

Historical “Who’s Who” in Rebecca Dean’s PALACE CIRCLE

Herbert Henry Asquith: 1852-1928

Herbert Henry Asquith served as the Liberal Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1908 to 1916. Generally known simply as H.H, he was raised to the peerage in 1925, taking the title, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith.

Margot Asquith: 1864-1945

Margot Asquith, née Tennant, married the widowed Herbert Henry Asquith in 1894. Unconventional, sharp-tongued and sharp-witted, she was a glittering and undisputed leader of society. During World War II her daughter, Elizabeth, who had married a Rumanian diplomat, was trapped in Bucharest. Margot schemed for her rescue but Elizabeth died of pneumonia in April 1945. Heartbroken, Margot died only a few months later.

Marie Belloc-Lowndes: 1868-1947

Marie Belloc-Lowndes was half-French and half-English and a prolific and respected novelist. She was a lifelong friend of Margot Asquith, the Prime Minister’s wife.

Dorothy Brooke: 1884-1955

Dorothy Brooke, née Gibson-Craig, was born in Melrose, Scotland, into a family that had been part of the Scottish aristocracy for centuries. The defining moment in her life was when she arrived in Cairo in 1930, the newly married wife of British cavalry officer Brigadier Geoffrey Brooke. Appalled at the condition of Army horses and mules left behind after World War I, and which were living and working in indescribable conditions, she set about easing their suffering. In 1934, she founded the ‘Old War Horse Memorial Hospital’ in Cairo, with the promise of free veterinary care for all the city’s working horses and donkeys. The Brooke Hospital for Animals – Dorothy Brooke’s lasting legacy - works today not only in Cairo, but in India, Pakistan, Jordan, Israel, Afghanistan, Kenya, Ethiopia and Guatemala.

Winston Churchill: 1874-1965

Winston Churchill was born at his family’s ancestral home, Blenheim Palace, Woodstock. His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was the third son of John Spencer-Churchill, the 7th Duke of Marlborough. His mother, Lady Randolph Churchill (née Jennie Jerome) was the daughter of American millionaire, Leonard Jerome. He was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst and in 1898 took part in the Battle of Omdurman. In 1900, he entered politics as a Conservative Member of Parliament. In 1908, he married Clementine Hozier. It was to be a long and happy marriage untouched by scandal. In 1911, he was made First Lord of the Admiralty. In this post he did a great deal to ensure that the British navy was in a state to fight a war. It was a post he held again, in 1939, at the outbreak of World War II. In 1940, he became Prime Minister and the greatest war leader Britain had ever known. A hugely talented artist and writer in 1953 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1963, he became an honorary American citizen – an honour confirmed by Congress.

Clementine Churchill: 1885-1977

Clementine was born in Mayfair, London. Her mother was Lady Henrietta Blanche Hozier, daughter of the 10th Earl of Airlie and second wife of Henry Montague Hozier. Her paternity, however, was always in doubt. Throughout her long marriage to Winston, she was always his friend, lover and constant support. They had five children, Diana, Randolph, Sarah, Marigold (who died aged three), and Mary.

Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough: 1877-1964

Consuelo was a member of the prominent American Vanderbilt family. Her marriage to the 9th Duke of Marlborough was an international emblem for socially advantageous marriages – and was also bitterly unhappy. The marriage was annulled in 1926 and Consuelo then married Lt.Col. Jacques Balsan, a Frenchman. She always maintained close ties with favourite Churchill relatives, particularly Winston. Another of her close friends and a regular visitor to the Balsans home on the French Riviera was Lord Curzon.

George Curzon, 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston: 1859-1925

George Nathaniel Curzon was a British statesman who served as Viceroy of India and as Foreign Secretary. His first wife was an American, Mary Victoria Leiter, the daughter of Levi Ziegler Leiter, a Chicago millionaire. (Together, with his friend Marshall Field, he founded the American store today known as Marshall Field). They had three daughters: Irene, Cynthia (first wife of British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley) and Alexandra (wife of Edward ‘Fruity’ Metcalfe, the best friend, best man and equerry of Edward VIII). He and Herbert Henry Asquith were long-time friends having met when they were both boys at Eton.

Freda Dudley-Ward: 1894-1983

Freda Dudley-Ward, née Birkin, met Edward, Prince of Wales in 1918, and began a relationship with him which was to last for sixteen years. Even during his love affair with Thelma, Lady Furness, his attachment to Freda remained the same. Only when he fell in love with Wallis Simpson did he break off all contact with her. In 1931, Freda divorced her husband, The Right Honourable William Dudley Ward, a Liberal Member of Parliament, and in 1937 married Pedro Jose Isidro Manuel Ricardo Mones, Marquess de Casa Maury. That marriage, too, ended in divorce.

Thelma Furness: 1904-1970

Born in Lucerne, Switzerland, Thelma was the daughter of Harry Hays Morgan, an American diplomat who was U.S. consul in Buenos Aires and in Brussels, and his half-Chilean, half Irish-American wife, Laura Delphine Kilpatrick. Marmaduke Furness, 1st Viscount Furness, was her second husband. They were married in 1926 and divorced in 1933. From 1929 until the beginning of 1934, she was the mistress of Edward, Prince of Wales. In January 1934, she left England to visit her sister Gloria in America. When she returned it was to find that the friend she had earlier introduced to the Prince, Wallis Simpson, had supplanted her in his affections.

Sir Miles Lampson: 1880-1964

Miles Wederburn Lampson, 1st Baron Killearn, was educated at Eton and entered the Foreign Office in 1903. In 1934, he succeeded Sir Percy Loraine as British High Commissioner in Egypt. From 1936-1946, he was British Ambassador to Egypt and High Commissioner for the Sudan. Widowed in 1930, his second wife, Jacqueline Castellani, was Italian. (Which gave rise to Farouk’s famous riposte when asked by

Lampson to get rid of the Italians he surrounded himself with at court – and who were suspected of being spies, “When you get rid of your Italian,” he said to the British Ambassador, “I’ll get rid of mine!”).

Sir Percy Loraine: 1880-1961

Sir Percy Lyham Loraine, 12th Baronet, was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford. He joined the Foreign Office in 1904 and in 1920, joined Lord Curzon’s personnel staff. From 1929-1933, he was the British High Commissioner in Egypt.

Alexandra (Baba) Metcalfe: 1904-1995

Alexandra was the third daughter of Lord Curzon. In 1925, she married Fruity Metcalfe, friend and equerry to Edward, Prince of Wales. Her sister, Cynthia (Cimmie) was married to the fascist leader, Sir Oswald Mosley and after Cimmie’s early death in 1933, Baba embarked on a passionate affair with him. In 1937 when, after abdicating, Edward married Wallis, Baba and Fruity were two of the handful of guests present at the ceremony. The turbulent Metcalfe marriage finally ended in divorce in 1952.

‘Fruity’ Metcalfe: 1887-1957

Fruity met the Prince of Wales when he was serving as an army officer in India and the Prince was there on a royal tour. From that point on he became Edward’s closest male friend and was Edward’s best man when, at the Château de Candé, France, Edward gained his heart’s desire and married Wallis.

Sir Oswald Mosley: 1896-1980

Always known as ‘Tom’ to family and friends, during World War 1 he fought on the Western Front. After the war he became a Conservative Member of Parliament. In May 1920, at a wedding attended by King George V and Queen Mary, he married Lord Curzon’s second daughter, Lady Cynthia (Cimmie). Though Cimmie loved him deeply, Mosley was incapable of marital fidelity. He was also incapable of political fidelity, leaving the Conservatives and, in 1924, joining the Labour Party. Given responsibility for solving the grave unemployment crisis he drafted a plan of radical proposals only to have them rejected by the Cabinet. He then resigned his parliamentary seat and formed a political party of his own, the New Party. In 1932 he united existing fascist movements and created the British Union of Fascists, his meetings and rallies growing ever more violent. In 1936, in the Berlin home of Josef Goebbels and with Hitler as one of the guests, he married Diana Guinness, née Mitford. During World War II, both were interned. After the war the Mosleys moved to France.

Sir John Simon: 1873-1954

Sir John Simon was a successful lawyer and entered Parliament in 1906 as a Liberal Member of Parliament. In 1910, he entered Mr Asquith’s Government as Solicitor General. In 1915, he became Home Secretary. Later he served as Foreign Secretary.

Wallis Simpson: 1895-1986

Bessie Wallis Warfield was born at Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. Her pedigree was aristocratic. The Warfields had long been prominent in the political and business life of Maryland, while her mother, Alice Montague, hailed from an old Virginia line. Each family produced a governor of its

respective state. In the Baltimore social season of 1914-15 Wallis, (she dropped the 'Bessie' early on), was brought out as a debutante. A few months later she met flying officer, E. Winfield Spencer, Jr. They married in November, 1916. The marriage was a violent one and in 1927, (after long periods of separation, some of which Wallis spent in China), ended in divorce.

In 1928, she married Ernest Aldrich Simpson, a half-English, half-American shipping executive. They set up house in Marylebone, London. Via a friend, Consuelo Thaw, Wallis met Consuelo's sister Thelma, Lady Furness, the then-mistress of Edward, Prince of Wales. On 10th January 1931 Wallis was introduced to the Prince. By 1933, Thelma was the ex-mistress and Wallis was Edward's constant companion. By 1935 he was so in love with her that he couldn't envisage a life without her. On 20th January 1936, King George V died and Edward ascended the throne as Edward VIII.

The King of the United Kingdom is Supreme Governor of the Church of England – and at that time the Church of England did not permit the re-marriage of divorced people with living ex-spouses. The constitutional position was that Edward could not marry Wallis and remain King.

Wallis was granted a decree nisi from her second husband on October 27, 1936. By early December, with all his attempts to remain King and to do so with Wallis as his Queen-Consort having failed, Edward abdicated, giving up the greatest throne in the world in order that he could marry the woman he loved. He then took the title Duke of Windsor and the Windsor marriage lasted lifelong.

King George V: 1865-1936

George became King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions; Emperor of India, in 1910 after the death of his father, Edward VII. During World War 1 he changed the German name of the British royal house from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to the name Windsor in order to appease British nationalist feelings. In 1893, he married Princess Victoria Mary of Teck. They had five sons and one daughter: Prince Edward, born 1894; Prince Albert, born 1895, Princess Mary, born 1897, Prince Henry, born 1900, Prince George, born 1902, and Prince John, born 1905, (and who died at the age of 13). He was rigid in his habits and a martinet when it came to the upbringing of his children. He disliked society and disapproved heartily of his eldest son's enjoyment of high society life. He never reconciled himself to Edward's affair with the married, (and previously divorced) Wallis Simpson. His expressed opinion was that Edward's brother, Prince Albert, (Bertie), would make a far better future king.

Queen Mary: 1867-1953

By birth she was a Princess of Teck, but her mother was English, (a first cousin to Queen Victoria) and she was born and brought up in Kensington Palace, London. Well-educated and serious minded she was cold and stiff in manner and an aloof and distant mother.

Prince Edward, Prince of Wales: 1894-1972

Edward's full name was Edward Albert George Andrew Patrick David – but he was known to his family and close friends by his last given name, David. His childhood was bleak in that neither of his parents was capable of showing affection either to him, or to his brothers and his sister. As an adult he sought the love he had been

deprived of in childhood in relationships with married women. For 16 years the most important woman in his life was Freda Dudley Ward. Then, for a shorter length of time, he had an affair with Lady Furness (born Thelma Morgan) an American. It was via Thelma that he met Wallis Simpson, the divorced American for whom, shortly after becoming king in 1936, he gave up his throne. After abdicating he was given the title Duke of Windsor. The Windsors made their home in France, becoming leading socialites, regularly visiting America, a country Edward greatly admired.

King Fuad: 1868-1936

Fuad was the Sultan and later King of Egypt and Sudan, Sovereign of Nubia, Kordofan and Darfur. His first marriage was to Princess Shevakier, his cousin. The couple divorced and Fuad's second wife, Princess Nazli, was the mother of his son and heir, Prince Farouk. Throughout his reign he struggled with the Wafd's party desire to free Egypt from British control.

Prince Farouk, later King Farouk: 1920-1965

Farouk became king in 1936, at the age of 16. In 1938, he married Safinaz Zulficar, who was renamed Farida upon her marriage. (Farouk, who was grossly promiscuous, divorced her in 1948.) In 1951, Farouk married Nariman Sadek. (This marriage also ended in divorce). During World War II, due to the continuing British occupation of Egypt, Farouk remained favorably disposed towards Germany and Italy and Egypt remained officially neutral until the final year of the war.

His corrupt and ineffectual rule came to an end in 1952 when the Free Officers Movement, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, staged a military coup and he was forced to abdicate. In 1953, Egypt was declared a republic. Farouk lived out his years of exile in Italy and Monaco and, after a typically heavy meal, died in the Ile de France restaurant, Rome.

Princess Shevakier: 1876-1947

Princess Shevakier was King Fuad of Egypt's cousin and first wife. After their divorce in 1898, she became the most lavish hostess in Cairo. Farouk, when King, often attended parties at the home of his father's ex-wife. A great friend of the British, Princess Shevakier's war-time Charity Balls were attended by everyone who was anyone.

Anwar El Sadat: 1918-1981

Anwar El Sadat's father was Egyptian, his mother Sudanese. In 1938, he graduated from the Royal Military Academy in Cairo, entering the army as a second lieutenant in the Signals Corps. Together, he and Nasser, with several other junior officers, formed the secret Free Officers Movement which was committed to freeing Egypt from British domination and royal corruption. Sadat took a leading part in the military coup that launched the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. King Farouk was sent into exile and the last remnants of British Occupation were brought to an end. In 1964, after holding many positions in the Egyptian government he was chosen to be vice president by President Nasser. After Nasser's death in 1970, Sadat succeeded him. In October 1981, he was assassinated by Muslim extremists.

Gamal Abdel Nasser: 1918-1970

Gamal Abdel Nasser was born in Alexandria and attended school there. In 1937, he was admitted to the Royal Military Academy in Cairo. Together with Anwar El Sadat he formed the Free Officers Movement, a movement within the Egyptian army dedicated to ending the British occupation of Egypt, and of freeing Egypt from King Farouk's corrupt and ineffective reign. In 1952, they succeeded in both aims. From now on, for the first time since the Persian conquest of 525B.C., Egypt was again ruled entirely by Egyptians. Nasser became President in 1954, remaining president until his death.