

The Queen's Coronation 1953 The Coronation State Banquets

The Banquets held to celebrate the Coronation of Her Majesty The Queen in 1953 have been recreated this summer as part of the special exhibition *The Queen's Coronation 1953, at the Summer Opening of Buckingham Palace (27 July – 29 September 2013)*.

Two Banquets were required to accommodate the large number of guests at the Coronation celebrations in 1953. The Banquets held on 3 and 4 June at Buckingham Palace, and two evening receptions on 5 and 9 June, were attended by more than 8,000 guests, including foreign Heads of State, and representatives and rulers of Commonwealth countries, as well as the Royal Family.

The Banquets were held in the Ballroom, with the guests seated at a number of round tables and The Queen's rectangular table at the centre of the room. Eighteenth-century Sèvres porcelain and magnificent silver-gilt from the Grand Service, commissioned by George IV in 1811, were used. The floral decorations, conceived by Moyses Stevens and Edward Goodyear, were specially arranged to suit The Queen's request that both she and The Duke of Edinburgh would be visible to all the guests.

As part of the exhibition this summer, the State Dining Room is dressed to give a flavour of the events of 60 years ago. The tables are set with Sèvres and silver-gilt to reflect how the Banquets would have appeared on the evenings of 3 and 4 June 1953. Displayed alongside are the seating plans for both events and the five-course menu for the Banquet on 3 June, written in French, the official language of court.

The origins of the Coronation Banquet date back to the earliest recorded feast of the Saxon king Edgar in 973. The feasts traditionally took place in Westminster Hall following the monarch's return procession from Westminster Abbey. Many rituals developed around the feast, including the arrival of the King's Champion – for centuries a member of the Dymoke family – who would ride in full armour and throw down his gauntlet three times on behalf of the monarch. The banquet in Westminster Hall was dispensed with at the coronation of William IV in 1830, but since then a celebratory Coronation Banquet has been held at Buckingham Palace.

Please see separate fact sheet for details of the menu of 3 June 1953.

The Queen's Coronation 1953 is part of a visit to the Summer Opening of Buckingham Palace, 27 July – 29 September 2013.

Advance tickets and visitor information: www.royalcollection.org.uk or +44 (0)20 7766 7300.

A selection of images is available from www.picselect.com. For further information and photographs, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, press@royalcollection.org.uk.