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RIGHT ROYAL REMINISCENCES

An Age UK Lancashire anthology of
memories and stories about the
Royal Family

Edited by Jacqueline Harris



Lynne Hindley

Quilled Horse and Carriage



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All of the stories were collected orally, and are taken directly from the transcripts of the audio recordings to retain the sense of the spoken word.

Derek Gardner

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations



Foreword

The 2022 Platinum Jubilee brought a much-needed opportunity for families, friends and communities to come together and celebrate the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II, and the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. To commemorate this unique milestone Age UK Lancashire successfully applied for funding from the Arts Council to gather the stories and experiences of our Day Clubs and wider community members who had met members of the Royal Family.

We were delighted to work with Jacqueline Harris, storyteller and writer, who visited our Loving Later Life Day Clubs in Lancaster, Nelson and Ormskirk, as well as Marsden Heights Community College, Brierfield to collect voice recordings of our older residents, pupils and members of the school's enthusiastic Mum2Mum group. Some of the recordings and images gathered during the conversations have been captured in these pages and also as a video which can be viewed on our website.

As Chief Executive of Age UK Lancashire, I am delighted to share these wonderful reminiscences with you and hope you enjoy the stories as much as I did. The contributors range hugely in age and experience. Look out for “doggy” conversations with the Queen, and memories of a visit to Buckingham Palace.

Teri Stephenson

Chief Executive, Age UK Lancashire

June 2022

Carol Davidson

Talking Dogs With the Queen

The first time I met her she was invited to open a new unit which was part of the hospital.

She'd start asking questions, you know, and that absolutely amazed me. How does she remember everything? She remembered being at the hospital years previously, and even mentioned one of the patients that had been in at that time. I thought, 'She's got good memory, or she's done her homework'. I landed the job, if you'd call it a job, of being there at the time. I just said,

“If no one else is prepared to do it, I'll do it.”

Afterwards I thought, what was I being so nervous about? I think it was the Queen I was frightened of! I didn't want to make a bloomer. The way she spoke with the patients: she wasn't afraid to ask anything.

We even talked about her corgis at one point, because we have dogs. I don't know what made me say... oh yes, I know, it started to rain a bit. That was what it was. And I said to her,

“Oh, the dog won't like going for a walk in this!”

It just came out. She said,

“Oh, you have a dog?”

I said,

“Well, I know you've got a corgi. I've got a labrador.”

So she said,

“Oh, I love those dogs. They're lovely dogs.”

We didn't talk about the patients or the hospital, or anything else, for about quarter of an hour! It was all dogs. She was saying how they've always had dogs in the family, and they've always had to make sacrifices for the sake of the dogs; and I'm saying,

“Oh, you're very good”.

She said,

“Well, you know, they do their part and we do our part”.

She would play in the field with a dog and a ball. I think it was just thinking time. I mean, she's human isn't she, at the end of the day? And she used to laugh. Oh gosh, her laugh would make anybody laugh. She'd be laughing, and I'd be in stitches, laughing at her laughing.

I saw her once again when she was at Liverpool. I don't even know now what she was doing, but she just nodded to me. That's all. That's all she did. I don't think anyone noticed. I noticed because I was glued to her. She's a wonderful woman.



Margaret Joan Maund

Bill Coady

Royal Drivers at Windsor

My daughter, Mandy, and her son live in Windsor, not far from Windsor Castle. You were allowed to walk up the Royal Drive. The public were allowed to walk up there, and one day this landrover was coming, helter skelter, down the path. Mandy waved to slow it down, and a hand waved back. It was the Queen!

Margaret Joan Maund

This didn't happen to me, but to someone I know, on the Royal Mile in Windsor. They nearly got run over by the Duke of Edinburgh! He was in his dotage! I mean, people don't realize how old he was. He nearly killed this fella!

Bill Coady

Left: Margaret Joan Maund



Bill Coady

Inside Buckingham Palace

Prince Phillip: I met him and I shook hands with him. I got the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, and when you got the Gold Award, you got to go to the Palace. It was presented to you by the Duke himself.

I was in the police cadets, so I must have been sixteen or seventeen. We had to go camping up a mountain somewhere, and you had to do some kind of public service. My public service was that I said I would referee football at boys clubs in Liverpool. That was dangerous! It really was, you know! You might as well said, "Give me a gun, I'll shoot myself!" The dads were all been on the touch-line, and if you got it wrong, they'd be 'Don't be effing stupid,' you know?!

I was excited, but not as excited as my mother, because we had to go to Buckingham Palace. We got to take someone with us, and of course my mother chose herself to come with me! As soon as she found out I was going to Buckingham Palace, that was it, she was going! She wore her best, and she told everyone in the street that we were going.

She was so proud. And you could tell: all the mothers, they were all on the coach, were in the same position. It's amazing that the coach didn't float, because of all the big hearted mothers, their hearts were going to burst, you know?

I was... overwhelmed is the word. I was overwhelmed, because who goes

to Buckingham Palace? Inside? I mean, I've been to Buckingham Palace outside to watch the changing of the Guard, but who goes inside?

The best part about it was that somehow or other, the coach driver had managed to get to drive into the front yard of Buckingham Palace. And when we got there, there were crowds of people outside, and we drove through the crowds and we waved to them!

The coach went inside and then we all had to get off and there were these little train-like things that we had to get on to, to be taken to the door. So we all got on the train and we waved to the crowd. We waved to the crowd and the crowd waved back and clapped! Then we went into the Palace.

My mother was so overwhelmed by going into the palace. it was an impressive thing. There were footmen, soldiers and guardsmen everywhere.

We were there for a good couple of hours. There was a balcony with a little band in it and they played. That really impressed my mother, you know, a band in a balcony! And then someone came round with sandwiches. It was a butler, but it was a posh butler. My mother nearly fainted! And then we all got to go and meet the Duke, and my mother cried, she really did.

Well, there we all were together, there were about seven of us who got the Gold Award.

Names were called individually. We went forward, and we met the Duke of Edinburgh. He was a nice person. He was a young man, and he was a very pleasant young man as well, I have to say.

We got our awards. I got the Gold Award. There was a Bronze and a Silver and a Gold.

Then all the mums wanted to go for a drink in London, and we were all of age, so we could go. So it was eventually agreed.

We walked from Buckingham Palace, just up the road, and found a few pubs. We went into one of them. People were listening to us. Well, we thought that they knew that we'd been into the Palace, or at least our mums did. Our mums believed that wherever we went in London, people would know that we'd been into the palace!

She loved every minute of it, and I did, because I'm a royalist. To go into Buckingham Palace... it was an experience.

Mary Billings

Memories

Remembering the Coronation

We watched it on a big screen at school; and it was the year that they conquered Everest, wasn't it? As a child it was like a fairy tale. It was lovely.

The Silver Jubilee

I can remember all the people. We lived on a lane, it was a through road from one village to another.

There were quite a lot of houses and we had a village party on the green. We had clowns and roundabouts. Everybody took some food and it was great.

It was the most lovely atmosphere. Claire absolutely loved it. I dressed her in red, white, and blue. She was in a group and they'd all got these silver hats on with union jacks sticking up. Yes, it was good.

Right: Mary Billings



Peter Williams

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations



Colin Bishop

Red, White and Blue Knickers

In 1977, when it was the Silver Jubilee, my then girlfriend's aunt and uncle, who lived next door to where my family lived, decided to have a 'Red, White and Blue' party. Some of my friends came along as well, and my friend insisted on checking that everyone was wearing something that was red, white, and blue.

With many people it was quite obvious, but my girlfriend didn't appear to be wearing any red, white, and blue. And so he casually went up and lifted her skirt, to find that she was wearing red, white, and blue knickers!

Tom Jones

Princess Anne at the Prison

Princess Anne came to to the prison because she was the President of the Offenders. The Governor was there. I was out in the yard and he said,

“Tom, can you look after that?”

I said,

“Yes of course.”

I waited until she came in. This girl had to say to her driver,

“Have you got ID?”

But she had to do it, you know? So he just showed his ID, and then he said to me,

“You're not going to ask for Princess Anne's are you?!”

I said,

“No, no, I daren't!”

The car behind was the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, Alan Waterworth, and his wife. I knew them very very well. So they came, and they got out

of the car and he said,

“Tom, how are you?”

They came up to me with big hugs, but he’s shaking hands with everyone else! The Governor’s looking like, ‘Can you do that?!’ Princess Anne was looking out and she was smiling. The governor’s going, ‘This is going to be a disaster’! But it was because I knew them very well!

Anyway, we showed them all around. We took them around all the workshops. She’d ask the governor questions. One of her aides would say,

“What happens here?”

They’d explained what it was. Then the Governor explained to Princess Anne what the shop work was. What it mainly was, was that they were out of their cell for six hours a day. It was meaningful work. It’s one way of making sure that they’re not stuck in the cell all day, and they get exercise, and they go to the gym. So they explained all of this to them, and they said,

“Do you get any trouble?”

I said,

“Very rarely, but sometimes you do.”

You get people who are in prison for eight, nine years or more, and they’ve had a letter from their wife saying, ‘That’s it, I’m getting a divorce. I’m never

going to see you again.'

I can imagine how someone must feel, stuck behind these walls. They can't do anything about it, and they're thinking about this all the time. So they wake up and someone says something wrong to them, and that kicks it off. We tried to explain to her that this is the kind of thing where trouble starts, and she understood. She understood everything we were talking about.

She understood what the prison work was all about. She asked meaningful questions. The Governor said afterwards that it was very interesting to note that she knew a lot more than what we thought she would. She understood the way that the system worked. That was the most important thing.

Then we came back. They got in their cars. They were going out, and we were standing there. Alan Waterworth went first and I was waving to them when Princess Anne came past. I'm still waving and she was waving back at me! The governor said,

"My office now!"

That's my brush with royalty. And although it was funny, it was nice, you know? I'll give Princess Anne her due, she joined in with the fun. And that, to me, means a lot. So that was a good day.

Pippa Benacs

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations





Marie Ginn

Close the Blinds

I remember the old King dying. I must have only been three or four, and my father came up to the bedroom and he said,

“The King is dead.”

I lived in Liverpool. They were all terraced houses and everybody had the blinds pulled, covered the mirrors, and no wirelesses on. The wireless was the entertainment, but they were really in mourning for him.

Rukhsana Amin

Soft Hands

I think I was about seventeen when Princess Diana came to Nelson and we met her. That was so nice. She was so humble, and she had soft hands. I still remember her ring.

She was wearing a green skirt and a green blazer with a bit of black. She was simple, with very little makeup. All the streets were out, and I think her spirits were really positive and high, that was how she was. She was very touching. People didn't wash their hands afterwards. We didn't wash our hands after we touched her.

I was young that time. I mean, we just met her, and I remember just feeling her hands and thinking, 'Oh, she's normal, you know, she's normal, just like us!'

Right: Rukhsana Amin is second from the left with other mums from the Mum2Mum Group at Marsden Heights Community College



Joan Atkinson

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations



John Rimmer

Prince Philip and the Tool Room

We worked at English Electric at Netherton. It was split up into various sections, and there was a Tool Room as we called it. In those days, for the tools that they used, you couldn't go to B&Q to buy them. They had to be made.

When the men made the tools they didn't want to be standing by their machines all day long, so they had made stools for themselves, and because we didn't want the stools to be seen when Prince Philip came to visit, they were all shoved into this cupboard all together, stacked high on top of each other.

It was off a big corridor coming from the offices and, well, that was the main entrance where the Duke of Edinburgh was going to come in.

When he arrived he was escorted by a crowd. Everybody had been warned: 'If he starts hanging back, be careful. He's an ex-Navy man, and he'll be looking for something!'

Sure enough, in the wall, and it was just a big brick wall down the side of the corridor, but in the middle of it was the great big wooden door to the Tool Room. Well, he stopped and opened this door! The whole lot fell out, and he just walked away laughing! Just brilliant!

Rukhsana Amin

Four Children

We met Prince Charles twice. I had three kids when he first came. Then the next time I had my fourth child and he was only about six or seven months old.

Prince Charles held him and he said,

“Oh, that's your fourth child? Your life's gone be so interesting with four children to bring up.”

And at the time I didn't understand. I do know!

Kenny Studholme

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations





Pupils at Marsden Heights

Platinum Jubilee Moments

I think the Royal family are really good people. Nice people. And on Sunday when the Queen's Platinum Jubilee happened, it was nice when they made Paddington Bear meet the queen. I like the Royal family more now.

- Humayal Naeem

Yes, I think it's good when people come together, Because you get to know others, you get to know other backgrounds, and different sorts of cultures. That's the best thing about coming together.

- Mohammed Ali

Anne Tillett

A Special Message From the Queen

“I am so pleased to know that you are celebrating your Diamond Wedding anniversary on 2nd July, 2015. I send my congratulations and best wishes to you on such a special occasion.

Elizabeth R

Mr. And Mrs. John Tillett “



ER



I am so pleased to know that you are celebrating your Diamond Wedding anniversary on 2nd July, 2015. I send my congratulations and best wishes to you on such a special occasion.

Elizabeth II

Mr. and Mrs. John Tilton



Arts Council England: “Let’s Create” Jubilee Fund

Arts Council England is a government-funded body dedicated to promoting the performing, visual and literary arts in England. The ‘Let’s Create’ Jubilee Fund was set up by Arts Council England and funded by the National Lottery. The scheme provided grants to encourage and enable local voluntary and community organisations to develop cultural and creative activities as part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022. These were distributed locally via Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside.

Age UK Lancashire received support from the Fund to explore and record the experiences and memories of the Queen’s reign amongst our Loving Later Life Day Club members, their families and wider community. We worked with storyteller and writer, Jacqueline Harris, who visited the clubs in Lancaster, Ormskirk and Nelson, and Marsden Heights Community College in Pendle. Jacqueline has collected and recorded memories, stories, and photographs from participants, reminiscing about moments in their lives that were linked to the Royal Family in some way.

These visits also provided stimulating activities and the results were sometimes quite surprising. The conversations took place on a one on one and group basis and have been collated in this book and as a captivating audio-visual recording which is available on Age UK Lancashire’s website.





Age UK Lancashire

For over 70 years Age UK Lancashire has provided information, advice and support for older people (aged 50+) across the county. We help individuals to remain independent and connected to their communities to combat isolation and loneliness.

In the ever-changing world we live in, we continually adapt our services to meet the needs of local older people, many of whom feel increasingly lonely and isolated. We provide services in the community and at home as well as support over the telephone or virtual groups.

These include advice and information, help with shopping and cleaning, regular contact calls, day clubs, dementia support, developing digital skills and hospital aftercare.

For the most up-to-date information on our services please see:

Our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/lancashire

Facebook page: AgeUKLancashire

Twitter: @AgeUKLancashire

Email: advice@ageuklancs.org.uk

Or call 0300 303 1234 and our experienced and friendly customer services team will be happy to help with any enquiries.

Thank You From the Editor

I want to thank everyone who has been involved in this project. It has been an absolute joy and privilege to meet so many wonderful people who were kind, compassionate and funny, with so many stories to tell.

It's my hope that this book will ensure these experiences are not lost, and that it helps to paint a picture of our ongoing relationship with the Royals in this Platinum Jubilee year.

Jacqueline Harris, Editor

