

Edward and Wallis - Part II

Lead: Born in the last decade of the Victorian Era, Edward, Prince of Wales developed into a popular and elegant if a not a little self-indulgent heir to the English throne.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Edward received early education as a naval officer before undergraduate studies at Magdalen College, Oxford. During World War I he served as a staff officer in France, Egypt and Italy. After the war he began the better part of a decade as

roving ambassador for the government. Spreading a message of goodwill, he spoke to enthusiastic crowds first in Canada and the United States and then throughout the British Empire. Built up by fawning press coverage and followed in print by millions of people who never could seem to get enough news about the royal family, Edward's popularity seemed to know no bounds. He emerged from this period as a glamorous personality, handsome, cultured, athletic, and above all, very single. He was by 1931 Europe's most eligible bachelor.

In 1930 his father, King George V gave him a place of his own. It was Fort Belvedere, a military lookout post

built in the 1700s by George II. At the Fort, the future King set up his own household with privacy from the press and official London. He drew around himself the cream of London's elite and built a reputation as an indulgent playboy. The King's friends were well-off, cultured, educated, a glittering circle of the social elite. Among them was a wealthy London stockbroker, Edward Simpson and his wife, Wallis, an American divorcee. There are different accounts as to the first meeting between Mrs. Simpson and the Prince but, at their third meeting in the summer of 1931, the attraction between them was profound and from that point, their relationship, quietly but persistently, deepened. By 1936 the two were deeply in love and she was

preparing to divorce Simpson so as to marry the Prince.

In the meantime, King George and Queen Mary were celebrating their Silver Jubilee, twenty-five years on the throne. In early 1936 the old King was dead. Next time: God Save the King from Stanley Baldwin.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

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Resources

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