

Wince Philip: Prince's most famous comments and clangers



The Duke of Edinburgh has shocked and sometimes delighted the public with his outspoken comments and clangers. His reputation for plain speaking has often led to controversy, but he was once called a “national treasure” by the press for his inability to curb his off-the-cuff remarks. He claimed he was misunderstood. In fact, the duke has been “misunderstood” almost everywhere he has been.

Here are some of Philip's famous phrases:

- “What do you gargle with, pebbles?” (speaking to the singer Tom Jones after the 1969 Royal Variety Performance)
- “I declare this thing open, whatever it is.” (on a visit to Canada in 1969)
- “Everybody was saying we must have more leisure. Now

they are complaining they are unemployed.” (during the 1981 recession)

- “If it has got four legs and it is not a chair, if it has got two wings and it flies but is not an aeroplane, and if it swims and it is not a submarine, the Cantonese will eat it.” (at a 1986 World Wildlife Fund meeting)
- “It looks like a tart’s bedroom.” (on seeing plans for the Duke and Duchess of York’s house at Sunninghill Park in 1988)
- “Yak, yak, yak; come on, get a move on.” (shouted from the deck of Britannia in Belize in 1994 to the Queen, who was chatting to her hosts on the quayside)
- “How do you keep the natives off the booze long enough to get them through the test?” (to a driving instructor in Oban, Scotland, during a 1995 walkabout)
- “Bloody silly fool!” (in 1997, referring to a Cambridge University car park attendant who did not recognise him)
- “It looks as if it was put in by an Indian.” (pointing at an old-fashioned fusebox in a factory near Edinburgh in 1999)
- “Deaf? If you are near there, no wonder you are deaf.” (to young deaf people in Cardiff, in 1999, referring to a school’s steel band)
- “They must be out of their minds.” (in the Solomon Islands, in 1982, when he was told that the annual population growth was 5%)
- (Prince Philip supposedly asked the Queen at her coronation: ‘Where did you get that hat?’)
- “If you stay here much longer, you’ll all be slitty-eyed.” (to British students in China, during the 1986 state visit)
- “You can’t have been here that long – you haven’t got a pot belly.” (to a Briton in Budapest, Hungary, in 1993)
- “I wish he’d turn the microphone off.” (muttered at the Royal Variety Performance as he watched Sir Elton John perform in 2001)
- “Do you still throw spears at each other?” (in Australia

in 2002, talking to a successful Indigenous Australian entrepreneur)

- “You look like a suicide bomber.” (to a young female officer wearing a bullet-proof vest on Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, in 2002)
- “There’s a lot of your family in tonight.” (after looking at the name badge of the businessman Atul Patel at a palace reception for British Indians in 2009)
- “Do you have a pair of knickers made out of this?” (pointing to some tartan, to the Scottish Conservative leader Annabel Goldie at a papal reception in Edinburgh in 2010)
- “I hope he breaks his bloody neck.” (when a photographer covering a royal visit to India fell out of a tree)
- “If it doesn’t fart or eat hay, she’s not interested.” (on the Princess Royal)
- “When a man opens a car door for his wife, it’s either a new car or a new wife.” (on marriage)
- “Where did you get that hat?” (supposedly to the Queen at her coronation)