

Good evening, everyone!

Thanks for joining us here this evening.

My name is Bill Rowland and I've worked here very long time, in fact 40 years.

I'm responsible for looking after Putney Lower Common.

People have been asking me what's the uniform your wearing; it's the uniform I was issued with 40 years ago, and amazingly it still fits!

I've been invited to say a few words about the link between the Queen and the Commons' staff. Of the six Keepers and myself, five of us served in Household Cavalry Regiment, one in the Staffordshire Regiment and one in the Royal Horse Artillery, and between us we have served 130 years' loyal service.

The Household Cavalry consists of two Regiments: The Lifeguards and the Blues and Royals; they were formed in 1660 and are the Monarch's personnel bodyguards.

The Regiments are divided between the Mounted Ceremonial and the Armoured Reconnaissance Regiments.

In previous decades, whilst serving, we have taken part in many state occasions (i.e. troopings, weddings, funerals, and of course Royal Jubilees).

I personally served in The Blues and Royals in the 1970s and in 1977 took part in the Silver Jubilee Queen's Escorts all over the country: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff, Swansea and of course London.

One of my proudest memories is riding down the Mall next to the Queen's carriage in full state kit with the crowds cheering and waving flags.

The quality of the Keepers' service in the army has meant they have all qualified doing the most intense riding training, probably in the world, stable management skills, and impeccable turnout, and we are so lucky to have two Household Cavalry riding instructors amongst us. They are also able to deal with any situation in a calm professional manner.

Just a quick royal story from my past!!

In the early 70s, Major Andrew Parker-Bowles was my Squadron Leader. We held a Squadron dance, and he brought along his new wife Camilla, now known as the Duchess of Cornwall. My fellow troopers goaded me to ask her if she

would like a dance; eventually after a few more pints of beer I plucked up the courage. Excuse would you like a dance with me, and she DID!

Not many people can say that they have twirled around the dance floor to the sounds of Barry White with the future Queen Consort.

Thank you!