

**William
and Kate**
A fairytale
romance

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APRIL 30, 2011

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4 **This week's cover feature**
Ian Lloyd
The Royal Wedding

A Tale As Old As Time



WHEN Catherine Elizabeth Middleton arrived to study at St Andrews University in September 2001, she doubtless had no idea that she would emerge four years later with a degree in one hand and the future King William V in the other! Kate and William were fellow students before they became friends, and then it was another year or two before they became boyfriend and girlfriend.

Kate was born in January 1982, and is five months older than her future husband. Her father, Michael Middleton, was an aircraft officer for British Airways, where he met and fell in love with Carole Goldsmith, a flight attendant.

Michael and Carole were married in the parish church of Dorney in Buckinghamshire. Kate was their firstborn, and was followed by Philippa, known as Pippa, who is to be Kate's

Ian Lloyd looks at the story behind the wedding of the decade . . .

maid of honour. It was after James's birth in 1987 that Carole came up with the idea for their company, "Party Pieces". She realised that many mothers dread making up party bags to hand out to the kiddies when they visit for a birthday party, so she had the brainwave of making them up ready and selling them. The business

grew into the multi-million pound venture it is today and "Party Pieces" supplies all kinds of things you might need to throw the perfect event. William and Kate's relationship has been a slow-burning romance, and it is just what the House of Windsor needs. Having been a couple for eight years, it is a safe bet that they know each other as



Ian Lloyd.

Tim Rooke/Rex Features.



Attending a wedding.

Tim Rooke/Rex Features.



As close as ever!

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Clarence House.

Ian Lloyd.

well as anyone could hope.

They split up twice; once when they were students and more recently in 2007.

Well, as many people know, if you can survive two break-ups and still find yourself laughing at the same jokes and caring for each other, then there is definitely something there worth celebrating.

The key to William and Kate's relationship is that they have stuck to their guns and done things their way. They have ignored all the pressure from newspapers and magazines to name a date, and appear to have had no pressure put on them by their families, either.

IT'S a far cry from the wedding of William's parents. Prince Charles gave way to pressure from his father, who told him it was unfair to keep Diana hanging on with all the photographers and journalists making her life so difficult.

In those days, protocol dictated that a girlfriend or boyfriend couldn't live under the same roof as their royal partner. They weren't allowed to join their prince or princess on royal engagements. They couldn't stay at Sandringham or Balmoral with the Queen or join the royals for Christmas and other holidays.

This meant that Diana, Sarah

Ferguson and Mark Phillips had no idea what they were really letting themselves in for when they became involved with Prince Charles, Prince Andrew and Princess Anne.

Each of them courted for less than a year before their wedding. Then they were flung mercilessly into the public eye with very little training. Diana was only



Graduation day.

Ian Lloyd.

twenty when she became Princess of Wales and, in retrospect, it was all too much too soon. No wonder William said on the day of his engagement, "We are hoping to learn lessons from the past."

To a certain extent, they did have a rôle model in William's uncle, Prince Edward, who saw Sophie Rhys-Jones — now the Countess of Wessex — for six years before they wed. During that time they stayed together in his apartments at Buckingham Palace from time to time, and Sophie attended family events such as the wedding of Princess Margaret's daughter, Lady Sarah Armstrong Jones, to Daniel Chatto. They were even allowed to sit side by side in the church, whereas a generation earlier they would have sat apart.

Kate has similarly been slowly immersed into royal life. She attended William's graduation from Sandhurst in 2006. Two years later she was a guest at Windsor Castle when William was made a Knight of the Garter and she was allowed to watch the procession. She stood between Prince Harry and the Duchess of Cornwall. It gave her a taste of what life would be like in the public eye.

William's family has rallied round to help Kate feel welcome. On the day of the

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At Wembley stadium.

Rex Features.

Continued from page 5.

royal engagement, Harry said he was delighted he had a sister at last and, a few weeks later, Camilla was spotted taking Kate out to lunch to discuss wedding plans. William also asked his aunt Sophie to take Kate under her wing and give her tips on how to cope with royal life in the glare of the media spotlight.

Someone who took her time in deciding to marry was the late Queen Mother. As Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, she turned down the Duke of York three times before she finally agreed to wed. Prince Charles is on record as saying he wanted his marriage to be like his grandparents', since they grew more in love over the years. If you've seen the film "The King's Speech" you'll know what an important part Elizabeth played in helping her beloved Bertie overcome his crippling stammer.

Prince William isn't as nervous as the late King, but it was noted on their first joint engagement in Anglesey how the text of his speech shook a little, even out of the breeze, and how, in contrast, Kate looked relaxed and happy even with dozens and dozens of cameras all around her.

Thankfully, with the Queen still hale and hearty at eighty-five, William and Kate don't have to act as the next in line, as Charles and Diana had to. There is a buffer since they are one step removed, thanks



Outdoor pursuits.

Rex Features.

to Charles and Camilla. This has the advantage that they can relax and get to know each other in a way that William's parents never did.

The prince is committed to his search and rescue work on Anglesey until at least 2013. Here they live a secluded life, unbothered by locals and journalists. They also love to holiday in Scotland. The Queen gave William and Harry the use of Tarn na Ghar, a cottage on the Balmoral estate, which was renovated for their use. They also stay at Birkhall, the large, whitewashed mansion that for many years was home to the Queen Mother on Deeside and which is now a bolthole for Charles and Camilla.

Kate has brought some new blood into the royal family. There is an air of optimism and a feeling that this time everything is going to work out well. The Queen is delighted that William has found true love and, more importantly, that the monarchy will be in safe hands for decades to come. ●



The book "Invitation To The Royal Wedding" by Ian Lloyd, published by Carlton Books, rrp £20, is available online and from bookshops.

Next Week:
Willie Shand visits the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh.