

# The Queen's Birthdays

## Why Does the Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of two royal birthdays was started by George II in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for his annual birthday parade on his actual birthday. A solution to this was to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the king or queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



Earlier on in her reign, The Queen celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday, but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June. Other countries of the Commonwealth celebrate on different days; in Canada it is held on the last Monday before 25th May, in New Zealand it is held on the first Monday in June and in most territories in Australia it is celebrated on the second Monday in June.

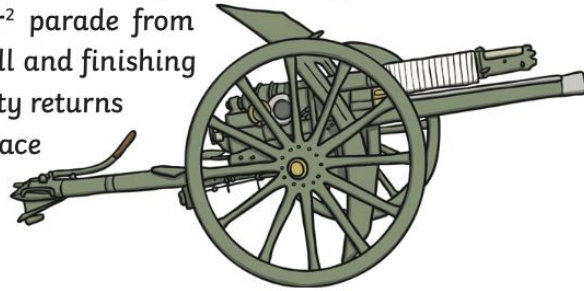
## Royal Facts

1. **Name:** Elizabeth Alexandra Mary
2. **Born:** 21st April, 1926
3. **Job:** Queen Elizabeth II reigns as The Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and many of the Commonwealth countries.
4. The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one on April 21st (her actual birthday) and one on the second Saturday in June (her official birthday).
5. On 9th September 2015, Her Majesty became the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch (king or queen). The Queen entered the record books after surpassing the reign of her great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria. At 5.30pm, she had officially equalled Victoria's 23,226 days, 16 hours and 18 minutes on the throne - over 63 years, seven months and two days.



### Birthday Traditions and Ceremonies

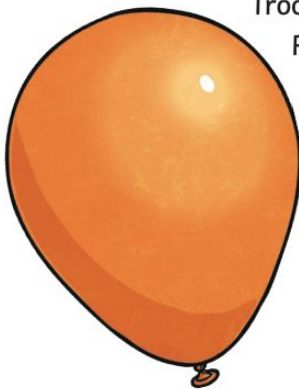
April 21st (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. But the occasion is marked by a 41 gun salute<sup>1</sup> in Hyde Park, a 21 gun salute in Windsor Great Park and a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London. On the second Saturday in June, her official birthday is celebrated with the colourful Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup> parade from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Her majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.



### A Special Birthday

In 2016, The Queen was 90 and there were special celebrations to mark this milestone birthday. Her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, was 95 this year although the events were not officially organised to celebrate his birthday.

To mark the event there was: a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral; Trooping the Colour; a carriage procession of the Royal Family to and from Buckingham Palace and Horse Guards Parade; a balcony appearance of members of the Royal Family at Buckingham Palace and the Patron's Lunch (a street party on The Mall with 10,000 invited guests). Most of the guests were involved in the 600 charities and organisations that The Queen is patron of.

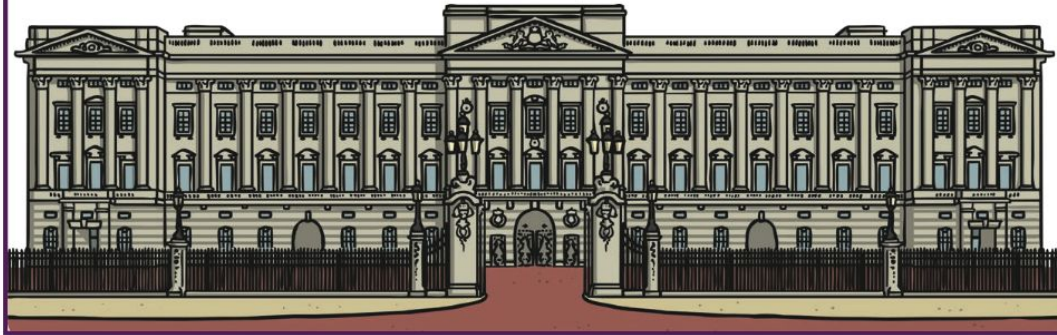


### Glossary

1. A **gun salute**<sup>1</sup> is a mark of respect for special royal celebrations. The number of rounds (or blasts) depends on the place and the occasion. The basic salute is 21 rounds, although in Hyde Park and Green Park, an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks. At the Tower of London, 62 rounds are fired on royal anniversaries (the basic 21, plus a further 20 because the Tower is a royal palace and fortress, plus another

21 'for the City of London'). Gun salutes are usually fired at midday. Salutes are not fired on Sundays, so if the anniversary date falls on a Sunday, the salute will take place on the following Monday.

2. **Trooping the Colour**<sup>2</sup>. During the ceremony, The Queen inspects the troops from the Household Division, who have paraded for her. Trooping the Colour originated from traditional preparations for battle when a Regiment's Colour was carried, or "trooped", down the ranks so that they could be seen and recognised by the soldiers who would use them as a rallying point in the confusion of battle.





# Questions

1. What date was Queen Elizabeth born and what are her middle names?

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2. When Queen Elizabeth passed Queen Victoria's record for the longest reigning British monarch, how long had she reigned?

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3. Find and record which countries celebrate The Queen's birthday. Which dates do they choose?

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4. Why are there different numbers of blasts for the gun salutes?  
Use the glossary to help you.

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5. Give a summary of the order of the day for Trooping the Colour using four conjunctions in your answer. Underline the conjunctions that you use.

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6. Using information about the events that took place to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday, decide which event you would have liked to be part of. Give reasons for your choice.

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7. What is the purpose of the glossary?

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