

It's a boy for Prince William and Kate

The baby, who was born on Monday, is fifth in line to the British throne

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Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, smiled and waved as she left the hospital on Monday after giving birth to a boy who is now fifth in line to the British throne.

The baby was born at 10:01 GMT and weighed 3.8 kilograms. William was present for the birth at St. Mary's Hospital in west London where their other two children, George and Charlotte, were also born.

Kate smiled at hundreds of well-wishers and assembled journalists as she left the hospital clutching her baby just seven hours after the birth. William later put the boy, strapped into a car seat, into a waiting car.

"Thrice the worry now," William told reporters, holding up three fingers with a smile, as he got into a Land Rover to take his wife and newborn back to Kensington Palace. "We didn't keep you waiting too long this time."

"Very happy, very excited, thank you," he said. When asked about a name for the boy, William said: "You'll find out sooner or later." Bookmakers have made Albert, Arthur, Jack and Fred the favoured names for a boy.

The Queen, Prince Charles — the baby's grandfather — and other members of the Royal Family and Kate's family have been informed and "are delighted with the news," Kensington Palace said.

When William brought his children to see their brother, Princess Charlotte, 2, turned and waved at the gathering of well-wishers. George, 4, did not wave.

The baby is the Queen's sixth great-grandchild and is behind his grandfather and heir Charles, father William and siblings George and Charlotte in line to the throne.

A 2013 change to the law means that for the first time in British history, a new prince will not supplant his older sister in the order of succession. Previously, younger males would take precedence over older female siblings.

William's younger brother, Harry, who marries U.S. actress Meghan Markle next month, falls to sixth on the list.

The official announcement of the birth was made by placing a notice on an easel in the forecourt of the Queen's London home, Buckingham Palace, a tradition that has been in place since it became the sovereign's official residence in 1837.

"My warmest congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the birth of their baby boy," British Prime Minister Theresa May said.

"I wish them great happiness for the future."

William and Kate met as students at St Andrews University in Scotland.

They wed in a pageant-packed ceremony at Westminster Abbey in April, 2011, and are treated as global celebrities.

The couple now live at Kensington Palace and last year, William gave up his day job as an air ambulance pilot to concentrate full-time on royal duties on behalf of his grandmother, having faced some criticism from British newspapers who dubbed him



Top: Britain's Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, with their newborn son in front of St. Mary's Hospital in London. KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Middle: The baby is behind his grandfather and heir Charles, father William, and siblings George and Charlotte in line to the throne. JOHN STILLWELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bottom: The media photographs the couple as they step outside with their son for the first time. DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/GETTY IMAGES

"workshy Wills."

He has been determined to play a hands-on role in bringing up his children while also protecting their privacy, an issue close to his heart after the death of his mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, in a 1997 Paris car crash as her limousine sped away from pursuing paparazzi.

"I think he takes on a lot more engagements than he used to," royal biographer Claudia Joseph said.

"But compared to members of the general public who have full-time jobs, he still has some time off to look after the children, to

give them their baths, to put them to bed and I think he'll continue to do that," Ms. Joseph said.

The British Royals are rarely out of the media glare, but the baby arrives at a time when the Windsors have particularly been in the limelight.

On Saturday, William joined the Queen and other senior Royals, with the exception of Kate, as the monarch celebrated her 92nd birthday at a televised concert.

The Queen also played a prominent role at the Commonwealth Heads of Government

meeting in London last week, where it was announced that Charles would succeed her as head of the network of mainly former British colonies.

While interest in their third child has been more muted than with the birth of their first, large numbers of photographers and broadcasters from around the globe massed outside the hospital, along with some dedicated royal fans.

"We've been coming out doing this for 21 years," said John Loughrey, 63, from south London, who was wearing a Union Jack onesie and hat and holding

a baby doll adorned with a crown. He said he had been camped outside the hospital for 15 days.

"We were here for George and Charlotte and we'll be there for the royal wedding too," he said, referring to Harry and Ms. Markle.

However, not everyone in Britain is so enamoured.

"Congratulations to William and Kate, but it is a private matter and if people are happy for them then fine, but I think the media should just move on and talk about something more important," Graham Smith, chief executive officer of the anti-monarchist campaign group Republic, told Reuters.

"The monarchy is about births, deaths and marriages and these events remind us how this system works and highlights again the inequality of those born into royalty and those born into poverty."

One consequence of the birth is that some existing members of the Royal Family are pushed to the periphery, and this has led to calls for the monarchy to be pared down.

"One of the problems all members of the Royal Family have is they start quite close to the throne and gradually, as time goes, on they go further and further away," royal historian Hugo Vickers said.

"It's very easy to talk about a bloated Royal Family, but it's not really fair because the Queen has an enormous amount of requests of things to do and her family are there to support her," he said.

The birth also gives Kate's own family another cause for celebration, after it was reported by British media on Sunday that her younger sister, Pippa Middleton, who is married to a wealthy financier, was pregnant with her first child.

REUTERS

Vancouver empty-home tax to pull in \$30-million from 1,200 units

FRANCES BULA VANCOUVER

Vancouver's tax on empty homes will bring in \$30-million of revenue in its first year, but that will come from only a tiny proportion of homeowners.

More than 5,000 properties out of 8,500 deemed vacant by city staff received exemptions under rules of the new tax bylaw, which is a first for Canada and is being watched closely around the world.

Nearly 1,000 homeowners among the 8,500 whose properties were designated vacant are disputing the classification.

So only 1,200 properties are being assessed the tax in the first year, some paying as much as \$250,000 for the 2018 tax period. Another 1,100 or more may be added from Vancouver residents that failed to make any declaration about their properties.

But Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson is pleased with the re-

It's unacceptable to have homes sitting empty when so many people are looking for a place to live.

GREGOR ROBERTSON
MAYOR OF VANCOUVER

sults anyway.

"Thank you for contributing to Vancouver's affordable-housing fund," the mayor said wryly at a news conference outlining the details of the new tax. He acknowledged it's not clear yet whether the tax has caused any owners to rent out their apartments or houses, which is one of the city's goals.

But, he said, the city needed to do something to ensure that desperately needed housing is available.

"It's unacceptable to have homes sitting empty when so many people are looking for a place to live."

The 1,200 to 2,300 homeowners who may eventually pay the tax are far less than the numbers that have circulated for years about empty units.

Two years ago, the city said 10,800 units were unoccupied for a year or more, after a comprehensive study of electrical use.

It's also far less than the 25,000

often cited based on numbers from the census of May, 2016. That number is often challenged, as it is based on only one day and includes housing used by students, or units classified as a basement suite even though owners may not use them that way.

Green Party Councillor Adriane Carr said she is concerned the numbers are so low.

"It doesn't gel to me when I talk to people in neighbourhoods about how many houses on their block are empty."

She also said she is increasing to see if the new tax helps increase the vacancy rates, which are currently around 0.8 per cent.

Mr. Robertson said citizens will decide what kinds of housing initiatives the revenue should finance.

He said it could go into more homeless shelters, the city's rent bank, which lends people money if they are in danger of being evicted, or toward buying more land

for housing.

Not all the money will go to housing. About \$7.5-million is needed for start-up costs for the new program and \$2.5-million a year is needed to run it.

Some of that operating money is going toward thousands of audits the city is doing to ensure that those who should pay the tax are not exempted.

People who can't prove their Vancouver home is a principal residence can be exempted if they can prove they are renting it out long term, it was being renovated or redeveloped, their strata doesn't allow rentals, or they work in the city for at least 180 days a year.

According to the city's statistics, 560 homes were exempted because their strata doesn't allow rentals, 2,480 because the title to the property changed hands during the year and 1,560 were being renovated or redeveloped.

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