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Edward VII (r.1901-1910)



Edward VII was brought up strictly under a very rigorous educational regime by his parents, who had unrealistic expectations of his abilities.

During his mother's reign, he undertook public duties (including working on Royal Commissions in the field of social issues), but he was excluded by his mother from acting as her deputy until 1898.

Edward was 59 when he became king, having been heir apparent for longer than anyone else in British history.

Criticised for his social life, Edward's main interests lay in foreign affairs, and military and naval matters.

Fluent in French and German, Edward made a number of visits abroad (in 1904, he visited France - a visit which helped to create the atmosphere which made the subsequent Anglo-French entente cordiale possible); he was related to nearly every Continental sovereign and came to be known as the 'Uncle of Europe'.

Edward also played an active role in encouraging military and naval reforms, pressing for the reform of the Army Medical Service and the modernisation of the Home Fleet.

In the last year of his life he was involved in the constitutional crisis brought about by the refusal of the Conservative majority in the Lords to pass the Liberal budget of 1909.

Edward died before the situation could be resolved by the Liberal victory in the election in 1910.

Watch footage of Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII, attending a Royal Maundy service:

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Edward VII

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