

- And welcome everyone. This is potentially an explosive meeting. And I'm not sure most of the Americans who've contacted me strangely enough are quite monarchist when it was quite a lot of the British who've contacted me are losing confidence. Well, let me start anyhow. I'm going to start by reading you a quotation. I'm not going to tell you anything about the quotation. I'm just going to read it to you. "Pageantry and show, the parade of crowns and coronets, of gold key sticks, white wands and black rods of ermine and lawn, maces and wigs are ridiculous when men become enlightened, when they have learned that the real object of government is to confer the greatest happiness of the people at the least expense." Now, if you're American, you might think that dates from the middle of the 18th century and criticism of the English crown. After all, does it not say, "...the real object of government is to confer the greatest happiness of the people at the least expense." Well, that sounds very American. If you're British, you might think I've combed it from a newspaper in recent weeks because that is the sort of criticism that is made of the monarchy today. But if I was to tell you it's British and it's from 1820, that 17 years before Victoria came to the throne, that might be a surprise. But it is. It is from 1820. So awful had Victoria's two predecessors been on the throne, her uncles, George IV and William IV, that it led even an ultraconservative, the Duke of Wellington, the victor of Waterloo, and subsequently a prime minister here, perhaps the most right wing prime minister we've ever had. Referring to those two previous kings, that is to say George IV and William IV, he said if there are any more like these two, then it will turn even me into a Republican. So the idea that Republicanism in Britain is a modern concept is of course nonsense. There's always been an underground of resistance to the idea of monarchy. But then after all, in 1649 we became a republic, the first and last republic we've seen. Well that we've seen on this side of the channel. Remember that British and American history, only parts in the 18th century. And in the 17th century, many of those English who came to New England came with Republican views. They had come with a background similar to that of Oliver Cromwell. And so it is hardly surprising that these British who moved across the Atlantic took the ideas of Republicanism with them and in the 18th century made that break with the British crown. It would've been surprising had they not given who they were. Now the people who from Britain moved to Australia and Canada and South Africa were very, very different sort of people. This was a very particular specific group of people who came to New England. And as everyone knows, it was New England that dominated American politics at the beginning. So we talk about a 1,000 year monarchy in Britain and that's a bit of a misrepresentation. We were a republic during the 1650s. And after we had forced James II in 1688 to leave, we became not a constitutional monarchy but became a parliamentary monarchy. And when people say, there has not been an English or British written

constitution, they are of course wrong. There was a written constitution under Cromwell and there was a partial written constitution under the Bill of Rights in 1688. That America and Britain or America and England have diverged more since the independence of America from Britain from the late 18th century onwards is not surprising. More surprising are the continuing links between us. And those links are really based on our view of democracy and our view of the rule of law. Our law comes from the same trunk of a tree with different branches. When I was a student at Oxford, we were allowed to quote American case law if we were arguing something in an English court and doubtless Americans did the same. After all Americans have quoted the Magna Carta relatively recently in courts in the States. I suppose today monarchists, even monarchists in Britain argue that the monarchy brings tourists in and bringing tourists in brings money into the British economy. They argue that the ritual of monarchy, the traditions of monarchy are deep in British or at least in English. It's very difficult with Scotland and completely different in Ireland. But in England and Wales, it's deep in our DNA. And we are and most countries recognise that. The English in particular are very conservative not in a political sense, as more will see. We are conservative as a people, as distinct from say the French. And so we are happy with old traditions.

Let me read you a second piece. "Some nations have a gift for ceremonial. No poverty of means or absence of splendour inhibits them from making any pageant in which they take part both real and impressive. Everybody falls naturally into his proper place, throws himself without effort into the spirit of the little drama he is enacting and instinctively represses all appearances of constraint or distracted attention." Well, that can't be talking about us surely in Britain. We're known for our tradition. Some of you Americans save up over a number of years to be able to come and see some of the ceremonial. And goodness knows what will happen at the next coronation. But that was written about Britain and it was written by a man who was prime minister, Lord Salisbury. And he wrote it after witnessing Queen Victoria opening Parliament in 1860. And he's saying, we make such a mockery of tradition and ceremonial. At Victoria's own coronation, people in the abbey took sandwiches in and whilst the service was going on were pouring drinks and having sandwiches off the top of tombs. It was all disastrous. The Archbishop of Canterbury put the ring, the coronation ring on Victoria's wrong finger and it wouldn't fit. And he pushed and pushed, and eventually got it on spilling blood at the same time. There was a member of the peerage called Lord Rolle who went up to kiss hands with the newly crowned queen. And the tradition was you walked backwards. Unfortunately, he tripped over his gown. And everyone remarked in the press afterwards, he lived up to his name as Lord Rolls as he rolled down the aisle. It was disastrous. You couldn't imagine that happening today. So there is an oddity about all of this. The first oddity is that Republicanism has never quite died in Britain. Maybe there's more than two points.

There is a subsequent point that the monarchy itself has changed from the absolute monarchy of Charles I to a monarchy that is what today? Ceremonial. One commentator in the 1950s when the present queen came to the throne described the British monarchy or the British system as a crowned republic, a crowned republic. And that's basically what it is. To believe that the queen has any political power at all is pretty well nonsense. The power lies with the prime minister and thereby hangs a lot of problems if change is in the air. So it's Britain's position in the world that is to say it's empire and it's being the leading superpower, the only superpower in the 19th century dwindle, so did the tradition and ceremonies increase. Old traditions were revived. New traditions were brought into play. And some of it was pure flummery and Hollywood really. The coronation inverted commerce of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales was entirely bogus and total nonsense as had been that of his great-uncle, Edward, Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII who married Mrs. Simpson. That was equally nonsense. We'd never had a ceremony. Well at the time of Charles' presentation to the people of Wales as the Prince of Wales, there was a lot of opposition in Britain and the whole thing looked, well it didn't look real. It looked as if it was a film set which basically it was. Today many who argue for a monarchy argue that even our parliamentary monarchy, even the monarchy without parliamentary power today argue that it's got to reform. There's too much flummery around it, all the curtsying and bowing to the members of the royal family, not just the queen. People don't like it. In fact people are indeed not just ordinary people, but we understand the queen is not happy with all the bowing and scraping. But when she tried to stop it, people insisted on doing it. When I went to get my gong, there was a very elderly actress receiving an award and she had a help to get into from where we were sitting, waiting to go into the throne room. She had a young man, an equerry to hold her arm to take her in. And as she went, the gentleman who was in charge of the ceremony said to her, now you do not have to curtsy. You do understand you do not have to curtsy. So she went in and she said to him, young man, I shall definitely curtsy. And the ceremony was being conducted not by the queen but by Princess Anne. And as she curtsied, she dropped her stick and Princess Anne had to lean forward and catch her while she went rather like Lord Rolle head over whatever. So people like doing it. Although a lot of people do not like doing it. The people like doing it who meet them but the people, not many, it's a small proportion of people who actually meet them to speak to them. Then they don't like doing it. It is all the flummery around it that people dislike. But all of that is Victoria. I blame Albert if you really want to know. You see, when William IV came down on holiday to Brighton, just down the road from where I am to stay in the Royal Pavilion which his brother George IV had built, he used to walk along the pier in Brighton just like any other holiday maker. And he would stop and talk to you if he thought you looked an interesting sort of person to speak to. So suddenly you'd find the king was saying, the weather's rather nice, isn't it? How far have you come? And enter into a normal conversation. In those days in the early

19th century, each seaside resort kept a list weekly of the great and the good who were visiting the town. So you were always desperate if you were visiting Brighton in the 1830s when William IV was on the throne to get your name on the list because he used to send an equerry out from the Brighton Pavilion to ordinary people, well ordinary in the terms of being middle class people, not aristocracy and invite them to dinner. And he invited this lady and her husband to dinner and she was horrified. What do you wear to go into the Royal Pavilion at Brighton to have dinner with the king and queen on their own? And the message came back from William IV, "Oh, don't worry, we're very casual here, just come in whatever you like." Now you can't imagine that happening today. And it was stopped. Well Albert stopped it in Brighton because he didn't like people coming up to him or indeed up to Victoria. And the result of that was that he built Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, which it has private beach and everything else. And he didn't have to meet with the hoi polloi in Brighton. But meeting with the hoi polloi in Brighton is exactly what Northern European monarchies now do. They do mix. But the idea of being able to go to Brighton and sit on the beach and see the Duke of Cambridge and the Duchess with their children on the beach would be well horrifying whereas Queen Victoria's mother used to take her to Ramsgate in Kent and she used to play with the children building sandcastles with any children that were on the beach. She used to go on donkey rides like every other child. So it's changed. And it's odd that it's changed in such a way as to distance the monarchy from ordinary people when the monarchy has lost its own power and Britain has lost power. You might say it doesn't make much sense. And the answer is no, it doesn't make much sense. So that's my way of introduction.

Let us come up to date with 2022. And we are in a quandary in 2022. There is a lot of opposition to the monarchy as it is. There's more agreement about the monarchy that could develop under Charles, but under particularly William, Duke of Cambridge. But at the moment, there's almost a moratorium on discussing the monarchy because of the queen's age and her desire to go on until death do us part. And so most of the big political arguments are not taking place. I thought about what book I could recommend people to read. There is not one. Most of the books are the flummery of monarchy or the tittle tattle of monarchy. They're not proper books about monarchy. I believe that when the queen dies, there will be proper books produced in Britain arguing the question, monarchy or republic. I believe that when she dies, the gloves will be off. They will be off for a number of reasons, not least that many Commonwealth countries, but in particular the big dominions as they were that is to say Australia, Canada, New Zealand may say well enough is enough. It's interesting to read in the press how the Australians' prime minister was publicly effusive at the Queen's Diamond, I'm sorry, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. But they have appointed a cabinet minister to look at the future of declaring a republic in Australia. Now if that happens, some people believe it's the end of the Commonwealth. That's nonsense. The Commonwealth does

not depend upon Britain being a monarchy. It depends on other political issues that pull us together. What it does mean if Canada, Australia, and New Zealand for example or even just Australia withdraw from the monarchy and remain in the Commonwealth which they would but if they withdraw from the monarchy, then it will raise serious questions in Britain. Very interestingly the Commonwealth Games are beginning this week in Birmingham in England. And the royal family minus the queen will be there in force. You wonder quite why. And the answer is it's nothing to do with promoting Britain, it's to do with promoting the monarchy within the Commonwealth. But I think that horse, if not bolted is about to bolt. So when the queen dies and the gloves come off, what do people in Britain, forget about the question of monarchy which will be raised in the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, wherever. That aside, what happens as Charles takes the throne? Charles is considerably less popular than the queen. In every survey that's been done in Britain, she scores over 90% from monarchists. He scores barely 50%, just over. He's considered somewhat eccentric and capricious. And some of you may have read stories in the press which read like this. Most of these comments are from The Times and The Sunday Times, so perfectly respectable papers. And this is all this summer. Our investigation today reveals that Charles personally received 3 million euros in cash in three payments from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani, the former prime minister of Qatar between 2011 and 2015. The money was deposited in the accounts of the Prince of Wales' charitable fund which bank rolls the prince's pet projects and his Scottish country estate. While there is no suggestion of wrongdoing by Charles, the nature of these transactions raises troubling questions about his judgement and about transparency. He's also considered by the politicians to be a meddler. And this again comes in The Times. This summer cabinet ministers have fired a warning shot at the Prince of Wales who they fear will plunge the country into a constitutional crisis if he continues to meddle in government business when he becomes king.

Now this blew up over the proposal by the British government to send refugee, sorry, to send immigrants who are crossing the channel to be processed and indeed, even if they were considered not to be illegal, have to remain in Rwanda in Africa. And Charles said that it was absolutely, he said appalling, appalling. And the government said he was intervening in political affairs. Now probably Charles' view was the view of the majority of British people who were appalled by as he was the government's actions. And then finally for the greatest number of people who wouldn't be interested in listening to this sort of talk, they blame Charles for Diana's death. And there's a lot of concern about whether Camilla would be accepted by the general public as queen which Charles is clearly going to do. Interestingly as a constitutional issue, if Charles becomes king, she automatically becomes queen but she does not have to be crowned queen. Not every female consort of a king in English history has been crowned. It's quite a modern thing to do. And so it could easily not happen or it

could happen later. But we understand that probably she's going to be crowned queen alongside him being crowned king. That will raise lots of issues. Then our next prime minister, possible prime minister, conservative Prime Minister, Liz Truss is on record as having made an anti monarchy speech in her younger days when she was a member of the Liberal Democrat Party. This country is very odd. It's very odd to judge. I've always said if the monarchy goes, it will be the Conservative Party that gets rid of it, not the Labour Party. And it looks as though at the minute I could be right. Now I've got some statistics here.

I know everyone loves statistics. But here are some good ones. These are from a 2021 survey who is in favour of the monarchy by age. Surprise, surprise, those aged 65 and plus. 81% of the 65 plus want to preserve the monarchy. The lowest, the 18 to 24 age group where only 31% want to preserve the monarchy. And if you put all the ages together, 61% prefer the monarchy to a republic. Put another way, 40% of the population of Britain would prefer a republic to a monarchy. It looks good from a monarchist point of view except that from the 81% to the 31% is a steady decline down the graph. In other words, as the younger generation grow older, the percentage in favour of a monarchy is not likely to rise very much. This isn't an age related thing in that sense that when they get older, they will see the value. There's no evidence to suggest that at all. It is to suggest that the older generation dying out are the last generation to be solidly monarchist, 40%. A YouGov poll in Britain taken in 2018 showed 69% overall support for the monarchy. So it had declined in three years from 69% to 61%. That's nearly a 10% drop. And that is indicative of the change of older people dying off and thus the support for the monarchy dying off. If you go by gender, it's pretty equal interestingly enough between men and women. In 2022, a poll this year shows a continuing decline from the year of the Diamond Jubilee which was 2012 and the year of the Platinum Jubilee, this year. Support for the monarchy has fallen in those 10 years from 73% to 62%, a drop of over 10%. Support for the monarchy is therefore over a period of time falling. Now of course if certain events happen like Harry and Meghan withdrawing from the royal family, like the appalling behaviour of Prince Andrew, then you expect the figures to fall which they have. But the overall trend is falling in support of the monarchy in Britain. But the majority by six to four still prefer a monarchy. So if there was a referendum today, the monarchy would win, but it's narrowing, it's narrowing. What I've done next is to put out a list of arguments, the main arguments for a monarchy. Number one, the monarchy is non-party political, thus the head of state is non-party political. Very different from the American Republic where the president is head of state and head of government an elected or on a political manifesto. Here it isn't. Except the politicians are worried that Charles will try and politicise the monarchy. He has said he will act differently as king than he has acted as Prince of Wales. Well, we wait to see. Do leopards change spots he asks. Secondly, the monarchy is important as

an icon of the nation behind which the nation can gather in times of crisis. That is not an insignificant thing. The queen's broadcast during the COVID crisis was extremely well received. And interestingly there were lots of comments in the British press from the American media of how much better that was than anything that Trump was doing. Thirdly, the monarchy provides historical continuity, a living connection with our past. And it's no bad thing in a country to be aware of its past, of its history, good and bad. But an awareness of history I think is an important thing. There's endless argument that it's good for tourism in terms of money. That's a very difficult thing to quantify. There's a view that it's harmless and it provides a wonderful soap opera. We get it day by day. Who is sleeping with whom? Who is cheating on whom? It's extraordinary. It's quite extraordinary. But people follow it. And then there is the unseen aspects of the monarchy, their support for the voluntary sector and good causes. And this is really important. You get a member of the royal family on your board then you are in a very good position. The college I was principal of in London now has Princess Anne as a president. Now that's very good because she's fantastic, Princess Anne. She will be wheeled out whenever the college want her wheeled out and if she's wheeled out whatever she says, A, she's written herself and B, it gets reported and that's helpful. And she can open doors and that's helpful. And of course they support the British Armed Forces and that is an important distinction with America. It is the queen who is the head of the armed forces, not the prime minister. And there was of course a lot of talk when Trump was president of the dangers of him being commander-in-chief. We don't have that danger because we have that role as it were divided between Parliament and the queen or prime minister and monarch. And that's to many of us who are British is an important distinction.

What are the arguments against the monarchy? Well obviously it looks decidedly non-democratic in the 21st century. It's very difficult say Republicans to argue for hereditary monarchy particularly given now that they marry "ordinary" people. The old marrying into other royal families business no longer exists. We're never going to have a Russian princess as queen. We're not going to have a German prince as prince consort. They don't exist. And we can't have a Catholic so we're reduced to the Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch royal families. And you just have to hope that Prince George France is one of those princesses when the time comes, but they may not be happy to give up their nationality and move to Britain with all the problems that that entails which Meghan Markle has highlighted. The Republican's biggest argument or after the one that it doesn't make sense in the 21st century in a democracy is that it costs a lot of money. Now I went through all the stuff that I could find about costs and it's very difficult. It is as one commentator said, they remain opaque. They get a grant from the government every year that is in return for George III having handed over royal properties in 1760. But the queen still owns some royal properties. Sandringham is owned by

the queen. Balmoral is owned by the queen. So there are differences. The queen also has a private, a private income and we have no idea what that is except that it's said that she inherited 27 million from her mother which I find extremely difficult to believe. But that is what is on the record. And she also or the royal family have receipts from the Duchy of Cornwall and the Duchy of Lancaster because the queen is Duke of Lancaster and Prince Charles is Duke of Cornwall. And they own land, lots of land in the name of the Cornish and the Lancastrians. And that money is used by the royal family. Until his death, the Duke of Edinburgh received a separate grant from the government. No one does that now. And the queen is paying a lot of the royal family out of the money earned by the Duchy of Lancaster. Is that quite open? No, it isn't. It's not audited. We don't know entirely the finances of the royal family. So one argument is A, they should be transparent. And B, it shouldn't cost us so much and they should be paying a lot more out of their own pocket. Thirdly, it's said a hereditary monarchy can throw out some odd people. It can throw out somebody underage for example. If Charles and William, God forbid were to be killed in a helicopter accident, George would have to have a regency. Just imagine the row over who that would be. Then there's the question of mental capacity. It would be nice to think that Biden couldn't be a monarch here but I'm not sure that that's true. I think he could probably get away with being king here in his mental state. And then there's the political views of people like Charles which governments find unacceptable. I don't think Charles is at all party political but he's political. And if he had a lot of support as I think he does over the Rwanda question, that raises all sorts of problems. And then there's the view that the monarchy is a relic of Imperial Britain which is dead and buried. And as I said before, the Commonwealth doesn't need a monarchy. It definitely doesn't. In fact, it might be better off even today if it did not have Charles succeeding the queen as head of the Commonwealth, much better to have had an election. Much better to have an African head of the Commonwealth. Just think of the difference it would've made if Mandela had been head of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth does not depend upon the monarchy.

Let me move on speedily because I want to give opportunities for people to speak. I want to move on and say what happens if Britain got an elected head of state, a president, whatever, protector if you like, which was the term we used in the Senate. It doesn't matter what term you use. Let's use the word president because it's one we understand. If we had an elected head of state president, we would have to lay down what the President was expected to do and what the President could not do in relationship to the prime minister. We do not have that. Why? Because the queen basically has none, a very, very tiny political role to advise and to warn. Well, we know what happened when George V complained to Asquith about women being force-fed, suffragettes force-fed at the beginning of the 20th century. George V objected on the grounds it was inhumane. Think Prince Charles. And



Asquith replied to the king so we're told, "There are only two people in this room and as far as I'm aware, I'm the only one that was elected." The king had to accept it. Would a president accept it? I'm not so sure. What I am sure about there would have to be written rules. What is the role? No one can apply for the job of president unless you knew what the job description was. And we don't have one. What to open fates? Well bully for that. Then you've got the question which I think we would answer differently than America. We're unlikely to make the prime minister a president on the American model. We are much more likely to want a president that would be a break on the power of the prime minister. And I think Boris Johnson has made that even clearer than it's been made by either Thatcher or Blair whose style of government was described as presidential on the American model. So we would have a president who was a president but he'd be a figure, he'd be an icon or she would be an icon. So who might such a person be if we had an icon? A retired politician, oh God, help us from that. A celebrity? Well what does that mean? David Beckham? I don't know. It's very difficult to see beyond superannuated politicians. And where does that get you? Precisely nowhere. So we could have an elected head of state. The first question I think is easy to answer. We would not have it on an American model but on an Irish model. And before anyone jumps in, yes, the Irish have had outstanding presidents, Mary Robinson and the present, President Higgins. But in between and before some very dodgy. And I use the word carefully, some very dodgy individuals. If you could guarantee a Mary Robinson every time you elected a president, fine. But there will be no guarantee of that. None at all. And if we did abolish the monarchy, what unplanned consequences might there be? First of all, the disestablishment of the Church of England. Unlike America, we have a state church. Now whether we should have a state church or not is very open to question given that 2019 statistics said that there was a weekly attendance of less than 2% of the English population went to church on a Sunday in the Church of England. It's true that people still put on forms they're Church of England but they don't mean that they attend services. They might be buried by the Church of England. They might be married by the Church of England. They might turn up for a boozy Christmas Eve carol service. But that would be about it. In fact the number of people declaring themselves the Church of England has fallen from 40% in 1983 to 12% in 2018. And being an established church gives the Church of England 26 bishops in the House of Lords. There is only one other country that has unelected religious in their Parliament. And that's Iran. You can't defend it. But if you did disestablish the Church of England which I think is absolutely bound to happen within the next 30 to 50 years. That does not necessarily affect the monarchy. The monarchy isn't dependent in that way. True, the queen is the head of the Church of England. But that wouldn't matter. I don't see that as an issue if you must. It certainly wouldn't be.

What are some of the unexpected consequences, the unknown consequences

of the monarchy being abolished? It's said it would lead to the abolition of the House of Lords. Well again, I don't think that's true. I think we've got to get rid of the House of Lords in its present form. It's indefensible in the 21st century. It's undemocratic and worse than undemocratic. People are appointed by political leaders. It's said that Johnson wants to make a very large number and is having a lot of kickback over that. But he made the son of a KGB officer, Lord Lebedev of Siberia sits in the House of Lords. Well, I, for one am deeply unhappy about that, deeply unhappy. We need reform in the House of Lords but that does not mean reform of the monarchy. The monarchy going might be part of a wider issue about the House of Lords. But that is simply an issue about how you have a democratic upper chamber. You can call it what you like. Cromwell called it the other house. And the first thing the other house did was to give themselves the honorary title of lord. I told you Britain is and England in particular is very conservative. So unplanned consequences of getting rid doesn't mean that a presidential system would be any better in terms of quality. It could be a lot worse. It doesn't mean necessarily that if the Church of England went that it would affect the monarchy. If the monarchy went, it might affect the Church of England. If the House of Lords went, it wouldn't necessarily affect the monarchy. But if the monarchy went, I think it would affect the House of Lords. How can the monarchy survive you might be asking. Well, the glib answer given in the British press continuously at the moment is modernising to become more relevant. That's a very 21st century thing to become more relevant, more woke if you like. But in practise what does it mean? Well, it means less of the flummery. And as far as we can see, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge would be entirely in favour of that. Charles would not. And there lies a problem. If the crown was to bypass Charles which it can't unless Charles decides to abdicate or Parliament forces him to abdicate. Neither of which look conceivable. Then Charles may do more harm by becoming king than handing over to his son. After all Charles is of a good age, over 70. Indeed, the question of retirement of the sovereign is one that we should address. After all one pope has retired and another pope is considering now retirement. And the queen is charging on towards her centenary. It's not, it's not viable. We need a retirement age of whatever you agree but 70 would seem reasonable enough. The other thing people complain about are the large number of palaces and so on. Well, Charles has made comments about that in a positive way. But he may need to go further than he has so far gone. There's also talk of a smaller royal family and Charles has talked about that. We can't have all these hangers-on. Cue for me to tell you a story. Some of you've heard this story before but I don't apologise for telling it again. I met Princess Michael of Kent who's German and aristocratic, a number of years ago now when I was principal in London. And I was at a meeting of a national deaf organisation at which she was present. And I was introduced to her. And they said, this is Mr. Tyler who is principal of The City Lit which has the largest centre for adult deaf students in Europe. "Oh," she said, "how

nice, how interesting." She said, "do you tell me, Mr. Tyler, do you find it difficult to teach them Braille?" Well, I think we could do without Princess Michael of Kent, frankly. It is said that the monarchy must cut its money back, its public money and be more transparent. I think the Cambridges would. I'm not so sure about Charles. But that is important. And we need less of a celebrity lifestyle, private jets to holiday resorts, holiday villas provided by the rich seeking to be seen with the monarchy. All of those things, we can do without all of that. We really can.

And so the monarchy could survive but in order to survive, it will need to modernise because the alternative of republic isn't all drums and whistles by any means. The monarchy has served us well and could go on serving us well. But in order to increase its, I don't want to use the word popularity but in order to continue to enjoy support amongst the wider British population then it needs to modernise. The question is can Charles do that? And then there's a question which no one or very few people ever ask, what happens if the monarchy decides to drop us rather than us dropping the monarchy? There was a letter very recently in The Times, which says, "My father kept his second World War medals in a bin in the attic. He believed they had been amply regarded simply for being there, a matter over which he had no choice. I thought 3 1/2 years of service in North Africa and Italy was highly meticulous, meritorious. I read that Prince Harry wears medals which are mainly like scout badges given a medal as all members of the royal family were for the Jubilee." William may not approve of that but he seems to have reconciled himself to being king. But what of the little boy George? In an article in The Times we read, "The royals work very hard to retain public support. George will be groomed for the job, rather as young gymnasts are groomed by ambitious parents and will face extraordinary pressures to adapt. He may well spend his life preparing for a job that when the time comes no longer exists. At some point he might decide that he will be happier abandoning a system that might otherwise abandon him." Prince Harry writ large, "What happens if George says or George's wife says, enough is enough?" If Harry had been the eldest and he'd married Meghan and they washed their hands of the whole institution, we should say, well, that's all right. There would've been a younger brother, William and he could have taken over. Yes, but it would've raised huge questions, huge questions. We know that Harry and Meghan are writing more books. That in itself could be a blow under the counter for the monarchy. But if he'd been potentially the king, then that would've been far more serious. We didn't have a problem with Edward VIII because we go almost immediately into World War II. And with Churchill's guidance, George VI is seen as an icon of the nation. But he might not have been like that. It might not have been like that had there not been a world war. So the monarchy isn't here forever but Republicanism doesn't look attractive. So what do we do? Well, I'm one of those that would argue I've been a monarchist all my life. Maybe that hasn't been clear or it has been clear in what I've said. But it's got to change. It's got to

change. It cannot go on as it is. And I'm a huge fan of Princess Anne whom I've met a number of times. And Princess Anne is the real deal. She is the real deal. She can do all of it. She can do the ceremonial bit but she's fantastic with people. The last time I met her was at The City Lit recently, not when I was principal, but I was invited as a guest. And I was in a line to shake hands and so on. But she spent most of her time with a woman, unmarried mom with children who had come to The City Lit to do a pre-university course, had succeeded in passing, and had succeeded in getting herself a place at the University of London. And Anne spoke to her, not about what she'd achieved. Because I was not very far away, I could hear what she was saying. And Anne asked her how she coped with having children and having very little money and study. Now that's great.

I'm not sure that a president would be any better. In fact, I'm pretty sure most of them would be a lot worse. Would I think Charles would be like that? I've only ever met Charles as part of a wider audience. He was... well, he can be quite difficult and the organisers were worried about him being difficult. Well, the queen simply goes on. It's just as though she's on sort of rollers and she just rolls on year after year. But don't believe anything that I've said which is common and a lot of tonight's been common. Because historians often get the future wrong. David Cannadine, a great historian from whose essay on the monarchy written in 1983. True. He wrote this in this essay. And in this essay about monarchy written in 1983, he wrote, "As seems possible the next coronation takes place without a House of Lords or Commonwealth or an established church, the role of the ceremonial in creating the comforting picture of stability, tradition, and continuity will only be further enhanced." Well, sorry, Professor Cannadine but we still have a House of Lords. We still have a Commonwealth and we still have an established church 40 years on from when you wrote that. So don't write off the monarchy and don't write in a republic. There's no guarantee. And we found out at Cromwell's death in 1658 that we hadn't set up a system that was rigorous enough to continue the republic although many people were in favour of continuing the republic instead of which we went for what we knew. And we asked Charles II to come back. And when I say we, I mean Cromwell's Army under General Monck asked him to come back and come back he did. And the rest as they say is history.

But I'm sure you've got lots of questions. Oh gosh, yes. Let's see what I can do with some of these questions.

## Q & A and Comments

Well this is someone I know, Irene, stating the obvious. I know before you start that this is one of the very few topics on which you and I disagree. I had an email before I even started tonight saying, I'm writing this email to say I hope you have a nice holiday because after

the talk, I may not feel so well disposed towards you.

Q: Why would the Brits choose between the monarchy and a republic a la the USA? Why not a parliamentary system a la Canada?

A: Well, Canada is a monarchy, Carol. Canada is a monarchy until it gets rid of the queen. As I said it wouldn't be a republic like the American republic. It would be a republic like the German republic. It would have the president and prime minister. That is to say the head of state and head of government. As with America, would be extremely unlikely to be rolled into one. I just don't think that's possible in Britain.

Q: What were the sympathies of the British sectors who went to Virginia?

A: Mixed, I think is the answer. There are more royalists in Virginia. And if you think of the time of the American Declaration of Independence and the loss by Britain of the war then many in the South were the empire loyalists who went to Canada. The idea that all the British who arrived in America were Protestants is not true. But what is true is that Protestant, that determined group of Protestants who arrived in New England were something very special in history, very special. And they were Republican to a man and a woman.

Sonny, thank you very much for a nice comment. Susan, thank you for a nice comment.

Myrna, I'm just reading "The Heir Apparent: the Life of Edward VII." Fascinating book on the monarchy, extremely detailed. Yes. Now, Edward VII is interesting because Edward VII did play a political role, the political role of the monarchy. And I mentioned his son, George V and suffragettes. The political role failed under George VI and under the present queen. It does not work which would make it very difficult for Charles to go back to how Edward VII dealt after all the Entente Cordiale with France was largely negotiated in part, largely in part. That's not very good English, was negotiated in part by Edward VII.

Tony says, I often joke Nicola Sturgeon, for those of you who don't know, Nicola Sturgeon is the First Minister in Scotland that Nicola Sturgeon secretly aims to be the next queen of Scotland. Could I perhaps have spotted a grain of truth in this? And has there been in history ever been anyone who has successfully manoeuvred in such a way?

Yes, Bernadotte. The Marshal of France became king of Sweden. And the kings of Sweden are descended from a Marshal of France. Not in British history. All of them were aristocratic with claims to the throne. Bernadotte had no claims to the Swedish throne. Off the top of my head that's the best example I can come up with.

Q: What about security concerns, whether for members of the royal family or Republican politicians?

A: I'm not sure Shelly what you mean by that. They would be the same whether we had a president or a monarch. The security wouldn't change and would be paid for by the government. Maybe you're making a comment about Harry. That's because Harry didn't understand what was going on. But then he doesn't have, he isn't over blessed between the ears.

Lawrence says the idea that monarchy brings in tourists does not hold up. Our Versailles palace attracts thousands even though all the French monarchs are long gone.

That's absolutely true. It's also true that Charles wants to open up Buckingham Palace to tourists. And I agree with that. I don't think the financial argument holds although I will say having been in both Versailles and Buckingham Palace, Versailles struck me as a cold, dead place. I wasn't expecting that. I felt it was dead. In Buckingham Palace all you're thinking about is you'd think they could get all the loos working, wouldn't you, toilets working. You would think that someone would've put a brush over that. It's different. It's alive.

What does Susanna say? Surely it's changed as security became a huge issue. Even ordinary people are in danger in public. I'm not sure. There isn't a big issue in Britain about security. All public figures have security paid for by the government.

Kel says the last six years here in the USA have been a masterclass in an executive presidency republic. I now believe that a defined constitutional monarchy Westminster parliamentary is the best of all evils.

Oh, that's a good phrase, the best of all evils. A problematic constitution can do very little damage to the democratic process and can be reined in by Parliament unlike a dynastic family executive presidency. Well, that's interesting coming from an American because that's what many of us in Britain feel. It's difficult to rein in an American president democratically. Okay, you can bring them to court but that is a hell of a procedure even in the States and is not guaranteed. The Charity Commission said there is no impropriety regarding 3 million received.

No indeed, Nicholas, there was not. And that's what The Times said and what I wrote. But there is nevertheless the smell of something untoward when he's receiving money in plastic carrier bags for goodness sake. The man must be very silly to do that.

Myrna says, as it would appear, Charles was right re: Rwanda which turns out to be a disaster.

Of course he was right. As I said, I think most Britons would think he was absolutely right. It's a scandalous thing caused by all lawyers who know who are British that there is no such thing as an illegal immigrant. You are an immigrant until it is found that you are illegal by a proper constituted court. I get so cross with cabinet ministers talking about illegal immigrants. There is no such thing in English law.

Ruth says, if we have a republic, the president will be chosen by politics. I think we have quite enough politicians and would much prefer monarchy hopefully modernised.

Yes, I agree with that. Others will not agree. It would be I think political. I can't see how it wouldn't be. Prince Charles likes to involve himself in climate politics. Well you see this is where you get a thin line. All the royal family in terms of the younger ones like William and Harry are involved in environmental questions. But you are right, there is an issue about climate politics. I would say Charles is right that it is not a political matter in terms of a party political matter. If it's party political, then he won't be able to say anything. If it's political, then that raises the issue you see. He could say to a prime minister when he meets him weekly or her weekly, look, I think you've got to do more in reaching your targets which have been agreed by Parliament. What are you going to do about it? A perfectly sensible question. But the prime minister might turn around and say, it's none of your business. We have a plan and we shall keep to it. And when we're ready, I'll tell you what it is. Now that could lead to trouble. You're right.

Q: Are people more in favour of the monarchy if William and Kate were king and queen?

A: Yes, all the evidence suggests that, evidence in terms of surveys, yes but it won't happen.

Abigail, I'm puzzled as there was a lot of debate and discussion before Charles married Camilla as she is divorced, then remarried and the controversy concerning the issue evaporated.

No, it didn't.

Q: How might this extreme change in concern manifest when he is crowned in terms of abdicating the crown?

A: We don't know. But the issue of Camilla has not gone away. It certainly hasn't. I haven't gone into the whole problem with Diana. Diana was a very sick, young lady who was badly treated by the royal family. But then many middle class families then treated people with mental illness badly.

Q: Might Charles pass the throne to William in a short time?

A: No, I don't think he will. I think he should. I'm sorry. I didn't say who that was.

Oh, and I can't see. I haven't got your first name. I think he should but I'm saying I don't think he will.

Marilyn says one of the problems is there are not enough young people in the British monarchy with which young people can identify with.

No, I don't think that's true. That's one of the arguments for a monarchy that it's multi-generational.

Surely William's marriage is a morganatic one.

No, it isn't. A morganatic marriage means that the children don't succeed. Of course, his children will succeed. George is in the line of succession.

My question is about your art collection. It is said that it really belongs to the nation.

Well, that's what Cromwell thought. It would lead to a lot of legal argument. Let's put it like that.

Irene says they bring in more revenue in invisible imports, exports, tourism, than they cost us.

Sorry, Irene, I've lost the question. I'll have to get back to it. Oh, how annoying. Oh, here we are. And secondly, Irene, you say they adhere to the constitution by staying completely away from political issues even though I agree with Charles about Rwanda. If either of those factors are not kept to I would pension him off into comfortable obscurity. What happens though if somebody like Princess Anne stood to be president?

I'll just let that float in the air, Irene.

Q: Do they pay taxes on personal income?

A: Yes, they do.

Q: Would the honour system exist without the monarchy?

A: Yes and there's no reason why it couldn't exist. Although receiving or gone from, from Beckham or from Tony Blair would not encourage me to accept one.



Lawrence says, oh, why am I losing this? I'm getting overexcited and knocking them off too quickly. Lawrence says, the gross unfairness in wealth and privilege will continue whilst the royal family exempt from paying inheritance taxes.

If you mean unfairness in wealth and privilege in society as a whole, I don't think that is so. One would think that at some point we will have a government in Britain of the right or the left who will deal with the issue of the increasing disparity in income. And part of that is down to our taxation system. But if the monarchy were required to pay, they would pay. Our system lets too many people not pay or find their way out of paying and not good, not good at all. And I'm not a socialist.

Carol says Canada no longer pays for the British monarchy. Harry and Meghan cost the Canadian taxpayers millions for the few months they were in British Columbia, cost of security for Harry and Meghan. Ah, yes because the British government refused because they're private citizens. I mean, Harry and Meghan could still cause trouble.

Q: What happens if Meghan decides to stand as a presidential candidate for the Democrats and her husband is a prince of the United Kingdom?

A: Well that raises all sorts of very funny questions. I guess she'd divorce him, wouldn't she? She'd drop him if she was elected.

Q: Shelly says, what if the president and prime minister are from different political parties?

A: Well, that's what we have in America. When the president and Congress can be different political parties and we would have the sort of stalemates that America has. That is why the president would have to have in Britain a very clear role which would not be that sort of political one. It would have to be questions on maybe he or she could recover the right to declare war rather than the prime minister. There are all sorts of things but no, we would not want that system.

Luis says Mary Robinson was strongly anti-Israel by the way.

Well, you can't be, you can't have everything. And that's one of the problems.

Q: Who does the Crown Estates belong to? The queen?

A: No, the Crown Estates belong to the government.

Q: What would happen to the royal family if they were no longer the royal family? Would they just be ordinary people?

A: Well, they would never be ordinary people. Maybe they'd all go back

to Germany. Oh, that's a little historical aside. No, they'd all get jobs and they wouldn't have difficulty getting jobs, would they? Presenting odd television programmes and things.

Judy says at least prime ministers are only the leader of the political party as majority therefore the prime minister can be forced to resign and election be called. This does not happen with the president. True but we couldn't get rid of Johnson.

Sandy says, I refused to stand for the queen at 18 but in my 80s I've come to be a little more conservative. The queen has read the red boxes. Those are the government boxes for those who aren't British. For all her years as queen, she must have serious counsel to give to her many prime ministers. It's a pity to lose that.

Yeah, but we don't know that she's ever influenced a prime minister. We knew she was anti-Thatcher attack on miners but it didn't seem to make a blind bit of difference. We don't know if she's had in those private conversations with prime ministers, she's ever managed to change the way they were going. Somebody has said we need change in terms of more transparency. Yes, I absolutely agree with that. Here it is.

Sandy, nevertheless some modernization, more transparency very much needed. For me, tick that.

Nicholas says, if there was a Democratic House of Lords, it would have to take powers away from the Commons.

No, not necessarily. No, it would not necessarily have to do that. Because the point of the House of Lords is to take time to look carefully at things. I don't think there would be a necessity to change. But there might. Your guess or your view is just as valid as mine.

Arlene says, I'm pleased you spoke about the capacity of their role.

Q: Do you think they should give up some of their land? That's why we are so short of space.

A: Well, that's an interesting question. Next time you meet Prince Charles, ask him.

Elaine, I thought if you were anointed, you could not abdicate.

Oh no, you can abdicate. You can abdicate. You can be forced to abdicate. It is true that Edward VIII was not anointed but the anointing bit is sort of flummery. They're anointed with oil from the Holy Land and it has to come originally from the pope. And when James II was crowned, they couldn't find any oil. I don't think they took

olive oil from a bottle but pretty well. No, they don't. They can abdicate. But I think we should think about having an age limit. That's what I would like.

Patricia says surely the Danish and Dutch monarchy are examples of a more modern monarchy for the UK. They work for Denmark and they work for the Dutch. We are the only country in Europe other than the Vatican that has a coronation.

The Dutch and the Danes, Norwegians, Swedes don't have coronations. They're just claimed. We have this whole coronation bit and all you Americans will be paying thousands of dollars to come and stay when all the prices will be hyped up and you could just as well stay at home and see more and better on TV. But people want to come and see it. And it won't only be Americans, it'll be all around the world. And that will be a big, big money earner.

Q: Without the flummery which equals mystique and glamour allowing people to dream, what is the point of the monarchy?

A: Well, that's difficult to answer. There would be occasions on which they are representative of the nation and that would still be the case. Does for example Charles need to wear military uniform when giving out civilian gongs? No, he doesn't. He could just as well wear a suit. But I don't think it lessens the fact that he is doing it with the whole of the history behind him on behalf of you like of the nation.

You said Boris is getting a lot of kickback. Oh no, sorry. It's simply an English expression. Sorry, Ron. All I meant was that there are people in the House of Lords saying you can't do this. This is nonsensical. He's trying to appoint it said 100 roughly in order to secure a Tory majority. And that's what's unpleasant. So there's nothing about quid pro quo except that he will get a Tory majority there for his successor. It's a question that's been worrying me that I may use English expressions which either are meaningless to some of you who don't live in Britain or indeed have different meanings. And I think Ron, I've fallen into that trap tonight.

Judith said Charles introduced Prince's Trust to create careers for young people. I've seen him on several days, casinos, and he spoke for everyone and not just the big-wigs. I think he has the common touch.

Yes, I mean, it's those initiatives which the monarchy take which have been good.

Princess Anne would've made an excellent queen. She would indeed.

Oh, well, Sharon, thank you for your nice comments.

Q: Do we know what's inside Queen Elizabeth's purse?

A: I dread to think. Probably what's inside most women's purses I imagine. I don't think it'll be anything exciting.

Re: Canada, the governor general, lieutenant governor are the queen's representatives in Canada. Yeah, of course. Not a question, oh, no, no. well, that's a nice comment.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Hannah says, Charles did say that he was not mad enough to interfere when he becomes king. Also, I've seen him at events where he spent far longer than scheduled in order not to disappoint people.

Yes, he has been. There are very good things about Charles not least his interest in history, but having said all of that, he has managed to put his foot in it more than once and recently. And he's old enough to know better.

Q: If the monarchies end then what happens to all the rest of the titled aristocracy?

A: They go on as they do in France. No problem at all. No problem to the aristocracy. This isn't a revolution in which they lose titles. Well, the French had a revolution but people still had titles. No, no, no, it wouldn't make any difference. What benefit does it if you've got a title? Well, you can probably get a better seat in a restaurant. That's what people say. But I know one titled lady who says she always gets a better deal from the garage in which she buys her car because the agent thinks the title means a lot more than it actually in fact does. So maybe a benefit in buying a car, maybe a benefit in, but pretty much not.

Oh, yes, yes. Well done, Miriam. Inside the queen's purse is a marmalade sandwich. She told Paddington Bear this recently on the Platinum Jubilee TV interview. Yes, that was fantastic. I mean, you can't imagine a president doing that somehow. And when the queen at the Olympics in 2012 met James Bond then we had that extraordinary scene. We all sat here thinking, this is different. We're proud to be British. We can't think of any other country in the world where the head of state would allow themselves to be used like that and the people would think it was wonderful. For me as a huge supporter of Churchill, what I like is the fact that as it, as it came over Churchill's statue, Churchill's statue waved at the helicopter. That made it for me.

I think the final question, Michael says, another expression, having the opposite meaning in the USA is playing the game.

Yeah, it does actually have two meanings here as well. But we usually

use it as in the old-fashioned Victorian sense. Play up, play up, and play the game from the poem by Newbolt.

I think I've come to an end. And I shall see you all I hope in September. I'm off as I always am in August and I'm off on a trip and a fortnight with my wife to the Norwegian fjords. So I shall be full of all sorts of interesting things to say about Norway perhaps. But for now, thanks all of you who followed the courses. All of us on Lockdown appreciate that and genuinely appreciate it because you are the people that make this a success, the success that it is. So thanks for listening, watching, and I shall see you in September.