

The Tower of London



The first part of the Tower of London was built by William the Conqueror in 1078 but what we now call the Tower is actually a collection of several different buildings.

The Tower of London has been used for many things since it was first built. Hundreds of years ago it was most famous as a prison where some prisoners were even tortured or killed! Now it is just as famous as the home of the crown jewels which have been kept there since the year 1303.



This was **traitor's gate**. Many prisoners of the tower were brought there by boat.

Locked up!

The most famous people to be locked up in the Tower of London were Queen Elizabeth I and Guy Fawkes.

Did you know?

The full name of the Tower of London is actually **Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress**.

Ghosts!

Many people say that the Tower is the most haunted building in England. The most famous ghost is said to be Anne Boleyn. She was married to King Henry VIII but in 1536 he had her head chopped off!!

The Gherkin



The Gherkin was completed in December 2003. It is 180 metres tall and has 40 floors! The building was designed by Norman Foster who also designed City Hall, the Millennium Bridge and Wembley Stadium!

On 21st February 2007, the Gherkin was sold for an amazing £630 million! The building today is used as offices but also has a restaurant on the 39th floor.

Did you know?

The full name of the Gherkin is actually **30 St Mary Axe**.



↖
The bottom of the tower.



Work began on the Gherkin in March 2001

What a view!

The building is so big that it can be seen from the M11 motorway over 20 miles away!

Green Gherkin

The Gherkin was designed to be very environmentally friendly and only uses half the power of other towers like it.

City Hall



City Hall is the headquarters of the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. The building was designed by Norman Foster who also designed The Gherkin, the Millennium Bridge and Wembley Stadium!

City Hall cost £65 million to build and was opened in July 2002.

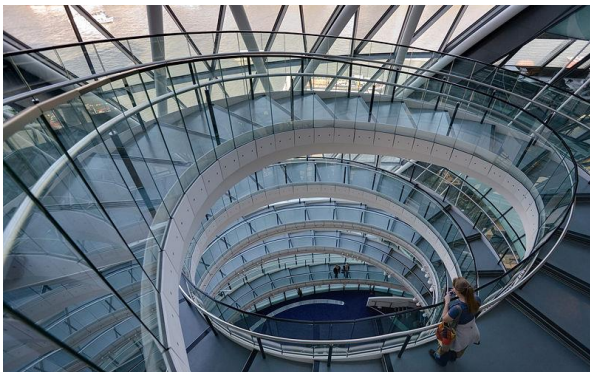
Did you know?

Some people say that the building looks like an onion, an egg and even Darth Vader's helmet!



Nice view!

On the 9th floor of City Hall there is a balcony that is open to the public and gives great views of Tower Bridge, the Tower of London and the Gherkin!



The staircase inside City Hall is 500 metres long!

The London Eye



The London Eye is the most popular paid tourist attraction in the United Kingdom, visited by over 3 million people every year!

Did you know?

It takes 30 minutes to go all the way round the wheel.

The London Eye was opened by Tony Blair (who was the Prime Minister at the time) on December 31st 1999. This is why it is sometimes called the Millennium Wheel. By June 2008, over 30 million people had been on it!

It's wheely expensive!

The cost of going on the London Eye is £15.50 for adults or £7.75 for children.

Get on quick!

The wheel moves so slowly that it doesn't stop to let people on - you have to get on and off while it is still moving!



There are 32 capsules on the wheel, each one holding up to 24 people.



HMS Belfast



The HMS Belfast was built in 1936 just before the Second World War. It was used for only 25 years and on 21st October 1971 was opened in London as a museum.

On 21st November 1939, during the war, the ship was badly damaged when it hit a mine which had been laid by a German submarine. 21 men were injured and the repairs took nearly 3 years.

Did you know?

The initials HMS stand for 'Her Majesty's Ship or Submarine'



After World War Two, the HMS Belfast fought in the Korean War. In July 1952 the ship was hit and one man died.

On film

The ship has appeared in many movies including the last Harry Potter film.



The crew of the HMS Belfast had to fight during the night using its 4 inch guns.

Big Ben



Big Ben is the name given to the large bell inside the clock tower of the Palace of Westminster (also known as the Houses of Parliament). The tower was built by Charles Barry after the old one was destroyed by fire in 1834.

Did you know?

The tower is over 96 metres tall!



Cold hands!

On December 31st 1962, the clock slowed down because of the ice and snow on the hands!



About time!

The clock was finished in 1854, but the tower wasn't completed until 1859 so for 5 whole years they had nowhere to put the clock!

The hour hand on the clock is nearly 3 metres long and the minute hand is over 4 metres long! These men are cleaning the clock face.

Houses of Parliament



The Houses of Parliament is where politicians meet to make important decisions about how the country should be run. The parliament of England has met here since the year 1295.

Look smart!

Hats are not allowed to be worn in the Houses of Parliament and you are not even allowed to walk around with your hands in your pockets!



Did you know?

The real name for the Houses of Parliament is the **Palace of Westminster.**



The palace has 1100 rooms, 100 staircases and 4800 metres of corridors!

The Gunpowder Plot

On 5th November 1605, Guy Fawkes and a group of his friends tried to kill King James I by blowing up the Houses of Parliament using gunpowder. The plot failed and all the men were sentenced to death.

St Paul's Cathedral



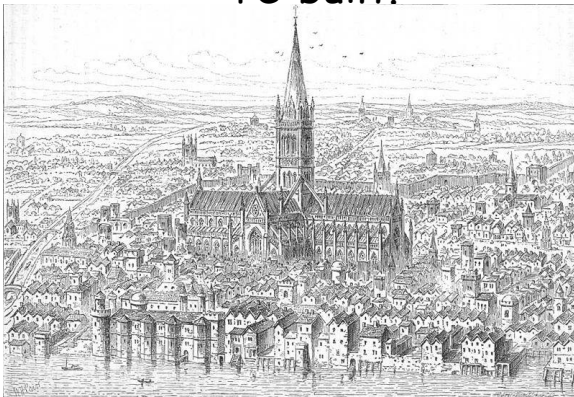
St Paul's Cathedral has been rebuilt many times. The building that we know today was completed on 20th October 1708 but the first church to be built here was finished nearly 1400 years ago!

Lots of famous people are buried at St Paul's including Sir Winston Churchill, Florence Nightingale, Horatio Nelson and Dr Samuel Johnson who wrote the first ever dictionary!

Did you know?

The dome of the cathedral is 100 metres tall and you have to climb 530 steps to reach the top!

This is what St Paul's would have looked like 500 years ago. In 1561, the spire was destroyed by lightening and it was never re-built.



After the Great Fire of London, St Paul's was rebuilt by Christopher Wren. This is his plan for the new building.

Tower Bridge



Tower Bridge was opened on 30th June 1894. It is open to cars and pedestrians and is crossed by 40,000 people every day! You can pay to go up the towers and walk across the walkway between them.

Jumping Bridge!

In 1952 a bus driver jumped over a gap in bridge as it was mistakenly opening. None of his passengers was hurt and he received £10 for his bravery!

Did you know?

People sometimes call Tower Bridge 'London Bridge' by mistake - that's the next one along the river!



The bridge can open to let boats through. This happens about 1000 times a year.

The Globe Theatre

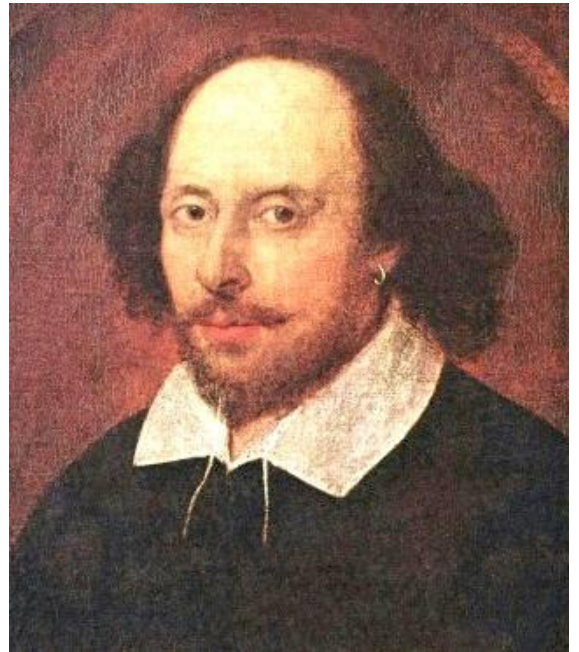


The first Globe theatre was built in 1599 but was destroyed by fire on 29th June 1613. The one in London today is a new version built in 1997. It is about 230 metres away from where the original theatre was.

Did you know?

The Globe can hold 3000 people for the plays that are still performed there. If you want to get the cheapest tickets you have to stand up for the whole play!

This is a picture of the first Globe theatre, drawn in the year 1638.



Many of William Shakespeare's plays were performed at the Globe. Most people think he was the best 'playwright' ever and he wrote lots of very famous plays including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

The Tate Modern



The Tate Modern is England's national museum of modern art. It was opened as a museum in May 2000 and by 2007 over 5 million had visited it.

Did you know?

The museum is being enlarged in time for London hosting the Olympic Games in 2012. This will cost about £215 million!

The main hall is called the *Turbine Hall* and has large works of art that change every few months.



This massive spider is one of the works of art at the Tate Modern. This was built by the artist Louise Bourgeois who is 95 years old!

The River Thames



The River Thames is 215 miles long and as well as flowing through London it also runs through other towns and cities like Oxford, Reading and Windsor.

Did you know?

In 1683 the River Thames was completely frozen for 2 months.

To stop the river flooding, the Thames Barrier was built in 1982. It cost £535 million!



London Bridge was one of the first bridges across the river. This picture of the bridge in the year 1616 shows that people used to live on it!

The London Underground



The London Underground, also known as the *Tube* is the world's oldest underground railway. It was also the first underground railway to use electric trains.

The earliest parts of the underground system were begun in 1863. Today there are 270 stations and 250 miles of track! The *Tube* map is one of the most famous maps in the world. There are 11 lines, all shown in different colour on the map.



The first line ran between Paddington station and Farringdon street and opened on 10th January 1863. The second line was the Hammersmith and City railway which opened the year after.

Did you know?

About 3 million people go on the London Underground every day!

Most tourists buy tickets from stations but people who use the trains every day usually pay using an *Oyster Card*.

