# Thatcher’s gift of rubber gloves reveals softer side of her relationship with Queen Elizabeth at Balmoral



The Balmoral Estate in Scotland has long been considered a sanctuary for the Royal Family, offering them a rare opportunity to relax and be themselves away from the public eye. This venue holds special significance, especially for the late Queen Elizabeth II, who cherished the freedom and privacy it offered. On 4 May, the nation marked 46 years since Queen Elizabeth invited Margaret Thatcher to form a government, a notable moment that made Thatcher the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The relationship between the Queen and Thatcher was famously complex, characterised more by formality than personal warmth. Despite this, there were occasional moments of levity. The late Prime Minister made annual visits to Balmoral throughout her eleven years in office, although her experiences there were often marred by discomfort. Thatcher reportedly referred to her stays as “purgatory,” a sentiment that reflects her disconnection from the Royal Family's leisurely lifestyle, including family barbecues and woodland walks.

An anecdote from these visits highlights the peculiarities of their relationship. During one of her stays, Thatcher was taken aback to see Queen Elizabeth engaged in washing up without gloves. This surprising sight seemed to prompt a kind-hearted response from Thatcher, who later sent the Queen a gift of rubber gloves. According to author Lady Colin Campbell, who shared this story in "Secrets of the Royal Kitchens," the gesture was described as “rather sweet,” indicating a light-hearted attempt to ease the Queen’s chores.

This interaction encapsulates the nuances of their dynamic, revealing how even in conditions of perceived incompatibility, gestures of goodwill could emerge. Thatcher’s thoughtful present serves as a small but poignant example of the complexities surrounding their professional and personal exchanges.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.royal.uk/balmoral-castle> - This page provides detailed information about Balmoral Estate's significance to the Royal Family, highlighting its role as a private retreat for relaxation away from public scrutiny.
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52231117> - The article discusses the lasting legacy of Queen Elizabeth II regarding her family traditions and the importance of Balmoral in her life, corroborating her fondness for the estate.
3. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1032488/Margaret-Thatcher-Queen-Elizabeth-II-Balmoral-purgatory-stays> - This piece touches on Thatcher's annual visits to Balmoral and her discomfort during these stays, supporting the claim about her feelings towards the royal lifestyle.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/oct/31/margaret-thatcher-and-the-queen-a-friendship-in-contrast> - The article examines the complex relationship between Queen Elizabeth II and Margaret Thatcher, emphasizing their formal interactions and occasional moments of levity.
5. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN04565/margaret-thatcher-biography> - This biography of Margaret Thatcher includes references to her time as Prime Minister and her experiences with the Royal Family, further contextualizing her visits to Balmoral.
6. <https://www.royalbiography.com/queen-elizabeth-ii-and-margaret-thatcher> - This resource details notable anecdotes and the dynamics of the Queen's relationship with Thatcher, including the rubber gloves story, providing insights into their interactions.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/2049916/queen-elizabeth-margaret-thatcher-royal-family> - Please view link - unable to able to access data