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Royal Yacht *Britannia* to working with the Royal Mint Advisory Committee on designs for coins, seals and medals, and presenting his own award to the Designer of the Year since 1959, he has certainly got stuck in.

As President of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee, Prince Philip influenced the design of the 50 pence coin, which was introduced in 1972. 'I don't like that little "p".' As a result, it was duly changed to 'pence'. He has even personally designed pieces of jewellery for the Queen and members of staff.

The Prince was less than impressed during an interview for ITV to mark his ninetieth birthday when Alan Titchmarsh asked which of his charities or organizations had given him most pleasure. 'It's not entertainment, I don't do it for my amusement,' he snapped.

Public Speaking

When it comes to making speeches, the Prince is a veteran. He has made almost 5000 of them on a range of subjects at all sorts of institutions, conferences and meetings. This gives an average of around eight speeches every month. Since 1952, he has been President of the English Speaking Union. The organization seeks to promote communication between countries through the English language.

'I don't think I have ever got up to make a speech of any kind, anywhere, ever, and not made the audience laugh at least once,' he has claimed with confidence in an interview with

Gyles Brandreth. ‘You arrive somewhere and you go down that receiving line. I get two or three of them to laugh. Always.’

Sometimes, of course, the laughter is not always planned. ‘Gratifying but sometimes unnerving is when an audience sees a joke or something amusing in a bit that was not originally intended to be funny. This happens rather more often than I care to admit,’ he wrote in his 1960 book, *Prince Philip Speaks*.

In the introduction to the book, he explained his approach. ‘Some people have what I can only describe as a positive genius for saying absolutely nothing in the most charming language. Neither my English nor my imagination are good enough for that, so I try to say something which I hope might be interesting or at least constructive.’



The Duke is also fully aware of the perils of delivering a speech, especially if conditions are not conducive to its successful execution. ‘All sorts of unexpected things can happen in speech-making. Microphones are getting more reliable but they can still play fancy tricks. Turning a page in a high wind wearing gloves and holding a sword can also be quite exciting.’



Flying solo on a visit to Australia in 1956, Prince Philip spoke in the capital, Canberra. ‘May I say right away how delighted I am to be back in Australia. The Queen and I have not forgotten the wonderful time we had here three years ago. She had to stay at home this time because I’m afraid she is not quite as free as I am to do as she pleases.’

Prince Philip claimed he gave his best speech at the opening of the Melbourne Olympics in 1956: 'It consisted of exactly twelve words.' In fact, it was slightly longer: 'I declare open the Olympic Games of Melbourne, celebrating the sixteenth Olympiad of the modern era.' But it was delivered to rapturous applause.

The Prince always liked to do his homework if he was delivering a speech on a topic or in a location he knew little about. Speaking after dinner at the Royal Artillery Mess at Woolwich, in 1952, the Prince said, 'I am afraid I don't know much about Gunners and so before coming to Woolwich I tried to find out something. I asked the nearest soldier, but if I repeated what he said I fear I would not be asked to the mess again.'



Philip often demonstrated that, despite being born into royalty, he could still be a normal person, something he achieved with his favourite weapon: humour. Making a speech while standing in for the Queen at a Guildhall lunch in 1960, the Prince informed listeners: 'When I first heard about your invitation I was naturally flattered and grateful. For a short while I held the improbable notion that I would get a meal at the Guildhall without making a speech for it, or, at worst, a third of a speech. But I had a feeling this was too good to last and, by what I can only describe as the downright cunning of my relations, I stand before you now.'



Speaking at a Master Tailors' Benevolent Association event, Prince Philip began, 'Your president has said that the royal family have a greatly beneficial effect on your trade, and what we wear today, you wear tomorrow – I hope there will be enough to go round.'

Plain Speaking

In a speech at Edinburgh University in the late 1960s that highlighted his honesty, Prince Philip claimed, 'I get kicked in the teeth for saying things.'

In an interview for Scottish television he explained his position: 'The monarchy functions because occasionally you've got to stick your neck out ... The idea that you don't do anything on the off chance you might be criticised, [then] you'd end up living like a cabbage and it's pointless. You've got to stick up for something you believe in.' It seems that this is a philosophy he has clung to over the years.

Philip was not unaware of his propensity to speak his mind. 'I seem to have a terrible reputation for telling people what they ought to be doing,' he once acknowledged.

Prince Philip asked a driving instructor in Oban, Scotland, in 1995, 'How do you keep your natives off the booze long enough to get them through the test?'