

21 February 2017 - Theme: Royal Couple 80th birthdays

Both King Harald V and Queen Sonja turn 80 this year. Crown Prince Harald was born on 21 February 1937 - the first time in 567 years that an heir was born in Norway. A little over a month after Prince Harald's third birthday came April 9; the German occupation and escape across the border to Sweden. Next came five years in exile in the United States with his mother and siblings.



When Prince Harald returned home in 1945, he had lived most part of his life as a refugee. Now schooling awaited; Prince Harald attended regular Norwegian school and took his A-levels in the sciences at Oslo Cathedral School in 1955. Subsequently came officers' training school and military academy, and two years of study in Oxford. Prince Harald lost his mother in 1954 and just three years later King Haakon died. With sorrow and sadness he took another step towards the throne to which he would later ascend. On 17 January 1991, King Olav V passed away in his sleep at Kongsseter Royal Lodge and the Crown Prince and Princess were now king and queen of Norway.

Sonja Haraldsen was born on 4 July 1937 in Oslo. She was educated in Switzerland and later studied at the University of Oslo. The years as the girlfriend of the Norwegian heir to the throne took their toll. The nine years from when they met at a ball until King Olav gave his consent to the marriage in 1969, were almost unbearably long and both have since talked openly about the difficult years on many occasions.



Queen Sonja is not just known as an accomplished art historian, she is an active artist herself, both with a camera in the Norwegian outdoors and inside a studio with both graphics and canvas. King Harald is and has been one of our top sailors, and pictures of his daring trip to the Amazon have delighted and impressed many. We wish them both a happy anniversary.