

British Culture 2 - Queen Elizabeth II

Queen Elizabeth II (Elizabeth Alexandra Mary) was born on April 21, 1926, in London. However, her official birthday is celebrated on the second Saturday of June. This day is called 'The Trooping of the Colours' or '**The Queen's** Birthday Parade'. During this ceremony **the Queen** takes the salute from thousands of guardsmen who parade the Colour (their regiment's flag). **Queen Elizabeth II** came to the throne on February 6, 1952 and she was crowned at Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953.



The Queen

The Queen lives at Buckingham Palace, in London. It is her official home. If you see the Royal Standard flying from the flag pole on top of Buckingham Palace, it means that **the Queen** is at home.



Buckingham Palace



The Royal Standard

The Queen also has other places of residence. She likes to spend some time at Windsor Castle in England. Windsor Castle is the largest occupied castle in the world.



Windsor Castle

When she is in Scotland, **the Queen** stays in the Palace of Holyroodhouse, her official residence, or at Balmoral Castle, her private residence.



The Palace of Holyroodhouse



Balmoral Castle

The Queen spends every Christmas at Sandringham House, in Norfolk, in the East of England.



Sandringham House

On November 20, 1947, the Queen married Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.



Queen Elizabeth II has eight grandchildren.

Her two most famous grandchildren are Prince William and Prince Harry.

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip have four children:



Prince Charles (1948)



Princess Anne (1950)



Prince Andrew (1960)



Prince Edward (1964)



Prince William



Prince Harry

Queen Elizabeth II likes horses and she regularly attends horse races and equestrian events.

She likes walking in the countryside and working her Labradors at Sandringham House. She is fond of Scottish country dancing.

(Adapted from <http://www.royal.gov.uk/HMTheQueen/Interests/Overview.aspx>)

Queen Elizabeth II is a constitutional monarch. This means that she does not really govern her country (the United Kingdom is run by the Prime Minister and the government). But she does many important things for her country. As Head of State, Queen Elizabeth II goes abroad and invites other world leaders to come to the United Kingdom. As Head of the Armed Forces, she is the only one who can declare war on another country (after consultation with the government). The Queen is also Head of the Church of England. She appoints archbishops and bishops with the help of her Prime Minister.

Every day the Queen receives a lot of documents that she must read and sign. She also represents her country during important celebrations.

Finally she visits a lot of different places such as hospitals, schools, etc., all around the United Kingdom.

(Adapted from <http://projectbritain.com/royal/role.htm>)

The Queen's Routine

1. The Queen's day begins at 7.30am when her maid¹ brings morning tea. There is milk but no sugar and a few biscuits. The maid turns on the radio, which is tuned to BBC Radio 4's Today programme, and the Queen listens to the day's breaking news stories while drinking her tea.
2. The maid goes into the adjoining bathroom and runs the Queen a bath. While the Queen is taking a bath, her dresser lays out the first outfit (= clothes) of the day in the adjacent dressing room. The Queen may have to change several times a day, depending on her engagements. After she has dressed, the Queen's hairdresser brushes and arranges her hair in the familiar royal style.
3. Breakfast is served at 8.30am in the Queen's private, first-floor dining room overlooking the Palace garden. A footman² has brought the food - usually just toast and marmalade - with more tea and coffee.
4. The Queen likes to read *The Daily Telegraph* as well as the *Racing Post*. Conversation may turn to the day's official engagements but is often kept to a minimum.
5. Following the tradition, the Queen listens to her kilted piper play a selection of tunes on the bagpipes beneath her window. It is the principal duty of the Queen's Piper to play every weekday at 9am for about 15 minutes when she is in residence at Buckingham Palace, Windsor, Edinburgh's Holyroodhouse Palace or Balmoral Castle in the Scottish Highlands.
6. By 9.30am, the Queen is usually seated at the Chippendale desk in her sitting-room-cum-office with her Corgis³ for company. Private secretary Sir Robin Janvrin, a former naval officer, arrives from his office on the ground floor with some documents for the Queen to read and sign. Sir Robin reads the documents and discusses the day's programme, offering briefing notes on engagements and individuals the Queen is due to meet. If guests are expected at the Palace, the housekeeper⁴ is summoned⁵ and arrangements made.
7. Later in the morning, the Queen's lady in waiting⁶ on duty is called into the sitting room and asked to reply to correspondence. Letters from children receive special attention from the lady in waiting who signs the response, written on headed notepaper, on the Queen's behalf.
8. On investiture⁷ days, when the Queen presents honours, she goes to the Palace ballroom for 11am to perform the ceremony which takes more than an hour. Official, but private, audiences with foreign diplomats, military chiefs and senior politicians take place at other times.

9. Lunch is usually eaten alone although occasionally a lady-in-waiting is invited. Periodically, the Queen and Prince Philip host special lunches for people with successful careers or the royal couple may entertain a visiting VIP.
10. Immediately after lunch, if she has time, the Queen likes to walk in the Palace garden with her dogs. Sometimes there are engagements in the afternoon when the Queen travels to a nearby event or, in summer, hosts a garden party in the Palace grounds.
11. When in the capital, the Queen likes to be back in her Palace suite by 5pm for high tea. Delicate sandwiches, scones and the Queen's favourite Dundee cake are served.
12. After tea the Queen returns to her desk for an hour or so and, if there is no evening engagement, retires to her private rooms. The exception is Tuesday evening when the Prime Minister comes to the Palace at 6.30pm for his weekly audience.
13. Dinner, when there are no guests, is a relaxed affair for the Queen and Prince Philip who prefer to change into comfortable clothes rather than more formal wear.
14. For relaxation the Queen likes to watch television or complete jigsaw puzzles. But she often spends part of the evening working on her "boxes", the official despatch cases which contain Government and Commonwealth documents. Because she has so much paperwork to look at during a normal day, she has developed a form of speed reading to scan pages.
15. The Queen is not a late-night person and is usually in bed by 11pm. However, she may decide to burn the midnight oil⁸ with some more reading.

(Adapted from

[http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/archive/2007/01/19/Golden+Jubilee+\(p_library_2002_jubilee\)/1135194.All_in_a_Royal_day/](http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/archive/2007/01/19/Golden+Jubilee+(p_library_2002_jubilee)/1135194.All_in_a_Royal_day/))

VOCABULARY

- ¹ a **maid** a female servant in a house or hotel.
 - ² a **footman** a male servant in a house in the past, who opened the door to visitors, served food at table, etc.
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- ³ a **Corgi**
 - ⁴ a **housekeeper** a person, usually a woman, whose job is to manage the shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc. in a house or an institution.
 - ⁵ **to summon sb** to order sb to come to you.
 - ⁶ a **lady-in-waiting** a woman who goes to places with, and helps, a queen or princess.
 - ⁷ an **investiture** a very special day when an individual who has been awarded an honour receives their award in person from the Queen or the Prince of Wales.
 - ⁸ **burn the midnight oil** to study or work until late at night