

THE KING OPENS FESTIVAL

In the glorious pageantry of state the King leaves Buckingham Palace to open the Festival of Britain. With Their Majesties is Princess Margaret; and in attendance, splendid in scarlet and flashing breast-plates, a Sovereign's escort of the Household Cavalry. Across Trafalgar Square and on into the Strand lies the route through London's cheering thousands. At Temple Bar, custom enjoined that the Lord Mayor should tender the city sword to the monarch who would enter. If the King came in peace, he at once returned the sword and the gate was opened to him. An old-out-dated custom, perhaps; but like so many old customs, a reminder that rights we take for granted today, our forefathers had to win for us. And so, on to the great church, where in times of sorrow or rejoicing, people and sovereign meet in prayer.

With sword held high (symbol that the King's safety is now the city's care) the Lord Mayor leads the way; and the King greets Herbert Morrison, the driving spirit behind the great Festival.

The service of dedication ends and the great crowd is stilled. Soon now the Festival will spring to life. In England, Scotland, Wales and across the sea in Northern Ireland, they await the word of the man who alone speaks for all ... the Festival is a visible sign of national achievement, says the King.....

"Two world wars brought us grievous loss of life and treasure; and though the nation has made a splendid effort towards recovery, new burdens have fallen upon it and dark clouds still overhang the whole world. Yet this is no time for despondency for I see this Festival as a symbol of Britain's abiding courage and vitality. Let us welcome to our shores the many members of our British Commonwealth, and all the visitors from other lands who have come to see what this old country can do. I declare the Festival of Britain open and wish it universal success."

The Festival of Britain is begun ... As a people building ourselves into a great nation we made our mistakes. Too often these alone are remembered now. It is good, therefore, that we should remember that which is great in our achieving...