

# The Queen's Birthdays

## Why Does the Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of two royal birthdays was started by George II in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for his annual birthday parade. A solution to this was to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the King or Queen was born.

### Royal Facts

1. **Name:** Elizabeth Alexandra Mary
2. **Born:** 21st April, 1926
3. **Job:** Queen Elizabeth II reigns as The Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and many of the Commonwealth countries.
4. The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one in April and one in June.
5. Since September 2015, Her Majesty is the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch (king or queen).



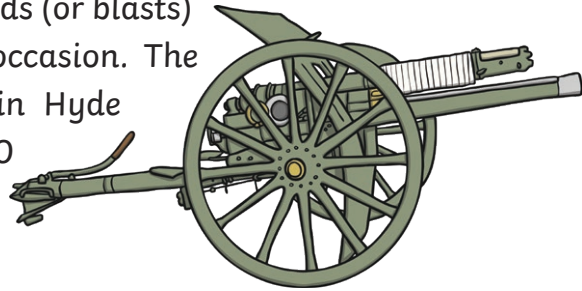
## How is Each Birthday Celebrated?



April 21st (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends and with a gun salute<sup>1</sup> to publicly wish her many happy returns. On the second Saturday in June, her official birthday is celebrated with the colourful Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup> parade from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Her Majesty is then joined on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.

## Glossary

1. **A gun salute**<sup>1</sup>. A gun salute is a mark of respect for special royal celebrations. The number of rounds (or blasts) depends on the place and the occasion. The basic salute is 21 rounds but in Hyde Park and Green Park, an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks.



2. **Trooping the Colour**<sup>2</sup>. During the ceremony, The Queen inspects the troops who have paraded for her. The bands play and the soldiers march, along with horses and the Regimental Colour (banner). It is a colourful celebration and thousands of people line the pavements of The Mall to enjoy the sight. For many years, The Queen rode her horse, Burmese, with her troops, but more recently she has ridden in a carriage.



# Questions

Look under the section 'Royal Facts' for the answers.

1. In what year was Queen Elizabeth II born?

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2. Name three countries that Queen Elizabeth reigns over.

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3. During which month and year did Queen Elizabeth become the longest reigning monarch?

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Look under the section 'Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?' for the answers.

4. What does the word 'tradition' mean?

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5. Who began the custom of having two birthday celebrations? Why did this come about?

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6. Would you like to have two birthdays? Why?

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Look under the section 'How Is Each Birthday Celebrated?' for the answers.

7. There are two words beginning with the letter 'p' that describe the different ways in which The Queen celebrates her birthdays. Find and copy them here.

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8. What is a balcony?

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Look under the section 'Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?' for the answers.

9. What are the titles called that separate each part of the fact file? Circle one.
10. Would you like to watch the Trooping the Colour parade? Give three reasons for your

commas

text boxes

subheadings

paragraphs

opinion.

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# Answers

Look under the section 'Royal Facts' for the answers.

1. In what year was Queen Elizabeth II born?  
**Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926.**
2. Name three countries that Queen Elizabeth reigns over.  
**Queen Elizabeth reigns over England, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and many Commonwealth Countries.**
3. During which month and year did Queen Elizabeth become the longest reigning monarch?  
**Queen Elizabeth became the longest reigning monarch in September 2015.**

Look under the section 'Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?' for the answers.

4. What does the word tradition mean?  
**The word tradition means a custom or something that has been happening for a long time.**
5. Who began the custom of having two birthday celebrations? Why did this come about?  
**George II started the custom of celebrating two birthdays when he didn't want to parade on his November birthday during the cold winter weather.**
6. Would you like to have two birthdays? Why?  
**Various responses indicating a positive or negative preference and backed up with appropriate reasoning.**

Look under the section 'How Is Each Birthday Celebrated?' for the answers.

7. There are two words beginning with the letter 'p' that describe the different ways in which The Queen celebrates her birthdays. Find and copy them here.  
**The words describing the ways that The Queen celebrates her birthdays are 'privately' and 'publicly'.**
8. What is a balcony?  
**A balcony is a terrace that is high up with a good view.**

Take ideas from the whole text for your answers.

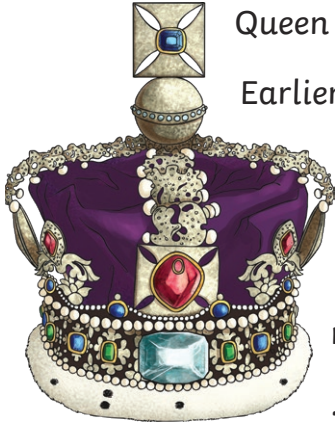
9. What are the titles called that separate each part of the fact file?  
**The correct response is: sub-headings.**
10. Would you like to watch the Trooping the Colour parade? Give three reasons for your opinion.  
**Various responses which could include justification for their opinion including aspects such as enjoying a party, wanting to share the celebration with other people and receiving presents, or not enjoying or wanting to take part in the above.**



# The Queen's Birthdays

## Why Does the Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of two royal birthdays was started by George II in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for his annual birthday parade on his actual birthday. A solution to this was to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the King or Queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



Earlier on in her reign, our Queen celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday, but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June. Other countries of the Commonwealth (nations in the world that The Queen reigns over) celebrate at different times too, but mostly during the months of May and June.

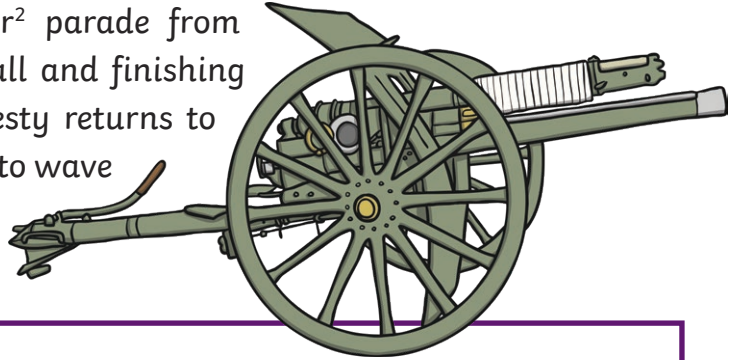
### Royal Facts

1. **Name:** Elizabeth Alexandra Mary
2. **Born:** 21st April, 1926
3. **Job:** Queen Elizabeth II reigns as The Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and many of the Commonwealth countries.
4. The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one on April 21st (her actual birthday) and one on the second Saturday in June (her official birthday).
5. Since September 2015, Her Majesty is the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch (king or queen). The Queen entered the record books as Britain's longest-reigning monarch after surpassing the reign of her great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria.



## Birthday Traditions and Ceremonies

April 21st (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. But the occasion is marked by a 41 gun salute<sup>1</sup> in Hyde Park, a 21 gun salute in Windsor Great Park and a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London. On the second Saturday in June, her official birthday is celebrated with the colourful Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup> parade from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Her majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.



### Glossary

1. **A gun salute<sup>1</sup>.** A gun salute is a mark of respect for special royal celebrations. The number of rounds (or blasts) depends on the place and the occasion. The basic salute is 21 rounds; in Hyde Park and Green Park an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks. There is a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London because it is a royal palace and fortress. Gun salutes are usually fired at midday.
2. **Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup>.** During the ceremony, The Queen inspects the troops who have paraded for her. The bands play and the soldiers march, along with horses and the Regimental Colour (banner). It is a colourful celebration and thousands of people line the pavements of The Mall to enjoy the sight. For many years, The Queen rode her horse, Burmese, with her troops, but more recently she has ridden in a carriage. During the parade in 1981, Marcus Serjeant aimed a pistol at Her Majesty as she rode from Buckingham Palace down Horse Guards Parade for the beginning of the Trooping the Colour ceremony. Six blank cartridges were fired before he was tackled by a guardsman and police. The Queen continued with the parade.



# Questions

1. On what date was Queen Elizabeth born?

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2. Which month is The Queen's actual birthday and which month is The Queen's official birthday?

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3. Which queen did Queen Elizabeth II pass as longest reigning British monarch in September 2015? What relation was that queen to Queen Elizabeth II?

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4. Why does The Queen celebrate two birthdays?

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

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6. What are the three main locations for the Trooping the Colour parade? List them here.

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7. Do you think there would be any disadvantages to having two birthdays? Give reasons for your answers.

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8. Why do you think The Queen continued with the parade after she was shot at in 1981?

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9. What are the titles called that separate each part of the fact file?

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10. If you had to organise The Queen's birthday celebrations, plan three activities that she may enjoy. Give reasons for your choices.

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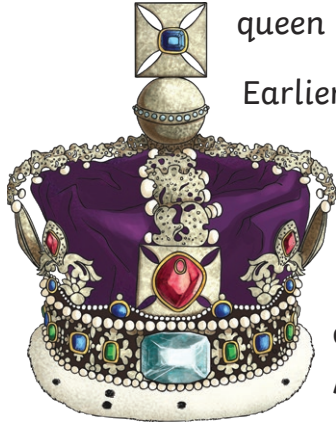
# Answers

1. On what date was Queen Elizabeth born?  
**Queen Elizabeth was born on 21st April, 1926.**
2. Which month is The Queen's actual birthday and which month is The Queen's official birthday?  
**The Queen's actual birthday is in April and the official birthday is in June.**
3. Which queen did Queen Elizabeth II pass as longest reigning British monarch in September 2015? What relation was that queen to Queen Elizabeth II?  
**Queen Elizabeth II passed Queen Victoria as longest reigning British monarch. Queen Victoria was Queen Elizabeth's great-great grandmother.**
4. Why does The Queen celebrate two birthdays?  
**The Queen celebrates two birthdays after George II thought it would be too cold in November to parade on his birthday, so he celebrated it as part of the spring Trooping the Colour parade. The tradition has continued ever since.**
5. Why do you think The Queen's birthday celebrations were changed from a Thursday to a Saturday?  
**I think The Queen's birthday celebrations were changed from a Thursday to a Saturday so that more people could take part in the celebrations, as Thursday is a working day.**
6. What are the three main locations for the Trooping the Colour parade? List them here.  
**The three main locations for the Trooping the Colour parade are Buckingham Palace, the Mall and Horse Guards Parade.**
7. Do you think there would be any disadvantages to having two birthdays? Give reasons for your answers.  
**I think it may be expensive to celebrate two birthdays if you have to hold two parties – especially if you have party bags for everyone!**
8. Why do you think The Queen continued with the parade after she was shot at in 1981?  
**I think The Queen continued with the parade because even though she must have been frightened by the gunshots, she wasn't hurt and if she had stopped the parade, then a lot of people who had come out to see it would have been disappointed.**
9. What are the titles called that separate each part of the fact file?  
**The titles that separate each part of the fact file are called sub-headings.**
10. If you had to organise The Queen's birthday celebrations, plan three activities that she may enjoy. Give reasons for your choices.  
**Various responses which could include appropriate activities for a senior citizen, like a picnic, a riverboat trip, a visit to the seaside, a day in the countryside, etc.**

# The Queen's Birthdays

## Why Does the Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of two royal birthdays was started by George II in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for his annual birthday parade on his actual birthday. A solution to this was to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the king or queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



Earlier on in her reign, The Queen celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday, but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June. Other countries of the Commonwealth celebrate on different days; in Canada it is held on the last Monday before 25th May, in New Zealand it is held on the first Monday in June and in most territories in Australia it is celebrated on the second Monday in June.

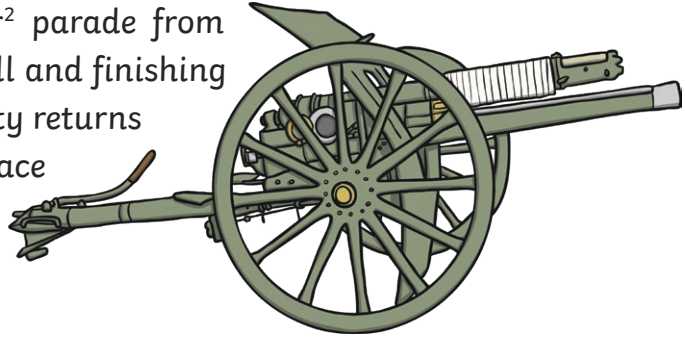
### Royal Facts

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3. **Job:** Queen Elizabeth II reigns as The Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and many of the Commonwealth countries.
4. The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one on April 21st (her actual birthday) and one on the second Saturday in June (her official birthday).
5. On 9th September 2015, Her Majesty became the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch (king or queen). The Queen entered the record books after surpassing the reign of her great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria. At 5.30pm, she had officially equalled Victoria's 23,226 days, 16 hours and 18 minutes on the throne - over 63 years, seven months and two days.



## Birthday Traditions and Ceremonies

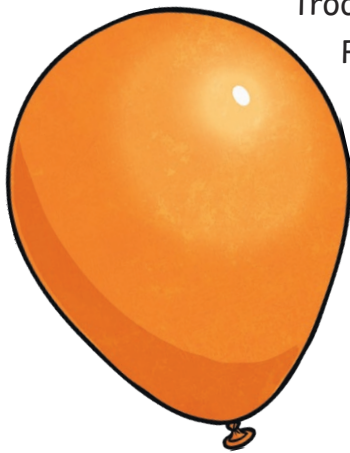
April 21st (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. But the occasion is marked by a 41 gun salute<sup>1</sup> in Hyde Park, a 21 gun salute in Windsor Great Park and a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London. On the second Saturday in June, her official birthday is celebrated with the colourful Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup> parade from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Her majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.



## A Special Birthday

In 2016, The Queen was 90 and there were special celebrations to mark this milestone birthday. Her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, was 95 this year although the events were not officially organised to celebrate his birthday.

To mark the event there was: a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral; Trooping the Colour; a carriage procession of the Royal Family to and from Buckingham Palace and Horse Guards Parade; a balcony appearance of members of the Royal Family at Buckingham Palace and the Patron's Lunch (a street party on The Mall with 10,000 invited guests). Most of the guests were involved in the 600 charities and organisations that The Queen is patron of.



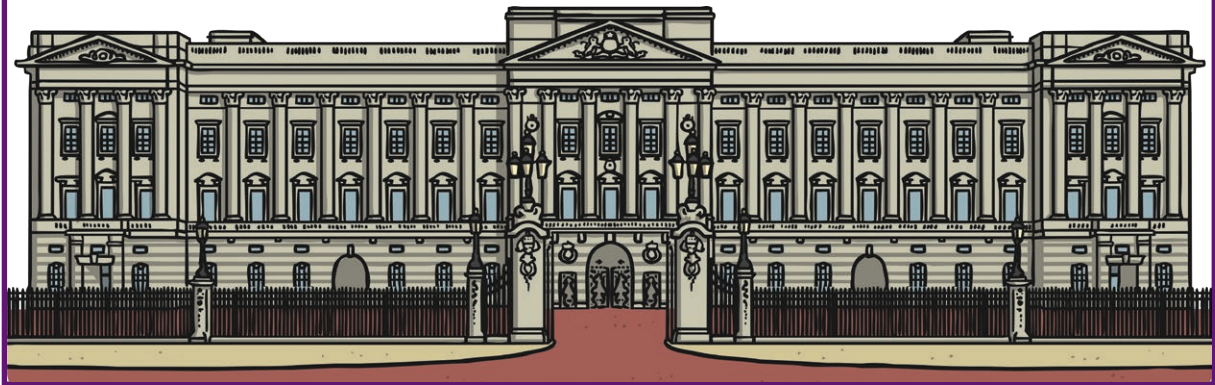
## Glossary

1. A **gun salute**<sup>1</sup> is a mark of respect for special royal celebrations. The number of rounds (or blasts) depends on the place and the occasion. The basic salute is 21 rounds, although in Hyde Park and Green Park, an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks. At the Tower of London, 62 rounds are fired on royal anniversaries (the basic 21, plus a further 20 because the Tower is a royal palace and fortress, plus another



21 'for the City of London'). Gun salutes are usually fired at midday. Salutes are not fired on Sundays, so if the anniversary date falls on a Sunday, the salute will take place on the following Monday.

2. **Trooping the Colour**<sup>2</sup>. During the ceremony, The Queen inspects the troops from the Household Division, who have paraded for her. Trooping the Colour originated from traditional preparations for battle when a Regiment's Colour was carried, or "trooped", down the ranks so that they could be seen and recognised by the soldiers who would use them as a rallying point in the confusion of battle.





# Questions

1. What date was Queen Elizabeth born and what are her middle names?

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2. When Queen Elizabeth passed Queen Victoria's record for the longest reigning British monarch, how long had she reigned?

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3. Find and record which countries celebrate The Queen's birthday. Which dates do they choose?

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4. Why are there different numbers of blasts for the gun salutes?

Use the glossary to help you.

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5. Give a summary of the order of the day for Trooping the Colour using four conjunctions in your answer. Underline the conjunctions that you use.

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6. Using information about the events that took place to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday, decide which event you would have liked to be part of. Give reasons for your choice.

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7. What is the purpose of the glossary?

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8. Some of the text is split into paragraphs. Can you explain when a new paragraph is needed?

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9. Why do you think The Queen continued with the 1981 Trooping the Colour parade after she was shot at? Would you have continued? Give reasons for your responses.

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10. Do you think The Queen should celebrate two birthdays? Justify your response.

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### Extension Activity

If you had to organise The Queen's birthday celebrations, plan a weekend of activities that she may enjoy. Give reasons for your choices.

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# Answers

1. What date was Queen Elizabeth born and what are her middle names?  
**Queen Elizabeth was born on 21st April, 1926. Her middle names are Alexandra and Mary.**
2. When Queen Elizabeth passed Queen Victoria's record for the longest reigning British monarch, how long had she reigned?  
**Queen Elizabeth had reigned for over 63 years, seven months and two days (or 23 226 days, 16 hours and 18 minutes).**
3. Find and record which countries celebrate The Queen's birthday. Which dates do they choose?  
**Great Britain celebrates The Queen's birthday on the second Saturday in June; Canada celebrates on the last Monday before 25th May; New Zealand celebrates on the first Monday in June and most of Australia celebrates on the second Monday in June.**
4. Why are there different numbers of blasts for the gun salutes? Use the glossary to help you.  
**There are different numbers of blasts for the gun salutes depending where they take place. There are 21 at Windsor Great Park (the standard number for a royal anniversary), 41 in Hyde Park and Green Park (because they are royal parks) and 62 at the Tower of London (an additional 21 because the tower is a royal palace and also for the City of London).**
5. Give a summary of the order of the day for Trooping the Colour using four conjunctions in your answer. Underline the conjunctions that you use.  
**First, the parade starts at Buckingham Palace, then it moves down The Mall before ending at Horse Guards parade. Finally, The Queen waves to the crowds from the balcony at Buckingham Palace. (Or any other appropriate conjunctions in the recount of the order of events.)**
6. Using information about the events that took place to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday, decide which event you would have liked to be part of. Give reasons for your choice.  
**Various responses to reflect an enjoyment of St Pauls' Cathedral Service of Thanksgiving, Trooping the Colour, the royal balcony appearance or the Patron's Lunch street party.**
7. What is the purpose of the glossary?  
**The glossary gives further explanation to facts mentioned in the text.**
8. Some of the text is split into paragraphs. Can you explain when a new paragraph is needed?  
**A paragraph is used to group together sentences that deal with one idea. When the writer changes ideas, location, speakers or time, a new paragraph is needed.**
9. Why do you think The Queen continued with the 1981 Trooping the Colour parade after she was shot at? Would you have continued? Give reasons for your responses.  
**I think The Queen continued with the parade because even though she must have been frightened by the gunshots, she wasn't hurt and if she had stopped the parade, then a**

**lot of people who had come out to see it would have been disappointed.  
Various responses for the second part of the question, justified with reasoning.**

10. Do you think The Queen should celebrate two birthdays? Justify your response.

**Various responses with justification, for example:**

**I think The Queen should celebrate two birthdays because she is monarch of our country and has an important public role. Her private birthday gives her chance to be with her family like we would, and her public birthday gives other people chance to celebrate with her in a more organised and spectacular way.**

**Or**

**I do not think The Queen should celebrate two birthdays because we only have one birthday so there is no reason why she should have two.**

## **Extension Activity**

If you had to organise The Queen's birthday celebrations, plan a weekend of activities that she may enjoy. Give reasons for your choices.

**Various responses which could include appropriate activities for a senior citizen, like a picnic, a riverboat trip, a visit to the seaside, a day in the countryside, etc.**