



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Official Report (Hansard)

Monday 12 April 2021
Volume 138, No 1

Contents

Assembly Business

Standing Order 20(1): Suspension 1

Tributes to His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh..... 1

Assembly Members

Aiken, Steve (South Antrim)
Allen, Andy (East Belfast)
Allister, Jim (North Antrim)
Anderson, Ms Martina (Foyle)
Archibald, Dr Caoimhe (East Londonderry)
Armstrong, Ms Kellie (Strangford)
Bailey, Ms Clare (South Belfast)
Barton, Mrs Rosemary (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Beattie, Doug (Upper Bann)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Blair, John (South Antrim)
Boylan, Cathal (Newry and Armagh)
Bradley, Maurice (East Londonderry)
Bradley, Ms Paula (North Belfast)
Bradley, Ms Sinéad (South Down)
Bradshaw, Ms Paula (South Belfast)
Brogan, Ms Nicola (West Tyrone)
Buchanan, Keith (Mid Ulster)
Buchanan, Thomas (West Tyrone)
Buckley, Jonathan (Upper Bann)
Bunting, Ms Joanne (East Belfast)
Butler, Robbie (Lagan Valley)
Cameron, Mrs Pam (South Antrim)
Carroll, Gerry (West Belfast)
Catney, Pat (Lagan Valley)
Chambers, Alan (North Down)
Clarke, Trevor (South Antrim)
Dickson, Stewart (East Antrim)
Dillon, Ms Linda (Mid Ulster)
Dodds, Mrs Diane (Upper Bann)
Dolan, Ms Jemma (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Dunne, Gordon (North Down)
Durkan, Mark (Foyle)
Easton, Alex (North Down)
Ennis, Ms Sinéad (South Down)
Flynn, Ms Órlaithí (West Belfast)
Foster, Mrs Arlene (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Frew, Paul (North Antrim)
Gildernew, Colm (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Givan, Paul (Lagan Valley)
Hargey, Ms Deirdre (South Belfast)
Harvey, Harry (Strangford)
Hilditch, David (East Antrim)
Humphrey, William (North Belfast)
Hunter, Ms Cara (East Londonderry)
Irwin, William (Newry and Armagh)
Kearney, Declan (South Antrim)
Kelly, Mrs Dolores (Upper Bann)
Kelly, Gerry (North Belfast)
Kimmins, Ms Liz (Newry and Armagh)
Long, Mrs Naomi (East Belfast)
Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)
Lynch, Seán (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Lyons, Gordon (East Antrim)
Lyttle, Chris (East Belfast)
McAleer, Declan (West Tyrone)
McCann, Fra (West Belfast)
McCrossan, Daniel (West Tyrone)
McGlone, Patsy (Mid Ulster)
McGrath, Colin (South Down)
McGuigan, Philip (North Antrim)
McHugh, Maolíosá (West Tyrone)
McIlveen, Miss Michelle (Strangford)
McLaughlin, Ms Sinead (Foyle)
McNulty, Justin (Newry and Armagh)
Mallon, Ms Nichola (North Belfast)
Maskey, Alex (Speaker)
Middleton, Gary (Foyle)
Muir, Andrew (North Down)
Mullan, Ms Karen (Foyle)
Murphy, Conor (Newry and Armagh)
Nesbitt, Mike (Strangford)
Newton, Robin (East Belfast)
Ní Chuilín, Ms Carál (North Belfast)
O'Dowd, John (Upper Bann)
O'Neill, Mrs Michelle (Mid Ulster)
O'Toole, Matthew (South Belfast)
Poots, Edwin (Lagan Valley)
Robinson, George (East Londonderry)
Rogan, Ms Emma (South Down)
Sheehan, Pat (West Belfast)
Sheerin, Ms Emma (Mid Ulster)
Stalford, Christopher (South Belfast)
Stewart, John (East Antrim)
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Sugden, Ms Claire (East Londonderry)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (Strangford)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Woods, Miss Rachel (North Down)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Monday 12 April 2021

The Assembly met at 12.00 noon (Mr Speaker in the Chair).

Members observed two minutes' silence.

Assembly Business

Standing Order 20(1): Suspension

Mr Speaker: Members will have been saddened to learn of the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, last Friday morning. As a mark of respect, the Business Committee has agreed to adjourn today's sitting after Members have had an opportunity to pay their respects. A formal item of business, as listed in the Order Paper, is required for the adjournment. The motion will be treated as a business motion. Therefore, there will be no debate.

Before we proceed to the Question, I remind Members that the motion requires cross-community support.

Resolved (with cross-community support):

That Standing Order 20(1) be suspended for 12 April 2021. — [Mr Butler.]

Tributes to His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Mr Speaker: We will commence with today's single item of business: tributes to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. As I mentioned at the start of the sitting, all business originally scheduled for today has been deferred so that Members can pay tribute to Prince Philip and extend their condolences to the Queen and the royal family.

Under normal circumstances, I would invite Members to sign a book of condolence. However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the royal household has requested that there should be no physical books of condolence. Therefore, an online book of condolence has been set up on the royal website. Members who wish to send a personal message will find a link to the online book of condolence on the Assembly website. I wish to thank all parties for their cooperation with the Speaker's Office and officials on Friday afternoon to ensure that

arrangements were put in place for the Assembly to pay its proper respects.

I want to say a few words about His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who passed away last Friday morning. Ba mhaith liom cúpla focal a rá ar an Phrionsa Pilib a fuair bás an tseachtain seo caite.

It is, of course, impossible to do justice to such a long and full life within a few short minutes, but it is worth reflecting that, even for those of us from the older generation in the Assembly, Prince Philip's lifetime of public duty had already begun before we were even born. That is a record of public service to which few will ever be able to compare.

Much has been said about the multitude of experiences, achievements and interests of Prince Philip's life, particularly in his earlier years. I am sure that Members will reflect those during our tributes today, including his 56 local visits. I will therefore touch on just a number of elements briefly in my remarks. Members will know that it is a personal priority for me, as Speaker, and other Members to have a youth assembly established, as a way of empowering young people and providing them with experiences and opportunities. In many ways, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has been doing that for some 55 years. It has become a household name, to the extent that many people may not appreciate the massive reach of the programme across the world. The 27 organisations that deliver the programme locally cover every aspect of our society, including Churches; uniformed organisations such as the Boys' Brigade, the Girls' Brigade, the Scouts and the Army Cadet Force Association; the Gaelic Athletic Association; and Féile an Phobail. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award does not just bear his name. Prince Philip clearly took an active personal interest in the programme right up until very recent years. For example, he was instrumental in establishing the partnership between the programme and Gaisce: Gradam an Uachtaráin — the Irish President's Award — to allow participants the choice of which certificate they

receive for their endeavours. His priority was to open the door for young people to participate, whatever their background. The ability of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to reach disadvantaged young people is particularly to be admired. Of course, that is typical of the very significant role in recent years played by senior members of the royal family in reconciliation efforts in our society and these islands, and it is right that we record our appreciation for that today.

From all the accounts and tributes that have been paid over the weekend from across the globe, it is clear that the Duke of Edinburgh was a significant historical figure not just in the UK but internationally. It is true that, throughout the 99 years of his life, we have all been on such a journey of change and tumult, challenge and opportunity, domestically, in these islands and globally. Of course, there will be many other days to reflect and dwell on all of that. At this time, we remember that a family has lost a husband, a father, a grandfather and a great-grandfather. In particular, none of us can appreciate the sense of loss that there must be after 73 years of marriage, love and steadfast support through an extraordinary life. There can be no truer example of the term "life partner". On behalf of the Assembly, I express our sincere condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the wider royal family. I hope that they will take comfort from the warmth of the reaction since the news of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh's passing. *Suaimhneas síoraí air. May he rest in peace.*

The Business Committee has agreed to allow around an hour and a half for tributes. As is customary, I will first invite party leaders or their nominated representative to speak for about five minutes. I will then call other Members who have indicated that they wish to speak or who rise in their place. I do not intend to impose strict time constraints, but I encourage Members to take no more than the allocated three minutes, in order to allow as many Members as possible to speak in the time allocated for tributes.

Mrs Foster: The life of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh was shaped by history, consciously and unconsciously. The ramifications, disruptions and consequences of the First World War resulted in his family's exile from Greece. In his childhood, he was effectively alone. He was taken under the care of the Mountbatten family, principally Lord Mountbatten, someone of whom, of course, he was robbed later in life by a PIRA bomb. Such momentous disruption could easily have led that young child to withdraw from life, but each

burden was borne on his young shoulders. As he came of age, the world entered its second war. He joined the fight against fascism and put into practice the values that he would exemplify for the rest of his life: duty, loyalty and service.

He served with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean, the North Sea and the Far East, even being present at the Japanese surrender. After the war, romance blossomed with his life partner, Queen Elizabeth. He was her bedrock as they served us, our country and our Commonwealth. All of this was carried out with dedication, humanity and humour; a sometimes blunt humour, which we got to appreciate here on the many occasions when he visited Northern Ireland.

In this era, too many too readily pour scorn over the traditional values that he exemplified. When you see what his values achieved throughout his life, you see how traditional values can shape a better world. He showed, of course, that you can believe in the best of tradition and in the inevitability of change at the same time. He redefined the role of a royal, working with hundreds of different causes and organisations, with younger people, service and driving British innovation at the centre of his efforts. His work with the World Wildlife Fund was literally decades ahead of its time, and over two million young people have gained a Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Proudly, Northern Ireland boasts the highest participation levels in the award scheme in the United Kingdom.

So, there is a true intergenerational legacy to our youth, our United Kingdom and the world's environment. Yet, as we remember our much loved monarch and her family in our prayers, our nation's deepest gratitude is for what His Royal Highness did on 2 June 1953 and every day until his death. When Her Majesty was crowned in Westminster Abbey, Prince Philip pledged to:

"become your liege man of life and limb and of earthly worship, and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die against all manner of folks, so help me God."

He fulfilled his pledge, he kept his word, and we are all the better for it. That is our common debt to him. His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh truly had a life well lived to the full.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I welcome the respectful way in which you and the parties have responded to the passing of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh. I think that the unity of spirit has been evident. So, let us all

harness and channel that spirit moving ahead as the Assembly and Executive work through the very real and significant challenges that face us. The Duke of Edinburgh demonstrated the desire for a better future, particularly for our younger generation. Let us embrace his legacy to positive effect as we all go about the job of seeing Northern Ireland reach its full potential in the century ahead of us.

Mrs O'Neill: I start by extending my sincere condolences to Queen Elizabeth and to her family on the death of her husband, Prince Philip. Over the past two decades, there have been significant interventions by the British royal family to assist in the building of relationships between Britain and Ireland. It is appropriate that this contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation is rightly recognised. I have acknowledged the sense of loss that will be felt in our community and across these islands by those of a unionist tradition and a British identity and those who value and cherish the royal family. Given Prince Philip's long service of duty to the monarchy, a tapestry of memories remains for the British people, which, over the days since his passing, has been shared through the media.

During the course of this decade, from 2012 to 2022, we are marking the centenaries of seminal events that have shaped modern Irish history over the past century. These events have defined our relationship over the past 100 years, too. It is a relationship that has been characterised by colonialism, partition and political division but towards peace, reconciliation and renewed cooperation. I was reflecting over the weekend on events, recalling that, in 2012, the late Martin McGuinness, as a leader of republicanism, met Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip in Belfast. That marked a very important step on our journey to reconciliation on this island and between our islands.

12.15 pm

Then, in 2014, the state visit to Britain by the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, occurred. That was the first state visit of a president of Ireland to Britain. As part of that, Martin McGuinness and I travelled to London's Royal Albert Hall to take part in the Ceiliúradh (Celebration) concert, where we met Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. Since those important and historic moments, the political landscape has changed. Brexit has unfolded over the past five years, testing British-Irish relations. Its implications for both islands are far-reaching. I hope that we can overcome those challenges through the efforts of us all,

and, not least, by the two Governments working closer together, which is something that I believe is undoubtedly required at this moment.

Saturday past marked the twenty-third anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, and, despite the challenges along the way, there is no denying that huge progress has been made over that time. While we have an imperfect peace — it is a work in progress, if you like — the agreement has provided an alternative to conflict. I acknowledge that the Queen, Prince Philip and their family were directly impacted by the conflict and, regrettably, endured sorrow and pain as a result of their personal loss and bereavement. Each of us knows that the tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering for so many families, which we are still trying to confront and address. Yet, having endured such personal loss, the royal family set about working towards advancing peace and reconciliation. I have been witness to those efforts and to their example of leadership in recent years. Just as the Queen and Prince Philip did, we in the Chamber, 23 years on from the Good Friday Agreement, must redouble our efforts to achieve reconciliation as we forge a path together, giving a new generation of young people hope that opportunity and a brighter future exists.

Ms Mallon: As deputy leader of the SDLP, I begin by expressing my sincere condolences and those of our party to Queen Elizabeth and her family on the loss of a loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. My thoughts are particularly with the Queen, who has lost her husband of 73 years. To wake up without your steadfast companion of that length of time must be heartbreaking and, for many of us, is unimaginable. This is an immensely difficult time for them all, and it has been compounded by the restrictions, which have made saying goodbye so difficult for families and people across our islands. I also send my sincere condolences to people in communities across Northern Ireland who feel a special connection and affinity with Prince Philip and the royal family. This is a sorrowful time, and our thoughts are with you.

It is a feature of commemorating significant or historic figures that we often reduce them to their best or, depending on your perspective, worst features. It is especially easy in the age of 280 characters to simplify the contribution of a lifetime into a quick turn of phrase. It is fair and important to say that the uncharitable and mean-spirited online commentary by some about Prince Philip in particular diminishes us all.

I do not intend to reflect on his life's history. I will leave that for others to discuss, save to say that Prince Philip was a complex individual who was shaped by loss in early childhood and who refused to be pigeonholed or placed in a box. While we across the House hold different views on the monarchy, his was a life of public service to a family that he clearly cherished and to people who held him in the highest regard. In 2014, as Lord Mayor of Belfast, I welcomed the Queen and Prince Philip to Belfast and hosted them for lunch in City Hall. While my interaction with Prince Philip was brief, the occasion was friendly, warm and very memorable.

The people of these islands are joined together by our common history and shared experiences of historic conflict. It would be remiss of us to fail to acknowledge that Prince Philip and his family were deeply affected by the conflict on this island and between these islands. We should also reflect on the role that he played alongside Queen Elizabeth in building relationships, setting aside enmity and promoting reconciliation, most visibly during their recent visit to Ireland.

He had a part to play in sustaining the new bond of shared endeavour across these islands.

It will be a difficult week for many in our community. It is important that we all respect that and continue to work together to heal the divisions of our past and build a more united community.

Dr Aiken: I join in the tributes to His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. At the outset, I send my and our party's condolences to Her Majesty The Queen and the other members of the royal family. We all share in Her Majesty's grief and sense of loss for her husband. He was her constant companion, supporter and muse, and, after 73 years of being together, through momentous times of change, that sense of loss must be profound. The grief and mourning that she and the rest of the royal family feel are echoed by many not just across our nation but across the Commonwealth and beyond, from the many thousands of young people who found a new sense of purpose through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to those who welcomed his keen interest in science, technology and education, his long commitment to the environment and his early championing of the crisis of climate change, and his support of the families of the many who have served across all aspects of public life, a support to which he brought his own unique, witty and emphatic style. Rarely has someone who never

sought the limelight but decided to sacrifice himself for duty, for support and for the stability of the institution that he and we most treasure garnered so much respect and affection.

While I feel that sense of loss and, indeed, the sense of the passing of an era, I thank, in particular, the deputy First Minister and members of the SDLP for their recognition of that loss. May I state how welcome your remarks were? Whilst we may disagree on much, those were welcome sentiments. I appreciate your sympathy and reaching out to those of us who hold the Union and the monarchy dear. Thank you.

I had the privilege of meeting Prince Philip on many occasions during my service in the Royal Navy and, later, in my role supporting the British-Irish business environment. His humour has been much and frequently remarked on, although it was in the naval environment that he felt fully at home and where his anecdotes were very much more of the salty kind. He had respect for what many tried to achieve in difficult circumstances and used his wealth of experience to understand. As someone who fought with distinction in the Second World War and saw the global winds of change at first hand in what is now the Commonwealth, he brought insight to Her Majesty through the good and, sometimes, not so good times; indeed, I know that, as a great friend to Northern Ireland, he was saddened by the horrors of the Troubles and wished only for peace. The murder of Lord Mountbatten had a profound effect, but he never allowed animus against those who committed so much violence, from whatever quarter, to prevent him reaching out to support the peace process. During the Irish president's state visit to the United Kingdom in 2014, I had the privilege of seeing at first hand how much pleasure he saw in the improving relationships across these islands and amongst our nations.

The man himself leaves the most abiding memory. At the 100th anniversary of the Submarine Service in Westminster Abbey, he spent his time talking to the families of those who were serving at sea and had been away for months. He never forgot to thank them for their service and sacrifice. He put them at ease, reminisced and gave them comfort, often with a wry but always affectionate sense of humour. At his core, he was always a Royal Navy officer who never forgot the lore of the sea and those who served on it.

On Friday, in many ways, we lost an unsung inspiration and the biggest supporter of Her Majesty. His loss to her and to all of us is most keenly felt. Our nation mourns, but his life and

example give us hope for the future of our United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. I say finally, the words of the Royal Navy hymn:

*"Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm has bound the restless wave".*

May you, Prince Philip, rest in peace.

Mrs Long: I extend my thoughts and prayers and those of the Alliance Party to the royal family at this sad time. My condolences go in particular to Her Majesty The Queen, who has lost her husband, constant companion and support of over 73 years. No matter what your role or how public your life is, that is a devastating thing to experience.

The Duke of Edinburgh lived a remarkable life. After years of distinguished service in the Royal Navy, including in wartime, he left behind the naval career that he loved and in which he excelled to support the Queen when she became monarch. He became the longest-serving royal consort in British history, leaving four children, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Throughout that time, whether by her side or the customary two steps behind, he demonstrated in practice what it means to be a supportive husband to a powerful woman. Speaking on their golden wedding anniversary, the Queen said of Prince Philip:

"he has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know."

Of course, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, as the first royal consort since the days of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria, had to carve out a role for himself in the life of the country, the royal family and the Commonwealth. He did that successfully over the last 73 years. He was a reformer and moderniser of the royal household, much in the way that Prince Albert was in his day, as he encouraged more informality and less protocol in engagements and promoted the use of new technology, particularly television, as a way to let people have greater insight into the life and work of the family and as a way to encourage industry to flourish. His work spanned his patronage of many charities at home and abroad. His passion and concern for the environment and conservation were evident long before such things were part of the popular discourse. His commitment to the World Wildlife Fund was unstinting, as its first UK president from its foundation in 1961 to 1982 and then as

president of the World Wildlife Fund International from 1981 to 1996, continuing as president emeritus and patron until his passing on Friday. Vitally, his commitment to supporting young people to build their resilience, skills and confidence and, crucially, their commitment to public service led to the founding of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. That scheme and associated schemes such as the President's Award in Ireland have encouraged millions of young people from over 140 countries across the globe to work to improve themselves and their communities and is perhaps his best and most enduring legacy.

Prince Philip's was a long life well lived. I pray that the 73 years of happy memories and that life well lived will bring some comfort, in the difficult days and months ahead, to Her Majesty The Queen, the wider family circle and all those who loved him.

Miss Woods: I too extend my condolences to the royal family on the death of the Duke of Edinburgh.

There have been many stories and anecdotes about Prince Philip since his death on Friday, many of which have been shared in the Chamber and through the media. I was not aware of the adversity that he had faced in his younger life and was interested to learn that he had described himself as a refugee after his family was exiled from Greece when he was an infant: from a child refugee to the Queen's consort and a member of the royals. It got me thinking about the way that Prince Philip was. Perhaps his passing should be a reminder to challenge the negative perceptions that we have of people.

The Duke of Edinburgh was a father to four children and had eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

I am of an age to remember him as an older man. I think of him in his role as a grandfather and as the founder of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, for which I had to traipse up and down the Mourne with a backpack a number of times. I have many fond memories of meeting new and interesting people in my community and of being able to give something back through that scheme. I achieved the bronze and silver awards and got halfway through the gold. I will remember him for that.

12.30 pm

Who can forget the images of him walking alongside William and Harry at the funeral of

their mother? The relationship between a grandparent and grandchildren can be so precious, and he will be dearly missed by his grandchildren, particularly those who grew up with him being there. Many of us, too, miss our grandparents at this time. Our families cannot hug them or visit them inside their houses. The Duke's passing reminds us to appreciate and treasure our grandparents and families while we can.

Ms Sugden: Mr Speaker, thank you for your kind and respectful comments at the outset. As I am someone who will always consider herself British as well as Irish, they are much appreciated.

On behalf of East Londonderry, I offer my condolences to Her Majesty The Queen, the royal family, the United Kingdom and to all those who knew and loved His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip visited my constituency many times. On probably his final visit to the area, I had the pleasure of meeting him; indeed, he was the first royal that I met in my role as MLA. He was interested, he gave his time, and he was witty. I am delighted to say that I have my own story of his wonderful sense of humour. He questioned whether my life experience — in 2014, I was a very fresh 27-year-old MLA — qualified me to be an elected representative. I wish that I had been as quick in responding to him, but I stood there with my mouth open, so I suppose that, in some ways, he was right. Seven years later, with more experience and more life, I reflect on Prince Philip's work throughout his 99 years, and I do not think that any of us, even if we are fortunate enough to live as long as he did, will have the life experience that he had, because his life was truly remarkable.

Since learning of the Duke's death, I have been most affected by the end of the partnership of the Queen and her prince. Theirs really is the greatest partnership in British history, a love story that lasted a lifetime and inspired generations. I am so sad for Her Majesty. He was her hero, and he was her man — and what a man he was. He sacrificed so much to serve his Queen, to love his wife unconditionally and to fulfil his duty to country and Commonwealth. Physically, he walked two steps behind, but he was never really behind; he was his own man, and he carved his own path. That is particularly so in relation to young people, in whom he invested so much. Given the difficult past weekend and the images that we saw across Northern Ireland, we can learn from his example of investing in young people not just by giving them schemes and jobs but by understanding and listening to what interests

them and how we can provide them with opportunities.

I watched a documentary about Prince Philip at the weekend and was so impressed by his sense of duty and his service to people. He said:

"If I can make life marginally more tolerable for those who come after us, I will be delighted."

Wherever he is, I am sure that he is delighted, because he had a life well lived. Since his passing on Friday, there have been a number of quotes. The one that has stuck with me and that others have mentioned is from the Queen. Describing Prince Philip, she said:

"He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years".

I know that some do not understand my appreciation and affection for the royal family, but those words reflect what they mean to me. They have been a "strength and stay" for me all these years. They have been part of my life, and I recognise that Prince Philip was part of that. May he rest in peace. He will be sorely missed.

Mr Allister: As with any death, whether from lowly or high estate, our first thoughts are properly with the immediate family. My condolences and those of my party, first and foremost, go to our Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, to whom, as consort, Prince Philip was such a rock and a support for so many years, and then, of course, to his grieving family: his children and their children and all in that wider family. They will all grieve as we do when we lose one so close. There will be no difference to their grief. They will feel the same emptiness, the same pain and the same suffering. Now, after 73 years of married life, Her Majesty must face her public and private life without her rock. There will be difficult, tough days for the Queen in all of that, particularly for someone who is herself of advanced years. I pray that she finds the strength to carry on in the remarkable era that has been her rule over us.

Today, however, we also celebrate a remarkable and incredible life of service to country and to people, from Prince Philip's service in the armed forces to his decades of service as consort and his dedication to that cause and to the people whom it served, filtering down throughout our society through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which

reached and empowered so many. Everything else apart, that is a lasting legacy of particular note. Yet he was a man who, although in that elevated position, refused to allow the position that he held to mould him. Despite his exalted position, his willingness to speak his mind brought a stamp of authenticity and sometimes, indeed, a smile to our faces. That is a characteristic that is often lost in public life, but not with the Duke of Edinburgh.

Prince Philip was not immune, of course, from pain and suffering in his life. Indeed, something that marks an affinity with so many in the Province was the brutal murder of his 79-year-old uncle, blown to bits by the IRA with other relatives and friends: a wicked act of the calibre that left so many in the Province also bereft of friends and relatives at the hands of terrorism. Today would have been a good day for the republican movement to unequivocally say, "Sorry", but, of course, the deputy First Minister does not do "Sorry". At most, all that Sinn Féin can muster is what journalist Jenny McCartney aptly described as a:

"carefully calibrated mixture of dogged justification and fuzzy regret".

Today, we remember a great — a giant in our lifetimes — whose contribution to our national life has been immense but whose life inevitably, in the mortality that denotes us all, has run its course.

Our nation and our people are the richer for his living, so today, on behalf of my constituents and my party, I join in mourning his passing, and, in grateful memory of the life of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, I convey the deepest sympathy to Her Majesty and record thankfulness for the lifetime of service and devotion to our monarch, our nation and our people.

Mr Poots: As a representative of the constituency most visited by Her Majesty The Queen and her late husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, I express my sympathies, and those of the people of Lagan Valley, to Her Majesty on the death of her dear husband. Their home in Hillsborough Castle is a place that they visited so many times over the years, and that brought them very close to the hearts of the people in that community.

The Duke of Edinburgh was a very special character. I had the privilege of meeting him, along with Her Majesty, a number of times, whether that was at Downshire Primary School, Lagan Valley Island or, latterly, the South West

Acute Hospital, a facility that the Queen opened. He was known for his toughness and resilience. The royal family has had many ups and downs over the years — those have been well-documented — and he was a rock during them. He was also known for his sharp mind, wittiness and incisiveness, but that sometimes got him into trouble, and his quips could become gaffes, and the media loved to play on that. As someone who occasionally behaves similarly, I can appreciate the quandary that he found himself in, because you want to engage with people and lighten an atmosphere, but sometimes it just does not work. On his visit to the South West Hospital, the duke remarked to me that he thought that he had come to open a hospital but instead had come to open a hotel, given the quality of the building. That was him. He liked to make a witty remark, and he liked to lighten the atmosphere.

The example of Her Majesty and he as a couple, and the love and devotion that they had for each other over those 73 years, is remarkable. It is an example to us all. He showed how he could reach out. Some people's perception is, "They're royalty. What do they know about being working class?". His example of reaching out through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which is aimed at helping young people find a path in life out of the difficult circumstances in which many find themselves, is something that will last long beyond his passing. He has laid down a great example for us all of hard work, honesty, reaching out and loyalty, and we would all do well to reflect on that.

One thing that we cannot let go today is the effort that Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh made towards reconciliation. Their visit to Ireland in 2012 and the president's subsequent visit to Windsor Castle in 2014 were of huge significance. He did not allow the cruel death of his uncle to prevent him from reaching out the hand of friendship. There is a lot for all of us to learn from that. If there is anything that the House could do well to reflect on, it is on how he and Her Majesty sought to heal wounds. Over the past couple of weeks, we have seen how things can go wrong in this country. We could do well to learn from Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh on how we can heal wounds, not open sores, and how we can make things better, not worse.

12.45 pm

Mr Catney: I give my condolences to Queen Elizabeth and her family, who are grieving the loss of a husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Suffering a loss during these

times, when families cannot come together to support each other in the grieving process, is something that many in our community have had to go through. It is not something that you would wish on anyone. This comes down to the common decency of humanity, where we like to comfort those in this situation by talking about 99 years as being a good innings, a life well lived and all anyone could hope for. In 99 years, you build up a huge community of human connections, lives touched and people who have lost a pillar of their own lives. The sense of loss is deeply felt by those for whom Prince Philip was a constant companion over his long life. This is no more so than for someone like Prince Philip, who devoted his life to public service, made his presence felt across the world and devoted himself to the development of our young people with his Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

My own mother passed away just a year ago, before her ninety-fourth birthday. She was the one constant in my life, whose wisdom and courage I was able to rely on for as long as I have had my memories. We all have family members who are no longer with us, and we all continue to grieve for them.

I speak out of a common sense of human decency; it is something that we have been completely lacking in here over the last few weeks. Twenty-three years after the Good Friday Agreement, we have entrenched ourselves in the old nonsense, talking about points and stereotypes of the past. I am a nationalist and no supporter of the monarchy, but, from an early age, every Remembrance Sunday, I went to the war memorial in Moira. The Prince's house, used when he came to visit Northern Ireland, is in that constituency. My Uncle Laurence's name is on the memorial. He died on a ship bringing munitions to South Africa. This false dichotomy of Protestant or Catholic, unionist or nationalist, us or them has always been false. We are not one side or the other. Our personal histories are intertwined, connected and eternally bound in the one community that we are all trying to survive in.

In recent months, I have been struck by the conversations that I have had with loyalist and republican ex-prisoners, because they have both told me the exact same thing. They have said that the old "us and them" politics does not speak to their beliefs or needs. It does not speak to the young men in their communities who are dying every day from suicide. It does not speak to the lack of educational standards that prevents their communities from prospering and developing. It does not speak to the overbearing deprivation that leads the young

people in their communities to feel like there is no future, except for the old ways of the past.

When I was elected, I was asked what it was like to be the only nationalist elected in Lagan Valley. I spoke of the need to represent and work for the one community of Lagan Valley and to help face and tackle the issues that we all feel, regardless of background. This is truer today than ever. We have listened, rightly, to all sides of this Chamber express condolences in unison. Now let us move forward together and do the job that our communities so desperately need us all to do.

Mr Beattie: I was very fortunate to have met His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on two occasions. The first occasion was in 1992 or maybe 1993. I was in my previous employment. I was a young sergeant at the time, working at the Northern Ireland training advisory team, training major and minor units to come to Northern Ireland to deal with the issues that we had here.

I did a capabilities brief and talked to him about what we were doing and what we were trying to achieve; I explained that to him. What struck me was how much interest he had, not necessarily in the capabilities that I was explaining to him but more in the young soldiers — men and women — whom we were sending over here and his concerns for them and the families that would be left behind when they were sent over here. He had a genuine concern and a real compassion. The conversation, however, was about far more than that, because he had real concern about the people of Northern Ireland — both communities, all corners, every faction. He expressed a real desire to see peace in Northern Ireland and to see us live in peace together. That was absolutely genuine, and it gives a sense of the man to whom I was speaking.

The second time that I met him was about six years later at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). I was a colour sergeant then and an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. It was slightly more informal; it was a bit of a meet-and-greet, grip-and-grin session. He walked around and met people, and we all had a conversation with him. He came to our table, and I remember the conversation that we had. We had a conversation about this tie. Yes, this tie is that old. It is as old as you, Jonny Buckley [*Laughter.*] He asked me, "What regiment is that?", and we had a conversation about my tie, which is a not a regimental tie but an instructor's tie that you are given when you complete your selection course to be an

instructor at Sandhurst. By the way, it is the only thing from that time that still fits me. We then talked about the knot in my tie. For those who do not know, if you are not an officer, you are not allowed to have a Windsor knot in your tie. You have to have a different knot — I do not know what it is called — because you are not allowed a Windsor knot. When he said, "What sort of knot is that?", I remember saying to him, "Well, it's not a Windsor knot; I'm not allowed it", and he said, in colourful language, "Well, that's ridiculous". It is a Windsor knot now, by the way.

The point that I make is this: sometimes we forget about the man and look at the position; sometimes we look at the privilege and do not focus on the person who gave so much of his time and helped and supported over 800 charities. He was one of the World War II generation, and we have to remember that. Those wee quips that I have given — they are quips; they are just small things that speak to a man, a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather and a husband — give you a sense of the person. While remembering that Her Majesty The Queen has lost her husband and a family has lost a father and grandfather, today, I just remember him for who he was: a person who showed real compassion, real understanding and real empathy and who wanted to do the best that he could for everybody, particularly those here in Northern Ireland.

Mr Dickson: I want to add a few words to the tributes that have been paid today. First and foremost, I pay tribute to His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh for the public service that he gave not only to our nation but to many countries around the world. This is also about the personal loss of a husband, a father, a grandfather and, indeed, a great-grandfather.

His Royal Highness had a long and extremely eventful life, with a tempestuous beginning, as others have referred to, just after the First World War, escaping and finding his way to London through the turmoil of his family at that time, to marry a princess in 1947. Since that time and since becoming consort to Her Majesty The Queen, he provided steadfast support to her and was always at her side.

It is important that we share some of the anecdotes and achievements of that incredible life. He is well remembered for his contribution to the World Wide Fund for Nature and for his early contribution to the National Playing Fields Association, an organisation that brought me, in part at least, into the life of my community. I spent 30 years as a leader in the Boys' Brigade,

helping young men and others to reach bronze, silver and gold level in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

I remember the first time that I saw the Duke of Edinburgh. It was a wet day, and, as an 11-year-old schoolboy, I was standing in Carrickfergus when the Queen and Prince Philip arrived into the harbour. I do not think there has been a wetter day since in Northern Ireland, and it sticks out in my mind. I will fast-forward to 2016, when I had the incredible privilege of being invited to Buckingham Palace to attend a reception to mark 50 years of the Winston Churchill fellowships. Her Majesty The Queen entertained 100 of us in the palace that evening, and members of the royal family were present. In the line-up was Her Majesty The Queen, and by her side was Prince Philip. As the evening progressed, people broke into small groups, and, of course, those of us from Northern Ireland tended to stand together. Individual members of the royal family came round the groups and chatted to us. The thing that struck me was his interest in and knowledge about everybody who was in the room that night. He was engaging. He reminisced with us about Winston Churchill, which was fascinating. He was also inquisitive about what we had done and the contribution that we had made through our Churchill fellowships. That evening of 18 March 2016 will stay with me for a very long time.

On behalf of the Alliance Party and of my constituents in East Antrim, I express my deepest condolences to the royal family, to Her Majesty The Queen and to the wider family circle as we engage in a week of mourning and progress towards a funeral this coming weekend.

Mrs Dodds: On behalf of my constituents in Upper Bann and in common with the sentiments expressed in the Chamber, I reiterate that our first thoughts and prayers are with Her Majesty The Queen, who, after 73 years of marriage, has lost her strength and stay of all these years. Surely the void that she spoke about must be great and deep.

In extending our sympathy to the Queen and the royal family, we are conscious that this is the passing of a much-loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather as well as of a statesman and towering national figure. Most people have grown up with the reassuring presence of Prince Philip by the side of the Queen. He has been part of our lives as well as of the nation's life. He will be greatly missed as someone who, while totally loyal to the Queen and a pillar of the royal family and the United

Kingdom, was not afraid to be himself and to break the mould. As many have said in the Chamber today, his humour and bluntness were legendary. However, as Her Majesty herself said:

"I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know."

He leaves a tremendous legacy in his own right. His distinguished service in the Royal Navy meant that his sacrifice to be at the Queen's side when duty called was all the greater.

His creation of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has helped millions of young people over many years. He was, quite rightly, proud of the fact that Northern Ireland has among the highest number of scheme participants per head of population in the United Kingdom. As an early pioneer and visionary in the world of conservation and the environment, he helped to found the World Wildlife Fund in 1961, leading it as president from 1981 to 1996.

1.00 pm

Prince Philip's frequent visits to Northern Ireland earned him the respect and affection of people here, and he will always have a special place in our hearts. I recall particularly the visit to the grounds of Stormont for the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, when tens of thousands of people were able to gather to show their admiration.

As Her Majesty, his close family and the people of the United Kingdom face into the future without his familiar presence, we know that, at this time of sorrow, God will give grace, courage and strength.

Ms McLaughlin: I wish to add my condolences on the death of Prince Philip. His engagement with young people right across our communities provides an example to our society that should be recognised, especially at this dangerous moment. Despite losing his uncle to an IRA bomb, he continued to visit here on many occasions in the spirit of friendship and reconciliation. That culminated in the successful state visit by the Queen, accompanied by her husband, in 2011. That is the spirit of reconciliation that all in the Assembly and in society can recognise as being of enormous value as we continue to emerge from the dark shadow of our past. It is a past that it seems that we have yet to escape from.

People not only from the unionist tradition but across much of our society are in mourning for Prince Philip's death. Across this island, in the South as well as the North, people have paused to consider the life of Prince Philip in its historical context and how much has changed in our society during his lifetime and, indeed, ours. Prince Philip has had a full and controversial life but not always a happy one. We remember him as a fellow human being, a man who was greatly loved and whom we mourn together. We are all mortal. We have a shared experience of life and death. As the poet John Donne said:

*"send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
it tolls for thee."*

Despite our differences, today, we offer our respect and thoughts together. We are one society whatever our differences. We can come together in sadness, dignity and also hope — the hope that we have embodied in the Good Friday Agreement and that we need to reflect on at this dangerous time. The Queen and Prince Philip helped to solidify the peace achieved in the Good Friday Agreement [*Inaudible due to poor sound quality.*]

Mr Speaker: We will give it a few seconds. [*Pause.*] I will move on and call Rosemary Barton.

Mrs Barton: Today is really the end of an era, with the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip. His was a lifetime in which so much happened and so much changed. However, our thoughts and prayers are with Her Majesty The Queen, who has lost her husband of 73 years, and her family at this very sad and difficult time for them.

Prince Philip dedicated his extraordinary life to selflessly supporting the Queen, who, in turn, affectionately described him as her bedrock. Over the weekend, we learnt so much about Prince Philip as a "dear papa", a role that we so rarely heard about. He was a father who was always available to sit down and listen to the woes of his family and always around to offer support and guidance, not only to his children but to their partners.

However, it is through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme that he will be forever remembered, with the encouragement that he gave to young people in building their resilience and increasing their confidence through the scheme. It was through the scheme, as an assessor, that I had the pleasure of meeting

him several times. I found the duke to be very jovial. He always showed a great interest in my work and was always keen to learn of the experiences of the young participants in the scheme. He visited Hillsborough every year, from the foundation of the award in 1956 until 2017, to present the gold awards. While we celebrate an incredible life of dedication and devotion to his family, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, on behalf of my constituents in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, I extend their sympathy and condolences to Her Majesty The Queen and her family.

Mr Weir: I start where the previous Member ended, in passing on the condolences and sympathies of my constituents in Strangford, and my own, to Her Majesty The Queen and the royal family on their sad loss.

We meet rightly today to pay tribute to a great man. Someone who, throughout his 99 years, did not simply talk the talk but was prepared to walk the walk. There will be some, not in the Chamber today, who will be keen to lecture the rest of us on fascism, for example, but do little of practical benefit otherwise. We should remember that in his early life, before he married the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh was actually on the front line of fighting fascism directly, in the Second World War. He was somebody who, truly, walked the walk.

I had the opportunity and the great privilege of meeting him in 2002 when he came to meet Assembly Members at Stormont. On that occasion, amongst countless others over a period of seven decades, he was there to give support to his wife, the Queen. Today, therefore, we see a void in the life of the nation, but particularly a void in the life of the royal family and particularly the Queen. To lose her rock after 73 years — our hearts must go out to the Queen and, indeed, to Prince Philip's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He has not simply left a void; he has left a lasting legacy. Mention has been made of his contribution to the environment, industry, technology and wildlife, but it will be most keenly felt in the contribution that he made to our young people through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, now 65 years old. Its four elements of volunteering, physical contribution, skills and expedition — or, as the Duke of Edinburgh himself put it with typical wit and bluntness, a "do-it-yourself growing-up kit" — have touched the lives of so many throughout the generations.

Five years ago, I was privileged to go to an event in Ballyclare High School that celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The two hours of that ceremony, with the duke being represented by the Earl of Wessex, gave a small snapshot of the contribution that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme was making. That snapshot was of a single year: multiply that by the generations who have done it; multiply that by the fact that this was simply the region of Northern Ireland; multiply it throughout the whole of the United Kingdom; and, indeed, multiply it throughout the world, where 130 countries have been involved with the scheme. In Northern Ireland alone, in the last full year, over 3,000 young people received awards and over 6,000 started a course. Over the last seven years, around 16,000 young people have received awards in Northern Ireland. Throughout the UK, that figure is 6.7 million, and there are many more spread across the world.

There is a saying in some parts of the world that you are never truly dead until all those whose lives you have touched have also died. With his lasting legacy — the ongoing legacy — particularly amongst our young people, the Duke of Edinburgh will be with us for many decades to come.

Mr Nesbitt: I had the pleasure — I do mean pleasure — of meeting the Duke of Edinburgh on a small number of occasions, and the first was a memorable day for me. I had been asked to present the Duke of Edinburgh's Award gold awards at St James's Palace in London, and the role was to try to keep the young people amused until he arrived and then to stand back with a couple of other people while he engaged with them. He would then speak to us and leave, and I would then hand out the certificates. From the moment that he entered the room, he had those young people in the palm of his hand. There were smiles and giggles and, towards the end, a great roar of laughter as he was clearly sharing one of his racier stories with them.

Then he came over to us. The first person to whom he was introduced was a teacher who, from my memory, was in his twenty-ninth year of encouraging pupils to undertake the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The duke was totally animated and engaged, and he wanted to know everything, such as whether the teacher was still in touch with the pupils and whether the award had helped them to develop their character and helped them in their careers. Then he turned to the second person, who was introduced as a businessman. The businessman, I am afraid, made the schoolboy

error of trotting out a pre-rehearsed speech eulogising the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As we have heard constantly since Friday, that was the last thing that Prince Philip wanted to hear. Suddenly, he started pointing at this man's lapel and saying, "Well, in that case, where is it then?". The poor fella had to say, "I am sorry, sir, where is what?". He said, "Your badge. Where is your Duke of Edinburgh badge?". The poor fella had not even done the bronze award. *[Laughter.]* That was him blown out of the water.

Then he turned to me, and somebody introduced me. He said, "Ah, you are the broadcaster", and I had to say, "Well, I was, sir". He said, "Really? Well, what are you doing with yourself now?". I said, "Well, I am into politics, sir". Time stopped, and he looked at me with a twinkle in his eye. He looked at me from my head down to my feet and back up again. He took a breath, shook his head, let out a sigh and left the room. *[Laughter.]* It was pure theatre. He roasted me. In those few short minutes, I saw so much of the prince's character: his dedication to duty, his determination to help young people to fulfil their potential, his utter intolerance and refusal to accept flattery and his wicked sense of humour.

On my behalf and on behalf of the people whom I represent in the constituency of Strangford, I send my condolences to Her Majesty The Queen and to the royal family.

Mr Buckley: I rise to give thanks for the life of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and to tender my deepest and heartfelt sympathies and those of the people of Upper Bann whom I represent to Her Majesty The Queen and the entire royal family.

His Royal Highness was an incredible man in his own right. His life was devoted to public service. Many words come to mind when people think of the contribution of Prince Philip: strength, duty, freethinker, forthright, service. An incredible life, I think, we can all agree.

His early years are like something from an award-winning film. He was born on the island of Corfu into a world of severe and life-threatening circumstances.

He arrived in Britain in a crib made from an orange box via a British warship sent by his future wife's grandfather, King George V, and went on to a flourishing naval career. Like many of his generation, he fought with duty and courage in the Second World War. In Britain's darkest hour, he was among those who participated in the Allied invasion of Sicily.

1.15 pm

For the Duke of Edinburgh, service came first: service to his nation and its people and, most importantly for him, service to Her Majesty The Queen, spanning some 73 years. At the Queen's coronation in 1953, the Duke of Edinburgh swore to be Her Majesty's:

"liege man of life and limb".

That service has been paid in full. Her Majesty summed up that life of service in her own words:

"He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know."

I cannot begin to comprehend what Her Majesty The Queen and the royal family are enduring today. They grieve as all families do, but they grieve in the full glare of the media. It is difficult to quantify the depth of devotion and servitude demonstrated by the Duke of Edinburgh for his country and Commonwealth in a life spanning over 99 years. He accompanied Her Majesty The Queen on all 251 of her overseas tours, and he reigns as the longest-serving consort in British history.

Prince Philip had a genuine interest in Northern Ireland's affairs. His association with these shores lasted 73 years — the first example taking place with Her Majesty in 1949 — despite the difficulty of the tragic and barbaric death of his uncle and mentor, Lord Louis Mountbatten. How difficult that must have been, and yet he was never afraid to reach the hand of peace across the divide. Through his distinctive presence and unique sense of humour, he put ordinary people at ease, engaging with all whom he encountered.

On Friday past, the nation lost a giant. As with any death, his passing will leave a huge void for his family, friends and loved ones, whose lives were touched by his presence. In time, we will be able to celebrate and fully understand the legacy that he has left and rededicate ourselves to the values to which he devoted his extraordinary life. I know that Her Majesty The Queen will take great comfort in scripture. I particularly draw comfort from the words of Matthew 25:23:

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

Mr Chambers: I add my thanks, Mr Speaker, to those of other Members to you for facilitating this tribute.

Nothing much can be added to the heartfelt and touching tributes that have been paid to the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, in the House today. He was a faithful and loyal royal consort, a husband, a father, a grandfather and a war hero. He never tried to overshadow the Queen. Nevertheless, he used his position to do so much for the nation, for the Commonwealth and, in particular, for generations of young people. My personal sympathy and the sympathy of all those whom I represent in North Down go out to our grieving Queen and her family at this sad time.

Mr Stalford: I offer my heartfelt condolences to Her Majesty The Queen, the Prince of Wales and the entire royal family on what must be an immense personal loss for them. I hope that they can take some comfort from knowing that their mourning is shared by millions of people across this country and by billions across the Commonwealth and the globe.

Seneca the Younger said:

"Life, if well lived, is long enough."

Nobody can be in any doubt that the life of the Duke of Edinburgh was not only long but well lived, with a vast range of accomplishments in many fields. After a difficult and often traumatic childhood, His Royal Highness spent his entire life in the devoted service of this country. During World War II, he served with distinction in the Mediterranean and Pacific fleets. He was present for the surrender of the Japanese empire and was mentioned in dispatches for service at Cape Matapan. He married the Queen in 1947 and subsequently gave her 73 years of absolute loyalty, support, devotion and love. He was a tireless campaigner for conservation and environmental causes, and, in that, he truly was a visionary and was years ahead of the rest of society.

It has been mentioned that a lasting legacy of the Duke of Edinburgh is the award scheme that bears his name. I participated in that scheme and, like the Member for North Down, got my bronze and silver; alas, I was not able to finish the gold element of the scheme. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is a magnificent legacy that he will leave.

Prince Philip was of the greatest generation in this country's history — the generation that defeated Hitlerism and fascism — and I believe firmly that he would have succeeded in any

walk of life. He more than succeeded in the path that he decided to walk in this life. He has gone to his reward. Matthew 25:21 says:

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

God bless those who mourn. God save the Queen.

Mr Beggs: On behalf of my constituency of East Antrim, I offer heartfelt condolences and sympathy to Queen Elizabeth II and the royal family following the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The royal family is in our thoughts and prayers.

The United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and, indeed, the world mourn the passing of the longest-serving royal consort. He was the supporting husband to Her Majesty for a remarkable 73 years and was her strength and stay. His life was one of public service, first as a gallant royal naval officer actively serving during World War II and then in his role of selflessly supporting Her Majesty The Queen. He also became patron to many charities, including the World Wildlife Fund, which he served for over 50 years, including time as the active president. His was a life well lived.

As a serving Boys' Brigade officer, I can vouch for the value of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. As a parent, I saw how it benefited my three children. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has positively helped to shape the lives of tens of thousands of young people locally and throughout the Commonwealth. Young people are required to volunteer in their communities to help others — it is a great thing to instil that sense of caring at a young age — to learn a new skill and to undertake an expedition. I remember meeting an exhausted group of Raloo BB and GB members who were wet, tired and weary. They had walked for three days, carrying their tents and food on a cross-country trek from Ballycastle to Broughshane. What struck me was their determination, the effort that they had made to be successful and their sense of achievement at having made a trek that they probably thought they could not do. In this day and age, few young people face such challenges, but it is a great achievement when they train and are successful. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme equips our young people with new skills and increased confidence and resilience and enables them to make the most of their life. The young people who have benefited from the Duke of

Edinburgh's Award scheme will be his greatest legacy.

The Queen has rightly insisted that the COVID regulations should be followed. I urge anyone who wants to pay tribute by sending a message of sympathy to take some time out to visit the royal website and sign the online book of condolence. Prince Philip will be remembered for the selfless role that he played in supporting Her Majesty The Queen and for how he benefited young people in particular in our community.

Mr Middleton: On behalf of my constituents in Londonderry and the wider Foyle constituency, I pass on my deepest sympathies and condolences to Her Majesty The Queen on the sad passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

It has been 68 years since Her Majesty and His Royal Highness stood in Guildhall Square in Londonderry as part of a visit following the coronation. Over the weekend, I heard from many constituents about their fond and cherished memories of that visit and of being there with their parents and grandparents. Over the many decades that have followed since that visit, the duke served with immense dedication and a tireless commitment to public service, and that is evident to us all not just in the United Kingdom but across the Commonwealth and worldwide.

His Royal Highness took part in over 22,000 solo engagements. When he retired in 2017, he was said to have been a patron, president or member of almost 800 organisations. He had visited 143 countries in an official capacity. That is a significant lifetime of service. One of his many lasting legacies is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. I, like many others, have benefited from that award, and I have been inspired listening to the many stories from across the UK and the world about young people whose lives were transformed by the award. I trust that it will be very much a positive, lasting legacy of His Royal Highness.

In the 99 years of his life, Prince Philip saw many world-changing events. He saw leaders come and go, but his service went on. The impact of his service and legacy will live on for many years to come. Of course, when it is all stripped back, Prince Philip was a devoted father, grandfather, husband and great-grandfather. Her Majesty The Queen, when speaking about her husband, stated:

"He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years".

Her Majesty The Queen is very much in my thoughts and prayers as she continues to reign over us in the times ahead. We have lost a tremendous public servant who served his queen and country for decades. We send our heartfelt condolences to Her Majesty and the royal family.

Mr Humphrey: I rise on behalf of my constituents in North Belfast and as chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to extend deepest sympathy to Her Majesty The Queen and to offer condolences to her and her family on the sad passing of the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark was born on 10 June 1921. He was evacuated from Corfu with his family at the age of 18 months in an orange box. He became a distinguished naval officer and a war hero in the fight against the evil of Nazism during World War II; indeed, I had two uncles who served with him on HMS Ramillies, and I remember them fondly telling me stories of when he was on board. He married Princess Elizabeth in November 1947 and became consort to the Queen, a role he carried out with distinction and in an exemplary manner for some 73 years.

Prince Philip was a keen sportsman, and he was president or patron of 780 organisations until his retirement from public life and royal service in August 2017. The duke completed 22,000 royal duties and delivered nearly 5,500 speeches. Passionate about world conservation, Prince Philip was president of the WWF from 1981 until 1996, but, undoubtedly, one of the Duke's most lasting legacies — there are many — will be the establishment of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award 65 years ago.

As a lifelong Scout, I commend the vision, foresight and immense leadership of that programme. In our United Kingdom alone, some 6.7 million young people have benefited from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Today, I proudly wear my Duke of Edinburgh's Award diamond challenge award, which was presented to me by the Earl of Wessex.

1.30 pm

Prince Philip was a much loved and respected figure, not just at home but across the world and throughout Her Majesty's Commonwealth. He was a real character with a sharp wit and intellect. I was privileged to meet him on a number of occasions while serving as High Sheriff and deputy Lord Mayor of this great city.

It was always a pleasure. The outpouring of grief and affection since Prince Philip's passing on Friday across the United Kingdom and the world demonstrates the love and respect that the British people had for Philip. Indeed, I saw that yesterday when I and other members of my family laid flowers at Hillsborough; a stream of people came along to do just that.

We live in very difficult days for our country. He gave leadership. He showed us how to behave in public life; he did so for such a long time. He has left a legacy that will never, and should never, be forgotten. We mourn today and respect the traditions that the House of Windsor has set out, but we remember that there is a family in mourning. I hope, wish and pray that the presence of God will surround the royal family at this time and that, in the days ahead, God will save the Queen.

Mrs Cameron: I am very grateful for this opportunity to pay tribute to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who has died aged 99, having given, quite literally, a lifetime of service to his country and the wider Commonwealth. One of the saddest things when it comes to someone passing away is that it is only when they have gone that we offer the deserved words of celebration and recognition of a life well lived. It is only then that we set the record straight with a narrative that is much more reflective of the person rather than the headlines written about them. That is why, over the past few days, it has been an absolute joy to hear from those who knew him best about exactly what type of man the duke was. He achieved more in his lifetime than most of us ever will. He was a war hero, a pilot, a naval commander, a top-class sportsman, a pioneering champion of wildlife and nature, an author and a philosopher. He was a man who, despite seemingly having no barriers to what he might achieve in his chosen career, made the choice to step back and instead devote his entire life to serving Queen and country, knowing full well all that that would entail for his ambition and complicated family history.

It was fascinating to learn that that seasoned war hero was also the first to offer support to the younger generations who followed him into a royal life of service. He was the first to provide comfort to William and Harry on the death of their mother, Diana. Remarkably, shortly after the assassination of President Kennedy, it was Prince Philip who was found on the floor of the White House playing with the slain President's infant son, who had become upset because he had no one to play with any more. Those are wonderful qualities that show that, at heart, he was, in private, a man who cared deeply for

those around him, even if, sometimes, his public manner suggested otherwise. His ability to care for younger generations was no doubt the driving force behind the incredible scheme that bears his name and which has changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people.

Perhaps, in his passing, the Duke of Edinburgh offers a final lesson to those of us who serve in public office: there is no greater privilege than to serve. He has provided the template and set the standard for all those who do likewise. As he might have pointed out, with a little more directness than I, we might learn not to wait until we are 99 years of age before being able to speak some kind words about one another. My thoughts and prayers today are with the Queen and the royal family as they mourn their great personal loss.

Mr Robinson: Last Friday, we learned of the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. It is, first, correct that our sincere sympathies and condolences are extended to Her Majesty The Queen, who has lost her much loved husband of 73 years. He was her pillar of support and ever-dependable adviser for all those years as she carried out duties here and throughout the world. Prince Philip's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are now left without the role model whom they all looked up to and sought wise advice from. They are all in our thoughts and prayers at this most difficult of times for all the family.

We cannot ever underestimate the lasting positive impact on young lives that Prince Philip had during his long and fulfilling life and, indeed, will have for generations. That is true not just in the United Kingdom but on a global scale. This is a hard-earned but thoroughly justified way for the prince's long life to be remembered. Generations of young people, including many here in Northern Ireland, will continue to be helped thanks to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

The prince was always a great supporter of the armed forces, which he served with during World War II and beyond, and he was among the last of the war veterans and deserves the greatest respect for his service. The prince was a man of great intellect, and, in the days since his death, we have heard of his deep interest in and influence on engineering, sport, ecology and theology. All of us today can learn a lesson from the prince's life in public service. We all will mourn with his family, who are enduring tremendous loss. Again, on my behalf and on behalf of my East Londonderry constituents, we offer our sincere condolences and sympathies

to the Queen and family on the death of the duke.

Mr T Buchanan: Like others around the Chamber, on behalf of the constituents of West Tyrone, I tender my sincere sympathy to the Queen and to the royal family and its household at this time. Friday 9 April 2021 will be a date that is etched in all our memories as we remember when the news filtered through of the death of a great man who was loved by so many, His Royal Highness Prince Philip. It is one of those occasions in life that we will remember where we were, what we were doing and who we were with when the news broke. Although he was a few weeks short of his 100th birthday, we never really expected the suddenness of his death because of the fact that this man had lived such an active life.

Prince Philip, as others said, was not only a dedicated husband of 73 years but a dedicated father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Despite all those responsibilities, we see how he gave himself to a full life of service to country and to Commonwealth. He was forthright, intelligent and forward-thinking, serving as patron to some 800 organisations and leaving the most lasting legacy through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which so many of our young people have taken part in. Those who are older today and who passed through it over the past 65 years can testify to how they benefited from it.

Throughout his life, Prince Philip exemplified the qualities of duty, service and sacrifice to country and Commonwealth with great humour, humility and, indeed, humanity. There is no doubt that he has left us all with a great example to follow. I remember the day, which my colleague Edwin Poots referred to, when the Queen and Prince Philip came to open the new South West Acute Hospital in Enniskillen, and I remember the humour that Prince Philip presented that day. As I was reflecting on those things this morning, I remembered the words of Jonathan to David in 1 Samuel 20:18. David was taking his leave from the king's table, and Jonathan came to him and said onto him:

"thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

As we reflect today on the loss of Prince Philip and extend our sincere Christian sympathy to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the entire royal household, we think of a chair that is now empty. We think of a voice that is now silent. We think of words of wisdom that are no longer there. Today, we sincerely pray that the royal household and Queen Elizabeth will know the

strength, comfort and blessing of God in the days, weeks and months to come.

Mr Speaker: Members, that concludes tributes to the late Prince Philip.

Adjourned at 1.40 pm.

Suggested amendments or corrections that arrive no later than two weeks after the publication of each report will be considered by the Editor of Debates.

They should be sent to:

✉ **Editor of Debates, Room 248, Parliament Buildings, BELFAST BT4 3XX**

☎ **028 9052 1135**

✉ **simon.burrowes@niassembly.gov.uk**

Hansard reports can be made available in a range of alternative formats, including large print, Braille etc. For more information, please contact:

✉ **Hansard Admin Unit, Room 251, Parliament Buildings, BELFAST BT4 3XX**

☎ **028 9052 1463**

✉ **hansard@niassembly.gov.uk**

The Official Report (Hansard) is licensed under the Open Northern Ireland Assembly Licence, which can be accessed here: [Open Data Licence](#)

[To receive an alert each time an updated plenary report is published, you can follow @NIAHansard on Twitter](#)