

House of Windsor

The **House of Windsor** is the reigning royal house of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms. In 1901, a line of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (itself a cadet branch of the House of Wettin) succeeded the House of Hanover to the British monarchy with the accession of King Edward VII, son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. In 1917, the name of the British royal house was changed from the German *Saxe-Coburg and Gotha* to the English *Windsor* because of anti-German sentiment in the United Kingdom during the First World War.^[1] There have been five British monarchs of the House of Windsor since then: George V, Edward VIII, George VI, Elizabeth II, and Charles III. As of the accession of King Charles, he and his descendants genealogically belong also to the House of Oldenburg.

The monarch is head of state of fifteen sovereign states. These are the United Kingdom (where he or she is based), Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. As well as these separate monarchies, there are also three Crown dependencies, fourteen British Overseas Territories and two small associated states of New Zealand: the Cook Islands and Niue.

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House of Windsor



Badge of the House of Windsor

Country	 United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms
Founded	17 July 1917
Founder	George V
Current head	Charles III
Members	<i>List</i>
Cadet branches	Mountbatten-Windsor (by cognatic descent)

Background

Edward VII and, in turn, his son, George V, were members of the German ducal House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha by virtue of their descent from Albert, Prince Consort, husband of Queen Victoria, the last British monarch from the House of Hanover. High anti-German sentiment amongst the people of the British Empire during World War I reached a peak in March 1917, when the Gotha G.IV, a heavy aircraft capable of crossing the English Channel, began bombing London directly and became a household name. In the same year, on 15 March, King George's first cousin, Nicholas II, the Emperor of Russia, was forced to abdicate, which raised the spectre of the eventual abolition of all the monarchies in Europe. The King and his family were finally persuaded to abandon all titles

held under the German Crown and to change German titles and house names to anglicised versions. Hence, on 17 July 1917, a royal proclamation issued by George V declared:








"A Good Riddance"; cartoon from *Punch*, Vol. 152, 27 June 1917, commenting on the King's order to relinquish all German titles held by members of his family

Now, therefore, We, out of Our Royal Will and Authority, do hereby declare and announce that as from the date of this Our Royal Proclamation 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....^[2]

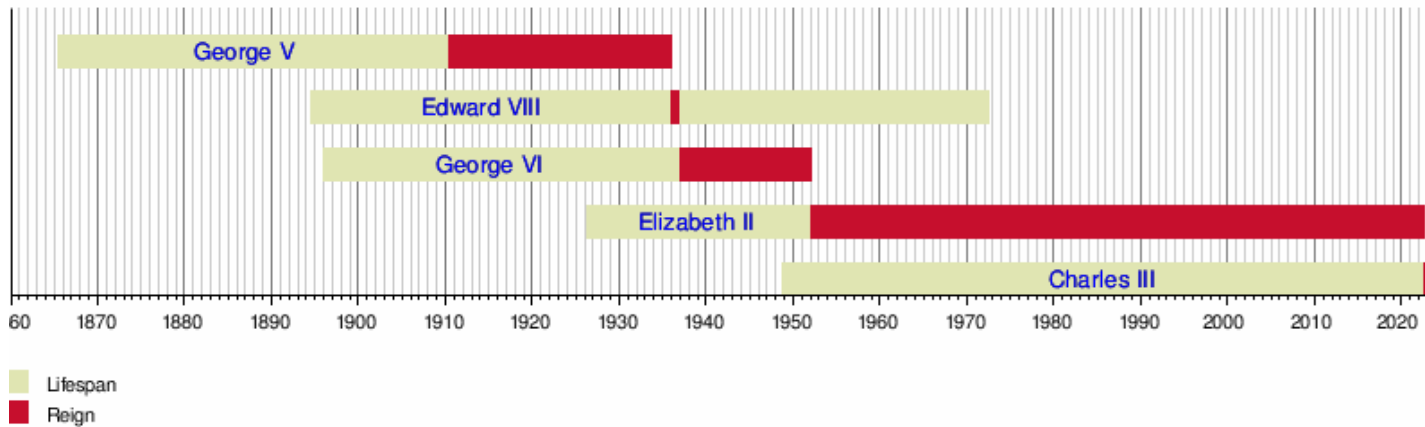
The name had a long association with monarchy in Britain, through the town of Windsor, Berkshire, and Windsor Castle; the link is alluded to in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle being the basis of the badge of the House of Windsor. It was suggested by Arthur Bigge, 1st Baron Stamfordham.^[3] Upon hearing that his cousin had changed the name of the British royal house to Windsor and in reference to Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, German Emperor Wilhelm II remarked jokingly that he planned to see "The Merry Wives of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha".^[4]

George V also restricted the use of British princely titles to his nearest relations,^[5] and in 1919, he stripped three of his German relations of their British titles and styles.^[6]

List of monarchs

Portrait	Name	Birth	Reign	Coronation	Spouse	Death	Claim
	<u>George V</u>	3 June 1865 <u>Marlborough House</u>	6 May 1910 – 20 January 1936 ^[7] (25 years, 259 days)	<u>22 June 1911</u>	<u>Mary of Teck</u>	20 January 1936 <u>Sandringham House</u> (aged 70 years, 231 days)	Son of <u>Edward VII</u> and <u>Alexandra of Denmark</u>
	<u>Edward VIII</u>	23 June 1894 <u>White Lodge, Richmond Park</u>	20 January 1936 – 11 December 1936 (10 months, 21 days)	<i>Cancelled</i>	<u>Wallis Simpson</u>	28 May 1972 <u>4 Route du Champ d'Entraînement</u> (aged 77 years, 340 days)	Son of <u>George V</u> and <u>Mary of Teck</u>
	<u>George VI</u>	14 December 1895 <u>York Cottage</u>	11 December 1936 – 6 February 1952 (15 years, 57 days)	<u>12 May 1937</u>	<u>Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon</u>	6 February 1952 <u>Sandringham House</u> (aged 56 years, 54 days)	Son of <u>George V</u> and <u>Mary of Teck</u>
	<u>Elizabeth II</u>	21 April 1926 <u>17 Bruton Street, Mayfair</u>	6 February 1952 – 8 September 2022 (70 years, 223 days)	<u>2 June 1953</u>	<u>Philip Mountbatten</u>	8 September 2022 <u>Balmoral Castle</u> (aged 96 years, 140 days)	Daughter of <u>George VI</u> and <u>Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon</u>
	<u>Charles III</u>	14 November 1948 <u>Buckingham Palace</u>	8 September 2022 – present (9 days)	<u>TBA</u>	<u>Diana Spencer (1981–1996)</u> <u>Camilla Parker Bowles (2005–)</u>	<i>Living</i> (age 73 years, 307 days)	Son of <u>Elizabeth II</u> and <u>Philip Mountbatten</u>

Lifespan of each Windsor monarch



Members

The 1917 proclamation stated that the name of the Royal House and all British descendants of Victoria and Albert in the male line were to bear the name of Windsor, except for women who married into other families.

Descendants of Elizabeth II

In 1947, Princess Elizabeth (who would become Queen Elizabeth II), heir presumptive to King George VI, married Philip Mountbatten (born Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark), a member of the House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, a branch of the House of Oldenburg. A few months before his marriage, Philip abandoned his princely titles and adopted the surname Mountbatten, which was that of his maternal uncle and mentor, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, and had itself been adopted by Lord Mountbatten's father (Philip's maternal grandfather), Prince Louis of Battenberg, in 1917. It is the literal translation of the German Battenberg, which refers to Battenberg, a small town in Hesse.

Soon after Elizabeth became Queen in 1952, Lord Mountbatten observed that because it was the standard practice for the wife in a marriage to adopt her husband's surname, the *House of Mountbatten* now reigned. When Elizabeth's grandmother, Queen Mary, heard of this comment, she informed British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and he later advised the Queen to issue a royal proclamation declaring that the royal house was to remain known as the House of Windsor. This she did on 9 April 1952, officially declaring it her "Will and Pleasure that I and My children shall be styled and known as the House and Family of Windsor, and that My descendants, other than female descendants who marry and their descendants, shall bear the name of Windsor."^[8] Philip privately complained, "I am nothing but a bloody amoeba. I am the only man in the country not allowed to give his name to his own children."^[9]

On 8 February 1960, some years after both the death of Queen Mary and the resignation of Churchill, the Queen confirmed that she and her children would continue to be known as the "House and Family of Windsor", as would any agnatic descendants who enjoy the style of Royal Highness and the title of prince or princess.^[8] Still, Elizabeth also decreed that her agnatic descendants who do not have that style and title would bear the surname Mountbatten-Windsor.^[8]



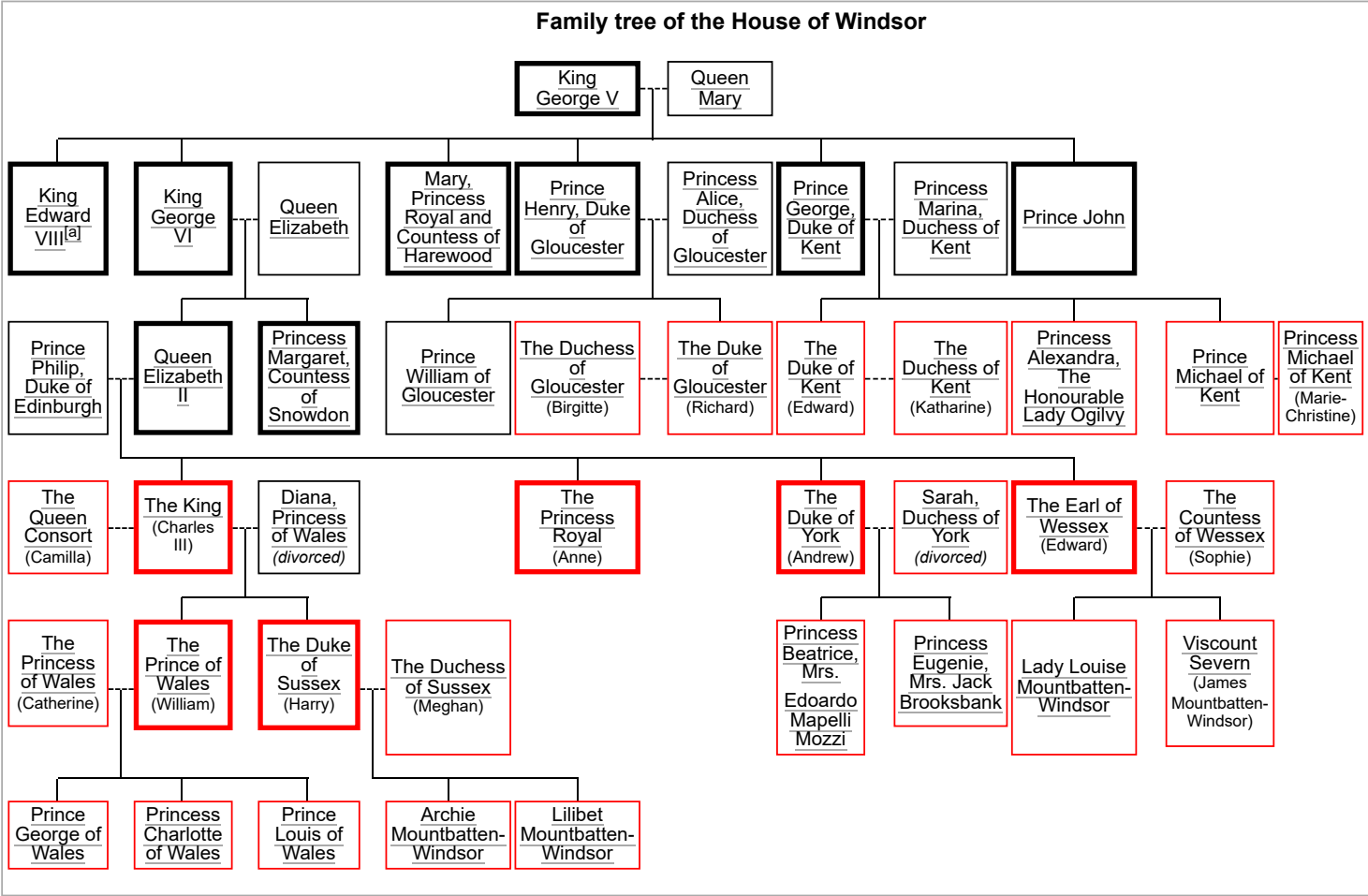
Members of the House of Windsor on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, 15 June 2013. Left to right: Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester; Lady Rose Gilman; Prince Michael of Kent; Princess Michael of Kent; Lady Louise Mountbatten-Windsor; Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex; James Mountbatten-Windsor; Viscount Severn; Sophie, Countess of Wessex; Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall; Prince Charles, Prince of Wales; **Queen Elizabeth II**; Princess Anne, Princess Royal; Prince Andrew, Duke of York; Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex; Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge; Prince William, Duke of Cambridge; Princess Eugenie; Princess Beatrice; Prince Edward, Duke of Kent; Katharine, Duchess of Kent

This came after some months of correspondence between the Prime Minister [Harold Macmillan](#) and the constitutional expert [Edward Iwi](#). Iwi had raised the prospect that the royal child due to be born in February 1960 would bear "the Badge of Bastardy" if it were given its mother's maiden name ([Windsor](#)) rather than its father's name ([Mountbatten](#)). Macmillan had attempted to rebuff Iwi, until the Queen advised [Rab Butler](#) in January 1960 that for some time she had her heart set on a change that would recognise the name [Mountbatten](#). She clearly wished to make this change before the birth of her child. The issue did not affect [Prince Charles](#) or [Princess Anne](#), as they had been born with the name [Mountbatten](#), before the Queen's accession to the throne.^[10] [Prince Andrew](#) was born 11 days later, on 19 February 1960.

Any future monarch can change the dynastic name through a similar royal proclamation, as royal proclamations do not have statutory authority.^[11]

Family tree

- Red-framed persons are living
- Black-framed persons are deceased
- Bold borders indicate children of British monarchs



States reigned over

At the creation of the House of Windsor, its head reigned over the [British Empire](#). Following the end of the First World War, however, shifts took place that saw the emergence of the [Dominions of the British Commonwealth](#) as independent states. The shift was recognised in the [Balfour Declaration of 1926](#),^{[12][13]} the [Royal and Parliamentary Titles Act 1927](#),^{[14][15]} and the [Statute of Westminster 1931](#).^{[16][17]} The Windsors became recognised as the royal family of multiple independent countries, a number that shifted over the decades, as some Dominions became republics and Crown colonies became realms, republics, or monarchies under a different sovereign.^[18]

Since 1949, three monarchs of the House of Windsor, [George VI](#), [Elizabeth II](#) and [Charles III](#), have also been [Head of the Commonwealth of Nations](#), comprising most (but not all) parts of the former [British Empire](#) and some states that were never part of it.^{[19][20][21]}

Country	Dates
Antigua and Barbuda	1981–present
Australia	1917–present
Bahamas	1973–present
Barbados	1966–2021
Belize	1981–present
Canada	1917–present
Ceylon	1948–1972
Fiji	1970–1987
The Gambia	1965–1970
Ghana	1957–1960
Grenada	1974–present
Guyana	1966–1970
India	1947–1950
Irish Free State	1922–1949
Jamaica	1962–present
Malawi	1964–1966
Malta	1964–1974
Mauritius	1968–1992
New Zealand	1917–present
Nigeria	1960–1963
Dominion of Pakistan	1947–1956
Papua New Guinea	1975–present
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1983–present
Saint Lucia	1979–present
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1979–present
Sierra Leone	1961–1971
Solomon Islands	1978–present
South Africa	1917–1961
Tanganyika	1961–1962
Trinidad and Tobago	1962–1976
Tuvalu	1978–present
Uganda	1962–1963
United Kingdom	1917–present

See also

- [British prince](#)
- [British princess](#)
- [Descendants of George V](#)

- Succession to the British throne

Notes

- After his abdication in 1936, King Edward VIII became the Duke of Windsor.

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External links

- Royal Family name (<https://www.royal.uk/royal-family-name>) from royal.uk
 - House of Windsor (<https://www.royal.uk/house-windsor>) from royal.uk
 - House of Windsor Tree (<https://web.archive.org/web/20101202213352/http://www.royal.gov.uk/pdf/Windsor%20family%20tree.pdf>) from royal.gov.uk (Lord Culloden & Albert+Leopold Windsor are missing)
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