

Queen Victoria - Anniversary Accession

Queen Victoria (Alexandrina Victoria; 24 May 1819 – 22 January 1901)

Was the monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 20 June 1837 until her death. From 1 May 1876, she used the additional title of Empress of India.

Victoria was the daughter of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn, the fourth son of King George III. Both the Duke of Kent and the King died in 1820, and Victoria was raised under close supervision by her German-born mother Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.

She inherited the throne at the age of 18, after her father's three elder brothers had all died without surviving legitimate issue. The United Kingdom was already an established constitutional monarchy, in which the Sovereign held relatively few direct political powers. Privately, she attempted to influence government policy and ministerial appointments. Publicly, she became a national icon, and was identified with strict standards of personal morality.

She married her first cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, in 1840. Their nine children and 26 of their 34 grandchildren who survived childhood married into royal and noble families across the continent, tying them together and earning her the nickname "the grandmother of Europe". After Albert's death in 1861, Victoria plunged into deep mourning and avoided public appearances. As a result of her seclusion, republicanism temporarily gained strength, but in the latter half of her reign, her popularity recovered. Her Golden and Diamond Jubilees were times of public celebration.

Her reign of 63 years and 7 months, which is longer than that of any other British monarch and the longest of any female monarch in history, is known as the Victorian era. It was a period of industrial, cultural, political, scientific, and military change within the United Kingdom, and was marked by a great expansion of the British Empire. She was the last British monarch of the House of Hanover; her son and successor Edward VII belonged to the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the line of his father.

In 1840 Victoria married her cousin Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. Although he was never popular with the British people Victoria adored him and relied on him for political advice. Albert had no political role so became active in the arts, science and technology. He arranged the Great Exhibition of 1851 - where the world's leading industrial and cultural developments were shown.

Victoria and Albert had nine children:

- Victoria born 1840 - married the emperor of Germany Friedrich III
- Albert Edward born 1841 - became Edward VII married Alexandra of Denmark
- Alice born 1843 - married Ludwig IV, Grand Duke of Hesse

- Alfred born 1844 - Duke of Edinburgh married Marie of Russia
- Helena born 1846 - married Christian of Schleswig-Holstein
- Louise born 1848 - married John Campbell, 9th Duke of Argyll
- Arthur born 1850 - Duke of Connaught married Louise Margaret of Prussia
- Leopold born 1853 - Duke of Albany married Helen of Waldeck-Pyrmont
- Beatrice born 1857 - married Henry of Battenberg

On 14th December 1861 Albert died of Typhus and Victoria sank into a deep depression. From the time of Albert's death to her own death she remained in mourning and only wore black. She withdrew from public life and here popularity declined. She refused all attempts to come out of seclusion until the late 1870s. Her popularity was somewhat restored when she was crowned Empress of India in 1877.

The reign of Queen Victoria saw many changes in British society brought about by the Reform Laws, the expansion of the electorate and the great strides made in industry and technology. She survived seven assassination attempts and was the first monarch to use a locomotive train.

Victoria celebrated her golden jubilee in 1887 and her diamond jubilee in 1897. She died on January 22nd 1901 having reigned for 64 years.