

PROCLAMATIONS

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the Kingdoms of 1707. The death of Queen Anne in 1714 was followed by the first Royal accession which occurred after the Union, namely, the accession of King George I. On 1st August a concourse of the late Queen's principal subjects, official and other, including the Lord Mayor of London, assembled at St. James's Palace, and there, describing itself as 'the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of the Realm, assisted with those of Her late Majesty's Privy Council, numbers of other gentlemen of quality, and the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of London,' 'with one full voice and consent of tongue and heart,' did 'publish and proclaim' the prince to be King, signed the proclamation, and gave it over to the heralds to proclaim, which they did firstly at the gate of the Palace at St. James, secondly at Charing Cross, thirdly at Temple Bar, fourthly at the end of Wood Street in Cheapside (for the place of the old cross of the Chape), and lastly at the Royal Exchange.

News did not travel fast in those days, and it was only on the 4th of the month, about twelve in the night, that an express arrived in Edinburgh at the house of the Lord Justice General, the Earl of Islay, with the announcement of the Queen's death, and orders, says Rae, the historian, who was in Edinburgh at the time, to proclaim King George. But it is incredible that the Lord Justice General, an officer with a general commission, received an order to make the proclamation and omitted to make it, electing rather to subscribe the proclamation to be made by a merely local official. A copy of the proclamation of the King, which had been made by the lords, gentlemen, and others in London, was certainly sent to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh 'with orders to proclaim the King there'; and from the conduct of the Lord Justice General and other great officers, who must have known of the forms used at the proclamation of Queen Anne, and that no proclamation of a King had ever been made by a Lord Provost or any officer of local jurisdiction, it is clear that they felt they must be content to give, if they could, the appearance of a national proclamation to a function which was in reality purely and merely local.

The occasion was unprecedented. The movements, therefore, of the actors on the occasion are interesting. The Lord Justice General immediately summoned 'the rest of the King's servants,' clearly including the Lord Provost, to meet at his house at eight next morning. They met and then repaired to the house of the Duke of Montrose, one of the Lords Justices named by King George in the Instrument of Government. There, says the Town Council Minute Book, they found the Duke with a number of other Scottish peers, whom it enumerates, and 'a very considerable number of gentry, officers of the army and principal inhabitants of this city,' and arranged the manner of the ceremony which they were to perform. The next step of the company was to adjourn to the Council Chambers, 'the Burrow Room,' where they were received by the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council, the Lord President and Judges of the Court of Session, the Chief Baron and Barons of Exchequer, and other officers, and the whole company signed the proclamation which was to be made to the people of Scotland.