

### **Headteacher's Address**

On Thursday September 8<sup>th</sup>, the 70 year reign of Queen Elizabeth II came to an end. The longest reigning monarch in British history, for 7 decades, we have been accustomed to the certainty and security of Queen Elizabeth in our lives.

Her Majesty became Queen on the death of her father King George 6<sup>th</sup>, on Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 1952. Her reign, celebrated so joyously only a few months ago across the Commonwealth in the Platinum Jubilee, has seen incredible global change and progress.

Technology, communications, transportation, international relations, human rights and medicine to name but a few issues – all are unrecognisable today from when she was coronated as monarch. My mother was only 2 years old when she took the official title of Queen – it is all the vast majority of the population she reigned over has ever known. She is, simply put, integral to 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century history.

Throughout these times of global transformation, she has been there during good times and bad, times of personal and national joy and sadness, and always remained steadfast in her role and in her duty to the Commonwealth. However, even before the time came, all too suddenly, to assume the role of monarch, her commitment as Elizabeth Windsor was evident – the vow she made as a teenager to dedicate herself to ‘furthering the happiness and prosperity’ of her people, and her serving in the Armed Forces during the Second World War, where she became a mechanic, repairing trucks and lorries for the army until after VJ day.

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As Queen she would see 15 Prime Ministers come, starting with Winston Churchill, who himself had begun his military career in the service of Queen Victoria. Two days before she died, she confirmed in office the current Prime Minister, Liz Truss. To the end then, she knew her duty and did it faithfully.

Her Majesty the Queen held a special place in the hearts of the people of the Channel Islands. For us she was not simply our Queen, but also our Duke. *La Reine, notre Duc*. It is perhaps something you don't realise, but what visitors to the Channel Islands from the UK often comment on is how happy she looks in her portrait on our currency notes. I think this shows how important the Channel Islands are to the Crown. At Liberation, Churchill announced in the House of Commons, that 'our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today', to great joy. We are a small part of the world, but a beloved one.

Since the news reached us of the death of Her Majesty, I am sure you have been, as I have, reflecting on what she meant to you. My wife and I were talking about the Queen whilst watching the Royal Family visit tributes at Buckingham Palace. I remember vividly watching as a 16 year old, Princes William and Harry do the same outside Kensington Palace after the untimely death of their mother, Princess Diana, in 1997. The messages on display for the Queen, as they were for the Princess, were beyond counting and were very moving. My wife said that isn't it a shame that the Queen isn't here to see this, feel the affection and love that the nation and the Commonwealth had for her. It made me think that we should show more love and kindness to those close to us whilst we can. To tell someone how special they are is a gift we all possess. However, this gift is sensitive to time. All too soon, the opportunity is gone. The Royal Family are in the

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midst of a period of process and transition, the face of it dictated by protocol and tradition. However, behind this we must remember that they have lost a mother, a grandmother, a great grandmother, a companion, someone to seek advice from, someone to rely on. Their feelings of sadness and loss are no different to anyone else's who faces a bereavement. I hope we can sympathise and empathise with them at this time.

What was notable from the moment the Queen's passing was announced, was the collective national and international sorrow and loss. The sense of solidarity across the United Kingdom and Commonwealth in both celebrating the life of a respected and loved individual, and mourning her loss, has shown a sense of togetherness that overrides economic, social, ethnic and national boundaries. Togetherness.

King Charles, when he addressed the Nation on Friday, spoke of his mother having a 'life well lived'. What a wonderful thing to be able to say. We can all aspire to live our lives well and fully. We have, after all, only one shot at it. We can learn much from the Queen's values and actions, to help our own lives to be the best they can be:

We can learn that kindness, forgiveness and reconciliation will always, always overcome hate.

We can learn that although our duty may not always be easy or enjoyable, it can be done with grace, good nature and positivity.

We can learn that trust is built and earned over time, through actions of honesty and reliability.

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We can learn that it is important to be reflective of our own faults whilst simultaneously looking for the best in others

We can learn to be true to ourselves, which takes courage and determination, especially when the chips are down.

Finally, we can learn to laugh and be joyous, seeing the benefits of a sense of humour.

One of the most celebrated stories of the Queen's quick wit involves her once walking in the Highlands near her Balmoral estate, when two American tourists came along the path. They fell into conversation, unaware of who she was. When they learned she lived nearby, they asked if she had ever met the Queen. Quick as a flash she replied, 'No, but this fellow has,' pointing to her Protection Officer. The American couple asked for a photo with the officer, and then slightly puzzled, allowed him to take a photo of them with this nice old lady they had met. After they walked on, the Queen said, 'I wish I could be there when they show their friends those photos.'

We have been blessed to have been visited by Her Majesty three times. We remember her with affection and gratitude, and we look forward to the reign of our newly proclaimed King, Charles III.

*La Reine, Notre Duc*

Please stand, to sing the National Anthem.

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