

Pause for Thought – Radio 2 – HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh

Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster

If there were a word to sum up the His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh - for me, it would be 'sacrifice'. Although he lived to the ripe old age of 99 so many aspects of his life were cut short.

His childhood cut short. His family fled Greece when he was just a year old, when his uncle, the King of Greece, was forced to abdicate.

As a husband and father, the privacy of his young family was cut short by the unexpected death of the Queen's father, King George VI in 1952.

As a distinguished Naval officer, who served in the Second World War, his career was cut short so he could fulfil duties as the Queen's Consort.

Unusually for a man of his generation, he sacrificed his career and the limelight to enable his wife, HM The Queen to take the lead. In the words of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge: he 'totally put his personal career aside to support her, he never took the limelight, never overstepped the mark'.

He touched many lives – including my own. My love for the outdoors and hiking was born through taking up the challenge of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award as a 14-year-old schoolgirl.

On her golden wedding anniversary in 1997, HM The Queen said of her husband: "He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years."

Prince Philip has served as one of the stalwarts of our nation and Commonwealth for over 70 years. The longest serving Royal Consort in British history.

In her annual Christmas messages, HM The Queen often speaks of her faith in Jesus Christ as her rock in the storms.

The Bible says: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

Prince Philip lived a life of sacrifice. As a Christian, my hope is that through faith in the incredible sacrifice of Jesus, a life sacrificed to death itself, that death does not need to have the last word. We - can - meet - again. We have a stalwart for our nation for many years to come."