is certain where it comes from.

This is the Speaker’s Chair. Unlike the Lord Speaker in the Lords – where Members are expected to behave themselves and regulate their own discussions - the nature of the Commons means that the Speaker does control debates in the Commons. Members entering the Chamber always bow to the Chair. On the back of the chair hangs the petition bag which I mentioned earlier in our tour, and into which MPs can put petitions that they want to present to the House.

Visitors often comment that the Chamber is smaller than they had imagined, and indeed it has only 427 seats for 650 MPs. The size of the Chamber, and its confrontational design, help to make debates lively and robust. When the Chamber was being rebuilt Churchill and others argued against an increase in its size. As MPs do not attend all debates because their work also involves them spending time in their constituencies and in committees, space is not usually a problem, although it can become crowded on big occasions like the Budget when some MPs sit on the steps.

The adversarial layout of the Chamber – i.e. Benches facing each other – is an historic relict of the original use of the first permanent Commons Chamber, St Stephen’s Chapel.

The Mace is the symbol of the authority of the House; the Commons may not sit without it being present, when it is placed in the brackets on the Table of the House (or in the lower brackets if the House is sitting as a Committee). The Mace used today is a Royal Mace made for Charles II.

The dignity of the Chair and the Speaker who occupied it has not always been quite as it is now. Speaker Cornwall, for example, always kept a jug of porter to hand; but not being allowed to leave the Chamber when in session, having no deputy speakers to relieve him, and in need of relief of another kind, a solution to this problem was provided, in the form of a chamber pot beneath the lifting seat of the Chair.

The right to petition is central to the history of the rise in power and pre-eminence of the Commons. Up until the first Parliament of Edward I in 1275, Parliament was pretty much a closed shop of ministers and judges. Edward, however, granted access to it by his subjects by means of petitions, which became hugely popular, to the extent that by the early 14th century 80% of Parliament’s work is recorded as consisting of the hearing of petitions. Today petitions can be debated in Westminster Hall or investigated by the Petitions Committee.

The government of the day traditionally occupies the benches on the Speaker's right, and the official opposition those on the left. The Prime Minister, or whichever senior minister is in charge of the business before the House, sits opposite the Government Despatch Box, and his opposition – or 'shadow' – minister sits across from him. The Government Despatch Box contains both the Authorised and Rheims–Douai versions of the Bible (for Protestants and Catholics respectively), plus a copy of the Old Testament for Jewish Members.

There is a strict protocol in place in the House, which controls language (e.g. use of 'the Honourable Member for') and behaviour during what can be heated exchanges. In order to gain permission to speak in the House, an MP must catch the Speaker's eye; however, Sir John Trevor had such a bad squint that it was decided he should call them to speak by name.

During debates, members speaking on opposing sides of the Chamber are not meant to step over the red lines you can see on the carpet, which are said to equal two swords lengths' distance and thus prevent Members from killing each other. However, as Members have never been allowed to bring weapons into the Chamber, we cannot be certain that this is true.

It is here in this space that MPs debate legislation, issues that concern them or their constituents, and question the government on their policies – their three key responsibilities of scrutiny, responsibility and legislation.

When new legislation, or an amendment to existing legislation, is proposed, it is introduced to Parliament as what is known as a Bill. Although they may be introduced in either House, to become law, bills must normally pass through and be approved by both Houses; during this process they may be amended significantly.

Prayer Cards *MP's can reserve a seat in the Chamber in advance of the day's sitting. This guarantees them that place for the prayers which begin each sitting, and for the rest of the day thereafter. If they then leave the chamber for a while and return later, the seat must still be given up to them.*

Protocol *the custom of not calling Members by their name derives from the attempt by Charles I to arrest the 5 MPs, naming them in the Chamber. The exception is the Speaker, who refers to Members by their names.*

'Toeing the line' *There is anecdotal evidence that this phrase refers to these lines, but also that its origin is naval, from shipboard parades (and sometimes punishments) when ratings were made to line up with the tarred joints between decking planks.*

Swords *Ribbons are still provided, attached to coat hangers in the Commons Members' Cloakroom, on which to hang swords before entering the Chamber.*

Bill *probably from the mediaeval Latin bulla seal, sealed document; cf Papal Bull*

The shield *above the entrance to the Chamber bears the arms of Airey Neave, Conservative MP and Colditz escaper, who was assassinated within the precincts of the palace by an IRA bomb placed in his car.*

Margaret Thatcher's parliamentary private secretary Eastbourne MP Ian Gow is also memorialized with a plaque after he died when the IRA detonated a bomb under his car.

The first stage is the formal introduction of the bill, known as the First Reading; followed by a general debate on its content (Second Reading); next by detailed clause-by-clause consideration (Committee Stage); there are further opportunities to look at the bill in its entirety at Report Stage and, finally, at Third Reading.

The Chamber often looks rather empty when televised - this is because, like the Lords, much of the detailed work is carried out in committees made up of members of all parties and which meet outside this Chamber. In the House of Commons the committee stage of a bill usually takes place in a Public Bill Committee which meets upstairs in the palace. In both Houses select committees are an important way in which a check is kept on the government. In the Commons there is a group of select committees which monitor the work of each major government department (e.g. Health Committee). This work is referred to as taking place 'off the floor'.

The galleries you see above and around us are for people to watch debates. The public are able to watch from behind a security screen opposite the press. We shall now retrace our steps through to Central Lobby and then into St Stephen's Hall, site of the original Chamber of the House of Commons until the fire of 1834.

A plaque for deceased Batley and Spennings MP Jo Cox bears the motto 'More in Common' from her maiden speech during which she stated 'we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us'.

The other 19 shields along this (southern) gallery commemorate MPs who were killed in WW1; the 23 opposite along the northern gallery those who fell in WW2.

Public Bill Committee *These are joined by Delegated Legislation Committees and European Standing Committees to come under the new heading 'General Committees'. The report of the Modernisation Select Committee 'The Legislative Process' in July 2006 recommended that Standing Committees should be re-named. From the start of the 2006-2007 parliamentary session, Standing Committees were renamed as 'General Committees'. Standing Committees on Bills are now called 'Public Bill Committees' and have the power to take evidence from officials and experts outside of Parliament.*

Visitors' Gallery *Tickets can be applied for via an MP, or simply obtained on the day by queuing at St Stephen's Entrance and speaking to a Visitor Assistant.*

The Bar of the House *is the point beyond which strangers may not pass when the House is in session; it is marked by a white line on the carpet and by a telescopic brass pole which can be pulled out above it.*

The Bar is also the place where people summoned for trial or questioning must stand (in earlier days they had to kneel). The House of Commons still has (via the Serjeant at Arms) extensive powers to arrest and try people, and even commit them to prison. If the crime is causing disruption in the Chamber, the perpetrators can be held in custody either on site or elsewhere by the police until the end of the day's business. For more serious offences – principally contempt (bringing the House into disrepute, interfering with its business, refusing to attend a Select Committee to give evidence) people can be summoned to the bar, under arrest if need be. The Commons can also discipline its own members, even expelling them and forcing a by-election in their constituencies, although this does not prevent them from immediately standing for election again.

The Press and Public in Parliament *Access by the press and public to Parliament has not always been accepted as being as necessary or even desirable as it is today. As recently as the 17th century MPs wished to keep their deliberations entirely to themselves – albeit mainly to keep them secret from the King – and in 1660 ordered that 'no person whatever do presume at his peril to print votes and proceedings of this House'. However, a blind eye was habitually turned and reporters would make their way in; and so evolved (by the 1730s) the practice of Members crying out if they see reason "I spy strangers", forcing a vote on whether the galleries should be cleared. (Since modernisation this has been replaced by the motion '...that this House do sit in private')*

Following the non-reporting of an important speech in 1803 because the numbers of the public in the galleries had kept out all members of the press, the Speaker ordered that a space be kept for their use at all times, thus creating the precursor of the Press Gallery of today. First William Cobbett, next Luke Hansard began regular reporting; and Hansard continues today as the official report of the proceedings of Parliament.

Stop 13: St. Stephen's Hall

Although the structure we are standing in today dates, like the majority of the rest of the building, from after the fire of 1834, this space is nonetheless one of the most historic and significant in the whole palace. St. Stephen's Hall was originally St. Stephen's Chapel, a place of Royal worship attached to the King's palace and first mentioned in 1184. Today we often think of chapels as small places, but when King Edward I set about rebuilding it in 1292 he created a magnificent building with an interior as tall as that of Westminster Abbey, richly (and expensively) decorated and designed to be a match for anything any other monarch of the time might have. The Upper Chapel of St. Stephen could only be entered via the Royal apartments; the lower chapel, St Mary Undercroft, was used by the Royal household. St Mary Undercroft survived the fire of 1834 and is still in use today.

When Parliament first formed it could be called into being by the King wherever he might happen to be, but as it grew in importance it gradually came to be the norm that it met in Westminster, with the Commons ultimately finding a permanent home in St. Stephen's in about 1547.

The beautiful wall paintings were whitewashed out and paneled over; the vaulted roof hidden by a lower wooden one. Members sat along both walls of this narrow space, and it was here that much of the history of Parliament took place, until the fire of 1834 destroyed the Chapel. Great Parliamentarians such as Walpole, Pitt and Fox all debated here; William Wilberforce pleaded for the abolition of the slave trade; the bills which led to the Great Reform Act were debated; and it was here that Charles I attempted to arrest the five Members and had his confrontation with Speaker Lenthall. In the floor you can see brass studs marking the position of the Speaker's Chair at that time, and the table which held the Mace. It was also in here that Spencer Percival, the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated, was shot in 1812.

Along both sides of the hall are statues of great Parliamentarians and frescoes on the theme of 'The Building of Britain'. The statue of Falkland is of interest – note the spur missing from one boot. This damage was caused in 1909 when a suffragette (Marjory Hume) chained herself to the statue in protest at the lack of votes for women & had to be freed.

The statues in niches represent Kings and Queens of England from William I

The statues on pedestals clockwise from left as you enter from Central Lobby:

John Hampden 1594-1643 *One of the five Members whom Charles I attempted to arrest, Hampden had long been aligned with the anti-Royalist faction, having been imprisoned for opposing a loan which the King had authorised for himself without Parliamentary approval.*

John Selden 1584-1654 *Parliamentarian and expert on constitutional law and history.*

Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Oxford 1676-1745 *Whig Prime Minister 1721-1742. Generally regarded as the first Prime Minister, he remains the longest serving. He successfully served both George I and George II, the latter presenting him with No 10 Downing Street.*

William Pitt (the Elder), 1st Earl of Chatham 1708-1767 *Whig Prime Minister 1766-1767. Enlarged Royal Navy for wars against France and Spain, gained Canada & French West Indies, expelled French influence in India.*

William Pitt (the Younger) 1759-1806 *Tory Prime Minister 1783-1801, 1804-1806. Britain's youngest ever Prime Minister at 24. He advocated Parliamentary reform, union with Ireland, abolition of the slave trade and Catholic emancipation, but in only one of these areas was he wholly successful. War with revolutionary France and rebellion in Ireland marked the later years of his ministry; union with Ireland was effected in 1800. The battle of Trafalgar in 1804 confirmed Britain's supremacy at sea but when he died in 1806, Britain and Europe were still menaced by Napoleon on land. Also during his ministry: India came under Britain's political control, and Australia began to be used as a penal colony.*

Henry Grattan 1746-1820 *An Irish Protestant in the Irish Parliament, he successfully campaigned for free trade for Ireland; unfortunately, his ardent advocacy of Irish Catholics (then denied the vote) and warnings of Catholic revolt without change went unheeded and he retired just before the unrest he had predicted.*

Edmund Burke 1729-1797 *Orator, philosopher, writer and Parliamentarian. Concerned with reconciliation with the American colonies, and India; his investigation into exploitation of Indian workers by the East India Company led to the trial of Warren Hastings. He was also one of the first to foresee the dangers resulting from the French Revolution.*

Charles James Fox 1749-1806 *Fox's successful early Parliamentary career was put on hold for more than 20 years due to the hostility of George III to him (partly due to his sympathy for the American colonists); during this period he held no office and was in opposition. Nonetheless, he was a leading Whig orator throughout and although his periods in high office covered less than two years of his career, as foreign secretary he was successful in abolishing the slave trade and he also established the principle that a prime minister should be elected by a majority of their party, not simply be an appointment of the monarch.*

William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield 1705-1793 *Leading opponent of Pitt the Elder; passionately so, refusing to attend his funeral or pay any posthumous respects to him.*

John Somers 1651-1716 *Actively involved in the negotiations with William of Orange over the Declaration of Rights, the committee to draft which he was chairman of. Involved in the trial of Titus Oates and the prosecution of Jacobites.*

Lucius Cary, 2nd Viscount Falkland 1610-1643 *Royalist Parliamentarian, very opposed to war and worked hard for peace for King and country. Disheartened by the approaching Civil War, he deliberately exposed himself to danger at the Battle of Gloucester and was killed.*

Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon 1609-1674 *Royalist Parliamentarian and representative of the King when efforts were made to end the Civil War. He fled to exile in Holland with the future Charles II, returning with him at the Restoration and made Lord Chancellor. His 'History of the Grand Rebellion' is widely regarded as one of the most accurate and comprehensive works on the Civil War.*

The pictures clockwise from first left as you enter from Central Lobby:

Sir Thomas More refusing to grant Wolsey a subsidy set in Blackfriars, before St. Stephen's *became the regular sitting place for the Commons. War with France during the reign of Henry VIII required vast sums of money; Wolsey attempted to raise this through dubious means. Parliament, as shown here, refused him the right to raise funds before this had been debated by the Commons*

Queen Elizabeth commissions Raleigh to sail for America 1584 *Elizabeth granted Raleigh a patent to discover new lands and take them in her name. The expedition reached America successfully and brought back tobacco, amongst other things; as a result, another expedition was sent off to establish a colony to be named Virginia in the Queen's honour. Although this expedition was not successful, Virginia was later successfully established and set the seeds for the New England colonies.*

Sir Thomas Roe at the Court of Ajmir 1614 *King James I's ambassador stands before the Moghul Emperor Jehangir at Ajmir. Sir Thomas' firm diplomacy established a commercial treaty between England and the Moghul Empire and laid the foundations of British influence in India.*

The Parliamentary Union of England and Scotland 1707 *Queen Anne receives the Articles of Agreement from the Scottish and English Commissioners. For over 100 years England and Scotland, had a single monarch but to guard against any attempted recall to Scotland of the Catholic Stuarts, and to give the Scots profitable access to English markets, the Parliaments of both countries are unified and sit at Westminster.*

King Alfred's Longships defeat the Danes *Swanage Bay, 877. Originally King of the West Saxons, Alfred subjugated all of the Angles and Saxons in Britain, as well as several Welsh princes, and inflicted defeats on the Danes. Regarded by many as the founder of the British navy, his successes established his Kingdom as the centre of the country, the beginnings of its freedom and unification.*

Richard I leaving England for the Crusades 1189 *Richard I actually spent very little of his time in his English kingdom, spending much of his reign campaigning in the Holy Land, in France, or imprisoned for ransom.*

King John assents to Magna Carta 1215 *Although the barons who forced King John to sign Magna Carta very much had their own interests at heart (granting the right to trial by their peers to all free men had limited effect in a country with very few of those), nonetheless its provisions have been carried through as the protection of the law extended to others and it remains a cornerstone of legal systems throughout the world.*

The English people reading Wycliffe's Bible *In the second half of the 14th century, Wycliffe began preaching doctrines which predated the Reformation by more than a century. A contemporary of Chaucer's, he was appalled at how ignorant most of the population were of the true teachings of the bible, then only accessible to them in Latin. He set about translating it into English, which proved very popular despite numerous prosecutions for heresy.*

Mary Branson's 'New Dawn' *is a permanent addition to the Parliamentary Art Collection, as well as the first piece of abstract art commissioned for permanent display in the historic Palace of Westminster. 150 years to the day since the campaign for women's votes began 'New Dawn' was installed as an artwork celebrating all the individuals involved.*

Stop 14: Westminster Hall

Westminster Hall is the oldest remaining part of the original Palace of Westminster and one of the most significant buildings in Europe, historically, politically and architecturally. It has survived fires, floods, explosions, World Wars and the changing demands of usage. It has seen the passing of 34 monarchs and the trial of one, King Charles I. It saw the trials of famous figures from history such as Sir William Wallace – “Braveheart” – Sir Thomas More, Bishop John Fisher and Guy Fawkes and his fellow Gunpowder Plot conspirators.

The building was first begun by the son of William the Conqueror, William Rufus, in 1097. It was the Great Hall of the royal palace, used for feasting and celebration; between 1189 and 1821, from Richard I (the Lionheart) to George IV it was the setting for a great banquet following the coronation ceremony held in Westminster Abbey. The original roof was supported by rows of pillars within the hall but in 1399 Richard II commissioned the building of a hammer-beam roof to arch across the entire span; it is this roof, with its carved angels, which you can see above today. It is one of the most important and spectacular architectural features of the Houses of Parliament, with the largest mediaeval wooden roof north of the Alps.

The Royal Courts of Justice were long based in Westminster Hall, but have now moved into a gothic building on the Strand. The Hall has also been used for the lying in state of monarchs and great Parliamentarians, including Sir Winston Churchill and of course more recently Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. If you look along the floor and up the steps towards St. Stephens, you will see plaques commemorating these events, and marking some of the famous trials held here.

By the time the fire engines arrived at the blazing palace in 1834 the Lords was already gutted and the Commons ablaze. Lord Althorp is recorded as crying out ‘Damn the House of Commons, let it blaze away; but save, oh save the Hall’; and the Prime Minister Lord Melbourne himself directed the work to soak the roof.

The rest of the palace was lost but the hall was saved. Much the same happened during the Blitz in May 1941, when incendiaries set both Westminster Hall and the Commons Chamber alight. An MP, Colonel Walter Elliot, made the decision for the firefighters: ‘Let the pseudo-Gothic go. We must save the Hall’. The Commons burned for two days, but again the Hall survived.

Statues of Kings on the South Wall *these six statues were carved in c.1385 by Thomas Canon; they are idealised representations of mediaeval kingship, and are not based on any individual monarchs. They would originally have been brightly painted & gilded.*

Statues of Kings on the East Wall. *These have the same provenance, being part of a larger set which once stood in niches outside the North Door. Damaged to varying extent by the elements, they were removed in the 1820s; five were returned here in the twentieth century. One other survives in Trinity Church Square, Lambeth.*

New Palace Yard / Old Palace Yard *the names derive from the palaces, not the yards themselves. When William II built Westminster Hall he named it the ‘New Hall’, to differentiate it from Edward the Confessor’s Great Hall to the South. Edward’s hall does not survive, but its Old Palace Yard does – now the Lord’s Car Park and extending over the road.*

The Hall *has also survived the Fenian bombs which went off here and in the Chamber in 1885*

Tennis balls *were found in the rafters during maintenance work in the 1920s. They were made of canvas stuffed with human hair around a core of pumice, indicating that they are of some age; there has been speculation that Henry VIII himself may have hit them up there during games of real tennis. There is, however, no evidence for this, nor that was the Hall ever adapted for Real Tennis.*

<p>As I mentioned earlier on in the tour, the hall is also where petitions are debated. These debates are usually for those which reach over 100,000 signatures. It is also where Back Bench MPs can debate issues which are important to them and their constituents.</p> <p>To the left of the North Door is a stair case, where the House of Commons' second debating chamber is. Like the main chamber, members of the public can watch those debates from a public gallery. These debates are usually reserved for those petitions which reach over 100,000 signatures. Debates in Westminster Hall are general debates - so they would not, for example, end in a vote to implement the request of a petition.</p> <p>We have come to the end of our tour and so if you have any questions, please do ask. There is a shop selling souvenirs and books back in Westminster Hall, along with a café and bathroom facilities. Please leave through the main doors where you came in and then up to the left.</p>	<p>Petition debates are a good way to raise an issue within Parliament and a Government Minister always responds to the points raised in the debate. Westminster Hall debates are also used by Back Bench MPs to raise issues which are important to them and their constituents.</p> <p>Westminster Hall sitting times:</p> <p><i>Petition debates are held on Mondays from 16.30 (for up to 3 hours)</i></p> <p>Other debates are as follows:</p> <p><i>Tuesday: 9:30 - 11:30 & 14:30 - 17:30</i></p> <p><i>Wednesday: 9:30 - 11:30 & 14:30 - 17:30</i></p> <p><i>Thursday: 13:30 - 16:30</i></p>
<p>Famous trials in the Hall:</p> <p>Sir William Wallace (“Braveheart”) (c1270-1305) fought long against English domination in Scotland. Much of his early history is hazy, but from a beginning of low-level insurgency he came to head a major revolt against Edward I of England; however, he was betrayed by the Scottish nobles accompanying him, who in 1297 swore fealty to Edward. Raising a new army, in the same year Wallace was back, defeating the English at Stirling and driving them out of Scotland, before marching into England and devastating the countryside as far as Newcastle. Edward hurried back from Flanders with a huge army, and defeated the Scots at Falkirk in 1298. Wallace, as before, had been deserted by many of his noble supporters in the run up to the battle. Outlawed, he survived on the run until he was captured (it is alleged by treachery) in 1305 and brought to trial in Westminster Hall. The charge was treason, of which he argued he was innocent, as he had never been a subject of Edward and had never sworn fealty to him. This defence did him no good, and he was hanged, drawn and quartered on the same day sentence was passed.</p> <p>Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) was at various times Under Sheriff of the City of London, a Member of Parliament, Speaker of the House of Commons, a diplomat, and Lord Chancellor; the author of <i>Utopia</i>, he had a brilliant mind and became a close friend and advisor to Henry VIII, even though he twice before had courted royal wrath, refusing (in Parliament) both Henry and his father, Henry VII, monies they sought. However, he could not sanction the divorce which would make Henry’s marriage to Anne Boleyn possible, and the final straw came when he resisted Henry’s attempts to place himself at the head of the Church of England. Several attempts were made – clearly sanctioned by the vengeful King - to bring him down with trumped-up charges, until finally he was charged with treason itself, the perjured evidence of the Solicitor-General, appearing for the Crown, sealing his fate. More was beheaded; his head placed on a spike on London Bridge, his body interred in the crypt of the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London. He was made a saint of the Catholic Church in 1935, and in 2000 Pope John Paul II declared him the patron saint of politicians.</p> <p>Bishop John Fisher (c1569-1535) Bishop of Rochester. Like Sir Thomas More, Fisher fell foul of King Henry VIII when he could not support the King’s divorce and then – fatally – refused to acknowledge Henry’s supremacy in the Church of England. Again like More, he was beheaded; his head set up on London Bridge, his body interred (ultimately) alongside More’s in the Tower.</p> <p>The Gunpowder Plot The protestant James I (1603-1625) was persecuting Catholics and so a plot was hatched by Robert Catesby and Thomas & Robert Wintour to assassinate him and his Government at the State Opening on 5th November 1605 (Guy Fawkes only joined them later). The plotters hired a cellar directly beneath the House of Lords but details of the plot leaked out and a search of the cellars found not only 36 barrels of gunpowder hidden beneath firewood, but also Guy Fawkes. After two days’ torture in the Tower, Fawkes cracked and gave up the names of his fellow conspirators, most of whom had fled to Staffordshire. There, at Holbeach House, Catesby, Thomas Percy and two brothers named Wright were shot and killed; the remainder were tried for High Treason in Westminster Hall on 27 January 1607. Four were executed at St Paul’s Cathedral churchyard, whilst Fawkes, Thomas Wintour, Keyes and Rookwood were executed nearby in Old Palace Yard. As a footnote, an analysis of the gunpowder found that it had “decayed” – it probably would not have gone off in any case. To this day, however, the Yeomen of the Guard (formed in 1485 by Henry VII, not the same as the Yeoman Warders, search the cellars of Parliament before each State Opening.</p>	

Earl of Strafford (1593-1641) MP and Lord-Deputy in Ireland. An able advisor to the King (although he often opposed Charles I, he was loyal to the Crown), he made many enemies which was ultimately his downfall. As Lord-Deputy in Ireland he was ruthlessly efficient, eradicating piracy, increasing trade and industry (though more, it must be said, to the benefit of England than the Irish) and introducing financial reforms which doubled Ireland's revenue. However, his despotic methods alienated both the 'Old English' aristocracy in Ireland and the 'New English' settlers. When the Scots rebelled and threatened England with invasion, Strafford advised the King to use his Irish armies to crush them. This was manipulated by his enemies into a charge of treason, they claimed that he had advised the use of these troops against England itself. The charges were clearly trumped up but when the case was at the point of collapse, a Bill of Attainder was laid against him. This device simply decreed that a man accused of treason was guilty, with no requirement to prove it by precise points of law. Charles by no means wanted this, especially as he had given Strafford his word that no harm would come to him, but the pressure for his execution was great. Eventually, Strafford wrote to the King to release him from his promise: "I do most humbly beseech you, for the preventing of such massacres as may happen by your refusal, to pass the bill; by this means to remove...the unfortunate thing forth of the way towards that blessed agreement, which God, I trust, shall forever establish between you and your subjects". Charles gave in and Strafford was executed, but it was in vain; Charles never forgave himself for his betrayal, and the Civil War broke out one year later.

Warren Hastings (1732-1818) First Governor General of India. As governor of Bengal embarked on judicial and financial reform, law codification, and the suppression of banditry, laying the foundation of British rule in India. In 1774, he was appointed governor-general of India but was greatly hampered by rivalries in the governing council, & the ill-defined relationship with and resulting lack of control over the other governors, e.g. of Bombay & Madras. Hastings twice rescued the British position in India due to crises brought about by the latter, but was still criticized for interference with their governments. He resigned (1784) and returned to England, where he was charged with high crimes and misdemeanours by Edmund Burke and Sir Philip Francis, the latter whom he had wounded in a duel in India. He was impeached in 1787; but the trial, begun in 1788, ended with his acquittal 7 years later in 1795, despite the bitter prosecution of Burke, Francis, Richard B. Sheridan, and Charles James Fox. Hastings's fortune was used up, but the East India Company later supported him. He survived the trial to become privy councillor.

Charles I (1600-1649) The Commons had passed resolutions claiming for itself supreme authority in law and able to pass acts without the consent of either the Lords or King; on this rested their claim to be able to try the King. Charles did not accept the authority of the Court to try him: "If power without law may make laws, I do not know what subject he is in England, that can be sure of his life, or anything else that he calls his own". Not that it mattered much; when one of the people nominated to be a judge, Algernon Sidney, opposed proceedings, saying "The King could be tried by no court; no man could be tried by that court", Cromwell simply replied "I tell you we will cut off his head, with the crown upon it"; something of a foregone conclusion. Charles was executed on 30th January 1649 on the charge of treason.

The 7 bishops 1688 The final straw for those opposed to pro-Catholic James II. James had issued Declarations of Indulgence towards Catholics and dissenters, one of which he ordered to be read in every church in the land. Seven bishops including the Archbishop of Canterbury petitioned him against this, and were charged with seditious libel; the trial lasted one day before their acquittal, to popular acclaim; on the same day the leaders of the Whigs and Tories invited William of Orange to invade.

Melville, Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount, (1742-1811), British lawyer and politician. Advocated harsh treatment of the rebel American colonists. Secretary for war during the early Napoleonic Wars (1794-1801), and first lord of the admiralty (1804-5). Charged in 1806 with mismanagement of navy funds; despite acquittal never returned to office. Last person to be tried in Westminster Hall.

Other trials There were other notable trials not commemorated in plaques, including those of Perkin Warbeck, and of the rebel Lords of the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745.

Not on Tour: The Elizabeth Tower

- ‘Big Ben’ is the name of the Great Bell
- No one is sure where Big Ben got its name, but the most likely theory is that it is named after Sir Benjamin Hall, the then Commissioner of Works. However, it may also have been named after a famous contemporary prize fighter, Benjamin Caunt
- Big Ben weighs 13.8 tonnes (14,021.49kg). The first bell cracked and had to be recast; the second, the existing Big Ben, also cracked in 1859. It was turned and has had a square cut out of it to prevent the crack from spreading
- The famous “Westminster Chimes” are based on Handel’s *Messiah*, and are in fact copied from Great St Mary’s church in Cambridge
- The clock’s timekeeping is adjusted by weights, some of which are old pennies. It is the largest and most accurate striking mechanical clock in the world
- The clock has stopped on several occasions. Usually accidentally caused by workmen, but on one occasion by the weight of frozen snow, on another the weight of a flock of starlings on the hands. Actual mechanical failure has been rare
- There are 334 steps from base to belfry, and a further 59 to the lantern
- At the top of the tower is the Ayrton Light, named after the 1st Commissioner of Works, Thomas Ayrton; it is lit at night whenever either House is sitting
- One third of the way up the tower is a cell in which MPs and Peers could be detained for various offences within the Chambers, in theory for the duration of the Parliamentary session (possibly some months) but in practice for the day of the offence. It was last used for this purpose in 1880 when an atheist MP refused to take the oath on the Bible

Not on Tour: The Crypt Chapel

- Work on the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft was begun in around 1297 by Edward I as part of his project to create, with St Stephen’s Chapel above, an edifice to rival Louis IX’s Sainte-Chappelle. Building and decorating continued under Edward II and the chapel was completed by Edward III in around 1365
- St Stephen’s was the chapel of the Royal Family whilst St Mary Undercroft was where the Court and Royal Household worshipped
- By the time of the 1834 fire the chapel had been used as a wine cellar & according to legend, a stable for Cromwell’s horses
- Relatively unscathed by the fire, the chapel was restored by Charles Barry’s son, between 1860 and 1870. He tried to reproduce the earlier medieval decoration and vaulting
- The Chapel is a Royal Peculiar, it does not come under the jurisdiction of a bishop but is under the monarch’s control. Their right is exercised via the Lord Great Chamberlain, who consults with the Speaker and Lord Chancellor. Other Royal Peculiars include the Chapels of St John and St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London, and Westminster Abbey.
- In a cupboard at the bottom of the steps is a plaque: *In loving memory of Emily Wilding-Davison. In this broom cupboard Emily Wilding-Davison hid herself, illegally, during the night of the 1911 census. She was a brave suffragette campaigning for votes for women at a time when Parliament denied them that right. In this way she was able to record her address on the night of the census as being the House of Commons: thus making her claim to the same political rights as men. Emily Wilding-Davison died in June 1913 from injuries sustained when she threw herself under the King’s horse at the Derby to draw public attention to the injustice suffered by women. By such means was democracy won for the people of Britain.*

