

# How the Queen stands the pace

Now visiting North America to open the St. Lawrence Seaway, Elizabeth II has become Britain's

most-traveled monarch; here's how she maintains her health despite her arduous schedule.

by Graham Fisher

*This exclusive report is based on the author's intimate knowledge of the British royal family. A resident of Kent, England, and one of that country's leading free-lance writers, Graham Fisher also has contributed to numerous American magazines.*

**WHEN QUEEN ELIZABETH II** arrived in Newfoundland en route to open the St. Lawrence Seaway, that great water highway linking the Atlantic Ocean with the heartland of North America, it was her second visit to Canada in less than two years and her ninth overseas tour in 36 months.

In fact, in her seven years on the throne, Britain's queen has already done more globetrotting than any previous monarch managed in a whole lifetime. One trip alone—her 1953-54 tour of Australasia—saw her cram 43,000 hectic miles of travel into a period of six months.

Some of her subjects think she is trying to do too much. They worry whether her health will stand the strain, for Elizabeth's arduous overseas tours come on top of the average 300 public functions she attends each year in Britain, and the countless receptions, investitures, and banquets she holds at Buckingham Palace.

A royal tour is far from being the vacation trip many people imagine. Frequently, Elizabeth's first engagement of the day is as early as 8 when she climbs into her car, aircraft, or train. This means rising two hours earlier if her clothes are to be worn immaculately and her hair style and make-up are to do her justice. Her day often winds up with a ball ending not earlier than midnight with the prospect of another early engagement the following day.

Royal tours mean long hours of standing, a constant smile—in itself a tiring strain on the face muscles—and the ordeal of a thousand handshakes, many of them the painful, too-tight grips of nervous people. I can reveal that Elizabeth has her own secret way of avoiding injury to her much-pumped right hand. She proffers only three fingers for a royal handshake.

Her busy, bustling overseas tours afford the Queen little free time. During two months in Australia, for example, she had only six completely free days and five half-days—a working round few business executives would tolerate.

The schedule for her Canadian tour promises to be no less exacting. In the six weeks between mid-June and the end of July, traveling by airplane, yacht, train, and car, she will visit Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Canada's northern areas, and the Prairie and Maritime Provinces, with a side trip to Chicago tossed in.

How does Britain's petite, rather frail-looking young monarch stand up to this grueling workaday round that few male executives could endure without getting ulcers? How does her health match up to her giant task of running Royalty, Inc.?

The answer is: pretty well, on the whole.

Not counting such comparatively minor ailments as mumps, measles, and sore throats, Britain's queen has had only one real breakdown of health since she ascended the throne. This was the attack of sinusitis brought on last year by her dogged insistence on sticking to her planned schedule of outdoor functions despite the torrential downpours of a Summer which was wetter than usual.

If last year's illness was also a warning to Elizabeth that she was trying to tackle too much, then it was one which she seems largely to have disregarded. Scarcely was she up and about again after her operation than she got busy planning visits to places and people in Britain she had had to pass up while she was ill. Even the long Summer vacation which followed her illness—a form of convalescence—was broken into for official visits to townships in Wales and Scotland.

Make no mistake about it—despite her apparent frailty, Britain's queen is the healthiest monarch that country has known since the days of Queen Victoria. And Elizabeth's determination and drive match her physical condition.

**ON PAPER**, the Queen's health is safeguarded by almost a regiment of honorary physicians and surgeons. Actually, they are seldom called in. Elizabeth is no mollycoddle. In fact, her attack of sinusitis was probably the more severe because she ignored the warning signs of a swinging temperature, plugging doggedly ahead with her official schedule when she should have been resting in bed.

When they are called in, her physicians do not let her take unnecessary chances. Before their last visit to Canada and the United States, both the Queen and Philip were vaccinated against Asian flu, which was on the rampage at the time; for their 1954 trip to Australia they were given anti-polio shots.

But Elizabeth firmly believes that hard work, fresh air, regular meals, and moderation are the main requisites for a healthy life.

Whenever she can escape the royal round for any worth-while length of time, she heads either for Balmoral Castle, in the highlands of Scotland, or for Sandringham, that equally away-from-it-all royal residence on Britain's windswept eastern seaboard. Away from the spotlight, she climbs into old, well-worn, comfortable clothes, her face bare of make-up, and walks through the woods and hills in all weather so that the sun, wind, rain, and fresh air can bring back the color to her cheeks.

Most Britons would gape if they could see their

queen as I have occasionally seen her at Sandringham—with snowboots, an old raincoat belted casually, her hair covered with a scarf—as she tramps the snow-covered fields with her dogs.

Her fine complexion, which excites admiration from those who glimpse her close up, stems in part from this love of fresh air. Her other secret is soap and cold water.

Ever since she was a small girl, she has carefully followed her mother's advice that cold water, internally and externally, is one of the finest inducements to good flesh and a clear complexion.

Seen at close quarters, Britain's queen is even lovelier than her photographs suggest. Elizabeth does not photograph well, and the results usually do less than justice to her warm, tooth-paste smile and her Marilyn Monroe-like figure.

In food and drink her tastes are simple. At public functions she is careful to drink only in moderation. She is content with a single glass of sherry at cocktail parties and cheerfully toys with the same glass of wine all through dinner.

Contrary to much that has been written about her, she does not keep slim by periodically cutting down on starch, sugar, and liquids or taking slimming pills. There is little reason for her to do so. The nervous energy she puts into the royal round is enough to keep her in trim. It was noticeable, despite all her official banquets, that she lost weight during her Australian tour and again during her 1956 visit to Nigeria. Today, despite motherhood, she has better contours than she did at 21.

At official banquets, she is careful to guard against overeating. Menus are submitted to her in advance so she can suggest any change she wishes, such as the substitution of clear soup for thick.

At the table she is waited on by her personal footman, who travels with her. This enables her to have some of each course (so that the other guests feel free to eat without upsetting royal etiquette), but ensures that most of her helpings are merely token tastings.

Rumors that the queen diets from time to time probably stem from the fact that, at home, she insists on balanced meals, low in fats and starch, high in proteins and vitamins. For breakfast, she prefers fresh orange juice with eggs, grilled bacon, or a mixed grill. She does not like grapefruit or melon, and seldom touches fish. For dinner, she prefers hors d'oeuvres, followed by filet of steak, saddle of lamb, or escallop of veal. She avoids root vegetables, preferring young peas, green beans, or asparagus. She never touches dessert or ice cream. Instead, she has mushrooms, sardines, or scrambled eggs on toast followed by fresh fruit—an apple, peach, or grapes.

Elizabeth's only constitutional weakness seems to be a reaction to rough seas. For this reason, most of her overseas travel these days is by air. But even

seasickness is no match for her will power and sense of duty. On one visit to the Channel Isles, just off the French coast, the sea crossing left her so groggy that her officials suggested postponing or abridging her engagements. Elizabeth would not hear of it. She swallowed a couple of aspirins and carried on doggedly with the complete itinerary.

Her tendency to seasickness is probably linked with her naturally nervous disposition. She is much more nervous and shy than anyone would imagine. It is a family weakness. Her father was the same way. So is her son and heir, Prince Charles.

To quiet her nerves before any major public ordeal, Elizabeth sometimes sucks one of the glucose tablets which her lady-in-waiting carries for such emergencies. She also finds tea with sugar and milk a nerve-soother and conscientiously begins each day with a cup of tea brought to her bedside.

**ELIZABETH** knows her own weaknesses. She knows, for example, that she is inherently shy and apt suddenly to dry up in conversation with strangers. She overcomes this by an immense amount of homework prior to each fresh tour, carefully reading up on the places she will be visiting and the more important people she will be meeting. This homework provides her with a handy conversational fund that helps to overcome her shyness.

It also makes her surprisingly well-informed on all sorts of unusual topics. She amazed everyone, on an earlier visit to British Columbia, by knowing all about that province's official emblem, the humble dogwood tree.

You can bet your last dollar that she will have all the facts and figures about the St. Lawrence Seaway at her fingertips, and what it means to Canada and the United States in terms of industry, commerce, and power.

She will have read up on the fact that the \$600 million hydroelectric project will attract new industries to Ontario, New York, and the adjacent American states. She will know exactly what the Seaway means to both America and Canada in terms of transportation—that it will enable iron ore to be shipped more cheaply from Quebec and Labrador to the huge ore-consuming mills of the United States and central Canada, American coal to reach Quebec at a saving of \$1 to \$2 a ton, that manufacturers and consumers of flour, auto parts, iron and steel products, coke, and fertilizers will all benefit from cheaper transportation. Canadians responsible for arranging the royal tour have told the Queen: "It is a major achievement in the history of Canadian transportation . . . an investment in the future of this country."

And Queen Elizabeth II, as she performs the official opening ceremony, will be mindful that that goes for the United States, too.



Cold water, fresh air, regular meals, and moderation help to keep the Queen royal yet relaxed.