

Scottish Parliament celebrates two decades

The sun came out for the visit of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Rothesay to Holyrood this morning to attend the ceremony to celebrate twenty years of the parliament.

Her Majesty and His Grace made the short journey by car from the Palace of Holyroodhouse to the parliament building where they were first greeted by the Rt Hon Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, Frank Ross, before Presiding Officer Ken Mackintosh took over to accompany Her Majesty along with the two deputy Presiding Officers, Christine Grahame and Linda Fabiani.

The royal party was accompanied by members of the Royal Company of Archers who have a ceremonial role to guard Her Majesty in Scotland.



Her Majesty the Queen makes her way to the chamber accompanied by Presiding Officer Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP during the Scottish Parliament's 20th Anniversary celebrations which too

place at Holyrood today. Her Majesty The Queen address Parliament. The Queen was accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Rothesay. 29 June 2019. Pic – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

The ceremony included young people who were born on 1st July – the day the parliament reconvened – in 1999. Much was made of the 20 year-olds who were from all over Scotland in the same way as they were included in the 10th birthday celebrations.



Presiding Officer Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP addresses the chamber during the Scottish Parliament's 20th Anniversary celebrations which took place at Holyrood today. Her Majesty The Queen also addressed Parliament and was accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Rothesay. 29 June 2019. Pic – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

A significant part of the performance was a wonderful poem by the Scots Makar, Jackie Kay who read her first commission, THE LONG VIEW, for the Parliament in English, with some parts spoken in Gaelic by Lewis McCaskill and some performed in British Sign Language by Moira Anne McAuslan with beautiful singing by Suzanne Bonnar and a BSL translation by Amy

Cheskin. It was a fabulous use of the chamber where the cantilevered ceiling means there are no upright supports or columns to obscure anyone's line of sight.

The performers were placed around the chamber rather than in a group, meaning that everyone had a chance to feel near and a part of it.

All of the political leaders spoke after Her Majesty had conveyed her good wishes to the parliament and mentioned her fondness for Scotland.

Her Majesty had presented the Mace to the parliament in 1999 when the first First Minister Donald Dewar was so pleased to deliver the devolved parliament. The Mace is an integral part of the symbolism of power in Holyrood and was referred to in several of the speeches made.

It was designed and crafted by Michael Lloyd. It is made from silver and of gold panned from Scottish rivers.

The inlaid gold band symbolises the relationship between the Parliament, its people and the land.

Engraved on the head of the mace are the words 'Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity' – a reference to the ideals that the people of Scotland aspire to for their Members of Parliament.



Her Majesty the Queen meets young adults born on 1 July 1999, the day the Scottish Parliament obtained its official powers during the Scottish Parliament's 20th Anniversary celebrations which took place at Holyrood today. 29 June 2019. Pic – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

The most understated performance perhaps was by Phil Cunningham who played the tin whistle during the performance of Farewell to Govan which he composed. It was arranged and conducted by John Logan, Head of Brass and performed by Braw Brass with Phil Cunningham, Artistic Director of Traditional Music and Jenn Butterworth, Lecturer in Practical Studies The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Karen Matheson of Capercaillie sang Ae Fond Kiss accompanied by her husband Donald Shaw on the piano and the Harvey String Quartet.

In what appeared to be an almost unscripted moment (it wasn't on the official programme!) while piper Stuart McMillan MSP played the Royal party out of the chamber with A Man's a Man for a' That, the person who had sung it at the opening 20

years ago, folk singer Sheena Wellington, got a mike and sang it once more!

After the ceremony the doors of Holyrood were opened for an afternoon of fun for members of the public while Her Majesty the Queen slipped back to the Palace across the road.









Her Majesty the Queen meets young people who wrote a series of

“Dear Scottish Parliament” letters, outlining their hopes and aspirations for the Scottish Parliament in the coming 20 years, during the Scottish Parliament’s 20th Anniversary celebrations which took place at Holyrood Here she receives a floral arrangement from Ewan Carmichael (13) who has professed a desire to be First Minister. 29 June 2019. Pic – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament