



Balmoral: Queen Victoria's Highland Home (Bloomsbury Reader)

Ronald Clark

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First published in 1981, this is Ronald Clark's engagingly readable account of Queen Victoria's relationship with "Our dear Balmoral" and the life that went on there.

The biography of Balmoral begins with the first visit to Scotland of the young Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert in 1842. Five years later, while bad weather envelops the Royal party in western Scotland, the son of the Queen's physician, convalescing in Old Balmoral, reports blazing sunshine from Upper Deeside. The death of his host shortly afterwards opens the way for the Royal acquisition of the Balmoral estate and the building of the new Castle in 1853-55.

In the period up to Albert's death in 1861 Balmoral becomes the setting for many of the Royal couple's happiest moments as they revel in the beauties of the scenery, relish the picturesque pageantry of Highland life, enjoy their incognito expeditions into the surrounding country, and - in Albert's case - discover a passionate enthusiasm for deer-stalking. After the Prince Consort's death Balmoral becomes a mausoleum of memories, but also a source of strength enabling the Queen to survive her devastating loss. About the time of the Golden Jubilee of 1887 there is an Indian summer, with members of the Queen's extensive family rallying round and dances and entertainments displacing some of the black-crepe gloom. In 1896 there is the colorful visit of the Tsar, with his wife and daughter. The closing section links Victorian Balmoral with the life of the Castle today.

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