

Andrew is history - but The Firm will go on

By Maureen Callaghan [DAILY MAIL21](#) February 2026

Apart from a brief hiatus in the mid-17th century, the British monarchy has survived intact for almost 1,000 years. There have been family feuds, the odd rebellion, even a few regicides.

Houses and dynasties have come and gone, while cousins, siblings or grandchildren have sometimes succeeded when there were no surviving sons or daughters – or the real heir apparent was deemed unsuitable.

But through it all, the royal line has prevailed. Charles III can chart his right of succession back to William the Conqueror – and has the family tree to prove it.

Such continuity has brought huge benefits. Since this country became a constitutional monarchy, the sovereign has been the defining symbol of national unity.

Ruling with the consent of parliament but rising above the hurly burly of partisan politics, successive kings and queens have been synonymous with Britishness; our heritage, liberties, culture and law.

While much of the rest of the world was convulsed by revolution throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Britain remained a beacon of stability. And when tyranny threatened our freedoms, millions volunteered to fight for 'King and Country'.

With the arrest and utter disgrace of the King's brother, many are suggesting the future of the monarchy is bleak. Republicans clamour for an elected president, and even those who see the virtues of the institution fear its image may have been tarnished beyond repair.

This is unquestionably the most damaging royal crisis in a generation, arguably since the abdication of 1936. Not only is Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor embroiled in squalid claims of sexual abuse, he also faces allegations of leaking confidential state documents when a UK trade envoy.

His arrest and 11-hour interrogation by police on suspicion of misconduct in a public office was unprecedented for a senior royal and a day of unbearable ignominy.

Whether innocent or guilty, there's no question Andrew has brought shame on his family. He allowed himself to become involved in a moral cesspit through his friendship with the world's most notorious sex trafficker, Jeffrey Epstein.

There is no hope of public redemption for him regardless of how the investigation goes. The only honour he retains is his place in the line of royal succession. That, too, should be immediately removed.

The question now is whether the monarchy can recover from such an agonising blow to its prestige. For all our sakes, we must hope the answer is yes.

The 'Firm' should have acted more quickly to disown Andrew, acknowledge that he had behaved appallingly and express sympathy with Epstein's victims. There are still difficult questions to answer.

But before tearing down an institution that has served this country for a millennium, we must look at what would replace it. The likelihood would be an elected president drawn from whatever party happens to hold power at the time – however tenuously. What a hostage to fortune that would be!

This is not to say the royals can behave as they choose. They must be seen to have integrity and be motivated by public duty and a commitment to service.

The Andrew scandal has undoubtedly stained his family's reputation, but with the nucleus of Charles, Camilla, William and Kate, most people believe the monarchy is in good hands. In the current maelstrom of bitter adversarial politics, the alternative doesn't bear thinking about.