

## General Overview – The Powers of the monarch

- **VIDEO - Queen Elizabeth II: her reign in numbers – *The Economist***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE-mJBWNXXw&ab\\_channel=TheEconomist](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE-mJBWNXXw&ab_channel=TheEconomist)

- **Video - What to expect from King Charles III – *The Economist***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6vQjHI8nb0&ab\\_channel=TheEconomist](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6vQjHI8nb0&ab_channel=TheEconomist)

- **A live debate which covers quite a few aspects of the question and contains all the useful expressions you may need...** (and it will also train your ears to a variety of British accents 😊)

Today presenter Mishal Husain was joined by a panel of guests in the BBC's Radio Theatre in Broadcasting House to look at the future of the Royal Family in '**The Today Debate: Do we need a Monarchy?**' Joining her were Billy Bragg, the singer and songwriter; Juliet Samuel, a columnist for the Times; Polly Toynbee, a columnist at the Guardian; Charles Moore, former editor of the Telegraph and the Spectator, biographer of Margaret Thatcher and Jason Arday, an academic who works on inequality, race and education

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fjs1j8>

The audio file can also be found on Cahier de Prépa

## DOCUMENTS COMPLÉMENTAIRES

Monarchy brings beauty and meaning to a world otherwise dominated by 'rationality' and zealotry

JULIET SAMUEL, *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 2022

They do not understand it – and why should they? While millions around the world mourn our late Queen, certain perplexed foreign observers and those peculiar creatures, the British anti-monarchists, look at us with bemusement or scorn. They cannot understand what all of it means; they cannot share our pride or grief. The best of them stay silent. The worst carp and criticise.

While the late Queen lived, the British monarchy needed no explanation. We did not have to wonder why we held on to its traditions or whether its stability was assured. In her hands, it was obviously safe and strong. The question-mark was about what would come after her. Could the “outdated” practice of inheritance, given such a prestigious stage, withstand the modern dogma of “logic” and “fairness”? Can a royal dynasty carried on by ordinary humans, flawed as they must be, sustain itself amid this age’s tide of vitriol and angst? How can we explain why our monarchy is not merely “relevant”, as the TV presenters might put it, but necessary and good?

On the face of it, the modern challenge to monarchy is formidable. We live in the post-war era when Europe’s empires have crumbled and with it their claim

to superiority, when past legacies of racism and genocide have discredited notions of genealogy, when immigration has begun to produce a new population in Europe, which draws on dozens of other traditions, when religion is in decline in our country, and when modern communications have given revolutionaries and revisionists the tools to tear down old hierarchies.

The hyper-rationalist republicans see constitutional monarchy as a vestige of despotism and superstition. They cringe at the country’s fascination with royal outfits and palaces. They obsess over the supposed “class divide” between us and them, and deploy phrases they think are incendiary, like “privileged” and “out of touch”. (...)

Of course, going by pure logic, we should not “want” or “need” a monarchy. To explain it, we must acknowledge the legitimacy of unfashionable ideas.

One such idea is the notion that nations need ceremony, richness, beauty and stories that, as Walter Bagehot put it, “sweeten politics”. The activities of a monarchy take place in gilt and red velvet, leather and fur, on scrolls and parchment, by candle or firelight; its dramas are the relatable rivalries of a family and a court

and its rituals still contain something of the ancient about them.

The practices of modern government take place  
50 against grey, sans serif backdrops, among petty, quibbling suits whose habitat is that of interminable PDFs, flickering screens, LED lighting and scrolling Twitter feeds. A monarchy keeps in our lives the beauty of allegory and symbolism – the lion and the unicorn,  
55 the rose and the thistle – and allows us to turn away at least momentarily from the ghastliness of office carpets, call centres and traffic jams, a world nobody ever wanted or consented to.

The crown performs, too, the invaluable function of  
60 denying our politicians access to the coveted status of a throne or head of state. There can be few things healthier than to put a cap on the ambition of political power.

By allowing parliament and government to possess all rights over policy, but withholding from them the  
65 right to be revered or celebrated as national symbols, the monarch protects the country's identity while exposing our political classes to the full glare of scrutiny.

A constitutional monarchy keeps real political power in its place by limiting its prestige and subjecting  
70 it to moral authority. Whether or not any individual politician actually respects the Crown, he or she is certainly cowed by the country's regard for it.

In contrast to the everyday power struggles, the monarchy provides the country with an uncontentious  
75 symbol. It performs the function of the sacred in the most ancient societies, not because the queen or king can ever possibly be perfect or even close to it, but because they are not engaged in the dirty struggle for supremacy. They are not "players" in the game. It has  
80 always been a cardinal sin for any politician to risk the prospect of "dragging the Queen into it". (...)

It is in the nature of all humans to need a point of unity, and it is almost always found in an idea that is irrational, which appeals to our instinct and is not  
85 constantly subject to critiques from inquiring minds.

This is even truer today, when the overwhelming complexity of globalised society is such that even the cleverest among us cannot comprehend it all. We need common points of culture and admiration to connect to  
90 our fellow humans and to provide a thread back to a shared past. Our mutual affection for the late Queen provided a shared experience and made all of us heirs to our history, good and bad.

But despite the respect the monarch commands – and  
95 in defiance of those who wrongly see the monarchy as a vestige of despotism – our constitutional monarchy also helps to protect us from tyranny. In theory, the Crown wields all sorts of powers and prerogatives. In practice, of course, Queen Elizabeth could not dissolve

100 parliament on a whim, declare war or pick a prime minister.

Some of these powers could of course be deployed by a prime minister with enough political backing, but ministers do not own them in any absolute sense. To use  
105 them, they must contend with a thicket of precedent, legal argument, norms and doubts. This is not a machinery of government fit for a despot.(...)

Of course, none of these advantages could have been sustained if it weren't for the late Queen's sense of duty  
110 and shrewd judgment. She was able to understand how and when the monarchy needed to change.(...)

What Queen Elizabeth II had was dignity. She was respected not because she was an intellectual, a saint or a great charmer. She did not strive for raw power or try  
115 to prick our consciences or present herself as morally superior.

She was simply a person of commitment who performed the arduous role allotted to her, no matter the personal cost. Because she did so, she has passed down  
120 to us a treasured institution, giving us all of the advantages and splendour that a constitutional monarchy can bestow upon its people.

However "irrational" it may appear to those poor souls who find it alien or uncomfortable, it is an  
125 inheritance to be proud of and one worth preserving.

## - For something so hollow, the royal family is astonishingly expensive

[Polly Toynbee](#), *The Guardian*, Wed 5 Apr 2023

*The trouble with the monarchy is not that it is too powerful but that it is utterly useless, a worthless vacuum shrouded in ceremony* “Not My King,” say the yellow T-shirts of the anti-monarchists TV cameras may swerve around in the coronation crowds. But he is our king, willy-nilly, like it or not, as he and his family are our dependants. The Guardian’s deep dive into the royal family’s finances shows our monarchy costs a fortune, more than anyone else’s in Europe.

The Borbones of Spain cost a mere £7.4m a year, while we pay our Windsors a very pricey £86m. And that’s before we add in the roughly £40m a year in revenues from their Duchy estates – adding up to £1.2bn over the years. That’s not much really, monarchists may claim. Out of £1tn in annual government spending, the royals’ consumption of taxpayers money is a mere bagatelle, a fleabite.

If that’s what the royals think, you might wonder why they are so exceptionally secretive about anything touching on their wealth and incomes. Why are the wills of even obscure royals locked away from the public gaze? It may be because they think that most of their subjects would consider their incomes vast.

How big? Just £1m of the king’s income would buy five AgeUK day centres, reopening ones shut by austerity. Or it could train 250 early years educators for nurseries, says the Early Years Alliance. Just one of his millions would pay for 25,000 GP appointments, says the King’s Fund. The annual public funding for the royals would pay for 30 hours of childcare per week for almost 13,000 three- and four-year-olds for a year, says the IFS. The king is paid more than the cost of all London’s street lighting. That £1.2bn from the Duchies would pay for 30,000 nurses for a year. Money spent on the monarchy seems a lot or a little depending on whether you think one king is worth more than 4,000 teachers.

Protesters unfurled a banner on the spot in Westminster Abbey where the king will be crowned, reading: “Would you vote for him?” For fear that people might ask themselves that question, no split second was allowed between the last breath of the late Queen and proclaiming Charles King. She was not, after all, to be Elizabeth the last, so we face the prospect of three elderly men in a row being crowned in their 60s and 70s, stretching out to the century’s end. That’s not what the young predict, with YouGov finding that 40% of under-25s want the monarchy abolished. Though the crown stands on a solid 60% support, that’s quite a steep falling off from 75% a decade ago.

The trouble with the monarchy is not that it is too powerful but that it is utterly useless. So much is spent on ceremonial trappings to disguise its inner nothingness. We could have commissioned a neverending soap opera of The Crown, like The Truman Show, inventing its own plotlines in a plywood set at a fraction of the cost. All ermine and no knickers is what we’ve got, anyway.



King Charles III faces anti-monarchy protesters during a visit to Milton Keynes on 16 February. Photograph: Mark Cuthbert/UK Press/Getty Images

It’s curious that many who were persuaded to vote for Brexit, at such a pernicious national cost, in order to reclaim “sovereignty” still seem willing as subjects to cede it without question to their sovereign. That royal prerogative is in turn handed to the prime minister in parliament as absolute power, barring a weak House of Lords.

Boris Johnson exposed the lack of any brake to stop him breaking basic law. He ordered the Queen to let him prorogue parliament illegally, and she, unelected, had no power to stop him. No one was there to prevent his voter suppression by demanding photo ID at elections to make the poor and young even less likely to vote. No one barred him from eviscerating the Electoral Commission’s power to prosecute illegal political donations. Elected presidents across Europe act as protectors of constitutions against such predations.

Just possibly, in unravelling the devilish conundrum of how to replace the House of Lords, which has defeated reformers since 1911, Labour may end up with a constitutional convention that finds itself exploring the nature of power. Last week the commission on political power (of which I am a member), chaired by Frances D’Souza and Frances Crook, suggested possible Lords reform that would not block the Commons but would have enough democratic legitimacy to carry authority. Any look at the balances of power could hardly avoid examining the bizarre vacuum caused by a redundant monarch.

Here comes the coronation in a few weeks, not much changed since I was waving at the last one, pleading in vain for a Dinky Toy gold coach. We have had a surfeit of royal folderol recently, with a jubilee, a funeral and a coronation all coming in less than 12 months. Guardian readers may not see the daily volumes of royal coverage in the rightwing press, splurging out reams of trivia and tripe, with pleasing pictures of the Princess of Wales. Stealing those scenes, has been the bad fairy, Prince Harry the Spare, delivering his truth.

My truth is that we are a country too bewitched by a phantasmagoria of majesty that encourages a national self-deceit about our power and importance in the world. All that ceremonial grandeur incites the state of mind that misled half the country to believe Britain could rule the waves again, all alone and bravely Brexiteering away from our continent.

Monarchy nurtures a conservatism of the heart, a feudal mindset, where patriotism becomes entangled with rightwing thinking. There is nothing unpatriotic about the left’s thinking, just different values that it cherishes about the country. The present perverse incarnation of the Conservative party is encapsulated in the Telegraph’s daily promotion of the monarchy, and the government’s trashing of institutions that summon most national pride – the BBC, the NHS, universities, the arts and sports from the grassroots up. Our best heritage has nothing to do with inheritance. Empty heads that wear the hollow crown are symbols of some of our worst tendencies – the growing weight of nepotism, inequality, privilege and inherited wealth.

Though 52% tell YouGov they are not interested in the coronation, expect the cameras to pick out the 15% “very interested” to represent the country’s mood. But, as everyone likes an extra holiday in this miserable country with the fewest in Europe, why not enjoy a spectacle that’s costing us all £100m? Just possibly, though, this time the Guardian’s revelations about the high cost of our extravagant royals may grate a little more among so many struggling with unpayable bills.

Why we put royal wealth under the microscope on eve of coronation

### - It’s the monarchy’s humanity that gives it such power

It matters that, at the heart of our system, there is a man enduring what millions of his subjects will also face

MADELINE GRANT, *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 February 2024

A cancer diagnosis is always a frightening moment; three words that nobody wants to hear, but statistically, half of us will during our lives – “you have cancer”.

Understandably, the world’s media have carried the news that these words have recently been said to one man.  
5 The King’s cancer diagnosis is at once an ordinary and extraordinary thing. Yes, in this case, front pages have been changed, prayers will be said in churches and well-wishes uttered by heads of state, while constitutional protocol will lurk in the distance to be deployed if need be. But there will also be an anxious family, treatments that must be performed on the patient, and a frail human body in the midst of it all.

10 This seeming paradox, these contrasts, are at the heart of monarchy and its enduring power. The institution personalises the state, showing the constitution in its human form. It embodies public-facing virtues like strength, honour and duty – and wraps those up in an individual.

The King’s openness about his diagnosis is a departure from previous practice and will have an obvious impact. Men (especially, dare I say it, those of the King’s vintage) are famed for shunning medical attention – “it’ll get better on its own”, “I don’t want a lot of fuss” etc. In calling his malady by its proper name and avoiding euphemism, the  
15 King’s actions may encourage others to book their check-up or report suspicious symptoms. In this case, the personal – and it doesn’t get more personal than His Majesty’s diagnosis – has obvious public implications.

20 But there is a deeper point here, which perhaps explains one facet of the monarchy's continued relevance. At the heart of the institution is not a piece of paper or a cabinet or governmental system, but one man and his family. It can therefore reflect the personal lives of millions across the country. Indeed, the swift turnaround of grief reflects an experience common in many households; a death in the family, soon followed by health complaints, a worrying diagnosis elsewhere.

25 Some dismiss this as "the Windsor soap opera"; but these are issues facing real people, too. All this puts a necessarily fragile human being at the heart of the state. Whereas republican systems may adopt some of the pomp and grandeur that we associate with royalty, they will struggle to replicate a constitution seen through the humanising lens of a family.

This mixture of vulnerability and transcendence is woven into the history of monarchy. Alongside the grandeur of the late Queen's funeral ceremony, it was often the more mundane moments that captured the public imagination; the sight of Elizabeth II's corgis and her fell pony, the piper's lament as the coffin finally descended from view.

30 This isn't, as some commentators have suggested, a recent response by the House of Windsor to a more sentimentalised public. This mixture of the personal and the constitutional has been a longstanding feature of the Crown.

George III oversaw one of the greatest periods in British history while locked away at Windsor Castle. Or the dying Queen Elizabeth I – the ailing Gloriana – being led reluctant to her bed having fought against lying down for the last time. Or Queen Anne, a faithful and conscientious stateswoman who also presided over a glorious era, in contrast to her personal infirmity. Perhaps no other Queen endured so much in her quest for an heir as Anne, whose life was marred by the loss of 18 children through miscarriage, stillbirth and early death. Beyond their role as glittering symbols, it is also in the moments of sadness that the value of monarchy becomes clear.

40 When so much divides us, there seems little in our common life that confers that same shared goodwill. While some will, inevitably, use any aspect of news about the Royal family to bemoan unfairness or inequality, the truth is that the vast majority of the country, republican or monarchist, will recognise this as something that speaks to a common humanity.

True, the King will receive world-class private hospital treatment that few can expect under the NHS. But neither princes nor paupers should be wished ill when they have cancer.

45 Those who would seek to make this a political moment fail to see the sad beauty that it embodies. Viewing the state in abstract terms is a dangerous thing and can lead people to commit very great evils. By contrast, the King's illness reminds us that the state is composed of individuals, of humans, who experience all the ups and downs that a human life can bring. The Crown only has relevance when it's on someone's head.

50 There is a final reason why the King's diagnosis may yet prove important. So often in moments of crisis, families reunite, jolted into a renewed appreciation of what really matters. Let us hope that Prince Harry's return to the UK to see his father might be the beginning of a rapprochement. Because it is in moments of vulnerability that we don't just realise how important monarchy is, but family, too.



## Background: constitutional monarchy

The United Kingdom (UK) is a democratic constitutional monarchy. What does this description mean? A monarchy is typically a system under which the head of state – the person formally at the summit of public life – inherits their office from their parents, holding it until they die (or perhaps retire), when it passes down to their heir. Generally, monarchs perform a range of important functions, that may include appointing ministers or other holders of important posts, and representing the country on the international stage. Various legal powers can be vested in monarchies, for instance, for approving laws and agreeing to treaties.

Given such a role, historically, monarchs have been powerful figures within political systems. This position has changed in those states that have become more democratic. Democracy means governments being chosen by and being answerable to the people. The head of state holding their office by birth, not by election, and there being no legal means by which the public can clearly hold them to account and potentially remove them, is difficult to reconcile with this principle.

For some countries – for instance, France and the United States – the long process of becoming more democratic partly involved removing the monarchy and becoming a republic. Both today have directly elected heads of state, in the form of presidents.

Other countries have developed democracy while retaining their monarchs. They have achieved this outcome through subjecting these hereditary heads of state to various rules intended to ensure that they act in accordance with democratic principles, rather than governing according to their own wishes. Monarchs who are restrained in this way are known as constitutional monarchs. They operate in various states around the world. In Europe, they include – alongside the UK – the Netherlands, Spain, and Denmark. Outside Europe, there are countries that share the same monarch as the UK, such as Australia and Canada.

This page outlines the history of the UK monarchy, its powers, the constitutional principles surrounding the monarchy, covers debates the future of the UK monarchy and answers some commonly asked questions.

## History of the UK monarchy

The UK constitutional monarchy has roots that long predate the UK itself as a state. We can trace its origins in part to the Anglo-Saxon era and the multiple kingdoms that existed prior to the formation (late in the first millennium CE) of England as a single polity. Compared to their contemporary successors, pre-modern rulers had an extensive range of powers. But there were limits on their freedom of action. There was a long-established concept of monarchs consulting with their subjects, a principle out of which Parliament began to develop in the thirteenth century. Furthermore, documents such as *Magna Carta* (first agreed in 1215) sought to impose constraints upon the monarch. But these restrictions were not as extensive as they later became. In 1603, following the

death of Elizabeth I, James VI of Scotland also became King of England, fusing the two crowns. There followed an attempt to introduce a more assertive monarchical absolutism. But the reaction against this tendency led to the establishment of greater constitutional restraints, and a firmer footing for [Parliament](#) as the supreme representative institution. During 1649-1660, the British Isles had no monarchy at all, following the civil wars and execution of Charles I. After the ‘Glorious Revolution’ or 1688, Mary and William ruled jointly, and were subject to a newly agreed ‘Bill of Rights.’ In the centuries that followed, active political leadership transferred increasingly to ministers accountable to Parliament, and away from the head of state. The franchise expanded through successive reforms from 1832 onwards. Governments – resting in the confidence of the elected House of Commons – acquired enhanced strength from a democratic legitimacy that Queens and Kings lacked. But though it came to be restrained, the monarchy persisted.

## Powers of the UK monarch

The contemporary UK constitutional monarch, at present King Charles III, possesses the ultimate legal responsibility for a variety of functions that are crucial to the operation of the political system. Among them are:

- Appointing and removing the Prime Minister and other ministers;
- Dissolving Parliament, to bring about general elections;
- ‘Proroguing’ Parliament – that is, disbanding it for a set period of time;
- Approving the most important laws (primary legislation) – through granting what is known as ‘Royal Assent’;
- Appointing members of the House of Lords;
- The conduct of diplomacy, and agreeing treaties;
- Acting as head of the Armed Forces, being responsible for their deployment within and outside the UK, including in potential or actual hostile action;
- Being head of the Church of England, the official religion of England; and
- Granting honours.

## Constitutional principles

These powers, many of which exist under an ancient legal source known as the ‘Royal Prerogative’, are extensive in their scope. A number of understandings have developed to ensure that they are deployed in accordance with constitutional principles. In the context of contemporary UK democracy, most of these functions are delegated to or exercised on the basis of advice provided by the Prime Minister and other ministers. For instance, in practice, prime ministers, not monarchs, choose who to appoint to ministerial posts; and decisions about entering into armed combat are made by the politicians. Monarchs simply do not have the discretion they might once have possessed about how their

legal authority should be used. For instance, it is hard to conceive of a ruler on their own initiative trying to veto the enactment of a law that had passed through Parliament; or seeking to impose their own choice of Prime Minister.

Royal authorities, then, are in practice largely delegated to ministers. Between them, these ministers make up His Majesty's Government. This entity derives its political authority from possessing the confidence of the House of Commons, the membership of which is determined by the outcomes of elections across the whole of the UK. **By this means, the powers technically attached to the monarchy become democratically legitimate: there is a link between voters and those within [the executive](#) who are responsible for these functions. Parliament in turn holds ministers to account, on behalf of the public, for the way in which they exercise these powers (though how effective it is at overseeing the use of the Royal Prerogative is debatable).** [The courts](#) can also become involved in ensuring the use of the Royal Prerogative is carried out in a way that conforms to established standards. They can decide whether particular powers exist; and scrutinise whether they are being deployed properly. The second Miller case in 2019, for example, showed that a court can rule a particular use of the prerogative, in that instance the attempted prorogation of Parliament by the Boris Johnson government, unlawful.

Because it is ministers who now make most of the real decisions about the use of these powers, monarchs are distanced from party politics. **Indeed, there is an important constitutional principle that they should be insulated from involvement in public controversy.** For instance, in circumstances where it is not entirely clear who is should become the next Prime Minister, leading politicians of different parties are supposed to resolve this matter between them and avoid drawing the monarch into it.

**Monarchs in the UK, however, do retain some scope for influence, though of a limited nature.** They are consulted privately on some decisions and policies, particularly those that would have a direct bearing on their interests; and are able to discuss government business at the meeting or 'audience' they have with the Prime Minister every week when Parliament is in session. The contents of the discussions that take place remain secret, but it is reasonable to assume that at times rulers might have some – albeit limited – impact upon their first minister. Their role, then, is significantly reduced when compared with their predecessors of earlier eras, but they are perhaps something more than just an ornament.

#### Debates and the future

Opinion research suggests strong overall support among the UK public for the continuation of the monarchy; and abolition is not on the mainstream political agenda. Nonetheless, the

idea of replacing the hereditary head of state with one who is either directly elected, or chosen by Parliament, has advocates.

In debates on this subject, some of the main arguments offered in favour of the monarchy are that:

- It provides continuity to the political system – while prime ministers and governments come and go, monarchs remain in place. Even when there is a changeover in ruler, as in 2022, it is instant, unchallenged and smooth;
- The monarch can act as a neutral focal point for the whole country, carrying out key ceremonial functions while maintaining distance from party political controversy;
- Monarchs play an important international relations role, contributing to the 'soft power' of the UK in the world; and
- Any replacement for the monarchy could create problems. A directly elected president, for example, could become a dynamic and destabilising personal force.

Possible objections to the monarchy include:

- It is undemocratic – no-one should become the head of state simply by birth, and there should be some means by which the public, either directly or via Parliament, can choose and remove them, and hold them to account;
- It is anachronistic, a relic of an imperial past, and attached to an Established Church that no longer represents the diversity of the contemporary UK;
- At times it might be useful for the head of state to be able to resist improper courses of action favoured by prime ministers and their governments. Hereditary monarchs lack the democratic legitimacy that would enable them to do so; and
- The Royal Prerogative, which has largely come under the control of prime ministers and ministers, can act as a shield behind which they can evade the full democratic accountability to which they could otherwise, and should, be subject.

One might argue that, for the foreseeable future, it is hard to conceive of there being any serious effort to remove the monarchy and that this debate is more theoretical than practical. Such a view is reasonable, although firm predictions of this type can be proved wrong. Moreover, whether or not there is a dramatic change in this area, the issues raised are central to an understanding of the [UK constitution](#). They relate in particular to its nature as an historic entity in which practical reality can differ greatly from official outward appearance.

### Document 2 - King Charles III, a Quiet Diplomat, is Stepping Up

As he welcomed the leaders of Ukraine and Canada to his country estate this week, the king was sending a message to the world.

By [Mark Landler](#), Reporting from London, March 5, 2025, *The New York Times*

King Charles III flew by helicopter to the H.M.S. Prince of Wales in the English Channel on Tuesday, where he mingled with sailors and watched as fighter jets took off from the deck of the ship, a Royal Navy aircraft carrier. It might have been a welcome getaway from his suddenly complicated social life.

In the span of five days, Charles had invited President Trump for a rare second state visit to Britain and then played host to two of Mr. Trump's biggest antagonists, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, at his country estate northeast of London.

None of those gestures by Charles was overtly political. As is customary in Britain's constitutional monarchy, he acted at the behest of the government. But they have nevertheless drawn the 76-year-old king into a swirling diplomatic drama in a way that is almost unheard-of for a British sovereign.

Charles's invitation to Mr. Trump, delivered with much fanfare by Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday in the Oval Office, has become more contentious since the president clashed with Mr. Zelensky over American support for Ukraine the day after his more harmonious session with Mr. Starmer.

"Now Stop the State Visit for 'Bully' Trump," The Mail on Sunday, a right-wing tabloid, said on its front page. It cited a chorus of demands by lawmakers and other critics that the government rescind the invitation to Mr. Trump to telegraph Britain's displeasure with the president and solidarity with Ukraine.

Symbolically, Charles may have done the next best thing: hosting Mr. Zelensky at his estate, Sandringham, after the president attended a summit meeting on Sunday devoted to Ukraine. Buckingham Palace did not disclose what they talked about but said Mr. Zelensky was "warmly received" by Charles, who served him tea in Sandringham's Saloon room.



King Charles and President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine earlier this month, at the Sandringham estate in Norfolk, England. Credit...Pool photo by Joe Giddens

For Mr. Trump's critics, the icing on the cake came on Monday, when Mr. Trudeau, whose country has come under sweeping American tariffs and which Mr. Trump says he wants to annex as the 51st state, made the pilgrimage to Sandringham to meet Charles. The king, of course, is also Canada's ceremonial head of state.

Mr. Trudeau said in a social media post that they discussed "matters of importance to Canadians — including, above all, Canada's sovereign and independent future." Charles himself was silent, which frustrated some Canadian politicians, who argued that he should have publicly reaffirmed Canada's sovereignty. Given his nonpolitical role, that was not going to happen. But the symbolism of the sovereign, smiling as he greeted a prime minister whom Mr. Trump refers to as governor, was lost on no one.

"It's been a really interesting week in British and royal diplomacy," said Ed Owens, a royal historian. "People have talked about how this royal family has become a secret weapon for British diplomacy. We saw Keir Starmer wielding the king and the monarchy as such in his interactions with Trump."

Mr. Owens said Mr. Trump's well-established affection for the king and the royal family was an intangible factor that could stick in the back of the American president's mind as he deals with Britain over Ukraine. Mr. Starmer has positioned himself as a bridge between Europe and the United States on the issue. And the president was plainly delighted by the invitation from Charles. "A beautiful man, a wonderful man," a beaming Mr. Trump told Mr. Starmer, from the same chair where he sat 24 hours later, as he chastised Mr. Zelensky, telling the Ukrainian president: "Don't tell us what we're going to feel. You're in no position to dictate that."

Buckingham Palace declined to comment on the status of the invitation to Mr. Trump, noting that the government is in charge of such issues. Mr. Starmer brushed aside calls for the visit to be canceled on Sunday, saying in a BBC interview that critics were "trying to ramp up the rhetoric without really appreciating what is the single most important thing at stake here — we're talking about peace in Europe."

Two people with knowledge of the palace said it was highly unlikely that the invitation would be rescinded, given the ill will that would generate with the White House — though the challenge of matching the calendars of two heads of state could mean that the state visit does not take place for months, they added.

In his letter, the king broached the idea of Mr. Trump first seeing him in Scotland, where the president has a golf club, Trump Turnberry, and Charles has a castle, Balmoral, to make the arrangements for the state visit at a later time.



The Scotland meeting would be more informal, without the honor guard and lavish banquet in Buckingham Palace that Mr. Trump enjoyed in his last state visit in 2019.

“The idea of it being indefinitely delayed until a peace agreement is reached, on terms that are acceptable to Ukraine and Europe, is interesting,” Mr. Owens said, adding that the royal family “has bought Britain influence within these negotiations that it might not have had otherwise.”

For all his adherence to the monarch’s nonpolitical role, Charles is known to be more politically aware and opinionated than his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II. Early in his reign, he came under criticism for welcoming the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to Windsor Castle, after she signed a deal on Northern Ireland with Rishi Sunak, who was then Britain’s prime minister.

Critics saw it as putting a royal imprimatur on the government’s deal. They said that Charles, whose support of the European Union was well documented, had allowed himself to be used by Downing Street.

The king has been demonstrative in his backing of Ukraine, issuing statements and making regular visits to relief organizations that help refugees from the war. Early in the conflict, when he was still Prince of Wales, he visited a group in London and spoke to a family that had been evacuated from Kharkiv, in eastern Ukraine.

“So, what do you think the aim of the Russians is?” Charles asked them. “Is it to remove people?”

Given the king’s strong feelings and the delicacy of the moment, royal watchers said the government should be careful not to overextend what has so far been a beneficial role. His value as an agent of British “soft power,” they say, resides in his being above politics.

Even his long-planned visit to the aircraft carrier was symbolic, given Britain’s pledge to deploy troops to a peacekeeping force for Ukraine. The H.M.S. Prince of Wales is in training exercises before deploying on an eight-month mission to Asia.

Speaking to crew members in his dress uniform, Charles could have been addressing Mr. Starmer, a relatively new prime minister, who has been struggling to calm the tempest between Ukraine and the United States.

“Your deployment in the next month comes amidst new challenges in an ever-changing and more unpredictable world,” the king said. “It will undoubtedly demand tenacity and determination, both at sea and for those you leave behind at home.”

### **Document 3 - How Prince William will be deployed as Britain’s secret weapon to win over Trump**

***The Telegraph***, February 12, 2025

When Donald Trump was voted out of office in 2020, most of the world turned its attention to the new US president, believing that Trump’s reign was over for good. As global leaders courted the new administration, the fickle world of politics moved on to the Biden years. There was one relationship, though, that was carefully, quietly maintained.

The King, one of life’s great letter writers through his decades as Prince of Wales, kept up his personal correspondence with the former president, posting a hand-written missive every now and then to the delight of Trump and his wife Melania.

At the time, it was a gesture that came naturally, following in the footsteps of the late Queen who had shown how to keep up a lifelong relationship with US presidents.

Now, as Trump settles into the White House for a second term, that transatlantic hand of royal friendship between the President, King and, now, Prince William, may come to define the “special relationship” for a new era. The Prince of Wales, described variously by Trump as a “good man”, “really very handsome” and doing a

“fantastic job”, is set to be called upon for more presidential charming.

What was initially proposed as a brief encounter in Paris between President Trump and Prince William in December turned into a 40-minute meeting behind closed doors, with those on both sides rhapsodising about the “warmth” on show ever since.

Prince William, says a White House source, now holds a “really powerful, really important” influence in the future of the “special relationship”.

The timing couldn’t have been more crucial: a Left-wing Labour Government, a controversial new ambassador in Lord Mandelson and a series of unforced errors American sources politely call “missteps” have dented UK-US relations in recent months.

From tariffs, to the Chagos islands and defence spending, there has been no shortage of political differences. The UK is “out of line” on trade policies, Trump said earlier this month.

But, White House sources tell *The Telegraph*, the President’s instinctive affection for Britain remains. And that emerging relationship with Prince William is key.

The President would love a royal charm offensive, says one who knows him. “We would be mad not to utilise it”, says a Whitehall source.

This is the inside story of how the cracks in that “special relationship” came to be, and how the Royal family is set to be deployed on the most important “soft power” mission of the 21st century.

### **Unforced errors by Starmer’s Labour**

President Trump and Sir Keir Starmer are not natural bedfellows. One, the populist figurehead of the Right-wing Make America Great Again movement he founded; the other a former state prosecutor, nicknamed “Mr Rules” and carrying a reputation for moderation.

But, it is understood, they actually get on rather well.

Conversations have been as warm as any others conducted by Trump with foreign leaders. The President claimed to “have a very good relationship” with Starmer, adding, “I like him a lot”. Starmer appears to be on course for a convivial reception from Trump when the pair meet in DC later this month.

Behind the scenes, though, things have not been so easy. A string of unforced errors from the Labour government have been noticed and remembered within the White House, where sources use terms ranging from “disrespectful” to “incompetent” and “malicious” to describe how the last few months have unfolded.

Labour Party members and supporters openly campaigned against Trump, with nearly 100 of them flying to the US to canvass for Kamala Harris. Morgan McSweeney, Starmer’s chief of staff, was named in a federal complaint from Trump’s team accusing Labour of making “illegal foreign campaign contributions and interference in our elections” after he attended the Democratic National Convention last summer.

The muddled appointment of the new British ambassador to the United States, Lord Mandelson, has been handled in the least diplomatic way imaginable, according to sources, with the UK flatly ignoring requests to keep the popular Dame Karen Pierce, a career diplomat, in the role at least until the relationship with the Labour Government was on firmer footing.

Described approvingly in this newspaper as a “champagne-swigging, high-heel-wearing, feather boaswathed diplomat” who is “always, always on top of her brief”, Pierce was well-liked in White House circles under both Joe Biden and Trump, and trusted by the President’s inner circle.

The relationship between the US and UK under her tenure, one source said, was “phenomenal”, with the move to replace her quickly labelled “puzzling”.

The White House, *The Telegraph* understands, learned of Lord Mandelson’s appointment via an enquiry from a reporter in December, after news leaked in Britain ahead of the official announcement later that month.

Remarkably, the new ambassador began his tenure by expressing regret for previously calling Trump a “danger to the world” and “little short of a white nationalist and racist”. Chris LaCivita, one of Trump’s

closest campaign aides, called Mandelson a “moron” on the day his appointment was made public.

“Were they aware he’d made comments about the President?” one source wonders now. “Either they didn’t vet him, which is incompetent, or they didn’t care, which shows malice. I’m not sure either is great.” Adding insult to injury was the fact that details of a phone call between Trump and Starmer before Christmas were leaked to a British newspaper in January. It was reported that the President had been “fixated” on the number of birds being killed by wind turbines and covered topics from his golf course in Scotland to his admiration of Prince William’s “modern” beard.

The President’s allies were left stung by the breach of trust from what was intended to be a private conversation and, worse, were unconvinced by a tale of it leaking via a junior staff member in the pub.

“That was a problem for us,” confirms a source close to the White House. “There have been a lot of missteps that didn’t have to happen.

“The biggest thing right now is figuring out how to make sure the relationship doesn’t go off track and we try to repair some of the damage. That is where I think the King and Prince William can really help.”

Enter the Royal family.

### **William ‘happy to play his role’**

Trump’s affection for the British Royal family is well documented. His list of superlatives for the late Queen is too long to repeat; he keeps a photograph album of his encounters with the late monarch and her offspring on his jet.

The King is a “really good person”, he has said. Prince William “looked really nice, and I told him that”, the highest praise from a President who has described himself as “so good-looking”.

He has been clear where his sympathies lie in the very public family breakdown with the Sussexes, accusing Prince Harry of an “unforgivable” betrayal of the late Queen, and is said to respect and support the monarchy’s handling of the fallout. In recent days he said he had no plans to deport Prince Harry because “he has enough problems with his wife. She’s terrible.”

Trump is said to admire the historic relationship between US presidents and British prime ministers, the Thatcher-Reagan partnership in particular. Queen Elizabeth II, for her part, was famously photographed riding through Windsor’s Home Park with Reagan, a symbol of that special relationship in action.

Trump is already “pretty close” to the King, says a source, after Charles undertook the then-Prince of Wales-level hosting duties during the 2019 state visit to Buckingham Palace. “A lot of people may not necessarily realise that.”

The current Prince of Wales has been building his own relationship with world leaders in recent years, in part thanks to his Earthshot Prize initiative which takes him around the globe to sit down with presidents (including

Biden) and prime ministers, now at the request of the Government too.

The Prince “realises the important role he and his family play,” says a palace source. “It’s important that we’re not involved in day-to-day politics, but when the time is right and there’s an ask for support from His Majesty’s government, the Prince is happy to play his role and support where needed.”

“There is a definite willingness to support where there is an ask.”

Prince William, 42, and Trump, 78 might not seem like an obvious match. But those who have worked with him emphasise that William’s approach to meetings behind closed doors is much the same as the public sees out and about.

“He’s extremely authentic,” says one. “He’s extremely comfortable in his own skin. He brings that authenticity to whoever he’s meeting or sitting down with.”

The President, another source ventured, enjoyed the “banter” with the Prince and is “very fond” of the younger man.

“The President looks to the King, and now William, for things that are going on in the UK,” adds one familiar with their meetings. [...]

#### **A balancing act**

Others have raised tentative doubts about where the royals must draw the line.

While the Government is keen to make use of the Royal family, “if it looks transactional, it would be counterproductive” says a diplomatic source.

“You also can’t just play the Royal family to the US because it has consequences for the rest of the world.”

Officials will have to bear in mind the juggling act of Britain’s relationships with the Commonwealth, post-Brexit Europe, and other countries and monarchies around the world with which the UK has longstanding ties. Even Canada has not yet had a visit from its King since he acceded to the throne.

But Trump, says one source, is “more inclined to want a relationship with the UK than in other parts of the world. Making sure that he feels he’s being respected is important.”

There will be concerns from some quarters about aligning members of the Royal family – politically neutral, with favourable polling most world leaders would dream of – too closely with polarising public figures. But that, emphasises a former palace source, is the job: the US Presidency as office, not individual.

Those watching and working on plans on both sides of the Atlantic sound a note of caution about the limits of what this can practically achieve.

It is “highly unlikely to change Trump’s views on tariffs”, says Sally Bedell Smith, the royal historian based in America.

“How far can you take soft power? In terms of atmosphere and mood and ‘vibe shifts’, as everybody talks about now, it could have an impact.”

The King has a relationship with Trump dating back to the 1980s, when he had tea at Mar-a-Lago during a trip to Palm Beach. Trump genuinely looks forward to his letters.

According to Bedell Smith, along with the benefits of the personal connection being developed between Prince William and Trump, a visit to the US by the Waleses, who have not conducted an official tour in America together since 2011, would bring a “glamour factor and a novelty factor” to build on the fact they are “very popular here”.

Such touches could be Britain’s secret weapon amid a global race to forge relations with Trump. Prof Adam Smith, director of the Rothermere American Institute at the University of Oxford, warns that the approach of the Trump administration is not “normal diplomacy”, leaving governments and historians alike in “unchartered territory”.

“There is a long history of American presidents being flattered and charmed by the Queen. Some more than others – LBJ was indifferent, for example, while Reagan loved the theatre of a state visit. In that sense, the treatment that will be accorded to Trump is in line with longstanding British diplomatic practice.

“But those were all visits that took place within the security of a fundamentally strong alliance, with confidence at all levels that there was genuine goodwill on both sides.”

In this case, says Smith: “I would be astonished if this kind of ‘soft’ royal diplomacy actually gains the UK anything, but it may mitigate being bullied just a little bit.”

Still, sources in the US and UK agree that the Royal family’s role could not be more important now.

“We can hopefully get back on track with the help of the royals,” says a source close to the White House, who emphasised the importance of William’s influence in particular.

“The President had a wonderful visit with him.”

For decades, the establishment has talked about the “soft power” of the Royal family – that unmatched, unquantifiable asset. Now, those responsible for Brand Britain say, is the time for it to become a little less soft.

## The Monarchy and the Future of the Commonwealth

Document 4 - VIDEO Why Queen Elizabeth II was the queen of 15 countries - VOX

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbmoGe1zoDc&ab\\_channel=Vox](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbmoGe1zoDc&ab_channel=Vox)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM\\_tv-gLpbs&ab\\_channel=DWNNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM_tv-gLpbs&ab_channel=DWNNews)

**Document 6 - From monarch mania to the slimline tour: how Charles and Camilla's Australian visit will break with tradition**

Daisy Dumas, *The Guardian*, Fri 18 Oct 2024

When Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip sailed into Sydney harbour on the SS Gothic on 3 February 1954, 1 million people – well over half the population of Sydney – lined the foreshore to greet their monarch.

She was 27, the mother of two small children and had been crowned just eight months earlier. It was the first time a British monarch had visited Australia: the world's most famous – and most carefully curated – person had come to town.

Her arrival was the first televised event in the nation, with footage of the tour sent to a screen in Mosman. Over 58 days, the mass adoration continued, with immense crowds in every of the 57 towns she toured – not least in Wagga, New South Wales, where the population of 8,000 swelled to 18,000 on the day of her visit.



'It just built and built until finally they were in Australia' ... Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh in Sydney in February 1954. Photograph: Alamy

After many years of waiting to see her in the flesh, the anticipation was breathless, said Margot Riley, a curator at the State Library of NSW, which has an extensive collection of ephemera from royal tours even before 1954. "The marriage, the children, the coronation, the colour movie – it just built and built until finally they were in Australia," she said.

The Queen opened a session of the commonwealth parliament in Canberra wearing her coronation gown, delivering a sense of that day's pageantry to the realm. William Dargie's official portrait marking the tour captured her wearing the Australia-themed wattle gown that she wore to a state banquet in a Sydney hall bedecked by 1,800 gladioli, 2,140 dahlias and 1,212 zinnias. The Tivoli theatre produced commemorative royal performance chocolates. The tour culminated in a state ball at Parliament House with a spread that featured boars' heads, stuffed suckling pig and pheasant – and the coat-of-arms crafted from sugar and marzipan.



'It really was the beginning of celebrity' ... the Queen in Hobart during her 1954 tour. Photograph: Popperfoto/Getty Images

Her youth brought with it the fashions of Paris and the wizardry of colour newsreels from Westminster Abbey. The result, 10,500 miles from home, was monarch mania.

"It really was the beginning of celebrity and of people understanding glamour," Riley said. "She was the personification of all of those elements of postwar life: youth, beauty, celebrity travel, that idea of the jet set – even though they came by boat."

The tour was, according to a commemorative book cited by the National Museum of Australia, "a thunderous progress through thousands of miles lit to incandescence by the affection and enthusiasm of nine million devoted subjects".

It also came after a line of strictly remote rulers. Victoria was not a great long distance traveller, Edward VII focused on Europe and George VI's intention to visit Australia was scuppered by ill-health. Elizabeth was a long overdue, postwar show-stopper.

The 'whistle-stop tour'

King Charles III's inaugural visit as the monarch – he and his wife, Queen Camilla, landed in Sydney on Friday night – will be remembered as an entirely different affair.

On Friday the sails of the Opera House were lit in the King and Queen's honour. The King, 75, will officially receive his representative, the governor general, Sam Mostyn. They will eat and meet at a community barbecue and see the work of bushfire fighters and Aboriginal groups. But, while there will be a reception hosted by the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, at Parliament House, the premiers of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania have said they are unable to attend.

There will be no state banquet or ball – and, as much as it might send authorities into a tailspin, a crowd of a million well-wishers seems a remote possibility amid the merging of even mild republican sentiment with a social climate that

puts royal tours well down the list of priorities for many Australians.

This time, the royal visitors will take in just Sydney and Canberra over four full days on the ground. The tour's brevity, cut short – but not cancelled – because of the King's cancer treatment, is “most unusual”, said associate professor Giselle Bastin, an expert on the British royal family at Flinders University. “Being very short and being so zoned-in on just those spaces makes it look like a whistle-stop tour rather than a royal tour.”

As part of his job, the King needs to meet with the governor general and the prime minister and break the 13-year hiatus between monarch's visits. There is one measure by which he outcompetes his mother, however. This is his 17th visit to Australia – surpassing the Queen's 16 tours.

“I think most people don't realise he's even coming – it's just not anticipated, like a visit from Queen Elizabeth the Second was,” Bastin said.

“I don't think it's really sunk in that he's *King*, King. In the way that the Queen was the *Queen*.”

“Many Australians revered Queen Elizabeth II because she and they belong to an era where the idea of the sovereign, the monarch, was almost mystical. People see Charles very much as a mortal and I think that comes with less reverence.”

The next generation

Royal hysteria didn't disappear after 1954. Princess Diana's popularity far eclipsed Prince Charles' on their 1983 tour – moments of which were recreated in the 2014 tour of Catherine and William, who brought along baby Prince George and duly caused a media frenzy.



Charles and Diana outside the Sydney Opera House during their 1983 tour. Photograph: Tim Graham Photo Library/Getty Images

Unlike George's monarchy-boosting appeal, or the showbiz allure of newlyweds Meghan and Harry, who toured Australia in 2018, the King and Queen are “not young anymore. And I hate to say it, but youth is the thing, isn't it?” Riley said.

“There's just so much going on – the conflict in the Middle East, the cost-of-living and housing crisis. The prospect of a visit from an ageing royal is not much to be excited about – but it's still King Charles' first visit to Australia as reigning monarch.”

Monarchists and loyal royal fans will want to be part of the experience. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet advertises just four opportunities in which to meet or glimpse the royal pair between their meetings with charities, community representatives and politicians before heading to Apia, Samoa.

There are also wider cultural and technological shifts affecting the slimline tour. The definition of celebrity that the Queen first introduced to Australia has become, to a certain extent, broader and more bland.

“[Royals] are just on the daily socials, alongside Kardashians and everybody else. There's no real sense of them being different, like in Queen Elizabeth's era,” Bastin said. “They are giving TV interviews. They're being filmed alongside Mary Berry making a cake. There's no sense that they're regal – but they're still very interesting and captivating.”

No matter how they are viewed, their role remains separate, above prime ministers and world leaders. Their job is unlike any other, Bastin said – and that in itself cements the relevance of the tour.

“I think a lot of people are relieved that there's someone there who is above party politics,” she said. “Having a constitutional monarch feels like a safety net in a world that's producing Donald Trumps and Brexit.”

“The royals have maintained some respect from the Australian public because we're not very fond of our politicians either.”

## Doc 7-Could the visit of King Charles and Queen Camilla be just what Australia's republican movement needs?

Josh Butler, *The Guardian*, Wed 16 Oct 2024

Momentum for an Australian republic has receded, the Labor government has shuffled away the minister appointed to it, and any prospect of politicians pushing to change the constitution – described by one historian as now being “frozen” – is distant at best.

The biggest backers of an Australian head of state concede the challenges they face, but also claim the arrival this week of King Charles and Queen Camilla may be the shot in the arm their campaign needs. It will be wall-to-wall media coverage of the royal couple visiting Australian landmarks, meeting well-wishers and being feted by dignitaries – and an “opportunity” to make it the last visit from a British monarch, according to the **Australian Republican Movement**. “The more we see various aspects of the royal tour, the more we're reminded the role of head of state serves a democratic purpose. They should be working in Australia full-time, working for Australians, and accountable to us,” the ARM co-chair Esther Anatolitis says.

But it's more difficult than that, according to historian Dr Benjamin Jones, who says republicans face “a battle on two fronts”: winning public support, and getting a future government to hold a referendum.



## Momentum has ‘clearly receded’

The ARM’s 2023 research found that 92% of Australians are open to becoming a republic, and 60% would prefer an Australian head of state to Charles (Guardian Essential polling in May 2023, after Charles’s coronation, found 54% of Australians said they would vote yes in a republic referendum and 46% no).

Republic supporters say it’s a strong base to start from, and that attention on Charles’s visit may stir the conversation about whether a modern Australia should remain tied to the British monarchy.

Philip Benwell, chair of the Australian Monarchist League, counters that the royal visit will only increase support for the monarchy. Charles, in a letter dated March 2024 and addressed to the ARM, said a republic is “for the Australian public to decide”.

But the political reality, especially considered in light of the visit coming exactly one year on from **the unsuccessful voice referendum**, is that the prospect of a referendum on an Australian republic is unlikely to be seriously considered for a generation.

Labor’s subsequent **dumping of a dedicated minister for the republic** has not helped. (...)

## A ‘frozen’ constitution

The **Albanese government**, after the 2022 election, had implicitly tied the two constitutional proposals – an Indigenous voice and a republic – together.

Only eight of 45 referendums proposed since Australian federation have succeeded, with change requiring a majority of voters in a majority of states. Prevailing political wisdom in Australia has long stated constitutional change is impossible without bipartisan support; failure of the voice referendum prompted speculation among some veteran political observers that a referendum may never again be successful.

**The republic referendum in 1999** received 45% support. But Kos Samaras, director of Redbridge polling, says Australia will probably see different results in future votes. “The country is far more diverse, with people having many connections that don’t originate from the UK,” he says. “When this is tested eventually, depending on the model, the notion that the country has the same bond to a monarchy from a country where less than a majority of Australians have an ancestral link – it’s hard to think that will hold up.”

The real challenge is changing the constitution at the moment, says Jones, lecturer in history at Central Queensland University, whose research focuses on Australian republicanism. “Republicans need to think creatively about this issue of how to unfreeze the frozen constitution.”

**Labor’s national party** platform has long supported a republic, and the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, is a longtime backer. The then assistant minister for the republic, Matt Thistlethwaite, told Guardian Australia in 2022 he was working towards being “ready to go in a second term of an Albanese government”.

“The current method of selecting our head of state is undemocratic, it doesn’t represent modern Australian values, and that’s something we want to begin a discussion with Australians on in the longer term,” he told the ABC at the time.

Monarchist groups were agitated by Labor’s appointment of Thistlethwaite in 2022, which prominent monarchist Eric Abetz criticised as “a taxpayer-funded head start” on a potential referendum.

But the position was abolished in a ministerial reshuffle in July, after the voice defeat in October 2023. In July, while announcing the reshuffle and cancellation of the republic portfolio, Albanese distanced himself from further attempts at constitutional change. “I intended to have one referendum”, he said, referencing the voice. (...)

## Finding the moment

Anatolitis says the ARM stood back to allow “clear air” for the voice referendum, but now wanted to begin campaigning for change again. “We need to build our movement to find our moment for a referendum,” she says.

“It’s been 11 years since a monarch visited. These visits are a really important opportunity to remind everyone that monarchy is what our democracy is subject to ... it really jars with who we are as Australians today, that our head of state is a king from a different country.”

The ARM launched a tongue-in-cheek media campaign before the visit, calling it the “farewell tour” of the British monarchy – claiming it is “time to give the royal wave goodbye”. It channels the promotional material of the final tour of a rock band, complete with T-shirts and posters.

Benwell, from the Monarchist League, calls it “mumbo jumbo” and “disrespectful”. (...)

King Charles, visiting the former British colony where he retains the ceremonial title of head of state, was shouted at by an Indigenous Australian senator.

By Mark Landler, *The New York Times*, Oct. 21, 2024

Shortly after King Charles III had finished making remarks in Australia's Parliament on Monday, a voice rang out from the back of the hall. "You are not our king," shouted Lidia Thorpe, an Indigenous senator and activist for Aboriginal rights. "Give us our land back. Give us what you stole from us."

As security guards hustled Ms. Thorpe out of the chamber, she continued to heckle the king, demanding that Britain enter a treaty with Australia's Indigenous population and accusing British colonizers of genocide.

"Our bones, our skulls, our babies, our people," said Ms. Thorpe, wearing a traditional possum skin cloak and shaking her fist at Charles, as the guards backed her toward the door. "You destroyed our land."

Once out of the room, Ms. Thorpe could be heard shouting an epithet about the British "colony" in Australia. The king watched impassively from the stage and along with his wife, Queen Camilla, left the reception a few minutes later.

It was a jarring interruption of Charles's first visit to Australia since becoming king in 2022, and it revived a perennial question about how long the British monarch will reign over Australia. When that question was last put to Australians in 1999, they voted against becoming a republic by 54.8 percent to 45.2 percent.

The republican movement has been largely quiescent since then, though the death of Queen Elizabeth II, a widely revered figure in Australia, fired the hopes of some republicans that it could re-emerge. Anti-monarchy activists have half-jokingly referred to the king's visit as a "farewell tour."

### Document 9 - Which Commonwealth realms might ditch King Charles III?

*A new wave of republicanism is gathering*



Illustration: Nate Kitch

*The Economist*, Nov 13th 2023

Can you name the King of Tuvalu? Or of Papua New Guinea? Or Belize? Probably not. How about the King of Canada? That one's easier. It's also a clue. For they are all King Charles III. Never a man short of titles (he has also, at various times, been the "Great Steward of Scotland" and the Tolkienish "Lord of the Isles", and is currently "Defender of the Faith"), Charles III is the head of 15 realms including Australia, the Bahamas and Grenada. A third of the world's monarchies have him as their king. For now, at least.

In 2024 some will start trying to change that. In the coming year, Jamaica hopes to hold a referendum on kicking Charles out. Australia expects to hold nationwide consultations on becoming a republic. Increasing discontent will also be heard in realms like Antigua and Barbuda (which has promised a referendum on the royals within two years) and Belize.

This burst of republicanism creates several problems. It is a minor problem for the royals (who care a bit about all this) and for the British government (which does not, but must pretend to). But chiefly it is a problem for anyone trying to work out what is happening with Britain's monarchy. Because it is fiendish.

The monarchy has never been easy to understand. It is governed by laws and customs dating back a millennium or more that cover everything from the king's power over Britons (minimal) to his power over swans (maximal, provided they are mute and in the River Thames). It even governs what his queen is allowed to think about (anything she likes, apart from her king's death, for that is high treason). Understanding all that, however, is a doddle compared with understanding the tangle of laws and customs governing the monarchy abroad. This, says Sathnam Sanghera, author of "Empireland: How Imperialism Has Shaped Modern Britain", is "incredibly confusing".

One source of confusion is how the Commonwealth fits in. In practice, it doesn't. Today it is little more than a club with occasional sports days. To leave the Commonwealth, all a country needs is "a letter...on headed notepaper", says

Philip Murphy, a historian at the University of London. But kicking out a king is constitutional. It is far more complicated and may need referendums—which, as Britons know, can backfire. That may be putting some countries off.

Still, the process is gathering pace. And if countries do kick Charles out, many people will be relieved—including, possibly, some royals. As Prince Philip once told journalists in Canada: “We don’t come here for our health.” If countries did want rid of them, he added, then “let’s end the thing on amicable terms.” In 2024, those terms may start to be drawn up.

#### **Document 10 - King Charles says past can’t be changed. Critics want Britain to reckon with slavery**

October 25, 2024, NPR, By [The Associated Press](#)

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — King Charles III told a summit of Commonwealth countries in Samoa on Friday that the past could not be changed as he indirectly acknowledged calls from some of Britain's former colonies for a reckoning over its role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The British royal understood "the most painful aspects of our past continue to resonate," he told leaders in Apia. But Charles stopped short of mentioning financial reparations that some leaders at the event have urged and instead exhorted them to find the "right language" and an understanding of history "to guide us towards making the right choices in future where inequality exists."

"None of us can change the past but we can commit with all our hearts to learning its lessons and to finding creative ways to right the inequalities that endure," said Charles, who is attending his first Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, or CHOGM, as Britain's head of state.

His remarks at the summit's official opening ceremony echoed comments a day earlier by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer that the meeting should avoid becoming mired in the past and "very, very long endless discussions about reparations." The U.K. leader dismissed calls from Caribbean countries for leaders at the biennial event to explicitly discuss redress for Britain's role in the slave trade and mention the matter in its final joint statement.

But Britain's handling of its involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade is seen by many observers as a litmus test for the Commonwealth's adaptation to a modern-day world, as other European nations and some British institutions have started to own up to their role in the trade.

"I think the time has come for this to be taken seriously," said Jacqueline McKenzie, a partner at London law firm Leigh Day. "Nobody expects people to pay every single penny for what happened. But I think there needs to be negotiations."

Such a policy would be costly and divisive at home, McKenzie said.

The U.K. has never formally apologized for its role in the trade, in which millions of African citizens were kidnapped and transported to plantations in the Caribbean and Americas over several centuries, enriching many individuals and companies. Studies estimate Britain would owe between hundreds of millions and trillions of dollars in compensation to descendants of slaves.

The Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis on Thursday said he wanted a "frank" discussion with Starmer about the matter and would seek mention of the reparations issue in the leaders' final statement at the event. All three candidates to be the next Commonwealth Secretary-General — from Gambia, Ghana and Lesotho — have endorsed policies of reparatory justice for slavery.

Starmer said Thursday in remarks to reporters that the matter would not be on the summit's agenda. But Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland told The Associated Press in an interview that leaders "will speak about absolutely anything they want to speak about" at an all-day private meeting scheduled for Saturday.

King Charles said in Friday's speech that nothing would right inequality "more decisively than to champion the principle that our Commonwealth is one of genuine opportunity for all." The monarch urged leaders to "choose within our Commonwealth family the language of community and respect, and reject the language of division."

He has expressed "sorrow" over slavery at a CHOGM summit before, in 2022, and last year endorsed a probe into the monarchy's ties to the industry.

Charles — who is battling cancer — and his wife, Queen Camilla, will return to Britain tomorrow after visiting Samoa and Australia — where his presence prompted a lawmaker's protest over his country's colonial legacy.

He acknowledged Friday that the Commonwealth had mattered "a great deal" his late mother Queen Elizabeth II, who was seen as a unifying figure among the body's at times disparate and divergent states.

The row over reparations threatened to overshadow a summit that Pacific leaders — and the Commonwealth secretariat — hoped would focus squarely on the ruinous effects of climate change.

"We are well past believing it is a problem for the future since it is already undermining the development we have long fought for," the king said Friday. "This year alone we have seen terrifying storms in the Caribbean, devastating flooding in East Africa and catastrophic wildfires in Canada. Lives, livelihood and human rights are at-risk across the Commonwealth."

Charles offered "every encouragement for action with unequivocal determination to arrest rising temperatures" by cutting emissions, building resilience, and conserving and restoring nature on land and at sea, he said.

Samoa is the first Pacific Island nation to host the event, and Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa said in a speech Friday that it was "a great opportunity for all to experience our lived reality, especially with climate change," which was "the greatest threat to the survival and security of our Pacific people."

Two dozen small island nations are among CHOGM's 56 member states, among them the world's most imperiled by rising seas. Her remarks came as the United Nations released a stark new report warning that the world was on pace for significantly more warming than expected without immediate climate action.

The population of the member nations of the 75-year-old Commonwealth organization totals 2.7 billion people.

**See also**

● **VIDEO King Charles tells Commonwealth Countries that the Past can't be changed - Newsweek**

<https://youtube.com/shorts/KXokYDz91bo?feature=shared>

### **Document 11 - King Charles Is Sitting on a Reparations Time Bomb**

(*Newsweek*, Sep 11, 2023) By Jack Royston, Chief Royal Correspondent

King Charles III may be on the cusp of a major debate about the monarchy, slavery and reparations at a time when a disconnect with young people poses the biggest threat to his reign.

Caribbean nations are reportedly planning to appeal directly to the British monarchy for reparations and an apology for slavery, bypassing the government, in what would be a new strategy.

Lawyer Arley Gill, chair of Grenada's Reparations Commission, told U.K. newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*: "We are hoping that King Charles will revisit the issue of reparations and make a more-profound statement beginning with an apology, and that he would make resources from the royal family available for reparative justice. He should make some money available." "We are not saying that he should starve himself and his family, and we are not asking for trinkets," Gill added. "But we believe we can sit around a table and discuss what can be made available for reparative justice."

Jamaica's Culture Minister Olivia "Babsy" Grange has also talked about petitioning the British monarchy directly as far back as 2021. In June 2023, the move was being finalized. Grange would have the support of vocal protesters who drew the world's attention during a visit to the country by Prince William and Kate Middleton in March 2022. Professor Rosalea Hamilton, a Jamaican academic and campaigner who helped organize the protests, told *Newsweek*: "All of these channels should be explored. I think there is no question of the debt that's owed, and it's well established now. The only question is when and the terms of the repayment. I don't think the British royal family can run away from it indefinitely," Hamilton added.

Charles and William have both condemned slavery before but have always stopped short of an apology, in line with the official position of the U.K. government.

However, the stance is becoming more difficult to justify in 2023 after a series of events created new momentum behind calls for reparations.

In July, King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands apologized for slavery while adding that not all of the country's population would support him. It showed that royals can take individual action, even when it is controversial, and continue to represent their people. Quoted in U.K. newspaper *The Guardian*, Willem-Alexander said: "On this day that we remember the Dutch history of slavery, I ask forgiveness for this crime against humanity. As your king and as a member of the government, I make this apology myself. And I feel the weight of the words in my heart and my soul," the Dutch king added.

In March, former BBC journalist and reparations campaigner Laura Trevelyan and her family agreed to donate more than £100,000 [\$125,000] to education projects in Grenada. This money acted as reparations for her family's historic role in slavery in the Caribbean country.

Judge Patrick Robinson, of the International Court of Justice, part of the U.N., said in August that Britain cannot ignore its colonial past for ever: "I believe that the United Kingdom will not be able to resist this movement towards the payment of reparations: it is required by history and it is required by law."

Robinson presided over the trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milošević, for war crimes and genocide. If the judge is correct about Britain, then the royal family members will have a limited window in which to get themselves on the right side of history.

If the king were to get there first, then it could represent a PR coup for the British monarchy after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's Oprah Winfrey interview triggered a major debate about the royals and racism.

However, if Charles leaves it too late and Britain is cajoled into paying out against its will, then the royals will appear as though they were unwilling to accept justice and were rooted in the past.

The issue is particularly problematic for Charles because of the way it intersects with another slow-building crisis—his difficult relationship with Generation Z Britons. The U.K.'s 18- to 24-year-olds predominantly oppose Charles, with 52 percent viewing him negatively and 28 percent viewing him positively, according to a YouGov poll of 212 Gen Z adults between August 26 and 28. And in May, 51 percent of U.K. 18- to 24-year-olds supported the royal family paying reparations compared to 22 percent who opposed the move, a separate YouGov survey showed. If those respondents were typical across the generations, then Charles' job might be more straightforward. However, any move to create a reparations system would likely be controversial among older Brits, with 60 percent of over 65-year-olds against the move and 19 percent supporting it.

Vocal opposition would also likely come from the nation's media, including high-profile commentators such as Piers Morgan. He is already on record as opposing the notion that the king should take responsibility for the actions of past monarchs.

The king has, through Historic Royal Palaces, an independent charity that manages crown property, backed research into "the links between the British monarchy and the transatlantic slave trade during the late 17th and 18th centuries," a spokesperson told *The Guardian* in April.

However, even once the research is published, there remain questions on what to do about any links uncovered and whether they should pave the way for reparations.

And if Charles ignores young people and simply hopes that Gen Z change their views as they get older, then he takes a significant gamble. Because if today's younger generation retain their growing opposition to Charles, the monarchy and the royal family's stance on slavery, then in 10 or 20 years' time, they may make up a far-greater portion of British society.

And if the disconnect has not been resolved by then, the British Royal Family may find it has a bigger problem on its hands than Harry's memoir.

## Links with slavery

### ● A podcast from the Guardian's Cost of the crown series

#### Today in Focus, The Cost of the Crown part 3: the hidden history of the monarchy and slavery

*While other reporters in the Guardian investigations team have travelled the country looking at horses, jewels and artworks to help uncover the royal family's hidden wealth, for his part in the Cost of the crown project David Conn looked much further back in time.*

*With the historian Brooke Newman, he has been digging into the evidence that shows the British monarchy's links with transatlantic slavery. What emerges is a newly surfaced document showing a 17th-century transaction: the transfer of £1,000 worth of shares in the Royal African Company to King William III.*

*It then emerged that direct ancestors of King Charles III and the royal family had bought and exploited enslaved people on tobacco plantations in Virginia, according to new research shared with the Guardian by the playwright Desirée Baptiste.*

*A spokesperson for the palace told us that the king would support a study into the links between the British monarchy and transatlantic slave trade by giving access to the royal archives and the royal collection. So far from the British state, there have been expressions of sorrow and a recognition of the horror of slavery, but no formal apology.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2023/may/03/cost-of-the-crown-part-3-hidden-history-monarchy-slavery-podcast>

### ● A video report from CBC News King Charles backs research in monarchy's slavery ties



For the first time, Buckingham Palace publicly expressed support for research into the Crown's connection to the transatlantic slave trade, including how much the monarchy profited from it. King Charles has even given researchers access to archives to dig into the historic links.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAGyCyMi-tA&ab\\_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAGyCyMi-tA&ab_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational)

● **British monarchy slavery link study supported by King Charles - BBC News**

Buckingham Palace said that it is cooperating with an independent study exploring the relationship between the British monarchy and the slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Palace said King Charles III takes the issue "profoundly seriously". Buckingham Palace is granting researchers from the University of Manchester in the UK full access to the Royal Archives and the Royal Collection. The study, a PhD project by historian Camilla de Koning, is expected to be completed in 2026.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5SApddSRwU&ab\\_channel=BBCNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5SApddSRwU&ab_channel=BBCNews)

## Document 12 - Why So Many Nations in the King's Realm Want to Say Goodbye

*Whether through a hard break or a soft fade in ties, nations that have kept the British monarch as their head of state are moving toward separation.*

**The New York Times**, Damien Cave, Reporting from Sydney, Australia, May 5, 2023

The era of warm, wave-and-smile relations between the British monarchy and its distant realms has come to an end. Many of the former colonies that still formally swear allegiance to King Charles III are accelerating efforts to cut ties with the crown and demanding restitution and a deeper reckoning with the empire that the royal family has come to represent.

Jamaica is moving rapidly toward a referendum that would remove King Charles as the nation's head of state, with a reform committee meeting regularly on the verdant grounds where colonial rulers and slave owners once lived. Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Bahamas and nearly every other country with similar systems of constitutional monarchy have also signaled support for becoming republics completely independent of Britain in the years to come.

The chorus of calls for British apologies, reparations and repatriation — of everything from India's Kohinoor diamond to sculptures from Benin and Easter Island — has also grown louder, placing the new king in a vexing position. Charles represents nearly 1,000 years of unbroken royal lineage; he also now stands on a volatile fault line between Britain, where much of that history tends to be romanticized, and a group of forthright former colonies demanding that he confront the harsh realities of his country's imperial past. "There is a growing gap

between Britain's perception of its own empire and how it's perceived everywhere else," said William Dalrymple, a prominent historian of British India. "And that gap keeps growing."

For countries still constitutionally joined to the crown, Charles's coronation arrived with little fanfare, and some cringing discomfort.

These nations are but a remnant. In the wave of decolonization that followed World War II, dozens of independent countries climbed out from under British rule, including India, Pakistan and Nigeria. During Elizabeth's seven-decade reign, which began in 1952, 17 former colonies left the monarchy's embrace to become republics — in most cases, with a president replacing the queen as head of state, usually in the ceremonial role previously played by the monarch or with stronger executive powers.

The 14 nations yet to do so stretch from Australia and Papua New Guinea to Canada and Jamaica. In some places that call the new 74-year-old sovereign their king, like the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, there seems to be little interest in severing royal bonds. Oaths of allegiance have already been switched from queen to king in the courtrooms of remote capitals where wigs are still worn as if in 1680s London.

But for many royal subjects in faraway places, words like "his majesty" and "royal" — as in the Royal Australian Air Force — roll less easily off the tongue now that Britain is less dominant on the global stage, and now that the monarch is no longer Queen Elizabeth II, who often seemed as irreplaceable as Big Ben.

A few governments have already endorsed a soft fade. Quebec passed a law in December that made the oath of

allegiance to the king optional for lawmakers. Australia also recently announced that its new five-dollar note would replace the portrait of Elizabeth not with Charles but with imagery celebrating the country's Indigenous heritage.

But for critics of monarchy and empire, these are baby steps when bold leaps are needed.

Nova Peris, an Aboriginal Australian Olympian and former politician who is a leader of the Australian Republic Movement, which aims to replace the British monarch with an Australian head of state, is one of many calling for a deeper reckoning with the past.

English settlers justified seizing Australia by declaring it "terra nullius" — a Latin term for "land belonging to no one." It was a slur used to justify dispossession, and the impact still lingers. No treaty has ever been signed between the Australian government and Aboriginal nations.

Later this year, Australians will vote on a referendum that would give Indigenous Australians an advisory role in policies affecting their communities. And polls show that many hope a vote on becoming a republic will be next, arguing it would tilt the nation more toward its neighbors in Asia and help unify Australia's increasingly multicultural population.

"Monarchy is all about entrenched privilege, about rule by kings and queens over and above the Australian people," Ms. Peris said. "It has no place in a democracy."

In Jamaica, the process of separation from "Mother England" is further along, and more imbued with demands for restitution. The Caribbean island was a center of the trans-Atlantic slave trade; Jamaican leaders began calling for reparations from Britain a few years ago, along with many other countries in the region. After Queen Elizabeth died in September, Jamaica's prime minister announced that his government would seek to change the constitution and make Jamaica a republic.

In March, a committee of lawmakers and international experts started gathering in Kingston to work out the details.

Richard Albert, a committee member and the director of constitutional studies at the University of Texas at Austin, said that at the first meeting, the gravity of the moment clarified the challenges ahead. The group now meets regularly to discuss what question to ask voters in the referendum, what role the Jamaican head of state would play, and what other changes might follow becoming a republic.

"There's a sense of national duty and pride," Mr. Albert said. "It's the idea that the country wants to exercise self-determination to celebrate its cultural heritage, and to plant a flag to say: We are an independent sovereign state."

Many Jamaicans have said they hope becoming a republic would lead to broader changes, with schools, courts and other institutions stepping away from quiet respect for British traditions and instead including more candid accounts of crimes committed by colonizers swearing loyalty to the British crown.

On the campus of the University of the West Indies on a recent afternoon, many students described Charles as an unknown, distant figure — almost a cardboard cutout from the past. "The monarchy is something that should just stay in England," said Tamoy Campbell, who is studying law. "For us to move forward as a nation, it's important that we break away from those ties, to charter our own destiny, our future and our goals."

Charles has said he does not object to such pursuits. Last June, at a meeting of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 54 nations, almost all of which were once under British rule, he declared that any constitutional connection to his family "depends solely on the decision of each member state."

He also noted that the group's roots "go deep into the most painful period of our history."

Last month, in a statement from Buckingham Palace, he signaled support for deeper research into the royal family's connections to slavery through the royal archives. Historians welcomed the move.

"That's quite a new step because the archives are private archives," said Robert Aldrich, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Sydney and co-author of "The Ends of Empire: The Last Colonies Revisited."

But how much can or will the king actually rectify?

"He's constrained," Professor Aldrich said. "He must say and do only what is approved by the British government."

British laws bar state-owned institutions from returning plundered artifacts. Even an apology for slavery would raise questions about whether the government, the royal family or businesses owed compensation, and it may be politically impossible. The families of some Kenyan victims of colonial abuse are instead trying to sue the British government in the European Court of Human Rights.

"There is still a widespread sense of pride in Britain about an empire that is perceived as being a good and progressive force that brought railways, cricket and democracy to half the world," Mr. Dalrymple said. "And there's very little awareness in Britain of the pile of skulls over which that was rolled." But there are hints of a shift. Books critical of British rule, such as "Empireland" by Sathnam Sanghera, a British journalist born to Indian Punjabi parents, have become best-sellers. Mr. Dalrymple's book "The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of

the East India Company” will soon become a big-budget television series that he has compared to “Game of Thrones.”

Image



*Service members representing Commonwealth nations rehearsing for the king's coronation. Credit...Rob Pinney/Getty Images*

For Charles, that means the realms he rules over may all soon become even more engaged with a sharper version of the history his family helped shape. And with that, his reign may be judged more critically than his mother's ever was — by British elites who believe much of their wealth came from their benign civilizing of a grateful world, and by former colonies that bear the scars of imperial violence and want their loot and patrimony returned.

“There is friction now in a way that there simply wasn't as recently as five or 10 years ago,” Mr. Dalrymple said. “Within Britain, there's a whole lot of stuff that we don't know and that we haven't come to terms with.”

## About King Charles's views on the environment (and architecture)

### Doc 13 - Will King Charles TV change your life and save the planet? Probably not, but he's brave to try

Stephen Bates, *The Guardian*, February 6, 2025

So King Charles is working on a feature-length documentary for Amazon Prime Video, which will apparently detail his philosophy on how to “transform people, places and ultimately the planet”. Times have changed. Before, you waited years for a royal TV project – now they all come along at once.

The royal documentary of old was a rare event, eagerly looked forward to, cherished and lovingly analysed – by royalists at least – for years to come: think of the BBC and ITV's Royal Family in 1969. Now they're ubiquitous, what with Harry and Meghan's Netflix programmes – including how to lay a dining table in someone else's house in California by Meghan – not to mention Channel 5's endless Saturday night royal documentaries.

There seem to be almost as many Windsors as Kardashians on screen, with shows ranging from the gripping tale of Kate “as you've never seen her before” to William and Harry: “Can their bond ever be mended?” If you count Prince Andrew: “Where did it all go wrong?”, you have the whole gamut of viewing pleasure. I shouldn't complain: I've been asked occasionally to appear on these types of programmes. There's quite a cottage industry of royal watching out there.

The king's documentary will be altogether less frivolous than the fast-cut shows with talking heads. It will be an exposition of his philosophy, about how his enthusiasms and views on nature, the environment and architecture are linked and could be harnessed to transform the world. He actually wrote a book outlining these ideas 15 years ago, a lavishly illustrated coffee-table tome titled *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*. The then prince claimed: “This is a call to revolution. Revolution is a strong word, and I use it deliberately. The many environmental and social problems that now loom large on our horizon cannot be solved by carrying on with the very approach that has caused them.”

If that was a hard sell then, how much harder it will be in this world of Donald Trump and Elon Musk – and indeed Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder. Bezos's Prime Video channel, home to myriad delights including Clarkson's Farm, is an interesting choice for the monarch – one that was apparently pondered hard by the king and his advisers. Rival Netflix, which has invested so heavily in Charles's errant younger son and daughter-in-law, will certainly be put out, but Charles's *cri de révolution* could hardly be posted alongside Harry's documentary about how much he loves polo, even though that is an enthusiasm he still shares with his father. It's worth noting that Prime Video is the channel that last year gave us the three-part drama *A Very Royal Scandal*, about Prince Andrew's car-crash interview with the journalist Emily Maitlis on his relationship with the late Jeffrey Epstein. Did Charles go to Amazon despite that, or because of it?

Undoubtedly he will have been keen to get his transformational message out to the widest possible audience, and for that, he clearly needed an international outlet. It will be a carefully crafted and expensive job: filming started last

month and is taking place through the summer, partly at Dumfries House, the Palladian mansion in Ayrshire that the king helped to save for the nation through a charitable grant from his foundation in 2007. The programme will be broadcast either later this year or early next.

Will Charles and a revolutionary vision transfer well to the screen? He is a man who does not take direction easily, and his relationship with television has been chequered, to say the least. It's largely forgotten now, but way back in 1994 he got into almost as large a pickle as Andrew when he admitted to committing adultery with Camilla Parker Bowles, then his mistress and now his queen, in the course of an ITV documentary about his life by Jonathan Dimbleby.

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge in the past 30 years, but the king's relationship with the media has often been prickly: remember his spat in 2005 with the inoffensive Nicholas Witchell, the BBC's then royal correspondent: "These bloody people. I can't bear that man. I mean, he's so awful, he really is." Witchell had merely asked what his sons, sitting beside him, thought of their father's forthcoming wedding to Camilla. One was less amused by journalism back then.

The king is more placid and secure these days. But he is also an elderly man in a hurry: as king for only two years and having had a cancer scare, he might very well see his TV opus as a sort of testament to issues on which he has been banging a sometimes lonely drum for 50 years.

The worldwide audience will be huge, but what will the men who could really make a difference – the oligarchs, autocrats and populists now running the western world – make of it? It could give Trump, for whom no oil-well is too closed or small, a private moment of discomfort when he achieves his ambition of another state visit to Britain. But don't hope for too much: unless Charles takes his TV message to Fox News, Trump probably won't even see it.

#### **Doc14 - King Charles will have to tone down support for net zero after Badenoch says 2050 is 'impossible'**

**Richard Palmer, *The Guardian*, April 4, 2025**

King Charles will have to temper his public support for net zero after Kemi Badenoch broke the political consensus over the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.

Senior royal sources have conceded that the 76-year-old monarch, who has spent more than half a century highlighting environmental challenges, will have to choose his words more carefully now that the Conservatives under Badenoch have said it will be impossible for the UK to hit net zero by 2050.

"The only way that we can regain it [trust] is to tell the unvarnished truth – net zero by 2050 is impossible," the Conservative leader said last month.

Charles III has spoken publicly about how vital it is to hit net zero by the 2050 target date, set by Theresa May's government in 2019 and agreed upon by subsequent administrations. Successive prime ministers have used the king's long track record on campaigning for climate action to help promote Britain's leadership on combatting the challenges. In December 2023, for example, the king told the Cop28 UN climate change conference in Dubai that more urgent action was needed to bring the world towards a zero-carbon future. "After all, ladies and gentlemen, in 2050 our grandchildren won't be asking what we said, they will be living with the consequences of what we did or didn't do," he said.

At that point, the main UK political parties were agreed on the issue. Now the monarch runs the risk of becoming embroiled in a party political dispute. In addition to the change in the Conservative view, Reform wants to scrap net zero completely.

Craig Prescott, a constitutional expert at Royal Holloway, University of London, suggested the king must be less specific about his own views on the target. "I think if you take the view that the monarchy has to be 'two or three steps away' from party politics then, as party politics changes, the monarchy should change," he said.

Charles, who flies to Italy tomorrow with Queen Camilla for a state visit that lasts until Thursday, will still put tackling the climate crisis and other environmental challenges at the heart of his monarchy. [...]

Any silencing of the monarch and his heir threatens to weaken Britain's voice abroad, according to some environmental groups. Shaun Spiers, executive director of the environmental thinktank Green Alliance, said Charles might be unable to speak out specifically on the 2050 target but could talk generally about the need for climate action. "The king is a well-respected leader and it would be a shame if he didn't speak on it, particularly internationally," he said.

Reshima Sharma, deputy head of politics at Greenpeace UK, pointed to popular support for green policies. “King Charles has long been an important advocate for action to clean up our environment and tackle climate change. While the monarchy must remain politically neutral, thankfully climate action continues to receive the kind of popular support that politicians can only dream of. This is reflected across voters of all stripes,” she said. Buckingham Palace declined to comment.

VIDEO - King Charles built this town. What it can teach us about him -CBS News

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I5XQwwBYZ4&ab\\_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I5XQwwBYZ4&ab_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational)

See also

**King Charles III's 'Make Britain Great Again' village – Politico – May 4, 2023**

*Poundbury mixes progressive city building with an aesthetic steeped in nostalgia for an idealized past.*

<https://www.politico.eu/article/king-charles-iiis-make-britain-great-again-village/>

## Monarchy and the media

Document 15- Monarchy and the media

UK in a changing Europe, 05 May 2023

*Ahead of the coronation of King Charles III, Roger Mosey examines the relationship between the monarchy and the media. This piece is taken from UK in a Changing Europe's new report, 'The British monarchy', co-published with the Constitution Unit.*

In a message in February 2022 to mark her 70th anniversary on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II noted that it was her “sincere wish” that the former Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles would become known as Queen Consort when her son Charles acceded to the throne. The media reaction to what could have been a controversial move showed the deferential and unquestioning tone that characterises much media reporting of royal matters. ‘Camilla WILL become Queen,’ proclaimed the [Daily Mail](#), calling it a ‘surprise announcement’ that would see ‘the former royal mistress’ become the woman who constitutionally represents the nation. It was a surprise because the Palace had previously said that this would not happen; Camilla would be known, they had said, as Princess Consort.

This significant change to the role of the King and his Queen was overwhelmingly treated by most of the media as a pleasing family touch by Elizabeth on a special occasion for her, and it even took *The Guardian* many paragraphs before they got to a commentator describing the announcement as ‘extraordinary’. Debates on broadcast media were vanishingly few, though Jack Royston – royal correspondent for Newsweek – said on

ITV’s Good Morning Britain that “the public don’t want it. The numbers are really clear.” The programme’s presenter said that their audience response supported that. The long-term goal of Charles and his courtiers to secure acceptance for Camilla is a perfectly understandable human wish, but it has not been achieved by an open debate facilitated by the media about the monarchy. In October 2022, [Tatler reported](#) that even the word ‘consort’ was, as they put it, ‘to be quietly dropped’ from Camilla’s title. Yet the instinct of many journalists is to present this as the latest twist in a high-quality soap opera rather than about the way we as citizens – or maybe ‘subjects’ – are governed. There are some exceptions to the royal conformists: a *Guardian* journalist fought a lengthy battle to uncover Charles’s interventionist memos to ministers, and *The Sunday Times* exposed bags of cash being handed over by questionable donors.

However, it is overwhelmingly what we might call ‘The Crown’ narrative that wins out. The real-life drama of the Windsors delivered some of its most compelling episodes when the Duke and Duchess of Sussex left the United Kingdom for their new life in North America, via Oprah Winfrey and Netflix.

There were high viewing figures in the UK and record book sales. This points to the greatest attraction of the Royal Family for newspapers, radio, television and the rest: they are box office. Most of us avidly consume the gossip. The late Queen is reported to have said “I have to



be seen to be believed” and now that can be achieved by internet clickbait more effectively than by a royal visit to Barrow. This can of course be hurtful to the humans at the centre of the story: Harry and Meghan seem to offer an example of not being able to live with – or without – it.

It would be a mistake to see the Royal Family as neutral players here. They, naturally, want to preserve the institution. To support that, they have a large team of professional media advisers and have used high-profile consultants on the trickiest assignments. Indeed, Prince Harry’s central allegation is that he was sacrificed by ‘the machine’ to bolster others. When a significant death occurs, there is a media plan. The tributes are filtered out: first from the then Prince of Wales, and a day later the Princess Royal’s words about her late father the Duke of Edinburgh were posted by the Palace on Instagram. Princess Eugenie brought up the rear.

The Royal household can be vigorous in defending its interests. The BBC lost its exclusive production rights on the Queen’s Christmas broadcast when it was thought to have displeased the Royal Family in the 1990s. I was editor of the Today programme on Radio 4 between 1993 and 1996, when the chairman of the BBC was Marmaduke Hussey – spouse of Lady Susan Hussey, who was a lady-in-waiting. By whatever route, the displeasure of the Palace at two of our royal items – I was told that Hussey wanted action taken against me personally – was made known. Happily, the management ignored the chairman. A few years later, as head of television news, I had a lovely, civilised drink with a courtier who asked me to replace one of the journalists assigned to a royal visit because of the dislike for them “at the very top”. We did not comply.

The broadcaster David Dimbleby summed up the continuing tension in comments at the Henley Literary Festival in October 2022. He told how the Palace sought to control every aspect of the televised funeral of the Queen: “There was this complete list of things that no broadcaster could show because the copyright belongs to Buckingham Palace. I think that’s wrong, just wrong. It’s just interesting how tightly controlled monarchy is.” He went on to list items that most journalists rarely challenge, such as the royal ability to change tax legislation or avoid capital gains tax on the Duchy of Cornwall. After the Queen’s death, there was very little coverage of the constitutional issues raised by the transition to a new monarch; only Channel 4 ran a peak-time programme. When a correspondent tried to raise questions in a news report, he was criticised by politicians. The Conservative Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said “the BBC should really not be introducing the independence debate into the Queen’s death. There’s no link.” That is not what David Cameron had said about the Queen’s intervention in the 2014 referendum campaign.

This fits into a pattern in which the media are much more interested in personalities than they are in what they see as dreary process stories. I and others have charted the risk that trivia overwhelms what really matters. With the Royal Family the characters are particularly vivid and the narrative is sometimes irresistible. But they represent our country’s government too and cement our national hierarchy and define our global image. It is hard to contend that the media has lived up to its role of scrutiny here, which is both a journalistic failing and – in the case of the public service organisations – risks an injustice to the millions of people who dissent from the monarchy.

*By Roger Mosey, Master of Selwyn College Cambridge and former Editorial Director, BBC.*

*This piece is one in a series of articles taken from UK in a Changing Europe’s new report, ‘The British monarchy’, co-published with the Constitution Unit.*

## **Document 16 - Memo to Harry: megaphone diplomacy isn’t working. You could write to your dad – it only costs a stamp**

*The reaction to the prince’s BBC interview highlights his error in thinking he is anyone’s priority. Time for a reality check*

Stephen Bates, *The Guardian*, Mon 5 May 2025

Was the timing deliberate? It did seem so as Prince Harry backed into the limelight once again last Friday evening with his extended lament to the BBC about the fact that he and his wife and children had been denied taxpayer-funded security protection by a wicked establishment if ever they choose to visit Britain again.

In the great scale of world events, or even of the royal family, Harry’s private security needs are probably not near the top of anybody’s priorities, but they were enough to knock the local election results and even the picture of a grinning Nigel Farage off Saturday’s front pages.

But if he thought his latest intervention was going to change minds at Buckingham Palace or effect the reconciliation he claims to want with his father, though not apparently with others like the queen or his brother, he has surely got another think coming.



Sunday People front page, 4 May 2025.

The interview – the latest in a string of complaints emerging at regular intervals from Harry and Meghan’s home in Montecito – is likely to be filed alongside previous interviews, documentaries and his book *Spare*. We have heard such complaints before, several times over. His trouble is that the family firm, the UK media and most of the public – insofar as they think of his plight at all – have given up on Harry. If he wants reconciliation, he needs better PR and less megaphone diplomacy.

The spark for his latest grievance comes as the rest of the royal family and the nation prepare to celebrate that moment in UK history which gave the country something to be proud about: its role 80 years ago in the defeat of Nazi Germany. It will be a commemoration of service, duty and unity, with parades, fly-pasts and civic celebrations, which Harry will miss despite his own military service.

At the interview in a private house (not his own) in California, the prince, who gave up royal duties five years ago and moved to America’s West Coast, complained, as if it were the most important thing, that he was a victim. That he was being discriminated against by the UK establishment for being, well, a prince: “My status hasn’t changed. It can’t change. I am who I am.” And he implied that the shadowy forces that had had it in for his mother were out to get him too. The old discredited conspiracy theory lives on in his brain.

Harry said he wants to reconcile with his father, who might be dying of cancer for all he knew, but could not get hold of him “because of the security stuff”. He would not bring his family to Britain because of their vulnerability to attack in a country which is somewhat safer than the West Coast, or indeed Ukraine, which he has recently visited. He said: “If anything were to happen to me, my wife or my father’s grandchildren...look where the responsibility lies,” and last night, possibly coincidentally, Meghan published a photograph of her husband holding their son Archie’s hand and carrying daughter Lilibet on his shoulders.

The prince thought King Charles might have intervened, or at least stepped aside, to allow a proper review of his safety needs from a body other than Ravec – the Royal and VIP Executive Committee – which reviews the security of vulnerable public figures and contains a staff member from Buckingham Palace. As the judges in Harry’s latest court case about the decision to remove protection pointed out on Friday, his complaint has been examined several times and found groundless.

More to the point, despite whatever constitutional training he ever received, the fifth in line to the throne does not seem to realise that his dad cannot intervene even in what are technically his own courts to get a favourable outcome for his younger son. That’s the sort of thing Donald Trump might try.

Pragmatically, instead of revelling in victimhood, Harry and Meghan might reflect that if they turn up for official events they will get protection. If they turn up privately to stay with friends, the British public will remain blissfully unaware of their presence or even location.

For now, all the palace can do is keep calm and carry on, albeit with exasperation. If Harry really wants reconciliation, he could always write a private letter. He knows where his father lives.

More on the Royal Family and the media:

- **The Prince Harry settlement with the press explained in 90 seconds – The BBC**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/cpdx46ly8x9o>

- **A timeline of events in Prince Harry's troubled relationship with the royal family**

<https://apnews.com/article/prince-harry-royal-rift-lawsuits-timeline-1ed08b7e1735a9b1a435ad638d4ca624>

- **News analysis - *Can King Charles Heal a Royal Family Crisis Before It's Too Late?***

Prince Harry's desperate plea to reconcile with his father highlighted a rupture that could undermine the monarchy's attempts to model unity.

Mark Landler, *The New York Times*, May 11, 2025

[https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/11/world/europe/charles-harry-royal-family-crisis.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.I08.BJri.4\\_OYw7s2JdoV&smid=url-share](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/11/world/europe/charles-harry-royal-family-crisis.html?unlocked_article_code=1.I08.BJri.4_OYw7s2JdoV&smid=url-share)

- **The media is central to the monarchy's survival. Will it also be its undoing?**

OPINION: The royal family is buttressed by an institution that has changed beyond recognition since the 1950s

[Laura Clancy](#), Open Democracy, 13 September 2022