

A large, ornate wooden throne with a high, curved backrest and a seat. The throne is supported by a base with four lion carvings. The background is a wall of Gothic-style wood paneling with arched niches.

INAUGURATING A NEW REIGN: PLANNING FOR ACCESSION AND CORONATION

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May 2018



ISBN: 978-1-903903-82-7

Published by:

The Constitution Unit
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29-31 Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9QU
United Kingdom

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First published May 2018

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CONTENTS

Preface.....	v
Executive summary.....	vi
1.1-1.25 Conceptual changes since 1952.....	1
1.1-1.5 Social.....	1
1.6-1.8 Religion.....	1
1.9-1.10 Political.....	2
1.11-1.14 Geopolitics and security.....	2
1.15-1.23 Constitutional.....	3
1.24-1.25 Machinery of government.....	5
2.1-2.22 Accession.....	6
2.1 Demise.....	6
2.2-2.4 Accession Council.....	6
2.5-2.6 Inaugural Privy Council.....	7
2.7 Personal declaration.....	7
2.8-2.10 ‘Scottish’ oath under the Act of Union 1706/7.....	8
2.11 Events following accession in 1952.....	8
2.12-2.20 Issues for future Accession Ceremonies.....	9
2.12-2.14 Regnal titles of the King and his wife.....	9
2.15-2.20 Running the next Accession Council.....	10
2.21-2.22 Lying in state at Westminster Hall.....	11
3.1-3.46 The Coronation.....	13
3.1 Introduction.....	13
3.2-3.10 Past Coronations.....	13
3.11-3.24 The Coronation of 1953.....	16
3.25-3.29 The Coronation Rite.....	19
3.30-3.36 The spectators.....	20
3.30-3.34 At the Abbey.....	20
3.35 Outside the Abbey.....	22
3.36 The ‘from’ procession.....	22

3.37 Naval Review.....	23
3.38-3.42 Costs of Coronation.....	23
3.43-3.46 Contemporary and retrospective reactions to the 1953 Coronation.....	24
4.1-4.24 The Next Coronation.....	27
4.1-4.3 Introduction.....	27
4.4-4.13 Religious voices.....	27
4.14-4.16 Secular voices.....	30
4.17-4.24 Adding a civil ceremony in Westminster Hall.....	31
5 Conclusions.....	34
Annexes	
A: Text of the 1952 proclamation.....	35
B: Text of the relevant statutes and the oaths they prescribe.....	36
C: Royal Titles Act 1953 and proclamation.....	41

Preface

In 2016 the Constitution Unit started a project looking at the oaths required of a new sovereign following accession. As part of the background research Bob Morris has been reading the government papers in the National Archives about previous accessions, in particular the accession of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 and her coronation in 1953, as well as the memoirs of some of the participants. They contained a treasure trove of fascinating material, which it seemed a shame not to publish. So alongside our report on the Accession and Coronation oaths – *Swearing in the new King: Accession Declarations and Oaths* - we have decided to publish this second report about the organisational arrangements.

Chapter 1 starts by recording changes of context that have occurred in the UK since the last accession in 1952. Chapter 2 then examines what is involved in the accession ceremonies which follow soon after demise, and how they have been adapted over the years. The next chapter moves on to consider the coronation, with a detailed account of how that has changed over the last two centuries. We have included a lot of practical detail, partly out of historical interest (and colour), partly in the hope that it might assist those planning the next coronation. It demonstrates that for all sorts of reasons, the next coronation cannot be like that in 1953.

The report concludes with a chapter identifying some of the main issues which will require reconsideration. Ultimately these will fall to the government of the day to decide. But since no one knows when demise will happen, some contingency planning is required, not least for the Accession Council and first meeting of the Privy Council, which take place within 24 hours of demise. Though it is possible that the next coronation will take place more quickly than the last, there will still be longer to plan the coronation, but it will not be easy, because so many competing interests will be involved. If the coronation defines, as Ben Pimlott stated, not just royalty but British identity, how is that identity best represented in all its 21st century diversity?

There will be lots of competing ideas, and no shortage of critics ready to snipe at the new monarch and his government if they seem at odds or if anything goes wrong. So the more things can be thought about in advance, the better: it is in that spirit that we offer these reflections on the accession and coronation, and what might need to change.

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May 2018

Executive summary

The UK is a much more diverse, pluralist and secular society compared with 1952. Half the population have no religious affiliation. Only 6 per cent attend religious services, with only 1-2 per cent being attending Anglicans. 11 per cent are from ethnic minorities.

In 1952 the UK was the head of a global empire. The armed forces numbered over 850,000; now they are less than 150,000. The UK is no longer a major international power; but it still has an international monarchy, with the Queen being head of state of 15 other countries. Accession ceremonies must include the 52 other countries in the Commonwealth, as well as the 15 realms.

The UK is more clearly a union state, with devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their governments must also be involved in the accession ceremonies. The Scottish independence referendum and now Brexit add to pressures on the monarchy to be a symbol of national unity.

Accession

Within 24 hours of demise, Parliament is recalled for parliamentarians to take new oaths of allegiance. An Accession Council is summoned to St James's Palace to proclaim the new sovereign. This is followed by the first Privy Council, at which the new King makes an inaugural declaration, swears the Scottish oath, and directs the timings for the lying in state and funeral of the Queen.

In the past this happened in private. In future it could be televised: it is the new sovereign's first official appearance, and the personal declaration is amongst his first public utterances as King.

Current planning envisages that, during his predecessor's lying in state, the new sovereign will visit the capitals of the devolved assemblies to attend memorial services and meet local people.

The Coronation

The coronation service goes back over 1000 years. The UK is the only monarchy in Europe to retain a religious – and eucharistic - coronation. It signifies the conferment of God's grace on the monarch, who is anointed with holy oil, invested with symbols of authority, receives homage and takes communion.

The 1953 coronation was planned by two committees of the Privy Council: the Coronation Committee chaired by the Duke of Edinburgh, and Coronation Executive Committee chaired by the Earl Marshal. The big decision they made – eventually - was to televise the service, except for the anointing.

The Earl Marshal took control of Westminster Abbey for ten months, to prepare and erect stands for 8,250 guests. The Cabinet determined the guest list: to accommodate larger numbers from the Commonwealth, and groups like trade unions, the whole peerage was no longer invited though peers and their wives still constituted the largest group.

Stands were erected outside for 96,000 paying spectators. The grand procession from the Abbey was nearly 3 miles long, and processed for over 5 miles. More than 40,000 troops took part, with 24 military bands. The subsequent naval review at Spithead involved 190 ships.

The UK no longer has the capacity to mount anything like this spectacle. The next coronation will inevitably be smaller. Archaic elements such as the Court of Claims could be dropped.

Most religious writing assumes that the coronation will continue to be an Anglican service; centred round the Eucharist, but finding a place for other Christian denominations and religions; and that it may not include the former ceremony of peers' homage. Other representatives could instead be chosen to pay a modernised form of homage possibly in Westminster Hall.

Alternatively, more creative thinking could see the ancient medieval homage still recognised at the service but in addition transformed into a separate, secular occasion when the new sovereign met representatives of civil society. A secular ceremony could celebrate the nation's diversity in ways that an Anglican service cannot. But there would be questions of timing (before or after the coronation), attendance and procedure to resolve. The event would need to avoid seeming second best compared with the splendour of the coronation, whilst at the same time as not overshadowing it.

Chapter I: Contextual changes since 1952

Social

1.1 The ceremonies of accession and coronation help to define not just the monarchy, but the nation whom the monarch is there to represent. The first chapter of this report seeks to summarise some of the essential features of 21st century Britain, and how much those have changed since the last accession in 1952.

1.2 The UK population is both much larger and more diverse than in 1952. A population of nearly 51 million has risen by about 30 per cent to 65 million in 2016 and now includes an ethnic minority population of over 11 per cent according to the 2011 census. Life expectancy at birth in 1952 was 78 years for males and 83 years for females. In 2012 the comparative figures were 91 and 94 years. Levels of formal educational attainment have risen markedly: in 1952 fewer than 5 per cent of age cohorts attended university; in 2016 the proportion was nearly fifty per cent.

1.3 In 1952 the UK was a very different place. It was still recovering from World War II 1939-45. Bomb sites continued to lurk in major cities. Food rationing had been reduced but not yet abolished. The need to carry wartime identity cards was not repealed until 1952. The British Nationality Act 1948 continued the ability of all Commonwealth (including colonial) citizens to travel and settle in the UK free from immigration control. There was still capital punishment for murder and some other very serious offences, and male homosexual behaviour remained criminalised. All plays for public performance had to be submitted for censorship by the Lord Chamberlain, an official of the Royal Household.

1.4 Military conscription was retained in peacetime (until 1963) in a global deployment of armed forces of 863,000 men in 1952 in bases in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Mediterranean, Egypt, Cyrenaica, the Persian Gulf, Aden, Hong Kong, the West Indies and Malaya. Total UK regular armed forces in October 2017, following the latest round of cuts, were less than one fifth of the size at 147,500. The regular army (82,040 October 2017) is now smaller than the police service in England and Wales (126,000 March 2017), let alone the UK (150,000 March 2017).

1.5 Active warfare from 1950 in Korea involving UK troops continued until the armistice of July 1953. Anti-insurgency operations lasted in Malaya during 1948-60, and the Mau Mau rising in Kenya was beginning to develop from 1952. In sum, the UK in 1952 was a dowdy, still heavily militarised and war-disciplined society where mining, textiles and heavy industry dominated the economy. The consumer and the permissive societies were still some way off.

Religion

1.6 Granted the UK monarchy's constitutional association with religion, an important dimension of social change is the degree of secularisation that has continued since 1952. The 2011 census showed that 59 per cent described themselves as Christian, a decrease from 72 per cent in 2001. Muslims at 5 per cent constituted the largest part of the 9 per cent belonging to other religions. Those saying they had no religion amounted to 25 per cent in 2011 as opposed to

15 per cent in 2001. Surveys indicate that about 6 per cent of the population actually attend religious services – 1-2 per cent in the case of Anglicans - and that 49 per cent of respondents have no religious affiliation.

1.7 Other statistics underline the decline in support for the Church of England. Baptisms have gone down by over 80 per cent, and confirmations by over 90 per cent, with a decline in live birth baptisms from 672,000 in 1950 to 130,000 in 2014, and in confirmations from 142,000 to 18,000 in 2014. The number of marriages celebrated by the Church has declined from 109,000 in 1990 to 43,000 in 2016. Though not impoverished, the Church struggles to maintain the full parochial ministry it once possessed: in rural areas one vicar can serve half a dozen parishes.

1.8 In 1956 34 per cent of those surveyed thought that the Queen was ‘especially chosen by God’, the number declining to 30 per cent when the survey was repeated in 1960. It is unlikely that a similar number would do so now.¹ A 1992 survey, for example, found no spontaneous respondent awareness of the monarchy’s religious dimension.²

Political

1.9 In 1952 the UK remained at the head of a global colonial empire and sported the necessary large armed forces accordingly. Whereas India had by then become an independent republic, it remained in the association of the British Commonwealth independent countries. These included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon, all of which were monarchies with the UK sovereign as head of state. In 2018, principally as a result of decolonisation, the Commonwealth has grown to 53 members, fifteen of which are ‘realms’ where the sovereign of the UK is their head of state. Unlike other surviving European monarchies, the UK monarchy is therefore still an international monarchy.

1.10 Although the UK continues to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council and is the fifth largest world economy, its relative global position has changed in a world where there were only 50 independent states in 1945 to one where now there are over 190. In addition to belonging to the permanent defence alliance of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the UK has formed other associations requiring some pooling of sovereignty, most notably from 1973 in what is now the European Union (EU) and also accepting from 1966 the full jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.³

Geopolitics and security

1.11 Britain is said to punch above its weight, a boast which reflects – and admits - that its global reach has declined. Because the sovereign is also head of state in fifteen Commonwealth countries, Britain may still have an international monarchy but it is no longer a truly international power. In 1952 the main threat to the nation was thermo-nuclear war with the Warsaw pact. Whilst the collapse of the Soviet Union from 1989 appeared to remove that threat, others have emerged to replace it. Nowadays the UK is compelled to manoeuvre in a more fractious world

¹ Harris L. M. (1966) *Long to Reign Over Us?* (London, Kimber). The exercise also found that ‘The idea of religious leadership... although inherent in certain comments, was rarely raised directly and spontaneously.’ p. 29.

² Billig M. (1992) *Talking of the Royal Family* (London, Routledge). A forty-year old survey made the same point about attitudes as a whole: ‘The most important general finding in the monarchy survey is the shallowness of the British response to their Queen’. See Rose R. and Kavanagh D. (1976) ‘The Monarchy in Contemporary Political Culture’, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 548-576 at p. 566.

³ At the time of writing, it seems that the UK may exit from the EU though on what terms is unknown.

where post-imperial genies have emerged from old imperial bottles in the shapes of ethnic nationalism and state-sponsored and non-state terrorism not necessarily tied and limited to territories outside the UK. The suicide vest has appeared in the capital and Irish terrorism is not entirely defunct.

1.12 In 1952 there seem to have been no such concerns. Whilst the Metropolitan police undertook a meticulous survey of the coronation routes, the object was to identify possible hazards to public safety. The sole mention in available contemporary official papers of public security concerned members of the St John's Ambulance Brigade who had volunteered to join that Brigade's lining of the route. Noting that some volunteers came from the Irish Republic, their names were conscientiously forwarded to the Metropolitan Police Special Branch (then responsible for Irish terrorism) for vetting.

1.13 There was more concern about the shortage of officers at a time when the force strength of 16,300 was well below its establishment of 20,000. Numbers were made up from 5,000 provincial and City officers, 2,000 special constables and 1,000 military – mostly Royal Military Police. In the end there was a total of nearly 21,000 police involved operating in three 12 hour shifts and being fed at 22 feeding stations where catering was assisted by 400 from the Women's Voluntary Service and 146 scouts.⁴

1.14 Modern state national celebrations require a level of precautionary response light years away from the insouciance of 1952. At least there are likely to be more police officers to call upon.

Constitutional

1.15 In 1952 the UK was a union state where the sole devolved, autonomous government and legislature was in Northern Ireland. Scotland had since the Parliamentary union with England in 1706/7 retained its separate legal and educational systems and its separate church, but was not autonomous. Its secretary of state was a member of the UK cabinet. Wales remained in the condition given it by Henry VIII in 1536: that is, it was joined with England. It did not acquire its own secretary of state until 1964.

1.16 Today there is devolution all round, if in different forms. Since the 1990s, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each now has a parliamentary assembly and first minister. A referendum in 2014 on whether Scotland should become an independent state failed but a Scottish National Party government now in power in Edinburgh continues to press the case and may insist on another independence referendum if the UK government does leave the EU. For this and other reasons devolution has made the union feel less stable and the monarchy to be seen more prominently as one of the institutions which operates across the whole of the UK. At the time of writing, the impending departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union (EU) has raised radical questions not only about future relations with the EU but also the future direction of the UK's own union.

1.17 There have been important changes to the peerage and the composition of the House of Lords. In 1958, peerages for life, hitherto limited to the most senior members of the judiciary, were introduced for both sexes so that women were enabled to enter the House for the first

⁴ MEPO 2/9243 Metropolitan police post Coronation Review report, August 1953.

time. Women who were peeresses in their own right and all Scottish peers (as opposed to a capped number since 1706/7) were allowed to sit under the 1963 Peerage Act.

1.18 The most important change to the Lords was the abolition in 1999 of the right of hereditary peers to sit except for 90 elected by them plus two hereditary officers of state, the Earl Marshal and the Lord Great Chamberlain. This meant the political marginalisation of the hereditary peerage and contributed to a situation where the Conservative party could no longer rely on a permanent Conservative majority in the House. The still unfettered ability of Prime Ministers to recommend the creation of peers has led to a House of over 800 members and no party enjoying an overall majority. Various attempts subsequently to achieve further reform of the House have failed.

1.19 Some of these changes have had implied effects for the monarchy. For example, the political marginalisation of the peerage could be said logically to challenge the hereditary principle of monarchy itself. In practice that has not happened: democratisation seems to have led to the perception of the peerage being anomalous without collateral damage to the monarchy, which is perceived as being above the political fray and retaining useful constitutional functions. Similarly, devolution and its potential for fragmentation has underlined the monarchy's identification with the concept of the whole of the political union of the four nations.⁵

1.20 On the other hand, there have been three constitutional changes directly affecting the monarchy itself, the first two of which have diluted its remaining constitutional powers. These are its roles in selecting the prime minister and in whether to accede to requests for the dissolution of Parliament and consequent holding of fresh general elections. The first discretionary power evaporated in the mid-1960s when it became the settled practice of all political parties to select their own leaders and leave no doubt about who should become prime minister whichever party won an election. Where there was no overall winner, the Cabinet Manual of 2010 set out the rules for government formation where the responsibility for reaching agreement was a matter for the parties, the outcome to be communicated to the sovereign who was not otherwise to become involved in the process. Finally, the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011 established statutory rules for dissolution and the calling of general elections which abolished the prerogative power of dissolution and no longer require the involvement of the sovereign.

1.21 These diminutions of monarchical power have not led to a loss of the sovereign's popularity: if anything they have reinforced it by emphasising that the sovereign is clearly non-party political as the result of rules, now set out explicitly in a Cabinet Manual, which explains the sovereign's role and codifies the key constitutional conventions involving the sovereign. Nonetheless, it is also the case that the monarchy does remain the ultimate longstop in the sense of retaining authority to intervene should existing arrangements break down. This feature almost certainly has low salience in popular appreciation of the position. It does not, therefore, disturb

⁵ Put in another way, the absence of political involvement can be seen one of the prerequisites of royal survival. Mulling over the results of Mass Observation surveys in 1956 and 1960, Leonard Harris concluded '...nothing is more certain than that if the monarchy is to survive...it must remain, and be seen to remain, politically inoffensive'. Harris, p. 102.

the conclusion that ‘the less politically significant a monarch, the better his chances of survival; the more politically active a monarch, the less chance that his throne will survive.’⁶

1.22 The third constitutional change affecting the monarchy was the Succession to the Crown Act 2013. The main purpose of the Act was to introduce gender equality into the rules of succession: in future the eldest child will succeed, whether boy or girl. But the Act also removed the prohibition on the succession of heirs married to Roman Catholics.⁷ The Act did not, however, remove the requirements that heirs should not themselves be Roman Catholics and that they have to be ‘in communion with’ the Church of England. In an age which is by instinct more ecumenical than in the past as well as less religious, the changes stopped short of removing a religious test for the head of state. Indeed, as discussed further in the companion paper on the oaths, it is the religious character of the oaths required of the sovereign following accession that are likely to provoke review.

1.23 In these respects, it is relevant to bear in mind the situation in the rest of Europe. While the Scandinavian countries expect monarchs to belong to the local Lutheran faith, such churches are no longer exclusively ‘established’ in Norway and Sweden. Even in countries like Belgium, Holland and Spain where there are large Roman Catholic populations, there are no religious tests for their monarchs. No European republic has a religious test for its head of state.

Machinery of government

1.24 Finally, there have been significant changes to the machinery of government which bear on the capacity of government to conduct large national ceremonies. Favourable is the consolidation in the 1960s of the service departments into a single Ministry of Defence. Less favourable is the abolition of any central works/estate management function following the final dismemberment of the Property Services Agency in the 1990s. The largest government estates function would seem now to be Defence Estates. Although substantial, it has no reservoir of, for example, coronation expertise.

1.25 Changes in ministerial functions have also changed the distribution of former ceremonial responsibilities. While the title of Lord Chancellor survives, the holder is now located in a Ministry of Justice. Successive changes have increased the ambit of that minister’s responsibilities but, paradoxically, reduced the office’s authority and prestige: the new Lord Chancellor need no longer be a lawyer, is no longer head of the judiciary, and no longer presides in the House of Lords. Further changes have seen constitutional responsibilities that in 1952 fell to the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor’s Department flow to the Cabinet Office, in 1952 a limited secretariat and now an important department in its own right.

⁶ Rose R. and Kavanagh D. (1976) ‘The Monarchy in Contemporary Political Culture’, *Comparative Politics*, 548-576 at p. 567.

⁷ The Act also featured some other changes – such as the range of monarchical consent required for their marriage – of lesser constitutional importance.

Chapter 2: Accession

Demise of the crown

2.1 'Demise' is the term used to cover the actions required following the death of a sovereign and the installation of the successor. In the past, the operations have been ultimately controlled by the Cabinet which decides on the overall level and scale of activity; since the late 1920s this has been guided by the Cabinet Office, a central government secretariat created only during World War I. A programme of events beginning with the Accession Council proclaiming the new sovereign has traditionally stretched up to the coronation and beyond, culminating in post-coronation royal tours to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and drives through the four quadrants of London. The following describes past practice and considers possible changes.⁸

Accession Council⁹

2.2 Under the common law, there is no hiatus between one sovereign and another: the heir as defined by legislation immediately succeeds on the former sovereign's death. As soon as reasonably possible within twenty-four hours of the death, an Accession Council is summoned to proclaim the new sovereign. Parliament also meets, if necessary following recall and on Sundays, within twenty-four hours. But this starts after the Accession Council whose proceedings take place at St James's Palace under the direction of the Lord President of the Council, a senior Cabinet minister usually acting also as Leader of the House of Commons.¹⁰

2.3 The proceedings fall into two distinct parts. The first is the summoning in recent times to the Accession Council in the ballroom of St James's Palace of all reasonably available Privy Councillors who by custom include members of the royal family who are Privy Councillors, Cabinet members and those other ministers and senior Opposition spokesmen also Privy Councillors, the Archbishop of Canterbury, senior members of the judiciary and the Royal Household, High Commissioners of the Realms (that is, the fifteen independent Commonwealth countries who also have the UK sovereign as their monarch), other diplomats and 'gentlemen of quality'. Traditionally the Lord Mayor of the City of London, the Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs and the High Officers of the City are also invited. Simultaneously, new sovereigns are asked to specify the regnal name by which they wish to be known and a draft of the Declaration traditionally made at the new sovereign's first Privy Council meeting is sent to the new sovereign. The regnal name is inserted in the text of the proclamation and those present sign the proclamation whose content has remained little changed over the centuries. For the text of the 1952 Proclamation, see Annex A.

⁸ On 17 March 2017 the *Guardian* published an account of the then state of preparatory planning as one of its 'Long Reads' - <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/16/what-happens-when-queen-elizabeth-dies-london-bridge>, accessed 20 March 2018. It is assumed here that this account is substantially correct of the current state of planning.

⁹ A description of the immediate procedure following demise may be found on the Privy Council Office website at <https://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/privy-council/the-accession-council/>, accessed 13 April 2018.

¹⁰ In 1952 the response of Parliament to demise was laid down in the Meeting of Parliament Act 1797 which was ambiguous about whether general elections had to be rerun in certain circumstances. The 1797 Act has now been amended by s. 20 of the Representation of the People Act 1985.

2.4 Parliament is recalled for Parliamentarians to take their oaths of allegiance to the new sovereign and mourn the death of the old. Since the Demise of the Crown Act 1901 fresh oaths have not been required of others previously sworn, for example members of the judiciary and other oath-taking public offices.

Inaugural Privy Council Meeting

2.5 The second stage starts with the Lord President leading a small deputation including the Archbishop and the most senior Cabinet members to wait by prior arrangement on the new sovereign who is then conducted to their first Privy Council meeting. This takes place in the Throne Room of the Palace and attendance is confined to members of the UK Privy Council alone.¹¹

2.6 It is at this meeting that the new sovereign makes an inaugural Declaration and swears the oath to support the Church of Scotland required under the Act of Union 1707. Amongst other pieces of formal business that ensue are approving the arrangements for the lying in state and funeral of the deceased sovereign and ensuring the continuity of public business, for example by decreeing that the Great Seal of the last sovereign can remain in use until replaced. Orders are given for the Proclamation of the Accession Council to be officially cried in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, and for appropriate alterations to the royal prayers in the Church of England.

Personal Declaration

2.7 This is a non-statutory statement made by the new sovereign as first business at their first Privy Council. The accompanying Constitution Unit paper *Swearing in the New King* examines the history of the personal declaration and considers how the next one may be cast. For the purpose of the current paper it will be enough to include for background illustration the text used by the Queen in 1952:

Your Royal Highnesses, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen:

By the sudden death of my dear Father, I am called to assume the duties and responsibilities of the Sovereignty.

At this time of deep sorrow, it is a profound consolation to me to be assured of the sympathy which you and all my Peoples feel towards me, to my Mother, and my Sister, and to the other members of my Family. My Father was our revered and beloved Head, as he was of the wider Family of his subjects: the grief that his loss brings is shared among us all.

My heart is too full to say more to you today than that I shall always work, as my Father did throughout his Reign, to uphold constitutional government and to advance the happiness and prosperity of my Peoples, spread as they are all the world over. I know that in my resolve to follow his shining example of service and devotion, I shall be inspired by the loyalty and affection of those whose Queen I have been called to be, and

¹¹ In 1936, misunderstanding the position, Massey (Canada) and Bruce (Australia) – with Privy Councillor status in their own Commonwealth countries – protested at their exclusion from the Privy Council meeting when they had attended the Accession Council – PC 12/160, letter 18 December 1936 from Batterby (Dominions Office).

by the counsel of their elected Parliaments. I pray that God will help me discharge worthily this heavy task that has been laid upon me so early in my life.¹²

The ‘Scottish’ oath under the Act of Union 1706/7

2.8 Other formal business at the first Privy Council includes the new sovereign taking and subscribing to the oath required by the Act of Union to uphold the Presbyterian form of church government in Scotland. It was one of the requirements laid by the Scottish Parliament upon the Scottish Commissioners who negotiated the terms of the Union that there should be no derogation from the form of Protestantism then practised in that country. Our accompanying report on the royal accession and coronation oaths considers this statutory oath in more detail alongside the two other statutory oaths. (The short point is that it is questionable whether the oath is any longer necessary in view of the terms of the Church of Scotland Act 1921 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Annex B lists all the oaths in their present form to display the full range.)

2.9 Assuming for the moment its continuance, it has been the practice to ensure that, marshalled informally by the Scottish judge on the former Appellate Committee of the House of Lords, a sufficient number of Scottish peers (whose maximum number sitting in the House of Lords remained 16 until 1963) were gathered to stand by the sovereign as the oath is processed. Since then the situation has been changed not only by the 1963 Act but also by the expulsion from the Lords of all but 92 peers with no special provision for Scottish peers to be represented. In addition, the judicial functions of the House of Lords have been transferred to the new Supreme Court.

2.10 If of more mixed character than in 1952, there is, however, no current shortage of Scottish members of the Lords.¹³ Some are hereditary peers who have been elected to serve amongst the 92; some are life peers with Scottish backgrounds, some but not all of whom have titles with Scottish attributions; and others are Scottish hereditaries made ineligible in 1999 but who have been made life peers. Not all are resident in Scotland. The holder of the premier Scottish earldom, the Countess of Mar, an elected hereditary, lives in Worcestershire.

Events following accession in 1952

2.11 In 1952, on the death of George VI in the early hours of 6 February, the Privy Council Office – responsible for summoning the Accession Council – did not receive notice of the death until a little after 10 a.m. which left only the shortest time in which to assemble the Council for 5 p.m. that day. Since the new sovereign was out of the country in Kenya, there was an interval of two days between the Accession Council meeting on 6 February and the Queen’s first Privy Council on 8 February after her return. The Accession Proclamation on 6 February (see Annex A) was signed by the Lord Chancellor first followed by the half dozen or so most senior Cabinet ministers and in no particular order thereafter by the remainder of the nearly 200 people attending the Accession Council. The largest group consisted of Privy Councillors who were senior politicians (including the Speaker of the Commons) or judges, plus then Commonwealth

¹² *London Gazette*, 12 February 1952, Declaration made on 8 February. It is interesting to observe how the differences in capitalization from the 1901 Declaration reflect the transition from an imperial to a service monarchy.

¹³ *Scotsman*, 11 November, 2015, analysed the then tally.

High Commissioners (including for India, the only then independent Commonwealth country not also a realm) and various office holders like Garter and the Lord Mayor of London. The Church of England was represented by the Bishop of London in the absence of Archbishop Fisher who was indisposed at the time.¹⁴ The Privy Council meeting on 8 February was attended by a slightly smaller number of 170 Privy Councillors alone headed by the Duke of Gloucester and thereafter reported by the *Gazette* strictly in order of rank and seniority.¹⁵

Issues for future Accession ceremonies

(i) *Regnal titles of the King and his wife*

2.12 The first decision of a new King is to choose his regnal name. Although it may be assumed that Prince Charles will choose ‘Charles III’ as his title, that style is not at all automatic or preordained. As already seen, Victoria’s successor chose to be known as Edward VII rather than Albert despite having invariably used the latter name alone up to his accession. It cannot be ruled out, therefore, that Prince Charles might in the event prefer, say, George VII in honour of his grandfather rather than a name associated with a previous dynasty.

2.13 The accession proclamation would also have to resolve whether the new King could retain the title ‘Head of the Commonwealth’ – strictly speaking non-hereditary. The title was created in 1949 to accommodate the inclusion of India in the Commonwealth when it was the sole member that was a republic. The Commonwealth having at present no machinery for legislating any question, in practice the title’s continuance depends on Commonwealth consensus - which was reached and declared at the April 2018 meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government. This means amongst other things that the substance of the royal title of the new King can remain the same as that of Elizabeth II. (See Annex B for the Royal Titles Act 1953 and the subsequent Royal Proclamation.)

2.14 Separately from the text of the Proclamation, there is the question of how the Duchess of Cornwall should be known on her husband’s accession. There has been a lot of speculation and some animosity on this point though polling attitudes appear to be especially sensitive to the form of the pollsters’ questions.¹⁶ When her marriage¹⁷ to the Prince of Wales was announced, it

¹⁴ *London Gazette*, 8 February 1952. Also present was an undefined category of ‘other Principal Gentlemen of Quality’ apparently elastic enough to include two Home Office officials.

¹⁵ *London Gazette*, 12 February 1952.

¹⁶ Roger Mortimore cites different polls in the same year finding as little as 17 per cent or as much as 53 per cent approval for the Duchess’s adoption of the title ‘Queen’. He warns ‘this is plainly one area in which opinions are considerably more fluid than is sometimes supposed...the interpretation of and reaction to public opinion via these polls still calls for good judgement.’ – see ‘Measuring Public Opinion on the Monarchy and the Royal Family’ in Glencross M. et al. (eds) (2016) *The Windsor Dynasty 1910 to the Present* (London, Palgrave), pp. 135-156.

¹⁷ Doubts surfaced whether the Prince of Wales was legally able to conduct a civil marriage because it had been thought that marriage acts since 1753 had always excepted royal marriages from their provisions so that royal marriages in England could take place only in church. The controversy and its resolution are described in a House of Commons Library Note of 2008: *Royal Marriages – Constitutional Issues* (SN/PC/03417) <https://beta.parliament.uk/search?q=royal+marriages>, accessed 15 April 2018. See also Probert R. (2011) *The Rights and Wrongs of Royal Marriages* (Kenilworth, Takeaway). The contention of the *Daily Mirror* – ‘Everyone relax – this is why Camilla may never become Queen’ (23 August 2017) - that the Duchess of Cornwall can never become Queen because she is not lawfully married to the Prince of Wales can effectively be discounted - though it is difficult to resist the suspicion that there may be draft clauses prudently prepared somewhere in Whitehall to invite Parliament at a suitable future occasion to put the matter beyond doubt.

was said that she would not use the title ‘Queen’ but, in recognition presumably of popular feeling supporting the memory of her husband’s first wife, Princess Diana, adopt instead a new title as ‘Princess Consort’. The law on this seems reasonably clear.¹⁸ Under common law, the spouse of a reigning king is customarily called ‘Queen’ but there is no requirement that the title must be used nor any penalty if it is not. Though it has been customary for the King’s wife to be crowned as Queen at her husband’s coronation, with the exception of the role envisaged under the Regency Acts in the certification of incapacity as a prelude to instituting a regency, and inclusion in the protection of 1351 treason legislation, the King’s wife has no constitutional function or place and does not even have a right to attend her husband’s coronation.¹⁹ Especially if the state of public opinion remains fragile in the way described by Roger Mortimore, it would seem desirable for the King to seek Prime Ministerial advice on the title by which the King’s wife is to be known.

(ii) *Running the next Accession Council*

2.15 Some issues will require further thought at the next accession. While the Accession Council will see for the first time the attendance of the First Ministers of the devolved governments since all are Privy Councillors, there is no assured place for the Mayor of London unless the Mayor – as the present Mayor happens to be – is also a Privy Councillor. This could lead to the anomaly that the Lord Mayor for the City’s square mile – invited for historic reasons – is privileged above the Mayor responsible for the sub-regional government of the whole of Greater London.

2.16 An already crowded space will have to accommodate up to 52 as opposed to seven Commonwealth High Commissioners 15 of whom represent realms and who would, on the implicit 1936-52 criteria, qualify to be received by the new sovereign after the Privy Council proceedings should that arrangement continue. Assuming the continuation of the oath, it would be for the Lord President to decide the right future marshalling procedure, possibly by concentrating on those Scottish peers of any stripe who are also Privy Councillors.

2.17 The proceedings will naturally attract great interest. They have never previously been publicised other than by formal, later notices in the *Gazette*. For consideration is whether they might be televised and/or filmed. If so, more determined steps will be necessary to marshal the Proclamation proceedings which have been, if not actually chaotic, distinctly informal and undirected.²⁰ TV crews will all be waiting outside to interview the participants, even if no broadcasters are allowed in.

¹⁸ Blackburn R., (2016) ‘The Abdication of Edward VIII: Legal and Constitutional Perspectives’ in Glencross *The Windsor Dynasty 1910 to the Present*, at p.174. See also Quentin-Baxter A. and McLean J. (2017) *This Realm of New Zealand: The Sovereign, the Governor-General, The Crown* (Auckland, Auckland UP), p.91.

¹⁹ Under s. 2(1) of the Regency Act 1937, the wife of the sovereign is one of the five persons of whom a minimum of three may certify the sovereign’s incapacity thus triggering the appointment of a regent who would normally be the then current heir. That putative heir now having already reached his majority, no question arises of the present spouse becoming guardian under s. 5. The judges decided for the coronation of George IV that Queens had no right of attendance or to be crowned – *Queen Caroline’s Claim to be Crowned (1821) 1 State Trials S 949*.

²⁰ See PC 12/160 for note of 12 December 1936 recording uncontrolled proceedings after the Royal Princes had signed the Declaration. Attempts by Macdonald (Lord President) and Hankey (Cabinet Secretary) to regulate matters were unavailing.

2.18 Televising the proceedings will draw attention to questions of dress. It became less formal between 1936 and 1952: on the former occasion levée dress with decorations was worn but morning suits on the latter, including at the inaugural Privy Council. In his diaries, Harold Macmillan observed:

Of course, the effect would have been more brilliant if we had all been in full dress. The officers of the Brigade and Household Cavalry; the Earl Marshal; Lord Halifax (as Lord High Steward of Westminster) and one or two others were in full dress and very fine they looked. But a lot of politicians in dark coats and striped trousers present rather a scruffy, scrubby appearance.²¹

2.19 On the other hand, in these post-imperial days, the dress code may settle for something like morning dress with a black or dark tie for men and dark day dresses for women, in all cases without decorations or medals.

2.20 Finally, granted the numbers now probably to be involved in the Accession Council – Privy Council members alone amount to over 600, all normally entitled to attend - to avoid overcrowding the Lord President may in practice have to set a ceiling and prioritise between those Privy Councillors available on the day. In certain circumstances resort to an alternative venue could prove to become necessary.

Lying in state in Westminster Hall

2.21 This was an innovation on the death of Edward VII modelled on the lying in state accorded to Gladstone in 1898.²² Ever since 1910 it has taken place in Westminster Hall and is under the superintendence of the Earl Marshal, a royal official hereditary in the person of the Duke of Norfolk. One of the early acts of the new sovereign is to direct what the timings should be for the lying in state and funeral.²³ The public wishing to show respect are admitted to file past the body. In 1952 almost one million did so. After three or so days (five for George V) the body has traditionally been hauled on a gun carriage by ratings of the Royal Navy to Paddington station for entrainment to Windsor for private family burial in St George's Chapel. However, next time plans appear to envisage the gun carriage hauled initially to Westminster Abbey for the first monarchical funeral service there since 1760 and the procession continuing afterwards to

²¹ Catterall P. (ed.) (2004) *The Macmillan Diaries: The Cabinet Years, 1950-1957* (London, Pan), entry for 8 February 1952, p. 141.

²² The Archbishop's address to the Westminster Hall mourners in 1910 has been described as 'a striking articulation of a form of civil religion expressing the convergence of church and state at a moment of national grief.' Wolfe J. (2000) *Great Deaths: Deaths, Grieving and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (London, British Academy), p. 254

²³ Edward VIII over-ruled the Earl Marshal's recommendations and insisted on a smarter timetable than that for Edward VII. To arrange the funeral, the Earl Marshal set up office in Norfolk House assisted by his sisters and other members of the family. The liaising Home Office official (H. A. Boyd) recorded 'there was no proper secretariat, no agenda, no minutes and therefore no real record of what took place ... everything worked extraordinarily well considering the difficulties. The invitations to the Service at Windsor were all issued by the Earl Marshal but mistakes arose and cousins and friends of the Queen were omitted, while others with no real claim were admitted.' HO 144/20239, file 691000/113, 'The First Few Weeks of the Reign of Edward VIII', March 1936. Almeric Fitzroy claimed that in 1901 the Earl Marshal's printed invitation to Lord Cadogan's wife had instructed her to wear trousers for Queen Victoria's funeral – Fitzroy A., (ND), *Memoirs*, (London, Hutchinson), p. 44.

Hyde Park Corner for the coffin's transfer to a car for the journey to interment in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.

2.22 Large crowds assemble on these occasions. They require careful management by the Metropolitan police in London and secondment of a considerable number of their officers to assist the local police in Windsor. The military and police authorities were taken by surprise by the numbers of onlookers during the procession to Paddington in 1936. Control of the streets was not always maintained in a situation where successive improvements in travel facilities had allowed larger numbers to assemble in the streets than on previous occasions. Marching troops lost pace and co-ordination. Over 7,000 people were treated by St John Ambulance attendants.²⁴ These problems did not recur in 1952.²⁵ The most recent lying in state – Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother – experienced large public attendances and such numbers can be expected to be greatly exceeded following the next demise.

²⁴ To help brief the Home Secretary to reply to a Parliamentary Question on the incidents, the Permanent Under Secretary chaired an urgent meeting with the Metropolitan police (who had deployed 8,776 men including 231 mounted officers) and military, none of whom wished to accept blame for what had happened. Fortunately, the Home Secretary prevailed upon the MP to withdraw his Question. HO 144/20239, note of meeting on 30 January 1936.

²⁵ See MEPO 2/9225 for the police orders set out in a 44 page printed document. 10,349 officers were involved including 2,185 provincial and City police officers and 134 mounted. Harold Macmillan in 1952 thought that the police had over-reacted to the 1936 experience: 'It struck me that the crowds were not very large. I think the police had frightened them away, with the barriers and closing so many side streets.' Catterall, *Macmillan Diaries*, 15 February 1952, p 143. Current plans should avoid past difficulties.

Chapter 3: The coronation

Introduction

3.1 Coronations do not make a sovereign, the law does.²⁶ What coronations are said to signify is the conferment of God's grace on the head of state and the symbolic deference of all earthly power to a higher, spiritual authority. In something like their current form, coronations in England date from that of Edgar of Wessex in 973. The sovereign is recognised, swears a three-part oath to observe the laws, temper justice with mercy and support the church. Traditions of Saxon election and Roman and Byzantine sacerdotalism are fused in a rite which includes anointing with sacred oil, being invested with the symbols of authority, receiving homage and taking communion. It is followed by a grand procession of the crowned sovereign through the capital.

Past coronations

(a) Up to 1838

3.2 Historically, the coronation of George IV in 1821 was the last of the post-Restoration style coronations. Stuart coronations always took place on 23 April, St George's Day. Up to and including 1821, all coronations had included a series of ceremonies in Westminster Hall immediately before the coronation and a following banquet in which services, such as the appearance of the King's Champion, were performed on a lavish occasion. George IV's coronation was unprecedentedly and scandalously costly as well as marred by his refusal to be accompanied by the wife he had failed so recently to divorce.

3.3 William IV at first declined on accession in 1830 to have a coronation but consented in the end to a much more modest occasion in 1831. This event considerably curtailed proceedings, dispensing with both the procession from Westminster Hall traditionally preceded by maidens strewing flowers and the post-coronation banquet, neither of which have since been revived. Notoriously, there was insufficient rehearsal for Victoria's 1838 coronation and proceedings verged on the indecorous in consequence.

3.4 Dropping the Westminster Hall ceremonies as the immediate prelude to the coronation in the Abbey meant some alternative space had to be provided for assembling the grand coronation procession which had hitherto paraded from the Hall to the Abbey carrying the regalia. The solution found was to erect a temporary if capacious Annexe immediately in front of the west door of the Abbey. This allowed the marshalling of officers of state bearing the ceremonial swords and banners together with the clergy bearing the regalia followed by the sovereign. The Annexe also provided retiring space, including for use after the ceremonies and before the street procession.

3.5 Victoria's was the last for which there was a public distribution at the coronation ceremony of medals struck for the occasion. Official papers contain much analysis of the practice of striking commemorative gold and silver medals. In 1838 the gold version was 1.5"

²⁶ This is why so little is said about the coronation as opposed to the relevant oaths in one of the leading studies of the constitution – Bogdanor V. (1995) *The Monarchy and the Constitution* (Oxford, OUP).

diameter of which 1,285 were distributed gratis to the Queen, all peers and MPs attending, and foreign ambassadors. Of the 1,112 silver versions, 600 were distributed ‘pell mell in the Abbey and procession’. This was traditionally started during the homage.²⁷ Up to and including 1838, every hereditary peer attending the coronation performed an act of homage. Granted their number, this would have been a somewhat tedious proceeding though much enlivened by the scramble for medals thrown into the congregation. The medals were also put on public sale but the take-up and profitability to the Mint depended on the attractiveness of the particular design. The restrained dismay of the Treasury official in 1901 on discovering this former practice during planning for Edward VII’s coronation still leaps off the page.²⁸

(b) 1901-52

3.6 By 1901 Victoria’s coronation must have seemed like occurring in a different country. In 1838 there was still no rail route out of London and the economic and social condition of the time would have appeared remote in 1901. Edward VII’s accession occurred not long after the 1897 Diamond Jubilee, an event naturally precipitating retrospection. The sense of marvel and imperial pride was well captured by an *Illustrated London News* article by one of the chroniclers of his age, Walter Besant:

... the period seems like a grand Triumphal March. To those of us who can remember English life as it was in the Forties, the changes that have fallen upon the country are nothing short of a Transformation. We are transformed indeed: we no longer think as we did; our daily manners and customs are changed; our views of things are changed; from Peer to Peasant we are, one and all, transformed ... during this long period there has arisen in the national mind such a spirit of enterprise, endeavour and achievement as has no parallel except in the reign of Queen Elizabeth ... there is no longer any party which seriously purposes any change in the Constitution; the whole nation is united in loyalty.²⁹

3.7 Perhaps not everyone would have felt the same though the impending end of the Boer War at Edward’s accession in 1901 probably swelled (anxious) imperial pride further. On the other hand, by the time of Edward VII’s accession, the state’s recent ceremonial experience consisted only of the jubilees of 1887 and 1897. The last minute postponement³⁰ because of the King’s illness of the coronation due in June 1902 led to the departure of invited foreign units and dignitaries with the result that the coronation became a wholly British and imperial event on Saturday 9 August 1902. The Abbey service was conducted by an aged and infirm Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple, with some obvious difficulty. For the first time homage by the

²⁷ At George III’s coronation in 1761 some silver medals were also thrown during the coronation banquet at Westminster Hall. An eye-witness recorded that ‘Some of gold was also thrown among the peeresses in the abbey, just after the King was crowned; but they thought it below their dignity to pick them up’. (*The Form and Proceeding of the Royal Coronation of George III*, British Library, N. Tab.2025/8 1761, p. 13.

²⁸ PC 22/3 – ‘It seems to me doubtful whether this large gratuitous distribution should be continued’. Edward Hamilton memorandum 19 October 1901. The distribution during Victoria’s coronation had been authorised by a Privy Council order dated 26 May 1838 (PC 22/2). Gold medals seem last to have been struck for Edward VII who insisted on a particularly expensive design – see PC 22/3 for letter of 2 September 1902 from Arthur Ellis of the Lord Chamberlain’s Office to Treasury.

²⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 21 June 1897.

³⁰ Fitzroy thought that the postponement saved the ceremony ‘as only a miracle in June could have averted fiasco’. He attributed the improvement to the ‘practical disestablishment’ of the Heralds and their substitution by ‘a body of young guardsmen under the direction of Lt Col R. Pole-Carew seasoned to discipline and precision of movement’. Fitzroy, *Memoirs*, pp 96-7.

peers was undertaken only by the senior peer in each order of peerage rather than by all peers individually – a significant saving of time. The post-coronation procession route returned via Whitehall, St James, Piccadilly and Constitution Hill. The *Times* reckoned that about 24,500 troops were involved marching or lining the route plus over 2,000 bandsmen and the employment of more than 4,000 horses. Troops from outside London had encamped in Kensington Gardens, Regent’s Park and Battersea Park.³¹ Amongst the troops were substantial contingents from Dominion, colonial, and Indian forces.³² The coronation was followed on 16 August by a fleet review of just short of 100 warships.

3.8 George V’s coronation on 22 June 1911 was managed by the formal government Coronation Committee structure first used in 1901-2 to which the Earl Marshal answered rather than continue to rely on ‘the Earl Marshal’s department, with its antiquated methods and fancy *cortège* of heralds’.³³ The ceremonies followed the style and routes of his father’s, and involved nearly 48,000 troops. There was also a fleet review on 24 June when an array of 167 British vessels including 32 dreadnoughts and a full range of other warships drawn up at Spithead. New was his attendance at the Delhi Durbar on 12 December 1911 when he received the homage of Indian rulers as Emperor of India wearing a newly made crown.

3.9 Also innovatory was his refusal to swear the accession oath required under the Bill of Rights 1689. This was on the grounds that its lengthy diatribe against Roman Catholicism and transubstantiation was deeply offensive to his catholic subjects. While his father had made a similar protest but ineffectively, George secured the much shorter declaration prescribed by the Accession Declaration Act 1910.³⁴

3.10 The coronation of George VI on 12 May 1937 followed his elder brother’s abdication. Like that of his two predecessors it was an imperial spectacle parading large numbers of dignitaries and troops, the latter accommodated in Royal parks as before but which were much affected by some of the heavy rain that fell over the period. As a result of Edward VIII’s lack of personal interest in the planning of his own coronation, his brother and successor had stood in for him at the planning discussions and was, therefore, fortuitously well-prepared for the occasion which went forward on the date originally planned for the elder brother. For the first time, the proceedings were broadcast in the streets. The Spithead naval review on 21 May had a total of 141 British and Dominion warships taking part.

³¹ *Times*, 11 August 1902. The paper remarked that many were in full dress uniform ‘from 3 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon practically without rest or refreshment.’ In 1953 NAAFI haversack rations for immediate consumption were delivered by truck to Coronation route liners between 1100 and Noon. The Metropolitan police issued ‘hard rations’ designed to be carried in tunic pockets. Interview 16 April 2016 with ex-Trooper Tony Child, 4th Hussars, whose detachment was (as with others) brought specially from Germany and trained for their duties for six weeks before the coronation. See also WO 32/14721 and MEPO 2/9243.

³² Indian troops in 1902 fed themselves in an encampment at Hampton Court on sheep they slaughtered on the spot in the full view of onlookers. An anxious resident wrote to the Office of Works in 1911 and was reassured that the practice would not be repeated but be properly shielded. WORK 21/29/8, letters of 10 and 12 May 1911.

³³ Fitzroy: *Memoirs*, p. 416.

³⁴ Michael Bloch claims that Edward VIII wished to dispense with the Protestant declaration altogether. (In 1910 Asquith had not thought it necessary, HC 27 June 1910, col. 2133). Because Edward VIII abdicated, the matter did not come to the test. Bloch M. (1991) *The Reign and Abdication of Edward VIII* (London, Black Swan), pp 34-5.

The coronation of 1953

3.11 The coronation of 1953 followed a dowdy period of drab post-war exhaustion and slow recovery. The new sovereign was a young, not long married mother of two small children whose husband was a handsome naval officer who had served during the war. Without any apparent consideration of alternatives or variations, the Conservative Cabinet made an early decision that the coronation should follow the 1937 style³⁵, conscious apparently that the event would give an opportunity to outshine their political opponents' sponsorship of the Festival of Britain in 1951.³⁶ At the same time, ministers were tasked to explore what savings could nonetheless be made. Accepting the Minister of Works' contention that the celebrations themselves could not be delivered parsimoniously, the Cabinet concluded that at least the special payment in 1937 to benefit claimants should not be repeated.³⁷

3.12 As an adjunct to the planning of the coronation, by immemorial custom the Court of Claims, presided over by the Lord Chancellor and consisting of the most senior English and Scottish judges, invited and adjudicated upon claims for the right to perform customary services at the coronation. Claims could include the customary right to carry a standard or perform some personal service to the sovereign such as delivering part of the regalia.

3.13 The Court is a hybrid body both executive and judicial in the sense of being simultaneously an emanation of the Privy Council and an august judicial body. In 1952 the Court's operations were helped by the fact that relatively little time had elapsed from the previous coronation. As a result, the Court did not normally require fresh – and expensively mounted – claims to be repeated where there had been no doubt in 1936/7 about whether the claim should be allowed. The fact that the then Lord Chancellor chaired the proceedings reflected the post's then Cabinet seniority and judicial weight. The subsequent decline in the office which has no judicial pretensions calls into question whether the present office of Minister of Justice/Lord Chancellor should continue to chair the Court if, that is, it is desired to preserve that Court's high ceremonial character. Indeed, it is not at all clear what the traditional Court brings to proceedings which, apart from their solemnity and expense, have no modern substance that could not be dealt with administratively.

3.14 By custom, for the main business of arranging the coronation two committees of the Privy Council were instituted. The senior committee – the Coronation Committee – was chaired by the Duke of Edinburgh, the sovereign's husband. It included senior Cabinet representation, the Earl Marshal, the archbishop of Canterbury, and senior members of the Household. Detailed

³⁵ 'Anyway, it'll beat the festival of Britain.' Remark attributed to Churchill at a Cabinet discussion on arrangements for the coronation. Catterall, *Macmillan Diaries*, 11 February 1952, p. 142.

³⁶ Churchill – 'anxious to remove all traces (save for the Royal Festival Hall) of his predecessor Clement Attlee's socialist extravaganza' – caused the aluminium Dome of Discovery (its 365 foot span one of the largest ever built) to be sold off to a Fulham scrap merchant. Some of the material resurfaced, apparently, as coronation trinkets. Knevitt C. (2012) *Dome: Ralph Tubbs and the Festival of Britain* (London, Chelsea Space) p. 10.

³⁷ See T 219/479 for the papers of GEN 408, the Cabinet Sub-Committee set up to report what guidance should be given on the scale of Coronation arrangements. The sole significant saving identified was not to repeat the special payments made to the unemployed for one week in 1937. The cost had been £109,000 or £265,900 at 1953 values and £7million at 2017 prices. (Upgrading past figures throughout this paper has relied upon the Bank of England's inflation calculator.)

planning was undertaken by the Coronation Executive Committee chaired by the Earl Marshal and generally mirroring at executive level the membership of the main committee.³⁸

3.15 An innovation was the inclusion of the Commonwealth High Commissioners, then limited to a total of six, on the Coronation Executive Committee. Both in 1937 and in 1952/3 there was great concern to find ways of associating Commonwealth countries with accession arrangements following the recognition of their independent national status in the Statute of Westminster 1931. Whereas in 1937 all the Commonwealth states were realms, by 1952 the Irish Free State had become independent outside the Commonwealth in 1949, while India had become a republic but one that joined the Commonwealth and recognised the UK sovereign as head of the Commonwealth. The coronation oath had been revised in 1937 after careful consultation with the then Commonwealth governments and in 1952/3 the representatives of all of the then members with the exception of India were fully engaged in the planning discussions.

3.16 Famously, these included whether and, if so, to what extent the coronation should be televised in a situation where it had already been agreed that there could be filming in colour – requiring greater illumination in the Abbey – as well as in black and white as a way of making the event accessible also to people overseas. The sole provider of television at the time was the BBC. Normally deferential, it was determined to make the maximum use of the still new broadcasting medium. In the same way it had pursued the right to broadcast the Cenotaph Remembrance service, a right eventually conceded in 1926. In the autumn of 1952, however, the Cabinet decided that television cameras should not be present at the main arena of the ceremonies. The announcement provoked great public opposition and the Cabinet retreated to the extent that all might be televised except for the anointing and the Queen’s taking communion. The archbishop also hoped that there would be no ‘close-ups’. In the event, televising the proceedings was an enormous success.

3.17 Sales of television sets boomed and so therefore did the number of BBC television licence holders:

Overall, there is little disputing the conventional wisdom that the Coronation ‘made’ television in Britain. Not only did anticipation of the event help stimulate licence holders to rise from 1.45 million in March 1952 to 2.32 million by the end of May 1953, but the coverage of the day itself prompted a further rise, up to 3.25 million by March 1954.³⁹

3.18 Declining the offer of the use of the Scottish Office building in Whitehall, the Earl Marshal opted for a quieter venue and, with a temporary planning staff based on College of Arms personnel, took up station in premises provided by the Ministry of Works in Belgrave Square.⁴⁰ By Privy Council order, he assumed control of the body of the Abbey at the beginning

³⁸ The secretary to all the committees was the same Treasury official who had fulfilled the role in 1937, R. U. E. Knox (1888-1965).

³⁹ Kynaston D. (2009) *Family Britain 1951-57* (London, Bloomsbury), p. 301. On the other hand, D.R.Thorpe, the author of a 1989 life of Selwyn Lloyd, thought that it was the televising of the King’s funeral that sparked off the mass purchase of sets *in time* for the coronation – see Hennessy P. (2006) *Having It So Good – Britain in the Fifties* (London, Allen Lane), p. 244. The *Times* – 3 June 1953 - thought that the total television viewing audience might have amounted to 20 million. The figure has subsequently been put at 27 million – Pimlott B. (1996) *The Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth II* (London, Harper Collins), p.207.

⁴⁰ An account of the Earl Marshal’s involvement and style by one of his staff is at Brooke-Little J. (1980) *Royal Ceremonies of State* (Feltham, Country Life Books), pp. 46-64.

of 1953 for the main contractors – Messrs Mowlem – to erect the viewing stands, prepare the Annexe and the ‘theatre’⁴¹, and all the other sub-contractors to install lighting, broadcasting and filming equipment and so on.

3.19 The Annexe⁴² was a large temporary building of clad steelwork whose design by the Ministry of Works Chief Architect was approved by the Fine Arts Commission and all other possible authorities. Entered by an octagon, it provided not only space for the forming up of the main procession but retiring rooms for members of the royal family and peers, and a dining room for the Queen. There she took a meal after the coronation service before the great procession in the State Coach through central London.

3.20 Planning the detail disclosed the importance of the role of officials otherwise normally uncelebrated. The main beneficiary in this sense was the Minister of Works, David Eccles. Works was normally one of the lowliest in the Cabinet hierarchy but its central role in the physical arrangements gave it a special prominence seized by a personable and competent minister. He was instrumental in, amongst other things, insisting that as few as possible of the troops should be accommodated in public parks both to avoid the damage of previous occasions⁴³ and to maximise public access at all times so far as possible. Encampments were confined to Kensington Gardens and troops otherwise mostly accommodated in civil accommodation with minorities occupying available London barracks.

3.21 Not normally visible at all and not a public figure was the Crown Equerry. An officer of the Household, his duty was to manage the sovereign’s transport, including the equine transport and the vehicles involved. His view became – to the evident irritation of some of the Executive Committee members – determinant in matters of routing the processions from and to Buckingham Palace. Explaining that his charge included then no horses other than those borrowed from the Metropolitan police, he maintained that routing the ‘to’ procession around the north side of Trafalgar Square (which would have given an opportunity for a friendly gesture to the South African High Commission) required too tight a turn for the eight horses of the State Coach. When the Earl Marshal suggested that the supposed difficulty could be tested in a dry run, the Equerry explained that it was not possible because the Coach was under repair and no other vehicle of similar size was available as a substitute. Similarly, the hillier down routes from Piccadilly had to be rejected because the Equerry advised he could not guarantee that the rather primitive brakes on the Coach could be depended upon to hold it.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Theatre – the area of the Abbey at the crossing in front of the altar specially arranged and carpeted for the ceremonies.

⁴² Annexe – up to 1821, coronation processions to the Abbey were formed up in Westminster Hall before proceeding to the Abbey. Marshalling them in the Abbey instead required a temporary expansion of space at the west door. Hence resort has accordingly been made ever since to temporary Annexes themselves quite substantial structures.

⁴³ Caused by the traffic of troops across the ground much exacerbated by heavy rainfalls in 1937. Flooding had been particularly severe in Regent’s Park where it was thought in 1952 that the consignment there of so much bomb damage rubble during 1940-5 should have improved the drainage.

⁴⁴ PC 22/9, Minutes of meeting 19 May 1952, CJC 11.

3.22 In the event, the routes finally chosen were little different from 1937. The main difference was the inclusion of Northumberland Avenue and the Embankment⁴⁵ in the ‘to’ route and the inclusion of the lower part of Piccadilly in the ‘from’ route which largely traversed the 1937 route but in reverse order.

3.23 Some 44,178 servicemen were involved in the ceremonies. Because of the distances and logistical problems otherwise involved in bussing troops in from service accommodation outside London (for example, Colchester), it was decided to accommodate them in London despite there being insufficient barracks. More than 8,000 were accommodated in Earls Court, over 5,000 at Olympia and 3,000 (Royal Navy) at the Clapham Deep Shelter. The sole encampment was at Kensington Gardens which took over 17,000 of whom 3,000 were provincial police officers. As against what happened in 1937, the Gardens were left, the War Office account claimed, in excellent order where only the bleached grass showed where the tentage had been.⁴⁶

3.24 The route to the Abbey was 1 mile 770 yards and the longer procession from the Abbey covered 5 miles and 250 yards. Route lining involved a total of nearly 16,000 servicemen and twenty military bands in addition to the twenty-four bands marching in the processions themselves. The military consisted of nearly 2,000 guardsmen, 2,000 Royal and Commonwealth Royal Navy, over 800 cadets from the services’ academies, 336 Canadians, nearly 1,500 Royal Artillery, 640 Royal Engineers, 300 Royal Signals, 2,240 line infantry, 4,000 RAF and 640 belonging to other army corps. Considerable sums were spent on providing No 1 Dress for the soldiers.

The Coronation Rite

3.25 This was the responsibility of the Archbishop of Canterbury who had been told, as on previous occasions, to keep it as short as possible. This meant amongst other things that the sermon – first dropped in 1902 and then revived in 1911 but not in 1937 – was unlikely to survive. Various proposals were made to the Archbishop urging modernization and the inclusion of a Commonwealth dimension perhaps by means of some ceremony in Westminster Hall. Not necessarily an opponent of change – he had himself, for example, argued for the inclusion of the Moderators of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Free Church Federal Council in the late King’s Windsor interment – he was not convinced of the case for significant departure from the rite.

3.26 Indeed, this meant he was opposed to the suggestion made by Clement Davies, the Liberal Leader in the Commons, that the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council might be associated with the coronation service in the same way as the Moderator of the Church of Scotland. Archbishop Fisher

said that this point had been most carefully considered and he would have been most pleased if a way could be found to do something of the kind. It would be seen however that in the latter part of the Oath ... there was the question “Will you to the utmost of

⁴⁵ The LCC had stationed 37,000 schoolchildren on the Victoria Embankment in 1937 – PP 22/9, CJC 49 of 9 October 1952. Roy Strong was one of the LCC schoolchildren on the same embankment in 1953 – see his *Coronation: A History of Kingship and the British Monarchy* (2005: London, HarperCollins), p. xxxv.

⁴⁶ WO 32/15395, *Summary of Action Taken by the War Office*, Ch.16.

your power maintain the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?’’ It was one of the characteristics of the Free Churches that they were not established by law. Having regard to this it would obviously be extremely difficult to include the Free Churches of England and Wales with the Church of Scotland’. The Committee took note accordingly.⁴⁷

3.27 The upshot was that the rubric followed very closely that of 1937. The Archbishop’s suggestion that the sovereign’s oath make a generic reference to the Commonwealth realms rather than continue to cite them individually was rejected. Otherwise, apart from the omission of reference to India, the substitution of Northern Ireland for Ireland and the addition of mention of Pakistan and Ceylon, the oath was unchanged. As mentioned, the only other innovation was to find a place for the Moderator of the Church of Scotland to participate in the ceremony for the first time.⁴⁸ The role assigned was to present the bible to the Queen using the traditional formula of presentation, actions formerly discharged by the Archbishop himself.⁴⁹

3.28 The most important point was that the coronation took place within the Anglican service of communion. As Archbishop Lang had pointed out in 1937,⁵⁰ this effectively excluded the participation of other Christian priests let alone – and not thought of at the time – other religions. One of the issues for the future is whether and, if so, how far the Church of England should maintain the same position for future coronations.

3.29 In the event, the ceremony in 1953 passed off very smoothly. The ring, as in Victoria’s coronation, was not forced painfully on to the wrong finger; nor was the St Edward’s crown placed on the sovereign’s head back to front as for Edward VII. After processing out of the Abbey, the Queen took a light lunch in the Annexe in a room decorated with a tasteful borrowed landscape.

The spectators

(i) At the Abbey

3.30 Allocating the seating was the responsibility of the Earl Marshal. This was no light duty since it required the construction of an outcome that could be credibly presented – and defended – as reflective of the society of the day. Accordingly, it was of great interest to the Cabinet who had directed that there should be a much larger representation from the Commonwealth than in 1937, the Prime Minister also wanting a substantially increased number of seats for the trade

⁴⁷ LCO 6/3522, CCPC 20, Conclusions of 2nd meeting.

⁴⁸ PREM 11/31 - The Secretary of State for Scotland wrote to the Prime Minister on 2 May 1952 seeking a place for the Moderator in the Sanctuary, and a Church of Scotland committee suggested a service of dedication in Scotland with the Scottish regalia, at which the Dean of the Thistle suggested the Queen should hold the sceptre. While there was no objection to a Scottish service, it could not appear to be a second coronation – the effect of the Act of Union – and the Dean’s suggestion was firmly rejected by the Lord Chancellor’s Department in a letter of 17 December 1952. In the event a St Giles service was held; the Queen wore a day dress and carried a handbag (a degree of modesty criticised in some Scottish circles); and the regalia were paraded at the front of an unshowy procession down the nave.

⁴⁹ Carpenter E. (1991) *Archbishop Fisher – His Life and Times* (Norwich, Canterbury Press), pp. 266-267.

⁵⁰ Lockhart J. G. (1949) *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London, Hodder) p. 416: ‘I said frankly that I could not share my traditional duties with other persons; and that the whole Service was within the Order of Communion of the Church of England.’

unions. Striving for a rational scheme, the Earl Marshall calculated that it was necessary to address no fewer than forty-two categories of eligible persons. Granted that the peerage of nearly 1,000 expected invitations to include their wives and the Commons likewise expected generous provision, by the time Privy Councillors were also accommodated there was little room for manoeuvre to fit in enhanced categories. After reducing military and civil service numbers and shaving other groups – the baronets, for example, were reduced from twenty-five to two – the ceiling of just over 8,000 places could not be sustained in a building where every square inch had been commandeered.⁵¹

3.31 Something had to give and a Conservative government decided that it had to be the peerage. This was achieved by the Lord Chancellor discovering/deciding that, although the peerage enjoyed a right of summons to Parliament, it enjoyed no commensurate right to be summoned to a coronation. There were then approximately 736 peers entitled to sit in the Lords within a total peerage of 936 including minors, peeresses in their own right and Irish and Scottish peers.⁵² He announced this by way of a statement in the Lords⁵³ and thus cleared the way for the Earl Marshal to propose allocations acceptable to the Cabinet and the Coronation Commission.

3.32 In fact, however, not all the latter committee did agree. The leader of the Opposition, Attlee, supported by the Liberal leader, Clement Davies, attempted a late run in February 1953 to insert homage by the Speaker as representative of the common man.⁵⁴ This proposed innovation was just too much for the planners who claimed the idea really needed greater consideration especially with the Commonwealth and that there was not time enough left to allow for it. A sort of promise was made that the suggestion might be considered separately after the coronation.⁵⁵

3.33 The Abbey seating was made, as in 1937, of tubular steel and wood planking. Great care was taken to protect Abbey furnishings and monuments. Cabling had to be laid for television and sound broadcasting and also for special lighting. Large reflectors were installed as unobtrusively as possible to enhance illumination. The Ministry charged fees to broadcasters for their use of facilities. The latter included for everyone considerable expenditure on lavatories, thus avoiding the humiliation of Samuel Pepys forced to leave Charles II's coronation early. Nonetheless, the Ministry's post-Coronation review concluded that there had been a failure to provide anything like enough for women.⁵⁶ In the absence of a modern Health and Safety inspection regime to ensure safety, the Abbey stands were tested by the expedient of using 1,000 guardsmen provided by London District for the purpose.

⁵¹ Photographs show Abbey stands in the Nave and elsewhere rising up to nine or eleven tiers high.

⁵² C(52) 403 Memorandum by the Lord Chancellor, PREM 11/357.

⁵³ Hansard, Lords, 27 January 1953, cols 4-13. This brusque treatment of the peerage reflected, amongst other things, a relative decline in its status. It may be contrasted, for example, with the fact that discussion was even entertained in 1937 on the allocation of Abbey seats to the eldest unmarried *sons* of peers over 21. Supported by Churchill, the Earl Marshal thought it not unreasonable that places should be found for as many as 249. Challenged by Attlee, the number was reduced to 50. See PC 22/6, minutes of meeting on 16 March 1937.

⁵⁴ Conclusions of the 2nd Meeting of the Coronation Committee of the Privy Council.

⁵⁵ LCO 6/3525, Report (dated 24 February 1953) of the Sub-committee on the Suggested Special Participation of the Speaker in the Coronation Service. There is no record of the suggestion's receiving post-coronation consideration.

⁵⁶ The Metropolitan police concurred as to provision for the public on the route. Although 101 temporary 'conveniences' were supplied, there were more for men than women. 'Long queues were present throughout Coronation eve and on Coronation day, taking as long as two or three hours to reach the toilets.' MEPO 2/9243, August 1953.

3.34 In 1937 there had been considerable confusion and delay inflicted on the departure of the Abbey guests. A sub-committee of the Coronation Committee chaired by the Commissioner of Police considered how a repetition of the scenes could be avoided. A scheme was therefore designed to disperse guests radially from the Abbey to locations where they would be offered lunch and orderly arrangements for accessing their vehicles.⁵⁷ Guests were sent variously to Westminster Hall, the New Public Offices in Whitehall and Church House. The ‘Gold Sticks’ – gentlemen ushers – repaired to a marquee in Dean’s Close for refreshments provided by the NAAFI. To assist egress from the Abbey to Westminster Hall a temporary prefabricated pedestrian bridge, previously tested offsite, was thrown across St Margaret’s Street on the night of 1 June and disassembled swiftly twenty-four hours later.⁵⁸

(ii) Outside the Abbey

3.35 The procession routes afforded all sorts of sightseeing opportunities from the pavements upwards for private viewing from windows and stands on private ground. The Ministry of Works was responsible for the erection of all public stands outside the Abbey as well as all stands within. Tasked to do so and to recover a greater proportion of the costs than in 1937, the Ministry erected stands for 96,000 people outside the Abbey and recovered from sales well over half its costs. Seats were not cheap: £6 covered (£159 at 2017 prices) and £4 uncovered (£106 at 2017 prices.). The Ministry stands were concentrated in the area of the Abbey and Whitehall, the Mall, the Victoria monument and environs, and the East Carriage Drive in Hyde Park. Parliament Square was entirely taken up by covered stands, and so were considerable areas facing Buckingham Palace. A few Whitehall stands were reserved at sharp prices for paying foreign visitors. Take up in their case faded close to the coronation date and places were made available to American servicemen based in Britain.

(iii) The ‘from’ procession

3.36 This was the great public hurrah of the coronation. 40,000 British, Commonwealth and Colonial troops and related services were involved marching twelve abreast. From the UK, all military formations were represented and for the first time every infantry regiment detachment carried its colours. The UK Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was the senior of the ten Commonwealth Prime Ministers in open carriages. Wearing as a Garter knight the George given by Queen Anne to his ancestor, Marlborough, and the star that had belonged to Castlereagh, Churchill was escorted by a mounted detachment of his old regiment, the 4th Hussars, who had managed to equip themselves with pre-War full dress uniforms.⁵⁹ (The rule of the procession was that participants either rode or were pulled by horses or walked.) The full turnout of Commonwealth Prime Ministers included Nehru from India though he had declined to send any troops whereas all the other Prime Ministers had done so. The Queen was escorted by the Household Brigade, senior members of her Household, service ADCs, and senior service officers from the UK and Commonwealth forces. Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke commanded the parade and rode beside the Queen’s carriage. There were marching bands and stationary

⁵⁷ The Prime Minister had been anxious that peers who so wished could be able to attend in their horse-drawn coaches. Although a number thought of doing so, only four actually did. MEPO 2/9243

⁵⁸ The Macmillans viewed the ‘from’ procession from this bridge, he wearing – Macmillan noted – his Privy Councillor’s costume ‘hired from Morris Angel, theatrical costumiers!’ Catterall, *Macmillan Diaries*, 1-7 June 1953, p 235.

⁵⁹ PREM 11/354.

bands along the route which was lined throughout with the troops at thirty inch intervals. The printed operational orders for the military and the police ran into scores of pages. The procession was so long that it took forty-five minutes to pass any stationary point. The sole defect was the one no planner could prevent: it was an overcast and showery day.

Naval Review

3.37 This took place at Spithead on 15 June 1953. It involved 190 vessels and more than 300 naval aircraft. The muster included 1 battleship, 8 carriers, 12 cruisers, 20 destroyers, 40 frigates, 18 minesweepers, 30 submarines, and 62 other vessels.⁶⁰

Costs of coronations

3.38 It is difficult to construct a fully comparable and meaningful list of costs over a long period. In recent times at least, Treasury practice has been to compile a Coronation Vote that included only the direct costs falling to the Household, Ministry of Works and the Government Hospitality Fund (which looked after overseas invitees) against the Appropriations in Aid arising principally from Works' sales of viewing seats, Abbey chairs and materials. A 1963 Treasury review⁶¹ set out the position on this basis:

Table 3.1: Estimated costs for the 1953 Coronation compiled by HM Treasury

£ Estimates 1952/53		£ Estimates 1953/54	
<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Out-turn</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Out-turn</i>
367,000	344,000	1,206,000	1,121,000
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Out-turn</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Out-turn</i>
135,000	113,000	513,000	561,000

3.39 Works was both the largest spender and source of income. Over the two years it spent £1.26m and received £696,000. At present money values⁶² based on increases in the Bank of England inflation Index, these sums may be translated as amounting respectively to £33.4m and £18.4m. Expenditure included stands in the Mall and at the Queen Victoria monument (£3.7m), at Whitehall and Parliament Square (£4.6m), Green Park (£3.0m) and Hyde Park (£3.3m); lavatories cost £123,000. These may seem large sums but the stands were substantial constructions accommodating about 96,000 people. There were also considerable sums spent on decorative arches across the Mall and street decorations along the routes, especially in Trafalgar Square.

3.40 Household expenditure was much less than that of Works. The main items were:

⁶⁰ PC 22/11.

⁶¹ T 219/30, note of 31 October 1963.

⁶² Present money value 2017 (pmv) for all figures in paragraphs 3.38-3.41.

Table 3.2 Household expenditure for the 1953 Coronation

Main Household costs 1953/54	£ pmv 2017
Queen's coronation garments	152,000
Maids of Honour dresses	40,000
Alterations to Imperial State Crown	44,000
Car Hire	199,000
Repairs to State Coach	53,000
Earl Marshal's remuneration	39,000

3.41 Other expenditure, which could be considerable, was left to fall on departmental votes, and there was never - so far as the available records appear to display - any final reckoning of the total net costs.⁶³ The War Office found it difficult to persuade the Treasury to agree that some of the War Office expenditure should be borne on the central Coronation Vote within the criterion 'expenditure incurred solely on account of the Coronation'. The War Office concluded that Treasury reluctance was motivated by a wish to avoid embarrassing comparisons with 1937 expenditure.⁶⁴

3.42 One of the War Office's difficulties was funding travel costs of over £6.3m, of which £4.0m fell under 'Conveyance of personnel by sea and air'. In other words, large numbers of troops were brought from abroad especially for the occasion. In addition, Cabinet approval was obtained for the issue to all participating troops of No I Dress, the dark navy (dark green for rifle/light infantry), high collar tunic and striped trouser uniforms (with chainmail epaulettes for cavalry) variously differenced as to corps and regiment. Immeasurably smarter than the normal serge of the then khaki battle dress, it was also much more expensive. Originally estimated at £5.2m, the final cost was a little over £6m. The costs for works services at the accommodation sites, for restoring Kensington Gardens and for hiring Olympia and Earls Court amounted to £2.3m. Substantial costs would also have fallen to the Admiralty and Air Ministry.

Contemporary reactions

3.43 The coronation was deemed a great success as a spectacle and was supported lustily not only in London but throughout the UK with local celebrations of all kinds from civic solemnities to open air parties primarily for children in decorated streets. Replying to a congratulatory letter from the Prime Minister, the Earl Marshal said:

Thank you for your letter. It was indeed kind of you to write.
I am so glad all went well and the Queen is delighted.
That we can still put on a show in this country and to be so clearly connected with it makes me very proud.⁶⁵

⁶³ Hankey's initial minute to the Prime Minister on coronation arrangements put net 1937 costs at £900,000 (£46m pmv) and estimated that the 1953 coronation might come in at about £2m net (£49.7m pmv). T 219/479, Hankey to Churchill, 10 April 1952.

⁶⁴ WO 32/15395 'Coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II 2 June 1953 – Summary of Action Taken by the War Department', Chapter 43.

⁶⁵ PREM 11/357, letter of 5 June 1953.

3.44 The Archbishop hoped ‘that the traditional Rite could still be given meaning to the secularized millions of Britain and beyond’.⁶⁶ In a long *Times* leader, ‘And After?’, the day following the coronation, the author – Dermot Morrah, who had officiated as one of the Heralds – obtruded his *Round Table* sympathies: ‘If the sense of Empire ...had vanished in a breathing space of Time shorter than that of Queen Victoria’s own reign, a feeling of Commonwealth and community had taken its place’. The population was abjured not to continue its ‘holiday from reality’. Referring to the ordeal of ‘the recent thirty years war’ and to the ‘exhaustion and the tiredness, and the barrenness of the victory so far’, the time had ‘come for Britain to find anew her place in the world’. Morrah looked forward to ‘Christian values re-established, morals reasserted, conscientiousness revived, energy renewed, and national unity restored.’⁶⁷ The BBC programme ‘Long Live the Queen’ on coronation day contained messages of loyalty and support from all the Commonwealth prime ministers. Vincent Massey, then Canadian Governor General, made an effusive broadcast reading in part:

During these times of stress and trouble, the Crown, unshaken by disaster, has been ennobled through trial. It helped us to face the dark days. It has been with us to brighten the glad ones. And, therefore, as we have returned once and again to this ancient rite, we have found it enriched with an even deeper meaning.⁶⁸

Retrospective reactions

3.45 The longer the elapse of time, the more subsequent concerns colour appreciations. The rapid dissolution of the colonial empire after 1953 subtracted meaning from the imperial splendour of the great coronation processions. Hopes that Christianity might strengthen have been falsified by increased secularization on the one hand, and a much greater and more visible degree of religious pluralization. The ‘thirty years war’, Morrah’s encapsulation of the period 1914-1945, has been replaced by the rolling anxieties of terrorism of various stripes in a global environment where, undeniably from the Suez debacle in 1956, Britain ceased to be a world power. One historian has called the coronation ‘A kind of farewell party’⁶⁹, another ‘a magnificent funeral tribute to a world order that was ending’.⁷⁰ Sociologists in 1953-5 argued inconclusively over the ‘meaning’ of the coronation⁷¹ though they persuaded a later historian that they had accurately perceived ‘that the Coronation was more than mere flummery; and that it helped to define, not just royalty, but the British identity for the next generation.’⁷²

3.46 Another way of attempting to understand the coronation is to place it in a larger context of the evolution of the UK monarchy since 1953:

⁶⁶ Carpenter, *Fisher*, p. 265.

⁶⁷ *Times*, 3 June 1953.

⁶⁸ *Idem*.

⁶⁹ Kynaston, Chapter 11.

⁷⁰ Pimlott B. (1996) *The Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth II* (London, Harper Collins), p.204.

⁷¹ For a recent discussion of this controversy, see Bonney N. (2013) *Monarchy, Religion and the State: Civil Religion in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the Commonwealth* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), pp. 54-7.

⁷² The sociologists were Shils E. and Young M. ‘The Meaning of the Coronation’, and Birnbaum N. ‘Monarchs and Sociologists: A Reply to Professor Shils and M. Young’, *Sociological Review*, Vol I.2 December 1953, pp. 63-70, and Vol 3.1 July 1955, pp.13-23. The historian was Ben Pimlott - Pimlott, *The Queen*, p. 217.

...the most marked national transformation since the early 1950s has been Britain's slow, painful and not-yet-completed adjustment to the loss of imperial dominion and great power status; and the most marked royal transformation during the same period has been the slow, painful and yet-to-be-completed adjustment from being an imperial monarchy and great-power throne to something necessarily less and necessarily different.⁷³

⁷³ Cannadine D. (2008) *Making History Now and Then*, pp. 56-7.

Chapter 4: The Next Coronation

Introduction

4.1 The UK is the only surviving European monarchy that retains a religious coronation as opposed to a constitutional investiture where – with or without public celebration – the sovereign swears to observe the constitution. It seems, therefore, from practices abroad that a coronation is not an absolute requirement for succession to the crown. Indeed, it has already been observed above that it is the law rather than a coronation that 'makes' the sovereign.

4.2 This section will consider what little public discussion there has been about the nature of a future coronation. It is assumed that the UK monarchy will survive: and that there is no significant pressure to change arrangements where the UK has for long possessed most of the attributes of a republic with a hereditary head of state. It is also assumed that at present there is an expectation, in so far as it is thought about at all, that the next accession would be followed by a coronation. As the present Dean of Westminster puts it

At its heart, the anointing of the Sovereign, and clothing with priestly garments that precede the coronation itself, resemble the ordination of a priest or the consecration of a bishop. The coronation is a setting apart for service after the pattern of Jesus Christ.⁷⁴

4.3 Archbishop Fisher's biographer referred to the thought in the wake of the 1953 coronation that its form might be reviewed in the light of the experience. That did not happen: 'It was rightly felt that conditions would probably be so different at the end of the century that any forward planning so early would consume time to no purpose'.⁷⁵ This warning remains apt because it will be the circumstances of the immediate times that will determine the nature of the event. While there will no doubt be a political willingness to take the heir's views into account, crucial will be the complexion of the government of the day for it is that government that will determine the outcome.

Religious voices

4.4 The preoccupation here is naturally with the form of the coronation service, the part of the coronation most susceptible to archiepiscopal influence. Such limited discussion that has surfaced has tended to concentrate accordingly on the religious aspects. A bishop noted for his espousal of disestablishing the Church of England nonetheless thought of the service:

It must, I take it, be recognizably a Church of England rite in terms of personnel, texts, milieu and style even if there are guest appearances within it of other Christians. If it were truly ecumenical, it would cease to recognize or confer a specially protected place in the nation for the Church of England.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Hall J. (2012) *Queen Elizabeth and Her Church: Royal Service at Westminster Abbey* (London, Continuum), p.2.

⁷⁵ Carpenter, *Fisher*, p. 265.

⁷⁶ Buchanan C. (1997) 'The Next Coronation' in Bradshaw P. (ed) *Coronations, Past, Present and Future* (Cambridge, Grove Books), p. 41.

The author went on to argue that disestablishment would remove the restrictions on the sovereign's own religion without threatening the viability of the monarchy, though at that point glossing over whether a coronation could survive such a change.

4.5 A former Dean of Westminster agreed that the service had to remain Anglican. While stressing the adaptable character of the rite, Wesley Carr emphasised the centrality of the eucharistic nature of the service:

To plan a coronation without a Eucharist would require a massive break with history. That alone would imply a long study of the intention behind a coronation at all, its venue and basic structure.⁷⁷

4.6 Exactly – one of the questions to be faced is whether the eucharistic quality of the rite will be thought appropriate on the next occasion. Although that is not a question that can be settled now, it will have to be settled then. And this in the changed social and religious context to which Carr was fully alive. Referring to talk in 1937 and 1952 that Westminster Hall – dropped from coronation day events after 1821 - might be re-included in the festivities for some modern species of homage, he saw use of that venue as ‘a suitable way for the Crown to affirm the ethnic and religious plurality to which the social reality points within the continuity that the nation seeks’. He also in the same article questioned the former dominant numbers of hereditary peers in the Abbey congregation and advanced the case for the inclusion of representation from the devolved legislatures.⁷⁸

4.7 Dr Ian Bradley of St Andrew's University, a minister in the Church of Scotland, would also wish to see the coronation preserved. In the revised edition of a book originally published in 2002, he puts forward the counter-cultural proposition that the monarchy still has a vital role and that this role is primarily spiritual:

It involves symbolizing spiritual values, embodying the sacred, representing and defending religious faith against unbelief and secular materialism, promoting order in the midst of chaos standing for the public good against private gain, and acting as a focal point for unity in a society which is increasingly fragmented and fissiparous.⁷⁹

On the other hand, Bradley has a more radical approach to the coronation rite than Wesley Carr:

The coronation must retain its sacramental character and its central element of the consecrating and anointing of the new sovereign. It is not absolutely central to this sacramentality that it remains embedded in the Anglican communion service.⁸⁰

4.8 He also argues for revisions of the Coronation Oath that would align it more specifically with traditions of fairness and tolerance in government, and combine support for Protestant establishment with support not only for the Christian religion as a whole but also with a

⁷⁷ Carr W. (2002) ‘This Intimate Ritual: The Coronation Service’, *Political Theology*, pp. 11-24 at p. 22.

⁷⁸ Carr 2002, pp. 22 and 14.

⁷⁹ Bradley I. (2012) *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Heart of the Monarchy* (London. Continuum), p.250.

⁸⁰ Bradley, p. 259.

commitment to the defence and safeguarding of faith more generally.⁸¹ Very controversially, in a non-eucharistic rite, he would be prepared to see the Roman Catholic cardinal share in the anointing with the Archbishop of Canterbury in a still Christian ceremony that found ways also to involve other Christian groups. After the coronation, Bradley would favour an ecumenical event in Westminster Hall which could include new and extended forms of homage:

At this ceremony, the monarch, wearing crown and robes, would be symbolically enthroned by leading members of the government, politicians from across the political spectrum and across the UK, Commonwealth prime ministers and senior officers in the armed forces.⁸²

4.9 More recently the religious think tank *Theos* published a report, *Who wants a Christian Coronation?*⁸³ Relying on a telephone survey,⁸⁴ the report maintained that there were no majorities for a secular coronation or for the view that a Christian coronation would alienate those of other faiths or none. A majority (57 per cent) thought the ceremony should be Christian compared with 19 per cent who thought it should be multi-faith and 23 per cent who thought it should be secular. The authors also noted that there were majorities saying they would not feel alienated by a Christian ceremony even among religious minorities and those of no religious faith.

4.10 The report concluded that there was a case for modernising the ceremony and making it in some ways more inclusive. It quoted a number of Anglican clerical sources and remarks by the Queen herself as expressing open mindedness on the possibility though all stopped short of welcoming participation as opposed to the presence of other religions.⁸⁵ The survey revealed solid majority support for the monarchy across all age groups but more variation on the religious questions and in some cases fairly high proportions of Don't knows.

4.11 Younger age groups, for example, were more evenly divided than older ones on the alienation issue with a small majority feeling that alienation would occur whereas older groups all had majorities dismissing the possibility. It will be interesting to see how opinion in the younger groups matures in the future and in the cohorts that replace them.⁸⁶

4.12 The report had views also on the scale of the Abbey event:

The next coronation would do well to be shorter: the three or so hours of 1953 is surely twice as long as any contemporary coronation could or should be. It could also be a smaller affair. The 8,250 guests of 1953 seems somewhat excessive (not least given the

⁸¹ Some of these arguments were first aired in a 2002 article, 'The Shape of the Next Coronation: Some Tentative Thoughts', *Political Theology*, pp. 25-43. Bradley has, however, retreated in 2012 from his earlier position arguing for the removal of the constitutional ban on the sovereign being a Roman Catholic.

⁸² Bradley 2012, p. 263.

⁸³ *Theos*, 1 September 2015 at <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2015/09/01/who-wants-a-christian-coronation>, accessed 9 June 2016.

⁸⁴ *Theos - Coronation Polling*, ComRes, *Theos - Coronation Polling*, ComRes at <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2015/09/01/who-wants-a-christian-coronation>, accessed 9 June 2016.

⁸⁵ The *Theos* writers had amongst other things the Westminster Abbey Commonwealth Day service in mind. This certainly has a multifaith presence and participation (delivering prayers, for example). But it is clearly an Anglican occasion and, above all, not like the coronation eucharistic rite. See the order of service used in 2016 at <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/press/news/2018/march/?a=115080>, accessed 23 April 2018.

⁸⁶ *Theos*, pp. 23-26.

size of the Abbey) and a congregation closer to that of the recent Royal Wedding (c. 2000 people) seems appropriate. (Report, p. 56)

4.13 Before leaving this discussion, it should be borne in mind that, with the exception of the voice from the established Church of Scotland, the voices recorded above are largely Anglican and all English. Nonconformist churchmen, and especially non-English nonconformists, see things differently. Pointing out that in 1953 the Church of England ‘appeared simply to take the service, the occasion and its own part in it, entirely for granted’, Daniel Jenkins⁸⁷ went on to argue that

Many people in the world suspect, and some believe, that the Church of England is little more than a thinly-disguised adaptation and distortion of the Christian faith to serve the purpose of English nationalism, and English nationalism at its most self-satisfied, uncritical and sanctimonious.⁸⁸

Arguably, greater Anglican sensitivity to this dimension would seem desirable on the next occasion especially considering, at present, how English nationalism has become more prominent. In his excellent study of past coronations, Roy Strong quoted with – perhaps nostalgic – approval 1953 remarks by the Anglican liturgist E. C. Ratcliff that ‘the English Coronation Service symbolises national continuity considered *sub specie Christianitatis*.’ Ratcliff was adamant on the point:

‘...the Coronation is no mere ceremonial parade. It is a Service of the English Church and State. To consider it otherwise is to miss or mistake its meaning.’⁸⁹

While true historically, its confident synecdoche of assuming that England can stand for the whole nation and, at that, also under one particular religion does not wear well for our present society and, indeed, nowadays indicates how far the times have moved.

Secular voices

4.14 There has been little public discussion and it has shown no preoccupation with the content of the religious ceremony as opposed to what political significance should be given to accession and coronation in greatly changed times.⁹⁰ Some of this discussion has taken place consciously or otherwise with regard to the concept of ‘civil religion’. This is the sociological concept with roots in the Enlightenment understanding that a state may manifest collective non-specific quasi-religious language that reflects shared moral beliefs without being anchored in any particular religion. Particularly noticed in the USA as related to the constitutional ban on

⁸⁷ Daniel Thomas Jenkins (1914-2002), born Dowlais, Congregationalist/United Reformed Church minister and prominent Nonconformist theologian.

⁸⁸ Jenkins D. (1975) *The British, Their Identity and Their Religion* (London, SCM Press), pp. 74 and 80. See also Morris R. M. (ed.) (2006) *Church and State: Some Reflections on Church Establishment in England* (London, Constitution Unit) for some other Christian non-Anglican attitudes to the Church of England, especially chapters 2-4.

⁸⁹ Ratcliff, E. C. (1953) *The Coronation Service of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II* (London, SPCK), pp.23 and vii respectively, the first quoted in Strong R. *Coronation*, p. 501.

⁹⁰ A possible exception is the religious affairs journalist Andrew Brown who has argued for keeping the coronation service (including the oaths) untouched and leaving people to take their own meaning from it whether they regard the ritual as religious or not – rather like a theology of don’t ask, don’t tell. See Brown A., ‘Charles will be sorely tempted to overhaul the coronation. Here’s why he should resist.’ *Prospect*, September 2017.

religious establishment, the phenomenon is less apparent in the UK because of the religious establishment here of a kind which in its mild and undemanding Anglican form shares similar social functions.⁹¹

4.15 Another preliminary to further discussion arises from the record above of what was done *outside* the Abbey in 1953. It is simply inconceivable, for example, that the UK state now has the wish let alone the capacity to mount the extent of the last coronation's festivities. There would not be the numbers of servicemen to line the streets let alone parade twelve abreast in a column nearly three miles long accompanied by enough bands stationary or marching to be audible to the marchers and the spectators.⁹²

4.16 Constitutional changes call into question whether any hereditary peers who are not relevant office-holders⁹³ should attend the Abbey service at all. It may also in the event become unclear whether the 1953 emphasis on the Commonwealth, including at the Abbey, remains viable or practicable, especially if the number of realms declines. Taken together with the increasing degree of religious disaffiliation, a combination of these and other factors may lead to a situation where, as Wesley Carr has anticipated, the balance between the religious and secular aspects of accession and coronation might be changed.

Adding a civil ceremony in Westminster Hall

4.17 One way of responding to these uncertainties would be to develop a new venture of non-feudal 'recognition' of the new monarch outside the religious canopy. In 1953 the *Round Table* mooted removing the secular ceremonies of fealty and homage from the Abbey service to a modernised equivalent event in Westminster Hall as a way of finding also a larger place for the Commonwealth in the ceremonies. Archbishop Fisher strongly opposed the proposal: 'Bearing in mind the whole tendency of the modern age, which is always to transfer significance from the religious to the secular...it is essential to keep the ceremony in the Abbey alone and there to keep everything subordinated to the religious service.'⁹⁴

4.18 So far, most religious commentators have not thought beyond retaining the coronation's eucharistic character if placing it in a more ecumenical context. However, Wesley Carr, when Dean of Westminster, suggested a series of ceremonies involving a progress starting with an ecumenical, civil ceremony of acclamation for the new sovereign in Westminster Hall as a prelude to the coronation proper shorn perhaps of the homage which might be displaced to a

⁹¹ For a review of these considerations see Bonney N. (2013) *Monarchy, religion and the state*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press).

⁹² The Arthur Rank coloured film of the coronation can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKzIKwpm17U> accessed 30 March 2016.

⁹³ Hereditary offices were created in times when the state bred functions but without adequate agency. That is, the permanent capacity of the state's services was limited almost entirely to the Household itself. Magnates were designated to shoulder certain functions accordingly, and the burdens were represented as marks of favour. The remaining significant officers of this character are now few. It might be ungrateful to transfer their functions to faceless commoners but the fact is they could be replaced from within government without difficulty, especially if the aristocratic aspects of public ceremony are further reduced.

⁹⁴ 'The Coronation and the Commonwealth IV – Some Overseas Opinions', *Round Table*, December 1953, 57-64. The December article was the last of four on the Commonwealth and the coronation during 1953, all of which are thought to have been written by the journal's long-standing editor, Dermot Morrah. The *Round Table*, founded in 1910, describes itself as a journal of Commonwealth and international affairs and Britain's oldest international affairs journal. See also Carpenter, *Fisher*, pp. 248-253.

Parliamentary acclamation/homage in St Margaret's Westminster, with a final return to Westminster Hall for an inter-faith inauguration.⁹⁵

4.19 A Scottish observer preferred a Westminster Hall event *after* the coronation which mixed ceremonies of homage and allegiance attended by political, judicial and civil state representatives.⁹⁶ It is for consideration whether, alternatively, such ceremonies should precede rather than follow the coronation: the former would stress the civil and perhaps multi-faith character of the nation's acclamation, but the latter would put the coronation at the centre of the celebrations.

4.20 On the other hand, when the discussion involves a wider group of participants, it quickly becomes evident that there is little real agreement. For example, a BBC discussion on the sixtieth anniversary of the 1953 coronation⁹⁷, disclosed a range of opinion: the House of Commons Speaker's Chaplain preferred to leave the text untouched; another religious speaker claimed that the ceremony should continue to signify the accountability of earthly government to a higher power; and a humanist argued that the coronation oath's support for the Church of England was contentious when that Church was attended by only two per cent of the population. The support for the symbolism and mystique on the one hand was countered by the view that it was possible to have pomp and ceremony without religion in a situation where such things should be tailored to the spirit of the age.

4.21 The limited and inchoate discussion so far may be taken to reflect uncertainties about how to respond to and reflect changes since 1953. It may be helpful to concentrate discussion by making some working assumptions about the next coronation: first, that there will be an Anglican coronation in Westminster Abbey – a tradition marking the start of a new reign since Saxon times will not be lightly set aside; second, that it will probably be eucharistic but one finding places for other Christian denominations and other religions⁹⁸; and, third, it may not include the former ceremony of peers' homage, not itself a religious element of the service. The homage reflected a feudal, hierarchical social structure whose dissolution has been most recently symbolically signalled in the removal of all but a minority of hereditary peers from the House of Lords. Removing homage from the coronation would give an opportunity to revivify and modernise its form into an occasion where the new sovereign met representative elements of civil society in a secular ceremony in, say, Westminster Hall.

4.22 Developments and elaborations of these ideas can be imagined. There could, for example, be an opportunity to include the 'Privileged Bodies'⁹⁹ and balloted representatives of the many hundreds of organisations which traditionally submit loyal addresses to the new sovereign expressing congratulations and support. Such an event could not only reflect society's greater diversity but also constitute a UK-wide counterpart that capped, for example, the process where a new sovereign wished to pay very early visits to the devolved legislatures' capitals for memorial events immediately after demise. This would avoid allowing accession to be marked only by the provincial repetition of the London proclamation and, as in the past, making provincial tours sometime *after* the coronation. The former absence of prime ministerial

⁹⁵ Wesley Carr, 'Crown and People: Reflections on the Spiritual Dimension of Establishment', Westminster Abbey Lecture, 16 September 2002.

⁹⁶ Bradley, *God Save the Queen*, pp. 262-3.

⁹⁷ Beyond Belief, chaired by Ernie Reay on 27 May 2013.

⁹⁸ The obvious precedent is the way the annual Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey has developed over the years.

⁹⁹ A group of organisations customarily permitted to present loyal addresses in person.

participation in the ceremony other than as one of the spectators draws attention to whether a ceremony outside the Abbey should include some distinct Parliamentary dimension, the thought behind the rejected suggestion made at a late stage of coronation planning in 1953 that the Speaker should perform homage as representative of the common man. Such an occasion would now, of course, need to find a place not only for the Commons Speaker but for the Lords Speaker too.

4.23 There would be, of course, questions of timing as well as purpose, attendance and procedure.¹⁰⁰ The object would not be to compete with, still less to upstage, the coronation – for example, by holding the new ceremony – as the *Round Table* had suggested - close to the coronation. The venture would not challenge the reported plans of the new king to visit the devolved legislatures' capitals but, rather, build on that initiative. An imaginative design could celebrate the nation's new diversity in ways that limiting public ceremony to an Anglican event or even provincial visits could not.

4.24 The *Theos* report wanted to locate 'inclusiveness' in the selected character of the Abbey congregation. There is certainly a case for that but locating some greater accession event at Westminster Hall would enable 'inclusiveness' to be encompassed outside the confines of a particular religious ceremony. In advance of the coronation, some special, one off assembly representative of contemporary civil society run by the Speakers and hosted by Parliament could be addressed by the new sovereign and itself express welcome in a celebration of the full range and diversity of UK society. The Church of England would probably prefer such an event to occur after the coronation to avoid diminishing the centrality of the coronation celebrations. But there is also a case for having such a ceremony *before* the coronation to stress the inclusiveness of the UK state in advance of a traditional Anglican event arranged by what has become a minority and at that a predominantly English religion.

¹⁰⁰ There might also be problems of location if Parliament had decamped during the planned refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster, and Westminster Hall – which could accommodate about 1,200 people - was not available.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Bearing in mind how a changed Britain wishes to present itself to the world, it will be for the Cabinet of the day in the circumstances of the day to determine the arrangements for the inaugural celebrations. Contingency planning for the accession needs to be agreed in advance, because the first accession ceremonies take place on the day immediately after demise.

5.2 At the time of writing, following are the cardinal considerations that this study brings to mind –

- The accession ceremonies should be opened to media coverage and used by the new King to set the tone for the new reign. He will announce his regnal title, and how his spouse should be styled. The first is a personal choice; the second a matter on which he, and the government of the day, may think it prudent he should take advice.
- In retrospect the 1953 coronation falls to be understood as the last imperial hurrah. The UK is no longer a global or a colonial power. Celebration will therefore need to reflect what the UK has become rather than what it once was.
- This has implications for both the scale of the coronation and, above all, its style:
 - *Scale* – lavish route-lining, exclusive use of horses, length of processional routes, extent of street decorations, the size and composition of the Abbey congregation, the length of the service and its feudal and eucharistic elements all require radical review. This is not simply on grounds of cost, but more on how a modern, forward looking and confident state should choose to present itself to itself and for view from outside.
 - *Style* – it is imperative that the continuity of British society should be celebrated but with an emphasis on its current diversity. Imperial echoes should be minimised and the inauguration of a new monarch emphasise the equality and diversity of modern society, in all its different forms: geographic, political, religious, cultural, ethnic, and many more.
- However welcoming to other faiths, a wholly Anglican coronation service is no longer capable of reflecting or responding to modern British society. The service should be shorter, its feudal and political elements reduced or purged, and the congregation fixed at a size to fit the accommodation normally available. That would also enable the coronation to take place swiftly, if that is the new monarch's wish.
- The coronation could be balanced by a new kind of event, or series of events, which signify the monarchy's reach to all parts of UK society. Current plans for the new King immediately to visit provincial capitals are steps in the right direction. Other events could include a ceremony in Westminster Hall in which politicians and all the different elements of civil society come together in an event registering mutual recognition and respect.

PROCLAMATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

EXTRACT FROM LONDON GAZETTE 8 FEBRUARY 1952 No 39462

Whitehall, February 6, 1952

Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth of Blessed Memory by whose Decease the Crown is solely and rightfully come to the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary: We, therefore, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of this Realm, being here assisted with these of His late Majesty's Privy Council, with representatives of other members of the Commonwealth, with other Principal Gentlemen of Quality, with the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of London, do now hereby with one voice and Consent of Tongue and Heart publish and proclaim that the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary is now, by the Death of our late Sovereign of Happy Memory, become Queen Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God Queen of this Realm and of all Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to whom Her lieges do acknowledge all Faith and constant Obedience, with hearty and humble Affection; beseeching God, by whom Kings and Queens do reign, to bless the Royal Princess Elizabeth the Second with long and happy Years to reign over us.

Given at St James's Palace this Sixth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fifty-two.

Simonds C.

Winston S. Churchill.

David Maxwell Fyfe.

Woolton.

W. S. Morrison.

C. R. Attlee

[and 185 others]

TEXT OF THE RELEVANT STATUTES, AND OATHS THEY PRESCRIBE¹⁰¹

In the order in which they are sworn, the relevant statutes and texts are as follows.

(I) The Scottish Oath

This is required, but the text as opposed to the content is not specified, by the -

Union with Scotland Act 1706 (1706 c. 11 6_Ann)

- Side notes

II Acts of Scotland herein mentioned, confirmed; Universities and colleges of Saint Andrew, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, to continue; Subjects not liable to Oath, Test, or Subscription, inconsistent with the Presbyterian Church Government; Successor to swear to maintain the said Settlement of Religion; This Act to be held a fundamental Condition of Union, and to be inserted in any Act of Parliament for concluding the said Union; This Ratification of the said Articles not binding until they are ratified by Parliament of England, &c.; Laws contrary to Articles void.

- ... Text of Act

- And further Her Majesty with Advice aforesaid expressly declares and statutes that none of the Subjects of this Kingdom shall be liable to but all and every one of them for ever free of any Oath Test or Subscription within this Kingdom contrary to or inconsistent with the foresaid true Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government Worship and Discipline as above established and that the same within the Bounds of this Church and Kingdom shall never be imposed upon or required of them in any sort And lastly that after the decease of Her present Majesty (whom God long preserve) the Sovereign succeeding to Her in the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Great Britain shall in all time coming at His or Her Accession to the Crown swear and subscribe that they shall inviolably maintain and preserve the foresaid Settlement of the true Protestant Religion with the Government Worship Discipline right and Privileges of this Church as above established by the Laws of this Kingdom in Prosecution of the Claim of Right
- And it is hereby statute and ordained that this Act of Parliament with the Establishment therein contained shall be held and observed in all time coming as a Fundamental and Essential Condition of any Treaty or Union to be concluded betwixt the two Kingdoms without any Alteration thereof or Derogation thereto in any sort for ever As also that this Act of Parliament and Settlement therein contained shall be insert and repeated in any Act of Parliament that shall pass for agreeing and concluding the foresaid Treaty or Union betwixt the two Kingdoms and that the same shall be therein expressly declared to be a Fundamental and Essential Condition of the said Treaty or Union in all time coming which Articles of Union and Act immediately above written Her Majesty with Advice and Consent aforesaid statutes enacts and ordains to be and continue in all time coming the Sure and perpetual Foundation of a compleat and entire Union of the two Kingdoms of Scotland and England under the

¹⁰¹ All texts taken from legislation.co.uk accessed 21 March 2017.

express Condition and provision that this approbation and ratification of the foresaid Articles and Act shall be no ways binding on this Kingdom until the said Articles and Act be ratified approved and confirmed by Her Majesty with and by the Authority of the Parliament of England as they are now agreed to approved and confirmed by Her Majesty with and by the Authority of the Parliament of Scotland declaring nevertheless that the Parliament of England may provide for the Security of the Church of England as they think expedient to take place within the Bounds of the said Kingdom of England and not derogating from the Security above provided for establishing of the Church of Scotland within the Bounds of this Kingdom As also the said Parliament of England may extend the Additions and other Provisions contained in the Articles of Union as above insert in favours of the Subjects of Scotland to and in favours of the Subjects of England which shall not suspend or derogate from the force and effect of this present Ratification but shall be understood as herein included without the necessity of any new ratification in the Parliament of Scotland

(II) Accession Declaration

While the 1910 Act specifies the *content* of the oath, *the requirement to swear* is contained in the Bill of Rights Act 1688 as follows –

Bill of Rights Act 1688 (1688 c.2 1 Will and Mar Sess 2)

An Act declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Setleing the Succession of the Crowne.

...And that every King and Queene of this Realme who at any time hereafter shall come to and succede in the Imperiall Crowne of this Kingdome shall on the first day of the meeting of the first Parlyament next after his or her coming to the Crowne sitting in his or her Throne in the House of Peeres in the presence of the Lords and Commons therein assembled or at his or her Coronation before such person or persons who shall administer the Coronation Oath to him or her at the time of his or her takeing the said Oath (which shall first happen) make subscribe and audibly repeate the Declaration mentioned in the Statute made in the thirtyeth yeare of the Raigne of King Charles the Second Entituled An Act for the more effectuall Preserueing the Kings Person and Government by disableing Papists from sitting in either House of Parlyament But if it shall happen that such King or Queene upon his or her Succession to the Crowne of this Realme shall be under the Age of twelve yeares then every such King or Queene shall make subscribe and audibly repeate the said Declaration at his or her Coronation or the first day of the meeting of the first Parlyament as aforesaid which shall first happen after such King or Queene shall have attained the said Age of twelve yeares

The wording thus required, but not the original nature of the requirement to swear was altered by

The Accession Declaration Act (1910 c. 29 10 Edw 7 and 1 Geo 5)

An Act to alter the form of the Declaration required to be made by the Sovereign on Accession.

1 Alteration of form of accession declaration.

The declaration to be made, subscribed, and audibly repeated by the Sovereign under section one of the Bill of Rights and section two of the Act of Settlement shall be that set out in the Schedule to this Act instead of that referred to in the said sections.

2 Short title.

This Act may be cited as the Accession Declaration Act 1910.

SCHEDULE

I [*here insert the name of the Sovereign*] do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the Throne of my Realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my powers according to law.

(III) Coronation Oath Act 1688 (1688 c. 6 1 Will and Mar)

An Act for Establishing the Coronation Oath.

Oath heretofore framed in doubtful Words.

Whereas by the Law and Ancient Usage of this Realme the Kings and Queens thereof have taken a Solemne Oath upon the Evangelists at Their respective Coronations to maintaine the Statutes Laws and Customs of the said Realme and all the People and Inhabitants thereof in their Spirituall and Civill Rights and Properties But forasmuch as the Oath itselpe on such Occasion Administred hath heretofore beene framed in doubtfull Words and Expressions with relation to ancient Laws and Constitutions at this time unknowne To the end therefore that One Uniforme Oath may be in all Times to come taken by the Kings and Queens of this Realme and to Them respectively Administred at the times of Their and every of Their Coronation.

II Oath hereafter mentioned to be administred, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, &c.

May it please Your Majesties That the Oath herein Mentioned and hereafter Expressed shall and may be Administred to their most Excellent Majestyes King William and Queene Mary (whome God long preserve) at the time of Their Coronation in the presence of all Persons that shall be then and there present at the Solemnizeing thereof by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Archbishop of Yorke or either of them or any other Bishop of this Realme whome the King's Majesty shall thereunto appoint and who shall be hereby thereunto respectively Authorized which Oath followeth and shall be Administred in this Manner That is to say,

III Form of Oath and Administration thereof.

The Arch-Bishop or Bishop shall say,

Will You solemnly Promise and Sweare to Governe the People of this Kingdome of England and the Dominions thereto belonging according to the Statutes in Parlyament Agreed on and the Laws and Customs of the same?

The King and Queene shall say,

I solemnly Promise soe to doe.

Arch Bishop or Bishop,

Will You to Your power cause Law and Justice in Mercy to be Executed in all Your Judgements?

King and Queene,

I will.

Arch Bishop or Bishop.

Will You to the utmost of Your power Maintaine the Laws of God the true Profession of the Gospell and the Protestant Reformed Religion Established by Law? And will You Preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of this Realme and to the Churches committed to their Charge all such Rights and Priviledges as by Law doe or shall appertaine unto them or any of them.

King and Queene.

All this I Promise to doe.

After this the King and Queene laying His and Her Hand upon the Holy Gospells, shall say,

King and Queene

The things which I have here before promised I will performe and Keepe Soe help me God.

Then the King and Queene shall kisse the Booke.

IVOath to be adminstered to all future Kings and Queens.

And the said Oath shall be in like manner Adminstred to every King or Queene who shall Succeede to the Imperiall Crowne of this Realme at their respective Coronations by one of the Archbishops or Bishops of this Realme of England for the time being to be thereunto appointed by such King or Queene respectively and in the Presence of all Persons that shall be Attending Assisting or otherwise present at such their respective Coronations Any Law Statute or Usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

(Source: legislation.gov.uk accessed 21 March 2017.)

The Coronation Oath 1953

As administered to Elizabeth II in 1953, it was as follows:

Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon, and of your Possessions and the other Territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, according to their respective laws and customs?

I solemnly promise so to do.

Will you to your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgements?

I will

Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?

All this I promise to do.



Royal Titles Act 1953

1953 CHAPTER 9 1 and 2 Eliz 2

An Act to provide for an alteration of the Royal Style and Titles.

[26th March 1953]

Whereas it is expedient that the style and titles at present appertaining to the Crown should be altered so as to reflect more clearly the existing constitutional relations of the members of the Commonwealth to one another and their recognition of the Crown as the symbol of their free association and of the Sovereign as the Head of the Commonwealth:

And whereas it was agreed between representatives of Her Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon assembled in London in the Month of December, nineteen hundred and fifty-two, that there is need for an alteration thereof which, whilst permitting of the use in relation to each of those countries of a form suiting its particular circumstances, would retain a substantial element common to all:

1 Power to alter the style and titles of the Crown.

The assent of the Parliament of the United Kingdom is hereby given to the adoption by Her Majesty, for use in relation to the United Kingdom and all other the territories for whose foreign relations Her Government in the United Kingdom is responsible, of such style and titles as Her Majesty may think fit having regard to the said agreement, in lieu of the style and titles at present appertaining to the Crown, and to the issue by Her for that purpose of Her Royal Proclamation under the Great Seal of the Realm.

2 Short Title.

This Act may be cited as the Royal Titles Act 1953.

Eleventh Supplement 29 May of *The London Gazette* of 26th May, 1953.)

BY THE QUEEN

A PROCLAMATION

ELIZABETH R.

WHEREAS there has been passed in the present Session of Parliament the Royal Titles Act, 1953 [1 & 2 Eliz. 2. c.9], which Act recites that it is expedient that the style and titles at present appertaining to the Crown should be altered so as to reflect more clearly the existing constitutional relations of the members of the Commonwealth to one another and their recognition of the Crown as the symbol of their free association and of the Sovereign as the Head of the Commonwealth, and which Act also recites that it was agreed between representatives of Her Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon assembled in London in the month of December, nineteen hundred and fifty-two, that there is need for an alteration thereof which, whilst permitting of the use in relation to each of those countries of a form suiting its particular circumstances, would retain a substantial element common to all:

And Whereas by the said Act the assent of the Parliament of the United Kingdom was given to the adoption by Us, for use in relation to the United Kingdom and all other the territories for whose foreign relations Our Government in the United Kingdom is responsible, of such style and titles as We may think fit having regard to the said agreement, in lieu of the style and titles at present appertaining to the Crown, and to the issue by Us for that purpose of Our Royal Proclamation under the Great Seal of the Realm:

We have thought fit, and We do hereby appoint and declare, by and with the advice of Our Privy Council, that so far as conveniently may be, on all occasions and in all instruments wherein Our style and titles are used in relation to all or any one or more of the following, that is to say, the United Kingdom and all other the territories for whose foreign relations Our Government in the United Kingdom is responsible, Our style and titles shall henceforth be accepted, taken and used as the same are set forth in manner and form following, that is to say, the same shall be expressed in the English tongue by these words:—

"Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith".

And in the Latin tongue by these words:—

" Elizabeth II, Dei Gratia Britanniarum Regnorumque Suorum Ceterorum Regina, Consortionis Populorum Princeps, Fidei Defensor ".

Given at Our Court at Buckingham Palace, this twenty-eighth day of May, in the year of our Lord One thousand nine hundred and fifty-three, and in the Second year of Our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN