

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee

GRANDEUR OF BRITAIN'S UNIQUE TRADITIONS

Dr. TILAK S. FERNANDO

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in England were held with the pomp and pageantry, stemming from the grandeur of Britain's unique traditions. Born to be a Queen is extraordinary, and to be the Head of the Commonwealth and the longest serving monarch in the UK is even greater accountability. Queen Elizabeth II, nee Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, was born on April 21, 1926. She became the Queen of England on February 6, 1952, after her father's demise. King George VI of Great Britain and Northern Ireland died in his sleep at the royal estate at Sandringham after a long illness.



The Queen appears on the Buckingham Palace balcony with Royal Family members to watch the flypast.

Local Celebrations

The Association of British Residents and Commonwealth Expatriates (ABR) celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on June 5 at the Bougainvillea Ballroom at Galadari Hotel in Colombo with High Tea followed by a sumptuous banquet. The celebrations commenced at 5 p.m., with earlier British residents filling the Ballroom. It appeared during the festivity, like being in Britain with a British atmosphere, where everyone wore caps epitomising the Union Jack. A popular band played Western music too, which the participants enjoyed thoroughly by dancing. Sharp at 10 p.m., the celebrations came to an end after playing both the Sri Lankan national anthem and the British—"God Save the Queen".

The Queen's Birthday Parade together with the jubilee celebrations in London stood officially on

Thursday June 2. The colour was trooped by the 1st Battalion, Irish Guards. More than 1,200 officers and soldiers from the Household Division put on a display of military pageantry on Horse Guards Parade, together with hundreds of Army musicians and around 240 horses. During the Queen's official Birthday Parade cum jubilee celebrations, a Royal Gun Salute was fired. Once the parade ended, the Royals returned to Buckingham Palace, where Members of the Royal Family made an appearance on the balcony to watch a memorable flypast.

Royal History

Princess Elizabeth was third in line to succeed to the British throne. Still, providence forced her to become the Queen of England unexpectedly. Prince Edward was in the line of succession before

Princess Elizabeth, but the Prince abdicated the throne to marry a divorcee (Wallis Simpson), which provoked a constitutional crisis.

On the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, she delivered a speech to the nation and across the Commonwealth: "I know that many happy memories will be created during this festive occasion. I continue to be inspired by the goodwill shown to me. I hope that the coming days will allow me to reflect on all that has been achieved during the last seventy years. We look to the future with confidence and enthusiasm."

The Queen addressed the Speaker of the Scottish Parliament: "It is a pleasure to invite you to address this special occasion. I would also like to congratulate you and the Scottish Parliament for being able to mark the new session of Parliament in this safe and welcoming manner during what has been a very trying period. You carry the

weighty responsibility of being a strong advocate for the Parliament and I know you will strive to use your judgement to lead this Parliament by demonstrating fairness, respect and impartiality. While some of you will have differences of opinion, I trust you will continue to work together. Your service is carried out in the presence of the Mace, and I encourage you to draw inspiration from the founding principles of Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity. I hope you can reaffirm the importance of everything you do as a Member of this Parliament."

It was a classic advice to current Sri Lankan Parliamentarians.

Addressing the Engineering and Technology in the UK to mark its 150th anniversary, Queen Elizabeth said: "Your 150th anniversary provides an opportunity to recognise the dedication and hard work of all those working in the engineering

and technology field. That made a difference to society to give equal rights to people."

The Queen's Travels

Queen Elizabeth II has carried all the responsibilities for the last 70 years. Over the years, she travelled to every corner of the globe, and thousands of miles in England, shaking millions of hands without devising any grip to protect her fingers.

At one time, during her reign, the Queen called for a radical overhaul of the monarchy, involving a referendum before an heir could become the Head of State. The well-known 'Demos' report suggested that the Royal Family send its children to State schools rather than Eton University and benefit from the National Health Service. The report showed that 66 per cent of Britons wanted a monarchy that

reflected the approach of the late Princess Diana. The 35-page report written by Tim Hanes and Mark Leonard stressed the importance of modernising the monarchy stating that the Queen is 'not the Head of State' but 'the head of society'. The Queen agreed that the law needed changing to give females equal rights to succeed to the throne, overturning the 800-year-old royal tradition.

The Queen celebrating her Platinum Jubilee in 2022 never forgot about her late husband- Duke of Edinburgh. She said: "For me, in the months since the death of my beloved Philip, I have drawn great comfort from the warmth and affection of the many tributes to his life and work - from around the country, the Commonwealth and the world. His sense of service, intellectual curiosity and capacity to squeeze fun out of any situation - were all irrepressible. That mischievous, enquiring twinkle was as bright at the end as when I first set eyes on him."

Prince Philip created The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which offers young people throughout the Commonwealth and beyond the chance of exploration and adventure. It will remain an astonishing success in the future. He was also an early champion of taking the Royal family of the environment.

The Queen said finally: "I hope my Platinum Jubilee year will allow people to enjoy a sense of togetherness. Thank you for the enormous changes over the last seventy years of social, scientific and cultural confidence you placed in me."

tilakfernando@gmail.com