

Don't piss on the parade (Jubilee thoughts from Real England)

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Flying the flag at the Bath and West

I [ran away from the Jubilee](#).

As a long-term republican I couldn't see the point of hanging around to piss on someone else's parade. Getting rid of the monarch is not on anyone's agenda and is not serious politics.

So off I went to the deepest south-west for some [wild swimming](#) and walking and the Bath and West Show.

There was much more (sodden) bunting out in rural England than in London, of course. And I would characterise the celebrations as: local, modest, and determined (despite the weather) but very thorough and widespread. More enthusiastic than the annual village fete, but less excited than a World Cup.

What I saw of the BBC and other mainstream media showed they worked very hard to fill every space of an

otherwise news-dull long weekend with red, white and blue.

Yes, the BBC coverage did strain particularly hard to evoke a rejoicing nation, but this was not exactly hard news.

Watching snatches of it on telly it was clear that the river pageant was very slow, dull, wet and windy.

But the concert had real mainstream highlights with wonderful off-beat moments such as Camden's finest – Madness – on Our House.

That – plus Charles' 'mummy' moment made me wonder if the Windsors had re-discovered their PR touch.

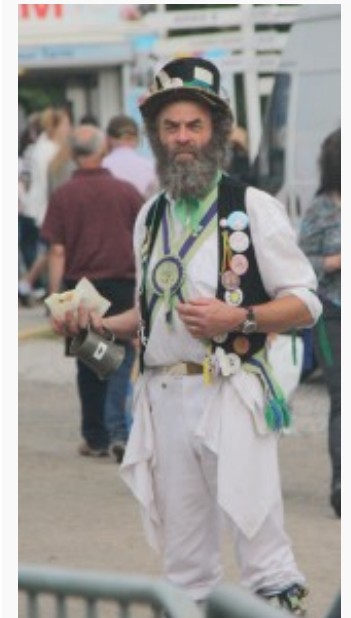
The Tuesday events were more staid and formalistic. And even more wet.

The Firm seem a much happier family and their matriarch is more respected than ever. Even republicans should not wish them ill.

But the headlines roll in from places like Spain. The local newspaper front pages that I saw spoke of firms closing and services shutting.

It's clear that this was quite a distinct and particular celebration. It was a real mark of respect from the mass of British people to one leader, a silent symbol, a personal figure of real worth.

However, it also felt like a punctuation mark that ends a very long sentence written in British history. So much is now



National Character

turning, both for Her (funnily enough exactly the same age as my late mum – another German immigrant) but more importantly on the continent and beyond.



National Conversation

Even as I watched people raise a glass to the Queen and 60 years of the past in ‘distant’ places like Exmoor, I think they are aware of the future. The real ideological battleground is not the constitution, let alone the Monarchy. There are more important political Palaces to storm than Buckingham’s. What will define our nation’s identity and the happiness of its people is not Elizabeth, it’s the economy.

[All photos by the author at the Bath and West Show June 2nd]

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