



HOUSE OF COMMONS

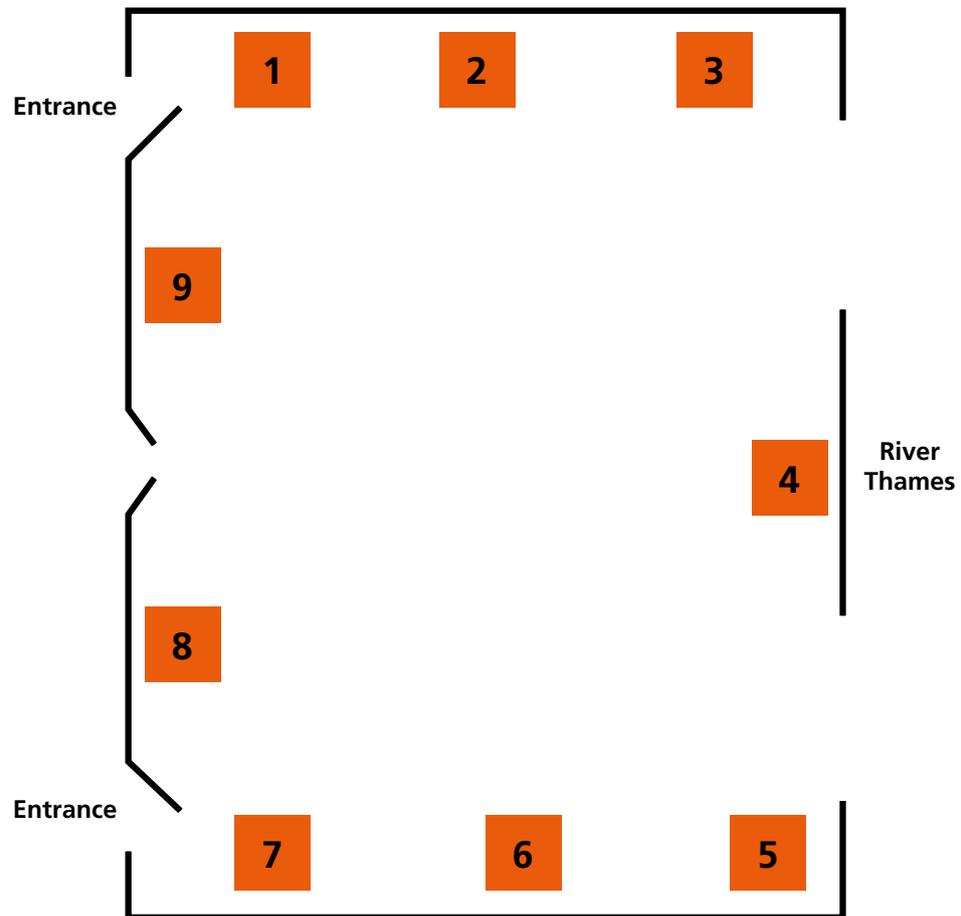
Works of Art in the Stranger's Dining Room



Stranger's Dining Room

The room was originally a Peers' Committee Room which was changed to a dining room in around 1867. By 1902 it had become the Irish Member's Dining room, by 1914 Member's Smoking Room and at some point between 1914 and 1938 it had become the Stranger's Dining Room. In 2006 the dining room was refurbished, wallpaper and carpet to A W N Pugin's designs were reinstated, having been replaced over the years with incorrect designs. Tests were also made on the plainly painted ceiling and original stencil patterns were discovered beneath, a rose and floral pattern in coral and green designed by Pugin and applied by J G Crace and Son.

The room is called Stranger's Dining room as 'Stranger's' was the term originally used to describe anyone who was not a Member of Parliament, and this was one of the few rooms where MPs could bring guests to eat.



Sir William Williams of Nantnog 1634-1700 Speaker

Oil painting, attributed to Emma Williams
WOA 2680

Chevening

Oil painting, by Marcus May 2006
WOA 6504

William Pitt 1759-1806 Prime Minister

Oil painting, after original by John Hoppner
WOA 647

Arthur Wellesley Peel, 1st Viscount Peel (1829-1912), Speaker of the House of Commons

Oil painting, by William Ewart Lockhart
WOA 6550

Charles Abbot 1st Baron Colchester 1757-1829 Speaker 1802-17

Oil painting, by John Hoppner
WOA L30 (Loaned by the National Portrait Gallery, London)

Chequers

Oil painting, by Marcus May 2005
WOA 6432

William Lenthall 1591-1662 Speaker

Oil painting, by Cornelius Johnson
WOA 2741

Sir John Freeman-Mitford, Speaker 1801-2

Oil painting, by Martin Archer Shee
WOA 2706

Sir Fletcher Norton, Speaker 1770-80

Oil painting, by William Beechey
WOA 2705

1. *Sir William Williams of Nantnog* 1634-1700 Speaker

Oil painting, attributed to Emma Williams WOA 2680

William Williams (1634-1700) was born in Anglesey and educated at Jesus College and Gray's Inn. He was elected MP in 1675 and Speaker in 1680. In 1686 he was fined 10,000 by the Court of King's Bench after allegedly authorising an anti-Catholic publication by Thomas Dangerfield. Following this, Williams made peace with the Catholic King James II and was knighted in 1687. During the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Williams was elected MP for Beaumaris and helped to draft the Bill of Rights. This painting is a copy based on the central figure of a 17th century parliamentary group portrait by an unknown artist that was destroyed in the fire of 1834. The portrait is half length with Williams sat to the right in the Speaker's gold braided black gown, broad brimmed hat, plain square white collar and long fair hair (possibly a wig); his right hand rests on the arm of his chair holding a paper.



Given by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bar^t. 1854.



2. *Chevening*

Oil painting, by Marcus May 2006 WOA 6504

This is a painting of Chevening House, in Sevenoaks, Kent. The history of Chevening dates back around 800 years but the current residence is an accumulation of seven generations of the Stanhope family. The Estate spans 3000 acres. Following the death of the 7th Earl Stanhope in 1967, the Chevening Estate Act of 1959 (amended in 1987) came into force and Trustees took over responsibility for the property. The Prime Minister is responsible for nominating who shall occupy the house, this is frequently the Foreign Secretary. This oil painting shows the house from above with landscape in the background and formal gardens in the foreground. It was commissioned by the House of Commons in 2006 and is a companion piece to 'Chequers' by May (number 6)

3. William Pitt 1759-1806 Prime Minister

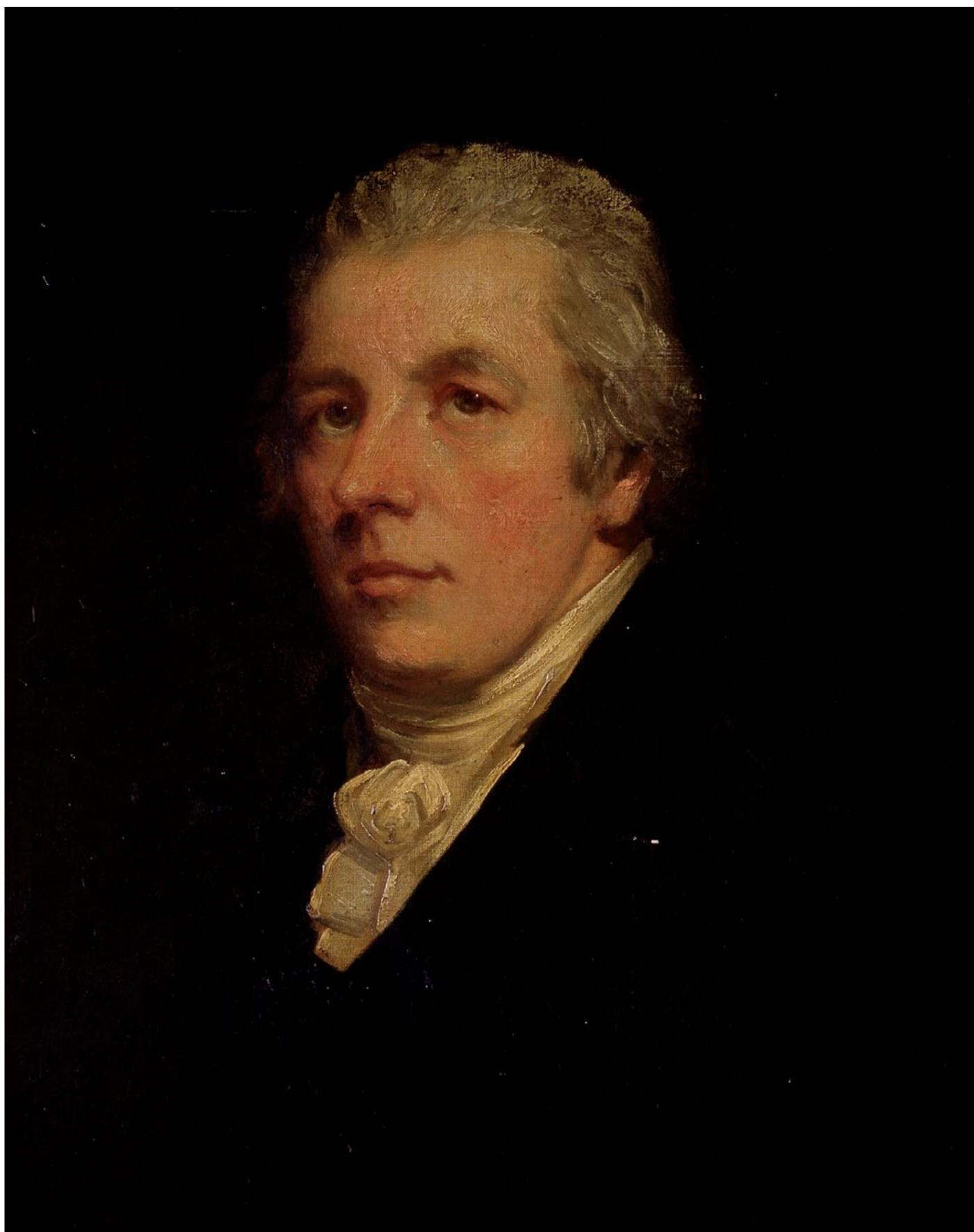
Oil painting, after original by John Hoppner WOA 647

William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) had a premiership that spanned a crucial period in European history, including the French Revolution and the early part of the Napoleonic wars. He became MP at the age of 21, Chancellor of the Exchequer at 23 and Prime Minister at 24. He was renowned for his efficiency and industry (he died through overwork and 'compensatory' drinking) as well as for being incorruptible and conducting a morally impeccable private life. This painting shows Pitt wearing an informal coat with a cravat and is a variation of John Hoppner's 1805 full-length portrait at Cowdray Park in West Sussex. The full length version was at the centre of a thriving market for portrait reproductions after Pitt's death the following year. A number of artists were known to have been employed by Hoppner as copyists.

4. Arthur Wellesley Peel, 1st Viscount Peel (1829-1912), Speaker of the House of Commons

Oil painting, by William Ewart Lockhart WOA 6550

Arthur Wellesley Peel (1829-1912) was born in London and was the youngest of five sons of Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, 2nd Baronet (1788-1850). He was named after his godfather, the Duke of Wellington. In 1865 he became one of the two MPs for Warwick. In Gladstone's first ministry, Peel was Parliamentary Secretary to the Poor-Law Board and went on to become Secretary to the Board of Trade, Liberal Chief Whip and Under-Secretary to the Home Office. Peel was elected Speaker in 1884 and retained his Speakership for ten years. After retirement, Peel remained active in public life. He was Chairman of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery and a Trustee of the British Museum. This oil painting depicts Peel seated wearing the Speaker's Robes with the ceremonial mace to his right. The mace is an official staff of office that is still brought in and out of the Commons chamber at the beginning and end of each day's proceedings (front cover)



5. Charles Abbot 1st Baron Colchester 1757-1829 Speaker 1802-17

Oil painting, by John Hoppner WOA L30
(Loaned by the National Portrait Gallery, London)

Charles Abbot (1757-1829) was son of the Revd. Dr John Abbot. He was educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford before he was called to the bar in 1783. Abbot became Clerk of the Rules for the King's Bench in 1794 and MP in 1795. In 1801 he became Chief Secretary for Ireland and travelled to Dublin. Only a few months later he returned to Westminster upon his election as Speaker, a post he held until 1817 and covering a period dominated by the Napoleonic Wars. It once fell to Abbot to give the casting vote on Mr Whitbread's resolutions questioning the conduct of Lord Melville as Treasurer of the Navy. The Dictionary of National Biography describes 'a scene long remembered as one of the most striking that have ever been witnessed within the walls of the House of Commons. Mr Pitt had moved the previous question, and on division the numbers were 216 on each side. Abbott turned as white as a sheet, says an eye witness, and he paused for at least ten minutes, after which he explained very briefly his reasons for voting in favour of the question being put [...] to the intense grief of Mr Pitt, who pulled a cocked hat over his face to hide the tears which trickled down his cheeks.' Abbot was raised to the peerage upon retirement.

6. Chequers

Oil painting, by Marcus May 2005 WOA 6432

Chequers has been the official country residence of the British Prime Minister since 1921. There has been a house on the site since the 12th century although the current one dates back to the 16th century. The house is likely to have gained its name in the 12th century as it may have been built by an individual called Elias Ostiarius, which meant an Usher of the Court of Exchequer. His coat of arms included the chequer board of the Exchequer. The younger sister of Lady Jane Grey, Lady Mary Grey was a royal prisoner at Chequers, she had married without her family's consent and was banished from court by Queen Elizabeth I for two years. During the First World War Chequers was used as a hospital and then a convalescent home for officers. This painting shows the house from above with landscape in the background and walled gardens in the foreground. It is a companion piece to 'Chevening' by May (number 2). It was commissioned by the House of Commons Works of Art Committee in 2004.

7. William Lenthall 1591-1662 Speaker

Oil painting, by by Cornelius Johnson WOA 2741

William Lenthall (1591-1662) was Speaker during one of the most turbulent periods in British history and the most significant in regard to the assertion of Parliamentary rights over Royal prerogative. On 4 January 1642, King Charles I entered the House of Commons to arrest five Members of Parliament for high treason. The Members in question had already fled and Speaker Lenthall refused to grant the King their names. He is famously quoted as saying: 'May it please your majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as this house is pleased to direct me whose servant I am here; and humbly beg your majesty's

pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this is to what your majesty is pleased to demand of me'. Speaker Lenthall therefore defied the King to uphold the privileges of Parliament. It was one of the events that led to the Civil War (1642-1646) between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists. Eventually, King Charles I was tried in Westminster Hall and beheaded outside the Banqueting House, Whitehall in 1649. No monarch has entered the House of Commons in an official capacity since and it remains the reason why the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod summons MPs to hear the Sovereign's speech in the House of Lords at the State Opening of Parliament.



8. Sir John Freeman-Mitford, Speaker 1801-2

Oil painting, by Martin Archer Shee WOA 2706

John Freeman-Mitford (1748–1830) was elected a bencher of Inner Temple in 1789 and appointed Chancellor of Durham and Second Justice of the Carmarthen circuit. Mitford entered Parliament in 1788 as MP for the borough of Bere Alston in Devon, a post he held until 1799. In 1801 Mitford succeeded Addington as Speaker of the House of Commons and became Chancellor for Ireland the following year. It was this same year (1802) that he was made a Peer with the title first Baron Resedale. Mitford was strongly opposed to Catholic Emancipation and distrusted the Catholic priesthood in Ireland. In 1803, he married Lady Frances Perceval (1767-1817), sister of Spencer Perceval, Prime Minister from 1809-1812.



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9. Sir Fletcher Norton, Speaker 1770-80

Oil painting, by William Beechey WOA 2705

Fletcher Norton (1716-1789) was born in Yorkshire and became MP for Appleby in 1756, Wigan in 1761 and Guildford in 1768. It was this latter seat that he held until his elevation to the peerage in 1782. In 1762 Norton was appointed Solicitor-General under the Bute administration. While in this role, he took part in the prosecution of John Wilkes for publishing his controversial texts, no. 45 of the *North Briton* and *Essay on Woman*. In 1770 Norton was elected Speaker of the House of Commons. However, Norton proved to be an unpopular Speaker and was replaced in 1780. The artist of this portrait, Sir William Beechey (1753-1839) was a portrait painter greatly influenced by Joshua Reynolds and was a former pupil of Johann Zoffany. Beechey was appointed portrait painter to Queen Charlotte in 1793 and was knighted in 1798 in recognition of his most ambitious painting, *Review of the Horse Guard with King George III and the Prince of Wales* (formerly Royal Collection; destroyed in the fire at Windsor Castle, 1992).



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The Parliamentary Art Collection is the national collection of art relating to the history of Parliament. The Collection contains images of important Parliamentary events past and present, images of people who have played an important role in making Parliament what it is today, and images which record the development over the centuries of the Palace of Westminster and the other buildings of the Parliamentary Estate. The earliest pieces date from the medieval age, with major holdings dating back to the 18th century, together with significant contemporary holdings.