

Above: the Changing of the Guard outside Buckingham Palace. The blue plume on the bearskin hat indicates an Irish Guard, one of five Regiments. Opposite page and below right: a Guard with bayonet.

A VERY ROYAL TRADITION

The Changing of the Guard

Es una de las principales atracciones de la capital británica, admirada cada día con curiosidad por miles de turistas que se agolpan frente al Palacio de Buckingham y asisten a esta larga y pomposa ceremonia que se remonta a los tiempos de la reina Victoria.

PRE-INTERMEDIATE **A2**

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GLOSSARY

- 1 **highly-trained:** muy bien entrenados
- 2 **infantry:** infantería
- 3 **bearskin:** piel de oso
- 4 **to last:** durar
- 5 **to relieve:** relevar

Since 1660, highly-trained¹ infantry² soldiers have guarded the Monarch and the Royal Palaces, and their bearskin³ hats and red tunics are a symbol of the British Monarchy. Most visitors to London go and see the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. But what exactly is this world-famous ceremony?

TO PROTECT THE QUEEN

Lasting⁴ about forty-five minutes, the Changing of the Guard ceremony is the

moment at which a group of soldiers is relieved⁵ of their responsibility for protecting the Queen and her entourage and replaced by a new batch⁶ of soldiers. But, in the Royal tradition, this is not as simple as it seems.

A NEW ROYAL HOME

In 1837, Queen Victoria moved her royal residence from St. James's Palace to Buckingham Palace, less than half a mile away. Some of the Queen's Guards accompanied her to her new home, while



▷ GLOSSARY

- 6 **batch:** grupo
- 7 **detachment:** destacamento
- 8 **mall:** bulevar
- 9 **towards:** hacia
- 10 **meanwhile:** mientras tanto
- 11 **forecourt:** patio frontal
- 12 **three hundred yards:** 300 yardas (275 metros)
- 13 **to hand over:** entregar, transferir
- 14 **to rest:** descansar
- 15 **to head to:** dirigirse
- 16 **view:** vista
- 17 **to get in the way:** ponerse en su camino
- 18 **to shout out:** gritar
- 19 **to make way:** abrir paso



Above: a map showing the three key locations in the Changing of the Guard ceremony. 1. Buckingham Palace. 2. St. James's Palace and 3. Wellington Barracks. Top: the marching band.

the others remained at St. James, so two separate sets of guards were formed.

OLD GUARD

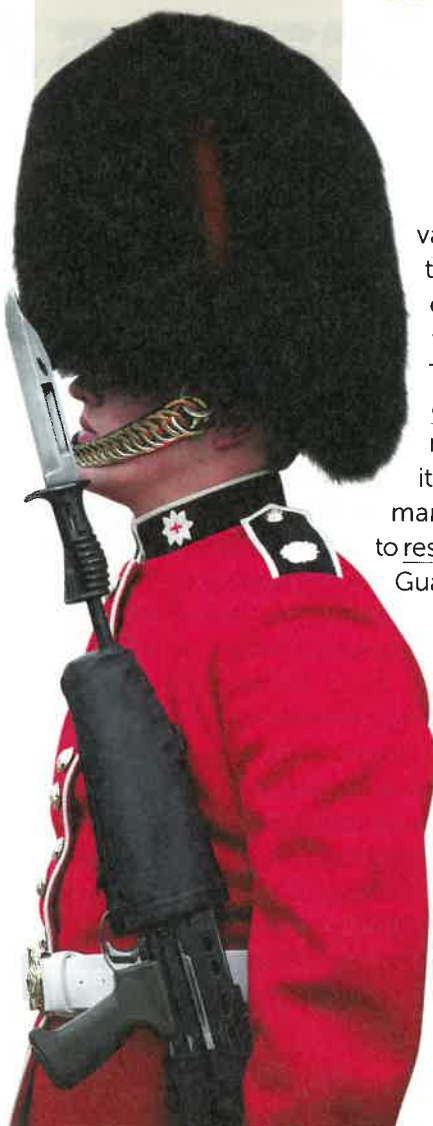
Every day at 10.30am, the Captain of The Queen's Guard inspects the St. James's detachment⁷ of the Old Guard. If everything is in good order, they march down a wide avenue⁸ called The Mall towards⁹ Buckingham Palace preceded by a marching band.

NEW GUARD

Meanwhile¹⁰, the Old Guard at the Buckingham Palace detachment is also inspected as they wait for the St. James's Palace detachment to arrive. When both detachments meet, they stand in the forecourt¹¹ of Buckingham Palace and wait for the New Guard to arrive from Wellington Barracks, a military headquarters just three hundred yards¹² away. Meanwhile, the band forms a circle and plays a selection of music.

PRESENT ARMS!

At 11 o'clock the New Guard enters the forecourt of Buckingham Palace and ad-



vances towards the Old Guard. The two guards then 'present arms', which consists of them holding their rifles vertically in front of them as a salute. Then the Palace keys are handed over¹³, symbolising the transfer of responsibility. The band continues its performance, and the Old Guard marches back to Wellington Barracks to rest¹⁴, while a detachment of the New Guard heads to¹⁵ St. James's Palace.

KEEP CLEAR

The Changing of the Guard is a very popular spectacle so if you want to get a good view¹⁶ of it, make sure you arrive at Buckingham Palace before 10.15am. And don't get in the way¹⁷! The Foot Guards never march around members of the public. They just shout out¹⁸ "Make way¹⁹ for the Queen's Guard!" and keep moving. ☒