

Queen Elizabeth II



History

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Elizabeth II became our queen in 1952. Probably only our great-grandparents or oldest grandparents can remember a time before her reign.

Elizabeth II was our country's longest-serving monarch ever. This is a short story of her long, and special, life.



Childhood



Princess Elizabeth was born on 21 April 1926.

Her little sister, Margaret, was born on 21 August 1930.

When they were children, Elizabeth did not expect to become queen because her father was not king.

The king, Edward VIII, was her uncle, her father's older brother.





King Edward VIII as a baby with his great grandmother, Queen Victoria.

When Elizabeth was 10 years old, her uncle did something that no British monarch had ever done before.

He abdicated (or gave up) the throne.

In December 1936, Elizabeth's father became King George VI.

Princess Elizabeth became heir to the throne.

The Second World War



Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret were sent to Windsor Castle during the Second World War. Their parents refused to leave London.

The King and Queen paid many visits to the East End of London when it was bombed during the time we know as the Blitz.

When Buckingham Palace was also bombed, the Queen famously said they could at last, 'look the East End in the face'.

During the war, Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret recorded a radio broadcast for the BBC's Children's Hour. These are the words of Princess Elizabeth:



"We are trying to do all we can to help our gallant sailors, soldiers and airmen, and we are trying, too, to bear our own share of the danger and sadness of war."

"We know, every one of us, that in the end all will be well; for God will care for us and give us victory and peace. And when peace comes, remember it will be for us, the children of today, to make the world of tomorrow a better and happier place."



When she was 19, in 1944, Princess Elizabeth joined the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Apparently, her father was a bit worried about this, but he allowed it anyway.

She did a driving and vehicle maintenance course. During her training, the King and Queen visited the Women's Territorial Service. It's said that Princess Elizabeth was surprised at all the work that went into preparing for a royal visit. She was used to being on the other side! She's reported to have said, *"I'll know for next time"*.

At the end of her six week course, she qualified as Subaltern Elizabeth Windsor.



Royal Wedding



On 20 November 1947, Princess Elizabeth married a handsome young naval officer called Philip. Before they got married, the king granted Philip the title of Duke of Edinburgh.

The country was still recovering from the war, which had ended only two years earlier. The joyful event of the wedding brightened up those bleak days. The nation came together to wish the couple well.



Queen



On 6 February 1952, King George VI died. Elizabeth was now Queen Elizabeth II.

Elizabeth was very sad, but she immediately did her best to serve the country.

Her coronation was held on 2 June 1953.

Something called television had arrived, and suddenly everyone wanted one! Millions of families gathered round their brand new television set to watch the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The pictures were in black and white, but back then it was a new and exciting technology.

All over the country, people also held street parties.





The Queen worked very hard. She was patron of several hundred charities, and visited charities and organisations almost every day. She also attended many important state events in this country and abroad.

She only recently handed over some of her roles to her children and grandchildren.

She also had a weekly meeting with the Prime Minister. She worked with 15 Prime Ministers. Now King Charles III has taken her place. Lots of people would love to know what is said! But all the conversations are completely private.





Queen Elizabeth loved horses. She had her first pony when she was only four years old, a little Shetland pony called Peggy.

She also owned race horses, and enjoyed horse-racing. When her race horses retired, she made sure they were well looked after.

The Queen was also famous for her love of dogs, especially corgis. She owned over thirty during her time as queen!

We have celebrated five major jubilees during Queen Elizabeth II's reign.



1977 – Silver Jubilee (25 years)

The new tube line was named in celebration (although the Jubilee Line didn't actually open until 1979.)

2002 – Golden Jubilee (50 years)

2012 – Diamond Jubilee (60 years)

2017 – Sapphire Jubilee (65 years)

2022 – Platinum Jubilee (70 years).

Queen Elizabeth II was the first ever British monarch to celebrate a Sapphire or Platinum jubilee.

Prince Philip



The Queen is our longest-serving monarch. Her husband, Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh, is the longest-serving British royal consort. They were married for over 73 years.

On Friday 9th April 2021, Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh sadly died.

People across the country offered their sympathy to the Queen and her family.

His funeral was held on Saturday 17th April 2021.

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Queen Elizabeth II became our longest-serving monarch on 9th September 2015, when she overtook her great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria.

The Queen's real birthday was 21st April, but we always celebrate the monarch's official birthday in June, in a ceremony called 'Trooping the Colour'.

Queen Elizabeth II was the longest-serving monarch of the United Kingdom.

She sadly passed away on 8 September 2022.

Her firstborn son succeeded her to the throne and became King Charles III.

