

A Speech by His Excellency The Lieutenant Governor at  
A Service of Thanksgiving for  
Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
In The Town Church, St Peter Port

'Evening will come, however determined the late afternoon'. So said the Poet Laureate of Her Majesty's death. What an extraordinary late afternoon she had, indeed what an extraordinary day, the like of which we will not see again in our lifetimes. And now the evening has come; we are living in a moment of great history, but it feels almost impossible to read all that is being written and watch all that is being broadcast. There will come a time when channels will change and newspapers will lie in the backs of cupboards, but our memories and emotions will be there for the rest of our lives.

Six times Her Majesty came to these Islands. She loved the Bailiwick and I know she never stopped thinking and caring about us. It has been over seventy years since her first visit and twenty years since her last and they are captured in trees planted, hospitals named and photographs taken. These things are important, but they tell us what she did, not who she was. That comes from the recollections of those that were there, who saw and spoke to her and who hold that memory dear.

She laughed with Jonathon Le Gallez and said he had cheated when he told her in 2001 that he had managed to see her twice in one day. On the same visit Eddie Bolger was so surprised when she looked him in the eye that he forgot to take a picture. In 1989 Angela Tostevin and Jeannine Tanquerel were so determined to give her flowers that they thrust them through the windows of her car – it made Angela's day that She seemed so pleased to get them. In 1978 Lady Loveridge said how lucky she had been to meet the Queen and Crystal James, who sang for Her Majesty in 1957 described the atmosphere as magical. In 1949 Michael Falla, who was holding his father's cow at the time, was asked by the then Princess whether he helped at home. 'Only Sometimes' was the honest reply. Many of you will have been there, many times perhaps, and will have your own memories. I have always believed throughout my military career that no-one is truly gone while they are remembered and their name is said. On that basis all will be well for many years to come.

My own 6 moments started at school, where we were all marched to the end of the drive to watch Her Majesty drive past. The car slowed down so that we could all wave and I remember it as if it were yesterday. I went to Sandhurst, where Her Royal cypher was in our cap badge and where we were soaked in the concept of service, which was such a hall-mark of her life. I held Her commission and She was the Royal Colonel of the Corps I joined. In later life she created me a General, presented me with a medal and appointed me as her representative to this Bailiwick.

I only met Her once. When I thought the meeting had come to an end, I stood up, bowed, and started to step backwards as I had been briefed to do. Her Majesty was standing by this stage as well and asked what I was doing. I stumbled through an answer that included that I thought it was time to go and so-on, at which point she told me to stand still. As I was clearly caught-out by this, she explained that although the meeting was over, the button she used to call her staff was broken, which meant that any moment now the door would be opened swiftly to ensure all was well. If I went any further back I'd be hit by the door. All

came to pass as she had predicted and the meeting ended with a gentle 'I told you so' and a smile.

Whether you met Her Majesty or not, we all knew her, and as the years pass it will be those memories that will come to mind. For some it will be catching a glimpse on a walkabout and for others it will be seeing Her eat a sandwich with Paddington or parachute into the Olympics. We grieve for our loss but, as she said herself, grief is the price that we pay for love. And we show that love not just in the pomp and ceremony that we do so well, but in taking a moment to think of someone who was loved and who loved in return. Her Majesty used her time to serve others – a promise was made and kept for life - and we can honour her life best in the way we live ours.

Thank you Ma'am.

A La perchôine.

May God grant you rest, and may he guide and support our King.

Dieu Sauve le Roi!