

# Westminster

Chronological notes for the outline history of the London Borough of Westminster.



## Westminster Abbey

- 605 The first church on the site was built between AD 605-610 by Sebert, king of the East Saxons, and dedicated to St Peter.
- 900 First recorded mention of a monastery on the site of today's abbey.
- 959 Abbey land was defined as:  
Manor of Westminster: bounded by River Tyburn; River Fleet; River Thames; and what is now the line of Holborn and Oxford Street.  
Manor of Ebury: whose boundary ran W to the River Westbourne; it also included the ancient manors of Hyde (now Hyde Park) and Neyte (later called Knightsbridge).

## Westminster (Derivation)

- 785 First recorded mention as 'Westmunster'.



## Westminster, Palace of

- 1050 Palace begun by Edward the Confessor. It became used as a home by all sovereigns until Henry VIII took over Whitehall.

## Westminster Abbey

- 1052 Edward the Confessor began rebuilding an abbey on the site of the C7 church of St Peter.
- 1065 The Abbey was consecrated on 28 December. Edward the Confessor was too ill to attend, Queen Edith acting in his place. The crypt and dormitories had been completed.



## St Margaret, Westminster

- 1064 The church is believed to have been founded by Edward the Confessor. It was the original parish church of Westminster.

## Edward the Confessor

- 1066 Edward the Confessor died on 5 January. he was buried in the Abbey.
- 6 Jan • Harold became king, being crowned in the Abbey on 6 January.
- 28 Sep • William landed in England.
- 14 Oct • Harold was killed at the Battle of Hastings when defending England against William. Harold was buried at Hastings but his body was later translated to Waltham Abbey.
- 25 Dec • William proclaimed himself king, marched on London, burning part of Southwark and was crowned on Christmas Day.

## St James the Less Hospital

- 1189 It was founded in Westminster for 'leprous maidens', dedicated to St James the Less.



## Whitehall, Palace of

- 1240 Land was acquired by Archbishop of York. The buildings became known as 'York House'. He turned them into an official residence for subsequent Archbishops of York.

## Chapter House, Westminster Abbey

- 1257 Completed. It became the meeting-place for the king's council.

## Parliament

- 1258 Simon de Montfort's barons imposed on Henry III the 'Provisions of Oxford' requiring the king to rule according to Magna Charta, established in 1215. The House of Commons was established.
- 1265 Montfort formed a 'Parliament' of archbishops; bishops; abbots; earls; barons; knights; and burgesses from towns. They were all summoned to the King's Council.
- 1295 The first truly representative parliament, called the 'Model Parliament', was inaugurated as the 'House of Commons' by Edward I. It was made up of two knights from every shire; and two burgesses from several towns; to join the peers forming a uniquely diverse assembly. The Commons met in the Chapter House and continued to meet there until 1547.
- 1332 Parliament was provisionally divided into two houses for the first time in 1332.
- 1341 The actual division into two houses was made in 1341. The Commons continued to meet in the Chapter House.



## Great Hall, Westminster

- 1397 Also called 'Westminster Hall', it was built 1397-99 by master mason Henry Yevele. The wooden hammer-beam roof was built by Hugh Herland.

## Westminster, Palace of

- 1512 Fire damaged most of the palace. It slightly damaged the Great Hall. Only the Jewel Tower survived undamaged.

### Whitehall, Palace of

- 1514 Still known as 'York House', the property passed to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey who largely rebuilt it.
- 1530 On the death of Wolsey it passed to Henry VIII who used it as a residence, adding two gateways at the N and S ends. Its name became 'White Hall' after a hall of that name in the Palace of Westminster where the Lords met.



St James's Palace

### St James's Palace

- 1532 The old leper hospital of St James the Less was closed by Henry VIII and a palace was erected on the site. The adjacent land became St James's Park.

### Westminster, The City of

- 1585 Until 1585 Westminster was administered as part of the property of Westminster Abbey by the Steward and Dean.

After the Reformation it became obvious that a separate civic authority was needed to regulate the affairs of the nation's administrative centre.

In 1585 an Act of Parliament 'for the good of the government of the City and Borough of Westminster' set up a court of Burghesses consisting of one, with an assistant, for each of the twelve wards.

### Westminster, The City of

- 1604 The boundary of Westminster was moved E to meet that of the City of London.

### St James's Park

- 1661 Charles II employed Andre le Notre, landscape gardener to Louis XIV, to lay out the gardens. His double lines of trees remain to this day. There was a 'formal water'.



St James's Park

### Covent Garden Market

- 1669 Market authorised. It opened 1671.

### Whitehall, Palace of

- 1698 The palace was destroyed by fire in January and not rebuilt. After the fire the royal residence became St James's Palace.

### Buckingham Palace

- 1705 It was built as 'Buckingham House' by the Duke of Buckingham

### Westminster Bridge

- 1739 The bridge was built 1739-50 by M Charles Labeleye. It was the second bridge in the Westminster-City stretch of the river to cross the Thames, after London Bridge. It was the third bridge in the Metropolitan London area, after London Bridge and Putney Bridge
- 1862 Second bridge built on the same site.



Buckingham Palace

### Buckingham Palace

- 1762 'Buckingham House' became known as 'Buckingham Palace' when George III and his family moved there from St James's Palace. It was the first time that a monarch had lived in it. Royalty used it on and off until Victoria made it her home.
- 1837 20 June • Victoria acceded to the throne and moved into Buckingham Palace from St James's Palace. She was the first sovereign to use it as a home.

### Trafalgar Square

- 1829 It was laid out 1829-41, named after the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805.

### Westminster, Palace of

- 1834 The palace was almost totally destroyed by fire. The Great Hall escaped damage for a second time.
- 1837 New buildings were begun. Charles Barry was the architect and Augustus Pugin designed the interior decoration.
- 1847 House of Lords completed.
- 1852 House of Commons completed and opened by Victoria.



Trafalgar Square

### Crystal Palace, Hyde Park

- 1851 Designed by Joseph Paxton, gardener for the Duke of Devonshire, erected in Hyde Park.



Crystal Palace

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