



THE STATE ROOMS

The Tudor period saw a massive decline in the fortunes of Warwick Castle to such an extent that after the death of Elizabeth the 1st in 1603 the New King, James 1st, considered demolishing the castle entirely. What saved the castle was King James's need to gather people of power and influence around him. One such person was a man called Sir Fulke Greville. James gifted Warwick castle to Sir Fulke. At this stage in history castles were beginning to lose their importance as centres of military power and many were either left to fall to ruin or a new use was found for them. In the case of Warwick Castle, Faulk Greville chose to change Warwick Castle into a luxury country estate. He therefore began a period of construction and renovation which was to continue into the middle of the 18th century.



THE GREAT HALL

The Great Hall has gone through a number of incarnations over the last 400 years. It is built from and upon the ruins of the medieval Great Hall which was partly demolished under the orders of Fulke Greville. It then had to be substantially restored after it was consumed by fire in 1871. The roof was completely destroyed and the walls themselves were very badly damaged.

The interior walls that can be seen today have been re-faced and the vaulted ceiling was installed during this Victorian period. If you take a look in the window bays where the fire would have burned at it's hottest you can still see signs of the fire from the damage caused to the Venetian marble flooring.





ARMS AND ARMOUR

The Great Hall houses the pride of the Warwick Castle collection, which is its arms and armour. Once one of the biggest private collections of such artefacts in England it still houses some important pieces, notably a Maximillian armour and two examples of Milanese armour. You will also find in the Great Hall two fine Victorian wooden Destriers (medieval battle horses), one which carries a Knight in full battle armour and a second which is an example of 16th Century jousting armour.



THE KENILWORTH BUFFET

One of the key items of note in this room, other than the arms and armour, is the Kenilworth Buffet. This magnificent piece of furniture was designed for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Crystal Palace, London. The Great Exhibition was organised during Queen Victoria's reign by her husband, Prince Albert, to show off all of the wonderful inventions produced by the British Empire. The Kenilworth Buffet was carved by local carpenters Cookes and Sons, and took over 9 years to complete. The Buffet was created out of a single oak tree, taken from the grounds of Kenilworth Castle.

The carvings are based on a poem by Walter Scott called Kenilworth and demonstrate the love story of Queen Elizabeth I and her court favourite, Robert Dudley. The buffet also includes carvings of key poets and playwrights of Elizabethan England. It also features the famous bear and ragged staff, which was the emblem of the county of Warwickshire.





THE RED DRAWING ROOM

After the grandeur of the great Hall one would consider the Red drawing room to be more than a little cramped. It's name comes from the colour of the panelling; red lacquer enhanced with gilding. It served as a private withdrawing room for the lord and his family, and some of their special guests. At the end of the communal meal they simply 'withdrew' to their private rooms away from all the noise and bustle. It was a room designed to re-acustom guests to a smaller space before being confronted with the further grandeur and splendour of the other state rooms, making them seem all the more impressive. This is also the reason that the room features few items from the collection.

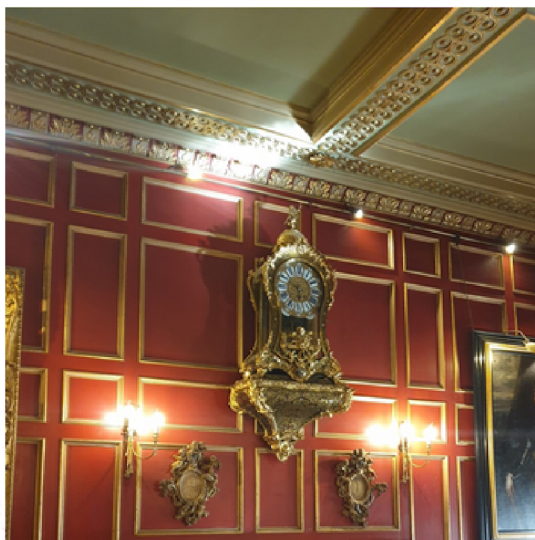
Dominating the room today are waxworks of Henry VIII and his six wives, highlighting perhaps the most well-known story in all of English history. The wives are placed in order of marriage.

There are however one or two items of interest in the room, notably a beautiful Louis XV bracket clock above the fireplace.

The Red drawing room also features a painting of Fulke Greville to whom is attached one of the most famous ghost stories at Warwick Castle.

Having spent around 8 million pounds in today's terms on the rebuilding and restoration of the castle, Fulke unfortunately met a rather gruesome end.

Whilst at his house in Holborn, London, his manservant, a man name Ralph Haywood, took a sneaky look at his master's will and testament. He discovered that he was only to be left £20 (around £9000 today), and was not impressed. So whilst Fulke was being dressed one evening, Haywood took out a knife and stabbed him twice in the stomach. However, Unfortunately for Fulke, this did not kill him immediately. He actually died 28 days later in agony after doctors had attempted to heal him by stuffing pigs' fat into the wound which turned gangrenous. Today his ghost is said to occasionally leave his portrait and wander the corridors and state rooms.





THE CEDAR DRAWING ROOM

Named after the Lebanese Cedar wood panelling which adorns its walls, The Cedar drawing room has always been the centre of the house and it's collection. It is the room where guests of the Earls of Warwick would spend the bulk of their evening. It was used for dinner and dancing.

The collection in the Cedar room is quite eclectic and too vast to do justice in these short paragraphs. However it is worth noting the four Japanese Imari dishes. Imari is a style of porcelain named after the Japanese port from which it was shipped to the west, beginning in the late 17th century. It took it's design from the colourful Japanese textiles of the day. These dishes show depictions of courtesans in exquisitely detailed kimonos and date from around 1700.

It was in the Cedar room that electricity was first switched on at the castle. Having installed a generator plant in the Mill and Engine house, the official switching on of the castle's electricity in December 1894 was timed to co-incide with the birthday of Frances Evelyn, 5th Countess of Warwick. Gas which had lit the castle since 1822 had been removed from virtually all areas. Lamps, chandeliers and wall brackets had been purchased or converted to bring electric light to all parts of the house, from the state rooms and private apartments, to the servant quarters and main driveway.



THE GREEN DRAWING ROOM

In centuries gone by, when men and women would often gather in their own separate rooms, The Green Drawing Room was reserved for the men. Probably the most notable feature of the architecture of this room is the ceiling, which was installed in the 18th century. It is a copy of the famous coffered ceiling from the Palmyra Temple in Syria, which was unfortunately destroyed in the recent conflicts which took place there.

Standing next to the waxwork of Oliver Cromwell is the Armour of Robert Greville, 2nd Lord Brooke, who inherited the castle after the death of his cousin Fulke. Robert was an ardent republican, so when civil war broke out in 1642 he came down firmly on the side of Parliament and was appointed General of the Parliamentary forces in Staffordshire and Warwickshire. He was, however killed at a skirmish at Lichfield in 1643. This is siege armour, identified by an additional plate attached to the breast plate. It is marked from a musket ball, but was not incurred in battle. The mark was made when a musket ball was fired at the breastplate to test its resistance before purchase. Originally armour was tested by firing a bolt from a crossbow but later with a musket. The armour comprises a horseman's pot helmet with a triple bar face-guard. The buff coat is modern, because the original was destroyed in the fire of 1871. Note that only one arm has a gauntlet. This is called a bridal gauntlet and was needed on the arm holding the horse's reins, while the other arm was free to wield the sword.

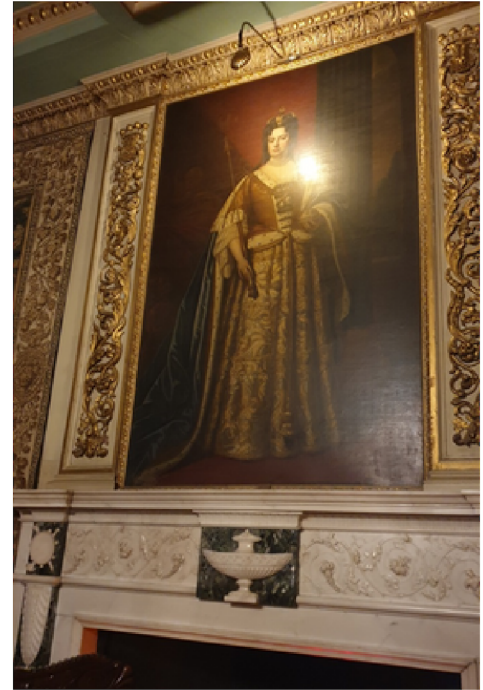




THE QUEEN ANNE BEDROOM

This grand state bedroom holds royal furniture that once belonged to Queen Anne, pictured above the fire place. She was the last of the Stuart line which ended in 1714. Queen Anne's life was somewhat tragic as she would have 17 pregnancies during her life and none of those children survived. The eldest, William, Duke of Gloucester survived to the age of 11. Queen Anne, suffering with grief, slowly gained more weight which affected her health, leading to her early death at the age of 49. She died in her bed at Kensington Palace, which is now on display in this bedroom.

The room itself is rather darker than the other rooms and that is to protect the tapestries hung on the walls. Natural light would fade the colours of the works of art which date from 1604. They were made in Delft in the Netherlands by Franciscus Spiringius. The wealth of the family is shown by the colours used as some were harder synthetically to work with than others. The colours would have run and as a result urine was used to prevent this. These tapestries illustrate scenes from Ovid's Metamorphosis.



THE BLUE BOUDOIR

The Blue Boudoir which takes its name from the colour of the wall coverings which were produced in Lyon, France in the 1890s. Some of the silk had to be restored in the 1980s, but was once again sourced from Lyon. The room is dominated by paintings, mostly of the Russel family who had close ties to the Grevilles through marriage. The most important portrait in this room however is that of Frances Evelyn Daisy Maynard, better known as Daisy the 5th countess of Warwick. Daisy held numerous society balls during her time including the famous Powder Ball of 1895. 500 guests received their invitations in white and gold. They were dressed in costumes from the periods of the French kings Louis XV and XVI

Daisy chose to be Marie Antoinette her photograph in her costume can also be found in the Blue Boudoir.

Daisy was fascinated by this most famous of French queens and this is perhaps the reason that a clock, which was belonged to Marie Antoinette can also be found in this room.

