



Queen Elizabeth II

- ❖ In 1936, Elizabeth's uncle Edward VIII abdicated, dramatically changing her future – at 10 years old, she was heir to the throne.
- ❖ As a teenager, her increasingly grown-up wardrobe included suits and dresses tailored by royal couturier Madame Handley-Seymour, as well as thrifty wartime hand-me-downs including the Norman Hartnell crinoline gown that the 19-year-old princess wore for Cecil Beaton's portrait in 1945.



Elizabeth at the Royal Lodge in 1936



The sisters with their mother
at Windsor in 1943



The Queen's coronation dress

When Norman Hartnell was commissioned to make the Queen's coronation dress in October 1952, he already had his own ideas of what embroideries he could include: lilies, roses, marguerites, the stars and moon, the sky, the earth, the sun among them.

But the Queen insisted all the floral symbols of Great Britain and the Commonwealth had to be incorporated; English roses, Welsh leeks, Irish shamrocks, Scottish thistles and Canadian maple leaves sat alongside emblems from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Pakistan, India and Ceylon.

From zingy violet and hot pink to lime and sunshine yellow, there is no colour that clashes with Her Majesty's colouring – the only one she avoids is beige, which does not allow her to stand out in a crowd.

Yet despite the glamour of the Queen's wardrobe (and it doesn't get more glamorous than State occasions with full regalia, a stupendous tiara and a parure of fabulous jewels) her Majesty is famously thrifty; as a princess, when austerity lingered across the land, the Queen would have her mother's clothes reworked into new outfits.

For 2012's Diamond Jubilee concert at Buckingham Palace, the Queen's richly appliquéd gold dress was made using fabric that had been at the Palace since 1961; a similarly lustrous silver dress worn in Slovenia in 2008 was also made from fabric that had been lying around the Palace for 20 years. And yet those sculptural hats are more dazzling than ever, the tailoring more clean-cut and sumptuous in its details. After 63 years on the throne, the ultimate working wardrobe has never been as triumphant as it is today.





Perhaps the most recognisable of all the Queen's jewellery, the ornate State Diadem has 1,333 diamonds as well as pearls, silver and gold and was made in 1820 for the coronation of George IV. It was a favourite of Queen Victoria, and was used for Elizabeth's coronation. She has worn it for every state opening of Parliament since 1952.

The elegant Queen Mary's Fringe (above) was originally a necklace given to Queen Mary as a wedding gift by Queen Victoria in 1893. The stones were then used to create a tiara by Garrard in 1919. It was worn by both the Queen and Princess Anne for their wedding days.





The Grand Duchess Vladimir tiara was smuggled out of Russia during the Revolution. It was inherited by the Grand Duchess' daughter, Princess Nicholas of Greece, and then later sold to Queen Mary and inherited by Elizabeth. The Queen last wore this tiara with stunning cabochon emeralds (in place of the pearls) for an Irish state banquet at Windsor in 2014.

Another favourite, the elegant, Russian-style Queen Alexandra Kokoshnik tiara has 488 brilliants and can also be worn as a necklace. It was originally a gift to Queen Alexandra to mark her silver wedding anniversary, and was later passed down to Queen Mary. It was bequeathed to the Elizabeth in 1953.





