LIFE&WELLBEING HISTORY

Victoria Regina et Imperatrix - 200 years from her birth



At 4.14am on May 24, 1819, at Kensington Palace on the outskirts of London, a little girl called Alexandrina Victoria was born, the daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent, and his wife Princess Victoria Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. Her father, Edward, was the fourth son of King George III and his wife Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, while her mother Victoria, after whom she was called, was the fourth daughter and seventh child of Franz Frederick Anton, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, and Countess Augusta of Reuss-Ebersdorf.

Queen Victoria's mother had already been married to Charles, Prince of Leiningen (1763-1814), and from 1814 onwards she served as regent of the Principality during the minority of her son from her first marriage, Carl; the regency ended with her second wedding in 1818 to Prince Edward of Great Britain. She was to give her name to one of the greatest eras in British history, and hers is now the second longest reign in

The young Alexandrina Victoria was only the daughter of the fourth son of the British monarch; she was not born to reign. Her father was not Prince of Wales. However, fate favoured her.

"One does not have to be a monarchist, an Anglophile or pro-British to realise that it is high time a statue of Queen Victoria is erected in a square of Gozo's ancient town of Rabat"

This was because while George III, her paternal grandfather, had some 56 grandchil-Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Head own a copy of this popular movie. of the Church of England.

It is important to state from the outset that when the young daughter of the Duke of Kent the turbulent first years of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee. The statue depicts the elderly was born, the British monarchy was defi-rule, with continuous references to her monarch with a lace shawl, as she had nitely not at the highest point of its popularity. Whether dissolute, mad, bullying, eccen- Blunt and Rupert Friend featured as Queen tric or merely disagreeable, the first five Victoria and Prince Albert. The film is still Malta lace. The statue was restored in 2011 Hanoverian monarchs had done little to very popular with monarch lovers. endear themselves to their subjects.



Archbishop Pietro Pace (1831-1914), who instigated the petition to Queen Victoria for the area of Rabat, Gozo, and adjacent areas to

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monarchy; by 1848 - the 'Year of the Revolutions' - when she has already reigned for 11 upon the monarch's death in 1901, they years, many European monarchs had lost their throne. It was her duty to see to it that the monarchy popularity's would rise again and steal the hearts of her British subjects. Gradually, she became so popular and her reign so long, that she became like an idol. After her death, historians would speak of the 'Victoria era' and refer it with a sense of awe and appreciation.

the Great is a 1937 British historical film directed by Herbert Wilcox and starring Anna Neagle, Anton Walbrook and Walter Rilla; the movie was so successful that a sequel appeared the following year, Sixty Glorious Years. Other films followed. Mrs Brown (also theatrically released as Her Majesty, Mrs Brown) is a 1997 British drama film starring Judi Dench, Billy Connolly, Geoffrey Palmer, Antony Sher, much-lamented death of the Regent's sole score of 71 out of 100, based on 22 critics. latter name rather than by the former that it heir Princess Charlotte, in childbirth that indicating "generally favourable reviews". It is now referred to by one and all. year. Destiny prepared her way to the throne, is still a popular movie today although more and with the death of her paternal uncle, than 20 years have passed since it was pro- instead of that of Grand Master Manoel de King William IV, she automatically became duced. Monarchy lovers would definitely Vilhena's statue in 1891, which it replaced,

In 2009, the popular movie The Young Victoria was screened; it was a dramatisation of scription to commemorate Queen Victoria's enduring romance with Prince Albert, Emily

It was Victoria's role to attract once again and her handsome, young Indian attendant monument but the project was coordinated the love of the British nations towards their Abdul Karim was deemed so controversial by heritage NGO Din l-Art Helwa.

and scandalous by her family members that, scrubbed his existence from royal history. Shrabani Basu, the journalist who uncovered this friendship between Queen Victoria and Abdul Karim after a 2003 visit to the Queen's summer home, wrote about it in her book Victoria & Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant. Basu explained how the Queen had expressed interest in the Indian territories ahead of her Golden Jubilee in 1887. It was Since Queen Victoria's death, various most probably this book which inspired the movies have been filmed about her. Victoria film. After the filming, Brian Viner of The Daily Mail even stated that "Queen Victoria was born to be played by Judi Dench"; such was the success of the film that was screened in 2017.

Victoria is also the name of a popular eightepisode 2016 British television drama series starring Jenna Coleman as Queen Victoria.

In Valletta, the square in front of the National Library was originally called Piazza Regina after Queen Victoria. Its official name is now Republic Square and it is connected and Gerard Butler in his film debut. It was to Republic Street, the main street of the city. dren by the time she was born, not one of written by Jeremy Brock and directed It was after a statue of Queen Victoria was them was legitimate under the terms of the by John Madden. Metacritic, a review aggreerected in the middle of the square that it Royal Marriages Act of 1772, following the gator, assigned the film a weighted average was nicknamed Piazza Regina and it is by the

> The statue of the Queen was erected giving the square its present name. The statue was originally paid for by public subordered "eight dozen pairs long and eight dozen pairs short mitts, besides a scarf" of by the M. Demajo Group; the entity spon-The relationship between Queen Victoria sored the conservation-restoration of the

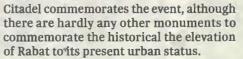
The 'Victoria Lines', originally known as the 'North West Front' and sometimes unofficially known as the Great Wall of Malta, are a line of fortifications that spans 12 kilometres along the width of Malta, dividing the north of the island from the south. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 highlighted the importance of the Maltese islands and the British, who were the colonisers of the Maltese islands, called the Great Wall of Malta the 'Victoria Lines' after Queen Victoria, who was also to become Empress of India. In 1998 the government submitted the Victoria Lines to Unesco for consideration as a World Heritage Site. The Victoria Lines owe their origin to a combination of international events and the military realities of the time.

On the island of Gozo, Victoria is the name of the island's main town. It was Queen Victoria who gave permission for the ancient town of Rabat in Gozo to be named after her. This took place through a document dated June 10, 1887; a fountain in Cathedral Square within the old Castello or

"She restored a sense of aura and respect to Britain's most ancient institution that had almost faded entirely due to the controversial lifestyle her uncles had adopted"



Poster of the 2016 television drama series Victoria, starring Jenna Coleman as the young



People in the 21st century may ask what legacy Queen Victoria left behind her, and this to the Victorian era. Victorian wallpaper, Victorian Christmas, Victorian furniture, Victo- and is still revealing. rian plumbing and Victorian font are only a One does not have to be a monarchist, nor been called after the queen-empress. Hundreds of places in the Commonwealth and all around the globe carry her illustrious name.

As to British history, she is considered by historians as the queen who "redefined a sense of aura and respect to Britain's most ancient institution, a respect that had almost faded entirely due to the controversial lifestyle that her uncles had adopted. In many ways, Queen Elizabeth II's British monarchy offers continuity with Queen Victoria's and reflects it in many ways longevity and both royal and political stabil-Victoria's and that of her great-great-granddaughter Queen Elizabeth.

past, the Commonwealth, consolidated during the reign of the present queen, can be a city in 1887.

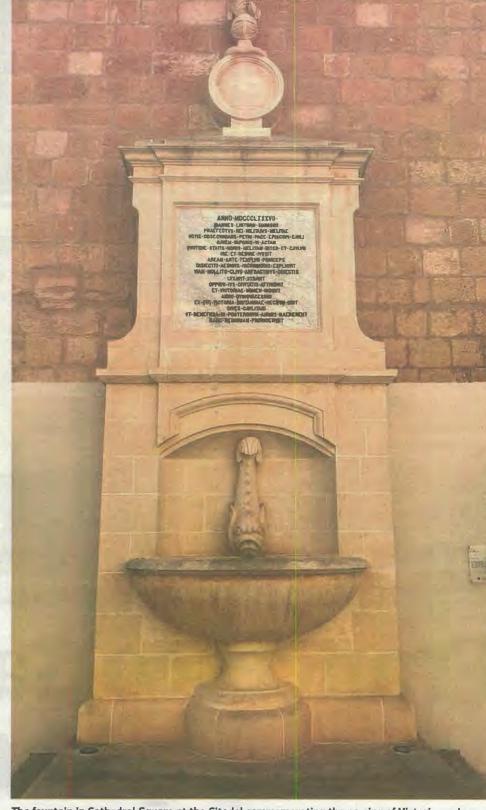


Poster of the 2009 movie The Young Victoria, dramatising the turbulent first years of Queen Victoria's rule, featuring Emily Blunt in the

considered one of the legacies that go back there are hardly any other monuments to to Queen Victoria's glorious reign. It would not be right not to mention the special dedication that Victoria had for the poor and the needy of her kingdom in an age characterised by the Industrial Revolution; her life would be reasonable considering the fact that and legacy continue to attract the attention she reigned for 64 years and gave her name of thousands if not millions of people, as the late TV series about her has revealed

few among the many other items that have an Anglophile or pro-British in his sympathies to realise that it is high time a statue of Queen Victoria is erected in a square of Gozo's ancient town of Rabat to commemorate the fact that it was she who - at the instigation of Bishop Pietro Pace and his friend and com-Britain's monarchy". She did, in fact, restore panion Sir Adrian Dingli, both of Rabat (Gozo) - bestowed the status of a city of Gozo's old town and gave her the new name of Victoria. While Rabat remains the most popular name for Gozo's main town, it will be known for posterity as Victoria after the great British queen and empress whose name became an icon to be remembered for ever.

A statue of the queen-empress in the ity, together with a healthy economy are roundabout next to Dar il-Gvernatur as one some of the common traits of both Queen arrives in Victoria from Mgarr would be the ideal way to commemorate such an important anniversary and give Gozo's With the British Empire a reality of the ancient town a long-deserved monument that has been lacking since Rabat became



MAY 19, 2019 | 57

The fountain in Cathedral Square at the Citadel commemorating the naming of Victoria on June



Queen Victoria with her controversial Indian attendant Abdul Karim.

Tzar Nicholas II, Queen Victoria and the future King Edward VII.



An 1896 royal family group photo showing (from left) Queen Alexandra with young Anastasia,