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VOLUME EIGHT APRIL 2012
The Royal Autographs of the
Horticultural Society



Cover illustration:

Decorated Autograph of Queen Victoria, as reproduced in Andrew Murray's *The Book of the Royal Horticultural Society* (see page 46).

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The Royal Autographs of the Horticultural Society

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Our Natives not alone appear
To Court this [Floral] Prize;
But Foreign Kings, Adopted here,
Their Crowns at Home despise.
– Dryden (modified)

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The Royal Autographs of the Horticultural Society

BRENT ELLIOTT

c/o The Lindley Library, the Royal Horticultural Society, London

On 16 January 1816, the minutes of the Horticultural Society's Council reported that the Queen had agreed to become a Royal Patroness. (The minutes are silent on whatever negotiations had led to this decision: whose idea it was, and how it was arranged, are left obscure.) At the next meeting, it was agreed to have a set of the Society's *Transactions* specially bound in green morocco to present to her. One meeting more, and it was announced (20 February) that the Princess of Wales had similarly agreed to become a Royal Patroness, and the Society's artist William Hooker was instructed to prepare Royal Autographs for them to sign.

Thus began a custom which continued for nearly a century and a half – which in fact has never been discontinued, and has remained in abeyance only because of the long reign of the current monarch, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. To date, thirty-nine Autographs have been painted on vellum sheets of a uniform size (35 × 23 cm), by a variety of artists in different styles, for the signatures of Royal Patrons and noble Honorary Fellows. (Two Royal Patrons never signed Autographs: Edward VIII, who held that status for only a matter of weeks before he abdicated, and Queen Marie of Romania, who was a Royal Patron from 1924 until her death in 1938.) They have never been collectively reproduced before. This paper will accompany reproductions of the Autographs with brief biographical notes about the signatories, and indicate some aspects of the social and political history against which the Society has developed.

The Royal Family in the early nineteenth century

The political achievements of George III's reign were varied, ranging from the loss of the American colonies to the formal incorporation of Ireland into the United Kingdom in 1801. The second half of his reign was dominated by the French Revolution and the succeeding cycle of wars on the Continent, with Britain leading a fluctuating collection of allied powers against Napoleon's steadily increasing empire. Consequences included threatened and unsuccessful French invasions of Ireland and a protracted war against the Napoleonic regime in Spain (which introduced Europe to the concept

of guerrilla warfare). While Queen Charlotte was horrified by the execution of her friend Marie Antoinette, there was a strong minority movement that sympathised with the French Revolution and opposed the war. Pitt's government responded with draconian laws, the suspension of habeas corpus, the suppression of trade unions, and the prosecution of dissidents.

In 1812–13, Napoleon overreached himself with an invasion of Russia; of 650,000 soldiers, only 27,000 returned fit for active service. In 1813, a new coalition defeated the French armies at the battle of Leipzig, and Napoleon was forced to relinquish his territories east of the Rhine. The following year the victorious allies entered Paris, and Napoleon abdicated; he was sentenced to exile on the isle of Elba, from which he escaped in 1815 and launched a new attempt to re-establish his empire. He was finally defeated at Waterloo in June 1815, and this time exiled to St Helena in the middle of the Atlantic, where he ended his days under British guard. The British army did not leave France until 1818, acting as an army of occupation while negotiations over the break-up of the French Empire continued; the radical movement at home was alarmed, fearing that the Duke of Wellington would use this army to set up a military dictatorship in England. Jeremy Bentham predicted that “The plains, or heights, or whatsoever they are, of *Waterloo* – will one day be pointed to by the historian as the grave – not only of French but of English liberties... There they are – our fifty thousand men, with the conqueror of French and English liberties – the protector of the Bourbons – the worthy vanquisher and successor to Bonaparte at the head of them: there they are – and, until every idea of good government – every idea of anything better than the most absolute despotism – has been weeded out: once more as thoroughly weeded out by the Bourbons, as ever it had been by Bonaparte” (Bentham, 1817: iv–v).

This was the political situation at the time the Horticultural Society sought its first Royal Patrons. The United Kingdom was in many ways still an *ancien régime* society: General Napier, a member of that army of occupation, was to describe the Napoleonic Wars as “a deadly conflict to determine whether aristocracy or democracy should predominate, equality or privilege be the principle of European civilization” (Napier, 1828: I 1). He concluded that aristocracy had won.

Bibliography: Clark (1985), Goodwin (1979), Mori (2000).¹

¹ For all British signatories, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* should be understood as a source, and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for all the others.



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Above. Queen Charlotte as patroness of botany. Engraving by Bartolozzi after Sir William Beechy, published January 1799, and used in Robert John Thornton's *New Illustration of the Sexual System of Linnaeus* (1799–1807), and in his *Botanical Extracts* (1810).

[1] Queen Charlotte (1744–1818)

Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz was born at Schloss Mirow, the ducal estate of a small duchy in Pomerania, whose ruler Duke Charles was probably better known for playing the flute than for his political importance. When George III ascended the throne in 1760, his ambassadors began searching for an appropriate princess to become his Queen; Charlotte, having been chosen, was married to him the following year. George ruled for sixty years, a record broken only by his great-niece Queen Victoria, and by her great-granddaughter Queen Elizabeth; Charlotte, who predeceased him by a little over a year, would be the longest-serving royal consort before the present Duke of Edinburgh. The early years of her marriage were made difficult by both the need for accommodation to a foreign language and country, and by the hostility of her new relatives; but George remained faithful to her and the marriage became a happy one for decades. George was a popular king for much of his reign.

Charlotte fulfilled her most important duty by producing fifteen children, among them the future kings George IV and William IV. When not busy producing heirs to the throne, she devoted much of her time to the patronage of the arts and sciences, including the development of Kew Gardens. In 1789, Sir Joseph Banks named the bird-of-paradise flower *Strelitzia reginae* in her honour. This is the plant that Hooker used as the basis for the Autograph, with the Queen's signature partially framed by a group of the flowers, below the crown of Mecklenburg.

George had an attack of mental illness, possibly not the first, in 1788: symptoms included seizures and incoherent speech. It has been speculated, but not universally agreed, that the cause was porphyria (Macalpine & Hunter, 1969). He recovered, but in 1810 the illness returned, complicated by his increasing blindness and rheumatic pain. In 1811 he agreed to let the Prince of Wales act as Regent, and withdrew from his royal functions; Charlotte became his legal guardian. When she died in 1818 he was incapable of recognising the fact; Shelley was to describe him the following year as “An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king” (“England in 1819”).

Bibliography: Campbell Orr (2005), King (1985), Köhler (2005), Marsden (2005; esp. pp. 313–46), Morris (1998), Roberts (2004), Strong (1992: 65–76), Watkin (2004).



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[1] Queen Charlotte (1816).

[2, 3] George, the Prince Regent, later George IV (1762–1830)

George, the eldest child of George III and Queen Charlotte, was born at St James's Palace, and lived for much of his life at Carlton House, overlooking St James's Park. He quickly distinguished himself from his abstemious father by living a life of dissipation and heavy expenditure. The King demanded a stable marriage from him as a condition of any financial aid, and in 1795 he married Princess Caroline of Brunswick: the marriage was drastically unhappy, and soon after the death of their daughter, Princess Charlotte, the couple started living separately. Unable to return to Brunswick because of its occupation by the French, Caroline was the object of a smear campaign, and eventually went to live in exile in Italy.

The possibility that George might be made Regent was inconclusively discussed by Parliament at the time of George III's incapacity in 1788; in 1811 the King's lack of a speedy recovery from his illness resulted in the Regency Act, and George assumed the role of interim ruler or Prince Regent. He intervened little in the affairs of the Army, which spent the first half of his Regency fighting against Napoleon, or in the running of Parliament, apart from trying to persuade successive Prime Ministers to co-operate with their rival parties and govern effectively as coalitions. (Neither Whigs nor Tories had any enthusiasm for coalition government.) In 1812 the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, was assassinated; the postwar years saw a recession, agricultural unrest, and most stormy of all, the fierce debate over removing the legal penalties against Roman Catholics – finally ended in 1828 under the ministry of the Duke of Wellington.

In December 1818 the Prince Regent announced his willingness to become a Royal Patron of the Society, and William Hooker was commissioned to prepare an Autograph, depicting red and white roses, a standard theme in British heraldry. Only a year later, however, in January 1820, George succeeded his father as King, and a new Autograph was prepared; at the Council meeting of 4 December it was announced that the Autograph was ready for signature. The new Autograph was unsigned, but was undoubtedly Hooker's work. According to a colleague of mine, Charlotte Brooks, who has compared this Autograph with Hooker's fruit drawings made for the Society: "The grapes featured are thought to be the White Muscat of Alexandria... But we don't have any illustrations of citrus by Hooker, and the currants and cherries don't quite match." (See the fruits depicted in Prince Leopold's Autograph, p.17.)



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[2] George IV as Prince Regent (1819).

The King was to return the favour the following October by subscribing £500 towards the costs of fitting out the Society's new Garden at Chiswick.

With George's coronation the problem of Queen Caroline returned, as did the Queen herself; George tried to get a divorce approved by Parliament, and Caroline was effectively put on public trial on charges of adultery. The perceived injustice of the proceedings made her a rallying focus for the radical party, and her public appearances were exceedingly popular. She was banned from George's coronation ceremony, but nonetheless showed up and made a scene; soon after she died under somewhat mysterious circumstances, and her funeral procession provided an occasion for rioting. Her body was sent back to Brunswick for burial.

It was long suspected that Prince George had secretly married one of his mistresses, a Roman Catholic named Maria Fitzherbert (1756–1837), although the marriage was officially denied in Parliament. After his death the rumour of a bigamous marriage was made increasingly public, and became a major plot device in G.W.M. Reynolds' serial novel *Mysteries of the Court of London* (1848–56). In 1856 W.H. Wilkins published a biography in which he made the documentation on the marriage public for the first time. The marriage was illegal under British law, since made without the approval of the King, so the later marriage with Caroline was not technically bigamous.

In 1786, George had bought a small property in Brighton, which over the succeeding decades he gradually developed into the Brighton Pavilion, with John Nash as the architect and designer of the grounds. Humphry Repton submitted and published his proposals for the project (Repton, 1808), but was passed over in Nash's favour; Nash helped himself to Repton's ideas. Nash also started work on the creation of Regent's Park as the Prince's London residence; but by the time the grounds were completed, the Prince had become the King and had turned his attention to Buckingham House instead. Nash began the conversion of House into Palace, while Regent's Park remained a park, and the area intended for the Prince's house was eventually used for the garden of the Royal Botanic Society, itself later to be partially converted into Queen Mary's Rose Garden.

Bibliography: Hibbert (1973), Jones (2005), Plowden (1989), Smith (1999), Strong (1992: 79–100), Wilkins (1856).



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[3] George IV (undated).

[4] Princess Charlotte (1796–1817)

Princess Charlotte was the only child of George IV and Queen Caroline; her childhood was overshadowed by the increasing rift between her parents, though she was a favourite with her grandfather George III. From the age of eight, she had her own household at Montague House, near the royal residence at Carlton House, and was looked after indulgently by Lady De Clifford, who allowed her to become a tomboy, frequently getting into scrapes.

As the Napoleonic Wars drew to a close, George IV began casting about for a husband for Charlotte. She conducted a number of flirtations, genuine or surmised, and settled on Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld as her preferred candidate; her father's preferred choice was the young Prince of Orange, son of a future signatory of a Royal Autograph (see p. 38), but Charlotte was unenthusiastic, broke off the engagement when her father refused her request that her mother be allowed to join her household, and when he tried to place her under confinement, escaped to join her mother. All this made Charlotte a heroine in the eyes of the public, and when, having been refused permission to visit Brighton, she went to Weymouth instead, the town welcomed her with illuminations.

Eventually, the Prince Regent was won over by Leopold, and the couple were married in May 1816. Public jubilation was intense; Leopold was made a field marshal, and a Knight of the Garter; Parliament bought Claremont House in Surrey as the couple's home. The Horticultural Society entered into the enthusiasm; the Princess had agreed to become a Royal Patroness before the announcement of her engagement, but only three weeks after the marriage (21 May) Sir Joseph Banks undertook to ask Prince Leopold if he too would become an Honorary Member (whether he or Sir Joseph was slow, it was not until the following January that he agreed). Once again there would be a Royal Autograph prepared; Hooker's fee was ten guineas. On Princess Charlotte's Autograph, her signature appears beneath the coronet of a child of the Heir Apparent, surmounted by the British lion, and depicts, over a clump of roses and pansies, a specimen of *Brunsvigia orientalis*, a plant that Lorenz Heister had named in 1755 in honour of the House of Brunswick (he named this plant *Brunsvigia gigantea*, but as it had already been described as *Amaryllis orientalis*, the



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[4] Princess Charlotte (1816).

original epithet was restored later). On Leopold's Autograph, his signature appears below a crown close to the design he would adopt as King of the Belgians; the illustration depicts a group of fruits. Once again I will quote a statement from Charlotte Brooks, who has investigated the relationship between this Autograph and Hooker's previous work as fruit artist for the Society: "Hooker had already completed at least 54 portraits of fruits (not including those for the *Transactions*)... The grapes featured... are thought to be the White Muscat of Alexandria. Leopold's decoration also includes the distinctive 'Black Rock' melon completed for the Society in 1815, a medlar (both the Dutch and Nottingham varieties were painted in 1815), and the 'Large Blue' fig (1817). The White Dutch currant (1816), plum 'Imperatrice' (1816), and 'Yellow Antwerp' raspberry (1815) are included here and then feature again in Hooker's *Pomona Londinensis*, published in 1816–18."

Princess Charlotte had a miscarriage within a few months of her marriage, but in 1817 became pregnant again, and efforts were made to ensure that this time the delivery would be successful. Sir Richard Croft, the Royal Physician, was in charge of arrangements, assisted by Dr John Sims, who among other things was the editor of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*. The birth was difficult, and the child stillborn; and while initial report was that the mother was in good condition, Charlotte died later that night, probably from internal bleeding.

The nation went into a spasm of mourning. Most normal life, including courts and the Royal Exchange, was suspended for a fortnight. "Mourning dress was worn by all who could afford it", and the apparel dictated by court protocol influenced the customs of mourning dress for the rest of the century (Taylor, 1983: 127–30). Croft was widely blamed for the death, and while exonerated by the Prince Regent and his colleagues, he succumbed to feelings of guilt and shot himself.

Bibliography: Behrendt (1997), Chambers (2007), Croft (1971), Plowden (1989), Ward (1912: 105–20).

BRENT ELLIOTT



SHE LEFT THE MORTAL FOR AN IMMORTAL CROWN.

Above. The frontispiece to *The Life of the Late Princess Charlotte* (January 1818), engraved by John Romney after the original by G. M. Brighly.

[5, 6] Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, later Leopold I of Belgium (1790–1865)

Prince Leopold, who before his marriage had been an officer in the Russian army, fighting against Napoleon, was devastated by the death of his wife. An Order in Council awarded him the title of Royal Highness the next year, and he remained in England for over a decade, living at Claremont, where his head gardener was Charles M'Intosh, one of the most famous of early 19th-century gardeners and horticultural writers. M'Intosh was noted for a "garden library of a considerable number of French books" (Loudon, 1834: 328).

Both his military career and his marriage had made Leopold a glamorous figure, and he was invited to become King of Greece, a role he turned down. Then in 1831 he was elected King of the Belgians by the newly formed country, and accepted. Shortly after, the Netherlands invaded Belgium, and during the decade of civil war that followed Leopold frequently returned to Claremont. In 1832 he remarried, and Louise of Orléans, daughter of Louis Philippe, the "citizen king" of France, became Queen of the Belgians. (The actress Karoline Bauer, in memoirs published posthumously in 1884, claimed that she had entered into a morganatic marriage with Leopold back in 1829 at Claremont, but this claim has not generally been believed.)

Leopold tried to improve social conditions in his new kingdom, promoting legislation on child labour and other issues which his congress refused to accept. In 1835 he arranged for the first railway in continental Europe (between Brussels and Mechelin). He was also instrumental in arranging the marriage of his niece, Queen Victoria, and his nephew Prince Albert. Perhaps because of this, he was persuaded to sign another Royal Autograph, in his new guise as King of the Belgians, on the day of the opening of the RHS Garden in Kensington (5 June 1861). This new Autograph shows the coat of arms that Leopold adopted as King of Belgium, with the new country's motto "L'union fait la force", surrounded by a figure 8 composed of pink and white bellflowers.

Leopold made Laeken his royal residence in Belgium. It was to be greatly modified by his successor Leopold II in the second half of the century;



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[5] Prince Leopold of Belgium (1817).

indeed, Leopold I seems to have played little role in the development of Laeken apart from enlarging the estate. Leopold II was in due course (1878) to be made an Honorary Fellow of the RHS, and paid a royal visit to the Society's gardens the next year.

Bibliography: Anon. (1872), Bauer (1884, vol. 2), Loudon (1834), Richardson (1961), Ward (1912: 105–20).



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[6] Leopold I of Belgium (1861).

[7] Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex (1773–1843)

On 5 June 1820, Council minutes reported that the Duke of Sussex wished to become a member of the Horticultural Society. An Autograph was prepared for his signature; the artist was Elizabeth Francillon. The image is only two-thirds the size of those in the previous Autographs, because the dedicatory inscription fills a separate panel at the top of the sheet; Francillon was following a model established by William Hooker with his Autograph for the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar three years before (see p. 30). The Duke's signature appears beneath a prince's crown, encircled by a wreath of roses, morning glories, bignonias, and other climbing plants.

In 1793 the Prince had married Lady Augusta Murray in a secret ceremony in Rome. The marriage was illegal without the King's consent, and was soon annulled, though the couple lived together for eight years and had two children. In 1801 they finally separated, Lady Augusta keeping custody of the children, and the Prince was formally made Duke of Sussex, and a Garter Knight. In 1831, after Lady Augusta's death, the Duke married again, and again illegally, this time to Lady Cecilia Buggin, who adopted her mother's maiden name Underwood. The couple lived at Kensington Palace, but official protocol did not allow Lady Cecilia to appear with her husband in public. Queen Victoria eased the situation by making Cecilia Duchess of Inverness in 1840 (Earl of Inverness having been one of the Duke's minor titles).

The Duke was the only one of George III's children who had not had a military or naval career, although he was later an honorary General of Artillery. He preferred a life of learning, having once thought of entering the Church, and having studied at the University of Göttingen. In 1816 he became the fourth President of the Society of Arts (to be succeeded at his death by Prince Albert). In 1830 he also became President of the Royal Society, and the following year he became Keeper of St James's Park and Hyde Park.

The Duke died in 1843 and was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery, not far from his sister Princess Sophia; these two burials in effect gave that cemetery the royal seal of approval.

Bibliography: Gillen (1976).



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[7] Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex (1820).

[8] Prince Adolphus Frederick, Duke of Cambridge (1774–1850)

Two months after the Duke of Sussex announced his intention of becoming a member, he was followed by the Duke of Cambridge. Once again, Elizabeth Francillon prepared an Autograph, using the same model as that made for the Duke of Sussex, with the inscription encircled by a wreath of flowers, including roses, dahlias, nigella, peonies, and irises.

Like his brother Augustus Frederick, Adolphus Frederick studied at Göttingen. He saw action as a colonel in the Hanoverian Army, fighting against the French from 1791 onward; he was made first a colonel, then a general in the British Army without changing his field of battle. In 1803 the Electorate of Hanover was conquered by Napoleon; a good part of its army fled to England, and the King's German Legion was formed, with Adolphus Frederick as its commander. Throughout the rest of the Napoleonic Wars it fought continuously in different parts of Europe, earning a reputation for valour and efficiency, until the end of the Wars meant that a re-emergent Hanover could have its own army again.

When the French army withdrew from the German territories in 1813, Adolphus Frederick became military governor of Hanover, and later Governor-General and Viceroy, Hanover then being a property of the British Royal Family. In 1818 he married Princess Augusta of Hesse-Kassel, and until 1837 they lived in Hanover. When Victoria came to the throne, however, the British monarchy separated from the House of Hanover, and the couple moved to England, where they lived at Cambridge Cottage in Kew Gardens (formerly Lord Bute's house, which had been given to the Duke in 1801), and later at St James's Palace.

Bibliography: Moremen (2002).



[8] Prince Adolphus Frederick, Duke of Cambridge (1820).

[9] Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany (1763–1827)

In 1824, Council minutes reported that the Duke of York had become an Honorary Member. The Autograph is unsigned, and its commissioning not described in Council minutes. The arms of the House of Hanover are shown above the Duke's signature, and his Garter regalia below; surrounding them is a scattering of roses, thistles, and oak leaves. The stars of the Order of the Bath and the Royal Guelphic Order hang beneath the lion and the unicorn.

The second son of George III, he became the youngest bishop in history when, at the age of six months, he was appointed Prince Bishop of Osnabrück. This was more a secular than a sacred task; Prince Frederick's career was military, and saw him become a colonel of the Coldstream Guards, and eventually Commander-in-Chief of the British army. In any case, the post of Prince Bishop was abolished in 1803 during the great secularisation – when, in order to compensate a number of German nobles whose territories had been lost to France, the Holy Roman Emperor provided them with new territories which had until then been prince-bishoprics.

In 1809 a scandal broke out when the Prince's mistress Mary Anne Clarke claimed that she had sold army commissions with his knowledge. The Duke resigned as Commander-in-Chief, but was acquitted of receiving bribes, and reinstated two years later.

He is reputed to be the Duke of York of nursery rhyme fame, who had ten thousand men, but the verses were never printed until the early twentieth century, so there must remain an uncertainty over the attribution. He is commemorated in the name of Fredericton, New Brunswick, and by the column erected in his honour overlooking The Mall. The proposal for the column, and the fundraising, were the work of George Glenny, the editor of the *Horticultural Journal* and the *Gardeners' Gazette*, a fierce critic of the Horticultural Society.

Bibliography: Berry (1970), Burne (1949), Clarke (1809), Tjaden (1986).



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[9] Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany (1824).

[10] King William IV (1765–1837)

William IV, unlike his brother Frederick, had a naval career, and was to become known as the “Sailor King”. He was a midshipman at the age of 13, and during the American War of Independence he saw action in New York; George Washington approved a plot to kidnap him, but the attempt failed. At the age of 21 he became captain of the *Pegasus*, and served in the West Indies under Horatio Nelson, who became a close friend. In 1789 he was made Duke of Clarence.

His active naval career ended in 1790, and while he hoped to re-enter service once war with France broke out, he was passed over and given purely honorary posts, including Admiral of the Fleet in 1811. Instead, he was given some decidedly landbound posts, including Ranger of Bushy Park in 1797. He lived at Bushy for the next thirty years, eventually supplementing it by having John Nash build Clarence House for him in London.

In 1827 the Duke was appointed Lord High Admiral, but was compelled to resign the next year when he responded to conflicts with the other admirals by taking a squadron to sea for ten days without saying where they were going. But during his brief tenure he commissioned the first steam warship in the Navy, and reduced the severity of naval punishments.

The Duke of Clarence succeeded his brother to the throne in the summer of 1830, taking the title of William IV. His reign saw the controversy over the first Reform Bill, which the King opposed, sacrificing much of his former popularity. At a moment of crisis, he went personally to prorogue Parliament and force a new election; he was eventually persuaded to create a sufficient number of new peers to ensure the passage of the Bill through the House of Lords. Thereafter he avoided getting directly involved in politics; his one subsequent effort, dismissing the Whig Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, failed, because the Tories lost the ensuing election. Among the major pieces of legislation during his reign were the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, the Factory Act, and the Poor Law reform.

For twenty years (1791–1811), William had lived with the actress Mrs Jordan, by whom he had ten children. When they eventually separated, he provided



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[10] King William IV (1827).

an allowance for her and her daughters (he kept custody of the sons), on condition she not return to the stage; when after a few years she tried to resume a stage career, he cut off her money, and she died in poverty soon after. After the death of Princess Charlotte, pressure to provide a new heir to the throne led him to marry Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, nearly thirty years his junior; but their attempts at creating a family resulted only in miscarriages, stillbirth, and death in infancy. Adelaide threw herself into charitable works and public enterprise, becoming a highly popular Queen Consort. The capital of the new colony of South Australia was named Adelaide in her honour in 1836.

Among the directions in which she spread her patronage was horticulture, though not perhaps in a manner the Horticultural Society would have liked. George Glenny, who organised the erection of the Duke of York's commemorative column, was editing a quarterly magazine called the *Horticultural Journal*. For its last two volumes (1839–40), it bore the subtitle *and Royal Lady's Magazine*, and engravings of the Duchess of Kent and the young Princess Victoria graced its pages.

King William's Autograph was designed by Mrs Augusta Withers, an exceptional artist who was to become Queen Adelaide's Flower Painter in Ordinary (perhaps it was the Autograph that brought her to the Queen's notice). The design is one of the most striking in the collection: garlands of oak leaves (oak, appropriate for the Navy) circle two loosely defined panels for inscriptions, the lower one containing the insignia of the Order of the Garter.

Bibliography: Somerset (1980).

European nobility after the Congress of Vienna

Apart from members of the British Royal Family, the signatories of the early Royal Autographs were all members of royal families on the Continent, who had applied for Fellowship or were invited by the Society's Council to become Honorary Fellows. Most of them had been active in the wars against France, and many of them had only recently regained or established their thrones as Europe was reorganised in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars.

The defeat of Napoleon's army at Leipzig in 1813 had made his eventual removal from power only a matter of time, and even before his surrender in 1814 representatives of the great powers had assembled in Vienna to begin negotiations over the restructuring of Europe. Lord Castlereagh for the United Kingdom, Metternich for Austria, Tsar Alexander I in person for Russia, and Talleyrand for the restored Bourbon monarchy in France, were the principal deliberators; their efforts were interrupted by Napoleon's escape from Elba, but resumed after his final defeat at Waterloo. Their attitudes ranged from the desire to reverse the effects of the French Revolution by restoring all the monarchies to the status and borders they held in 1789, to the pragmatic attempt to create a balance of powers and avoid future wars.

Between 1818 and 1825 Royal Autographs were prepared for and signed by eight members of the royal houses and the conquering states of Europe. The Tsar of Russia and his plenipotentiary Prince Razumovsky, and the Crown Princes of Prussia and Denmark, represented the only countries that had remained independent throughout the Napoleonic Wars, if occasionally forced into alliance with France and reduced in territory; the rulers of Saxe-Weimar and Württemberg had recovered their ancestral thrones as a result of the Congress of Vienna; the King of the Netherlands was a new title, created in 1815. Most interestingly, the Grand Duchess of Parma was granted a Royal Autograph, despite the fact that until 1814 she had been Napoleon's wife; but the ease with which she slipped into the role of independent royalty won her the approval of the allied powers.

All these rulers were busy creating new royal gardens, or altering their inherited gardens by replacing their baroque parterres with landscape parks in the English manner. The Society sent gifts of plants to many of them or their families.

Bibliography: Kissinger (1957), Nicolson (1946), Palmer (1970: 23–40), Zamoyski (2007).

[11] Karl August, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (1757–1828)

The Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar became an Honorary Fellow of the Horticultural Society in 1817, and the following year William Hooker prepared a Royal Autograph for him to sign, decorated with white and yellow roses. This was the first Autograph to keep a top panel for the dedicatory inscription.

Karl August was Duke of two German principalities, Saxe-Weimar and Saxe-Eisenach, which he eventually amalgamated into one. He devoted his early life to the promotion of the arts and sciences, making the University of Jena a major institution, and Weimar a cultural centre. He is most famous for his promotion of Goethe, who became Weimar's chief administrator until, overwhelmed by his duties, he fled on his famous journey to Italy, returning to a reduced range of offices. In other circles he may be particularly famous for breeding the Weimaraner gun dog.

Karl August supported Frederick the Great against Austria, and was an early enthusiast for the idea of a united Germany. After the French Revolution, he served as a major-general in the Prussian army, and saw the Prussian defeat at the battle of Valmy in 1792 (Goethe, also present, said that from that day a new era in history had begun). In 1806 Napoleon crushed the Prussians at the battle of Jena, and Weimar was sacked; Karl August reluctantly joined Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine, and Weimaraner troops took part in the invasion of Russia. Then, as the tide turned against Napoleon, Karl August joined the Grand Alliance; his reward was the independence of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, and a new status as Grand Duke. His liberal attitudes brought conflict with the other regimes: he instituted freedom of the press, and encouraged nationalistic student fraternities. In 1819 he was forced to adopt the Carlsbad Decrees, which banned such associations and instituted press censorship throughout the German states, but spent his remaining career trying to mitigate their effect.

The Duke was responsible, with Goethe's help, for augmenting the Jena Botanic Garden, and for creating a small botanic garden at the Schloss Weimar, which he had developed from its original baroque form into a landscape park.

Bibliography: Balzer (1966), Goethe (1849), Tümmler (1978), Willy (1953).



RHS, LINDLEY LIBRARY

[11] Karl August, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (1818).

[12] Prince Andrey Razumovsky (1752–1836)

In 1819 Prince Andrey Razumovsky was invited to become a Fellow of the Horticultural Society, and next year an Autograph was prepared for his signature. No artist's name appears on the Autograph. At the top, against the backdrop of an ermine mantle, is the coat of arms of the Razumovsky family, with the motto "Famam extendere factis" [to spread fame by deeds] and a calligraphic inscription. Twining around these is a highly stylised depiction of *Wisteria sinensis*, at the time the latest sensational introduction; a plant had been brought to England in 1816, and the first specimens propagated from it presented to the Horticultural Society. By 1819, the year of the Autograph, it had flowered, and been named *Glycine sinensis* by John Sims; the artist would not have seen an adult specimen, hence presumably the uncharacteristic presentation of the leaves. (It is not recorded that wisteria specimens were given to Razumovsky by the Society, but it seems likely in view of its choice for the Autograph; it would have been treated by the Prince as a glasshouse plant.)

Prince Razumovsky is best remembered today for having commissioned from Beethoven the three string quartets named in his honour; he was a competent musician, specialising on the theorbo, an instrument related to the lute.

The Razumovsky Palace in St Petersburg had an early 18th-century formal garden; but during his years in Vienna Prince Andrey commissioned a Neoclassical palace by Louis Montoyer, with a landscape park in the English manner, incorporating a river and suspension bridge. The park was designed by Konrad Rosenthal, the Austrian royal gardener. The inaugural ball, in 1814, was a disaster: fire broke out and destroyed much of his art collection. The Palais Rasumofsky was sold to the Austrian government in 1873, and for most of the following century served to house the Geological Institute; the landscape park was sold off in lots for building; part of its stables, converted into flats, survives on the Rasumofskygasse. A portion of the landscape park survives, having been reworked into the Grete-Jost Park after the Second World War

Bibliography: Hajós (1989: 210–13), Razumovsky (1998).



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[12] Prince Andrey Razumovsky (1819).

[13] Marie-Louise, Duchess of Parma (1791–1847)

No record survives of the date at which this Royal Autograph was prepared. Because Marie-Louise, as she was most commonly known, had been Napoleon's wife, it is hard to imagine that she would have been invited to sign a Royal Autograph until after his death in 1821; note that her name is shown in a somewhat German form, as Maria Louisa. (Full name: Maria Ludovica Leopoldina Franziska Therese Josepha Lucia von Habsburg-Lothringen.)

Marie-Louise was the niece of Marie Antoinette and the daughter of Francis I, Emperor of Austria, who was intermittently at war with revolutionary France throughout her childhood and adolescence. But in 1809, Austria was soundly defeated at the battle of Wagram, and Francis forced to relinquish a fifth of Austria's territory, as well as his daughter, to Napoleon. The Empress Josephine having been unable to conceive a child, Napoleon divorced her and married the nineteen-year-old Marie-Louise, who promptly provided him with an heir, Napoleon II, who was to end his days as an Austrian duke instead of commanding an empire.

Napoleon's defeat and exile to Elba ended the marriage in practical terms; Marie-Louise was placed in the custody of Count Adam Albert von Neipperg, who soon became her lover. The couple had two children before Napoleon's death allowed them to marry officially (and a third later). Meanwhile, the Congress of Vienna had revived the erstwhile Duchy of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, and Marie-Louise was made the Duchess for the term of her life, the Duchy to revert to the Bourbon family after her death.

While living at the Ducal Palace in Parma, Marie-Louise oversaw the modernisation of the gardens, removing the baroque parterres and replacing them with an English-style landscape park. The work was carried out by the court gardener Carlo Barvitiuis; in recent years the baroque garden has been restored.

The Autograph was prepared by Elizabeth Francillon, and bears an Italian inscription. Marie-Louise's coat of arms is displayed against the backdrop of an ermine mantle surmounted by the crown of an Austrian princess, and all these are surrounded by a frame of Parma violets, with a group of roses at the base.

Bibliography: Palmer (2001), Solmi (1985).



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[13] Marie-Louise, Duchess of Parma (1820?).

[14] Christian VIII of Denmark (1786–1848)

On 19 June 1822, it was reported in Council minutes that the Prince of Denmark was in England, and would attend that evening's meeting of the Society; the prospect of another monarch as a Fellow was obviously exciting, and by the next meeting he had been enrolled. This unsigned Autograph was prepared at that time. It shows the recently designed coat of arms of Denmark, flanked by two wild men, below which runs the inscription. Below these is a group of roses, peonies, and heathers, with trailing strands of bellflowers and columbines framing the composition.

Christian's father, Frederick VI, had allied himself with Napoleon, and Christian, as viceroy in Norway, at that time part of the kingdom of Denmark, had to cope with potential revolt. Frederick changed sides as Napoleon's power waned, and as part of a new treaty with the allied powers, agreed to cede Norway to the kingdom of Sweden. Prince Christian then started a Norwegian independence movement, with the aim of eventually returning Norway to Danish control, and spent three months as the elected King of Norway before being defeated by the Swedish army and abdicating.

His insistence on being a constitutional monarch during his brief kingship did not endear him to the monarchs of the allied powers, who suspected him of democratic leanings, and he spent the post-Napoleonic decades excluded from any government posts. He put these years to use as a patron of the arts and sciences, including personally funding much of the botanist Jens Vahl's exploration of Greenland.

The Crown Prince finally became King of Denmark in 1839; although he was widely expected to give Denmark a liberal constitution, that had to wait for his successor Frederick VII. Christian VIII redeveloped the royal garden at Frederiksborg Castle as a landscape park. In 1841 Christian VIII had an area of redundant fortifications in Copenhagen converted by Georg Carstensen into the Tivoli Gardens, probably the first public park to include a switchback and a merry-go-round.

Bibliography: Benson (2007), Hendeliowitz (2005).



[14] Christian VIII of Denmark (1822).

[15] William I of the Netherlands (1772–1844)

The King of the Netherlands became a Fellow of the Horticultural Society in 1823; this unsigned Autograph was prepared at that time. Beneath the King's coat of arms is the inscription, the whole framed by fruits and flowers of varieties of citrus, the great traditional mainstay of European glasshouses.

While still Prince of Nassau, he had established a reputation as an opponent of Napoleon; in 1799 he had taken part in an unsuccessful Anglo-Russian invasion of the Netherlands, which was occupied by the French. His father, William V, Prince of Orange, was recognised by the English as the ruler of the Dutch Republic in exile, and the royal family lived first at Hampton Court and latterly in Brunswick, where the old king died in 1806. In 1813, after Napoleon's defeat at the battle of Leipzig, the French withdrew from the Netherlands, and William was invited to return. At first he refused the kingship, taking the role of Sovereign Prince in order to oversee the establishment of a constitution; he finally declared himself King of the Netherlands in 1815. His constitution was not welcomed in the largely Catholic south, which seceded in 1830; there followed nine years of civil war before William was forced to recognise the sovereignty of the new state of Belgium. His constitution now obsolete, he abdicated in favour of his son, William II, and spent his latter years in voluntary exile in Berlin.

William I spent his years as King living at Het Loo, the traditional estate of the Princes of Orange. Here he continued the work of his predecessors in sweeping away the great baroque garden designed by Daniel Marot, and creating instead an English-style landscape park. Since the 1960s the baroque garden has been restored.

Bibliography: Terlinden (1906).



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[15] William I of the Netherlands (1823).

[16] William I of Württemberg (1781–1864)

William I, identified on the Autograph by the German version of his name, was Crown Prince at the time. His father, Frederick I, the first King of Württemberg, who transformed the state from a duchy into a kingdom, was married twice, latterly to Princess Charlotte, daughter of George III; William was therefore the nephew of the King of England. He became a Fellow in 1824, and this Royal Autograph was presumably made at that time, but is unsigned and undocumented in Council minutes (the only reference to Württemberg in the minutes is a gift of chrysanthemums to the Queen in 1827). Beneath the ducal arms of Württemberg, with the motto “Furchtlos und treu” [fearless and loyal] is the dedicatory inscription, surrounded by sprays of heather and wallflowers.

William I was married three times: he divorced his first wife in order to marry the Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna of Russia, who had formed a regiment during the Napoleonic Wars and attended the Congress of Vienna; they met in England and married in Russia, but had only three years of life together before Catherine died of erysipelas in 1819. William built a Palladian mausoleum outside Stuttgart for her, beginning a long association with Giovanni Salucci as his architect. In 1820 he made his third marriage, to his cousin Pauline; the marriage was long and unhappy, and William cut her out of his will.

At the time he became a Fellow, William was engaged in large construction works in his capital, Stuttgart: the Rosenstein Palace, around which was laid out the largest English-style landscape garden in Europe, the Rosensteinpark, designed by his royal gardener Johann Bosch. This was soon followed by the Wilhelma zoo and botanical garden on an adjacent site.

Bibliography: Green (2001), Nick (1864).



[16] William I of Württemberg (1824).

[17] Tsar Alexander I of Russia (1777–1825)

Alexander I became Tsar of all the Russias in 1801, after the assassination of his father Paul I. In his early years he had a reputation as a liberal, and began his career by introducing constitutional monarchy, reforming the state councils, passing a law allowing serfs to own property, and setting up new universities – including four botanic gardens, at Dorpat (Tartu), Vilna, Kharkov, and Kazan. But these were also the years in which Napoleon’s sway was extending steadily eastward. After initial enthusiasm for the ideas of the French Revolution, Alexander strengthened his alliance with Britain and Prussia; an uneasy treaty with France was ended in 1812 by Napoleon’s unsuccessful invasion of Russia; and Alexander became progressively convinced that he had a divine mission to act as Europe’s peacemaker. He attended the Congress of Vienna in person, left with Russian territories augmented, and for the rest of his reign continued to negotiate with Metternich over the reorganisation of Europe. Gradually he retrenched on his early liberalism. When he died suddenly of typhus in 1825, he was succeeded by the autocratic Nicholas I; within the first month of his reign, he crushed a revolt by liberal-minded army officers, who became known as the “Decembrists”, and were mostly exiled to Siberia.

In 1823–24 the Society provided plants for a new garden that Alexander I was starting (now known as the Alexander Park, designed by Adam Menelaws, a Scottish landscape gardener who had been working in Russia since the 1780s). In 1824 he was made an Honorary Fellow, and Mrs Withers was commissioned to make a Royal Autograph. Showing a more emphatic use of chiaroscuro than any of the preceding Autographs, this depicts varieties of apples together with some apple blossom (Mrs Withers was at the same time drawing fruits for the Society). The Tsar’s coat of arms, with its double-headed eagle, sceptre and orb, is shown against a crowned ermine mantle.

The tradition begun by Tsar Alexander continued: after his death, his son Nicholas I was made an Honorary Fellow, as were his successors in their turn until the end of the dynasty.

Bibliography: Gribble (1931), Hayden (2006), Lieven (2009), Troyat (1984), and you could always try *War and Peace*...



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[17] Tsar Alexander I of Russia (1824).

[18] Frederick William IV of Prussia (1795–1861)

The Crown Prince of Prussia became a Fellow of the Horticultural Society in April 1825. The Prussian royal family was interested in gardening, and the Society had already sent chrysanthemums and *Primula sinensis* to the King and Queen. In 1822 the Prussian Horticultural Society (predecessor of the current Deutsche Gartenbau Gesellschaft) had been established, with royal patronage, and was sending its *Transactions* – sold in 1859, and never replaced, alas – to the Horticultural Society’s library. The Royal Autograph is dated 1825, and was probably the work of William Clark; it rivals Mrs Withers’ Autograph of the year before for chiaroscuro, and goes further in organising the plants into a densely figured scene, composed of roses, honeysuckle, morning glories, and gentians.

In 1825, the Crown Prince had a reputation as a conservative who had fought in the wars against Napoleon and had proposed a new constitution investing political power in the landed aristocracy. Frederick William’s enthusiasm for architecture and gardening was already apparent: in that year he was given land bordering the royal estate at Sanssouci, and forthwith commissioned Schinkel to build the Charlottenhof palace, and Peter Lenné to lay out the grounds. In later years he would commission Friedrich August Stüler to design the Neues Museum in Berlin and other buildings, and Ferdinand von Arnim to remodel parts of the gardens at Sanssouci.

In 1840 he succeeded his father, and while immediately introducing a degree of freedom of the press, he resisted calls for liberalisation. When revolution broke out in 1848, he used it as an opportunity to call for German unification and a more liberalised constitution, but idealistically refused the crown of a united Germany when it was one-sidedly proposed by the Frankfurt assembly. He partially remodelled the Prussian government on the English, creating an upper and lower house, though ensuring that the monarchy retained the executive and military power. He has been described (Clark, 2006: 436, 490) as a “political romantic”, and as “the first truly German-minded monarch to occupy the Hohenzollern throne”. In 1857 he was crippled by a stroke, and his brother William acted as Regent before succeeding him as King; he would become the first Emperor of Germany – by military conquest.

Bibliography: Barclay (1995), Clark (2006: 436–46, 486–97), Heilmeyer (2009).



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[18] Frederick William IV of Prussia (1825).

[19, 20] Victoria and Albert

The death of Princess Charlotte in 1817 caused a crisis for the succession: there was no longer a legitimate grandchild of George III extant to succeed to the throne. The Duke of Kent, King George's fourth son, was persuaded to try to produce an heir; in 1818 he married Leopold's sister, Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg, and the result, the following year, was Princess Victoria. So in relation to the previous signatories of Royal Autographs, she was the granddaughter of George III, the niece of Prince Leopold and of William IV, the niece and great-niece of George IV, and the god-daughter of Tsar Alexander I.

The young Victoria, brought up after her father's death at Kensington Palace, had to witness family rifts and dynastic tensions. William IV once publicly declared that he wanted to live until Victoria was eighteen, so that her mother could never act as Regent while she was a minor. He succeeded, dying a month after her eighteenth birthday. On acceding to the throne, Victoria broke off relations with her mother until she became a mother herself, and the Duchess once again joined Victoria's family circle.

Victoria became Queen on 20 June 1837, and on 22 July the Society's Council agreed to send her an address of congratulation and to have a Royal Autograph prepared; interestingly, she was not asked to become a Royal Patron until a month later. The unsigned Autograph was made by Sarah Ann Drake (her fee was £6.10s.0d.) and depicts the Amazonian waterlily, which the Society's Vice-Secretary John Lindley had recently named *Victoria regia* (now *Victoria amazonica*). Today the Autograph is badly faded and discoloured as a result of over-exposure in display cases in the mid-20th century; but it was reproduced in Andrew Murray's *Book of the Royal Horticultural Society* (1863), where the original vibrant colours can still be seen.

In 1840, Victoria married her cousin Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1819–1861), a nephew of Prince Leopold of Belgium, who had promoted the match. Albert was naturalised by Act of Parliament just before the marriage. The couple had nine children over a period of nearly two decades, all of whom survived into adulthood.



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[19] Queen Victoria (1837?).

The royal couple quickly began to change the image of the monarchy by regular public visits throughout the kingdom, and the promotion of an image of domesticity. Their wedding arrangements had been scurrilously lampooned in a gutter press left over from the radical opposition to George IV (Pearsall, 1969: 25–34); within a decade these journals had disappeared, and the press was led by the *Illustrated London News* and other papers which regularly featured the populist activities of the Royal Family. During the first years of the marriage, Albert took his role as Prince Consort seriously, but with an air of measured subordination; but as time went on, he became progressively involved in practical and administrative matters, culminating in the organisation of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the ancestor of world's fairs ever since.

The energy which Albert put into the arts and industries of Britain also made itself felt in the world of horticulture. Styles of gardening were changing rapidly when Victoria came to the throne; English gardeners were rejecting the English landscape garden that had been so widely adopted on the Continent, and were reviving decorative flower gardens and even enclosed gardens. Glasshouses, once the exclusive luxury of the rich, would become available even to the urban householder in the second half of the century. And the Horticultural Society had greatly increased the number of exotic plants available to the ordinary gardener.

Prince Albert's Royal Autograph is dated 17 March 1840; Council minutes are silent on the subject. The unidentified artist framed the signature with a garland consisting of two sprays of roses, fuchsias and clivias (like Victoria's, Albert's Autograph has faded, but the reproduction in Andrew Murray shows the tubular flowers as being decidedly redder in colour than can now be seen in the original). John Lindley had named *Clivia nobilis* in honour of Lady Charlotte Clive, the Duchess of Northumberland, formerly a governess to the young Victoria.

The Queen visited the Society's garden at Chiswick in May 1842; in 1844 and 1847 the Society made gifts of conifers to Prince Albert, including a collection of newly introduced Mexican pines, most of which were probably used at Osborne House, which the royal couple were developing on the Isle of Wight as a secluded family residence. In 1858 the Duke of Devonshire, the Society's President, died, and Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke was asked



[20] Prince Albert.

to approach Prince Albert or the Prince of Wales (who was only 17!) to see whether one of them would become the next President; Prince Albert agreed.

By the time of his presidency, Albert was busy organising a cultural complex of museums, schools, and galleries in Kensington (though he failed in his attempt to move the National Gallery there). The Horticultural Society was foundering; the eclipse of its flower shows, and bad financial management, threatened it with bankruptcy. Prince Albert came to the rescue with a mutually beneficial package: the Society was renamed the Royal Horticultural Society, and it was provided with a new Garden amid the Kensington complex, where it could hold its shows nearer the centre of London. The opening of the Garden, on 5 June 1861, would prove to be Albert's last public appearance in London.

At the beginning of 1861, Queen Victoria's mother died; they had been partially reconciled in recent years, but the Queen was prostrated with grief, and Albert took over many of her duties. Trouble with the Prince of Wales over his sexual conduct soured the year further, and in December Prince Albert died of typhoid fever. The impact of multiple bereavement and family conflict (she blamed stress over the Prince of Wales' conduct for weakening Albert's resistance to disease) pushed Victoria into the characteristic mode of her remaining forty years: the mourning widow. Memorials to Albert proliferated throughout the country, most notably the great Albert Memorial erected in Kensington Gardens, on a line with the axis of the RHS Garden (and built by the Society's Treasurer Sir John Kelk). The Society sent an address of condolence within a fortnight of Albert's death, and the Prince of Wales replied that the "Memorial to the Great Exhibition" which Albert had been planning for the RHS Garden should be replaced by a statue of him (it would be "most hurtful to Her feelings were any other statue to surmount this Memorial, but that of the great, good Prince, my dearly beloved Father, to whose honor it is in reality raised" – minutes of 2 January 1862). A fortnight later Victoria announced her intention of succeeding her husband as the Society's President; but her advisers, most notably Dilke, got to work, and three weeks later it was announced that the Duke of Buccleuch would become President instead.

The Queen went into effective seclusion, restricting her activities to her family and no longer being seen in public. In 1864, in one of his last pieces of advice, her uncle King Leopold advised her to make a public appearance



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Above. Princess Victoria: engraving after a portrait by Fanny Corbaux, from George Glenný's *Horticultural Journal*.

in order to counteract potential republicanism; she therefore made a visit to the RHS Garden, where a fête was organised for her birthday. Thereafter she forced herself to resume some degree of public life, but never to the extent of the years with Albert. Her Golden and Diamond Jubilees in 1887 and 1897, however, were the occasions of large-scale public celebrations, the latter the first important public event in Britain to be captured on film. For that Jubilee the RHS created the Victoria Medal of Honour, presented, in honour of her sixty years on the throne, to sixty eminent gardeners.

Queen Victoria's reign saw immense social changes, though many of them – from the coming of the railways to the extension of the suffrage – had begun during the decade before she came to the throne. The British Empire grew to become the largest the world had ever seen, and in 1877 the title of Empress of India was added to that of Queen. One important change from the horticultural world should be noted. In 1833 a Select Committee on Public Walks had noted the loss of public recreation space as a result of the building boom that had followed the Napoleonic Wars, and recommended the creation of new Royal Parks to serve the congested districts of London. Three new parks were planned, but were completed under the auspices of local authorities rather than the Crown: Battersea, Victoria, and Albert (which had become Finsbury Park by the time it was finished). But meanwhile local authorities around the country got into the act, and every city in the country was furnished with at least one municipal park during Victoria's reign, many of them signalling their allegiance by sporting the names of Victoria or Albert. Members of the Royal Family sometimes performed official opening ceremonies for public parks, and Royal Jubilees used parks intensively as centres of celebration (Lambert, 2012).

Bibliography: Darby (1983), Elliott (2004), Hobhouse (1983), Longford (1973), Plunkett (2003), Prochaska (1995), Strong (1992: 103–24).



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Above. Prince Albert, from a carte-de-visite by an unknown photographer.

The Kensington Autographs

Since 1840, the Society had made no Royal Autographs. Foreign nobles continued to become Fellows, but the scale of enrolment may have declined; at any rate, less was made of them. The reason may have lain in the Society's stormy fortunes in the 1830s, which had seen the forced resignation of its Secretary over financial mismanagement, a committee of enquiry, retrenchment on expenditure, and a public perception that the cultivation of the aristocracy was not necessarily the best way of promoting a learned society's status. Charles Babbage had praised the Society for the way it was reforming itself, and had contrasted it with the ill-fated Medico-Botanical Society, which "speedily became distinguished, not by its publications or discoveries, but by the number of princes enrolled in its list" (Babbage, 1830: 48–49). The Society had enough publications and discoveries to be proud of; the princes were still there on the (occasional) membership lists, but somewhat less publicised.

All that changed in 1861. The opening of the Society's new Garden in Kensington was a major event, and the culmination of the Prince Consort's presidency. On the day of the opening, Queen Victoria rushed around getting royal signatures from as many of her relatives as possible, including the entire exiled royal family of France. No fewer than six Royal Autographs were signed on the opening day of the Garden; the Autograph of the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia was also made in 1861, and four others were made before the end of 1863, and will be described in the same sequence. The Autograph of the Prince of Wales, though one of those made on the opening day, will be treated together with that of his wife Princess Alexandra, at the end of this sequence.

Bibliography: Elliott (2004).

Opposite. **Albumen photographic print mounted inside the 1863 publication *The book of the Royal Horticultural Society: 1862–1863*, by Andrew Murray. With illustrations and photographs by John Leighton, Thomas Scott, and C. Thurston Thompson. The photograph illustrates a view of the RHS garden at Kensington c.1861–63. Murray, an entomologist and author, was also Assistant Secretary of the RHS and President of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh.**



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[21] The Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, later Emperor and Empress of Germany

Frederick William (1831–1888) was the only son of William I, King of Prussia. Young Fritz, as he was known, was raised for a military career, but in 1849, against his father's wishes, he interrupted his training to study at the University of Bonn. In 1858 he married Victoria Adelaide (1840–1901), Princess Royal of the United Kingdom; the marriage was arranged in order to secure the Royal Family's ties with its German relatives. The couple greatly admired Prince Albert, and hoped that Prussia would become a constitutional monarchy on the British model.

They were elected Fellows of the Society in 1861, and Walter Hood Fitch, the regular artist for *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, was commissioned to make a Royal Autograph. The Prussian black eagle is surrounded by a garland of flowers including corn poppy, foxgloves, pansies, and cornflowers.

The Prince finally saw military service in 1864, in the Second Schleswig War and its successor, the Austro-Prussian War. He developed a hatred for warfare as a result, but still took part in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71, and played a major part in the battle of Sedan; he was praised for his conciliatory treatment of the defeated enemy. Prince Frederick supported the liberal side in the Diet, and after a public denunciation of Bismarck for infringing the liberty of the press, he was barred from political offices, and indeed spent much of his time living in England. But he was made Protector of Public Museums, and helped to oversee the expansion of the German museum system.

In 1888 William I died, and Frederick William became Emperor Frederick III. He was already suffering from cancer of the larynx and died after three months in office. He was succeeded by his son William ("Kaiser Bill"), who was opposed politically to everything Frederick had stood for, and whose programme of territorial expansion eventually provoked the First World War. Victoria, after her brief term as Empress, increasingly at odds with her son, withdrew to an estate in Kronberg, where she had the architect Ernst Eberhard Ihne construct Friedrichshof Castle for her, with a rose garden and other features.

Bibliography: Benson (1939), Corti (1957), Kollander (1995), Müller (2011), Sinclair (1981).



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[21] Frederick III & Empress Frederick (1861).

[22a] Princess Alice, later Grand Duchess of Hesse (1843–1878)

Princess Alice was the first of five children of Victoria and Albert to sign a joint Autograph on the opening day of the RHS Garden in Kensington. The Autograph was the work of E.G. Snellgrove, and depicts three blue and white pansies with a spray of leaves, against a background of blue sky.

Alice was the third child of Victoria and Albert, and early on displayed both sympathy and skill as a nurse, whether for soldiers returned from the Crimea, for her grandmother, or for her father in his last days. She acted as Queen Victoria's secretary during the months after Prince Albert's death.

The search for a suitable husband for Alice was resolved at her own suggestion with the choice of Prince Louis of Hesse, who as her fiancé was to sign a separate Royal Autograph on the same day (see p. 70). Because of mourning for Prince Albert, the wedding did not take place until the summer of 1862. At first the couple lived in an old house in Darmstadt, but in 1864 were given a palace at Kranichstein, outside the city. During the Franco-Prussian War Alice continued her customary work of nursing injured soldiers. Life became progressively uncomfortable for her, however, for reasons personal (growing rift from her mother), religious (she became a friend and patron of David Friedrich Strauss, and in consequence was regarded by some of her family as an atheist), and political (unpopularity with the people of Darmstadt). Along with one of her daughters, she died of diphtheria in December 1878. She was survived by six children, one of whom, Alix, married Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia, with whom she was killed by the Bolsheviks.

Bibliography: Benson (1939), Duff (1967).

[22b] Princess Helena (1846–1928)

Princess Helena, the fifth child of Victoria and Albert, was the second signatory of the joint Autograph, after Princess Alice. After a flirtation with the Royal Librarian, Carl Ruland, resulted in his being sent back to Germany, a husband was quickly found for her in the person of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (1831–1917) – an explosive match, since



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[22] Princesses Alice, Helena and Louise; Princes Arthur and Leopold ([1861]).

Denmark and Prussia were engaged in intermittent war over the ownership of that territory. Prussia eventually won, but Prince Christian's family still claimed to be the rightful heirs of the Duchy, and Queen Victoria's family divided heatedly over the issue. The marriage took place in 1865, however, and Prince Christian agreed to stay in Britain; he was given the post of Ranger of Windsor Great Park (Roberts, 1997: 98–99), and the couple lived at Cumberland Lodge within the park.

Helena spent the rest of her life as a semi-invalid, but engaged seriously in good works. She became the first President of the Royal School of Needlework, and of the Royal British Nurses' Association (until ousted by Queen Alexandra, who had taken the Danish side in the Schleswig-Holstein affair). She and her husband survived into the First World War, when the name of the Royal Family was changed from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor in response to anti-German feeling; they became simply Prince Christian and Princess Helena.

Bibliography: Benson (1939).

[22c] Princess Louise, later Duchess of Argyll (1848–1939)

Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the sixth child of Victoria and Albert, was the third signatory of the joint Autograph, after Princesses Alice and Helena. Her birth was difficult, and Queen Victoria controversially used chloroform to cope with the pain, overruling doctors who thought that painful childbirth was dictated by the Bible; so perhaps it is appropriate that Louise became the most feminist-leaning of Victoria's children.

She was allowed to study sculpture at the Female School of Art in Kensington (a separately housed division of the National Art Training School, founded in 1853, and later absorbed with it into the Royal College of Art), and in later years she was to carve some sculptures that are still on view publicly, such as the statue of Queen Victoria at McGill University. When the customary efforts at finding a husband for her were proving inconclusive, she declared her love for John Campbell, the Marquess of Lorne; Victoria approved her choice, and so in 1870 she became the first British Princess for over 300 years to marry a British subject. In 1878 Lorne was appointed Governor-General of Canada, and the couple spent five

years in Ottawa, a place which Louise came to dislike heartily, and where she suffered a serious concussion in a sleighing accident; however, they founded the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, and both the province of Alberta and Lake Louise were named in her honour.

After their return to England, Louise and her husband went through a couple of decades of intermittently drifting apart and being reunited, not without rumours that Louise was having affairs with prominent sculptors (J.E. Boehm died in her rooms in 1890). Lorne succeeded his father as Duke of Argyll in 1900; in politics, he had become a Liberal Unionist, giving fresh reasons for conflict with his wife, who supported home rule for Ireland; but the couple made their final reconciliation some years before his death, and she nursed him through his final illness in 1914. Thereafter she lived at Kensington Palace, continuing to promote the arts through various organisations.

Bibliography: Benson (1939), MacNutt (1955), Noonan (2002: 83–130), Wake (1988).

[22d] Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany (1853–1884)

Prince Leopold, the eighth child of Victoria and Albert, was, at the age of eight, the fifth signatory of the joint Autograph, after Princess Alice.

Suffering from haemophilia, the young Leopold was unable to pursue an active career. He was made Duke of Albany in 1881, and the following year was married to Princess Helena of Waldeck-Pyrmont. The marriage was happy, and produced two children, before Leopold died of complications after an injury suffered at Cannes (to which resort he is credited with introducing croquet). During his short life he surrounded himself with an intellectual circle, developing a strong interest in the arts; he maintained his parents' tradition of promoting public parks by opening Beaumont Park in Huddersfield the year before he died.

Bibliography: Myers (1893), Zeepvat (1998).

[22e, 23] Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn (1850–1942)

Prince Arthur was the fourth signatory of the joint Autograph, after Princess Alice; he was also the only one of Queen Victoria's children to sign a second Royal Autograph independently in his later years.

Prince Arthur trained at Woolwich, and served with the Royal Engineers and the Artillery before coming to rest in the Rifle Brigade. He first won distinction in Canada, where, by the time he was twenty, he had won a medal for defeating a Fenian attack from the United States, and been made an honorary chief of the Iroquois. He was to return to Canada more than once, and in 1911 was appointed Governor-General, so he served as the Crown's representative in Canada during the First World War – occasionally getting into conflict with the Prime Minister when he took military matters into his own hands.

In 1874 he was made Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, and received as his official residence Bagshot Park, which over the years he was to have redesigned with rock gardens, avenues, and a blue garden. In 1879 he married Princess Louise Margaret of Prussia, by whom he had three children (one of whom, Princess Margaret, became the first wife of King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden – see p. 100). He continued his military career, gradually working his way up through the ranks to general, field marshal, and Inspector-General of the Forces. On the side, he was President of the Boy Scout Association, and for nearly forty years Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Masons. His last public ceremony was the opening of the Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth, named in his honour, in 1934.

In 1924 Prince Arthur, by then approaching eighty years of age, became a Royal Patron, and a new Royal Autograph was prepared for him to sign, the artist being Lilian Snelling, the Society's official artist for *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, which the Society had acquired three years previously. The Autograph, the image of which is the smallest in the collection, frames the signature diagonally between groups of lilies of the valley

Bibliography: Frankland (1993); Noonan (2002: 337–38); Ward (1912: 32–49).



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[23] Prince Arthur (1924?).

[24a] Princess Augusta of Cambridge, later Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1822–1916)

Princess Augusta was the daughter of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge (see p. 22), and was the first signatory of a joint Autograph with two of her siblings on the occasion of the opening of the Kensington garden. The Autograph was designed by Theresa W. Smith of the Female School of Art (possibly a fellow trainee with Princess Louise – see p. 60), and shows a prince's coronet above a wreath of largely blue flowers with a rose at the apex, and two acanthus scrolls entwined to suggest decorative legs of a stand, each framing a signature.

Augusta was born in Hanover, where her father was Viceroy. In 1843 she married Frederick William of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, becoming Grand Duchess when her husband succeeded to the Dukedom in 1860, so that she may be counted the great-niece of Queen Charlotte (see p. 6). Until prevented by old age, she travelled regularly to Britain, and had a house near Buckingham Palace. She was consulted on protocol for the coronation of Edward VII. Her husband, the Grand Duke, predeceased her in 1904, and the First World War broke her contact with the British Royal Family.

Bibliography: Mayer (1890: 21–31).

[24b] Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, later Duchess of Teck (1833–1897)

Princess Mary Adelaide was the daughter of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge (see p. 22), and was the second signatory of a joint Autograph with two of her siblings.

Mary Adelaide, like her elder sister Augusta, was born in Hanover, but spent much of her youth at Cambridge Cottage in Kew Gardens, where she became a friend of Sir William Hooker (whom she nicknamed “Old Hookey”) and interested herself in the bedding schemes for the garden (King, 1985: 202). Nicknamed “Fat Mary” in her youth, she did not readily attract suitors; Queen Victoria found a husband for her in the person of Prince Francis of Teck, whom she married in 1866. The couple lived at



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[24] Princesses Augusta and Mary Adelaide and Prince George of Cambridge ([1861])

White Lodge in Richmond Park, apart from two years (1883–85), when they lived abroad, in flight from creditors. They had four children, most notably their eldest, Princess Mary of Teck, who married the future George V (see below, p. 86).

Bibliography: Jackman (1984).

[24c] Prince George, Duke of Cambridge (1819–1904)

Prince George was the son and successor of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge (see p. 22), and was the third signatory of a joint Autograph with two of his siblings.

George was born at Hanover, and followed his father into a military career, serving first in the Hanoverian army, and then the British, eventually becoming lieutenant-general during the Crimean War. In 1856 he became Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, and a field marshal six years later. In this capacity he resisted many of Edward Cardwell's reforms of the Army, especially his attempt to end the purchase of officer ranks by the aristocracy; in 1895 he was forced to resign as Commander-in-Chief. In addition to several military titles and roles (including President of the Royal Military Academy), he was appointed Ranger of Hyde Park and St James's Park in 1852, and of Richmond Park in 1857.

The Duke secretly married an actress, Sarah Fairbrother, in 1847; they had already had two children, and went on to have a third. The marriage was illegal, as undertaken without royal approval, and the couple lived in disguise, Sarah using the name Mrs FitzGeorge. Not long after the marriage, he took another mistress, Louisa Beauclerk; she died in 1882, and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery. When Sarah died in 1890, the Duke had her buried in a mausoleum near Louisa's grave, and was deposited there himself in due course. The Dukedom of Cambridge became extinct with his death, until its recent revival for His Royal Highness Prince William.

Bibliography: St Aubin (1963).

[25] The exiled royal family of France

In 1824, Louis XVIII died, and was succeeded by his brother, the elderly Comte d'Artois, who took the name Charles X, and promptly applied to become a Fellow of the Horticultural Society. No one seems to have suggested making an Autograph for him to sign, nor for his successor Louis Philippe. But in 1861, Queen Victoria got more or less the entire French royal family to sign an Autograph on the occasion of the opening of the RHS Garden in Kensington.

The Autograph bears the title “The Royal Family of France”, and depicts a blue ermine mantle set with fleurs-de-lis, against which are displayed three circular panels for signatures, each framed with a wreath of roses, pansies, lilies, and bedding plants.

There are twelve signatures in all. The first is that of the last Queen of France, the widow of Louis Philippe: Marie Amélie (Maria Amalia, 1782–1866) was the daughter of King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies, and met her husband while they were both in exile during the Napoleonic Wars. He was the son of the former Duke of Orléans, Philippe-Égalité, and partly in keeping with family tradition, when the Revolution of July 1830 ousted King Charles X and brought him to the throne, instead of adopting a name and number, he took the name of Louis Philippe, and the title of Citizen King. In 1848, a further revolution ended the French monarchy forever; Louis Philippe and his family fled to England, where they lived at Claremont, the estate of the King of the Belgians.

Louis Philippe's grandsons wrote the second and third signatures on the Autograph. Louis Philippe d'Orléans (Prince Philippe, Count of Paris, 1838–1894) had been the Prince Royal, designated to succeed his grandfather; an attempt to install him on the throne as Louis Philippe II failed during the 1848 revolution, and he fled to England, where he lived at Sheen House and later Stowe. The year after signing this Autograph, he married his young cousin Princess Marie Isabelle; they had eight children, two of whom married into the royal families of Spain and Portugal.

The third signature is that of Philippe's younger brother Robert d'Orléans, Duke of Chartres (1840–1910). At the time of signing he was already engaged to his cousin Princess Françoise, whom he married two years

later. He joined the army of Piedmont and fought in the War of Italian Liberation; together with his brother and his uncle the Prince of Joinville, he fought on the side of the Union in the American Civil War. After the fall of the Second Republic he rejoined the French army.

The fourth signature on the Autograph is that of Louis Philippe's second son, Louis d'Orléans, Duke of Nemours (1814–1896), who before the 1848 revolution had a military career in North Africa, and returned to the army after 1871. His signature is followed by that of his daughter, Marguerite d'Orléans (Princess Margaret Adelaide, 1846–1893), who was to marry the exiled Polish activist Prince Ladislaus Czartoryski.

In the lower left panel will be found the signature of Louis Philippe's third son, François d'Orléans, Prince of Joinville (1818–1900), who before 1848 had a naval career, rising to the rank of Vice-Admiral. During the American Civil War, he and his nephews offered their services to the American government, and fought on the Union side. After the fall of the Second Empire, he served a term as a representative in the French National Assembly. He wrote books about the French navy and his American experiences.

Three signatures below his is that of his wife, Françoise d'Orléans (Princess Francisca of Brazil, 1824–1898); in between are those of their daughter Françoise (1844–1925), who as we have seen married Robert d'Orléans, and their son Pierre, Duke of Penthièvre (1845–1919), who also had a naval career.

The last three signatures, in the lower right panel, represent the family of Louis Philippe's youngest son, Antoine d'Orléans, Duke of Montpensier (1824–1890); his wife Marie Louise Ferdinande (Luisa Fernanda, Infanta of Spain, 1832–1897); and their daughter Princess Marie Isabelle (1848–1919), who as we have seen married her cousin Philippe.

Louis Philippe's descendants, from the Duke of Nemours on, have continued to claim the throne to the present day. In 1881, a law was passed to remove the threat of pretenders to the throne, and those of the signatories who were still alive were variously stripped of their offices and barred from the armed services.

Bibliography: Broglie (1981: 317–65); Foreman (2010, esp. pp. 150–51, 176).



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[25] The exiled royal family of France ([1861]).

[26a] Prince Philippe, Count of Flanders (1837–1905)

Prince Philippe signed a joint Royal Autograph with Prince Louis of Hesse on the opening day of the RHS Garden. The Autograph, which was designed by Mrs Withers, shows a coronet of oak leaves framing a beehive, symbol of industry, and two cornucopias, symbol of prosperity.

Prince Philippe was the second surviving son of Leopold I (see p. 16), and was no doubt chosen to sign the Autograph because of his father's status as the former husband of Princess Charlotte. Prince Philippe spent his entire life as heir presumptive to the throne of Belgium; he married Princess Marie Louise of Hohenzollern, and did at least sire a future king, Albert I (1875–1934).

Bibliography: Baycroft (2004).

[26b] Prince Louis of Hesse, later Ludwig IV (1837–1892)

Prince Louis was the second signatory of the joint Autograph with Prince Philippe. At the time he was engaged to Princess Alice (see p. 58), though their marriage would be delayed until the following year because of the protocols of mourning for Prince Albert.

Prince Louis became Ludwig IV of Hesse in 1877; Alice died of diphtheria the following year, along with one of their children. Six years later, he married Alexandrina, the widow of the former Russian *chargé d'affaires* in Darmstadt, who became Countess of Romrod; but the marriage was annulled soon after.

Bibliography: Duff (1967).



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[26] Prince Philippe, Count of Flanders and Prince Louis of Hesse, later Ludwig IV ([1861]).

[27] Napoleon Jerome Bonaparte (1822–1891)

Napoleon Joseph Charles Paul Bonaparte was the nephew of Napoleon I, and the son of his younger brother Jerome, who during the Empire had ruled as King of Westphalia, but latterly lived in France as governor of Les Invalides. After the revolution of 1848, young Napoleon entered politics as a representative for Corsica, and took the name Napoleon Jerome. He was named heir presumptive to the imperial throne if Napoleon III died childless, a situation that ended in 1856 with the birth of the Prince Imperial. During the Crimean War he commanded a division, and after the war became Colonial Minister; his lifelong nickname was “Plon-Plon”.

In 1859 he married Maria Clotilde, Princess of Savoy, which at that time controlled Nice and the surrounding territories. The war of Italian liberation broke out later the same year, and the Prince’s father-in-law eventually became the King of united Italy; Napoleon Jerome commanded a division in the French army during the campaigns. After the fall of the Second Empire he abandoned politics until 1879, when the death of the Dauphin made him the head of the Bonaparte family, and he spent the rest of his life in the role of Pretender to the throne of France.

The artist of the Autograph, which was made in 1862, was Mrs Withers. The Prince’s name is rendered “Napoleon Girome, Prince of the French”. The Autograph shows the imperial eagle and crown, with the signature on a swag, with a cluster of forget-me-nots at the base, surrounding a beehive, symbol of industry. At the sides are a naval scene and a view of a coastal town, possibly in Corsica.

Bibliography: Aronson (1972), Holt (1973).



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[27] Napoleon Jerome Bonaparte (1862).

[28] Mohammed Sa'id, Pasha of Egypt (1822–1863)

This is by far the most curious of the Autographs: the only one signed by a non-European, non-Christian ruler. But in 1862, the probable year of its painting, Mohammed Sa'id was at the peak of his prestige in Europe: not only was he trying to bring a liberalised constitution to backward Egypt, not only had he attempted to ban the slave trade from his country, not only had he introduced railways into Egypt, but his country was becoming central to the British economy. The American Civil War had disrupted the export of cotton into Britain, and the resulting "cotton famine" had caused mass unemployment in the north of England. Egypt was the next most important source of cotton, and was busily increasing production in an attempt to take the place of the Americans. Mohammed Sa'id was the potential saviour of the British textile industry.

At the time, work was also under way on one of the most important industrial developments of the age: the construction of the Suez Canal, eagerly awaited by every naval power in Europe. (The fact that it was being constructed by French engineers had piqued Britain, and British interference had delayed the commencement by years: but it was finally in progress.) A new city was being built to serve as the Canal's Mediterranean harbour, named Port Said in the Pasha's honour.

The Autograph, which is unsigned and undated but must date from 1862, shows an imaginary Egyptian scene with the Pyramids in the distance, and nearer views of a date palm, calabash gourds and lotus plants (*Nelumbo nucifera*). The device of the sky god Horus, showing him in the form of a falcon silhouetted against the sun with the moon below, had been adopted by Sa'id Pasha, but the Muslim crescent and three stars which accompanied it in his own regalia have been omitted, presumably for religious reasons. This Autograph has one of the crudest bits of drawing in the series: the horizon line passes visibly and uncorrected through the Pyramids.

The Pasha drowned accidentally early in 1863. His involvement with the RHS left some lingering impression, though, for the following year his successor sent an exhibit of fruit to the Society's International Fruit Show, and was duly awarded a medal.

Bibliography: Bréhier (1901: 154–64), Toledano (1990).



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[28] Mohammed Sa'id, Pasha of Egypt (no date).

[29] King Edward VII (1841–1910)

Prince Albert Edward (known familiarly as “Bertie”), the eldest child of Victoria and Albert, was born at Buckingham Palace in 1841, and created Prince of Wales shortly after. He spent his childhood being rigorously educated by Prince Albert, with disappointing results. Although he was not allowed a military career, much of his travel was spent watching army manoeuvres; before he was twenty he was sent on an official tour of America. He also developed early on a reputation for liaisons with women, beginning with an actress whose affair with him came to his parents’ attention. Prince Albert reprimanded him, and was dead a fortnight later; Queen Victoria blamed Albert Edward for contributing to his father’s death.

But in June 1861 these troubles had yet to arise. The Autograph was produced by Theresa W. Smith and Fanny Stock of the Female School of Art, and depicts a group of red and white roses surmounted by the Prince of Wales’ feathers, with the motto “Ich dien” [I serve], with the signature set within the eight-pointed Garter Star.

Arrangements had already begun for the Prince of Wales’ marriage. He married Princess Alexandra of Denmark in 1863, and the couple moved into Sandringham House in Norfolk, which they soon had rebuilt; A.J. Humphrey was the architect, and Broderick Thomas designed the gardens, which included a massive rock garden by James Pulham and Son. “Once, driving through the forests at Balmoral, King Edward VII confided to one of his Ministers that he would have chosen to be a landscape gardener if he had had a choice” (Woodward, 1939: 106).

After his marriage, the Prince functioned as a celebrity – an icon of fashion, with a well publicised partying lifestyle, hunting and shooting, constantly in the press – and put his image to social and political use, appearing as a dignitary at public events. In 1871 he opened the Thames Embankment, and thereafter regularly conducted opening ceremonies for important buildings. He became a popular figure despite his mother’s long-term hostility and frequent disapproval. Gradually, although she tried to keep him at a distance from practical politics, he became a trusted figure for successive Prime Ministers, to be consulted on administrative matters.



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[29] King Edward VII ([1861]).

In 1901, his mother died and he succeeded to the throne, ruling as Edward VII. He decided not to use the name Albert, in order that his father's name should stand alone in the ranks of British monarchy; he donated his parents' house at Osborne to the state, and continued to live at Sandringham. It had now been nearly forty years since the last time the Society commissioned a Royal Autograph, and no one suggested the preparation of a new one, though George IV had set a precedent for signing a new Autograph on accession to the throne. In 1904 he opened the Society's New Hall on Vincent Square, and three years later he spontaneously knighted Sir Pieter Bam in that Hall in gratitude for the South African Exhibition he had arranged (Dee, 2011: 58–65).

He proved a popular king. He supported many of the innovations of the Liberal government of the prime ministers Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, including the creation of the Territorial Army, and Lloyd George's radical budget of 1910 which introduced old age pensions. Edward agreed to create enough new Liberal peers to swing the vote in the House of Lords in favour of the budget.

On the international scene, Edward was related to nearly every European monarch, and used state visits and continental holidays to keep his extended family in order and defuse tensions, helping to forge the Entente Cordiale with France and approving plans to establish an expeditionary force to go to the aid of France if Germany attacked it.

Bibliography: Anon. (1902a), Anon. (1872), Dunlop (2004), Heffer (1998), Magnus (1964), Plumptre (1995), Ward (1912: 121–46).



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Above. The opening ceremony for the RHS New Hall (now the Lindley Hall), with King Edward and Queen Alexandra both visible, being addressed by Sir Trevor Lawrence (*Gardeners' Chronicle* for 30 July 1904).

[30] Queen Alexandra (1844–1925)

Princess Alexandra of Denmark was the eldest daughter of Christian, the Crown Prince of Denmark. Before Prince Albert's death she was already being considered as a potential wife for the Prince of Wales; after the necessary interruption for mourning, negotiations were satisfactorily completed. In March 1863 she arrived in England, to the accompaniment of music by Arthur Sullivan composed specially for her landing. Three days later the wedding took place, and Alexandra began her career as Princess of Wales, sharing her husband's celebrity lifestyle, and becoming as great an influence on female fashion as he was on male. The couple had six children, all born prematurely, though one biographer has speculated that Alexandra gave Queen Victoria false dates for the expected deliveries to prevent her from being present at the births. The Royal Autograph is dated 1863, and is the work of Mrs Withers. It shows the royal arms, surmounting a wreath composed of roses and other flowers, including pansies and morning glory.

Little more than a year after her marriage, her native country was at war with Prussia over the control of the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein. Alexandra naturally supported the Danish side, and the result was a rift and lifelong rivalry with her sister-in-law Princess Helena, whose husband Prince Christian she regarded as a pretender to the ducal throne. All her life, and most significantly as Queen, she remained suspicious of German expansionism.

The 1860s and 1870s saw a wave of parks, streets, and institutions (not least Alexandra Palace) named in her honour. Alexandra was an amateur musician, who was eventually awarded an honorary doctorate in music; her husband helped to found the Royal College of Music in 1883. She was a patron of the London Hospital, and founded a nursing corps to serve in South Africa during the Boer War.

In 1901 she became Queen Consort, but with little change in her lifestyle. After Edward's death, she continued her public and charitable activities, and instituted Alexandra Rose Day in 1912 to raise funds for the disabled. During the First World War she supported the renaming of the Royal Family and the severing of German connections. After the War she became more retired, and increasingly blind and demented, before dying in 1925 at the age of eighty.

Bibliography: Anon. (1902b), Battiscombe (1969), Hough (1992), Strong (1992: 127–36).



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[30] Queen Alexandra (1863).

[31] The royal family of Denmark

This Autograph, signed by six members of the royal family of Denmark, is undated but was undoubtedly made in 1863, when Princess Alexandra arrived for her marriage to the Prince of Wales, accompanied by her parents and siblings. The unidentified designer has made this the most decoratively stylised and least botanical of any of the Royal Autographs: a frame with various floral motifs, all abstractly presented.

The first signatory was the Crown Prince of Denmark: Christian (1818–1906), who eight months after the wedding would ascend the throne as King Christian IX. The son of Frederick William of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, he was not originally in the line to the throne, but King Frederick VII, the last King of the Oldenburg line, was childless, and he had been named heir presumptive in 1852. The early years of his reign saw war between Denmark and Prussia over the control of the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein; Christian was defeated, and Prussia annexed the Duchy. For most of his reign, he presided over the increasingly dictatorial administration of his Prime Minister Estrup, but at the beginning of the twentieth century became associated with a more liberal government.

The next signature is that of Christian's wife, Louise of Hesse-Kassel (1817–1898), soon to become Queen Louise. The daughter of Prince William of Hesse and Charlotte of Denmark, she married her cousin Christian in 1842, and the couple had six children, four of whom signed this Autograph (Alexandra, of course, had her own individual Autograph). She was an amateur painter, and promoter of the arts.

Next to sign was Prince Frederick (1843–1912), who would eventually succeed his father as King Frederick VIII. He married Princess Louise of Sweden, with the unsuccessful aim of improving relations between the two countries.

The next signature is that of Prince Wilhelm (1845–1913), who two years after signing the Autograph would be elected King of the Hellenes, the first monarch to be chosen by the Greek Assembly rather than by the consortium of great powers that had assisted Greece to become



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[31] The royal family of Denmark (pre-1863).

independent from the Ottoman Empire. He ruled under the name of King George I, and established a constitution which included the first provision among European countries for universal male suffrage. Over the course of his long reign, he continually tried to expand the territory of Greece, more than once bringing the country into disastrous wars against Turkey. In 1913 he was assassinated, apparently not for political reasons.

The next signature is that of Marie Sophie Fredrica Dagmar (1847–1928), known in her youth as Princess Dagmar. The year after Alexandra's marriage, she became engaged to Nicholas Alexandrovitch, the son of the Tsar; but during the engagement he died of meningitis, leaving the deathbed wish that Dagmar might marry his brother Alexander – which, once she had recovered from her grief, she duly did, converting to the Russian Orthodox Church and adopting the name Maria Feodorovna. Alexander became Tsar in 1881 after the assassination of his father. As Tsarina, Maria Feodorovna was very popular: she had made the effort to learn Russian, and her court balls gave Russia a taste of western elegance. She spent much time at Gatchina, an 18th-century landscape park, where she helped to develop the garden. Alexander ruled for little over a decade, dying of nephritis in 1894. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Nicholas II, who married Princess Alix, one of the children of Princess Alice (see p. 58). After the Russian Revolution and the execution of Nicholas and Alix, Maria Feodorovna fled to Denmark, where she spent her last years in exile.

The final signature is that of Princess Thyra (1853–1933). When she was 18, she became pregnant by a cavalry officer; the event was hushed up, Thyra gave birth secretly in Athens, where her brother George I was King, and the officer killed himself. In 1878 Thyra married the Crown Prince of Hanover, Ernest Augustus, whose titles included Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale, Earl of Armagh, and Duke of Brunswick. He never ruled Brunswick, however; when the reigning Duke died in 1884, Bismarck declared the inheritance vacated, and annexed the Duchy to Prussia. During the First World War, Ernest Augustus was stripped of the Dukedom of Cumberland for supporting the German side.

Bibliography: Aronson (1976), Christmas (1914), Hall (1999), Hayden (2006), Sandiford (1975).

The twentieth century

The network of alliances created among the European powers in the late nineteenth century had been intended to keep war at bay; in the end it had the opposite effect, and once a war broke out between two countries, the alliances served to drag all the rest into it. The First World War, in the words of an eminent historian, “damaged civilisation, the rational and liberal civilisation of the European enlightenment, permanently for the worse and, through the damage done, world civilisation also” (Keegan, 1998: 8). The twentieth century was an age of unprecedentedly destructive warfare, and was to witness the unravelling of the political and cultural hopes of the nineteenth century.

After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Congress of Vienna tried its hardest to re-establish the old regime and put the interrupted monarchies back on their thrones. After the First World War, the monarchies had largely disappeared from Europe, the monarchs themselves exiled or killed, the German and Austro-Hungarian empires had been broken up, and a new Europe composed largely of republics formed a League of Nations in an attempt to resolve political squabbles before they became crises. It proved ineffectual in the face of new non-monarchical empires which competed against each other and precipitated a Second World War. At the end of that war, which caused far more material damage than the First, the number of monarchies was reduced still further, and the postwar years saw the progressive breakup of all the remaining European empires, including the British.

Bibliography: Howard (1977), Prochaska (1995).

[32] George V (1865–1936)

Prince George was the second son of Edward and Alexandra; his elder brother, Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, was the expected heir to the throne. Both brothers were trained for service in the Navy. Plans for their marriages went awry: George proposed to his cousin Princess Marie of Edinburgh, who turned him down and ended by becoming Queen of Romania (and, later, a Royal Patron of the RHS); Albert Victor became engaged to Princess Mary of Teck, the daughter of Princess Mary Adelaide (see p. 64), but died of pneumonia in 1892. During the subsequent period of mourning, George and Mary became close, then engaged, and were married in July 1893.

Now promoted to the rank of Duke and Duchess of York, George and Mary lived in York Cottage on the Sandringham estate. After Edward VII had become King, they made a tour of the British Empire; George was then made Prince of Wales, and given an increasing role in aspects of government and administration.

George V became a Royal Patron of the RHS in 1910, on his accession to the throne; but no Royal Autograph was prepared for him to sign until 1929. The artist was Frank Galsworthy, who within a few years would become a member of the RHS Picture Committee. The royal signature is placed in an elliptical panel surmounted by a crown, and surrounded by a bouquet of carnations, supplemented by white roses to represent the House of York.

The coronation in 1911 was celebrated with a Festival of Empire, and the royal couple travelled to Delhi to attend the Durbar as Emperor and Empress of India. But under the panoply political tensions were growing, with Asquith's Liberal government introducing legislation to reduce the powers of the House of Lords, and the debate over Irish home rule escalating to the point where civil war seemed threatened. George convened a conference to try to resolve the conflict, failed, and reluctantly signed a Home Rule Bill; but the outbreak of the First World War suspended the initiative until the uprising of 1916 forced the issue.

The protracted War, and the wave of anti-German feeling, led King George to change the name of the Royal Family from Saxe-Coburg-



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[32] George V (1929).

Gotha to Windsor, and other attendant names to English equivalents (e.g. Battenberg to Mountbatten). By the end of the War, many of the European monarchies had been expelled and their countries become republics; several continental royal families sought refuge in Britain; and the British monarch no longer had the prewar capacity to influence international politics by family interaction. Closest to home, Ireland was partitioned, and the Irish Free State declared. In 1926, George presided over an imperial conference in London, at which it was accepted as a goal that the British colonies should follow the path of Canada, Australia and New Zealand in becoming self-governing dominions; five years later, the phrase “British Empire” was formally replaced by “British Commonwealth of Nations”.

George V died in January 1936, of pleurisy and complications. Fifty years later, the publication of the papers of his doctor Lord Dawson revealed that he had given the King a lethal injection of morphine and cocaine, as euthanasia (Watson, 1986). The RHS cancelled its imminent fortnightly show for the funeral.

Bibliography: Anon. (1935), Cook (1932), Nicolson (1952), Sinclair (1988), Somervell (1935), Taylor (1934).



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Above. King George V and Queen Mary, at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, c.1934.

[33] Queen Mary (1867–1953)

Princess Mary of Teck was the daughter of Princess Mary Adelaide, and the granddaughter of the Duke of Cambridge (see pp. 64, 22). She was brought up at White Lodge, Richmond Park. Her fiancé the Prince of Wales, Prince Albert Victor, having died young, she married his younger brother Prince George instead, in 1893. The couple had six children.

Like her husband, Queen Mary became a Royal Patron in 1910, but did not sign a Royal Autograph until 1929. The artist was E.A. Bowles, a longstanding member of Council and of numerous committees (and whose great-niece would one day marry the current heir to the Throne). The Autograph depicts a collection of roses of various sorts, in a range of colours indicating current horticultural interests rather than the heraldic red and white roses that had appeared on earlier Autographs.

Her husband collected stamps; Mary collected pictures and *objets d'art*, becoming a major contributor to the Royal Collection (its website lists 316 works collected by her), and commissioning Queen Mary's Dolls' House from Edwin Lutyens (Lambton, 2010). From 1925, she oversaw the redecoration of Frogmore House, both inside and outside, clearing overgrowth and restoring the garden. In 1930, the garden of the now defunct Royal Botanic Society in the inner circle of Regent's Park was taken over by the Royal Parks and redeveloped; on part of the site Duncan Campbell created what was named Queen Mary's Rose Garden in her honour.

Mary was nearly 70 when George V died. Their eldest son, the Prince of Wales, who had built up a great popular following as a sportsman and traveller, became King Edward VIII, but before the coronation could take place he had abdicated, because he refused to give up his intention of marrying an American divorcée, Mrs Wallis Simpson. Edward and Wallis retired, if that is the word, to the lesser status of Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and the second son, George, became King.

Bibliography: Pope-Hennessy (1959), Woodward (1939). For her contributions to the Royal Collection, see www.royalcollection.org.uk.



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[33] Queen Mary (1929).

[34] Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, later Countess of Harewood (1897–1965)

On 26 June 1928, the Royal Horticultural Society's New Hall in Greycourt Street was officially opened by Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles. She had been invited to assume the role of Royal Patron four months before, and in September 1929 a Royal Autograph was prepared for her to sign; the artist is signed H.E.M., and the Autograph depicts four cultivars of sweet peas, which were then still near the height of their popularity.

The only daughter of George V and Queen Mary, Victoria Alexandra Alice Mary was brought up on the Sandringham estate, and while still a teenager began to play a role in charitable activities, overseeing Princess Mary's Christmas Gift Fund to provide Christmas presents for British servicemen in December 1914. She trained as a nurse at the Great Ormond Street Hospital, and after the War became President of the Girl Guides Association, and of the British Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments.

In 1922 she married Viscount Lascelles, the elder son of the Earl of Harewood. The couple moved to Goldsborough Hall in Yorkshire, where the Viscountess became involved in replanning the garden, creating a grand lime walk.

In 1929 the Viscount succeeded his father as Earl of Harewood, and the couple moved to Harewood House. Mary assumed the title of Princess Royal. During the Second World War she became the Chief Controller of the Women's Land Army; she had already become Royal Patron of what was to be known as Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, and her military activities would continue to the point where in 1956 she was given the honorary rank of general in the British army. In peacetime she became the Chancellor of the University of Leeds. Her husband died in 1947, but she continued to live at Harewood, where her son Gerald was now Earl.

Bibliography: Hall (1978), Kennedy (1982).



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[34] Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles (1928?).

[35] George VI (1895–1952)

Prince Albert Frederick Arthur George was the second son of George V and Queen Mary, and known in his early years as Albert. He proceeded through naval college into active service, was mentioned in despatches for bravery at the battle of Jutland in 1916, then transferred into the Air Force for the remainder of the War. He then went to university; in 1920 he was created Duke of York, and in 1923 married a commoner, Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. He avoided public speaking because of a stammer (the subject of a recent film, *The King's Speech*), but was famous for his tours of mines and industrial developments, becoming President of the Industrial Welfare Society. Public speaking eventually became a necessity, however, for on the abdication of his elder brother in 1936, he succeeded to the throne, and took the name George VI.

King George became a Royal Patron of the RHS in 1936, on his accession to the throne; his Royal Autograph, though undated, was probably prepared shortly after, by Emily Sartain, and shows a rhododendron cultivar. His coronation took place in 1937, and the Chelsea Flower Show staged a massive Commonwealth exhibit to celebrate the event.

In 1939, George VI became the first reigning monarch to visit Canada, where he was styled “King of Canada” by the Prime Minister; the visit was a great success, and began a tradition of such visits. (Story of the time: on being asked whether she was Scottish or English, the Queen replied that she was Canadian.) A few months later the War began, bringing with it air raids on London; the Royal Family refused to move to safer areas, staying throughout in Windsor and Buckingham Palace, which was bombed in September 1940. The George Cross and the George Medal were instituted during the War to recognise acts of civilian bravery. After the War, George travelled to America to address the first session of the United Nations.

The British Commonwealth of Nations began to disintegrate after the War; Ireland and Burma left during George's reign; in 1949 the word “British” was dropped from the title of the Commonwealth. His great-grandmother Victoria had been Queen Empress; George VI became Head of the Commonwealth. He died suddenly in 1952 of a coronary thrombosis.

Bibliography: James (1998), Roper (1959), Shewell-Cooper (1952), Sinclair (1988).



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[35] George VI (no date).

[36] Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother (1900–2002)

Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon was the youngest daughter of the Earl of Strathmore, and grew up mainly at Glamis Castle, where she was largely responsible for saving the contents of the castle during a fire in 1916 (the Castle was being used as a home for wounded soldiers at the time). In 1921 Prince Albert, as he then was, proposed to her; she turned him down for fear of the life of restriction and punctilio that would be hers if she joined the Royal Family. He pursued her for another couple of years before overcoming her resistance. When they were married in 1923, they were regarded as having set a progressive precedent: a member of the Royal Family marrying a commoner. The couple were given Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park as their home; they had two children, TRH Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret.

In 1936, after the abdication crisis, she became the Queen Consort, and her Royal Autograph, again by Emily Sartain, depicted a grouping of roses, magnolias, and astilbe. Despite the move to Buckingham Palace, the couple continued the association with Royal Lodge. In 1932 the Park's Deputy Surveyor Eric Savill had begun work on an ornamental garden for the royal couple within the Park; when it was completed, the King named it the Savill Garden. Lanning Roper tells the story of the presentation of the Garden: "Their Majesties could not fail to be impressed by the miracle that had been wrought in so short a time, for this dreary overgrown scrubland had become a mass of sparkling spring flowers in a sylvan setting... They examined everything with great interest, but made little comment until their departure. Then, with a slight smile, the Queen turned to Sir Eric with this delightful challenge: 'It's very nice, Mr Savill, but isn't it rather small?'" (Roper 1959: 33). After the War, on the Queen's encouragement, Savill moved on to create the Valley Garden.

Elizabeth's younger brother, Sir David Bowes-Lyon, was active in the affairs of the Royal Horticultural Society: from 1934 a member of Council, from 1948 to 1953 Treasurer, and, from 1953 until his death in 1961, President. In that capacity he could be seen each year escorting his sister around the Chelsea Flower Show; it was during this reign that the nearly annual link between the Royal Family and the Chelsea Show was forged.



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[36] Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother (no date).

After the death of her husband, she became known as Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, in which capacity she would spend nearly half of her long life. Gardening and the making of gardens became one of her major interests: in 1952 she bought the Castle of Mey as an additional residence, and had the garden restored. In 1997 The Queen Mother's Garden, commissioned by English Heritage from Penelope Hobhouse, was opened at Walmer Castle. In 2006 The Queen Mother's Memorial Garden, designed by Lachlan Stewart, was opened at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

A number of plants were named after her throughout her career, from the rose and rhododendron named 'Elizabeth of Glamis' to the variety of plants bearing the words 'Queen Mother' in their name. In 1961 she was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour by the RHS; in 1991 she set up The Queen Mother Bursary to fund horticultural projects. The August 1990 issue of the RHS journal, *The Garden*, was a special issue in her honour. She died at the age of 101, the longest-lived British monarch, and camellias from her own gardens were arranged on her coffin in the funeral procession.

Bibliography: Duff (1973), Roberts (1997), Roper (1959), Salisbury (1988), Shawcross (2009), Shewell-Cooper (1952), Strong (1992: 139–50).

Opposite. Above: King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in a rock garden at the Chelsea Show, 1937. Below: the opening of the Queen Mother's Garden at Walmer Castle, June 1997. The Queen Mother is at centre with Sir Jocelyn Stevens, then Chairman of English Heritage. To the left are three members of the English Heritage Historic Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee: the present author, Peter Goodchild, and Gilly Drummond.



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[37] King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden (1882–1973)

The King and Queen of Sweden were made Honorary Fellows in 1961, and Royal Autographs were prepared for them a decade later. Both were made by Emily Sartain; King Gustav's is dated 1971, and Queen Louise's, though undated, was probably made at the same time.

Gustav, Duke of Scania, was the eldest son of King Gustav V of Sweden. When he was 23 he married Princess Margaret of Connaught, the daughter of Prince Arthur (see p. 62). She was extremely interested in gardening, and in 1915–17 published two books on the subject, which were translated into English as *The Garden that we Made* (1920) and *In our Flower Garden* (1921). She died suddenly in 1920, and three years later Gustav married Princess Louise Mountbatten.

Gustav's horticultural interests became apparent early on; in 1907 he planted his first rhododendron at his summer residence at Sofiero, and over more than half a century he collected specimens and bred new hybrids. His enthusiasm communicated itself to his family: in 1937 the Crown Prince (Prince Gustav Adolf, 1906–47) travelled to Britain to train at Wisley. By the time the King died there were nearly 5000 rhododendrons at Sofiero; he bequeathed the garden to the town of Helsingborg, which has maintained and expanded the collection since. The Royal Autograph was therefore illustrated with two sprays of a rhododendron cultivar.

Bibliography: Hanson-Ericson (1965), Kvant (2001), Lindquist (1961).



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[37] King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden (1971).

[38] Queen Louise of Sweden (1889–1965)

The undated Autograph was prepared by Emily Sartain, probably, like her husband's, in 1971, and shows a group of sprays of rhododendron cultivars, unfortunately not identified.

Prince Louis of Battenberg (1854–1921) married Princess Victoria, the daughter of Prince Louis of Hesse and Princess Alice (see p. 58). He made his career in the Royal Navy, rising to become First Sea Lord, and during the First World War, bowing to the climate of anti-German feeling, he changed his family's name to Mountbatten.

His second daughter, Princess Louise, was brought up in Hesse, but took permanent residence in England when the War broke out. She enlisted as a nurse in the Red Cross, and spent much of the War in military hospitals in France, earning several medals for her work. After several abortive courtships, she married Crown Prince Gustav Adolf of Sweden in 1923. During the interwar years she made travelled internationally to promote Swedish interests, and during the Second World War returned to her work with the Red Cross.

As Queen, in the 1950s and 1960s, she took an initiative in democratising the customs of the Swedish court.

Bibliography: Fjellman (1968).



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[38] Queen Louise of Sweden (no date).

[39] Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)

HRH Princess Elizabeth first met Prince Philip of Greece when she was eight years old; they were married in 1947. HRH Prince Philip was the great-grandson of Christian IX of Denmark (see p. 82); he had pursued a career in the Royal Navy, seeing action in the Mediterranean during World War II. After the marriage they lived first at Windlesham Moor, then at Clarence House. They have had four children.

During the last year of her father's life, Elizabeth took his place at various public events. On his death in 1952, she became Queen; her coronation was the first to be shown on television. In 1953–54 the royal couple spent six months on a tour of the Commonwealth countries; The Queen became the first British monarch to address the United States Congress (1991, after the Gulf War); she twice addressed the year's opening session of the United Nations; in 2010 she opened the 9/11 British Memorial Garden in New York. No previous monarch had travelled so widely in the course of royal duties.

Not surprisingly, the daughter of George VI and Elizabeth developed horticultural interests from an early age. In 1937 it was reported in Council minutes that she had her own little garden at the Royal Lodge (she was sent tickets to Chelsea). Council sent an address to her in February 1952, and she was announced as Royal Patron on 23 June. The undated Royal Autograph was completed the following year; once again it was designed by Emily Sartain, and depicted a grouping of roses and thistles, to stand for England and Scotland, but not heraldically presented. Over a period of sixty years, The Queen has attended all but twelve of the Chelsea Flower Shows, as well as the opening of the Wisley Glasshouse in 2007. Like her mother, she has had numerous plants named after her, and while the cultivar name 'Queen Elizabeth' is ambiguous and needs its date checking to determine which monarch it was named after, one occasionally finds a name that is unmistakable, like *Camellia* 'Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II'.

The sixty years of Queen Elizabeth's reign have seen political and social change on a scale to which it is difficult to do justice in a paragraph: the move toward self-governing dominions within the Commonwealth accelerating with a rush around 1960, as most of the former colonies became independent; the occasionally uneasy alliance with the United



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[39] Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (1952).

States, sometimes referred to as “the special relationship”, covering the period of the Cold War and the breakup of the former Communist bloc; the formation of the European Common Market, and then the European Community, and Britain’s vacillations over membership; the rise and fall, first of militant trade unionism and then of monetarism; the nationalisation and then the privatisation of industries and services; the financial disasters of the early 21st century – not to mention the alterations in the ordinary relations of everyday life, signalled by media debates about privacy, changing manners, the disappearance of familiar institutions, modern communications... To focus for a moment on the horticultural world, think of the rise and fall of synthetic chemical pesticides; the rise of the garden centre; the ecological movement in gardening; the development of garden history as an academic and leisure interest; the Garden Festivals of the 1980s using horticulture as a means of urban regeneration; and the decline and dismissal of public parks, to be followed in a sudden spasm by their promotion and restoration. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge has been launched under the authority of HRH The Duke of Cambridge, as a means of providing protection for public parks and playing fields.

During these years the Royal Family has been constantly in the public eye, and at times served as a beacon for the social changes listed above. The erosion of privacy in the modern media, for example, was displayed nowhere more significantly than in the press treatment of HRH Prince Charles’ marriage to Diana, Princess of Wales. But the Royal Family’s horticultural interests have continued into the next generation, as Prince Charles’ garden at Highgrove has shown.

It is now approximately sixty years since the last time a Royal Autograph was commissioned by the RHS. For The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee this year (2012), two new Autographs have been commissioned, and at the time of writing are being prepared by the artist Gillian Barlow. One will be signed by The Queen and Prince Philip as part of the Jubilee celebrations, the other by Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall on the occasion of the Prince’s birthday. So the collection of Royal Autographs is not lying dormant, but is still growing.

Bibliography: Laird (1959), Longford (1983), Pimlott (2001). Every succeeding year sees new books about The Queen appear; few add anything substantial to the same collections of press cuttings and gossip on which their predecessors were based. Take your pick.



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Above. Charles McLaren, 3rd Baron Aberconway (1913–2003) and Queen Elizabeth II at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Lord Aberconway gardened at Bodnant near Colwyn Bay and served as President of the RHS for 23 years.

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