



Pomp on parade

SPECTACULAR: Henry Dallal's picture of the Queen returning to Buckingham Palace

By Simon Heptinstall

Photographer like a trooper to regal splendour

AS A world-renowned travel and mountaineering photographer, Henry Dallal braved some of the most remote and dangerous places in the world. He stumbled on his most inspiring subject, however, in a quiet London backstreet.

By chance early one morning, Henry saw a troop of 30 mounted soldiers trotting along the cobbles near Knightsbridge Tube station.

'I was awestruck,' says the internationally acclaimed cameraman. 'For almost eight years since then, Henry has captured the spectacle of traditional British pomp and ceremony. Yet this most passionate fan of Royal rituals isn't British - he's from Iran.'

'Perhaps it's because I am foreign that I have become so entranced with British pageantry,' he says. 'There are few nations that can boast such a splendid treasure evolved over centuries.'

Henry, who now lives in Knights-

bridge himself, has spent hundreds of hours taking 23,000 behind-the-scenes photographs of the Household Cavalry and the Royal Horse Artillery. He has attended secret rehearsals, virtually lived with the troopers and their horses and has captured major public events such as Trooping the Colour and the Lord Mayor's Show.

In fact, one of Henry's best-loved pictures shows the Lord Mayor's parade with St Paul's Cathedral behind.

This year's parade will take place on Saturday, November 13, and anyone with an interest in colourful pageantry would find it enthralling.

It will include more than 2,000 soldiers and 20 marching bands. The Royal Air Force will stage a dramatic flypast and the finale will be a spectacular fireworks display. The three-mile procession will feature 30 Rolls-Royces, 250 horses and 20 carriages led by

after her birthday parade in 2001, with an escort of the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal

who works capture the of London

the fabulous gilt-encrusted State Coach.

For many countries, an 800-year-old tradition such as this would be a premiere attraction. Yet in Britain we are spoiled by so much pomp and pageantry that for many people, the Lord Mayor's Show will barely register.

Perhaps that's because this colourful journey by the new Lord Mayor of the City of London to the Royal Courts of Justice to take his oath of allegiance to the Sovereign is just one of a succession of pageants, including the Queen's attendance at the State Opening of Parliament on November 23.

Everyone from a trooper to the Sovereign, as Colonel-in-Chief of the Household Cavalry, takes pride in their duties,' says Henry.

He has become so close to the

Royal establishment that he has twice been invited to photograph the Queen. 'It was a great honour to be commissioned to photograph Her Majesty,' he says. 'It was a wonderful moment in my photographic career.'

One of Henry's shots of the Queen is now in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. An exhibition of his pictures is touring the world and his self-published coffee-table book *Pageantry And Performance* has sold more than 10,000 copies so far, despite costing about £50.

IS images are now on show in Naples, Florida, where more than 250,000 visitors are expected. The rare accolade of an exhibition at Washington's Smithsonian Institute is planned for 2005.

Henry's book was launched at Windsor Castle last year when his photographs were projected on to the castle walls.

A striking image of the Household Cavalry from the book earned him the BBC Radio 4 Today Pro-

gramme 2004 award for the 'best view of Britain at 6am'.

Henry's passion is an example to many of us who can be complacent about familiar marching displays, immaculate uniforms and centuries-old ritual when it happens all around us so often.

'But where else in the world would you see a whole orchestra made up of soldiers, spectacularly uniformed, mounted on horses while playing music, without missing a beat or a gait, all hands-free?' asks Henry enthusiastically.

He adds: 'The initial spark of fascination that was ignited in me seven years ago grows stronger than ever. I hope that my photos kindle something similar in the British people - a pride in their ceremonial events and a refusal to take their rich pageantry for granted.'

● Further details of the Lord Mayor's Show are available at www.lordmayorshow.org. For more information on Henry Dallal's work, to order his book or to see more photographs, visit www.henrydallalphotography.com