

British Royal Weddings of the 20th Century on DVD

May 6, 2011 Francine Brokaw

This DVD looks back at many of the royal weddings from 1919 up to 1999. It is impressive to see the continuity of royal weddings through the years.

British Royal Weddings of the 20th Century is a DVD filled with history - history of England and history of the royal family. While viewing the past royal weddings it is amazing to see that they all have the same grandeur that modern royal weddings have. There are the same family processions through the streets, the same carriages and cars, the same cavalry processions, the same uniformed guards, and the same precise timing of the entrances of the royals in the churches. While many of the weddings on this DVD are from newsreels and shown in black and white (after all, they occurred almost a century ago), the feeling and atmosphere of a royal wedding has not changed.

The Royal Weddings on the DVD

There are clips from the weddings of Princess Mary and Henry Charles George (1922), Lord Mountbatten and Edwina Ashley (1922), Prince Albert and Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (1923 – the parents of Queen Elizabeth), Prince George and Princess Marina (1934), Prince Henry and Alice Scott (1935), Princess Elizabeth and Phillip Mountbatten (1947), Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones (1960), Prince Edward and Katherine Worsley (1961), Princess Alexandra and Angus Ogilvy (1963), Prince Richard and Brigitte van Deurs (1972), Princess Anne and Mark Phillips (1973), Prince Charles and Diana Spencer (1982), and Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson (1986). Bonus clips include looks at the weddings of Princess Patricia and Alexander Ramsay (1919), Earl of Harewood and Marion Stein (1949), Lady Pamela Mountbatten and David Hicks (1960), Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones (1960, an alternate news report), Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones (1999), and more views from the 1947 wedding of Princess Elizabeth (now Queen Elizabeth) and Phillip Mountbatten.

Who's Who

While viewing these weddings, you might wonder who's who. I did. With all the princes and princesses, lords, queens, kings, earls, duchesses, dukes and others, I only recognized a few people. So I did some research to find out who is who in this vast group of royals who are privileged to indulge in these lavish weddings.

The House of Windsor family tree includes most of the wedding couples on this DVD. It's a bit confusing to try to figure out who is related to whom and how, but this diagram will help you to understand the participants in these royal weddings. If you want to go back even further, this other Royal Family Tree website will give you a more inclusive look at the royal family through the centuries.

In the latter weddings, viewers will recognize many of participants. For instance, Princess Anne was a bridesmaid in several royal weddings, and when he was old enough Prince Charles attended all the royal weddings along with his parents. And, if you look closely, you'll see a very young Prince William as a page in the wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson.

Continuity

Many of the weddings have taken place at Westminster Abbey, just as the most recent wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton did. The continuity from one wedding to another is the same. The only things that change are the participants and the dresses. The hats are the same, the uniforms are the same, the processions are the same, the carriages are the same, and the vows are, for the most part, the same.

Today there is not as much publicity about the royal wedding cakes as there was in the past. It's interesting to see some of the old newsreels featuring the humongous cakes, and viewers like me will undoubtedly regret that the film is black and white instead of color.

The older film tells the story of the weddings, the public's interest in the ceremony, and the interest in the wedding dresses. Not much has changed. In the more modern weddings, people are still interested in the events and especially the wedding dresses. While Princess Diana's 25-foot train made history, a long train has been a staple among royal brides. And the tiaras are also something that the young brides in these weddings all wear. After all, if you've got it you might as well wear it ... and show it off.

While some of the vows have been modernized, the pomp and circumstance of royal weddings has remained the same. The continuity through the ages for royal weddings is similar to the inauguration of the president of the United States. The dignity and celebrations are the same but the people are different.

The DVD is an interesting look at a truly British institution. The monarchy is the symbol of Britain and their weddings have always been big productions for not only the wedding couple but also the people of Britain. This is something Prince William and Catherine Middleton might have watched while planning their own wedding which took place on April 29, 2011.

- *British Royal Weddings of the 20th Century*
- Studio: British Pathé
- Running Time: 184 minutes

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