

Royal Weddings through History

From simple weddings to expensive ceremonies watched by millions, here are some of the most talked-about royal weddings in history.

King Henry VIII and His Six Wives

Let's start with The King who had six royal weddings: King Henry VIII. Henry VIII married his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in 1509 after she had already been married to his brother, Arthur. Their wedding was a small event; there were not many people invited and didn't cost much money.

King Henry VIII married his second wife, Anne Boleyn, in secret. It was kept secret for months. Henry then married his third wife, Jane Seymour, less than two weeks after Anne had died. After Jane's death one year later, Henry chose to marry his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, based on a painting of her that he had seen. He quickly changed his mind and they were only married for six months. Henry married his fifth wife when he was almost 50 years old. However, he quickly moved on and married his sixth and final wife, Katherine Parr, only three years later.



Superstition would have been important at each of these Tudor weddings. The brides would have worn a **veil**. This is because the Tudors believed that it would disguise her face from any evil spirits. All the men at the wedding would wear the same clothing. This was in the hope that spirits would not know who the groom was. Nobody in the wedding party would wear green because it was thought to be an unlucky colour.

King Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson

King Edward VIII is the only ruler in British history to give up the throne so that he could marry the person he loved. The Royal Family and the British government at the time did not want Edward to marry Wallis Simpson because she had already been married before. After being King for less than one year, Edward gave up the throne in 1936. He got married to Wallis in a private ceremony in France.



A Royal Tradition: Welsh Gold

In 1923, King George VI married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. The happy couple gave each other rings made from Welsh gold. Since then, lots of members of the Royal Family have given each other rings made from Welsh gold, including The Queen and Prince Charles. People think that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will do the same at their wedding.



Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer

The wedding of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, is said to be the most expensive British royal wedding in history. It is said to have cost around £35 million. The happy couple married in 1981 at St Paul's Cathedral in London. Kings, queens and leaders from across the world went to the wedding and there were over 3500 people inside the church. 600,000 people stood outside on the streets of London and 750 million people watched the wedding on TV.



A Royal Tradition: The Lord Chamberlain

The Lord Chamberlain's Office is responsible for organising Royal Weddings. They have been doing this since 1399. They write the guest list and the seating plan for the wedding, which is not an easy thing to do with over 2000 people invited. The current Lord Chamberlain is called The Earl Peel. He organised the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and is currently doing the same for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.



Glossary

superstition: The belief that certain actions lead to good or bad luck, with no evidence to support this.

veil: A thin piece of material which brides wear in front of their face.

Questions

1. Who had Catherine of Aragon been married to before she married King Henry VIII?
Tick one.

- King Edward VIII's brother
- King Henry VIII's brother
- Anne Boleyn's father
- Prince Charles's brother

2. How many people watched the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, on television? Tick one.

- 3500
- 600,000
- 35 million
- 750 million

3. In which year did King Henry VIII marry his first wife?

4. Find and copy a word or phrase from the text which shows that King Edward VIII's wedding to Wallis Simpson was a small event.

5. Fill in the missing words:

In 1923, _____ married _____. The happy couple gave each other rings made from _____.

6. Explain why Tudor brides would not wear green.

7. Discuss why the Lord Chamberlain's job is difficult.

8. What do you think that Prince Harry's wedding ring will be made from? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Who had Catherine of Aragon been married to before she married King Henry VIII?
Tick one.

- King Edward VIII's brother
- King Henry VIII's brother**
- Anne Boleyn's father
- Prince Charles's brother

2. How many people watched the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, on television? Tick one.

- 3500
- 600,000
- 35 million
- 750 million**

3. In which year did King Henry VIII marry his first wife?

King Henry VIII married his first wife in 1509.

4. Find and copy a word or phrase from the text which shows that King Edward VIII's wedding to Wallis Simpson was a small event.

private ceremony

5. Fill in the missing words:

In 1923, **King George VI** married **Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon**. The happy couple gave each other rings made from **Welsh gold**.

6. Explain why Tudor brides would not wear green.

Tudor brides would not wear green because it was thought to be an unlucky colour.

7. Discuss why the Lord Chamberlain's job is difficult.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Lord Chamberlain's job is difficult because he has to write the guest list and seating plan for royal weddings which have more than 2000 guests.

8. What do you think that Prince Harry's wedding ring will be made from? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Prince Harry's wedding ring will be made from Welsh gold because it is a royal tradition.

Royal Weddings through History

From simple occasions to extravagant ceremonies enjoyed by millions, here are some of the most talked-about royal weddings in history and some ancient royal traditions which still continue today.

King Henry VIII and His Six Wives

When talking about royal weddings, it would be impossible to ignore the **monarch** who had six of them: King Henry VIII. Henry VIII married his first wife, Catherine of Aragon in 1509, yet she had already been married to his brother, Arthur, before him. Their wedding was low-key, with few people invited and very little expense.

King Henry VIII married his third wife, Jane Seymour, less than two weeks after the death of his second wife, Anne Boleyn – whom he had married in secret. After Jane's untimely death one year later, Henry chose to marry his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, based on a painting of her that he had seen. He quickly changed his mind and the marriage only lasted for six months. Henry married his fifth wife when he was almost 50 years old but quickly moved on to marry his sixth and final wife, Katherine Parr, only three years later.

At each of these Tudor weddings, **superstition** would have been important. Each bride would have worn a veil. This is because the Tudors believed that it would disguise her face from evil spirits. Similarly, all males at the wedding ceremony would wear the same clothing. This was in the hope that spirits would not know who the groom was. Nobody in the wedding party would wear green; it was thought to be an unlucky colour.



King Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson

King Edward VIII is the only monarch in British history to choose to **abdicate** so that he could marry the lady he loved, Wallis Simpson. The Royal Family and the British government at the time did not want Edward to marry Wallis because she had already been married before. After being King for less than one year, Edward chose Wallis and abdicated the throne. They married in a private ceremony in France in 1937.

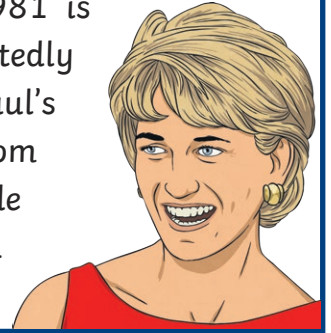


A Royal Tradition: Welsh Gold

In 1923, the future King George VI married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. At the ceremony, the happy couple exchanged rings made from Welsh gold. This gold was unearthed from ancient mines in the Welsh countryside. Since then, most members of the Royal Family have exchanged rings made from Welsh gold, including Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles and, most recently, Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge. It is thought that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will do the same at their wedding.

Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer

The wedding of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1981 is said to be the most expensive British royal wedding in history, reportedly costing approximately £35 million. The happy couple married at St Paul's Cathedral in London in front of royalty, leaders and notable figures from across the world. Over 3500 people watched the ceremony from inside the church, with over 600,000 people lining the streets of London and 750 million people around the world watching the event on TV.



A Royal Tradition: The Lord Chamberlain

The Lord Chamberlain's Office have been responsible for organising royal weddings since 1399. The Lord Chamberlain and his team are responsible for writing the guest list and arranging the seating plan for the ceremony, which is not a simple task with over 2000 to invite and seat! The current Lord Chamberlain, The Earl Peel, organised the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and is currently doing the same for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.



Glossary

abdicate: To give up being a king or queen and all of the responsibilities that come with it.

monarch: A king, queen or emperor; the only ruler of a place.

superstition: The belief that certain actions lead to good or bad luck, with no evidence to support this.

Questions

1. In which country is the gold for many royal wedding rings mined? Tick one.

- England
 Ireland
 Scotland
 Wales

2. Matching (drawing lines).

Wallis Simpson ●

Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon ●

Diana, Princess of Wales ●

● King George VI

● Prince Charles

● King Edward VIII

3. Find and copy a word from the text which shows that Jane Seymour's death was unusually early.

4. Which word from the text means to give up the throne?

5. Fill in the missing words:

_____ have been responsible for organising
 _____ since _____.

6. Explain why King Edward VIII is unique.

7. What was unusual about King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn's wedding?

8. Discuss one way that Tudor brides would try to avoid bad luck.

9. In 1923, the future King George VI married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

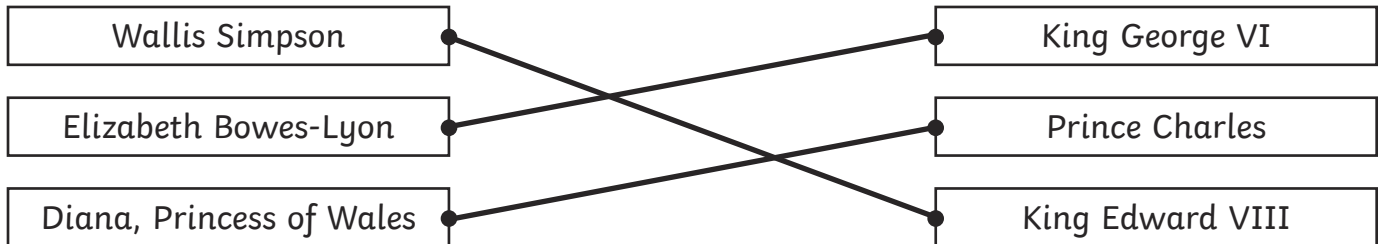
What does this phrase imply about King George VI?

Answers

1. In which country is the gold for many royal wedding rings mined? Tick one.

- England
- Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales**

2. Matching (drawing lines).



3. Find and copy a word from the text which shows that Jane Seymour's death was unusually early.

untimely

4. Which word from the text means to give up the throne?

abdicate

5. Fill in the missing words:

The Lord Chamberlain's Office have been responsible for organising **royal weddings** since **1399**.

6. Explain why King Edward VIII is unique.

King Edward VIII is unique because he is the only British monarch in history to voluntarily abdicate so that he could marry somebody.

7. What was unusual about King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn's wedding?

King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn's wedding was unusual because it was done secretly.

8. Discuss one way that Tudor brides would try to avoid bad luck.

Pupils own responses, such as: Tudor brides would try to avoid bad luck by not wearing green clothes.

9. In 1923, the future King George VI married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

What does this phrase imply about King George VI?

This phrase implies that King George was not yet the monarch when he married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

Royal Weddings through History

From simple, family occasions to lavish ceremonies enjoyed by millions, here are some of the most iconic Royal Weddings in the history of the British monarchy and some ancient royal traditions which still continue today.

King Henry VIII and His Six Wives

When examining royal weddings of the British monarchy, it would be impossible to ignore the monarch who had six of them: King Henry VIII.

Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, whom he married in 1509, had already been married to his brother, Arthur, before him. She was 23 years old when they married whereas Henry was 17. Their wedding was low-key, with few people invited and very little expense.

Days after the death of his second wife, Anne Boleyn, whom he is reported to have married in secret on two separate occasions, King Henry VIII became engaged to Jane Seymour, marrying her just ten days later. After her untimely death one year later, Henry chose to marry his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, based on a painting of her that he had seen. He quickly regretted his decision and their marriage only lasted for six months.

Henry married his fifth wife when he was almost 50 years old, while she was just 19 but moved on to marry his sixth and final wife, Katherine Parr, only three years later.

At each of these Tudor weddings, superstition would have played a key role. Each bride would have worn a veil, as Tudors believed that it would disguise her face from evil spirits. In the same vein, all males involved within a Tudor wedding ceremony would wear the same clothing, in the hope of fooling the spirits. Nobody in the wedding party would wear green as it was thought to be an unlucky colour.



A Royal Tradition: Welsh Gold

In 1923, Queen Elizabeth II's father, the future King George VI, married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. At the ceremony, the happy couple exchanged rings made from Welsh gold, sourced from ancient opencast mines in the Welsh countryside which date back to Roman times. Since then, most members of the Royal Family have exchanged rings made from Welsh gold, including Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Margaret, Princess Anne, Prince Charles and, most recently, Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge. It is thought that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will do the same at their wedding.



King Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson

King Edward VIII is the only monarch in British history to choose to abdicate – give up his position as monarch – so that he could marry the lady he loved, Wallis Simpson. As Wallis had been married before and divorced, the Royal Family and the British government did not approve of her marriage to Edward at the time. Instead of the throne, Edward chose Wallis and abdicated after being King for less than one year. They married in a private ceremony in France the following year in 1937.



A Royal Tradition: The Lord Chamberlain

The Lord Chamberlain's Office at Buckingham Palace is responsible for organising royal weddings and they have been since 1399. Under the guidance of the royal couple and their private secretaries, the Lord Chamberlain and his team are responsible for writing the guest list and arranging the seating plan for the ceremony – not a simple task with over 2000 to invite and seat! The current Lord Chamberlain, The Earl Peel, organised the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and is currently in the process of doing the same for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.



Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer

The 1981 wedding of the parents of Prince William and Prince Harry, Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, is said to be the most expensive British Royal Wedding in history, costing a reported £35 million. The happy couple married at St Paul's Cathedral in London in front of royalty, leaders and notable figures from across the world. Over 3500 people watched the ceremony from inside the church, with over 600,000 people lining the streets of London and 750 million people watching the event globally on TV.



Glossary

abdicate: To give up being a king or queen and all of the responsibilities that come with it.

monarch: A king, queen or emperor; the only ruler of a place.

superstition: The belief that certain actions lead to good or bad luck, with no evidence to support this.

Questions

1. How old was King Henry VIII when he first married? Tick one.

- 17
- 19
- 21
- 23

2. Number the names below to show the order in which they were married to King Henry VIII. The first one has been done for you.

- Anne Boleyn
- Anne of Cleves
- 1 Catherine of Aragon
- Katherine Parr
- Jane Seymour

3. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows King George VI married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon before his coronation.

4. Name the only British monarch to voluntarily abdicate.

5. Which bride and groom had the most expensive royal wedding in British history?

6. Discuss the role of superstition in Tudor weddings.

7. Explain why King Edward VIII's decision was controversial.

8. Explain the role of the Lord Chamberlain's office.

9. Comment on the popularity of the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana.

10. Summarise the royal tradition of using Welsh gold in 20 words or less.

Answers

1. How old was King Henry VIII when he first married? Tick one.

- 17
 19
 21
 23

2. Number the names below to show the order in which they were married to King Henry VIII. The first one has been done for you.

- 2** Anne Boleyn
4 Anne of Cleves
1 Catherine of Aragon
5 Katherine Parr
3 Jane Seymour

3. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows King George VI married Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon before his coronation.

the future King George VI

4. Name the only British monarch to voluntarily abdicate.

King Edward VIII

5. Which bride and groom had the most expensive royal wedding in British history?

Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, had the most expensive royal wedding in British history.

6. Discuss the role of superstition in Tudor weddings.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Tudor brides and grooms were very superstitious. The bride would wear a veil to disguise her face from spirits. All men would wear the same clothes so that spirits would not know who the groom was. Nobody in the wedding party would wear green because they thought it was an unlucky colour.

7. Explain why King Edward VIII's decision was controversial.

Pupils' own responses, such as: King Edward VIII's decision was controversial because the Royal Family and the British government did not approve of his marriage but he chose to still marry Wallis and abdicate the throne against their wishes.

8. Explain the role of the Lord Chamberlain's office.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Lord Chamberlain's Office have been responsible for organising royal weddings since 1399. The Lord Chamberlain and his team are responsible for writing the list of over 2000 guests and arranging the seating plan for the ceremony.

9. Comment on the popularity of the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, was very popular. They had over 3500 guests at their wedding ceremony. A further 600,000 people lined the streets of London and 750 million people around the world watched their wedding on TV.

10. Summarise the royal tradition of using Welsh gold in 20 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Royal Family have made their wedding rings from gold mined in Wales since 1923.