

# WHO WAS QUEEN MAUD?

by Peter Donald

QUEEN MAUD OF NORWAY, who gave her name to the former Norwegian Antarctic Territory and to the mountain range near the pole, was a sister of George V of England, but the story of how she came to be Queen of Norway at the time of Amundsen's treks in the early years of this century is quite complicated.

In 1896 she had married her cousin, Carl, a first lieutenant in the Danish Navy and the second child of Frederick VII of Denmark, and his wife, Louise, who was a daughter of Carl XV, King of Norway and Sweden.

Their common ancestors were the Danish king and queen, Christian IX and Louise of Glücksborg, two of whose children had been Frederick and Alexandra. Frederick had been the crown prince of Denmark as the eldest child and had become king as Frederick VII. Alexandra, the second child, had married the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII of England, at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1863.

Carl, Maud's husband, was born at Charlottenlund Castle, on August 3, 1873.

Maud herself was born on November 26, 1869, the third daughter and fifth child of the Prince of Wales and his queen, Alexandra. She was thus nearly four years older than her husband-to-be.

The two families often holidayed with the Danish king at his residences of Bernsdorf and Fredenborg. The children grew to know each other well, and it was no surprise when they announced their engagement in 1896, seven years after Carl had entered the Danish Navy at the early, but no means unusual, age of 14.

Maud was now 26, and a pretty and intelligent young woman, although inclined to be reserved in the presence of strangers. This was perhaps the reason why, throughout her life, she was never to take a prominent part in public life.

Prince Carl, who had been made a second lieutenant in 1893, was promoted first lieutenant in the Danish Navy before the wedding, which took place in a private chapel in Buckingham Palace on June 22, 1896. Among the guests at one of the most splendid weddings of the European courts in the last years of the nineteenth century was the ageing Queen Victoria.

The queen's son, the Prince of Wales, gave his daughter an English residence as a wedding present. This was Appleton House, near Sandringham, which had long been and which still is one of the principal residences of the British royal family. The couple honeymooned at Appleton, and for the rest of their lives made frequent visits there to escape the rigours of the North European winter. It was here, too, that Alexandra, the only child of Maud and Carl, was born on July 2, 1903.

After their marriage, Maud and Carl set up home at King George's Palace, in Amalienborg, in Denmark. They led a relatively quiet life, which suited Maud, and Carl returned to his career as a Danish naval officer.

Neither could have suspected what the future held in store for them.

For many years Sweden and Norway had been a unified state, but in 1905, only two years after the birth of Maud and Carl's only child, the union of the two countries was dissolved.

Prince Carl was invited by the Norwegian parliament to be king of the newly independent country.

Although he was keen to accept, he had the foresight to suggest that there should be a national plebiscite to decide whether this move was acceptable to the Norwegian people. He had been made aware of the strong republican sentiment among many of the Norwegians, and this had caused his hesitancy.

His suggestion that there should be a plebiscite was accepted, and in the event the republican element was shown to be only a small part of the total electorate, for the voters of the new state divided in a ratio of 5:1 in favour of a monarchy.

Carl decided that his name had too much of a Danish ring about it, and he therefore changed it to the traditional Norwegian Haakon. He was crowned Haakon VII in Trondheim Cathedral on June 22, 1906, after having travelled to Norway in the Danish royal yacht *Dannebrog*. The journey of the new royal family up the Oslo fjord was slowed by fog and their arrival in Norway on November 25, 1905, was marked by almost continuous snow. However, the inclement weather did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the welcoming crowds. Following the arrival of the royal party, they took the traditional route of the Norwegian kings to Trondheim via Lilliehammer, the Valley of Gubrandsdal and Andalsnes.

Meanwhile, Maud and Carl, now Haakon, had also renamed their son Alexander with the historical Norwegian name Olav.

Maud was the first of the couple to die. They had enjoyed 42 years of happily married life at the time of a visit to London in 1938. During the visit Maud fell ill and died after an operation on November 20 of that year. Her body lay in state in the chapel of Marlborough House, London, where she had been christened, and was then taken to Oslo for burial in the battle-cruiser *H.M.S. Royal Oak*.

Her husband, King Haakon, lived for another 19 years, dying in 1957 at the age of 85. Olav, their son, succeeded him as King Olav V of Norway. In 1928 he had married Princess Martha of Sweden. There were three children of this marriage, the crown prince, Harald, and two daughters, Princess Ragnhild and Princess Astrid. Prince Harald married a commoner, Sonja Haraldsen, and so far two children have been born of the marriage, Martha Louise in 1971, and Haakon Magnus in 1973.

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