



The Tower of London

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R.F. 48



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- The Tower is known to everybody. It was started in 1066 by William the Conqueror to protect London from enemies. Since the eleventh century the Tower has served many purposes- a fortress , a royal palace, a prison, a treasury, an arsenal, even a royal zoo. Now it is the most popular museum.



- The oldest building on the territory of the Tower is the white tower. This is where the kings of England ate, slept and ran the country.



- The Ceremony of the Keys hasn't changed for 7 hundred years.
“Halt! Who goes there?”
“The Keys”.
“Whose Keys?”
“Queen Elizabeth’s Keys”.
“God preserve Queen Elizabeth”.
“Amen!”



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- Edward I didn't like the White Tower. It seemed dark and cold to him. So he built a new palace-with large windows, beautiful fireplaces and richly decorated halls.



The Zoo

- Kings sometimes get strange presents. About 700 years ago King Henry III got 3 leopards, an elephant and a polar bear. He kept them in the Tower. That was the start of the London Zoo. In 1835 all the animals left the Tower and were sent to the Zoo in Regent's Park. Only the ravens stayed on.



Ravens



- There have always been ravens at the Tower. The first ones probably built their nests here because they liked the stone houses and walls. There is a story that they bring good luck to Britain, as long as they stay at the Tower. That's why they get meat and biscuits every day. But their wings are clipped so that they can't fly away.

The Prison



- During the times of Tudors and Stuarts the tower became famous as a prison. Many queens, kings and noblemen were imprisoned here. Many, like Lady Jane Grey or Ann Boleyn, lost their heads on Tower Green. These executions were “private”. But all the other prisoners were executed outside the Tower. These executions were public, watched by thousands of people.

Beefeaters



- The Beefeaters have guarded the Tower and its prisoners since the reign of Henry VIII. Today, they mostly work as guides. They show the people around and tell stories about all the terrible things that have happened here. They wear dark blue uniform when they guide.



- Here we see the Yeoman Warders in their splendid State Dress (red and gold tunic) originated from 1552 and reserved for ceremonial duty. Old traditions are always very interesting for numerous tourists and guests.



- This armour was made for King Henry the VIII in 1540. Numerous tourists can also see other examples of military ammunition of the old times.



- Here we see two young princes, wax figures from the Museum of Madame Tussaud, who were imprisoned in the Tower by the enemies of the Royal family.



- Today the Tower houses a unique collection of the arms and armour and instruments for torture. Many famous Englishmen were seized and taken here to be murdered in the Tower. Here we see the block and axe.

The Crown Jewels



- The Jewel House at the Tower of London is the home of the most valuable collection of jewels in the world, the Crown Jewels. They are well looked after.