

# Curragh History Archives



## A Royal Visit The Prince of Wales Curragh Camp July 1861



Albert Edward, Prince of Wales 1861

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In July, 1861, the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, came to the Curragh of Kildare to spend a period with the garrison. He arrived at Kingstown, now Dun Laoghaire, aboard the Connaught and as the steamer rounded the pier head salutes were fired simultaneously from the Ajax man-of-war and the Pigeon-house Fort. The Illustrated London news of July 13, 1861, describes how “On Tuesday the Prince proceeded to the Curragh Camp, where he was received by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George Brown and a Royal Salute was fired by a field battery of Horse Artillery. A grand review took place on Wednesday and yesterday week there was a brigade review.



**Horse Artillery Royal Salute – Curragh Camp**

The quarters of the Prince of Wales, which are those formerly occupied by Lord Seaton, when Commander of the Forces in Ireland, can be seen by anyone passing on the road through the Curragh to the encampment, from which road they are only a few yards distant. Two men of the Grenadier Guards are placed on sentry outside the entrance and on the grounds inside, which are tastefully laid out, two small tents have been erected. His Royal Highness goes through the routine of military duties every morning with as much exactness as any other officer in the camp. When his morning exercises are over he usually, after lunch, plays games of racket.”

## Early life

Edward was born at 10:48 a.m. on 9 November 1841 in Buckingham Palace. His mother was **Queen Victoria**, the only daughter of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn and Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. His father was Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, first cousin and consort of Victoria. He was christened Albert Edward (after his father and maternal grandfather) at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, on 25 January 1842.

Edward hoped to pursue a career in the British Army, but this was denied him because he was heir to the throne. His military ranks were honorary. But his mother thought that some Military training and discipline would help him in his future role as King. So Edward was sent to the Curragh Camp for training and military maneuvers in 1861.

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During his stay at the Camp he was frequent visitor to the Curragh Races and to Punchestown. In fact he liked Punchestown so much he later returned as King in 1904.

Kildare Observer Newspaper Reported: The royal cavalcade was to sail across the Irish sea to Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) and then onwards by rail from Dublin to Naas station where the king would alight from the royal train and continue to Punchestown by horse-drawn carriage. News of Edward's visit had triggered a frenzy of preparation among the elites and merchants of Naas. Spectacular photographs exist of the main street of the county town swathed in bunting, banners and arches bearing royal and loyalist symbols and colours. Part of the protocol for his welcome in Naas, as he passed through on the way to Punchestown, was for local dignitaries to present him with an address of welcome on behalf of the Urban District Council.

## Accession

When Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901, Edward became King of the United Kingdom, Emperor of India and, in an innovation, King of the British Dominions. He chose to reign under the name **Edward VII**.



King Edward VII in Coronation Robes – 1902

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**Coat of arms of Edward VII of the United Kingdom**