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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 will be 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

Winston Churchill with his son Randolph and grandson Winston in the garden of No. 10 Downing Street, 1952. See related stories on pages 24 and 28. Photo: The Broadwater Collection
FROM THE EDITOR

The Churchill Men

In our last issue we looked at some of the women closest to Winston Churchill. In this issue we look at some of the men who surrounded his life, especially those in his family.

Churchill was the grandson of both the stolid seventh Duke of Marlborough and the mercurial Leonard Jerome. Paul J. Taylor looks at this Yankee entrepreneur and finds that no shortage of the American’s personality found its way into his grandson. Paul Addison then examines the enigmatic relationship between Churchill and his father Lord Randolph and notes a key difference in their political vision.

Much has been written about the relationship between Churchill and his parents, which Churchill saw as unbearably distant. Little attention, however, has been paid to how Lord and Lady Randolph were viewed by their younger son. Celia and John Lee look at the life of Jack Churchill and, in so doing, slightly change our perception of the self-centered young Winston. Similarly, we see Churchill’s own son Randolph somewhat differently by looking at him here through the eyes of his sister Sarah Churchill.

We are also pleased to follow a long standing Churchill tradition of having sons write of their fathers. Randolph Churchill, President of the International Churchill Society, tells the story of his father the “Younger Winston” and the challenges of living up to such a famous name.

Churchill, of course, felt the influence of men outside his family. One such was his Head Master at Harrow, J. E. C. Welldon, who had an interesting career of his own, as Fred Glueckstein explains. As the son of an American mother, Churchill cared deeply about American history. Not surprisingly, the greatest man of the twentieth century found a hero in the greatest man of the nineteenth. Lewis E. Lehrman compares and contrasts Churchill and Abraham Lincoln as the leaders of democracies at war.

John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, was part of Winston Churchill’s family. Like Lincoln, however, the great general was an influence Winston Churchill could only learn from through reading. John von Heyking shows how Churchill’s study of his most famous ancestor prepared him for the responsibilities of the Second World War.

Finally, news of Churchill’s “belief” in extraterrestrial life swept through the global news media earlier this year. Timothy Riley of the National Churchill Museum in Fulton, Missouri explains the story, while providing the most reliable and authoritative account of what it is really all about. He shows once again why Finest Hour is the recognized journal of record on all things related to Churchill.

David Freeman, April 2017
**In Praise of Women**

NEW YORK—Your number 175 on “The Churchill Women” is an outstanding theme, extremely well executed. Congratulations. I am also pleased that you use the Chicago Manual of Style. When my footnotes or endnotes are so extensive, I sometimes truncate them. My teachers in undergraduate and graduate school would take the ruler to me.

—Lewis E. Lehrman

**Santé!**

MONT-SAINT-AIGNAN, FRANCE—Our new International Churchill Society President Randolph Churchill was so pleased with my “biting” review of the biographie gourmande in FH 175 [p. 46] that he had a quiet word with his good friend Christian Pol-Roger. Imagine my surprise when I received a carton of six 2008 vintage bottles!—Antoine Capet

**Erratum**

In the first paragraph on page 6 of FH 175, the year of the wedding of Churchill’s parents was incorrectly given as 1875 instead of 1874. The Editor is aghast at his oversight, which was not the fault of the author. Can we blame the Pol Roger? [Yes, yes we can.—Dep. Ed.]

**Cape Town Gold**

SHAKER HEIGHTS, OH—In his article “Cape Town Gold: A Churchill Myth in Reverse” in FH 172, Professor Warren Kimball wrote that Churchill “had printed in his memoir a draft message as having been sent to Roosevelt” when it was not. It was recently brought to Professor’s Kimball’s attention that British Foreign Office records as well as the Official Biography both indicate the message was sent. Based on this, Professor Kimball allowed that the message may have been sent, but he pointed out that it did not mean that Roosevelt received the message, for he was unable to locate it among the Roosevelt Papers during his research for his Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence.—Michael McMenamin
As history tells it, dissuading Winston Churchill from participating in the D-Day landings required the efforts of several generals and King George VI himself. But nothing could stop the formidable leader from paying a personal visit to the Normandy beachhead just six days later, on June 12, 1944. The world was changing after all; Churchill needed to be there to see it for himself.

Today, it is the children and grandchildren of the brave souls that fought World War II who visit these places. They go to remember, explore, engage, and reflect on the lessons learned, and to fulfill a duty to pass those insights along to future generations. While many organizations offer brief visits to sites where the war was fought and won, none provide such comprehensive, informed, and poignant journeys as The National WWII Museum.

Thanks to the efforts of Museum leaders, travelers with an interest in World War II have the opportunity to embark on thoughtfully planned Signature Journeys designed and led by esteemed WWII historians, best-selling authors, and curators of The National WWII Museum collection. Each journey explores a theme—such as war correspondents or the secret lives of spies—and features exclusive access to related behind-the-scenes settings and authentic local experiences.

By day, guests travel in the company of renowned historians and authors, talented tour managers, and local guides who bring the stories of each site to life in vivid detail. With exclusive access to archival materials from the Museum’s collection—including digital recordings of intimate interviews with veterans—travelers are able to relive the pivotal moments on the beaches and bridges and in the cities and villages where crucial battles took place, and where history-making decisions were made.

Highlights of the journeys include special access to rarely seen sites, participation in VIP events, and opportunities to interact with people who were eyewitnesses to history.

Travelers who embark on the Museum’s Signature Journeys also enjoy effortless transportation via private, air-conditioned motor coach, delicious meals in venues where the likes of Hemingway once dined, and five-star service every step of the way. Nighttime accommodations add to the enrichment with stays in luxurious and historic hotels such as Château de Sully or Hotel Villa Lara in Bayeux, Westin Paris Vendôme, and Maison des Armateurs in Saint-Malo, France.

Travelers return home with once-in-a-lifetime memories, autographed mementos, and keepsake travel guides with maps, photographs, and historical information plucked from the Museum’s collection.

The War’s Most Illustrious Voices

Departing in late September of 2017, the nine-day Writing the War journey retraces the footsteps of the WWII era’s most celebrated war correspondents. During this enlightening adventure, guests will travel in the company of best-selling author and historian Donald L. Miller, PhD.

This star-studded itinerary draws upon the Museum’s extensive collection of stories and recollections, bringing into sharp focus the courageous, professional
correspondents who often slogged through the same mud as the infantry, jotting down notes in their foxholes and taking cover during bombardments. These were the legendary chroniclers who brought the war to life through their writings and images.

Each day, travelers awaken to share the adventures of Ernest Hemingway, Ernie Pyle, Martha Gellhorn, and “Beachhead Don” Whitehead as they recorded the events of the war. Highights include Ernie Pyle’s “Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish” on Omaha Beach and other sites of war-torn Europe. In the beautiful walled city of Saint-Malo, the tour follows the footsteps of Lee Miller, the fashion model-turned-photojournalist. At the Ritz in Paris, guests raise a toast to the bar that was “liberated” by Hemingway before he drove deep into the Huertgen Forest for his final battle experience.

Evening meals are equally historic, as guests have the opportunity to relive such events as the meeting of Hemingway and fellow journalist Robert Capa, who dined together at Hotel La Mère Poulard at Mont Saint-Michel in July 1944. Nighttime accommodations include a stay in the historic Normandy château that served as a German headquarters between Bayeux and Port-en-Bessin, as well as overnights within the walled city of Saint-Malo, and steps from the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle in Aachen.

Sacrifice and Espionage
Avid readers of Alex Kershaw’s books, as well as those not yet familiar with his works, will appreciate The National World War II Museum’s Soldiers & Spies seven-day journey through France, which focuses on the author’s New York Times best-selling books The Bedford Boys and Avenue of Spies.

Departing in mid-October 2017, this suspense-filled adventure begins by following the first wave of Americans to land in Normandy, with the author himself serving as the featured historian. Guests traverse Omaha Beach of Normandy with Kershaw as he relates stories of sacrifice about the “Bedford Boys,” who came ashore with Company A, 116th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division during the first wave at Omaha Beach on D-Day.

Tour members also roam the breathtaking streets of Paris with Kershaw, who provides depth and context to the espionage that occurred there more than 70 years ago. Avenue Foch, one of the most upscale and elite streets in Paris, was home to Avenue of Spies protagonist Dr. Sumner Jackson and his family. Their address at Number 11 was both a meeting place for the French Resistance and a drop site for crucial information. High-ranking Nazis took up residence nearby, putting the Jacksons in constant danger. Kershaw’s stories will bring to life the Jackson
family’s courage at a time when “Never had so many psychopaths and sadists been based on one street in Paris.”

In keeping with the drama and intrigue of a story about espionage, guests on this magnificent journey enjoy stays in grand hotels, experience French hospitality at its most authentic and charming, and share marvelous wine and cuisine as they savor stories of heroism and sacrifice that will remain in their memories long after their last glass of champagne. This journey features special VIP events offering opportunities to meet people who were eyewitnesses to the history of WWII-era France, including the D-Day invasions, life in occupied Paris, and the daring efforts of the Allied forces.

An Iconic Journey of Remembrance

Departing from Amsterdam on May 30, 2019, this iconic D-Day 75th Anniversary voyage promises to be one of life’s greatest adventures for those with a keen interest in the events of World War II.

Sailing in the comfort of a six-star luxury cruise ship, guests will enjoy the company of renowned WWII historians and authors, special onboard events, and exceptional private tours and visits ashore. The thoughtfully designed itinerary offers a truly exclusive, memorable, and personalized travel experience that culminates in a special remembrance ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 2019.

Over this 10-day voyage, guests will sail aboard one of the world’s most acclaimed luxury cruise ships, the Regent Seven Seas Navigator. Fresh from a multimillion-dollar refurbishment, this six-star luxury coastal ship features just 249 beautifully appointed staterooms and an unmatched crew-to-passage ratio, ensuring complete comfort and attentive service for every one of her privileged guests. Onboard amenities include four gourmet dining venues and the world-famous Canyon Ranch Spa. On board, guests will sail with many of The National WWII Museum’s closest friends and supporters—including D-Day veterans—and enjoy many opportunities for informal discussions, formal talks, group activities, and enlightening lectures by many of the world’s most renowned WWII scholars. Included shore excursions feature visits to hallmark sites such as Point-du-Hoc, Omaha Beach, and Ste-Mère-Église.

Also included are a series of exclusive and immersive battlefield excursions to places not typically found on other D-Day itineraries. In addition to the military touring, more cultural shore experiences are offered than ever before, such as Belgian chocolate demonstrations and tastings, private art gallery openings, and an optional once-in-a-lifetime flyover of the Normandy Beaches and full-day in Paris by private helicopter. The pinnacle of all shore experiences will culminate at the 75th Anniversary of D-Day ceremony.

Reserve a Place in History

The National WWII Museum Signature Journeys extend the Museum’s tradition of inspiration, excellence, and thoughtful inquiry to important WWII sites around the world. With VIP access to the most intriguing destinations, rich historical context from travel experts, primary-source materials from the Museum’s digital collections, and custom experiences found nowhere else, The National WWII Museum has become the leader in WWII travel, providing unforgettable journeys into history.

To access discounts for early booking, view detailed itineraries, and learn more about departures and availability visit the travel program website at www.ww2museumtours.org or call 1-877-813-3329 x 257.
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The Fabulous Leonard Jerome: Churchhill’s “Fierce” American Roots

By Paul J. Taylor

Winston Churchill once observed about a photo of his grandfather Leonard Jerome that he was “very fierce.” “I’m the only tame one they’ve produced,” he said modestly. Jerome, like his grandson, spent a lifetime beating the odds.

Despite an historic disdain for hereditary aristocracy, Americans love to create their own—if transitory—nobility. They are the wealthy, stars, glamorous, or notorious. Leonard Jerome was all that and more: he was a feisty, flamboyant, ultra-wealthy investor, sportsman, diplomat, raconteur, and arts patron. He easily made fortunes and easily lost them. His friends were a “Who’s Who” of the nouveau riche elite, and by age forty his informal moniker was “The King of Wall Street.”

Jerome’s life started humbly in 1817: he was one of ten children who tended chickens and other livestock on father Isaac’s farm in Palmyra, New York. Arriving in Palmyra at the same time was the family of a young Joseph Smith, who went on to found the Mormon church. The Jeromes had their own religious antecedents. Their French Huguenot forebears immigrated in 1710.

At age fourteen, Leonard toiled in a store, where he learned to haggle. He followed brothers to Princeton University, but, struggling with math and expenses, he transferred to and graduated from the less expensive Union College in Schenectady, New York. Arriving in Palmyra at the same time was the family of a young Joseph Smith, who went on to found the Mormon church. The Jeromes had their own religious antecedents. Their French Huguenot forebears immigrated in 1710.

At age fourteen, Leonard toiled in a store, where he learned to haggle. He followed brothers to Princeton University, but, struggling with math and expenses, he transferred to and graduated from the less expensive Union College in Schenectady, New York. He then studied law and started a practice before an entrepreneurial spirit led him to found a newspaper and printing business. Both succeeded thanks to his shrewd management and hard-hitting political editorials.

The adult Jerome was a witty, charming, handsome, and extroverted civic leader. Hostesses vied to have him at social events. He met Clarissa (Clara) Hall, heiress to a small fortune, at a ball and fell in love. They married in 1849. Winston Churchill loved to brag that both his maternal grandparents had American officer ancestors in the Revolutionary War.

Opportunity Knocks

A knack for profitmaking led Jerome to New York City in 1850, where he and brother Lawrence invested and helped run an early telegraph enterprise. It flourished and rapidly sold for a big profit. Thus started a classic Horatio Alger story.

The Jerome brothers loved New York, America’s fastest growing commercial center and transportation hub. Vast opportunities were there, even as the city struggled with the problems of explosive growth. Jerome dove into the untamed waters of 1850s Wall Street stock speculation. His talents perfectly matched that world, and his intelligence and quick wit at late-night stag parties boosted his reputation. He surprisingly declared bankruptcy for a few weeks before establishing a lifelong pattern of rebounding and prospering.

In 1852, Clara gave birth to their first child, Clarita, and Jerome accepted President Millard Fillmore’s nomination as American consul to Trieste, a popular summer destination for nobility. He served for only eighteen months, long enough for Clara to be mesmerized by European society. Her fascination ultimately changed the Jeromes, Churchills, and world history.

A Midas Touch

Returning home, Jerome formed a stock brokerage partnership with his brother. They cunningly hosted posh lunches for editors and planted tips for publication about stocks they owned. Jerome’s wealth skyrocketed, estimated at ten million dollars at a time when New York had fewer than twenty millionaires.

Jerome became a patron of the arts, especially opera. He loved more than the music. He had a passion for female opera stars. His dalliances were often public. Rumors still abound about him and superstar Jenny Lind, the “Swedish Nightingale.” A carnal liaison cannot be proven, but Lind said Jerome was “the best looking” of her fans. When Clara became pregnant, Leonard suggested
they name the baby “Jenny.” The child, born in 1854, was named Jeanette but called “Jennie.” A third daughter, Camille, was born in 1855 but died at age eight.

A competition started in the mid-1850s to build lavish mansions. The Jeromes set the pace. Jennie’s childhood home was an opulent palace. Ballroom fountains could flow with champagne, and it had a 600-seat opera theater, a 100-guest dining room, a breakfast room for seventy, and a carriage house with elegant paneling and stained glass windows. Their horses lived better than most New Yorkers.

The Jeromes’ social ambitions were equally outsized. They entertained lavishly. Churchill said, “My grandfather thought nothing of spending $70,000 on a party, where each lady found a gold bracelet, inset with diamonds, wrapped in her napkin.”

Needing another break, Jerome took the family to Paris in 1858, living sumptuously on the Champs-Elysees. Rich Americans were welcome at the Court of the Emperor Napoleon III, transfixing Clara. During the visit, their fourth daughter, Leonie, was born.

**Turbulent Times**

During the Civil War, Congress passed a mandatory military draft in 1863. Working-class New Yorkers rioted, killing blacks and burning entire blocks. Although the Jeromes owned about a quarter of the New York Times, Leonard was never its majority owner nor editor, as often claimed. But he was no passive investor. When the pro-Lincoln newspaper was targeted by rioters, Jerome joined other investors behind Gatling guns to protect the paper’s offices.

The war was a jackpot for Jerome. Receiving coded telegrams from the frontlines, he used the inside news in aggressive stock trading. Explosive growth in industry and railroads was also a boom. But his biggest asset was “an almost blind risk taking” rooted in “a complete confidence in his own destiny.” Still, he wisely created trusts for Clara’s future.

Gossip about Jerome’s adulteries abounds. In addition to Lind, liaisons included singers Adelina Patti and “Fanney” Ronalds. Then there was “Minnie” Hauk, allegedly his illegitimate child. Born about the time of Lind’s visit, she resembled daughter Jennie. Clara and Leonard took Minnie into their home, and she totally depended on them before rising to stardom as an opera singer.

Stories of serial philandering and illegitimate children may sound like rumormongering. But when Clara and Leonard’s longtime mistress Fanny came face-to-face, Mrs. Jerome said, “My dear, I understand how you feel. He is so irresistible.”

Thoroughbred horses were Leonard’s other love. He founded the American Jockey Club and, with August Belmont, Jerome Park racetrack—home to the first Belmont stakes. Leonard made racetracks acceptable for the social elite. He became known as the “Father of the American.copy
Turf.” Jerome Park vanished in 1894, yet a namesake remains. Jerome had built a road to the track, but the city named it after a politician, infuriating Clara. She replaced the signs with her own: Jerome Avenue, one of the largest streets in the Bronx.

**Clara Lives Her Dream**

The family’s world turned upside down in the late 1860s. They moved to Paris. Biographers suggest many reasons. William Manchester points to Clara’s love of Paris and fascination with the Second Empire. Others speculate that Leonard’s adultery embarrassed Clara in New York society. Anita Leslie claims that Clara persuaded Leonard to go for two years, but a stock market crash intervened. All are possible, but most agree that Europe drew Clara like a moth to a flame. Since they remained a couple with frequent letters and regular visits, it is likely that Clara simply loved Europe, and Leonard indulged her. The fact is he went home, and his family stayed.

Jerome’s fortunes took a hit with the 1868 Black Friday crash, which began when gold speculators (not Leonard) tried to corner the market and artificially increase values. President Grant halted the plot, but shock waves affected markets for years. Jerome responded by giving up his mansion and restructuring other assets. His fortune reputedly halved, but the real impact is unknown. The family continued living high nonetheless.

Likely the Jerome women were oblivious. Clara and the three daughters had every luxury. Each repeatedly ordered outrageously expensive gowns by the dozen from Paris designers. Leonard remarked of Clara, “She hates money, or thinks she does. I’ve never discussed business matters with her.”

Clara was obsessed with their standing in society. Daughter Clarita debuted at the Tuileries Palace. Jennie’s planned debut in 1870 was upset by Germany’s crushing victory in the Franco-Prussian War and the exile of the last French monarch.

New America and Old England

The family bolted to a stylish resort on the Isle of Wight. They quickly became popular guests at swanky events, including a shipboard gala where Jennie was introduced to Lord Randolph Churchill. Randolph told a friend that night that he would marry Jennie. She just as quickly caught the marriage bug. They were engaged three days later.

Both families were aghast. Whirlwind engagements were taboo. Randolph wrote for approval from his father, the Duke of Marlborough, who responded, “From what you have told me & what I have heard, this Mr. J seems to be a sporting, and I should think, vulgar kind of man. It is evident he is of the class of speculators, he has been bankrupt once; and may be so again.” The Duke said they should wait. His headstrong son would not.

Jerome represented the New American class of self-made men, while the Churchills were the Old England of inherited wealth that disdained work. Jennie’s father was opposed to the marriage at first. Then he warmed to it, only to change his mind, possibly because the Duke inquired about him through the British embassy.

Randolph broke the logjam with his election to Parliament and then getting the Prince of Wales to endorse the marriage. The Prince had once been guest of honor at the Jerome Mansion. Clara and Jennie pressured Leonard. He relented. The final roadblocks were money and control. Jerome’s negotiating shattered tradition. He was willing to be more generous than the Duke, but insisted Jennie have her own income. This modern notion shocked the Duke. A compromise a week before the wedding had Randolph’s debts forgiven, and sums given by both families to assure annual incomes. Half of one trust’s income was for Jennie’s personal use. Jerome had won.

The 15 April 1874 wedding was the season’s top social event. And none too soon. Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born 30 November 1874, 272 days after the couple had last seen each other. “Premature birth” was the official announcement, but was Jennie pregnant at the wedding? Who knows? When asked, Winston would
playfully respond, “Although present on the occasion I have no recollection of the events leading up to it.”

Meanwhile Jerome tended business in New York. He and Clara exchanged visits, and he constantly pleaded for news. Their other daughters also married into prominent British families. In 1881 Clarita wed Moreton Frewen from an ancient but poor family. Jerome liked the captivating groom at first, but Moreton was a squanderer whose money-making schemes always failed, enraged his father-in-law. Frewen’s nickname became “Mortal Ruin.”

Youngest daughter Leonie married more safely in 1884. Her husband Sir John Leslie was an Army officer and the son of an Irish baronet with estates covering 70,000 acres. Leonie’s daughter Anita became a chronicler of family history.

Jerome was enchanted by his grandchildren, “despite the strange English upbringing which made them seem reserved and different from the boys of his own recollection.” When he heard the emphasis on “gentlemanly birth,” he wrote: “The character of a gentleman I consider within the capacity of all—at least it requires no extraordinary intellect. A due regard for the feelings of others is in my judgment its foundation.”

News that young Winston “seemed backward,” with poor school reports, led Jerome to counsel, “Let him be. Boys get good at what they find they shine in.”

“Pass it On.”

By the 1880s, Jerome’s health flagged and so did his finances. He devoted more time to thoroughbred horses than to business. A contemporary account of him provides this description: “…The large, tall bony figure is attired in loose-fitting, old-fashioned black frock coat…the face bronzed by exposure to the weather…the hair iron gray….Once he dominated Wall Street as Jay Gould does now; but his was a merry despotism, and he was loved where Jay Gould would be hated.”

Jerome gave up business entirely by 1888. His wealth had gone to family. He lived in a hotel, contentedly monitoring his racehorses. Clara’s letters expressed concern about his health, but he always said he was fine. He was not. He agreed to go to England to be cared for and left America a final time in December 1889. His daughters were shocked by his “tired and worn” look.

Leonard Jerome died on 3 March 1891, surrounded by his family. He told them on his deathbed, “I have given you all that I have. Pass it on.” His body was returned to America and entombed in a huge mausoleum—paid for years before—at the Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. His wife Clara and their daughter Camille are also buried there.

“Pass it on” can be interpreted many ways. But Jerome’s greatest legacy already had been “passed on” to his grandson Winston Leonard. Daily Mail war correspondent George Steevens once opined about Churchill: “He is what he is by breeding. From his father, he derives the hereditary aptitude for affairs….From his mother’s side…came the shrewdness, keenness, personal ambition, and sense of humor.”

Jerome would have taken pride in his grandson’s world leadership and the fact that he actually earned a living by his wits as a journalist. A Nobel Prize for Literature and Number 10 Downing Street are a far cry from tending chickens in Palmyra.

Endnotes

3. Ibid.
8. Manchester, p. 98.
10. Leslie, p. 156.
12. Manchester, p. 50.
15. Ibid., 265.
16. Ibid., 307.
17. Shane Leslie notes from Leslie family papers possessed by Tarka King, Anita Leslie’s son.
Lord Randolph Churchill’s life has long been overshadowed by the enduring fame of his son. By comparison with Winston’s heroic feats as a war leader, the father’s political career was brief, embedded in the obscure and long-forgotten politics of late Victorian Britain, and a conspicuous failure. It is no surprise, therefore, that he attracts comparatively little attention, but in one respect, at least, the situation fails to do him justice. Winston Churchill was, in more ways than one, his father’s creation.

Randolph Churchill (1849–1895) was the second surviving son of the seventh Duke of Marlborough. After Eton, and Magdalen College Oxford, where he obtained a respectable degree in law and history, he devoted most of his time to fox hunting. In 1874 he was elected to the House of Commons as the Conservative MP for Woodstock, a small country town at the gates of Blenheim Palace, where the duke’s influence over the electors virtually guaranteed his victory. Randolph contested the seat partly from loyalty to his family, and partly in return for his father’s permission to marry Jennie Jerome, a match of which he initially disapproved. As yet he gave no sign of ambition and neglected politics in favour of high society. He and Jennie were a dazzling young couple at the heart of the “Marlborough House Set,” the favourite friends and companions of “Bertie,” the philandering Prince of Wales.

In 1876 a scandal plunged Randolph into conflict with “Bertie.” The Earl of Aylesford, a companion of the Prince, planned to divorce his wife on the grounds that she had committed adultery with Randolph’s elder brother, the Marquess of Blandford. In an attempt to prevent the scandal from becoming public, Randolph threatened to produce compromising letters the Prince had written to Lady Aylesford some years before. It was a daring move, driven by ferocious loyalty to the good name of the Churchills. Aylesford dropped the divorce proceedings, but the Prince was furious and instructed his friends to ostracise Randolph, in effect banishing him from high society. For the next eight years, until a reconciliation occurred, Randolph lived under the shadow of royal displeasure. “In the interval,” wrote Winston in his father’s biography, “a nature originally genial and gay contracted a stern and bitter quality, a harsh contempt for what is called ‘Society’, and an abiding antagonism to rank and authority.”

In order to defuse the tensions, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli appointed the duke Lord Lieutenant (“Viceroy”) of Ireland, and the Churchills moved to Dublin with Randolph as his father’s unpaid private secretary. John Winston Spencer Churchill, the seventh Duke of Marlborough (1822–1883), was a leading Conservative and devout Anglican who took the problems of Ireland seriously. Randolph, who accompanied his father on his travels around the country, got to know Catholics as well as Protestants, and Nationalists as well as Unionists. Of all his contacts, however, the most important was the chief legal adviser to the Irish government, Gerald Fitzgibbon, who became a lifelong friend. Randolph’s ideas on Ireland owed much to Fitzgibbon and the circle of enlightened unionists around him. While strongly opposed to nationalism, they sought to address Irish grievances through reforms in education and land tenure, and the cementing of an alliance between the Tory Party and the Roman Catholic Church.

Return to Westminster

When the Conservatives were defeated in the general election of 1880, the Liberals took office under Gladstone, and the duke and his family returned to England. For the next four years, however, the doors of high society remained closed to Randolph and Jennie, a humiliation that helps to account for the unmistakable undercurrent of anger and aggression in his politics. With two other Tory malcontents, Henry Drummond-Wolff and John Gorst, and some assistance from Arthur Balfour, he formed a rebel group dubbed by contemporaries “the Fourth Party.” (The other three were the Tories, the Liberals, and the Irish.) The Fourth Party pursued a dual strategy of harassing and obstructing Gladstone while undermining and attacking their own party leaders, Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords and Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of Commons. Were they, perhaps, secretly colluding with Salisbury against Northcote? MPs debated grave issues in grave tones, but
parliamentary politics were overlaid by intrigues and rivalries in which all the leading figures were jockeying for position, with Randolph setting a cracking pace.2

In 1880 Randolph was a comparatively obscure back-bench MP. By 1886 he was Chancellor of the Exchequer and heir apparent to Salisbury as Prime Minister. On the high wire of politics, he was a supreme acrobat whose feats of daring were as breathtaking as they were unpredictable. Sometimes he spoke as a dyed-in-the-wool Tory, defending the powers of the House of Lords or demanding protective tariffs as the only salvation for British industry. Sometime he attacked the Gladstone government from the left, deploring military spending or the occupation of Egypt as vigorously as any Radical. He also claimed to stand for Tory Democracy, a phrase borrowed from Disraeli. On one occasion he declared himself in favour of the kind of “Tory Socialism” introduced by Bismarck in Germany. On another he equated Tory Democracy simply with popular support for the monarchy and the constitution. When asked what it meant he replied: “To tell the truth I don’t know myself what Tory Democracy is, but I believe it to be principally opportunism.”3

Randolph was, however, a true pioneer of the politics of mass democracy. In the mid-nineteenth century the Tories had been a party based mainly on the Church, the Land, and pockets of commercial wealth. With the extension of the franchise and the continuing expansion of towns and cities, they needed politicians who could win support for the party in hitherto alien territory. Randolph was not alone in seeing the need to broaden the party’s base, but he was by far the most successful in reaching out beyond suburbia to the urban working class. (Agricultural labourers, he claimed, were not intelligent enough to deserve the vote.) With his protuberant eyes, rakish moustache, and dandified dress, he was a cross between a charismatic orator and a music-hall turn. His speeches, which he delivered in advance to the press, were a blend of vacuous rhetoric, political polemic, and personal abuse, seasoned with humour and wit. The speech in which he mocked Gladstone over his favourite recreation of felling trees on his estate (“the forest laments, in order that Mr Gladstone may perspire”) was a satirical masterpiece.4

“Ulster Will Fight”

In the House of Commons one of his greatest assets was his knowledge of Ireland, on which he was an acknowledged authority. By 1881 the Irish countryside was the scene of a campaign of intimidation and terror against landlords waged by the Land League—of which the president was Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish party at Westminster. At first Gladstone responded with coercive measures, including the mass internment of Land Leaguers and the imprisonment of Parnell himself in Kilmainham Gaol. When he struck a deal with
Parnell to defuse hostilities on both sides, and released him from prison, Randolph denounced the “Kilmainham Treaty” as a surrender to terrorism. Subsequently, however, he struck up a close relationship with Parnell—a land-owning squire who loved hunting and cricket—on the ground that he was fundamentally a conservative in harmony with Tory views. In 1885 they colluded in bringing about the defeat of Gladstone in the House of Commons. During the short-lived Conservative government that followed, Randolph persuaded Parnell that the Irish would get a better deal from the Tories than they would from the Liberals, and Parnell for his part urged all Irishmen in Britain to vote Conservative in the general election of December 1885. Had the tactic succeeded, and the Conservatives won the election, Churchill and Parnell might have worked out some kind of deal, but it seems unlikely that Randolph would have conceded Home Rule, a policy anathema to most Tories, and indeed to his friends in Dublin.

When Gladstone returned as Prime Minister he announced his conversion to Home Rule, split his own party in two, and set in motion a ferocious struggle between the Protestants of Ulster, where popular resistance to “Rome Rule” was mobilised by the Orange Order, and the Roman Catholics of the south, most of whom were Nationalists. Randolph fanned the flames of the Protestant revolt. As he explained to Fitzgibbon: “I decided some time ago that if the G.O.M. [“Grand Old Man,” i.e., Gladstone] went for home rule, the Orange card would be the one to play. Please God it may turn out the ace of trumps not the two.” Later he appeared to incite armed resistance to Home Rule in a public letter: “Ulster will fight, Ulster will be right.” In defence of Lord Randolph it can be urged that what he said was true and even prophetic. Protestant Ulster was prepared to resist Home Rule by force if necessary. He could also lay claim, through his mother Frances, Duchess of Marlborough, to Ulster Protestant ancestry. By his own confession, however, his sword-rattling, which taken literally verged on treason, was merely a ploy to bring down Gladstone.

_Such was Churchill’s pre-eminence that when the Tories returned to office in July 1886, Salisbury appointed him Chancellor of the Exchequer. Salisbury, however, feared that his finance minister lacked judgment, as indeed he did. After ditching protectionism in favour of free trade, he drew up a set of budget proposals based on the classic Gladstonian principles of “peace, retrenchment and reform.” They included, however, substantial cuts in the defence estimates that ran into strong resistance in the Cabinet. In an effort to force the Prime Minister’s hand, he offered his resignation in the expectation of triggering a crisis from which he would emerge victorious. Salisbury, however, called his bluff, accepted the resignation, and appointed George Goschen in his place. Randolph battled on in the political wilderness for another eight years and would almost certainly have been re-admitted to the fold if he had lived, but he died in January 1895, after a long illness in the course of which he slowly and agonisingly lost the power of speech. It has often been claimed that he died of syphilis, but Dr. John Mather, a historian of medicine, argues persuasively that Randolph’s symptoms could well have been caused by a brain tumour. Nor, despite gossip and speculation, do we know anything for certain of Randolph’s private life outside his marriage.

His most important legacy was his son Winston, whose early career was virtually a continuation of his father’s. With the help of his mother, Lady Randolph, he exploited his father’s political contacts. He imitated his speeches and adopted his rallying cry of Tory Democracy. In the House of Commons he declared that he had come to “pick up the tattered flag” of his father’s proposals in the budget of 1886. The “Hughligans,” a group of backbench rebels to which Churchill belonged with his great friend Hugh Cecil, was highly reminiscent of the Fourth Party. Between 1902 and 1905 he wrote a two-volume life of his father that managed to be, at one and the same time, a work of filial piety and a major contribution to recent political history.
As an ambitious young man, however, Churchill could not afford to shackle himself to the past. While paying homage to Lord Randolph, he was beginning to emerge from his father’s shadow by abandoning the Tories for the Liberals, a shift that involved the repudiation of a number of his father’s policies. It was not through his doctrines or policies that Randolph lived on in Winston, but through his character, temperament and political style.

The resemblances were noted by the Arabist and maverick Tory W. S. Blunt, who had known Randolph well. On meeting Winston for the first time in 1903 he wrote:

In mind and manner he is a strange replica of his father, with all his father’s suddenness and assurance, and I should say more than his father’s ability. There is just the same gaminerie and contempt of the conventional and the same engaging plain spokenness and readiness to understand. As I listened to him recounting conversations he had had with Chamberlain I seemed once more to be listening to Randolph on the subject of Northcote and Salisbury….In opposition Winston I expect to see playing precisely his father’s game, and I should not be surprised if he had his father’s success.7

Legacy

In his vaulting ambition, rousing platform oratory, love of bold initiatives, stubborn independence of judgment, abrupt changes of course, and readiness to shock and offend, Winston was in many ways a reincarnation of Lord Randolph, and the reactions of the political world were similar.

The brilliance of the performance propelled him to the top, but simultaneously gave rise to mistrust of his motives and doubts about his judgment. There were also, however, notable contrasts between father and son. Randolph lacked Winston’s romantic imperialism, his fascination with the conduct of war and his intermittent sense of destiny. Where Randolph was immersed in party politics, Winston struggled to break free of them. In writing his father’s life he had revisited every twist and turn of the Home Rule crisis of 1886. Perversely the effect had been to subordinate British parties to Irish quarrels, with the Liberals taken hostage by Irish Nationalists and the Tories by Ulster Unionists. By 1914 Ireland stood on the brink of a civil war that threatened to range the British parties on opposite sides. As a leading figure in the Liberal party Winston was compelled to play politics too, but his underlying aim was to bring about a cross-party agreement, and a compromise settlement in Ireland, that would remove the Irish question from British politics. The Irish Treaty of 1921, of which Winston was one of the authors, was the most authentic expression of his policies towards “John Bull’s Other Island.”

This brings us to what seems at first sight to be the most striking contrast between father and son. Randolph, unlike Winston, never graduated from politics—the art of winning and holding power—to statesmanship, the use of power for the greater good of a nation or, indeed, of the world. The judgment, however, is flawed. Randolph died at the age of forty-five after an exceptionally brief ministerial career. Winston was sixty-five, with a long and varied experience of high office behind him, before he became Prime Minister in 1940. Who can tell what Randolph might or might not have achieved in the space of another twenty or thirty years? Could it have been Randolph instead of Lloyd George who succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister in 1916? There is simply too little evidence to go on. Dying before his capacities as a statesman could ever be put to the test, he will always elude the judgment of historians.

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Endnotes

2. While the biographies of Lord Randolph by his son (1906) and Robert Rhodes James (1959) both have great merit, the most thoroughly researched and penetrating analysis of his tactics is to be found in R. F. Foster, Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).
5. Ibid., pp. 446 and 450.
In The Churchillians, Winston Churchill’s former Private Secretary Sir John Colville wrote that one of the men from his youth whom Churchill held in high regard was the Head Master of his old school, Harrow. James Edward Cowell (J. E. C.) Welldon was educated at Eton and attended King’s College, Cambridge. He was ordained as a deacon in 1883 and as a priest in 1885. In May 1883, Welldon was appointed Master of Dulwich College. He resigned this post in July 1885 to become the Head Master of Harrow, a position he held from 1885 to 1898.

After Lord Randolph decided that Winston would attend Harrow, Churchill, age thirteen, was required to take the Entrance Examination on 18 March 1888. Churchill was accompanied by Miss Charlotte Thomson, who founded and headed the preparatory school in Brighton that he attended. As explained in My Early Life, however, examinations for Churchill “were a great trial.”

**Entrance Exam to Harrow**

The subjects Churchill liked were history, poetry, and writing essays. He wrote, however: “The examiners were partial to Latin and mathematics. And their will prevailed. This sort of treatment had only one result: I did not do well in examinations. This was especially true of my Entrance Examination to Harrow. The Head Master, Dr. Welldon, however, took a broad-minded view of my Latin prose: he showed discernment in judging my general ability.”

“This was the more remarkable,” wrote Churchill, “because I was found unable to answer a single question in the Latin paper. I wrote my name at the top of the page. I wrote down the number of the question ‘I’. After much reflection I put a bracket around it thus ‘(I)’. But thereafter I could not think of anything connected with it that was either relevant or true.”

After gazing for two hours at the exam, the attendants collected Churchill’s paper and took it up to the Head Master’s table. “It was from these slender indications of scholarship that Dr. Welldon drew the conclusion that I was to pass into Harrow. It is very much to his credit. It showed that he was a man capable of looking beneath the surface of things: a man not dependent upon paper manifestations. I have always had the greatest regard for him.”

Welldon’s decision to give Winston the opportunity to attend Harrow was severely criticized, and he was accused of favoritism. Some believed Welldon’s action was to avoid embarrassing Lord Randolph Churchill by rejecting his son. Certainly in those days the school was unlikely ever to deny admission to a grandson of a duke except in the most extraordinary cases.

**Attending Harrow**

Churchill entered Harrow on 17 April 1888. Although he expressed a wish to be placed into Crookshank’s House since he knew some boys there, Welldon had already agreed to take him into his own House. The Head Master, however, was unable to give the new pupil immediate admittance, so Churchill had to “wait” in one of the Small Houses run by H. O. D. Davidson. A year later, when there was room in Welldon’s House, Churchill was moved.

Latin was not Churchill’s strong subject, despite special instruction by Welldon. Clearly, Churchill’s accomplishment, in his first term, was recognition for winning the Declamation Prize for reciting, without error, 1200 lines of Macaulay’s “Lays of Ancient Rome.” Unquestionably, Welldon was delighted in young Churchill’s success.

In the official biography of his father, Randolph Churchill described the Head Master’s relationship with young Winston: “Throughout his school career Welldon showed infinite patience, and took considerable pains with Winston; ever afterwards the two retained an admiration for each other.”

**Bishop of Calcutta**

After leaving Harrow in 1898, Welldon was appointed Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India. At the time of Welldon’s arrival in Calcutta, Churchill was with the army in Bangalore. Eager to see his former Head Master, he wrote to Welldon from Meerut on 22 February 1899:
I am coming to Calcutta on the 27th and am staying with the Viceroy [Lord Curzon]. I shall take the first opportunity to come and make my respects. I must offer my congratulations on the warmth of your reception. I do hope you will like India and make it the better for your stay….I shall hope to refresh in Calcutta Cathedral the dearest memories of Harrow Chapel. I work incessantly at my book [The River War] and I propose to ask your advice on one or two matters on which I am a little in doubt.5

One of the matters on which Churchill sought Welldon’s advice was the title Lady Randolph Churchill was considering for her new quarterly journal. Churchill disliked the titles that she considered: Arena, International Quarterly, and Anglo-Saxon. Churchill had informed his mother in a letter from Meerut dated 23 February 1899: “I am going to Calcutta the day after tomorrow and shall talk to Mr. Welldon about it. There must be some classical way or some elegant English way of expressing one or other of the ideas I have suggested to you in my last.”6

Although it is not known what title Churchill’s former Head Master suggested, Lady Randolph was adamant on the name Anglo-Saxon, and she named her quarterly miscellany The Anglo-Saxon Review [see FH 174].

“…Your Star Will Rise Again…”

In 1902, due to ill health and a disagreement with the Viceroy on the subject of Christian missions, Welldon was forced to resign and return to England. After serving in Westminster until 1906, he was appointed Dean of Manchester Cathedral. In 1908, Churchill invited him to give the address at his wedding to Clementine Hozier at St. Margaret’s, Westminster, on 12 September. This Welldon did with pleasure.

Mary Soames later wrote of Welldon’s address at her parents’ wedding: “The old bishop must have been something of a prophet; in his address he said: ‘There must be in the statesman’s life many times when he depends upon the love, the insight, the penetrating sympathy and devotion of his wife. The influence which the wives of our statesmen have exercised for good upon their husbands’ lives is an unwritten chapter of English history….”7

In the years that followed, Welldon and Churchill maintained a close association. When Churchill lost the Dundee election in 1922 and was out of office for the first time in twenty-two years, Welldon wrote him a heartfelt letter: “I do not doubt that your star will rise again, and will shine even more brightly than before.”8 Churchill’s esteem for Welldon continued until his former Head Master’s passing on 17 June 1937. Their admiration for each other covered a period of almost fifty years. Had he lived, Welldon would have been delighted and proud to see his former student become Prime Minister.  

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Endnotes

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 15–16.
In 1996 an article in the American press discussed “great leadership,” based on a work of psychology by Professor Dean K. Simonton published in 1994. It surmised that “only children” made good leaders in times of crisis and deduced that Winston Churchill fitted that category perfectly. It is small wonder that for all of his lifetime Jack Churchill, Sir Winston’s only sibling, remained an enigma. He has been shrouded in a whispering campaign that he was not a Churchill at all and any one of six different men have been cited as being his “real” father. Celia Lee’s six years’ research in the Churchills’ papers shows these allegations to be simply untrue.

John Strange Spencer Churchill (Jack) was born in Dublin on 4 February 1880, during the time his grandfather, the seventh Duke of Marlborough, was Viceroy of Ireland, and his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was serving as his Private Secretary. The family lived there from December 1876 until April 1880. The men variously supposed to be Jack’s father never set foot in Ireland during that time, with the exception of John Strange Jocelyn, the fifth Earl of Roden. This man has been seized upon by various authors because of the unusual use of his second name as Jack’s, and it has been claimed Lady Randolph had an affair with him. Celia contacted the present

Randolph, Johnny, Winston, and Jack Churchill in Canada, 1929
Earl of Roden and determined that Jocelyn had only arrived in what is today Northern Ireland in January 1880, having inherited the title from his nephew who died of tuberculosis in Paris. Jocelyn was a lifelong friend of the seventh duke and a respectable married man with a wife and daughter living in England. Peregrine Churchill (Jack’s younger son) explained to Celia that Jocelyn, en route to visit an estate he had inherited in County Down, stopped off with the Duke and Duchess at the Viceregal Lodge in Dublin, and Jack was born whilst he was there. He stood as godfather to the child, explaining the honorific use of his middle name, as Jack was primarily named after John Churchill, the great first Duke of Marlborough.

Readers familiar with Winston’s implied criticism of his parents as being too distant have to come to terms with the fact that Jack lived his whole life without a word of complaint against them. With the older child often described as “a handful” or “harum scarum fellow,” the younger is consistently held up as “a model child.” Even at the age of two Jack was described as a “slightly serious child.” When one houseguest asked him if he was a good boy, Jack replied “Yes, but brother is teaching me to be naughty!” After Winston’s terrible experience at his first preparatory school, St George’s, Ascot, his parents exercised more care in their choice of school for Jack, who would benefit from a more settled start to his education.

Jack was seven years and seven months old before he went as a boarder to Elstree preparatory school, where he showed academic promise from the beginning. He was invariably at the top of his form. At age twelve Jack passed the entrance examination into Harrow, a year earlier than usual, and became quite the youngest boy at the school, breezing through an arithmetic test at very short notice, and joining Winston there. He loved his brother dearly and was delighted to share a room with him, but soon found Winston to be a noisy and disruptive companion. He was again constantly top of his class, and Winston would later admit that in Jack’s entire school history to the age of seventeen he set the record for having never once been given lines or physical punishment of any sort, so exemplary was his conduct. Like Winston, Jack wrote home frequently to both his parents and whilst his letters to his mother usually asked for a little money and a hamper of food, those between father and son were more to do with which horse won which race and how much were the family’s earnings from the winnings. Being the son of “the coming man” in politics, Lord Randolph Churchill, meant that both boys were looked up to at Harrow, and they made extra pocket money by cutting out their father’s signatures from his letters to them and selling them to their classmates. Jack took very early to photography as a hobby. In 1893 his father bought him a new camera and a clock as a reward for his excellent work at school.

Having shared Winston’s passion for toy soldiers for many years, and visiting him when he went to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, it was natural that Jack would also express an interest in the Army as a career. Their father had already made both boys superb horsemen. Lord Randolph put Jack into an “army class” at school, arranged for him to meet Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army, and pulled strings to see him entered as a candidate for the 60th Rifles (all this from a man who allegedly did nothing for his sons). The tragic early death of his father was to change all that. Jack’s spendthrift mother, Jennie née Jerome, always heavily in debt, insisted she could only put one son through an army career and, putting aside the fact that Jack would have found a place at Oxford University with relative ease, immediately began to lay plans for him to follow her own father’s career path as a businessman.

Into Business and into Battle

Leonard Jerome had been a highly successful speculator in New York, making, losing, and re-making a considerable personal fortune. Jennie fondly imagined that she would set Jack up in the line of stockbroker and see him “make millions” for the family. She did make the inspired choice to send him to France for a long spell to complete his education and make him fluent in French, which would be of inestimable value in his future wartime career. Using her close friendship with the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, she took Jack to a weekend party at the Prince’s country home Sandringham in Norfolk, and saw him introduced to Sir Ernest Cassel, the hugely successful banker and businessman (colloquially known as “the King’s banker”). Jack was taken on as a sort of apprentice, a personal assistant to Sir Ernest, at first perhaps without pay but soon earning a place on the establishment as a clerk. He was extremely adept at shorthand and taking dictation and accompanied Cassel on extensive business trips, most notably to his many and varied interests in Egypt. He tried to interest himself in the work but it quickly became monoto-
nous, and we can be sure that throughout his long, and ultimately successful, career as a stockbroker it was never what he really wanted to do.

To compensate for the loss of a military career, in 1898 Jennie allowed Jack to join the prestigious yeomanry cavalry regiment with strong connections to the Marlborough family, the Queen’s Own Oxfordshire Hussars. He thrived in that capacity over many years, commanding a troop and then a squadron. In December 1899, he answered an appeal from Winston for young men to come out to South Africa to serve in the South African Light Horse regiment during the Boer War. He was commissioned as a lieutenant and troop commander on 1 February 1900 and wounded in the ankle in his very first action just ten days later, becoming the first officer casualty to be treated on the hospital ship Maine, where he was greeted by his mother, who had been the driving force behind the fitting out of the ship and had travelled on it in the role of a nurse.

Returning to active duty with his regiment, he served in Natal under Sir Redvers Buller and saw months of gruelling anti-guerrilla operations, punctuated by some sharp battles in which he conducted himself with notable gallantry. He resisted the blandishments of both his brother and his mother to “chuck” the regiment and come home, even when his mother informed him of her forthcoming marriage to George Cornwallis-West. He felt honour bound to see the thing through. He left the regiment in late October 1900, when everyone thought the war was all but won, returning home with the ringing endorsement of his colonel, Julian Byng.

**Family Man**

Jack resumed his career as a stockbroker, becoming a partner in Nelke Phillips in 1906, and later joining the firm of Vickers da Costa. While training with the regiment, he met the daughter of the Earl and Countess of Abingdon, the adorable Gwendeline Bertie (1885–1941), always known by her family pet name “Goonie.” He had to wait a while to marry because of tight finances. Marriage finally came on 7 August 1908, in a registry office and on the next day in St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Oxford. The couple had three children: artist John (known as “Johnny,” 1909–92); engineer Henry Winston (known as “Peregrine,” 1913–2002); and Anne Clarissa. Now ninety-six, “Clarissa” was born in 1920. She wed Sir Anthony Eden and became Countess of Avon in 1961.

Having such a famous and successful brother as Winston was, of course, to Jack’s advantage. When Winston was First Lord of the Admiralty, Jack took every opportunity to join him on the Admiralty yacht Enchantress; Winston once wrote to Clemmie that “Jack was always happy in the circle of military things.” And through the fabulous circle of friends around his hugely popular wife Goonie, Jack was intimately acquainted with many of the great politicians, writers, and artists of the day—the Asquiths, William Orpen, the Laverys, and J. M. Barrie, to name but a few.

In 1914, while he was helping his mother sort out chaotic finances during her divorce from George Cornwallis-West, Jack discovered the true terms of his late father’s will, showing that Jennie had been denying her boys considerable income bequeathed to them by Lord Randolph. This caused a great deal of upset in the family, but, as with so many other troubles in Europe in 1914, war intervened to divert attention away from the issue.

**The Great War**

Jack went on active service in Flanders with his regiment and served with distinction at a crucial stage in the First Battle of Ypres. Thereafter his superb command of the French language saw him appointed to British General Headquarters in France. He was able to keep Winston fully informed of the army’s progress in their constant stream of letters. In March 1915, General Sir Ian Hamilton, a friend of Winston’s, asked for Jack to serve on his staff about to embark on the ill-fated Gallipoli expedition, since Jack was one of the few staff officers with immediate practical experience of combat in the Great War. He served throughout the campaign as the Camp Commandant, General Headquarters, a vital if not glamorous posting, making sure the headquarters functioned at peak efficiency for the duration of the campaign. When Hamilton was recalled in October 1915, Jack remained in post until January 1916, when the last troops were evacuated back to Egypt. He then joined the staff of 1st Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (the famous “Anzacs”) and served with them throughout the fighting on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. In 1917 he was able to give his brother a guided tour over some of the recent battlefields. He ended the war as Military Secretary to Fifth Army and came home with a Distinguished Service Order in particular recognition of his liaison with the French Army.
The Financier

Jack used his financial skills to assist the family in a number of ways and was especially useful to Winston during the great upheavals of the late 1920s and early 1930s. He was a well-established stockbroker now and was made a partner in Vickers da Costa in 1921. So comfortable was he that in 1929 he was able to accompany Winston and their sons Randolph and Johnny on a three-month tour of North America. The “Great Crash” occurred while they were there, and Jack was busy thereafter supervising the “retrenchments” necessary in Winston’s normally extravagant life. He deftly managed their tax affairs and was able to direct the family’s investments into some very far-sighted and successful areas, including copper and gold mining, Marks and Spencer, and Gaumont British Films.

At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Jack was of course too old for active service but was a constant companion and support to his brother, who was soon achieving his crowning glory as Prime Minister, 1940–1945. Though himself diagnosed with a heart tumour, and nursing a terminally ill Goonie, Jack made time to organise a staff canteen at Downing Street that greatly improved the productivity of Winston’s immediate staff there. Goonie, an inveterate heavy smoker, died on 7 July 1941. Jack suffered a heart attack in April 1945 and after the hard winter of 1946–47 succumbed to heart failure on 22 February 1947 with Winston and Johnny at his side. Because of the bad weather of that terrible winter, Winston’s doctors advised against him attending the funeral as Jack was laid to rest in the family plot at St Martin’s Church, Bladon, Oxfordshire.

Winston’s doctor, Lord Moran, once marvelled at how Jack got on with life “as if he had not a care in the world.” He was the quiet, unassuming, younger brother, a great family man to his own, and a stalwart supporter of his brother in all his greatest endeavours.

Celia and John Lee are authors of The Churchills: A Family Portrait (2010) and Winston and Jack: The Churchill Brothers (2007), from which all quotations in this article are drawn.
In her 1981 memoir *Keep on Dancing*, Sarah Churchill recalls how her show business aspirations were temporarily placed on hold when she and her sister Diana were called upon by their brother to support the family profession.

In January 1935 the routine of dancing classes was interrupted by a Parliamentary by-election. My brother Randolph decided to stand as an independent Conservative candidate in the Wavertree division of Liverpool. He was not, needless to say, looking for a safe seat, but he took the candidacy with alacrity as a challenge. He commandeered Diana and me to go up to Liverpool to help in the campaign. I murmured something about my dancing, which he imperiously pooh-poohed: politics were far more important. I adored him, so I went meekly—later enthusiastically—to help.

The political hustings were quite familiar since as children we had often accompanied my father on his campaigns. On this occasion my father watched Randolph from afar with a proud paternal eye, but desisted firmly from intruding, although he was obviously dying to. He confined himself to one appearance at an eve-of-poll meeting....[My mother] was away during Randolph’s campaign, so I kept her informed with two long letters:

22 January 1935
Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool

...I came up here last night to be with Randolph for his first meeting. It was very exciting. Sunday he was very depressed as he could get hold of no one, and everything was closed. Monday he wired for me and Diana to come at once to swell the size of his supporters that numbered five!—none of whom were actually voters in the Wavertree division. Diana could not come because of her [divorce] case—but I jumped out of my dancing pants, caught the next train to Liverpool and was met on the platform by a small deputation. They consisted of Randolph hatless, with an enormous muffler around his throat, [cousin] Peregrine with his car, five or six handsome young men from goodness knows where, Miss Buck—Randolph’s secretary—and a flashlight photographer. I stepped unsuspectingly from the carriage. A few unbecoming photographs of Sarah struggling with odd bits of luggage gathered at a moment’s notice; then I arrived here to find the oddest looking collection of people, but all I discovered to be charming, sincere and hard-working. In an hour the first meeting was to be held. This was going to be very important for us, and we all felt very anxious—Randolph, of course, not at all apparently—and discussed having chairs put on the platform to accommodate the overflow. I wondered doubtfully if that would be necessary—but did not say so. At 7:30 Randolph told me to get on to the Town Hall and find out how it was filling up.

An incoherent child answered, which wasn’t encouraging. Finally I got hold of the caretaker, whose muffled voice seemed to come from under a pile of dust sheets. “How many have arrived? I gaily asked. “No one,” he said and slammed down the receiver. I told Randolph—he went a trifle red and said: “Sh! we never put any posters up outside the hall!” Still it was no use worrying. 8 o’clock—we must go. Randolph, me, Mr. and Mrs. Cannel (Daily Mail local), the Daily Mirror—a man called Watts, a marvellous two or three other people crowded into a taxi that groaned under our weight.
We shall anyway fill the hall a bit with our weight I thought. But it was amazing. The hall was packed, and Randolph, who had thought he would be alone on the platform, found he hardly had room to stand on it himself. His stewards meanwhile had already organised an overflow meeting at the Women’s Institute further down the road—which we went to later and which was even fuller and more enthusiastic. Randolph then said—if any of you feel like supporting me, please don’t just go home, come now at once to my committee rooms and enroll. About 100 came, which was surprising considering that the committee rooms were 1½ miles away.

Today more rooms are being got, and the organization is progressing well.

I honestly think we stand a sporting chance of winning. The first round is ours—but there are so many rounds—and can we keep it up. Randolph’s voice is a great anxiety—he gets so excited and shouts much more than is necessary, and last night he nearly lost it. It is his most valuable asset—he does speak brilliantly at times—all the women say he is a new F. E. Smith and sing “Randolph, hope and glory!”

17 February 1935
Chartwell

…I told you about the first week at Wavertree more or less I believe….All day we addressed polling cards, and then at nights went round with Randolph to the most enthusiastic meetings generally. On the whole he spoke very well, always he humoured his audiences and got them laughing and willing to listen, and what impressed them most was the way in which he answered questions afterwards. His answers, more than his speeches, showed that he really had an
amazing depth of knowledge on a variety of subjects. There can be no doubt that he has a great power of rallying people under his banner. Young men and girls literally hero-worshipped the “Fat Boy of Wavertree” as the Daily Express called him!

Also he showed an immense capacity for sustained hard work and generally infusing everyone with his energy. Randolph of course was the whole time confident of victory—the thought of defeat never seemed to cross his mind even in private. It was a horrid moment at the “count” when we arrived and Orr-Ewing and his political agent told him he didn’t stand a chance. He went very white indeed, and I wondered anxiously how he would take it. I must say he was marvellous—after that moment you wouldn’t have known that he had lost! And certainly no one guessed how much he minded. It sounds pompous and horrid to say so, but losing Wavertree taught Randolph an immense amount. I think it would have been disastrous for his career had he won, because he would have been (naturally) so impossibly conceited. As it is, he has come out of it very well—shown definite ability and has gained general respect all round—if a certain amount of disapproval for splitting the vote. The 10,000 votes he got were due almost entirely to his speaking, as our organisation was really nil. The second week was slightly different. Randolph asked me to get hold of some of my “boyfriends” and get them to come up to Liverpool and canvass. I had a sniffany telegram of refusal from one of my friends, but Harry Llewellyn burst upon the scene with his younger brother and proceeded to convulse me and Cousin Mop (who came to lend an air of respectability to the campaign) and indeed the entire electorate by their unconventional way of canvassing. They were up there ten days and Harry was a scrutineer at the “count.” I think he thoroughly enjoyed himself although thoroughly disapproving of Churchill politics! He had a car sent up on Polling Day, and also his dog Lancer who did the most bewitching tricks.

I can’t tell you how sweet all the people were and how much they loved Randolph. It really is a most romantic story. Randolph and his four friends from the tour he made in the summer in Lancashire decided by themselves to take this venture. His “gang” are all Lancashire men ruined by the penal tariff, one is actually a cotton-spinner who left his wheel to come and speak in broad “Albert and the Lion” accents for Randolph.

The day after Polling Day was sad, everyone returned to their jobs, Harry and David went back to Wales, Randolph back to journalism, me back to dancing. I am working for an exam—Wavertree was not a very helpful interlude for me exactly. Clerical work is rather trying for a would-be acrobatic dancer….

The King’s English

This was Randolph’s first foray into the political arena where he had set his goal but which was forever to deny him any real success. Despite their disagreements, Randolph was to be everlastingly unhappy that he could not be as the younger Pitt to the elder, standing by his father in the House of Commons and fighting the battles with him. He did become a Member of Parliament very briefly during the wartime coalition government; but he had little luck with politics. I am sure, however, that as a renowned journalist toward the end of his life he gained great satisfaction collaborating with his own son, my nephew Winston, on their book about the Six-Day War in Israel. Winston was sent to cover the battlefield as a journalist while Randolph sat at his home in East Bergholt—already quite advanced in his last ill-
ness—surrounded by telexes, recordings of broadcasts, and copies of dispatches from his son in Israel.

Before Wavertree, Randolph, at the age of twenty-one, had already made a remarkably successful lecture tour of the United States of America. Goodness knows what he was speaking about, but he certainly wowed his American audiences. Frankly, they must have been impressed by his name, of course, but also by his incredible good looks and his oratory. My father had had to teach himself to speak—the well-known lisp, which too many people have imitated was conquered, but he had to work at making himself an orator. By the time that Randolph was on the scene he had been brought up in the sound of that resonant, positive and riveting voice, and I suppose this is where family environment has a definite effect. If you are the son of a cobbler, you learn to make shoes just by watching; if you belong to a totally musical family, you will know about music—even if it is not your particular bent. I can only suppose that among my father’s children it was a form of unconscious acceptance that made us speak “the English rather good!”

No Picture, No Story

There were two events during the Wavertree campaign that I carefully avoided mentioning in my letters to my mother. The first was that Randolph, descending the steps of the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, with his small entourage, was greeted by a man running up the steps with his hand extended. Randolph, thinking it must be an admirer…naturally extended his own hand to the supposed voter. But as the man slipped away into the crowd, Randolph discovered he had been left holding a writ. Flashbulbs exploded for the opposition’s publicity photographs, and Randolph became much more wary of supposed admirers. The writ, I must add, was for something quite innocuous, but it made a good picture and that, after all, is what newsmen are for—though in equally embarrassing situations myself, I have wondered just what they are for. But one has to remember the old reporter’s saying: “If there’s no picture, there’s no story.”

The second event was the time we were touring the dockland area when a brick was thrown into the car. No personal damage was done, but we were very near the water’s edge and I remember thinking that if things got really nasty it would be a dirty and murky end to be pushed over the side. Apart from the verbal abuse—which, being children of a soldier and politician, did not trouble us—there was no further violence. But it was quite impossible for Randolph to do what he had wanted to do: stand up on the car and make a speech.

In some of the smaller halls where we had meetings, the noise was so great that Randolph simply could not be heard through the screams of violent abuse. On one occasion he even took a tremendous leap into the audience, who were crowding the platform. They instinctively backed off and Randolph left the hall as we followed meekly—unmoled by the astonished crowd. Randolph appreciated on such occasions that it would be impossible to put any policies before the crowd. But he did make it clear at every meeting, no matter how rowdy, that if he had no way of making them desist from their follies, he would at least assert the Englishman’s right to free speech. He succeeded to a considerable degree; respect for him went up enormously, and at many meetings the audience became very attentive.

A Popular Winner

Throughout all the years I knew him, despite the usual occasional spats between brother and sister, he was a deeply emotional, affectionate and endearing person. Randolph once appeared on the popular American television program, The $64,000 Question—the quiz game in which you could choose your subject, from astronomy to Xerxes, be locked into a soundproof glass box and have questions hurled at you. Randolph chose general knowledge and, like the assiduous schoolboy he had never been, he crammed his subject for six months. To the amazement of the world and to his own horror, when he went on the program, he froze on the first question: what is the origin of the word “boycott”? I hurried round to his hotel the next day and commiserated: “Well, there have been some doubts about the authenticity of the program, but you’ve certainly dispelled them. And you’re a popular loser.”

A grown man, mature in thought, he turned to me with a pathos I still remember: “I don’t want to be a popular loser. I want to be a popular winner.”

Sarah Churchill (1914–1982) was the third child of Winston and Clementine Churchill. This article, © Sarah Churchill (Lady Audley), is reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Churchill College, Cambridge.
Thus began a life full of adventure, daring, and a role on the international stage, which lasted six decades. He inherited the energy and dynamism of his father—my grandfather—who in 1941 in the Libyan desert with SAS founder David Stirling talked his way into the Benghazi German naval base, remained there for twenty-four hours and succeeded in doing no damage to the enemy before they talked their way out. Randolph had an eventful life, full of political opinion and a good measure of drama. Winston’s mother Pamela, the irrepressible daughter of Lord and Lady Digby of Minterne, met Randolph in autumn 1939 on a blind date and married him three weeks later. Theirs was a generation where the cocktail of the war years provided impetus to getting married expeditiously.

Winston gained a place to read modern history at Christ Church, Oxford, giving him the opportunity to explore a wider world. Before starting at Oxford he had a few months to spare and, whilst visiting the States, heard about a vacancy in Senator John F. Kennedy’s campaign office in Washington, which was in full swing preparing for his presidential bid. On 23 July 1959 my father sent a cable to his father:

WANT TO GET JOB HERE AUGUST STOP HAVE BEEN OFFERED ONE IN JACK KENNEDY’S WASHINGTON OFFICE ANXIOUS FOR YOUR APPROVAL STOP PLEASE REPLY SOONEST THE DRAKE NEW YORK

This prompted, by return, the bluntest telegram my father ever received from Randolph, who—wrongly—assumed that the offer had come from Jack Kennedy:

DON’T THINK YOU SHOULD TAKE SIDES IN AMERICAN PARTY POLITICS STOP SINCE 1776 REVOLTING COLONISTS HAVE RESENTED US LIMEYS INTERFERING IN THEIR AFFAIRS STOP ASK JACK ABOUT BOSTON TEA PARTY AND WHAT HAPPENED TO BRITISH AMBASSADOR SACKVILLE WEST IN 1888 STOP SUGGEST YOU FIND SOMETHING LESS POLITICALLY AND CLIMATICALLY HOT THAN WASHINGTON STOP LET ME KNOW IF I CAN HELP, LOVE = FATHER

My father, the younger Winston, like his father Randolph, was born during a tumultuous world war. He loved the fact that he was born on 10 October 1940, during the Battle of Britain, at the Prime Minister’s country house Chequers. The night before, his imminent arrival was foreshadowed by the delivery of a German bomb landing one hundred yards from the house. My father liked to say that he was the next bombshell to arrive at Chequers!

Growing up Winston

It was never going to be easy growing up as effectively an only child (his half-sister Arabella was nine years younger) and also as the namesake and grandson of the legendary wartime Prime Minister. My father noted: “I had come to realise from an early age that the name of Winston Churchill, which I was so proud to bear, was both a lot to live up to and a lot to live down.” He was a young man in a hurry. He would often escort his mother on her travels and lacked the benefit of growing up with siblings and other young ones around him. He never liked structure or authority, and he did not enjoy his time at school. He wanted to get on and make his mark in life.
So Winston, aged nineteen, avoided politics and went straight into what he was to adore, journalism. He secured a job on the copy desk of the *Wall Street Journal* and reflected: “After years of drudgery cooped up in a classroom, it was wonderfully exciting and challenging at last to be doing a job of work in the real world.”

At Oxford, Winston enjoyed the company of his friends, as well as the Oxford Union. He was thrilled to join the Oxford University Ski Club and win his “Half-Blue.” During his time at Oxford, he distinguished himself primarily in the enjoyment of life, saying: “Having, in the spring of 1960, successfully put behind me my preliminary exams, and with my finals still two years away, I was able to start savouring to the full the joys and freedom of Oxford life. In retrospect I naturally regret that I did not address my studies with the same determination as I did my skiing and, later, my flying.” Winston finished Oxford as Captain of the Ski Team, he had a number of articles published in national newspapers, and he was fortunate to scrape a fourth-class degree.

**Hazardous Enterprises**

During his last year at Oxford, he caught the flying bug, learning to fly at the little Oxford airdrome. Winston and his friends flew wherever they felt they might enjoy a good lunch, dinner, or an Armagnac. In 1962, as a newer world opened to him after university, my father and one of his fellow skiing companions, Arnold von Bohlen, set their hearts on flying round Africa in a single-engine plane. Winston’s grandparents were most concerned. Clementine wrote to remonstrate with young Winston, and he was summoned to join his grandfather for lunch at 28 Hyde Park Gate. Sir Winston did not conceal his anxiety: “It is a very hazardous enterprise,” he declared, “I am not at all sure that I approve.” My father noted: “I had long since learned by experience...
that the only way to deal with Churchills—whether my grandfather or my father—was to stand up to them. It was the only language they understood and respected. To hesitate or show weakness was fatal and guaranteed one would lose the argument.” So Winston rejoined: “How dare you, Grandpapa... When you were my age, you had already come under fire in Cuba, fought on the North-West frontier of India and were on the point of charging with the 21st Lancers at Omdurman!” His grandfather paused for a moment’s reflection before replying: “I think you have a point,” adding, as they parted, “You have my blessing!”

The journey around Africa went amazingly well despite many incidents. The conspirators returned unscathed, together with their plane, and with broader horizons. On his return from Africa, Winston bumped into Minnie d’Erlanger, and it was not long before romance blossomed. In the spring of 1964, Winston proposed, and they married a few months later on 15 July 1964. They celebrated at Hyde Park Gate with Sir Winston and Clementine, who had put on ice some Pol Roger champagne and where the proud grandfather had arranged for the famous photographer Yousuf Karsh to fly over and take their wedding photographs.

Having had his adventures and now married, the younger Winston needed a sustainable career. With the help of my mother Minnie doing the typing, he published his first book First Journey, which directly led into a job at BBC radio as anchorman of This Time of Day, the forerunner of The World at One. Aged twenty-five, he was where he wanted to be: a new-generation Churchill talking about, debating, and participating in issues of the post-war world. This led him to a mammoth lecture tour for which he was completely unprepared and only modestly daunted, taking Minnie but leaving me, their seven-month-old baby son, at home.

My father spoke in forty-seven cities in fifty-six days, in the course of which he and Mother drove 12,000 miles. The lecture tour, although nerve-racking, gave Winston the ability to speak with brilliance and confidence wherever he went. He was never daunted by people he met or those he interviewed. Shortly after his twenty-fifth birthday, he was invited to travel to Southeast Asia for Look magazine to report on the Vietnam War. On the scene, he managed to talk his way onto a strike mission with the US Air Force in a Super Sabre fighter plane. He waddled out onto the tarmac in a flight suit weighed down with a parachute, life jacket, dinghy, G-suit, emergency radio transmitter, strobe flashlight, miniature flare gun, two daggers, survival rations, jungle survival kit, fishing tackle, and water purification tablets. “I felt about as ungainly as any medieval knight in armour preparing to enter the lists. Before I climbed into the navigator-bombardier’s seat to the rear, the pilot, Major John Sercel from Cleveland, Ohio, handed me a holster and the butt end of a Colt .45 with the query: ‘Mr Churchill, if we are shot down, do you want to try explaining to the VC [Viet-Cong] that you’re only an English roundeye rather than an American roundeye? Or would you sooner have this?’” He took the gun.

During the summer of 1967, when Winston was twenty-six, there was a by-election for the northern industrial working-class constituency of Gorton, which is near Manchester and where there was already a considerable Labour majority. Winston resolved not to stand for an easy shoehorn constituency but chose to fight for an industrial constituency in the northwest, as he wished to represent an area that had real challenges. He wanted to make an impact and win a working-class constituency from the Socialists. The Guardian described the area as a “no twilight zone; the dark came down over most of it a long time ago...its main shopping street would need little alteration to fit into a film about the Great Depression.” The campaign was lively, and Winston made a great impression upon the constituents. Although not elected, he reduced the Labour majority from 8,308 votes down to just 577. Though but two-and-a-half years old, I remember this campaign very fondly, as I have a distinct memory of our family renting a flat with a railway line going straight past the bedroom window. What more does a young boy need?

In 1970 my father won the constituency of Stretford near Manchester. Upon election, he was the youngest Conservative Member of Parliament. He remained an MP for almost twenty-seven years, standing down in 1997 when his constituency was abolished. Between those years, he made his mark as a dedicated constituency MP who was always happy to take up the issues of individuals who had a cause in which he believed. From his travels in Africa and Asia, he knew about the real world, and he campaigned vigorously against sanctions on the minority white government in Rhodesia led by Ian Smith. He believed that Smith and his ministers were steadily moving towards full enfranchisement for Africans and that sanctions would only bring on a dictatorial form of
government. Mrs. Thatcher, as Leader of the Opposition, had a policy of transferring former colonies to independence as soon as possible. For his beliefs, Winston lost his position as Shadow Defence Spokesman. When Mrs. Thatcher was elected Prime Minister in 1979, she remembered what she saw as Winston’s disloyalty, and he did not gain high office in her administration. My father came into further conflict with her when he supported keeping open some parts of the coal mines during the protracted miners’ strike. This was his hallmark; he was never afraid to speak up for things he felt passionately about, even if it affected his political career. He was always determined to do the right thing. Winston had a very loyal coterie of friends who were also not afraid to say what they believed. There was a buzz of excitement wherever my father was, always with great projects, schemes, and adventures taking place.

A Big Heart

Winston loved sailing, and, with my mother Minnie and siblings Jennie, Marina, and Jack, we had many eventful times on board his thirty-foot Contessa, which was kept at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. With his flying, too, there were often challenging situations. On one occasion in a big Alpine winter storm, our twin-engine plane was accumulating a lot of ice. With the hundred-knot headwind, we were barely making ground over the snowy white peaks. Winston had the engines at full throttle, and yet we were losing altitude the whole time. The danger below was all too visible. Fortunately we made a miraculous landing at Zurich, where—an hour later—the slabs of ice were still crashing off the wings of the plane!

Winston was involved in many charities, including the British Kidney Patient Association. For several years he was also a volunteer pilot for the St John’s Ambulance Air Wing. My mother and he would be called without warning, sometimes in the middle of the night, to deliver organs for transplant to hospitals throughout Western Europe. This was exactly the sort of excitement my father thrived on. It exhausted most of us, but he loved playing his part.

Winston had a big heart and was always keen to help others. With a parliamentary delegation, he visited a small British military hospital in eastern Nepal nestled in the foothills of Everest. At Dharan some six months previously, there had been a dreadful earthquake, and here, in the hospital, my father met a young, smiling girl named Manmaya Karki, whose leg had been severely crushed by a boulder falling down the mountain and landing on her while she slept with the cattle in the shed adjoining her small family home. Winston asked the British nurse, Major Maggie: “How can this girl survive without a proper functioning leg?” The matron was very clear that the girl’s whole leg needed rebuilding and that it would take considerable resources, not available in Nepal. Winston immediately arranged with friends to raise a large sum of money to cover the medical bills. Eventually, the Royal Masonic Hospital at Chiswick agreed to cover a good part of the expenses, and the young girl’s leg was rebuilt over the following year. Afterwards, my father supported her education in Kathmandu, as she could not live in the mountains. He continued to support her with her career and eventually provided a house for her and her young family when she became a mother.

When my father’s constituency was abolished by the Boundary Commission in 1997, he was keen to head to the European Parliament. Due to his tussles with the Conservative Party, however, he was unsuccessful. In the remaining thirteen years of his life, Winston continued his love of debating and sparring with friends. He enjoyed his time in America with his second wife Luce, who had many friends in Palm Beach, where Winston loved the energy and the entrepreneurial zest of the American people. In 1955, when Sir Winston was standing down as Prime Minister at the age of eighty, he had two insights for his ministers: the first was “Man is spirit,” and the other maxim was “Never be separated from the Americans.” My father, like his grandfather, felt strongly the American blood in our veins that came from our American ancestry—through Jennie Jerome, her flamboyant father Leonard Jerome, and, of course, through our ancestors who served alongside George Washington. This American blood, combined with the Marlborough genes, provided the spark to create strong, independent-minded Churchills, who understood that you had to win the goodwill of the ordinary person to achieve great things. My father may have grown up in his grandfather’s shadow, but he pursued his own career in his own very Churchillian way.

Randolph L. S. Churchill is President of the International Churchill Society.
Winston Churchill wrote his biography of his great ancestor John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, ostensibly to counter the claims of Thomas Babington Macaulay and other historians about Marlborough’s apparent failures as a military commander, his corruption and selfishness, his reliance upon Prince Eugene’s professional knowledge for his victories, and sheer luck. All culminated in what Churchill characterized as “Macaulay’s story of the betrayal of the expedition against Brest” that was “an obstacle I could not face.”

Churchill faced and repudiated it along with the other charges and presents Marlborough instead as the greatest military and political leader Great Britain has ever known.

More than Churchill’s attempt to save Marlborough’s reputation, however, what strikes the reader with this biography, published first in 1933 with subsequent volumes appearing up until 1938 (the time of the Munich Agreement), are the parallels Churchill draws with his contemporary situation. Marlborough was written during the important “wilderness years” and led his wife Clementine to claim that writing it had taught him patience.

From Student to Practitioner
Churchill applied many lessons from Marlborough to his own fight against Hitler. The main threat to British liberty and security was a despot in the middle of the continent; Marlborough had to lead an alliance of continental nations against that despot and encircle him on several fronts; naval control of the Mediterranean was necessary before engaging the enemy on the continent (an instance of requiring patience); there was necessity for a vast network of personal spies; Marlborough had military command but lacked leadership of the House of Commons, which Churchill would make a point of combining when he became prime minister; there was a necessity of keeping friendships and covenants with allies as a way of preserving not only national honour but also national security and prosperity; and perhaps most important of all, friendship with one’s greatest ally with whom to share a Clausewitzian coup d’œil of the whole scene and to inspire member armies to fight “as if they were the army of a single nation.”

The capacity to form friendships, not just alliances or strategic partnerships, is, with magnanimity and political and military prudence, the central criterion Churchill applied to judging Marlborough and those he associated with. He understood friendship roughly the same way that Aristotle described virtuous friendship, and that is the standard Churchill used to judge the success or failure of the historic figures he examined in his biography. For instance, Churchill saw King William III as competent with a good strategic mind, but lacking Marlborough’s ability to develop a network of friends to achieve strategic objectives. He had strong relations with Princess (later Queen) Anne, Lord Godolphin (the Treasurer), and Speaker of the House of Commons Robert Harley, whose friendship Marlborough used to influence that institution. “The Cockpit friendships,” the name derived from the home of Princess Anne, were, in Churchill’s words, “the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise gleaming among nations.” Marlborough’s most important connection was that with his wife Sarah, who was Anne’s personal confidante. On the field of battle, however, the Marlborough friendship that most stands out is that he had with Prince Eugene of Savoy.

Prince Eugene
The friendship of Marlborough and Eugene was based largely upon the power they had over their respective armies and their alliance. It began in the letters they shared with one another in 1701–02, which led them to meet and cement their friendship in a banquet on 10 June 1704:

Then at once began that glorious brotherhood in arms which neither victory nor misfortune could disturb, before which jealousy and misunderstanding were
powerless, and of which the history of war furnishes no equal example. The two men took to one another from the outset. They both thought and spoke about war in the same way, measured the vast forces at work by the same standards, and above all alike looked to a great battle with its awful risks as the means by which their problems would be solved.  

Elsewhere Churchill claims: “So perfect was the harmony which the ascendancy of Marlborough and Eugene exercised upon all minds that these soldiers of different races, creeds, and Governments—English, Scots, Irish, Danes, Prussians, Hanoverians, Hessians, Saxons, Palatines, and Dutch—acted together as if they were the army of a single nation.” Churchill would undoubtedly have held this example in mind during the Second World War, when he and Roosevelt used their friendship to forge their alliance.

Marlborough and Eugene felt the strains of each other’s battles as if they were each man’s own, and Eugene offered succor to Marlborough, who suffered from depression. Eugene signed some of his letters to Marlborough, “Your affectionate Cousin,” and Marlborough claimed, “I not only esteem, but really love that Prince.” Churchill describes their friendship in terms comparable to Aristotle’s language of virtuous friends as one’s “second self.”

Churchill’s comment echoes Clausewitz’s notion of the coup d’œil, whereby genius is capable of perceiving the whole scene. Churchill states the capacity of viewing the scene “must be evolved from the eye and brain and soul of a single man, which from hour to hour are making subconsciously all the unweighable adjustments, no doubt with many errors, but with an ultimate practical accuracy.” Yet later he claims “no one can comprehend the movements leading up to the battle of Blenheim unless he realizes that Eugene and Marlborough were working like two lobes of the same brain. They were in constant touch with one another.” Churchill claims of Marlborough’s victory at Malplaquet: “Marlborough’s fame, his influence upon the Continent, his comradeship with Eugene, had compelled the tremendous event.”

shared vision

Churchill suggests Marlborough and Eugene enjoyed not just a Clausewitzian coup d’œil separately as individuals, but together as friends. His analysis is comparable to the way that Aristotle describes the peak of friendship as a joint intellectual perception, in Greek sunaisthesis, the joint or mutual perception of the good whereby friends behold one another inseparably as they behold the good. For Churchill then, it seems their military and political success was predicated upon this
sunesthetic coup d’œil. That shared vision enabled them also to view their friendship not only as one of shared political and strategic vision, but also as the very purpose of that statecraft. Their friendship seemed to be based upon something higher than mere politics or strategy.

The pair had fun together. They were at play together. As warriors they sought the “decisive battle” that would defeat Louis XIV once and for all. But they also saw it as the primary means of testing their mettle as warriors, indeed their virtue, their very moral ethos. Churchill explains the importance of the Battle of Blenheim: “With pride and pleasure they rejoiced in each other’s companionship and in their conviction that the whole war must be put to the test at dawn.”

Despite Churchill’s emphasis on their equality, he admits that Marlborough was the superior because he was the grand commander of the allied forces against Louis XIV. Churchill observes of Marlborough’s Machiavellian mind: “As clever at piercing the hidden designs of his enemy as in beating him on the field of battle, he united the cunning of the fox to the force of the lion.” Later Churchill claims Marlborough “…acted thus in the interests of right strategy and of the common cause as he conceived them. He was accustomed by the conditions under which he fought to be continually deceiving friends for their goods and foes for their bane.”

Churchill does not explicitly specify the way Marlborough deceived Eugene for his good, but the problems that arose over Marlborough’s wish to put Toulon to siege would be one example. Churchill observes, however, that in the case of the siege of Toulon, which Eugene had opposed and had suffered so much in waging, Marlborough regretted forcing Eugene to go along with his plan on account of the cost it had on their friendship as well as on the war effort: “But the cost was measureless. A year’s campaign must be used; a year of political attrition at home; a year of waning comradeship through the Alliance. High stakes for Toulon!” Marlborough regretted the manner in which his disagreement with Eugene harmed their friendship and their capacity to pursue strategic objectives.

After Marlborough was removed from office, Eugene paid a visit to him in London in early 1712 as a gesture of loyalty and support for his friend. It was a tense time. There were rumors the two would wage a coup d’état. Eugene made the rounds, meeting various politicians and important people. Churchill provides little detail on their own time together, highlighting instead Eugene’s public demonstrations of his friendship with Marlborough during this time when Marlborough was suffering political attacks from all directions: “Thus did the famous Prince and warrior proclaim his friendship for his comrade of so many glorious days.”

The Friend of Marlborough

Churchill’s tale of Marlborough’s achievements and friendships is a tale as well of the civic friendship of England, whose story at this stage is “completed” by Churchill the bard, practitioner, and theorist of political friendship. The biography is Churchill’s greatest statement of his political wisdom, which he sums up in terms of the practice of virtuous friendship: “One rule of conduct alone survives as a guide to men in their wanderings: fidelity to covenants, the honour of soldiers, and the hatred of causing human woe.”

Churchill reads Marlborough as his contemporary and he hints how Marlborough’s statecraft and his conduct of a war on the continent will provide the model for what needs to be done with Nazi Germany. In writing the biography and thus preparing for his own statecraft, Churchill became the friend of Marlborough best equipped to judge his character. In telling the story of Marlborough and of Great Britain in the biography, Churchill found his other self in his great ancestor.

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John von Heyking teaches at the University of Lethbridge. This article is an abbreviation of material in his forthcoming book from St. Augustine’s Press “Absolute Selflessness”: Winston Churchill on Politics as Friendship.

Endnotes
4. Ibid. p. 774.
6. Ibid., pp. 251, 182, and 220.
8. Ibid., p. 825.
11. Ibid., p. 761.
13. Ibid., p. 259.
15. Ibid., p. 996.
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In peace and in war, Abraham Lincoln became a master of his craft by intense study. Military historian T. Harry Williams argued that President Lincoln was "a great natural strategist, a better one than any of his generals." But the commander-in-chief had also studied the works of great military strategists in books drawn from the Library of Congress. As President during the Civil War, Lincoln found himself in uncharted territory—legally and militarily. He needed to feel and study his way into both spheres. General Grant wrote in his memoirs of Lincoln: "All he wanted, or had ever wanted was someone who would take the responsibility and act, and call on him for all the assistance necessary, pledging himself to use all the power of the government in rendering such assistance."

The presidency of Abraham Lincoln began and ended in a civil war of national survival. The first prime ministship of Winston S. Churchill began and ended in a global war of national survival. Churchill had inherited his war. Lincoln’s war had not yet begun when he took office. Many generals in America and Britain scoffed at the military strategy and tactics of Lincoln and Churchill. Both proved essentially sound in their strategy of deploying an anaconda-like armed embrace of the enemy to squeeze the life from it. Subordinates would chafe at their suggestions.

**Developing a Strategy**

The reality of the Civil War presented itself as largely an ad hoc affair—necessarily with ad hoc strategy and tactics. Corelli Barnett wrote of Lincoln: "Unlike Churchill in 1940, he had no previous experience as a member of a wartime administration. Unlike Churchill again, he had never taken a deep interest in military and naval history." Yet during the first year of the war, Lincoln developed his own strategy for a coordinated series of actions in both the eastern and western United States, which he defined in a letter to General Don Carlos Buell: "I state my general idea of this war to be that we have the greater numbers, and the enemy has the greater facility of concentrating forces upon points of collision; that we must fail, unless we can find some way of making our advantage an over-match for his; and that this can only be done by menacing him with superior forces at different points, at the same time; so that we can safely attack, one, or both, if he makes no change; and if he weakens one to strengthen the other, forbear to attack the strengthened one, but seize, and hold the weakened one, gaining so much."4

Colin Ballard wrote that Lincoln’s “strategy was not on the conventional lines of Napoleon and Von Moltke, but it is just in its originality that its beauty comes out.... Like the poet, the strategist is born, not made, and Lincoln had the character of a born strategist. He could not apply the grand principles because he had never had an opportunity to study them; but instinctively he grasped the main facts and gave them their proper value.”5

Churchill had spent years contemplating the military implications of a major conflict. Lincoln never studied the subject before his presidency. Nor did he have grand planning staffs in Washington. “The fundamental problem for the historian attempting to understand and describe the grand strategy for the American Civil War is that it was nowhere written down at the time,” noted historian Mark E. Neely, Jr. “In an era without military war 'colleges' and a peacetime general staff, there were no contingency plans or white papers laying out strategic doctrine. There were only ad hoc responses to pressing military problems of war as it raged.”6 Lincoln had to respond to events as they happened and take advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. It is in Lincoln’s letters to his Generals that we discover his military tactics and strategy.

Lincoln never hesitated to reach out to Union commanders. He simply walked next door to the Telegraph Office in the War Department and wrote out his message. Unlike Churchill, he rarely consulted anyone but Secretary of War Stanton, General Halleck, even anyone who might be handy. As with Churchill, Lincoln’s biggest challenge was to define goals and find the commanders who could attain them. “As he grew comfortable holding the reins of power, Lincoln became more assertive as commander in chief,” wrote Craig Symonds. By “1862 he was beginning to exercise hands-on management, even issuing operation orders to division commanders; and by 1863 he was hitting his full stride as an activist commander in chief.”7
Both Lincoln and Churchill urged action. Lincoln wrote General George B. McClellan in April 1862: “And, once more let me tell you, it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow.”8 A few weeks later, Lincoln wrote McClellan: “Your call for Parrott guns from Washington alarms me—chiefly because it argues indefinite procrastination.”9 Churchill prided himself on being a “prod.” On 3 June 1940, only three weeks after becoming Prime Minister, Churchill minuted the British chiefs of Staff: “The completely defensive habit of mind, which has ruined the French, must not be allowed to ruin our initiative.”10

Like Churchill, Lincoln would lead from the front. The President visited General McClellan’s headquarters shortly after the Battle of Antietam in 1862. Lincoln would go to General Joseph Hooker’s headquarters shortly after the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863. Lincoln’s visits to the eastern front were instructive and didactic. He tried repeatedly to focus the commanders of the Army of the Potomac on defeating Robert E. Lee’s army rather than to take the Richmond of Jefferson Davis.

**Churchill’s Credentials**

Winston Churchill in the Second World War began with far greater knowledge of military affairs than Lincoln would ever possess. A graduate of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, Churchill participated in wars on four continents. By the time he became prime minister in 1940, he had served as Minister of Munitions, Secretary of State for War, Secretary of State for Air, and twice as First Lord of the Admiralty.

Like Lincoln, Churchill was a glutton for military information. Where Lincoln had his telegraph office to learn daily the latest from the war front, Churchill maintained his map room in the Annexe to 10 Downing Street. Historian John Keegan wrote of Churchill’s leadership role in the War: “If there is any other war leader with whom a ready comparison suggests itself, it is Abraham Lincoln. Like Lincoln, Churchill worked throughout the war at the seat of government; like Lincoln, he embroiled himself throughout the conflict in the processes of representative democracy; like Lincoln, he never rested in his search for generals who could deliver victory, peremptorily discarding those who failed him; like Lincoln, he clung to no doctrinaire principles of strategy, preferring to trust in a few broad policies that he believed best served the long-term interests of the people and the alliance of states he represented.”11

Churchill had “a War Lord’s basic requirement, the gift of being right about essentials,” wrote historian Ronald Lewin.12 “The salient feature of Churchill as War Lord is that he unashamedly enjoyed power—and war,” concluded Lewin. In 1927, “Long before Austria and Munich, Lord Keynes remarked that ‘Mr Churchill does not dissemble his own delight in the intense experience of conducting warfare on the grand scale which those can enjoy who make the decision,’ and in the ’fifties, when it was all over, the old man [Churchill] asked Lord Moran, ‘Don’t you feel lonely without a war? I do.’ These passions were not reprehensible—not in a man who had to function as Stalin’s ally and Hitler’s adversary. But the mere mention of this alliance and this confrontation identifies the particular manner in which Churchill exercised power: its purpose was to restore and retain, not to conquer. From the moment he entered his sunlit garden in May 1940, his aim was never predatory, since his three essential objectives were at first, survival: then the restoration of the status quo ante; and finally the establishment of protective devices which might prevent aggression in a post-war world.”13

**Thought and Deed**

Lincoln, too, represented the fusion of thought and deed. James McPherson emphasized the “congruity” of Lincoln’s strategy, writing: “Common sense, not to mention Clausewitz, will tell us that there must be congruity between national and military strategy. That is, an all-out war to overthrow the enemy requires total mobilization and a military strategy to destroy the enemy’s armies, resources, and morale, while a limited war requires a limited military strategy to gain or defend territory.”14 One of Lincoln’s virtues, as President and Commander-in-chief, was his understanding of the inherent union of both military and political strategy.

Like Lincoln, Churchill did not have the luxury of preparing for wartime command. He took hold of the prime ministership on the day that Germany invaded Western Europe, although he had been, for more than eight months, First Lord of the Admiralty. Lincoln had four months to analyze the situation before he assumed the presidency, then another six weeks before military hostilities commenced, followed by another three months before the first major military battle. For both Lincoln and Churchill, the first engagements of war were disordered and chaotic. Military historian John Keegan wrote: “Lincoln, a totally inexperienced commander in chief, was
confronted from the onset of his presidency by a kaleidoscope of temperamental difficulties among his military helpmeets which would have brought down a lesser person. The verdict on the military leadership of the Union during the Civil War is that there was too much personality in play and far too little talent.” Despite these disabilities, Lincoln never lost the drive for victory.

Craig Symonds wrote: “Given the absence of either a department of defense or a joint chiefs of staff, Lincoln was the only person in the government or its military establishment who had simultaneous command authority over both the army and the navy, and as a result, he was necessarily drawn into those aspects of the war where the two services had to cooperate: on the western rivers and along the Atlantic seaboard.” Lincoln and Churchill frequently worried that their forces would not be used to their best advantage. Churchill particularly worried about the efficient use of British forces in Cairo. They did not have perfect tools but they must use the tools they had. At one point, Churchill told an aide: “Remember, it isn’t only the good boys who help win the wars. It is the sneaks and stinkers as well.”

A Reliable System

President Lincoln had no astute and experienced military adviser to perform the role that General Ismay did for Churchill—to guide him discreetly and to communicate with other military leaders. Nor did he have for the first three years of the war the services of battle experienced men like Generals John Dill and Alan Brooke, who served as Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff for Churchill.

Speaking to the House in July 1942, Churchill said: “Under the present arrangement the three Chiefs of Staff, sitting almost continuously together, carry on the war from day to day, assisted not only by the machinery of the great departments which serve them, but by the Combined General Staff, in making their decisions effective through the Navy, Army, and Air Forces over which they exercise direct operational control. I supervise their activities, whether as Prime Minister or Minister of Defence. I work myself under the supervision and control of the War Cabinet, to whom all important matters are referred, and whom I have to carry with me in all major decisions. Nearly all my work has been done in writing, and a complete record exists of all the directions I have given, the inquiries I have made, and the telegrams I have drafted. I shall be perfectly content to be judged by them.”

This description shows precisely what Lincoln did not have in support.

With the world watching, Lincoln and Churchill would prevail, each in his own way, in their great wars of national survival.


Endnotes

8. Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 9 April 1862, CWAL V, p. 185.
9. Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 1 May 1862, CWAL V, p. 203.
13. Ibid., p. 264.
“Lewis Lehrman’s “Churchill, Roosevelt & Company” offers a detailed look at the special relationship, especially during World War II, when Anglo-American cooperation achieved its most impressive results and faced its most formidable challenges. The book is packed with fascinating detail and illuminates not only the past but the challenges of the present day. The subtitle is “Studies in Character and Statecraft”: Mr. Lehrman makes it clear that, in geopolitics, the two go together.”

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Synthesizing an impressive variety of sources from memoirs and letters to histories and biographies, Lewis Lehrman explains how the Anglo-American alliance worked--and occasionally did not work--by presenting portraits and case studies of the men who worked the back channels and back rooms, the secretaries and under secretaries, ambassadors and ministers, responsible for carrying out Roosevelt’s and Churchill’s agendas while also pursuing their own and thwarting others’. Scrupulous in its research and fair in its judgments, Lehrman’s book reveals the personal diplomacy at the core of the Anglo-American alliance.

“Lewis E. Lehrman’s arresting and deeply researched study of the Anglo-American alliance during the Second World War brilliantly establishes how far Roosevelt and Churchill—sometimes willing to use back channels and bypass conventional diplomatic authority—found and relied on the right people to smooth relations between the two countries. Rich in historical immediacy, Churchill, Roosevelt & Company demonstrates how generals, diplomats, spies, businessmen, economists, and other key figures served the needs of both Prime Minister and President in their unyielding defense of democratic government. Not least, the book delivers a powerful reminder of the contingent role of human interaction and personal chemistry in determining the course of historical events.”

Prof. Richard Carwardine, Rhodes Professor of American History at Oxford University

“Lewis E. Lehrman demonstrates an almost uncanny feel for all the senior personalities around Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Second World War; he understands their characters, viewpoints and motives and has an enlightening insight into all of them, coupled with an impressively objective judiciousness. I didn’t think much more of genuine value could be written about this glittering galere—one of the great ‘genius clusters’ of history—but this well-researched, well-written and profoundly thoughtful book proves me wrong.”

Prof. Andrew Roberts, King’s College, London, author of Masters and Commanders: How Churchill, Roosevelt, Marshall and Alanbrooke Won the War in the West

Available on Amazon.com in Hardcover and on Kindle.
A
n eleven-page essay by Win-
ston Churchill entitled “Are We Alone in the Universe?” in the archives of the National Churchill Museum has developed into an international news story that revealed Churchill was clearly open to the possibility of extra-terrestrial life on other planets.

Churchill drafted his first version of the essay in 1939 and then revised the text slightly in the 1950s. The manuscript of the revised version was among four boxes of materials that were donated to the museum some thirty years ago by Wendy Reves, widow of Churchill literary agent Emery Reves. There it sat unnoticed until its rediscovery last year.

Seeking insights about the validity or the accuracy of Churchill’s astronomical perspective, Timothy Riley, Sandra L. and Monroe E. Trout Director and Chief Curator of the National Churchill Museum, provided the essay to Westminster science faculty as well as renowned astrophysicist Mario Livio, during his Hancock Symposium lecture at Westminster College last fall.

Excitement grew when Livio and the Westminster science faculty expressed great amazement over Churchill’s faith in science and his belief in potential alien life on other planets. Riley gave support to Livio, who wrote an extensive article about the essay for the 16 February 2017 issue of *Nature*, the prestigious science journal.

The article touched off an avalanche of news stories in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The Guardian*, among others. The story was carried by *The Times* of Israel, *El Diario*, *El Universio*, and the news agencies Reuters, Agence France-Press (AFP), AFP Japan, and Xinhua, the official news agency of the People’s Republic of China. And the story continued to grow.

According to news monitoring services, the collected stories to date have been read, heard, or watched by a potential newspaper, magazine, TV, radio, and online audience of more than 6.8 billion people around the globe.

Professor Christopher Bell of Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, however, rightly noted after the widespread media attention claimed the work to be “a lost essay,” that a shortened version of the work entitled “Are There Men in the Moon?” was in fact published in London’s *Sunday Dispatch* on 8 March 1942 and later included in *The Collected Essays of Sir Winston Churchill* (1975).

**Can We Really Say “Are We Alone in the Universe?” is an unpublished Churchill essay?**

Churchill’s original 1939 draft on extraterrestrial life was entitled “Are We Alone in Space?” and is now in the collection of the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge (CHAR 8/644). This version went unpublished in 1939, though notes in the Cambridge archives seem to indicate that it was originally intended for the *News of the World*.

The revised manuscript from the 1950s in the National Churchill Museum is identical to the 1939 “Are We Alone in Space?” text apart from minor typographical differences and the change in title from “Space” to “the Universe.”

While it is true that much of “Are There Men in the Moon?” contains the same content as the earlier “Are We Alone in Space?” and the latter “Are We Alone in the Universe?” there are important differences.

The “Universe” and “Space” manuscripts begin the same way as the published “Moon” essay:
Does life exist elsewhere in the Universe?—indeed a fascinating question.

What immediately follows in the “Space” and “Universe” versions is the chief difference between those texts and “Are There Men in the Moon?”

After the “indeed a fascinating question” opening, which all three versions of the essay share, the “Space” and “Universe” manuscripts contain the following:

To answer it we must agree on what we call Life. It may seem that this is rather like the well-known story of the elephant; we may not be able to define an elephant, but we know one when we see it.

About life this is not quite true.

One is apt to think that the most important characteristics of a living entity are that it can breed and multiply.

If one finds that units placed in a suitable environment can absorb some of the matter surrounding them and increase in numbers, one is inclined to say they are obviously alive.

Now this very simple, as it would appear fundamental, criterion would seem to most of us to provide a sharp dividing line between living and non-living matter; but the line to-day is badly blurred. There are certain curious substances called “viruses,” which have been much studied because they are capable of producing disease.

The particles of which they are presumably composed are too small to be seen under the microscope, but if you keep a small amount of the virus in the proper conditions for a few days, it is found to increase in quantity.

It was always considered, therefore, to consist of sub-microscopic living entities like very small bacteria, which could multiply in suitable circumstances.

Now it has proved possible—for instance in the case of virus which produces tobacco disease—to isolate it and crystalize it.

To all intents and purposes such a crystal is what in the nursery game would be called a mineral. [Note: this sentence is unique to the “Universe” manuscript.]

No one would believe that a lump of sugar or salt could be alive.

Well, here we have a crystal not very much different in kind from a lump of barley sugar, which is the virus we know will increase and multiply given the right environment.

Is it alive or not?

It is not so easy as it seemed to say exactly what we mean when we ask this question.

Still bearing those difficulties in mind, it is interesting to speculate where it is likely that comparatively highly-organized life, as to which there can be no argument, exists elsewhere or not.

The other difference is a short passage—a sentence or two—about Jupiter, which was also omitted from the published “Moon” version.

The vast interest in all things Churchill certainly proves that he is as relevant today as he was in 1939 and draws more international interest than most anyone on the planet, despite the fact he passed away more than fifty years ago.
125 Years Ago
Spring 1892 • Age 17
“His Quick and Dashing Attack”

Winston’s parents knew of his interest in fencing, but he modestly downplayed his talents, telling his father in a mid-February letter, “I am getting on with my fencing and hope, with luck, to be school champion.” A month later he wrote his mother: “I am awfully excited about the fencing which comes off on Tuesday. I know I shall get beaten yet…!”

On 24 March, Winston wrote his mother, telling her that he had “won the Fencing” at Harrow and received a “very fine cup.” His earlier modesty was cast aside as he went on to say, “I was far and away the first. Absolutely untouched in the finals.” He had also written to his father about it, and Lord Randolph replied on 25 March: “I congratulate you on your success. I only hope fencing will not too much divert your attention from the army class.” His father enclosed a two-pound note “with which you will be able to make a present to yr fencing master.”

Winning the fencing championship at Harrow meant that Winston would represent his school at the all-Public Schools gymnastic, boxing, and fencing competition to be held at Aldershot in early April. He wrote to his father on 27 March asking him if he would be able to attend, as “I would so much like you to go.” Unfortunately, he also asked his father if he “could send me a sovereign for myself,” since it “would be great service in making up my accounts.”

That was a mistake. While Lord Randolph did send the money, it was accompanied by a lecture on Winston’s extravagance, telling him that if he “were a millionaire, you could not be more extravagant…. This cannot last, & if you are not more careful should you get into the Bankruptcy Court. Do think this all over & moderate your ways & ideas.” He also told Winston that “I fear I cannot possibly get to Aldershot” for the fencing competition, because it conflicted with the “Sandown races which I must go to.”

Winston became the Public Schools Fencing Champion at Aldershot in April. The school paper, the Harrovian, wrote: “His success was chiefly due to his quick and dashing attack, which quite took his opponents by surprise….Churchill must be congratulated on his success over all his opponents in the fencing line, many of whom must have been much taller and more formidable than himself.”

100 Years Ago
Spring 1917 • Age 42
“Back in the Loop”

After the United States declared war on Germany on 6 April, Churchill, with seemingly no real prospect of being given a cabinet position by Prime Minister Lloyd George, continued to oppose a new Western Offensive in 1917. In an article in The Sunday Pictorial, Churchill argued that “[S]tatesmanship and sound military judgment would decide that it was better to wait that supreme effort [of a new offensive] until the immense, hitherto untouched, and almost immeasurable resources of the United States had been in an effective manner brought into the field in order that the supreme effort might be made with overwhelming power….”

In May, Churchill suggested to his cousin Frederick Guest, the Liberal Chief Whip in Lloyd George’s Coalition Government, that the Prime Minister take the initiative and call a Secret Session of the House of Commons to discuss war policy in order to forestall criticism by the Labour party, Irish Nationalists, and pro-Asquith Liberals. Lloyd George accepted the suggestion and scheduled the Secret Session for 10 May.

Asquith was caught flat-footed and unprepared so that Churchill was the first to open the debate. Roy Jenkins, in his biography of Churchill, calls the speech “one of the several turning points of his long political life…a classic example of his ability to pick out the broad lines of a conjuncture, and to state them in terms which gripped his audience (a packed House) and made their minds receptive to the direction in which he wanted to lead them.” Churchill began by noting that “Russia has collapsed….[An ally whose]
army comprised over seven million soldiers has been crushed by the German hammer.” Counter balancing that, Churchill observed, was the fact that the United States had entered the war, “a nation comprising 120 million of the most active, educated and wealthy citizens, commanding instant and almost limitless resources of every kind.” British war policy, therefore, should take these two developments into account. At sea, the “first and decisive danger” was Germany’s unrestricted submarine warfare, which had to be addressed if American intervention were to be effective. “Let the anti-submarine war claim priority and dominance over every form of British effort.”

What this meant for the war policy on land, Churchill said, was “obvious…we ought not to squander the remaining armies of France and Britain in precipitate offensives before the American power begins to be felt on the battlefields…” He then concluded with a summary of his recommendations. “Master the U-boat attack. Bring over the American millions. And meanwhile maintain an active defensive on the Western Front, so as to economize French and British lives, and so as to train, increase and perfect our armies and methods for a decisive effort in a later year.”

The speech was well received by all in the House save Churchill’s most bitter enemies among the Tories. Lloyd George’s speech that followed Churchill’s was also well received, even though he declined to rule out a new offensive later in 1917, as Churchill had urged. The Chief Whip wrote the Prime Minister: “The impression in the House, lobby and smoking room is that you have made a great speech….Winston’s speech is also considered to be a fine statesmanlike effort.”

More importantly for Churchill’s political future, however, was a chance meeting with the Prime Minister after their respective speeches. Churchill wrote in The World Crisis that, on this occasion, Lloyd George “assured me of my determination to have me at his side. From that day, although holding no office, I became to a large extent his colleague.” As Roy Jenkins wrote in his biography of Churchill, “He was emphatically back in the loop.”

**75 Years Ago**
**(Spring 1942 • Age 67)**

**“Now We See the Ridge Ahead”**

In a speech on 26 March, Churchill acknowledged that the fall of Singapore to the Japanese was “the greatest disaster to British arms which our history records.” Defeats continued to mount through the rest of the spring. On 23 March, the Japanese occupied the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. On 3 April, 2000 civilians were killed in a Japanese bombing raid on Mandalay. On 4 April, Japanese carrier-based airplanes sank four British warships with a loss of life of more than 500 sailors off Ceylon. On 5 April, Japanese aircraft sank two more British warships off Ceylon with more than 300 lives lost. On 6 April, Japanese troops landed on Australia’s Pacific Ocean Mandate, the Solomon Islands. On 9 April, American forces on Bataan surrendered, with more than 35,000 troops taken prisoner. Convoys to Russia also suffered heavy losses in April, with only eight of the twenty-three ships in one convoy getting through. On 3 May, Mandalay surrendered. On 6 May, American forces on Corregidor Island in the Philippines surrendered. On 26 May, Rommel commenced an attack in North Africa that was soon to lead to the fall of Tobruk and the surrender of 33,000 troops.

Against all this, victories were few and humble. Perhaps these are what Churchill optimistically had in mind when, in a speech on 15 May, he said “We have reached a period in the war when it would be premature to say that we have topped the ridge, but now we see the ridge ahead.” On 15 May that ridge seemed pretty far away, but on 4 June the US Navy met and sunk all four aircraft carriers the Japanese had sent to support an invasion of Midway Island, a defeat from which the Japanese Navy never recovered.

On 17 June, Churchill flew to America for a meeting with FDR at Hyde Park. There he presented the President a paper he had written throwing cold water on a half-baked American plan to open a second front in Europe in September 1942 — using largely British troops— that Harry Hopkins and General George Marshall had presented to Churchill in London that April. At the time, Churchill had written to FDR that the American plan was “a masterly document” and that he was “in entire agreement in principle with all you propose” (italics added).

Now, having had two months to prepare a rebuttal, Churchill’s paper told the President what he really thought: “No responsible British military authority has so far been able to make a plan for September 1942 which had any chance of success unless the Germans become utterly demoralized, of which there is no likelihood….Have the American staffs a plan? At what points would they strike? What landing craft and shipping are available? Who is the officer prepared to command such an enterprise?” There would be no such invasion for two more years.

© Finest Hour
Historical dramas require some artistic license. The events of several days, months, or years must be compressed into a viewable timespan. In assessing such films, the reviewer should ask two questions: 1) Does the story remain true to the historical framework? and 2) Does it entertain? Sadly this Churchill fails on both counts.

With regards to accuracy, much can be forgiven up to a point. Lawrence of Arabia, Patton, and The King’s Speech all won the Best Picture Oscar as dramas that entertained while remaining within the essential framework of history. Directors Mel Gibson and Oliver Stone have shown that even when that framework is willfully disregarded, the results can sometimes make compelling viewing.

Alas, Churchill, starring Brian Cox in the title role, commits the greatest of all cinematic sins: it’s boring.

A film about the events leading up to the Normandy invasion in June 1944 should not want for drama, but a low budget, indifferent acting, uninspiring direction, and—above all—a hopelessly insipid script have made it so. It is incredible to think that this is intended to be a theatrical release and not simply a made-for-television movie.

The producers were so anxious to save money that there are only about a dozen speaking parts. None of what is spoken comes from the Churchill canon. Rather than pay a license fee to the estate, the filmmakers opted for phony, pseudo-Churchill speeches. For once we have a film about the D-Day landings that includes no action scenes from the beaches, not even stock newsreel footage. The most aggressive moment on screen comes when an angry Churchill swipes his breakfast off the table.

So dull and dreary is this picture that cataloguing the inaccuracies seems pointless: no one will pay attention long enough to be misled by them. The main storyline imagines that as late as the week leading up to D-Day Churchill was against the whole idea and desperately trying to stop it. Again and again (and again and again) the reason is given as Churchill’s dark memories of the Dardanelles campaign—memories that are not even correct as depicted.

In addition to the major errors, there are many minor mistakes. A uniformed King George VI (James Purefoy) salutes his own driver and then turns around and salutes a gathering of generals, suggesting that no one with so much as one day of military service was available to advise the director about one of the most basic of protocols. More egregiously, General Montgomery (Julian Wadham) repeatedly addresses WSC simply as “Churchill”—not “Prime Minister” or counterparts from a premature attempt at a cross-channel invasion in 1942 or 1943. By the spring of 1944 British and American leadership including Churchill were at one in working to make a successful go of Operation Overlord. Yet in the most bizarre scene in the film Churchill, alone in his bedroom on the night before the attack, has a Lear-on-the-heath moment where he gets down on his hands and knees and prays out loud with bombastic fury for a storm of biblical proportions that will force cancellation of the invasion.

In reality Churchill and the entire British high command worked to dissuade their American coun-

Review by David Freeman

Churchill starring Brian Cox and Miranda Richardson, written by Alex Von Tunzelmann, directed by Jonathan Teplitzky, released by Lionsgate Films: June 2017

Dullest Hours

Books, Arts, & Curiosities
“Mr. Churchill.” No British general officer, not even Monty at his most difficult, would have so much as thought of committing such an act of lèse majesté.

The only good news is that there is a second theatrical release featuring Churchill due out at the end of this year with Gary Oldman in the lead. We must hope that the present forgettable film does not queer the pitch for what currently available evidence suggests will be a much finer hour.

David Freeman is the editor of Finest Hour.

Clash of the Titans


Review by Richard A. McConnell

“I am everlastingly angry only at those who assert vociferously that the four freedoms and the Atlantic Charter are nonsense because they are unattainable. If these people had lived a century and a half ago they would have sneered and said that the Declaration of Independence was utter piffle.”

This 1943 statement by President Franklin Roosevelt is a stellar example of visionary rhetoric and is one of many examples of FDR’s drive to use the Four Freedoms (Freedom of Speech and Worship; Freedom from Want and Fear) as his compass to lead the war effort. In his latest book on Roosevelt during the Second World War, Nigel Hamilton continues his quest to give FDR his “day in literary court.”

Hamilton’s second volume (Mantle of Command being the first and reviewed in FH 168) investigating Roosevelt’s continued maturation into the role of commander in chief. Hamilton’s narrative goes beyond Roosevelt’s challenges commanding the US war effort. This account captures the myriad trials associated with galvanizing world leaders toward a vision of the post-war world. FDR used notions that, although they may have been novel at the time, have now been accepted as foundational for organizations such as the United Nations and NATO. Thus, this latest account engagingly describes a seminal moment in world history created by a dynamic leader, which changed the world permanently.

The book’s subtitle, FDR’s Battle with Churchill, might imply open hostility between the warlords, which would be incorrect. This is not an anti-Churchill book. Hamilton depicts a complex picture of this historic alliance, which really was a close friendship that included intense competition. Both men were strong leaders, but each had distinctly different strengths and challenges. Without this collaboration, our present world would be very different.

Hamilton provides a remarkable description of FDR as both uncompromising and diplomatic. In 1943, the president was growing into the role of commander-in-chief of an allied effort that was far from unified. This book contains riveting descriptions of how decisions that might be taken for granted today almost did not happen, potentially changing the outcome of the war.

Commander in Chief is a study in how a national leader established a vision and used it to guide world leaders through the cauldron of conflict to a brighter future. To do this, Hamilton continues to draw from speeches, official documents, and personal journals, providing the reader with more than what was publicly released at the time. This account includes what military leaders, politicians, and private citizens captured in their journals regarding what they saw. This combination of sources helps provide the reader with rich descriptions resembling a literary time capsule, which is especially effective.

One of Hamilton’s most engaging techniques is to compare and contrast journal entries of perceptions of events as they occurred with what was considered official policy. For example, he describes differences between the agreements at the Casablanca conference in early 1943 and subsequent British and American war plans. In Casablanca, Churchill agreed to a cross-channel invasion of the continent of Europe in 1944 and set the planning in motion for such an endeavor. Numerous journal entries, however, chronicled British reluctance to pursue such an invasion plan, resulting in incessant conflict between allied planners. Roosevelt
 Readers of *Finest Hour* know better than anyone that there is no end to the outpouring of books about Winston Churchill, focussing on ever more obscure corners of his titanic life. This slim volume, on the contrary, seeks to encompass the most important elements of his whole career, not in another full-scale biography—there have surely been enough of those—but in fifteen short essays on different strands or themes.

It is not entirely clear who it is aimed at. It aspires simultaneously to be “suitable for those coming to Churchill for the first time” while also “providing new insights for those already familiar with his life.” But inevitably it falls between stools—too academic for the first category, but too brief to offer much to the second. It is best seen as a concise survey of how a number of distinguished scholars view Churchill today.

What is original, however, is that the endnotes provide full references to the papers held at Churchill College, Cambridge, now digitised and available online, while an e-book edition provides links to the original documents. So perhaps the real target audience is students. The fifteen essays are of variable quality. The first two or three, covering Churchill’s early career, are a bit perfunctory, adding little to the received picture, though Peter Caterral defends Churchill’s controversial 1925 decision as Chancellor of the Exchequer to put Britain back on the gold standard, arguing that it could have worked and was less responsible for provoking the general strike the following year than has often been alleged.

The later, more thematic, essays are more interesting. Chris Wrigley contributes an excellent piece explaining Churchill’s visceral hostility to socialism on the one hand and warm support for trade unionism on the other. “Trade unions,” he insists in 1908, “are not socialistic. They are the antithesis of socialism.” Forty years later he was still urging that “every craftsman or wage earner should of his own free will be a trade unionist.” Similarly Stuart Ball traces the consistency behind Churchill’s up-and-down relationship with the Tory party—“ratting” in 1904, “re-ratting” in 1924, rehabilitated between 1924 and 1929, isolated in the 1930s, fully vindicated in 1940—suggesting finally that he was a much better party leader after 1945 than is usually acknowledged, whose moderation enabled the Tories to capture and hold the centre ground for the next fifteen years.

At the midpoint of the book, Paul Addison contributes an elegant piece contrasting the important part played in his life by three particular women (his mother Jennie, his nurse Mrs Everest, and his long-suffering wife Clementine) with his initial opposition to women’s suffrage (“Contrary to natural law and the practice of civilised
states”), which changed under the impact of women’s roles in both wars. “When I think what women did in the war,” he acknowledged after 1945, “I feel sure they deserve to be treated equally.”

Richard Toye (who also edited the book) makes a balanced case that Churchill, though of course “racist” by modern standards, was for his time a relatively enlightened imperialist. “Although he believed non-whites were racially inferior, this did not mean that he believed they had no rights at all, and he was genuinely concerned to ensure what he regarded as fair treatment (stopping short of equality).”

Probably the most unfamiliar (but topical) subject is Churchill’s relationship with the Islamic World. Warren Dockter not only demonstrates the important role he played as Colonial Secretary in re-shaping the Middle East after 1918, with consequences which still reverberate today, but highlights his lifelong fascination with and respect for Islam, which led him usually to favour Turkey over Greece and, in India, the Moslems over the Hindus. Though supportive of the creation of Israel, he wanted the new state to respect “the legitimate rights of the Arabs.”

Richard Overy gives a clear account of Churchill’s early and consistent enthusiasm for the military use of air power, without regard to the ethics or morality of bombing civilians. Jeremy Black considers his record as a strategist in the Second World War, always favouring peripheral theatres where possible—as he had in the First War—and always wanting to attack, often having to be restrained by his commanders. David Woolner (Resident Historian of the Roosevelt Institute) gives a solid account of the Churchill-FDR relationship, as documented in their correspondence. Finally, in two somewhat overlapping essays, Kevin Ruane charts Churchill’s journey from bellicose Cold Warrior, willing to use the threat of America’s superiority in nuclear weapons to force Soviet withdrawal from eastern Europe, to ardent peacemonger anxious before he left office for the last time to hold a summit with Stalin to rid the world of the spectre of the Bomb. If there is a theme running through all these essays, it is a reminder of the generosity and humanity that always lay behind Churchill’s outward bluster and bombast.

John Campbell’s books include major biographies of E. E. Smith, Aneurin Bevan, Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher, and most recently Roy Jenkins.

**The Seat of Power**


Review by Warren Dockter

Visiting the Churchill War Rooms is a powerful experience. The secrecy, urgency, and importance housed within the walls immediately surround and intoxicate your senses. Solemnly pacing the halls, peering into the map room, and perusing the exhibits gives you a feeling of their immense historical importance. You can almost smell wafts of Churchill’s cigar smoke as you contemplate how he and others like General Brooke and General Ismay directed the war. Replicating that experience with a book might prove a difficult task. Jonathan Asbury’s *Secrets of Churchill’s War Rooms*, however, does so with aplomb. Published by the Imperial War Museum, the book provides an informative and engaging account of life in Churchill’s bunker.

Asbury’s book joins the ranks of several other texts written on the subject including *The Cabinet War Rooms* (1996), *The Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms* (2005), and more recently Richard Holmes’s final book, *Churchill’s Bunker: The Secret Headquarters at the Heart of the War* (2011). Like those books, Asbury relies a great deal on the account of the first “in-house” historian at the War Rooms, Peter Simkins. Asbury admirably pays respect to Simkins’s work, *The Cabinet War Rooms* (1968) in his acknowledgements and notes that Simkins himself “played a major role in the preservation and restoration of the site” (219). But as a testament to Asbury’s thoroughness and thoughtfulness, he reminds his readers of the role Nigel de Lee, a historian from the Royal Military Academy, played in preparing an unpublished history of the War Rooms. De Lee’s work informed both the accounts of Simkins and that of Jon Wenzel, the first Curator of the War Rooms, in his curation of the site right down to the correct furniture required.
While Asbury employs a familiar structure, expediently covering the context of the war at the beginning of each chapter, this particular history of the War Rooms stands above its peers for two primary reasons. The first is the final section, which chronicles the preservation and curatorship of the space. This dimension of the museum’s history has remained fairly absent from most accounts and is a welcome addition, which showcases the time, effort, and care that went into fashioning the War Rooms as we know them today. People like Simkins, de Lee, and Wenzel played a major part in shaping how we think about the role of Churchill during the war, and this has been somewhat overlooked in the past.

The second and even more impressive reason this book is a welcome addition to the Churchill canon is the exceptionally good photography of Andrew Tunnard found throughout the book. His images illustrate the historical weight of their subjects. The low ceilings, cramped conditions, and poor lighting of the Dock convey the claustrophobic working conditions for Churchill’s staff during the war. The comic caricature of Adolf Hitler and “clouds” of pinholes on the enormous global map reveal the staff’s dynamic nature and sense of humour. But perhaps the most impressive photo of all is a simple close shot of Churchill’s chair in the Cabinet Room. Though I have personally visited the War Rooms numerous times, I never before noticed what this photo captures: the scratch marks made by Churchill on the arms of his chair revealing the energy, tension, and pressure he must have experienced during the many hours he sat there managing the war effort. Visitors to the museum must stand too far away from the prime minister’s seat to be able to see this themselves. Here was a secret revealed indeed.

Warren Dockter is Lecturer in International Politics at Aberystwyth University and author of Churchill and the Islamic World (2015).

**Churchill in Combat**


**Review by Douglas S. Russell**

In the past few years renewed interest in Winston Churchill’s military career has been accompanied by publication of new books on his active service in Cuba in 1895, on the North-West Frontier of India in 1897, in Sudan in 1898, and in the Second Boer War, 1899–1900. Frontline Books has done a signal service to Churchillians and military historians by returning to print an important contemporary account of Churchill’s frontline service in the Great War.

With Winston Churchill at the Front by “Captain X” (Andrew Dewar Gibb) was originally published in 1924 by Cowens & Gray, Ltd., as a small (3-1/4 by 6-3/8 inch) paperback priced at one shilling. Long out of print, first editions are now rare and priced in the hundreds of dollars. This reprint, however, is a handsome, hardcover book with a striking dust jacket. This is a welcome addition to the Churchill literature of an almost forgotten classic.

The new edition is much expanded from the original. There is a forward by Churchill’s great-grandson and ICS President Randolph Churchill and an introduction by Gibb’s son Nigel. Also included are excellent photographs and maps of “Plugstreet,” the area of the Western Front defended by the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers while under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Churchill from January through May 1916.

The current edition is divided into three parts. The first consists of four well-done essays written by John Grehan, a senior editor at Frontline Books. These set out Churchill’s army service in four earlier wars together with a capsule history of the Gallipoli Campaign, which led to his leaving the cabinet and rejoining the army to serve in France. Part II contains the original nine-chapter text written by Gibb. Part III provides a streamlined summary of Churchill’s political career from the time he left the front until he became prime minister. There is also a detailed “Visitor’s Guide to Plugstreet” for the modern traveller.

Gibb’s fascinating book is the only detailed, contemporary account of Churchill’s service in the trenches during the First World War aside from Churchill’s own
commander. He concluded his ac-
count with the following judgment:  
“We came to realise, and realise at first hand, his transcendent ability. He came to be looked on as really a possession of our own, and one of which we were intensely proud. And much more, he became our friend. He is a man who is always apparently to have enemies. He made none in his old regiment, but left behind him there men who will always be his loyal partisans and admirers, and who are proud of having served in the Great War under the leadership of one who is beyond a question a great man.”

Douglas S. Russell is the author of  
Winston Churchill: Soldier, the  
Military Life of a Gentleman at War  
(2005).

Maître de Guerre

François Kersaudy, Churchill:  
Stratège passionné, Paris: Perrin/Tallandier, 2016, 447 pages,  

Review by Antoine Capet

Many Finest Hour readers will no doubt be familiar with François Kersaudy’s 1981 monograph Churchill and de Gaulle. As the most eminent Churchill scholar in France, Kersaudy has also widely published on the great man in French magazines, and his biography of Churchill in French (revised & enlarged in 2009) is unanimously regarded as the best in the language.

Professor Kersaudy did his thesis on the Norway Campaign of 1940 and has kept a life-long interest in Second World War studies—so much so that, in a way, he is himself the “passionate strategist,” which he sees in Churchill. Nobody is better qualified, therefore, to write the volume on Churchill as “Maître de Guerre” (master of war) in the series of the same name, which Kersaudy also co-edits.

Kersaudy does not quote Churchill’s reflection on the night of 10 May 1940, as given in the last paragraph of The Gathering Storm (“I felt...that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial”), but his chapters on 1940 to 1945 are entirely impregnated with this underlying idea, especially Chapter 8, concerning June to October 1940 and predictably titled “La plus belle heure” (the finest hour). Now the “strategist” was able to give full vent to his inspiration and intuitions.

“But this unequalled organiser, inventor, propagandist and tactician,” Kersaudy warns the reader, “doubles up as a disquieting strategist: confusing the desirable with the possible, neglecting logistics, immersing himself in details at the expense of the whole picture, this conductor of genius is constantly tempted to leave his rostrum to play the scores of the violinist or trumpeter. If most false notes were in fact avoided, it is only because this flamboyant maestro was surrounded by professionals who, if notably less inspired, were far more reflective.” Churchill’s team saved him from many errors.

Among these “far more reflective” strategists in Churchill’s entourage, General (later Field Marshal) Alan Brooke probably plays the most visible role in Kersaudy’s narrative—as he should. But of course, from 1941 Churchill was no longer alone as warlord: he had to share the planning of future operations with two other giants who came to dwarf him.

Chapter 11, entitled “A subordinate victor,” harps on the same theme, with Churchill powerless to
check Soviet expansionism in the face of President Roosevelt’s benevolent attitude to Stalin’s scheming. The “strategist” has no more opportunities to see a concrete translation of his bright ideas as these are ruthlessly vetoed by the Americans. Likewise, in Chapter 12, “Renaissance,” the recognition of Churchill’s geo-strategic vision gets off to a slow start. Kersaudy reminds us that “on both sides of the Atlantic, the Fulton speech was misunderstood by the population, denounced by the press and disowned….” But then of course Churchill was fundamentally right in his judgement, as it turned out.

Kersaudy argues that when Churchill returned to Downing Street in 1951 he wanted to take up the summitry as it had been left at Potsdam in 1945, entertaining the chimera that with him instead of Attlee, Britain would again successfully play the role of honest broker between the two thermonuclear superpowers. Kersaudy makes much of Churchill’s brilliant Commons speech of 1 March 1955 in which he publicly announced that Britain was joining the H-bomb race with a view to assuring a lasting peace by deterrence and the balance of terror. We now know that the British deterrent was only a drop in the ocean of Soviet-American weaponry and that only seven years later Macmillan made it almost entirely dependent on American goodwill, thereby putting a definitive end to Churchill’s last strategic ambition.

What remained, then, of Churchill’s life-long and “passionate” struggle to preserve peace, freedom, and the world status of his country—all three simultaneously if possible? Kersaudy aptly points out that in the later stages of the war, when it was clear beyond doubt that Hitler was going to be defeated, Churchill feared a replacement of the brown plague by a red one. He also rightly quotes Churchill’s prediction to his private secretary “Jock” Colville that Colville would see the crumbling of the Soviet bloc in his lifetime. In fact Colville missed it by two years—but the fundamental conclusion that Soviet Communism could not endure was of course vindicated, some twenty-five years after Churchill’s own death. Yet, if Churchill’s “strategy” can be credited with having effectively brought down Nazism, it seems impossible to argue seriously that it in any way contributed to the melting-down of Soviet communism.

The volume can only be hailed as a tour-de-force—not because it produces new facts, but because of Kersaudy’s mastery in adducing and manipulating such a mass of sources, and arranging them into a coherent synthesis both eminently readable and perfectly convincing. Kersaudy’s vivid prose is a delight, and the proof-checking was faultless. Unreservedly recommended.

**The Wisdom of Winston**

Western writers have long explored the unique legacy of Winston Churchill. Chinese writer Shao Lijing takes a reflective approach, arguing that only when politicians learn the art of politicking itself can effective leadership be established for-upholding democracy.

Born in Shanghai, Shao was educated in Hong Kong and earned his Ph.D. at Oxford. Previously he wrote a series of articles called 十四年亂象回顧 (The Reflection on Fourteen-Year Frenzied Phenomena). These articles analyze in depth the issues involved in the governing of Hong Kong. Shao suggests that Hong Kong’s leadership should borrow Churchill’s knowledge of statecraft and adapt it to today’s rapidly-changing and more challenging world, that people need to ponder how the British Parliament kept running even during the most difficult times of the War, and that historians and government officials need to rethink in what way the post-war powers were reconstructed, how colonialism and nationalism evolve, and what challenges democracy is facing today.

To find lessons in the most effective methods for running a democratic government facing a mortal threat, Shao examines Churchill’s
Memoirs of the Second World War. For Shao, to learn the lessons of war is to avoid the actuality of war. He argues that wars in the 1920s, economic and political, led to the Second World War. Future tragedies can result if people do not now reflect upon the causes of these earlier conflicts. Taking the surrender of Singapore as an example, Shao suggests that many politicians in Hong Kong need to learn from Churchill and not act like “事後孔明 [the wise man after the event]” (85).

One of the strengths of the book is Shao’s use of Chinese wisdom to explore the acumen of the leadership of the Western world. The phrase “歪打正着 [hit the mark by a fluke]” on page 63, for example, is used to describe a division of German paratroopers who were almost completely wiped out in Southern Greece, and yet, because of this near-disaster, the British and the Americans learned and started building up their own paratrooper divisions. The author applies the phrase “將在外, 君命有所不受 [A commander is exempted from the king’s dictation on a battlefield]” (77) to describe an episode when General Montgomery did not obey Churchill’s order, but Churchill still appreciated his courage and audacity. Other splendid Chinese idioms in this book include “先禮後兵 [try peaceful means before resorting to force]” (182), which is used to describe Churchill’s attitude towards Hitler, and “不拘小節 [do not bother about trifles]” (196), which is used to describe Churchill’s humor and his big heart. Readers who understand Chinese will find this book most enjoyable.

The book does three things very effectively. First, Shao puts his emphasis on the core values of freedom and democracy in the Western world. Second, he shows how the English language connected the British and the Americans in defense of these values, and finally Shao illustrates well the British national spirit as represented by the wartime motto “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Shao is also especially good at translating Churchill’s core ideas into appropriate Chinese equivalents, such as when he observes that Churchill’s statement, “The odds were great; our margins small; the stakes infinite” (250), may be rephrased to something like: “The chances of winning (in this lottery) are one in a million; we do not have many resources to use; we have no other option but to live or die” (250).

Shao extracts the most important events and conflicts from The Second World War and streamlines them into a 254-page book that still represents the war’s triumphs and tragedies with suitable power. The translation of parts of The Second World War into Chinese itself stands as a great accomplishment. This comprehensive text will be helpful for college students and readers who are interested in history and political science. &

Angela Sugiyama is a graduate student of history at California State University, Fullerton.

Churchill as a Literary Character: WSC in Fiction


Review by Michael McMenamin

Mrs. Roosevelt’s Confidante is the fifth book in the Maggie Hope Mystery series and is easily as good as, if not better than, the first four novels. Maggie is back as Churchill’s secretary and accompanies him on his post-Pearl Harbor visit to Washington. Churchill wants her not only for her typing and Special Operations Executive (SOE) training, but also to translate for him, as Maggie has been raised in America, and, in Churchill’s words, the United States and Great Britain are “Two nations divided by a common language.”

One of Mrs. Roosevelt’s young female secretaries is murdered early in the novel and made to look like a suicide. In the process of solving the murder, Maggie uncovers a plot by Southern isolationists to blackmail and tarnish the First Lady’s reputation with accusations of sexual improprieties on her part towards the dead secretary, who has seemingly left behind a damning suicide note claiming Mrs. Roosevelt’s behavior toward her was the reason she killed herself. There are also subplots involving the Nazis’ V-1 and V-2 rocket program,
the pending execution in Virginia of an innocent black man wrong-ly convicted of murder, and—for good measure—a visit by Maggie’s former RAF lover to Hollywood to meet Walt Disney about making propaganda cartoons (and conve-
niently get her ex out of the way so Maggie can rekindle a romantic friendship with a journalist with whom she went to college).

Historical characters are plentiful and well drawn. Churchill, FDR, and Eleanor Roosevelt have major roles. Fritz Todt and Werner von Braun make appearances in the rocket program subplot, includ-
ing a scene where, under pressure from Berlin, a V-2 rocket is finally launched successfully without exploding or going off target. Also appearing in this context are Lord Cherwell (Frederick Lindemann, also known as “the Prof”), who is skeptical about the German rocket program, and Churchill’s son-in-law Duncan Sandys, who is not.

The scenes between Churchill and FDR are especially good, as are the scenes between FDR and his wife. The same is true of Churchill’s press conference in the White House, his remarks at the lighting of the White House Christmas Tree, and his address to a joint session of Congress. The Hollywood scenes with Walt Disney are also enjoyable and remind you of what a remarkable talent he was.

There is a sixth novel now out in the series, The Queen’s Accomp-
lice, set in 1942 London, where a Jack the Ripper copycat is killing female SOE agents. As Churchill is not a character in the novel, howev-
er, it will not be reviewed in Finest Hour. Nevertheless, if you enjoyed any of the other Maggie Hope novels, you will like this one as well. It focuses on the women of the SOE, including the fact that their pay and benefits were substantially less than the men, though their respons-
sibilities and the dangers they faced in the field were certainly equal. There will be a seventh Maggie Hope Mystery out later this year, The Paris Spy, which has Maggie back in the SOE and on her way to France to find out who is betray-
ing SOE agents in the field to the Nazis. If Churchill makes an ap-
pearance, FH will review it, but do not miss it if you like Maggie, even if Churchill is otherwise engaged.

Novels are rated one to three stars on two questions: Is the portrayal of Churchill accurate and is the book worth reading?

Michael McMenamin writes the “Ac-
tion This Day” column. He and his son Patrick are co-authors of the award-win-

Freedom Fighters


Review by Paul K. Alkon

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his book explains what Churchill and Orwell meant by freedom, how they fought for it, and why that battle contin-
ues. Explanations are scattered throughout alternating chapters on each man, designed to provide parallel lives. Coverage is cradle to grave, with focus on the 1930s and 1940s. The book seems intended as either review for those familiar with both, or as an introduction for neophytes. It is best as review. Ricks’s thesis is that “Churchill helped give us the liberty we enjoy now. Orwell’s thinking about lib-
erty affects how we think about it now.” In his “Afterword: The Path of Churchill and Orwell,” Ricks urg-
es readers to walk that path.

Because available pages are insufficient for ample biographies, the intertwined narratives too often seem like erratic Cliffs Notes with odd inclusions and omissions.
Unfortunately omitted are any discussions of Savrola, My Early Life, Marlborough, or even the Nobel committee’s explanation of Churchill’s Nobel Prize for literature. Coming up for Air is merely listed among “close to unreadable” fiction by Orwell.

The oddest inclusion, as companion to analysis of Homage to Catalonia, is two short paragraphs from Ernest Hemingway’s For Whom the Bell Tolls quoting unpleasant characters without any attempt to distinguish between what they say and what the novel intends by including their remarks. Ricks ends his glance at Hemingway by quoting “Orwell’s friend Malcolm Muggeridge” dismissing Hemingway as “boozey, preoccupied with the image rather than the reality.” So much for Papa.

Such vagaries are compensated for by attention to Orwell’s key insight, expressed early in 1984 by its protagonist Winston Smith, that “Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.” The novel—and much of Orwell’s career—centers on showing why denial of reality is the indispensable foundation of totalitarian states. They thrive on creation and acceptance of lies. Ricks notes of Winston Smith (whose first name, as many have remarked, is one of Orwell’s tributes to Churchill) that “He is especially provoked by the Party’s insistence that only it could determine what was real and what was not. ‘The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears,’ he thinks at one point. ‘It was their final, most essential command.’”

Ricks shows that here though “Winston does not know it, and Orwell does not say so” the underlying argument reflects the empiricism of John Locke, David Hume, and “most specifically” their intellectual heir John Stuart Mill’s 1859 essay On Liberty. Ricks quotes Mill’s statement that his topic is “the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual....a question...likely soon to make itself recognised as the vital question of the future.” Most crucial for this issue, Mill insists, is “the inward domain of consciousness...liberty of conscience...liberty of thought and feeling.”

Ricks states that also reflecting Mill’s insight without alluding to it is Winston Smith’s conviction that although he is “uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear....it was not by making yourself heard but by staying sane that you carried on the human heritage.” Without remarking here how Smith’s sanity is ultimately destroyed by the state, thus preventing him from successfully attacking it, Ricks plausibly contends that “In that passage, Orwell presages the dissidents such as Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and Amalrik, who in testifying about the facts they perceived, helped bring down the Soviet Union just a few years after the real year 1984. In both worlds—the imaginary one of 1984 and the real Soviet Union—it was a moral victory simply to question the official presentation of truth and posit an alternative by documenting observable reality. The state in both cases knew this and regarded such an act as seditious.”

Churchill’s task during his wilderness, Second World War years, and after was less to counter lies with truth, though it included that, than to prevent a Nazi victory and (later) a Soviet expansion that could veer into atomic Armageddon.

Ricks accurately outlines Churchill’s magnificent achievements in holding the fort until arrival of United States forces to help (then overshadow) England’s efforts. Postwar stumbles are duly noted. Also accurately analyzed are Orwell’s Burmese Days, Down and Out in Paris and London, The Road to Wigan Pier, and Homage to Catalonia. Ricks argues persuasively for the enduring relevance of Animal Farm and the increasing impact of 1984. Especially helpful for appreciating the origins and reception of Animal Farm is Ricks’s account of its context in children’s literature. Explication of it is accurate, though surely little needed even by readers being introduced to it for the first time.

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Aged fourteen, I was given a ticket for the gallery of the House of Commons. My family were Conservative, and I was reared with a fixed belief that Labour were decidedly not up to the mark. Hence it came as something of a surprise to spot that the Conservative Minister of Education answering questions had evidently inherited every advantage that privileged birth could give, except brains. A very shrewd Labour MP, I think from Southampton, wanted to know why the government had been offered land for a new school for £8,000, turned it down—and eventually bought it for £80,000.

I suspect that the Government’s spin-doctors, for I am sure they existed then, had Churchill ready and wound up in the wings and got a “send-him-now” signal from the Treasury Bench. For it was 30 November 1959— the old boy’s eighty-fifth birthday. Sir Winston entered the chamber just under the gallery, and at first I could not see him. But the House erupted, waving order papers. He stood there, and Labour Leader Hugh Gaitskell jumped up to ask: “I hope that it will be in order, Mr. Speaker, if I offer to the rt hon. Gentleman, the Member for Woodford (Sir Winston Churchill) our warmest congratulations and best wishes and affectionate greetings, on his 85th birthday.” The Leader of the House, R. A. Butler, added: “May I support the Leader of the Opposition, Sir, and on behalf of the whole House include in the rt hon. Gentleman’s and hon. Friends’ offer our most heartfelt good wishes to my rt hon. Friend.” An obviously moved Churchill rose and replied: “May I say that I most gratefully and eagerly accept both forms of compliment.” And ‘twas for all the world as if Southampton had never existed.
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The International Churchill Society is pleased to announce the 34th International Churchill Conference, “Churchill as International Statesman.” The Conference will be held at the historic Essex House hotel in New York City on October 10–12, 2017. This will be the first-ever International Churchill Conference held in New York, the city that Churchill first visited in 1895 and where he suffered his 1931 “misadventure”—being run over by a car on 5th Avenue. The history of the world hung in the balance just blocks from where we shall meet this autumn.

Those who register by May 31, 2017, will receive a 10% discount on all tickets. Return the form enclosed with this issue or go to www.bit.ly/Churchill2017 to register

First-time conference speakers will include Lord Owen, former British foreign secretary and author of Cabinet’s Finest Hour: The Hidden Agenda of May 1940; Lord Bew, author of Churchill and Ireland; and Lewis Lehrman, co-founder of the Gilder-Lehrman Institute for American History and author of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Company. Return favorites will include Andrew Roberts, and David Lough on “Churchill and the Art of the Deal.”

One of the conference’s many highlights will be an interview by Celia Sandys, Churchill’s granddaughter, with Lady Williams (formerly Jane Portal), personal secretary to Churchill during his second premiership.

Registration is free for high school and college students; however, student registration is not available online. Please contact us via email at info@winstonchurchill.org for more information. Include your school and expected date of graduation.

To book your room at the Essex House, go online or call +1 (212) 247-0300 and quote “The 34th International Churchill Conference, October 10–12.”

If you have any questions or need assistance booking your conference tickets online, please call our office at +1 (202) 994-4744.