



## Words of Welcome

One hundred and forty-four years ago, on the rich soil of the Zulu Kingdom, the valiant soldiers of Her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria met in battle with the warriors of King Cetshwayo kaMpande. It was truly a clash of empires, for the nation forged by King Shaka kaSenzangakhona proved far more formidable than anyone in British society, or the military, ever anticipated.

Indeed, on receiving the news that the Prince Imperial of France had perished on the battlefield in Zululand, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli famously lamented: "A remarkable people, the Zulu. They defeat our generals, they convert our bishops and they put an end to a mighty European dynasty."

For the descendants of those who fought in the Anglo-Zulu War, the history of its battles remains important. But there is significance for us all in what happened in 1879, for it set the course of nations.

As the maternal great grandson of King Cetshwayo kaMpande, and the paternal great grandson of Mnyamana Buthelezi, the Commander-in-Chief of all the King's Regiments in the Anglo-Zulu War, the story of 1879 has particular resonance for me.

I am grateful therefore that the Royal Philatelic Society London has given this important part of history a significant venue in the heart of the United Kingdom. It is a great privilege to welcome you to Clash of Empires: The 1879 Anglo-Zulu War. I hope that as you ponder the artefacts and original letters in this collection, you will experience the drama and tragedy as well as the valour and dignity of this, our shared history.

This exhibition is remarkable in that it is one of the largest artefact-driven museum exhibitions to look at this chapter of history. Moreover, it recognises that Zulu culture and history is far broader than the details of 1879, and this is reflected in the inclusion of a wide range of everyday Zulu cultural artefacts, including beadwork, izinkezo, amathunga, iziqhaza, as well as more military items such as izihlangu, imikhonto and amawisa.

The exhibition also features a series of handwritten letters and documents from King Cetshwayo and other members of the Royal Family, up to my late nephew, His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu.

Throughout the exhibition, Zulu, colonial and British perspectives are interpreted side-by-side, with dozens of different categories of artefacts

included. Many of the weapons and uniform items were actually used in the 1879 war. Additional period photographs, documents, artwork, publications and maps create a detailed doorway into the past.

The exhibition's narrative ranges from the formation of the Zulu Kingdom in the early 19th century to its contact with the British and the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War, along with the consequences of that conflict, including the 1906 Rebellion, and through to modern times.

Interestingly, it also looks at the impact this conflict has had on popular culture, including the films Zulu, Zulu Dawn and Shaka Zulu. I had the privilege of playing my grandfather, King Cetshwayo, in the 1964 film Zulu by director Cy Endfield, which was also the cinematic debut of Sir Michael Caine. My mother, Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu, an internationally acclaimed songstress, coached the thousands upon thousands of Zulu extras in the battle songs of that time.

I must thank the Curators of this exhibition for providing an entry point into the shared history of the Zulu Kingdom and Great Britain. May what you see here inspire you to explore this story further, and perhaps one day to visit the historic and cultural sites of KwaZulu-Natal, where the battlefields still speak.

It is a remarkable experience to stand where the British Red Coats faced the Zulu warriors, in a great clash of empires. But short of being on the very soil of Zululand, a journey through the artefacts and story of that watershed moment will undoubtedly leave its mark.

**PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI MP**  
**TRADITIONAL PRIME MINISTER TO THE ZULU MONARCH AND NATION**  
*UNDER HIS MAJESTY KING CYPRIAN BHEKUZULU KA SOLOMON 1954 – 1968*  
*HIS MAJESTY KING GOODWILL ZWELITHINI KA BHEKUZULU 1971 – 2021*  
*HIS MAJESTY KING MISUZULU KA ZWELITHINI 2022 – PRESENT*