



HAPPY MEMORIES OF OUR QUEEN

To one of our own members, Mrs. Lamb of Crathie Institute, we are indebted for this article. We record our thanks to Mrs. Lamb for the trouble and care she has taken to give us an intimate picture of the lively and lovable girl who is now Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

THE first time I ever saw the Princesses was on the Queen Mother's birthday in 1937 when my husband and I went, as was the custom, to the top of the Manse road to greet the Royal Family on their way to Balmoral. You can imagine how thrilled I was. Punctual to the minute, the car drove up and stopped beside us. I remember it all so vividly: their charming greeting; making my first curtsy; the beautiful bouquet of lily-of-the-valley which had been given to Her Majesty and two little girls very wide-eyed and happy. So began a very treasured part of our lives.

Later that summer we got a message one day asking if it would be convenient for us that the Queen should call. That struck me very forcibly, as I had expected just to be told Her Majesty would call. We had about fifteen minutes to see that both ourselves and the house were all spruce and tidy. As the Manse had been newly done up, we felt quite prepared, although very excited.

That afternoon is a memory I shall always cherish. It was no motor that turned in at the gate but a landau drawn by the Windsor Greys. We were at the door to make our bows and curtsies, and out from the

carriage literally tumbled a stream of little girls and dogs—the two Princesses, the Hon. Margaret Elphinstone, and the corgis. It all seemed such fun. The Queen Mother told us the children loved more than anything to go out driving with her in an open carriage. We set off all over the house, as the Queen Mother said she would like to see our Manse. Various quaint survivals from Victorian days interested them very much, but the Princesses were more intrigued with a bath, in a new bathroom, because it stood right out in the floor and not against a wall. They were interested in everything.

When they visited us the next year we asked if they would honour us by signing our Visitors' Book. The Queen Mother signed first, then Princess Margaret took the pen. The Queen Mother gently remonstrated, "Lilibet first, Margaret." "But why? I have the pen." The Queen Mother smiled and let it pass. So, in our Visitors' Book, Princess Margaret's name comes before our Queen's.

All these memories are of both the Princesses. We never saw one without the other. They were like two parts of a whole.

The halcyon days soon passed till we came to that memorable Sunday



H.M. The Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) and Princess Margaret enjoy the fun at the Master of Carnegie's birthday party at Elsie's House in 1935. The young host is third from the left



In the year of King George VI's Coronation (1937) the Royal Family visited Deeside and, on arrival at Ballater, The Queen Mother, The Queen and Princess Margaret spent some time there, when this photograph was taken, before leaving for Balmoral Castle



A happy picture taken during a visit to a boys' camp at Aberfeldie in 1939

in 1939 which was Princess Margaret's birthday. We were bidden to the Castle for the birthday party. It was a queer atmosphere. The children—and there were many of them—were all so gay and the grown-ups played their games and joined in, but, below the surface, there were strangely different feelings. The King returned from a lonely walk and we could not but feel the stress and strain he was suffering, though he tried to cover it and be gay at tea-time. That night he left for London and it was many months before we saw him again. But these first months of war probably led to a greater intimacy with the Princesses than otherwise we might have known.

I shall never forget our Queen, the first Sunday of the war. From a crowded church we were down to a handful of people, and alone in the Royal Pew sat the two little girls with their governess. It was as if Princess Elizabeth had grown up in a night; her face was so serious and her eyes seemed to look beyond. It was most moving—a glimpse of what was to come.

FUN AND GAMES

Often, that autumn, the Princess came to tea with us. On fine days we had great games outside. "Kick-a-Tin" was the favourite. Princess Elizabeth had an athletic figure and to see her run was a joy. Sometimes I found myself wondering "Is it really true that one day this charming child will be our Queen and shall I live to see the day?" Now one can but be glad that her girlhood was so happy. She was always so natural, yet one never forgot she was a Princess.

The Princesses loved to rake up the fallen leaves, and one day, when they insisted on raking the path to the kitchen gate, a vanman came down the path while Princess Elizabeth was bent on her task of leaf-raking. He only saw a little girl, and said in passing: "That's a big job ye've gotten." Princess Elizabeth looked up at him and smiled. Recognising her, he looked as if he wished the earth would swallow him. When the days were cold we played indoor games. A special favourite was a drawing game at which they both excelled with their clever and amusing little pictures. We even played Mah Jong, because they loved the beautiful ivories, and it was wonderful how quickly Princess Elizabeth got the idea of this difficult game.

They joined the local Guide Company and rehearsed for a Nativity Play with the other Guides. Princess Elizabeth was one of the Kings and Princess Margaret the little girl of the story. Then, to their great disappointment, one of the cast got chickenpox, and the play was not performed until after they had left for Sandringham. But they asked to have it sent on, and afterwards produced it with their friends. Indeed, I think I am right in saying this was the beginning of their dramatic efforts.

GROWING UP

When they came back in 1941, Princess Elizabeth had left her childhood behind her, although she and Princess Margaret still came to tea with us and enjoyed a peppermint chocolate cake our cook baked for them. The Princesses continued to have great fun at all sorts of outdoor games. They loved the open-air life and our Queen showed from the beginning that she was a real sportswoman and good at any game or exercise she turned to.

At that time there were always troops on guard. One year it was the Manchester Regiment and, coming from the Midlands, it was natural they should have a lot of musical and dramatic talent. They staged a concert which the Royal Family honoured with their presence. It was a huge success and the Princesses enjoyed it so much that it came to be almost a weekly affair. The Princesses joined in, acting along with N.C.O.s and Tommies in what could best be described as a charade—all very easy and very amusing. They sang duets both in French and English, each playing the accompaniments in turn.

The first time we saw Princess Elizabeth in the drawing-room at Balmoral after dinner was one evening when Mr. Churchill was making an important Broadcast. When we went in to hear the Broadcast we found Princess Elizabeth and a friend waiting to hear it too. And so her education to be our Queen went on.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of the Princess was her perfect manners; not mere politeness but the grace and thoughtfulness that mean so much more. When the Royal Family were leaving for the South we always went to Balmoral to say good-bye. On one occasion neither the King nor the Queen was there. As we made our curtsies and bows, Princess Elizabeth had a special word of thanks for each one—the housekeeper for looking after them so well; Mrs. Ross, the Factor's wife, for toffee and a recipe; myself for teas; and so on, in the most natural and charming way.

The years passed and Princess Elizabeth began to grow up. First she, and then Princess Margaret, joined the evening party at dinner. Towards the end of the war Balmoral was filled to overflowing with young life and gaiety. It was the happiest place, despite the shadow of war which was never forgotten. The happy home atmosphere and the gay, high spirits of the young people made visits there a perfect tonic. In the last year of the war a dance was held and, during the evening, the Queen Mother remarked: "How mad Hitler would be if he could see us daring to enjoy ourselves like this!"

Our Queen, like all the Royal Family, is a beautiful dancer and whole-heartedly enjoys dancing of every kind—Modern, Country and Scottish. There is always a long Paul Jones at the Gillies' Ball, so that many a Tommy from many a different part of the country will be able to tell how he danced with the Queen.

DAYS ON THE MOORS

As the Queen grew up she kept her love of outdoor life. When she began stalking, which she still enjoys, she showed not only skill but the real sportsman's joy in the long day on moor and heather, the hard going and, at the end, a successful shot. She has always had an abundant supply of energy and never seems to tire. Both the Princesses were very good horsewomen and rode almost every day. My husband tells how the first time he ever met Prince Philip was on the day when the Princesses were riding past our gate and called to him to come and speak with them—and there was Prince Philip on a bicycle!

When Prince Philip first came to Balmoral he was with King George of the Hellenes, whom we all liked so much. From the very beginning, everyone took to Prince Philip, and, while many may have had their own thoughts, loyalty was uppermost and we never talked about why he stayed so long. Now, we can all be truly glad and realise how fortunate we are that these two young people found each other. Perhaps it was not only that they loved Balmoral, but because they knew they would find among us the peace and freedom they so much enjoy, that they chose to spend part of their honeymoon at Birkhall.

Few people in the world can be so loved as our Royal Family. Here, I know, our love for them is something deeper than words can tell, as I feel sure it must be at each of their other homes. It is an immense privilege to be allowed to share even a little of their everyday life.

I was asked to write of our Queen's girlhood on Deeside. I must apologise for making this article so personal. I do not feel that, seeing our Queen as I have done, only from time to time, I could do other than give pictures of various incidents in which I have taken part. I only wish I had been more able to do justice to the subject.

God Save The Queen

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The photographs illustrating this feature have come from various sources. The first one of H.M. The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles, Princess Anne and King Feisal of Iraq, with Balmoral Castle in the background, and also that of The Queen at Aboyne Ball are BULLETIN photographs. The groups at the Master of Carnegie's birthday party and the boys' camp at Abergeldie come from "The Balmoral Story," just published by ABERDEEN JOURNALS LTD. We are grateful for the permission to use these photographs.



The Queen at Aboyne Ball

