Accession and Coronation

After her marriage in 1947, Princess Elizabeth paid formal visits with The Duke of Edinburgh to France and Greece, and in autumn 1951 they toured Canada.

Princess Elizabeth also visited Malta four times while Prince Philip was stationed there on naval duties, and enjoyed the life of a naval wife and young mother.

This way of life was not to last long, as her father's health was deteriorating. In 1952, King George VI's illness forced him to abandon his proposed visit to Australia and New Zealand. The Princess, accompanied by Prince Philip, took his place.

View three films from the archives charting the death of King George VI and The Queen's Accession and Coronation.

Part One, The King's Death:

Part Two, The Queen's Accession:
On Wednesday, 6 February 1952, Princess Elizabeth received the news
of her father's death and her own accession to the throne, while staying in
a remote part of Kenya.

The tour had to be abandoned, and the young Princess flew back to
Britain as Queen. She was greeted by Prime Minister Winston Churchill
and other officials at the airport.

The Coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953. It was
a solemn ceremony conducted by Dr Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of
Canterbury.

Representatives of the peers, the Commons and all the great public
interests in Britain, the Prime Ministers and leading citizens of the other
Commonwealth countries, and representatives of foreign states were
present.

Crowds of people viewed the procession all along the route, despite
heavy rain. The ceremony was also broadcast on radio around the world
and, at The Queen's request, on television for the first time.

Television brought home to hundreds of thousands of people around the
Commonwealth the splendour and significance of the Coronation in a way
never before possible.

The Coronation was followed by drives through every part of London, a
review of the fleet at Spithead, and visits to Scotland, Northern Ireland
and Wales.