



The CIBUK Clear Water Partnership

News Bulletin

Welcome!



From: [Ben Philips](#) Communications Director and Editor
of the [CIBUK Clear Water News Bulletin](#)

Thursday, 15 Sept 2022



Why monarchy matters

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of Her Majesty's passing, it is perhaps fitting to take a step back and examine our constitutional monarchy from past, present, and future perspectives.

We look first at its historic legacy which despite the stresses and strains, remains as relevant for us today as it was at its foundation more than three hundred years ago.

How King Charles adapts to this inheritance whilst forging his own particular style as king remains to be seen. We look at the obligations and restrictions placed upon him and the likely role he will play as head of state in helping guide the nation through the enormous challenges which lie ahead.

The start of a new reign also represents an opportunity for renewal, a chance to take a fresh look at our constitution by addressing some of the long-standing historic anomalies which lie at its heart, the better to meet future problems further down the line.

And problems there will be both at home and abroad where questions are already being asked about the integrity of the United Kingdom, the viability of the Commonwealth and Britain's role in Europe and the wider world.

Finally we provide a brief hint as to his role in a changing Commonwealth, sensitive as he is to the political and cultural convulsions which have taken place over the past two years.

All that is to come.

For now, it is quite right and proper that we come together over the next few days to pay tribute to our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth, whose life of duty and service remain an example to us all.

SUMMARY

- We begin with Daniel Hannan's article in the *Telegraph* on the crucial role the monarchy plays in anchoring our constitution through a head of state who is above the political process.
- In that sense he argues, it stands in marked contrast to the upheavals currently taking place in the United States. Where the monarchy acts as a lightning rod through which fiercely contested debate can be channelled without ever endangering the overall structure of government, many in America are now challenging the foundational principles upon which the Republic itself is built.
- Aris Roussinos takes a personal look at the new monarch in an article for *UnHerd*, speculating on the role which the new king may play in the light of his track record as Prince of Wales.
- We should, he says, be broadly optimistic, notwithstanding the perils which lie ahead.
- On a divergent note, we enclose a piece by Professor Linda Colley which places the present constitution in its historical context and identifies some of the profound shocks to the system which have already shaped it down the ages.
- With growing restiveness in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are we in for another constitutional shock at some point in the near future?
- The point is amplified in an article for the BBC by its Scottish editor James Cook, which highlights the political tightrope the new King will have to tread if he is to keep his United Kingdom together.
- And finally, in a wide-ranging addendum piece from *'The Conversation'*, Stephen Carr, lecturer in Constitutional and Administrative Law at the University of Bangor, provides his own take on what the future of the Commonwealth might look like under its new leader.

It's no coincidence that the most successful democracies are constitutional monarchies

– by Daniel Hannan for the Telegraph

The importance of a constitutional monarchy lies not in the royal trappings of an individual sovereign but in the legitimacy it confers on the parties of government which operate beneath it, according to Daniel Hannan in this week's Sunday Telegraph.

And, in contrast to other systems of government, constitutional monarchy provides one other, vital safeguard which is often overlooked and frequently taken for granted:

To prevent civil war.

"Yes, civil war. Forty-three per cent of Americans, according to YouGov, expect such an outcome within the next decade. Before you dismiss that finding, consider why civil wars happen."

In contrast to the British constitution under which both parties operate according to rules agreed beneath the Crown in Parliament, no such tacit agreement appears to operate in the United States. In such circumstances

"It is possible to imagine two rival electoral colleges choosing two rival presidents, and the

50 states dividing over which to recognise.
Yes, that outcome might still be unlikely. But it is no longer inconceivable.”

In the UK by contrast

“such a situation simply could not come about. We have an umpire whose authority all sides respect. Whoever the King recognised would be the head of His Majesty’s Government. That is what a constitutional monarch is: a military commander who is not a general, a head of state who is not a politician, a focus for national loyalty who is above ideology and beyond faction.”

Indeed it is possible to argue that the American Revolution was superfluous to requirements: democracy was already well-embedded.

“In Great Britain, as in the Thirteen Colonies, the 1760s gave birth to an odd conspiracy theory to the effect that the Hanoverians were trying to roll back the powers of Parliament and rule as mediaeval despots. How people ever came to believe this of the dim, dull, decent George III is a mystery.
In any event, it turned out to be utter nonsense. Democracy continued to advance in Britain as in North America. Far from descending into autocracy, we remained, in effect, a crowned republic.”

And people should not be fooled by outward appearances:

“None of the flummery **associated with the crown** – golden coaches, state openings, military reviews – detracts from our democracy. Around four fifths of us presently support the monarchy. But if that majority changed, and voters preferred a republic, no one doubts that their wishes would prevail.”

Finally, one might want to consider the alternatives.

“Where men are forbidden to honour a king, they honour millionaires, athletes, or film stars instead; even famous prostitutes or gangsters. For spiritual nature, like bodily nature, will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison.” (C.S. Lewis).

The full, original article can be found [here](#).

The mythic power of King Charles III

- By Aris Roussinos for UnHerd

The new king should signal a break with the past by becoming a much more interventionist monarch, argues Aris Roussinos.

“Our constitution grants our monarch greater political power **than the Queen chose to exercise**, and we are fortunate that our new King possesses a willingness to intercede in public life that has at times tested the patience of Prime Ministers.

He must be encouraged to continue: whatever his personal foibles, his instincts are good and just, and his decades-long critiques of globalisation, of our despoliation of our natural and built environments and our pell-mell rush towards the mythical horizon of progress have been tragically borne out by events.”

And what should that look like? He is, after all a mixture of the conservative and progressive. It seems almost certain that he will continue to stick his neck out on

environmental issues:

*"In his little-discussed 2010 book, **Harmony**, Charles remarks in a "call for revolution" that "it is very strange that we carry on behaving as we do. If we were on a walk in a forest and found ourselves on the wrong path, then the last thing we would do is carry on walking in the wrong direction. We would instead retrace our steps, go back to where we took the wrong turn, and follow the right path." For, as he writes: "I cannot stress the point enough: we are travelling along a very wrong road."*

As geo-political and environmental challenges become ever more apparent, it may be that the King's long-term vision is finally coming to fruition:

"in the 21st century we desperately need an alternative vision... a future where food production and its distribution will have to all happen more locally to each other and be less dependent, certainly, on aircraft; where the car will become much more subordinated to the needs of the pedestrian; where our economy will have to operate on a far less generous supply of raw materials and natural resources."

It is of a land "where the character of our built environments once more reflects the harmonious, universal principles of which we are an integral part".

The full, original article can be found [here](#).

The Radical Constitutional Change Britain Needs

- By Linda Colley for the New York Times

We strike a divergent note in the following article by Professor Linda Colley, visiting Professor of History at Princeton University.

Beneath the veneer of continuity which the long reign of our late monarch provided, serious constitutional shortcomings are now emerging which a new government and a new monarch will urgently need to address:

"For all of Elizabeth II's absolute professionalism, the second half of her reign witnessed a palpable rise in dissatisfaction with how the government functioned in a state with a far more diverse and far less deferential population. So might the queen's death and the accession of a less popular Charles III contribute to increased levels of turmoil and lead to unstoppable pressure for radical constitutional change, even a new British Constitution?"

One should not overlook the extent of change already undertaken:

Since 2009, the nation has had a Supreme Court. Scotland and Wales now each have their own Parliament, while Northern Ireland has its own Assembly with wide lawmaking powers.

However other significant constitutional changes remain outstanding:

"True, power has been devolved away from London, but not sufficiently or systematically so. Unlike Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, for instance, England — the largest of the four component parts of the United Kingdom — has no separate assembly of its own, and this has helped to stoke a resentful, inward-looking English nationalism.

At the same time, resurrecting a Parliament in Edinburgh has not thus far succeeded in defusing separatist sentiment in Scotland, while the Northern Ireland Assembly is currently stalled and nationalist sentiment is rising in Wales.

Most crucially, there has been no systematic reform of the Westminster Parliament itself. Nor have the necessary measures been introduced to monitor and regulate the growing power of British prime ministers, who have become ever more presidential in style and

ambition, especially since the long tenure (1979 to 1990) of that other formidable woman Margaret Thatcher."

Is a radical overhaul required in order to address the problems outlined above?

The introduction of a brand new Constitution has usually been accompanied by existential shocks in the past – the English Civil War, or the American War of Independence.

"If Scotland in the near future should again call for a vote for independence, and if a majority of Northern Irish voters should decide they want to rejoin the rest of the island of Ireland, then the United Kingdom will shrink to a duopoly of England and Wales, with the latter already becoming more restive.

Were such a breakup of the union to occur, especially if it took place against a background of protracted economic crisis, radical constitutional rethinking might come to seem a necessary solution, rather than simply alien and a threat."

The full, original article can be found [here](#).

The monarchy's delicate Scottish balancing act

- By James Cook, BBC Scotland Editor

The thrust of Professor Colley's arguments is amplified in this extended report for the BBC by their Scottish Editor James Cook.

Charting the twin-history of the crowns of Scotland and England and incorporating the story of the Queen's reign to the present day, underlying tensions toward the monarchy have never been far from the surface.

The one note of controversy in the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 occurred in a speech she made on the State of the Union.

"The issue of the day was Labour's plan to devolve power to Scotland and Wales. Perceptively perhaps the Queen spoke of a growing "awareness of historic national identities in these islands", which she described as driving discussion about devolution. "I number Kings and Queens of England and of Scotland, and Princes of Wales among my ancestors and so I can readily understand these aspirations..." she explained.

Then came the controversial caveat: "...but I cannot forget that I was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Perhaps this jubilee is a time to remind ourselves of the benefits which union has conferred, at home and in our international dealings, on the inhabitants of all parts of this United Kingdom."

Otherwise she remained popular and widely loved north of the border. And now?

"The polling expert and professor of politics at Strathclyde University, Sir John Curtice, says polling conducted before her death indicated a clear majority in England and Wales would choose retaining the monarchy over setting up a republic. In Scotland, however, while monarchy was still the preferred option of the two, support for it was below 50%.

The institution could not be described as unpopular north of the border, says Sir John, but it is "definitely less popular in Scotland" than it is in England.

That, combined with a feeling that the constitution may now be in flux, must surely be a concern for King Charles."

Devolution in 1999 has merely accelerated the process of separation, the Union saved by a whisker in the 2014 Referendum and a raised eyebrow from Her Majesty.

"The former PM [David Cameron] admitted that he then asked Buckingham Palace for "just a raising of the eyebrow even...a quarter of an inch," because he and his team believed the Queen could "make a difference".

Polling on the monarchy is largely based on voting preferences:

"Among Conservatives support is in the high 70s in percentage terms, for Labour and Liberal Democrat voters it is in the 60s, and for SNP supporters it is "much lower" - in the high 20s."

For the SNP whoever is monarch is irrelevant to the wider debate on independence:

*"Even some republicans, such as the former deputy leader of the SNP, Jim Sillars, are comfortable with the party's position on the topic.
Does Charles's accession to the throne affect the constitutional debate in Scotland?
"Not one bit," says Mr Sillars.*

*Economic difficulties and political divergence with England are the key factors, he argues, adding "no disrespect to the new King but he's irrelevant in the constitutional issue".
"My advice to the independence movement is put that aside, that is not the most relevant matter that faces us at the present time," [he adds](#).*

One thing is certain:

"All around us there are reminders of the changes the nation underwent in the Elizabethan Age, and reminders too that as King Charles III ascends to the throne, it is changing still."

The full, original article can be found [here](#).

What to expect from the reign of King Charles III

- By Stephen Carr for 'The Conversation'

Given the magnitude of the subject matter and the nature of events unfolding before us, we enclose a fifth article from 'The Conversation' – an on-line political and academic discussion forum scoping the future role of King Charles III with a particular emphasis on his role as Head of the Commonwealth.

Anticipated changes have already been widely circulated, including a slimmed-down monarchy to match the straitened circumstances in which so many of its subjects now find themselves.

But it is in relation to the Commonwealth that we may expect to see a greater change in emphasis, according to Stephen Carr, lecturer in Constitutional & Administrative Law at Bangor University.

*"In relation to the Commonwealth realms, we might expect Charles to be more conscious of societal changes. As Prince of Wales he commented at the Commonwealth's Heads of Government meeting **in Kagali** how the legacy of slavery needed to be confronted, stating:*

I cannot describe the depths of my personal sorrow at the suffering of so many, as I continue to deepen my own understanding of slavery's enduring impact.

*Similarly, Prince William acknowledged, on a visit to **Jamaica** that the “appalling atrocity of slavery stains our history”. During the visit, he similarly acknowledged individual Commonwealth states’ right to independently choose their own path, separate to associations with the royal family if they should so decide. That will be remembered now as the passing of the Queen is likely to reignite debate surrounding whether some jurisdictions want to continue their association with the royal family.”*

While the passing of Queen Elizabeth II may mark further state departures from the Commonwealth, this is by no means an inevitability. As with so much else, it remains to be seen how future events unfold.

The full, original article can be found [here](#)

About CIBUK: The Campaign for an Independent Britain ([CIBUK](#)) is a non-party political campaigning organisation of people from all walks of life. It is the UK's longest-running membership organisation for freedom, democracy and independence.

Founded in 1969, for over 50 years the CIBUK has made a significant contribution in campaigning on issues important to the majority of our population and in securing our exit from the European Union. Now it's time for the next chapter.