COVER
“To Winston, with affectionate birthday greetings from his old friend and castigator—Low.”
First published in Illustrated, 20 November 1954. Australian-born cartoonist David Low had produced Churchill-skewering political cartoons for the Star and other left-wing papers since the early 1920s. But victim and victimizer retained an abiding respect for one another and WSC wrote fondly of Low in his essay “Cartoons and Cartoonists” in Thoughts and Adventures As Sir Winston turned eighty, David Low returned the compliment.

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Late in his long life, my father was dismayed to find himself in a world he no longer recognized. From the price of peanuts to manners and mores, he declared himself on unfamiliar ground. An era of striving had morphed into an era of gratification. The older I get, the more I understand what he meant.

Forty years ago, at a time marked by a no-win war in Asia, assassinations in America and repression in Europe, Finest Hour launched its first thin photocopied issue. It was nothing I’d be proud to reprint. But to mark the anniversary we offer several of the best articles from early issues not yet posted on our website, an index to others that are on it; “climacterics” (Churchill’s word) in our own story; a review of conferences since 1984; a hundred of the best Churchill books. And, in “Forty Years On” (the words are from the Harrow song), leading thinkers tell us what if anything has changed in the world view of Churchill since 1968.

Whatever it thinks of Churchill, the world has changed beyond the imagination of those alive and sentient in 1968. Unprecedented events—assassinations, undeclared wars, impeachments, scandals, natural catastrophes and those of our own making—have accompanied the end of empires evil and benign, the liberation of some but not all peoples, the replacement of state terror with a stateless variety, the growth of the collective, the diminishment of the individual. All of this would concern Winston Churchill. Some of it did.

And one senses a torpor among the English-speaking peoples: a reluctance to focus on the essentials, a preference for inconsequentia. We indulge a film and broadcast media, that brothel of the western dream, as Mark Weingarden put it: “morally uncomplicated, comic-book depictions of heroes and villains, simple stories for uncurious people.” Churchill remarked: “We live in the most thoughtless of ages. Every day headlines and short views.”

We strain those views through Politically Correct lenses so that moral lessons are homogenized, no one offended, no “insensitivity” expressed. Problems and threats are now “issues” and “challenges,” lest they be of our own making. Poll-driven politicians demonstrate, in the words of the historian Paul Johnson, “how far a meretricious personal charm will get you in the media age.”

It is foolish to believe, as Paul Alkon writes herein, that our times are simply a replay of Churchill’s. There will never be another Third Reich—perhaps something worse, but not the same. Winston Churchill’s lasting value lies in his approach to challenges: not what he did in 1915 or 1940, but the broad principles he stood for, which are in the end timeless. And Churchill is unscathed by forty years of “deconstruction” (as we call lying about history). The history is still there with its flickering lamp, as he reminded us, stumbling “along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days.”

One of the most learned of scholars, President Larry Arnn of Hillsdale College, reminds me that forty years on, Sir Winston is in transition as the World War II generation dies. From a figure people remember, if only as a voice on the radio, he has become a figure for the ages. Larry ranks him with Washington and Lincoln in the United States, “provided we understand him fully—which is not easy, because it’s difficult to get our hands around him.”

How extraordinary that Churchill thought so deeply about transcendental matters! We could build a whole conference around just one of his essays, “Mass Effects in Modern Life” (1927, republished in Thoughts and Adventures in 1932). It could have been written yesterday. In it he ponders the trends toward mass-thought, mass-behavior, the cult of celebrity, the decline of the individual and of personal responsibility. Other essays of his contemplate the replacement of religious morals with a kind of vague internationalism; the refusal to act until “self-preservation strikes its jarring gong.” Until the terror of imminent extinction flickers....

It is astonishing that a politician who never went to university thought so deeply about these things. And Churchill communicated them so well: “There is not one single social or economic principle or concept in the philosophy of the Russian Bolshevik,” he wrote in “Mass Effects in Modern Life,” “which has not been realized, carried into action, and enshrined in immutable laws a million years ago by the White Ant.” In 2008, alas, we can apply that to many beside Bolsheviks.

It has been the work of this little magazine to reflect on the Washington or Lincoln of our time: to venture outside the trivial and the legendary, above the frothy soap opera picture, above the memorabilia, above even the blood, sweat and tears; to defend his greatness from carpers and cranks; to show that Winston Churchill was one of a kind, not just the person of a century, but of a millennium. We do so imperfectly. But we shall continue. Here’s to Finest Hour’s editors of the future—and to the next forty years.

RML
DESPATCH BOX

HAPPY FORTIETH
Producing any type of magazine is no mean feat and so I would like to put pen to paper and say how much I appreciate receiving both *Finest Hour* and the *Chartwell Bulletin*. I cannot think of a finer tribute to Churchill’s memory than these two publications. So congratulations to all those involved in the production and for providing so much pleasure and interest over the years.

JOHN FROST, NEW BARNET, HERTS.

• With which you have had much to do, John! See “Datelines,” page 8.

CHARTWELL FLOOR PLAN
Anent the review of *Churchill & Chartwell* (FH 138:52), I would be interested to know if there is a floor plan of Chartwell during Churchill’s residence.

ALEX DAVIS, NEW ZEALAND

• Stefan Buczacki, author of *Churchill & Chartwell*, replies:
The short answer is: not as far as I am aware. Almost no plans survive from Churchill’s architect Philip Tilden, and no one else had any reason to draw up floor plans before the National Trust acquired the property. Moreover, the layout and disposition of the rooms changed considerably during the Churchills’ occupation. For instance, by the end of World War II there was a cinema in the dining room, some of the bedrooms were in different places and the kitchen was upstairs. The NT have chosen, in accord with Churchill’s wishes, to display the house more or less as it was in the 1930s, although even here there are differences—for example some of the rooms (servants’ rooms especially) are now used as Trust offices or staff accommodation. One of the editor’s (very few!) criticisms in his generous review of my book was that there was no floor plan and I agree—my publishers said there simply wasn’t space because of the many photographs! Contact the National Trust at Chartwell via their website and they should be able to supply a fairly basic layout.

MORE LEOPOLD
Further to “Was Leopold Guilty?” (FH 138:42) may we also point out that Belgium’s neutral status under the Treaty of London (1839) disappeared in 1914. In 1936 Belgium adopted “a policy of independence” (translation), the word for “neutrality” being carefully avoided. Also, the King’s visit to Hitler was not disclosed until after the war so it is wrong to state that it caused unpopularity during the war.

At dawn on 25 May, four ministers called on the King at his headquarters near Bruges. Paul-Henri Spaak, Minister for Foreign Affairs asked: “Will the King have a Government at his side? Leopold: “Obviously yes, as I am not a dictator.” Prime Minister Hubert Pierlot asked: “Will the present Government, which will continue the war, be that of the King?” Leopold: “No, because that Government will be against me.”

(Leopold III, *Pour l’Histoire*, Brussels: Editions Racine, 2001, Chapter X, trans.) Leopold later complained bitterly that he had had no time to prepare for “the tragic misunderstanding of Wynendale on 25 May 1940.”

You also state incorrectly that the Belgian government fled France in late October and that Spaak and Pierlot did not accompany it. One fully empowered member of the government, Minister of Colonies Albert de Vleeschauwer, reached England on 4 July 1940, committing all Belgian overseas assets to the pursuit of the war at a meeting with Churchill on the 8th. Churchill said that as a junior minister, de Vleeschauwer could represent his country; he insisted that he return to the Continent and persuade his colleagues to come to England.

After three arduous weeks de Vleeschauwer managed to meet Pierlot, Spaak and Minister of Finance Camille Gutt, and convinced them to leave Vichy. Gutt joined him straightaway. Pierlot and Spaak, who returned to Vichy to clear matters with the rest of the cabinet, left on 28 August, but were interned in Spain until 21 October. They reached London three days later.

As regards “an armistice with Hitler” and “Nazi puppets” Pierlot never attempted anything of the sort. However he did offer the resignation of his government to allow Leopold to form a new government for the purpose of negotiating with the Germans. Leopold bluntly refused to accept this resignation, which he considered a political action he could not take as a POW. Thereby he did, fortuitously, contribute to the legitimacy of the government-in-exile.

The 1950 “referendum” exercise was called “a people’s consultation” which ended in favour of Leopold but it was not binding and the result was not respected. After the liberation, in a joint session on 19 September 1945, the Belgian Parliament approved all legislative and administrative decisions taken by the government since it left Brussels in May 1940 in an unanimous vote of confidence. Furthermore the Belgian Supreme Court decided that all measures taken in Paris, Poitiers and London were valid collegiate decisions thus clearly establishing the legitimacy of the wartime government, notwithstanding its deplorable quarrel with the King.

LUDO BARON DE VLEESCHAUWER VAN BRAEKEN

GEOFFREY FLETCHER, BELGIUM

• Editor’s response: I am happy to stipulate that Leopold visited Hitler in November not October; that it added to his unpopularity after but not during the war; and that Spaak and Pierlot eventually reached London. I will not argue the semantics of words like “neutrality” or “referendum.” It seems clear that Belgium in the 1930s adopted armed neutrality; and that the 1950 “people’s consultation” was a referendum, however one translates it. My object was to determine whether King Leopold adequately warned his allies of the Belgian surrender and to discuss the reasons for Churchill’s reactions, which I did. The relations between Leopold and his ministers are beyond my ken, but Col. Van Leemput’s following letter may explain which Belgians wanted an armistice with the Germans.

SEEKING AN ARMISTICE
First, I congratulate you on your fine article. I was pleased to sit down with the letter cosigned by my good friend Ludo Baron de Vleeschauwer, whose knowledge, because of his father’s involvement during the war, is considerable. I fear, however, that Ludo is a bit too mild about Pierlot.

You were indeed correct to state that “Spaak and Pierlot considered the war to be lost.” I do have a slightly different opinion about Pierlot’s intentions, as described by Roger Keyes in *A Sea of Troubles* On 18 June 1940 Spaak wrote to Paul Baudouin at the Quai d’Orsay: >>
“...The Belgian government is also willing to negotiate an armistice between Germany and Belgium, but before committing herself to anything, she finds it indispensable to make contact with the King and requests therefore a safe conduct for two members of the government” (translation).

Also on 18 June, during the Cabinet meeting, Pierlot (after being informed that France was seeking an armistice) stated (translation): “I have considered the problem from all sides. We will not go to England. France has thrown in the towel. We abandon, at the same time, the battle.” To which Spaak added: “Our mandate is accomplished. We have done our duty.” From the above it appears to be quite obvious that Pierlot and Spaak would have preferred to return to Belgium and to install a new government under German occupation.

IT. COL. (RET) LOUIS VAN LEEMPUT
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN,
VETERANS KING LEOPOLD III

BUCHANAN REDUX

Professor Freeman’s review of Pat Buchanan’s book rightly criticizes the author for trying to demonize Churchill, while occasionally conceding that Hitler was a less than sterling character. But the review leaves out Buchanan’s legitimate, albeit by now shopworn, contention that Versailles and its consequences were the product of extreme vindictiveness, rampant nationalism, out of touch idealism (especially on the part of President Wilson), and irrational arrangements. Buchanan’s main thesis therefore is actually that, if only people were virtuous and far-seeing, the war would indeed have been unnecessary. This is an unexceptionable conclusion which requires no revisionist to argue in over 400 pages. Ever hear of Original Sin, Pat?

MANFRED WEIDHORN, FAIR LAWN, N.J.

• David Freeman replies: I appreciate what Professor Weidhorn is saying, but as I was reviewing the book for *Finest Hour* I naturally felt that I should concentrate on its Churchillian aspects. Goodness knows the book has not lacked for other reviews.

I think that both my review and Professor Weidhorn’s remarks indicate that Buchanan’s book is badly structured. It almost seems that Buchanan set out to write yet another tome blasting the folly of Versailles, but decided it would not sell very well so he tacked on a lengthy chapter blaming everything on Churchill. This enabled him to put Churchill’s name and face on the cover, attract more attention and sell more books. For good measure, he then wrote one further chapter to conclude that all he had written explains what he sees as the misguided policies of President Bush.

People get so caught up in looking at the faults of the Versailles settlement and Wilson’s commitment to self-determination that they forget to see what was accomplished: For the first time in modern history millions of people in central Europe and the Middle East enjoyed the status of having their own nation-states. While many of these countries may have stumbled through the last ninety years in an effort to establish good government, that has not diminished their sense of national identity. I am quite sure that the Poles, Hungarians, Iraqis etc. prefer having their own country no matter how bad the leadership than returning to Imperial servitude. After all, none of these countries thus far has been clamoring for a return to the 1914 *status quo ante bellum*.

FINEST HOUR 139

Great edition of *FH*. In Ray Callahan’s article on Orde Wingate, one of the pictures shows Wingate talking with a Colonel Cochran, USAAC. Cochran was a good friend of Milton Caniff, the creator of the comic strip “Terry and the Pirates” (and later “Steve Canyon”). Caniff incorporated Cochran into the wartime “Terry” strips as Terry’s friend and protector, Flip Corkin, replacing Pat Ryan, who performed similar functions for Terry in the prewar years.

COL. DAVID JABLONSKY, CARLISLE, PENNA.

*FH* 139 is in its tradition of the highest standards of scholarship and presentation. Moving the book reviews to the front section seemingly runs counter to standard practice but really worked very well, particularly to emphasize two painfully absurd revisionist histories. It was right to mention that neither Buchanan nor Baker is proposing a new thesis, or indeed any new evidence. Their arguments trace back to 1940. It seems appropriate to quote a very apt British phrase to categorize mental laziness: “The man’s a bloody wanker!” Readers owe a debt to Messrs. Freeman, Roberts and Kimball, who have certainly saved us the price and the time it would take to read these two insignificant publications.

ROBIN BATES, MESA, ARIZ.

I’ve always thought of F.E. Smith as the swashbuckling older brother Winston Churchill never had. As to his quotation about “the best of everything,” the following line from GBS’s “Major B” (1905), spoken by Lady Britomart (ouch!) in act 1, scene 1, probably preceded E.E.’s quip: “I know your quiet, simple, refined, poetic people like Adolphus—quite content with the best of everything!”

ROBERT PILPEL, WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.

The second endnote to Barry Gough’s paper about the loss of *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* gives the impression that heavy naval losses connected with the evacuation of Crete were due to faulty command decisions. Admiral Cunningham, per his biographer John Winton, said: “It has always been the duty of the Navy to take the Army overseas to battle and, if the Army fail, to bring them back again....If, gentlemen, you now order the army in Crete to surrender, the Fleet will still go there to bring off the Marines.” Had the army been able to hold on a few more days, the German assault would have failed because of the extreme difficulties they were experiencing. If nothing else, the defence of Crete broke the enemy’s elite airborne forces and from then on they were used solely as infantry.

NORMAN HUNT, COULSDON, SURREY

• David Ramsay replies: I think this is beside the point. No Admiral, particularly one of Cunningham’s indomitable character, would have abandoned the troops on Crete and he was bound to attempt to get them off despite German air supremacy.

Admiral “Blinker” Hall’s remarks in the endnote (from his papers at the Churchill Archives Centre) relate solely to the failure of the Admiralty and Admiral Phillips to understand the vulnerability of capital ships to attacks from the air, and to the latter sailing without any air cover. He was a great admirer of Andrew Cunningham.
**DATELINES**

**WHEN CHURCHILL WAS BORN**

FINEST HOUR 29, AUGUST-DECEMBER 1973— Gladstone announced his retirement (but did not retire for twenty years)....Disraeli’s Tories began negotiations for purchase of the Suez Canal shares from Egypt....Postal sorters pressed for 26/ per week, rising to a maximum of 50/....The King of Fiji ceded the islands to Britain....Disraeli reduced income tax from 4d to 3d in the pound....silver spoons were 7/4 per ounce, coal 21/ per ton, a frock coat 21/. Cook’s advertised first class round-the-world fares for £170.....It was raining the day WSC was born, a weekend of hurricanes, high seas and shipping disasters. Vivid lightning was seen by sailors.

—JOHN FROST

* FH editor Dalton Newfield commented: “We are indebted (again) to John Frost, who is an inexhaustible supplier of interesting items about the Great Man.” Thirty-five years on, nothing has changed, as John’s world-renowned newspaper collection serves him still as our cuttings editor. John, 88, a veteran of Juno Beach in 1944, is now very ill. His many friends might like to send him an email via his son Peter: vwpete@tiscali.co.uk —Ed.

**ANGIE’S TRIBUTE**

HOLLYWOOD, JULY 7TH— Evidently Angelina Jolie’s tattoo, Roman numerals for the date of Churchill’s “Finest Hour” speech (FH 136: 62) were temporary adornments for the film “Wanted.” According to Jolie in “Bang Media International” (which doubtless knows what goes), “We tried to focus the fake tattoos on themes that would be related to this sense of justice. I have ‘Strength of Will’ in one language, and we added it in four other languages on my arm.... From Churchill’s speech, ‘We have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat,’ I had ‘Toil’ and ‘Tears’ put on my arms.” Jolie says having the temporary artwork added was unusual, and to that end, her permanent collection of tattoos was not covered for this film: “Instead of taking mine away, which we have to do in every film, we ended up leaving mine and adding more.”

**GROWING PAINS**

FINEST HOUR 18, MARCH-APRIL 1971— As we become more international, it behooves the editor to realize that we must communicate in at least two languages. Although an Englishman would probably recognize the word “harbor,” he would spell it “harbour.” More dangerously, if Finest Hour dates an event to happen on 3/4/71 it means March 4th to Americans and April 3rd to our British friends. Incidentally, our late Honorary Member, Randolph S. Churchill, raised a big fuss about this during World War II, but to little avail. Finally, American forces were trained to use the designation “4Mar71,” or more fully “4 March 1971,” which leaves little room for any mistakes—and FH will do this in the future (if the editor remembers).

Not so easy of solution is the designation of stamps. Each country has its own lingua franca when it comes to philatelic items, and this is very necessary. Elsewhere in this issue we refer to Australia #152-4. In the USA, this is the normal way to to designate three stamps issued by Australia in 1935 showing King George V on his charger “Anzac” and available in three values, 2d red, 3d blue and 2/ violet; and issued in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the reign of King George V.

But this is all nonsense to a reader who does not have Scott, and uses Gibbon to communicate with his fellow philatelists. Or Minkus. Or one of a number of other perfectly good catalogue systems. Perhaps the editor will have to have both Scott and Gibbon at hand in the future.

—DALTON NEWFIELD

• FH editor Dalton Newfield commented: “We are indebted (again) to John Frost, who is an inexhaustible supplier of interesting items about the Great Man.” Thirty-five years on, nothing has changed, as John’s world-renowned newspaper collection serves him still as our cuttings editor. John, 88, a veteran of Juno Beach in 1944, is now very ill. His many friends might like to send him an email via his son Peter: vwpete@tiscali.co.uk —Ed.

**APPLE FROM ORCHARD**

CHURCHILLCHAT AUGUST 1ST—There is a kind of cultish quality emerging in Churchill discussions these days with respect to the terms “liberal” and “conservative.” Apparently to some people you must be categorized as being one or the other and there is no middle ground. In fact, it is possible for a single mind to hold liberal views on one subject and conservative views on another without being philosophically inconsistent or unfaithful to one’s personal ethic. Isolated opinions may be interpreted as leftist or rightist, but one can hope people are more complex in their broader intellectual make-up.

Winston Churchill certainly was.
Incidentally, Clementine Churchill was a staunch life-long supporter of Liberal Party policies. Churchill was hated at times by people on both the left and right of politics because of his free-thinking and fearlessly expressed opinions. His closest friends came in all political colours and Churchill functioned best in coalition governments. One needs only to look at the membership lists for his “Other Club” to see that he was comfortable in the company of vital minds with fully formed ideas no matter what their party affiliations.

If Churchill had not been an individualist but a conventional party politician he could not have achieved what he did and we would not be holding him in such high regard today. My hope is that Winston Churchill’s memory will not be appropriated by the left or the right or the up or the down but will be celebrated as an icon of a individualism, rationalism and free speech who remained true to his own convictions in the face of enormous organized resistance.

—Stan Orchard, Victoria, B.C.

The Society has been honored by the acceptance of Honorary Membership by Lord Mountbatten. In a long and thrilling career, he contributed in a notable way to the causes of the Empire and the free world, aided by his wife, Countess Mountbatten. It was our intention to present a thumbnail biography in this issue, and to that end we reviewed several books about Mountbatten in our library. We soon determined that there is no thumbnail that could do justice even to the barest outline of his wide and interesting career. Instead, we present his Who’s Who entry, and intend to bring you biographical sketches in future issues, particularly as they pertain to his relationships with Sir Winston, which were many and intimate. Meanwhile we offer Mountbatten’s address to the Edmonton Society which begins in this issue. (The speech is now available on our website: http://xrl.us/bbpd -Ed.)

—Dalton Newfield

**LONDON PLAQUES**

**LONDON, AUGUST 6TH**— Reader Keelan Morris asked why there is a blue plaque marking Churchill’s residence in Sussex Square, when the house he lived in was leveled in the Blitz (Ampersand, FH 138:58). We referred this conundrum to Stefan Buczacki, author of the admirable *Churchill & Chartwell* (reviewed in FH 138:52), who kindly replied and sent the accompanying photographs. Stefan Buczacki elaborates:

“The house with the plaque in Sussex Square is not the original one in which Churchill lived—pretty obvious really! The present house dates from the 1960s. Moreover, notice that the plaque isn’t the official English Heritage version. ‘Official’ plaques are limited to one per person, but there are actually four Winston Churchill plaques in London, plus one for his father Lord Randolph Churchill. Unofficial plaques are on the site of the old 2 Sussex Square, on 33 Eccleston Square, and on 11 Morpeth Mansions (black, not the usual blue).

“The Lord Randolph plaque is official while the official English Heritage plaque for Sir Winston is on his last house, 28 Hyde Park Gate—but contains inaccurate information. As stated in my book, it proclaims that Churchill lived and died there. Actually, he lived at 28 and 27, which he temporarily linked, and he actually died at 27, where the ground floor room had been converted to a bedroom for him. Lady Soames told me she had been aware of this longstanding error when I raised it with her, but no one else seems to have spotted it.”

**HISTORY #102 1/2**

**LONDON, MAY 10TH**— On the 68th anniversary of Churchill’s becoming premier, the Headmaster of Brighton College told a conference that he wanted to inspire children with Britain’s legacy and influence on the world. Headmaster Richard Cairns said current history stops on only three occasions: 19th century women and the two World Wars. “We should stop being ashamed of being British,” he said.

“The Story of Our Land” is a course taught six times a week to pupils aged 11 to 14, after which they will take exams in geography, history and religious education. Cairns said the education system is “so obsessed with testing skills that it has forgotten to provide a historical and geographic framework...Not only do children not know where Afghanistan is on the map but a quarter of them believe Winston Churchill is a fictional character....Our poor children have no sense of their history and no sense of the historical landscape that surrounds them. We’re hesitating about talking about the past because people did things we would not do today. Slavery existed—that was wrong—but Britain had an important role in the development of the world and children should be aware our culture spread across the globe, for good or ill.”

“For good or ill”? Will someone please send to Headmaster Cairns >>
Churchill's retort to Clement Attlee (Woodford, 12 October 1951), who said his Labour Party was having to clean up "the mess of centuries":

"This is what the Prime Minister considers Britain and her Empire represented when in 1945 she emerged honoured and respected from one end of the world to the other by friend and foe alike after her most glorious victory for freedom. 'The mess of centuries'—that is all we were. The remark is instructive because it reveals with painful clarity the Socialist point of view and sense of proportion. Nothing happened that was any good until they came into office. We may leave out the great struggles and achievements of the past—Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, Parliamentary institutions, constitutional monarchy, the building of our Empire—all these were part of 'the mess of centuries.' Coming to more modern times, Gladstone and Disraeli must have been pygmies. Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill...and in our lifetime Balfour, Asquith and Morley, all these no doubt were 'small fry.'"

"NEVER SO GOOD"

London, March 28th—Actor Jeremy Irons, who won fame in "Brideshead Revisited" and other great roles, receives high marks for his portrayal of Harold Macmillan at the Lyttleton Theatre. (The play's title is from "Supermac's" 1957 remark that the British "never had it so good"). According to Benedict Nightingale in The Times, Irons portrays a "shrewd, canny, withdrawn figure who conceals a melancholy and even a despair beneath an urbane exterior." (Macmillan's wife carried on a long and not very quiet affair with Robert Boothby, Macmillan determinedly ignoring it.) Nightingale writes, "...the play is two or three cuts above the usual theatrical bio. There are consistently good supporting performances, from Anthony Cal's vain, edgy Eden to Ian McNeice's Churchill, who looks a bit like a bloated dwarf but does catch some of the giant character. Irons manages genuinely difficult feats. To be self-effacing yet in command. To aim for power without quite wanting it. To attain success yet see through it and, at times, wish for death. To watch what he suspects is his own moral decline. To be inscrutable. In short, to be Harold Macmillan."
Dresden, VE-Day, Potsdam).
1945 August to October (War’s
End, Iron Curtain speech).
1951-1955 (Second Premiership,
Bermuda Conference).
1955-1965 (Retirement, writing,
painting, reflecting, family, legacy).
Anyone who has any documents
that they would like Sir Martin to con-
sider for inclusion can email him through
his website: www.martingilbert.com.

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Leading Churchill Myths
“Churchill crushed striking Welsh coal miners by sending in troops”
Randolph S. Churchill
Excerpted by kind permission from Winston S. Churchill, vol. 2 Young

In 1911, a strike began in the coal mines at Rhondda in early
November of the same year. It arose out of a dispute concerning wage
differentials in the working of hard and soft seams. Many men were
involved, estimates varying between 25,000 and 30,000, and many dif-
ferent pits were affected.

There was looting and the local authorities appealed to the War
Office for troops. On hearing of this, Churchill as Home Secretary con-
sulted the Secretary of War, Haldane, and they agreed instead to send
police, but to hold some troops in reserve nearby.

Churchill’s whole conduct has since been grotesquely distorted, and
it has become a part of socialist demonology that Churchill sent troops
who fired upon the miners of Tonypany. Socialist propagandists have
sought to make martyrs of the miners of Tonypany comparable to those
of Tolpuddle in 1834. Around 10 November, WSC wrote to the King:
“No need for the employment of the military is likely to occur….The
whole district is now in the effective control of the police, and there
appears to be no reason at present why the policy of keeping the military
out of direct contact with the rioters should be departed from.”

A study of the contemporary Press confirms the facts set out in
Churchill’s letter to the King. The fact that Churchill did not use troops
against the miners is underlined by the fact that Lord Northcliffe’s Times,
“ever strong upon the stronger side” as Hazlitt had earlier said of it,
attacked him on 9 November for not having used troops: “Mr. Churchill
hardly seems to understand that an acute crisis has arisen, which needs
decisive handling.”

The Manchester Guardian the next day rebuked The Times and said
in an editorial: “It needed some courage after the Chief Constable had
asked for troops to stop the troops which were on their way and to send
policemen instead. But, as usual, the brave course was also the wise
one….imagine what would have happened if the soldiers instead of the
policemen had come on the rioters while they were pillaging. Bayonets
would have been used instead of truncheons; the clumsier methods of
the soldiers would have exasperated the crowds, and instead of a score of
cases for the hospital there might have been as many for the mortuary.”

In the light of the facts so clearly shown in the public prints of the
time, it is all the more remarkable that the Tonypany label should have
hanged around Churchill’s neck all his life. The lie was still being energeti-
cally spread in the 1960s, and received what should have been its quietus
in a brilliant article by Sir Alan Herbert in The Spectator of 28 June
1963. Yet the rumour persists and has even been improved upon.

In January 1967 the author was informed that an Oxford under-
graduate, discussing Churchill’s career with his tutor, asserted with some
confidence that “Churchill had ordered tanks to be used against the
Welsh miners at Tonypany.” His tutor commented that this showed
remarkable farsightedness on Churchill’s part, as the tank had not yet
been invented.
I love to revive for both myself and for others the vivid personality, the warmth and the humanity of my great and beloved father, in the glow of whose memory I shall ever live. Of course, it was his family and close friends who were the principal beneficiaries of his warm-hearted and in the main genial temperament. But those who knew Winston Churchill best in public and in private have often testified to the oneness of his character. His public face was not that much different from the private countenance we all knew. He was a most natural, almost uninhibited person with an engaging frankness of expression and candour of mind which were refreshing to encounter. His spontaneous enjoyment of so many things in life and his many interests and talents made him a very enthralling companion.

To have been my father’s child was an enrichment, as perhaps you can imagine, beyond compare. And from my earliest years I found myself admitted to a grown-up world of interest, variety, excitement, and great fun. My childhood memories of my parents are chiefly centred around life at Chartwell, which was where my father loved best of all to be in the world. He used to say, “A day away from Chartwell is a day wasted.” And there I, by far the youngest of his children, was brought up from my earliest days.

No account of Churchill as a family man can exclude his beloved Clementine, whose abiding beauty, distinct personality, steadfast love, and—last but not least—good housekeeping, made the constant background to his own tumultuous career. Many years after they were married he wrote to her: “My greatest good fortune in a life of brilliant experience has been to find you and to lead my life with you.” What a tribute! And for fifty-seven years they lived together, facing the ups and downs of political life, in the eyes of the storms which have rocked our civilisation.

We children were early on to learn the tides and seasons of Parliamentary sessions—the responsibilities of public life which governed our parents’ lives, which took no account of school prize givings, family feasts, or carefully planned treats and holidays. Even when we were quite small, we learned to sense and to respond to the tension of the crisis. My father used to say gravely, “We must all rise to the level of events.” An austere dictum for the young, but I have come to be grateful for it in my life.

Public dramas penetrated to the nursery floor. In 1915, at the height of the Dardanelles Crisis which resulted in grievous loss of life and dramatic repercussions, Diana, then aged six, was heard by her nanny to pray with fervour, “Oh God, please bless the Dardanelles, whatever they are.”

For me, clear consecutive memories of my father begin with the opening of that decade which in the term of Winston Churchill’s life has come to be called “The Wilderness Years”: 1929-39. In 1929, he had ceased to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, when Stanley Baldwin’s Conservative government was defeated. For ten years after that he was to be out of office. Winston was now in his mid-fifties, Clementine ten years younger, and myself, trailing along well behind the big ones, Diana, Randolph, and Sarah.

Winston was of course still a member of Parliament, and politics kept my parents much in London. But in the Thirties, Chartwell, which had been bought in the early Twenties, became more and more the centre of their lives. Looking back with a perspective which one doesn’t have at the time, I think what strikes me most about my father at that period, is what a prodigious worker he was.

Our domestic life was geared around his programme. Chartwell was a veritable factory. The lights from his upstairs study gleamed late into the night while, padding up and down that long room with its raftered ceiling, he dictated to his secretary hour after hour. His speeches, whether on platforms up and down the country or from his place below the gangway in the House of Commons, received infinite pains in their preparation. Newspaper articles for both home and abroad poured forth. His polit-
ical activities alone would have filled a busy life, but apart from all this, he made time for his work as an author and as an historian.

It must never be forgotten that he was not a rich man. He kept us all by his pen. His literary output in those years was truly amazing. Apart from collections and speeches, articles and essays, his major works between the two world wars were *The World Crisis* in six volumes (the 1914-18 war and its aftermath), and his monumental Life of his great ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough. The outbreak of the Second World War found him hard at work on his four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, a vivid, panoramic tapestry, from which he broke off to contribute with his own life and actions more memorable pages to that history.

After the Second World War he was to complete this work, but only after the six volumes of his war memoirs. Someone has compared him to Caesar, who waged wars and wrote about them. All the while he was involved in politics, leading his party from the humiliating defeat of 1945 back to power once more. Winston Churchill was 76 and still going strong when he became Prime Minister again in 1951. And if we now recall him chiefly as statesman and world leader, we must remember that it was for literature that Winston Churchill was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1953.

Life was not all toil. Far from it! If midnight oil was consumed by the gallon, daylight and sunshine hours were filled with a multitude of occupations: building walls and cottages, making dams, turning peninsulas into islands, constructing swimming pools, and devising complicated waterworks so the little rivulet that ran in at the Chartwell splashed round down through the valley and was pumped up again to start crashing down the hill again.

During the winter of 1934, when my mother was away on a long sea voyage, a friend staying at Chartwell wrote to her to keep her in touch. She wrote, “Winston has so many irons in the fire that the day is not nearly long enough, what with the new wall and the mechanical digger that does the work of forty men, rebuilding the chauffeur’s cottage, films, the crisis in India, and when there is nothing else, Marlborough. Well, you see, we are busy.”

And there was his painting. He took it up literally as occupational therapy when he was over forty, in the traumatic aftermath of the Dardanelles catastrophe; and from that grim summer of 1915 for over forty years more, my father found hours of pleasure and occupation in painting. He himself wrote, “Happy are the painters, for they shall not be lonely. Light and colour, peace and hope, will keep them company to the end or almost to the end of the day.”

Those were prophetic words, for he continued to enjoy painting up to within just a few years before his death. I am indeed fortunate to live surrounded by some of his best pictures. They are so full of light and colour, and evoke for me many happy hours spent watching him paint or having picnics while he was painting. They evoke not only the many seasons of Chartwell and the brilliant light of the south of France, but reflect also the hours of concentrated pleasure, and oblivion from dark worries, which he derived from painting them.

One of my father’s salient characteristics was his readiness to forgive. Somebody said about him, “Winston is a very bad hater.” When I was a child, I often heard him quote the Biblical injunction, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” and it was a precept he practised both in his public and his private life. He indeed was a quick forgiver, and often it was he who made the first steps across the bridge, to make up quarrels—whether in matters great or small, whether with mighty grown-ups or his own silly, tempestuous children. In his public life, he preached and practised reconciliations and magnanimity in victory to his country’s foes.

No recollection of my father could ignore the wit and wisdom and joviality of his company. Early admitted to our parents’ table as we children were, some of my most vivid childhood and teenage memories are the mealtimes at Chartwell. Much of the splendour of conversation, of course, sailed over my head in the earlier years. I think I may have possibly been more preoccupied about whether there were going to be enough cupcakes for me to have a second helping. But I think sometimes I didn’t miss all of the firework displays and eloquent argument. And as time went on, I began to follow and to feel inspired by the great issues of those days.

Most of all I remember with delight when our company was joined by some of the muses—of history, of song, and poetry sacred and heroic. Led by my father, we would recite verse after verse from *Macaulay’s Lays of Ancient Rome*, his and our favourite being the glorious tale of how Horatio kept that bridge in the days of old. And the rollicking Edwardian musical songs he had enjoyed so much as a young man; and Rudyard Kipling in all his moods; and Rupert Brooke; and of course, Shakespeare. What a prodigious memory my father had, reaching far back to his school days at Harrow. And from him, too, I learned as a child that throbbing, thrilling, glorious “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.” Perhaps those long ago, triumphant days were in our minds when we chose that hymn to be sung at his state funeral at St. Paul’s.

With all these diversions, mealtimes sometimes prolonged themselves into three-hour sessions, often to my mother’s despair. And so eventually she would make to move. And I so well remember my father looking at her down the table, lovingly and ruefully, and saying, “Oh, Clemmie, don’t go. It is so nice. Let us command the moment to remain.”

Of course, one never can. But today I’ve tried to command some precious moments that I remember to remain. And as I have recalled these things and that extraordinary man in your company, it has made me very happy.
Churchill
Since 1968

*Finest Hour* asked twenty leading Churchill thinkers and writers whether the world’s view of Sir Winston has changed since our founding; and if so, what if anything The Churchill Centre should do about it.

As Alive as Ever

PAUL ADDISON

Forty years ago the future of Churchill’s reputation was uncertain. The official biography had stopped short at 1914 and Martin Gilbert’s volumes had yet to appear. Most of the source materials now freely available to historians were still top secret, as was the very existence of ULTRA.

Churchill’s death had been followed by a spate of revisionism that intensified in the Seventies. In *Churchill and the Admirals* (1977) Stephen Roskill was severely critical of WSC’s interventions in naval operations. In *Allies of a Kind* (1978) Christopher Thorne accused him of racial prejudice and ignorance of the Far East. How much further would such criticisms go?

They culminated, at least by scholarly measurements, in John Charmley’s *Churchill: The End of Glory* (1993), a root-and-branch attack on the Prime Minister’s war leadership. It was at this point that opinion began to swing back in Churchill’s favour.

Historians who in the past had seen it as their duty to avoid the cardinal sin of hagiography now feared that revisionism was emptying the baby out with the bath-water. In order to counter the “Charmley thesis” they began to emphasise and explain Churchill’s achievements as a statesman and his exceptional qualities as a human being.

Other important factors in the Churchill revival were the opening up of the archives and the demolition of anti-Churchill myths by the official biography and The Churchill Centre. Areas of serious debate, such as the military and moral dimensions of Churchill’s support for area bombing, remain, and there always will be genuine dissent.

Dr. Addison is a professor of history at the University of Edinburgh. His books include *Churchill on the Home Front* and *Churchill: The Unexpected Hero*. His *Churchill* in the Oxford VIP series is used as a text in The Churchill Centre’s teacher seminars.

But over the past few years works favourable to Churchill have poured from the presses and his reputation rests on much firmer foundations than it did forty years ago.

Since history never repeats itself exactly, the specific policies Churchill adopted in twentieth century contexts do not provide ready-made solutions to the problems of the twenty-first century. But Churchill’s writings and speeches are full of maxims and reflections and a political philosophy that offers us much food for thought.

Up to a point Churchill took a Darwinian view of human nature. He believed in the virtues of competition between individuals and between nations. But although he was not an orthodox Christian he also believed that political power and military force must serve a moral purpose. Hence it was the duty of governments to intervene on behalf of the weak and the poor. Hence also it was the duty of statesmen “so to deal with other nations as to avoid strife and war and to eschew aggression in all its forms, whether for national or ideological objects. But the safety of the State, the lives and freedoms of their fellow-countrymen, to whom they owe their position, make it right and imperative in the last resort, or when a final and definite conviction has been reached, that the use of force should not be excluded.” Debatable, of course, but Churchill’s political thought is worth debating.

What other reasons are there for studying Churchill? Firstly pleasure. His life is a riveting tale in itself, a blend of *Boys’ Own Paper* and Shakespearian tragedy. Secondly it is virtually an education in the history of the two World Wars and many of the other great events of the first half of the twentieth century. Thirdly, Churchill exemplified the virtues of leadership in a parliamentary democracy. He believed that major problems had to be identified and addressed rather than swept under the carpet. He was always ready to offer bold and imaginative solutions and sceptical of the inhibitions and “shibboleths” of party politics. Sometimes he led where hardly anyone wished to follow, and sometimes he blundered into a cul-de-sac; but in the end it was his readiness to lead that made him, in the words of A.J.P. Taylor, “the saviour of his country.”
Golden Scholarship vs. Leadden Reading Skills

PAUL ALKON

Last year a mathematically inclined book reviewer stated that more than 8000 publications have appeared with “Churchill” in their title, some 600 of them biographical studies, and that 129 books related to Churchill had appeared between 2000 and 2007, whereas fewer than 100 had appeared during each of the previous four decades. These figures are plausible and at first glance reassuring. Even without keeping count, fellow book junkies will have noticed a rising tide if not tsunami of Churchill studies.

Very many, though alas not all, are accurate additions to our understanding. The steady increase of good books would be a lot more comforting if the reviewer above hadn’t mentioned in passing how strongly Churchill was “attracted to Hitler’s dynamism,” as though that dubious fact revealed everything essential about their relationship. But accurate books don’t guarantee careful reviewers.

We live during a golden age of Churchill scholarship and a leaden age of diminishing reading skills. Thanks to the very proliferation of attention to him, moreover, Churchill remains an irresistible attraction for those who enjoy cutting great men down to their own small size. More dangerously, he also attracts those who fancy themselves his reincarnation and our times simply a replay of his era. Too often reviewers applaud books reviving the wheezy old accusations about Winston the alcoholic warmonger, egging on the British to lose their nice empire by fighting an unnecessary war with inexplicable ferocity.

As with many other notable figures, there is a persistent double tradition. First there is popular legend, sometimes waxing positive, sometimes negative, but in either mode usually retailing easy oversimplifications, yielding variously heroic or villainous Churchill to suit prevailing political moods. Parallel to but mostly without touching the Churchills of popular imagination is historical scholarship that challenges our nostalgic longing to convert his past into an easily applied preview of our present.

In Marlborough Churchill remarks the paradox that history must be studied even though “the success of a commander does not arise from following rules or models...every great operation of war is unique.” And surely not just operations of war.

Permutations of the legendary Churchill warrant attention as one measure of shifting public opinion. The historical Churchill warrants attention because, despite all his faults, he is among the handful of people whose principles, courage, and conduct made our world significantly better than it otherwise would be. Study of him will always yield important lessons (not rules), more so if we avoid the deplorable recent tendency to convert his experiences into do-it-yourself leadership handbooks for ambitious executives.

The Churchill Centre will have no end of useful work ahead combating with historical facts the more pernicious legends about Churchill. As a student of literature, I especially hope for greater efforts to illuminate and make more widely known his skill as a writer. Churchill’s mastery of English prose is a significant part of his achievement and our literary heritage. Not least, Churchill warrants attention and admiration because in 1940 he shaped events in ways that made a decisive difference for the better while also, thanks to his brilliant words, making legend and history coincide to become the inspiring tale of his and Britain’s finest hour.

“Never Despair”

LARRY P. ARNN

The relevance of the life of Winston Churchill to our time is apparent in the newspaper every day. It is not so much that “the great world wars and the cold war shape the time in which we live,” although they do. Look at something more direct. What frightens us today?

Take one thing: modern weapons which are increasingly cheap and available. There are dirty bombs. There is anthrax and its biological cousins. There are virulent chemicals. It is said that a small nuclear device exploded high above our country and killing no one immediately might destroy the electronics and the electrical power of the nation. This would cause not inconvenience, but a disruption of life and civilization. Despotic nations possess these weapons. Will they use them? Their practices at home are not encouraging.

This phenomenon was familiar to Churchill not only because he lived to see it: before he saw it, he foresaw it. He could perceive its outlines in the use of new and terrible, if now primitive, machines of war even before the great wars. In that phony peace between those great wars, he drew a picture of the danger we face today in disturbing terms:

Mankind has never been in this position before. Without having improved appreciably in virtue or enjoying wiser guidance, it has got into its hands for the first time the tools by which it can unfailingly accomplish its own...
exterminating...Death stands at attention, obedient, expectant, ready to serve, ready to shear away the peoples en masse; ready, if called on, to pulverize, without hope of repair, what is left of civilization. He awaits only the word of command. He awaits it from a frail, bewildered being, long his victim, now—for one occasion only—his Master.

It is hard to think what can be done about this problem for the long term. It would be a very good thing if the worst weapons did not exist in anyone's hands; but they do. It would be a very good thing if war could be outlawed; but it has been outlawed before. It would be a very good thing if we improved appreciably in virtue, or "enjoyed wiser guidance." Virtue and wise guidance are not ubiquitous, the latter not even common. The problem of rule, say the old philosophers, is fundamental. Part of the solution lies in the study of the best rulers.

If this is our problem, then Churchill is a man to study. Do not make up your mind in advance whether you think he was right. Do not pay attention to the stick figure Churchill in some recent books. Read Churchill himself, or else read his great biographer, where the richness of his story is found in detail.

Consider at the beginning only that Churchill knew the problem of our time, and still he found the courage and prudence to fight the worst war, against the worst enemy, to victory. Fearing that freedom, and the wealth and science that flow from it, made war more fearsome—still he stood up for freedom against every risk.

At the end of his work, speaking of nuclear weapons, he admitted that we had entered a period "both measureless and laden with doom." Still he thought that statesmen owed their people a plan, and he had one, that is worth studying even today. And if plans should fail, he reminded us with his last words: "Never flinch, never weary, never despair."

This seems very relevant to our time, or to any time.©

Still Settled and Still Secure on his Pillar

PIERS BRENDON

I

used to give a lecture entitled "Changing Views of Churchill." It began by examining the two stupendous pillars of Churchill studies: his own writings and the official biography. Then it looked at ways in which attitudes towards the Great Man have changed in recent years, using prominent landmarks such as Robert Rhodes James's excellent Churchill: A Study in Failure (1970) and John Charmley's elaborate Churchill: The End of Glory (1993). Both books undermined WSC's reputation in different ways, as did others, notably the full version of Lord Alanbrooke's War Diaries, published in 2001. But Brooke wrote in haste when he was tired and I was happy to conclude with his own favourable verdict on his boss, whom he called a "superhuman genius."

Since then, however, Professor David Reynolds has produced his mighty tome In Command of History: Churchill Writing and Fighting the Second World War (2004). Unlike Charmley and others, he has no axe to grind. His account of Churchill's making and penning the history of World War II is a cool forensic exercise, informed by incomparable knowledge of the period in general and enviable familiarity with the Churchill archives (and other documentary material) in particular. Furthermore, Reynolds has written, as it were, the second instalment of a critique of Churchill's war memoirs, the first being Robin Prior's excellent Churchill's "World Crisis" as History (1983). Reynolds confirms the serious doubt that Prior had already cast on Churchill's reliability as an historian, thus sapping one of the twin pillars I refer to above.

Reynolds exposes Churchill's unremitting endeavour to present the past as he wanted it to be. Sometimes there were sound reasons for this. Churchill did not wish to affront America by revealing his low estimation of Eisenhower and he could not, of course, divulge the ULTRA secret. For the most part, though, Churchill was intent on showing that he had nearly always been right. For example, he struggled to maintain that he had been consistently in favour of the cross-Channel invasion. The truth was that he preferred flanking attacks (such as the operation against Norway (which General Ismay called an "Arctic Gallipoli") and raids to "set Europe ablaze" (which often turned out to be damp squibs).

Reynolds has thus produced the most damaging assault on Churchill's credibility since Robert Rhodes James. But has he damaged Churchill beyond repair? Reynolds himself does not think so, and neither do I. He maintains, for example, that the unexpurgated account of Churchill's discussions whether to negotiate with Hitler in 1940 makes him "a more impressive figure than the almost blindly pugnacious bulldog of popular stereotype." I believe that Churchill studies will benefit in the future from a more sceptical and nuanced approach towards his own writings.

It is not, after all, as if Churchill did not warn posterity about his partisan approach. He explained his refusal to keep a diary during the war by saying that he preferred to produce a subsequent account "so that, if necessary, he could correct or bury his mistakes." And he described his six-volume memoir, The Second World War, as "my case." He famously liked to declare, "I consider that it will be found much better by all Parties to leave the past to history," adding with a chuckle, "especially as I propose to write that history myself."©

Mr. Brendon is a writer and historian who was Keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre from 1995 to 2001. His most recent book is The Decline and Fall of the British Empire (2007).
S

o much has been made of
Churchill’s haranguing his gen-
erals that we thought readers
might like to read his 30
March 1941 memo to the
Chiefs of Staff on the invasion exercise
VICTOR, in which five German divi-
sions were assumed to have landed on the
Norfolk coast despite heavy opposition:

I presume the details of this remarkable feat have been worked out by the staff concerned. Let me see them. For instance, how many ships and transports carried these five divisions? How many armoured vehicles did they comprise? How many motor lorries, how many guns, how much ammunition, how many men, how many tons of stores, how far did they advance in the first forty-eight hours, how many men and vehicles were assumed to have landed in the first twelve hours, what percentage of loss were they debited with? What happened to the transports and store-ships while the first forty-eight hours of fighting was going on? Had they completed emptying their cargoes, or were they still lying inshore off the beaches? What naval escort did they have? Was the landing at this point protected by superior enemy daylight fighter formations? How many fighter aeroplanes did the enemy have to employ, if so, to cover the landing-places?...I should be very glad if the same officers would work out a scheme for our landing an exactly similar force in the Middle East. Churchill was arguing—against the position of several of his military advisers—that the risks of invasion were sufficiently low to make the TIGER convoy worth the attempt. TIGER went through, losing only one ship to a mine and delivering some 250 tanks to the hard-pressed forces in the Middle East.”

CRIMINAL VIEWPOINT

Eric Allison of The Guardian (Manchester, UK) asked for Churchill’s July 1910 remarks about prisoner policy:

“The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilisation of any country. A calm and dispassionate recognition of the rights of the accused against the State, a constant heart-searching by all charged with the duty of punishment, a desire and eagerness to rehabilitate in the world of industry all those who have paid their dues in the hard coinage of punishment, tireless efforts towards the discovery of curative and regenerating processes, and an unaltering faith that there is a treasure, if only you can find it, in the heart of every man—these are the symbols which in the treatment of crime and criminals mark and measure the stored-up strength of a nation, and are the sign and proof of the living virtue in it.”

Four months later, we noted, The Guardian corrected the slander that Churchill had sent troops against the striking Welsh miners (see page 11).

Disagreements, aside, Churchill always had kind thoughts about the paper.

Mr. Allison replied: “I found this quotation incredibly moving. I have been in prison many times, was in fact a professional criminal. Four years ago, The Guardian advertised for a prisons correspondent and I turned over a new leaf at the age of 62. Which is why I seized upon a treasure, if only you can find it, in the heart of every man.’ This country tends now to believe that its kids have developed horns. Yes, they behave badly and if put through the penal system they may offend for the rest of their lives. My mantra, when told how bad they are, is: ’We know what they are bad at; let’s find out what they are good at.’ Not a million miles from the Great Man’s thoughts on the subject, though he of course put it much better.

“You taught me something else as well, with your reference to The Guardian and Churchill; but I am not surprised that there was mutual appreciation. I come from a left-wing family and hold left-wing views but, speaking as a former prisoner, the best Home Secretaries I have come across, have both been Conservatives: Douglas Hurd and Kenneth Baker.”

INFINITE EXPANSE

Dr. John Mather reports a quip about blood samples when Churchill was ill with pneumonia in Tunis in December 1943. Lt. Col Pulvertaft, Deputy Chief Hygiene Officer at the army hospital in Cairo, was brought in to do various cultures of sputum and to take blood for examination. Contrary to some accounts, Pulvertaft did not give WSC any injections, but according to Pulvertaft’s biography in The Times (11 April 1990), when asked for a blood sample Churchill said: “You can use my finger, or my ear and, of course, I have an almost infinite expanse of arse.”
WSC Since 1968

Myth and Legend

JOHN CHARMLEY

A recent survey in the UK revealed that 23 percent of Britons think Churchill was a mythical figure. After holding our heads in our hands and deciding that the world has indeed gone to the dogs, we might care to reflect that there may be an irony in all of this; after all, Churchill did set out to make himself a legendary figure; so it may be only just that he seems to have become one—in an unexpected way—in his homeland.

Churchill’s The Second World War has a good claim to be one of the most influential books published since the event it describes. This is not only because all histories of that war start with it, and the very way in which we think about it was devised by Churchill; it is also because of the message it carries, not least in its first and sixth volumes. Put with brevity (not something one could accuse Churchill of) that message comes in two parts: a warning about the dangers of appeasement; and the advocacy of a close Anglo-American connection as the bastion of peace and security in the world.

These two principles have informed British and American foreign policy since the late 1940s, which gives Churchill a just claim to be not only the architect of victory in the war, but of the structure which gave the West its victory in the Cold War. Such an interpretation would secure the agreement of many, but two questions might be thought relevant here: Is this an accurate claim? And even if it is, does Churchill have any relevance now and in the future?

Churchill is a figure who arouses strong emotions amongst his admirers; to question his achievement is to invite a storm of controversy, as well as barbed comments implying that the critic must either have a screw loose or be secretly in favour of a Nazi victory. Churchillians, like their hero, tend to paint with a broad brush. Churchill’s achievement in smoothing the American path to supersedng Britain as a global power has rightly earned him the gratitude of his mother’s land. And, provided one phrases this more gently, his securing Britain the role of America’s favourite ally has earned him the plaudits of those British politicians who like to think of things in that way.

In old age, Anthony Eden used to muse on whether Britain would not have done better to have modelled her policy towards the USA on that of Charles de Gaulle. This is a view which may become more prevalent in the modern era. What harm has befallen the “cheese-eating surrender monkeys” who refused to embroil themselves in the Iraq imbroglio? What is the difference between being America’s poodle and her close ally when she uses your airbases for “extraordinary rendition” and forgets to tell you? The “special relationship” has always been more special to the British than to the Americans, after all, and in an era when the global balance of power shifts eastwards, perhaps the Anglo-American alliance will decline in significance—just like its partners. In that world Churchill may well be a figure of myth and legend.

So Much Still to Learn

DAVID DILKS

At the lychgate, said Churchill in his valediction of Neville Chamberlain, we may all pass our own conduct and our own judgments under a searching review: “In one phase men seem to have been right, in another they seem to have been wrong. Then again, a few years later, when the perspective of time has lengthened, all stands in a different setting. There is a new proportion.” This was the speech of which one well-placed observer said that only Churchill of living orators could make one realise what it must have been like to hear Burke or Chatham; and of which another remarked that while there might be room for various judgments of Churchill as a politician, there could be but one opinion of him as a poet.

No one knew better how to present his case persuasively, even aggressively; but as his intimate friend and coadjutor Bill Deakin pointed out, Churchill did not...
expect that gratitude or admiration would, or should, shield him from the scrutiny of later generations.

It is the common fate of statesmen to suffer descent into a trough of low esteem from which, indeed, some never emerge. Nothing of the kind has happened to Churchill. Nor should it, however fiercely this or that decision or attitude may be criticised; for he brought to public life value of the highest order, not the unthinking resolution of one blind to danger but the deliberate courage of the man who apprehends it all too well. To that he added what is almost as rare in high politics, constructive imagination.

Commemorative organizations like our own must by their very nature confront a difficulty: However profound the thoughts and decisive the acts of a great man, their relevance to immediate situations diminishes with time. For Churchill, the process is somewhat postponed, for in a long life he decided much and influenced more. We need not fear that he will fade into irrelevance. He had prodigious industry, unmatched powers of concentration, Napoleonic memory, high gifts as an orator and writer.

Democracies in every part of the world are treading no smooth or easy road. They must renew their qualities and review their failings in each generation. They depend upon the leadership of faith and character; and in that search, never more urgent than in the present time, they have much to learn from Winston Churchill.

Neither Mission Accomplished Nor Mission Impossible

MICHAEL DOBBS

A novelist’s eye looks to the inner man: not simply what he achieves but who he is, how true and how strong his heart beats. In my eye, Winston Churchill had one of the most extraordinary hearts of all time. It beat as resolutely as a drum, and to its timbre the world marched from the jaws of Hell. Yet that same huge heart also overcame obstacles in his private affairs that would have crippled most ordinary mortals. He was great not because he got everything right (hah!) or because he was always pleasant and polite (he wasn’t), but because he managed to save our world even while battling with his own private demons.

Is he relevant in today’s world? Of course he is. Open your newspaper and you will be bombarded with messages about a World Crisis, a Gathering Storm, nations torn between the appeals of meeting jaw to jaw as an alternate to war. Some of the issues have changed, of course, but the fundamental inspiration of Winston Churchill’s life was that we make our own world, that the tide of history isn’t driven by irresistible Marxist-Fascist tides and irreversible social trends but by the passions of men and women. What we do, you and I, and those we elect, makes a difference. In the end, it’s up to us, and how big we find our hearts to be.

Yet it’s the nature of the man that appeals to me most. When I talk to school children about that strange beast Winston Churchill, I show him not just as an overly-round sixty-something with little hair and a fat cigar who did extraordinary things, but also as a tormented and at times frightened child who was subjected to abuse at school and—let’s be frank—a fair dose of parental neglect at home. Yet still he made it through. If Winston were in a classroom today he would be sitting in the back row, a child with few friends, with a troubled home life, with learning difficulties, with school reports that summed him up as all but worthless, who couldn’t even make it to university. And yet….

To watch the fascination of young eyes suddenly alert, identifying with our Old Man, realising that perhaps they, too, might find some way to overcome their own personal challenges, never fails to be a transcending moment.

What would his message be today? I suspect it would not be framed in terms of Mission Accomplished, but neither would it be Mission Impossible. Wherever he is remembered, the memory brings hope and a reminder that nothing in the course of human affairs is beyond our reach. He remains an inspiration to schoolchildren and statesmen, and to the rest of us who fall somewhere in between.

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Mr. Dobbs is author of four Churchill historical novels in which the characters and episodes are carefully researched from life: Winston’s War (reviewed, FH 122), Never Surrender (FH 126), Churchill’s Hour (FH 126) and Churchill’s Triumph (FH 131).
Rorschach Ink Blot for Contemporary Politics

DAVID FREEMAN

When members of the American Topical Association’s Winston S. Churchill Study Unit received the first copy of Finest Hour in 1968, it was already nearly impossible to collect all of the different Churchill stamps then in existence. Third world countries and quasi-states, anxious for cash, printed “wallpaper” in abundance. Yet it was still possible in those days not only to read all of the books Churchill himself authored but virtually all of the books which had then been written about him in English.

Today this is no longer the case. The death of Randolph Churchill, soon after Finest Hour first went to press, led to Martin Gilbert becoming official biographer, and a work originally conceived as five-volumes expanded into eight, with massive companion volumes still being generated four decades later. At the same time the “non-official” body of works about Churchill has been equally fecund. No one now could read every book on the subject.

In fact Churchill has become what might be called an “A-list” celebrity in the world of history. Publishers know that they can sell more books if they can include Winston Churchill’s name in the title, no matter how much of a reach it may be. Last year I reviewed a manuscript called Churchill’s War Against the Zeppelin, a book that will teach you much about Zeppelins and little about Churchill. Thus, in historiographical terms, Churchill has never been more popular, and the editor of Finest Hour requires a small army of reviewers just to keep up with the flood of new titles.

One reason for such sustained interest in Churchill is the fact that he has been viewed as a hero of both the political left and right. To the left, he is the man who defeated fascism and helped to create the welfare state. To the right, he is the founding father of anti-communism. In both views he proved prescient and his positions ultimately prevailed. How amused he himself might be by this since, by switching parties not once but twice, he effectively put himself against all of the people some of the time.

Consequently, revisionist studies of Churchill have all emanated from the extreme ends of the political spectrum, quickly dismissed by a powerful intellectual center ranging from Arthur Schlesinger Jr. on the left to Paul Johnson on the right. A consequence of this situation is that Churchill has become a virtual Rorschach Ink Blot for contemporary politics, as people constantly cite the example of Churchill to substantiate their own position on current events.

This situation is certainly more desirable than seeing Churchill forgotten; but it also means that we as institutions like The Churchill Centre must maintain continued vigilance for those who would use and abuse the record. But as the great man said, “We shall not flag or fail.”

Opium for the People: Leading Churchill Myths 1983-2008

Determined as Professor Freeman says that “we shall not flag or fail,” Finest Hour has for twenty-five years skewered world-famous fictions, fairy tales, imaginings, and things that go bump in the night. Herewith a recap, right up through page 11 of this edition. To read on our website append “pageid=xxx” to this location: http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?

Note: “pageid=35” opens a page of .pdf downloads.

“Churchill let Coventry burn to protect ULTRA.”
Peter McIver, FH 41:10, Autumn 1983, pageid=690

“Lord Randolph Churchill died of syphilis.”
John Mather, FH 93:23, Winter 1996-97, pageid=105

“He knew about the Holocaust and did nothing.”

“WSC and FDR knew of Pearl Harbor in advance.”
Ron Helgemo, FH 101:37, Winter 1998-99, pageid=104

“He personally fire-bombed Dresden for no reason.”
Martin Gilbert, FH 110:6, Summer 2001, pageid=106

“Churchill was an alcohol abuser.”
Michael Richards, FH 111:33, Summer 2001, pageid=99

“An actor read his war speeches.”
Robert Rhodes James, FH 112:52, Autumn 2001, page id=101

“Alexander Fleming twice saved Churchill’s life.”
Richard Langworth, FH 115:46, Spring 2002, pageid=102

“He suffered from Alzheimer’s Disease.”
John Mather, FH 117:9-10, Winter 2002-03, pageid=108

“Winston was a poor student in school.”
Jim Golland, FH 124:13, Autumn 2004, pageid=111

“Jack Churchill was not Lord Randolph’s son.”

“Churchill had American Indian ancestors.”
Elizabeth Snell, FH 126:13, Spring 2005, pageid=103

“Whom Would You Trust! (Answer: Hitler.)”
Michael Richards, FH 127:15, Summer 2005, pageid=35

“Lord Moran’s book is based on Moran’s diaries.”
John Mather, FH 132:45, Autumn 2006, pageid=1211

“He crushed striking Welsh miners with troops.”
Randolph S. Churchill, FH 140:11 Autumn 2008
Churchill and History

THE DANGERS OF “GENERATIONAL CHAUVINISM”

WILLIAM MANCHESTER

In 1990 a writer for the New York Observer charged that Winston Churchill was a racist, an accusation still regularly heard from time to time. This and other allegations were taken up by The Churchill Centre’s New York chapter founder Al Lurie, who noted that the charge of racism was qualified at best, as illustrated by a related dispute about H. L. Mencken.

Concerning The Diary of H.L. Mencken in The New York Times Book Review, a reviewer fastened onto a few of Mencken’s private diary entries to argue that the great writer and editor hated blacks and Jews and was pro-Nazi. This drew the fire of Churchill biographer William Manchester, who permitted us to quote from his response to the Mencken review, as well as his comments on Churchill’s attitudes from his biography, The Last Lion.

In all our thousands of hours together I never heard Mencken insult Jews or blacks, and perhaps the most outrageous twisting of the Mencken diary is the charge that he was pro-Nazi. He dismissed World War II as “Roosevelt’s War,” but he despised the Third Reich from the outset. Any defense of Germany was impossible, he concluded, “so long as the chief officer of the German state continues to make speeches worthy of an Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.”

Churchill once described a ruffian as a “sort of Kaffir” and a “Mulatto.” In Cuba, fresh out of Sandhurst, he had distrusted “the negro element among the insurgents.” He never outgrew this prejudice. Late in life he was asked if he had seen the film Carmen Jones. He had walked out on it, he replied, because he didn’t like “blackamoors.” His physician was present, and Winston asked what happened when blacks got measles. Could the rash be spotted? The doctor replied that blacks suffered a high mortality rate from measles. Churchill said lightly, “Well, there are plenty left. They’ve got a high rate of production.” He could greet Louis Botha and Michael Collins as equals, but his relationship with any Indian could never be as between compatriots. It followed that their country must remain a vassal state.

This was the underside of his position in the great debates over India’s future which began in 1929. Today it would be called an expression of racism, and he, as its exponent, a racist. But neither word had been coined then; they would not appear in the Oxford English Dictionary or Webster’s for another generation. Until recently—beginning in the 1940s—racial intolerance was not only acceptable in polite society; it was fashionable, even assumed.

Churchill expressed initial enthusiasm for Katherine Mayo’s book, Mother India. Viewed from the 1980s, her work seems almost comparable to the Protocols of Zion. Vile in its insinuations, wildly inaccurate, and above all hypocritical, this single volume by an elderly prig poisoned the minds of millions who might otherwise have reflected thoughtfully on Gandhi’s movement.

Churchill, however, always had second and third thoughts, and they usually improved as he went along. It was part of his pattern of response to any political issue that while his early reactions were often emotional, and even unworthy of him, they were usually succeeded by reason and generosity. Russia had been more than he could handle—though it should be remembered that he would have been content to see a socialist regime there provided it renounced wholesale slaughter—but his record had been impressive in South Africa, the Middle East and Ireland. And Churchill, as a friend of Jews individually and the Jews collectively, ranked above all other major statesmen of the 20th century.

People who argue from the convenient perch of the present that Churchill was a racist or bigot are guilty of what I call “generational chauvinism”—judging past eras by the standards of the present. The passing of such ex post facto judgments seems to be increasingly popular. A recent headline in a Connecticut newspaper read: “Old West Was Sexist,” though neither the word nor the concept of sexism existed on the frontier. Soon, perhaps, it will be disclosed that “Alamo Defenders Were Homophobes.” It is sobering to reflect on the consequences were the tables turned. How would past generations judge American sexual behavior in 1990 and the abandonment of the traditional family?

If we are going to adopt generational chauvinism as dogma, many past heroes will be diminished, including liberal heroes. The kind of anti-semitism that appears in Churchill’s private conversations may be found elsewhere: for example, in the early letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson. And after FDR’s crutches collapsed during a 1936 political rally in Philadelphia, he said, “I was the maddest white man you ever saw”—a remark that, in this day and age, could lose an election.
The Fifty Best Books of the Last Forty Years

ALWAYS LED BY THE OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHY
(FIRST AMERICAN EDITIONS AT LEFT), HERE ARE FINEST HOUR’S TOP PICKS AMONG BOOKS ABOUT CHURCHILL PUBLISHED SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE WINSTON CHURCHILL STUDY UNIT IN 1968.

In 1991, Finest Hour 70 listed our thirty favorite books about Churchill, five in each of six categories. In 2005, Finest Hour 128 offered Professor Paul Addison’s top ten choices. The exciting explosion of books over recent years makes it impossible to be so rigid nowadays—so for our fortieth anniversary, we have simply listed fifty great books, alphabetically by author (except that the Official Biography is at the top).

Our list is not intended to be exclusive, and more nominations are welcome. We have cited at least one work from prolific Churchill authors such as Gilbert, Kimball, Sandys, Soames and Weidhorn, though their other titles are worth considering. The only “mandates” were to include any book which made Professor Addison’s list (which one disputes at one’s peril), and all winners of Churchill Centre awards: the Reves Award for excellence in writing or speaking about Churchill’s life and times; the Farrow Award for excellence in Churchill studies. (Winners are at http://wsc.us/oo5en.)

Three changes from 1991: (1) We no longer list any work more than forty years old. While many are still fine reads, many have been rendered incomplete or obsolete by new scholarship and sourcework. (2) Several books are included that were not listed in 1991 because they mainly contain Churchill’s own words. Yet their editors deserve credit, because they are indispensable. (3) There is no attempt to rank books in any sub-category or in order of merit. Our priorities may differ from yours, and given the diversity of this rich assortment, judging one book against another is futile.

“A” numbers are from the standard work that should be on every Churchillian’s shelf: Curt Zoller’s Annotated Bibliography of Works About Sir Winston Churchill (Sharpe, 2004). This massive book of 410 pages sells for up to $189 on the internet, but members can order it for $65 postpaid—complete with Curt Zoller’s addendum to works published since 2004. Send your check to Zoller Book, Churchill Centre, 200 West Madison Street, Suite 1700, Chicago IL 60606 or telephone Mary Dwyer with your credit card numbers toll free: (888) WSC-1874.

For titles not readily obtainable through usual sources, readers may wish to check www.bookfinder.com, or contact one of the two leading Churchill book specialists:

Barry Singer, Chartwell Booksellers (www.churchillbooks.com, email info@chartwellbooksellers.com), Park Avenue Plaza, 55 East 52nd Street, New York, NY 10055, telephone (212) 308-0643.

Mark Weber, The Churchill Book Specialist (www.wscbooks.com, email mark@wscbooks.com), PO Box 90689, Tucson AZ 85752-0689, telephone (520) 743-8405.

THE TOP FIFTY

Churchill, Randolph S. and Gilbert, Martin. Winston S. Churchill, 1966 and 25,278 pages to date, Zoller A301. With eight biographic and sixteen companion volumes so far, and seven companions projected, this is the longest biography ever published, and the Churchill title to have if you are permitted only one! While thorough on political events, it contains many personal documents, and to some the companion volumes are more interesting than the biographies. The authors are unabashedly positive in their selection of material, but all the facts are there, and this is the basic reference all other Churchill writers draw from. We warmly recommend the new Hillsdale College Press reprints (page 11). On the Internet, we urge you to visit www.hillsdale.edu/news/freedomlibrary/churchill.asp. Farrow Award 1996, Reves Award 1999.

Addison, Paul. Churchill on the Home Front 1900-1955,
1992, 494 pages, Zoller A539. A standard work on Churchill’s domestic policies, elections and politics, covering everything from entry into Parliament in 1901 to his last term as Prime Minister, which ended in 1955. The author is evenhanded, and has documented his work with a plethora of sources. Farrow Award 1997.

Addison, Paul. Churchill: The Unexpected Hero, 2004, 308 pages. Full of arresting insights, this outstanding expansion of the author’s Churchill entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography is “a treat instead of a treat- ment.” John Ramsden accurately says it is “now by a long way the most recommendable short life of WSC. It seems quite amazingly fresh to me.”

Alkon, Paul. Winston Churchill’s Imagination, 2006, 268 pages. A collection of incisive essays on little-covered aspects: Churchill and the movies, his friendship with T.E. Lawrence, his painting with words, his interest in counterfactual history and science fiction. Here is close textual analysis of Churchill’s writings, and parallels with major literary works. Manfred Weidhorn writes: “The writer is focused, the style is crystal clear, the analysis is subtle, and the results are consistently enjoyable and enlightening.”

Ashley, Maurice. Churchill as Historian, 1968, 246 pages, Zoller A321. The main work until David Reynolds’ (page 26) which relates how Churchill wrote history, by his literary assistant on Marlborough. Endpapers are color reproductions of edited manuscript pages. A careful evaluation of Churchill’s conclusions on key issues in the light of the findings of professional historians. Reves Award 1989.


Birkenhead. The Earl of. Churchill 1874-1922, 1989, 552 pages, Zoller A499a. Based largely on the papers of Churchill’s friend F.E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead, it was written by his son, who died before taking the story beyond 1922. While the early chapters are largely boilerplate, the book begins to “sing” circa 1910, when Churchill met F.E. Smith and personal reminiscences begin. From here, this eloquent biographer soars to a dazzling crescendo, finishing with a coda on Chartwell in the Wilderness Years which is alone worth the price of the book. A later, privately published volume carried the story forward.

Buczaki, Stefan. Churchill & Chartwell: The Untold Story of Churchill’s Houses and Gardens, 2007, 324 pages. With readable prose and a plethora of illustrations, Buczaki discusses Churchill’s three-dozen domiciles (Chartwell is only half the book), offering new research from heretofore unknown archives, such as that of Chartwell’s architect, Philip Tilden. A thoroughly indispensable and overdue standard work, as important for the Churchill library as memoirs of close associates.

Charmley, John. Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography, 1993, 742 pages, Zoller A551. Many (including Finest Hour) took issue with Charmley’s argument that Churchill should have backed off fighting Germany in 1940 in order to preserve Britain’s wealth, independence and empire. But we agree with Paul Addison: “an otherwise perceptive political life grounded in a coherent critique of Churchill’s flaws, and a far from ungenerous appreciation of his abilities.” Equally pointed is the author’s Churchill’s Grand Alliance, 1995.

Churchill, Winston S., ed. “Never Give In!” The Best of Winston Churchill’s Speeches, 2003, 288 pages. This is the best single-volume collection of speeches you can buy, including such gems as Churchill’s speech in Durban after escaping from the Boers in 1899, his Great War victory speech, addresses on Jewish and Arab relations, all the great WW2 perorations, his tribute to Lloyd George, Fulton, the Hague, Zurich, France—200 of the best.

Cohen, Ronald I. Bibliography of the Writings of Sir Winston Churchill, 2006, 3 vols., 2184 pages. Over twenty years in the making, this is the last word in bibliographic research, totally eclipsing and replacing the 1963 Woods bibliography and the source not only for details of every edition and variation of Churchill’s books, articles and contributions, but for details on how each work was put together, from publisher’s contracts to proofs. The research is prodigious, the scholarship impeccable.

Colville, John. The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1940-1955, 1986, Zoller A469. One of the most important primary sources, this is the most significant of several memoirs by Churchill’s colleagues. Colville was WSC’s best-known private secretary (1939-44, 1951-55). Jock Colville came to Churchill sharing prevailing doubt over the “half-breed American”; as the diaries progress his doubts change rapidly to admiration. The biographic sketches in the back are pungent, and not quite what you’ll read in Who’s Who.
Invaluable.

FIFTY BEST BOOKS...

Coombs, David and Churchill, Minnie. *Winston Churchill: His Life Through His Paintings*, 2003, 256 pages. A vast expansion and update of Coombs’ 1967 catalogue of Churchill’s paintings, this book not only lists all the 550-plus Churchill paintings but reproduces nearly all of them, mostly in faultless color. Five thick chapters, a bibliography, and a catalogue track Churchill’s painting against the course of world events. A luxurious coffee table book as well as the essential reference to WSC’s art.

Dilks, David. *Great Dominion: Winston Churchill and Canada 1900-1954*, 2005. This award-winning work examines each of Churchill’s nine encounters with Canada, dredging from contemporary news accounts words by and about WSC that were hitherto unrecorded. A grand and handsome guidebook to Canada as seen through Churchill’s eyes, and how Canadians themselves saw WSC. Reves Award 2006.

Gilbert, Martin. *Churchill: A Photographic Portrait*, 1974, 354 photos, Zoller A383. Complementing Lady Soames’s *Family Album* (page 27) as one of the two best photo-documented, this is less of a family photo collection than a catholic compilation with emphasis on the political side by the official biographer, whose captions are expert and extensive. Highly recommended, it has been reprinted frequently over the years and is readily available in paperback as well as hardback. Zoller A383.

Gilbert, Martin. *Churchill: A Life*, 1991, 1066 pages, Zoller A528. Not an abridgment, as is often imagined, this is a ground-up biography designed to be read in much shorter time than the full-scale official biography. Gilbert includes much information which was not known when the original volumes were written, especially the early volumes. Chronological like the O.B., this is an indispensable trove of well-researched facts.

Gilbert, Martin. *In Search of Churchill: A Historian’s Journey*, 1994, 338 pages, Zoller A558. The answer to whingers over the years who accused Gilbert of being uncritical. Having examined more evidence than anyone in writing the official biography, Gilbert states that he came away even more impressed with Churchill’s intellect, generosity, statesmanship and humanity. Cited by *Finest Hour* as the best Churchill book of 1994, it is especially useful in showing how Gilbert found his primary source material and ferreted out information from often obscure witnesses to history.

Gilbert, Martin. *Churchill and America*, 2005, 504 pages. Churchill’s love of his mother’s land was evident from an early age and stayed with him for life, but he was not an uncritical lover. He deplored U.S. reluctance to engage in world affairs after World War I, and with Russia after WW2, and hoped for more than he got from the “special relationship.” Here is the whole story, good, bad and ugly, with the fastidious maps that are among his hallmarks. Reading like a fast-paced novel, this book is now the standard work on the subject.

Gilbert, Martin. *Churchill and the Jews*, 2007, 384 pages. The subject is traced individually and collectively, beginning with Churchill’s representing a heavily Jewish consistency and ending with his support for Israel, with vast detail on WSC’s involvement in the Jewish Homeland from the Balfour declaration to the 1937 Peel Commission and beyond. No one is better able to write such a history, which eclipses earlier works on the subject by Rabinowicz and Cohen. See also Makovsky, below.

Hall, Douglas. *The Book of Churchilliana*, 2002, 196 pages. While not a catalogue like Scott or Gibbon in the stamp world, this is the best book published on what we might call “bric-a-brac,” from jugs to busts, dolls to figurines, tea towels to tobacco pipes. Including such “Churchilliana” as Westminster Abbey, the RAF Memorial Flight and the USS *Winston S. Churchill* makes for an eclectic assortment, but so much information is here in one place that you won’t find any source as comprehensive.

Hayward, Steven. *Churchill on Leadership: Executive Success in the Face of Adversity*, 1998, 248 pages, Zoller A601. A study in “applied Churchill” for leaders, businesspeople or those who must speak for a living. Hayward presents Churchill as a model of leadership, using his life to illustrate the maxims and character that he relied upon. Many readers have cited Hayward’s book as the best of the Churchillian self-help studies.

Jenkins, Roy. *Churchill: A Biography*, 2001, 998 pages. Paul Addison: “Jenkins brings to the subject a veteran politician’s feel for office and power, a worldly appreciation of Churchill’s love of the good life, and an encyclopaedic appetite for detail. John Plumpton (FH 114): “*Magnum opus* with gems de haut en bas.” Andrew Roberts summarized this book by writing: “...it will be a brave, if not to say foolhardy, author who attempts to write another life of Churchill for at least a
decade.”
Kimball, Warren F., ed. *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, 3 Vols., 1983, 2192 pages, Zoller A463. This seminal three-volume achievement collects all the Roosevelt-Churchill correspondence, carefully arranging and footnoting every communication between them. Kimball adds scholarly connecting tissue to reveal the background, and his own opinions. A major sourcework, not least for Kimball's own subsequent books such as *The Juggler and Forged in War*, which we also recommend.


Lartes, Klaus. *Churchill's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy*, 2002, 592 pages. While one hundred pages of this book cover Churchill's pre-World War II career, most of the work is dedicated to his actions during and after it: a *tour de force* that dispels the "widespread perception of Churchill as a simplistic cold warrior," as the author says. Depicts a depth of personal diplomacy that was both imaginative and visionary, whether or not it succeeded or failed, and WSC experienced ample cases of both.

Makovski, Michael. *Churchill's Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft*, 2007, 368 pages. Makovski's excellent study on the statecraft of Churchill over Jewish matters is a highly readable accompanying work to Gilbert's *Churchill and the Jews*. Both books provide up to date archival research and perspectives on Zionism that were not available, or not offered by, earlier writers.


While patronizing and gratuitous in parts, it has probably brought more lay readers to Churchill than any other single Churchill title. Reves Award 1995.

McMenamin, Michael and Zoller, Curt. *Becoming Winston Churchill: The Untold Story of Young Winston and His American Mentor*, 2007, 274 pages. One of the most important recent books about Churchill packs his full correspondence with the man who made him who he was. A book of the year candidate for its extraordinary insights into Churchill's genius. If you want to know what made Churchill the extraordinary personality he became, you have to contemplate the events of 1895—the most important of which was meeting Cockran.

Meacham, Jon. *Franklin and Winston*, 2003, 412 pages. This book's virtue is not that it expresses so much that is new, but that it skillfully distills everything that matters about the Roosevelt-Churchill relationship from every key source, while forming its own conclusions. Beautifully written, it gathers the testimony of virtually every witness present at the time—a true achievement. While you may not agree with every conclusion, you will find it hard to put down. Reves Award 2004.

Midgely, Peter, ed. *The Heroic Memory: Memorial Addresses to the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society, Edmonton, Alberta*, 1965-1969, 2004, 438 pages. No collection of books by WSC’s associates is complete without these sterling speeches by such luminaries as Lord Mountbatten, Mark Clark, Colin Coote, Jock Colville, Lord and Lady Soames, Fitzroy Maclean, and more—the first twenty-five years of speeches to the first Churchill Society and the only one founded in WSC's lifetime.

Montague Browne, Anthony. *Long Sunset: Memoirs of Winston Churchill’s Last Private Secretary*, 1995, 376 pages, Zoller A576. An intimate memoir of “life on the inside,” eloquently written by Sir Anthony; forthright and at times blunt, for the author has very conservative views. Eminently readable and exciting, the book also covers the author’s career in the RAF, Foreign Office, and as a courtier to the Queen.

Moran, Lord (Charles). *Churchill at War 1940-45*, 2002, 352 pp., Zoller A301. While the original work was published in 1966, this new edition qualifies it for our list (along with the 1968 response to it: see Wheeler-Bennett, >>
**FIFTY BEST BOOKS...**
page 27). Alistair Cooke wrote (FH 118) of “the unique pleasure of the book is the doctor’s eye for Churchill’s human foibles and ear for the tang of his speech.”

Muller, James W., ed., *Churchill as Peacemaker*, 1997, 344 pages, Zoller A624. An elegant testimonial to Churchill’s peace efforts from South Africa to India, Yalta to Bermuda, ably refutes the canard that he was only a man of war. Nine leading historians shed light on each phase, highlighting many little-known episodes. Editor won Farrow Award, 1995.

Nel, Elizabeth. *Winston Churchill’s Secretary: Recollections of the Great Man by a Woman Who Worked for Him*, 2007, 178 pages, Zoller A196. This charming memoir was first published in 1958, but its recent revival makes it essential for any list of top Churchill works. With WSC from 1941 to 1945, the author accompanied him to numerous critical summit meetings. Primary source testimony to why his staff remained devoted.

Ramsden, John. *Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and His Legend since 1945*, 2002, 652 pages. A tour d’horizon of how Churchill fashioned his own legend and how that image has played out and transformed over time, full of information, with faultless prose and endless detail. Ramsden also considers how major historians dealt with the image, and how so many institutions were founded in his name, from grammar schools to The Churchill Centre. If you want to know the hows and whys of WSC’s image, read this book. Farrow Award 2003.

Reynolds, David. *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*, 2004, 646 pages. The first in-depth study of how Churchill wrote his memoirs to create “a useable past that would secure his fortune, vindicate his judgment and assist his ongoing political career…a masterly feat of sustained scholarly analysis,” as Paul Addison describes it. Indispensable to understanding WSC the writer. Reves Award 2003.


Rhodes James, Sir Robert. *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 1972, 372 pages, Zoller A348. An important work on Churchill’s lost causes through 1939, this book develops the controversial argument that Churchill would be a historical footnote had he died before 1939. The author is grinding no personal axes and his analytical work is among the most balanced critiques. Despite the advent of new research and archives, it is still widely quoted.

Rhodes James, Sir Robert, ed. *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches 1897-1963*, 1974, 8 vols., 8918 pages. While not entirely complete, 98 percent of Churchill’s oratory must be gathered here, by a young Rhodes James who let on that he was paid all of £5000 for this titanic job. Alas now rare and expensive, this is the masterwork from which all quotations must be drawn, based as it is on Hansard (Parliamentary Debates), with expert introductions by the editor.

Russell, Douglas. *Winston Churchill Soldier: The Military Life of a Gentleman at War*, 2005, 388 pages. Although much of the story has been published variously before, Russell has brought Churchill’s military career together in one compact, highly praised package which qualifies it as essential for the serious Churchill library. The expertly footnoted narrative is neverboring, and the depth of the author’s knowledge is manifest throughout.

Sandys, Celia. *Churchill*, 2003, 160 pages. A brief life by WSC’s granddaughter, profusely illustrated and well researched. Widely admired for its applications to education, used as a tool by the Churchill Centre to reach young people: an ideal “Churchill 101,” and an introduction to the author’s other books, notably including Churchill Wanted Dead or Alive and Chasing Churchill, the latter now a television documentary.

Seldon, Anthony. *Churchill’s Indian Summer: The Conservative Government, 1951-1955, 1951, 662 pages*, Zoller 442. Virtually all biographies run quickly through Churchill’s second premiership, from 1951 through 1955. Here is the only work thus far which concentrates in detail on that Conservative Government, distinguished by numerous first-person interviews.

**FINEST HOUR 140 / 26**
Severance, John. *Sir Winston Churchill: Soldier, Statesman, Artist*, 1986, 144 pages, Zoller A593. An illustrated biography for young people, this outstanding little volume restores an appreciation for Churchill not being taught in many schools, while puncturing many widely held beliefs about him. The photos are accurately captioned and not many are “old chestnuts.” Lady Soames called it one of the best juveniles yet published.

Soames, Mary. *A Churchill Family Album*, 1982, 429 photos, Zoller A447. Lovingly compiled, largely from family photos, some never seen before. With detailed captions expertly identifying and commenting on each picture, this is the most important photo documentary and among the five or six essential works on Winston Churchill. Farrow Award 2007.

Soames, Mary. *Winston Churchill: His Life as a Painter*, 1990, 224 pages, Zoller A523. Paul Addison: “Churchill never claimed to be a great artist but he delighted in the landscapes he saw on his travels, domestic scenes from his home at Chartwell, and portraits of his family and friends. The story is delightfully told by his daughter, a revelation of the private self who kept the statesman man.” Wonderful large-format color reproductions bedizen this great work. Farrow Award 2007.

Soames, Mary. *Speaking for Themselves: The Personal Letters of Winston and Clementine Churchill*, 1999, 702 pages, Zoller A620. A masterful compilation of correspondence spanning fifty-eight years. Paul Addison wrote: “Mary Soames is a fine editor. Her unrivaled knowledge of the subject is complemented by literary and historical skills which are gracefully worn but highly professional....In bringing together both sides of the correspondence, and eliminating everything else, she has revealed as never before the inside story of a marriage that was also a great political partnership.” Farrow Award 2007.

Stafford, David. *Churchill and Secret Service*, 1997, 386 pages, Zoller A608. Churchill’s lifelong fascination with intelligence is brought together by this most comprehensive account stretching from the Indian frontiers of 1897 to the Mussadeq coup in Iran in 1953. Paul Addison writes: “While shattering many canards implicating Churchill, such as the *Lusitania* and Pearl Harbor, Stafford shows that WSC played a crucial part in the development of the intelligence services and was no mean hand with a cloak and dagger.” Farrow Award 2000.

Wallin, Jeffery. *By Ships Alone: Churchill and the Dardanelles, Politics and Strategy of a Decision*, 1981, 216 pages, Zoller A444. The leading account of the attempt to force the Dardanelles “by ships alone,” which ended in a naval retreat and the subsequent failure of an attempt on the Gallipoli peninsula by seaborne assault. Wallin maintains that the concept was strategically sound, would have worked; that ruination came because Churchill lacked the plenary authority to control events.

Weidhorn, Manfred. *Sword and Pen: A Survey of the Writings of Winston Churchill*, 1974, 278 pages, Zoller A394. Arguably the finest analytical work on Churchill’s writings: scholarly and thoughtful, it shows how Churchill’s temperament, background and experience influenced his pen. Around for over thirty years, it is still among the best sources on the Churchill canon. Farrow Award 1998.

Wheeler-Bennett, John, ed., *Action This Day: Working with Churchill*, 1968, 272 pages, Zoller A331. This book was written at behest of Clementine Churchill by six close colleagues of her husband to refute the notion from Lord Moran’s *Struggle for Survival* (1966) that Churchill’s performance was seriously affected by his health. Our forty-year cut-off eliminates Moran’s original; flaws and all, it remains important reading.


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*Finest Hour* 140 / 27
hen Randolph Churchill began work on his father's biography in 1961, he had at his disposal an estimated fifteen tons of paper, his father's personal archive, now at Churchill College, Cambridge. In 1962, when I joined his research team, Randolph had already begun to search out yet more material.

As well as Churchill's letters to his friends, there were also other letters of his which, on a vast scale, had begun to transform Randolph's work by 1968, and which over the next forty years transformed mine. These were the long, affectionate, and almost always handwritten letters which Churchill sent to his wife whenever they were apart. When Lady Churchill decided that these letters could become a part of the biography, she ensured a truly remarkable extra dimension of our knowledge of Churchill's moods and motives.

On being confronted by such a formidable amount of personal material, Randolph Churchill adopted as the motto for the biography: "He shall be his own biographer." Churchill's letters were to be the basis of his son's narrative. One must remember when Randolph began, in 1962, no Cabinet, or even departmental, documents could be used. In view of the fifty-year rule which was then in force, the most recent official archives available were those for the year 1912.

But in 1965 (the year of Churchill's death, and three years before Randolph's) the time limit was reduced to thirty years. I am unable to forget that had the fifty-year rule remained in force, the official archives would in 1990 have been open only up to 1940. The inner workings of Churchill's leadership in the Second World War would have then still been largely secret.

For the last forty years, then, Churchill has no longer had to be "his own biographer," even though his personality still towers over every page of the narrative. I am quite content that this should be so; indeed, it has been my aim to try to place the reader in Churchill's presence. Yet the contribution to our understanding afforded by the easing of restrictions was profound.

In 1979, the Government agreed to open the archives of the Second World War in their entirety, including those of the Ministry of Defence, of which Churchill had made himself the head in May 1940. It now became possible to study papers such as the meetings of the War Cabinet, the Chiefs of Staff Committee—over which Churchill presided—and the Defence...
Committee, which took some of the most sensitive decisions in 1940, including the decision not to open peace negotiations after the fall of France. For Churchill's biographer, the unforeseen opening of the official archives made possible a quite different, intricate and comprehensive narrative. It also demanded, if justice were to be done to Churchill's achievements, two volumes more than had been envisaged in the original scheme.

It now became possible to go far beyond even Churchill's own six-volume account of his war leadership; to see the actual arguments which were put forward at the time for and against every element of war policy, to see where Churchill prevailed and where he was overruled, and above all to trace the impact of ULTRA—the British eavesdropping on the most secret messages passing between German headquarters and the senior commanders on land, sea and air.

Also opened as a result of the thirty-year rule were the full, unedited transcripts of every meeting and telegraphic exchange between Churchill and Roosevelt, and between Churchill and Stalin. Churchill's opening remarks when he and Stalin met for the first time in 1942 were: "I would not have come to Moscow unless I felt sure that I would be able to discuss realities." The first of those realities was the Anglo-American inability to mount a Second Front in 1942, or even in 1943. The British interpreter jotted down on his note pad how, on hearing this bad news, "Stalin's face crumpled up into a frown." Patiently, Churchill set about explaining to the Soviet leader the reasons for the delay.

By combining Churchill's private papers with the government's archives, every episode of Churchill's stormy career can now be separated from the long and often bizarre accumulation of myth and half truth. It is possible to trace in detail, for example, Churchill's determined attempts to give the miners' grievances due weight during the Coal Strike in 1926, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his equal determination to end the Cold War by urging President Eisenhower to accept a new concept, that of a summit, to be held with Stalin's successors. "I have a strong belief that Soviet self-interest will be their guide," Churchill explained to Eisenhower in May 1953, over fifty-five years ago, and he added: "My hope is that it is their self-interest which will bring about an easier state of affairs."

Churchill's second premiership, portrayed by his doctor, Lord Moran, as a time of dotage, can now be seen, thanks to the opening of the government archives, as a period when he was very much alert to the many issues pressing in upon his fellow countrymen, from housing to the hydrogen bomb. His desire for a summit on the nuclear issue, and the care and precision with which he argued his case, are hardly the marks of a senile Victorian.

Forty years ago it was my good fortune to have been given by Merton College, where I was a junior research fellow, an extended sabbatical, so that no teaching, lecturing, examining or administrative duties could come between me and the biography, the completion of which, at times, seemed very distant. Once, however, coming across a phrase by Churchill—"work, which is a joy"—I understood at once what he meant. I am lucky to have had an unbroken forty years of such joy.

Remember the Liberal

CAMERON HAZLEHURST

Every morning when I am in Canberra, Australia's national capital, I step out from University House at the Australian National University to be greeted across the road by a massive charcoal metal figure, a standing surprise among eucalypts, wattle and native grass.

The improbable bronze presence of Winston Spencer Churchill is a metaphor of his influence in landscapes that he never saw, a perpetual reminder of a global impact more than one hundred years in the making.

The Churchill I know best was not yet the saviour of his nation. Rather he was a restless young politician, impatient with political parties that clung to obsolescent ideas, searching for new ways to make the country whose Liberal government he had joined a better place for all its citizens.

He was a man of emotion and empathy, of passion and purpose. He was eager to understand how to fight unemployment, poverty, and sickness. Formidable in advocacy, he was always willing to negotiate and compromise to achieve reform. Excoriated by some of those he left behind in the Conservative Party, his motives suspected by many of the Liberals with whom he served, Churchill frequently defied expectations. Full of ego he was indeed, yet capable of introspection and compassion.

Until war came to shatter their hopes, he searched for a path of political unity with like-minded opponents as well as his own party allies. More than any of his Cabinet colleagues other than his greatest contemporary, David Lloyd George, he faced the realities of the spiralling cost of modern government. He accepted the logic of new forms of revenue raising including land taxes that were anathema to many of his wealthy friends.

When defence needs could no longer be subordinated to the social reform agenda, he risked his career in standing >>

Dr. Hazlehurst was part of Randolph Churchill's team on the official biography. He has held academic and public service appointments in the UK and Australia, where he is currently Adjunct Professor in the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University.
up to those who thought his demands for naval expansion were themselves inflammatory.

With his intimate involvement in the machinery of politics, and a practised hand in harnessing the press to his causes, Churchill was already in 1908 one of the first politicians of the modern era. He should be remembered in 2008 for his youthful policy innovation and political courage—as a man of manifold and enviable achievement long before he led the world against the Nazi tyranny. Everyone knows the rest of the story.

It All Depends on Us

WARREN F. KIMBALL

Who cares about the ultimate DWM (dead white male)? Yes, he was present during the greatest threat posed to civilization since... I know of no greater threat than a Europe and perhaps a world owned and operated by Adolf Hitler and the pathological sociopaths who surrounded him. Of course that explains and excuses nothing.

OK. He is fun to study. Unlike his contemporary, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill is less a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma than robust and overwhelming. And he wrote everything down! He was always where the action was, and frequently part of the action, which makes for significant reading. By the time the Second World War began, he led (or would soon lead) a nation that had lost its edge, the empire he loved beginning to collapse around him as nationalism took its toll. But that hardly makes him irrelevant.

People love inspiration. It is a curse and a blessing. Choose the wrong inspirational, charismatic figure and you slide down the path to perdition. Choose the right one and you move yourself, and perhaps the world, in the right direction. Winston Churchill inspired people. Historians, contemporaries, casual observers are all moved by his words, his actions, his indomitable courage.

Did he make mistakes? Of course. Who doesn’t? Did he contradict himself? Routinely: witness his strikingly different reactions to the Soviet Union in and out of a leadership office. His emotions often (thankfully) took him to places he (and his advisers) wished to avoid. He had one foot of clay, but the other was, for better and for worse, plopped firmly in the world of realpolitik. Emerson said, “a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds....” Certainly Churchill did not have a little mind.

But this is the fortieth anniversary of Finest Hour, not Sir Winston Churchill, and Finest Hour deserves a word or two. For one thing, FH will never catch up. Assuming we grow wiser as we grow older, then Churchill is far wiser than we.

Finest Hour has come a long way from its cozy origins as a newsy little trivia sheet, replete with Churchill hagiography and anecdotes, before it moved toward analytical yet entertaining looks at Churchill and what he did. Then, over the last decade, FH has become a serious (and still entertaining) journal, earning the sobriquet “The Journal of Winston Churchill.” FH has taken our man from the clutches of the worshipful and given him over to the appreciative—those who can look at him, warts and all.

But the shift has so far been on FH’s terms, not on the terms of a bunch of wanna-be academic scholars. That forces the editor to walk a very fine line between nostalgia and history, which he has done with acrobatic skill. Articles remain focused on and around Churchill, as they should be. Letters to the editor continue to offer a stimulating and amusingly candid dialogue.

To accusations and dismissals that FH is parochial and narrowly conceived, I ask: How can serious study of the extraordinarily broad and international “life and times” of Winston Churchill be too narrow? The most prestigious scholarly journal in the United States, The Journal of American History, publishes articles about only U.S. history—talk about parochial and narrow. Sometimes it seems that the only people interested in high politics and politicians are students and the people who buy books.

Yet, it will be increasingly difficult to maintain a quality journal based on a single person, however fascinating and important. We (The Churchill Centre) are unabashedly geopolitical (with occasional domestic excursions). So was Sir Winston. But there remain legitimate and important social and cultural issues of context (going well beyond his paintings and brickwork) that set a powerful and sometimes overriding context, one that more than occasionally frustrated his own geopolitical maneuverings.

“Keeping the memory green and the record accurate” will be fun... and worthwhile. Making Churchill an inspiration to future generations is a challenge; whether or not that happens depends heavily, perhaps primarily, on the reach and persuasiveness of Finest Hour. Happy fortieth!
One of the profound differences between the rule of law and the rule of history is that the law does not permit multiple jeopardy: a man may not be tried for a case more than once. Yet the rule of history is that of multiple jeopardy: a man, or a cause, may be—indeed will be—tried again and again. History amounts to the constant rethinking—and, consequently, to the rewriting—of the past. One result of this are waves of declining and rising historical reputations.

It is pleasant to record that, more than a half-century after his retreat from public life, this has not happened to Winston Churchill. His reputation has not much changed during the last forty years; as a matter of fact, it may even be said that admiration for Churchill has spread even farther than before. This includes historians. About a quarter century ago occasional historians published books critical of Churchill, but their influence turned out to be entirely inconsequential. This is an unusual, perhaps even amazing, phenomenon.

The reason for this is obvious. It is that of contrast. After Churchill there have been no presidents or prime ministers or other statesmen comparable to him, not in any English-speaking country or even anywhere else. (One particular exception to that may have been General de Gaulle.) Churchill is something like a gold standard, to which the fluctuating currencies of the reputations of other statesmen are, consciously or not, compared.

Another reason is the continuing interest in the Second World War. Among its victors, the reputations of Stalin and of Roosevelt have undergone changes since their deaths. Yet Churchill’s reputation has hardly changed at all—despite the fact that his wartime leadership was followed, soon after the war, by the liquidation of much of the British Empire, a prospect that he himself had denied in a ringing phrase during the war.

A third reason is something that I have emphasized in some of my writings, summing it up in a few words: while Roosevelt and Stalin won the Second World War, it was Churchill who did not lose it.

This is not a matter of a phrase. We—and at least some historians—are more aware than before of how close Hitler had come to winning his war in the late spring and summer of 1940—and even for a long time thereafter. One man stood in his way then: this was Churchill, whose task was much more difficult and much less promising than it seemed for a long time.

Yet another reason, particularly relevant to documentary scholarship: Unlike many other leaders and statesmen, Churchill was not a secretive man. His quick mind and temperament not only impelled him to express his thoughts instantly to others; there is little or nothing in the documentary trove of his (and of other British) archives that throws a different light on what he said or wrote then or afterwards. Moreover, there were instances when he chose not to emphasize but to obscure his contribution at decisive moments. Why, for example, did he, in Their Finest Hour, choose to write nothing about his crucial debate with Halifax during those five days at the end of May 1940?

I can surmise only two reasons for that. One is educational: his wish to tell the English-speaking nations of the world and their readers that the British people and their representatives had been sublimely united at that very time. The other reason, apparent throughout his life, was his magnanimity. He had been right: but he saw no reason to say this not only during the war but also thereafter. “Don’t ever tell people ‘I told you so,’” he once said to his daughter.

He is our remnant connection—an ancient silk thread—to a now dead, and yet deathless, past.

Dr. Lukacs is the author of over twenty-five books, including The Duel: Hitler vs. Churchill (1990), the acclaimed account of Five Days in London: May 1940 (1999) and, most recently, Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: The Dire Warning. He was a professor of history at Chestnut Hill College from 1947 to 1994.
Churchill and Achievement

STAND AND DELIVER: A NATION OF CHURCHILLS

BILL CLINTON

Churchill's greatest contributions may have come at times when he was not recognized. In the 1930s, when Stanley Baldwin was the “don’t-worry-be-happy” politician of his age, Churchill kept saying, in effect, “This Hitler is no good. I don’t care what you say to the contrary.”

Then again during the war, when the Allies finally began to win, Churchill began to plan for the postwar world, to think about what the shape of that world should be. Some of the ideas that he had led to very good changes in the world that we have seen in recent years.

Decades ago at a sombre hour, Winston Churchill gave one of his most remarkable speeches. As the Germans prepared for a likely invasion of Britain, he said on 18 June 1940, “Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour.’”

In 1989 and 1990 we witnessed remarkable changes. The Berlin Wall came down—it went up when I was in high school. In the years between, our whole view of the world was shaped by that wall. It divided light from darkness, freedom from oppression, free enterprise from Communism. It forced us to define our national security in terms of the soldiers under arms and the weapons that we had. It led us into mind-boggling computations, arms-control treaties, and attempts to figure out just how many times we could destroy one another. Now all of that has changed, in part because the people behind that wall realized their system wasn’t working—but also because in our country and in Britain during World War II and the years immediately after, we “braced ourselves to our duties.”

The things we have lived through in the past few years have nearly nothing to do with what most of us have done in the last few years, in government or as private citizens. We basically have seen the triumph of the three great ideas Churchill espoused, and which we began to push after World War II: national independence, market economies, political democracy. It is exhilarating, and every person who had anything to do with winning that war, or the shaping of the postwar world, should be proud of it.

Did you ever think you’d live to see a Gorbachev, and moreover that he would do as well as he did, and have his biggest problems from people who thought that he was not changing fast enough? In 1989 they had an election for the Mayor of St. Petersburg. The party candidate had no opponent, but he was defeated anyway. When I was in school, we’d read these anti-Communist lectures about how 97 percent of the Russians voted, and 99 percent of them voted for the guys who were in office, and that showed what frauds they were. But in 1989 they voted this guy out and nobody was running against him.

We are celebrating the fruits of a former generation’s vision and our faithful adherence to that vision. The arms build-up accelerated under Ronald Reagan had problems but, by forcing the Russians to match it, it accelerated the undoing of their system and exposed the inherent weaknesses of it. I don’t want to minimize the contributions of anybody along the way, but I do want to clarify this: all those contributions flowed out of a set of ideas and principles that were forged during and after World War II. Well, now it’s our generation’s turn to stand and deliver.

We do not need a nation of Einsteins, but we do need a nation of Churchills—as principals, mayors, governors, running businesses that emphasize people development—visionaries who believe in themselves and have the will and courage it takes to succeed.

There are a whole lot of people in this country who don’t believe a polyglot nation like the U.S. can do what it takes to lead the world that we are moving into. Think about whether you really believe that the United States can lead the world it has made, and if so, can it do it by just rocking along, or do we have to sound some alarms? The world is very different now. The things the world rewards are the things we have to work harder for. I don’t care how good the numbers look. If we do not take seriously these responsibilities we are going to be in deep trouble. If we do, I think we will truly lead the world we have made.

We owe that to the generations of Churchill’s time, who made the decisions long ago that inevitably led to the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, to Nelson Mandela walking out from behind his prison wall, and to millions of people hoping for a world in which they could at long last raise their children without the spectre of nuclear war. It is a wonderful time to be alive. Let’s not blow it.

On 12 June 1990, we participated in a luncheon for the Governor of Arkansas sponsored by the Churchill Club, which hosts prominent speakers for its audiences of California business people. The speech was published for the first time by Finest Hour shortly after the speaker had been elected President of the United States.
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FINEST HOUR 140 / 36
TR’s Great White Fleet

Q Why did Churchill oppose Australian Prime Minister Arthur Deakin’s invitation for Theodore Roosevelt’s “Great White Fleet” to visit Australia in 1907? Was this based on Churchill’s opinion of Roosevelt after having met him in Albany in 1901, or other reasons?
—DR. GENE PRINTZ-KOPELSON, TCC AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT ASSOCIATION

A Churchill’s opposition had less to do with naval rivalries than to his antipathy toward Prime Minister Deakin, an outspoken opponent of Free Trade, which WSC ardently supported. Deakin favored Joseph Chamberlain’s “Empire Free Trade,” with heavy tariffs on goods from outside the Empire.

Churchill admired Theodore Roosevelt, but the view was not mutual. (See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.’s article, “Churchill and TR,” Finest Hour 100; or select “search” on our home page and enter “Theodore Roosevelt.”)

Of interest is that in 1918, WSC suggested the Allies send an emissary to Lenin to get the Russians back in the war, in exchange for which he proposed to guarantee the Bolshevik Revolution! (When he realized this “commissar,” as he called him, would likely not be he, WSC suggested Roosevelt.) See Gilbert, Churchill: A Life (1991).

Henry Pelling, Winston Churchill (London: Macmillan, 1974), reports on pages 100-01:

“The Colonial Office in this period was still responsible for relations with the self-governing as well as with the dependent territories of the Empire. In April and May 1907 a Colonial Conference was held in London at which the prime ministers of the self-governing territories were present. In order to satisfy their feelings of self-respect Lord Elgin [Colonial Secretary] announced to the conference that he was proposing to establish a separate department for them within the Colonial Office, to deal with their relations with Britain. The conference itself was thereafter renamed the Imperial Conference and the department within the Colonial Office became known as the Dominions Office.

“Churchill was not formally a member of the conference, but he attended its sessions and perhaps at his own request was invited to deliver an address on the political aspects of Imperial Preference. He wished to expound to the prime ministers, who were mostly in favour of Tariff Reform, the nature of the opposition that he felt would persist in Britain even if a British government eventually agreed to join in an Imperial system of fiscal protection. The higher prices which were bound to result from the preferences would, thought Churchill, ‘accumulate a deep feeling of sullen hatred of the Colonies and of Colonial affairs among [the] poorer people in this country.’ The argument seemed rather overstrained, and it provoked Alfred Deakin, the Australian Prime Minister, into replying rather tartly that the speech suggested ‘the indulgence of a riotous imagination.’ The members of the conference had to agree to differ on the question of Imperial Preference— as indeed they had done at their previous meeting in 1902, which was before Joseph Chamberlain had announced his conversion to the idea.”


“Lord Elgin to Lord Crewe, [?] May 1908 [Dunphail, Morayshire]

‘...When I accepted Churchill as my Under-Secy I knew I had no easy task. I resolved to give him access to all business—but to keep control (and my temper). I think I may say I succeeded. Certainly we have had no quarrel during the 2 1/2 years, on the contrary he has again and again thanked me for what he had learned and for our pleasant personal relations. I have taken a keen interest in his ability and in many ways attractive personality. But all the same I know that it has affected my position outside the office and the strain has often been severe...’

‘...the Sixth Colonial Conference [was] arranged to meet in April 1907. The initial arrangements had been made by the Unionist Government and it had been hoped that Imperial Preference would be the principal topic under discussion with Alfred Deakin of Australia and Dr. Jameson of Cape Colony as its principal protagonists. But it was obvious that the new Liberal Government would not entertain such an idea. Other subjects, however, were also planned for discussion at the conference, including Imperial defence, the establishment of an Imperial Court of Appeal and immigration into the Colonies....

“Churchill inclined to the view that the State Prime Ministers of Australia should be invited as well as the Federal Prime Minister...because he thought that they would be less keen on Imperial preference than Deakin. As he wrote to Elgin on January 8: ‘Deakin is the most hostile to our Government of all the Australians, and [the conference] will simply be turned into a demonstration of the Tariff Reform League. The State Premiers would ipso facto have gone the other way. Divide et impera!’

‘...Eventually the seven Australian Premiers formally requested that they be invited; Churchill argued his point of view in a series of letters to Elgin and submitted a memorandum to be placed before the Cabinet. This Elgin refused to circulate, maintaining that the Premiers should not be invited—they are in some cases by no means high class.’ But he did promise to put forward Winston Churchill’s case, which seems to have been favoured by the King as well as by the officials at the Colonial Office. It did not, however, prevail: the State Premiers were not invited.

“All the Colonial Prime Ministers except Sir Robert Bond of Newfoundland, who was delayed by ice, were assembled in London in time for the opening of the Conference on April 15, and were accommodated by the Government at the Hotel Cecil in the Strand. Among them there was Alfred Deakin of Australia, a stubborn, determined politician and a great orator, who had attended the Colonial Conference twenty years before as the thirty-one-year-old Chief Secretary in the government of the State of Victoria. On that occasion he had refused a knighthood, just as in 1907 he was to refuse a Privy Councillorship.”
Historians in the last forty years have established, I think, that before each of the world wars, Churchill tried to prevent hostilities. Neither Britain nor Germany, he maintained, would benefit from making the other an enemy. Speaking in 1908, Churchill deplored the view that Britain and Germany were rivals fated inevitably to fight: “There are two great peoples who have nothing to fight about, have no prize to fight for, and have no place to fight in.”

The extremist nationalists who led Germany into both world wars did not share Churchill’s assessment about the irrational nature of their use of war to dominate Europe. Could either Armageddon, as Churchill called them, actually have been averted?

Churchill criticized imperial Germany’s rulers for their “unwisdom” and self-defeating behavior. Instead of acting responsibly with Britain to uphold the existing international order from which Germany profited economically, her rulers charted a foreign policy, weapons programs, and strategies that posed a grave challenge to British security and threatened to upset the equilibrium of Europe.

Germany’s naval building program, for example, was specifically designed to threaten and coerce Britain. To Churchill, Germany’s “ever-present danger” on the high seas seemed devoid of sense, and he called upon Germany’s rulers to negotiate. An agreement to abate the naval rivalry, he hoped, would lead in turn to a wider settlement to reduce the security fears of the European great powers.

But the German government, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Admiral Tirpitz, head of the German navy, poured nothing but scorn on Churchill’s repeated calls for a “holiday” in warship construction. Yet, while Churchill failed in his quest for peace, he succeeded in his role as First Lord of the Admiralty, working to ensure that Britain stood well-armed and prepared to command the sea when Germany started the Great War by attacking Belgium and France in the summer of 1914. Britain’s superior naval strength helped provide the sure strategic basis, if not for deterring the war, then for winning it.

The rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s saw Churchill advocating a markedly different stance for preserving the peace. Unlike the situation before 1914, Churchill saw no hope for arms control negotiations with Hitler, who had established in Germany a “most grim dictatorship….militarism and appeals to every form of fighting spirit.”

Now Churchill maintained that preserving the peace required Britain and France stay ahead of Germany in the air, on the ground, and at sea by waging a vigorous arms race. To fall behind, especially in air power, in Churchill’s view, was to court disaster by giving Hitler an opportunity to carry out a war of conquest and establish a new international order around a Nazi-dominated Europe.

Excluded from high office by political opponents, with no executive responsibility for maintaining Britain’s defenses, Churchill called repeatedly on the government to undertake a rapid expansion of the country’s armed forces and find coalition partners to face the German threat from a position of strength. In July 1934, Churchill called publicly for “a large vote of credit to double our Air Force; we ought to have it now, and a larger vote of credit as soon as possible to redouble the Air Force.”

Churchill’s critics in and out of government viewed his warning as alarmist, deriding “the language of a Malay running amok.” Of course he proved prophetic. Once Germany got ahead of Britain and France in the race to rearm, Hitler decided to strike in 1939-40 before his adversaries could restore the balance of forces and frustrate his plans to dominate Europe.

Churchill proved powerless to prevent this unfolding tragedy. If not for him, however, Britain might have proved even slower to rearm, giving Nazi Germany an even greater advantage in the air when the clash of arms did take place.

The war that Churchill warned about and worked to prevent would paradoxically bring him back to power, first at the Admiralty and then as premier. Lord Boothby recalled Churchill as saying during the crisis of 1940: “It took Armageddon to make me prime minister.” It was Churchill’s hard lot that his “Finest Hour,” during 1940, as Britain suffered defeat and German attack, is inextricably linked with his speeches on why war was preferable to a negotiated settlement. The statesman who saw wars between European great powers as irrational had become the war leader, calling upon the British people to make sacrifices to continue fighting, even as German bombs rained down upon their homeland.
Shaper of the Present
ALLEN PACKWOOD

I was born in June 1968, three and a half years after the death and state funeral of Sir Winston Churchill, and at almost exactly the time when what is now The Churchill Centre was founded. Though always interested in history, I was never taught about Churchill's life, and to me as a boy he was a name, an occasional voice in war movies, but little more.

In the four decades since, we have come a long way toward establishing Churchill as worthy subject of modern study, and it is legitimate to examine the reasons. Why, apart from self interest, do we think people should study Winston Churchill now?

To shape the present, you must understand how it has been shaped. The great conflicts and movements of the twentieth century, the birth of mass democracy, the decline of the European empires and the emergence as a world power of the United States, the rise of fascism and communism, the dislocation of the two world wars and the cold war, the development of mass communication and travel—to name but a few—continue to have a profound effect on the world today. Churchill lived through, engaged with, and wrote about these changes. A study of his life provides a point of entry to explore our own recent past.

But Churchill gives us something else. Faced with these huge changes, historians and commentators are apt to focus on socio-economic forces and long-term trends. Important as these undoubtedly are, they can depersonalise history and strip it of some of the colour and vitality that comes from the study of living individuals wrestling with emotional responses or immediate events.

The life of Churchill is about the triumph of personality. His energy, his humour, his idiosyncrasies, his sheer bloody-mindedness, shine through in the archives and contemporary accounts. He would have been an exasperating but also an exhilarating person to work for. He was not always right, but he engaged totally with the problems of his age, and showed incredible personal bravery in assuming the leadership of a beleaguered country in 1940.

Attempts are continually being made to enlist Churchill in the service of modern political causes or movements. This is problematic. He was, like all of us, a product of a particular time and place. He did not operate in isolation, he did not win the war alone—it is commonly asserted that his contribution was not to lose it. He was influenced by the thinking and actions of his time, and his contemporaries. His real strength was perhaps to understand, to articulate, and to harness his place in time, at such a moment and to such effect, that he helped shape his present, and therefore ours.

PHILIPPE HALSMAN, 1954

Intellectual Compass

ROBERT L. PFALTZGRAFF, JR.

That Winston Churchill’s stature has endured with the passage of the past forty years, transcending time and generations, should not surprise us. It is only with such a lengthening perspective that we most fully recognize greatness.

Having spent his youth in the Victorian era, Churchill’s life work spanned the first six decades of the twentieth century. We cannot understand the forces that shaped that century without examining his vast contribution: how he decisively influenced the course of events. To study his abundant life and works is to gain a unique vantage point from which to observe the convulsive forces of a century that influences our lives today.

What made him great? The eminent philosopher Isaiah Berlin provided perhaps the best answer: “Churchill’s dominant category, the single, central, organizing principle of his moral and intellectual universe, is an historical imagination so strong, so comprehensive, as to encase the >>

Mr. Packwood, director of the Churchill Archives Centre since 2001, has been an unflagging supporter, researcher and contributor to Finest Hour for at least that long, and the key player in the famous 2004 Library of Congress exhibition, “Churchill and the Great Republic.”

Dr. Pfaltzgraff, who has lectured and spoken at Churchill Centre educational forums, is founder and president of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Security Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University.
whole of the present and the whole of the future in a framework of a rich and multi-coloured past.”

Churchill was a man of the future marshalling a knowledge of the past to interpret and understand the present. To use a present metaphor, he drew on an immense intellect to “connect the dots” creatively, usually but not always brilliantly. He was capable of both genius and miscalculation, but far more often the former, and nowhere more consequentially than in the vital years when the survival of our civilization hung in the balance.

Churchill’s enduring importance is also to be found in another timeless quality he possessed. As Berlin put it, he had “fixed moral and intellectual bearings” that gave “shape and character, colour, and direction and coherence, to the stream of events.” This moral and intellectual compass enabled Churchill to stand resolutely and defiantly against forces that would have overwhelmed a lesser person. He believed that those who have a philosophy or set of principles on which to base their actions most certainly will have a firmer basis for consistency of purpose than those who are merely swayed by the vicissitudes of the moment.

Early in life he fixed on such principles as the indispensable unity of the English-speaking peoples, the need to assure that overwhelming power lay on the side of the democracies against totalitarian states and movements, support for liberty against injustice and oppression, and commitment to free trade and market economies against collectivist ideologies. Aggressive governments were to be defeated, but magnanimity accorded to their populations. These principles are as valid today as they were in Churchill’s time. His abundant qualities of character, motivation, leadership, and perseverance are not bound by time or circumstances. They not only help explain his enduring legacy over four decades since his death, but also furnish guiding lights for us that make Churchill a man of both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The Arduous Virtue

ROBERT PILPEL

he humorist Mel Brooks created a character called the 2000-year-old man, who claimed to be present at all the turning points in history. Take for example the 2000-year-old man’s account of the origin of religion:

“There was this really big mean guy, Phil, and we used to pray to him: ‘Oh Phil, please don’t hit us or hurt us and we’ll do whatever you say.’ Amen!” But one day, Phil was struck by lightning. And after looking at each other for a moment we said, ‘There’s something bigger than Phil!’”

Mr. Pilpel, a novelist and historian, is the author of Churchill in America, 1895-1961. His “What Churchill Owed the Great Republic” (FH 125) won the FH Journal Award for the best article of 2005.
Churchill and Liberty

OUR CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT THE MOMENTUM OF FREEDOM

GEORGE W. BUSH

I've always been a great admirer of Churchill: his career, his strength, his character—so much so that I keep a stern-looking bust of him in the Oval Office. He watches my every move.

Like few others in this or any other age, Churchill is admired throughout the world. Through his writings and personal effects displayed here, we feel his presence. As people tour “Churchill and the Great Republic,” I’m sure they’ll be able to smell the whisky and the cigars.

Churchill’s ninety years on earth joined together two ages. He stood in the presence of Queen Victoria, who first reigned in 1837. He was Prime Minister to Elizabeth II, who reigns today. Sir Winston met Theodore Roosevelt and Richard Nixon. Over his long career, Churchill knew success and he knew failure, but he never passed unnoticed. He was a prisoner in the Boer War, a controversial strategist in the Great War. He was the rallying voice of the Second World War, a prophet of the Cold War. He helped abolish the sweat shops. He gave coal miners an eight-hour day. He was an early advocate of the tank. He helped draw boundary lines that remain on the map of the Middle East.

In a highly disciplined daily schedule, pacing and dictating to harried secretaries, he produced fifty books and a thousand articles. He said after World War II: “...it will be found much better by all Parties to leave the past to history, especially as I propose to write that history myself.” History has been kind to Winston Churchill, as it usually is to those who help save the world.

In a decade of political exile during the 1930s, Churchill was dismissed as a nuisance and a crank. When the crisis he predicted arrived, nearly everyone knew that only one man could rescue Britain. The same trait that had made him an outcast eventually made him the leader of his country. Churchill possessed, in one writer’s words, an “absolute refusal, unlike many good and prudent men around him, to compromise or to surrender.”

In the years that followed, as a great enemy was defeated, a great partnership was formed. President Franklin Roosevelt found in Churchill a confidence and resolve that equaled his own. As they led the Allies to victory, they grew in respect and friendship. When he entered his sixties, the President wrote to the Prime Minister, “It’s fun to be in the same decade with you.”

This sense of fellowship and common purpose between our two nations continues to this day. I have also been privileged to know a British leader of conscience and unshakeable faith in his determination to do the right thing, and not the easy thing, Prime Minister Tony Blair.

When World War II ended, Churchill understood that the victory was incomplete. Half of Europe was occupied by an aggressive empire. And one of his finest hours came in his 1946 speech in Fulton, Missouri, as he warned of new dangers facing free peoples. In stark but measured tones, he spoke of the need for free nations to unite against Communist expansion. Marshal Stalin denounced the speech as a “call to war.” A prominent American journalist called the speech an “almost catastrophic blunder.” In fact, Churchill had set a simple truth before the world: that tyranny cannot be ignored or appeased without great risk. And he boldly asserted that freedom—freedom was the right of men and women on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Churchill understood that the Cold War was a conflict of visions, a clear divide between those who put their faith in ideologies of power, and those who put their faith in the choices of free people. The successors of Churchill and Roosevelt—leaders like Truman, Reagan and Thatcher—led a confident alliance that held firm as Communism collapsed under its own contradictions.

Today, we are engaged in a different struggle. And we are the heirs of the tradition of liberty, defenders of the freedom, the conscience and the dignity of every person. The tradition of liberty has advocates in every culture, in every religion. Our great challenge is to support the momentum of freedom. The stakes could not be higher. But true democratic reform must come from within. And across the world, reformers are pushing for change.

Achieving this vision will be the work of many nations over time, requiring the same strength of will and confidence of purpose that propelled freedom to victory in the last century. We will always have an example in the man we honor today. Winston Churchill was a man of extraordinary personal gifts; yet his greatest strength was his unshakeable confidence in the power and appeal of liberty. It was the great fortune of mankind that he was there in an hour of peril. And it remains the great duty of mankind to advance the cause of freedom in our time.

The Churchill Centre collaborated with the Churchill Archives Centre and the Library of Congress in the 2004 exhibition, which later traveled widely. “Churchill and the Great Republic.” Members of the Centre were invited to the opening celebrations, which commenced with an address by the President of the United States.
125 YEARS AGO:
Autumn 1883 • Age 8
“Only 18 more days…”

Lord Randolph was not pleased that Jennie had left Winston and Jack alone at Blenheim for the month of September with their cousin Sunny. “I think it rather rash of you.” The boys appeared to do just fine, however, as Winston wrote to his mother: “I went out fishing today & caught my first fish by my self [sic]. Jack & I are quite well.”

Winston’s return to school that autumn did not show much improvement from the previous term. While his work in history was described as “good,” the previous term it had been “very good.” French had dropped from “fair” to “not very good.” Geography was “weak,” down from “very fair.” But his tardiness improved: late only six times compared to nineteen times the term before. This probably accounts for his overall assessment for the term: “On the whole he has improved though at times he is still troublesome.”

100 YEARS AGO:
Autumn 1908 • Age 33
“HMG will do their duty”

In a speech to his Dundee constituency on 8 October, Churchill covered a variety of subjects. On foreign policy:

We are met to-night with the knowledge that on the continent of Europe there is a period of strain and critical anxiety. The whole Continent is agog. All the diplomatists are enjoying themselves enormously. (Laughter.) All the newspaper offices are buzzing like disturbed hives of hornets. All the wiseracres are pulling the longest possible faces and endeavouring to assume an air of superior wisdom. Let us keep quite calm. Nothing very serious will happen. (Cheers.)

On defense:

If we wish to keep ourselves in these islands free and independent of European difficulties then I say it is indispensable that these islands should be guarded by the strength of a navy sufficiently powerful to make us immune from all possibility of attack.

On Irish Home Rule:

...the Liberal party is a Home Rule party, and its policy is to give Ireland an Irish Parliament and the management of exclusively Irish affairs, subject to and subordinate to the proper control of the Imperial Parliament. When another general election takes place I am of opinion that the party should in no way bind itself not to put forward the whole of that policy.

Churchill spoke in Manchester on 14 October, expressing appreciation to the Liberal Party for the way in which it treated him in 1904 when he left the Conservative Party of his father. In doing so, he made the candid admission that there were, at the time, many issues where “my mind was not fully prepared”:

When I first came to Manchester I was at a very critical and doubtful moment in my political life. I had hopelessly and completely severed myself from one of the great parties in the State. I was not fully prepared at once to associate myself with the other. My views had been expressed often and clearly on many of the great questions of the day; and on all of the great issues which were then the current issues of politics I was whole-heartedly in sympathy with the Liberal cause. But there were other questions which were not very prominently before the public at that time and which had not much been debated—issues in the late Parliament, the first Parliament of which I was a member, and on those questions my mind was not fully prepared. I had not studied them sufficiently. I was not thoroughly acquainted with the arguments and the reasonings which might be advanced on either side, and I was not prepared, when I came to Manchester in 1905, I was not prepared to sign any complete or rigid pledge, or to subscribe wholeheartedly to the programme of the Liberal party.

I often think that if at that juncture I had been confronted by men who wished to bind me down in word or letter to every detail of a cut and dried party programme I could never have felt the same internal self-respect and self-confidence—the consciousness of the truth and sincerity of my action—which have enabled me to make good my case in spite of all the calumny and criticism which is brought to bear on anyone who changes sides. (Cheers.)

Margot Asquith, wife of the Prime Minister, wrote an interesting letter to Churchill on 11 December, asking him to intervene with the editor of the Manchester Guardian to stop its editorial attacks on her husband:

Now lately the Manchester Guardian has been decrying my husband as leader and saying that they will take care that there is no future Asquith regime and all possible odious and disloyal things about their Prime Minister. Do you think a hint from you to the editor wd be a good thing?...Do write and tell the editor that you and others of influence will not support and praise him if he tries to make mischief...
in a great party...I know you wd do anything for your chief and that you have power with the Press. So I confide my sorrows to you. My husband doesn't even see the M. Guardian and tho' he cares what his colleagues and supporters think of him he doesn't care what the papers say of him at all. I do I confess. Write one line to cheer me up and tear this letter up.

Churchill's letter to his accountant the next day offers a revealing glimpse into the state of the newly-wed Churchill's finances:

My income for the year should be calculated as follows: 1/3 of £7,400, i.e. £2,466—being the last instalment of the profits arising from my Life of Lord Randolph Churchill. This year, I have made as the result of my articles and book on my African journey a profit of £2,000, from which must be deducted £800 which were the necessary expenses of my journey to Africa and an essential condition of the production of the work. This £1200 I propose to spread over 3 years, making £400 income taxable in the present year. There is also a sum of £225 arising from a reprint of my novel Savrola. This I shd propose to pay wholly in the current year. The total income is therefore £3,091, from which shd however be deducted the payments wh I have made of premium on my life policy; of these Messrs Nicholl Manisty can furnish you an account. They are about £200.

75 YEARS AGO:
Autumn 1933 • Age 58
“We cannot be the policeman of the whole world”

Churchill's concerns over the new Nazi government in Germany continued to mount as he received first-hand accounts of events inside that country. Duff Cooper wrote to him in September, 1933 while on holiday:

We are living here on the frontier of Austria and the inhabitants are nervous of invasion. We motored through the centre of Germany and it was a remarkable sight. Everywhere and at all times of the day and night there were troops marching, drilling and singing. Hitlerite uniform is an exceptionally unpleasant shade of khaki and one sees as much of it in Germany now as one did of khaki in England, in 1918. This is not an exaggeration. They were preparing for war with more general enthusiasm than a whole nation has ever before put into such a preparation.

In mid-October, 1933, Germany withdrew from the League of Nations. In the House of Commons on 7 November, 1933, Lloyd George painted a benign picture of Germany and its intentions. Churchill replied to his former colleague and drew entirely different conclusions:

My Rt. Hon. Friend made tonight a deeply interesting speech, to which I listened, like everyone else, with admiration of the persuasive charm and skill with which he pressed his point. There is nothing that he can do so well as to draw one side of a picture in the most glowing manner and then reduce the other side to small and pitiable proportions. He gave an account of the state of Europe. He represented that Germany might have a few thousand more rifles than was allowed by the Treaty, a few more Boy Scouts, and then he pictured the enormous armies of Czechoslovakia and Poland and France, with their thousands of cannon, and so forth. If I could believe that picture I should feel much comforted, but I cannot. I find it difficult to believe it in view of the obvious fear which holds all the nations who are neighbours of Germany and the obvious lack of fear which appears in the behaviour of the German Government and a large proportion of the German people. The great dominant fact is that Germany has already begun to rearm. We read of importations quite out of the ordinary of scrap iron and nickel and war metals. We read of the military spirit which is rife throughout the country; we see that the philosophy of blood lust is being inculcated into their youth in a manner unparalleled since the days of barbarism.

Churchill went on in his speech, to criticize the government's disarmament policy and warned that Great Britain and the British “cannot be the policemen of the whole world”:

I am glad that an interval has been introduced into this dangerous process of disarmament in Europe, which has played a noticeable part in raising the temperature to its present level. If we wish to keep our freedom, we should forthwith recognize that our role in Europe is more limited than it has hitherto been considered to be. Isolation is, I believe, utterly impossible, but we should nevertheless practice a certain degree of sober detachment from the European scene. We should not try to weaken those powers which are in danger, or feel themselves in danger, and thereby expose ourselves to a demand that we should come to their aid....

I know that it is natural for Ministers, for the Prime Minister, to wish to play a great part on the European stage, to bestride Europe in the cause of peace, and to be as it were its saviours. You cannot be the saviours of Europe on a limited liability. I agree with the statement of the late Mr. Bonar Law, who said that we cannot be the policemen of the whole world. We have to discharge our obligations, but we cannot take upon ourselves undue obligations into which we shall certainly come if we are the leaders in compelling and pressing for a great diminution in the strength of France and other Powers which are neighbours of Germany. How lucky it is that the French did not take the advice that we have been tendering them in the last few years, or the advice which the United States has given them—advice tendered from a safe position 3000 miles across the ocean! If they had accepted it the war would be much nearer, and our obligation to come to their aid would be much more strictly interpreted.

The first volume of Churchill's biography of Marlborough was published in October, 1933 and Stanley Baldwin wrote to extend his congratulations:

You really are an amazing man! I look sometimes at that row of volumes in my little library, and I cannot think how you can have found the mere time to have got through the physical labour alone of writing them. This last book would mean years of work even for a man whose sole occupation was writing history.
fortieth anniversary is a good time to recall our early conferences before they fade into history. Full disclosure: Barbara Langworth chaired three conferences between 1985 and 1995; I was the one who accompanied her to them, and I enjoyed myself.

Our first “event,” at the Churchill Memorial in Fulton in 1983, attracted two Canadians, the Fulton postal clerk who processed the Churchill first day cover in 1965, and this writer. Friends at the Memorial were amused. We regrouped and decided not to call this our first conference.

I TORONTO, 1984: Our first real convention (as they were then called), chaired by the late George Temple, was held in conjunction with the Churchill Society for the Advancement of Parliamentary Democracy, who invited Martin Gilbert and us to dinner. During the day, we had a reception for then-American Ambassador to Canada Paul Robinson. Most of us had never met an Excellency, but Paul was very keen, became a Trustee, and his friendship stood us well on many occasions over the years.

II BOSTON, 1985: We hosted a cabinet official in 1985 under Barbara Langworth, who invited U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to the Parker House in Boston. The President and Secretary Schulz were in Geneva with the Russians, Secretary Weinberger was the senior cabinet officer in the country. His remarks, “Churchill: An Uncomfortable Hero,” recalled what Churchill had meant to a young soldier in distant barracks during 1940.

Security was high. The Secret Service closed a street so they could use it driving in from Logan Airport, and marched him up the stairs, shunning the lifts. When we next met at a dinner at the House of Commons a few years later he had left office, and I asked him if he missed those bodyguards. “That,” he said, “was the best thing about giving up the job.”

III VANCOUVER, 1986: Back in Canada, we were hosted by the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society of British Columbia, our first encounter with the pomp and circumstance of those famous Canadian dinners, with a resplendent M.C. banging a mace on the floor to Pray Silence of Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. Our speaker was William Manchester, who read the lyrical prologue to The Last Lion, then still unpublished. It was the beginning of a long friendship; Bill allowed us to publish two advance excerpts of his Volume III (page 35) and was our guest again in Boston nine years later.

IV DALLAS, 1987: Under co-chairmen Naomi Gottlieb and David Sampson, we gathered at the famous Adolphus Hotel, deep in the heart of Texas. Our guests were longtime Churchill secretary and first Chartwell administrator Grace Hamblin (“Chartwell Memories,” page 34), WSC’s one-time hostess Wendy Reves, and Congressman Jim Courtier. A gadfly from The New Republic befriended people, took notes, then wrote a nasty attack piece about cigar-puffing reactionaries mourning the “damp seam of détente running through the Reagan Administration.” We reprinted his article, footnoting all the inaccuracies, in FH 51.

Incidentally, smoking after dinner stopped stone dead in 1991. We never heard of it again, though we do provide after-dinner cigar smokers for the unreconstructed.
Owing to our inexperience, and what is known as “creative billing” in the hotel business, Dallas ran up an $8000 loss. We were living “mouth to hand” in those days, but somehow treasurer George Lewis scraped the money together. One director complained (rightly) that the treasury should not be financing good times for a few at the expense of all. We vowed never again to lose money, a vow we kept through the period in this account.

V BRETTON WOODS, 1988: Barbara Langworth’s second event was held at the majestic Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. We nearly had President Reagan, and we did get Alistair Cooke and then-Governor John Sununu, with over 250 at each dinner. Sununu spoke off-the-cuff, proudly recalling that his bell-wether state of New Hampshire had made Sir Winston an honorary citizen before the U.S. Congress. Alistair Cooke was superb, recalling the Churchill of his youth in England (page 33). This was the first conference addressed by the academics—Ray Callahan, Hal Elliott Wert and Ted Wilson. Scholars have contributed to every event since. Ray Callahan was with us in Vancouver twenty years later.

A notable faux pas was when the head table (which we have since dropped in favor of spreading around our celebrities) marched in and John Edison’s trousers fell down. Bill Ives, next in line, grabbed them and held them up while John demurely took his seat and reconnected his braces. The Mount Washington was being renovated, and many of us had rooms not redone since the 1944 Bretton Woods Monetary Conference! Another lesson learned: check all the rooms they intend to put you in....

VI LONDON, 1989: This was mainly a dinner with Maurice Ashley, Churchill’s literary aide on Marlborough, and Robert Hardy, the greatest Churchill actor ever, during the fourth Churchill Tour, with the tour party and UK members. We dined at the Waldorf Hotel on what Mr. Hardy described as a “hot Egyptian evening.” We announced that the Americans might remove their jackets, the British would have to keep theirs on, and the Canadians could do as they pleased as usual. Maurice, the author of Churchill as Historian (page 23), gave a delightful talk on his experiences, though his wife fainted in the heat and cigar smoke. Happily, she quickly recovered! It was our Patron Lady Soames’s first conference, and we are happy to look back now on ten events buoyed by her presence.

VII SAN FRANCISCO, 1990: As Saddam Hussein was invading Kuwait, we invaded San Francisco in a conference chaired by Merry Alberigi. (The word “conference” was her idea, substituting for “convention.”) We enjoyed three memorable days with Lady Soames and Robert Hardy at the Fairmont Hotel. There were a wine tasting, a cruise of San Francisco Bay, excellent scholarly papers, and some good debates with such scholars as Larry Arnn. Robert Hardy’s speech (page 34) was a classic. We hosted over 275, an attendance record for conferences up to that time. >>
**PAST GLORIES...**

**VIII AUSTRALIA, 1991:** Our Down-Under conference was held in conjunction with a Churchill Tour of Australia, including a dinner with Australian members in Melbourne organized by Peter Jenkins, and another with members of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia at the U.S. Embassy in Canberra. Ambassador Melvin Sembler (now Ambassador to Italy) told us that the cornerstone to the brick colonial-style U.S. Embassy was laid on (wait for it) 7 December 1941. The then-Ambassador wired home saying, more or less, “What do we do now?”

The answer he received was: “Build the rest of it in a hurry, lest the Aussies think we’re on the run.”

**IX SURREY, ENGLAND, 1992:** The village of Effingham Park was our country venue, and our speakers were Professor John Charmley and Enoch Powell. The former gave us a dose of the thesis of his upcoming book, *Churchill: The End of Glory* that Churchill should have backed away from the Hitler war in 1940-41. Thoroughly pleasant, Charmley was fun to debate. Conversely, we expected fire and brimstone from Enoch Powell, but instead he gave a modest speech about “Churchill from the Dimension of Time,” which we duly published, and which is now on our website at: http://xrl.us/oqi5r.

**X WASHINGTON, 1993:** We met at the Mayflower Hotel, chaired by Merry Alberigi, with a reception for Lady Thatcher at the British Embassy, attended by General Powell and Secretary Weinberger. Lady T stayed up all night reading her copy of *The Dream*, which she said she was unable to put down. David McCullough spoke eloquently about Churchill and Truman. Celia Sandys, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Winston Churchill and Jack Kemp were speakers. “What did Lady Thatcher say?” Kirkpatrick asked me. “She said some people were not on her side over the Falklands, but Cap Weinberger was.” Jeane replied: “I was one of those people.” (Ulp.) I took a chance: “But you were wrong, weren’t you?” “Perhaps,” she said.... (Relief)

Ambassador Alan Keyes, who thought of taking up opera, sang five national anthems (including *God Defend New Zealand*). Later, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, in freezing cold and without musical accompaniment, he sang every verse of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*: a bravura performance that none present would ever forget.

**XI CALGARY AND BANFF, 1994:** In 1994, ICS Canada hosted yet again, with starting events in Calgary and the grand finale at the fabulous Banff Springs Hotel, with Lady Soames and Celia Sandys our guests of honor. Celia gave the keynote speech at the first dinner, attended by members of the Calgary Society, who unfortunately did not follow us to Banff, which was the scene of more action. We visited Lake Louise, the venues painted by Churchill, and Celia’s car was gored by a rutting elk, which added a novel twist to our enjoyment of local fauna.
II BOSTON, 1995: Returning to Boston, Barbara Langworth’s third conference was held at the Copley Plaza, from which we have just returned from Conference XXV under Joe Hern. Lady Soames was guest of honor and the speakers were Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., William F. Buckley, Jr. and William Manchester. There was a visit to the Kennedy Library (where the Honorary Citizen papers were laid out for us); Cyril Mazansky’s tour of “Churchill’s Boston” and student presentations. New England Patriots conditioning coach Johnny Parker spoke on WSC’s inspiration to football players. Ken Rendell brought exhibits from his Museum of World War II, and the Harvard Glee Club sang Harrow songs. It was a financial success despite a $65 registration fee. The serious bills were paid by corporate sponsors and the generosity of nearly thirty benefactors who contributed $2500 per couple, most of it tax-deductible. With guests like these, you can build a nice margin into your dinner ticket. About 350 people attended each of two black tie dinners.

Humor moment: conference chief of staff Parker Lee, in the days before cell phones, was on the street with a walky-talky when green trolleys arrived to pick people up for our Boston harbor cruise. “There are 150 people and only three trolleys,” he called to us in our room. “We are out of seats.” “Have them take the first group over and come back for the rest, and we’ll hold the boat,” Barbara said. The green trolleys had no sooner departed than a fleet of orange trolleys arrived—we had hired the orange ones! We never did find out who ordered the greens...and they never billed us.

The Churchill Centre was founded at the 1995 conference. I was president during the next five conferences and was proud to be associated with every one of them.

XIII EAST SUSSEX, ENGLAND, 1996: David Boler managed a most successful UK conference at Ashdown Park Hotel in Ashdown Forest. We hosted a tour for a record eighty people which, as an adjunct to the conference, hosted an unbelievable dinner with the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough in the Grand Hall of Blenheim Palace. The location helped, because it was a resort package, much cheaper than London. Speakers included David Stafford on Churchill and the “Secret Wars”; and Bill Deedes, who had riveting memories of his years in the postwar Churchill government. David also laid on the best dance band we have ever heard. A big hit...

XIV TORONTO, 1997: John Plumpton and Randy Barber co-chaired a committee they called the “Dream Team” for a large conference at Toronto with Celia Sandys the guest of honor. John Ramsden spoke on Churchill’s honorary U.S. citizenship; Hugh Segal on “Churchill as a Moderate”; John Mather on WSC’s hardiness and resilience. The scholarly subject was Churchill on India, which was diffidently and differently examined by Kirk Emmert and Clifford Orwin. This must have been the first of Celia’s speeches on “Memories of Grandpapa.”
**PAST GLORIES...**

**XV WILLIAMSBURG, 1998:** In 1998 under John Mather and Craig and Lorraine Horn, we hosted U.S. Ambassador to Britain Raymond Seitz for the First Churchill Lecture. With the support of William and Mary, Jim Muller put together an excellent student seminar on *The Age of Revolution*. Celia Sandys and Lady Soames both attended. Speakers included Matt Wills on Harry Hopkins and Manfred Weidhorn on Churchill the writer. Colonial Williamsburg, which WSC, Clementine and their daughter Mary had visited, was a unique and special venue.

**XVI BATH, 1999:** We were at Bath, England under ICS (UK) and chairman Nigel Knocker. No hotel was big enough, so we had to spread business around, but the result was satisfying. The beautiful city had Roman baths to drink Pol Roger in (better than the water). The American Museum, where young WSC gave his first political speech, was venue for its reenactment by Celia Sandys’ son, Dominic Walters. Paul Courtenay gave a fine talk on Churchill and the man he admired most of all: Jan Smuts.

**XVII ANCHORAGE, 2000:** Jim and Judith Muller chaired an ambitious event in Alaska, which was well attended despite its remote location, giving many an opportunity for a wonderful Alaskan cruise. It was also special owing to the presence of Lady Soames and Martin Gilbert, who delivered a powerful triptych of speeches on “Churchill and Russia.” There were Harrow Songs and spectacular excursions. The Mullers planned a low break-even point, ended up with more than that, and for the thirteenth year in a row, kept the conference in the black.

We look back at these conferences with pride and gratitude, not only for the dedicated people who ran them, but because most of them had certain qualities in common: individual event prices that allowed attendees to pick what they wished, very low breakeven estimates (we were only caught napping once), a good mix of ages, non-peak timing, tight-fisted conference chairmen; and saturation coverage of Winston Churchill.

Repeated surveys tell us what members consider most important: price, location, speakers. Another point of interest: until 1995, when the theme was the end of World War II, none of the conferences had a theme. We would try first to get the best speakers we could, and then see if there was some unifying thread to build a theme around. If there wasn’t, we simply wouldn’t declare one.

I used to think it was vital for conferences to make money. I no longer do. If a conference can break even, while allowing the Centre to “take home” some tax-deductible donations, it is a success. Our members take a keen interest in conferences they attend, and communicate their thoughts and advice, which are invaluable. Never fail to think and rethink, because in change lies improvement. Above all, remember Winston Churchill.
WSC Since 1968

He Met the Test of Greatness

PHIL REED

There is a sadness when witnessing a building being demolished that was erected only decades previously. How quickly time passes and how little we count in the grand scheme of things! But almost any area is rich in older buildings which are cherished and serve their purpose for decades or even centuries.

Iconoclasm is a much-favoured practice among the British and there has always been a clutch of clever people keen to knock over the image of Sir Winston Churchill. They might have realised long ago that his is an image not so easily demolished. It grew from the deep soil of history in which it is permanently rooted. Mozart, Shakespeare, Newton, Churchill—whatever accusations are made against them, they live forever for their unique, indelible impression on the development of music, writing, science and, quite simply, the course of history. Time and its decaying powers will never destroy them.

Greatness is a concept widely misunderstood and too liberally applied. It is not an accolade reflecting a lifetime’s achievements, nor the stuff of some evanescent modish acclaim, not something to reward certain criteria or indeed even given in any sense. It is a view that will be confirmed as a lasting truth not by fashion and favour, but only by the judgement of time, what the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. called "the cool eye of history." At our 1995 conference, Schlesinger added: “History, as Pieter Geyl said, is indeed an argument without end. But if anyone is likely to survive that argument and come out unscathed and on top, it is that impetuous, imperious, fallible, glorious man, history's impresario, Winston Churchill.”

The great will always be such and will always inspire, regardless of faith, politics, geography or gender. In 1933 Churchill wrote of Franklin Roosevelt: “Time and distance are two elements but not unreliable tests of greatness. How big do the leading public men of a century ago seem to us today—and how big will our national celebrities seem to our descendants a hundred years hence? How many reputations are independent of frontiers and can survive the crossing of continents and oceans?” Churchill’s most certainly can…and will.

Mr. Reed is director of the Churchill Museum at the Cabinet War Rooms and Executive Vice President of The Churchill Centre.

Blazoned in honour! For each generation You kindled courage to stand and to stay; You led our fathers to fight for the nation, Called “Follow up” and yourself showed the way. We who were born in the calm after thunder Cherish our freedom to think and to do; If in our turn we forgetfully wonder, Yet we’ll remember we owe it to you. Follow up! (etc.)

—Forty Years On, verse added for WSC’s 90th birthday and first sung on 29 November 1964.

Now That’s Fame!

ANDREW ROBERTS

Anyone who thinks that we can safely consign Sir Winston Churchill to the realm of history, as opposed to still finding him standing foursquare in the realm of current affairs, cannot have been reading the newspapers.

“Winston Churchill: Neocoon?” asked a recent headline in The New York Times book section. The presence of his statue in Parliament Square has been cited as the reason that space can't be redeveloped (thankfully). His speeches beat pop-star videos for viewership figures on You-Tube. Thabo M’beki denounced him for causing half of modern Africa’s problems (forty-three years after his death). The Winston Churchill High School in Harare has been renamed by President Mugabe after a Zimbabwean guerrilla leader in a “blow against Imperialism.”

Meanwhile, Senator John McCain produced a campaign advert likening himself to Churchill, which begins with the “Never Surrender” speech. In The Weekly Standard, a writer pointed out that like Churchill, McCain had a famous father and grandfather, was a prisoner-of-war, was never a partisan party politician, and was widely perceived as erratic. Parallels were drawn between the threat posed by the Luftwaffe in the 1930s and Iranian nuclear ambitions today.

Reflecting WSC’s continuing popularity and relevance, Churchilliana continues to set sales records. One of his paintings of Morocco fetched £612,000 in 2006, his top hat recently brought £23,500, his slippers £6,325 and a Stetson presented to him by the citizens of Calgary, which he wore while painting, sold for £9,400.

He is also one of the giants of Cyberspace: his name elicits no fewer than 6.1 million hits on Google, although >>

Mr. Roberts’ latest book is Masters and Commanders: How Roosevelt, Churchill, Marshall and Al.anbrooke Won the War in the West. He is a regular contributor to Finest Hour and, on the centenary of Winston Churchill’s election as MP for Dundee, in May 2008, he spoke at Dundee University on “Churchill and His Detractors.”
ROBERTS, continued...

admittedly many are about schools, ships, scholarships and a
variety of red sweet pea, *Lathyrus odoratus*, that was named
after him. Then there are the Internet questions asked
about him, very many of which require the answer “No”—
such as, “was Winston Churchill Jewish?,” “was Churchill
anti-Semitic?,” “was Churchill born in a ladies’ loo after a
dance?” and “did Sir Alexander Fleming or his father save
Churchill from drowning?” Not even put into the interrogative
is the statement on one website: “It is a little known
fact that one of Britain’s most celebrated statesmen,
Winston Churchill, was a Druid.”

Scores of books with Churchill in the title are pub-
ished every year, some of them utterly fatuous. Margaret
Cook, the ex-wife of the former foreign secretary Robin
Cook, ought to have known better before she cited
Churchill as “almost homosexual” in a book entitled *Lords
of Creation: The Demented World of Men in Power*. She claims that
Churchill “intimidated women by
being uninterested in them,” and even
more absurdly that he and Roosevelt
were so close that “people thought they
might be gay,” without actually produ-
ing a single piece of evidence that anyone
held that opinion.

The media con-
tinues its fascination with
Churchill: *The Guardian* quotes his
contributions to the immigration
debate (he wanted strict upper limits on totals of
New Commonwealth immigrants); *The Sunday
Times* headlines a story on his wartime watching of movies,
“Bambi Helped Churchill Keep Up the Fight”;
Eurosceptics and Europhiles struggle over his attitude
towards the Common Market (he was a Eurosceptic as far
as Britain was concerned, but in favour of a United Europe
for the continent). A whole page in a national newspaper
was devoted in February 2008 to Churchill’s spare set of
dentures going on display in the Royal College of Surgeons
Museum. Now that’s fame.

Yet despite all this, in February 2008 it was reported
that a survey commissioned by UKTV Gold found that 23
percent of British citizens—taken from a representative
sample of no fewer than three thousand—that Sir
Winston Churchill was a fictional character, while Sherlock
Holmes and Eleanor Rigby were real people. Admittedly
there is much about Churchill’s life that defies belief—but
the survey proves that fine organisations such as The
Churchill Centre and Museum still have a great deal of
work to do.

True Humanity

DAVID STAFFORD

I’m writing this the day after giving a talk at the
Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh
about the controversial portrait of Churchill by
the English artist Graham Sutherland. The work
was commissioned by the Houses of Parliament as
a gift for his eightieth birthday in 1954. Churchill was at
the apogee of his renown. He’d returned triumphantly to
Downing Street as Prime Minister in 1951. More recently
he’d been knighted, received the Nobel Prize for Literature,
and presided over the nationwide celebrations marking
Queen Elizabeth II’s Coronation and—it was widely
believed—the birth of a new and glorious Elizabethan age
for Britain.

But the great man so hated the
portrait that his wife Clementine
secretly destroyed it a year later. The
painting made no concessions to
Churchill’s age and portrayed him
with ruthless honesty as an old man
staring furiously down at the artist.

“I look like a down-and-out
drunk who has been picked
up out of the gutter in the
Strand,” Churchill com-
plained furiously, and he
came close to rejecting the
gift altogether. There was a
huge public row when
news of its destruction
was confirmed after Lady
Churchill’s death in 1977.
Sutherland and others described it as vandalism.

That was then. But what about now, thirty years on?
My audience at the Portrait Gallery consisted of the typical
visitors who like to drop in during the lunch hour to hear
one of the regular free talks offered by the gallery—mostly
middle-aged or retired, equally divided between men and
women, mostly middle class—a good cross-section of at
least part of the British population. Their perceptions of
Churchill were straightforward and unclouded by myth.

And I was struck that only one out of the thirty or so
in the audience thought that Sutherland’s portrait was cruel
or unfair, or in any way derogatory. Churchill was an old
man, they agreed, and whatever he’d done during the war,
by 1954 he was clinging vainly to office (indeed, Sutherland
revealed that his subject had spent much of the time at the

Dr. Stafford is project director at the Centre for the Study of the Two
World Wars, University of Edinburgh, and the leading authority on
Churchill and Secret Intelligence. His books include *Churchill and
sittings grumbling about his Cabinet colleagues’ undisguised impatience to get rid of him). In other words, the Churchill they knew and were happy to accept as national hero was also an ordinary and fallible human being.

But sometimes when you look at the press or watch television, it’s hard to remember their point of view, for Churchill regularly appears as superman. There’s a disconcerting and disorientating gap between current historiography, in which Churchill and all his richness of complexity is often skilfully portrayed, and the portrait usually on public display.

Frequently this is the result of some politician trying to hijack Churchill’s reputation for his own political agenda. Just a week ago, for example, the Daily Telegraph published a full page extract on Churchill from Senator John McCain’s book Hard Call: Courageous Decisions by Inspiring People. Headlined “Extraordinary foresight made Churchill great,” the story made the clear implication that the Senator is cast in the same heroic mould. He may well be: I have great respect for John McCain, and he’s by no means the first politician to do this. But it’s still remarkable to me how much—especially in the United States—Churchill is placed on a pedestal.

My down-to-earth British audience yesterday had moved on well past such uncritical views. Instead, they would have asked some tough and sceptical questions—and in doing so helped guide us to the reality of the great man in all the strengths and weaknesses of his true humanity.

Too Early to Tell?

MANFRED WEIDHORN

When Chou En-lai was asked in the 1960s whether the French Revolution was a good development, his profound response was that it was too early to tell. And the answer to such a question will of course always remain premature because history—like its opposite, the future, which people are forever trying to master—is a matter of the short term versus the long term; and then in turn the long-long term, etc. Hence the reputations of historical and artistic figures, like stocks, go up and down.

On the world stage, Churchill was periodically a failure in the short term (Gallipoli, the abortive strangling of Bolshevism in the cradle, India, the Abdication); hence the title of Robert Rhodes James’s judicious biography up to the year 1939: Churchill: A Study in Failure. In the long term, he was successful (1940, the Grand Alliance, his prediction of the implosion of the Soviet Union). In the long-long term, he seemed to some people a failure: to wit, the Charmley-Clark-Buchanan thesis that fighting Hitler gave the ascendancy to the U.S. and the USSR, brought in socialism at home, and ended the Empire abroad. (And so it did, but what alternatives were better?)

In smaller venues, the record is also mixed. Churchill helped carve up the Arab limbs of the Ottoman corpse in a way that seemed to settle things neatly, but does not appear so viable eighty-five years later. Still, eighty-five years is a fairly long run as settlements go. The Irish settlement has looked good in the short run, bad in the long run (the time of troubles, ca. 1968-2000), and good again in the long-long run.

So a final assessment of the consequences of Churchill’s actions is indefinitely postponed. What remain to be glorified are (1) the sheer range of Churchill’s achievement in many areas of human endeavor—the work of a latter day Renaissance Man; (2) his standing for, celebrating, and embodying democracy and decency, especially in a world largely given over to dictators of all stripes; (3) his rare wit and eloquence; (4) his impact on history, for if he had been killed in that traffic accident on Fifth Avenue in 1931, the world would have been very different; and (5) the test he applied to Neville Chamberlain:

“The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting of our calculations; but with this shield, however the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honour....Whatever else history may or may not say about these terrible, tremendous years, we can be sure that [he] acted with perfect sincerity according to his lights and strove to the utmost of his capacity and authority, which were powerful, to save the world.”

Such words of course make sense only if the man in question had a good, indeed noble, conscience. Other endowments necessary for greatness are intellect, erudition, experience, judgment, ambition and temperament. Most of the time, Churchill had all of these in good working order. Especially ambition.

Two youthful utterances provide some insight into how he became great: On his self-learning in India he wrote: “It was a curious education. First because I approached it with an empty, hungry mind, and with fairly strong jaws; and what I got I bit.” He read much between writing projects because imports must balance exports.

Then there was that remarkable 1891 prediction to a school chum: “I tell you London will be in danger—London will be attacked and I shall be very prominent in the defence of London. I see further ahead than you do. I see into the future. This country will be subjected somehow, to a tremendous invasion, by what means I do not know, but I tell you I shall be in command of the defences of London and I shall save London and England from disaster.”

With a combination of erudition and articulateness, he was determined to achieve greatness, either through notability or notoriety. In the event, he had both.
Churchill and the Media

“COME COME, MR. CHURCHILL, AREN’T YOU BEING RATHER PROVOCATIVE?” WSC IN THE AGE OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

ANDREW ALEXANDER

We published this piece a quarter century ago. Somehow it seems like a mere quarter-hour. —Ed.

TVI: Tell me, Mr. Churchill, is it now the Government’s intention to press ahead with military measures, with all that entails, or will you work for a peaceful solution?

WSC: You ask what is our policy? I will say, it is to wage war by sea, land and air, with all our might...

TVI: I see. But isn’t that rather extreme and old-fashioned? I mean, the French have made a peaceful settlement....

WSC: They have delivered themselves over to the enemy. Nothing will alter our feelings towards them or our faith that the genius of France will rise again.

TVI: You call it a surrender, but mustn’t any settlement involve compromise? Mustn’t we minimise casualties?

WSC: What has happened in France makes no difference to our actions and purpose.... We shall fight on unconquerable until the curse of Hitler is lifted from the brows of mankind.

TVI: So you are perfectly happy to escalate the conflict?

WSC: Without victory there is no survival.

TVI: You say our survival is threatened. Can you actually prove that? I understand that Herr Hitler and the German junta have just said they are prepared to offer peace terms. I understand that Signor Mussolini agrees.

WSC: I assure you that That Man is besotted by his lust for blood and conquest.

TVI: Of course, Mr. Churchill, I’m not accusing you of dishonesty, merely trying to clear matters up for viewers. Surely you are not suggesting that we escalate the conflict while there is still possibility of a peaceful solution?

WSC: We have become the sole champions now in arms to defend the world cause.

TVI: But we are supported by the League of Nations. Shouldn’t we go back to Geneva now? Surely, we must act responsibly to keep world opinion on our side. Is it not everyone’s responsibility to curb the mood of jingoism which seems to be sweeping the country?

WSC: We shall fight on the beaches....

TVI: Fight on the beaches! But can we? I put it to you that we have lost so much equipment. And isn’t the suggestion rather provocative? We do not know whether the Germans are going to invade. It may all be an attempt by the Berlin regime to distract attention from its own internal problems. Given goodwill is it not possible to...

WSC: You astonish me. You are either for us or against us.

TVI: I’m not on the Germans’ side, I’m just carrying out my duty to be objective and to see all sides. What you see as terrorism they see as freedom fighting. We have a duty to be impartial as you know. I trust you do not expect us to editorialize.

WSC: I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.

TVI: Very picturesque, Prime Minister, but this talk of blood, toil, tears and sweat may be just the sort of comment that is liable to harden attitudes.

WSC: What? With Nahrrrzeees?

TVI: I don’t think that insensitively mispronouncing the word Nazi will help. Just a moment. I’ve been handed a
news flash. British and German battleships are fighting in the Atlantic. This is very alarming. I must ask you: Did we fire first or were we responding in self-defence?

WSC: One of the ways to bring this war to a speedy end is to convince the enemy, not by words but by deeds, that we have both the will and the means not only to go on indefinitely but to strike heavy and unexpected blows.

TVI: You will have seen the interview earlier we had with some servicemen's wives. They were very alarmed for their husbands. For goodness sake, have you paused to consider the personal tragedies you may cause? Can you in all conscience proceed? Would it not be better to rely on economic sanctions?

WSC: Sanctions? Hitler is now sprawled across Europe. A frightful fate has overtaken Poland....

TVI: All very well, Prime Minister, but we are not even fighting over British soil. The dispute between Germany and Poland is a very long way from these shores. Are you saying that you rule out all peace initiatives? What about seeking an interim administration in Poland, perhaps allowing the German and Polish flags to fly alongside the League of Nations flag, with administrators drawn from a neutral power?

WSC: We are fighting the pestilence of Nazi tyranny. We have never weakened in our resolve that Poland shall be restored and stand erect as a sovereign nation.

TVI: But surely what you say would be wholly unacceptable to the Germans? Isn't it important to get round a peace table now without too many preconditions or too much talk about pride?

WSC: Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.

TVI: That is your view, Mr. Churchill, but I must put it to you that going on about a “new Dark Age” is likely to exacerbate the conflict. Surely you realise that British business interests throughout Europe are being seriously jeopardized by the dispute. It has been suggested—I must put this to you—that your warlike attitudes are designed to improve the standing of the Tory Party after a period in which unemployment and economic difficulties have been eroding support for the Government.

WSC: One bond unites us all—never to surrender ourselves to servitude and shame...

TVI: Never surrender! Can you guarantee that? Surely never is a word you cannot realistically use? [A series of loud arguments appears to have broken out at this point, with shouts exchanged. The interview continues....]

TVI: Yes, but for how long could we hold out? Much of the German war materiel is superior to ours. How can it be seriously argued that fighting in North Africa has any relevance to British interests? Should a single British serviceman be asked to risk his life so far from home and for a stretch of sand? Will it mean higher taxes? Surely this is in nobody's interest....

At this point, I want to bring in two others via satellite. From a studio in Frankfurt we have the diplomatic correspondent of Der Sturmer, a German newspaper which favors the Berlin government; and from Berlin the German Minister for National Guidance, Dr. Josef Goebbels. If I may turn to you first, er, Josef, would you care to comment on the views of the British Government which you have just heard put?

...Yes, yes. I see. Quite. Well now, Prime Minister, I think those are views which people would like you to comment on. Is it a fact, as Dr. Goebbels claims, that you and the British Government are under the influence of and indeed in the pay of a clique of Jewish bankers operating from Wall Street?

...Mr. Churchill please—come back! Well, I’m sorry, ladies and gentlemen. My apologies, too, to our German colleagues, but the Prime Minister does not seem prepared to debate these important issues. Now to our Sports Desk for the latest cricket results.
The Beginning

*Finest Hour 1, May-June 1968*

The name of this publication is up to you. *Finest Hour* is only temporary, unless you feel it should become permanent. In the meantime, we had to call it something. We didn't much like the Churchill family motto “Fiel Pero Desdichado” (Faithful But Unfortunate), because for most of his ninety years Winston Churchill was as fortunate (he said so himself) as he was faithful. By all means send some alternative publication names, we can offer a slate from which to choose.

Dues for the Winston S. Churchill Study Unit are fixed at $2 per member per year. Our only expense at this time is this newsletter. However, if you feel this paltry sum is minimal, by all means contribute whatever you think is proper. We tried to set the mood with $5. On the other hand, if $2 is all you wish to subscribe, that is all that's necessary to assure you *Finest Hour* for the coming year.

The present officers are the earliest to express interest: Richard Langworth, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania; Martin Hoff, Brooklyn, New York; Beverly Fowler, Spenard, Alaska; J.R. Styles, Greenville, South Carolina. Their duties at this time are nebulous, although a constitution and by-laws are now being framed for your approval which will define their responsibilities in detail.

Finally, this publication will be published in English, recalling Churchill's paens to his native tongue: “We were considered such dunces that we could learn only English...As I remained in the Third Fourth [form] three times as long as anyone else, I had three times as much of it. I learned it thoroughly. Thus I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence—which is a noble thing.” —*My Early Life* (1930)

The End of the Beginning

*Finest Hour 32, Spring 1975*

We are approaching a most important event and one which requires your thought and action: the election of officers. The next election may possibly be the most important in our history.

We find the Society in need of extensive renovation. Because of the rapid growth in membership the machinery needs renovation or replacement. Our constitution is outdated and almost useless and we have outgrown our bookkeeping system. We need new direction and a new commitment to the principles of the Society, which principles themselves need considered restatement. The work of the next board of directors will be very important indeed. Additionally, an entire new slate of directors must be elected.

We are quite different from other organizations in an important respect: Except in the UK, few of our members have ever met more than a handful, if any, of their fellow members. How then can we (excepting the UK members) intelligently nominate other members for a position? In most organizations, the president is put out to pasture, the vice president moves up, and his position is filled by an officer or director. But this has never been true of us.

It is not too early to mention this subject, as proved by the last election, which resulted in a situation that, as forecast, was not to the benefit of the Society: I accepted reelection only on the promise and hope that a new editor would be forthcoming, I could not see how any working man could do both jobs well. My point was, I believe sincerely, more than proved.

We must begin now to consider how the Churchill Society can be perpetuated through the election of a good slate so that this kind of situation will not recur. There is but one answer to how nominations can be made if so few of us have met other members: We must overcome our own modesty and nominate ourselves! If you can contribute by serving in any office, you must overcome any diffidence you may have and put your own name forward. *Finest Hour* #33 will contain the call for nominations, *Finest Hour* #34 will contain the ballot and #35 will announce the results. Think, NOW!

—Dalton Newfield
The End of the End
Finest Hour 33, Autumn 1981

On this date at last, Finest Hour has returned.

For those with long memories, issue #32 was mailed nearly seven years ago, carrying sombre warnings about its imminent demise which were, alas, as good as its word. The trouble? We can answer in two words: No editor. Finest Hour ironically vanished at the height of the Churchill Centenary boom in stamps, books and keepsakes, and the International Churchill Society with it. For without an editor, there was no survival.

You recognize my poor attempts to paraphrase the Great Man. They are in my mind as I prepare this copy, on 15 May 1981, remindful of winter evenings a year and more ago, when I listened to Decca's Churchill speeches and readings from The Second World War. I had begun, then, to overhaul my long-moribund Churchill stamp collection, and I was soon besieging Dal Newfield with research questions and book requests. I played those Decca records as I worked, trying to imagine what it was like in those "dark days and darker nights," as President Kennedy put it, when Britain stood alone.

Somewhere during the next year Dal shyly—or slyly—suggested, "Why not resuscitate ICS? I have the treasury under control, and drawing interest. Think about it." I did. ICS expired with 700 members and dozens of projects from auction to covers to a new handbook, and all that killed it was: No editor. In 1975 I was in no position to help. Now, six years and much experience later, I felt capable of producing a journal Churchillians would enjoy.

All the other good things which ICS alone can provide are also about to start happening again. We shall resume our commemorative cachet program. We shall in 1982 publish a new Churchill Collector's Handbook. Meanwhile we shall devote these pages to all aspects of Churchilliana: stamps and books, coins and statues, facts and opinions, current events and reflections on the past. And there is something new: we shall soon escort forty vintage car enthusiasts, and our experience hosting similar tours for eleven-day journey made possible through Dal Newfield's expertise and our knowledge of English-speaking peoples across the globe, are appropriate and above all his feelings for that great community of his. In perilous times it strikes us moreover that Sir Winston Churchill's wit and wisdom, his zest for liberty, and above all his feelings for that great community of English-speaking peoples across the globe, are appropriate to dwell upon. I am heartened with the heady thought that the President of the United States thinks so too. For certainly Ronald Reagan is a Churchillian. Do you recall his inaugural address, when he paraphrased WSC in saying he had not become president to preside over the liquidation of America? Remember too that day in April, when a stray loonie tried to do to him what others had done to Lord Mountbatten, and how he cheered us by referring again to the words of Churchill: "Nothing is more exhilarating than to have been shot at without result"?

I hope you will enjoy this issue, meager though its twelve pages are, with the assurance that the page count will increase as our numbers multiply. I think I know a good deal about it all, and I am sure I shall not fail. And so, impatient for the next issue, I sleep soundly, and have no need for cheering dreams. Facts are better than dreams.

—RML

Reviving The Dream
Finest Hour 56, Autumn 1987

There hasn't been a "new book" by Winston S. Churchill since the Collected Essays was published in 1975. Thus the publication this month of The Dream is an event of double satisfaction to us. We publish below excerpts from the preface.

We are on the brink of our most ambitious project ever: raising $250,000 to fund ten additional Companion or Document Volumes of Martin Gilbert's official biography: The Churchill Papers 1939-1965. The old Companion Volumes stopped dead in September 1939. Without our intervention, they would have stayed that way. All supporters will receive a copy of The Dream, magnificently bound in padded leather and gilt with rich moire endpapers, printed by letterpress, illustrated by a painting depicting the scene in Chartwell's studio.

Return now to the dining room at Chartwell, late 1946: Winston Churchill, Leader of the Opposition, is enjoying a quiet dinner with his family. During a pause in the conversation, his daughter Sarah points to an empty chair: "If you had the power to put someone in that chair to join us now, whom would you choose?"

Sarah expected her father to name one of his heroes—Caesar, Napoleon or Marlborough. He took only a moment to consider. And then he said simply, "Oh, my father, of course." He had chosen his greatest hero of all.

The Dream is uncharacteristic of Churchill's writings, though the writing is not. It is exciting because it captures the ethos of the man, the ironies of a life "already long, and not without incident." The supreme irony of the piece is, of course, that Lord Randolph Churchill, briefly brought back to life in his prime, hears his aging son recite the sweeping, tragic history of the 20th century, without any revelation of the myriad roles Winston himself played. But there are many others.

"Is there still a Tsar?" Lord Randolph asks. "Yes, but he is not a Romanoff," Winston replies. Lord Randolph >>
THE DREAM...

asks if there has been war. Winston replies: “We have had nothing else but wars since democracy took charge.”

The latter is one of the many revealing passages. A devoted monarchist, Winston Churchill nevertheless publicly expressed his faith in democracy; in The Dream he sadly despairs of it. Yet, “having gone through so much, we do not despair....we are trying to make a world organisation in which we and America will be very important.” As for the remaining Dominions of the Crown, “They are our brothers.”

But to go on is to spoil the text for the reader. We must allow Sir Winston that happy luxury—how he would have enjoyed it.

One question about the piece remains, at least in this writer’s mind. Just how much of it was fiction? Sir Winston was a man of transcendental powers. In 1953 he told Jock Colville that he would die on 24 January, the same day as his father died; 12 years later he lapsed into a coma on 10 January, and Colville was able to assure The Queen’s private secretary, “he won’t die until the 24th.” For the most part unconscious, Churchill did just that. Was it coincidence?

What his family called The Dream was labeled by Sir Winston a “private article.” There is no doubt that it was not entirely a dream to him.

Toward the Centre

Finest Hour 67,
Second Quarter 1990

HOUSE OF COMMONS, 2 JUNE—

W

hat honor to speak within these walls, to share the excitement that has engulfed the International Churchill Societies during the 50th anniversary of the year Sir Winston said “nothing surpasses.” There are so many anniversaries to remember. Tonight marks the fiftieth anniversary of the final evacuations at Dunkirk. Fifty years ago at 3am tomorrow morning, General Alexander was the last soldier to leave, having cruised the beaches to be sure there were none left behind.

“Alex,” as Churchill called him, was one of the great generals of the war. Who can forget the famous exchange between the PM and Alexander as the latter prepared to take command in North Africa? “Your prime & main duty,” Churchill wrote, “will be to take or destroy at the earliest opportunity the German-Italian Army commanded by Field Marshal Rommel, together with all its supplies and establishments in Egypt & Libya. (2.) You will discharge, or cause to be discharged, such other duties as pertain to your command without prejudice to the task described in paragraph 1.”

That order in Churchill’s hand was given Alexander on 10th August 1942. And do you remember Alexander’s reply in February 1943? “Sir: The orders you gave me on August 10th, 1942 have been fulfilled. His Majesty’s enemies, together with their impedimenta, have been completely eliminated from Egypt, Cyrenaica, Libya and Tripolitania. I now await your further instructions.”

It was typical of Alexander, a man of few words, who in a calm, orderly and unflashy way got the job done.

The Field Marshal would approve of the way the Churchill Societies have got their jobs done over the past year. We have evolved to four independent Societies in Britain, Canada, the United States and Australia, the first three independently registered as charitable or educational organisations. To advance work of joint interest, Finest Hour, our other publications and the rotating international conferences, we formed an international council of Churchill Societies. By far the largest amounts are expended on Finest Hour, which has recently reached forty pages; also Churchill Proceedings, Douglas Russell’s Orders, Decorations and Medals of Sir Winston Churchill; and a Sherlock Holmes pastiche, The Boer Conspiracy; which is in its way a contribution to history.

Equally wonderful news is that Sir Martin Gilbert will deliver the first of ten new companion volumes of the official biography covering the years 1940-1965 this month, in accordance with the campaign by ICS to see into print these hitherto unscheduled volumes, which we funded thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Wendy Rees.

Among national organisations, ICS/Australia will host the 1991 conference in Melbourne. We hope to bring a dozen or more North Americans to Australia on a tour culminating in this meeting. ICS/Canada and John Plumpton have again engaged the services of schoolchildren to help prepare another fifty-year calendar for 1991, listing all the Churchill-related events of 1941. ICS/UK has launched a bi-monthly, Churchill Tales, and the first edition has been circulated.

ICS United States is now very close to launching a Centre for Churchill Studies, which aims to establish a professorial chair, develop curricula which relate the Churchill experience to modern teaching of history and political science, and work to further international understanding among the English-Speaking Democracies through seminars and symposia. Its physical headquarters will house a standard library of Churchill works and will develop a computer index to every word Churchill wrote and spoke.

We have much on our plate and the challenges are enormous. As Churchill told a British diplomat who wrote to ask how to handle the new dangers of 1941: “Continue to pester, nag and bite.”

Our great advantage is that the subject of all our work is the most quoted and revered person in history, religious figures excepted. He remains not merely a symbol of the war we waged together, but of culture, principle, faith,
humor, optimism, pride in country—and by far not least, one of the great writers of this century. And in that century's waning years no one—English, American, and certainly not Russian—can challenge his stature.

We are always amazed at the numbers of young people who join us, who have so soon come to know him either through his writings or by the endless stories about him. One of these, only 18 years old, told us recently what first got him interested. So many of these stories are apocryphal, but Lady Soames has confirmed this one.

A young boy [later identified as his grandson Nicholas Soames] surreptitiously darted upstairs at Chartwell and, eluding all barriers, found himself in WSC's bedroom. The occupant was propped up, riffling through the morning papers and smoking an enormous cigar.

"My Papa says you're the greatest man in the world," offered the boy. "Is it true?"

Sir Winston peered at him over his spectacles and said, "Of course—now buzz off."

Now I am told that in fact he used a rather more earthy phrase than that. But in deference to our surroundings I have done a little editing.

He certainly was the greatest man in the world for the longest time, and his truth, in the words of the American hymn he loved, goes marching on.

—RML

"What Kind of a People Do They Think We Are?"

Finest Hour 112, September 11th, 2001

D ear Mr. President:
The prayers of thousands of members of The Churchill Centre and Societies around the world are with you and your administration at this time. In your own speeches you said that "just as Churchill defined the moral issues of the 1930s and 1940s, he also defined the great moral challenge up to our own times." It is our fervent wish that the words and actions of Sir Winston, whose bust observes your work in the Oval Office, will provide comfort and inspiration.

Commanders cannot know outcomes—only choices. But these words of Sir Winston provide a beacon for making those choices: "The price of greatness is responsibility...One cannot rise to be in many ways the leading community in the civilized world without being involved in its problems, without being convulsed by its agonies, and inspired by its causes....The soul of freedom is deathless; it cannot and will not perish....I have no fear of the future. Let us go forward into its mysteries, let us tear aside the veils which hide it from our eyes, and let us move onward with confidence and courage."

Sir Winston Churchill was always confident that the great democracies would prevail in the fight against tyranny and terror, whatever the price might be. We share his confidence in offering our support and encouragement to you at this great moral challenge to our own times.

—JOHN G. PLUMPTON

"Behind the Distant Mountains is the Promise of the Sun"

Finest Hour 135, Summer 2007

O ur mandate to publish "all Churchill, all the time" offers us opportunities for more expansive treatment of Churchill's relevance today: not what he would do if he were alongside us (and he would be alongside us); but what his experience and reflections suggest might be done, in the face of dangers and challenges similar to those he fought and overcame.

Speaking in 2006 on this most critical mission of The Churchill Centre, Chairman Laurence Geller described a responsibility "to keep the lessons Churchill taught us alive. They are today never more vital in the endless fight against genocidal maniacs, racism, fundamentalism, hatred and bigotry. His example emboldens us to combat the wickedness of myriad self-serving fanatics. We are stronger when armed with Churchillian lessons."

Many meetings at board, chapter and national level, in America and in Britain, have ratified his idea: a kind of think tank to promote the development of Churchillian responses to today’s challenges. Call it "Applied Churchill," or whatever you like. Repeatedly Sir Winston implored us to "study history." Certainly he would want us to derive the lessons his own story offers. As he said a century ago in 1908: "What is the use of living, if it be not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone? How else can we put ourselves in harmonious relation with the great verities and consolations of the infinite and the eternal?" Our aim is simple: to encourage fresh thinking among Great Democracies he believed were "the hope of years to come."

—THE EDITORS
Churchill and the Future

BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 2008—Let me first again thank Joe Hern and the New England Churchillians for all their hard work in putting together this terrific and energizing conference. These are difficult economic times and an attendance of over 200 is testimonial to not only the long and enduring interest of Churchill, but an awareness of the importance and relevance of this unique and vital man’s life.

In the fragile and volatile world in which we live, who amongst us does not realize how critical it is to learn from Churchillian actions and thoughts. How many of us Churchillians don’t scratch our heads in bemusement as we see situation after situation evolve with obvious parallels to challenges Churchill faced, yet how very often are the lessons from Churchill’s life ignored?

That is why the Churchill Centre, the Churchill Museum, and the Cabinet War Rooms exist, and why our mission is to promote and sustain, for the benefit of current and future generations, the legacy and heritage of Sir Winston Churchill in order to foster the values of freedom, leadership, statesmanship and courage. This translates into action in the form of our principal programs.

Education sits at the very core of the values and purpose of the Churchill Centre. Our programs, seminars, symposia and conferences are the very essence of what we do. Yet so much more is to be done if we are to have a constant and sustaining program reaching all levels of our society throughout North America and the UK. We deserve the best and will not rest until we achieve our goals, with Suzanne Sigman our continuing inspiration.

Our recent merger with the American Friends of the Churchill Museum has allowed the Churchill Centre to blend seamlessly a world-renowned museum into our overall education plans and have one combined fundraising organization, under the leader of both entities, Phil Reed. Bricks and mortar may be in our future in America, but meanwhile we hope to have a piece of the museum on a travelling exhibition, to enlighten peoples over here.

The Internet is essential to all we do, and will be inevitably the preeminent communication method thanks to Dave Turrell and his devoted committee, including John Olsen, Ian Langworth and Todd Ronnei.

Publishing, of papers, research, new information, old information constantly reviewed, ever in tribute to the official biographer, Sir Martin Gilbert, is in the capable hands of our editors, Richard Langworth and Dave Turrell.

Our endowment rests at about $1.3 million; we have had to borrow some of its earnings, but we are dedicated to replacing them and adding to them, and much of my own work has been to secure the financing that will at last enable us to rest confident that our future is assured.

Chapters, branches and affiliates are the backbone and lifeblood of our organization. Phil Reed and I see our roles as providing services and resources to each and every one. They must thrive, grow and prosper for us to have an avenue of communicating our messages with the furthest reach possible. We pledge to support them and over the past year have increased our efforts with visits from Celia Sandys and Michael Dobbs, and we will shortly announce a visit to chapters by another member of the Churchill family. If you have any questions about local or national activities, don’t hesitate. Telephone our toll free number, (888) WSC-1874, and the very capable Mary Dwyer will direct you to the right person if she can’t answer herself.

Merging the two organizations, which has kept us so busy for the past two years, has not been easy. Inevitably changes in direction, personalities and programs, cause unforeseen controversy, problems and complications. All of this takes human and financial resources...people and money...fundraising and work.

To that end we have developed our board of trustees to include a panoply of successful, high-profile, well connected and capable people who believe in the education Winston Churchill offers, and who bring work, wisdom, wealth, and Rolodexes to our cause. This is an essential ingredient in any not-for-profit enterprise, and is crucial to our success in four areas: organization, programs, governance, and fundraising. We intend to add to the board continually as we identify capable people who share a commitment to our mission.

In any organization such as ours, the committee structure is of paramount importance. As such, we have put together a series of committees populated and chaired by capable and willing Churchillians—see Chartwell Bulletin 17, page 5. We intend to add to the committees and build upon this essential component of our success.

We have had fundraising successes and continue to add to them with additional, substantial, multi-year commitments, in an addition to our regular fund raising efforts...
for which we are grateful. Please support the upcoming annual Heritage Fund appeal, which we will be writing to you about this autumn.

We are continually working on new and interesting fund-raising concepts and are willing to try bold and innovative ideas: David Boler’s concept in reproducing the Churchill painting, “The Tower at Katoubia Mosque,” Sir Winston’s only wartime oil painting, which was displayed at Boston, will bring us much needed tax-deductible gifts. The travel programs we are initiating build on the many successful Churchill Tours of the past.

The New York Chapter’s pioneering of the Winston S. Churchill Polo Cup on September 14th was a healthy success which will be repeated in future years.

Last year’s dinner honoring Secretary Jim Baker and Congressman Lee Hamilton was another major success, and a counterpart dinner will occur early in 2009.

All these efforts help, and, though they take work, all energize us to achieve Churchillian greatness. I know you will benefit from the education, ideas, energy and collegial friendship of this great institution named for the greatest figure of the past century, a ready guide to the new century ahead. Above all I hope you will remain committed Churchillians. I know I will.

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The Last Memory, 1965

EDMUND MURRAY IN 1992

I escorted Sir Winston on his last visit to the House of Commons on Monday, 27 July 1964. His very first political speech had been made just along the road from where we live in Bath, at the American Museum, on 26 July 1897. He had been for sixty-seven years and a day actively engaged in politics.

On Saturday, 9 January 1965 he dined with Lady Churchill at Hyde Park Gate. He was very quiet during dinner, ate little and wanted neither brandy nor a cigar, which was most unusual. It was only in the early hours of the morning that he was persuaded to go to bed. He never got out of it again.

From Friday, 15 January, daily bulletins were issued by his doctors and suddenly the whole world became aware that the old warrior was fighting his last battle. I saw him as usual at about 8 a.m. on Saturday 23 January. He was lying on the small bed with his eyes closed and his hands crossed on his breast. He made no response when Howells, the male nurse, announced me, so I stepped forward and placed my right hand in his. It was immediately gripped firmly, and the blue tinge on his face began to disappear, to be replaced by a touch of the old pinkish colour.

The nurse saw this and hurried to present a glass of orange juice to the old man’s lips and he sipped from it several times. Howells assured me that was the very first nourishment that had passed those lips in four days. We and young Winston, who had witnessed the event from the open door, began to hope, and Winston and I had a whisky in the lounge: “He’ll do it on them yet again, Sergeant Murray, he’ll do it on them yet again,” he said.

But it was not to be and the very next day, that chill Sunday, 24 January 1965, at five minutes past eight in the morning, seventy years to the day his father, Lord Randolph, had passed on, Sir Winston Churchill, Knight of the Garter, Order of Merit, Companion of Honour, with so many more honours and decorations from the world, died. He was just over ninety years old.

That man had brought our country through the greatest struggle in its history. Though he did admit to me on several occasions the Shakespearean line that God had been on his side, his was the voice, the spirit, the courage and the determination that had brought Britain and Britons to the highest peak of glory they had ever known. He inspired men and women in this country, and in many other countries as well, so that from a balcony in Whitehall on 8 May 1945, the descendant of the First Duke of Marlborough, who had defeated the combined forces of the French and Bavarians at Blenheim in 1704, was able to stand in the presence of a multitude and with his colleagues at his side proclaim the end of the war in Europe: “God bless you all! This is your victory. Everyone, man or woman, has done their best.”

Ladies and gentleman, the Churchill I knew was the epitome of all that was ever good and fine in our island race, and he was always proud as well of his American heritage. Yes, he made mistakes, but then only those who do nothing do not. Always his aim was to make Britain great, and to join all European countries together as one in peace and freedom. One day we may possibly see the culmination of those efforts which he himself began at Zürich so long ago in 1946.

We all have a job to do and indeed the tools to do it are in your hands. Vivre à jamais dans l’esprit des gens, n’est-ce pas l’immortalité? [To live forever in the minds of men, is not that immortality?] There is the heritage he left us: la raison d’être of The Churchill Centre. May we all be worthy of his trust.

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Edmund Murray was Sir Winston’s bodyguard from 1950 until the end. His remembrances of their long friendship were recorded at the Ninth International Churchill Conference in Surrey, England on 13 June 1992, and may be read in full on our website at: http://xrl.us/orkde.
David Jablonsky

Raymond Callahan’s latest book is an outstanding study concerning the impressive institutional transformations of the British and Indian armies under great stress in World War II. For the British Army, the change was necessary because of the shift from imperial defense to a continental focus, leaving unresolved doctrinal issues as the conflict began that adversely affected training, organizing and equipping the force—processes that were not helped by the hasty expansion and reorganization after Dunkirk.

Throughout the almost three years of defeat, retreat and evacuation or surrender that followed, an increasingly dissatisfied Churchill had limited impact on these internal dynamics and therefore on how the Army fought. The imperial victory at El Alamein insured that he would be politically secure until 1945. But as the author also emphasizes, the battle caused a change in the way the British Army fought the war and in Churchill’s relationships with his generals. General Bernard Montgomery’s success allowed him to put his stamp for the remainder of the war on the British Army approach to battle: set-piece attacks with massive artillery and air fire power, followed by controlled advance. This coincided with Churchill’s need after 1942 for a continuing succession of battlefield victories at a sustainable cost against the backdrop of Britain’s dwindling manpower.

The most dramatic renaissance of British forces, however, occurred in the Indian Army. That army, Callahan makes clear, was very different from either the British or the Commonwealth armies. Its officers and those of the regular British Army were of different professional traditions and social origins and knew very little of each other, an ignorance that in the desert war caused some unsuitable appointments and misunderstandings. Like the British Army, the Indian Army had to undergo a massive expansion after 1939. And in a similar but much more disastrous pattern, the Indian Army suffered defeats and reversals in 1941-42 that included surrender at Singapore and the wholesale retreat from Burma.

The key to the reversal of these misfortunes, Callahan convincingly demonstrates, was William Slim, “the outstanding British Army commander of World War II and Britain’s best field commander since Wellington.” At the core of Slim’s success was his undeviating focus on leading and training infantrymen based on sound commonsense doctrine. The outcome was the destruction of the Japanese Fifteenth Army in 1944-45 at the hands of Slim’s “forgotten” Fourteenth Army—“the most remarkable feat of arms to take place under the British flag during the war.”

The term “Forgotten Army” takes on new meaning in Callahan’s examination of Churchill’s approach to the Indian Army. The Prime Minister had never met Slim and consistently undervalued his army, which he believed was a “welter of lassitude and inefficiency.” After the war, Burma as well as the revitalization of the Indian Army was an awkward fit in Churchill’s narrative. Incredibly, he made no mention of Slim or his army in the penultimate volume of his memoirs; and only in his last volume, after the intercession of Slim, by then a Field Marshal and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, did he devote the better part of two chapters to the “famous Fourteenth Army under the masterly command of General Slim.”

The irony is that throughout the war, Churchill questioned the aggressiveness and leadership of British Army commanders and what he perceived as their constant demand for “logistics over insurance.” And yet Slim was the embodiment of aggressiveness and imaginative leadership, a charismatic force who maintained the cohesiveness of a defeated army on one of the longest retreats in history and then rebuilt it into the unstoppable force that crushed the Japanese. And as for supply, Slim produced what Callahan terms “a miracle of logistic improvisation” that used everything from borrowed American aircraft to elephants and porters with headloads.

Throughout the book, the author treats all the protagonists with a knowledgeable, evenhanded objectivity. For Churchill, along with observations concerning “gaps and misperceptions” in the Prime Minister’s military education, Callahan consistently reminds the reader that the Prime Minister was operating in a complex grand strategic environment in which non-military considerations, ranging from domestic and alliance politics to economics, demographics and national will, had to be taken into account. In a similar manner, Callahan describes how after being relieved from his desert command, General Claude Auchinleck’s leadership as Commander-in-Chief, India was instrumental in the renaissance of the Indian Army. As for the “enigma” of General Harold

Col. Jablonsky, the author of several works on Churchill and grand strategy, taught at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
THE CHURCHILL QUIZ

JAMES R. LANCASTER

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

Level 4:
1. Which country did Churchill often call “The Great Dominion”? (P)
2. Where did Churchill travel as a correspondent in 1895? (W)
3. What did Churchill call his “factory”? (L)
4. In October 1911 Churchill said to Violet Asquith: “I don’t want tea—I don’t want anything—anything in the world. Your father has just offered me the _______.” What had H.H. Asquith offered? (S)
5. Whom did Churchill often call “that man” because he did not like to use his name? (M)
6. Whom did Churchill describe in 1931 as “striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal Palace...”? (C)

Level 3:
7. Which book by Churchill did John Maynard Keynes describe in 1926 as “a tractate against war—more effective than the work of a pacifist could be”? (L)
8. In his article, “Land of Corn and Lobsters,” written in August 1933, Churchill observed: “A dangerous, yet almost universal, habit of the American people is the drinking of ————.” What was the missing word? (P)
9. “Here ———-, though all be drifting” was a phrase applied by Churchill to his long and happy marriage to Clementine. Provide the missing word. (P)
10. Name one of the four hymns which were sung at Churchill’s funeral service. (M)

Level 2:
11. Churchill wrote to Rosebery on 17 August 1908: “This is a wonderful event in my life...I never thought this sun would shine for me.” What was the event? (P)
12. They met for the first time on 16 July 1945 in Potsdam. Churchill referred to his “precise, sparkling manner and obvious powers of decision.” Who was he? (C)
13. “Here ———-, though all be drifting” was a phrase applied by Churchill to his long and happy marriage to Clementine. Provide the missing word. (P)
14. “Here ———-, though all be drifting” was a phrase applied by Churchill to his long and happy marriage to Clementine. Provide the missing word. (P)
15. Name one of the four hymns which were sung at Churchill’s funeral service. (M)
16. When was the first time the small adverts on the front page of The Times, which had long distinguished that newspaper, were banished to an inside page? (S)
17. “The founder of ———— was Christopher Columbus. When he started he didn’t know where he was going; when he arrived, he didn’t know where he was; and he did it all on borrowed money.” Which movement was Churchill describing? (S)
18. Where was Churchill when he heard of the death of Queen Victoria? (C)

Level 1:
19. What was Churchill’s singular achievement at the outbreak of the First World War? (W)
20. What was Churchill’s famous remark about central heating? (M)
21. Which well-known British historian wrote: “Anyone one can run up an account of Churchill and find plenty of faults. They weigh not a feather in the balance”? (L)
22. Which World War II event did Churchill call “The Fourth Climacteric”? (S)
23. Who gave the address when Winston and Clementine were married? (P)
24. “I admired always his courage, integrity of purpose, high comprehending vision. He was one of those—who few—who guard the life of Britain. Now he is gone.” Whom was Churchill referring to in this letter of condolence? (C)

Answers

At the end of October, 1895, Winston S. Churchill was en route to Cuba together with a friend, Reginald Barnes. It was his first attempt to take part in serious military action. The way to Cuba lay via New York. Churchill scheduled three days there but hoped to cut his stay to a day and a half.

Lady Randolph had told him that New York was “fearfully expensive” and that he would be “bored to death there—all men are.” But she reckoned without his cousin “Sunny” (Charles, later ninth Duke of Marlborough) who had, just three days before Churchill landed, married Consuelo, the daughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt. Also awaiting Winston were Lady Randolph’s nieces and Congressman Bourke Cockran, a prominent attorney who had met Lady Randolph in Europe.

It is impossible to underrate the abiding influence of Bourke Cockran on Churchill (see notes on McMenamin and Zoller’s Becoming Winston Churchill, page 25, and reference to Zoller’s Cockran article, page 36). WSC wrote:

I must record the strong impression which this remarkable man made upon my untutored mind. I have never seen his like, or in some respects his equal. With his enormous head, gleaming eyes and flexible countenance, he looked uncommonly like the portraits of Charles James Fox. It was not my fortune to hear any of his orations, but his conversation, in point, in pith, in rotundity, in antithesis, and in comprehension, exceeded anything I have ever heard.

Cockran provided young Winston with a Fifth Avenue apartment and his cousin, Eva Purday, supplied a valet. The day after he arrived, the twenty-year-old second lieutenant was given an official tour of the forts and barracks in the harbor and inspected the ironclad New York, then attended the opening of the New York Horse Show in the evening.

The next day Winston was given an official tour of West Point. Of the cadets he wrote:

They are not allowed to smoke or have any money in their possession nor are they given any leave except two months after the first two years….I think such a state of things is positively disgraceful and young men of 24 or 25 who would resign their personal liberty to such an extent can never make good citizens or fine soldiers.

On the day following he sat on the bench at a notorious trial while the judge explained the proceedings. He found the trial very different from English ones, but said “…they manage to hang a man all the same, and that after all is the great thing.”

He toured the city, crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, used his first paper money (he despised it), admired the transportation system and, altogether, cut a very wide swathe.

Cockran pleased him by “alarming” four or five fire stations while Churchill watched the great horses rush into the shafts, the harness falling upon them, while half-dressed firemen slid down poles from the sleeping rooms and the whole apparatus boiled into the street in 5 1/2 seconds. He found it an unforgettable sight.

King Alfonso XIII, whose picture appears on the Cuban stamps of the day, was nine years old in 1895. Spain was ruled by his mother as regent. Cuba, the “Pearl of the Antilles,” was thought to be the richest island in the world, but the seriously insensitive and rapacious Spanish rule had driven the Cubans to one revolt after another.

On November 20th, Churchill disembarked at Havana. After filling up on oranges and trying cigars (a lifelong habit he acquired at this moment), he proceeded to Marshal Martinez Campos’ headquarters at Santa Clara. There, because of his letters of introduction, he was welcomed as an important emissary of a mighty power and
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ancient ally. He was attached, as a guest, to the staff of General Suarez Valdez, whom he joined in Sancti Spiritu after a circuitous detour made necessary by a rebel attack on the railroad line.

Valdez was conveying food to Iguara, a small, fortified village with a heliograph station, and trying to get the elusive rebels, headed by Maximo Gomez, to stand and fight. (Maximo Gomez was but one of many Cuban leaders, but the only one that Churchill mentioned in his writing at the time.) The roads were primitive and the Spanish were forced to proceed in almost single file. The country was full of rebels and some parts of the column were under fire almost from the beginning. On Churchill’s 21st birthday he heard his first shots fired in anger.

In Iguara, news was received that Gomez had encamped with about 4000 of his men a few miles to the east. Valdez turned his forces in pursuit. On the second day the Spaniards were fired upon. The bullets were aimed at the beautifully uniformed staff, which delighted Churchill despite his danger. The column camped at a place called Las Grullas. Here Churchill persuaded some of the staff to join him in a swim.

They were dressing when they were fired upon from about 200 yards. According to Churchill, they remained cool and collected and finished dressing while fifty Spanish soldiers grabbed Mausers and drove the rebels off. That night the camp was fired upon again, an orderly was wounded outside WSC’s hut, and one shot came through the building. He admitted he was quite content that the hammock between him and the rebels was occupied by a very fat officer.

The day following it appeared that the sought-for battle would develop. Gomez occupied the crest of a hill, in front of which was a wide and open area. The Spanish infantry formed a front and crossed the area under fire, closely followed by General Valdez in a resplendent white and gold uniform and mounted on a grey horse. Naturally, his staff was with him, and this group was the most attractive target on the field. But after a few minutes the rebels, in accordance with Gomez’s tactics, melted into the jungle and “The Battle of La Reforma,” as it was afterwards named, was over.

Marshal Campos awarded Churchill the “Cruz Roja” (Order of Military Merit, First Class) for his bravery. Churchill said good-bye and departed for Fifth Avenue. He wrote that the revolution had the support of almost all Cubans, but that he thought the Cubans would be unable to govern themselves if they won their independence. He wrote that the only answer lay in the United States taking over until a new government could be stabilized: a conclusion that eventually came to pass as is illustrated by the USA “occupation” stamp of 1898.

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Alexander, he illustrates how the British general’s “agreeableness” left him vulnerable to misunderstandings with his subordinates and yet equipped him to deal successfully with someone like American General Mark Clark in much the same manner as Eisenhower dealt with Montgomery. For Callahan, Monty’s “unattractive vanity…would ultimately damage his reputation more than anything he did or failed to do on the battlefield.” But he also points out that after Normandy, although Montgomery’s set-piece approach to battle was not capable of producing a spectacular breakthrough, his carefully and intelligently managed version of attrition provided victory at an acceptable cost, as Churchill appreciated.

The text is bolstered by over fifty pages of notes, which demonstrate the depth and extent of Callahan’s research and which alone are worth the price of admission. They contain, for instance, a pungent analysis of the need for studies on generals like Ironside and Dill, and new treatments “free of the near-compulsory piety and discretion of the official biography” on Ismay, Alexander, Montgomery and Auchinleck. Among these riches are miniature biographical essays on such figures as Wavell and Wingate; a catalogue of Montgomery’s “relentlessly negative” judgments about British and Allied leaders; and perceptive examinations of the historiography concerning issues from the Italian campaign to Overlord to such controversies as Mountbatten’s attempt to relieve Slim of his command after the final victory.

Churchill and his Generals is a major contribution by a distinguished scholar, who has provided a superb analysis of Churchill’s interaction with key military subordinates in the context of a rich and original examination of the parallel structural developments of the British and Indian Armies. The result is a consistently rewarding experience. In particular, despite the fact that his “operational art” has been a staple of military education for decades, the role of William Slim, the “last sepoy general,” may come as a surprise to many readers. In that case, the best remedy is to pour a gin and tonic, spin a Vera Lynn CD, and settle down to read Slim’s Defeat into Victory and George MacDonald Fraser’s Quartered Safe out Here.
Churchill in Wedgwood

BARLASTON’S BEAUTIFUL COMMEMORATIVE CHURCHILLIANA

MICHAEL RICHARDS

In 1759 the first Josiah Wedgwood founded a pottery company at Etruria, later succeeded by a factory at Barlaston, near Stoke-on-Trent. For over 200 years Wedgwood has attracted the finest craftsmen, many of whose families have worked there for generations. The factory, in a 500-acre estate, is well worth visiting for its crafts display, in which the variety of pottery skills are demonstrated.

The most familiar Churchill Wedgwood is the famous jasperware, a rough-finish material best known for its white designs reminiscent of Greek sculpture usually on light blue (but also black and light green) background. Dating the busts is easy. The 1965 design has a butt of a cigar and conventional necktie; the 1974 has no cigar and a bow tie. The 1965 designs employ a somewhat more intricate border of laurel leaves and berries for the borders, and they “face” the opposite direction in 1974.

Our knowledge of Churchill Wedgwood is never complete because new variations occasionally turn up. By far the largest outpouring of pieces came following his death in 1965, and his centenary in 1974. This checklist is updated from the original article in Finest Hour 37.

Bust (1953): The current contender for Wedgwood’s first Churchill piece, this smiling P.M. was actually sculpted in 1940 or 1941 by the company’s leading artist, Arnold Machin, but it was not released until 1953. Douglas Hall’s Book of Churchilliana describes it as 11 inches high by 8 inches across: “one of the first pieces made in Wedgwood’s new Windsor grey body.” Hall adds that Machin was a conscientious objector during the war, and his works were not pushed by the company until years later; but he certainly had Churchill’s image down well.

Chartwell Tankard (1965): Measuring 4 1/2 inches high with a 3 1/2-inch diameter, this large glazed tankard has a Karsh-based portrait of WSC on a dark blue background with the southern elevation of Chartwell against dark blue and green backgrounds. On the bottom is a facsimile signature of Churchill and a note about Chartwell, erroneously giving 1927-65 as the years of his residence. (He bought it in 1922, moved in during 1924.) Not as scarce as the glazed blue tankard, its quantity is unknown.

Churchill Tankard (1965): One of the rarer pieces, this handsome glazed piece measures 4 1/4 inches high and 3 1/2 inches in diameter. The cigar-type bas-relief of WSC is accompanied by a lion rampant on the opposite side, both in white against a blue background. Along the bottom in black is the quotation, “Give us the tools and we will finish the job,” from Churchill’s broadcast-reply to Roosevelt’s message quoting Longfellow, “Sail on, O Ship of State,” in 1941. On the underside is a slight misquote from 1940. “…We will fight on the seas and oceans. We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing grounds, in the fields, in the streets and in the hills—We shall never surrender.” It is perilous to estimate values but we are informed that examples are good buys at $200/£100. Much pricier is the numbered, limited edition of this tankard.

Sweet Dish (1965 & 1974): Issued in both pale blue and black jasper with hand-applied white bas-relief cameo of Churchill and laurel border, diameter 4 1/2 inches. The more common blue variety sells for half or less than the black variety. In both cases, the 1965 design is the rarer.

Glass Goblet (1974): A superb, 5-inch-high hand-cut blue-tinted goblet, 4 inches in diameter, with the Centenary jasper cameo (bow tie, no cigar), applied inside a heavy faceted blue glass border. It was offered in a limited edition of 1000. Detailed cutwork encircled the
lower half, “Wedgwood England” was etched on the base. With brochure and certificate of authenticity, this is one of the least-seen and most attractive pieces of Centenary Churchilliana; in 2004, number 534 sold for $325.

**Glass Tankard (1974):** An exquisite, hand-made topaz tankard bearing a black and white jasper cameo, was a special piece and not often seen today. The edition was limited to 750, the height was 3 1/4 inches, and each piece came with a numbered certificate.

**Lighter (1974):** A collaboration with Ronson resulted in a handsome blue and white jasper table lighter. This piece is relatively often seen and ranges up to about $100 on eBay, but it pays to shop around.

**Machin Small Bust (1974):** A very fine black basalt bust modeled by Arnold Machin OBE RA was sold in a limited edition of 750. Each was numbered and inscribed in gold, and supplied with a numbered certificate. Height 6 3/4 inches. When this article was first published, examples were being offered by the Churchill Memorial in Fulton, Missouri at $185, but they are more expensive today. This is one of the finest small sculptures.

**Machin Large Bust (1974):** The most ambitious Churchill Wedgwood commemorative is a foot-high version of the smaller Machin, gold inscribed. We have seen few of them, but it is truly a work of art. Prices in recent years have been around $1000. According to Ivan Hiller of British Collectibles, “The 1974 commemorative of the centenary birth of Sir Winston Churchill proved to be a major flop with collectors because of its almost total irrelevance. Therefore one can still find many pieces still unsold at the original issue price in British ceramic stores.”

**Medallion miniatures (1974):** Small one-inch oval replicas of the portrait medallion were produced for the Centenary, apparently in large quantity. These seem to exist only in blue and white jasper as tie tacs, cufflinks and pendants.

**Medallion (1974):** Described by Wedgwood as pale blue and white jasper, this production has also been seen in a striking combination of black and white. A limited edition of 1000, the medallion was inscribed in gold on the reverse and individually numbered. Then it was clay framed, pierced and slotted for hanging, and boxed with a numbered certificate.

**Paperweight (1974):** A joint venture with Waterford Glass produced a fine crystal paperweight with a jasper bust imbedded and the “Give us the tools” quotation around the edges. Regularly seen nowadays on eBay, and one of the most handsome Wedgwood pieces.

**Plate (1974):** This 6 1/2-inch diameter commemorative plate was issued in large quantity in two versions: plain black basalt with raised relief portrait of WSC; and the same item with a gold inscription: “Winston Churchill, 1874-1965 Author, Statesman, Soldier, Artist.”

Wedgwood is routinely faked, and while this usually involves more elaborate pieces than its Churchilliana, even the portrait medallion has been copied, with a particularly hideous bronze and green counterfeit. For more on Wedgwood fakes see Douglas Hall’s articles in Finest Hour 84 and 88.
The March of Victory: Nimitz, MacArthur, and Coalition Warfare in the Pacific

CRAIG L. SYMONDS

A photograph of the “Big Three”—Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin—taken at Teheran, hints at the give and take that often existed behind the scenes whenever the putative allies came together. In this case, Churchill’s dour expression may reflect the fact that he had just lost an argument with FDR and Stalin about the timing of the second front. Both Roosevelt and Stalin wanted to set a date certain for the invasion of Europe—Americans by instinct sought the jugular; the Red Army needed early relief from carrying the heaviest burden of land war. Churchill, however, wanted to delay a commitment to go back onto the continent. He remembered Dunkirk vividly, and he remembered, too, from personal experience, the trenches of World War I. But Churchill also saw nothing particularly terrible about the fact that in November 1943, Nazis were killing Communists and Communists Nazis. He was simply in no great a hurry to break that up. But he lost the argument, and the morning after this photo was taken, American and British Chiefs of Staff set 1 May 1944 as the date for the invasion, Operation Overlord.

A similar photograph was taken fourteen months later at Yalta. All three men are older, and they look it, Roosevelt especially. They also look a good deal more cheerful. And why not? The war was all but won. D-Day had been successful, if costly, and the Red Army was closing in on Berlin. Because of that, Roosevelt had played up to Stalin, hoping to obtain Soviet assistance in the war against Japan, and to avoid a breakup of the Big Three at war’s end.

These photos remind us all that the Second World War was fought and won by a coalition, the partners of which were not always in accord. Churchill entitled the third volume of his war memoirs The Grand Alliance, but it was not so much an alliance as a marriage of convenience. What bound these putative allies together was their opposition to Hitler, not a shared vision of the future. Indeed, coalition warfare is a difficult thing to pull off, for few nations are willing to subordinate their own national interests to the good of the whole.

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Suspicious by nature, Stalin feared that the Americans and the British were willing to fight the Germans to the last Russian. Churchill worried that FDR was too credulous of Stalin's promises; and FDR was principally interested in doing whatever was necessary to hold the coalition together at least until the war was won. It was, at times, a precarious balancing act.

It was different in the Pacific. At first there was a short-lived attempt to erect a coalition in the western Pacific: ABDA (American, British, Dutch, and Australian forces). But ABDA collapsed quickly, its denouement coming with the Japanese victory in the Battle of the Java Sea in February 1942, only three months after Pearl Harbor. After that, the war in the Pacific was strictly an American show.

One might thus assume that the problems of coalition warfare—the pushing and pulling and deal making and compromising—could be bypassed. Since only one of the allied powers was involved, a streamlined, centrally-directed, military strategy for an efficient victory could be put in place and sustained without all the political baggage associated with coalition warfare.

Not so. A photograph taken on the deck of the cruiser USS Baltimore in July of 1944 shows a jovial Franklin Roosevelt playing essentially the same role that he did seven months earlier at Teheran, and which he played again seven months later at Yalta: he is trying to hold together a coalition that was within inches of breaking apart. They may have saluted the same flag, and fought the same enemy, but General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz had almost nothing else in common. If we could imagine the thoughts of each man as they posed for this photograph, they might be something like this:

MacArthur: "I can't believe I had to fly all the way from Australia just so I could have my picture taken with these two, especially that guy in the ice cream suit. I have a war to fight, and I would win it faster and with fewer casualties if the president would only give me overall command, and then leave me alone."

Nimitz: "MacArthur already has his own army and his own navy, I don't understand why he feels he has to command everything. And what's with that leather jacket? We're in Hawaii in July, for God's sake."

Roosevelt: "Hey, boys, isn't this fun? Aren't we all getting along great? Won't this look just fine in the papers?"

Such musings are partly in jest, but they remind us that the Pacific war was a kind of coalition operation, too. The first six months in the Pacific saw uninterrupted Japanese victory, not only at Pearl Harbor, but at Singapore, the Philippines, even the Indian Ocean. During those six months, the Japanese main battle group of six carriers attended by their escorts—the Kido Butai, to use its Japanese name—cruised unchallenged and at will across a watery empire that encompassed a quarter of the globe, from India to Hawaii and from Australia to Alaska. Not until the Battle of Midway in June of 1942, where four of those six carriers were sunk in a single day, did the initiative pass from the Japanese to the Americans. By then, however, the Japanese had already achieved all their war goals. They had conquered a maritime empire that could supply them with the raw materials and energy resources they needed without depending on foreign imports. They called it the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, proving that Madison Avenue did not invent creative marketing.

From the beginning of the war, the Japanese plan had been to gain independent access to the raw materials of South Asia—the rubber, iron, especially the oil that kept their war machine working—and then to defy anyone to take that empire away from them. They did not expect to defeat the United States or its allies—there were no serious plans to invade California, Hawaii or even Australia. They assumed that Hitler would take care of the British and that they could handle the Americans—who could win a battle or two, but in the long run would pay such a price as to force a reconsideration of whether it was worth it. It was essentially what Muhammad Ali would later call the “Rope-a-Dope” strategy.

For the rest of the war in the Pacific, then, the American goal was to retake this empire, one island at a time, without paying so great a price that it exhausted the will of the American public to continue the fight. It seemed likely that they would have to do it with limited resources, for even before Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed at the Argentia Conference that Germany was the more dangerous enemy, and that Europe was the more important theater. The goal was “Hitler first.”

This strategy meant that until Hitler was defeated, the U.S. would stand on the defensive in the Pacific. A challenge was posed by U.S. opinion: Americans were eager to defeat Hitler, but they were far more eager to avenge Pearl Harbor. With the loss of the Philippines, Guam, and Wake in early 1942, the pressure mounted to do something. If the U.S. had lost the Battle of Midway, Roosevelt >>
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would have had a difficult time resisting the public pressure to focus on the Pacific. (As an aside, it is worth speculating what might have happened if the U.S. had sent its resources to the Pacific first. It might have given Hitler another six months to a year before D-Day, enough time to perfect the V-2 and its advanced warheads. The European war might have run a very different course.) But, of course, the U.S. did win the Battle of Midway, and the “Europe First” strategy survived. Nevertheless, the U.S. did mount a kind of “defensive offense” against the Japanese in 1942, and a genuine offensive in 1943, well before D-Day.

This came about in part because of tough talking Ernie King, the American Chief of Naval Operations, who saw the Pacific as the Navy’s theater. King was the Navy’s George Patton. A self-acknowledged “son of a bitch,” who, according to some, shaved with a blowtorch. King’s career in the prewar navy had been jeopardized by womanizing and drinking; but as he put it, when the shooting starts, they send for the sons of bitches. As the wartime CNO, King presided over the largest navy the planet has ever seen. In his view, the war in Europe would be mainly a land campaign where the army had priority, but the Pacific was an ocean, and the war there had begun with an attack on the American battle fleet. To his mind it was only reasonable—and only fair—that the Navy take charge of the Pacific war. King would not do it personally—he had to stay in Washington as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—but it would be a Navy war.

The man King assumed would run that war was almost his complete opposite in personality and character. Fifty-six-year-old Chester Nimitz had been born and raised of German ancestry in the hardscrabble Texas Hill Country, and his placid demeanor and flawless manners disguised a fierce commitment to duty and a gambler’s instinct. He had snow white hair that led his young staffers to refer to him as “cotton tail”—but only behind his back, for his mild manner was something of a disguise. Throughout the war, Nimitz would demonstrate a willingness to roll the dice, taking long chances with no outward sign of concern. He was a very cool customer.

But there was another candidate for command in the Pacific. Douglas MacArthur was already an Army legend when the war began. He had graduated first in his class at West Point in 1903 and was sent the next year to the Philippines to help suppress the ongoing independence movement, was decorated for bravery thirteen times in the First World War, and had been the youngest division commander in the allied armies.

In 1935, Roosevelt had sent MacArthur back to the Philippines to upgrade U.S. defenses there. MacArthur retired officially in 1937, but he stayed in the Philippines, and in 1941, with war threatening, Roosevelt recalled him to active duty.

Despite all that has been said subsequently about MacArthur’s military genius, objective analysis shows that he was bamboozled by the Japanese when they attacked the Philippines in 1942. His army of some 80,000 Filipino and American soldiers was outmaneuvered and defeated by fewer than 55,000 Japanese. Once he had been forced back into the defensive line across the Bataan Peninsula and onto the fortified island of Corregidor, Roosevelt ordered him to leave, implying that he would be assigned to a new force that would bring a relief force to the archipelago. MacArthur departed at night in a submarine, sneaking out past the Japanese blockade.

Arrived in Australia, he told reporters: “The President of the United States ordered me to break through the Japanese lines and proceed from Corregidor to Australia for the purpose, as I understand it, of organizing the American offensive against Japan, a primary objective of which is the relief of the Philippines. I came through and I shall return.”

His statement struck the public as heroic when there was so little to cheer about, even though the forces he left behind were compelled to surrender, to make the notorious Bataan Death March. Those who survived endured harsh captivity in the hands of the Japanese.

MacArthur, however, was not only senior in years and experience to Nimitz, or anyone else in the Pacific, but he had made a pledge. His honor was at stake. And his monumental ego convinced him that no other individual on the planet was as qualified as he was. He may have been right, but his willingness to acknowledge it—and to insist that others acknowledge it as well—was annoying to some.

The man who had to decide which of these two men would command the American offensive was Franklin Roosevelt, who was by background and by interest a naval man. Like the his cousin Theodore, he had served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and he had a lifelong interest in naval affairs. Roosevelt was a political animal,
and just as he would try to hold the Big Three together at Tehran and Yalta, he also sought to find a way to please both MacArthur and Ernie King.

Like King Solomon, FDR and the Joint Chiefs solved the problem by cutting the baby in half. Solomon used the gambit to discover the rightful mother, but FDR actually did cut the Pacific in half, more or less.

MacArthur thought this division of authority monumentally stupid, and didn’t mind saying so. Unified command, he declared, was fundamental to warfare. The failure to apply this principle in the Pacific, he insisted, “cannot be defended in logic, in theory, or even common sense. Other motives must be ascribed.” And those other motives, clearly, were political: Roosevelt didn’t want to disappoint King and the Navy. After the war, MacArthur insisted that the decision to divide the Pacific command “resulted in divided effort, the waste of diffusion and duplication of force, undue extension of the war with added casualties and cost.” He may have believed all this, but if the command had been unified, MacArthur, as senior man, would have commanded it all.

Independent of each other, MacArthur and Nimitz were not independent of the Joint Chiefs, and the Chiefs had to consider the deliberations of the Combined Chiefs of Staff—the American Joint Chiefs and the British heads of service. Within that group there was constant pulling and tugging about where to put resources. The “Europe First” strategy held, but Ernie King began to push to initiate a counter-attack in the Pacific before the Japanese consolidated their defenses. Royal Navy delegates joked privately that King had both a European and a Pacific strategy. His full attention was focused on the Pacific strategy, and every once in a while he threw a rock over his shoulder, and that was his European strategy.

King argued that an early counterattack in the Pacific was essential because it was crucial to keep the enemy off balance. Even now, he reported, the Japanese were constructing an airstrip on Guadalcanal Island in the Solomons. If they completed that airstrip, King insisted, they would be able to interdict sea traffic passing between the two allied headquarters in Hawaii and Australia.

Convinced by this argument, the Combined Chiefs gave King permission to invade Guadalcanal, but they could spare him no troops—it was still “Europe First.” Consequently the only body of troops available for the invasion was the one division of Marines which Nimitz had at Pearl Harbor. Nimitz, too, was virtually autonomous and independent within his command theater, since he would command not only the naval forces in his region, but also land and air forces. He carried his own air force on board Navy carriers, and he had his own ground force in the U.S. Marine Corps. And in any case, each man commanded all the forces, of all services, within his theater. MacArthur and Nimitz were on the same side, to be sure, but they operated independently—like a coalition.
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That was not the end of it, of course. The Japanese threw reinforcements into the island in an effort to regain it, running troops in at night on what Americans soon called the "Tokyo Express," until there were over 30,000 on the island. They squandered many of these front line soldiers in foolish penny-packet attacks on the American lines, but remember that their goal was not necessarily to win each battle, but to make victory so costly that the Americans would weary of the struggle. On Guadalcanal, however, it was the Japanese who wearied, and after six months of brutal jungle warfare, they evacuated the last of their troops in February 1943.

In theory, the fight for the isle of Guadalcanal had been a defensive move, but now the two sovereignties that were Nimitz and MacArthur each began an offensive aimed at the eventual recovery of the Philippines. The Anglo-Americans having agreed that a cross-channel invasion was impossible in 1943, the Americans decided they would begin the Pacific thrust that year, before D-Day.

MacArthur’s idea was to advance along what he called the New Guinea-Mindanao axis. From Australia, he would conduct a series of amphibious landings along the north coast of New Guinea, past the Japanese citadel of Rabaul on New Britain, and then on to Mindanao, the southernmost island of the Philippine archipelago. He would attack weakly-defended positions and bypass the strong points. MacArthur shook his head at the meat grinder that was Guadalcanal. He believed it was possible to defeat the Japanese far more elegantly and efficiently by hitting where they were weak and avoiding them where they were strong.

While MacArthur conducted this campaign, Nimitz would preside over what became known as the Central Pacific Drive: a series of giant leaps across the Pacific from the Gilberts to the Marshalls, to the Marianas, and then to the Philippines. To conduct this campaign, he relied on a fast carrier force to neutralize Japanese air; battleships and cruisers to soften up the target; and the amphibious Marine Corps to conduct the landings and secure the objective. The U.S. Marines and their U.S. Army counterparts inevitably won these battles, but as the Japanese intended, they took heavy casualties in doing so, and every time they did, MacArthur would shake his head and claim that such sacrifices were unnecessary.

A good case in point is the American landing on Betio, the principal island in the Tarawa atoll, part of the Gilberts archipelago. The Japanese simply refused to surrender. They fought almost to the last man. By the time the battle ended, of the 5000 defenders only 17 were taken alive (below). But the Marines took 3300 casualties with 1000 killed. Americans back home were shocked that so many had died in so short a time in so small a place.

MacArthur insisted that such costly battles as Tarawa were unnecessary. His own campaign along the northern coast of New Guinea was far less costly, mainly because he struck at weakly-defended positions. And, indeed, the outcome of Tarawa, successful though it was, led to a lot of soul-searching back in Washington about the Central Pacific Drive. Understandably, Nimitz had to think very carefully about his next step.

Nimitz’s list was Kwajalein, and in a December meeting, his officers declared their preference for an attack on the outer islands. He thanked them for their input and announced: “Gentlemen, our next objective will be Kwajalein.” After the meeting, two of his senior officers stayed behind to argue with him. Nimitz listened to them patiently, then quietly told them that if they were unwilling to make the attack he would find new commanders.

And, as it happened, the attack on Kwajalein was a textbook operation in which U.S. planners applied the lessons learned from Tarawa. This time the preliminary bombardment targeted specific sites instead of firing blindly at the island. The assault force was overwhelming, and the island was secured with a loss of 400 killed and 1800 wounded, modest compared to the 8800 Japanese killed defending the island.

MacArthur, meanwhile, bypassed the Japanese citadel of Rabaul, leaving it to wither on the vine as he cut its lines of communication and supply, and moved westward along the New Guinea coast to Hollandia and Biak, preparing for the leap to Mindanao.

One other feature of the U.S. command organization in the Pacific is worth mention: its fleet structure. Officially, while MacArthur had the 7th Fleet within his command, Nimitz had two fleets—the 3rd Fleet under William “Bull” Halsey, and the 5th Fleet under Raymond Spruance. Their fleets tag-teamed the Japanese. Spruance’s Fifth Fleet conducted the assault on Tarawa,
then Halsey’s 3rd Fleet led the assault on Kwajalein, then it was Spruance’s turn again for the leap to Saipan in the Marianas. But here’s the trick. The 3rd and 5th Fleets were the one and the same: ships, captains, crews—just different fleet commanders. While one executed an operation, the other was back at HQ drawing up the plans for the next: the new team would come on board, the 3rd Fleet would become the 5th vice versa—and the next operation would take place. This often fooled Americans at home, who rooted for one fleet or the other; it fooled the Japanese, who believed that the Americans had two giant fleets. As a result, the Japanese got hit by MacArthur at Hollandia, by Spruance at Saipan, and then by Halsey in the Philippine Sea.

Was divided command in the Pacific foolish? Without doubt, unity of command is a virtue, and if the balance of forces between the U.S. and Japan had been more even, divided command would indeed have been foolish. But it was not even. MacArthur and Nimitz were each of them superior to the total strength of the Japanese Empire. The Japanese fought valiantly and ferociously, making the Americans pay in blood for every yard of soil. But they were simply overmatched and overwhelmed by superior United States forces.

There was one occasion, however, when divided command nearly led to disaster: at Leyte Gulf, where the two prongs of the American dual advance came together for the landing in the Philippines. This time it was Halsey’s turn to command, so it was officially the 3rd Fleet that covered the landings from the north. But guarding the landing beaches from the south was Kinkaid’s 7th Fleet, part of MacArthur’s SOWESPAC forces.

This was a big moment for MacArthur, his long-anticipated return to the Philippines. He had it immortalized for the cameras, twice: After he splashed ashore, his every move carefully recorded, he went back and did it again to make sure they got the most dramatic image.

But the real news was happening offshore, where the Japanese had decided to throw everything they had left—which wasn’t much—at the Americans. Their plan was a good one, and it almost worked. Admiral Ozawa would approach the beachhead from the north with the few carriers Japan had left, even though they had almost no airplanes to fly, tempt the American carriers to leave the beachhead and come north in search of a final battle. Then the Japanese battleships and cruisers would sneak in from the west through San Bernardino Strait or up from the south through Surigao Strait to destroy the support fleet in Leyte: transports, >>

troop ships, supply vessels, and oilers necessary to sustain the landing.

Much has been written about this battle, most of it focusing on the action of Admiral Halsey, the Third Fleet commander. Halsey had been critical of Spruance for not going after the Japanese carrier fleet in the Battle of the Philippine Sea the previous July. Trained at the U.S. Naval Academy, where Alfred Thayer Mahan’s The Influence of Sea Power upon History was almost an institutional Bible, Halsey believed that any fleet commander who had a chance to destroy the main enemy battle fleet should do so. But Spruance had stayed by the Saipan beachhead to protect the landing force, and the Japanese battle fleet, though badly mauled, had escaped. So Halsey had Nimitz write into his orders that if he had the chance, the enemy’s main fleet should become his primary target.

And it did. When Ozawa’s fleet steamed toward Luzon, Halsey, having satisfied himself that Kinkaid had matters well in hand, left the beachhead to go get him. But no one was watching Admiral Kurita’s battleship force headed for San Bernardino Strait. To give Halsey his due, he had not ignored Kurita. He had launched several air strikes against it in the Sibuyan Sea, sinking the super-battleship Musashi and damaging the rest of the fleet so badly that at one point Kurita actually turned back. But when Halsey left to go after Ozawa, Kurita turned around again. Halsey knew that, but assumed Kinkaid could handle anything Kurita had left. Meanwhile Kinkaid assumed that Halsey had the strait guarded.

Rather than make such assumptions, of course, both Kinkaid and Halsey should have found out for sure. Why didn’t they? The answer to that question traces all the way back to the divided command. Kinkaid was part of SOWESPAC. He reported to MacArthur, who reported to George C. Marshall, who reported to the Secretary of War. Halsey, on the other hand reported to Nimitz, who reported to King, who reported to the Secretary of the Navy. There was no individual below Roosevelt himself who had joint command over these two naval forces.

They did listen in on each other’s radio net, though one radio order contributed to the confusion. Just before leaving, Halsey had ordered the formation of Task Force 34 to be composed of the fast battleships of Rear Admiral Willis Lee. By implication, at least, this force would be left at San Bernardino Strait. That, at least, is what Kinkaid assumed, as did Nimitz, who was also listening in.

They were both wrong. When Halsey went north he took Task Force 34 with him. Mahan had always insisted that it was foolish to divide your forces in the face of the enemy, so Halsey took everything he had. When Kurita exited the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait just past midnight on 24 October, he was stunned to find the ocean empty. The smooth black seas stretched out in front of him, the moonlight painting its white stripe on the surface...but there were no ships. Mystified, but willing to accept a gift, Kurita turned south for Leyte Gulf.

At dawn on 25 October, lookouts aboard small escort vessels off the mouth of Leyte Gulf saw the pagoda-style masts of Japanese battleships closing on them from the north. The only allied forces between Kurita and the helpless transports in Leyte consisted of three so-called “Taffy” groups: Taffy 1, Taffy 2, and Taffy 3 under the command of Rear Admiral Clifton Sprague. Sprague had three small unarmored escort carriers, each carrying a handful of fighter planes, plus a few small destroyer escorts. They would be easy meat for the Japanese heavy battleships, including the 73,000-ton super-battleship Yamato, armed with the largest guns ever deployed at sea.

Sprague did three things almost at once: First he ordered his carriers to turn into the wind and launch their fighters, and he ordered the destroyer escorts to attack. Ordering a destroyer escort to attack a battleship is virtually a death sentence—but there was simply nothing else at hand, and he hoped to buy time.

At the same time, Sprague broke radio silence to send out a message in the clear—no time for codes, and what difference would it make now?—“I am under attack from Japanese battleships 20 miles east of Leyte Gulf.”

Now there’s a message to curl your hair! Halsey heard
It at 8:22 am, some 320 miles to the north. There was little he could do about it now. Kinkaid at Surigao Strait was closer, but Kinkaid had his hands full with the southernmost Japanese thrust. For another two hours, therefore, Halsey continued to steam northward; Ozawa’s decoy carriers were now almost within the range of his bombers.

During those two hours, a handful of American sailors were doing everything they could to stop or at least slow down Kurita’s battleships. The little destroyer escorts fired their torpedoes, which caused Kurita to turn away briefly to comb the tracks. The valiant destroyers advanced, firing their little 5-inch guns until they were all but cut in half by the big shells from the Japanese cruisers and battleships. The Japanese were so impressed by their audacity that when USS Johnston went down, officers on the bridge of the Japanese battleship Kongo spontaneously saluted.

The fighter planes from the small escort carriers were doing their best as well. They had no bombs—they were only fighters—but they strafed the battleships and cruisers until they ran out of ammunition, then they made dry runs, essentially buzzing the bridge, in an attempt to convince the enemy that there were serious forces in their way. Lieutenant Paul B. Garrison made twenty such runs, and would have done more if he had not run out of gas.

Meanwhile Sprague continued to send requests for support in the clear. Listening in with mounting concern was Chester Nimitz at his headquarters in Pearl Harbor, two thousand miles away. He did not know what to do. He was a firm believer that it was inappropriate for a theater commander to interfere with the decisions of his on-scene commanders. Should he do something? If so, what? He finally decided that he could at least ask a question. Where was Task Force 34? Could he simply ask Halsey? He scribbled out a query and sent it to the radio shack.

At a few minutes before 10:00, an ensign showed up on the bridge of Halsey’s flagship and handed him a clipboard with the following message: “Where is, repeat, where is, Task Force 34?” If that had been the entire message it still would have stung, because of its implied rebuke. But there was more.

During World War II, all messages included what was called “padding”: nonsense phrases added to the message at the beginning and the end to confuse decoders. They were selected completely at random. The padding at the front of Nimitz’s message read: “The turkey trots to water.” The one at the end read “All the world wonders.” The junior officer in the radio shack on board Halsey’s flagship wasn’t sure if this last was part of the message or not, so he left it in. What Halsey read, then, was this: “HALSEY: Where is, repeat, where is, Task Force 34. All the world wonders. NIMITZ.”

Halsey threw his hat on the deck and shouted out a few expletives before ordering Willis Lee’s battleship force plus one of his three carrier groups to turn around.

As it happened, they would be too late. Whether it was the ferocious defense by Taffy 3, or if Kurita simply lost his nerve, the Japanese inexplicably turned away at 9:15 am and headed back to San Bernardino Strait.

Thus it was that the U.S. Navy won the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and MacArthur’s return to the Philippines was unsullied by what could easily have become a Japanese triumph. Of course it is possible to wonder whether it would ever have come to this if American command in the Pacific had never been divided in the first place. The Americans had clear superiority in every category and should have been able to overwhelm every element of the Japanese counterattack without enduring the terrifying few hours when only a few tiny escorts stood between the Japanese battleships and disaster.

Does this mean that MacArthur was right? In theory, yes. But although MacArthur was inclined to dismiss ‘politics’ as a reason for making military decisions, Roosevelt knew that to give Europe to Eisenhower and the Pacific to MacArthur would have seriously upset Ernie King and the Navy. Just as he continued to promise Stalin a second front to keep the Soviet Union in the fight in Europe, he split the command in the Pacific between his two rival services in order to keep them all on the same team.

In practice, Roosevelt’s decision to cut the baby in half made sense. And it worked not only because of overwhelming American industrial superiority, but because each of the two rival commanders kept the enemy off balance until he had no assets left.

Inevitably, perhaps MacArthur had the last word. The surrender ceremony ending the war was held on the deck of the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Certainly Ernie King and Chester Nimitz believed that it was entirely appropriate to hold the event on the deck of a ship. But at that ceremony, the man who presided was the Supreme Allied Commander, General Douglas MacArthur.

Ozawa’s decoy force was destroyed by Halsey’s other two carrier groups, and the southern force was destroyed by the battleships of Kinkaid’s 7th Fleet, but Kurita got away. On the other hand, the vast armada of unprotected ships in Leyte Gulf survived, too.
two weeks after VE Day, Britain was plunged into a general election. The voting began on 5 July, but the count was delayed until the 26th so that the service vote could be ferried by the RAF from far-flung corners of the globe where servicemen were stationed, many still in combat. When the ballots were counted two months later, the Conservatives under Winston Churchill held only 197 seats of their previous 387. Clement Attlee had led the Labour Party to a massive landslide victory, with 393 seats out of 640, capturing virtually 50 percent of the votes cast.

How could Britons turn their back on the very man whom they credited with winning the war? That question is one Churchillians hear often.

Churchill himself was thunderstruck—no less so than the rest of the world. On 25 July 1945, as he departed Potsdam to hear the results at home, Stalin told him that Soviet Intelligence had predicted a sizeable majority.

Were there warnings of the debacle? Yes. Churchill’s daughter, Lady Soames, speaking at the Portsmouth, England Churchill Conference fifty-nine years later, recalled riding with her father reviewing troops at Potsdam: it seemed to her that the second Jeep, containing Deputy Prime Minister Attlee, received more resounding cheers.

Ever the democrat, Churchill had taken Attlee, as Leader of the Opposition and potential PM, with him to Potsdam. The summit conference was scheduled to continue after the vote count and Churchill felt that including his adversary was the right thing to do. This was in fact Churchill’s second wartime administration: since May he had headed a Conservative “caretaker government,” and Attlee was no longer Deputy Prime Minister, as he had been during the previous coalition government. But it was Attlee who would return alone to Potsdam.

By all measurement, the Conservative defeat was a rout, with almost twelve million votes for Labour compared to nine million for the Tories. There was no single reason, but there were many factors.

First, the public was pretty tired of the ruling party, which is not to say they were tired of Churchill. There were 639 constituencies where the local candidate was not Winston Churchill, but someone else carrying the Conservative banner, tattered as it was. In fact there were twenty-five parties running, ten of which took seats.

The Conservatives under Stanley Baldwin had been elected with almost 400 seats ten years earlier, but there had not been another election because of the war. In

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normal times, the five-year limit would have produced one or two elections before July 1945. Counting Chamberlain and Churchill, there were three premiers in six years.

In most countries the public grows tired if the same party is in power that long. Governments often have a shelf life in the ten-year range, though there are exceptions. We have certainly seen voter fatigue set in frequently in Canada, so it is no surprise that it would happen elsewhere. There had been no chance during the war for voters to vent their anger, and maybe change governments twice.

The war weighed heavily on the electorate. Not a family was untouched by death and destruction: homes had been bombed, families scattered, children shipped to the country, food rationed, inflation mounted. All had taken their toll. The British people were not beaten, but they were pretty beat up.

And many of the public held the Tories responsible for Britain not having been prepared for war. The Conservatives had always been strong in foreign affairs, but the people felt let down by what they saw as too little rearmament too late in the decade of the 1930s.

Martin Gilbert, in his fine little book The Will of the People, writes: “There was another factor that worked against a Conservative victory: the memories of its prewar appeasement policies and neglect of Britain’s defences. Lord Beaverbrook (the Canadian Max Aitken), himself a prewar pro-appeasement Conservative, wrote to a friend when the election results were known: ‘The main factor in the political landslide here lies way back in the years 1938-40. It was about that time that the great mass of middle-class opinion in Britain decided to punish the Conservatives. It is unfortunate that the blows intended for the heads of Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues should fall on Mr. Churchill.’ The unpopularity of the Conservative Party, Beaverbrook added, ‘proved too strong for the greatness of Churchill and the affection in which he is held by the people.’”

The population had not even elected Churchill as Prime Minister. He had taken the job in 1940 by appointment of the King after Labour refused to serve in a coalition government under Chamberlain and Halifax, the only other viable alternative, opted to pass. At that time, Churchill wasn’t even the Leader of the Tories, and would not become so until October 1940, following Neville Chamberlain’s illness (he died of cancer in November).

As Conservative Leader Winston Churchill had a war to fight and little time to devote to party fortunes. This left the party somewhat bereft. One backbench Conservative wrote in October 1944: “Never was a party so leaderless as the Conservative Party is today.” The situation did not augur well for the Party in the coming election.

Still, the 1945 general election was a strange call. Following VE Day, Attlee had told Churchill he would continue in the National Government until war’s end. But his party took that decision out of his own hands at its conference at Blackpool, and Attlee had to renege just a few days later. Pending the general election in July, Churchill formed the caretaker government. Churchill was still running the war, which was months away from victory in the Pacific.

The Tory campaign was of course Churchill-centered, as might be expected, and many considered the Conservative platform to be a poor set of planks. Yet it seemed like a mismatch: Churchill, the cigar chomping, whisky-loving warrior, against Attlee, the mild-mannered professorial type (one of his own Labour colleagues likened him to a mouse). But the Labour Party had an attractive platform, as parties often do when they promise all. It appealed to the public with its promises to nationalize key industries, bring about full employment, and establish a national health scheme. To the beleaguered and badly bruised British public, such promises must have seemed very inviting indeed.

This was Churchill’s first election as party leader and according to the pundits at least, he made a few gaffes. >>
ELECTION 1945...

On the BBC, in his first election address, he warned that Labour would have to fall back on “some form of Gestapo” in order to produce their reforms. This was considered way over the top by many, who could not imagine the modest Clem Attlee as a storm trooper. WSC’s wife advised him against the Gestapo reference, but he ignored her.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote in 1995: “I vividly remember sitting in the student common room in Somerville listening to Churchill’s famous (or notorious) election broadcast...and thinking, ‘He’s gone too far.’ However logically unassailable the connection between socialism and coercion was, in our present circumstances the line would not be credible. I knew from political argument on similar lines at an election meeting in Oxford what the riposte would be: ‘Who’s run the country when Mr. Churchill’s been away? Mr. Attlee.’”

Attlee may have had “much to be modest about,” as Churchill remarked to President Truman, but that did not seem such a bad quality. The public had had a chance to observe him for years as Deputy Prime Minister and tended to respect him.

During the campaign—when he did campaign, which was not often enough—Churchill seemed to rely too often on scare tactics; but the public was not buying them. The Tory poster slogan, “Let Us Go Forward Together,” depicting a face-on pose of the Great Man in his homburg with fighter planes in the background, just did not take. Meanwhile, the Labour campaign slogan, “And Now—Win the Peace,” seemed to capture the public’s imagination. Labour, in the view of the voter in the street, had policies that caught on with the public mood.

After the results were known, even Churchill had to concede that the population could be forgiven for expressing their thanks the way they did. When his principal private secretary spoke to him of the ingratitude of the British people, Churchill replied: “That’s politics, my dear, that’s politics.” To his doctor, Lord Moran, who mentioned the word “ingratitude,” Churchill replied: “I wouldn’t call it that. They have had a very hard time.”

Mary Soames in her biography of her mother wrote: “Winston did not lurk long licking his wounds; when Parliament reassembled on 1st August, less than a week after the election result, he took his new place on the Opposition front bench.”

Was the defeat predictable? Mary Soames had an inkling at Potsdam, hearing the cheers for Attlee. One would have expected just the opposite from, of all people, men in uniform; this was certainly an omen of what was to come.

It is widely thought indeed that the service vote turned the tide against Churchill, that he had been winning until the military votes were counted. But that runs contrary to the opinion polls which, since 1942, had shown Labour with a large lead over the Conservatives.

True, polls were in their infancy back then and people would often challenge the premise that a sample of a few thousand could predict an outcome. Even today we disparage “rogue” polls, citing the Truman-Dewey predictions of 1948, and later examples where losers turn to winners after the vote is in. No doubt British pundits who were predicting a Tory victory just could not fathom how so great a man could ever be defeated. What he had accomplished was apparent to all. And yet the voters turned their backs on him—or so it would seem.

The cynical observer might have been inclined to say that with the war in Europe won and the Japanese on the run, people really did not need Churchill any more. Perhaps a more charitable view is that Churchill was needed to win the war, but someone else was needed to win the peace: a peacemaker, not a warmonger. The label of warmonger was exactly what the Labour Party chose to fix on Churchill during the campaign. And Labour tried to make it clear that the coalition team which brought Britain through World War II was not a one-man government, citing the presence of Labour Ministers such as Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Clement Attlee.
In any case the results were resounding, and Churchill was now the Leader of His Majesty’s Loyal Opposition, holding just half as many seats as Labour. It would take Churchill over six years in that role before he would once again be called on to be Prime Minister.

That long-sought win came on 25 October 1951, the second general election of the new decade. In 1950 Attlee’s government had gone to the country to see Labour’s majority shrink from 393 seats to 315, just a few seats over a majority. Churchill’s Tories were rejuvenated with eighty-five more seats, giving them 298 in all, a dominant force breathing down Labour’s collective neck, just seventeen seats behind. In 1950 a narrow majority was really not a working majority. Even though the popular vote had favoured Labour by nearly two million votes over the Tories, it was the seats held that counted.

In 1951 King George VI was very concerned about such a narrow majority. It is said he counseled Attlee to seek a mandate from the people in order to clarify the precarious majority they held. Traditionally, British governments almost always had majorities, and working majorities, which meant enough seats over the combined opposition for votes to carry regardless of a few mavericks or absent members. The King was battling cancer in the autumn of 1951, and sadly succumbed to it a few months later, at the very time he was to embark on a Commonwealth tour to Africa. He was very concerned about the precariousness of the situation in Parliament.

The inevitable next election in October 1951 saw the seat count tumble in favour of the Conservatives. Churchill was now able to count on 321 seats, plus the Liberal Nationalists, to give him a working majority. Labour lost twenty more seats.

It was a bittersweet election for Labour, as the popular vote gave them 1.3 million more votes than the Conservatives. But in a “first past the post” electoral format, the surplus votes were in the wrong constituencies. Churchill had won. He was summoned by the King who asked him to form a Government, almost twelve years since he had first gone to Buckingham Palace for that purpose. For Churchill it was elation and vindication.

In summary, the 1945 change of government was based on some or all of the reasons I have set out:

- The “Gestapo speech.”
- The persuasive socialist policies of Labour.
- Churchill’s inability to campaign adequately while he was still fighting the war.
- Mistaken strategy by Tory campaign managers.
- Attlee’s appearance as a “peacemonger.”
- Voter fatigue after years of Tory rule and war.
- The lack of any interim elections since 1935.
- The terrible devastation throughout the country.
- A feeling among voters that revenge should be taken on the Conservatives for poor prewar performance.

From my own point of view, I think the primary reason was the voters’ intent to punish the Tories.

Did Winston Churchill himself really lose? Although he was returned for Woodford with a smaller majority, his constituency’s borders had changed, making it hard to compare the vote with prewar results. I would offer the view that it was the Conservative Party that lost. The public had rendered judgement on the 1930s failures of the Tories. But Beaverbrook was right: it was sad that the public took out their revenge on Churchill.
Bill Buckley said: “Expressions of gratitude can be most awfully trying to the ear of an audience, generally captive. But the act of gratitude nowadays is probably more often neglected than overdone.” Finest Hour has been, not the work of one but of many over the years, who contributed time, talent and skill as writers, artists or thinkers to the product it became. On its fortieth anniversary, it is appropriate to mention all who come to mind, knowing I will forget to mention others.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry reflected in Wind, Sand, and Stars: “Life may scatter us and keep us apart; it may prevent us from thinking very often of one another, but we know that our comrades are somewhere ‘out there’—where, one can hardly say.” Well, here they are, out there...

A gone shipmate, Conrad wrote, is gone forever from Finest Hour, or this world. “But at times the spring-flood of memory sets with force up the dark River of the Nine Bends. Then on the waters of the forlorn stream drifts a ship—manned by a crew of Shades. They pass and make a sign, in a shadowy hail. Haven’t we, together and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives?....You were a good crowd. As good a crowd as ever fisted with wild cries the beating canvas of a heavy fore-sail; or tossing aloft, invisible in the night, gave back yell for yell to a westerly gale.”

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