

LONDON BRIDGE and GOLDEN ORB: Reflections on a funeral and a coronation

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With their roots over a millennium deep, the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, and the coronation of King Charles III, were state ceremonies of a particularly ancient and significant kind. Key moments in the ceremonial life of the nation and the Commonwealth, they were occasions when our national stories were retold, reinforced, and reimagined. The funeral and coronation rites were of particular interest because they were the first to take place for so long. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the country had changed. Our place in the world, our values, our relationship with history and with the monarchy, had altered markedly. The slow maturing of plans for the funeral and its associated ceremonies, and the rather swifter development of plans for the coronation, were opportunities to express these changes.

Heralds have for many centuries been intimately connected with the ceremonial life of the nation and the monarchy. Their roles and responsibilities have evolved, but they retain key duties connected to the funerals and coronations of Sovereigns, and with the mechanics of the change of reign. In this talk he will look at the ceremonies and the heralds' roles, and try to give a sense of what it was like to be there.

Peter is York Herald at HM College of Arms, and extremely proud to be the Patron of the Guild of One-Name Studies.