



The first pictures of Dame Helen Mirren playing Her Majesty The Queen were released in September, ahead of a new film about the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Mirren, 60, is pictured reading news of the death of Diana in the movie, which is called *The Queen*. Directed by Stephen Frears, it is set in the week following the crash which killed Diana and Dodi Fayed in August 1997.

Frears's film claims to recreate the events of that week from the point of view of the Royal Family and Prime Minister Tony Blair, with a script based on interviews with insiders and royal observers.

Veteran actress Sylvia Syms plays the Queen Mother, with James Cromwell as Prince Philip and Michael Sheen as Tony Blair. No release date has yet been set for the film.

Mirren - who won an Emmy for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth I in the HBO/Channel 4 television series "Elizabeth I" - said she doesn't want to speculate about being considered an Oscar nomination for her performance.

She said, "The work is what is important and all the other stuff is fantastic."

The 61-year-old actress also revealed she thinks the queen will be tempted to go and watch the film, adding, "I can't see how she can resist because the film has had a huge amount of attention."

The Queen was in the news herself in mid October when she received an enthusiastic welcome from thousands of Lithuanians who went to see her at the start of her tour of the three Baltic states.

In the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, a flag-waving crowd gathered in the city's Town Hall Square, cheering as the Queen went on "walkabout" meeting members of the public.

Many had arrived early to watch the Queen's speech to the Seimas, the Lithuanian parliament, which was broadcast on giant TV screens in the square.

Most exciting of all, it seems, is the apparent discovery by Lithuanian and British historians, that Elizabeth II is a distant descendant of a medieval Lithuanian monarch. A headline in the national daily "Lietuvos Rytas" reads: "A surprise from historians for the honoured guest - Queen Elizabeth will be told about blood ties with Lithuania."

In other Royal news and according to Bang Media, Prince William and his girlfriend Kate Middleton (picture below) will be known as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge if they wed.



The fact that the title has been set aside for the couple shows that Queen Elizabeth believes it is only a matter of time before the 24-year-old prince ties the knot. A royal source told Britain's *The People* newspaper: "Kate is being quietly groomed for her new role. The Queen thinks she's a natural and a perfect consort for William."

William, who is third in line to the throne, has been dating Kate, 24, for five years. The couple met at St Andrews University in Scotland, where they were both studying. The dukedom would be a temporary title for William, until he inherits his father's title, the Prince of Wales, when Charles ascends the throne.



The last Duke of Cambridge, who died in 1904, outraged his family by secretly marrying an actress. Prince William is said to be under increasing pressure to propose to Kate, despite stating in interviews that he doesn't plan to marry until he is 28 years old.

In August, the couple visited Harewood Park House, in Herefordshire, amid reports that the mansion is to become their marital home. The residence is being rebuilt by Prince Charles' Duchy of Cornwall estate and is due for completion in 2010, the year that William celebrates his 28th birthday.

Brother Harry meanwhile has been making the headlines on the other side of the world after flying down to South Africa to help celebrate his girlfriend Chelsy Davy's 21st birthday.

According to the UK press, Harry had begged his commanding officers for leave so he could attend the Roaring Twenties themed-bash in Cape Town.

The 22-year-old wore a customized t-shirt saying "Official Bodyguard of Miss CD" and "Hands off