

**THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
SOUTHERN TASMANIA BRANCH
PLATINUM JUBILEE TREE PLANTING
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 22 APRIL 2022**

Good morning and a warm welcome to all the members of the Royal Commonwealth Society Southern Tasmania Branch to this Platinum Jubilee commemoration event.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

May I acknowledge among us:

- Barry Smith, Branch President;
- Frank McGregor, Honorary Consul for the United Kingdom in Tasmania;
- and representatives of the Order of Australia Association; Hobart Horticultural Society; and the City of Glenorchy Garden Club.

Our event today is unique as it combines our close association with the Monarchy and the business of horticulture, or more precisely arboriculture.

Many of you may know that yesterday I had the honour and pleasure of unveiling a plaque after the planting of a Flowering Cherry Tree at Franklin House, Youngtown, on behalf of your Northern Branch colleagues, to mark the historic seventy years of Her Majesty The Queen's rule.

I shall not repeat my remarks except to record some essential facts:

- Elizabeth, aged 25, acceded to the throne on Wednesday the 6th of February 1952 on the death of her father King George the Sixth.

- The young Elizabeth was in Kenya at the time. She was proclaimed Queen by her Privy and Executive councils in London shortly after the death of King George.
- The Queen’s Coronation was held on the 2nd of June 1953 at Westminster Abbey in London. The delay was because of the greatly detailed planning involved in this momentous occasion.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second has paid seven official visits to Tasmania between 1954 and 2000. She has planted three trees in the grounds of our Government House.

The trees are a fitting focus, as we contemplate the life and dedication of the longest-serving British Monarch.

On the 21st of February 1954 – on her first visit to Tasmania, just eight months after her Coronation – The Queen planted an English Oak tree adjacent to our Main Drive. It is on your left as you drive out – about a hundred metres in front of the gaze of the statue of her ancestor Queen Victoria, in her plinth on the mountain-facing wall of the building.

In 1963, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness planted two trees directly in front of the steps leading from the South Terrace fountain to the gravel walkway overlooking the harbour and Regatta Grounds. These towering trees are Tasmanian Flowering Blue Gums. This species had been proclaimed as our State floral emblem just a few months earlier, in December 1962, hence their selection for planting by Her Majesty The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The 1988 Royal Visit marked our Australian Bicentenary. As you may imagine, the four-day Tasmanian program was packed and the official schedule for the morning of Tuesday the 26th of April reads as follows:

“10 am members of the Royal Household and Visit Officials assemble in the main hallway.

“10.10 am The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh are met at the foot of the main staircase by the Governor and Lady Bennett.

“Walk to the Western Gardens for Tree Planting. Note: the Royal vehicle moves to a point adjacent the planting area.”¹ End quote.

The “Western Gardens” referred to is the Plimsoll Native Garden, established by Governor and Lady Bennett. Governor Sir James Plimsoll’s original concept was for a garden to mark the Bicentenary. Her Majesty planted a Huon pine; The Duke of Edinburgh planted a myrtle.

The Royal vehicle followed them along the Main Driveway, and as soon as they had planted the trees, they got into the vehicle, drove to Hobart Airport, flew to Wynyard for engagements, drove to Burnie for engagements, drove back to Wynyard, flew to Launceston for engagements, and then flew back to Hobart in time for supper!

That meal, incidentally, was prepared by our then very youthful Head Chef, Ainstie Wagner.

Now, on Friday 22 April 2022, we commemorate The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, here at the Eastern Arboretum with the planting of a dawn redwood. This species is a fast-growing, but endangered deciduous conifer. It is the sole living species of the genus *Metasequoia*.

Fittingly, this tree was a gift from the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. A cutting was grown from an original planting in their gardens, a tree that fell down in poor weather in 2018.

May we acknowledge and thank Barry Smith and his colleagues for suggesting, last year, that we consider this planting to commemorate Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee.

May I also announce that we intend this year to formally name, as the Platinum Jubilee Lookout, the levelled viewing platform at the north-west end of the Quarry Pond.

In these ways, here in Tasmania, we celebrate the remarkable reign of Queen Elizabeth the Second and her seventy years as our Sovereign.

Thank you.

¹ Untitled stapled foolscap document, 25 pages, quote at page 22, “Event 7”.