

INAUGURAL LECTURE

'Intelligible government'?

Rethinking the meaning of monarchy in the age of Charles III

Thurs 4 May 2023
17:00 hours s.t.

Centre for British Studies
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with a welcome introduction by

Professor Sir Christopher Clark

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On the eve of the coronation it seems appropriate to re-assess the meaning of monarchy in modern Britain. The new King heads a fractured royal family, a divided nation, and a disaffected Commonwealth. How can we as scholars make sense of where the monarchy has been, and where it might be going? This lecture suggests we need a new approach. Through a critical analysis of three classic studies of monarchy: Walter Bagehot's *The English constitution* (1867), Kingsley Martin's *The magic of monarchy* (1937) and Tom Nairn's *The enchanted glass* (1988), the lecture traces the lineage of modern interpretations of the British monarchy and points up their limitations. As the lecture concludes, in the era of Brexit at home and populist regimes around the world, modern democracies may actually need monarchy more than ever before.

Miles Taylor joined the Centre in 2021 as Professor of British History and Society. He was previously Professor of Modern History at the University of York and is a 19th century specialist with a particular interest in Britain and its empire. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society.