

THE QUEEN'S VISIT, MARCH 1985

by J. M. Woolley

Twenty eight years after their first State Visit to Portugal in 1957, HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, returned in March 1985 to be welcomed by President Ramalho Eanes and Prime Minister Mário Soares. An introductory summary of the visit is as follows:—

- 25 March, pm. The Queen arrives by air to join Prince Philip on HMS "Britannia".
- 26 March, am. Arrival at Belém. Visit to Jerónimos Monastery. Lunch with President Eanes.
- pm. The Queen visits the British Embassy; dines with the President at Ajuda Palace; visits exhibition of former royal visits.
- 27 March, am. In Queluz Palace the Queen receives the Diplomatic Corps; sees exhibition of her 1957 visit; at the Estufa Fria unveils a bust of King Edward VII; receives Medal of Honour from the Mayor of Lisbon.
- pm. Lunch at Sintra Palace given by Dr. Mário Soares; visits St. Julian's School, Carcavelos; visits Assembleia da República; attends Teatro Maria II with President Eanes.
- 28 March, am. Visit to Évora by train; watches display by Portuguese Riding School; visits University of Évora.
- pm. Reception for President Eanes on board HMS "Britannia".
- 29 March, am. Flies to Porto; lunch at Casa do Infante.
- pm. Receives British community of Porto; farewell to President; flies to UK.

For the three nights of their visit to Portugal, the Queen and Prince Philip slept in Queluz Palace in a suite of rooms which members of our Society were privileged to see on a later conducted tour.

On 25 March at 5.30 pm the Queen flew into Montijo Air Base and drove to Setúbal where the Royal Yacht "Britannia" was already waiting with Prince Philip aboard. He had sailed in her from Madeira where he had been on official business for the "World Wild Life Fund".

During the night of 25/26th the "Britannia" sailed slowly from Setúbal to take up position off the Torre de Belém in readiness for the landing next morning in the Royal Barge at 10.00 am. On a decorated pier the President of the Republic and Senhora Eanes were waiting to greet the Queen and Prince Philip. Among the Portuguese suite were the Prime Minister and Senhora Soares and the Portuguese Ambassador in London, Senhor Hall Themido.

The British community in Lisbon had their first chance to cheer the Queen in an area specially reserved for them very near the landing stage. The Queen, in a forget-me-not blue outfit with a blue boater, waved and smiled as small children rushed up to present her with bouquets.

Escorted by the Republican Guard, the Queen's car drove slowly to a dais outside the Jerónimos Monastery over which both flags were flying. The national anthems were played and a 21 gun salute fired as the Queen inspected the Guard of Honour. She then entered the Jerónimos Monastery and laid a wreath on the tomb of Camões. The Queen was then driven to Belém Palace for the official call on President Eanes. She bestowed on him the Royal Victorian Chain, a personal decoration which is in her gift. She was decorated by the President with the Collar of the Order of Santiago de Espada. Lunch followed at Belém. After lunch, the Queen returned to "Britannia" now in Alcântara dock.

At 4 pm the Queen and the Duke were received at the British Embassy Residence by the Ambassador, Mr. Hugh Byatt, and

Mrs. Fiona Byatt. At the conclusion of this most successful visit the Queen made Mr. Byatt a Knight of the Royal Victorian Order. Six hundred members of the British community in Portugal were invited as guests to meet the Queen, among them the Committee members of our Society. The Queen unveiled a plaque to commemorate her visit in the garden of the Residence while the Royal Marine Band from "Britannia" played.

The Queen then returned to Queluz Palace to prepare for the banquet given for her by President Eanes at the Ajuda Palace. 160 guests sat down with the Queen, including all the ministers in the government. In her speech of thanks the Queen quoted some lines of Fernando Pessoa:—

"Tudo vale a pena
Se a alma não é pequena"

After the banquet the Queen and the Duke were taken to see an exhibition of Photographs and memorabilia relating to two former Royal Visits, that of King Edward VII to Lisbon in 1903 and that of King Manoel II to London in 1910. Mr. John Cobb, then Chairman of our Society, helped to conduct the Queen and to explain the exhibits. The Queen then returned to Queluz.

On the morning of 27 March, the Prime Minister, Doutor Mário Soares, called at Queluz and was received by the Queen. He then presented the Diplomatic Corps to Her Majesty in the throne room of the palace. After that, the Queen was taken to another part of the palace to see a photographic exhibition of her former visit to Portugal in 1957, in the time of President Craveiro Lopes and Prime Minister Salazar.

At 12.00 the Queen and the Duke arrived at the Estufa Fria Botanical Garden in the Parque do Eduardo VII where she unveiled a bust of her great-grandfather, King Edward VII, just outside the entrance. The committee members of our Society were kindly invited to be present and our then Chairman, Mr. John Cobb, met the Queen again and was able to show her the inscription at the back of the plinth. This explains that the bust is a copy of the original at the Royal Military Hospital in Chelsea,

sculpted by Albert Bruce-Joy. It was due to the initiative of certain members of the British Historical Society of Portugal, principally our present Chairman, Dr. Paul Lowndes Marques, that the idea of the bust was carried through, with the co-operation of the Câmara de Lisboa and its enthusiastic President, Dr. Nuno Krus Abecassis.

After unveiling the bust, the Queen and the Duke walked into the Estufa Fria to a dais in front of the flamingo lake. Here she received the Medal of Honour of the City of Lisbon from the Mayor and signed the Golden Book (despite some problems with a dry official pen which she solved from her own handbag!) The Queen then drove to the old place in Sintra for a lunch hosted by Dr. Mario Soares. A tour of the palace followed.

At 15.20 came the moment St. Julian's School had been awaiting with mounting excitement: the Queen's visit. She was met by her Consul General in Lisbon, Mr. A. Abbott, the Chairman of the Governors, Mr. R. Symington, and the Headmaster, Mr. Andrew Bull. The Queen unveiled a plaque on a new school building named in honour of her visit, walked among the pupils and asked for an extra day's holiday which was granted to resounding cheers.

She then drove by car to visit the National Assembly where she signed the Book of Honour before returning to Queluz Palace. Later that evening the Queen and the Duke were entertained by President and Senhora Eanes at the National Theatre of Dona Maria II where they had a buffet supper. The programme was as follows:

Two Songs by Dom Dancho and Dom Dinís
Three piano sonates by Carlos Seixas
Violin Sonata by Luis Costa
Three Rounds, taken from Camões
Dances with Guitar performed by the Gulbenkian Ballet

The Queen then returned to Queluz.

March 28 was a day devoted to Evora, capital of the Alentejo. The Queen and the Duke went by car over the Ponte 25 de Abril to the rail station at Pinhal Novo. They went to Evora by

train. President Eanes was there to meet them. The Queen was cheered on the balcony of the Town Hall and made a brief visit to see Evora Cathedral. She was then taken to the Terreiro das Meninas da Graça to see a magnificent display of horseriding styles put on by the Portuguese National Riding School. As always this item aroused Her Majesty's keenest interest and she was able to discuss the finer points with the Captain of the team. She had lunch in the old University of Evora with the Rector before returning by train to Pinhal Novo. The Queen did not omit to thank the traindriver personally! She then returned to "Britannia" where at 8.00 p.m. President and Senhora Eanes arrived with their suite to be the Queen's guests at a state banquet on board. After it the President watched the Royal Marines "beating retreat". The Queen then retired to sleep her last night at Queluz.

The next morning of March 29 the Queen and the Duke flew to Porto. They were received by the Mayor at the City Hall and watched a display of Minho dancing from the balcony. They then descended to the heart of Porto, the Praça de Ribeira, to watch a sail-past of "Rabélos", the traditional sailing boats used to carry the port wine barrels down the Douro river. Also present for this were the members of the "Confaría do Vinho do Porto", the Portwine Brotherhood. With them the Queen walked to the Casa do Infante, birthplace of Prince Henry the Navigator, where she was entertained to lunch.

After lunch she walked to the Palácio da Bolsa to see an exhibition commemorating the many historical links between Porto and Great Britain. It was here that the Queen met some of the 1,000 members of the British community of Porto and the Minho, introduced by her Consul, Mr. David Ward. She then drove to Pedras Rubras Airport where President Eanes and his wife were waiting to say the official goodbyes. At 3.30 p.m. on March 29 the Royal Flight left for home.

It hardly needs saying that the 1985 State Visit was a great success, full of interest for the Queen and Prince Philip and with almost no hitches at all, except a little lateness occasionally. Some older observers who remembered the 1957 visit have commented

on the absence of the old aristocracy as participants, but maybe this was intended to stress the fact that times have changed in Portugal. However, this did not prevent the Queen from inviting to her own banquet aboard "Britannia" Dom Duarte, the Duke of Bragança.

The British Historical Society of Portugal can be very proud of playing a fairly important part in two of the events: the unveiling of the bust of Edward VII and the memorial exhibition of royal visits in the Ajuda Palace. And we hope that the folio of watercolours painted by John Coates which John Cobb gave to the Queen at the unveiling will be a pleasant reminder for her of the many historical links between our two countries, depicting as they do buildings of Anglo-Portuguese interest, including one of the Palace of Bemposta where England's Queen from Portugal, Catherine of Bragança, died.