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COVER
“The Firth of Forth,” Coombs 136, c. 1925. Violet Bonham Carter remembered when Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911:
“I saw in Winston’s face a radiance like the sun...he said to me with grave but shining eyes.... ‘Your father has just offered me the Admiralty’...His whole life was invested with a new significance. He was tasting fulfilment. Never, before or since, have I seen him more completely and profoundly happy.” (See also back cover.) Reproduced by kind permission of Churchill Heritage Ltd.

ARTICLES
16 We’ll Always Have Boston: Bill Buckey, Churchillian • Richard M. Langworth
20 Present at the Creation: Danny Mander at Teheran, 1942-43 • An Interview with Susan Kidder

The French Connection
24 Lion of Britain, Cross of Lorraine: Churchill and de Gaulle • Terry Reardon
30 Churchill’s French: Much Better Than You Thought it Was • James R. Lancaster
34 “Seeing Claw to Claw”: A Synopsis • Will Morrissey

Churchill Proceedings
35 Did Singapore Have to Fall? • Richard M. Torre, Raymond P. Callahan, David Jablonsky
42 History Detectives: Was Leopold Guilty? • The Editor

DEPARTMENTS
Despatch Box 4 • Editor’s Essay 6
Datelines 7 • Around & About 9
Glimpses 12 • Wit & Wisdom 13
Action This Day 14 • Riddles 19
History Detectives 42
Poems Churchill Loved 55
Churchill Quiz 57 • Ampersand 58
Local Contacts 59

47 BOOKS, ARTS & CURIOSITIES
Give Jack a break! John Strange Spencer Churchill, Ted Hutchinson reports, is no longer strange to Churchill historiography, thanks to Celia and John Lee...Warren F. Kimball admires Peter Stansky’s account of the London Blitz...Alfred James has a contemplative smoke with Churchill’s Cigar...
Churchill goes to war with Brian Lavery while Christopher H. Sterling looks on...The Editor reports three great new “standard works” involving Churchill and Mohandas Gandhi, Chartwell and the “Fateful Decisions” of World War II...Joshua Greenberg in search of Churchill in the Crimea.
FAST AIRCRAFT

Further to Gene Lasser (FH 137:5), I believe the two fastest WW2 piston-engine fighters were the North American P51, (437 mph at 25,000 ft) and Sydney Camm’s brutal Tempest (435 mph at lower altitudes, able even to mix it with Me262s and V-1s). Both were designed for different roles, at which they excelled, but the 2500hp required to push a Tempest to such speeds at low levels meant it was soon modified to carry up to a ton of bombs and rockets for ground attack, making it one of the first true fighter/attack aircraft. The P51 could also carry a one-ton external payload, but its low-level performance was seriously compromised by its beautiful laminar wings.

De Havilland’s Mosquito, however, was designed as a bomber with a two-ton internal payload. It was so fast that it did not need defensive weapons, and became faster when its original turrets were removed. When fitted with forward cannon and machine guns, it was probably the world’s only bomber/fighter! For comparison, imagine a 400+ mph B25.

The point is, aircraft nomenclature is problematic, even within a broadly agreed group. Sir Winston would have loved the chance to be pedantic, and might have said: “This is the sort of nonsense up with which I will not put!” But call the Mosquito the fastest piston-engine bomber and there is not much room for pedantry. Nothing came within a bull’s roar of it.

GREG HUGHES, EMERALD, QLD., AUSTRALIA

COMPARISON TROUBLES

In your editor’s essay (FH 136:6) you state, “It seems hardly possible to compare Bush, who opted for war at any price, to Chamberlain, who opted for peace at any price.” On the contrary, it is very possible and instructive to compare them. Neither man understood the world in which he led his nation. For example, Chamberlain predicted “peace” after Munich. In early 1940, before Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, he claimed Hitler had “missed the bus.”

Similarly, Bush said we would find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. No such weapons have been found. In May 2003, he told us the mission had been accomplished in Iraq. In October 2004, he told us he had made no mistakes. The last two statements were self-corrected in December 2005. For months thereafter, he told us we were making progress in Iraq; so much progress that he completely changed strategy and after months of refusing to send more troops (even though urged to do so by many supporters) he finally did so. In short, far from being like Winston Churchill, Bush is far more like Neville Chamberlain.

JAMES LYNCH, LIVINGSTON, N.J.

Editor’s response: I search in vain for examples of Chamberlain’s “self-corrections.” Chamberlain declared war, which Bush didn’t (to his later detriment?). And Saddam wasn’t Hitler. Situations compare, but not individuals. There are too many variables: which is what I suggested about the attempt to compare Bush and Chamberlain.

That silly sign, “Mission Accomplished,” like the slogan-bedecked wallpaper Mr. Bush and his rivals drape behind their speaking rostrums, referred to the removal of Saddam, not the end of the war—but speaks to the foolhardiness, as you suggest, of backing oneself with slogans. We found no ready-made nukes, but the capability was clear, and “WMD” includes biological and chemical weapons, which did exist and were used. But Mr. Bush exaggerated his case—more or less like the Member of Parliament who, on 19 March 1935, asserted prematurely that Britain had lost air superiority. That MP was Mr. Churchill—which doesn’t render Churchill’s larger case less valid, nor suggest any comparison to Bush. Comparisons are cheap, and far too easily indulged.
**WINSTON AS RADIC-LIB**

Churchill’s century-old “Untrodden Field in Politics,” which you dug up and bravely printed in *FH* 137: 58-60, is a classic statement of modern (i.e., interventionist) Liberalism and is as apropos to America in 2008 as the day it was written—down to justifying the estate tax. As a flaming left-Churchillian, I say, “Bravo, Winston!”

MANFRED WEIDHORN, FAIR LAWN, N.J.

**Editor’s response: Manfred Weidhorn, author of four fine works on Churchill, is the dean of authorities on WSC’s writings, but we always thought Manny was an equal-opportunity contrarian!**

**WHITELAW REID**

Further to my piece on U.S. Ambassador Whitelaw Reid (*FH* 137:11), Reid’s gossipy letters contain other nuggets. The following is from Royal Cortissoz, *The Life of Whitelaw Reid* (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), vol. II, Politics—Diplomacy:

“The ‘enfant terrible’ of the Liberal party, Winston Churchill, received a prodigious amount of attention in the political talk of 1905. Campbell-Bannerman [the new Liberal Prime Minister] who expected to have him in the government, nevertheless spoke to Reid about him with complete frankness, depreciating his lack of judgment and his faculty for vituperation. ‘He told amusing stories,’ Reid wrote to the President [Theodore Roosevelt] ‘about the extraordinary care with which Winston prepares his speeches, commits them to memory and even (as he was said to have told himself) practices them before the mirror in his room. The most curious point of all, perhaps, was that Winston had told him of his preparation for two or three possible interruptions that the other side might make, and of his having carefully written out the appropriate reply for each possibility.’” (312; see also pp. 314-15, 317-18, 401-02)

DAUN VAN EE, HISTORICAL SPECIALIST
MANUSCRIPT DIVISION
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

**BRACKEN ON BRACKEN**

Your editor’s essay (*FH* 137:6) refers to how Churchill rarely publicly acknowledged the role played by close friends such as the “three terrible B’s”: Bracken, Beaverbrook and Birkenhead. A notable exception was in June 1940, shortly after he became Prime Minister, when he named my uncle to the Privy Council. The King demurred, which left Churchill “surprised and not a little disturbed,” but he would not be put off honouring his most faithful follower. As he wrote to the King’s secretary: “Mr Bracken is a Member of Parliament of distinguished standing and exceptional ability. He has sometimes been almost my sole supporter in the years when I have been striving to get this country properly defended, especially from the air. He has suffered, as I have done, every form of official hostility. Had he joined the ranks of the time-servers and careerists who were assuring the public that our air force was larger than that of Germany, I have no doubt that he would long ago have attained high office.” On 7th June 1940 Bracken was sworn in.

BRENDAN BRACKEN, DALKEY, IRELAND

**Editor’s response: Brendan Bracken, author of four fine works on Churchill, is the dean of authorities on WSC’s writings, but we always thought Manny was an equal-opportunity contrarian!**

**PROMISED LAND REVIEW**

I appreciate the very positive comments Ronald Cohen wrote about my book, *Churchill’s Promised Land* (*FH* 137: 49-50), in his review of it and Martin Gilbert’s *Churchill and the Jews*. However, there were several notable omissions and mistakes that I wish to clear up.

Cohen did not convey accurately my main arguments, and overstated my criticism of Churchill, who comes through as a sophisticated and complex statesman focused on Britain’s strategic and imperial interests, and sometimes inevitably on his own political interests. Yet Churchill managed to engage and eventually support the new and unusual cause of Zionism for largely sentimental reasons—civilizational, religious, ideological—and and at times for strategic reasons. Over time he became more pro-Zionist—especially as he viewed Zionism aligning with British interests. Ironically, as Churchill learned more about Zionism, the British establishment became more anti-Zionist, which caused him some political problems.

The Churchill in this story is not as knowledgeable and consistent as he is prescient, imaginative and often gutsy. Indeed, by understanding WSC’s view of Zionism, we get a better understanding of his overall world view.

Cohen wrongly claims that my book is based mainly on secondary instead of primary sources, and that I ignore the anti-Jewish riots in Wales in 1911 (they are on page 66). Finally, I think Cohen should have disclosed in his review that he reviewed Sir Martin’s manuscript before publication, as noted in that book.

Overall, as Cohen notes, “Both books are excellent contributions to the subject,” but he fails to explain that Sir Martin’s and mine have different emphases, approaches and arguments, offer different information, and often come to different conclusions. They both illuminate aspects of Winston Churchill and hopefully enrich the academic field of the greatest statesman of recent times.

DR. MICHAEL MAKOVSKY
FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTOR
BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER, WASHINGTON
Churchill’s Optimism

Churchill’s optimism for humanity was tempered with a conviction that “the genus homo” never changes. The same imperfect being is presented by the advance of science with increasingly potent and dangerous toys: “This vast expansion was unhappily not accompanied by any noticeable advance in the stature of man, either in his mental faculties, or his moral character. His brain got no better, but it buzzed the more.”¹

His splendid essay, “Mass Effects in Modern Life,” took up his concern about the leveling of man to a low common denominator: “Are not modern conditions—at any rate throughout the English-speaking communities—hostile to the development of outstanding personalities and to their influence upon events”?² Churchill wondered.

Would the “moral philosophy and spiritual conceptions of men and nations” hold their own against “formidable scientific evolutions”?³ Was it possible that, in abandoning its theocratic principles, mankind would lose the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and substitute instead a kind of vague, utopian concept of wishful thinking? Churchill worried not so much that those who forget the past are condemned to relive it, but that the loss of the past would mean “the most thoughtless of ages. Everyday headlines and short views.”⁴

In the end Churchill hoped that a merciful Providence would pass “the sponge of oblivion across much that is suffered”: a “blessed dispensation,” through which pain would be forgotten and glory and honor exalted.⁵ Although often pilloried as an extremist by both the Left and Right, Winston Churchill genuinely believed in a “middle road” between the radicals and the reactionaries, the jingoies and the appeasers. He was proud that his country’s constitution was unwritten, that “the English never draw a line without blurring it.”⁶

Sir Martin Gilbert, who, while writing and editing over eight million words about Winston Churchill, has the ability to summarize him in a few lines, captured the essence of the Great Man when he wrote, in his final words of the official biography:

“Churchill was indeed a noble spirit, sustained in his long life by a faith in the capacity of man to live in peace, to seek prosperity, and to ward off threats and dangers by his own exertions. His love of country, his sense of fair play, his hopes for the human race, were matched by formidable powers of work and thought, vision and foresight. His path had often been dogged by controversy, disappointment and abuse, but these had never deflected him from his sense of duty and his faith in the British people.…

“In the last years, when power passed, to be followed by extreme old age with all its infirmity and sadness, Churchill’s children expressed to him in private the feelings which many of his fellow countrymen also felt. In August 1955, four months after the end of his Premiership, his son Randolph wrote to him: ‘Power must pass and vanish. Glory, which is achieved through a just exercise of power—which itself is accumulated by genius, toil, courage and self-sacrifice—alone remains’….From his daughter Mary had come words of equal solace nine years later, when at last his life’s great impulses were fading. ‘In addition to all the feelings a daughter has for a loving, generous father,’ she wrote, “I owe you what every Englishman, woman & child does—Liberty itself.”⁷

—RML

1. WSC, House of Commons, 31 March 1949.
6. WSC, House of Commons, 16 November 1948.
“Winston Churchill, when he came here, by the way—I dug out a quote that I’d like to read to you. He said, ‘Some...regard private enterprise as a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look on it as a cow that they can milk. Only a handful see it for what it really is—the strong and willing horse that pulls the whole cart along.’ I don’t know if he said it right here because we told the White House when Churchill said it: at Woodford Green, Essex, on 29 October 1959. So it goes!

Big Feet, Little Gaffes

Chicago, January 9th—President George W. Bush invoked Churchill here at the Union League: “I did a little research into the history, and it turns out Winston Churchill came here in 1932—right before I was born. When people think of Churchill, of course they marvel at what he managed to do with the English language. When people think of me...” (laughter).

Contacted by the White House.

And there was no reason to suspect he said it right there because we told the White House when Churchill said it: at Woodford Green, Essex, on 29 October 1959. So it goes!

FH’s Deputy Editor

Eleuthera, Bahamas, February 25th—I today received permission from our chairman and executive vice-president to list David A. Turrell, our webmaster, as deputy editor of Finest Hour.

I fully realise that Dave and our web committee are preoccupied with website reconstruction and do not intend to add to his burden at this key time. But I have been thinking about this a long time and there are three reasons for his appointment.

First, it is a natural fit. As editor and webmaster we work hand in glove with material for FH that also goes (perhaps in different form) onto the website. Second, “time, the churl, is running.” Dave Turrell is substantially younger than I am, which is actuarially significant.

Third and most important, Dave has the understanding, panache and ability eventually to become our next editor. He has that all-important quality of sensitivity and judgement to avoid publishing material that is >>
hagiographic, unfair or trivial. His grasp of “the saga” is considerable, and in his role as webmaster it will only increase. He is already an authority on WSC’s books through his own “Savrola” website (www.savrola.co.uk). I hope that our readers will think well of this move, and will come to know Dave as many of us who work with him do already. RML

REMEMBERING DUFF

PRAGUE, NOVEMBER 24TH—

Alfred Duff Cooper, a relative of Britain’s Conservative Party leader David Cameron, who left Neville Chamberlain’s cabinet in 1938 over Munich, was remembered today when the Czech government presented Cameron with a 1940 letter from Duff Cooper to the then Czech Prime Minister, Edvard Benes, exiled in Britain during the Nazi occupation.

Duff Cooper never regretted his resignation: “I believe it would have been better for Britain and Europe, as well as for Czechoslovakia, if we had stood firm instead of surrendering.”

In 1940, Coward was recruited by Sir William Stephenson of British Security Coordination in New York, who asked him to target key American opinion formers. The 43-year-old playwright, who worked in secrecy, was vilified by a furious British press who assumed he was staying in America as a ruse to avoid the war. In a letter to Vansittart dated 21 August 1940, a frustrated but naive Coward wrote: “Would it be possible to tell the State Department the truth, which is that I was sent over by the Ministry of Information to work, with your approval, at gauging various cross sections of American opinion and reporting on it?...I think it would do away with a lot of the false rumour and wild surmise. I am most definitely not over here on personal busin...

Noël Coward was recruited as a spy in 1938. In 1942 Churchill used the excuse of a relatively minor court case to block the title.

Two months earlier Coward had been fined a token £200 for inadvertently breaching wartime currency exchange laws by spending £11,000 on a trip to the USA. On 29 December 1942 Churchill wrote to the King: “I have examined in consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the details of the case against Mr Noël Coward. The Chancellor and Sir Richard Hopkins are contented that it was one of substance and that the conferment of Knighthood upon Mr. Coward so soon afterwards would give rise to unfavourable comment. With considerable personal reluctance I have therefore come to the conclusion that I could not advise Your Majesty to proceed with this proposal on the present occasion.”

Coward was recruited in 1938 by Sir Robert Vansittart, a Foreign Office mandarin, who instructed Coward on a mission to the USA: “Try to get them on to the topic [of Nazi threat] as much as possible and let them rip.”

In 1940, Coward was recruited by Sir William Stephenson of British Security Coordination in New York, who asked him to target key American opinion formers. The 43-year-old playwright, who worked in secrecy, was vilified by a furious British press who assumed he was staying in America as a ruse to avoid the war. In a letter to Vansittart dated 21 August 1940, a frustrated but naive Coward wrote: “Would it be possible to tell the State Department the truth, which is that I was sent over by the Ministry of Information to work, with your approval, at gauging various cross sections of American opinion and reporting on it?...I think it would do away with a lot of the false rumour and wild surmise. I am most definitely not over here on personal busin...

He later wrote: “If I ran away and refused to have anything to do with the war and lived comfortably in Hollywood, as so many of my friends have done, I would be ashamed to the end of my days.” Coward was knighted in 1970 and died three years later.

—CHRIS HASTINGS, DAILY TELEGRAPH

Finest Hour’s opinion:

Such judgments and assumptions that are not warranted by what we know of Churchill and Coward’s relationship, as repeatedly suggested by the literature:

• 8 July 1938, WSC to his wife: “I have not yet lost the impression of that lovely play of Noël Coward’s [Operette] and I am ashamed to say I have not written him as I meant to do.” —Martin Gilbert, ed., Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume 5, Part 3 (London: 1982, 1095).

• August 1941: “Mr. Churchill asked if any officer in the ship had a record of Noël Coward’s ‘Mad Dogs and Englishmen.’ This was produced, and Mr. Churchill proved that he knew the words and the tune.” —H. V. Morton, Atlantic Meeting (London: 1943, 62).

DATELINES

Noël Coward
30 November 1964: WSC "had dinner at 7 p.m. so that he could watch the BBC tribute "Ninety Years On," the star-packed variety show introduced by Noël Coward....He enjoyed the programme immensely...." —Roy Howells, Simply Churchill (London: 1965, 166).

Also incorrect is the notion that Churchill was a homophobe, given his friendships with people like Eddie Marsh. Repeatedly his concern about homosexuals was their susceptibility to blackmail by Britain's enemies.

Sir Martin Gilbert sent us his view of the Churchill-Coward relationship: "Churchill was a friend and admirer of Coward, but breaching of currency regulations—as advised by the Treasury—would always be a barrier to an honour. As you know, we are mired in honours scandals just now. Even so, note that it was a knighthood 'just now' that Churchill advised against—and only 'on the present occasion.' See my volume VII, 1327 on their dinner in May 1945."

Coward himself recalled that evening in his Future Indefinite (London: 1954, 327-28): "The Prime Minister was at his most benign, and suddenly, towards the end of dinner, looking across the table at the man who had carried England through her dark years, I felt an upsurge of gratitude that melted into hero worship. This was a profoundly significant moment in the history of our country; the long, long hoped-for victory was so very near, and the fact that we were in the presence of the man who had contributed so much foresight, courage and genius to winning it struck Juliet [Duff] and Veneta [Stanley] at the same instant that it struck me. Emotion submerged us and without exchanging a word, as simultaneously as though we had carefully rehearsed it, the three of us rose to our feet and drank Mr. Churchill’s health." —RML.

On the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, Garrison Keillor (on U.S. National Public Radio’s “Literary Calendar”) quoted a few lines from the immortal poem “In Flanders Fields,” (FH 121:6) and then criticized the poet, John McRae (FH 137:56) for suggesting that the dead wished the living to “take up the quarrel with the foe.” Bad advice, Keillor said: It is never right to prolong a war (or words to that effect). Mr. Keillor forgets the national aspirations that were met through that conflict, and continue today. From Estonia to Poland and Czechoslovakia, peoples long under the yokes of oppressors were presented for the first time in anyone’s memory with nationhood. We were reminded of this when we fell over Churchill's review of World War I in The Aftermath, vol. IV of The World Crisis (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1929),159: “The war had been fought to make sure that the smallest state should have the power to assert its lawful rights against even the greatest; and this will probably be for several generations an enduring fact.” Thanks to another (cold) war, it is a fact forever.

Mark Kurlansky, reviewing Nicholson Baker’s Human Smoke in The Los Angeles Times, March 9th, said World War II “was a particularly hard sell. Roosevelt and Churchill did it well and their lies have been with us ever since.” He continued with discredited arguments we have all heard before. For example: Kurlansky says everyone who dragged the western world into the war was an anti-Semite: Churchill, Roosevelt, Chamberlain. Even Hitler, apparently. —David Freeman

Terry Reardon of ICS Canada reports a new children’s book, Winston of Churchill, “one bear’s fight against global warming,” for ages 6 and up. Churchill, Manitoba, the polar bear capital of the world, is named after John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough. Winston is a “fierce brave bear” alarmed because the ice is melting in polar bear territory around Hudson’s Bay. He gathers his fellow bears around him and exhorts them with expressions like “We will fight for ice...we shall defend our island,” etc. Mrs. Winston says Winston’s cigar smoking is polluting the air, so he switches to chewing a twig! Details at www.pgcbooks.ca or the author’s website www.jeandaviesokimoto.com.

David Wondrich writes about “the story of the Manhattan [cocktail] being invented for a dinner at the Manhattan Club hosted by Jennie Jerome to celebrate Samuel Tilden’s election etc. etc. About five minutes of Googling will uncover the fact that Tilden was elected in November 1874, when La Jerome was in England, giving birth to Winston Churchill. (In fact, the banquet was held on the day Winston was christened; Jennie Jerome’s only connection with the Manhattan Club was the fact that the Club later moved into a mansion which had once belonged to her father). Contemporary newspaper accounts of the two Manhattan Club banquets held for Tilden’s election make no mention of Jennie Jerome, nor indeed of any woman present—these were strictly stag affairs. And old bar guides, one that we have being originally printed in 1860, list many a Manhattan cocktail.” Mr. Wondrich’s piece is on wiki.webtender.com.
THE TEHERAN PLOT
LONDON, NOVEMBER 29TH— CC Board of Trustees member Celia Sandys is presenting in 2008 a TV documentary, “The Lion and the Bear,” on Anglo-Russian relations. One part is devoted to the Teheran Conference in 1943, and a plot to kill the Big Three, masterminded by Hitler’s favorite saboteur, Otto Skorzeny, the SS operator who temporarily rescued Mussolini in September 1943.

The plot, dubbed “Operation Long Jump” by the Germans, was foiled by Soviet agents including then-19-year-old Georg Vartanian who, during the filming, was asked by Celia Sandys how they had succeeded.

“Six German radio operators had been dropped by parachute into the holy city of Qum and made it to Teheran, where they established radio communication with Berlin,” Vartanian said. “Day and night we scoured the streets. Eventually we found where the group was hiding. From then on we made it to Teheran, where they had succeeded.

“The Nazis decided against sending the main group, led by Skorzeny, to certain death,” he told Celia. “Your grandfather was staying at the British Embassy, where he had security guards. But the U.S. Embassy was on the city’s outskirts and staying there was too risky, so Roosevelt stayed in the Russian Embassy.” (See the Danny Mander story page 20.)

“The street between the Soviet and British Embassies, which were located close to each other, had been sealed off. They stretched a six-metre tarpaulin sheet to make something like a passage, guarded by Soviet and British machine-gunners. All the participants in the Teheran Conference were able to go back and forth safely. According to some information, the Nazis planned to get into the British Embassy through a water supply channel and assassinate Churchill on his birthday, November 30th. But these plans were foiled. I was close enough to see your grandfather, Stalin and Roosevelt. What struck me was their confidence and calmness.

“You must have had a certain amount of luck,” said Ms. Sandys. Vartanian agreed: “Luck is important for many professions, and all the more so for that of an intelligence agent.”

—DAILY TELEGRAPH RUSSIA SUPPLEMENT

WSC AND THE PRESS
LONDON, FEBRUARY 8TH TO MAY 11TH— Churchill Centre and Museum headquarters, the Cabinet War Rooms, is offering an exciting temporary exhibit on WSC as celebrity, from his birth announcement in The Times to his death in 1965. Artifacts include a letter from Winston to his mother detailing his contract to act as a war correspondent for the Morning Post in South Africa, and his letter from the Staats Model School Prison in Pretoria (both from the Churchill Archives Centre).

The General Strike of May 1926 is documented by copies of The British Gazette, edited by Churchill on behalf of the government in the offices of the Morning Post. A section on Churchill the journalist displays his prolific output of articles and his contracts with various newspapers.

Visitors will learn about Churchill’s craving for news during the Second World War. Each morning he would read almost every paper, sometimes even ringing the Daily Mail at midnight to get his news before the papers went to press.

“Churchill and the Press” is accompanied by an impressive array of original newspapers, domestic and foreign, courtesy of John Frost’s Historical Newspaper collection, as well as images from Associated Newspapers and the Imperial War Museum.

The Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, at Clive Steps, King Charles Street (tube station Westminster) are open daily from 9:30am to 6pm, the last admission being at 5pm. Admission costs £12, with children under 16 free and students and senior citizens £9.50. There is no extra charge for the Exhibition.
India 1925-29; and Robert Boothby, Parliamentary Private Secretary to Churchill, 1925-29. Although Brendan Bracken, Harold Macmillan and Alfred Duff Cooper joined Churchill’s “troublesome young men,” this is the earliest list we have seen of these individuals of conscience.

MoD TO SELL WAR OFFICE
LONDON, DECEMBER 26TH— After more than a century’s illustrious service, the Ministry of Defence is planning to sell the Old War Office Building opposite Horse Guards. The Ministry will ask £35 million for the deteriorating but well-located building, standing over underground tunnels that once connected it to some of the most sensitive sites in Whitehall.

The War Office was used by Secretaries of State for War and senior staff officers until the MoD was created in 1964. Churchill was based there between 1919 and 1921. Kitchener and Lloyd George worked there as war minister and munitions minister during the First World War, and T.E. Lawrence was stationed there in 1914, drawing maps of the Middle East based on his travels.

The secret passages and their connections gave pause, and the Ministry of Defence considered selling it to another government department to retain their benefit. But officials decided to put the building on the market while “maintaining the integrity” of the Government Secure Zone of protected Whitehall sites.

ARABELLA CHURCHILL
GLASTONBURY, SOMERSET, DECEMBER 20TH— Sir Winston’s granddaughter died today aged 58—the same age as her father, Randolph Churchill, at his death in 1968. In her twenties, Arabella, daughter of Randolph and the former June Osborne, ran off to join hippies in Glastonbury, where she helped found the local festival. Her son Jake, from her first marriage to Jim Barton, was born on a sheep farm they were running in Wales. Mr. Barton left his wife and son a year later. At the time of her death, Jake Barton was being arrested in Australia on drug charges. Arabella also leaves a daughter Jessica, 19, from her second marriage to Ian “Haggis” McLeod, a juggler fourteen years her junior. R.I.P.

THE SEARCH FOR MARIO
LONDON, FEBRUARY 18TH— A British game company producing “alternate reality” video games is developing a game called “Turning Point: Fall of Liberty,” which imagines what might have happened had Churchill been killed while crossing Fifth Avenue, New York, on 13 December 1931. (“My New York Misadventure,” FH 136:24.) The game producers are trying to find Mario Contasino, the driver of the car involved, or his descendants. So they’ve enlisted genealogists in the United States. There is no record in the U.S. Census, from 1790-1930, of anyone with the last name of Contasino. A search of Ellis Island records only Giuseppe Contasino, who arrived in 1913 at the age of 1. There are no Social Security records that record the death (from about 1960 to present) of anyone named Contasino. So far, it’s a dead end. —THE TIMES

DENTURES’ FINEST HOUR
LONDON, FEBRUARY 20TH— Two letters from 1952 and 1954, to be auctioned by Bonham’s in March, revealed a key ally without whom Sir Winston might have struggled: his dentist.

Throughout his life, Churchill feared that problems with his teeth would affect his public speaking, one of his most powerful attributes. So he relied on Sir Wilfred Fish, the most acclaimed dentist of his generation, to supply him with dentures to deliver his rallying calls. Churchill showed his appreciation in 1954, when he wrote Fish confirming his nomination for a knighthood. Churchill, then 79, also enclosed a set of his false teeth for repair. He wrote: “I am very glad it fell to me to recommend you for a well-deserved honour. I enclose one set of his false teeth to repair. He wrote: “I am very glad it fell to me to recommend you for a well-deserved honour. I enclose one set of his false teeth for repair.”

Churchill’s false teeth, were made to Fish’s specification by >>
Churchill suffered from a pronounced lisp, which later became a trademark that he wanted to preserve with “soft fitting” dentures. His sessions with Sir Wilfred were accompanied by brandy in place of mouthwash, and two cigars. When WSC’s patience wore thin at times of crisis, he would place his thumb against the dentures while he was wearing them and flick them against a wall.

—PAUL BROSTER, DAILY EXPRESS

Glimpses: Marion Davies

The actress and mistress of William Randolph Hearst, Miss Davies entertained Churchill at her Santa Monica home on his California visit in 1929. She offers (unintentionally?) the following hilarious vignette in her posthumous memoirs, The Times We Had: Life with William Randolph Hearst (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975). —JUDITH KAMBESTAD

Churchill was my house guest. He came with [his brother Jack], his son Randolph and Randolph’s cousin John, who liked to play the piano. They arrived in Charlie Schwab’s railroad car, and they stayed at the beach house. MGM gave a big reception for Churchill. He had a sort of lisp, but it didn’t come out over the microphone. He couldn’t figure it out and I can’t figure it out, but a lisp just does not register.

We went to the opening of the Grand Hotel, and afterwards there was a big party at the Roosevelt. I was working then, so I didn’t see much of Churchill. He was a very good house guest because he had so many things to do that he didn’t become a nuisance. And he stayed quite awhile, maybe three or four weeks....He liked his scotch and his cigars. They were what kept him alive...

When we visited England Churchill asked us to come down for the weekend at his home....He had a place outside of London, and he had this huge brick wall which he had built all by himself. And he built a brick garage [cottage -Ed.]. He was quite an artist. He painted apples and oranges and occasionally a bottle of gin or something like that—but very artistically....

He had a big pond with swans, white and black swans. And one day they were fighting. One grabbed the other by the throat and it was horrifying. Churchill was picking up stones and throwing at them. He said, “Oh, you bally bloaters!” One swan was undoubtedly going to kill the other one, but he couldn’t stop it. He kept throwing rocks and stones and I decided that I didn’t want to look any longer. I was chicken-hearted. I went up to the house with his son Randolph, and we sat before the fireplace. It was always cold in England. When he came back he said, “One is dead, naturally.”

I said, “Why do you have swans that fight?” Dumb Dora. Churchill said, “Just show me one that doesn’t fight!” I didn’t know anything about swans; I didn’t even know what the swans know. I only knew Gloria Swanson. 😊
ON ANIMOSITY

“I have always felt that a politician is to be judged by the animosities he excites among his opponents.” Many of us will ruefully recognize and relate to Winston Churchill’s reflection.

In November 1906, Churchill gave this toast to the Institute of Journalists. The laughs were over his references to heavy press criticism of the new Liberal government, of which he was a part. His later reference to The Times Book Club—which produced cheap editions of current books—was likely prompted by his feud with the TBC, which prematurely brought out a cheap edition of Lord Randolph Churchill. (WSC believed a cheap edition would cut into the sales of the standard edition.)

THE PRESS
Winston S. Churchill

I would like to pay a small tribute to the London press, which always says so many kind things about the government (laughter), and can always be relied upon all occasions and in all difficulties to give their unflinching and unstinted support.

Still, even if there were any doubt of the government being sustained at every stage by the exertions of the press, I am inclined to think we might be able to pull through—in a sort of way.

It is astonishing to a public man to notice how keenly sensitive of journalistic criticism is the ordinary private person. Whatever may happen he always desires to keep up appearances in the press.

I heard a story of an American editor who received the following letter from a prominent citizen:

“Dear Sir, I regret to inform you that on my way home from the saloon this evening I fell into a political altercation with Colonel Jonas D. Walker, of this town, in the course of which a slight misunderstanding arose, and I am very sorry to think that in the end I shot him. I should add that, carried away by the excitement of the moment, I also scalped him (laughter). But I earnestly hope that no exaggerated account of this painful episode will appear in the columns of your paper” (laughter).

If any public man in this country had been drawn into such a doubtful action, he would have been haunted by no fears like those which beset the writer. He would know that there were two sides to the question, and that if one section of the press took one view the other section would express the opposite. He would go to bed with the full consciousness of being able to read in the Daily News next morning that another blow had been struck on the side of liberty (laughter) that there had been another exhibition of moral indignation in a righteous cause, and that no great popular movement had been carried to success without occasional acts of violence (more laughter).

The Times, on the other hand, would insist that the perpetrator of the deed should be brought to book—I might almost say brought to the Book Club (laughter). He would be reminded that his methods of conducting political arguments were unworthy of a civilised age and invited to refer to the methods of the manager of the Times Book Club (laughter).

Politicians do well always to pay close attention to anything said about them in the press of a civil nature. This civility is only a mark of the high standard that journalism has reached in this country. For my own part I have always felt that a politician is to be judged by the animosities which he excites among his opponents. I have always set myself not merely to relish but to deserve thoroughly their censure (cheers).

I asked myself whether the power of the press is as great as ever. If considered by the increased output, I would say that the power of the press has increased lately. The machinery of the press grows more and more powerful, but do the writers get more and more powerful? I am inclined to think that journalism is hampered rather than aided by the ever-growing force of its machinery.

The French press is not so wealthy nor so well equipped as the British, but French journalists individually play their part in the political control of their country. There the Chambers are divided between the politicians and the journalists; in England Parliament is controlled by lawyers and Scotsmen (laughter).

In England the individual writer ought to exert a greater influence than is the case at present. The signed article, I think, ought to be a much more prominent feature in British journalism than is the case today.

I gladly propose the toast because the Journalists’ Institute gives journalists a sense of corporate existence, and enables them to be sure that in any great point of principle they will not have to fight single-handed. The Institute has a lofty mission to perform, and exercises a high standard in the manner of performing it (cheers).
125 YEARS AGO:
Spring 1883 • Age 8
“Does not quite understand the meaning of hard work”

Winston was not doing well at St. George’s School, where he ranked eleventh among eleven boys in the Winter term. He moved up to ninth in the spring term only because there were only nine boys in his Division.

The Spring Report showed why: “Does not quite understand the meaning of hard work—must make up his mind to do so next term. Writing good but so terribly slow—Spelling about as bad as it well can be.”

Churchill’s mother would not have been surprised by the spelling report, as evidenced by a letter in early June: “My dear Mamma, I hope you will come and see me soon. Did Everest give you my flour I sent you. Give my love to my ants, and tell not to forget to come down. I am comeing home in a month.”

While Winston’s general performance had “improved,” the number of days he was late increased to nineteen against four the previous term.

100 YEARS AGO:
Spring 1908 • Age 33
“That made a bad impression”

Winston had begun to court the beautiful Clementine Hozier. The match was by no means foreordained. In fact, on the first occasion when Churchill was in Clementine’s company, he did not make a good impression.

Their first meeting had occurred at a dance in 1904, where Churchill lived up to a description of him by his first love Pamela Plowden, who said that the first time you meet him you see all his faults, but “the rest of your life you spend in discovering his virtues.” Winston had noticed Clementine and asked his mother Jennie to introduce them. Years later, Clementine politely recalled to her son that his father “…just stared. He never uttered one word and was very gauche—he never asked me for a dance, he never asked me to have supper with him. I had of course heard a great deal about him, nothing but ill. I had been told he was stuck up, objectionable etc. And on this occasion he just stood and stared.”

Winston met Clementine again at a dinner party in March 1908, in his last days at the Colonial Office. The party was given by Clementine’s great-aunt who, while ostensibly asking her to attend at the last minute because there were only thirteen for dinner, was obviously intent on matchmaking. Churchill was late as usual and was seated between Clementine and the guest of honour, who thought herself an authority on colonial matters and had a low opinion of the Undersecretary for the Colonies. Not surprisingly, Churchill ignored the guest of honour and devoted all his attention to Miss Hozier.

That Churchill fell in love with a girl as beautiful and brilliant as Clementine is no surprise. That he was able to win her love after not one but two inauspicious debuts is a testament to the accuracy of Pamela Plowden’s endearing observation.

75 YEARS AGO:
Spring 1933 • Age 58
“He thinks England is going Fascist”

Hitler had been Chancellor of Germany for less than three months when, on 23 March, the Reichstag passed legislation giving him full dictatorial powers. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald spoke in the House of Commons that same day on his government’s disarmament proposals. Notwithstanding his deep involvement in foreign affairs generally and disarmament specifically, including the naval disarmament treaty of 1930, Mr. MacDonald casually observed that “I cannot pretend that I went through the figures myself.”

Winston Churchill immediately rose to his feet and objected to giving Germany “equality of status” in the forthcoming disarmament conference and to urging
France to disarm:

...when we watch with surprise and distress the tumultuous insurrection of ferocity and war spirit, the pitiless ill-treatment of minorities, the denial of the normal protections of civilized society to large numbers of individuals solely on the ground of race—when we see that occurring in one of the most gifted, learned, scientific and formidable nations in the world, one cannot help feeling glad, that the fierce passions that are raging in Germany have not found, as yet, any other outlet but upon Germans.... As long as France is strong, and Germany is but inadequately armed there is no chance of France being attacked with success, and therefore no obligation will arise under Locarno for us to go to the aid of France.

Churchill then attacked Ramsay MacDonald for the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, declaring it “a solemn and prolonged farce” and that “we have been brought much nearer to war.” Anthony Eden has a reputation as one who opposed appeasement throughout the 1930s. Eventually he did, but not in 1933. He delivered the government’s rebuttal to Churchill, in the course of which he said that to blame MacDonald for the deterioration of international relations was a “fantastic absurdity.”

On 7 April 1933, Hitler ended the autonomous status of the regional German states and made himself Governor of Prussia, ousting his vice-chancellor, Franz von Papen. On 13 April, Jews were banned from national, local and municipal office. Churchill spoke the same day in the House of Commons and once more attacked MacDonald’s disarmament policy:

The rise of Germany to anything like military equality with France, or the rise of Germany or some ally or other to anything like military equality with France, Poland or the small states, means a renewal of a general European war.

What the Prime Minister proposed so recently for the disarmament of Europe seems to move towards German equality in armaments. He is suspected all over the continent of wishing to help Germany at the expense of her neighbours. The other day he spread on the table at Geneva a vast plan for bringing all the armaments down and thus bringing Germany much nearer to equality with her neighbors. He told us an (extraordinary admission) that he had not gone through the figures himself, but he took responsibility for them. It is a very grave responsibility. If ever there was a document upon which its author should have consumed his personal thought and energy it was the immense disarmament proposal. I doubt very much whether even the Committee of Imperial Defence was consulted upon it. We have not been told whether the heads of all our fighting services were consulted upon it. Unknown hands have prepared it and its author tells us that he has not mastered it either in its scope or detail.

Contemporaneously with Hitler’s early months in office, Churchill continued to fight a rear-guard action against the government’s policy of giving dominion status to India. As a consequence, his many enemies in the Conservative Party attacked his motives. Samuel Hoare was in the forefront of those doing so. In one letter in early April, Hoare wrote:

Winston has convinced himself that he will smash the Government sooner or later.....I believe that at the back of his mind he thinks that he will not only smash the Government but that England is going Fascist and that he, or someone like him, will eventually be able to rule India as Mussolini governs north Africa. I believe that he is wrong, but no doubt he sees around him at the moment a good deal of evidence in the break-up European governments that gives colour to his thought.

50 YEARS AGO:

Spring 1958 • Age 83

“A medical marvel”

Churchill had been invited by President Eisenhower to visit the United States in the spring of 1958. He had been ill during March while in France and his wife did not want him to go. She wrote to their daughter Mary:

Papa, for the first time, shows hesitation about going to America... Of course—I hope he won’t go. If he does not make one or two speeches & television appearances, the visit will be a flop as regards the American people who want to see and hear him. Then if he lets himself be persuaded to make public appearances, it will half kill him.

Churchill cancelled his trip and returned to England in April. His illness returned but he had recovered by mid-month. Brendan Bracken wrote to Lord Beaverbrook on 21 April after he visited with WSC:

Our friend Winston is, of course, a medical marvel. He had disregarded all the normal life-lengthening rules and has witnessed, doubtless with regret, but with some complacency, the burial of most of his doctors, save Charles. The sun is Churchill’s greatest life-maintainer and the lack of it has probably played some part in creating his present condition.
My first encounter with William F. Buckley, Jr. was as a college senior in 1963. I had responded to one of his annual appeals, which subscribers to National Review expect as part of their reading matter: his eloquent confession that a journal devoted to capitalism has had, not exactly *ipso facto*, another losing year, and cannot continue without the help of its friends. I said I could not spare a penny to save a publication I simply couldn’t imagine being without. (College campuses in those days were hotbeds of ideas from left to right, not the closed shops so many of them are today.)

“For heaven’s sake don’t apologize,” Bill Buckley shot back personally, to my surprise and delight. “It is enough to know you are with us.”

Later I had the pleasure to be published twice in National Review, first with a 1980 story about how to save the Detroit auto industry. Mr. Buckley sent another note: “Nice going, hope the President takes it in.” Of course Mr. Reagan was a subscriber, and he took it in, and the auto industry was saved. Next I wrote about Latvia, “The Once and Future Republic,” speculating on a rebirth of Baltic nationhood “in the event of some unforeseen future breakdown of the Soviet Union.” It isn’t what they pay at National Review, but the unerring way they make good your predictions.

And with Bill Buckley I’ve largely been ever since, always with immense admiration for his ability with words, which is equally what attracts so many to Winston Churchill. If Churchill snared us with what Robert Pilpel called “roast beef and pewter phrases,” Buckley galvanized us with his sheer breadth of interest, from Rosalind Tureck’s Bach recitals to running as a Conservative for Mayor of New York, from sextant navigation to skiing the Alps with David Niven, from serving as a United Nations diplomat to diving two and a half miles down to visit the Titanic. And he delivered this fusillade of experience using all the words in Mr. Webster’s dictionary.

He had a Churchillian characteristic rare in
politics today: collegiality toward the opposition. In 1975, when Bill Buckley first sailed the Atlantic, The New York Times reported that he had arrived in the Azores “accompanied by John Kenneth Galbraith, celebrating his retirement from the Harvard faculty.” Bill immediately wrote to the Times: “The Galbraith on board was not my friend, the six-foot 11-inch emaciated Menshevik, John Kenneth, but my friend, the chunky, five-foot 11-inch Manchesterist, Evan; and anyway, surely it was Harvard, not Professor Galbraith, that had reason to celebrate.”

John Kenneth Galbraith had meanwhile written the Times: “William F. Buckley, Jr. was boasting as usual when he told you that I’d sailed to the Azores as a member of his crew. He is not that brave; nor, may I say, am I.” Later, Galbraith read Buckley’s account of the voyage which, he wrote, “takes me to sea, makes me part of the whole adventure. Mr. Buckley should give up politics and concentrate on writing. He cannot afford to have serious people think he is a failed politician when he is a master of a higher craft.”

The Churchill Centre’s great trifecta, in 1995, was bringing William Buckley, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and William Manchester to the same conference in Boston. Each of them provided us with special moments. I will never forget Bill Manchester, old and ailing, astonished and in tears when an audience of 400 rose as one to applaud the author of The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill; or Arthur Schlesinger, the great historian, referring to Sir Winston as “history’s impresario...the largest human being of our time.” But most of all I remember Bill Buckley’s speech.

He began by recalling his coverage, as editor of the Yale Daily News, of Churchill’s famous “Mid-Century” oration at M.I.T. in 1949. Then he tracked Churchill’s bittersweet postwar political career. I thought his speech ordinary at the time, only to realize later, readying it for publication, how exquisitely crafted a tribute it was, and how generous to Winston Churchill—for Bill had never really warmed to Churchill, had called him a “peacetime catastrophe.” And yet he gave us words that will live forever in our annals:

Five Letters: RML and WFB

A few wisps of correspondence on matters Churchill, which are perhaps more precious to the editor now that there will be no more. Readers will be amused to note the relative economy of words by WFB compared to the waterfall of words by...

December 1995

A hasty note, which however you won’t get for awhile since I’m at the sea, but its purpose is to thank you for your extraordinary courtesies at Boston. You could not have been more thoughtful, kinder, more generous, and if I performed anything for you or Mr. Churchill, that’s only a poor contribution in an attempt at requital. Warmest, Bill

June 1996

Can you tell me the term for the debate strategy in which the debater muddies up the waters with a side issue while avoiding the main issue, on which he is on weak ground? As Andrew Roberts reports in our next issue, David Irving’s second Churchill volume claims that the present Queen Mother supported Hitler’s “peace offer” in June 1940 and that the proof is to be found in Box Number 23 of Lord Monkton’s papers at the Bodleian. But the Bodleian says Irving has never seen the box, let alone opened it—which obfuscates the simple fact that the Queen Mum, like most of the Establishment, had no initial confidence in Churchill; so it’s not exactly earthshaking that she once entertained the notion of “scuttling,” as Churchill put it. Thus, whatever the Queen Mother thought is inconsequential; and whatever is in the mysterious box can hardly be profound.

I have taken National Review Online to task for a statement that Churchill let Coventry burn in 1940 rather than reveal his access to the “Ultra” decrypts. If you’ve not read this, see Peter McIver, “Winston Churchill and the Bombing of Coventry” on our website. Regards, Richard

Glad to have that Coventry story, nicely handled by Mr. McIver. The first part of your query suggests we’re talking about ignoratio elenchi, refuting a different point while ignoring the primary point. Does that do it? Advise. XX WFB.
Mr. Churchill had struggled to diminish totalitarian rule in Europe which, however, increased. He fought to save the Empire, which dissolved. He fought socialism, which prevailed. He struggled to defeat Hitler, and he won. It is not, I think, the significance of that victory, mighty and glorious though it was, that causes the name of Churchill to make the blood run a little faster...it is the roar that we hear, when we pronounce his name. It is simply mistaken that battles are necessarily more important than the words that summon men to arms. The battle of Agincourt was long forgotten as a geopolitical event, but the words of Henry V, with Shakespeare to recall them, are imperishable in the mind, even as which side won the battle of Gettysburg will dim from the memory of those who will never forget the words spoken about that battle by Abraham Lincoln. The genius of Churchill was his union of affinities of the heart and of the mind, the total fusion of animal and spiritual energy...It is my proposal that Winston Churchill’s words were indispensable to the benediction of that hour, which we hail here tonight, as we hail the memory of the man who spoke them; as we come together, to praise a famous man.

Above all, he was so nice! Riding to the hotel, I asked if there was any Churchill fact he needed that might have eluded him. “Ah, do you know when he was born?” Bill winked. After his speech we fired questions, as at National Press Club luncheons: “If you could have Churchill to yourself for an evening, what would you say to him?” WFB replied: “I would say, ‘Please talk non-stop.’”

We come together to praise a famous man, each from our station, each with our memories. Thanks to Bill Buckley, I got into my bones the essential structure of a fund appeal; I’ve lost track of the times I’ve used his National Review subscription tally: “the combined circulation of Finest Hour and the Reader’s Digest is twenty million copies.” Thanks to him, I ventured beyond lake sailing into the Atlantic. Thanks to him, I know what Che Guevara, Barry Goldwater and Whittaker Chambers were really like. Thanks to him, I know how to essay an obituary, for his touch on these was a model. Thanks to him I developed an appreciation for Bach, especially on a harpsichord. Thanks to him, and Sir Winston, I’ve seen the heights to which the English language can rise. Thanks to him, I know what I owe my country.

“For every thing there is a season.” Among his friends there seemed a resignation that it was time for him to go. Just weeks ago he penned his farewell to his best friend, Evan Galbraith; last year he mourned the loss of his wife, wondering what was left that made life worth living. Bill married his wife Pat the same day in 1950 that Elizabeth Taylor married the first of eight husbands. He was always proud of that.

**Five Letters continued...**

October 1999

A Churchill Centre member and mutual friend of ours writes angrily over your 24 September column, saying your view of World War II is “intellectually and viscerally very close to Pat Buchanan’s.” Why, he says, you’ve written that “if Hitler had got to Moscow it might have been better for us.” I replied that (a) you didn’t say that and (b) I don’t find legitimate speculation about alternate outcomes of the war outrageous.

But my quibble is with your statement that, had Hitler conquered Moscow, things “could have been worse.” Surely, in an all-out battle between Hitler and Stalin, absent Britain and America, Hitler would have won. Maybe not in 1942, but eventually. That would be good? With the Anglo-Americans neutralized or uninvolved, and with the resources of the Caucasus and Ukraine—which, remember, Hitler didn’t lose immediately after Stalingrad—would we not have faced a Nazified Europe and a nuclear Third Reich? Hitler wasn’t that far away from the bomb, and his rocket scientists were working on means to deliver it. We saw what the V-2 did to London, even in his final months.

A friendly academic wrote me recently: “Personally I get a little bored repeatedly recording this, but there’s something wrong with the notion that if Hitler had been free to concentrate on Stalin, both of them would have wound up dead.” —Kindest, RML

My thought has always been that Nazism had absolutely no eschatology, and would wither on the vine. Only the life of Hitler kept it going, and I can’t imagine he’d have lasted very long. The Communists hung in there for forty-six years. —Warmest ever, WFB
Did FDR call him a “stinker”?  

Q: What is the source of Roosevelt’s description of his first meeting with Churchill, in July 1918 at Gray’s Inn, when he thought him a show-off and a “stinker”? —Andrew Roberts


Beschloss had special access to the Joseph Kennedy papers, and seems the first to publish the “stinker” remark. Daun van Ee (Library of Congress) reports a slightly different version in Amanda Smith, ed., Hostage to Fortune: The Letters of Joseph P. Kennedy (2001, 411): A diary entry for 28 March 1940 quotes FDR as saying: “I always disliked him [Churchill] since the time I went to England in 1917 or 1918. At a dinner I attended he acted like a stinker.” Smith’s “editor’s note” (xxxiv) mentions various versions of her source texts, but gives no indication that this text was altered.

Is Kennedy’s recollection plausible? Would Roosevelt have used the word “stinker”? Yes. It sounds like him. He seems to have sunk to today’s level of four letter words only rarely. (His mother, a formidable woman, surely forbade vulgar language.) He threw out the occasional “damn,” and used “son of a bitch” at least once in, ironically, a reference to Joe Kennedy! (As in, to Eleanor Roosevelt, “I never want to see that son of a bitch again...”—also taken from Beschloss.)

—WARREN F. KIMBALL

Atlantic Star  

Q: I am at a loss as to why Churchill did not receive the Atlantic Star. From my research of details of the award of the war service medals and campaign medals for World War II, and the qualifications required, it would appear that the length of time Sir Winston spent on Royal Navy battleships when he crossed the Atlantic, or flew back across the Atlantic battle zone, he would have qualified for the medal in question.

—REGINALD G. BEINT

A: The Atlantic Star was awarded in the Royal Navy for six months’ service afloat in the Atlantic or home waters between 3 September 1939 and 8 May 1945, and to personnel employed in convoys to North Russia and the South Atlantic. Personnel must first have qualified for the 1939-1945 Star, with the qualifying time for this not counting toward the Atlantic Star. The same requirements applied to the Merchant Navy. There were separate requirements for RAF air crew and Army gunners who served afloat, which would not apply to Churchill. Winston Churchill did not meet these requirements.

One further comment by Paul Courtenay: One could not have both the Atlantic and the France and Germany Stars; it was one or the other. If you qualified for both, you were given the one you earned first, to which was attached a clasp for the second award stating “Atlantic” or “France and Germany,” denoting the entitlement which did not bring you a further star; when the medal itself was not worn, the clasp was represented by a rosette on the ribbon. Had WSC qualified for the Atlantic Star, he would have earned a clasp, but not an extra medal.

—DOUGLAS S. RUSSELL (AUTHOR OF THE ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS OF SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL)

Army Terminology

Q: Please explain the differences in the British army terms “commissioned, seconded, gazetted,” which are often applied to Churchill without explanation.

A: An officer is commissioned into a particular regiment or corps; this is a formal status, accompanied by a document signed by the Queen (in facsimile these days). So you don’t receive a fresh commission every time you are posted from A to B. Receipt of a commission is published in the London Gazette, hence “gazetted.”

Once you have your commission, you are frequently sent to jobs outside your regiment (perhaps to a headquarters staff or a training depot as an instructor or to a specialisation, e.g., linguist, parachutist, military attaché, etc.). You remain a member of your own regiment or corps and receive a posting to and from your assignment.

Sometimes you volunteer (or are invited) to fill a vacancy in another similar regiment; in this case you would be attached (sometimes called “seconded”) for a temporary period. Sometimes this might become permanent—if it suits all three parties—in which case your transfer would be gazetted. —PHC

Never Despair

Q: Recently without warning, I was slandered by a colleague who then resigned, denouncing all of us and leaving a mess for his successors to clean up. Can you please recommend the most appropriate Churchill quotation for such a situation.

A: “The spectacle of a number of middle-aged gentlemen who are my political opponents being in a state of uproar and fury is really quite exhilarating to me.”

—HOUSE OF COMMONS, 21 MAY 1952
Danny Mander was born in Lancashire to a Scottish mother and English father in 1917, and after school became a journeyman engraver. In 1939 he volunteered for the Military Police, and attended the Police College in March 1940. He was discharged in April 1946 and later emigrated to the United States. Now 91, Danny is an active real estate broker in California, where he is regularly taken for thirty years younger. He is living testimony to the late Alistair Cooke’s vow that he would never retire, “because I’ve observed that my friends who retire immediately keel over.” Danny and his wife Heather live in Sacramento.

Present at the Creation: Danny Mander Guarding the P.M. at Teheran, 1942-43

At the 2006 Churchill Conference, an engaging Lancashire man held the audience spellbound recounting his experiences with the Military Police in Teheran in 1942-43, where he twice guarded Churchill—the second time at the critical conference which began to create the postwar world.

AN INTERVIEW WITH SUSAN KIDDER

Susan Kidder: How did you get to Teheran?

Danny Mander: In June 1942 I was posted to Teheran to ferret out German spies. With Iranian agreement, German “occupational plants” had been sent there in 1937-38, hoping to be absorbed into the Iranian community by the time Hitler got through Russia, easing his access to Iranian oil fields. As managers of newspapers, railways, local industry, even the branch of a police station, they were experts in their fields and had learned the language well. Fortunately, our own secret branch of the Intelligence Corps, the Field Security Police, were nondescript types who merged into the community and were quickly able to identify the culprits. One by one they were arrested at pistol point, and taken to a wing of an Iranian jail allotted to us for our questioning. We treated them humanely but questioned them closely, and when we had learned enough we put them on a train to Basra, Iraq. From here they were sent by boat to India for safekeeping until the end of the war.

Taking our prisoners to the railway station was the most dangerous time. “Relatives” would appear to bid them good-bye, trying to pass them guns, knives and cut-throat type razors....It was hazardous work, and the only advice we had was to be careful.

Susan Kidder is a recent transplant from New England to Wisconsin, and founder of the Winston Churchill book group of Wisconsin. WSC was Susan’s inspiration since middle school years: “I learned the power of the spoken word, which I used to disarm my verbal tormenters!”
Their fate in India was far better than Allied soldiers in German camps. I always found Indian Army soldiers to be friendly and hospitable. But without the Field Security Police of the British army, we could never have achieved such intelligence success—and it was all done without a shot being fired.

SK: Were these agents dedicated Nazis?

DM: Hard to tell. There were no Nazi salutes or Heil Hitlers. They were clearly middle class and well educated. Had Hitler won, they would have enjoyed a comfortable life with more freedom than in Germany. They had come to Iran with few regrets, and as the war progressed I am sure they felt they had chosen right. They behaved well under the circumstances, not like desperately oppressed people, not like dedicated Nazis.

SK: Your next job, I gather from your tapes, was creating a route between Teheran and Sheba, 30 miles northwest of Basra, as a supply route to Russia—part of Lend-Lease aid to the Soviets. This was all behind-the-scenes work, very important but sometimes missed in the history books.

DM: You would be amazed at what Lend-Lease entailed that the American public never knew about. I set off with three other policemen, a Jeep and a pick-up truck, bedding in a tent so as not to waste any time packing and repacking. Experts from the Royal Engineers rode with us, checking every bridge over the dried-up stream beds (which became raging torrents in the wet season). My job was to read the poor quality maps and try to keep us on the dirt and gravel roads. We went from sea level to three or four thousand feet, where there was snow; then down to the terrific heat of the sandy plains, then up to the 3000-foot Teheran plateau.

I could not remember how long it took to do this survey—until the time I saw convoys traveling this route to Russia after I had been moved from Teheran to Ahwaz in early 1944. This was a forsaken place on the River Karun, which empties into the Persian Gulf—hot and filthy, with lots of malaria. We took precautions against malaria, but we caught sandfly fever instead.

At Ahwaz I finally saw the results of my outing with the Royal Engineers. Convoys were rolling from Basra with cargoes from America, Britain and Canada, where we’d put them on trains for Teheran. The railway was built before the war by a consortium of British, Dutch and German engineers; it winds up and around huge mountains, and on the top you can look back and see six or seven stations in the distance. There are also scores of tunnels. I’d never heard of this monumental undertaking until I saw it. Its builders were proud of it, as they had a right to be.

Moving military material to Russia was a phenomenal achievement. Americans never knew the extent of Lend-Lease—and it was all for free. I am sure the Russians never paid a bean, although I read not too long ago that Britain paid off its last Lend-Lease loans to the United States in 2006.

My job in Ahwaz was to administer security checkpoints. In August 1942, I was ordered to organize security for an upscale conference of “senior officials”—British American, Russian and Iranian. By now, Iran had decided to ditch Germany and to be on our side. This showpiece meeting was at an old chateau on large grounds, the like of which I hadn’t known existed in Ahwaz. It was like a king’s palace.

The participants assembled. As each general stepped out of his car he was given a raffle-type ticket to reclaim it. He would then walk into the garden, where he was smartly saluted by three lance corporals (British, Russian, American), with fixed bayonets. Farther on he was saluted by three corporals, then three sergeants. As they dined, it was interesting to see the British and Americans stack their arms in a corner, while the Russians sat with their rifles between their knees!

Making conversation, I asked what happened to the Lend-Lease Studebaker trucks, laden with arms and medical supplies, that we had sent on the railway cars to Russia. The Russians replied that they were in storage. So I asked, “Why aren’t they being used?” They replied: “We are saving them to fight the Americans.” Quite a straight answer—and with venom to go with it.
PRESENT AT THE CREATION...

SK: In August 1942 you first encountered Churchill, who flew in from Cairo, where he had just installed Alexander and Montgomery in the Middle East Command. How did you come to be assigned?

DM: I was thoroughly vetted. A sergeant-major cross-examined me on everything: schooldays, religion, church attendance, first job, social activities, sports (football, cricket, running). Was I a non-smoker and non-drinker? Yes. “Right,” he said, “report at 5AM tomorrow morning, and bring a comrade you can trust.” I chose Charlie Oakenful.

The next morning we drove out to a disused airfield named “Qualy Morguey” (area of wild rabbits). Other cars began to arrive, loaded with foreigners: Russians, Persian generals, American brass. We had no inkling of what was about to take place.

Sometime after 6 am an American plane the size of a jet liner touched down and taxied to where we were all assembled. A side door opened and a rather rotund figure appeared, wearing a siren suit and a large cigar. There was no doubt who he was.

The brass made a receiving line and Winston Churchill was introduced to each “victim.” Charlie and I were at the end, and realized we were not part of the “high echelon.” So, as he got to me, I stepped out of line, saluted him (which he returned) and opened the car door for him to enter. He smiled and muttered, “Thank-you, corporal.” We were off and running on a “harmonious friendship”!

At the British Legation in Teheran, the kitchen staff had breakfast ready, despite the early hour. Charlie and I took turns walking around the building, mainly guarding the rear access. I called for more help at the front, where locals were gathering, realizing something was up; it would have been easy for a terrorist to mix with them and get inside. I will never forget the “breakfast dessert,” which we shared: peaches with their stones removed, filled with liquid chocolate, cream on top, and the slice preciously cut replaced at jaunty angle in the cream. Having spent two years in the UK when no fruit was imported, it was wonderful to see such luscious peaches. They tasted as good as they looked.

Mr. Churchill always noticed and talked to people allocated to serve and guard him. Jokingly, he invited me to join him in the pool. Of course he knew that as a bodyguard I could not do so, and he laughed when I had to refuse. In short, he behaved as a normal person—not at all stand-offish.

Rather than return to Teheran, the Prime Minister decided to stay overnight at this cooler altitude, so Charlie and I were on continual duty all night long. The next morning, astride the motorcycles again, we escorted the PM to the “airport,” and he flew off to visit Stalin in Moscow.

SK: What were your impressions of the “Big Three” at the November 1943 “summit conference”?

DM: It was a fraught time for Churchill, and he dictated to stenographers non-stop when returning to his room after a session with Stalin and Roosevelt. This I admired, for he always returned fresh as a daisy inside and out, ready to face another grueling meeting. It is a lesson anyone in such an important position should learn.

He never went to a social event without emptying his mind of all that had transpired at the plenary sessions beforehand. This also impressed me. It made such a difference to his attitude as he went off to his next meeting, usually of a very different calibre to the last. How wonderful he must have felt to be fresh every time in mind and spirit. It was a great trait.
When we took Churchill to the Russian Embassy, the OGPU (Soviet secret police) were trying to hide behind every tree on the great lawn. It seemed very silly, because we all could see them. It was very different from the security we were trained to provide. We never used large numbers of men; but we placed them far more strategically.

The only time I saw the PM the worse for alcohol was when I helped him walk back to our legation after one of those long dinners with the Russians. It was a fine, clear night and he and Eden chose to walk rather than ride in the limousine. They were still on their feet—just. I put my arm within his to hold him steady and had a corporal do the same for Mr. Eden. Thus they continued straight and upright to the British consulate, talking together (but not carousing!) in proper British fashion.

November 30th was Churchill’s 69th birthday and his turn to host dinner at the British Legation. The Russians were uncooperative on security and trusted no one. The Americans were the opposite, entrusting Roosevelt to our own police.

Roosevelt could not use the stone steps at the front door, so carpenters had made a ramp up to the rear kitchen door, which was situated along a narrow alley. His car drove up, and his driver pulled a folding wheelchair from the boot. As he unfolded it I lifted FDR from his car into the chair. I was impressed by his size, his large head and massive chest. From the waist up he was a great looking man, but his buttocks and legs were wasted away from polio. As he was being pushed up the ramp to the kitchen door, Churchill welcomed him inside.

Stalin was a different kettle of fish. He drank multiple toasts but with very small glasses, and always remained firmly sober. I remember him arriving at the circular drive around a lily pond at the bottom of the Legation steps. A corporal who sprang to open the car door for him had to use two hands: It contained heavy panels of bullet-proof steel. As Stalin stepped out, a surge of Russian officers from the cars following behind rushed up to enclose him totally, so no one else could get near. It was all done quickly. I remarked at the time that the only person who could put a knife in Stalin’s back were his own officers.

**SK:** What was your relation with Detective-Sergeant Thompson, Churchill’s bodyguard?

**DM:** When I learned that a film was being made about him I wrote to the BBC offering information about the Teheran Conference, but I never heard from anyone. I liked Thompson and got on well with him on Churchill’s visits. We talked a lot, and I gave him the benefit of my local knowledge.

Walter always made the decision as to where in a car Churchill would sit, and he was the man in the PM’s room. Legation security was left to the Military Police, helped by infantry guards inside and outside the walls. The units chosen were ones Churchill had been associated with in his early military life. I was never regarded as working for Walter Thompson; my job was security as a whole. Wherever the PM landed was the jurisdiction of the British military, and Walter was off-duty except within the quarters where Churchill slept.

I have been a regular member of the Churchill Centre for many years, and have visited Blenheim Palace and Bladon churchyard in England. When we were in the church no one else was there, and my wife Heather asked me to play “Amazing Grace” on the organ. No way, I replied; Sir Winston’s favorite was “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” I played at full blast. We were both thrilled to hear it in his own backyard. I trust he heard it loud and clear.

I have ad-libbed these words, not referring to my CD or my notes. It certainly brings back many memories of those years. The magnitude of it all was and still is in my mind astonishing. I can hardly believe it ever happened.
Charles André Joseph Marie de Gaulle was born on 22 November 1890 in Lille, France. He graduated from the French military academy in 1912, was wounded three times in World War I, and spent thirty months as a prisoner of war, making repeated but unsuccessful escape attempts.

The interwar years saw de Gaulle make rapid strides in the army thanks to a mentor, Marshal Philippe Pétain, head of the French army. Pétain brought de Gaulle into his inner circle in 1925 and after two years as a battalion commander de Gaulle was promoted to the secretariat of the Council Superior of National Defence, where he was involved in a planning capacity from 1932 to 1937. His criticisms of the Army’s lack of new ideas, such as tank brigades, were frostily received by the High Command, which was committed to the illusory and incomplete Maginot Line.1

One high-profile member of the French Parliament, Paul Reynaud, agreed with de Gaulle’s concerns, and de Gaulle bombarded him with sixty-two letters over the next four years. Reynaud became Prime Minister in March 1940, and in May promoted Major de Gaulle to temporary General, commanding a tank division. Summoned back to Paris, he was given the position of Under Secretary of State, over the objections of Pétain and French Army head General Maxime Weygand.2

On 9 June 1940, with France reeling under the German assault, Reynaud sent de Gaulle to London to request more assistance from the British Air Force. Of his first meeting with Churchill at Downing Street de Gaulle later wrote: “Mr. Churchill seemed to me to be equal to the rudest task, provided it also had grandeur...The humour, too, with which he seasoned his acts and words, and the way in which he made use, now of graciousness, now of anger, contributed to make one feel what mastery he had of the terrible game in which he was engaged.”3

Churchill flew to France four times in May and June, trying to bolster the French leadership. De Gaulle supported the British War Cabinet’s offer of “indissoluble union” between the two nations, transmitted to Reynaud on 16 June, together with Churchill’s proposal to meet Reynaud in Brittany the next day. But the French Council, led by Weygand and Pétain, was hostile to the proposal, saying that “in three weeks England will have her neck rung like a chicken.” A union with Britain, Pétain added, would be “fusion with a corpse.”5

With the collapse of France, and the formation of a quiescent if not collaborationist government at Vichy, the only member of the Government who decided to carry on the fight from England, who thus became the spokesman for free France, was Charles de Gaulle.

In mid-June de Gaulle obtained Churchill’s permission to use the BBC to broadcast an appeal of resistance to his countrymen. “France does not stand alone,” he said. “Behind her is a vast empire
and she can make common cause with the British Empire which commands the seas and is continuing the struggle....The flame of French resistance must not and shall not die.”

Reynaud had now resigned and his successor Pétain sought an armistice with Hitler, whose terms prescribed that the French Fleet “shall be collected in ports to be specified and there demobilised and disarmed under German or Italian control.” Although the German government had solemnly declared that it had no intention of using the French fleet, this was not believed by the British War Cabinet. Thus the Cabinet took in Churchill’s words “a hateful decision, the most unnatural and painful in which I have ever been concerned....But no act was ever more necessary for the life of Britain and for all that depended upon it.” The British action on 3 July focused on the French fleet in Mers-el-Kebir and Oran in North Africa.

The French fleet was given several options: joining the British fleet in the war, sailing to a French port such as Martinique for demilitarization, or scuttling. With no satisfactory response, the Royal Navy commenced hostilities and the bulk of the fleet was sunk or disabled.

De Gaulle was not informed of the action until it had commenced and his initial reaction was anger, but when General Spears, British Liaison Officer to the former French government, met with him two days later, he found de Gaulle “astonishingly objective.” On 8 July de Gaulle broadcast to France: “…the government at Bordeaux had agreed to place our ships at the enemy’s discretion....one day the enemy would have used them against England or against our own empire. Well, I say without hesitation that it is better they should have been destroyed....Our two ancient nations, our two great nations, remain bound to one another. They will either go down both together or both together they will win.”

On 24 August 1940 Churchill spoke in the House of Commons “Our old comradeship with France is not at an end. In General de Gaulle and his gallant band that comradeship takes an effective form. These Free Frenchmen have been condemned to death by Vichy, but the day will come, as surely as the sun will rise tomorrow, when their names will be held in honour, and their names will be graven in stones in the streets and villages of a France restored in a liberated Europe, to its full freedom and its ancient fame.”

Dakar, the capital of the French colony of Senegal, was controlled by Vichy, and Churchill pressured the British Chiefs of Staff to mount an operation with the Free French to take the port, which would be useful as a base in the battle of the Atlantic. The attack, between 23 and 25 September 1940, was a disaster, with Vichy forces mounting a strong defence. Vichy and German propaganda took advantage of their victory, and the British and American press were also highly critical.

While Dakar did not diminish Churchill’s confidence in de Gaulle, their relationship rapidly deteriorated. Although in late 1940 de Gaulle’s forces consisted of an army of 140 officers and 2109 men, and a navy of 120 officers and 1746 ratings, his attitude and deportment were those of a major player in the war.

In November 1940, without advising Churchill or the British Government, de Gaulle announced an Empire Defence Council, with the wording of the manifesto reading like a declaration of war on Vichy. He included an unrealistic and >>
The next few months saw many incidents of anti-British actions and comments by de Gaulle, but in June 1941 came a serious disruption. Two countries in the Levant, Syria and Lebanon, had been mandated to France after World War I, and after the armistice were governed by Vichy. In June 1941 an allied force of mainly Free French troops commenced an offensive, and in July Vichy asked for a cease-fire and an armistice. De Gaulle laid down his arms if you could let him see the gulf on the edge of

Beside himself with rage, de Gaulle vented his anger on General Spears and the British Minister of State in the Middle East, Oliver Lyttelton, who in his memoirs admitted that the Free French should have been consulted. Lyttelton wired Churchill that “de Gaulle worked himself into a state of bitter hostility to everything English” and “was rude and offensive.”

Churchill replied: “I am sorry you are having all this trouble with de Gaulle...It might be well if you could let him see the gulf on the edge of which he is disporting himself.” Churchill also telegraphed de Gaulle suggesting he return to England in order that he may discuss with you personally the difficulties which have arisen.”

De Gaulle ignored the suggestion. When on 27 August 1941 a reporter for the Chicago Daily News asked him why Britain had not formally recognized the Free French as a government-in-exile, he replied: “England is carrying on a wartime deal with Hitler in which Vichy serves as a go-between. Vichy serves Hitler by keeping the French people in subjection and selling the French Empire piecemeal. Vichy serves Hitler by keeping the French people in subjection and selling the French Empire piecemeal. Vichy is exploiting Vichy in the same way as Germany; the only difference is in her purposes. What happens in effect is an exchange of advantages between hostile powers which keeps the Vichy Government alive as long as both Britain and Germany agree it should exist.”

Realizing he had gone too far, de Gaulle tried to stop the publication, and after this failed, claimed he had been misinterpreted. He finally returned to London on 1 September; but the day before, Churchill had issued a directive that no person in authority was to see him, and that “he is to stew in his own juice.”

On 12 September de Gaulle met with Churchill, who was determined to put him in his place. Churchill informed his private secretary, John Colville, that he would speak only through an interpreter (see James Lancaster’s following article).

“An hour slipped away and I began to fear violence,” Colville wrote. “I had decided it was my duty to burst in, perhaps with a bogus message...I went in to find the two of them sitting side by side with amiable expressions on their faces. De Gaulle, no doubt for tactical purposes, was smoking one of the Prime Minister’s cigars...The Entente was Cordiale again, at least temporarily.”

On 7 December 1941 the United States entered the war. Roosevelt had been supportive of Vichy and Marshal Pétain, and negative toward the Free French, especially its erratic and explosive leader. The invasion of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon on 24 December 1941 (FH 136: 18-22) reinforced the U.S. government’s disdain for de Gaulle, which continued throughout the war.

In 1942 things didn’t get any better. In May, British forces landed on the Vichy-controlled island of Madagascar without Free French participation or any warning to de Gaulle. The general, again furious, cabled his commanders in Africa and the Levant, stating that they must have no relations with the invaders. De Gaulle backed off after another meeting with Churchill, but he was soon again to be out of step with “Les Anglo-Saxons.”

“Torch,” the invasion of North Africa, was set to commence in November 1942. Churchill had written to Roosevelt stating his intention to advise de Gaulle the day before the landing; but Roosevelt demanded that he not be told until after a successful landing. When eventually informed, de Gaulle roared: “I hope the Vichy people will fling them into the sea! You don’t get France by burglary!”

Again, however, de Gaulle calmed down, and at lunch at Chequers that same day he politely listened while Churchill explained the reasons for the secrecy. But de Gaulle interpreted this as stemming from the pro-Vichy American stance.

De Gaulle further entrenched the American negative opinion when he refused to fly to Casablanca in January 1943 to discuss power sharing with French General Henri Giraud, who had recently escaped from a German prison. His attitude was that this was purely a French affair.

The Americans, of course, were certain that Giraud was a better bet than de Gaulle, but with Churchill expressing the opposite opinion, they agreed to a sharing of power. Roosevelt cabled WSC: “We’ll call Giraud the bridegroom, and I’ll produce him from Algiers, and you have the bride, de Gaulle, down from London, and we’ll have a shotgun wedding.”

The President, somewhat perversely enjoying Churchill’s discomfort, cabled to Secretary of State Cordell Hull: “We delivered our bridegroom, General Giraud, who was most cooperative on the
impending marriage, and I am sure was ready to go through with it on our terms. However our friends could not produce the bride, the temperamental Lady de Gaulle.”

Ultimately, under pressure from his Free French National Committee, de Gaulle relented and arrived in Casablanca on 22 January; he and Giraud could not agree, but they did issue a statement on their mutual objective: the liberation of France. De Gaulle’s stubbornness left Churchill “in a white fury” according to Robert Murphy, American representative in Algiers. However, at the request of Roosevelt, de Gaulle did agree to shake hands with Giraud for the benefit of the cameramen, and the photographs received a wide circulation.

When Churchill and de Gaulle arrived back in England, Churchill gave orders that “the monster of Hampstead” (where de Gaulle lived) was not to be allowed to leave the country and stir up trouble abroad. The two did not meet again until 2 April 1943. De Gaulle began by saying that he was a prisoner and would be sent to the enemy alien prison on the Isle of Man (which he pronounced “eel-o-mon”). Churchill responded, “No, you are very distinguished, and so would go to the Tower of London!” But WSC did agree to allow de Gaulle to travel back to Algiers.

Agreement could still not be reached with Giraud, and Churchill laid the blame on de Gaulle. When meeting with the U.S. Senate on 19 May 1943, Churchill said that he had “raised de Gaulle as a pup…now he bit the hand that fed him.” Churchill was close to a split with de Gaulle, but Anthony Eden and most of the British Cabinet interceded. Of an Algiers meeting with Eden on 25 May, de Gaulle recounted: “Mr. Eden good-humouredly said ‘Do you know that you have caused us more difficulties than all our other European allies put together?’ ‘I don’t doubt it,’ I replied, smiling also. ‘France is a great power.’”

On 3 June 1943 an agreement of sorts was reached between de Gaulle and Giraud, although soon after de Gaulle was able to manoeuvre his rival out of the joint leadership. Harold Macmillan, Allied Minister in North Africa and a future prime minister, recalled a 3 1/2 hours drive with de Gaulle to the Algerian seaside on 14 June 1943, and bathing naked with de Gaulle sitting “in a dignified manner on a rock, with his military cap, his uniform and his belt…It is very difficult to know how to handle him…’I’m afraid he will always be difficult to work with. He is by nature an autocrat. Just like Louis XIV or Napoleon. He thinks in his heart that he should command and all others should obey him. It is not exactly ‘Fascist’ (an overworked word), it is authoritarian.”

The anglophobic actions of de Gaulle continued, although these did not reflect his respect and admiration for Churchill, and some light moments were recorded. On 13 January 1944 Churchill and de Gaulle lunched in Marrakesh, with British Ambassador to the French Committee of Liberation Alfred Duff Cooper, and after lunch Churchill decided that if he spoke French it would add a lighter touch to the occasion. He remarked to Duff Cooper, “I’m doing rather well, aren’t I? Now that the General speaks English so well, he understands my French perfectly.” Everyone including de Gaulle burst out laughing.

A clash occurred over D-Day, where the details were again withheld from de Gaulle beforehand. Invited to London from Algiers, de Gaulle took his time and eventually arrived on 4 June. Churchill met with him and after discussing the invasion passed him on to General Eisenhower, who gave specific information on the operation and asked him to broadcast after the landing. When Eisenhower said he too would be broadcasting, de Gaulle responded that he would not take second place in the broadcast and that Eisenhower had no right to instruct the French people on civil administration matters, which was part of his speech. Churchill, already in an agitated state over the impending landing, flew into a rage, only slightly...
CHURCHILL AND DE GAULLE... 
lessened when informed that de Gaulle would speak, but not immediately after Eisenhower. 

Then the question was broached as to vetting the draft of the speech beforehand. In the end it was not done and de Gaulle gave a magnificent speech exhorting “the sons of France, whoever they may be, wherever they may be, the simple and sacred duty is to fight the enemy with every means in its power.” De Gaulle went on to give heartfelt thanks to the British for their effort in the liberation of France. On hearing him, tears welled up in Churchill’s eyes. Noticing a certain skepticism in his Chief of Personal Staff, General Ismay, he said: “You great tub of lard! Have you no sentiment?” 28 

With the Normandy bridgehead established, de Gaulle left England on 16 June and wrote to Churchill, “Upon leaving Great Britain, to which you kindly invited me at a moment of decisive importance to the successful conclusion of this war, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks for the welcome extended to me by His Majesty’s Government....I have been able to see and feel that the courage and power of the people of Great Britain were of the highest order and that their feelings of friendship for France were stronger than ever. I can assure you, in return, of the deep confidence and unbreakable attachment which France feels towards Great Britain.” 29 

While the balance of the war still saw skirmishes between the two men, there were now more occasions of warmth and mutual admiration. On 10 November 1944 Churchill flew to Paris. He was met at the airport by de Gaulle and driven to the Quai d’Orsay, where he was to stay. The accoutrements were of the highest class. Churchill’s included a
golden bath, prepared by Goering for his own use; Churchill was still more delighted to find that Anthony Eden’s bath was only of silver.30

The following day, Armistice Day, de Gaulle conducted Churchill in an open car across the Seine and the two men walked the Champs Elysees, teeming with thousands of cheering Parisians. The diarist and MP Harold Nicolson stated that Eden told him that “not for one moment did Winston stop crying, and that he could have filled buckets by the time he received the Freedom of Paris.” He said “they yelled for Churchill in a way that he has never heard any crowd yell before.”31

At an official luncheon de Gaulle said, “It is true that we would not have seen [the liberation] if our old and gallant ally England, and all the British dominions under precisely the impulsion and inspiration of those we are honouring today, had not deployed the extraordinary determination to win, and that magnificent courage which saved the freedom of the world. There is no French man or woman who is not touched to the depths of their hearts and souls by this.”

It was General Spears, not Churchill, who remarked, “the hardest cross I have to bear is the Cross of Lorraine,” though WSC certainly shared those sentiments. So why did he not abandon de Gaulle after so many provocations? The answer is in Churchill’s own words. In France’s darkest hour Churchill had whispered to him, “L’homme du destin.”32

At Casablanca in 1943 he said of de Gaulle: “His country has given up fighting, he himself is a refugee, and if we turn him down he’s finished. Well just look at him! He might be Stalin, with 200 divisions behind his words....France without an army is not France. De Gaulle is the spirit of that Army. Perhaps the last survivor of a warrior race.” 33

Churchill added in August 1944, “I have never forgotten, and can never forget, that he stood forth as the first eminent Frenchman to face the common foe in what seemed to be the hour of ruin of his country and possibly, of ours....”34

Of Churchill’s dismissal following the 1945 British general election, de Gaulle wrote: “To minds inclined towards sentimentality this disgrace suddenly inflicted by the British Nation upon the great man who had so gloriously led her to salvation and victory might seem surprising. Yet there was nothing in it that was not in accordance with the order of human affairs....[Churchill’s] nature, identified with a magnificent undertaking, his countenance chiselled by the fires and frosts of great events, had become inadequate in this era of mediocrity.”35

On 6 November 1958 in Paris, Churchill was presented with the Croix de la Libération by de Gaulle, now French President, who remarked: “I want Sir Winston to know this. Today’s ceremony means that France remembers what she owes him. I want him to know this: the man who has just had the honour of bestowing this distinction upon him values and admires him more than ever.”36

Upon Churchill’s death on 24 January 1965 de Gaulle wrote to Queen Elizabeth, “In the great drama he was the greatest of all.”37

Endnotes

5. Ibid., 213.
10. Ibid., 100-02.
13. Ibid., 139.
15. Ibid., 136.
18. Lacoutre, op. cit., 397.
30. Ibid., 374.
35. Kersaudy, op. cit., 413.
36. Ibid., 424.
37. Ibid., 428.
Churchill’s French

JAMES R. LANCASTER

as Churchill’s French really as bad as we are led to believe? It is variously described on a scale from poor to execrable, not only by some of his contemporaries but also by later writers. This calumny needs to be redressed. Here is my case.

In learning French, Churchill was luckier than most of us; he had a mother who was fluent in the language. Jennie Jerome had lived in Paris with her mother Clara and her two sisters from 1867 to 1870, and from 1871 to 1874, a total of six years. Jennie spoke perfect French.

Many years later, in 1908, Churchill was fortunate in marrying someone whose French was also impeccable. Clementine Hozier had learned the French language first from her governess, Mlle. Gonnard, and then from Mlle. Louise Henri, described by Mary Soames in Clementine Churchill as an intelligent and remarkable woman.1

In the summer of 1899 Lady Blanche Hozier and her family moved to Puys, a small village by the sea near Dieppe. Come the school year, the four children moved to Dieppe. By the time the family returned to Scotland in February 1900, as Clementine’s daughter writes, she “distinguished herself by winning, in open competition with students from all over the country, a handsome solid silver medal for French, presented by the Société des Professeurs Français en Angleterre. She received it from the hands of Monsieur Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador.”2

Of Churchill’s Harrow schooldays the French historian François Bédarida writes: “He was strong in History and French….He started to use French phrases and expressions….Later in life it was always a pleasure for him to speak French. When

DE GAULLE SAID THAT BY LEARNING ENGLISH HE WAS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND CHURCHILL’S FRENCH. WSC OFTEN SPOKE “FRANGLAIS,” BUT IS THERE EVIDENCE OF MALICE AFORETHOUGHT? ARE THERE STORIES OF THE COMMENTS AND REACTIONS OF FRENCHMEN (AND WOMEN) WHICH ECHO DE GAULLE’S REMARK? YES—AND THEY SUGGEST WSC’S FRENCH WAS RATHER GOOD.

“Français! C’est moi, Churchill, qui vous parle....”
he was twelve years old he acted the role of Martine, the wife of Sganarelle in _Le Médecin malgré lui_ (Molière’s _The Reluctant Doctor_).

Winston’s French improved when he went to the Army Class under the auspices of Louis Martin Moriarty, a charming Parisian with remarkable powers of conversation in both English and French. It improved still further when, in his last year at the school, he was taught by the distinguished French teacher Bernard Jules Minssen. In 1891 the Harrow Headmaster, the Rt. Rev. J.E.C. Welldon, insisted that Winston spend a month with the Minssen family near Versailles, to improve his French.

In a December 1891 letter to his mother he wrote: “I have already made great progress in French. I begin to think in it….M. Minssen says I know far more than he thought I did.”5 On Christmas Eve he told his mother that the Minssen family reported “Son progrès est merveilleux” (“He is making excellent progress”).6 Of this there can be no doubt. He passed into Sandhurst with a respectable 60% in French.

In 1899, Churchill’s French had matured significantly. In 1944 one of his first French biographers, Jacques Arnavon, wrote of these years: “He was already at home with the French language. It had improved year by year. At this period of his life it was written French which attracted him. In later years he became more confident in speaking in French, to the point where he could make short speeches in the language.”9

Churchill’s self-education was based on wide reading, including books in French. Authors popular with the British at the turn of the century were Montaigne and Voltaire, but Churchill also amassed a significant library on Napoleon, about whom he once hoped to write a biography. On one buying spree in Paris he came away with almost 300 books. How many of them he read we do not know, but this is how he came to read French documents and letters with consummate ease.

In meetings he could almost always follow a conversation. Which is just as well, because most French people he met only had a smattering of English. This was in the days when French was the lingua franca. There were exceptions of course.

General Nivelle spoke good English, as did Georges Clemenceau, who lived in America from 1865 to 1869 and married Mary Plummer, an orphan from Springfield, Massachusetts. But even here it is probable that Clemenceau and Churchill spoke French when on French soil. For example, in Anthony Montague Browne’s _Long Sunset_ there is an account of Churchill’s last meeting with Clemenceau.

Churchill asked him, “What have you left?” Clemenceau replied: “Il me reste mes griffes” (“I’ve still got my claws”).10 This indicates that the conversation was in French. The “claws” were a reference to Clemenceau’s popular nickname “Tiger.”

Another Clemenceau story in _Long Sunset_ is about the day in 1918 when he met Churchill wearing the uniform of an Elder Brother of Trinity House. He asked Churchill why he was dressed up as a semi-retired naval officer. Churchill replied in French: “Je suis un Frère Ainé de la Trinité” (“I am an Elder Brother of the Trinity”). Clemenceau, thinking Churchill was a member of the Holy Trinity, replied, “Quelle belle situation!” (“What a wonderful position!”).11

While on the subject of Clemenceau, for whom Churchill had the greatest admiration, and about whom he wrote two brilliant monographs, it is worth recording that Churchill knew by heart the well-known song _Le Père la Victoire_ (The Father of Victory), which the singer Paulus made famous in 1889. The title of this popular song was attached to Clemenceau after he became Prime Minister in November 1917 and saved his country in the last twelve months of the First World War.

François Bédarida writes that Churchill knew all the verses of _Le Père la Victoire_ by heart, and that he once recited the whole song to de Gaulle during the Second World War.12 This is corroborated by de Gaulle himself when writing about Churchill’s visit to Paris on 11 November 1944: “On my orders the band played _Le Père la Victoire_. And it was only his due. Besides, I remembered that at Chequers, on the evening of a black day, he had sung me our old song by Paulus word perfectly.”13

After lunch on that memorable day, Duff Cooper, then British Ambassador, recalled: “We >>
Soon after becoming Prime Minister on 10 May 1940, Churchill realised that there was an urgent need to put some backbone into an increasingly demoralised French cabinet. He flew to Paris on 16 May, again to Paris on the 31st, to Briare, near Orleans, on 11 June, and to Tours two days later. All these meetings have been admirably recounted in General Spears’s books Prelude to Dunkirk and The Fall of France. Churchill’s long familiarity with the French language had prepared him for these critical meetings, “for this hour and for this trial.”

At the first meeting on 16 May in Paris (at the Quai d’Orsay, the French Foreign Office)—as archives were being thrown onto bonfires in the garden—Churchill spoke in French most of the time. Lord Ismay recalled that he “dominated the proceedings from the moment he entered the room. There was no interpreter, and he spoke throughout in French. His idiom was not always correct, and his vocabulary was not equal to translating all the words which he required with exactitude. But no one could be in any doubt as to his meaning.”

It was at this meeting that he asked General Gamelin “Où est la masse de manœuvre?” (“Where are your reserves?”)—a military phrase which Churchill probably remembered from Monsieur Moriarty’s Army Class at Harrow. The answer was “Aucune” (“None”).

During this same 16 May meeting Ismay tells how General Gamelin recounted a tale of unmitigated woe, to which Churchill responded with: “Evidently this battle will be known as the Battle of the Bulge.” But “Boolge” was the nearest WSC could get to “Bulge” in French. Fair enough: the nearest French word is saillant (salient) but French historians always refer to La Bataille des Ardennes, never to La Bataille du Saillant. So “Boolge” it is!

There were two interpreters at the subsequent meetings: Roland de Margerie translated from English into French, and Captain Berkeley translated from French into English. Churchill spoke in English, interspersed frequently with French words and phrases. At the meeting in Paris on 31 May, when discussing the evacuation of British and French soldiers at Dunkirk, Churchill interrupted Roland de Margerie by exclaiming that they would leave French soil “bras dessus, bras dessous” (“arm in arm”).

The French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud spoke good English, but at the Briare meeting on 11 June, there was one occasion when, after listening to Churchill speaking French, as a debating tactic he asked for a “traduction” (“translation”). Spears describes one of Churchill’s oratorations at this meeting: “I ceased taking notes and watched him, hypnotised. He found wonderful flashing words to express his fiery eloquence. They came in torrents, French and English phrases tumbling over each other like waves racing for the shore when driven by a storm.”

Churchill’s spoken French was his own creation. As was his English, where he often invented new words, such as “paintatious” to describe places worthy of his brush. That he often spoke “franglais” was intentional. There is his memorable phrase during a heated discussion with de Gaulle in Casablanca in January 1943 when he said “Si vous m’obstaclez, je vous liquiderai!,” which needs no translation. It should be remembered that de Gaulle spoke little English when he first arrived in London, and it is fair to assume that when they met they both spoke in French. De Gaulle’s English improved over time, allowing him to joke that this allowed him to understand Churchill’s French.

Churchill’s private secretary, John Colville, wrote an amusing description of a meeting between Churchill and de Gaulle, in the summer of 1941. It started off badly. As Terry Reardon mentions in the previous article, Colville went in after a while only to find them smoking the Prime Minister’s cigars and talking in French, “an exercise which Churchill could never resist and one which his audience, even when they spoke with the purity of de Gaulle, invariably found fascinating.” And at his last meeting with Churchill, in Nice on 22 October 1960, de Gaulle, now President of France, enjoyed listening to Churchill’s stories about the old days, recounted in a French which needed no translation.

Brigadier Ian Jacob has left us an amusing account of Churchill’s ability to translate an English text into French on the fly. On 30 January 1943 Churchill flew from Cairo to Adana in Turkey to meet with President Inönü. Prior to the meeting he had prepared a paper reviewing Anglo-Turkish relations. The idea was that a member of the British Embassy in Ankara, Paul Falla, would translate the paper into French as it was read by Churchill. But after a few minutes Churchill waved Falla aside and translated his own text directly into French.

Jacob, whom Churchill had introduced to the Turks as “le fils du Maréchal Jacob” (“the son of
In his writing, Churchill frequently used French words and phrases where the context and the meaning were appropriate. And he used them accurately. Some might even think that he could write French verse. In his delightful postwar book about his hobby, Painting as a Pastime, there is the delightful verse:

La peinture à l’huile
Est bien difficile,
Mais c’est beaucoup plus beau
Que la peinture à l’eau.  

However, this is not an example of the muse in WSC but of his memory. It comes from a popular song which most French children know by heart.

What about Churchill’s accent? Without any doubt he made little attempt to emulate the polished French accent of colleagues such as Colville, Eden or Spears. On the contrary, he often went out of his way to use the English pronunciation of foreign names and cities, for example Shams Ellizie for Champs Élysées! In conversation with Jack Seely he once said: “Jack, when you cross Europe you land at Marsai, spend a night in Lee-on and another in Par-ee, and, crossing by Callay, eventually reach Londres. I land at Mar-sales, spend a night in Lions, and another in Paris, and come home to London.”

He made several broadcasts and speeches in French, notably his radio broadcast on 21 October 1940, and his speech in Ottawa on 30 December 1941, where he briefly addressed his French Canadian audience. Jean Oberlé, who worked for the French section of the BBC from July 1940 to the end of the war, wrote a book in 1945 about his five years in London. In his Jean Oberlé vous parle is an amusing description of the preparation of the radio broadcast on 21 October 1940. (I paraphrase):  

The English version of the broadcast was sent to the French section of the BBC to be translated. The head of the section, Jacques Duchesne, took the translation to Churchill at 10 Downing Street. After lunch he was offered a cigar and a whisky and then listened to Churchill reciting the broadcast in French. He returned in the evening for a second practice session. Bombs were falling close by. Duchesne remarked that there did not appear to be much security at 10 Downing Street. Churchill burst out laughing: “Si une bombe tombe sur la maison, nous mourrons comme deux braves gens!” (“If a bomb falls on this building, we will die nobly together”)

Duchesne did not find this very reassuring.

Churchill’s broadcast in French on 21 October 1940 began: “Français! C’est moi, Churchill, qui vous parle. Pendant plus de trente ans, dans la paix comme dans la guerre, j’ai marché avec vous, et je marche encore avec vous aujourd’hui.”

One can hear Churchill speaking these words in a BBC audio CD called Churchill Remembered, published in 2006. His French accent is remarkably good—much better than the French accent of most of his compatriots.

The English version of this memorable broadcast is: “Good night then: sleep to gather strength for the morning. For the morning will come. Brightly will it shine on the brave and true, kindly upon all who suffer for the cause, glorious upon the tombs of heroes. Thus will shine the dawn. Vive la France!” By their fire sides in France, those who were brave enough to listen to the BBC could not fail to be heartened by these words:

Allons, bonne nuit; dormez bien, rassemblez vos forces pour l’aube, car l’aube viendra. Elle se lèvera, brillante pour les braves, douce pour les fidèles qui auront souffert, glorieuse sur les tombes des héros. Vive la France!

Most of the audio recordings of Churchill’s well-known speeches and broadcasts include these words of hope and encouragement. The accent is very Churchillian—clear, expressive and completely unaffected. In Britain’s finest hour he not only inspired his listeners at home; he also raised the spirits of all French men and women in their Heure Tragique, their darkest hour.

This was not the last time he asked his listeners to dormez bien (sleep well). Many years later he ended his broadcast from Ottawa on 30 June 1954, during his last visit to Canada:


Footnotes overleaf >>
“SEEING CLAW TO CLAW” • WILL MORRISEY

“All might have been well had de Gaulle been an ordinary General or even an ordinary man. He is not. He is an extraordinary man. He is an eagle with bad habits. Winston, who is a house-trained eagle, does not see claw to claw with him.” —Harold Nicolson

Aristotle describes the magnanimous or great-souled man, but he does not say what would happen if two of them came into the same room. And what if two such men came together during the greatest and most noteworthy of wars, a war in which the most dangerous tyrannies of all time contended against one another, and also against the greatest republics? Would we not need a Thucydides as well as an Aristotle to help us understand this event? We do have something in a way as valuable: the writings of Winston S. Churchill and Charles de Gaulle, who worked for and against one another. From their writings we know they quarreled, not only over English policies in French colonies and over the conduct of the war itself, but more importantly over the political character of the immediate postwar settlement, both in France, the conquered republic, and in Germany, the conquering then conquered tyranny. We also know that they cooperated, often in measured opposition to their mighty wartime allies—the United States of Franklin Roosevelt and the Soviet Union of Josef Stalin. By 1946 America and Russia, the regime of democratic republicanism and the regime of undemocratic despotism, each held the destinies of half the world in its hands. Neither Churchill nor de Gaulle wanted that, but in their unflinching way each saw it happening and conceived of geopolitical strategies, first to meet Germany’s threat, then to meet the consequent rise of America and Russia. In all that they wrote on these matters both exhibited the quality André Malraux would see in de Gaulle: “He was shrewd and even, sometimes, clairvoyant. But his intelligence had more to do with the level of his thought, what Chateaubriand called the intelligence of greatness of soul.”
They grouped together about their chief
And each looked at his mate
Ashamed to think that Australian men
Should meet such a bitter fate.
And black was the wrath in each hot heart
And savage oaths they swore
As they thought of how they had all been ditched
By “Impregnable” Singapore.
—Dame Mary Gilmore, Australian Poet

When Christopher Hebb snookered, I mean invited, me here this morning, it was to debate Bill Ives, the Centre’s most recent past president. Bill, Chris and I agreed to a “spirited, no holds barred” format, the bloodthirsty Hebb wanting body parts on the floor.

I was temporarily relieved when Bill Ives was compelled to withdraw. Being skewered by a litigator from Chicago is not high on my personal wish list. Relieved, that is, until I read Professor Raymond Callahan’s CV. I was convinced that my only defense would be a sudden case of pneumonia. Hebb got wind of my plot and bribed my wife to force-feed me vitamins. Frankly, it was more effective than anything Britain did in South East Asia between the two world wars. My plot was foiled and I am here.

But I’ve come to see that I have a second line of defense for my position that Singapore had to fall. It can be summarized in five words: Hope is not a strategy.

In the sixty-five years since the fall of Singapore, many excellent works have emerged, several by my opponent. Typewriters were clanging before 1942 was out, espousing theories, reporting facts and concocting fairy tales as to why it took only seventy days for these little yellow men with buck teeth, poor vision and limited understanding of the modern world (the contemporary cartoonist image) to humble mighty Britain and its regional satellites, India and Australia.

Perhaps the best of these was written in 1971 by Gen. S. Woodburn Kirby, official British military historian, in his posthumously published Chain of Disaster. Kirby posited that there was a linking of responsibilities from 1921 until the collapse of...

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**FINEST HOUR**

**SINGAPORE...**

Singapore in 1942. It was the political, economic, military and leadership failures, all compounded, which doomed the island fortress in the opening weeks of 1942.

In this and dozens—no hundreds—of works, there is a central theme: the hope that the Royal Navy would steam to the rescue. That is—as long as the Japanese didn’t have the temerity to strike at an inopportune moment, like when Britain’s finite resources were deployed elsewhere, such as the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

Indeed, Professor Callahan will affirm this view. In his outstanding book, *The Worst Disaster: The Fall of Singapore*, Ray stated: “The basic fact was that Britain after 1918 was no longer able and, perhaps, no longer willing, to defend her world position built up in the Victorian era. Churchill could not alter this. What he did was to see clearly that Britain could fight one war, or lose two.”

So, as you can see there is really no debate at all. The simple answer is “Yes,” Singapore had to fall. Just as its sponsor state, Britain, disintegrated as a world power after three hundred years, its chattel Singapore was equally doomed. From Pax Britannia’s apex in 1900 to a hollowed out shell by 1918 and a fiction by 1942, the jig was up, and all the world could see—especially the Asiatic world.

The disintegration of empires gets very sloppy. Ambiguity abounds. There’s no lack of culpable individuals and incidents that can be blamed.

Singapore was but a single tile in a mosaic, strategically, logistically and tactically indefensible in an age when isolated, fixed fortifications were obsoleted by technology and mobility.

A dozen summarizing points:

1. Singapore was not and could not be an “impregnable fortress” by any definition. This wasn’t the 1800s and this wasn’t Khartoum.

2. If Singapore were so critical to the British Empire, then having the “B” Team of Commander-in-Chief Far East Robert Brooke-Popham (relieved during the Battle for Malaya) and General Arthur E. Percival (British commander at Singapore) in charge was incomprehensible. Neither was Chinese Gordon and both were completely overmatched by Japan’s General Yamashita.

3. For a litany of reasons, many economic, the defenders were ill-equipped. Even the air defense strategy, which succeeded the naval defense, was starved and never approached the presumed requirement of 336 modern aircraft (there being on hand but 180 obsolete Buffalos and Wildebeests). Never underestimate an opponent, for they will most certainly not do what you expect.

4. Once and for all, the 15-inch guns were not pointing the wrong way. Four of the five had Mark II naval turret mountings and 360-degree traverse if the obstructing cables and gun-stops were removed, as they were. Two of the five 15-inch rifles (two others obstructed by hills), along with all six of the 9.2-inch guns, fired north during the battle. All the 6-inch guns on Tekong Island also fired into Johore. The greater limitation was the lack of high explosive, anti-personnel ammunition, most being armor piercing for ship assault. The latter was ineffective against massed formations, intended for the Japanese fleet that never came. There’s that problem again: “the enemy does what it can, not what you expect it to do.”

5. If you want to lead a coalition, it’s a good thing to have conformity of strategic goals. In the months and weeks prior to the attack on 8 December 1941, there were draining disputes with Australia, in particular, over the Far East/Near North dichotomy.

6. John Curtin, the pacifist of the Thirties who succeeded Robert Menzies as Australian Prime Minister, became the appeaser of 1940, attempting to negotiate with his friend, Ambassador Tatsuo Kawai, for a separate peace with Japan. The prize was the iron ore deposits in Yampi Sound. As these discussions began to fail, Kawai told Curtin straight out on 29 November 1941—ten days prior to the attack—that matters had “gone too far.”

Curtin had become increasingly hawkish from mid-1941. Equipped with this additional knowl-
edge, he became embarrassingly more vocal with his criticisms of London’s policies, demanding that they immediately assume the defensive positions in Southern Thailand known as the Matador Plan. He was unsuccessful, as was Percival, whose dithering scuttled this opportunity;

7. Lest one think Curtin a traitor, one must put his actions within the context of the time. Britain’s Far East policy from 1939 was one of appeasement, a play for time. An odious example was Britain’s being quite willing to starve the Chinese following Japan’s demand to close the Burma Road, reopening it under U.S. pressure in late 1941.

8. Though one prominent turncoat, Capt. Heenan, was executed, Singapore’s failures were not the result of fifth column activity. There was significant Japanese spy infiltration into Thailand and Malaya from 1937. These spies were fully versed on the woeful state of British preparedness.

9. The sinking of Repulse and Prince of Wales was a psychological blow. But these assets were never deployed in any serious military context and had zero effect upon the tactical outcome.

10. The three national forces, the British, Australians and Indians, especially the Indians and the Australian replacements, were conspicuously untrained. The last reinforcements, in January 1942, virtually marched off their transports and into captivity at Changi.

11. The civilian administration under Shelton Thomas was obstructionist and actually forbade military preparations on the basis of not wishing to alarm the population.

12. There are well-substantiated allegations that some of the Indian troops ran under fire, and that others joined the Japanese Army. Lest this suggest some character or racial defect, let the record show that as they jumped into the waters of Keppel Harbour, they landed atop the Aussies who beat them to the docks. And why not? Aussie Gen. Gordon Bennett fled Singapore without permission. Poor leadership in the field is a virus that will sap the will of any army to fight.

So, as you can see, the confluence of a deteriorating fictional empire, limited resources, extraordinary incompetence and unpreparedness doomed Singapore.

The British attempted to lure the U.S. Fleet to the base as a hoped-for deterrent to Japanese aggression. General George Marshall vetoed the plan. It was one more rung in the ladder of hope: We hope we won’t be preoccupied at the instant of a Japanese attack; and, if we are, we hope the U.S. will curtail the Japanese dog.

Unfortunately for Britain, this last bit of wishful thinking found the U.S. preoccupied with its isolationism, unprepared for war and full of its own prejudices as to Japanese capabilities. And so, 65,000 Japanese field troops managed to overcome 138,000 ultimate captives and casualties.

Churchill saved Western Democracy as we know it, but he could not save the echo of the British Raj, and he could not save Singapore. Nobody could.

2. “Responsible but Unrepentant”

RAYMOND P. CALLAHAN

At the Admiralty during the “twilight war,” discussing his sponsorship of a prototype armored trench digger known as “Cultivator Number One,” Churchill remarked that he was “responsible but unrepentant.” It is not a bad description of the position he took—albeit less forthrightly—about his role in what he called the “worst disaster” in Britain’s military history: the fall of Singapore. We are here today to assess how much of the blame for that debacle he should shoulder before history.

The starting point in this assessment is the fundamental flaw in the “Singapore strategy” devised shortly after World War I: the assumption that, once the Singapore base was built, the Royal Navy would always be free to deploy eastwards to confront Japan. “Main fleet to Singapore” was the slogan describing this strategy. Carefully never answered was a question posed at an early date: What happens if a European threat made such a deployment impossible?

Perhaps, as Geoffrey Best has suggested, the sense after 1918 that this particular problem of imperial defense was essentially insoluble led to a tacit agreement—in London to be sure, but also and less understandably in Canberra as well—not to confront the issue. Churchill was in office first as Colonial Secretary and then as Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Singapore strategy took shape, and so bears some responsibility for it, but surely not more than the other policymakers involved—politicians, admirals and civil servants alike.

The situation Churchill confronted from May 1940 to February 1942 poses, of course, a very different question. Churchill was Prime Minister and Minister of Defense; his responsibility for a military catastrophe is inescapable. But how much at that >>

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point could he really have changed? The answer is, I would suggest, very little. Britain was fighting for its life, and Churchill was not about to risk the loss of the war against Germany by trying to be adequately prepared in the Far East for a war against Japan that might, with luck, never come.

It was crystal clear in May 1940 that neither the main fleet nor any substantial part of it could now go to Singapore. Churchill signed off in August 1940 on a new plan that gave the RAF the lead role in defending the Malay Peninsula and Singapore. But Churchill’s real strategy for the Far East was to depend upon the United States to deter Japan. At the back of his mind lurked the thought, freely albeit privately admitted at the time, that a Japanese attack which brought the United States into the war at Britain’s side would be well worth the resulting (in his mind, temporary) forfeits in the Far East.

Now we come to what, I would suggest, is the key issue: Given Churchill’s strategic framework, could he have done more for the defenders of Malaya and Singapore than he did? Here lies the heart of the case we must answer.

I put it to you that there were three areas where he could have done more—but that even if he had done more, it would have made no perceptible impact on the final result.

The first of these areas is the Byzantine and self-defeating chain of command in the Far East. It certainly could have been restructured—but that alteration would have made little difference unless better personnel, civil and military, were posted there. No organization ever has enough first-class talent, and 1940-41 was not the moment to park some of it in an inactive theater. In any case, many people besides the Prime Minister bear responsibility for the structure and staffing of command in the Far East.

Second, there is the air power strategy put in place in August 1940. There was never agreement on how many aircraft were in fact needed to carry out the strategy. Furthermore, the RAF in the Far East never came within striking distance of even the minimum figure (336 first-line aircraft). The 188 actually available in December 1941 were an assortment of aircraft that were either inappropriate, obsolete, or flat-out museum pieces.

Meanwhile, 699 modern aircraft had been shipped to the Soviet Union between June and December 1941. Would some of them, if diverted to the Far East, have made a difference? Probably not. The RAF fighter squadrons in the United Kingdom were formidable because they were part of an integrated air defense system. There was not the time, resources or personnel to establish such a system in the Far East. Similarly, modern anti-shipping strike aircraft were only just becoming available to the RAF, and few could be spared for the Far East. And, of course, continued Russian resistance was vital to Britain’s survival in a way Singapore was not.

Third, there was the matter of the Singapore “fortress.” Churchill spoke often of it and believed Singapore was a true fortress, capable of all-around defense. This misapprehension of the nature of the great naval base informed much of his thinking on the Far East.

Of course, Singapore was not and could never have been a true fortress. (For one thing, its water was supplied from the mainland.) Churchill here was clearly wrong—but should not the Chief of the Imperial General Staff or Churchill’s own military staff officers have corrected him? We know they did not, and the reason seems to have been that some—rather incredibly—shared his mistaken belief that Singapore was a true fortress.

In any case, all were as focused as he was on the European war. The sad truth is that no one in London wanted to be bothered by a hypothetical Far Eastern war when they were barely holding their own in the all-too-real war on their doorstep. Even if they had been paying more attention, there was little or nothing that they could have done.

The argument I have been advancing is that while, of course, Churchill—along with many others over a twenty-year period—bears responsibility for the 1941-42 disaster in the Far East, his “guilt” is mitigated by the iron constraints in which he found himself. Perhaps he deserves at this point to speak in his own defense: “The major dispositions were right...if I had known all about it then as I know now, there were no substantial resources that could have been diverted....”
3. Mr. Torre Replies

No, Winston Churchill’s actions from his ascendancy to Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924 through the fall of Singapore in 1942 were not the sole cause of the disaster. But I believe they gave new meaning to the phrase “Asiatic Theatre of Operations.”

With his grip on England’s purse prior to the Great Depression, he repeatedly vetoed or curtailed expenditures for Singapore’s defense and the naval base. As a private citizen in March 1939, he told Chamberlain that “losses and punishment” in the Far East were to be suffered in preference to weakening the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean.

When Bourke-Popham was sent to the Far East Command, Churchill didn’t even meet with him; nor did the General Staff. I recall the canard about success having a thousand fathers and failure being an orphan; in this case it seems it was an expected failure.

And on and on the litany goes, up to and including actions in January 1942 with respect to reinforcements being diverted to Burma before the Australians demanded they stop.

Against these actions is a rhetoric of ambiguity, some say duplicity, with respect to the Pacific Dominions, trading security assurances for troops to be deployed in North Africa and the Middle East.

I believe that attempts to square the theatrical rhetoric with consistent actions over 18 years are so much eyewash. Churchill was the most focused, clear-eyed strategist of his time. He was not a Prime Minister of the world, but of Britain, who recognized his primary duty as its survival. All else was disposable and/or negotiable. How else did a hollowed-out Empire not only gain a seat at the table, but often sit at the head?

He knew the United States was one of two critical keys to victory. Another was bleeding the Germans white on the steppes of Russia. He may have misjudged the timing of U.S. entry into the war, but not the ultimate reality of its doing so. And that wasn’t as evident in 1939 as it is now, nor was depending upon the U.S. as sure a thing.

Sir Robert Vanisttart, Under Secretary for Foreign Relations, stated: “1) The USA will always disappoint; 2) Beware of American suggestions that we should cooperate against Japan in the Far East. The Americans will let us down or stab us in the back; 3) We ought be more preoccupied in keeping Japan friendly than endeavouring to better our existing relations with the U.S. which are as good as that unreliable Country will or can allow them to be.”

Whilst the Dominions might have felt elements of anger and betrayal at Singapore, such feelings were naïve, or at the least misdirected. They were certainly alerted by Lavarek and others from the Thirties with respect to Royal Navy limitations. Churchill used his assets brilliantly, including his Svengaliesque hold over Roosevelt.

Singapore was the melancholy victim of circumstance. Steely genius knew how to measure the odds. The war was an all-out battle for survival, not a Vegas craps table. The war’s outcome, as history has vindicated, never depended upon control of the Straights of Malacca.

Hold the coalition together: that was Churchill’s prime directive. Placate the Aussies, send Force Z…It was lost? “Oh, my.”

To this day there are subscribers to Churchill’s “shock” at learning that Singapore was not an impregnable fortress, and gibberish persists about Victorian definitions of the term. Were Churchill a yokel this might be plausible, but surely not from the shrewdest mind of the war and someone who knew more about the language than most. Not an impregnable fortress? “Oh, my.”

Some saw through the rhetoric and ambiguity as those who referred to SEAC (Southeast Asia Command) as “Save England’s Asiatic Colonies.” I don’t suggest Churchill was callous—just wise enough to know this was total war, and that the Marquis of Queensbury rules didn’t apply. Even if there was a magic bullet—and there was not—Britain did not have the logistical capability and/or sealift capacity to implement it.

If Churchill failed at Singapore, beyond completely underestimating the Japanese, it was in the hope that he could emerge from the war with an intact British Empire. He was wrong.

Earlier I expressed my view that Churchill saved the western world. I not only don’t deplore his tactics, I applaud them. This intrepid, focused and visionary leader faced the insoluble challenge and found a course to victory.
4. Dr. Callahan Responds

Richard Torre and I agree on many points. The disaster of February 1942 had roots stretching back to the aftermath of World War I, when Britain faced a new world in which its resources were sharply constrained while its commitments, already global, had grown. The resultant insoluble strategic dilemma was evaded by a strategy that contained a very considerable element of wishful thinking. That strategy became increasingly unreal after the mid-1930s and was a Potemkin village by 1940.

This situation was Churchill’s inheritance. He focused on the war against Germany, where Britain’s existence was at stake, and hoped that Japan would be deterred by the Americans.

Richard and I disagree about the genuineness of Churchill’s surprise at the loss of Force Z (Prince of Wales and Repulse) and, a few weeks later, when he learned that the “Singapore fortress” did not exist. I do not believe that Churchill’s reactions in these cases were feigned.

Winston Churchill was many things, but he was not a great actor. In common with others, he overrated Admiral Tom Phillips and underrated the Japanese. In common with most of Whitehall, he simply wasn’t paying much attention to the true state of affairs in Malaya and Singapore because of the enormous, grinding pressure of the European war, something he later admitted. Even for Winston Churchill, the day had only twenty-four hours. He also knew how history works. Excoriating the great Victorian historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay, for his misleading treatment of the First Duke of Marlborough, Churchill wrote that history would pin the label “liar” to Macaulay’s “genteel coat-tails.” Churchill knew well the same thing could happen to him. His account of his reactions seems to me perfectly credible.

Singapore was a Greek tragedy: many victims, few heroes; simply people caught in a situation created by Britain’s past that they were powerless to alter. When that situation brought catastrophe, there was a perhaps quite understandable urge to identify scapegoats—Brooke Popham, Percival, the Australians, and later Churchill. But Churchill (and Whitehall in general) were not the first – and certainly not the last – to face an insoluble problem and turn away from it to the comfort of fanciful beliefs.

And that is the real lesson of Singapore. As Churchill put it in another context: “Facts are better than dreams.”

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5. Reflections on the Australian Reality

David Jablonsky

Churchill was consistent in his approach to British national interests. As to Australia he was less consistent. One historian commented: “Of the Far East he knew nothing. Australia was a very distant country, which produced some great fighting men, and some black swans for the pond at Chartwell, but it cannot be said that it otherwise excited his imagination or his interest.”

Much of the misunderstandings and false expectations over what Britain and Churchill could do to defend Australia were owed to the fact that initially in the war there was no clear sense of Australian national interests as distinct from those of Britain. This led to misplaced assumptions and unfulfilled expectations as the interests of the two countries began to diverge under the weight of war.

For Australia, the primary threat to its most vital national interests was Japan. Involvement in the European war could only further those national interests if the Imperial connection, which had left Australia ill prepared for war, could ensure Australian security once war began.

But given Britain’s disconnect in its global responsibilities, owing to the German existential threat, an inexorable prioritization of British interests began. The Middle East, Soviet Union, Indian Ocean and Burma-India theatre began to draw off resources even as the British perception of the possibility of a full-scale Japanese invasion of Australia diminished.

The inevitable reaction occurred. Australian Prime Minister John Curtin’s December 1941 declaration of his country’s new focus on the United States can be seen in the light of a recognition, however belated, of a small power’s national interests, and its trading the protection of one great power for another.

Which brings me to my final point—that the efforts of the Empire, and particularly the Dominions, were an essential part of Great Britain’s achieving her most vital goal: national survival.

The famous 1940 David Low cartoon, depicting a soldier standing alone on the beach with one
arm raised defiantly to the sky and a caption reading, “Very Well, Alone,” really represents the soldiers of the Empire. As an example, it was not until the buildup to the Battle of Alamein in North Africa that the British Isles component of the Eighth Army outnumbered its troops from India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Palestine, East and West Africa and the national contingents from Poland, France and Greece. And recall that by 1945, the Indian Army numbered 2,500,000 men—the largest volunteer Army in history.

Recall also that Canada, in addition to agricultural, industrial and financial aid, provided over a million volunteers from a population base of only 11 million, and that 42,000 Canadians were killed. Or that New Zealand, with a population base of 1,700,000, sent 140,000 overseas, with over 11,000 killed. Last but certainly not least, Australia, with over one million serving in the armed forces, out of a 7,000,000 population base, ended with 30,000 dead in that conflict.

Then think about these words:

“Japan is at the other end of the world. She cannot menace our vital security in any way. She has no reason whatever to come into collision with us. She has every reason to avoid such a collision. The only sufficient cause which could draw us into a war with Japan would be if she invaded Australia. Does anybody imagine she is going to do so?....It is an absolute absurdity. Even if America stood inactive Japan would be ruined. She would never attempt it.”

—WSC to Stanley Baldwin, 15 December 1924

“As long as the British Navy is undefeated, and as long as we hold Singapore, no invasion of Australia or New Zealand by Japan is possible....Can one suppose that Japan, enjoying herself in the mastery of the Yellow Sea, would send afloat a conquering and colonising expedition to Australia? It is ludicrous. More than one hundred thousand men would be needed to make any impression upon Australian manhood....The great danger to the world at the present time still lies, not in the far east, not in the quarrels of the yellow peoples, but in the heart of Christendom and Europe.”

—WSC to Neville Chamberlain, 27 March 1939

“I regret this cost to our commitments elsewhere, but it was in our vital interests to do so as the Russians will shortly be engaged in mortal combat with our main enemy.”

—WSC, November 1942, on the transfer of air assets to the Soviet Union, quoted by Australian historian David Day, The Great Betrayal, 315.

“We refuse to accept the dictum that the Pacific struggle must be treated as a subordinate segment of the general conflict....The Australian government therefore regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the democracies’ fighting plan. Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America free of any pangs as to our traditional links with the United Kingdom.”

—Prime Minister John Curtin, 27 December 1942. Signed statement in Australian newspapers

“We are doing our utmost in the mother country to meet living perils and onslaughts. We have sunk all Party differences and have universal compulsory service....I hope therefore you will be considerate in the judgment which you pass upon those to whom Australian lives and fortunes are so dear.”

—WSC to John Curtin, 14 January 1943

Curtin to WSC: “We make no apologies for our effort, or even for what you argue we are not doing. The various parts of the Empire, as you know, are differently situated, possess various resources and have their own peculiar problems.”

WSC to Curtin: “To try to be safe everywhere is to be strong nowhere.”

Curtin to WSC: “Just as you foresaw events in Europe, so we felt that we saw the trend of the Pacific situation more clearly than was realized in London.”

“I confess that in my mind the whole Japanese menace lay in a sinister twilight, compared with our other needs. My feeling was that if Japan attacked us the United States would come in. If the United States did not come in we had no means of defending the Dutch East Indies, or indeed our own Empire in the East. If, on the other hand, Japanese aggression drew in America I would be content to have it. On this I rested. Our priorities during 1941 stood: first, the defence of the Island, including the threat of invasion and the U-boat war, secondly, the struggle in the Middle East and Mediterranean, thirdly, after June, supplies to Soviet Russia, and, last of all, resistance to a Japanese assault.”

—WSC, The Grand Alliance, 1950

“The Australians’ claim that they had understood and foreseen the dangers in the Far East and from Japan better than I had done in London can only be judged in relation to the war as a whole. It was their duty to study their own position with concentrated attention. We had to try to think for all.”

—WSC, The Hinge of Fate, 1951
1. The Controversy

Leopold III (1901-83) was King of the Belgians from 1934 through 1951. Born in Brussels, the son of Albert I, he married Princess Astrid of Sweden in 1926. The Queen died in a car accident in 1935, and in 1941 Leopold married morganatically a commoner, Lillian Baels—which was criticized by many Belgians, particularly after the events of 1940.

Belgium, which had adopted a “policy of independence” (armed neutrality) in 1936, was invaded by Hitler on 10 May 1940. Belgium appealed for help, and Anglo-French forces took up defensive positions along the Dyle River, while the Belgians held the Albert Canal line to the northeast. German glider troops captured the key fortress at Eben-Émael, forcing the Belgians to fall back to the Dyle before the French could set up their positions. The resulting battle found the French still in possession of the field, but with an irreplaceable loss of 105 tanks.

A broader crisis was developing meanwhile at Sedan, where on 14 May German Panzers broke the French line, crossing the River Meuse. Allied forces in Belgium were ordered to withdraw, and within a week, the French Army of the North, the entire British Expeditionary Force, and the Belgian Army were encircled. On the 25th the Belgian government fled to France, but the Belgian Army kept fighting until the 28th, providing extra time and protection to the withdrawing Allies. Leopold remained to face the Germans. Refusing to administer his country in accord with their demands, he was imprisoned in his palace at Laeken until 1944.

Leopold’s surrender was vilified by French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud, and, more importantly, his own exiled government in unoccupied France. Churchill’s old colleague Lloyd George, no paragon of virtue in 1940, wrote on 2 June: “You can rummage in vain through the black annals of the most reprobate Kings of the earth to find a blacker and more squalid sample of perfidy and poltroonery than that perpetrated by the King of the Belgians.”

In November 1940, Leopold contributed to his future unpopularity by visiting Hitler in Berchtesgaden, asking for the liberation of Belgian prisoners of war and improvement of food provisions. Hitler ultimately released Flemish-speaking prisoners and allowed a Flemish parliament to be set up, but he would not release French-speaking Belgians, and food supplies remained low.

Leopold continued to feud with his government-in-exile, which in late October arrived in London. In January 1944 he wrote a “political testament” to be published if he were not in Belgium when it was liberated. Herein he declared that all international agreements of his exiled government (including an important one granting the Allies access to uranium in the Belgian Congo) were invalid because they did not have the Royal signature. He lived in exile in Austria after the war, refusing to withdraw his criti-
cisms of the wartime government. After a 1950 “people’s consulta-
tion” over his return, in which 72 percent of Flemish-speakers voted
in favor and 58 percent of French-
speakers against, Leopold
returned briefly to the throne. But
continued controversy, including
three days of riots and two deaths
in Liège, caused him to abdicate
in favor of his son, Baudouin, the
following year. He has remained a
controversial figure to this day.

Churchill’s comments in the
Commons about King Leopold’s
surrender, though not as censori-
ous as those of Reynaud or Lloyd
George, were certainly significant:

I have no intention of suggesting
to the House [WSC said in the
Commons] “that we should
attempt at this moment to pass
judgment upon the action of the
King of the Belgians in his capaci-
ty as Commander-in-Chief of the
Belgian Army. This army has
fought very bravely and has both
suffered and inflicted heavy losses.
The Belgian Government has dis-
sociated itself from the action of
the King, and, declaring itself to be
the only legal Government of
Belgium, has formally announced
its resolve to continue the war at
the side of the Allies.\footnote{2}

He wrote in rather milder terms
in the second volume of his
postwar memoirs:

Upon all this there now descended
a simplifying catastrophe. The
Germans, who had hitherto not
pressed the Belgian front severely,
on May 24 broke the Belgian line on
either side of Courtrai, which is but
thirty miles from Ostend and
Dunkirk. The King of the Belgians
soon considered the situation hope-
less, and prepared himself for
capitulation.\footnote{2}

Churchill was being inordinat-
ely kind to the exiled Belgian
government, then in France, led
by Prime Minister Pierlot and
Foreign Minister Paul-Henri
Spaak (a postwar secretary-
general of NATO and founder of
what became the EU). That same
government which Churchill said
was resolved to continue the war
had repeatedly asked Leopold to
sign an armistice with Hitler—
which conveniently might have
allowed them to return to Brussels
(as Nazi puppets). Spaak later
admitted that, by refusing his
support, Leopold had prevented
him and his colleagues from
becoming Nazi collaborators. But
at the time, Spaak and Pierlot con-
sidered the war to be lost. Later
they found their way to London,
where their government-in-exile
remained for the duration of the
war.\footnote{4}

Churchill’s relatively equable
handling of the subject in June
1940 was too much for the
excitable Reynaud, who com-
plained bitterly that Leopold had
let down the Franco-British armies.
Churchill thus added in his book:

Concern was expressed by the
French Government that my refer-
ce to King Leopold’s action was
in sharp contrast to that of M. 
Reynaud. I thought it my duty,
when speaking in the House on
June 4, after a careful examination
of the fuller facts then available,
and in justice not only to our
French Ally but also to the Belgian
Government now in London, to
state the truth in plain terms:

“At the last moment, when
Belgium was already invaded,
King Leopold called upon us to
come to his aid, and even at the
last moment we came. He and his
brave, efficient Army, nearly half a
million strong, guarded our left
flank and thus kept open our only
line of retreat to the sea. Suddenly,
without prior consultation, with
the least possible notice, without
the advice of his Ministers and
upon his own personal act, he sent
a plenipotentiary to the German
Command, surrendered his Army,
and exposed our whole flank and
means of retreat.

“The brave and efficient army of
which I spoke had indeed conduct-
ed itself in accordance with its best
traditions. They were overcome by
an enemy whom it was beyond
their power to resist for long. That
they were defeated and ordered to
surrender is no slur upon their
honour or reputation.”\footnote{5}

2. What Really Happened?
While much has been written
on the Leopold matter, there are
several recent and rather reveal-
ing accounts, the first of which
was written by the historian
Andrew Roberts about the political
aspects of the debate: >>
HISTORY DETECTIVES

**LEOPOLD III...**

It is indicative of the changing nature of the King’s [George VI’s] relationship with Churchill that he did not protest against what he knew to be an undeserved slur on King Leopold III of the Belgians by the Prime Minister. Leopold had written to George VI on 25 May warning him of his country’s capitulation by the King’s answering telegram to Brussels the next day urging him not to become a prisoner. The King therefore knew that Churchill was guilty of a particularly gross “terminological inexactitude” for his depiction of the Belgian capitulation three days later as a treacherous surprise. On the day of his return from the Continent, Britain’s special envoy to Leopold, Admiral Roger Keyes, was visited by an Intelligence officer, who demanded all the documents from his mission. Keyes successfully concealed them and showed them to the King to dispute Churchill’s calumnies.

Thus the King knew the truth, as did Churchill. Seven months later, sitting in an air raid shelter with Roosevelt’s adviser, Harry Hopkins, he “expressed a good deal of sympathy with King Leopold,” and although he refused to allow his brother monarch to be stripped of his colonelcy in the British army, or have his Garter banner removed from St George’s Chapel, George VI did not, as Leopold had hoped, “insist that his Prime Minister should uphold, rather than pervert, the truth concerning these circumstances.” Admiral Keyes’s son has since stated: “Had the existence of Leopold’s warning letter to George VI, or even a paraphrase of its contents been made public...the French, Belgian and British Prime Ministers’ false allegations would have been completely demolished.”

Whilst it might be understandable for raisons d’état for the King to have kept silent in the summer of 1940 when Britain desperately needed a scapegoat to explain the Allied defeat, the King permitted this unwarranted slur to continue after the war, even to the extent of Leopold not being invited to Princess Elizabeth’s wedding in 1947. To Harry Hopkins the King had confirmed the view that the Belgian Monarch “should have left the country and established his government elsewhere.” Yet this was precisely the course that the British royal family has constantly been given credit for having refused to contemplate in their own case. 6

George VI wasn’t the only person Leopold had warned, according to a contemporary account in *Time*:

On May 20 the Belgian King sent word to the Allies through Sir Roger Keyes that should his troops lose contact with the French and British, “capitulation would be inevitable”...[Roger Keyes] wrote nothing, merely asked the British public to suspend its judgment until all the facts were known. For this he was attacked by the *Daily Mirror* and he sued the paper for libel. Last week, in getting an apology in court, he made the facts public at last. On 27 May, the day before he surrendered, Leopold had asked Keyes “to inform the British authorities that he would be obliged to surrender before a debacle took place. A similar message was given the French.” 7

3. Publishing Repercussions

For the history of Churchill’s Leopold account in his memoirs, the most important and scholarly sourcework is David Reynolds’ *In Command of History* (now available in paperback from Basic Books via Amazon.com and others):

For Churchill’s publishers *Their Finest Hour* proved no less of a challenge than *The Gathering Storm*. They faced the same impossible deadlines, constant changes and autocratic demands. Reviews were also beginning to set in a mould—many being panegyrics rather than analyses. The big exception was for the French edition, significantly re-titled *L’Heure Tragique*, because in France and Belgium 1940 was a national disaster and a running sore in postwar politics. As before, reception depended on audience as much as intention.

The British had been vilified by many on the continent for deserting their allies. Churchill therefore took pains to show they did their utmost in a situation that was already hopeless—emphasizing that the British Expeditionary Force was ready to counter-attack at Arras on 21-22 May 1940 but insisting that it also had to protect its line of retreat to the sea. He deflected attention onto the precipitate Belgian surrender, quoting his speech to the Commons on 4 June 1940 which followed Paul Reynaud, the French Prime Minister, in placing the blame squarely on King Leopold: “Suddenly, without prior consultation, with the least possible notice, without the advice of his Ministers and upon his own personal act, he sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command, surrendered his Army and exposed our whole flank and means of retreat.”

As he completed *Their Finest Hour*, Churchill found these words coming back to haunt him. The stigma of surrender had marked Leopold ever since May 1940. Unlike the Dutch, Danish and Norwegian monarchs, he stayed with his troops rather than joining the government-in-exile in London, and was taken to Germany when the Allies liberated Belgium. His brother acted as Regent and Left-wing parties campaigned to block his return. The “Royal Question” became the most vexed issue in Belgian politics and much of the debate revolved around interpretations of May 1940. In mid-January 1949, three weeks before serialization began, *La Libre Belgique*, an ultramonarchist paper, printed six front-page articles quoting and rebutting statements critical of the King by Churchill, Reynaud and others. Hurriedly General Pownall [WSC’s literary adviser on military
aspects] and Churchill checked their final draft of “The March to the Sea.” On the German breach of the Belgian line on 24 May they had written: “The King of the Belgians considered the situation hopeless, and already thought only of capitulation.” This was amended to “soon considered the situation hopeless, and prepared himself for capitulation.” Churchill had also made reference to Reynaud’s denunciation of King Leopold’s “treachery.” After hurried research [literary assistant Bill] Deakin advised him that Reynaud had never used the word “treachery” — this was an old Vichy canard. The offending sentences were removed, as was the phrase “this pitiful episode” from the speech of 4 June 1940. These and other last-minute revisions, resulting in six new pages of proofs, were all incorporated in the final text.

Nevertheless, when the serial version appeared Churchill was attacked for his 4 June 1940 comment about the King surrendering his army without prior consultation. Sixty-eight Belgian generals published a petition in February 1949 calling his remarks “neither accurate nor fair.” After consulting the Prince Regent [Leopold’s younger brother Charles, Count of Flanders], who believed no amendments were necessary, Churchill stuck to his guns. “I am not attempting to write a History of the Second World War,” he told one critic, “but only [to] give the story of events as they appeared to me and the British Government.” Receiving no response, the petitioners took advantage of Churchill’s visit to Brussels at the end of May to reissue their declaration, to which another twenty-two generals had added their names. Deakin warned that the document was “a manifesto destined for internal Belgian consumption” and that its probable intent was to “lure you into controversy round the position of the King.” Following the Belgian elections in June 1949, a new coalition instituted a referendum on Leopold’s return. As far as Churchill was concerned, the fuss then died down except for one fervent British partisan of Leopold, Olive Muir, who harangued him in letters and at public meetings about why he had not replied to the generals. 8

The Belgians, Churchill wrote, “fought with gallantry and determination” but “were put into the war so late that they could not even occupy their own prepared front lines.” By now Leopold was back on the throne and his secretary wrote to Churchill expressing the King’s “profound astonishment” at an attack on “the honour of Belgium” and what amounted to a charge of “criminal negligence” by Leopold as commander-in-chief. Churchill, Pownall and [literary agent] Emery Reves all agreed that silence was again the best course, and the Belgian material was omitted when the statement finally appeared [in the] preface to the second French edition. 9

4. Was Leopold Guilty?

A canard Churchill once repeated is that “wherever there are three Jews it will be found that there are two Prime Ministers and one leader of the Opposition.” 10 This is nothing when it comes to Flemish- and French-speaking Belgians. Belgium is a “manufactured country,” and disagreements have long existed between its two populations. No one opinion is likely to satisfy both sides. In 1936, as Hitler, unopposed, reoccupied the Rhineland, the Belgian government adopted a position of “armed neutrality,” refusing to join an alliance with France and Britain while arming Belgium for any future conflict, remembering how their country had been trampled in 1914. As a result, Belgium was one of the better-prepared nations when Hitler marched west in 1940. Although Belgium did share military information with the Allies, as a proclaimed neutral it could not allow Allied forces to pre-position themselves or march with Belgian forces until it was actually invaded. Oliver Harvey, British Minister in Paris, wrote in his diary in January 1940:

Poor Leopold is in a desperate dilemma. If he commits himself to a military agreement, the Germans will say he has violated his neutrality and so justify a German invasion. If he doesn’t get agreement with us and France we cannot afford him proper help if he is attacked—a vicious circle. Moreover, it can be represented as an Allied interest that Germany should not invade Belgium and therefore Belgium should not provoke Germany. The answer is, I suppose, that Germany will invade Belgium if it suits, whatever Belgium does. 11

Winston Churchill took a dim view of neutrals. For him there were only two options in the face of Hitler: fight or surrender. Each neutral, WSC said on 20 January 1940, “hopes that if he feeds the crocodile enough, the crocodile will eat him last. All of them hope that the storm will pass before their turn comes to be devoured. But I fear—I fear greatly—the storm will not pass.” 12

But Leopold’s stance was based not on Churchill but on the governments that ruled France, Britain and Belgium in the 1930s, which had resolutely refused to oppose Germany’s numerous aggressions. Against that kind of leadership, however forlorn the hope that Hitler would leave Belgium alone, as commander of the Belgian forces, Leopold had few alternatives. When Hitler attacked in May 1940, Holland went down in four days, but Belgium fought bravely for two weeks, its artillery taking a deadly toll on the invaders. Prolonged resistance contributed to the successful evacuation at >>
LEOPOLD III...
Dunkirk, where 340,000 French and British soldiers were rescued. Nearly all the French soldiers refused to join Free French forces in Britain and returned to France. The Belgian government, then in exile in unoccupied France, forbade Belgian soldiers to leave, and even court-marshalled Belgian pilots who had flown to Britain or North Africa, accusing them of having stolen their aircraft.\(^{13}\)

Leopold had little joy from some of his allies. When General Gort, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, pulled back from the coast to protect access to Dunkirk (leaving the Belgian right flank unprotected) he did not tell the Belgians, nor indeed his own government, until after the fact. Meanwhile General Pownall, commander of British forces in Belgium (the same Pownall who would later assist Churchill in writing his war memoirs) remarked at the time: “we don’t give a bugger what happens to the Belgians.”\(^{14}\)

Clearly, the idea that Leopold surrendered without prior warning is denied by the facts. Leopold did not communicate with his own government, which, as he saw it, had cut and run; but he certainly warned George VI and Admiral Keyes. On 27 May he informed General Crampon (French Military Attaché) and Colonel Davy (British Military Mission), who in turn informed General Percival at the War Office. Upon returning to London the next day, Keyes sought an interview with Churchill, who would not see him and forbade him to make any public statements on the situation. But Churchill had additional considerations.

Churchill’s position as Prime Minister was by no means solid. On 28 May, the same day the Belgian Army surrendered, Lord Halifax was arguing that the British cabinet should enquire through Mussolini the German terms for an armistice. The pressure on Churchill was enormous, not least from his now nearly hysterical ally Reynaud; he desperately wanted to keep France in the war, if only as another government in exile.

With these points in mind one may dispute Andrew Roberts’ suggestion that Churchill said what he did because Britain needed a scapegoat. Often a scapegoat himself, WSC rarely pilloried individuals for catastrophe, and told his country the full nature of this one. The suggestion that George VI expected Leopold to reign in exile, while he himself marked it milder than his speeches in 1940. He consulted with Leopold’s brother, whose relationship with the King had turned sour and he assured Churchill that no further amendments were necessary. Churchill’s memoirs proved insufficient to satisfy all of Leopold’s supporters, but realpolitik also was at play here: Churchill saw no benefit in sticking his finger in the collective French eye, over a very sore subject in postwar France.

Much of the criticism of Leopold arose from internal Belgian politics. He was hardly the only one who underestimated Hitler’s ruthlessness. In 1940, as Oliver Harvey suggested, he was damned if he did, and damned if he didn’t. That he went to see Hitler is not criminal; he wished to reduce the suffering of his people. On the weight of the evidence it is fair to record that Leopold III was an honorable man.

ENDNOTES
3. Ibid., 73-74.
9. Ibid., 207-08.
11. Jackson, op. cit., 76.
13. Lt. Col. Louis Van Leemput, Belgian Air Force (ret.) to Daniel Wybo and the author; Col. Van Leemput, who was 13 at the outbreak of war in 1940, is National Chairman of the Royal League of Veterans of King Leopold III.
Winston’s Brother Jack Finally Gets His Due

TED HUTCHINSON

Rellying extensively on the papers of the late Peregrine Churchill, Winston’s nephew, Celia and John Lee offer an appealing book about a legendary figure and his almost unknown brother. They begin with the boys’ parents, Lord Randolph and Jennie Churchill: their backgrounds, courtship, and early years of marriage. The Lees track Winston and Jack’s childhood (confirming, as other scholars have, that it was not quite as unhappy a time as Winston’s autobiography suggests). We see the brothers as adults, their love and friendship giving them the strength to cope during trying times. The book closes by considering how the lives of their children have intertwined and shaped our remembrances.

The book tells us little that is new about Winston. The chapters on his youth are interesting, but his adult life, which has been studied as closely as anyone’s in history, has few mysteries left to reveal, and none are unveiled here.

This book’s great service is its accessible and valuable portrait of Jack Churchill. While Jack was the only sibling of Winston Churchill, I can honestly say I did not know much about him before starting the book, although I have read quite a lot on Winston. All credit to the authors for providing much that is new about an important figure in Winston’s life.

The Lees build a portrait of Jack that is at once impressive and humane. Jack was in many ways a simple man, a family man. He loved his wife, children and brother dearly. He was a hard worker and ambitious (a successful businessman in the City of London), but he was also content to support rather than emulate Winston’s quest for political prominence.

Indeed, through the material about Jack we are able to glean important insights about Winston, the man of whom there is seemingly little new to learn. For Jack, in some ways, seems almost to be a reflection of Winston—without the searing ambition that drove WSC to the height of politics.

They were both military men. They were both family men. They enjoyed great literature and the fellowship of a few close friends. But Jack was content to avoid the limelight. One could imagine Winston as Jack—if Winston were born without that nagging little voice entreating him to reach for greatness. It is a credit to the authors, then, that we receive a full portrait of both men, even if the portrait of Winston is familiar.

That said, the book is not without its flaws. There are a number of sweeping statements not supported by the evidence offered, including the claim at a number of points (e.g., 346) that Winston advanced his career at the expense of Jack. This is unsupported by the papers and biographies of both men, and frankly seems disrespectful to both.

For example, the authors say Jack was not credited for helping to organize his brother’s biography of their father or the World Crisis volumes (172). There is no correspondence in the Churchill Archives Centre, which we consulted, on Jack’s work with these books, and none is footnoted here. Is it not possible that the self-effacing Jack specifically asked that he receive no acknowledgement? That seems more in character than the idea that WSC purposely ignored his brother’s role.

Two pages later we read: “How ironic of Winston [in 1896] to berate Jack for ‘drifting languidly and placidly’... when he himself was abandoning his first choice [Army career] even before it had begun.” (174) The Churchill canon clearly reveals that WSC looked upon the Army as a springboard to >>
Leaving aside Jack’s retiring nature; consider only his brother, the self-described “glow-worm,” so laden with talent that one colleague said his headlights were so bright they sometimes blinded him. Yes, young Winston had a few corners cut for him by his mother. But he rose on his own immense talent and ambition, a climb both rapid and astonishing—as were his numerous but temporary reversals.

Make no mistake: this book’s central message is a valuable one.

Winston & Jack is a work of earnest good intentions in a world where many authors try to make money off the Churchill name with a “quickie” biography.

Moreover, this is surely the best book ever written about Jack’s life. It should be read by any Churchillian, like myself, who has wanted to know more about this man who remained in the shadows despite the glare shone on his brother. The authors deserve much credit for bringing Jack Churchill

**“Keep your Bowels Open and Your Kidneys Flushed”**

**WARREN F. KIMBALL**


Member price $19.20.

At tea-time, or to be precise at 4:14 pm on Saturday, September 7, 1940, 348 German bombers...and 617 Messerschmitt German fighters crossed the English Channel into British airspace, forming a block 20 miles wide, filling 80 square miles of sky. The most concentrated assault against Britain since the Spanish Armada.

This was the first day of the London Blitz...” An evocative opening to a compelling little book.

How evocative? Evocative of the immensity of the attack.* Evocative of Britain’s greatest strategic asset—the English Channel, which had kept both the Armada and Napoleon at bay. Evocative of British refusal to appear frightened or to act differently in the face of destruction, best summed up in the word “tea-time.”

But let us take our tea a bit later, and look at how the book works.

Peter Stansky, an accomplished historian of modern Britain, deftly takes us from British preparations for air attacks during the Thirties, the actual bombings, civil defense, public reactions (taken heavily from memoirs and similar recollections as well as early histories), and on to a discussion of the myths, realities, and legacies of the Blitz. The story is about how Londoners rich and poor, posh, East and West End, blue collar and intellectual, responded. They were, after all, the true stalwarts.

Government leaders and senior officials make only cameo, though appropriate appearances. The oft-cited visit of the King and Queen to the East End is balanced

*The Blitz was not the heaviest air terror attack on British lands. In just March and April of 1942, over twice the tonnage of bombs fell on the tiny island of Malta as were dropped on London during the entire Blitz; *Oxford Companion to the Second World War* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 713. Although the Malta siege is not mentioned by Stansky, one hopes that he will consider a follow-up comparing it with the London Blitz. The parallels are striking.*
Churchill’s actions and rhetoric appear at the right places. Stansky credits his oratory with a “central role.” But the book is about Londoners, not the Royals or Churchill; and properly so. (I would suggest that understanding Churchill’s leadership requires an understanding of the London Blitz, not the other way round.)

Inadequate and unimaginative civil defense preparations created long-lasting resentments. Planners expected more deaths and failed to provide for homelessness—a far greater problem. “Tragic as they would be,” writes Stansky, “bodies—though presenting all sorts of difficulties—were nevertheless a terminal problem.” (121)

Horrible events like the widely publicized South Hallsville School bombing, where a school packed with refugees whose homes had been destroyed itself suffered a direct hit, added to the perception of government having failed. The cock-up came when buses scheduled to evacuate the school showed up a day late (“eerily similar” to the late arrival of Hurricane Katrina evacuation busses, Stansky notes).

This is not to say that the Beveridge Plan of postwar social reform was a direct result of the South Hallsville disaster, or of the repeated instances of bureaucratic timidity and small-thinking (no toilets in bomb shelters, limits on free blankets lest people stay too long at a rest center, discouraging use of the Underground as bomb shelters lest fear and panic be contagious). But it was a small step from the need to broaden government responsibilities during war to extending them in time of peace. Two days after the Blitz began, a newspaper ad for a health tonic offered, with unintentional humor, a bridge between government responsibilities and the “carry on” reactions of Londoners. “No Act of Parliament compels you to look after yourself. It’s up to you to...[use the tonic and] keep your bowels open and your kidneys well flushed,” somehow making that part of the war effort.

Britons were no braver than others, said a number of observers, but their style “is peculiar to the national character.” One diarist noted that most East Enders “are taking the raids with that curious stolidity that baffles both the enemy and the home propagandist” (141). It was more than just propagandists who were surprised. Government plans had often assumed the public would be demoralized, particularly Jews and foreigners. Not everyone was “heroic.” But for those Londoners who stayed in the city—which was the overwhelming majority either because they chose to or had no choice—the persistent reaction to Nazi terror bombing was vocal anger directed at the “Jerries,” and quiet stubbornness.

On the last day of the London Blitz some nine months later (10 May 1941), nearly 1500 Londoners died. But that there was a last day, Stansky notes, illustrates that terrorism rarely achieves its goals. (This is a comforting thought in our own times, until you think about being one of those 1500 killed.)

In the end, the “ordinary” people of London won their victory. Hitler did more than blink. As Eric Sevareid wrote in 1946: “The Germans lost their nerve; the British did not, and so they won out” (135).

I promised you tea. Perhaps the Nazis made their most fatal mistake by interrupting Londoners at tea-time. Whatever the whimsy of that occult comment, tea epitomized their reaction to the Blitz.

Within minutes after the Blitz began, London was awash with tea. To take but one story: A fireman recalled a woman sobbing at the sight of her burned out home and telling another elderly lady about the damage. “Never mind luv,” said the second woman, “let’s go in and try and make a cup of tea” (89).

Smoking Banns

ALFRED JAMES


In the quest to record every facet of Churchill’s life, inevitably someone would examine his association with cigars. Author McGinty is a journalist in Scotland—where, ironically, smoking is banned almost everywhere.

Mr. James, of Wahroonga, N.S.W., is President of Churchill Centre Australia.

McGinty relies strongly on the Churchill Papers at Cambridge, whose electronic catalogue produces no fewer than 295 cigar references. Most are orders to and accounts from well-known suppliers in London and New York, and copies of letters to prominent persons, notably in Cuba, thanking them for gift boxes.

The book is entertaining but unfortunately adds little to our store of knowledge. Presumably, there is a market for only one book on this subject and it is a pity that Mr. McGinty did not consult more widely. About a third of the text outlines well-known details of Churchill’s career, and there is other “padding.” The most interesting chapter, “Protecting the Prime Minister,” is but an expanded version, duly acknowledged, of Allen Packwood’s “Cigars: Protecting the Premier,” which appeared in Finest Hour 106. It is >>
built around the testing in 1941 of two percent of an extraordinary gift of 2400 cigars from Cuba. By the time the testing was completed and a couple of mice had died (for reasons uncertain), it was found that Churchill had already tested other cigars from the collection on members of his Defence Committee!

The author interviewed a former secretary, the late Elizabeth Nel, and WSC’s last private secretary, Anthony Montague Browne. But nothing seems to have been contained many details as to how Churchill acquired, carried, cut, lit, re-lit, chewed and disposed of his cigars. I especially like Murray’s anecdote that it was his job to collect the remains of Churchill’s cigars and give them to Mr Kern (McGowan calls him “Kearns”), a gardener at Chartwell, who used them in his pipe.

Norman McGowan’s description of the ritual of WSC lighting his first cigar of the day in bed is worth repeating:

First he took off the band [against the advice of Zino Davidoff in The Connoisseur’s Book of the Cigar] and pierced the cigar with a long match, of a kind he had specially imported from America. Then he lit the candle which he has always at his bedside, and warmed the end in its flame. Next he lovingly wrapped a piece of gummed brown paper [made by Cartier, according to Graebner] round the other end. “I designed that myself,” he told me. “I call it a Belly-bando. It stops the end from becoming too wet when I chew it.”

This seems to have served the same purpose as “the blotting paper ring which looked like a very small doughnut” which Ronald E. Golding (Finest Hour 35) said was designed by Churchill’s butler, Greenshields. But few stories such as these appear in Churchill’s Cigar, nor do some thirty references, including auction prices, in Finest Hour, most of which could have been found in the Index to Numbers 1 to 100.

Bill McVey, who did the sculpture outside the British Embassy in Washington, says that Churchill was holding or smoking a cigar in about 260 of the 300 photographs he had examined (Finest Hour 36). Mr. McGinty is probably correct in his statement that “His cigar became a potent political prop, a handy pointer and a steady source of solace….He was also aware of the image the cigar projected, one of relaxed confidence, and the appeal this would have with the electorate.” In later life WSC always kept a partly-smoked cigar in his pocket for the benefit of photographers, as he put it: “People must see their ageing lion tearing up his gazelle or they’d say he’d lost his teeth” (Finest Hour 131).

Although I live in Australia, Mr. McGinty has told me one thing I didn’t know. In the town of Churchill, 100 miles west of Melbourne and built in the late 1960s, the Rotary Club has erected an edifice known as “The Big Cigar” as a memorial to Churchill. It is over 100 feet in height.

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**Over Hill, Over Dale.**

**CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING**

Churchill Goes to War: Winston’s Wartime Journeys, by Brian Lavery. Conway and U.S. Naval Institute Press, 392 pages, $34.95, member price $27.95.

A retired curator at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and a naval historian, Brian Lavery has plumbed a variety of primary source records as well as published accounts to relate the story of Churchill’s long-distance wartime trips (other than to western Europe). Many aspects of WSC’s dangerous and arduous sea and air journeys to meet with Roosevelt, Stalin and other leaders from 1941 to 1945 have been told before. Indeed, some books have focused on the topic, notably Gerald Pawle’s The War and Colonel Warden (1964), long rated highly. Several books covered the aircraft and their crews that Churchill used, and Celia Sandys’ Chasing Churchill (2003) included the wartime trips among others before and after. But this new account is by far the best, providing new details and deeper context for each voyage or air journey.

Lavery is an experienced writer and it shows—this is a readable account with few factual bobbles. One of the few is a statement (89-90) that the Boeing 314 Clipper flying boat was “the first [aircraft] in the world designed mainly for crossing oceans.” Not so, though it was the best of those that could. The endpapers feature the wonderful photo of Churchill in the Boeing’s pilot’s seat, with the huge cigar that surely nobody else would be allowed to smoke in a cockpit!

Lavery skewers a long-told tale that in flying Churchill to England from Bermuda in January 1942 (the first transatlantic air trip by any country’s leader), the flying boat had been within minutes of over-flying German gun batteries at Brest, on the coast of France. With a
good map and careful sleuthing of the archives, the author shows that (despite Churchill’s war memoirs) the plane was far from the French coast. In any case, Churchill flew on a sister flying boat less than six months later, back to Washington in one long hop from Scotland.

Maps charting the wartime travels are clear and to the point, and help the reader follow some of the odd routing required to avoid enemy interception. The text focuses on the actual travel time and the vehicles used far more than what happened at the meetings. Progressive improvements in Churchill’s aircraft (ultimately a C-54 Douglas Skymaster) are evident in the growing comfort of the long flights toward the war’s end, compared to the difficult conditions on the early Commando, a transport version of the B-24.

By far the most luxurious trips were by sea—especially three aboard the Cunard-White Star liner Queen Mary: two in 1943, the first to New York (and then by train to Washington to meet Roosevelt) and the second to Halifax (and by train to Quebec for the “Quadrant” summit). The third came in 1944 for yet another Quebec summit. The party returned from the second trip on the battlecruiser Renown, where Churchill’s daughter Mary was nearly swept overboard by a huge wave. (See Vic Humphries, “Glimpses from the ‘Taxi’: HMS Renown 1943,” FH 113:24-25, Winter 2002-03.)

Renown also took Churchill and party to Egypt late in 1943 for a conference at Cairo and then the specially-equipped York aircraft “Ascalon” carried him on to Teheran for the first meeting of the Big Three. This was the trip where Churchill, already weakened by a cold and the long hours of several successive conferences, ended up briefly on a nearly deserted landing strip in North Africa, thanks to confusion in RAF communications. Pneumonia set in and with that WSC had to endure an enforced stay (mainly in Marrakesh) to recover.

Still more travel was to come—including a trip to see Stalin in Moscow in October 1944, to Yalta in early 1945, and to the first portion of the Potsdam summit in mid-1945. To help illuminate these many voyages and flights, Lavery has found interesting little personal stories that help to bring alive the process as well as dangers of wartime travel. All told, this book is a marvelous read of an era quite different from the much-heralded aerial processions of national leaders these days.

### Three Great New Standards

**RICHARD M. LANGWORTH**

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**Gandhi and Churchill: The Epic Rivalry That Destroyed an Empire and Forged Our Age, by Arthur Herman. Bantam, 684 pages, $30, member price $24.**

**Churchill & Chartwell: The Untold Story of Churchill’s Houses and Gardens, by Stefan Buczacki. Frances & Lincoln, 324 pages, 214 illustrations, $40, member price $32.**

**Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940-1941, by Ian Kershaw. Penguin, 600 pages, $35, member price $28.**

**Gandhi and Churchill**

Cutting through decades of narrow or shallow reporting, Arthur Herman offers a balanced and elegant account of two famous personages, which captures both Churchill’s generosity of spirit and Gandhi’s greatness of soul. While recognizing their faults, he shows what motivated them and made them great—with impressive research which in Churchill’s words leaves “no stone unturned, no cutlet uncooked.” The last two chapters, and the author’s conclusion, are alone worth the price of what will be the standard work on the subject.

The book is comprehensive, with well-researched chapters on the early life of both figures, contrasting Churchill’s upbringing in glorious Victorian Britain with Gandhi’s in a prosperous, loving family in the Princely State of Gujarat—his father, like Churchill’s, a political figure of some repute. The author tells us how each man’s attitude was shaped by the other’s country, recounting Churchill’s early visits to India and Gandhi’s to England. Next comes their brief encounter on 28 November 1906, when Gandhi pleaded with the >>
GANDHI AND CHURCHILL...

32-year-old Churchill on behalf of Indians in the Transvaal, who were being deprived of their rights as British subjects by the Boer majority. Churchill was impressed by Gandhi’s “marshalling of the facts” and promised to do what he could. Gandhi never forgot, and thirty years later told a mutual friend: “I have got a good recollection of Mr. Churchill when he was in the Colonial Office and somehow or other since then I have held the opinion that I can always rely on his sympathy and goodwill.”

Gandhi evolved from a loyal British subject to the head of India’s independence movement following incidents like Amritsar, the 1919 massacre of Indians by a British general who fired into a crowd. Gandhi was apprised of the situation not least by Churchill, who spoke against it in the strongest terms: “What I mean by frightfulness is the inflicting of great slaughter or massacre upon a particular crowd of people...Frightfulness is not a remedy known to the British pharmacopoeia....”

Churchill is often visualized as unalterably opposed to Indian independence, which is a simplification. He softened toward Gandhi when the latter declared for equal rights: “Mr Gandhi has gone very high in my esteem since he stood up for the untouchables.” But Churchill adamantly opposed the India Act of the 1930s, and broke his political pick over it, opposed overwhelmingly by all three British political parties.

Churchill subsided when the India Bill passed in 1935, telling Gandhi to “use the powers that are offered and make the thing a success...” But in World War II as Prime Minister, with his nation’s survival at stake, he would brook no deviation from what he saw as the common cause. In 1943, when Gandhi was arrested and confined to luxurious captivity, he declared he would fast until Britain declared she would quit India. Churchill was certain that Gandhi added glucose to his drinking water to sustain himself. At Casablanca, Churchill remarked to the U.S. consul: “Now, Pendar, why don’t you give us Morocco, and we shall give you India. We shall even give you Gandhi, and he’s awfully cheap to keep, now that he’s on a hunger strike.”

Arthur Herman, who has the measure of the two great antagonists, offers a balanced and generous verdict. Churchill, he says had never understood Gandhi, any more than Gandhi had understood him. The reason was simple. The confrontation in February 1943 was not just between two willful men, or between imperialism and freedom, or between what Louis Fischer later called ‘the past of England and the future of India.’ It was no longer even about two different conceptions of empire. The confrontation, rather, was between two different conceptions of life. One rested on secular and humanistic traditions that had been tested by history and centuries of human conflict. The other rested on a vision of spiritual purity in which history and material things (including Gandhi’s own body) counted for nothing...In short, both men loved freedom and liberty, but of two fundamentally different kinds. Both were capable of great ruthlessness in pursuit of their goals precisely because of their confidence in those twin but opposite visions, which had sustained them through defeats and disappointments that would have destroyed weaker human beings. Together they might have complemented each other’s strengths and bolstered each other’s weaknesses. Instead, in February 1943, they went head to head in a final contest of wills, with the fate of India and the Second World War at stake.

This is a truly informative book on two great leaders, with no axes to grind, like so many authors who have disparaged them in the past. It is sensitive, balanced, fair, and beautifully written.

Churchill & Chartwell

CHARTWELL, 15 SEPTEMBER 1934—

“Forty winks in the afternoon and then (unexpectedly) bathing at 7 in pouring rain, intensely cold with a grey half-light of approaching night, yet curiously enough very enjoyable in its oddness. Freda Ward, Winston, Duff, Clemmie, Randolph and a child, in fact the whole party, were splashing about with gleeful screams in this sad crepuscule. The secret is that the bath is heated, and it is Winston’s delightful toy. He summoned Inches the butler: ‘Tell Allen to have a lot more coal on. I want the thing full blast.’ But Inches returned to say that Allen was out for the day. ‘Then tell Arthur I want it full blast.’ But it was Arthur’s day out as well, so the darling old schoolboy went surreptitiously and stoked it himself for half an hour, coming in on the verge of apoplexy.”

—Lady Diana Cooper,
The Light of Common Day.

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—Lady Diana Cooper,
The Light of Common Day.

Chartwell and its estate fill only half of this book. Stefan Buczacki admits that, having set out to write about Churchill’s most famous home, he was soon captivated by all the others, and realized that to be truly comprehensive he must cover them all: primary residences, government quarters, loans from or shares with family or friends, country houses, even holiday cottages. The result is the first comprehensive book about where Churchill lived throughout his long and eventful life, a surprising three dozen separate residences. (See Ampersand, page 58.)

The coverage is total, beginning with 48 Charles Street, where Winston spent his first five years, through his bachelor flat on Mount Street, his first house on Bolton Street, official residences (Admiralty House, Ministry of Munitions, 10 and 11 Downing Street), the friends’ and relatives’ homes he used, and his “three” holiday properties (including Chequers, the Prime Minister’s country estate, as well as
Lullenden.) Buczacki, who has penned over fifty books on gardening and natural history, immersed himself in the archives, and his end-notes extend to fifteen pages.

The author benefitted from “two significant pieces of good fortune”: the unpublished papers of Chartwell architect Philip Tilden, with whom Churchill uproariously contended through Chartwell’s initial reconstruction; and a trove of hitherto closed papers in the Churchill Archives relating to WSC’s farms. Illustrations, so vital to this story, are profuse, for the author obtained photographs of many of the residences today, supplementing numerous contemporary photos, documents, maps and plans. Even the endpages support the work, with a select family tree of close associates like Jock Colville and Anthony Montague Browne. What closer associates did Churchill have than the houses he lived in?

The combined fiscal failure and precarious finances of his horsey activities, are covered with accuracy and humor. Such episodes are so amusing that I wished for more of them. The archives-based material is somewhat clinical, and lacks many of the priceless observations published from time to time by such erudite friends as Diana Cooper (facing page). Churchill’s interaction with locals as a “Townsman of Westerham” (the title of an obscure but good 1969 booklet by Percy Reid) is not included. Happily, however, Buczacki mentions the gypsy, “Mrs. Donkey Jack,” whom WSC befriended and offered a place to live in his own wood. Longtime secretary Grace Hamblin’s “Chartwell Memories,” delivered at our 1987 conference and republished in FH 118, would alone have provided an intimate account of life at Chartwell and the peregrinations of its famous master. I would have liked to see larger format maps and floor plans, but this is the end of my criticism.

This is a thoroughly indispensable “standard work,” as important for the library of any serious Churchill student, as the memoirs of close associates like Jock Colville and Anthony Montague Browne. What closer associates did Churchill have than the houses he lived in?

**Fateful Choices**

Sometimes, All It Takes is a Shrug

“What a story! Think of all these people—decent, educated, the story of the past laid out before them—What to avoid—what to do etc.—patriotic, loyal, clean—trying their utmost—What a ghastly muddle they made of it!

Un teachable from infancy to tomb—

There is the first and main characteristic of mankind.”

—WSC to Beaverbrook, 21 May 1928

I an Kershaw, whose two-volume biography of Hitler is acclaimed, has written a fascinating book on what Churchill might call the “ten climacterics” of World War II: Britain’s decision to fight on in May 1940; Mussolini’s decision to attack Greece; Stalin’s decision to trust Hitler; Japan’s decisions to expand southward and to go to war with the United States; Roosevelt’s decisions to help Britain and to wage undeclared war against Germany; Hitler’s decisions to attack Russia, to declare war on the USA and to commit genocide in Europe.

While many chapters cover familiar ground, Kershaw does so in a fresh way, pulling together key sources that reveal the reasoning (or lack of it) behind each decision—which, together, settled the outcome of the war, and the world we know today. The only fault of the book is a degree of academic overkill: the chapters average nearly 50 pages each, and Kershaw is so intent on producing all the evidence that he runs the risk of violating an old editorial adage: “a bore is someone who tells everything.”

The most gripping chapters are those that explain the inexplicable: Japan’s decision to go to war with the United States, a war both the Emperor and Prime Minister expected they would probably lose; and Hitler’s decision, four days after Pearl Harbor, to declare war on the United States: an enemy he could not strike at, but which could soon strike at him.
FATEFUL CHOICES

Kershaw offers a revisionist view of Hideki Tojo, the Army chief turned Prime Minister often cast as a bloodthirsty aggressor. Though a hard-liner as head of the Army, once he became Prime Minister in October 1941, Tojo wanted an accommodation as much as the Emperor (maybe because of the Emperor, whom he worshiped as divine). By sending a high-level diplomat, Kurosu Saburo, to support Ambassador Nomura Kichiasburo in Washington, Tojo and his foreign minister, Shigenori Togo, signalled a serious desire for a settlement with the Americans.

(K)ershaw paints Secretary of State Cordell Hull the way Churchill allegedly painted Dulles: “He is the only case of a bull I know who carries his china closet with him...” As the clock ticked in late 1941, Hull frustrated negotiations at every turn. He rightly rejected the Japanese “Plan A,” letting Japan run amok in East Asia. He seemed to accept, but finally rejected “Plan B,” which offered a pull-back of Japanese forces from Indochina and an agreement to vacate China “at an agreed future date.”

Nor was FDR consistent: “While Hull and the State Department dampened prospects of an accommodation, the President himself appeared still open to the possibility of one” (367). In his don’t-tell-them-everything-you’re-thinking approach, Roosevelt ran hot and cold on requested meetings with Japan’s foreign minister or Emperor. First FDR would hint that he wanted a “modus vivendi”; then he would play hardball, refusing to consider any terms by which he would normalize relations.

Finally Hull replied with his “Ten Points,” including all previous demands and some new ones. In exchange for normalized relations Japan was required “to withdraw from China and Indochina, renounce her extraterritorial rights and concessions dating back to the turn of the century, following the Boxer Rebellion, to recognize no other Chinese government but that of Chiang Kai-shek, and effectively to abrogate the Tripartite Pact” with Germany and Italy. (369). Those were terms no Japanese government could accept. Hull was unclear as to whether he also wanted Japan to abandon its puppet state of Manchukuo. In fact he did not—but he didn’t bother to make this clear.

Too late FDR realized, “this means war”; he did not know Pearl Harbor was the target, but he must have known he’d backed Japan into a corner. Call me a cynic and you’ll be right: but if George W. Bush and his Secretary of State handled the Iranians like Roosevelt and Hull handled the Japanese, and ended up getting bombed for their pains, there would be a full-scale outcry and a Congressional investigation.

Kershaw also reveals much about Hitler’s decision to declare war on America four days after Pearl Harbor—one of the most inexplicable acts of the war. Carefully he reviews Hitler’s thoughts on the “American Union” from his earliest speeches in 1919. He concludes that the Western Hemisphere never seriously figured in Hitler’s plans (despite the now-famous forgery of a German map carving up South America)—except as some long-distant final confrontation which might have to be undertaken by a second generation of Nazis.

Hitler thought the “European armaments industry was greater than the American. And he had experienced American soldiers in the First World War [and believed] the Germans were far superior” (405). But longer term, he was smart enough to realize that Germany was on borrowed time. He knew when he invaded Russia that he must win quickly, compel Stalin’s surrender, then turn on Britain with his full forces and compel an armistice.

By 1943, Hitler said, the mighty engine of American industry would be engaged on behalf of Britain and the Soviets, and any hope of Germany for European mastery would be ended. Thus the Fuhrer warned his trigger-happy naval chief, Admiral Raeder, to avoid provocations in the Atlantic, even after Roosevelt had occupied Iceland and expanded the Atlantic security zone far to the east.

Why then did Hitler declare war after Pearl Harbor? Logic did not play a part here. The Tripartite Pact (Hitler’s stated reason) required Germany to declare war only if Japan had been attacked. The idea that he went to war to “fulfill a commitment” to Japan seems far-fetched. (When did Hitler honor any commitments?)

So infuriated were Americans over Pearl Harbor that, absent a German declaration, Roosevelt might not have asked for (or might not have obtained) a U.S. declaration of war on Germany. Churchill’s rush visit to Washington after Pearl Harbor, remember, was predicated on the urgency he saw that FDR adopt a policy of “Germany first.”

In declaring war, Hitler took little military advice, other than that of the belligerent Raeder, and even his Navy chief admitted that in December 1941 not one U-boat was anywhere near the U.S.

Astonishment at Hitler’s move was expressed by even sycophants like Goebbels. Many experienced soldiers privately (very privately) confessed they saw doom in Hitler’s act. “One ordinary soldier, confident that Germany would eventually prove victorious, nevertheless confided to his diary on the day of Hitler’s Reichstag speech, that it meant ‘war for our lifetime.’ ‘Poor parents,’ he added” (383).
Why did Hitler do it? The answer, it seems, was a “shrug.” Hitler knew that sooner or later Germany would have to confront the Americans. Why not now? That was all it amounted to: a shrug. It proved fatal.

Despite his disdain toward the enemy he had known in Great War, Kershaw notes, Hitler by the autumn 1941 had “contemplated for the first time the possibility of defeat,” saying “that if in the end the German people should not prove strong enough, then Germany deserved to go under and be destroyed by the stronger power.” (We may recall Hitler’s “scorched earth” orders as the Russians advanced on Berlin in 1945.)

Kershaw sees this as very highly revealing: “Beneath the veneer, Hitler seems to have recognized that his chances of total victory had by now all but evaporated...It was a characteristic attempt to wrest back the initiative through a bold move. But for the first time it was a move doomed from the very outset to failure” (430).

What a story!” Japan’s leadership is of two minds about going to war. The United States is also of two minds—or is she? Between Roosevelt and Hull, it is hard to tell. Emperor Hirohito and his entire cabinet believe that if they go to war, they will probably lose. So...to war they go!

Fateful Choices is an amazing commentary on the occasional (one hopes) irrationality of high-level decision-making: a book which ought to be read by our modern decision-makers (present and future), before they do something stupid. Again.

POEMS CHURCHILL LOVED

Crimea, 1945 and “The Charge of the Light Brigade”

JOSHUA GREENBERG

I found the original of this photograph in the Museum of the Black Sea Fleet in Sebastopol, Ukraine. Visiting museums in Russia and the Ukraine is a completely different experience for Westerners. To take photographs you must pay a fee. I was charged two Hryvnas (about 55p) per photo. Some museums are so under-funded that they have to economize on lighting. So a museum worker sometimes follows you around the halls switching the lights off after you.

The photo at right, taken in February 1945 by the Russian war photographer A. Mashuyev, is purportedly of Churchill visiting the British Crimean War Cemetery outside Yalta. But Finest Hour senior editor Paul Courtenay has identified the figure as Field Marshal Henry Maitland Wilson.

Wilson appears saddened to see the cemetery in such a state. In the background the land is ash black and the graves are destroyed. The face of the Russian officer standing behind Wilson hints that he may have felt the same sorrow. The memorial stands on Cathcart Hill, named for the British Lieutenant-General George Cathcart, who planned the infantry manoeuvres during “The Charge of the Light Brigade” in 1854.

Although the 1945 visit was lightly documented in the western press, it was on Churchill’s itinerary after the Yalta Conference ended. The Cemetery was badly run down; it had been neglected under Soviet rule, and was extensively damaged under Nazi occupation.

Invaded in 1941, the Crimea suffered badly. About 115 villages were burned to the ground and their inhabitants were sent to concentration, extermination and >>
CRIMEA, 1945...
forced-labour camps in Germany, Poland and Austria. By May 1944, the Red Army had regained control.

A second photo from the same source shows Field Marshal Alan Brooke and Admiral Cunningham, flanking a Soviet naval officer.

Today the area has been greatly restored and there is a memorial enclosure and obelisk to commemorate the British dead. It is situated on one of the hills in Balaclava, “The Valley of Death,” where the Charge took place.

I think it would be fair to conclude that Churchill was among the party visiting the Cemetery out of interest in the Crimean War, whose history he had studied deeply.

Churchill particularly admired The Invasion of the Crimea (1863), by Alexander William Kinglake. When asked how to write good history, Churchill once recommended, “Read Kinglake.” There are lines in Kinglake which prefigure WSC’s style, and in an 1898 article on frontier policy Churchill wrote: “I shall take refuge in Kinglake’s celebrated remark, that ‘a scrutiny so minute as to bring a subject under a false angle of vision is a poorer guide to a man’s judgment than the most rapid glance that sees things in their true proportions.’”

Surely the Prime Minister wanted to visit the scene so nobly described by Tennyson in one of his favourite poems. One could well imagine him reciting the lines on that very scene.

The Charge of the Light Brigade
25 October 1854
Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1. Half a league, half a league, Half a league onward, All in the valley of Death Rode the six hundred. “Forward, the Light Brigade! “Charge for the guns!” he said: Into the valley of Death Rode the six hundred.

2. “Forward, the Light Brigade!” Was there a man dismay’d? Not the soldier knew Someone had blunder’d: Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die: Into the valley of Death Rode the six hundred.

3. Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon in front of them Volley’d and thunder’d; Storm’d at with shot and shell, While horse and hero fell, They that had fought so well Came thro’ the jaws of Death Back from the mouth of Hell, All that was left of them, Left of six hundred.

4. Flash’d all their sabres bare, Flash’d as they turn’d in air, Sabring the gunners there, Charging an army, while All the world wonder’d: Plunged in the battery-smoke Right thro’ the line they broke; Cossack and Russian Reel’d from the sabre stroke Shatter’d and sunder’d. Then they rode back, but not Not the six hundred.

5. Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon behind them Volley’d and thunder’d; Storm’d at with shot and shell, While horse and hero fell, They that had fought so well Came thro’ the jaws of Death Back from the mouth of Hell, All that was left of them, Left of six hundred.

6. When can their glory fade? O the wild charge they made! All the world wondered. Honor the charge they made, Honor the Light Brigade, Noble six hundred.

Poems of Alfred Tennyson
Boston: J. E. Tilton & Co., 1870

http://poemsandprose.blog.co.uk/2005/12/
CHURCHILL QUIZ

by James Lancaster

Each quiz includes four questions in each of six categories: Churchill contemporaries (C), literary matters (L), miscellaneous (M), personal details (P), statesmanship (S) and war (W), with the easier questions first. Can you reach Level 1?

Level 4:

1. After whom did George Orwell name his hero Winston Smith in his 1949 novel 1984? (L)
2. “Negotiating with __ was impossible. He was a maniac with supreme power to play his hand out to the end, which he did, and so did we.” To whom does WSC refer? (W)
3. Which Canadian newspaper proprietor was a long-term friend of Churchill’s? (C)
4. In which of WSC’s books was Emery referred to as “Pausaland”? (M)

Level 3:

5. What did WSC mean when he said, “Let me have the best personal details?” (P)
6. To whom did F.E. Smith refer when he said, “I see end in old age”? (M)
7. On 6 June 1944, to whom did WSC order to be sent back to Algiers “in chains if necessary”? (C)
8. What was the first use of the phrase “special relationship”? (S)

Level 1:

9. Who was Churchill’s Conservative Shadow Cabinet? (S)
10. In 1911, which club invited Churchill and F.E. Smith to join, and then blackballed them? “It was like asking a man to dinner and kicking him down the steps before he entered your house.” (M)

Answers

This is an update on "Ampersand" in Finest Hour 103, Summer 1999, kindly provided by Mr. Buczacki, author of the excellent new book Churchill & Chartwell, reviewed on page 52. —Ed.

This list is as complete and accurate as I can make it. More complete details, including the holiday homes where they stayed with friends, and also London hotels used as short-term accommodation, are in my book. Overseas holiday residences are excluded. There are overlaps in several dates when more than one house was owned, leased or lived in at the same time. Dates are essentially those of ownership, not necessarily when the Churchills actually moved in or left. Please note that most London houses are in practice held on long-term leases rather than strictly owned as freeholds, and usually belong to institutions or Trusts.

Primary Residences of WSC: owned, leased or provided officially


2 Connaught Place (late 1882—1892). Leased by Lord Randolph Churchill. The family moved into Duchess Fanny’s at 50 Grosvenor Square (see below), where Lord Randolph died in 1895.

105 Mount Street (January—February 1911). Leased by WSC; his first bachelor flat.

12 Bolton Street (December 1905—March 1909). Leased by WSC, the first house of his own and became his first married home.

33 Eccleston Square (Spring 1909—May 1918). Not lived in between May 1915 and late 1916, since it was leased to Lord Grey from 1913. First house purchased by WSC after his marriage.

Admiralty House (April 1913—May 1915). Official residence, available to WSC from 1911 but not lived in until 1913.

Ministry of Munitions house, probably in Whitehall Place (May 1918—late 1918 or early 1919). Accommodation officially provided to the Minister of Munitions.

1 Dean Trench Street (early 1919—early 1920). Rented from the Hon. Victoria Adeane.

2 Hyde Park Street (late summer 1919—May 1920). Purchased by WSC but never lived in.

2 Sussex Square (November 1919—January 1925). Owned by WSC. Lived in from February 1920 to 1924, then leased, and finally sold in February 1925. Demolished following irreparable bomb damage sustained in March 1941.


11 Morpeth Mansions (late November/early December 1931—late 1939). Leased by WSC.


10 Downing Street & Number Ten Annexe (early summer 1940—July 1945). Official residences.

28 Hyde Park Gate (September 1945—1965). Combined with 27 Hyde Park Gate from August 1946. Owned by WSC but subdivided and let while the family lived at 10 Downing Street.


Family or Friends' Loans or Shares


35 Great Cumberland Place (1895—1900). Owned by Lady Randolph Churchill.

10 Carlton House Terrace (January—February 1908). Owned and loaned by Lord and Lady Ridley.

22 Carlton House Terrace (March—May 1909). Owned and loaned by Freddie Guest.

21 Arlington Street (May—late July 1915; CSC until October). Owned and loaned by Ivor Guest.

72 Brook Street (July 1915—November 1915). Owned by Lady Randolph Churchill.

41 Cromwell Road (October/November 1915—Autumn 1916). Owned by and shared with Jack and Goonie Churchill.

16 Lower Berkeley Street (September—November 1918). Now Fitzhardinge Street. Owned and loaned by Lady Horner.


Templeton, Roehampton (Late October 1919—February 1920). Owned and loaned by Freddie Guest.


67 Westminster Gardens (July 1945—September 1945). Leased and loaned by Diana and Duncan Sandys.

Country Houses

Lullenden, East Grinstead, West Sussex (February 1917—November 1919). Owned by WSC.

Chartwell, Westerham, Kent (November 1922 to 1965). Lived in from around April 1924. Owned by WSC; officially owned by the National Trust after WW2.

### Churchill Centre Regional and Local Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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