



PRINCESS DIANA

A LIFE AFTER DEATH



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During her life and for a period after her death Princess Diana was the most famous person in the world. The death of Diana on August 31st 1997 changed Britain.

So many people have had reactions to Diana's death. Diana's life has been subject to so many varied interpretations.

In the unstable summer of 1997 a strange atmosphere existed throughout Britain. Tony Blair had just won an election and the world's tabloid press was pursuing Princess Diana after her separation from Prince Charles.

There was an extraordinary and vibrant - if controversially intense - period of mourning immediately after her death, culminating in the strange drive to Althorp and Diana's hesitant burial on an isolated island.

Diana's death set the nation thinking deeply about monarchy and the royal family. It became a full-scale crisis for the monarchy.

Politicians had to get involved. Alistair Campbell and Tony Blair intervened to prevent a full-scale crisis for the monarchy, sympathetically guiding Palace courtiers on how to handle a potentially explosive reaction to an old-fashioned monarchy. A side-effect was legislation about the role of the press

and media in society.

The country was divided between those who thought the public grief displayed as being excessive and those that felt that the expression of this emotion allowed many Britons to change their emotional make-up and landscape forever. There is a strangeness and a power about the permanent effect that this remarkable woman has had on Britain and the world.

The "condition of Britain" after Diana's death has been greatly influenced - on the one hand through the life of her sons and family after her death - and on the other through the collective memory we have through the images and controversies of Diana's life.

Ironically the monarchy is now trusted more than ever before and it is politicians who have lost the nation's trust.

The charitable work and empathy of Princess Diana allowed the monarchy to change after her death, not least through the powerful influence of her sons William and Harry.

At the same time the selfless aspects of her wide interests continue to act as a form of both emotional ballast and inspiration to the British nation.



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