

*Queen Victoria: The woman who
redefined Britain's monarchy*

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A headstrong head of state

Queen Victoria restored the reputation of a monarchy, shaped a new role for the Royal Family. Victoria was a towering presence as a symbol of her Empire. She and her husband Albert and their children came to symbolize a new age.



A queen in waiting (24 May 1819)

Alexandrina Victoria was born to the Duchess of Kent, she was fifth in line to the throne. Victoria was raised by her governess Baroness Lehzen at Kensington Palace.



A controlled childhood (1820 -1837)

Victoria became heir to her final surviving uncle King William IV. Victoria's youth was dominated by strict rules known as the 'Kensington System' (sharing a room with her mother and having no time alone). She started writing a diary.



Victoria becomes Queen (20 June 1837)

Victoria succeeded her uncle William IV, just weeks after her 18th birthday. Her first request was an hour alone. Victoria moved to Buckingham Palace. She became the richest woman in the world.



A slightly chaotic coronation (28 June 1838)

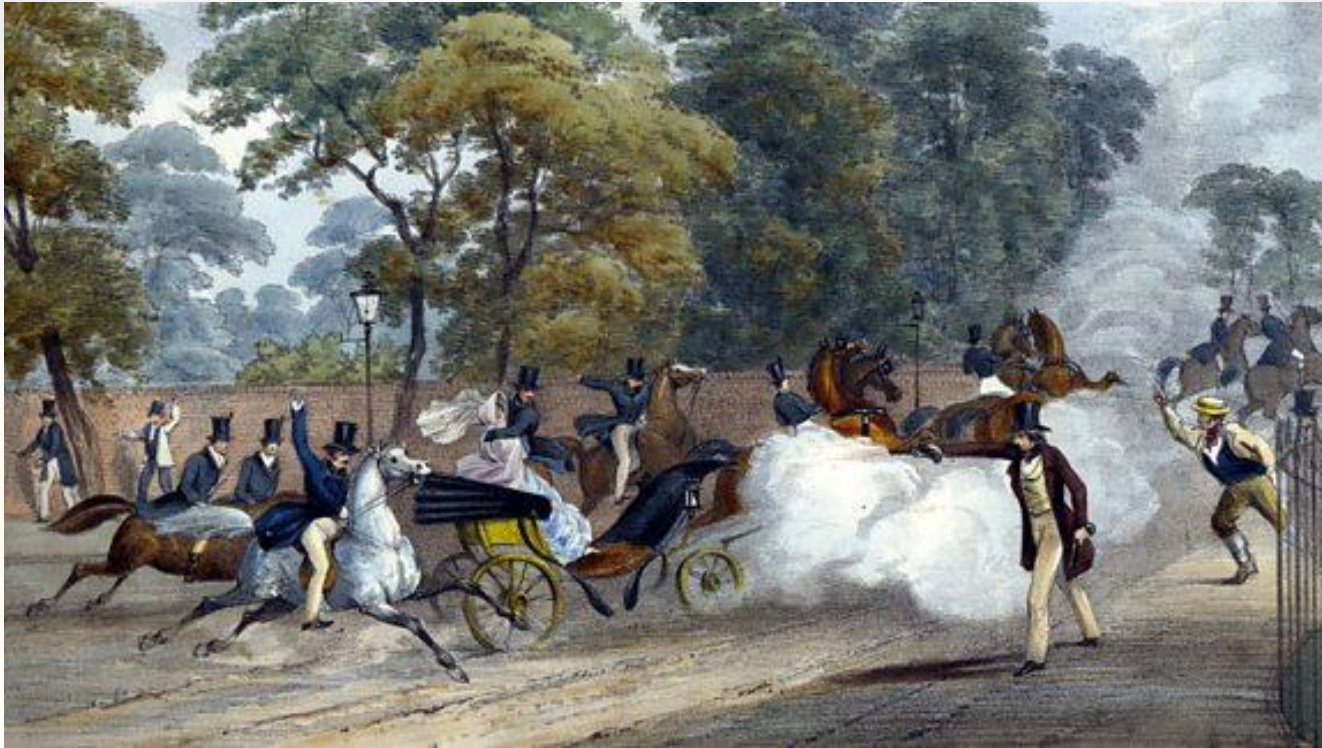
She was crowned in Westminster Abbey. She wore robes of white satin and red velvet. The Archbishop of Canterbury forced a ring on the wrong finger, which took her an hour to remove.



A royal white wedding (10 February 1840)

Victoria fell in love with her first cousin Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. The couple were married the following year. Victoria wore a large white wedding dress and had a tiered wedding cake. The relationship was a passionate one, Victoria often lost her temper with her new husband.





Victoria survives an assassination attempt (10 June 1840)

The Queen was the target of eight attempts to kill. All of the Queen's assailants worked alone and were judged to have mental health conditions.

A new royal family (21 November 1840)

Victoria fell pregnant soon after her wedding and gave birth to her daughter Victoria nine months later. The Queen hated childbirth and suffered postnatal depression. Although she had nine children with Albert over 16 years.





Love affair with Scotland (1842)

The couple bought Balmoral in Scotland. Albert supervised the building of a new neo-Gothic castle for the family. It remains a private residence for the Royal Family today. Victoria promoted the monarchy in Scotland through frequent visits.

A new parliamentary tradition (3 February 1852)

The Queen began new royal traditions when she attended the first State Opening of Parliament in the new Palace of Westminster. The Queen arrived in the Irish State Coach. The protocols and traditions established then have been followed by every British monarch since.



Victoria and Albert redefine what it means to be Queen
(7 September 1858)

Victoria created a newly visible constitutional monarchy to stem a growing republican movement in Britain. Victoria became patron of 150 institutions, while Albert supported the development of educational museums.





The Victoria Cross (29 January 1856)

The Victoria Cross was introduced by Queen Victoria to honour acts of great bravery during the Crimean War. It was awarded on merit instead of rank. The Queen was suspected of secretly supporting the Russian Tsar. She awarded the first Victoria Crosses personally to 62 men at a ceremony at Hyde Park in 1857.

*Royal photographs sold to
the public (1860)*

A set of 14 photos, known as Carte de Visites, was created of the Royal Family. . It marked the beginning of photographic celebrity culture. Women tried to replicate Victoria's fashions while some men copied Albert's hairstyle and moustache.



The death of Albert (14 December 1861)

Prince Albert died at the age of 42. The Queen was inconsolable with grief and wore mourning for the rest of her life. Victoria withdrew from public life after Albert's death, but kept up with her correspondence and continued to give audiences to ministers and official visitors. She decreed that monuments to honour Albert should be built across the country and Empire.



Victoria returns to the public eye (February 1871)

The Queen was frantic with worry after her son and heir Edward fell ill with typhoid. It came a year after the founding of the French Third Republic, which had provoked anti-monarchist feeling in Britain. When Edward recovered, the Queen used an orchestrated event to boost royal support.



The Queen who became an Empress (2 January 1877)

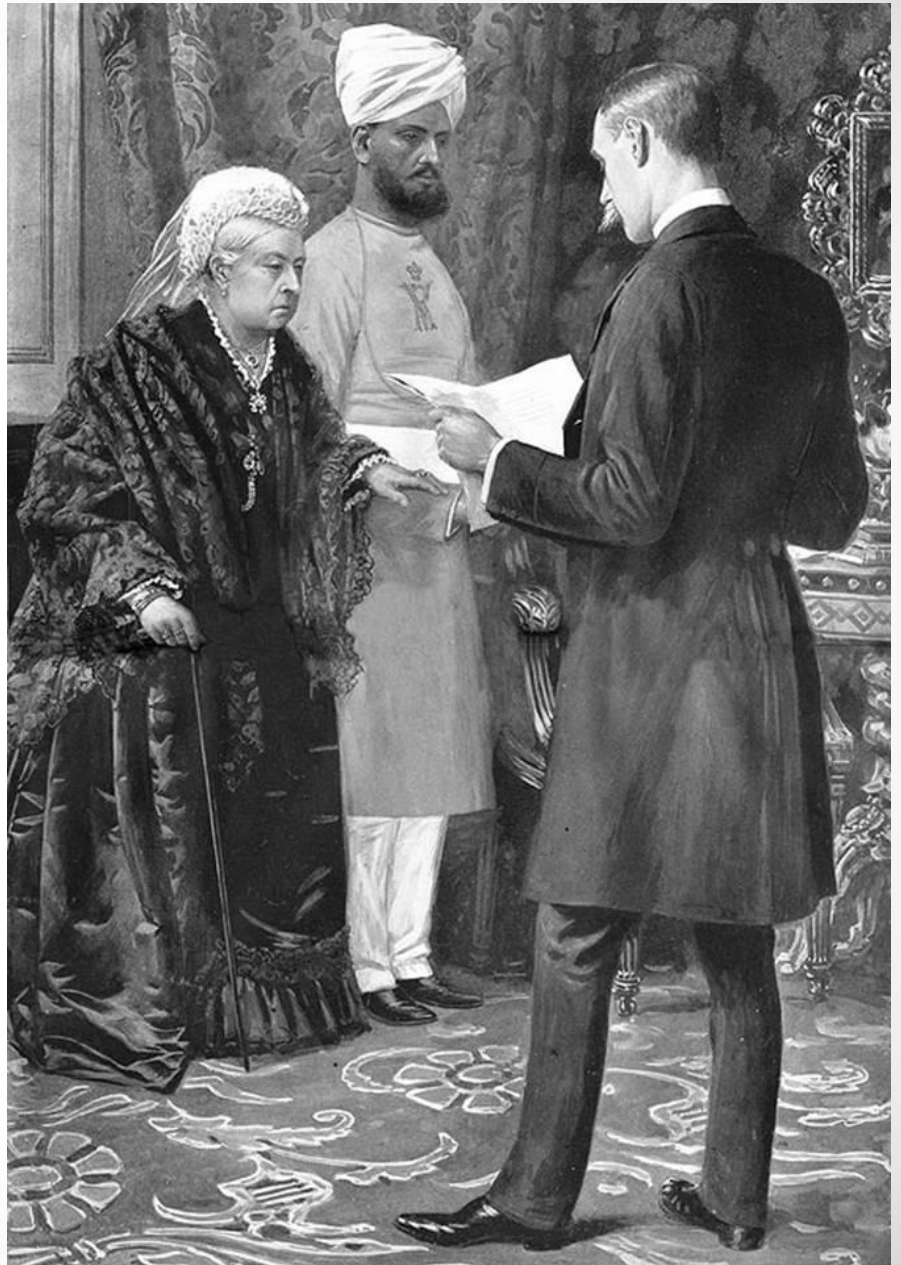
Victoria became the Empress of India to tie the monarchy and Empire closer together.

She accepted the title on the advice of her seventh prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, whose political advice she relied on. Her popularity in Britain soared as she became a symbol of empire towards the end of her reign.



A new favourite from India
(June 1887)

The Queen received Indian servants to mark her Golden Jubilee year. She promoted one, Abdul Karim, to become her personal teacher or 'Munshi'. Karim instructed Victoria in Urdu and Indian affairs and introduced her to curry. He was just 24 but Victoria was fascinated by India, the country she ruled but would never visit.



The Golden Jubilee defines 'brand Victoria' (20 June 1887)

Victoria's Jubilee bolstered her reputation. . Soldiers from the British Empire marched in processions through London. Victoria held a feast, attended by 50 foreign kings and princes, along with the governing heads of Britain's overseas colonies and dominions.



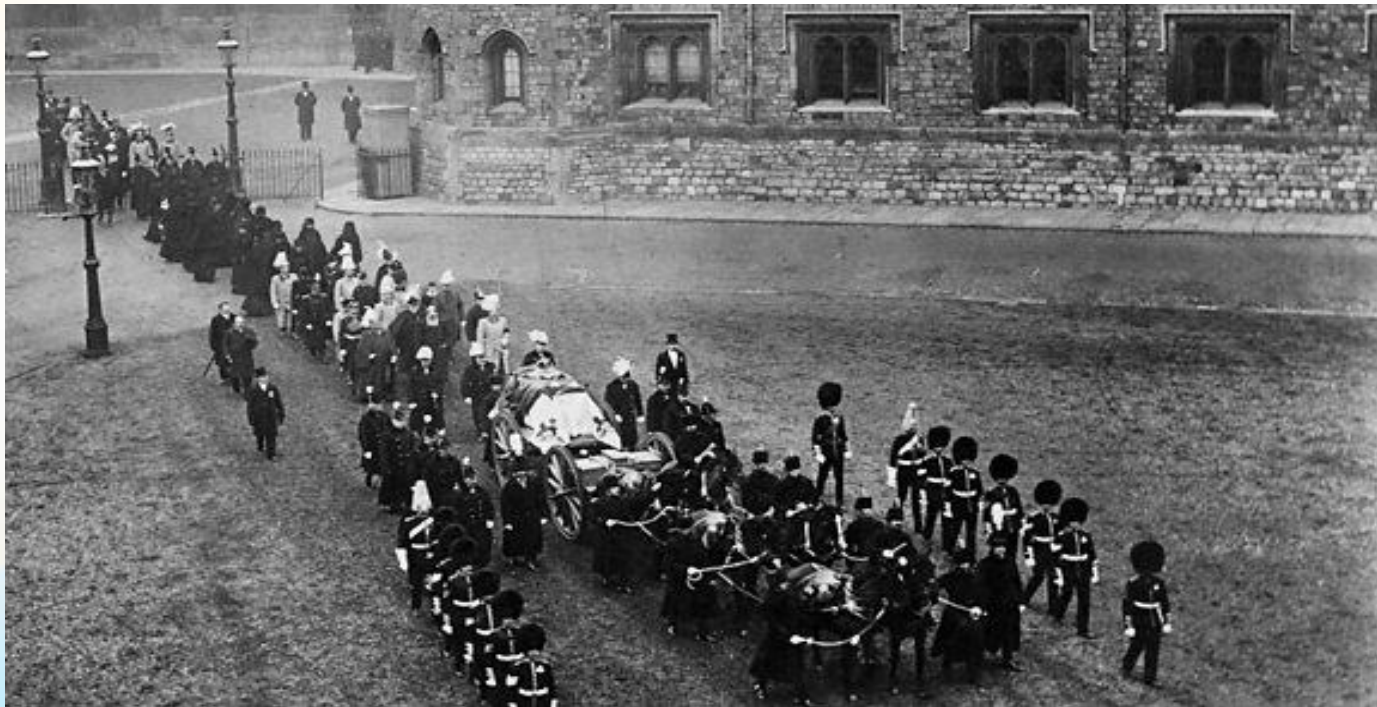
*The Diamond Jubilee
celebrates Empire (22 June
1897)*

A day of global celebrations was planned for Victoria. The elderly Queen presided over a number of events though her mobility was limited. Victoria embraced technology by sending a telegram thanking her subjects across the empire.



The end of the Victorian age (2 January 1901)

Victoria died after weeks of ill health. The Queen ruled over an Empire that covered a quarter of the globe with 400 million subjects, but she never forgot the men who supported her. She was an indomitable monarch who, even at the end, was adept at getting her own way.



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