

Factsheet Denmark

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THE CROWN PRINCE COUPLE

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik and Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary are Denmark's young and very popular successor couple. Mary Donaldson appeared from a remote country and with her grace and nature won the heart of not only the Crown Prince, but also half the kingdom. The wedding was on 14 May 2004 in Copenhagen Cathedral, with the cameras running. Shameless and indiscreet, they captured Frederik's tears as he was overwhelmed by his bride's entrance along the aisle. That moment is remembered in the Danish homes as a symbol of the young couple's humanity.

The Monarchy and the People

The monarchy is deeply rooted in Denmark. Firstly, it is ancient and can be traced back at least a thousand years. Secondly, the monarch ruled with absolute power in 1660-1848 and the entire state administration was created in close collaboration between king, court and the city of Copenhagen. Thirdly, the monarchy remained an important element in the 1849 Constitution.

While the political influence of the royal house has waned over the years, it has retained its place in the minds of the Danes. After the defeat to Prussia and Austria in the 1864 war, the king became a symbol of Danish unity, supported not only by the traditional pillars of the monarchy such as nobility and officialdom, but also the peasants. This was very significant, as Denmark was predominantly an agricultural country. Industrialisation and urbanisation from 1870 onwards provided an opening for dissenting voices, but they never grew particularly strong.

Unlike presidents, who are elected as head of state by a democratic process, the



Crown Princess Mary and Crown Prince Frederik are cheered during their state coach drive after their wedding in Copenhagen Cathedral on 14 May 2004. Photo: Scanpix/Rune Feldt-Rasmussen.

selection in a monarchy is based on inheritance. As long as this was justified solely by reference to history and tradition, the sovereign lived in relative isolation from the population. That has changed markedly in the second half of the 20th century. The current status is a firm expectation that monarchs must win the people's favour, not only through their office, but also their person.

The new contract between people and monarch, which is just as unwritten a law as the idea of 'political correctness' in the political world, arose in the wake of World War II. During the German occupation of Denmark in 1940-45, the old Christian X (king 1912-47) had succeeded in making Danish patriotism visible by his daily ride through Copenhagen, and his son King Frederik IX (king 1947-72) cleverly managed to maintain this course by allowing the media fairly close to his family.

The new popularity of the royal house was demonstrated by the Act of Succession

of 1953, which allowed female succession. In simple terms, this amendment of the law was based on a popular feeling that the royal couple's three daughters had a greater right to the throne than the principle of male succession then in force allowed. The foundations for the success of the royal house were partly laid during King Frederik and Queen Ingrid's time as successor couple (1935-47).

The Role of the Successor Couple

In an inveterate monarchy like the Danish, the successor couple period has a special status. On the one hand, it marks the end of the long and by no means safe journey of a crown prince or crown princess towards marriage with another person. On the other hand, everyone knows that the wedding is not itself the end, but only the precursor of something even greater, i.e. the accession. That is why all expectations are mercilessly directed towards the couple.

In addition, the nation only experi-





Crown Prince Frederik as a child with his mother and his maternal grandfather, King Frederik IX. Photo: Polfoto.

The Crown Prince has received military training in army, air force and navy. Photo: Scanpix/Claus Fisker.



ences a successor couple decades apart. It most recently happened in the brief period 1967-72, when Denmark's current sovereign, Queen Margrethe II (b.1940), and His Royal Highness Prince Henrik (b.1934) played the role. Moreover, in the nature of things nobody knows how long the period will be. In other words, everybody needs to enjoy the time while it lasts.

Wedding and Continuing Renewal

Crown Prince Frederik met Mary Donaldson during the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000. He was then 32 and she was 28. Rumours of a relationship soon appeared in the Danish weekly press, but they only flourished after Mary Donaldson got a job in Copenhagen in 2002. Previously, she and Frederik had both worked in Paris for a while.

On 8 October 2003, Her Majesty the Queen publicly announced their engagement. At that day's press conference, Mary Donaldson addressed the Danish people for the first time. She was able to do so in the nation's own language, Danish, which many have found difficult to access. This

may not seem a big thing, but for a small nation of five million inhabitants, it was an important signal that Mary was ready to take on the task of Crown Princess according to the best traditions of the royal house. The wedding took place six months later.

The wedding revealed that the couple belong to a younger generation. Thus, the week before the wedding included a big rock concert in honour of the couple in Idrætsparken in Copenhagen, giving by the leading Danish rock musicians. And in his speech to Mary at the wedding banquet, the Crown Prince quoted poetic rock lyrics by the contemporary Danish musician Lars H.U.G. Their love was interpreted and understood in a contemporary language.

Frederik has said about the continuing renewal of the royal house: 'The danger inherent in the office is of course that one becomes isolated. One has to beware of that. But in our country, the royal family is not at all isolated compared to other countries. Here we can count ourselves lucky that our institution moves with the times. That is main thing: to move with

the times. Find out the lie of the land and be influenced by what you find. And shape the institution on that basis.'

This renewal was also demonstrated by his choice of spouse. Mary Donaldson's parents are commoners. By comparison, in the two preceding generations of the royal house, the Crown Prince's mother in 1967 married a nobleman, a French count of the Monpezat family, while his maternal grandfather in 1935 married the daughter of a Swedish king, the later Queen Ingrid (d.2000), with whom the Crown Prince incidentally had a close relationship. This shift away from class considerations in relation to marriage more than anything else reveals the gradual modernisation of the Danish royal house.

The Crown Princess' Background

Mary Elizabeth Donaldson was born on 5 February 1972 in Hobart, the main town on Tasmania, which is part of Australia. The island is 1½ times larger than Denmark, but the population is considerably smaller (456,652 in 2001). She grew up as the youngest of four siblings. Her father, John Dalgleish Donaldson, emigrated to the mountainous island from Scotland in 1963, a few months after his marriage to the Crown Princess' mother, Henrietta Clark. He works as a Professor of Applied Mathematics. Mary's mother, who died in 1997, was a senior secretary at the University of Tasmania.

After Mary had completed elementary and secondary education, she attended college 1983-86. In 1989, she started studying at the island's university, obtaining a BA in Economics and Law five years later. In the years 1994-96, she added an advertising and marketing diploma.

In 1996-2003, the Crown Princess had several advertising jobs, reaching the position of account handler. She soon orientated herself internationally, working first in Edinburgh in her father's native Scotland in 1999, then in Paris in 2002. When she moved to Copenhagen, she was employed by Microsoft Business Solutions

The Order of Succession

Crown Prince Frederik's status as heir to the Danish throne is based on the Act of Succession of 27 March 1953. This Act continued the lineal principle previously in force, i.e. succession by direct line of descent, but as an innovation it laid down that the order of succession, which had hitherto been purely agnatic, i.e. male line succession, would in future be agnatic-cognatic, so that both men and women could now succeed to the throne, although a younger son would precede an older daughter. The Act also limited those entitled to succeed to the descendants of Christian X and Queen Alexandrine. These changes meant that the mother of Crown Prince Frederik – Princess Margrethe, then aged 12, who was the eldest of the royal couple's three daughters – became heir to the throne when the Act came into force. When King Frederik IX died on 14 January 1972, she therefore became reigning Queen under the

name of Margrethe II, while the royal couple's elder son at the same time received the title of Crown Prince.

Like the Crown Prince, his mother received a careful education in preparation for eventually succeeding to the throne. After passing her A-levels in 1959, she thus trained as group leader in the Women's Flying Corps and later she studied political science and archaeology at Danish and foreign universities. The Crown Prince's maternal grandfather, King Frederik IX, became Crown Prince at the age of 13, when his father became King in 1912. He succeeded his father to the throne in 1947 and during his long period as Crown Prince received a full naval officer training, which involved several senior commands on active service. Before succeeding to the throne, he had reached the rank of rear admiral.

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Prince Henrik, Queen Margrethe, Crown Princess Mary and Crown Prince Frederik cheer on the Danish women's handball team during the 2004 Olympics in Athens. Photo: Scanpix/Lars Møller Jensen.

The Crown Prince couple on the quay in Sydney. Photo: Scanpix/Ernst van Norde.

with responsibility for company development, communication and marketing.

Like the Crown Prince, Mary has always been very interested in sport and an active participant in, among other things, yachting, golf and riding. On the other hand, she has left marathon running to Crown Prince Frederik.

The Crown Prince's Early Years

Crown Prince Frederik was born on 26 May 1968. His only sibling, Prince Joachim, was born the following year. Despite their royal background, they were educated with other children at the private Krebs' School in Copenhagen 1974-81. The school's principal was Jørgen Stegelman, who is known as a marvellous storyteller. At the request of their father, Crown Prince Frederik and Prince Joachim were in 1982 enrolled in the French elite school École des Roches in Normandy, where they gained an understanding of French culture and history. The Princes continued their schooling at Øregaard Upper Secondary School in Hellerup in Northern Copenhagen, where Frederik gained his baccalaureate in Modern Languages in summer 1986.

A month earlier, he had joined the Council of State, where the sovereign of the constitutional monarchy meets his or her minister about 15 times a year to sign the Acts of the country. As Crown Prince, Frederik can take over his mother's role as sovereign of Denmark, if she is abroad or otherwise unable to fulfil the function.

Military and Academic Career

The Crown Prince has continued the Danish kings' traditional association with army, navy and air force. Thus, he was a recruit with the Household Corps in 1986, later transferring to the Hussars. In 1995, he joined the elite Naval Diving Corps. Under the name of Pingo, he passed one of the physically and mentally most demanding courses in the Danish armed forces. In this way alone, the Crown Prince set new limits for what a future king may



Crown Princess Mary and Crown Prince Frederik in Tivoli on a Saturday night in August 2005. Photo: Scanpix/Jens Nørgaard Larsen.

do. To huge media attention, Frederik met the challenges of the Diving Corps, becoming a First Lieutenant in 1995.

Since 1997, he has gradually risen in the ranks within the three armed forces. He was first appointed Captain of the reserve in the army, Flight Officer of the reserve in the air force and Lieutenant-Commander in the navy (1997-2000). He then became a Major in the army and air force and a Commander in the navy (2002-03) and most recently a Lieutenant-Colonel in the army and air force and a Commodore in the navy (2004). In addition, the Crown Prince completed a leadership course at the Royal Danish Defence College in 2002 and worked at Headquarters, Chief of Defence, Denmark, in 2002-03. He has been teaching at the

Royal Danish Defence College since 2003.

In 1989-95, the Crown Prince studied political sciences at Aarhus University in the second-largest city in Denmark. His mother, Queen Margrethe II, did the same for a couple of terms when she was young, but Frederik was the first member of the Danish royal house to complete a full academic course. In 1992-93, Frederik also studied at Harvard University in the USA. In 1995, he graduated with a main paper on the foreign policy of the Baltic States.

International Tasks

In autumn 1994, the Crown Prince was on a three-month internship at the Danish UN mission in New York. His time there helped give the Crown Prince an interna-

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The Crown Prince couple's son is baptised in Christianborg Palace Church on 21 January 2006. Photo: Scanpix/Keld Navtoft.

tional profile, which was further developed when he was stationed at the Danish Embassy in Paris in 1998-99 and again in 2002.

In addition, Crown Prince Frederik represents Denmark on official visits abroad. He has headed trade delegations and met international top politicians as well as ordinary people.

In 2002, Frederik took over the post of Commissioner of the Danish Red Cross from his father Prince Henrik. His list of honorary offices is long, as is that of the Crown Princess. Among other things, the Crown Prince is Patron of The Foreign Policy Society, The Greenland Society and The Royal Danish Geographical Society. The Crown Princess is, among other things, Patron of the Danish Refugee Council, the Danish Arts and Crafts Association, the Danish Cultural Institute and Copenhagen International Fashion Fair. The Crown Prince has also received numerous Danish and foreign orders and decorations. They have been bestowed by the Nordic, Baltic and other European states, as well as

Brazil, Japan, Jordan, Nepal and Thailand. Mary is, among other things, a Knight of the Order of the Elephant and carries the Norwegian St. Olav Order.

Expedition Sirius 2000

A unique experience for the Crown Prince was his participation as sledge driver on Expedition Sirius 2000. Just six people took part in the 2,795 kilometres long journey along the coast of North and North East Greenland. The expedition demanded great physical and mental strength and endurance. It lasted four months and marked the 50th anniversary of Sledge Patrol Sirius, which is responsible for the surveillance of North and North East Greenland and the enforcement of Danish sovereignty in this part of the Danish realm. The Danes were able to follow the journey through a series of television documentaries, where the Crown Prince himself talked about the hardships and the wonderful nature experiences with flashbacks to the famous Greenland expeditions in the early 20th century. Frederik

has himself later emphasised the expedition's great importance to him in various interviews and books.

Succession Secured

On 15 October 2005, the couple had a little prince. On 21 January 2006, he was baptised in Christianborg Palace Church and given the name Christian Valdemar Henri John. The succession is thus secured for two generations.

The couple's popularity in Denmark is huge and extends to circles which have not traditionally shown an interest in the royal house. Already before his marriage, the Crown Prince was voted Dane of the Year several times. The couple have mastered the difficult art of renewing the monarchy without destroying its mystique. At the political level, the royal house is by definition neutral, but in recent years the task has not become easier for the future sovereign, as politics increasingly impinge on the area of moral values. So far, the Crown Prince has however managed to adopt an open style, for instance with his statement that he would like to be the king of an increasingly multicultural nation.

Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary live partly at Amalienborg, the royal family's residence in Copenhagen, partly at the Chancellery at Frederiksborg Castle in Northern Zealand, which for generations has been the Danish royal family's summer residence.

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