

# Charles & Camilla: A Royal Love Story [C1]

Il loro matrimonio fu segnato da scandali e critiche, testimonianza di un passato complesso. Oggi, a 20 anni dal loro matrimonio, vediamo come si è evoluta nel tempo l'opinione pubblica nei confronti della controversa coppia e della monarchia britannica in generale.

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When Prince Charles and Camilla married on 9 April 2005, the scandal of the illicit affair they had conducted while both still wed to their respective spouses, Princess Diana and Andrew Parker-Bowles, remained the **hallmark** of their relationship. **Tellingly**, the **understated** civil ceremony did not take place on royal grounds. Instead, the couple **tied the knot** at Windsor **Guildhall**, which is situated just outside the entrance to Windsor Castle, the royal family's Berkshire residence, some twenty-five miles away from central London.

## INTIMATE AFFAIR

With just twenty-eight **guests**, including Camilla's ex-husband, their children, Tom and Laura Parker-Bowles, and Princes William and Harry, the wedding was **devoid** of the pomp and ceremony that had defined the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana on 29 July 1981, which was televised and seen by 750 million people in seventy-four countries. Interestingly, Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip were only present for the service of prayer and dedication at St. George's Chapel, on the grounds of Windsor Castle, and the wedding reception itself, after the wedding ceremony. Being head of the Church of England, the Queen **deemed** her attendance inappropriate, as both Charles and Camilla were divorcees.

**It is fair to say** that the pair have experienced many major life events together. **Over the span** of their marriage, both Charles and Camilla have witnessed the marriages of their children and become grandparents. Then, in September 2022, **upon the death** of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles ascended to the throne. The official coronation ceremony took place on 6 May 2023, at Westminster Abbey, where Charles and Camilla were

crowned king and queen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth territories.

## PUBLIC SCANDAL

Now, as the couple celebrates their 20th wedding anniversary, Speak Up spoke to Professor Robert Hazell, an expert in the UK government and constitution and co-editor of *The Role of Monarchy in Modern Democracy*, to learn what has changed over the years for the couple. Professor Hazell began by sharing his thoughts on how public opinion of the couple has evolved over time. **Professor Robert Hazell (English accent):** I think public opinion has gradually become more positive towards Camilla. And it's true that twenty, thirty, years ago, public opinion was quite hostile because people were still in mourning for Princess Diana, who was perceived as a victim, and there were important sections of the British press that had been champions of Diana. And all that, now, is in the past. And as memories have faded, I think support for Camilla has grown stronger and stronger. You can trace the growing public acceptance of Camilla in the discussion that's taken place over the years about what title she would have. And initially, when Charles was Prince of Wales, she wasn't going to have the title Princess of Wales, because that was associated with Diana. And when asked whether she would be queen, we were told no, she would only be called the Queen Consort. Well, now Charles is king, and Camilla is called Queen or Queen Camilla, and there's been no public fuss or major pushback against that. So that's another indicator, I think, of how the public have gradually come to accept her and warm to her. There's no doubt that in the early years of Charles and Camilla's relationship, a lot of the press coverage about Camilla was negative. I haven't done an analysis, but I would guess that if you looked at the press coverage over the last twenty years, you would gradually see that the stories about Camilla are increasingly positive. And now I would expect that they're almost overwhelmingly positive, and those negative stories are now all in the past. The tabloid press has a very important role in helping to shape public opinion and the tabloids in Britain are still very important, not just for politicians, but for the monarchy. And the monarchy will only survive so long as it is supported by public opinion. And that's why

the media still play an important role in the way that they helped shape public opinion. They don't merely reflect it.

## THE ROYAL WEDDING

Professor Hazell analysed how the circumstances of the royal wedding in 2005 differed from those of Charles and Camilla's 20th wedding anniversary.

**Professor Robert Hazell:** The wedding itself was controversial at the time in 2005. There were some doubts raised at the time by legal experts about the validity of the marriage. I won't go into the legal complications of that, but partly, as a result, the wedding was really very quiet. It was held in the Town Hall in Windsor, it was a civil ceremony, partly because of the legal complications that I mentioned. And so, it was a pretty quiet affair. And in terms of how they celebrate it twenty years after, I have no inside knowledge, but I would expect that their celebrations would be pretty quiet and private, too.

## A REGAL ROLE

Then we asked Professor Hazell how Camilla's role as Queen differs from that of the late Queen Elizabeth II. **Professor Robert Hazell:** Her role is very different from that of Queen Elizabeth. Queen Elizabeth was a queen regnant. She was the sovereign. Camilla is a queen consort, so she only has the courtesy title Queen because she's married to the King. Queen Elizabeth worked tremendously hard as the sovereign, as the head of state, and she was head of state, not just of the United Kingdom, but of fourteen other countries around the world; of countries like Australia and Canada and Jamaica and small islands in the Pacific. And being very conscientious and hardworking, she visited almost all the countries where she was head of state, and the important ones like Canada or Australia, she went to many, many times. Camilla has no obligation or duty to do anything because she's not the head of state, so she can only do as much as she wants. And in fact, she has herself been conscientious and hardworking. And in a team of members of the royal family, which is shrinking as they get older, she has come to play an increasingly important role. But her role is voluntary, and it

really cannot be compared with that of the Queen. The Queen's role was obligatory.

## WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

But what might happen if King Charles passes away before his spouse. Would Camilla still play an active role in the royal family? Professor Hazell speculated on this matter. **Professor Robert Hazell:** That will be entirely up to her, and also up to Prince William, who will then be king. So formally, Prince William will have to decide whether he wants Camilla to continue to play a role as a working member of the royal family. And again, she will be under no obligation to do so. And she will be increasingly elderly herself, so I wouldn't be surprised if she takes a bit of a step backwards. But being someone who is conscientious and hard-working, I'm confident she will continue to do what is asked of her.

## THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

Professor Hazell offered his view on the reason the press is so fascinated by the disputes and scandals related to the royals. **Professor Robert Hazell:** There's a magic about royalty and there always has been. And, in modern days, they've also been caught up in celebrity culture. And if you look at any glossy magazine, you will see on the front cover, photos of royals. It's not always the British royal family. But there's no doubt that across Europe, the British royal family is seen as the premier royal family, and so you'll probably see more stories about British royals than about others. And the magazines just love it. And they know that if they have a royal on the cover, it will sell their magazine.

## AN IDENTITY OF HER OWN

For years, Camilla's identity was inextricably intertwined with the extramarital affair she had had with the Prince of Wales. We asked Professor Hazell to reflect on how successfully he thought Camilla had managed to forge an identity of her own over her years of involvement with the royal

family. **Professor Robert Hazell:** I think she has slowly won round public opinion through being a conscientious working royal, through not seeking the limelight in the way that Diana clearly did. Camilla has just quietly got on with the job. And I think people have gradually come to appreciate that she's a steady, reliable kind of person. And in doing all the royal visits that she does to hospitals, to schools, to children's homes, to charities of all kinds, people have gradually warmed to her because they've seen that she just does quietly get on with the job in quite a British kind of understated way. So, there'll never be never be drama, glamour or fireworks as there were with Diana. Camilla is a very different kind of person. And therefore, she's never going to make the headlines in the same way. But I think people have come to appreciate her for the kind of person that she is.

## MONARCHY TODAY

Finally, Professor Hazell talked about the significance of monarchy in modern-day Britain and how he thinks that's going to evolve and change over the coming years. **Professor Robert Hazell:** I'm confident that we will continue to be a monarchy. We're a very old monarchy. Britain has been a monarchy for over a thousand years, with only one brief gap in the 17th century for ten years, when we were a republic under Cromwell. So, it's a very ancient monarchy. It's very deep-seated in British history, in British culture, both political culture and popular culture. And the monarchy will continue so long as it is supported by public opinion. And the public opinion polls have for many, many decades shown very strong public support for the monarchy, and there are opinion polls every year asking people in different ways, "Would you prefer Britain to become a republic or would you like us to continue to be a monarchy?" And support for the monarchy is [has] always been in the range between 60 and 80 per cent, and in most polls it's closer to 80 per cent. So, these are confidence ratings that politicians would die for. Support for the monarchy is very deep-seated. And I think we can expect that to continue. The line of succession is secure through Prince William and, after him, his eldest son, Prince George. So there aren't any doubts on that score. So although there are sections of the British press that like to speculate about the future of the monarchy, again, because that makes a

good story, I'm pretty **confident** that the monarchy will continue, certainly in my lifetime and probably into that of my children and maybe my grandchildren, too.

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# Glossary

- **It is fair to say** = si può dire
- **Over the span** = nel corso di
- **in mourning** = essere in lutto
- **pushback** = contestazione
- **passes away** = morire
- **to forge** = creare
- **got on with the job** = mettersi al lavoro
- **guests** = invitati
- **reliable** = affidabile
- **warm to her** = affezionarsi
- **pretty quiet affair** = evento abbastanza discreto
- **shrinking** = diminuire
- **caught up** = coinvolti
- **deep-seated** = radicato
- **champions** = sostenitori
- **won round** = convincere
- **seeking the limelight** = cercare l'attenzione
- **polls** = sondaggi
- **upon the death** = dopo la morte
- **devoid** = privo
- **fireworks** = fuochi d'artificio
- **hallmark** = segno distintivo
- **confident** = sicuro
- **steady** = stabile
- **faded** = svanire
- **understated** = modesta
- **Guildhall** = municipio
- **deemed** = considerare
- **overwhelmingly** = in grande maggioranza
- **intertwined** = intrecciata
- **Tellingly** = significativamente
- **trace** = rintracciare
- **fuss** = clamore

- **Town Hall** = sala comunale
- **be entirely up to** = dipendere da
- **to make the headlines** = finire in prima pagina
- **tied the knot** = sposarsi, legarsi
- **gap** = intervallo