

PART 2

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BRITISH MONARCHY

2.1 Assassination Attempts and Attacks on
British Monarchy

Despite the general belief that the Royal Family has remained detached from the political wrangles in the U.K. they have been the targets of threats and assassination attempts over-time. Assassination attempts were almost routine for Queen Victoria. She was attacked or threatened eight times between 1840 and 1882. Between 1882 and 1936 no attempt was made on the life of a royal person on British soil. But King Edward VII - then Prince of Wales - was attacked in Brussels in 1900. On 16 July 1936, King Edward VIII was involved in a scare when a man in a London crowd produced a revolver. Three years later, in June 1939, the Duchess of Kent had shots fired at her as she left her London home. A plot to kill the King and Queen during their visit to the United States in 1939 was feared after a disclosure by the FBI. In June, 1971, Princess Anne left Durham Cathedral after bomb threats were received to blow up the building. Finally, there was the recent kidnap/assassination attempt on Princess Anne and Mark Phillips in March 1974. Clearly, the Royal Family has not been immune from threats, attack, or assassination attempts.

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2.2 Previous Canadian Tours

Visits by members of the Royal Family to Canada have generally been devoid of incident. No serious untoward incident has taken place against any member of the Royal Family, although occasionally protest/demonstrations, the presentation of petitions, etc. have marred previous Royal visits. The most serious incident accompanied the 1964 visit to the province of Quebec. Opposition to the 1964 visit began soon after it was officially announced in January 1964, and took a very ominous tone in the form of virtual spate of vociferous and strident letters threatening the life of the Queen. The outpouring of French-Canadian nationalism culminated in protest/demonstrations during the Queen's visit to Quebec City which in turn, broke down into a series of ongoing violent clashes between the demonstrators and the police.

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