

A ROYAL NIGHT OUT – Film at CONCA VERDE on 10.10.16 - Talk by Peter Anderson

From WIKIPEDIA

The film

A Royal Night Out is a 2015 romantic comedy-drama film directed by Julian Jarrold and written by Trevor de Silva and Kevin Hood. It was produced by Belgian, Swedish and British companies. The film stars Sarah Gadon as the young Princess Elizabeth, who with Princess Margaret (Bel Powley) ventures out of Buckingham Palace to enjoy the VE Day celebrations.....

Plot

On V.E. Day (**Victory in Europe Day**), in 1945, as peace is declared across Europe and London is celebrating, Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret are allowed to join the celebrations, against the Queen's wishes. The King, impressed by Elizabeth's pleading, asks her to report back on the people's feelings towards him and his midnight speech on the radio.

Each girl, incognito, is given a chaperone of an army officer, and an itinerary to be back at Buckingham Palace by 1am. Soon realising the planned itinerary by the Queen does not live up to their expectations of fun and meeting the ordinary people, Margaret is the first to slip away from her escort, followed by Elizabeth.

The Princesses are separated on two different buses, and Margaret is befriended by a Naval Officer seeking to take advantage of what he believes is just an ordinary girl, and Elizabeth by an airman who is absent without leave.

Margaret is led by her naval officer into a world of nightclubs, gambling, spiked drinks and brothels. Elizabeth and her airman have their own adventures trying to catch up with Margaret, which take them far beyond the 1am deadline into the early hours of the following morning.

Connection to actual events

The screenplay makes no mention that Princess Margaret was 14 years old at the time, Elizabeth was 19 years old and that they went out in a group of 16 including their nanny, several friends their own age and military protection including Group Captain Peter Townsend, at the time, 30 years old and still married. The two officer escorts and the airman in the screenplay were fictional creations. The group returned to Buckingham Palace at 1am.

The reviews

On Rotten Tomatoes, the film has a 71% rating, based on 51 reviews, with an average rating of 5.8/10. The site's consensus states: "Undeniably slight yet thoroughly charming, *A Royal Night Out* uses a fascinating historical footnote as a springboard into a fun dramedy diversion." Metacritic reports a 59 out of 100 rating, based on 16 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".

Townsend's relationship with Princess Margaret

Group Captain Townsend is best known for his romance with Princess Margaret. He had met the Princess in his role as an equerry to her father, King George VI. Divorced people suffered severe disapproval in the social atmosphere of the time, and could not remarry in the Church of England. Thus, despite his distinguished career, Townsend had no chance of marriage with the princess unless she renounced her royal privileges. Their relationship caused enormous controversy after Margaret's sister

acceded to the throne. The Princess eventually renounced Townsend, who was sent to take up a post at the British Embassy in Belgium.

Although Princess Margaret later married photographer Anthony Armstrong-Jones in 1960, she herself underwent a divorce in 1978.

From The New York Times by Joseph R. Gregory Feb. 10, 2002

Attractive and fun-loving, Princess Margaret earned a reputation in her youth as a free spirit. But her 20's were clouded by an unlucky romance with Group Capt. Peter Townsend of the Royal Air Force, a Battle of Britain hero with whom she fell in love when he served as an equerry to her father, King George VI.

A Daunting Hurdle: Divorce

In many ways, the group captain might have made an ideal husband. But the fact that he was divorced raised strong objections from the very establishment the royal family represented. As queen, Margaret's sister, Elizabeth, was the supreme governor of the Church of England, which forbade divorce. Moreover, in the early 1950's, the political storm surrounding Edward VIII's abdication in December 1936 to marry a twice-divorced American, Wallis Warfield Simpson, was a not-so-distant memory.

News media scrutiny was relentless and the pressure intense on Princess Margaret, then third in line to the throne, to break off the relationship. Bowing to the demands of a moral code that a decade later would seem quaint to many people, she chose not to marry him.

After Elizabeth married Prince Philip of Greece in November 1947, Princess Margaret became one of the most eligible single women in the world, and her name was coupled with various fashionable young men.

She first met Group Captain Townsend during the war, when he joined King George's entourage. The group captain's heroism -- he shot down 11 German planes -- was coupled with a low-key style that appealed to the king. Indeed, King George was godfather to one of his two sons by his wife, Rosemary Pawle, whom he married in 1941 and divorced in 1952 on the ground of adultery.

His relationship with the princess grew closer after the king's death in February 1952, but it did not become public until the coronation of Elizabeth II on June 2, 1953, when Margaret, in a gesture of affection that was captured by news photographers, brushed some lint from his uniform.

Princess Margaret was then 22 and Group Captain Townsend 38. He later wrote that their love "took no heed of wealth and rank and all the other worldly, conventional barriers which separated us."

But under the Royal Marriages Act, passed in the reign of George III, Princess Margaret could not marry without the sovereign's permission. Under intense media scrutiny, the affair became as politicized as the one involving King Edward and Mrs. Simpson 16 years before. Both Winston Churchill and the queen's private secretary, Sir Alan Lascelles, advised against allowing the marriage. Pressing Group Captain Townsend to end the romance, the British government posted him to the British Embassy in Brussels as air attaché in June 1953. Princess Margaret learned of his posting while she was on a tour of Rhodesia. After her return, the lovers kept in touch by telephone and managed to see each other secretly.

But the government continued to oppose a marriage, and though Princess Margaret turned 25 in 1955 and was thus free to marry without the queen's consent, it was made plain to her that if she chose to marry Group Captain Townsend she would lose her royal rights and income. In October of that year, the couple met in Britain, discussed their situation, and came to a decision.

"I would like it to be known that I have decided not to marry Group Capt. Peter Townsend," Princess Margaret announced in a statement. "Mindful of the church's teaching that Christian marriage is indissoluble, and conscious of my duty to the Commonwealth, I have resolved to put these considerations before any others."

Sympathetic observers later said that if the couple had been permitted to marry, the princess would have settled down to a more conventional life, like her sister. But in his 1978 autobiography, "Time and Chance," Group Captain Townsend wrote, "I simply hadn't the weight, I knew it, to counterbalance all she would have lost."

In 1959 the group captain married Marie Luce Jamagne, a 20-year-old Belgian. The next year, on May 6, 1960, Princess Margaret married Mr. Armstrong-Jones, also a commoner, who was given the title Earl of Snowdon.

It was often speculated how different her life might have been had the two been allowed to marry.

"In my opinion, this was the turning point to disaster for the royal family," said Harold Brooks-Baker, publishing director of Burke's Peerage, at the time of Group Captain Townsend's death. "After Princess Margaret was denied marriage, it backfired and more or less ruined Margaret's life. The queen decided that from then on, anyone someone in her family wanted to marry would be more or less acceptable. The royal family and the public now feel that they've gone too far in the other direction."

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The film show

This is the second film in English this year. The next film will be in English – the title being BROOKLYN and followed by the film in French TROIS SOUVENIRS DE MA JEUNESSE – I MIEI GIORNI PIU' BELLI. There are 12 films altogether till Xmas – 6 in English, 1 in French, 1 in German and 4 in Spanish.

Enjoy the film!