

HMS Tamar visits Darwin: Royal Navy ships complete first deployment of Indo-Pacific

The Royal Navy vessel HMS Tamar visits Darwin this week (w/c May 30) after successful completion of a first deployment in the Indo-Asia Pacific as part of Britain's permanent naval presence in the region. HMS Tamar visits the Northern Territory briefly for crew rotation, before continuing its permanent deployment in the region.

Over the course of their five-year deployment, HMS TAMAR and sister ship SPEY plan to work with allies and partners across the region and plan to visit countries from Australia to Japan, and Fiji to Singapore.

Since deploying in September 2021, Tamar and her sister ship Spey have travelled 25,000 nautical miles to Columbia, through the Panama Canal, transiting along the US West coast and into the region via Hawaii. Some of the highlights of Tamar's operations include:

- In January Tamar patrolled the East China Sea to conduct monitoring and surveillance against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels prohibited by the United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs). This activity served to ensure that commitments to demilitarization is adhered to in the Democratic people's Republic of Korea and ensure Rules Based International Security is upheld.
- In February Tamar took part in Exercise Bersama Shield with the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA) nations (UK, Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia). This multi-national exercise which took place in Singapore and Malaysia included a range of exercises which demonstrated the interoperability and cooperative response of the five nations and their commitment to security in the region.
- In March Tamar joined the Royal Brunei Navy Warship KDB DARULEHSAW for a passage exercise off Brunei, highlighting the continuation of relationship building in the region.

Highlights from HMS Spey's operations include the following:

- In January, the Ship came to the aid of the Tongan Government following the Hunga-Tonga volcanic eruption and tsunami, delivering humanitarian supplies and supporting repair work to communications infrastructure.
- In February Spey deployed a medical team to deliver Covid booster vaccinations and dental treatment to the people of the Pitcairn Islands. The ship's company also visited Fiji and Papua New Guinea, carrying out engagements with the military, government leaders and local communities.
- Spey has also worked with regional partners to carry out environmental and hydrographic surveys as well as water sampling, contributing to studies on climate change. One of the greenest ships in the Royal Navy,

Spey also carried out important Marine Bio-diversity taskings.

- It has been an exciting time for the ship and crew where they have opened new relationships, strengthened others, delivered essential aid to countries in need and helped deter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The ship has worked with a number of maritime forces in the region including; the US Coast Guard, US Navy, Royal Australian Navy, Royal New Zealand Navy, Republic of Fiji Navy, Royal Brunei Navy and Indonesian Navy.

Alongside the Royal Navy, the British Army and Royal Air Force regularly conduct exercises and operations with partners and allies, underlining the UK's joint commitment to security and stability in the Indo-Asia Pacific.

QUOTES

Lieutenant Commander Matt Millyard, Tamar's executive officer, said:

The 90m-long patrol vessel has a pivotal role in tackling shared security challenges and developing relationships; we're not a carrier, we're not a massive warship or an intimidating force, we're here as a force for good and a force for peace.

Lieutenant Gareth Senior, HMS SPEY Marine Engineering Officer, said:

This deployment has seen us travel to some amazing places, interacting with a whole host of new cultures. It has been a privilege to work alongside local communities, government organisations and military forces in the Pacific; we have learned a lot from each other, and I look forward to building on those relationships and working with our close partners again in the near future.

British High Commissioner to Australia Vicki Treadell, said:

We're delighted to welcome Tamar to Australian shores this week, and the chance for the crew to take a well deserved rest following a truly immense deployment across the region. The visit of HMS Tamar in Darwin, and HMS Spey's deployment in the region, underlines our permanent naval presence across the Indo-Pacific and speaks to the UK's ongoing commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific in which sovereign states of all sizes are free from coercion.

SUMMARY

HMS Tamar is permanently deployed to the Indo-Pacific region alongside her sister ship HMS Spey. Working alongside partners and allies, the ship is

helping tackle security challenges and support nations against the impacts of climate change.

Millions of people in the UK and around the world prepare to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

- Millions around the world set to join in Platinum Jubilee celebrations as TV channels and reporters flock to London to cover event
- More than 200,000 local events and street parties expected across the UK over the four-day bank holiday weekend

Millions of people are gearing up to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee over a blockbuster four-day bank holiday weekend.

Celebrations begin on Thursday with the Queen's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour) taking place at Horseguards Parade in London. It will be followed by a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's on Friday, royal attendance at the Derby, Epsom on Saturday and then a Party at the Palace on Saturday night with some of the biggest names in music performing.

The weekend will be rounded off with the Platinum Jubilee Pageant on Sunday on The Mall which will culminate in 150 national treasures, including Ed Sheeran, paying tribute to Her Majesty The Queen.

Big screens broadcasting the events will be placed in The Mall in London, Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens and in Cardiff's Bute Park.

At home, people can watch the events on the BBC, Sky and ITV and, across the country, millions will sit down to a Big Jubilee Lunch over the weekend with more than 200,000 local events – including screenings, street parties and lunches – planned.

Across the Commonwealth and the rest of the world, more than 600 Big Jubilee Lunches are planned in more than 80 countries – from Greenland to New Zealand.

Scores of TV channels and reporters from around the world have flocked to London to cover the historic celebrations.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

For seventy years The Queen has been the ultimate symbol of what it

means to be British. Her steadfast leadership and unwavering service through good and bad has been an inspiration to so many.

With four days of celebrations and millions around the world taking part, this weekend will be a fitting tribute and celebration of her service and dedication to the people of the UK and the Commonwealth.

A four-day extravaganza of events

The Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend in Central London begins on Thursday with the traditional Queen's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour) which will see more than 1,500 soldiers and musicians, around 240 horses and the Irish Guards mascot, Turlough Mor the Irish Wolfhound, take to Horse Guards Parade.

Around 7,000 ticketed members of the public will watch the ceremony from the stands on Horse Guards Parade as they return for the first time since the pandemic. Another 7,000 members of the Armed Forces Community invited by the Royal British Legion will watch Trooping the Colour from the seating around the Queen Victoria Memorial. The parade will finish with the traditional RAF flypast and balcony moment. Beacons will be lit throughout the UK and the Commonwealth in the evening.

On Friday, a Service of Thanksgiving for The Queen's 70-year reign will be held at St Paul's Cathedral. The service will include Bible readings, anthems, prayers and congregational hymns to express thanks for Her Majesty's reign, faith and service. The service will include a new Anthem by Judith Weir, Master of The Queen's Music, which sets to music words from the third chapter of the Book of Proverbs.

On Saturday, global music stars including Queen and Adam Lambert, Alicia Keys, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Andrea Bocelli, Ella Eyre, Craig David and Duran Duran will perform some of their biggest hits. The show, which will take place on a 360-degree stage around the Queen Victoria Memorial, will be closed by the legendary Diana Ross. More than 22,000 people will attend, including more than 7,500 key workers, members of the Armed Forces, volunteers and charities.

The Jubilee weekend comes to a close on Sunday with the Platinum Jubilee Pageant. With thousands of performers from across Britain and the Commonwealth, the Pageant will feature a giant dragon puppet the size of a double decker bus, corgis, acrobats, dancers and circus acts. The grand finale will feature 150 'national treasures' including Ed Sheeran who, along with members of the viewing public invited to become part of the performance, will gather and pay tribute to The Queen.

In addition to the events taking place in London, organised by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in partnership with Buckingham Palace, the Government has also extended licensing hours so people can celebrate the

Jubilee in pubs and bars across England and Wales.

To mark the occasion eight UK towns were granted city status. These are Bangor in Northern Ireland, Colchester, Doncaster and Milton Keynes in England, Douglas in the Isle of Man, Dunfermline in Scotland, Stanley in the Falkland Islands and Wrexham in Wales.

The competition for city status has taken place in each of the last three Jubilee years. Previous winners include Chelmsford in England, Lisburn in Northern Ireland and Perth in Scotland. Southampton was also granted lord mayoralty status which entitles the mayor to be known as the lord mayor.

Notes to editors:

- People can find tips on how to make bunting, entertainment for children with colour a corgi and colour a crown, as well as recipes, on the [DCMS Platinum Jubilee website](#). It also includes details on more than 6,000 local events.
- Big screen locations in London are not ticketed but capacity is limited. There will be other locations to watch the events locally. More than 100 local sites can be found on [DCMS's events map](#)

In London the screens will be provided as below:

Saturday 4th June – Platinum Party at the Palace

- St James's Park
- The Mall

Sunday 5th June – The Platinum Jubilee Pageant

- St James's Park
- The Mall
- Whitehall

There are no screens provided at St Paul's Cathedral.

People are encouraged to check the [TFL website](#) before making plans to travel to London because routes are expected to be busy.

Countries call for action to finance nature recovery ahead of COP15

Action to drive the recovery of the global economy and bolster food security worldwide by protecting and restoring nature will be set out today by government ministers, CEOs and civil society leaders at a major multinational summit being held today (Wednesday 1 June).

'Financing the Transition to a Nature Positive Future' will be held in association with Stockholm +50, a major environmental meeting led by the United Nations between 2-3 June. The event is being convened by the UK Government and supported by the [Leaders' Pledge for Nature](#) (LPN).

Over half of GDP – \$44 trillion – relies on the services that nature provides or natural capital – from the bees that pollinate the plants we eat, to the trees that purify our air and the forests and oceans that absorb carbon emissions. However, we are spending our natural capital much faster than it is being replenished.

At the event, the UK Government will announce a contribution of £330 million to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the fund that supports developing countries to tackle the most pressing environmental problems and so deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Chair of the GEF, will thank donors for their record-breaking contributions, which bring the total pledged to GEF8 to date to \$5.25bn, a real increase of 29% compared with GEF7.

The event builds on the ambitious commitments made by nearly 100 countries through the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and COP26, which put nature at the heart of global efforts to tackle climate change. The Glasgow Leaders Declaration secured commitments from 141 governments to halt and reverse deforestation. This was matched by major donors pledging \$20 billion to protect and restore the world's forests, and commitments by financial institutions and major commodity traders to make sure their investments and business support the goal of forest protection.

Lord Zac Goldsmith, International Environment Minister, said:

COP26 showed nature must be at the centre of any solution to tackle the global challenges we face, from the loss of biodiversity, hunger, poverty and pollution to the causes and impacts of climate change.

Protecting our forests, oceans and species is essential for our economy and survival but time is running out to rapidly scale up the finance for nature that is critical to deliver an ambitious

Global Biodiversity Framework.

There is no silver bullet. That's why we need a package of action with investment from all sources – public and private, domestic and international – and why we must align our spending and overseas aid with the recovery of the natural world. Everyone must play their part.

Carlos Manuel, CEO at Global Environment Fund said:

Conflicts between nature and human systems are increasing in severity, and it's critical that more money from all sources is spent on nature conservation in developing countries, where most of the world's biodiversity is located.

The record GEF replenishment will give a major boost to biodiversity funding compared to the past four years. This financing will help developing countries implement the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and is a testament to the leadership of the UK and other donors.

Brian O'Donnell, Director of Campaign for Nature:

Nature is in a state of crisis, with current loss of biodiversity at levels unprecedented in human history. The difference between proposed policy solutions and implemented policy solutions to address this crisis is adequate finance. We are grateful that the UK is providing global leadership to find ways to close the biodiversity finance gap at a time when it is so desperately needed.

Speakers will welcome increasing aid investment in protecting and restoring the critical ecosystems on which millions of people rely for their food, water and energy. They will caution, however, that just spending more money on nature will not be enough.

Lord Goldsmith will highlight the "perverse incentives" that drive deforestation and "the madness" of countries spending money to restore nature on one hand whilst providing subsidies that indirectly support the destruction of the natural world. For every \$1 invested by government in protecting nature, \$4 is used in ways that damage it, for example through environmentally harmful subsidies. Meanwhile, trillions of dollars of private finance are invested in ways that deplete the natural capital on which we all depend.

Speakers will underscore that the time has come for governments, business and communities to work together and reset incentives in favour of a nature-positive economy. They will highlight the opportunity to recast the hundreds

of billions of dollars spent in harmful subsidies to support investments that protect and restore biodiversity and provide natural climate solutions, whilst also benefitting the poorest.

The summit comes as momentum builds to finalise the Global Biodiversity Framework – a new, global treaty designed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss – which is set to be agreed at this year’s COP15. A key issue to be resolved in those negotiations is how to bridge the estimated \$700 billion gap in financing protection and restoration of nature.

Notes to editors:

- The Convention on Biodiversity COP15 conference will see the international community come together to agree biodiversity targets for the next 10 years. This follows the successful COP26 conference where the UK as president committed to putting nature restoration at the heart of climate change
- “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity” (Stockholm+50) will take place five decades after the 1972 [United Nations Conference on the Human Environment](#). The event will provide leaders with an opportunity to draw on 50 years of multilateral environmental action to achieve the bold and urgent action needed to secure a better future on a healthy planet.
- The Leaders’ Pledge for Nature: voluntary, leader-level declaration which aims to put biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. 64 Heads of States, endorsed the Pledge at the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020. The Pledge has now been signed by between 94 world leaders (including the European Union) and over 100, businesses and civil society organisations.
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was set up in 1991 is the is the largest global financial mechanism tackling major environmental challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, unsustainable food and agriculture, deforestation, chemical pollution, marine and freshwater degradation. As the official financing mechanism for five international multilateral environmental agreements it supports developing countries deliver their commitments under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention to combat Desertification (UNCCD), and two conventions dealing with chemical pollution and waste (Stockholm and Minamata). The GEF is replenished on 4-yearly cycles. The next cycle, to which the UK has pledged £330m, will run from 2022 to 2026.

Remarks by HE Governor Nigel Dakin CMG

on the occasion of Jags McCartney Day

Good morning Turks and Caicos and a particularly warm welcome to the family, friends and past colleagues of the late, let's say it great, Honourable James Alexander George Smith McCartney – who our national day is named after – and who, in the shadow of his legacy, we are gathered here today.

You may recall that last year I used this opportunity to ask some questions about how JAGS would view the challenges of TCI today; how he would describe the challenge of today's diversity; how he would therefore nation-build, and; what leadership lessons we might take from him, as we all wrestle with these challenges ourselves.

My congratulations to our keynote speaker – Leo Lightbourne – for taking on those hard questions and answering them so comprehensively.

Beyond the keynote speaker the Premier, Leader of the Opposition and JAGS daughter have all spoken and so set against this somewhat crowded backdrop of expertise, perhaps you will allow me to both rest on what I said last year and allow me to tackle a slightly different thought, a thought that flows from any discussion of any 'national hero'.

That is, how do make sure that the shadow any singular national hero casts, does not put others in the shade to the point that future heroes do not emerge – indeed multiply – but instead how do we harness heroic energy today, that draws on inspiration from our past and from JAG's life.

Given JAGS set the bar so high – what exactly do we mean by heroism and in defining it – how can we all encourage it – indeed perhaps teach it – in a practical sense to our children.

Many proud nations have an individual figure that towers over all others. My mind turns to George Washington in the United States, Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Mahatma Gandhi in India. Early days, perhaps, but on present showing Volodymyr Zelensky would appear to be starting to occupy this type of position in Ukraine.

But even countries that have 'a' national hero doesn't preclude them from having 'many' national heroes. It is quite possible to have both. Think of George Washington and you quickly think of Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton and from a different age Lincoln. And none of them have a day named after them – that is reserved for Martin Luther King. Think of Mandela and your mind turns to Desmond Tutu, Gandhi takes you to Nehru.

And of course not all countries have one towering figure. By way of contrast, in the UK, there is no equivalent to say Washington, Mandela or indeed JAGS. With a 2,000-year history that's perhaps inevitable – but an attempt at a popular poll in 2002, to find the one hundred Greatest Britons, included – once the public had had their say – a relatively small number of genuine national leaders.

It did however include scientists, explorer's, mathematicians, physicists, biologists, artists, writers, poets, Generals and Admirals, athletes, entertainers, and monarchs and even a comedian. As an aside, it's worth reflecting that in Barbados one of their 10 National Heroes' is a sportsman – Sir Garfield Sobers.

My personal choice, of the Greatest Britain, came in only at number 76 – 'The Unknown Warrior' – buried in Westminster Abbey. However, the person the British people did place first in their poll was indeed a politician: Winston Churchill. But of course Churchill is not without historical controversy and having led us through the Second World War – a moment of huge crisis for us – he lost a landslide election at its conclusion, so his popularity was in question at the moment of his greatest achievement.

I think an important point that comes from this is acknowledging, as those who knew him well have acknowledged about JAGS, that national heroes aren't perfect – in fact they can't be perfect. They make mistakes – indeed as we will see in a moment – they are almost forced into making mistakes because they must take risks. There is a very significant difference indeed between a hero and a saint.

With that in mind, the point I think I want to land today – in the shadow of JAGS – is that for all our imperfections we have it in all of us to be heroic. So perhaps the most important thing I can hope to nail is to define what heroism is, because if we know what it is, we can be intentional in its pursuit and if we know what it is, we can properly honour it.

Heroism can of course be thought of in many ways. The notion of 'ultimate sacrifice' has a long history and is, for example, deeply rooted in myths, legends and antiquity as well as in present day military culture. Many globally recognised, let alone national heroes, like JAGS, have died at too young an age and that tragedy – the notion that so much more was yet to come – has helped consolidate their heroic status.

'John' Chapter 15 Verse 13, captures it all rather beautifully: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". It's this quality that attracts me, for example, to my own choice in the UK of the 'Unknown Soldier'.

But this is a very focussed definition and not one particularly helpful for a society that wishes to be at peace and hopes its heroes enjoy longevity.

What we might instead say is that heroes exemplify cherished values; heroes display qualities we admire; heroes show us how to overcome challenges and heroes call us to stand up for others. And heroes do one more thing – heroes take risks – not risks at others expense – but risks that can seriously rebound on them.

So let me try and define heroism so we can intentionally pursue it and we can recognise it when we see it. Fortunately, there is a reasonable consensus that heroism needs to be made up of at least four criteria, all of which must be fulfilled.

First, it's performed in service to others who are in need—whether that's a person, group, or community—or in defence of certain ideals.

Second, it's engaged in voluntarily. This is true even in military or policing contexts; heroism is an act that goes well beyond that required by normal duty.

Third, it is performed without any gain anticipated at the time the act occurs.

Finally, and this is the crucial difference between altruism and heroism, a heroic act is one performed with recognition of possible risks and costs. Those may be to one's well-being or perhaps more pertinent to us today, to one's reputation. The actor is willing to accept anticipated sacrifice in pursuit of a larger goal.

The good news, I believe, is we have far more potential heroes around us than we might imagine and so the next question is 'how do we encourage more potential heroes to perform heroic acts'.

I suggest the first thing is that we need to know – and in particular our young people need to know – is that heroism is alive and well and being a hero is achievable right here, and right now.

Now, to lighten the mood, and accepting the verse I'm about to use isn't quite as beautiful as the John: 15:13, I want to delve into popular culture for a moment. The final line, of the first verse, of "Something Just Like This" – the collaboration between the American band 'The Chainsmokers' and the UK's 'Coldplay' – rather nails the point I want to make...now bear with me.

If you haven't heard it, I'm afraid my own 'risk taking' doesn't extend to me singing it for you – although there may be others here who would relish the opportunity. But the lyrics go as follows...

I've been reading books of old

The legends and the myths

Achilles and his gold

Hercules and his gifts

Spider-Man's control

And Batman with his Fists

And clearly I don't see myself upon that list.

It's that last line "And clearly I don't see myself on that list" that I want to hover over because my contention is, we do need to see ourselves on that list, young and old alike.

We all need to see – in this Territory – heroic role models living amongst

us. They are there, for sure, we just probably need to do a better job in acknowledging them. Given the complex circumstances we are in – complexity that I'm not sure JAGS could have imagined we would face within 40 of his untimely death – we are not going to build a nation without living, breathing, everyday heroes walking amongst us that we recognise as such.

The good news is that I, and you, see them every day, in multiple walks of life, including some close to me on this stage and some I see in the audience, and many I know who are watching or listening. In politics, for sure, but also in sport and culture, in uniform and without, on land and at sea, in the church and in secular life, in the private sector, public and voluntary.

Beyond that I see disabled people living an almost daily life of heroism, I see parents of children with special needs and – in terms of taking the personal risk, to reach for the stars (because the risk of perpetual failure stalks those with such high ambition) – I see world class athletes, artists and performers from TCI making it on the world stage and I'm in genuine awe of them and I think you are too.

Acts of heroism though don't just come from truly exceptional people but from people placed in the right circumstance and given the necessary tools to transform compassion into action. The key point is that they have to be prepared to take a personal risk to do that, and that behaviour of sacrifice can be encouraged.

A first step we can take is to quietly say to ourselves that we are willing to be a hero 'in waiting'. When we see wrong, we won't look the other way, we will take a risk, and we will step up. We can pledge to act when confronted with a situation where we feel something is wrong, to actively develop our heroic abilities and believe in the heroic capacities within ourselves and others.

If you are a parent, teacher or youth leader, you might want to talk about so called: 'Giraffe Courage'. A good up bringing, that teaches right from wrong, is of course the foundation, as is encouraging empathy, compassion and altruism. But to turn that to heroism – just like a Giraffe – we need to have the inner confidence to stick our neck out – and to stand tall.

No one can be a hero every day of their life, that would be literally exhausting, and most heroes are remembered for a relatively small number of actions – perhaps a singular act of bravery. But if every day we hide in the crowd we will, in the end, however good our thoughts, only be part of the problem because a lack of positive heroic action tends to work in favour of those who do harm, not those who do good.

We need to honour our first national hero and at the same time demystify what it is to be a hero. Being a hero is an opportunity open to us all.

So finally, standing in the shadow of our national hero, and paying my own respects to him as I will shortly in laying a wreath, I also want to acknowledge, as I'm sure he would, the unsung, quiet heroes—the men and women

who put themselves in some form of jeopardy, defend a moral cause, help someone in need.

I thank our national hero for leading the way and I encourage us all to be inspired by his example, to not only live our best life, but to live the most heroic life we can.

And with that, may God Bless these heroic Turks and Caicos Islands.

Honouring the Nation's Hero

Remarks by HE Governor Nigel Dakin CMG during an event to celebrate the Commonwealth Games Baton being in TCI

Good afternoon Turks and Caicos,

I was asked to say something – by the organizing committee – about ‘Youth, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’. It’s a set of subjects that don’t lend themselves to brevity and I suspect brevity is what is needed today. The Baton Relay is not about ‘talking’, it’s about ‘doing’, and it’s not about ‘sitting and listening’ but about ‘moving and engaging’. So I’m going to let the Baton do the talking – or at least use the Baton in part as an analogy – to touch on some of those issues, albeit briefly.

First, the Baton is a reminder that, while we live our daily lives in a small Island chain, we are very much connected to the wider world. Except for the United Nations, if one were looking for an international organization that expressed diversity, more than any other, it would indeed be the Commonwealth. And within the Commonwealth the flagship must be ‘the Games’ that bring together, into one place, so much diversity yet united in friendly competition as the youth of the commonwealth compete against each other on only one measure – the measure of excellence.

By the end of its journey this baton – moving through the Commonwealth – will have travelled 90,000 miles and it will have visited all 72 Commonwealth nations and territories. Over 269 days, tens of thousands of remarkable people, everyone different, everyone with their own hopes and dreams, everyone with their own loves and likes, will have engaged in a shared endeavor. That now includes many here in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Put together this global village represents more ethnicities, cultures and languages than we can – here today – easily name or imagine.

Despite the games natural focus on ‘youth’, here in the TCI family is, and

remains, the most special of relationships and it was good to celebrate this when five generations of one family – including a Centenarian – passed the Baton between them on Wednesday. Close relationships, across the generations, as well as close relationships, across the globe, are a feature of these islands and something worthy of celebration.

The Baton spent Christmas Eve in the Seychelles, saw the New Year's sun rise in the Maldives and will be in Jamaica over the Easter weekend. Starting its journey on 7 October 2021 it went from Buckingham Palace to Cyprus, Cyprus to Malta and then through nineteen countries in Africa, as but examples: Nigeria, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, the list goes on...

Before it got to us it had already been to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India. It's travelled across Southeast Asia, visiting Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. February saw it in the Pacific Islands including Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa. Just a few weeks ago it was in New Zealand and in mid-March it was in Australia.

And now it is with us, here in the Caribbean. We in the Turks and Caicos Islands received it from the Bahamas and we will send it onward to Cayman – but for a few days it's been with us – and we have shown it the full beauty of these Islands, as it traveled through them in the hands of our amazing people. In holding that Baton, our people are in one sense immediately connected to every land, and every person, I've just mentioned.

After it has left the Caribbean, it still has many miles to travel. It goes through Canada and there will then be stops in the Falkland Islands and the Channel Islands and thence through the four nations that make up the United Kingdom where the final bearer will hand the baton back to her Majesty at the opening ceremony on the 28th July. The message, hidden in a chamber under the Birmingham 2022 Coat of Arms will then be read out in what, as it happens, is my home city – Birmingham – where I was last week opening a twinning relationship with their Police Force and our Police Force.

In this remarkable journey the Baton will have passed through a Commonwealth that has a combined population of 2 billion people. Of these, more than 60% are under 30 years of age. The Commonwealth may well be the largest youth organization in the world!

This global journey ends in one – if not the – most diverse cities in the UK. As a child my family were not sufficiently well-off for us to have holiday's overseas – we did 'staycations' long before that word was ever coined. But culturally it was possible to travel the globe without travelling far from my childhood front door. It isn't a coincidence that my professional life was spent living in cultures that I'd got to know in Birmingham – be they Indian, Pakistani, West African or Caribbean.

In this regard (and probably only in this regard) our young people in TCI are now growing up in an environment similar to the one I grew up in; the world is now represented in TCI and diversity is a feature of our landscape. The challenge is not about diversity, the challenge is about inclusion.

Living amongst diversity is what 'happens to you'. Choosing to be inclusive is an intentional choice. And choosing to be inclusive is not straightforward – we all have a subliminal inbuilt prejudice for those we know, and who seem similar to us.

But there's a very straightforward route to being inclusive and in that, sport has much to teach us. The fastest route to inclusion is to give a group a challenging goal, to achieve something that is well beyond the capability of any one person. Then inclusion doesn't become something that's optional – it becomes the only route to success. When you've agreed on the need to 'win' you quickly realize that the things that you once saw as the things that differentiated you, are now the things that strengthen you.

The Commonwealth games are a competitive sport, many involving individual excellence, but that individual excellence would be nothing without the coaching staff or the organizational support. Even the finest individual athlete is not an island. Life (by which I mean all forms of life over the history of our planet) is a competitive challenge, fought against the odds against an often hostile or unpredictable environment, but what becomes clear over time is that those who consistently achieve aren't necessarily the best individual, they are the individual who is regularly the best team player.

Indeed that would be my advice to any young person listening; if you are the best team player you can be – over a full career you will find you will be sought after in whatever walk of life you choose. In its rawest sense, inclusion leads to survival, and in its best sense, inclusion leads to delivering way beyond your own capability.

So to conclude: here we have the Baton manufactured in a city that describes itself as having a thousand trades, and that is now one of the most multi-cultural places in the UK. It will have travelled the equivalent of twice around the world, touching countries that account for a quarter of humanity and including cultures, languages and histories that no one person could hope to understand.

It's travelled through the archipelago of the TCI and captured, through its sensors, the most beautiful place on earth. Before we have even won our first medal we are confident we have already won that accolade.

We thank all those who make our involvement in the Games possible, we stand behind, and in awe, of our amazing athletes knowing that in doing their best, they are the best they can be, and we pray for a Games where we are not only successful – as we will surely be – but one that is also an affirmation that we are part of a global village, that there is more that unites humanity than divides, and if there isn't – then we have a responsibility to make it so.

And with that, may God now bless our athletes, proud to drape themselves in our flag, may God bless our people, proud to carry the Baton through these lands and may God continue to Bless these beautiful by nature Turks and Caicos Islands.

HE the Governor welcoming the baton to TCI

The Hon Premier shares the privilege of walking the baton with a young participant