

**GUESTS OF THE KNIGHTS
AND LADIES OF THE
ORDER OF THE GARTER**

THE QUEEN AND PRINCE PHILIP ATTEND THE FIRST CELEBRATION OF THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING AT SPENCER HOUSE





The Queen and Prince Philip were guests of honour at a dinner organised by fellow Knights and Ladies of the Order of the Garter to celebrate the royal couple's Golden Wedding. It was held at Spencer House, Lord Rothschild's palatial mansion overlooking Green Park.

Among the first arrivals was the Duke of Gloucester, who is the newest royal Garter Knight. The Duke was appointed as a Knight by his cousin the Queen on St George's Day this year and will be formally installed at Windsor next Monday. The Duchess of Gloucester, in midnight blue, waved to onlookers gathered to see the VIP arrivals in St James's Place.

The Duke of Kent, who is also a royal Knight, arrived at the same time as the Gloucesters and shortly before the Princess Royal. The Queen created her only daughter a Lady of the Order of the Garter in 1994. The Princess was wearing a dark green dress with a tartan bodice. The eight-pointed Diamond Star of the Garter was pinned low down on her left side, in the traditional manner.

The Queen Mother arrived with Prince Charles. He automatically became a Garter Knight when he was created Prince of Wales in 1958, although it was another ten years before he was finally installed, aged 19.

The Queen Mother has had her title of Lady of the Order of the Garter since 1936. It was one of first acts of her husband when he succeeded his brother Edward VIII after the Abdication. George VI had his 41st birthday three days after he became King and, as the new Queen Consort explained in a letter to her mother-in-law, Queen Mary, "He had discovered that Papa [George V] gave [the Garter] to you on his birthday, June 3, and the coincidence was so charming that he has now followed suit and given it to me on his own birthday."

More than 60 years on, the Queen Mother arrived wearing the Garter star on a stunning silver evening

The Queen and Queen Mother shine in gold and silver (facing page). Departing from tradition, the Queen did not carry gloves, displaying an impressive array of rings instead. The Princess Royal (above left) has been a Lady of the Order since 1994. The Duchess of Gloucester (above) accompanied her husband, who is the newest royal Knight



dress. She also wore a diamond and pearl necklace – made in 1863 as a wedding present for the future Queen Alexandra. Diamond earrings matched her diamond bracelet and, to complete the glamorous image, she wore silver shoes with three-inch heels.

The Queen Mother's arrival gave

the evening one of its lighter moments. Though her detective leapt forward to open the door of her Daimler, it remained resolutely locked and no amount of tugging would release it. Eventually, the Queen Mother wound down the window so the detective could lean into the car to release the catch. ▶





Members of this very ancient order of chivalry are appointed by the monarch herself, without having to consult her government. They include Dukes Gloucester and Kent (above left) and three ex-prime ministers (opposite, left to right) Lady Thatcher, whose husband Dennis joins the 20 Knights' wives each year to watch the annual procession at Windsor, Sir Edward Heath and Lord Callaghan



The Duchess of Devonshire, one of the legendary Mitford sisters (above left, with the Duke), wore pastels and a silk scarf adorned with brooches shaped like butterflies and small animals. The Duchess of Grafton (left, with the Duke) is one of the Queen's closest friends and, as Mistress of the Robes to the Queen since 1967, she's the senior lady of the royal household. The Duchess of Wellington (above) greets Lady Callaghan and Lady Longford

While the Queen Mother's car sat outside Spencer House, the two guests of honour, the Queen and Prince Philip, were left stranded further down the road in their limousine. When the Queen finally alighted, she looked stunning in heavily embroidered yellow and green silk, with gold and emerald earrings and an emerald and diamond necklace.

This year is not only the 50th anniversary of the Queen and Prince Philip's wedding, it is also 50 years since they were admitted to the Order of the Garter. Her father wrote to Queen Mary at the time: "I am giving the Garter to Lilibet on November 11 so that she will be senior to Philip, whom I am giving it to on November 19.

"I have arranged that he shall be created a Royal Highness and the titles of his peerage will be Baron Greenwich, Earl of Merioneth and Duke of Edinburgh. These will be announced in the morning papers of November 20 [their wedding day], including the Garter.

"It is a great deal to give to a man all at once, but I know Philip understands his new responsibilities on his marriage to Lilibet."

The Chapter of the Order of the Garter was established by Edward III in 1348. The Order consists of the Queen, the Prince of Wales and such members of the royal family as have been

selected, and 24 non-royal Knights Companions or Ladies of the Garter. In addition, a number of foreign monarchs who have become Extra Knights and Ladies.

The longest-serving Knight Companion, the Earl of Longford, arrived shortly before the royal party with his wife, celebrated biographer Lady Elizabeth Longford. Also present were the Duke and Duchess of Grafton.

Other Garter Knights at Spencer House included Viscount Leverhulme, Viscount Ridley, Baron Ashburton, Baron Bramall, the Marquess of Abergavenny, Baron Sainsbury, Sir Timothy Colman, ex-Governor of the Bank of England Baron Kingsdown and former Foreign Secretary Baron Carrington. The Dukes of Norfolk, Wellington and Devonshire, also members of the Order, attended too.

It was after 11 o'clock when the Queen and Prince Philip left, having let official precedence slip to allow the Queen Mother's car to take her home earlier. As she emerged into the still-warm evening, the Queen looked happy and relaxed as she waved to the crowd, having clearly enjoyed the first of this year's many Golden Wedding celebrations. **H**