



# FINEST HOUR

THE JOURNAL OF WINSTON CHURCHILL

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Historian of  
the 20th  
Century:  
A Tribute to  
Sir Martin  
Gilbert

World War I Centenary:  
The Making of a Defence Minister  
Battles of Coronel and the Falkland Islands

Ditchley Park: "When the Moon Was High"

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# The Rt Hon Sir Martin Gilbert CBE: Historian of the 20th Century



Martin Gilbert in 2008, while recording videos for his website. ESTHER GILBERT



**Arnn, 17**



**Jackson, 38**



**McKay, 55**



**Langworth, 60**



# FINEST HOUR

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AUTUMN 2014 • NUMBER 165

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### Cover

"Winston Churchill" by Sir Oswald Birley, 1951, collection of Lady Soames, her last image loaned to us for *Finest Hour* covers.





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# DESPATCH BOX

## *FINEST HOUR* 163

Whether or not Churchill believed in God and Christianity, he certainly had high hopes. In *Painting as a Pastime* he declared that when he got to heaven he meant to spend a considerable part of his first million years in painting. In another context, he mused that in heaven the Lord would have to form a government, "And He will certainly call upon me." (John Colville in "Churchill and the Italian Campaign" by Ward Chamberlin Jr., *Proceedings of the International Churchill Societies 1990-1991*, 116).

MIKE GROVES, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

I found the World War I articles fascinating. It was skimmed in my last weeks of school. My great uncle, whom I knew well, fought in France. But, my favorite in this issue is Jock VI, Lord Warden of the Cinque Mouseholes! Great issue. Enjoyed it. Wish the KC conference on WWI had not been cancelled.

JUDITH KAMBESTAD, SANTA ANA, CALIF.

I enjoyed the images of the Harrow Rifle Corps, especially the photos of the "Square," which was already obsolete at the time. It was intended to repel a cavalry charge. The medieval Scottish *schiltron* formation was designed for this purpose. The basic tactic was probably known to Julius Caesar, and the Duke of Wellington used it against Ney's cavalry at Waterloo. I've found numerous examples in the intervening years.

In essence you form a line of spears, pikes or bayonets pointed toward the direction of the oncoming charge, whence equine psychology comes in. No horse will charge such a line; you can spur him all day—he will not do it (which only proves horses are smarter than people). The tactic does not stop the charge; it redirects it. The charging horsemen will flow along the line of spears/pikes/bayonets, looking for an open flank. With the square formation, there isn't one.

The square was strictly a defensive formation; as obvious from the Harrow photos, it did not have offensive capability. While it saw occasional use in colonial warfare, against infantry armed with repeating rifles, it would have been

suicidal. The Maxim gun rendered cavalry charges obsolete anyway.

JONATHAN HAYES, CORVALLIS, ORE.

I was devastated to note in *FH* 163 that the "Churchill Quiz" will only be available online. This was always the first page I turned to and I see no possible reason for this course of action. In my opinion this is another nail in the coffin of Western civilisation! Unlike WSC I am a committed Luddite without a computer, and no plans to acquire one. I shall thus be deprived of the pleasant exercise of testing my erudition on all things Churchillian.

MERVYN GILBERT-SMITH, VANCOUVER, B.C.

*Editor's response:* I gather that the decision to move the Quiz is part of a number of changes in this journal to accommodate the digital age and to add images and web links to the Q&As.

William F. Buckley Jr. at the age of 80 wrote that he had learned to use email and computers, not because he welcomed them, but because to reject them is "to be condemned to ever-diminishing news and information." That he was uncomfortable I know from his emails, always full of typos! Indeed I had all I could do years ago to switch from a manual to an electric typewriter. Given the times we live in I've made my peace with computers. I'm not at all sure what Churchill would think of them.

## LADY SOAMES ISSUE 164

What an extraordinary issue of *Finest Hour*: Immensely moving, very well written and of course beautifully produced as ever. Many congratulations; she would have been thrilled.

ANDREW ROBERTS, NEW YORK CITY

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the memorial issue on Lady Soames. I read it cover to cover and found the tributes and articles fascinating. I especially enjoyed your remembrance and the valediction by Sarah Churchill to end the issue. Thank you for all the wonderful issues that you produced over the years.

BETH KRZYWICKI, SPRING VALLEY, CALIF.

*Letters continue on page 58...*

## WOOING MAIDENS

Edwina Sandys asked us when her grandfather said something like, “I wooed Roosevelt more ardently than a young man woos a maiden.”

Sir Martin Gilbert writes, in the official biography, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 8, *Never Despair 1946-1965* (Hillsdale College Press, 2013), 416: “After dinner Churchill talked of the visit he and Colville had made to the Rhine in March 1945....Speaking of the Anglo-American disputes over the question of a Second Front in the Cotentin in 1942, Winston said, ‘No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt.’”



German lampoon of the August 1941 Atlantic Charter conference, in *Der Stürmer*, Nuremberg, 4 September 1941.

Prof. Warren Kimball reminds us that after Pearl Harbor, Churchill commented that he no longer would speak to America in terms of courtship. Replying to a colleague who had urged a cautious approach to the newly belligerent U.S. he quipped: “Oh! That is the way we talked to her while we were wooing her; now that she is in the harem, we talk to her quite differently!” Alanbrooke’s diaries record this comment on 9 December 1941. See Arthur Bryant, ed., *The Turn of the Tide 1939-1943* (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 231.

Incidentally, at Chequers in March 1943, Churchill also spoke of wooing

the Maiden Stalin. From Sir Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (London: Heinemann, 1991), 743:

“As he recovered from his pneumonia, Churchill was in reflective mood, telling the editor of *The Times*, Robin Barrington-Ward, who found him ‘pink, fresh in colour, hardly a wrinkle, voice firm, all his usual animation and emphasis.’” WSC said: “I shall come out of the war an old man. I shall be seventy. I have nothing more to ask.” Churchill’s thoughts then were on the future of a Europe dominated by Russia. “I have wooed Joe Stalin as a man might woo a maid,” he added. He would favour a postwar confederation of the smaller states of Europe, “I do not want to be left alone in Europe with the bear.” ☞

## PAT AND HITCH

Mr. Joseph Clemmow asks: “Have you published any ‘Wit and Wisdom’ about the criticisms of Churchill and British participation in World War II by the American Pat Buchanan and the British Peter Hitchens? I had an online quarrel with the latter over his articles endorsing Buchanan’s book *Churchill, Hitler and the Unnecessary War*.”

When this question appeared on Churchillchat, Rafal Heydel-Mankoo mentioned a recent American radio “Tom Woods Show,” which interviewed Buchanan. Personally I am fond of Pat. Sir Winston Churchill said, “I like a man who smiles when he fights.” Being an equal opportunity researcher, I even helped him check some points for his book. He sent me an inscribed copy, and I sent him one of mine. It wasn’t my fault, as I told him, that he chose to put the wrong spin on everything and quote Churchill out of context!



Our responses to Buchanan were the articles on pages 6 and 13-21 in *Finest Hour* 139, Summer 2008. The same issue also tackled Nicholas Baker’s melodrama, *Human Smoke*. You can read the pdf at: <http://bit.ly/1ruJlhu>.

Mr. Peter Hitchens used to be known as “the good Hitchens.” He is brother to the late Christopher, but comes at things from a different angle. There are three references to Peter on The Churchill Centre website: enter “peter hitchens” in the search box.

We also took on Mr. Christopher Hitchens when he wrote some silly stuff in *The Atlantic*. It was like shooting fish in a barrel: <http://bit.ly/RQxY8G>.



Buchanan and Hitchens (slightly modified by us from the cartoon at left), *FH* 139.

One cannot really get too upset about this sort of thing. There is a grain of truth to some of it, of course, since the war didn’t end in the brave new world Churchill, Roosevelt and the rest hoped it would. But iconoclasts operate using clear hindsight, are well paid to do so, and are good at keeping the pot bubbling. —RML ☞

# DATELINES

## Funeral Coach Saved Again

SHILDON, UK, SEPTEMBER 15TH— The 1931 railway car that carried Sir Winston's coffin to Bladon after his State Funeral in 1965, property of the Swanage Railway Trust, has arrived at "Locomotion," the National Railway Museum, to be cosmetically restored and exhibited during the 50th anniversary of the funeral.

Southern Railways baggage car number 2464 has an interesting history. Long before it carried Churchill, it was used to transport the body of Edith Cavell, the World War I nurse and spy executed by the Germans, to her final resting place; Churchill highly respected Cavell's service to her country.

Some years ago the famous artifact was acquired by Pacific Palms Resort outside Los Angeles, where it was



placed on display alongside a replica of St. Andrew's Station (FH 129: 6-7). In 2006 Pacific Palms grew tired of the display and proposed to scrap the historic car, but offered to return it to England if the funds could be raised. That was when the Swanage Railway Trust began its campaign to raise £40,000 for the operation (FH 133: 8). A year later the car began its journey from Los Angeles back to Swanage where the Railway Trust arranged for its preservation (FH 136: 20). With the help of the National Railway Museum it will now be preserved for posterity.

“THE WHOLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST IS INTIMATELY RELATED....THERE ARE ALWAYS FEUDS AND ANIMOSITIES. THERE ARE ALWAYS SCORES TO BE SETTLED AND FANATICAL THIRSTS TO BE SLAKED. ANY APPEARANCE OF THE LACK OF WILL-POWER...BLOWS LIKE A DRAUGHT OF AIR ON THE FULL, FIERCE EMBERS.”

QUOTATION OF THE SEASON

—WSC, *SUNDAY TIMES*, 22 SEPTEMBER 1929

## Congratulations Dame Vera

LONDON, JUNE 6TH— Released to coincide with the 70th anniversary of D-Day was a new album, "Vera Lynn: National Treasure: The Ultimate Collection." Dame Vera, 97, said: "I am delighted of course. It is wonderful to hear these songs again

that were at the top of the charts long ago, and it's warming to think that everyone else is listening to them too."

The veteran singer's last major chart success was five years ago when, at the age of 92, she achieved a number one with an earlier "best-of" release. Dame Vera, who made her professional debut at the age of seven, already holds the record as

the first British artist to top the U.S. charts in 1952, and as the only artist over 90 to top UK album charts.

The new album, featuring more than forty wartime songs including the memorable classics "We'll Meet Again" and "The White Cliffs of Dover," reached number 13 in the chart, beating the likes of Pharrell, the Arctic Monkeys and rapper 50 Cent whose new album missed the top twenty.

—FELICITY THISTLETHWAITE, *DAILY EXPRESS*

## Sassoon's Palace Opens

HYTHE, KENT, JUNE 12TH— A magnificent house once owned by a Tory MP who befriended Lawrence of Arabia and Churchill was reopened as a hotel by a conservation charity. Sir Philip Sassoon sat for Hythe from 1912 to his death in 1939. He began to build Port Lympne before the First World War and completed it after being demobbed, spending much of his vast fortune on its decoration and upkeep. A member of the Rothschild family, Sassoon also hosted Prince Edward and Mrs. Simpson and Charlie Chaplin.

The house is now the Mansion Hotel at Port Lympne Reserve, run by the Aspinall Foundation, where animals roam free and visitors receive a



Vera Lynn, 1940s





Port Lympne, Kent

safari-like experience. The hotel specializes in weddings, corporate events and getaway breaks.

—PAUL DONNELLY, *THE MAIL ONLINE*

## Curt Zoller, R.I.P.

LAGUNA HILLS, CALIF., OCTOBER 6TH—Longtime Churchill scholar Curt Zoller died today, a week short of his 94th birthday. Despite recent declining health, writes his daughter Marsha, “he tried hard to ‘Never give in.’”

For years Curt wrote for *FH*, where he took over Quiz column from Barbara Langworth. In 2004 he published the *Annotated Bibliography of Works About Winston Churchill*, signed copies of which are offered by Mark Weber (<http://bit.ly/1w8CPEo>, tel. 520-743-8405). He logs thousands of books, articles, dissertations and together he and I wrote annotations on the primary works. Curt also published *The American Handpress* (1980), and with Michael McMenamin an important book on *Bourke Cockran: Becoming Winston Churchill: The Untold Story of Young Winston and His American Mentor* (2007).

Gert Zoller, Curt’s wife of 67 years, continues to do well at 93; email me for her contact information.

A man never dies as long as he is remembered. Curt’s many friends remember the delight of his company and friendship, and his books comprise his permanent memorial among Churchill scholars. —RML

## Blairence of Arabia?

LONDON, JUNE 21ST—“Richard and Judy,” the *Daily Express* column, suggests that much-maligned Tony Blair may be vindicated following recent confirmation of his dire predictions about the Middle East.

While former allies have said the Blair went “mad” or “bonkers” in his last days in office, the column notes a certain parallel with WSC:

“Churchill had a rotten time of it in the 1930s. The catastrophic 1915 Gallipoli campaign cast a long shadow, as Iraq does over Blair now, and Churchill’s warnings about Hitler were mostly dismissed as the ravings of an old, tired, discredited, disappointed politician—and a warmonger to boot.

“Blair is no Churchill, but much of what he warned of this week: the borderless ambitions of the murderous, racist, fascist entity that is currently spreading across the Middle East, are privately accorded with by his fiercest

critics, left, right and centre. The ball and chain that dogs Blair’s steps is 2003—with hindsight a pointless mistake. Gallipoli was Churchill’s mistake and he got a second chance because Britain catastrophically ran out of options in 1940.

Blair wearily warns us that the Islamic extremists currently rampaging through what’s left of Iraq will eventually drag us into a fight with them whether we like it or not. If that happens will he remain the perpetually reviled outsider preaching in the wilderness or will we start listening to what he has to say? I’m taking no bets either way. These are unpredictable times....” ☺

# AROUND & ABOUT



On June 17th, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives **John Boehner** misquoted Churchill as he praised resigning Majority Leader **Eric Cantor**: “Winston Churchill once famously said: ‘Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.’ As one who suffered a tough defeat myself in 1998, I can tell you there’s plenty of wisdom in that statement.” Boehner said that—Churchill didn’t.

There is wisdom in what Churchill *really* said: “You must put your head into the lion’s mouth if the performance is to be a success.” (*London to Ladysmith*, 1900). “Success always demands a greater effort.” (13 December 1940 to Australian Premier **Robert Menzies**). “No one can guarantee success...but only deserve it.” (*Their Finest Hour*, 1949)

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**Margot Asquith** dismissed Winston Churchill as “a dangerous maniac....Winston’s vanity is septic. He would die of blood poisoning if it were not for a great deal of red blood which circulates freely through his heart and stomach.” A backhanded compliment? Margot went on to label WSC “so poor in character and judgment, so insolent and childish, I hardly ever think of him as a danger.”

In 1916, **H.H. Asquith** fell to **Lloyd George** as head of the World War I coalition government. “From her vantage point she created a ‘compelling’ record of her husband’s fall from grace—and revealed her disdain for a number of leading figures of the day,” reports the *Daily Mail* in a book review of *Margot Asquith’s Great War Diary 1914-1916* (<http://dailymail/1qccXTi>).

One look at her tells you all you need to know about Margot. Her diaries seem to resurface every forty years or so. It wasn’t Churchill who brought “Squiffy” down, although the opposite could be argued. Asquith had much to do with his own demise, given his lackluster leadership, and his habit of confiding his true thoughts less to his colleagues than to his lady friend **Venetia Stanley**. The *Mail* says nothing about **Violet**, Asquith’s daughter by his first wife, who worshipped Churchill and wrote a good book about him, *Winston Churchill as I Knew Him*, aka *Winston Churchill: An Intimate Portrait* (1966). ☺



# MARTIN GILBERT BY HIS FRIENDS

**RICHARD M. LANGWORTH**

An issue in honor of Sir Martin Gilbert hasn't been published for twenty-five years. So when Allen Packwood suggested one, the fit was perfect. This is my last issue of *Finest Hour*. There is no better way to complete my work of forty years than with these tributes from some of Martin's many admirers. I am grateful to them all for highlighting an extraordinary career in words full of love, respect, humor, and above all of the character and humanity of a great man.



Chartwell, November 2006 ESTHER GILBERT

## “Rose-Lipt Maidens, Lightfoot Lads”

“Stop that!” Seated beside him at his first appearance before the Churchill Society—the second Churchill Tour on 17 September 1985—I had caught Martin Gilbert riffling through a briefcase which was crammed with sheets of yellow foolscap, tossing some out as the minutes ticked by before his lecture, “Churchill’s London: Spinning Top of Memories” (<http://bit.ly/RibfUu>). It was the first time I was to hear a Gilbert speech, and here he was, culling it already!

“This is my ‘Speech Form,’” he explained, referring to the term Winston Churchill used for speech notes. Unlike Churchill, whose typed notes included every word, the lines picked out like verses of the Psalms, Martin’s sheets each contained only a few handwritten

words. When he began, he would pull one out, glance at the line, toss it aside and ad-lib flawlessly for five or ten minutes. Then he’d pull out another and the process was repeated. Before he started, he would self-edit himself by omitting sheets he thought might run too long.

“A bore is somebody who tells everything,” my best editor once told me. But here at this time, at the Waldorf Hotel in London, I wanted Martin to leave nothing out. We were Churchillians. We would hang on every word. But Martin kept culling, sympathetic to his audience, determined to fit his talk into what he thought was the right amount of time.

I have never heard as riveting a speech. As Ambassador Matthew Gould writes herein, it was a mix



of “humility with humour and extraordinary command of detail, without grand flourishes or great cadences, keeping his audiences rapt in attention....an understated and diffident style which often left me feeling he was on the verge of running dry, only to answer every question with a great depth of knowledge and understanding.”

His written work is much the same. Critics might complain that he is too methodical, too “stuck” on chronology. But for Martin, as Andrew Roberts observes, chronology is the key. It was his job in the “Great Work” to place the reader on Churchill’s burly shoulder, personally observing the march of events—to explain what happened when, and what stemmed from it. Let others make broad pronouncements about whether Churchill was wise or foolish; Martin Gilbert makes his views plain from his selection of material. And few ever challenged the validity of that selection. The only times I saw him disgruntled were when later writers treated as a revelation some fact or anecdote he’d published decades before.

I marveled at Martin’s spontaneity. His public voice was the same as his private one: conversational, with vast recall, and a studious disregard for “revisionist” nonsense. He knew the story so well, you see. He knew it having sifted through more papers, documents, interviews and transcripts than anyone else on the planet.

His words simply flowed, fact upon fact, with irrefutable logic. Always he would portray the same Churchill, a character with human faults and frailties, driven by a love of liberty and his fellow man. “I never felt that he was going to spring an unpleasant surprise on me,” Max Hastings quotes Martin as saying. “I might find that he was adopting views with which I disagreed. But I always knew that there would be nothing to cause me to think: ‘How shocking, how appalling.’”

Asked once to describe Churchill in a single sentence, Martin Gilbert said nothing about blood, toil, tears and sweat: Churchill, he said, “was a great humanitarian who was himself distressed that the accidents of history gave him his greatest power at a time when everything had to be focused on defending the country from destruction, rather than achieving his goals of a fairer society.” That illuminates Martin’s Churchillian optimism, as Prime Minister Gordon Brown writes in these pages, that somehow, in the end “all will come right.”

Many authors, like Douglas Russell, here record how honored they were by a Gilbert foreword to or approval of their own books. In my own book of quotations, *Churchill in His Own Words*, he not only wrote the Introduction, but coined the best promotion line the publisher could hope to have: “unputdownable.”

His generosity was unending. A devout Jew, he never failed to wish his Gentile friends a Happy Easter—even

those who were not particularly religious. With me at a Boston bookshop he pulled book after book off the shelves, paid for them and inscribed them on the spot. I wondered how many authors could visit a shop and find four of his books on the racks (or what the shop owner thought of this stranger scribbling in his stock!)

A devoted and constant friend, Martin has always been there for this organization, producing scholarly articles, traveling to lecture at conferences as distant as Alaska, guiding tour parties from London to Suffolk, where he showed up at Randolph Churchill’s old home shedding tears of memory. His phenomenal recall rarely missed a reference. When I offered him the toast, “Rose-lipt maidens...lightfoot lads,” Martin exclaimed: “Housman! From *Out of Africa*” (the great film with Streep and Redford, based on Isak Dineson’s book).

Martin always downplayed and offered no details of his work for successive prime ministers from Margaret Thatcher to Gordon Brown, but he did once share an amusing anecdote. In the Middle East to meet with the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Prime Minister John Major introduced Martin as “my guru.” Consternation and a buzz of hasty chatter arose in the Arab delegation. It finally emerged that they weren’t sure what a guru was! Yet the Prime Minister had exactly described Martin’s role. On the next page Prime Minister Major (and further on, Martin’s wife Esther) describe what it is like to travel with this keen historian.

The main problem with a *Festschrift* issue of *Finest Hour* honoring Martin Gilbert is not finding enough material, but restricting the volume of it—since so many people would wish to pay him tribute. And here I am, introducing twenty articles from prime ministers to acquaintances, on every aspect of Sir Martin Gilbert’s life and work. Above all, the impression you will get from each is Martin’s devotion to history, and to us. ☺

The time you won your town the race  
We chaired you through the market-place;  
Man and boy stood cheering by,  
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

To-day, the road all runners come,  
Shoulder-high we bring you home,  
And set you at your threshold down,  
Townsmen of a stiller town.

So set, before its echoes fade,  
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,  
And hold to the low lintel up  
The still-defended challenge-cup.

—A *Shropshire Lad*, Housman



Lake District, 2007 ESTHER GILBERT

## Sir Winston's Boswell

THE RT HON SIR JOHN MAJOR KG CH



Sir Martin in Jerusalem with friends Barry Schreier and Renee Silberman, 2007. ESTHER GILBERT

After Boswell's massive *Life of Samuel Johnson* comes Martin Gilbert's epic history of Churchill. These are two giants of British life whose every action and opinion was laid out minutely for posterity by two biographers, themselves of literary genius.

Martin Gilbert's output has been prolific. It is difficult to understand how he could have produced so much high-quality history in a single lifetime. The industry of this remarkable man never ceases to impress. He also retains the affection of many friends, of whom I am proud to be one.

I met Martin over a quarter century ago and, in the intervening years, we shared many a drink and meal both during and beyond my time in politics. His arrival for a meeting always heralded an occasion for gossip, historical and contemporary politics—mixed with much laughter. They were memorable meetings, during which he dispensed much wisdom—and nothing ever leaked!

Martin was always very generous in providing quotes and material for speeches, and this led to him joining me on a visit to Israel, Jordan and Palestine in 1995. Throughout the visit, Martin was a constant source of historical notes and anecdotes for every place we visited and everyone we met. He sat in on meetings—notably

---

Sir John Major was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1990 to 1997. He previously held the posts of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Foreign Secretary in the Thatcher Government and was Member of Parliament for Huntingdon from 1979 to 2001. In 2005 he was bestowed by The Queen with a knighthood as a Knight Companion of the Order of the Garter.



with Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. Later, his detailed report of the visit missed nothing—and highlighted opportunities, dangers, anomalies and ironies that were hugely valuable to policy making. He would have made a remarkable civil servant.

One highlight of that visit was a helicopter ride with Yitzhak Rabin to the Golan Heights, replete with the Israeli Prime Minister's views and Martin's historic analogies. It was an unforgettable day—and unforgettable is an apt description of Martin. He may have been shy, often unobtrusive; but his penetrating intellect, fed on solid research and undeniable fact, often shed light where none had previously existed.

I believe that Martin's Churchill volumes will be reprinted as long as history is read. And I think it very likely that his name will be linked to Churchill as much as Boswell's is to Johnson. As a man, Martin is a joy to his friends; as a biographer, he is a gift to history. ☺

## The Road Not Travelled and the Power of History

THE RT HON GORDON BROWN MP

Sir Martin Gilbert was a pupil at Highgate School from 1945 to 1955, an enjoyable interlude for him. It came between the war years when he was sent away to Canada, and the period when perhaps he was less happy also, doing military service in the cold climate of my home country, Scotland. Highgate gave him confidence and a love of learning, a keenness and an enthusiasm for history. That was owed to great teachers who taught him the power of history, not only to influence but also to affect the continuing progress and advancement of nations and continents.

Israel is a country that for centuries never had a land to call its own. In 1948 thanks in part to Churchill and most of all to the courage and the sacrifice of its people, the Israeli state was created. And now we hope it will have a lasting peace with the Palestinian people.

The many diplomats gathered here today underline the impact Martin has had across the international, political, academic and intellectual community. Gladstone was the last prime minister to visit this school, and in the mid-19th century. It was said that after you met Gladstone you went away thinking he was the wisest person in the world; but after you met his great rival Disraeli you went away thinking *you* were the wisest person in the world. I would like you to think, as you

leave having met Martin Gilbert, that you are the wisest people for being here today.

Martin's eighty-eight books comprise a record of authorship that is unsurpassed in this country. His first book, *The Appeasers*, with Richard Gott, who is here today, began a skein including famous atlases and memoirs, influential books on the two World Wars, even a children's book about Israel that my own children have had the chance to read after a visit to Israel with his daughter Natalie. His scholarship on Churchill and the 20th century will stand unrivalled.

It was said that Picasso, asked to show a television audience how he worked, created a doodle which was shown to them. "There you have it," said the interviewer. "Only ninety seconds and you have a work of art that's probably worth millions." Picasso replied: "No, it took seventy-four years. All my life is in the work that I'm now producing."

That is also true of Sir Martin Gilbert's books, almost two a year, the brilliant product of long years of work that began at Highgate School and run to the present day. It is indeed scholarship, as Martin has said: he wanted to write real history, true history—to find out what really happened. It's not his way to make grand judgements without the scholarship and detail to back them up. It is his way to provide such detail that his case is almost unanswerable.

When I was pursuing my Ph.D., I was told that a successful thesis might change a line in a history textbook. I thought this was no great ambition to have. My thesis changed no lines...but Martin has continually given us new perspectives that are in all the standard accounts of the age, from Gallipoli through to the rise of Churchill, his premiership in the Second World War through his last years as prime minister. Thanks to Martin's precise nitpicking, we know what Churchill was about. And Martin has said that "nitpicking" is not a bad word, because it is necessary for the work he had to do, to clarify through exquisite detail what really happened.

That leads to a point about his achievement that I think we must remember. Martin is a great internationalist, who wants to see the world coming together. He would be proud that today is the anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel. I went there to address the

**Lady Gilbert with the author at the dedication of the Sir Martin Gilbert Library, Highgate School, May 2014.**



Knesset, bringing Martin to help me with my speech, surveying its long struggle for survival and lasting peace.

In one of the rooms of his house I noticed he has assembled all the documents he had brought together about the terrible events of the Holocaust. Martin was in no doubt about the evil people could do to others. That is why he supported the Holocaust Educational Trust, which sends young people from schools in Britain to Auschwitz, to learn and understand, so that such things will never happen again. Yet, despite the darkness that he found in our history, Martin has remained optimistic about the future. A citizen of the world, he still looks forward to a time when people can be brought together.

It is also a personal privilege for me to take part in this tribute. I know Martin helped Lady Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair, and Harold Wilson before them. But he also helped me a great deal with his insights into history. He was available to us at every point, always hoping for the best outcomes. He is a genuine humanitarian, whose writing of history taught him that we could always do better if we learn history's lessons.

This year marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, about which, as you know, Martin has written extensively. Some of you may know Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken." You have choices, Frost tried to say. Your decisions change your life and the lives of those around you. "Don't read too much into it," Frost said, "don't think of it as so significant." But his poet friend Edward Thomas, inspired by the message of that poem, volunteered to enlist. He went to France, where he died, and Frost could never again say that "The Road Not Travelled" had no importance.

Martin Gilbert took a road less travelled. His decision to become a historian changed the way we look not only at Britain but our relationships with the world. His work changed the lives of many by interpreting the past, the present and the future.

We all know the phrase, "the good and the great." Some people are great, but not necessarily good; others are good, but you cannot say they are great. Sir Martin Gilbert is a great man and a good man, and I am pleased and proud to share with so many of his friends in this tremendous commemoration of his life and work. ♪

Mr. Brown was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Labour Party from 2007 to 2010 and served as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour Government from 1997 to 2007. He has been a Member of Parliament since 1983. This article is excerpted from his remarks at Highgate School, London, at the opening of the Sir Martin Gilbert Library on 6 May 2014 (FH 163: 6).





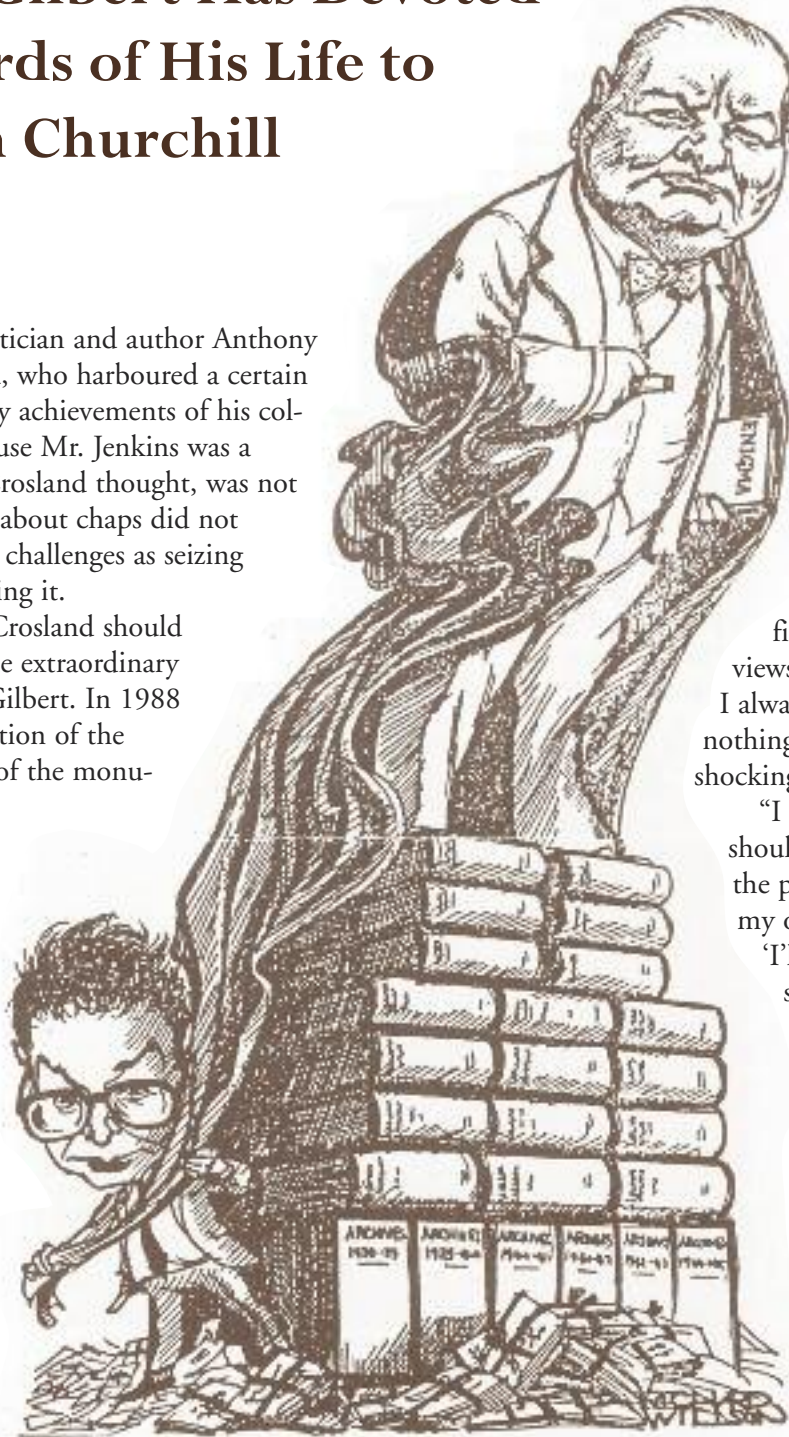
# Life, Love and Liberty

## Martin Gilbert Has Devoted Two-thirds of His Life to Winston Churchill

MAX HASTINGS

It was the Labour politician and author Anthony Crosland, I once read, who harboured a certain disdain for the literary achievements of his colleague Roy Jenkins, because Mr. Jenkins was a biographer. Biography, Crosland thought, was not real man's work: writing about chaps did not present the same creative challenges as seizing upon a theme and pursuing it.

Yet even the likes of Crosland should scarce forbear to cheer the extraordinary performance of Martin Gilbert. In 1988 he celebrated the publication of the eighth and final volume of the monumental biography of Winston Churchill that he inherited on the death of Randolph Churchill in 1968. The last volume alone was a book that you would be ill-advised to allow to fall upon your tame tortoise—four inches thick, 1348 pages long, detailing Churchill's every public and private act between 1945 and his death in 1965. Those eight volumes, with their battalion ultimately of twenty-three companion volumes and documents, has to rank as the largest work of British biography.



Gilbert, who is now 78 (in 2014), has been living with Winston Churchill for two-thirds of his own life, since the day that he began as Randolph's researcher, in 1962. His deep affection for his subject has remained undimmed. "I never felt that he was going to spring an unpleasant surprise on me," says Gilbert. "I might

find that he was adopting views with which I disagreed. But I always knew that there would be nothing to cause me to think: 'How shocking, how appalling.'

"I was told when I started that I should expect to take ten years on the project. I was so confident in my own abilities that I thought: 'I'll do it in eight; maybe in six.' Then I saw what was in the archives, the huge weight of new material released under the Thirty-Year Rule. I was frightened at one time that the constraints of reasonable publishing would prevent me from doing Churchill justice. I feared that I would have to cheat both him and the reader. I am very relieved, in the event, to have had space to do justice to

every aspect of the man."

Gilbert's quick, jolly, relaxed manner masks one of the most energetic and prolific historians of his generation. Yet the vast weight of words he has expended upon Churchill earned him very little money. "The biography has been a financial burden to me," he agrees. "But it's

Sir Max Hastings is a journalist, editor, author and historian. This article, part of our tribute twenty-five years ago, was first published in *Finest Hour* 65, Winter 1989-90, by kind permission of the *Daily Telegraph*. Cartoon by Richard Willson.

been so fascinating—more than fascinating! It has provided me with a golden thread through British history.

“Churchill was such an open book, such an open personality, that one never has to guess anything about him. It’s all there. But there is an enormous difference between the amount of material available about the periods when he was with his wife, and when he was not. When they were together, that immensely valuable, almost daily diary of his doings, in the letters that he wrote to her, simply disappears.” Among the most moving documents in Volume 8 are the love letters—for that is what much of this correspondence was—between Winston and Clementine after half a century of marriage.

“My darling One,” he scrawled, on April 8th, 1963, “This is only to give you my fondest love and kisses a hundred times repeated. I am a pretty dull & paltry scribbler; but my stick as I write carries my heart along with it. Yours ever & always, W.” He was approaching ninety as he wrote, yet still he often scratched the little

period when the Prime Minister’s personal entourage concealed from the world that he was incapable, following a stroke, “the government machine continued to function pretty effectively.” This seems a dubious compliment, for it reflects the extent to which the entire administration was already functioning on automatic pilot, so to speak. But when I remarked upon the strain that this manner of doing business must have imposed upon Churchill’s colleagues, Gilbert said: “Yes, but one should emphasise one central fact—how enormously they all enjoyed his leadership. His presence. His company. His support when they needed it—for instance for Macmillan on housing and defence. Even some of those most eager to remove him shared this feeling for him.”

Many pages of Gilbert’s book are taken up with the account of this writing of Churchill’s six-volume memoir, *The Second World War*. As a war chronicler, Churchill was seriously hampered by the fact that he remained a practising politician, with vital interests to protect at

**“Martin Gilbert’s collected volumes, together with those by Randolph Churchill, form an extraordinary memorial. They are never dull, because their subject was never dull. Churchill’s huge generosity of spirit, his wit, his humanity, his breadth of interests, his capacity for love, sparkle through the pages.”**

drawing at the foot of the page: “your pig,” whose shape and mood depicted his own. This remains one of the great love affairs of the age.

It is in the nature of the last period of Churchill’s life that *Never Despair* contains much of sadness. In the postwar period, both in government and opposition, the Conservative Party’s record on domestic affairs was unimpressive, to put it politely. In considerable measure, this reflected Churchill’s personal obsession—Gilbert disputes the word obsession—with foreign affairs, with Britain’s place in the world, and his lack of interest—here again, Gilbert disagrees with me on this—in domestic issues. He played more and more Bezique, read more and more widely, yet paid less and less heed to government.

Churchill was incomparably Britain’s most cultured Prime Minister of the 20th century. Lack of culture, lack of time for culture, makes many contemporary politicians much smaller men and women than their predecessors. Yet it is pathetic to read of Churchill in his last phase, his grasp of issues fading, prevaricating year after year about his own resignation; driving Eden, the chosen successor, almost literally mad.

“The end of the premiership was very sad. An element of pettiness came in all round,” says his biographer. Gilbert remarks that even during the now notorious

home and abroad. I put to Gilbert some of the flaws and major omissions. “The book was still,” Gilbert argues, “a superb monument to history, as it could be told in the 1940s and 1950s. Churchill was conscious of the shortcoming. But the book gave him a vehicle to write certain reflective pieces—perhaps one of the most powerful being his description of the prewar appeasement years. He was determined that the story of Chamberlain’s great failure should be told.”

*The Second World War* is a much inferior work to Churchill’s parallel work a generation earlier, *The World Crisis*. Yet it contains passages that coruscate down the years. And heavens, what a lot of money it made for him. He needed a huge income, though, to sustain the life of a grandee in the age of the common man. Gilbert tells us that such arrangements as allowing Time-Life to finance sybaritic expeditions to Morocco—again, Gilbert disputes my use of the adjective “sybaritic”—did not contravene the draconian currency regulations then afflicting most Britons. But bailing Randolph out of his endless money troubles was a serious business.

What pain the old man’s family must have caused him. As he approached forty, Randolph was still making the sorts of promises to his father to mend his ways and read for the bar that Trollopian reprobates grew out of >>

## **MAX HASTINGS...**

by twenty-five. Yet when I put this to Gilbert, he pointed out the happiness and support Churchill's children also brought him. There was that wonderfully memorable note from his daughter Mary Soames in 1964: "In addition to all the feelings a daughter has for a loving, generous father," she wrote, "I owe you what every Englishman, woman and child does—Liberty itself."

Martin Gilbert's central connection with the biography began one day in 1962, when he was a young historian doing research on Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy. He drove down to East Bergholt in

is tinged with regret that he has not tempered his narrative with some critical assessments. Yet he always seeks to set the debates around Churchill in perspective. He passes no judgment in Volume 8, for instance, upon the achievements and failures of Churchill's last administration. I turned to the final chapter, expecting him to mark Churchill's passing with an essay upon his place in history. It is not there. Gilbert says that he does not regard it as his business to pass judgments: "By what you select, you make plain your views. I deal with the arguments for Churchill, and against him. But then it is for the reader to make up his own mind. People's own his-

**"Gilbert says that he does not regard it as his business to pass judgments: 'By what you select, you make plain your views. I deal with the arguments for Churchill, and against him. But then it is for the reader to make up his own mind. People's own historical perspectives are changing all the time—they have changed a great deal over the many years I have been writing.'"**

Suffolk to find that he had already been preceded by a wholly characteristic note from Lady Diana Cooper:

"Darling Randy, Here is Martin Gilbert, an interesting young researching man. Do see him. He is full of zeal to set history right." From that grew Randolph's invitation to become his junior researcher, and the offer to take over the huge task on Randolph's death.

Gilbert, the son of a London jeweller, went to Highgate School and Magdalen College, Oxford. He has since inspired more than his share of pique from fellow historians, jealous of his energy, capacity to control material and privileged access to the Churchill papers: though no one who asked to see and to use the papers was ever refused, including A.J.P. Taylor for his life of Beaverbrook and Robert Rhodes James for his life of Eden.

Through the years he was writing, Gilbert took a break of six to nine months between finishing work on one volume and beginning the next: "I was very worried about becoming stale, and producing books which were much of a muchness." In the intervals he made notable contributions to Jewish history, above all by his studies of the Holocaust. For a Jewish author, Churchill's passionate support for Israel is deeply sympathetic. Gilbert himself, a companionable companion whose generosity sets him apart from some academic rivals, is always game to take up the cudgels for causes that mean much to him, such as that of the Russian Jewish refuseniks. He lived in unpretentious confusion in Hampstead, amid a predictably vast collection of Churchill books and papers.

My own admiration for Martin Gilbert's scholarship

torical perspectives are changing all the time—they have changed a great deal over the many years I have been writing." This huge work is history written largely as Churchill would have wished it, charting his course through the history of the 20th century.

Martin Gilbert's collected volumes, together with those by Randolph Churchill, form an extraordinary memorial. They are never dull, because their subject was never dull. Churchill's huge generosity of spirit, his wit, his humanity, his breadth of interests, his capacity for love, sparkle through the pages. Gilbert makes the point that no man who reads this last volume can put it down believing that Churchill was a man who loved war. His last years of power were dominated by a personal struggle to bring together the leaders of East and West to avert it. "Never despair," he told his countrymen amid the great surge of dismay that followed the test of the first hydrogen bomb.

If Churchill's efforts to bring together the leaders of the world did not succeed, neither did their pursuit of peace fail. When this article was written, Martin Gilbert was still gathering his papers in the overcrowded working room of the house in Hampstead, not yet quite finished with Churchill. He had ten companion volumes of papers still to edit; then a single-volume edition of the biography to prepare. Five more years, he thought; it has turned out to be many more than that. By 1989, he had been on a twenty-one-year sabbatical from his old Oxford College, Merton. They would have to wait a little longer for his return. ☺



# The Map-Maker

## Genesis of Sir Martin's Extraordinary Cartography

TONIE AND VALMAI HOLT

Having corresponded and exchanged books with Sir Martin for some time, we finally met him and Lady Gilbert in May 2005. For years we had been engaging with audiences on historic battlefields, and it was clear to us that Martin was a master of that art. We lunched with the Gilberts after that meeting, and soon became close friends.

We found common currency in Martin's use of maps to describe battles. The drawing and subsequent use of a map adds greatly to the understanding both of authors and readers; but our own maps paled in comparison to the scope and detail of Martin's. His enthusiasm for cartography is evident from his acclaimed atlases of American, British, Jewish and Russian history; British Charities (self-published); the Arab-Israeli conflicts; Jerusalem; the Holocaust; and the two World Wars. His maps reflect an imaginative, analytical mind and wide range of knowledge.

Who else, in a book about D-Day, would map the route Eisenhower drove the day before the landings, or show where the Japanese located their "Comfort Women" brothels in their occupied territories? While creating maps for *The Somme* (2006) and *Atlas of the First World War* (2008), he spent a day with us, going through each of his over 200 sketches. We had drawn maps of the two World Wars and thought we knew something about them, but for hours we felt like infants before the master. Martin's cartography led us into areas of history that we had never before explored.

Anyone who has received a handwritten letter or postcard from Martin (in tiny script to cram as many words as possible into the small area available) will be aware of his distinctive calligraphy. This is reflected in the meticulous drafts of his maps, with precise geographic features, clear

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Major Tonie and Valmai Holt are pioneers of the modern battlefield tour. From 1977 nearly to the end of the century, they have guided visitors to sites of the two World Wars, the American Civil War, and battles from Europe to the Falklands. They left that business to write battlefield guidebooks, ([www.guide-books.co.uk](http://www.guide-books.co.uk)), detailed maps of battle lines, objectives, memorials and cemeteries, sites of heroism and literary interest used by tens of thousands. Their work taught them to appreciate and admire the consummate map-making art of their friend, Sir Martin.



Above: Probably the only photo of Martin drawing a map, done impromptu, when his wife asked where they had been after a trip to Poland and Ukraine, 2011. Below: Europe on the eve of war, 1914, from Martin's book, *The Somme* (Henry Holt, 2006). ESTHER GILBERT



text and legends, which for many years have been professionally digitalised by the cartographer Tim Aspden. With exacting detail they add to the reader's appreciation and comprehension of the stories Martin tells.

Two works, *The Somme* and *D-Day*, will be intensely studied during the centenary of the Great War and the 70th anniversary of the Normandy campaign. Having ourselves mapped those battlefields, we deeply appreciate Martin's complexity, clarity and informative drawings.

Having the wisdom to illustrate one aspect at a time, his work has a deceptive simplicity and understandability. For example, maps in *The Somme* start with "Europe on the Eve of War, June 1914," showing the protagonists, from France eastwards to the Balkans and Russia, >>

## TONIE AND VALMAI HOLT..

Greece and Turkey to the south, bodies of water, principal cities and key rivers, all clearly defined. Successive maps narrow to focus on the Western Front and the trenches from the North Sea to Switzerland. Next is the area of the British Expeditionary Force under General Haig in 1916, followed by the Somme battlefield in May 1916. The reader becomes aware of the wider span of conflict and the Somme's precise location within that broad picture.

Martin's books have always focused on the "human story." The next map in the Somme series follows the Newfoundlanders from St John's to Egypt, Gallipoli and finally to the Somme. The reader is encouraged to take a personal interest in the fortune of this one battalion, whose losses at Beaumont Hamel on 1 July 1916 were crippling. Of the 801 who went into action that morning, perhaps only sixty-eight remained alive and unwounded after the attack, one of the highest casualty counts for any regimental unit.

The forty-four British counties whose regiments fought on the Somme merit a map of their own, as do the cities, towns and areas of the country. The horrendous personal cost of the battle is brought vividly home by a sad map charting British towns whose dead lie in Fricourt New Military cemetery alone. Successive maps show the national, divisional, regimental and private memorials on the battlefield and the cemeteries which followed the front line. Martin lists the number of individual burials in each cemetery and the total in the area. French and German cemeteries with their burials are included. This is history at its most precise.

Because of its many associations with Churchill, Normandy is a subject of Martin's particular interest. As early as June 1940, after Dunkirk, Churchill had begun planning the invasion of France: "We ought to have a corps of at least 5000 parachute troops." The proposals were refined, becoming, in mid-1943, Operation Overlord, followed by Churchill's concept of artificial harbours, "Mulberry" and "Gooseberry." In Churchill's mind was always concern for casualties. Martin quotes Churchill's message to his wife on 5 June: "Do you realise that by the time you wake in the morning, twenty thousand men may have been killed?" Such human touches give depth to Martin's books.

The amount of information imparted by the twenty-seven maps in the *D-Day* book represents a tour de force in research and drafting. They show British commando training bases, American landing craft yards, training sites for amphibious landings, German intelligence assessments, Anglo-American bombing targets prior to the landings, the movements of Generals Guderian and

Rommel, Allied deception plans and code names, Eisenhower's movements, troop concentrations, Air Force assembly points and flight paths, Naval forces in action, landings on all the beaches, the Allied forces ashore, and the Mulberry Harbour—a pictorial history clearly set out for all to understand.

Through simple black and white lines, arrows and dotted boundaries, place names and legends with distinctive symbols, Martin Gilbert illustrates not just the military strategy and political imperatives, but also constantly reminds the reader of the stark reality of war. One realises that battles are not just marks on a map; they are woven by the flesh and blood of those whose lives became the currency of war—the measure of a nation's sacrifice. ☸

## • Gratitude •

Martin is a generous colleague. I first went to his home in London in 1992, after he sent me a warm letter about my manuscript for *The Orders, Decorations and Medals of Sir Winston Churchill* (1990, 2004). He then encouraged me to try something bigger (which became *Winston Churchill Soldier* in 2005) and made a gift to me of a copy of his *Atlas of the First World War*. He didn't simply inscribe and present it; he tipped in a photocopy of Field Marshal Montgomery's handwritten introduction. Martin not only read the manuscripts for both of my books and offered to do the maps for the soldier book, but also wrote a kind foreword to it.

My favorite anecdote during his review of the *Soldier* manuscript was when he called to advise that I had misspelled Gibraltar as "Gibralter." In doing so he introduced me to a new term, "schoolboy howler." A year later he sent me a newspaper clipping, a headline about Gibraltar. He circled and highlighted the word and wrote on the page, "There's GibraltAr for you!"

—Hon Douglas S. Russell, Iowa City, Iowa

I have been reading Martin Gilbert for forty years and been his friend for fifteen of those years. He is a scholar in the grand sense of the word, a scholar of world history, of Jewish history, of the history of the English-speaking people, and, of course, of one of the greatest men of the English-speaking world, Winston Churchill. In his studies, especially his works about Sir Winston, I have come to believe that some of Churchill's greatness rubbed off on Martin.

—R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., Editor-in-Chief,  
The American Spectator, Washington ☸

# Martin Gilbert and the “Great Work”: Present at the Creation

LARRY P. ARNN



*“An interesting young researching man,” Lady Diana Cooper described him to Randolph Churchill, “full of zeal to put history right.” Martin Gilbert in 1962, commencing what would be a life’s work.*

Winston Churchill’s only son Randolph, the first author of the official biography, began what he called “The Great Work” in 1961, and on his twenty-fifth birthday, 25 October 1962, Martin Gilbert was hired as one of five assistants. The project began grandly. Setting out to write a record for the ages, Randolph insisted that the publishers produce document volumes to accompany the biographical narrative he was writing. This has proven to be, especially under Sir Martin, a task of immense scope. It is one thing, and no easy thing, to cite a document in the course of explaining its meaning in a narrative history, especially when that narrative is constructed almost entirely from these original sources. It is another thing to *publish* that document so that the reader may understand it independently of a surrounding narrative account.

This requires extensive indexing and annotation of a different kind. People and events must be, so far as possible, identified and explained. Moreover, one must select the documents to be included, as the total corpus is much too numerous and lengthy to publish in a book or

a series of books, even if the books are large and even if there are many of them. The selection must be made on the grounds of relevance, explanatory power, and importance. The provenance of everything must be explained. This activity is a service to history in itself and a major portion, probably by far the largest portion in actual volume of work, of the task.

Martin Gilbert worked as a researcher on the biography for almost five years until June 1967. At this point he withdrew, citing the pressure of work on the biography under the demanding Randolph in combination with his own historical work and his teaching at Merton College, Oxford. In May 1968 Randolph telephoned Martin to say that “a lamp is always burning for you here,” and they agreed in that conversation that Martin would rejoin the staff shortly. Three weeks later Randolph Churchill died.

Randolph and his British publishers, Heinemann, had wanted his son Winston to succeed him as biographer, but Lord Hartwell, owner of the *Daily Telegraph* and of certain rights to serialize the biography, favoured Lord Birkenhead, son of Churchill’s great friend F.E. Smith, the first Lord Birkenhead. Weeks passed while the pros and cons were discussed among the parties. Eventually the American publishers, Houghton Mifflin, suggested that the young Martin Gilbert, who had been present at some of the discussions through his friendship with the grandson Winston, finish the job. Martin met with Lord Hartwell and “in desperation I think at the thought of missing my train, I made the following suggestion: Lord Birkenhead, a noted one-volume biographer, would write a single-volume biography of Churchill based on the papers of which Lord Hartwell was the effective copyright holder. I would finish the multi-volume work on which Randolph had embarked. Lord Birkenhead’s book would be short and stimulating. Mine would be long and academic.” The compromise was accepted, and the young historian was given the job in October 1968.

During the forty-six years that have passed since Martin Gilbert took up this great task, the number of his published books has risen to eighty-eight. The Churchill biography has become a thing of magnificence in scale, scope and accuracy. It is without doubt the longest biography ever written, as befits one of the largest lives ever lived. It is built upon an effort of research that has consumed the best efforts of this prolific author for most of his life. He has maintained throughout the rigorous commitment to careful chronology, to attention to accuracy in every detail and to reliance upon original documents that is the hallmark of his scholarship.

I was privileged to work for Martin Gilbert for >>

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Dr. Arnn, President of Hillsdale College, is editor-in-chief of Martin Gilbert’s official biography, *Winston S. Churchill*. Hillsdale College Press has republished the twenty-four previous volumes, recently published the seventeenth document volume (1942), and plans up to six further document volumes running through 1965. This article is excerpted from Dr. Arnn’s introduction to *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 17, *Testing Times*, 1942.





**Martin's team: Estelle Botsman (with Lottie) and Ela Gottwald, working to preserve his legacy, in print and digitally. His new website will describe in his own words his eighty-eight books with interviews, lectures, articles about him, news, and hidden gems of his writing. ESTHER GILBERT**

applied himself to his work with something approaching fury. I keep his *Complete Speeches*, which is not quite complete, on my bookshelf, not far from the complete writings of Abraham Lincoln. Churchill's speeches alone are many times more voluminous than all that Lincoln wrote. In addition, Churchill wrote about fifty books, thousands of articles, and memoranda and official minutes by the thousands. And this is only what he wrote himself; he famously inspired opinions about himself and the enterprises with which he was involved from friends and adversaries and historians, in all over fifty million words.

### **LARRY P. ARNN...**

three years in the 1970s; since then, I have been his friend continuously, and have often been privileged to be his colleague. In those three years I witnessed and wondered at the care and energy he put into his work. Martin was not a wealthy man, then or now, but he would spare no expense to make sure that every document that could be found was found. Sensing that the expense of gathering the material was serious, I asked him once if I should be more careful what I copied at the Public Record Office and other archives. He replied with feeling: "You must get everything. We must have it all here."

His commitment to finding every relevant document was nothing less than fierce, although his manner was never so. He would say: "You have a good memory, and I have a good memory; we do not rely upon our memories." One learned to look things up, again and again. One learned to write with the evidence directly before one. One learned that it is an infinite job to find all the evidence, but that this knowledge must spur one not to despair but to further effort. The best efforts would yield results: he liked to say, "In the writing of 19th and 20th century history, there is no room for the word 'perhaps.'" If you used that term with him, his eyebrow would go up, and he would say: "Perhaps not!"

Regarding Churchill, the abundance of the record is an obstacle as well as an opportunity. Martin wrote once that the first step is simply to read what Churchill wrote, and that itself requires months of application. Thinking he would live a short life as his father had, Churchill

The official biography turned out to be bigger than Martin Gilbert foresaw, almost bigger than even he could do. His method was simple yet ambitious. He looked everywhere possible for every original source. He covered secondary sources with care: more care when the authors were original witnesses to or participants in the events, more care still when their recollections were recorded at the time of the events. This vast treasure of material, once collected, was placed in strict chronological order.

The documents were put in "wedges," as he called them, and each wedge had a blank sheet of paper with the beginning date on it. The wedges were held together with "black clips" or "bulldog clips."

The biography deployed hundreds, then thousands of these. When a wedge got too big, it was split into several wedges. They were all kept on his desk, which was about thirty feet long, in their own chronological order. Secondary sources were photocopied and placed at the appropriate point in the chronology. One had to be careful not to put any wastebasket under the edge of a desk: something might fall into it! One did not carry the documents away anywhere. If he needed to use one, he made a photocopy.

Martin would sit at his long desk for hours, beginning at the latest at 9 am sharp, writing from these documents. Sometimes "flags"—long strips of paper held by a paper clip—would be placed alongside a document of particular importance, some carrying a little summary at the top of what the document was or the theme it concerned.

Until the last fifteen years or so, he wrote everything by hand in a clear script. He liked the Lami Safari fountain pen, had many of them lying about the desk. He owned one or two of Churchill's fountain pens, but did not use them. Once one went missing and a frantic search began, enlisting all hands, until it was uncovered. When it was found, to great relief, he went about the room checking to be doubly sure that no wastebaskets were positioned so that something could fall into them by accident.

A friend said to me once: "I do not see how he produces so much; I could never do so." I replied that probably none of us could do it, but we could try to follow his example in one respect. We could sit down every day not later than 9 am and get on with the work. Martin was stricken once with Bell's Palsy, as a result of which part of his face was paralysed. He worked on regardless, the same hours, holding his pen in one hand and in the other a handkerchief which he held against his mouth to keep it fully closed.

I have thought since I first met Martin that he was made for this work and it was made for him. I have been privileged to know and to study with a few great scholars, and now I work with some here at Hillsdale College. I have never seen any with such capacity to master detail and render it into order and sense. I have never seen any so diligent in making sure that what he wrote reflected the evidence that was before him.

His efforts remind me of one of the most brilliant passages that Churchill wrote about the great painters:

...trying to paint a picture is, I suppose, like trying to fight a battle. It is, if anything, more exciting than fighting it successfully. But the principle is the same. It is the same kind of problem, as unfolding a long, sustained, interlocked argument. It is a proposition which, whether of few or numberless parts, is commanded by a single unity of conception. And we think—though I cannot tell—that painting a great picture must require an intellect on a grand scale. There must be that all-embracing view which presents the beginning and the end, the whole and each part, as one instantaneous impression retentively and untiringly held in the mind. When we look at the larger Turners—canvases yards wide and tall—and observe that they are all done in one piece and represent one single second of time, and that every innumerable detail, however small, however distant, however subordinate, is set forth naturally and in its true proportion and relation, without effort, without failure, we must feel in the presence of an intellectual manifestation the equal in quality and intensity of the finest achievements of warlike action, of forensic argument, or of scientific or philosophical adjudication.

Let this be a description of Sir Martin's achievement in making this Great Work.

I will close with two points of a personal nature. The first is a word of praise to the members of Sir Martin's immediate family. I have known most of them—Helen, Susie, Natalie, David, Josh, Margaret and Esther—for decades, and their support has always been steadfast. Martin's wife Esther has been brave, strong and loving in caring for him in good times and bad.

The second is a word about this man who was my teacher and employer. To such as he, a student owes a debt that cannot be repaid. In my case the debt is compounded by the fact that I met my wife, now of thirty-three years, in his home. For much of the time while we worked for Martin, Penny Houghton, now Arnn, was the only other member of the staff, and this gave me the privilege I still treasure of coming to know her. Sir Martin's example, which we have observed and sought to follow now for more than three decades, is one of the greatest benefits we have reaped. ☺

## Master of Chronology

ANDREW ROBERTS

**Martin Gilbert has a respect for what used to be called "the general readership," which, despite everything, does still exist.**

"Chronology, chronology," Martin Gilbert once said to me, "chronology is all: it's the key to proper history-writing." He is right, and for all that some fashionable modern theories of history like to play around with chronology, adopting thematic or determinist approaches, Martin's theory is still by far the best one, and I suspect always will be. His insistence on telling the reader what happened next, with utter integrity, rather than trying to extrapolate political or philosophical theorems from events, allows a narrative to emerge that permits the reader to exercise his or her own judgment about the events described.

Martin's history-writing is therefore directly in the tradition of the great historians of the past, people who trusted their readers rather than hoping to lecture, change, indoctrinate, or let alone mislead them. In that sense he is a far greater teacher than the likes of Eric Hobsbawm, E.H. Carr, André Deutsch, E.P. Thompson, Manning >>

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Dr. Roberts is an historian and journalist, the author of numerous books on Churchill's life and times. His newest book is *Napoleon: A Life*.

### ANDREW ROBERTS...

Clark, Christopher Hill, Howard Zinn and others whose representations of the past were driven by a desire to impose an overarching ideology, rather than simply telling their readers what actually happened. Perhaps for that very reason, Martin has never really been properly acknowledged by academia for what he undoubtedly is: one of our greatest living historians.

Unlike some other historians, Martin is always too much of a genuine and natural democrat to want to indoctrinate; he has a respect for what used to be called “the general readership,” which despite everything does still exist. He believes that having been given the facts—and there is no greater dispenser of facts alive today than he—a reasonable person will come to morally defensible, intelligent conclusions. In a sense it’s a basis of the civilisation about the defence of which so many of Martin’s books dwell. It lies at the heart of the Judeo-Christian concepts of open debate and free interaction of ideas, to which Martin dedicated perhaps the most active (certainly in terms of numbers of books published) intellectual life of any front-rank historian.

Martin’s Jewishness is a vitally important part of his life and work, which comes out no more powerfully than in his books on the Holocaust. In them, the reader is allowed to sense the horrific evils of totalitarianism without gratuitously or condescendingly spelling them out. The sheer humanity of Martin’s books spring directly from his lifelong commitment to and celebration of Judeo-Christian values. Wherever he could find examples of people acting decently, even in the most unpromising circumstances, he made sure to let the stories be told.

Chronology is of course epicentral to Martin’s official biography of Winston Churchill. As Martin explained to me when I first met him—when I was writing a biography of Lord Halifax in the late 1980s—it is only by trying to know what Churchill knew at any one time that one can possibly judge him, and that could only be achieved through a mastery of the sometimes massively complex chronology of his life and career.

That is why Martin created the vast card-index system chronicling virtually every day of Churchill’s life. Who knew what, when, and how they acted upon information is the very stuff of history; only through it can what Churchill called “the grievous inquest of history” sit in fair judgment.

Which is also why Martin was such a good choice as a member of Sir John Chilcot’s Inquiry into the Iraq War. Here Martin was in the service of the nation just as much as any of the heroes about whom he wrote in his books on the two world wars.

A giant of historiography who rejects the modish approaches and cleaves to chronology, narrative and the very best practices of his profession; a Stakhanovite worker in the sheer number of works he published, every one of which is of high quality; a true believer in the superiority of Judeo-Christian values over totalitarianism; a friend who would always help fellow historians, however junior. That is Sir Martin Gilbert. ☺

## “Would You Like to See the Fulton Speech?”

**BARRY SINGER**



Martin Gilbert and the author. **BARRY SINGER**

As the only standing bookshop in the world devoted to the writings of Winston Churchill, Chartwell Booksellers has inextricably been interested in the writings of Martin Gilbert. This association has yielded a delightful dividend: unlike Sir Winston, Sir Martin could actually visit us. Many of his visits resulted in parties. The first was in December 1986 when we feted him on the publication of *Road to Victory*, the seventh volume in the official Churchill biography.

Martin’s humility and straightforward communicative eloquence, so evident on every page of the official biography, was manifest from the moment one met him. We toasted his achievement that evening with Pol Roger champagne and marveled at what lay ahead: Volume 8, and the end of his remarkable biographical journey.

Little more than a year later, I visited Martin at his then-home on Parliament Hill, near Hampstead Heath. He swept me inside with unexpected giddiness. “I’ve just finished it!” he announced, practically crowing: “The last chapter. Let me read it to you.” And he did.

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Mr. Singer is proprietor of Chartwell Booksellers in New York City and the author of *Churchill Style* (reviewed in *Finest Hour* 155).



I felt giddy myself. What impossible luck to stumble in on the day that Martin Gilbert completes the official biography. So dazzled was I by the moment (and the reading) that I almost didn't grasp what Martin said next: "Would you like to see the Fulton speech?"

In 1946 Churchill had delivered his most famous postwar speech at Fulton, Missouri's Westminster College, catapulting himself back to the center of world events in the wake of his ouster as prime minister the previous year—a speech containing the famous warning: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent."

Martin, sifting through masses of paper strewn across his huge desk, lifted what appeared to be a typed roll of toilet paper: "Churchill had the sheets pinned together with straight pins, you see, as he revised it on the train out from Washington." The narrow pages were indeed pinned at the edges, creating one long, linked scroll.

We hunted for the page containing Churchill's "iron curtain" watch phrase. "I prefer to work from the original documents," muttered Martin simply, as we spooled along. "I am often given leave to borrow them. Quietly."

Indeed.

Twenty-two years later, a sequence of events that captures both Martin's bone-deep modesty and understated meticulousness was set in motion by a telephone call. President Obama, then newly elected, had caused a stir by returning to the British government a bronze Churchill bust that had been loaned to the Oval Office as a sign of solidarity in the wake of September 11th. It was one of two White House Churchill busts sculpted by Sir Jacob Epstein (the other was presented during the Johnson years, and is still there). President Bush had given the second bust a place of honor but had left it behind upon his departure. President Obama had replaced it with a bust of Abraham Lincoln. A small furor had ensued, particularly in Great Britain.

Cut to the morning of Thursday, 26 February 2009, when my telephone rang and I heard the familiar greeting, "Martin here!" British Prime Minister Gordon Brown was coming to Washington the following week for his first official meeting with the President. "I have been asked to suggest an appropriate Churchill-related gift that the PM might bring," said Martin.

His idea was to offer Brown a maquette of the Epstein sculpture that Martin kept on his own desk. I allowed that this was a symmetrical exchange, but hardly an improvement. Why not give Obama a complete First Edition set of the official biography, signed by Martin Gilbert? The President was known to read voraciously.

At first, Martin balked at what he perceived to be rank self-aggrandizement. Finally, however, he relented.

There was a set in his house, Martin said, that he could hand over to the PM's staff immediately. But it was missing Volume 5.

I offered to fill in the blank with a copy Martin had signed on one of his visits here. Martin alerted Number Ten. The seven-volume set left London with the Prime Minister and his entourage, while we shipped off a signed copy of Volume 5 to a waiting operative at the British Embassy in Washington. Our book would be added to Martin's set in time for Gordon Brown's meeting with President Obama. All would be well.

Then on the appointed Tuesday, emails like this one began to appear in my inbox: "In the *Daily Mail* online the following statement appears: 'Mr. Brown arrived laden with gifts, including a seven-volume first-edition of Sir Martin Gilbert's biography of Winston Churchill.' I've found no trace of this set. Do you know anything about it, and will it be available for sale in the U.S.?"

Apparently Number Ten, in its advance press release, had simply counted the books on hand. I checked newspapers around the world online. Every one of them reiterated the same inaccuracy: "Sir Martin Gilbert's seven-volume biography"!

Frantically, I phoned our British Embassy contact in D.C. Yes, she reassured me, Volume 5 had arrived in time and President Obama had correctly been handed a complete, eight-volume official biography.

Martin remained nonplussed. "They so rarely read it," he sighed, as we commiserated by phone. "Now I know they don't even count it."☹

## Achievement on a Colossal Scale

PAUL ADDISON

**It is nearly half a century since I first met Martin and I have never forgotten his kindness and generosity all those years ago.**

He was a Fellow of Merton College and the co-author, with Richard Gott, of a much acclaimed book, *The Appeasers*. I was a humbler form of life, a postgraduate making precious little progress with a Ph.D. on British politics in the Second World War. Martin took me up, entertained me to lunch or dinner, inspired me with his own enthusiasm for research, and radiated a sense of delight in the study of history.

I see now that he was a bit of a misfit in the >>

### PAUL ADDISON...

Oxford of the day, a stuffy old place in many respects, and that I was a bit of a misfit too. Both of us were pupils and admirers of a great maverick historian, A.J.P. Taylor, against whom there was much feeling in Oxford. It was mainly due to widespread jealousy of a historian who attracted packed student audiences to lectures at 9 am, gave brilliant talks without a note on television, and wrote for a popular newspaper, *The Daily Express*. Martin sometimes had a historical bone to pick with him, whereas I regarded him as infallible, but we were both devoted fans.

This was not the only suspect item on our CVs. Both of us worked, at different times, as research assistants to Randolph Churchill on the official life of his father. Randolph had been such a hell-raiser in his time that he was virtually banished from polite society, not to mention the pubs near his home at East Bergholt, Suffolk. He could be quite impossible, but like other researchers on his team Martin and I discovered his more admirable and endearing qualities. By the time we knew him his drink-fuelled excesses were in the past and his mission in life was to make the official biography as accurate and comprehensive as possible. Martin himself never met Sir Winston Churchill, but I am sure that working with Randolph gave him an intimate sense of Churchillian characteristics—above all a fearless independence of spirit—that were passed on from father to son.

Martin is such a celebrated figure today, and the literature on Sir Winston so vast, that it is hard to recall how very different the situation was in 1968, when Randolph died and Martin was appointed as his successor. Scholars were immersed in the study of earlier centuries and the Oxford History faculty decreed that History, as a subject for teaching and research, had ended with the outbreak of the First World War. Twentieth-century Britain was virtually a black hole. In spite of his legendary status, much—perhaps most—of Churchill's life was sketchily documented and little understood. For several years Martin was a lone pioneer, on the British side of the Atlantic, of Churchill studies.

So many things can be said of the official biography that I will single out one only, the outstanding quality of the research on which it is based. When Martin used to lecture at Oxford he would rivet his audience by making dramatic use of unpublished documents. I remember him reading out a letter of scathing rebuke from Lloyd

George, who was then Prime Minister, to Churchill as Secretary of State for War in 1919. It was a shock to realise that the renowned and revered figure of Sir Winston Churchill had once been treated as a delinquent schoolboy. It also demonstrated Martin's love of original documents, and his enterprise in pursuing them. This was a new departure.

In the past, political biography had been a gentlemanly pursuit, entrusted to a man of letters, a member of the family or an eminent public figure. The biographer would browse through the great man's papers, publish one or two extracts, summarise the main events, and strive to create an essentially literary portrait. Martin set new and demanding standards that turned political biography into the most exacting of professions. Although he had exclusive access to the Churchill papers, he pursued every conceivable source with the excitement of a prospector panning for gold. He would then marshal the materials with astonishing precision.

I called on him one day at his home in London and found that he had reached 4 October 1940. All the documents for that day were arranged in strict chronological order along a printer's desk. They were the raw material not only for the main volume of narrative, but also for the massive companion volumes of documents. What other historian has ever displayed, for the benefit of readers, all the documents on which his account is based?

A distinguished historian once said to me, of Martin's biography: "It's what we used to call *précis* writing." The documents, in other words, became in Martin's hands a substitute for historical analysis. Since they were mainly composed by Churchill himself, they also tended to present the past through Churchill's eyes. There is substance in these criticisms, which I have sometimes expressed myself in reviews. They are, however, dwarfed by the colossal scale of the achievement. Martin's admiration for Churchill is profound, but his principal aim has always been to create a chronicle so comprehensive that it makes all the relevant materials available to readers and allows them to reach their own judgments. Even now, perhaps, there are one or two documents still withheld from public gaze. But thanks to Martin Gilbert, Churchill stands as naked before posterity as any statesman in history.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of moving a vote of thanks to Martin after a public lecture he gave in Edinburgh. I said: "I think Sir Martin will have persuaded you that whatever criticisms might be made of Churchill as a war leader, nobody could have done it better. The same can be said of Sir Martin as his official biographer—nobody could have done it better." ☺

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Dr. Addison is a professor of history at the University of Edinburgh and author of the outstanding short life, *Churchill: The Unexpected Hero* (2005), as well as the definitive account of Sir Winston's domestic politics, *Churchill on the Home Front* (1993), recently released as a Kindle title.

# Humanitarian Historian: Sir Martin Gilbert's Engagement with The Holocaust

DAVID PATTERSON

Among Holocaust historians Martin Gilbert stands out as perhaps the most profoundly human. He has a deep understanding of what the Nazis set out to accomplish: the systematic extermination of the sanctity of person as affirmed in the millennial testimony of the Jewish people. Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg said as much when he insisted that the German spirit was poisoned not merely by Jewish blood but by Judaism.<sup>1</sup>

What distinguishes Martin Gilbert's histories of the Holocaust is that, far beyond recounting the events, they recover a trace of the human sanctity the Nazis targeted for annihilation. Two things provide him with that distinction: historical method and humanitarian outlook.

Some historians claim that when writing Holocaust history one must never use the diaries or the memoirs of the victims because they could not see the "big picture." These chroniclers view history from an overarching God's-eye perspective. If, for example, the killing units went into operation with the invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, it was, in part, because the situation in Europe was well in hand; if, however, a survivor recalls that in the Kovno Ghetto "before our eyes our children fell," as Sir Martin relates,<sup>2</sup> it is irrelevant to history. No one provides a more thoroughly researched view of history than Gilbert.

In addition to the macrocosm, however, he sounds the depths of the human dimension as no other. Drawing

upon diaries and memoirs, he bares the face of the human beings whose souls came under assault.

The outcry of the witness resounds throughout Sir Martin's seminal study *Kristallnacht*. A skilled storyteller, he draws upon eye-witness testimony to the devastation that was the prelude to extermination. He allows the voices of those who were there to speak, from the British Consuls in Vienna and Frankfurt to the eyewitnesses Laurie Lowenthal and Max Kopfstein. The testimonies convey *Kristallnacht's* horror, making it palpable, thus driving home its reality. Detailing the destruction of synagogues, Sir Martin demonstrates ridding the world of Jews also involved ridding the world of Judaism. On the question of why more Jews did not leave Germany, he analyzes the refusal of representatives at the July 1938 Evian Conference on the "refugee problem."<sup>3</sup> Their inaction gave Hitler the green light to proceed with genocide.

In *Auschwitz and the Allies* Sir Martin explores the question of "how the most terrible crimes could be committed with scarcely any effort being made to halt them."<sup>4</sup> Although in 1941 and 1942 it was difficult for the Allies "to do anything but issue warnings and declarations," policy-makers feared "the 'danger' of 'flooding' Palestine, and indeed Britain, with Jews"; many "were also wary of what they regarded as a parallel 'danger' of falling for what one of them referred to as Jewish 'sob-stuff.'"<sup>5</sup> As for Auschwitz, news of what was happening did reach the West

but did not make any impact.<sup>6</sup>

Although Churchill had ordered feasibility studies for air strikes on Auschwitz, the RAF not only did nothing, but passed the buck to the Americans, who followed suit.<sup>7</sup> This demonstration of the rest of >>



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### DAVID PATTERSON...

humanity's complicity in the assault on the very meaning of "human being" implicates anyone who reads it.

The same dictum applies to Martin's study *The Righteous*. In the course of writing this book he came face to face with people from Norway to Greece, from the Atlantic to the Baltic, whose acts of courage provided a beacon and an example in a time of deep darkness. Coming from all walks of life, their actions transcended the usual social, cultural, or religious profiles. "The story of the Righteous," he writes, "is the story of men and women who risked their lives and those of their families to help save Jewish lives: people who, in the words of Si Frumkin, a survivor of the Kovno ghetto, 'ignored the law, opposed popular opinion, and dared to do what was right.'"<sup>8</sup> He follows these words with an invocation of the Talmudic dictum that "he who saves a single life saves the entire world"—words that demonstrate what is Jewish about this historian.

Martin Gilbert's declaration to humanity—"Here I am for you!"—even pervades what might seem to be an impersonal project: his *Atlas of the Holocaust*. Consisting of 333 maps, that book provides the graphic history of the extermination campaign from the organization of ghettos to the establishment of death camps. It also includes more than 200 instances of Jewish revolt and partisan risings. Putting a face to the horror he cites names of the dead, such as Charlotte Salomon and Janusz Korczak.<sup>9</sup> In addition to maps of ghettos, deportations, and death camps, he includes singular maps like one showing the fate of a single family, the Hirschsprungs of Belgium and the Netherlands.<sup>10</sup> Emphasizing his humanitarian concern, the *Atlas* includes photographs of the murdered, faces that ask the question put to the first human being: "Where are you?"

This haunting question lurks between every line of Sir Martin's *Final Journey*, as though it represents the last words of those swallowed up in the maelstrom. "On their own, the statistics are powerful and terrible," Martin writes. "But the story of the Nazi attempt to murder the Jews of Europe concerned individual people: people with names, families, careers and futures, for millions of whom no one survived to mourn, or to remember."<sup>11</sup> More than a history, this account of the last days of millions is a memorial to the names and the faces of the forgotten. Martin's book contains chapters devoted to countries, cities, ghettos, single transports, single individuals. Here, as throughout his work, we discover in



Martin at his desk, February 2012

ESTHER GILBERT

Martin Gilbert not only a historian who chronicles events but a human being who remembers lost humanity.

The only thing that Martin Gilbert cares more about than the past is the future, as evidenced in *Holocaust Journey*. That book is based on a fourteen-day trip he made with his students to the sites of destruction. It demonstrates his uncanny ability to merge geography and history, to transmit not only what happened, but why it matters. An hour-to-hour chronicle, *Holocaust Journey* exudes Sir Martin's devotion to

his subject and his students. "There seems to be a story for every place we go," he writes,<sup>12</sup> and so there is: the human relation to each place lies in the story it relates, a story of the past, for the sake of the future. The volume contains the words of the dead and the words of his students, now transformed into witnesses. In the end, after he and his students have peered into the essence of the event, they collide with the question that transcends the abstractions of history: *Did the murderers not have children?*<sup>13</sup>

As a Holocaust historian, Sir Martin Gilbert exemplifies a tedious attention to detail and the gathering of evidence. Far more than that, he tells us what is required of humanity: a certain understanding of history itself. Future generations will study not only his encyclopedic accomplishment as a chronicler who informs the field. They will, I think, study Sir Martin himself, to learn what our history has to do with our humanity. ♡

### Endnotes

1. Alfred Rosenberg, *Race and Race History and Other Essays*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 131-32.
2. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (London: Collins, 1986), 162.
3. Martin Gilbert, *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 119.
4. Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (New York: Holt, 1990), viii.
5. *Ibid.*, 339.
6. *Ibid.*, 340.
7. *Ibid.*, 341.
8. Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), xx-xxi.
9. Martin Gilbert, *Atlas of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 10.
10. *Ibid.*, 120.
11. Martin Gilbert, *Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Mayflower Books, 1979), 7.
12. Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), 11.
13. *Ibid.*, 401.

# Churchill and the Holocaust : A Personal Memoir

CYRIL MAZANSKY

**Some years ago now, my younger brother visited Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial, to record the names of my father's family who had perished.**

**H**e found that they had already been recorded there as long ago as 1953 by one Leah Slonimsky, who was listed as living on a kibbutz by the Sea of Galilee. Months of research brought him into contact with her. He sent me her location a few days before I was leaving on a trip to Israel with my family.

Arriving at the kibbutz, we were directed to her apartment. Her family later told us that she had been extremely emotional over our visit. As this diminutive woman of 80 emerged through her door, she threw her arms around me and stood weeping on the steps for several minutes. Over refreshments, she unfolded to us the story of my family's annihilation.

Leah had been a lifelong and very close friend of my Aunt Channah. In 1934, she immigrated to Israel from Ponavez, Lithuania, where my father's family lived as her neighbors. After the war, she was told the story of their murders, and of her own family, by a survivor who had joined the partisans and had witnessed their deaths.

One day in August 1941, exactly the time Sir Martin referred to, as the Germans were approaching Ponavez, local peasants herded the Jewish population into the forest. There they made them dig their own graves and undress. There, among others, my grandmother, my Aunt Channah, my Uncle Chaim and my Uncle Moishe, together with their spouses and my cousins, were cold-bloodedly shot. Please God may their souls rest in peace.

Leah gave me photographs of my family which she had kept since the 1930s. They are now permanently preserved in these walls. As we left, our guide, an extremely intelligent, sensitive, native-born Israeli, knocked me over with the statement: "It is stories like this that have made the State of Israel. Many of us believe that, if it were not

for the Holocaust, there never would have been an Israel." That is why this museum tour ends in creation of Israel. Good will always be victorious over evil.

**U**ntil today the nagging questions that I have always had, with all my deep respect for Winston Churchill, were: What did he know about this mass murder? If he knew, what did he try to do about it? Why was more not done by the Allies?

In a way, my Israeli guide had given me a partial answer. But the fact that Churchill gave the last ounce of his energy and force to destroy one of the most vicious barbarians that humanity has ever produced, and thus allowed the free world to survive, proved to me that, regardless of anything else, he had played an instrumental role in the ultimate salvation of the remnants of the Jewish people.

Until today, I rationalized my family tragedy with the overall British and Allied efforts. I knew that were it not for Churchill's efforts and leadership, particularly in the dark days of 1940-41 when he was the sole bastion against that evil empire and its cadre of nefarious thugs, neither British nor Western civilization as we know it would have survived. Certainly the Jews, never mind Israel, would not now be in existence. And for me that is more than enough reason to revere an

individual who must be considered among the greatest of non-Jewish friends of the Jewish people.

In fact, I found my conclusion was in agreement with the description of Martin Gilbert in his eloquent and moving tribute to Emery Reves, in the 25th Anniversary issue of *Finest Hour*: "No wonder that Reves saw Churchill as a savior: had Britain not taken up arms against Nazi rule in 1939, and persevered despite great odds throughout 1940 and 1941, and then led the coalition against Hitler until the Nazi system was totally destroyed, how many more millions might have perished is a question not for doubt, but for arithmetic."

Today, Martin, you have gone even further. You have provided the factual evidence that Churchill gave everything of himself, personally and politically, not only to lead the destruction of that blight on humanity, but also very specifically to try to save the Jewish people. That he could do no more was the result of factors beyond his control. For me personally, you have provided the complete answer—rationally, intellectually and emotionally. And that is worth everything. ☺



Chartwell, 2006  
ESTHER GILBERT

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Dr. Mazansky, a radiologist in Boston, Massachusetts, is a longtime contributor to *FH* and a former member of the Board of Governors. This article is extracted from his speech of thanks after Sir Martin's lecture, "Churchill and the Holocaust," at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial in 1993, during the Tenth International Churchill Conference. Sir Martin's remarks may be read online at : <http://bit.ly/1nkcL5N>.

# A Gentleman and a *Mensch*

MATTHEW S. GOULD



Ambassador Gould, Martin Gilbert and Austen Science, then chairman of the Israel, Britain and the Commonwealth Association.

MATTHEW GOULD

When I was sent to Israel to be the British Ambassador, I was acutely conscious that navigating the present would require understanding the past. History hangs heavy everywhere, but in Israel it has an immediacy that I have rarely known. I have been blessed to have in Martin a wonderful and learned guide who also became a friend.

He has been a remarkable source of advice. On one occasion before taking up my post, I wanted to be sure of my ground on the vexed issue of the British government turning Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe back from the Mandate of Palestine. In his unique way, combining humility with humour and extraordinary command of detail, he took me by the hand through this minefield.

He is a writer of huge breadth. I went to his books for the definitive overview of Israel's history, and the story of Churchill's relationship with the Jewish people. I have returned over and over to his atlases and essays.

I heard Martin's distinctive speeches on numerous occasions, without grand flourishes or great cadences, keeping his audiences in rapt attention. He had an understated and diffident style which often left me feeling he was on the verge of running dry, only to answer every question with a great depth of knowledge and understanding.

He is a gentleman, and a *mensch*. I remember him at dinner parties, listening to the most fearful nonsense being spoken, serenely letting it wash over him rather than pointlessly and ungallantly getting into combat. I remember his infinite patience and great generosity, not only to me, but more impressively to all he met.

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Matthew S. Gould CMG MBE is the British Ambassador to Israel.

Martin is regarded as highly in Israel as in the UK. He is one of those figures, and there are a few, whose names are known in both places, who have bridged the gap between the countries and brought them closer. He is a loyal citizen of Britain, and a true friend of Israel. ☺

## Martin Gilbert and the Soviet Refuseniks

**"I felt proud, as a Jew, to sit with them and talk to them."** —MG, *The Jews of Hope*

MICHAEL BEIZER

For many Russian Jews Sir Martin Gilbert remains first and foremost a champion for their right to emigrate and to join their people in Israel. In the 1970s and 1980s tens of thousands of Soviet Jews, called "Refuseniks," were denied this basic right; those who insisted and fought for it were persecuted, even imprisoned. The State of Israel and a number of Western Jewish organizations and individuals supported their struggle. Among them, Martin Gilbert was outstanding.

He joined their cause in winter 1983, when he traveled to Moscow and Leningrad and met leaders and activists of the Soviet Jewish movement. Though Moscow airport authorities confiscated part of the materials he had gathered when he departed, Martin nevertheless



Martin (r.) in a rally for Soviet Jewry with activist and later Knesset member Yuri Shtern, journalist and Radio Voice of Israel Esther Carmi, and activist Enid Wurtman, Jerusalem 1986. MICHAEL BEIZER





Left: MG and the author, Jerusalem, 1987. Above: Yuly Kosharovsky, Natan Shcharansky, and Martin, Jerusalem, 2004. Below left: Aba and Ida Taratuta with Martin in the Taratutas' apartment, Leningrad, 1983.

MICHAEL BEIZER



wrote a moving report of his meetings, *The Jews of Hope: The Plight of Soviet Jewry Today*. The book had a tremendous effect: after reading it, many people in the free world joined the effort. By giving international publicity to his heroes, Martin did a lot to protect them from further persecutions.

But this was not all. Every person he met during his trip became a devoted pen-friend of Martin Gilbert. Despite the thousand and one other things he was working on, Martin kept in touch with letters and postcards, often sent registered with return receipts to confirm they had not been intercepted by the KGB. I personally received more than one hundred letters; some activists had twice as many. Out of respect to his friends Martin usually wrote in his own hand. But on 16 January 1985 his sixtieth letter to me arrived typewritten: "Dear Misha, forgive a typewritten letter, but my fingers are 'worn to the bone' with my Churchill writing."

Martin never cared whose turn it was to write. He knew the value of his messages and encouragement, and he sent them on every opportunity, even while waiting for a plane or riding on a train. He always took care to add beautiful stamps and to send a postcard from every new place he visited. Before his speech for Soviet Jews at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in February 1987, he found time to send me a postcard with a Swiss landscape and UN stamps on the back.

Martin tried to respond to every Refusenik's request,

to protect them from trouble, to give them hope for freedom, a rare commodity in the Soviet Union. Towards this end he turned to politicians, including then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, public organizations, and prominent individuals.

In his fight for freedom Martin was in tune with Churchill's belief that Zionism was a desirable alternative to Communism as an outlet for Jewish public energy. In 1983, "in friendship and hope," he dedicated the sixth volume of his Churchill biography to two long-term activists, Yuly Kosharovsky and Aba Taratuta. In his atlases he included the names of Refuseniks in Russia and even drew special maps to portray their place in history, one map showing their home towns and the labour camps to which they were deported—all part of his effort to publicize their plight.

He wrote articles in the *Jerusalem Post* which were syndicated worldwide. He tirelessly fought for the imprisoned, such as Nathan Shcharansky, Iosif Begun, Evgeny Lein, Vladimir Lifshits, Alexander Kholmiansky and others. His book on the most famous prisoner, *Shcharansky: Hero of Our Time*, countered the charges against a man who was unjustly jailed for nine years. Martin worked with the tireless efficiency of an entire organization or institution.

My meeting Martin was fateful. With his encouragement and intensive help, I wrote my first book, *The Jews of St. Petersburg: Excursions through a Noble Past*, while still being held behind the Iron Curtain. Foreign visitors microfilmed and smuggled chapters of my manuscript out of Russia and sent them to Martin, who put the pieces together, had them translated and then published in Philadelphia. He edited the book, wrote an introduction, and created its twelve special maps. Its publication defined my destiny to earn a Ph.D. and become a historian.

We, the former Soviet Refuseniks, were all very pleased when Martin was honored with a knighthood, a sign of recognition for his outstanding contribution to British historiography. For us he was a Jewish knight, our friend and protector. 🤝

Dr. Beizer is a historian of Russian Jewry who was formerly active in the Soviet Jewish movement. He teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

# “Cosmos out of Chaos”: Gilbert as Archivist

ALLEN PACKWOOD



**Return to Stour, 2006.** Stour's owners and the Churchill Tour hosted Martin at the former Randolph Churchill home in Suffolk where his archival odyssey began. With great emotion, he read to us from old letters he had gathered and collated for the visit.

BARBARA LANGWORTH

My first serious encounter with Martin Gilbert's work was in 1995, when I secured an interview for the post of Archivist/Exhibitions Officer at the Churchill Archives Centre, one of a team working on the Churchill Papers, now secured for the British Nation, with the help of Heritage Lottery Funding. It was a daunting prospect, made worse by the fact that I had not read any 20th century history since university.

In preparation I first read Sir Martin's classic, *In Search of Churchill*. It probably got me the job, so it is not surprising that it remains a personal favourite. Yet it is also very much an archivist's text. For it describes how Sir Martin set about the huge task of tracking down and working through his primary source materials, tracing papers and conducting oral histories to create his own Churchill archive alongside the Churchill Papers.

Jump forward a decade and it was my great pleasure to be shown the Gilbert archive by Sir Martin himself. It occupied most of his house and overflowed into a nearby office. But there was no sign of chaos. Everything was neatly filed in ordered lever arch files, and arranged by theme. Here were his working files for the vital Companion Volumes, grouped by year, month, week and even day; photocopies of key documents brought together from assorted archives; transcripts and commentaries. Here too were his own correspondence files, arranged alphabetically by correspondent, with titles like “Jock Colville,” giving tantalising indications of the treasures they contained. It was immediately clear to me that Sir Martin was a natural cataloguer.

We all know that the world owes him a huge debt for his scholarship. But what is less well known is that for a while, he was the de facto Keeper of the Churchill Papers. For after the death of Randolph Churchill, and until their transfer into the purpose-built Churchill Archives Centre, Sir Winston's papers were temporarily kept at the Bodleian Library—where it fell upon the young Martin Gilbert of Merton College to help keep them safe and ordered.

It is often said that there are two types of archivist; those who wish to get on with the cataloguing, to bring order from chaos; and those who seek to engage a wider public by answering queries and helping others. To be fair, these are stereotypes, and to some degree most archivists enjoy both. Martin has always been as meticulous in his arrangements as he was generous with his knowledge. Whether responding to an eminent colleague, a professional member of the Churchill Archives Centre, an enthusiast researching Lady Randolph's ancestry, or a student doing a school project, he has always given help and advice with kindness, patience and encouragement.

I do not know whether Martin has ever thought of himself as an archivist. Yet in his travels and in the range of his research he has certainly visited more archives than most of us can name. More than this, his work has always been grounded in original sources—and he has done more than most to highlight the value of documents and to promote their importance in our understanding and interpretation of the recent past.

To illustrate this I looked at the row of volumes that make up *The Churchill Documents* in their latest incarnation by Hillsdale College Press. If you combine the page counts for volumes 6 to 16—those directly edited by Martin—you get the staggering total of 15,130 pages of selected and indexed transcripts. Add Randolph Churchill's two volumes of narrative and five volumes of documents, produced with the help of Randolph's entire team, and Volume 17 for 1942, newly published by Hillsdale, and we have a further 2942 pages, making a total of 18,072. This is perhaps a pedantic counting exercise, and by embarking upon it maybe I am living up to some archivist's stereotype. But I think it gives us some idea of the scale of the man and his achievements.

Martin knows that when Sir Winston Churchill showed his own first archivist, Denis Kelly, the muniment room at Chartwell, he told Denis: “Your task, my boy, is to make Cosmos out of Chaos.” Martin Gilbert has made that his life's work. ☺

Mr. Packwood is director of the Churchill Archives Centre at Cambridge, and executive director of The Churchill Centre (UK).





Toronto Book Fair, 2006, with Glynne Jenkins, former Highgate School classmate and member of the Board of Directors of the Churchill Society for the Advancement of Parliamentary Democracy.

ESTHER GILBERT

## Lector, si Monumentum Requiris, Circumspice: Gilbert and Bibliography

RONALD I. COHEN

When I met Martin Gilbert more than thirty years ago, I was clutching a track-paper printout of several hundred errata or omissions in Frederick Woods's 1963 Churchill bibliography. Martin perused my dot-matrix text with an intensity that I came to know well, pointing out a couple of my errors. My indebtedness to him began small, but burgeoned over the subsequent decades. Our relationship was quickly cemented. Not surprisingly, bibliography remained central to our communications.

Over the next few years, given my day work in the production of motion pictures, part of our communication centred on the prospect of a documentary or mini-series on Churchill. But my business was feature film production, drama not documentary, and nothing came of that proposed collaboration. Martin did go on to write the four-part television series "The Complete Churchill" (1991), and to participate in many other Churchill-related documentaries. He even helped create a video for The Churchill Centre, sitting at the famous desk at Chartwell, explaining why Sir Winston matters.

We then concentrated on bibliographic issues, and in 1989 Martin kindly wrote to the British Library's

Department of Manuscripts to recommend my access, for what he then generously described as "a comprehensive bibliography on a scale not hitherto attempted." Five years later, he similarly secured access for me to the Bodleian. In January 1995, having seen more of my text, he advised a potential publisher that the "work will be the basic reference tool for scholars, students, journalists and Churchill-buffs for the next century." By the end of that year, he had agreed to write the foreword, which he produced promptly the following June. My progress was slower than hoped, and ultimately it was not needed until early 2006. Yet without complaint, Martin kindly drafted updated forewords in 2001, 2003 and 2006.

In the early 1990s I had broached the prospect of a Gilbert bibliography. In 1994 Martin wrote to say he approved, proposing a division of the text: pamphlets, books, introductions to other authors' works, and periodical contributions. We also agreed that Martin's cartographic work deserved documentation and that works with his maps should also be a component. For years we wrote each other on divisions and content, and in June 1995 I faxed him the happy change to the title page, for he had now become Sir Martin. Alas, the Churchill bibliography took me so long that the Gilbert work has never taken flight, although, given the vastness of Martin's oeuvre, it is very much merited. There are eighty-eight books (see Christopher Sterling, pages 34-36), hundreds of pamphlets, introductions, forewords, prefaces, chapters, maps and periodical contributions.

Martin's Churchill research, principally from 1968 to 1988, involved sifting through, as he wrote, "an estimated fifteen tons" of documents, most but not all in the Churchill Archives Centre and the Public Records Office (now the National Archives). His monumental work has been my indispensable tool. Without his probing through those archives, and the many others documented in his warm and charming *In Search of Churchill*, I would have been unable to describe the circumstances of publication that are essential to my work. I wrote him in 2001: "I believe that my Bibliography will also be seen as a monument to your biographical achievement."

Martin's perennial attention to detail was also acutely helpful to me in the case of his *Winston Churchill and Emery Reves: Correspondence 1937-1964*, the manuscript for which I was able to consult before publication. Among other details, this work constitutes the complete record of published translations of Churchill's important 1930s articles.

My indebtedness to Martin Gilbert is evident in the footnotes throughout my three volumes. Without him my work would not have been possible, even within the already extended twenty-two years of preparation. >>

Ronald Cohen MBE is author of the *Bibliography of the Writings of Sir Winston Churchill*, President of the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Ottawa, and a Senior Fellow at the Faculty of Public Affairs at Carleton University. The Latin title translates: "Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you."



## RONALD I. COHEN...

Our years of friendship also gave rise to many amusing exchanges. The peripatetic Martin would often send postcards from exotic locales. One of these, on 2 December 1989, reads “bought in Fulton, posted in Jerusalem!” Another, on 30 May 1997 from Lviv, Ukraine, carried his handwritten names of the ancient city in Russian, German, Polish and Latin! Yet another was sent on Churchill’s birthday in 2003: “I am now—at 30,000 feet—just above Kabul!” On 10 February 2004 came one from Pago Pago, American Samoa: “As we cross the International Date Line at midnight, tomorrow will be February 12—and I will never know February 11, 2004. Isn’t life strange?”

Martin would also fax or e-mail me from venues ashore or afloat, asking if I could send him a reference, or a Churchill speech or other writing, that he needed for a shipboard speech. On 15 March 2006, he explained pertinently: “I am in the Indian Ocean, lecturing at sea, and in two days will be in the Red Sea. Is there any way you could send me the text of *Man Overboard*!”

I deeply cherish all those delightful exchanges and opportunities. I find particularly apt the words of Sir Christopher Wren’s tombstone at St. Paul’s, commemorating the life and contributions of the great architect, *Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. Those who seek the literary monument to the extraordinary achievements of Sir Martin Gilbert need not look far. ☺

# History Meets Geography: Travels with Martin

ESTHER GILBERT

**I**t was November. We were walking through a thick fog that seeped into our bones. Gunshots were heard...ah, of course, it was hunting season. We could not see anything but the narrow grass path in front of us that bisected a farmer’s field. We tried to walk without slipping off the edges into clods of mud. What lay ahead? Where were we going?

Martin knew. He had been to the Somme before. In preparation for our journey, he had collected material: excerpts from official reports, regimental histories, poetry by those who had been there, trench maps and his own

maps to be fine-tuned, descriptions of life—and death—on the battlefield, gathered over decades and gleaned from his archives.

Each day we set forth with another fistful of papers to explore a different battle, a different vantage point, each poignantly marked by a memorial or cemetery. Our “marching orders” were held together with a black clip, separated day by day of our journey. Each day’s cluster of papers was always in Martin’s hand, so he could read aloud and describe what had happened on that very spot, noting the mileage and directions, the inscriptions and impressions. Martin had just written *The Somme*; we were there just to make sure everything was right before it went to press, and also doing a “reccy” in advance of a trip Martin was to lead with a group of friends.

Slowly, through the fog, images became clear: a few



Above: Martin introducing what we are about to see at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, Somme battlefield, June 2006. Thiepval is the largest memorial on the Western Front and the largest British war memorial in the world. It lists the names of 73,335 British and South African soldiers who were killed on the Somme and have no known grave. Below: Esther, Martin and his book on the tragic battle. ESTHER GILBERT



Lady Gilbert, the former Esther Goldberg, a Holocaust historian, has been Martin’s constant companion, counsellor, champion and friend since they married in 2005.

trees, bare of leaves, a low stone wall with a gate, and then finally, the name engraved on the plaque of that particular Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.

First task at hand: to take in whatever scenery we could make out through the fog and get our bearings. Second: to look in the cemetery register where the names of those buried were recorded. Third: to walk among the rows of gravestones, stopping to recognize the regimental insignia and read a name, an inscription, the ages, the sadness of the nameless—those “Known only to God”—and those whose gravestones are so close together, reflecting the way soldiers’ lives ended in the same shell hole. When we found a gravestone with a Star of David, we would look for a small rock to place on its top, which Jews use instead of flowers to mark a visit. The Commonwealth War Cemeteries are beautifully kept up, a mark of honour to those who gave their lives.

At each cemetery came a description of the battle: which regiment defended this particular bit of ground, in the case of the Somme, Canadians, English, Irish, Newfoundlanders, Scots, South Africans and Welsh. “Over there,” Martin pointed, describing how the Germans advanced, how this wood was held, how that hillside was taken, human life all round as shattered as the landscape. Now these fields produce food, swords beaten into ploughshares. The serenity belies the horror buried beneath the surface; the stillness masks the deafening sounds of battle and of death as described in the pages held by the black clip. The history is recalled in the words of those who were there: only the eyewitnesses are granted the privilege of adverbs and adjectives. The historian brings it all to life; armed with the facts on the ground, readers draw their own conclusions.

In every town we visited together in England, Scotland and Wales, and also many in Canada, Martin and I would stop at the war memorial, photograph or record the names of the local boys who did not come home, and linger a moment remembering the battle-grounds we had seen. Thus Martin’s archives and understanding grew, names with towns, connections to be made, human stories to be woven in and remembered.

Martin and I have visited Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries wherever our travels have taken us: to Ramle and Be’er Sheva in Israel, New Delhi in India, Heverlee in Belgium, and those that pockmark the Somme. Our single day in Honolulu found us at Pearl Harbor and the nearby Punchbowl Cemetery; a visit to Washington took us to Arlington, and the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. To Martin, the cemeteries and the battles that caused them are the intersection of history and geography, the very distillation of what must be remembered. ☸

## “He Worked Like a Tiger”

**RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL**



SIGRID ESTRADA, 1987

**I**t was Lady Diana Cooper who introduced Martin Gilbert to my grandfather and namesake. His brilliant life of the 17th Earl of Derby so impressed Sir Winston in 1959 that he had assigned Randolph to write his official biography.

I was born on 22 January 1965, some

thirty-six hours before my great-grandfather died. As a child, one of the highlights of each year was our family Christmas at my parents’ farmhouse in Sussex. We were often joined by Clementine, and also by Peregrine Churchill (born Henry Winston, younger son of Churchill’s brother Jack) and his wife Yvonne. During mealtimes the discussion would turn to the “Great Work,” and inevitably the pace of progress! My father Winston regaled us with stories of how the biography began, with his father Randolph, gathering together the resources at his beautiful but chaotic Georgian house Stour, in East Bergholt, Suffolk. Many times at Stour, the house guests were provoked by Randolph who, fortified by scotch and claret, relished debate and argument. He sometimes found that by the time he awoke in the morning his guests had left. That option was not available to his team of young researchers, who grew up on a diet of Churchill excitement, debate and endless energy.

Stour became the nerve centre for Randolph’s team. Michael Wolff, formerly a journalist in the Beaverbrook empire, was Director of Research and Randolph’s right-hand man, spending much of his time at Stour. Martin Gilbert, a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford soon joined the team of “Young Gentlemen,” as they were known. Eager to help, he fitted this obligation in amongst his many other projects. Always interested in maps (see “the Map-Maker,” page 15), he published several very successful atlases, and built a home at North Hinksey which he called “Map House.” The house was designed >>

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Mr. Churchill, a member of The Churchill Centre’s Board of Trustees, is Sir Winston Churchill’s great-grandson. He lives in Kent, quite close to Chartwell.

### **RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL...**

around one large room dominated by a desk extending wall to wall, where he carefully laid out the Churchill documents. He continued this practice wherever he worked (see “Cosmos out of Chaos,” page 28).

To accommodate an archive numbering over a million documents, Randolph had erected a special building with a Chubb safe door near the main house. The records ran from young Winston’s earliest letters to his parents to his death. Here the Young Gentlemen accessed the sources Randolph needed to write the story. Martin spent hours delving into this goldmine, photocopying anything he needed to continue his work back in Oxford.

My grandfather said Martin “worked like a tiger.” He had an enormous capability for absorbing the essence of what “the Boss” needed, which ranged far beyond Stour. What he couldn’t find there or at Oxford he would obtain by interrogating aged politicians, journalists, military men and others—anyone he thought would be able to help. In 1994 Martin published some of these amazing experiences in his book, *In Search of Churchill*.

As Randolph’s health deteriorated, progress slowed. When Michael Wolff resigned and Martin had to spend more time at Oxford, the remaining staff continued supporting Randolph as best they could. He had bursts of energy when he was able to dictate lengthy tracts, but sadly, Randolph died just three years after his father, having seen publication of two main biographic volumes and two document volumes. The archive was moved to the Bodleian and Martin was asked to take over, working there and visiting other archives, personal and national. In 1988 Martin completed the main biography in eight volumes, three more than originally contemplated.

The respect and support of his team enabled Randolph to get as far as he did. Esther Gilbert sent me a letter Martin wrote to Sir Isaiah Berlin on 6 June 1969, which summarizes Martin’s relationship with my grandfather:

Today is also the first anniversary of Randolph’s death; and I am on my way this morning to his grave. It has not been easy taking up his work. But now that I have begun the actual writing of volume three, which covers the First World War, I feel a new upsurge of energy and inspiration. When I began to work for him I felt a great deal of fear mingled with a certain amount of awe; after six years the fear had been replaced by admiration and the awe by affection. And then he was gone: and neither the honour of having been chosen to carry on his work nor the excitement, variety and interest of the work itself can ever obliterate the pain of his departure.

Martin’s interest in life is boundless. I have many happy memories of the joy, humour and fun that he relished with my grandfather. In 2006 on his 70th birthday,

Martin entertained us with his memories. He picked out, and we sang together, soldiers’ songs as they headed to the front in the Great War. I was entranced with his account of how he was evacuated from Liverpool to Canada when he was not yet four years old; how, at the age of seven-and-a-half, he returned to Liverpool having not seen his parents in the intervening period. Martin was a great correspondent and I treasure the postcards he sent to me on his travels around the globe.

The Churchill family owes Martin the greatest gratitude for recording and preserving the record of Winston Churchill and all those around him so faithfully, that we may better understand his life and times and reach our own conclusions. Martin understood completely the context and the pressures of that time. He certainly mapped the history most clearly for all of us to see.

As the years go by the “Great Work,” started by Randolph and completed by Martin, will go down as one of the greatest biographies ever written, not least because of Martin’s love for accuracy and detail, for seeking the truth. He has enabled history to judge Churchill fairly because he has placed the story fully and accurately in our hands. He is the Macaulay of the modern world. ☺

## **In Search of Inscriptions**

**I pursued our author from one engagement to another, but it seemed he could write new books faster than I could get them signed.**

**DAVID FREEMAN**

After finishing the narrative volumes of the official biography, Martin Gilbert published a book about that Olympic task, *In Search of Churchill*. In a minor key, my own life paralleled his search for Churchill, since for many years I have doggedly pursued Sir Martin Gilbert.

I was brought to his work in the 1980s, around the same time I joined the International Churchill Society and learned about the annual conferences at which Sir Martin often spoke. Being in the U.S. Navy, the chances of attending seemed remote, but in 1991 the planets aligned and I was able to take a two-week leave that coincided with the U.S. conference in Richmond, Virginia. I flew in from Pearl Harbor (traveling the farthest, I think),

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Mr. Freeman is a professor of History at California State University Fullerton, and becomes editor of *Finest Hour* effective with the next issue.



bringing two Gilbert books to have signed. One was “*Never Despair*,” the last biographic volume, which I had finished at sea on a submarine, possibly a unique accomplishment.

I was excited finally to meet the author as he signed books at Richmond’s beautiful Jefferson Hotel, using a Lamy Safari fountain pen, his preferred instrument. He cheerfully signed my books; I couldn’t help noticing that others had brought stacks, yet he happily signed all.

What could I do? I had many more books back in California, but could only carry so many. Fortunately, when I returned home to spend a week with my family, Sir Martin was speaking at nearby Claremont-McKenna College, where his former research assistant Larry Arnn (now President of Hillsdale College) was on the faculty.

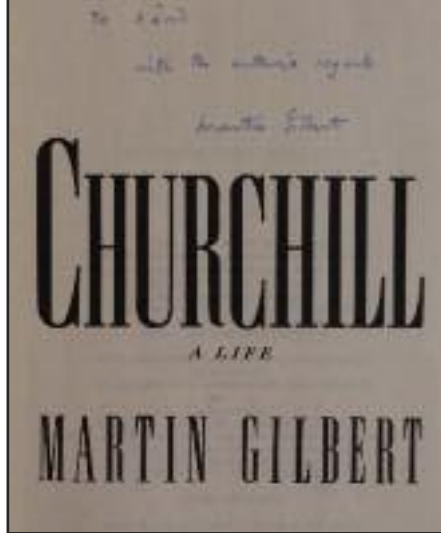
I grabbed as many books as I could and drove to Claremont, where Sir Martin spoke on Veterans Day, or as he put it, “the seventy-third anniversary of the day Armageddon ended.” Again he kindly signed all of my books, and even told me the story behind one of the cover photographs. Mine were nothing—I observed a man with a little red wagon loaded with volumes.

After I returned to Pearl Harbor, I wrote to thank him. Sir Martin responded with a letter in his own hand, saying he would gladly sign more copies, and even inviting me to visit if I was ever in London. Eighteen months later, out of the Navy and in school in London, I visited his home near Hampstead Heath. For an hour we strolled about the Heath talking Churchill—a great kindness to a young scholar that I shall never forget.

For the 1993 Churchill conference in Washington, I organized a strategic plan to have my remaining Gilbert volumes signed. Although limited by luggage space, I brought narrative volumes 3-7 and, since he was speaking at the National Holocaust Museum, I brought along one of his books on that sad subject.

After Washington, I found myself scouring issues of *Finest Hour* for news of Martin Gilbert’s upcoming activities. To paraphrase Harry Hopkins’ biblical quotation made to Churchill, whithersoever thou goest, I go. I pursued our author from one engagement to another, but it seemed he could write new books faster than I could get them signed.

Finally in 2001, the perfect opportunity arrived with the Churchill conference in San Diego, a two-hour drive from my home. Remembering the man with the little red wagon, I filled two suitcases with every remaining unsigned volume and stuffed them into my car.



The conference began on Guy Fawkes Day—perfect for a plot. At the signing session I offered him a few volumes, asking if I could buy him a drink later while he signed a few more. He easily agreed. So it was that, on a balmy afternoon on the verandah of the Hotel Del Coronado, overlooking the Pacific, I handed him one copy after another to be duly inscribed. There must have been several dozen, including the massive companion volumes to the Official Biography. Finally, my collec-

tion was complete. But not for long!

Sir Martin was by no means finished writing books, and in the years that followed I scrambled to secure signed copies of the new works. I have not accumulated the Complete Signed Works of Sir Martin Gilbert, but am close. I was grateful in the process to meet and know this wonderful man and great historian. ☺

## • Memories •



During the 1996 Churchill Tour of England, so superbly arranged by Barbara and Richard Langworth, we enjoyed a rapid-fire walking tour of Whitehall with Martin Gilbert. He had so many venues that we had almost to run to keep up! Unassuming as ever, he arrived carrying an tattered old wicker shopping bag. From this he produced notes for his history lesson, provocative and exciting, on what went on at each place. We began (above) at Horse Guards Parade, bordered by the Admiralty, where Asquith once said the lights would burn late into the night “as Winston brewed his plans.” It was hard not to smile as our teacher spoke, the kind-hearted, sweet, humble yet brilliant biographer of a titan, utterly nonchalant, with his shopping bag on his arm. Thank you, Martin, for being a wonderful historian, and so great a friend.

—Jacqueline Dean Witter, Redwood City, Calif. ☺



**CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING**

Martin with two of his nine historical atlases, Toronto, 2006.  
ESTHER GILBERT

## A Half-Century of Excellence: All the Books of Sir Martin Gilbert

Over six decades, Martin Gilbert has produced eighty-eight books, thirty-five focused on Churchill, seven on the two World Wars and 20th century history, and eighteen on Jewish history and the Holocaust, along with ten historical atlases for which he designed the maps. Some went through more than one edition, and many were reprinted (rep.). Features common to most of his books include original maps, extensive biographical annotations (usually footnotes on the same page as the textual reference), photos (often fresh), bibliographies, detailed source notes and indexes.

This chronological bibliography draws on Sir Martin's website, with brief annotations. Sir Martin is the sole author or editor (ed.) unless indicated otherwise. Most books were published in Britain and America, many in Canada; those publishers are noted. Paperback versions are noted only if that was the sole format. Many of the titles have appeared in languages other than English: these are noted with an asterisk after the annotation. Many are now also available as e-books.

**1. (with Richard Gott). *The Appeasers*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963 (rep. 1968, 2000), 444 pp. An insightful analysis of British leadership in 1933-39 inquires into the reasons for appeasing Hitler's Germany.\*

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**2. (ed.). *Britain and Germany Between the Wars*.** London: Longmans, 1964 (rep. 1977), paperback, 180 pp. Excerpted documents illustrate British policy toward Germany, 1919-39.

**3. *The European Powers 1900-1945*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: New American Library, 1965 (rep. 2001), 308 pp. A political and diplomatic history of the early 20th century centers on events before and during the two World Wars.\*

**4. (ed.) *Plough My Own Furrow: The Life of Lord Allen of Hurtwood*.** London: Longmans, 1965, 442 pp. Clifford Allen, a British socialist, imprisoned as a conscientious objector during World War I, became an appeaser, then an opponent of, Nazi Germany.

**5. *Recent History Atlas, 1860-1960*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: Macmillan, 1966, 121 maps. The first of many atlases (printed maps were done by cartographers to Gilbert's design). Highlights world history with clearly delineated maps that illustrate key events.

**6. *The Roots of Appeasement*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: New American Library, 1966, 254 pp. Explores the 18th century and Versailles Treaty origins (among other factors) preceding appeasement in the 1930s.

**7. (ed.) *Servant of India: Diaries of the Viceroy's Private Secretary, 1905-1910*.** London: Longmans, 1966, 266 pp. A portrait of the Raj at its height based on letters and diaries of James Dunlop Smith, private secretary to Viceroy Lord Curzon.

**8. *Winston Churchill*.** Oxford Univ. Press; New York: Dial Press, 1966, 64 pp. A short biography for school use, Gilbert's first volume on Churchill.

**9. (ed.) *Churchill: Great Lives Observed*.** Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967, 180 pp. A collection in WSC's words and those of his contemporaries, and a review of his life and work.

**10. (ed.) *Lloyd George: Great Lives Observed*.** Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968, 182 pp. Same style as above.

**11. *Atlas of British History*.** London: Routledge, 1968, with 118 maps; 214 maps in 5th edition, 2011. Two millennia of history from Roman times to today.

**12. *Atlas of American History*.** London: Routledge, 1968; 163 maps in 6th edition, 2009. Coverage is from the earliest settlements to the 21st century.

**13. *Atlas of Jewish History*.** London: Routledge, 1969; 157 maps in 8th edition, 2010. Coverage ranges from Biblical times to the end of the 20th century.\*

**14. (ed.) *Winston Churchill 1874-1965*.** London: Jackdaw/Jonathan Cape, 1969. "Jackdaw No. 31" narrates Churchill's life, excerpts speeches and facsimiles of historical documents, designed for school use. See also entry 19.

**15. *The Second World War*.** London: Chatto & Windus, 1970, 108 pp. This is a summary history intended for schools.

**16. *Atlas of the First World War*.** London: Routledge, 1971: 173 maps in 3rd edition, 2008. Surveys all fronts, land and sea; foreword by Field Marshal Montgomery.

**17. *Winston S. Churchill, vol. 3, The Challenge of War, 1914-1916*.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971 (rep. Hillsdale College, 2008), 998 pp. First Gilbert biographic volume covers the Admiralty, Dardanelles and Western Front.

**18. *Atlas of Russian History*.** London: Routledge, 1972; 176 maps in 4th edition, 2007. Maps range from the earliest settlement through to the post-Soviet era.\*

**19. (ed.) *The Coming of War, 1939*.** London: Jackdaw/Jonathan Cape, 1972. "Jackdaw No. 64" has a narrative, excerpts of Hitler's speeches, maps by Gilbert and facsimiles, for school use. See entry 14.

**20-21. (ed.) *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume 3, Part 1, Documents, August 1914-April 1915; Part 2: Documents, May 1915-December 1916*.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972 (rep. Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vols. 6-7, 2008), 1686 pp.

**22. *Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat 1869-1941*.** London: Heinemann, 1973, 496 pp. On the British ambassador in Berlin when Hitler took power. Gilbert's third biography of a UK diplomatic figure (see entries 4 and 7).



**23. Churchill: A Photographic Portrait.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974 (reissued with expanded captions, 1988), 310 pp., 364 photos. An excellent photo-documentary.

**24. Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict.** London: Routledge, 1974; 227 maps in 10th edition, 2012. From late 19th century to present; all the wars, suicide bombings and endless peace processes.\*

**25. Winston S. Churchill, vol. 4, The Stricken World 1917-1922.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975; paperback 1990 (rep. as *World in Torment*, Hillsdale College, 2008), 968 pp. Churchill as Minister of Munitions, War and as Colonial Secretary.

**26. The Jews of Arab Lands: Their History in Maps.** London: Board of Deputies of British Jews, 1976 (rep. 1977), 15 maps. From the rise of Islam onward.\*

**27. Winston S. Churchill, vol. 5, Prophet of Truth, 1922-1939.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976 (rep. 1988, 1990; rep. by Hillsdale College, 2009), 1168 pp. From Chancellor of the Exchequer to political wilderness, India Bill, Abdication and Appeasement.

**28. The Jews of Russia: Their History in Maps and Photographs.** London: National Council for Soviet Jewry, 1976 (revised 1977, 1979), 78 pp., 26 maps. The millennium from the Middle Ages to the late 20th century.\*

**29-30-31. (ed.) Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume IV, Part 1, Documents December 1916- June 1919; Part 2, Documents, July 1919-March 1921; Part 3: Documents, April 1921-November 1922.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977 (rep. Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vols. 8-10, 2008), 2166 pp.

**32. Historical Atlas of Jerusalem.** London: Routledge, 1977; 69 maps in 4th edition, 2008. Aspects of the city from ancient times to the present.\*

**33. Exile and Return: The Emergence of Jewish Statehood** (U.S. subtitle, *The Struggle for a Jewish Homeland*). London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1978, 364 pp. The rise and impact of the Zionist movement, 19th century to 1948.

**34. The Holocaust: Maps and Photographs.** London: Holocaust Educational Trust, 1978 (5th ed., 1998), 60 pp., 27 maps. Designed for young people.

**35. The Children's Illustrated Bible Atlas.** London: W. H. Allen, 1979 (rep. 1982), 56 pp. Original color maps illustrate biblical periods, combined with photographs by the author.

**36. Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews of Nazi Europe.** London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Mayflower, 1979, 224 pp. Draws on documents of organizers and witnesses.\*

**37. Churchill: An Illustrated Biography.** London: Marks & Spencer, 1979 (rep. by Chanticleer, 1983), 192 pp. 200 photos in color and B&W, including Churchill's books, the latter substituted later for images of Churchill's paintings for which permission was not granted.

**38. (ed.) Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume V, Part 1, The Exchequer Years 1922-1929.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979 (rep. by Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 11, 2009), 1504 pp. Includes the gold standard, General Strike and war debt negotiations.

**39. (ed.) Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume V, Part 2, The Wilderness Years 1929-1935.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981 (rep. by Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 12, 2009), 1404 pp. Thousands of documents cover the early "wilderness years" when Churchill was out of office including his political struggles such as India policy.

**40. Auschwitz and the Allies.** London: Michael Joseph, 1981; New York: Henry Holt, 1981 (rep. 1989, 2000), 368 pp. Draws on escapee and other sources. How the news emerged and the Allies reacted.\*

**41. Churchill's Political Philosophy.** Oxford University Press, 1981, 120 pp. Three lectures assess a half-century of ideas and beliefs and their application.

**42. Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years.** London: Macmillan; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981 (rep. by Pimlico, 2004), 280 pp. Churchill's lonely 1930s fight, the basis for a television series.

**43. (ed.) Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume V, Part 3, The Coming of War, 1936-1939.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982 (rep. by Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 13, 2009), 1684 pp. Thousands of documents cover events from the Abdication to outbreak of war.

**44. Atlas of the Holocaust.** London: Routledge, 1982; 333 maps in the 4th edition, 2009. Countries, regions, refugees, labor camps, deportations, resistance, death marches and numbers killed.\*

**45. Winston S. Churchill, vol. 6, Finest Hour 1939-1941.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983 (paperback, 1990; rep. by Hillsdale College, 2011), 1308 pp. Churchill at the Admiralty, and first months as premier.

**46. The Jews of Hope: The Plight of Soviet Jewry Today.** London: Macmillan; New York: Viking, 1984 (paperback 1986), 238 pp. Based on interviews and clandestine notes during MG's trips to Russia.\*

**47. Jerusalem: Rebirth of a City.** London: Chatto & Windus; New York: Viking, 1985, 238 pp. A social and political history, 1838-98. See also entry 61.

**48. The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy.** London: Collins; New York: Holt, 1986 (many reprints), 960 pp. The full story of deportation and mass murder, with documentation from all sides.\*

**49. Winston S. Churchill, vol. 7, Road to Victory 1941-1945.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986 (paperback 1990; rep. by Hillsdale College, 2013), 1418 pp. Covers 1942 through the 1945 election defeat.

**50. Shcharansky: Hero of Our Time.** London: Macmillan; New York: Viking, 1986 (paperback 1989), 467 pp. The leading "Refusenik," based on his letters and the Soviet judgment against him.\*

**51. Winston S. Churchill, vol. 7, "Never Despair" 1945-1965.** London: Heinemann; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988 (paperback 1990; rep. by Hillsdale College, 2013), 1438 pp. The final volume traces the last two decades, return to No. 10, the search for peace with the Russians.

**52. The Second World War: A Complete History.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: Holt, 1989 (many reprints), 846 pp., 230 maps and photos. A survey of military, political and social history in all nations and peoples.\*

**53. (ed.) Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary of Avraham Tory.** Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990 (paperback 1991), 578 pp. Diary with notes on the Secretary of the Jewish Council in Kovno, Lithuania.

**54. Churchill: A Life.** London: Heinemann; New York: Holt, 1991 (many reprints), 1066 pp. Not a condensed official biography, this work includes new material not earlier known. See entry 56.\*

**55. (ed.) The Churchill War Papers, vol. 1, At the Admiralty, September 1939-May 1940.** London: Heinemann; New York: Norton, 1993 (rep. by Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 14, 2011), 1370 pp. First document volume to biographic vol. 6. See entries 60 and 70.

**56. Churchill: A Life (Pocket Edition).** London: Mandarin (paperback), 1993, 734 pp. Abridged version of #53.

**57. Atlas of British Charities.** London: Heathside (paperback), 1993, 104 pp. Offers 72 maps showing the geographic range and work of 100 charities. >>



## CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING...

**58. *In Search of Churchill*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: John Wiley, 1994 (many reprints), 338 pp. MG's personal story of researching and writing the official biography, his most delightful and approachable book; insightful anecdotes.

**59. *The Day The War Ended: VE Day 1945*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Holt, 1995 (several reprints), 474 pp. Stories and experiences: where people were, what they were thinking and doing.

**60. (ed.) *The Churchill War Papers, vol. 2: Never Surrender May-December 1940*.** London: Heinemann; New York: Norton, 1995 (rep. by Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 15, 2011), 1360 pp. Covers Churchill's first eight months as PM. See also entries 55 and 70.

**61. *Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century*.** London: Chatto & Windus; New York: Wiley, 1996, 400 pp. Following entry 47; the modern political, religious, military and social history of the city, and the impact of changing technology.\*

**62. *The Boys: Triumph over Adversity*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: Holt, 1996, 512 pp. Stories of 732 Holocaust-orphaned survivors, some of them girls, brought to UK after the War.

**63. *A History of the Twentieth Century, vol. 1, Empires in Conflict 1900-1933*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Morrow, 1997, 928 pp. The coming of World War I and political, social, economic and scientific events. See entries 67-68.\*

**64. *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, 480 pp. Diary of a 14-day study tour by MG and graduate students to Holocaust sites in Europe.\*

**65. (ed.) *Winston Churchill and Emery Reves: Correspondence 1937-1964*.** Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1997, 398 pp. Reves was Churchill's long-time literary agent; their letters cover WSC's writings and negotiations on his war memoirs.

**66. *Israel: A History*.** London: Transworld; New York: Doubleday, 1998; 60th ann. edn., 2008, 750 pp. The Jewish National movement from the late 19th century to Israel's first half century.\*

**67. *A History of the Twentieth Century, vol. 2, Descent into Barbarism 1933-1951*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Morrow, 1998, 1050 pp. The advent and impact of WW2. (See entries 64, 69.)

**68. *A History of the Twentieth Century, vol. 3, Challenge to Civilization 1952-1999*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Morrow, 1999,

1072 pp. The Cold War, decolonization, China's rise, Apartheid, end of the USSR.

**69. "Never Again": A History of the Holocaust.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Rizzoli-Universe, 2000, 192 pp. A brief history with 72 spreads depicting ghetto life, escape, key people, liberations.\*

**70. (ed.) *The Churchill War Papers, vol. 3, The Ever-Widening War 1941*.** London: Heinemann; New York: Norton, 2000 (rep. by Hillsdale College as *The Churchill Documents*, vol. 16, 2011), 1822 pp. Documents cover Hitler's invasion of Russia through Pearl Harbor. See 55, 61.

**71. *From the Ends of the Earth: The Jews in the Twentieth Century*.** London: Cassel; New York: Schocken, 2001, 376 pp. History and celebration of Jewish life worldwide, including Zionism and Israel.\*

**72. *A History of the Twentieth Century*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Morrow, 2001, 783 pp. A condensed one-volume version of MG's three-volume history (see entries 64, 68, and 69).

**73. *The First World War: A Complete History*.** London: HarperCollins; New York: Holt, 2002 (several reprints), 616 pp. Parallels entry 52, but on World War I.\*

**74. *Letters to Auntie Fori: The 5000-Year History of the Jewish People and Their Faith*.** London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; New York: Schocken, 2002 (revised 2003), 460 pp. A history of Judaism seen through 141 letters by Gilbert to his "adopted" Indian aunt.\*

**75. *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust*.** London: Doubleday, 2002; New York: Holt; Toronto: Key Porter, 2003, 460 pp. The 20,000 Christians and Muslims honored by Yad Vashem, who risked their lives to hide and save Jews during the Holocaust.\*

**76. *Churchill at War: His "Finest Hour" in Photographs 1940-1945*.** London: Carlton; New York: Norton, 2003, 160 pp. Nearly 200 captioned photos from the Imperial War Museum Archives offer a visual tour of Churchill's World War II.

**77. *Winston Churchill's War Leadership*.** New York: Vintage; London and Toronto: Random House, 2004, 98 pp. Expanded version of a 2002 lecture at the White House, and in 2004 in Canada.

**78. *D-Day*.** London and New York: Wiley, 2004, 220 pp. 60th anniversary survey of the days leading up to the invasion and its aftermath, including deception plans that contributed to success.

**79. *Churchill and America*.** London: Simon & Schuster; New York: Free Press; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2005, 528 pp. Chronicles a lifelong relationship with America, 1895 to 1961.

**80. *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction*.** London and New York: HarperCollins, 2006, 314 pp. The widespread attacks on Jewish businesses and synagogues in Germany and Austria on 9/10 November 1938. Observing the international outcry afterward, the Nazis resorted to secrecy when they adopted their "final solution."\*

**81. *The Somme: Heroism and Horror in the First World War*.** London: John Murray; New York: Holt; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006, 332 pp. The July-November 1916 struggle cost more than 300,000 British and Commonwealth lives alone.

**82. *The Will of the People: Churchill and Parliamentary Democracy*.** Toronto: Random House Canada, 2006, 150 pp. Expanded from a lecture, this is a study of the evolution of Churchill's views during his half-century in Parliament.

**83. *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship*.** London: Simon & Schuster; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart; New York: Holt, 2007, 360 pp. Churchill's relationship with Jews from immigrants to Britain to the Zionists and his wartime efforts to save Jews from the Nazis.

**84. *The Story of Israel*.** New York: Ingram; London: Andre Deutsch; Toronto: Indigo Books, 2008, 64 pp. Photos, maps and facsimile documents survey of Israel's development and first sixty years.\*

**85. *The Routledge Atlas of the Second World War*.** New York: Routledge, 2008, 310 pp.; 207 maps in the 2nd ed., 2009. A history through maps, including espionage and deception, resistance, refugees and human costs.

**86. *In Ishmael's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands*.** New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2010, 448 pp. The 1400-year history of coexistence and conflict from Morocco to Afghanistan.

**87. (ed.) *Churchill: The Power of Words—His Remarkable Life Recounted Through His Writings and Speeches*.** London: Transworld; Boston: Da Capo, 2012, 486 pp. Two hundred readings from Churchill's writings and speeches, annotated with context and sources, issued for an exhibit at New York's Morgan Library.

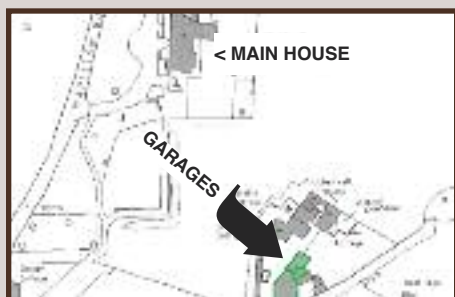
**88. (ed.) *The Churchill Documents, vol. 17, Testing Times, 1942*.** Hillsdale, Mich.: Hillsdale College Press, 2014, 1652 pp. Continuation of the companion volume series after a fourteen-year gap, last to be edited by MG, with the aid of others. Contains the usual thousands of documents by Churchill and others, with the copious footnotes and sourcework. ☺

# Riddles, Mysteries and Enigmas



## GARAGES AND CARS

Q Are there any garages at Chartwell? Could Churchill drive? I have seen only pictures of him being chauffeured. —BARRY MANSFIELD



A The garages were in the small buildings behind the cottages (Orchard, Studio/Stable, Lake) and adjacent to the Studio. The above plan shows their location. Note that they also may have had use as stables at different periods; they were not solely garages between 1924 and 1965.

— KATHERINE BARNETT, ADMINISTRATOR

To answer your second question, Churchill indeed owned several cars. At Chartwell after the war a clapped-out Morris was used to run errands and carry WSC around the property. In 1954, a Land Rover (recently sold at auction) was given him by the company. In the 1960s Lady Churchill's Vanden Plas Princess was seen. On trips to London WSC usually traveled in a government limousine, most often a Humber, with a chauffeur named Bullock. (When he wanted the limo he would say, "I think I'll have the Bullock Cart.")



Churchill himself drove until the 1930s (this photo is 1925, the car a Wolseley). According to an article I

have contemplated but not published, he was a dangerous driver, often going too fast. Impatient in traffic jams, he might drive up on the pavement (sidewalk) to get around the ruck. He was once accosted by a constable who recognized him and let him off with a warning. The joys of fame. —RML

## CHURCHILL'S LONDON

Q When is it possible to visit Chartwell? Besides the obvious Churchill Museum and War Rooms, can you suggest other must-see London places to visit? —FLAVIO SIMOES

A Chartwell, Blenheim, Bletchley and Bladon are essential day trips out of London. Chartwell is two miles south of Westerham off the B3036, southeast of London. Opening times are 11-5 Wednesdays through Sundays from 1 April to 1 November. By rail, the best connection from London is Victoria Station using trains marked "to East Grinstead and calling at Oxted." Though only a mile closer than Sevenoaks, Oxted is less congested, making for a cheaper taxi fare. Talk the cabbie into picking you up for the return to Oxted at a set time.

In London, here are my top ten:

1. The Houses of Parliament: Saturday tours include the Commons Chamber, Churchill Arch and Westminster Hall. Ivor Roberts-Jones's famous statue of Churchill is outside in Parliament Square: <http://bit.ly/1ruI0gi>.
2. The Imperial War Museum: the World War exhibits contain Churchill-related content. Reopened last July with new First World War galleries.
3. Westminster Abbey: laid into the floor near the Great West Doors is a marble stone inscribed "Remember Winston Churchill." Sir Winston, wearing his robes as a Knight of the Garter, stood here during the Coronation in 1953.

4. St. Paul's Cathedral: site of the State Funeral. In the Crypt is the Churchill Memorial Screen. See

cover story, *FH* 146, Spring 2010.

5. The Guildhall: An imposing Nemon statue of WSC dominates the impressive medieval hall.

6. Bond Street: "Allies," an outdoor statue of Churchill and FDR by Lawrence Holfcener (alas, anti-smoking vandals have snapped off Churchill's cigar) is on a park bench.

7. J.J. Fox's, St. James's Street, the oldest cigar shop in the world, once supplied WSC. This atmospheric shop displays Churchilliana focused on their relationship, and sells statues.

8. Churchill Bar, Churchill Hyatt Regency Hotel, contains books, photos, facsimiles of letters, a rather dubious Churchill-inspired cocktail menu, a cigar collection and, on the cigar terrace, a statue by the Bond Street sculptor: <http://bit.ly/1ruIoeG>.

9. Harrow School (suburban London, easily accessible): offers occasional tours: <http://bit.ly/1ruIuTt>.

10. *Havengore*, the launch that carried Churchill up the Thames after his funeral, is not open to the public but may be seen at St. Katharine's Dock next to the Tower of London. See: <http://bit.ly/1ruIzq8>.

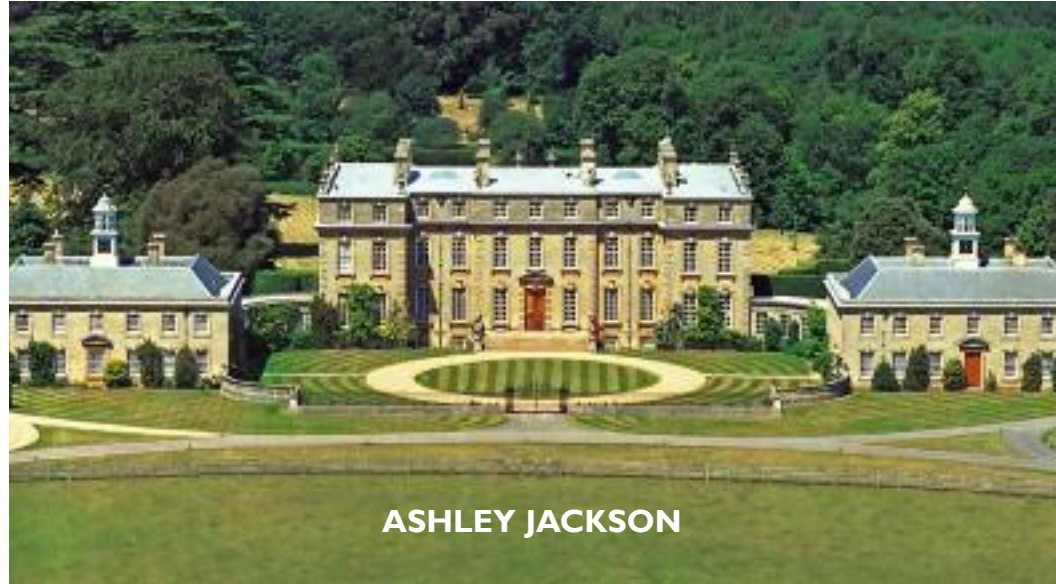
For his various London residences and the ex-London magazine near the Hyde Park Serpentine (now a gallery and restaurant) see Gilbert, "Churchill's London," <http://bit.ly/1j0pIjJ>. A green City of Westminster plaque was recently affixed to 29 St. James's Place (*FH* 162: 6). The only notable omission is the Carlton Club, the Tory party club in St. James's, of which WSC was a long-standing member.

—RAFAŁ HEYDEL-MANKOO, LONDON



# Winston Churchill and Ditchley Park

**A**dvised not to visit Chequers when the prime minister's country residence was visible to German bombers, Winston Churchill asked Conservative MP Ronald Tree: "Would it be possible for you to offer me accommodation at Ditchley for certain weekends—when the moon is high?" Tree readily consented.



**A** beautiful Georgian mansion set in hundreds of acres of Oxfordshire countryside, Ditchley provided a weekend getaway for Churchill and his entourage on numerous occasions from late 1940 through 1942. His first wartime visit, in company with Clementine, Mary and Secretary of State for War Anthony Eden, occurred on the weekend of 9 November 1940. Here an understanding between Churchill and the Trees was cemented.

"My Dear Prime Minister," wrote Tree after Churchill's departure: "As Nancy told you last night, we hope so much that you will come to Ditchley as often as it may suit your convenience.... We have kept it running until such time as needed for some war purpose, so that it is at your entire disposal." Tree encouraged Churchill to "use the house as your own... We can always go away for the weekend if you need complete peace."

As a wartime residence and headquarters for the Prime Minister, Ditchley had to undergo considerable rearrangement and modification, because accommodating Churchill and his entourage was no simple matter. As his bodyguard Walter Thompson wrote of wartime relocations from London to Chequers or Ditchley, it was "like moving Number Ten Downing Street to the country,"

the Prime Minister, his staff and guests arriving "like a mini-invasion." Special telephone lines and a scrambler system were installed in the grounds: "Three of the handsome rooms on the ground floor were set aside as offices for the Prime Minister and equipped with all the devices by which he could keep in touch with every development of the war at every instant day or night." Churchill slept in a four-poster bed in the Yellow Room, overlooking the lake, Clementine in an adjoining bedroom with a shared bathroom connecting the two. Accommodation was also provided for Churchill's administrative staff and secretary, and there were billets for the company of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry detailed to guard the premises during his visits.

## The Ditchley Weekend

Visits to rural Oxfordshire allowed Churchill to remain at the heart of the British and Allied war effort whilst enjoying a change of scene from London. It provided efficient workspace and the sparkle of a country weekend, surrounded by people of his choice and those whose presence was required for the conduct of the war. The place was packed with members of the aristocracy and high-level war leaders. Guests included President Roosevelt's special envoy Harry Hopkins, Averell Harriman, Lord Rothermere, General Sir Alan Brooke and General Henry "Hap" Arnold. There were also visits from Eden, Polish Prime Minister General Vlatislav Sikorski, Czech Premier Edvard Beneš and British

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Ambassador to Washington Lord Lothian. House parties also included congenial people invited by the Trees, such as the actor David Niven.

Ditchley weekends always combined work and leisure, inseparable for Churchill and therefore those around him. On 9 November 1940 he discussed Wavell's plans for an offensive in the Western Desert with Eden, after which the Prime Minister telegraphed direct to the general. He received news of Neville Chamberlain's death whilst discussing the situation, and wrote Chamberlain's widow from Ditchley the following day. On 14 December 1940 he was driven from Chequers to Ditchley where, upon arrival, he studied Lindemann's graphs of British aircraft production. He then held a conference with First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, Chief of Air Staff Sir Charles Portal, Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff General Sir Robert Haining, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff Vice-Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, Deputy Secretary of the War Cabinet General Sir Hastings "Pug" Ismay and, on the 16th, General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

It was while staying at Ditchley on 11 May 1941 that Churchill received a dramatic visit from the Duke of Hamilton, to tell him of the arrival in Scotland of Rudolf Hess, by parachute. Churchill was in mind to see a film starring his favourite comedians. "Hess or no Hess," he declared, "I'm going to watch the Marx Brothers."

Ditchley also played an important role in cementing the Anglo-American alliance. It was on a Ditchley weekend in November 1940 that Churchill wrote a long letter to Roosevelt, "one of the most important I ever wrote," from which sprang what he termed the "glorious conception of Lend-Lease."

The deadly serious business of running a global war effort was paramount even if Churchill was away from Downing Street for the weekend. At Ditchley on 20 April 1941, Churchill learned from Wavell that the British forces in Egypt were dangerously short of tanks, while Enigma decrypts advised him that Rommel was likely to be reinforced by an armoured division: "I was spending the week-end at Ditchley and working in bed, when I received a telegram from General Wavell to the C. I. G. S. which disclosed his plight in all its gravity."

Churchill telephoned Eden from Ditchley, Eden remembered, "and asked me to go to London and 'take command' of the situation in respect of Greece and help Wavell." Given Wavell's urgent need, Churchill also summoned General Ismay: The Chiefs of Staff, he instructed, must meet at once. They duly met that evening and agreed to Churchill's plan for immediate reinforcement, leading to the "Tiger" convoy, which delivered 200 tanks to Alexandria by 12 May.

## Ditchley: The Working Day

Whilst at Ditchley Churchill followed what had become his normal daily pattern: work in bed, meetings, lengthy dinners, late night work and film screenings. On 16 February 1941, Major-General Sir John Kennedy, Director of Military Operations at the War Office, was invited one morning to Churchill's headquarters:

I was summoned to the PM's bedroom at about 10.30. He had warned me at dinner the night before that he would do so, and that he wanted a general review of the situation. He was sitting up in bed in his famous gaily-patterned dressing-gown, with dragons, smoking a long cigar. Heaps of files and papers lay on the bed, and several telephones were on a table beside him. He said he hoped I did not mind his air-raid suit, and offered me a cigar. I told him I had brought no papers—only a map, which I spread on the bed.

Churchill's private secretary John Colville recorded the composition of the Ditchley working day. On Sunday 15 December 1940 he "arose in a leisurely way in my luxury bedroom and settled down to work with the December sun streaming in through the windows." He had a pile of communications to work on: Wavell's comments on past and future operations in North Africa were beginning to arrive; there were moves within the French government; a telegram had arrived from South Africa in which Premier Smuts urged the need to increase the level of propaganda in America and to make a "supreme effort" to bring the United States into the war.

Churchill and his staff worked hard amid the fine surroundings. John Martin, Churchill's Private Secretary, noted on 20 April 1941: "Back in this lovely house, even more beautiful in the spring sunshine. Today I managed to get out for a short walk with Mrs. C, but otherwise seldom got very far from my telephone." Jock Colville recorded the weekend of 11-13 January 1941: "I was very annoyed at being disturbed early by the PM," he wrote on the Saturday morning when President Roosevelt's emissary Harry Hopkins arrived. At dinner that night "his quiet charm and dignity held the table."

## Dinner and into the Night

Busy days gave way to busy evenings, as Ditchley adapted to Churchill's pace of interlacing work and leisure, office time, busy mealtimes, and late night films, conferences and dictation. This was a time that saw the last gasp of the trademark house-party, a social phenomenon that had oiled the works of British government and society for centuries: convivial company, dressing for dinner, fine food, table talk, departure of the ladies while the gents nursed brandy and cigars, strolling in the >>

## DITCHLEY...

grounds, entertainment, politics in the drawing room.

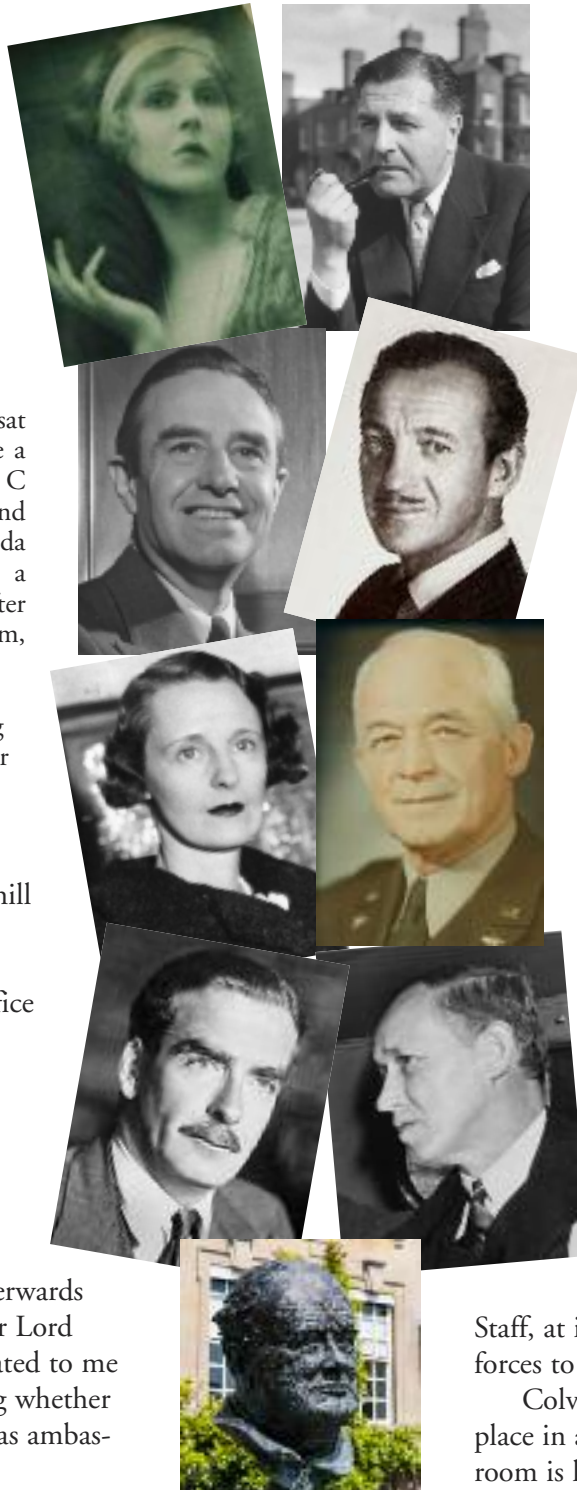
Arriving at Ditchley on the evening of 15 February 1941, Major-General Kennedy found himself propelled straight into the country house experience: "I found Mrs. Tree, Lady Diana Cooper, Miss Mary Churchill, and Mr. Bruce, an American, all having tea together in the drawing-room.... We were to dine at 8.30 and when we had assembled, the PM appeared, looking cheerful and fresh." Diana Duff Cooper sat on the PM's right, Kennedy next to her. Churchill was in good spirits, Kennedy said, his conversation scintillating:

Soon the lights were put out and we sat down to see some films. First came a news-reel, in which we saw C inspecting troops, in a reefer jacket and yachtsman's cap, an Italian propaganda film depicting Mussolini making a speech, and, finally, a thriller. After that, we talked in the drawing-room, until, at last, the PM went off to bed at 1.30am. I had not been to a party on such a splendid scale for a long time. It was delightful, and the war seemed very remote.

Colville recorded a Ditchley evening in December 1940. Churchill spent some time before dinner showing him "the Prof's" albums, "while I sat in my Louis Quinze office and drank an Old Fashioned cocktail." At a large dinner party, "I sat between the Duchess of Marlborough and Ronnie Tree." After dinner they watched Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, not yet released in Britain. The film caused a lot of laughter, though afterwards it was back to business. Ambassador Lord Lothian having died, "the PM dictated to me a short telegram to Roosevelt asking whether Lloyd George would be acceptable as ambassador, and went to bed early."



Above: Ditchley's drawing room hosted the *Good and the Great*. Clockwise from below left, Lady Diana Dooper, Ronald Tree, David Niven, Hap Arnold, Harry Hopkins, Anthony Eden, Freda Dudley Ward and Averell Harriman, among the many who talked politics, love and war. Bottom: Ditchley's bust.



On the following day, Sunday, 15 December 1940, "Eden arrived for the night and made himself extremely affable." They stayed up until two in the morning watching *Gone with the Wind*,

Churchill saying afterwards that he was "pulverised by the strength of their feelings and emotions." After the film, Churchill and Eden talked about North Africa. They headed to bed at three, "but the PM, throwing himself on a chair in his bedroom, collapsed between the chair and the stool, ending in a most absurd position on the floor with his feet in the air. Having no false dignity, he treated it as a complete joke and repeated several times, 'A real Charlie Chaplin!'"

On the weekend of 10 January 1941 the house party included the Trees, Venetia Montagu, Dinah Brand ("with her Australian beau") and the Captain of the Guard. Dinner, wrote Colville, "was an exquisite meal at which I sat next to Mrs. Tree. Afterwards Winston smoked the biggest cigar in history and became very mellow.... Winston retired to bed with a very full box and in an excellent temper while I worked away the time arranging the box in my beautiful work room below."

The "box" Colville referred to was the PM's red despatch box, arranged with documents on every aspect of the war, which Churchill would act on, one by one, returning them for disposition. Once at Ditchley, Churchill "drafted a long and intricate telegram to Wavell for consideration by the Chiefs of Staff, at its heart the perceived need to divert forces to Greece."

Colville wrote: "Dining at Ditchley takes place in a magnificent setting. The dining-room is lit only by candles, in a large

chandelier and on the walls. The table is not over-decorated: four gilt candle sticks with tall yellow tapers and a single gilt cup in the centre. The food is in keeping with the surroundings.”

General H.H. “Hap” Arnold, sent by the American government to assess the air situation, motored to Ditchley with Averell Harriman, who, during the journey, provided a “wonderful background” to prepare him for his talk with the Prime Minister:

Among other things, Harriman told me that Churchill would talk long into the night—but I didn’t expect him to talk as long as he did. After dinner the men adjourned to a small room where we sat around and the talk started. The conversation that night covered a wide field. We talked about the United States; what help might be expected from us if we went into the war; what our first offensive would be; airplanes and their crews from the United States as units; additional airplanes and equipment for the Royal Air Force.

They also spoke of Russia, Churchill offering a description that Arnold was not to forget: “Russia is like an amoral crocodile, lurking in the depths, waiting for whatever prey may come his way.” The talk roamed over the course of the war, Churchill arguing the need for American participation, talking up the mutuality of American and British interests, predicting that few gains could be made in 1941 and that it might not be until 1943 that things started to improve. After some time, Air Marshal Portal arrived and joined them, emphasizing the need for pressure-cabined aircraft, long-range bombers, and hunting the Focke-Wulf 200s by pursuit aircraft when the Germans were convoy-hunting in the Atlantic. The men talked until three, at which point “my mind was full. I was sleepy and ready to go to bed.”

### Harry Hopkins at Ditchley

When Hopkins landed in Britain, Brendan Bracken took him to Downing Street for lunch with Churchill. The Prime Minister showed him a map of the transatlantic convoys and German aircraft interception routes. In the afternoon Hopkins drove to Ditchley, escorted by Bracken and Colville. Bracken told Colville that their guest was “the most important American visitor this country has ever had.” He had come to see what kind of help Britain needed, and could influence Roosevelt “more than any living man.” The stakes, therefore, were high: “That weekend at Ditchley was to be decisive for the future of Anglo-American cooperation.” Fortunately, as Colville and others noted, an almost instant rapport sprang up between Churchill and Hopkins. When the ladies had left the table after dinner that evening, Hopkins “paid a graceful tribute to the PM’s speeches

which had stirred people in America.” Churchill, at his ease, poured forth a “ceaseless flow of eloquence.... Then Mrs. Tree forcibly ejected us from dining room to watch a film of the Mormons called *Brigham Young*.... I sat next to Mrs. Dudley Ward\* and thought I understood why the Prince of Wales felt the way he did. Afterwards some German news films including scenes of the Brenner meeting, which with its salutes and its absurdity was funnier than anything Charlie Chaplin produced in *The Great Dictator*.” The guests retired to bed at two o’clock in the morning. This was to prove a most important evening.

On Sunday, 12 January 1941, dinner was followed by films including *Night Train to Munich*. In the middle of the screening, Colville wrote, “the telephone rang and I was told that HMS *Southampton* had been destroyed by dive-bombers in the Mediterranean.” Hopkins, his biographer recorded, “was amazed at the calmness with which Churchill and his staff took this bad news.” The evening drew on. “From midnight until 2am the PM, smoking a phenomenally large cigar, paced about in front of the fire at the far end of the library and gave, for Hopkins’ benefit, an appreciation of the war up to date. Ronnie Tree, Oliver Lyttelton, Prof., Tommy Thompson and I sat and goggled, while Hopkins occasionally made some short comment.” Churchill’s performance at Ditchley that night shaped Hopkins’ assessment and, subsequently, his report to Roosevelt: “This island needs our help now, Mr. President, with everything we can give them.”

### Ditchley as Sanctuary

Ditchley Park was a welcome haven for the Churchill family, away from the fatigued and battered capital. “We were becoming,” wrote Mary Churchill, “so accustomed to the drabness and ugliness of war—khaki, mountains of sandbags, the blackout, and the dust and desolation of ruined buildings—that we gazed with keener appreciation on elegance and beauty, and glowing, lighted interiors.” Ditchley thus played a critical role. “In retrospect,” wrote John Martin, “the Ditchley weekends stand out as a happy oasis in the gloomiest years of the war.”

Churchill’s connection with the estate has been discreetly remembered on the Ditchley Foundation’s official website, and, in 1994, Warren Christopher and Douglas Hurd unveiled a bust of Sir Winston on the garden terrace that he would have looked out upon from his work room, on those wartime weekends, long ago in Oxfordshire. ☸

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\*Freda Dudley Ward (1893-1974) had been the mistress of Edward Prince of Wales in 1918-23 and remained his close confidante until 1934 and the beginning of his relationship with Wallis Simpson.



# The Eleventh Duke of Marlborough 1926-2014

RICHARD M. LANGWORTH



The Marlboroughs greeting Marcus and Molly Frost, Churchill Tour, 2006. At the right, Blenheim's Paul Duffie.

“You mustn’t address him as ‘Your Grace.’”

It was 2005. Lady Soames was helping me write to her cousin the Duke, asking (again) for the lease (at another friend-of-the-family discount) of the Great Hall at Blenheim Palace for a black tie Churchill tour dinner.

“What should I call him then? I can’t say ‘Sunny,’ as you do!” (The family nickname stemmed from the Duke’s first title, Earl of Sunderland.)

“Of course not. But ‘Your Grace’ is too formal, or for servants. Why not write, ‘My Dear Duke?’”

“Sounds positively medieval,” I said, drawing a snort from Winston Churchill’s daughter. “Well,” she said, “if you want to be *completely* unimaginative you can write ‘Dear Sir.’ But it will sound like a solicitor’s letter.”

Dutifully I wrote “My Dear Duke,” and he quickly replied (Dear Richard...Yours, Sunny). Of course we could have the Great Hall; yes, at lower cost; yes, he and the Duchess would be happy to attend. Just one thing, he added: “This will have to be the last time at that price. I have to answer to my trustees, and they simply don’t understand my making exceptions.”

I remembered that episode when I heard he’d left us, because it illustrates not only what a generous man he was, but how much he cared about Blenheim, so often run down in the past, which waxed glorious thanks to his attention to detail, his business acumen. And to assure continuity, he had organized a new board of trustees, to whom even he paid deference, knowing that they were devoted to its survival as the national monument to John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough.

Make no mistake, it is no easy task. I once asked him why, every time I visited, there was scaffolding up somewhere around the building. “Because,” he said with a

smile, “every time we finish painting the window sashes, it’s time to start all over again.” I had to think he was speaking figuratively, but it did emphasize the work needed to preserve an 18th century palace.

The Marlboroughs were committed at every level. “I think people visualize me lounging on a divan in leopard-skin leotards, with a long cigarette holder,” joked his wife of thirty-six years, the former Countess Rosita Douglas, in the Orangery during a lesser but by no means ungrand Churchill banquet. “She gestured at the ceiling: “Trust me, I’ve been up there on the scaffolding scrubbing the dentils with a toothbrush like everybody else.” Rosita, his wife from 1972 to 2008, was as welcoming as he was.

For our first Great Hall dinner in 1996, warned that the Duke was notoriously hard to converse with, I seated at his right my secret weapon, Mrs. Barbara Langworth, who is capable of engaging with anybody. The two of them chatted gaily throughout the meal. “I thought he was hard to talk to?” I asked her afterward. “How did you do it?” “Cows!” she said. We then lived next to a New Hampshire dairy farm; Barbara merely mentioned cows, and the Duke was off and running on the fine points of bovine husbandry.

Churchillians came to Blenheim not to gape at its wonders but because it was the birthplace and sometime habitation of Winston Churchill. Twice we dined in ultimate splendor in the Great Hall, the Duke and Duchess in the receiving line, putting everyone at ease. Another time it was the Orangery, as always organized by the Duke’s indispensable manager Paul Duffie. Once it was the Spencer-Churchill Conference Room, which the Duke made available for our academic symposium on *Marlborough: His Life and Times*. Yet again it was the Blenheim Muniment Room, off limits except to scholars, where we were shown the Marlborough archives that Churchill had perused while writing the great biography of his ancestor. At every one of those occasions the Duke and Duchess made themselves available, even when pressed by other concerns, to welcome us to their home.

The Long Library at Blenheim is dominated by an 1891 Henry Willis organ, which bears a poignant legend: “In memory of happy days & as a tribute to this glorious home, we leave thy voice to speak within these walls in years to come, when ours are still.”

The 11th Duke of Marlborough went to his rest knowing that his work to preserve and protect a Churchillian monument goes on under his trustees. I am confident that his voice will speak, through their example, in years to come, when ours are still. ☺



# Lady Soames

*The following messages were received too late to be included in the previous special edition in memory of our Patron, but are no less important. —Ed.*

“I have watched with admiration & respect,” wrote Winston Churchill to his youngest daughter for her 23rd birthday, “the career of distinction & duty wh you have made for yourself during the hard years of the war. I look forward to the days that may be left me to see you happy & glorious in peace. You are a gt joy to yr mother & me.”

She was irrepressible—“Oh, good. Here comes the coffee. Now we can light our cigars”—and irresistible. Few felt those qualities more keenly than members of Churchill Societies. In her dignified and devoted way she strove, affectionately but not uncritically, to burnish her parents’ memory. Less fragile than her mother, less volatile than her father, Mary Soames revered and understood them both. Sensing in 1945 their exhaustion, expressed for a while in petty arguments and misunderstandings, she offered comfort to her mother: “It seems to me such a triumph that after so many events—which have all of them left their marks on your own private life and experience you and Papa should have come through still loving each other and still together.”

Mary was much closer to her parents than were any of their other children. For ten years she and her husband Christopher lived at Chartwell Farm, their children forming strong bonds with their grandparents. When it was reported that her father had called her as “a very serviceable animal,” she laughed. “Offended? Of course not. Anyway, it’s true, isn’t it?”

Her humour, good sense and judgment served her country well in public offices from Paris to Zimbabwe. She is affectionately remembered there, and the same qualities of discernment and acumen permeate her splendid *Clementine Churchill*, and her autobiography.

Towards the end of last year, she came to lunch with me at Buck’s. She listened with flattering attention as I described how, a boy of twelve, I had stood amongst the throng outside the Guildhall at Worcester in 1950, when her father received the Freedom of the City. She paid a heartfelt tribute to the services which Bill Deakin had rendered to her father and enquired tenderly after mutual friends, Joe and Myrna Siegenberg, pillars for many years of the Churchill Societies in Canada.

As I handed her into the taxi, I apologised for keeping her so late, for it was by then 3.30 p.m. “Not a bit of it” she replied robustly; “proper Chartwellian hours.”

She set an example to be treasured.

—PROFESSOR DAVID DILKS, LEEDS, YORKSHIRE

I will be forever grateful for Mary’s friendship and encouragement over twenty-five years of visits and correspondence, her influential role in support of my work with the International Churchill Society and my studies of her father’s painting. In 1997, when I completed my master’s thesis and catalogue raisonne of Sir Winston’s paintings she congratulated me on “this long and detailed work.” She supported publication of my thesis as it complemented her own fine book on this important aspect.

Last summer my daughter Carina and I traveled to London and enjoyed afternoon tea with Mary in the garden of her home. I did not know those would be our last moments together. I treasure my memories of her laughter, her smile, her kindness, her grace and her affection. Like the father whose memory she preserved through her books, she leaves behind a legacy of her own that will inspire generations to come.

—MERRY ALBERIGI, NOVATO, CALIF.

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It was the greeting. This is my most vivid memory of Mary Soames. No matter the occasion, be it formal events or gatherings of her family with her beloved father, Mary, her lovely face alight with anticipation, would be there with a greeting of generosity and love. Her presence set the tone whenever she was present. She shone with the pleasure and deep interest of every encounter, big or small. My memories are of her all-embracing generosity, her sense of the fun of life, but also the seriousness on so many occasions. She was a golden and beautiful person.

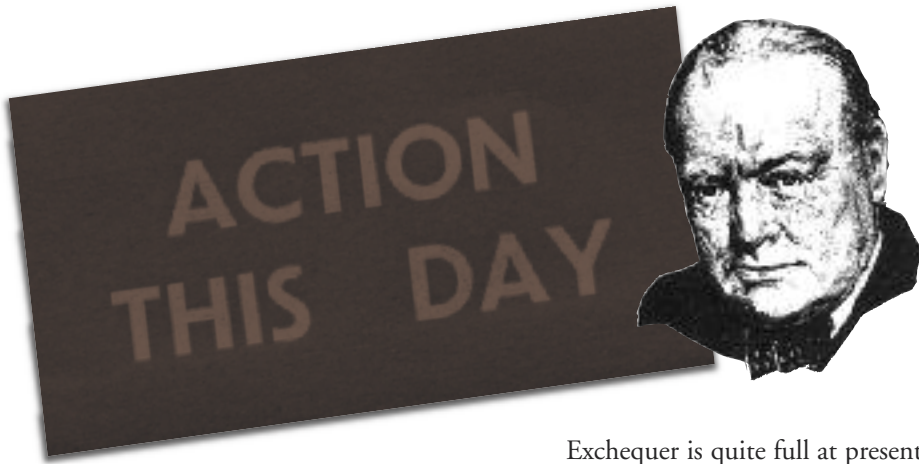
—LADY WILLIAMS OF ELVEL, SECRETARY TO WSC 1949-55

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Before publication of her *Winston Churchill: His Life as a Painter*, Mary Soames asked me to visit. Though I had catalogued his art we had never met. During a long, convivial lunch we discovered a shared passion—though of course from differing perspectives—and a determination to guard his artistic reputation. Thereafter, she would telephone to discuss issues affecting her father’s paintings, often in lengthy and circular debates. After one such, she paused and said, “David, you must always tell me when to stop wittering!” On another occasion, when the authenticity of a painting was in doubt, there came a moment of mutual reflection, and she said, “But it’s up to you. David.” I have never forgotten that expression of confidence in my opinion from Mary Soames which, following her death, lays very heavily upon me.

—DAVID COOMBS, ART HISTORIAN, GODALMING, SURREY 🐾





## 125 YEARS AGO

Autumn 1889 • Age 15

**"I am awfully cross"**

Winston had joined Harrow's Army Class, with a curriculum designed for students who planned to attend a military academy like Sandhurst, rather than a university. Thus he did not take courses in Latin and Greek as did boys headed for Oxford or Cambridge.

"We were considered such dunces that we could only learn English," he later wrote. "Mr. Somervell—a most delightful man to whom my debt is great—was charged with the duty of teaching the stupidest boys the most disregarded thing—namely to write mere English.... Thus I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence—which is a noble thing."

Money and what he perceived as his mother's neglect were once more on his mind. On 5 October, he scolded her: "It is more than a fortnight since I heard from you. In fact, I have had only one letter this term. It is not very kind, my darling Mummy, to forget all about me, not answer any of my epistles. However remiss I may have been in the past in my correspondence, you must never scold me again about it. I have many requests to make. In the first place I beg that you will give me some money."

This refrain brought an in-kind reply from his mother in November: "I suppose when yr exchequer is at a low ebb I shall have the pleasure of hearing from you." Not at all, he replied, "my

Exchequer is quite full at present. I don't want anything for a wonder."

The next day, 8 November, Lord Randolph visited Winston at Harrow for the first time. On the 11th Winston wrote his mother complaining that the Head Master had not taken him off report as promised: "I am awfully cross, because now I am not able to come home for an absit [overnight leave] on Thursday which I very much wanted to do. I hope you don't imagine that I am happy here.... what I should like best would be to leave this hell of a [subsequently crossed out] place but I cannot expect that at present."

## 100 YEARS AGO

Autumn 1914 • Age 40

**"Starching and ironing"**

The early months of the war were not favorable to the Royal Navy. While it had ferried 120,000 British troops across the Channel with no casualties, established a blockade of Germany's North Sea ports and sunk three German cruisers, elsewhere the news was anything but good.

In early August the Navy futilely chased the only German warships in the Mediterranean, *Goeben* and *Breslau* (see "The Terrible 'Ifs' Accumulate," *FH* 163). The same month the cruiser HMS *Amphion* was sunk by a German mine ironically laid by a minesweeper which *Amphion* had sunk a few days earlier. On 22 September, three aging British cruisers were sunk with the loss of over 1450

sailors, by German submarines off the Dutch coast near the Dogger Bank. The next month saw the loss of the modern dreadnought HMS *Audacious*, another mine victim. A few days later at the Battle of Coronel in the Pacific, 1600 sailors and the cruisers *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* were sent to the bottom (see page 56). German ships bombarded Yarmouth, Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby in November and December. Churchill later wrote: "I do not remember any period when the weight of the War seemed to press more heavily on me."

Much of the pressure involved his taking personal control of the defense of Antwerp, Belgium. On 2 October, with German forces threatening to cut Antwerp off from the Allied armies, the Belgians announced that the city would be abandoned. Churchill offered to go there, assess the situation and persuade the Belgians to hold on. Kitchener, at the War Office, accepted the offer, fearing that if Antwerp fell at this point, the Germans might overrun Calais and Dunkirk as well.

Churchill arrived, pacing the Belgian lines shaking his stick, heedless of enemy fire, encouraging the defenders, even offering them the Royal Marine and naval brigades. Prime Minister Asquith wrote to his sister: "Under Winston's stimulus, the Belgians are making a resolute stand. He has done good service by way of starching and ironing the Belges."

Political foes and the press attacked Churchill for his effort, calling it "a costly blunder," "a gross example of mal-organization." Those who knew the facts took another view. Winston, Asquith wrote, was "certainly one of the people one would choose to go tiger-hunting with.... He was quite ready to take over in Belgium, and did so in fact for a couple of days—the army, the navy & the civil government." Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey wrote to Clementine from the Cabinet Room: "I am sitting next to a hero. I can't tell you how much I admire his courage & gallant spirit & genius for war."



The extra week of resistance Churchill had provided allowed the British Army to beat the Germans to the coast and regroup in Flanders.

## 75 YEARS AGO

**Summer 1939 • Age 64**  
**“Winston is back”**

Churchill was surprised to be back at the Admiralty. His bodyguard, Inspector Thompson, recalled waiting with Clementine as WSC saw the Prime Minister at Number Ten. He returned to the car jubilant, telling them, “It’s the Admiralty. That’s a lot better than I thought.” That same day, the passenger ship *Athenia* was sunk by a German submarine and 112 passengers, including twenty-eight Americans, were drowned.

Churchill learned that as a cost-saving measure, no naval vessels had been equipped with radar. He immediately directed that it be fitted to all ships, beginning with “those engaged in the U-boat fighting,” as well as all submarines. The next day, the Navy successfully escorted to France the first troops of the British Expeditionary Force, just as it had done under Churchill a quarter century earlier.

On 11 September, Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Churchill (and not, interestingly, Chamberlain) proposing to begin what would be a famous correspondence: “It is because you and I occupied similar positions in the World War that I want you to know how glad I am that you are back again in the Admiralty....I shall at all times welcome it if you will keep me in touch personally with anything you want me to know about.” FDR added that he was “glad you did the Marlboro [sic] volumes before this thing started—and I much enjoyed reading them.” (Churchill had sent Roosevelt an inscribed copy of Volume I in 1933.)

Churchill was “delighted” with the President’s overture—unexpected because they were not well acquainted. Warren Kimball notes in his volumes of their correspondence: “Except for a brief encounter in London in 1918—one which Roosevelt remembered with

distaste and Churchill completely forgot—there is no record of a prewar meeting.”

Despite his naval preoccupations, Churchill continued work on his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* and delivered a 500,000-word manuscript to Cassell in December. But the book concluded with American Civil War, and the publisher wanted it extended to 1900. In exchange for £7500 [\$200,000 in today’s money], Churchill was given until 30 June 1940 to deliver the additional material. Ultimately, however, the work would slumber until 1956.

On September 17th the aircraft carrier *Courageous* was sunk with a loss of over 500 men. At the end of



**“The First Month of the War”: a broadcast to the nation as First Lord of the Admiralty, 1 October 1939.**

the month, Churchill reported to the Commons on the Royal Navy’s multifaceted approach to the U-boat threat to shipping—convoys, arming merchant ships and increased attacks on U-boats. These, he said, had reduced losses from 65,000 tons in the war’s first week to only 9000 in the fourth.

In the Reichstag on 6 October Hitler made his first proposal for a negotiated peace, based on France and Britain recognizing Germany’s “effective hegemony” in central and eastern Europe. Churchill urged that no negotiations be started until “sovereignty is unmistakably restored” to Poland and Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain agreed and rejected Hitler’s offer in a speech that incorporated much of Churchill’s memorandum.

On 14 October a German U-boat penetrated “impregnable” Scapa Flow and sank the battleship *Royal Oak*, a

shocking surprise. In the South Atlantic, the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* sank ten merchant ships, but her career ended in mid-December when three British cruisers disabled the ship and forced her to seek sanctuary in Montevideo. Despite being hit over fifty times, *Graf Spee* had not been badly damaged and repairs could have made her seaworthy. But British Naval Intelligence broadcast signals on insecure frequencies which persuaded her captain, Hans Langsdorff, that a much greater force than the three cruisers was waiting offshore to sink his ship. The ruse worked and on the 18th, with the approval of Berlin, Langsdorff sent *Graf Spee* out of Montevideo to be scuttled, rather than subject his crew to what he thought would be an ignominious death. Two days later, in full dress uniform, Langsdorff committed suicide in a Buenos Aires hotel room.

## 50 YEARS AGO

**Summer 1964 • Age 89**  
**“The end could not be far off”**

His 90th birthday on November 30th capped a season of “last times” for the increasingly weak Churchill. On July 27th he had visited the House of Commons for the last time. In October, a few days after a visit by Sir Leslie and Lady Rowan, Sir Winston left Chartwell for the last time and returned to his Hyde Park Gate home in London. “It was sad,” Lady Rowan told Martin Gilbert, “to see such a great man become so frail.”

On his birthday the new Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, called to extend his good wishes and those of the Cabinet. There was a family dinner party that evening, Mary Soames wrote, which “had for all of us a poignant quality—he was so fragile now, and often so remote. And though he beamed at us as we all gathered round him, and one felt he was glad to have us there—in our hearts we knew the end could not be far off.” On 10 December, accompanied by his old friend and literary assistant Bill Deakin, Winston Churchill went to the Savoy to attend his last dinner of The Other Club. ☞



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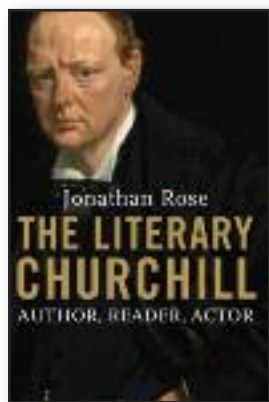




# BOOKS, ARTS & CURIOSITIES

## The Poor Player Struts and Frets...

MANFRED WEIDHORN



Jonathan Rose, *The Literary Churchill: Author, Reader, Actor*. Yale University Press, 520 pages, £17/\$35 (Kindle \$16.99), member price \$28.

Since the Churchill biography market has surely reached the saturation point, the challenge is to find a fresh way to tell an old story. Jonathan Rose adopts a chronological narrative, but, instead of enumerating the many words and deeds of his subject, he resorts to selectivity in order to portray the cultural setting which shaped the man.

Culture and Churchill? Never having attended college, Churchill was in some ways an autodidact. He was certainly no intellectual (if that means reading all of Kierkegaard and cherishing late Beethoven quartets). But he did read widely in popular literature, as well as some classics, and avidly

attended the theater. Much of what he read and heard remained in his highly retentive mind, and the world of books was consequently important to him. (In later years, he wanted all military officers to read Plutarch's *Lives*.)

Churchill not only read books but wrote a goodly number of his own. Some of his contemporaries even suspected that he made only a slight distinction between politics and art because everything he wrote seemed potentially a first draft for his next book. It was Churchill, in fact, who nicely observed in typical governmental language that imports (reading) must balance exports (speaking and writing).

Rose's study is very well written, filled with erudition, documentation and insights. Fascinating especially is the observation that in Hitler, Churchill dealt with a like-minded person who had many aesthetic aspirations and melodramatic inclinations. In order to show their likely influence on Churchill's behavior, Rose has read the now-obscure books and plays that were important a hundred years ago.

In the case of Edward VIII's abdication, for instance, Rose asserts, "Churchill's eccentric trajectory was driven not so much by political considerations as by literature. Only if we look to those sources can we detect the motives behind his actions, which were often self-defeating." Only? Or take the concurrent India crisis: Churchill's failing here was to view "20th century India through the prism

of bad 19th century plays." Those are categorical statements.

Others have made similar observations, but no one till now has done it so systematically and assertively. And Rose provides clear cases of such literary influence. When Churchill privately suggested at various times in the 1940s that the West issue an ultimatum to Russia backed by the threat of the atomic bomb, or make aerial demonstrations over Russian cities, Rose finds the inspiration for, respectively, "this mad daydream" and that "lunatic idea" in a 1932 Harold Nicolson novel which Churchill called "very remarkable."

Churchill's dependence on popular books allegedly came to a climax in his "we shall fight on the beaches" speech, with its defiant back-to-the-wall stance, which is said to echo *Michael Strogoff*, a Jules Verne novel perhaps little read by 1940 and unread now.

Rose's approach leaves open, however, the question of whether, given Churchill's mercurial personality—"He venerated tradition but ridiculed convention," Gen. Ismay said—he would have behaved in a melodramatic fashion even if had *not* read these books. In other words, did the books generate his behavior or just reinforce his proclivities?

At issue is more than just the content of plays and books but the literary manner of visualizing life. Starting with Aristotle, thinkers have emphasized that resort to metaphor is an essential human trait. And one >>

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### THE LITERARY CHURCHILL...

of the most common metaphors is that, as Shakespeare put it, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players." The idea of an individual as an actor in a cosmic stage production is used by Jonathan Rose as a master key for unlocking the mystery of Winston Churchill.

Life is not only a play but a certain type of play popular during the Victorian era in which Churchill was raised: the melodrama. This format includes characters who are either all good or all evil; heroes who are prepared to choose death over dishonor; situations in which good people find themselves with their backs to the wall and are saved at the last minute by forces of good. In this analysis, the British attack on the French fleet in Oran was not only a version of the Blitzkrieg and a signal to Britons and Americans of indomitability, but also a melodramatic action anticipated in Churchill's own early novel, *Savrola*.

Moreover, in the dark days of 1940, Churchill carefully spelled out the recent defeats and the grim prospect facing Britain but concluded with predictions of ultimate victory. That too, Rose finds, is a melodramatic device, which on this occasion happened perfectly to fit the reality. "*The Second World War* is indeed a work of theater," he writes. "...*The Gathering Storm* is straight out blood-and-thunder melodrama."

Rose seems to cite every last reference to theater in general and to melodrama in particular made by Churchill or observers of his career. The reader sometimes fears overkill, but on balance the method is rewarding. Surely recurrent in Churchill's many utterances are words like "world stage," "drama" and "tragedy." Churchill himself provided license for this approach when he described his own life as "an endless moving picture in which one was an actor. On the whole Great Fun!"

Rose chooses not to speculate, however, on what this theater metaphor says about Churchill (and

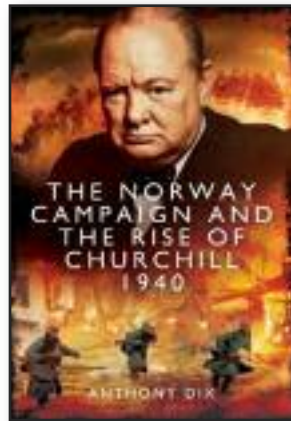
about like-minded people). The philosophical implication of life being like a play is that there is something fictional, artificial, or unreal about it. If taken seriously, the metaphor invokes the detachment and irony that enable one to see oneself as if through someone else's eyes, an attitude which can be heuristic. But awareness of *being* an actor also means that a man of action like Churchill is a divided self—that even as he throws himself into grimly serious challenges, a part

of him is merely playing a role; that, in the infinite scheme of things, whether Britain wins or loses does not matter because life, being theatrical and fictional, "is a tale told by an idiot...signifying nothing"; that "our actors," along with the huge play they inhabit, "are melted into air"; that, in the words of another perennial metaphor, "Life is a dream."

Or is the actor/theater metaphor merely a device of rhetoric and nothing more? ☺

## More Norway than Churchill

ROBERT COURTS



*The Norway Campaign and the Rise of Churchill 1940*, by Anthony Dix. Pen & Sword Books, 272 pages, £20.11, Amazon \$22.48.

When a book with a title such as this lands upon a *FH* reviewer's desk, one instinctively steels oneself for "one of those." So it was with an odd brew of disappointment, relief and bemusement to find that the focus is not Churchill; for long stretches he barely makes an appearance.

This book is a labour of love for the author, who has spent ten years writing it, and whose father served in Norway. He meticulously researched

the military aspects, and we are given a unit-eye view of the campaign. We are taken through it with the words of individual soldiers, learning the actions of commanders, the fates of ships and military units from each side. It is a diligent multi-regimental history.

What this book is not, however, is an analysis of Churchill's rise to power and the part the ill-starred Norway campaign played in it. It is an assiduous military history, with an attempt to graft on some Churchillian commentary to reach a wider audience. There are vast gaps when Churchill is absent, almost entirely in the middle. A five-page chapter on the Norway debate—which precipitated Churchill's rise to the premiership—has only two pages on the debate itself. There is little discussion of what blame, if any, Churchill or the Admiralty should bear for the failure of the campaign.

The reason for this is that when it comes to Churchill, the author seems insecure: "when one reads of the interminable Cabinet discussions that took place during the first winter of the war...one gets the impression that Churchill did more than his fair share of the talking." What did he say, then?

Some obvious errors stand out: Churchill's first stint as First Lord was 1911-15, not from 1913 (90); the "Other Club" was not the "Other Luncheon Club" (7) and Violet

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Mr. Courts is a *Finest Hour* contributor whose last article was "Bladon Today" in issue 161, page 57.

Asquith was not a frequent participant. Harold Nicolson wasn't a "Tory and former appeaser" (151) but a National Labour sometime supporter of Eden and Churchill supporter. Churchill is described as outshining all others (except Hitler) in interfering in the conduct of the campaign (211), which may not be so, but no evidence or reasoned argument is offered, just assertion. Most ministers spent weekends in the country, Dix sniffs, but "Winston rarely left his flat at the Admiralty." Churchill led from the front with a titanic work ethic; to criticise him for remaining at his post rather than going to the country, is bizarre—did the Nazis recognise the need for a weekend off? The author cites Churchill's interference by can-

celling an attack on Bergen, but adds that the decision was made in conjunction with the First Sea Lord and was "probably wise." It seems Dix is comfortable with the military but not the Churchillian aspect of his story.

The author's incomplete grasp of the period is evident when he "solves" the long mystery of Hitler's "Panzer Halt" order (156-57), and simplistically describes Holland as being "hand in glove" with Germany in World War I (155). Dix is greatly exercised by British codewords (81ff), not realising that they were simply taken from a random file as required to describe a putative plan, better than the German (or modern American) codewords that describe the operation itself.

The grammar and punctuation are

patchy throughout, with the occasional unprofessional phrase ("0200, if you please") or injudicious comment. For example, whilst the reason for John Profumo's later fall from grace is well-known, to suggest that he visited a brothel after the Norway debate, managing "to vote against the government and take his pleasure" at the same time (151) is, to my knowledge, without foundation.

This book reminds me of Attlee's crack that Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* should have been entitled *Things in History That Interested Me*. The dust jacket photo and the subtitle disguise its actual content, the Churchill passages read like afterthoughts, and this book is the worse for that. ☹

## Is There Anything Here?

CHRISTOPHER H. STERLING



*Hess, Hitler & Churchill: The Real Turning Point of the Second World War—A Secret History*, by Peter Padfield. Icon Books, 428 pp., \$21.46, paperback \$9.50 (Kindle \$9.99).

Neither a lightweight nor a conspiracy theorist, the late Peter Padfield was a longtime British writer of naval and military history with a string of respected works. Yet his final subject—Rudolf Hess's flight to Scotland and what the British knew or did about it—

has been raked over countless times before (including in an earlier Padfield biography). Why another telling, and with such a portentous title?

It was a long story—nearly a half century from Hess's flight to his death in Spandau prison in Berlin in 1987, the last of the former Nazi leadership still incarcerated. A generation has passed, removing from the scene the last contemporary witnesses, leaving us with a sometimes confusing paper trail.

The Hess story's appeal is its lingering mystery. Alleged documents (like the peace plan he "may" have brought with him) have disappeared, or at least have never been released from British secret archives. Padfield cites evidence suggesting that such documents were pruned from the public record. Theories range from "Hitler sent him" to "he was tricked by British Intelligence." Some even suggest the British Royal Family was involved. We are told sometimes that the "real" story behind the Hess mission—to end the war and forestall the Cold War—

is too "hot" to reveal even now. But as Churchill said, why would anyone in 1941 have trusted a Hitler offer?

Fifty-five supposedly key characters in Britain and Germany appear before we reach the main narrative. So many players, many tangential, don't make the complex story easier to follow.

Was Hess's flight a climacteric, a lost opportunity? Padfield offers theories and suppositions—Hitler knew; German assassins hoped to silence Hess—what-ifs (were the British expecting him?) and might-have-beens (if only they'd taken him seriously). But there is nothing really new, and no evidence that this was a "real turning point" of the war. It's a disappointing volume, often hard to follow, another book using Churchill's name in which he plays a limited part.

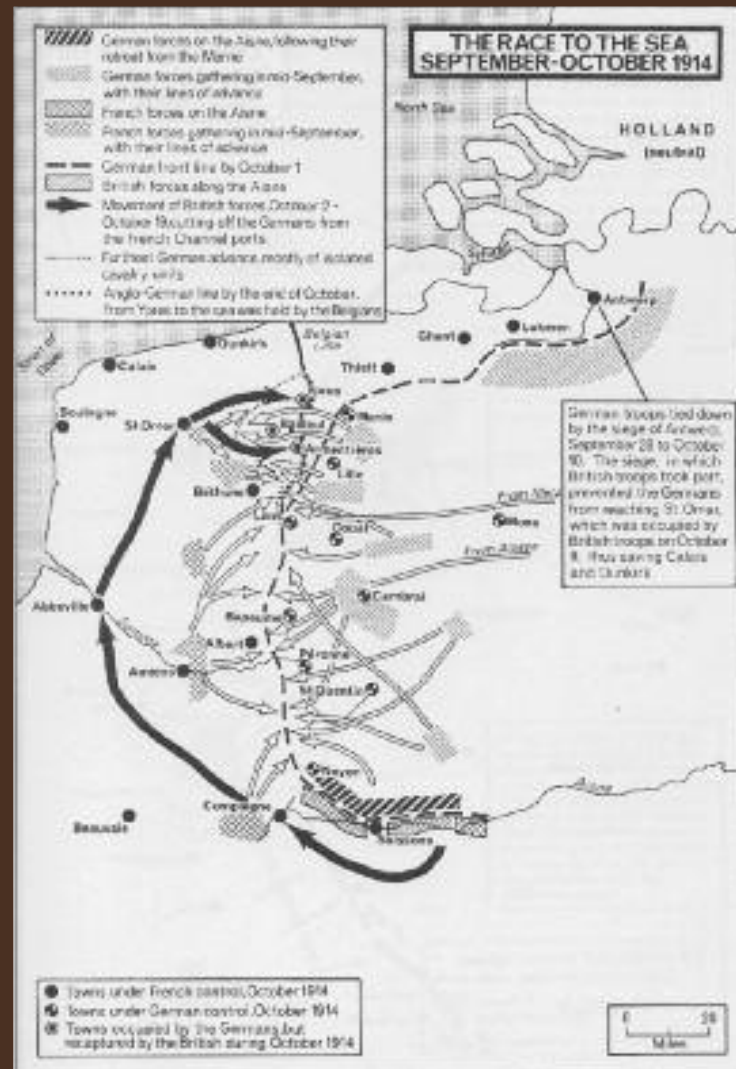
Still unchallenged is the mainstream conclusion that Hess was a muddled, idealistic Nazi who slipped in and out of reality as it suited him, hoping perhaps to ease Germany's pending invasion of Russia or to revive his faded place in Hitler's court. In the end he produced only momentary excitement. We already know the basic story—and have for years. ☹

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# The Making of a Defence Minister

There has never been a British wartime prime minister who possessed such operational and ministerial experience, nor so much evidence of sustained, applied strategic thinking and energy in looking for tactical, often technical, solutions. Churchill never boasted of his superior military appreciation. But when the time came, in 1940, to pick his generals and question the military advice they tendered, the experience of his 1911 memorandum must have been a factor.

MAP REPRINTED BY KIND PERMISSION OF MARTIN GILBERT FROM HIS *ATLAS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR* (1971, 2008),



In his 2009 review of Carlo D'Este's *Warlord: A Life of Churchill at War* in the *London Review of Books*,

Professor Bernard Porter suggested that the author had stepped beyond his intellectual comfort zone: "D'Este's is a very top-down history, as one might expect from one lieutenant-colonel writing about another."

D'Este can defend himself, perhaps by citing the author of *Stalingrad* and *D-Day*, Antony Beevor (2nd Lieutenant, retired), who by Bernard Porter's reckoning would not be competent to write on military affairs above platoon level—a dangerous principle, for it would at a stroke disbar most military historians, the great majority of whom have never held a rifle in their hands.

But the inference that Churchill's military qualifications, and consequently his outlook, were those of a "mere" lieutenant-colonel needs challenging. Indeed, he showed military judgement and strategic grasp beyond his

## ALLAN MALLINSON

rank (major in the yeomanry—the reserve) on 5 August 1914, the day after the expiry of Britain's ultimatum

to Germany over the violation of Belgian neutrality, when at the war council he opposed the General Staff's plans to despatch a British Expeditionary Force to fight alongside the French on the Belgian border. Instead, Churchill wanted the BEF to concentrate well to the rear as a "strategic reserve," preserving independence of action.

After much discussion a compromise was reached: the BEF would go instead to Amiens—not far enough back to be a true reserve, but not so far forward as to be drawn into the uncertain fight in Belgium. Within days, however, the Director of Military Operations and chief architect of War Office plans, Major-General Henry Wilson, persuaded the newly appointed war minister, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, to revert to the original concentration area close to the border at Maubeuge. The decision would have calamitous and far-reaching results for the British army and the whole course of the war.



Churchill's objections were not made on impulse. Three years before, on 23 August 1911, during one of the periodic crises in far-away places which seemed to threaten the peace of Europe (Agadir, Morocco), the Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith, called a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence and asked the service chiefs to present their ideas for assistance to France in the event of war. He also invited Churchill, the Home Secretary, who although having limited official interest in the subject was the only member of the cabinet with military experience, and had several times attended the German army manoeuvres.

Prior to the meeting Churchill sent Asquith a memorandum, "Military Aspects of the Continental Problem,"<sup>1</sup> which came to a different conclusion from that of the General Staff. At the meeting, Henry Wilson gave an appreciation of the situation as seen from Paris, on which the War Office based its planning. The German army fully mobilized, he said, would field 110 divisions, each 15,000 to 20,000 strong. The figure was sobering, since the British contribution could at best be six divisions.

Knowing they would be fighting a war on two fronts because of the Franco-Russian alliance, Wilson explained, the Germans would mount a holding operation in East Prussia with twenty-two divisions, while delivering a crushing blow to France. Then the victorious divisions would be sent east by rail to defeat the slower-mobilizing Russian bear—the celebrated Schlieffen Plan.

French intelligence believed that the German main effort would be on the Franco-German border, in Alsace-Lorraine, but that in order to envelop the strong frontier defences the Germans would disregard Belgian neutrality. Britain had no formal treaty obligations with the French, but Wilson argued that the BEF might just tip the balance if it came to war.

At the meeting, Churchill pressed Wilson on his assessment of German capability and intentions: What would be the effect on the French army, and the BEF, of far greater German strength west of the Meuse? His own memorandum concluded: "France will not be able to end the war successfully by any action on the frontiers. She will not be strong enough to invade Germany. Her only chance is to conquer Germany *in France*." (Emphasis added.) Churchill calculated that by the fortieth day of mobilisation, "Germany should be extended at full strain both internally and on her war fronts, and this strain will become daily more severe and ultimately overwhelming, unless it is relieved by decisive victories in France. If the French army has not been squandered by precipitate or desperate action, the balance of forces should be favourable after the fortieth day [and improving]....Opportunities for the decisive trial of strength might then occur."

For this reason, therefore, Churchill proposed that the

BEF should concentrate not at Maubeuge but at Tours, midway between Paris and St. Nazaire, and that during those forty days the Royal Navy should bring back troops from their imperial bases, replacing them with colonial troops or territorials, and together with yeomanry and Indian troops boost the BEF to some 300,000, more than double that which could be sent at once to Maubeuge.

But Wilson was in no mood to give the 36-year-old yeomanry major's ideas anything but a polite brush-off, even though Churchill had seen a good deal more of war than he had: "Winston had put in a ridiculous and fantastic paper on a war on the French and German frontier, which I was able to demolish," he wrote in his diary. The Germans would not have enough divisions to develop a strong offensive west of the Meuse, he insisted, because of the number they would have to keep in East Prussia, and for their major offensive in Alsace-Lorraine.

Wilson's argument for the forward deployment of the BEF would be accepted as the basis of planning. Yet Churchill's memorandum was in fact a paper of extraordinary prescience, as we shall see.

In 1914 the BEF, comprising just four divisions plus the Cavalry Division (two divisions being held back in Britain because of a perceived threat of invasion), would be almost overwhelmed in its first encounter, in hastily prepared positions and against far superior numbers, at Mons on 23 August. Exactly as Churchill had predicted, the Germans crossed the Meuse in strength (their main offensive was in fact through Belgium, not Alsace-Lorraine). The four divisions were joined by a fifth a few days later when the BEF was in retreat, to be caught on the hop as it detrained at Le Cateau. Four more divisions arrived in turn during the next two months and joined the fight piecemeal, casualties mounting accordingly.

By the end of November the BEF was a shadow of its original self. Throughout 1915 newly raised units in Kitchener's so-called "new armies" would be trickled-in to the Western Front before they were ready, too few to make a decisive difference. Consequently they suffered heavy casualties, which had to be replaced by troops even less ready. Only after 1917, with conscription regulating the flow of recruits, and with officers and NCOs who had gained sufficient experience to train and lead them, did the British army get into balance.

Churchill, meanwhile, was throwing himself into the war as First Lord of the Admiralty, but in October 1914 he was nearly vested as a general. The German onslaught in France had been checked at the battle of the Marne in early September, and the first battle of Ypres was developing (a battle to find the flank, commonly known as "the race for the sea"). The situation of the Belgian army, most of which had withdrawn into the fortified city >>

### **THE MAKING OF A DEFENCE MINISTER...**

of Antwerp, was perilous. In the early hours of 3 October, in the prime minister's absence in Wales, the foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey, and Kitchener, asked Churchill to go to Antwerp to assess the Belgians' holding power. "I don't know how fluent he [Churchill] is in French," wrote Asquith to his *confidante* Venetia Stanley when he got back to London, "but if he was able to do himself justice in a foreign tongue, the Belgians will be listening to a discourse the like of which they have never heard before. I cannot but think that he will stiffen them up to the sticking point."<sup>2</sup>

Churchill did indeed stiffen them up. The Belgians agreed to continue the defence of Antwerp if their forces' withdrawal routes into the fortress could be protected by Allied troops. Churchill promised British reinforcements and successfully obtained two naval brigades formed from surplus sailors for home defence, and the Royal Marine Brigade from Dunkirk. In requesting them he also said: "If it is thought by HM government that I can be of service here, I am willing to resign my office and undertake command of relieving and defensive forces assigned to Antwerp in conjunction with Belgian army, provided that I am given necessary military rank and authority and full powers of a commander of a detached force in the field...."

This was received in Cabinet with much laughter.

Kitchener didn't laugh. Indeed he said he was willing to give Churchill the rank of lieutenant-general. But common-sense prevailed: others could go to Antwerp, few could go to the Admiralty. A general (Rawlinson) was despatched to take command, but he did not arrive for forty-eight hours; meanwhile Churchill simply conducted himself as if he were indeed a lieutenant-general.

He famously did don uniform eighteen months later after his resignation from the government in the wake of Gallipoli, but as lieutenant-colonel to command the 6th battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers. In fact this was meant to be preparation for command of a brigade, and he would be formally recommended for brigade command at the end of his short time with the Fusiliers. But he returned instead to Parliament.

What, then, of his 1911 (and again in August 1914) proposal to keep the BEF out of the fight on the frontiers, to build up its strength to 300,000, and then to make it available for "decisive action" after the fortieth day of German mobilization? In light of actual events, would it have been a better strategy? What, for example,

of the gap that would have been left in the French line of battle? Did the BEF really tip the balance?

If the French had not been told that the BEF would join the line immediately, they would have made alternative arrangements—the normal work of a general staff (there would undoubtedly have been contingency plans in any case). With ninety divisions they had the flexibility. Indeed, even if the decision to hold back the BEF had been taken on August 5th, the French had nine divisions that could have replaced them—those earmarked for the army of observation on the Italian border. These could have been put at notice to move as soon as the Italians declared neutrality on 3 August.

The move could certainly have begun as soon as French intelligence confirmed that the Italian army was not moving to a war footing (Italy's concern was in fact to reinforce the Austrian border). If such a redeployment sounds too much like a paper exercise, in the event this is what did indeed happen: the French Army of the Alps was stood down on 17 August (at which time much of the BEF was still encamped near their ports of landing), but its divisions were then spread piecemeal across the entire French line.

The French enjoyed one great advantage, though they failed to make full use of it: the

*Westaufmarsch* (the German campaign in the west) unfolded at walking pace, on exterior lines, observable by air, in close to real time, while the strategic movement of French troops, on interior lines, could be conducted at the speed of a railway engine. Never before or since has a commander-in-chief had so much time in which to make his critical decisions.

Had these dispositions been made, the situation at the end of September would have been the same as actually transpired—French forces mounting a successful counter-attack on the Marne, then stalling on the Aisne. Having the BEF in the line may well have boosted French morale, but it is unreasonable to suggest that the French would not have been able to manage things on their own.

Joffre had brilliantly improvised, and delivered a blow on the Marne that sent the flower of Brandenburg reeling, but it was not enough. He had executed the first two of (in modern parlance) the four requirements of victory—"find" and "fix." He had found the weak point, the flank of the great hook through Belgium by the armies of Generals Kluck and Bülow, and he had fixed them, temporarily, on the Aisne. What he then needed was to "strike" and then "exploit" (cf Churchill's "Her



**"If he [Churchill] was able to do himself justice in a foreign tongue, the Belgians will be listening to a discourse the like of which they have never heard before."**

**—H.H. Asquith to Venetia Stanley, 1914**

only chance is to conquer Germany in France”). But Joffre had not been able to create a further striking force. What he needed was what the BEF would have had to offer, had it been allowed to build its strength at Tours—a fresh, strong, virtually all-regular army of 300,000.

The need was not simply to attack on the Aisne—to apply more brute force where brute force had already exhausted itself. What was needed now was overwhelming force applied as a lever rather than a sledgehammer. The German flank was not just open in a localized way after the retreat to the Aisne: The entire *Schwenkungsflügel*—the “pivot” or “swing” wing—of the vaunted Schlieffen Plan was extended in an east–west line through mid-Champagne and southern Picardy, and it was beginning to bow back on the right. With each successive encounter on the extremity of that flank (“the race for the sea”), even as the Germans brought up new troops, their line backed further north rather than projecting further west.

In the third week of September, therefore, with the Belgians still holding out at Antwerp, a 300,000-strong BEF, fully equipped, its reservists fighting fit, could have launched a counter-stroke from Abbeville east between Arras and Albert (or even more boldly, further north between Arras and Lille), on a 30-mile front with strong reserves and artillery. It could have clouted rather than dribbled. Simultaneously the French could have applied pressure along the Aisne—indeed, across the whole front (with the Belgians making another sortie from Antwerp), to fix the Germans in place. So fixed, unable further to reinforce the right, all the Germans in Western France could have done to avoid being enveloped was turn 90 degrees to face west. They would have had to pivot somewhere that did not form too sharp an angle and therefore a dangerous salient—Rheims, or even Verdun. In the best case, with the Germans unable to find a natural line to halt the BEF, and a renewed offensive by the French and Belgians, the German First, Second and Fourth Armies would have had to pull back to the Meuse.

Even if at that point the Germans managed to check further allied progress east, the situation on the Western Front would have changed dramatically. The Allies could then have used the growing Russian strength on the Eastern Front to advantage, and the Germans would have been truly caught between two giant hammers.

With so catastrophic an end to Schlieffen, the possibilities are intriguing. The Allies would have been in a vastly superior strategic position to that in which they actually found themselves in 1915. The possession of most of Belgium would have been significant in terms of the extra men and materiel available. The failure of Germany to achieve victory would not have been lost on the neutrals.

It was almost certainly impossible that Britain could have avoided war with Turkey, but if it were possible in May 1915 to persuade Italy to enter the war on the Allies’ side, it should also have been possible to persuade the Dutch and the Danes, especially once the Germans had been removed from the southern Dutch border.

At the very least a BEF counterstroke, forcing the Germans back into Belgium, perhaps as far as the Meuse, would have given the allies far better ground on which to fight—and with a strong Belgian army, a much shorter front, and therefore more reserves. At the very best, an offensive by the British, French and Belgian armies on the Meuse in spring 1915, with Dutch–Danish action directed against the Kiel Canal and the submarine base at Heligoland, might have ended the war that summer.

Churchill never boasted of his superior military appreciation after the war. In part, recrimination was not in his nature. Also, rightly or wrongly, by then he bore the failure of the Dardanelles. But when the time came, in 1940, to pick his generals and to question the military advice they tendered, the experience of his 1911 memorandum must have been a factor in his assertiveness.

The knowledge that Kitchener would have made him a lieutenant-general for Antwerp, in command of “a detached force in the field,” must likewise have reinforced his sense of moral authority. At the very least, Churchill could think of himself as a brigadier-general, for that was the rank in which he would have served had he not returned to Parliament in 1916.

None of the generals with whom he had to deal as prime minister—Wavell, Ironside, Dill, Gort, Alanbrooke, Auchinleck, Alexander, Montgomery—finished the war in 1918 in any higher rank than brigadier-general. And in the interwar years, none of these acquired any more experience of war fitting them better for strategic thinking than Churchill. Which is why writing him off as a mere lieutenant-colonel, as Professor Bernard Porter does in his review of D’Este, is facile.

There has never been a British prime minister in time of war who possessed such operational and ministerial experience, nor one who furnished so much evidence of sustained, applied strategic thinking—as well as such remarkable energy in looking for tactical, often technical, solutions. The 1911 memorandum shows just how profound was Churchill’s grasp of war in Europe on a Napoleonic scale, at a time when the British military establishment was still thinking in small-war terms. ☞

## Endnotes

1. Public Record Office: CAB 38/19/50.
2. Michael & Eleanor Brock, eds., *H.H. Asquith: Letters to Venetia Stanley* (Oxford University Press, 1982).



# Defeat and Victory: Churchill, Coronel, and the Falkland Islands

**B**adly routed at Coronel, Churchill and Fisher sent timely reinforcements to the southern oceans, which arrived in time to end Germany's hopes for surface mastery on the high seas. That victory was the product of Churchill's and Fisher's revolutionary changes in the Royal Navy.



The sinking of SMS Scharnhorst (probably exaggerating the proximity of HMS Carnarvon), Falkland Islands, 1914. Painting by William Lionel Wyllie (1851-1931). Wikimedia Commons.

**T**here was, in the early months of the Great War, no cold douche of disillusion after the blood-letting. That would come later, in the throes of stalemated battlefields and unimagined slaughter in places like Passchendaele and the Somme. Initially, it was what everyone had been led to expect: a trial of patriotism, manliness, and endurance—for which the nations of Europe had been preparing quite awhile.<sup>1</sup>

On 23 August 1911, in the midst of the Agadir Crisis which threatened war between France and Germany,<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister H.H. Asquith convened a secret meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence. His aim was to clarify British strategy in the event of hostilities.<sup>3</sup> As

## COL. JOHN C. MCKAY

Churchill subsequently noted, “It was very soon apparent that a profound difference existed between the War Office and the Admiralty view.”<sup>4</sup> This disagreement, Churchill continued, “in such critical times upon fundamental issues was the immediate cause of my going to the Admiralty.”<sup>5</sup> Churchill became First Lord on 25 October 1911.

The two most pressing concerns confronting Churchill were the creation of a War Staff and planning to transport a British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to France in the event of hostilities. Royal Navy officers were not trained for general staff work and the service suffered from this deficiency. As Churchill astutely

Col. McKay, USMC (Ret.), was commanding officer, Joint Task Force-160, U.S. Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in 1995-96. His article on Churchill's leadership, based on a lecture to the Brigade of Midshipmen, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, appeared in *FH* 158.

observed, “‘The Silent Service’ was not mute because it was absorbed in thought and study, but because it was weighed down by its daily routine and by its ever-complicating and diversifying technique. We had competent administrators, brilliant experts of every description, unequalled navigators, good disciplinarians, fine sea-officers, brave and devoted hearts: but at the outset of the conflict we had more captains of ships than captains of war.”<sup>6</sup> Institutional change, especially in something so



v Vice Admiral Maximilian Reichsgraf von Spee (1861-1914) went down with his flagship *SMS Scharnhorst* in the Battle of the Falklands.



^ Rear Admiral Sir Christopher "Kit" George Francis Maurice Cradock KCVO CB (1862-1914), sunk aboard his flagship, *HMS Good Hope*, off Coronel.

revolutionary as the creation of a planning staff where one had never existed, can be laborious and time consuming, but it was better that the job be done in peace. Attempted during wartime, it can be dangerous and conceivably catastrophic.

The naval progress demonstrated in the Battle of the Falkland Islands was partly due to Churchill's bringing back as First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John "Jacky" Fisher, a great administrator and innovator. As First Sea Lord in 1904-10, Fisher shook the Royal Navy out of professional complacency if not lethargy. In 1906 he launched *HMS Dreadnought*, progenitor of a revolutionary class of fast, powerful battleships. "He shook them and beat them and cajoled them out of a slumber into intense activity," noted Churchill, but ultimately Fisher had to go: "... the Navy was not a pleasant place while this was going on. The 'Band of Brothers' tradition which Nelson handed down, was for a time, but only for a time, dis-

carded; and, behind the open hostility of chieftains flourished the venomous intrigues of their followers."<sup>7</sup>

Skillful and exuberant, Churchill continued and improved upon Fisher's reforms while confronting new challenges. Obsolescence quickened as technological innovation advanced, increasing the already severe burden of the naval budget. A basic but expensive change was from coal to oil. Joseph Chamberlain's 1897 remark about a "weary Titan, staggering under the too-vast orb of his fate,"<sup>8</sup> was still appropriate in 1914. Yet, Churchill argued, it was vital to face facts: Britain's maritime supremacy was challenged not only by the German High Seas Fleet but by the advent of torpedoes, mines, submarines, aircraft, wireless and the nascent concept of the aircraft carrier.<sup>9</sup>

By 1914, all major surface combatants of both protagonists were equipped with wireless.<sup>10</sup> Nor had the torpedo and mine damage inflicted by both sides in the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War gone unnoticed.<sup>11</sup>

Within weeks of war breaking out, on 22 September 1914, the Kriegsmarine's U-9 torpedoed the cruisers *HMS Aboukir*, *Cressey*, and *Hogue* within the space of an hour with a loss of 1459 hands. On the same day, Britain conducted its first air raid on Germany, attacking the Zeppelin sheds at Cologne and Düsseldorf.<sup>12</sup>

The outbreak of hostilities found the British Grand Fleet concentrated at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys, and the German High Seas Fleet based in the estuaries of the Weser and Elbe Rivers and in Jade Bay. The failure to corral the battlecruisers *SMS Goeben* and *Breslau*<sup>13</sup> before they reached Turkey in August 1914 (see "The Terrible 'Ifs' Accumulate," *FH* 163: 22) can be attributed in no small part to an inexperienced War Staff at the Admiralty; by contrast, the successful transport of the BEF's five divisions from Southampton to La Havre reflected the benefits of coordinated staff planning.

The British drew first blood in a surface action on August 28, 1914, at Heligoland Bight. Bungling of the planning by the Admiralty was offset by chance and circumstances, resulting in the sinking of three German light cruisers and a destroyer with minimal British casualties and minor shipboard damage.

## The Battle of Coronel

On 27 October 1914, Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock's South American Station contingent, having sailed down the Atlantic, cleared Tierra del Fuego, steering north along Chile's rugged coast, knowing it was in proximity of the determined and superior German East Asiatic Cruiser Squadron under Vice-Admiral Count Maximilian von Spee. Moreover, Cradock was saddled with crews largely of recently called-up reservists who >>

## Defeat and Victory...

had worked together for only a few weeks, while the German crews, quite proficient in gunnery, had been working together for three years.<sup>14</sup>

On the 26th Cradock had notified the Admiralty that he had left the aging and slow battleship HMS *Canopus* behind at Port Stanley in the Falklands, with orders to follow with the colliers, since she could steam at only 12 knots, eight less than his newer ships. This was against instructions, but the Admiralty did not question Cradock's decision. A message from Churchill on October 29th did imply that Cradock should not engage the Germans without *Canopus*.

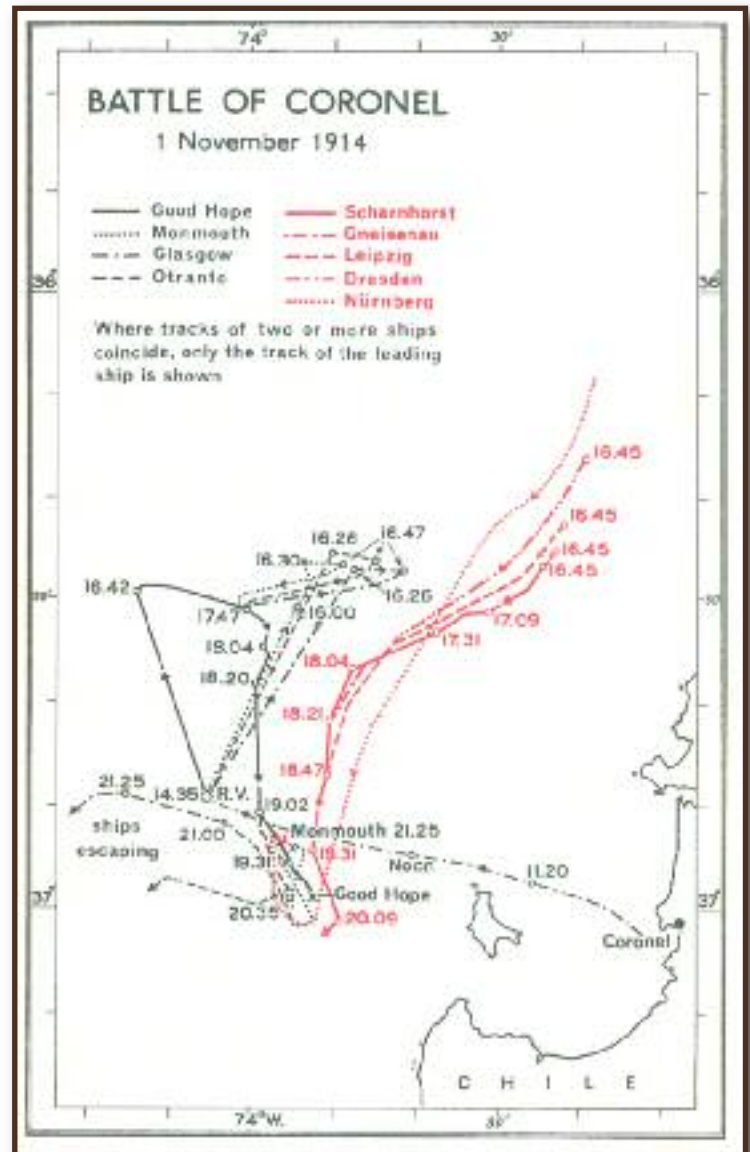
Churchill wrote in *The World Crisis* that this message did not reach Cradock,<sup>15</sup> though his claim has been questioned by at least one historian.<sup>16</sup> In defense of Churchill, he does state in *The World Crisis*: "We were then in the throes of a change in the office of First Sea Lord, and I was gravely preoccupied with the circumstances and oppositions attending the appointment of Lord Fisher."<sup>17</sup> At any rate, by the first day of November the Admiralty "was already talking into the void."<sup>18</sup>

In the waning afternoon hours of 1 November 1914, the Royal Navy suffered its first major defeat in a hundred years.<sup>19</sup> In clear, bright, sunny though frightfully cold weather with Force 6 winds,<sup>20</sup> Cradock established visual range with elements of von Spee's squadron off Coronel, Chile. With the British ships backdropped by a setting sun, von Spee kept the range open and held his fire. It was only at 7pm, when the British vessels were silhouetted in the afterglow of sunset, that the Germans closed and opened fire at a range of 11,370 yards.<sup>21</sup> By 9pm they had sunk Cradock's flagship, HMS *Good Hope*, along with another armored cruiser, HMS *Monmouth*. Cradock went down with his ship, while two surviving ships, the light cruiser HMS *Glasgow* and armed merchant cruiser HMS *Otranto*, escaped the one-sided battle. The British loss of life was 1600 sailors; the Germans suffered three wounded.<sup>22</sup>

## The Battle of the Falklands

In strategic or even in operational terms, the battle of Coronel was without significance. Defeat of the British force, a tactical victory for the Germans, was rendered meaningless by their own near-annihilation off the Falkland Islands five weeks later. The Falklands settled the naval history of the opening phases of the Great War, eliminating the last major German naval surface force outside the North Sea.

Unbeknownst to the wary von Spee,<sup>23</sup> three days after the Coronel disaster, Admiral Fisher, freshly reinstated as



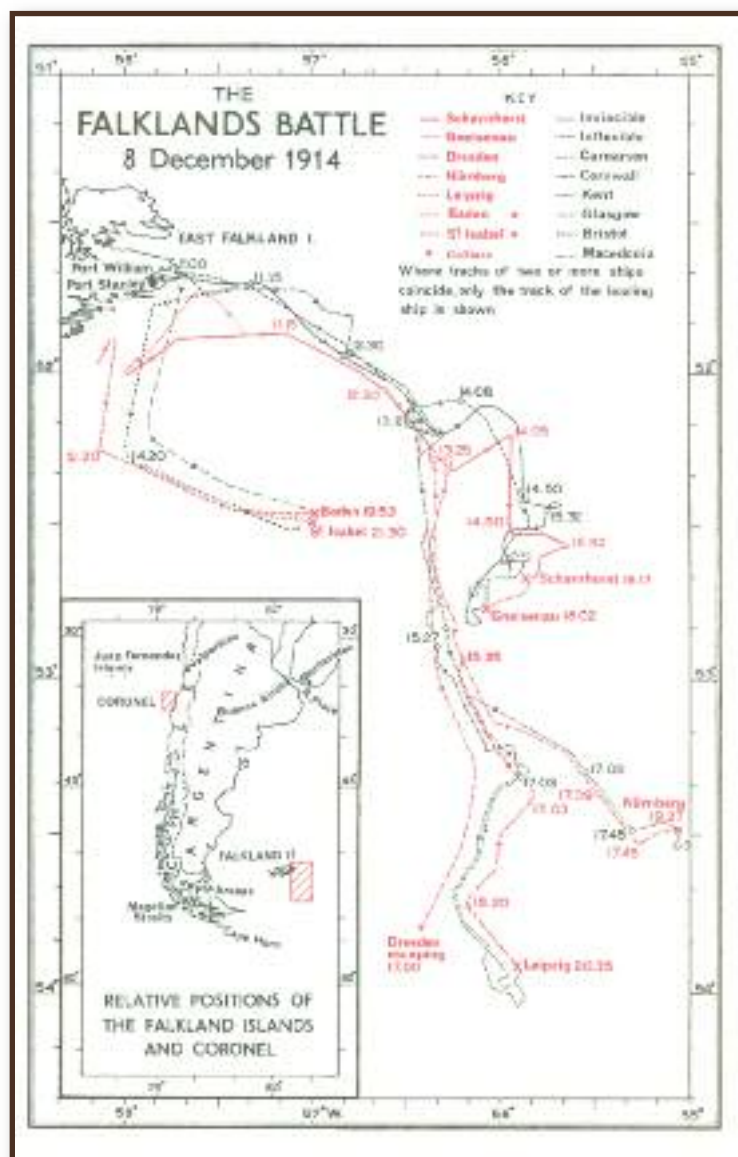
Maps from Arthur Marder's *From Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*, vol. 2.

First Sea Lord, had persuaded Churchill to dispatch the modern (1907) battlecruisers HMS *Invincible* and *Inflexible* to the South Atlantic.<sup>24</sup> They arrived at Port Stanley on December 7th.

In Port Stanley roadstead just before 8am the following morning HMS *Glasgow*, a Coronel survivor, hoisted the signal flags "enemy in sight." The first shots were fired by HMS *Canopus*, an obsolete, pre-dreadnought battleship, purposely beached in a mud flat so that her 12-inch guns could command the harbor approaches.<sup>25</sup> The British fighting ships, most of them coaling when the Germans were sighted, raised steam and set off in pursuit.

It was the death knell for the German cruiser squadron: SMS *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig*, along with the colliers *Baden* and *St. Isabel*. All went to the bottom, along with Admiral von Spee and





Maps are reprinted by kind permission of Seaforth Publishing, 2014.

over 2000 German sailors, while the British suffered relatively minor damage and loss of life.<sup>26</sup>

Both battles were conclusive, and together they marked the only decisive surface naval engagements of World War I. But the second battle was the key. The superiority of the seven-year-old *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* over the much older *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* off Coronel was nullified at the Falklands by the modern battlecruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible*. Yet this lesson was lost on both participants, as demonstrated by the loss of the SMS *Blücher* at the battle of Dogger Bank in January 1915; and the sinking of HMS *Defence* and *Warrior* at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.<sup>27</sup>

The just-in-time arrival<sup>28</sup> of *Invincible* and *Inflexible* gave the Royal Navy the needed edge to ensure the near-annihilation of the German East Asiatic Cruiser Squadron off the Falklands in December.<sup>29</sup> ☞

## Endnotes

1. Michael Howard, *Studies in War & Peace* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 104.
2. Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (New York: Harper, 2013), 204-14.
3. Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. 1, 1911-1914 (London: Library of Imperial History, 1974), 56. See also Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 51. Aside from Asquith, Cabinet members present were Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for War Lord Haldane, Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George, First Lord of the Admiralty Reginald McKenna, and Home Secretary Winston Churchill. General Sir Henry Wilson expounded the Army view, while Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, Admiral Fisher's successor as First Sea Lord, presented the Navy's.
4. *The World Crisis*, 58. This is one of the most important sources by key government officials in office at the beginning of the war.
5. *Ibid.*, 59, 67.
6. *Ibid.*, 90-93.
7. *Ibid.*, 75.
8. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), 229.
9. Donald Macintyre and Basil W. Bathe, *Man-of-War: A History of the Combat Vessel* (Gothenburg, Sweden: Tre Tryckare, Cagner & Co., 1969), 157-77, 205-06. On aircraft carrier development, see Richard Hough, *The Great War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 317-18. For more on wireless see John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to al-Qaeda* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) 99-143.
10. Keegan, 105.
11. E. B. Potter, & Chester W. Nimitz, Fleet Admiral, USN, eds., *Sea Power: A Naval History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 354-365.
12. Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), 84.
13. Tuchman, 137-62.
14. Hough, 90.
15. Churchill, 417.
16. Hough, 93.
17. Churchill, 416.
18. *Ibid.*, 419.
19. The Royal Navy's last defeat in battle was on Lake Champlain on 11 September 1814.
20. Keegan, 124.
21. Potter & Nimitz, 403-05.
22. Hough, 126.
23. Keegan, 133-34.
24. Churchill, 428.
25. *Ibid.*, 137.
26. *Ibid.*, 140.
27. Holloway H. Frost, *The Battle of Jutland* (Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute, 1936), 310, 318.
28. Hough, 106; 108-109.
29. SMS *Dresden* and the auxiliary *Seydlitz* escaped. *Seydlitz* was interned, while *Dresden*, trapped by the Royal Navy, was scuttled at Más Afuera Island, Chile, on 14 March 1915.

# DESPATCH BOX

...continued from page 4

## THANKS TO YOU ALL

**My inadequate attempt to thank these and many others is on the following pages. —RML**

Congratulations on a terrific run as the man who, through writing, editing, and organizing, kept the flame of Churchill in the public eye, stimulated research and publication, and always showed by rare example that biography must trump hagiography, that idolatry is no substitute for truth, that greatness in a historical figure means not the absence of flaws but the overcoming of them.

PROF. MANFRED WEIDHORN,  
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY

You have been a remarkable editor, a superb Churchill scholar and an unfailingly generous friend. You helped me get started on the Winston trail. My debt is deep and I can do nothing but wish you and Barbara all the best.

LORD (MICHAEL) DOBBS, WYLYE, WILTS.

Inevitable as it was, stepping down from your last significant link to TCC is a sad occasion for the Churchill community. As our oracle for four decades, you have stoutly and articulately defended Churchill's monumental legacy in a fair and objective way, to keep "the memory green and the record straight," as his daughter once said, telling me how splendidly you achieved her goal. Your contributions went well beyond *Finest Hour*. I was privileged to have witnessed many of them as an officer of ICS when you were president, then later as one of TCC's founders. I have thoroughly enjoyed our many wide ranging discussions and the vigorous debates we had, especially those over matters about which we knew little! But most of it all it was great fun and I am looking forward to more of the same. And now, as you drape the mantle on the shoulders of your able successor and you and Barbara pursue other work, let us hope that it will be worn with as much dedication as it was on yours.

WILLIAM C. IVES, CHAPEL HILL, N.C.  
PAST PRESIDENT, TCC

I can't repress my regret. You have maintained the highest standards of content and design, and so for so long that it seems unforgivable to leave the task of delivering to readers their quarterly box of treats. As an academic I've always been particularly impressed by the fact that so much of the journal is devoted to serious, properly referenced historical discussion and debate. Of course Churchill is fun too, and it has rightly reflected this, but *Finest Hour* has always done him justice as statesman and politician. It must have been enormous hard work and a burden you wouldn't want to bear indefinitely, so I congratulate you on your emancipation. I'm sure David will do a great job in maintaining the standards you've set.

PROF. PAUL ADDISON,  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Your role has been so capital, critical, learned and balanced. Thank you very much for an immense contribution to sustaining the importance of Churchill, and for thirty years of friendship and collaboration.

RONALD I. COHEN, OTTAWA, ONT.

I am deeply proud to have had my name appear in this extraordinary publication. It is a wonderful achievement: a journal that stands in the front rank of Churchillian study, and knowing you built it. I come from no writing background other than raw enthusiasm, and I have learned an enormous amount from your editorial expertise. It is a phenomenon of the Internet age that one can instruct people one rarely actually meets. Learning "on the job" from you whilst writing for *FH* has enabled me to produce, I hope, concise, well-crafted articles where I might only have produced rambling if enthusiastic, tracts.

ROBERT COURTS,  
BALSALL COMMON, MIDLANDS

I thought I knew all about writing until I encountered your editorial pencil and discovered I still had a lot to learn—especially (like most professors, probably) about concision. Thanks too

for composition lessons! Best wishes for your next enterprise and thanks for all your help with my Churchill efforts.

PROF. PAUL ALKON,  
ROLLING HILLS ESTATES, CALIF.

I wanted to wish you the best of luck and thank you for the hours of joy and enlightenment!

JORDI MARTÍ DE CONEJORS, BARCELONA

My gratitude for doing a superlative job on the publication, and for always being there when I had burning questions about Churchill.

BOB MACK, ANNAPOLIS, MD.

Churchillians owe you a huge debt of thanks for your work on *Finest Hour*. These volumes stand as one of the best, if not the best, ongoing records of Churchill scholarship.

CITA STELZER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

It is bittersweet news, but thousands of Churchillians, scholars, and perhaps people all over the world have benefited from your loyal and steadfast dedication. I would be remiss if I did not extend my thanks for your help in my independent study and final essay at Hollins University a few years ago.

In the long run, everyone benefits by Churchill study. The world moves on, but many of his thoughts and views come to mind and we are reminded of his incredible insights and the lessons he offers to those willing to listen. The language may change, but the wisdom continues. His relevance is timeless.

KEITH THOMAS LEONARD, ROANOKE, VA.

Having worked with you since you relaunched *FH* with #33, and now proofing #165, I am truly impressed by what you created. It was like watching a baby born in a small room at Blenheim growing into a colossus. Amongst your many achievements, perhaps the one that impresses me most is to see *FH* constantly cited as an authoritative source by the eminent scholars in the field. A warm thanks on behalf of all who toil in the historiographical field of Sir Winston Churchill.

JOHN G. PLUMTON, TORONTO, ONT.  
PAST PRESIDENT, TCC

It had to happen sometime, and it's now upon us. Thank you for producing a magazine of quality and consistency and for being a Churchill champion one challenges at their peril! Add to that the wonderful conferences and tours we have enjoyed over the years and for your books, three or four of which are standard references. Well done: the Old Man would have been honoured and proud to have you keeping the memory green and the record accurate.

BRIAN SINGLETON, BASLOW, DERBYSHIRE

I've enjoyed working with you all these years and I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to write. I've worked with a lot of editors over the years and I've always said the best editor is someone whose edits one never notices, but believes that's the way you wrote it, even though you didn't.

MICHAEL McMENAMIN, SHAKER HTS., OH.

My best wishes to you on this news. Your *FH* work was exemplary. I'm glad I got in under the wire as a contributor.

BARRY SINGER, NEW YORK CITY

This news, coming fast upon the demise of Lady Soames, really does fill me with the sense of an end of an era. The Churchill world will not be the same, but hopefully it can live up to the standards you have set.

ALLEN PACKWOOD,  
CHURCHILL ARCHIVES CENTRE, CAMBRIDGE

I was hoping Operation Hope Not would be indefinitely postponed. But thanks for a brilliant publication all these years, and personally for helping to nurture my writing efforts.

TERRY REARDON, TORONTO, ONT.

The cover and tribute to Lady Soames in issue 163 are very nicely done, both design and content. I have really enjoyed working as design director with you as and Barbara on *Finest Hour* and other projects over the years.

CHARLOTTE THIBAUT, CONTOOCOOK, N. H.

Editing a magazine is so much work I really don't know how you did it so well for so long. It is one of the things that gives me hope that all will come

right in a decaying world where leadership seems absent. Churchill's example is something that could save us if enough people take it to heart.

DR. STEVE GOLDFEIN, SAN FRANCISCO

Few people I have known can end a job with a greater sense of accomplishment than you and Barbara. I wish you good health and many years more "laboring in the vineyard."

PROF. RAY CALLAHAN,  
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

You have been a team without equal who added professionalism and dignity to all you touched. You will be missed in so many ways, but we know you will be continue to be engaged and engaging in the Churchill world.

PHIL AND SUE LARSON, CHICAGO

You have been able to do two rare things: live your dream and make it a reality for others. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to write book reviews. You published my first in 1992, a stepping stone to my great side career as a reviewer with nearly forty reviews in print or online in a dozen publications and websites.

WILLIAM JOHN SHEPHERD, CROFTON, MD.

Well, that is a huge tree fallen in the forest! You will hear from lots of people, but no one can properly appreciate the decades you have given to the Churchill movement. More than any other person, you've moved it from "fandom" to serious analysis and consideration of the man and his times. I've learned from all you've done, including great editing.

DEAN CHRISTOPHER STERLING,  
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

What news! I trust you have received many messages of congratulations and regret, and I can add very little besides joining in the concert.

PROF. ANTOINE CAPET,  
UNIVERSITY OF ROUEN

I have never worked with a better editor. You should take great pride in producing a beautiful and thoughtful journal that has kept alive Churchill's spirit and always reminded us of the

need to defend goodness and justice. I am grateful to you for the many opportunities you have given me to publish.

PROF. JUSTIN LYONS, ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

Say it ain't so! How can we begin to thank you for your dedication and sacrifices and marvelous devotion.

JACQUELINE DEAN WITTER, SEATTLE, WASH.

What a stupendous achievement your creation has been, and how exciting it has been to see it evolve even in the nine years that I have been reading it. Congratulations, and good luck with your many new projects.

GORDON WISE,  
CURTIS BROWN LTD., LONDON

I always look forward to the journal, share it with friends and persuade them to join the Centre. You've done an extraordinary job with limited resources. I remember fondly the times that we have had an opportunity to talk, and look forward to your future efforts.

DR. LAYTON McCURDY, CHARLESTON, S.C.

I can't tell you how many people I've signed up as members saying, and meaning, that *Finest Hour* alone is worth the price of the subscription. Thanks. I keep them all—just part in my list of "stuff" that I must possess.

PHIL LYONS, CHICAGO, ILL.

Thank you for the phenomenal body of work represented by your long editorship, articles and commentary which made for a unique journal. In 1908, Churchill told the Authors Club: "Words are the only things which last forever. That is, to my mind, always a wonderful thought. The most durable structures raised in stone by the strength of man, the mightiest monuments of his power, crumble into dust, while the words spoken with fleeting breath, the passing expression of the unstable fancies of his mind, endure not as echoes of the past, not as mere archaeological curiosities or venerable relics, but with a force and life as new and strong, and sometimes far stronger than when they were first spoken..." Words will last forever.

RICHARD C. MARSH, ANN ARBOR, MICH. ✉



# Footprints on the Sands of Time

## Hail and Farewell

*From quiet homes and first beginning,  
Out to the undiscovered ends,  
There's nothing worth the wear of winning  
But laughter and the love of friends.*

—Hilaire Belloc



No sender of praise is allowed to escape untouched: When a reader in Auckland complimented the “New Zealand Number” (FH 161), he was persuaded to create an online index. I sent him John Plumptre’s 1998 index to issues 1-100, re-reading the tribute therein to “Richard Langworth’s phenomenal memory of 100 issues.” John couldn’t believe how I always seemed to

**RICHARD M. LANGWORTH**  
**EDITOR, 1968-70, 1982-2014**

know in what issue we did thus and so. Ah, but when you proofread an issue twenty times before it appears in print, you tend to remember

when and where you did things.

Proofing is one of the things editors are paid for. The Churchill Society kindly decided, along about 1990, that I could not continue producing an expanding journal pro-bono, as I had until then,

### *Finest Hour Contributors 1968-2014*

Joseph Abrahamson, Natalie Adams, Paul Addison, Merry Alberigi, Andrew Alexander, Paul Alkon, A.R. Allen, Marianne Almquist, H.W. Arndt, Larry Arnn, Sal Asaro, Maurice Ashley, Philip Aspden, Naim Attalah, Reg Auckland

Maurice Baird-Smith, Earl Baker, Celwyn Ball, John Banta, Randy Barber, Luigi Barzini, Colin Baxter, Bill Beatty, Christopher Beckvold, Christopher Bell, Tony Benn, Tim Benson, Elliot Berke, Geoffrey Best, Henry Beverley, Eric Bingham, Byron Birdsall, Niels Bjerre, Robert Blake, Naomi Bliven, Mark Blitz, Conrad Black, David Boler, Marcel Bolomet, Dan Borinsky, Peter Boswell, Kelley Bouchard, James Boutilier, Jim Brady, David Braun, Carol Breckenridge, Piers Brendon, Ronald Brennan, Jean Broome, Jonathan Brown, Robert Brown, Ryan Brown, Glen Browne, Derek Brownleader, Mark Bryant, Peter Buchanan, William F. Buckley Jr., Stephen Bungay, Neville Bullock, George Bush, Harry Byrd Jr., Randall Bytwerk

Ray Callahan, Paul Cantor, Antoine Capet, Frank Capra, William Carey, Nicholas Carr, Lord Carrington,

Virginia Carter, Ward Chamberlin Jr., John Charmley, Erica Chenoweth, Minnie Churchill, Peregrine Churchill, Randolph Churchill, Winston G. Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, John Chuter, Max Cleland, Bill Clinton, Amy Cohn, John Colville, Eliot Cohen, Ron Cohen, Neil Coates, Myra Collyer, Dana Cook, Alistair Cooke, David Coombs

Alfred Duff Cooper, Lady Diana Cooper, Charles Cooper, Martin Cooper, Ray Connolly, Ursula Corcoran, Paul Courtenay, Jim Courter, Robert Courts, Maurice Cowling, Harry Crooks, John Crookshank, Bob Dales, Jack Darrah, Jacqueline Dean Witter, Bill Deedes, Jeffrey DeHaan, Richard Devine, David Dilks, Michael Dobbs, Alan Dobson, James Douglas, David Druckman, William Duncan, Dick Durbin, Mary Dwyer, John Edison, Betsy Elliott, Kirk Emmert, Richard Eyre

Fred Farrow, Don Feder, Jarden Feldschreiber, Carol Ferguson, Darmiad Ferriter, Robert Fincher, Alan Fischl, William Fisher, Alan Fitch, Edward Fitzgerald,

without sacrificing part of a writing career—and so I was paid. I think however that even you who claim to read each issue cover to cover (*are you serious?*) would shrink from having to do it twenty times. So I hope the investment was a good one.

Page proofs are one of the last things you confront when creating an issue. The journal wouldn't be half as good without our fastidious senior editors, James Muller, Paul Courtenay and John Plumpton, who spent hours of their time going over every punctuation mark and spotting every gaffe. Churchill said the final stage of writing a book is when you "kill the monster and fling him about to the public." For *Finest Hour*, that is when Jim Muller talks earnestly with me for two hours (afterward I always have a whisky) making me correct, on-screen, everything from rogue spaces to quotemarks facing the wrong way to French grammar to nouns in apposition, while citing the relevant rules. I think I know the rules in an abstract sense, but I am unable to cite them, as does this extraordinary scholar. Only I know what we owe him.

Some 140 quarterly deadlines—the bimonthly *FH* of 1968-70 and the quarterly from 1982 to date—have come and gone and it is high time to say good-bye. I looked for something appropriate by Churchill, because he always says things better than I. In 1963,

when he became my fellow countryman, he wrote to President Kennedy: "I contemplate with high satisfaction the interwoven and upward progress of our peoples." Me too—and the corpus we have left: Churchill scholarship by the best authorities in the world, the writers, historians, artists, photographers and collectors who contributed to *Finest Hour*.

Editors rarely win popularity contests, and I hope I wasn't too obstreperous. Don Vorderman, the best editor I ever worked for, told me two things: "You are paid to make writers look good," and "The surest sign of an amateur is sensitivity about his prose." I always tried to bear his words in mind. Almost always, writers were happy with the outcome; if they didn't like some word or fillip, we worked it out, except once only recently, when it just wasn't worth the argument.

My successor David Freeman, whom I admire as a friend and scholar, now has the challenge, but nobody is perfect. The great film director Elia Kazan said: "You have to accept limited happiness, because all happiness is limited, and to expect perfection is the most neurotic thing of all." Yet, for *Finest Hour*, the average hasn't been too bad.

To thank all those involved would take far more than the space available, but I append herein the men and women who made *Finest Hour* what it was. >>

Geoffrey Fletcher, Donald Forbes, Steve Forbes, Betsy Foster, Beverly Fowler, Matt Fox, Mike Franken, David Freeman, David Fromkin, John Frost, Marcus Frost

Jeanette Gabriel, Chris Gainor, John Kenneth Galbraith, Gary Garrison, Laurence Geller, Joseph Gerwood, Patrizio Giangreco, Martin Gilbert, Michael Godlewski, Clifford Goldfarb, Fred Glueckstein, Ronald Golding, Raymond Goodman, Barry Gough, Dan Graeter, Rob Granger, Tarah Grant, Joshua Greenberg, Mike Groves, Bill Gunn

Douglas Hall, Stuart Hall, Grace Hamblin, Fred Hambrook, Chris Hanger, Fred Hardman, Timothy Robert Hardy, Christopher Harmon, Pamela Harriman, Mim Harrison, R.F. Harrod, Jessica Hart, Max Hastings, David Hatter, Rob Havers, Allison Hay, John Hay, Stephen Hayward, Cameron Hazlehurst, Christopher Hebb, James Heinemann, Cynthia Heinz, Ron Helgemo, Gerald Hensley, Timothy Henson, Arthur Herman, Joe Hern, Max Hertwig, Rafal Heydel-Mankoo, Nicholas Hiley, Peter Hitchens, René Højris, June Hopkins, Leslie Hore-Belisha, Craig Horn, Sarah Howells, Timothy Hoyt, Greg Hughes, Selma Hughes,

John Hume, James Humes, Vic Humphries, Ted Hutchinson Bill Ives, David Jablonsky, Ashley Jackson, Will Jacobs, Harry Jaffa, Karan Jain, Alfred James, The Earl Jellicoe, Roy Jenkins, Wallace Johnson, Derek Lukin Johnston, John Kamau, Judith Kambestad, Eric Kane, Yousuf Karsh, Denis Kelly, Jack Kemp, Jill Kendall, François Kersaudy, Alan Keyes, Eugenia Kiesling, Warren Kimball, Patrick Kinna, Till Kinzel, James Kirchik, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Hal Klepak, John Kops, Michael Korda, Dick Knight, Nigel Knockor, Stewart Knowles, Nicholas Koutzos, Charles Krauthammer, Larry Kryske

Steven Lambakis, James Lancaster, James Lane, Barbara Langworth, Ian Langworth, Phil Larson, Sue Larson, Robin Lawson, Celia Lee, Parker Lee, John Lellenberg, Dan Lenahan, Anna Lenthauer, George Lewis, Leslie Lewis, Nigel Lewis, Karen Linebarger, Barrie Linklater, David Low, Hugh Lunghi, Jari Lybeck, Justin Lyons, Charles Lysaght

Ben MacIntyre, James Mack, Andrew MacLaren, Charles Maclean, Fitzroy Maclean, Veronica Maclean, Dan Mahoney, John Major, Allan Mallinson, William Manchester, David Manning, Scott Manning, Dave Marcus, The Duke of Marlborough, >>

## HAIL AND FAREWELL...

My special list begins with my wife Barbara, the tireless confidante, proofreader and dealer with all aspects of publishing, the rock who was there every step of the voyage; Mary Soames, more involved and influential than anyone but Barbara and I know; and design director Charlotte Thibault, whose talent improved the look of the journal from issue 152 onward, while lampooning the notion that we make it resemble, well... another publication. Thanks also to all who served on the boards of ICS and TCC, including my successors as executive director, Parker Lee, Dan Myers and Lee Pollock, for sustaining *FH* these many years and finding the wherewithal that allowed it to continue. Then there are the people on our masthead (page 4), whom I cherish for their vivid contributions, counsel and friendship. Finally there are you, our readers, without whom we would have no one to write for.

It has been a lot of work, and leaving has a dividend—time for a lot of things Barbara and I have set aside too long. Everything must end, but in endings there are also beginnings, as Longfellow wrote—for future readers who, in search of the great man, may fall across our work and be inspired, infuriated, amused, encouraged or instructed, in years to come.

Santayana said: “This world is so ordered that we must, in a material sense, lose everything we have and love, one thing after another, until we ourselves close our eyes upon the whole.” But then I have this actuarial reassurance, that however prolonged the forthcoming and inevitable decomposition, I will not be subjected to what would be truly intolerable, the loss of 165 issues of *Finest Hour*.

For this I am grateful, as I am to you, for serving as witnesses to this final capitulation, done in your warm and enduring company. ☺

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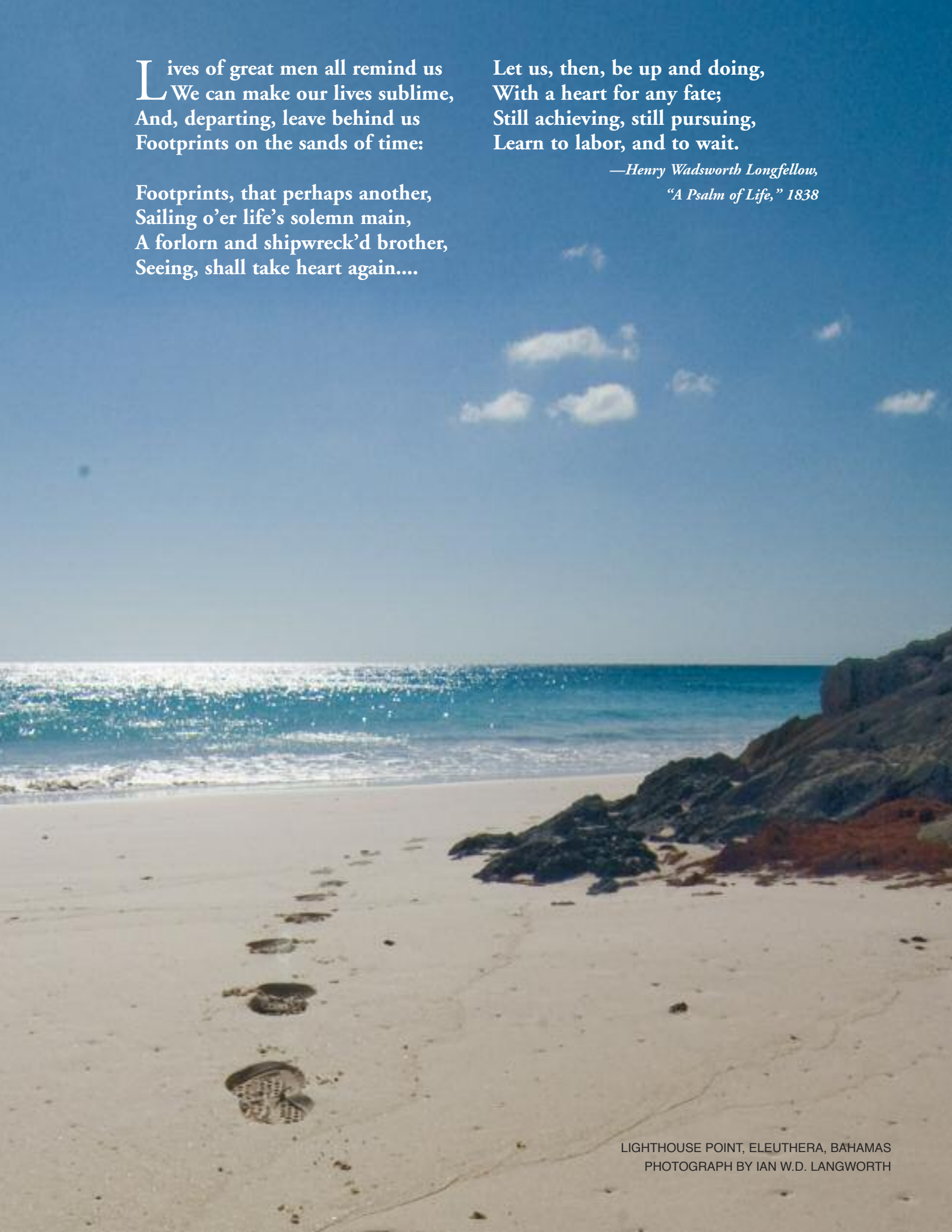
Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time:

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again....

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor, and to wait.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,

*"A Psalm of Life," 1838*



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