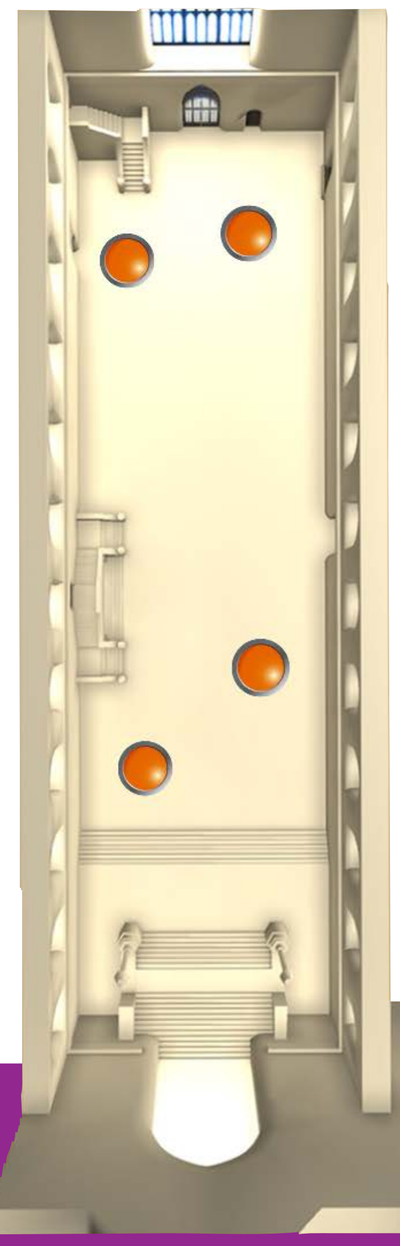
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

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Westminster Hall

Introduction

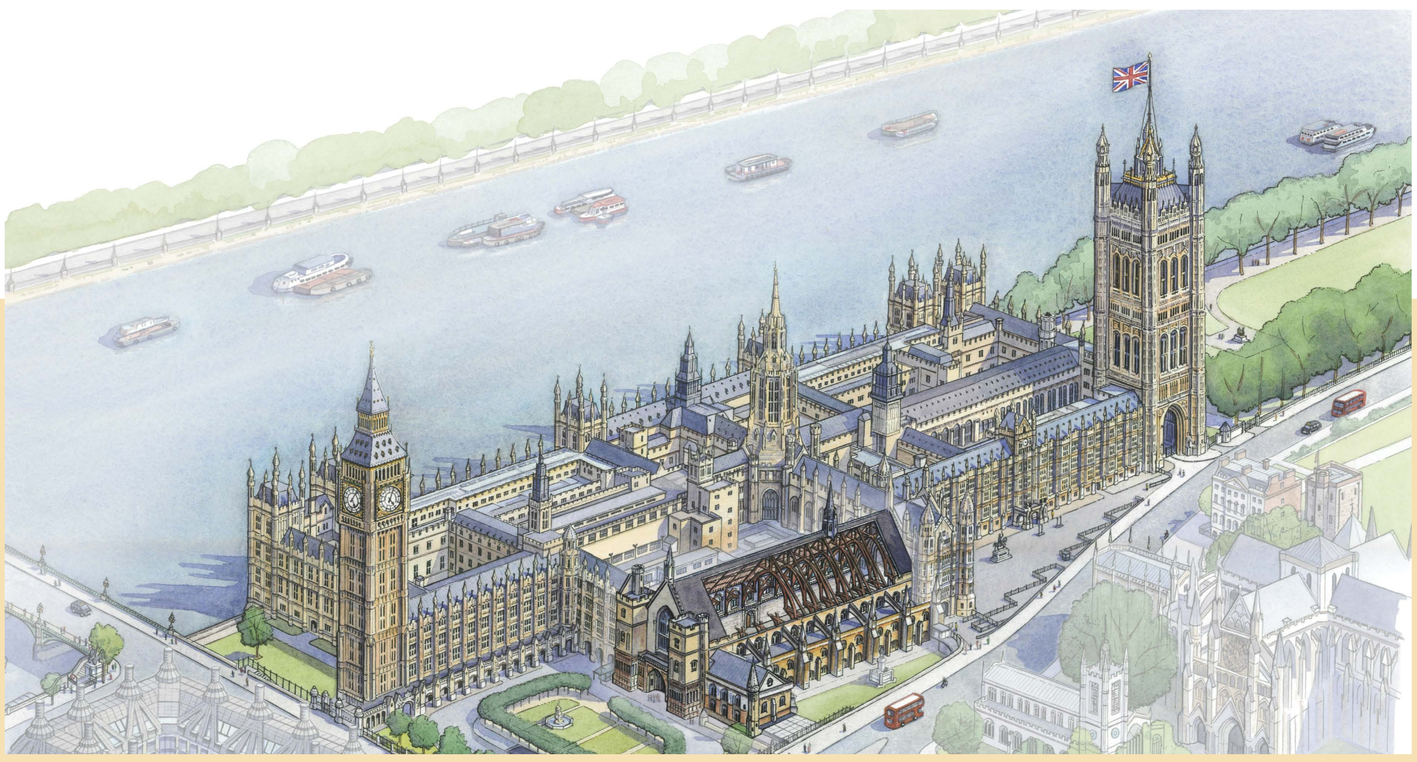
Find out more about the rich history of Westminster Hall and how you can use these signboards to trigger interactive experiences on your device.



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by visiting the Wi-Fi access poster on the back of this signboard.

Headphones are required to hear the narration, or a subtitle option is available.



The Palace of Westminster, ink and watercolour drawing, by Donna Scott, 2012

Westminster Hall is the oldest part of the Palace of Westminster. The first stones of this historic building were laid in 1097 under the reign of William Rufus, son of William the Conqueror, and have been standing here ever since.

In over nine hundred years of history, many great occasions and memorable events have taken place here. Westminster Hall has been the scene of royal feasting and played home to the nation's law courts; it has seen a King sentenced to death while Presidents have given addresses here; and Westminster Hall has twice narrowly escaped from fire.

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The Hammerbeam Roof

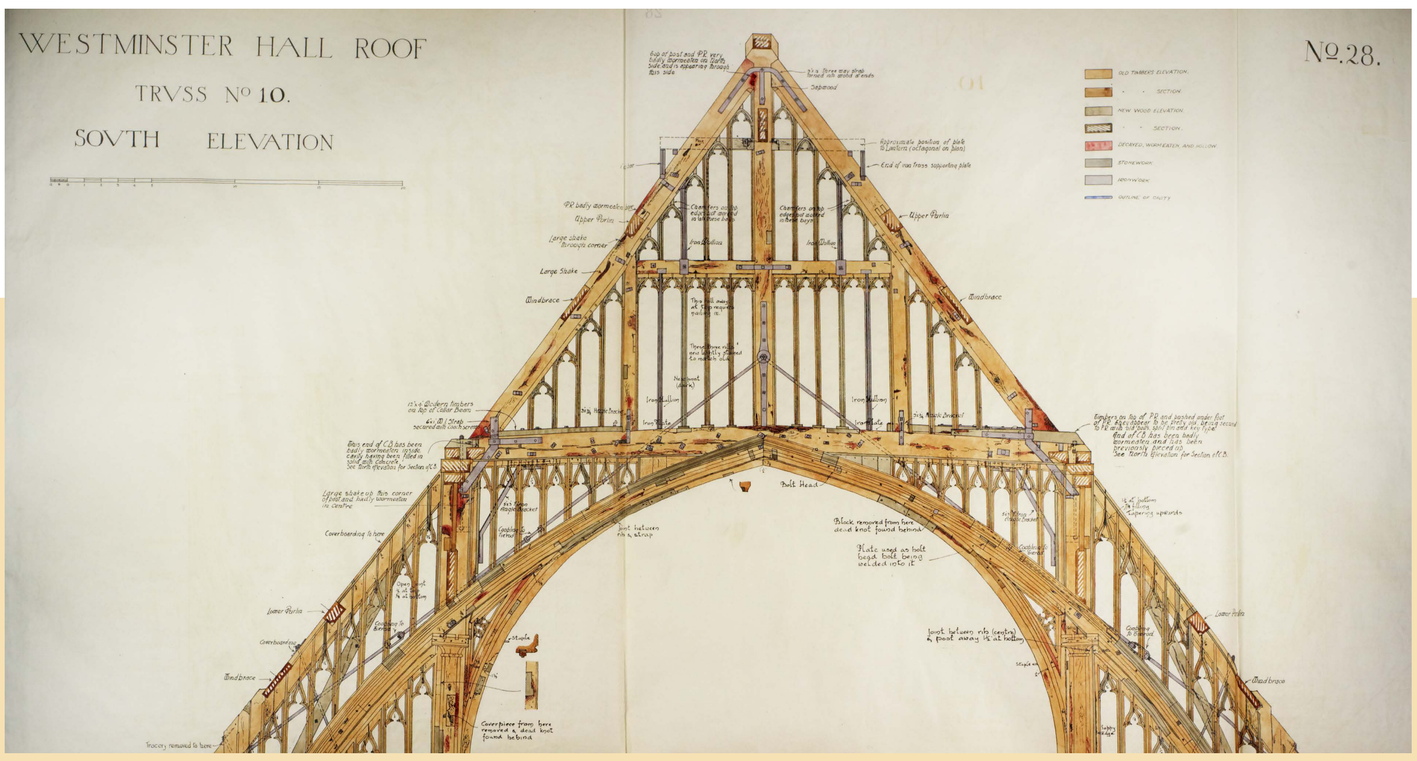
Take a closer look at Westminster Hall's hammerbeam roof and zoom in on some of the finer detail, including the carved angels, in this 3D model.



Headphones are required to hear the narration, or a subtitle option is available.

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Westminster Hall roof truss, by Sir Frank Baines, 1914, Parliamentary Archives, HC/LB/1/114/42/28 www.parliament.uk/archives
Architectural drawing from 1914 renovations

The current roof of Westminster Hall was built in the 1390s and completed in 1401.

Timbers spanning the width of the Hall without using supporting pillars was a great architectural challenge. The thirteen great wooden trusses built by the carpenters to support this huge structure were a marvel of engineering.

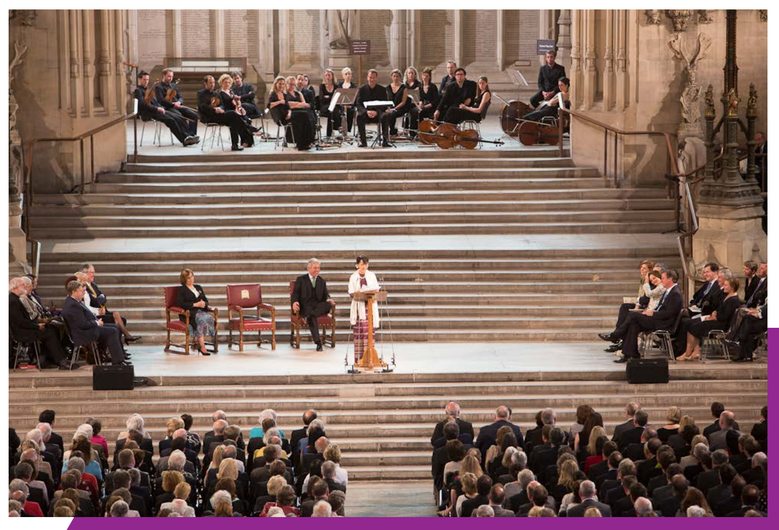
They are also thought to signify the thirteen apostles of Christ and represent the divine authority of the King.

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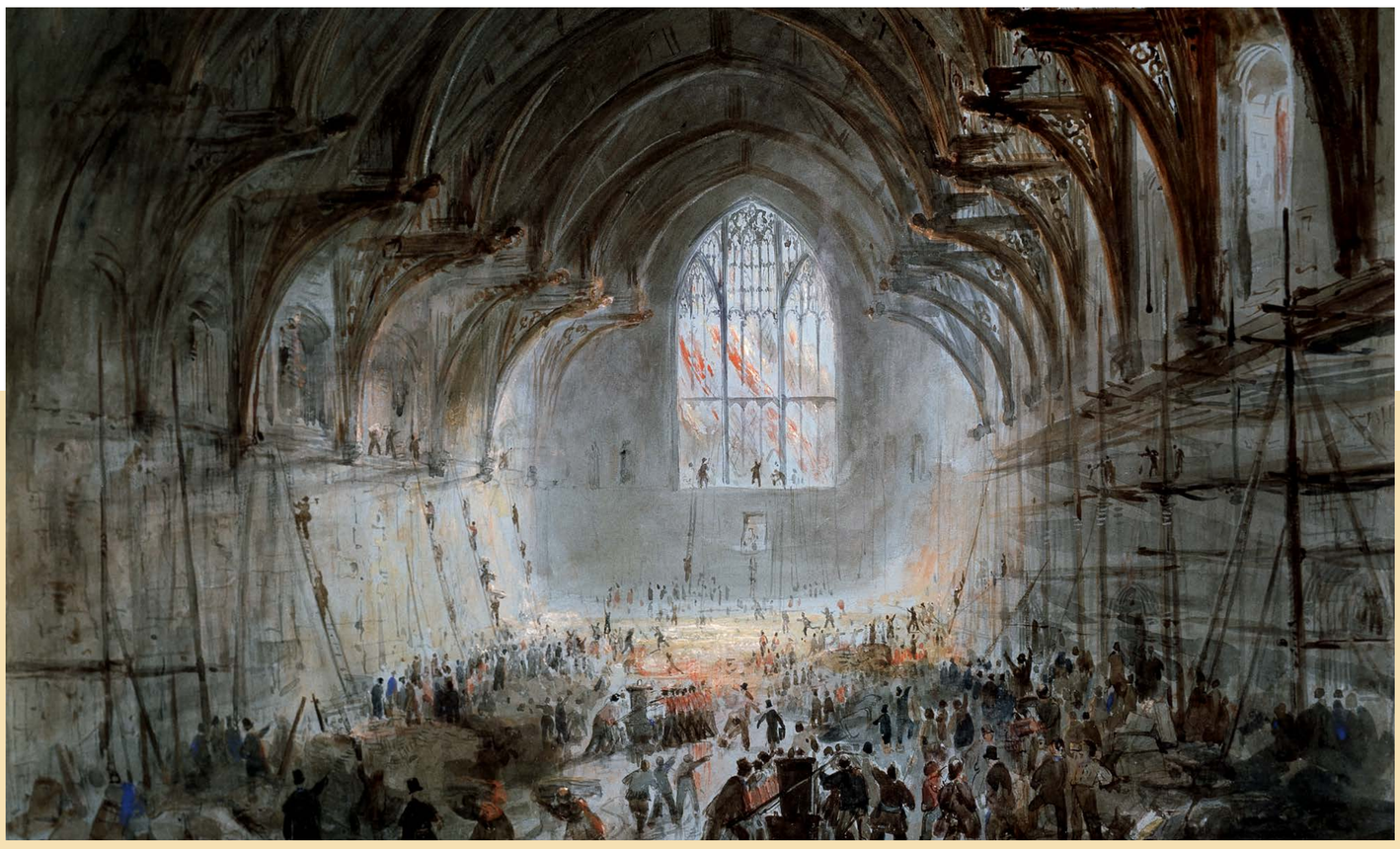
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Changes Through Time

Take a look at images of great events in the Hall from Parliament's collection to get a sense of its many functions over the years.



Once the experience is triggered, hold your device in the direction of the large staircase at the southern end of Westminster Hall.



Westminster Hall on Fire 1834 watercolour by George B. Capion, 1834,
© Palace of Westminster Collection, WOA 1669 www.parliament.uk/art

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Since it was built in the 11th century, Westminster Hall has been the scene of many great events.

Recent centuries have seen less feasting and pageantry but no less drama. Standing here in 1834 you would have seen firefighters struggling to save Westminster Hall from the flames that burnt the rest of the Palace to the ground.

At the start of the twentieth century, you may have watched volunteer army units on parade, or in 1941 the bomb damage inflicted during the War.

More recently great speeches have been given in this Hall by dignitaries including Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and Aung San Suu Kyi.

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

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The King's Table

Trigger an augmented reality 3D model of the King's table, laid as it would have been at the time of George IV's coronation banquet in 1821.



Headphones are required to hear the narration, or a subtitle option is available. To get the full experience, keep this signboard in view at all times and take a number of steps backwards until the King's table is clearly visible.



Coronation Banquet of George IV in Westminster Hall oil painting by an unknown artist,
© Palace of Westminster Collection, WOA 5870 www.parliament.uk/art

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by visiting the Wi-Fi access poster near the main entrance to Westminster Hall.

From the time of Richard I in 1189 right through to the coronation of George IV in 1821, the coronation banquet of each King or Queen took place in Westminster Hall, after a ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

The King's High Table was raised on a dais at this end of the Hall and laid for royal banquets on special occasions.

Archaeological work in 2006 uncovered the dark Purbeck marble King's Table which was in use from the 14th century until the time of King Charles II.

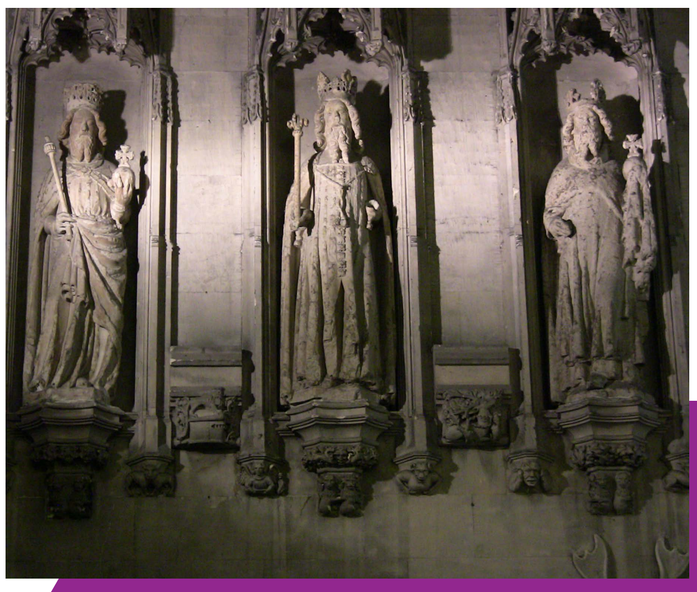
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

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Hidden Features

Go behind the scenes and discover the features hidden behind the great walls of Westminster Hall.

Headphones are required to hear the narration, or a subtitle option is available.





St Mary Undercroft © Parliamentary Copyright - Creative Commons

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Over the years, Westminster Hall has been adorned with the work of many great craftsmen. Emblems such as the unicorn and lion of Scotland and England appear frequently; so does the white hart stag, the personal emblem of King Richard II who renovated the Hall in the 14th century.

The buildings surrounding Westminster Hall are no less spectacular. Doorways from this Hall lead to a range of important chambers. They include the Grand Committee Room, where MPs hold debates; the Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft, pictured above, once used for worship by the Royal Household; and St. Stephen's Hall, leading towards the House of Commons and House of Lords chambers.

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Explore Westminster Hall App Signboard

Lying in State

See an augmented reality model of Winston Churchill's guarded coffin during his lying in state.



Headphones are required to hear the narration, or a subtitle option is available. To get the full experience, keep this signboard in view at all times and take a number of steps backwards.



Gladstone Lying-in-State, Westminster Hall 1898, watercolour, by Charles James Lauder, © Palace of Westminster Collection, WOA 2674 www.parliament.uk/art

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On his death in 1965, Winston Churchill's state funeral was preceded by a period of lying in state in Westminster Hall. His coffin was placed on a raised platform and over 300,000 people filed past to pay their last respects to him.

The first person to lie in state in Westminster Hall was Prime Minister Gladstone in 1898.

Since then, Kings, Queens and, most recently, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, have lain here. You will find plaques on the stone floor marking these occasions.

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Explore Westminster Hall App Signboard

The Trial of Charles I



Bring King Charles I back to life with this 3D animation and hear him speak as he stands on trial, right here in Westminster Hall.

Don't forget to take your photo with him to share with friends. Headphones are required to hear the speech, or a subtitle option is available. To get the full experience, keep this signboard in view at all times and take a number of steps backwards until King Charles I is clearly visible.



Death Warrant of Charles I, 1649, Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/JO/10/1/297A www.parliament.uk/archives

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King Charles I was tried as a 'tyrant, traitor and murderer' in Westminster Hall in 1649 – the first ever trial of a King of England. The court sentenced him to death and he was beheaded outside the Banqueting House on Whitehall. The trial took place in public and attracted large crowds to Westminster Hall.

Other prominent trials in the Hall included those of Guy Fawkes, Sir Thomas More and William Wallace. All were charged with treason and condemned to death.

Westminster Hall also served as the home of the law courts for hundreds of years. The Court of King's Bench, the Court of Common Pleas and Chancery all sat here.