

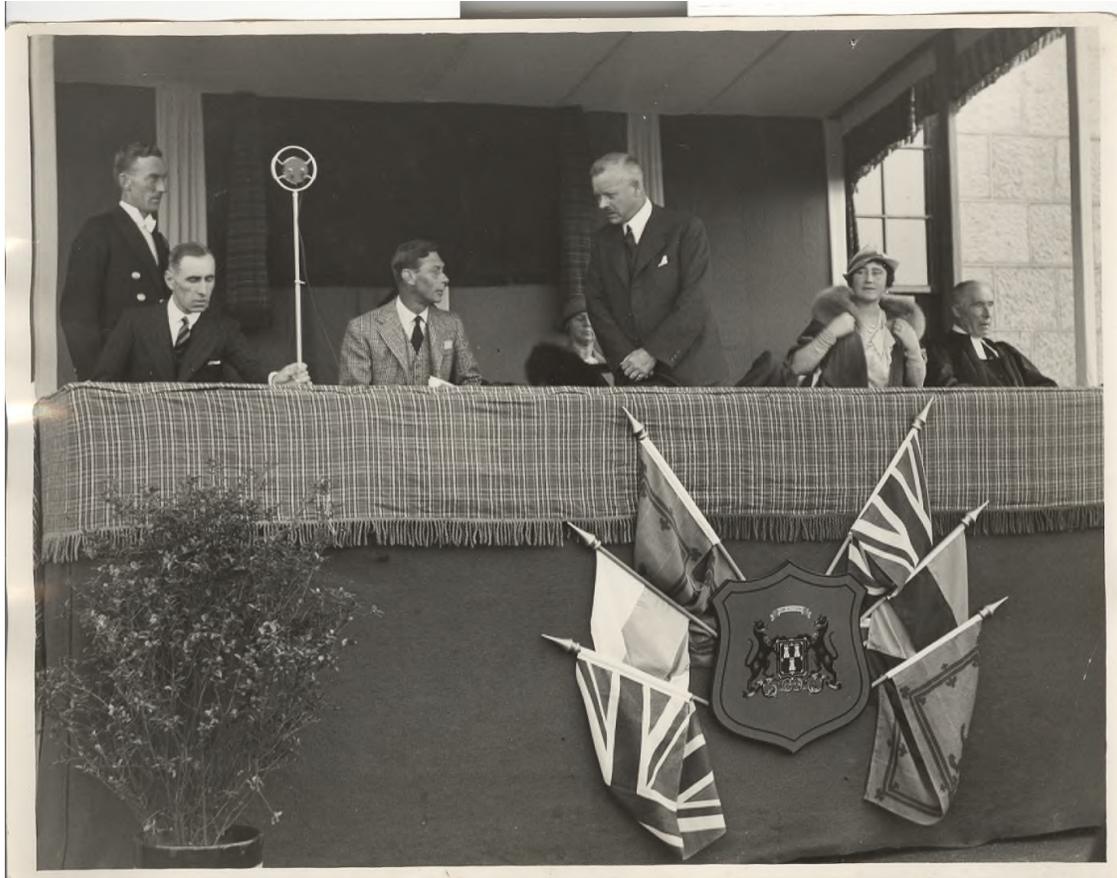
## ROYAL TALES



When Edward Watt was Lord Provost of Aberdeen in 1936-38, one of his duties was to meet visiting royalty.



This included accompanying The Duke and Duchess of York when they opened a new wing at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary at Foresterhill on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1936.



The opening was to have been performed by the uncrowned King, Edward VIII, but he cancelled at the last minute on the grounds that he was still mourning the death of his father George V.

His brother and sister-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of York were on holiday at Balmoral at the same time, so the Duke stood in for his brother.

In the photograph below, possibly from the Braemar gathering, the future Queen Elizabeth II shows more leg than perhaps at any subsequent time.



While the Duke and Duchess were at Foresterhill, however, the King, who had not yet been crowned, disappeared from Balmoral Castle to drive to Aberdeen Joint Station to pick up Wallis Simpson.

Some of the accounts say that the King and his mistress met up at Ballater station, but that doesn't square with the following information.

The train was late. Despite his disguise of enormous motoring goggles, everyone at the station recognised the monarch, except a policeman who reprimanded him for leaving his car in the “No Parking” zone.



Wallis Simpson had never been to Balmoral before (and was never there again). She seemed to rejoice in the fact that she occupied rooms that had originally been used by Queen Victoria, Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary. The incongruity evidently amused her as she issued forth in shorts each morning with the King and began shopping in the local village of Crathie.

Accounts of how everyone got one, or didn't, at Balmoral, speaking out of order and so on, describe an increasingly poisonous atmosphere within the Royal household .

News of the King's subterfuge leaked out into the Scottish newspapers, earning him considerable unpopularity, especially in Aberdeen. All this occurred less than two months before the abdication, after which the soon-to-be Duke and Duchess of Windsor left for France.

The Lord and Lady Provost subsequently attended the coronation of George the Sixth in Westminster Abbey on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1937. They led the

Coronation Ball in Aberdeen a few days later. Their eldest daughter Marjory married Hamish Henderson at the beginning of June. A busy month.

Edward Watt met Queen Elizabeth on at least one further occasion, before which her private secretary wrote to the Lord Provost, on notepaper with black margins.

*"I write to confirm our telephone conversation.*

*The Queen will arrive at 11.15 at the Aberdeen Hospital. Will you meet her there, not in top hat and morning dress.*

*The Queen does not wish to pay a long visit to any of the 3 hospitals, just an informal call.*

*In that case the Queen thought it might be possible to visit King's College also before luncheon. The details of her visit Her Majesty gladly leaves in your hands.*

*I asked the Queen about wine. Her Majesty says she would prefer to drink cider.*

*The Queen is pleased that she may have a herring for luncheon!"*

