Three generations of the Swedish Royal Family, with life partners. Clockwise from left: Christopher O’Neill, Princess Madeleine with daughter Leonore, Prince Daniel, Crown Princess Victoria with daughter Estelle, Prince Carl Philip, Sofia Hellqvist, King Carl XVI Gustaf, and Queen Silvia.

MONARCHY:

A MODERN MONARCHY

The Swedish Royal Family is one of the oldest royal families in the world, yet regarded as the world’s most modern by many. In 1980, Sweden became the first monarchy to change its succession rites so that the first-born child of the monarch is heir to the throne, regardless of gender. Ambitious and with charm to spare, Crown Princess Victoria seems more than ready for the task.

The Swedish monarchy is certainly used to the eyes of media. Recent years have offered up a series of weddings and births that have put them even more into the spotlight – nationally and internationally.

Perhaps none was as widely followed as the marriage on 19 June 2010 between Crown Princess Victoria and Daniel Westling. As the eldest of three siblings, Victoria is first in line to the Swedish throne, and as such she has become a highly popular ambassador for the country.

Heir apparent
Already before Victoria was born, there were discussions about changing the Succession Act and make it gender neutral. The change eventually took place three years after her birth but was made retroactive, which immediately changed Victoria’s title from Princess to Crown Princess.

The celebrations around her marriage to Daniel, previously a gym owner and personal trainer, lasted for three days, and thousands of people assembled to offer their congratulations. International press, meanwhile, spread the news around the globe.

Daniel Westling was given the title H.R.H. Prince Daniel, Duke of Västergötland. Eighteen months later they had their first child, a baby princess. Second in line to the Swedish throne, Princess Estelle Silvia Ewa Mary was born on 23 February 2012 at Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm.

Royal nuptials
Almost on the day two years later, on 20 February 2014, Victoria’s younger sister Madeleine gave birth to Princess Leonore Lilian Maria. The father is British-American businessman Christopher O’Neill. They are expecting their second child in the summer of 2015.

The couple were married on 8 June 2013 at the Royal Palace in Stockholm, and celebrations were held afterwards at the family home at the Palace of Drottningholm.
ROYAL HERITAGE

FRENCH ORIGINS

Swedish monarchs date back around a thousand years and have belonged to eleven dynasties, with the current one, the House of Bernadotte, ruling the longest. Jean Baptiste Bernadotte was the first Bernadotte on the Swedish throne. Born in France in 1763, he was named heir to the Swedish throne in 1810. His name as king was Karl XIV Johan. The Swedish Royal Family is related to all the reigning royal courts of Europe.

Drottningholm Palace, home to the King and Queen since 1981.

DROTTNINGHOLM PALACE

Drottningholm Palace, the home of the Royal Family, is on UNESCO's World Heritage List. The palace was built by the architect Nicodemus Tessin the Elder in the 17th century and is highly characteristic of European royal architecture of the time. Large parts of the palace and park are open to visitors.

Solliden Palace, the summer residence of the Royal Family.

SOLLIDEN PALACE

Solliden is the Royal Family’s summer retreat on Öland, a large island off the southeast coast of Sweden. Solliden Palace was designed in mutual consultation between architect Torben Grut and Sweden’s Queen Victoria, wife of King Gustav V. The construction took place between 1903 and 1906. During the summer months, the Royal Family gather at Solliden to spend time with each other in private.

To retain her H.R.H. title, Princess Madeleine has not taken the O’Neill surname. Unlike Prince Daniel, O’Neill has not added Bernadotte to his name, preferring instead to retain his UK and US citizenships. He therefore has no royal titles and is not an official member of the Swedish Royal Family.

Prince Carl Philip, the second oldest of the three siblings, is third in line of succession to the Swedish throne after Crown Princess Victoria and her daughter Princess Estelle. In June 2014 his engagement to Sofia Hellqvist was announced by the Swedish Royal Court. The wedding will take place on 13 June 2015 in Stockholm. Hellqvist is a former model and reality television contestant. The two have lived together since 2011.

Carl XVI Gustaf

It was not a coincidence that Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel chose to get married on 19 June. On that date in 1976, Sweden’s current King Carl XVI Gustaf married Queen Silvia.

King Carl XVI Gustaf is the seventh monarch of the House of Bernadotte. He was born on 30 April 1946 as the fifth child and only son of Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and Princess Sibylla. Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf died in an air crash in Denmark the following year.

In 1950, Carl Gustaf became Crown Prince of Sweden when his great-grandfather Gustaf V died and was succeeded by the then 68-year-old Gustaf VI Adolf, the Crown Prince’s grandfather.

After serving as monarch for 23 years, Gustaf Adolf passed away in 1973. That same year, at the age of 27, the Crown Prince became King Carl XVI Gustaf. His motto is ‘For Sweden – with the times.’

Queen with a career

In 1972, when still the Crown Prince, Carl Gustaf met his German-Brazilian future wife, Silvia Sommerlath, who was born in 1943 in Germany. They met in Munich during the Olympic Games, where Silvia was chief hostess.

A trained interpreter without either royal or noble origins, Silvia is the first Swedish queen to have had a professional career.

She married King Carl Gustaf in 1976. At the time royal weddings that included non-nobility were highly unusual, and Queen Silvia has since modernised the position of queen so that it is in step with the times. Her relationship with the King is considered very equal, and she has taken strong initiatives to pursue several social issues close to her heart, in particular children’s rights.

The King and Queen have three children: Crown Princess Victoria Ingrid Alice Désirée, Duchess of Västergötland, born on 14 July 1977; Prince Carl Philip Edmund, Duke of Värmland, born on 13 May 1979; and Princess Madeleine Thérèse Amelie Josephine, Duchess of Hälsingland and Gästrikland, born on 10 June 1982.

Since 1981 the Royal Family lives in Drottningholm Palace, outside Stockholm. However, only the King and Queen live there today.

FOR SWEDEN – WITH THE TIMES

Sweden is one of the world’s most stable and egalitarian democracies, with a monarchy that has strong roots and public support.

As head of state, the King is Sweden’s foremost unifying symbol. According to the 1974 constitution, the monarch has no political affinity and no formal powers. The King’s duties are mainly of a ceremonial and representative nature.

King Carl XVI Gustaf has a strong commitment to the global environment and is a recognised authority on environmental issues. Among other things, he has received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Award. He is likewise deeply committed to the preservation of Sweden’s cultural heritage and considers it important that the public has access to the royal palaces with their collections and parks.

Keeping busy

King Carl XVI Gustaf is an active monarch who keeps up to date on current affairs and the Swedish business sector.
FAMOUS SWEDISH MONARCHS

GUSTAV II ADOLF

Gustav II Adolf ruled from 1611 to 1632. By intervening in the Thirty Years’ War, he came to assume great political importance and is internationally the most renowned of Sweden’s kings. Under his rule, Sweden became a leading military power. Gustav II Adolf was killed in 1632 at the Battle of Lützen. Parliament chose to honour his memory by calling him Gustav Adolf the Great.

QUEEN KRISTINA

Excepting the brief caretaker government of Queen Ulrika Eleonora in 1719–20, Queen Kristina is the only female monarch of the Kingdom of Sweden. She succeeded Gustav II Adolf in 1632, just before her sixth birthday, and ruled for 22 years.

Kristina abdicated in 1654. She converted to Roman Catholicism, settled in Rome and was succeeded by her cousin, Karl Gustav. When he died in 1660, she travelled to Sweden in the hope of reclaiming the throne. However, her claim was rejected by Parliament, and Kristina returned to Rome.

GUSTAV III

Gustav III ruled from 1771 to 1792 and is often called the Theatre King. He was a keen patron of the arts, especially theatre and opera, and founded the first opera in Stockholm in 1782, the Swedish Academy and the Swedish Royal Academy of Music. Gustav III’s reign was not popular with the high nobility. Opposition culminated in a conspiracy in 1792, when Gustav III was shot by Jacob J. Anckarström at a masked ball held at the Stockholm Opera. The King died shortly after, and having admitted to the assassination, Anckarström was executed.

CROWN PRINCESS VICTORIA – SWEDEN’S FUTURE QUEEN

When she succeeds her father, Crown Princess Victoria will become Sweden’s 70th monarch, the third female monarch in the history of the Kingdom of Sweden, and the first since 1720.

The heir to the throne should be raised so as to represent Sweden in an appropriate and constitutionally correct way. This is in part to maintain the popular support of the Swedish people, a key to be effective.

Crown Princess Victoria’s agenda includes attending official dinners, openings and visits from foreign dignitaries. She also attends the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs and the information councils with Government ministers, and steps in as a temporary regent when needed.

In addition to two or three state visits abroad each year, he takes part in international trips organised by the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences and the World Scout Foundation. Under the collective label ‘Royal Colloquium’, the King also organises high-level seminars on various themes in collaboration with Swedish scientists.

The Royal Family receives thousands of invitations each year. Once a week, the King holds a planning meeting with the Queen, the Crown Princess and their closest staff members to discuss the invitations and decide which are most important. They make sure that their appearances are spread across Sweden.

When the King is prevented from performing his duties as head of state, for example during a trip abroad, Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Carl Philip or Princess Madeleine, in that order, assume the duties of temporary regent.

Victoria has by now made many official trips abroad as a representative of Sweden. Her first major official visit on her own was to Japan in 2001, where she promoted Swedish design, music, gastronomy and environmental sustainability.

She speaks English, French and German and is in great demand as an ambassador for Swedish ventures in culture, art and design – which are also personal interests.

Issues surrounding crisis and conflict management, including international peace-building, are also of particular interest to Victoria.
CROWN PRINCESS VICTORIA

ARTISTIC TALENTS

The Crown Princess enjoys both painting and drawing. She appreciates the cultural heritage left by her ancestors, and is also proud to wear the jewellery worn by previous generations of the Royal Family at major celebrations.

ROYAL TIES

The Crown Princess is in contact with other European heirs to the throne. She has had especially close ties with her Nordic counterparts, the heirs to the thrones of Denmark and Norway.

OFFICE IN OLD TOWN

Along with the King and the Queen, Crown Princess Victoria has her office and staff at the Royal Palace in Stockholm’s Old Town.

LEISURE INTERESTS

Crown Princess Victoria enjoys spending time in nature. She likes to take long walks, ski and pursue other outdoor activities. She is genuinely fond of animals and dogs are her favourites. As a young mother she spends time with her daughter Estelle in the gardens of their home.

LIVING IN HAGA PALACE

Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and their daughter Estelle live in Haga Palace outside Stockholm, the birthplace and early home of King Carl XVI Gustaf.

FUND FOR CHILDREN

The Crown Princess Victoria Fund was set up in 1997 to help provide recreational activities for children with functional disabilities or chronic illnesses. Approved grants cover expenses for recreational trips. Every summer, Swedish public service television (SVT) carries out fundraising drives for the Victoria Fund. The fund mainly survives thanks to donations by the public, but companies also contribute.

Thorough education

Victoria began her formal education at local public schools, switching to a private school when she began her secondary school studies. Despite having dyslexia, she graduated in 1996 with good grades thanks to a steadfast commitment and devotion to learning.

The Crown Princess’ studies at universities and other academic institutions constitute an important part of her education – but as heir to the throne she must also continuously maintain a breadth of knowledge on social issues. Courses in individual subjects have been prioritised over a specific academic degree.

After graduating from upper secondary school, the Crown Princess studied French for foreign students at the Université Catholique de l’Ouest in Angers, France.

In 1998, she enrolled at Yale University in the US where she studied for five semesters, taking courses in geology, history and international relations. During her time at Yale, her interest in international issues deepened and she took private lessons in current affairs, wrote an essay on the role of the United Nations in Iraq and completed internships at the UN in New York and the Swedish Embassy in Washington, DC.

In the spring of 2002, she continued her international studies at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, Sweden. She has studied the structure and functioning of Swedish society, partly through internships at Swedish government offices and various other institutions. Through a study programme at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), she visited Uganda and Ethiopia. She has also served as an intern at the offices of the Swedish Trade Council in Berlin and Paris, has undergone basic military training and has taken courses at the Swedish National Defence College (Försvarshögskolan) in Stockholm.

USEFUL LINKS

www.royalcourt.se  Swedish Royal Court
www.sweden.gov.se  Government Offices of Sweden
www.tacitus.nu  Historical atlas

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