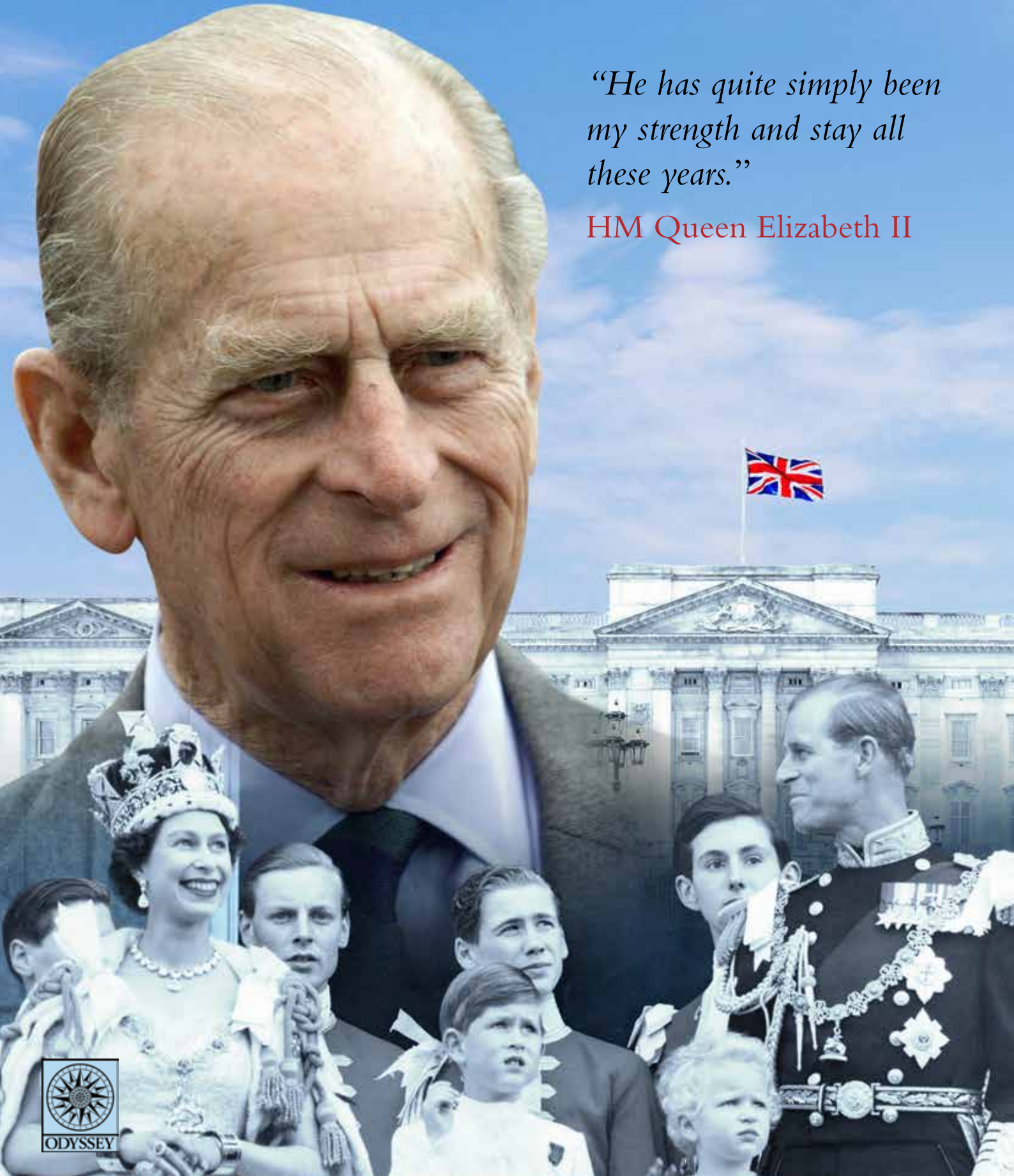


PRINCE PHILIP

A PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE

“He has quite simply been my strength and stay all these years.”

HM Queen Elizabeth II



PRINCE PHILIP

A PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE

The consort of Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip has combined a courageous war record with public service and a commitment to Queen, the monarchy and his adopted country. His life has not been without controversy. Prince Philip is nothing if not direct and forceful with his views. This is a new and powerful portrait of a man who has often been the subject of conflicting opinions - yet who is the most popular royal amongst Buckingham Palace staff, and who they love and regard as a “man of the people”.

The subject sometimes of rumour in his private life - where he has appreciated the company of beautiful and attractive, often aristocratic women - Prince Philip has in recent times become much more appreciated by the British people. His combination of “telling it how it is” and personal fortitude has become increasingly recognised. Born in Corfu in 1921, Prince Philip has lived the life of both the twentieth century and the twenty-first century, encompassing much of the history of the countries of Europe. Now 97, Prince Philip has been the patron of no less than 780 organisations and started the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme for young people. He combines personal directness with a no-nonsense approach to getting things done.

Less well-known is that Prince Philip has 5,510 flying hours and that he was present as captain of the destroyer HMS Whelp at the Japanese surrender in 1945. When asked about what have sometimes seemed challenging encounters - gaffes - with ordinary people, he has countered by saying it has kept him interested in what are often arduous and repetitive public occasions and visits.

Born in and then exiled from Greece, Prince Philip considers himself of both Danish and Greek origin. His courage seems to have partly been inherited from his mother, Princess Alice of Battenberg. His sisters married Nazis during the war and this inevitably led to public and painful separation from much of his family.

Remarkably, Princess Elizabeth fell in love with Philip when she was 13. Theirs has been, after initial reservations from King George VI, a loving marriage, if occasionally bumpy, marriage with periods of unexplained separation at its beginning. With four children, three of whom have divorced in very public circumstances, Prince Philip has been a powerful and sometimes divisive presence in royal family life.

His relationship with his children has not always been straightforward, particularly with Prince Charles, who he insisted on sending to school at Gordonstoun, which Charles loathed. More positively Prince Philip suggested after Princess Diana’s death, that he would walk with his two young grandsons behind their dead mother’s gun-carriage - and in so doing neutralised hostile public attitudes to the monarchy in this act of public affection and duty.

Prince Philip has lived on the national stage through Britain’s move from Empire to Commonwealth amid all the extraordinary political and social changes that have taken place since he married Princess Elizabeth in 1947. In so doing he has been a presence that has offered continuity, one that has increasingly, and perhaps surprisingly, become more respected by the British people.

