

# The Duke of Schomberg

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The Schomberg Monument  
Erected in 1952

A little bit of Groomsport history from



DISCOVER  
**GROOMSPORT**

# The Duke of Schomberg

He was born Freidrich Hermann von Schonberg in 1615, in Heidelberg, which is now in the German state of Baden-Wurttemberg.

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.



The Duke of Schomberg

King William III appointed Schomberg commander-in-chief of the army which was sent to drive King James II out of Ireland. Local tradition has it that Schomberg and his army landed at Groomsport on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1689. This has been a matter for debate.

It is possible that Schomberg and a small number of men landed at Groomsport while, perhaps, the rest of his 10,000 strong army landed at Ballyholme or Bangor.

Tradition also has it that, after landing, some of the troops 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.

It is said that Schomberg set up his first headquarters in Ireland under a tree in Bangor. Today, the stump of "Schomberg's tree" can be found in Castle Park, Bangor.

After landing in North Down, Schomberg's army laid siege to Carrickfergus, where James's supporters surrendered.

The following year, Schomberg's forces joined with William's army and took part in the battle of the Boyne on 1st 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.

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.

## The Schomberg Monument

The King William III Club of Belfast and Groomsport's Orange Lodge – The Schomberg's True Blues, LOL 589 – paid for the memorial to the Duke of Schomberg which sits in the corner of the Holme Field.

The monument was unveiled in June 1952 by Mrs P L Perceval-Maxwell. Sir Walter Smiles MP and other local dignitaries were present at the ceremony.

Choppy seas prevented the planned re-enactment of Schomberg's landing at Groomsport. However, Mr W J Gillespie, in the role of Schomberg, led the procession through the village before the monument was unveiled.



“The Duke of Schomberg”, 1952

# Schomberg's True Blues, LOL 589

Groomsport's Orange Lodge is known as "Schomberg's True Blues". Valuation Records show that there was an Orange Hall on Main Street from at least 1864. That hall was replaced by a new Orange Hall on the Springwell Road. This was opened by Mrs Kingan, of Glenganagh, on 2nd April 1934 and Viscount Craig, the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland presided at the meeting.

The photograph shows the unfurling of the lodge's new banner at Glenganagh in 1935. Pictured are Mr and Mrs Kingan, W J Forsythe and Rev Harris, Rector of Groomsport.

The three men commemorated on the banner are William Johnston MP (of Ballykilbeg), Robert Perceval-Maxwell (of Groomsport House and Finnebrogue) and Samuel Kingan (of Glenganagh).



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