

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. 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.

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 in April and one in June.
5. Since September 2015, Her Majesty is the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch (king or queen).



How is Each Birthday Celebrated?



April 21st (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends and with a gun salute¹ to publicly wish her many happy returns. On the second Saturday in June, her official birthday is celebrated with the colourful Trooping the Colour² parade from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Her Majesty is then joined on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.

Glossary

1. **A gun salute¹.** A gun salute 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 but in Hyde Park and Green Park, an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks.
2. **Trooping the Colour².** During the ceremony, The Queen inspects the troops who have paraded for her. The bands play and the soldiers march, along with horses and the Regimental Colour (banner). It is a colourful celebration and thousands of people line the pavements of The Mall to enjoy the sight. For many years, The Queen rode her horse, Burmese, with her troops, but more recently she has ridden in a carriage.



Questions

Look under the section 'Royal Facts' for the answers.

1. In what year was Queen Elizabeth II born?

2. Name three countries that Queen Elizabeth reigns over.

3. During which month and year did Queen Elizabeth become the longest reigning monarch?

Look under the section 'Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?' for the answers.

4. What does the word 'tradition' mean?

5. Who began the custom of having two birthday celebrations? Why did this come about?

6. Would you like to have two birthdays? Why?

Look under the section 'How Is Each Birthday Celebrated?' for the answers.

7. There are two words beginning with the letter 'p' that describe the different ways in which The Queen celebrates her birthdays. Find and copy them here.

8. What is a balcony?

Answers

Look under the section 'Royal Facts' for the answers.

1. In what year was Queen Elizabeth II born?
Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926.
2. Name three countries that Queen Elizabeth reigns over.
Queen Elizabeth reigns over England, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and many Commonwealth Countries.
3. During which month and year did Queen Elizabeth become the longest reigning monarch?
Queen Elizabeth became the longest reigning monarch in September 2015.

Look under the section 'Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?' for the answers.

4. What does the word tradition mean?
The word tradition means a custom or something that has been happening for a long time.
5. Who began the custom of having two birthday celebrations? Why did this come about?
George II started the custom of celebrating two birthdays when he didn't want to parade on his November birthday during the cold winter weather.
6. Would you like to have two birthdays? Why?
Various responses indicating a positive or negative preference and backed up with appropriate reasoning.

Look under the section 'How Is Each Birthday Celebrated?' for the answers.

7. There are two words beginning with the letter 'p' that describe the different ways in which The Queen celebrates her birthdays. Find and copy them here.
The words describing the ways that The Queen celebrates her birthdays are 'privately' and 'publicly'.
8. What is a balcony?
A balcony is a terrace that is high up with a good view.

Take ideas from the whole text for your answers