

Factsheet Denmark



Queen Margrethe has given her New Year message a very personal character and it has become a tradition in most Danish homes to listen to her message every New Year's Eve, when it is transmitted live on radio and television. Photo 2003. Keld Navntoft/Scanpix.

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THE QUEEN AND THE ROYAL HOUSE

The Danish monarchy is one of the oldest in the world and one of the most firmly established and popular institutions in Denmark. The current Queen, Margrethe II, is regarded with affection and respect by the whole nation, and she and her family attract strong and positive interest.

The Members of the Danish Royal House

In a narrow sense, the royal house today consists of Queen Margrethe II, the Prince Consort Prince Henrik, Crown Prince Frederik, Crown Princess Mary and their son Prince Christian, as well as the Crown Prince's brother, Prince Joachim, and his two sons Prince Nikolai and Prince Felix, the Queen's sister, Princess Benedikte,

with her spouse and the Queen's cousin, Princess Elisabeth. Prince Joachim's former wife, Princess Alexandra, Countess of Frederiksborg, is also included among the members of the royal house.

Queen Margrethe was born on 16 April 1940 as the eldest daughter of King Frederik IX and Queen Ingrid. She matriculated in 1959 and then studied at the universities of Copenhagen, Cambridge, Århus, Sorbonne and London, concentrating particularly on political science and archaeology. In 1967, she married the French diplomat Comte Henri de Laborde de Monpezat (b.1934), thereafter called Prince Henrik. They have the sons Frederik (b.1968) and Joachim (b.1969). The Queen's style of reigning is outgoing and during her reign, the royal house's relationship with the population has become more open than before. During her annual summer cruises on the royal yacht *Dannebrog*, she attaches great importance to reaching all parts of the realm, including the Faroe Islands and Greenland. In addi-

tion, she has managed to give her traditional televised New Year message a personal touch, which has strengthened the monarchy's position in the nation. At the same time, she pursues a wide range of artistic and literary interests, which have produced numerous visible results in the form of paintings, church vestments, stage designs, book illustrations and translations from Swedish into Danish and, with the Prince Consort, from French into Danish.

Like the Queen, Prince Henrik is an intellectual. He holds a university degree in French literature and Oriental languages and has published several books, including a volume of memoirs, *Destiny Binds*, in 1996, the poetry collection *Cantabile*, illustrated with collages created by the Queen, in 2000 and the poetry collection *Whispering Breeze*, also published in French as *Murmures de vent*, in 2005. He is moreover an established cookery book writer and an experienced wine-grower. The Queen and Prince Consort own the wine



The Prince Consort, Prince Henrik, 1992.
Photo: Rigmor Mydtskov.

Prince Joachim in Turkey,
where he attended
a business forum for Danish
industry in 2004.
Photo: Indius Pedersen.



castle Château de Caix in the Prince's native Cahors in southwest France, where they usually spend part of the late summer. The Prince Consort's cosmopolitan attitude manifests itself in his extensive international work, and he is often called upon to support Danish export campaigns all over the world.

The sons, Crown Prince Frederik and Prince Joachim, have both received a thorough military training - in the case of the Crown Prince supplemented by a demanding course with the elite Diving Corps. He subsequently graduated in political science from Århus University, followed by studies abroad at Harvard University in the USA and elsewhere. He has also served as a diplomat for short periods. On 14 May 2004, he married Mary Elizabeth Donaldson, Crown Princess Mary, born in Hobart on Tasmania in 1972. They have a son, Prince Christian (b.2005). Prince Joachim, who owns the estate Schackenborg in Møgeltonder in southern Jutland, has mainly studied agriculture. In 1995, he married Alexandra Christina Manley, Princess Alexandra, now also Countess of Frederiksborg, born in Hong Kong in 1964. They have two sons, Prince Nikolai (b.1999) and Prince Felix (b.2002). The couple divorced by mutual consent in 2005.

The History of the Royal House

The Danish monarchy can with certainty be traced back to Gorm the Old (d. 958). The monarchy was originally elective, but in practice the election normally fell on the eldest son of the reigning monarch. In return, the king had to sign a coronation charter, which regulated the balance of power between himself and his people. When hereditary monarchy was introduced in 1660-1661, the monarchy changed to Royal Absolutism. The succession, which was based on the principle of male primogeniture, was laid down in the Royal Law of 1665, which also regulated the internal affairs of the royal house in other ways. The democratic Constitution of 5 June 1849 changed the monarchy's status from

absolute to constitutional. The Act of Succession of 27 March 1953 introduced the possibility of female succession, which enabled the current Queen to succeed to the throne.

The direct lines of the ancient Danish dynasty became extinct with the death of Christoffer III in 1448. Duke Christian of Oldenburg was elected as his successor and became King of Denmark the same year under the name of Christian I. He belonged to one of the collateral branches of the original dynasty and founded the Royal House of Oldenburg, which reigned until 1863, when the last man on the throne from this family, Frederik VII, died without issue. In accordance with the Act of Succession of 1853, the throne therefore went to his relative, Prince Christian of Glücksborg, who was descended in direct male line from the royal house. After the death of Frederik VII, he became King under the name of Christian IX, thus founding the current House of Glücksborg on the Danish throne.

Christian IX was nicknamed 'the father-in-law of Europe', because his daughter Alexandra married Edward VII of England, his daughter Dagmar married Alexander III of Russia and yet another daughter, Thyra, married Duke Ernst August of Cumberland. In 1863, his son Vilhelm became King of the Hellenes under the name of George I, and in 1905 his grandson Carl became King of Norway under the name of Haakon VII. The Danish royal house was thus directly related to many of Europe's reigning princely houses.

Christian IX's son, Frederik VIII, was 63 years old when he finally succeeded to the throne in 1906. When he died in 1912, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Christian X, who reigned over Denmark through both World Wars. He is remembered as the equestrian king for his ride across the old border into the recovered land after the reunion of North Schleswig with Denmark in 1920 and for his popular rides through the streets of Copenhagen in the first years of the German occu-

pation of Denmark in 1940-1945, which made him a symbol of national unity.

Christian X died in 1947 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Frederik IX, who in 1935 had married the Swedish Princess Ingrid. The marriage produced three daughters, Margrethe, Benedikte (b.1944), who in 1968 married Prince Richard zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, and Anne-Marie (b.1946), who in 1964 married Constantine II, then King of the Hellenes. Unlike his father, Frederik IX from the start accepted that the king has no real political power. With his family, he instead modernised the monarchy, adapting it to the representative government and its democratic ways. By virtue of his bluff, informal manner and obvious joy in his family, Frederik IX became the exponent of post-war popular values without jeopardising the dignity and distance inherent in the nature of monarchy. His eldest daughter, Margrethe II, has man-

Danish Monarchs

House of Oldenburg

1448-1481	Christian I
1481-1513	Hans
1513-1523	Christian II
1523-1533	Frederik I
1534-1559	Christian III
1559-1588	Frederik II
1588-1648	Christian IV
1648-1670	Frederik III
1670-1699	Christian V
1699-1730	Frederik IV
1730-1746	Christian VI
1746-1766	Frederik V
1766-1808	Christian VII
1808-1839	Frederik VI
1839-1848	Christian VIII
1848-1863	Frederik VII

House of Glücksborg

1863-1906	Christian IX
1906-1912	Frederik VIII
1912-1947	Christian X
1947-1972	Frederik IX
1972-	Margrethe II



Queen Margrethe's main artistic achievements include set and costume designs for the ballet pantomime *Kærlighed i Skarnkassen* (Love in the Dustbin) based on three fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen and choreographed by Dinna Bjørn. This photograph shows the Queen and the performers after the first performance at the Tivoli Pantomime Theatre in 2001. Photo: Scanpix/Bo Tornvig.

aged to continue and develop this line, so that the royal house and the monarchy today are more popular than ever. The deaths of Frederik IX in 1972 and Queen Ingrid in 2000 therefore caused genuine national mourning.

Tasks and Duties

The Danish monarchy is constitutional, which means that the monarch cannot independently perform political acts. Although the monarch signs all acts, these only come into force when they have been countersigned by a cabinet minister. As head of state, the monarch participates in the formation of new governments. After consultation with representatives of the political parties, she asks the party leader backed by the largest number of seats in the Folketing, the Danish parliament, to try to form a government and appoints this after it has been formed. She also formally heads the government and therefore presides over the Council of State, where the acts passed by the Folketing are signed and thus come into force. The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs regularly report to the Queen to advise her of the latest political developments. The Queen hosts official visits by foreign heads of state and pays state visits abroad. She also formally appoints and dismisses civil servants.

The Queen's main tasks are to represent Denmark abroad and be a focus at home. She performs the latter task by for instance accepting invitations to open exhibitions, attending anniversaries, inaugurating bridges, etc. Exhibition openings abroad in connection with export campaigns are also often attended by royalty. In addition, the Queen grants frequent public audiences, where citizens with a special reason can experience a few minutes alone with their country's Queen.

The Royal Orders of Chivalry

The Queen heads the two Danish Royal Orders of Chivalry, the Order of the Elephant and the Order of the Dannebrog,



Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary on the balcony of Odense Town Hall during their visit to Denmark's third largest city, Odense, in 2004. Photo: Jørgen Jessen/NF.

while Prince Henrik is their Chancellor. The most distinguished is the Order of the Elephant, which is believed to date back to the 15th century. Originally, it was mainly bestowed on foreign princes and exalted Danish noblemen. Now, the Order is almost exclusively bestowed on foreign heads of state and members of the royal family. The Order of the Dannebrog was instituted by Christian V in 1671, but its statutes were changed along the lines of the French Legion of Honour in 1808, when it was divided into various grades. It is now mainly used to honour meritorious Danish citizens.

Any decision about the bestowal of honours continues to lie solely with the Head of the Order, but the day-to-day administration of the honours system is undertak-

en by the College of Arms, which forms part of the royal court. By virtue of the relatively broad bestowal of the lower grades of the Order of the Dannebrog and the Royal Orders of Merit, the honours system today acts as a link between the population and the royal house.

The Danish crown jewels, which are the monarch's insignia, consist of the crown, the sceptre (the staff of rule), the globe (the earth), the sword of state and the ampulla. To this should be added the collars of the Orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog, which the monarch wears on special occasions. The oldest of the crown jewels is Christian III's sword of state from 1551. Since c. 1680, the crown jewels have been kept at Rosenborg Palace.

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Originally, the regalia were carried at the coronation of the elective monarchs, where the clergy and nobility placed the crown on the elected king's head to symbolise that they were conferring royal authority upon him on behalf of the whole nation. As a consequence of the introduction of Absolutism in 1660-1661, the coronation was replaced by an anointing ceremony demonstrating that the monarch was no longer elected by the people, but the Lord's Anointed. For the anointing of Christian V in 1671 a new hoop crown was made to replace the open ring crown of the elective monarchs. To symbolise their absolute power, the monarchs placed the crown on their own heads and were anointed in church with holy oil from the ampulla. When constitutional monarchy was introduced in 1849, the anointing was discontinued. Instead the new monarch is proclaimed by the country's Prime Minister from the balcony of Christiansborg Palace.

The Royal Residences

From the 15th century, Copenhagen Castle gradually became the main royal residence. Around 1730, it was replaced by Christiansborg. After this palace burnt down in 1794, the king moved to Amalienborg, which is still the main residence. However, the royal wing of the rebuilt Christiansborg still contains the state apartments, which are used for instance for official gala dinners, royal parties, the annual New Year levees and the Queen's public audiences.

The Amalienborg complex was originally four, externally identical, nobleman's palaces, symmetrically placed around an octagonal palace yard with the equestrian statue of Frederik V, by the French sculptor J.F.J. Saly, in the centre. The large complex was constructed as the centre of Frederiksstaden, the new upper class quarter of Copenhagen, laid out in 1748 as part of the tribute to the House of Oldenburg on the occasion of its 300th anniversary on the Danish throne. Since then, the

four palaces have by turns served as residences for the reigning monarch. Today, one of them (Moltke's or Christian VII's Palace) is fitted up as a guest palace and mainly used for ceremonial purposes. The others are the residences of the Queen and her husband (Schack's or Christian IX's Palace) and the Crown Prince and his wife (Levetzau's or Christian VIII's Palace). Once its refurbishment is completed, the Crown Prince and Crown Princess will move to Brockdorff's Palace (Frederik VIII's Palace), which was formerly the residence of Frederik IX and Queen Ingrid. With the Yellow Palace, located immediately next to the Amalienborg complex, the palaces also house the various court functions.

The favourite summer residence of the Queen and her husband is Fredensborg in North Zealand. This country seat, architecturally inspired by Italian baroque, was built by Frederik IV in 1720-1722 to mark the end of the Great Nordic War. The beautifully situated palace has since been used to a varying extent as a summer residence by successive monarchs. It was probably used most frequently by Christian IX, who every summer during the 'Fredensborg Days' would summon his large family from the European princely houses to informal gatherings at the palace. Today, it is also used for gala dinners in connection with state visits and festive celebrations of family occasions in the royal house. Finally, the Queen and Prince Consort have at their disposal Marselisborg in South Århus, which serves as their residence when they are in Jutland. This baroque-inspired palace was built in 1899-1902 by order of Århus City Council and presented to Prince Christian (X) and Princess Alexandrine as a national gift after their marriage in 1898.

The small palace of Rosenborg in the centre of Copenhagen and Frederiksborg Palace in Hillerød - both built by Christian IV in the early 17th century - have also periodically been used as royal residences. They are now museums. Rosenborg

contains the Danish Kings' Chronological Collection, while Frederiksborg, which was rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1859, has been converted into a museum of national history. The royal residences also include Gråsten Palace in southern Jutland. In 1936, it was presented by the Danish state to the newly married Crown Prince Frederik (IX) and Crown Princess Ingrid as a summer residence.

The Royal Household

Compared with many other royal houses, the Danish royal household is relatively modest. The ceremonial is limited to essentials and there is no extravagant display. The traditional pomp is only strongly in evidence on very special occasions, such as state visits, royal weddings, important birthdays and anniversaries. The royal household numbers about 140 in total. The staff is paid from the Civil List, the state's disbursement to the royal house. A significant part of this is the royal family annuities, currently totalling around DKK 81.6m.

At a time characterised by internationalisation and rapidly changing fundamental values, the Danish royal house today stands as an important symbol of national unity and as a fixed point in an unstable world. This status is partly attributable to the monarchy's solid anchoring in ancient traditions, but also to the royal house's ability to adapt to contemporary conditions without spurning traditional values such as permanence, respect for tradition, sense of duty and responsibility for the nation, which historically have always been the mainstay of the monarchy as a form of government.

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