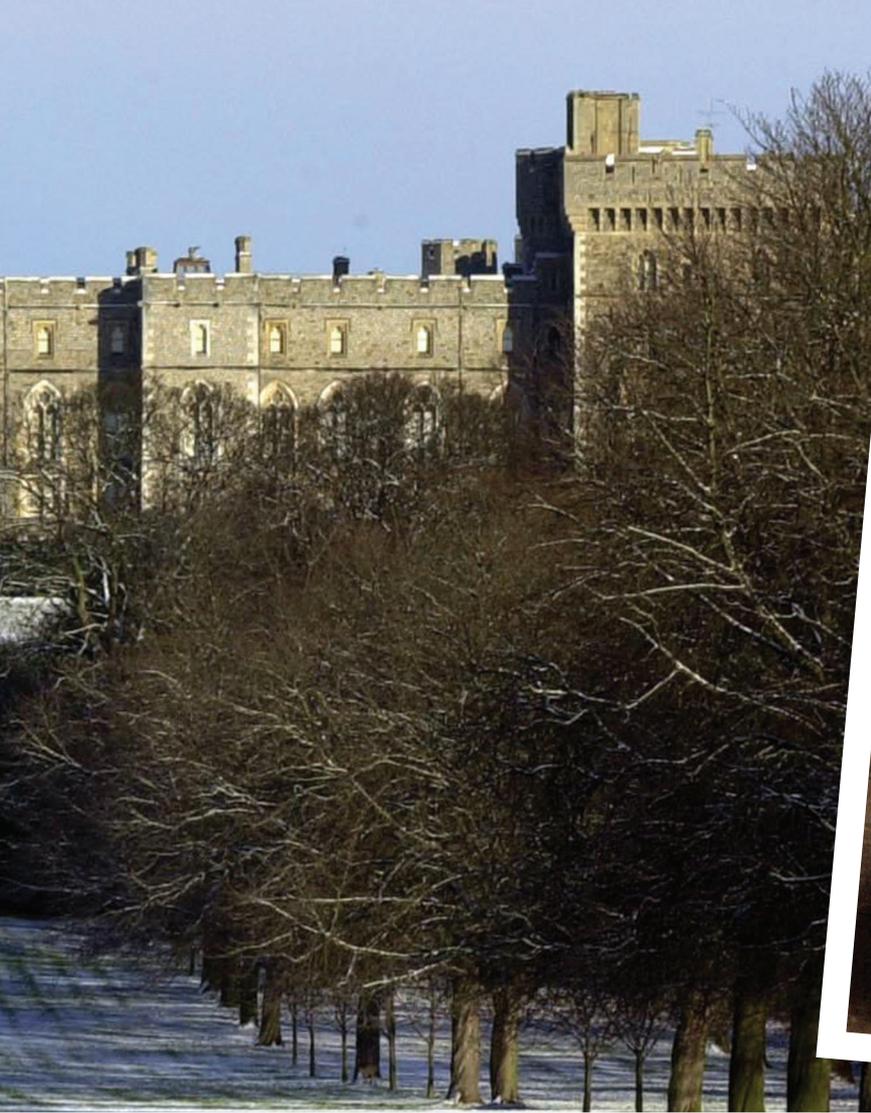




Royal Honeymoons: *From Victoria to today*

Where they went, what they did, what to expect: we explore the history of some of the most iconic royal honeymoons of all time

Words by Sarah Dawson



ABOVE Windsor Castle where the historic proposal was made

RIGHT Victoria proposed to Albert not vice versa, as she was the Queen



The first holiday as newlyweds is very special for any couple – the royals being no exception. It’s hard to imagine a time when the bride and groom didn’t celebrate their marriage with a romantic honeymoon, but it wasn’t always this way. “The term ‘honeymoon’ dates from the 16th century and referred to what was perceived as the sweetest time of the marriage – the first month, when the couple spent a lot of time together,” explains royal historian and author of *Raising Royalty: 100 Years of Royal Parenting*, Carolyn Harris. “In the early 19th century, wealthy British couples began travelling during their honeymoon – at first to visit friends and family who were unable to attend the wedding, but later on these holidays became more like the tradition of honeymooning we know today.”

QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE ALBERT

It’s no secret that the young Queen Victoria was head over heels in love with her Prince, but even so, this didn’t stop her from putting her royal duties ahead of her new husband when it came to their honeymoon. Despite Prince Albert’s desire to enjoy a two-week honeymoon, Queen Victoria’s sense of duty was so strong that she refused, insisting she was too busy. In a letter written to the Prince she explained, “*Dear Albert, You forget, my dearest Love, that I am the Sovereign, and that business can stop and wait for nothing.*” After their wedding in 1840,

they ended up taking just a three-day honeymoon at Windsor Castle, spending their time together reading, walking and riding – as well as raising a few eyebrows with numerous impromptu dinner parties and balls!

The term ‘honeymoon’ dates from the 16th century and referred to what was perceived as the sweetest time of the marriage

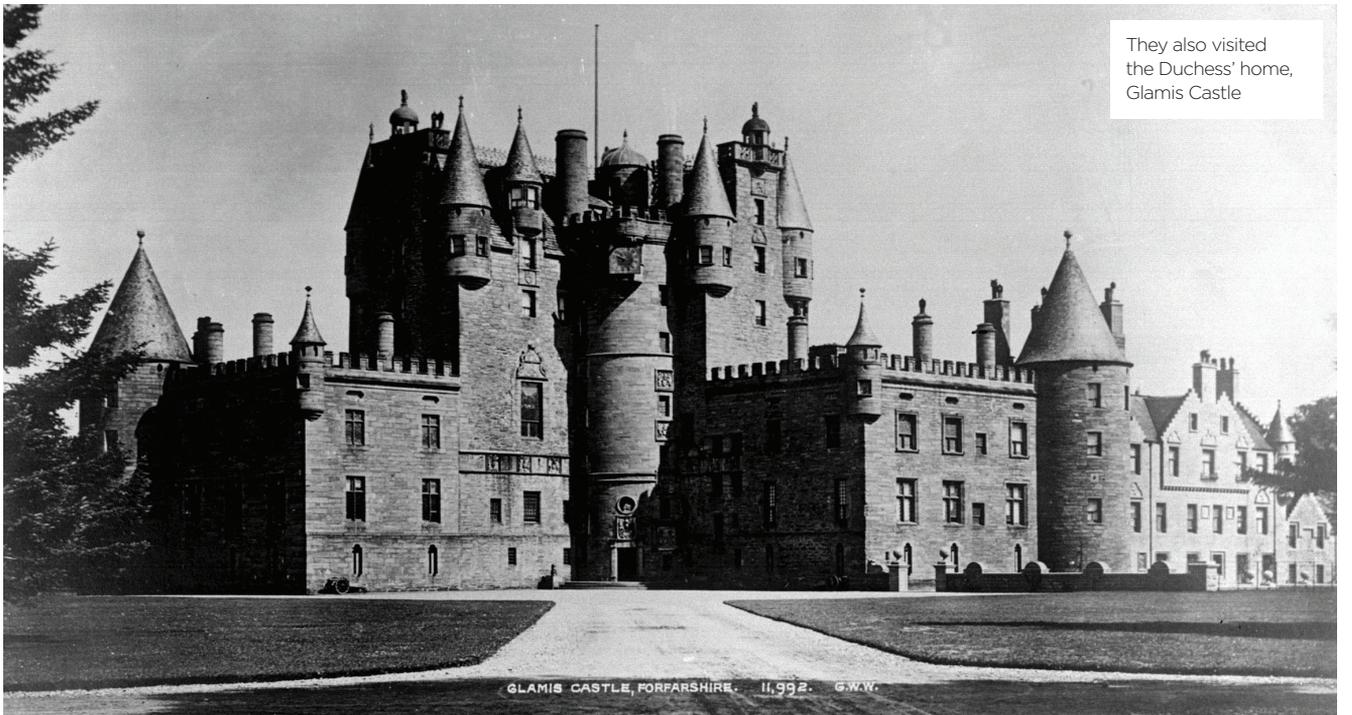
Carolyn Harris

DUKE OF YORK AND LADY ELIZABETH BOWES-LYON

Before taking the throne as King George VI, the couple were married as the Duke and Duchess of York in 1923. Following the wedding, they headed off on honeymoon to Polesden Lacey, a beautiful country manor house in Surrey. Owned by their friend, aristocratic socialite Margaret Greville, the house was striking, with sumptuous interiors designed by architects who worked on iconic London hotel, The Ritz. The happy couple enjoyed a break from duties, playing golf and tennis ▶



A quiet moment for the Duke and Duchess of York at Polesden Lacey



They also visited the Duchess' home, Glamis Castle

GLAMIS CASTLE, FORFARSHIRE. 11,992. G.W.W.



as well as taking walks in the countryside. They later visited the bride's home, Glamis Castle in Scotland, to spend time with friends and family, but it wasn't the perfect trip they were hoping for. Victoria Howard, founder and editor of *The Crown Chronicles* (thecrownchronicles.co.uk), explains, "It was at Glamis Castle where the Duchess of York caught whooping cough, something she later described as 'not very romantic!'"

PRINCESS ELIZABETH AND LIEUTENANT PHILIP MOUNTBATTEN

The future Queen and Prince Philip married in 1947, before setting off on honeymoon. The couple chose places that were close to their hearts as their honeymoon destinations. The first stop was

Broadlands in Hampshire, the Mountbatten family home, where they were accompanied by a surprise guest – Susan the corgi. A royal courtier had secretly smuggled Princess Elizabeth's favourite pet dog into their train carriage, something she was reportedly thrilled about! For three days, the newlyweds slept in a beautiful 18th-century lodge surrounded by woodland, and passed the time stalking deer, as well as taking Susan on long walks.

The second part of their honeymoon was spent at Prince Elizabeth's childhood home, Birkhall – part of the Balmoral estate in Scotland. Birkhall has remained a big part of the royals' life, with Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall choosing to honeymoon there in 2005. The Queen and Prince Philip also spent a few days on the

ABOVE Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip en route to Waterloo Station for the train journey to Broadlands, Romsey

BELOW The first public appearance of the happy couple on their honeymoon





Happy smiles on the Royal Yacht Britannia



Charles and Diana at Craigowan

Mediterranean island of Malta in 2007, where they took an unofficial ‘second honeymoon’ to celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary. The island has always been special to them, as they spent some of their happiest years as a young couple there, before the then-Princess Elizabeth took to the throne.

PRINCE CHARLES AND DIANA

After one of the most unforgettable weddings in history, came an equally impressive honeymoon. Prince Charles and Diana celebrated the start of married life in 1981 with a staggering three-month-long honeymoon. First the couple spent three days at Broadlands, like Prince Charles’ parents did over 30 years earlier. Here they enjoyed strolling around the grounds, intimate dinners and – rumour has it – they even watched a video of their own wedding day, which had been rushed over by special messenger.

The couple then flew to Gibraltar to embark on a private 11-day cruise around the Med on the Royal Yacht Britannia. After being waved off by a crowd of over 30,000 well-wishers, the couple set sail, visiting countries including Tunisia, Sardinia, Greece and Egypt. Rather than following a set route, Prince Charles and Diana made plans daily as to what to do and where to go, something that was thought of as very casual for a Royal honeymoon, but afforded them the chance to get away from the paparazzi desperate for photos.

After this relaxing cruise, they flew back to Scotland, to the royals’ beloved Balmoral Castle, where the rest of the royal family had gathered. Prince Charles and Diana had a bit of privacy, staying in Craigowan, a hunting lodge on the Royal Estate, and spent the rest of their honeymoon exploring the countryside. It was also here that the press took official photos of the royal newlyweds.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's honeymoon was different in that they had a 'normal' one

Victoria Howard

PRINCE WILLIAM AND CATHERINE

If ever there was a honeymoon that broke with traditional British royal protocol, it was that of Prince William and his new bride, Catherine. "The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's honeymoon was different in that they had a 'normal' one," says Victoria Howard. "They went somewhere hot and sunny for two weeks, to enjoy their status as a married couple." As Prince William had to request time off from his Royal Air Force duties, the couple had to postpone their honeymoon slightly – finally jetting off on their 10-day honeymoon to the Seychelles' North Island, over a week after their iconic wedding day. The newlyweds honeymooned in true luxury, in one of the most remote £5,000-a-night villas on the island. With their own freshwater pool, private garden, outdoor yoga pavilion, personal chef and butler, it was everything the young royals could dream of.

During their stay, Prince William and Catherine saw new-born turtles hatch on the beach and swam



with sharks and stingrays on a scuba dive. With just 11 villas on the island and guests arriving by helicopter, it's no surprise North Island attracts A-list celebrities like Brad Pitt and George Clooney.

But despite all of this, their honeymoon wasn't as private as they hoped: "Despite travelling to a secluded island, photographs of the couple on the beach appeared in an Australian magazine, leaving the couple feeling understandably 'upset and betrayed,'" reveals Carolyn Harris. ▶

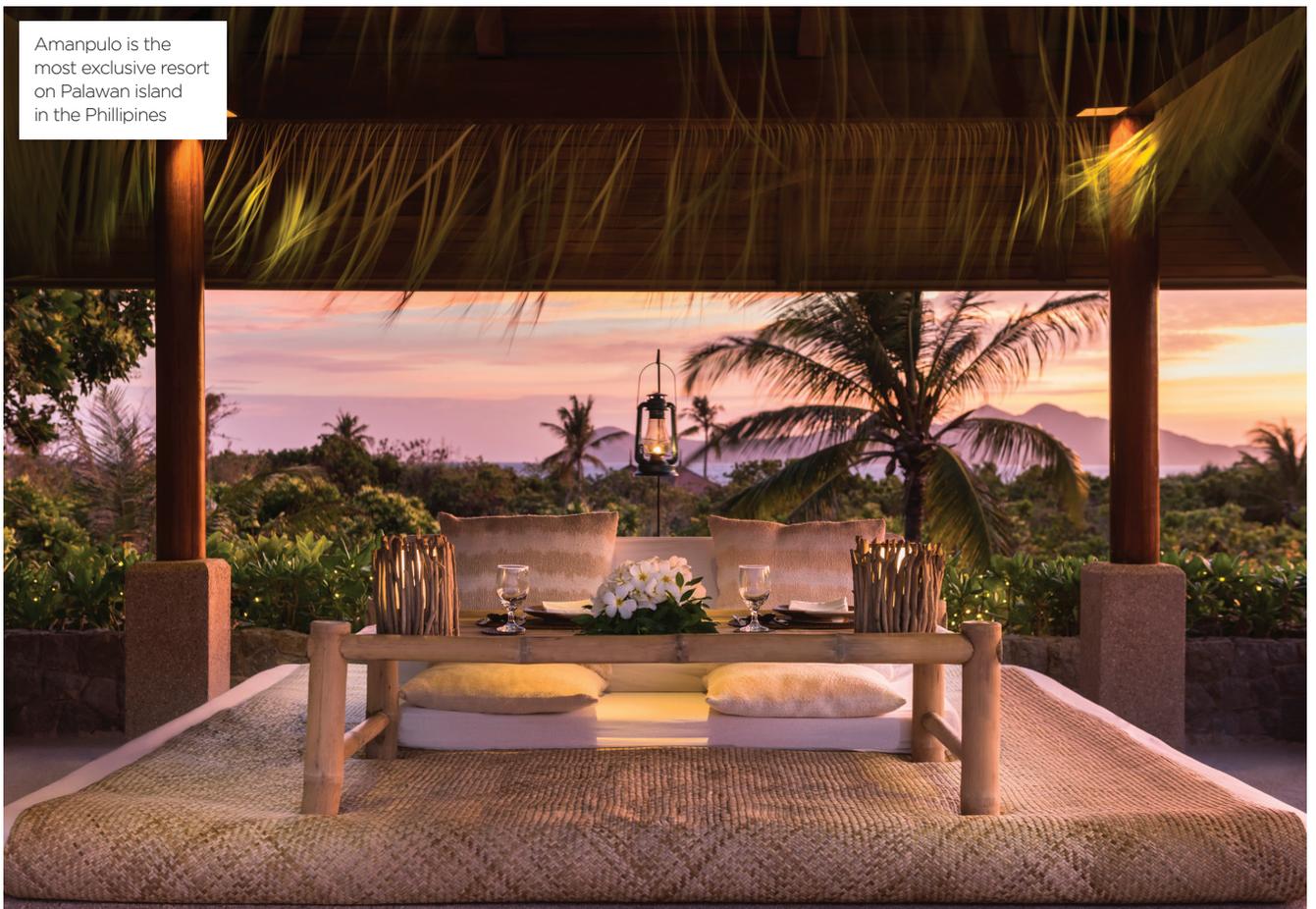
ABOVE The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge wanted somewhere hot and sunny

BELOW They spent 10 days on Seychelles' secluded North Island





Beautiful vistas greeted Catherine and William in the Seychelles



Amanpulo is the most exclusive resort on Palawan island in the Philippines



Looking ahead...

Prince Harry and Meghan

ABOVE Harry visited Nevis in the Caribbean with his mother

BELOW Privacy and luxury on the Duba Plains Private Reserve in Botswana

With passports full of stamps from exotic locations, there's a lot of speculation as to where this well-travelled couple will choose for their honeymoon. Africa is a continent that means a lot to both of them, so could this be the setting for the year's most anticipated honeymoon? "Botswana, where the couple spent time getting to know one another before their engagement, seems an obvious choice," says Victoria Howard. "It's very secluded, which is what they will want after the wonderful, but press-centred, chaos that their wedding will bring." Prince Harry and Meghan have holidayed

at Meno a Kwena, and the diamond from Meghan's engagement ring was sourced from the country, so it's a strong contender. The Duba Plains Suite on the Duba Plains Private Reserve in northern Botswana, offers the privacy and luxury that the couple will no doubt be searching for.

Another possible destination is Palawan, named the 'Best Island in The World' in the *Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards*. This tropical island paradise in the Philippines was mentioned as being on Meghan's holiday wish list on *The Tig's* (her now-closed lifestyle blog) Instagram page. Ringed by a white-sand beach and coral reefs in the Sulu Sea, Amanpulo is the most exclusive resort on the island and would suit the stylish couple down to the ground.

Finally, the rumour mill has been going into overdrive that the Prince and Meghan's honeymoon will be on Nevis, a small island in the Caribbean that Prince Harry visited with his mother, Princess Diana, in 1993. Perhaps this will be where the happy newlyweds will start their new chapter: the perfect way to include his beloved mother in the celebrations. One thing's for sure, wherever they decide to honeymoon, it will be beautiful, stylish – and top secret! 

