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Elizabeth R

Passport

**Queen
Elizabeth II**

2020/2021



Elizabeth II

Elizabeth II (Elizabeth Alexandra Mary; born 21 April 1926) is the Queen of the United Kingdom, and the other Commonwealth realms.

She became Queen when her father, King George VI, died on 6 February 1952. Since 9 September 2015, Elizabeth II has ruled longer than any other king or queen in the history of the United Kingdom. She has also ruled longer than any other living king or queen in the world, since the death of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej on 13 October 2016.

The countries of which she is Queen are known as Commonwealth realms. Their total population is over 129 million. Although Elizabeth II is the queen of each country separately, all are independent countries. Elizabeth II lives and spends most of her time in the United Kingdom. In all the other countries where she is queen, a person is chosen to represent her. This person may be known as the Governor General.

Elizabeth II has few political powers, and is not a ruler in the usual sense. She is Queen and interested in the running of her countries, but she does not tell the governments what to do. She has regular meetings with people from her governments, but it is they who run the countries. She performs ceremonies for the governments, gives out honours, and visits and supports many charities.

Since 1947, the Queen has been married to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip was born into the royal families of Greece and Denmark. Just before they were married, he officially became a citizen of the United Kingdom, and changed his name to Philip Mountbatten. He became the Duke of Edinburgh on the day he married, and became a Prince of the United Kingdom in 1957. The Queen and Prince Philip have four children, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Early Life

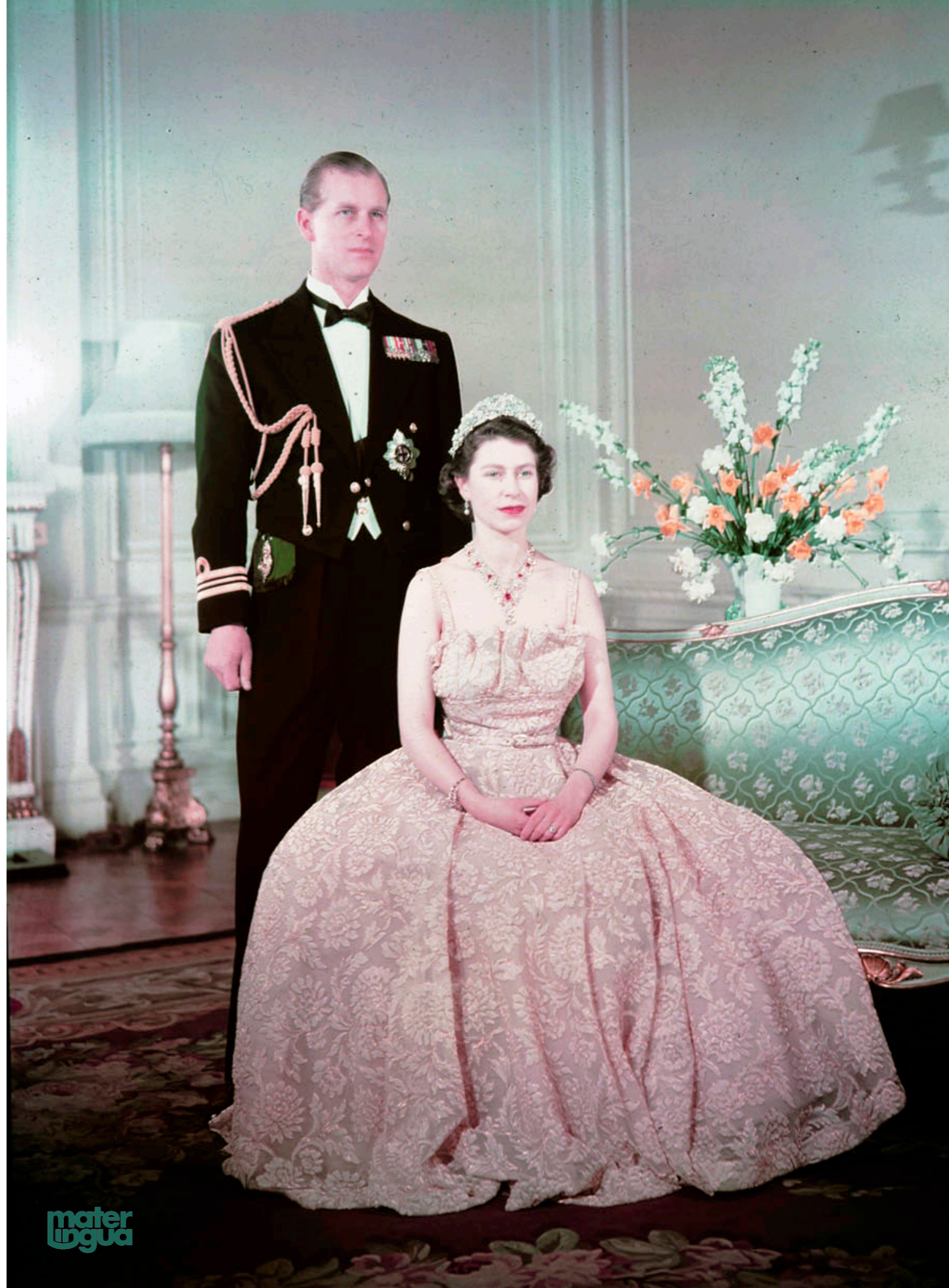
Elizabeth was born in her grandparents' home at 17 Bruton street, Mayfair, London on 21 April 1926. Her father was Prince Albert, Duke of York, who later became George VI. His brother was the Prince of Wales. Her mother was Elizabeth, Duchess of York. Princess Elizabeth was the granddaughter of King George V and Queen Mary. She was named after her mother. Her nickname was « Lilibet". Princess Elizabeth had one sister, Princess Margaret. Margaret was born in 1930. The two young princesses were taught at home. They had a governess named Marion Crawford. Princess Elizabeth was third in the line of succession to the British Throne. The first in line was her uncle, the Prince of Wales. The second in line was her father, the Duke of York. She was third in line. Elizabeth's grandfather, King George V, died in 1936. Her uncle became King Edward VIII. He was king only for a short time. He abdicated. His brother, Elizabeth's father the Duke of York, became King George VI. One day, Princess Elizabeth would be Queen. Elizabeth was 13 years old when World War II started. London was bombed. Elizabeth and Margaret were moved to Windsor Castle. This was for their safety. People thought that they should be sent to Canada. Their mother did not approve this idea. Princess Elizabeth joined the British army in 1945. She drove a truck. She was a mechanic. In 1947, she made her first official trip outside Britain. She went with her parents to South Africa. She made a speech on her 21st birthday. She said her whole life would be devoted to the service of British Commonwealth and Empire.



Life as Queen

Princess Elizabeth married Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on 20 November 1947. The wedding was held in Westminster Abbey. The couple lived mostly at Clarence House in London. The couple has four children; Charles, Prince of Wales was born 14 November 1948. Their second child is a daughter. She is Anne, Princess Royal. She was born 15 August 1950. The Royal couple had two more sons. Prince Andrew, Duke of York was born 19 February 1960. Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex was born 10 March 1964. The princes and princess sometimes use the name Mountbatten-Windsor. This is their official last name when they need one (royal families rarely use them).

In 1952, Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip moved into Buckingham Palace in central London. This is the main official home of the monarch. Her early years as Queen were spent traveling to many places. In 1953, the Queen and Prince Philip began an around the world tour in the Royal Yacht, Britannia. Their tour went for 6 months. She was the first reigning monarch to visit Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. In October 1957, she made an official visit to the United States. She spoke to the United Nations General Assembly. She toured Canada. She became the first monarch to open the nation's Parliament. The Queen likes to go to Canada. She calls Canada her "home away from home ». In February 1961, she visited Turkey, India, Iran, Pakistan and Nepal for the first time. Since then, the Queen has made visits to most Commonwealth countries. She has also been to most European countries and many countries outside Europe. In 1991, she became the first British monarch to speak to a joint session of the United States Congress. She goes to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. She is the most widely traveled head of state in history.



The Queen as a person

Faith and duty

Elizabeth II, as the Monarch of the United Kingdom, is the "Supreme Governor" of the Church of England and sworn protector of the Church of Scotland. She is very interested in the Church of England, but the Archbishop of Canterbury runs the church. She rarely attends the yearly meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Queen is deeply religious. In her Christmas Day television broadcast in 2000, she said:

“To many of us, our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me, the teachings of Christ, and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example.”

The Queen regularly goes to church wherever she is: at St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, St. Mary Magdalene Church at Sandringham House, Crathie Kirk at Balmoral Castle, and Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh, when she stays there in Holyroodhouse, her official home in Scotland. The Queen often meets with leaders from other religions as well. In 1980, she became the first British Monarch to visit the Vatican, where she was welcomed by Pope John Paul II. She made another visit twenty years later on 17 October 2000. Queen Elizabeth II is Patron of "The Council of Christians and Jews" in the UK.

The Queen has shown a very strong sense of duty, ever since she was a girl. Her father, King George VI, was not meant to be king. Her uncle became king when her grandfather died. But he fell in love with an American woman who was divorced, and that wasn't allowed. So he had to give up being king very shortly after ascending. George VI didn't want to be king, because he was quite nervous and had a stammer. However, Elizabeth's grandfather said that he didn't think her uncle was very good as a king, and wanted George to reign, then Elizabeth. From the moment she realised that one day she would be Queen, she became very interested in her duties and did all she could to help her father. Her promise to serve her people all her life has always been very important to her. Some people think that now that she is old, perhaps she will retire ("abdicate") and let her son Prince Charles take over. People who know her well, including Prince Charles, have said that this will never happen.



The Queen has often shown courage, ever since she joined the military at 18. During a trip to Ghana in 1961, she was warned that it was dangerous to be near the President Kwame Nkrumah because people wanted to kill him. But she refused to stay away. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Harold Macmillan, wrote that the Queen got very impatient with people if they tried to treat her like "a film star".

In 1964, when the Queen was invited to Quebec, there were fears for her safety because there was opposition to her visit. There were suggestions that the tour should be cancelled. But the Queen's secretary said that the Queen would not want to be stopped from going to Quebec because of any danger.

During the Trooping the Colour in 1981, she was shot at, but she carried on. The Queen was praised for her courage and for her ability to keep her horse calm. It was later discovered that the shots were blanks. In 1982, a man called Michael Fagan broke into Buckingham Palace in the morning, and found the Queen's bedroom. He woke her up, and sat on her bed, until the guards came to take him away.



Family Relations

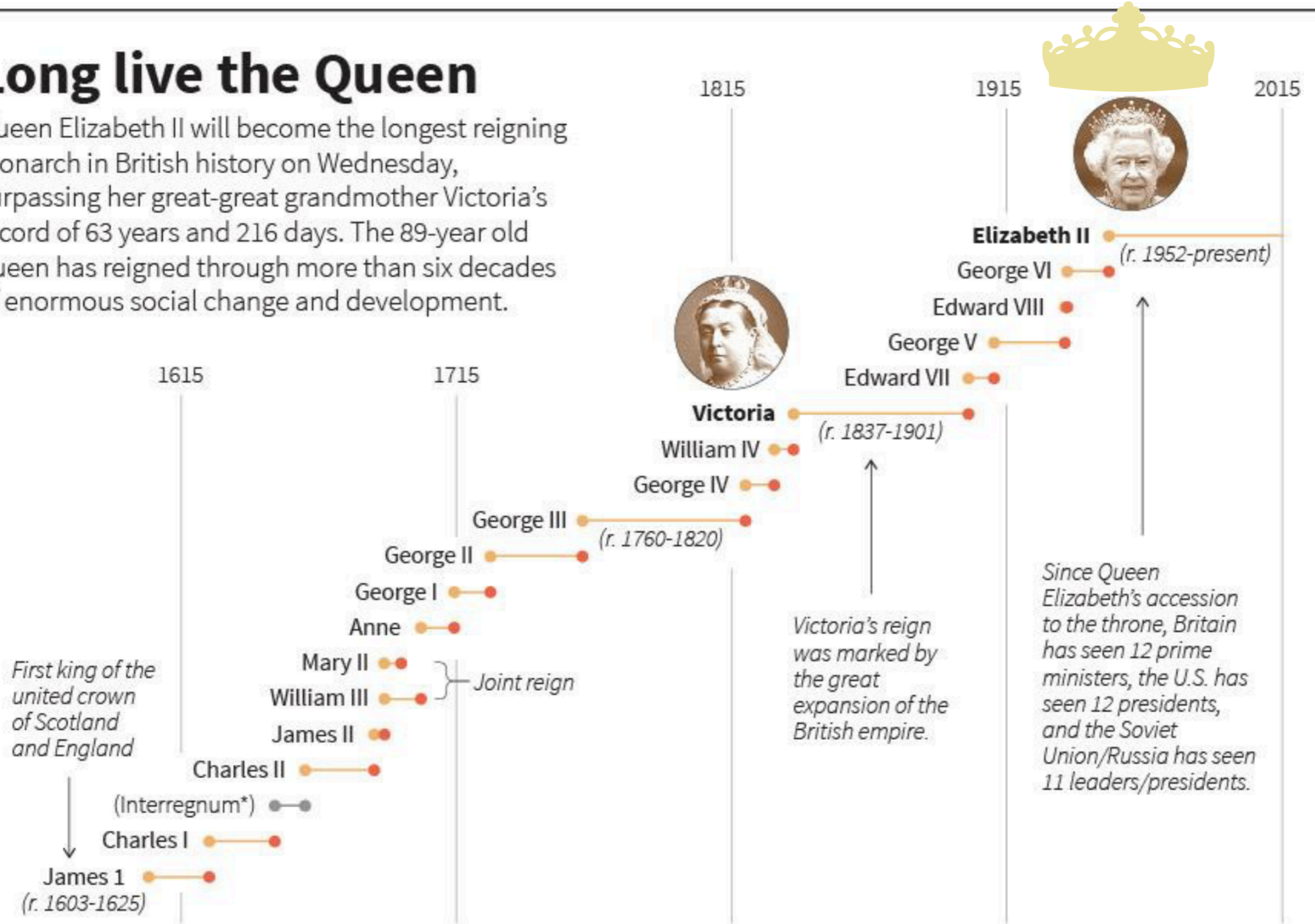
Throughout her long reign, Queen Elizabeth II has been supported in her duties by her husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip promised to help the Queen on the day of her Coronation. The Queen was also helped by her mother Queen Elizabeth, known as "The Queen Mother", who lived to be 101 years old, and stayed very active in her old-age. The Queen is the patron of many organisations and charities. She has many invitations and official duties. Many of the duties have been shared by other members of the Royal Family, who have also become patrons of many organisations.

The Queen and Prince Philip with some of their family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, 2007. On the left is Princess Beatrice, Prince William is talking to Viscount Linley. To the right is the Princes Royal, in Colonel's uniform. The Queen was sad about the broken marriages and divorces of three of her children, Prince Charles, Princess Anne and Prince Andrew. Prince Charles's marriage to Lady Diana Spencer was thought to be a fairytale wedding because Diana was young and beautiful, and they seemed very happy. But soon the marriage became troubled, and after their divorce, she was killed in a car accident in 1997. On 9 April 2005, Prince Charles married Camilla Parker-Bowles, whom he had loved for many years. In the year 2002, within a few months of each other, the Queen's mother and sister, Princess Margaret, both died. As the Queen is old, people worry about her health, but she is rarely sick. However, she is leaving more duties to the younger members of the Royal Family, particularly to Prince Charles, who will become King when she dies.



Long live the Queen

Queen Elizabeth II will become the longest reigning monarch in British history on Wednesday, surpassing her great-great grandmother Victoria's record of 63 years and 216 days. The 89-year old queen has reigned through more than six decades of enormous social change and development.



Source: The Royal Household. *Between reigns. (r.) Reign.



Crowds cheer Queen Elizabeth II as UK's longest-reigning monarch.

