

The Gold State Coach to lead the Platinum Jubilee Pageant

The Gold State Coach will appear as part of the Platinum Jubilee Pageant on Sunday 5 June, 2022. It has been a splendid and beloved sight at royal coronations, jubilees, and events since it was built in 1762.

To mark the beginning of the Platinum Jubilee Pageant, the bells of Westminster Abbey will toll as they did on Coronation Day. As they do so, the Mounted Band of the Household Cavalry will lead The Gold State Coach, drawn – as it always has been – by eight Windsor Grey horses. The Gold State Coach transported The Queen to her Coronation 69 years ago, and has not been seen in on the streets of London for over twenty years.

However on this occasion the Gold State Coach will play a very particular role in the Pageant, not transporting Her Majesty The Queen but showcasing in the coach windows, original film footage recorded on Coronation Day, evoking the image of The young Queen on that day.

Adrian Evans, Pageant Master says: “Everywhere you look, in the golden sculptures and painted panels, in the uniforms of the postillions, grooms, footmen, attendants and mounted guards, there is rich tradition and history. It will be a unique spectacle that we are privileged to be opening the

Pageant with it will set the tone for the very many spectacular sights to come.”

The Gold State Coach will be 260 years old this November. It has been significantly overhauled four times, in 1820 when King George IV acceded (but it was not used for his coronation); in 1902 for the coronation of King Edward VII, and in 1953 for the coronation of The Queen. It was last regilded in 1977 for The Queen’s Silver Jubilee, although in places it bears evidence of between seven and ten layers of gilding and retouching over the past 260 years.

The Coach was used at the State Openings of Parliament, by George III, George IV and William IV. Queen Victoria, however, was not fond of the Coach and after Prince Albert’s death in 1861, only opened Parliament seven times and did not make use of the State Coach. King Edward VII revived its use at his Coronation and the annual State Opening of Parliament, and this was continued by King George V from 1922. King George VI made use of it twice following his coronation.

The Coach only ever conveys the sovereign, although it has previously taken part in pageants with no passengers. When the sovereign is being conveyed in the Coach, it is only ever escorted by a Sovereign’s Escort of the Household Cavalry. It is driven by postilions in full state livery. Grooms in full state livery walk close to the carriage. Slightly further away from the carriage body, and carrying long polearm called a partisan, walk the Yeomen of The Queen’s Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard (not what is today called a Beefeater, who are a different body within the same corps).

When not in use, the Gold State Coach is on public display whenever the Royal Mews is open, and will return to display shortly after the Pageant.

Use of the Coach at [The Queen's Coronation](#)

The Queen used the Gold State Coach to travel from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, and to return, on the day of the Coronation 2 June 1953. She was accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet. Royal Mews staff strapped a hot water bottle under the seat, as the day was unseasonably cold and wet.

The return route from Westminster Abbey was extended for this special occasion, allowing as many

people as possible to see [The Queen](#), now wearing the Imperial State Crown. She had left the Abbey carrying the orb and sceptre, and inside the Coach special supports had been created for them. The whole Coronation procession took 45 minutes to pass any one given point.

At the Jubilees of 1977 and 2002, Her Majesty and The Duke of Edinburgh were conveyed in the Coach to a Service of National Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral.

Design of the Coach

The Gold State Coach is the third oldest surviving coach in the UK, after the Speaker of the House of Commons's Coach (1698) and the Lord Mayor of London's Coach (1758). It is made of giltwood, which is a thin layer of gold leaf over wood. It is seven metres long, weighs four tonnes and is 3.6 metres tall. Because of the weight and suspension, it is only ever used at a walking pace. The Gold State Coach is always drawn by eight horses. In the past century these have been Windsor Greys, which are not a breed but a type selected by the Royal Mews.

The design was decided upon between Lord Huntingdon, the king's Master of the Horse and Thomas Hollis, a wealthy art connoisseur, who contacted friends they had made in Europe

during the Grand Tour; architect Sir William Chambers, sculptor Joseph Wilton, and the Florentine painter Giovanni Battista Cipriani.

Above each wheel is a massive triton figure in gilded walnut wood to represent the spreading of the news

of good government. The main body of the Coach is gilded wood, carved to represent palm trees framing the doors and windows. Paintings include Roman gods and goddesses representing human skill and endeavour. These include the Arts, Sciences, Virtue, Security, and the harvest goddess Ceres setting light to weapons in a sign of peace and prosperity overcoming war. As a nod to London in 1760, the front panel includes a figure of Britannia sitting on the banks of the river Thames, with the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral just visible in the city. Some of the figures refer to the power of the Royal Navy at this time,

and the message was that this new king would allow arts and sciences to flourish under wise, loyal and peaceful government, supported by Britain's naval power. On the roof is a giltwood carving of the British Imperial crown being held by three putti representing England, Scotland and Ireland.

About The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pageant

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pageant will take place on Sunday 5th June 2022, processing along The Mall and surrounding streets in celebration of The Queen's 70-year reign. The organising company, The Platinum Jubilee Pageant, has commissioned artists and communities from around the country and Commonwealth including military personnel, performers, key workers and volunteers from across the UK, who will come together to tell the story of The Queen's 70-year reign and our transforming society.