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**THE RELEVANCE OF THE BRITISH
ROYAL FAMILY TODAY**

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Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci Váš původní formulář *Zadáni bak. práce*
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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

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Abstract

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This undergraduate thesis deals with the relevance of the British royal family in today's society. The purpose of the thesis is to discover the views of the British people on the British monarchy and its members.

The first part of the thesis concerns the history of the royal family from its roots until the 20th century, focusing on events that shaped the role the British monarchy has in today's society, while the second part deals with contemporary members of the royal family and their history and also the issues the monarchy faces in the 21st century.

The third part of the thesis is dedicated to a survey conducted among inhabitants of the United Kingdom, conducted through a series of specific questions concerning the topic of the thesis, such as the continuations of the monarchy in the future. The results of the survey are summarized and commented upon.

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Introduction

The British monarchy is one of the oldest surviving monarchies and arguably the oldest monarchy within Europe. It has managed to survive for over 1000 years, with the exception of 11 years, during which England became a republic for the only time in its history. Over the course of history, British monarchs have been at the helm of an empire that massively impacted the course the politics of not only Europe but of the entire world, by conquering large parts of it, an empire that at its peak encompassed an area exceeding one quarter of the entire world, comprised of people of different races, ethnicities and religion.

However, the British monarchy has not always been the same, but rather evolved according to the desires and urges of people over the course of the history. It managed to survive periods that were turbulent for monarchies, leading to a large number of them perishing or their stability decreasing. The British monarchy managed to persevere in spite of all the upheavals, largely thanks to its relatively progressive policies with regard to its transformation into a relatively ceremonial monarchy and the unifying role the monarchy has fulfilled during times of peril and war.

While the British monarchy has been around for over a millennium, the question is being raised in some discussions as to whether the institution has not served its course and whether there is even a place for monarchy in the current era. There have been numerous issues plaguing the monarchy and the need for an unifying figure has largely not been felt since the end of the Second World War, while the rise of mass media and 24/7 news have shed light on the private lives of the Royal family and their misdeeds, along with the general decrease of popularity for the idea of hereditary aristocracy, of which the monarchy is certainly part.

This undergraduate thesis will focus on the history of the British monarchy and its transformation from numerous independent kingdoms into a unified kingdom encompassing the British Isles and its expansion beyond the European continent and the empire's later transformation into the Commonwealth of Nations. It will further consider the question of whether the monarchy has a place in the current era, along with the opinions of its subjects on the continuation and issues of the monarchy.

1. English monarchy throughout history

1.1 Beginnings of the English monarchy

The first humans appeared on the island we now know as Great Britain around 800 000 years ago and their continuous settlement on the island can be dated back to the Mesolithic period (Eaton, 2014). However, the establishment of the English monarchy can only be traced back to the early Middle Ages after the departure of Roman invaders and the arrival of Germanic tribes, collectively known as the Anglo-Saxons. These invaders originally came in various tribes with their own chieftains and nobility, but through conflict, settlement and political marriage, larger political entities arose - seven kingdoms, also known as *the Heptarchy*, consisting of Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex., Sussex, and Wessex and Kent. During this time, an institution called *the Witan* was created – an official council consisting of important clergymen and noblemen, meant not only to advise the king, but also to solve the matters of succession - by choosing the next king from the members of the royal family (McDowall, 2004, p. 12).

As a result of the incursions of Viking invaders from Norway and Denmark starting at the end of the 8th century, the enmity between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms started to disappear and the kingdoms slowly became unified. Some kings are known to have carried the title *bretwalda*, meaning that they ruled multiple or all of the kingdoms at once (Maurois, 1998). The kingdom of Wessex eventually became the dominant kingdom under king Ecgbert, who also carried the title of *bretwalda*, at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, but in the 2nd half of the 9th century, Viking invaders started to settle in England until their expansion was stopped by Alfred, king of Wessex. Alfred's grandson, Æthelstan, is considered the first proper king of England as he subjugated York, the last Viking kingdom in England, in 927.

The last Anglo-Saxon king of England was Edward, known as “the Confessor” because of his interest in church, ruled from 1042 to 1066, and under his rule, the Westminster Abbey was established and has subsequently served as the site of the coronation of every English and British monarch starting with Edward's successor.

1.2 English monarchy after the Norman Conquest

After King Edward died in 1066 without a descendant, the Witan selected Harold Godwinson, the most powerful nobleman in England, and the brother-in-law of the

deceased king, to accede to the throne. However, his claim was challenged by the Duke of Normandy, William, who claimed that the late king had promised him the throne and, on a different occasion, Harold promised him that he would not try to claim it for himself (McDowall, 2004, p.17). William landed in Britain in the late September, and on the 14th of October, defeated Harold's army at the Battle of Hastings, during which the English sovereign perished. William thus earned the moniker "the Conqueror" and in December he was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

The Norman Conquest changed the political situation in England significantly, as the noblemen that fought on Harold's side at Hastings and died were branded traitors and their possessions were forfeited in favour of the new king or his nobles. The Normans brought the feudal system with them, which strengthened the position of the king. William also supplanted the English clergymen with those from continental Europe in order to secure his own position further. The Domesday Book, created in 1086 on William's orders, shows us clearly that the English upper class was firmly replaced by Frenchmen by the year of its creation (BBC History Magazine, 2016).

In 1135, William's fourth son and the third and last of his sons to claim the English throne, Henry I, died without a male heir, and a civil war broke out between his daughter, Empress Matilda, and his nephew Stephen, which ended in 1153 with a treaty that allowed Stephen to remain on the throne but recognized Matilda's son, Henry, as the heir apparent. Stephen died the following year and thus the House of Plantagenet claimed the English throne.

1.3 English monarchy under the Plantagenets

In 1199, Henry's youngest son John was crowned King of England and his rule was a troubled one. During the reign of his elder brother Richard and shortly after his own coronation, many English possessions in France were seized by the French king, which alienated John's nobles, as their possessions were among those that were lost. John also raised taxes, which alienated his subjects even further. Between 1205 and 1213, John also quarrelled with the Pope over the election of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which ended in the King begging for forgiveness and subsequent submission of England under papal authority.

As a result of the rift created between the king and his subjects, a document called the Magna Carta was forced upon John. According to Jones (2014), “Magna Carta is something of a muddle. It is a collection of promises extracted in bad faith from a reluctant king, most of which concern matters of arcane thirteenth-century legal principle.” The charter, signed by John at Runnymede on the 15th of June 1215, was the result of negotiations between the unruly barons, the representatives of the Church led by Archbishop Stephen Langton and the king himself.

The impact of Magna Carta on the English monarchy cannot be understated. Divided into 63 chapters, it dealt with variety of issues concerning the powers of the sovereign and the rights of his subjects. It established the freedom of the English church from the king, prevented the king from levying new taxes without the consent of his realm and also prevented the king from demanding unjust inheritance taxes. And probably the most important of all are the 2 clauses that are still in effect today:

(39) No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.

(40) To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.

(The National Archives, 2015)

As a result of this treaty, the king could no longer pursue his subjects based on personal slights, but had to pursue the matter in the court of law. However, the Great charter of 1215 was a failure as a peace treaty, as the charter was subsequently annulled by Pope Innocent III on the request of the king, who did not intend to honour the agreement. The charter was subsequently revived, albeit stripped of large part of its content, by John’s successor, Henry III, in order to secure the support of his subjects and was subsequently recognized and renewed by Henry’s successors until it lost its relevancy at the turn of the 16th century where it came into conflict with the autocratic monarchical system of the Tudors.

Magna Carta also “stated the right of the barons to consult with and advise the king in his Great Council” (UK Parliament, 17.3.2022). This provision allowed the Great Council of the king to evolve into a permanent elected parliamentary body. The first English parliament was summoned by Simon de Montfort during his doomed rebellion

against King Henry, although the first real parliament was established by Henry's successor, Edward I, with each shire, town or borough being represented in this new institution, however it was not yet a permanent one, as it was summoned at the behest of the sovereign and only the question of taxes had to be solved by the parliament as a result of the provisions of the Magna Carta.

1.4 Reign of the Tudors

The reign of the House of Tudor came after a period of two that shaped Britain's history – a series of conflicts known as the Hundred Years' War and a civil war between two cadet branches of the Royal House of Plantagenet, the House of York and the House of Lancaster, known as the War of the Roses. Henry Tudor, a descendant of the House of Lancaster, defeated King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth field in 1485 and seized the English throne as his own. With his marriage to Elizabeth of York he united both houses and ended the turbulent period of English history. Starkey (2007, pp. 41) writes:

The symbolic union of York and Lancaster was made flesh in January 1486, when Henry Tudor married Elizabeth of York, just as their respective mothers had planned. A new iconography of union was created, merging the two once warring roses, red and white, into one – the Tudor Rose. A new dynasty was born.

Henry VII managed to restore and even strengthen the position of the monarchy, partially thanks to the extinction of many noble houses in the warring period, whose lands have fallen under the domain of the sovereign, thus enriching the royal treasury. The new king also restored the rule of law and encouraged the usage of fines as punishments, as this increased the amount of wealth flowing into the treasury. He also encouraged the establishment of a merchant fleet in order to support the position of England in the growing international trade (McDowall, 2004).

Another reform introduced during this era was the reform of administrative offices, where positions that were formerly filled by powerful noblemen were now filled by qualified people who were taught at universities and whose descendants would go on to form a new kind of nobility, one based on personal skills and service to the country rather than land holdings.

After the death of Henry VII, he was succeeded by his son who would proceed to reign as Henry VIII. Unlike his father, who after his accession to the throne avoided

waging wars and focused on increasing the prosperity of England, Henry VIII attempted to influence both the politics of continental Europe and the politics of Scotland and through needless wars depleted the wealth his father carefully built and needed to find a new source of income.

Henry's wife was Catherine of Aragon, whom he married as a widow of his late brother Arthur. However, the marriage failed to produce a male heir and was unlikely to do so, much to Henry's chagrin. The king therefore attempted to find himself a new suitable wife with whom he could sire a son, but he needed to void his marriage to Catherine first, but he needed the Pope to allow him to do so, arguing that his marriage to the widow of his deceased brother was against biblical law and thus invalid. But as the Pope was under pressure from Catherine's nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, he has refused to grant Henry the annulment of his marriage. In 1534, the Act of Supremacy was passed by the English Parliament, making the English sovereign the Supreme Governor of the Church of England and sparking the English reformation. In the following years, Henry and his advisor, Thomas Cromwell, closed and sold over 500 religious buildings, thus replenishing the plundered royal treasury.

The struggle between the Catholic religion and the nascent Church of England continued under the reign of Henry's children, with Edward VI continuing the spread of the new religion, while Edward's sister and successor Mary, daughter of Henry and Catherine, remained Catholic and punished those who claimed Protestantism as their religion with death. Under the last of Henry's children, Elizabeth, the Church of England was strengthened and many Catholic plots against the Queen were foiled.

During the reign of the Tudors, the Parliament of England strengthened their position, despite still being called only at the whim of the monarch. It was called whenever the monarch needed resources and in order to pass important decisions, including the secession from the Catholic Church, which gave the Parliament larger authority than ever before.

1.5 House of Stuart of the English throne

In 1603 James VI of Scotland acceded to the throne of England, becoming James I of England, with England and Scotland joining into a personal union as two independent countries bound together by the same monarch. During the reign of the House of Stuart,

powers of the king were greatly diminished as a result of a civil war, including a period during which England became a republic for the only time in history.

James attempted to continue the policy of Tudors regarding the English parliament, which meant to rule without it as much as is possible. However, the Anglo-Spanish wars drained the royal treasury significantly and James thus had to rely on the Parliament's right to raise taxes. James was a firm believer in the Divine Right of Kings, and thus believed himself to be above the law and answerable only to God, as he himself put it in a speech to Parliament in 1610:

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth. For kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. There be three principal similitudes that illustrate the state of monarchy. One taken out of the word of God, and the two other out of the grounds of policy and philosophy. In the Scriptures kings are called gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the divine power. Kings are also compared to fathers of families, for a king is truly *paterfamilias*, the politic father of his people. And lastly, kings are compared to the head of this microcosm of the body of man (www.hist.cam.ac.uk, 19.3.2022).

Despite his attempt to circumvent the Parliament as much as possible, James was unable to diminish its power and the quarrels between the sovereign and the Parliament continued during the reign of his son and successor, Charles I.

As the Parliament was only summoned whenever the king needed money, the MPs took advantage of this situation in 1628 and wrote a document coined the Petition of Right and demanded that the king signed it. This statute limited the King's powers significantly and was made to settle unlawful imprisonments and taxation that happened during his reign. However, the king did not intend to honour the agreement:

Charles I was furious and dissolved the Parliament that very same day. He did not call another one for 11 years, making clear his distaste for dealing with Parliament and his belief that the royal prerogative allowed him to rule and to raise money without it. (UK Parliament, 19.3.2022)

Charles managed to rule without the Parliament for 11 years before his meddling in the affairs of Scottish Church caused a war between England and Scotland, which forced Charles to summon the Parliament as he was unable to raise sufficient funds to defend

against the Scots. The first Parliament that was called to address the issue became known as the Short Parliament, as it was in session for only 18 days before being dissolved due to the king's dissatisfaction with the proceedings, as the MPs attempted to address previous abuses of the sovereign's power.

The second Parliament that was called in 1640 became known as the Long Parliament, as it, in contrast with its predecessor, lasted for 20 years. The Parliament's primary goal was the removal of one of the king's chief advisors, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford, who was attempting to persuade the king into more absolutistic form of government and to subvert the Parliament. A Bill of Attainder was passed by both Houses of the Parliament, subverting the powers of the judiciary, which declared the Earl to have committed treason and with the signature of the sovereign allowed for the advisor's execution.

However, the Parliament was not yet done. From the website of the UK Parliament:

The attainder of Strafford was just the beginning of Parliament's onslaught on Charles's prerogative rule. Soon after this Acts were passed on the following:

- to ensure that Parliament met every three years and could not be dissolved without its own consent
- to abolish the prerogative courts which were seen as challenging the supremacy of the law, and
- to declare the collection of non-parliamentary taxation, such as ship money, illegal

(UK Parliament, 20.3.2022)

In 1641 the House of Commons passed the Grand Remonstrance, which was a list of grievances against the King's politics, which blamed all disagreements between the sovereign and the opposition on various officials and a conspiracy involving the remaining Catholics. The king refused to accept any of the points made in the document and at the beginning of the next year breached the House of Commons to arrest 5 MPs for treason, including the opposition leader John Pym, however they have known about this action and managed to hide. The king was subsequently forced to vacate the City of London and relocated to Nottingham, where he started amassing an army against the Parliament,

starting the English Civil war. However, the Royalists were soon faced with a lack of resources and low morale, leading to the king's eventual defeat in 1646.

However, the Parliament was faced with a split between the will of the common folk, who longed for a return back to the old established order, and the radical representatives of its New Model army, led by Oliver Cromwell. The Parliament tried to negotiate with the imprisoned king in an attempt to restore the monarchy under certain conditions. These negotiations eventually failed, leading to the Second Civil War in 1648 as Charles attempted to seize the throne with an army from Scotland, but was swiftly defeated.

At the end of that year, 40 members of the Long Parliament considered antagonistic to the army were barred from entering the House of Commons, leading to its reorganization into the Rump Parliament. Now under the control of the radical wing and de facto controlled by the army, the House of Commons began a trial with the captured king, who was accused of treason. He was subsequently condemned to death and on the 30th of January executed by beheading.

In 1649 the English kingdom was reformed into a republic, called the Commonwealth of England, which lasted until 1660. The House of Lords was abolished and the army led by Cromwell remained the most powerful entity during this era, while managing to subdue Catholics in Ireland and Presbyterians in Scotland. The Rump Parliament during the first years of the republic attempted to secure its own power against the ever growing power of Oliver Cromwell and to resist his radical religious reforms.

On the 22nd April 1653 Cromwell ended the session of the Rump Parliament, evicting its members by force as he was unable to convince the Parliament to enact his reforms. Cromwell reportedly also stated that he did not intend to abolish the Rump Parliament, but once there was enlightened by God (Coward & Puchalská, 2000).

After dissolving the Parliament, England became governed by Cromwell alone, with him being granted the title of Lord Protector with powers equal to those of a king. However Cromwell's government was unpopular with the people, as many celebrations were forbidden as a result of his radical religious views. In 1657 Cromwell was offered a hereditary crown, but he refused to accept it. After his death in 1658, his son Richard succeeded to the office of the Lord Protector, but lacked the support his father had and was therefore forced to resign in the following year and hand over his power to the Parliament.

In 1660 Charles II Stuart was invited back to England to claim the throne, promising to rule with the Parliament and proclaiming that he shall not punish his former opponents, excluding those that participated in the execution of his father. In 1679 the Habeas Corpus Act was passed by the Parliament, which prevented the unlawful and unjust arrest of any person by requiring that the detention of any person be examined by a court.

During the rule of Charles II, two political groups evolved in the Parliament. One was the Whigs, who were the supporters of constitutional monarchy and against the king accumulating more power; they also supported religious freedom, yet fought against the Catholic Church gaining ground in England. Against them were the Tories, who continued in the tradition of the royalists. The Parliament also attempted to prevent Charles's brother James from succeeding to the throne by passing the Test Act, which would prevent any Catholic from holding a governmental office, but were unsuccessful in preventing James's accession.

Soon after his being crowned in 1685, James attempted to reverse the laws that prevented Catholic's from holding office and increase the power of the Catholic Church in England. This, however, was met with fierce resistance, even from those who had supported him previously. His reign was barely tolerated, as his daughter and heiress presumptive Mary was of Protestant faith, but in 1688 his son James was born, which led the opposition to consider dethroning the sovereign.

Mary and her husband, William of Orange, were invited to England. According to Maurois (1998), the transfer of power did not have an easy solution, as the Tories and Whigs disagreed on whether the people and the Parliament had a right to depose a monarch. Ultimately a compromise was agreed that James's flight from England be considered a voluntary abdication. Mary was proclaimed Queen of England, but refused to rule without her husband; thus William was granted the title of King and they proceeded to reign together as joint monarchs. This revolution would become known as the Glorious Revolution, as it did not require any bloodshed; although that is not entirely true, as reported by Valance (2011): "Although bloodshed in England was limited, the revolution was only secured in Ireland and Scotland by force and with much loss of life."

After their accession to the throne, William and Mary both confirmed the Declaration of Rights, which would then in 1689 be enacted as by the Parliament as the Bill of Rights, which again enshrined that the king shall not raise taxes or command a

standing army without the consent of the Parliament, that the parliamentary elections ought to be free, and prevented prosecution for any speech made by a member during parliamentary proceedings.

The Parliament also began to meet annually for the first time and the Triennial Act of 1694 was passed, which limited the duration of a Parliament to three years, ensuring representation and evolution of ideas within the Parliament, however in 1716 it was repealed and replaced with the Septennial act, prolonging the term of a single Parliament to seven years due to the frequent elections being costly and impractical.

Another important document passed by the Parliament during the reign of William is the Act of Settlement of 1701, created as a result of a looming succession crisis, as Queen Mary had died in 1694 without the pair producing any children and by the year 1700 her sister Anne, who was next in line to the throne, had no surviving children either. The Act of Settlement settled the issue by preventing non-Protestants from inheriting the throne and after the death of Anne; the crown would pass on to James I's great grandson, George, Prince-Elector of Hanover. In 1707, the Acts of Union were passed by the English and Scottish Parliaments, which unified the countries from a personal union into a single state with a central government; thus the Kingdom of Great Britain was established.

1.6 British monarchy under the House of Hanover

The newly crowned king George I was largely disinterested in ruling Britain and mostly unaware of the laws and culture of the country and therefore relied mostly on his ministers to govern the country. As a German, he did not understand English and thus did not attend the meetings of the ministers. Bogdanor (1995) depicts this situation as follows:

The most important of the conventions to develop in the eighteenth century was the principle of responsible government. From 1717 George I began to absent himself from cabinet meetings, his place being taken by the senior minister, who eventually came to be known as the prime minister. Since the time of George I, the sovereign has attended cabinet meetings only on a very small number of formal occasions, or to consider pardons, and since 1837 the sovereign has not attended cabinet at all. Thus the sovereign gradually came to play a smaller role in the general determination of policy

The position of the senior minister was claimed by Robert Walpole who dominated the government between 1721 and 1742, as a result being widely considered the first Prime Minister of Britain. Under him the tradition of a cabinet of ministers who would govern in unison and would be responsible for policy decisions was established. During this era the government was dominated by the Whig party, as the newly crowned king mistrusted the Tories, believing some of them to be Jacobites, supporters of the claim of descendants of James II.

The power of the monarch further deteriorated under the following kings from the House of Hannover, as evidenced by the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, as the Duke of Wellington, serving as the prime minister, was able to enact the legislation despite facing adversity from King George IV. As stated by Wasson (2016, pp. 144), “Weeping and pleading, George IV surrendered. Never again would the sovereign be able to halt the course of legislation if the Cabinet was united in its will to go forward and prepared to resign over the issue.”

The last monarch of the House of Hannover was Queen Victoria, who acceded to the throne in 1837 at 18 years of age and thus was heavily reliant on her prime minister during her early reign. After her marriage to Prince Albert of House Saxe-Coburg Gotha, she became a neutral force in politics, rather than favouring one side of the political spectrum as her predecessors had done.

As a result, the monarchy became a cultural and social unifying symbol, rather than a political force, despite Victoria’s renewed partisanship and conservative views after the death of her husband. Victoria placed high value on virtue and a calm domestic life, and thus, again in contrast to her predecessors, who were known for their intemperance, was able to restore the dignity of the monarchy in the eyes of the common people.

During the reign of Victoria and later her son, Edward VII of House Saxe-Coburg Gotha, the British Empire reached its position as the largest colonial empire in history and the world’s largest power. Wasson (2016) asserts that it encompassed a quarter of the globe’s land area and a fifth of its population.

1.7 House of Windsor on the throne

Queen Victoria was succeeded by her son Edward VII, with him becoming the only monarch from the House of Saxe-Coburg Gotha on the throne, as the name of royal

dynasty was changed in 1917 during the Great War, becoming the House of Windsor, in order to combat rising anti-German sentiment within the nation. This era can be characterized by the waning power of the British Empire, the further transformation of the monarchy into a purely representative and unifying institution, especially in light of the Second World War and the rise of modern media, giving further insight into regular lives of the royal family.

Another important event in this era is the abdication of King Edward VIII in 1936, as it is the only case in which a sitting English monarch willingly surrendered the throne. The reason for this abdication was love: the sitting British monarch could not marry a twice divorced American, as the Church of England would not grant a person whose former spouse was still alive permission to remarry and it would be inconceivable for the Supreme Governor of the same church to be married against its own rules. Facing opposition from the government, and knowing that proceeding with the marriage would trigger a constitutional crisis, Edward chose to abdicate. While this may seem ironic considering that the Church of England was established due to a monarch wanting to split from his wife, contrary to popular belief none of the marriages of Henry VIII ended in divorce, but rather in their annulment.

The abdication did not endanger the stability of the monarchy, as Edward's younger brother Albert, who would accede to the throne as George VI, was relatively popular, and would manage to restore the image of the monarchy during the Second World War by choosing to stay in Buckingham Palace despite facing a bombing campaign from the Germans, and later visiting bombed areas of the country and British troops fighting the war (The Royal Family, 28.3.2022).

2. British monarchy in present time

2.1 Duties and privileges of the British monarch

As the United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy, the monarch serves primarily as the head of state and formally as the head of the executive, while the head of the government is the prime minister, with the legislative power held by the elected Parliament. The judicial system of the United Kingdom also sources its authority from the sovereign, as stated of the official website of the Royal Family (2.4.2022): “While no longer administering justice in a practical way, the Sovereign today still retains an important symbolic role as the figure in whose name justice is carried out, and law and order is maintained.”

As the head of state, the current monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, has many constitutional and ceremonial duties, including appointing the government by selecting the prime minister, who is traditionally the leader of the party that wins the majority of seats in the House of Commons. Since she has been crowned, 14 different prime minister have served the Queen. The monarch is also mean to meet the prime minister each Wednesday at the Buckingham Palace to discuss important governmental matters in private, although during COVID era these meetings have taken place over the phone (BBC News, 24.6.2021). The Queen also receives daily dispatches from the government placed in red boxes, which include briefings ahead of important meetings or documents which requiring formal signature.

The sovereign also gives a regular speech at the beginning of the new Parliamentary year from a throne situated in the House of Lords, although in 2022 the Speech was delivered by the Prince of Wales as a result of the Queen’s advanced age and reported mobility issues (Preskey, 2022). Another role of the monarch is to dissolve both the Parliament and the government before a general election is set to take place. Whenever a piece of legislation is passed through both chambers of the Parliament, the sovereign must give a formal approval for it to be transformed into an Act of Parliament. The last monarch to withhold the Royal Assent has been Queen Anne in 1708 and a present monarch attempting to do so would possibly trigger a constitutional crisis.

One controversial power that the monarch exercises in relation to the Parliament is the Queen’s consent, which is according to the Royal website (10.5.2022):

A long established convention that The Queen is asked by Parliament to provide consent (which is different to assent) for the debating of bills which would affect the prerogative or interests of the Crown. Where Queen's Consent is given it is signified in each House of Parliament and recorded in Hansard. Consent has not been withheld in modern times, except on the advice of Government.

Along with the Prince's consent, which allows the Prince of Wales to exercise the same power in relation to bills that would affect the Duchy of Cornwall, over 1000 bills have been vetted, ranging from bills directly affecting the Duchy of Lancaster, the monarch's private holding, to seemingly unrelated bills, such as the 1986 Salmon Bill. The practice has raised some concerns, as it allows the Royal family to exempt themselves from bills that would affect their wealth while also ensuring secrecy about the amount of wealth they have amassed over the course of history (The Guardian, 8.2.2021).

Other activities of the monarch include approving Orders and Proclamations through her Privy Council, meeting with foreign heads of state and heads of government, participating in various national celebrations, important anniversaries, visiting other countries, including the Commonwealth realms, attending religious celebrations or holding and visiting less important cultural events. The Queen may also be represented at many of these events by another member of the royal family, most notably by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge as her direct successors, as the number of events the royal family partakes in during a year is numbered at more than 2000, which would be impossible for one person alone to manage, let alone one in advanced age. The royal family also provides emotional support during times of difficulties, such as visiting victims of various tragedies.

The British monarch also has a relationship with the Church of England, as the position has been bound together with the position of the Supreme Governor of the Church of England since the Church has been established. Any character defects of the sovereigns are irrelevant to them holding the office, but ever since the reign of Queen Victoria they are expected to behave appropriately. From this position the monarch appoints various members of the clergy including the archbishop, with them swearing an oath of allegiance and being unable to resign without an approval of the monarch (Bogdanor, 1995).

2.2 Queen Elizabeth II

Elizabeth II, born Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, has reigned over the United Kingdom since 6th February 1952, making her the longest reigning British monarch and also the second longest-reigning head of a sovereign state in verifiable history. Her full regal name is: Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

Elizabeth was born on 21 April 1926 as the daughter of Prince Albert, the Duke of York. At the moment of her birth she was 3rd in line to the throne, yet quite unlikely ever to be crowned, as any children of her uncle would precede her in the line of succession and so would any brother she may have. She became the heir presumptive in 1936, after her uncle Edward VIII abdicated and her father became king. In 1940, the princess, along with her younger sister Margaret, appeared in a public radio address to the children of the Commonwealth, reassuring them during the times of war (The Royal Family, 5.4.2022). During the war, Elizabeth and her younger sister lived away from their parents at the Windsor castle, as it was deemed safer. In 1945 the princess was allowed to join the Auxiliary Territorial Service in secrecy, as Lacey (2003, p. 212) explains:

The eleven young women on her Vehicle Maintenance Course at Aldershot, in Surrey, were told it was the first time in history that a female royal had ever attended a course with “other people.” They were under strict instructions not to reveal her identity and were bursting with curiosity to see what she looked like.

During the war Elizabeth met Prince Philip, a member of the Greek and Danish royal families, and fell in love. They proceeded to exchange letters and in 1947 they were married, with their first son Charles being born the following year. The couple later had three more children – Anne, Andrew and Edward. Following a dispute between the Prime Minister Winston Churchill and both dowager queens on one side and Prince Philip and his maternal uncle Earl Mountbatten on the other, it was decided that the name of the royal family would remain Windsor, breaking the precedent established by Queen Victoria, who took her husband’s name as her own (Smith, 2017).

After the war, the king’s health began to worsen, and by 1951, Elizabeth exercised large portion of his duties as he was suffering from lung cancer in addition to other illnesses. He passed away on the 6th of February 1952 and Elizabeth officially became

queen. During her lifetime the British Empire finalized its transformation into the Commonwealth of Nations, and she has served as head of state of 32 independent countries, although never all of them at the same time. Currently she is the head of state of 15 members of the Commonwealth, down from 16 after Barbados became a republic in November 2021 (The Guardian, 30.11.2021).

The Queen's husband, Prince Philip, died on 9th April 2021, at the age of 99. His funeral was held on the 17th April, with the royal family observing two weeks of mourning following the announcement of his passing, cancelling their usual events and attendances. As a result of the BBC suspending its regular scheduled programming, replacing it entirely with a coverage dedicated to the life of Prince Philip, the news station received 109,741 complaints, making it the most complained-about event in the history of British television (BBC News, 15.4.2021).

The 6th February 2022 marked the 70th anniversary of the Queen's reign. She became the only British sovereign to achieve such a feat, having surpassed Queen Victoria as the longest reigning monarch in Britain in 2015. Elizabeth is also currently the second longest reigning monarch of a sovereign country in verifiable history and may yet manage to surpass the current title holder, Louis XIV of France. In order to do so, she would have to reign until at least May 27th 2024.

2.3 The heir apparent

Charles, the Prince of Wales, was born on 14th November 1948, less than a full year after his parents' wedding. He has been the first in the line of succession to the throne since his mother's accession in 1952, in other words for over 70 years, making him the longest serving heir apparent and if he were to succeed his mother, he would be the oldest monarch to be crowned (Rayner, 2013). He has been officially invested as the Prince of Wales in 1969, having been the Duke of Cornwall, also a traditional title of the heir, since 1952.

In 1971, Charles met Camilla Shand, fell in love with her and the two began a relationship which, however, was short-lived as in 1973 Camilla became engaged to Andrew Parker Bowles, a cavalry officer whom she had dated prior to meeting Charles. Nevertheless, Charles and Camilla remained friends and would later begin an adulterous affair together, leading to the breakup of both of their marriages (Jobson, 2019).

On 29 July 1981 Charles married Lady Diana Spencer, who would become the Princess of Wales, and the couple would have two sons together, William and Harry. Their relationship was nonetheless generally an unhappy one and both parties indulged in adultery, leading to their eventual separation in 1992 and divorce in 1996. This also to a decrease of popularity in Prince Charles, as Diana was beloved by the people. A further scandal that preceded the separation of the pair also shook Charles's popularity: nicknamed "Camillagate", it involved the publication of a transcript of a phone conversation between Charles and Camilla, including their professing love for each other, with the Prince wishing that he could live inside his lover's trousers, even going so far as to consider being her tampon (Lacey, 2020, Chapter 11).

In 1995, Diana was interviewed by the BBC's Martin Bashir in 1995, leading to her discussion of her feelings of depression and also including her now famous statement: "There were three of us in this marriage." Diana was later involved in a relationship with Dodi Al-Fayed, son of an Egyptian businessman; in 1997, the two of them were involved in a chase with several paparazzi who followed their car, leading to their driver crashing into a pillar. The only survivor of the crash was Al-Fayed's bodyguard and Diana's death has subsequently been subject to numerous conspiracies, some of which implicate the Royal family in a scheme to murder Diana, yet none of them have ever been proven in any way.

Charles and Camilla continued their relationship, both of them divorced, and in 2005 they were married in a civil ceremony. Due to the nature of their relationship and the continuing popularity of the late Princess of Wales, questions arose as to whether Camilla would be granted the title of Queen Consort according to the precedent once Charles was crowned or if she would only be known as the Princess Consort. Attempting to settle this debate, in her message on the occasion of her 70th Jubilee, the Queen (The Royal Family, 5.2.2022) expressed the following:

And when, in the fullness of time, my son Charles becomes King, I know you will give him and his wife Camilla the same support that you have given me; and it is my sincere wish that, when that time comes, Camilla will be known as Queen Consort as she continues her own loyal service.

Charles also has many official duties, as stated on the official website of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall (2022):

The Prince often represents The Queen by welcoming dignitaries to the UK and attending State dinners during State visits. Along with other members of the Royal Family, His Royal Highness always attends the Trooping the Colour ceremony which forms part of the official celebration of Her Majesty's birthday. The Prince often represents The Queen and the UK overseas at state and ceremonial occasions such as state funerals.

With her advanced age, the Queen has been recently withdrawing from some of her public duties, choosing to be represented by Charles instead, including the opening of the Parliament. Charles also devotes a large part of his time to championing sustainability and combating climate change by helping raise awareness of this issue, including conversations with other world leaders and business leaders, one example being his convincing Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to donate £732m to help reforestation of Africa (English, 2021)

As for the Prince's popularity, according to a research published in an article by Speare-Cole (2022), 42% Britons believe that he should step aside and Prince William should become king, with only 24% of respondents answering that Charles should not step aside. However, the same poll found that Charles's popularity has been steadily rising among the populace. An article by Ipsos (2022) states that 49% of the populace believes that Charles will do a good job once crowned, with only 20% believing the opposite, while Prince William has a net approval of 67%. However, there is no mechanism by which Charles could be skipped in the line of succession.

2.4 Royal Family in the media

The British royal family has historically had a positive approach to accepting and using new media, at least ever since George V used a radio broadcast in 1924. The king would use this new media technology to reach common people, earning himself and the royal family increased popularity, as people could feel that the King himself was talking to them personally and openly. Later on, starting with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, people could watch television broadcasts of important events where the royal family was in attendance and thus feel like they are closer to them (Owens, 2022). Members of the royal family started becoming strikingly similar to celebrities.

Another breakthrough in the relationship between the monarchy and the media came in 1969, as a documentary showing the regular life of the royal family was

commissioned by the Queen on the occasion of Charles's 21st birthday. More than 43 hours of film were shot, with only 90 minutes of footage being used to create the documentary. The documentary shed light on the ordinary life of the family, showing their humanity and bringing them closer to the regular populace, however some critics pointed out that the documentary could also damage the future of the monarchy by dispelling the mysticism surrounding it (Lacey, 2003, Ch. 18). The documentary was subsequently shown multiple times until 1977, after which the Queen refused to allow it to be aired any longer, in spite of that it has been since leaked on the internet.

In modern times, the monarchy has been quick to adapt to all new forms of mass media by maintaining a presence on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, with various family members having public profiles dedicated solely to them in addition to the main social media of the royal family. They also maintain a YouTube channel and a website, so people can find information about the royal family and their various engagements.

According to Friel (2021), the royal family also maintains a personal relationship with British tabloids, leading to the family receiving better press coverage and being shielded from paparazzi by allowing themselves to be photographed. However, the existence of the relationship does not prevent negative coverage entirely, with several members of the royal family being subject to scandals involving their private life being exposed by these tabloids.

2.5 Scandals in the Royal Family

The Royal family and its members have historically been involved in many scandals. These would include the first marriages of the three eldest children of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, which certainly contributed to the Queen naming the year 1992 as her "annus horribilis": in the mentioned year Prince Charles and Prince Andrew announced separation from their wives, while Princess Anne had finalized her divorce from Mark Philips, from whom she had split in 1989.

While infidelity and infighting were never uncommon among royalty, in the present time these issues are exaggerated by the presence of mass media and their international reach, leading to an unprecedented level of scrutiny.

2.5.1 Prince Harry

The younger of Prince Charles' two sons has also been involved in numerous scandals, just like his father. For example, at the age of 17, he was sent to a one-day rehab by his father after admitting to him that he had smoked marijuana (Alderson, 2002). Later on, he has been photographed wearing a swastika armband in along with a Nazi uniform at a friend's dress party, for which the palace and the prince have been forced to apologize (BBC News, 13.1.2005). Later he would be involved in a scandal when The Sun (24.8.2012) published photographs of the prince naked at a party in Las Vegas.

The greatest scandal around Prince Harry would arise around his relationship with and subsequent marriage to Meghan Markle, a mixed-race former actress. As the first non-white member of the family, Meghan was subjected to a combination of racism and sexism, including uncomplimentary comparisons to her sister-in-law, Kate Middleton, as tabloids would insult and vilify Meghan for the same or very similar actions they had previously praised Kate for, such as touching her pregnant belly, eating avocados or even wearing fashionable dresses (Hall, 2020). Another example of racist attack from the press would be the case of Danny Baker, a BBC Live 5 presenter, who posted a picture of a man and a woman holding hands with a chimpanzee on his Twitter and commented "Royal baby leaves hospital." for which he was been promptly fired by the radio station (Walker, 2019).

On January 8 2020, Harry and Meghan announced they were stepping back from senior royal positions. This was followed by a meeting involving the Queen, the Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry, where the future of the couple was discussed. to the outcome was an official statement from the Queen, which was published on The Royal Family website (18.01.2020), declaring that the pair would no longer use the HRH title, undertake their royal duties and represent the Queen and as a result no longer receive public funds. The couple subsequently relocated to Canada and from there to the United States. Later in the year they e signed deals with Netflix and Spotify to produce a range of programmes and podcasts.

In March 2021, the couple would spark another controversy by partaking in an interview with Oprah Winfrey, in which they made several controversial statements, such as he royal family did not provide them with sufficient support in light of racist attacks on Meghan and also did not provide mental health support due to a belief that seeking help for

this issue would be negative for the public perception of the royal family. The royal family was also accused of not attempting to prevent and correct false narratives about the pair (Lyall & Mzezewa, 2021). One senior royal, alleged to be Prince Charles, also reportedly raised a question concerning the skin colour of the couple's first son, Archie. Another point of contention was that the royal family apparently denied Archie the title of a prince; however, this claim has been disputed, as under the current convention, the great-grandchildren of the monarch are not entitled to the title unless they are in the direct line of succession, which means Archie could only be granted the title of a prince once Charles becomes king (Davies, 2021).

The couple has subsequently attracted criticism from prominent media personalities, such as Piers Morgan, who claimed on his show that he did not believe a word Meghan said and expressed several other disparaging remarks, culminating in his subsequent departure from the morning news show *Good Morning Britain* after over 40,000 complaints had been made against him (Sweney, 2021).

The couple's second child, named Lilibet Diana after Harry's grandmother and mother respectively, was born in June 2021. Nearly a year later, in June 2022, the couple made their first public appearance together with other members of the royal family, appearing at the celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee of Elizabeth II.

According to a poll conducted by YouGov (Ibbetson, 2022), the popularity of the couple overall has plummeted since 2020; although they remain popular among young people, they are hopelessly unpopular with the older populace, being surpassed in this respect only by Prince Andrew.

2.5.2 Prince Andrew

Andrew, the Duke of York, is the Queen's third child, and the first one to be born during her reign. At the time of his birth he was second in line to the throne, as men would take precedence in the line of succession until The Succession to the Crown Act was passed in 2013, ending male primogeniture for those born after 28 October 2011 (legislation.gov.uk, 2013).

The Duke first attracted significant controversy as a result of his marriage to Sarah Ferguson, whom she married in 1986, after revealing photographs came to light in 1992, revealing the infidelity of the Duchess. As a result of this controversy, the couple had

announced their split in 1992. In 1996, their divorce was finalized, yet the former couple continued to live together until 2004, sharing custody of their two daughters (Cawthorne, 2021). In 2010 the Duchess was caught attempting to sell access to her ex-husband.

In 2001, Andrew was named the United Kingdom's Special Representative for International Trade and Investment and during this time in this role he was also criticized, before being forced to step down in 2011 as a result of allegations of improper conduct, abusing government expenses and establishing connections with dubious people, such as recently convicted Jeffrey Epstein (BBC News, 21.7.2011).

The Duke's connections to Epstein would reappear in public in 2015 when he was named in a civil court case against Epstein, with Virginia Giuffre stating that she was forced to have sexual intercourse with Prince Andrew between 2001 and 2002 while only 17 years old, although both Andrew and Buckingham Palace denied these claims. The Prince would take part in an interview with BBC Newsnight (17.11.2019), where he attempted to shed light on his relationship with Epstein and clear himself of allegations, but it had the opposite effect due to his questionable claims, such as stating that he is unable to sweat and his inability to recall meeting a person he has been photographed with, but recalling visiting a pizzeria on a specific day. As a result of a mounting backlash against his alleged behaviour, Andrew had decided to step back from the public role and his patronages only a week after the ill-advised interview (Booth, 2019).

In 2021, Virginia Giuffre filed a court case against Prince Andrew, who again denied her claims. In January 2022, it was reported that the Prince had been stripped of his military titles, would no longer use the title His Royal Highness or undertake any public duties (Foster & Wilkinson, 2022). In March Prince Andrew paid an out-of-court settlement to his accuser and her charity, thus ending the case without it ever reaching the courtroom (Coughlan, 2022).

Questions were raised about whether the disgraced royal would appear together with other members of the royal family during the celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee; however, on 2nd June it was announced the prince had contracted COVID-19, and was thus unable to attend the service on June 3, sparking rumours about the diagnosis being a convenient way of avoiding the issue altogether (The News International, 3.6.2022).

2.6 Republicanism in the UK

During the long history of the British monarchy, the republican movement has never really gained substantial support, with the exception of the English Civil War, but even then the English republic was rather short-lived, as shortly after its inception it was transformed into a military dictatorship and later became an unstable hereditary dictatorship before the restoration of monarchy.

To this day, the monarchy remains popular in the UK, with only a minority of people supporting its abolition. However, according to an article by Skinner & Garrett (2022), support for the monarchy has been falling in recent era, decreasing by nearly 20% in the last 10 years and as such representing a historical low since 1993. The article also asserts that positive opinions on the monarchy are more common among voters of the Conservative party, with supporters of Labour being split in their opinion, while also stating that young people are more likely to support Britain becoming a republic compared to older generations.

One of the common criticisms of the monarchy has been their traditional conservativeness and therefore holding back progressive ideas and politics. However, Bogdanor (1995) asserts that this argument cannot be supported in an international context, with Denmark, Norway and Sweden being considered some of the most progressive countries in their national politics, all the while remaining constitutional monarchies.

Another common criticism is the cost of the monarchy for the British populace; although according to Armstrong (30.5.2022), in 2021 the British monarchy cost the British people 87.5 million GBP, or only around £1.31 per capita. Supporters of the monarchy imply a correlation between the preservation of the monarchy and tourism to the United Kingdom; however, the true impact of the existence of the monarchy on tourism cannot be measured. There have been rumours of Prince Charles's plans for the future of the monarchy including scaling down the amount of working members of the family, as in those undertaking public duties on behalf of the sovereign, which could also bring decreased costs. Nevertheless, the true extent of those plans is yet to be known.

What could nonetheless influence the republican movement in the United Kingdom are republican movements in other Commonwealth realms of which the British monarch is the head. One such is Australia, where Anthony Albanese, the Labor Prime Minister of Australia who was elected in May 2022, has appointed a "minister for the republic",

heralding the process of transformation of Australia from constitutional monarchy (Zhuang, 2022).

3. Research

The third chapter of the thesis covers the practical research conducted on the topic of the relevance of the British monarchy at present. The research was conducted through a questionnaire consisting of 19 items that are meant to showcase the opinions of people on the impact of monarchy in their lives, their opinions on the British monarchy and its members and their views on the future of the monarchy and whether it should be preserved. The questionnaire was conducted online and was distributed among people from the United Kingdom through social media.

3.1 Results

1. What is your gender?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Male	52.8%	28
Female	43.4%	23
Other	3.8%	2

Despite the research being conducted online, the questionnaire was completed by an almost even number of male and female respondents, which was a welcome surprise. The total number of respondents amounted to 53.

2. What age group do you belong to?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
18 - 24	47.2%	25
25 - 29	17%	9
30 - 39	18.9%	10
40 - 49	13.2%	7
50 - 65	3.8%	2
66+	0%	0

As far as age is concerned, the respondents of the survey were overwhelmingly on the younger side with over 64% of respondents being under the age of 29, while only 2 respondents were over 50 years old. It would stand to reason that the age distribution should be reflected in the attitude towards the monarchy, as younger people are more likely not to support it.

3. What is your highest level of completed education?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
High School	32.1%	17
Undergraduate	41.5%	22
Postgraduate	24.5%	13
PhD or higher	1.9%	1

The vast majority of respondents have completed some level of university studies, with only a minority have only graduated high school.

4. Do you consider the monarchy to be a symbol of Britain?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	84.9%	46
No	15.1%	8

The results of this question show clearly that the majority of British people see the monarchy as an important part of the United Kingdom and its history. The question was largely intended to be compared to subsequent questions about the future of the monarchy.

5. Does the existence of the British monarchy affect your everyday life?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	3.8%	2
No	45.3%	24
Sometimes (during events, celebrations, etc.)	50.9%	27

It is evident from the answers that the British monarchy has an impact on the life average British person, even if this impact may only be felt while there is an ongoing event happening.

6. Do you follow news concerning the royal family?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes, I actively seek them out	1.9%	1
Yes, if it is important or interests me	45.3%	24
No, I do not care at all	52.8%	28

The results of this question show that despite the monarchy being considered important within British society, most people are largely indifferent towards it and do not actively seek out news concerning unimportant issues of the royal family, with over half of respondents stating that they do not care about those at all.

7. Do you attend or watch events that involve the royal family?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes, always	1.9%	1
Sporadically	34%	18
No	64.2%	34

The data obtained from this question in particular and the age distribution of the respondents suggest younger people are not that interested in ceremonial functions of the royal family and extravagant celebrations that the royal family attends or hosts, once again showing a level of indifference towards the institution.

8. Who is your favourite (recent - since 1952) member of the royal family?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
The Queen	22.6%	12
Prince Charles	7.5%	4
Princess Diana	11.3%	6
Prince William	3.8%	2
Kate Middleton	3.8%	2
Prince Louis	1.9%	1
Prince Harry	17%	9
Meghan Markle	1.9%	1
Princess Anne	1.9%	1
Royal Corgis	1.9%	1
None/No answer	26.4%	14

This question was left open with every respondent being able to select whomever they liked the most among the royals. The results of this question show that the Queen remains the most popular member of the royal family and also that Princess Diana and her life has left a profound mark on British society and the royal family, as she still remains one of the more popular royals more than 24 years after her death. However, this question in particular does not reflect the assertion that Prince William is more popular among the populace than Prince Charles.

Interestingly, the survey supports the assertion that despite the general unpopularity of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, they remain popular among younger people. Over one quarter of respondents either have no favourite royal or refused to answer the question, again showing some level of indifference towards the monarchy.

9. Least favourite?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
The Queen	1.9%	1
Prince Philip	1.9%	1
Prince Charles	9.4%	5
Prince Andrew	66%	35
Meghan Markle	1.9%	1
Prince George	1.9%	1
All of them	5.7%	3
No answer	11.3%	6

As with question 8, respondents could offer the name of whomever they disliked the most. The responses to this question clearly show that Prince Andrew remains the most unpopular member of the royal family as a result of the allegations made against him, while also showing that some people do still dislike Prince Charles for his largely scandalous past with his relationships.

10. Do scandals of the royal family affect your opinion on it?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	18.9%	10
Only if it is an actual scandal (i.e. not something that is common such as a divorce)	66%	35
No	15.1%	8

This question was formulated in a way that would show whether the opinions of the people were influenced by scandals involving members of the royal family, while also revealing whether the royals are held to a higher standard. The results show that a substantial number of people are influenced by any scandal; however, almost two thirds of the respondents would not change their opinion on the royal family due to one of its members being involved in a divorce. It could also be seen as a sign of society's progress, as respondents do not see divorce in itself as an actual scandal, in contrast to the previously mentioned divorces of the Queen's children, which once constituted significant scandals.

11. Which scandal affected do you think affected people the most?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Prince Andrew's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein	60.4%	32
Princess Diana's death	5.7%	3
Divorce of Prince Charles and Princess Diana	1.9%	1
The affair between Prince Charles and Camilla	1.9%	1
Megxit	5.7%	3
Not sure/No answer	24.5%	13

Question 11 was once again an open one, allowing each respondent to select any scandal that they believe contributed to the people's opinions the most. The answers to this question were expected, as the scandal involving Prince Andrew is quite recent, or rather still left unsolved; therefore, at the time of writing, it is still very fresh in people's minds. All of the scandals mentioned in these responses contributed significantly to the decrease of popularity of the royal family, so it is no surprise that these were mentioned.

12. Are you aware of the duties and powers of the monarch?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes, of all/most of them	37.7%	20
Yes, but only of some	58.5%	31
No, I have no idea	3.8%	2

The results of this question shows that people living in the United Kingdom are still aware of the duties and powers of the Queen, despite her holding no factual powers, although most people are not aware of the full extent of it.

13. What do you think is the monarchy's biggest contribution?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Representing the country abroad	13.2%	7
Unifying the country	15.1%	8
Extra bank holidays	9.4%	5
Increasing tourism	45.3%	24
Something else	17%	9

Question 13 of the survey concerns the contribution of the monarchy, with the plurality of respondents answering that the largest contribution is increasing the amount of tourism flowing into the United Kingdom. These answers in concordance with the overall age of the respondents show that younger people do not believe that the monarchy contributes significantly to the politics of the UK, but is rather an allurements for tourists to visit the country.

14. Do you think the Queen and the Prince of Wales should be allowed to consult or veto bills concerning themselves before they are discussed within the Parliament? (The Queen's/Prince's consent)		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	18.9%	10
No	62.3%	33
I have no opinion on this matter	18.9%	10

The majority of respondents believe the monarch should not be able to influence decision making of the Parliament on issues concerning their person. This supports the assertion that the practice is rather controversial among the populace of the United Kingdom, especially as it is one of the reasons the finances and wealth of the royal family are so heavily guarded, while also inherently undermining the position of the monarch as that of only a representative figurehead.

15. Do you think the monarch should be able to withhold the Royal assent?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	7.5%	4
Yes, but only if the Parliament can override the "veto"	20.8%	11
No, it should continue being a formality	47.2%	25
I have no opinion on this matter	24.5%	13

Interestingly, more than one quarter of respondents believe that the sovereign should exercise great power than is usual by being able to withhold the Royal assent, which has not been done since the early 18th century. The majority of the people who would prefer the sovereign be able to do that would however be willing to grant the power only if there was a possibility of Parliamentary override, which would make the Royal assent equivalent to a presidential veto as exercised in other countries, such as the Czech Republic or the US.

16. Do you support abolishing the monarchy?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes, definitely	22.6%	12
Yes, but only after the Queen's death	9.4%	5
Yes, but there are more pressing matters at hand that need to be solved	18.9%	10
I do not care	7.5%	4
No, but some changes should be made	18.9%	10
No, it should remain	22.6%	12

Despite most of the respondents believing the monarchy to be a symbol of Britain, over half of them answered that they support abolishing the monarchy, reflecting the waning popularity of the monarchy among younger people. The notion that the monarchy should only be abolished after the Queen's passing is also reflected in the answers. Less

than one quarter of people who answered this questionnaire would leave the monarchy unchanged, reflecting the further desire of the populace to modernize the institution.

17. Follow up: Do you support abolishing the House of Lords?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes, along with the monarchy	37.7%	20
Yes, but not the monarchy	15.1%	8
No, but the monarchy should be abolished	13.2%	7
No, same as the monarchy	34%	18

Over half of the respondents would abolish the House of Lords, an institution similar to the monarchy in that it is also an unelected governmental body. However, my assertion that there would be larger consistency between opinions on abolition of the monarchy and on the House of Lords was shown as incorrect, with more than a quarter of respondents answering that they would abolish only one of the institutions but not the other.

18. Who should become monarch after the Queen's death/abdication? (Assuming no abolition)		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Prince Charles	42.3%	22
Prince William	50%	26
Someone else	7.7%	4

Question 18 concerns succession to the throne of the United Kingdom, with the answers supporting the notion that Prince William is more popular than his father and the British people would rather see Charles be skipped in the line of succession or abdicate shortly after becoming king, clearing the path for his son.

19. For how long do you see the monarchy surviving?		
	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
<10 years	9.4%	5
<50 years	34%	18
<100 years	20.8%	11
>100 years	35.8%	19

The final question in the survey concerns how long the people think the British monarchy will persevere. Despite large support for the abolition of monarchy in a previous question, over half of the respondents do not believe the British monarchy will be abolished within the next 50 years, while a large majority do not see it being abolished in less than 10 years, thus showing that there can be optimism, or pessimism, depending on one's viewpoint, for the continued survival of the British monarchy.

Conclusion

This thesis has focused on the history of the British monarchy and its transformation over the course of time. It contemplates the issues of the current monarchy and its existence within the context of the 21st century both through theoretical analysis of sources and presentation of the results of a survey on the opinions of people who are subjects of the British monarchy, even if only by tradition.

The monarchy has managed to survive over a thousand years, while Britain has been transformed from a large number of independent states into one single kingdom and also from an elected monarchy into one that is hereditary, but its line of succession is and has been numerous times influenced by another governmental body, the Parliament. It has survived various dynasties claiming the throne; nevertheless, continuity of the monarchy has largely been preserved, with the current monarchy being able to trace its genealogical history back to the earliest eras.

While the support for the monarchy has been wavering in recent years, many people do still support the institution and do not wish for its abolition, or do not consider any such abolition a priority. The question of whether the monarchy has a place in the current era has also been pondered, calling into question its relative conservativeness. Here it is true many people would desire of the monarchy dispose of some of its archaic principles and its members bear responsibility for their own actions.

The desire of the royal family to modernise the institution and attempt to approach the common people of Britain can be reflected in their relatively quick utilizations of mass media over the last 100 years to enamours themselves to their subjects and their current usage of social media, attempting to shed light on the charitable and governmental work that they do and what their role in the current era is.

The future of the British monarchy cannot be safely predicted, just as any other future, especially in these turbulent times, but many people do believe that the monarchy of the United Kingdom will survive for a larger extent of time, at least in the United Kingdom itself, possibly less so in other Commonwealth nations, which have their own reasons for desiring its abolition, resting in the colonial past of the empire and the relative distance from the monarchy within these realms. The future of the monarchy within the United Kingdom stands entirely on the shoulders of successors of Queen Elizabeth, as its abolition within her lifetime is highly unlikely.

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Summary in Czech

Bakalářská práce *Význam britské královské rodiny v současné době* se zabývá nejen královskou rodinou dnes, ale taktéž její historií a jejími současnými problémy. První část práce se zabývá právě historií, přičemž se soustředí na historické okamžiky, které utvářely současnou podobu a roli monarchie ve společnosti Spojeného království Velké Británie a Severního Irsku.

Druhá část se poté zabývá především hlavními osobnostmi současné britské královské rodiny, tedy královnou Alžbětou a jejím nástupcem, ale taktéž i problémy monarchie v současné moderní době.

Třetí část práce je tvořena dotazníkem, rozšířeným mezi obyvatele Spojeného království, jehož úkolem bylo zjistit úroveň vědomostí Britů o monarchii, vlivu této instituce na běžné občany a dále pak jejich názor na členy a problémy monarchie a na její budoucnost a trvání.

Klíčová slova: Britská královská rodina, dějiny Spojeného království, Alžběta II., Princ Charles, monarchie v 21. století