

SEVEN



DIAMOND JUBILEE SPECIAL

A ROYAL LIFE

The Elizabeth you know, and the one you don't.
By Amanda Foreman, Hugo Vickers and Sally Bedell Smith

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THE ROLE SHE WAS BORN TO PLAY

Sixty years ago, a young woman learned that her father had died. The quiet poise with which she accepted the news – and the crown – defines her monarchy to this day. But how well do we truly know Queen Elizabeth II? To begin our Diamond Jubilee celebration, Amanda Foreman examines a life lived in the spotlight

On June 3 1953, the most famous car mechanic in the world was crowned Queen before an estimated television audience of 227 million, 27 million of them in Britain. Elizabeth II had been a popular figure in her own right since the war when, as a 19-year-old princess, she was photographed in her Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service uniform changing the tyre of a military vehicle. The sight of the heir to the throne doing her part for the war effort, just like millions of other less privileged women, profoundly affected people. Without uttering a word, Elizabeth had demonstrated her total solidarity with the nation.

Two years later, on the announcement of Elizabeth's engagement to Prince Philip of Greece, the solidarity forged in wartime came to the fore as hundreds of women tried to donate their clothing coupons towards the royal wedding dress. Since it was illegal to swap or give away coupons, Elizabeth returned each one with a grateful note attached. In the end, the extra coupons required to create a dress worthy of the occasion came from a one-off donation by the government.

By the time Elizabeth became Queen, the expectation that the monarchy was going to change under her rule had become a certainty. Evidence of her determination to be forward-thinking was everywhere, not least in her bold decision to allow cameras inside Westminster Abbey. But the big question surrounding the monarchy – what would be its role in a post-empire Britain – had yet to be answered. Shortly after the Coronation, the Queen and Prince Philip embarked on an ambitious global tour of the Commonwealth. During the six months she was away, the Queen covered more than 43,000 miles, visited all eight Commonwealth nations, gave 102 speeches and was personally introduced to more than 13,000 people. Despite the unrelenting nature of the tour, the Queen found the time to ponder the future and she drew inspiration from her foreign experiences.

On her return to Britain she gave a speech that outlined her vision for the monarchy: it existed to serve the needs of the nation and the Commonwealth, and as those needs changed, so too would the monarchy adapt. "The structure and framework of a constitutional monarchy could easily stand as an archaic and meaningless survival," she

CAPTURING THE QUEEN.

1 Celebrated childrens' photographer **MARCUS ADAMS** took this portrait of Princess Elizabeth at his Mayfair studios, in 1941. He once described the Royals as "full of fun". **2** Sterling Henry Nahum Baron, who went simply by **BARON**, took all the official photographs of the Queen's wedding, in 1947. **3** **LORD**

SNOWDON's official 80th birthday portrait, taken in 2006, almost 40 years after he first photographed her. For that sitting, he "asked her to sit on a piano stool and then we could get every different view of her..." **4** A life-long favourite of the Queen Mother, *Vogue* photographer **CECIL BEATON** first shot the Queen in 1939.

"Luckily it seems that the Royal family have only to get a glimpse of me to be convulsed with giggles," he once said. "I found that it was very easy to reduce the Queen to a condition of almost ineradicable *fou rire*." This portrait of the Queen with her Garter Star was taken in 1955





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CAPTURING THE QUEEN. 1

"I wasn't given any special instructions on how to address her," says Russian painter **SERGEI PAVLENKO** of this 2000 portrait. "It was explained to me that etiquette required me to call her 'ma'am', but she didn't like it. So I addressed her as 'Your Majesty'. I tried to talk as little as possible so as not to get distracted from my work." **2** Her Majesty sat for the Italian artist **PIETRO ANNIGONI** both for this 1954 portrait, and again in 1956. "I did not want to paint her as a film star," he said. "I saw her as a monarch, alone in the problems of her responsibility"



declared. "But wherever we have been we have received visible and audible proof that it is real and living in the hearts of the people."

She promised to ensure the monarchy would continue to be "real and living" throughout her reign. Two years later, the Queen stunned the world by being the first head of state to confront the social prejudice against lepers. In February 1956, she visited a leper colony in Nigeria and shook hands with one of its inhabitants. With this simple act, she dismantled a taboo that stretched back to biblical times.

Sometimes, however, good intentions and lofty ideals are not enough to stave off criticism. Postwar Britain was a place of enormous social upheaval. Public rumblings over whether a modern society needed a monarchy suddenly turned into outright attacks on Elizabeth herself. Everything was deemed to be wrong: her voice, "too high"; her clothes, "too tweedy"; her manner, "too priggish". The changes she had instituted, such as abolishing the presentation of debutantes at court, either did not go far enough or, as in the case of awarding MBEs to the Beatles, were said to be going too far in the other direction.

In July 1963, the dramatic change in the public's attitude to the monarchy was captured by a shocking incident at the Aldwych Theatre in London. The Queen, Prince Philip and the Queen Mother were booed as they accompanied the King and Queen of Greece to the royal box. The real target of the demonstrators was the Queen of Greece, whose Nazi ties were well known. But this was the first time in modern memory that a crowd turned on the monarchy.

There had not been such a display of hostility towards a sovereign since Queen Victoria's ill-planned visit to Mile End Road in 1887, when her carriage was booed all the way down the street. "Socialists and the worst sort of Irish," the then prime minister Lord Salisbury had reassured the shaken Queen, while inwardly vowing to confront the over-complacent palace courtier who had allowed the fiasco to happen. For Elizabeth, the problem of complacency lay with her well-meaning but unyielding press secretary whose ability to communicate with the media was hampered by his undisguised loathing of journalists.

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Increasingly during the Sixties, the Queen and the Royal family became fair game in the press. There seemed to be no one at the palace who was able to explain that behind the pomp and ceremony there was a serious woman doing a serious job. Then, in 1968, William Heseltine became the new press secretary and a quiet revolution at the palace was soon under way.

A year later the British public was reintroduced to the monarchy via the first ever royal documentary. Watched by 40 million people in Britain and 350 million people around the world, the film showed the Queen both at her best and at her most human. The public finally saw what the Queen did all day long; from the hours spent poring over her state papers to the moments spent with her children. Although some traditionalists felt that the mystery of the monarchy had been taken away, the film heralded the dawn of a new relationship between the sovereign and the people. In 1970 the Queen went on her first walkabout while touring New Zealand. The crowds loved it and a new tradition was born.

Elizabeth built on the triumphs at the end of the Sixties to turn the Seventies into a decade of real gains for the monarchy. The entire Royal Family experienced a surge in popularity, especially during the Silver Jubilee in 1977. Polls consistently placed support for the monarchy near the 80 per cent mark. Throughout all the heated debates over Scottish devolution, the one piece of Britain that the Scots were not keen to jettison was the Queen.

There were, of course, sadnesses during these years, some purely familial and others that cast a great shadow over the entire nation – such as the murder of Lord Mountbatten, Philip's uncle and the Queen's cousin, by the IRA in 1979. The Queen's legendary nerve was called into play once when a disturbed youth fired blanks at her on the Mall during a birthday parade; and a second time when an obsessive named Michael Fagan burst into her bedroom at Buckingham Palace. These incidents, though, were relatively tame compared to Queen Victoria's six assassination attempts, or her encounters with "the boy Jones", whose obsession led him to break into the palace three times.

If the audience of 750 million at the 1981 wedding of Charles and Diana was anything to go by, the monarchy was



3 "It was unnerving when she first entered the room," says the Canadian photographer **CHRIS LEVINE** of this 2004 shoot. "Initially she gave very little away; she has a highly developed mechanism to observe rather than give out. But once she was engaged in the shoot she was very personable"

Some of her changes have been small; others have touched millions

on a trajectory that had only one direction. But 10 years later, the good times came to a halt. The great fire at Windsor Castle on November 20 1992 (which also happened to be the 45th wedding anniversary of the Queen and Prince Philip), came to symbolise not just one terrible year but several.

Behind closed doors, the Queen instituted the co-ordination and research unit (CRU) – a kind of royal think tank – to help her re-examine every aspect of the monarchy. With little fuss or fanfare, the spirit of innovation that had typified the early years of Elizabeth's reign came back in force. Some changes have been small, such as abolishing the rule that only a spouse could accompany an honoree to the palace. Others have touched millions of people, such as a new award to recognise voluntary service, or the opening of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle to the public. Together, they have refreshed the monarchy's relationship with the people and given it a new kind of authority based on civic pride and national identity.

Guiding all these changes, however, has been the Queen's insistence that the monarchy must never forget its duty to preserve as well as innovate. The public expects both. Nowadays, photographs of the Duchess of Cambridge in full evening dress greeting heads of state are as popular as those showing her food shopping at Waitrose.

The fundamental point about the Queen, however, is that she is admired precisely because she has never tried to be anything other than her authentic self. Her sworn oath to serve the Commonwealth when it was just eight countries remains unwavering even though it has now grown to 54.

Similarly, her promise in 1953 to make the monarchy "real and living" is the reason that it has not just survived but flourished over the past six decades. Last year witnessed the great joy of the royal wedding; but just as important, the Queen achieved the greatest triumph of her reign in bringing about a reconciliation between Britain and Ireland. Only a figure as beloved and respected as the Queen could undo years of mutual bitterness through words alone.

In a long reign of many legacies, perhaps the Queen's greatest legacy of all is the example of duty, loyalty, and patriotism she has set for generations past, the generations present, and for the generations yet to come.

The Queen by numbers

2,500 Number of wedding gifts received by the Queen and Prince Philip.

387,000+ Number of awards and honours the Queen has conferred.

16 Number of countries of which the Queen is now constitutional monarch.

20,000 Average number of cake slices consumed during a Buckingham Palace garden party.

32 Number of countries of which the Queen has been constitutional monarch throughout her reign.

129 Number of foreign countries the Queen has visited throughout her reign.

23 Number of ships the Queen has launched.

139 Number of portraits the Queen has sat for.

£300 million Her estimated net worth.

2,000 Number of guests at the Queen's wedding.

10,000 Number of congratulatory telegrams received by the Queen on her wedding day.

78,000 Number of Christmas puddings given to staff by the Queen during her reign.

2,868 Number of diamonds on the Queen's Imperial State Crown.

1 inch Height removed from the crown to make it more comfortable before the Coronation.

88 Number of swans on the Thames owned by the Queen

43,618 The miles covered by the Queen on her first Commonwealth tour.

280,000 Number of telegrams the Queen has sent to couples celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary.

30 Number of corgis the Queen has owned.

4 Number of "dorgis" (new breed of dog introduced when one of the Queen's corgis mated with Princess Margaret's dachshund) the Queen currently owns.

430 Approximate number of engagements handled by the Queen each year.

4 ½ tons Weight of the Queen's luggage on a 1991 official visit to the US.

£25,000 Legal costs paid to the Queen by the *Daily Mirror* after a reporter, masquerading as a royal footman, wrote a story revealing that Her Majesty ate marmalade on toast for breakfast and enjoyed watching *The Bill*.

80% Current approval rating of the Queen in the UK.

48% Current approval rating of democratically elected Prime Minister.

5 Number of people known to have publicly broken the "no touching" rule with the Queen (Alice Frazier, Paul Keating, Brian Tobin, Louis Garneau, Michelle Obama).

230,873 Queen's service number in the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service during the Second World War.

120,000 hectares Agricultural land owned by the Queen.

£50,000 Amount saved by the Queen's cancellation of the Buckingham Palace Christmas party in 2010.

£10 billion Estimated value of the Queen's personal art collection.

£7,900,000 Annual amount the Queen receives from public funds.

£15,000 Princess Elizabeth's annual income, aged 21.

½ a mouthful Quantity of kava, an alcoholic beverage made partly with spit, drunk by the Queen during a 1953 visit to Fiji.