

Tower of London



The city of London, England contains some of the most beautiful architecture that can be found around the world. Even after the great fire of 1666 the structures of Westminster Abbey and the Banqueting House survived the chaos. The greatest structure that stands in London today is the great Tower of London, or commonly known as the Tower. It is one of the greatest historical monuments that stand in England today. Over time it has

expanding to become a stronger fortress. It is adjacent to the Tower Bridge and the Thames River. The central building that was

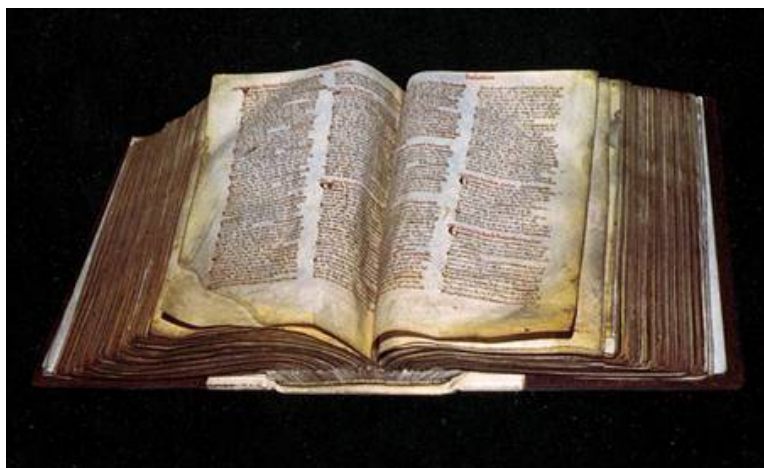
first built was the greatest work of Conqueror. This started during the In the book, Edward



White Tower, the William the construction Norman Conquest. *London*, by Rutherford, you

see the building of the first tower and how the families in the book are all involved in the building of the Tower. It represents one of the early uses of it and the drama that happens describes the time period of the Norman Conquest. Over time different leaders and figureheads have added to the building which furthered the uses and purposes of it.

The tower has been used for many different purposes over time and the families in the book are involved with the building of it and contributed to the secrets of it. Even though it has been altered over time you can still see aspects from its time, “The landscape also holds many clues to the Norman Conquest. Besides the ditches, mottes and earth banks of the early castles, there are the remains of the great open fields preserved as ridge and furrow strips. Then there are the royal forests the Normans created, such as the New Forest. The Domesday Book is a great property survey of



the kingdom; and a glance at the dictionary shows many words still in everyday use that were originally Norman

French. The clues to the conquest are still all around us.”ⁱ Even

thought the Tower's have improved and moved on you can still see the characteristics and past from the time that was represented in the book *London*.

The construction of the Tower was first ordered by William the Conqueror. It was not finished in his time but was later finished by his successors. How it began is a mystery, "Gundulf, the new Bishop



of Rochester, was in charge; Norman masons were employed and some of the building stone was specially imported from William's native Normandy. Labour, however, was

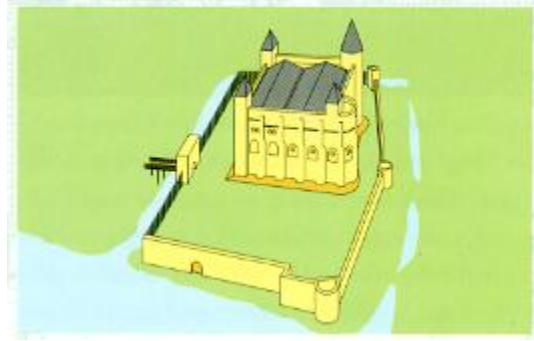
provided by Englishmen. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle comments in 1097 that 'many shires whose labour was due to London were hard pressed because of the wall that they built around the Tower'. By 1100 the White Tower was complete."ⁱⁱ He ordered the structure to

be built in order to keep the city of London safe. He did not want any outsiders getting in. This was part of one of the uses that the tower provided over time. He invaded and took over London in 1066, after many unsuccessful tries and made himself the king. Because of his harsh tactics, war methods and paranoia he wanted to protect his territory that he just invaded. He demanded the building of the huge tower so it would be impossible to invade London and take it over like he did. There was also much conflict going on in Europe during that time, “First there had been English revolts; Scotland had threatened; the Danes had invaded. More



than once it looked as though William might lose his new island kingdom.” (p. 203) Even though it was not finished during his life his predecessor, William Rufus, did much work for the tower, along with the Thames Bridge and the great hall at Westminster.

Over time various kings and queens would order construction of the building for purposes they deemed necessary.



(Tower, circa 1100)

Along with being the watchtower of London, the tower had other ways that it was used. Over time when the structure became more developed and actually finished, the different leaders of London decided to use it for different reasons, “Gundulf's great Tower was used both as fortress and prison - Ralph Flambard, Bishop of Durham and favourite of Rufus, was imprisoned there by Henry I, escaping by a rope after a heavy drinking session that left his jailers sleeping...In the time of Henry III, who spent much of his youth in the Tower and later filled it with prisoners...Animals

were also kept in the Lion Tower-sometimes providing lion and bear baiting entertainments - until the last were dispatched in the nineteenth century to Regent's Park. Edward I invited within the Tower of London the alchemist Raymond Lully, and in the "secret chamber of St. Katharine" Lully declared that he transformed crystal into diamond for the King's benefit. It was popularly believed that Edward's Crusades were financed by like wizardry, although the 600 Jews whom he committed to the vaults of the White Tower also contributed. To the Tower Edward II sent Knights Templars found south of the Trent after the dissolution of the Order; in its frowning security his little daughter "Jane of the Tower" was born; there Queen Isabel and Lord Mortimer guarded Edward III during his minority ; and at the Tower, in 1330, Mortimer was executed."ⁱⁱⁱ All of these uses are over time and gradually changed as culture and politics changed.

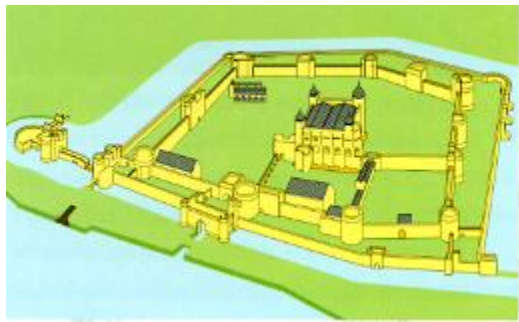
The earlier years of the Tower and its lesser development and expansion limited how it could first be used. It's limited purposes were, "...the enclosure contained a number of timber buildings for residential and service use. It is not clear whether these included a royal residence but William the Conqueror's immediate successors probably made use of the White Tower itself. It is important for us



today to remember that the functions of the Tower from the 1070s until the late 19th century were established by its Norman founders. The Tower was never primarily intended to protect London from external invasion, although, of course, it could have done so if necessary. Nor was it ever intended to be the principal residence of the kings and queens of England, though many did in fact spend periods of time there. Its primary function was always to provide a base for royal power in the City of London and a

stronghold to which the royal family could retreat in times of civil disorder.”^{iv} As time developed, the structure developed and different leaders took over and used the Tower as they saw fit.

Henry VII was one the first leaders of England to use it as a prison. It was huge for holding political and religious prisoners



who went against the King, “The first important Tudor prisoners were Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher of

Rochester, both of whom were executed in 1535 For refusing to acknowledge Henry VIII as head of the English Church. They were soon followed by a still more famous prisoner and victim, the King's second wife Anne Boleyn, executed along with her brother and four others a little under a year later. July 1540 saw the execution of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex and former thief minister of the King - in which capacity he had modernized the

Tower's defenses and, ironically enough, sent many others to their deaths on the same spot. Two years later, Catherine Howard, the second of Henry VIII's six wives to be beheaded, met her death outside the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula which Henry had rebuilt a few years before.”^v This was another use of the (Tower, circa 1547, when it was used as prison) Towers, a persecution chamber.

Even though it could seem like there were a lot of persecutions at the Tower of London, few actually took place within the walls of it. Most of the persecutions that occurred in London were away from the Tower and people were hung, beheaded, drawn, or quartered. The persecutions, “Six beheadings have occurred on Tower Green. Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII, was executed by a French swordsman in 1536; Catherine



Howard, Henry's fifth wife, lay her head on the block in 1542. Lady Jane Grey, who reigned as Queen for only nine days in 1553, died by the axe in 1554 for "usurping the throne of England." Less famous victims were Margaret Plantagenet Pole, the 68-year-old Countess of Salisbury, who refused to go quietly and required several blows of the axe to die in 1541. The last prisoner to beheaded at the Tower was Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, who was arrested after plotting against Queen Elizabeth I in 1601.”^{vi} Even with limited deaths it is known greatly for the purpose of killing. These people were known for their deaths in the Towers.



Another use of the Tower was for the royal families to have a safe place to be if there was anything ever going on in London.

Although many kings and queens have stayed at the Towers it was never intended to be the main spot for royalty to live. The royalty

would stay in castles like

Westminster. The only king that

added to the Tower for his own



personal pleasure was Henry VIII. He wanted to enjoy comfort for

him and his second wife who he ended up persecuting, Anne

Boleyn. After that hardly any leaders had additions made to the

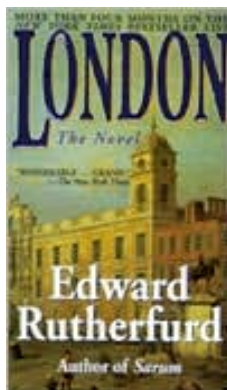
Tower for their own enjoyment to stay there. The Tower's main

function up until the nineteenth century was to stand tall as a

fortress and keep harm and invasion away from the citizens of

London.

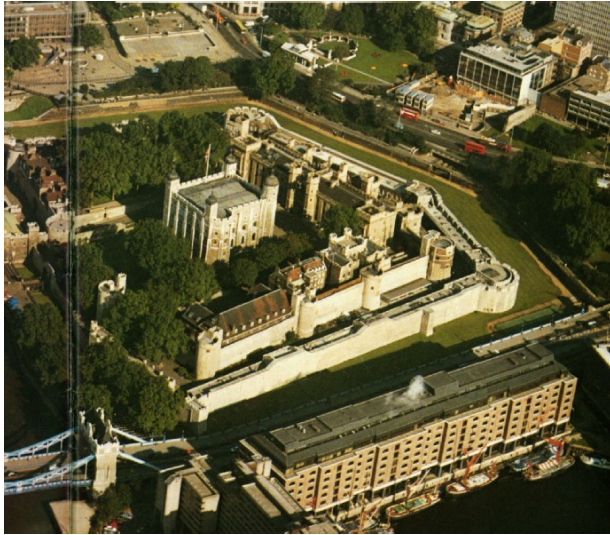
One of the reasons for the imprisonment, persecutions and fear of invasion was because of the political culture and history of England. They played an important role in the arts in sciences. The Tower of London wasn't the only grand piece of architecture of this time. There are many museums that hold beautiful paintings, sculptures and other forms of art. One of the biggest conflicts of England has been the conflict over the primary language. Protestant or Christian? The kings and church have had conflict over which religion is going to be accepted in the country.



In the book, *London*, different characters in the book are helping build the prestigious Tower. They did not know that it would be known as the most infamous tower in London, the White Tower. They describe in the book that during this time, William the Conqueror did not trust anyone in London because he thought people were as

conniving as him and he did not want to be thrown out of power. He sent out troops to go to everyone's house to make sure that no one was going to revolt against him. Because of the cleverness of the Ralph and Henri Silversleeves, the illegal operation that they were performing was not ever found out, except by one man who got killed for his knowledge of their activity. With the help from a serf, Osric, the men built weapons and other forms of armor and armed forces and stored them in the Tower. They did not know who they were doing it for or what the reason for the illegal activity, but they went along with it. Osric could easily help with carrying the weapons into the Tower because he was one of the laborers. He was forced to do some of the hardest work. Even the men that were building the Tower had motives outside of their jobs. What they were doing was highly illegal and if caught could have been punished by death. This is just an example of the uses of

the Tower that is presented in the book during the Nomadic Conquest. Different characters were also held as prisoners in the Tower during the Tudor period.



In conclusion, the Tower of London is an epic monument that has grown and become stronger since it was ordered to be built during the Norman Conquest. As time went on, towers kept being added to the huge establishment. Today all the names of the Towers are, The White Tower, Salt Tower, Martin Tower, the execution site, Cradle Tower, Constable Tower, Chapel Royal of St. Peter ad Vincula, Chapel of St. John's, Broad Arrow Tower, Bowyer Tower, Bloody Tower and The Beauchamp Tower. It started as just a symbol for a king who wanted no outside influence of invasion. Some of the people that

helped build this monument were displayed in Edward Rutherford's book, *London*. They participated in the making of one of most prestigious buildings in England today. They used it as a holding chamber for illegal armed forces and even participated in a murder. Over time, it was used as a chamber for torture and for imprisonment. The characters of the book went as far as to kill someone and to hide the body in the tower like it would never be found. This structure is so amazing that William Shakespeare wrote about it in one of his plays, showing that it is famous and was well known for its use as a prison. The Tower of London is not just any building; it contains secrets and stories from many different generations from the time. Today, it is one of the biggest tourists' attractions in all of London because of its great history.



ⁱ <http://www.roland-collection.com/rolandcollection/section/31/118.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon/sightsandstories/buildinghistory/normanbeginnings.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.londononline.co.uk/tower/intro/8/>

^{iv} http://www.castles.org/castles/Europe/Western_Europe/United_Kingdom/England/england12.htm

^v http://www.castles.org/castles/Europe/Western_Europe/United_Kingdom/England/england12.htm

^{vi} <http://europeforvisitors.com/europe/countries/uk/tower-of-london-prisoners.htm>