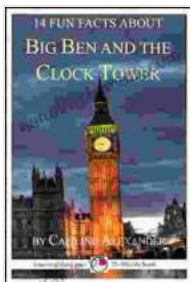


14 Fun Facts About Big Ben And The Clock Tower

Big Ben, the iconic clock tower of the Palace of Westminster in London, is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world. Its majestic presence and the deep, resonant chimes of its bells have become synonymous with the city. But beyond its familiar facade, Big Ben holds a wealth of fascinating stories and intriguing facts that reveal the rich history and significance of this beloved monument.



14 Fun Facts About Big Ben And The Clock Tower: A 15-Minute Book (15-Minute Books) by Nikki Tate

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 2265 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 35 pages
Lending	: Enabled



1. The Tower's Official Name is Elizabeth Tower

While commonly known as Big Ben, the Clock Tower was officially renamed Elizabeth Tower in 2012 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. However, the name Big Ben still affectionately refers to the massive bell housed within the tower.

2. **The Clock Has Four Faces**

The Clock Tower boasts four enormous clock faces, each measuring 23 feet in diameter. These faces are made of opal glass and are lit from behind by electric lights, ensuring their visibility even at night.

3. **Big Ben Is the Nickname of the Bell**

Contrary to popular belief, Big Ben is not the name of the tower but rather the nickname given to the largest bell within it. This 13.5-ton bell, cast in 1858, was named after Sir Benjamin Hall, the Commissioner of Works who oversaw its installation.

4. **The Clock Is Remarkably Accurate**

The Great Clock of Westminster, as it is officially known, is renowned for its exceptional accuracy. It is maintained by a team of horologists who ensure that it runs just a few seconds off over a year.

5. **The Clock Faces Faced Outward for Stability**

Unlike most clocks, the faces of the Clock Tower are set back from the tower's walls, facing outward. This design decision was made to increase the stability of the structure and prevent the clock faces from being damaged by wind or other external forces.

6. **The Tower Was Once Known as the St. Stephen's Tower**

Before it was renamed Elizabeth Tower, the Clock Tower was originally known as the St. Stephen's Tower, after the Saint Stephen's Chapel that it replaced. The chapel was destroyed in a fire in 1834, prompting the construction of the new tower.

7. **The Tower Houses a Prison Cell**

Hidden within the Clock Tower is a small prison cell, known as the Clock Tower Prison. This cell was used to temporarily detain members of Parliament who misbehaved or were found in contempt of the House.

8. **The Tower Leaned Slightly**

Over time, the Clock Tower has developed a slight lean due to the soft ground on which it is built. However, this lean is so minimal that it is barely noticeable to the naked eye.

9. **The Tower Was Bombed During World War II**

During the Blitz of World War II, the Clock Tower was struck by a German bomb. The explosion caused significant damage to the tower, including destroying the House of Commons chamber. Miraculously, the clock itself survived the attack and continued to chime.

10. **The Tower Has a Secret Passage**

Beneath the Clock Tower lies a secret passage that leads to the Westminster Abbey. This passage was used by members of Parliament to attend religious services at the Abbey without having to venture outside.

11. **The Tower's Bells Have Nicknames**

Each of the five bells in the Clock Tower has its nickname. Big Ben, the largest bell, is named after Sir Benjamin Hall. The other bells are named Great Paul, Quarter Bells, and St. Stephen's Bell.

12. **The Tower Is a UNESCO World Heritage Site**

In 1987, the Clock Tower, along with the rest of the Palace of Westminster, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This prestigious status recognizes the tower's outstanding architectural and historical significance.

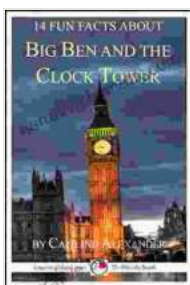
13. **The Chimes of Big Ben Are Synonymous with London**

The deep, resonant chimes of Big Ben have become an iconic sound associated with London. The chimes are broadcast live on BBC radio and can be heard throughout the city, marking the hours and providing a comforting rhythm to London life.

14. **The Tower Is Open to the Public**

For a truly immersive experience, visitors can book a guided tour of the Clock Tower. These tours provide an exclusive glimpse into the inner workings of the tower, its history, and the fascinating stories behind its iconic presence.

Big Ben



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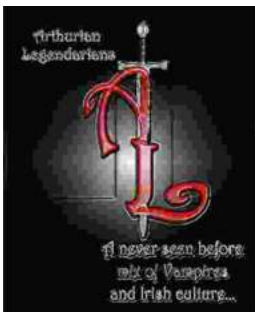
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