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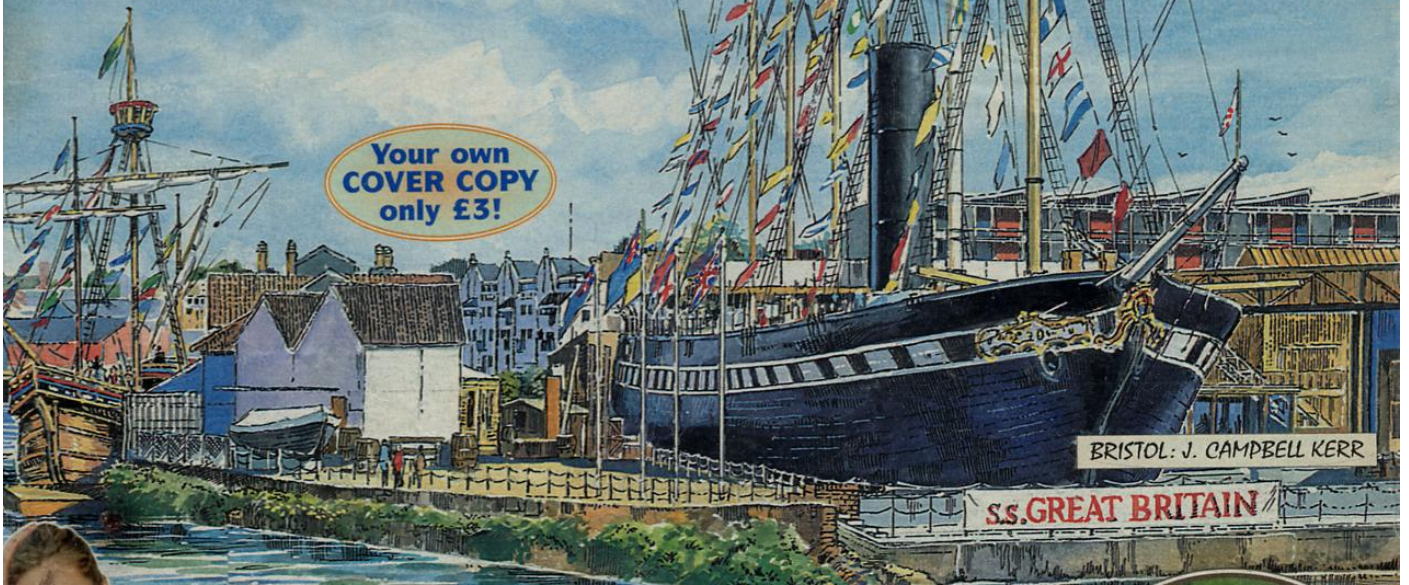
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**DESIGNS
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THE QUEEN**

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YUDY



Teresa Lanz puts the finishing touches to a cocktail dress designed by Karl-Ludwig Rehse.

SHE first hit the cover of "Time" magazine aged three, and her clothes have been a talking point ever since.

She and her sister were role models for girls worldwide. In Holland, Anne Frank had a magazine photo of Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret pinned to a wall in her

and one of the few folk the monarch can trust through and through.

It's Angela who has transformed the Queen's style. Working from her base on the east side of Buckingham Palace, she and her assistants care for the sovereign's clothes and also run the in-house design team, Kelly and Pordum. This label's

"I was asked to make an evening gown for a formal dinner during the Jamaica Commonwealth conference. It received huge publicity, thanks to a power cut as the Queen arrived. She ended up dining by car headlights shining through the window!"

I'm struck by Stewart's admiration for his royal client.

"I think the Queen is always elegant, and she dresses as you'd really like women to dress; in the sort of clothes you'd choose for a wedding.

"She's youthful in her opinions, in her attitude to life, and mixes easily with people half her age. This shows in the way she dresses. She's far more experimental than her mother or grandmother ever were."

Another designer often favoured is Karl-Ludwig Rehse,

each fabric.

"The unfinished dresses or calicoes are taken to the Palace for a first fitting, corrections are marked and if there's time, there's a second fitting.

"It's all made a lot easier by the fact the Queen is a professional and knows what she wants. At the same time she always consults you."

Karl's salon is literally a few doors down from Philip Somerville, who liaises closely with Angela and the designers to ensure his hats complement each outfit.

"These days the Queen likes a classic look, a clean look that's not too fussy," Philip says. "Comfort is essential, since she might be wearing a hat for five or six hours. The hats have to fit well.

"It's vital they don't blow off, so we supply a couple of hatpins, one for each side, covered in the same material so

Meet The Dream Team!

attic hideaway.

As Elizabeth's governess put it, she was "content to wear whatever was laid before her". Her nursemaid, Bobo, went on to become her dresser.

The then Queen introduced her to Norman Hartnell, designer of Elizabeth's wedding dress and the Coronation dress. He designed for the Queen till he died.

By the late 1980s, her style had begun to seem dowdy and matronly, but ten years on, and things were looking different.

Bobo's successor is Angela Kelly, the friendly Liverpoolian who's now the Queen's senior dresser and personal assistant,

produced many tour outfits, as well as those worn on engagements at home.

In 2006, Angela kindly allowed me to interview many of those responsible for the Queen's look.

Stewart Parvin was just thirty-three when Angela discovered him, and his first design for the Queen had a memorable launch.

The Queen's last, template and shoe at Anello and Davide's.



An assistant brings Philip Somerville's latest creation to life.



who works from London's Chiltern Street.

Karl gives me an insight into the vast amount of work that goes into preparing the Queen's wardrobe.

"Designing for the Queen, we have to take into account comfort, then climate. We have to make sure the skirt length is OK for sitting down, and that the buttons can be noticed for the photographs.

"A few months before a tour, we send fabric samples and sketches to the Palace, and after the Queen has had a chance to look at them we'll meet, and she'll ask your opinion about

The way the Queen looks is the work of a dedicated team of designers and craftspeople. In her birthday week, Ian Lloyd has been behind the scenes . . .



Cordelia James gloves, then and now.

you can't really see them. Fortunately the Queen has nice thick hair, so it isn't a problem fitting them.

"The outfit is designed first, and we match the hat from a material swatch. We take them to the Palace at the same fitting.

"This is very nice," she might say, 'but remember I'm in a car, it might be too wide. It would be fine for a carriage.'

"She's very observant, too. Not long ago she greeted me with, 'Happy birthday for yesterday!'

"I was flabbergasted, as I never tell anyone when it is.

"Oh, I spotted it listed in the 'Telegraph'," she said."

Careful accessorising is an essential part of the Queen's style, and because she stands for hours on end, comfortable shoes are an absolute must. David Hyatt, originally of H&R Rayne, now at Anello and Davide, showed me

how they're made.

"The lasts we use for the Queen date back to 1986. We normally supply the same styles, in different materials.

"Her court shoes are leather, usually black, beige or navy with a two-and-a-quarter inch heel, and the option of another quarter-inch on the sole for use on grass or when it's wet."

There are three different kinds of evening shoe — satin, silver or gold.



Photographs by Ian Lloyd.

"It probably takes a couple of days to make a pair of shoes, but they remain on the lasts for about a week, so the leather shrinks to the perfect shape.

"We normally supply one or two pairs a year, and occasionally renew the tops, reheel or change the insole."

One of her best-kept secrets is the contents of those famous handbags, bought for many years from the craftsmen at Launer.

"We supply patent leather handbags in black, white, or beige for day use, and occasionally gold or silver for evenings," the managing director, Gerald Bodmer, tells me.

"Each one takes five or six hours to make. We sometimes add a purse, but the Queen doesn't like a divide in the middle, like the normal design. They're made to a specific length for carrying over the arm.

"Recently we've supplied six smaller, more feminine bags as the Queen has updated her look. Normally it would be only one or two a year.

"We invited her to watch the bags being made in Walsall, and I think she really enjoyed her visit. We're one of the few leather companies still in existence, and we owe the Queen a lot, really."

The final trademark in the sovereign's style is her gloves,

which help protect hands that shake a lot of other hands during a working day.

"My mother was asked to design the gloves for Princess Elizabeth's going-away outfit," Cordelia James's daughter, Geraldine, explains. "She then designed the Coronation gloves, and it went on from there.

"She also supplied the Queen Mother and most of the other royal ladies; she always said Diana used them to hide her nails, which were quite bitten.

"The Queen's daytime gloves are of breathable, washable brushed cotton, which she changes several times a day. For her Australian visit we made a dozen pairs.

"For evenings she chooses lighter nylon.

"She's been very loyal to us over the years, and when my mother was dying, she asked to be kept informed about her health."

So this is the team responsible for the Queen's style, and as ever, they've been busy over the winter planning the latest additions to the wardrobe.

When the Queen, newly turned eighty-one, and Prince Philip land in the USA on May 1, do keep a look-out for what she's wearing. You never know, you may have seen it here first!

The End.

Stewart Parvin in his salon at Motcombe Street.



Dress designer and milliner work together to create the perfect outfit.



The finished product — Her Majesty arrives at Royal Ascot.



Oops! The Queen drops Launer's finest in the mud.

Gerald Bodmer at Launer's.

