

Queen of hearts

Your weekly nose into nostalgia

# heat *story*

## DIANA'S LEGACY: 25 YEARS ON

*heat* remembers the  
People's Princess 25  
years after her death

August 31st marks 25 years since the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales. Known lovingly as the People's Princess, she danced and roller-skated through life with an air that was impossible to ignore. And while she never intentionally set out to modernise the monarchy, she showed us a side of royalty that people hadn't previously seen. From British culture to royal fashion, here are the ways that Diana's legacy lives on today...





Looking iconic on her wedding day



Visiting an HIV ward



LOLs with her boys at Thorpe Park



In one of her iconic frocks at Cannes

## FEMALE ICON

Princess Diana wasn't afraid to shake things up. She was the first royal to refrain from using the traditional – but outdated – promise to “obey” her husband in her wedding vows to Prince Charles.

While the break from royal precedent caused quite a stir back in 1981, Diana had no idea of the ripple effect she would create. Following in her mother-in-law's footsteps, Kate Middleton left “obey” out of her vows when she married Prince William 30 years later, with Meghan Markle and Princess Eugenie following suit.



With Elton John at a memorial for Gianni Versace in 1997

When visiting children's hospitals, she would wear bright colours so that she would be approachable. She rarely wore gloves, because she liked to hold people's hands, and she eventually stopped wearing hats after saying, “You can't cuddle a child in a hat.”

## ROYAL REBEL

The royals are notorious for their strict dress codes – but Diana broke all these rules. From plunging necklines to that iconic revenge dress, the Princess of Wales wasn't afraid to have fun and channel her inner sexy. She was also an unmaterial girl in a material world – she auctioned off her iconic gowns to help raise funds for charity. But it wasn't all about looking good – the Princess had other motives. Elizabeth Emmanuel – whose husband designed Diana's wedding dress – said of the bubbly princess, “Diana used clothes to communicate with the world.”

## ‘SHE WAS FABULOUS’

And, as the latest figurehead to carry the baton for royal fashion, Kate Middleton often leans into Diana's legacy, paying homage to her with her showstopping outfits.

## GEN Z QUEEN

From Elton John to George Michael, Diana had her fair share

of famous friends. Anecdotes from A-list pals have carried the Princess across time – Freddie Mercury allegedly snuck her into a gay bar during one wild night out, while close friend Elton John described her as “fabulous company, the best dinner party guest, incredibly indiscreet, a real gossip – you could ask her anything and she'd tell you”. And from *The Crown* to

Kristen Stewart's portrayal of her in *Spencer*, pop culture is making sure that future generations won't forget Princess Diana. Young people are unlocking their phones and switching on their TV to realise how the Princess of Wales was uncannily ahead of her time – and now lovingly dubbed the Princess of Meme, the internet has turned Diana into a Generation Z cult queen.

## THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS

One of the most impressive ways Diana's legacy lives on is through the hearts she touched – particularly through her charity work. She was ahead of her time in opening conversations around mental health, as well as setting an impressive precedent in her missions to get rid of land mines.

And back in 1987, she sent out a powerful message when she shook the hand of an AIDS patient in front of the world's media. With one single gesture, she shut down what had become a public frenzy, saying to people, “HIV does not make people dangerous to know, so you can shake their hands and give them a hug – heaven knows they need it.”

And with her unbridled emotions and ability to let her guard down, Diana helped to break down the stiff-upper-lip mentality, showing that compassion is what can bring about the most change. It's even

said that the Queen learnt some things from her daughter-in-law – a royal watcher with close ties to the family revealed, “She had to take a page from Diana's book and connect with people on an emotional level that she hadn't done before.”

## THE DIANA EFFECT

While Diana might not be here anymore, she has a living legacy. Back in 2016, William, Kate and Harry set up Heads Together – a public awareness campaign that focused on destigmatising mental

health – and a close friend of Diana's said, “There is something very moving that Diana's sons would take on the issue of mental health, knowing their mother struggled with depression during various parts of her life. She would be so pleased.”

More recently, William hugging England's Lionesses following their Euros win reminded former protection officer Ken Wharfe of the princess. “It's exactly what Diana was like,” he said. And the boys themselves – who grew up in the glare of the public eye – channel their mother in everything they do.

Speaking about Diana, Harry said, “We will do everything we can to make sure that she's never forgotten and carry on all of the special gifts, as such, that she portrayed while she was alive,” later adding, “I honour my mother in everything I do. I am my mother's son.” ■



Her living legacy: Wills, Kate and Harry promoting mental health

## THE PRINCESS HAS SPOKEN...



“CALL ME DIANA, NOT PRINCESS DIANA”

“BEING A PRINCESS ISN'T ALL THAT IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE”

“I LIKE TO BE A FREE SPIRIT. SOME DON'T LIKE THAT, BUT THAT'S THE WAY I AM”

“I AM NOT A POLITICAL FIGURE, I AM A HUMANITARIAN FIGURE. ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE”

“HUGS CAN DO GREAT AMOUNTS OF GOOD – ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN”

“PEOPLE THINK THAT, AT THE END OF THE DAY, A MAN IS THE ONLY ANSWER. ACTUALLY, A FULFILLING JOB IS BETTER”



# ICONIC MOMENTS OF THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS

She was a trailblazer, a fashionista, a feminist, and an icon to many



"I don't know what you mean"

## BEST SERVED COLD

There are certain moments in life when a sartorial statement speaks more than words. That's what Di embodied on 20 November 1994 when she stepped out in *that* off-the-shoulder cocktail dress for a *Vanity Fair* party - which happened to be on the same evening her estranged husband Prince Charles confessed to adultery in a TV interview.



Leading from the front in Angola

## STANDING STRONG

As part of her extensive charity work, Princess Diana visited war-torn Angola in January 1997 to support her plea for a worldwide ban on land mines. She famously walked through a minefield and even detonated an explosive device. Responding to British government backlash that frowned upon her unorthodox approach, she said, "I'm just trying to highlight a problem that's going on around the world."



Having hersay

## THAT INTERVIEW

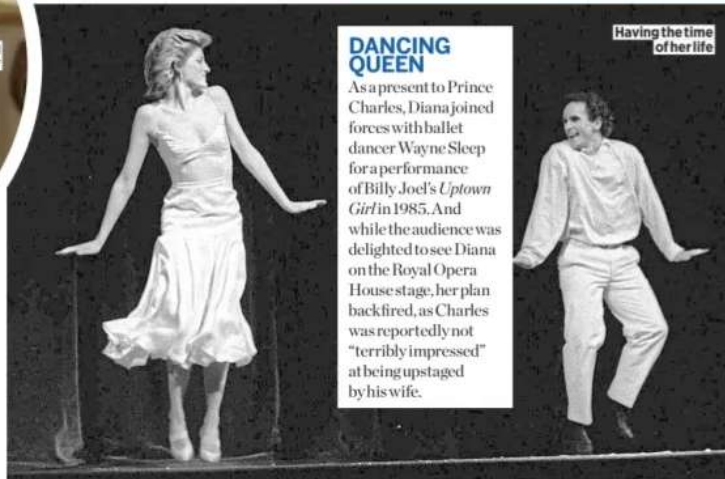
Princess Diana's 1995 *Panorama* interview with Martin Bashir gave her a platform to speak of Charles' affair with Camilla at length - even though Bashir and the BBC have since been criticised for the methods used to procure her story. "There were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded," she famously stated. The interview quickened divorce proceedings.



Cheer up, lads - Mummy's here

## NOT A REGULAR MUM, A COOL MUM

William and Harry were the centre of her world, and going against the grain was Diana's way of ensuring their upbringing was as normal as possible. Ripping up the royal rulebook on motherhood, she did the school run herself, treated them to McDonald's, and threw them into the same pursuits as less-privileged children.



## DANCING QUEEN

As a present to Prince Charles, Diana joined forces with ballet dancer Wayne Sleep for a performance of Billy Joel's *Uptown Girl* in 1985. And while the audience was delighted to see Diana on the Royal Opera House stage, her plan backfired, as Charles was reportedly not "terribly impressed" at being upstaged by his wife.

Having the time of her life



Making magic on the dance floor

## HOPELESSLY DEVOTED

All eyes were on John Travolta and Princess Diana in November 1985, when they danced together at the White House during a gala hosted by then-President Ronald Reagan. British royalty and a Hollywood heart throb made for a mesmerising duo and John described the moment as "special and magical".



The Queen of Hearts channels The King



Basically, our summer wardrobe

## SERVING LOOKS

Conforming to conventional royal fashion ideals is something Diana strayed away from, and she remains one of the most enduring style icons. Whether it be her "Elvis" pearl dress (left), or her jumper and cycling shorts, Diana's wardrobe still remains a talking point today.