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ORDER OF BUSINESS

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Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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House of Lords

Friday 9 September 2022

Noon

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Oxford.

Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Tributes

12.07 pm

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): My Lords, in a moment, the Leader of the House will begin today's solemn business and lead the House of Lords in making tributes to Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I will first offer a short contribution from the Woolsack.

Her late Majesty, whom we mourn today, was, for over 70 years, a loyal and steadfast presence in the national life of the United Kingdom. Her strong sense of public duty and her devotion to the welfare and happiness of her people served to bind our nation together during an epoch of unprecedented societal and technological change. Her unique record of public service, deep sense of faith and commitment to her role ensure that she will be regarded as a supreme example of a constitutional monarch.

Today, my thoughts, and indeed those of the whole House, go out to members of her family, especially His Majesty the King, for whom this feeling of loss will be profound. I offer my devoted sympathy, as well as the thoughts, prayers, commitment and dedication of this House and its Members.

The Lord Privy Seal (Lord True) (Con): My Lords, this is an appropriately dark and dreary day, and one we prayed would never come. These are words that I hoped never to hear spoken, let alone to have to speak.

I ask myself how people will conceive of life without Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the heart and focus of our nation's love and loyalty. For millions of people, she was the mother of our nation and the literal embodiment of the United Kingdom, which she so cherished. The shock will be immense and the grief unmeasured—as we already see. Even people in their 70s have never known life without her. She was our anchor of stability in a changing world and our exemplar of conduct and courtesy—one who, from the highest position in the land, showed us day by day the virtues of dignity, civility, humility, truthfulness and service.

“The Queen”: two little words that identified her instantly in seven continents and 100 languages. Can we conceive never again hearing that voice—that kindly, gentle voice, as we heard it from that very Throne at our State Openings—giving, in her royal broadcasts at Christmas or lately during lockdown, her unvarying message of faith and hope? Her voice was warmly encouraging to so many people on her myriad daily visits to hospitals, schools and factories and all the

public places in cities, towns and villages here and across all her realms and territories—indeed the whole world. No one ever questioned her work ethic; she was Queen for everyone, every place and every generation.

In a moving and unusually public remark—because Her Majesty had that diamond among virtues, discretion—Her Majesty said of the husband that she so loved, our late lamented Prince Philip, that he was quite simply her

“strength and stay all these years”.

So was she to us, and to all the countries and peoples of the great Commonwealth that she herself, beyond all others, nurtured, and to which she was devoted. She was our strength and stay for 70 years—firm in her duty, wise in her counsel, reassuring in her smile and gracious in her every act, whether in stretching out the hand of reconciliation in Ireland or encouraging a timorous child hovering with a bouquet that he dared not present.

How many tens of millions of people over 70 long years have travelled, sometimes hundreds of miles, to see her, the most famous woman in the world—although that was the very last thing she would ever have sought to be? Having seen her, they were touched by her warmth and went home with joy in their hearts, secure that there was a sparkle of goodness and a spirit of good humour in the world—and, my goodness, Her Majesty had humour and wit. People were just glad that she had come to their little corner of the world; frankly, people were just glad that she was there. For as they loved the public Queen, they also loved the private Queen, with her dogs and horses and her joy in Scotland's countryside, wherein she died. Many who came to see her were from other nations, not her subjects, on her state visits or on their visits to this country. She was our nation's greatest magnet and our finest diplomat. None will ever have forgotten that day when they saw her, however long it was ago.

All of us, whether we knew her or not, felt that we knew her and were glad that we knew her. Of all the different things we felt we knew, the one thing we all surely knew lies in that one word: duty. Hers was a life given to duty, to the service of her peoples, service to others: unceasing, utterly selfless service given with resilience and forbearance even in the difficult times. From that moment in her 21st birthday broadcast when she declared that her whole life would be devoted to our service, through her sacred coronation oath, to what we witnessed this last week, when this quite extraordinary woman summoned the last drops of her strength to say farewell to her 14th Prime Minister and appoint her 15th, it was duty, my Lords—duty. Many of us make many promises, and we all fall short of them. In 1947 and 1953, Her Majesty made one great and solemn vow of lifelong service, and she honoured it without flinch or blemish for 75 years.

Therein was another quality of Her Majesty: constancy and courage—the courage that we saw when, at Trooping the Colour, a demented man fired shots at her that no one then knew were blanks. That consummate horsewoman steadied her horse and just got on with it, as her generation did. She displayed that courage this last week too, even unto the threshold of death.

[LORD TRUE]

12.15 pm

In that very first 21st birthday broadcast, so soon after a terrible war that scorched and stole the flower of her youth, she said something else to the young people of Britain and the Commonwealth. It is often overlooked, but it should not be forgotten. She said that they must never be daunted by anxieties and hardships. Her Majesty was never daunted; she always persevered. I venture to say, with no disrespect to the first, mighty Queen Elizabeth, that here was the greatest sovereign this country has ever had.

The deepest and most poignant sympathy of your Lordships' House and all our thoughts will be with all her sorrowing family and with our King, for over half a century her fellow in duty as her faithful Prince of Wales. We pray that God may now protect and preserve him as our new King. May he and the Royal Family be consoled in their grief and comforted by the boundless love with which Her Majesty has ever been and, I believe, ever will be regarded.

We in her loyal House of Lords, along with hundreds of millions of people across the world, will join in prayers for our dear, our dearest, departed Queen. We call upon almighty God, in whom she so profoundly trusted and believed, to receive, as he so surely will, her dauntless and immortal soul. Thank you, Ma'am. May you ever rest in peace, as you will ever rest in our hearts.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord True, has spoken for us all in his very moving tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. That we should feel not just grief and sadness but shock at the passing of our Queen at the age of 96 is extraordinary. It is not just our nations that are deeply shaken. Across the world, from great leaders to schoolchildren, we all feel that we have lost something special from our lives. It was so finely illustrated last night as, around the globe, lights dimmed, flags were flown at half-mast and national monuments were illuminated.

As the most recognisable face in the world, Her Majesty has been a fixed point at the core of our national life. As the world has changed almost beyond recognition during the 70 years of her reign, through her experience, her character and steadfast sense of duty, the Queen was able to remain a constant and unwavering presence while still ensuring that the monarchy adapted to the challenges of the modern age. It was not just her longevity and the span of history she lived through but how she represented and served the nations of the UK and the Commonwealth that have earned such admiration and affection.

The noble Lord, Lord True, spoke of that remarkable 21st birthday speech, when she dedicated her life, be it long or short, to our service and, as she said, to make us

“more free, more prosperous, more happy and a more powerful influence for good in the world”.

She saw that commitment as a joint endeavour, as she added:

“But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me.”

And we did. That is why we mourn her loss so deeply today.

When Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary was born, few could have predicted the life ahead of her. Her father King George VI's succession to the Throne was sudden and unexpected. Despite feeling unprepared, his general devotion and commitment to his country, to the Commonwealth and all its people earned him great warmth and admiration, particularly during the trauma of the war years. The then Princess Elizabeth also readily absorbed her new responsibilities. We should not underestimate the impact of her first public broadcast, at the age of 14, on the BBC's “Children's Hour” to those evacuated overseas during the Second World War.

Her Majesty later qualified as a mechanic and driver with the women's branch of the British Army, the ATS. Apparently, the Government did not approve, believing that her most important training should be as heir to the Throne, not as a mechanic, yet her determination in insisting that she wanted to serve her country was an early sign of the great Queen she would become. And, having served in the ATS, on VE Day the two Royal Princesses were as excited as anyone. Her Majesty later spoke of joining the crowds in Whitehall, where they mingled anonymously with those linking arms and singing. In a world without mobile phones or selfies, I wonder how many thought that the two young women celebrating with them looked just like the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret.

It is wonderful how she reached across the generations. My parents and grandparents would speak of her and her father's dedication to the country during the war. As the first monarch of the television age, she and the Duke of Edinburgh ensured that her Coronation was the first ever to be broadcast across the world, as she pioneered the Christmas Day televised message. She connected with and was visible to each new generation in a way no monarch has ever done before, even when having to resort to Zoom during the pandemic. Her arrival at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games, where she appeared to be parachuted into the stadium with James Bond, was as surprising as it was delightful, and the nation was just enchanted by her sharing of tea and marmalade sandwiches with Paddington Bear for her Platinum Jubilee.

That sense of fun enhanced her reputation as a monarch who connected with and understood her people. Of her 15 Prime Ministers, the first was born over a century before the last. At their weekly audiences, she was so much more than a willing confidante with absolute discretion. Her experience gave her a knowledge and an intuitive understanding of domestic and international issues. At home and abroad, she presented the best of us. President Barack Obama, one of the 14 US Presidents of her lifetime, said:

“Queen Elizabeth II embodied the special relationship”.

But she was so much more than a figurehead. Her historic visits to the Republic of Ireland in 2011 and Northern Ireland in 2012 were of global significance and further proof of her diplomatic skills. It is enormously valued that Her Majesty never spoke publicly of her views on a political or policy issue. She maintained a dignified privacy of thought and displayed strict impartiality. If it was frustrating at times, it never showed.

As Head of State, she symbolised that our common values are greater than any divisions. Many in your Lordships' House will have memories of meetings with Queen Elizabeth that they will treasure and will share during tributes in your Lordships' House. More importantly, up and down and across the country—indeed, all over the world—people who met her, spoke to her or just saw her in person are also sharing their memories. Our affection for Her Majesty is not the demanded affection of deference to a monarch of the past, but is freely given for a monarch who, in an era of great change and some turbulence, provided precious stability and continuity. Although we are united in sorrow, we are also united in pride and in celebrating the life of a remarkable Queen.

It is the end of a great Elizabethan age. We send our very sincere condolences to all members of the Royal Family on their profound loss, especially to His Majesty. We join the noble Lord, the Lord Privy Seal, in the hope that the love, respect and admiration of your Lordships' House, the country, the Commonwealth and all across the world, provides some comfort in their loss.

Lord Newby (LD): My Lords, it is only a matter of weeks since your Lordships' House met to pay tribute to the Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee. On that occasion, we knew that the Queen was already in frail health, but nobody contemplated that her reign had such a short period ahead of it. Because the Queen is the only monarch most people have known and was a permanent, reassuring presence in a challenging and rapidly changing world, her death has clearly come to millions as a great shock. For all but the oldest among us, a hitherto ever-present feature of British life has been removed and a deep sense of loss is felt not just by my generation, but by many of our children and grandchildren, for whom one might have thought that the Queen was a distant and possibly irrelevant figure.

What was the basis of this universal appeal? I suggest that it is because she demonstrated qualities that appeal across and down the ages. She was constant. As the world changed, as Prime Ministers and Presidents came and went, she exuded a sense of serenity and calm and, in times of national trauma and tragedy, a sense that these difficulties were surmountable, that they should be met with fortitude and that they would pass. She was unwavering in her commitment to the service of the nation and to her duty to represent its traditions and values, but she was sensitive to changing times, realising that the monarchy too had to change—had to be more open, more accessible and more accountable for everything it did. She was empathetic. For someone whose daily life was as different as it is possible to be from that of the vast majority of her subjects, she had an ability to communicate with them as individuals, to put them at ease and to make them feel truly special.

She had a great sense of humour. This no doubt helped her deal with the vagaries of her own life, but she used it effortlessly to defuse potentially difficult situations and to put the thousands of people she met at ease. She had a zest for life and for the role she had been allotted. Just look at the picture taken earlier this

week as she met the new Prime Minister. That smile was genuine and heartwarming. Finally, she appealed to people's better natures. Every year in her Christmas broadcast, she championed the values of community, generosity, kindness and service to others. We politicians share these values, but the nature of political debate means that we rarely articulate them. The country also shares them and looked to the Queen to champion them, which she unflinchingly did.

These qualities were underpinned by two constants in her own life. The first, as we heard, was her marriage to Prince Philip, whom she repeatedly called her rock. For anyone who saw them together, there was no doubting that this was indeed the case. The second was her religious faith. This not only provided a source of strength and comfort for her but underpinned her approach to being the monarch. There is, in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the evocative concept of an individual's "bounden duty". The Queen applied this concept not only to her spiritual life but to her public role. She understood the importance of that duty for a monarch and she fulfilled her duties, one might say, religiously—literally to the end of her life.

As we remember the Queen, we also have in our thoughts, His Majesty King Charles—how strange it is to be using those words—Prince William and all other members of the Royal Family. We send them our condolences and good wishes for the difficult days ahead. We have lived our lives in the Elizabethan age, and how fortunate we have been to do so.

Lord Judge (CB): My Lords, on behalf of the Cross Benches, I want to associate myself with each of the three very moving speeches that the House has listened to. In a sense, there is nothing more to be added; yet, we do need to reflect and think about the things we have heard and perhaps you will allow me to just add a little to it.

12.30 pm

What I find amazing is that we have known that yesterday would happen and yet, just looking around the Chamber, we are stunned. It was going to happen; we did not want it to and, because we did not want it to, we shut our eyes to its inevitability. So, here we are, assembled to pay our great respects to a great Queen—as has already been said—in an age of amazing change, in an age where more has changed for more people in more places than ever in history. For each one of us, and for each member of the world's population, life has changed more dramatically than ever before: sometimes for much better, sometimes for less good.

It is no surprise that there will be an outpouring of affection, respect, love and, indeed, grief at the disappearance from our lives of this great Queen. We do have to remember that she was the Queen to men and women who were born in Queen Victoria's age. We have to remember that she, in her generation, was one of that generation for whom the horrors, the fears, the catastrophe of the Second World War lived bright and dark. For that generation, the arrival of a new princess to become Queen, mourning the loss of her beloved father and yet assuming her responsibilities

[LORD JUDGE]

without hesitation, was a moment that reflected the possibility in those austere times of a great future for this country. To the extent that there has been a great future, we are indebted to her for her contribution to it. As it is now, the young still adore her. It is something to do with style, approach, commitment, the ability to get the best out of everybody she was speaking to—and that probably includes many of us—that fixed the affection for ever and kept her in the warmth of all our hearts.

I just wanted to refer to one particular matter that the noble Lord, Lord Newby, has just referred to. One of the most unsung qualities of a Christian life—and, indeed, of a human characteristic—is fortitude. It is one of the eternal verities. In this Queen, we had fortitude: fortitude to stand up and do your duty—it is not the doing your duty that is the characteristic; it is the fortitude on which it stems.

We also have to face the fact that life has not always been easy for Her Majesty. There have been some dreadful times: there have been times when the personal criticism of her was awful; there were times when most of us, faced with that sort of criticism, would say, “Okay, I will give up.” There were times, too, when her personal life must have been filled with a sense of cataclysm—all in the public gaze. We all knew about every family trouble: I would not want anyone’s family troubles to be illuminated in public like hers have been. Again, there could have been times when she said, “This is too much”, the most important of which, of course, and most recent, was the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. But there she was stepping forward, now an elderly lady, nevertheless with fortitude to do her duty.

There are going to be many other things said and I shall not reflect on this anymore, save for one final observation: if we are to be paying tribute to Her Majesty, it is right that it should be here in the heart of our constitutional monarchy paying our respects to a great constitutional monarch. We just do that, do we not? We thank her. We are very grateful.

The Archbishop of Canterbury: My Lords, one of the greatest privileges of sitting on these Benches is that, within a year or so of becoming a diocesan bishop, you are invited to spend a weekend at Sandringham. While there, often in January, you go for a barbeque—fortitude. You have the enormous gift given to you of being able to spend time with Her late Majesty, with her family, with the jigsaw puzzle and all the other things that are there. Thus, on behalf of these Benches—I know from the conversations we have among ourselves—there is a profound sense of personal sorrow and an even more profound sense of the significance of the virtues of the characteristics of the late Queen.

What has been said already today has been extraordinarily eloquent. I do not intend to repeat it but to say something about the Queen’s links to faith and to the Church of England. First is her assurance, her confidence, in the God who called her. At her coronation, so long ago, conducted by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher—the first of seven Archbishops of Canterbury who had the privilege of serving her—the

service began with her walking by herself past the Throne, where she would very shortly be seated, and kneeling by the high altar of Westminster Abbey. The order of service said, “She will kneel in private prayer”—and so she did, for some time. The next thing to happen was that homage was paid to her, starting with the Duke of Edinburgh. What that said about her understanding of her role was that she pledged her allegiance to God before others pledged their allegiance to her. She had this profound sense of who she was and by whom she was called.

Then there was her profound, deep and extraordinary theological vision. Many years ago now—seven or eight years ago—I was travelling abroad, and someone who had no knowledge of these things said, “Well, of course, she’s not really got that much intellect, has she? I mean, private tutors and all this—what can she know?” Well, what ignorance. In 2012, she spoke at Lambeth Palace on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee, and the speech she made there is one we return to very frequently, because she set out a vision for what an established Church should be. It was not a vision of comfort and privilege; it was to say, put very politely, “You are here as an umbrella for the whole people of this land”. The subtext was, “If you are not that, you are nothing”. That is a deep vision of what it is to be the Church—of what it is to be not an established Church but a Christian Church. That came from her deep understanding of faith. Every five years, at the inauguration of the Church of England’s General Synod, she came with messages of encouragement and assurance of her prayers. In 2021, her message was,

“my hope is that you will be strengthened with the certainty of the love of God, as you work together and draw on the Church’s tradition of unity in fellowship for the tasks ahead.”

Publicly, Her late Majesty worshipped regularly and spoke of her faith in God, particularly in her Christmas broadcasts, with quiet, gentle confidence. Privately, she was an inspiring and helpful guide and questioner to me and to my predecessors. She had a dry sense of humour, as we have heard already, and the ability to spot the absurd—the Church of England was very capable of giving her material—but she never exercised that at the expense of others. When I last saw her in June, her memory was as sharp as it could ever have been. She remembered meetings from 40 or 50 years ago and drew on the lessons from those times to speak of today and what we needed to learn: assurance of the love of God in her call, and then humility. It would be easy as a monarch to be proud, but she was everything but that. It was her faith that gave her strength. She knew that, but she knew also her call to be a servant, the one whom she served, and the nation she served, the Commonwealth and the world. Over the last 24 hours, I have had so many messages from archbishops, bishops and other people around the world, within the Commonwealth and way beyond it—from China, Latin America and many other places—in a deep sense of loss.

It has been the privilege of those on these Benches to be intimately involved with momentous occasions so often throughout Her late Majesty’s life. As has been said, she has been a presence for as long as we can remember. Jesus says in the Gospel of St Matthew:

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”.

May God comfort all those who grieve Her late Majesty’s loss, and may God sustain His Majesty King Charles III in the enormous weight and challenges that he takes on immediately, at the same as he bears the burden of grief, and those around him in his family. May God hold Her late Majesty in His presence, firmly secured in the peace that passes far beyond our understanding.

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): My Lords, it may be for the convenience of the House if we adjourn until 1.15 pm so that noble Lords who have to do things and be various places can find the time to do so.

12.42 pm

Sitting suspended.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement

1.15 pm

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): My Lords, on this most solemn of occasions, I want to ensure that the House has the fullest opportunity to pay tribute to our late beloved Queen Elizabeth II. I will therefore take this opportunity to provide a brief update to Members on the arrangements for tributes over the next two days.

All Members who wish to pay tribute will of course be able to. The House will adjourn at around 5.50 pm today, shortly before His Majesty the King’s address. That will be broadcast in both Chambers, and tributes will then resume. The House will then sit until around 10 pm this evening and will resume at 1 pm tomorrow afternoon. We expect to rise at 10 pm tomorrow night, but that may depend on the number of Members who wish to pay tribute. There is no speakers’ list for tributes and no formal advisory time limit on Members’ speeches. However, I am sure that noble Lords will take their lead from the leaders of all the Benches who spoke earlier.

The House will of course want to pay the widest tribute to our late beloved Queen, and I know that Members will want to hear the fullest range of speeches. On this occasion, as I explained earlier through the usual channels, noble Lords are not required to attend the start and the end of the tributes. However, in accordance with usual practice, they should be in the Chamber for the speeches just before and after their own, and for as many of the tributes as they are able to. However, I thank the House for conducting itself so far in a way that is appropriate to this occasion.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): My Lords, the House will now resume tributes to Her late Majesty the Queen.

Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Tributes (Continued)

1.18 pm

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con): My Lords, I begin by congratulating my noble friend Lady Williams on her appointment as Chief Whip. I am very sad that her first duties should be in connection with this sad news, but we look forward to great things from her.

My Lords, I am lost for words. Having listened to the fantastic tribute made by the new Leader of the House—what a tremendous 24 or 48 hours he has had—and to those from the Leader of the Opposition, the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, from the noble Lord, Lord Newby, from the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, on the Cross Benches, and in particular the contribution of the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury. There is very little I can say that is new to encapsulate what we are all feeling at this present time. However, I would like to express and extend my sympathy to His Majesty the King and members of the Royal Family on this day of great sadness but also thankfulness.

I do not know if I am alone in experiencing feelings of bereavement and sadness that quite took me by surprise yesterday evening. I found myself hugely emotional, and I think many people in the country felt the same, on hearing the dreadful news. I think we all secretly hoped that the Queen would go on forever—a view that was expressed by the noble Lord, Lord Newby, and by the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, earlier. However, I would like to concentrate on the thankfulness rather than the sadness: thankfulness for the example, the dedication, the stability, the love and the leadership that Queen Elizabeth gave to our country and the Commonwealth. As we heard today, the thousands of tributes from every corner of the globe talk of duty, dignity, humility, integrity, humanity, compassion, kindness and faith, which were indeed the hallmarks of our late Queen and shone brightly in everything she did.

As Secretary of State for Scotland I was privileged to spend some time with her, and in Royal Week, where my role was basically to follow behind carrying the handbag, almost, I was privileged to spend some time with her and to see these qualities and her sense of humour at first hand. Her love of Scotland and her dedication to the United Kingdom—our United Kingdom—are well known, and it is a real blessing that she was able to die in her own bed in her beloved Balmoral in Scotland, having carried out her duties right to the end.

In the many millions of words written about her in the last 24 hours all over the world, many folk will have commented on how she could have shown these astonishing qualities so consistently over so many years and carried that great burden of office and responsibilities without putting a foot wrong. I believe, as the most reverend Primate indicated in his remarks, that the key to answering that question lies in her Christian faith and a life lived following the teachings of Jesus Christ. May God bless her and may she rest in peace.

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Lab): My Lords, I echo the thanks and congratulations of the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, to the Front-Bench speakers, who all spoke so eloquently and movingly for us today. I have no wish to duplicate or repeat what they said; I just want to add a few remarks of my own.

Very few of us will be lucky enough to pass away in the place that we love the most, but we saw this week, after such a life of service, our Queen deservedly pass away in a place that she loved perhaps more than any other. That must have brought her, her family and her staff incredible solace. Balmoral was a very special place to the Queen. It was a place where she not only conducted official duties but was able to relax and have fun with official visitors and with family and friends.

Like the most reverend Primate, some of us have had the incredible privilege of enjoying those barbecues—not at Sandringham, in my case, but at Balmoral, where she would pretend to race with her staff up through the hills to the cottage where the barbecues took place. She was jokingly racing—she would always say to me that she knew that they were never going to try to pass her, but she had to pretend to be part of the race anyway and get there first. She would roll up her sleeves and help set the fire, set the table and clear up afterwards. It was somewhere where she really felt at home. As First Minister, I enjoyed those moments more than I ever expected to. My nerves went after the first year and, as the years went by, we enjoyed sharing stories and experiences.

I recall in particular when the Queen told a story about two American tourists, who had been on a bus trip and had wandered round the back of Balmoral to the rose garden, where she was tending the roses with her headscarf and sunglasses on. Of course, they did not recognise her. They broke into conversation: they asked her what it was like to work for the Queen and whether the Queen never tended the roses herself. She played along with it for five minutes or so, and they were very grateful for the opportunity to hear so much about the life of the Queen from one of her staff. They went back round to the bus to leave Balmoral, and she very quickly nipped into the kitchen, took her headscarf and sunglasses off, went out the front door and waved goodbye to the bus, only to see these two American tourists looking out the window, nudging everybody and saying that they had just spoken to her in the garden. That great sense of humour and fun was remarkable, and it was a privilege to have seen it up close.

I also appreciated, as I am absolutely certain previous and current First Ministers in the devolved Governments have, her interest in, and the time spent with her discussing, the way in which devolution was developing in the United Kingdom and the issues at play, good and bad, in our devolved nations.

We have heard a lot this week about consistency. Although her consistency was important, it was also very important that she was able to change and adapt with the times as society changed over the decades she served us. Her ability to embrace that change was, for me, just as important as the consistency of her values.

Her relationship with Scotland did not begin in 1999, but her relationship with Scotland informed her ability to embrace the constitutional changes that took place that year and to show real empathy, respect and support for the new institutions, not just in Edinburgh but in Cardiff and Belfast too. She met the new Cabinet in 1999 and she embodied the positive celebrations that we had in those early days. Crucially, in 2002, during that Golden Jubilee, she came to the Scottish Parliament again and reminded us of the importance of the long-term goal, helping us steady the ship after those rocky first three years and giving us a lead by saying that, if you serve the people, you will get there in the end. That made a huge difference to the Parliament and to Scotland at the time.

She understood that the UK was four nations but, more than that, she understood the Commonwealth—that tapestry of nations that she did so much to nurture and support. I was amazed to get a text today at 7 am. This time last week, I was in Maganga Secondary School in Salima, in rural Malawi—a school where none of the girls had ever visited a big city or seen a television. The head teacher sent me a text this morning which reads: “On behalf of Maganga School, staff and students, I would like to sincerely express our sadness upon hearing about the death of the Queen, Queen Elizabeth II. As a school, we are very sorry for that great loss. She was our Queen, and a great personality to us all. May the good Lord be with the bereaved family.” That is the mark of the impact that she had around the world, not just for leaders, not just for history, but right now, today, in some of the poorest villages in Malawi and elsewhere.

Finally, I want to recall her kindness to my family and my staff, and her commitment to her own family—remember, she was a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother, and her family will be grieving desperately this weekend. I thank her for her support, and know that she would want us to give full support to King Charles III; I thank her for her service; I thank her personally for those treasured moments that I have. We are poorer for her passing, but we are richer and stronger for her life.

Baroness Walmsley (LD): My Lords, I shall say a few words from these Benches on behalf of myself and my co-deputy leader, my noble friend Lord Dholakia, who is unable to be with us today.

Her late Majesty, like many women, was thrown into a difficult role at a time when she least expected it, yet, like many women, she pulled herself together despite her grief and got on with her job—or her calling, as she saw it. She did it in her own way, as I am sure our new King, King Charles, will also do, adapting her approach as appropriate over the years. As the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, just said, she managed to achieve a balance between consistency and flexibility, and she did it with grace, charm, dignity and dedication. She was at the heart of her family and the nation, and supported us all in good times and in bad. We will miss her among us, as she has so often been.

Everyone who met her has an anecdote about our late Queen, but I am not going to share mine today. Instead, I should like to share just a couple of things that I take away from her long life of service.

First, you always knew which side she was on. She was on my side and your side. She was on the side of all the people of our nation and Commonwealth. She wanted us all to do well. I had the impression that she particularly enjoyed the opportunity to recognise people's achievements and contributions to the nation or their community when she honoured them at investitures and visits throughout the country. She never took sides, expect when there was a chance that her horse might win the race.

1.30 pm

That was one of the occasions when we saw the other thing I will always remember: her radiant and rather infectious smile, which often gave us a glimpse of her famous sense of humour. She smiled at young and old, rich and poor—especially poor. She smiled at heads of state and little girls making wobbly curtsies as they presented a posy of flowers. She smiled at Paddington Bear and made us all smile too. So, as we go about our own public duties, perhaps we should remember to smile a little more, as Her Majesty often did even when she was tired. Perhaps we should do it especially when we do not agree with each other.

As we mourn the loss of our Queen and express our loyalty to our new King, King Charles, who takes up the responsibilities for which she prepared him at a time when he is also mourning his mother—and, indeed, his father, so recently passed away—I am sure that we will all want to express our sympathy to him and his family in their very personal loss. As I look back at more than 70 years of service, I want simply to say, “Thank you, Ma’am.”

Lord Wigley (PC): My Lords, I rise to speak on behalf of Plaid Cymru in paying our tribute to the late Queen and extending our sympathy and condolences to all the Royal Family.

Seventy years ago, on a February morning, I was whisked away from my primary school in Bontnewydd by my father and taken down to Caernarfon where, on the steps outside the law courts, a proclamation was made, following the death of the King, that we had a new Queen. At the end of it, my father whispered to me, “It may be quite a time before you experience that again.” It most certainly has been.

As the MP for Caernarfon, I had the honour of welcoming Her Majesty to the constituency on several occasions. She always came with dignity and charm, and was always so well informed. The most memorable occasion for me was her opening of Wales's National Assembly in 1999—our first Parliament for 600 years. On the day, I was with her, as was the noble and learned Lord, Lord Morris of Aberavon, the noble Lord, Lord Elis-Thomas, and the then First Minister, Alun Michael. It was an honour indeed. She carried out that day with such dignity.

That evening, the celebration dinner coincided with the European Cup final, with Manchester United losing by a goal with a minute to go. They then equalised, and the joy was palpable. When they scored the winning goal in injury time, her “Whoopie!” was heard by the whole room as she almost rose out of her seat.

Her visit to the Welsh Senedd last summer was one of her last public engagements away from London and was very much appreciated. That was the occasion when she was overheard, one almost thinks deliberately, emphasising the importance of the Glasgow climate conference—a sentiment that will undoubtedly be shared by our new monarch.

Queen Elizabeth's grace, humour, patience and devotion to duty were, and are, an inspiration to us all. Whatever our future debates about the constitutional relationships between the nations of these islands, Queen Elizabeth II has ensured that the monarchy is not in question and is a symbol of the shared heritage that we have within our diverse political structures and ambitions. May King Charles III inherit her remarkable talents and may she rest in peace.

Lord Butler of Brockwell (CB): My Lords, my noble friend Lord Hennessy—how we miss him today; he would have made a great contribution to this debate—used to talk about rising to the level of events. This is an event whose level it is difficult to rise to. It is also extremely difficult to rise to anywhere near the level of the opening tributes that we heard this morning. The British do these things rather well but those were done superbly well. If I may speak for myself, they made me very proud to be a Member of this House.

Queen Elizabeth was the sovereign during the whole of my professional life in the Civil Service. I want to make a few observations about the role of the sovereign in the constitution. I always regarded, and continue to regard, the sovereign as the embodiment of the British state. It is worth recalling that, like the Armed Forces—the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, is due to speak, I think—and the other Crown services, the Civil Service owes its allegiance to the sovereign. We owe our duty to the Government of the day because it is the sovereign's Government—the Government appointed by the monarch. So the last official duty of the Queen, so bravely carried out on Tuesday in appointing the new Prime Minister, had more than a symbolic importance. The completion of the appointment of other Ministers will presumably be carried out by the new King. However, when appointed, they will be the King's Government and we in this House will rightly take an oath of loyalty to him.

I make this brief excursion into our constitution to demonstrate that all of us who are servants of the Crown have a higher duty than simply to our political bosses. Speaking for myself, I found that my duty to Queen Elizabeth was not only demanding but inspiring. Her Majesty's standard of service throughout her long life, to which so many tributes have been made, was one to which many of us may aspire but can never attain. Moreover, she carried out those duties with a grace, dignity and humanity of which the whole nation can be proud. She caused other nations to envy us.

This is a difficult and challenging time for the new King, as well as a moment of acute personal sadness for him. Nevertheless, he has had a long apprenticeship. He is his own person, as every individual should be, but he has demonstrated over many years his devotion to the welfare and success of this country and its citizens, as well as to the challenges that are being

[LORD BUTLER OF BROCKWELL]

faced by the wider world. His mother has demonstrated the value of our monarchy. I wish our new sovereign well and pledge to him my loyalty and support as he carries forward that heavy responsibility.

The Lord Bishop of Durham: My Lords, I begin by paying tribute to Her Majesty the Queen for all that she gave to us and thanking those noble Lords who have already made tributes. The noble Lord, Lord True, and the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, moved me to tears for the first time, for which I thank them—because tears matter.

My first personal meeting with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was as Bishop of Southampton. In 2007, Romsey celebrated the 500th year of its royal charter and the 900th anniversary of the foundation of its wonderful abbey. Her Majesty had been a regular visitor to Broadlands, the home of the Mountbatten family, so local people took the opportunity to tell me their memories of bumping into Her Majesty as she walked locally, popped into the shops or made her way to worship in the abbey. This highlighted for me her humanity, interest in people's lives, concern for the local community and commitment to worship and prayer.

At the close of the service, together we examined James I's seal on the royal charter. She delighted in explaining to me the continuity between her seal and his: notably, both were seated on a horse. She made an observation on the horse's gait, for she was concerned for its welfare. Concern for welfare also struck me during my visit to Sandringham as the bishop in residence when I was Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham. Her conversation included concern for the welfare of her family, the nation, the Commonwealth and her beloved—that is the word that she used—Church of England. It was “education Sunday”, so there was some discussion with Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh on education in our nation. While Prince Philip took a fairly robust approach to the discussion, Her Majesty was entirely focused on wanting to know that the welfare of children as well-rounded human beings was at the heart of all our education.

Her commitment to welfare makes me note also that yesterday morning there was the wonderful news of the success of the malaria vaccine. Given Her Majesty's love of the Commonwealth, and the scourge that malaria remains, might we consider that one memorial could be that this be known as the Elizabeth malaria vaccine, and that a significant sum be committed by us as a nation to its distribution through the Commonwealth nations that need it, in memory of her?

In conclusion, I celebrate, with others, the centrality of Her Majesty's faith in Jesus Christ, and her life of prayer. I know that the people of the north-east of England, whom I have come to learn expect the Bishop of Durham to speak on their behalf, always valued Her Majesty's visits to the region. They will want me to express on their behalf today their sorrow at Her Majesty's passing, their prayers for the Royal Family in their grieving, their commitment to our new King, His Majesty King Charles III, and their deep thanksgiving for Her Majesty's life of faith, service, kindness and

duty. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in heaven, we thank you. His Majesty King Charles III, we promise our loyalty.

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park (Con): My Lords, just over three months ago, I had the honour to lead the tributes in this House for Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. As I commented in my closing remarks, it was probably the most uplifting debate that I was involved in as Leader of the House. The love, affection and respect that noble Lords from all Benches had for Her Majesty shone through every contribution, so it is with the most immense and profound sadness that I speak today.

The Queen gave us seven decades of dedicated service. Just as she proclaimed she would at the age of 21, she devoted her life to the United Kingdom, the realms and the Commonwealth. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, Queen Elizabeth was the very spirit of our nation, the rock on which modern Britain was built. Her service and dedication were truly remarkable.

Holding the role of Leader of this House is a privilege in all its respects and daunting in many, but I would be lying if I did not admit that most of the “Pinch me, is this really happening?” moments that I experienced over the last six years involved Her Majesty. Perhaps the most public was carrying the cap of maintenance during the State Opening of Parliament. During her reign, she opened every Parliament bar three, a testament to her overriding sense of duty. Little did I realise that my role was not only a huge and terrifying responsibility but a feat of endurance, as that cap is a lot heavier than it looks.

As Leader of the House and Lord Privy Seal, you have the honour of attending, among other things, state banquets, the diplomatic reception, the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph and, of course, Privy Council meetings. I was always amazed and impressed by Her Majesty's knowledge about any topic that you could think of, her ability to put anybody at ease and the twinkle in her eye when you did not quite follow established protocol. I suspect that noble Lords will not be entirely surprised to learn that, despite my best efforts, I saw that twinkle on more than one occasion.

When we moved to virtual Privy Council meetings due to the pandemic, it was sadly no longer possible to have those enjoyable informal conversations in person with Her Majesty after the official business. Instead, all of us attending were asked to update Her Majesty on our areas of responsibility. She was always very interested and, of course, extremely knowledgeable about what was happening in your Lordships' House. As well as highlighting the important work that we were doing, I always tried to include an amusing anecdote or comment, as there was nothing quite like the feeling of knowing that you had made Her Majesty chuckle. Sadly, it has turned out that I attended the last meeting that she presided over.

1.45 pm

I also had the privilege of seeing in action the incredible partnership she had with her “strength and stay”, the late Duke of Edinburgh. His unfailing support for and devotion to Her Majesty was clear for all to

see, and their shared sense of humour was undoubtedly an important part of their 73-year marriage. I am sure that during these tributes, other noble Lords will say more about the Queen's lifelong affection for Sandringham, but since my husband James was elected as the MP for North West Norfolk, which includes this estate, I have seen at first-hand the love and deep respect that those who live there have for her. It has been yet another reminder for me of the role that she has played in the lives of so many and the place that she held in our hearts.

I offer my deepest condolences to the Royal Family, with whom we mourn at this saddest of times. Now our thoughts go to our new King, who has lost his beloved mother and is taking over this extraordinary role. We offer our loyalty and support to him as he takes on the immense responsibility that she held for so long with unfailing service and dedication.

May she rest in peace, and God save the King.

Lord Blunkett (Lab): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Evans, and to thank her for her time as Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House.

Much has been said, and there will be much more to say over the weeks and months ahead—condolences, of course, to the Royal Family and heartfelt thanks for a life of historic proportions. All of us in public life in one way or another hope to leave a tiny footprint, some small legacy, behind us, but Her Majesty strode as a colossus through decades and generations, dealing with the most incredible personal and public events and taking on those challenges, to quote the noble Lord, Lord Judge, “with fortitude”.

Much has been said about service and duty, but I make no apology for repeating them. This is what Her Majesty's life was about, right from those early days, described so graphically in this House today. That is why so many felt, like my noble friend Lady Smith of Basildon, shock when we learned that Her Majesty's life was fading. Is it only yesterday? The shock was obviously greater, as has been alluded to, because of the juxtaposition with her role as our monarch on Tuesday, inducting the new Prime Minister and doing—yes—her duty. I found myself yesterday evening in a situation that I had never expected to, one of complete irrationality. I started to think, “Not now, not at this moment, please, not yet”. It was totally irrational, but it was because our Queen, over my lifetime, not only demonstrated how a constitutional monarch can do that duty but did it in a way that has held our nation, our United Kingdom, together. I hope that the memory will last with us for decades to come.

Holding our fragile constitution together, as the noble Lord, Lord Butler, put it so well, is not an easy matter. We live in very delicate, difficult times for liberal democracy. Our Queen will be deeply missed, but her guidance and example will carry into the life and work of His Majesty King Charles III. Through turbulent and sometimes difficult times, he will display his great strength and compassion, which I have experienced, and his understanding of that duty to us as a nation and to our kingdom.

In my very brief speech this afternoon, I want to say a simple word about conducting ourselves for the future. Of course our respect requires our mourning, but in my view we need to celebrate and rejoice in the life of Elizabeth II. We need to lift people, as well as mourn. I hope it will be possible for public events to resume as quickly as possible so that people, in gathering together, can pay their respects and show their grief, but in a positive and uplifting way.

I have lots of anecdotes, particularly about dogs, as noble Lords will understand, from over those many years, but perhaps appropriately I will finish by giving just two. One was when I was inducted as a privy counsellor 25 years ago. I am sad that decisions have been taken that preclude so many of us on the Privy Council from the Accession Council. Back in those days, I knew it would be difficult and, unusually for me, I was quite nervous. I knew I could not drag the dog across the floor because dogs are not very good at showing you where to kneel on cushions. They are brilliant at all other kinds of other things, but that is not one of them, so I left the dog with Jack Straw. I moved across the room and I managed to hit the cushion, but facing the wrong way. Her Majesty, in what was always her gracious, careful and never patronising way, managed to gently shift me round by touching my arm so that I could just brush her hand.

I also remember seven years ago, much later, when she came to undertake the Maundy Thursday distribution at the cathedral in my city of Sheffield. Because I was retiring from the House of Commons as the longest serving Sheffield Member of Parliament, I had the privilege once again of sitting at a table with her at lunch. I had a member of the charitable community in Sheffield between me and Her Majesty. There was a silence, and I thought I would fill it—inappropriately, as it turned out—by saying to her, “Your Majesty, I have been reading in the papers that the breed of corgi is dying out.” There was a tremendous pause, and Her Majesty then did what she did so cleverly and so appropriately in putting me down. “Mr Blunkett,” she said, “of all people, you should know not to believe what you read in the newspapers.” I know that His Majesty King Charles III will not need, want or ask for my advice, but if he did I would give him one simple piece of advice: in the years to come, do not believe everything you read in the newspapers, and above all, sometimes do not bother reading them.

Lord Wallace of Saltire (LD): My Lords, I am conscious that admitting that I can remember the monarchy before Queen Elizabeth is to admit that I am well over the average age, even in this House. My first image of the monarchy was, indeed, of the Queen's grandmother, Queen Mary, who used to come to listen to sermons in Westminster Abbey whenever a particularly radical canon, Canon Marriott, was preaching the social gospel—something which would now be considered far too left-wing for any current bishop to talk about. I learned a little more when, as a junior chorister, I sang when the coffin of George VI arrived at Westminster Hall for the lying-in-state, and rather more about the symbolic importance of the monarchy when, as a more senior chorister, I sang at the Coronation.

[LORD WALLACE OF SALTAIRE]

People have talked a lot about how much the country has changed since then. When I think back to that period, it is astonishing what sort of change we have been through. As I walked past the abbey this morning, I remembered that it was black in 1952, covered in soot. Outside, a gallery had been built for people to watch from over a bomb site, which is now the Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Inside, nearly a thousand Peers were in the north transept, in their full robes and with their coronets, and nearly a thousand Peeresses were in the south transept. In a few months' time, when the ballot for perhaps 100 of us who wish to attend the next Coronation arrives, we should remember that social deference has ended and the social order in this country is different from what it was then.

The monarchy is about symbolism, holding the country together and reminding us of how much we are linked with the past and with the lives of others in this country. Symbolism, ritual and conventions are an essential part of holding this kingdom together. The Queen has done her best throughout her very long reign to act in a symbolic way that reminds us of that. Because I am associated with Westminster Abbey, I have seen quite a lot of the symbolic services in operation. It is astonishing how she has not only adapted but actively assisted adaptation over the years.

At the Coronation, the only minister of religion participating who was not a member of the Church of England was, of course, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland. I have heard that the Cardinal Archbishop was invited but decided that he would prefer to sit in a gallery outside the abbey. On the 50th anniversary service of the Coronation, the Cardinal Archbishop read the first lesson. Representatives of our nonconformist churches sat at the side of the sanctuary. Under the lantern, in the first row, were representatives of Britain's other faiths. That is real adaptation and a wonderful change.

For the 60th anniversary of the Coronation, the abbey and the Palace decided to symbolise the idea of the public service of all the nation and organised a procession that would walk from the west end to the sanctuary with an anointing flask, accompanied by a representation of the diversity of the nation. At the back were a Peer and a High Court judge in full robes. The head doorkeeper insisted that I put on my robes over here because he said that I could not possibly manage it when I got to the other side of the road. In front of us were Scout leaders, Guides, petty officers, NCOs and a lollipop lady in full school crossing uniform. That is good symbolism of the public service that everyone does. The Queen symbolised public duty, public service and public good. That is part of what we all need to remember and, I hope, to practise ourselves in our own contributions to this kingdom.

Lord Jay of Ewelme (CB): My Lords, one of the privileges of ambassadorial life was the relationship we had with the monarchy and with the Queen. We were proud to be members of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service. The Queen came to Paris when I was ambassador to unveil a statue to Sir Winston Churchill. Nothing could better have symbolised Britain or the relationship

between Britain and France since the Second World War. The dignity with which the Queen performed her duties was a lesson to us all, British and French.

While the Queen was in Paris, I hosted a dinner for her in our embassy and, according to custom, proposed a rather pompous toast to the President of the French Republic and to Her Majesty the Queen. "What a nice couple," she replied. It was that mixture of dignity and informality, at times almost irreverence, that was so captivating to millions in Britain and around the world.

In my last job at the Foreign Office, I had the extraordinary privilege to be at Her Majesty's side when she received new ambassadors. The Queen had been doing this for about 50 years and loved it when things went slightly awry. I remember that a very distinguished ambassador arrived by carriage at Buckingham Palace and had forgotten his credentials. An ever-helpful equerry gave him a plain brown envelope and said, "Present this to Her Majesty and all will be well." The rather nervous ambassador entered the room and presented the Queen with an empty plain brown envelope. The Queen was generously pleased to accept the empty plain brown envelope and said, with a dignified twinkle in her eye, "How very kind, ambassador".

2 pm

Those are two anecdotes, but for us diplomats the privilege of representing the Queen was real. We all knew the immensely positive influence she had and could have on our relations with other countries and that is why, as ambassadors, we all wanted the Queen to come to visit us because we knew that would have a hugely positive impact on our relations with the country concerned. Nothing can replace the 70 years of service of Her Majesty the Queen to the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and other countries in the world, and nothing can replace the affection and respect with which she was held by millions in this country and around the world.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, it is an immense honour for me to follow the noble Lord, Lord Jay. I reflect on the contributions that have been made, and I pay tribute to my noble friend Lord True and the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, for setting the tone and once again demonstrating your Lordships' House at its very best.

All of us will reflect on the incredible contribution of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, but as one foreign dignitary who rang me last night said, "She was not just your Queen, Tariq, she was all of ours." That reflects the love and affection all of us are experiencing and seeing demonstrated across the globe. Her Majesty truly transcended barriers—barriers of religion and different nationalities. The noble Baroness, Lady Smith, alluded to Paddington Bear. I have an eight year-old who connects in a different way, but very poignantly, with our great sovereign who has passed. I saw directly, through various experiences, how, in a room full of hundreds, at times touching a thousand people, she made everyone she met feel that they were an individual. They cherish those memories.

We all have anecdotes. I remember 1977. I did not then know that I would carry the name of my town in your Lordships' House, as I was but a young boy. We were terribly excited about the Silver Jubilee. Virginia Wade had reached the final of Wimbledon. The great citizens of the town of Wimbledon were told to line up and, dutifully, we did, neighbour to neighbour, friend to friend. We were all dressed in our red, white and blue and waving flags. As it happened, Her Majesty the Queen's car passed directly in front of our house. It was a slow passing and, just for a moment, it stopped. Her Majesty the Queen looked towards my brother, sister and me. She smiled, her eyes twinkled, and she waved. Of course, the rest of the evening in the Ahmad household was spent arguing about who that wave was directed at. I still take possession of that wave. Again, it showed the ability of Her Majesty the Queen to connect. She knew that millions loved her, but she treated everyone as an individual because she loved her nation, and she performed her duty like no other.

To continue that personal journey, I am delighted that the Senior Deputy Speaker is in his place. It was along with my noble friend Lord Gardiner and the noble Lord, Lord Newby, that I had the great privilege of becoming a Lord in Waiting to Her Majesty the Queen and a government Whip. The three of us dutifully lined up together for that first meeting on official duty. As someone engaged at the Foreign Office, I wish my current Whips on the Front Bench well as we look towards welcoming the world for Her Majesty's state funeral. As we lined up, there was a degree of trepidation, and then the doors opened and we went in. Each of us was treated as an individual. Her Majesty sat me down, and as I took my seat she said, "Lord Ahmad, I understand your mother is from Jodhpur." She then shared her experiences of India and the south-Asian continent. Then she said, with a smile, "I understand your father was from Gurdaspur but he started life in the early 1950s in Glasgow. Now that's a change if ever there was one." These things matter.

I remember from various subsequent meetings her warmth and affection, and the real sense of trust she showed. At a one-to-one meeting when I was ending my tenure as a Lord in Waiting, she did not address me as Lord Ahmad but said, "Tariq, come and sit next to me." It was the day after the Scottish referendum, and what was said will rightly remain private, but two things stayed with me. One was the trust she showed in sharing her views with me; the other was that maybe I was doing something right, as we had done away with my formal title and she had called me by my first name.

During my tenure as a Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, I saw Her Majesty at her best when it came to diplomacy. During the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, she made a personal connection with each president and head of government she met, each dutifully lining up and waiting their turn to meet Her Majesty. If a training module for diplomacy is ever designed for diplomats and Ministers, Her Majesty really did set the standard. She demonstrated what connecting means, and the value of people-to-people connection. As Minister of State for the Commonwealth—I am delighted

that my noble friend Lord Howe is in his place—I saw her love for the Commonwealth. It was shown not just by her words or actions, but by her connection with the people of the Commonwealth, and she is rightly mourned across the 56 nations today.

As we have heard from various noble Lords, Her Majesty had a real sense of humour. I shall share a final anecdote, which I shared with a couple of colleagues in your Lordships' House just a few moments ago. Saddiqa, my wife, Lady Ahmad, and I were at one of the many diplomatic receptions we have attended, and there was a new official at the palace. Those who have attended these receptions will know that you have your place to stand in respect of who meets which member of the Royal Family, and where. Of course, I took my place, as I had done it a few times. The official came in and said, "Sir, you're standing in the wrong place", and wanted to move me into the diplomatic line. In a year in which we celebrated the diversity of this United Kingdom and what it represents, I assured the official that I was standing dutifully in the right place. She returned a few moments later and said, "I really must insist that you and your wife stand in the right place." I smiled and said to her, "Madam, I assure you I am standing in the right place." I continued standing where I was, together with Saddiqa. A few moments later, the official returned again and said, "I really must insist", and as we were about to embark on our third bout of that conversation, who should come round the corner but Her Majesty, and she said, "Leave him alone. He's one of mine". There was a real demonstration of the best of Her Majesty's wit, wisdom and knowledge.

My noble friend Lord Forsyth talked of Her Majesty's deep faith. We had conversations about faith, as I have had the great honour to have with His Majesty King Charles III. Faith mattered to her. As Her Majesty now embarks on her final journey, to meet her maker, I end my humble contribution with the words I uttered when I was informed yesterday by my private secretary of Her Majesty's passing: to almighty God we belong, and to almighty God we shall return.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): I rise to express sincere condolences to the Royal Family at this time of loss and grieving. As many noble Lords have said, it is true that the whole UK is grieving in a similar way.

The Queen represented us in all sorts of ways for her whole life and for 70 years of public service, and she was absolutely tireless. I first met her when she opened City Hall in 2002. We were a new Assembly, we had a mayor and it was all very exciting to be in a new building. It was obvious that she took it very seriously. She went along the line-up at the end, probably 80 or 90 people, as if she was really enjoying it. Prince Philip took the opportunity of telling me what was wrong with the Greens. He told me quite forcefully, and I took it to heart; perhaps he was right.

I met her on other occasions, and the same attitude was there: absolute dedication to and concentration on what she was doing at the time. It was not like someone doing a job or performing their duty but someone who seemed interested and curious in what was happening.

[BARONESS JONES OF MOULSECOOMB]

I had a tiny taste—a glimmer—of what it was like to do such public service when I was deputy mayor under Ken Livingstone. He gave me lots of jobs he did not want to do—to meet people, go to meetings and make speeches he did not want to make. It was the first time ever that I was not representing myself or my political party. Sometimes I had to do things that were at odds with my nature: being very polite, listening to boring speeches and generally appearing to be interested and polite the whole time. I found that putting on a fascinated face, which is what Her Majesty did for 70 years, was incredibly difficult. I did that for 13 months; she did it for 70 years. It left me feeling what an extraordinary woman and an amazing monarch she was.

The Lord Bishop of St Albans: My Lords, I join in with the tributes to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth for the extraordinary reign we have observed, for which we pay tribute today.

Like many noble Lords, I too have my anecdotes. I remember going up to stay in Sandringham for the weekend. Coming from a farming background, I had expressed interest in her racehorses and she was very keen to show them to me, so I was summoned outside. There was a Range Rover there, and she came out very brusquely and shouted across to me, “Jump in, Bishop; I’m driving”. She set off at a rate of knots, and I was holding on for dear life. She taught me a great deal about prayer at that point, which is perhaps why she was called Defender of the Faith.

I want to briefly draw your Lordships’ attention to one other thing about Her Majesty which I think is really significant. Some people have asked, “Why has she had such an impact?” One of the features or tendencies of many of those in leadership for a long time is that the longer they are in leadership, the less they really listen. What struck me about Her Majesty the Queen was that she really listened. I am not saying that she did it superficially. The first significant time I met her was when I had paid homage and, afterwards, we had a conversation. She immediately wanted to ask my views on various aspects of the history, industry and background of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. In an informed way, she showed that she absolutely knew what was going on—but what did I think about it? What did I think was happening?

2.15 pm

At a later stage, when I was staying at Sandringham, there was an odd moment when I was sitting around with other guests, and Her Majesty had come down and was playing patience. I remember thinking, “Do I just wander across and have a chat with her? Well, I’m not going to get invited again, I don’t suppose, so let’s go for it.” I went across and asked, “May I join you?” She said, “Please do”, as she was playing cards. It was just after Christmas, and she wanted to know what I had thought about her Christmas message. She wanted to know how people had heard it and whether it had been able to speak and communicate with people. It caught me totally by surprise that that was what she was interested in. She was so concerned that she was not only on transmit mode, as it were, but engaging with people of different groups. She wanted to ask

whether I had spoken to people in various places to hear what they had thought about it. I was able to assure her that people had been very grateful for the words she had expressed. That quality of attentive listening is one of the reasons why so many people relate to her as a person. It is a wonderful gift to be able to do that at the end of a reign of 70 years.

To finish, I just want to comment on one picture, which the noble Lord, Lord Newby, mentioned. There have been a number of what I think people today call “iconic” photographs, but it is that picture—I think it is the last photograph we have—of her standing with such fragility and frailty. In a world where it is endlessly presented to us that the only style of leadership is that which is bold, aggressive and so on, she was showing us that there are other sorts of leadership, which can come from humanity and fragility. That picture of her leaning on her stick, stooped over with her hand outstretched, will stay with me as a picture of welcome and warmth. For that, I give thanks to God. I give thanks for her life and, along with many other Members of this House, I say: may she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Baroness Amos (Lab): My Lords, I shared in the shock and sadness of people in this country and across the world when we heard the news of the Queen’s passing last night. Of course, I share the sentiments already expressed in this House about the Queen’s extraordinary commitment to public service, her sense of duty and her leadership.

In my brief remarks I will focus on the Queen’s standing internationally, which went far beyond her lifelong commitment to the Commonwealth. I have been struck by the numerous messages I have received since yesterday—there have been many, as I am sure we have all received—from family, friends and colleagues around the world about their deep sense of loss and sadness. They felt a connection with our Queen and, through her, us. It is a connection that speaks to values and, crucially, to stability and calm in a turbulent, complex and changing world.

The Queen was not just a confidante to our Prime Minister. She played that role with many Prime Ministers and Presidents over the years. As a Foreign Office Minister I was very conscious of this. I also saw it in many discussions I had when I engaged with politicians internationally. She gave wise advice and brought a light touch to those interactions, which helped to give those Prime Ministers and Presidents the confidence to do things that they thought might be too difficult.

The noble Lords, Lord Jay and Lord Ahmad, have spoken about the Queen’s important diplomacy role. Some noble Lords will have seen the heartfelt tribute last night from Prime Minister Trudeau, who spoke absolutely to this. I would also like to pay tribute to the way in which she has led Britain through extraordinary change. The Britain that my family arrived in in the 1960s was very different from who we are today. We are a diverse, multi-ethnic nation, and throughout this change the Queen was a constant.

Perhaps I might end on a very personal note—there have been plenty of anecdotes today. In June, I had the privilege of a personal audience with the Queen ahead

of Garter Day. Our conversation ranged over a number of subjects, some light-hearted, some very serious. A number of references have been made to the Queen's sense of humour. She relished telling me the story of the filming of that skit with Paddington Bear and the challenges of acting with a bear who was not moving or speaking. She also told me that the jars of marmalade were already beginning to arrive at Windsor Castle. It was a warm and very special experience for me, and I will always treasure it. I offer my condolences to His Majesty King Charles III, the Queen Consort and the other members of the Royal Family.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD): I am privileged to follow the profound eloquence of the noble Baroness in her tribute and I echo many of her regards. It is to the personal, the local and the international personified by her late Majesty that we pay tribute today. As the sorrowful but necessary processes in my home country north of the border pass, she will continue in the wee dark hours over the border, on her last journey home, through my home town of Berwick. Like many noble Lords, I have memories of meeting her in my home area; they no doubt felt when they met her as I did—that she knew our area more than we knew it ourselves. It was just one of the many attributes she held that are receiving tribute today.

Queen Elizabeth II lived for nearly a third of all the time of our union and was sovereign of it for nearly a quarter. This will never be repeated in the future story of these isles: a semi-mystical link between old and new, a shelter of calm in storms of turbulent political waters and, in the wider world, an embodiment of reliability as the tectonic shifts in how the world sees itself have moved, along with the place of our country in this transformation, from empire to Commonwealth, from military prowess to cultural influence.

I reviewed the Motions of condolence for the late King George VI in 1952. From these Benches, Viscount Samuel quoted Prime Minister Nehru of India as saying that

“when the relationship between England and India took a new turn and was based on friendship and free association ... I was impressed by his thoughtfulness and understanding of us and our position, and we welcomed him most willingly as Head of the Commonwealth”.—[*Official Report*, 11/2/1952; cols. 1080-81.]

Her late Majesty built upon this foundation and became the reason beyond all others as to why peaceful transition with complex moral dimensions on an immense scale, touching every part of the world, has been a success.

Today, I was due to be arriving in Khartoum. Friends from there messaged me last evening, as others have from other parts of the world. I was greatly moved by the news that the pictures of her Majesty's visit there in 1965 have been circulating widely. That country is vastly different from before and after independence—as is the world. Another Sudanese friend messaged me saying, “Her legacy in the decolonisation era will especially be remembered in our region of the world”.

No other leader of a country in world history has ever travelled so much or met more leaders and people from more countries. As one American publication put it this morning, “Among Queen Elizabeth II's

many talents was an ability to turn the most powerful man on the planet into an overexcited fanboy—tea with the Queen outranking a nuclear arsenal”.

At home in the Borders, where her visits were frequent and her knowledge of our equestrian common ridings was thorough—as was that of other members of the Royal Family; in fact, the Queen Consort was due to be in Galashiels yesterday—we will feel a gap as she passes through for the final time.

Her late Majesty made me feel it that it was a remarkable stroke of good fortune to be born British, and I know the pride felt by many people who have come and made Britain their home. That pride for our history is in my heart, but there is a sense of anxiety in the pit of my stomach for the future. Many people of my parents' generation and, indeed, my own, and I myself, feel loss, but some will feel lost. Who will be the constancy in times of churn to come? So, for our union at home and our place in the world abroad, I thank her late Majesty, and I wish the new King every success.

Lord Dodds of Duncairn (DUP): My Lords, it is difficult to follow so many eloquent speeches that have already been given in the House by your Lordships this afternoon, but I rise to add few words on my own behalf and that of my noble friends in the Democratic Unionist Party, and on behalf of so many in Northern Ireland who feel the loss of Her Majesty so acutely today.

So many words have been spoken, yet, no matter how many or how eloquently expressed, they cannot do justice to the feelings that we experienced when we heard the dreadful news yesterday afternoon on the passing of Her Majesty. That shock was palpable; as the noble Lord, Lord Purvis, said, there is a sense not just of loss but that people are lost, in a bit of a limbo and worried about what might happen going forward.

As the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, said, we knew this day would come but we wished that it would not. The sense of loss is acute. Her Majesty was a constant presence in our lives and in the life of our communities, and in each of the countries of our United Kingdom she is, or was, the embodiment—a mother and grandmother of our United Kingdom. It is hard to process.

We think today of her family and, in particular, the new King Charles III. We pray that he will know God's blessing and guidance in the days ahead. He has to grieve and yet immediately assume the great duties, burdens and responsibilities of the monarchy. It reminds us, of course, that, at the tender age of 26, Her Majesty herself ascended to the throne while she desperately grieved his late Majesty King George VI; but she embraced her duties without hesitation, taking upon herself the mantle or duty and service.

Those beautiful words that she spoke on her 21st birthday,

“I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service”,

have been fulfilled in the most exemplary way and with such grace. The qualities of integrity and great wisdom shone through brightly her entire life, with her great strength and stay his late Royal Highness the

[LORD DODDS OF DUNCAIRN]

Duke of Edinburgh constantly at her side. What was striking to many of us was her deep Christian faith, so evident in her wonderful Christmas broadcasts. How we will miss sitting down on Christmas Day to hear the gentle words of Her Majesty speak to the entire nation. Today, as we look over decades of her service, we have been reminded in your Lordships' House that, while many paid homage to her, she first placed her hands and her life in the hands of Christ the Lord himself. As we look back over 70 years, we are reminded of what the Bible says about life:

"For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

But Her Majesty has left behind such a legacy and example for us all.

2.30 pm

People in Northern Ireland warmly welcomed every one of Her Majesty's visits to our Province. People loved her. Even those who wish a different future for the Province held her in the highest esteem and with the greatest respect. I had the wonderful privilege, like many in this House, of meeting her on a number of occasions in different capacities. As Lord Mayor of Belfast in the late 1980s, I remember on one of Her Majesty's visits, which were not very frequent then because of the security situation, she visited my former constituency in north Belfast. Two police officers had been badly injured the previous day in a terrorist attack, and her first words as we lined up to greet her and welcome her were to express concern and inquire after their health, which showed her compassion and deep concern for people in Northern Ireland, which was evident on many other visits that she made to the Province.

When she returned in 2012 for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, I remember the many tens of thousands who were able to turn out to the Stormont estate and welcome her. Her visits became more widely open to the public because of the improved security and political situation, which she warmly welcomed and of course played such an important part, in her quiet diplomatic way, in bringing about. Her visit to the Irish Republic will go down as one of the great significant milestones of Her Majesty's reign and will be remembered as an important and significant milestone in the peace and political process.

In Northern Ireland, like other parts of this great United Kingdom, we will never forget Her Majesty's steadfast support for and encouragement of our people through dark days and, gladly and wonderfully, brighter days in recent times. Thank you, Ma'am. God save the King.

Lord Stirrup (CB): My Lords, my earliest memory goes back to the moment when I had just turned the age of two. I can be certain of the date because my parents had moved house and I clearly remember the removal men in their dustcoats delivering our furniture. The date was February 1952 and Queen Elizabeth was just acceding to the throne. So, until yesterday afternoon, my entire conscious life had been exactly coincident with the second Elizabethan age.

That age has now ended. I have fond memories from its latter years of many meetings and discussions with the Queen, both professional and social, and I shall always be grateful for her kindness, her wisdom, her support and her great sense of fun, which I am happy to say was just as evident when I last spoke with her only a few weeks ago. Like the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury, I also remember the winter barbecues at Sandringham, and I am proud of having been the co-producer, with my sovereign, of a particularly successful salad dressing.

The Queen was, as the noble Lord, Lord Butler of Brockwell, observed, the head of the Armed Forces. She took an intense interest in their activities—their difficulties and challenges as well as their successes—but particularly in their people. She had formal affiliations with a great many formations and organisations, all of which valued the association highly. I think that over the next few days and weeks many stories will be told and memories exchanged, with that strange and piercing mixture of sadness and joy that I suspect we all experience today.

I want to focus on just one incident from several years ago. One of the Queen's military affiliations was as the honorary air commodore at RAF Marham, a station very close to Sandringham. I commanded RAF Marham over the first Gulf War. When we started to lose aircraft over Iraq, the Queen was immediately in touch, wanting to know how she could help, and in particular how she could support the families. She came and had private meetings with the next of kin of those who were missing in action. She spoke with the families more widely. She listened to them, empathised with them and made them understand how much she cared. That is just one small incident in a very long reign, but for me it epitomises it all.

The nation has lost a Queen. The people have lost one of the best servants they have ever known in this or any other age.

Lord Polak (Con): My Lords, I pay tribute to all the speakers before me, particularly the noble Lord, Lord True, who is not in his place. On an occasion like today, I think I speak on behalf of the whole House when I say we miss the late Lord Sacks, who would have known exactly what to say.

On hearing of someone's passing, the Jewish tradition is to say "Baruch dayan ha'emet", which means "Blessed is the true judge". In my earliest memories of going to synagogue on a Saturday morning, there was only one prayer that was said in English, and that prayer will be said tomorrow in synagogues up and down the country. I will read it as it was done last week: "He who giveth salvation unto kings and dominion unto princes, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, may he bless our sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth and all the Royal Family. May the supreme King of kings, in his mercy, preserve the Queen in life, guard her and deliver her from all trouble and sorrow." In synagogues up and down the country tomorrow we will say it as usual for His Majesty King Charles.

I have been listening to so many personal stories of how Her Majesty touched the lives of so many, even just for a fleeting moment, and that will forever be

etched on the memory of those people. In 1971 my mother and my late grandmother were at Royal Ascot. My grandmother at the time thought she was part of the Royal Family and we did not tell her that she was not. On the way back from the paddock to the enclosure, my grandma Leah touched the back of the Queen Mother and said, “Ma’am, you look beautiful.” As the heavies suddenly came round to where my mum—who was deeply embarrassed—was, the Queen Mother said, “Hang on”, and turned to my grandmother and said, “And, if I may say so, you look beautiful too.” At this point both embarrassed daughters, Her Majesty the Queen and my mother, turned round at the same moment and said, “Oh mummy.” This moment, this 10-second encounter, stayed with my late grandmother her whole life, and has stayed with my mother to this day.

The tributes to Her Majesty have all been magnificent, but I listened particularly carefully to Sir John Major, the former Prime Minister, whose tribute included the line, “There was almost no part of the world she had not visited.” Sir John was right. I will concentrate for a moment on the word “almost”. On 22 June 2016, the night before the EU referendum, I was at a small dinner with a few people raising a little bit of money for Gordonstoun at the home of the Princess Royal. As I was leaving, I said to the headmaster that I would happily come up to the school and speak to the students about politics. Princess Anne turned round and said, “I think they’d be more interested in your previous work.” We had a conversation and discussed how the Royal Family were prohibited by the Foreign Office from visiting Israel. We agreed that it was and is sad that the Queen, as someone who was deeply religious and God-fearing, never walked down the Via Dolorosa into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem or experienced the peace and tranquillity on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

At a Jewish funeral, Psalm 16 is often recited in Hebrew. In translation, it ends:

“You will make known to me the path of life;
In your presence is fullness of joy,
at your right hand bliss for ever more.”

Yehi zichra baruch—may Her Majesty’s memory be for a blessing.

Lord Morris of Aberavon (Lab): My Lords, I had the privilege on a number of occasions to have a private audience with Her Majesty, as Welsh Secretary for six years. The most memorable was, while travelling on her plane from Caernarfon, to be summoned by her private secretary to come and sit by Her Majesty on the journey to London. She sought to scrutinise my policies with very careful prodding. As a professional cross-examiner, I was totally unused to being in the witness box.

My job during the Silver Jubilee was supervising the organising of her tour of Wales, based on “*Britannia*” for three wonderful days, meeting her one sunny morning in a railway siding in north Wales and finishing with the Royal Marines playing on the quay in Cardiff. She greeted the immense crowds from Llandudno to Cardiff with immense pleasure and great interest. I surmise that the high point of the tour was a few quiet hours

admiring the beauty of Bodnant Garden. She had the magical quality of combining formality and informality as appropriate. My wife and I valued the great care and meticulous consideration given for my wife’s hearing when she entertained us at the end of each day.

The sense of fun in the Duke and Her Majesty herself was manifest at the opening of Theatr Clwyd in north Wales, when the great actor, Emlyn Williams, delivered his monologue describing the bus trip full of Welsh bards in search of the Druid’s Tap for refreshment. When the Duke turned to me and asked, “Was there such a place as the Druid’s Tap?”, we all rolled with laughter.

Wearing another hat many years later, as Her Majesty’s Attorney-General I had the privilege at the first sitting of the Welsh Assembly to present her two copies of the Wales Bill for initialling. The first was in English; there was no problem. I then presented a second, in Welsh. Trusting her bilingual Minister, without batting an eyelid she signed the second one too.

My sympathies go to King Charles and his family. I have visited his home in Wales on many occasions and he has won the respect and friendship of the nation of Wales through his close interest in our affairs.

The Lord Bishop of Guildford: My Lords, I have been deeply moved by many of the contributions this afternoon and share all the sentiments that have been so eloquently expressed. It is a phrase used far too often, but yesterday was truly the end of an era—and a glorious era. Much has been spoken already of the Queen’s remarkable sense of service, emanating from her love for her nation and the Commonwealth, and from her deep faith in the Christ who came as one who serves. But alongside that were two further virtues, contained in another favoured Bible text from the outset of Her Majesty’s reign: the words of Moses to his successor, Joshua, when he exhorted the younger man to:

“Be strong and courageous ... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”.

What kind of person would be willing to sacrifice their own preferences, private life and retirement plans for the sake of a nation and family of nations? What kind of person would be prepared to carry out such a punishing schedule of public engagements with extraordinary grace, month after month and year after year, even three or four decades after most of their contemporaries have opted for a quiet life of golf or daytime TV? What kind of person would put up with the endless intrusions of the press, making the odd family annus horribilis, with which we all sympathise, infinitely more difficult to bear? What kind of person would offer a listening ear to politicians, Prime Ministers and Presidents alike, while holding to the discipline of never straying into the political arena themselves? It is a strong and courageous person—a person whose commitment to duty, as we have heard, overrode all else.

2.45 pm

There must have been times when the gilded carriage which took her to her Coronation felt like a gilded cage, and when the pressure became almost too much

[THE LORD BISHOP OF GUILDFORD]

to bear, not least in the past couple of years, when she faced many challenges without her beloved Philip by her side. But in an age where personal vulnerability is lauded as the greatest of all virtues and we are constantly concerned about our own well-being, there is something refreshingly unfashionable about the way in which Her Majesty lived her life and carried out her duties. It is not that we can turn the clock back, nor is it that the British stiff upper lip is an unqualified virtue, but there is something about genuine selflessness and a life where the ego is kept firmly in its place, in response to a higher and nobler calling, which has something to teach us all.

I experienced it at first hand in my two personal encounters with Her Majesty, including a remarkable weekend at Sandringham, which concluded with us companionably sitting side by side and sharing our photo albums together—with Willow, the last of the corgis, sitting at our feet. It was such a warm domestic scene that I was genuinely startled after 20 minutes or so to look up, see that famous profile and realise with a jolt “That’s the Queen”.

Much has already been spoken of the Christian faith which lay at the heart of her service, most recently from the noble Lord, Lord Dodds. If she was the rock, Jesus Christ was the rock beneath the rock. Hers was a faith about which she was entirely open but never preachy; a faith that was real and personal but never trite or sentimental; a faith that was deeply nourishing but never sectarian. It was a faith beautifully exemplified in a phrase that has gained some currency in Christian circles: “Roots down, walls down”, meaning that those most secure in their own understanding and identity should be those who are most warm and undefended towards those who are differently rooted.

There are two bricks in the cathedral church from which I travelled to the House this morning, two among the very many bricks for which tens of thousands of Surrey residents—and many others too, my grandmother included—paid 2/6 to see Guildford Cathedral, the Cathedral Church of the Holy Spirit, erected. They bear the signatures of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, a reminder of one of several visits they paid to the cathedral and very many to the town and county. Perhaps it was providential that when we gathered there earlier this year to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, it was on the day of Pentecost, the festival when Christians celebrate the coming of God’s Holy Spirit. This spirit empowered Her Majesty to live the life she lived through every annus horribilis and every annus mirabilis of the past 70—indeed, the past 96—years. As others have expressed, may she indeed rest in peace and rise in glory.

Baroness Benjamin (LD): My Lords, I start my tribute to Her Majesty the Queen by expressing my deep sadness and condolences to the Royal Family for the loss of Her Majesty: a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. All our thoughts are with them.

The word “icon” is banded around quite freely these days, but Her Majesty the Queen was truly a global, iconic monarch who personified everything

the people of this country and around the globe truly admired and loved. Her dedication to duty and unflinching devotion to her people and the Commonwealth was, to use a modern term, awesome. When you think about it, we will not see another woman on the Throne for maybe 100 years. We have all lived through unbelievable history.

Her Majesty lived through wars, disasters, floods, political and social upheaval, and incredible technological changes. Yet she had a way of embracing change seamlessly, with easy curiosity, fun and joy. You could see that when she introduced the Invictus Games, with her grandson Prince Harry, online. She was a role model for those who needed to be inspired never to give up and practised consideration, commitment and unconditional love to others.

She was an important pillar of strength to children over the last seven decades and represented something constant in their lives. Many young children wanted to grow up to meet her one day. She gave them that sense of pride which is so important for the human soul and spirit, which young people need. I grew up in Trinidad in the Caribbean in the 1950s and as a little girl sang “God Save the Queen” in the school playground every day. Never did I dream that one day I would meet her, but I had the honour of doing so. I first met her in 1995, when I was president of the Elizabeth R Commonwealth broadcasting fund, which was set up with funds she donated from the royalties of the BBC programme for the 40th anniversary of her reign and which hundreds across the Commonwealth have benefited from.

The meeting I remember most fondly was when she visited the University of Exeter for her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. She was overwhelmed, touched and thrilled by the rapturous reception she received from the thousands of students who came out to greet her on that memorable day. It made her smile; she gave one of her famous smiles all through the visit. As chancellor, I had the task of hosting her. It was then that I got a glimpse of the true character of this remarkable woman. It was like having a masterclass in people skills. She loved to indulge in finding out about everything and in a short time I had to judge who she wanted to find out more about and when she wanted to move on. The signal of that famous handbag meant so much. When she met someone from the Commonwealth, she exuded excitement and interest and had so many questions she wanted to ask them. You could see that this filled up her knowledge bank. She was like a walking encyclopaedia; she knew everything about everything solely because she took an interest in people. She had a great sense of empathy and embraced differences with ease.

She arrived in Exeter at lunchtime and had read every single newspaper, including the *Racing Post*, because she quoted from them. During our conversations I could tell how much she loved her family by how she spoke about them in the way that any proud mother would. You could tell how much she loved her own mother by the excitement she showed when I showed her where her mother had signed the visitors’ book at the University of Exeter. Her reaction was delightful—so girlish, childlike and wonderful to see. We chatted and

shared stories about everything, including faith and forgiveness, which were qualities she told me she admired in Nelson Mandela. We spoke about children and education, which were so important to her. We spoke about fashion—she was a fashion icon—and about food and her famous barbeque.

She had a great sense of humour and her blue eyes twinkled mischievously when she shared a funny story with you, which you felt privileged to hear. Those are unforgettable memories that will stay in my heart for as long as I live.

Our late Queen was a record-breaker. There will never be anyone like her ever again. I feel a sadness saying that. Long may we remember Queen Elizabeth II: a monarch and a woman who touched so many lives across the world. What a legacy she has left behind, including her son. Long may King Charles live and prove to his mother that her legacy was worth while. May she rest in peace. I feel strongly after speaking to her that an eternal spiritual place is waiting for her, which she had been prepared for. Thank you, Ma'am, for being who you are and for being a role model to all of us.

Lord Anderson of Ipswich (CB): My Lords, when a Knight of the Thistle dies, the surviving spouse or a child attends on the sovereign to return the knight's insignia. Shortly before Christmas, as we started to recover from Covid, that extraordinary honour fell on me. Appointment to the Order of the Thistle, Scotland's equivalent of the Garter, is, as noble Lords well know, in the personal gift of the monarch. My father had no other titles but was thought of, I suppose, because as a young teacher at Gordonstoun he took Prince Charles under his wing. We were proud of our modest tradition of royal service, exemplified by my grandfather, who used to travel to Balmoral, tape measure in hand, to fit the Royal Family for their kilts. Her Majesty seemed to remember everything—that included.

Her Majesty explained that the insignia did not actually need to be returned, pointing to my father's thistle collar and the badge already laid out on the small round table in Windsor Castle. But she had reckoned without our family incompetence in matters of protocol. I fished out of my pocket a gold-coloured medallion, feeling ashamed that I had not ironed its green ribbon first. We had wrongly believed that it was our duty to keep it safe at home. Royal surprise turned to triumph when the Queen's sharp eyes spotted that the medallion fitted into an indentation in the jewellery box which contained the badge. She pressed it in like the last piece of a jigsaw.

"It's been a funny time, hasn't it?" said Her Majesty, as she drew the audience expertly to a close. "Do you think things will go back to the way they were, or have some things just changed?" That question, posed in the context of the pandemic, came back to me after her death. Some things will never go back to the way they were, and in that there is infinite sadness. The future, by contrast, affords us no comfortable memories and fear often weighs more heavily with us than hope. But our national future can be happy and glorious if we unite to make it so. After an unparalleled life of service, Her Majesty has left us in good hands. Thank you, Ma'am, and long live the King.

Baroness Stowell of Beeston (Con): My Lords, I echo the comments of other noble Lords about the superb opening speeches from all quarters of your Lordships' House. I pay particular tribute to my noble friend the Lord Privy Seal, who today demonstrated what an effective Leader of this House he will be.

It was a true privilege to have met Her Majesty the Queen and it is a privilege that most, if not all, of us in this House share. We have heard some wonderful anecdotes already today. I will always be grateful for and cherish the moment that I was able to introduce my parents to Her Majesty at Buckingham Palace. You did not have to meet the Queen to feel that you knew her and that she was a very special person. Her devotion to serving all of us throughout the UK and across the Commonwealth, whatever our class, colour or religion, was evident in all that she said and did and in the way that she did it.

When I was a little girl, I once asked why the Queen never smiled when we sang "God Save the Queen". I said, very innocently, that I thought she looked ungrateful. I was told sharply in response that it was me who should be grateful that Her Majesty did not smile during the national anthem and that it would be a bad sign if she ever did. From that day on, I always looked. She never, ever let me down.

It has always been remarkable to me that Her Majesty never did anything that made us doubt her devotion to us. I think that is why she was loved and admired by so many, and why we feel so sad and unsettled now she has gone. She made her reign as our sovereign all about us and showed us her pride in the people of this United Kingdom. All of us who were her subjects have just lost our biggest fan.

However, this is a very fortunate nation, because we know that His Majesty the King—I am still getting used to saying that, like everyone else—will continue where Her Majesty left off. He has my full support, and I offer him and the whole Royal Family my sincere condolences.

3 pm

Lord Hacking (Lab): My Lords, I spoke in this House on 26 May in the humble Address to Her Majesty the Queen on her Platinum Jubilee. I said that I could think of her only as a young Queen, because my early memories of Her Majesty were of when she was very young, having ascended the Throne aged 25. These memories are indelible for me.

Coming to this House today, I was thinking of my very first memory of Her Majesty. I am quite sure that it is of her dedication address, as it is now called, broadcast from Cape Town on 21 April 1947. This has been cited by many before and since Her Majesty's death, and was also cited in this debate by the Lord Privy Seal. I was only nine, and was not a listener to broadcasts or the radio, but my parents thought I ought to listen to this broadcast, which I did.

I also remember clearly the circumstances of Her Majesty giving this broadcast from Cape Town. It was the first overseas visit by the Royal Family following the war and it was really made in honour of Field Marshal Smuts for his great help to our nation during

[LORD HACKING]

World War II—he spent quite a lot of time here and almost became a member of the War Cabinet. I remember that, with no royal yacht available, the Royal Family travelled to Cape Town in the one remaining battleship after World War II, HMS “Vanguard”. I suppose it would have been a voyage of about three or four days down to South Africa.

I am not going to add to the tributes that have already nobly been made. I endorse every tribute that I have heard, and I am sure that I will continue to endorse the further tributes that will be given in this debate. I would therefore like to turn to the new King, King Charles III, and my first memory of him.

I have a very clear memory of when I was honoured to receive an invitation to Windsor Castle in about 1960 to attend an informal Christmas party for children and young persons. The King was only 12; I was a little older, at 22. I remember that the then Prince Charles was very shy. He stood by the Christmas tree during most of the party, just shyly observing what was happening. His Majesty the King is no longer shy, but he remains a very modest man. I have no doubt that he will be a most worthy successor to Her late Majesty the Queen.

I now turn in my short intervention to quote from the dedication address:

“I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.”

That is exactly what Her Majesty has done during the 70 years of her reign.

Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick (CB): My Lords, I belong to a generation of Caribbean young who had parents and grandparents who bemoaned the end of the Empire. My father was from Angola, but my mother was from Sav-la-mar, Jamaica, and I will never forget her and her mother constantly wishing for the better days of the 1950s. On one occasion, I listened to my mother railing against the new democracy in Jamaica, saying “Tsk, dem all useless, but de Queen, she gorgeous.” That sense of affectionate love for this distant lady—our sovereign, her sovereign—was deep and immense.

I also recall so clearly a radical Government appointed by election in the early 1970s who wanted to do away with the Queen’s Christmas Day broadcast. I remember from when I was a child the protests in Kingston. People came out on the streets for weeks, placarding and threatening to bombard the radio stations if they removed the broadcast. It continues to this day.

In the opening remarks from the Leader of the House, the noble Lord, Lord True, and the Leader of the Opposition, the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, reference was made to the fact that the Queen passed through all these years without expressing an opinion. That is not quite correct, because I have the opinion in my hands in a letter from Balmoral Castle, which I am happy to show the House, dated 14 September 1976.

Some 46 years ago, when I was just 18, I received a letter from the press secretary of Her Majesty the Queen, Ron Allison, who passed recently. He wrote:

“I am commanded by The Queen to acknowledge your recent letter about the projected film on the life of Jesus Christ which a Mr. Jens Thorsen proposes to produce.”

Some of the older Members here might recall the massive public debate in 1976 about a Danish filmmaker’s interest in the intimate life of Jesus. The letter goes on:

“While Her Majesty finds this proposal quite as obnoxious as most of her subjects do, the preventing of the making of such a film in the United Kingdom, or the exclusion from this country of Mr. Thorsen, could only be accomplished within the laws of the United Kingdom. Accordingly, your letter has been referred at Her Majesty’s commands to the Home Office.”

The then Home Secretary, Mr Merlyn Rees, found it impossible to allow entry to the country to pursue such a bizarre interest.

Many years later, I met Ron Allison by mistake. He looked at me and said, “You’re—”, and I said, “Yes, and you’re—”. I was still in my early 20s. I said to him then, “Did you write the letter, or did Her Majesty the Queen dictate it?” He said, “Oh no, she dictated it.” So I said that she wished it be known that she had a view that this was obnoxious and, for those old enough to remember, it was front-page news for days. I still have all the cuttings from all those years ago. I featured on endless news broadcasts, as a young black man standing up at the age of 18 in defence of the faith and the Jesus she loved, and defending what should be proper process. Yes, the Home Secretary must decide, as he did, by order and command, but Her Majesty made it clear that things were “obnoxious”. That is the one view she expressed in her long reign, and I am proud to hold it in my hands.

Lord Thomas of Gresford (LD): My Lords, the existence of Princess Elizabeth was borne in on me in 1947 at the time of the royal wedding. It was a blaze of sudden colour—and I still have the souvenir illustrated magazine that my mother kept—in a post-war world of austerity and ration books. “But where did she get the coupons for that dress?”, the grumpy ones said.

After the shock of the death of her father, it was a struggle to find a television in our street where we could watch in black and white the Queen’s Coronation. However, the following year, I remember pouring out of school to greet her and her consort when they came to my home town of Wrexham on her coronation tour.

I have no anecdotes. On the few occasions I met her personally, I was too tongue-tied to do much more than mumble my name. The noble Lord, Lord Wigley, and the noble and learned Lord, Lord Morris of Aberavon, referred to the first day of the opening of the Welsh Assembly, in which I played a less distinguished part. I found myself in the corridor leading from the front door to the Chamber, which was empty. At the far end, the noble Lord, Lord Elis-Thomas, the then Presiding Officer of the Welsh Assembly, was greeting Her Majesty. There were no doors, but I spotted the choir of the Welsh National Opera in an alcove; it was about to deliver a motet especially written for the Queen. As she passed along the carpet towards me, I joined the choir and did what was known in those days as a John Redwood: I opened my programme and mouthed the words as the choir of the Welsh National Opera looked at me in some astonishment.

I knew the Queen and her family better than any family save my own—the media saw to that. She went through many highs and lows during her long lifetime. I have followed half a generation behind with my four children, encouraged and supported through the triumphs and disasters in my own family by the knowledge that she, though a Queen, had passed through similar personal difficulties with courage and determination. That is what is meant by the many people who are saying today, “She was part of my life”.

I will speak of Balmoral. I first visited the castle and its grounds as a member of the public, as thousands do, in 1963. Ever since, I have spent much of every August in the valley of the Scottish Dee. I have walked around and above Loch Muick many times. I have climbed Lochnagar celebrating with friends in the June twilight, sitting at the summit and waiting for the sun to rise. I scaled it more than 20 years ago from the Glenshee road in solitary grief following the death of my wife, Nan. I have fished there since with my wife—my noble friend Lady Walmsley—below the famous, old military bridge across the Dee at Tulloch on the estate. On 18 August, only three weeks ago, my grandson caught his first salmon from a pool directly opposite Balmoral Castle.

If I love that area as a tolerated visitor, how much more did Balmoral mean to the Queen? Where else could she enjoy peace, tranquillity and the absence of ceremony? I have never understood metropolitans who regard its glinting waters, dappled woods and wide, open hills as cold and boring. For me, it was entirely understandable that Balmoral should be the place where Her Majesty finally came home.

Baroness Taylor of Bolton (Lab): My Lords, the opening comments today have set the tone exactly right on how this House wanted to make its tributes to Queen Elizabeth. The Leader of the House, the shadow Leader, the noble Lord, Lord Newby, and the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, all presented, in their own ways, the whole feeling that we all have of respect, sorrow and pride in what Her Majesty had achieved—alongside the human side, which is also extremely important for us all to remember at this time. I thank noble Lords for those comments; it was the House of Lords at its best and encapsulated all that we feel.

I will say a few words from my own personal experience. In 1997, I became the first woman to be appointed President of the Privy Council—it was an honour. It was also a strange event; the title had to be changed because previously it had been Lord President, and I am told that there were many discussions with the palace and the Cabinet Office as to whether that word—“Lord”—could be dropped. Indeed, the first time I met the Queen, she commented on the change, and we had a nice exchange of views as to what was going to happen in the future for more equality—she was very interested in that.

3.15 pm

Because I was President of the Privy Council, I had a one-to-one meeting with the Queen before each Privy Council meeting—every couple of weeks for that first year. During that time, I gained some insight

into how she operated and what her attitude was. I will make one or two comments following on from what others have said. The Queen exhibited absolute professionalism and she was on top of everything. My noble and learned friend Lord Morris mentioned this in terms of the Welsh affairs, and the noble Baroness, Lady Benjamin, mentioned that the Queen had read every single newspaper. After each Privy Council meeting, we would gather and have a cup of tea. I sometimes thought that Her Majesty knew more about the SIs than we had just passed than many of the Ministers who had presented them—she really did her homework.

Of course, mention has been made of the Queen’s sense of humour, which was really tested on occasions. One example is her straight face when one of my colleagues misread his instructions about kneeling at the first stool and taking the oath. He moved to the second stool—to begin kissing hands—by scurrying across the floor on his knees because he was in such deference to the occasion. It was even more amusing that this was one of my more left-wing colleagues. Although privy counsellors were trying their best not to laugh, the Queen dealt with that situation calmly.

I think that many noble Lords have heard the story about Clare Short. We once had a Privy Council meeting to which Clare was late, so she barged into the room in a flurry, and we continued the meeting. Then Clare’s phone goes off—we were all told we must turn our phones off and leave them outside—and the Queen said, “I trust it wasn’t anybody important”, and we carried on with our proceedings.

There was another side to the Queen: she could make her own decisions. When I was President of the Privy Council, we had a Privy Council dinner in the Royal Gallery to commemorate the 50th wedding anniversary of the Queen and Prince Philip—I think that some noble Lords here were present. The week before, there was a lunchtime reception in Banqueting House, attended by the Queen, and we had a Privy Council meeting shortly afterwards. She commented to me that the occasion at lunchtime had been very relaxed because they got speeches out of the way before they started the reception and went around talking to people. She thought it had been a nice change. So I said, “Why don’t we do that at the Privy Council dinner next week?” She said, “I think that is a good idea; I would enjoy it much more if we got the speeches out of the way”. When I returned to my office, the Queen’s private secretary was already plotting with my private office to ensure that it did not happen—but, in fact, the Queen had said that it should happen, and happen it did. So she could intervene to make decisions.

The final point I raise is the kindness that she showed to the Ministers with whom she was dealing. It is never easy when you are sacked from the Cabinet to move on but, after I left office, I received an invitation three or four weeks later inviting me to tea. It was almost like a HR redundancy chat, because somebody was asking me about my plans and making suggestions—we were not just having a cup of tea. She then went on to talk about my family and how they talked about the situation. It is not surprising that everyone saw

[BARONESS TAYLOR OF BOLTON]

how close she was to her family, because she understood how other people's families reacted to them in any set of circumstances.

This afternoon, we have managed to capture the flavour of having such an astounding person as our monarch. At a time when the constitution is—shall we say?—challenged in some respects, to have had her there at the head of a constitutional monarchy has been a benefit to us all.

The Earl of Caithness (Con): My Lords, truly yesterday even the heavens cried, or, as they would say at Balmoral, they greeted.

I mention Balmoral because that is where I was lucky enough to be brought up for the early part of my life. Yes, Her Majesty was the Queen, but, to me, she was a mother. To any boy aged six, as I was then, and upwards, she was primarily a mother; she was a mother who drove her children over to play with us occasionally. She was a mother who behaved as every mother I knew did. When she brought her children over, she sometimes joined in the game that we were going to play. To me, she was just another ordinary mother, as well as the Queen. She was a mother who was also interested in other people's children. Most mothers did not bother to talk to a six or seven year-old, but the Queen did. I remember that very vividly, and the time that she was able to give to everybody and how she made us feel very special.

A little later, I remember going to a small dance hosted by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. We were doing one dance. I managed to catch my mother's eye—that was a mistake—and I got one of those looks that only a parent can give their child. My sister and I were dancing a dance totally different to everybody else in the room. There was that lovely hiatus where I thought, "What's going to happen now?" Well, the first thing that happened was that the Queen came over and said, "What are you dancing?" My sister explained that it was a new modern dance that she had just learned in London. The Queen said, "I'd like to learn how to do it", and, very soon, we got the whole room doing it. It was a slight change from Scottish reels, but that is an example of the human side of Her Majesty.

I remember Her Majesty's love of the estate and the people who worked on it. We have heard tributes to how she cares for people. I remember her concern for everybody on that estate. I remember one particular conversation I had with her. We were sitting there on the hill, in glorious sunshine, and she said, "Malcolm, this is a very special environment. We have got to keep environments like this and our country, because that is what is important in the world." She was way ahead of her time in thinking like that, because that is a fragile environment subject to all sorts of pressures, which we talked about only yesterday in this House.

Nobody has mentioned the Queen's love of animals. She was always very knowledgeable and interested in her garrons—I am not going to talk about her racehorses. The garrons played an integral part in life on the hill at Balmoral. She knew their pedigree; she knew what

they did, and she knew them all by name. If one was ill, she would be very concerned as to its future. Besides her corgis, she was absolutely brilliant with Labradors. It is astonishing when you see somebody who is naturally good with dogs working a dog. There is that invisible thread that you have to be able to communicate with a working dog. The Queen had it in spades. How this person could come on to the hill, take the dog off the keeper, with the dog knowing who exactly was boss—not the keeper, but the Queen—and doing exactly what the Queen wanted it to do, was something very nice to watch and showed her great abilities.

There were obviously times when, as a young boy, you would tend to forget that you were actually in the presence of the monarch. I remember the occasional proverbial clip round the ear by my father for some of the things I did, and I apologised to him for that, but I think that any youthful child would have done that.

There were also times when the Queen suddenly slipped away to do something else—duty called. It was only much later in my life that I realised what that duty and that role was. Many of your Lordships have mentioned that, and I commend in particular the speeches of the Front Benches; I shall not say anything more on that.

I would like to thank you, Ma'am, for all those wonderful happy memories and the great light that you shone in all our lives.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (CB): My Lords, on behalf of myself and the wider Sikh community, I too want to pass on our sense of loss and sorrow on the death of Her Majesty the Queen. Her passing marks a moment of great sorrow and reflection for us all. As has been said, her life was one of selfless and unparalleled service to her subjects, conducted with both dignity and humility throughout her 70-year reign.

I have had the good fortune of meeting the Queen on several occasions and being invited to lunch at Buckingham Palace and admiring her wit, wisdom and depth of knowledge. I recall the privilege of accompanying Her Majesty during her first visit to a gurdwara in Leicester in 2002. I remember standing on the steps as the car drew up and the Queen got out a little nervously. Then she saw me and said with a broad grin, "I know him." It is measure of the high esteem in which she was held by the Sikh community that, in that small gurdwara, after the visit we needed a large truck to take away the many bouquets and posies of flowers.

It was during her Golden Jubilee celebrations that the Queen made it clear that she was the sovereign for all her people and that our different religions show that God's love extends in equal measure to the whole of humanity—a resonant echo of Sikh teachings that show the important commonalities between our different faiths. I have been taking part in the annual Commonwealth Day service for many years. One year, it was suggested that the service move away from Westminster Abbey, which allows contributions of different faiths, to another church which did not. The Queen very promptly said, "If you do that, I won't come."

Her Majesty's commitment to the service of others, contribution to society and humility in all she did are qualities that Sikhs aspire to embody in their lives. Sikhs will always remember her with love and affection.

Baroness Blake of Leeds (Lab): I thank the Lord Speaker for the opportunity to pay tribute to Her Majesty the Queen today. Like my noble friend Lady Taylor, I am very conscious of the powerful, heartfelt and sincere speeches that have led the debate. I am sure that we are all very grateful for that. I know that all our thoughts are with the members of the Royal Family at this time of deep sadness and loss. I join everyone in sending my condolences to them.

Over my lifetime, the Queen visited my home city of Leeds on many occasions. My memories go back, as so many have said do theirs, to lining a route as a schoolgirl to watch the royal car pass. I have to say that I will never forget the trauma of my sister losing her flag at the key moment as the car was just about to pass. In fact, I think she is still traumatised more than 60 years later. Even at that very young age, I recognised the enormous significance of Her Majesty's visit and her interest in our part of the United Kingdom.

3.30 pm

It was my great privilege, 10 years ago this summer, as deputy leader of Leeds City Council to invite the Queen and Prince Philip to launch the Child Friendly Leeds initiative—a central pillar in the city's improvement journey in children's services. The Queen, at the same time, reopened the newly refurbished City Varieties—I am sure your Lordships all know the venue of "The Good Old Days" fame. We had a brilliant cast of young people performing fearlessly for her on stage.

My personal duties included escorting the Queen and Prince Philip from the building in a newly installed glass lift on the outside of the building: what could possibly go wrong? I have to say, I did feel some trepidation at the task, but both the Queen and Prince Philip put me at ease instantly, and Prince Philip was particularly fascinated by the mechanics of the new lift. Sadly, I was unable to enlighten him on the finer workings of the mechanisms.

We walked down to Briggate—the main pedestrianised shopping street in Leeds—and I will never forget the roar of delight that hit us as we turned the corner to find both sides of the street thronged with hundreds and hundreds of children from every primary school in Leeds. It was simply breathtaking. I saw, first-hand, how they both interacted with the children and particularly how Prince Philip was assiduous in supporting the Queen so that every child felt included. It was a real pleasure to see them working so naturally and engagingly, talking to so many children and young people; I have never seen so many floral tributes, cuddly toys—you name it—all of the gifts that the children wanted to give to the royal couple. Those children and young people will never forget that day, and I know how much it has inspired them over the years.

We will always remember the Queen's extraordinary sense of duty and her commitment to people and communities the length and breadth of the country. Her depth of knowledge concerning organisations

and backgrounds to events that she attended was simply astounding, revealing her intense interest in the people she was meeting. I think it was this attention to detail that helps explain why she is so well respected and loved by so many people across the country.

I am grateful for the opportunity to say an enormous thank you for the Queen's life, her service, her sense of duty and her extraordinary contribution to public life across the world over the 70 years of her reign.

Lord Bruce of Bennachie (LD): My Lords, I had the honour to represent a beautiful part of Aberdeenshire for over four decades and our communities have greatly appreciated, throughout that time, the regular presence of the Queen and other members of the Royal Family in, around and among us for so many years. In fact, it was no surprise to me when I travelled down on Monday to find that the Duchess of Rothesay, as she then was, was on the same plane—of course, she had to return only two days later in sadness, but as Queen Consort—but that was not unusual on that flight.

I remember the Queen's accession when I was a boy of seven, and in 1953—like so many others—I watched the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on a friend's newly acquired, tiny, black and white TV set, although two weeks later I went to the cinema and saw it in full glorious Technicolor. Thirty years later, I became an MP and my encounters with the Queen and other members of the family, as is the case for many of us, became more frequent. I remember a number of royal visits and openings, but I also remember being a part of the receiving party when the royal yacht brought the Queen to Aberdeen—probably the last time the royal yacht came north to Aberdeen. Unfortunately, because of the fog, the yacht was not able to dock in the port and the royal party had to come ashore in a barge or launch. When I was in conversation greeting and remarking to the Queen that it was a pity the fog had prevented "Britannia" from docking, Princess Anne made the Queen laugh when she said, "Not at all: fog means flat calm."

Subsequently and on many other occasions, my wife and I were privileged to be invited to the garden party, including the only garden party, I think, that has taken place at Balmoral to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. It was exclusively limited to the invitees being from the county of Aberdeenshire—again, an indication of the connection between the community. The sun, I have to say, shone all day on Balmoral despite the heavy downpours and flash flooding that occurred in nearly all the surrounding communities, which clearly proves that the sun does shine on the righteous—I mean the Queen, not me.

I recall an incident when I was on the International Development Committee, which I had the privilege of chairing, and we were visiting an African and Commonwealth country—which I will not identify—when one of the Ministers leant across the table and said, "We are all loyal subjects here, you know." A little bit quaint, but it perhaps encapsulates just how, during her long reign, the Queen personified a positive identity of what Britain and the Commonwealth meant to the world. It rises far above the quality or the character of any Government of the day; that is a huge asset to

[LORD BRUCE OF BENNACHIE]

have. I think it is why yesterday's news was greeted with tributes and genuine outpourings of affection from literally all over the world. Indeed, when anybody talks about the Queen anywhere in the world, there is only one Queen that they meant—we know that.

I knelt before the Queen to swear an oath as a privy counsellor—as the noble Baroness, Lady Taylor, did and many others—and later to receive a knighthood when the Queen discussed my support for sign language and communication support for deaf people, which she told me was very important and she valued it. It just indicates that, whatever the topic was, she had a view and she had knowledge.

At the last diplomatic reception that took place at Buckingham Palace, I wore full Highland dress because I had it and, therefore, did not have to rent the other outfit. But the Queen stopped and admired it and commented, “It is lovely to see the kilt here,” meaning in Buckingham Palace, rather than elsewhere. The Queen's Balmoral home is just a few miles from our more modest home, and the presence of the Royals is noted all the time, throughout the year; many local businesses are, by royal appointment, suppliers to the Queen and, now, to our new King. The privacy of the Royal Family is respected by the community, but their informal engagement with the local community is also valued. There are many stories of people seeing members of the Royal Family shopping in Ballater or being given a lift when caught in the rain when hiking around Lochnagar or Loch Muick to find it was Prince Charles, or the Queen, or the Duke of Edinburgh who had picked them up.

It is, therefore, perhaps fitting that the family gathered at Balmoral to say farewell to the Queen before the formalities of state mourning began. They have the sympathy and the support of their local community, as well as the nation and the world. Of course, our sympathies are with them all. Our gratitude is to her. But now, for the first time in most people's memory, we say “God save the King!”

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar (Con): My Lords, I begin, in accordance with the custom of my religious tradition, with an acknowledgement that, as mortal humans, we submit to God's decree and from his judgment, whether that be for life or for death, there is no appeal: “Baruch dayan ha'emet”—“Blessed be the Judge of truth.”

As I say that blessing, I am taken to the last time I met Her Majesty. I recited a different and special blessing, the blessing our rabbis prescribed to be said when meeting royalty: “Baruch shenatan michvodo lebasar vadam”—“Blessed is He who has shared His glory with mortals of flesh and blood”. The idea in that blessing is not the divine right of kings; it is not the absolutist notion that, because monarchs derive their power from God, they cannot be held accountable for their actions. The blessing embodies a totally different idea, but it is a powerful one. It is the idea, as the Talmud puts it, that “royalty on earth is to reflect royalty in heaven”; that to be royal requires the highest standards and impeccable behaviour. It is an idea, I suggest, that Her late Majesty exemplified throughout her long reign.

Noble Lords might be familiar with the Hebrew word “mitzvah”. “Well done for doing this or that,” you might hear somebody say, and they will add, “You've done a mitzvah”—you have done a good deed. But a mitzvah is not a good deed which you do because you are in the mood or because the urge takes you; it is not something you do only and if you feel like it. The Hebrew root of the word mitzvah, its basic etymology, is the word “tzav”, which means “commandment”, “order” or “duty”. You do a mitzvah not just because it is a good deed and not just because you feel like doing it; you do a mitzvah because it is your duty. Her late Majesty spent her whole life doing the right thing and not just because she felt like it or because the mood took her. She spent her 96 years doing the right thing, day in, day out, out of a sense of duty. It was a life, if I may respectfully say, of mitzvah, of acting out of a profound sense of personal duty and under the solemn oath to God which she took at her Coronation.

In Hebrew, every letter also has a numerical value and you can add up the values of individual letters to get the value of a word. In one of those coincidences which perhaps are not, the numerical value of the Hebrew word tzav, the root of the word mitzvah, is 96: 96 years of tzav, of duty, and also of mitzvah, of doing the right thing because that is your duty.

Tomorrow is Shabbat and, as we have heard from my noble friend Lord Polak, in synagogues up and down the country we will say the prayer for the Royal Family, as we do each and every week. We recite that prayer immediately after the reading of the Torah, the five books of the Pentateuch, from Genesis to Deuteronomy, which we read in weekly instalments throughout the year. We are well into Deuteronomy at the moment, so the current annual cycle is nearly complete, but on the day we finish Deuteronomy, we do something odd but important. We return to the Holy Ark the scroll with which we completed Deuteronomy but we immediately take out a new scroll and start reading again from the first chapter of Genesis. So, on that day, the death of Moses, the faithful leader who had guided the people over so many decades, is immediately followed, a matter of moments later, by a new start—indeed, a new creation—in the first chapter of Genesis.

So tomorrow, for the first time in my life, we will not pray in synagogue for Prince Charles but for King Charles. I started yesterday as a Queen's Counsel and I finished it as a King's Counsel. We have closed one book, a long and good book which we have had with us for so many years, and we are about to open another. As we all pray that God save our King, I will also pray that he too may enjoy a reign of mitzvah, of doing the right thing, for that, now, is his duty. Baruch dayan ha'emet, yehi zichra baruch. “Blessed be the judge of truth”, and may her late Majesty's cherished memory be a blessing for all of us.

3.45 pm

Baroness Watkins of Tavistock (CB): My Lords, it is an honour to contribute to these speeches recognising the value that Her Majesty the Queen gave this country. There are over half a million nurses in the UK and she

met many of them. She had been patron of the Royal College of Nursing since 1953 and will be sorely missed. Her interest was great. She met many Florence Nightingale Foundation scholars—I am president of that foundation—and many of those scholars lead our NHS trusts and community services. She worked with the Queen's Nursing Institute and always had a deep interest in nursing. She met so many nurses from so many different countries, backgrounds and faiths, and they all valued the discussions she had with them.

As I got more senior, I met the Queen on several occasions, but what she wanted senior nurses to do was to introduce her to the people who were working on the floor or in the community—and, obviously, sometimes to patients. At the end of the pandemic, she said she recognised that nurses had played a very important part in our pandemic response. Of course, over the years she visited palliative care centres and children's centres, and after the Manchester bomb, she spoke to a variety of nurses and patients. She also had quite an interest, as I have, in homelessness and how healthcare was delivered there. That issue has now been taken up by His Royal Highness Prince William. I also remind noble Lords how brilliant she was with people in distress: she coped with somebody breaking into her bedroom and kept them calm. That is quite a challenge.

I join other members of my profession in remembering a role model who took the rough with the smooth. The Queen was interested in all her people's welfare and was fair and polite to everybody she came into contact with. I will just say that, although she did not know it was me, exactly 49 years ago I was a second-year student at the Westminster Hospital at a time when, on the whole, her staff and friends were admitted to the Westminster Hospital if they were not well. I was working in theatre and, in theatre, if you had been on night duty, you had to go down in the morning and collect the blood from the basement and bring it up to the theatres. You had to do that separately, so you did not muddle blood for different theatres. There were only two lifts: one for emergencies and the other for ordinary behaviour.

We were told at 6 am that nobody was to use the routine lift until 7 am, but I had the blood to collect, so I had several journeys down eight sets of stairs, because theatre was at the top and blood was in the basement. At 7.02 am, I was on my last trip and I thought, "Great, I can get into the lift." So I pressed for the lift in the basement, it opened and there was our matron, whose name I can remember, with the Queen, who had overrun visiting a member of her staff. I stood with two bags of blood in each hand, curtsied, stood back and out of the lift they got. She just smiled at me—so many noble Lords have mentioned that smile. I spent the next 72 hours expecting to be called for by the matron. That did not happen and I am pretty convinced it was because the Queen probably laughed once she walked away from me.

I join others in sending my condolences to His Majesty King Charles III, his sons and his wife, the Queen Consort, Camilla, who I trust will support and comfort him throughout his reign in the way the Queen was supported by Prince Philip.

Baroness Smith of Newnham (LD): My Lords, I rise to speak from perhaps a unique perspective in your Lordships' House. Almost all the very powerful and moving tributes to Her late Majesty we have heard today have been from noble Lords who met Her Majesty, but I never met Her Majesty in person. I thought yesterday, "I don't think I will rise to speak in tribute to Her late Majesty; what can I say?" But the more I thought about it, the more I thought, "Surely my perspective is somewhat more similar to the many millions of loyal subjects across the United Kingdom and other countries who have our sovereign as their head of state". As my noble friend Lady Benjamin said, she dreamed of meeting the Queen when she was a child in Trinidad, and she never thought that that would happen. But in her case, like so many of your Lordships, she had the opportunity to meet Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Exactly eight years ago, the second Friday of September 2014, I received an email to say that Her Majesty the Queen had agreed my title. The missive had been sent thanks to Her Majesty the Queen, and my friends and relatives all said, "That's wonderful; you're going to be in the House of Lords. Does that mean you're going to meet the Queen?" There was an immediate assumption that if the monarch opens Parliament, and if we see people who get MBEs, CBEs, DBEs and KBEs going to the palace to receive them from the Queen, then surely if you get a peerage—what higher honour could there be?—you receive it from the sovereign. So, I had to explain a little bit of the British constitution and how, although the Queen makes her Letters Patent in order for us to be here, in practice we do not kiss the ring or have any other direct interaction with Her Majesty the Queen.

Like many children of the 1970s, and like the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, I remember the Silver Jubilee—and I too remember Virginia Wade winning Wimbledon. I come from Liverpool and, like many children, I went to a street party. My mother paid five pence every week for a collection so that I could go, and I got one of the commemorative coins, just like every child. In the 1970s, when this country still believed in deference, you expected young children to look to Her Majesty the Queen, and people across the Commonwealth would look to the Royal Family. Fast forward 45 years and the world has changed fundamentally.

As we heard from my noble friend Lord Wallace of Saltaire, who was present at the last Coronation, the country has become so much more diverse—we have heard from many noble Lords of different faiths—and the Queen has overseen that growing diversity. But the country itself has, in many ways, become much less deferential and much less interested—one might think—in pageantry. However, my youngest godson, who is three, and his brother like nothing more than singing what they call "The Queen's song"; to them, that is what the national anthem is. That might be strange. I do not know how many three, four or five year-olds like to sing their national anthem—this is not a country like the United States, where you are expected to do so—but for those children, and for anybody under the age of 70, our national anthem has been wrapped up with the identity of Her Majesty the Queen. All of us are going

[BARONESS SMITH OF NEWNHAM]

to have to think about what it means to have King Charles III, and we are all going to have to get used to thinking about His Majesty the King.

One of the things that has been so tremendous this week is the outpouring of grief in the country. This is a personal moment for the Royal Family—like other noble Lords, I send my most sincere condolences to His Majesty the King, the Queen Consort and the rest of the Royal Family—but it is also a time of heartfelt grief in this country and other countries where Her Majesty the Queen was head of state. She has been the most wonderful role model, both for those of you who met her and for those of us who never met her in person. We can only hope and pray that, whereas Her late Majesty had a very short apprenticeship to be our Queen, her son, who has had a 70-year apprenticeship from the best teacher he could have had, will find the faith and fortitude to be as wonderful a monarch of our country as his late mother. I wish him well. God save the King—and thank you, Ma'am.

Lord Alli (Lab): My Lords, I have not spoken in your Lordships' House for many years but I felt compelled to do so today, and I am glad I did. I wish to associate myself with much of what has been said about Her late Majesty and everything she embodied. I also echo the sentiments of the noble Lord, Lord Butler, and pay tribute to the opening speeches by the Front Benches and many others today. It makes you proud to be a Member of this House as you listen to the tributes, the contributions that almost everybody in this House has made to public life and the interaction they have had with Her Majesty the Queen.

Her Majesty's life set us all an example. My time in this House—it has been long—has been focused on equality, as many noble Lords will know. The notion of equality and monarchy can be difficult to reconcile in the abstract. The most fitting tribute I can pay to the late Queen is that she made that reconciliation look easy. She was a great equaliser; she equalised in almost every room into which she stepped. Her sense of duty should humble us all.

I have always been enamoured by the motto of the BBC:

“Nation shall speak peace unto nation”.

Her Majesty was the personification of this, and I mourn her passing. I celebrate her life, with all of you, and I wish long life to His Majesty the King.

Baroness Helic (Con): My Lords, I share something with the noble Baroness, Lady Smith of Newnham: I never had the honour of meeting Her Majesty, although I did have the honour of being in her presence.

I did not grow up in Britain, or indeed in a monarchy. Queen Elizabeth was not the daily background to my childhood and identity, as I know she was for so many people in this House, in this nation and across the Commonwealth. In school, I was taught about the former kingdom of Yugoslavia and its royal family, who had abandoned the country at a time of great difficulty in the Second World War and whose supporters had been on the wrong side of history. Yet, as I studied the language and literature of this country at university,

and then sought refuge here, the virtues and principles of Her late Majesty the Queen showed me a different idea of monarchy.

The values Elizabeth II embodied, to which noble Lords have paid tribute so eloquently, were the values I have come to associate with this United Kingdom which is now my home. The sense of service which she so defined, and defined her, and which she chose to emphasise as the fundamental principle of her reign, is an example and inspiration to all of us in public life. The Queen was a reminder that, across periods of huge change in politics, society and technology, there are values that persist. Through times of uncertainty or division, she was a unifying force. You could look to her for continuity and an idea of how to act and how to serve.

Her leadership was respected and admired across the world. As one former refugee from Iran now serving in the United Nations told me this morning, it does not matter where you are from: she was a point of light for us all. For the people of this nation, the Commonwealth and the world, the Queen represents an ideal of decency and quiet duty which offers hope and reassurance.

For those like me who came to this country as refugees and immigrants, the Queen brought us together. In our admiration and love for her, we became British. She was a lighthouse, guiding us through the darkness and showing us by her actions how we might place duty and humility at the heart of our lives. So she will remain.

My thoughts now are with her family and His Majesty the King. Our pain can be only a shadow of what they feel—those who knew her best and loved her first as a mother and a grandmother. I offer His Majesty King Charles III my loyalty and support, and pray for his long reign.

4 pm

Lord Craig of Radley (CB): My Lords, I, too, share the deep sorrow and grief felt throughout the nation, the Commonwealth and overseas for the passing of Her Majesty. Her devotion, commitment and strength of purpose were not only most remarkable but sustained so magisterially throughout her long reign. I offer my condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and all the Royal Family.

I was 22 years old and on my flying training course when Her Majesty ascended the throne aged 25. It has always been a mark of her greatness that she assumed her role and responsibilities at so youthful an age and in such full measure. While attending the state visit of her parents to South Africa in 1947, she made on her 21st birthday the vow, already repeated today, that

“my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service”.

It was an admirable and most impressive pledge for a 21 year-old young lady.

Indeed, it was my privilege to meet her for the first time as soon as two months after she made that vow—still a princess and attending one of her early royal solo events. The occasion was the centenary celebrations at my school, Radley. The Archbishop of

Canterbury had preached in chapel. The warden and others had made speeches of welcome and thanks. The school prefects, of which I was one, entertained the princess, less than four years our senior in age, to tea in our study. No masters were present; we had her all to ourselves. We plied her with meringues and biscuits and presented her with a box of chocolates; Radley's archive still holds the receipt, making clear that this sweet offering cost all 15 of us not only 16 shillings and eight pence but a whole week of our sugar ration. Also in that archive is a copy of part of her handwritten letter to a friend, describing her day at Radley. She wrote:

"The tea with the prefects was very enjoyable, and certainly a great change from some of the rather dull teas one has on official occasions. This one couldn't have been more fun."

She was well known for her sense of fun, as well as for her sense of duty and responsibility.

Of course, during my time in the senior ranks of the Armed Forces, and even later, I had the privilege of meeting Her Majesty on numerous occasions. In 1991, when I was Chief of the Defence Staff, she asked me personally to Buckingham Palace to brief her on the ongoing operations in the first Gulf War. She was, as always, deeply interested in the performance of her Armed Forces.

It is the greatest of blessings to have known such a charming and charismatic person. May she rest in peace and in our memories for ever.

Lord Wallace of Tankerness (Non-Afl): My Lords, I was born two and a half years after Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth ascended the Throne. Until yesterday, in common with the majority of people in this country, I had known only one monarch. For so many of us, the Queen alone represented what we think of as and understand by the concept of monarchy. She was "the Queen". Her reign was one of exemplary, selfless and faithful service, sustained by a profound Christian faith—a life of service inspired by following the way of Jesus, the Servant King.

However, it was not a slavish adherence to duty. Many people have commented on the late Queen's pertinent comments on visits, her informed observations and the real interest she showed in people and communities. She engaged with these people and their communities on visits for 70 years and more, and invariably left them feeling much better for having met her. It is testimony to the gracious manner in which she fulfilled her role as our Queen.

Comments have been made today and in many of the commentaries over the past 24 hours about the dramatic changes that have taken place in our country, across the world and in society since the Queen ascended the Throne in 1952—things that almost certainly would have been unimaginable in that year. I recall reading somewhere that, at the age of 50, she was the first head of state ever to send what we now call an email. The Scottish Parliament was probably only a twinkle in the eye of some political activists, but the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, recalled her visit to the Scottish Parliament's Sitting in Aberdeen on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002. She gave so much encouragement to those of us who had been in there

from the beginning and had taken some brickbats from the press for what we were doing. I also recall that, when she opened the new Scottish Parliament on 1 July 1999, she referred to the

"pragmatic balance between continuity and change".

Truly it was her ability to achieve and maintain that pragmatic balance over seven decades, not least in political and constitutional relationships, that was one of the key hallmarks of her reign.

I first met the Queen in Kirkwall in 1987 when she unveiled a new stained glass window in St Magnus Cathedral on the 850th anniversary of the cathedral's foundation. When I last met her, less than three weeks ago, she referred to that visit. As a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a church in which she always showed a keen interest, I had been asked to preach the sermon at the Sunday morning worship in Crathie church. The Queen graciously invited me to spend two nights at Balmoral Castle on her beloved Deeside—but no barbeques. It was a privilege to have had such quality time talking to her. Her mind was sharp. She had a keen interest in what was going on. I experienced the warmth of her personality, which so many people have talked about. She so readily put me at my ease.

It was also a privilege to engage with close members of her family over those two days, who also did so much to make me feel welcome. It is them—the family to whom the Queen was a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt and mother-in-law—I have particularly been thinking about over the past 24 hours. As we give thanks for the life of the Queen—a remarkable life of humble leadership and service—I know that we will want to keep in our thoughts and prayers her close family, especially His Majesty King Charles, for whom her death is so very real and personal. May they know the comfort that Jesus promised to those who mourn.

Lord Howard of Lympne (Con): My Lords, at this stage in your Lordships' proceedings, it is not easy to say very much that is new. However, I want to echo in particular the words of the right reverend Prelate who led our prayers and the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, in suggesting that our mourning for the longest-reigning monarch in our history should be infused with a spirit of gratitude. For it is we, the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, who are the beneficiaries of that sense of duty, devotion to service and dedication to the well-being of her subjects about which so many have spoken. She applied those principles in practice in a way that provided inspiration and leadership without ever trespassing for a second into the realm of party politics. In the words of my noble friend Lord Forsyth, she never put a foot wrong.

Much is said these days about soft power: the way in which a country can influence events without necessarily relying on military or even economic clout. It is impossible to exaggerate the extent to which Her Majesty influenced across the world a positive perception of the United Kingdom. She was soft power personified.

Much has been said about the way she put people at ease, and I had the privilege, with my wife, of spending a night at Windsor Castle when I was leader of the Opposition. I was amazed to find in the library the

[LORD HOWARD OF LYMPNE]

trouble that had been taken to assemble a collection of objects which related to my constituency, Folkestone and Hythe—objects I had known nothing at all about and which were quite remarkable.

Perhaps the most telling example of the way she could put people at ease occurred when a friend of mine who had been subject to much trauma was invited to lunch at the palace, sat next to the Queen and, in the middle of the lunch, froze. The Queen sent for the corgis and, together, they fed the corgis, and my friend unfroze and was able to continue the conversation.

Much has been said about the way Her Majesty was regarded with such enormous respect and admiration far beyond our shores. I finish with one reminiscence. I was in a Caribbean country when a new governor-general had just been appointed, and the local newspaper published an article giving advice to the new governor-general. It said: “You will have many difficult decisions to make, and we suggest that when you are confronted with those decisions, you ask yourself one question: what would Her Majesty do?”

My Lords, we have lost a great monarch, a great friend and, as she described herself, a servant—our country’s greatest and most faithful servant.

Baroness Uddin (Non-Afl): My Lords, Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un: to God we belong, and unto God we shall be returned. As a Muslim, these are the first sentiments that we utter on hearing news of deaths. So it was that I learned of Her Majesty’s death and shared the same words with my friends and family.

I stand in deepest sorrow and share all the condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty’s beloved family—our sincerest sorrow and deepest sympathy. Being respectful of all the eloquent contributions before me, I speak as her Peer, a woman, a mother and grandmother, in expressing my deepest gratitude for her lifelong service to our nation and the Commonwealth—indeed, the longest serving woman leader of any nation. Her presence will have inspired umpteen generations of younger women and emerging leaders in their communities and countries. We cannot overestimate the impact on the young of Her Majesty’s encounter, with natural ease, with Paddington Bear, or of her bus ride on a Peppa Pig bus booked to Buckingham Palace. I can share with noble Lords the endearment with which Her Majesty is held by the generation of my seven year-old granddaughter, Imaan, who wants to meet Her Majesty the Queen on the next red bus ride.

4.15 pm

On a very personal note, I had the honour of receiving Her Majesty the Queen for the first time as deputy leader of Tower Hamlets Council during her visit to a London hospital. I had just given birth and left a breastfed baby behind. The royal visit was a little delayed and, as I got a call, I stepped out of this huge building with a heavy wooden door and shielded myself behind the entrance. As I was there for a few minutes, the door was flung open, exposing me with a little telephone to my ear. I was petrified. Her Majesty

opened the door and said, “Who are you?”. I curtsied and said, “Your Majesty, I am the deputy leader of the council, here to welcome you, to receive you, and I am really sorry. I had to step out because I have a screaming baby and a distressed husband.” She asked me how many children I had: was this the first? I said, “No, Your Majesty, this is my fifth.” She said, “For God’s sake, tell him to get a bottle and feed him.” Remarkably, a few years later, in the Royal Gallery, when I was introduced as the first Muslim woman appointed by her to this House, she asked me if we had met before. I dared to explain where I had met her and she asked where the babies were. I said, “Unfortunately, still with the same man.”

The smile that I saw everywhere yesterday on television was exactly the smile that was so endearing and so loving. It was almost as though you knew her, although those moments were so little, so unimportant, in the greater scheme of things.

I am thankful for this opportunity to express my humblest gratitude for Her Majesty’s life of service and dedication to all her people. As a mother, I feel confident that Her Majesty’s teaching and indelible wisdom will be imprinted in the footprints of His Majesty King Charles III: duty to our whole country as defender of all people, of all faiths. Long may he reign, and may Almighty God bless our Queen, eternal guardian of peace beside her beloved rock.

Lord Wakeham (Con): My Lords, I have only recently come out of hospital, so I hope I can hang on to my stick and keep straight. I particularly wanted to come to this debate, not to say anything very remarkable but to listen to the speeches. The standard of the speeches that I have heard is as high as any that I have heard in this House over many years.

I think I am the Leader of the House of Lords from the longest ago—I was not Leader of the House of Lords the longest, but it is longer ago that I was Leader—and I have very much enjoyed what I have heard today. I will not go into my share of reminiscences. Listening to the debate, I wanted to say just one thing, which I think has not been sufficiently emphasised. Many of us who have been Ministers in the Government have been the slaves of their red boxes for years. I do not know whether it was for 10 or 15 years that I had to deal with my red boxes. I cannot imagine how I would have dealt with them for 70 years, but it was 70 years for which she did that.

A lot of what she succeeded in doing in her life was because she was so well prepared for every event. She was not only well prepared; she knew how to put that across in a way that did not reveal that she might have views of her own. Importantly, she put things across in an impartial way. In the excellent debate that we have had, the thing that I thought had not been emphasised enough was just what a lot of hard work she had to put up with over 70 years.

Lord Kakkar (CB): My Lords, at this saddest of times I join other noble Lords in sending sincere condolences to His Majesty the King and members of the Royal Family. This has been a very moving day because of the remarkable tributes paid by so many

noble Lords. They were deeply emotional, reminding us all of the very real loss that our nation has experienced. Although a very strong nation, it will regrettably find it very difficult to come to terms with that for some time to come.

So much has been said about Her late Majesty but I should like to make two observations, one professional and one personal. Her late Majesty was patron of so many medical organisations—medical royal colleges, hospitals and other organisations—and the Queen's example and her values inspired the professions hugely, as we heard from the noble Baroness, Lady Watkins. That inspiration was vital at many times, particularly so during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Queen was, from the very beginning of her reign, patron of the King's Fund, and we in the fund were deeply privileged to enjoy that patronage, which had a tremendous impact on the work of the fund over 70 years. Of course, during that period things have changed tremendously: life expectancy has increased and the way that medicine and healthcare are delivered has changed substantially.

The fund was established in 1897 by the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, to raise funds for the hospitals dealing with the poor in London. Its purpose has changed substantially over that period, but in 2008 the fund was privileged to receive its royal charter from Her Majesty, which continued the capacity for us to pursue the work that was so strongly supported. That deep commitment to the work of healthcare professionals was not only reflected in its support of organisations here in the United Kingdom but throughout the Commonwealth, and was vital in ensuring that the values that Her late Majesty so clearly expressed and practised could remain fundamental to the practice of medicine throughout the world.

The second observation I should like to make is much more personal. It reflects Her Majesty's deep commitment to the Commonwealth and, through that deep commitment and example, the opportunity afforded to so many from Commonwealth countries to come to the United Kingdom. Among those subjects who came from another Commonwealth country to settle here in the United Kingdom were my parents in 1961. I remember, growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, how they were deeply inspired and moved by Her Majesty's commitment to the Commonwealth and all its peoples, and indeed to those people who decided to come and settle here in the United Kingdom. It was a vital part of ensuring, during that important period in our national history, that subjects of all backgrounds had the capacity to make their contribution, to participate in the life of our country and, in the case of my parents, to contribute to the work of the National Health Service. It was a vital opportunity, afforded by a monarch who understood the importance of the sensitivity, kindness and example that would ensure the integration of those from all over the world in societies and communities across our country, providing the opportunity for them to make their contributions.

I remembered all this at a deeply moving moment in my own time: the day I had the privilege to kneel before Her Majesty and to swear my oath of allegiance

on becoming a member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council. I was particularly nervous that day but, as noble Lords have indicated, any audience with Her Majesty was always attended by her determination to ensure that one was put at ease. Kneeling there, I was deeply moved because I understood that it was Her Majesty's values, her example and the work that she had done over so many decades that provided the opportunity for my family to settle here in the United Kingdom and the remarkable occurrence of my kneeling before Her Majesty to swear that oath. The fine example and the values of service, duty and commitment, always shown with kindness and thoughtfulness, are very powerful qualities that will live in the hearts of every one of Her late Majesty's subjects. God save the King.

Lord Taylor of Holbeach (Con): My Lords, I am pleased to follow the noble Lord, Lord Kakkar, because I was with him on that very day, when I also took the Privy Council oath.

I start by saying how much I have enjoyed listening to other noble Lords talk about our late Queen and the way in which she has served the nation. We have heard some admirable speeches, as my noble friend Lord Wakeham said. I echo his admiration for her diligence in knowing what the issues are and being prepared to work to acquire that knowledge. Nobody can doubt that she has been a very hard-working and diligent monarch. She has combined that with constitutional integrity, which has been vital for this nation, the developing world and the Commonwealth of which she has been head.

Noble Lords have mentioned her human qualities. Perhaps that is an important dimension because that was how she was able to relate to many noble Lords here present who have had opportunities to get to know her, to work with her or to accompany her in particular activities.

I do not know whether I should declare an interest, but I want to talk about my family horticultural business. For 37 years, we have been the warrant holders, as bulb growers, to Her Majesty the Queen. Some people may say that is not a particularly proud boast, but I personally take great pleasure from it and it has preceded all this other stuff, of red Benches and the rest of it, and is probably more important in real terms than anything I have been able to do here. Although gardening does not compete with horses or dogs, it comes a very close second, and you have only to go round the royal gardens of royal properties at Balmoral, Windsor and Buckingham Palace to get an idea of how seriously Her Majesty took gardening. It was not just visits to Chelsea and scant things like that.

That has provided me with some common link. Perhaps I may end with a little bit of an anecdote from my political life, because I was a Lord in Waiting, which was for a number of us a great deal of fun and enjoyable, although it involved duties. I see colleagues here who are Baronesses in Waiting; they will know that it is a great honour but also interesting. One of the great things that the monarchy has done in this

[LORD TAYLOR OF HOLBEACH]

country is to make working with it interesting, with everybody feeling that it is a worthwhile thing to be doing.

4.30 pm

Obviously, when I first went along to see Her Majesty, the bulb connection sprang to mind. It served as a common theme, so we talked about politics, of course, but we also talked about horticulture and the like. There was a famous occasion when we had a visit from a certain important ally. In fact, it was my last royal duty. We were part of the welcoming group at Buckingham Palace. The particular visitor was extraordinarily diligent, so much so that the bandmaster had to reprise the music while he inspected the guard of honour, as he insisted on stopping to speak to about every other person, asking them where they came from, what they did, how long they had been in the service or whatever it happened to be.

Subsequently, this particular distinguished visitor seemed to take an awfully long time moving around in the reception area. Her Majesty said to me, "I think we're going to have to break this up. He's getting stuck." Of course, she was rather mischievous about this, but asked me what I thought we should talk to him about. I said, "Why don't we talk to him about daffodils?" Of course, this particular President was not used to talking about daffodils. He had never met anybody who knew anything about daffodils, and he certainly did not know anything about them himself. He was much more interested in casinos, New York property development and things like that, if I might say so. Oh! I have revealed who it is. Never mind; the confidentiality of these speeches is well known.

I felt that it was evidence of her humanity that the thing that helped her through the days of hard work that she had to accomplish was the fact that she had a sense of humour, a genuine wit, and she was great fun. All noble Lords here who have had anything to do with Her Majesty will know that to be with her was great fun.

I wish the House comfort in its grief because we are all upset at her death. May the King live long.

Baroness Falkner of Margravine (CB): My Lords, I seem to be taking part in that bit of the proceedings where there are a lot of people who never had the honour of meeting Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth. I, among others in our nation and beyond, have known her only as our singular sovereign. I say that as a first-generation migrant to this country, coming from a republic, so my early experience was not of her as my Head of State. In fact, for many years after I arrived here, I continued to be a republican, but her example finally cured me of that heresy about 30 years ago.

The Queen's presence among Commonwealth countries has been remarked on considerably today. There never was any doubt as to her status within that family of nations as its head. My first memory of seeing her was as a very young child when she and the late Duke of Edinburgh visited what was then East Pakistan, today's Bangladesh, in 1961. My late father, who was an army

officer, and my mother took us to Chittagong in a state of great excitement. My mother was of her generation, I think born in the same year, and was incredibly excited to see "the Queen"—there was never any question of needing a name—in the flesh. The Queen spoke beautifully, but more importantly for me as a child, she wore a beautiful dress. That sense of style stayed with her to the end.

In more recent times, I saw her in operation in her beloved Commonwealth when I served as a staffer at the Queensland CHOGM of 2002. I see that the noble Lord, Lord Jay, is not in his place; he was there as well in a slightly more significant role. It was a difficult one, after the 9/11 attacks, the problems of Mugabe and Zimbabwean democracy, and the expulsion of Pakistan after the Musharraf coup. There was a general sense of crisis. I said to my boss, who was a veteran of those meetings, "Oh my God, does she really need this on her plate?", to which his reply was, "My dear girl, the odd coup or two in between these meetings wouldn't even cause her to blink. She's seen it all."

A lot has been said about the late Queen Elizabeth's personal qualities as our sovereign, but I also pay tribute to her deep knowledge and understanding of complex issues. After we as a country experienced the global financial crash of 2008, a furious debate was raging about all the assumptions that underpinned financial markets and capitalism. She asked to meet a bunch of senior economists at the London School of Economics, of which I am an alumnus. Nobel Prize winners were lined up wall to wall. After listening to the great and good in the world of economics, she asked the simplest of questions: "Why didn't you see this coming?" This was the question being asked up and down the land in every house. She was always ahead of the game.

Tributes this morning spoke about the role faith played in the Queen's life and the umbrella that the Church of England holds up on behalf of all faiths in our country. Speaking as another person from the Muslim world, I can say that the service that Queen Elizabeth represents, and which King Charles has so clearly articulated he wishes to continue, will sustain all their subjects in the weeks and years to come.

I am confident that we are, in our sorrow, one indivisible United Kingdom, irrespective of race, religion or creed. All of us mourn her passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with King Charles III and the wider family.

Lord Dobbs (Con): My Lords, it is truly humbling to take part in this debate after so many eloquent speeches from those who have known Her late Majesty so well, but I want to pay my own short tribute to a woman who has influenced so much of my life.

I suppose my most solid connection with Her late Majesty is the fact that I was born in the very same hour as her eldest son, our new King. I do not remember the occasion particularly well, but the birth certificate bears this out. As a young boy, I remember looking at the back of my pale hand and seeing these very blue veins and wondering just a little bit, "What if?" Fortunately, you and I have been spared.

Our late Queen came to us as a shy young woman and left us as the greatest of Queens, to stand alongside—perhaps even a step above—Victoria and the first Elizabeth. She was a Queen; a monarch; a woman; a wife who loved but one man ever, and who herself was loved by millions. She led us on the extraordinary and historic journey from an ageing and ailing empire to the enduring friendships of the Commonwealth, about which we have heard so much.

She was a woman who placed duty first, second and third, and who began it all again every single morning. That sense of duty and dignity, that unflappability, personal courage and wisdom, that love of marmalade sandwiches and, oh, that smile, and even shouts of joy—yes, she loved her horses, and winning. She was no pale functionary. She was an example of selfless leadership and we could have done no better; she was an example to us all. She was a golden thread that ran through the tapestries of our lives and the sinews that bind this nation together. They were bonds not of fear—that is the prerogative of leaders in some other countries—but of affection and of devotion; bonds which had tens of thousands of us pouring towards Buckingham Palace, not waving machine guns and severed heads but waving banners and shouting not chants of revolution but songs of joy. We were waving banners that told her how devoted to her we were and how much we loved her. That little word, “love”, keeps cropping up in our discussions about Elizabeth. How we rejoiced at her many jubilees. What fun we had, as other nations marvelled and quietly envied the very British secret that was Elizabeth.

Now the torch passes to another generation, whose sorrows today we share. We send our commiserations to our new King, His Majesty King Charles III, his Queen Consort, Camilla, and the entire family. We thank them for sharing with us the long, long life of such an extraordinary lady. We will bury her not only with sadness but with unquenchable pride and endless gratitude. Thank you, Ma’am.

The Queen is dead. Long live the King.

The Earl of Devon (CB): My Lords, I salute Her glorious and beloved Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Given her age and recent frailty, we have all, I am sure, imagined this day, but in its awesome realisation, I think we find it almost unimaginable and wholly surreal. We are, as a nation, bereft, with tears flowing unexpectedly and a peculiar ache of loss.

Her Majesty reigned for so long that this time feels unprecedented to us all, but of course it is not. I speak not to offer personal anecdotes—like the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, I never met her personally—and we have heard so many warm and wonderful reminiscences. Rather, I offer the House context in my role as the Earl of Devon, a title that has a particular affinity with our female monarchs.

The title was created by our first, and often forgotten, female monarch, Matilda. She was granddaughter of William I, whose reign was cruelly usurped on the death of her father, Henry I. The first Baron to raise his standard in her support was Baldwin, at Exeter Castle. For his unwavering support of the right of a woman to reign, he was created Earl of Devon in 1142.

Our second and unfairly maligned female monarch was Queen Mary. The Earl of Devon, her cousin, protested her parents’ divorce and the young princess’s own unjust disinheritance. As a result, he was attained and beheaded by Henry VIII for his devotion to female monarchy. The Earl’s young son grew up a prisoner in the Tower of London until Mary’s eventual succession, at which point he was released, recreated Earl of Devon, and carried the sword of state at her Coronation.

It is that title that I bear and, although the principles of inherited duty may be contentious outside the Royal Family, I am proud to speak on behalf of a family that served Matilda, Mary and each of our subsequent female monarchs, thankfully without a beheading for some centuries. It has been an enormous privilege to add my little part to that tradition of service to female rule.

4.45 pm

As just stated, Queen Elizabeth II now takes her place among the pantheon of our greatest Queens and Kings. It is not for us to determine her exact position therein, but we can be sure that history will find her an exalted place. The sheer sweep of time over which she has presided and the humanity with which she did so has made sure of that. This swift canter through history also reminds us that it is now for us, the long-serving House of Lords, to support our nation in the traumatic passage of its sovereignty from Queen Elizabeth to His Majesty King Charles III. We have done this many times before, but it will not be easy. While this time provides us with the important opportunity for reflection on the nature of our constitution and the role of our monarch, I fervently hope that we do it many times into the future and with Her Majesty’s shining example to light the way.

In conclusion, I offer a few words as a Devonian. The county is proud beyond measure that it was in Dartmouth that Her Majesty first met her beloved Prince Philip, a moment from which sprung Her Majesty’s important role as spouse, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother to so many and, indeed, to the nation. Finally, I welcome her grandson, Prince William, now the Duke of Cornwall, to his ancient role within the south-west peninsula. As a neighbour, I look forward to supporting his efforts to steward our glorious natural capital in his father’s eminent footsteps, and to debating with him the appropriate construction of a cream tea.

God save the King and his whole family.

Lord Ribeiro (Con): My Lords, I arrived as a young boy in the United Kingdom from the Gold Coast in June 1952, as the country was preparing for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Today, 70 years later, we are preparing for her funeral.

I want to acknowledge the Queen’s leadership of and contribution to the Commonwealth, and to Ghana in particular. Ghana was the first British colony to gain independence, in 1957, and it invited the Queen in November 1961. She had been invited before but was pregnant with Princess Anne at the time. It was a time of political turmoil in Ghana, and a bomb had damaged a statue of Kwame Nkrumah. The Queen shrugged off

[LORD RIBEIRO]

advice to cancel the trip and made a successful tour of Ghana, steadying nerves and ensuring that Ghana, later to become a republic, remained in the Commonwealth.

At the state banquet, Nkrumah toasted the Queen, saying:

“The wind of change blowing through Africa has become a hurricane. Whatever else is blown into the limbo of history, the personal regard and affection which we have for Your Majesty will remain unaffected.”

When the Queen danced with Kwame Nkrumah, it was seen by many as a symbolic moment in the history of the Commonwealth. That visit was instrumental in keeping Ghana within the Commonwealth. The Queen’s admiration for Ghana continued and when President John Kufuor was invited to a state banquet at Buckingham Palace in 2007, I was privileged to be invited, as president of the Royal College of Surgeons.

After the formal dinner, I chanced to have a conversation with the Queen. I began, respectfully, “I suspect, Ma’am, that you have visited most of the countries in the Commonwealth.” She fixed me with a look, and said, “No. All of them.” That put me in my place. However, it was said with a knowing smile which quickly put me at ease—so much so that I was probably the last to leave that evening.

We have heard much today about the Queen’s contribution to these isles, but we should not forget the enormous contribution she made to the Commonwealth, keeping it together and relevant to Britain when others would have had it otherwise. The Queen will be remembered not only for her service to this country but for the service she gave to the Commonwealth.

Baroness Barker (LD): My Lords, there was a conversation that took place many years ago among a group of neighbours. It happened in my grandma’s house, which was in Coronation Road in a mining village in Scotland. The discussion was about the Queen Mother; I think there had been a controversy of some kind in the newspaper. At one point my grandmother, who was part of the conversation, passed the comment, “Well, I don’t know. I only met her the once”. That phrase has passed into my family.

Lots of people have talked today about how they met the Queen, and I have greatly enjoyed the insights and anecdotes. I am different—I think I am glad I never met the Queen, because of a particular incident. Noble Lords will know that in what we will now have to call the King’s Robing Room—it will take us a little while to get around that—there are two brass figurines of the Queen and Prince Philip. Longer-serving Members of the House might remember when the Queen and Prince Philip came to unveil those artworks. For the first time, our then Black Rod did a very insightful and appropriate thing: he invited very long-standing members of staff, some of whom did jobs that were not particularly glamorous and had never really been up in this part of the building, to be part of the event. So it was that Her Majesty asked Peggy, who, longer-serving Members of the House will remember, was the person who ran the Peers’ Guest Room and had done so for more than

30 years, what she did. At that moment, Peggy had no idea; she could not say anything. This was clearly something that happened to the Queen all the time and she said, “I am sure your colleagues admire your work tremendously”, and walked on. If I had met the Queen, I might have found myself in the same position, so I am glad it never happened.

I am also glad to have the opportunity to register the fact that one of the Queen’s greatest achievements was her recognition of people who work for all sorts of charities. She recognised them in all sorts of different ways, not just bestowing honours or being a patron but inviting people who never imagined it would happen to them to go to a garden party and feel like a million dollars for a day. That was truly amazing. As someone who worked in charities, I have to say that it is something she has passed on to the rest of the family. If you are a charity, involvement with the Royal Family is not the easiest of things, because they have the most encyclopaedic historical knowledge of charities—so if you are going to talk to any member of the Royal Family, but particularly the Queen, about your charity, you need to know your stuff. She was a very exacting patron, tremendously thoughtful and I think the most famous member of the Sandringham WI. She knew charities from bottom to top.

Over the past 20 to 30 years, those of us who come from the LGBT community have really appreciated the way in which the Royal Family and Her Majesty have honoured our charities and leaders of our community. It has not always been easy, but the fact that the Royal Family, led by the Queen, King Charles and the Princes, have done that for us, as a somewhat marginalised group, is really important and means a lot to people who, like me, never met the Queen and may never meet a member of the Royal Family. But the fact that they recognise and honour us is very important, and a signal to all the other minority groups in this country that we are all important as her subjects. That is perhaps a little bit of her magic.

I just want to add one indiscretion. I used to work for Age Concern. There was a period of time when it was extremely cold, and there was a great deal of public debate about pensioners not being able to keep warm in the middle of a very cold winter; there were appeals and so on. One particular donation went to pensioners in a very poor part of London on the basis that they should never know who it came from or on what basis it was made. Some wonderful bed sheets and blankets went to people who really needed them. I do not imagine they knew where it came from but, for those of us who did, it told us that she understood charity to its absolute core.

Baroness Verma (Con): My Lords, I pay tribute to all noble Lords’ speeches, particularly those of the Front Benches when they started this afternoon. I had the privilege of meeting Her Majesty the late Queen when I was made a Government Whip and became a Baroness in Waiting. For all of us who meet Her Majesty for the first time, it is one of the most daunting and frightening experiences, especially when you are asked to curtsy. I said to the then Chief Whip, my noble friend Lady Anelay, “I’m not sure my dodgy knee will allow me to get back up if I do that curtsy.

May I just do a quick bow?" The Chief Whip said, "I'm sure that will be fine". As all noble Lords know, I am constantly hurting my ankles and knees. In the Queen I met somebody who knew how to put you at ease straightaway. It was just fantastic to be able not to have to start our conversation about India—she obviously knew that I was of Indian origin—as she so warmly started it herself.

Last night, as we heard the news that Her Majesty was not well and then Chancellor the saddest of sad news, I was getting messages and phone calls from people across the world—from India, Africa and the Middle East—all saying how sad they were at hearing the news that we were all going to have to come to terms with. To me, that really demonstrated how far Her Majesty's reach went. I could not imagine for one moment the hurt, grief and mourning that her family must be facing today. Not only do they have to mourn, they have duty to perform. My heart went out to them.

I picked up the phone to my mother, one of the biggest royalists ever, and said, "Mum, have you heard?" She said, "Just put the phone down. I need a few minutes to absorb what I'm listening to". I think that was all of us last night. We were all just trying to absorb what of course we all knew was going to happen but—I do not know why—we all just felt that Her Majesty had this magic power and would always be with us.

Last night I was reminded by many community groups to make sure that I mentioned her visits to Leicester, how they all loved it when she visited and how she made each and every one of those who were involved, whether from the charity sector or from local communities, feel so special. I just hope that, if I can be even a tiny bit in the shadows of the public service that Her Majesty was able to deliver, that would be a great achievement over my lifetime.

We will all mourn her and of course will play our role in your Lordships' House in making sure that we are the biggest support for King Charles III as we all come together to heal and offer strength to each other and to Her Majesty's family. One of my community leaders asked me to end by saying "Shanti, shanti, shanti". In Hindi that means "Peace, peace, peace". May Her Majesty the Queen rest in peace.

5 pm

Viscount Chandos (Lab): My Lords, I came here this afternoon not intending to speak, but listening to other noble Lords I felt inspired to speak—although, I think in breach of a convention of the House, the words will not be predominantly mine. They are the words of my maternal grandfather, Sir Alan Lascelles—Tommy Lascelles—Her Majesty the Queen's first private secretary and her father's private secretary for nearly 10 years. When my aunt died last year, we found in her papers a very short memoir of his, written in 1960, with his reminiscences of knowing Her Majesty as she grew up and of working for her. I hope your Lordships will bear with me if I quote two quite short sections, one because of its resonance for today or, particularly, tomorrow:

"At the time of the King's death, in February 1952, she was in Kenya. She returned as Queen, and from the moment she stepped out of the aeroplane which brought her home she assumed the responsibilities of her new position with a calm dignity that filled us all with admiration. In all my life I can recall no more moving incident than her entry into the crowded Throne Room at St James's Palace for the Accession Privy Council. There were, I suppose, over 100 of us Privy Counsellors assembled; there was not one who was not stirred to the point of tears by the sight of that slim figure in black moving quietly to the throne, and by the sound of her unfaltering musical voice as she read the message to us."

Although His Majesty King Charles may have had rather longer to prepare to assume his role, I suspect he may be feeling as nervous this evening as Her Majesty did all those years ago.

I shall finish with the summary that Tommy Lascelles wrote. There is a wonderful passage describing her relationship with Sir Winston Churchill, and then he goes on:

"Her relations with other ministers were always easy. I never saw any sign of her having found an audience, ministerial or otherwise, a trouble. To her secretarial staff, she was an ideal chief. Her father habitually suffered from violent storms of temper—a trait that was probably hereditary. I never knew the Queen to be even mildly cross or—outwardly at any rate—ruffled by any contretemps or piece of bad news. Her serenity was constant, her wisdom faultless. On the whole, I consider her the most remarkable woman I have ever met."

Baroness Grey-Thompson (CB): My Lords, I wish to pay my deepest respects to the extraordinary life of Her Majesty the Queen. Her unstinting support and knowledge of the sporting landscape was formidable. She always asked gently challenging questions about personal performances and the team—none of the bland "Are you happy you won?" or "Are you sad you lost?" She made everyone feel special and cherished, regardless of their performance.

In my career as an athlete, I competed at three Commonwealth Games. The Queen's attendance at the opening or closing ceremonies, or at the events, provided the magic fairy dust for the event. More than the athlete parade on home soil, her speech was the moment when the Games began. She was the guiding light we wanted to live up to.

In 2002 at the Games in Manchester, who can forget Kirsty Howard and David Beckham handing over the baton to the Queen? The Queen's baton relay this year was an amazing event; thousands of people took part, and many thousands more came to watch, sometimes waiting for hours on a little part of a road just to see it go past. Listening to some of the stories of how the individuals came to be nominated was moving and emotional, but they all shared one thing: their pride in being part of something special, and feeling a connection to her.

Who can forget the wonderful way she arrived at the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Games? Before Paddington, there was James Bond. It was such a closely guarded secret; all I knew was that we had to wait and see. I was in the stadium that night. I remember sitting in a crowd of 60,000 people as that moment of realisation dawned: "That looks a bit like Buckingham Palace—it is Buckingham Palace. That looks a bit like the Queen—it is the Queen". At the moment she turned and said, "Mr Bond", the atmosphere was

[BARONESS GREY-THOMPSON]

electric. No one was prepared for the helicopter or the parachute jump, but it showed an innate sense of humour.

A few years before that was the bidding process for the 2012 Games. I believe the Queen had an enormous impact on that. As noble Lords might imagine, there are many rules for the bidding process for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The evaluation commission is allowed to attend only one reception. Four other cities bidding for the Games gave huge, grand receptions with hundreds of people. But it was always London's intention to do something different. The Queen hosted an intimate dinner at Buckingham Palace, which I was privileged to attend. It allowed the evaluation commission some time away from the public eye, and I and others who were part of the bid believed it played a significant role in the eventual victory.

Her commitment to sport was not just about attending events. After major Games—Olympics and Paralympics—receptions were held at Buckingham Palace to which all team members were invited, and other members of the Royal Family were there. After one such reception after the Sydney Games, I was introduced to Her Majesty. Initially, my mother was delighted because the day after a picture was published in a national newspaper of me and the Queen together—until my mother looked at my shoes. Well, my purple boots. She deemed them entirely unsuitable and robustly told me how unsuitable they were. At the end of my telling off, she said “What will the Queen think of me because you wore those shoes?” There are times when there is simply nothing to say except “Sorry”—except I said, “I don't think the Queen is thinking of you”. My dad shook his head, walked away from me and said, “You're on your own with that one”.

Actually, I wanted not to disappoint either my mother or the Queen in equal measure. We learn many lessons in life; the lesson I learned from that is that sometimes you just need to learn when to be quiet. A couple of days later, my mother decided to forgive me and very proudly showed anyone who wanted to see—and many who did not—the picture of me, but with the offending boots folded out of it and a hand covering them. I am not sure that anyone else noticed I was wearing those boots.

The Queen's presence at sporting events, or indeed any event, simply raised people's spirits. The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham earlier this year was an amazing event. Many athletes wished she could have been there; sadly, it was not to be, but everyone understood why. However, the then Prince of Wales did a sterling job, balancing ceremony with compassion. He set exactly the right tone for the successful Games they became, which the sporting community will be ever grateful for in difficult times. It meant so much to everyone. Long live the King.

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, so many good things have been said this afternoon about our late and wonderful Queen. There have been some really uplifting speeches, one of which we heard just now.

I shall concentrate on just one aspect of the whole wonderful story. The Queen was the founder of the modern Commonwealth. There have been lots of references to her famous 21st-birthday dedication of her whole life and efforts to what later became the Commonwealth; it has been quoted here and in broadcasts many times.

I have two further insights from Her Majesty to cite in making my feelings understood. The first, 62 years after that dedication on her 21st birthday, was:

“The Commonwealth is in many ways the face of the future.”

That came out of her Christmas broadcast in 2009. The second was when she observed, only a few sad months ago:

“Today, it is rewarding to observe a modern, vibrant and connected Commonwealth that combines a wealth of history and tradition with the great social, cultural and technological advances of our time.”

Let us ponder those two statements. I say: what prescience and insight they show into the 21st century, which we should all have been sharing and following much more closely. As the world switches increasingly to Asia and Africa and an entirely different international order from that of the last 60 or 70 years, it is our membership of this giant network, consisting of eight nations at the start and 56 now, with several more wanting to join, that gives us back our strong role with purpose and direction and, if handled wisely, our advantage and our exceptionalism. That is what I place at the centre of my thoughts at this sad time.

For me, this reflects the constancy throughout the Queen's long lifetime and her understanding of the future, well beyond most of those around her. For that insight and wisdom, I believe we must now give deep thanks beyond words. We wish King Charles all the strength and good fortune in the world to follow in his mother's footsteps. I believe he will do well. He is the best-prepared new monarch in our history. Long may he reign.

The Lord Bishop of Worcester: My Lords, like millions of others across the globe, I was immensely sad to learn of the death of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I have just travelled up from Worcester and lots of people are gathering at the cathedral to pay their respects, as they are at many other parish churches. I am sure I speak on behalf of all the people in Worcestershire and Dudley in the diocese of Worcester in saying how desperately sad we are at this news.

In my tribute to her late Majesty today, I shall refer to my particular place in the Royal Household. For some 10 years I have been privileged to be the Lord High Almoner to the Queen, a rather esoteric title for an ancient role. Cardinal Wolsey was one of my predecessors, and he did not come to a very good end. Traditionally, the almoner has been responsible for all the monarch's almsgiving. Nowadays my duty is to take overall responsibility for the Royal Maundy Service. At that service, as your Lordships will know, the same number of men and women as the monarch's age—so 96 men and 96 women this year—are awarded the Maundy money in recognition of their exemplary Christian service over a long period. I was moved to be able to accompany Her Majesty the Queen, someone

who herself gave exemplary Christian service over her lifetime, in honouring those who had done the same. It seemed to me that as they looked into one another's eyes, they understood one another and what made them tick. Her Majesty took the Royal Maundy Service very seriously, I think because it symbolised what motivated her. She served because of her faith in Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve. In doing so, she was an inspiration to millions around the globe.

5.15 pm

The Royal Maundy Service is a very serious matter but, with the constant twinkle in her eye and that radiant smile, the Queen managed to put people at their ease, immensely nervous though they were. I told them beforehand that they should just say, "Thank you, Your Majesty" or "Thank you, Ma'am", as the Queen approached them and then give a bow. But, one year, there was a woman who could not resist thrusting a pot of marmalade into the Queen's hands as a sort of return gift. As you can imagine, the Queen dealt with that unexpected development with great aplomb. All those who were privileged to know Her Majesty can attest that not only was the Queen a fount of wisdom, but she had a great sense of humour and fun. Only latterly did James Bond and Paddington make that plain to everyone.

This is a time of deep grieving, but the Queen was a person of profound Christian faith, who believed in a God whose love is stronger than death. Some 16,000 Anglican parish churches and cathedrals, as well as other places of worship, that have symbolised that Christian hope for centuries are now open for people to give thanks, reflect and pray. As we give thanks for the life of this most remarkable monarch and wonderful woman and commend her to the God in whom she believed, I pray that we shall all come together as a nation as we honour her. That would surely be the most fitting tribute to our late beloved Queen who was, through her faith and service, the glue that held us all together.

We pray too, as we do so, for His Majesty the King, for him to be given the strength and grace that he needs as he takes over the reins of the monarchy. God save the King.

Lord Sarfraz (Con): My Lords, I too offer my deepest condolences to the Royal Family on the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. My family and I will join millions of people in praying for them during this difficult time. There is a simple reminder that all Muslims say out loud when someone passes away: "Ina lilahe wa ina ilayhe rajioon", or "We come from God and to God we shall return".

All day I have been receiving messages from friends all over the world offering condolences on Her Majesty's passing. It is touching to see just how much love there was and always will be for Her late Majesty. In Singapore, for where I am the Prime Minister's trade envoy, Parliament will observe a minute's silence and flags will fly at half-mast—such is the sentiment across the Commonwealth and beyond. Rarely has one person meant so much to so many people.

When I was born, Her late Majesty had already reigned for 30 years. Personally, today I feel a great sense of gratitude to her. I am grateful for her tireless service to our country up until the day she passed, for her love, for her selflessness, for her great spirit and for being the flag around which we all could rally at the hardest moments. She embodied our history, our values and what it means to be a servant of this great nation.

I wish His Majesty the King strength and fortitude in building on his mother's legacy and forging a legacy of his own. Long live the King.

Lord Bilimoria (CB): My Lords, I was in Boston yesterday and at lunchtime, Boston time, I came out of a meeting with one of my Harvard Business School professors, looked at my phone and saw the sad news about Her Majesty.

Some of my earliest memories going back to my childhood are of seeing the photographs, which are in our house in India to this day, of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh on their state visit to India in 1961, when Rajendra Prasad was the President of India and my father, at that time Captain Bilimoria, was the senior ADC to the President of India.

Little did I know that years later, I would be privileged to not only meet but get to know them both. What I saw was a couple who were devoted to each other. Her Majesty the Queen was absolutely devoted to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, and he to her. A few years ago, when His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh came to visit the Zoroastrian centre in Harrow, I accompanied him. When we went up to the prayer room, we had to take off our shoes; when we came out of that room, we were sitting next to each other, putting our shoes on and tying our laces, and he said to me, "Do you know, I've had these shoes since the day I got married?" Such was the sentimentality between this couple.

As we heard from the noble Lord, Lord Howell, Her Majesty was not just the Queen of the United Kingdom but Head of the Commonwealth—a Commonwealth of 56 countries, all voluntary. Not one of those countries has to be a member of the Commonwealth; they do it out of choice. She was not just the figurehead but the leader of this array of nations—from giants such as India with its 1.4 billion people to tiny Caribbean countries—making up a third of the world's population. We heard just now from the noble Baroness, Lady Grey-Thompson, about the Commonwealth Games. I am privileged to be chancellor of the University of Birmingham and was there on 7 October when Her Majesty drove up in the courtyard in front of Buckingham Palace, stepped out and handed over the baton to its first relay holder. It went all around the world, across all the Commonwealth countries and territories.

Prime Minister Liz Truss described the Queen as the rock of the nation over seven decades. Republics do not have this advantage that we have. Presidents change regularly; we have had continuity for 70 years—not just continuity but somebody who has been apolitical, objective and completely independent. She cared for Great Britain and for Northern Ireland; she cared for

[LORD BILIMORIA]

the Commonwealth. Her stamina, of course, is legendary. I remember that at the state visit of the President of India to Windsor Castle, it was late into the night at a post-dinner reception when I was suddenly summoned by the Master of the Household, saying, “Her Majesty would like you to accompany her for a while, please.” So I went up to her and asked, “Your Majesty, where is the President?” The Queen said, “She and her husband have retired”, yet she stayed on until past midnight, meeting visitors.

Fast forward: a few years ago, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh came up to Birmingham to reopen New Street Station. That was a big enough thing in itself but, from there, they came over to the University of Birmingham to open the new dental centre at Pebble Mill. Not only did she open that dental centre, they stayed for lunch, spent the whole afternoon and went back. It was absolutely remarkable, and how wonderful that we were able to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee.

This year, I was proud to be a member of the committee at the Royal Windsor Horse Show. Her Majesty always came to attend the final night, and that night we were warned: “She may not come and if she does, she may come only for a few minutes. She has not been well.” If your Lordships remember, she had missed the State Opening of Parliament just before that. We were all seated at 8 pm when she walked in, on time for the show to start. She stayed the full two hours—clapping, smiling, laughing and enjoying every minute, and it did not stop there. She then got into the Range Rover and did a whole lap of the arena, waving to everyone who was there. She left after 11 pm.

Winston Churchill, the Queen’s first Prime Minister, was born 100 years before today’s Prime Minister, Liz Truss. It is truly remarkable. I have been proud to be a deputy lieutenant, representing Her Majesty in Greater London. I was appointed on 9/11 in 2001, when I was still in my 30s. I remember the vice lord-lieutenant at the time, Sir Michael Craig-Cooper, telling me a story about accompanying the Queen. She was going through crowds and stopped in front of a teenage girl. The teenage girl curtsied and, at that moment, her phone rang. The Queen said, “Maybe you should answer that. It could be somebody important.” That was her sense of humour.

I remember sitting opposite her at a lunch at Buckingham Palace. There were the famous stories about the corgis. The corgis were sitting around her and one of the butlers, or waiters, walked behind her—she did not see this happen—and tripped over one of the corgis. It was like slow motion in a comedy movie; somehow, he managed not to drop the tray.

We loved Her Majesty the Queen and the world loved her. As she said, the price of love is grief. We are grieving. We have received messages from all over the world; I have received messages from the Middle East, India and America. We thank Her Majesty. My mother in India, who I spoke to this morning, said, “What a dignified woman.” She was majestic, magisterial, a true leader. She was an authentic leader: she had the abilities and the empathy of a true leader; she really cared.

She was the Queen of all Queens, the monarch of all monarchs. She was not only the most famous monarch in the world but the most respected, by miles. I have said time and again that the United Kingdom has one of the strongest combinations of hard and soft power in the world. Of that soft power, the number one factor is our luckiness as country to have had Her Majesty the Queen, our strongest element of soft power. She is the most priceless asset our country has had.

His Majesty King Charles III has not just a hard act to follow but an impossible one. Yet I hope—I know—that, looking ahead, like Isaac Newton, he will be able to say:

“If I can see further, it is because I am standing on the shoulders of giants”,

and of one giant in particular. Your Majesty the Queen, we will miss you but your inspiration will live on with us forever. We offer our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to His Majesty the King and the Royal Family. Long live the King, King Charles III. Long may he reign.

Lord Shinkwin (Con): My Lords, the scale of technological progress achieved during Queen Elizabeth’s remarkable reign was exceptional but, as the noble Baroness, Lady Benjamin, reminded us, so too has been the change in social attitudes and values. As the noble Baroness, Lady Amos, said in her powerful speech, the Britain that the Queen leaves behind is so different from the Britain of the beginning of her reign. Indeed, the very idea that, even in the middle of her long reign, she would have made someone such as me, with a severe disability that also affects my ability to speak, a Member of your Lordships’ House I find inconceivable. The fact that I am speaking in your Lordships’ House today compels me to reflect that, surely, the richness of the legacy that she has bequeathed to us can in part be seen in the far more diverse and inclusive society she so gently nurtured.

For me, one of the most visible signs of that deep personal commitment to all her people was her unstinting support for Motability, the charity co-founded by my noble friend Lord Sterling of Plaistow. I will never forget the occasion on which I was presented to Her Majesty at Windsor, where she very kindly hosted an event for Motability as its chief patron. It was a chilly spring day as we gathered outside, yet she spent over an hour greeting and speaking to all of us. For someone who grew up in an age of discrimination, some of it state-sanctioned, on grounds of sex, race, disability and sexual orientation, her capacity to reflect evolving attitudes and, subtly but no less powerfully for that, embrace diversity and inclusion was extraordinary. As my noble friend the Lord Privy Seal said in his profoundly poignant opening remarks, she was the Queen of everyone.

5.30 pm

As others have also said, she was a monarch of great courage as well. As we reflect on the stresses and strains of our troubled world, I am sure she would want us, as her beloved people, to draw strength from the fact that she served us, cared for us and led us

through incredibly tough times, not least during the pandemic. Throughout, she always projected a supreme confidence that the resolve, resilience and resources of the diverse peoples of her United Kingdom and the Commonwealth would see us through to better times.

The Queen was the personification of public duty. Our duty is to live up to her example and, as she did, continue to nurture a more diverse and inclusive society to the benefit of us all. His Majesty the King, as the Prince of Wales, has already shown his long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion through the wonderful work of the Prince's Trust and his support for interfaith initiatives. He deserves our fulsome support. That would surely be a fitting tribute, to sustain her legacy. May she rest in peace.

Lord Flight (Con): My Lords, I add my grateful thanks and tribute to Her Majesty the late Queen. I raise these points both professionally and at a personal level. She has always been professional in the delivery of her duties and responsibilities, and it is wonderful to see how much she is recognised across the whole world.

I stood with my parents 69 years ago in Birdcage Walk to watch the coronation procession and I can remember that to this day. Little did I know that I was witnessing the beginning of a reign of 70 years by such a wonderful and human Queen. At the tender age of only 18, the Queen committed herself to her duty, her standards and all the action that has come since.

A mere 67 years ago, the Queen opened the science building at my school, Brentwood School. Very many other enterprises have been supported thus by the Queen. While I am sure Charles III will make an excellent King, I am saddened greatly by the departing of my Queen. She has left us, a wonderful person. We will not see her like again.

Viscount Stansgate (Lab): My Lords, I hope the House will allow me to begin by saying how much I appreciated the opening speeches by the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, the Convenor of the Cross-Bench Peers and the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury, who made a collection of remarks that set the tone for today's debate. I have listened to some wonderful tributes from other Members throughout the day and I think today's *Hansard* will be a remarkable document and a testament to the person in whose honour we are holding this debate.

I remember when I lost my own mother, as many Members will remember losing theirs. It is a very difficult thing to lose one's mother and therefore my sympathy personally goes out to the King, from whom we will hear shortly, and his family, because of the loss they are suffering, which is of course combined, as others have said, with the duties that now fall upon the new King.

I am one of the Members of this House who did not meet Her Majesty and I am not going to claim that I did. I was in close proximity to her on more than one occasion—at the investiture when she gave my wife an OBE, and so on—but I am not going to claim that I had any personal conversations with her.

Nevertheless, I recognise the enormous importance she had to the lives of people in this country and the impact she had on them. I am sorry in some ways that my dad is not here to make a speech about his relations with the Queen, because he certainly had many stories he could have told, including his rather unsuccessful attempt to cut her head off—not in any physical sense, you understand, but in relation to British stamps. Noble Lords can read all about that in his memoirs.

The more I have thought about it over the last 24 hours, the more I think it was no coincidence that we saw her fulfil the one last constitutional duty which only she could fulfil on Tuesday in appointing the new Prime Minister, and then sadly found that she became very unwell and died shortly after. I think she knew for weeks, as we all did, that she had this duty ahead of her and she held on to fulfil it. That would be absolutely typical, from everything I have heard anyone in this Chamber say about Her Majesty in the 70 years she reigned. I do not think it was a coincidence that she lived long enough to do it.

I also think she is a supreme example of a successful constitutional monarch, for which we should all be very grateful. Looking back over the years of her reign, I think that this country has moved, as has been indicated by others, from a position where we were still an imperial power and had an element of what you might call hard power. Over the decades it has been transferred into soft power, and she embodied that in a way that is going to be very hard to follow.

Her death is still a shock and for many people it will continue to be so. When we hear from the new King in a moment, it will begin to bring itself to bear on people's lives. However, there is a great deal to celebrate. We all know that she lived to see an unrivalled Platinum Jubilee celebration. Although she was not able to take that much of a part in many of the events, the country, the nation and the Commonwealth had a chance to say thank you to her, and her own contribution was, in a way, to live to see it unfold in front of her. However, there is still a great deal of mourning now.

Reference has been made to the remarkable interviews that she gave when she was younger and her pledge to serve her country and the Commonwealth whether her life "be long or short". It turned out to be remarkably long, for which we are all very grateful. She served her country as she promised to do and fulfilled her promise. You cannot ask for more than that and I do not think we will see her like again in our lifetime.

Baroness Morgan of Cotes (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Viscount. So much has already been said this afternoon, but at a time of grief it is better for us all to say something. In his message yesterday, our new King said that he and his family would draw comfort from all the sentiments of loss, mourning and gratitude that people would express in the coming days. We have heard many fantastic and moving speeches and it has been a privilege to be part of your Lordships' House today to listen to them.

I will offer three brief thoughts. First, as has been mentioned and as the noble Viscount just captured in his tribute, the Queen's last service was to invite her 15th Prime Minister to form a Government. Her face

[BARONESS MORGAN OF COTES]

in that picture was still innately curious. To have that level of curiosity at the age of 96, after everything that the Queen had seen, was truly remarkable. Her curiosity was also captured, as we heard earlier, in that very simple question to those City financiers after the 2008 financial crash: “Why did no one else see that this was going to happen?” What a good question that she asked on behalf of so many of her subjects.

Secondly, we have heard that, for those who encountered her in the flesh, it was an unforgettable experience. She said that, for those who were just going to catch a glimpse, she deliberately wore bright clothes so that she could not be missed. Whatever we might think of His Majesty’s wardrobe, he is unlikely to wear that rainbow of colours that we got so used to.

As we heard, in 2012 the Queen visited Leicester with the new Duchess of Cambridge and the Duke of Edinburgh. It was a huge honour for both the city and county for that visit to be the first to any city in the Diamond Jubilee year. Of course, there was great excitement, but the tip that I took away, having watched Her Majesty during the lunch, was that it is acceptable to open your handbag, get out your lipstick and put it on after lunch. I have taken that tip and told many people about it; they found it a great insight into what was in her handbag—apart from marmalade sandwiches.

We heard a story from the noble Baroness, Lady Barker, of someone encountering the Queen and not being able to speak. In my case, when I was appointed to the Privy Council, I forgot to breathe. As the black spots appeared in my peripheral vision, I suddenly realised that I had stopped breathing as I was so close to my monarch and was observing her in close quarters. We also heard about the kissing of hands. While one is not meant to go into the details of Privy Council experiences, it is fair to say that, however experienced in life you are, that ceremony of kneeling and kissing your monarch’s hand is probably the most agonising kiss that you will ever make in your lifetime.

Thirdly, the Queen was our voice of stability at key moments. We have mentioned her Christmas afternoon broadcasts. Of course, after the death of Princess Diana, when the country needed a moment of stability, she was the one who invoked the phrase:

“Grief is the price we pay for love.”

That is worth remembering today. She was also asked to speak in spring 2020 when the Covid pandemic had struck with such ferocity.

I have no doubt that His Majesty the King will provide that same stability and that our thoughts and support will be with him over the coming days and months as he takes on his new duties. In many ways, we began to see that transition of power when he was at the State Opening of Parliament in this House just a few months ago. As we have heard, all these events will be much more of a shock for everyone at every level of society and everywhere around the globe than most of us would have expected. God save the King.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff (CB): Today, as we pay tribute, having been led so sensitively and eloquently by our Front Benches, we must remember that Her

Majesty was patron of over 600 charities and each felt that they were unique to her. Hospices and hospitals benefited greatly from her support and she lifted the morale of everyone, even the sickest person. We saw that she herself lived fully and with her uniquely great dignity until death took her.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy had the honour of having Her Majesty as our patron since 1953—its charter having been granted by her grandfather, King George V, in June 1920. Every year of those 69 years, she sent her official royal greetings to our members to mark our AGMs. In 2020, the centenary of our charter, she particularly noted the vital contribution of physiotherapy staff in response to the Covid pandemic. Every year as president, I read out the message and the uplift in the room was palpable: it was affirmation by her while physiotherapists focused on their service to the health of the nation—her subjects—and all felt, and indeed knew, that she deeply appreciated their role. Every event that Her Majesty attended created treasured memories for all who were there. Every year, many enjoyed the honour of a lifetime: an invitation to one of the Queen’s annual garden parties, and some received honours in recognition of the impact of their work.

Her commitment to her citizens across the Commonwealth of Nations, as we have heard so eloquently, was evident throughout her long service. She unwavering dedication to all her subjects provided stability during many turbulent times. At the recent launch of the Commonwealth Tribute to Life—a memorandum of understanding across the Commonwealth—the friendship and support that she inspired were palpable among the transplant professionals in the room.

5.45 pm

I saw Her Majesty’s concern for each person when I attended Sunday service at the Royal Chapel of All Saints in Windsor Great Park. Suddenly, one of the choirboys was taken ill. After attending to him—he did seem rather ill—I stood outside, rather than disrupt the last minutes of the service. At the end of the service, Her Majesty came towards me and inquired, with great concern in her kind blue eyes, about the welfare of the child and whether he would be all right. Her sensitive concern overrode all other duties in those moments.

Her corgis were also an important adjunct to her quiet sensibility. David Nott, the trauma surgeon, described how half a dog biscuit, discreetly handed to him to give a corgi under the lunch table, helped him to recover his composure as the post-traumatic stress of Aleppo overwhelmed him.

Our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences are offered to all the Royal Family, as the whole nation shares in profound grief and treasures those moments, some longer than others, when their lives were touched and enriched by our amazing Queen. My very first memory is of watching her Coronation on our neighbour’s first TV. We all have our lifetimes of memories of Her Majesty to treasure, as if she was our own much-loved mother or grandmother. Now, in deepest sympathy

with all who love her deeply, particularly her family, we pledge our commitment and allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III.

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): My Lords, what a wonderful note on which to end this session. As I said earlier, we are going to adjourn for the King's address. I suggest, given that timings are not entirely certain, that we resume tributes not sooner than 10 minutes after the conclusion of the King's address.

5.47 pm

Sitting suspended.

6.20 pm

The Lord Bishop of Southwark: My Lords, it was profoundly moving to sit together in this Chamber and listen to His Majesty the King speaking to the nation and Commonwealth of his profound thanks to his mother, Her Majesty the late Queen, and of his commitment to follow her example of selfless service. That resonated deeply.

I wish to share two conversations that I heard while travelling here today. One was on the Underground, when someone looked across and said, "You must be busy at the moment". Guessing what this was leading up to, I said, "How is the news of the Queen's death affecting you?" He said, "I've just been with my mum, who came to this country 70 years ago; she is now 74. She has only ever known the Queen and she is devastated. I too am full of sorrow". And on we talked. Then, to get here in good time, I hopped into a black cab. The cab driver, when he knew where I was going, also put two and two together. He dropped me off and said, "That one is on me, Father. We are all sharing in this". And so it is.

The tributes paid in this House and in the other place have rightly dwelt on personal reminiscences and the place of our late sovereign in the life of the nation. I too, like my fellow Prelates, have made my way to Sandringham in the depth of winter. Like them, I have both made my homage in due time and faced the Supreme Governor of the Church of England across a jigsaw puzzle. I have had my sermon judged and been put at my ease in spacious hospitality.

Since the news yesterday, we have been thinking deeply about what we knew of Her late Majesty in the light of our loss. I have one particular observation to make. As your Lordships know, my diocese covers the boroughs of south London and east Surrey. Near where I live is the magnificent edifice of Streatham public library, to which was added in 1912 a truly splendid clock by public subscription in memory of the late King Edward VII, who had died two years previously. A little further, again funded by public subscription, is a monumental statue of the same King at Tooting Broadway. I mention this because both stand out and both were by public subscription, and thus reflect the sense of the people of the day as a tangible means of expressing thanks and making their own tribute.

I wonder what we might say and do in response to the life of our late Queen. There are many tangible tributes that we may make in the coming months and years to Her late Majesty the Queen, but one of the

greatest tributes would be to take to heart the sense of vocation and service she embodied in her role. In an age where politics is dominated by great parties and economics by great corporations, is it not salutary that even those who wield political and economic power are in some sense accountable and defer to someone who personifies the unity and well-being of the nation, and in that person to find a pledge of lifelong service and integrity—one that is not shouted out but lived out year after year?

I will tell one small anecdote. My late sister-in-law, who was profoundly deaf, accompanied me during my time as Bishop of Woolwich when the Royal Artillery moved from Woolwich down to Salisbury Plain. Her Majesty the Queen was there for the occasion and spotted that my sister-in-law was wearing a Duke of Edinburgh gold badge. She went up and, as soon as she realised that my sister-in-law was deaf, her face lit up and non-verbal communication took place that was at the deepest and most wonderful level. My sister-in-law felt that she had had a wonderful conversation with the Queen, the Queen not least talking with her about deafness in her own family. Her capacity to reach out, particularly to those who live in this life with great challenges—disabilities, learning difficulties and many other challenges—was a real hallmark of her own integrity.

Her late Majesty the Queen spent her long life in service with an uncomplaining dedication that she derived from her pledge to us and her duty to God, who called her to be our Queen. So, in audiences and walkabouts, at her official boxes, in correspondence, at investitures, before military personnel, before crowds, at great national occasions, in countless private moments, in numerous personal kindnesses and in her prayers, she did not fail us. May we embody these standards in the vocation we have been given—that will be a fitting tribute. Thanks be to God; God save the King.

Lord Loomba (CB): My Lords, Nelson Mandela once said:

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."

I was sorry to hear that the Queen died yesterday. She was an extraordinary woman who fulfilled her destiny with dedication, dignity and grace, using her power behind the scenes as a cohesive force, bringing people across the globe together with an overall perspective of future unity. In challenging times she was a rock, which our Prime Minister also mentioned yesterday in her speech. Today marks the end of an enormously long Elizabethan era.

Like me, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was born into a world where the British monarch was Emperor of India, but it fell to her, coming to the Throne five years later, to embody that transition to a post-imperial world, and there can be no greater tribute to her than the heartfelt outpouring of love and gratitude expressed by the leaders of Commonwealth countries all over the world since Her Majesty passed away on Thursday. The transition has been different for every country, but it was the Queen's unfailing spirit of service and humility that allowed even the most painful of memories not to stand in the way of forging a new relationship.

[LORD LOOMBA]

I had the honour to meet Her Majesty twice, once at the opening of the GLA building—I have a beautiful photograph of myself with her—and, on another occasion, at the opening of Barnardo's new offices as I am the vice-president of Barnardo's. I was completely taken back as both Her Majesty and the Duchess of Cornwall—now the Queen Consort—wanted to hear about my charity for widows.

6.30 pm

In 1997, 50 years after India gained her independence, it was my privilege to organise the British-Indian Golden Jubilee banquet in London, at which King Charles III, then of course the Prince of Wales, quoted the Vedas and expressed his thanks to India for its civilising influence on Britain. It was a moment that symbolised the transformation that had taken place from imperial power and subject nation to the familial ties of equals. The enduring strength of those ties between the world's fifth and sixth-largest economies was illustrated again yesterday when the Prime Minister of India recalled the Queen's warmth and kindness.

Many tributes have alluded to the Queen's greatness. To that, I would add my voice by saying that the greatness of Queen Elizabeth II lay not in harking back to the days of empire or in asserting dominance over others, but in the service and humility that characterised her reign and opened the door to new beginnings.

I pay tribute to her late Majesty for the contribution she has made, which has undoubtedly made the world a better place than it would otherwise have been. It is her legacy that in an increasingly uncertain world offers hope for the future. I know that the Queen's love for India and for the Commonwealth was fully shared by her eldest son, King Charles III, and that he will seek to build on that legacy. God save the King.

Baroness Sheehan (LD): My Lords, perhaps I may start by saying how much I have appreciated the quite admirable tributes from across the House that we have heard today. I add my wish to be associated with them. What a privilege and honour it was to be present in the Chamber with other noble Lords and staff as King Charles III made his first address to the nation. It was really quite a moving occasion.

I think we can all agree that, as tributes go, this one to her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II writes itself. She was a quite remarkable woman whose life of service and duty was lived in the full glare of public life in exemplary fashion. She dealt with the numerous challenges that arose with admirable fortitude and dignity. She was never haughty, never unkind and never condescending—although, judging by anecdotes from noble Lords today, she seems to have had ample opportunity to respond in such a way on several occasions.

I never met her late Majesty, but I wish I had. Nevertheless, her passing has hit me hard, and it is very emotional for me and for the multitudes of her subjects from all corners of the world who also never met her but who have come to royal palaces just to be there to remember her with love and to pay their

respects. I wish to speak today as one of them and on their behalf, if that is not too presumptuous. I come from an immigrant family from Pakistan as part of the Commonwealth. In us, her late Majesty inspired feelings of loyalty and respect, and our love. She garnered the gratitude of the people of the Commonwealth who came here to build a new life. In greeting leaders of all countries of the Commonwealth with respect and dignity, hers was an example to other leaders in our communities and to ordinary people in their dealings with their newly arrived, different neighbours.

Not only that, but she took the trouble to travel extensively to Commonwealth countries and accept their hospitality. She will have known that, in many parts of the world, to be a guest is to confer a great honour on your host. We immigrants may have felt the antipathy of some towards us, but it was always a comfort to know that the Queen pointed the way to decency. It is no accident that so many of those who have wanted to be at one or other of the royal palaces are from the Commonwealth, because for them she was their champion and they loved her for it. That love seemed approved by the heavens as a rainbow shone forth over Windsor yesterday evening.

Her faith guided her throughout her life. It was a privilege indeed to swear allegiance to a monarch who valued faith, a monarch who will be deeply missed by her family, to whom I offer my deepest condolences, particularly to King Charles and his Queen Consort, Camilla. I look forward to swearing loyal allegiance to King Charles III. God save the King.

Baroness Thornton (Lab): My Lords, may I begin by saying how much I appreciated the remarks of the noble Lord, Lord True, and my noble friend Lady Smith in opening this debate. They were wonderfully moving.

Like many noble Lords, I spent yesterday evening glued to the television and exchanging messages with family and friends, and, like many other noble Lords, I was puzzled as to why I felt so discombobulated and odd. That is an experience that we all seem to have shared. Possibly it is because I was born in the year that the Queen came to the throne—I am 70 in six weeks' time—but actually I think it is mostly because we were witnessing something seismic, a huge shift in our civic infrastructure and our life in the UK, and we all have to come to terms with that. We in this House have to work out how to support our nation in getting through this period.

I am a member of what I like to think of as the elite group in this House who are Baronesses in Waiting. Since several Baronesses in Waiting are here and have spoken, I wonder whether we should form a former Baronesses in Waiting group—"FBIWG", we could call it. Most of us had to be taught how to curtsy, because if you do not get it right you fall over. In my case, I was taught by a lady in waiting just before the audience that we all have to have before we can undertake the varied duties of being a Baroness in Waiting. I do not have a huge recollection of the conversation in that audience because there were several of us and it was actually a bit terrifying. However, in the course of

that conversation I mentioned to Her Majesty that the week before, I had been to Poundbury on a coach trip of parliamentarians. When I said that, I saw a glimpse of a mother who was really proud of her boy. She was really proud of the work that our new Head of State was doing in Poundbury in its early days.

The duties that we were to undertake were very varied. In my case, they included accompanying Her Majesty to Parliament for State Opening in December 2009 in an open carriage—I underline that this was in December—with Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, who I have to say I thought was going to turn blue with cold. We had other duties such as attending diplomatic balls. I am a millworker's daughter from Bradford, so I experienced these things with wonder and perhaps some terror but, like others in this House, I also experienced the warmth and humour of Her Majesty and other members of the family, which turned those into very valued and treasured experiences.

As our new Head of State, King Charles, said in his address tonight, he will have to leave behind many of the causes and organisations into which he has poured his time and passion for decades, from young people to the unemployed and the environment. I must say, I hope that many of those progressive causes do not fall by the wayside. I was pleased to hear His Majesty's assurance that support for many of those businesses, charities, social enterprises and causes will be picked up and will continue.

In his remarks, His Majesty finished on a point of hope. I think we just need to say "Onward and upward" from now on.

Baroness Fraser of Craigmaddie (Con): My Lords, I feel distinctly underqualified to offer my tribute today, particularly in such august company, but I feel humbled that we have this opportunity to do so.

Like the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, I wish my father were here because he was very involved in horseracing throughout his life—something that we know the Queen absolutely adored and was unbelievably knowledgeable about, as my father could attest to. As a result of hanging on to my father's coat-tails, I was extremely fortunate in my early 20s to have the honour of my life; it was almost more of an honour than when I was brought into this place. I was invited to stay at Windsor Castle for Ascot Week. As I was a young 20 year-old, as you can imagine, my mother packed my suitcase and made sure that I knew what to do. I could curtsy because my ballet training had helped with that, but I was sent off with many lectures, such as, "Don't you dare put a foot wrong and let us down".

I must say, from the moment I walked into Windsor Castle, Her Majesty could not have been kinder or more wonderful a host to that nervous young girl, even when I forgot basic things, such as my race glasses—which it is pretty essential to take to a race meeting. We were all under a great timetable, so I ran down those long corridors thinking, "Have I got time to get them before we're meant to be in the cars?" and all the rest of it. Her Majesty saw my problem and shoogled me along, saying, "No, off you go, go in front of me". I also experienced the deep disappointment

of the schoolchildren lining the route and waving at us as we went up the racecourse, which was amazing. When they got to the carriage I was in, right at the back, I could see them thinking, "Who on earth is that?"

However, that is not really what I want to pay tribute to. As the leader of a charity, I want to say thank you and note Her Majesty's enormous contribution to civic society and charities. As has been said, she was patron of more than 600 charities. In fact, the Royal Family's website notes that more than 3,000 charities have a member of the Royal Family as either their patron or their president. These charities are throughout the UK. They cover all aspects of life, from health and disability to education, the arts and sport. It is tireless, unglamorous work. The visits the Royal Family make to charities make a huge difference, not only to the organisations themselves, in highlighting some really important and sometimes not very fashionable issues. For the people we support, the beneficiaries, their visits are a highlight. In my experience, nobody ever says no to coming to meet a member of the Royal Family.

This also highlights the importance of the Royal Family, because that is an awful lot of organisations. As we heard in His Majesty's address, he will not be able to carry on the work that he has done. I therefore thank the wider members of the Royal Family who support this work and have until now supported the late Queen, because I would consider any organisation fortunate to have a royal patron.

6.45 pm

I have two other things to note quickly. Her Majesty's love of Scotland was a love by heritage but also by experience. Given that she died at Balmoral and we have all these events in Scotland in the coming days, it is wonderful to note that love of Scotland. As somebody said, she was a unionist to the end. Her most political statements were in the Silver Jubilee and before the referendum, about the importance of the union of all four nations of the United Kingdom.

Finally, we have heard many people speak about her service and it being a personal service, but it is also a personal service from us to our monarch. The last time I was in the same vicinity as Her Majesty was in July, in the Palace of Holyrood House, where there was a *reddendo* by the Royal Company of Archers, the Queen's personal bodyguard in Scotland. They are all volunteers and amateurs. My husband happens to be the Adjutant of the Royal Company of Archers, and they were organising a *reddendo*.

I did not know what a *reddendo* was, and I was put in my place by my husband, because it was to mark the 200th anniversary of the forming of the Royal Company of Archers. It was the one event of the week that was not about the Platinum Jubilee and it was an opportunity for them, after 200 years, to say, "Thank you, your Majesty, for allowing us to be your personal bodyguard". She was on absolutely tremendous form that day, and 324 volunteer amateurs turned out and put on a fantastic parade that made her smile light up. I just note the captain-general's words on that occasion. In his speech to the late Queen, he noted that in its

[BARONESS FRASER OF CRAIGMADDIE]

200 years, the Royal Company of Archers had served eight monarchs, but more than one-third of its history had been spent serving her. It was a privilege to thank her.

Our new King ended his remarks by saying that hers was a life well lived. It was, and, like the archers at their *reddendo*, I too should like to say thank you.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow (Con): My Lords, several months ago I rang and had a chat to Helen Cross, personal private secretary to the Queen. I reminded her that more than 10 years ago, we had done something of a similar nature, and I wanted to know whether the Queen would be in favour. We have all the monarch's palaces, and many people there, such as the gardeners, the sous chefs and the chambermaids, who have hardly even met members of the Royal Family, but certainly have not been involved in a major gathering to do something they might really enjoy. Last time, we did exactly the same: she went to the Queen and the Queen was very much in favour. They had a ballot among all the people working for the palaces—the lot—but not at a high level. These were the people doing the down-to-earth jobs.

Yesterday was the day they came on board to visit “Gloriana”, the Queen's row barge, at Chelsea. We had a great turnout, and the Queen's royal bargemaster and all her watermen rode her. They all had a turn inside it. We got together and exchanged views. I met somebody from Scotland, who was very much involved in the shooting and birdlife up there, who said he had never been to London before. Then I spoke to the gardener, who was explaining how the earth is very different for planting in Kensington from what it might be in London. It was a wonderful get-together.

One of the two seniors who accompanied them came over to me and said, “Would you mind if we leave early?” I said, “No,”—I realised there had been some news coming out—and he said, “We've really got to get back, because there will be a lot of communication.” But I cannot help thinking how, when all those people went home, they said, “Wonderful!”—they were grateful. I thank them all on our behalf for coming, and what did they go back to? To find that the person that they loved had died. I have to say it was quite extraordinary.

But then, on our own front, we had to decide regarding “Gloriana”, the Queen's row barge: obviously, with what has transpired, there were various things we had to do. For argument's sake, you have to get the flags down, you have to put black satin over it, and this morning, very early, at 6 o'clock, we got the whole thing together to go down the river, accompanied by the police, in order to get her back in readiness for the rest of what will transpire.

I personally have had the honour and the pleasure of running the Silver Jubilee, the Golden Jubilee, most of the Diamond Jubilee and for the most recent one I was a senior adviser, but we took part in many areas as to what was transpiring. I have to say that the reaction was quite extraordinary, and the most important part of all of them were the street parties—how people actually got together. If I think of anything that really

mattered, it was that. Something that might amuse noble Lords was the occasion when Robin Janvrin, the noble Lord, Lord Janvrin, said to me when we were coming up to that major concert in the Palace, which noble Lords might remember—this was in the Golden Jubilee—and he said, “I think you had better come along and have an audience with the Queen, to put her in the picture as to how it is going and where we are doing it. I suggest you come after 9 o'clock, because that is when they are going through the red boxes, et cetera, so if you could be there just before 10, then perhaps we could do it.”

So, I arrived at that time, I came in, bowed—everything was in that form—and I thought we were set to talk about it when the Queen got up and said, “No, no; I want you to come over to the windows.” I looked out of the windows and of course they had JCBs and everything digging up the gardens, taking so much soil out I cannot tell you what was going on in the gardens, and she was so upset, she was saying, “They're ruining the gardens.” I said, “I think they will probably get them back in a reasonable state afterwards,” but it was just a great pleasure and an honour to be in that position. I also had the pleasure at P&O and Cunard when she came many times through her life for naming of some of the great ships.

Perhaps most important, as far as I am concerned, which my noble friend has already referred to, was Motability, which I co-founded with the late Lord Goodman. The Queen became, very early on, the chief patron. I know she has been president of umpteen charities, but for some reason—all noble Lords have spoken about how she was as a person—she really did get heavily involved and extremely interested in anything to do with the disabled and, of course, the veterans. At that time, it was an idea: we had only one car. Forty-five years afterwards, we had 6 million cars out, and there are 700,000-odd on the roads as we speak today, and I am sure that her involvement lifted our standing to those millions of families and their friends and the disabled, of course, to put them on the road to freedom. I have always felt, and we all felt, that this was something that was absolutely special.

Coming on to the last couple of points, one of the pleasures of our King is classical music—which is very much a part of my life—and he loves opera, ballet and all those areas. So I am quite sure that quite a lot of what will be happening will include that in a very major way, which gives me huge personal pleasure.

To finish, I will suggest the best tribute for all of us to give in memory of this wonderful person with this huge sense of duty. The oath we take here is to serve; that is what the Queen did all her life. I think the greatest long-term legacy we can give in her memory is for we parliamentarians to regain the trust of the people of this country. God save the King.

Baroness Chalker of Wallasey (Con): My Lords, I rise to add my very personal thanks to our beloved late Queen Elizabeth II. Her love of this nation, all its people and all its societies, particularly in the voluntary sector—about which noble Lords have spoken already tonight—was profound. No one could ever count what she has contributed to the growth of voluntary

activity in the United Kingdom. We are, in fact, much envied by many countries abroad for that. When the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Southwark spoke about the volunteering that has to go on, I kept thinking of all those little incidents that the Queen monitored, made note of and often referred to in other circumstances in order to encourage more people to be involved in volunteering and in service. So, if there is one thing that I thank her for above all else, it is her encouragement for people to be involved with their communities.

It was a very special privilege for me to spend numerous moments with Her Majesty during my 18 years as a Minister in three successive government departments, and indeed since that time. But it was in the Foreign Office, and then when I took on development matters as well, that I began to see her more frequently, because so many of the things in which I was involved were loves of hers and of the late Duke of Edinburgh. It was not just development; it was also the Commonwealth. Many references have been made to the Commonwealth, but there is the sheer fact that, in addition to the 56 member nations of the Commonwealth today, there is a queue of countries wishing to join the Commonwealth. We should be working hard to develop it, and I am certain that His Majesty King Charles III will want that to be a feature of our government going forward.

Among my many contacts with Her Majesty were two particular incidents on the island of Dominica, which was looked after by Dame Eugenia Charles as Prime Minister. There is probably hardly anybody here who will remember her, but she was a very determined elderly lady. I was to be the Minister in attendance when the Queen went to meet her. Dame Eugenia was absolutely certain that the tea service she had in her cupboard, which, she pointed out to me, only she could clean—I had a slightly raised eyebrow when I looked at it, but never mind—should be used when the Queen came for tea. All went well until the tea came in. Her Majesty was offered a cup of tea, but she decided that she did not want one at that moment. Too many cups of tea on tours are something that Ministers often regret; I am sure Her Majesty regretted it many other times too. I was left to make a diplomatic bridge between the Prime Minister of Dominica, who wanted to use the tea set, and the Queen, who had not given her the tea set. Such is the life in the Foreign Office sometimes.

7 pm

On that very same Caribbean visit, on another island, I nearly fell down a hole outside a church into which we were going. I was following Her Majesty and a piece of plywood had been put down which was not a perfect fit. Needless to say, my ankle caught the edge of it. I did not go down the hole as I was saved by a policeman, as ever, but the thing that hit me really hard was that the first thing that was said to me by Her Majesty, when I got into the church in the row behind her, was, “I have sent for some ice for that ankle”. I did not even know that she knew I had nearly gone down the hole. The kindness and the thoughtfulness came up so many times in my experiences of her.

I always remember being very encouraged by her. On one occasion, when things were not going very well in the then ODA, she said, “What is the main purpose of what you are seeking to do?” Without going into the politics of this in any way, I told her and she said, “Well, why don’t you try—?” She came up with a thoroughly practical suggestion, and if there is one other thing I remember about Her Majesty, it is what a practical lady she was in so many ways. I hope that that practical nature will be continued by His Majesty King Charles III, who I know so well as the Prince of Wales I am not sure how I am going to address him in the future; I think I am going to make mistakes, and I have been forgiven by the Queen so I hope I shall be forgiven by Prince Charles—as he was. You see how easy it is to make the mistake!

King Charles III, we wish you a magnificent reign, we hope you will continue your mother’s best and most tremendous contributions to this country and we, as ordinary citizens, will do our best to make sure: long live King Charles III.

Lord Farmer (Con): My Lords, the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, is getting up and walking out, but I want to pick up on a point that he made in his speech earlier on, which struck a note with me. It was the point about constitutional monarchy, as we have heard from time to time during the speeches today, and how apt this place in particular is to make tributes to Her Majesty. This place, the House of Lords, is where Her Majesty sits on the Throne at the State Opening and calls in the Commons so that they can hear the Queen’s Speech. Here is the place where the constitutional monarchy is on display at its most effective, if you like, at the beginning of every parliamentary year. It struck me very much what the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, said, and it is certainly, for me, an honour and a privilege to be able to stand here and say what a wonderful Queen we have had.

I want to start at the end, in a way, where many other Peers have started, with the photo, this week, leaning forwards and slightly stooped to shake the other Liz’s hand: a little old lady in a cardigan. The new Prime Minister’s dark suit was the epitome of power dressing and her height was accentuated in the foreground of the shot. Yet, despite the optics—and without any disrespect to our Prime Minister—I think, when we looked at the picture, we all knew where the real power lay in that handshake. I actually passed the photograph around our office and said, “Where is the real power?” And it was obvious.

Soft power, which we have heard about today, was a phrase that could have been coined for the Queen—the ability to co-opt rather than coerce. She would say herself that it came primarily not from her constitutional position but from her utter dependence on God, his son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, who so clearly worked through her. Interestingly, I hear that President Biden has today ordered all American flags worldwide to be flown at half-mast until after the funeral. What a display of power—for one British individual to have the American flag flying at half-mast for such a length of time.

[LORD FARMER]

The Queen was a unique expression of God's grace. In the final words of her last Christmas message, she described Jesus as

"a man whose teachings have been handed down from generation to generation, and have been the bedrock of my faith."

Throughout her reign, in her Christmas messages in particular, she referred to him as her rock. In his Letter to the Galatians, St Paul lists the fruit of the Holy Spirit—a list of the essence of the character of God—as love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, gentleness, patience, faithfulness and self-control.

Let us think of those words. We have mentioned love today: love for her family, the people she served and the nation. We have heard anecdotes in every single speech in which she was so thoughtful and caring to those around her. As for joy, we have heard about her sense of humour—its infectiousness, her smile and her zest for life. As for peace, we have heard also of her work, her shaking that hand in Ireland. We have heard about the peaceful overtures we have seen her make publicly in her family difficulties.

Then we have the kindness, goodness and gentleness that pervaded her. I will come back to faithfulness. As for patience and self-control, I often remember sitting in the middle of these Benches at State Opening, when the Table was removed. We were all waiting patiently; the Queen had come in and was sitting on the Throne as Black Rod had gone down to bang on the door. We were all looking at the Queen, as she looked over our heads down the Corridor, and you could hear shambling, laughing and casual chatting slowly ambling up towards us. As I looked at her, I thought "There is patience but also self-control." There was a steeliness in her eyes which I think she was controlling.

With all humility, coming back to faithfulness, I have made a recommendation that she should have the designation "Elizabeth the Faithful". We have had Kings in the past, and there have been many Kings of other countries, who have had an adjective following their name to define them. This would be an epigram of her constancy, faithfulness and outworked sense of duty to God and man since she made those promises when she was so young, to make the uniqueness of her reign stand out in the sweep of history to come for future generations and in future centuries.

Coming back to the present, I mentioned Biden earlier. Apparently Vladimir Putin has acknowledged:

"For many decades Elizabeth II rightfully enjoyed her subjects' love and respect as well as authority on the world stage."

Even those who rule in a contrary spirit recognise and respect the miracle that she was to us. Light has a habit of overcoming darkness. She is a miracle of the modern age.

I should like to finish by talking about prayer. Noble Lords pray here at the start of every day. You could say we pray by rote, but we pray for our monarch—that God will direct and bless them, and give them wisdom, happiness and health. One must not forget all the congregations and church assemblies, in the villages and towns, that pray for the monarch. In all sorts of gatherings there are people praying for the monarch.

I say to all who have been praying over the years that your prayers have been answered. Do believe in the power of prayer; it is heard and it does work. Look at the Queen's life, which I have just described as a miracle. Where can the strength have come from to do what she did?

I finish with the encouragement to carry on praying and to pray that our new King has a long and glorious life of service. As I say without any doubt, God hears and answers these prayers. We all know it would please her for us to say that we will now lift up those prayers for our gracious monarch King Charles III. May he be blessed bountifully in his reign. We will continue to be faithful in doing that.

The Earl of Dundee (Con): My Lords, I pay tribute as Her Majesty's hereditary banner-bearer for Scotland. Along with your Lordships, I send condolences to the Royal Family.

As has been said, the Queen's passing yesterday is already noted everywhere to have caused shock, uncertainty and even fear. Yet the corollary of that is the healing strength of what she achieved.

Whether here in the United Kingdom, in the Commonwealth or elsewhere abroad, there are her priorities for how things should be.

These may perhaps be summarised by her comments in London in 1969, at the 20th anniversary of Europe's human rights institution, of which the United Kingdom remains a key member:

"The Council of Europe provides us with a means to dismantle the barriers to communication, understanding and common effort between the European peoples. For the sake of future generations and for the peace and prosperity of our continent, we should grasp this opportunity with both hands."

The Queen's humour, warm personality, astuteness and concern for others are well known across the world. The noble Baroness, Lady Finlay, referred to her corgis and love of animals—an attribute shared with St Francis. Certainly at all times, her wishes were to encourage the prescriptions of harmony within the famous prayer of St Francis.

I join your Lordships in recognising the enormous benefits that her long reign brought to all of us, both nationally and internationally, with huge thanks; and with appreciation for her remarkable legacy that will endure.

Lord Hope of Craighead (CB): My Lords, much has been rightly made of Her Majesty's deep religious conviction. At the other end of the huge breadth of her character are her corgis and wonderful sense of humour. I draw from my own experience of her commitment to the Church of Scotland and her love of ponies, particularly the highland pony.

When she was at Balmoral, Crathie was her parish church and she worshipped there every Sunday. When she was at Holyrood, in Edinburgh, she worshipped at the parish church of Canongate Kirk. It was not just the routine of worship that inspired her feelings about the Church of Scotland; it was a deep interest in what the Church of Scotland was all about.

7.15 pm

That was brought to my attention when I served for two years, at her request, as the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. My function was to represent Her Majesty at the beginning and end of a week when the Church met to discuss its affairs, and to attend the assembly every day for prayers as the week went on. I had the huge privilege of living in Holyrood Palace, effectively with the status of one below the Queen. I was known as “Your Grace” and, as soon as I went outside the door, the full national anthem was played—and no doubt there were some archers there as well.

It was a very demanding week, but even more demanding was the request, two or three weeks later, to report to Her Majesty in an audience of half an hour what the Church had been discussing in its General Assembly. It was a formidable undertaking, but it was suggested to me that the atmosphere would be lightened a bit if I could offer Her Majesty a present. But this raised the question: what present can you possibly give a Queen that she has never received before? Among the many charities she supported is the Highland Pony Society, of which she was patron. We have seen on many occasions her love of ponies as well as horses—particularly the Highland pony, which she bred at Balmoral with great success. My wife, who has ponies, suggested that we might make a cushion on which we would embroider the portrait of a pony—and that is what we did.

The next question is: how do you present the Queen with a cushion? I asked one of the people masterminding the audience how to do this. I asked him, “Will you hand the cushion to Her Majesty for me?” He said, “No, not at all, you must take it in yourself”. So I walked into the audience clutching a cushion under my arm, took the three steps forward, bowed and—I am afraid to say—blurted out, “Your Majesty, I have a present for you”. It was remarkable to see a lovely smile spread across her face, particularly when she saw what was on the cushion. “Ah, I must take this to Balmoral”, she said. So I felt that I had scored some success there.

However, the second year, I had to do the same again—give her a full report on what the Church had been doing—and we wondered what we should present this time. My wife said, “Well, last time it was a cushion with the pony facing one way, and it is always known that horses become very uneasy if they are on their own. Why don’t we give her a cushion with a horse facing the other way?” So that is what we did. For the second time, I went into the audience, stepped forward three times, bowed with the cushion and handed it forward. Again, a wonderful smile spread across her face. I suspect that we spent rather more time talking about ponies than we did about the Church of Scotland—but that is another matter. This time, she thanked me for it. Later on, it was reported to me that, at the end of the day’s business, she went into lunch clutching the cushion and said to everybody around the luncheon table, “Look what I’ve got”. It was typical of her that she entered into the fun of it. From the very beginning of the presentation of the cushion, there was this huge sense of fun and enjoyment that we had this little private engagement together about ponies and cushions.

I look back with enormous gratitude to these flashes of her sense of humour and her generous nature—which not many people are given at all, although some of us in this House have encountered it many times. I owe a particular thanks to her for appointing me to that office and for the way in which she received me when it was my turn to report on my duties. Of course we mourn her loss deeply, and we wish His Majesty King Charles III every success in the demanding life that he will now lead. I conclude my speech with the same words that have been mentioned earlier, His Majesty’s own words: “Simply, thank you”.

Lord Gadhia (Non-Aff): My Lords, as we gather on this sombre and sad occasion, a huge void is felt not only by the Royal Family and our whole nation but by the entire world. It is difficult to think of a public figure who has ever had such a global impact. We often speak about the United Kingdom’s soft power and of global Britain, but so much of this was embodied in, and personified by, Her late Majesty the Queen.

The worldwide outpouring of affection is reflective of a lifetime devoted to service and duty, a theme we have heard again and again, and deservedly so. Her Majesty was a constant and unifying figure, rising above the political fray and forces of division, providing a source of stability over seven decades of incredible change. As someone who arrived in this country 50 years ago in traumatic circumstances, during the expulsion of the Asian community from Uganda, I have not experienced anything other than the second Elizabethan age. For all the change and challenges during her long reign, it has also been a remarkable period of progress and human advancement, a period of improving community cohesion and greater diversity, as barriers to those from any and all backgrounds have come down.

What could be more emblematic of the social mobility of the second Elizabethan age than for someone of Indian origin, displaced from Uganda, to have the opportunity in a single generation to be appointed to this House, taking an oath of allegiance to Her late Majesty? That moment, six years ago this month, was the greatest honour of my life, even more so being a child of the Commonwealth, which occupied such a special status for the Queen. Indeed, as a child of the Commonwealth, I feel like a child of Her late Majesty.

The last occasion on which I was honoured to meet the Queen was during a reception that she graciously hosted at Buckingham Palace to mark the UK-India year of culture. On that occasion, she kindly placed an item on display from her own personal possessions: a wedding gift from Mahatma Gandhi. It was a piece of cloth, woven from yarn spun by Gandhi himself, including the words “Jai Hind”.

It was palpable how connected she felt to India and the wider subcontinent, which makes up almost 75% of the 2.5 billion people across the Commonwealth. These sentiments are mirrored in reverse, exemplified by the day of state mourning that has been declared by the Government of India for this coming Sunday, and the three days of mourning declared by Bangladesh. The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has lauded

[LORD GADHIA]

the Queen for her dignity and decency in public life, and the Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has described her as a true guardian.

As chair of the British Asian Trust, founded by His Majesty King Charles III some 15 years ago, I know that our new monarch shares the same priorities as his mother for the Commonwealth, and maintains a deep and abiding connectivity with all the countries of south Asia, also including Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Yes, King Charles has enormous shoes to fill, but he also possesses the strength of character and sense of purpose to pick up the baton from his mother, as our constitutional monarchy requires, and to continue the same dedication to public service and duty without missing a beat. Tonight's broadcast from His Majesty confirms this commitment and determination. In that mission, and in their grief, we offer our new King, the Queen Consort, and the Royal Family our full and loyal support.

Baroness Stroud (Con): My Lords, I did not have the privilege of knowing Her Majesty personally so I have no stories of cushions or tea sets, but the most precious possession I have is the letter of summons to this House, which reads:

"I give you a seat, a place and a voice"

in the Parliaments of this land. Therefore, it is a real privilege to be able to give my tribute to Her Majesty too.

When the Queen was 21 years old, as I am sure many have said today in this House, she delivered a speech that bore the mark of her maturity—that maturity which guided her life. Her words speak louder than anything we can say:

"If we all go forward together with an unwavering faith, a high courage, and a quiet heart, we shall be able to make of this ancient commonwealth, which we all love so dearly, an even grander thing—more free, more prosperous, more happy and a more powerful influence for good in the world—than it has been in the greatest days of our forefathers. To accomplish that we must give nothing less than the whole of ourselves. There is a motto which has been borne by many of my ancestors—a noble motto, 'I serve'."

And she declared

"before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service."

Today, we think of that unwavering faith, that high courage, that quiet heart, and that beauty which today shines from the ashes. We all feel the baton being passed to the next generation. As it passes, my prayer is that her legacy will be that we walk with that same courage, that same humility, integrity and grace.

The Queen has been a gift to our nation, binding us together. The second Elizabethan era has been a time when culture and society have changed beyond recognition. In the shaking and polarisation, she has been a constant that has unified us. She has shown leadership through service. A role model, she has shown the same ethos that guides the lives of heroes across society: duty, service and responsibility. They may feel outmoded, but these virtues are the root of our prosperity.

It is no small thing to have a Head of State who sees their role as being one who serves. Institutional trust, so fundamental to the flourishing of society, relies on leaders of character being held in high honour by the people. Her unique constitutional position could have been a burden, but she walked with unflappable grace and courage for the common good. From the Cold War through to Covid, she led with courage in crisis after crisis. She consistently lifted our vision higher; with public discourse so often concerned with the next crisis or scandal, she sought to stand above the fray.

As the flame passes on to us, we must remember the core foundational principles that made her such a remarkable woman. She believed that the British nation could be a light among the nations and contribute positively in the world. She consciously and publicly modelled her life on the example of Jesus and saw the future through the lens of hope. May the words she delivered as we began the first Easter of the pandemic—words which reflected her core, driving convictions—carry us in the next season:

"As dark as death can be—particularly for those suffering with grief—light and life are greater."

Today is a day to remember and celebrate the legacy of a woman who has given us so much. Seventy-three years after the speech given at 21 years old, Elizabeth II readied herself for another landmark moment. It was the outset of the pandemic and she set out a vision for how we should approach the coming season of crisis and change. While lockdown may be over, her words still ring true today:

"I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge. And those who come after us will say that the Britons of this generation were as strong as any. That the attributes of self-discipline, of quiet good-humoured resolve and of fellow-feeling still characterise this country. The pride in who we are is not a part of our past, it defines our present and our future."

May that be so.

7.30 pm

Lord Thurlow (CB): My Lords, I have listened to many of the speeches today—an extraordinary day. They have been speeches expressing sadness and grief, mixed with wonderful, moving, heartfelt tributes, memories and a great outpouring of love and respect. I cannot add any more to the tributes; the vocabulary is exhausted, the superlatives are exhausted.

I feel that I am in something of a minority for, like the noble Baroness, Lady Stroud, I never met Her Majesty, but she entered my consciousness indelibly when I was 10 or 11. I lived in New Zealand, and there was to be a state visit. There was great excitement at school, at home and in the media—that is to say, children's television. Although I never met Her Majesty, I stood very close to her on one of her visits, and I regret to report great disappointment: she was not wearing a crown. I had assumed that Her Majesty always wore a crown. We lived in New Zealand because my father was the high commissioner. The diplomatic life led me to grow up in many countries: Ghana, Canada, Nigeria and the Bahamas, as well as New Zealand. Everywhere had portraits of the Queen—usually, of course, wearing her crown. We prayed for Her Majesty and the Royal Family every Sunday in every

country we lived in. She was a constant presence. I mention this because, in these countries, the love, affection and respect were everywhere. It was truly impressive, and it was a privilege to experience it first-hand.

I may be in the minority of not having met Her Majesty but I think I am probably one of the very few who has heard the national anthem “God Save the King” sung with vigour. For, 16 or 17 years after the Queen’s Coronation, I attended a visit to a small island in the Bahamas with my father, who was the governor. They had not had an official visit for decades. We climbed out of a small boat and the officers of the town lined up to shake hands. Then the band played and the school choir sang “God Save the King”. The news had not caught up with this little township.

Her Majesty’s legacy is one we can share. She was the world’s greatest role model; she defined the concept of service for us all with endeavour, commitment and, of course, as oft said today, humility. We must strive to behave in the same way. We remember our Queen, a wonderful person and a monarch who will, I am sure, enter history as a truly great individual, admired the world over. God bless the King.

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): My Lords, I sense that all noble Lords who wanted to give tributes have done so. I remind noble Lords that the House will sit again at 1 pm tomorrow for the continuation of tributes for those who want to come in to give them.

House adjourned at 7.34 pm.

