'A TRULY MAGNIFICENT DA

HELLO! ROYAL REPORTER AND ABBEY GUEST JUDY WA ON TAKING HER SEAT AT THE WEDDING OF THE CENTU

'I've accompanied William around the world, but I have never enjoyed any occasion with him as much as this one'

A respected reporter on royal events for more than three decades, Judy Wade was thrilled to be a part of the wedding of the century and witness first-hand the historic events. "I felt so lucky to be there. It was utterly magical," she says

'The red carpet was better than any catwalk, as one sensationally well-

What was it like to be *there*? To be closer to the bride than Sir Elton John, Victoria Beckham and half the crowned heads of Europe?

It was totally, utterly magical.

When I first walked in, I thought I had happened upon a fantastic party. The guests were milling around on the red carpet chatting, swapping air kisses and catching up with old friends.

The atmosphere was extraordinary, a bit like *My Fair Lady* staged in a medieval church. When I found my seat in Poets' Corner, I discovered I was sitting on Charles Dickens's tomb. It would have taken someone of his genius to capture the splendour of the scene before me.

The daylight streamed through the stained-glass windows onto statesmen, showbusiness stars and socialites, making their colourful wedding finery stand out even more against the abbey's grey stone.

And as the VIPs and royals rolled up in their hundreds, the opportunities for star-spotting were thrilling. Carole Middleton, in her powder-blue Catherine Walker outfit, wins my award as the most elegant mother of the bride I have ever seen.

Earl Spencer's three gorgeous daughters – Kitty, Amelia and Eliza – all turned heads, and Lady Gabriella Windsor's petrol-blue hat certainly had the wow factor. Of course, Princess Beatrice and her sister Princess Eugenie were both scene-stealers when they arrived. It was also lovely to spot the rarely seen Duchess of Kent looking so pretty in pink silk.

The red carpet was better than any catwalk, as one sensationally well-dressed woman after another walked in. But I only truly realised this as a very special event when I noticed the Queen's shoes.

She always wears black ones. Every day, rain or shine. It's almost her trademark. She likes her old, comfy, black-patent court shoes – and *never* wears anything else.

But not this time.

On this most special of special occasions she wore cream shoes with bows to blend with her golden-yellow outfit. And the seams radiating around the neckline of her coat were like sunbeams around her face. She looked more gloriou

We were – like everyone world – all waiting for the brid And when she did glide in, screens in the abbey switch William would not get a sneak soon-to-be wife.

Of all the royal brides I have in the past 30 years – includ Sarah, Sophie, Serena, Au Camilla – I really do believe th the most stunning. She quite r to her understated classic sty lovely lace of her gown adde romantic touch.

Her something borrowe Cartier "halo" tiara, worn so l the late Queen Mother; her new were the dazzling diamo their oak leaf motif designed bring a little of her rural hom Bucklebury into the abbey with

LESSON IN LOVE

But for me the highlight of the moment when William wink while her brother James read t

It seemed as if he was telli bride "We're in this together r made her smile.

When the newlyweds and th disappeared into the Shrine of Confessor to sign the register, I gazed around the historic abb over its 1,000-year history – many kings and queens cr mourned. I felt so lucky to be t

I can't say I know Will and K I have followed their long ro they were first seen together at I have trekked up and down th report on their appearances weddings over the years, accompanied William around but I have never enjoyed any o them as much as this one.

In front of me sat a huddle of one of whom turned to me as Kate walked, hand-on-hand, the aisle. "He looks like the cat cream," he said with a grin. I the new Duke of Cambridge di

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