



GOLDEN JUBILEE

The Queen's reign began unexpectedly on an ordinary Wednesday in 1952. King George VI, The Queen's father, had died suddenly at Sandringham on the 6th February after several years of ill health. The news of his death reached the 25 year old Princess Elizabeth in the afternoon of that day in Kenya, where she and Prince Philip had just begun a Commonwealth tour. Having left Britain a Princess, she was to return as Queen. Political duties began immediately, from the State Opening of Parliament to weekly audiences with the prime minister, then Winston Churchill.



As well as being Sovereign, The Queen was a mother with two young children to care for. With the birth of Prince Andrew in 1960, The Queen became the first reigning Sovereign to give birth since Queen Victoria, who had her youngest child, Princess Beatrice, in 1857.

The year 2002 will mark the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty The Queen's Accession to the Throne. The Queen's Coronation took place more than a year after her Accession (on 2 June 1953). Traditionally, Royal jubilee celebrations mark the anniversary of Accession. The anniversary of The Queen's Accession to the Throne is 6 February. The Queen's Accession Day on 6 February is the anniversary of the death of King George VI, her father. It would not, therefore, be a suitable date for public celebration. The main celebrations for the Silver Jubilee in 1977 were also held in June.

Six key themes have been identified to guide the planning and delivery of the Golden Jubilee celebrations and these have been outlined on the website: <http://www.goldenjubilee.gov.uk>. In summary they are as follows

1. CELEBRATION

The Queen has expressed the wish that her Golden Jubilee should be an occasion for celebration involving the whole community in the UK and throughout the Commonwealth. The focal point of the celebrations will be the National Service of

Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday 4 June 2002. Her Majesty hopes to tour within the United Kingdom from May to July. She will visit the Armed Forces in Portsmouth on 27 June, open the Commonwealth Games in Manchester on 25 July and close them on 4 August.

2. GIVING THANKS

The Queen has said that she sees her Golden Jubilee as an opportunity to express her thanks for the support and loyalty she has enjoyed during her reign. This is a central theme of the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

3. SERVICE

The Golden Jubilee celebrations will provide a special opportunity to acknowledge all those who support and contribute to their communities through public service and voluntary endeavour.

4. INVOLVING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

The Queen hopes that the celebrations will reach into every community and involve everyone no matter what their background, age, culture, ethnic origin, religion or other status.

5. LOOKING FORWARD AS WELL AS BACK

The celebration of a 50-year reign is a time for reflection on the ways in which our lives have changed over 50 years. It also offers the chance to take stock of where we stand today and to look to the future.

6. COMMONWEALTH

The significance of the Commonwealth to the development and modern life of the United Kingdom is central to the programme of Golden Jubilee events scheduled for 2002. There is an important Commonwealth dimension to each of the other themes, which places the Commonwealth at the heart of the Jubilee.

OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS

The Queen has agreed that there should be an extra Bank Holiday for the Golden Jubilee on Monday 3 June 2002. The late May Bank Holiday, which would otherwise fall on Monday 27 May in 2002, will be moved to Tuesday 4 June. The dates were selected to allow as many people as possible to join in the celebrations. Together, these two Bank Holidays will provide a four day central weekend for the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

If individuals or organisations wish to mark the Jubilee with a gift, The Queen has indicated that donations can be made to one or more of the following charitable organisations, of which she is Patron.

