

EVERY THURSDAY No. 6289 AUGUST 4, 1990

30p

THE
**People's
Friend**

THE FAMOUS STORY PAPER FOR WOMEN

**Happy
Birthday,
Ma'am**





That inimitable wave!

Crown Jewel

Most of the week IAN LLOYD has a nine-to-five job — but not if the Queen Mother's visiting somewhere special. Then he's on the road with his camera, ready for that perfect royal shot. To celebrate Her Majesty's ninetieth birthday, the "Friend" is happy to pay tribute, in his words and pictures, to a busy, charming, and obviously happy lady.

The Cameramen's Delight

THE Queen Mother is quite simply brilliant to photograph. Whether the camera belongs to a seasoned photographer or to a six-year-old Brownie, its owner is never disappointed. If they are, it can never be put down to the Queen Mother's being unco-operative.

She is the only member of the Royal Family who appears truly unconcerned by the invasion of the paparazzi (at least fifty of them followed her around the Royal Smithfield Show in 1988), or by the intrusion of boom-mikes and the latest photographic equipment. Finding her way impeded by a 500-mm lens on a tripod at

Egham last May, she touched the end of it, saying, "Dear me, that looks rather frightening."

The Queen Mother nearly always greets photographers with a polite "Good morning." When she steps out of a car, she looks towards both sides of the crowd to make sure that everyone can see her and photograph her. Then there is the final glance over her shoulder as she enters the building she is visiting. This usually catches out the novice photographer.

I once overheard the Queen Mother say of the Press, "Well, they have to get their pictures or nobody will know that I've been here, will they?"



Lady of the Garter in procession at Windsor — a never-missed engagement.

She also appreciates the fact that a photographer, whether amateur or professional, may have waited up to five or six hours to see her. And she knows what makes a good picture. For instance, when she visited the Royal Windsor Flower Show in July 1987, and a gust of wind blew the vicar's hat off just as he bowed in her direction, she roared with delight and shouted over to us, "I hope you photographed that!"

This spirit of co-operation was again evident the following year when the Queen Mother opened a police convalescent home. During the visit she was presented with a wooden bench for the gardens of Royal Lodge. All the photographers were tacitly imploring her to sit on it.

The Queen Mother looked at us and then at the bench. "Shall I sit on it?" A swift chorus of "Yes please, Ma'am" followed, and then she was surrounded by the whirr of a mass of cameras.

That same year the Queen Mother visited the docklands redevelopment scheme in and around Bermondsey. Her Majesty made a poignant speech recalling her previous visits during the Blitz.

Behind her, as a brilliant imaginative gesture, two thirty-foot photographs showed the then Queen Elizabeth and King George VI making one of these very visits. Again, she asked us whether or not we wanted her to pose in front of them, and to universal thanks she obligingly stood against a wall of sandbags and smiled up at her own image.

Her Majesty knows whether the photographer should be using 100 or 400 ASA film. She understands the difficulties of photographing through glass, and lowers her car window as she leaves each engagement. She is also adept at dealing with flash photography.

A prized annual chore — presenting shamrocks to the Irish Guards on St Patrick's Day.





It's hard to tell who's more excited! Could that be the secret behind the Queen Mother's smile?

When the Vice-President of Sandringham Women's Institute asked her how she and the Queen coped with constant glare, she replied, "Oh, we're used to it." Clearly, the Queen Mother regards media coverage as more than an intrusion or just an inevitable part of the job. She treats the camera as she does the bouquet, the plaque or the visitors' book: as a necessary and vital part of the ceremony.

What Is She Really Like?

MENTION the Queen Mother to anyone and you can guarantee they will ask, "Is she really always so nice?" Perhaps the best way I can answer the question is by describing the image that I have seen the Queen Mother present on both public and private engagements.

Queen Elizabeth obviously derives great fulfilment from making public appearances. Even the most routine engagement finds her in high spirits. Yet this mood is tempered by the formality that surrounds her and the high standards that she insists on.

She is a natural and very gracious flirt, and produces in men a chivalry that recalls a romantic, bygone era. Also, she has a romantic's love of flowers and much prefers the public's home-grown bunches, held together by tin-foil and ribbon, to an official bouquet.

Children can be a menace with flowers, and many a distraught parent has seen £10 go down the drain when the youngster gives the bouquet to a mayoress or lady-in-waiting by mistake.

In January 1988, when the Queen and Queen Mother were about to leave West Newton Church, near the Sandringham estate, a stream of small children were paired off to approach the royal ladies with flowers. A woman next to me in the crowd kept saying, "Annabel, give them to the Queen, don't forget . . . the Queen."

As luck would have it, when Annabel's turn came, she faced the Queen Mother, gave her the flowers and then asked loudly, "Are you the Queen?" The



"Nice to see you, Mr Lloyd!" she says, about to leave her Ascot carriage.

Queen Mother, slightly taken aback, said, "Well, no, it's my daughter . . ." and indicated the present monarch.

Obviously bearing in mind her mother's instructions, Annabel grabbed back the flowers and gave them to the Queen, who turned round with a deadpan expression and said, "Got it right that time!"

Romance is also evoked by the Queen Mother's style: the reassuringly familiar silk or velvet coat, the matching familiar soft-brimmed hat, the pearls, the brooch and the teetering 3½-inch heels.

Although the style may vary little, the colours embrace a whole spectrum of blues, greens, pinks and yellows, and no matter where in the UK I have travelled to photograph the Queen Mother, the guessing game of "What will she wear?" is usually played somewhere among the well-wishers.

For the many people who meet royalty only once in a lifetime, the experience can be thrilling. I remember fifty-three-year-old George Aldred telling the Queen Mother that he had fulfilled a lifetime's ambition when he met her at Saffron Walden. She replied, "Well, I'm so glad that we've met now," as if she too had waited half a century for the meeting.

I have overheard her ask the inevitable royal question, "Where do you come



Arriving for a Middle Temple dinner, she pauses for the cameras, despite the December frost.



"It's ideal for Royal Lodge," she said, sitting on her new bench for the photographers.

from?" and after receiving the usual reply, "Hampstead," "Twickenham," "Leeds," she always follows it with the delighted exclamation, "Oh, Hampstead . . ." as if she knows the place well. I even heard, "Oh, Missouri!" when she visited Egham. Similarly, when she is driving past a crowd, she selects particular people to smile at and acknowledge in order to make them feel special.

With King George, the Queen Mother developed the Royal Family's ability to associate itself successfully with ordinary men and women, mainly owing to the war. Their visits to badly-bombed areas set the precedent for royal visits to the scenes of disasters, such as the Queen's

Wherever she goes, they go!



Continued overleaf.



This broad smile was because she'd been reminded it was the 35th anniversary of her daughter's Coronation!



The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports leaving church near Dover.

visit to Aberfan in 1966 and that of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Enniskillen in 1987.

It is amazing how many times, even today, the war comes up in conversation during the Queen Mother's engagements around the country. When she visited the Manor Gardens Community Centre in North London, she talked about rationing and the price of butter with ninety-four-year-old Kitty Gregg. In Walmer I heard her say to eighty-three-year-old Alf Morris, "We never knew what Hitler was going to do next, did we?"

"I Can Beat You!"

ONE of the most notable aspects of the Queen Mother's engagements is that whenever she visits a town or city, diligent officials

Posing at her own suggestion in front of wartime pictures.



The sun doesn't always shine — on this day her helicopter couldn't fly, so she drove to meet one of her regiments.

always seem to have scoured the district for someone the same age as Her Majesty to present to her.

Unfortunately, many do not share the Queen Mother's robust state of health, and it must be very dispiriting for her to meet a wheel-chair-bound old dear and to be told, "Mrs Sedgeman is exactly the same age as Your Majesty!"

Happily, the Queen Mother seems to take it all in her stride, to the extent of her straightening the blanket covering eighty-nine-year-old Gertrude Nelson's knees at the Windsor Flower Show, saying, "Now do keep warm, won't you?"

When, a month earlier, Her Majesty met eighty-six-year-old Mrs Emily Silverside in Newcastle, the latter told her, "We're all travelling on," to which the Queen Mother replied, "Yes, we are, aren't we," before hurrying off to open a leisure park and then flying back to Heathrow in time for a dinner engagement in London.

If it is a case of survival of the fittest, the Queen Mother definitely has the last word. As I photographed her at a reception at Norwich Airport, the city's former mayor, Ted Gambling, told her, "We're a couple of oldsters. I'm eighty-four."

"Yes," said the Queen Mother, wagging her finger, "but I can beat you!"

Her visits to the races are part of the same annual pattern as many of her public engagements. In this way, her yearly call at grocer Philip Delaney's shop in Prestbury, on her way to the Cheltenham Gold Cup, has itself become one of the traditions on which the Queen Mother bases her style of royalty.

Should an important race coincide with a public engagement, the Queen Mother will, if the timing permits, listen to the live broadcast over the car radio. I remember several years ago waiting anxiously as she took ten minutes to alight from her Rolls-Royce after returning to Clarence House. A member of the household later confirmed that, far from having been taken ill as I had feared, the Queen Mother, with her entourage, had stayed in the drive to listen to the 4.15 at Newmarket.

The world is her oyster, yet many of the Queen Mother's recreational activities are modest. While staying at the Castle of Mey, she makes excursions to art galleries



Waving the family off to Britannia from Scrabster Pier in Caithness.

in Thurso, and during her summer visits to Sandringham attends exhibitions and concerts at King's Lynn.

There are visits to the theatre, and the more contemplative pursuits of gardening and reading poetry. Her devotion to her corgis is renowned, and after last year's Trooping the Colour, I photographed her leaving Clarence House for Windsor only to see her return minutes later roaring with laughter, since in her hurry she had forgotten to take the corgis.

All of these private pursuits are to some degree a security risk, requiring an increase in the size of the Royalty Protection force and in the number of police guarding the royal palaces. The Queen Mother treats the officers with the same personal consideration that characterises much of her contact with the public.

A WPC seconded to work at Buckingham Palace told me that on her first day of duty there, a radio signal warned her to open the ten-foot-high gates at the garden entrance to the palace, as the Queen Mother was about to leave for Clarence House after dining with the Queen.

As the policewoman pushed the gates back, one side became jammed by gravel from the forecourt. Fortunately, a voice said, "Do you think I can help you?" and the policewoman was amazed to see the Queen Mother, then well over eighty, get out of her car and try very gently to push the gates open.

The End.

© 1989 Ian Lloyd.

Taken from the book *CROWN JEWEL* by Ian Lloyd, published by Bloomsbury Publishing Limited at £14.95.

At the end of the day, she returns home to her own quiet house and garden. Happy birthday, Ma'am!

