

The People's Princess



After her divorce from Prince Charles in 1996, Diana appeared less often in public and did less charity work. However, she continued to be a patron of some charities, including Centrepoin, for homeless people. She visited the charity's shelters regularly up until she died.

It was after her death that Diana became known as 'the People's Princess'. Many people wanted to give money to the charities which she supported, and the Princess Diana Memorial Fund managed the £34 million that was collected.

Diana did the same for leprosy. The fear of catching it from sufferers is centuries old, and when Diana visited a leprosy hospital in Indonesia, her advisers suggested she shouldn't touch them. Diana sat on their beds and held their hands, showing that you can't catch leprosy through physical contact.

1 When Diana Spencer married Prince Charles and became Princess Diana, she also became one of the biggest celebrities of the 80s and 90s. She wasn't a typical British royal, however. She had an informal style and a special ability to connect with ordinary people.

In the same year as her death, 1997, she visited Angola to bring attention to the problem of landmines. The photograph of her walking through a recently cleared minefield is as famous as the one with the AIDS victim.



Two other hospitals that Diana often visited were the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and The Royal Marsden. Both are in London and have many child cancer patients. Diana spent many hours with them, saying, 'Some of them will live and some will die, but they all need to be loved while they are here.'

In the 1980s, people lived in fear of the newly discovered AIDS virus, and were afraid of contact with people suffering from it. In 1987, Diana opened Britain's first AIDS hospital ward. The photograph of her shaking hands with AIDS patients, without wearing gloves, completely changed people's ideas about the illness.