

A Royal Connection



James H. Hillestad, member number 6, takes a look at the strong connection W. Britain has always had with the British Royal Family

In 1922, King George V, upon seeing Britains farm and village series at the British Industries Trade Show, remarked to Dennis Britain, "But where is the village idiot? No English village is complete without him!"

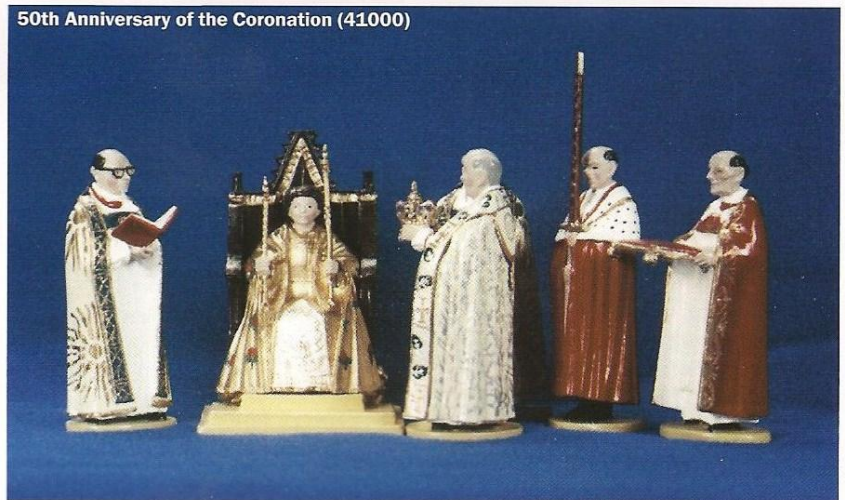


Within a few weeks, Britains produced just such a figure and it remained in the catalogue until the Second World War.

This marked the beginning of a long association of Britains with the British monarchy. In 1935, Britains produced busts of George V and Queen Mary to celebrate their Silver Jubilee. Two years later, they offered an 80mm scale bust of the newly-crowned George VI.

The same year saw the introduction of the first State Coach. Originally designed to carry the single figure of Edward VIII, it was quickly modified after the abdication to accommodate a

50th Anniversary of the Coronation (41000)



pair of figures representing George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

In 1953, the Coronation State Coach was again modified to celebrate the ascent of Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen, accompanied by Prince Philip now held the scepter previously held by her father King George VI.

A new model of the coach was offered to members of the W. Britain Collectors Club in 2003 to celebrate the golden anniversary of the Queen's coronation.

It is therefore no wonder that Britains last year chose to mark the Queen's 80th birthday with four historic figures capturing important periods in her reign.

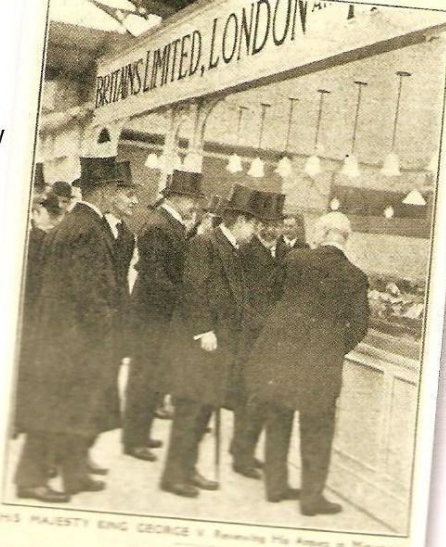
Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926. On the occasion of the birth of her sister four years later, she announced to a friend, "I've got a baby sister, Margaret Rose, and I'm going to call her Bud." To this, the friend responded "Why Bud?" "Well," came the answer, "she's not a real Rose yet, is she? She's only a bud."



LEFT The Queen Mother and Princess Margaret admiring the Britains display at the 1956 British Industries Fair

RIGHT King George V viewing the Britains display at the 1922 British Industries Trade Show

BRITISH INDUSTRIES FAIR 1922.



HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V. Viewing the Britains in Museum
With the Compliments of
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King George VI with Queen Elizabeth admiring the Britains 1948 "Birthday Parade"

people. Many of them had camped out the previous night in the rain. In the morning, they were greeted with the news that Edmund Hillary, a New Zealander, had conquered Mt. Everest. This was taken as a good omen, offsetting the bad weather.

The W. Britain Collectors Club 2003 Coronation Series included the ceremonial carriage carrying the "imposing" Queen Salote of Tonga and the diminutive Sultan of Kalantan. Watching the original procession, Noel Coward asked a royal attendant, "Who can he be?" and received this response: "Her lunch!"

Six years later, upon learning that her uncle had abdicated the throne, she told Margaret the news. "Does this mean that you will have to be the next Queen?" asked the younger sister. "Yes, some day," was the reply. "Poor you," said Margaret.

In 1939, at the age of 13, then Princess Elizabeth met Prince Philip of Greece, aged 18, a cadet at Dartmouth Naval College. On November 20, 1947, they married.

In 1952, she succeeded to the crown at the same age (25) as her distant predecessor Elizabeth I. On June 2, 1953, nearly a quarter of the human beings then living on earth celebrated her coronation. The Mall was packed twelve deep with 30,000



State Open Road Landau (2094) from 1954



State Coach, Collectors Club Edition (40295) from 2003



The four figures depicting the Queen throughout her life made by W. Britain in 2006



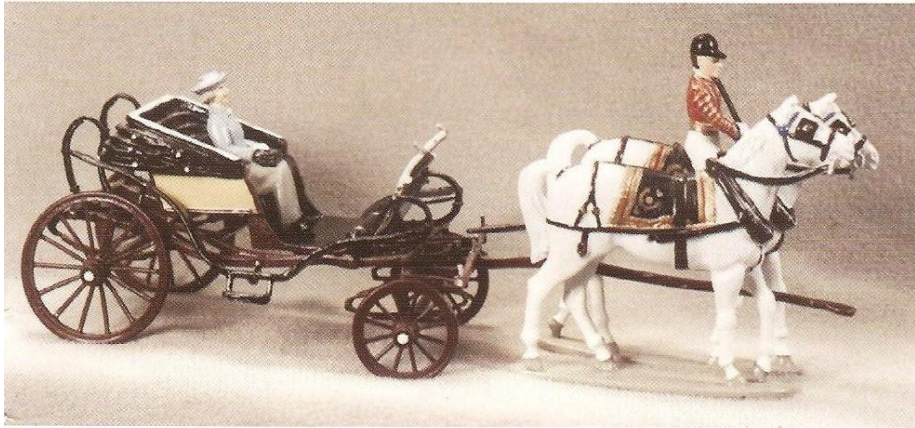
State Coach of Queen Elizabeth II (2081) from 1953



State Coach of King George VI (1470) from 1937

It has been said that the Queen has an intuitive feeling of what is right. She wears a minimum of makeup and very little jewelry. Her clothes are pretty but never flamboyant. Though not funny, she has a good sense of humor as illustrated by an encounter at a Norfolk teasshop. Two women in headscarves and wearing green quilted jackets were leaving the shop when they were stopped by another customer. "Excuse me, but you do look awfully like the Queen," she said. "How very reassuring," the Queen smiled as she went on her way.

Her fondness for her dogs is well-known. Visitors to Buckingham Palace are greeted with a flurry of Corgis heralding the arrival of the Queen and Prince Philip. These tiny canine "guards" fan out, hopping on every gentleman in the room. Protecting themselves, the men put down their sherry and clasp their hands over their vulnerable areas,



H.M. The Queen in the Ivory Phaeton (40111)

rather like footballers lining up in front of a free kick.

Descriptors such as practical, sensible, extremely able, and genuinely caring are often ascribed to her. She is proud to have become the most traveled monarch in Britain's history, and regards herself as Britain's foremost salesperson.

Reflecting on the sustained popularity of the British monarchy, King Farouk of Egypt prophesized that by the end of the 20th century, there would be only five houses left in business – those of Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades, and Windsor.

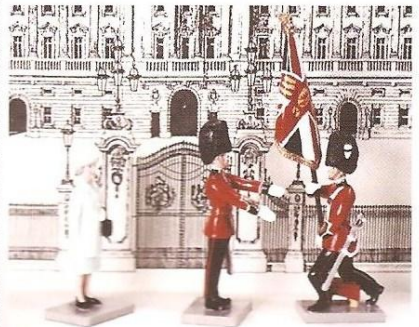
A genealogical footnote – the Queen and Prince Philip are both great-great grandchildren of Queen Victoria. ■



Queen Elizabeth (left) from 1952 (2065) and (right) from 2001 (40197)



H.M. The Queen (08031/41075)



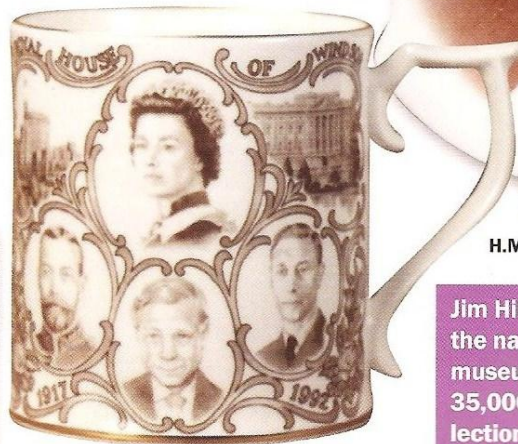
H.M. The Queen presenting the Standard to the Welsh Guards (40392)

SUGGESTED READING

- Majesty by Robert Lacey
- The Queen by Ann Morrow
- Royal Anecdotes by Elizabeth Longford



Princess Elizabeth Commemorative cup



Commemorative cup celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Royal House of Windsor



H.M. The Queen Commemorative plate

Jim Hillestad operates under the name "The Toy Soldier." His museum, containing more than 35,000 figures and a large collection of militaria, is located in the Pocono Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania. For directions and hours, call him at 570 629-7227 or visit his website at www.the-toy-soldier.com