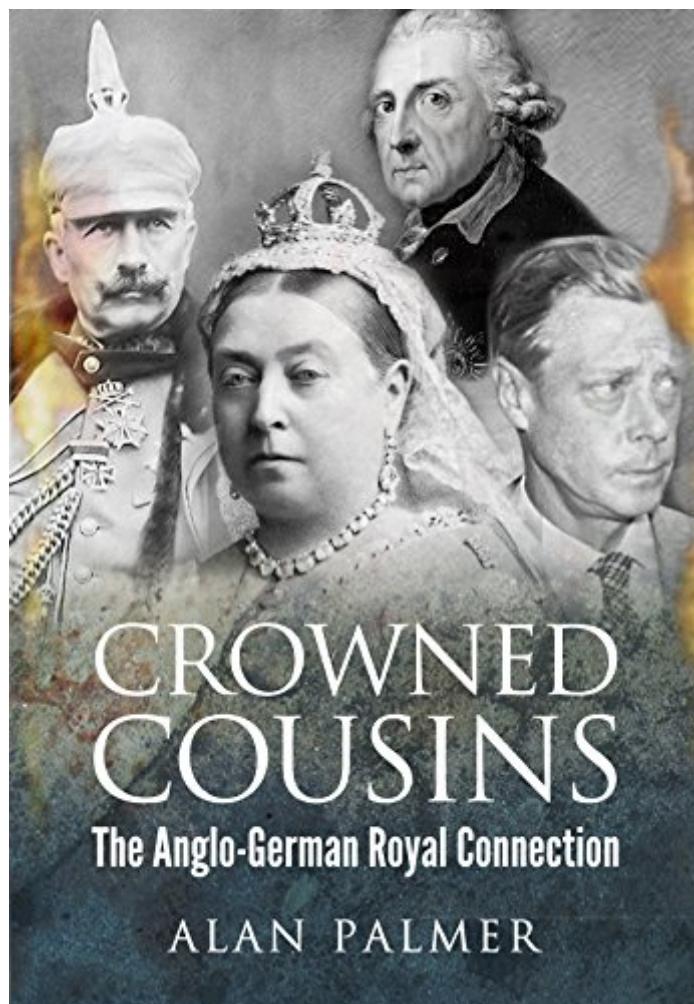


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Crowned Cousins: The Anglo-German Royal Connection



Synopsis

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 a '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 it 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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Customer Reviews

Anyone interested in the Royal Families of Europe has heard detractors going on about the "Germans" on the various royal thrones. The history is lost to anyone dabbling into royalty and even some who have long been arm chair historians. Alan Palmer is not new to royal biography. Among his works other works is a biography on the Kaiser (Grandson of Queen Victoria), so he knows the content well. His books had been out of print for some time - this book was first published in 1985 and is now available as an ebook. In very simple prose, Mr. Palmer breaks down the ancestry of many of Europe's houses. All of today's European royals (and even a few non-European) have "German blood," in a modern sense. They are just as equally descendants of the very British Tudors and Scottish Stewarts who occupied thrones in England,

France and Scotland long before their many of their descendants' families even had a country to rule. This is not an in-depth book. This is a simple, accessible overview of the ancestry of the British *and other European* royal houses along with their various German connections. It is not for someone looking for anecdotes about Princess Diana or Kate and William. It may serve to education those who go overboard about how "German" the current Queen of England is. This will be old hat for those who read a lot of royal nonfiction and keep up with the relationships of the families. The main personalities are covered with the bare bones information. In truth, I am usually weary of these kind of tomes when it comes to the "German connections" of royal houses. Too often the "German" ancestry of royals is used as a slur with the undertone that the royal in question is therefore not worthy of their throne.

Interesting and yet a bit dry. Not too long ago I read a book about the go-betweens for Hitler. A look at the various members of royalty and nobility who used their familial ties to the royal house of Great Britain to try and sway politics and make inroads into British involvement in mainland Europe's affairs. So it was with some interest I delved into this. For those who know at most how WWI was the war between cousins (prosaically speaking), this is a nice overview of just how German the British royal family is. Well was. Well still is if you are looking at the DNA that makes up Britain's greatest tourist attraction (among other things less glib of course). Palmer breaks down generation after generation of marriages with the various German houses that span petty princedoms and sweeping empires. It does get a bit too dry and the prose falters slightly. I think part of the flaw for me was that it was treading too familiar ground in a way that was not fresh or engaging simply because it was telling me what I already knew. For those less knowledgeable I think it might be more engaging. The other problem I had was that it seemed a large part of the book unnecessarily dwells on the relationships that precede the Hanoverians. Yes, I do think some background is needed. But there are some odd skips even as I felt it dwelt too long on the period of the Stuarts. While it may outrage many, the thing is that during the time the lines between the houses of Nassau and Oldenburg from their German counterparts was not as defined. In some ways they were almost as "German" in regard to how they were intermarried into the Stuart dynasty. By this I mean the overall theme of the Anglo-German royal connection. Of course in many regards they weren't.

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