



Queen Elizabeth II

The Queen has ruled for longer than any other Monarch in British history, becoming a much loved and respected figure across the globe. Her extraordinary reign has seen her travel more widely than any other monarch, undertaking many historic overseas visits. Known for her sense of duty and her devotion to a life of service, she has been an important figurehead for the UK and the Commonwealth during times of enormous social change.



Her Majesty continues to carry out a full programme of engagements, from visits to charities and schools, to hosting visiting Heads of State, to leading the nation in Remembrance and celebratory events - all supported by other members of the Royal Family.

The Queen sees public and voluntary service as one of the most important elements of her work. The Queen has links - as Royal Patron or President - with over 600 charities, military associations, professional bodies and public service organisations. These vary from well-established international charities to smaller bodies working in a specialist area or on a local basis only.

Her patronages and charities cover a wide range of issues, from opportunities for young people, to the preservation of wildlife and the environment. Having Her Majesty as Royal patron or president provides vital publicity for the work of these organisations, and allows their enormous achievements and contributions to society to be recognised.

Her Majesty supports and encourages achievement in all walks of life through the annual programme of Investitures (at which she presents members of the general public with their honours), Garden Parties, receptions and other awards given in her name, which allow her to say ‘thank you’ to all those who have contributed to the life of the nation and the Commonwealth.



The Queen carries out all of her duties against the backdrop of a full personal life which has seen her raise four children and welcome grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren to the Royal Family. The Duke of Edinburgh was – in her own words – her ‘strength and stay’ during her reign, whilst other members of the Royal Family continue to offer vital support through their work in the UK and overseas.



Queen Elizabeth II might be the most powerful person in Britain, but she is also one of the most inspiring women in the world.

The 96-year-old, is the UK's longest-serving monarch and despite hardly ever discussing women's rights, she has had a watershed impact on empowering women everywhere throughout her reign.

The Queen has been described by many as a feminist icon, including Olivia Colman, who plays the monarch in the latest season of *The Crown*.

In November 2019, the Oscar winner told *Radio Times*: “[The Queen is] the ultimate feminist. She’s the breadwinner. She’s the one on our coins and banknotes.”

In celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which marks 70 years since she ascended the throne, here are some of her best feminist moments.



Olivia Colman as The Queen

In 2003, **the Queen** famously took Abdullah, who died in 2015, for a drive in her Land Rover when he came to visit her in Balmoral, Scotland.

The story was told in a memoir by British diplomat Sir Sherard Cowper-Cowles, who was Ambassador to Saudi Arabia at the time.



“After lunch, the Queen had asked her royal guest whether he would like a tour of the estate,” wrote Cowper-Coles.

Prompted by his foreign minister the urbane Prince Saud, an initially hesitant Abdullah had agreed. The royal Land Rovers were drawn up in front of the castle. As instructed, the Crown Prince climbed into the front seat of the front Land Rover, his interpreter in the seat behind. *“To his surprise, the Queen climbed into the driving seat, turned the ignition and drove off.”* **The move was particularly significant considering women were not yet allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia, and, as Cowper-Coles writes, “Abdullah was not used to being driven by a woman, let alone a Queen”.**

The Queen quietly oversaw the change in royal rules of succession to allow the eldest woman to accede to the throne.

In 2011, the Queen oversaw a major change to succession laws as agreed by the leaders of the 16 Commonwealth countries that meant sons and daughters of any future British monarch would have equal rights to the throne.

Up until that point, the laws of succession dictated that the heir to the throne is always the first-born son of the monarch.

But according to the new rules, had the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge had a daughter first, she would have taken precedence to the throne over her younger brothers. As it so happens, the couple had a boy first, Prince George.



Queen Elizabeth II became the first female member of the Royal Family to join the Armed Services full-time.



One of the reasons why the Queen is such a keen driver (she is regularly photographed behind the wheel) is because in 1945 during World War II, she drove trucks and learnt how to repair cars in the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service.

She's the only living head of state to have served in the Second World War.

The Queen gave a brilliant speech at the centenary celebrations of the Women's Institute in 2015.

In June 2015, the Queen opened the 100th annual meeting of the Women's Institute (WI) at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

The monarch, who became a member of Sandringham WI in 1943, delivered an inspiring speech to more than 5,000 WI members to mark the occasion. In the speech, she highlighted some of the greatest achievements for women in the last 100 years.

"There has been significant economic and social change since 1915," she said. "Women have been granted the vote, British women have climbed Everest for the first time and the country has elected its first female prime minister."



She added: “In the modern world, the opportunities for women to give something of value to society are greater than ever, because, through their own efforts, they now play a much greater part in all areas of public life.”

“In 2015 it continues to demonstrate that it can make a real difference to the lives of women of all ages and cultural backgrounds, in a spirit of friendship, cooperation and support.”



When the Duke of Edinburgh was still alive, he almost always walked behind the Queen.

This is no coincidence. According to tradition, when the royal family is part of a procession, they enter and are seated in the order of precedence, which is the same as the line of succession to the throne.

This means that **the Queen** always walks in front, followed by Prince Philip, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, and then the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and so forth.

After Philip's death in April 2021, the order of the procession now starts with the Queen, followed by Prince Charles and Camilla, then Prince William and Kate Middleton, and so on.

It might be out of obligation rather than choice, but it's hard not to feel empowered every time we see **the Queen** leading the royal family, both symbolically and literally.

