

Queen Elizabeth II has died. In 1996 she visited Kraków

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On Thursday, 8 September, the British Queen Elizabeth II passed away at the age of 96. Since taking the throne in 1952 she was the longest-reigning monarch in the history of the British Crown.

The British Queen arrived in Poland on 25 March 1996 and visited Kraków for a few hours on 27 March, the final day of her trip.

"The royal city of Kraków welcomed Elizabeth II with an unusually warm atmosphere despite the snow and rain. The city had been preparing for several days to welcome the queen: streets were cleaned, holes in roads were patched". - reported the Rzeczpospolita daily.

At Wawel Cathedral, Elisabeth II met with President Aleksander Kwaśniewski. In the vaults of Wawel Cathedral, she laid flowers on the tomb of General Władysław Sikorski and paid tribute to Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

The Queen took a stroll around the Main Square. "The royal couple, accompanied by the President of the Republic of Poland, the authorities of Kraków and the voivodeship, took a quick walk through the Cloth Hall. The Queen did not stop at any of the stalls, but accepted a gift from the merchants: two large dolls in a regional Kraków dress. The bugle call was just playing when she stepped out onto the Main Square. She stood, listened and then set off in the direction of St. Mary's Church. On the way, she accepted a bouquet from Józefa Paćławska, who has been presenting flowers to distinguished guests for 20 years, and watched the performance of the Słowianki ensemble". - wrote the Gazeta Wyborcza daily.

From the Main Square, she moved on to visit the Collegium Maius. A ceremonial breakfast was held there with, among others, the Rector of the Jagiellonian University, Professor Aleksander Koj, Professor Józef Gierowski and the editor-in-chief of the Tygodnik Powszechny weekly, Jerzy Turowicz.

- The Queen seemed to give such a calm impression, without any grandiosity. She behaved completely normally, but of course following protocol. I got the impression that she was an extremely natural person. She greeted everyone, even those who wanted to exchanged a few words with her. What I really remember was such a completely relaxed, normal approach to virtually everyone, without any superiority. Kraków looked different then than it does now. Nevertheless, the Old Town and the Main Square were impressive and the Queen was happy to be in Kraków, - said the then mayor Józef Lassota in an interview with Radio Eska.

Elisabeth II flew directly from Balice airport to Prague.