

# The Duke of Edinburgh signs off first International Award online

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HRH The Duke of Edinburgh has signed off the first Gold Award on The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Online Record Book (ORB).



Observed by HM The Queen, HRH signed off young New Zealander Amanda Lawson's online record for her Gold Award activities. This marks a significant milestone for the Award globally and comes on the day the internet marks its 25th Birthday.

HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh were visiting staff at The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation and The Royal Commonwealth Society to find out more about how the two organisations are providing non-formal education programmes to help empower young people worldwide.

## The Award online

On HM's first visit to the Foundation, The Queen had the opportunity to learn more about the Award and how the development of digital tools is enabling the Foundation to



reach more young people from diverse backgrounds. The Online Record Book (ORB) is a new global digital platform, which replaces the paper Record Book, designed to help participants, leaders and assessors doing, delivering and assessing the Award.

Now a Gold Award holder, thanks to The Duke signing off her

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Award, Amanda says taking part in the Award helped her to overcome many challenges. Having been diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes as a child, Amanda was determined not to let her condition define her or her capabilities. "Participating in the Award has taken me out of my comfort zone. My boundaries were certainly pushed to their limits during a number of my challenges but I was determined to complete my Gold Award. Giving up was not an option." Her success in completing her Gold is a testament to the adaptability of the Award framework and its accessibility to all, no matter their background or ability.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh founded The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in 1956; the Award has since spread to more than 140 countries and territories with more than 8 million young people having participated in the Award.

"The Foundation works to grow the Award worldwide and to increase the diversity of its participants, particularly reaching out to those who are often on the margins of society," explains Secretary General of the Foundation, John May. "Work that we are doing now will ensure that more young people have access to this tried and tested framework of non-formal education that has time and time again proven to transform the lives of individuals and their communities. This is all of course thanks to the vision of our Foundation."

## **Commonwealth connections**

The RCS recently moved into Award House, premises that the Foundation has occupied since 1996. Michael Lake CBE, Director of The RCS says, "The Royal Commonwealth Society has undergone a transformative twelve months. As we embark upon this exciting new stage in the life of our organisation, we are delighted to be sharing the newly refurbished Award House with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation. Like them, the focus of our work is very much on young people and on offering them the inspiration and confidence to fulfil their dreams. As compatible organisations with complementary remits, it is my firm belief that we can live together with greater efficiency than apart.

"The Society plays an important role in championing the values that underpin the Commonwealth and that lend the association its unique purpose in the contemporary world. And HM The Queen, in her role as Head of the Commonwealth and as the Patron of our Society, is a lasting inspiration."

## **Major milestones**

The visit to Award House formed part of a momentous week for The Queen and The Duke as their youngest son celebrated his 50th birthday on 10 March. Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, a Gold Award holder himself, is a trustee of the Foundation and is actively involved in ensuring it is inclusive to all.

The Queen was also in attendance at the annual Commonwealth Day Observance at Westminster Abbey on 10 March.

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huge thanks to our kind supporters by word of mouth for providing complimentary food and drink for this momentous occasion.

### Further information:

- [The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award](#)
- [The Royal Commonwealth Society \(RCS\)](#)
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