

'She's everyone's queen': Americans visit London for the jubilee's pomp and pageantry.



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For the last four years, Patricia Watts of Louisville, Ky., has been saving up for a trip to London. But it's not just any vacation. For her, it's a once-in-a-lifetime visit for Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee.

"Just seeing how dedicated Her Majesty is to her role, I felt like I wanted to be a part of it," she said, adding of an earlier trip to Britain: "As soon as I left in 2018, I started saving and planning."

She joins a group of other dedicated royal lovers from the United States whose fondness for the House of Windsor has driven them to pack their suitcases and head across the pond for the chance to celebrate the monarch's seven-decade reign.

Ms. Watts, who flew on Tuesday with her mother, Robbin Farley, 65, had visited in 2018 for an official parade to mark the queen's birthday. She said she fell in love with London during that trip, but has also followed Britain's royal family closely for the last decade and is particularly interested in their philanthropy.



Patricia Watts prepping for the Trooping the Color on Thursday.

She blogs about both the royal family's fashion and the charities they patronize, and has begun supporting some of those charities herself.

"I think a lot of us are just trying to go and enjoy this moment and be a part of history," Ms. Watts said.

Carol LaRue and Andi Libuser, who live in California, came to the jubilee with several friends and family members from the United States, France and Britain.

"I came for Kate and Will's wedding, and it was such a nice event, and the energy was so fun, so I brought my daughter and her friend so they could experience this," Ms. LaRue said. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

The group had arrived at the Mall in front of Buckingham Palace early Thursday to secure a prime location to view the Trooping the Color parade.

"It's very festive," Ms. Libuser said. "We are all very happy to support the queen."

Carole LaRue, second from left, and Andi Libuser, second from right, along the Mall on Thursday.



For Heidi Schmidt, of California, it's the pageantry of the jubilee and the traditions around the royal family that are captivating. As a theologian, she said she was interested in ceremony and sacred rites, and the British monarchy — with its constitutional and symbolic functions — intrigues her.

"They are sort of a keeper of cultural identity in a way that as Americans, we don't have sort of a central, unifying cultural institution," Ms. Schmidt said, adding, "She's everyone's queen."

No one does pageantry as well as the British, said Ms. Schmidt, who traveled to London with her husband on Tuesday, after a few days in Germany indulging his interest in Formula 1 racing. Her fellow Americans, she said, had a fondness for another British sensibility: "They also love that, as a country, they have a good sense of humor about themselves."

Much like Ms. Watts, Ms. Schmidt expressed a deep fondness for Queen Elizabeth, whose life of duty and service she admires.

"This is certainly the last Platinum Jubilee that any of us will see in our lifetimes," Ms. Schmidt said. "So it's just important for me to be there to sing 'God Save the Queen' in person."

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Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee >

Britain celebrates Queen Elizabeth's 70 years on the throne.

The queen and Prince William lead beacon lightings as communities in Britain and beyond honor her.

Roger Daltrey, lead singer of The Who, officiates at a rural Jubilee event.

Prince Andrew will miss a jubilee event after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Queen Elizabeth will skip Friday's church service after 'discomfort' during the jubilee's first day.