








Unmasked. The millionaire's daughter who became the great celebrity spoofer

By EMILY HILL and ADAM LUCK FOR MAILONLINE

UPDATED: 12:35, 16 March 2011

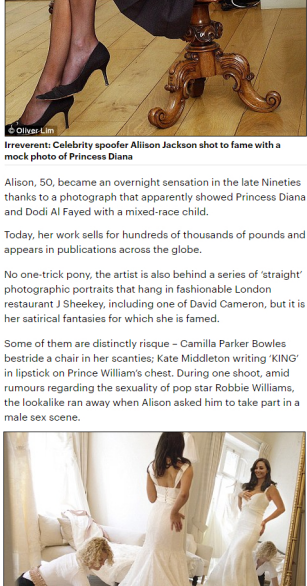
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Everyone knows photographer Alison Jackson's irreverent and risqué lookalike shots. But the truth about the rebellious millionaire's daughter who created them is every bit as tantalising...

Alison Jackson's photographs have entertained, amused and occasionally shocked the public for more than a decade now.

They purport to be snatched shots of the secret lives of celebrities: the Queen donning Marigolds to do the washing-up; Mick Jagger having lip-plumping injections; Gordon Brown being comforted by removal men as he packs up his boxes at No 10.

Only on close scrutiny does it become evident that the shots were posed by lookalikes.



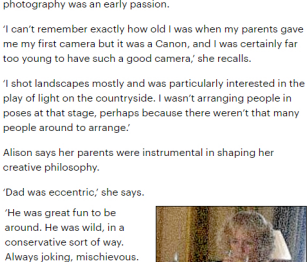
Irreverent: Celebrity spoofer Alison Jackson shot to fame with a mock photo of Princess Diana

Alison, 50, became an overnight sensation in the late Nineties thanks to a photograph that apparently showed Princess Diana and Dodi Al Fayed with a mixed-race child.

Today, her work sells for hundreds of thousands of pounds and appears in publications across the globe.

No one-trick pony, the artist is also behind a series of 'straight' photographic portraits that hang in fashionable London restaurant J Sheekey, including one of David Cameron, but it is her satirical fantasies for which she is famed.

Some of them are distinctly risqué – Camilla Parker Bowles bestride a chair in her scanties; Kate Middleton writing 'KING' in lipstick on Prince William's chest. During one shoot, amid rumours regarding the sexuality of pop star Robbie Williams, the lookalike ran away when Alison asked him to take part in a male sex scene.



Who's that girl? A Kate Middleton lookalike gets ready for her big day

Yet for all her fascination with celebrity, the photographer has remained tight-lipped about her own personal life – until now. Intriguingly, her own background is as colourful as the world depicted in her playful pictures.

Born in Southsea, Hampshire, in 1960, Alison was the second child of multi-millionaire George Jackson and his wife, Catherine, a keen horse rider.

'I had a very outdoorsy childhood,' she says. 'I was athletic and used to ride and do dressage. I could ride almost before I could walk. There is a picture of me at 18 months old sitting happily on the back of a donkey. I wasn't the sort of child who liked to sit in front of the TV.'

'We lived miles away from anyone. My father had inherited a country estate near Portsmouth that he ran and I was very happy to be in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the countryside.'

Although her first ambition was to be a film director, photography was an early passion.

'I can't remember exactly how old I was when my parents gave me my first camera but it was a Canon, and I was certainly far too young to have such a good camera,' she recalls.

'I shot landscapes mostly and was particularly interested in the play of light on the countryside. I wasn't arranging people in poses at that stage, perhaps because there weren't that many people around to arrange.'

Alison says her parents were instrumental in shaping her creative philosophy.

'Dad was eccentric,' she says.

'He was great fun to be around. He was wild, in a conservative sort of way. Always joking, mischievous. In contrast, my mother was very quiet but I noticed that while both would behave quite formally in public, they would behave very differently at home.'

'I think that helped form my own view of the distinction between the public and the private that you can see in my photographs – the idea that people might behave very differently in private to the way they appear in public.'

George was certainly a larger-than-life character. He owned a fleet of vintage Rolls-Royces, which he kept in centrally-heated garages, and presided over balls.

However, this somewhat whimsical country idyll was shattered in 1972 when George received a government purchase order for his estate. A motorway was set to plough through his parkland.

'It was devastating for him,' Alison says.

'My father had been brought up there, as had his mother and father. It was a family home. The last thing he wanted to do was to leave.'

The house burnt down the following year. It became a family joke that George, in fury, had arranged it. In fact, as he wrote in *The Rise And Fall Of Stakes Hill Lodge*, a privately-published book about the bitter planning battle, the house 'was burnt down by vandals'.

Although his father was a Jackson, George inherited the estate through his mother, a Hulbert – a family of landed Hampshire gentry, thought to be directly descended from William the Conqueror. Its sale netted George, already a very wealthy man, almost £6 million – equivalent to around £18 million in today's money.

The family then moved to an equally grand residence in Gloucestershire, which was once an 11th Century Gilbertine monastery and had a secret network of underground tunnels.

By this time Alison was at boarding school in Sussex, a 'miserable' establishment called Croft House, which taught little besides needlework and dressage.

One of her close friends at the school, Sarah Thompson, says Alison's talent for upsetting those in authority was apparent even then – she organised a demonstration against the planned splitting up of their noisy dormitory.

Unsurprisingly, the traditional values of her parents did not gel with Alison's own fledgling ambitions.

'I think my parents had in mind that I would settle down at quite a young age but I decided that being a housewife in a big country house wasn't for me,' she says.

'I wanted to leave the country, head for London and see what the world had to offer.'

Family friend Elizabeth Burridge adds: 'Alison was a teenager when I first met her. She had a lot of character, stood her ground and did what she wanted. She argued with her father and there was a great rebelling against the fact that George wanted her to conform. She took the opposite line.'

Like some of the celebrities she would later spoof, Alison began to experiment with her own image, spraying her boots different shades of gold, sticking safety pins through her ears, punk-style, and dyeing her hair luminous colours.

On leaving school, at 18, she went to London and got a job as a receptionist for a film production company, working her way up the ranks until she was producing television adverts for companies including BA. But it wasn't enough for her.

'I still wanted to direct,' she says. 'Specifically, I wanted to direct Hollywood blockbusters but I was working as a producer, which is really a service position for the director. Because I wasn't being taken seriously, I thought I had better educate myself.'

After eight years at the same company, she left to do a BA in sculpture at Chelsea College of Art, before moving on to the Royal College of Art.

'It changed my life,' she says. 'It provided me with a certain creative structure and the ability to create something original.'

In her last term, she produced the photograph that would make her famous: a fake Diana and Dodi and their baby. Photography, she has said, is 'a slimy deceitful medium', which 'tells only a partial truth'.

'Diana was a product of image. Nobody knew her for real. I wondered if people would realise it was a lookalike and if they would care and what they would make of this image.'

'It played into a lot of the fantasies then – that Diana and Dodi were in love, that she was pregnant, and this had led to her possible murder. People left flowers underneath my picture.'

Despite the fanfare, her mother was initially sceptical.

'She looked at a picture I did of Camilla kissing Charles in front of Diana and was shocked, telling me, "It's not right", and just not getting it, however much I tried to explain what I was trying to do.'

The Royals are an enduring fascination. Alison's latest book – *Kate And Wills Up The Aisle: A Right Royal Fairy Tale* – an affectionate satire of Prince William and Kate Middleton's romance, is due for publication on April Fool's Day.

Before the Royal wedding was even announced, she was providing the images the Hello!-reading masses were hungry for – Kate trying on wedding dresses and William getting down on one knee.

Her earlier work includes a vision of Camilla's hen night – involving strippers wearing Prince Charles masks – and the Queen trooping her corgis down to the bookies.

'I am fascinated by the Royal Family because they are shrouded in mystique and the Queen, and to a certain extent William, represent fabulous blank canvases,' she says.

'I find the Prince of Wales less fascinating because he spills the beans and we know too much about him.'

Perhaps fittingly then, Alison is extremely reticent regarding her own private life – particularly the loves and losses. Her father George died in 1992, meaning he never got to see her success.

'He had a heart attack and was rushed off to hospital,' recalls Alison's cousin, Tony Felgate.

'The body was moved to the morgue. Alison wept for three days and would not move.'

Then, in the late Eighties, Catherine was involved in a riding accident which left her paralysed.

'There was a hunt and she was late,' says Mr Felgate.

'She went to catch up – her and another person galloping through the fields. The horse then tripped. It was a big horse, and it catapulted over and crushed her.'

'The woman with her resuscitated her and got her to hospital, where she was for the next ten years. It was an absolute tragedy. Catherine was confined to a wheelchair and in and out of Stoke Mandeville Hospital. She had this incredible will but she had to have professional nurses for 24 hours a day.'

Catherine passed away in 2001.

However, the indomitable spirit of her parents lives on in Alison's body of work, which encompasses art exhibitions, magazine deals, bestselling books and television series.

She won a Bafta award in 2001 for her BBC2 comedy series *Doubletake*, which used long-lens cameras and grainy CCTV shots to send up a selection of Royals, celebrities and politicians.

Her other small-screen offerings include *Sven: The Cash*, *The Coach And His Lovers*, and *Blaired Vision*, which aired on the eve of the former Prime Minister's departure from office and showed Tony and Cherie Blair having sex, the Queen calling Mr Blair a creep and Ministers running from the police on Clapham Common.

She is famed for pushing herself to the limit, working long hours and never stinting in her quest to find the right lookalike. Her search for a Gordon Brown doppelganger lasted six years. She blamed the difficulty on his 'huge bovine features'.

She once approached a man who bore an uncanny resemblance to Diana's former lover James Hewitt and asked him to pose, before he revealed that he was, actually, James Hewitt and she couldn't afford him. In New York, she was thrown out of a restaurant when her Richard Gere lookalike told restaurant staff she was harassing him.

As her profile has risen, the artist has become increasingly conscious of her own security. She has spoken of 'weird' people who approached her when she was exhibiting the Diana and Dodi photo, and a police guard was set up outside the gallery in which her photograph of Osama Bin Laden being entertained by belly dancers was displayed. She has installed CCTV at her studio to protect her work.

Alison, who broke off an engagement as a teenager and has never married, fiercely protects the identity of her romantic partners, mentioning only a film producer called Anthony and a 'well-known figure in the arts world' in past profiles.

'There is someone, but I am a very private person and I simply prefer not to discuss that part of my life,' she says.

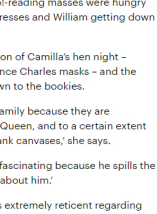
The distinction between the public and the private that is so blurred in her work remains very much in place when she puts down her camera.



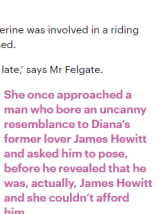
Send-up: 'Camilla' sips a large G&T on a body toning machine



Mirror, mirror: A lookalike Peter Mandelson admires his reflection as he poses in lordly robes, fishnets and heels



Mirror, mirror: A lookalike James Hewitt admires his reflection as he poses in lordly robes, fishnets and heels



Mirror, mirror: A lookalike Richard Gere poses in lordly robes, fishnets and heels