

Royal Connections Audio Tour Transcript

Welcome to the Royal Connections audio tour. This tour will guide you through the Halifax Public Gardens and explore the historic connections between the Public Gardens and Canada's Royal Family.

Right now, you should be standing directly in front of Horticultural Hall, just several metres from the Spring Garden Road entrance to the Public Gardens. This is where our tour begins. If you haven't made it here yet, simply pause the audio on your mobile device until you've reached Horticultural Hall.

Throughout the tour, you'll receive directions that will guide you from one location to the next. This tour uses descriptive audio to create a more accessible experience for our listeners. As you move throughout the Gardens, please pause the audio on your mobile device. You can resume playback when you've reached your destination. As you take in your environment, feel free to move at your own pace, but make sure to watch your step as you navigate the Gardens' many pathways.

Canada's Relationship to the Monarchy

Canada is one of the oldest lasting monarchies in the world. Its royal connections date back to the kings of France in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. As a colony under the Crown, and later as the Dominion of Canada in 1867, Canada has continued to uphold the institution of monarchy. Constitutional monarchy has had a significant influence on the development of Canada, and throughout this tour, we'll explore how Canada's royal connections have played a part in shaping the history of Halifax and the Halifax Public Gardens.

The original inhabitants of Halifax are the Mi'kmaq, who have been living in Atlantic Canada for thousands of years. Halifax is known to the Mi'kmaq as K'jipuktuk—the Mi'kmaw word for Great Harbour. The area from downtown Halifax to Point Pleasant park was a sacred gathering place for the Mi'kmaq. Originally a large, forested area with sprawling freshwater wetlands, the British cleared trees and converted the land to create the fortified town of Halifax in 1749.

Colonial settlers constructed the first citadel, a stockade fort on the hill's summit, which was later named after King George III. Settlers converted the surrounding area and in 1763, King George III declared the land to be "to and for the use of the inhabitants of the Town of Halifax as Commons forever." This sentiment encouraged the public to use

the Common for recreational activities, livestock grazing, and eventually, the creation of Victorian gardens.

[Two-second pause]

The First Royal Visit

Before we continue to the physical stops on our tour, we'll start with a bit of background on the royal connections to the Gardens. Facing Horticultural Hall, just five metres to your left is a wooden bench. Feel free to grab a seat while we explore some of the earliest royal influences on the Gardens.

We'll begin our tour with the first royal visit to Canada. Prince William Henry, who later became King William IV, was the third son of King George III, and the first member of the royal family to visit Canada. As the captain of the H.M.S. Pegasus, a twenty-eight-gun military vessel, Prince William travelled to Atlantic Canada on several occasions, visiting Halifax every year from 1786 to 1789.

Prince Edward's Extended Stay

Five years later, in 1794, Prince William's younger brother, Prince Edward, arrived in Halifax following three years as the British military commander in Québec City. Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn, was the first member of the royal family to live in North America for a significant period of time. Prince Edward was the fourth son and fifth child of King George III. The King had a strong disliking for Prince Edward, who had been repeatedly sent away from England and the court of his father. Prince Edward arrived in Halifax with his beloved companion and mistress of many years, Thérèse-Bernardine Montgenet, who became known as Madame Julie de Saint Laurent. Prince Edward was stationed here as the military commander for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and later became the commander-in-chief of British North America.

Considered to have been a stern and authoritative figure, Prince Edward viewed the local population's frequent drinking and gambling as unquestionably immoral. He was known to stroll the garrison every morning at 5 a.m. and reprimand troops for any breach of conduct. Because of his disciplinary tendencies, Prince Edward was not a popular figure in the military. He did, however, gain public favour for his appreciation of landscaping and Palladian architecture.

Prince Edward was involved in the planning and construction of many structures throughout the city, including the Old Town Clock on Citadel Hill and St. George's

Round Church on Brunswick Street—both recognized for their rounded features. Prince Edward led the third redesign of Citadel Hill, which was then named Fort George after his father, George III. The hill was excavated in order to build a stronger, larger rectangular fort surrounded by four tall stone towers. The Citadel we recognize today is the site's fourth reconstruction—a Vauban style fort, featuring a distinctive star shape.

Prince Edward continued to modify the city by constructing an elaborate and richly decorated wooden mansion along with an impressive and ornate garden that stretched from the north side of Citadel Hill down towards Cogswell Street. The Prince used this grandiose space to host numerous levees, dinner parties, and balls that captivated the public and sparked their interest in social green space.

Further pursuing his interest in renovation, he went on to lease a villa from Lieutenant Governor, John Wentworth. Prince Edward quickly transformed the residence into an elaborate country retreat, located near Hemlock Ravine Park today. Known as Prince's Lodge, the 80-hectare estate showcased a two-story round portico, Corinthian columns, and stunning views of the Bedford Basin. Surrounding the property, winding footpaths, lined with pagodas and strings of copper and glass ornaments meandered around shady hemlock trees. The grounds featured manicured flower beds, miniature waterfalls, and an oval-shaped pond. Guests would travel for miles to view the sprawling estate.

In 1800, under financial and familial pressure, Prince Edward left behind his landscape garden and returned to Britain. Eventually parting ways with Madame de Saint Laurent, he went on to marry Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld and later became the father of the future Queen Victoria.

Prince Edward spent six years in Halifax and his influence remained long after his departure. In sharing his passion for landscaping, architecture, and ornate design, Prince Edward transformed the city and embedded the Victorian idea that horticulture improves body, mind, and quality of life. It's suggested that the increase in social green space that followed is due, at least in part, to his contributions.

[Two-second pause]

History of the Gardens

Almost forty years later, in 1836, the Nova Scotia Horticultural Society was established. The Horticultural Society was focused on the development of social green space and formed what was called the People's Garden. The People's Garden, more commonly referred to as the Horticultural Gardens, was a rectangular 2.2-hectare section of the

Halifax Common that bordered Summer Street, Spring Garden Road, and the southeast corner of Griffin's Pond. As time went on, the Horticultural Society was faced with a large amount of debt due to the growing cost of maintenance. The Society began restricting access to the Gardens, and only those who could afford shares in the Society or a visiting ticket could gain entry. With the Horticultural Gardens losing public appeal, the city was in need of another option for social green space.

Twenty years later, in 1867, the Halifax Public Gardens were established as the first city-owned public garden in Halifax. Starting out as a small patch of land just east of Griffin's Pond, the Gardens quickly expanded to replace the Horticultural Gardens, forming the 6.5-hectare section of Victorian gardens we recognize today as the Public Gardens.

[Two-second pause]

From the wooden bench, turn to your left to face Horticultural Hall. Continue slightly left for twelve metres. Move past the concrete tile to meet a gravel crossroads, keeping Horticultural Hall on your right.

[Two-second pause]

You'll come to a large elm tree on your right—keep right. As the path turns to the right, continue along this gravel path for twenty metres until you come to a second elm tree, on the north side of Horticultural Hall. These trees are the oldest in the Gardens and were planted at each corner of Horticultural Hall as part of the original Horticultural Gardens.

Passing Horticultural Hall on your right, continue along this gravel path for thirty metres. You should arrive at a large seating area with several rows of wooden benches. Feel free to pause the audio now until you've reached the large seating area on your right.

[Four-second pause]

Designed for concerts and social gatherings, this open space contains a wide, gravel clearing that stretches north to meet the bandstand at the centre of the Gardens. Lined with linden, elm, and tulip trees, this seating area has been the site of many social gatherings throughout the years and has even served as a space to entertain royal visitors.

[Two-second pause]

Preparations for the First Royal Tour

In 1860, Prince Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, visited Halifax. Later to become King Edward VII, Prince Edward was the eldest son and second child of Queen Victoria. At the age of eighteen, Prince Edward was sent to Canada on a “mission” considered to be the first royal tour of Canada.

Preparations for the Prince’s visit began well in advance, with the installation of numerous towering arches across the downtown. Standing almost twenty metres high, the decorative arches were draped with strings of evergreen and capped with plumes of Prince’s Feather. The London Times described the city as a “perfect vista” that was “...concealed under such a mass of triumphal arches, illuminations, decorations... and banners, that Halifax proper was no longer to be seen, but in its stead was a town of colours, tinsel, wreaths, lamps, flowers, and evergreens...”

On July 31, 1860, thousands of cheering spectators gathered in the streets to await the future king. The crowds that turned out are reported to have been so large that they were often uncontrollable. Accompanied by the Earl of Mulgrave, the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, and General Charles Trollope, the Commander-in-Chief of

Her Majesty's Forces in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward travelled through the city's downtown. The royal party moved through the towering arches on Barrington Street and Spring Garden Road, passing by the west end of the Horticultural Gardens, before arriving at the Halifax Common.

Each day, the Prince received addresses and read replies, reviewed volunteer troops, met with cheering crowds, and attended numerous levees, dances, and luncheons. All of these elaborate displays, concerts, and balls worked towards increasing favour of the royal family among the general public and helped to strengthen the city's ties to the monarchy.

[Two-second pause]

The First Royal in the Gardens

Nearly a decade later, in 1869, Queen Victoria's third son, Prince Arthur, visited the Public Gardens. On August 23, Prince Arthur arrived on the steamship, City of Paris, marking the fastest voyage ever made across the Atlantic at that time. He received an enthusiastic reception and was welcomed by the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governor, the 78th Highland Regiment, and crowds of excited Haligonians.

Officers of the garrison organized a ball at Province House, and citizens extended an invitation to picnic at Prince's Lodge—the former residence of his grandfather, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent. To mark the occasion, the city had the estate's oval-shaped pond transformed into the shape of a heart to commemorate Prince Edward's visit with Madame de Saint-Laurent.

The next day, Prince Arthur attended a concert in this section of the Horticultural Gardens with a turnout of six thousand people. The New York Times documented the event, stating that the Prince had received “a most cordial welcome” and that the weather was “very fine and cool.”

[Two-second pause]

Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee Bandstand

Here, at the central seating area, you might have noticed the Jubilee bandstand in the distance. With the seating area to your right, continue north along the gravel path. You should arrive at a crossroads surrounding a large, yellow elm tree.

[Two-second pause]

At the crossroads, turn to your right and continue for fifteen metres until you reach the centre of the Gardens. Just off the gravel path and to your left is the Jubilee bandstand.

[Two-second pause]

In 1878, Queen Victoria's fourth daughter, Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, visited Halifax with her husband John Campbell, Marquis of Lorne. Princess Louise was the first British Princess to visit Canada, and the public adored her. Her charismatic and fun-loving demeanor earned her the title of "the People's Princess". While Princess Louise is known for her scandalous love life and multitude of lovers, she had many artistic and charitable interests as well, leading her to sponsor a concert in the Public Gardens to raise funds for general maintenance. The concert was hugely successful and the Gardens received some much-needed repairs. Princess Louise's fundraiser contributed to the upkeep of the Gardens for years to come. Of the money raised, eight hundred dollars was allotted for the construction of the Golden Jubilee bandstand nearly ten years later.

[Two-second pause]

Marking the first physical stop on our tour, the Jubilee bandstand was built in 1887 by architect Henry Busch to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. This octagonal, wooden structure features intricately carved Victorian trim, eight rounded pillars, and an ornate, crested copper roof. Surrounding the bandstand are thirty-two geometric flower beds. These traditional Victorian annual beds pre-date the bandstand and contrast the structure's predominantly green and white colour scheme.

In celebration of Queen Victoria's fifty-year reign, the opening of the bandstand featured a lively concert and a fireworks' display with over four-thousand attendees. A key focal point of the Gardens, the bandstand has long served as a venue for public concerts and continues to be a popular site for events today.

[Two-second pause]

Facing the front of the bandstand, turn slightly to your left. You'll notice a curved gravel path on your right that circles around the bandstand. Follow this path for fifty metres to circle around to the back of the bandstand. Feel free to pause the audio now until you reach the back of the bandstand.

[Four-second pause]

As we arrive at the back of the bandstand, you should be facing a long gravel walkway, known as the Grande Allée. Turn to your left and continue for two metres to join the Grande Allée.

[Two-second pause]

Once you've joined the Grande Allée, turn to your left and continue west along the walkway for sixty metres. Accented with tall, Victorian-style lamp posts, the Grande Allée provides visitors with a view that runs straight through the Gardens. As you move along the Grande Allée, note the numerous American, Princeton, and wych elm trees lining each side of the path. You might also notice the azalea bushes up ahead on your right. Known as "the royalty of the garden", when in bloom, azaleas can be spotted from their vibrantly coloured blossoms.

[Two-second pause]

After sixty metres, take the fourth pathway on your right. You should arrive at a crossroads with a large classical-style fountain in the distance. Feel free to pause the audio now until you reach the fourth pathway on your right.

[Four-second pause]

Queen Elizabeth II Walkway

You should now be at the west end of the Grande Allée with a gravel pathway to your right. This pathway marks the start of the Queen Elizabeth II Walkway that surrounds the Victoria Jubilee Fountain. Before joining the walkway, we'll get into the story behind its name.

On September 9th, 2015, Queen Elizabeth surpassed her great, great grandmother, Queen Victoria, as the longest-reigning monarch in Canadian history. While neither Queen Victoria nor Queen Elizabeth II visited the grounds, the local branch of the Monarchist League of Canada thought it would be fitting to officially recognize Queen Elizabeth II's long-lasting reign by dedicating the walkway that surrounds the Victoria Jubilee Fountain in her honour. Guiding visitors from the Gardens' central pathway and

around the flowing scroll beds of the Victoria Jubilee Fountain, the walkway is meant to connect the two monarchs and represent the transition from one monarch to another.

Following correspondence with the Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen, the Monarchist League received news that the Queen had approved their request to dedicate the walkway in her honour. On September 9th, 2018, the walkway was named the Queen Elizabeth II Walkway. The event was marked with a public dedication in the Gardens, followed by a reception hosted by the Friends of the Public Gardens. Guests included the local branch of the Monarchist League of Canada, the Honourable Mayann Francis, former Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Her Honour Patsy LeBlanc, MP Andy Fillmore, and Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason.

[Two-second pause]

From the gravel crossroads, to your right, in the distance is a large, classical-style fountain. Turn to your right to move along the Queen Elizabeth II Walkway for twenty metres, following the curves of the path around the rose beds on your right until you come to another crossroads.

As you move along the walkway, notice how the century-old scroll beds lining the inside of the path are shaped in the letter “E” in honour of Queen Elizabeth II. With a large katsura tree to your right, and the scroll beds on your left, keep left and make your way fifteen metres towards the fountain at the centre of this symmetrical design. You should pass through a small, wrought iron archway. Feel free to pause the audio now until you reach the wrought iron archway in front of the Victoria Jubilee fountain.

[Four-second pause]

At the archway, turn to your left and continue for eight metres to arrive at the Victoria Jubilee fountain. Feel free to grab a seat on one of the wooden benches surrounding the fountain.

[Two-second pause]

Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Fountain

The Victoria Jubilee fountain was designed to be the centrepiece of the most axially symmetrical part of the Gardens. Equally placed on each side of the fountain are four

serpentine and scroll beds, densely planted to accentuate their curved shape. On the north and south ends of the fountain, vibrant beds of azaleas are arranged in an impressive display of symmetry—a key feature of Victorian gardens.

The highlight of this circular design is the Victoria Jubilee fountain. Made of cast iron and cast zinc, this Victorian-style centrepiece spans almost eight metres in diameter. The square green base of the fountain is decorated on all sides with gold-coloured, gargoyle waterspouts. At the centre sits a tall Corinthian column. Circling the column, four sculptures of plump water babies sit on the backs of sea serpents, while raising conch shells in the air. Positioned at the top of the column, is an intricately patterned basin, where the Roman nymph Egeria carries an urn to supply water to the active scene below.

In 1897, ten years after the installation of the Jubilee Bandstand, Queen Victoria celebrated sixty years as the reigning monarch of the British Empire and its Dominions, including Canada. At the time, Queen Victoria was the longest reigning monarch in British history, and the first British monarch to mark the sixtieth anniversary of her accession with a public celebration. In anticipation of the holiday, the Halifax Public Gardens commissioned J.W. Fiske & Co., a prominent New York manufacturer, to build the spectacular cast iron fountain we know today.

Canada's official gift to the Queen was the establishment of the Victorian Order of Nurses, a national, non-profit health organization created to increase community access to health care. Founded by Ishbel Hamilton-Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair and vice regal consort of Canada, the Victorian Order of Nurses was established to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

On June 22, 1897, Lady Aberdeen unveiled the Victoria Jubilee Fountain. Mi'kmaq elders were present in regalia along with crowds of enthusiastic Haligonians. The celebration included performances from the local cadet band and the children's choir, followed by a fireworks' display later that evening. Notman Studio, a Halifax photography company, captured the events of the day in a photo that can be found near the arch at the southwest corner of the fountain.

In 2012, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, the fountain underwent extensive restorations to repair the protective cast iron and cast zinc coatings and reseal the fountain's century-old seams. A recirculating pump and in-ground collection system were also installed to improve the fountain's water pressure and provide a more sustainable water system. By October, restorations were revealed in time for the contemporary art festival, Nocturne: Art at Night. Organized by the Friends of the Public Gardens, the event featured a poetry reading by Poet Laureate Tanya Davis, followed by a light show, set to *Water Music*, by the Baroque composer George Frideric Handel. Handel's orchestral *Water Music* was first performed for King George I on London's

River Thames. Written specifically for a backdrop of flowing water, this piece was the perfect accompaniment to showcase the newly restored Jubilee fountain. The event marked the first time in recent history that the Gardens were open at night.

[Two-second pause]

Facing north, towards the Jubilee fountain, turn to your right and follow the gravel path for eight metres towards the wrought iron arch, where we first arrived at the fountain. Moving through the arch, continue for twenty metres, until you come to a crossroads in front of a sprawling katsura tree.

[Two-second pause]

Turn slightly left to continue past the katsura tree for six metres. You'll come to a gravel crossroads. With the katsura tree to your right, turn right and follow the gravel path for forty metres to return to the Grande Allée. Feel free to pause the audio now until you've arrived back at the Grande Allée.

[Four-second pause]

Once you've arrived back at the Grande Allée, just in front of you to your left, you'll come to a London plane tree—commonly recognized by its pale, patchy bark. Continue east along the pathway for a few metres, turning left just before the lamp post up ahead. Moving past the London plane tree on your left, turn left to join the gravel pathway that runs along the pond.

[Two-second pause]

Continue along this pathway for fifty metres. On your right, you'll come to a metal stanchion featuring a photo of Griffin's Pond from 1870. Directly across from this stanchion, on your left, is a small, ornamental hawthorn tree. You might notice a metal plaque on the ground, identifying the tree as a Toba Hawthorn.

[Two-second pause]

A Tribute to Princess Diana

The Toba Hawthorn is a deciduous tree that features lobed, glossy, green leaves and clusters of gorgeous pink and white blossoms throughout the warmer months. If you're visiting in the fall, you may also notice the hawthorn's bright red berries.

In 1998, a Toba Hawthorn, much like this one, was planted near the bandstand in tribute to the late Diana, Princess of Wales. The tree didn't survive, but we'll visit the site where it was planted later in the tour.

Princess Diana first visited Halifax with Prince Charles in 1983, on their first royal tour of Canada. During their visit, the Princess planted a tree at the Halifax Common.

Following Diana's unexpected death on August 31, 1997, fans of the Princess left hundreds of flowers outside of the entrance of the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto. The flowers were eventually composted and distributed amongst gardens across Canada, including the Halifax Public Gardens. This compost was used to plant the Toba Hawthorn near the bandstand during National Composting Awareness week. On April 5th, 1998, Lieutenant Governor John Kinley planted the tree in tribute to Princess Diana.

While this Toba Hawthorn isn't the same tree planted in 1998, it is the only one of its kind in the Gardens and continues to serve as a reminder of the Princess.

[Two-second pause]

Facing the Toba Hawthorn, turn to your right. Continue along the gravel path, towards the north end of the Gardens. With Griffin's Pond on your right, continue along the edge of the pond for just over a hundred metres until you reach the end of the pathway.

[Two-second pause]

Griffin's Pond

Griffin's Pond is named after Lawrence Griffin, a young Irishman who was wrongfully hanged for the murder of Henry Ferguson, a local copper. In 1821, fifteen years before the opening of the Horticultural Gardens, Griffin was accused of murdering Ferguson. Despite evidence from four local witnesses pointing to his innocence, Griffin was

convicted and hanged in the execution grounds just east of the pond. The pond has been known as Griffin's Pond ever since.

Griffin's Pond has long served as a rest stop for migrating birds. Victorians were exceptionally interested in birds and often constructed designated areas, much like the Gardens' former bird enclosure, to appreciate their feathered friends. The pond provides a sheltered environment for a variety of waterfowl including mallards, American Black Ducks, Great Blue Herons, and on rare occasions, even the Common Loon.

King George V recognized the Gardens' appreciation for birds and in 1926, sent the Gardens a pair of swans from his swan keeper in Cookham-on-Thames in Berkshire, England. King George first visited the Gardens in 1883, as a naval cadet with the North Atlantic fleet. During his visit, he attended a concert held in his honour at the Public Gardens. In 1901, he returned to Halifax as Prince George, Duke of Cornwall and York, with his wife Mary, who later became the popular Queen Mary.

King George's donation started the tradition of gifting swans to the Gardens, and this eventually led to the creation of a bird enclosure. Until recently, the enclosure was home to many swans and several varieties of geese, including the large Toulouse goose.

[Two-second pause]

Now that you've arrived at the end of the pathway, you should be facing Sackville Street, with the Gardens behind you. Here, at the northwest corner of Griffin's Pond, is the duck house. Built in 1908, the duck house is a small, white building, detailed with ornately carved wooden trim and a covered veranda that wraps around the front of the building. This sheltered deck at the front of the Duck House provides the perfect seating area for visitors to sit and watch the different types of waterfowl that visit the Pond.

[Two-second pause]

Turn to your right to move past the Duck House and continue east along the gravel path for two hundred metres. As we move along the northern perimeter of the Gardens, notice the linden, elm, and beech trees lining this shady path. Intended to isolate the Gardens from the surrounding urban landscape, this natural boundary supports the Victorian notion that gardens should be self-contained works of art. These trees were first planted in 1872 as saplings from the Horticultural Society's nursery. Today, some of them have grown to be over ten metres tall.

Many beech trees in the Gardens were sent directly from England in the late 1800s. This unintentionally contributed to the introduction of beech bark disease, which spread

across the Maritime provinces and eventually affected trees in Québec and Ontario as well.

Queen Victoria is known to have gifted a beech tree to the Public Gardens. The tree was one of the tallest in the Gardens and, for many years, grew near the main entrance on Spring Garden Road and South Park Street. Unfortunately, in 2003, the tree was badly damaged by Hurricane Juan and had to be removed.

[Two-second pause]

As you move along the gravel path, after a hundred metres on your right, you should pass the northeast corner of Griffin's Pond. Continue east for one hundred metres until you reach the end of the path at the Sackville and South Park Street entrance to the Gardens. Feel free to pause the audio now until you reach the north east entrance of the Gardens at the corner of Sackville and South Park Street.

[Four-second pause]

A Visit from King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

You should now be standing at the Sackville and South Park Street entrance. This shaded, circular clearing in the northeast corner of the Gardens is where King George VI and Queen Elizabeth—who later became the Queen Mother—entered the Public Gardens on their royal tour of Canada in 1939.

The couple's country-wide tour was highly anticipated and marked the first time a reigning monarch had visited Canada. In Halifax, approximately 150,000 people arrived in the city to meet the King and Queen. The streets were lined with decorative flags and streamers, local businesses promoted silk gloves and chiffon hosiery, and the Halifax Herald dedicated four full pages of the paper to the visiting monarchs.

On the night before their arrival, thirty thousand spectators gathered along the parade route on Barrington Street. Despite heavy rain, crowds eagerly awaited a glimpse of the King and Queen. Police reports from the day describe a steady stream of traffic pouring into the city, with visitors travelling all the way from the Prairies and the southern U.S.

The next day, on June 15, following a tour of downtown Halifax, the royal party visited the Garrison Grounds, at the base of Citadel Hill, where tens of thousands of excited people gathered for a pageant in honour of the King and Queen. At 5:00 p.m. that day,

the royal party travelled on foot from the nearby Garrison Grounds into the Public Gardens. King George and Queen Elizabeth entered the Gardens here, at the corner of Sackville and South Park Street, and continued along the eastern perimeter of the Gardens to reach the main gates at South Park Street and Spring Garden Road.

During their visit to the Gardens, the royal couple saw the eight-month-old Salterio triplets, who were considered to be local celebrities at the time. King George also planted an English oak tree just east of the bandstand, which we'll visit shortly. The royal tour of 1939 is considered to be the most successful royal tour in Canadian history.

[Two-second pause]

From the centre of the clearing at the Sackville and South Park Street entrance, you should now be facing south with South Park Street directly in front of you. Turn slightly right to move around the large linden tree at the centre of the clearing. You should pass a wide metal stanchion featuring a map of the Gardens. Keep left to follow the wrought iron fence along the eastern perimeter of the Gardens.

[Two-second pause]

Continue straight along this gravel pathway for one hundred metres, following the same route as King George and Queen Elizabeth when they walked through the Gardens on their royal tour. Finishing just months before the start of World War II, the royal tour of 1939 ensured Canada's support for Britain and solidified ties between the countries as political equals.

In the years following World War II, Halifax saw many royal visitors. In 1951, three months before ascending to the throne, Princess Elizabeth made her first visit to Halifax during a month-long tour of Canada. The future Queen toured Halifax on November 7 and 8 and was accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh. Despite high winds and heavy rain, fifty thousand people came out to greet the Princess and the Duke of Edinburgh. During their visit, the royal couple attended a state dinner hosted by Premier Angus L. Macdonald at the Nova Scotian Hotel. Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh were spotted waving farewell to the nearby crowds from the balcony of the hotel. The royal couple also stopped by the Camp Hill Hospital, just north of the Gardens.

[Two-second pause]

After a hundred metres, you'll arrive at a crossroads at the east end of the Grande Allée. Feel free to pause the audio now until you arrive at the crossroads.

[Four-second pause]

Once you've arrived at the east end of the Grande Allée, you should be facing a gravel crossroads marked by a wide metal stanchion and a Victorian-style lamp post. Turn to your right, keeping the stanchion to your right and the lamp post to your left. Continue west along this gravel pathway for one hundred metres, stopping when you come to a crossroads on your left.

[Two-second pause]

In 1954, three years after the royal tour of Princess Elizabeth, Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, and her seventeen-year-old daughter, Princess Alexandra, made their first trip to Canada in a three-week tour of the country. While in Halifax, Princess Marina and Princess Alexandra attended a garden party in the Public Gardens where 1,400 people gathered to see the princesses. A photograph from the event places the princesses at the centre of the Gardens, near the bandstand, which we'll visit shortly.

[Two-second pause]

As we move along the gravel pathway, to your left, you should pass by a tamarack tree and a small stream before arriving at a crossroads. Feel free to pause the audio now until you've arrived at the crossroads.

[Four-second pause]

Once you've arrived at the crossroads, turn to your left to follow the circular design of the pathway south for sixty metres towards the centre of the Gardens.

[Two-second pause]

On your left, you'll pass a maple tree and a cedar of Lebanon tree before arriving at another crossroads. At the crossroads, turn to your right to move towards the open grounds that surround the bandstand at the centre of the Gardens.

[Two-second pause]

Following the curves of the gravel pathway as they turn slightly right, in the distance, you may be able to spot a large, Victorian-style carpet bed. A common feature of Victorian gardens, not commonly seen in North America, carpet beds require considerable artistry to arrange a variety of dwarf plants with contrasting colours into a three-dimensional design.

[Two-second pause]

Continue along the pathway for fifteen metres until you reach a large English oak tree on your right. Feel free to pause the audio now until you reach a large oak tree on your right.

[Four-second pause]

A Royal Tradition

You should now be standing in front of a large, English oak tree. With its broad canopy, furrowed grey bark, and lobed green leaves, this impressive tree stands over ten metres tall. Identified by a crown-shaped plaque, this English oak tree was planted by King George VI during the royal tour of 1939. The tree was planted in commemoration of King George's coronation just two years earlier in 1937. Prime Minister William Lyon

Mackenzie King was present for the ceremony as well as Queen Elizabeth, the future Queen Mother. The royal couple spent the early evening in the Public Gardens before continuing on a tour of downtown Halifax.

[Two-second pause]

This grassy clearing also marks the site we mentioned earlier. In 1998, a Toba Hawthorn tree was planted here in tribute to Princess Diana.

[Two-second pause]

Slightly to the right of King George's English oak tree, you might notice another smaller tree. This younger English oak tree was planted by Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, on a visit to the Public Gardens during a four-day tour of Canada in 2014.

On May 19, 2014, hundreds of enthusiastic spectators gathered in the Gardens to await the arrival of Prince Charles. After greeting the crowds, Prince Charles continued through the Gardens to visit the Victoria Jubilee Fountain and several other prominent

features of the Gardens. Accompanied by Mayor Mike Savage, Prince Charles then planted this English oak tree and received satisfied cheers from the crowd.

A common tradition with the royal family, the practice of planting a tree represents future growth and continuity, while serving as a reminder of each royal visit.

[Two-second pause]

Facing the oak trees, turn left and continue for forty metres to reach the bandstand. As we make our way back towards the centre of the Gardens, we'll end our tour just a short distance from where we began, with Horticultural Hall in the distance.

[Two-second pause]

Closing Statements

Throughout history, we've seen how the city of Halifax has maintained close ties with the royal family. From Prince Edward's architectural influence, to Queen Victoria's

Jubilee Fountain, each royal connection has played a part in shaping the history of the Halifax Public Gardens.

The monarchy has also contributed to the development of Canada as a whole. While Canada is now an independent nation under the system of constitutional monarchy, the sovereign continues to represent the embodiment of the Crown as well as the Canadian state itself. Today, the Queen has made a total of five visits to Halifax and twenty-two official visits to Canada, making Canada her most visited commonwealth country. These royal visits symbolize Canada's historic connection with the monarchy and continue to sow the seeds for an ongoing relationship in the future.

[Two-second pause]

Thank you for joining the Royal Connections tour. We hope you've enjoyed the stories shared and that you'll consider how each stop on this tour has shaped the history of Halifax and the Halifax Public Gardens. While this marks the end of our tour, feel free to continue strolling throughout the Gardens.

This audio tour was created by the Friends of the Public Gardens and is part of a series of audio tours. The Friends of the Public Gardens would like to acknowledge that the

Halifax Public Gardens is located in K'jipuktuk, in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the Peace and Friendship treaties between the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), and the British Crown dating back to 1725. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources but recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established terms for an ongoing relationship between nations. The purpose of this land acknowledgement is to show recognition and respect to the first peoples of the land on which we live and work.

This audio tour was produced by the Friends of the Public Gardens and co-researched with John Yogis and Scott Burke. Special thanks to Pamela Sweet Smith. For more audio tours, visit the audio tours section of the Halifax Public Gardens website.