

## A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH Presented at Thanksgiving Prayers: 14 April 2021

I want to thank the Rector and the congregation of St James for this chance to remember Prince Philip. Who lived a fulfilling life; was content. One cannot complain when someone of a great age dies. But I will miss his sympathetic encouragement 'My money is on you'.

We understood each other's what anthropologists call 'taken-for-granted.' This sympathy kept us friends. But it didn't start well.

I'd negotiated for my husband, Clifton Pugh, to paint the Prince's portrait in the happy expectation he'd be pleased. Clif was constantly approached to paint Governor's General, chairmen of international companies, in England and Australia. It was a perfectly reasonable assumption.

Except of Her Majesty the Queen or Prince Philip, who are painted twice a year, every year.

The Windsor Castle Grand Reception room served as a temporary studio. Clif was organising his paints when our subject arrived.

'This is my wife Judith.' And at the easel began to concentrate.

There was a chair nearby. The Prince asked Clif how he should sit.

I replied he should make himself comfortable. I would be keeping him occupied so that he could be himself. The Prince asked Clif again, and, thinking *hard of hearing*, I replied a bit louder. I explained he

should feel free to move. If Clif needed stillness to draw a detail, he would ask. The Prince again asked Clif, and I realised we had a problem.

I said I was sorry that he wasn't aware of our process, but that he would find Clif paints the real person, not the look of them.

'I've heard all that before' and asked Clif if he could bring work on Friday.

Quite cross, I said 'You can, but you're stuck with me now'.

Even crosser, he turned to leave, stopped, turned back. 'What do you want to talk about?'

'This is your home, and I am a guest in it. It seems to be a place of history, why don't you tell me about it?'

Half an hour or so later he laughed aloud at something I'd said and his whole demeanour altered. Kindly, urbane and very amused, he explained he realised that he *had* forgotten he was being painted, that I hadn't turned up so I could tell my friends I'd met him.

After the awkward start, the paintings, two of the Prince, one of me, went very well.

Our ex-Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull at the weekend talked about the lack of power, the frustration that must have been his. Not at all. Prince Philip understood that he could have influence, and from the first, set about to use his position for the public benefit.

I found myself talking about my activities and ideas. Through informing and influencing individuals, you start a chain reaction. Clif was a conservationist and his scientist friends had set about training me. Once the Prince realised I was wasn't simply sentimental about conservation, he said 'Science isn't enough. You need to learn about the economics associated with the exploitation of resources. Do you have a pencil?' And I had a reading list.

Our sitter one day suddenly remarked, as we talked about feminism, that he hoped that the movement would stop men hitting women. And he looked at Clif, and became the officer laying down the law to a subordinate. Firmly and precisely. It is never, never acceptable, no-one should ever have to put up with it. It was clear that this acute observer of people had realised what was going on, decided to stop it.

His prominent characteristic was to take steps to improve the world; on every plane, personal and on the broadest scale. He began and powered the global

conservation movement, worked at a detailed and executive level in hundreds of organisations.

To work as he did within his constraints required high intelligence, intuition, strength of character. When everyone recognises you, every action is scrutinised, there is no privacy. Every expression of opinion carries weight, and in particular there must never be any preferring of one place or group of people above another, nothing ever remotely party political. This space of neutrality in the centre is essential for the Westminster system to work and it was fascinating to see it lived. The individual has sociality separate from personality or character, and must understand the constitutional situation at every moment.

Clif had been concreting just before we left Dunmoochin, so I had the idea of recipe of sand to cement, proportion of water, the problem of flat. As the Prince was showing me points of interest from the window, he remarked that Elizabeth had built the flagged area directly below us. Huge stones, beautifully fitted. For a moment I was surprised, but I supposed he meant designed, surely she wouldn't have actually bucketed the concrete?

I said 'Oh it's very nice.' In the tone you use when someone has just built a barbeque. He realised what I thought.

'No, no, not the Queen, Elizabeth the First.'

It's not often you have a moment when you know someone you have come to like and to value also likes and values you. In this friendship, I had the moment.

One day, late to our session, I found both men disgruntled. The Prince had decided which picture he wanted. I was concerned that they might alter as they were finished.

'Well, we should agree that if the one you choose doesn't end up as you expect, you can have the other one.'

Clif, sulky, said 'That won't be necessary,'

Prince Philip explained he wanted the portrait of me: he'd got to know the sitter.