

## Four royal generations at White Lodge

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The Friends History Project has uncovered another fascinating event in the story of Richmond Park. The year 1894 saw a grand christening at White Lodge, then the home of the Duke and Duchess of Teck. The Duchess, known as "Fat Mary" because of her generous waistline, was a first cousin of Queen Victoria and mother of Princess May, who was married to the future King George V (and became Queen Mary). For the birth of her first child in 1894, May went home to White Lodge to be with her mother.

The baby was to become King Edward VIII (who reigned for only 11 months in 1936 before abdicating). His christening at White Lodge was a prestigious affair attended by Queen Victoria herself, the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII), and European royals connected to the British royal family, such as Prince Louis of Battenberg and the heir to the Russian throne, Czarevitch Nicholas Alexandrovitch, later Czar Nicholas II. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward Benson, performed the ceremony, using a font brought from Windsor for the occasion. The future Edward VIII was christened Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David.

Victoria was proud of the way her succession was assured and the event was marked by a photograph of the Queen and her three heirs: her son, the future Edward VII, her grandson, the future George V, and her great grandson, the future Edward VIII. She noted in her journal about the christening:

"16th July 1894... The child was very good. There was an absence of all music, which I thought a pity... afterwards we were photographed, I, holding the baby on my lap, Bertie and George standing behind me, thus making the four generations."



Not only was this an extraordinary occurrence in 1894, but it seems that history is due to repeat itself in 2013 when the birth of a royal baby will once again secure four generations: Queen Elizabeth II, her son the Prince of Wales, her grandson Prince William, and his heir, male or female.