



Seeing the Capital Differently

Ceiling Paintings

Welcome to *CityThemes*

By printing this leaflet you have decided to discover, or rediscover, the sights and delights of **London** in a different way. We hope that you enjoy your explorations of our fascinating and historical capital city.

This leaflet has been designed to allow you to explore as the mood takes you. Both well-known and lesser-known attractions are included and they are randomly listed so that you plan your own itinerary and visit as many or as few as you wish.

Please note:- some places restrict entry and ask for prior application either in writing or by telephone. This is indicated where known. Others may change opening days and hours with little warning – it may be worth checking by phone if they are off the beaten track.

A very brief description of the reason for the choice of site is given but because of space it is not possible to include much detail. Again a telephone call to the site may help you to decide on whether a visit is worthwhile. Remember there may be other items that interest you at the same site.

Themes are constantly being updated and new titles added so please keep looking at our website or get in touch with us by e-mail or letter. We welcome your comments especially if you feel that some site should be included or details are incorrect/inaccurate. Contact details are

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Enjoy Your Explorations

this Theme only includes a small sample of the attractive ceilings to be found in churches. These merit a separate Theme which is still being prepared

Banqueting House

Whitehall, SW1A
020 7930 4179 www.hrp.org.uk

transport: Westminster u/g; buses 3,11,12,24,53,77A, 88,159,211; boat Westminster Millennium Pier
facilities: shop

opening: Mon-Sat 10.00-17.00; a telephone call is advisable
admission charge

the nine ceiling paintings by Rubens were commissioned by King Charles 1 in 1635 to commemorate his father King James I. They were intended to glorify the Stuart dynasty, the union of England and Scotland and the peaceful reign of James I

Chiswick House

Burlington Lane, Hogarth Road, W4
020 8995 0508 www.english-heritage.org.uk

transport: Turnham Green u/g ¾mile, Chiswick rail ½ mile; buses 190,290,E3
facilities: audio tour in French & German, hearing loop for video; disabled access with two steps at entrance & a chairlift to upper floors; snacks; giftshop; group tours during winter months

opening: house Apr-Sept 10.00-18.00, Oct 10.00-17.00 (Sats 10.00-noon only); gardens: daily dawn-dusk
admission charge to house; gardens free

the ceiling paintings by William Kent are an allegory to the arts and include musical instruments, portraits of the gods and zodiac signs. The visual arts are architecture (represented by a woman with set square and a cherub with a plan of a temple), sculpture (a fallen bust of Inigo Jones) and painting (a woman unveiling a self-portrait of Kent). Others are in panels and include a copy of a painting in the Doge's Palace, Venice

the ceiling in the Summer Parlour has figures, foliage & animal forms including the heraldic emblem of the Savile family - an owl -that can be seen on the corner panels

Vintners Place

68 Upper Thames Street, EC4
020 7236 1863

transport: Mansion House u/g, Cannon Street u/g & rail; buses 11,15,26,76,344

admission by prior arrangement

the symbol of the Vintners' Company is the swan and the ceiling painting in the lobby reflects this theme. It depicts the Greek legend of Leda and Zeus where Zeus assumes the disguise of a swan in order to seduce Leda. It is by Richard Scinalli

Ham House

Ham Street, Richmond, Surrey, TW10
020 8940 1950 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/southern

transport: Richmond u/g & rail; buses 65,371
facilities: disabled access & wcs; parking; licensed restaurant in the Orangery; tours

opening: house Apr-Oct Mon-Wed, Sat-Sun 13.00-17.00; gardens all year Mon-Wed, Sat-Sun 11.00-18.00
admission charge

superb examples of Antonio Verrio's (c.1640-1707) work can be seen on the ceilings throughout the house

Hampton Court Palace

East Molesey, Surrey, KT8
020 8781 9500 www.hrp.org.uk

transport: Hampton Court rail; buses 111,216,267,411, 416,726,R68; boat Hampton Court; Green Line coach 718 from Victoria

facilities: audio guides in 6 languages; disabled access (wheelchairs available); disabled wcs; parking; Tiltyard Tearoom or Privy Kitchen Coffee Shop, ice cream kiosks; 4 themed shops (Base Court, Garden, Tudor Kitchen, Barrack Block); costumed guides and family trails; free group tours (choose from daily programme)

opening: daily mid Mar-Oct Mon 10.15-18.00, Tue-Sun 09.30-18.00 (last admission 17.15); Nov-mid Mar Mon 10.15-16.30, Tue-Sun 09.30-16.30 (last admission 15.45)
admission charge

paintings by Antonio Verrio can be found on several of the ceilings throughout the Palace. The King's Great Bedchamber has Endymion (an eternal sleeper) in the arms of Morpheus (god of dreams and sleep), and Mars in the lap of Venus is in the Little Bedchamber. The Queen's Drawing Room has Queen Anne portrayed as Justice being attended by Neptune, Britannia, Peace and Plenty.

other ceilings include medallion portraits of King George II and his family on the ceiling coves of the Queen's State Bedchamber with a central piece showing Apollo about to enter a chariot. These were painted by James Thornhill

Kensington Palace

Kensington Gardens, W8
020 7937 9561 www.hrp.org.uk

transport: Queensway, Notting Hill Gate & High Street Kensington u/g; buses 9,10,12,49,52,70,94

facilities: multi-language audio guides; refreshments in The Orangery - morning coffee, light lunches & afternoon tea; gift and souvenirs shop; tours

opening: daily 10.00-17.00 summer; 10.00-16.00 winter
admission charge

the majority of the ceilings in this Palace were painted by William Kent. The Presence Chamber has a trompe l'oeil painting. Trompe l'oeil is literally 'something which deceives the eye' and was often used as a technique in painting or architecture. This ceiling of 1724 is in the 'grotesque' style (painting in antique style) and the centre has Apollo in his chariot

the King's Drawing Room ceiling shows Jupiter and his lover, Semele (1723) while that above the King's Grand Staircase gives the impression of a dome with balustraded openings with onlookers. On the north side can be seen William Kent with his mistress and assistants while musicians play on the south wall (1725-7)

some of the paintings were executed on canvas and the one in the King's Gallery has seven mythological scenes taken from the story of Ulysses. The Privy Chamber has a 1723 imitation of ancient Roman paintings with Mars and Minerva surrounded by the Arts and Sciences. Mars is wearing the Order of the Garter!

Kenwood House

Hampstead Lane, NW3
020 8348 1286 www.english-heritage.org.uk

transport: Archway or Golders Green u/g then bus 210 to Highgate 1 mile; Hampstead Heath rail 1 mile

facilities: audio guides (English, French, German, Italian); disabled access & wcs; wheelchair hire available; cotton gloves supplied for visually impaired visitors to touch cornices, fire surrounds etc; parking; Brew House Café; gift & bookshop; special tours by arrangement, Taster tours every Wed 14.30 (check in advance)

opening: daily Apr-Sept 10.00-18.00, Oct 10.00-17.00,
Nov-Mar 10.00-16.00
admission free

*paintings by Zucchi and Angelica Kauffmann in the
Entrance Hall and Library*

Osterley Park House

Jersey Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7
01494 755566 (infoline) www.osterleypark.org.uk
transport: Osterley u/g ½ mile; Syon Lane rail 1½ miles;
buses H28, H91
*facilities: parking; refreshments; shop; tours by
arrangement*

opening: house 1 April-end Oct Wed-Sun 13.00-16.00;
park daily 09.00-19.30 or dusk
admission charge to house; park free

*the painting by Rubens is a replica, the original having
been destroyed by fire in 1949*

Royal Academy of Arts

Piccadilly, W1V
020 7300 8000 www.royalacademy.org.uk
transport: Piccadilly Circus u/g; buses 3,6,9,12,13,14,
15,19,22,23,38,53,88,139,159
*facilities: acousti guides; disabled access; library by
arrangement; restaurant; shop; tours (Tue-Fri 13.00)*

opening: daily 10.00-18.00, last admission 17.30; Fri
10.00-20.30,
admission charge for exhibitions

by Angelica Kauffman

Syon House and Park

Brentford, Middlesex, TW8
020 8560 0883/LAE 020 8847 4730
www.syonpark.co.uk

transport: Kew Bridge, Brentford, Syon Lane &
Twickenham rail; buses 235,237, 267
facilities: parking

opening: house: Wed, Thur, Sun Mar-Oct 11.00-17.00;
gardens daily 10.00-17.30 or dusk;
admission charge for house & gardens

on the ceiling of the Front Hall

Old Royal Naval College

King William Walk, Greenwich, SE10
020 8331 7897 www.greenwichfoundation.org.uk
transport: Greenwich DLR & rail, Cutty Sark DLR; buses
177,180,188,199,286,386; boat Greenwich Pier
facilities: disabled access

opening: Mon-Sat 10.00-16.15, Sun 12.30-17.00
admission free

*allegorical painting shows King William III & Queen Mary
handing down Peace and Liberty to Europe with a
vanquished Louis XIV clutching a broken sword. By James
Thornhill it is in the Painted Hall A mixture of allegory,
modern & classical history and traditional symbolism it
took 19 years to complete (1707-1726)*

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace Road, SW1A
020 7930 4832 www.royalresidences.com
transport: Victoria, Green Park & St James's u/g; buses
2,8,9,10,11,14,16,19,22,24,36,38,52,73,74,82,137,185,
211,239,C1,C10
*facilities: disabled access but prior application needed for
wheelchairs; shop*

opening: daily Aug-Sept 09.30-16.15
admission charge

*this Royal Palace and London home of the Monarch has
lovely ceilings in the rooms open to the public. There is a
gilded one by Blore in the Dining Room, portrait paintings
of Shakespeare, Milton & Spenser in the Blue Drawing
Room and a gilded rose of England, thistle of Scotland &
shamrock of Ireland in the Music Room*

Boston Manor House

Boston Manor Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8
020 8583 4463 www.cip.org.uk/heritage/boston
transport: Boston Manor u/g, Brentford rail; buses E2,E8,
H91

opening: Apr-Oct Sat-Sun 14.30-17.00 CLOSED APRIL
2004 (enquire 0846 456 2800)
admission free

*there are 19 allegorical figures on the ceiling of the
Drawing Room - five Senses, four Elements, three Virtues,
Peace & Plenty, War & Peace and Father Time flanked by
two cherubs*

St Pancras Chambers

Euston Road, NW1
transport: King's Cross/St Pancras & Euston u/g & rail;
buses 10,17,30,45,46,63,73,91,214,259

*facilities: no disabled access at present or working lifts;
coffee lounge (Mon-Fri 11.30-15.30); guided tours (Sat-
Sun 11.00,13.30 - no booking, small charge; ring
enquiries on 020 7304 3921)*

opening: guided tours only except for entrance hall &
coffee lounge

*this Victorian Gothic former Midland Grand Hotel closed in
1935 and was then used as railway offices. At the
moment it is being converted into a Marriott Hotel with
the upper rooms as loft apartments. The domed sectioned
ceiling of 1876-7 shows the Virtues: humility, liberality,
industry, chastity, temperance, truth, charity and
patience. together with the first coat of arms of the
Midland Railways incorporated with the coats of arms of
the cities served by the railway*

Café Royal Grillroom

68 Regent Street, W1
020 7437 9090
transport: Piccadilly Circus u/g; buses 3,6,9,12,13,14,15,
19,22,23,38,53,88,139,159

*the interior of this grill room is in 1920s style with
chandeliers, gilt mirrors and hand-painted ceilings*

Southgate House

Cannon Hill, Southgate, N14
transport: Southgate u/g, Palmers Green rail; buses 121,
298,299,W6

*this neo-Georgian house with 1723 brick centre is now a
home for the elderly (Beaumont Care Centre). The
baroque stairwell in entrance hall has painted ceilings &
walls showing Caesar's progress into Rome and his
elevation to heaven*

HOK International Ltd

216 Oxford Street, W1
transport: Bond Street & Oxford Circus u/g; buses 3,6,7,
8,10,12,13,15,23,25,53,55,73,94,98,113,137,139,159,
176, 189

*originally designed as a department store but converted
into an office in 1999 the vaulted ceiling has a mural of
operas painted on it*

Windsor Castle

Windsor, Berks, SL4
01753 831118 www.the-royal-collection.org.uk
transport: Windsor rail, Green Line coach from Victoria
facilities: audio guide; disabled visitors should contact
visitors' office; shop for books, postcards & gifts; pre-
arranged tours for groups

opening: daily Mar-Oct 09.45-17.15 (last admission
16.00); Nov-Feb 09.45-16.15 (last admission 15.00)
admission charge

*three paintings by Antonio Verrio (c.1640-1707) including
a Banquet being enjoyed by the Gods in the King's Dining
Room, and Queen Catherine of Braganza crossing the
heavens in a chariot drawn by swans in the Queen's
Presence Chamber*

Lancaster House

Stable Yard Road, Green Park, SW1
transport: Green Park & Hyde Park Corner u/g; buses 2,
8,9,10,14,16,19,22,36,38,52,73,74,82,137
opening: usually by invitation only as this lovely house is
used by the government and diplomatic service for
conferences and entertaining heads of state, politicians
and other celebrities. If you do have the chance to see
inside you will find very beautiful, richly decorated historic
rooms - make the most of the opportunity!

*among the lovely ceilings in this 1820's house, that in
the State Drawing Room shows St Grisogonos being
borne to heaven by angels. By Guercino it is based on a
painting in the church at Trastevere in Rome. The
Veronese Room has Cupid receiving an apple from the
Graces while the South-West Drawing Room depicts the
solar system with the signs of the zodiac*

Black Friar Pub

174 Queen Victoria Street, EC4
020 7236 6394
transport: Blackfriars u/g & rail; buses 11,15,26,45,63,
76,100,172
facilities: bar food (noon-14.30)

opening: Mon-Wed 11.30-22.00, Thur-Fri 11.30-23.00
*an interesting and unusual art deco pub decorated with
scenes of monastic life including a bas-relief of friars
singing carols and playing instruments, gathering grapes
and harvesting apples. It has an arched ceiling with
mosaics and mottos of wisdom such as 'finery is foolery' &
'don't advertise, tell a gossip', marbled columns and
carvings of monks. Well worth a visit but not open
weekends*

Waltham Abbey Church

Greenyard, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9
01992 767897 (Parish Office)
transport: Waltham Cross rail; bus 505
opening: daily 10.00-16.00 winter,10.00-18.00 summer
*this Norman church was restored between 1860 and 1870
by William Burges. The ceiling painting is unusual in that
it is on canvas. It depicts four of the elements and the
twelve zodiac signs with activities appropriate to each sign
(ploughing,weaving etc). Robed figures represent the
months*

Trinity House

Trinity Square, Tower Hill, EC3
transport: Tower Hill u/g, Tower Gateway DLR, Fenchurch
Street rail; buses 15,42,78,100; boat Tower Millennium &
St Katharines Piers
opening: occasional open days.

*this building houses the body responsible for lighthouses
throughout Britain. As might be expected the Court Room
ceiling has allegorical emblems of the sea - Neptune and
Poseiden amongst others- and is by William Holman Hunt
(1827-1910)*

Brompton Oratory (Oratory of St Philip Neri)

Brompton Road, SW7
020 7808 0900
transport: South Kensington u/g; buses 14,74,414,C1
opening: daily 07.00-20.00
*built between 1880 and 1884 this was the first new
Catholic church in London after the Reformation. It has
the third widest nave in Britain after Westminster Abbey &
York Minster and is of High Baroque (Italian Mannerist)
style with side aisles decorated with gold, Siena marble &
Venetian mosaics. The main dome and lantern oratory are
by George Sherrin and is of a congregation of secular
priests living together without vows. The Oratory is well-
known for its music and solemn masses sung in Latin*

A great deal of care has been taken in collecting the
information in this leaflet but *CityThemes* cannot be held
responsible for the accuracy of that information. It can
cover only a few of the many interesting sites to be found
in London and therefore must not be considered a
definitive guide.

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