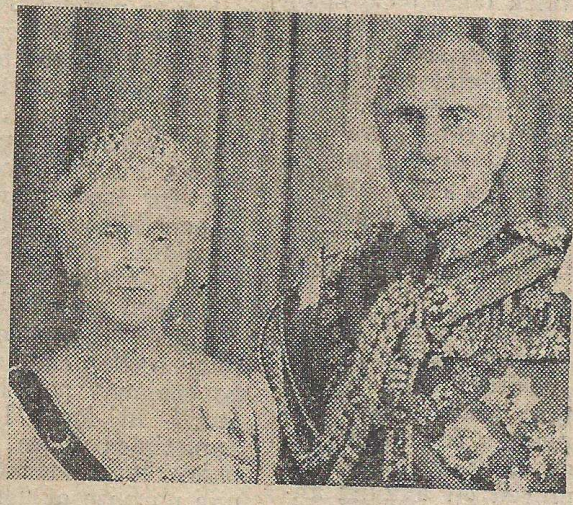




The Queen, Princess Anne and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother arriving at Sandringham Parish Church yesterday wearing mourning for Princess Alice.



Pictures spanning more than 70 years in the life of Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone — the young Princess at the time of her wedding with the Earl of Athlone on their golden wedding day in 1954; and in 1978 on her 95th birthday.



A revered Edwardian lady

BY the death of Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, at the age of 97, the Royal family loses a close friend as well as a relative.

With her husband, the late Earl of Athlone, former Governor-General of South Africa and of Canada, she had since Edwardian days been a familiar and well-loved figure in Court circles. Lord Athlone died in 1977.

Helen of Waldeck-Pyrmont, a sister of the late Queen Emma of the Netherlands.

Her father, who had been created Duke of Albany in 1881, died a year after her birth, and the infant Princess was brought up quietly at Claremont, Esher, by the widowed Duchess.

Marriage in 1904

None in the Royal family gave more unselfishly or more unstintingly of their time in the public weal than the young Princess Alice. She made nursing and the welfare of needy children her particular concern among a profusion of interests which were to endure throughout her life.

Her popularity was enhanced in 1904 by her marriage, in St George's Chapel, Windsor, to the Earl of Athlone, brother of Queen Mary, then known as Prince Alexander of Teck.

The Princess's husband was designated Governor-General of Canada in 1914, but when war broke out the term of the late Duke of Connaught, who held that office, was extended.

Welfare interests

In 1923 Lord Athlone became Governor-General of South Africa and the Princess took to Government House there her social gifts and zeal for service. She even took the trouble to learn Afrikaans to enable her to make personal contacts with people of Boer descent.

So successful was Lord Athlone's term of office that it was extended for two years at the request of the South African Government.

Lord Athlone became Governor-General of Canada in 1940. From then until 1946 Princess Alice repeated in Ottawa the success she had scored in Cape Town.

On her return to England she renewed her many charitable and welfare interests, which included the Women's Transport Service (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry) of which she was Commandant-in-Chief.

She was Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and made regular trips to that country by banana boat.

In the Royal Heritage TV series she recalled childhood memories of Queen Victoria in whose reign, at the age of four, she first appeared on the Buckingham Palace balcony during the golden jubilee celebrations in 1887.

She rejected the picture of Queen Victoria as a stern unbending matriarch by remembering the grandmother who smiled frequently and denied ever saying "We are not amused."

In 1933 Princess Alice proved her courage as the first member of the Royal Family openly to support birth control.

On safari in South Africa she once narrowly escaped the charge of a rhinoceros and later killed a wounded wildebeeste charging at her.

She attended four coronations, many Royal weddings, three jubilee celebrations and the funerals of five British monarchs.