Summer Book Number • Churchill and Conan Doyle
The Role of the State: Why Churchill Changed His Mind
The Myth of the “Black Dog” • The Real Churchill
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**DESPATCH BOX**

**FH 154 Canada Number**

I just received the latest issue: very, very good and well produced and well art-directed. It’s good to read some stirring stuff about the Great Man instead of all the rubbish in the press about these present day chancers!

BOB COLMAN, ELEUTHERA, BAHAMAS

It would be graceless on my part not to thank you warmly for what you write about me on page 13. Having spent much of my life, mostly with little success, in trying to foster good relations between this country and Canada, I am grateful to you for drawing attention so pointedly in this issue to the heroic effort which Canada made in the war. It needs saying again and again. I feel sure that many others will share this view, even if it is little understood by politicians, at least in this country.

DAVID DILKS, LEEDS, YORKSHIRE

**FH153 “Churchillnomics”**

Congratulations for a stunning edition, which shows the depth and breadth of Churchill’s activities and their relevance today. The relationship between Churchill and Keynes brings together two towering personalities who continue to reverberate through our lives today.

PETE VAN DE GOHM, HOUSTON

Thank you for the nice job on my article, “In the Field: Churchill and Northey.” It was great fun and even better seeing one’s name in print! My 25-year-old daughter, who writes a blog on contemporary art (M.A. from American University, Richmond, London) says, “Dad, hasn’t there been enough written about Churchill?”

Response: “No...too many stories out there.”

BILL NANNY, CHARLOTTE, N.C.

**Churchillian Kindness**

I am the son of John Logie Baird, the scientist who invented the first practical, publicly demonstrated television. My mother was Kathleen Faux, who was employed by the Bairds as a “live-in housekeeper” while John’s family was living on the south coast. She was twenty years younger than he, and modeled for his photography.

Churchill met and became friends with John Baird, and Churchill knew the power of television in the near future. Whenever he called, my mother would look after the then-Mr. Churchill and with her interest in art they too became friends. When she married, Mr. Churchill found a house for her to buy in his constituency of Wanstead.

One day, canvassing in Wanstead, he spotted Mother in the crowd and, taking me from her arms, he posed for press photographs.

continued on page 63...
**Datelines**

**60 Years On: God Save the Queen**

LONDON, JUNE 5TH— We may think of Churchill as an amiable or even reverent agnostic, who conceived of himself not as a pillar of the church but perhaps as a flying buttress. He did not invoke the Deity casually or cynically, a fact which confers its own interest upon his touching and heartfelt reply to the Queen’s letter following his retirement as prime minister (excerpt, right).

The monarchy signified for Churchill something of infinite value, at once numinous and luminous; and if you will allow the remark in parenthesis, ladies and gentlemen, do you not sometimes long for someone at the summit of our public life who can think and write at that level?

—DAVID DILKS, FH 135

**Waiting on Nessie**

LONDON, JUNE 1ST— The BBC aired an hour-long documentary, “A Jubilee Tribute to the Queen by the Prince of Wales,” comprising home movies never before seen, covering the lives of the Royal Family. Of note to FH readers are about three minutes with Sir Winston and Lady Churchill at Balmoral with Prince Charles commenting on Churchill’s greatness and impact.

Any depiction of Churchill would be lacking were it without humor and this documentary does not disappoint. It shows WSC sitting on the shore of a loch with a large piece of driftwood, raised high in hand. Prince Charles says that he remembers distinctly hearing Sir Winston say he was “waiting on the Loch Ness Monster.”

Viewing BBC TV rebroadcasts from the U.S. can only be done with a VPN network with a UK IP address, but a color still of Churchill with his Nessie club (along with many other evocative Royal photos from this show) can be seen on the accompanying web page: http://xrl.us/bm974w.

—BRENT McIVER, PHOENIX

**Quotation of the Season**

OUR ISLAND NO LONGER HOLD THE SAME AUTHORITY OR POWER THAT IT DID IN THE DAYS OF QUEEN VICTORIA.... [BUT] I REGARD IT AS THE MOST DIRECT MARK OF GOD’S FAVOUR [THAT OUR] COMMONWEALTH HAS BEEN LINKED AND ILLUMINATED BY A SPARKLING PRESENCE AT ITS SUMMIT.”

—WSC TO H.M. THE QUEEN, SICILY, 18 APRIL 1955

**Key Phrase Index**

NEW HAMPSHIRE, MAY 21ST— FH 153:8 advised that the Churchill quotations book, Churchill By Himself, is being updated and corrected for a new edition called Churchill in His Own Words, with an e-book version as well.

The present index is good but not comprehensive. In order to help make finding quotes easier in the new volume, we replaced Appendix IV (“The Biblical Churchill”) with a new Key Phrase Index that will lead readers to the many familiar lines. There are over 400 entries from “Abdullah is in Transjordania where I put him” to “Zionism, my heart is full of sympathy for...”

Since the pagination will not change (we have found only one non-quote which had to be removed), the new Phrase Index can also be used by owners of Churchill By Himself. For a copy please email the editor. If, even with this, you still can’t find what you are looking for, send me a Tweet (@rmlangworth) or email (page 4).

“The Biblical Churchill” is not lost either. It has been posted in three parts on my website, starting at: http://xrl.us/bm55xk. —RML

**Arthur Bray Honoured**

TORONTO, APRIL 10TH— Arthur Bray has long had an appreciation for Churchill, starting from the time he was in High School in the UK. His admiration >>
was reinforced when he became a pilot during World War II. After the war ended, Arthur started to build a collection based on books given to him by his father, who felt the same about Sir Winston—a collection which has now become considerable. He has visited Chartwell and Bladon Churchyard on more than one occasion and it was on a visit to Chartwell that he met Lady Soames and had the good fortune to have tea with her.

In 1988, purchasing books to augment his collection, he found a shop specializing in Churchilliana. The owner put him on to the Society and he has been a member ever since. The first Finest Hour he received was #62.

A charter member of The Churchill Centre, Mr. Bray continues to hold Sir Winston the greatest man of the 20th century and supported ICS, Canada for almost a quarter of a century. In recognition of this achievement the ICSC Board of Directors was pleased to award him with a life membership.

**WSC Goes Digital**

**NEW YORK, JUNE 18TH**— Churchill’s body of published work will soon be fully digital. RosettaBooks, an e-book publisher, has agreed to publish nearly all of his writings, including his speeches, the first time most have been available digitally. Forty titles will be available by next year at £5-6 each, says RosettaBooks CEO Arthur Klebanoff.

The e-books will be available in English globally, a shift for the industry. Digital publishing makes it much easier now for a book to be offered worldwide. “When we started, you could sell an e-book basically in the U.S. Now, we’re selling around the world,” Klebanoff said. About Churchill he added:

“There are only two American figures who have done something comparable: Theodore Roosevelt, who wrote fifty books; and Richard Nixon, who wrote ten. ‘It’s wildly unusual to have a world leader who is also a writer, especially when he was such an important figure for sixty years. And Churchill was an extraordinary writer. You could open one of his books at a random chapter and read it aloud and you’ll find it’s beautifully written. He didn’t just win the Nobel Prize for Literature, he won it for a good reason.”

Retailers of e-books that operate internationally include Amazon.com, which sells Kindles and Kindle apps in more than 175 countries. Kobo, a digital books retailer and device maker owned by Tokyo-based Rakuten, also operates globally, selling digital books in more than 190 countries.

Among the few Churchill titles previously available digitally was his six-volume memoir, The Second World War, which RosettaBooks published in 2001, paving the way for the new agreement. Other well-known Churchill works that will be available electronically as a result of this deal include the four-volume A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, Marlborough and My Early Life.

Gordon Wise, senior agent at Curtis Brown Group in London, declined to discuss terms. In some digital rights publishing deals, publishers pay steep royalty rates of as much as 60 percent for sales in excess of 2500 copies and cover all related digital publishing costs.

Ronald Cohen and the editor helped steer RosettaBooks to the right editions containing the true texts as Churchill last signed off on them—not edited reprints. Churchill book dealer Mark Weber provided inexpensive copies for scanning. We cannot underestimate the importance of this step forward. Thanks to Gordon Wise at Curtis Brown who drove the effort.

**Hitler, WSC Both Pranged**

**NEW YORK, APRIL 2ND**— Churchill’s near-death accident when he was hit by a car in New York City in 1931 is well known, not least through his own writing (“My New York Misadventure,” FH 136, Autumn 2007). Far less known is that Hitler was also nearly killed by a car the very same year in Munich. On what slender threads the fate of nations turns!

Ed Smith, in his book Luck, quotes
the late baron and racehorse owner John Scott-Ellis, whose red Fiat almost mowed down the future Fuhrer in the Bavarian capital: “For a few seconds, perhaps, I held the history of Europe in my rather clumsy hands…. [Hitler] was only shaken up, but had I killed him, it would have changed the history of the world.”

—SIMON KENNEDY, S.F. CHRONICLE

We Can Still Learn
On 4 June 1940, Winston Churchill delivered a radio speech, as families all over England gathered around to listen. Within the speech were these words—perhaps his most famous:

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender…

From Churchill, leaders can learn how to give others hope in a time of hardship or fear. Churchill gave the British a hopeful vision of surviving despite the odds, by appealing to their hearts. He evoked heroes and their values. And he spoke to people as if they were adults, capable of comprehending the dangers. Most of all, he used declarations about the future.

Leaders often don’t understand declarations, but using them in your communication is a powerful tool. Here’s what they sound like:

• They must be lofty but realistic.
• They must be delivered with confident words and body language.
• They must contain an emotional appeal that appeals to the spirit.
• They should include specific actions that lead to the desired outcome.
• They must be spoken by a leader with real and perceived authority.

Don’t feel daunted. After all, Churchill rose to the occasion despite having a speech impediment that led him to rehearse his speeches for hours. Like most things, powerful declarations require practice.


And He Sank the Titanic!
LONDON, MARCH 30TH—Robert Strange, a British investigative journalist, in his book Who Sank The Titanic?, holds Churchill responsible for the century-old disaster, The Sun reports. (This makes a nice bookend with the old canard that he also sank the Lusitania.)

On 10 April 1912, the world’s largest passenger ship set out on her maiden voyage from Southampton, Cherbourg and Queenstown to New York. Four days later, Titanic struck an iceberg and sank in under three hours, killing 1,514 people. Mr. Strange, who says he spent three years researching documents in the National Archives, levels chief blame on Churchill:

“As a newly-promoted government minister, Churchill had final responsibility for all marine safety when the Titanic was being planned, designed and built [but was] fatally distracted by a combination of burning political ambition, wounded pride and the pursuit of his future wife Clementine. I believe he bears a heavy burden of responsibility…. From the start, he seems to have washed his hands of the [BoT] Marine Division. Supervision of Titanic’s construction was passed to Francis Carruthers, a poorly-trained and underpaid Board of Trade engineer who failed to spot flaws in the ship’s construction….

“By the time the Titanic was finally launched, Churchill had achieved his aim of promotion to Home Secretary and thereby escaped public examination about his role in the Titanic debacle. [But] the ship was first proposed, designed and had its keel laid down on his watch. It is inconceivable that the minister responsible for safety at sea would not have been fully briefed about the construction of what was to be the biggest ship afloat. And he was very aware of the lack of lifeboats. He had been warned again and again but failed to take action.”

Churchill was President of the Board of Trade from 12 April 1908 to 18 December 1909. But Titanic complied with all current Board of Trade regulations. Her lifeboat capacity (1178) actually exceeded the requirement (990). And if Francis Carruthers, the engineer assigned, “failed to spot flaws” in the ship’s construction, how was it possible for Churchill to spot them?

Earlier researchers have suggested weaknesses in Titanic’s steel plates and rivets contributed to her rapid sinking. This begs the question of how her sister the Olympic managed an illustrious 24-year career, including troop transport during World War I, and several collisions, earning the nickname “Old Reliable,” with faulty rivets and plates.

True, Olympic was refitted with a sturdy hull after the Titanic disaster. Yet oil tankers up to five times her tonnage and 100 feet or more longer remained single hulled until the Exxon Valdez episode in 1989. To blame Churchill for design defects reminds us of the author who criticized Churchill’s urgent despatch of tanks to North Africa in 1941 before they’d been fully tested. A reviewer commented: “The Prime Minister must also be a mechanic!” >>
DATELINES

What about the “burning ambition, wounded pride and pursuit of his future wife”? Churchill was offered the Board of Trade in April 1908, achieving Cabinet rank. While he lost the mandatory re-election for new ministers in Manchester in April, he won handily at Dundee in May. His “pursuit” of Clementine was nearing its successful end by July. These proud accomplishments were before the Titanic plans were submitted to the Board of Trade. Neither was it Churchill’s responsibility personally to review ship plans.

WSC saw his personal role, the official biography records, “as responsible for the direct defence of Free Trade,” and fostering “the commercial interests of our country, within the limits of state intervention.”* It is certainly true that he found those tasks more interesting than rivets and steel plate, which he quite properly assigned to underlings.

The charge that Churchill was warned and ignored the lifeboat question awaits our review of the book and the sources he offers for this conclusion.


Churchill-Nimoy Charity

SOMERVILLE, MASS., MARCH 31ST—Actor Leonard Nimoy and Sir Winston Churchill never met, but both were connected to a Boston-area children’s non-profit that has been doing work among immigrant families for more than a century.

The Elizabeth Peabody House (www.teph.org), which Nimoy attended and Churchill supported with a cash donation, is asking the public’s help in submitting the names of individuals who have done outstanding work among children and immigrant families in Greater Boston over the last year.

AROUND & ABOUT

Melissa Kay Cox, owner of Aclarus Communications in Denton, Texas, was asked by the Denton Record-Chronicle to name four guests for her fantasy dinner party (http://xrl.us/bm6fcp). Cox listed Winston Churchill, Amelia Earhart, Katharine Hepburn and Mae West.

That would be quite a party. WSC loved conversing with talented, attractive, accomplished women, and with these he almost certainly would not dominate the conversation.

Robert Pilpel wrote of George Orwell’s accolade to Churchill in *FH* 142. Now David Freeman sends us another Orwellism, from the author’s 1941 essay, “The Art of Donald McGill” (*Oxford Book of Aphorisms*): “…high sentiments always win in the end, leaders who offer blood, toil, tears and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and a good time. When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic.”

William John Shepherd writes of “a little irony that you might find interesting. At Catholic University of America where I work we have the papers of the late historian Catherine Ann Cline. Her major work was a biography of E. D. Morel, who ran against Churchill in Dundee. See the archival compiling work I did for the Cline Papers at http://xrl.us/bm5zq8.” Mr. Shepherd also reminded us that the Communist Willie Gallacher (MP for West Fife, 1935-50) once ran against Churchill in Dundee. Churchill said, “Mr. Gallacher is only Mr. Morel with the courage of his convictions, and Trotsky is only Mr. Gallacher with the power to murder those whom he cannot convince.”

Congressman Rob Woodall (R., Ga.) is “a big fan of Winston Churchill,” but “I do not have Churchill aspirations.” Or speechwriting aspirations either, it would seem.

Lawrenceville Channel 11 (http://xrl.us/bm9pp5) calls Woodall “generations removed” from Churchill’s time “when political speech often seemed a bit dense and wordy by today’s standards.” Then they asked him to rewrite Churchill’s line from the 1946 “Iron Curtain” speech at Fulton. Mr. Woodall, neither dense nor wordy, tackled his assignment with aplomb. Churchill had said: “We all know the frightful disturbance in which the ordinary family is plunged when the curse of war swoops down upon the bread-winner and those for whom he works and contrives.”

Woodall offered: “We have working families here in the Seventh District. And we do want to protect our working families from the perils of war.”

It doesn’t exactly tug at your heartstrings, but reminds us of Roosevelt’s crack to Churchill about his “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” speech: “I wonder what the course of history would have been if in May 1940 you had been able to offer the British people only ‘blood, work, eye water, and face water,’ which I understand is the best Basic English can do with five famous words.”

John Plumpton wonders how many of today’s students would get the humor: German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives at Passport Control at the Paris airport. “Nationality?” asks the immigration officer. “German,” she replies. “Occupation?” “No—just here for a few days.”

****

Winston Churchill, *Occupation?*” “No—just here for a few days.”

****
“We are looking to find the inspiring stories of four local champions of children and immigrant families, and give credit where credit’s due,” said Selvin L. Chambers, III, executive director. “Immigrant children have been the focus of our work for 115 years.”

Peabody House already has a “Winston Churchill Award” because on 10 March 1932, Churchill donated all proceeds from a speech delivered at Boston Symphony Hall to the organization. It is now presented by the business community to persons who have done outstanding work among children and immigrant families in Greater Boston.

—Somerville Journal (http://xrl.us/bmz377)

What Next? Earplugs!

London, March 19th—The beeswax earplugs once worn by Winston Churchill during his famous afternoon naps were auctioned for charity, along with the original plaster casts of his ears.

WSC often said that regular naps were the only way he could cope. Andrew Bullock, head of Keys auction house, said: “It’s something that could be met with not great enthusiasm or totally the opposite. During the war years in the cabinet office or war office, there would be no end of bustle of noise. Churchill was a great person for noise. Churchill was a great person for the normal sleep cycle.”

News stories say Churchill actually coined the phrase “power nap,” which we doubt, but accurately quote him on his reasons for napping: “Nature has not intended mankind to work from eight in the morning until midnight without that refreshment of blessed oblivion which, even if it only lasts twenty minutes, is sufficient to renew all the vital forces.” —The Grand Alliance, (London: Cassell, 1948), 329.

The earplugs were sold by the Keys auction on 30 March, with a variety of other Churchill memorabilia. The original story by Metro News is at http://xrl.us/bmz4hk.

Erratum, FH 154

Alfred James (Australia) reminds us that all hands were not rescued when the sailing sloop Winston Churchill (page 11) sank on 28 December 1998: “Unfortunately, three of the crew, James Lawler, Michael Bannister and John Dean, drowned that day. That was a rough Sydney-to-Hobart Race: three others died, five boats sank, and only forty-four of 115 starters reached Hobart.” >>

Churchillian Drift = Yogi Berra Drift

“If you don’t know the author of a choice quote, credit it to Churchill, Einstein, Lincoln or Martin Luther King. Everybody will be impressed and they all said so much that nobody will know the difference.”

We have long been looking for a term to express this reaction whenever we see a potted, inaccurate Churchill quote. “A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth puts its trousers on” is big now on Twitter. “Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference” is another. Some Attitude—Some Neck. Sorry!

Professor Manfred Weidhorn puts us onto the right term: “Churchillian Drift.” This is explained by James Geary (www.jamesgeary.com) a “gnomologist” (quote mavens get to wear this impressive title) who shares Manfred Weidhorn’s vice of collecting aphorisms:

“Churchillian Drift was devised by British gnomologist Nigel Rees, who wrote: ‘Long ago, I coined the term Churchillian Drift to describe the process whereby the actual originator of a quotation is often elbowed to one side and replaced by someone more famous. So to Churchill or Napoleon would be ascribed what, actually, a lesser-known political figure had said. The process occurs in all fields.”

“Churchillian Drift bobs up among some of the biggest names in the aphorism business, not just Churchill and Napoleon but Einstein (Not everything that counts can be counted); Gandhi (Be the change you wish to see in the world) and Lincoln (whose famous “house divided” is from the Bible).

“But you do not find yourself the target of Churchillian Drift unless, like Churchill himself, you are already a fine aphorist. Part of the reason it’s so easy to misattribute brilliant sayings to great aphorists is that they have already coined so many brilliant sayings themselves. Which is also why, I guess, they might feel occasionally justified in purloining an orphan phrase to make it their own. (‘Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the other forms...’) After all, Franklin may or may not have originated the aphorism, ‘Neither a borrower nor a lender be,’ but he never said anything against being a plagiarist.”

Professor Weidhorn adds: “Churchill himself used some of his well-known sayings earlier in his career but no one noticed, so my addendum to this theory is that not just the stature of the person matters but the occasion does, 1940-42 being high drama on the world stage.

“When you consider, there’s really nothing Churchillian about it. You could just as well call it the Yogi Berra drift. ‘I never said many of the things I said,’ Yogi said—allegedly....

“It’s closely related to the phenomenon of a charismatic figure—Alexander the Great, King Arthur, Jesus—becoming like a black hole that draws in miscellaneous stories that were just lying around and then are connected to the famous figure.”
Another Favoured Actor: Orson Welles

According to Orson Welles, he should be included with Richard Burton and Laurence Olivier (FH154 Datelines) in stories about Churchill's theatrical wanderings. In an interview on the Dick Cavett Show (http://xrl.us/bnbsau) Welles, who admired Churchill's humour and irony, remembered that just after World War II he was playing Othello in London, and could hear murmurs from the front row in the audience similar to those which distracted Richard Burton. It was Churchill, repeating Shakespeare's lines. After the performance, WSC went backstage, sat down in Welles' dressing room, and began reciting Othello's parts, including the cuts Welles had made. Welles thought that he put particular emphasis on the cuts!

In 1951 the two met again in Venice, an encounter recorded by Edmund Murray in I Was Winston Churchill's Bodyguard (London: Allen, 1987), 208: “…most of the eminent visitors seemed to have booked in at the Excelsior Palace, where the Churchills were staying. Orson Welles, for instance, was frequently to be seen, and from the way he seemed to sit and study Mr. Churchill from a distance, strategically placed in the lounge, one formed the strong impression that he was contemplating a film about Churchill's life, with Welles in the leading role. The Old Man, if he was aware of his regular surveillance, raised no objection to it. Whenever he encountered Welles, he would incline his head courteously in recognition, for he was a film addict, and would receive a reciprocal greeting.”

In his Dick Cavett appearance, Welles explains that he was there “hustling” a Russian financier for money for a movie. (Welles emphasized that he was a White not a Red Russian.) As Welles and the Russian passed his table, Churchill made a gesture of greeting to Welles that “drove the Russian out of his mind.” Welles knew that he had the money just on the basis of his knowing Winston Churchill and receiving this special recognition.

The next morning Welles met Churchill again when they were swimming, so he paddled up to him and said: “Mr. Churchill, you ought to know what you did for me and how your special recognition got me my financing.”

At lunch that day, as Welles and the Russian again passed his table, Churchill rose from his chair and gave Welles a full bow, almost like one did for me and how your special recognition got me my financing.”

Churchill did not pilot or fly in this airplane, nor did E.W. Wakefield, for whom it was built. Indeed, neither was even present when Waterbird first flew off the water in November 1911.

Wakefield (1862-1941) had ordered the craft, built by A. V. Roe to designs by American flier Glenn Curtiss. Early in 1912 he formed the Lakes Flying Company with hangars on the shore of Windermere. Waterbird made dozens of flights before being lost when a storm destroyed it in its hangar in 1912.

Waterbird’s early flights induced protests from nearby residents, including author Beatrix Potter, about the noise it made. We asked Dr. Lynsey Darby, archives assistant at the Churchill Archives Centre, whether Churchill, then just become First Lord of the Admiralty, might have interceded to allow its continued flying, but she found no evidence:

“I was asked to find a photograph of Churchill with an early seaplane. We do have one, in the family’s photograph albums which we hold here on loan. It shows him in the cockpit of a seaplane, but Martin Gilbert has dated the occasion to 1914. A search of the online catalogue of the Churchill Papers for the word ‘seaplane’ produces no hits from earlier than 1913.”

—CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING

Not His Brandy

LONDON, MARCH 23RD— The Evening Standard describes ArArAt Armenian brandy, once reserved for Communist party elite, as “the brandy that Stalin served Churchill” in an article by consumer business editor Jonathan Prynn (http://xrl.us/bm9p22):

“The prime minister developed a taste for ArArAt brandy when it was served by Stalin at the Yalta conference in February 1945. After the Second World War, the Soviet leader arranged for Churchill to be sent 400 bottles every year.”

This seems highly doubtful, since continued on page 63...
Riddles Mysteries Enigmas

Q I was wondering if someone could tell me who was in the group that bought Churchill’s home, Chartwell, to save it for posterity and allow him to live out his life there.

—TOM DANIELS ON CHURCHILLCHAT

A Churchill purchased Chartwell in 1922 with the help of an unexpected legacy from a cousin. In 1938, when he seriously contemplated having to sell it, a banker friend, Sir Henry Strakosch, came to his rescue with a financial arrangement which enabled WSC to retain the property. In 1946 money was raised in order to buy the property from Churchill and present it to the National Trust, together with an endowment fund allowing Winston to live out his life there. Those involved were: Viscount Camrose (who led the fundraising campaign), Viscount Bearsted, Lord Bicester, Lord Catto, Sir Hugh Cunliffe-Owen Br, Lord Glendyne, Lord Kenilworth, Sir James Laird, Lord Leathers, Sir James Lithgow Br, Sir Edward Mountain Br, Lord Nuffield, Sir Edward Peacock, Viscount Portal (a distant cousin of the wartime Chief of Air Staff), James de Rothschild, J. Arthur Rank and Sir Frederick Stewart. Camrose subscribed £15,000 and the others £5000 each.

All but two of the above agreed within three minutes of being approached by Camrose, one of the other two following suit on the next day, and the last one very soon afterwards.

Their names are on a plaque on one of Chartwell’s walls. —PAUL COURTENAY

Q I am thinking about a probably apocryphal Churchill story. It seems WSC sent a copy of one of his books to his cousin, Lord Londonderry, and received the following reply: “My dear Winston, I have received the copy of your latest book. I have put it on the shelf beside the others.” Ouch! If you really want to slam an author, this is one way.

—JONATHAN HAYES ON CHURCHILLCHAT

A We believe the writer was Edward VIII, later the Duke of Windsor, not Lord Londonderry. Sarah Churchill reports in her Thread in the Tapestry (41): “... my father received a note from a friend of royal lineage which said: ‘Dear Winston, Thank you for your book, I have put it on the shelf with the others.’ The family, on being told this by my mother, collapsed in laughter. It evoked for us the famous story of what George III, the then-Duke of Gloucester, did in 1796, when he arrived for a meeting with the Queen, explaining the unusual boy. ‘I started too late.’”

In fact he would not have addressed the Prince of Wales as “Sire” but rather as “Sir” or “Your Royal Highness.” Taylor wrote a fine book, but his lack of footnotes makes tracking his quotations difficult. Churchill himself confirms and dates this incident in his autobiography: “I realized that I must be upon my best behaviour: punctual, subdued, reserved, in short display all the qualities with which I am least endowed.” Later he added: “I do think unpunctuality is a vile habit, and all my life I have tried to break myself of it.” —WSC, My Early Life (London: Butterworth, 1930, 107).

Churchill never quite succeeded in curing himself. As his wife once remarked: “Winston is a sporting man; he always likes to give the train a chance to get away.”

Q I have been told that once Churchill arrived late for a meeting with the Queen, expressing his regret by saying, “My sincere apologies madam, I started too late.” But I haven’t found any reference to this. Can you help?

—ANNA PALMGREN-HOUEL, VIA EMAIL

A This famous late-show was not with the Queen but with the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII (1901-10), in 1896. Robert Lewis Taylor, in Winston Churchill: An Informal Study of Greatness (New York Doubleday, 1952) writes on page 16: “As a very young subaltern, he once kept the Prince of Wales and a dinner party of twelve waiting for nearly an hour. The prince, a grand eater and in the blackest kind of mood, refused to go in until the chancy number of thirteen was made fourteen by the dilatory guest. When Churchill arrived, he was asked the meaning of this unseemly breach of good manners. ‘Do you have an excuse, young man?’ inquired the prince, before a drawing room full of starved nobility. ‘Indeed I have, Sire,’ explained the unusual boy. ‘I started too late.’”

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Much food for thought. And it is rare to discover in the and reflections and a political philosophy that offers us Churchill's writings and speeches are full of maxims provide ready-made solutions to the problem of the 21st. “Since history never repeats itself exactly, the specific politics Churchill adopted in 20th century contexts do not "Churchill elicits 37 million hits on Google, although admittedly many are about schools, ships, scholarships and a variety of red sweet pea, Lathyrus odoratus, that was named after him,” Andrew Roberts wrote. “Then there are the Internet questions, many of which require the answer ‘No’—such as ‘was Churchill Jewish?’, ‘was Churchill anti-Semitic?’, ‘was Churchill born in a ladies’ loo after a dance?’, and ‘did Alexander Fleming or his father save Churchill from drowning?’ Not even put into the interrogative is the statement on one website that: ‘It is a little known fact that Winston Churchill was a Druid.’”

The “Information Revolution” has not revolutionized everyone’s information, John Charmley observed: “A recent survey in the UK revealed that most schoolchildren 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.”

People simply believe anything. From play producers to authors to politicians to critics, they have put out more pure rubbish about Winston Churchill on the Internet than all the attack-books about him in the last century. Some criticisms are well founded, of course. But which are real, and which are impulses of nuts rattling on keyboards?

For Finest Hour it is not enough to inform you that some exhibit or play or book exists. If you want that, enter “Churchill” into Google Alerts and you’ll get more daily information than you can assimilate.

No. What FH readers expect to know is whether the item in question is any good or not. Does it reflect Churchill’s reality? If not, why not? We take that job seriously. As the historian Paul Addison remarked in 2008: “Since history never repeats itself exactly, the specific policies Churchill adopted in 20th century contexts do not provide ready-made solutions to the problems of the 21st. But Churchill’s writings and speeches are full of maxims and reflections and a political philosophy that offers us much food for thought. [And] it is rare to discover in the archives the reflections of a politician on the nature of man.” Leo Strauss said of Churchill’s Marlborough: “…the greatest historical work written in our century, an inexhaustible mine of political wisdom and understanding.”

This is what FH strives to be: a thoughtful reader’s distillation of Churchill’s reflections on humanity, manners, mores, life and death. (If you fear death, read Churchill.)

“People love inspiration,” wrote Warren Kimball. “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 in the right direction. Churchill inspired people…..moved by his words, his actions, his indomitable courage.”

Sir Martin Gilbert, asked to summarize Churchill in one sentence, said: “He was a great humanitarian who was himself distressed that the accidents of history gave him his greatest power at a time when everything had to be focused on defending the country from destruction, rather than achieving his goals of a fairer society.” But what is it about him that continues to fascinate? Sir Martin wrote: “Churchill was indeed a noble spirit, sustained in his long life by a faith in the capacity of man to live in peace, to seek prosperity, and to ward off threats and dangers by his own exertions. His love of country, his sense of fair play, his hopes for the human race, were matched by formidable powers of work and thought, vision and foresight. His path had often been dogged by controversy, disappointment and abuse, but these had never deflected him from his sense of duty and his faith in the British people.”

That faith however was tempered by a conviction that “the genus homo” never changes. The same imperfect being is presented by science with increasingly potent and dangerous toys. To illustrate, Churchill quoted Pope:

Placed on this Isthmus of a middle State,
A being darkly wise and rudely great...
Created half to rise and half to fall;
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled;
The glory, jest and riddle of the world.

“Are not modern conditions…hostile to the development of outstanding personalities and to their influence upon events?” Churchill wondered. Yet he was unabashedly proud, in a way that has gone out of fashion, of the exceptionalism of the English-Speaking Peoples.

Addendum on page 63...
Just as we are told that there is more joy in Heaven for a sinner who repenteth and is saved than for the ninety-nine souls who have already seen the light, so we should rejoice that his personal experience and raw intelligence brought Winston Churchill into the free market movement with such éclat and formidable powers of persuasion.

The personal odyssey that brought Sir Winston Churchill from Left to Right on economics—from an architect of the Welfare State in 1906 to a passionate advocate of the Free Market in 1945—is one of the less studied aspects of a career that has otherwise been subjected to the steady glare of history. In a political life that spanned over sixty years, Churchill discovered for himself that collectivism simply doesn’t work, and he had the courage to act accordingly.

He started life as a paternalist, a true believer in his father Lord Randolph’s philosophy of Tory Democracy. In the very first political speech of his life, at the age of only 22, he stated: “The British working man has more to hope for from the rising tide of Tory Democracy than from the dried-up drainpipe of Radicalism.” Later on in his career one could exchange Socialism and Communism for the word “Radicalism.”

Churchill’s father had died only two years before that maiden speech, but posthumously he had a powerful influence on his son. As Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1880s, Randolph had attempted to put ideas into practice that stemmed from Benjamin >>

Mr. Roberts’ latest book is The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War. This article is adapted from his speech, “Winston Churchill and Free Enterprise,” to Civitas Canada on 5 May 2012. “English-Speaking Peoples” is a periodic department reviewing current events in the light of Churchill’s experience in his own time. Maximum latitude is offered, opinions are those of the authors, debate and rebuttal are most welcome.
Disraeli’s Young England philosophy, seeking to prise the working man away from the mantras of the Left. This project came to a shuddering halt in December 1886 when he resigned from the Salisbury government. Nonetheless his principles were almost osmotically absorbed by his son Winston, who studied his father’s speeches and wrote his biography.

The Young England and Tory Democracy philosophies were profoundly paternalist by modern standards, but they were not quasi-socialist either, and Churchill rightly defined himself as a passionate anti-Socialist throughout his life. Nonetheless in early life he readily accepted a role for the State.

“There are some things which a government must do,” he said in Manchester in February 1904, “not because the government would do them well, but because nobody else would do them at all.” By October 1906 he declared that “the State should increasingly take the position of the reserve employer of labour,” which I think must be the furthest left he ever got, but which was not followed up with anything concrete in terms of policy. It was also during this period that he flirted dangerously with ideas of land taxes. (See “Henry George” in Am persand, FH 139, Summer 2008; and “The People’s Rights: Opportunity Lost?” in FH 112, Autumn 2001.)

Joining the Liberal Party in 1904 after the Conservatives embraced protectionism over Free Trade, Churchill stayed focused on where Liberalism ended and Socialism began. “Socialism would kill enterprise,” he declared in Dundee in May 1908. “Liberalism would rescue enterprise from the trammels of privilege and preference. Socialism assails the pre-eminence of the individual; Liberalism seeks…to build up the minimum standard for the mass. Socialism attacks capital; Liberalism attacks monopoly.” It is quite clear, therefore, that Churchill was an adherent to the Gladstonian, or classical form of Liberalism, a far cry from the much more radical British Liberal Democrats of today.

Free trade was the defining issue between and within Britain’s parties then, and Churchill was a committed supporter. It ripped the Conservative Party apart, causing it to lose the 1906 election to a Liberal landslide. “It is the theory of the Protectionist that imports are an evil,” said Churchill in February 1904. “We Free-traders say it is not true. To think you can make a man richer by putting on a tax is like a man thinking that he can stand in a bucket and lift himself up by the handle.”

Even after the Great War, with the ruptures that it caused to the international economic system, Churchill remained an unrepentant Free Trader. “Has Free Trade served this country well or ill?,” he asked in 1923. “Has it been proved a failure in peace or war? Surely nothing has been more remarkable than the gigantic financial, commercial and economic strength of this island of ours, revealed in the great struggle and tribulation through which we have passed. We are the only nation in the whole world which has borne the burden we had to bear without breaking.” Churchill’s support for Free Trade was driven by the Tory Democrat idea that it meant cheaper food for the working man, and so it proved.

It was this concern for the ordinary working Briton, whom he didn’t want to fall into the clutches of organized labour or socialist politicians, that found Churchill adopting German ideas for a social safety net. Otto von Bismarck originally invented the concept of the Welfare State, largely as a cynical way of outmanoeuvring his opponents on the Left. The Asquith ministry of 1906-16 wished to protect itself from the Labour Party’s accusation that it was doing nothing for the poor, the unprotected and underprivileged, but there was a moral impetus too.

In 1909, when the Asquith Government extended National Insurance and Old Age pensions, the twin pillars of the early Welfare State, Churchill declared: “I think it is our duty to use the strength and resources of the State to arrest the ghastly waste not merely of human happiness but of national health and strength which follows when a working man’s home which has taken him years to get together is broken up and scattered through a long spell of unemployment, or when, through the death, the sickness or the invalidity of the breadwinner, the frail boat in which the fortunes of the family are embarked founders, and the women and children are left to struggle helplessly on the dark waters of a friendless world.”

The Welfare State when it began was a last-chance safety-net for British workers who, through no fault of their own, faced crushing penury and destitution due to unforeseen downturns or accidents. It was certainly never intended by
Churchill or anybody else at the time to be a comprehensive solution for every citizen throughout the country, as it subsequently became and remains today. The first old age pension was only 1 to 5 shillings per week for those over seventy who did not have an income of 12 shillings a week, so it was heavily means-tested.

Under the 1911 National Insurance Act, workers paid 4 pence per week for unemployment assistance should they be laid off. Thus it was a world away from the all-consuming Welfare State of today, which encourages dependency on government largesse, creates a benefits gap that in the opinion of many actually discourages work, and provides an army of voters for whichever party promises the largest amount of benefits for the smallest number of obligations.

One might well argue that Prime Minister Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George, and Churchill himself ought to have seen the way that the Welfare State would go, gobbling up ever-larger amounts of money, constantly extending entitlements, using more and more taxpayer cash, and so on. Yet the really expensive extensions to the Welfare State, to the point that it began seriously to impede the ability of enterprise to deliver progress, wealth and security to the Western nations that embraced it, were very much in the future and not from the Liberal or Conservative parties.

Over the following decade, and especially after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, social reform, the dole, National Assistance, old age pensions and so on were increasingly seen by the governing classes as a means to protect Britain against revolutionary movements of the kind that had engulfed Czarist Russia. In the forefront of this anti-Bolshevik crusade was Winston Churchill, who in November 1918 said that Bolshevism had reduced Russia “to an animal form of barbarism...Bolsheviks hop and caper like troops of ferocious baboons amid the ruins of cities and the corpses of their many victims.”

The imagery might have been savage, but his hatred of Communism was palpable. And in the developing struggle between Communism and Capitalism, Churchill was to emerge as one of the most eloquent paladins for liberty.

After the Great War
By 1918-19, Churchill was undoubtedly willing to engage in some crypto-socialist solutions to national problems, even the nationalization of the railways and running them at a loss, a fact of which he was vocally reminded three decades later when as Leader of the Opposition he vehemently opposed their nationalization by Clement Attlee’s post-World War II Labour Government. When a Labour MP reminded him of his support for it back in 1919. Churchill replied: “But what happened?” All that was produced, he said, “in four years was a very bad service for the public, heavy loss to the shareholders, and the worst railway strike ever known except the one preceding the General Strike. I must admit that this practical experience of nationalization—and we do learn by trial and error provided we profit by experience—damped, I cannot say my usual, my early enthusiasm for the project.”

Churchill was no Ayn Rand libertarian, but he genuinely believed the capitalist system was “the mainspring of every form of civilization,” and shared the dislike of taxation that should be felt by every good capitalist. Even in his most leftist phase, Churchill was still able to state that “taxes are an evil—a necessary evil, but still an evil, and the fewer of them we have the better.”

And this is the key: Churchill’s enthusiasm for collectivist answers to economic problems belonged very much to the early part of his career. He learned both from practical experience—especially as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and from reading Friedrich Hayek’s 1944 masterpiece The Road to Serfdom, and he also learned by trial and error, as with the railways. His economic views were not monolithic throughout his life—whose ever are? But they matured through experience and intellectual engagement. As the world around him became ever more collectivist, and as the Labour Party triumphed over the Liberals—who never formed a government after 1918—Churchill became a proselytizing advocate for the free market, especially in his devastating philippics, while Leader of the Opposition, against the socialist government of 1945-51.

If we need to look for a Damascene conversion moment for Churchill in terms of economics, it was his surprise 1924 appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, when suddenly he was personally responsible for the shaky finances of >>

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Why Churchill Changed His Mind....

post-Great War Britain. His belief in free enterprise was born in the five years he spent there, despite the cataclysmic events they witnessed, including the return to the Gold Standard in 1925 and General Strike in 1926.

Now if you are a devotee of John Maynard Keynes, you will probably agree with him that the return to Gold caused the General Strike, and undermined the whole British economy. Instead, might I recommend a perceptive essay by Ryan Brown in Finest Hour 153, which argues that while the timing and the exchange rate might have been questionable, Churchill’s reasoning was sound and indeed praiseworthy, based on good free market and Free Trade principles, and he was fantastically unlucky in the way events developed.

The General Strike was in no way caused by the return to Gold, but it did help to undermine confidence in Sterling at a crucial time, so instead of the trade unions being the victims of Churchillian economics, as Keynes argued, in fact they were the deliberate architects of its downfall. Socialists knew they had a determined ideological foe in Churchill, who said a few months before the General Strike broke out: “Let them abandon the utter fallacy, the grotesque, erroneous, fatal blunder of believing that by limiting the enterprise of man, by riveting the shackles of a false equality...they will increase the well-being of the world.”

After the Strike was defeated, Churchill addressed an issue that hangs over much of the Western world today: deficits. “There are two ways in which a gigantic debt may be spread over new decades and future generations,” he told the House of Commons in April 1927. The right way would be “to make the utmost provision for amortization which prudence allows.” The wrong way would be “to aggravate the burden of debt by fresh borrowing, to live from hand to mouth and from year to year, and to exclaim with Louis XIV, ‘After me, the deluge.’”

Churchill’s sound approach to deficit financing, taxation and the money supply did not alter in the 1930s, but his attention was taken up by the rise of the Nazis, and in the first half of the 1940s by the war, which of course was to witness the largest increase in State power in history, much of it on his watch. He only considered this a temporary necessity, though, unlike the Socialist members of his Coalition government, who hated the restrictions, regulations and controls might be extended into the postwar years.

The “Gestapo Error” and in Opposition

“Control for control’s sake is senseless,” Churchill was saying in March 1945, even before the end of the war. “Controls under the pretext of war or its aftermath which are in fact designed to favour the accomplishment of quasi-totalitarian systems, however innocently designed, whatever guise they assume, whatever liveries they wear, whatever slogans they mouth, are a fraud that should be mercilessly exposed to the British public.”

Yet it was in his attempt to expose this fraud three months later that was to lead Churchill into one of the great unforced errors of his whole career. “My friends,” he said in his first broadcast for the 1945 General Election, on 4 June,

I must tell you that a Socialist policy is abhorrent to the British ideas of freedom. Although it is now put forward in the main by people who have a good grounding in the Liberalism and Radicalism of the early part of this century, there can be no doubt that Socialism is inseparably interwoven with Totalitarianism and the abject worship of the State. It is not alone that property, in all its forms, is struck at, but that liberty, in all its forms, is challenged by the fundamental conceptions of Socialism. Look how even to-day they hunger for controls of every kind, as if these were delectable foods instead of war-time inflictions and monstrosities. There is to be one State to which all are to be obedient in every act of their lives. This State is to be the arch-employer, the arch-planner, the arch-administrator and ruler, and the arch-caucus-boss.

So far he was straightforward and true. Churchill wanted to set the parameters of the debate for the Election, and had chosen well in trying to make them incorporate the glaring dichotomy between freedom and Socialism. Yet in the next paragraph of his speech he included a sentence which was popularly thought to have gone too far, not least because the Labour leader, Clement Attlee, was a mild-mannered democrat who had sat beside him as deputy prime minister during the war, and who clearly didn’t deserve the almost Stalinistic role that Churchill seemed to be painting for him.

I declare to you, from the bottom of my heart that no Socialist system can be established without a political police. Many of those who are advocating Socialism or voting Socialist today will be horrified at this idea. That is because they are shortsighted, that is because they do not see where their theories are leading them. No Socialist Government conducting the entire life and industry of the country could afford to allow free, sharp, or violently-worded expressions of public discontent. They would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo, no
doubt very humanely directed in the first instance. And this would nip opinion in the bud; it would stop criticism as it reared its head, and it would gather all the power to the supreme party and the party leaders, rising like stately pinnacles above their vast bureaucracies of Civil servants, no longer servants and no longer civil. And where would the ordinary simple folk—the common people, as they like to call them in America—where would they be, once this mighty organism had got them in its grip?

Clementine Churchill suggested that that toxic sentence about the Gestapo should be removed, but sadly Winston did not take her advice. There was an immediate howl of outrage at Churchill’s words, much of it of ringing false and manufactured by Labour, of course, but deeply damaging nonetheless. In vain did his supporters point out that Churchill had hedged his message around with qualifications, that he didn’t mean Attlee personally, that everything else he had said was true, and had happened to every country in which nationalization of industry, state planning and common ownership of property had triumphed.

But it is simply not true to suggest, as Harold Laski and other socialists did, that the “Gestapo speech”—as it quickly came to be known—lost Churchill the election. There were far deeper causes at work to explain the Tories’ defeat than a single over-exuberant speech, needless to say.

To support the arguments Churchill had made, Friedrich Hayek was offered enough heavily rationed and hard-to-obtain paper by the Conservatives to publish an abstract of The Road to Serfdom before the general election, but it was not printed in time. The electorate gave Labour the biggest landslide victory for any political party since 1906. It was allowed to repent at leisure, not giving Labour another overall majority until 1964.

Now, I believe that David Cameron is right to say that Churchill’s period in opposition between 1945 and 1951 is perhaps the least studied period of his life, yet it was one of the more important. For it was during that very intellectually productive time that Winston Churchill delivered his most hard-hitting speeches against Socialism and in favour of the free market, speeches that we know inspired the young Margaret Thatcher at the time, who was finally to put into practice the calls for economic liberty which Churchill made in them. One can imagine her sitting by the radio or reading the newspaper and lapping up her party leader’s words as she prepared to stand for the Dartford constituency in the 1950 general election, little guessing that it would fall to her to put many of Churchill’s prescriptions into practice three decades later.

For in his six years of opposition, Churchill set out a critique of socialism and collectivism, as well as a defence of free market capitalism, that should ring down the ages. Sometimes these were in telling aphorisms. “The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of the blessings,” he quipped in the Commons in October 1945. “The inherent blessing of Socialism is the equal sharing of misery.” More often they were in hard-hitting campaign speeches. “Will not the daily toil of the actual producing worker have a heavier burden thrust upon him by the enormous hordes of… largely uninterested officials that would be the case under private management?” he asked at Ayr in May 1947. “And will not these officials be less efficient, more costly, and far more dictatorial than the private employers?”

Of course in those days there were far fewer public servants than today, with a consequently lower political price to pay for criticizing them. Today, when in some areas of Britain, such as in Scotland, Ulster and Northern England, public employees or people who in are some way paid for by the State can form up to 70 percent of the working >>

"DAVID CAMERON IS RIGHT TO SAY THAT CHURCHILL’S PERIOD IN OPPOSITION BETWEEN 1945 AND 1951 IS PERHAPS THE LEAST STUDIED PERIOD OF HIS LIFE...FOR IT WAS DURING THAT VERY INTELLECTUALLY PRODUCTIVE TIME THAT CHURCHILL DELIVERED HIS MOST HARD-HITTING SPEECHES AGAINST SOCIALISM AND IN FAVOUR OF THE FREE MARKET...."

RIGHT: WITH THUMBS-UP PIN, 1945

Why Churchill Changed His Mind....

population, that political price is far higher—which is why you rarely hear this Churchill truth stated by politicians today. “When losses are made,” he warned in Manchester in 1947, under the present system these losses are borne by the individuals who sustained them and took the risks and judged things wrongly, whereas under State management all losses are quartered upon the taxpayers and the community as a whole. The elimination of the profit motive and of self-interest as a practical guide in the myriad transactions of daily life will restrict, paralyze and destroy British ingenuity, thrift, contrivance and good housekeeping in every stage in our life and production, and will reduce all our industries from a profit-making to a loss-making process.

This, too, swiftly proved to be right, but governments of the 1960s and 1970s, of both political persuasions, merely ordained that taxpayers had to shoulder the losses incurred in bad decision-making. When the invisible hand of the market is lopped off, the whole body politic winds up maimed.

In April 1948, referring to the Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee’s Leader of the House of Commons, Churchill said:

Mr. Herbert Morrison, in a momentary lapse into candour, told us in Liverpool that without [the American Marshall Plan], we should be facing one or two millions unemployed, We may indeed ask ourselves how it is that Capitalism and free enterprise enable the United States not only to support its vast and varied life and needs, but also to supply these enormous sums to lighten the burden of others in distress.

In a memorable aphorism, Churchill said in Perth a month later: “Socialism is the philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy.” Envy—which on a different occasion he memorably termed “the most barren of all vices”—is of course the automatic default position of the statist demagogue. If all else fails in his attempts to persuade people that it is right to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor—when all of his arguments that that is a desirable, economically efficient or even morally decent thing to do to hard-working, entrepreneurial citizens fail—the socialist can always fall back on the crude emotions of jealousy that can all too easily be whipped up against the rich. And not just in 1948.

“I do not at all wonder that British youth is in revolt against the morbid doctrine that nothing matters but the equal sharing of miseries,” said Churchill in June 1948, “that what used to be called the ‘submerged tenth’ can only be rescued by bringing the other nine-tenths down to their level.”

Returning to his transatlantic theme, Churchill told his Woodford constituency in Essex in July 1948: “When I see the present Socialist Government denouncing Capitalism in all its forms, mocking with derision and contempt the tremendous free enterprise capitalist system on which the mighty production of the United States is founded, I cannot help feeling that as a nation we are not acting honourably or even honestly.” That production had helped save Britain during the Second World War, so it was natural that Churchill wished to give it its proper due.

But it was of Britain that Churchill was speaking in November 1948 when he said: “A strong dose of either Socialism or Communism will kill Britannia stone dead, and at the inquest the only question will be: Did she fall or was she pushed?” The implication was that although Communists actively wanted to destroy the British economy for the greater good of the Soviet Union, the Labour Party’s incompetence, negligence and blinkered ideological assumptions would so strangle the profit motive that it would unbidden and unwittingly have much the same effect.

“The choice is between two ways of life,” Churchill stated categorically in Wolverhampton in July 1949:

between individual liberty and State domination; between concentration of ownership in the hands of the State and the extension of ownership over the widest number of individuals; between the dead hand of monopoly and the stimulus of competition...between a policy of leveling down and a policy of opportunity for all to rise upwards from a basic standard.
That stark dichotomy is the one that is always seen in Western general elections whenever there is a party favoring the State facing one that believes in classical liberal market economics, six decades after Churchill spoke those words.

One of the aspects of government control that socialists always lauded was Planning. Churchill took on this mantra in his speech in the Empress Hall in London in October 1949. “There is nothing new in Planning” he said…

Did not Joseph advise Pharaoh to build new granaries and fill them for the lean years when the Nile water failed? Planning, with all the resources of science at its disposal, should aim at giving the individual citizen as many choices as possible of what to do in the ups and downs of daily life… This kind of planning differs fundamentally from the statist theme of grinding them all up in a vast State mill which must certainly destroy in the process the freedom and independence which are the foundation of our way of life and the most famous characteristic of our race.

Nowadays we hear little about the glories of planned economies, but at the time Churchill spoke it was a regular boast that they made for efficient use of resources. Time and experience, and the swift-moving nature of the market, have thankfully put paid to that particular line of argument.

The costs of the nationalized industries became acutely clear soon after they were “taken into public ownership,” i.e., subjected to forced sale by government diktat against their owners’ wishes. “I doubt if it gives very much pleasure to the average socialist when he wakes up in the morning to say to himself ‘Oho, I own the Bank of England, I own the railways, I own the coal mines,’” Churchill said in Edinburgh in February 1950. “But if it does give him any actual pleasure, he is certainly dearly paying for it.” To underline the economic lunacy of it all, he told his own constituents in July 1951 how “All the boastings of the Welfare state have to be set against the fact that more than what they have given with one hand has been filched back by the other.”

**Return to Power**

By the time of the October 1951 general election, Churchill was warning the British people that, as he put it in Huddersfield that month, “The complete nationalization of all the means of production, distribution and exchange would make it impossible for this small island to support a large part of its population.” They heeded him and returned him to Downing Street with a workable Tory majority, his first and only election victory as leader of his party. The 1951-55 Churchill government ended rationing but undertook only a marginal deregulation of industry and only denationalized the steel and road trucking industries, while the State retained considerable control in the former. There was no “bonfire of controls,” as had been promised.

“**BUT IT WAS THE FATE OF WINSTON CHURCHILL TO RETURN TO POWER RESOLVED **NOT** TO FIGHT THE SOCIALIST ENCROACHMENTS OF THE POSTWAR YEARS. HE, AND ENGLAND, WERE TOO TIRED, AND THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE DONE...NO FORCE IN GREAT BRITAIN THAT WOULD REIGNITE, UNTIL TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THE VISION MR. CHURCHILL DISPLAYED, SPEAKING TO THE BBC MICROPHONES IN 1945, SINCE NOBODY ELSE WAS LISTENING.”**

—WM. F. BUCKLEY, JR., 1995 CHURCHILL CONFERENCE, BOSTON

Moreover he simply surrendered in front of trade union militancy, which eventually led to wage-induced inflation after he left office. (After Churchill settled one threatened Christmas strike of railwaymen, his Chancellor of the Exchequer Rab Butler telephoned him to ask him on whose terms the strike had been settled. “Why, theirs of course, old cock!” came the cheery reply.)

Churchill was eighty by the time he left office, was more interested in foreign than domestic affairs, and had no stomach for the kind of bruising fights with the unions that would have been necessary, such as were seen in the 1970s under Ted Heath—who did not have the fibre to see them through—and, finally victoriously under Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s (who, as Buckley noted, most certainly did).

In the last political speech of his life, at his Woodford constituency on 29 September 1959, Churchill said:

> Among our Socialist opponents there is great confusion. Some of them regard private enterprise as a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look upon it as a cow they can milk. [At this point he made the motion of a cow being milked.] Only a handful see it for what it really is—the strong and willing horse that pulls the whole cart along.

There is enough of an echo in that speech of the one he had made over four decades earlier, in which he had defined capitalism as “the mainspring of every form of Civilization,” for us to recognize that Winston Churchill grew into a doughty supporter of the free market. I believe that along with Adam Smith, Friedrich von Hayek, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, we should recognize that Winston Churchill was one of history’s most eloquent promoters of the genius of capitalism.

Just as we are told that there is more joy in Heaven for a sinner who repents and is saved than for the ninety-nine souls who have already seen the light, so we should rejoice that his personal experience and raw intelligence brought Winston Churchill into the free market movement with such éclat and formidable powers of persuasion.

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to be institutionalized for life. His mother, Mary Foley, held the family together and imbued her children with romantic stories of family history. Arthur, raised in genteel poverty, was sent off to Jesuit schools at Hodder, Stonyhurst and Feldkirch, Austria (sometimes not coming home for vacations because of his family situation). Eventually he enrolled at Edinburgh Medical School, where he came under the influence of Dr. Joseph Bell, the acknowledged model for Sherlock Holmes.

Much as the youthful Churchill had renounced his “High Church” religion, young Arthur renounced his Catholic faith, pursuing a lifelong search for a replacement. His renunciation cost Doyle the support of aunts and uncles who would have greatly aided him in establishing a medical practice. This was typical of Conan Doyle: once he decided to take a stand on a subject, however unpopular, he was virtually immovable, accepting the consequences. Like Churchill,² he could be convinced

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Mr. Goldfarb is a director of ICS, Canada and Chairman of the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library. He is grateful to Sam Battle, Churchill Archives Centre, for kind assistance in research and Peter Blau, Doylean collector extraordinaire, who provided scans of the stamp and first day cover.
I received two Strand Magazines and am much obliged to you for them. I think Conan Doyle’s execution of the story of Rodney Stone is much better than his plot. It is absurd to suppose that any man would practically plead guilty to murder to avoid accusing his dead brother of cheating at cards in order to save the family honour. Which would be the worst. The former obviously. But his descriptions of the Fight (and I expect later on of Trafalgar) are splendid.

This was very perceptive so soon after the Gothic novel’s publication, since it is likely that Conan Doyle at one point intended to do for Rodney Stone what he had done for The Great Shadow, which ended with the climactic battle of Waterloo; Rodney Stone was likely intended to end at Trafalgar, but for reasons not discovered by Doyle scholars, it didn’t.

Their first opportunity to cross paths was in South Africa in 1900. Though he had given up medicine in 1891, Conan Doyle went out with Langman’s Field Hospital and was in South Africa when Churchill staged his famous escape from a Boer prison camp. But if they met in South Africa, neither documented it. They returned to Britain on different ships.

Conan Doyle went on to write The Great Boer War (1900) and The War in South Africa: Its Causes and >>
**Churchill and Conan Doyle...**

*Conduct* (1902), strongly defending Britain’s conduct of the war and treatment of Boer prisoners, for which he was ultimately knighted. In the former, he briefly describes the famous armoured train incident and Churchill’s gallant actions in staying with his colleagues until his capture. Churchill, of course, wrote *London to Ladysmith* and *Ian Hamilton’s March* (both 1900).

They met at last while speaking separately at the annual dinner of the Pall Mall Club on 25 October 1900. (See Fred Glueckstein’s article below.) Both defended the honour of British officers in South Africa. A reviewer called Churchill’s speech “Excellent, that is, in matter, though it must be observed that in respect of his oratorical form and manner the son of Lord Randolph has still a good deal to learn….Dr. Doyle’s speech, if less controversial in tone, was assuredly not less.”

By the end of 1893, twenty-three Sherlock Holmes short stories had appeared and Conan Doyle was tired of the character. He wanted to concentrate on historical novels, which he believed to be his true calling. So he “killed” Holmes off in a climactic struggle with Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, chronicled in “The Final Problem,” published in *The Strand Magazine* for December 1893.

His public wouldn’t have it, however, and, bowing to popular demand and his publishers at *The Strand*, plus a very lucrative offer, he agreed to bring Holmes back in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. In late April, 1901, Conan

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**FIRST ENCOUNTER**

On 25 October 1900, Churchill and Conan Doyle found themselves as guest speakers at the annual dinner of the Pall Mall Club in London. The subject was the Boer War, where Doyle had served as a volunteer doctor in Langman’s Field Hospital at Bloemfontein. Churchill was a war correspondent who had obtained national prominence when he escaped imprisonment from a Boer POW camp in Pretoria, and was now Member of Parliament for Oldham, Lancashire.

Chairing the evening dinner at the Pall Mall Club was its president, Sir Herbert Maxwell MP. After a toast to The Queen, Sir Herbert proposed the toast of “Welcome Home” for Winston Churchill. Among many changes in modern warfare, he said, none were more revolutionary than the hospital service and the system of war correspondence. There were two kinds of war correspondents, Sir Herbert said: those who wrote with military experience and a sense of responsibility, and those that felt the importance of their communication depended upon their reflections on the high command. Some communications from the front, he added, had made him blush, and to feel ashamed for the profession.

Despite Churchill’s reputation for reflecting on high command, Sir Herbert apparently thought highly of him. WSC aspired to both pen and politics: to the audience’s laughter, Maxwell hoped his honorable friend would not be disappointed by the latter. Alluding to Winston’s father, Lord Randolph Churchill, he declared that one of the brightest features of the 1900 general election was the restoration of the name Churchill to the Parliamentary roll.

Churchill began by saying that he hoped he would not be indiscreet in talking of more serious matters than were usually discussed after dinner. A great deal had been said lately about press censorship in South Africa. The need for censorship was undoubted, not only for military reasons but to prevent the public from being needlessly tortured by morbid or hysterical letters written only to create a newspaper “boom.” Censorship was also necessary to ensure justice for officers, Churchill added. While a person slandered could defend himself in the field, there was nothing but censorship to protect the people at home. Churchill himself had indignantly denied recent descriptions by a correspondent about the “kid gloved British officer,” with “hee-haw manners, drawling speech, offensive arrogance, and worship of dress.” He

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Mr. Glueckstein is a Maryland writer and a frequent contributor to *Finest Hour*. His most recent articles are in issues 151, 147 and 144.
Doyles wrote to his mother from the edge of Dartmoor (a letter which dispels any suggestion that he was not the principal author of the Hound):

On Tuesday I give a dinner at the Athenaeum Club. My guests are The Langmans, Major Griffiths, Sir Francis Jeune, Winston Churchill, Barrie, Anthony Hope, Norman Haigood, Cranston (of Edinburgh), Gosse the Critic, & Buckle (Editor of the Times)—rather a good team, I think. Adieu, my dear—Excuse this short scribble. Fletcher Robinson came here with me and we are going to do a small book together “The Hound of the Baskervilles”—a real Creeper.

From Churchill’s appointments diary, we know that this dinner took place on Tuesday, 30 April 1901. Churchill reciprocated with an invitation to dine on May 9th at the House of Commons: “Every Thursday we—that is to say Percy, Hugh Cecil myself and a few others—have dinner in a private room at the House of Commons at 8pm.” That dinner took place on May 16th.

The exchange of dinners was almost certainly not the last physical meeting between the two. On 29 August 1941, Churchill wrote to Conan Doyle’s son Adrian to thank him for the gift of The White Company, which Adrian had called “my father’s greatest book,” attaching his father’s autograph to the flyleaf. Churchill’s response, surely on a date when he had more important things to do, having just returned from the Argentia meeting with Roosevelt, was generous: “I read this book with enthusiasm many years ago, and I had the pleasure of meeting your father on many occasions.” Churchill replied in the same terms seven

had seen more of British officers in South Africa and elsewhere than the writer, he said, and utterly denied the truth or justice of those charges.

To the cheers of the audience, Churchill said that a man had a right to be judged by his peers, so let the British officer be judged by the fighting races that he trained. Would Buller’s Army, so often beaten, have fought its way into Ladysmith if private soldiers believed their officers to be kid-gloved effigies or duffers or arrogant fools? Critics of British officers should ask the troopers of the Imperial Light Horse and the South African Light Horse, Brabant’s Horses, Montmorency’s Scouts, and the officers of the Australian and Canadian contingents. Or ask the fighting races of India, or the black Sudanese, their opinion of “kid-gloved” officers.

All these brave fighting men, Churchill went on, would say such descriptions were foul and cruel slanders. The audience responded “hear, hear!” Finally, to cheers, Churchill said a glance of the casualty lists in the South African war showed “a glorious disproportion” of mortality between officers and men. That alone should convince the staunchest critic that the British officer had done much to preserve the honour of his country and the dignity of British manhood.

Mr. Henniker Heaton next proposed a toast to “Our Guests” and to Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle, who began his remarks by saying that he had seen the British officer more in hospital than in action. What struck him was that when things were worst, British officers looked at death open-eyed and unafraid. They were absolutely brave men, whose nerve even disease could not shake. When he read reports of officer misbehavior, Doyle added, it made his blood boil, for he knew that at best the correspondent was generalizing from one case.

Conan Doyle then adopted a Churchill tactic by saying a word on behalf of the enemy. The Boers, he said, had been the victims of a great deal of cheap slander; those who had seen them in the field were far more generous toward them. A report of Boers hoisting a white flag as a cold-blooded device for luring the British into the open was an absolute calumny. To discredit their valor, Conan Doyle said, was to discredit Britain’s victory. The Boers had been noble and generous in restoring without parole prisoners of war whom they could not properly provide for. He had never heard of that in any other campaign.

Finally, Conan Doyle expressed the view that with so much bitterness over the war, it would be better to fight it to the end than to have a premature peace. With the control of arms and ammunition and a great influx of British into the Transvaal, there would be enough force to keep the Boers in hand.

Soon after their Pall Mall Club speeches, Churchill asked Conan Doyle to chair his talk on “The War as I Saw It” at St. James’s Hall on November 5th. Four months later, on 8 March 1901, Conan Doyle was elected to the Athenaeum Club, comprising notable men of inherited wealth and status, and of distinguished eminence in Science, Literature, the Arts, and Public Service. Shortly after his admission, Conan Doyle was invited to the Athenaeum by his new friend Churchill, who also asked him to join him at the House of Commons for a gathering of the “Hughligans,” named after Lord Hugh Cecil, youngest son of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, a select group of young, backbench Conservative MPs dissatisfied with the leadership of Arthur Balfour. Their subsequent acquaintance forged a professional relationship of mutual respect and admiration as each went on to establish his own mark in history.
Churchill and Conan Doyle...

years later, when Adrian wrote, “I did meet you when I was a little boy in 1912, upon an occasion when you and your Wife spent the day with my dear parents at our house on Ashdown Forest.” Adrian must have had a remarkable memory, since he was two years old in 1912! There was a plaque in the study of Windlesham, Conan Doyle’s home at Crowborough, East Sussex, attesting that Churchill had been a visitor.

Politically Conan Doyle began as a Liberal Unionist through his support for the Boer War and opposition to Irish Home Rule (on which he later reversed himself). He twice stood as a candidate for Parliament. In 1900, when Churchill won his first seat in Oldham, Doyle lost a close election to a Radical candidate in Central Edinburgh. He ran for a second time in 1906 as Liberal Unionist candidate for Hawick, Galashiels and Selkirk, but lost again. Though he had, and expressed, strong opinions on many political issues, he was not what we would today call a “political animal,” and would have bristled under the yoke of party discipline. In the end, he thanked the voters “for returning me to the bosom of my family.”

We also know of at least one visit between their respective spouses. On 28 October 1909 Clementine wrote to Churchill from the Crest Hotel, Crowborough, Sussex: “We went, Hodgy Podgy, P.K. & all to have tea with Lady Conan Doyle. The PK had exquisite company manners & looked too lovely making the little Conan Doyle child look such a fat lump.”

Over the remaining years of Conan Doyle’s life, which ended in 1930, there was infrequent correspondence.
between the two, covering many subjects, and showing an easy familiarity and mutual respect. In 1909, Conan Doyle published *The Crime of the Congo*, a powerful denunciation of King Leopold’s actions in the Belgian colony. Churchill, as President of the Board of Trade, wrote (undated, but in October that year): “I am very glad that you have turned your attention to the Congo. I will certainly do what I can to help you.” In January 1911, Conan Doyle wrote to Churchill at the Home Office complaining about Chief Constable G.A. Anson of the Staffordshire Police’s letters in the Edalji case, the wrongful conviction of a young Parsee solicitor for maiming horses.

Rejected for service in World War I because he was then 55, Conan Doyle formed a civilian volunteer regiment. He took a great interest in the war, writing letters to the press and to various members of the government, urging defense against submarine warfare and supporting the use of body armour and life jackets. In April 1917 he had a private audience with Prime Minister David Lloyd George.

Another exchange of correspondence between Conan Doyle and Churchill occurred in late autumn 1916, when Conan Doyle proposed the armour plating of military vehicles. Churchill thanked him “for your kindness in writing to me about the caterpillars [an early term for tanks]...There are plenty of good ideas if only they can be backed with power and brought into relief.” Churchill added that the caterpillar was “the beginning of the bullet proof army,” prompting a further letter from Conan Doyle in reply on 4 October, urging Churchill to do what he could to hasten the dissemination of body armour.

Conan Doyle wrote a six-volume history of the Great War, *The British Campaigns in Europe 1914-1918*, not a particularly distinguished example of his work. There are about a dozen references to Churchill, mostly approving and mostly referring to Churchill’s foresight as First Lord of the Admiralty. Even by that relatively early date, Conan Doyle well understood Churchill’s seeming need to be at the heart of the action, regardless of the danger:

On the night of the 5th the two other brigades of the [Marine Brigade of the Naval Division under General Paris], numbering some 5000 amateur sailors, arrived in Antwerp, and the whole force assembled on the new lines of defence. Mr. Winston Churchill showed his gallantry as a man, and his indiscretion as a high official, whose life was of great value to his country, by accompanying the force from England.

On 14 December 1923, Conan Doyle wrote to Churchill, to congratulate him on his success in a criminal libel case against Lord Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde’s “Bosie,” for having said that Churchill’s reassuring statement about the Battle of Jutland in June 1916 had been a corrupt effort to manipulate the stock exchange in the interests of a Jewish syndicate headed by Sir Ernest Cassel, who had given him a reward of £40,000. It was nonsense, Churchill was vindicated, and Lord Alfred was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment. “May I say,” Conan Doyle wrote, “how much I sympathise with the monstrous persecution you have endured. The sentence was far too light—a rest cure in a quiet retreat without a bill to pay. This fellow Douglas wrote me an abusive letter once over my psychic work. I answered, ‘It is only your approval which would shock me.’ I have heard no more.” Conan Doyle then bowed to his spiritualist preoccupation: “I wish you would yourself look into this psychic question. It is far the most important thing upon earth & we want leaders of energy.”

The last-known correspondence is a letter from Churchill to Conan Doyle dated 1 July, probably 1929, expressing his pleasure in accepting a copy of *The British Campaign in Europe, 1914-1918* and meekly accepting criticisms of his own pronouncements about the Battles of Mons and Le Cateau, admitting, “my phrase about Haig was too sweeping.”

Conan Doyle was an almost daily writer of letters to the press, covering a very wide range of topics. Although his correspondence was heavily skewed towards spiritualism after 1915, there were a number of letters in which he praised or criticised Churchill. To *The Times* on 25 October 1923, he described “Mr. Churchill’s wonderfully lucid and powerful statement about the Dardanelles expedition which should be noted….In all Mr. Churchill’s closely-reasoned argument which led up to the expedition, the one flaw seems to me to have been that in grasping at an immediate advantage there was not sufficient appreciation of the dangers prepared for our posterity.”

Again to *The Times* on 15 February 1927, as Churchill published his third volume of *The World Crisis* on the 1916-18 period, Conan Doyle wrote: “Personally, I have long recognised that Winston Churchill had the finest prose style of any contemporary, and it is indeed a splendid thing that he should use it to do that which seemed impossible—namely, to give an adequate appreciation of that glorious Army of patriotic volunteers who gave themselves so ungrudgingly to their country’s service.”

On the day of his death, 7 July 1930, the *Daily Telegraph* published another Conan Doyle observation about the Dardanelles: “Mr. Churchill writes with such power—he is, in my opinion, the greatest living master of English prose—that he may produce a greater effect than the facts warrant. For consider the situation if we had then taken Constantinople and driven Turkey out of the war.”

As we have seen, Adrian Conan Doyle continued the relationship. In the spring of 1946, Adrian sent Churchill his hagiographic pamphlet, *The True Conan Doyle*, which he’d written to refute the views in Hesketh Pearson’s biography of his father—which, until Adrian decided he didn’t like it, had actually been an authorized biography. >>
On 4 February 1948, Adrian wrote a lengthy, flattering letter to Churchill, enclosing the galleys of a new Conan Doyle biography by John Dickson Carr: "You knew my father. You are, and he was, a man of giant mental calibre and for such a book as this might I venture to ask that you would agree to write the Introduction? Be it long, be it short, I would ask the Introduction from you and from no other. If you will do this for the memory of my father, I will always be your debtor."  

Churchill’s secretary, Jo Sturdee, politely replied that WSC, owing to “the pressure of his commitments,” felt “he could not give his attention to this subject which he feels it deserves.” This drew a petulant reply: “…my father would have considered it not only an honour but his devoir to have contributed some word to the memory of one whom he had known and liked and entertained in the past.” That led to a letter from Clementine Churchill to Adrian (27 May 1948), explaining that Churchill’s own writing and duties as Leader of the Opposition simply did not allow him time to write the introduction. The book was published with Dickson Carr’s own foreword and Adrian sent a copy to Churchill, who responded generously on 9 March 1949:

I well remember his taking the Chair for me at my lecture in the Exeter Hall in 1900. I was already one of his fascinated readers. Of course I have read every Sherlock Holmes story, and I think “The Speckled Band” thrilled me most. But the works I like even more than the detective stories are the great historical novels which, like Sherlock Holmes, have certainly found a permanent place in English literature.

Adrian sent Churchill further gifts: Heaven Has Claws and the 1951 British Exhibition Centenary Book. What was the true relationship between Churchill and Conan Doyle? Perhaps inevitably in view of the age difference, they knew each other socially and politically but met infrequently. Yet they had great respect and admiration for each other, and each man, in his time, was the most famous Briton. Each certainly must rank among the best-loved and best-paid of British writers of his day, and of many other days. It is in the completeness of their character, their contributions to this world, that we must assess them.

They both had a great interest in Napoleon. Doyle said he was “unable to determine whether I was dealing with a great hero or with a great scoundrel. Of the adjective only could I be sure.”

Conan Doyle did not live to see how Churchill conducted himself during World War II. Had he been there, I am certain he would know which noun to use.

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Endnotes

2. Churchill “always had second and third thoughts,” as Manchester, wrote, “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.” William Manchester, The Last Lion: Visions of Glory (Boston: Little Brown, 1983), 843-44.
3. Kitchener was promoted from Brigadier-General to Major-General in 1896 and was ennobled in 1898. See http://xrl.us/bnbybg.
4. The Westminster Gazette, 26 October 1900. The Pall Mall Club had been a home of the Marlboroughs, where Lord Randolph was born.
5. Conan Doyle was notorious for not dating letters and other correspondence, imposing major inconvenience on scholars.
7. PK (“Puppy Kitten”) was the Churchills’ eldest child, Diana. Hodgy Podgy was Diana’s Nurse Hodgson. The Conan Doyle child was Denis, eldest of three children from Conan Doyle’s second marriage.
8. His critics have suggested that Conan Doyle was used by the military hierarchy to put their case before the public and that his “open access” to the staff in the field allowed them to manipulate and control the information that he was given. Conan Doyle was also among a group of British writers who wrote war propaganda. See: http://xrl.us/bnbybg. ACD wrote “To Arms” for the War Propaganda Bureau.
11. As David Reynolds and others have written, Churchill was heavily engaged in the writing of his memoirs of the Second World War, working anxiously against deadlines which had to be met for financial and tax reasons. Perhaps under different circumstances Churchill would have accepted the request.
12. In April 2004 Chartwell house manager Neil Walters advised that Heaven Has Claws was still at Chartwell. The White Company, The True Conan Doyle and the John Dickson Carr life of Conan Doyle, at Chartwell when Churchill died in 1965, were inherited by Churchill’s son Randolph. Mr. Walters had no knowledge of their current whereabouts, nor could he trace the Arthur Conan Doyle Centenary edition presented to Churchill by Adrian.
In August, 1938, as German aggression against the Sudetenland threatened war, Winston Churchill sent Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain his fourth and final volume of *Marlborough*, with what would become an acutely apposite inscription.

The significance of these volumes cannot be discounted. Indeed Bonham’s, which offered the four-volume set in its Knightsbridge Maps and Manuscripts sale last March 27th, sold them for £45,000. The provenance was impeccable: from the private collection of Mrs. Francis Neville Chamberlain, daughter-in-law of the recipient.

Each volume was inscribed and dated by Churchill at the time of publication, which happened to coincide with crucial events: October 1933 (the year Hitler came to power); 21 October, 1934 (Hindenburg dead, Hitler supreme leader); October 1936 (German-Italian Axis declared); and now, in volume four, August 1938, the brink of Munich, with Churchill’s pointed postscript: “Perhaps you may like to take refuge in the Eighteenth Century.”

The inscription captures Churchill’s sardonic, mordant wit and rings with poignant irony, written as the world stood on the brink of sinking into “the abyss of a new Dark Age,” with Chamberlain desperately seeking peace at any price and Churchill among the few voices arguing for a confrontation before Hitler became militarily stronger and further emboldened against his neighbors.

A few weeks later Chamberlain would alight in England bearing news of the Munich Agreement which partitioned Czechoslovakia: “…for the second time in our history a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time.”

Churchill’s reply came on October 5th in the House of Commons: “We have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat” The British people, he insisted, “should know the truth. They should know that there has been gross neglect and deficiency in our defences; they should know that we have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel far with us along our road; they should know that we have passed an awful milestone in our history, when the whole equilibrium of Europe has been deranged, and that the terrible words have for the time being been pronounced against the Western democracies: ‘Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.’ And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup…”

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The Myth of the “Black Dog”

Churchill did have dark moods, but he was not bipolar

“Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.” Illingworth’s 1954 cartoon in Punch, as rumors mounted of Churchill’s retirement, slandered WSC with a vicious and inaccurate portrait of a decrepit leader, his elegant hands grossly misshapen, and more than a hint of the serious depression so often alleged since. See “The Cartoon That Shocked the PM” by Tim Benson, Finest Hour 113, Winter 2001-02.

A Google search for “Churchill and Depression” produces page after page of articles and references to books that discuss Churchill’s alleged serious depression. There are those who believe he had Manic Depression (now known as Bipolar Disorder) and there’s another group who believe he suffered from Major Depression. The National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) includes Churchill, along with Abraham Lincoln and

Carol Breckenridge

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Beethoven and Tolstoy to name a few, in their list of famous personages who lived with mental illness. NAMI specifies that this is a list of those who suffered with Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia.

The literature on this topic is of two types. The first is by writers who are qualified to make a diagnosis but have superficial knowledge of Churchill. A recent example is Nassir Ghaemi’s A First Rate Madness (reviewed on page 44)—the premise of which seems to be that mental illness is present in many if not most great leaders. The second is by writers who are knowledgeable about Churchill’s life but have a superficial understanding of mental illness. Even certain admiring works about Sir Winston assert that he was Bipolar. Either way, the myth of the “Black Dog” is central to their conclusions.

As an art therapist working for twenty years in outpatient mental health, I have seen hundreds of patients who were Bipolar or had Major Depression, and children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADD-H). Churchill’s childhood and painting have long interested me. I presented a peer-reviewed paper for the American Art Therapy Association exploring my thesis that the young Churchill had ADD-H, and continued to cope with many of those traits in his adult life. I do not purport to examine Churchill’s medical minutiae, nor to propose that he never suffered from milder forms of depression. I do, however, object strongly to sweeping generalizations about his alleged Bipolar Disorder.

More biographers should follow the example of one who spoke at the International Churchill Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. He disagreed, he said, with the assertion that Churchill suffered from serious depression, so he presented an anonymous description of Churchill’s personality, symptoms and achievements to three distinguished psychiatrists. Independently, each agreed that no one who was able to achieve so much could have suffered from Bipolar Disorder or Major Depression. Mental health professionals in the conference audience agreed.

Bipolar Disorder is a severely disabling mental illness. Without medication, victims have difficulty maintaining relationships or employment. Their lives are chaotic, and often unproductive. They are unable to focus and lack the energy to marshal their thoughts even to write a convincing letter to the editor, much less fifty books. They are not likely to create 500 paintings or support a family of five in an upperclass way of life, or become one of the world’s most highly paid journalists.

The psychiatric state formerly called Manic Depression is still the core of the Bipolar diagnosis, according to The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Using the list of symptoms for a Major Depressive Episode, Churchill would need to experience at least five symptoms which “have been present during the same two week period and represent a change from previous functioning; at least one of the symptoms is either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure.”

The DSM notes that these symptoms cannot be due to a general medical condition, such as the circulatory illnesses (heart attacks and strokes) that Churchill experienced in the last twenty-five years of his life when Lord Moran served as his physician. Let us consider the DSM’s nine criteria for “Major Depressive Episodes”:

1. **Depressed Mood**
Churchill did have dark moods during periods of his life when his talents were underutilized or he’d suffered serious personal or professional losses. His term for these moments was “Black Dog,” a common description of Victorian nannies to characterize their charges. “Black dog on my back” roughly corresponds to getting out on the wrong side of the bed. His daughter, Lady Soames, stated that her father was not depressed unless he had good reason. For instance, after the terrific loss of life in the Dardanelles disaster, she said he would have had to be a “monster of insensitivity” not to be depressed. Historians, she added, have made “rather a big meal” out of the Black Dog, echoing Colville’s concern. Sadness after periods of loss and devastating events is called grief, not clinical depression.

2. **Diminished Interest or Pleasure**
When Churchill lost his position of First Lord of the Admiralty, following the resignation of First Sea Lord Fisher over the failure of the Dardanelles campaign in 1915, he certainly felt bereft, writing in his essay, Painting as a Pastime: “Like a sea beast fished up from the depths, my veins threatened to burst from the fall in pressure.” But did he show no interest in life’s activities? On the contrary, he threw himself into his new hobby of painting, while planning to salvage his political career. His recollection of his rescue by “The Muse of Painting” is as joyful an account as could be rendered by anyone with his burdens at that time.

3. **Significant Weight Change**
Churchill was throughout most of his life a burly figure, but he never appeared significantly obese until perhaps the last years. But contemporary photographs from 1915 and other critical periods do not support any rapid weight gain or loss during this or similar depressing experiences.

4. **Insomnia or Hypersomnia**
Churchill seemed to need less sleep than the average person, but he said this was owed to his practice of an afternoon siesta, which he had learned in Cuba in 1895. The very drive that kept him writing and dictating until the wee hours again belies the notion that he lost interest in life.
5. Psychomotor Agitation or Retardation
Churchill was an active man, playing polo into his fifties and riding to hounds in his seventies. The DSM’s descriptive material does not refer to exercise, or even common movements such as twitching a foot or pacing while dictating. They describe, rather, an extreme movement that others observe with alarm: hand-wringing, for example, or repeated rubbing of the skin. In his sixties and seventies Churchill’s energy was amazing, but his activities were goal-directed and reasonable.

6. Fatigue or Loss of Energy
Before his last two decades, Churchill rarely exhibited energy loss or fatigue; on the contrary, he was often described as indefatigable. Even after his circulatory illnesses began to take their toll, colleagues found it hard to keep pace with him. Some might sunbathe and read a book on vacation; Churchill chose to paint for hours, working his brushes and palette until he was in his mid-eighties.

7. Feelings of Worthlessness; Inappropriate Guilt
Churchill, who said “I do believe I am a glow-worm,” believed in his destiny. As a young man he did not feel he could be killed as he rode in a cavalry charge heedless of bullets. When faced with defeat he licked his wounds and found a new project. Churchill’s ego in his prime was the equal of any man, and in his youth he was able to withstand the scathing appraisal of his father Lord Randolph, who wrote disparagingly of his son’s self-confidence when Churchill was finally admitted to Sandhurst. As a very old man he reflected that he had done a great deal, only to do little in the end; but these are often the reflections of the aged, and Churchill was a man capable of serious reflections on history and his role in it. Even in those years he was wont to retort to an errant valet, “But I am a great man,” and he certainly exhibited no guilt over his life’s work.

8. Diminished Concentration; Indecisiveness
Throughout his career Churchill was lauded for his sharp mind and the ability to think on his feet, even by those who disagreed with him. His speeches in Parliament usually drew an audience. Even with alcohol coursing through his veins, he was able to work efficiently into the night, to focus and to make decisions.

9. Recurrent Thoughts of Death
Suicidal ideation has been anecdotally noted in Churchill in old age by his physician, Lord Moran, who says WSC did not like to stand next to a train track, fearful of being overtaken by an urge to jump. No other colleague ever recorded this, and Churchill said that he had no wish to commit suicide. A Freudian might say that his fear was derived from an unconscious death wish which proved that Churchill had suicidal thoughts. A non-Freudian might consider that Churchill had always been impulsive—and curious—and that in maturity he was aware of this trait. Interestingly, impulsivity is one of the DSM criteria for Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity, which is not our purpose here to dispute.
A lot has been made of the depressive side of his character by psychiatrists who were never in the same room with him. He himself talks of his black dog, and he did have times of depression, but marriage to my mother very largely kennelled the black dog. Of course, if you have a black dog it lurks somewhere in your nature and you never quite banish it; but I never saw him disarmed by depression. I’m not talking about the depression of his much later years, because surely that is a sad feature of old age which afflicts a great many people who have led a very active life.” —Lady Soames to Naim Attallah, Finest Hour 91, Summer 1996

which are required to qualify. The main difference between the two is the severity of the symptoms and the effect on functioning.

Consider the DSM’s criteria for a “Manic Episode”:

1. Inflated Self-esteem or Grandiosity

   Does thinking of oneself as a “glow-worm” or a “great man” imply inflated self-esteem or simply a healthy appraisal of self-worth? Was this not the same man who once observed that he was probably the worst Chancellor of the Exchequer there ever was? This does not seem to be a situation in which there was a significant change, since even as a child and youth Churchill thought well of himself.

2. Decreased Need for Sleep

   Churchill’s sleep patterns of short nights with daytime energizing naps was not a pattern that came and went. It was his constant pattern during most of his life, and therefore not an “episode.”

3. Pressured Speech; Increased Talking

   Manifestly Churchill liked to talk, and usually dominated dinner party conversation. So does my husband. However, if circumstances required Churchill to listen, there are many incidents when he displayed that he could do so—the most famous being the “long silence” following Chamberlain’s query about who should succeed him in May 1940: “As I remained silent a very long pause ensued. It certainly seemed longer than the two minutes which one observes in the commemorations of Armistice Day. Then at length Halifax spoke”—and delivered Churchill to the Premiership. People who have pressured speech cannot help themselves; Churchill could.

4. Racing Thoughts; Flight of Ideas

   This refers not to a person with a lot of good (or bad) ideas, like Churchill, but rather to one who finds it is hard to focus, decide, or sort through those ideas in a logical way. Could Churchill have written fifty books with an inability to focus? Could he have spent thousands of hours in front of his easel, or serve in every cabinet position except Foreign Secretary? Clearly this was not his problem.

5. Diminished Concentration
6. Psychomotor Agitation

   These are covered in the discussion of Major Depression.

7. Excessive Pleasurable or Dangerous Activity

   Churchill’s energy as an adult was focused but not pathological. He had no fear of anything, and some of the adventures he indulged in were indeed risky; the decision to pursue them often seemed impulsive, and Clementine sometimes chastised him for the risks he took. But was this involvement “excessive”? Clearly not; he took life as it came: When dangerous situations occurred, he did not shrink, but neither did he seek them out to the exclusion of all else.

 manic symptoms 3-7 are also indicative of Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity. It is possible too that the young Churchill could have been diagnosed with ADD-H as it is known now—and that its very traits became his strengths as an adult. The DSM, noting this congruity of symptoms, states that ADD-H can only be diagnosed in place of a Manic Episode if the symptoms have been present since childhood—Churchill’s case. His teachers found him easily distracted. But like most bright children with ADD-H, he excelled when his interest was engaged. He was so full of energy that his mother found him difficult to manage without the aid of his nanny; his energy had an impulsive nature and he enjoyed situations with an element of danger.

   The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders states that “periods of sadness are inherent aspects of the human experience.” This was certainly true of Churchill, who lived a life that was quite human and profoundly inspirational. He was a man with a huge personality who enjoyed life, family and the fulfillment of destiny without the hobble of a debilitating mental illness. The myth of the “Black Dog” as Churchill’s metaphor for a severe clinical mood disorder is just that—a myth.
MICHAEL McMENAMIN’S

ACTION
THIS DAY

125 YEARS AGO
Summer 1887 • Age 12
“Not to do any work…”

Winston wrote his mother on 24 June to report success reading Euclid (“I and another boy are top of the school in it”) and to ask her to send him one of two new novels, She or Jess, by his favorite writer H. Rider Haggard. While he didn’t ask for money, he did seek to resupply stock for his cottage industry of selling his parents’ autographs: “Please be quick and send me the autographs 6 of yours & 6 of Papa’s.” Four days later he repeated his request for Jess (“I want something to read very much”) and the autographs. Possibly anticipating autograph earnings, he assured his mother that “My Money will last a long time yet....” A long time apparently meant seven days: on July 5th he wrote: “I should like 5/- as I am absolutely bankrupt.” In a follow-up on July 8th he added: “My darling I hope you don’t intend to make my holidays miserable by having a Tutor.”

But that in fact was his mother’s intention. The tutor was to be one of Winston’s masters, and he accepted this conditionally: “I shall not mind him at all, on one condition v.i.z. ‘Not to do any work.’ I give up all other conditions except this one. I have never done work in my holidays and I will not begin now. I will be very good if this is not forced upon me and I am not bothered about it. When I am doing nothing, I don’t mind working a little, but to feel that I am forced to do it is against my principles.”

His cheeky ultimatum did not go over well. His mother’s next letter enclosed autographs and money but upbraided him. He wrote back contritely: “...I did not enjoy the letter so much, nevertheless I deserved it, I know. I promise you I will be a very good boy indeed in the Holidays. Only do let me off the work because I am working hard this term & I shall find quite enough to do in the Holidays. Subsequent letters are silent as to whether he ever received either She or Jess.

100 YEARS AGO
Summer 1912 • Age 37
“Almost treasonable activity”

Churchill’s attention during the summer was divided between his duties at the Admiralty and his continuing role as the government’s chief spokesman in Parliament on Irish Home Rule. Earlier in the year, he had accused the Tory leader Bonar Law of “almost treasonable activity” in his speeches to large crowds in Ulster which were not “warnings to the Government but incitement to the Orangemen…Had British statesmen and leaders of great parties in the past allowed their thoughts so lightly to turn to projects of bloodshed within the bosom of the country, we should have shared the follies of Poland.”

Andrew Bonar Law took nearly four months to respond, on 27 July, in terms which made Churchill’s “almost treasonable” accusation seemed modest. Bonar Law called the elected government of Great Britain “a revolutionary committee which has seized upon despotic power by fraud. In our opposition to them we shall not be guided by considerations or bound by the restraints which would influence us in an ordinary constitutional struggle…there are things stronger than Parliamentary majorities.…I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which I would not be prepared to support them.”

Ulster’s resistance included conspiring with Germany to provide the weapons for a civil war within the UK by the Ulstermen and their Tory co-conspirators. Yet no one was ever indicted for conspiring with Germany at a time when she was universally considered to be an enemy of Britain.

Churchill then turned to the Irish, in a 31 August letter to John Redmond, leader of the Irish Nationalist Party, asking him to allow Orange majority counties—three or at best four—to opt out of Home Rule and an Irish Parliament for several years. This Redmond eventually agreed to do. In response, Bonar Law and the Orangemen would turn to Germany for arms. The Kaiser was pleased to accommodate them.

Simultaneously Churchill at this moment was advising the Committee of Imperial Defence on naval policy:

...the whole character of the German fleet shows that it is designed for aggressive and offensive action of the largest possible character in the North Sea or the North Atlantic…The structure of the German battleships shows clearly that they are intended for attack and for fleet action. They are not a cruiser fleet designed to protect Colonies and commerce all over the world. They have been preparing for years, and are continuing to prepare, on an even larger scale a fleet which, from its
structure and character, can be proved by naval experts to have the central and supreme object of drawing out a line of battle for a great test of strength in the North Sea or in the ocean.

Churchill was undoubtedly correct in this aspect of his analysis. Germany’s fleet was designed to confront the British fleet. But why? Churchill never understood. In public he had caused no little controversy by calling the German fleet a “luxury.” He didn’t say this to provoke Germany, though it did. In private to the CID, he said the same thing. After noting with approval Bonar Law’s statement that the German fleet “was almost a loaded cannon continually pointed at us,” Churchill wrote, “Of course, they may say that our fleet is similarly pointed at them”—which it clearly was. Then Churchill wrote what proved to be untrue but played a role in Germany’s eventual defeat: “...nothing we can do on the sea can menace the freedom or security of Germany [or] can make any difference to that which makes life worth living for them.”

Churchill certainly believed this in 1912. The continued British naval blockade of Germany after the November 1918 armistice, however, and the resulting postwar starvation of German civilians, would be major factors in Germany reluctantly signing the treaty dictated at Versailles.

75 YEARS AGO
Summer 1937 • Age 62
“The power of personal example”

While appeasement is popularly linked with the Anglo-French betrayal of Czechoslovakia in 1938, an incident during the summer of 1937 illustrates how the Foreign Office, even under Anthony Eden, took pains to avoid offending a Germany bent on war.

Churchill, in the process of compiling Great Contemporaries, had sent copies of various articles he intended to include for comment by others. One of these was his 1935 Strand Magazine article on Hitler, which he sent on 2 July to Sir Robert Vansittart, an open opponent of Hitler at the Foreign Office.

In that article, Churchill expressed admiration for the “courage, perseverance and the vital force” Hitler had displayed on his rise to power. He described Hitler as “highly competent, cool, well-informed…with an agreeable manner, a disarming smile and…a subtle personal magnetism.” Churchill hoped “that we may yet live to see Hitler as a gentler figure in a happier age.” Clifford North, Vansittart’s Private Secretary, replied that the essay would not be “at all palatable” to Germany, and asked if “republication just now was advisable.” Although he made a few deletions “to take the sting out of the article,” WSC reprinted the Hitler chapter. (See review of Great Contemporaries, page 53.)

While believing privately that Hitler was bent on war in 1938 or 1939, Churchill publicly said nice things about the German dictator. In the Evening Standard on 17 September he urged Hitler to cease persecution of German Jews, Protestants and Catholics, but added: “One may dislike Hitler’s system and yet admire his patriotic achievement. If our country were defeated, I hope we should find a champion as indomitable to restore our courage and lead us back to our place among the nations.” This was part of Churchill’s characteristic generosity toward opponents, but has since been used to pillory him for “naivete.”

Morale in the Royal Air Force was dangerously low. Wing Commander Tor Anderson, one of Churchill’s many sources of information, visited Chartwell on 1 August where WSC read aloud from Marlborough. On the 5th, Anderson wrote: “...I was very impressed by that incident in the life of the Duke of Marlborough...and by your conclusion as to the power of personal example and inspiration. It is just that influence which is so disastrously absent from the Air Force at this moment.”

50 YEARS AGO
Summer 1962 • Age 87
“I want to die in England”

Churchill broke his hip on June 28th in Monte Carlo, after slipping off the edge of his bed. Calmly he told his male nurse, “I think I’ve hurt my leg.” He was transported to a Monaco hospital where he told his private secretary, Anthony Montague Browne, “I want to die in England.” Montague Browne relayed this to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who dispatched an RAF Comet to carry WSC back to Britain.

At Middlesex Hospital, successful surgery was performed and he remained there three weeks. One of his physicians, Dr. Herbert Seddon, joined him for coffee and brandy each evening and noted in his diary:

I have never met anyone who could make a modest dose of cognac last so long....Maybe I was in on one or two film sessions, but can remember only one: Sink the Bismarck. I think I watched the Grand Old Warrior as much as the movie. He never took his eyes off it, and they lit up. He sat upright and his usually pale face flushed. His cigar went out; he just held it; his mouth opened in rapt attention. Winston was fighting the battle over again.

On July 20th Churchill was visited at Middlesex Hospital by former President Eisenhower and the Prime Minister. Macmillan noted in his diary that Churchill had been reading a C.S. Forester novel. On 21 August Churchill returned to his London residence at Hyde Park Gate, which had been remodelled to install a bedroom and bathroom on the ground floor. It had easy access to the garden, where his daughter Mary said “he loved to sit.” ★
As Finest Hour’s Canada Number made clear last issue, 30 December 1941 was a defining moment for Winston Churchill and for Canada. His address to the joint houses of the Canadian legislature, only days after Pearl Harbor and the fall of Hong Kong, reasserted and reinvigorated the political and military bonds between Britain and Canada, confirmed the resolve of both nations to fight on, and set out the phased programme that would lead to victory. The event was made famous by the iconic image of the defiant wartime leader taken immediately afterwards by the young photographer Yousuf Karsh.

On March 26th the Canadian Library of Parliament opened a small exhibition to commemorate this great occasion. Six pages of Churchill’s speech notes, on loan from the Churchill Archives Centre in Churchill College, Cambridge, along with contemporary film footage of the occasion, and the Karsh portrait were displayed in the magnificent and recently restored Library building, which was constructed in 1876, two years after Churchill’s birth, and was the only part of the Canadian Parliament to survive the fire of 1916.

Ronald I. Cohen, Churchill bibliographer, longtime FH contributor and co-founder of the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Ottawa, realized his dream of celebrating Churchill on Canada’s Parliament Hill. “I’d been talking for years to Allen Packwood about finding some way to bring something to Canada,” Cohen told the press. “It was the first and only time that Churchill spoke to our Parliament, and that is a significant event. It was especially important because we were in the midst of the world war and Churchill had been an inspiration to the world.

“The six typed pages, with handwritten notes by WSC, are some of the most significant and memorable from the 22-page message,” Cohen said. “They include parts written and delivered in French, as well as Churchill’s infamous comment about the French generals’ speculation that ‘in three weeks

Mr. Packwood is director of the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge, England.
England will have her neck wrung like a chicken,’ together with his Ottawa retort: ‘Some Chicken! Some Neck!’ Some of those same pages can be seen stuffed into his jacket pocket in the Karsh photographs.”

Mr. Cohen added that the pages still hold lessons for Canadians today: “The speeches are inspirational, and what Churchill stood for is inspirational. He wrote his own speeches. He was a man of principle and an admirable leader.”

Nepean-Carleton MP Pierre Poilievre told Ottawa’s EMC News that he was proud that Canada was the first place outside the UK to showcase the speech. “So much of what Churchill said and stood for stands true today,” he said. The exhibit ran through June 27th.

The display was made possible by the generosity of The Globe and Mail and Woodbridge Company Limited, with the support of the International Churchill Society of Canada. It was opened by the Hon. Andrew Scheer, Speaker of the House of Commons, and was visited by Mrs. Estrellita Karsh, widow of the photographer. The prominent location, which is part of the parliamentary tour route, ensured that the display was seen by over 100,000 visitors during the three-month period, as well as by Canadian MPs, Senators and their guests.

We are grateful to Dianne Brydon and the team at the Library of Parliament for facilitating the return of Churchill’s words to the scene of their original delivery and triumph.

For an excellent op-ed article on the exhibit in the Ottawa Citizen, see http://xrl.us/bnbvnc.

THE ART OF SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, APRIL 13TH - JULY 29TH
M A X  E D W A R D  H E R T W I G

The exhibit featured works by and of Churchill, including two which have appeared on FH covers: “Firth of Forth,” left (Coombs 136, FH 138), loaned by Richard Mahoney; and “Winston at Work,” right (FH 153), by Edwina Sandys.

In Appleton, Wisconsin, the Trout Museum Churchill art exhibition took a unique approach, displaying not only some of Churchill’s paintings, but paintings and other works of art with him as the subject. The exhibition was made possible thanks to collaboration among Allen Packwood and the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge; the National Churchill Museum in Fulton, Missouri; the Oscar Nemon Estate; and private collections.

The exhibition presented several paintings by Winston Churchill as well as a images depicting the former Prime Minister accomplished by his favorite sculptor, Oscar Nemon. The exhibit included artwork by three of Churchill’s family members—his granddaughter Edwina Sandys, his daughter Sarah and his nephew John Spencer-Churchill—which explore and expand upon the ideas and passions to which he devoted his long and remarkable life.

“Churchill was the subject of many depictions in the media and the Arts,” the Museum explained. “As with politicians and luminaries today, the character of these images varied widely; some commemorative medallions and statues portray the Prime Minister in the radiant light of a Roman Caesar, while disparaging political cartoons show him as a stodgy, cigar-chomping curmudgeon.

“Croatian-born sculptor Oscar Nemon (1906–1985) enjoyed an artistic relationship of a different stripe with Winston Churchill. In 1951, the Churchills met Nemon at the Hotel La Mamounia in Marrakech. There, Nemon created a small terracotta bust of the great man, which Clementine Churchill praised for its remarkable accuracy: ‘It represents to me my husband as I see him and as I think of him.’ Nemon became the world’s best-known and most prolific Churchill sculptor.”

On the second floor of the Appleton building was a section of the exhibition entitled, “The Greatest Generation of Pastime Painters.” This collection featured works by Wisconsinite artists and veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War.

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Between 1902 and 1906, John Pierpont Morgan, the most influential financier in American history and an avid collector, built a private library at Madison Avenue and 36th Street, just east of his New York residence. In 1924, eleven years after his death, his son presented it to the public. Several landmark buildings were added to the complex since, and many famous exhibitions have been held there. In June the Morgan opened a new exhibition showcasing Winston Churchill’s use of spoken and written words.

Prior to entering the exhibit hall, in keeping with the theme, a Remington Noiseless typewriter used by Churchill’s staff is on display. Churchill’s favored method of working was dictation, and the noiseless machine was used to avoid distracting him. Typists were expected immediately to provide a typed document for his review and editing.

Items on display in glass cases are arranged in chronological sequence of his life—Child, Soldier, Young Tribune, Wilderness Years, Finest Hour, Grand Alliance, Elder Statesman, Twilight Years—introduced by large posters with photographs. Drawn from the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, and the National Trust, Chartwell, the exhibition uses a fascinating array of sixty personal letters, speech drafts, speaking notes, personal and official correspondence, and public statements to examine events in Churchill’s life. Even in England there are few opportunities to see these items on public display.

The visitor is transported back in time through Churchill’s writings and correspondence. Many items captured my own fascination, including 1883 and 1897 letters from Churchill to his mother; a manuscript draft from The Story of the Malakand Field Force; a 1929 letter from Churchill to his wife on his only visit to the United States west coast, describing his meeting with Charlie Chaplin; a 1936 pamphlet written by Churchill entitled The Truth about Hitler (stamped boldly on the cover BANNED IN GERMANY, no doubt to promote sales); and a personal telegram to Churchill from President Roosevelt after D-Day.

One document that drew the attention of visitors was a letter Churchill’s New York doctor, Otto Pickhardt, wrote during WSC’s recovery after being hit by a car in 1931, when the U.S. was still under Prohibition: “This is to certify that the post-accident convalescence of the Hon. Winston S. Churchill necessitates the use of alcoholic spirits especially at meal times. The quantity is naturally indefinite but the minimum requirements would be 250 cubic centimeters.”

Another display that I found extremely interesting, and one that recognizes Churchill’s place in history as a writer and orator, is the Nobel Prize for Literature medal and citation he was awarded in 1953. The beautiful color and illustrated citation in Swedish is translated for the visitor in English. It reads: “For his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values.” An enjoyable exhibit is a Churchill painting, “The Coast Near Antibes,” circa 1925, on loan from Kenneth Rendell. Churchill originally gave the painting to his bodyguard.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the small theater where Churchill can be heard giving parts of eight famous speeches delivered on the radio for British and American audiences, from “Their Finest Hour” (18 June 1940) to “The Sinews of Peace” (5 March 1946). As one listens, three screens simultaneously display words and photographs.
The middle screen shows the words as he wrote them and the tempo in which he delivered them. The side screens display historical photographs.

Visitors may also use two touch screens, allowing the user to select any period of Churchill’s life. One menu, for example, is a depiction of a cablegram Churchill received from his friend Bernard Baruch when the Germans began bombing London: “My home is open to all grandchildren.” (Churchill politely declined, replying that “the English countryside is ‘fairly safe.’”) The touch screen links related photographs not on display, including Churchill’s grandchildren, Edwina and Julian Sandys in the countryside, and Churchill and Baruch in 1949.

This project does not end in September. The Morgan Library and Churchill Archives Centre launched a website, www.DiscoverChurchill.org, to generate interest in Churchill among a younger audience and educators. It features fun facts, videos, quotes, and links to Churchill-related content.

Charles C.W. Cooke reviewed the exhibition in National Review Online, concluding eloquently with a summary of all that Churchill was:

“It would be a grave mistake to presume that, after a rough school career, the boy magically transformed into a sage. Lord Birkenhead never spoke truer words than when observing, ‘When Winston’s right, he’s right. When he’s wrong, well, my God.’ But while Churchill was often wrong, he was never unsure. Of the British government’s policy toward Nazi Germany he wrote, ‘so they go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamantly for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.’ Whatever his flaws, these were words that could never have been spoken of him. Instead, he lived by his motto: ‘I never worry about action, only inaction.’ The modern world owes that fact a sizeable debt.”

As a regular contributor to Finest Hour, I found the exhibition extremely informative. The opportunity to view its documents and artifacts together is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

If you have the opportunity to see “Churchill: The Power of Words,” you will not be disappointed. In addition, the Morgan Library Shop offers a large array of Churchill items and books, including Martin Gilbert’s new 2012 hardback Churchill: The Power Of Words: His Remarkable Life Recounted Through His Writings And Speeches. The book contains 200 extracts from his books, articles, and speeches, selected, edited and introduced by Martin Gilbert. While at The Morgan Library & Museum, I highly recommend a visit to the beautiful Pierpont Morgan Study and The Original Library. For further information, link on to www.themorgan.org/home.asp.

“Power of Words” Video

On June 13th, noted television moderator Charlie Rose convened an extremely good panel on Churchill’s “Power of Words”: Celia Sandys, David Reynolds, Peter Clarke and Lord Watson. http://xrl.us/bnbviz. He could not go wrong with such a cast, though we were surprised to hear Prof. Reynolds repeat the “jaw-jaw/war-war” canard, which was said by Harold Macmillan. Lord Watson, discussing Churchill’s trip to Potsdam in 1945, made a poignant observation: Churchill’s distress at the destruction of Berlin was something in a victorious war leader that is “very rare” at a time like that. David Reynolds was throughout poignant and penetrating, never setting a foot wrong about “Mr. Churchill’s Profession”—the title of Peter Clarke’s excellent new book (see reviews). We heard only two major inaccuracies: two panelists suggested that Chamberlain supported Halifax’s futile notion of exploring a German armistice through the Italians in late May 1940; and Charlie Rose alleged incorrectly that Churchill said he should have died in 1945. This was a really thoughtful and instructive conversation on Churchill as statesman-writer. —RML

TELEVISION

Churchill’s “Cover-Up”

DAVID FREEMAN

A New BBC Documentary titled “The Fall of Singapore” has been given predictably sensational attention in the predictably sensational New York Post (“The Traitor of Pearl Harbor” 27 May 2012). The gist of the story is that as Prime Minister, Winston Churchill covered up the treachery of a British peer who had been discovered passing information to the Japanese before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

According to the Post, “when Churchill first learned of this longtime friend’s activities in 1941, he was terrified that the world would learn that he had been casually chatting about military secrets with a friend who was then passing them along to their enemy.”

The friend was William Forbes-Sempill, who had succeeded his father as the 19th Baron Sempill in 1934. Of Churchill and the Baron, Prof. Richard Aldrich of the University of Warwick is quoted as saying, “They were social friends,” and that the revelation was >>
a “potential death knell” for Churchill:
“Sempill goes around for a cup of tea, Churchill’s talking about the war, and then Sempill goes to the Japanese Embassy to tell them what Churchill told him. If this comes into court, Churchill’s going to be tremendously embarrassed, because he’s been blabbing. He drinks a lot, and he’s very gregarious. Who knows what he said?”
All of this is supposedly the product of “recently discovered” information.
Oh, really?

Eleven years ago in 2001 Sir Martin Gilbert published the following declassified document in volume three of The Churchill War Papers, page 1240:

I regard the attached [a report on the sources available to the Japanese Embassy] as most serious. At any moment we may be at war with Japan, and here are all these Englishmen, many of them respectable, two of whom I know personally, moving around collecting information and sending it to the Japanese Embassy. I cannot believe that the Master of Sempill and Commander McGrath have any idea of what their position would be on the morrow of a Japanese declaration of war. Immediate internment would be the least of their troubles. I consider Lord Swinton [Chairman of the Security Executive] should see them all and caution them, and require them to cease their activities, failing which other measures will have to be taken. Meanwhile, none of them must have access to any Government Department. It is possible for Lord Sempill to continue to be employed at the Admiralty, [but] I do not know in what capacity.
“Some time ago I directed that the Japanese Embassy were to have no more facilities in London and about the country than, for instance, the American Embassy is accorded at the present time in Berlin. This should certainly carry with it the effectual closing down of the activities of this English nebula.
“Pray let me know what action can be taken.”
Clearly when Churchill first learned of Lord Sempill’s activities, which so far as the PM then knew were perfectly legal, he took immediate steps to shut down the supply line of information.
Evidently this long-public information has eluded both the filmmakers and the New York Post reporter, who also failed to discover that Sempill was no more than a very minor acquaintance of Churchill’s. As for Prof. Aldrich, does he really know so little about Churchill as to concoct fantasies about the Prime Minister regularly inviting around casual acquaintances for a cup of tea and drunkenly revealing government secrets?
Possibly somebody connected with this story had been drinking, but it wasn’t Winston Churchill.

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**Summer Book Number**

Living Churchill’s Comfortable, Stylish Life

Richard M. Langworth


disproved, vide the avalanche of new books in this issue alone. Every time we think that biography, for example, is passé, a new one comes along with a fresh angle. Here is one by Barry Singer, proprietor of Chartwell Booksellers in New York City, an active writer on the arts, who found a niche and filled it: by explaining just how Churchill lived his comfortable, stylish and on the whole enviable private life.

The biography that intertwines through this book is workaday, accurate and unbiased. Neither a Churchill exponent nor critic, Singer tells us what happened in brisk, readable, factual prose. Take the India Act, for example, WSC’s political bête noir of the early Thirties: Churchill’s “essential forbodings about the Muslim-Hindu violence...did prove prophetic...but failed to comprehend Gandhi’s charismatic appeal.” To his credit and unlike >>
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most writers on the subject (with the outstanding exception of Arthur Herman), Singer on Gandhi balances Churchill’s “naked fakir” crack with his final magnanimity, quoting his 1935 remark that Gandhi had gone “very high in my esteem since he stood up for the Untouchables.” Finest Hour has been flogging that point for two decades.

But biography is mere backdrop to what the author is really here to say, which he weaves into the story: nine facets of Churchill that form the essence of “Churchill Style”: Autos, Books, Cigars, Dining, Fashion, Friendships, Home, Imbibing, Pastimes. Notes under these subjects appear chronologically as interlinear interruptions, set off by inset or colored type.

What more do you need to understand the essence of Churchill? All right: Aircraft, Children, Enemies, Foreigners, Hotels, Ships, Watering Holes and Women come to mind. But that would create overlaps and make this a much blowzier book. If any of Singer’s selected subjects interests you, you can’t be without this book. True, Cigars, Dining, Homes and Pastimes have already had ink, and even books of their own—but not so much Autos, Books (those Churchill read as well as his own), Fashion and Pastimes (which carry far beyond oil painting and polo).

Take Autos, for years an interesting, elusive subject for this motoring writer: Mr. Singer has researched all the cars Churchill owned and when—well, perhaps he missed a Vanden Plas or two—and they appear seriatim throughout. I was pleased to see the little Wolseley, which FH 154 said was the last car he was seen in behind the wheel—but Singer reports there were two Wolseleys. You won’t get a lengthy treatise on each motorcar, but at the end you’ll know of all that he owned, and this is more than you’ll learn in any of the thousand-odd books already published about him.

Even subjects you think you know something about are full of interesting tidbits. Take Imbibing: Can you believe Churchill once drank Eau de Vie, “a clear, colorless fruit brandy commonly served as a digestive?” Yech! Or Cigars: Lord Randolph warned Winston against them, yet was himself an “eater” of cigarettes—and so was Winston, until he got to Cuba and took his cure.*

*WSC had one known relapse to cigarettes. Shortly after his failed attempt to bring Turkey into the war in 1943, a staffer was astonished to find the PM serenely puffing a Turkish coffin nail. Explained Churchill: “These are all I ever got from the Turks.”

Victory Was Not for Power, but for Liberty

MANFRED WEIDHORN

The major world political leaders have tended to be aristocrats, generals, politicians, lawyers—but not writers. So Churchill got there the hard way. Yes, he was a politician, but he made his living as a writer, and never more so than in the 1930s.

His writing career has received increasing attention. A landmark in Churchill studies is David Reynolds’ 2004 book In Command of History, an exhaustive analysis of the complex political, financial, historical, and literary circumstances involved in the composition, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, of Churchill’s most famous work, The Second World War. Now comes Peter Clarke, who does for the best-selling A History of the English Speaking Peoples (mainly written in the 1930s) something like what Reynolds did for The Second World War.

The book is scholarly, well written and definitive. Clarke analyzes the contents and merits of the History, as well as its references to events at the time of writing. The original motive may have been making money but, like the great men in his version of British history, Churchill was unconsciously preparing himself for his rendezvous with >>

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destiny in his other vocation of politics.

In the famous war speeches of 1939-42, he availed himself of historical details discovered or rediscovered in his recent bookish labors. His writing thus provided him with the sense of history in the making, of a prophetic vision, of seeing Hitler as but the latest in the series of European tyrants who periodically (but vainly) threatened British survival. He retained hope and confidence during the darkest days, when few others did. Above all, the major theme of the History—that the Mother of Parliaments, through its ex-colonies, had (with the help of the Royal Navy) spread democracy across the globe—was given special meaning during the war: “Victory at all costs” was not about power over others, but liberty for all.

While a sense of humor can enliven most subjects, books on the political side of Churchill’s life involve “tragedy and triumph” (to reverse Churchill’s phrase) and of necessity are serious, sometimes grim. But the other major Churchillian career, that of author, sometimes comes close to comedy, and Clarke’s subtle and consistent sense of humor, sly witicisms and occasional word play make his book perfect for the subject at hand and a delight to read.

The 1930s was a dark decade in world history. Being out of government (though still an MP), as well as refashioning Chartwell according to his whims, required Churchill to turn extra attention to writing for remuneration. The comedy results from his trying to juggle four balls in the air: a private life devoted to the best of everything; the sheer physical limitations to what he could achieve as a serious historian in the available time; the pressures of politics; and the interest of His Majesty’s Government in his tax returns.

Thus we see a side of Churchill not normally on view: Instead of dealing, as a high government official, with admirals, generals, diplomats, and politicians, he now is a businessman constantly negotiating—haggling?—with publishers and editors of all sorts, while also consulting lawyers and accountants on maneuvers to keep his taxes to a minimum. He drove his publishers to distraction with his delays and occasional disingenuousness. In 1932 he also indulged in some currency speculation.

Churchill simply underestimated the expenses of his indulgences, even as he overestimated what he could accomplish with his pen. He “signed contracts for books that he promised to write several years in the future.” One of them, the Marlborough, kept on exceeding the length he had projected. He repeatedly postponed deadlines for the submission of manuscripts. He also made multiple commitments. So we see him concurrently finishing The World Crisis, writing his delightful My Early Life, embarking on his massive Marlborough, and planning the History, not to speak of a steady stream of articles for newspapers and magazines. Meanwhile, he published collections of essays, Thoughts and Adventures (aka Amid These Storms) and Great Contemporaries, and he even dabbled in plans to make film documentaries. He had become a one-man writing factory.

Complaining of the “pressure” of “laborious” projects, Clarke writes, Churchill “was never more stretched than in these years.” The sight of someone in over his head because of his own misjudgments and because God or Nature has allotted only twenty-four hours to each day is, at least in this telling, amusing.

Nor did it help that Churchill retained his day job (literally) of participating assiduously in politics, lost staggering sums in the Great Crash of 1929, and was hit by a car in New York in 1931, curtailing his lecture tour. After the dramatic events of 1938-39, he carried on some of the writing, even after he returned to government in the perilous September of 1939, and continued to do so—unbelievably—at least until the spring of 1941.

The History differs from all his other works in its curious development. Once ejected from the premiership in 1945, Churchill inevitably decided to write his war memoirs. Just as concluding the History in the 1930s had to be postponed with the advent of war, so the massive memoir of that war caused a second postponement of the History. Only after he retired from high office for good in 1955 could the History finally be finished. And indeed it reminded him, old and exhausted as he was, that he always needed to be doing something big—with a challenge to live for. Upon his withdrawal from a half century of politics, the professional writer at last had the leisure to revise and publish his final major work, free of the pressures of “sterner days.”

Ghost Story for America

ANDREW ROBERTS


Member price $24.

Overall, was the British Empire a good or a bad thing? Taken in the round over its half-millennium history—between John Cabot landing in Newfoundland in 1497 and the handover of Hong Kong in 1997—did the Empire contribute or detract from the sum of human happiness?

The standing of the Empire is presently the most
contentious historiographical battleground in British public discourse, and Kwarteng has tossed a grenade into the struggle.

Kwarteng describes it as “a post-racial account of empire, insofar as it does not regard the fact that the administrators were white, while the subject people were from other races, as the key determinant in understanding empire. There is clearly more to understanding the British Empire than racial politics, important though that was.”

For a Ghanaian, who might have been expected to adopt the classic 1960s left-wing analysis of the Empire as a vast exploitative racist kleptocracy, Mr. Kwarteng instead has written a far subtler and more nuanced critique, one that cannot be ignored by the warring historians of both sides. Kwarteng is also a 36-year-old Old Etonian, holds a Cambridge Ph.D. in History, and is moreover a Member of Parliament for one of the safest Tory seats in the House of Commons.

The Marxist characterization of the imperialist elite as a bunch of cynical asset-strippers does not wash with Kwarteng, who rightly portrays them as amongst the most ideological group of administrators in the history of mankind. (The author almost glories in his own elitism; it’s hard not to warm to someone who expresses his grateful and filial love to his parents in his book’s dedication, written in Latin.)

Yet neither is Kwarteng the Old Tom that his political and historiographical opponents have tried to make out. He resolutely holds the British imperialists to account for the mess they made when finally relinquishing power over places like Iraq, Kashmir, Burma, Sudan and Nigeria. By total contrast, the British often had plenty of better alternatives than the routes they took, yet all too often they plumped for partition, hasty exits and subsequent unjustified self-congratulation. (He might also have added the Palestine Mandate, but five post-British hot spots seem quite enough to cover.) He does write about Hong Kong, but there the end of empire has not led to bloodshed; indeed it is still hugely prosperous, and anyhow there was no viable alternative to honoring an 1898 agreement to handing the territory back to China.

In his introduction to the American edition of this book, Kwarteng states that “No nation faced such similar problems to modern America as Britain at the height of its imperial glory.” He argues that as the world’s preeminent superpower, Britain was for decades the financial and commercial center of the world, and deliberately took on responsibility for the world order, whose Pax Britannica was thus almost an exact precursor to today’s Pax Americana. His message is that America should learn the lesson of the demise of the British Empire, and avoid the paternalism, pragmatism and opportunism that in Britain’s case led to disastrous decline.

This seems like a good prescription for America to follow, but is it? In his recent state of the union Speech, President Obama said: “Anyone who tells you that America is in decline or that our influence has waned, doesn’t know what they’re talking about.” It was hardly a Churchillian rejoinder, but then it was a very demotic speech, and he is wrong. By almost any set of criteria, the United States’ influence in the world has indeed waned since the Administration of President Dwight Eisenhower, but she still has a good head-start on the British Empire, which was anti-democratic, protectionist, slow to innovate, and largely ruled by the sportsmen of its only two great universities.

America, by total contrast, is—when she is true to herself—a proselytizing democracy, free-market and innovation. And she has over a dozen of the world’s top twenty universities.

Where the British Empire does indeed hold a message for modern America is in the area of self-belief. Kwarteng is an engaging writer, and his pen-portraits of British imperialists—both well-known, such as Kitchener, Gordon and Lawrence, and the more obscure, such as Lord Lugard of Nigeria, Sir Henry Dobbs of Iraq and Sir Anthony Grantham of Hong Kong—are subtle and scholarly. What emerges is a picture of well-meaning Classicists from Oxford and Cambridge who in their twenties and early thirties went out to rule over vast areas of the globe with minimal training, muscular Christianity and common sense, as well as a burning desire to do their best for the people in their care. All too often, when flung into deeply complex and dangerous tribal, economic, religious and political quagmires, as Kwarteng ably demonstrates, good-will simply wasn’t enough, especially once Britain’s imperial prestige had been fatally compromised by the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942.
“Churchill is a Gangster…”

FRANÇOIS KERSAUDY

The book opens with a now-familiar description of the two elder statesmen as memoirists, closing with the hardly startling revelation that they gave divergent accounts of their mutual relations. The next chapter leads us briskly through the past careers of Churchill and de Gaulle, after which we can follow their first encounters during the dark year of 1940, including the fall of France, de Gaulle’s heading the Free French in London, Churchill’s immortal June speeches, the Blitz, the attack on the French fleet at Mers el-Kébir, and the raid on Dakar.

Next in line is a chronological account of their confrontations: Syria and Lebanon, 1941; Bir Hachim and the North African landings, 1942; the comedic meeting between de Gaulle and Giraud sponsored by Roosevelt and Churchill at Casablanca, 1943; Churchill’s vulnerability to Roosevelt’s Gaullophobia; the endless negotiations before de Gaulle’s arrival in Algiers at the end of May 1943; the Teheran Conference (without de Gaulle); a reconciliation of sorts at Marrakech in early 1944; the dramatic misunderstandings before D-Day; the liberation of Paris; Churchill’s triumphal visit to the capital; the campaign in north-east France; Yalta and beyond. Hostilities were followed by a mellowing of relations after the war, and de Gaulle’s presence at Churchill’s funeral.

The author’s prose is pleasant and even humorous at times. He knows how to tell a good story and maintains commendable objectivity in judging the two great leaders’ frequent tantrums. What then are the weaknesses of this generally entertaining book? For one thing, it is rather expeditious, what with a shortish text, further cramped by forty photographs. Second, the emphasis is more on the parallel lives of the two protagonists than on their meetings per se, which are dealt with rather briefly and appear as short summaries of accounts to be found elsewhere.

This may indeed hold true for the whole book, which often reads like a reproduction of the leaders’ memoirs, with a few excerpts from academic studies thrown in—hence the conspicuous absence of any revelations. There are no end notes, and important books referenced throughout the narrative do not even appear in the bibliography. Ståhlberg includes a list of French and British archives that can be used with profit, but he clearly had little time to visit them himself. In all, the book will seem vastly entertaining to non-English-speaking Swedes—a rare breed these days. The others may be reminded of Yogi Berra’s immortal words: “Déjà vu all over again!”

Not for the Faint of Heart

RICHARD A. DEVINE


Any new book about Churchill tempts us to ask if there is anything more to say about him. Alan Baxendale has happily provided some meaningful “more” on Churchill’s time as Home Secretary, from February 1910 to October 1911. The Home Office then covered a wide range of government activity, but Baxendale focuses on
how Churchill addressed his responsibilities for Britain’s prison system, particularly treatment of prisoners and sentencing. He brings an insider’s view to the subject, having served as chief education officer at the Home Office Prison Department from 1967 to 1985.

In researching a potential book on the “history of educational endeavors” among English prisoners, Baxendale learned that Churchill was the only Home Secretary to have looked at education as an “integral part of prison regimes” (xii). Further research sparked the author’s interest in what drove WSC to champion a number of proposals for prison reform. The result is a relatively short but interesting account of the major initiatives undertaken by Churchill in the corrections field.

Given his World War II bulldog image, some might expect that Churchill would have adapted a conservative, law-and-order approach to prison management. In fact, per the book’s title, he was very much the reformer, and brought a humanitarian philosophy to his oversight of the system. His views may have been the result in part of having been captured during the Boer War. Although he was not a prisoner for long and not confined in a traditional prison setting, he never forgot what it was like to lose one’s freedom.

Churchill’s predecessor at the Home Office, Herbert Gladstone, had, like Churchill, progressive views on how prisons should be run, but his approach to the role of Home Secretary was, according to Baxendale, one of “gentlemanly management” (9). Needless to say, that was not Churchill’s way of doing things. He was full of energy and ideas, determined to make a difference as quickly as possible.

Churchill’s aggressive push for immediate change put him at odds with the civil servants responsible for the prisons. They were, as the author notes, “accustomed to advising their minister but now found themselves being advised—and directed—by him” (9). They did not jump at the chance radically to alter what they had spent their careers building. The book offers short biographies of the main players at the Home Office, including Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, long-time chairman of the Prison Commission, and Sir Edward Troup, Permanent Under-secretary of State at the Home Office. These men knew their business and were not reluctant to disagree with Churchill.

Not surprisingly, Churchill pushed back. In the same method he later used with his World War II generals, he challenged their positions, asked pointed questions, demanded facts and offered counter-proposals. While the process was not without pain, and often left Brise, Troup and their colleagues frustrated and unhappy, progress was made.

Baxendale says there were two main phases in Churchill’s tenure at the Home Office. During the first, which ran roughly from February through July 1910, he concentrated on issues left over from Gladstone, relating primarily to prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners, including methods for handling prisoners of conscience and separate confinement. On 20 July 1910, Churchill outlined in Parliament his major proposals for penal reform. From then until he left the Home Office in October 1911, he focused on legislative measures to reduce the number of people who went to prison (8-12).

Baxendale’s book discusses in some depth debates with regard to the issues of separate confinement, the treatment of young offenders, the use of preventive detention, aid to discharged convicts and Churchill’s proposals for drastically reducing the prison population.

Churchill did not get his way on every proposal, but his aggressive push for change, moderated by the more conservative senior staff at the Home Office, led to meaningful progress on many of the reforms he proposed.

Yet Churchill’s relentless calls for action at times drove even his most experienced advisers to distraction. Brise had been around a long time and had worked with many political leaders at the highest level, but Churchill was a special case: “We are still groaning under the domination of WSC,” he wrote Gladstone. “I could tell you stories of him which would make your hair turn white! But I must be silent on paper from the traditional loyalty of a public servant to his Chief” (31).

As exasperated as Brise might have been, he and Troup stood up to Churchill many times, which helped to create sounder measures. It was valuable and necessary work—but not for the faint of heart. Churchill was not unhappy to go to the Admiralty in late 1911, not only for the broader challenge but perhaps also because he had felt some frustration in dealing with the Home Office bureaucracy.

Baxendale concludes that Churchill left a mark on the prison system, as he did on so many other areas of government. He wasn’t always right—in fact he could be incredibly wrong—but he was determined to make things happen. Many of his proposals, including the elimination of separate confinement, came to fruition over the years. As in all his government offices, Churchill challenged the system to do better. Looking back from today, when gridlock in government appears to be the order of the day, it is refreshing to see that a leader like Churchill, filled with ideas, determination and drive, working with an intelligent and experienced staff, unafraid to debate him vigorously, could make things happen. And, quite often, they were good things. ☑

Mr. Devine, author of “Top Cop in a Top Hat: Churchill as Home Secretary” (FH 143:20) served as States’ Attorney of Cook County, Illinois, and is now a Chicago private attorney.
Please Stop Rubbing Your Eyes

MICHAEL McMENAMIN

Churchill’s father was not the Eighth Duke of Marlborough, nor did he not have “a special fondness for sex” and “many dalliances throughout his life.” Nor did he leave £20,000 to Lady Colin Campbell, “the ‘sex goddess’ of Victorian England.” Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald did not lead a government of national unity “for about ten years.” MacDonald was not called “the Boneless Wonder” by “some leftists,” but by Churchill in the House of Commons.

Churchill did not “want to send more troops to India rather than negotiate peaceful independence.” He supported Indian self-government at the state and regional level, and never called for more British troops. Neville Chamberlain was not the “successor to Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer” in 1924-29, nor did he “remain” Chancellor in 1931. Chamberlain did not “remain oblivious” to the Nazi threat until Munich in 1938. He did believe Hitler could be appeased by diplomacy, but his support for rearmament, if less than Churchill wanted, shows he was keenly aware of the German threat long before Munich.

Why so many howlers? Well, the only full Churchill biography Ghaemi cites is John Pearson’s The Private Lives of Winston Churchill (1991), about which the Sunday Telegraph wrote: “…counting up the factual errors might provide some amusement, but otherwise there cannot be any reason to buy this book.”

Finest Hour 73 disagreed: “This book is invaluable in demonstrating the depths to which Churchillphobia can sink, and the comparative value of honest and valid critiques.” Yet Ghaemi cites Pearson more than any other Churchill title, including two books by Martin Gilbert.

Though Ghaemi can’t get his facts straight on Churchill’s and Chamberlain’s careers, he feels sufficiently informed to offer detailed psychological critiques of both, asking, almost incredulously: “Was Churchill’s insanity linked to his wisdom? Was Chamberlain’s sanity linked to his blindness? Sanity prevented realistic assessment and rational decision making; one had to be somewhat depressed, a bit out of the mainstream, a contrarian rebel—as Churchill was—to see what was coming.” Please stop rubbing your eyes.

On Churchill’s alleged Bipolar Disorder, facts are few. At page 59, we learn that WSC “had severe periods of depression” because, evidently, “he was open about it.” On pages 61-62 is a cursory list of Churchill’s “depressive episodes,” starting with Cuba in 1895 and continuing with “at least two episodes per decade into his forties and fifties.” The only source for this is Pearson’s biography.

The author does cite Martin Gilbert’s In Search of Churchill but, like a vampire recoiling from the cross, he fails to confront Gilbert’s conclusion: “From a careful study of the archives, and from long talks with Churchill’s colleagues, drink and depression seemed much exaggerated, yet much repeated (and embellished) in recent popular accounts.”

Ghaemi fails again when he offers no rebuttal to Jock Colville’s comments in Gilbert’s book: “I suppose that this hypothetical state of depression into which Lord Moran alleges Sir Winston used to fall will become accepted dogma….[Lady Churchill] was quite positive that although her husband was occasionally depressed—as indeed most normal people are—he was not abnormally subject to long fits of depression. The expression ‘to have a black dog on one’s back’ was one that my nanny used to use very frequently….this does show what dangerous historians can make, by being ignorant of the jargon of an age
preceding their own.”

Ghaemi’s failure to confront such primary source statements contradicting his thesis can only point to his failings as a historian through his choice of the wrong model. Pearson was convinced the Churchills were a scurrilous family and set out to find the evidence, even if manufactured. Ghaemi is convinced that the best leaders in crises are mentally ill, and followed in Pearson’s footsteps, preferring the superficial and the secondary to accurate testimony by principals. When evidence turned up that contradicted his beliefs, he suppressed it or failed to refute it. Scholars of the other figures in this book will laugh. Well they should. 

Curiouser and Curiouser….

CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING


The facts are well known: In May 1941, Deputy Führer Rudolph Hess flew to Britain, parachuted into a field near Newton Mearns, south of Glasgow when his aircraft ran low on fuel, and was taken prisoner. Why he did it, however, was debated until the day he died, decades later in Spandau prison. Most observers concluded Hess was demented, and indeed his antics over the years suggested this was the case. Or… could there have been another reason?

This far-out book contends that Hess’s flight was the result of a purposeful deception by Churchill’s government, designed to embarrass the Nazi regime. Noting that many relevant documents remain classified, Rubinstein argues that Hess could have taken off in response to a “royal letter” from George VI (transmitted under somewhat cloudy circumstances) as an attempt to offer peace terms and end the war.

Churchill appears only in passing. He is perceived largely as an impediment that would need to be removed or otherwise overcome if British peace feelers were to have any real chance. This much is certainly true.

But the theory is as preposterous as the Daily Mail allegation that Hitler approved the Hess flight (destruction in FH 152:9). George VI may have been a “Man of Munich,” but by May 1941 he was firmly in the Never Surrender corner. Reliable eye-witnesses found Hitler furious when he heard of the flight; eye-witnesses across the Channel found Churchill astonished, but bemused: “Hess or no Hess, I’m going to watch the Marx Brothers.” Perhaps only the final release of those still classified official papers will put speculations like this to rest.

The author states that it would be “a profound misconception” were his book to be seen narrowly to “expound yet another theory seeking to explain Hess’s flight.” Yet that is exactly what it is. It would have been better labeled as fiction: an amusing alternative or counter-history or a “what if?” story. By trying to give his theory credence the author gathers a host of facts (oddly footnoted using Roman numerals), to which he adds some suppositions and outright guesses to build his wholly implausible scenario. We do meet some fascinating figures—all quite real—as the author poses the roles they might have played in the drama.

Churchill’s “Sinews of Peace” speech, delivered at a small liberal arts college in March 1946, is one of the best-known orations in modern history. White sets out to tell the tale of how the speech came to be. While not living up to its subtitle, the book gives a good sense of the issues and era, providing context for the speech’s ringing words.

Why Fulton, Missouri? It’s an oft-told tale, not least in Winston Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech: Fifty Years Later (University of Missouri Press, 1999), a collection of papers evolving from a joint Churchill Centre/Churchill Memorial colloquium in 1996, edited by James W. Muller. Westminster College’s president, Frank “Bullet” McCluer, was a friend of Harry Vaughn, Westminster alumnus and military aide to President Harry S. Truman. McCluer decided to invite Churchill to deliver a speech on his campus, approached Vaughn to obtain Truman’s encouragement, and the President agreed, offering to introduce Churchill—surely the factor that pushed >>
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Churchill to accept the college’s request. The event offered Churchill a venue to state his views on the developing postwar scene. Truman’s presence assured widespread media coverage, but also underlined the administration’s agreement with Churchill’s message calling for western resolve in the face of growing Soviet intransigence. The speech was a shot in the arm for the speaker and Westminster College.

Only on page 161 do we get to the speech itself. Chapter 8 provides the full text, with some annotations by the author. But this leaves precious little space for assessing the speech along the lines suggested in the subtitle. We do learn a great many tidbits about lesser-known people, and sidebars cover events in the months and weeks leading up to the great day (a map of the campus would have been useful). Indeed, I found myself mentally marking out whole pages and paragraphs of trivia that contribute little to the story at hand. And the editors missed too many clangers—such as saying Chamberlain signed the 1938 Munich Agreement on Hitler’s desk in Berlin; that Harry Vaughn was Truman’s naval aide; that Churchill wore a bowler hat while traveling to Missouri.

For an assessment of how the speech “defined” the Cold War, readers must look elsewhere, such as the above-mentioned 1996 anthology. This book will tell you more about who ate what, when and where. ☘

Psychobiography or Psychobabble?

ERICA L. CHENOWETH


In 1960, HM the Queen approved the Royal Charter and Statutes of Churchill College, then the newest addition to the University of Cambridge. The same year, across the Atlantic in

Cambridge, Massachusetts, Jerome Bruner was co-founding the Center of Cognitive Studies at Harvard University, a place of “interdisciplinary study” of the mind and learning before “interdisciplinary” became a buzz-word.

Twenty-three years later, Bruner would write of a “deep gap” in the modern world “between the history-minded and the social-science-minded.” The reader begins to understand that such underlying tensions exist between history and psychology when reading Dr. Andrew Norman’s “psychobiography” of Winston Churchill.

Norman sets out his goal in the preface, with gratuitous reference to his subject by first name, to enable “Winston’s true nature finally to be revealed and understood.” In Sherlockian tone, he lures the reader down the path of his pseudo-scientific investigation looking to recognize “clues” for understanding Churchill’s “character traits” and to see them “for what they are” (x).

But rather than a serious treatment of what should be an endlessly fascinating topic—the inner workings of the mind of a great man and the possible underlying motives for his behavior—the reader is presented with sparse, unenlightening excerpts from two short books, authored by psychologists, in the rare chapters that offer original writing; along with recitations of symptoms from the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. (See “The Myth of the ‘Black Dog,’” page 28.) These are used, first, to diagnose Churchill as having “Emotional Deprivation Disorder,” and then to suggest the armchair diagnosis of “hypo-manic-depressive”—which, we are informed, fortunately gave him the “almost super-human” energy to help save the free world, and of which Churchill’s body of written work and paintings “may also be regarded as part of the ‘hypomanic dividend’” (204).

The surrounding pages contain so-called evidence cherry-picked from writings of Churchill and others, presented by a researcher already convinced of his own theories, and reproduced whether they support his thesis or not. In the appendix, he states his belief that Lord Randolph Churchill died of syphilis, basing it on unenlightened and simplistic analysis.

Norman is so noncommittal in his investigation that it is often difficult for the reader to understand if any conclusion is meant to be reached. Some of his commentary is so outrageously off the mark that the reader cannot tell if the misunderstanding is deliberate, or if such blinkered analysis lies in wait after every delightful quotation. One is reminded of Churchill’s description, in Great Contemporaries, of how Arthur Balfour once contemplated a frenzied member of the House of Commons, regarding him “with no more and no less than the interest of a biologist examining through a microscope the contortions of a rare and provoked insect.” Churchill himself surely deserves better as a subject for study.

The most readable chapters are those which summarize biographical material

Ms. Chenoweth is a fishery biologist for the state of Alaska. Her “Churchill and the Theatre” appeared in Finest Hour 152.
Hi-Tech Britain in World War II

WILLIAM JOHN SHEPHERD


Here is a reasoned revisionist work on “war science” with a refined argument, well documented with extensive endnotes and bibliography, maps and tables. It amounts to a profound reinterpretation of the role and legacy of Great Britain and Churchill in the Second World War.

Edgerton, a British historian, develops iconoclastic themes from his previous works, challenging the conventional history of science and technology relative to war, economy, and society. He argues that Britain practiced “liberal militarism” (73) and was a “warfare state” before it was a “welfare state” (299). It gave priority to military capability, especially research and development in the arms industry, as well as on health care and social security.

The author disputes the familiar image of underdog Britain resisting German might. He argues instead that Britain was a rich and well-armed country, commanding a global economic system. It had the most mechanized military forces in the world, with a large empire and numerous allies fighting on several fronts, and was well supplied with food, arms and fuel. Led by the technological visionary Churchill, the British created and deployed a range of machines from mundane to bizarre to support the war effort. This included the (American) Liberty ships, radar, four-engine heavy bombers, floating harbors (Mulberries), and an underwater fuel pipeline (PLUTO).

Despite early defeats by less well-equipped enemies, the British vision of modern war was vindicated with a relatively cheap victory (shared with America), compared with other combatants on both sides. Misleading depictions of wartime Britain result from the convergence of several elements, Edgerton explains. The Blitz of 1940 continues to evoke popular cultural images of British distinctiveness from their European neighbors, while liberal academic histories overemphasize the notion of a people’s democracy triumphing and enacting a cradle-to-grave welfare state.

Edgerton also presents a revised view of Churchill as more than a Victorian adventurer and antediluvian romantic: He had, for example, a lifelong interest in science and inventions (86-88). He was even criticized in 1942 for an overemphasis on new gadgets (137). Churchill, the author argues, presided over what Edgerton calls the most “technically oriented” government Britain ever had (138). He has a favorable view of the controversial Frederick Lindemann (Viscount Cherwell) as a confidant and scientific adviser to Churchill (104); and of the strategic bombing guru Sir Arthur “Bomber” Harris, whom he calls, in the spirit of Gilbert and Sullivan, the “very model of a modern warrior” (290).

This is a well packaged critique of the way British history has heretofore been written and makes a convincing case for a fuller portrait of Churchill beyond the Hero of 1940, so often characterized as out of touch with his country’s development and progress.

All Churchill’s Fault

TERRY REARDON

Gallipoli, by Peter Hart. Oxford University Press, hardbound, illus., 534 pp. $34.95. Kindle $13.72. Member price $27.95.

The author, a historian at the Imperial War Museum, leaves the reader with no confusion over his stance in the first words of his preface: “Gallipoli. It was a lunacy that never could have succeeded….Churchill pushed his luck once too often and ended up justly >>
vilified for the dreadful consequences of his strategic incompetence. The setback would have ended the career of a lesser man; even he had to spend ten years in the political wilderness.”

What? Churchill was back in the Cabinet as Minister of Munitions within two years of Gallipoli. His true wilderness was in the 1930s, mainly the result of his opposition to the India Bill, not the Dardanelles campaign.

Hart’s book offers only a cursory examination of the reasons for the Dardanelles/Gallipoli campaign in 1915: to capture Constantinople, take pressure off the Russian army and encourage other Balkan states to join the Allies or at least not side with Germany. Churchill hoped it would open a back door to attack the Central Powers and save the troops on the Western Front who were “chewing barbed wire.”

Unlike the long drawn-out fighting in France and Flanders, the Gallipoli land campaign started on 25 April 1915, and after the decision to evacuate, it finished on 8 January 1916. Although short it was bloody, with Allied casualties of 141,000 and Turkish of 251,000.

Why did Gallipoli fail? Hart says the British War Council was bloated and inefficient, with Churchill and Kitchener having too much influence. While Churchill initially thought the Dardanelles straits could be forced by the Navy alone, when an army component was considered essential, Kitchener was less than forthcoming. Then there were the failures of the Navy, due mainly to floating mines, the unexpected quality of the Turkish troops, the unrealistic strategic planning, raw Allied troops expected to perform like veterans, and incompetent leaders, especially the Commander, General Sir Ian Hamilton.

The author’s main criticism is that the British War Council, including Churchill, forgot the sound principle of war, “concentrating on the main enemy on the main front.” Hart commends General Haig for later expressing “grim satisfaction” at the final evacuation, so “he could turn to full attention to the business of winning the war where he and the professional generals had always said it must be won, the Western Front.” Haig certainly turned his full attention to “chewing barbed wire” in France—for two more bloody years.

Churchill said of Hamilton’s successor, General Sir Charles Monro, who made the decision to evacuate: “He came, he saw, he capitulated.” Hart writes: “As an epigrammatic sneer it is clever; as a comment on Monro’s eminently sensible analysis it merely highlights Churchill’s lack of grip on strategic matters.” The nuances of language are lost on Mr. Hart; Churchill’s comment was a literary device, not a serious strategic analysis.

Comparing the Gallipoli landing with D-Day in the next war, Hart says Gallipoli “could have been cited as an example of how not to carry out combined operations on a hostile shore,” but “the planners of the D-Day landings had learnt in a far more organic manner which, although partly drawing on the negative lessons of 1915, was more firmly grounded in the positive experiences and lessons of the combined operations already undertaken during the Second World War.” Surely he does not mean Dieppe? (See this writer’s article on that subject, FH 154:32.)

Hart’s conclusion about D-Day is correct, but his contention that the Dardanelles/Gallipoli operation could not have succeeded with better planning and full cooperation of the Army and Navy is not proven. Clement Attlee said it was the only imaginative concept of World War I. Done right, could have shortened the war and saved lives.

I will spare the reader all the contradictory information favoring the validity of the plan (see, e.g., Geoffrey Wallin’s By Ships Alone, 1981). It is more appropriate to quote Churchill himself who, contrary to the implications of this book, took a solidly analytical approach to the problem in the second volume of his WW2 memoirs, Their Finest Hour: “I was ruined for the time being in 1915 over the Dardanelles, and a supreme enterprise was cast away, through my trying to carry out a major and cardinal operation of war from a subordinate position. Men are ill-advised to try such ventures. This lesson had sunk into my nature.”

The Appeasers Revisited

TED HUTCHINSON


Professor Lewis has produced an interesting study of five key figures heavily involved in British politics and appeasement in the 1930s, with an unusual format. Not a study of appeasement itself nor a comprehensive survey of the appeasers (there are no chapters for Baldwin or Chamberlain), the book considers “the actions and reputations” of the five title subjects. Simon, Hoare and Halifax as the author says, “have often been blamed for the failures of appeasement; Eden and Cooper, who resigned over appeasement policies, “have at least partially escaped such criticisms” (2).
Lewis uncovers little that is new about his subjects, but his method of producing a book via five mini-biographies is useful. First, it helps the reader understand just how similar the backgrounds, politics, and temperaments of the five really were; it is not surprising how little dissension there was in the Cabinet through most of the appeasement years. Second, it helps humanize the subjects. Many of the figures who led Britain then, Simon and Hoare particularly, were quite unsympathetic; neither seemed to have many real friends. Yet Lewis shows that all five men did their best to keep Britain safe while preserving world peace during a tumultuous decade.

As the appeasers themselves argued in their respective memoirs, appeasement was not just a policy choice but one brought about by a complex confluence of public opinion, party politics, global realpolitik and financial reality.

Lewis also suggests, and makes a convincing case, that there was little substantial difference between the arch-appeasers like Chamberlain, Simon, or Halifax and those now regarded as anti-appeasers, such as Eden. In fact, in some ways Eden comes out the worst of the five. On one hand he seemed to know better than his colleagues that appeasement would only end in tragedy; but he was too ineffectual, too ambitious, and too polite to make a difference. Lewis also argues that the differences between Eden and Chamberlain were so slight that when Eden did resign almost no one in or out of politics really understood why. It didn’t matter, because the combination of his resignation, youthful good looks and careful plotting would cause many to think of him as ultimate anti- appeaser next to Churchill.

Lewis makes a powerful argument that Alfred Duff Cooper deserves a stronger historical reputation. He was a man of principle, Lewis argues, in spite of his seeming “playboy” lifestyle; his resignation speech after Munich was both honorable and devastating. Its impact was only lessoned, Lewis argues, by Chamberlain’s control of the press. Cooper played a relatively minor role in the war, and today is not as well remembered as, say, Eden. But the author argues convincingly that Cooper was a man of honor.

Although Lewis presents a sympathetic and complex portrait of all five men, he does not let any of them off the hook. Of course, he writes, the appeasers had lots of cultural and political cover for their policies: no political party wanted to rearm, and there was little appetite for it among the public. But Lewis quotes both A.L. Rowse and G.M. Trevelyan when he asks: “What are political leaders for? Do we employ them to put across the lies they are such fools to believe? Not at all: the proper function of political leaders is to not be taken in, but to warn us. It was the duty of government to warn the country of its danger, and to lead, not follow” (144).

In spite of their many convincing and real excuses, Lewis writes, the appeasers did not lead: they followed. Readers of this journal know that perhaps the only man leading in the 1930s was Winston Churchill—and that is why he became Prime Minister when things became grim.

While not breaking new ground, Terrance Lewis’ book is engagingly written, and its unique format provides a helpful way of thinking about British appeasement in the 1930s. It is unfortunate that the high price will keep it out of the hands of most readers.

From Ireland to Vietnam

CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING

The Chamberlains, the Churchills and Ireland, 1874-1922, by Ian Chambers. Cambria Press, hardbound, illus., 346 pages, $114.95, Kindle $57.99.


Two scholarly studies published in the past six years explore the role of political family ties and the ever-intractable issue of Irish Home Rule. Given the long role of Ireland in British life (the Act of Union dated to 1801), and the role of the Churchills there, it is surprising that these books are only the second and third on the Churchills and the troubled isle. The first, Mary Bromage’s Churchill and Ireland (Notre Dame Press, 1964) offered a generally uncritical biographical survey.

Chambers makes use of extensive archival work to focus upon the changing role of two sets of famous fathers and their sons through a half-century of strife.

Interleaving the ideas and actions of Joseph and Austen Chamberlain, and then Randolph and Winston Churchill, his study centers on the dominant impact of fathers on sons amidst a changing political situation. After an introductory chapter >>

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comparing and contrasting the two “Tory Radical” fathers, two further chapters explore the efforts of Joseph Chamberlain twice to oppose Home Rule in order to tie Ireland more closely to the Empire. Lord Randolph Churchill also took a strongly Unionist hand (“Ulster will fight. Ulster will be Right”). Part of the problem was a lack of real Irish experience in either man over the period 1880-93, though Lord Randolph fancied himself, and was viewed as, an authority. Alas, Chambers writes, both men used a narrow class-defined glass to view the Irish, having little feel for the concerns of the masses.

Chambers’ final four chapters cover Winston and Austen, and how they helped to define the dominant, festering issue of Irish nationalism. Austen Chamberlain (half-brother of Neville) generally followed in his father’s footsteps. Never as fully focused on the Irish problem as the others in this volume, he did come around to a more conciliatory position by the time the Anglo-Irish Treaty was being negotiated in 1920-22.

Chambers makes a strong case that Winston Churchill’s own changing views on home rule (from strongly Unionist to somewhat reluctant acceptance) were largely driven by political expediency. In one sense, he “drifted with the times,” though to say Churchill ever “drifted” is in itself controversial! The author provides a clear and documented narrative on the events of 1920-22. He helps us to understand how the rigid Unionist views of the fathers could not prevent a move toward independence of the Irish Republic during the time of their sons.

Robert McNamara, who teaches international history at the University of Ulster, offers an important collection of ten original papers ranging over a longer period, half devoted to Winston Churchill and Ireland. Reflecting recent research and newly available archival material, they concentrate on the role of Ireland in British political life. This new, well-documented anthology provides the collective views of a new generation of Irish and American scholars.

The first half centers on the years before Winston, including the role of Ireland in Restoration England and John Churchill’s 1690 Irish campaign. Later chapters cover the 1660s-1740s and connections between the Irish Hookes family and the Churchills as reflected in letters between them; and the role of Lord Randolph in Irish affairs in 1877-85 and 1886-93.

The Winston section begins with a review of his relationship with Ulster’s Unionists from the end of World War I to 1925; the difficult but changing interaction between WSC and Eamon de Valera, including the British attempts to gain access to Irish ports in World War II; and a fascinating essay by the editor on Churchill’s historical writing about Ireland, noting what he said and what he left out. The penultimate chapter, by Finest Hour’s Michael McMenamin, surveys Irish-American Bourke Cockran’s mentoring role early in Churchill’s life. The final chapter is on the relationship between Churchill and the Irish-born Brendan Bracken.

Unfortunately, given the good material offered, the book was not well proofread. The lower-case “I” is used interchangeably with the numeral 1 in dates, Macaulay’s name is sometimes misspelled, and so on. Although My Early Life is listed in the bibliography with an asterisk indicating that it has significant material on Ireland, there is barely a mention of WSC’s first years in Ireland and no discussion of their significance in his autobiography.

Collectively, both of these expensive books shine much light into interesting corners of the Churchill story. Even in a new century, despite our sense of the background, we may forget how the Irish debate dominated British politics for so long. Chambers and McNamara bring that fact into vivid and readable focus. ©

Other People’s Empires


Widely traveled though he was, Churchill never reached Southeast Asia. But the region surely troubled him, given the 1941-42 losses to Japan of Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore and Burma. Still, those colonies were parts of the British Empire. Why then two new books about Churchill and a part of Southeast Asia that was never British?

On closer inspection they are really studies of the growing importance of the “Special Relationship” between Britain and the United States—and why French colonies mattered little if they got in the way of that relationship. While Churchill resisted American interference in the British Empire, colonies belonging to others could, if need be, give way to U.S. demands for their independence. Vietnam is the case in point here.
Smith focuses on Churchill’s wartime administration and his relationship with Roosevelt, while Nong covers Churchill’s second (technically third) premiership of 1951-55, and his and Eden’s interactions with Truman and Eisenhower. Through the two Churchill premierships, the United States became and remained the dominant military and economic partner. Maintaining the special relationship with a powerful America became one of Churchill’s aims, coloring his views in foreign policy, on occasion to Eden’s despair. Eden’s role grew in the 1950s, culminating when he followed Churchill for a short and disastrous term as prime minister.

Smith, a history professor at Indiana’s Huntington University, argues that Churchill had little concern for the shape of the postwar world despite his micro-management of British participation in World War II. Churchill readily admitted not keeping up with Indochina issues and concerns—he lacked the time, let alone the interest. Eden’s Foreign Office was more concerned and consistent, for they wanted to retain France as a major ally and power, and colonies were still seen as a part of such a role. That the British view mattered became clear in September 1945, when Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam’s independence just as British troops entered the country to take the Japanese surrender. Trying to extricate themselves from a developing civil war, the British suffered nearly a thousand casualties—the Vietnamese and French even more. It was the opening salvo for decades of war.

Nong, a senior research fellow at an economics institute in Hanoi, bases his study of postwar developments on his Cambridge Ph.D dissertation. As a Vietnamese, he has drawn on many domestic sources there as well as British archives. His book is as much a study of the internal policymaking operations of the Foreign Office as a study of Churchill and Eden.

The economically pinched British tried to maintain their colonies in Burma and Malaya in the face of growing nationalism. The deepening French-Vietnamese battle for power was complex and potentially dangerous with the triumph of Communism in China in 1949, the Korean War of 1950-53, and Cold War tensions. The fall of the French base at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 effectively led to the 1955 Geneva agreements to divide Vietnam. Nong provides good coverage of the large cast of characters in this story. An appendix offers a dozen maps, largely drawn from contemporary Foreign Office documents. Documentation includes some 105 pages of often very detailed footnotes and a thirty-page bibliography that includes many Vietnamese sources.

Taken together, these two new studies provide a valuable case study of how a region on the fringe of Churchill’s interest grew to such importance during the Cold War. Plumb ing archives and documenting their tracks, the two authors fill an obscure gap in the Churchill story.

Cheap, Cheerful, Cheerless

MICHAEL RICHARDS


Latest in a long line of souvenir books, likely to be found in gift shops at Chartwell, Blenheim or the Churchill Museum, Rodney Legg’s effort is as good as most in tracing Churchill career in a book you can digest in half an hour.

Legg has done good research, which helps him avoid the traditional pitfalls (Lord Randolph’s alleged syphilis, WSC’s supposed love of war and intransigence over India, and so on.) He also writes accurate captions, which you don’t always get in souvenir books, except for one mistaken Gertrude Bell for Clementine in the 1921 camels-and-pyramids photo. He picks out immortal or humorous Churchill quotes in sidebars, and gets most of them right. (Exception: “Bodyguard of lies” becomes “escort of lies”—the latter was Alanbrooke’s comment to Stalin, when he attempted to quote what Churchill had said. No biggie.) Nevertheless, Legg does say that the Dardanelles concept was Kitchener’s (it wasn’t); and that the infamous Sutherland portrait was destroyed because Clementine hated it (WSC did). I wish he would not resort to calling the man “Winston,” a device some Churchill writers use to assure the reader how chummy they are with their subject. But, all in all, there are worse ways to spend a fiver.


Speaking of worse ways to spend a fiver (or more), we read these so you don’t have to. Paperback published in 2009 and 2010 respectively, they >>
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appear to be one and the same. Indeed, a short way into American Idol (which has nothing to do with the popular TV show and is apparently deployed to sell books in America), “Spencer-Lewis” publishes an office memo of his (complete with expletives), forgetting to omit his real name, that of our first author (if this really is his name).

Apparently self-published, the books are ostensibly self-help guides for career professionals. They contain stunningly obvious observations about Churchill’s life interspersed with stories from the author’s life as a businessman. The author has read The Second World War, but otherwise does not seem to know much about Churchill. Many of his statements are either laughably silly or just wrong. The comparisons he draws between Churchill’s leadership and his own experiences as a salesmen are so guffaw-inducing that they almost seem intentionally humorous. WSC is treated as a familiar (“Winston”), as is the President of the United States, whose name is spelled “Barrack.” The rampant typos suggest the absence of an editor.

Paraphrasing Churchill, I like the martial and commanding air with which the author treats apostrophes…he stands no nonsense from them. Thus the possessive “its” becomes “it’s” and vice-versa, the possessive “company’s” becomes “companies,” and so on.

There is no way to sugar-coat the fact that these are simply the kind of books that beg the question: why? There is some good in everything, and the author does convey, however lamely, an appreciation for Churchill’s scintillating service memos taken from the back of WSC’s six volumes—which are reprinted wholesale, no doubt without permission. The diet of truly atrocious English is relieved only by the truly splendid English of Winston Churchill. But that is no reason to spend $15, which after all would buy a very high-class hamburger.

Winston Churchill: Oxfordshire Hussars, edited by Stanley C. Jenkins. Lightmoor Press, softbound, illus., 64 pages, £5.50 from Amazon UK.

This booklet contains only three or four pages of text outlining Churchill’s service with the QOOH, but there are a good number of interesting photographs, in particular a stunning shot of him that we have never before seen, which is so singular that we contemplate using it on an upcoming cover of Finest Hour—yes, in black and white, just like our two covers featuring the photographs of Yousuf Karsh (FH94, 154). It will be new to nearly everyone.

Given the small scope of this publication, it could not possibly provide a comprehensive look at Churchill as part of the Queen’s Own Oxfordshire Hussars. For a more comprehensive study of his part-time service, readers would do better to read Douglas Russell’s excellent book, Winston Churchill—Soldier.

From Hussar to Painter

PAUL H. COURTEENAY

Winston Churchill: Oxfordshire Hussars, edited by Stanley C. Jenkins. Lightmoor Press, softbound, illus., 64 pages, £5.50 from Amazon UK.

This slim brochure was published in 2009 to accompany an exhibition at Woodstock (near Blenheim) about Winston Churchill’s service as a part-time soldier. But it is rather more than that, covering all the well-known features of his life, and especially the history of the Queen’s Own Oxfordshire Hussars, so it is therefore inevitably inadequate.

The QOOH was a Yeomanry cavalry regiment whose members undertook military training on evenings, weekends and an annual camp, and were available for national emergencies, as evidenced by their operational service during both world wars. In 1908 the QOOH became part of the newly designated Territorial Force (TF) renamed the Territorial Army (TA) in 1920. The regiment had a number of sub-units around Oxfordshire and Churchill began his service as second-in-command of the squadron at Woodstock, but was soon promoted to the rank of major and took command of the squadron at Henley-on-Thames.

After World War I the QOOH was converted from the cavalry to the artillery role; its name lives on today as a squadron of the Royal Corps of Signals (TA). Churchill had been appointed Honorary Colonel of the QOOH in 1951, and at his State funeral in 1965 a detachment of the regiment had a prominent place in the procession.

This booklet contains only three or four pages of text outlining Churchill’s service with the QOOH, but there are a good number of interesting photographs, in particular a stunning shot of him that we have never before seen, which is so singular that we contemplate using it on an upcoming cover of Finest Hour—yes, in black and white, just like our two covers featuring the photographs of Yousuf Karsh (FH94, 154). It will be new to nearly everyone.

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This brochure was published to coincide with an unusual exhibition in January 2012 in London’s Leighton House. The title immediately suggests that Winston Churchill must be involved, and a delightful tale unfolds on how he was able to foster the talents of a younger man.
Churchill first went to Marrakech in 1935 and immediately knew that this would be the perfect place for numberless opportunities for painting; he returned there many times.

As Celia Sandys writes in her informative introduction, no eminent foreign politician could arrive in Marrakech without receiving an invitation from the local Pasha, the tribal elder Thami El Glaoui. Churchill and the Glaoui quickly became friends, and they always spent time together during later visits.

The Glaoui’s son, Hassan, was an aspiring artist, but his father was not keen on an artistic career for one aspiring artist, but his father was not expected to follow a more traditional path. In those days it was considered a futility, not to say a dishonour, to be a painter when you belonged to the proud tribe of the Glaoua, known and considered as a desert island text for any marooned Churchillian, with only a set of WSC’s books to pass the time.

The paintings displayed at the Marrakech in 1943, the Glaoui showed him some of Hassan’s sketches. A good judge of talent, Churchill was impressed, and dissolved Hassan’s father’s opposition and advised him that his son should certainly be sent to Paris, to study art seriously—which he eventually did. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and then worked in Paris (in all, a total of fifteen years).

The paintings displayed at the London exhibition were a combination of two contrasting styles. Churchill’s well-known preference for bright colours and bold depictions are very different from Hassan El Glaoui’s more subtle skills, which display movement and colour in a space which is undefined and undated: his paintings are therefore serenely eternal. The difference between the two men has been well defined as that between a professional artist and a weekend painter.

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The Special Relationship Reflects What Allies Really Are

Sir Max Hastings

Churchill from the earliest days of the war understood that only American assistance could enable Britain to survive, only American belligerence could make possible the defeat of Nazism. He displayed supreme wisdom in his grasp of the need to clasp Roosevelt’s people in the closest possible embrace, when many of the British people high and low spurned them.

Lord Halifax, whom Churchill dispatched to become Britain’s Washington ambassador in December 1940, once said: “I have never liked Americans, except odd ones. In the mass I have always found them dreadful.” Lord Linlithgow, as Viceroy of India, wrote to commiserate with Halifax on his posting: “the heavy labour of toadying to your pack of pole-squatting parvenus! What a country, and what savages those who inhabit it!”

As for U.S. attitudes to the British, the historian Sir Michael Howard, in 1941 an Oxford student, has written: “It is never very easy for the British to understand that a very large number of Americans, if they think about us at all, do so with various degrees of dislike and contempt….In the 1940s the Americans had some reason to regard the British as a lot of toffee-nosed bastards who oppressed half the world and

had a sinister talent for getting other people to do their fighting for them.”

A Gallup poll in July 1942 invited Americans to say which nation they thought was trying hardest to win the war. A loyal 37% answered the U.S.; 30% named Russia, 14% China and 13% offered no opinion. Just 6% identified the British as most convincing tryers.

In making a broad judgement about Anglo-American relations, it seems useful to reflect a little about just what allies are. It is unheard-of in history for two sovereign nations to achieve concord across the whole range of policy. Countries become allies because they discover one, and occasionally a few more, objectives in common. Almost always, this includes a shared enemy. Marlborough in the 18th century led British and Dutch forces against the French, as Wellington led British, Spanish and Portuguese troops a hundred years later. Such relationships have always been highly fractious.

No other statesman could have conducted British policy towards the U.S. with such consummate skill as Churchill, nor have achieved such personal influence upon the American people. This persisted until 1944, when it declined precipitously, to revive only when the onset of the Cold War caused many Americans to hail Churchill as a prophet.

It was a perverse feature of the war that while the British people showed huge admiration for Russian achievements, they seldom displayed the same generosity towards Americans. A Home Intelligence report of 14 January 1943 declared: “At the time of Pearl Harbor, public interest in the U.S. received a momentary stimulus which soon declined and has (in marked contrast to the attitude to Russia and things Russian) remained low ever since.” In February 1943 a Londoner reported meeting a vegetable seller in Covent Garden who said, “Good news today, sir?” He replied, “Have the Russians done well?” “No,” said the vegetable man, “the Americans have got the knock.” This, asserted the diarist, Violet Bonham-Carter, represented “the universal reaction” to news of the reverse which had befallen Eisenhower’s army at Kasserine Pass.

In their hearts most Britons knew that their country could accomplish nothing alone, that only American resources had averted Hitler’s ultimate triumph. But it was sometimes hard to feel gratitude, amid British consciousness that the struggle was reducing their own nation to penury, while America grew relentlessly in wealth and might. If many upper-crust Britons hoped that the Russians and Germans would destroy each other in the course of the war, many Americans seemed well pleased by the prospect of the British Empire becoming a casualty of victory.

The extravagant rhetoric of Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill about the Grand Alliance causes some historians even to this day wildly to overstate the harmony and intimacy of their personal relations. They are sometimes described as friends. This seems mistaken: they created a friendship of State, something quite different.

One reason Stalin became the most successful warlord of World War II was that he understood with icy clarity something that often eluded the Anglo-Americans. The three allied powers became conjoined to defeat a common enemy, but this in no way altered the fact that on almost everything else, their purposes were at odds. This applied also, if in lesser degree, between Britain and the United States.

In 1940-41, before America became a belligerent, Washington insisted on payment of cash on the nail for every ton of arms and supplies shipped across the Atlantic, until the British had exhausted their entire gold holdings and foreign investment portfolio, some of which had to be sold to U.S. companies at fire sale prices. Churchill was appalled by this, and wrote to Roosevelt on 7 December 1940, saying that if the cash drain continued, his nation would find itself in a position in which “after the victory was won with our blood and sweat, and civilization saved and the time gained for the U.S. to be fully armed against all eventualities, we should stand stripped to the bone. Such a course would not be in the moral or economic interests of either of our countries.”

Roosevelt never responded to this point, and his evasion seems highly significant. The President identified a powerful American >>
interest in Britain’s continued resistance—and
displayed extraordinary energy and imagination
to make public and congressional opinion recognize this—but not in Britain’s postwar solvency.
American policy throughout the war emphasized the importance of strengthening the U.S. post-
war competitive trading position vis-à-vis its ally. Indeed the terms of Lend-Lease imposed harsh
constraints on, for instance, British civil aviation. The U.S. was unflinching in shaping policy to do
as little as possible to assist the preservation of the British Empire, a purpose which it deplored,
with special emphasis on India. Growing awareness of this caused Churchill much dismay,
though his belief never wavered that fostering the American alliance was a core purpose to which all
else must be subordinated.

By 1944-45 the British, and Churchill in particular, had become privately angry and bitter
at what they perceived as intolerably overbearing American behavior towards themselves. I will
quote just one example of just how tough Washington could be.

In December 1944, there was hunger
verging upon starvation in Italy and indeed all
Europe. A British embassy official in Washington
visited Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy
to protest against the policy of monopolizing pre-
cious shipping to transport fantastically extra-
gant quantities of supplies to American forces
overseas, while liberated civilians were in desper-
ate straits. “In order to win the war,” the British
visitor demanded of McCloy, “were we not im-
perilling the political and social fabric of Euro-
pean civilization on which the future peace of the
world depends?”

His subsequent memo to the Foreign Office records: “This drew from Mr. McCloy the
immediate rejoinder that it was a British interest to remember that, as a result of the complete
change in the economic and financial position of the British Commonwealth which the war had
brought about, we, in the U.K., depended at least as much upon the U.S. as we did upon Eu-
rope. Was it wise to risk losing the support of the U.S. in seeking the support of Western Europe?
This was what was involved.”

The shocked British official persisted in
pressing the case for feeding Europe’s civilians. McCloy, too, stuck to his guns. He asserted that
it would be fatal for Britain “to argue that the war in the Pacific should be retarded in order
that the civilian population of Europe should be fed.” The Foreign Office in London professed
acute dismay on reading the record of this meet-
ing. But British impotence in the face of Ameri-
can dominance remained inescapable.

That is only one example of the sort of
exchanges which took place between the two al-
lied capitals in the latter part of the war, suppos-
edly a halcyon era of Anglo-American relations.
The Americans were in the driving seat. They
knew it, and were determined to impose their
will. Brigadier Vivian Dykes of the British Mili-
tary Mission in Washington wrote home: “We
simply hold no cards at all, but London expects
us to work miracles. It is a hard life.”
Curiously
enough, at
that time the
U.S. adopted
a more in-
dulgent atti-
date to the
third party
in the al-
liance, the
Soviet
Union. Until his death, Roosevelt harboured delusions about the working relationship that might be possible with Stalin, such as Churchill had abandoned years earlier.

Now, my point in all the above is emphatically not to suggest that the wartime Anglo-American relationship was a sham or a failure. On the contrary, at an operational level it proved the most successful military alliance in history. Professor Harry Nicholas has written that what was attained was “a much higher degree of cooperation and unforced fusion than had ever before existed between two sovereign states.” It is merely that we are foolish to idealise it, to fail to recognise that it rested, and always will, not upon sentiment but upon perceptions of respective national interest. It represented a partnership committed to a certain purpose—in the 1940s, defeat of the Axis—rather than a marriage of minds between peoples or governments, such as never could and never can be attainable. One of the commonest mistakes made by some British people, including sometimes their prime ministers, in conducting relations with Americans, is to suppose that our two peoples are alike. We indeed share many values and beliefs, but our cultures are nonetheless quite dissimilar.

The phrase “Special Relationship” always seems a rather pathetic British conceit, which American presidents indulge as a courtesy, knowing that some of our politicians attribute to it totemic significance. It implies that we hope, or even expect, to receive breaks from Washington which other nations do not. Yet only in very rare cases does anglophilia influence American behaviour. To say this does not, I hope and trust, suggest British chippiness, but rather a degree of realism which seems indispensable to historians of the Second World War in the 21st century.

Our differences have not prevented us from achieving a remarkable amount together. With the coming of the Cold War after 1945, the United States and Britain became the foremost players in the NATO alliance—a huge success in shielding Western Europe against the Soviet Union. Close military and intelligence collaboration was superbly sustained through more than forty years, and the latter especially continues to the present day. But meanwhile, on many other bilateral issues tensions and differences persisted between Washington and London, as they must. What matters, to justify the continuance of this like any other alliance, is to identify a relatively narrow range of big things about which the two countries can agree, acknowledging that on many others, they will not. This seems as true now as it was in 1945.
President Obama in May 2011 said a close Anglo-American relation “doesn’t just have to do with our shared history, our shared heritage, our ties of language and culture, or even the strong partnership between our governments. Our relationship is special because of the values and beliefs that have united our people through the ages.”

It would seem to the joy of some and the chagrin of others, that the Anglo-American Special Relationship has endured into the 21st century. But there are sceptics who see such statements as empty sentimental rhetoric and are inclined to enquire: where’s the beef? Well, currently, the USA and the UK enjoy the world’s largest bilateral investment relationship. Their trade in goods and services amounts to around £120 billion a year; they share the world’s largest venture capital markets; approximately one million Americans work for British companies in the USA; and approximately one million Britons work for American companies in the UK. Over seven million people cross the Atlantic each year between Britain and the USA and of those travellers about 33,000 of them are Americans coming to study in Britain and 9000 Britons going to study in the USA. Further examples of these complicated relationships were cited in these pages by former U.S. Ambassador to Britain Raymond Seitz.2

Anglo-American intelligence and nuclear cooperation is closer than between any other two countries and Britain has supplied military contingents second only to the USA in the First and Second Gulf Wars and in Afghanistan.3 The institutions of global governance largely remain those fashioned by Britain and America in the aftermath of World War II. English remains the lingua franca of international business and Anglo-American culture flows around the globe more freely now than at any time in the past. For some, the UK and USA even form the core of an emergent “network civilisation,” the Anglosphere.

Numerous studies have enquired into the origins, nature and even existence of all this, and there is a Manichean divide between the schools of sentiment and interest. The former see shared values, culture, democratic principles, and kinship leading on to habits of cooperation about how to deal with international issues. The latter see shared and overlapping national interests forming a utility or functional relationship that will be “special” only while common interests abide and each side can be of importance to the other.

ALAN P. DOBSON AND STEVE MARSH

Drs. Dobson (St. Andrews University) and Marsh (Cardiff University) are co-authors of U.S. Foreign Policy since 1945. Dr. Dobson is writing a book about Roosevelt and the development of U.S. civil aviation; Dr. Marsh’s specialties are Anglo-American relations and EU foreign and security policy.
Churchill and Roosevelt met briefly in London in 1918 but not until Roosevelt’s presidency did relations develop between them, when Churchill sent him a copy of his biography of Marlborough “With earnest best wishes for the success of the greatest crusade of modern times.” Almost exactly six years later, with war in Europe and Churchill again First Lord of the Admiralty, Roosevelt wrote a letter of warm encouragement, which among other things mentioned that he too had held an important naval position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Already, then, there was a sense of overlapping experience, a continuity they shared in confronting the threat from Germany. That threat provided the grounds for common national interests, which married with shared sentiment regarding common cultural inheritances and political values—held by many of their fellow nationals—to produce the beginnings of the modern Special Relationship.

Isolationist public opinion and its Neutrality Laws required the USA to remain aloof from the crisis in Europe, but in September 1940, after the narrow margin of victory in the Battle of Britain, Roosevelt improvised aid to Britain with the Destroyers for Bases agreement. From Britain’s perspective the practical importance of the destroyers, which were elderly and in need of refitting, was not great, but the deal was of huge symbolic importance. This was the opening step on the path to dependency, with the USA and the UK locked together in an evolving Special Relationship based on sentiment and interest from which, it is argued, they have never since radically departed.

Even before Pearl Harbor President Roosevelt promised to lend and lease Britain supplies and consummated that with the master Lend-Lease Bill in early 1941. In August that year Roosevelt and Churchill met off Newfoundland and sketched out a liberal and democratic future for the world in the Atlantic Charter. They later jested about the fact that it was not signed and they had no copies of it, but it was an iconic statement of general principles that was later to inform much of postwar planning. With American entry into the war came the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Combined Supply Boards, intelligence and technology sharing (including production of the atomic bomb), planning for what became the United Nations, and a new economic world order, and a mass mingling of the two nations as hundreds of thousands of GIs poured into Britain in preparation for D-Day. After it was all over, thousands of British war brides accompanied their American husbands back to the USA.

Amidst all this controversy it is fascinating to find a constant that all sides can agree upon: the seminal importance of Winston Churchill. Churchill was half American, his life a boy’s own adventure: heroics in the Boer War, First Lord of the Admiralty in the First World War, Prime Minister and triumphant war leader in the Second World War, peacetime premier in 1951-55. Along the way he was a noted journalist, historian, accomplished painter and builder of brick walls; also a political turn-coat, an enthusiastic imperialist, an ardent drinker and cigar smoker, and an occasional if not serious depressive (see page 28).

His self-confidence is legendary. In the mid-1950s when his grandson Nicholas Soames, then about six years old, had the temerity to enter his grandfather’s study at Chartwell, impugningly asking if granddad were the greatest man in the world, without any hesitation Churchill replied: “Yes—now bugger off.”

But what concerns us here is what he publicly dubbed, in his 1946 Fulton, Missouri Iron Curtain speech, the Anglo-American Special Relationship. Churchill was present at its creation. He gave Anglo-American relations distinctiveness in the sentiment of “fraternal association.” He had a vision of a Special Relationship that married interest with sentiment in an inextricable bond: “If the population of the English-speaking Commonwealt hs be added to that of the United States with all that such cooperation implies in the air, on the sea, all over the globe and in science and in industry, and in moral force, there will be...an overwhelming assurance of security.” How did Churchill fashion Anglo-American relations to his vision? And to what success?
The Relationship Matured...

Former Prime Minister James Callaghan believed that “the Second World War was the apogee of the Special Relationship.” These were the days, as President Obama noted in May 2011, when “Roosevelt and Churchill could sit in a room and solve the world’s problems over a glass of brandy.” Concomitantly, though, the war years accelerated a significant structural change in UK-USA relations; the latter assumed super-power status and the former slipped progressively to middle-power status. British relative decline has often been seen as undermining the “specialness” in Anglo-American relations; for Churchill it was certainly contrary to his vision of a family partnership of equals.

Resuming the British helm in 1951, Churchill immediately sought opportunity to demonstrate to the world that he was determined to restore Anglo-American relations and British prestige, which he felt the Attlee government had let slip. He wanted to resurrect intimate Anglo-American relations with President Truman, and to secure overt demonstrations of Britain’s special status with Washington, which would buttress British prestige and ease challenges to British power in the Developing World. No more in 1951 than during the war was Churchill willing to preside over what he saw as the unnecessary diminishing of British power and influence. He got his opportunity in January 1952 when he went to Washington for a summit meeting with Truman.

That meeting reveals much about Churchill’s ambitions and the extent to which he was able to achieve them. Part of his aim was to recreate the public impression of Anglo-American closeness and demonstrate Britain’s determination to pull its own weight. In this, facilitated by American desire for improved relations, he was quite successful, and returned home in a good mood.

Churchill made to American officials what he called “the UK’s form of a declaration of independence”: the British government would take the necessary measures, and its people would accept the sacrifices, to deal with their internal problems. The Truman administration obligingly covered the reality of British economic dependence on the United States by dressing up assistance as a raw material exchange. They also afforded Churchill the privilege for the third time of addressing a joint session of Congress, which he used to promote the health and well-being of Anglo-American relations. The Foreign Office deemed the speech “a personal triumph” and British Ambassador Franks later reported from Washington that the summit had “reaffirmed and strengthened” the Special Relationship with “closer partnership and renewed personal trust.”

Yet, while the Americans admired and even feared Churchill—his private secretary Jock Colville recalled that “the White House and the State Department clutched their life-belts and prepared to repel boarders”—there were limits to their indulgence and what they would accept. They rebuffed Churchill’s penchant for free-ranging talks by insisting on an agreed summit agenda and refused to recreate formal structures of Anglo-American cooperation akin to the Combined Boards of World War II. This reflected a fundamental difference over the presentation of the special relationship. As Secretary of State Dean Acheson later recalled, “The British want to insist that there should be an exclusive UK-USA arrangement; that we do it together. We are always insisting that we can’t do that.”

In Washington Churchill aimed also to dispel the doldrums into which he felt many British officials had slipped, and to emphasise that Anglo-American relations depended on mutual consideration. Britain was not to be taken for granted. Negotiations over naval commands offer insights into his concerns. The Attlee government had accepted a unified command in the Atlantic with an American Supreme Allied Commander (SACLANT), which Churchill vociferously opposed. He deemed the arrangements operationally unsound and a grave threat to British prestige and Britain’s privileged place in the naval defence of the West.

Churchill privately acknowledged his weakened hand on account of the widening asymmetry in Anglo-American relations and that he might ultimately have to concede SACLANT to the Americans. Nevertheless, aboard the Queen Mary bound for America, he insisted British officials prepare arguments against this, advocating instead a de facto Anglo-American naval condominium in the Atlantic that would secure British security interests and strengthen the Special Relationship. The Americans predictably balked but Churchill held out to the last, even against the expert counsel of his own officials.

His brinkmanship paid dividends. In return for finally conceding SACLANT, he secured operational changes, involving the British Home Station, and flexibility of command in the eastern Atlantic that ensured British control over vital aspects of British security. The Americans were pushed into recognising a de facto naval Special Relationship by acknowledg-
Endnotes


10. Interview with Lord Callaghan, conducted by Dobson, House of Commons, 26 November 1987.

11. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the President to Parliament in London, United Kingdom, 25 May 2011.


14. FRUS 1952-54, vol. 6, part 1, 747; U.S. Delegation minutes of the first formal meeting of President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill at the White House, 7 January 1952.


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

**LEVEL 1**

1. Of all her Prime Ministers, whom has Queen Elizabeth II found the most amusing? (P)

2. Who described WSC on his 80th birthday in a broadcast as "The most considerable man to walk the stage of history in our time"? (C)

3. Who were the "Big Three" during the Second World War? (W)

4. Which were Churchill's first three foreign trips after becoming Prime Minister in October 1951? (S)

5. What did Churchill describe as the "most frightful misfortune since the collapse of the Roman Empire before the Barbarians"? (W)

6. In which famous speech did Winston Churchill say, "There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe"? (W)

**LEVEL 2**

13. To whom did Churchill write in July 1904: "I like to think that under different skies and different lands we are fighting in one long line of battle for a common cause"? (C)

14. On which occasion did Churchill memorably end a speech: "Lift up your hearts. All will come right. Out of the depths of sorrow and sacrifice will be born again the glory of mankind." (S)

15. Which famous Churchill essay was published in the 1931 book If It Had Happened Otherwise? (L)

16. Churchill's first published book, The Story of the Malakand Field Force, was based on his articles for which newspaper? (L)

17. Whom did Churchill describe in The World Crisis: "His weapon logic; his mood opportunist. His sympathies cold and wide as the Arctic Ocean; his hatreds tight as the hangman's noose. His purpose to save the world: his method to blow it up"? (C)

18. Which song did the Hotel de Paris orchestra in Monte Carlo always play whenever Churchill dined there after World War II? (P)

**LEVEL 3**

7. In which joint declaration did Roosevelt and Churchill lay out the first principles of the United Nations? (S)

8. Whom did Winston and Randolph Churchill sometimes refer to as 'Barney'? (P)

9. What was Churchill referring to when he wrote in 1929: "The Constitution of the United States, the God of Israel, and the Pope—an august combination—protect, with the triple sanctions of Washington, Jerusalem and Rome, this inspiring scene"? (M)

10. During which years was WSC officially the Father of the House of Commons? (P)

11. Which novel did the American Winston Churchill write in 1899, the year he was contacted by the English Winston Churchill? (L)

12. Whom did Churchill sometimes refer to as "Dilly-Dally"? (M)

**LEVEL 4**

1. Of all her Prime Ministers, whom has Queen Elizabeth II found the most amusing? (P)

2. Who described WSC on his 80th birthday in a broadcast as "The most considerable man to walk the stage of history in our time"? (C)

3. Who were the "Big Three" during the Second World War? (W)

4. Which were Churchill's first three foreign trips after becoming Prime Minister in October 1951? (S)

**ANSWERS**


23. While he was at the Admiralty 1939-40 Churchill would sometimes command the nearest secretory to "Fetch the Seal from his ice-floe." Who or what was "the Seal"? (C)

24. On 2 January 1906 the young Winston said: "What we might have given with courage and distinction...In the hour of our strength, will be jerked and twisted from our hands—without grace of any kind—not perhaps without humiliation..." What was Churchill referring to? (S)
Despatch Box...from page 4

I had blonde hair matching my father’s, and mother had the picture on display for many years. I have over the years lost the picture, and cannot find it online, but I am always proud to have been at least “jiggled” by Sir Winston Churchill.

Churchill’s interests away from the public were vast, and his depressions were deep; he needed love from those near him and from his public.

GORDON MAYS BAIRD, LONDON

The Royal Tournament

Gavin Freeman of Shell UK writes: “I recently purchased a signed program from the 1948 Royal Tournament at Olympia (Churchill, Attlee, Newall, Montgomery, Slim, Tedder, etc.). I was wondering if you would have any references to Churchill being at this event, and better yet some photos.”

Editor’s response: The Royal Tournament was the world’s largest military tattoo and pageant, held by the British Armed Forces from 1880 to 1999. It was popular between the wars; Churchill attended several times and spoke at the 1920 event. The 1948 R.T. was the first since World War II and therefore a major event, and would be likely attended by these luminaries, but I could not confirm that Churchill was there. If you are trying to pin down his attending, the Churchill Archives Centre has his daily appointment cards for this period and may be of help.

Apropos nothing at all is this amusing note by Colin Thornton-Kemsley, who was important mainly for trying to get Churchill thrown out as MP for Epping as punishment for Churchill’s opposition to appeasement. (Kemsley later apologized, and was forgiven by a magnanimous Churchill):

“Bing” Tremlett, a Horse Gunner who played cricket for the Army and in 1942-44 was the Major General in charge of London’s Anti-Aircraft defenses, heard a regimental sergeant-major addresses his men after a Royal Tournament performance:

“Do you know who was in the Royal Box today? It was ’er gracious Majesty Queen Mary, whose ’usband the King is lying sick at Buckin’am Palace. When she gets ’ome the King will say to ’er: ‘Mary, ’ow did my Royal Marines do? An’ Queen Mary, she’ll say, ‘George, they was ruddy awful”—an’ so you was!”

Datelines...from page 10

there is no record in the Churchill Archives Centre of even one bottle of the brandy being sent to Churchill—although he did compliment Stalin on an Armenian brandy served at Yalta.

Again we are indebted to archivist Lynsey Darby, who writes:

“I’ve looked at a number of files in the Churchill Papers, and at Cita Stelzer’s book, Dinner with Churchill, and it seems as though the evidence points towards Churchill enjoying a range of different (but always high-quality) brandies, not just Armenian cognac. There is one anecdote quoted in Mrs. Stelzer’s book about Churchill picking up a bottle of Armenian cognac during a dinner given by Stalin in 1942. Otherwise, the other brandies men-

Editor’s Notes...from page 12

A suitable valedictory to Churchill was written by Noël Coward, who dined with him and two lady friends, Juliet Duff and Venetia Montague, six days before V-E Day:

“The Prime Minister was at his most benign, and suddenly, towards the end of dinner, looking across the table at the man who had carried England through her dark years, I felt an upsurge of gratitude that melted into hero worship. This was a profoundly significant moment in the history of our country; the long, long hoped-for victory was so very near, and the fact that we were in the presence of the man who had contributed so much foresight, courage and genius to winning it struck Juliet and Venetia at the same instance that it struck me.

“Emotion submerged us and without exchanging a word, as simultaneously as though we had carefully rehearsed it, the three of us rose to our feet and drank Mr. Churchill’s health.”

(Quotations on page 12 are from the 40th anniversary edition, Finest Hour 140, Autumn 2008.)
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