

Crowned Cousins: The Anglo-German Royal Connection

Alan Palmer

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For two long periods in modern history — from 1714 to 1760 and from 1837 to 1901 — the sovereign in London looked upon the British and the Germans as peoples inseparably connected, with a common heritage and with similar interests to maintain on the Continent.

Close connections between the great ruling houses of Britain and Germany have existed since even before the time of the Hanoverians. In these centuries the affairs of these royal households have played a decisive role in political events and international diplomacy.

Germanic influence in England does not exist today, but the bond is still strong, not least in the lineage of the present Royal Family.

This book, first published in 1985, looks closely at the Anglo-German dynastic relationship. From the marriage in 1613 of James I's daughter Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine — from which union every reigning monarch in Europe is descended — to the Second World War and beyond, Alan Palmer uses material from the Royal Archives to letters, memoirs and historical scholarship to place every royal figure in the context of their time and their place on the family tree.

Palmer chronicles the ascendancies in German and British political life of the ambitious dynasties of Guelph, Coburg and Battenberg. He also looks closely at the sometimes difficult relationship between the royal families in London and Berlin. Important personalities such as Frederick the Great, the three German Kaisers and Edward VIII are given a spotlight in clear, concise prose not burdened by academic language.

Palmer looks also at certain historical topics: the extreme changes of mood in the British press towards Germany and its princes, especially in the twentieth century in the wake of the Kaiser's wish for a German reich; the attempts of Albert and Victoria to influence the unification of Germany during the long Victorian era in England; the dynastic contacts maintained during World War I; and the rival abortive hopes of Churchill and Ribbentrop to use the ex-Kaiser and the Duke of Windsor as 'political chessmen' in the crisis months of 1940.

Crowned Cousins provides a valuable study of the royal past and its indispensable place in modern European history.

Alan Palmer was Head of the History Department at Highgate School from 1953 to 1969, when he gave up his post to concentrate on historical writing and research. He has written some thirty narrative histories, historical reference books or biographies. In 1980 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Praise for Alan Palmer:

- 'Alan Palmer writes the sort of history that dons did before "accessible" became an insult...Cool, rational, scholarly, literate.' Sir John Keegan
- 'A fine piece of narrative history, a combination of suspense and scholarship which actually makes you wonder will he make it?' ANTONIA FRASER'S BOOK OF THE YEAR, Sunday Times

'Alan Palmer has done justice to [the] epic events with a lively, vivid narrative, written with the appropriate style and panache' LAWRENCE JAMES, The Times

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