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Will Kate take a leaf out of Euro royals' baby albums?

THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS: Crown Princess of Sweden Victoria with daughter Estelle

PRINCE WILLIAM'S first photocall came when he was just a day old. Wrapped in a crocheted white blanket and nestled in the arms of his mother Diana, Princess of Wales, the future king was oblivious to the cheers of wellwishers gathered outside St Mary's Hospital as he was whisked away by his proud parents. Can we expect similar scenes when the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge present their newborn to the world?

With the global media expected to descend on whichever hospital Kate chooses to have the baby, the new parents will not be able to avoid the photographers waiting outside but the most eagerly anticipated royal birth in modern memory does pose problems for a couple so fiercely protective of their privacy that they frequently complain about photographs they believe to be too intrusive, even when taken in a public place.

The recent hullabaloo surrounding pregnant Kate being pictured on a beach in a bikini during a holiday to Mustique shows just how sensitive the couple have become about being photographed outside official duties. Nevertheless, the nation and indeed the world, will be clamouring for pictures of Baby Cambridge that by their very nature will require William and Kate to lay themselves bare like never before.

Having only ever given one joint interview, to mark their engagement in November 2010, the couple are not used to discussing their private lives. Only time will tell if they are minded to share their emotions on what is the biggest milestone in most people's lives: starting a family.

A spokesman for St James's Palace said it was "too early" to say definitively how they intend to manage photography of their little one, although it is being discussed at the highest levels.

As with most parenthood problems in life, there is a solution and, as is so often the case with dilemmas of an infant nature, the answer lies in Scandinavia. In countries like Sweden, Denmark and Norway, the royals have enjoyed a harmonious relationship with the press precisely because they have learned to give the media exactly what it wants. The closest Continental comparison to William is Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, who in February last year gave birth to Estelle, her first child.

Having previously been fiercely protective of her privacy (partly as a result of suffering eating disorders as a teenager) Victoria's attitude to the press shifted upon marriage in 2010 and practically performed a 180 degree turn with motherhood. Within hours of Princess Estelle's birth on February 23 last year, the palace released the first of many pictures of Victoria, 35, and her husband, Daniel, 39, holding their baby.

Four days after that, a series of photographs that were taken by Daniel were released. Then came a set of professional portraits the following month. In April, to mark the 66th birthday of the baby's grandfather King Carl Gustaf, Estelle made a surprise appearance on the palace balcony. Then came baptism pictures in May, photographs from the family's first holiday in June and in July there was another package of shots from Victoria's own birthday celebrations.

In August came photographs taken in Victoria and Daniel's

Royal Editor CAMILLA TOMINEY looks ahead to the birth of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's first child, and the lessons they could learn from Scandinavia about family photocalls



PHOTOCALL: The Danish royals snapped at the start of one of their holidays, above, and the Cambridges who have given only one joint interview since 2010



back garden and two months later even more showing Estelle among the autumn leaves. At Christmas the couple produced cute pictures of their daughter in a festive red dress, as well as giving a TV interview about the joys of parenthood. The latest set of snaps, featuring Estelle blowing out the candles on her first birthday cake, are arguably the most intimate (and adorable) royal baby photos ever to have been published.

Such openness is nothing new in neighbouring Denmark, where Crown Prince Frederik and his wife Mary (whom William and Kate met during a visit to Copenhagen in 2011) regularly pose on private holidays with their four children, as do the Dutch royals.

That Victoria should be so open is significant. She is even more senior than William in her own royal ranks because she is already deputy head of state and heiress to the throne, not second-in-line like the prince.

ESPEN KJENDLIE, the royal reporter for *Se og Hør* magazine, said the Crown Princess had never been more popular: "Her openness has been surprising but it is a new generation of royals carving out their own path. They could not have been any smarter about the photography element. Because they have given the press so many pictures, there has never even been a demand for paparazzi shots because we see them every month."

"It is the same when they are on holiday. All the royals over here let the photographers take pictures at the beginning of the holiday and then they are left alone. There is no need to pap people who make themselves so accessible, not only on official engagements but also in their private lives."

Kjendlie said the Swedish royals had been using Facebook and social media to great effect: "The photos of Estelle have all been released on Facebook so everyone can see them. We can only hope something similar will happen when Baby Cambridge arrives."

Will it though? Joe Little, managing editor of *Majesty* magazine, thinks it unlikely. "The approach of the Scandinavian royals is proving immensely popular. Before she got married, Victoria was a very private person but now she has become a mother she appears keen to share pictures of her daughter, the future Queen of Sweden, with everyone."

"The frequent release of pictures maintains people's interest so it is a smart approach but I have to say I don't think we are going to see anything like the number of images of Baby Cambridge."

"William and Harry were quite visible from a young age because of Diana but I can't see William following in his mother's footsteps. It will all be done through gritted teeth."

That may well be the case if William remains in charge of his family's public image but what if Kate takes the lead? If she is anything like her ambitious mother Carole then she will no doubt insist on her children being presented in the best possible light. After all, if Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden's approach tells us anything it is that mother usually knows best.