

Personal Reflections on the Occasion of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee

6th February 1952 – 2022

As an eight year old, I was deeply impressed by the weighty words of the Herald from our large wireless set to which Dad had called us. We did not have a television.

<https://youtu.be/tcIeEUPxsa4> (film version here)

"WHEREAS it hath pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth of Blessed and Glorious memory, by whose Decease the Crown is solely and rightfully come to the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary:

WE, therefore, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of this Realm, being here assisted with these His late Majesty's Privy Council, with representatives of other Members of the Commonwealth, with other Principal Gentlemen of Quality, with the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of London, do now proclaim with one voice and Consent of Tongue and Heart, publish and proclaim that the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary is now, by the death of our late Sovereign of happy memory, become Queen Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen of this Realm and of all Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to whom Her lieges do acknowledge all Faith and constant Obedience with hearty and humble

Affection, beseeching God by whom Kings and Queens do reign to bless the Royal Princess Elizabeth the second with long and happy Years to reign over us.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN".

I knew that something very solemn had happened, heard mention that the Vicar was holding a special service and slipped away up the hill to the church. When I got back I did not get a row for going out without saying where. Dad just said thoughtfully "Yes, he was a good king". At that stage, I think most of the grown-ups were thinking like that. King George had done his duty to the utmost and had seen them through the war. They knew that he had never wanted the job.

A few days later I was talking to my Great Aunt Jan, Granny's youngest sister. She mentioned how she had taken my father down to Derby Market Place to hear the proclamation of King George V in 1910. Dad was then three and she had lifted him onto her shoulder so he could see what was happening.

The Mayor and Corporation were on the platform with other important people like the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff whilst the Town Clerk read the proclamation just as the Heralds in London had. In those pre-electronic days that was the only way in which people would actually hear the proclamation.

My great aunt explained how very important this had been in olden days to avoid the peril of rival claimants to the throne and all the evils of civil war. So it had to be done quickly. I absorbed a sense and feeling of continuity and the way in which our family's generations in some inexplicable way related to the lives, deaths and generations of our

rulers.

It was against this background that we settled down to wait for the Coronation and, to us children, it was a very long time coming. Of course, we heard more about the Queen but did not get very excited about it until the approach of the Coronation over a year later – and much of our interest was focused on the local preparations in our own village.

My mother, a very keen member of the Women's Institute, was much involved with these but she was taken ill just before the great day and so had the leisure to write an account of how things were done. Reading it now was rather like returning to the black and white films of those days where everything turned out right when people all pulled together. The organisers had even made sure that the house-bound people in the village were not forgotten and would be visited with festive fare and the opportunity to drink the Queen's health. Neither social worker, official nor risk assessment was involved in this. It was purely neighbourly.

Recalling the atmosphere of the Coronation year , I reflect on the ways in which our social and political lives have diverged from the spirit of those days, inherent in the dignity of sovereignty expressed and implied in every syllable.

It would never have occurred to us then that important people had been scheming for some years to make the Queen and all of us into subjects of a foreign power. Yet they had.

From Design for Europe (1947)

"No government dependent on a democratic vote could

possibly agree in advance to the sacrifice that any adequate plan must involve. The British people must be led slowly and unconsciously into the abandonment of their traditional economic defences...."

Peter Thorneycroft, later Chancellor of the Exchequer and Chairman of the Conservative party.

Like all Privy Counsellors, Thorneycroft would pledge his most solemn oath to maintain the sovereignty of the Crown against all foreign authorities whatsoever – even as he proceeded with his design to make the Queen and her people the subjects of the institutions of what is now the European Union.

Between now and June, I hope to show other examples of this sort where things have gone awry and our politicians have not lived up to that spirit of honour and hope which most people felt at the Queen's accession.