

For immediate release: 19 October 2023

## Celebrate Christmas at the official residences of His Majesty The King



*The Christmas decorations at Windsor Castle*



*The Christmas tree in the Great Gallery  
at the Palace of Holyroodhouse*

This December, visitors to Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse will see the State Apartments transformed with magnificent Christmas displays, while exclusive evening tours will give an unforgettable, behind-the-ropes experience at Windsor Castle, the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and Buckingham Palace.

### **Christmas at Windsor Castle 30 November 2023 to 1 January 2024**

- This year's Christmas display at Windsor Castle will celebrate the 675th anniversary of the Order of the Garter, the oldest order of chivalry in Britain which was founded in Windsor in 1348.
- A magnificent 20-foot-high Nordmann Fir tree in St George's Hall, grown nearby in Windsor Great Park, is the highlight of the Christmas display. This year it will be topped by a specially commissioned sparkling Garter Star to commemorate the anniversary, alongside Coronation-themed decorations to celebrate this special year.
- Another glistening Christmas tree topped with a Garter Star will be in the Crimson Drawing Room – one of the most elaborate rooms in the Castle. Part of the Semi-State Rooms created as private apartments for George IV, these rooms on the east side of the Castle are still used by members of the Royal Family for official entertaining and are open to visitors over the winter months.

- In the Waterloo Chamber, the 160-foot-long dining table will be laid with porcelain from the Garter Service, featuring a design inspired by the Garter star and the Order's motto '*Honi soit qui mal y pense* (Shame on him who thinks evil of it)'.
- Impressive garlands on the Grand Staircase will greet visitors as they enter the State Apartments, while outside, festive wreaths and foliage will adorn gates and lampposts in the Castle grounds.
- After exploring the State Apartments, visitors can treat themselves to a festive menu in the Undercroft Café, available throughout December, where there will be another spectacular tree dressed with sparkling Garter Stars to commemorate the anniversary.
- On select dates in December, local school and community choirs will perform carols beneath the Christmas tree in St George's Hall.
- Families can participate in craft activities and workshops exploring how the Victorians celebrated Christmas, held at the Learning Centre every Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday between Saturday, 16 December 2023 and Monday, 1 January 2024.
- St George's Chapel will be open to visitors to the Castle on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and services are open to all, seven days a week. Advent, the period leading up to Christmas, begins on Sunday, 3 December. The Chapel is the spiritual home of the Order of the Garter, and the impressive crests and banners of the current Knights and Ladies can be seen above the Quire stalls.

### **Christmas at the Palace of Holyroodhouse 23 November 2023 to 1 January 2024**

- A magnificent Christmas tree in the wood-panelled Throne Room is the centrepiece for the displays at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Another glittering Nordmann Fir tree and two decorated mantelpieces will create a festive atmosphere in the storied Great Gallery.
- Velvet garlands, vibrant berries and seasonal foliage will adorn the Great Stair leading to the historic State Apartments, and wreaths will be hung in the windows in the enfilade of the King's Rooms. Outside, the Quadrangle will have a garland visible from around the quadrangle and from the forecourt.
- In the Royal Dining Room, the grand table will be laid with a silver service and with sugared fruit and foliage.
- In the Café at the Palace in the Mews courtyard, visitors can enjoy homemade mince pies, Christmas cake and mulled wine surrounded by wreaths and garlands. Decadent Christmas-themed Afternoon Tea can also be booked in advance.
- Visitors interested in learning how monarchs have celebrated Christmas over the centuries – from exchanging Christmas cards and personal gifts to holding festive pantomimes – can hear short talks held on Thursdays throughout December.

- A programme of festive music will be performed in evening Christmas concerts on Sunday, 10 and Monday, 11 December, concluding with a glass of wine and mince pies.
- A special version of Royal Rhyme Time: Festive Fling on Monday, 4 December will give toddlers and their parents or carers the chance to celebrate through interactive storytelling, songs, and rhymes.
- On Mary, Queen of Scots' birthday, Friday, 8 December, a special evening event at the Palace will explore life at Mary's court.
- The Carols and Crafts: Christmas Activity Day on Saturday, 16 December gives families the chance to try their hand at making either clay decorations, inspired by the Palace's 17th -century interiors, or Christmas crackers, a Victorian invention. There will also be local choirs performing songs.

## **Winter Exclusive Guided Tours at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, and the Palace of Holyroodhouse**

### **November to February**

- As part of a greatly expanded programme of exclusive tours, visitors will have the opportunity to tour the Buckingham Palace State Rooms on select dates throughout the winter. Led by an expert guide, all tickets include a copy of the Official Souvenir Guide. Guided tours suitable for families with children are also available.
- On select dates in December, visitors can enjoy an exclusive evening tour offering a behind-the-ropes experience through the State Apartments at Windsor Castle, ending with a glass of English Sparkling Wine.
- With dates in November and December, visitors can enjoy private evening tours of the State Apartments at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, taking in the magic of the Palace once the doors have closed to visitors for the day.

### **A Royal Christmas Feast Online Event Tuesday 5 December 2023, 19:00 – 20:00**

Senior Curator of Decorative Arts Kathryn Jones is joined by food historian Marc Meltonville for a lively online discussion on culinary traditions of the past, covering everything from dining services to the sumptuous food served at royal Christmases.

## Shopping

Visitors to the royal residences will be able to take a memento of the festive displays home with them, with the beaded Garter Star and navy and white Coronation decorations used on the Christmas trees this year available for purchase online and in Royal Collection Trust shops.

Browse the Royal Collection Trust shops or online at [www.rct.uk/shop](http://www.rct.uk/shop) for more Christmas gift inspiration, including traditional and heirloom advent calendars, indulgent hampers, and new gourmet stocking fillers.



## Ends

**Christmas at the official residences of His Majesty The King is from 30 November 2023 to 1 January 2024 at Windsor Castle, and 23 November 2023 to 1 January 2024 at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.**

**Exclusive Guided Tours are available on select dates in November to February at Buckingham Palace, in December at Windsor Castle, and in November and December at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.**

**For more information, to request images or to register for media facilities please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, [press@rct.uk](mailto:press@rct.uk).**

**Tickets and visitor information: [www.rct.uk](http://www.rct.uk), Windsor Castle +44 (030) 123 7304, Palace of Holyroodhouse +44 (030) 123 7306.**

**A selection of images is available for download from [DropBox](https://www.dropbox.com). Credit line: Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023.**

## Notes to Editors

**Royal Collection Trust**, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The King. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes.

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

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