



The Queen's Birthdays



The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year. Her actual birthday is celebrated on 21st April and her official birthday falls on the second Saturday in June.

Why Does The Queen Have Two Birthdays?

King George II began the tradition of two royal birthdays in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for a birthday parade.

So, he decided to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring or summer. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the king or queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



Did You Know...?

There was no gun salute for The Queen's 95th birthday in April 2021. This was because The Queen's husband, Prince Philip, had died a few days earlier and The Queen was still in **mourning**.

The Queen's Actual Birthday

The 21st April (**The Queen's actual birthday**) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. Around London, however, there are usually a number of gun salutes.

Gun salutes are a mark of respect for special royal celebrations and involve rounds being fired from large guns in royal parks. Gun salutes are usually fired at midday.

Other countries of the **Commonwealth** celebrate The Queen's birthday on different days of the year.

Salutes are not fired on Sundays so, if The Queen's birthday is on a Sunday, the salute will take place on the following Monday.

The basic gun salute is 21 rounds. In Hyde Park and Green Park, an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks. There is a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London because it is a royal palace and fortress.



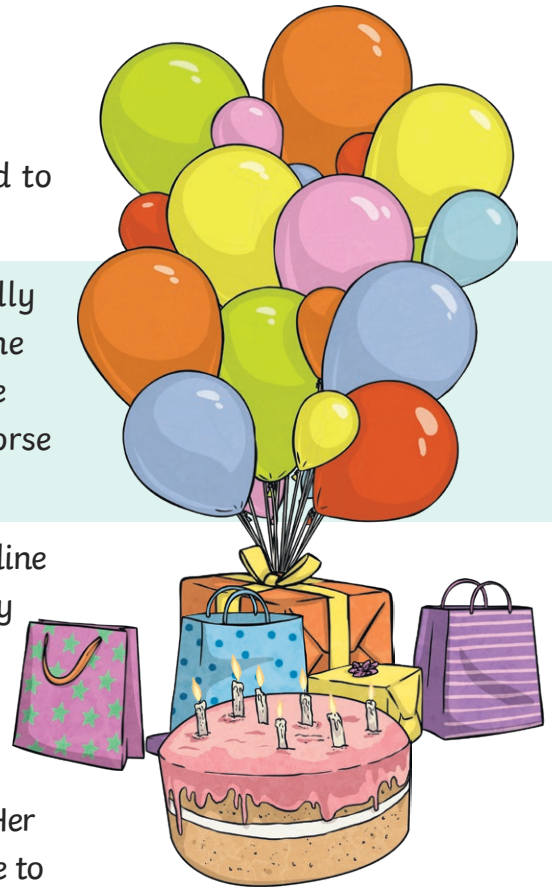
The Queen's Official Birthday

The Queen originally celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June.

The **sovereign's** official birthday in June is usually marked with a famous parade called Trooping the Colour. The parade begins at Buckingham Palace and travels down The Mall before finishing at Horse Guards Parade.

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.

Usually, members of the public line the streets to watch the parade while waving flags and cheering. Her Majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.



In 2020, the parade was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a much smaller version was held inside the grounds of Windsor Castle. In 2021, COVID-19 restrictions were still in place so a smaller version of the parade was again held in Windsor Castle.

Glossary

Commonwealth:	A family of 54 countries that work together. The Queen is Head of the Commonwealth.
mourning	An expression of sorrow following a person's death.
sovereign:	A supreme ruler, such as a king or queen.

Questions

1. On what day was The Queen born? Tick one.

- ☐ 21st April
- ☐ 21st June
- ☐ 21st November
- ☐ 21st March

2. Which monarch began the tradition of having two sovereign birthdays? Tick one.

- ☐ Queen Elizabeth I
- ☐ King George II
- ☐ Queen Elizabeth II
- ☐ King Henry VIII

3. Why was the 2020 Trooping the Colour parade cancelled?

4. In which section of the text would you find information about gun salutes?

5. Find and copy a word from the text that means the same as 'king or queen'.

6. Would you like to attend the Trooping the Colour parade? Explain why.

7. Explain what the purpose of the glossary is.

8. Prince Charles is the next in line to the throne.

Do you think that he should also celebrate two birthdays if he becomes king?

Answers

1. On what day was The Queen born? Tick one.

- ☒ **21st April**
☐ 21st June
☐ 21st November
☐ 21st March

2. Which monarch began the tradition of having two sovereign birthdays? Tick one.

- ☐ Queen Elizabeth I
☒ **King George II**
☐ Queen Elizabeth II
☐ King Henry VIII

3. Why was the 2020 Trooping the Colour parade cancelled?

In 2020, the Trooping the Colour parade was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. In which section of the text would you find information about gun salutes?

You would find information about gun salutes in the section called The Queen's Actual Birthday.

5. Find and copy a word from the text that means the same as 'king or queen'.

Accept either of the following: monarch; sovereign

6. Would you like to attend the Trooping the Colour parade? Explain why.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I would like to attend the parade because it sounds like a really exciting and fun day out. I think there would be a really happy atmosphere in the crowd and I would like to see the parade and maybe catch a glimpse of the Royal Family.

7. Explain what the purpose of the glossary is.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The purpose of the glossary is to explain some of the trickier and technical words that are used in the text so that the reader can understand the text better.

8. Prince Charles is the next in line to the throne.

Do you think that he should also celebrate two birthdays if he becomes king?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Prince Charles should celebrate two birthdays if he becomes king because it is a tradition that dates back many years. It will also give him the chance to have both public and private birthday celebrations.



The Queen's Birthdays



The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one on 21st April (her actual birthday) and another on the second Saturday in June (her official birthday).



Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of two royal birthdays was started by King George II in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for a birthday parade.

A solution to this was to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every late spring or early summer when pleasant weather was more likely. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the king or queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.

Gun Salutes

Gun salutes are a mark of respect for special royal celebrations and involve rounds being fired from large guns in royal parks.

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.

The Queen's Actual Birthday

The 21st April (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. Around London, however, the occasion is usually marked by a number of gun salutes.

The Queen's 95th birthday celebrations in April 2021 were a more subdued occasion. Following the death of The Queen's husband and consort a few days earlier, The Queen's birthday passed without a gun salute.

The Queen's Official Birthday

The Queen originally 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.



The Queen's Birthdays

Trooping the Colour

Trooping the Colour is a grand parade on the sovereign's official birthday in June. The parade begins at Buckingham Palace and travels down The Mall before finishing at Horse Guards Parade.

Typically, flag-waving members of the public line the streets to watch the parade and the members of the Royal Family, who travel with it on horseback. Following the parade, The Queen returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.



In 2020, the parade was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a much smaller version was held inside the grounds of Windsor Castle and at a safe distance from the Royal Family.

An announcement was made in March 2021 which said that the 2021 parade would not go ahead in its traditional form and arrangements for an alternative and smaller parade were again made.

The Queen's Special Birthdays

Her Majesty has been known to mark milestone birthdays with special breaks in tradition. On her 80th birthday in April 2006, The Queen went on a walkabout outside her royal residence of Windsor Castle and met with members of the public.

In 2016, to mark The Queen's 90th birthday there was, alongside the traditional Trooping the Colour: a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral; 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).

Glossary

Commonwealth:

A family of 54 countries that work together. The Queen is Head of the Commonwealth.

Questions

1. Draw **four** lines and match each royal location with its relevant fact.

The Mall	The place where the Trooping the Colour parade usually finishes.
Horse Guards Parade	Where Her Majesty waves at the crowds from the balcony.
Buckingham Palace	The Queen's royal residence where she carried out a royal walkabout in 2006.
Windsor Castle	The location of a street party held to celebrate The Queen's 90 th birthday.

2. **The Queen's 95th birthday celebrations in April 2021 were a more subdued occasion.**

Which word means the same as 'subdued'? Tick one.

- ☐ sombre
☐ delayed
☐ cheaper
☐ private

3. Fill in the missing words.

Following the _____, The Queen returns to the _____ of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.

4. Look at the section called **The Queen's Special Birthdays**.

Find and copy a word that means the same as 'home'.

5. What time of day are gun salutes usually fired?

6. Which of the events held to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday would you have liked to have been part of? Explain your answer.

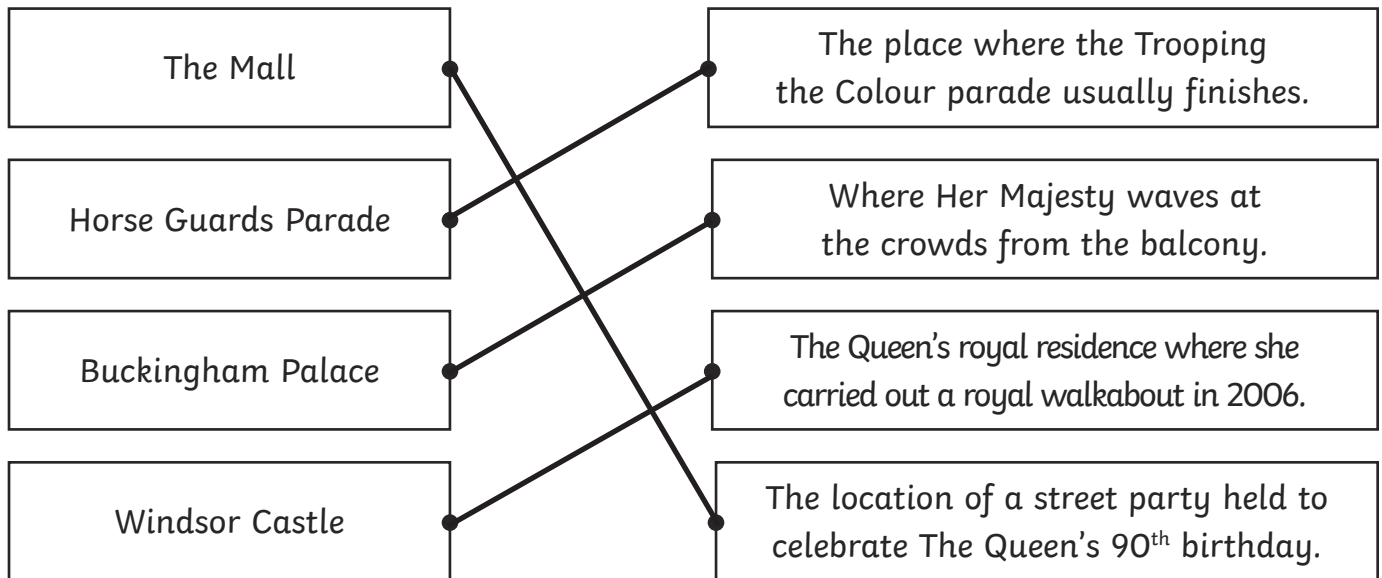
7. Describe what the atmosphere might be like at a typical Trooping the Colour parade.

8. Would you like to have two birthdays? Explain why.

9. Discuss whether you think that Prince Charles, who is next in line to the throne, will celebrate an official birthday and an actual birthday.

Answers

1. Draw **four** lines and match each royal location with its relevant fact.



2. **The Queen's 95th birthday celebrations in April 2021 were a more subdued occasion.**

Which word means the same as 'subdued'? Tick one.

- ☒ **sombre**
☐ delayed
☐ cheaper
☐ private

3. Fill in the missing words.

Following the **parade**, The Queen returns to the **balcony** of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.

4. Look at the section called **The Queen's Special Birthdays**.

Find and copy a word that means the same as 'home'.

residence

5. What time of day are gun salutes usually fired?

Gun salutes are usually fired at midday.

6. Which of the events held to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday would you have liked to have been part of? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would have liked to have been part of the Patron's Lunch because a street party sounds really fun and there may have been lots of entertainment and food to enjoy.

7. Describe what the atmosphere might be like at a typical Trooping the Colour parade.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The atmosphere at a Trooping the Colour Parade might be joyous and exciting. I imagine that people will be happy to celebrate The Queen's Birthday and thrilled at seeing members of the Royal Family and the parade.

8. Would you like to have two birthdays? Explain why.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I would like to have two birthdays because I could choose to celebrate in two different ways, like The Queen. It may also mean that I get two lots of presents!

9. Discuss whether you think that Prince Charles, who is next in line to the throne, will celebrate an official birthday and an actual birthday.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Prince Charles will continue the tradition of celebrating an official birthday and an actual birthday. The tradition has been established for a long time and I imagine a lot of people would be disappointed if the Trooping of the Colours were not to continue.



The Queen's Birthdays



The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one on 21st April (her actual birthday) and another, ceremonial affair on the second Saturday in June (her official birthday).

Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of having two sovereign birthdays dates back to the reign of King George II in 1748.

He was born in November and he felt that the inclement weather of the season could have a negative impact on an 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 or summer when there is an increased likelihood of more pleasant weather. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the king or queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



Gun Salutes

Gun salutes are a mark of respect for special royal celebrations and involve rounds being fired from large guns in royal parks.

Gun salutes are usually fired at midday. There is a 41 gun salute in Hyde Park, a 21 gun salute in Windsor Great Park and a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London.

Salutes are not fired on Sundays so, if the anniversary date falls on a Sunday, the salute will take place on the following Monday.

The Queen's Actual Birthday

The 21st April (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. Around London, however, the occasion is usually marked by a number of gun salutes.

The Queen's 95th birthday celebrations in April 2021 were a more subdued occasion. Following the death of The Queen's husband and consort, Prince Philip, on 9th April 2021, The Queen was still in a period of official mourning (the expression of sorrow following a person's death). As a result, The Queen's birthday passed without a gun salute.

The Queen's Official Birthday

Earlier in her reign, The Queen celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June.



The Queen's Birthdays

Trooping the Colour

Trooping the Colour is a grand parade of soldiers, horses and musicians to mark the sovereign's official birthday in June. The parade begins at Buckingham Palace and travels down The Mall before finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Typically, flag-waving members of the public line the streets to observe the parade and members of the Royal Family, who travel with it on horseback. Following the parade, Her Majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.

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 could identify their fellow troops easily on a battlefield.

In 2020, the parade was cancelled owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and a scaled-down version was held inside the grounds of Windsor Castle and at a safe distance from the Royal Family. An announcement was made in March 2021 which stated that the 2021 parade would not go ahead in its traditional form; an alternative and smaller parade was held again.

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.

The Queen's son, Prince Charles, is the next in line to the throne and it is possible that he may continue the tradition of having an official birthday; his birthday is in November which (as King George II established) is not an ideal time of year for a military parade!

Milestone Birthdays

Her Majesty has been known to mark milestone birthdays with special breaks in tradition. On her 80th birthday in April 2006, The Queen went on a walkabout outside her royal residence of Windsor Castle and met with members of the public.

In 2016, to mark The Queen's 90th birthday there was, alongside the traditional Trooping the Colour: a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral; 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).



Questions

1. Why did King George II start the tradition of having two sovereign birthdays? Tick one.

- ☐ He felt that a monarch deserved two birthdays.
- ☐ He wanted to celebrate with a parade when the weather was better.
- ☐ He wanted to mark the anniversary of his coronation.
- ☐ He wanted both a private and a public celebration.

2. From where at Buckingham Palace does The Queen usually wave to members of the public? Tick one.

- ☐ her bedroom window
- ☐ the courtyard
- ☐ the roof
- ☐ the balcony

3. Why did The Queen's 95th birthday in 2021 pass without a gun salute?

4. Look at the section called **Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?**

Find and copy one word from the text that shows that the Trooping the Colour parade included soldiers.

5. List the three main locations for the Trooping the Colour parade.

- ---
- ---
- ---

6. Why do you think that The Queen chose to have a walkabout to celebrate her 80th birthday?

7. **The tradition of having two sovereign birthdays dates back to the reign of King George II in 1748.**

Explain what the word 'tradition' means.

8. Do you think there would be any disadvantages to having two birthdays? Explain why.

9. Why do you think The Queen's birthday celebrations were changed from a Thursday to a Saturday?

10. Do you think that The Queen should celebrate two birthdays? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Why did King George II start the tradition of having two sovereign birthdays? Tick one.

- ☐ He felt that a monarch deserved two birthdays.
- ☒ **He wanted to celebrate with a parade when the weather was better.**
- ☐ He wanted to mark the anniversary of his coronation.
- ☐ He wanted both a private and a public celebration.

2. From where at Buckingham Palace does The Queen usually wave to members of the public? Tick one.

- ☐ her bedroom window
- ☐ the courtyard
- ☐ the roof
- ☒ **the balcony**

3. Why did The Queen's 95th birthday in 2021 pass without a gun salute?

The Queen's birthday in 2021 passed without a gun salute because her husband and consort, Prince Philip, died on 9th April 2021 and The Queen was still in a period of official mourning.

4. Look at the section called **Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?**

Find and copy one word from the text that shows that the Trooping the Colour parade included soldiers.

military

5. List the three main locations for the Trooping the Colour parade.

- **Buckingham Palace**
- **The Mall**
- **Horse Guards Parade**

6. Why do you think that The Queen chose to have a walkabout to celebrate her 80th birthday?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that The Queen chose to have a walkabout because it would be a nice way to meet with members of the public and a special way of marking a milestone birthday.

7. **The tradition of having two sovereign birthdays dates back to the reign of King George II in 1748.**

Explain what the word 'tradition' means.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The word tradition means something that has been happening for a long time and is often repeated at other occasions.

8. Do you think there would be any disadvantages to having two birthdays? Explain why.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it may be expensive to celebrate two birthdays if you have to hold two parties. It would also require quite a lot of planning.

9. Why do you think The Queen's birthday celebrations were changed from a Thursday to a Saturday?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think The Queen's birthday celebrations were changed from a Thursday to a Saturday so that more people could take part in the celebrations on a weekend as Thursday is a working day.

10. Do you think that The Queen should celebrate two birthdays? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think The Queen should celebrate two birthdays because she is monarch of our country and has an important public role. Her two birthdays give her the chance to celebrate privately and publicly.