

Royal Dukedoms and other titles

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On the 19th June 1999 His Royal Highness The Prince Edward will marry Miss Sophie Rhys-Jones, in Her Majesty's The Queen's Free Chapel of St George within Her Castle of Windsor. Prince Edward is the first prince to marry outside London since His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, married Miss Katherine Worsley, daughter of Sir William Worsley, Bt, in York Minster, on the 8th June 1961. Although this century has seen the adoption of the almost universal royal practice of marrying in London, often in Westminster Abbey, traditional royal marriages were more private affairs. Even of those celebrated in London, many were solemnised in the small but historically significant Chapel Royal, St James's Palace.

Since it was built in the fifteenth century, St George's Chapel has seen a number of royal marriages, most recently that of Lady Helen Windsor to Timothy Taylor, in 1992, the first since that of HRH Princess Alice to HSH Prince Alexander of Teck (later the Earl of Athlone), in 1904.

Although the choice of St George's Chapel may have been influenced, in part, by a desire for a more private wedding than the usual royal wedding, it also marks something of a renaissance in the life of Windsor Castle. This historic royal residence has been the scene of countless royal ceremonials, and is replete with heraldic representations. Among the newest emblems are the shields of the Knights and Dames of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, which add colour to the newly restored ceiling of St George's Hall.

A further significant link with the royal past would be the conferring upon Prince Edward of the customary dukedom. Although there was some speculation that this would not be done, supposedly in the interests of "modernising" the monarchy, there are actually strong reasons why such a custom should be followed.

Unlike the practice on the Continent, not all members of the royal family are princes or princesses. In Belgium, all are styled HRH Prince/Princess of Belgium, Duke/Duchess of Saxony, Prince/Princess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. In Denmark, the children of the Sovereign, and children of the heir are all HRH Prince/Princess. Other, more distant relatives, are HH Prince/Princess, and those who contract unequal marriages are styled counts of Rosenborg. In Liechtenstein and Monaco all are HSH Prince/Princess. In Luxembourg the children of the Sovereign are all HRH Prince/Princess of Luxembourg, Bourbon-Parma and Nassau. More distant descendants of the Grand Dukes are all styled HGDH Prince/Princess.

In the Netherlands all are HRH Prince/Princess of the Netherlands, Prince/Princess of Orange-Nassau, and for the descendants of the present Queen, Jonkheer/Jonkvrouw van Amsberg. In Norway and Sweden all are styled HRH Prince/Princess, unless they have contracted civil marriages, in which case they lose the royal title. In Spain the children of the Sovereign, and the children of the heir are all HRH Infante/Infanta. The rest of the royal family have no legal style, though are commonly called Prince/Princess.

In the United Kingdom such precedents are not followed. Indeed, prince is not a title of great antiquity, the custom of giving the courtesy title to all male descendants of the Sovereign being foreign to English traditions. It was not until King Henry VII's reign did sons begin to be styled "prince", and as late as the time of King Charles II, the daughters of the duke of York were called Lady Mary and Lady Anne. The daughters of Princess (later Queen) Anne, also, were called Ladies also. Even later there were throwbacks to the earlier custom-Princess Augusta, eldest daughter of Frederick Lewis was also styled Lady Augusta.

Under the influence of Hanoverian practice, from 1714 to 1917 all descendants of the Sovereign in the male line were princes, with the children, children of sons being Royal Highnesses, others being Highnesses.

It was not entirely certain what style should be accorded princes, great-grandchildren of a Sovereign. The children of the duke of Gloucester, son of Prince Frederick Lewis, were great-grandchildren of a Sovereign. Although his marriage did not comply with Hanoverian Family Law, and his children were not recognised as dukes of Brunswick, nor capable of succeeding to the Hanoverian dominions, they were styled prince/princess of Great Britain. The daughter, Princess Sophia Matilda (d 1844) was always styled Highness in official documents, but her brother Prince William Frederick, 2nd duke of Gloucester, was sometimes styled Highness and sometimes Royal Highness. Upon his marriage he was granted the style of Royal Highness (22nd July 1816).

Ernest Augustus duke of Cumberland, king of Hanover 1837, was also a British prince. His son, George V, King of Hanover, was also, as grandson of George III, a prince of Great Britain, Royal Highness. His son, Ernest Augustus, 3rd duke of Cumberland, was also Prince of Great Britain, and as such Highness, though always styled Royal Highness as a Hanoverian prince.

This practice, tacitly confirmed in 1816, was again confirmed in letters patent of 30th January 1864, for the birth of the duke of Clarence, Queen Victoria's grandson. All the descendants in the male line of the Sovereign are Princes or Princesses, the children, and the children of the sons of the Sovereign alone being Royal Highnesses, all others being Highnesses. This was the first measure dealing with the royal style in general terms, and was applicable to the issue of George III and Queen Victoria.

As a consequence of these Letters patent, the issue of George V as duke of York, being great-grandchildren of the Sovereign, were only Highnesses. On 27th May 1898 therefore it was provided that the children of the eldest son of a Prince of Wales are to be Royal Highnesses and Prince or Princess.

By royal warrant of 1867 the children of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, by Princess Helena, were granted the style of Highness. As prince/princess of Schleswig-Holstein they would have been HSH only. They were Prince (later Duke) Albert, Princess Helena Victoria, and Princess Marie Louise.

On 9th November 1905 the daughters of the Duke of Fife and Princess Louise Princess Royal, daughter of King Edward VII, were made princesses with the style Highness- HH

Princess Alexandra, born Lady Alexandra Duff (later HRH Princess Arthur of Connaught); and HH Princess Maud, born Lady Maud Duff (later HH the Countess of Southesk).

On 17th June 1914 the style Highness was conferred by royal warrant on the eldest son of Prince Ernest Augustus, then reigning Duke of Brunswick, and to the children thereafter to be born, being great-great-great-grandchildren of George III. They were Prince Ernest Augustus (later The Prince of Hanover); Prince George (later Prince George of Hanover); and Princess Friederike (later Queen of the Hellenes)¹.

The First World War disrupted the royal family as much in respect of protocol as in any other matter. The continued use of German titles became intolerable, and by Royal Proclamation of 17 July 1917, it was announced that:

We, of Our Royal will and Authority, do hereby declare and announce that as from the date of this Our Royal Proclamation:

We having taken into consideration the Name and Title of Our Royal House and Family, have determined that henceforth:

Our House and Family shall be styled and known as the House and Family of Windsor, and that all the descendants in the male line of Our said Grandmother Queen Victoria who are subjects of these Realms, other than female descendants who may marry or may have married, shall bear the said name of Windsor, and do hereby further declare and announce that We for ourselves and for and on behalf of Our descendants and all other descendants of Our said Grandmother Queen Victoria who are subjects of these Realms relinquish and enjoin the discontinuance of the use of the Degrees, styles, Dignities, Titles and Honours of Dukes and Duchesses of Saxony and Princes and Princesses of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and all other German Degrees, Styles, Dignities, Titles, Honours and Appellations to us or to them heretofore belonging or appertaining.

This has the effect of naming (or renaming, though there was always some uncertainty pre-1917 just what the dynastic name actually was) the royal family, but also ended the use of all German "Degrees, Styles, Dignities, Titles, Honours and Appellations", including heraldic. Shortly afterwards, by letters patent of 30 October 1917, it was announced that:

The children of any Sovereign of the United Kingdom, and the children of the sons of any such Sovereign, and the eldest living son of the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, shall have and at all times hold and enjoy the style, title or attribute of Royal Highness, with the titular dignity of Prince or Princess prefixed to their respective Christian names, or with their other titles of honour.

That, save as aforesaid, that titles of Royal Highness, Highness, or Serene Highness, and the titular dignity of Prince or Princess shall cease, except those titles already granted and remaining unrevoked.

¹They, as well as their younger brothers born after 1917 are also Princes and HH. The children of the Prince of Hanover and of his brothers all also bear the title of Prince of Great Britain and Ireland and Royal Highness by virtue of the decree of the late Duke of Brunswick as Head of the House of Hanover in 1931, but such decree has no official recognition in the UK. British styles are currently enjoyed by HH Prince George of Hanover, HH Princess Ortud of Hanover, and HH Princess Sophia of Hanover. Hanoverians were HSH Duke/Duchess of Brunswick and Lüneburg, and after 1814, HRH Prince/Princess of Hanover.

Although further muddying the water in several respects, the position was now simply that the children of the Sovereign, the children of sons of the Sovereign, and the eldest living son of eldest son of Prince of Wales are HRH Prince/Princesses of Great Britain and Ireland. Great grandchildren in the male line use the style and title of children of dukes.

These letters patent have been followed since, with occasional additions to meet particular contingencies. Thus, the Duke of Edinburgh was made a Royal Highness on 20th November 1947, and a Prince on 22nd February 1957. By letters patent of 22nd October 1948 the children of Princess Elizabeth made prince/princess and HRH, so that Charles would not be born only as Lord Charles Mountbatten.

Only the children of the Sovereign are styled "The Prince/Princess", and this only by recent custom. The children of a Sovereign are by courtesy princes and princesses, but need a royal warrant to raise them de jure above the common herd- and even then they remain commoners until raised to the peerage. Unlike Continental Europe, it is quite possible for a near relative of the Sovereign to possess no title at all, and indeed this is the inescapable consequence of the 1917 letters patent.

If mediaeval royalty were not styled prince, what were they called? Generally, they possessed a peerage. In the earlier years of the Plantagenet monarchy, these were French fiefs, usually actual principalities governed by, or on behalf of the holder of the title. For example, the children of Matilda, daughter of King Henry I, were Geoffrey VI count of Anjou and count of Nantes; and William count of Poitou. The sons of her rival, Stephen, were Eustace IV count of Boulogne; and William II count of Mortain and Boulogne, both titles inherited from their mother. The sons of King Henry II, were Henry duke of Normandy and count of Anjou; and Geoffrey duke of Brittany.

The first English titles were held by the ill-fated Arthur duke of Brittany and earl of Richmond, which he inherited from his maternal grandfather, Conan IV duke of Brittany and earl of Richmond. His cousin Richard, son of King John, was earl of Cornwall and king of the Romans.

King Henry III's son, Edmund Crouchback, was earl of Lancaster, Leicester and Derby, as well as being king of Sicily. His grandson was fourth earl of Lancaster, Derby and Lincoln, and the first duke of Lancaster.

From King Edward III, almost every son of the Sovereign surviving into adulthood was made a duke. Edward III's own sons were Lionel of Antwerp duke of Clarence; John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster and king of Castile and Leon; Edmund of Langley duke of York; and Thomas of Woodstock duke of Gloucester.

The stronger tradition is English practice has been to confer a peerage, usually of the status of a dukedom, upon sons of the Sovereign. Each then founds a separate royal line. Thus Henry Duke of Gloucester, son of King George V, was the father of Prince William of Gloucester, and Prince Richard of Gloucester (now Duke of Gloucester). Further generations will not possess the princely title, but the eldest line will have a dukedom.

Why confer a dukedom? One reason is so that the wife of Prince Edward can enjoy the title of Sophie Duchess of Cambridge, rather than Princess Edward. It would never be correct

to call her princess Sophie, unless she were a princess in her own right. In Sweden, all princes and princesses receive dukedoms, though these are not hereditary. A similar practice is followed in Spain. Though there have been the occasional suggestion that royal dukedoms are not hereditary in the United Kingdom, this is quite incorrect, though the survival rate has been good.

Why have a title at all? Simply because these people will always be treated by the public as members of the royal family, whatever they are called. It is more satisfactory for all concerned if they have some title to distinguish them as such. Whilst it might be preferable to widen the range of those entitled to the princely title to the logical extent common on the Continent, this is unlikely to find favour in official circles, because of fears of criticism. There is an expectation that Prince Edward will be made a duke. There is no reason why this should be denied him.

Assuming that Prince Edward is made a duke, what title would be chosen? The most frequently cited is Cambridge. This was first in 1661, and most recently as a dukedom 1801-1904. It was used as the title for a marquessate 1917-80. Once a title has been used for a member of the royal family it is not customary for it to be used for a commoner in the future.

Other possibilities include Clarence. Named for Clare, Suffolk, this was first used 1362-68, as an earldom 1881-1919, and most recently as a dukedom 1890-92. Although sometimes thought to be unlucky, it would be suitable for Prince William of Wales. Sussex, first used 1801-43, would be suitable for Prince Harry of Wales.

Windsor, first 1936-72, is unlikely to be used, at least until the trauma of the Abdication is forgotten. Kendal, named for the town in Cumbria, and first used 1667, was last used 1719-43. Aumale, a dukedom in 1397, is now the earldom of Albermarle, and so not available. Cumberland, first used 1644, the fifth and last used 1799-1919. It is now claimed by the King of Hanover.

Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, was a marquessate 1917-60, for the son of the daughter of Queen Victoria. Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, was a marquessate to 1765. Eltham was an earldom 1726-60. Kennington, was an earl to 1765. Northallerton, Yorkshire, was a viscountcy 1706-27. Launceston, Cornwall, was a viscountcy 1726-60. Trematon, a viscount to 1765, and 1917-57. The Isle of Wight, a lordship 1066, hereditary to 1293, for life or term 1307-1483, is unlikely now.

Strathearn, named for the Earn river valley, Tayside centred on Crieff, was first used 1766, and most recently 1850-1943 with Connaught. Kintyre, in Scotland, was first used in 1602. Avondale, Scotland, was used as dukedom first in 1890, with Clarence. Teviotdale, also in Scotland, was first used 1799-1919, with Cumberland. Albany, Scotland north of Tay, first 1600, last 1881-1919, claimed by Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and so is unavailable.

Connaught, Ireland, was first used as a dukedom 1874. It became extinct 1943. Dublin, was an earldom of the Prince of Wales 1850-1901². Armagh earldom 1799-1919, in Ulster.

2 ²Letters patent 1849, *London Gazette*, 11 September 1849, conferred upon Edward Prince of Wales, and his heirs, the "Kings of Great Britain and Ireland". The title merged in the Crown in the death of Queen Victoria, 22 January 1901.

Tipperary, earldom 1818-1904. Athlone, Ireland, earldom 1917-57 for son of daughter of King George III. Arklow, Wicklow, Ireland, barony 1801-43, and 1881-1919, is now claimed by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.