

Chapter 4

A British prince and a transnational life: Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh's visit to Australia, 1867–68

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The voyages of Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (1844–1900), offer a useful entrée to understanding transnational lives in nineteenth-century Britain and Australia. Alfred crossed borders and nationalities as a prince and serving officer in the Royal Navy. His visit to Australia in 1867–68, the first by a member of the British royal family, attracted considerable attention.¹ Examining official and private accounts of the visit enables us to consider the transnational dimensions of Alfred and his Australian hosts, as well as those of contemporary Britons and Australians in general. Indeed, employing a transnational perspective enriches our historical understanding of such 'British' institutions as the Royal Family and the Royal Navy. Alfred's visit to Australia demonstrates how contemporary individuals, families and societies were seen, and saw themselves, as transnational. Furthermore, while much of this experience took place within the British Empire, much of it took place beyond it.

A British prince

At first glance, it might seem odd to describe the second son of Queen Victoria—that most secure and relatively sedentary of British monarchs—as leading a transnational life. Surely the only identity that really mattered, in Alfred's eyes and others, was his status as the Queen's son and heir, the second in line to the British throne?²

Alfred's royal status was certainly made much of in Australia. His familial relationship with Queen Victoria and his status as her proxy were stressed throughout his visit. Colonists sang 'We love thee for thy father's fame...And for thy mother's sake!' and noted that Alfred's presence provided them with the 'opportunity of expressing our devotion to Her Majesty's throne and person'.³ Queen Victoria was also anxious that her son's royal position be properly acknowledged.⁴ As we will see below, however, while Alfred could insist on strict protocol, he preferred to avoid it.

Figure 4.1: HRH Prince Alfred, KG, Duke of Edinburgh in naval uniform.



Photographic print: albumen silver *carte-de-visite*, on *carte-de-visite*. State Library of Victoria. Image no. a15044.

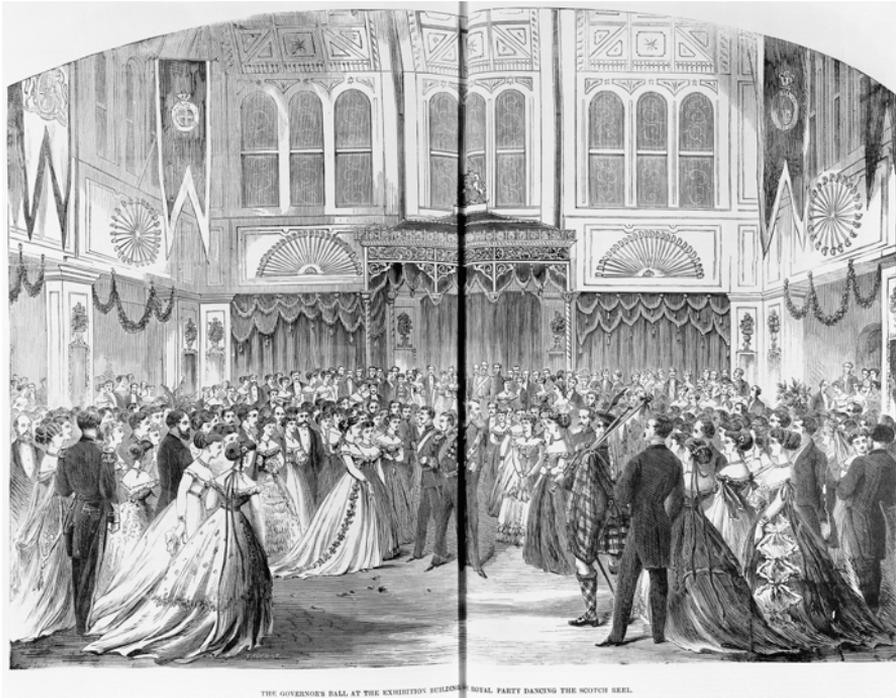
Alfred's dislike of pomp reflected his own shyness and his awareness of the ambiguous position of minor royals within Britain. While there was public delight at their births and marriages, the cost of supporting the Queen's numerous children caused increasing resentment. When combined with frustration at Victoria's own absence from public affairs after the death of her husband, Prince Albert, public dissatisfaction with the royal family ran high. While Alfred wished to appear as a prince, he did not want to appear (and the British Government did not want him to appear) as a grasping one. Whatever the duke's own views

on his royal status, it was clear that at least some colonists considered him suitable monarch material. In 1863 the Victorian Premier, John O'Shanassy, proposed that Alfred become 'King of Australia'. As Anita Callaway notes, this idea was revived in a transparency displayed in Melbourne during the duke's visit.⁵

While he often downplayed his royal status, Alfred emphasised his connections with one particular part of his mother's kingdom: Scotland. This had nothing to do with his place of birth or family background (he was born in Windsor to Anglo-German parents), but everything to do with the royal family's projection of themselves as British. In the early nineteenth century, the unpopular Anglo-German George IV fell in love with Highland Scots culture. Although the English population detested George for his excessive spending and shoddy attempt to divorce his German wife, they readily embraced his interest in tartans. George did more than set a new fashion: he attempted to create a new historical tradition. Even more dramatically, his niece Victoria and her German husband, Albert, embarked on a lifelong love affair with Scotland with the purchase of an estate at Balmoral.⁶ It was here that the couple chose to spend private time with their children, who grew up with firsthand (albeit selective) knowledge of Highland culture. Scotland represented a physical escape from English critics of their Germanness, and a means to consolidate their own claim to Britishness. For the royal family, then, Britishness, to an extent, was something that could be acquired, or at least assumed, via public display and private practice.

Alfred's recently bestowed title of Duke of Edinburgh further cemented his connection with Scotland, but he seems to have pursued Scottish pastimes out of genuine interest.⁷ Scottish dancing, for example, featured prominently in Alfred's entertainments ashore and aboard HMS *Galatea*. Numerous cartoons published in *Sydney Punch* and *Melbourne Punch* displayed Alfred's enthusiasm, along with colonists' often ludicrous attempts to keep up with him. In *The Duke of Edinburgh's Visit. Design for ye Illumination of ye Town Hall*, for example, 'Ye Mayor-Elect Practiseth ye Sword Dance'.⁸ Dressed in pseudo-Highland garb, the unfortunate politician manages to pierce his bagpipes with his sword while attempting to dance over crossed swords. Similarly, in *Preparations for the Prince*, 'Miss Clementina Jones practices the Scotch Reel before the Gentleman borrowed from the Tobacconist. N.B.—She finds the prevailing fashion rather in the way.'⁹ Here a young woman's desperate attempt to learn Scottish dancing in front of a kilted statue is handicapped by her overly long gown. Rather than demonstrating her dancing skills, she reveals her own vanity. Colonial women's vanity was a popular theme of newspaper articles and cartoons, which widely ridiculed their attempts to impress the duke. In fact, of course, these Australian colonists were simply imitating the royal family's own 'invention of tradition'. This is one instance in which colonial attempts to identify with British culture largely failed. Other attempts would prove more successful.

Figure 4.2: The Governor's Ball at the Exhibition Buildings, The Royal Party Dancing the Scotch Reel, 27 December 1867.



Samuel Calvert. Print: wood engraving. State Library of Victoria. Image no. b49420.

National ties

While Alfred's genealogy and his tastes confirmed him as a British prince, he developed associations with other nations. In 1862, for example, Alfred was proposed as the new king of Greece. This honour reflected his German as well as his British bloodline. German princes, who were often relatively poor and landless, were often put forward to occupy vacant European thrones. Indeed, after the British Government turned down the Greeks' request for Alfred, his German Uncle Ernest of Saxe-Coburg Gotha was placed on the throne.¹⁰ While Alfred never became a Greek prince, arguably he always remained a German one. Although his mother's father's family had lived mostly in Britain since the early eighteenth century, the rest of his family was based in Germany. His father, Prince Albert, left Saxe-Coburg Gotha to marry Queen Victoria, and in turn Alfred became heir to this duchy. Alfred's future as well as his past thus lay more in Germany than in Britain.

Alfred's German identity was more than a little problematic in contemporary Britain. As Richard Williams pointed out, since the accession of the Hanoverians to the British throne in 1714, complaints were made that the royal family was

more German than British. Queen Victoria was judged to have made things even worse, first by her marriage to a German prince, and, latterly, by encouraging her children to marry German spouses. For example, her beloved eldest daughter, Vicky, married the heir to the Prussian throne in 1858. Arguably, only after Albert's sudden death in 1861 did the crown's Englishness become secure. Doubts, however, remained. The Duke of Edinburgh's first voyage to Australia in 1867–68 was sandwiched between two episodes of bitter anti-German and in particular anti-Prussian feeling in Britain. In the 1864 Schleswig-Holstein affair and the 1869–70 Franco-Prussian War, Queen Victoria was widely criticised for allegedly attempting to influence British foreign policy to support Prussia.¹¹ In many ways, Alfred's visit provided a timely opportunity to demonstrate the royal family's Britishness.

Alfred's behaviour in Australia both supported and complicated these claims to Britishness—for while the prince emphasised his Scottish links, he also drew attention to his German connections. In Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, for example, the duke warmly greeted *liedertafel*: male torchbearers dressed in German national costumes, who serenaded him with German songs. Indeed, in Melbourne, Alfred jocularly urged the mayor to finish his long speech so that he could go and listen to the *liedertafel*: 'Cut it short, Mr Mayor—the Germans are burning their fingers.'¹² Despite this display of partiality, and even though it allegedly caused 'great jealousy in certain press circles, because there was to be a "Leidertafel" [sic] and not an Australasian-tafel as well', Australians apparently accepted Alfred's expressions of his Germanness without public comment.¹³ This even extended to the prince's adoption of German military uniform. In Sydney, Alfred wore 'the uniform of a general officer of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha' at the local military review.¹⁴ At the Adelaide and Melbourne reviews, he dressed as a Prussian colonel.¹⁵ For a British prince (and captain in the Royal Navy) to take part in British military ceremonies wearing German uniform (even if, as heir to a German duchy, he was entitled to wear such uniform) seems astonishing. The adoption of Prussian uniform in particular might have been expected to raise a few eyebrows. While Saxe-Coburg Gotha (Alfred's ancestral home) remained an obscure German state, Prussia (with which he was linked only through his sister's marriage) was fast becoming Britain's economic and military rival. In Australia at this time, however, loyalty to Germany was evidently seen as compatible with loyalty to Britain.¹⁶ If colonists were worried by such behaviour, they did not express this concern publicly. One exception was a satirical sketch made by George Gordon McCrae, entitled 'A Saylore on Horse-backe, ye Adelaide Troops are reviewed bye a Prussian Colonel'.¹⁷ In it, a stiff Alfred, resplendent in shiny Prussian uniform, sits astride a gawky steed, while HMS *Galatea*'s presence in the background gently reminds the viewer of the prince's proper, British occupation. This exception might,

however, prove the rule: McCrae's drawing was not published, and it seems to have reflected a minority viewpoint, or at least one that was not aired publicly.

Even the most anti-British elements within the colonies appeared unperturbed by these dual identities. Sydney's *Freeman's Journal* drew particular attention to Alfred's German connections, describing him as a 'young Anglo-German gentleman' who probably had an ear for music, since 'most Germans have some'. This paper, which a few months later proudly described its policy as remaining 'truly and unflinchingly, Irish, National, and Catholic', was being deliberately provocative in describing the son of the British monarch as a foreigner. It nevertheless accepted that Alfred could combine English identity with German, in the same article referring to him as 'this young Englishman'. For nationalist Irishmen, of course, an Englishman was as much a foreigner as a German. The *Freeman's Journal* therefore distinguished its constituency from 'Anglo-Saxons', whom it characterised as having 'an innate vulgarity'.¹⁸ Pro-British sources also noted, however, that Alfred combined English and foreign elements. According to the British émigré Samuel Curtis Candler, who was soon to become friendly with the duke in Melbourne, 'his pronunciation is peculiar, something between that of an English gentleman and of a foreigner who had been taught English perfectly'.¹⁹

For the *Freeman's Journal* and its Irish Catholic constituency, there was no contradiction in Alfred being English and German. Instead, the paper distanced itself from those who were 'preparing to give him a reception betokening the esteem in which they hold *their* sovereign' (my italics). The problem lay not with multiple national identities, but with the assumption that as the son of the British monarch, Alfred should be worshipped by Australian colonists: 'We are not aware that the aforementioned sovereign has done anything particular to win the gratitude of the Australians.' Rather, Alfred was simply a 'young stranger' whose presence demanded respect, due not to his royal birth but for his polite behaviour: '[T]hough we feel no inclination to honour the coming guest simply because he happens to be a prince, we would, at all events, respect him, because we know he is a gentleman.'²⁰ Candler also emphasised the importance of Alfred's behaviour as a gentleman, and claimed that it was a welcome surprise to learn that 'one may sometimes put one's trust in Princes'.²¹ As we will see below, Alfred also put much stock in appearing as a gentleman.

Figure 4.3: *A Saylore on Horse-backe, ye Adelaide Troopes are reviewed bye a Prussian Colonel, 1868.*



George Gordon McCrae. Drawing: pen, ink and wash. National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an6330424

Alfred's expression of dual loyalty was accepted in colonial Australia because colonists recognised, and to a certain extent approved of, the existence of multiple loyalties. In other words, Alfred was not alone in combining loyalty to Britain with loyalty (or at least affection) for another state or culture. German–British loyalty was particularly comprehensible in South Australia, which boasted a large German immigrant population (although, as many migrants had fled religious persecution and economic marginalisation in Pomerania, it was a population that owed little gratitude to the Prussian State). Just as British colonists in Tasmania gave the duke a wheelbarrow that combined Australian blackwood with the British heraldic flowers of rose, thistle and shamrock, the German colonists in South Australia gave Alfred 'a well-executed imitation of a flaming torch made of rope in blackwood, and inlaid with thirty-two different species of colonial woods, which were supplied by Dr. Schomburg of the Botanic Gardens'.²² Both gifts were emblematic of colonists' assertion of the botanical metaphor—namely that the seeds of the old country flourished in colonial soil.

Such a relaxed attitude to dual German–British loyalty would not last long. After Prussia's 1870 victory in the war with France and its emergence as the leading state within the new German Empire, many Australians, like Britons, came to see it as an aggressor state. In 1867, however, while the *Pax Britannica* still held, and Prussia's military threat to Britain was not yet explicit, the adoption of foreign military uniforms was not necessarily associated with any particular ideological commitment or conflict of national interests. People did put on and discard uniforms more casually in this period than later in the nineteenth century. This was probably even truer in the colonies than at home (it is hard to imagine Alfred escaping public criticism had he worn a Prussian uniform while reviewing troops in London, for example). In Australia, where the European population faced many invasion scares but to date no real attack, the wearing of foreign uniforms offered an amusing diversion for the general public as well as the prince.

In fact, the wearing of uniforms was seen to have an aesthetic as well as a military function. At the duke's entry to Melbourne, for example:

In order to make the whole affair as impressive as possible, all the military force in the colony was brought into requisition...and rendered most effective service, not only as regards the general picturesque effect in lining the streets, but also in the important duty which they undertook in...keeping the thoroughfares clear for the procession to pass along.²³

The prince also displayed his love of military-style dress when he landed in Sydney wearing 'light trousers with a black military stripe'.²⁴ Moreover, Alfred was not afraid to mix and match German and British insignia; in Adelaide therefore, his Prussian colonel's uniform was 'ornamented by the badge of KG, and other marks of honourable distinction'.²⁵ This reflected the prevailing

sartorial convention that ‘more was more’, as well as Alfred’s own love of ornamentation. In Melbourne, observers commented on the gold rings the duke wore:

He had eleven altogether on the two hands yesterday—large massive gold affairs—such as a lucky reefer, or puddler, might wear. They were so thick that he could not close his fingers—making his hands, as Sir Redmond remarked, like the fins of a turtle. In addition to these ornaments he wore a gold bracelet...it may be a delicate recognition of the fashion of wearing bracelets in Australia.²⁶

While it might seem far-fetched for a British prince to emulate a gold-digger’s taste in jewellery, in fact, Alfred seemed to enjoy following colonial fashion (or at least, what he perceived was colonial fashion). Sailors, like gold-diggers, were also known for wearing ostentatious jewellery and clothing ashore. Perhaps, like these men, Alfred relished the opportunities provided in the colonies to escape naval discipline.

Similarly, the extravagant dress worn by NSW ministers at the duke’s arrival drew attention. The ministers’ decision to order elaborate uniforms at a cost of £70 each was ridiculed as a ‘childish whim’ by the *Freeman’s Journal*, which attributed it to a desire to do proper honour to the son of ‘their Queen’.²⁷ These costumes, however, demonstrated colonial pride as much as individual vanity or loyalty to Britain, for the British Government had recently given colonial ministers the same status as ministers ‘at Home’, which meant that they were entitled to wear the same dress. By wearing these costumes in the duke’s presence, then, New South Wales’ ministers demonstrated their equality with their British counterparts.

Many other colonists wore costumes during the duke’s visit. Some, such as the members of the *liedertafel*, wore national dress to express their identification with their homeland. For others, dressing up in foreign outfits provided an opportunity to display past, future or just wished-for transnational experience. At the Civic Fancy Dress Ball held to welcome Prince Alfred to Melbourne, for example, French, German, Italian, Swedish, Russian and Dutch costumes, including several military and naval uniforms, were on display. This reflected the international nature of the gathering—with several foreign consuls present—but also the outward-looking orientation of the Australian colonists themselves. The prominence of foreign naval costumes at local entertainments also reflected elite colonists’ frequent contact with visiting navies. Dinners and dances for the officers were held in gentlemen’s clubs such as the Melbourne Club as well as in private homes. These visits provided amusement for the visitors, boosted hostesses’ egos and facilitated cultural exchange. To commemorate the 1870 visit of the Italian frigate *Garibaldi*, which brought the Duke of Genoa to Tasmania, for example, F. Fiorani inscribed a musical score

with a dedication to the writer, artist and musician Louisa Anne Meredith. Such naval visits also appealed to the general public. One month after the Duke of Edinburgh departed Sydney, for example, the local papers were full of enthusiasm for the visiting French transport *Aveyron*. A report published in the *Illustrated Sydney News* suggested that Australian men and women were as keen to visit a French warship as a British one.²⁸ Indeed, when it came to public entertainment, any nation's warships would do, and the bigger the better.

Just as British colonists greeted foreign visitors enthusiastically, many non-British colonists queued up to honour Alfred. Loyal addresses were presented to him from 'the Hungarian residents of New South Wales', for example, as well as from the Chinese community in Castlemaine, Victoria.²⁹ Presenting loyal addresses was a well-established way for minority groups to assert their identity in a non-threatening way. This was particularly important for the Chinese community, which was viewed with much suspicion in Australia, as elsewhere. Still, their right to present their own address (albeit with the assistance of a trusted European translator) to the son of the British monarch was widely accepted, and exercised.³⁰ The press attention given to loyal addresses provided excellent publicity for many of these groups. Indeed, the Melbourne Chinese community's celebrations of the duke's visit attracted great interest, not least from the duke himself. So too in Sydney, the decoration of the steamer *Yamba* to resemble a dragon was widely admired.³¹

This image of multiple ethnic groups coexisting in harmony was, however, overly simplistic. The Irish Catholic community in particular was disaffected. Despite the fact that Catholics represented approximately one-quarter of the colonial population, the Irish Catholic clergy stayed away from official functions during the royal visit. While the *Freeman's Journal* expressed the hope that 'the day is not distant when the cause of the continued absence of the Catholic body from public receptions will be removed and they will be able to join with these acts of loyalty with their fellow colonists', such hope was in fact premature.³² For while transparencies displaying Irish greetings such as '*Cead m'ille failtha*' welcomed the duke, other messages stirred up sectarian hatred.³³ Protestant Orangemen's provocative reference to the Battle of the Boyne in one Melbourne display exacerbated tensions with Irish Catholics, and led to a fatal shooting. Tensions worsened with the shooting of the duke at Clontarf in March 1868. While this attempted assassination was the work of one unbalanced Irish Australian, it was initially blamed on the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish republican movement. Moreover, in the eyes of the rabidly anti-Catholic NSW Colonial Secretary, Henry Parkes, all Irish Catholic Australians were potential Fenians. So, far from providing an opportunity to cement their ties to the polity, the duke's visit to Australia only isolated Irish Catholics further.³⁴ In colonial Australia, then, maintaining loyalty to Britain and Ireland (or Australia and

Ireland) clearly proved more problematic than maintaining loyalty to Britain and Germany. Not all combinations of national loyalty worked in the Australian context.

The Royal Navy

While Alfred might have mixed and matched his military uniforms, combining various German uniforms with British insignia, he seems to have treated his naval uniform with greater respect. His captain's uniform was certainly his uniform of choice throughout his Australian tour—at official functions in port as well as aboard HMS *Galatea*. While to an extent this simply reflects the fact that Alfred visited Australia as a serving naval officer, and naturally was expected to wear his uniform, it also reflects his great pride in the navy.³⁵ The fact that most of the 'carte-de-visite' photographs circulating in the colonies depicted Alfred in naval uniform suggests that this is how Alfred himself wanted to be seen there.³⁶ In any case, this is certainly how many Australian colonists wanted to see him. Dozens of transparencies decorating buildings as well as flattering and unflattering cartoons published in the colonial press all depicted Alfred in naval uniform. When colonists noted that 'we know him from his portrait', they could have been describing Alfred's uniform as much as his facial features.³⁷ Alfred's decision not to wear his naval uniform on one occasion in northern Tasmania even drew press comment:

Had he but appeared in naval uniform when holding his levee on Thursday, he would certainly have gratified many, and particularly some old naval officers who feel prouder, if possible, of the cloth—the navy blue—since they have had a Prince of the blood Royal in the service.³⁸

As this account suggests, the uniform was seen to make the man. More than any other factor, Alfred's naval career confirmed his Britishness in the eyes of his Australian audience. Even the transparency decorating Sydney's Prussian consulate made reference to Alfred's maritime association, depicting Neptune escorting the prince over the ocean.³⁹ Alfred's 'true-blue' loyalty to the Royal Navy helps to explain further why Australians did not find his German connections disquieting.

For all the apparent Britishness of the Royal Navy, however, it was the navy that gave Alfred much of his transnational experience. On HMS *Galatea* alone, Alfred visited five continents. Similarly, many Australian colonists first saw the world from (or below) the deck of a Royal Navy ship—as officers, crew, soldiers or transported convicts. Even free emigrants who travelled directly between Britain and Australia on commercial vessels often stopped off in other places en route. In short, for many British and Australian men and women in the mid to late nineteenth century, life was transnational.

Colonists liked to see Alfred dressed as a naval officer because the navy was seen as Britain's 'wooden walls'. By choosing a naval career, therefore, Alfred demonstrated his commitment to protect the Mother Country and her colonies. In 1859, at a time when the navy was trying to recruit men, 'Admiral Punch' pointed to the young Alfred, recently entered as midshipman on HMS *Euryalus*: 'There, Boys! There's an Example for You!'⁴⁰ Just as Alfred's participation was seen to improve the navy, participation in the navy was seen to improve Alfred. As a fulsome article in a Tasmanian paper put it:

In selecting his profession Prince Alfred gave convincing proof that he 'scorn'd luxurious ease', and no one can look at him without being further convinced that he, young as he is...has 'lived laborious days'. The result is a sound constitution, nerves firm as steel, an independent, self-reliant, candid spirit, a thorough knowledge of an honourable profession, and a laudable pride in the possession of that knowledge. He can navigate his course ashore as well as afloat, and would live and thrive in any condition of life. Even if stripped of his high rank he would ascend in the social scale, when a mere lordling or court puppet would sink or starve.⁴¹

By wearing his naval uniform in Australia, therefore, Alfred discarded the trappings of a prince and displayed the very qualities prized by colonists. While Alfred enjoyed many special privileges, his naval background did provide him with some common experience with gentlemen migrants to Australia.⁴² Both spent months and years away from home, often in relatively Spartan conditions, exposed to the extremes of weather and reliant on letters and newspapers for news of home.⁴³ Alfred also seems to have shared many emigrants' desire to leave the tensions of home and seek adventure abroad.⁴⁴

The Melbourne Club

In Victoria, for example, the duke quickly developed friendships with Samuel Curtis Candler and Frederick Standish, members of a circle of colonial gentlemen who entertained him at the Melbourne Club. Misfortune in Britain (Candler suffered ill health and Standish lost huge amounts of money gambling) left them with uncertain prospects. They migrated to Australia, where they built up solid lives in Victoria. Like Alfred, they enjoyed long careers in government service—Candler as coroner and Standish in the police force. While Alfred made his home for many years in the navy, Candler and Standish found homes in the Melbourne Club. Indeed, the Melbourne Club was Candler's residence for more than 50 years.⁴⁵

While each of these three men used his career to establish his individual reputation, each also sought comfort, privacy and relative anonymity in the all-male environments provided by the navy or the Melbourne Club. Aboard

ship, or behind the closed doors of the Melbourne Club, Alfred, Standish and Candler could relax with like-minded gentlemen. Candler rejoiced in Alfred's desire to be treated as any other club member: 'In short his bearing expressed as plainly as words could have done "Gentlemen, I am an Honorary member of your club. I perceive that you do not intend to treat me with ceremonial and we will be on the same footing if you please."' ⁴⁶

Alfred appears to have found the Melbourne Club's relative informality a welcome change from Victorian vice-regal society. Piqued at Governor Sir Henry Manners Sutton's excessive formality, the prince allegedly gave him a taste of his own medicine by making him and his family remain standing in his presence. ⁴⁷ Similarly, aboard his ship, Alfred's word was law. Candler described Alfred's request to a Melbourne Club whist party that his own mistakes be pointed out to him while playing. In contrast, Captain Taylor of the *Galatea* assured Candler that 'if I won a hundred from him I should never think of letting him fancy it was from wrong play'. ⁴⁸

Like most immigrants to the colonies, Alfred made considerable efforts to fit into local society. Candler records that Alfred picked up colonial slang quickly, and used it frequently while off duty in the Melbourne Club. Similarly, rather than setting fashion trends, Alfred followed:

He was quietly dressed and not in the extreme of fashion...I also noticed that his white hat was not [?] so much as I had been led to expect. It was of precisely the same shape, height and build of my own—indeed I fancy it was probably bought here in Melbourne. ⁴⁹

So delighted was Alfred with his Melbourne Club friends that he chose to spend Christmas Day 1867 with them. It is significant that Alfred chose to spend this holiday, so closely associated with family and 'home', ashore with men he had met only weeks before, as well as a few trusted companions from the *Galatea*. For most of the men at the table, 'home' was Britain. According to Candler, however, Alfred described a sense of dislocation on returning home:

Talking of living in Melbourne I said I would rather live here on my small income than in Manchester, Birmingham or any of the large towns of England. The Duke said it was a very good place indeed and was inclined to agree with me...Also told us how difficult he found it on getting back from a voyage to London to pick up his old friends. ⁵⁰

Alfred's closeness to Candler and the other members of the Melbourne Club should not be exaggerated, nor should his apparent preference for egalitarian treatment. In fact, the duke could and did insist on his royal status when piqued, as his treatment of the Victorian governor and his family demonstrates. Alfred enjoyed the freedom of playing prince one day, captain of HMS *Galatea* another, and Melbourne Club member the next. Moreover, to be a member of the

Melbourne Club was to be a privileged member of colonial society indeed! For their part, Candler's and Standish's diaries reveal their habit of introspection and their enjoyment of solitude, away from their Melbourne Club cronies. Nevertheless, for all three men, all-male society based around the navy or the club played an important role in their lives. It provided the opportunity to reinvent themselves, and to re-present themselves as they chose, free from ordinary social obligations. It is telling that Alfred and Candler seized the opportunity to go incognito when it arose. At the Fancy Dress Ball in Melbourne, the duke changed from his naval uniform into disguise as an old man, and was delighted that very few people recognised him. For his part, Candler enjoyed dressing up as a Knight of Malta.⁵¹ Though very different, both costumes suggest that their wearers relished the opportunity to display their masculine independence.

Colonial Australia also provided young men the freedom to escape the familial, social and moral constraints of Britain. Here was a place to reinvent oneself, while still maintaining some recognition of British class divisions. Like the navy, Australia provided an enjoyable and relatively well-remunerated alternative for young men who did not fit into successful middle-class British society. This allowed men to delay or avoid family responsibilities. Removal to Australia made postponement of marriage, and indeed failure to ever marry, much more likely. As Peter McDonald has pointed out, in the late nineteenth century, 20 to 30 per cent of Australian men had never married by the age of fifty—a higher proportion than in Britain.⁵² Whether this was due to lack of opportunity (in most parts of Australia, men considerably outnumbered women) or desire, it is clear that, as Beverley Kingston has argued, contemporary Australian masculine society was ambivalent, to say the least, about marriage with Australian women.⁵³ Standish remained a bachelor his entire life and, as Penny Russell points out, his diary entries reveal his dislike of what he saw as 'fast' colonial women.⁵⁴ While Candler eventually married Laura Ellen Kennedy, who had borne him four children, he lived apart from them. Indeed, his Melbourne Club colleagues apparently learned of Mrs Candler's existence only after his death.⁵⁵ Even the duke married only in 1874, more than a decade after his elder brother the Prince of Wales. These examples provided further evidence that what John Tosh termed 'the flight from domesticity' applied to colonial Australia and to institutions such as the Royal Navy as well as to Victorian Britain.⁵⁶ From this perspective, Alfred's transnational life took him away from 'home' in more ways than one. For Alfred, as for numerous other British men of his generation, close male friendships and delayed marriage went hand-in-hand with a transnational life.

Conclusion

In a toast delivered shortly before the Duke of Edinburgh departed Tasmania, Governor Thomas Gore-Brown asserted that Tasmanians embodied Horace's

maxim that ‘they who cross the seas change their climate, but not their feelings’. Tasmanians were ‘Britons to the back bone...whose loyalty and attachment to the Queen and her Royal family has not been chilled either by time or the distance which separates them from the mother country’. In his response, Alfred joked that he had in fact changed his feelings, for he had not expected Tasmania to be so wet.⁵⁷ Jokes aside, governor and duke had a point. Alfred’s visit to Australia demanded that the prince and the locals display their loyalty to the British throne, affection for the Royal Navy and their adherence to British protocol. This involved asserting the Britishness of Alfred and the majority of colonists. Other cultural elements, however, were not easily forgotten, and the visit highlighted how transnational Australian society, as well as the British monarchy, really was. Like the Tasmanian weather, the loyalties of a British prince and Australian colonists were not always predictable. Moreover, the duke’s experience with Victorian colonists led him to develop new loyalties.

Alfred’s visit reminds us that post-gold-rush Australia was by no means a wholly British or even wholly English-speaking domain. The coexistence of multiple nationalities did not necessarily imply tolerance, of course. Irish and Chinese communities, among others, faced hostility that sometimes spilled over into violence. Neither, however, could the presence of these and other nationalities be wholly ignored or downplayed. The Duke of Edinburgh’s visit provided a superb opportunity for national groups to advertise their contributions to colonial Australia, as well as (with the notable exception of the Irish Catholic clergy) to profess their loyalty to the British Crown.⁵⁸ Ironically, Alfred’s attempted assassination greatly enhanced the opportunities for displays of loyalty, and led to an outpouring of extravagant assertions of submission and devotion.

Alfred’s royal birth distinguished him from Australian colonists in many ways. In his choice of career and his travels to Australia and other colonies, however, he followed a path trod by thousands of other privileged young men seeking their fortunes beyond Britain’s borders. At times, these men wore the uniforms of British officers and/or gentlemen, while at other times they slipped easily into the dress and manners of local elites. Such men often remained single for many years, and seemed most comfortable in the company of other immigrants and travellers. Their experiences, and those of their counterparts in Britain, demonstrated that Victorian masculinity was often performed outside of, and in resistance to, the domestic sphere. Alfred’s transnational life allowed him to share in the colonial experience, albeit that of a privileged minority of men. Examining Alfred’s life helps us to understand better his own complicated identity, and in turn those of colonial Australians. Finally, Alfred’s visit to Australia helps illuminate how many men and women—within and beyond the British Empire—lived transnational lives.

Notes

¹ See Gibbney, H. J. 1972, 'Edinburgh, Duke of (1844–1900)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography. Volume 4*, Melbourne University, pp. 128–9.

² As is appropriate for a man who saw himself, and was seen by others, in different guises, Alfred will also be referred to in this essay as 'the Duke of Edinburgh' and 'the prince'.

³ Meredith, Louisa Anne 1868, 'Welcome to Prince Alfred', *Prince Alfred Preparation Committee. Programme of the Torchlight Aquatic Procession and Serenade, To Welcome H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh on his arrival in Tasmania*, Printed at the Mercury Steam Press Office, Macquarie Street, Hobart Town, p. 11; 'Loyal address of directors of the Launceston and Western Railway Company', quoted in *Cornwall Chronicle*, 18 January 1868, p. 2.

⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald* (hereafter *SMH*), 22 January 1868, pp. 4–5.

⁵ Callaway, Anita 2000, *Visual Ephemera: Theatrical art in nineteenth-century Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, p. 38.

⁶ As with George IV, Victoria's activity boosted the popularity of Highland Scots culture within England. See Trevor-Roper, Hugh 1992, 'The invention of tradition: the Highland tradition of Scotland', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 15–41, at p. 39.

⁷ For example, Alfred attended the annual Caledonian gathering in Melbourne 'and at his request the race in Highland costume, and the dance, Gillie Callum, were competed for out of their order in the programme'; *Argus*, reprinted in *Launceston Examiner*, 7 January 1868, p. 3.

⁸ *Melbourne Punch*, 31 October 1867, p. 137.

⁹ *Melbourne Punch*, 14 November 1867, p. 156.

¹⁰ Callaway, *Visual Ephemera*, p. 38.

¹¹ Williams, Richard 1997, *The Contentious Crown: Public discussion of the British monarchy in the reign of Queen Victoria*, Ashgate, Brookfield, Vt, p. 154.

¹² *SMH*, 23 November 1867, p. 5, quoted in Van der Kiste, John and Jordaan, Bee with a foreword by Aronson, Theo 1984, *Dearest Affie... Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh: Queen Victoria's second son 1844–1900*, Alan Sutton Publishing, Gloucester, p. 63.

¹³ Samuel Curtis Candler, 'Notes about Melbourne, and diaries' (hereafter 'Candler Diary'), 1848–[19—], 1 December 1867, State Library of Victoria, MS 9502, p. 301.

¹⁴ *SMH*, 25 January 1868, p. 5.

¹⁵ Candler Diary, 26 December 1867, p. 342.

¹⁶ The same was not true in the 1890s. Questions were raised in the British Parliament and the German Reichstag about Alfred's suitability to lead a German state given his status as a British prince, a member of the Privy Council and a naval officer. See Van der Kiste and Jordaan, *Dearest Affie*, pp. 148–54.

¹⁷ McCrae, George Gordon 1868, 'A Saylor on Horse-backe, ye Adelaide Troops are reviewed bye a Prussian Colonel', drawing, pen, ink and wash, in his *Album of Drawings*, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an6330424.

¹⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, Saturday 12 October 1867, p. 8; 25 April 1868, p. 2; 12 October 1867, p. 8.

¹⁹ Candler Diary, 1 December 1867, p. 307.

²⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 12 October 1867, p. 8.

²¹ Candler Diary, 1 December 1867, p. 305; 14 January 1868, p. 354. In Tasmania, however, Louisa Anne Meredith employed the original, biblical version—'put not ye trust in Princes'—to comment on Alfred's apparent failure to support her petition to the Queen for a pension. See Robson, Lloyd 1991, *A History of Tasmania. Volume II. Colony and state from 1856 to the 1980s*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 18; and Rae-Ellis, Vivienne 1990, *Louisa Anne Meredith: A tigress in exile*, St David's Park Publishing, Hobart, pp. 217–18.

²² *Cornwall Chronicle*, 15 January 1868, p. 6; 'From the *South Australian Register*, 2d November', *SMH*, 15 November 1867, pp. 5–6. Other Germans in Australia seem to have focused solely on their shared German heritage with Alfred. See, for example, the verses presented by Louis Kölling, *Fackelträger* (torchlight procession bearer), to Alfred in Melbourne (Gieh. Archiv QQ XVI I. 305, Thuringian State Archives, Gotha, Germany).

²³ 'Public entry into Melbourne' [from the *Melbourne Herald*], *SMH*, 29 November 1867, p. 6.

²⁴ *SMH*, 30 January 1868, p. 2.

- ²⁵ *SMH*, 15 November 1867, p. 2.
- ²⁶ Candler Diary, 2 December 1867, p. 316.
- ²⁷ Among other cartoons, see 'The great "clothes" question; or, the prince and the ministry', *Sydney Punch*, vol. 7, 7 September 1867, p. 123; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 October 1867, p. 8.
- ²⁸ Russell, Penny 1994, *A Wish of Distinction: Colonial gentility and femininity*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, p. 76; Fiorani, F. [18—], 'Tasmania: remembrance of the Italian frigate *Garibaldi*: romance', Musical score, Giannini, Napoli, Tasmaniana Library, CRO.E 780.9946 TAS, State Library of Tasmania; 'A visiting day on board the French transport ship "Aveyron"', *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 May 1868, p. 364. Colonists flocked to visit the duke's ship, too; in Adelaide, 20,000 people were reported to have visited the *Galatea*; *SMH*, 15 November 1867, p. 5.
- ²⁹ *SMH*, 6 April 1868, p. 24; *Argus*, 18 November 1867, p. 5.
- ³⁰ Chinese communities throughout Australia, Asia, South Africa and the Pacific presented loyal addresses. See, for example, addresses from Malacca (Gieh. Archiv QQ XVI VII. 41) and Otago, New Zealand (Gieh. Archiv QQ XVI VI. 37), now held in the Thuringian State Archives, Gotha.
- ³¹ Candler Diary, 2 December 1867, pp. 311–12. The dragon motif seems to have been inspired by Chinese designs; *SMH*, 21 January 1868, p. 5.
- ³² *Freeman's Journal*, 8 February 1868, p. 1. *Sydney Punch* also commented on the Catholics' absence in 'What we may expect to see. As the head of only one religious denomination "assisted" at the last review, Mr Punch respectfully offers the above suggestion as an improvement in the next one', *Sydney Punch*, vol. 8, 1 February 1868, p. 74.
- ³³ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 15 January 1868, p. 5. Victorian Governor, Sir Henry Manners Sutton, commented on the sectarian tensions in a memorandum on a loyal address submitted by the Orangemen to Alfred, which he advised accepting in order to maintain the peace (16 November 1867, Gieh. Archiv QQ XVI I. 510, Thuringian State Archives, Gotha).
- ³⁴ Inglis, K. S. 1974, *The Australian Colonists: An exploration of social history 1788–1870*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, pp. 94–7.
- ³⁵ Alfred could also have been making amends for his earlier behaviour. Candler contrasts the rumour of him being told off for wearing *mufti* in South Africa (which he visited immediately before Australia) with his apparently blameless behaviour in Gibraltar; Candler Diary, Christmas Day 1867, p. 338. Naval discipline aboard HMS *Galatea* in the latter voyages (1869–71) seems to have been maintained strictly, according to the notebook of Lieutenant John William Ramsay (University of Cambridge Library, Manuscripts Collection, Add. 9279).
- ³⁶ In addition to numerous photographs in Australian and British collections, Alfred appears in naval uniform in two *carte-de-visite* photographs, dated 1858 and c. 1862 respectively, held in the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town Pictures, ARC 54 [6630] and Album 1 [5]), as well as in several photographs detailing his 1867 visit to Cape Town (photograph album, Wits University Library, Reference A1552). My thanks to Michele Pickover and Idah Makukele for sending me details of the Wits album.
- ³⁷ See, for example, 'Australia Supplex and the "real" Australian Australian Ladies' Ball; or, gin-uine "Blue Blood"', *Sydney Punch*, vol. 8, 28 March 1868, p. 139, and vol. 7, 9 November 1867, p. 194.
- ³⁸ While decades later the duke was chastised for spending too little time on his naval duties, when he was a young man, the navy was clearly the centre of Alfred's world; Van der Kiste and Jordaan, *Dearest Affie*, pp. 28, 40, 54–5; *Cornwall Chronicle*, 18 January 1868, p. 2.
- ³⁹ *SMH*, 23 January 1868, pp. 5–6.
- ⁴⁰ 'Men for the fleet! Punch', in M. Lemon (ed.) n.d., *Punch: The first fifty years*, London, p. 238.
- ⁴¹ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 18 January 1868, p. 2.
- ⁴² Numerous criticisms were made of Alfred's tardiness and frequent expressions of boredom at official events—for example, Candler Diary, 29 November 1867, p. 301. Had he not been shot in March 1868, it is likely that these criticisms would have increased.
- ⁴³ In his diary entry for 2 December 1867 (pp. 312–13), Candler describes the duke joining in a conversation at the Melbourne Club about pests such as fleas and cockroaches. Alfred was clearly no stranger to physical discomfort while travelling.
- ⁴⁴ Van der Kiste and Jordaan, *Dearest Affie*, pp. 54–6.
- ⁴⁵ Cooke, Simon 2005, 'Candler, Samuel Curtis (1827–1911)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography. Supplementary Volume*, Melbourne University Press, pp. 63–4; Legge, J. S. 1976, 'Standish, Frederick Charles (1824–1883)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography. Volume 6*, Melbourne University Press, pp.

172–3 (online edition viewed 1 August 2007); McNicoll, Ronald 1988, *Number 36 Collins Street: Melbourne Club 1838–1988*, Allen & Unwin/Haynes and Melbourne Club, Sydney, pp. 143–4. Candler's and Standish's diaries record the sexual and social adventures of the duke and his entourage in Melbourne. In a forthcoming piece entitled 'Colonial hospitality', I argue that these adventures constituted an unofficial tour that ran parallel with the official tour, illuminating the hypocrisy and the flexibility of elite colonial society's responses to gender, race and class.

⁴⁶ Candler Diary, 2 December 1867, p. 314.

⁴⁷ The frosty atmosphere in Government House can be gauged by an undated note written by Sir Henry Manners Sutton to his royal guest on the Saturday morning of an official function, pointing out the need to leave the residence in time to arrive punctually (Gieh. Archiv QQ XVI I. 457, Thuringian State Archives, Gotha).

⁴⁸ Candler Diary, 2 December 1867, p. 314; 28 December 1867, p. 344.

⁴⁹ Candler Diary, 1 December 1867, p. 305.

⁵⁰ Candler Diary, Christmas Day 1867, p. 339.

⁵¹ Candler Diary, 23 December 1867, p. 336.

⁵² McDonald, Peter F. 1975, *Marriage in Australia: Age at first marriage and proportions marrying, 1860–1971*, The Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 105, 107, cited in Kingston, Beverley 1988, *The Oxford History of Australia. Volume 3, 1860–1900 Glad, Confident Morning*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 119.

⁵³ Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia*, pp. 119–21.

⁵⁴ For example, Candler Diary, 23 September 1867, cited in Russell, *A Wish of Distinction*, pp. 110–1.

⁵⁵ Legge, 'Standish, Frederick Charles', pp. 172–3; McNicoll, *Number 36 Collins Street*, p. 144.

⁵⁶ Tosh, John 1999, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*, New Haven and London, p. 187.

⁵⁷ *Launceston Examiner*, 16 January 1868, p. 5.

⁵⁸ The Irish Catholic community (including the priesthood) did profess its loyalty to the royal family after the attempted assassination of Alfred at Clontarf in Sydney in March 1868. I discuss this episode, and its implications for colonial expressions of loyalty and identity, in a forthcoming essay.