

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF THE QUEEN OF DIAMONDS AND THE GREAT POVERTY OF LITTLE BRITAIN

Part – I

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“Without a pang of self-awareness, the British government is spending millions of pounds of taxpayer money that they assert they do not have on a nationwide party along with all other Commonwealth countries around the globe. No expense has been spared to honour the Queen, who is in reality the pampered head of an anachronistic institution that has symbolized aristocratic elitism, oppression and privilege since its inception.”

A reader of the *Toronto Star* on 6 June 2012.

In February 2012, a senior advisor was quoted as saying the Queen set two guidelines for the planning of her Diamond Jubilee: the use of public funds should be minimised, with most of the expenses, apart from security, being paid by private individuals and sponsors, and people should not “be forced to celebrate.” The wish of the Queen was emphasised.

Such announcements never happen by accident. They are, in this case, part of a long-planned programme designed to maximise the advantage of modern media and at the same time to maintain a maximum of that benefit that Walter Bagehot retained essential for the preservation of the British monarchy when he wrote: “Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic.” He wrote this in *The English Constitution*, dated 1867, the same year in which the *Reform Act* of 1867 was enacted and that Bagehot considered nothing but calamitous. What ? Allow a parliamentary vote to the unskilled labouring class ?!

The timing of the senior advisor's announcement was to coincide with 6 February, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II father's death, which is known in royal circles as Accession Day.

There was hardly to be any rest in 2012 for then-soon-to-turn 86 year-old monarch, while she was preparing to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee. The 85-year-old Queen and her Consort Prince Philip had toured Britain since March as part of celebrations to mark her 60th years on the throne, while other royals were, and still are, travelling the globe, from Canada to Tuvalu. The Queen and Prince Philip visited Australia for ten days in 2011 on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, in Perth from 28 to 30 October.

Elizabeth II is now the second-longest-reigning British monarch, after Queen Victoria. The Royal Family, or "The Firm," as it calls itself, is a 'brand' which is seeking to build on the successes of last year's Royal Wedding, to capitalise on ever-increasing global interest in the monarchy through the use of both ancient pageantry and up-to-the-minute technology. It was 'tradition' on one hand, television on the other.

One of the hagiographers specified: "The jubilees are an invented tradition, which allow the monarchy to dominate the crowded news agenda of a busy country." As in television, everything would have been planned to the second. The centrepiece of the festivities was a four-day weekend extravaganza at the beginning of June. The dates, 2 to 5 June, had been chosen because those were known, statistically, to be the driest few days in England. Those days were to see street parties across the country, the lighting of thousands beacons across the Commonwealth, a river pageant of 1,000 boats on the Thames, and a giant concert in London.

In addition, there would have been, some events before and some after, an exhibit of the Queen's diamonds at Buckingham Palace, a huge horse show in Windsor, a lunch for Commonwealth heads of government and a reception for left-over royal families - mostly from Europe, the publication of several hagiographic books, eight new bells named for the Royal Family, a half-dozen television documentaries and one special prayer to be intoned at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Planning for so many months of gilt, velvet and polished trumpets had begun four years before. How much would be spent ? Well, Buckingham Palace staff had delicately avoided

questions of exactly how much the celebrations would cost, but the planned river pageant alone was estimated to command 10 million pounds (AU\$ 15 million).

During the Silver Jubilee of 1977 newspapers described a country which was tired and riven by industrial conflict. Its people talked of feeling a bit lost, and yet - from a distance of 35 years - they seemed enviably grounded in a shared culture with deep roots. There was striking uniformity to their celebrations. Invited to have fun, people first grumbled, then formed committees. It is remembered that at previous royal jubilees children were given commemorative mugs, prompting endless rows about paying for them. The grown-ups would receive beer. It was the equivalent of *panem et circenses* - bread and games, the offering of a previous savage empire.

At those previous royal jubilees there were violent sporting contests, from tugs-of-war to free-form football matches. To conquer reserve, fancy dress was worn, often involving men in women's clothing. From the West Midlands came news of an all-transvestite football game, with the laconic annotation: "all ended up in the canal." - how perfectly consonant to *le vice Anglais* !

London displayed both patriotic zeal - flag-draped pubs in Brick Lane, big street parties in Muswell Hill, and hostility - cheerless housing estates, slogans declaring "Stuff the Jubilee."

Scotland was a nation apart. In Glasgow the anniversary was called "an English jubilee." Snobs sneered along with Scots. At Eton College, a wooden Jubilee pyramid was smashed by old boys. At Oxford University, examinations were held on Jubilee Day, in a display of indifference.

When the 2002 Golden Jubilee arrived, Britain came across as a busier, lonelier, more cynical place. The Royal Family was regarded as 'just showbiz'. There was angry talk of Princess Diana and how her 1997 death was mishandled by the Queen. There were fewer street parties than in 1977. This was variously blamed on apathy, the authorities - for failing to organise events, apparently, and above all on health-and-safety rules.

The 2012 Diamond Jubilee would find Britain changed again. Diamond jubilees being rare - the last was achieved by Queen Victoria in 1897, the Queen would be firmly at the centre

of the celebrations. Just a week before the beginning, local councils would receive more than 8,000 applications to close roads for street parties, suggesting that 2002's passivity was fading. The country was not returning to 1977 and its home-made fancy-dress costumes or Coronation bunting dug out of attics. Shops would heave with Jubilee cakes, disposable decorations and flag-emblazoned baubles, letting consumers buy patriotism out of a box.

The 2012 show would not end with the four-day events, but would continue with "Diamonds: A Jubilee Celebration". It would be on display from 30 June to 8 July and from 31 July to 7 October, as part of the summer at Buckingham Palace.

The State Rooms of Buckingham Palace have been open to the public every summer since 1993. What started as a way to pay for the fire damage at Windsor Castle in 1992 has continued past the cost of those repairs and when the Queen retreats to Balmoral in Scotland for a 'well earned rest'.

The Exhibition was destined to be the most valuable ever set up at Buckingham Palace in whole 21 hand-picked items. Ten thousand priceless diamonds, set in works collected by six monarchs over three centuries, would be on display, many for the first time ever, to mark the Queen's Jubilee.

The Exhibition includes jewellery made from the world's largest diamond ever found - the *Cullinan* Diamond - which weighed 3,106 carats as an uncut stone when it was found at the Premier Mine near Pretoria in South Africa in 1905. It carries the name of the chairman of the mining company, Thomas Cullinan. Seven of the nine principal stones cut from the *Cullinan* Diamond would be reunited for the first time in the Exhibition. These seven stones are set in a ring, a necklace and three brooches, one of which, the *Cullinan* III and IV Brooch, would be worn by the Queen for the National Service of Thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral, during her Diamond Jubilee celebrations, on 5 June 2012.

From the diminutive diamond crown worn by Queen Victoria throughout her widowhood, to the breath-taking Coronation Necklace, featuring a staggering 22.48 carat pendant, the Exhibition features some of the most spectacular pieces from the Queen's private collection. Among them would be the diamond Diadem Tiara, shown by the Queen on British and Commonwealth stamps, which also features on some issues of coinage and bank notes, as well as Queen Victoria's Fringe Brooch, and a diamond-set Coronation Fan, made for Queen

Alexandra at the time of the coronation in 1902. The Diamond Tiara, which is worn by the Queen for the state opening of parliament is set with 1,333 brilliant-cut diamonds, including a four-carat pale yellow brilliant; the piece was actually made for the famously extravagant coronation of George IV in 1821. At the time, king George IV had paid 8,000 pounds - equivalent to 815,000 today (AU\$ 1,273 million). Made originally for a man, its feminine appearance so much appealed to his wife, Queen Adelaide, that she borrowed it on a rather more permanent basis.

Queen Victoria's dazzling Fringe Brooch, which has never been displayed in public before, includes two impressive jewels presented to the Queen by the Sultan of Turkey. It contains a large, emerald-cut central stone and nine graduated pave-set chains suspended from an outer row of 12 large, brilliant-cut diamonds and were last seen being worn by the Queen, appropriately, for a state banquet in honour of the President of Turkey in 2011.

There would also be a *Jaipur* Sword and Scabbard, set with 719 diamonds weighing a total of 2,000 carats, originally presented to King Edward VII for his coronation in 1902.

Among other precious items there would be a table snuff box owned by Frederick the Great of Prussia, incorporating nearly 3,000 diamonds, which was purchased by Queen Mary in 1932.

The Coronation Necklace would be among the pieces set to go on display. It was handed down to female members of the family from Queen Victoria to Queen Alexandra, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and then to the present Queen who wore it on the journey to and from her own coronation.

The Delhi Durbar Tiara would link two events of the British monarchy. Called the 'Proclamation Durbar', the Durbar of 1877 was held beginning on 1 January 1877 to designate the coronation and proclaim Queen Victoria as Empress of India. The tiara was re-fashioned in 1911 for Queen Mary to wear to a spectacular ceremonial gathering in India in 1911, paying homage to the new King George V.

In 2005 Queen Elizabeth 'loaned' it as a reward to Camilla Parker-Bowles when the former adulterous lover of her son Charles became her new daughter-in-law, and was anointed as the Duchess of Cambridge. Camilla has worn it in public numerous times since.

On display, too, would be jewels worn by Queen Victoria for her diamond jubilee and less stately and more personal pieces which have been altered to suit different moments in history, changing tastes and varied personalities. For example, because of a need to conceal a scar on the neck of the elegant young Princess Alexandra, a fashion for ‘dog collar’ necklaces began. The young Princess Elizabeth, the current Queen, showed a penchant for flowers. The brooch she had made by Cartier in 1953 was a floral tribute to its central pink diamond from South Africa.

In preparation for the Jubilee, the London jewellery house De Beers had manufactured a crown to top all others. Called ‘The Talisman’, it comprises 974 diamonds - 797 of them are polished; 177 are rough - and required more than 100 hours to complete. “Rough diamonds were once worn exclusively by kings and queens, [and were believed] to bring power, protection and prosperity.” said De Beers’ C.E.O.

Rarity is the principal cause of the value of diamonds. Intrinsically, they are but carbon. The word diamond, the hardest known natural material, derives from the ancient Greek *αδάμας* - essentially, ‘unbreakable’. Diamonds are thought to have been first recognised and mined in India, where significant alluvial deposits of the stone could be found many centuries ago along the rivers Godavari, Krishna and Penner. Diamonds have been known in India for at least 3,000 years but most likely 6,000 years.

Diamonds have been treasured as gemstones since their use as religious icons in ancient India. Their usage in engraving tools also dates from early human history. The popularity of diamonds has risen since the 19th century because of increased supply, improved cutting and polishing techniques, growth in the world economy, and innovative and successful advertising campaigns. In the 21st century, experts in gemology have developed methods of grading diamonds and other gemstones based on the characteristics most important to their value as a gem. Four characteristics, known informally as the *four Cs*, are now commonly used as the basic descriptors of diamonds: these are *carat*, *cut*, *colour*, and *clarity*. A large, flawless diamond is known as a paragon.

The production and distribution of diamonds is largely consolidated in the hands of a few key players, and concentrated in traditional diamond trading centres, the most important being Antwerp, where 80 per cent of all rough diamonds, 50 per cent of all cut diamonds and more than 50 per cent of all rough, cut and industrial diamonds combined are handled. This makes

Antwerp a *de facto* 'world diamond capital'. Another important diamond centre is New York City, where almost 80 per cent of the world's diamonds are sold, including at auction sales. The De Beers company, as the world's largest diamond miner holds a dominant position in the industry, and has done so since soon after its founding in 1888 by the British imperialist Cecil Rhodes. De Beers owns or controls a significant portion of the world's rough diamond production facilities, mines and distribution channels for gem-quality diamonds. The Diamond Trading Company is a subsidiary of De Beers and markets rough diamonds from De Beers-operated mines.

Marketing has significantly affected the image of diamonds as a valuable commodity. N. W. Ayer & Son, the advertising firm retained by De Beers in the mid-20th century, succeeded in reviving the American diamond market. And the firm created new markets in countries where no diamond tradition had existed before. N. W. Ayer's marketing included product placement, advertising focused on the diamond product itself rather than the De Beers brand, and associations with celebrities and royalty. Without advertising the De Beers brand, De Beers was also advertising its competitors' diamond products. The campaign lasted for decades but was effectively discontinued by early 2011. De Beers still advertises diamonds, but the advertising now mostly promotes its own brands, or licensed product lines, rather than completely 'generic' diamond products. The campaign was perhaps best captured by the slogan "a diamond is forever". This slogan is now being used by De Beers Diamond Jewellers.

It is particularly from Africa and Asia in the 1700s and 1800s that such riches came, by way of tributes from local potentates to the ultimate divinely-descended-Being in London. There, one could see - on payment, of course - the famous *Crown Jewels*. There, one can see the *Cullinan*, also known as the Star of Africa. And there is the *Koh-i-noor*; rumoured to have been found in Afghanistan, not far from the Indian border, once owned by the builder of the Taj Mahal, the Mughal Emperor Sha Jahan. It was at one time - before the discovery of the Star of Africa - considered the largest diamond on earth. Both of the world's largest diamonds are parts of the *Crown Jewels*. After **Queen Victoria**'s death the *Koh-i-noor* was set in Queen Alexandra's brand-new diamond crown, with which she was crowned at the coronation of her husband, **King Edward VII**. **Queen Alexandra** was the first Queen Consort to use the diamond in her crown, followed by **Queen Mary** and then **Queen Elizabeth**. **India** has claimed that the diamond was taken away illegally and it should be given back to India. When the Queen made a state visit to India marking the 50th anniversary of Independence in 1997, many Indians in Britain and in India, including several Indian members of parliament, demanded the return of the diamond. It remains in the Tower of London. The nations of Africa, devastated and scattered across the globe by the slave trade until 150 years ago, and then exploited by a company such as De Beers - particularly during the *Apartheid* regime that it supported - receive not a penny as 'royalty' from that exhibition.

On 20 November 1947, when Elizabeth married Philip, and despite the gloomy atmosphere of austerity and restraint, or perhaps because the public needed a public celebration, there was little resentment of the enormous expenses involved. The wedding dress, designed by Norman Hartnell - the British fashion designer who had become Royal Warrant as Dressmaker to Her Majesty The Queen in 1940, and would subsequently be Royal Warrant as Dressmaker to Queen *Elizabeth II* since 1957 - was studded with ten thousand pearls. The couple were showered with priceless jewels: a hoard of rubies from Burma; emeralds and diamonds from British Columbia; uncut diamonds from South Africa; and similar presents from all over the then still British Commonwealth. Individual admirers also sent lavish gifts of jewellery - among them a single 54-carat uncut diamond. The late Queen Mary gave the couple the gifts she had herself been given fifty five years before, including a diamond tiara of inestimable worth from Queen Victoria and priceless diamond brooches which had been given to her by a Maharajah, when India was still the Pearl of the Empire. King George VI gave Elizabeth and Philip hundred-year-old earrings which featured every cut of diamond and flawless antique pearls once worn by Queen Anne.

It is not known - perhaps the Queen herself may not know - how many carats of diamonds she owns/holds. What is known is that the diamond market price has considerably increased recently, in fact by 20 per cent in 2011.

Since the mid 1950s the wholesale price of a one carat diamond has soared from AU\$ 2,600 to AU\$ 27,940, a significant gain on an investment if fortunate enough to have been gifted a few gems in 1952.

The *Cullinan* diamond weighed in at a staggering 3,106.75 carats. It was presented to King Edward VII and was eventually cut into nine stones, seven of which will be on display as part of the celebrations this summer. The largest, which is mounted in the royal sceptre, is 530 carats.

So, perhaps, a series of new meanings should be given to the word diamond in the hands of the head of the Battenberg-Windsors: such as their self-defined word 'proper', the word 'unalterable' - meaning by that sclerotic, the 'unbreakable' grasping of the English monarch and her Family, the 'untamed' greed which characterises The Firm, along with the other word of threat and intimidation, for which the Greek original word could readily be

translated into: “I tame” or “I overpower.” Because nothing in this obsession for owning precious stones could explain, let alone justify, the profligate use of public money and the indifference to suffering of the people - in Little Britain as well as in the countries from which such stones were originally taken.

In the end the possession of so much tells quite a lot about the owners; it certainly brings to mind the notion of hypocrisy, a hypocrite being - in Ambrose Bierce unforgettable definition - “one who, professing virtues that [she] does not respect, secures the advantage of seeming to be what [she] despises.”

This state of affairs is particularly grave if one considers the enormous, personal, other wealth of the Queen, her disposal of public property - often intermingled with State property, and the profligacy of the members of The Firm. Elizabeth II is the Queen of Diamonds - *par excellence*.

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If the value of diamonds owned by The Firm is not known, neither is how much more the Queen owns/controls. Estimations have been made from time to time.

Not long before the Jubilee, *Forbes* magazine calculated that the Queen’s personal fortune at about 310 million pounds (AU\$ 466 million). More recent research, carried out by *Wealth-X Intelligence* firm, estimates the Queen’s net worth at US\$ 510 million (AU\$ 491 million), making her the wealthiest royal in Britain. Prince Charles takes second place with a ‘net worth’ of US\$ 210 million (AU\$ 202 million). The report, which was released in celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, collected the financial data of 14 British royals and found their collective net worth topped US\$ 1 billion (AU\$ 960 million).

The figures did not include the worth of the Crown Jewels and Royal Collection. These royal assets, as well as US\$ 11 billion (AU\$ 10.6 billion) worth of United Kingdom property, are owned by the State and not the Queen, according to *Forbes*.

The study also found that Prince Andrew, who is fourth in line of succession to the throne, has a net worth of US\$ 75 million (AU\$ 72.2 million). He is followed by Prince Edward,

who has US\$ 45 million (AU\$ 43.3 million) and Princess Anne who has US\$ 30 million (AU\$ 28.9 million).

The Queen's personal fortune can only be an approximate calculation and includes property holdings, such as Balmoral Castle and Sandringham House, but does not include the Crown Estate, a property portfolio owned by the Crown - revenue from which has been, until recently, kept by the Government in exchange for the *Civil List* - a list of members of the Royal Family to whom money is paid by the Government.

The Royal Art Collection alone could be worth up to 10 billion pounds (AU\$ 15.5 billion). It contains no less than 130,000 objects, including works by Da Vinci, Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Titian, Holbein and Fabergé.

7 billion pounds (AU\$ 10.53 billion) is the value of the Crown Estate's property portfolio, which includes Regent Street, and 50 per cent of the buildings in St. James, London, as well as stakes in commercial property, including the Bluewater shopping centre. Revenue from these goes to the Exchequer.

1.05 billion pounds (AU\$ 1.58 billion) is the value of the rural part of the Crown Estate, including 106,000 hectares.

90 million pounds (AU\$ 135.4 million) is estimated to be the value of the Queen's personal share portfolio.

186 million pounds (AU\$ 280 million) is the value of the Windsor Estate, including Ascot race course.

The Queen has 19,680 pages of stamps in the 328 albums which comprise the Royal Philatelic Collection.

587 million pounds (AU\$ 883.2 million) is the value of the marine estate - the seabed out to 12 nautical miles and much of Britain's foreshore - including revenue from the development of off shore wind farms, which goes to the Crown Estate and the Exchequer.

The Queen owns palaces, houses and coaches: Buckingham Palace, St. James's Palace, Clarence House and Marlborough House Mews; the residential and office areas of

Kensington Palace; The Royal Mews and Royal Paddocks at Hampton Court; Windsor Castle and buildings in the Home and Great Parks at Windsor.

To maintain such complex patrimony the Queen employs 1,200 staff in the Royal Household. 450 of them are paid for by the State. To keep up the tenor of life to which she and other members of The Firm have become accustomed 76,000 people were guests at official palace events in 2011.

1.86 million people paid to visit the royal palaces during the same year. During that time there were 14 journeys on the Royal Train, at an average distance of 931 miles. More than 100 carriages and coaches are owned by the monarch.

30 horses are kept to pull the royal carriages.

8 limousines: two Bentleys, three Daimlers and three Rolls Royces form the Royal Fleet.

One is entitled to ask at this point: what does this 'spectacle' cost? - particularly keeping in mind the special meaning of the word 'work' when referring to The Firm.

On 30 June 2011 the Sovereign Grant Bill was introduced to Parliament and on 18 October 2011 it passed into law, becoming the *Sovereign Grant Act 2011*. The Act provides new arrangements to support the Sovereign in Her official duties. The arrangements are intended to move from the *Civil List* arrangements which were reign-specific to a more permanent regime.

In summary, the *Sovereign Grant Act* provides for 1) new consolidated Sovereign Grant payment to support the Queen in her official duties; 2) full parliamentary approval and scrutiny of grant expenditure; 3) continuation and modernisation of support to the heir to the throne; 4) continuation of grant arrangements on accession of a new monarch; and 5) rationalisation of payments to annuitants.

'Gracious Messages' from the Sovereign had been sent to each House of Parliament on 29 June 2011 about legislation to make financial provision for the Royal Household. The messages indicate the Sovereign's agreement to Parliament considering making the type of provision described in it. In December the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, announced that the Queen's salary, funded by tax payer's money, was to be 'frozen' until April 2013. He explained that she would receive 30 million pounds (AU\$ 45,500,000)

annually with an additional 1 million pounds (AU\$ 1.5 million) to fund the cost of the Diamond Jubilee.

Royal funding for travel and other expenses in the Palace will no longer come from the pockets of taxpayers; instead profits from the Crown Estate will be the main source of royal expenditure. During her 'pay freeze' the Queen has agreed to rent out rooms at St. James's Palace for royal warrants to throw parties during the 2012 Olympics.

Last year the Queen agreed to freeze her annual 'salary' until at least 2015. The austerity measures came off the back of the economic downturn. This year is the sixth consecutive year that the Queen would have suffered a cut in her income. She will now receive 30 million pounds (AU\$ 45,500,000) a year - a stark contrast to the 77.3 million pounds (AU\$ 116,300,000) she received during 1991-1992.

Out of many pussy-footing formalities, the keeping of The Firm costs the British public a cool 32.3 million pounds (AU\$ 48.6 million) per year.

The official figures were published in early July 2012 and refer to the financial year ended on 31 March 2012. The amount has gone up 200,000 pounds (AU\$ 301,000) with respect to the previous year. Much of this rise is attributed to high travel costs.

Some figures may give an idea of the Queen's 'work', of that of The Firm and of their cost:

- 1) The Queen undertook 325 public engagements in the United Kingdom and 45 overseas.
- 2) The Queen entertained 33,000 people at five garden parties in Buckingham Palace and Holyrood House. The parties cost 800,000 pounds (AU\$ 1,204,000). About 400,000 pounds (AU\$ 602,000) were paid for wine and spirits for entertaining.
- 3) There were 26 investitures for 2,500 people.
- 4) The Duke of Edinburgh undertook 330 official engagements.
- 5) Almost 3,000 official engagements in the United Kingdom and overseas were undertaken by members of the Royal Family during the year to 31 March 2012.
- 6) 72 journeys cost more than 10,000 pounds (AU\$ 15,500) each.

7) The average number of staff paid from the *Civil List* was 300 - three fewer than last year - at a cost of 10 million pounds (AU\$ 15,5 million) in salaries, pensions and national insurance.

8) Royal stationery cost 300,000 pounds (AU\$ 450,000) - up 100,000 (AU\$ 150,000) on the previous year.

9) 3,269 tonnes of carbon are due to be offset at a cost of 36,000 pounds (AU\$ 54,200).

10) About 611,000 people bought tickets for the summer opening of Buckingham Palace's state apartments.

The published cost figures relate to 2011-2012 and concern funding provided by the taxpayer to finance the Queen's official duties.

The accounts for the 2010-2011 financial year revealed the Queen's official expenditure fell by 5.3 per cent from 33.9 million pounds (AU\$ 51,010.000) to 32.1 million pounds (AU\$ 48.300.000). It is doubtful that the cost of celebrating the Queen Diamond Jubilee would strain finances.

The Queen's *Civil List* spending fell from 14.2 million pounds (AU\$ 21,400.000) to 13.7 million pounds (AU\$ 20,600.000), while there was a cut in spending on property services from 15.4 million pounds (AU\$ 23,800.000) to 11.9 million pounds (AU\$ 17,000.000).

Wages for the Queen's 300 staff, frozen for the past two years, fell 200,000 pounds (AU\$ 300.000) to 10 million pounds (AU\$ 15,050.000) compared to the previous year.

But royal travel costs rose from 3.9 million pounds (AU\$ 5,870.000) in 2009-2010 to 6 million pounds (AU\$ 9.030.000) in 2010-2011. During the year members of the Royal Family travelled a total of 142,000 miles on 30 scheduled flights - nine more than 2010-11.

It is not common knowledge that every time the Queen and/or her consort Philip travel abroad, a bill for travelling expenses is sent to the British Embassy or High Commission of the country that she and/or he happen to be visiting. This bill will include the price of the Queen's outfits, of Prince Philip's suits and ties and shirts, as well as of the clothes worn by

their ladies-in-waiting, equerries, *courtiers* and courtesans. No ambassador and no high commissioner ever question the bills, which are often enormous. They are sent back to the Foreign Office in London, and paid by the taxpayer. Since the Queen and Prince Philip spend a substantial part of each year travelling, they could be said ‘to live on the expenses’. These vast sums never appear in any account of what the Royal Family costs the British taxpayer.

The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall’s travel bill was the highest, costing at least 810,000 pounds (AU\$ 1,219.000), followed by the Duke of York on 378,249 pounds (AU\$ 569,128).

Royal finances are in a transitional phase as the old system is phased out and the new Sovereign Grant funding model is introduced. Under the new *Sovereign Grant Act*, the Queen will receive 15 per cent of the profits from the 6.7 billion pounds (AU\$ 10.1 billion) Crown Estate.

The grant for the 2012-2013 financial year has already been set at 31 million pounds (AU\$ 46.6 million) but for 2013-2014, when the new formula will begin, it is estimated to be worth 36 million pounds (AU\$ 54.3 million).

Accounts published by Clarence House, the official residence of the heir to the throne, showed that the cost to the taxpayers of keeping the Prince of Wales and his family had risen by more than 10 per cent during the last financial year. Charles’ accounts showed that his income from grants-in-aid and Government departments rose from 1,962,000 pounds (AU\$ 2,952.000) to 2,194,000 pounds (AU\$ 3,301.180), an increase of 232,000 pounds (AU\$ 349,080.000) during 2011-2012.

The figures covered the Duchess of Cambridge’s first full year as a royal but her cost to the taxpayer and to the Prince - who funds much of her public work and official clothes - was described as ‘fairly marginal’ compared with the overall total by a royal aide.

Cash generated by the Duchy of Cornwall - the landed estate given to the heir to the throne to provide him or her with an income - went up by 3 per cent to 18.3 million pounds (AU\$ 27.5 million).

Some observations may be *à propos* about Prince Charles, as the heir to the throne, and Prince Andrew, as the fourth in line of succession.

At the disastrous insistence of his father - a notorious boorish Germanic disciplinarian - Prince Charles was not given a conventional education; he was sent to Gordonstoun, not a noted centre of intellectual excellence.

The combination of bullying and toadyism that he encountered at this German education establishment, set in the rigour of the Scottish Highlands, will hardly have given him an accurate idea of his own capabilities, and indeed he left the school. After school, there was a short visit to Timbertop, the Bushland annexe of Geelong Grammar School, Australia. Presumably the bright idea behind this experience - and it is said that Charles intensely disliked Timbertop - was that he should acquaint himself with the Commonwealth of which he might one day be the head.

After that, since he is the Prince of Wales, he was sent to the University of Aberystwyth for a few weeks to acquire a smattering of Welsh in a language laboratory. Then off to Cambridge, where he changed courses several times. He went to Cambridge with a wholly inflated sense of his own cleverness. Had he been sent to a school such as Eton where there are some genuinely clever boys and masters, he might have come to understand his actual level.

Charles is not, as his sycophantic followers have been assuring him for decades, 'an intellectual'. Unlike first-rate minds he does not always understand what he is saying. He is not notably cleverer than his mother, grandfather or great-grandfather, but he entirely lacks their intellectual humility.

When he arrived on the public arena, it was his persistent sermonising, the explicit claim that his views of life - on architecture, on farming, on the environment - would bring people not merely closer to peace but closer to God. This made malicious ears so willing to listen to the so-called 'Camillagate tapes' - transcripts said to be of recorded telephone conversations between the Prince and his friend, Mrs. Parker-Bowles. And such intrusion into one's life, whether commoner or royal, occurred quite separately from the activity of the *Murdochian* journalists. It must be dismaying to him to realise that the public at large can probably only remember two of his utterances: his comparison of a proposed scheme to modernise the

National Gallery to a ‘monstrous carbuncle’, and his wish to be re-incarnated as Mrs. Parker-Bowles’ sanitary tampon.

In the long process of becoming a king he, in turn, may wish to forget the difficulty for him to become the Supreme Governor of the Anglican Church - although by that time, if it were ever to come, the Church could have such broad arms as to reach even for Charlie.

It would certainly make a nonsense of the Battenberg-Windsor ‘tradition’ that the king should have an exemplary domestic life. Though wisdom may be granted to him with age - and he is now about to turn 64, it has to be said that many of his utterances to date have come perilously close to being ‘unconstitutional’ - the word to be interpreted in the strictly English meaning, if one keeps in mind that England has no written constitution to speak of. Far from appearing to mind all this, the Prince positively relishes it.

Charles’ preparation for the ‘job’ of king was always of a contingent character. He was never allowed, as most young people might be and many must do, to find his *métier* and then pursue it, for the *métier*, if he ever found it, would have involved the death of the one person supremely capable of keeping the British monarchy afloat in the twenty first century.

From the time he was sent to his appalling boarding school Prince Charles has been a tinker, a potterer, a dabbler with this and that. And after that there has been no fixed career, no obvious role for him to follow. Pity the man. How could anyone feel if s/he were trained for a specific role, trained to be king in this case, only to be told, when that ‘training’ was nearly done, that he could not start the job until they were seventy years of age ? Can anyone imagine how a lawyer would feel about not being able to be called to the Bar because s/he had not passed the age when most people have retired ?

Charlie might not be too bright, but he certainly understood the meaning of his mother’s declaration during one of her ‘Christmas Messages’, as long as twenty one years ago, that she was ever-mindful of her coronation oath to be *Queen for life*.

It is unlikely that, while being indoctrinated by Sir Clarence Henry Kennett Marten, Provost of Eton, the young Elizabeth was exposed to the writing of Thomas Paine and his *Common sense*. In it, he said *inter alia*: “To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession, and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed

as a matter of right, is an insult and imposition on posterity. ... One of the strongest natural proofs of the folly of hereditary right in Kings, is that nature disapproves it, otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule, by giving mankind an ass for a lion.”

The truthfulness of such a statement is daily reaffirmed. Yet, though the word ‘Charley’ connotes idiocy in colloquial English, Charlie might have got the message right-away.

So he continued his easy run. Perhaps, having lost any hope for the real thing, he contents himself with being what he is frequently murmured as: the King of the Spenders.

A detailed breakdown of the Royal Family's 6.1 million pounds (AU\$ 9.2 million) official travel bill reveals charter flights for the tour cost 460,387 pounds (AU\$ 692,720) after officials determined it was not possible to fly scheduled.

When chinless Prince Charles and his chisel-chinned wife Camilla interrupted their Balmoral holidays to visit victims of last summer's London riots, they sent the Queen's hard-up subjects a bill for nearly 20,000 pounds (AU\$ 30,000) for their flights.

And weeks after their riots visit, they cost the public purse 16,047 pounds (AU\$ 24,233) for another flight from London to Aberdeen, this time after a memorial service to mark the 10th anniversary of September 11.

In October-November 2011 Prince Charles made a nine-day tour of the Middle East - friendly countries such as Kuwait and Qatar - and then on to Tanzania and South Africa with the Duchess of Cornwall which cost taxpayers almost half a million pounds.

It also emerged from the figures made available that before his trip to the Middle East, Charles flew by charter to Saudi Arabia to pay his condolences on behalf of the United Kingdom following the death of the Crown Prince - at a cost of 67,215 pounds (AU\$ 101,134).

Next in the line of irresponsible profligacy comes Andrew.

Prince Andrew, Duke of York, accumulated the highest charter bills after his older brother. These included 10,470 pounds (AU\$ 15,753) for an overnight trip from Northolt to Belfast, Teesside and back to Northolt.

Expensive charters by Prince Andrew, as United Kingdom ‘special representative for international trade and investment’, topped 378,000 pounds (AU\$ 571,000) last year, including 81,000 pounds (AU\$ 121,900) for a six-day visit to Saudi Arabia and 89,915 pounds (AU\$ 135,300) in scheduled air and charter costs for a six-day trip to China, Malaysia and Thailand. A scheduled return flight from Heathrow to Bangkok for him and aides cost 29,946 pounds (AU\$ 45,057). His costs were expected to reduce after he relinquished his post following intense scrutiny of his relationships with controversial figures, including the dictator who passes as President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and the friend convicted and duly registered paedophile Jeffrey Epstein - who, however, is a billionaire.

Prince Andrew left his post in July 2011, but he had a number of commitments to fulfil so he continued travelling the globe as trade envoy. He spent 236,000 pounds (AU\$ 356,000) on pre-arranged trade trips after he announced he was giving up the job.

Prince Andrew is known around the traps and in the British Press as ‘Air-miles Andy’.

Prince Harry, no longer dressed up as a Nazi, jumped on-board with the big spenders with his pre-Jubilee tour in March costing over 107,000 pounds (AU\$ 161,000), including a 55,655 pounds (AU\$ 83,740) private jet trip from Miami to Belize, the Bahamas, Jamaica and back to Miami.

It was not only senior royals who stung the taxpayer for flights and train journeys. The relatively lowly Duke of Gloucester, a Queen’s cousin and 22nd in line to the throne, cost the public purse 91,381 pounds (AU\$ 137,908) in March 2012 when he took a 20,000-mile round trip to the south seas to represent the Queen at the funeral of King Siaosi Tupou of Tonga. The duke makes scores of royal trips every year, and has visited many countries including China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, the Ivory Coast, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa and Thailand. Gloucester lives at taxpayer’s expense in Kensington Palace.

The costs, detailed in Buckingham Palace accounts, show the Queen’s official expenditure increased last year by 200,000 pounds (AU\$ 300,000) on the previous year to 32.3 million pounds (AU\$ 48.6 million).

By way of consolation, Sir Alan Reid, Keeper of the Privy Purse, said that spending had decreased by 26 per cent in real terms over the past three years if inflation was taken into

account. “When the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his plans for the public expenditure to reduce by 25 per cent in real terms over a four-year period, the Queen was very keen that the royal household should play its part in reducing its expenditure accordingly.” he said. The reduction was “a year ahead of the public expenditure target.” he added.

Travel costs increased by 100,000 pounds (AU\$ 150,000), despite William and Kate, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge getting an upgrade from British Airways for their one-way flight from Los Angeles to London at the end of their tour of North America. Even so, the bill was 51,410 pounds (AU\$ 77,353) in business-class tickets for the couple and seven accompanying staff.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman stressed that all trips were undertaken at the request of the Government and every possible step was taken to ensure they were as cost effective as possible.

Thirteen Royal Train journeys cost a total of 900,000 pounds (AU\$ 1,354,180). The most expensive undertaken by Charles - an overnight regional tour from Ayr, near his Scottish home in Birkhall, through Middlesbrough, Redcar, Burnley, Stoke-on-Trent to London - cost 38,016 pounds (AU\$ 57,200).

The Queen cost every man, woman and child in the United Kingdom 52p, less than an Australian dollar over the year - a pittance, really. Or is it ? The social cost will be examined thereafter.

The pressure group *Republic* said that royal aides were attempting to spin an increase in spending as a real-terms decrease. “Compare these travel costs with those of the prime minister, who spent less than 500 pounds (AU\$ 752) travelling on *Eurostar* to a Paris meeting with former president Sarkozy in 2011 and just over 2,000 pounds (AU\$ 3,009) on a visit to Afghanistan to meet forces and local leaders.” said *Republic*’s chief executive, Graham Smith, who described the year-on-year increase as “indefensible and morally repugnant.” Of the 19,583 pounds (AU\$ 29,465) cost of flying Charles and Camilla from Aberdeen to spend a day touring riot-torn London in August, he said: “It beggars belief that it costs the taxpayer more to send Charles to east London than it does to send the prime minister to Afghanistan.”

Calling for a “cost-benefit analysis” of the trips undertaken by the Royal Family, Smith said: “The costs published are just the tip of the iceberg - the true cost of the monarchy is likely to be over 200 million pounds (AU\$ 300 million) each year.”

The accounts, which detail only travel costs exceeding 10,000 pounds (AU\$ 15,000), revealed 3,506,485 pounds (AU\$ 5,275.666) was spent on journeys less than 10,000 pounds. These included 153 journeys by the Queen’s S76 helicopter, leased at 1,435 pounds (AU\$ 2,159) per flying hour, and 62 by charter helicopter.

As is usual, the finances did not disclose the amount of tax paid by the Queen on her private income from the Duchy of Lancaster. An aide stressed it was a “private matter.”

The 2011-12 financial year was the last one in which the Queen’s finances were funded by the *Civil List* and government grants. For the current financial year the Queen’s funding will come from a percentage of the profits of the Crown Estate, increasing her income to a projected 36 million pounds (AU\$ 54.1 million) next year.

Matters which concern money and the Royal Family are always a source of awe and uncertainty. For instance: what does it mean to say that ‘The Queen *technically* owns the Crown Estate’ ?

And how could one be so audacious as to ask: “How much does the Royal Family cost ?” or “What do the Queen’s accounts really tell us ?” Better not to ask many questions.

Uncertainty, guesstimates and approximation, along with ancient ‘rituals’ and ceremonies, do wonder to generate mindless ‘respect’. Asking questions could be turned into sedition, ‘leasing-making’ - more elegantly *lèse majesté*. ‘Rituals’, processions, parades, marching-as-a-substitute-for-thought, ‘spectacles’ and pompous ceremonies are for uneducated people the occasion and way of expressing feelings of loyalty - similar to the pledge of ‘belonging’ which is demanded by fanatical religions.

It is important always to keep in mind what the 19th century essayist Bagehot wrote of the monarchy: “Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon the magic.”

* * * * *

There were many preliminary events leading to the final show on 2 to 5 June 2012.

At the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron announced the setting up of the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, which was officially launched in the United Kingdom on 6 February 2012, Accession Day. Chaired by former British prime minister, Sir John Major, the trust is intended to support charitable organisations and projects across the Commonwealth of Nations, focusing on areas such as cures for diseases and the promotion of cultural activities and education.

On 6 February also, a 62-gun salute was mounted on the banks of the River Thames, near the Tower of London and the Queen made a visit to Norfolk, one of the first places the monarch visited after acceding to the throne. Later in the month, Queen Elizabeth attended a multi-faith (Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian) reception held at the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, in honour of the Jubilee.

In early 2012 the Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard announced that the Australian Crown-in-Council would make an AU\$ 5.4 million contribution to the Diamond Jubilee Trust. The New Zealand Crown-in-Council later made a \$1 million donation to the fund. The Canadian government announced in April that former prime minister, Jean Chrétien would be Canada's representative to the Trust.

The Queen addressed both Houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall on 20 March 2012. Also in March the Royal Commonwealth Society launched the Jubilee Time Capsule. The British Broadcasting Corporation and Andrew Marr presented the television documentary *The Diamond Queen*, in which various members of the Royal Family and current and former politicians spoke about the sovereign and her life. The documentary was criticised by the campaign group *Republic*, which argued that it breached B.B.C. guidelines on impartiality.

The first major event of the jubilee celebrations was the Diamond Jubilee Pageant, also named *The world comes to Windsor*, a cavalcade held at Windsor Castle to celebrate the Queen's visits to and tours of over 250 countries and her passion for horses. The show, which

featured 550 horses and 1,100 performers from around the world, was performed in the evenings between 10 and 13 May, after the daytime events of the annual Royal Windsor Horse Show had taken place. The Queen attended the final night.

On 18 May the Queen hosted an informal lunch at Windsor Castle for more than twenty current or former monarchs from other countries. In the evening of the same day, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall hosted a dinner that most of the monarchs also attended, although the Queen herself was not present. Criticism was directed at the presence of the King of Bahrain at the lunch, because of the savage repression of protests against the government of Bahrain in that country in 2011. In London, protesters against the king assembled outside Buckingham Palace during the dinner, although he did not attend that event.

On 19 May the Queen attended the Diamond Jubilee Armed Forces Parade and Muster, the British Armed Forces' own tribute to the monarch, in Windsor Castle and nearby Home Park. The first time all three services had assembled for the Queen for such an event at the same time, it featured military reviews and a 2,600 Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force soldiers, sailors and airmen parade. This was followed by a Drum Head Service and a Royal Air Force 78 aircraft fly-past.

Only two British monarchs have celebrated 60 years on the throne of Britain: Queen Victoria and, as of June, Queen Elizabeth. '*Pax Britannica*' under Queen Victoria contrasts sharply with '*Annus horribilis*' under Queen Elizabeth. Victoria ruled during a century of general peace and order; Elizabeth has reigned during a half century of tumult. Victoria presided over the most rapid and 'progressive' growth of the British Empire in terms of territorial gain, naval power and wealth. But it has been the lot of Elizabeth II to hold the throne during Britain's most rapid demise from Empire to second-rate power, its exchequer starved, and its current navy unable to protect its shrivelled territory. The year of Elizabeth's marriage, Britain lost the 'jewel in the imperial crown' - India. Four months before her 50th wedding anniversary, the Empire lost Hong Kong.

Neither monarch can be blamed for the prevailing world conditions of her time. In fact, where Victoria was in perpetual mourning following the death of her beloved Albert, Elizabeth II has been a most 'public monarch', an inveterate 'world traveller', an indefatigable 'supporter of good causes', and a 'great mixer with her subjects' in public.

Most of the territories of the former British Empire remain members of the Commonwealth of Nations. Sixteen of them, including Australia, still recognise the Queen as their head of state.

When Commonwealth leaders sat down to a special lunch with the Queen on 6 June 2012, there would undoubtedly have been much toasting. Yet, behind the pomp and pageantry of the Jubilee, lies an international association which has had few public political successes in recent years and shows signs of genteel decline. And there was likely to have been little discussion on that day of how the Commonwealth will add value in the modern diplomatic world.

The Commonwealth 'played its role' in the Jubilee celebrations. But for those who believe in the Commonwealth as a unique international experiment in promoting shared values around democracy, development and human rights, the celebrations must have been bittersweet. A growing momentum to reform and revitalise the Commonwealth's institutions seems to be running out of steam.

Ahead of the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, C.H.O.G.M., in Perth, Australia, last October, an eminent persons group came up with a set of recommendations to rebuild the Commonwealth's profile. Many of their key reforms - such as the setting up of a commissioner on democracy, the rule of law and human rights - were kicked into the long grass. Attempts to enshrine shared values in a charter are still being discussed by officials, but the final product is unlikely to go beyond existing international commitments.

Some of the Commonwealth's most enduring successes - its role in ending South African *Apartheid*, for example - arose from organising dialogue between countries with different outlooks which nonetheless managed to agree a way forward. Today there seems little appetite for tackling some of the thornier issues which should be on the agenda. For example, the Commonwealth could be actively working to end the criminalisation of homosexuality in its member states, or clamping down on the arms trade.

And leaders attending lunch on 6 June did not need to look far to see perhaps the thorniest issue of all. The Queen was joined by both Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa, whose country will host the next C.H.O.G.M., and Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, who

has said that he will not attend C.H.O.G.M. unless the Sri Lankan government addresses human rights violations.

Rajapaksa will rightly claim that his government has received no formal Commonwealth sanction and that he has the support of the vast majority of member states. Harper's concerns are shared by several member states and almost all Commonwealth non-government organisations. The problem is that Commonwealth institutions seem unable to lend a helping hand with reconciliation or development in Sri Lanka, or to be able to demonstrate that they can resolve political differences. Without the former, Sri Lanka and its supporters will see the Commonwealth as just another forum for meaningless resolutions; without the latter, the next C.H.O.G.M. may be marred by deep fault-lines and further scepticism about whether the Commonwealth stands for any shared values.

More than 1,000 Tamil protesters demonstrated outside the venue for the 6 June lunch in protest over the presence of Rajapaksa, as he was forced to abandon a keynote speech in the City. The protesters accused him of presiding over human rights abuses and war crimes by Sri Lankan armed forces. Demonstrators descended on Marlborough House, Pall Mall, with some wielding hanged effigies of Rajapaksa. Their chants echoed around the forecourt as guests arrived. Police estimated there were 1,200 protesters, though the Tamils said there were many more. Rajapaksa was jeered as he swept through the main gates in a Range Rover, which did not carry a flag because of security concerns.

The Queen spent a brief moment with Rajapaksa and his wife, and the two shook hands at a pre-lunch reception in the Blenheim Saloon.

At lunch Rajapaksa was seated to the Queen's left, with Babli Sharma, wife of the Commonwealth secretary general, the Namibian president Hifikepunye Pohamba and his wife, and the New Zealand prime minister John Key and his wife. He later stood alongside Cameron for a 'family photo' of the group, apparently arranged informally and not dictated by protocol.

"It is absolutely not appropriate for President Rajapaksa to be feted by the Queen at the behest of the Commonwealth secretary general." said the director of the Sri Lanka Campaign.

But Queen Elizabeth did not even bother herself to remain loyal to the values that she claims by cancelling the invitation of people like Rajapaksa and the Middle Eastern and African tyrants. The autocrats of countries such as Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland and the United Arab Emirates - most of them dictators and murderers - were toasting the Queen's health as her special guests while at the same time their actions in their own countries had left the ordinary people gasping for breath.

All she was concerned with was showing off her wealth proudly and wearing a one-million-pound crown on her head.

* * * * *

At the beginning of June, the patriotic bunting was ready, the golden carriage on standby, the boats freshly painted, the shops filled with souvenirs.

The normal ebb and flow of British life would give way in the days from 2 to 5 June to a series of ceremony, symbolism and street parties, flotillas, outdoor concerts and finally the appearance of an elderly grandmother on her balcony to wave to her subjects.

The pageantry would be very grand and very British. Buckingham Palace *courtiers* and courtesans were hoping that what was referred to as a 'simple show of affection for the Queen' would be repeated on 5 June when the commemoration climaxed with another balcony appearance.

Not everyone in Britain would be celebrating. The anti-monarchist group *Republic* had planned a riverbank protest as the flotilla would go by on Sunday 4 June - followed by a pub night where 'royal *refuseniks*' could drown their sorrows.

By-and-large what was being heard were expressions of satisfaction, that "She's done a very good job." "She works so very hard." One may be reminded of the view that William Schwenck Gilbert, the dramatist, took of the House of Lords: "[It] did nothing in particular, and did it very well."

Shrugging off the gathering economic gloom and republican unease, Britain on 2 June plunged into four days of non-stop partying - and do not mention the cost - as the celebrations kicked off with ceremonial gun salutes in London, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh, capitals of the four regions which make up the United Kingdom.

A 41-gun salute was fired by the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery at Horse Guards Parade in central London.

A beaming Queen Elizabeth arrived at the Epsom races in southern England on 2 June for the Diamond Jubilee Coronation Cup race on Derby Day, the second day of the horse racing festival, her favourite event of the racing calendar, to indulge a lifelong passion for horses and to start the anniversary celebration. The Queen is a keen horse rider and breeder, and visits Epsom every year. While few personal details are known about the famously discreet head of state, it is reported that she reads the *Racing Post* sports newspaper over breakfast each morning. First things, first !

To increase participation, civil servants had been treated to a five-day Jubilee bank holiday weekend after being granted an extra 'privilege day' while many workers are getting just three days off. The Government announced a double bank holiday weekend with both 4 and 5 June being declared national holidays. While many businesses would be treating 5 June as a usual working day, granting employees just three days off instead of four, officials working for Whitehall departments and Government agencies would be given a 'privileged' day - a euphemism for one more holiday.

The programme was basically as follows: 2 June, morning at the races, followed by a massive two-day festival in Hyde Park, including a concert of Disney songs, a performance from B.B.C.'s *Strictly come dancing*, a theatre show *War horse* as well as food and craft stands for the plebs.

On 3 June at 2.40 pm the Queen aboard the Royal Barge would join 1,000 boats travelling down the Thames. An *armada* of vessels - from historic sailboats and barges to kayaks, lifeboats and military launches - would be mustering along the river. It was to become one of the biggest live events ever to take place in London - the largest such pageant on the river for 350 years. It had taken two years to plan and was estimated to cost 10.5 million pounds (AU\$ 15.8 million) of private money. That sum did not include the cost of policing

which would fall to the taxpayer, but Lord Salisbury, who chaired the team which organised the pageant, promised “a hell of a show ... to thank the Queen for 60 years' hard labour.” Well, yes ?!

Amidst an abundant display of red, white and blue on the buildings and bridges along the river bank one could have heard church bells, fireworks, music and foghorns. Hundreds of boats from all over the United Kingdom were to move at a gentle speed of four knots down seven miles of river escorting the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, aboard the Royal Barge, the *Spirit of Chartwell*, which would be richly decorated in red, gold and purple.

Boats which were too tall to travel under bridges would have been moored at St. Katherine Docks and along a mile-long stretch from London Bridge to Wapping known as the Avenue of Sail. The bascules of Tower Bridge would be raised in salute. Safety and security was paramount, with 6,000 police and 7,000 stewards to be on duty. About 30,000 people had been security checked. All bridges and riverside roads would be closed to traffic although Lambeth, Westminster and Blackfriars bridges would be open to the public. About one million spectators were expected on the river banks, and millions watching live television coverage.

Boats had been grouped by size and type to avoid collisions. Boat owners and skippers, many of whom are not familiar with the vagaries of the Thames, had been given detailed instructions on how to negotiate the 14 bridges - and advised to refrain from drinking alcohol.

The crafts were assembled in 10 squadrons, with 265 man-powered boats taking the lead, from Maori war canoes and dragon boats to Canadian portage canoes to Venetian *gondole*, the gold-leafed *Gloriana* row-barge, and every nation in the Commonwealth represented. It really was a marvellous sight to behold, while the inclement weather held, as oars slapped through the water and ensigns flapped.

A tender from the decommissioned Royal Yacht *Britannia* would transport the Queen to the Royal Barge and then the rest of the pleasure boat armada would fall in behind.

The flotilla encompassed service boats and historical craft, including the Dunkirk ‘little ships’ which rescued some 338,000 troops from France in 1940. Larger boats which could not navigate the Thames, including tall ships, mustered at the end, alongside Tower Bridge.

While hundreds of thousands lined the riverbank, about 2 million others settled for ‘Big Lunch’ spreads at 10,000 neighbourhood parties. The ‘Big Lunches’ had been championed by Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, to encourage communities coming together. Unexpectedly, Camilla and Prince Charles put in an appearance at the Piccadilly lunch, surprising and delighting the crowd - of course.

There was patriotic fervour galore - of course, in a country which has not had much to cheer about lately, hit by massive government cost-cutting. In the end, it was to be ‘true British pluck’ they were commemorating.

At 6 pm the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Royal College of Music Chamber Choir would perform the National Anthem for the Queen, with pyrotechnic effects from Tower Bridge as its bascules closed.

Lord Salisbury would comment: “Today’s Pageant was also a public launch for the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, which aims to raise funds for good causes in the UK and the Commonwealth - with a particular focus on young people. It is our great hope that the out-pouring of public support for the Monarch at today’s Pageant gives the Jubilee Trust the boost it so richly deserves.”

Italian-speaking English could rave: “Plenty *salamelecchi*”, almost the equivalent of “Many salaams.”

There would be pageant shown on big screens across London, and a big Jubilee lunch from 11.30 am to 6 pm in London’s Piccadilly ‘pedestrianised’ street party. Battersea Park would host a festival celebrating design, music, art, film, fashion and food during the Queen’s reign. 70,000 tickets had been sold out

Thousands of street parties were planned across the country, including one in Downing Street outside Prime Minister David Cameron’s office, as part of a ‘Big Jubilee Lunch.’

On 4 June at 7.30 pm there would be a concert, for which some 18,000 tickets had been sold, with the participation of Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Tom Jones, Ms. Jessie Madness, and all of that broadcast live on B.B.C. 1 and Radio 2, as well as shown on screens in Hyde Park, St. James' Park and The Mall. At 10.30 pm the Queen would light the last of 4,000 beacons across Britain and the Commonwealth. The bells in each of the 34 church bell towers along the River Welland valley would ring in succession, ending with the ringing of the bell at Fosdyke 60 times.

On 5 June at 10.30 in St. Paul's Cathedral there would be a Service of Thanksgiving led by Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, with the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and other members of the Royal Family in attendance. There would follow receptions at Mansion House and Guildhall, and then lunch at Westminster Hall.

Archbishop Williams, spiritual head of the Anglican Church, expressed a popularly held view when he said Britain had been lucky to have Elizabeth as monarch throughout a period of rapid change. "It seems to me that what her importance has been for most people in this country has been as a sign of stability, a sign of some kind of security." Williams said in a Jubilee video message. ... "And that would not have happened had she not been so profoundly committed at every point, so intelligently committed to understanding the society she was in, working with the flow of the changes that have taken place. To have someone who has been a symbol, a sign of stability through all that period is really a rather exceptional gift." And the slithering went on. Some speculated that as she aged, the Queen might abdicate in favour of Prince Charles - or even her popular grandson, Prince William. Those who know her say that is unlikely. "I think it is an absolutely absurd notion." former prime minister John Major said. "I have not a shadow of a doubt that given her health she will remain monarch for the rest of her life."

At 2.20 pm there would be a carriage procession and a fly-past. Just before 3.30 pm the Royal Family would make an apparition on the Palace balcony, in time for the R.A.F. fly-past.

Prime Minister David Cameron paid tribute to the Queen's "extraordinary level of physical energy, mental energy, and above all devotion to her people, to the institutions of this country, to the way our democracy works." Cameron, among the politicians at the Service, said that the Jubilee had demonstrated the "best of British", and despite arguments suggesting

bank holidays damaged the economy, he said that, together with the Olympics, the celebrations would give the country the bounce it needed in the face of a faltering economy. “We have paid for the Olympics. We have now got to make the best of them. I think there is huge opportunity to make them a giant advertisement for our country.” the prime minister told the media.

.At 10.30 am the Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh would be driven from St. Paul’s to a Mansion House reception, and at 12.45 pm the Queen would attend a Westminster Hall lunch with 700 guests, including Prince William and Kate.

At 2.20 pm the State Procession would begin as the Royal Carriage would leave Westminster Hall for Buckingham Palace while a 60-gun salute was being fired. The Royal Carriage was to arrive at Buckingham Palace at 2.40 pm.

At 3.30 pm the Royal Family would make an apparition on the Palace balcony and watch the R.A.F. fly-past, the Red Arrows trailing red, white and blue smoke, amidst a cascade of rifle fire - the English need use a French expression for it: *feu de joie* - interspersed by the national anthem.

In a Jubilee gift from Britain’s politicians, lawmakers from the three main parties supported a motion calling for the tower housing Big Ben - the beloved London bell which chimes the quarter hour - to be renamed in the Queen’s honour. More than half of legislators had signed a letter asking parliamentary authorities to consider renaming the east tower of the Houses of Parliament ‘the Elizabeth Tower’. It is currently called the Clock Tower.

If the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were meant somehow to reflect 21st century Britain, it was only fitting that two unshakable features of modern life would find their way into all the pomp and silliness. First came yet another example of the screaming hostility which rises up whenever the B.B.C. does anything even slightly untoward, then an outbreak of angst about the growing numbers of people who are expected to work for nothing.

There was a little bit of a *contretemps* on the night of 2 June, but nothing that a good ‘spin’ would not remedy.

Here are the facts: a security firm called Close Protection United Kingdom bussed around 80 people from Bath, Bristol and Plymouth to London, where they were to work as stewards in

and around the Jubilee river pageant. Fifty were classed as apprentices and rewarded to the princely sum of 2.80 pounds (AU\$ 4.20) an hour. Another 30 were classified as ‘customers’ of the government’s work programme, given training placements with Close Protection UK and promised temporary paid work at the Olympics - but for their work at the Jubilee celebrations, they were paid nothing. Having arrived in the capital on Sunday morning, all of them were told to sleep under London Bridge from 3 am to 5.30 am. After long hours working in the cold and wet, they then made their way to a campsite in Essex, where they bedded down in conditions described by some of them as “swampy”.

This became known 24 hours later, and in the following days, everything needed for a national shout-fest fell into place. There was the obligatory phone-in on the Jeremy Vine show, items on *Today* and *Newsnight*, and a tour of the studios from an angry John Prescott. Downing Street claimed the incident was a “one-off”. In all the debate, though, one big fact was overlooked: that the 30 stewards on the work programme were one small part of a national army of unpaid labour, which seems to be growing bigger every month.

Much of this can be traced back to ‘innovations’ by the last government, which decisively embraced what some people call ‘workfare’ - though the now governing Coalition has expanded such practices to mindboggling proportions. Sometimes this is a matter of people being forced to work for nothing under pain of having their benefits stopped. Slightly higher up the employment hierarchy, it might be a matter of a job-centre or work programme adviser telling them a spell of unpaid work will brighten up their *curriculum vitae*, or lead to a proper job with the same employer. Politicians praise all these things as a means of getting people into work and thereby attacking unemployment. What nobody mentions is that expanding unpaid labour ensures there is even less proper work in the economy.

The story of a young woman among the 30 unpaid people is rather interesting. She had been made redundant early last year. Eventually, she was referred by her job-centre adviser to *Tomorrow's People*, a charity administering the work programme, and persuaded to train for a qualification in security work. As part of her training, she had already worked for nothing, but only once: at a football match, “observing the crowd and making sure there were no problems”, with six other people on the same scheme. When she and others were informed about the Jubilee weekend - she said - they were at first told they would be paid

around 400 pounds (AU\$ 602), but at the last minute she was told “You are not getting anything - it is ‘work experience’.”

Sleeping under London Bridge, she said, had been impossible: “It was too cold, it was raining, and there were way too many people.” She thus started work at 9.30 am, having had no sleep for upwards of 20 hours. She put on her work clothes “in public, in the cold”. Breakfast - “piddly”, she said - had not arrived until 9.15 am. The first chance she had to use a toilet, she claimed, was at 2 pm. She was supposed to stop work 12 hours after she started, “but me and some other people gave up, ‘cos we were that cold and wet, at six o'clock.” she said. She was then told to take ‘the Tube’ to the end of the Central line, whereupon she called her mother and stepfather almost 150 miles away and asked them to come and get her. “I was that distraught. I had five layers on, and I was soaked through. I was having trouble breathing. After standing up for nine hours, I had a back spasm; I could barely walk. I'd just had enough.” “I’m signing on tomorrow,” she said, “and I’m asking to be withdrawn from *Tomorrow's People*. I can’t trust them. I don’t want to be treated like dirt, working long hours for nothing.” “There’s work experience, and there’s slave labour. I wouldn’t mind work experience for free if it was in good conditions and I was treated properly ... not being asked to change in public and having no access to a toilet.”

Many companies and organisations are involved in welfare-to-work schemes. As well as charities and social enterprises such as *Tomorrow's People*, there are the specialist companies which deliver such projects as the work programme - G4S, Serco, and A4e, for example - some of which benefit from work experience by giving unemployed people placements in their own offices. Further along the chain are the high-street businesses which take on unemployed people as temporary unpaid workers.

“We’re talking about tens of millions of pounds being handed to companies in unpaid work.” said one of the victims, before suggesting that the issue undermines the fashionable idea that most Britons want to throw people on welfare to the lions.

In May 2012 the government vowed to double the numbers of unemployed people forced to work for their benefit - for four weeks at a time, up to 30 hours a week - under what *officialspeak* calls ‘mandatory work activity’, which could mean an increase to around 80,000 placements a year. The government is also aiming ‘to create’ 250,000 work experience places for young people before 2015. The official blurb says the latter are a matter of “voluntary

work experience”, though when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne announced the scheme last year, he said: “Young people who do not engage with this offer will be considered for mandatory work activity, and those who drop out without good reason will lose their benefits.”

Then there is the work programme, launched in June 2011, focused on people unemployed for a year or more, and built around the private companies and charities which are paid according to how many people they get into work. At the last count, around 565,000 people had been referred to the scheme over the six months to January 2012.

The array of schemes and projects goes on. Some 300,000 people, either suffering from a long-term illness or disabled, are included in what the government calls the work-related activity group, and there have been proposals to introduce many of them to the wonders of mandatory work experience. There is also a pilot scheme called the ‘community action programme’ - up to 30 hours of unpaid work a week, for as long as six months, and sector-based work academies - combinations of training and unpaid work lasting up to six weeks. All of this points up one of the most sobering things about modern Britain: there may be a paucity of proper work, but there seems to be no shortage of the unpaid variety.

This does not stack up very well with the picture of a hardworking and comfortably off monarch. Just as the Jubilee celebrations got going, the Queen paid tribute to “the continuity of our national story and the virtues of resilience, ingenuity and tolerance that created it.” Probably, she had a point - but there is also a ‘very British’ tradition of grim exploitation, embodied by such inventions as the workhouse and the sweatshop. And at this rate, it may be about to return, in spades.

There must have been times at the weekend when the Queen, “Defender of the Faith”, must have wondered if God is a republican, as it rained each time her family appeared.

Tuesday 5 June was no exception. No sooner had the Band of the Irish Guards struck up *Land of hope and glory*, ahead of the planned fly-past, and the historic *feu de joie* - than up went the umbrellas.

And with that it would be over. Well, for another decade at least. But it is not quite as simple as that, of course.

The public purse was not entirely spared the cost of the event - quite the contrary. The Greater London Authority had budgeted 2 million pounds (AU\$ 3 million) for outside screens, road closures, signage and similar expenses. It would pick up 100,000 pounds (AU\$ 150,000) and pass the rest of the bill to the Department for Media, Culture and Sport. Some of the costs could be offset by revenues from commercial sponsorship.

The Royal Household had been given an extra 1 million pounds (AU\$ 1.5 million) to cover the cost of administration and increased correspondence in the Jubilee year. That came from taxpayers through the Sovereign Grant - and it was more than double the contribution made for the golden jubilee in 2002: 450,000 pounds (AU\$ 677,000).

At the end of the last day The Queen's press secretary issued the following statement: "The Queen will make a special broadcast of thanks following this weekend's diamond jubilee celebrations." - the broadcast, lasting just over two minutes, to be transmitted on television and radio at 6 pm in the United Kingdom and across the Commonwealth.

This is how the four days of the Jubilee would break down in numbers:

- 1.2 million people were estimated to have lined the royal pageant route along the river Thames to watch the flotilla go past.
- 10,000 ballot winners were treated to a picnic in Buckingham Palace's garden.
- 1,000 boats made up the flotilla, with another 100 moored in the avenue of sail and about 200 work, safety and marshalling vessels.
- It took 75 minutes for the flotilla to sail pass any static point along the route.
- 14.7 million people tuned into B.B.C.'s coverage of the Diamond Jubilee concert on Monday night - the biggest TV audience of the year up to then.
- 4,200 beacons were lit across the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Commonwealth and overseas.
- 9,500 street parties were estimated to have taken place in England.

The lighting of thousands of beacons across the Commonwealth took place on 4 June. Their number was originally set at 2,012; but by the closing date for registrations, approximately 4,000 had been submitted in the United Kingdom alone. The first beacon of the Jubilee was lit on the grounds of Apifo'ou College in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. Other nations including Australia, New Zealand, India, Kenya, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and several Caribbean states took part in the beacon lighting. The world's most remote beacon was lit in Tristan da Cunha in the south Atlantic. In the United Kingdom, British servicemen and women wounded in battle and individuals representing charities carried beacons to the summits of the country's four highest peaks. One beacon was lit at Treetops Hotel in Aberdare National Park in Kenya, where the Queen was at the moment of her accession to the throne. The Queen lit the beacon outside Buckingham Palace at 10:30 pm. The lighting proceeded until the final beacon was lit in Canada eight hours later.

The Queen's husband, Prince Philip, was hospitalised with a bladder infection on 4 June.

On the evening of 5 June, a pre-recorded message by the Queen was released and aired on television around the world. Elizabeth stated: "the events that I have attended to mark my Diamond Jubilee have been a humbling experience" and also expressed her thanks to those who had organised the celebrations over the extended weekend, ending by saying: "I will continue to treasure and draw inspiration from the countless kindnesses shown to me in this country and throughout the Commonwealth. Thank you all."

As in the previous sixty years she sounded exactly as Lord Altrincham had written many decades ago, when he ventured to say that in the Queen's speeches "the personality conveyed by her utterances which are put into her mouth is that of a priggish schoolgirl, captain of the hockey team, a prefect and a recent candidate for confirmation."

And if that sounds excessive, one should think of all royal jokes of the past sixty years, on radio, television or stage - simply gentle meditation on the Queen's essential dullness. Maybe this is what the English like of her.

Not much time had passed from the luxurious and expensive wedding of the Queen's grandson at the peak of the economic recession and the poverty of millions of Britons, that the Queen herself came on the scene in order to present a bright image of herself to the

cameras, without even considering the right of the ordinary people as sponsors of the festivities to freedom of expression.

In the general *razzamatazz* the Queen did not even bother herself to remain loyal to the values that she claims by cancelling the invitation of the Middle Eastern and African tyrants. The autocrats of countries such as Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland and the United Arab Emirates were toasting the Queen's health as her special guests while at the same time their actions in their own countries have left the ordinary people gasping for breath. In addition, the presence of one Harbinder Singh Rana, 52, right beside the Queen in the Royal Barge during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, has left no room for the royalist extremists to defend. The Queen's special guest was gaoled in August 1986 for several indecent assaults on women, who believed he was a doctor, on whom he performed internal examinations and to whom he administered injections.

Proudly showing off her wealth and wearing a one-million-pound crown on her head, apparently the Queen was not reluctant completely to perform all traditions of this 1,100-year-old ceremony of which once slaves were part.

Meanwhile, Britain's mainstream media did their best as usual to present a beautiful and lucky image of the Jubilee Pageant and to show their loyalty to the Queen. Radio, television, internet and official websites were all full of images of citizens who happily congratulated the Queen. However, the facts proved the contrary as there were Britons who questioned the institution of the monarchy.

The riches' show-offs to express their loyalty to the Queen were the major theme of the media, but no official media covered protests of the critics of the monarchy, as if no one heard their voices. Obviously, even the royalist extremists' attack to peaceful gatherings of republicans should not be broadcast.

No one paid attention to the Irish and Scottish people's deep dislike - hatred, maybe ? - of the Queen and apparently such news should not be placed in the media circus of B.B.C. and powerful private media.

Of the 100 street parties organised in Scotland, 20 were put up by the Orange Order.

The ceremonies finished and once-Great Britain showed its extraordinary democracy, in which the highest rank person in the country is not supervised by any monitoring institution and no one can question its legacy.

It is the democracy in which the power structure in its highest level remains still unknown after 100 years. It is controlled by what is commonly referred to as 'the Establishment': the Palace circle of advisers, *courtiers* and courtesans to the Queen; the handful of key Church of England bishops; the leading members of the judiciary; the most senior officers of the armed services; the upper reaches of the civil service, the mandarins of Whitehall, who keep their positions regardless of changes in government; the governors of the B.B.C. and of the Bank of England, the editors and proprietors of what used to be called 'quality' newspapers; and a sprinkling of other bodies.

British citizens paid millions (billions ?) of pounds again for one person and from what one can gather it could not be the last expenditure of Elizabeth II. She is old, and though no one wishes her evil, is likely to die. The taxpayer will then be up for another expensive ceremony.

As for the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen of Diamonds what was the cost ? Nobody, really, knows.

* * * * *

Despite the years of planning and countless hours spent budgeting, rehearsing and finessing, no one seems quite sure how much all the Diamond Jubilee celebrations have cost - nor who will eventually have to foot the bill.

No estimate of the total cost has been made available, but much of the burden looks set to fall upon the taxpayer.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which was responsible for co-ordinating the government's role in the celebrations, referred an inquiry to the government Olympic communication press office, which appeared to be in charge over the long weekend. "I am afraid we don't currently have figures for costs." said a spokesman. "We will only be able to

provide accurate figures after the event.” He stressed the benefits of all the pomp and ceremony. “The Queen’s diamond jubilee is a once-in-a-lifetime celebration for the whole country and Commonwealth. But it is also an opportunity to showcase to the world the very best of London and the United Kingdom and to attract new visitors and investment for the long-term benefit of the country. So it is quite right that government plays its part to help ensure the celebrations are a success.”

More forthcoming were the organisers of the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant, which cost 10.5 million pounds (AU\$ 15.8 million), and which was paid for by donations to a privately-funded charitable trust, the Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation. A spokeswoman for the Pageant said: “In common with all large public events in the capital there are some policing costs met by the public purse. We have always been open about these and have worked in close collaboration with the Met police.” But the Met, which deployed all 21 of its marine policing boats for the pageant and had 6,000 officers working during the busiest periods of the long weekend, said that while there were “obviously extra costs” it had no figures or estimates as yet.

The Ministry of Defence was also unable to put a price on its involvement in the celebrations. “Much of this will be due to the fact that ceremonial duties form a big part of what we do in the military.” said a spokesman. “The same will be true of the Red Arrows, which will be factored into the overall MoD budget.”

The Culture Department estimated that the extra bank holiday could cost Britain’s ailing economy 1.2 billion pounds (AU\$ 1.8 billion).

The B.B.C., which assumed the costs of producing Monday’s Diamond Jubilee concert, said it would not profit from its role in the Jubilee events. A spokeswoman said that any commercial income from programme sales abroad would be used to offset the costs of staging the concert, adding: “If there is a surplus the BBC has agreed it may go to the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.”

The Greater London Authority said it had contributed about 600,000 pounds (AU\$ 900,000) to the cost of erecting giant video screens in the capital and stewarding the crowds through busy streets. A spokesman for the mayor of London said the contribution had “helped ensure the success of hosting one of the most important national events in our country’s history, and

to help create a safe and enjoyable event for the large crowds that have gathered in central London.”

British taxpayers, who financially support the Queen through the annual 30 million pounds Sovereign Grant, have already contributed an additional 1 million pounds (AU\$ 1.5 million) to help with the costs of the Diamond Jubilee.

Britain’s Royal Family is worth a dizzying 44 billion pounds (AU\$ 66 billion) in tangible and intangible assets as a brand, a study shows, yet it had been expected that the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee had damaged the British economy by at least 275 million pounds (AU\$ 413 million).

Brand Finance said in a special report published at the end of May 2012 that the tangible assets of the Royal Family, including the Duchy of Cornwall, are worth a staggering 18 billion pounds (AU\$ 27 billion). The tangible assets are those assets that the monarchy controls directly and out of which it makes money.

Brand Finance said that the monarchy is also valued another 26 billion pounds (AU\$ 39 billion) in intangible assets, which include the Royal Family income from several sources such as the Royal Warrant scheme as well as the boost to British tourism and businesses as a brand. Royal Warrants are granted to people or companies who have regularly supplied goods or services for a minimum of five consecutive years to The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh or The Prince of Wales.

The report said the Royal Warrant alone brings in 4 billion pounds (AU\$ 6 billion) annually, while many companies also strive to get a Coat of Arms on their products which is worth separately an annual 400 million pounds (AU\$ 600 million).

While being a royal ‘earns’ an individual a huge income annually, the report shows that the benefits are not extended to the British economy when it comes to the Diamond Jubilee.

Brand Finance calculated that the celebrations were estimated to boost the tourism, leisure and accommodation industries by 924 million pounds (AU\$ 1,387 million) while the cost of the extra ‘bank holiday’ was around 1.2 billion pounds (AU\$ 1.8 billion).

The report did not take account of the massive cost of security for the events.

Were people who sniped about the cost of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee being humourless grouches? Even if that was the case, they were not alone. With them was the governor of the Bank of England, who lamented that there would have been a four day weekend which he thought would not help Britain's economic growth, according to *The Financial Times*. As a result, Britain would have nine bank holidays in 2012 because of the Jubilee, and Gross Domestic Product was expected to be affected.

In these times of austerity, even the Duchess of Cambridge is 'recycling' her clothes, reported *The Mirror*. She had worn the dress she put on for her first Buckingham Palace garden party before.

The Jubilee would have caused most people great joy - except for republicans, who said that the Queen's has lived on state benefits all her life.

Avowed republican Kevin Maguire told [*The Mirror*](#) that he wanted the Queen to be "Elizabeth the Last." Despite her popularity, he valued "democracy over the gene lottery of feudalism." The Royal Family - he noted - legitimises "unearned wealth and inequality." Britain will be "brighter as a self-confident republic." He raised an ironic glass to the Queen - "60 glorious years on state benefits."

The Financial Times argued that things were not so bad - the London Olympics would help to boost output. The Centre for Economic and Business Research had suggested that Britain should have fewer events such as the Jubilee. It is hard to "assess" the effect of the Jubilee on Gross Domestic Product.

Despite all such difficulties, it seemed that the Queen was more popular than ever. Her 'approval ratings' had soared to an all-time record during the Jubilee celebrations, an exclusive poll revealed at mid-June. An overwhelming 90 per cent of Britons are satisfied with the way she is 'doing her job', according the *Evening Standard*. It is her highest rating ever recorded by a poll agency and marks a peak in the fortunes of the Royal Family under the Queen's headship.

Prince Charles's public support had soared, too - with 78 per cent satisfied with him. Pressure on Charles to step aside from the succession to allow his son to succeed the Queen had fallen away.

Prince William is almost as popular as his grandmother, with 89 per cent saying they are 'happy with the way he carries out his role', suggesting that the long-term future of the monarchy is secure in his hands.

Just 15 per cent of Britons said that they would like to have a republic. A mighty 77 per cent want to keep the royals. Such high levels of support reveal how successfully the Queen has led The Firm's recovery since the dark months following the death of Princess Diana 15 years ago, when the Palace was widely seen to have misjudged the mood of the nation.

A survey in September 1997 found 54 per cent wanted the monarchy to skip a generation and only 36 per cent said Charles should be crowned. Now the figures are reversed, with a majority in favour of Charles being king.

In March 1998, six months after the Princess was killed, satisfaction with the Queen and Prince Charles fell to 66 per cent and 59 per cent respectively. Within days of her death, a majority of Britons felt Charles should abandon his claim to the throne and allow William to succeed the Queen.

The Royals' triumphant comeback is in stark contrast to the collapse in public affection for the political classes over the same period.

Tony Blair, whose expression "The People's Princess" seemed more in tune with national emotions, enjoyed a 62 per cent satisfaction rating in the wake of Diana's death. However, today's political leaders, tarnished by expenses scandals, economic failures and austerity, have negative net ratings. Only 34 per cent are satisfied with Prime Minister David Cameron, while 58 per cent are dissatisfied. Just 26 per cent are content with his deputy Nick Clegg, and only 35 per cent are satisfied with Ed Miliband, Leader of the Opposition.

So, Stop carping about the cost; maybe abolish Parliament ? For, after all, it is happiness which counts !

Nevertheless, some found it hard to get festive among the job cuts, slashed wages, petrol hikes and rising education costs.

Some experts predicted that Britons would spend over a billion dollars on patriotic purchases such as hats, flags and different Jubilee *memorabilia*. Many felt that the money could have been better spent with the country now in a crisis and slashing public services and introducing drastic cuts. “We are in the midst of a double-dip recession, people are really feeling the pinch, with wage freezes, and unemployment. The standard of living is really suffering but yet our queen has made no acknowledgement of that.” said Andrew Child, a director of the campaign group *Republic*.

The authorities have repeatedly emphasised that the Jubilee celebrations were for everyone, urging people to take part in festivities. But among those who took to the streets some did so for quite different purposes. “They say the jubilee is for everyone but if it was really for everyone, we would be celebrating by balancing the inequality of power and wealth in this country. Instead we are celebrating monarchy, armed forces, obscene levels of wealth and all at a time of austerity - this is not a celebration of the British people.” said another activist.

The Queen would say in a televised address that the Diamond Jubilee celebrations had been for her as a “humbling experience.” In a two-minute message of thanks, which made no mention of the Duke of Edinburgh going to hospital, she said: “It has touched me deeply to see so many thousands of families, neighbours and friends celebrating together in such a happy atmosphere.”

Offering special thanks from herself and Prince Philip to all those who had helped organise the celebrations, she said it had been a massive challenge. “I hope that memories of all this year’s happy events will brighten our lives for years to come. I will continue to treasure and draw inspiration from the countless kindnesses shown to me in this country and throughout the Commonwealth. Thank you all.”

After the pop pageantry, things went back to the familiar: ceremonial fare of military pomp, plumed helmets, gleaming breast plates, and 60-gun salute. Senior Royals took part in a

carriage procession, culminating in a balcony appearance at Buckingham Palace and the fly-past.

Perhaps to focus on the issue of succession, or perhaps as canny public relations in days of austerity, the Queen stood only with Prince Charles and Camilla, Prince William, Catherine and Prince Harry.

Some figures stood in the way to much happiness for most.

“Unemployment is still high, the double-dip recession has dented confidence, and plenty of public sector cuts are still to come.” said an analyst at the Centre for Economics and Business Research. “Wage growth is disappointingly anaemic, without much prospect of it picking up in the coming months.” he added.

Official figures confirmed that extra holidays for celebrations of the Jubilee had caused a loss to the British economy equal to 0.08 per cent of the country’s expected Gross Domestic Product.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport had estimated that the extra day’s holiday and a regular public holiday for the Jubilee have caused a 1.2 billion pound loss (AU\$ 1.8 billion) to the British economy.

Moreover, after people went back to work on Wednesday 6 June, new figures revealed that ‘business confidence’ had plunged.

The group *Republic* estimated that Jubilee had cost British taxpayers “3.5 billion pounds (AU\$ 5.25 billion), excluding security.” On 3 June anti-monarchy protestors staged a demonstration on the banks of the Thames ahead of the Jubilee river Pageant. Among the protestors was the chief executive of *Republic*, Graham Smith, who said “the hereditary system is offensive to all the democratic values this country has fought for in the past. The jubilee represents a celebration of everything we, as republicans, oppose.”

North Ayrshire Labour M.P. Katy Clark was among many Labour M.P.s who had refused to pay for a present for the Queen to mark her Jubilee celebrations. Ms. Clark said: “I have never thought we should have a Royal Family as they are the ultimate symbol of inequality

and class division. Compared to many other countries we live in an incredibly class-ridden society with huge inequalities in wealth and power.”

Graham Smith’s and Katy Clark’s sentiments certainly echo the considered opinion that a head of state appointed by the feudal process of primogeniture goes against every democratic principle by which Great Britain professes to be standing. But that, of course, is the rhetoric !

In the view of some thoughtful people partaking in the Diamond Jubilee was not just a celebration of the Queen’s 60 year reign, but also a celebration of something far more sinister - a celebration of the ingrained inequality and class segregation within the country. The monarchy represents the worst of Britain: a class structured society governed by a select *élite* which is out of touch with the rest of the country.

Despite doing little and achieving even less, the Royals command respect and deference from the people. The most brave, talented and accomplished working class woman and man are expected to praise the Royals for their military service and charitable deeds. But is not their use of charities and the military to bolster their own reputation simply a smokescreen to deflect attention from the real issues ?

Engaging in what can only be described as hobbies - as far as they are concerned - could be done without royal titles and without any cost to the state. After all, the Royals are paid astronomic hourly rates for jobs for which they never even applied - nor are they ever at risk of redundancy. The Royal Family is the very antithesis of meritocracy.

Contrary to the rhetoric diffused by the media, the monarchy does not act as a stabilising and unifying influence on people’s lives; it does not have the power to prevent or stop war, oppression, inequality or divisive political policies; it does not provide stability and unity, which are the results of a democratic country, where power is vested in the people to elect an accountable government and head of state.

Pageantry and tourism are irrelevant to British non-existent constitution. There is a lot of pageantry in countries like North Korea, for instance. Nor could one say that Britain’s existence is based on tourism. This is the kind of nonsensical explanation for the existence of a place like the Principality of Monaco, or the State of the Holy Sea - the Vatican. In any event, the Royal Family does not generate the major part of British tourism. Of the top 10

tourist attractions in Britain collated by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, the only place of interest with direct royal association is the Tower of London. It may, perhaps, attract Texan potentates, uneducated people, cinema goers who draw from that their 'historical information'.

The tourist argument is often used to distract people from the real issue that the monarchy is not value for money. According to the *Civil List*, the total official spending by the Queen - as it was paid for by the state in grants and the *Civil List* in 2011 was a whopping 32.1 million pounds (AU\$ 48.2 million), of which : 13.7 million pounds (AU\$ 20.6 million) on the *Civil List* and reserve, 11.9 million pounds (AU\$ 17.9 million) on property, 6.1 million pounds (AU\$ 9.2 million) on travel grants and other grants and 0.5 million pounds (AU\$ 0.75 million) on communications and information grants.

This figure of 32.1 million pounds (AU\$ 48.2 million) does not include the cost of security as well as many other expenses. *Republic* estimates the annual cost to be at least 202.4 million pounds (AU\$ 303.8 million).

Unfortunately, it is likely that one will never know the true cost of the Royal Family as the Queen's accounts are exempt from Freedom of Information legislation and her accounts are not scrutinised by the National Audit Office.

What is known - if that is the word applicable to the circumstance - is that Elizabeth Battenberg-Windsor's own personal fortune is about 310 million pounds (AU\$ 465 million) according to *Forbes* magazine. The Queen continues to cost the taxpayer millions a year at a time when unemployment figures have reached the highest in 17 years, 1 in 4 children live in dire poverty and benefits are slashed for the 'undeserving' poor. 32.1 million pounds (AU\$ 48.2 million) could be better utilised to support those most in need rather than throwing money at an unelected head of state which is the ultimate symbol of inequality.

There is another way, of course: an election to decide if the people want Elizabeth II as their head of state, or whether they would prefer, as an alternative to a Royal Family, an elected head of state and a real, democratic constitution which places power in the hands of the people. And a republic would be what would give the people of Britain a choice and a voice.

That seems like a nice dream. The facts are substantially different.

The fact of the matter is that, in times of economic and social crisis, the British ruling class looks to the monarchy to provide a symbol of national unity. For this reason, the Jubilee festivities for Elizabeth Battenberg-Windsor in 2012, very much like the Royal Wedding in 2011, have highlighted the social and political conformity of many leading cultural figures.

Attendance at the Queen's royal flotilla on the Thames was even higher than for last year's wedding, but there can hardly be said to have been widespread enthusiasm nationally. Despite press reports trying to portray a country brimming with patriotic fever, they struggled to produce evidence of it. Street parties were relatively few in number and usually confined to the better-off areas. Most people seem to have decided to take advantage of the enforced additional bank holiday to have a holiday - full stop.

Yet, one wonders, why this respect for the monarchy ? Perhaps, it boils down to some simplistic slogans, and, when push comes to shove one takes one's stand 'for queen and country'.

This obsequious response to the Jubilee cannot be explained by personal foible or failings, but speaks to a broader phenomenon.

For many in Britain, social reality is one of brutal austerity dictated by the worst economic conditions since the 1930s. Conditions of rising unemployment, economic insecurity and poverty are replicated in most other countries. There is no shortage of commentators drawing parallels between the period of the last breakdown of the capitalist profit system in the first part of the 20th century and today.

Still there is no end to the rapacious demands of the financial oligarchy, which insists on even more bailouts for the banks and business people while advocating ever greater penury for working people.

The ruling *élite* has made clear that it is using the Jubilee to smother widespread disaffection at this state of affairs. Prime Minister David Cameron said: "As a country, I think we understand we are having difficult economic times but I don't think people see any difficulty in celebrating something as great as Her Majesty's contribution over 60 years at a time of economic difficulty."

The *Financial Times* editorialised: “At the Queen’s coronation, Britain was in the grip of austerity. The occasion brought a flash of welcome pageantry to the everyday grimness. Today Britain is again facing hard times. This weekend offers another chance to forget the everyday but also to celebrate a monarch who has helped the UK stay a steady course.”

Of course, there are many amongst Britain’s establishment who know nothing of ‘hard times’ and are indifferent to them. And some, at least, did acknowledge that the royal festivities “coincide with the worst economic crisis for 80 years, brought about, we should remember, by the failure of the political class to offer the country even a modest degree of protection from a rampantly destructive City of London.” Others put it this way: “No event since the invasion of Iraq has so reinforced people’s sense of powerlessness.”

It was the Labour government of Tony Blair which joined the United States in its pre-emptive war against Iraq in the face of mass popular opposition. This was only the most grotesque expression of the utter moral decay of what passes for the so-called ‘labour movement’. In Britain, as elsewhere in Europe, it was the social democratic parties which went on to engineer a massive subvention of public funds to the super-rich in the wake of the 2008 so-called Global Financial Crisis and to inaugurate the policies of austerity, while the trade unions have worked to limit and sabotage popular hostility to these measures.

This shifting of fundamental positions and loyalty to basic democratic programmes does not speak to people’s powerlessness. It rather indicates the social and political chasm between the privileged petty-bourgeoisie and the mass of working people, while underscoring the bankruptcy of all critiques of the existing set-up which are not rooted in the fight for the overthrow of capitalism and its institutions.

At a time when the conditions of life have become insupportable and demand an uncompromising response, these once-representatives of the people exhort to passivity, conformism and reconciliation with the ruling *élite* and - in once-Great Britain - with the living embodiment of the hereditary privileges enjoyed by the rich and of the subservience and servility demanded of working people.

And so, for days, the British public was subjected to saturation coverage of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

This diet of carefully choreographed royal propaganda, which included minute-by-minute coverage of Sunday's 1,000-boat pageant on the Thames and an official pop concert at Buckingham Palace, ensured that any serious news was all but excised.

The mounting economic crisis in Europe was reduced to footnotes.

The tens of millions of pounds spent on the Royal Jubilee is in stark contrast to the demands of the ruling *élite* that working people - the victims of the most severe austerity measures since the 1930s - must make 'sacrifices' for the good of the country. Rumours were circulating that the cost of the celebrations, including the extra 'bank holiday', was going to be around 1.2 billion pounds (AU\$ 1.8 billion).

Much of the expense has been on ensuring a security lockdown of the capital. For the Thames Pageant event alone, 13,000 security forces were mobilised, including members of the Royal Navy and Marines, as well as police officers.

Over the month of May 2012 London's 40 square miles had been systematically swept by security forces, including police frogmen carrying out an underwater search of the Thames, to counter any so-called 'terrorist threat'. This was in addition to the biggest mobilisation of the armed forces in London since the second world war, already in place in the run-up to the Olympic Games.

The pop concert organised outside Buckingham Palace plumbed new depths of sycophancy and deference. Performing alongside a number of tired, multi-millionaire musicians including Paul McCartney, Elton John and Stevie Wonder, were a host of manufactured 'reality TV show' creations. Just what is one to make of Prince Charles publicly giving thanks to one Gary Barlow, lead singer in the 1990s boy-band, *Take that*, for organising the event ?

In the process of these celebrations, all manner of the crimes of British imperialism and its consequences were brushed under the carpet. In May, the Queen hosted a tea party of foreign monarchs to celebrate her Jubilee. Amongst the attendees were the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, fresh from their bloody repression of opposition protests in Bahrain.

At the 23 May Royal Academy 'Celebration of the Arts' event to celebrate the Jubilee, Paul David Hewson, most commonly known by his stage name as *Bono*, lead singer of rock band U2, thanked the Queen for her reign and visit to Ireland last year. This is the band whose

1982 *Sunday Bloody Sunday* song - about the slaughter of 13 innocent people in Derry in 1972 by the occupying British army - is rated as one of the best political protest songs of all time.

What exactly was being celebrated by the Jubilee is hard to understand.

Today, the financial and social gulf between the United Kingdom's rich and the rest of the population is at record levels. The *Sunday Times* 'rich list', which tracks the wealth of Britain's richest 1,000 people, records their combined wealth at 414 billion pounds (AU\$ 621 billion). According to the same source, the Queen herself is worth more than 300 million pounds (AU\$ 450 million) - a vast underestimation.

The very *Financial Times* was forced to note in a comment that since the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, "society has become far more unequal. After tax, the richest 1 per cent now have 9 per cent of all income, compared with 3 per cent in 1977."

Now the social position of the working class is being subjected to an even sharper decline as a result of the government's austerity measures. Millions are without work. Pay cuts and freezes are the norm, while the destruction of social provision - implemented to fund the multi-billion-pound bailout of Britain's banks in 2008 - means many being denied their right to health care, education and social benefits.

In the capital, soup kitchens now feed thousands of people every day, including emaciated and starving children.

Despite the media's best efforts to present the population of the United Kingdom "as all being in it together", a single episode from the Jubilee made plain the real state of class relations: the already mentioned case of a group of long-term unemployed people from Bath, Bristol and Plymouth having been bussed into London and forced to work as unpaid stewards during the Jubilee, as part of the government's 'Work Programme'. It is almost Kafkaesque.

Indeed, this is no isolated, anomalous incident. In truth, many unemployed workers are now being forced into such miserable schemes under the 'Work Programme', as a means of throwing them off unemployment benefit. Up to 270 voluntary organisations and charities have signed up to the programme.

The pouring of vast political, financial and human resources into the Jubilee celebrations took place at a time of widespread alienation amongst the mass of working people and youth from the political parties and state institutions.

Support to working people by and for all the three main political parties has collapsed, while much of Britain's ruling *élite* - and *its* police - have been exposed through their relations with financial oligarchs, such as Rupert Murdoch, as deeply corrupt.

No doubt the promotion of the monarchy as an institution supposedly above all this stench is intended to remedy this situation. Instead, the glorification of wealth and privilege only proves just how far removed that ruling *élite* is from the concerns and sentiments of millions.

Perhaps, after four days of fawning and drooling, one might have expected even the Queen to feel embarrassed. Not so, as will be seen.

For the occasion, millions of words were written about a woman sitting for 60 years on an inherited throne, and most of them reeked with sickening adulation. That Right-wing press was so prostrate, so drooling, so repulsively servile that its coverage felt like a spoof.

To embrace the monarchy is to deny, absolutely, the very desire for equality.

Inequality has been increasing for three decades and Britain is now one of the least equal countries in the developed world. That the Battenberg-Windsor family is unremarkable, except on or near a horse, is only more offensive. The Queen is not a fool; no wonder she said she felt humbled.

There was much evidence of hierarchy during the Jubilee weekend and much more was to be expected at the Olympics. The heart-rending spectacle of job-seekers made to sleep under bridges, the seven bridges on the Thames - out of the 13 that the flotilla passed - closed except to 'invited guests', the alleys by the Thames closed too, except to the wealthy or well-connected, the wall of white wealth in the royal box and so on and on, all came from a different world. The question, and it was not much asked, was why did this happen? Why were ordinary families, excepting charity representatives, the monarchy's goodness made flesh, excluded from the decent views? It was the wrong question. It should have been, given the circumstances: why does it not happen more often? If the person of the Queen were more frightening, the Jubilee would be a cheap personality cult.

If one should prod the screaming of the masses, one would see more evidence of regression. The vision of once-Kate, now the Duchess of Cambridge, practising wifely submission during her engagement interview while speaking in a fake posh voice is frightening; on subsequent engagements she spoke only of William, and then it was off to another 3,000 pound-a-night suite (AU\$ 4,500) in paradise with a 10,000 pounds dress (AU\$ 15,000) hanging off her frame. Of Kate's - or rather Queen Catherine's ? - future miseries, one can only guess: if one lives by the mob, one is likely to die by it. Prince Charles - with his eleven private secretaries and his fetish for interfering in public matters he does not understand - is called Sir by everyone, except the Queen, whom he calls Mummy, in a parody of Little Britain dysfunction. Mummy ? Really ?

The Queen, of course, is ever easy with autocrats. In May she met the king of Bahrain, currently murdering his own subjects; in June it was the president of Sri Lanka, whose soldiers photograph their female Tamil victims naked and dead. People say one can guess the Queen's pleasure by the arc of her smile and so suppose she is some well-disguised agitator for human rights - read the signs ! Well, she greeted a person [guilty of organising and leading a genocide](#) as warmly as any.

The Queen's catchphrase - duty, not love - was smelted in the abdication crisis, when uncle Edward married double-divorcee Bessie Wallis Warfield + Spencer + Simpson, high practitioner of the 'Singapore grip', and then both went for tea with Hitler and toured a concentration camp. That was almost alright. After all, anti-Semitism is fundamental to the Battenberg-Windsors: it was so at the time of Sir Oswald Mosley; it went on with those who sought to bring Nazi-style Fascism to Britain - and Edward VIII was only one, because who could forget his brother, Prince George, Duke of Kent ?; it was so when Edward VIII announced that "every drop of my blood is German."

The leading British Establishment was anti-Semitic long before it could envisage in Nazism a 'solution' to social and economic problems 'to undercut' the Communists as well as the Socialists, but also 'to discipline' the trade unions, and to maintain power in the hands of the *élite*. At best, when the Establishment was simply passive in its racism and xenophobic prejudices, rife throughout the British upper class and the army upper class - who could forget George VI's attempt in December 1939 to have Leslie Hore-Belisha, minister for war, sacked ? This was orchestrated with the connivance of Lord Halifax: "because H.B. [or

Hor-ebrew, as he was referred to sometimes] is a Jew”, supported by the monarch, and indeed applauded throughout European society to varying degrees - that passivity allowed the Establishment to ignore the virulent anti-Semitism of the Nazis with no pang of conscience. That most of the blame was laid at the double-divorcee’s door of Bessie Wallis Warfield + Spencer + Simpson was typical, a smidgeon of misogyny to a pinch of snobbery and xenophobia: better to say Wallis was a witch than admit that hereditary monarchy is inherently flawed and one does not always get what one pays for: what ? a king who is ‘in love’ with a possible hermaphrodite of his choice ?

The Jubilee was a moan, no more, for a benevolent autocracy, every bit as thoughtless and consuming as the celebrity culture, actually the anti-culture, which haunts the age. Britain should face adult problems and, despite the vapid claim that the Pageant cheered everyone up - how in hell does one measure cheeriness ? - the country needs adult solutions, not the clowning which went on at the Jubilee, with an heir who distinguished himself for paying public homage to “Mummy” !

There were further episodes of infantilism: in a speech marking Britain’s ‘incredible summer’, encompassing the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics, the Labour leader, Ed Miliband, said that ‘English identity’ has been a ‘closed book’ and he calls for the future of the United Kingdom to be debated across the country. He was referring obliquely to Scotland.

But Miliband’s speech was in danger of being overshadowed after Tom Watson, the Labour party’s deputy chair, described the Jubilee celebrations as a “show of opulence by state elites.”

Priti Patel, the Conservative M.P. for Witham, charged: “It is shameful for the deputy chairman of the Labour party to attack the Queen and the jubilee celebrations in this way. Tom Watson should apologise for these comments and Ed Miliband should condemn them immediately.”

Miliband hoped to shrug off the Watson row by using the aftermath of the Jubilee celebrations to speak up in favour of Englishness. “We in the Labour Party have been too reluctant to talk about England in recent years.” Miliband said. “We’ve concentrated on shaping a new politics for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. But some people in England

felt Labour's attention had turned away. That something was holding us back from celebrating England, too. That we were too nervous to talk of English pride and English character. Connecting it to the kind of nationalism that left us ill at ease." ... "Somehow, while there is romanticism in parts of the left about Welsh identity [and] Scottish identity, English identity has tended to be a closed book of late. For too long, people have believed that to express English identity is to undermine the union. At the same time, we have rightly helped express Scottish identity within the union. This does not make sense. You can be proudly Scottish and British. And you can be proudly English and British, as I am."

Miliband's speech had been carefully timed to take place between the Jubilee bank holiday, that he marked with his wife Justine at the St. Paul's Cathedral Service, and the start of the Euro 2012 football tournament and the Olympic Games.

Miliband rejected "narrow nationalism" wherever it occurs across Britain: "In Scotland, the narrow nationalists of the Scottish National Party pose a false choice. They ask: are you Scottish or British ? I say you can be both."

Miliband cited his own background, as the son of Holocaust survivors who grew up in London, to illustrate his belief that there should be no "false choice" between multiple identities. "You could say my family have not sat under the same oak tree for the last 500 years." he said. "I am the son of a Jewish refugee.... I am proud to be English. And I am proud to be British, too." ... "To me, Britain is a country where it is always possible to have more than one identity, more than one place in mind when you talk of home."

And after the infantilism came an example of advancing senility: *the Queen expressed the desire to have a Jubilee celebrating her reign every year*, as she thoroughly enjoyed her Diamond Jubilee celebrations so much.

Speaking at Buckingham Palace whilst addressing the nation on all channels, the Queen announced that she will speak to Whitehall policy makers and the Prime Minister so the new law can be approved by Parliament.

"It is Her Majesty's desire to have a Jubilee celebration every year for the rest of her life, therefore as her subjects, we are obliged to agree to her wishes." Prime Minister David Cameron said slithering from Number 10 on the same day.

One could go a long way in explaining the first suggestion as a case of incipient senility; as for the second, sycophancy seems the appropriate word.

The cost to the taxpayer of continuous four day celebrations every year would undoubtedly be enormous.

“It’s not just the cost of the Queen’s celebrations which go into the multi-millions; but loss of productivity for the economy as well as the security cost involved. I guess we can get more poor bastard benefits slaves to sleep under Waterloo bridge and do unpaid work in the freezing rain, at least this way we’ll claw back some of the cost. So what if the poor fuckers die of hypothermia, they shouldn’t have been unemployed and receiving benefits in the first fucking place, the vile scum.” a Tory politician, told the *Times*.

The brainwashed masses might have been delighted to hear about the new proposals for yearly Jubilee celebrations. From now on the streets of London will be filled with flag waving people, their wide eyes glazed over, hypnotised with praise, bleating their *mantra* with devout excitement as they follow all the other people in the crowds. North Koreans would surely be envious of the level of brainwashing displayed by the British public for the four days of the Diamond Jubilee.

Queen Elizabeth had another reason to sound high: her annual pay was about to jump by 20 per cent to 36 million pounds (AU\$ 54.1 million) for the fiscal year through to March 2014.

Her property holdings, known as the Crown Estate, posted a record profit of 240.2 million pounds (AU\$ 306.7 million), a net rise of 4 per cent in the year through March 2012 largely due to strong tenant demand for its shops in the upmarket Regent Street and St. James’ districts of London.

At a time when Britain is in recession and many families are feeling the pinch of higher household costs and taxes, the Queen’s allowance will rise to 36 million pounds from 30 million pounds, the level at which it was frozen in October 2010 under new laws which peg her pay to the estate’s profits.

The Crown Estate pays all of its profit to the Exchequer. Under new laws which come into effect in 2013-2014, the monarch’s pay is calculated as 15 per cent of the estate’s profits from two years prior. The changes were designed to ensure that the Queen’s pay would rise

and fall with the health of the British economy, which this year entered its second recession since the start of the so-called Global Financial Crisis.

The Crown Estate, which owns a mix of wind farms, retail parks and most of Britain's seabed in addition to its central London properties, outperformed the industry's Investment Property Databank benchmark index due to strong international interest in the London property market and the country's growing dependency on renewable energy. The value of its property portfolio rose 7.4 per cent to 7.6 billion pounds (AU\$ 11.4 billion) from the previous year, while the total return, which includes rental income, was 16.8 per cent, outperforming the Investment Property Databank index by 10.4 percentage points. In London such projects include the 500 million pound regeneration of the St. James' district, where it will redevelop almost 300,000 square feet of new shops, offices and homes.

Meanwhile, Prince William was due to inherit up to 10 million pounds (AU\$ 15.5 million) on his 30th birthday on 21 June 2012, but aides say he will not be going on a spending spree. Rumour was circulating that he would use the money to buy a country home. But he is contemplating signing up for another tour with the R.A.F.'s Search and Rescue force.

As a reader of the *Toronto Star* commented on 6 June, "It is highly ironic that in the post-economic crash era of austerity, crisis and massive cuts to social programs around the globe, where the working public are told daily by their governments that we cannot afford social 'entitlements' like pensions and healthcare, we are witness to the gratuitous and lavish excesses of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in England celebrating the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Without a pang of self-awareness, the British government is spending millions of pounds of taxpayer money that they assert they do not have on a nationwide party along with all other Commonwealth countries around the globe. No expense has been spared to honour the Queen, who is in reality the pampered head of an anachronistic institution that has symbolized aristocratic elitism, oppression and privilege since its inception.

Throughout the history of the monarchy the "divine right of kings" has always included the unlimited use of the public purse to fund the excesses and whims of successive rulers such as wars and the self-serving pageantry we are currently witnessing.

As the paying public we are only allowed to vicariously join in the celebrations of the royal family and offer adulation on this auspicious occasion lest we offend her royal majesty with disturbing questions about its value and relevance. However what we should be doing is reflecting on the brutal history of the monarchy as an institution and asking tough questions about what we are honouring and why.

The English monarchy is an enduring symbol not of benign and passive rule but of authoritarianism, power and domination that has no place in modern society. Only a short time ago the British Empire was a feared world power that ruled its people and its subjects with ruthless impunity.

The aristocratic pomp and ceremony that media all over the world are currently celebrating without a single critical observation was created through armed force and the subordination of first the English public itself as well as a litany of unfortunate foreign peoples during the period of colonial and imperial expansion that created the British Empire and inflicted enormous cruelty and devastation on the indigenous people that England “discovered,” including the First Nations peoples of North America, Australia and Africa to name only a few. The problems of our modern world are the legacy of the British monarchy.

Monarchists, media outlets and governments worldwide prefer to turn a blind eye to this appalling historical tradition and prefer instead to focus on the superficial entrapments of the modern royal family. Their ceremonial function cannot be justified, symbolically or economically, nor can the legacy of the monarchy be sugar coated.

Events such as the Diamond Jubilee celebrate a history of aristocratic rule and excess built on the backs of millions of conquered peoples who were subjugated and exploited all their lives for centuries to provide a privileged few to live in luxury.

The irony of this lavish overspending in the face of an apparently struggling English economy appears lost on the royal family, the British government and the British public themselves who unthinkingly perpetuate this checkered tradition.

However, as the Romans knew only too well, providing bread and circuses to keep the minds of the destitute populace off revolution was an effective poverty management strategy then as

it is now. It is time the monarchy as a symbol and an institution exited the stage of history as an excess we can ill afford.”

When, on 21 June, a Labour member of the House of Lords asked “to know from [Her Majesty's Government](#) what is the total estimated cost of the [Queen's Diamond Jubilee](#) celebrations, including security, policing and temporary constructions; and who funded the celebrations.”, this was the reply from [Baroness Garden of Frognal](#), a member of the Liberal Democrats: “The national events that took place over the four day jubilee weekend in London, were funded by the organisers, and through individual donations and corporate partnerships. Costs for elements of support and co-ordination falling to the [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#), including certain stewarding and temporary structures built for the public and media, are still being finalised.”

To date such costs have not been “finalised.”

Even by the end of June 2012, opinions were still divided on whether the Queen's Jubilee had been a waste of money.

The question remained: after the feel-good haze of boats and bunting had dissipated, was the Diamond Jubilee - while undeniably a pleasant weekend off - money well-spent? It was becoming increasingly evident that the enormous expense of the Jubilee will cost the taxpayer more than the government was prepared to disclose.

Some suggested - a little bit late, actually - that the drawn-out proceedings could easily have been curtailed to celebrate the Jubilee in a more modest but nonetheless positive manner. It was estimated that the extra bank holiday would have cost the economy an approximate 1.2 billion pounds (AU\$ 1.8 billion), a large price to pay for weekend of unerring patriotism. Indeed, if the Jubilee celebrations had been more restrained it would have allowed taxpayers' money to be free for more valuable issues such as the provision of jobs.

In addition, the opportunity of the Jubilee to generate employment was largely missed and the celebrations had even been accused of exploiting cheap labour, as in the case of employed workers bussed into London, made to sleep under the bridges and unpaid for their work.

One would not want to mislead people in giving the impression that the Jubilee celebrations were funded solely from the taxpayers' pockets. Indeed, an approximate 10.5 million pounds (AU\$ 15.8 million) budget for the celebrations had come directly from both individual and corporate sponsors and the 'celebrity' artists who played in the Jubilee concert were unpaid. However, this sum of 10.5 million pounds (AU\$ 15.8 million) is but a small percentage of the overall costs of the Jubilee; there were many extra costs about which the government is conveniently remaining very tight-lipped. The vast underlying costs certainly darken an initial impression of the Jubilee as an event which relied on the generosity of the affluent.

The issue of affluent sponsorship of the Jubilee highlights the fact that if these sponsors had not spent their money on the Jubilee they could have given financial support to much more worthwhile and sustainable causes.

Government cuts were arguably one of the reasons for last summer's rioting and with the memory of this still fresh in people's minds, it would have been more justifiable for such sponsors to direct their money to the aid of businesses which suffered at the hands of rioters or to prevent this happening again.

In the north London borough of Haringey, the youth services budget was cut by 75 per cent after the council's budget was slashed by 41 million pounds (AU\$ 61.2 million). It is undeniable that the 10.5 million pounds (AU\$ 15.7 million) sponsorship could be put to good use in the restoration of at least some of these youth services, and this is just one example of how this money could be injected back into society.

Apart from the private sponsorship, the costs of the Jubilee quickly escalated when practical matters were considered. The Greater London Authority budgeted 2 million pounds (AU\$ 3 million) for outside screens, road closures, signage and other expenses and while towards this it did provide 100,000 pounds (AU\$ 150,000) the rest went to the Department for Media, Culture and Sport.

In addition to practical issues, the Royal Household was given an extra 1 million pounds (AU\$ 1.5 million) to cover the increased volume of administration and correspondence from the Jubilee, obtained from taxpayers through the Sovereign Grant. It is worth noting that this amount is more than double the contribution made for the Golden Jubilee in 2002.

One can also think of the Ministry of Defence as a further example of the wasting of taxpayers' money in the Jubilee. That Ministry made a big contribution to the proceedings through the provision of ships for the river flotilla, the R.A.F. fly-past and the 1,000 strong personnel in the processions. What is most telling about the contribution of the military is that the Ministry refused to disclose any cost estimates for their participation. At a time when the armed forces have increasingly diminished resources at their disposal, their obligation to pump what little they have into the Jubilee is a veritable waste. If the pomp and ceremony had been scaled down the Ministry could have used their fiscal resources for much more worthy causes such as rehabilitation and better job security for serving members of the forces.

Having considered all these factors, it becomes increasingly apparent that the Jubilee celebrations wasted an inordinate amount of money which could have been put to much better use. With the public still caught up in patriotic fervour there were doubtless many who might disagree. But, given it a few months and once Britain has emerged from the euphoric haze of the Jubilee and Olympics, the state of public purse will tell a very different story.

Hard though it is now to credit it, when the Queen ascended the throne in 1952, the United Kingdom was the third-largest economy in the world after the United States and the Soviet Union. With Germany recovering from the physical damage caused by the second world war, Britain was Europe's powerhouse.

Since then there have been booms and busts. Two long periods of growth have culminated in deep and painful recessions. Governments of both Left and Right have tried to modernise and reinvigorate the economy: the three-day week, the winter of discontent, Black Wednesday - 16 September 1992, the day when the British government was forced to withdraw the pound from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. Five years later the Chancellor of the Exchequer estimated that the loss from that day was around 3.14 billion pounds (presently, AU\$ 4.71 billion) - and the yet unfinished great recession of the past five years have shown how difficult this has been.

Throughout it all, Britain has got richer. While there are surveys questioning whether the people are happier on the occasion of the Jubilee than they were when Elizabeth Battenberg-Windsor came to the throne, living standards have more than tripled since 1952.

The consumer luxuries of the age when Harold Macmillan said that “people had never had it so good” had become the present-day necessities. Nor is it simply in material terms that Britain is better off. Babies born now can expect to live for about 10 years longer than the baby boomers of six decades ago. They will be fitter and healthier as well.

Yet, the real story of the past 60 years has been of potential squandered. Britain has grown richer, but other countries have grown richer faster. What is more, the economy has become more unbalanced and its foundations shakier. The hollowing out of the country’s industrial base has been a feature of the past 60 years, as has the widening regional disparity between north and south which has accompanied the drift towards an economy dominated by financial services, and the City of London in particular. For the first half of the reign of Elizabeth II, Britain became a more equal country. After 1980 the gap between rich and poor widened.

The reign began with Winston Churchill back in Downing Street and Richard Austen Butler as Chancellor of the Exchequer. With the last vestiges of rationing on their way out, the early and mid-1950s saw the transition from Socialist planning to Keynesian demand management. The governments of Churchill, Eden and Macmillan brought forward the view of a mixed economy and full employment. Strong growth, low inflation and a buoyant jobs market defined the start of the ‘new Elizabethan age’.

Yet, during the 1950s there was growing concern that Britain’s economic performance was markedly inferior to that of its continental rivals as they recovered from the ravages of war. As a result, the next 10 years were spent searching for a new growth model. In the early 1960s there were half-hearted attempts to import the ‘indicative planning’ used by the French government to direct its economy from the centre, leading to the creation of the tripartite National Economic Development Council in 1962. This was followed by Harold Wilson’s equally nebulous “white heat” - the belief that the power of science and technology could be harnessed to raise the growth rate. Wilson set up a new ministry, the Department of Economic Affairs, to implement a national plan, which had the ambitious target of expanding the economy by 25 per cent in six years. However the plan was made stillborn by the deflationary measures deemed necessary to avoid a devaluation of the sterling, which happened anyway in November 1967.

Despite the difficulties, the first 15 years of the Queen’s reign were as good as it got for a very long time. The next quarter of a century saw two ferocious boom-busts in the housing

market, the highest inflation in peacetime, the longest dole queues since the 1930s' great depression, widespread industrial unrest, two major sterling crises and the abandonment of Keynesian demand management for the rigours of monetarism.

Until recently, the worst five-year period since 1952 was from the Silver Jubilee year of 1977 to 1981, which encompassed the austerity measures imposed on Britain by the International Monetary Fund and the collapse of manufacturing in a two-year recession after Thatcher's arrival in Downing Street. Growth during that period averaged barely 1 per cent a year, but it was followed by a strong upswing generated by lower oil prices, a cheaper currency and financial deregulation.

If the past 60 years are split into five-year tranches, the fastest growth was the 3.2 per cent a year on average between 1982 and 1986, the period which straddled the Falklands war and the big bang deregulation of the City.

The boom got out of hand in 1987 and 1988, leading to the house price crash of 1989 and 1990. Britain's ill-fated entry into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism intensified the recessionary pressures, and it was only when the pound was blown out of the E.R.M. on Black Wednesday in September 1992 that recovery began.

This proved to be much longer than anybody who had been accustomed to the gyrations of the economy over the previous quarter-century imagined. It was - as the Governor of the Bank of England and Chairman of the Monetary Policy Committee Sir Mervyn King put it - the time of the "great moderation". Unemployment fell and for more than 15 years there was not a single quarter of negative output.

During the near-decade from 1997 to 2006, when Tony Blair was Prime Minister and Gordon Brown Chancellor of the Exchequer, the expansion looked particularly impressive. In the first five years of Blair's premiership, growth averaged 3.1 per cent per annum, and slipped back only slightly to 2.8 per cent a year between 2001 and 2006. Brown's claim that Labour had abolished "Tory boom and bust" came from the sense that at last - after all the false starts - Britain had finally cracked the mystery of sustained non-inflationary growth.

It had not, of course. The boom was concentrated over too narrow a *spectrum* of industries and was far too dependent on financial leverage, consumer debt and property speculation.

Years 56 to 60 of the Queen's reign have been the grimmest for her subjects since she came to the throne. Growth has averaged just 0.2 per cent a year and real living standards have fallen.

On the latest estimates it will take until 2014 for economic output to get back to where it was in 2008, and until 2017 for living standards to return to the levels they were at when Blair ordered British troops into Iraq in 2003.

The past five years have been a reality check. The Queen once famously asked economists why none of them saw the crash coming. As she was celebrating her Diamond Jubilee, she should have been asking her prime minister how a nation - which has not run a manufacturing trade surplus since Michael Foot was Leader of the Opposition, where North Sea oil has come and nearly gone, and where consumer debt hit saturation point some years ago - is going to earn a living in the years ahead.

Macmillan's "never had it so good" speech was actually a warning that the prosperity might not last. And he was right.

Not everyone was as happy about the Jubilee as the ignorant multitude. Republicans had been stepping up their protest well before the events of the weekend - but who were they, how many were they, and what exactly did they want? A group of volunteers spent a long evening organising campaign material and preparing big placards on wooden poles. The signs read: "Power to the People" and "Citizen Not Subjects". One placard put an interesting dilemma: "9,560 Nurses or 1 Queen?"

They were preparing for 3 June, when the country was to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. Thousands of onlookers were expected to flock to the Thames to catch a glimpse of the monarch forming the floating centrepiece of her own Jubilee River Pageant, a grand spectacle boasting seven-and-a-half miles of regal flotilla - just one of the main events in an extravagant four-day bank holiday weekend.

One might be forgiven for believing that Britain was barmy for royalty.

But just along from London's Tower Bridge on the south side of the river, *Republic's* protest, what they describe as "the biggest and boldest in modern times", would be floating a different idea. And this would be no riverside gala.

After years as a low-key movement, *Republic* re-launched itself in 2006 as an official pressure group. In 2010 it had 9,000 members, but since the Royal Wedding announcement that year, they registered supporters had increased to over 21,000. “We are really getting our message out, considering our size.” said an organiser. “We have one-and-a-half paid employees so we are definitely punching above our weight.”

Republic wants to stir up some lively political debate.

The mission is simple, said chief executive Graham Smith. “We want to get rid of the monarchy and have a republican constitution with an elected head of state.” Republicans want a referendum because, for them, the monarchy is undemocratic. “It is not chosen by the people, does not represent the people, and as an institution it is not fit for purpose.” Mr. Smith explained. Just look at the “enormously wasteful” Jubilee, he pointed out.

So who are the people behind the politics ?

“*Republic* has changed over the last few years.” said another organiser. “It is younger, more evenly split between genders, and more diverse in terms of professions. We are ordinary people.” ... “Our methods are not controversial, but we are not afraid of getting into scraps - not literally.”

Mr. Smith believes that *Republic*’s first hurdle is public opinion, because political opinion will follow.

However, recent polls have not provided him with good support. One published by poll agency *Ipsos Mori* in May suggested that 13 per cent of Britons wanted a republic. But Mr. Smith dismisses the accuracy of that. “It is clearly a blip because every other poll before and after shows about 20-25 per cent.” *Ipsos Mori* has previously reported that those favouring a republic averaged just under 20 per cent, a slightly lower figure, but one which has remained consistent for 18 years during 1993-2011.

Another poll at the end of May 2012 suggested that 22 per cent of people believe the country would be better off without a monarchy, with 69 per cent saying it would be worse off.

Even after the death of the Princess of Wales, in 1997, support for republicanism remained steady. “That stability” said Mr. Smith, “shows that the issue has not been sufficiently

engaged with in the past.” And *Republic*’s chief executive believes opinion is shifting: “The other 75 per cent of the population are not all monarchists.” he said. “Many simply do not know how to go about the change.”

But does even half-baked tolerance mean Britain is ready for a drastic change ?

Neil Blain, Royal commentator and Stirling University’s professor of communications, said that criticism of the British monarchy is mainly found on social media. “Grumbling seldom finds a public voice.” he said. ... “*Republic* is pretty much the only force for debate about the monarchy in Britain. And for this reason it is actually rather important.”

But its impact is another matter.

“*Republic* is building political alliances, which it needs.” added Professor Blain. “Without this there is a danger it could look, not like a lost cause, but a becalmed cause. Historically, there are periods when the monarchy was quite unpopular.”

“There is still a fear in Britain of openly criticising the Queen. We need to be trailblazers.” said one of *Republic*’s directors. “We have settled into a period of acceptance. People like spectacle and tradition; it is hard to upstage a royal wedding with micro-blogging. The major challenge facing *Republic* is ‘how do you market republicanism ?’ But they are tackling this in an organised, strategic way, so I would absolutely not write them off.”

Republic’s real frustration is, as they see it, unbalanced, unfettered royal press coverage. They complain in particular about the balance of B.B.C. reporting.

By *Ipsos Mori*’s previous reckonings, there could be as many as 10 million people in the United Kingdom who sympathise with *Republic*’s view. “You just would not know that from the print media.” said the same group’s director.

How can “firm, serious” *Republic* fire debate if most people are fine, even happy, with the *status quo* ? The answer is simple: “It is about asking questions, getting people thinking, working from a premise of fairness and equality.” said another organiser. “And showing how a republic would affect a normal person in the street.”.... “*Republic* is not radical or scary. We are not counter-culture.”

The challenge remained for the members of *Republic* to convince people to listen.

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