

CAMILLA TOMINEY

It is time for royal couple to lighten up

Picture: NBA/Reuters

I WAS watching William and Kate meet Beyoncé and Jay-Z in New York last week when the penny finally dropped. There we all were at this hip new stadium in Brooklyn and the Cambridges looked distinctly out of place.

Suddenly they popped up on the big screen but it took them several seconds to realise, even though a man was pointing a handheld camera directly at them.

It was as they smiled awkwardly and waved in that way only royals can that it dawned on me. For all their celebrity, for all the column inches and red-carpet fever they create, for all their informality, the Cambridges aren't cool.

Seeing them meet Mr and Mrs Carter, as Bey and Z are known maritally, felt quite uncomfortable. I was up in the nose-bleed section so couldn't hear what they were saying but William and Kate appeared so how-do-you-do-ish I dread to think what might have happened had the rapper proffered a fist-bump.

The cringefest continued as the royal couple, last week dubbed Mr and Mrs Bland by much of the press, met basketball star LeBron James after the match.

Maybe Kate was startled by the Cleveland Cavalier player's 6ft 8in height but she reacted to his friendly arm gesture as a young female radio researcher might an advance by Dave Lee Travis.

Perhaps it was because she isn't "cool" with being photographed either. I spent last week in the Big Apple staring at the back of the Duchess's head, as did most of the snappers standing for hours on end in the freezing wind and rain.

Such cold-shoulder treatment would be understandable if she was at the supermarket (no one wants the press at their Waitrose shop, except Pippa Middleton) but these were official royal engagements on behalf of the Queen. Make an effort, love, you're part funded by the taxpayer!

The Queen Mother used to turn both ways whenever she got out of a car. Even Camilla looks straight down the lens.



OUT OF PLACE: The Duchess of Cambridge meets Beyoncé and her husband Jay-Z at a basketball match in New York

What's Kate's excuse? I like the Duchess and honestly believe there is a great deal more to her than meets the eye but at the moment she is appearing too posh to push the envelope.

I tend to avoid comparisons with Diana, because they are different women in different times but at least the late princess understood that you cannot be all style over substance. Kate appears all baubles and no balls. That said, she could just be a slow burner. I hope she takes a leaf out of her brother-in-law's book and

grows in confidence to be herself, rather than a royal robot.

Prince Harry is the king of cool because like his mother, he appears more like one of "us", than one of "them" thanks to his natural ability to engage with the press and public. Kate struggles with that. The chances of her coming up with so much as an aside are up there with Prince George starring in the next series of Kids Say The Funniest Things.

Is he even talking yet, I wonder? We wouldn't know since the royal couple have kept him so under wraps the British public has not seen him since his christening more than a year ago. (Staged photographs once in a blue moon are all well and good but what about bringing him out in public occasionally?)

While we all respect their right to privacy and a family life, is it any wonder that William and Kate come across as insipid when all we get is a highly stage-managed version of their lives completely devoid of any spontaneity? It is as if they would rather nothing made it into the papers without their say-so, which is not how this royalty lark works.

After a while such control freakery backfires because the public tires of it. Perfect people tend to be rather boring.

William and Kate refuse to let their guard down amid a misplaced fear that they will open some imaginary set of floodgates, even though they have been going about their privileged lives largely undisturbed for years.

Hounded? That term could equally apply to the increasing number of journalists and photographers on the receiving end of complaints from their PRs and lawyers. Contradict the spin or breach their unreasonable expectations of privacy (when can a public park ever be private?) then expect a snotty missive.

Come on, Cambridges, lighten up! Or as Jay-Z might put it: be cool.

LABOUR MP Frank Doran's claim that the post of fisheries minister would be an unsuitable job for a woman will not have gone down well at Buckingham Palace.

As a keen fisherwoman, there isn't much the Queen doesn't know about the subject while the Queen Mother was one of the most accomplished anglers of her generation.

Sexist politicians really should stop carpin' on like this.

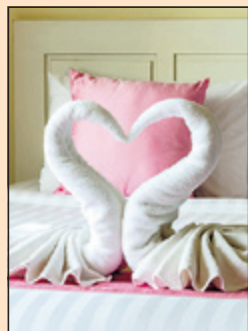
I KNOW it is wrong but how good are the leaked Sony emails? In the hacked messages, Hollywood producer Scott Rudin accuses Angelina Jolie of being a "minimally talented spoilt brat" while branding her forthcoming epic Cleopatra a "£180million ego bath".

A group calling itself Guardians Of Peace has claimed responsibility, saying it hacked into the company's network last month with the aim of forcing Sony to cancel the release of comedy The Interview, which makes fun of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un.

In one email to Sony Pictures co-chairman Amy Pascal, Rudin, whose credits including The Social Network and Captain Phillips, lets rip: "There is no movie of Cleopatra to be made (and how that is a bad thing given the insanity and rampaging spoiled ego of this woman and the cost of the movie is beyond me) and if you won't tell her that you do not like the script, which let me remind you, SHE DOESN'T EITHER, this will just spin even further out in Crazyland but let me tell you I have zero appetite for the indulgence of spoiled brats and I'll tell her myself if you don't."

Will he, really? Personally I cannot wait for THAT red carpet encounter at next year's Oscars.

WHAT are we doing about Christmas cards this year? I'm wondering whether I can get away with another year of only sending to those who have sent to us. I know it is a bit bah humbug but blame the Royal Mail for turning us all into Scrooges. At 53p a pop, even sending cards second class seems ostentatious. Who needs smug festive round robins about high-achieving children and exotic holidays when you can send out the message that you are rolling in it simply by posting your cards first class?



SWAN: Towel and error

APPARENTLY we experience thrills from mundane acts like seeing gifts being wrapped or watching someone fold towels.

The phenomenon, dubbed Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR), has spawned a cottage industry online, with dozens of video artists catering for thousands of enthusiasts. One 18-minute clip, of a woman folding towels and napkins, has been watched more than 770,000 times.

Which reminds me of a cruise we took with the children several years ago. It was on the last day when my husband declared a desire to take part in a "towel-gami" session that I realised cabin fever had set in. Never again.