

United Kingdom



Description of Arms :

Quarterly: 1st and 4th, gules, three lions passant guardant in pale or (England) ; 2nd, Or, a lion rampant within a double tressure flory counter-flory gules (Scotland) ; 3rd, azure a harp or, stringed argent (Ireland).

Principal Title : Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and her other realms and territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

Family Name : Windsor.

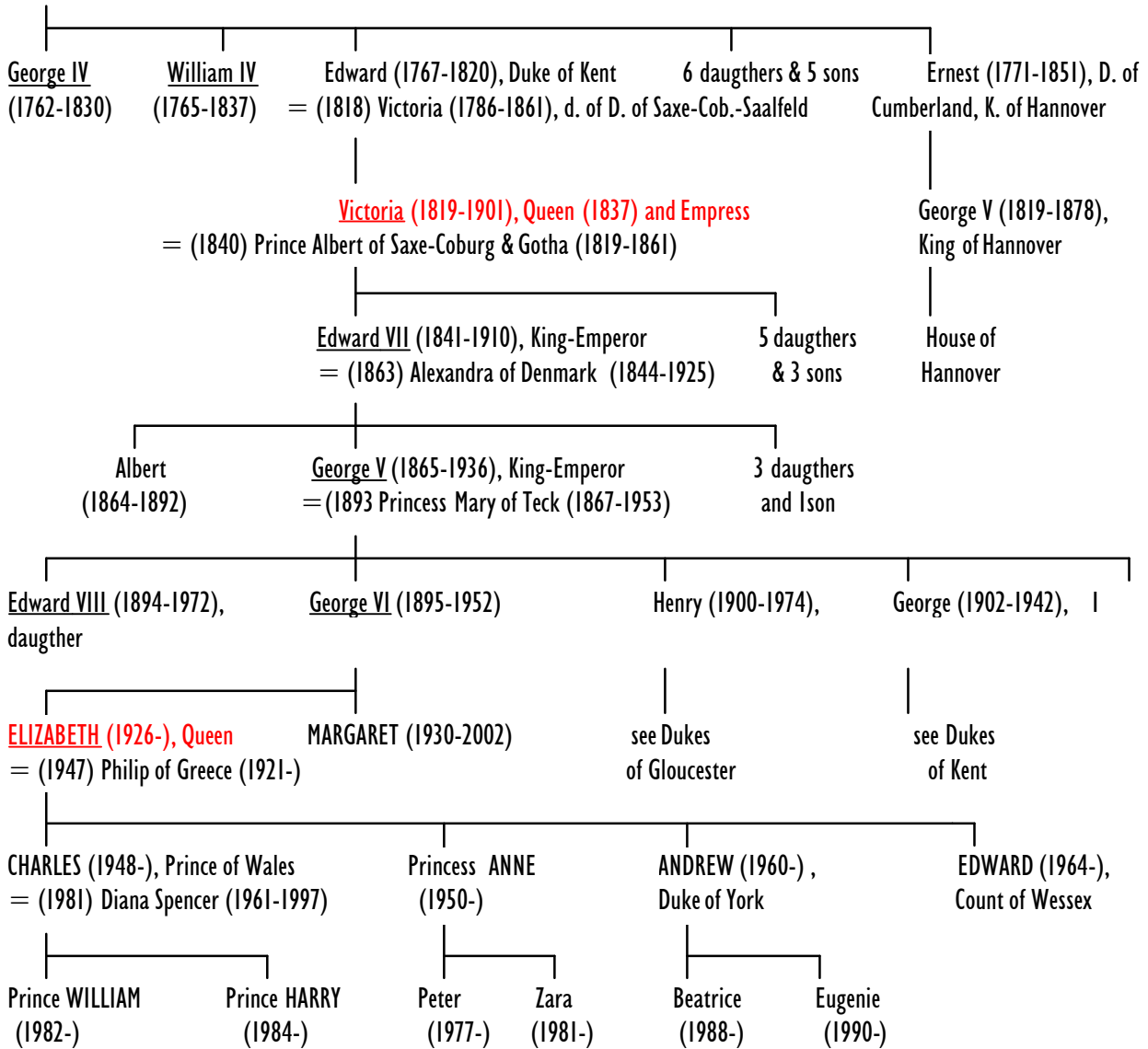
Family History : England seems always to have been a kingdom or, at least, a collection of kingdoms. For the British, history is usually reckoned to have begun with William the Conqueror in 1066. Except for a short period, under Protector Cromwell, the story of the royal family has unrolled ever since. Even King Farouk of Egypt once exclaimed that one day there would only be five kings - that of England and the four in a pack of cards. The early history of the country is the customary one of rivalries. Scotland was united in 1603, under James I & VI, when the country became known as Great Britain. Ireland was later included, to form the United Kingdom. This may help explain why British dukes have different creations.

England has always mattered more than its size, perhaps, justified. In all the wars, certainly in Western Europe, England was an important player. But it may be said that the high point came, during the reign of Queen Victoria, when the British monarch ruled over a huge empire "on which the sun never set". Her uncle had returned to Hannover to be king. One son took over as Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the son of another followed him. Her eldest daughter became Empress of Germany, another Grand Duchess of Hesse, yet another the mother of the Spanish Queen and a great-granddaughter was Queen of Sweden. Truly she could regard herself as the Grandmother of Europe. Since then, as has been said, the country has lost an empire and not yet quite found a new role to play. It certainly will, a thousand years of solid history and tradition cannot be that easily forgotten.

The present royal family adopted the name of Windsor, instead of the less wieldy Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, during the Great War. It has, for a long time had close connections with Germany, partly because it was there that Protestant princesses could be found. But it is thoroughly "British". Even the Duke of Edinburgh, both foreign and a prince already, could not be mistaken for anything other than completely anglicised. The Queen Mother is possibly the best-loved woman in the world and her daughter, the Queen, probably the most respected.

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George III (1738-1820), King of England (1760), King of Hannover (1814)
= (1761) Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744-1818)



The two young princes, William and Harry, ensure the succession after their father, the Prince of Wales.