

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

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Faithfulness

Faithfulness. The very word seems quaint and old fashioned, rather like long treasured family china or the story of Greyfriars Bobby. The spirit of this age seems to be constant change – disposable this, throwaway that, built in obsolescence and a new mobile phone each year!



And yet celebrations of faithfulness are going on all the time. Often in this very paper we see happy announcements of Silver, Ruby, Golden and even Diamond wedding celebrations when couples remember and rejoice in a long life together and family and friends are delighted to congratulate them. Organizations, corporations, trades people and retailers are proud to boast that they have been in business for many years or for generations and this is hailed as a guarantee of their reliability.

This year we celebrate the 90th birthday of our Queen and I sense that the celebrations are heightened not just because her Majesty has reached the age of 90 – which we have to admit is becoming quite commonplace - but because of her tenacious faithfulness to the UK as a nation and to the role of sovereign as she understands it. From the staunchest royalist to the most dyed-in-the-wool Republican I have never heard anything but admiration for the Queen's faithfulness to her coronation pledges. Who can forget her moving words, "I declare before you all that my whole life, be it long or short, shall be devoted to your service and to the service of the great imperial family to which we all belong" and we have to admit that through political turmoil, recession, fire, family divorces and an "annus horribilis" the Queen has always been faithful.

In church we sing a hymn "Great is thy faithfulness, O God our Father, there is no shadow of turning with thee." It is a hymn which celebrates the implacable faithfulness of God through all the seasons of life – a faithfulness for which all Christians, including her Majesty, are hugely grateful. So perhaps "faithfulness" is not an old fashioned word after all but rather a foundational word, a good word on which to base our lives.