

# **The British Royal Family**

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a monarchy. The head of the monarchy is a king or queen of the House of Windsor. The monarch of the UK is also the head of the British Commonwealth such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand...but the monarch is only a formal head because each state has its own government.

At present the head of the United Kingdom is the King Charles III. Until 2022 the head of the UK was the Queen Elisabeth II. The head of the state often meets the Prime Minister and the members of the government, formally opens the Parliament. The official seat of the British monarch is Buckingham Palace in the centre of London. It is the biggest royal office in the world. Every year many tourists come to see the Changing of the Guards in front of Buckingham Palace.

**Queen Elisabeth II** – she was born on 21st April 1926 as the first child of the Duke and the Duchess of York – later the king George VI and the Queen Elisabeth. In 1947 married Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. At the age of 25 she became the Queen (when her father died). She was the longest lived and longest reigning monarch in the world. She died on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at Balmoral Castle at the age of 96.

**Prince Philip** - the husband of the Queen was prince Philip, the Prince of Edinburgh. He was born as Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark. At the age of 18 he joined the Royal navy. During the WWII he served in the British Mediterranean and Pacific fleets. He married Elisabeth in 1947. They had 4 children - three sons: Charles, Andrew, Edward, and the only daughter Anne. He died in April 2021 at the age of 99.

**Prince Charles** was the Prince of Wales and he is the Queen's oldest son. He was born in 1948. After finishing University, he served in the Royal navy and the Royal air force. He married Diana Spencer, later known as Princess Diana. They had 2 sons – William and Harry. He got divorced in 1996. After Diana's death he married his long-term partner Camilla Parker Bowles in 2005. After Queen Elisabeth II death, he became King Charles III.

**Diana Spencer** - she was born in 1961. She got engaged to Prince Charles while she was working at a nursery school. She was Prince Charles's first wife and mother of their two sons. She was very popular among people, they loved her. Diana and Charles got divorced due to extramarital affairs in 1996. Diana died in 1997 in a car crash in Paris when being followed by paparazzi.

**Prince Andrew** - he is the Duke of York. He was born in 1960 as the third child of Queen Elisabeth II. He served in the royal navy as a helicopter pilot. His wife was Sarah Ferguson. They had two daughters – Beatrice and Eugenie. In 2019 he had to resign to all his public duties due to his connections in the case of a sexual offender Epstein.

**Prince Edward** – he is the Earl of Wessex. He is the youngest son of the Queen. He was born in 1964. After finishing studies, he worked for Royal marines and for a theatre. Now he works for many charities. He is married to Sophie. They have two children – son James and a daughter Louise. They live in Bagshot Park near the Buckingham Palace.

**Princess Anne** - she was born in 1950 as the second child of Queen Elisabeth II. She is the Princess Royal since 1987. In 1976 she took part in the Olympic Games, she is also respected equestrian winning one gold medal in 1971 and two silver medals in 1975. She hold patronage in over 300 organizations and charities. She was married to Mark Phillips. They had 2 children – Zara and Peter. They got divorced in 1992. Her second husband is Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence.

**Prince William** - he was born in 1982 as the first child of Princess Diana and Prince Charles. He is the second in line to the British throne. After finishing his studies he worked for Royal Air Force and Rescue Force. He married Kate Middleton in 2011. They have 3 children – Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis of Cambridge. William and Kate are very popular among people.

**Prince Harry** - he was born in 1984 as the youngest son of Diana and Charles. After finishing his studies he served in Afghanistan in military corps. In 2018 he married an American actress Meghan Markle and they have 2 children – a son called Archie and a daughter called Lilibet. Harry and Meghan are considered to be the black sheep of the family. They decided to leave the royal family and now they live in California in the USA. Recently they had a controversial interview with Oprah Winfrey, where they accused the royal family of racism.

#### Official seats of the British royal family:

**Buckingham Palace** is the London residence and administrative headquarters of the monarch of the United Kingdom. It is located in the City of Westminster. It was built in 1703. The palace has 775 rooms, and the garden is the largest private garden in London. The state rooms are open to the public each year for most of August and September and on some days in winter and spring. It is also very popular to watch the Changing of the Guards parade.

**Windsor Castle** – it is a private weekend house of the Queen not far from London. The castle is the largest inhabited castle in the world and is one of the biggest British tourist attractions. It is also used to host State visits from monarchs and presidents. Many Royal weddings have been celebrated in St George's Chapel. In the ancient Round Tower, there is the Royal Archive and the Royal Photographs Collection. It is open to public all year round.

**Balmoral castle** is situated in Scotland and the Queen used to spend her summer holiday there. It was the Queen's private house. It also serves as a non-official war shelter for the royal family as the Windsor castle is close to Heathrow airport.

**Sandringham House** can be found in the north east of England. It was also the Queen's private house and she liked spending time there. The park and the visitor centre are open all year round. The house, the gardens and the museum are open from March to October.

**The Palace of Holyrood House** in Edinburgh is the official seat of the British monarch in Scotland. Every year the Queen spent there at least one week. When the Queen was not present at the palace, it was open to public. The most visited parts of the palace are the rooms where Mary, the Queen of Scots, lived in the past.