

FINEST HOUR

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Churchill at the Movies



GARY OLDMAN IN *DARKEST HOUR*

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FINEST HOUR

WINTER 2018 • NUMBER 179

Churchill at the Movies

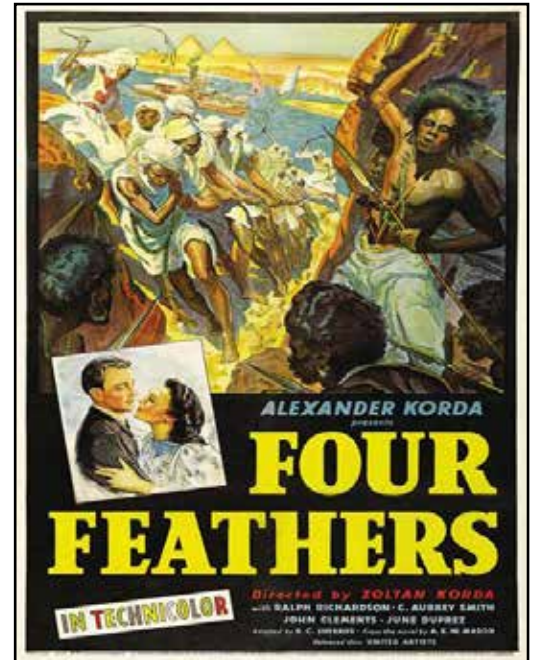
- 4 From the Editor
- 5 Letters to the Editor
- 8 Churchill on Screen: The Five Best • *Michael F. Bishop*
- 12 Alexander Korda: Churchill's Man in Hollywood • *John Fleet*
- 16 The British Bulldog and the Little Tramp: Winston Churchill and Charlie Chaplin • *Bradley P. Tolpannen*
- 22 Love, Self-Sacrifice, and Whomping the Bad Guys: Winston Churchill's Favorite Films • *Robert James*
- 26 "Let it Roll": Churchill's Chartwell Cinema • *Justin Reash*
- 31 Churchill on Hollywood
- 32 The Fulton Report • *Timothy Riley*
- 34 Cohen Corner • *My Early Life*
- 36 Action This Day • *Michael McMenamin*
- 50 Churchill Returns to the Queen Mary

Books, Arts, & Curiosities

- 38 *Six Minutes in May: How Churchill Unexpectedly Became Prime Minister* • Peter Clarke
- 39 *Churchill and Fisher: Titans at the Admiralty* • Stephen McLaughlin
- 40 *The Memorial Addresses to the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society Edmonton, Alberta, 1965–1989*
The Memorial Addresses to the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society Edmonton, Alberta, 1990–2014 • Terry Reardon
- 41 *Churchill at the Gallop* • Fred Gluecksetin
- 43 *The Cabinet Office 1916–2016: The Birth of Modern Government*
Iain Carter
- 44 *The Locomotive of War: Money, Empire, Power and Guilt*
Christopher H. Sterling
- 45 *Train to Nowhere: One Woman's War, Ambulance Driver, Reporter, Liberator* • Celia Lee
- 46 *Churchill et la guerre navale* • Antoine Capet
- 47 *Biographic Churchill* • W. Mark Hamilton
- 48 *Severn House | The Irregular: A Different Class of Spy*
The Paris Spy: A Maggie Hope Mystery • Michael McMenamin

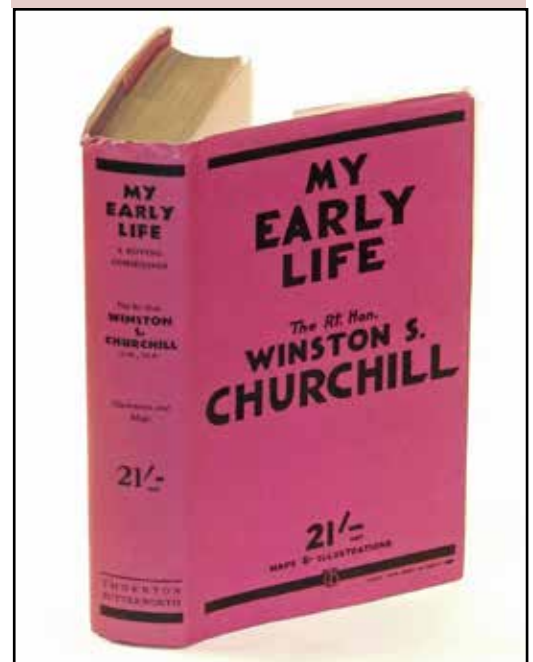
On the Cover

Gary Oldman stars as Winston Churchill in director Joe Wright's **DARKEST HOUR**, a Focus Features release.
Credit: Jack English / Focus Features



See story on page 12

See story on page 34





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FROM THE EDITOR

Churchill at the Movies

Winston Churchill loved the movies. And just at the moment, the movies love Winston Churchill. Of course, he would have used the words cinema or film, but his maternal connection to the United States, always the center of the film industry, meant that he was no stranger to American idioms.

The larger than life Churchill is a natural subject for film, but it has been mostly on the small screen that he has been represented. Actors have played Churchill at nearly all stages of his life, though most dramatizations naturally center upon the Second World War. Sometimes Churchill has been the star, and sometimes he has been a supporting character. **Michael F. Bishop** gives us his selection of what he sees as the best five in which Churchill is the featured player.

In *Finest Hour* 174, David Lough explained that it was the selling of film rights to his books that ultimately placed Churchill's finances on a sound basis. The producer who purchased the rights was Sir Alexander Korda. In this issue **John Fleet** tells us more about Korda and his relationship with Churchill.

Charlie Chaplin was not only the biggest star of the silent screen—he was in his time probably the most recognizable man in the world. Churchill certainly recognized and appreciated his genius. **Bradley P. Tolppanen** explains how the two men first came to meet in Hollywood and how their friendship continued through the years that followed.

Churchill's love for painting and even bricklaying as forms of relaxation are well known. He was also an avid cinephile. Film historian **Robert James** takes a look at three of Churchill's favorite films (*City Lights*, *That Hamilton Woman*, and *Henry V*) and considers what more they tell us about the man.

In a world where we can watch any movie we want on demand using portable electronic devices of all shapes and sizes, we can lose sight of the time when most everyone was completely dependent for selection on what films were being shown at their local cinema and what times the films were shown. Starting in 1950, though, Churchill enjoyed the luxury of having a fully-equipped cinema in his home at Chartwell. **Justin Reash** tells the story of how this came about and Churchill's viewing habits.

Only once in his life did Churchill visit the west coast of North America. This was part of a great journey he made across first Canada and then the United States in 1929. Along the way, he visited Hollywood and after returning home published his impressions of Tinsel Town, which we reprint here.

And so now it's lights, camera, Churchill!

David Freeman, January 2018

Finest Hour 179

WESTERHAM, KENT—I have been very pleased with the feedback I have received about my article describing the animals of Chartwell in the last issue of *Finest Hour*. When the editor informed me that the theme of this issue would be “Churchill at the Movies” and that there would be an article about the Chartwell cinema, I felt that I should write to explain a reference made in this story about the presence of a fish tank in the basement.

The tank was set up after a young admirer sent some tropical fish as a gift with a note to say that he thought Sir Winston might enjoy admiring them and watching

them grow. Members of the household added to the collection, and Sir Winston fell into the habit of returning from his walks about the grounds via the basement to see how his fish were getting along.

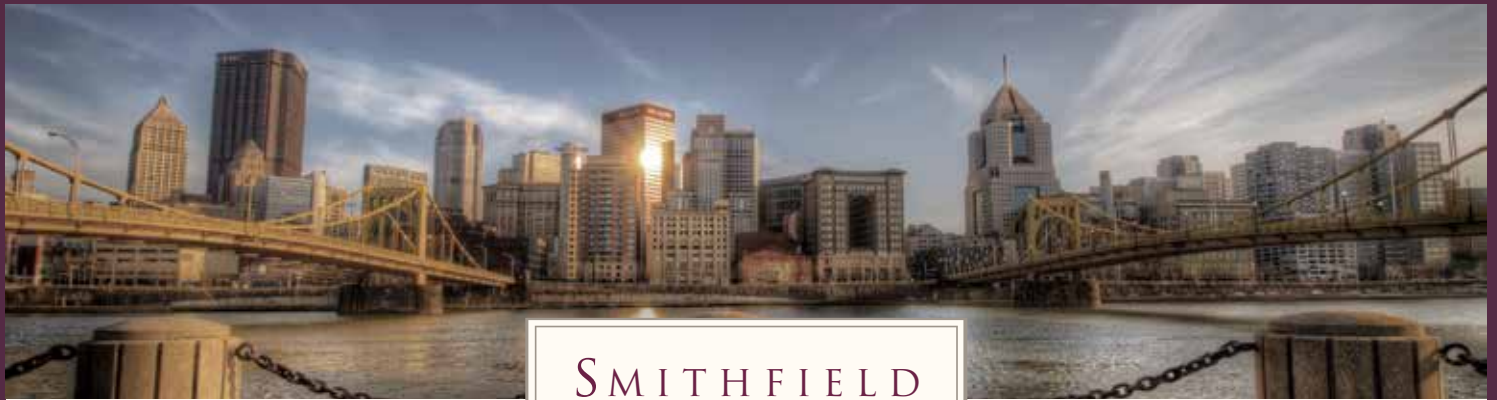
So fascinated did Sir Winston become with his aquatic friends that before long he ordered not one but four more tanks. These were duly set up in his study, which previously had been decorated only with inanimate objects like books, paintings, and family photographs. The fish tanks were richly decorated with stones and plants and then stocked with every variety of tropical fish that Sir Winston could obtain.

Thereafter, the Master of Chartwell enjoyed entering his study and

sitting transfixed before his colourful collection as the fish swam about. He loved watching their antics and exclaiming about their beauty and love of life. Naturally he named as many as he could and called them all by name as he recognized each fish.

As with his other pets, Sir Winston could never resist the temptation to feed his fish—and feed them rather more than he should from the small bottles near the tanks.
—Jock of Chartwell

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Churchill on Screen: The Five Best *By Michael F. Bishop*

Visitors to Chartwell and Chequers during Winston Churchill's time were often treated to film screenings hosted by one of the premier cinephiles of his era. Whether in or out of power, Churchill turned to movies for entertainment, relaxation, and inspiration. "He loved the films, any film," recalled one of his private secretaries. "After it, then tears down his face, and wiping them away, "The best film I've ever seen."¹

Churchill knew something about the film industry. Not long after the end of his time as Chancellor of the Exchequer following the defeat of the Conservative government in 1929, Churchill found himself in Hollywood, where he visited Charlie Chaplin and was filmed with the diminutive actor at his studio (see p. 16). Churchill also pursued the very modern practice of writing screenplays for movies that were never made, a lucrative sideline that helped keep at bay the ever-present creditors who so haunted his middle years. Perhaps his most intriguing cinematic near miss was an epic film about Napoleon, which was to feature Chaplin in the lead role.

As we imagine him gazing time and again upon the silvery images of his favorite film, *That Hamilton Woman*, eagerly watching Laurence Olivier as Admiral Nelson lead his country to victory at Trafalgar, one wonders whether Churchill envisioned himself as a character in the films of the future, perhaps inspiring some president or prime minister yet to come.

That has certainly come to pass. Churchill has been depicted on screen more than sixty times, usually in supporting roles, and often on television, a medium he abominated. Of these productions, about a dozen feature Churchill as the lead character. In a remarkable coincidence, two of them were released in theatres last year. One was the worst Churchill film ever made (*Churchill*, starring

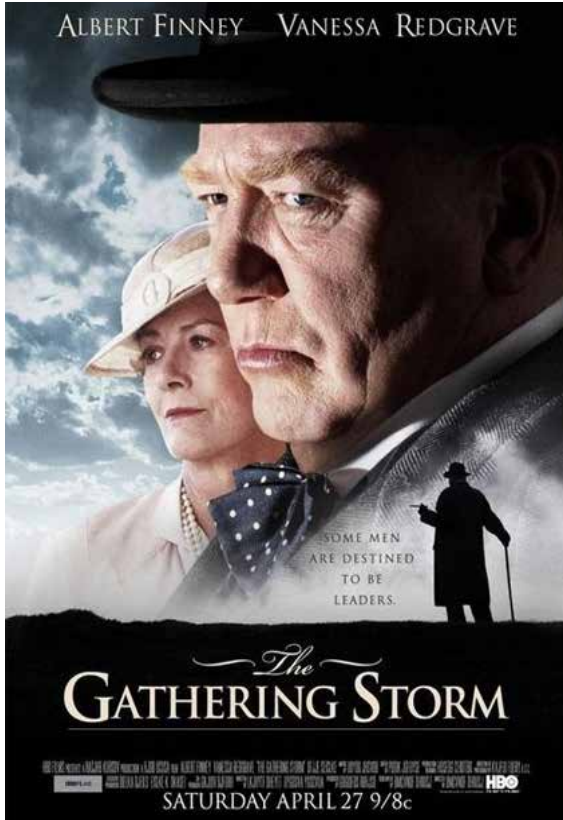
Brian Cox), and the other the best. (2017's other major film about the Second World War, the riveting *Dunkirk*, which climaxes with a reading by an exhausted soldier of Churchill's famed "Fight on the Beaches" speech of 4 June 1940, did not depict the prime minister.)

Recognizing that even the most enthusiastic Churchillian has only a limited amount of leisure time, it seems a useful exercise to identify the movies and television dramas about Sir Winston that, because of great performances, high production values, and relative historical accuracy, are most worth watching.

So let us count down, in reverse order, the five best films ever made featuring Winston Churchill as the principal character.

5) *Into the Storm* (2009)

The gifted, bearlike Brendan Gleeson took on the role—the only Irishman yet to do so—in this sequel to 2002's *The Gathering Storm*. It depicts Churchill from his elevation to the premiership until his summary dismissal by the electorate in 1945. The film is handsomely shot and generally well acted, and Gleeson acquits himself rather well as the wartime prime minister. Though much taller and broader than the real Churchill, Gleeson adopts a posture and demeanor that effectively embody the great man. (In this he far exceeds another oversized Churchill actor, John Lithgow, who often



Above left:

Brendan Gleeson clocks in at number 5 with his performance in *Into the Storm* (2009)

Above:

Robert Shaw (sitting) as Lord Randolph and Simon Ward (standing) as Churchill in *Young Winston* (1972), a movie adaptation of *My Early Life*

Left:

Albert Finney in *The Gathering Storm* (2002) HBO's predecessor to *Into the Storm*

Below:

Sian Phillips as Clementine with Robert Hardy, who depicted Churchill many times, starting with *The Wilderness Years* (1982)

seemed to bend over double in the 2016 Netflix drama *The Crown* in order to compensate for being nearly a foot taller than the character.)

There is a particularly moving scene in which Churchill presents a Victoria Cross to a young airman, who is gradually revealed to have suffered terrible facial injuries. "You feel very humble and awkward in my presence, don't you?" asks the prime minister. "Yes, sir," he responds. "Then you can imagine how humble and awkward I feel in yours." Such uplifting scenes alternate with others that depict a leader filled with private doubts and fears, and lashing out at family and staff.

Set against the film's great qualities is the rushed and episodic nature of the production, the inevitable result of trying to fit the five tumultuous years of



Churchill's leadership into an hour and a half. The sudden shifts from the spring of 1945, as Churchill and his wife holiday in France while awaiting the results of the general election, to various points in the war—and back again—are confusing to viewers unfamiliar with these events (a problem unlikely to afflict readers of this publication). *Into the Storm* is an earnest, sincere, and enjoyable production, but also a reminder that the best and most dramatically satisfying “biopics” are those that focus on a relatively narrow slice of the subject's life.

4) *Young Winston* (1972)

Y*oung Winston* is an old-fashioned epic based on Churchill's charming 1930 autobiography, *My Early Life*, starring Simon Ward in the title role. The film is directed by Richard Attenborough and features Robert Shaw and Anne Bancroft as Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill. (In an odd portent of things to come, Robert Hardy plays Churchill's sadistic schoolmaster.) It opens on the Northwest Frontier and gallops round the world in the wake of its eponymous hero.

With his slender frame and round face, Simon Ward is a convincing, if somewhat idealized version of Churchill. He expertly portrays the supremely ambitious “medal-chaser” so derided by his senior officers, and the budding statesman taking his first steps as a parliamentarian. While the film is mostly a forthright celebration of youthful heroism, it is surprisingly frank about Lord Randolph's final illness (though remarkably chaste about Lady Randolph's amorous adventures).

Although Churchill secured his fortune by selling the film rights to many of his books (see David Lough's article in *FH* 174, “Churchill and the Silver Screen”), this was the only one that made it to the cinema. *Young Winston* was not only the first major theatrical release about Churchill—it was the last until 2017.

3) *The Wilderness Years* (1982)

This eight-part television miniseries, produced by Southern Television and broadcast on ITV, had the enviable distinction of having Sir Martin Gilbert, Churchill's official biographer, as historical adviser. His careful, scrupulous hand is in evidence throughout, as Churchill's lost decade unfolds at a stately pace. The vicissitudes of the British governments in the 1930s have never been so thoroughly and accurately dramatized.

Robert Hardy was the definitive Churchill for a generation of admirers. He played the role in more pro-

ductions than any other actor and expertly embodied Churchill's fighting spirit, restless ambition, and rolling cadences. Hardy also had Churchill's mannerisms down pat. As a longtime honorary member of ICS, Hardy also performed Churchill in person, as he did at the Blenheim Conference in 2015, when he and Churchill's granddaughter Celia Sandys took turns reading from the letters of Winston and Clementine.

The ensemble cast of *The Wilderness Years* features many great character actors from the era, including Nigel Havers as Randolph Churchill, Peter Barkworth as Baldwin, Eric Porter as Chamberlain, Peter Vaughn as Sir Thomas Inskip, and the always engaging Frank Middlemass as an appropriately snobbish Lord Derby. Sian Phillips is perhaps too hard-edged as Clementine, lacking her ethereal grace, and the young Tim Pigott-Smith seems to shout all his lines as Brendan Bracken. But Edward Woodward brings suave urbanity and veiled menace to the role of arch-appeaser Sir Samuel Hoare.

Hampered in part by the cheap film stock typical of the era and a less than spectacular DVD transfer, the film has a somewhat dated look. Though hardly a fault, it requires a much greater investment of time than any of the other films on this list. Yet in its encyclopedic scope, its expert navigation of the stormy political seas of the 1930s, and its strong lead performance, *The Wilderness Years* will always deserve a prominent place in the annals of Churchill on film.

2) *The Gathering Storm* (2002)

Never in the field of television movies have so many fine actors done so much good work over such a short running time. In this joint BBC/HBO production, Albert Finney excels as Churchill (though he appears much older than Churchill was at the time), as does the exquisite Vanessa Redgrave as Clementine. But they are merely the leading lights of a truly sublime cast; even the smallest roles are filled with actors of the highest caliber. From Sir Derek Jacobi as Stanley Baldwin, to a then-unknown Tom Hiddleston as Randolph Churchill, to Linus Roache and Lena Headey as Ralph and Ava Wigam, Tom Wilkinson as Sir Robert Vansittart, and Jim Broadbent as Desmond Morton, the viewer is dazzled by the concentration of acting talent.

Superbly directed by Richard Loncraine, the film is a feast for the eyes from the very first frame. The only real fault of the film is that there is not enough of it: Churchill's wilderness years are squeezed into ninety minutes

that fly by too quickly. Though Stanley Baldwin is prominently featured as Churchill's *bête noire*, Neville Chamberlain never appears—only his (real) reedy voice is heard announcing: “this country is at war with Germany.” The final scene, in which Churchill professes his gratitude to Clementine for her love and devotion before returning to the Admiralty in 1939, the majestic score swelling to a crescendo in the background, is profoundly moving.

The Gathering Storm is the loveliest evocation of the somewhat chaotic idyll that was Chartwell in the 1930s since the lyrical preface of William Manchester's second volume. As much a domestic drama as a political one, it memorably and succinctly evokes the difficult years of Churchill's political exile, when his marriage was under its greatest strain, and culminates in a rousing personal and political triumph.

1) *Darkest Hour* (2017)

The latest incarnation of Churchill on screen is also the greatest. The slender, working-class Gary Oldman, who shot to fame playing Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols in *Sid and Nancy* (1986), seemed an unlikely choice when his casting was announced in 2015. But to film buffs and his fellow thespians, Oldman is known as one of the greatest actors in the world, a chameleon-like performer who has brought to life such disparate characters as Lee Harvey Oswald, Ludwig von Beethoven, and John le Carré's master spy George Smiley. I have written elsewhere about the greatness of Oldman's performance (*FH* 178); at the time of this writing, he has already collected numerous awards for his portrayal of Churchill, including the Golden Globe, and is an Oscar favorite. Like Daniel Day-Lewis in *Lincoln* (2012), Oldman immersed himself in the character, eerily channeling his voice, mannerisms, and explosive energy.

The near-total physical transformation of Oldman into Churchill achieved by the supremely gifted makeup artist Kazuhiro Tsuji removes the most important roadblock preventing most viewers from being absorbed into historical drama: the obvious fact that they are watching a famous and recognizable actor impersonate a historical

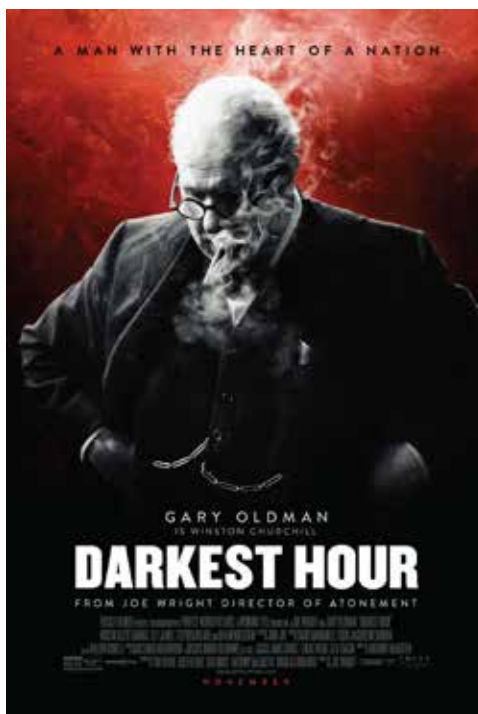


figure. Oldman's invisibility makes the drama all-enveloping. *Darkest Hour* is by no means a documentary, but on occasion the Churchill in the film and the Churchill in the newsreels are all but indistinguishable.

Kristin Scott Thomas is perfect as Clementine Churchill: elegant, feminine, and strong, and an essential partner to her mercurial husband. Ben Mendelsohn is first-rate as King George VI, and both Lily James and Stephen Dillane turn in strong performances as, respectively, Churchill's semi-fictional secretary and the very real foreign secretary Lord Halifax.

Director Joe Wright brought the beaches of Dunkirk to vivid and unforgettable life in his previous film *Atonement* (2007) and here employs truly creative framing and staging to convey Churchill's isolation and eventual triumph.

Anthony McCarten's script is smart, snappy, and well researched, though his fictional detour into the London Underground with Churchill will leave some viewers rolling their eyes. But McCarten deserves every plaudit for focusing the screenplay on the most important few weeks not only of Churchill's life, but arguably of the twentieth century: the beginning of his wartime premiership when Hitler was sweeping all before him and the British establishment was eager to secure a compromise peace with the dictator. This decision not only makes the film more tightly focused and suspenseful, it conveys to a new generation the real reason why Churchill is the greatest and most important leader of modern times.

On 11 January 2018, *Darkest Hour* was screened before a select audience in the State Dining Room of 10 Downing Street. Somewhere, Churchill must have been smiling. ☺

Michael F. Bishop is Executive Director of the International Churchill Society.

Endnote

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Alexander Korda: Churchill's Man in Hollywood

By John Fleet

In early 1935, Winston Churchill wrote an urgent letter to the Hungarian-born British film producer Alexander Korda. He had just completed a screenplay entitled *The Reign of George V* and was anxious that “not another day be lost in the preparation of the sets.”¹ So confident was Churchill that he cautioned in the text of his screenplay, “the audience must have a chance to recover from the cataract of impressions and emotions to which they will be subjected.”²

It was to be “an imperial film embodying the sentiments, anxieties and achievements of the British people all over the world.”³ Churchill was under contract to Korda as assistant-producer and historical adviser for a handsome sum, so much so that he had sidetracked his long-overdue biography of Marlborough.

Churchill believed that “with the pregnant word, illustrated by the compelling picture, it will be possible to bring home to a vast audience the basic truths about many questions of public importance.”⁴

The main problem, however, was that the screenplay showed no concern for budget. Here is how Churchill painted a few of his scenes:

“a German gunboat steaming through the water in a moonlit night...”

“a rapid series of shots of all parts of the Empire...”

“...away to British Columbia for a moment”

Churchill's sense of visual drama was undeniable, though, imagining how “a skeleton face with its helmet still on fills the picture of a veritable ‘Death's Head’ growing to monstrous, symbolic proportions.” He did admit in the screenplay, however, that “this terrifying spectacle is our only macabre shot.”

In March 1935, Korda shelved the project, leaving Churchill deflated, “the film is busted and all my hard work wasted.”⁵ He was, however, greatly impressed by Korda and his team and began a friendship with him that would shape the course of far more than just film history. Writing to his wife Clementine, he said, “Korda certainly gives me the feeling of a genius at this kind of thing....I have great confidence in this man and in his flair.”⁶

The Impresario

Korda's box-office smash *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933) had placed him at the centre of a frustratingly modest British film industry, but Churchill could see its potential.

In a 1936 article called “The Future of Publicity,” he wrote that “the pictures are among the most powerful instruments of propaganda the world has ever known.”⁷ When Korda opened Britain's first Hollywood-style studio that year, he stated that “Denham is based on the simple belief that the British Empire sooner or later must have its own film studio.”⁸

Having grown up in poverty in Hungary, Korda was viewed with considerable suspicion on his arrival in Britain. In some people's eyes he was making a goulash of British history. *The Private Life of Henry VIII* might have put British films on the map in America, but it painted an embarrassing picture. In a key scene, Charles Laughton devoured a chicken, throwing its bones over his shoulders with the line “refinement's a thing of the past.”

Churchill cautioned Korda, “my only criticism would be a little less chicken-bone chewing and a bit more England building.”⁹ This poignant remark would almost become the mission statement of Korda's company, London Films.

Gloriana

Korda turned next to Henry's daughter Queen Elizabeth I in a morale-boosting spin. Her victory over the Spanish Armada was one of Churchill's favourite bits of history and guaranteed to provide the glory he wanted. Instead of chicken bones, there would be the sea-dogs and buccaneers of the Elizabethan era.

In superb casting, *Fire over England* brought together Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh, sealing another box-office smash and going on to win the League of Nations Award for Best Film in 1936. Its underlying message was that the real menace to peace was in fact “prudence,” or rather—appeasement.

Churchill visited Denham in August 1936, relishing the sight of the miniature Armada, even deciding to stock the pond with swans. Korda's production managers recorded with exasperation in his diary that "Winston Churchill was with A. K. from 1.45 [to] 3.45!"¹⁰ This was England-building at its finest, and an Hungarian Jew fresh off the boat from Hollywood had become its unlikely spokesman.

In a speech, echoed by Churchill in the war, the Queen mounts a horse and delivers screenplay dialogue penned in 1588: "I am come to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my Kingdom and for my people my honour and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and valour of a King and of a King of England too. Not Spain, nor any Prince of Europe shall dare to invade the borders of my realm. Pluck up your hearts, by your peace in camp and your valour in the field we shall shortly have a famous victory." Churchill's work as adviser was starting to bear fruit.

English Westerns

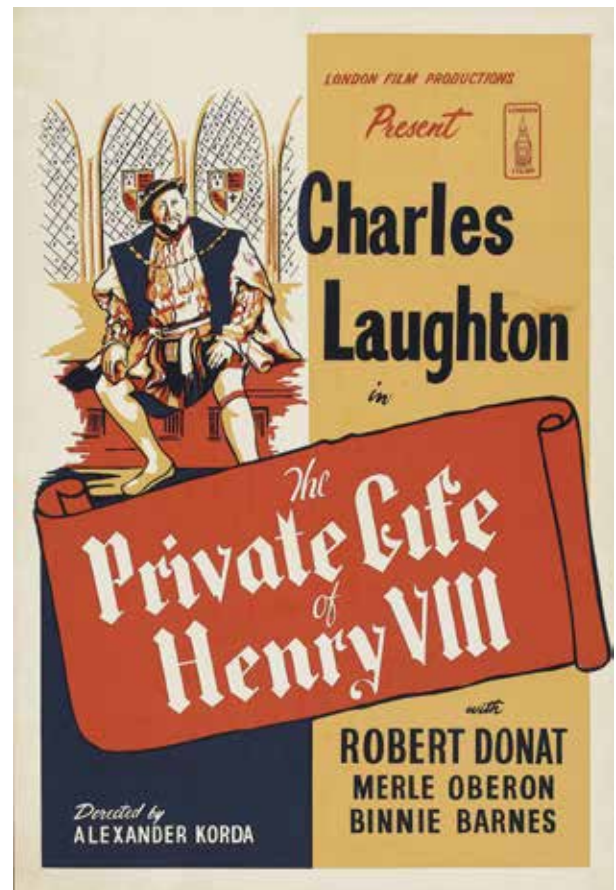
As troubles in Europe became ever more apparent, so Korda's attentions turned to Hollywood. The US withdrawal from European affairs had left a power vacuum for Hitler to fill, and movies were a means of clawing them back.

It was on the tarnished image of the British Empire that Korda now focused his attention, sending film crews to Africa and India to make his Empire trilogy (*Sanders of the River*, 1936; *The Drum*, 1938; and *The Four Feathers*, 1939), cleverly re-fashioning the oppressed natives as comrades in arms. The isolationist *Chicago Tribune* responded by upping its already vicious anti-Empire campaign. Its owner, Colonel Robert McCormick, believed that British imperialism was more dangerous than Hitler's fascism. Luckily for Korda, these "English Westerns" were box-office gold. Hollywood was so impressed that studios started to make their own versions such as 1939's *Gunga Din*.

Korda's most colossal creation was *The Four Feathers*, which brought an episode from Churchill's early life to the screen. In a helpful budgetary move, the producer mobilised the British army regiment in Khartoum as extras, calling upon 1574 natives, 1578 horses, 300 camels, and ten mules to recreate the battle of Omdurman in blistering Technicolor.



Two Alexander Korda-produced films, *Fire over England* (1937) and *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933)





Alexander Korda

A leader of the America First movement, Charles Lindbergh, became so enraged that he accused “the British and the Jewish” of being responsible for the fact that cinemas “soon became filled with plays portraying the glory of war.”¹¹ The American author, Gore Vidal, a child of the '30s, wrote an essay called “Fire over England” in which he explained how “the English kept up a propaganda barrage that was to permeate our entire culture.... On our screens, it seemed as if the only country on earth was England.... British Intelligence had no great faith in the American educational system.”¹²

Mission to Hollywood

In May 1940, Britain’s darkest hour, Korda was called to an urgent meeting with Duff Cooper, Churchill’s Minister of Information, and a plot was hatched. Korda would sail for Hollywood and make what he termed an “American” propaganda film.¹³ Hollywood was a safe-haven for film-makers. Denham Studios took a direct hit during the Blitz. Furthermore, a film made in Hollywood would arouse less suspicion.

The resulting film, *That Hamilton Woman*, released in March 1941, was perhaps the most revealing example of Churchill’s involvement in the film world. Casting Laurence Olivier as Admiral Nelson and Vivien Leigh as his lover Emma Hamilton, it told effectively the same story as *Fire over England*, only this time with Napoleon instead of the Spanish standing in for Hitler. Olivier delivers the line, “you cannot make peace with dictators, you have to destroy them, wipe them out,” in what commentators de-

scribed as a regular 1941 war speech. Legend has it that Churchill actually wrote it.

In a further bit of movie gold, Vivien Leigh was now the most famous actress in the world after her Oscar-winning turn in *Gone with the Wind*. Audiences flocked to her next show.

Churchill sent telegrams to Korda during the production, suggesting alternative titles, such as “Emma.” He urged the producer also to include Nelson’s famous saying, “if there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons.”¹⁴ In contrast to Hitler, who decided to commission a film largely about himself (*Triumph of the Will*, 1935), Churchill preferred to idolise other people’s achievements.

Churchill kept a bust of Nelson on his desk, and named the British Admiralty cat after him. It is no surprise therefore that it became his favourite film, notching up seventeen viewings, the most notable of which was on board HMS *Prince of Wales* during his secret meeting with President Roosevelt in August 1941.

The Power to Persuade

The greatest testament to the success of the British mission to Hollywood is that in September 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor, the US Senate launched an investigation into “Propaganda in Motion Pictures,” and Korda’s film was Exhibit One.

Spokesmen for America First warned that the public was susceptible to this kind of propaganda precisely because it was delivered through the medium of cinema. They attacked *The Four Feathers*, seeing it as another example of “the ancient British sport of knocking off the natives.”¹⁵

In truth, though, the charm of the British spirit had been brought to the fore. Churchill then stepped out of the wings and embodied the same romantic notions the cinematic parallels had evoked. He began his “We shall fight them on the beaches” speech with a quick reminder about the moment “when Napoleon lay at Boulogne for a year....”¹⁶

Churchill had by then become the lead character in the single most defining drama of the twentieth century. He was the hero with his shining sword, and there was Hitler the dragon who had to be defeated. He was St. George personified, and he played the role far better than any actor has done since. Whether Olivier made a better Nelson we shall never know, but for the newsreel cameramen Churchill did not disappoint.

When he addressed the US Congress in December 1941, he asked rhetorically, “what kind of a people do they think we are? Can it be that they do not realise that we will never cease to persevere against them?”¹⁷ If Americans were in any doubt about that, a trip to the cinema would provide all they needed to know.

In Churchill’s *George V* screenplay, the following line appears: “In all her wars, England always wins one battle—the last.” In 1942, he delivered the same line to tremendous applause, in what he termed “The Bright Gleam of Victory” speech.

Winston Churchill was, however, no actor at all. At twenty-four years old, in the candle-lit barracks of Northern India, he penned an unpublished essay called “The Scaffolding of Rhetoric” in which he analysed what made an effective orator. He cautioned that “before he can move their tears his own must flow.”¹⁸ In other words, if the orator is any good, he is not acting at all.

Honours

As the war raged on, the FBI launched an investigation into Korda, eventually questioning him in 1946. They accused him of acting as an agent for the British government, having tracked payments he made to British Intelligence agents in America. The real story behind that is worthy of a screenplay in itself. The deputy-head of MI6, Claude Dansey, appeared on the board of London Films after the war, in convenient timing.

Korda was knighted on Churchill’s orders in 1942. In a letter thanking Churchill, the producer quoted Browning’s poem *Trafalgar*, “Here and here has England helped me—how can I help England—say.”¹⁹ He also gave Churchill the gift of a permanent cinema in the basement at Chartwell (see page 28). Korda went on to cement his place as one of the founding fathers of the British film industry. The Best British Film award at BAFTA is given in his honour.

When Churchill eventually published *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, Korda paid him £50,000 for the film rights, having agreed secretly to do so ten years earlier. The truth was they had already filmed the most exciting bits.

England-building on screen has a long and distinguished history from Korda’s time to the fifty-five year film franchise that is James Bond. The creator, Ian Fleming, like Korda, worked for Claude Dansey, code-name “Z” or rather “M.”

Korda wrote to Fleming in 1954 about the Bond novel *Live and Let Die*, “Your book is one of the most exciting I’ve ever read. I could not put it down.”²⁰ He missed his chance of bringing it to film, however, when he died in 1956.

In a great crowd-pleaser, the Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* opens with Roger Moore evading his captors by skiing straight off a cliff, only to pull the rip-cord on a parachute boldly emblazoned with the Union Jack. Chicken-bone chewing had been replaced by martinis—shaken, not stirred. Arguably, the confidence of that scene owes a lot to a pre-war discussion over brandy and cigars between two unlikely friends. ☺

John Fleet is a British film-maker. He is currently making a documentary about Winston Churchill and his friendship with Alexander Korda.

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4. Letter from WSC to AK, 24 September 1934, CHAR 8/495/A–B.
5. WSC to Clementine Churchill (CC), 23 January 1935, CHAR 1/273/19–23.
6. WSC to CC, 18 January 1935, CHAR 1/273/8–13.
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The British Bulldog and the Little Tramp: Winston Churchill and Charlie Chaplin

By Bradley P. Tolppanen

On 14 December 1940, as Britain struggled alone against a triumphant Nazi Germany, Winston Churchill briefly set aside his heavy responsibilities to watch with his family and advisers Charlie Chaplin's new film *The Great Dictator*. They were at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, which was placed at the Prime Minister's disposal by its owner Ronald Tree MP, on nights when the full moon made Chequers, the PM's official country house in Buckinghamshire, too inviting a target.

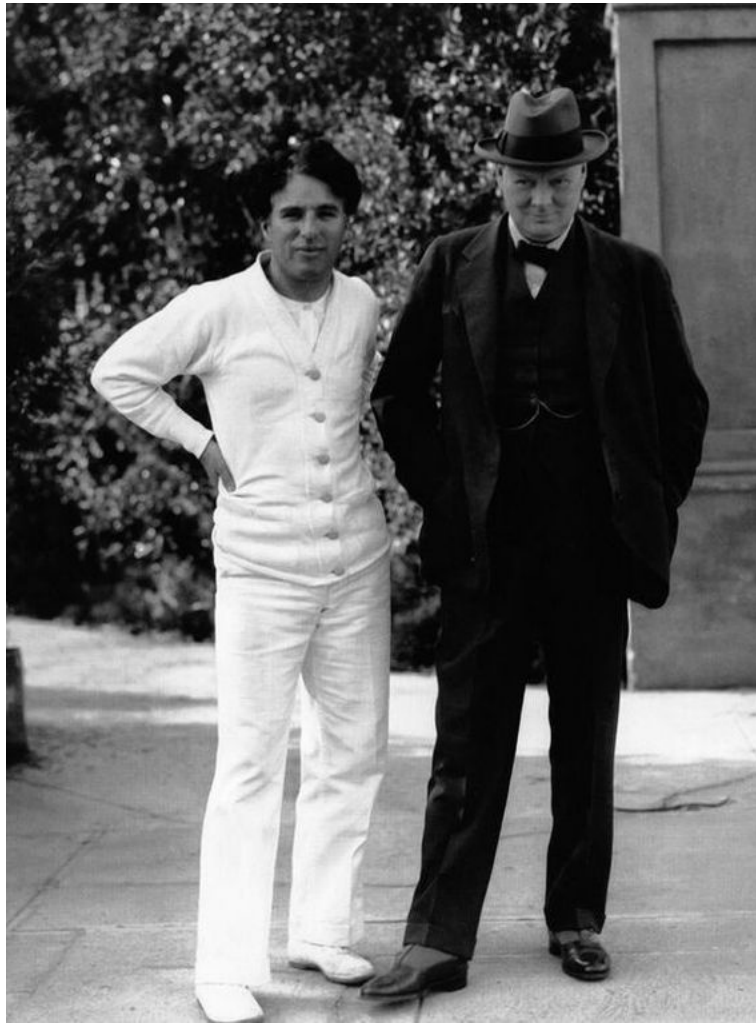
An avid film lover, Churchill naturally enjoyed this pre-release viewing lampooning Hitler, which starred and was directed by an old friend. The Prime Minister laughed throughout, especially the scene where two dictators throw food at each other. After it ended, Churchill

returned to composing another secret cable to President Roosevelt.

Hollywood Sojourn

Churchill had met Chaplin more than a decade earlier, during a tour of North America shortly after the Conservatives had been defeated in the 1929 general election. Despite sharp political differences, Churchill and Chaplin had come to admire and appreciate each other's qualities, and Chaplin had twice been Churchill's guest at Chartwell.

Accompanying Churchill on his 1929 trip to the United States and Canada were his son Randolph, brother Jack, and nephew Johnny—a foursome which its leader



These photographs show Churchill's 1929 trip to California. The "Churchill Troupe" visited Chaplin in Hollywood. Though initially put off by each other, Churchill and Chaplin became lifelong friends.



dubbed the "Churchill Troupe." The troupe was hosted in southern California by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst and introduced to the city's film industry, which Churchill later called "a strange and an amusing world."¹ The Churchill men attended receptions in their honor, toured movie studios, and met several film stars, including the actress Marion Davies, Hearst's long-time mistress.

Davies, whose parties were legendary, quickly arranged for the Churchills to be entertained at a star-studded festivity. It was probably she who convinced her close friend Charlie Chaplin to come. The other celebrities were delivered by Hearst, who had told Randolph and Johnny to prepare a list of all the stars they wished to meet and leave it to him. The only notable to elude them was the reclusive Greta Garbo.

On 21 September, after a day of touring Los Angeles, the Churchill Troupe motored north to Ocean House, Davies' opulent mansion in Santa Monica. After bathing in the heated Italian marble swimming pool, the troupe dressed for a dinner with sixty glitterati, including Mary Brian, Billie Dove, Bessie Love, Bebe Daniels, Dorothy

Mackaill, Wallace Beery, Harold Lloyd and Pola Negri. The most famous guest, however, was Chaplin.

The Little Tramp

After a Dickensian childhood in London, Chaplin had built a long career as a comedian and filmmaker. Declared by some newspapers the most famous figure in the world, he was known to millions through his performances as the "Little Tramp."

Chaplin was milling about with other guests when Churchill arrived, accompanied by Hearst. Chaplin recalled the future prime minister standing apart, "Napoleon-like with his hand in his waistcoat" as he watched the dancing.² Since Churchill appeared lost and out of place, Hearst waved Chaplin over and introduced him to the English statesman.

At first Chaplin found Churchill abrupt in manner, but when he started talking about Britain's new Labour government Churchill brightened. "What I don't understand is that in England the election of a socialist government does not alter the status of a King and Queen," Chaplin remarked. "Of course not," Churchill replied with a quick



glance that Chaplin thought “humorously challenging.” “I thought socialists were opposed to a monarchy,” Chaplin persisted. “If you were in England we’d cut your head off for that remark,” Churchill countered with a laugh.³

The dinner party was a great success. Davies persuaded Chaplin to join her in impersonations. She did Sarah Bernhardt and Lillian Gish; he played Napoleon, Uriah Heep, Henry Irving, and John Barrymore as Hamlet. The Davies-Chaplin duo then performed a complicated dance during which Johnny Churchill noticed that Charlie’s feet were small enough to fit into Marion’s shoes. In a sure sign of favor, Churchill kept Chaplin up talking until three in the morning. He wanted Chaplin to take on the role of a young Napoleon as his next film; if Chaplin would do it, Churchill promised to write the script.

“You must do it,” Churchill pressed, describing the opportunities the role presented for drama and comedy. “Think of its possibilities for humour. Napoleon in his bathtub arguing with his imperious brother who’s all dressed up, bedecked in gold braid, and using this oppor-

tunity to place Napoleon in a position of inferiority. But Napoleon, in his rage, deliberately splashes water over his brother’s fine uniform and he has to exit ignominiously from him. This is not alone clever psychology. It is action and fun.”⁴

Growing Friendship

Randolph Churchill had not immediately recognized Chaplin, but wrote in his diary that the actor was “absolutely superb and enchanted everyone.”⁵ Chaplin, for his part, was impressed by Randolph’s father, whom he thought dynamic with “a thirst for accomplishment” as well as a wonderful talker who could “rattle off brilliant epigrams.”⁶

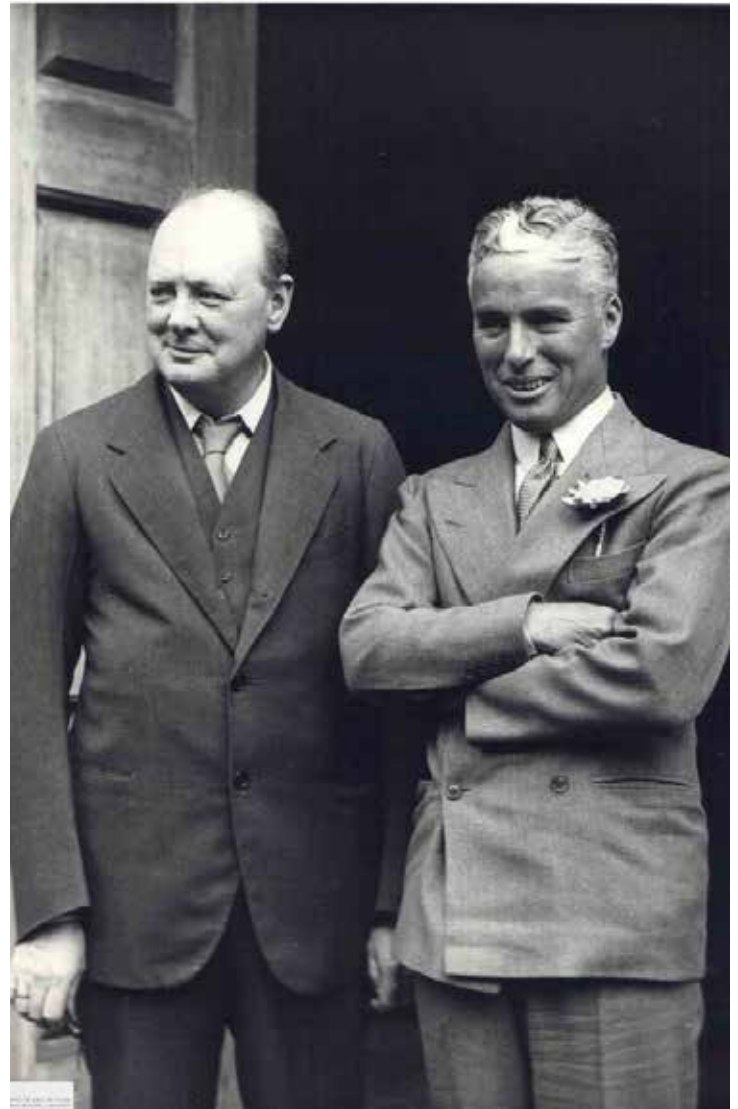
Chaplin met Churchill several more times during the troupe’s Los Angeles visit, including an evening when he dined with the Churchills in their suite at the Biltmore Hotel. The actor spent a delightful evening listening to Winston and Randolph pleasantly bantering.

Left:

The Churchills entertain Chaplin at Chartwell in 1931. The actor was visiting England for the premiere of his hit film *City Lights*.

Right:

Churchill wrote a biographical essay about Chaplin that was first published in 1935. The essay is included in the 2012 edition of *Great Contemporaries*, James W. Muller, ed., Wilmington, DE: ISI Books.



On 24 September, Chaplin hosted the Churchill party at his studio at Sunset Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. After lunch, Chaplin showed them around and provided a private screening of his 1918 film *Shoulder Arms*, one of his great movies, followed by the rushes for his upcoming silent classic *City Lights*. As Chaplin always liked to film the visitors to his studio, the troupe's visit was captured on film. The footage shows "a rather self-conscious and wooden Winston walking beside an assured and relaxed Chaplin."⁷ (See the January 2018 *Churchill Bulletin* for a link to the film.)

Churchill and Chaplin discussed the revolution in progress by the introduction of "talkies." Chaplin acknowledged the popularity of the new form but was unwilling to concede the demise of silent film, which he called the true "genius of drama."⁸ Churchill said *City Lights* was Chaplin's attempt to prove silent films superior to talkies, and predicted an "easy victory" for the production.⁹

That evening the Churchills and Chaplin accompanied Marion Davies to the premiere of *Cock-Eyed World* at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where a crowd had gathered for hours. The hoopla did not prevent Randolph from loudly denouncing the film as the worst he had ever seen. Davies apparently forgave him, hosting a dinner at the Roosevelt Hotel where sherry and champagne were served despite the strictures of Prohibition.

A few days later, after leaving Los Angeles, Churchill recounted his fascination with Chaplin: "a marvelous comedian—bolshy in politics & delightful in conversation."¹⁰

Chaplin at Chartwell

In February 1931, Chaplin came to England for the premiere of *City Lights*. Welcomed by excited crowds, he met a host of public figures and lunched at Chequers with Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald.

Inevitably Chaplin was invited to Chartwell. Churchill asked his onetime Parliamentary Private Secretary Robert Boothby to accompany the actor from London on the 25th. Chaplin brought along his friend Ralph Barton, an artist and cartoonist.

The party arrived on a bitterly cold evening, but Chaplin thought Chartwell a beautiful country residence, "modestly furnished, but in good taste with a family feeling about it." He bathed and dressed in Churchill's own bedroom, noticing that it was piled high with papers and



Chaplin in *The Great Dictator*

had books stacked against every wall. Among the volumes were a set of *Plutarch's Lives*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), and several books on Napoleon. Chaplin mentioned the latter to Churchill, who replied, "Yes. I am a great admirer of his."¹¹

Along with Boothby, Churchill had invited Brendan Bracken. Though Clementine Churchill was away, Jack and Johnny Churchill were on hand to meet Chaplin once again, along with two of Winston's daughters Diana, then twenty-one, and eight-year old Mary, who was allowed to stay up for the occasion by what her father termed a "special arrangement."¹²

The evening had a difficult start when Chaplin remarked that Britain's return to the Gold Standard in 1925 (under Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer) had been a great mistake and then launched into a long soliloquy, which Johnny Churchill deemed "pacifist and communist."¹³ Winston fell into a moody silence, and Johnny felt badly for Chaplin.

But the actor was himself no mean judge of human reactions. Suddenly changing course, he began to perform. Sticking forks into two bread rolls, he did a dance from his film *Gold Rush*. The ice melted, everyone relaxed, and an enjoyable dinner ensued. Chaplin thought the evening "dialectic," as Churchill harangued his guests with humor and wit.¹⁴

In a momentary lapse back into contentious subjects, Bracken declared Gandhi a "menace" to the peace in India. Chaplin replied forcefully that "Gandhis or Lenins"



The great comedian in retirement

do not start revolutions but are forced up by the masses and usually voice the want of a people. (Later in the year, Chaplin would visit Gandhi in London.) "You should run for Parliament," Churchill said with a laugh.¹⁵

"No, sir, I prefer to be a motion picture actor these days," Chaplin replied. "However, I believe we should go with evolution to avoid revolution, and there's every evidence that the world needs a drastic change." He later noted that both he and Churchill were all for progressive government, and that even Churchill believed much had to be done to preserve civilization and guide it safely back to normal after the Depression ended.¹⁶

To his wife, Churchill wrote that Chaplin had been "most agreeable" and had performed "various droll tricks." Both Churchill daughters enjoyed the actor's performances, young Mary being "absolutely thrilled."¹⁷

Return to Chartwell

Two nights later Chaplin premiered *City Lights* in London at the Dominion Theatre. Churchill probably did not attend the film, but was present at a party for 200 guests afterwards at the Carlton Hotel. Here Churchill proposed the toast, saying Chaplin was "a lad from across the river" who had "achieved the world's affection."¹⁸

From London, Charlie Chaplin made a triumphal tour across Europe, opening *City Lights* to enthusiastic crowds in Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. He probably met and lunched with Churchill at Biarritz in August, where Chur-

chill had arrived on a research trip for his biography of his ancestor John Churchill, the First Duke of Marlborough.

The following month, with both men back in England, Chaplin again visited Chartwell, probably arriving on Friday, 18 September, and staying through Sunday. Clementine was present, along with all the Churchill children this time and other guests. Sarah Churchill, who had missed Chaplin's previous visit, unlike her sisters, said she was surprised by the actor's appearance: a "rather good-looking, desperately serious man with almost white hair."¹⁹

At lunch that weekend Churchill attempted to talk about films and acting, but Chaplin was again eager to discuss politics, a disappointment to the others at Churchill's so-often-political table. Eventually WSC asked what Chaplin's next role would be. "Jesus Christ," Chaplin replied with all seriousness. After a pause Churchill asked, "Have you cleared the rights?" There was a silent pause before Clementine returned the conversation to politics.²⁰

Chaplin was amused by Churchill's family sitting unmoved at the table while WSC held forth, despite being interrupted by telephone calls from Lord Beaverbrook and other demands. During the visit, Chaplin expressed interest in Churchill's hobbies of painting and bricklaying. Examining one of his host's paintings over the fireplace in the dining room, Chaplin said, "But how remarkable." Churchill replied: "Nothing to it—saw a man painting a landscape in the South of France and said, 'I can do that.'" On a stroll along the brick walls Churchill had constructed, Chaplin remarked that bricklaying must be difficult. "I'll show you how and you'll do it in five minutes," said his host. And he did.²¹

Just before Chaplin left, he asked, "Is there a walking stick?" He was directed to a cupboard, only to emerge moments later with a bowler hat and stick, instantly transformed from the serious guest to the endearing "Little Tramp." His "enchanted performance" impersonating other actors included his John Barrymore in Hamlet's "To Be or Not to Be"—while picking his nose! "The day was made for us," Sarah wrote, "and we were sorry to see him go."²²

Chaplin, who had really come to know Churchill on this visit, concluded that WSC had a charming family, lived well and had more fun than most people. Although poles apart politically, Chaplin considered him a "sincere patriot" who had played for the highest stakes and had sometimes won, though his friend's political future was at that time doubtful.

Envoi

A final, brief meeting between Chaplin and Churchill occurred years later on 25 April 1956 after Churchill had retired and Chaplin was living in Switzerland. They met at the Savoy Grill in London: a rather strained encounter, Chaplin said, because he had failed to respond to a letter Churchill had sent congratulating him on his film *Limelight* two years before.

Chaplin told Churchill he thought his letter was charming but did not think it required a reply. Somewhat mollified, Churchill accepted his explanation, adding, "I always enjoy your pictures."²³

Bradley P. Tolppanen is author of *Churchill in North America, 1929: A Three Month Tour of Canada and the United States* (2014). The original version of this article appeared in FH 142. It has been revised and updated.

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Love, Self-Sacrifice, and Whomping the Bad Guys: Winston Churchill's Favorite Films

Winston Churchill had excellent taste in movies. His three favorite films have all remained recognized classics, beloved by fans for generations: Charlie Chaplin's masterwork, *City Lights* (1931); Alexander Korda's romance *That Hamilton Woman* (1941); and Laurence Olivier's most innovative work as a director, *Henry V* (1944). *City Lights* is a strong candidate for the greatest of Chaplin's films, as well as the height of American silent film. *That Hamilton Woman* tops the category of the doomed lover genre, as well as being the most enduring of the three films Olivier made with Vivien Leigh. *Henry V* broke new cinematic ground in adapting Shakespeare, and for many endures as the finest of all Shakespeare films not directed by Orson Welles or Akira Kurosawa. Churchill loved all three of these, and had a hand in either promoting or creating them—or both.

City Lights

Charlie Chaplin was facing disaster after Warner Brothers released *The Jazz Singer*, the first "talkie," on 26 October 1927. But then, so was all of Hollywood, although it took people time to recognize that—and nobody took longer than Chaplin, the king of the silent screen, the most famous face in the world (even today, people are more likely to recognize Chaplin than any other movie star of the first half of the Twentieth Century—except perhaps Mickey Mouse). Chaplin would go on making silent films long after everybody else had converted to sound; he did not release his first true talking picture until *The Great Dictator* in 1940. He had other tragedies on his hands as well, including the troubled production of *The Circus* (the sets burned down), his mother's death, his ugly scandalous divorce from his second wife, and the IRS demanding payment of back taxes.

Chaplin took almost two years to film *City Lights*, from December 1928 to September 1930, financing the entire production from his own pocket. Not content with

merely writing, producing, directing, and starring, he also composed the score for the first time for one of his films (for the female leitmotif, he chose a theme by José Padilla). Musical arrangement was placed in the capable hands of famed film composer Alfred Newman.

Chaplin's tale of a tramp who falls in love with a blind flower girl, then does all he can to help her, including suffering the crazed attentions of a drunken millionaire, entering the boxing ring, following an elephant, and getting carted off to jail, is one of the most important artistic works of the Twentieth Century. The final moments are arguably the most honestly emotional in the history of film. Churchill's granddaughter Edwina Sandys told the

2016 International Churchill Conference that her grandfather always cried at the end of the film.

Getting there was not easy; it never was for Chaplin, whose ambitions continually rose. In addition to the aforementioned personal crises, he had to deal with a lead actress, Virginia Cherrill, who was next to impossible at being convincing on screen (she was not convincing as Cary Grant's second wife either, but that is another story). At one point Chaplin fired her, replaced her with his co-star Georgia Hale from *The Gold Rush*, then ended up re-hiring Cherrill (for double the money). That she ultimately ends as one of the strengths of the film is almost entirely due to Chaplin's gifts as a director.

The greatest story bind during *City Lights* was trying to figure out how to convince the blind girl that Chaplin was a rich man. Chaplin shot the scene more than three hundred times, ultimately sending the entire cast and crew home for days on full pay while he figured it out. Chaplin shot a total of 180 days, out of twenty-two months of production; such is the price of perfection. The film became one of the biggest hits of Chaplin's career.

Churchill visited the set of *City Lights* on 24 September 1929, reuniting with his friend. Chaplin was so thrilled he did not shoot the entire day, preferring to entertain Churchill's party at a luncheon. Chaplin and

By Robert James

Churchill toured the sets, pausing for still photographs and the newsreel cameras (see p. 17). Two years later, on 27 February 1931, Churchill attended the world premiere of *City Lights* in London; George Bernard Shaw was the guest of honor (the film had already premiered in Los Angeles, with Albert Einstein and his wife as Chaplin's guests). That night, Churchill toasted Chaplin at dinner as "a man who had started out as a lad from across the river and had achieved the world's affection." Privately, Churchill summed up Chaplin as a "marvelous comedian—bolshy in politics and delightful in conversation."¹ Chaplin later named Churchill as one of only three geniuses he had ever met, the other two being Einstein and pianist Clara Haskil.

That Hamilton Woman

Churchill had little to do with the creation of *City Lights*. The question of Churchill's involvement in 1941's *That Hamilton Woman* is more inviting as the source of the film's inspiration, but far less rooted in actual fact. The historical record is clouded by a conspiratorial tone of Churchill's supposed involvement as well as producer-director Alexander Korda's non-cinematic

activities in peacetime America between the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 and the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Korda is a legendary figure in the history of British cinema, along with his brothers Zoltan and Vincent (see p. 12). The Kordas were born in Hungary, and emigrated as a result of the postwar political situation (Alexander seems to have been a supporter of the brief Communist takeover). Korda moved into the Austrian and German film communities before heading to Hollywood in the late Twenties, and then to France and Great Britain. He hit the big time as the producer of Charles Laughton's *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933) and Leslie Howard's *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934). He then used a script by H. G. Wells to lay out the future of the world in *Things to Come* (1936); as that film remains seminal to the science fiction genre, so too does his magisterial *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940) stand central in the development of fantasy and special effects. Korda moved to the United States to complete the Arabian tale, and he then made *That Hamilton Woman* in the United States as well.

Korda had known Churchill during the politician's years of political exile, paying him as a script consultant-

Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* (1944)





Left: Charlie Chaplin's famous *City Lights* (1931)
Above: Filmed in the US, *That Hamilton Woman!* (1941) was released in Britain as *Lady Hamilton*.

during Korda's failed attempt to film the life of Lawrence of Arabia, as well as having Churchill provide scenarios for short subjects on political and historical issues. That relationship forms the basis for any speculation that Churchill set Korda to any illicit activities as a British propaganda conduit in America, including inciting Korda to make *That Hamilton Woman* as a way to jog the Americans out of their isolationism. Unfortunately, this can only be speculation, since no actual proof exists of any kind of specific instigation.

But what can be proven? Three things for certain. First, an obvious parallel is intended between the tale of Lord Nelson fighting Napoleon and the need to fight Hitler, most obviously in Nelson's speech arguing for continued fighting against Napoleon instead of an ill-advised peace treaty: "Gentlemen, you will never make peace with Napoleon! Napoleon cannot be master of the world until he has smashed us up, and believe me, gentlemen, he means to be master of the world! You cannot make peace with dictators. You have to destroy them, wipe them out!" Very Churchillian that, and a scene essentially replicated in 2017's *Darkest Hour* with Gary Oldman as Churchill himself.

The doomed love affair in *That Hamilton Woman* was intended to draw in both men and women. Casting Vivien Leigh in the aftermath of her smash hit *Gone with the Wind* and Laurence Olivier in the wake of his impressive hits *Wuthering Heights* and *Rebecca* was a smart box-office move. The two stars had finally married and were in the throes of a celebrity obsession on the part of the public

(mirrored in later generations by Elizabeth Taylor marrying Richard Burton in the Sixties).

A second fact is that the America Firsters went nuts, accusing Korda of attempting to provoke the US into war with Hitler (they made the same accusation against Chaplin and *The Great Dictator*, as well as other Hollywood productions). Korda was summoned to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on these accusations, but the attack on Pearl Harbor happened right before Korda was due to be grilled on 12 December 1941 as a suspected British intelligence agent.

The third fact is *That Hamilton Woman* is widely regarded as Churchill's favorite film, with accounts of his viewing the movie ranging from seventeen to eighty-three times (oddly enough, at least one source suggests it was also Joseph Stalin's favorite). Did Churchill suggest the film be made? Certainly, the concept is possible, but no evidence exists to support that claim. What we do know is that he was very much in love with Vivien Leigh. (Well, who wasn't?) After the war, Churchill gave Leigh one of his best paintings, which she kept in her bedroom for the rest of her life (see *FH* 177). Churchill also supported Leigh's efforts to save a historic theatre in the Fifties. Churchill had a fondness for her performance that exceeded his critical faculties (of the three favorites, *That Hamilton Woman* remains the least regarded by film historians).

We also know that *That Hamilton Woman* provided a strong historical context for fighting Hitler, and for boosting the morale of the British people. Much of what

the film was saying was what Churchill was saying on an almost daily, if not hourly, basis.

As a film, *That Hamilton Woman* was made remarkably quickly and far more cheaply than one might expect, given the lavish sets and costumes. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences saw fit to nominate the hit for Best Cinematography (for a lovely sense of shadows), Best Art Direction (for Vincent Korda and Julia Heron), Best Special Effects (the naval combat scenes), and Best Sound (for which it won the Oscar). In the wake of its success, Churchill wrote to Alexander Korda on 15 June 1941: “Many congratulations upon your admirable film about Nelson.”²

Henry V

Of the three films discussed here, we know Churchill was a primary force in getting *Henry V* made, as Laurence Olivier was prompted by Churchill to create a movie that would boost British morale by reminding them of their greatest wartime king. Churchill arranged for government financing of a substantial part of the budget as well. The Prime Minister thought it “would be a rousing film for the country.”³ One is tempted to point at the false anecdote about Churchill being asked to cut funding for the arts, and ending the request with the retort “Then what are we fighting for?” as a perfect summation of Churchill’s attitude about making *Henry V*.

Olivier had been using speeches from *Henry V* to entertain the troops (“once more unto the breach” and “We few, we happy few” were particularly apt). He cut the play substantially, emphasizing the patriotic aspects and downplaying the less savory moments of Henry’s character (such as approving of rape as a war tactic—little things like that). Filmed largely in Ireland for the exterior scenes and in England for the interiors, *Henry V* is a triumph of the creative spirit, as it moves us from a patently false recreation of the Globe and the staging practices of Shakespeare’s day to a more realistic use of sets as one might find on the stage in Olivier’s time, to a completely realistic battle of Agincourt, shot with all the artistry of modern cinematography. From start to finish, *Henry V* is a truly unique film that was the first completely successful cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare, and it still strikes many viewers as remarkably postmodern in its approach (Olivier would try again with *Hamlet* though with less acclaimed results, due largely to his unnecessary cuts and a bluntly low-denominator approach to his audience). As

a director, Olivier set an impossibly high bar for himself, and one that he would never again come close to equaling.

The score by Sir William Walton is also a classic, and remains a model for this kind of composition. *Henry V* was a commercial hit as well, garnering Olivier an honorary Oscar for “his outstanding achievement as actor, producer and director in bringing *Henry V* to the screen,” as well as competitive nominations for him as Best Actor and Best Picture.⁴ Walton also received a nomination, as did the Art Direction. When Churchill first saw the picture on 25 November 1944, his private secretary Jock Colville recorded: “The P.M. went into ecstasies about it”—right and honorable response.⁵

Deeply Romantic

Once upon a time, I used to scare people with a parlor game, in which I asked for their three favorite books or movies, the ones they obsessed over. I then proceeded to tell them things about themselves I could not possibly know (I courted my wife this way; she was charmed, which tells you something about both of us). Were I to play this game with Churchill and his three favorites, I would argue he was deeply romantic, enchanted by underdogs, concerned about the difficulties of the heart, and centered on selflessness and self-sacrifice. In short, Winston Churchill was a most admirable human being with a good sense of humor and a love of fair play—but mischievous. ☺

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An Irreverent Look at the Oscars.

Endnotes

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“Let It Roll”: Churchill’s Chartwell Cinema

By Justin Reash

Churchill. Chartwell. Cinema. How did an unused room on the lower level of Chartwell become a portal for Churchill’s escapism? By chance, as it happens. Though not a subject found in many books or academic studies, films played an important role in Winston Churchill’s life. They were an extension of his personality. Like painting, watching movies helped him to relax.

Furthermore, as an artist himself, films allowed Churchill to criticize and explore the creativity of others. But movies held another attraction for him. Stories are told on the screen, and Churchill was passionate for stories. He wrote stories, spoke stories, and painted stories. Thus, films were yet another medium for him to live his storied life.

Churchill’s love for the cinema produced memories for people beyond himself. His granddaughter Celia Sandys says that some of her first memories of Chartwell, her grandfather’s home in Kent, are those of watching films in rooms that smelled of “Napoleon brandy and cigars and my grandfather saying ‘let it roll’”—which was the signal to start the film. Lady Williams of Elvel, who as Jane Portal worked as a secretary to Churchill from 1949 to 1955, remembers spending many weekend evenings in the cinema and how much pleasure it brought her boss.

Celia and Jane recently discussed the Chartwell cinema together at the 2017 International Churchill Conference in New York City. Based on their memories and those recorded by others, we can tell the story of how, thanks to good friends and new technology, Churchill’s treasured home became the epicenter for one of his great passions and most important forms of entertainment.

Failed but Fateful Gift

The cinema setup at Chartwell was a present to the former Prime Minister and his family. Lady Williams was working for Churchill when his friend

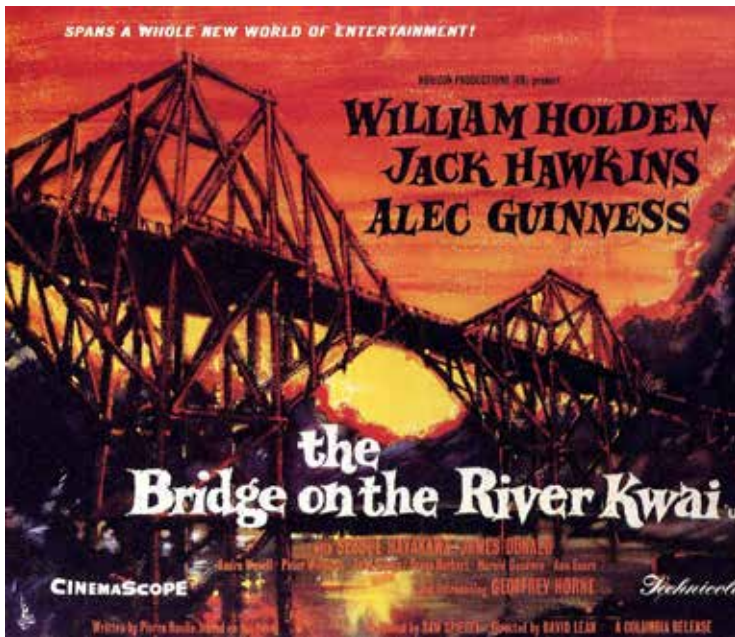
Sir Alexander Korda, a leading film producer and director (see p. 12), desired to give Churchill a gift. The filmmaker and politician had a long relationship going back before the Second World War, when Churchill had agreed to act as a consultant to Korda’s planned but never realized production about T. E. Lawrence. In 1934 Churchill, “signed a contract with London Films [Korda’s company] to edit a series of films.”¹ Author Mark Helprin has even claimed that Churchill used Korda as a go-between to President Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s.²

The friendship continued after the war. Out of office following the general election of 1945, Churchill resumed his professional writing by starting work on his massive six-volume war memoirs. Busy as always, Churchill typically worked late into the night on the project by dictating to secretaries, who became understandably exhausted. In 1950, Korda had an idea to improve the process.

Lady Williams remembers: “At lunch one day, Korda said to Churchill, ‘I’m so anxious for you because you’re never at leisure; you’re never with your family! There’s a wonderful invention; it’s called a Dictaphone. I’d like to give you one.’”

Korda suggested that the Dictaphone be installed in Churchill’s bedroom. This was close to the study, and Churchill did much of his work in bed. One wall of the adjoining bathroom was removed, and a cupboard was installed to hold the machine.

Dictaphones had first been developed in the early twentieth century by the company that later became known as Columbia Records, which traced its own foundation back to Alexander Graham Bell. Like gramophones, the machines initially relied on wax cylinders to record sound. In 1947, however, Dictaphone introduced what it called Dictabelt technology to cut a mechanical groove into a plastic belt. This created a permanent recording, which was admissible in court.



"If he did not like what he had seen, he would grunt one word 'bloody.'" — Churchill's nurse, Roy Howells



After one of these new Dictaphones was installed at Chartwell, Churchill's excited family informed him at dinner that all he had to do was speak into the machine, and a secretary would later produce a transcript, thus sparing her another late night at the office.

"The next morning at 8:00 am, after a night of fun," Lady Williams recalled, "I was suddenly summoned to Churchill's room. Upon entering he said to me, 'take it away. I don't like it. I can never work like this. I must be able to dictate, to hear the English language as I speak it and not to a machine'—so it was removed."

The Cinema Arrives

After the ill-fated Dictaphone was banished, Churchill sent a letter to Korda, which the filmmaker replied to immediately. "I entirely understand your views of the Dictaphone," Lady Williams remembers Korda writing, "but I do want to give you a substantially good gift, so I'm giving you a cinema." In contrast to the reception he gave to the Dictaphone, Churchill "was thrilled," Lady Williams stated.

What had been a dining room on the lower ground floor of Chartwell was perfect for a cinema, which could seat up to thirty people. The cinema's furnishings included ceiling pendants with enamelled shade, a pair of slatwood duck boards, an RCA Victorphone high fidelity amplifier, and (concealed in an adjacent room) two 35 mm projectors. Living close by in the village of Westerham was a retired cinema projectionist, Mr. Shaw, who was called in to install the equipment and, afterwards, show the films that Churchill hosted. "This is Mr. Shaw," Churchill would say when introducing him to guests, "He's a Labour man but quite a nice fellow."³ Mrs. Shaw assisted her husband by collecting the reels.

The cinema was on the east side of the building facing the terrace lawn and lakes. The windows were blocked up so that a large screen could be installed across the entire wall at one end of the room. A central aisle was installed with permanent seats reserved for Churchill and his wife Clementine. Churchill's nurse Roy Howells described these seating arrangements in his memoirs: "Sir Winston had a huge chintz covered armchair to the left of the centre aisle about halfway down the long room. On his immediate left was another armchair, usually occupied by his principal guest, and on the other side of the gangway was a six-seater settee where Lady Churchill would sit with the other guests. Behind this luxury row were four rows of hard chairs, filled at every weekend showing by

housemaids, butler, cook, gardeners and their wives, secretaries and car drivers."⁴

A winding room adjacent to the cinema included a Hilton and Hilton pianoforte in mahogany case, a refrigerator, a deal table to which the winding apparatus was fixed, fish tanks, cupboards, and a cigar cabinet. Once completed, the makeshift cinema became the gathering place for all Chartwell guests, from family members to the future Prime Minister Edward Heath.

A frequent audience member was Churchill's namesake grandson. "I used to enjoy being up in the projection room with Mr. Shaw," Young Winston recalled. "He and I would watch the film through a small glass panel in the wall and wait for the telltale mark at the top right-hand corner of the screen, which was the signal that the reel was about to run out and it was time to start the second machine to insure perfect synchronization, so that the reel change would pass unnoticed. If the film was particularly long like *Gone with the Wind*—another of Grandpapa's favorites—we would have a fifteen minute break while brandy glasses were recharged, cigars relit, and anyone who wanted to could, to use one of his naval expressions, 'pump ship.'"⁵

Heroes

Howells recalled, "The films were sent down by rail from London, and whenever Sir Winston was at Chartwell he saw at least three a week."⁶ One of the responsibilities of Lady Williams in her secretarial appointment was to select possible films to be shown in the Chartwell cinema. "It was my job to choose the movies we watched," she recalled. "Every week I'd ring the secretary at Alexander Korda's office and inquire which films were available." "I was then given a list to choose from. Some of my choices were not a huge success, but more were. I knew that if there were any historical films available he'd be very happy."

Screenings always took place after dinner, usually at about 9:15, though they were frequently delayed, because many times Clementine would have to chivvy her husband along as he lingered over brandy and coffee at the dinner table. Lady Williams or another secretary would have typed up a plot summary of the available films so that Churchill could read these and select the one he wanted to see.

Churchill enjoyed period films, especially if it included his favorite actor Laurence Olivier. *Henry V* (1944) was one of his most beloved films, with Olivier playing



the victorious king (see p. 25). How unsurprising that Churchill enjoyed this film version of Shakespeare's dramatic tale, complete with the English conquering a foreign foe. As he later did while watching Richard Burton play in *Hamlet* at the Old Vic in 1953, Churchill recited the lines along with Laurence Olivier while watching Olivier's 1948 film version of the play. He would then run upstairs to check his memory against a copy of Shakespeare's text. Another favorite was Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949), a film noir classic depicting an American investigating a suspicious death in post-war Vienna. Starring Joseph Cotton and Orson Welles, the movie was produced by Korda and voted the greatest British film of all time by the British Films Institute in 1999.⁷

Churchill's taste in films covered many genres. He especially enjoyed historically based films such as *War and Peace* (1956), which was the first truly lengthy film to be shown at Chartwell. For ease of viewing, it was shown over two nights. Other war films that he liked included *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), *The Guns of Navarone* (1961), and *The Longest Day* (1962). One war film he admired, no doubt in part because of the fact that it dramatized an experience he had lived through himself, was *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), the first all-talking non-musical to win the Oscar for Best Picture.

Westerns, the prototypical American entertainment export, also ranked high on Churchill's list. He watched Alan Ladd in *Shane* (1953) many times but would watch "any Western just as long as there were lots of horse riding and gunfighting in it," Howells remembered.⁸ Westerns featuring Kirk Douglas, Gary Cooper, and James Stewart all found their way to Chartwell, as did, inevitably, films starring the King of Westerns, John Wayne. Churchill, however, did not know that the "Duke" was a distant relative—a fifth cousin twice removed who idolized Churchill (see *FH* 172).

Remarkable

Clearly Churchill loved films with lots of action, swashbucklers as well as Westerns. But his taste also ran to other styles. The 1952 adaptation of Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the 1958 musical *Gigi* were both big hits. "If he did not like what he had seen," recalled Howells, "he would grunt one word 'bloody.' If he liked it, he used to say 'Remarkable.' Nothing else."⁹ *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957) went over especially well, since it had two of his favorite stars, Charles Laughton and Marlene Dietrich.

Like most men of his era, Churchill was a fan of Greta Garbo, but his most beloved actress was

Olivier's wife Vivien Leigh. Not only did her films play frequently at Chartwell, especially 1941's *That Hamilton Woman* (see p. 23), but Churchill went to see Olivier and Leigh on stage in *Titus Andronicus*, then one of the most rarely performed Shakespeare plays.

One film that Churchill never saw, unfortunately, was David Lean's sweeping 1962 epic *Lawrence of Arabia*. Churchill had been friends with Lawrence when the two worked together to settle the Middle East after the First World War. Lawrence had been a guest at Chartwell several times and impressed young Mary Churchill when he wore his robes to dinner. Alas, the Chartwell cinema was not geared to accommodate the widescreen film that Churchill no doubt would have found mesmerizing.

One of the most unusual films to be screened at Chartwell was the twenty-seven-part television documentary produced in 1960 and 1961 by Jack LeVien. Based on Churchill's memoirs, *The Valiant Years* featured the voice of Richard Burton reading extracts from the books. The complete series was shown in the Chartwell cinema over the course of four special sittings. Howells, whose "nursing" tasks included sitting behind Churchill in order to supply him with cigars and light them, recalled that "more than at any other time, I was conscious of his greatness as I saw film flashbacks of him at his peak and heard his deep voice rasping out his wonderful wartime speeches."¹⁰

The Animal Kingdom

Historian Andrew Roberts spoke to the 2016 Churchill conference about Churchill's famous lachrymosity. According to Lady Williams, her boss cried often while watching films, especially if they featured animals. Here the Walt Disney studios filled the bill. The heyday of the Chartwell cinema coincided with the time that Disney was producing his True-Life Adventure series, which pioneered the field of the nature documentary. *The Living Desert* (1953) proved very much to Churchill's liking, for example, especially since it was filmed in Technicolor, which he found increasingly preferable to black and white.

Another Disney film Churchill was bound to love was *The Incredible Journey* (1963) about two dogs and a cat that successfully make an epic journey across Ontario, Canada, to rejoin their family from whom they had become separated.

"Sometimes as a supporting program," Howells remembered, "a special film would be shown of Sir Winston

down by the fishponds feeding a little red robin. This robin appeared every time he went down to feed the fish, and Sir Winston was so fond of it that he had the film made. It lasted about a quarter of an hour and was invariably shown when any special guest was down. It always came on to round off the evening after the main feature."¹¹

A less satisfying animal film that Lady Williams once selected was a French release that told the story of a boy who rescues a white stallion from the marshes. The boy and horse form a close bond, only for the horse to be killed by hunters at the end of the film. Afterwards, Churchill went up to his secretary with tears pouring down his face and asked, "How could you?"

Fin

After Churchill's death in 1965, Chartwell was opened to the public by the National Trust. According to Katherine Carter, Chartwell's Project Curator and Collections Manager, Clementine Churchill insisted the cinema room be restored to its previous condition. "Lady Churchill wanted the house to represent the golden age of Chartwell, that being its pre-war layout," Carter said. Unfortunately, no photographs of the original cinema are known to exist. In 2016, however, the room was temporarily restored to a vintage cinema setting as part of a tradition whereby Chartwell is rearranged each Christmas. ☺

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5. Winston S. Churchill, *Memories and Adventures* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989), p. 56.
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11. *Ibid.*

Churchill on Hollywood



In September 1929, Winston Churchill made his one and only visit to Los Angeles as part of a grand tour of North America in the company of his son Randolph, brother Jack, and nephew Johnny. His visit coincided with the period when the motion picture industry was making the transition from silent film to “talkies.” At the end of the year Churchill published a description of what he found in Hollywood in an article for the Daily Telegraph.

Los Angeles spreads more widely over the level shores than any city of equal numbers in the world. It is a gay and happy city, where everyone has room to live, where no one lacks a small, but sufficient dwelling, and every house stands in a separate garden.

Here we enter a strange and an amusing world, the like of which has certainly never been seen before. Dozens of studios, covering together thousands of acres, and employing scores of thousands of very highly paid performers and technicians, minister to the gaiety of the world. It is like going behind the scenes of a theatre magnified a thousand-fold. Battalions of skilled workmen construct with magical quickness streets of London, of China, of India, jungles, mountains, and every conceivable form of scenery in solid and comparatively durable style. In a neighbouring creek pirate ships, Spanish galleons and Roman galleys ride at anchor.

This Peter Pan township is thronged with the most odd and varied of crowds that can be imagined. Here is a stream of South Sea Islanders with sweet little nut-brown children, hurrying to keep their studio appointments. There is a corps-de-ballet which would rival the Moulin Rouge. Ferocious brigands, bristling with property pistols, cowboys, train robbers, heroines in distress of all descriptions, aged cronies stalk or stroll or totter to and fro.

Twenty films are in the making at once. A gang of wild Circassian horsemen filters past a long stream of camels from a desert caravan. Keen young men regulate the most elaborate processes of photography, and the most perfect installations for bridling light and sound. Competition is intense; the hours of toil are hard, and so are the hours of waiting. Youthful beauty claims her indisputable rights; but the aristocracy of the filmland found themselves on personality. It is a factory in appearance the queerest in the world, whose principal characteristics are hard work, frugality and discipline.

The apparition of the “talkies” created a revolution among the “movies.” Hollywood was shaken to its foundations. No one could challenge the popularity of these upstarts. Their technique might be defective; their voices in reproduction rough and unmusical; their dialect weak; but talking films were what the public wanted; and what the public wants it has to get. So all is turned upside down, and new experts arrive with more delicate apparatus, and a far more complicated organization must be set up. Everywhere throughout filmland the characters must be made to talk as well as act. New values are established, and old favourites have to look to their laurels. Now that everyone is making talking pictures, not only darkness but the perfect silence must be procurable whenever required, and balloons float above the studios to scare away the buzzings of wandering aeroplanes.

Alone among producers Charlie Chaplin remains unconverted, claiming that pantomime is the genius of drama, and that the imagination of the audience supplies better words than machinery can render, and prepared to vindicate the silent film by the glittering weapons of wit and pathos.

On the whole, I share his opinion.

THE FULTON REPORT

From the National Churchill Museum

“Add my most loyal salutations to you-know-who and tell him I’m going to do him justice in bronze.”¹

—Sculptor David McFall to Wendy Reves

On 28 January 1958, sculptor David McFall RA arrived in the south of France with a singular mission: to capture an image of one of the most famous and most recognizable men in the world—Sir Winston Churchill.

The formal announcement that McFall, thirty-eight and a native Scot, would be commissioned to create an eight-foot bronze statue of Sir Winston as a tribute to the statesman’s thirty-three years representing Woodford (formerly Epping) would follow in the weeks ahead, but McFall wasted little time in getting to work.

When McFall arrived at Villa La Pausa, Roquebrune, Cap Martin, the home of Churchill’s publisher Emery Reves and his American wife Wendy, the sculptor found his subject on the brink of illness.

“When I went to Roquebrune to sculpt him, just before his illness, I was struck by something in him I had not expected to see. Tragedy. His age is a matter of great sorrow to him, and I have caught him at a very tragic moment of his life. I felt I had to do this intimate, unhappy head of him. I shall not use this head for the statue. The statue will be of legend. But this is just the head of a man. In his glory—and disappointment.”² The bronze casting of this sorrowful Churchill is a recent acquisition of the National Churchill Museum at Westminster College.

While McFall’s initial sculpture of Churchill may have been influenced by Churchill’s lamentable mood and imminent illness, it is a strikingly honest and intimate portrait. It was cast in bronze and exhibited in London at the Royal Academy of the Arts during the 1958 Summer Exhibition. At the time, McFall commented on his approach to sculpting Churchill: “I know he doesn’t like pompous, self-important artists, so I made myself as invisible as possible. I put him on an ordinary chair instead of a rostrum, which meant that I had to work on my knees. And I used the minimum equipment. By persuading him that I was hardly there at all, I caught the private, instead of public, expression.”³

Putting the private depiction aside, McFall fervently turned his attention to creating, as promised, the “legend” of Churchill. With Wendy Reves as intercessor, the sculptor contacted Clementine Churchill, who immediately took interest in McFall’s work. Lady Churchill did not hesitate to provide suggestions, offer advice, and send photographs of her husband taken during the war—his “finest hours.”

“Dear Mr McFall, I tried unsuccessfully to reach you on the telephone this morning, as I wanted to talk to you about the statue,” wrote Lady Churchill. “I think it a remark-

able achievement; but I am disturbed at what to me, seems an exaggeration—indeed a caricature of Winston. Here are two photographs taken during the war period. In both we have the projecting lower lip, but not swollen as it appears to be in the statue.”⁴

Advice from Lady Churchill, her daughter Diana, and Wendy Reves informed and influenced McFall, who ultimately created a statue of legend. The final work was unveiled on 31 October 1959 by Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery with Sir Winston in attendance. Sir Winston, upon inspection of the statue from every angle—in one of the shortest speeches of his life—remarked, “Very nice.” ☺

Timothy Riley is Sandra L. and Monroe E. Trout Director and Chief Curator of the National Churchill Museum.

Endnotes

1. Letter from David McFall to Wendy Reves, 27 February 1958, Emery Reves Papers, National Churchill Museum at Westminster College.
2. *Daily Herald*, 31 March 1958.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Letter from Clementine Churchill to David McFall, 13 December 1958, Reves Papers.



Above left:

David McFall RA Woodford Statue of Sir Winston Churchill, Bronze, 1959.

Above right:

David McFall RA *Rocquebrune Head*, Bronze, 1958. Collection of National Churchill Museum at Westminster College. Gift of Sheila and James Warren, 2017.

Note:

David McFall's *Rocquebrune Head* will be included in the upcoming exhibition "Imaging Churchill" at the National Churchill Museum at Westminster College. The exhibition, which opens March 1, will also include sculptures of Churchill by Sir Jacob Epstein and Oscar Nemon.

Cohen Corner

My Early Life

It is hard to believe that, in a life rich with writings and crowned with the 1953 Nobel Prize for Literature, Churchill wrote so little autobiography. In a year in which he has been so present cinematically (two feature films—*Churchill* and *Darkest Hour*, an off-screen but strong presence in *Dunkirk*, and a significant role in the first series of *The Crown*), it seems appropriate to have a brief look at his sole autobiographical volume, *My Early Life*, which is also the only one of his books ever developed into a film, 1972's *Young Winston* (see p. 10).

Churchill did write numerous autobiographical articles over the years—including, of course, the story of his escape from the Boers—that were published in periodicals such as *Nash's*, the *Strand*, and *Cosmopolitan*. Seeking to gain additional income from the earliest of these, Churchill proposed in 1930 to use them in creating his first book since starting work on *The World Crisis*, four volumes of which had then been completed.

In February 1930, Churchill announced his projected autobiographical volume to his British publisher, Thornton Butterworth. He said that he wished to have the 50,000 words “in the articles I have already assembled” for *My Early Life* “set up in proof.” His demands were precise. “The book would vary from 100,000 to 125,000 words. It should be published at not less than a guinea. It could come out in the autumn publishing season of 1931.” In the end, Butterworth agreed with the typesetting proposal, and Churchill sent the first instalment off to Butler and Tanner, the printers, on 12 March. He was, as usual, enthusiastic about the content. “They [the old articles] seem to me to read extremely well and, when woven into the texture of a continuous narrative, they will I believe make a book of adventure, possibly of some permanent merit.”

Churchill next proposed that the publication date for the memoirs be advanced to the spring of 1931, putting off the last of the First World War volumes, *The Eastern Front*, until the autumn. “I feel ready to go on with these Memoirs now and my mind is full of ideas about them,” while, he explained, the last volume of *The World Crisis* “requires a great amount of new study and will gain if more time is taken over it.”

Once he had Butterworth's approval regarding the revised publishing schedule, Churchill broached the idea of the book to Charles Scribner, his American publisher:

As you know, I have in the last five or six years written a series of articles on my past adventures, covering broadly speaking the first thirty years of my life. About 70,000 words...will be directly available for publication in book form. I shall write another 30 or 40,000 words so as to make a homogeneous narrative. This is easy for me as I have it all in my head....I think there is no doubt it will have wide popular value.

Churchill enclosed a synopsis and advised that the book would be a maximum of 110,000 words “of which perhaps 30,000 will be new material. I think myself it would have a very large sale as a book of real adventures, and of a young man's struggle with life.”

Initially, Churchill anticipated that the “tale will end either in the year 1900 when I got into Parliament, or in the year 1905 when I first took office.” By 30 July he had changed his mind in this respect and, in fact, the book ended with these words: “Events were soon to arise in the fiscal sphere which were to plunge me into new struggles and absorb my thoughts and energies at least until September 1908, when I married and lived happily ever afterwards.”

By early August, Churchill's secretary Violet Pearman sent Butler and Tanner “the last bundle of proofs” with the request that the printers return twelve copies of everything, which would “enable Mr Churchill to have twelve copies which he can circulate to various people before finally going into page proof. He would particularly like the proofs on Friday as he wishes to send one to America urgently.”

Churchill's deal with the British publisher was attractive. Butterworth agreed to pay him a royalty of 25% to 5000 copies, 27½% over 7500 and 30% over 10,000. The final text was about 130,000 words, and Butterworth was torn between leaving the price at twenty-one shillings and raising it to twenty-five.

Churchill sent proofs of the volume around to some of his close friends and colleagues, including T. E. Shaw (better known as Lawrence of Arabia), Stanley Baldwin, and Lord Beaverbrook. Their comments were extremely favourable. To Baldwin, Churchill replied, in part, “I am hopeful that the book will do more than it was originally written to do, namely, to pay the Tax collector. There may even be a small surplus to nourish the author and his family.” David Lough's thorough and entertaining tale of Churchill's finances, *No More Champagne*, explains the interweaving of Churchill's financial machinations, book contracts, and fiscal pressures.

Despite the wishful sentiment of the reviewer in *The Times* of 20 October, that “We can only hope

that this autobiography is only an instalment," this remained Churchill's only *purely* autobiographical volume. Revelations of Churchill's wish to continue the autobiography can be found from time to time in his letters. In one, shortly after he agreed to write a serialised *Life* for Lord Riddell in the *News of the World* (see C460a), he said to Thornton Butterworth:

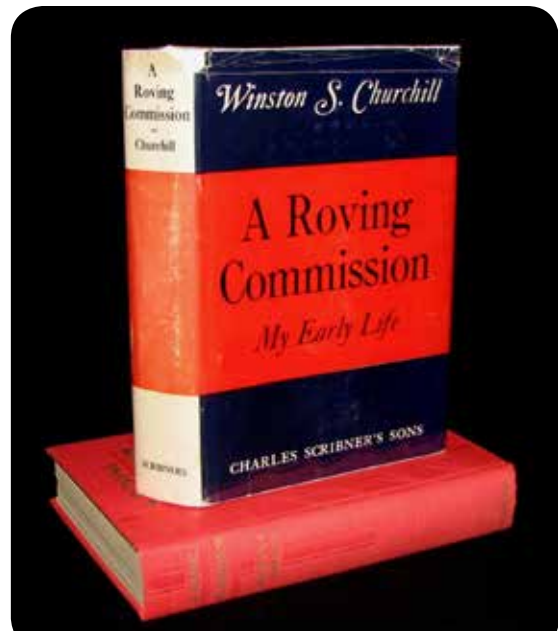
I have undertaken to write for Newnes a short autobiographical sketch amounting to 35,000 words, from the standpoint of my sixtieth birthday (now impending), to be published in *News of the World* during the first quarter of next year. This has turned my mind to the continuation of my autobiography which I imagine has three more volumes. This I hope you will do for me when the time comes.

In December of that year, Major Pollock, manager of the Book Department at George Newnes Limited, had proposed a work to Churchill to follow upon their successful publication of *The Great War*. In his letter of 5 January 1935 refusing *that* proposal for the time being, Churchill did reveal some of his intentions regarding his own autobiography. In that letter, he said: "It seems to me moreover that I might tell the history of this period more easily (and more attractively) as a continuance of my biography [*sic*], the first volume of which has been published as 'My Early Life'. I have always had the intention of completing this volume by volume, and its publication in a serial form when sufficient material has accumulated would be a project which I should like to examine later on with you, if we are both still alive at that date."

It never happened.

My Early Life has, however, been the most commercially successful single-volume work by Churchill. There are no fewer than twenty-three separate editions and issues in the English language, from the first British appearance on 20 October 1930 through the customarily beautiful Folio Society edition of 2007. The first American edition was published under the title *A Roving Commission* four days after the first British edition. Scribners has kept the autobiography in print longer than any other of its Churchill-authored titles after switching to the original British title in 1939. *My Early Life* has also been translated into eighteen languages, more than any other Churchill work except the *Second World War*.

Among the oddest of the English-language appearances is that published in Stockholm in 1936 by Albert Bonniers Förlag Svenska Bokförlaget, but there is none rarer than the Canadian Nelson "appearance" in 1930. I use that term advisedly since there never was a



First American Edition

separate Canadian *edition* or issue. It cannot be identified by the volume itself (which is the Thornton Butterworth edition with strong, reddish-purple, calico-texture cloth) but only by the dust jacket, which is essentially the original British dust jacket modified to include the name of the Canadian distributor "Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd." above that of "Thornton Butterworth" on the spine. Additionally, the Canadian price of \$4.50 is printed on the front, the spine, and a rear panel. Only two such copies are known.

The popularity of *My Early Life* has led to numerous editions being produced. In Britain alone, there have been Keystone Library (1937–40) and Macmillan (1941–44) issues, a British Reprint Society edition (1944), numerous printings of an Odhams edition in standard and deluxe bindings (1947–1965), thirteen printings of an Odhams School Edition (1958–64), eighteen printings of a Fontana paperback edition (1959–88), a new cased edition by Leo Cooper (1989), a Mandarin paperback issue, an Ulverscroft Large Print edition (1992), and an Eland paperback in 2000.

It would be fair to say that this charming, delightful, amusing, and informative autobiography is also extremely accessible. As of the date of this article, hundreds of copies of the book (in print or its audio CD version) are available online and elsewhere. It is hard to imagine a better entry-level introduction to Sir Winston. ☺

Ronald I. Cohen MBE is author of *A Bibliography of the Writings of Sir Winston Churchill, 3 vols.* (2006).



125 YEARS AGO
Winter 1893 • Age 18
“Distinctly Inclined to Be Inattentive”

Winter was not kind to Winston, but, as usual, he had no one but himself to blame. It began on 10 January during his holiday at the estate of his aunt Lady Wimborne. While being chased by his younger brother Jack and a cousin, Winston was cornered on a long bridge across a ravine some thirty feet below. There were a number of pine trees around whose tops reached the level of the bridge. Winston climbed over the railing. As he later wrote in *My Early Life*, “Would it not be possible to leap on to one of [the trees] and slip down the pole-like stem, breaking off each tier of branches as one descended until the fall was broken? To plunge or not to plunge, that was the question! In a second, I had plunged, throwing out my arms to embrace the summit of the fir tree. The argument was correct; the data were absolutely wrong. It was three days before I regained consciousness.”

It was a long fall onto hard ground and, in addition to a ruptured kidney, he had also broken his thigh, although the latter injury was not discovered until 1963 when an x-ray was taken after he had a fall in Monte Carlo.

Ten days later, Winston received the news that he again had failed the entrance exam to Sandhurst, even though he had improved his score. Lord Randolph, after consultation with Harrow’s headmaster, decided to send Winston to a “crammer,” Captain W. H. James, whose sole purpose was to prepare students for the Sandhurst entrance exam. As Churchill wrote in *My Early Life*, “It was said that no one who was not a congenital idiot could avoid passing thence into the Army.”

A 7 March 1893 letter to Lord Randolph from Captain James illustrates the problems encountered in cramming Winston: “I had to speak to him the other day about his casual manner. I think the boy means well but he is distinctly inclined to be inattentive and to think too much of his own abilities....”

100 YEARS AGO
Winter 1918 • Age 43
“Their Generals Are Better Than Ours”

As winter began, Churchill was apprehensive about the ability of Allied forces to withstand Germany’s forthcoming offensive now that its peace with the Bolsheviks would enable it to shift millions of men to the Western Front. On 19 January he wrote a

letter to Lloyd George expressing his concern that the Government was not adequately preparing for such an attack: “I don’t think we are doing enough for our army. Really, I must make that point to you. We are not raising its strength as we ought.... The imminent danger is on the western front: & the crisis will come before June. A defeat here will be fatal.... The Germans are a terrible foe, & their generals are better than ours. Ponder & then *act*.”

In Paris in late February, Churchill speculated to Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador to France and the uncle of his sister-in-law Gwendoline, what he thought the terms of a negotiated peace with Germany might be. As Bertie wrote in his diary: “Winston’s views are peculiar. At one moment he said that the war ought not to continue a day beyond what might be necessary to free Belgium and to obtain for France, not necessarily the whole of Alsace Lorraine, but such part of it as would not enable her to feel and say that she had been deserted by England....”

That Churchill was prepared to be magnanimous in victory is not surprising, but three weeks later he rejected any thought of peace negotiations with Germany any time soon in a letter to Lord Wimborne who had asked him “to use your influence in the direction of sane accommodation.” Churchill replied that the prosecution of the war “will certainly continue on a great scale; for we are reinforced by America & Germany by the capture of Russia. The Germans are in no mood for reason and I should greatly fear any settlement with them unless & until they have been definitely worsted. At present they think they have won.”

Meanwhile, in a paper circulated to the Cabinet on 5 March, Churchill set out his vision of how to win the war without using the calamitous

trench warfare tactics both sides had employed thus far. He proposed using tanks and airplanes rather than full frontal assaults against barbed wire and machine guns. This, he wrote, would be “essentially different in its composition and method of warfare from any that have yet been employed on either side. . . . the resources are available, the knowledge is available, the time is available, the result is certain: nothing is lacking except the will.”

Churchill, of course, was not in the War Cabinet and his paper went far beyond the brief of the Minister of Munitions. One member of the War Cabinet, First Lord of the Admiralty Sir Eric Geddes, was impressed. He wrote to Churchill on 6 March that he was “most interested in reading your inspiring paper. . . . I hope it will bring great thoughts to the minds of those who dictate our tactics.”

Sir Douglas Haig, for one, was not convinced. The Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force continued to believe in the efficacy of infantry and artillery to succeed. So did the German General Staff. Churchill was in France on 21 March when the Germans began the most successful offensive of the war to date, sending the Allied armies reeling in retreat back across the Marne and the Somme. Churchill’s fears expressed on 19 January were well founded. Even though they knew the offensive was coming, the Allies were not prepared to repel it.

75 YEARS AGO **Winter 1943 • Age 68** **“His Immense Vigour”**

Churchill spent Christmas at Chequers with his family, where he was informed on Christmas Day that Admiral Darlan, the High Commissioner in French North Africa, had been assassinat-

ed by a French student in Algiers. The Americans had been the ones who pushed to work with Darlan to persuade the Vichy French forces opposing the Allied landings in North Africa to cease their resistance. Churchill, nevertheless, had come under criticism at home for dealing with a Nazi collaborator who had continued to enforce Nazi laws against the Jews in French North Africa. The assassination was, therefore, politically convenient, and evidence suggests that MI6 was complicit.

Beginning in early January, Churchill began a series of long air journeys lasting nearly a month, which culminated upon his return to England in a diagnosis of pneumonia that kept him bed-ridden for most of the month. On 12 January, Churchill flew to Casablanca, where he met two days later with President Roosevelt, both men having brought with them their Chiefs of Staff. The meetings took place over the next eight days, and major decisions were made, including an emphasis on the Mediterranean theatre, thereby postponing until 1944 a cross-channel invasion of Europe. Once Tunisia had fallen, it was agreed that Sicily would be the next target, preparatory to an invasion of the Italian mainland. On 23 January, Montgomery’s Eighth Army entered Tripoli, and the next day Churchill and FDR made a five-hour journey by motorcar to Marrakech for the sole reason of Churchill showing FDR the sunset over the Atlas mountains. When FDR left the next day, Churchill stayed behind to paint the scene, the only painting he did during the war.

On 27 January, Churchill flew to Cairo where he met with the head of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) for the Middle East and decided to send an SOE mission to Josef Tito, the Communist leader in Yugoslavia. On 30 January, Churchill

flew from Cairo to Adana, Turkey, where he met the Turkish president and unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the neutral leader to accept British and American aid. From Adana, he flew on 31 January to Cyprus, where he visited the next morning his old regiment the Fourth Hussars. On 2 February, he flew back to Cairo to receive the welcome news that the German Army had been surrounded at Stalingrad. The next morning he made a six-hour flight from Cairo to Tripoli to meet and inspect the successful Eighth Army that had defeated the *Afrika Korps*. “Your feats will gleam and glow,” he told them, “long after we who are gathered here will have passed away.”

After a picnic lunch, an inspection of the New Zealand Division and dinner with General Montgomery, Churchill flew early on 5 February in a five-hour flight to Algiers, where he insisted the new French administration under General Giraud repeal the Vichy laws against Algerian Jews that Admiral Darlan had enforced. He attempted to leave Algiers for England at midnight, but mechanical trouble grounded the aircraft and he spent all of 6 February in Algiers until the aircraft had been repaired. There followed an eight-and-a-half-hour flight to England, arriving at 11:00 p.m., and an hour-long train ride to London, where in the early hours of 7 February he was met at the train station by thirteen of his Cabinet Ministers.

Churchill was exhausted by his travels. Pneumonia followed and, by 20 February, his fever had reached a temperature of 102. On 3 March, Churchill had recovered enough to travel to Chequers, accompanied by a nurse, to resume work. The nurse later recalled “his immense vigour and enthusiasm” and “his determination to get over his illness as quickly as possible.” ☺



BOOKS, ARTS, & CURIOSITIES

Man of the Hour

Nicholas Shakespeare, ***Six Minutes in May: How Churchill Unexpectedly Became Prime Minister***, Harvill Secker, 2017, 508 pages, £20. ISBN 978-1846559723

Review by Peter Clarke

Nicholas Shakespeare has made his reputation as a novelist rather than as an historian. But for vindication of his claim that “the writing of history need not be the domain solely of academics and specialists,” we need look no further than the book he has written about Churchill’s emergence in May 1940 as leader of the embattled British people. This was surely their direst hour, if we go by the meaning of “dire” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which simply quotes Dr. Johnson’s eighteenth-century definition: “Dreadful, dismal, mournful, horrible, terrible, evil in a great degree.” All of these adjectives could be applied to the abortive British campaign in Norway, which failed to prevent German occupation and gave Hitler the green light for the successive invasion of France through the Low Countries. In the meantime, Neville Chamberlain was replaced by Winston Churchill in little less than a political revolution, installing a broad-based coalition government that lasted until its mission was achieved in 1945.

This revolution necessarily involved displacing Chamberlain’s Conservative government, despite its large majority in the House of Commons, and—crucially—finding an alternative Prime Minister acceptable to the Labour opposition. All this took rather longer than six minutes. Shakespeare’s title thus deploys some literary licence in focusing our attention on the conventional six minutes that was allowed in the House of Commons for a division to be called and for MPs to troop through one of the lobbies, as they did on the night of 8 May 1940: Aye in support of the Chamberlain government or No in opposition. The motion itself, as put forward by Labour, was purely procedural (“That this House do now adjourn”), and the government carried it by 281 to 200 votes. But the abrupt fall in its normal majority signalled a political crisis, from which a new Prime Minister duly emerged—Winston Churchill.

His own later claim is well known, that he had been “walking with destiny”: a memorable phrase that has eloquently set the tone for accounts that take the outcome as all but inevitable, and hence in little need of lengthy explanation or examination. But Shakespeare deliberately takes three hundred pages to get us to the crucial six minutes, with a punctilious devotion to showing that it was hardly a simple matter, still less one that was predestined in its outcome. Not until a phone call was received

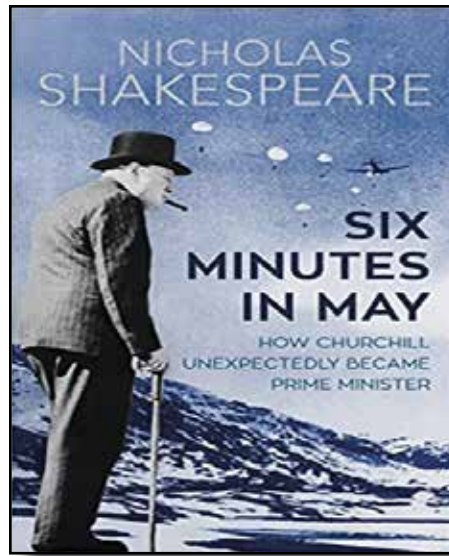
in Downing Street on 10 May, amid news of Hitler’s attack on the Low Countries, was the issue settled. The call was from Clement Attlee, as leader of the Labour Party, giving its answer on whether it would serve in a new government under Chamberlain: No. Or under “someone else”? Yes. And since the identity of that person was already understood to be either the austere Lord Halifax, who did not wish to lead, or the ebullient Churchill, who wished for little else, the latter’s long walk was finally over.

Though he tells the story with a skill and grace that suggest the novelist in him, Shakespeare’s sheer hard work in his own research deserves respect from historians. Not only has he read virtually all the relevant publications, but he has also dug up some archival sources that bring out the decisive political impact of the Norway campaign. What was so damning for the Chamberlain government at the time was the perception that it was responsible for dire blunders, leaving hapless British warriors tactically ill-equipped to go into battle and strategically misdirected in their goals. Yet it has always been apparent that, as First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill himself could hardly be absolved of some blame in 1940 (any more than, when holding the same cabinet post in 1915, he had notoriously been blamed for the failure of the Gallipoli campaign).

This is a recurrent thread in Shakespeare's closely-woven narrative. Thus on ministerial intervention over the Norway landings: "There is no argument that the responsibility lay with Churchill, who had been caught with his pants down." Later, there is a wider judgment: "Rarely would things go so badly for Churchill than in Norway." This is followed by an endorsement of the view of Churchill that was passed on to Neville Chamberlain by his sister Hilda: "doubtless his brilliant ideas are stored somewhere to be brought out in book form later to show how much better he could have done than you." Indeed, in the author's own voice, when writing of relative power in the air: "Norway had proved the Prime Minister right." Shakespeare further concludes: "The government was having to take the rap over Norway for something that Chamberlain could not reveal to the public." In support, there is a sympathetic quotation from the loyal Conservative backbencher Chips Channon: "Our failure in Norway is largely Winston's fault, and yet he would profit by it. I am appalled." The political impact is thus brought out: "Churchill's keenness to capture Narvik had less to do with the town's strategic value than with the First Lord's survival in Westminster." And there is a commensurately severe comment on Narvik's eventual (if shortlived) occupation by the British on 28 May 1940: "Any earlier, and the chances were strong that Churchill might have seen repeated the massacre of Suvla Bay in the Turkish campaign—a campaign that had earned him the nickname 'the butcher of Gallipoli.'"

This is, then, no uncritical account of Churchill's role. It repeatedly extends a degree of sympathy

towards Chamberlain that the author feels merited not just by the Norway campaign, which so largely dominates the narrative here, but more widely in the perspective of events in the immediate pre-war period. Chamberlain's own persistent feeling that the passage of time would surely bring a more sympathetic understanding of his actions at Munich prompts the author's comment: "That moment has been excruciatingly slow to arrive."



In this spirit, readers of this dense, vivid, and well-supported narrative, ostensibly focused on Churchill, may come to wonder who is the real hero—or villain. They may turn back to the epigraph at the beginning of the book, recording a reflective comment by Chamberlain back in 1918: "Strange that we do not fully realise men's characters while they are still alive." Which men? It is almost as though this versatile author had decided to write a whodunit. ☺

Peter Clarke is author of The Locomotive of War: Money, Empire, Power, and Guilt (Bloomsbury, 2017) reviewed on page 44.

Daemonic Duo

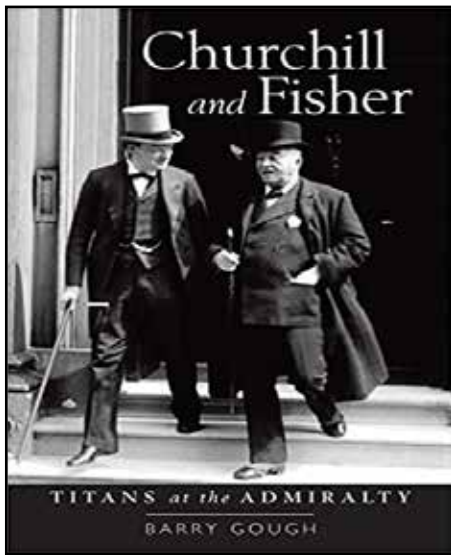
Barry Gough, **Churchill and Fisher: Titans at the Admiralty**, Seaforth (UK) and Naval Institute Press (US), 2017, 600 pages, £35 / \$39.95. 978-1526703569

Review by Stephen McLaughlin

Canadian naval historian Barry Gough has written a book that is long past due—a dual biography of the two giants who presided over the Royal Navy from November 1914 to May 1915, Winston Churchill and Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher. While Churchill was a rising star in the Liberal party, John ("Jacky") Fisher had been First Sea Lord—the navy's professional head—from 1904 to 1910 and had been responsible for many reforms and innovations, the most famous of which was the introduction of the "all-big-gun" battleship HMS *Dreadnought*.

Churchill first met Fisher in 1907 and from the start was fascinated by the charismatic admiral. So in October 1914, when the somewhat passive First Sea Lord, Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg, came under fire for his German origins, Churchill decided to replace him with the energetic but controversial Fisher. Gough dubs them the "daemonic duo," and indeed it was a fraught partnership that ultimately imploded. Frustrated by the siphoning off of resources for the Dardanelles, in May 1915 Fisher abandoned his post while Churchill was in France, leaving no one at the Admiralty's helm. Yet eventually the two reconciled sufficiently to coordinate their testimony before the Dardanelles Commission to minimize each other's vulnerabilities.

Gough tells the complex story of these two men well, but inevitably a few mistakes creep into the text. There are the inevitable typos, my favorite being the renaming of French naval minister Delcassé to “Declassé”—one suspects that spellcheck has struck again! More serious are some errors of fact, e.g., Gough repeatedly implies that Reginald Hall, the Director of Naval Intelligence, was in charge of the code-breaking unit Room 40



throughout the war, when in fact he gained control over it only in May 1917, a year after Churchill and Fisher had left the Admiralty.

There are also some interpretations I would question. Gough disagrees with the contention of Christopher M. Bell in his recent work *Churchill and the Dardanelles* (see *FH* 178) that during the long buildup to the Dardanelles campaign Fisher failed to express clearly to Churchill his opposition to the operation. Yet Gough’s own work shows that Fisher did indeed waffle, and he even states at one point that “Fisher had blown hot and cold, but at the outset he had concealed his reservations and then expressed great enthusiasm (which

he later regretted).” All of this strongly suggests that Bell’s assessment is correct.

There is one final point I cannot let pass. In several places Gough repeats an old canard invented by Fisher’s enemies that he was a “materialist” interested only in building bigger and bigger ships. This ignores Fisher’s many other reforms. The Admiralty got it right in its letter of condolence, sent to Fisher’s son when the old admiral died:

There is no part in the multitudinous activities of modern naval service in which his influence has not been felt.... His remarkable abilities were displayed alike in the technical development of the Fleet and all its appurtenances, in the training and education of the personnel of the Royal Navy, and in the strategical disposition of the Sea Forces of the country....

It is time historians lay this particular historical ghost to rest; Fisher did much more than simply build HMS *Dreadnought*.

Interpretive quibbles aside, Gough’s work is based on a wide use of primary sources and is well written, providing many valuable insights. But it should be noted that it requires some knowledge of the naval policy and technology of the era to appreciate fully the complexities of the issues confronting Fisher and Churchill. With that caveat in mind, this book is highly recommended. ☺

Stephen McLaughlin is an independent scholar who has written about both the Royal and Russian navies.

The Heroic Memory

The Memorial Addresses to the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society, Edmonton, Alberta, 1965–1989, The Churchill Statue and Oxford Scholarship Foundation, 2004, 437 pages, US\$17.20, CDN\$21. ISBN 978–1551951150

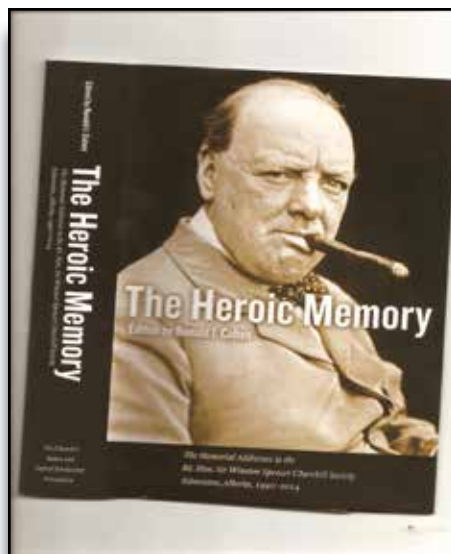
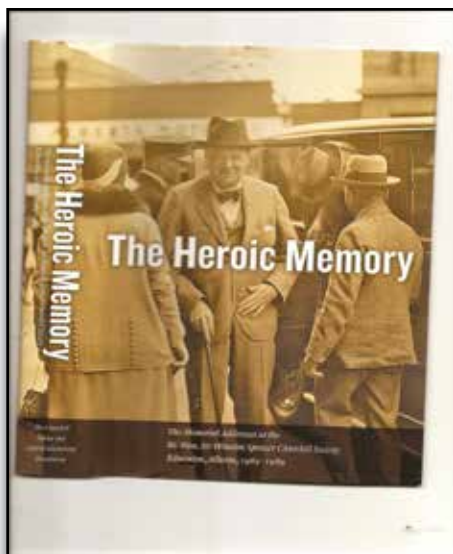
Ronald I. Cohen, ed., ***The Memorial Addresses to the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society, Edmonton, Alberta, 1990–2014***, The Churchill Statue and Oxford Scholarship Foundation, 2016, 458 pages, US\$17.20, CDN\$21. ISBN 978–1791364126

Available as a two-volume set from Alhambra Books in Edmonton. Telephone 1 (780) 439-4195.

Review by Terry Reardon

Some, if not many, will be surprised by the fact that Western Canada has a significant place in the Churchill world. The first statue of Winston Churchill was unveiled in 1943 at Albert E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and the oldest Churchill Society—and the only one started in his lifetime—the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society of Edmonton, Alberta, commenced in 1964.

While many societies take tentative steps in their early days, the Edmonton Society commenced its annual dinners in 1965 ambitiously and with a clear requirement of the speakers: they had to have known or worked with Winston Churchill. The Society also sponsors major scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, annual speech and debate competitions for high school students, and more recently a scholarship in Journal-



ism. Furthermore the Society was instrumental in commissioning an Oscar Nemon statue of Churchill, which was placed in the subsequently named Sir Winston Churchill Square in Edmonton. This was unveiled by Lady Soames, the Patron of the Society, in 1989.

The Heroic Memory 1965–1989 contains the addresses of the speakers for the first twenty-five years, the list being a veritable Who's Who of distinguished political, military, and family figures. Examples include Lady Soames (three times), Earl Mounbatten, Earl Alexander, Lord (Rab) Butler, Sir Fitzroy Maclean, and a trio of Private Secretaries: Sir John Colville, Sir John Peck, and Sir Anthony Montague Browne.

The anecdotes of the speakers give fascinating and at times amusing recollections of the Great Man. Sir John (Jock) Colville, for instance, said that one time Churchill exploded, "I hate the Foreign Office!" Colville responded that the previous evening he had hated the Treasury and asked which he hated the most. Churchill replied, "The War Office."

The Heroic Memory 1990–2014 contains the addresses for the second quarter-century. While

inevitably, with the passage of time, not all had (in one speaker's words) "pressed the flesh," they all have provided a fresh insight into Churchill's life and times. The second distinguished list includes family members Nicholas Soames, Winston S. Churchill, Celia Sandys, Randolph Churchill, and a fourth and final appearance by Lady Soames. Others include Sir Robert Rhodes James, Lord Deedes, Sir John Keegan, Earl Jellicoe, John Lukacs, and Viscount Montgomery (son of Monty).

War hero Sir Michael Howard provides a first-hand account of being stationed at Chequers and enjoying the privilege of being invited to join the audience at the late night film shows, which the Prime Minister screened for himself and his guests. Howard recorded that the films were generally very bad B-movies but Churchill became a total participant in the drama. "Look out,' he would growl, 'he's behind the door....Oh you fool.' And a great dome-like head became silhouetted against the screen as he bounced up and down in the excitement."

We are indebted to the Edmonton Society for reproducing these addresses, which should have a

place in all Churchill libraries. Both books are strongly recommended. ☺

Terry Reardon is author of *Winston Churchill & Mackenzie King, So Similar, So Different*. He was honoured to be the speaker at the 2017 memorial dinner.

Saddle Up

Brough Scott, ***Churchill at the Gallop***, Racing Post Books, 2017, 229 pages, \$34.95/£17.99. ISBN 978-910497364

Review by Fred Glueckstein

In my office hang a number of photographs of Winston Churchill with horses. My favorite is Churchill with a horse named Colonist II, a big grey racehorse that he bought in 1949. Churchill and Colonist II captured the heart of the public and led me to write of their exploits together.

With an admiration for Churchill and a fondness for horses, it was with great anticipation that I looked forward to the release of Brough Scott's *Churchill at the Gallop*. Scott, a well-known English jockey, broadcaster, journalist, and author, chronicles Churchill's lifetime experiences with horses from his youth, serving in the military, and his intervening and senior years, a period stemming from Churchill's early recollections in Ireland in 1879 to his final years, 1952–65.

Scott acknowledges his writing objective in the Introduction as "an attempt to go back in time and look at Churchill from the only vantage point where I can claim any authority: a view from the saddle." He begins his account in the summer of 1879, when Winston, at the age of four, had his first involvement with

“a four-legged animal.” While visiting Emo Court, a relative’s home in Ireland, young Churchill was put on a donkey. When the donkey shied, he was thrown to the ground.

Not dispirited from his donkey experience, young Churchill’s interest in horses developed, as he shared his parents’ love for horses and riding. Churchill would take horse-riding lessons in Hyde Park, gallop across the Newmarket Heath, and follow the feats of his father’s race horse, *L’Abbesse De Jouarre*, which punters named “Abscess on the Jaw.”

Scott writes extremely fascinating accounts of Churchill’s association with horses in the ensuing years, intertwined with the future statesman’s life, such as Churchill’s attendance at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, where he was a cadet and riding was on the official curriculum.

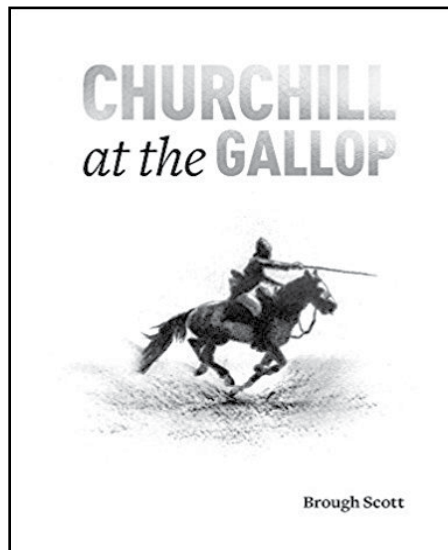
Young Churchill’s talent as a horseman was demonstrated at Sandhurst during the Riding Examinations, where 127 cadets participated. Churchill was selected as one of fifteen finalists. In the difficult competition, he finished second, with 199 out of 200 marks. He left Sandhurst in 1895 as a subaltern commissioned to the 4th Hussars.

From Sandhurst, Churchill competed for the first time in the steeplechase of the highly controversial 4th Hussars Subalterns Cup. From steeple chasing, point-to-point, polo, and fox hunting in England, Scott provides the reader with meticulous and thrilling accounts of Churchill’s exploits abroad as a cavalry officer and newspaper correspondent. Scott writes of Churchill’s adventures on horseback from 1895 to 1900 in Cuba; India; the North-West Frontier; the famed mounted charge at Omdurman, Sudan, with the 21st

Lancers; the Inter-Regimental Polo Championship in Meerut, India; and in South Africa during the Boer War.

Churchill returned home from South Africa in 1900. Yet, as Scott writes, Churchill continued to engage his equestrian passion through fox hunting and polo. By 1925, however, age and parliamentary workloads forced Churchill to give up polo and sell his ponies.

Particularly touching is Scott’s account of the last polo match



Churchill ever played, at the age of fifty-two, on 8 January 1927 in Malta—two years after his last contest on a polo pony.

Scott also writes of Churchill’s reconnection with horses in the post-war years 1946–51. This included buying the racehorse *Colonist II* in 1949, “the first and most famous of runners that Winston was to have over the next 15 years,” writes Scott.

Writing of Churchill and *Colonist II*, Scott fondly recalls: “As a little boy growing up in London, I remember the pictures in the papers and the images on the Pathé News of the famous old man that my father clearly revered: the Hom-burg hat, the cheering crowds, the

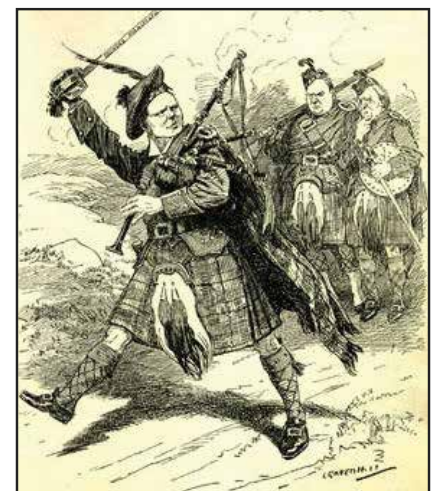
V-for-Victory sign, and the gallant grey and his Scottish jockey Tommy Gosling setting off in front and defying the others to pass.” Scott goes on to tell of Churchill’s happiness in watching other racehorses running and owning the Newchapel Stud near his home in Chartwell.

Extremely well-written, *Churchill at the Gallop* is highlighted with well-researched historical backdrop and a superb array of photographs illustrating Churchill’s lifetime involvement with horses. Wonderful drawings, paintings, and cartoons add to Churchill’s story and to the splendor of the book.

By riding along Churchill’s “routes,” Scott accomplished his objective “to go back in time” to present “a view from the saddle.” His splendid book is evidence of his own extraordinary experiences with horses, and his knowledge of Winston Churchill, clearly stemming from extensive reading and research.

Churchill at the Gallop is a wonderful addition to the Churchill canon and will be prized by Churchillians. It will also be greatly valued by equestrians and those with a genuine affection for the horse. 🐾

Fred Glueckstein is author of *Churchill and Colonist II* (2014).



Fine Furnishing

Anthony Seldon with Jonathan Meakin, *The Cabinet Office 1916–2016: The Birth of Modern Government*, Biteback, 2016, 360 pages, £25. ISBN 978–12785901737

Review by Iain Carter

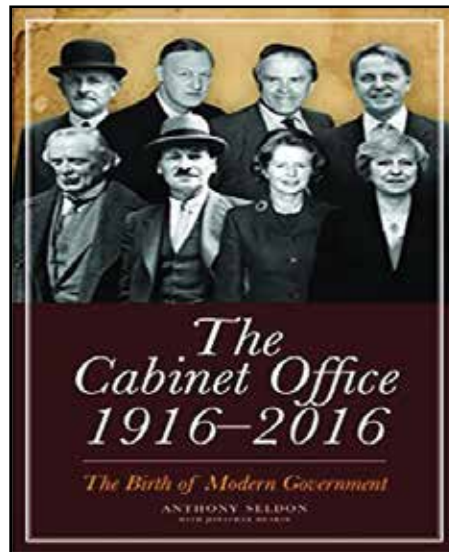
Modern government can be traced back to the founding of the Cabinet Office in December 1916. Since then “its role as the central coordinator of government policy and its implementation remains essentially unchanged,” according to the current Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood. Yet, despite being at the heart of almost all major decisions taken by the British government in the past century, the department remains something of a mystery even to experienced Whitehall operators.

Anthony Seldon’s *The Cabinet Office 1916–2016* chronicles how the modest-sounding task of taking and distributing cabinet minutes grew into this crucial co-ordinating role. In doing so, it lifts the lid on this little-understood corner of government. It also offers a canter through twentieth-century British political history via the relationship between the Prime Ministers and their most senior official, the Cabinet Secretary.

After devoting the opening chapter to describing the emergence of cabinet government from the early modern period onwards, Seldon focuses on the eleven men who have led the Cabinet Office, beginning with Maurice Hankey, who was tasked with its creation under Lloyd George, and concluding with the current incumbent.

As would be expected from any work dealing predominantly with

twentieth-century history, Winston Churchill is afforded a substantial role. Churchill was thought to be sceptical of the Cabinet Secretary when he rejoined the government at the beginning of the Second World War. Indeed, at a meeting of the War Cabinet in 1939 he told Edward Bridges he was running little more than “a magazine.”



Yet, despite the initial scepticism, Bridges became a vital source of advice during the war. Whilst Churchill relied heavily on General Ismay as his Chief Military Adviser—a role that perhaps foreshadowed the creation of a National Security Adviser in David Cameron’s No. 10—the contribution of Bridges in the civil sphere was indispensable. Although Bridges never lost his professional distance, his role as a ceremonial pallbearer at Churchill’s funeral in 1965 indicates just how important he became. It is this, which is explored by Seldon, not least through a discussion of the most significant of Churchill’s War Cabinet meetings from amongst the 919 which were supported by Bridges and his team.

On Churchill’s return to the premiership in 1951, he demanded that Norman Brook—Bridges’

successor as Cabinet Secretary, who himself was due to move on—remain in post. Churchill had a high opinion of Brook from an earlier spell in the Cabinet Office during the Second World War, had also kept in touch with him during the preparation of his memoirs, and went on to enjoy a closer personal relationship than the strictly professional one he had with Bridges. Seldon offers an insight into how a civil servant, having grown personally as well as professionally close to his principal, went above and beyond, especially following Churchill’s stroke in 1953.

Later chapters, covering the Thatcher to Brown governments, have a different tone, offering something akin to a firsthand account of contemporary British political history as seen through the eyes of the most senior mandarins. Seldon draws on interviews with the living former cabinet secretaries, notably Lord Butler of Brockwell, who served Thatcher, Major, and Blair, and whose contribution feels particularly substantial. This is something that is lacking from earlier periods, where some officials kept no personal papers and offered no later account before their death. The coverage of the Cameron Coalition and later Conservative government feels more superficial, unsurprisingly, as many of those in question remain active in public life.

Running through the book are two recurrent themes. The first is the ability of the Cabinet Office to adapt to the needs of successive prime ministers without the creation of a true standalone Prime Minister’s Department. For example, the Cabinet Office worked with Lloyd George’s Garden Suburb; the Central Policy Review Staff (CPRS) favoured by Heath, Wilson, and

Callaghan; and Blair's Delivery Unit. The second is the sustained role of officials in promoting the cabinet and cabinet committees as their preferred forum for political decision making, albeit with an ebb and flow in their success.

Whilst this book is unlikely to reach as wide an audience as Seldon's biographies of recent prime ministers—most notably *Cameron at 10*, *Brown at 10*, *Blair Unbound*, and *Major*—it nonetheless represents an excellent examination of this vital part of the Whitehall machine. Those wanting to understand how government operates and how officials and their political leaders interact will struggle to find a better study. ☞

Iain Carter is Political Director of the Conservative Party. He was previously a special adviser to the Leader of the House of Lords in the Cabinet Office.

The Clattering Train

Peter Clarke, ***The Locomotive of War: Money, Empire, Power and Guilt***, Bloomsbury Press, 2016, 418 pages, \$30.00. ISBN 978-1620406601

Review by Christopher H. Sterling

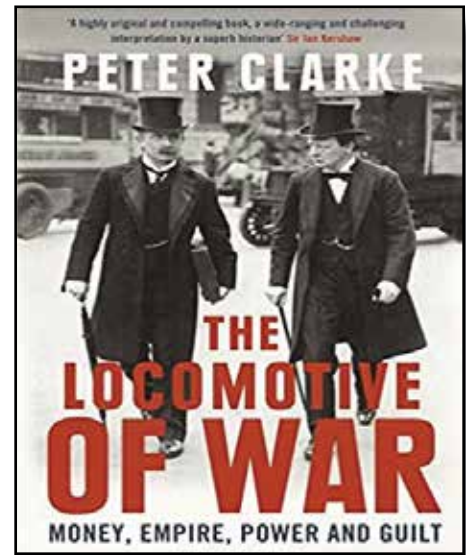
This is not a book focused upon Churchill, though the man and some of his writings (chiefly *The World Crisis*) do figure throughout. Instead, Peter Clarke's latest history can be read in two ways. In the first instance, the book offers an assessment of the moralistic rhetoric used by national leaders compared with their military and economic actions both before and after the First World War. The second way to read the book is as a series of insightful

biographical vignettes of a selection of those leaders. Either way, one's time is well spent.

A retired professor of history at Cambridge University with numerous prior books to his credit, Clarke takes on the huge and still-expanding literature concerning the causes and effects of the Great War. As its centennial is now being observed, Clarke reaches back to the lives and writings of a key selection of British and American leaders (and one Frenchman—Clemenceau) in order to understand better what happened and why. His argument is that once set on its rails, the initiative or "locomotive" leading to war (the imagery dates to Trotsky) is hard if not impossible to stop.

The first half of the volume consists of an illuminating collection of mini-biographies of such people as Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, Churchill, economist John Maynard Keynes, FDR, and Wilson's chief adviser, "Colonel" House. Note that two of these—Keynes and Franklin Roosevelt—were leaders-in-training, as it were, operating from junior positions but often exerting greater impact than their official roles might otherwise have indicated (this was especially so with Keynes). The war memoirs of Lloyd George and Churchill take center stage, with much positive comment on the latter and criticism of the former, not least on their readability. For each of the major players, Clarke offers an informed profile, often supplemented by gossipy sidelights to add color (even to the otherwise colorless Wilson).

How these men interacted is the glue connecting the chapters, especially in the book's second half. As the study progresses, the focus is increasingly on the bitter 1919 battle over German reparations



and which nation was to receive what. Keynes made his mark in this process—especially with his 1919 book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. As Clarke makes clear, where money was involved (or to a somewhat lesser degree, domestic politics and imperial concerns), good intentions and international comity quickly gave way.

Clarke's prologue (going all the way back to Gladstone) and brief epilogue provide the wrapping for the central chapters. The latter suggests ways the arguments over the place of the Great War in national histories was often determined by events in the Second World War. His "notes on sources" essay is much more than that, for it offers an excellent guideline of what else to read on this huge topic, all carefully linked to the arguments made here. Bottom line: Clarke provides a valuable and enjoyable book offering considerable insight on selected Allied decision makers and their varied policy positions before and after the 1914–18 war. ☞

Christopher H. Sterling is Professor Emeritus of Media and Public Affairs at the George Washington University.

Road to Hell

Anita Leslie, *Train to Nowhere: One Woman's War, Ambulance Driver, Reporter, Liberator*,

Bloomsbury Caravel, 2017,
336 pages, \$20.
978-1448216680

Review by Celia Lee

First published in 1945, Anita Leslie's *Train to Nowhere* enjoyed success, but, like other stories about the work carried out by women during wartime, it fast vanished into obscurity. In 2017, like a time capsule buried for seventy years, this gem has been rediscovered. Prepare to have demolished all your illusions of angel-like girls wearing shining white nurses' uniforms and nun-like head-dresses. When you take up *Train to Nowhere*, you will find that *The Road to Hell* would have been a more fitting title.

Anita Leslie, cousin to Winston Churchill and from a genteel background of titled gentry living in an Anglo-Irish castle in Ireland, plunged head-first into war work by becoming a female ambulance driver in 1940. She worked first for

the Motor Transport Corps (MTC) and then the Free French Forces, serving in Libya, Syria, Palestine, Italy, France, and Germany.

Well into the war, and having gained a great deal of experience with the British Army, Anita wanted to delve further and so became an ambulance driver in the French Army. If it was to be at the centre of more action she wanted, she certainly got it! She was sent to Naples and attached to a barracks at Pozzuoli. Wrapped in blankets, she slept her first night on a floor coated in insect powder.

After their ambulances arrived off another ship, the female drivers moved northwards, hoping to catch up with the French Army, which was chasing the Germans up the Rhone. They parked their ambulances in a row on a deserted race-course beside Aix-en-Provence, where the men of the Company set up a field-kitchen. When evening came, they went to sleep in their ambulances. They pushed stretchers into the slots, and, when required, several nurses could sleep in these conditions in one ambulance.

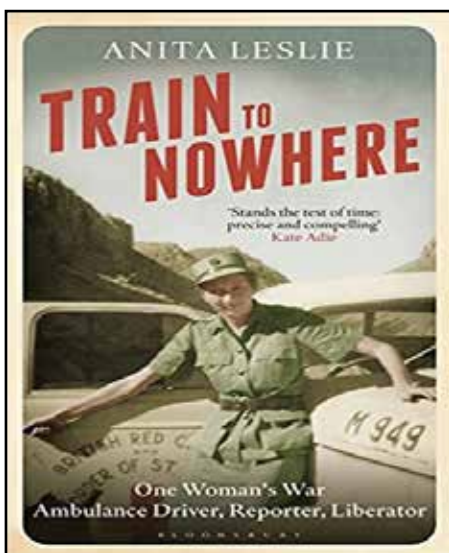
Anita was posted to Combat Command 1 of the 1st Armoured Division, which was fighting in the mountains forty miles north of Besançon. She set off in search of Combat Command 1 as the French were fighting one of the hardest battles in their history. Anita was assigned to the unit of Jeanne de l'Espée, daughter of a famous French general. She caught up with Jeanne's unit near a small village called Rupt, where Jeanne described to her the ambulance system. When the division went into action, the girls were posted to the regimental doctors and worked under their direct command, driving the wounded back from the regi-

mental aid posts. Jeanne told her, "Now we are in full attack, and the girls are driving day and night and getting short of sleep, so you must begin work tomorrow."

When more girls arrived to park their ambulances and snatch a few hours' sleep, Jeanne advised Anita, "You see the girls have been taught to spend every possible moment sleeping, and you must learn to do the same. We eat well whenever we can, and whatever happens, remember to use lipstick because it cheers the wounded." Anita soon learned that behind Jeanne's humour "lay a character of steel." The first soldiers Anita talked to told her that the previous Sunday Jeanne had driven out at nightfall and managed to rescue wounded parachutists from a mountaintop, where they had lain for three days surrounded by Germans. The enemy saw her driving up the rough track and opened heavy shell fire as she came down, but they missed.

When not driving, Anita and the other female drivers watched from their ambulances the traffic of war rushing to and fro. Files of French infantry trudged up to attack along the right-hand side, while the wounded came down on the left. Many of the Moroccan soldiers marched down from the front lines with bare or bandaged frost-bitten feet, carrying their wet boots as if the pain were more endurable that way.

Anita was reputed to be able to drive anything on wheels, and, when given her own ambulance to drive, it was one that had been captured from the Germans. It had a worn-out battery and unpredictable petrol pump far beyond even her technical capacity. Jeanne installed her office in it so that she could crouch out of the rain and check the whereabouts of her twelve-am-



balance fleet. At night Anita and Jeanne shared it as sleeping quarters with stretchers as beds. They struggled out of their muddy boots and wet clothes, pulled off their men's underwear, and wriggled into flea-bags. Jennie would say: "What on earth made us go in for this?"

Train to Nowhere is an inspiring reminder of the hardship and heroism that saved the world. ☺

Celia Lee is co-author with her husband John of Winston and Jack: The Churchill Brothers (2007).

Un navire qui coule à pic

Jean-José Ségéric, **Churchill et la guerre navale**, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2016, 435 pages, €39. 978-2343089980

Review by Antoine Capet

The old saying, "the cobbler should stick to his last," is frequently disproved—not in this book. Captain Ségéric, retired from the French merchant navy and also a former officer of the naval reserve, must evidently be more at ease at the helm of a ship than with a pen. He is a poor writer: his French grammar and spelling would shame a schoolboy, his choice of words often wrong, and his sentences occasionally broken by incomprehensible punctuation. To make things worse, the proofs were clearly not read, leaving a deplorable number of typos. Readers with some knowledge of English or German will also notice how the author and publisher did not even bother to make sure the words quoted were correctly copied out. Added to this, Ségéric is completely lost in the complexity

of British political history, describing Aneurin Bevan as an American, writing twice that Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty on 1 October 1939, asserting that Churchill had four children, and speaking of "Air-Marshal Tedder of the USAF."

Like any author discussing Churchill and sea operations, Ségéric has to examine the Dardanelles expedition—Churchill's degree of responsibility in the discomfiture, and the long-term consequences of the decisions he made regarding naval affairs: financial in the 1920s and operational in the years 1939–1945. The reader gets the impression that Churchill learnt nothing from the fiasco of 1915, as his impulsive nature always inevitably got the better of him, even in his later years. The book presents the Norway campaign of 1940 as the best illustration of Churchill getting out of his depth because of his misplaced self-confidence. Whereas many people today hail his perseverance, Ségéric disapprovingly gives an unsourced quote ("Success is going from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm") with the idea that this supposed recklessness was bound to make him a poor naval overlord. But the book is not an undiluted enterprise in condemnation, as Ségéric laboriously strives to apportion blame and praise according to his lights, which are unfortunately severely limited.

On the Mers el-Kébir (Oran) "tragedy," the author uses Churchill's own words in *The Second World War*. Ségéric stands resolutely with the Gaullist side: those to blame are primarily Admirals Darlan in Paris and Gensoul on the spot, who unconscionably refused the honourable way out offered by Churchill. Overall, Ségéric approves

of Churchill's Mediterranean strategy—his only real reservation being the Prime Minister's decision to send British troops to Greece in 1941. Yet he glosses over Churchill's later justification that, though he knew the move was doomed to failure, it had to be made since Britain had a pledge to Greece—and he wanted to show that the time of broken commitments like the Munich betrayal was definitively over. Ségéric also fails to take into account Churchill's constant eye on isolationist and often anti-British opinion in the United States, which one more British "surrender" would have



bolstered. This appears to be a recurrent shortcoming in the book: Ségéric always forgets how conscious Churchill was of his painful dependence on American goodwill.

Likewise Ségéric seems to forget how Churchill had to placate Stalin in view of the repeated delays in the opening of the Second Front. Ségéric does often have a balanced judgement on Churchill's major decisions—but not on what he describes as the Prime Minister's greatest mistake in the Battle of the Atlantic: his allocation of forces to Bomber Command for the raids on Germany at the expense

of the expansion of Coastal Command, which Ségéric argues would have paid much higher dividends. But here again Churchill had to walk a tight rope between the actual damage inflicted to German submarines and the potential resulting damage to relations with what was then his major ally on land, with the underlying fear of a separate peace in Eastern Europe.

Churchill et la guerre navale contains little which *Finest Hour* readers familiar with the existing literature on the subject in English do not already know. On the French market, however, the volume does fill a gap, and it is a pity that the structure and style are so defective and the narrative in such atrocious French that many readers will be quickly discouraged from reading: a missed opportunity if ever there was one to make this aspect of Churchill better known to the French general public. ☹

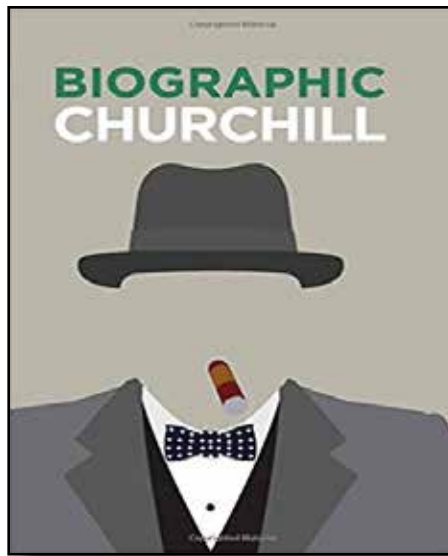
Antoine Capet is the former Head of British Studies at the University of Rouen. His book *Churchill: Le Dictionnaire* was published in January by Perrin.

Graphically Efficient

Richard Wiles, *Biographic Churchill*, Ammonite Press, 2017, 96 pages, £10/\$14. ISBN 978-1791453018

Review by W. Mark Hamilton

B*igraphic Churchill* is one in a new series of small and short books that presents a unique way of looking at the world's greatest thinkers. Each compact volume takes fifty defining facts, dates, thoughts, habits, and achievements and conveys this information to



the reader using “infographics.” Author Richard Wiles examines Churchill’s life, world, work, and legacy. With an intentionally sparse text, the reader examining Churchill’s long and accomplished life is drawn to the custom-designed images on every page.

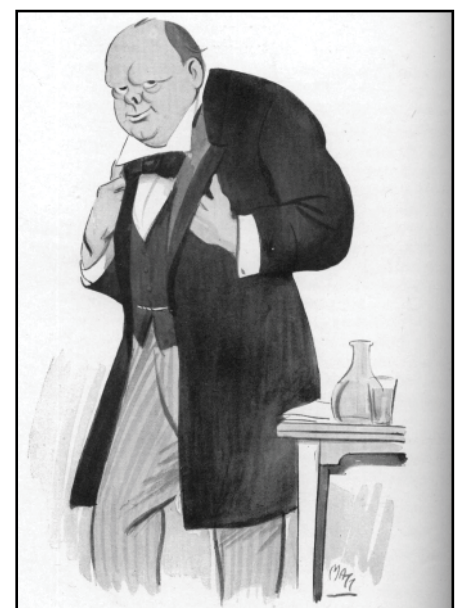
The book includes many lesser-known facts about Churchill, such as how many times he was shot at in his youthful military campaigns (more than fifty), his numerous health issues over a long lifetime, and a detailed account of his “very generous” drinking habits and profligate smoking (up to ten cigars a day). Churchill’s quotes and phrases fill the book, and the author estimates that Churchill wrote more than 16,000 pages and ten million words over sixty-four years, including a 345-page novel.

Richard Wiles touches on Churchill’s painting as a pastime, his brick-laying efforts at his country home, his occasional mental health and stress-related challenges, and his famous—albeit sometimes questionable—wardrobe selections. Churchill’s fondness for gambling at French casinos is not excluded, nor are his estimated annual losses (£40,000). An extremely quick read, the book’s appeal is its visu-

al images and abundant trove of statistics, which together provide an almost comic-book feel. This is not a book for the serious reader of history, but it is fun icing on the Churchill biographic cake. The vast use of statistics is hard to verify, and the statement that the “US/UK special relationship” existed in the nineteenth century is in error. There is no bibliography for further reading, and the index is minimal. The book’s real value is in giving readers a quick overview of Churchill’s life using brief sentences and statistics.

To my eyes, regrettably no longer young, the book’s graphics are somewhat distracting, at times rather ugly, and rendered in a bizarre color scheme. But this eye-catching format may be ideal for younger readers and perfect for high school students in a social studies course: another advantage is that in an age of expensive book publishing, *Biographic Churchill* is available at a very affordable cost. ☹

W. Mark Hamilton is author of *The Nation and the Navy: Methods and Organization of British Navalist Propaganda, 1889–1914* (Garland, 1986).



Churchill as Literary Character: WSC in Fiction

Jim Eldridge, *Assassins*, Severn House, 2016, 256 pages, \$30. ISBN 978-1790290881 Portrayal * Worth Reading ***

H. B. Lyle, *The Irregular: A Different Class of Spy*, Quercus, 2017, 288 pages, \$27. ISBN 978-1681440279 Portrayal *** Worth Reading ***

Susan Elia MacNeal, *The Paris Spy: A Maggie Hope Mystery*, Bantam, 2017, 320 pages, \$26. ISBN 978-0399593802 Portrayal ** Worth Reading ***

Review by Michael McMenamin

A *ssassins* is described by Amazon as “The first of a new mystery series featuring Winston Churchill and King George V” and “set in 1920s London.” It is not, but two out of three is not bad. It is a new mystery series, and it is set in 1920s London. Alas, the series does not “feature” Churchill or King George V, though both make appearances—Churchill in the first chapter and the King in the closing chapters.

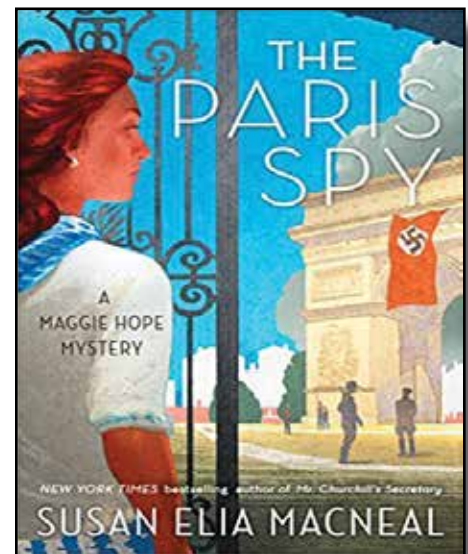
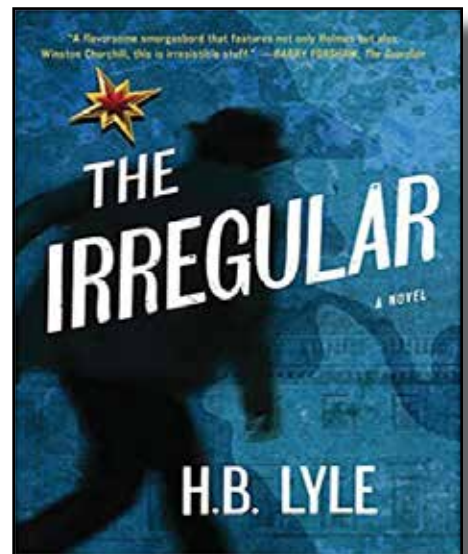
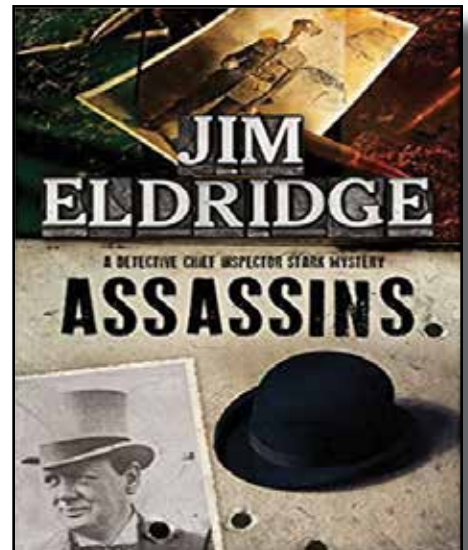
The mystery itself is interesting, a series of assassinations of various members of the aristocracy. Churchill as a character, though, is not realistic. For reasons never explained, a cardboard caricature of Churchill as Colonial Secretary takes command of the crime scene after the first murder and has the body removed to the victim’s nearby house before the protagonist, Scotland Yard Chief Inspector Paul Stark, arrives. Stark does not

like “Churchill the opportunist. One day a Tory, the next a Liberal. Power at all costs and beat down all those who stand in your way.” Stark seems unaware that Churchill had been a Liberal for more than seventeen years by this point.

Though Churchill is in the midst of negotiating a treaty to end the Anglo-Irish war—a fairly realistic Michael Collins makes an appearance later in the book—he promptly concludes on no evidence whatsoever that Bolsheviks were responsible for the killing and not the IRA. One howler involves a climactic scene at No. 10 Downing Street where “the tall, bulky figure of Churchill entered the room.” As Churchillians know, a “tall” Churchill (5’6”) never entered a room anywhere except when he was being portrayed by the 6’4” British actor John Lithgow in *The Crown*.

The Irregular is also a new mystery series set in London. It is 1909, and its two protagonists are the real-life Vernon Kell (who became the first head of MI-5) and his operative, a “different class of spy,” a now-grown-up street urchin who once had been a member of Sherlock Holmes’s Baker Street Irregulars. The plot involves Kell’s quest against political opposition to establish a permanent counter-intelligence unit, as well as an undercover investigation to identify and uncover a German spy ring in whose existence no one else—except Churchill at the Board of Trade—believes. Both Holmes and Watson are characters, as is Churchill, who appears at three critical moments where, as Kell’s supporter, he comes across as more far-sighted about the German threat than the other politicians, who oppose Kell.

While the series does not promise to utilize Churchill as a continu-



ing character in future, the real-life anarchist “Peter the Painter” of the famous Siege of Sydney Street is also a character, and that siege in 1910 is just around the corner chronologically. Also, Mansfield Cummings, the first head of MI-6, makes an appearance at the end of the book, and he and Kell agree to share the services of Kell’s Baker Street Irregular in future books.

The Paris Spy is the seventh Maggie Hope Mystery. Maggie is back in the Special Operations Executive in June 1942 and in Paris at Churchill’s behest to find out

who is betraying SOE agents in the field to the Nazis. It is an intriguing, fast-paced story of the perils of being a female SOE agent in Occupied Europe and easily as good as the first six books in the series.

Do not be put off by the two stars awarded for the portrayal of Churchill. MacNeal’s Churchill is once more spot on, but she repeats the myth that Churchill “let Coventry be destroyed in a Luftwaffe attack to protect the secrets of Bletchley Park.” Nope, never happened (see *FH* 141). It does not do harm to verisimilitude like having a

“tall” Churchill enter a room, but it is still enough to lose a star. ☺

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

Michael McMenamin writes the “Action This Day” column. He and his son Patrick are co-authors of the award-winning *Winston Churchill Thrillers* *The DeValera Deception*, *The Parsifal Pursuit*, *The Gemini Agenda*, *The Berghof Betrayal*, and *The Silver Mosaic*.

Save the Date!

The 35th International Churchill Conference

Colonial Williamsburg | 9–11 November 2018

- 100th anniversary of the Armistice
- 50th Year of the International Churchill Society
- Details to follow in the next issue of *Finest Hour*



Churchill Returns to the Queen Mary

Members of the International Churchill Society gathered aboard the RMS *Queen Mary* on December 8th to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the ship's arrival in Long Beach, California, with the opening of a new exhibit. "*Their Finest Hours: Winston Churchill and the Queen Mary*" was officially dedicated by Sir Winston's great-granddaughter Jennie Churchill and International Churchill Society Chairman Laurence Geller.

The multi-media exhibition features sets designed for the critically-acclaimed film *Darkest Hour* starring Gary Oldman as Winston Churchill. The Imperial War Museum's Phil Reed worked closely with the filmmakers to ensure authenticity. Three of these sets now serve as the gateway to the Churchill exhibit on the ship: the Cabinet Room, Map Room, and Churchill's bedroom. The exhibit is wonderful for local schoolchildren, since visitors are encouraged to touch the displays. There is also a replica of Churchill's shipboard conference room.

The British Vice-Consul in Los Angeles presented the ship with a framed replica of War Cabinet minutes made during one of Churchill's wartime passages. On behalf of the International Churchill Society, Chairman Laurence Geller presented the ship with a framed copy of Churchill's customs declaration form upon arrival in Southampton after his 1949 journey on the *Queen Mary*. Included on the declaration are 600 cigars, a generous supply of brandy, and—most intriguingly—several rubber ducks.

The International Churchill Society and the *Queen Mary* have signed a formal agreement of cooperation, which includes reciprocal marketing activities that will lead to closer partnership in the future and make the ship the center of ICS activities on the Pacific coast. Stephen Sowards, General Manager of the *Queen Mary*, said, "We are truly appreciative and look forward to a long-lasting relationship with our new friends both here in California and in the UK." Anchors aweigh! 🇬🇧

From left: *Queen Mary* General Manager Stephen Sowards, Jennie Churchill, and ICS Chairman Laurence Geller



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