

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Today we give thanks to the Queen for her sterling service to our nation for more than 70 years as monarch. Over those years she has gently nudged change in the way the monarchy and court work and how they reach out to the public they serve. She has reigned from days of food rationing and bomb sites after the World War to the days of the digital revolution when so many enjoy a mobile phone and many appliances in their homes that were beyond the imagination or the pockets of the many 70 years ago. She has seen us move on from open coal fires to central heating, from very few going on to A levels and degrees to a much more widely educated society and from most walking or going by bus to many having a family car and a foreign holiday.

The Queen throughout has been the UK's first diplomat. At times her state visits and Commonwealth interventions have made an important contribution to peace and greater world harmony. Her early reaching out to Nelson Mandela led to him riding in a state coach with her in London and a very successful state visit to South Africa. Her official visit to the Republic of Ireland after the troubles was well received by all sides and helped the peace process. Her warmth towards Michelle Obama helped in a difficult phase of the UK/US long relationship.

She has kept her position as constitutional monarch by understanding exactly how she must not be seen to be interfering in contentious matters that divide the parties and Parliament. She has avoided over hasty action when Parliament itself fails to deliver a reliable majority for the Prime Minister, understanding that at such times of dispute the elected politicians have to find their own way through. Over the Jubilee holiday we can relax a little, celebrate all that is good about the modern UK, and thank the Queen for her service.