



Observed 3 April 1983

The ads that angered non-smokers and caused a protest to the Palace.

Row about smoking hits the royal tour

by ANNABEL FERRIMAN and LINDSAY MURDOCH

HEALTH groups in Britain and Australia have accused Benson and Hedges of exploiting the royal visit to Australia to promote smoking.

Four big dailies in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra have carried full colour, wrap-around supplements on the royal visit, showing photographs of the Prince and Princess of Wales above huge advertisements for Benson and Hedges.

An anti-smoking group in Australia has protested to the country's Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, that the supplements make it appear that Benson and Hedges has the royal stamp of approval.

Mr Michael Sorenson, a leading Australian anti-smoking campaigner, wrote:

'I was particularly surprised that Prince Charles, well known for his anti-smoking views, would allow the Royal Family to be exploited in this shameful manner.'

Dr William Burch, chairman of the Cancer Society in Canberra, who has been protesting widely on Australian radio and television, told THE OBSERVER last week that people had been saying that it looked as though the Royal Family was indirectly supporting the company or that the royal tour was being sponsored by Benson and Hedges.

The souvenirs were being kept by children, many of whom had met the Princess, and were being pinned up in thousands of classrooms, so that Benson and Hedges now had their advertisements in schools across the country, he said.

Mr David Simpson, director of Action on Smoking and Health in Britain, had informed Buckingham Palace of the cigarette company's promotional campaign and sent them copies of the newspapers.

He said: 'This is utterly disgraceful. It is glaringly obvious that they have tried to associate their wretched product with the Royal Family.'

'They have linked a particularly charming, wholesome scene of young family life with cigarettes which will kill a quarter of those who use them.'

He said it was widely known that Prince Charles did not smoke and held anti-smoking views. The advertisements were in particularly poor taste since the last four British kings had died of smoking-related diseases.