Churchill's Adventures

Randolph Churchill | Theresa May | Stephen Hawking
Churchill on Foot at Witbank | On Safari in Kenya
On the Pitch in England | A Christmas in Athens
The International Churchill Society

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The International Churchill Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historic legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. For the benefit of scholars, students, and Churchillians, the Society's activities, publications, and programs are conducted through the joint resources of the National Churchill Library & Center at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and the National Churchill Museum at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

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**On the Cover**

Detail from the Churchill coat of arms
Credit: Meghan Pyle
Churchill’s Adventures

Fifty years but only 180 issues of a quarterly magazine? The numbers do not appear to compute. This discrepancy, along with the entire history of the International Churchill Society, is explained by myself in the lead article of this our fiftieth anniversary issue. Churchill wrote that “the veils of the future are lifted one by one, and mortals must act from day to day.” This appositely describes the unexpected evolution of a tiny group of enthusiasts into the global organization to which you belong if you are reading these words.

Churchill led a life of adventure, and so “Churchill’s Adventures” is a suitable theme for our half-century milestone. Publishing a letter to the editor of a school newspaper may not appear to be adventurous, but it must be remembered that writing became Churchill’s primary source of income. Setting out on a career that Churchill sensed would be important to him was the beginning of a life-long adventure, as Fred Glueckstein shows.

Glueckstein has done double duty for this issue by also telling the story of Churchill’s 1908 tour of East Africa that resulted in the publication of My African Journey, one of the many books that sustained the author’s grand lifestyle. John Bird looks at an earlier adventure that Churchill had in Africa when he escaped from the Boers in 1899. Much has been written on the subject, not least by Churchill himself, but Bird has filled a gap in our knowledge by exploring the hills around his own hometown of Witbank.

No matter which office of state he held, Churchill’s involvement with the Royal Navy remained an unfolding adventure. John H. Maurer looks at the strategy decisions Churchill made with regard to the rise of Japanese naval power and finds both wise and faulty decision making.

One of Churchill’s most perilous adventures took place when he was Prime Minister during the war. In December 1944, he decided he should travel to Greece personally to help settle the chaotic political situation that followed German withdrawal. He arrived in Athens on Christmas Day to find fighting in the streets between the forces seeking to gain control of the country. Christos Bouris examines the contemporary Greek accounts and identifies what Churchill was and was not able to accomplish.

The football pitch (or soccer field) may seem an unlikely place ever to have found Winston Churchill, but he did attend the odd match and even on one occasion the FA Cup final. Paul Trevillion spoke with one of England’s football legends from those years and tells us what Churchill had to say to the players when he greeted them individually.

And so we begin fifty more years of Finest Hour.

David Freeman, April 2018

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Stephen Hawking RIP, 1942–2018

Before he passed away on 13 March, Stephen Hawking sent the following letter to the International Churchill Society. We publish this tribute from a great scientist to a great statesman in honor of both men.

CAMBRIDGE—Churchill was the right man at the right time for the right job to fight a very nasty disease spreading throughout Europe—Nazism and Fascism. For this Churchill spared no expense for Bletchley Park to fund Alan Turing and his colleagues to break the enigma code and win the war. His support of scientific development in those dark years has carried forward positively into more enlightened times. We thank him for not giving up.

Churchill and I have a couple of things in common:

The team who made the film The Theory of Everything [2014] have made the feature film Darkest Hour [2017] on the life of Winston Churchill.

He was voted the Greatest Briton, and I was honoured to follow him further down the list of nominations.

Churchill won the Nobel prize for literature. Unfortunately, we do not have this in common!

We all should strive to have more in common with this great man.—Stephen Hawking
The National Churchill Museum at Westminster College gratefully acknowledges the individuals, corporations, and foundations who have made leadership gifts to support its mission and purpose.

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Between 1914 and 1945, a generation of men and women spent their lives at war. Many Americans who experienced war in the trenches of Western Europe in World War I returned to liberate the same ground again in 1944. The military and political leaders of World War II learned the art of war from 1914 to 1918, and vowed not to repeat the mistakes of that war, and the flawed peace that ended it. The 2018 pre-conference symposium will explore the legacies, leadership lessons and tactics of World War I and the role its ending played in World War II’s beginning.

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Participation in The International Conference on World War II is an exclusive benefit of Membership at The National WWII Museum.
A Message from the President of the International Churchill Society

Randolph L.S. Churchill

Fifty years ago, the very first issue of Finest Hour published an extract from a letter written by my grandfather and namesake to the fledgling Winston S. Churchill Study Unit of the American Philatelic Association, the precursor of the International Churchill Society. Noting that he knew “nothing about stamps,” grandpapa Randolph nevertheless said that he would “try to answer any questions [the group] have in mind.”

Sadly, there was only time for grandfather to be named Honorary Member Number One before he passed away in June 1968. The second issue of Finest Hour was a tribute to his memory and included notes from my father Winston and my great-grandmother Clementine acknowledging letters of sympathy sent to them on behalf of the members of the study unit.

Today I am proud to serve as President of the organization that grew out of those simple beginnings. I know I speak for the whole of the extended Churchill family when I say that we owe an enormous debt to the International Churchill Society: to all its patrons, officers, members, and supporters past and present.

More than a century ago, in July 1915, my great-grandfather was at a low point in his career, and was about to resign from the government to take up a commission on the Western Front. In a letter to Clementine, to be opened only in the event of his death, he wrote: “Do not grieve for me too much. I am a spirit confident of my rights. Death is only an incident, & not the most important which happens to us in this state of being.” He urged her to “look forward, feel free, rejoice in Life, cherish the children, guard my memory.”

The ICS has guarded that memory. In the oft-repeated words of its late Patron, my great aunt Mary (The Lady Soames LG DBE), ICS has kept the memory green and the record accurate. What began with the dedication and enthusiasm of Richard Langworth CBE and a few like-minded souls has become an organisation with chapters and affiliates throughout North America, Britain, and around the world.

Finest Hour is the Society’s flagship. It has grown to become a highly regarded journal of substance, combining serious and groundbreaking academic scholarship with a popular passion for its subject. It consistently shows the relevance of Churchill’s memory and legacy to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Under the leadership of Chairman Laurence Geller CBE, whose generosity has made the Churchill archives freely accessible to schools worldwide, the International Churchill Society has gone from strength to strength. The National Churchill Library and Center in Washington, D.C. is now a physical reality and a dynamic platform for all things Churchill. It joins the Churchill Archives Centre, the Churchill War Rooms, the National Churchill Museum in Fulton, Chartwell, and Blenheim Palace as the means by which new generations can learn about the greatest Briton.

Our family feels very proud of this great milestone in the history of the International Churchill Society, and we salute all that have come forward to cherish the memory of Sir Winston. As we face the next fifty years, let us remember the words of my great-grandfather when he told the defenders of freedom during their Darkest Hour, “Come then, let us go forward together.”
Congratulations to the International Churchill Society on your 50th anniversary.

The ICS is known across the globe for helping to preserve the memory of Sir Winston Churchill through its publications, conferences and educational programmes. I am grateful to the ICS for their work and for demonstrating the continued relevance of Churchill’s life and legacy to new generations.

Every day, I walk past Churchill’s portrait as I enter my office in 10 Downing Street. As I do so, I often reflect upon his remarkable leadership during our country’s darkest hour. That leadership inspired millions of people in the United Kingdom and all over the world to stand firm against tyranny, and it remains an inspiration to all those who still fight now for freedom and democracy.

The preservation of freedom requires constant vigilance and must never be taken for granted. As we face new challenges in the 21st century, Churchill’s example should continue to inspire us.

So once again, congratulations on your 50th anniversary and I wish you well as you continue your important mission for another 50 years and beyond.
This is the 180th issue of Finest Hour. The operating budget for the first year of what became the International Churchill Society was $180. The first issue of the journal was sent out to the founding members—all twelve of them—in the spring of 1968 with a note that the title was only “temporary” until a better suggestion arose. Fifty years on, the current editor has determined that the cut-off date for suggestions has now passed.
No Black Blots!

The International Churchill Society was founded because Richard M. Langworth did not want to buy phony stamps.

Following the death of Sir Winston Churchill in January 1965, a rash of commemorative stamps was produced in his memory. The major issuers were the quasi-autonomous Arab sheikdoms Ajman, Fujiera, and Sharjah, which printed countless different designs, called “black blots” by philatelists, that were always intended to bilk collectors rather than to frank envelopes. Each design deliberately included many variants so as to entice those obsessed with having “complete” collections.

The American Topical Association, the presiding US authority on thematic stamps, appeared indifferent to this obvious charlatanism. After contacting other members of the ATA who had expressed an interest in Churchill, Langworth organized the Winston S. Churchill Study Unit (WSCSU) for the purpose of identifying and distinguishing between legitimately issued stamps and black blots.

Finest Hour began as a bi-monthly newsletter for the WSCSU. Dated “May-June 1968,” the first issue ran to seven, mimeographed pages including a three-page checklist of stamps. Annual dues were $2.

In the early issues, most of the articles focused on stamp collecting and included prodigious warnings about those ubiquitous black blots. There was, however, an early movement to publish more generalized information about Churchill. Crucially, the organization reached out to establish a link with the Churchill family from the very beginning. Comments from Randolph Churchill were published in the first issue, and he was made Honorary Member Number One before his untimely death. His mother Clementine and son Winston became Honorary Members Two and Three respectively.

By David Freeman

The International Churchill Society

Langworth served as editor for the first thirteen issues and two years of the WSCSU. Then, with issue number fourteen in May 1970, Dalton “Dal” Newfield took over as editor. Dal’s effervescent personality bubbled over the pages of Finest Hour. From his home in Sacramento, California, he began the process of transforming the journal and the organization into more general platforms for the study of Winston Churchill.

The case was made for a “Churchill Society” modeled after the first such organization, the Winston S. Churchill Society of Edmonton, Alberta. Members of the WSCSU recognized that most Churchill philatelists were Churchillphiles first and stamp collectors second. Changing the nature of the organization, they hoped, would lead to a growing membership.

In the autumn of 1971, issue number twenty-one of Finest Hour was published as the “Bulletin of the International Churchill Society.” Appearing on the cover was Lord Mountbatten, the society’s newest honorary member and later its first Patron. ICS could claim 154 members in nine different countries including Vietnam and Iran. A record meeting of one dozen people took place in Los Angeles at the end of the year. The first meeting of ICS (UK) took place the following year in London at the Charing Cross Hotel.

Death and Resurrection

Despite reorganization and rising membership, the new society still maintained a precarious existence. Even Dal’s prodigious nature was strained when he agreed to serve as president of ICS while remaining editor of Finest Hour. Eventually he was able to turn over editing duties to Stephen King (no, not that Stephen King), but in 1975 King was also constrained to give up the unpaid job in order to attend to personal affairs. For want of an editor, the International Churchill Society was forced to fold after six-and-a-half years.

ICS remained dormant for a period equal to its entire previous existence. Then, in 1981 and with Dal’s encouragement, Richard Langworth was persuaded to resurrect the society he had created and to serve once again as editor. During the interregnum, Dal had banked the society’s assets with the happy result that there was almost enough money to cover the expense of the first new issue.

Finest Hour number thirty-three appeared in the autumn of 1981, and the journal has been published continuously as a quarterly ever since. This was the first issue presented in the magazine format that we continue to follow. While still heavily focused on stamps, the new Finest Hour also introduced such regular departments as “Action This Day” and “Riddles, Mysteries, and Enigmas.” Rapidly, the magazine became primarily a journal about Churchill as the philatelic antecedents faded away. The length gradually expanded from twelve pages in 1981 to the fifty-two or more we regularly publish today.

Sadly, only months after the rebirth of ICS, Dal Newfield passed away. He had long been the heart and soul of the organization and had lived just long enough to make possible its resurrection.
Admiral of the Fleet
The Right Honourable
The Earl Mountbatten of Burma
KG GCB OM GCSI GCIE GCVO DSO PC FRS
1900–1979

First Patron of the
International Churchill Society
1971–1979

The Lady Soames
LG DBE FRSL
1929–2014

Second Patron of the
International Churchill Society
1986–2014

Below: Former Secretary of State James A. Baker III speaks to the 2016 ICS Conference in the Benjamin Franklin State Dining Room at the US State Department in Washington, D.C.
New Directions

Even as the society lost Dal, it was welcoming prominent newcomers. Harold Macmillan and Lord and Lady Soames accepted honorary membership. Ultimately in 1986, Lady Soames, as the only surviving child of Winston and Clementine Churchill, agreed to become Patron of the Society. It is she who is responsible for defining the mission of ICS to “keep the record accurate and the memory green.”

The first international meeting was held in London in 1983. The next two meetings were held in Toronto and Boston respectively. This established the pattern of rotating the annual conference between member countries. The 1985 Boston gathering demonstrated that ICS had “arrived” when it secured as Keynote Speaker the incumbent United States Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger.

High-profile conference speakers became the norm. In the 1980s and ‘90s, ICS hosted former members of Churchill’s staff such as Sir John Colville and Sir Anthony Montague Browne. Members of the Churchill family became regular guests, including Lady Soames, Celia Sandys, and namesake grandson Winston, the father of our current president. From the entertainment industry Lee Remick, Gregory Peck, and Robert Hardy, who played Churchill more times than any other actor, all dazzled ICS audiences.

Writers and historians are natural choices to speak about Churchill. The journalism world has been represented by Alistair Cooke, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Chris Matthews. Other speakers have included Pulitzer Prize winning authors William Manchester and David McCullough. Above all, Churchill’s official biographer Sir Martin Gilbert became a regular fixture at ICS events.

In the mid-1990s, ICS began its transition from a purely voluntary organization of enthusiasts to a paid, professional organization seriously dedicated to the mission of teaching new generations about the relevance of Churchill’s life and legacy. An endowment was established, and ICS was chartered as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization focused on education. Free seminars for teachers were organized in Britain and North America to provide them with tools that they could take to the classroom.

New Millennium

Before the internet, virtually every function of ICS had to be carried out through the pages of Finest Hour, which reached members only every three months. For this reason, the Chartwell Bulletin was created as a supplementary quarterly to provide information about the activities of ICS and its local branches, leaving room in Finest Hour for stories exclusively related to Churchill’s life and career.

With the internet, ICS now has a website accessible at any time containing a bonanza of information about all aspects of Churchill. The internet has also enabled ICS to convert the Chartwell Bulletin from a quarterly print journal reaching only paying members into the Churchill Bulletin, an online journal published monthly and sent free to more than 35,000 subscribers. The new “CB” presents stories about contemporary events related to Churchill, while stories about ICS activities have migrated to websites and social media platforms run by individual chapters, which can focus on organizing local members.

In 2010, Laurence Geller became the new chairman of ICS and brought in Lee Pollock as executive director. Together they began the process of realizing a long-held dream of the organization: the establishment of a perma-
David Freeman is the editor of Finest Hour. His first contribution to the magazine was a history of the International Churchill Society’s first twenty-five years. He would like to hear from volunteers to write the history of the organization’s first seventy-five years.
On 12 December 1899, Winston Churchill escaped from the State Model School in Pretoria, where he had been held prisoner by the Boers since his capture the previous month. After brazenly walking out of town, he found a railway line, which he hoped led on to his goal: the Portuguese colony at Delagoa Bay. In the evening, he scrambled onto a freight train and caught some sleep. But he knew he could not continue on the train after dawn, since he might be spotted on board and he would need to find water.

In the early hours of the 13th, Churchill jumped from the train and began to make his way on foot until he miraculously happened upon help at the Transvaal & Delagoa Bay Colliery near Witbank. While he subsequently recorded what he could of this journey, the precise route he then took has hitherto remained a complete mystery. It took many years of research, but I have now been able to put together a plausible itinerary. To do this, I found two keys were necessary to trace Churchill’s journey from the time he sprawled off the train at a quarter to four on the morning of 13 December until he was taken down a mineshaft at the colliery at a quarter to five the following morning.

Two Keys

The first key was not easy to find. There were more than thirty shafts in use at the colliery over the years. It took several missions by a friend of mine flying in his micro-light to photograph the area. In this way, we first identified the fishpond at the manager’s house. From there, we homed in on what we believed to be the shaft used by Churchill. In 2009, I spoke with a few of the old area residents who remembered the shaft as children and confirmed its position. I later found photos of the shaft from the 1920s through the 1960s. Most importantly, I discovered surveyor’s plans dated 1899 and 1925 of underground workings on this same shaft. It was Churchill’s all right.

The second key was even more elusive. Churchill recorded several descriptive points about the hill where he spent the daylight hours of 13 December. If this hill were found, I felt certain that the story of his journey on foot could be determined. So I walked every meter of the rail line from Crown-Douglas siding to Witbank station. Except for the improvements over the years, the line remains almost exactly as it was in 1899. Research like this is never easy, and my walk ended with four low “hills of interest,” all set in the fringe of the valley. On visiting each, three were immediately dismissed, but the fourth arrested my attention. Everything Churchill mentioned was there: the deep ravine with a grove of indigenous trees growing on the side, the little tin-roofed town of Balmoral three miles to the westward, and the incline where trains battle to climb out of the valley. I also found a little pool of clear water that tantalized in the heat of the day and the boulders Churchill said he navigated on his way down the hill in the evening to return to the rail line.

The hill, set upon the fringe of a mundane valley, is not a significant geographic feature, and it is no surprise that it had never been identified before in connection with Churchill. Yet all the pieces fit. Two seasonal streams run down its sides. The stream to the east feeds into the bog and marsh mentioned in Churchill’s account. The western stream flows down a deep ravine into a small gulley before passing under the rail line. This had to be where Churchill drank deeply—enough, he wrote, for the whole day. Some 800 meters backward from this stream, there is a curve in the line, a likely point for Churchill to have sprawled off the train.

Churchill had reported: “No one in the world knew where I was—I did not know myself.” To prove my theory, then, it was necessary to fit the times of the journey supplied by Churchill to the route I tentatively identified. I found they did indeed fit—and right to the minute.

Here, then, follows my reconstruction of Churchill’s journey while on foot, including estimated times and distances. Some points he mentions are out of sequence, but he certainly was not keeping a precise record while fleeing his enemy. Imperial measures are used as well as metric units along the rail line, just as in 1899. Times are given...
John Bird's reconstruction of Churchill's route at Witbank

At 3:36 pm that afternoon, Churchill may have seen a nearly full moon rise in the east, giving assurance of some light for the coming night. But for the moment, he sought shelter from the sun and oppressive heat in the shade of the trees. This action drew the attention of a flight of cape vultures. These spiraled at a great height above his hiding place, and their associated dance of death entertained Churchill for some of the early afternoon.

By 5:00 pm, the heat had lifted, and life in the wide valley began to stir. Churchill had had the whole day to contemplate life and asked for strength to overcome what lay ahead. This was soon to be “swiftly and wonderfully answered.” At 7:30, with darkness upon him, he broke cover and headed back to the rail line. First he negotiated his way through a boulder field in his path and soon reached open veld before coming to a little stream.

At 7:30 the dinner bell sounded for the prisoners back in Pretoria, but for Churchill it was a drink of cool water. Hunger was now becoming his greatest enemy. By the time he reached the rail line, the sun had gone down. The moon, now high in the sky, allowed him to set a cracking pace, and shortly he approached a guarded bridge. The picket was probably on the far side just off the line.
To avoid the picket, Churchill left the line to the right and was soon floundering around up to his knees in a marsh. He persisted for thirty minutes or so before wading through the strong-flowing, waist-deep Zaalklap River. Once across, he climbed up the far bank leaving the marsh behind. Scrambling through a few hundred yards of long grass brought him back to the rail line.

A short distance beyond the bridge, the line curved to the right. This was the first of four bends that allowed the rail line to zigzag up out of the wide valley. Earlier in the day while observing from the top of the hill, Churchill probably decided to head to the furthest and highest of the four bends where the trains move at their slowest. He arrived there at 9:15. From the curve, Churchill intended to jump onto a train as he had the night before. With the guard and driver facing away from the curve, he hoped to do this unobserved.

Here, for what seemed an eternity, Churchill waited, still wet from fording the river. Inactivity brought its own problem. The oppressive heat of the day was replaced by the chill of night on the high veld. A little after midnight on the 14th, it became obvious that no trains were running, and he set off to cover what ground he could while it was still dark. A few hundred meters of brisk walking brought him onto the surrounding plateau. Once again he was forced to leave the line to bypass a picket at Elandsfontein (now Wakefield) siding, and his clothing received a further drenching from dew on the long grass.

Beyond Elandsfontein, the rail-line is straight and level. Churchill would have walked along the center of the track by stepping on the flat wooden sleepers. He had good light from the bright moon and could have reached walking speeds in excess of five kilometers (three miles) per hour. A further good hour brought him to Brugspruit (now Clewer) station—a hive of activity—where Churchill dropped the idea of boarding a train. He skirted the station and continued on his way.

At this point, Churchill mentions passing a house where lamps lit up the windows, and he thought of all the food and warmth within. He realized, however, that this place meant only danger to him. Shortly after leaving Brugspruit behind, Churchill noticed the eight newly installed electric lights at Witbank station. Fifteen minutes later after passing a slight rise, Churchill noticed far out to his left two or three fires of what he thought to be a kraal. The time was now 2:00 am.

Tired and hungry, Churchill struck out through the veld hoping the fires would lead to cooperative Black or English people. After covering a mile, he had a moment filled with doubt and anxiety and turned back towards the line. Returning half a mile, he sat down completely.
baffled and pondered the situation. After composing himself, he argued that the fires offered a far better prospect than wondering aimlessly along the line. He turned to approach the fires once again. This was one of the most momentous decisions Churchill made in his early life. He could not have known it, but his chances of passing Witbank unnoticed would have been slim. The staff of the mine included a number of pro-Boer French volunteers. A rail depot and telegraph office employed some burghers and Boers in addition to the picket contingent. Given the size of the town and Churchill’s deteriorating strength, he would have had to seek succor from locals, who almost certainly would have turned him in to the Boers.

The bright moon, now just above the western horizon, allowed Churchill to cover ground at a fair pace. At 2:41 the moon slipped from the sky, and within minutes the veld was plunged into darkness. Hunger pangs and fatigue were all too constant reminders of the fact that Churchill had last eaten a meal at 1:00 pm on the 12th. In the chill and darkness of the night, he must have felt a terrible gnawing in his stomach. It was now only the fires before him that presented any glimmer of hope. Churchill does not mention the moon setting, but at that stage he was probably not more than a few hundred yards from the mine.

Thank God You Have Come Here!

The fires turned out to be much further off than Churchill first thought, but by 3:00 he noticed the winding wheel of a coal-mine. By this point, he had walked seventeen kilometers (more than nine miles) in three-and-a-quarter hours from the curve in the rail line—no easy task considering the conditions. As he walked closer to the winding engine, Churchill entered the light of the furnace fires. In the glow, he could make out a house of two stories surrounded by a number of lesser structures.

After Churchill wrapped twice upon the door, a man’s voice called out, “Wie’s daar?” The blood in Churchill’s veins froze. This was one of the few occasions that he was at a loss for words, but shortly he managed to get into conversation with John Howard, manager of the colliery. Howard spoke the immortal words. “Thank God you have come here! It is the only house for twenty miles where you would not have been handed over. But we are all British here, and we will see you through.” With this welcome ringing in his ear, Churchill was left in the room with a leg of mutton and a whiskey and soda while Howard left the house. Almost an hour later, the manager returned and reported that Churchill was to be hidden down the mine. Churchill followed his host out of the house across a small yard and into the enclosure, where he entered a cage to descend the shaft. Churchill noticed that the stars to the east had started to dim. It was now 4:30.

From the bottom of the shaft, Churchill was led 600 yards through a maze of cavernous passages to a short tunnel that had been dug into a sandstone dyke. This was a newly constructed stable and for the next thirty-four hours it was Churchill’s home. Not far from the stable was the second of three shafts on the mine in 1899. This ladder shaft is still visible, and it was probably through this that Churchill looked up and saw the light of day. After his time underground, he spent the following four days in an inner room at the back of the mine office. He left Witbank Station at 11:00 am on 19 December, hidden amongst bails of wool in a rail truck, just short of one week after sprawling from the train to begin his journey on foot. Upon his safe arrival at Delagoa Bay, Winston Churchill became—in the words of Candice Millard in her 2016 book about the adventure—a hero of the Empire.

Ambiguities

There is still some disagreement as to just where Howard and Churchill met. Almost certainly, it was at the boarding house of the mine. Howard’s wife and two teenaged children had moved to the coast for the duration of the war, and he found it easier staying in lodgings. There is considerable evidence to support this. One worth mentioning is that Howard told Churchill that the two catering ladies were staying in the boarding house with him, and it was their leg of mutton that had been consumed. Churchill said the structure had two stories and affirmed this many times. Some historians question this, but there is evidence suggesting that Churchill was right.

Several weeks after he escaped from prison, Churchill’s comrades Aylmer Haldane and Frederick le Mesurier escaped using an almost identical route. In Haldane’s book How We Escaped from Pretoria, there are a set of photographs taken from the time when he and Churchill first set out in the armoured train in Estcourt before the attack that led to their capture until Haldane and le Mesurier also arrived safely in Delagoa Bay. Two of these photos show the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay mine around March 1900. These helped in determining the time Churchill spent at the location. As incredible as it sounds, it seems that Haldane must have had a camera that he managed to hide from the Boer authorities. In any event, all of the pictures in his book must have been taken before November 1901.

John Bird lives in Witbank, South Africa.
On 9 December 1905, Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman sent Winston Churchill, MP for Manchester North West, a telegram at his house, 29 Belgrave Square: “Greatly obliged if you would come and see me here at six o’clock.” During their meeting, Campbell-Bannerman invited Churchill to join his Government as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. The offer was accepted.

Churchill’s African Journey
By Fred Glueckstein
On Churchill’s first evening as a junior member of the Government, he attended a party in London where he was introduced to Edward Marsh, a clerk in the West African Department of the Colonial Office:

“How do you do?” asked Marsh. “Which I must now say with great respect.”

“Why with great respect?” Churchill responded. “Because you’re coming to rule over me at the Colonial Office,” Marsh replied.2

Churchill made enquiries about the Colonial Office clerk, and subsequently asked him to be his Private Secretary. Marsh accepted and would work for Churchill off and on in this capacity for almost three decades.

Lord Elgin and Churchill

As Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, Churchill, then thirty-one, became deputy to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Elgin. With Elgin in the House of Lords, Churchill became the sole voice for the department in the Commons. “Churchill was opting for prominence and parliamentary opportunity rather than rank, a high-risk strategy,” wrote Roy Jenkins.3

Lord Elgin and Churchill were unlike each other in personality and manner. Soon Elgin witnessed his new Under-Secretary exercise his ambitions and his manner.4

In 1907, Churchill decided to tour British East Africa extensively during the autumn recess. It was said that “Lord Elgin was not slow to applaud.” A cartoon on 31 July 1907 in Punch shows the Colonial Secretary helping Churchill pack his clothing. Under the headline “Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow,” Lord Elgin has one hand holding shirts and the other on Churchill’s shoulder with the caption, “Well, my boy, you see I’m helping to get you off, I shall miss you terribly. You must be sure to have a good rest, and whatever you do, don’t hurry back!”5

Before travelling to British East Africa, Churchill and George Scrivings, his father’s former servant, spent a month on the continent of Europe. While there, Churchill attended French Army maneuvers. After leaving France, Churchill and Scrivings travelled through Vienna and Syracuse on the Ionian coast of Sicily.

From Syracuse, Churchill and Scrivings, now joined by Eddie Marsh, went by sea to Malta. Awaiting Churchill in Malta was Colonel Gordon Wilson, the husband of Churchill’s aunt Lady Sarah Churchill, and the Admiralty cruiser Venus. From Malta, the cruiser went to Cyprus.

After leaving Cyprus, the cruiser took Churchill and his party across the Eastern Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal, and into the Red Sea towards Aden. During the voyage, Churchill prepared six protracted memoranda that were sent back to the Colonial Office. In a letter to his mother, Churchill explained that his memoranda were “upon things I want to have done.”

Churchill’s memoranda provoked Sir Francis Hopwood, the senior civil servant at the Colonial Office, who wrote in strong terms about Churchill to Lord Elgin: “He is most tiresome to deal with and will, I fear, give trouble—as his father did—in any position to which he may be called. The restless energy, uncontrollable desire for notoriety and lack of moral perception make him an anxiety indeed,” wrote Hopwood.6

Kenya

After stopping in the Somaliland Protectorate to educate himself on its affairs, Churchill and his party reached Mombasa on the coast of Kenya on 28 October 1907. Upon arrival, Churchill was met by the colony’s officials and received deputations from planters and local communities. While in Mombasa, Churchill was given a certificate by the colony’s governor that read: “The Rt Honorable Winston Churchill & party are granted a complimentary license to shoot such game as is allowed by the schedule of the game Regulations, during his tour through East Africa.”7

After two days of functions, inspections, and speeches in Mombasa, Churchill boarded a special train at his disposal from the Uganda Railway, which linked the interior of Kenya and Uganda at Mombasa. “We sat (Gordon and I) on the engine [known as the Cow-catcher, it is an inclined frame on the front of a railroad locomotive] with our rifles, & as soon as we saw anything to shoot at—a wave of the hand brought the train to a standstill & sometimes we tried at antelope without even getting down. From the railway one can see literally every animal in the Zoo. Zebras, lions, rhinoceros, antelopes of every kind, ostriches, giraffes—on their day—and often five or six different kinds are in sight at the same moment,” wrote Churchill to his mother.8

On the first day in the field, Churchill killed one zebra, one wildebeeste, two hartebeeste, one gazelle, and one bustard (a giant bird). For Churchill, the third day was momentous as he saw a rhinoceros grazing. “I cannot describe to you the impression produced on the mind by the sight of the grim black silhouette of this mighty beast—a survival of prehistoric times—roaming about the plain as he & his forerunners had done since the dawn of the world. It was like being transported back into the stone age.”9
Soon two more rhinoceros were sighted resting under a tree. Churchill, Marsh, and Gordon sneaked under the crest of the plateau to within 150 yards of the two new rhino. Churchill fired and hit the larger animal.

“She swerved round & came straight for us at that curious brisk trot which is nearly as fast as a horse’s gallop, & full of surprising activity. Everybody fired & both the rhino turned off—much to our relief,” wrote Churchill, “and then in a few more seconds down came the big one on the ground & the smaller one managed to get away under a heavy fire—this one we followed up & killed later in the day. I must say I found it exciting and also anxious work.”

While in Africa, Churchill received an offer from *The Strand Magazine* for five articles on his travels for £150 each. He gratefully accepted, since it would “definitely liquidate all possible expenses in this journey.” Churchill would also receive an additional £500 for the book rights to his account of his travels in Africa, which was published as *My African Journey*.

On 5 November 1907 at Thika, Churchill spent time hunting lions without success. That evening, he proceeded to Nairobi, where he dined with the Governor. From Nairobi, Churchill could see Mount Kenya with its snow-clad peak.

### Uganda

While in Nairobi, Churchill visited Fort Hall and Embu. From there, he proceeded from Nairobi to Elmenteita for pig-sticking with Lord Delamere. Churchill, Marsh, Scrivings, and Wilson then arrived at Kisumu, where they were greeted by hundreds of members of the unclothed Kavirondo tribe. From Kisumu on Lake Victoria, Churchill and his party went by boat on to Entebbe and then travelled by rickshaw to Kampala.

In Kampala, Churchill “was delighted to hear the little black school boys in white English cotton clothes singing *Oh dear, what can the matter be?* This seemed to please him almost more than anything else in East Africa, apart from the highly-coloured butterflies,” Ronald Hyman later concluded.

Churchill then took a steamboat to Ripon Falls on the Victoria Nile. On 23 November 1907, he went on trek, also referred to as safari, where he traveled on foot, by bicycle, and canoe from camp to camp. Churchill coined a memorable phrase after each day’s trek: “sofari, so-goody.”

Churchill’s party then reached Jinja, where the Nile leaves Lake Victoria and begins a 4,000 mile journey to the sea. From Jinja, Churchill, Wilson, Marsh, and Scriv-
ings continued north through the Uganda Protectorate. After touring Uganda, Churchill and his party spent ten days on a steamer to reach the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Death of George Scrivings

On 23 December 1907, Churchill and his companions were at Khartoum in Sudan. That day, Churchill’s faithful servant Scrivings fell ill with choleric diarrhea. After sixteen hours, he died on Christmas Eve. “Scrivings’ death was a great shock to me,” Churchill wrote his brother Jack, “& has cast a gloom over all the memories of this pleasant & even wonderful journey. We all must have eaten the same dish which contained the poison—whether it was a tin of ptomaine-poisoned fish, or rotten asparagus, or what, will never be known.”

It was only Churchill’s stronger constitution that prevented him from meeting Scrivings’ tragic fate.

Churchill arranged the funeral. On Christmas, Scrivings was buried in the Khartoum Cemetery in the evening with full military honors, since he had been a Yeoman. “The Dublin Fusiliers sent their band and a company of men, and we all walked in procession to the cemetery as mourners, while the sun sank over the desert, and the band played that beautiful funeral march you know so well,” Churchill wrote Jack.

Afterwards, Churchill wrote a heart-rending letter from Khartoum to Scrivings’ wife. After telling her what occurred, Churchill wrote: “My heart bleeds for you and for your children. It will be my duty to make adequate provision for your future and theirs; & you need not worry on these matters. We will talk of them when I return… My own sorrow is keen & deep. I was very fond of Scrivings & regarded him as a faithful friend, whose character and virtues I respected and admired. May God help you to bear your loss.”

The loss of Scrivings had a deep effect on Churchill. In his book My African Journey, Churchill wrote: “Africa always claims its forfeits; and so the four white men who had started together from Mombasa returned but three to Cairo. A military interment involves the union of the two most impressive rituals in the world. The day after the Battle of Omdurman it fell to my lot to bury those soldiers of the 21st Lancers, who had died of their wounds during the night.”

Churchill continued: “Now after nine years, in very different circumstances, from the other end of Africa, I had come back to this grim place where so much blood has been shed, and again I found myself standing at an open grave, while the yellow glare of the departed sun still lingered over the desert, and the sound of funeral volleys broke its silence.”

The remainder of the journey to British East Africa soon came to an end. Churchill, Marsh, and Wilson travelled to Upper Egypt, back to Cairo, then Alexandria. On 17 January 1908, Churchill returned to London after an absence of five months.

For Churchill, the trip to British East Africa was a combination of conducting colonial administration business, big-game hunting, and sightseeing. He never forgot his travels and considered his journey through British East Africa one of his greatest adventures, though sadly marred by the loss of his faithful servant George Scrivings.

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Endnotes
4. Martin Gilbert wrote of the difference between Elgin and Churchill: “Throughout his time at the Colonial Office, Churchill endeavoured to instil Liberal principles into Colonial administration. His minutes to Elgin were so outspoken that in several cases Elgin asked him to paste them over so that junior officials would not see them.” Gilbert, pp. 182–83.
8. Ibid., pp. 692–93.
10. Ibid., p. 232.
12. Ibid.
In the aftermath of the First World War, Great Britain faced a serious strategic challenge in imperial Japan, whose nascent sea power threatened the security and interests of the British Empire in Asia. At the center of British decision making about Japan’s naval challenge in 1924–29 was Chancellor of the Exchequer Winston Churchill, who reviewed spending requests of government departments, set priorities, sought revenue, prepared budgets, and managed the economy in the hurly-burly politics of the public arena.

Churchill had just turned fifty and, at the height of his powers when he became Chancellor, was determined to take an active role in directing Britain’s grand strategy. One colleague described Churchill as “the most forceful personality in the Cabinet.” But he forcefully challenged the idea of conflict with Japan. In an oft-quoted letter to Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, Churchill wrote: “why should there be a war with Japan? I do not believe there is the slightest chance of it in our lifetime.” Instead, he foresaw a “long peace, such as follows in the wake of great wars.” In a tragic irony of history, Churchill’s words would later come back to haunt him when Japan attacked the British Empire in December 1941.

**Economizing Chancellor**

Churchill’s views put him at odds with the Royal Navy, whose leaders urged a buildup of naval power against what they saw as a looming menace in Asia. Japan’s new generation of powerfully armed cruisers especially alarmed British naval planners. The Royal Navy wanted new cruisers of its own, as well as enhanced oil fuel supplies and naval bases in the Pacific.

The navy’s demands came at an inopportune time, when Britain was confronting harsh economic realities. The economy suffered from anemic growth and high unemployment. Churchill hoped to arrest this trend, and so improve his own political fortunes. His attempt to restrain defense spending brought him into a bruising, drawn-out, interdepartmental struggle with the navy. The politician and historian Roy Jenkins viewed this struggle as the “most dangerous of the disputes” that confronted him as Chancellor.

Top naval leaders, fired up by the forceful First Sea Lord, Admiral Earl Beatty, threatened resignation en masse to protest against proposed cuts in warship construction. After one encounter with Churchill, with whom he had usually cordial relations, an exasperated Beatty complained: “That extraordinary fellow Winston has gone mad, economically mad, and no sacrifice is too great to achieve what in his short-sightedness is the panacea for all evils, to take 1/- [one shilling] off the Income Tax. Nobody outside a lunatic asylum expects a shilling off the Income Tax this Budget.”

**Wrong but Right**

Clearly, Japan’s rising naval challenge posed awkward political, economic, and strategic tradeoffs. That as sagacious a statesman as Churchill misjudged the danger of war with Japan, believing that Japanese leaders would act as responsible stakeholders on the international stage, highlights the pitfalls that can bedevil even the very best strategic assessments. Churchill erred in his forecast that Japan’s rulers would show restraint in their foreign policy. He was, however, wrong for the right reasons.

Churchill’s argument to Baldwin was that “Japan is on the other end of the world. She cannot menace our vital security.” He did not deny that Japan would be a dangerous adversary—he argued only that Japanese forces were in no position to deliver a knockout blow against the heart and center of the British Empire.

“The only war it would be worth our while to fight with Japan,” Churchill continued, “would be to prevent an invasion of Australia.” That, he insisted, would require mounting a major naval and military effort at great distance from the British home islands, entailing enormous problems of supply and colossal costs and risks. Surely, Churchill argued, leaders on both sides would recoil from the prospect of so hideous a struggle. Even supposing a Japanese strike to destroy the British Empire in Asia,
Churchill believed, the United States “would be thrown increasingly to our side.”

While Japan would not embark on a war of its own, Churchill’s understanding of the international strategic environment did lead him to imagine a predatory Japan attacking the British Empire if Britain were endangered by some other great power, such as a revanchist Germany or an expansionist Soviet Union. This scenario, too, proved an accurate forecast: Japan’s rulers felt confident enough to attack Britain only in 1941, when it appeared that Germany was on the verge of scoring a major military success in Europe.

The principal Japanese threat, Churchill concluded, would occur if Britain were tied down elsewhere, fighting on several widely scattered fronts. In that case, he believed, salvation would depend on finding a coalition partner in the United States. This was not a new thought. In 1912, as First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill had written: “If the power of Great Britain were shattered upon the sea, the only course open to the 5,000,000 of white men in the Pacific [that is, Australia and New Zealand] would be to seek the protection of the United States.” He clung to this view after the First World War as well: “Canada, Australia and New Zealand had very strong racial objections to the Japanese and would be disposed to throw in their lot with the United States against Japan in certain contingencies, as they already regarded the United States fleet in the Pacific in the light of a safeguard to themselves.”

His strategic assessment demonstrated a deep understanding of the workings of the international balance of power and the importance of the United States in upholding that balance.

The Naval View

Britain’s naval leaders were sanguine neither about Japan’s future behavior nor about the chances of a permanent peace. First Lord of the Admiralty Sir William Bridgeman wrote: “No one can foretell the date of the next war.” Bridgeman had no difficulty imagining Japan striking out on the road of conquest. The First Lord contested the view held by Churchill and Britain’s top diplomats: “It has been said there is no danger of war—the common cry of the foolish virgins. Would the Foreign Office still say, in view of the racial unrest in the East that an anti-European wave of fanaticism might not seize the Japanese, bring about a revolution and the installment of a militarist Government?”

One astute British naval officer, with considerable experience of service in Asia, maintained, “the Japanese Government and their people are entering a very critical period.” A struggle was “in full swing” between a “section of the ruling classes” who favor cooperation with the West and the “military party, who have hitherto dominated Japan’s policy, [and] do not take kindly to these new ideas which, as a very minimum, presuppose the subordination of armies and navies to civilian direction.” The outcome
of this struggle within Japan was in doubt because “the majority of the Japanese nation have been brought up very stiffly upon extreme nationalist lines.” The militarists, intent upon whipping up and exploiting nationalist sentiments, could emerge the winners in Japan’s internal power struggle, thereby increasing the likelihood of conflict in East Asia. Bridgeman thought that Churchill’s assessment of Japan “ignores history, real facts and the psychology of the people.”

Japanese external behavior might give the appearance of a responsible stakeholder invested in the international status quo, the Admiralty argued, but that could change. Increased trade and economic interdependence with other countries might expand not limit Japanese foreign ambitions. The veneer of liberalism—popular elections, political parties, cabinet government, international cooperation, arms control, and spending cuts imposed on armaments—hid what was actually a militaristic country bent on expansion. Japan’s growing economy was underwriting a naval buildup. Simple prudence dictated that Britain adopt a hedging strategy, undertaking substantial defense preparations to provide for a war against Japan even if that contingency appeared remote. The challenge was to balance financial reality with strategic possibility.

**Churchill’s View**

Churchill was a realist: he understood and did not deny the strategic risks that Britain was running by not funding all of the Royal Navy’s programs for warships, bases, and readiness. As a result, he felt obliged to consider even what he thought was an unlikely scenario of war with Japan.

In a remarkable strategic appreciation, Churchill envisioned what a contest between Britain and Japan would entail. At first, Britain should “make arrangements to base a squadron of battle-cruisers, or a fast division of battleships, or if possible both, upon Singapore during the period of strained relations, or as soon as may be after War has begun.” This force, supported by cruisers, destroyers, submarines, aircraft, and coastal artillery batteries, should remain on the defensive, avoiding any engagement with superior Japanese forces. Such a force would “prove an effectual deterrent against a Japanese attack on Singapore.” If deterrence failed and the Japanese sent an overwhelming force to take Singapore, then British covering forces should “withdraw without being drawn into decisive action at an inferiority” into the Indian Ocean, awaiting reinforcements.

Churchill declared that the loss of Singapore during the early stages of a conflict did not mean Japan would win the war. “Great as are the injuries which Japan, if she ‘ran amok,’ could inflict upon our trade in the Northern Pacific, lamentable as would be the initial insults which she might offer to the British flag, I submit that it is beyond the power of Japan, in any period which we might foresee, to take any action which would prevent the whole might of the British empire being eventually brought to bear upon her.” A defensive strategy early, trading space for time until it could build overwhelming offensive force, would enable Britain to win. Remain on the defensive,
Churchill counseled: hold at Singapore if feasible, guard trade routes in the Indian Ocean, until “a preconceived programme of new construction” started at the outbreak of war provided Britain with naval superiority over Japan.

At the Admiralty when the First World War began, Churchill had put in motion a huge program of naval construction. Toward the end, as Minister of Munitions, he had presided over manufacture of weaponry for British and Allied forces. This experience gave him first-hand knowledge and understanding of the economic mobilization required to fight a war against another great power. He predicted this new construction would be complete within two years of the war’s outbreak. Reinforcements sent to Asia would eventually enable Britain to move from defensive to offensive operations.

The initial campaigns of a Japanese war might cause the British Empire “great annoyance and expense,” but Churchill believed that they “would not make any difference to the final result.” Once Britain mobilized its resources in the Pacific, he maintained, “in three or four years we could certainly sweep the Japanese from the seas and force them to make peace.” Still, Churchill feared that terminating the war might require “large armies…to go and attack Japan in her home waters.” That, he said, “would reduce us to bankruptcy.”

Deep Understanding

Churchill’s appreciation was sound advice should Japan opportunistically strike when Britain was held down in conflict with another great power. Churchill did not try to hide the risks. He bluntly contemplated a long, costly war and the likelihood of an ally in the United States. He predicted losses in the beginning, but victory in the end. His strategic appraisal proved an accurate forecast. The competing assessments produced by Churchill and the Admiralty are significant in the way they complemented each other and, taken together, offered a window for seeing into the future.

Churchill was wrong to credit Japan’s rulers with greater strategic acumen and concern for the wellbeing of their people than what they actually possessed. As conflict with Japan loomed in 1941, he even sought to give Tokyo strategic advice—a prescient warning to underscore the dangers of provoking Britain and the United States. The extremist vision held by Japan’s rulers to dominate Asia, their refusal to show self-restraint, and their decision to unleash the powerful Japanese navy combined to inflict shattering blows on forward-deployed American and British forces in the Pacific, confounded Churchill’s hopes. In December 1941, soon after Japan had attacked Britain and the United States, Churchill told a joint session of Congress that it was “difficult to reconcile Japanese action with prudence or even sanity.” In predicting that the Japanese bid for hegemony in Asia would ultimately fail, Churchill showed a deeper understanding of national interest and grand strategy than the warlords of imperial Japan.

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Endnotes

3. Ibid., p. 366.
7. Ibid.
8. Gilbert, pp. 443–44.
10. Committee on Imperial Defence, 134th Meeting, 14 December 1920, CAB 2/3, National Archives, Kew.
12. Ibid., p. 186.
17. Ibid., p. 306.
18. This memo shows that during the mid-1920s, Churchill had already envisioned what would become known as Force Z, the “decisive deterrent” sent to Singapore on the eve of war with Japan. Winston S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), pp. 578–624.
At Christmastime 1944, Winston Churchill travelled to Athens. It was a perilous journey, but the stakes were high: the future of Greece. Recently liberated from the Axis, Athens was now beset by confrontation between the communist-controlled EAM-ELAS (the first being a communist-led resistance group and the second her military counterpart) and British forces positioned in the Greek capital, assisted by Greek army units and security forces loyal to the Greek government. Both sides sought control of the city. The armed clash that ensued became known as “Dekemvriana” and ended with a British victory over the Greek communists.

Churchill arrived in Athens determined to use his influence in the negotiations between the Greek government and EAM in order to create a provisional government and avoid the outbreak of civil war. He also wanted to keep Greece free of communist control.

The Forces in Play

As early as 1943, when it was evident that the liberation of Greece from the Axis was imminent, clear differences emerged between the various Greek guerrilla forces fighting against the Germans and Italians. The main resistance groups were EAM-ELAS (which was the largest) and the right wing but mainly republican EDES. Both fought the common enemy but were also determined to consolidate their power and ensure that they would play a significant part in Greek politics after liberation. Another player was the Greek government in exile, which was essentially monarchist and in close relations with the British government, on whose support it was counting while it controlled the Greek military forces fighting in the Middle East and later in Italy.¹

Gradually all the Greek resistance organizations were either eliminated or incorporated into EAM-ELAS and EDES, leaving only two factions with influence and power on Greek soil. Not satisfied with their respective areas of control, however, the two sides confronted each other militarily, beginning what is known as the “first round” of the Greek Civil War. Round One ended with the Lebanon agreement, the signatories of which included EAM-ELAS, EDES, and the Greek government in exile. This pact ensured the ending of hostilities between the two resistance groups and provided for the creation of a provisional government under George Papandreou, one fourth of whose cabinet would have to be composed of EAM-ELAS affiliates. Moreover, according to the armistice agreement signed on 20 May 1944, all the resistance groups would be subject to the control of the new government, as would the Greek armed forces in the Middle East; but this was not put into effect.²

Churchill was determined to support the Greek government and prevent the capture of Athens and Salonica by the communists. On 21 August 1944, he implemented operation “Manna,” which provided for the dispatch of a British military force of 10,000 men under Lieutenant General Ronald Scobie to Greece with the mission of securing and holding Athens and Salonica immediately after the withdrawal of German troops.³ Developments continued with the signing of the Caserta agreement in Italy between the Greek government and EAM on 26 September. This placed all the resistance units under the control of Scobie, while the communists accepted the arrival of British forces on Greek soil, agreed to keep ELAS out of Attica, and recognize Papandreou's government as the EAM ministers took up their cabinet posts in Italy.⁴

The “Dekemvriana”

The Germans evacuated Athens on 12 October 1944. British troops occupied the city two days later, followed by the Greek government on the 18th. Reinforcements arrived in the form of elements of the 4th Indian Division and Greek army units from the Italian front. Control of Athens and its port Piraeus was then in the hands of the British and the Greek government forces, but the countryside was mainly controlled.
by ELAS. The Papandreou government remained in power due only to British support and not that of the Greek people and political parties.

Tension between the communists and the right wing simmered at every level of Greek society. One thorny problem was the reinstatement of Axis collaborators by the new government. Another was the sense that resistance fighters were being persecuted for their left-wing affiliations. Alongside these, the main issue was disbanding the resistance forces along with the royalist army units, which served the Greek government in exile, proceeding to the formation of a new national army. The will of the Greek government and General Scobie was to disband only ELAS and use exclusively royalist units as the basis for the new army. Scobie considered the royalists essential to support his own meager forces in Athens, but he insisted on disarming ELAS and pressed the Greek government to issue the order, which was published on 1 December.

The incident that triggered the outbreak of fighting was an EAM demonstration in Athens on 3 December, when Greek police opened fire killing several protesters. EAM-ELAS responded with an organized chain of attacks on police stations in the capital, prompting General Scobie to send his units against ELAS forces. The strength of the communist units was significant, amounting to around 12,000. This was more than Scobie expected and left British and Greek government forces in a difficult position until the arrival of large British reinforcements from Italy. During the fighting, the British used companies of a newly-created National Guard composed to a large extent of former members of the Security Battalions who had collaborated openly with the Germans during the Occupation.

**Our Man in Greece**

From the beginning of the fighting, Churchill supported the decisions of General Scobie and the British ambassador in Athens, Sir Reginald Leep-
er, to suppress the revolt against the Greek government. Accordingly, the British Prime Minister resolved to intervene personally to resolve the conflict. In a dramatic decision, he flew to Athens along with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and arrived there on Christmas day.

Churchill attempted to bring the different factions together and enable them to cooperate in finding common political ground so that peace and order would be restored. For this purpose, after much discussion with Leeper and the British Minister-resident at Allied Headquarters Mediterranean Harold Macmillan, Churchill formulated the plan of a conference consisting of repre
sentatives of the various Greek political parties, including EAM. To promote his design, Churchill met Prime Minister Papandreou and Archbishop of Greece Damaskinos, who would chair the conference. Macmillan states in his memoirs that the receipt of the invitations upset some of those invited, who resented the presence of EAM representatives, but these malcontents relented when the British threatened to reveal to the press the names of those who had refused the personal invitation of Churchill.

Ultimately a conference was held comprising eminent figures from every political party, including three representatives of EAM-ELAS, along with high-ranking British political and military officials like Field Marshal Alexander. Churchill’s rationale behind sponsoring the conference was to put an end to the Greek conflict. He believed that the meetings would probably result in the formation of a united government and would show the world that Britain was determined to settle the Greek question.

In his opening speech, Churchill underlined his wish to end the Greek turmoil by political means, but at the same time he pointed out that—as a last resort—he was ready to resolve the issue militarily and indicated that he had the support of both Stalin and Roosevelt. After statements by Eden and Alexander, the British party departed, leaving the Greek politicians to their deliberations, which proved unfruitful.

The representatives of the establishment parties could not find common ground with EAM, whose representatives insisted that to sign an armistice they required control of half the cabinet seats and the complete disbanding of the troops supporting the government. This provoked a strong negative response from the other politicians present. The only point on which almost all present could agree was the need to create a Regency, with Archbishop Damaskinos serving as Regent, while the return of George II, King of the Hellenes, to Athens would depend on the will of the Greek people, as expressed through a plebiscite.

**Regency by Fiat**

On 26 December, the centrist newspaper Ελευθερία featured Churchill’s visit in its headline. The lead article suggested that the meeting he convened might resolve the turmoil. The next day’s headline referred to Churchill as the general representative of the Allies in Greece and analyzed the meeting and its results. The story mentions that during his speech Churchill expressed his will for Greece to be reinstated as
a member of the United Nations through an agreement at the conference table and the creation of a provisional government. Additionally, he was reported to have stated that the British government was determined to enforce the rule of law in Greece and to clear the capital area of ELAS forces.\(^\text{11}\)

On 28 December, the lead article in Ελευθερία once more reported on the conference and the fact that the participating representatives could not reach a general agreement beyond establishing a Regent in the place of the king, since the conditions for ending hostilities set by EAM were not acceptable to the other parties.\(^\text{12}\) More coverage was given to the Regency question following an extensive meeting on the 29th. The newspaper reported that on their return to England, Churchill and Eden would press George II to accept the decision of the conference and recognize Damaskinos as Regent until the Greek people could decide for themselves about the nature of the Greek polity.\(^\text{13}\)

The decision to back the Archbishop as Regent was taken at the end of the second day of the conference when, after a private discussion with Damaskinos, the EAM delegates agreed to accept him. The communists had also asked to meet with Churchill privately, but he refused. The British Prime Minister was determined to do as he had threatened if the conference failed to arrive at a political solution: he would use military means to clear the Athens-Piraeus area of ELAS units. This he made clear in a telegram on 28 December sent to General Hastings Ismay in London.\(^\text{14}\) Churchill also did as he promised on his return to London and pressed the Greek king to accept Damaskinos as Regent by making it clear that the British government would recognize the Archbishop’s authority with or without the king’s support. This brought an immediate response from George II, who made a statement appointing Damaskinos as Regent.\(^\text{15}\)

The opinion of the Greek communists about Churchill’s handling of the Greek question is found in a memorandum of May 1947 sent by the secretary general of the Greek Communist Party to Stalin. The Greek leader stated that, during the clash of December 1944, the British Prime Minister found Greece isolated and imposed his will, forcing EAM and the Greek Communist Party to accept an armistice early in 1945.\(^\text{16}\)

**What Was Achieved?**

Churchill’s initiative to visit Athens and sponsor a conference of representatives from every main Greek party and political faction in order to stop the conflict that had broken out in and around the Greek capital did not result in a peaceful settlement. The Greek political establishment could not reach a compromise with the communist-led EAM-ELAS. Consequently, the clash continued between ELAS and the British forces in Attica, assisted by the regular Greek army units loyal to the Greek government and Greek security forces—some of whom had cooperated with the Germans.

Churchill’s intervention, however, did bring about general agreement of the parties represented at the conference for the appointment of a Regent until the Greek people could decide whether they wished to restore the monarchy. Without Churchill’s role and influence, it is highly unlikely that the Greek king would have accepted such an arrangement.\(^\text{6}\)

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**Endnotes**


7. Woodhouse, p. 331.


10. *Ελευθερία* (Πάνος Κόκκας), αρ. 93 (December 1944a).

11. *Ελευθερία* (Πάνος Κόκκας), αρ. 94 (December 1944b).

12. *Ελευθερία* (Πάνος Κόκκας), αρ. 95 (December 1944c).

13. *Ελευθερία* (Πάνος Κόκκας), αρ. 96 (December 1944d).


15. Ibid., pp. 278–79.

In 1994 the United States hosted the World Cup, and I was the artist on Umbro’s Soccerblast: Legends of Soccer Tour. I worked alongside American soccer superstar Michelle Akers-Stahl; Sir Stanley Matthews, who was England’s wizard of the dribble; England’s 1966 World Cup goalkeeper hero Gordon Banks; and Brazilian legend Roberto Rivelino.

It was my role standing pitch side to draw the goals as they flew in so that the fans could see my images on the big screen high above the field of play.

Michelle Akers-Stahl and Roberto Rivelino hammered the ball into the back of the opposition net again and again, much to the approval of the roaring fans. Even Sir Stanley Matthews, then nearly eighty, raised laughs from the crowd when, with a shoulder feint or body swerve, he left a defender on the seat of his pants.

When the games were over, I had an opportunity to talk to the soccer superstars. On one occasion, I asked Sir Stanley what Winston Churchill had said when he greeted players before matches during the wartime England internationals. These moments were recorded by the newsreels and shown in cinemas. The Prime Minister stopped as he walked down the line of the England team to shake hands and speak with each player.

“It was pretty much the same words every time,” said Stanley. “Winston would still hold onto your hand after the initial handshake, but not too tightly. I imagined he was checking for any sign of nerves, a slight tremble or something. Then he would ask me if the ‘troops’ were ready for action. He never said players or footballers. I always nodded. Then Winston would invariably lean forward and ask me if I was going to lead the opposing defence a merry dance. ‘Yes sir,’ I always instantly replied. Winston would then look straight into my eyes, smile, and then walk away.”

Before Stanley continued he started on another glass of water. I never saw him drink anything else but water. “I always played well when Winston was watching,” he said. “Truth is the whole team played well. All of us found that little bit extra. We never lost a game. Never. Thanks to Winston.

“I will never forget one particular game when I had one of those days when I could do nothing wrong. Time after time, I would waltz through the opposition defence. After that game, Winston congratulated me, and I remember asking him if he had ever played football. ‘Never,’ said Winston. ‘Polo and always with a very courageous horse. Courage is everything. It is the greatest of all qualities. It guarantees all other virtues. That is the reason why you are such a successful player Stanley. Courage. Am I right?’ ‘Yes sir,’ I replied. ‘I always believe I can and will beat the opponent facing me.’ ‘Splendid,’ said Winston and shook my hand, and this time I was very conscious it was quite a firm handshake.”

By Paul Trevillion

Winston Churchill greets Stanley Matthews before an international match during the Second World War
Stanley put down his glass of water and laughed. “Looking back, I regret when talking with Winston about courage, the two of us didn’t exchange autographs. Winston might not have wanted mine, but what a golden opportunity I had to get the great man’s autograph. I can see it now: ‘To Stanley, Best wishes, Sir Winston Churchill.’ To have got that would have been something I would have treasured for a lifetime.”

From nowhere, another bottle of water appeared, and Stanley continued: “Sadly, when in 1965 I became the first footballer to be knighted, it was also the year when Sir Winston Churchill passed on. A very sad time, but I am thankful I have been left with some wonderful memories of our greatest war leader.”

I watched Sir Stanley Matthews walk away, possibly in search of another bottle of water, but inwardly I smiled. I did not pass up on the golden opportunity to get the great man’s autograph, and I have the portrait I painted signed by Sir Winston Churchill. [See back cover of FH 175.] Of course Stanley was right: it is a lifetime’s treasure!

Paul Trevillion is Artist in Residence at the National Football Museum in Manchester, England.
“School Display”: Churchill’s First Published Work

By Fred Glueckstein

Young Winston Churchill had just turned seventeen when his first published work was printed in December 1891 in the pages of the Harrow School’s weekly newspaper The Harrovian under the pseudonym Junius Junior.

Churchill’s first published work raises a number of curious questions. Why did he write the letter? What did the letter express? Was there a reason he used the pseudonym Junius Junior, and was there a response by schoolmates, or the school administration?

Letters to the Editor

Winston Churchill entered Harrow, an independent boarding school for boys in Middlesex, on 17 April 1888. While there, he took up fencing and spent a good deal of time in the gymnasium. Churchill eventually became fencing champion of the school in December 1892.

On 8 October 1891, Churchill had his first letter published in The Harrovian. It was a two-sentence appeal for more convenient opening hours for the school library. In writing the paper, Churchill would have been cognizant of The Harrovian’s policy, which appeared regularly in its pages, and read:

CORRESPONDENCE: The Editors will be glad to receive any correspondence from Harrovians, past and present; but in all cases the writer must send his name and address—not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. The editors do not always endorse the opinions of their correspondents. All communications should be legibly written on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the Editors of “THE HARROVIAN,” care of Mr. Overhead, Harrow.

Six weeks later, on 19 December 1891, Churchill wrote a much lengthier letter about the school’s lack of encouragement to boys to take a greater interest in the gymnasium’s activities. This letter, written under the pseudonym Junius Junior, was regarded by Churchill’s son Randolph as his father’s first true published work.¹

First Letter from Junius

Dear Sirs, Great as the School undoubtedly is, it cannot afford to allow any of its mechanism to fall out of gear. When a public school possesses a Gymnasium, and especially such a fine one as ours, it becomes the duty of every one of us to see that it should not go to rack and ruin. I am far from asserting that the Gymnasium has gone completely down the hill, but it is no secret that it is going that way. This being so, it is for each and all to see that it goes no further in that direction.

We have lately been startled by an imposing announcement that the “School Display” would take place in the Gymnasium on Saturday, 12th December. Whether those who went to see this “Display” were satisfied is more than I can say, but everyone will assent when I state that the notice would have been much more correct, had it proclaimed that the Aldershot Staff would give a Display in the Gymnasium on Saturday, 12th December.
A School Assault-of-Arms is intended to bring out our own talent. The Aldershot Staff can be seen elsewhere, but untold gold could not purchase the services of the School. Among the performers, the School was conspicuous by its absence. The endeavour to prove that four equalled eight failed signal-ly. Picture the "Display" without the assistance of the Aldershot Sergeants—it would indeed have been a “show.”

Now, what I ask, and what the School ought to ask, and will ask, is—Why did so few boys do anything? Why was the performance watched from the gallery by two members of the School Eight? Why is it that when, within a hundred yards of the Gymnasium, there is an athlete, whose sparring has ever been the guarantee of a full house, boxing was entirely omitted from the programme? It seems that to these questions certain answers might be made. “The School,” it might be said, “were asked and wouldn’t, the boxer has been approached and has refused, the members of the Eight have been exhorted, but they have declined with thanks.”

If that is so, there must surely be some reason for this spontaneous refusal, and to find this reason I turn to the Editors of The Harrovian.

There is another excuse that may be set forth. It may be urged that no one else was good enough to perform. In that case no further question is necessary. If, out of all who go to the Gymnasium, only five per annum are fit to perform before the School at the Assault, there is obviously a hitch somewhere.

All these things that I have enumerated serve to suggest that there is “something rotten in the State of Denmark.” I have merely stated facts—it is not for me to offer an explanation of them. To you, sirs, as directors of public opinion, it belongs to lay bare the weakness. Could I not propose that some of your unemployed special correspondents might be set to work to unravel the mystery, and to collect material where-with these questions may be answered.

The School itself has an ancient history; even the Gymnasium dates back to a Tudor. In those days they were not wont to “Risk” [Tudor Risk was the first Superintendent of Gymnasium, 1874–87] the success of the School Assault-of-Arms in the manner in which it was done on Saturday last. For three years the Assaults have been getting worse and worse. First the Midgets, then the Board School, and, finally, the Aldershot Staff have been called in to supplement the scanty programme. It is time there should be a change, and I rely on your influential columns to work that change.

Who Is This Junius?

We can only speculate about Churchill’s use of the pseudonym Junius Junior. His interest in history, however, argues for the following explanation. Letters of Junius was a collection of private and open letters critical of the government of King George III from an anonymous polemicist (Junius), as well as other letters in-reply from people to whom Junius had written between 1769 and 1772. The collection was published in two volumes in 1772 by Henry Sampson Woodfall, the owner and editor of a London newspaper, the Public Advertiser.

It appears likely that Churchill’s chosen pseudonym was a reference to the anonymous polemicist of the eighteenth century. Certainly, like the original, Churchill’s letter attracted replies also written under pen names such as that from “Octavus” published on 18 February 1892: “As to the letter which appeared in your last issue by ‘Junius Junior,’ there is no doubt that he is perfectly right in saying that the Gymnasium is going downhill. It is certainly not what it used to be. The competitions were more keenly competed for, the assaults were a greater success, and the standard of the Eight was much higher; and, I am sure, it is the unanimous desire of all well-wishers of the Gymnasium that this falling-off should not continue, but that every year should find Harrow better, keener, and more fitted for carrying off the Aldershot Shield than the preceding one.”

Another student styled himself “Aequitas Junior,” while acknowledging Junius Junior’s fervor for the welfare of the gymnasium but suggesting that his argument “seems to be just a trifle too severe on its present condition.” Aequitas Junior argued that during the last few years the proportion of the performances done at the school by outsiders had always been rather small and, in fact, the last time there were numerically far less outsiders than usual.

Aequitas Junior also wrote that a combination of accidents resulted in the members of the Eight having reasons for their absence, which included such unforeseen accidents as a fractured wrist; illness, and inability to practice because of an approaching scholarship. He ended: “It also strikes one as somewhat strange that your correspondent should say ‘the Eight have been exhorted, but they have declined with thanks.’ The absentee all had a very valid reason for their absence.”

Exasperated with Aequitas Junior, Churchill wrote a second letter to The Harrovian dated 17 March 1892. In publishing Churchill’s letter, The Harrovian’s editor Leo Amery (who later served in Churchill’s Cabinet during the war) added a note: “We have omitted a portion of our correspondent’s letter, which seemed to us to exceed the limits of fair criticism.”

FInEST HOUr 180/35
Second Letter from Junius

Dear Sirs, When fired by the lamentable failure of the Assault-at-Arms I wrote my last letter to you, I expected an answer. I had hoped to see an emphatic denial of the charges which I made. I had looked for an explanation, offered not only to one, but to all of my questions.

It seems, however, that I was mistaken. Your correspondent, “Aequitas Junior,” does not answer my letter: he avoids my main statement and seeks to champion his cause from a side issue; in fact, sirs, I had to read his letter several times before I could determine whether it was intended for an answer or a confirmation of what I wrote. But since it explains the one sentence of my letter which he is good enough to quote, I have decided to consider it as an answer.

I will not pause to criticise his style nor comment on his probable motives, though I am inclined to think that both are equally poor. Beginning with his opening sentences we find that he thinks I have been “just a trifle too severe” on the conditions of the Gymnasium. I may have been. I will not dispute the point. But if the statements detailed at length in my last letter were only incorrect in one particular, and if the inferences I drew were only “just a trifle too severe,” the state of things must indeed be bad.

As to the rest of the letter, it does not answer or concern me. He seems, however, to be under the impression that I compared the School Eight with the Aldershot staff. I deny it. Such a comparison, if indeed possible, would have been too odious. . . .

I assert, then, that my questions remain unanswered and my charges unrefuted. If what I stated were false, surely it were easy to prove it so, and if true, who should object? And in the presence of this half-hearted reply, which says, I allow, all there is to be said, and in the presence of the confirmation afforded to me by “Octavus,” I appeal to the readers of The Harrovian to decide whether in my last letter I stated fact or falsehood.

The Headmaster and Churchill

In 1941 Amery recalled: “As schoolboy editor of The Harrovian it fell to me to be the Prime Minister’s first editor and press censor. He submitted a trilogy of articles on Ducker [the school swimming pool], the gym, and the school workshop, breezy, entertaining and frankly critical of the existing administration of all these departments.”

“I can still see,” Amery mused, “the look of misery on his face as, in spite of his impassioned protests, I blue pencilled out some of his best jibes. However, even my pedantic zeal for the Victorian respectability of The Harrovian did not altogether save the expurgated text from criticism by the authorities concerned.”

Amery continued, “Mr. Welldon, the Headmaster, summoned the young author to his study and thus addressed him: ‘My boy, I have observed certain articles which have recently appeared in The Harrovian, of a character not calculated to increase the respect of the boys for the constituted authorities of the School. As The Harrovian is anonymous I shall not dream of inquiring who wrote those articles, but if any more of the same sort appear, it might become my painful duty to swish you!’ This, at least, is the story as Mr. Welldon more than once related it to me with great gusto.”

Avery believed Churchill’s letters to The Harrovian reflected his schooling in the Fourth Form of Mr. R. Somervell, whose teachings provided him with a complete knowledge of the elements of the English language. Churchill’s writing under the pseudonym Junius Junior foretold his great gifts as a master of the spoken and written word, and it represented Churchill’s first authenticated published work.

Fred Glueckstein wishes to thank Miss Tace Fox, Archivist and Record Manager at Harrow School, London for her invaluable assistance in researching the archives on his behalf.

Endnotes

The National WWII Museum provides vivid insight into the war that changed the world, but nothing can tell its story more dramatically than a visit to the actual places where victory was fought for and won. Our program allows you to experience these journeys in first-class comfort as you go behind the scenes to the beaches, bridges, cities, and villages where crucial battles took place and history-making decisions were made. Guided by the best experts in WWII history, you’ll hear the personal stories and walk in the footsteps of the citizen soldiers who fought for the freedom we enjoy today. From the hedgerows of Normandy, along “Hell’s Highway” in the Netherlands, in the foxholes surrounding Bastogne, and atop the Eagle’s Nest, this tour immerses you in the drama of D-Day and beyond.

*Terms and conditions apply. For a full list of terms and conditions, contact The National WWII Museum Travel at 1-877-813-3329 x 257.
The idea of establishing a permanent memorial to Winston Churchill in the United States began in 1961 during Westminster College’s commencement ceremonies, when Westminster President Dr. R. L. “Larry” Davidson and members of the St. Louis Branch of the English-Speaking Union hatched a bold plan to move the war-damaged church of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury from London, England, to Fulton, Missouri.

The original church dates to the twelfth century, but it was rebuilt in 1677 by Sir Christopher Wren following the Great Fire of London. It stood proudly at the corner of Love Lane and Aldermanbury, not far from the medieval Guildhall and near Wren’s masterpiece, St. Paul’s Cathedral.

On the night of 30 December 1940, catastrophe struck again when the church suffered a direct hit by an incendiary bomb dropped by the Luftwaffe. When morning came on the final day of that year, only the external stonework and the eight columns with acanthus-leaf capitals remained. Wren’s church lay in ruins. It remained so for more than twenty years until Larry Davidson saw an article in Life magazine just before Westminster’s commencement ceremony. That Life article prompted a discussion that transformed the Westminster College campus and established a permanent memorial to Winston Churchill in the United States.

The effort to relocate St. Mary the Virgin from London to Fulton was both national and international. The City of London, the Diocese of London, and several American Presidents—Kennedy, Johnson, Eisenhower, and Truman—supported the effort. Perhaps the most powerful endorsement came from Churchill himself, who, aged eighty-eight, wrote to Westminster College, “I am honoured....The removal of a ruined Christopher Wren Church, largely destroyed by enemy action in London in 1941 [sic] and its reconstruction and re-dedication at Fulton, is an imaginative concept.”

On 19 April 1964, former President Harry Truman, former Westminster President Franc McCluer, and several other surviving members of the platform party who had been present on 4 March 1946, when Churchill delivered his “Iron Curtain” speech, joined British Ambassador Lord Harlach for the groundbreaking ceremony. President Truman turned the symbolic first shovel.

After nearly five years of construction, The Times of London called the effort “perhaps the biggest jigsaw puzzle in the history of architecture.”

On 7 May 1969, the church was re-hallowed by the Right Rev. Anthony Tremlett, the Bishop of Dover. Former United States Ambassador to Britain Averell Harriman and the Earl Mountbatten of Burma (a member of the Royal Family and the Queen’s representative) gave the principal addresses and spoke about their experiences with Winston Churchill. Special guests at the dedication included Churchill’s youngest daughter Mary Soames and her eldest son Nicholas, now Sir Nicholas Soames MP.

Today, St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, remains a lasting symbol to Winston Churchill’s resilience and steadfastness in the face of adversity. It is the largest work in the collection of the National Churchill Museum, which was designated by Congress in 2009 as the nation’s Churchill museum.

Timothy Riley is Sandra L. and Monroe E. Trout Director and Chief Curator of the National Churchill Museum.
Opposite left:
Lord Mountbatten and Averell Harriman at the dedication of the church in Fulton in 1969

Left:
The ruins of the church in London after the Blitz

Below:
The beautifully restored interior of the church as it looks today
Winston spent the spring of 1893 “cramming” with Captain Walter James for the Sandhurst Entrance Examination scheduled for late June. Having twice failed the examination, Winston would have been expected to redouble his efforts, especially after Captain James had written to Lord Randolph in early March to say that Winston “means well but he is distinctly inclined to be inattentive and to think too much of his own abilities” and was “too much inclined up to the present to teach his instructors instead of endeavouring to learn from them.”

True to form, Winston did not meet those expectations in the seven weeks following that letter. On 29 April, Captain James once more wrote to Lord Randolph that, while he had no definite complaints to make, “I do not think his work is going on very satisfactorily.” James told Lord Randolph that he had spoken to Winston about this and suggested that he give his son “a little paternal advice and point out, what I have done, the absolute necessity of single-minded devotion to the immediate object before him.”

We do not know what if anything Lord Randolph said to his son, but the inference can be drawn that he must have said something, for in the next six weeks Winston’s efforts began to please Captain James. “He is working well and I think doing his best to get on,” James reported to Lord Randolph on 19 June, “and I have lately had no cause to complain of him.” While James added that Winston “ought to pass this time,” he concluded the letter by saying that “It would not do to let him know what I think of his chance of success as with his peculiar disposition, this might lead him to slacken off again.”

Churchill was right in the middle of the attack and experienced it first hand. He awoke in the early morning of 21 March to the sound of explosions of German mines under the British trenches, followed by “in less than one minute the most tremendous cannonade I shall ever hear…. The crash of the German shells bursting on our trench lines eight thousand yards away was so overpowering that the accession to the tumult of nearly two hundred [British] guns firing from much nearer could not even be distinguished.”

Within a week, the Germans had overrun Allied positions on the whole battlefield of the Somme, which the Germans had lost in 1916 with a staggering loss of life. Churchill returned to London on 23 March, and Lloyd George asked him how it would be possible to hold any positions on the battlefield now that their front lines had been breached. Churchill replied with a metaphor: “I answered that every offensive lost its force as it proceeded. It was like
throwing a bucket of water over the floor. It first rushed forward, then soaked forward, and finally stopped altogether until another bucket could be brought.” The Germans might advance thirty or forty miles, Churchill explained, but eventually the front could be reconstituted.

Reassured, Lloyd George sent Churchill back to France to secure evidence that the British and French armies had the strength to withstand the German advance. While there, Churchill met with the French President Georges Clemenceau, and the two men toured the battlefields together at some considerable risk to their safety. They met Marshall Foch on 30 March, and Foch proceeded to give evidence of the accuracy of Churchill’s water bucket metaphor by marking on a map the huge gains made by Germany on the first day of the attack and then showed how each succeeding day, the German advance grew progressively smaller until they reached, in Churchill’s words, “this poor, weak, miserable little zone of invasion which was all that had been achieved on the last day. One felt what a wretched, petty compass it was compared to the mighty strides of the opening days. The hostile effort was exhausted.”

Churchill’s contribution to slowing the offensive began the year before when he first became Minister of Munitions in July 1917. He quickly reorganized the ministry by reducing fifty semi-independent, overlapping divisions into ten, whose leaders met with him daily as a Munitions Council. Sir Martin Gilbert notes that the result was that by 21 April 1918, less than a year later, Churchill’s ministry “had been able to send [British commander General] Haig twice as many guns as had been lost or destroyed since the start of the German offensive… the same was true of aircraft. He also had been able to replace every tank lost by one of a newer and better pattern.”

75 YEARS AGO
Spring 1943 • Age 68
“What Stalin Would Think… I Cannot Imagine”

The spring of 1943 was kind to Churchill, with no major setbacks and only a few bumps in the road. On 7 April, American troops in western Tunisia linked up with the British Eighth Army. By 11 April, Montgomery had the remnants of the Afrika Corps in Tunisia on the run and had taken 25,000 prisoners. On 7 May, the British Army captured Tunis and the Americans seized Bizerta. By 9 May, 50,000 prisoners had been captured, including nine German Generals. By the end of May, the total had risen to more than 240,000 German and Italian prisoners. North Africa was at last free of the Axis occupation. The way was clear for the invasion of Sicily.

Sicily, however, was one of the bumps in the road. Churchill learned on 8 April that Eisenhower now opposed an invasion of Sicily, because there were two German divisions on the island as well as the expected six Italian divisions. Churchill responded in a memorandum that Ike’s view was “pusillanimous and defeatist doctrine” that would make the Allied governments “the laughing stock of the world.” Inasmuch as an Arctic convoy to the Russians had been cancelled because the escort ships were needed for the invasion of Sicily, he observed: “What Stalin would think when he has 185 German divisions on his front, I cannot imagine.”

Doubtless, Eisenhower was recalling the first contact between American and German forces when his soldiers were mauled at Kasserine Pass and lost 170 tanks. As a consequence of Eisenhower’s reluctance, Churchill resumed the heavy travel schedule he had endured during the first two months of the year, a schedule that had resulted in him being diagnosed with pneumonia that gave him a fever and a temperature of 102.

On 4 May, Churchill left England on the Queen Mary for his third trip to the United States during the war. Once in Washington, he was again invited by FDR to stay at the White House. While there, he and the President quickly reached an agreement giving the Sicily invasion the highest priority, Eisenhower’s reservations notwithstanding. The invasion of Italy would follow, with the focus shifting by November to preparations for a large-scale cross-Channel landing in May 1944.

Churchill also cleared up another bump in the road with FDR after having learned that the Americans had stopped exchanging information on the development of the atomic bomb. FDR ordered the resumption of this exchange.

Churchill did not return to England when the Washington conference ended. On 27 May, he took a flying boat to Gibraltar by way of Newfoundland, a seventeen-hour flight. On 28 May, he flew for three hours in a converted Lancaster bomber to Algiers. On 1 June, after stopping at an American air base in the desert, he flew to Tunis, where he addressed a large number of the First Army troops who helped to drive the Axis forces from North Africa. On returning to Gibraltar in the Lancaster on 4 June, bad weather caused him to change his original plans to switch to a more comfortable flying boat and to stick with the Lancaster. That same day, a Pan American flying boat from Lisbon to England on a similar flight path was shot down by German fighter planes with all passengers killed, including the British actor Leslie Howard. ☼
Before the 2016 referendum, both “Leave” and “Remain” sought to win Winston Churchill to their cause. Leavers relied on the famous Saturday Evening Post article from 1930: “We have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are interested and associated, but not absorbed.” Remainers reject this, arguing that Churchill’s views changed over the following fifteen years. They focus instead on the speeches from Zurich onwards during the late 1940s. Just before the 2016 referendum, the publisher of this book by Felix Klos released a shortened version dealing only with those “European Movement” days and badged it “the must read book of the referendum.” Published more than a year later, this full-length edition is engaging, well written, and well researched. Klos shows that both sides take too simplistic a view, whilst revealing Churchill’s thinking on “Europe” in more detail than ever before—but perhaps not quite in the way the author intends.

As anyone will know who is familiar with the notorious internet story about Churchill advocating the use of “poison gas”—fake news if ever there was any—Churchill’s talent for producing striking but loose phrases is a real problem for the historian. Klos makes quite clear, when Churchill spoke of a “United Europe,” that his meaning was not so plain as his language. When trying to understand the model that Churchill wished to create, readers would do better drawing an analogy with the “United Nations” than the “United States.” Churchill certainly set a hare running in his 1946 call for Europe to unite and was used as a figurehead by others thereafter. He did argue for European integration, but that does not necessarily mean that he would have approved of this European Union, or wish Britain to be a part of it. His meaning always remained opaque about how, in what ways, and how far such “unity” should progress. Klos points out that from the start there were two integrationist camps: the “radical federalists,” who wanted immediate, rigid, constitutional federalism imposed from the top down, and the “pragmatists” who favoured slower, limited integration, flowing from the peoples of Europe, where reconciliation preceded integration and which might or might not evolve into a federal union.

This distinction has been almost entirely forgotten in the contemporary debate, as has the fact that Churchill, along with almost the entirety of the British political establishment then and a majority now, was squarely in the latter camp: favouring a looser arrangement of nation states co-operating freely, rather than being forced together by rigid structures: a kind of economic NATO, perhaps based on the OEEC. Klos makes this entirely clear, quoting Churchill telling Eden, “Nothing will induce me to be a federalist.” In answer to a Labour question in the House of Commons in 1950 querying whether the Conservative party would ever be in favour of a federal union, Churchill answered that, although he worked with the federalists in the European movement, the party was “not committed to their conclusions,” and that Britain could not accept “full membership of a
federal system of Europe” because of its ties to the Commonwealth and America. Two years later, and once again prime minister, Churchill returned to his 1930 language: “We are not members of the European Defence Community, nor do we intend to be merged in a Federal European system. We feel we have a special relationship to both. This can be expressed by prepositions, by the preposition ‘with’ but not ‘of’—we are with them, but not of them.”

Klos is entirely clear, therefore, that Churchill did not want Britain to be part of a federal Europe, but one of a looser nature. This explains why, when Churchill returned to power, he did nothing to advance what was by then a federalist cause, stating in a written minute in response to the Schuman plan in 1951: “Our attitude towards further economic developments on the Schuman lines resembles that which we adopt about the European Army. We help, we dedicate, we play a part, but we are not merged with and do not forfeit our insular or Commonwealth character…. It is only when plans for uniting Europe take a federal form that we ourselves cannot take part, because we cannot subordinate ourselves or the control of British policy to federal authorities.”

This was more, however, than the methodological difference that Klos imagines. It was a philosophically different idea of where European integration should go, and one in which Churchill was very vague. Indeed, as Churchill himself told Duncan Sandy: “we are growing a living plant,” and it is probable that he did not spell out what he meant by “unity,” because he did not know himself. Indeed, some of Churchill’s pronouncements show that he had not thought through his own proposals, telling an audience, “For Britain to enter a European Union from which the Empire and Commonwealth would be excluded would not only be impossible but would, in the eyes of Europe, enormously reduce the value of our participation.” Of course, that is precisely what happened, and precisely what would always happen within a customs union that could logically only contain a geographically European state. Proponents of Churchill’s supposed federalism ignore his failure to address the logical consequences of some of his proposals where they collided with his long-held, central beliefs, but simply give him the benefit of the doubt—in a federalist direction.

In any event, the “pragmatist” side lost. The French, frustrated at the slow progress under Churchill’s beloved Council of Europe (which, it should be noted, still exists and from which Britain is not withdrawing), produced the federalist Schuman plan in 1950. Attlee’s Labour government decided not to accept the invitation to take part in the discussions. And so the crucial chance to shape the destiny of postwar Europe—in a British, non-federalist direction—was lost. Thereafter, there was only ever one show in town: one that Churchill had not desired, in which Britain was never comfortable, and, after forty years of ambivalence, one which Britain has now decided to leave.

Whether Churchill—who has been dead more than fifty years—would agree with this decision is impossible to say, and we should not try. But what is clear is that the European Union that now exists is not the one that Churchill dreamt of, being more federal, more bureaucratic and less democratic. That must be read alongside the other changed facts that Britain’s Empire is gone and its Commonwealth looser. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion, having read Klos’s book, that if Churchill had been listened to whilst in opposition, then we might have a very different European Union, one Britain was comfortable in and might not be leaving. For better or worse, Churchill was in opposition at the crucial time, and, by the time he was back in power, the course had essentially been set.

If modern day federalists wish to claim Churchill for their cause, Klos’s careful, fair, and scrupulous book will not assist them. History can help us understand Churchill’s views on his own times, and there are principles to be gleaned to guide us today. That is the role of history. But the decisions we make today are ones for us, not Churchill.

Robert Courts is Member of Parliament for Witney.
Lewis Lehrman has produced a wonderfully rendered comparison of two very different statesmen. Indeed, while the author’s recent Churchill, Roosevelt & Company related the statecraft of two closely intertwined war leaders, the juxtaposition of Lincoln and Churchill would seem a stretch, until now. Lehrman quickly points out the radically different backgrounds and personality traits of the president and the prime minister, yet he also suggests compelling historical parallels. Both leaders guided their countries to victory through essentially existential crises unprecedented in scope, the American Civil War and the Second World War.

Lehrman also notes that the modest and unassuming Lincoln served as Commander-in-Chief of an army that exceeded two million men, one of the largest in history to that point, while Churchill refused to yield even as the British Empire and Commonwealth, vast but impeckulous and poorly equipped, faced Hitler’s might with no outside aid following the fall of France.

One of the most valuable aspects of this work is how cogently it reveals the similarity of traits that made Lincoln and Churchill such outstanding wartime leaders. Both men possessed an aptitude for military affairs and harbored a deep understanding of history. Most critically, Lehrman documents Lincoln’s and Churchill’s shared sense of moral clarity with regard to the respective evils of American slavery and Nazism. This awareness created a determination in both leaders to see the fighting through to the end, even when defeat seemed imminent and those around them lost heart and clamored for peace, or some sort of shameful accommodation.

The two chief executives also shared great foresight. Lincoln began denouncing any Southern attempts at secession in the mid-1850s. As early as 1933, Churchill started condemning the Nazi tendency towards “ferocity and war spirit,” as well as Germany’s “pitiless treatment of minorities” such as the country’s Jewish population. Churchill was also quick to dismiss officers whom he saw as ineffective, particularly in the early campaigns in the Middle East and North Africa. Lehrman suggests it was General Sir Alan Brooke, who replaced Sir John Dill as Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1941, who best understood how to manage the relationship with the prime minister. Brooke’s intellect and stubbornness easily matched Churchill’s, with no small amount of mutual exasperation and respect.

Equally vital for effective war leadership was the ability of Lincoln and Churchill to see problems as a combination of political and military factors. Lincoln was shrewd enough to release the Confederate diplomats James Mason and John Slidell after the crew of the USS San Jacinto seized them from the British mail packet RMS Trent en route for Europe—“one war at a time,” as Lincoln put it. Churchill had the opposite problem: how to cultivate President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the hope that the immense war-making potential of the United States could be brought to bear against Germany.

In making his comparisons, Lehrman astutely shows just how large the Anglo-American relationship loomed in both conflicts. One cannot but reflect that the lives of Lincoln and Churchill might have briefly overlapped if the former had survived just a few more years. And Churchill, ever alert to his American bloodline and his own historical moment, could not help drawing a direct comparison in a 1939 speech: “All the heroism of the South could not redeem their cause from the stain of slavery, just as all the courage and skill which the Germans show in war will not free them from the reproach of
Nazism, with its intolerance and its brutality.” This compelling monograph makes one wonder how the respective leaders escaped more direct comparison for so long.

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**Leadership Lessons**


*Review by David Freeman*

One of the most frequently received requests by the International Churchill Society is for material about Churchill’s qualities as a leader. Lawrence M. Kryske is a retired US Navy commander and longtime Churchillian. No one is better qualified to write on the subject.

*Churchill without Blood, Sweat, or Tears* distills what Kryske has learned from more than fifty years of studying Churchill and a naval career that began with action during the Vietnam War and culminated as the first commanding officer of US Naval Station, Pascagoula, which was the Navy’s newest, most technologically advanced, and most environmentally clean base in the world.

Kryske begins by identifying Churchill’s formula for success: vision + courage + determination = success. The main sections of the book break down each of the three ingredients by identifying qualities that advance, cultivate, and deepen them.

Each section is supported with concrete examples from Churchill’s career and copious quotations that illustrate the essence of his leadership philosophy. When it comes to explaining courage, for instance (which Kryske rightly judges “the most difficult step”), the author cites this incontrovertible wisdom: “We shall not be judged by the criticisms of our opponents but by the consequences of our acts.”

Underlying Churchill’s leadership was the clarity of purpose that he championed his entire life against all threats: “The central principle of civilization is the subordination of the ruling authority to the settled customs of the people and their will as expressed through the Constitution.”

Even with noble vision and great courage, however, determination is still essential in order to persevere towards victory. Here Kryske identifies another one of Churchill’s greatest qualities: tenacity. Never did he express this better than in his famous injunction, “Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never, never—in nothing great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.”

This brief, brisk, and powerful handbook is informed by a lifetime of study and experience and is highly recommended both for those only just beginning their career path and those looking for an excellent jolt in their continuing leadership development.

David Freeman is the editor of Finest Hour.
A Gentlemanly Love of Liberty


Review by James W. Muller

We learn on its first page that this book had its origin in a conversation in England between its Portuguese author as a young man and the Austrian-born British subject Karl Popper, a professor of political philosophy at the London School of Economics, then in his old age. The author, João Carlos Espada, with the woman who became his wife, had earlier taken part in the revolution that ended the long dictatorship in his country and was working as political adviser to Portugal’s democratically elected president Mario Soares. The president had arranged for Popper to deliver a lecture in Lisbon, where Espada had discussed with him his research on Popper’s critique of Marxism and his theory of democracy. Popper invited Espada to come to Britain to continue the discussion. Hence their conversation in 1988 at Popper’s house, which Espada tells us remained in his recollection after more than a quarter-century “as vivid as I recalled it when I left his home in the evening of that unforgettable first visit” (2).

The conversation took a particular turn by accident, when Espada espied, among the “highly selective collection” of books in Popper’s living room, not only works by Plato, Aristotle, Smith, Burke, Kant, and more recently Keynes and Hayek (1), but also a huge shelf full of books by and on Winston Churchill.

In my youthful openness, and my scholarly arrogance, I could not help putting the question: “why do you have so many books on Churchill? I thought he was mainly a politician.”

Thereupon Popper turned to Espada “and, with great intensity, said something like this: ‘sit down, my boy, I am afraid I have to teach you something very seriously.’” Then the old professor gave the young scholar “a full lecture” lasting “much more than an hour” about “Winston Churchill and the tradition of liberty among the English-speaking peoples” (2).

What Popper told Espada is that Churchill, as “the only leading politician, not only in Britain but in the whole of Europe, to have perceived the threat of Hitler almost a decade before he invaded Poland and started the Second World War,” had “saved western civilisation.” Knowing that that civilization could not survive without liberty, he had refused to compromise by making “a separate peace with Hitler,” although Britain was at a disadvantage against the Nazis’ military might. Had Hitler prevailed, western civilization would have been destroyed. Popper had so many books on Churchill “because he saved us.” He explained to Espada that the political culture of the English-speaking peoples combined “a deep love of liberty” and “a sense of duty,” which Popper called “the British mystery.”

This culture was exemplified in the British gentleman, “who does not take himself too seriously,” but takes “his duties very seriously,” amid many who “speak only about their rights” (2). Popper rejected “the mistaken view” that the gentleman was a snob, pointing out that gentlemen sympathized with eccentrics and underdogs, and he took care to explain to his puzzled interlocutor what an underdog was. Then he told Espada that to “grasp the specificity of the Anglo-American tradition of liberty,” he would have to study and live in Britain or America (3).

It was Allen Packwood, director of the Churchill Archives Centre at Churchill College, Cambridge, who later urged Espada to begin his book on Anglo-American liberty by recounting the conversation that had changed his life. Espada and his wife gave up comfortable positions in Lisbon so he could earn a doctoral degree at Oxford under the supervision of another naturalized Briton, Ralf Dahrendorf, who had been Popper’s student. Afterwards Espada taught in the United States at Brown, Stanford, and Georgetown. When he returned to Portugal, he founded the Institute for Political Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon. There the man who sought liberty through revolution in his youth learned what it takes to sustain it. As a professor of political science, Espada has taught a generation of students, some of them now among his faculty colleagues, his appreciation for the distinctive advantages of Anglo-American liberty. Eventually, as the leading lusophone Anglophile, Espada became a prominent expositor and proponent of that tradition on the continent of Europe. He takes pride in the fact that Britain’s oldest alliance, dating back to the fourteenth century, is with Portugal.
The Anglo-American Tradition of Liberty, which is in part Espada’s intellectual autobiography, reflects his vocation as a teacher. Often he tells us how he introduces authors whose works contributed to his education to his students or what students think of them. Aristotle says that the characteristic activity of friends is conversation, and the book’s tone is friendly and conversational: often Espada repeats an important point for the benefit of the reader, as a teacher would in class. In his acknowledgments he explains that his book “was not made according to a previously established plan” but “has emerged gradually,” mostly “from teaching” (ix), following a distinction made by the Austrian-born economist Friedrich Hayek between “organisation or made order and spontaneous or grown order” (65–66).

In successive chapters of the book Espada explains what he learned from a succession of scholars, some of whom he knew in person: first “personal influences” from Popper, Dahrendorf, British Labour peer and political theorist Raymond Plant, and American political writer Irving Kristol and historian Gertrude Himmelfarb; next lessons from “cold warriors,” French political theorist Raymond Aron, Hayek, British diplomat and academic Isaiah Berlin, philosophy professor Michael Oakeshott, and naturalized American political philosopher Leo Strauss; then proponents of “orderly liberty,” British philosopher Edmund Burke, American founder James Madison (whom Espada contrasts with the revolutionary French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau), and French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville.

These essays lead up to his chapter on Winston S. Churchill, subtitled “The English-speaking peoples and the free world.” Espada quotes British historian Geoffrey Elton’s description of Churchill as, “quite simply, a great man” (188), and the cover of his book has a handsome photograph of Churchill’s statue in Parliament Square. Although the author admits that the statesman’s “works are not widely read and certainly not studied” among intellectuals, he claims that Churchill may have been the greatest twentieth-century “representative of the western tradition of liberty” (139). His lifelong opposition to communism and Nazism, to tyranny from the left or from the right, arose from his devotion to the British “tradition of limited government and of liberty under law” (151).

One of Espada’s favorite quotations is from the British political writer Anthony Quinton, who argues that “the effect of the importation of Locke’s doctrines into France was much like that of alcohol on an empty stomach” (6; cf. 7, 102, 106, 108, 159, 186), making revolution in France bolder, bloodier, and brighter than constitutional changes in Britain for want of a tradition of limited government to restrain excesses of popular rule. Espada emphasizes the importance of Churchill’s argument in A History of the English-Speaking Peoples that liberty, the rule of law, and agreement that a man’s home is his castle allow British subjects to achieve happiness. Thus Espada’s book offers a different view of Churchill, making him an intellectual defender of the liberty that even now allows Englishmen to live a contented life, rather than a backward-looking statesman longing for the Victorian era. In the last chapters of the book, written before Britain’s vote to leave the European Union, Espada, who is not anti-European, applies the spirit of Anglo-American liberty to Europe’s twenty-first century troubles by urging European statesmen to stop longing for continental uniformity and respect differences in the settled ways of life of their distinct European nations.


James W. Muller is Professor of Political Science at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and chairman of the ICS Board of Academic Advisers.
This little book shows that if Churchill did not have an aptitude for music, he certainly took much enjoyment from it.

There can be no doubt that Churchill’s taste in music did not run to the classical. The symphony, opera, and ballet were not for him. But music comes in many varieties, and appreciation can only ever be subjective.

Churchill enjoyed the music hall ditties of his youth and could quote the words of his favorites to the end of his days. He also treasured the school songs unique to Harrow, which he attended during his teenage years.

As a soldier, Churchill appreciated both traditional marches and the songs developed by those who fought in the First World War. As a man steeped in Biblical verse, he also took inspiration from hymns.

He never tired of Gilbert and Sullivan and was fond of the musical ditties of Noel Coward, including “Let’s Not Be Beastly to the Germans.”

Don Cusic’s accomplishment is to identify the individual songs that Churchill enjoyed most and introduce them during relevant events in Churchill’s life. Three songs, for example, are presented in connection with Churchill’s first wartime meeting with President Roosevelt in 1941, which concluded with a prayer service for which Churchill selected the music: “For Those in Peril on the Sea,” “Onward Christian Soldiers,” and “O God, Our Help in Ages Past.”

Cusic does more than simply name the songs, however. He provides the background to each piece and all the lyrics as well. The only thing missing here is the sheet music. Readers, nevertheless, can get a flavor of Churchill’s eclectic taste.
The recent Channel 4 documentary “Churchill’s Secret Mistress” asserted, but did not establish, that the great man had an affair with Doris, the wife of Viscount Castlerosse during the mid-1930s. The evidence that two well-qualified historians, Warren Dockter and Richard Toye, produced to make the case for this adultery is flimsy and circumstantial, whereas Churchill gave a lifelong demonstration of his faithful devotion to his wife Clementine.

Having been Keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge and written much about Churchill and the inter-war period, I was interviewed for the documentary myself. During filming, I explained my reasons for disbelieving in the alleged liaison.

I noted that the allegation rests on two pieces of testimony. The first is a 1985 tape-recording in which Sir John Colville, one of Churchill’s wartime private secretaries, asserted that Churchill “certainly had an affair.” The second is a family tradition expounded by Lady Castlerosse’s niece, based on confidences shared with her relations at the time, that Doris did indeed become Churchill’s mistress.

All this is second-hand and threadbare. Colville did not come to know Churchill until 1940 and by 1985, two years before his death, was notoriously vague. If Colville’s words had been broadcast in full, they would have shown that he could not remember Doris Castlerosse’s name, got muddled about other details, and told a most implausible story about how Clementine supposedly found out about her husband’s “little fling.”

Colville was not above repeating gossip, and he may have simply confused Winston with Randolph Churchill, one of many who did have an affair with Doris. Colville may even have been transposing Churchill’s outrageous latter-day flirtation with Colville’s own wife Meg, about which Clementine wrote with some amusement. No mention was made in the documentary that Doris was a wholly unreliable witness, who by her own confession was given to making “absurd misstatements.” She relied on attracting wealthy lovers to fund her extravagance, and she may well have tried adding to her allure as a femme fatale by whispering that the famously monogamous Churchill was one of her conquests.

The experienced producer Richard Sanders pronounced my interview great. Dockter reckoned that it gave the programme essential balance. One of the cameramen even remarked that I had converted him. But Channel 4 maintained that the case for Churchill’s infidelity was so compelling that there was no room for dissent. So my interview was cut, to the embarrassment of Sanders and the chagrin of Dockter, who both contacted me to apologise. Channel 4 committed the professional communicator’s cardinal sin of not allowing inconvenient facts and arguments to get in the way of a good story. Readers of Finest Hour know better and will find a full version of this article on the website of the Churchill Archives Centre at www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives.

By Piers Brendon

Leading Myths – The Castlerosse Affair
Gary Oldman won the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role at the 90th annual Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood, California on 4 March. Oldman, who had only been nominated once before, received his first Oscar for his performance as Winston Churchill in the film *Darkest Hour*, directed by Joe Wright.

When first approached to play the role of the British Prime Minister, Oldman objected that he looked nothing like Churchill and was not suited to the role. After persistent persuasion from Wright, however, Oldman agreed—provided Japanese makeup wizard Kazuhiro Tsuji was part of the project. This decision led not only to an Oscar for Oldman but gold statuettes for Tsuji, David Malinowski, and Lucy Sibbick for Best Makeup and Hairstyling.

Oldman’s extensive makeup took a full six months to develop. It took four hours to apply each morning and one hour to remove. But it was time well spent. Director Joe Wright was amazed that the makeup did not require digital touchups during post-production, because the lamps used to light numerous scenes were very hot.

Just as much work went into Oldman’s internal preparation as went into his external appearance. He spent four months preparing for the role and would send Wright phone recordings of himself performing and practicing the speeches. It all paid off on Oscar night.

During his acceptance speech, Oldman said, “I would just like to salute Sir Winston Churchill, who has been marvelous company on what can be described as an incredible journey.”

![Gary Oldman with his Oscar](Photo by Mark Seliger, *Vanity Fair*)
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