

70
years of

Royal Style



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royal fashion

THE QUEEN



70 YEARS OF
MAJESTIC STYLE
BETHAN HOLT

Adapted from *The Queen: 70 Years of Majestic Style* by
Bethan Holt, published by Ryland Peters & Small, £18.99



1950s

Youthful and full of hope for the future, the young Queen reflected the times

The Fashion Forward Years

Britain was riding high at the beginning of the 50s, its mood of optimism buoyed by recent victory, 1951's Festival of Britain and – following the death of George VI – a new monarch who embodied youth and beauty. Even continued rationing in the early part of the decade could not quell the appetite of a population hungry for all things new – with fashion top of the shopping list. After the long years of practical clothing necessitated by wartime austerity, women rejoiced in both Dior's full-skirted New Look and in streamlined tailoring which flattered the female form. With her youthfulness and shapely figure, the young Queen was equal to the challenge of the "fashion forward 50s", turning to fashionable designers including Hardy Amies and Norman Hartnell.

Hartnell, who had designed the Queen's wedding dress, was also the designer of the magnificent coronation gown "shimmering and sparkling" with crystals, diamonds and gold, which took nine weeks to complete. She quickly became a royal trendsetter shortly afterwards, long before the days of Diana and Kate, in a stunning black and white Norman Hartnell gown worn to a Royal Film Premier in 1952 and quickly copied for the masses. As Bethan Holt explains in her book, *The Queen, 70 years of*



"The young Queen was equal to the challenge of the fashion forward 50s"

Majestic Style, "Even those on a budget could emulate Her Majesty after a 30d paper pattern was produced, although the dress, dubbed the 'Magpie', was never worn again."

Throughout the 50s, the

Queen wowed crowds on foreign tours, resplendent in diamonds and fashionable couture gowns. Even Parisians admired her in silver lace and Norman Hartnell's "Fields of France" creation worn on a 1957

visit. By the end of the decade, the Queen was in her 30s when full skirts gave way to a sleeker silhouette. Elegant, classic, but with a nod to trends, the Queen had finally found her signature style. ➔



The Grand Duchess Vladimir Tiara and Queen Alexandra's Kokoshnik fringe-style Tiara are among the Queen's most significant jewels

Resplendent formal dress



More casual and fashionable for travelling



Women could dress like the Queen in cotton dresses by British company Horrockses Fashions, whose frocks she wore on foreign tours throughout the 50s



Timeline

- ◆ Elizabeth II's coronation, on June 2, 1953, was televised and could be seen on colour TV, available since 1951.
- ◆ On April 25, 1953, James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA.
- ◆ The entertainment world lost Grace Kelly, who married Prince Rainier of Monaco on April 18, 1956.
- ◆ In the wake of Egypt's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal, on November 5, 1956 the Suez Crisis caused fuel shortages and the downfall of Prime Minister Anthony Eden.
- ◆ The space race began on October 4, 1957 with the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik.
- ◆ *Blue Peter's* first show was broadcast on October 16, 1958.



- ◆ Britain's first motorway, the Preston by-pass, was opened by Prime Minister Harold MacMillan on December 5, 1958 and the Mini was launched on August 26, 1959.

1960s

The monarchy kept up with a decade of fast social change

The Youthquake Years



Even within the bounds of protocol, the Queen followed fashion



The 60s were a decade of incredible innovation, from the breakthroughs in science and technology that brought us Concorde and space travel, to a fashion revolution. Social barriers were breaking down, while the “youthquake” movement saw young people setting their own agenda in music and fashion. London played a pivotal part in the emerging scene, while The Beatles revolutionised music and designers like Mary Quant took a fresh, youthful approach to fashion as the lines between formal and informal blurred and new developments in fabric technology made anything possible.

While mini-skirts and space-age fabrics were not practical options for regal life, the Queen’s wardrobe did reflect trends of the time, including simpler shapes such as shifts and column dresses. As Bethan Holt observes in *The Queen: 70 Years of Majestic Style*, the Queen is not averse to taking fashion risks. “Her gown for a State Dinner at the British Embassy in Tehran in March 1961 exhibited a finger on the

pulse of evolving fashion. Instead of the usual fairytale gowns, the Queen wore a chic, minimal, column-style dress that looked light and effortless. It was a look that seemed to show the sovereign had an eye on the fashion pages.” If her dresses had to follow a more conservative take on 60s trends, the Queen’s hats had fewer restrictions. Her choice of hat is one item where she can freely make a statement

or indulge her playful streak. Along with her handbag and gloves, hats are an essential part of the royal look and should always be distinctive and bright enough to ensure she is visible in a crowd – in her own words, “people want to see me”. From feather and petal-strewn creations to Simone Mirman’s 1965 noodle-like number jokingly dubbed the “spaghetti” hat, the Queen fearlessly adopted some outré 60s hat trends. ➔



A simple column dress replaced the usual ball gown



French milliner Simone Mirman designed some of the most distinctive hats worn by the Queen during the 60s

“Hats are an essential part of the royal look and should always be distinctive”



The Queen makes a statement with her hats

The Queen wore a chic, minimal 60s ensemble designed by Norman Hartnell at the investiture of Prince Charles in 1969

Timeline

- ◆ The Beatles’ Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, was released on June 1, 1967.
- ◆ On April 12, 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin made the world’s first spaceflight.
- ◆ US/Russian hostilities during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 almost caused a war.
- ◆ John F Kennedy became US President on March 4, 1961; his assassination in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963 shook the world.
- ◆ Civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King made his “I have a dream” speech on August 28, 1963. He was shot dead on April 4, 1968.
- ◆ The UK death penalty was abolished on November 8, 1965.
- ◆ The Sexual Offences and Abortion Acts of 1967 legalised abortion and homosexuality.



- ◆ Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon on July 20, 1969.
- ◆ Concorde, the world’s first supersonic aircraft, flew on March 2, 1969.

1970s

A more relaxed era brought fluid prints to the royal wardrobe

The Free-Spirited Years



The Queen's 70s evening looks took a new direction for her and included free-flowing shapes, diaphanous fabrics and swirly prints



The Queen's formal wear became more relaxed and fluid

If 60s looks embraced clean lines and simplicity, 70s style was all about the drama. Designers took inspiration from around the globe with ethnic looks: kaftans, afghan coats and beaded dresses in patterned Indian fabrics filled the High Street. "Unisex" was a buzz-word: trouser suits, frilly shirts, platform shoes and Annie Hall's androgynous look had universal appeal. Fashion looks were eclectic, encompassing a vintage Victorian vibe (think Laura Ashley and Biba) and the lurex and spangles of disco.

Chiffon was a key fabric of the 70s, well suited to night-life attire. Celebrities

danced the night away in New York's trendy Studio 54 in Halston's swirly silk chiffon gowns, while film legends Liz Taylor and Grace Kelly appeared goddess-like in flowing kaftans by Madame Grès.

The Queen joined in the love affair with evening wear during the 70s, swapping her more formal gowns for bolder patterns, brighter colours and more relaxed styles. A pink and orange chiffon kaftan-style gown with an eye-catching swirly print, worn to the opening of the National Theatre in November 1976, was in tune with the times, while a spangled green column

dress with matching metallic shoes worn on state visit to Helsinki the same year had glam-rocker pizzazz.

Her Majesty is meticulous in observing the customs and traditions of host countries on foreign tours and very conscious of the important role dress plays. Hardy Amies, who designed much of her wardrobe for a 1975 Japan tour, recalled her regal appearance in an Amies mauve silk coat. Mauve being an imperial colour, the Japanese took it as a tribute – a happy coincidence for Amies, though as he remarked, "I shouldn't be surprised if the Queen had known." →



Prints and soft fabrics were "in"



Modest dressing was required on 1979's Saudi Arabia visit. The Queen's long dresses were shortened later and worn to Royal Ascot

"The Queen joined in the love affair with evening wear during the 70s"

Timeline

◆ The first Boeing 747 "Jumbo Jet" commercial flight took place on January 22, 1970 from JFK to London Heathrow.



◆ On February 15, 1971, decimalised currency replaced sterling pounds, shillings and pence.

◆ "Watergate" saw political scandal and criminal charges against President Nixon in June 1972, leading to his resignation.

◆ 14 people were killed by British troops in Londonderry on Bloody Sunday, January 30, 1972.

◆ Jaws, released in December 1975, was the first blockbuster movie.

◆ Apple was founded on April 1, 1976 in California by buddies Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak.

◆ The world's first test tube baby, Louise Brown, was born on July 25, 1978.

◆ Britain's "winter of discontent" in 1978/79 was a series of strikes affecting public services.

◆ Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female Prime Minister on May 4, 1979.

1980s

In a confusing age the Queen always struck the right note

The Glamorous Years

The beginning of the 80s brought a younger generation of royals into the spotlight – and a new fashion icon, Princess Diana, whose 1981 wedding dress caused a media frenzy. It epitomised the romantic side of 80s style – think Laura Ashley’s flowers and frills, pretty prairie dresses, the overblown blouses beloved by the New Romantics. On the other side of the coin the influence of menswear continued, with oversized blazers, sharp tailoring, padded shoulders and “power dressing”. Britain had its first female Prime Minister and it was the age of the career-woman, reflected in TV and film with *Dynasty* and *Working Girl*. It was a decade of contradictions: excess and poverty, froufrou looks and hard-edged glamour.

Throughout it all, the Queen carried out her schedule of engagements home and abroad. Foreign

visits continued to boost international relationships, including a visit with the Reagans in California in 1983. The state’s sunshine was notably absent, the Queen’s wardrobe subject to mixed reviews. However a romantic white gown featuring Californian poppies by Amies that the designer, “had always hoped the Queen would choose to wear,” struck the right note.

Ronald and Nancy Reagan had previously visited the Queen at Windsor Castle, where the Queen and President went horse riding. A 1982 photo of Her Majesty and Reagan on horseback shows them looking relaxed. Bethan Holt describes the Queen’s timeless equestrian look in *The Queen: 70 years of Majestic Style* as “traditional beige jodhpurs, a tweed jacket and chestnut leather riding boots... Her Majesty usually chooses to eschew a riding hat in favour of a silk headscarf.” She never looks more at ease. →



“A decade of contradictions: excess and poverty, froufrou looks and hard-edged glamour”



Like Prime Minister Thatcher was throughout the 80s, the Queen is never without her handbag – made by Launer to specific requirements



The Queen’s signature country look, of cardigans, kilts, tweeds, waxed jackets and silk headscarves, inspired Max Mara’s 2021-22 Fall/Winter collection

The Queen is relaxed when in the country



The Queen boosts international relationships

Timeline

- ◆ The world wept when music legend John Lennon was shot on December 8, 1980.
- ◆ Lady Diana Spencer married Prince Charles at St Paul’s Cathedral on July 29, 1981, viewed by 750 million people.
- ◆ On April 2, 1982, Argentina invaded the Falklands Islands and Prime Minister Thatcher sent in British Troops. The war ended on June 14. It cost 900 lives.
- ◆ The IRA bombed the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the Conservative Party Conference on October 12, 1984.



- ◆ An accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station on April 26, 1986 in Ukraine caused a massive radiation release, with devastating effects to human life and the environment.
- ◆ The Berlin Wall came down on November 9, 1989, heralding the end of the Cold War.
- ◆ The internet was born in 1989 when Tim Berners-Lee, at CERN in Switzerland, had the idea of a World Wide Web.

1990s

A stressful decade saw a refreshed and updated wardrobe

The Makeover Years



The Queen's new dresser brought more youthful designs

Designer Karl-Ludwig Rehse was overwhelmed by the public's reaction to the Queen's "Harlequin" dress worn to a Royal Variety Performance

The 90s saw a shift from the bold, brash looks of 80s power dressing and glitz to a pared down, understated aesthetic. Designers such as Armani took a minimal approach, favouring a neutral colour palette and leaner silhouette, softly tailored, fuss-free and ably modelled by "Supers" Cindy, Naomi, Linda and Christy with their tall, athletic frames. Even showy celebrities went low-key, and by the end of the decade, the mood for dressed-down authenticity had found ultimate expression in the lived-in looks of grunge and so-called "heroin chic".

Such fashion trends were appropriate for a time of recession, civil unrest and war. The Queen faced personal challenges: her *annus horribilis* in 1992 with marriage breakdowns for Anne, Andrew and Charles, and a devastating fire at Windsor Castle. In 1997,

while the Spice Girls waved a patriotic flag, the Queen saw her nation divide as Wales and Scotland chose devolution and her own popularity plummet following Diana's death.

Small wonder if her wardrobe was the least of the Queen's concerns at this time. However, while anyone can become stuck in a fashion rut, the Queen's position demands high-octane style. New Dresser Angela Kelly (appointed in 1993) identified a need for a more glamorous image with a bolder style and more flattering cuts. "I could not help thinking that the Queen's style needed to change quickly, before she was made to look older than she was," she explained.

Kelly's approach has included bringing in new designers such as Stewart Parvin while remaining respectful to the traditions of Hartnell and Amies. Notable triumphs included a glamorous Hardy Amies lilac gown with matching feathered headpiece by Frederick Fox worn to Edward and Sophie's wedding ceremony in 1999, and a striking gold dress with sequinned, multi-coloured diamond patterned harlequin bodice worn the same year – pure theatre, and how her public loved it! →

"I could not help thinking that the Queen's style needed to change quickly"



Angela Kelly identified a need for the Queen to adapt her look and cultivate a brighter, more glamorous image



A brighter, fresher look

Timeline

- ◆ The Gulf War began with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2, 1990, the largest deployment of British troops since WWII joining coalition forces.
- ◆ Following the Poll Tax Riots and growing unpopularity, Margaret Thatcher resigned on November 22, 1990.
- ◆ AIDS claimed another victim with the death of Queen's Freddie Mercury on November 24, 1991.
- ◆ The Channel Tunnel opened on May 6, 1992, linking London and Paris.
- ◆ Anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa on May 10, 1994.
- ◆ Tony Blair was elected Prime Minister on May 1, 1997 following his "New Labour" campaign.
- ◆ Princess Diana, divorced in 1996, died in a car crash in Paris on August 31, 1997.
- ◆ Following revelations by White House intern Monica Lewinsky of their affair, President Bill Clinton was impeached on December 19, 1998.



2000s

A Diamond wedding anniversary brought a sparkling decade!

The Diamond Years

The new millennium brought the spirit of change, yet though fashion moved on, there was a nod to vintage in the boho looks of celebrity fashionistas such as Sarah Jessica Parker, Sienna Miller and Kate Moss with their festival chic, while red carpet looks harked back to the glamour of the 50s. Established designers like Alexander McQueen, John Galliano and Matthew Williamson brought colour and verve to the catwalks, while new kid on the block Victoria Beckham proved her fashion credentials with form-fitting dresses women loved. It was the era of the "It" bag and from the

"bagette" to the "saddle", every self-respecting follower of fashion casually dangled a designer classic.

The new millennium brought a major personal milestone for the Queen with the celebration of her Diamond wedding anniversary in 2007. To mark the occasion, a touching photograph of the Queen and Prince Philip referenced a portrait taken on their honeymoon in 1947. As then, the couple are linking arms, the Queen again in a smart skirt suit sporting the same sapphire brooch she wore then.

The Queen has inherited a dazzling collection of jewels: the sapphire and diamond brooch featured in her honeymoon and Diamond Wedding anniversary portraits was a gift to Queen

Victoria from Prince Albert. Her collection includes a number of significant diamond pieces, including the spectacular Greville chandelier earrings, bequeathed to the Queen Mother by Dame Margaret Greville, and diamonds (nicknamed "granny's chips" by the royals) cut from the Cullinan diamond, the largest gem-quality diamond ever found.

The Queen regularly wears skirt suits like that in her 2007 portrait, but her trouser looks are so rare that cameras went crazy when she emerged from hospital in a grey trouser suit after a knee operation in 2003.

The designer revealed he makes many trousers for her: everyone likes comfort off-duty. ➔

"The new millennium brought a major personal milestone for the Queen"



The Queen has an extensive jewellery collection



Honeymoon portrait in 1947

The 2007 portrait of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh mimics their pose in a photograph taken on their honeymoon in 1947



Always dazzling with diamonds!



The Queen has inherited some dazzling jewellery, including the stunning Greville chandelier earrings bequeathed to the Queen Mother



Timeline

- ◆ On September 11, 2001, Islamic terrorists used hijacked planes to attack the twin towers of New York's World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in Washington. The world gasped in horror and President Bush declared a "war on terror".
- ◆ On March 20, 2003, the Iraq War began with a bombing campaign by US and coalition forces
- ◆ Social network phenomenon Facebook was launched in Massachusetts on February 4, 2004.



- ◆ London transport was the terror target on July 7, 2005 – suicide bombers killed 52 people and injured 700.
- ◆ Hurricane Katrina began on August 23, 2005, causing destruction on a massive scale and a humanitarian disaster when the levees broke in New Orleans. Nearly 1,900 people died, with over 700 reported missing.
- ◆ Pop star Michael Jackson died, aged 50, on June 25, 2009.

2010s-20s

In unstable times the Queen is a constant presence

The Eventful Years



A new generation of royals brought beloved great-grandchildren for the Queen



Fashion trends have become less predictable as global events have influenced style to an extent not experienced in decades: witness the boom in leisurewear during the lockdown years, while climate change awareness, rising living costs and looming recession have seen the trend for upcycling, recycling and buying second-hand rocket. We look beyond the catwalks for inspiration – via the internet and social media, anyone can become a fashion icon if they get enough views, while celebrity style is instantly accessible at the click of a mouse. Against this shifting background the Queen remains a constant, reassuring presence.

The decade began with two royal visits: Canada in 2010 and Ireland in 2011. Ever the dignified ambassador, the Queen used her wardrobe to pay tribute to her hosts, referencing the national emblem in a beautiful white gown strewn with sparkling maple leaves and donning a red and white ensemble on Canada day, accessorised with the maple leaf brooch given to her mother in 1939. In Ireland, she arrived in an emerald coat and hat and graced a State Dinner in a white Angela Kelly creation adorned with silk shamrocks.

Major events took place with the wedding of William and Catherine Middleton in 2011 and the Diamond

Jubilee River Pageant in 2012. In *The Queen: 70 Years of Majestic Style* Bethan Holt describes the Queen's Jubilee outfit of white tweed featuring sparkling diamanté and threads of silver and gold. "The Queen's look for the day was a suitably elevated version of the sleek uniform that Kelly had by now established for her. In fact, she looked rather sparkling and diamond-like herself, in a design inspired by Elizabeth I." →

■ My Weekly joins with our readers in mourning the loss of Queen Elizabeth II and we hope you have enjoyed these pages, which we believe form a fitting tribute to a monarch like no other



The Queen's white Diamond Jubilee outfit embellished with silver, gold and sparkles, was inspired by a portrait of Elizabeth I

"She looked rather sparkling and diamond-like herself, in a design inspired by Elizabeth I"



The Queen's now trademark style

Timeline

◆ The eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland on April 14, 2010 caused mayhem and severe disruption to international air travel.



◆ London hosted the Olympics in 2012 – and the Queen made a surprise appearance with James Bond in the July 27 opening ceremony

◆ The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) in England and Wales Act was passed on July 17, 2013.

◆ The Queen became Britain's longest serving monarch on September 9, 2015.

◆ Donald Trump became US President on January 20, 2017.

◆ January 30, 2020 marked the start of the Covid-19 pandemic when the World Health Organization declared a World Health Emergency of International Concern.

◆ Britain officially separated from the EU with "Brexit" on January 31, 2020.

◆ The Duke of Edinburgh died on April 9, 2021 and the Queen, observing Covid rules, cut a solitary figure sitting alone at his funeral.

Timeless Beauty

Less is more is the Queen's approach to skin care and make-up

Cecil Beaton commented in The Sunday Express, July 1951 that photographs did not do justice to the Queen. "One misses, even in colour photographs, the effect of the dazzling fresh complexion, the clear regard from glass-blue eyes, and the gentle, all-pervading sweetness of her smile."

According to royal insiders, the Queen doesn't rely on expensive facials to care for her skin, instead depending on a fairly modest beauty routine which reportedly includes tried and trusted beauty favourites such as Elizabeth Arden's Eight-Hour cream and Clarins Hand and Nail Cream.

Escentual.com Communications and Campaigns Manager Chelsey Edmunds commented, "The Queen's regular use of Eight-Hour Cream will have definitely contributed to her soft, youthful appearance at 96 years of age. This heavy-duty moisturising cream is definitely the way to go for older skin."

In addition, all those hats over the years will have helped considerably to protect the royal complexion from the damaging, ageing effects of sun exposure.

"Less is more," is the mantra for the Queen's make-up: soft and subtle, with a bright splash of lipstick (Elizabeth Arden's



The soft brown curls may now be silver, but the Queen's distinctive hairdo has changed little over the years

The Queen's look has always been comfortably recognisable

"She spent little time applying make-up, with just a dusting of powder"

Beautiful Color Moisturising Lipstick is a must-have) to enhance her radiant smile. Nail colour is discreet, with Essie's Ballet Slippers delivering a hint of pink.

The Queen's beauty look has varied little over the years. In her book *Elizabeth the Queen*, Sally Beddell

Smith describes preparations for her 50th birthday in 1976. First hairdresser Charles Martyn washed her hair with egg and lemon shampoo. "Between setting and drying, Martyn would spend an hour and a half creating her unvarying hairstyle. For her skin she

used an assortment of Cyclax products, including milk and roses moisturiser, and she washed with milk and honey cleanser. She spent little time applying make-up, with just a dusting of powder, and she used bright red lipstick because it was more visible."



Even for formal wear, the Queen keeps it simple

A bright splash of lipstick is a beauty essential for the Queen, highlighting her smile and making her more visible



WORDS: AUDREY PATTERSON
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