



Head of State

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Her Majesty The Queen

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The Duke of Edinburgh



The Duke of Edinburgh

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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.

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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:

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Accession

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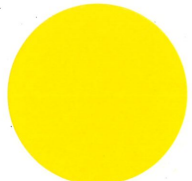
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Part Three, the Coronation:

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.

