Unlocking the secrets of Camden Place

From 1870 the French flag flew above Camden Place, Chislehurst as it became home to the Napoleonic Imperial family and a base for the French Court in exile.

The Empress Eugénie and Louis-Napoléon, the Prince Imperial arrived at Chislehurst on 24th September 1870. Napoleon III joined them on 20th March 1871 after being released from Wilhelmshôhe, Germany where we was held prisoner.

During this time, they received regular visits from Queen Victoria, European Royalty and leading politicians.

Napoleon lll died at Camden Place on 9th January 1873 and was buried at St Mary's Church after a funeral procession of over 20,000 mourners.

Tragically, hopes of the popular Prince Imperial becoming Napoleon lV were dashed when he was killed in Zululand in 1879 serving in British uniform. Chislehurst became host to yet another huge royal funeral to which 40,000 mourners attended.

The Empress Eugénie continued to live at Camden Place until she moved to Farnborough in 1881.

Eugénie passed away on 11th July 1920.

150 years of Imperial Chislehurst

In January 2023, Camden Place will be hosting a number of events to commemorate 100 years since the death of Napoleon III :

- **Monday 9th January**
  - 9:45am – Napoleon Remembered (Mass, Talk and Tour)
  - 2:00pm – Camden Place History Talk and Tour
  - 6.00pm – Napoleon III – the road to Chislehurst Talk, Tour and Tipple
- **Tuesday 10th January**
  - 11:00am – Camden Place History Talk and Tour
  - 2:00pm – Napoleon III in exile – Talk and Tour
  - 7.00pm – A Taste of France
- **Wednesday 11th January**
  - 9:30am – Camden Place History Talk and Tour
  - 2:00pm – Napoleon III – A Talk by Ed Shawcross
  - 6:00pm – The Story of Camden Place's Panelling
- **Thursday 12th and Friday 13th January**
  - 2-day Conference: Boiseries - Decoration and Migration from the Eighteenth Century to the Present
- **Saturday 14th January**
  - 10:00am – Camden Place History Talk and Tour
  - 2:00pm – Napoleon III's Foreign Policy Talk

www.camden-place.com
events@camden-place.com

A home fit for French Royalty

In the early 1860's Camden Place was purchased by banker Nathaniel Strode. He was trustee to Harriet Howard who had been both mistress and financial supporter of Napoleon III from the time of his exile in London in the 1850's.

Strode set about turning Camden Place into something of a French Château. Impressive gates from the Paris Exhibition and a new dining room with panelling from the Château de Bercy were backdrops to murals, fireplaces and furnishings that featured the best of the Flemish and French styles of the time.

It is unknown whether this endeavour was to suit Strode's own tastes or whether Napoleon had a long term plan to set up a bolt hole in England just in case.

Strode received FR900,000 from the French civil list; was known as a fixer and friend of Napoleon; and charged only FR6,000pa for rent. These all give substance to this theory.

The truth may never be known but it proved to be a tranquil and appreciated home for the family. Eugénie lived here for 10 years, some of which she said were her happiest.

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13th August 1870
France's war with Prussia is not going well and the British Embassy issues Eugénie with a passport.

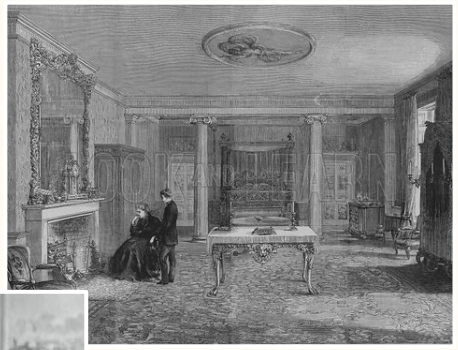
27th August 1870
The Prince Imperial (aged 14) is sent away from the battlefield dressed as a peasant.

2nd September 1870
Napoleon lll is defeated at the Battle of Sedan and surrenders the French army to Bismarck. He is put under house arrest in Belgium at Wilhelmshohe Castle.

4th September 1870
The mob in Paris storms the Tuileries. Eugénie (still the Regent of France) is forced to flee. She makes her escape to England with the help of her dentist and friend, an American, Dr. Evans.

Drawing Room
(now Trophy Hall)

The French Imperial Family at Camden Place



Eugénie's Apartments
(now Apt. A)

9th September1870
After a stormy crossing, the Empress arrives at the Isle of Wight and quickly moves to Hastings where she is reunited with her son.

24th September 1870
The Empress and Prince Imperial move into Camden Place, furnished by Nathaniel Strode who rents it to them for a paltry FR6,000 p.a.

30th November 1870
Queen Victoria visits Camden Place for the first time.

19th March 1871
Napoleon is released by Bismarck and, on 20th March, is met in Dover by the Empress. They travel together by train to Chislehurst.

3rd April 1871
Napoleon III receives a visit from the Prince of Wales and Queen Victoria.

Napoleon's Bedroom
(now Apt. B)

Napoleon's Library
(now Apt. C)

11th July 1920
The Empress Eugénie passes away at the age of 95.

9th January 1888
The bodies of Napoleon lll and the Prince Imperial are moved from Chislehurst to Farnborough.

Autumn 1881
Eugénie is unable to negotiate a fitting memorial tomb with St Mary's Church and is distressed by sad memories. She purchases and moves to a new home at Farnborough Hill.

12th July 1879
Chislehurst again sees a huge Imperial funeral as the Prince Imperial is initially laid to rest in St Mary's Church with his father.

19th June 1879
Queen Victoria sends Earl Sydney to inform Eugénie of the death of her son.

1st June 1879
The Prince Imperial is tragically killed in British Uniform whilst on patrol in Zululand.

16th March 1874
Prince Imperial comes of age with great celebration and a party for 4,000 people at Camden Place.

15th January 1873
Twelve days of mourning are declared. 20,000 people, many from across Europe come to Chislehurst to pay their respects.

9th January 1873
Napoleon III dies, exhausted after surgery to remove his kidney stones. According to his death certificate, he is still Emperor of the French.

20th April 1872
Queen Victoria makes her 3rd visit to Camden Place accompanied by her Lord Chamberlain, Earl Sydney.