

Public celebration for Queen's Platinum Jubilee set for June

Just in time for Queen Elizabeth II's 96th birthday this Thursday, April 21, the Town of Aurora has formally announced a public celebration in honour of her Platinum Jubilee.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrates the 70th anniversary Elizabeth II's accession to the throne following the death of her father, George VI.

Elizabeth II is the first British monarch to achieve this remarkable milestone and the first Canadian monarch since Confederation to reach this anniversary.

Aurora marked the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession in 2012 - her Diamond Jubilee - by transforming the former Civic Square Park into a greenspace tailored for people of all ages and re-dedicating it as Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park.

It is here that a specially-commissioned bench marking the Platinum Jubilee will be formally installed on Thursday, June 2 before a public celebration of the reign takes over Town Park on Saturday, June 4, from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

"Our sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, has supported Canada's triumphs and has witnessed Canada's growth, now our community is invited to come together and celebrate her achievements with being the longest reigning Monarch," said the Town in a statement. "Join us for greetings by the Town Crier, then take in an incredible performance by the Aurora Community Band while enjoying complimentary scones with jam and the Queen's favourite Earl Grey tea."

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement: "The Town of Aurora is pleased to recognize Her Majesty the Queen becoming the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service. The Queen is a wonderful example of the true meaning of public service. Her dedication, compassion and commitment is inspiring to all. Don't miss out in joining us to celebrate in this historic milestone."

Participants are encouraged to wear party hats, tea hats, or fascinators and "prizes for the ladies with the best party tea hat or fascinator" will be awarded.

"As people take in the concert, they will enjoy nibbles with the tea and everything will be focused on the Queen and her seven decades of reign," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "We will also have art show easels and we will be depicting historical photos from each of the decades. We really hope that people will dress up."

"On social media, we will also do a call out for anyone who wants to submit any stories or memories, maybe of one of the royal tours or whatever memories one might have and we will load that onto our website."

The Town has also created an online resource at aurora.ca/platinumjubilee with educational materials and activities for all ages tied in with the Jubilee.

Ms. Ware adds the timing of the Town Park celebration is such that people can have a morning of fun outdoors while still being able to take in the televised Party at the Palace, featuring some of the biggest names in the music industry, that is expected to be broadcast on television and through streaming, that afternoon.

"We wanted to provide a gathering where people can come and share in awe, respect and celebration of this huge milestone," says Ms. Ware, adding that one of the Queen's rumoured favourite flower, lily of the valley, will also be key in the celebration.

Not only is it expected to be incorporated into the design of the bench, but bunches of flowers are hoped to be on hand to give to many of the June 4 participants.

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