

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SPENT TIME WITH WILLIAM OR KATE, THERE'S ONLY ONE QUESTION TO ASK: WHAT ARE THEY *REALLY* LIKE, THEN?



"William relished being in Africa." With Charlie Mayhew, head of Tusk



Olivia Lichtenstein (below), film-maker and novelist, worked with Prince William on a documentary about his work as Patron of Tusk Trust

to a good tailor. He's articulate and his words tumbled out quickly as he made us laugh with anecdotes about mischievous chimps at a camp in Kenya.

I was there to begin filming. The first day, William met the Battle Back soldiers, injured servicemen and women who'd be running a

marathon in Kenya to raise money for Tusk. William immediately put them at ease as he joked about the wild animals that roam the route. He has the same relaxed manner as Princess Diana, and when we interviewed him in Africa a few weeks later, he talked about her.

"My mother instilled in Harry and me from a very young age that being grounded was very important," he told us. "I've really tried to keep that going,

and I know Harry has as well, because there's a lot of unreality in my life..." William made it clear that he and his brother don't want to be mollycoddled. I got the sense that their military lives are central to the feeling they have of living in the real world.

"If you're not grounded you don't ever know what's going on. You can sort of claim you do, but you don't ever feel it. So the more grounded and more normal—dare I say it—you can be, the better."

But however much they may wish it (and I get the strong sense that William really does at times), their lives are far from normal. When we next saw William, with Harry in Botswana a few weeks later, the world's press was out in force and there

My Royal Appointment

The first time I met William was in May last year at Clarence House. I was deep in the inner Royal sanctum, where the princes live. I noticed a family portrait on the wall—it was the Queen. He entered the room purposefully, his expression open and friendly, his hand outstretched in greeting. "Hello, I'm William."

It's often curious when you meet famous people in the flesh. Most are surprisingly small (Cheryl Cole, for example). Not so William. He's tall, slim, handsome and quick to laugh. His physique was badly served by an ill-fitting suit and I wanted to whisk him

COURTESY OF OLIVIA LICHTENSTEIN

was some unseemly jostling to get into position when the princes fondled two tame cheetahs at a nature reserve.

Both of them relished being in Africa. Later, on our own, William got bounced around in the back of an old Land Rover as we went off to start our interview. He's an Aston Villa fan and chatted with the crew about football. The cameraman and sound

"I like having a very plain, sort of normal, side to my private life. I listen to music: music is really important to me" **Prince William**

recorder, who have travelled the world and met all kinds of people, commented on how easy he is to be around and how likeable.

When William was about to board the small plane to fly back from the bush, I noticed that despite his small entourage of press and protection officers, he was carrying his own bag, which he loaded into the hold with a manner that suggested he's used to doing such things for himself.

**It's precisely this down-to-earth "chap-
pishness"** that's endearing and makes you aware of the burden royalty must be to bear. Can he ever do the things that men of his age normally do?

"Yes, I go out like anyone else," he said. "I like having a very plain, sort of normal, side to my private life. I listen to music: rock, dance, rap and hip-hop; music is really important to me." He has an iPod and commented on how much he enjoyed hearing Dizzee Rascal and Florence and the Machine at a music event in Wales, where he was currently stationed with the RAF.

He was philosophical about the constant

and intense interest in his love life [the announcement of his engagement was six months off]. "There's always speculation, but it comes with the job, so get on with it," he said, adding, "I'm very lucky to be in my position, so I won't complain." And he didn't. He was self-deprecating and modest and talked rapidly, almost as though he found it embarrassing to talk about himself.

Yet for all William's boyish enthusiasm (at times he seems younger than his 28 years), you catch a glimpse of a steely determination to be his own man that reminds you of his grandfather. When asked whether he has to accept that there will always be people who'll make decisions about what he can and can't do, his answer was firm. "No, that's the thing: I don't," he said. "I like to disagree with them because many of the things they come out with are old-fashioned and don't work nowadays, or are just wrong. People have incorrect views of what it's like to be in the Family, for instance, and I want to correct them...I take in lots of opinions and then make my own judgements. People have got different perceptions of how things should be and, invariably, you're fighting the system rather than anything else."

When William left at the end of filming, he leaned out of the plane and shook my hand, saying, "Bye, Olivia, thanks." It's impossible not to be charmed by someone who remembers your name. I wanted to tell him how proud his mother would be of him.

Australian author Kathy Lette, 52, met the royal couple at a polo event.

Arriving at the Dalwhinnie Crook polo match in Gloucestershire a year ago, I was sipping Pimm's in the marquee when I noticed a tiny version of our tent further down the field. Curious, I wandered off to take a peek. And there, all alone, was Kate Middleton. I was struck by the visual echo of Princess Di all forlorn at the foot of the Taj Mahal, and immediately suggested that she join in the fun with my friends. "Oh no," she laughed. "I have to watch every moment. There'll be an inquisition later," she rolled her eyes, with mock terror.

"Why don't you play, at least?" I suggested, as we rushed onto the field between chukkas to stamp down the divots. Ms M raised a wry brow and confessed, "I'm allergic to horses." Now it was my turn to laugh. "Hon, I think you might be marrying into the wrong family. I mean the Royals are so horsey they practically count with one foot!"

Kate's a match for William. She's personable, bright and also has an independent streak. During their brief separation in April 2007, the press made much of the snobbery William's upper-class friends directed at Kate's air-stewardess mother. It was reported that they would signal Kate's arrival by chortling "doors to manual". But I have no doubt the down-to-earth KM has already

concluded that the "cream of British society" just means rich, thick and prone to whipping.

Dudley Spencer, 36, from London, owner of the London League, a PR marketing and events agency

I was introduced to Prince William in 2008 by a mutual friend at Boujis, one of his and Kate's favourite London nightclubs. He was there having a good time and the atmosphere was very relaxed. He was friendly and welcoming and we chit-chatted. What struck me was his sense of humour, which I presume he gets from the Queen. He has brilliant comedic timing.

A few months later we organised a birthday party for his cousin Peter Phillips. Harry was also there and the brothers were constantly teasing each other—but William always got the upper hand. Peter tried unsuccessfully to blow out the candles;

William joked he was full of hot air.

The party started in a restaurant in Chelsea and was to move to a club across the street. Outside the back entrance, 50 paparazzi were waiting, and I was standing next to William, holding his umbrella, moments before the doors were flung open. Then,

after taking a deep breath, we crossed the street in the rain to the glare of flashing bulbs. I couldn't believe how calm and collected he was. But then he's been doing this all his life.

As told to Katreen Hardt



COURTESY OF KATHY LETTE

Oscar Gosby, aged 14, from Herne Bay in Kent, interviewed Prince William for a children's TV programme

In March 2009, I'd just recovered from non-Hodgkin lymphoma and Prince William was president of The Royal Marsden Hospital, where I was treated in the Children's Unit. He wanted to meet children who had survived cancer.

He asked me what had happened when I was ill. I told him a tumour was found in my lungs when I was ten, I lost all my hair and had to miss school for nearly two years. He asked if losing my hair was scary, but I told him it didn't matter, as it grew back quickly.

I got to ask him some really cool questions such as what his favourite food was. He told me I should try Marmite and banana sandwiches, but I'm still not convinced. I told him I have a younger brother, too, and asked if he ever falls out with his. He said yes, about silly things like who's better at football, or who's in charge of the TV remote or doing the washing-up, stuff like that.

As told to Adam Williams

Beth Nicholls, 33, from Leeds, met William in Zurich in 2010, when working on a bid for the 2018 Fifa World Cup

We all cheered when William walked into the room, but he immediately

put his hands up and said, "No, this isn't about me. You guys did all the work." He was humble without any sense of arrogance. He'd just given a speech to the voting members.



Beth Nicholls



Oscar:
"I asked William if he ever fell out with his brother"

Afterwards, he wandered around talking to everyone. When he approached me, I was struck by how tall and broad-shouldered he was. He has these twinkling eyes and wonderful smile. He laughed a lot and I was amazed at how easy it was to

talk to him. He was 100 per cent focused on me, despite the room being full of celebrities like David Beckham and Gary Lineker.

I got the sense that he really gets what normal people's lives are like and that he understands our

issues. When I asked him how he proposed to Kate, he blushed and said he'd been nervous and afraid that she might say no. The fact he was so open made him seem all the more normal.

In all we spoke for ten minutes and later I remember thinking, *That was the future King, and I just had the most ridiculously easy conversation with him.* As he made his way through the crowd I noticed there was no parting of the sea. It was as if Prince William was one of us. And I could tell that's exactly how he wants it to be.

As told to Katreen Hardt

Claudia Bradby, 42, from Hampshire, is a jewellery designer who met Kate when they collaborated on a work project

Kate became an accessory buyer for Junior Jigsaw in 2006 and she called me about a necklace.

The first time we met, in early 2007, I was impressed by how straightforward she was. She had a very clear idea of what she wanted, which was something simple, elegant and classy. I found her extremely focused and easy to work with. Of course she was charming and beautiful too. To my surprise, she was a lot taller than I thought. I'm 5ft 11 and she's about the same.

Kate is the type of girl that if you were a mum you would be thrilled if your daughter turned out to be like her. She is decent and understated. The whole time we worked together she only mentioned Prince William once when she said he was working really hard on the Diana Memorial concert that was taking place that summer. She didn't pepper her conversation with his name nor make any references to the royal family. She is very, very discreet.

As told to Katreen Hardt

Paula Wynne, 46, an author from Hampshire, met Kate when she ran the village shop in Bucklebury, three doors down from the Middleton's family home in Berkshire

There's nothing pretentious about Kate—she's a natural, modest girl. Even without make-up she looks gorgeous. She'd often come down the road in the morning to get the papers and, despite having her hair

BETH NICHOLLS: KENT MESSENGER GROUP (OSCAR)

☞ **“I remember Kate saying to me that she didn’t understand why the media was so interested in her” *Paula Wynne***

pulled back and wearing nothing but a jumper and jeans, she’d look perfectly styled. There was something about her that lit up the shop. If there were other people around she’d always stop to chat. She had the loveliest smile and could brighten up any day with her infectious giggles.

Once she came in and bought a pear saying it was her lunch. I remember my ex-husband then started telling her, in a fatherly way, that she needed to eat more and tried to get her to buy a beef and Stilton pie. But she politely declined.

When the news broke in March 2004 that Kate and Prince William were dating, the media camped outside our shop for a week—it was crazy. I remember Kate saying to me that she didn’t understand why the media was so interested in her—there were so many other more beautiful women out there they could photograph. Not that she didn’t understand the media frenzy, she just considered herself to be a normal girl.

As told to Katreen Hardt



June Scutter, 82, is now retired and lives in Berkshire. She first met Kate when she was her Brown Owl

When Catherine, as she liked to be called, became a Brownie in September 1990, I’d never have guessed that one day she’d get engaged to a prince. She was eight when I enrolled her and her sister Pippa in the 1st St Andrew’s pack. Although she was a year older than her sister, Catherine was shy, nothing like the glamorous icon she is today.

Even though she was timid, she took to the Brownies like a duck to water—she was one of my most conscientious girls. She worked hard to get her badges. I remember taking her and Pippa on a summer camp to the Cotswolds, the following Easter, where she thrived. The girls slept in two dorms in a building that was little more than a shed. There was a cook, but they’d wash up and sweep, in order to get their House Orderly badge. Catherine was the perfect housewife. As told to Claudia Joseph

CLAUDIA JOSEPH’S BOOK *KATE: THE MAKING OF A PRINCESS* (£7.99) IS OUT NOW

CLAUDIA JOSEPH/XCLUSIVE PIX

Kate at six. Even as a Brownie (circled), she had the makings of “the perfect housewife”



ROYAL DEGREES OF SEPARATION 3: SIMON COWELL



SIMON COWELL FAMOUSLY TOLD WILL YOUNG HE WAS “DISTINCTLY AVERAGE” ON *POP IDOL* IN 2002—BUT THEY KISSED AND MADE UP, WITH YOUNG GUEST-STARRING ON *THE X FACTOR*



WILL YOUNG PERFORMED AT MUSICIAN NITIN SAWHNEY’S CONCERT IN THE 2006 BBC ELECTRIC PROMS, AND THE PAIR HAVE WRITTEN AND RECORDED MUSIC TOGETHER TOO



NITIN SAWHNEY, EVER THE SOCIALITE, KNOWS PAUL MCCARTNEY TOO. THEY RECORDED A SONG CALLED “MY SOUL” WITH HIM IN 2008



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