

## The Schomberg Monument

The Schomberg monument commemorates the Duke of Schomberg's landing on 13 August 1689. There has been a long-running debate about where exactly he landed. It is possible that Schomberg and a small number of men landed at Groomsport while the rest of his 10,000 strong army landed at the beaches of Ballyholme or Bangor.

The monument is a bronze plaque on a granite slab which was erected by the William the Third Club. The monument was unveiled by Mrs P L Perceval-Maxwell at a ceremony held on 14 June 1952.

The inscription on the plaque reads:

*"1688-1690. Field Marshall Frederic, Duke of Schomberg K.G. landed at Groomsport 13<sup>th</sup> August 1689 on his march from Groomsport to Carrickfergus, which he captured and where in the following year he joined forces with King William III Prince of Orange and fell gloriously at the Battle of the Boyne fighting in defence of the Protestant Faith. King William II Club 131."*



Photograph from Schomberg's True Blues Facebook page

He was born Freidrich Hermann von Schonberg in Heidelberg, in the Palatine in 1615. He had a long military career, with the armies of many nations including Sweden, France, Portugal, Brandenburg and Great Britain. He changed his nationality at least twice. For some years he was a French national and in 1688 became British and was made a Knight of the Garter (K.G.) and the first Duke of Schomberg.

Schomberg was appointed commander-in -chief of King William III's army which was sent to drive King James II out of Ireland.

Tradition has it that, while Schomberg spent his first night in Ireland with James Hamilton in Bangor, some of his troops “lay upon their arms” as they slept on the sites of the old forts at Islet Hill and Nelson’s Hill (where the Presbyterian manse was later built) and that seeds from their wilting orange lilies fell to the ground as they slept. Centuries later orange lilies were a feature of the garden at the manse.

The stump of “Schomberg’s tree” can be found in Castle Park, Bangor. It is said that he set up his first headquarters in Ireland under the tree.

After landing in north Down, Schomberg’s army laid siege to Carrickfergus, where the Jacobite forces surrendered, before travelling to Dundalk.

The following year, Schomberg’s forces joined with William’s army and took part in a major battle at the river Boyne on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1690. It is reported that, in disagreement with William, Schomberg believed that the enemy forces should be attacked directly by crossing the river. As he crossed the river, rallying his troops, he was shot dead. He was aged 74.

Schomberg was buried in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin. In 1731, Dean Jonathan Swift placed a plaque in the cathedral in his honour.

In the 1880s the Schomberg True Blues, Loyal Orange Lodge 589, was formed in the village. Since 1934 the Orange Hall has been on Springwell Road.

Peter Gibson  
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Sources:

“Tides and Times in the Port” by Rev Dr David Irwin

“A Short History of Groomsport” North Down visitors and Heritage Centre