

Hampton Court Palace



During my stay in England this summer, I had a wonderful time visiting Hampton Court Palace. The Palace, which is set on the banks of the River Thames, began its illustrious history in 1513, when Cardinal Thomas Wolsey acquired the property as his residence. In the late 1520s, Wolsey was forced to present his palace to Henry VIII in a vain attempt to regain his royal favour.

The Palace is built of red brick with distinctive Tudor diamond patterns. Rows of chimneys top the building, each with a different design. One can just imagine how Henry's hunting party felt when, after a long cold day in the saddle, they saw wisps of welcoming smoke rising from the chimneys.

At the entrance to the inner part of the Palace stands the Clock Tower. Its astronomical clock tells the hour, the day, the month, the phase of the moon and the time of the high tides at London Bridge. It also shows the signs of the zodiac and the golden Sun travelling around an immobile Earth.

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The Chapel Royal is fit for a monarch. Its vaulted ceiling is painted in magnificent blue and gold. The Chapel is divided into two parts, the Chapel proper and the Royal Pew. In Tudor times the Royal Pew was divided into two large rooms, one for the king and one for the queen, with bay windows looking down into the body of the Chapel. Hence the king could attend to state affairs and hear Mass at the same time.



Henry VIII knew how to make his presence felt. In the Great Hall, the high table is placed on a raised platform next to the window, the source of light. As the king held a feast in the splendid hall decorated with pennants and royal arms, he was spotlighted for all to see. An interesting anecdote is that people at that time ate with a spoon as the fork was not invented until later.

After Henry other kings and queens took up residence in the Palace too. They rebuilt and added on to the original structure. Hampton Court Palace boasts sumptuous state apartments, a unique garden and extensive parkland. It houses a great dynastic art collection including paintings, tapestries and furniture. No wonder it has been claimed that the splendour of the Palace rivalled that of Louis XIV's Versailles in its heyday.



說好普通話 開創新天下

二零零一年，香港電台普通話台倡議各推廣普通話團體和學校組成“香港推廣普通話大聯盟”（以下簡稱“大聯盟”），共同籌劃活動，以帶動學習和多講普通話的風氣。

大聯盟先後於二零零一年和二零零二年舉辦“普通話日”和“普通話月”，今年更擴大規模，舉辦為期兩個月的“普通話節2003”。九月十四日至十一月十六日期間，大聯盟籌辦了一系列活動，包括：“2003年全港普通話歌唱大賽”、“普通話公開講座”、“學生普通話躍進大獎”和“全港普通話親子才藝大賽”等。這些活動備受社會各界支持，得到熱烈回響。

公務員事務局法定語文事務部是大聯盟的成員，過去兩年，除呼籲各政府部門積極響應外，更籌辦活動，

鼓勵同事多聽多講普通話。今年，我們為全港公務員舉辦網上普通話常識問答比賽；又在普通話節期間推出“普通話知多少”，每天在公務員事務局網頁介紹日常用語的粵普對照。以上活動的目的，是幫助同事說起普通話來，更流暢地道。

“普通話節2003”雖已圓滿結束，但推廣普通話的工作不會停頓下來。大聯盟已成立工作小組，策劃來年的活動，並決定建立網上支援中心，通過網上專頁，把“說好普通話，開創新天下”的訊息廣泛傳播。

