



As Diana, Princess of Wales reaches what would have been her 60th birthday, her legacy is still proving big business, writes **Kerry Parnell**

It's been almost a quarter of a century since her death, yet Diana is as big a business as ever.

Such is the enduring power of the Princess of Wales' legacy, shortly before what would have been her 60th birthday, her story is still hitting headlines, selling books, movies, exhibitions and even a musical.

So just what was it about the late princess who would have celebrated her 60th on July 1 that makes her life and legacy so enduring? Was it her beauty, fashion sense, kindness, campaigning, or her tragic life and death?

It's all these and something less tangible, say royal commentators, that keeps us endlessly fascinated by her.

"What endeared Diana in the hearts and minds of millions around the world was that, in spite of her luminous beauty and privileged background, she had struggled to discover her true self, living as she did inside an unhappy marriage and a distant and rather chilly institution," Diana biographer Andrew Morton tells *The Sunday Telegraph*.

"The presence of William and Harry on the public stage has ensured that there are constant reminders of the late princess; from Catherine's engagement ring which belonged to Diana to the way Harry hugs people in crowds – just like his mum..."

Diana's untimely demise was

like a Greek tragedy, says Ingrid Seward, royal biographer and editor-in-chief of *Majesty* magazine. "Sad stories always make for compelling telling."

"All these years later it is still difficult to believe she died at the hands of a drunk driver in a Paris underpass with her Egyptian lover at her side."

But aside from her sorry demise, she had a special quality in life.

"There are loads of movie stars and celebrities, but there will be only one Diana," says Elizabeth Emanuel, one half of the designers who created Diana's unforgettable wedding gown. The dress has recently gone back on display in Kensington Palace, Diana's former home.

"In spite of her luminous beauty and privileged background, she had struggled to discover her true self"

The exhibition, *Royal Style In The Making*, coincides with her 60th birthday and planned unveiling of her statue by Princes William and Harry in Kensington Palace garden.

"It is one of the most famous dresses ever made," says exhibition curator Matthew Storey, describing it as a "pivotal moment" in fashion. And such is its – and Diana's – power, people are queuing to see it 40 years after the 20-year-old bride wore it in St Paul's Cathedral, July 29, 1981.

Diana understood the power of clothes for communicating a message, but she was more than a fashion plate, she was a breath of fresh air in the royal family, paving

the way for a much more modernised approach by the institution.

Her back-then fairly "radical" hands-on parenting style, doing things like taking young William and Harry to Thorpe Park theme park for a day out in 1993, queuing for the rides with the general public and snapped roaring with laughter on the log flume, has directly influenced how her sons are bringing up their own families, albeit across the world from one another.

It's also resulted in them referencing her in their charity work and endeavours, from William and Catherine's mental health programs through their Royal Foundation, under the banner "Making a Difference Together" to Harry and Meghan's Archewell initiatives dubbed "Compassion in Action", including their Netflix deal, Spotify podcasts and Apple TV mental health series with Oprah.

Diana's story has been endlessly retold on-screen and shows no sign of ever ending.

Series Four of *The Crown* was so explosive it hit the headlines, mainly because of the portrayal of Charles and Diana.

The Netflix show reportedly pulled in more viewers in the UK than watched the real wedding of Charles and Diana, so mesmerised were we by the fairytale romance that wasn't. To cash in on the interest, the streaming giant is planning a sequel to its 2017 documentary *Diana: In Her Own Words*, featuring more unheard audio of Diana's tapes.

And in October, a very different telling of Diana's story will air on Netflix, as the streaming service previews the stage show *Diana: The Musical*, some two months ahead of its Broadway debut.

In the UK, a new

How I beat being mum-shamed by a TV dog

Bluey makes me barking mad. It's Bandit's fault – he's such a good dad, us non-canine-identifiers are being savaged by his parenting skills.

Basically, I'm being mum-shamed by a TV dog.

Bluey is paws down the best kids' show on telly right now, and Bandit the Blue Heeler is far and away the best cartoon dad – yes, beating even Daddy Pig, who had held the top spot for decades but can't bring home the bacon anymore.

I part wish I was married to Bandit (not in the weird way it sounds) and part wish I was him, because he is making me feel like a completely rubbish mum.

It's really ruff – how can I compete with a dog dad who



KERRY PARNELL
TWITTER.COM/KERRYARNELL

goes into dance mode at the post office, turns into a magic claw vending machine or happily plays horsey weddings?

The brilliant Aussie-animated series, by Brisbane-

based Joe Brumm, was recently voted in the top 100 sitcoms of all time by *Rolling Stone* magazine.

The show, which launched on ABC in Australia in 2018 has already won two AACTAs and an Emmy, but most of all captured the hearts of kids all over the world.

Its success is because it's laugh-out-loud funny for both kids and parents, has a great message and makes you really care about the furry family of four. So it deserves its place in the sitcom hall of fame – alongside *Sex And The City*, *Fawlty Towers*, *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons*.

My daughters howl with laughter at the antics of pup Bandit, mum Chilli and pups Bluey and Bingo, in a way I



have never heard them do for any other show – even for its inspiration *Peppa Pig*, or sister series *Ben and Holly*.

One of them confidentially admitted to me – in a whisper,

lest she get arrested by the cartoon police – "I feel bad saying it, but I like it more than *Peppa*".

The heart of the home is Bandit, who has to be the funnest dad who ever lived, which of course, he doesn't in real life, because nobody could ever be that enthusiastic about joining in imaginary play with their children. All. The. Time.

That's what's gnawing at me – Bandit makes me feel so guilty. When he's having Indiana-Jones-style adventures with his daughters in his living room, I'm shouting at mine to put on their socks.

My five-year-old solemnly told me we are not like Bandit and Chilli, "because they don't shout".

"Maybe it's because dogs don't wear socks, so they're never late for school waiting for them to put them on," I whined.

But I'm not going to be muzzled by a mutt. Bluey has inspired me this week, when my youngest wanted to throw a birthday party for her teddy, I smiled, supplied cake and candles and played musical statues.

"This was a really good day," she said happily, as she was going to bed, "You were so much fun." I gave myself a pat and a chewy stick as a reward.

As the fortune cookie reveals in the episode *Takeaway*: "Flowers may bloom again, but a person never has a chance to be young again." For real life.

SUNDAY JUNE 20 2021

129



Kristen Stewart (left) is the latest to play Diana joining The Crown's Emma Corrin who starred in the much-talked about Season Four.

documentary Diana is running on ITV to mark her birthday, with the channel also commissioning a series Diana's Decades.

"There is something a bit magical about Princess Diana, and despite the difficulties in her personal life she managed to use her connection with people to do huge amounts of good," Diana producer David Glover says.

"Her 60th birthday feels like the perfect time to re-examine her life and legacy and explore just how she went from a relatively unknown teenager to the most mourned person who ever lived."

She is also the focus of new movie Spencer, penned by Peaky Blinders' Steven Knight, with Twilight's Kristen Stewart playing the tragic princess. There has been

endless biographies on Diana and they are still appearing over two decades on from her death. The biggest was Andrew Morton's explosive tell-all Diana: Her True Story, which came out in 1992

and was updated in 2017. Andrew has continued to write royal biographies, having just published Margaret & Elizabeth: The Intimate World Of The Windsor Sisters. Another best-seller was 2007's The Diana Chronicles by Tina Brown, which hit the top spot on The New York Times Best Seller list.

And those close to her have made careers from their relationship.

Diana's butler Paul Burrell brought out book A Royal Duty in 2001 and still makes his living as a royal pundit and reality show contestant.

Her ex-lover James Hewitt has also made a career from their affair – he collaborated with Anna Pasternak on 1994's Princess In Love, then penned several himself including 2017's A Love Like No



Paul Burrell.

Other: Diana And Me, as well as trying to sell her private letters; her ex-protection officer Ken Wharfe shared his secrets in Diana: Closely Guarded Secret in 2002 and even her voice and "presence coach" Stewart Pearce brought out Diana: The Voice Of Change last year.



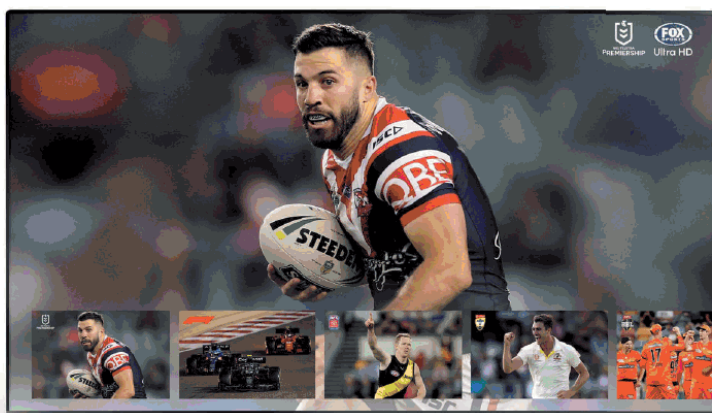
There will also be another raft of releases to coincide with the 25th anniversary of her death next year, including a documentary by director Ed Perkins, which has already secured a cinema release, and book The Princess by Wendy Holden.

Meanwhile, Diana is still hitting the headlines – this week there were news stories on her on everything from the Martin Bashir Panorama investigation to her 1981 Ford Escort being auctioned for around \$70,000 and her friend Dr James Colthurst revealing what she would have thought about Harry's Oprah interview.

What she would think of her posthumous fame, we can only guess, but Diana Inc doesn't look like it's going out of business any time soon.



Prince Harry has based his brand of charity work on that of his mother.



"Show me sport
in Ultra HD"



What will you
ask for?

With voice control, finding and watching the shows your family loves has never been easier.

FOXTEL | ALL IN ONE
PLACE, EASY

