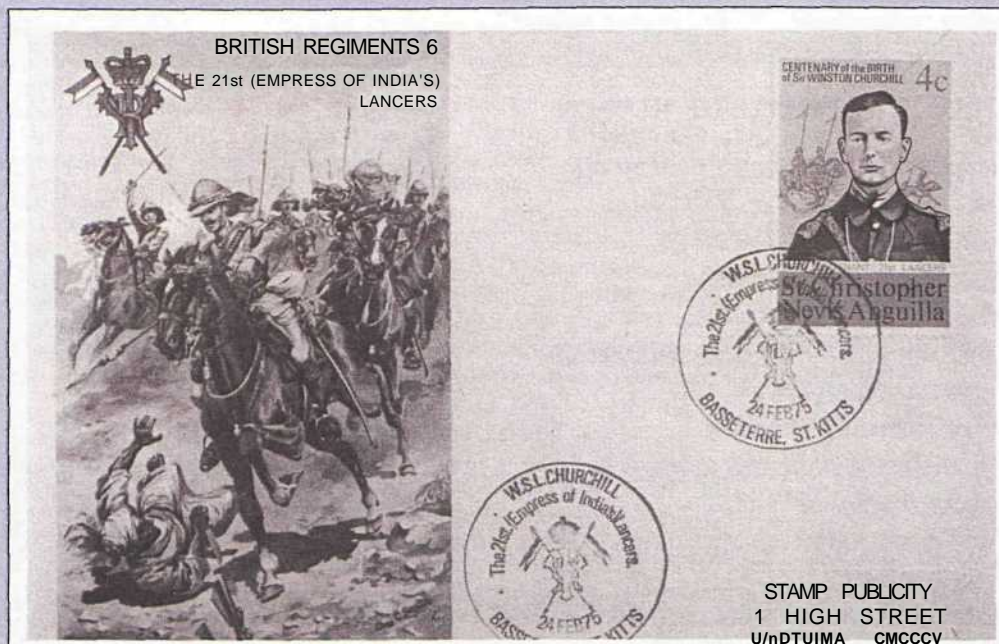


# Finest Hour



Two superlative covers from the collection of L. L. Thomas. Top, St. Kitts Centenary 4<sup>^</sup> issue with special cancellation for the 21st Lancers, the cachet depicting the famous charge at Omdurman, in which WSC took part. Above, both British Churchill sets cancelled at Westerham on the 1974 first day of issue.

# Finest Hour



## IMMORTAL WORDS: THE FRUITS OF MUNICH

*The Czechoslovakian Republic is being broken up  
before our eyes.*

*Their gold is to be stolen by the Nazis.*

*The Nazi system is to blot out  
every form of internal freedom.*

*Their army is to be reduced to negligible proportions,  
or incorporated in the Nazi power.*

*They are about to lose all symbols  
of an independent, democratic state.*

*Does anybody deny it?*

*I saw in one of our papers today  
that we were not involved*

*in this new Czechoslovakian crisis . . .*

*It is too late to intervene.*

*The Czechs have surrendered their fortress line.*

*Its cannon are now moving  
to the Western Front.*

*They are defenceless.*

*Their railways are interrupted.*

*They are ripped about*

*on every side*

*Therefore I agree entirely with those  
who think we should not intervene at the present time.*

*We cannot.*

*That is the end of it.*

*But to suppose that we are not involved in what is happening  
is a profound illusion.*

*Although we can do nothing to stop it,  
we shall be sufferers on a very great scale.*

*We shall have to make sacrifices  
not only of money,*

*but of personal service*

*in order to make up  
for what we have lost. . .*

*Many people at the time of September crisis  
thought they were only giving away the interests*

*of Czechoslovakia . . .*

*They are also giving away the interests of Britain,  
and the interests of peace and justice.*

- Waltham Abbey, 14 March 1939

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## IMPORTANT BOOK NEWS!

Bibliophiles will join us in applauding Houghton-Mifflin, who have teamed up with the Book-of-the-Month Club to publish a fine new "Chartwell Edition" of the six-volume **SECOND WORLD WAR**. Ostensibly listed at a retail price of \$295, this luxurious set is being offered to new BOMC members at only \$27.50, plus postage. (You must agree to buy four BOMC books within two years, after which you may terminate your membership.)

The editor took immediate advantage of the offer, and can report that this is a magnificent edition: half bound in dark blue leather, the spines gold stamped, the remainder of the boards in tan cloth with WSC's painting of Chartwell tipped onto the top board of each volume. They measure 9 1/4 x 6 1/4", roughly 10 percent larger than the regular edition. The endpapers contain well executed color maps of the theatres of war and the books are finished with headbands and stained page ends. William Shirer writes a foreword.

Because of the very high retail price, the Churchill Book Club will not be offering this set. It will be much cheaper for you to join BOMC. Buying the required four books in two years should not be a burden, as they offer dozens of titles every month.

ICS members should write Ms. Lana McGeary, Correspondent, Book-of-the-Month Club Inc., Camp Hill, Pennsylvania 17012. Send no money; you will be billed. Tell Lana you are an ICS member, and that you wish to join BOMC and obtain the Chartwell Edition as your "new member premium." If you are already a BOMC member, get somebody to join for you - take our word for it, you'll be highly satisfied.

## "HESP" ONE VOLUME EDITION

Hot on the heels of the new BOMC set comes word of Dodd-Mead's abridged one-volume edition of **HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES**, WSC's celebrated four-volume chronicle, arranged and edited by Henry Steele Commager. (Commager also edited the one-volume **MARLBOROUGH**.) Adverts say that Commager has captured the crux of the original work, yet every paragraph is intact, exactly as it was written. The book is 528 pages long and contains over 50 illustrations. To our knowledge this is the first abridged edition of HESP, and therefore an important addition to any Churchill library. Best of all, it costs only \$6.98.

We suggest you add SI for postage and handling and order while the supply lasts. The source is Publishers Central Bureau, Post Office Box 1136, Newark, New Jersey 07101. Book number is #422832. (Publishers Central will put you on their mailing list, and their catalogues always have something of Churchill interest to offer.)

# International Updates

## EDWINA SANDYS: A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOKE?

*People* magazine (11 July 1983) reports that WSC's granddaughter Edwina Sandys (daughter of Duncan Sandys and Diana Churchill Sandys), is also an artist of considerable repute: "Her works have a witty exuberance that marks her as a modern; her New York pied-à-terre is a showcase for cartoonish marble silhouettes and offbeat bronzes, and for boldly colored canvases influenced by Toulouse-Lautrec."

Together with her younger sister Celia, Edwina helped arrange the recent exhibit of Sir Winston's paintings (FH #41 p. 14) and wrote the excellent booklet *Painting as a Pastime*, which describes Churchill's love affair with the brush and illustrates some of his better works.

*People* says 44-year-old Sandys "followed the path prescribed for upper-class Englishwomen: Graduation from a genteel girls' school was followed by a sojourn in Paris, a job 'answering the doorbell' for a dress designer, and a stint as a secretary. Marriage to Piers Dixon, whose father was the British Ambassador to France, came when she was 22, and sons Mark and Hugo were born in quick succession.

"Now divorced and dividing her time among New York City, Carrara, Italy and London, Edwina devotes her prodigious energy to projects ranging from the recent \$3.5 million 'Britain Salutes New York Arts Festival' - which she helped organize - to a \$50,000 [WSC] bronze she wants to place next to a restaurant in Queens."

In writing the text for the *Painting* booklet, Sandys rediscovered Churchill. "People always ask what it was like growing up in the shadow of a great man," she says. "I tell them, 'It wasn't like being in his shadow — it was like basking in his sunshine.'"

## THE V-SIGN IN NEW ORLEANS

James J. Coleman, Jr. Honorary British Counsel for Louisiana, has kindly sent us photographs of the Ivor Roberts-Jones bronze of Sir Winston, which stands at British Place in downtown New Orleans. (Roberts-Jones also sculpted the Parliament Square statue, FH #41 cover). The statue was dedicated by the Lady Soames and Mr. Coleman on 19 November 1977, and was donated by the partners of International Rivercenter, a business district construction firm. WSC is somewhat more defiant and less brooding than in Roberts-Jones' London reincarnation. We like it!

## BACK TO THE MINISTRY

British Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine has turned back the clock to "sterner days" by creating in his office a near-perfect replica of the room once occupied by First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill. Official-issue furniture has made way for some of the fine mahogany pieces at which WSC created many of his great speeches. Pride of place is the "octagonal table," where WSC, Mountbatten, Cunningham and others held historic meetings. The table was in a junior minister's office, but when Heseltine moved into the building in early 1983, he fetched it immediately.

"The first thing Churchill said when he returned to the Admiralty as First Lord was: 'Where's my octagonal table?' said Mr. Heseltine. "I can see why — it's a beautiful piece."

Along one wall of the sixth-floor office is a large George IV mahogany and ebony bookcase with one door cracked from top to bottom. "Rumour has it that Churchill caused that crack by kicking it during a particularly infuriating moment," says Mr. Heseltine, seated at the 18th century work desk covered in the original green leather which matches the room's chairs.

Also brought in from other parts of the department were an old wooden globe and a clock presented to the Navy by Queen Anne. Mr. Heseltine's only concession to the Eighties are two television sets and a long pinboard for maps and displays. (WSC had a whole room for maps! -Ed.)

-Harvey Elliott, *The Daily Mail*  
continued page 12



Roberts-Jones' New Orleans bronze.



Posed strategy: Churchill, Marshall, Eisenhower, Eden, Brooke, Tedder, Cunningham, Alexander and Montgomery discussing plans for the invasion of Italy. Algiers, June, 1943. (Photo courtesy Imperial War Museum.)

# Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?

by Colin F. Baxter  
East Tennessee State University

AMONG the most controversial aspects of Winston Churchill's long and controversial career, none has aroused more dispute than his role as a strategist in World War II. His strategic reputation has see-sawed between hero-worship and scapegoat. In the immediate afterglow of the war, Churchill's reputation as prophet and savior of the West was unchallenged. As the days of "blood, toil, tears and sweat" faded into the past, critical views began to appear which accused him of making numerous strategic mistakes and questioned whether he was a strategist at all. In the extreme was the implication that his strategic ideas nearly lost the war. Churchill's decisions were attributed to such diverse motives as ideological prejudice, nightmarish memories of World War I, an intellectual commitment to the "indirect approach," or simply emotionalism and intuition. After an examination of some of the more general observations that have been made concerning Churchill's strategic qualities, a closer

study will be made of the controversies surrounding his most important strategic decisions.

Churchill's own six-volume epic, *The Second World War*, appeared between 1948 and 1954. A superb narrative and a mine of raw material, the work could not help but add to Churchill's stature. Although the author did mention on occasion his own mistakes, the memoirs could not be the definitive assessment of strategic decision-making. In 1952, Chester Wilmot's classic, *The Struggle for Europe*, contributed enormously to one of the popular misconceptions concerning Churchill's strategy. Wilmot argued that the West had won the war but lost the peace because Roosevelt had not followed Churchill's "Mediterranean strategy," an issue that will be examined in greater detail at a later point.

Far less laudatory views of Churchill the strategist emerged with the publication of wartime memoirs of British military lead-

ers. Viscount Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1941-46, published his diaries between 1957 and 1959. Alanbrooke's unflattering characterization of Churchill overemphasized the Prime Minister's impulsiveness. Alanbrooke described his own role as that of a brake on Churchill's "passion for premature offensives."<sup>2</sup> A former Director of Military Operations in the war, Sir John Kennedy, contributed to the growing criticism by writing that most of Churchill's inspirations had been "profoundly impractical and wrongheaded." "Only Churchill's magnificent and courageous leadership," wrote Kennedy, "compensated for his deplorable strategic sense."<sup>3</sup> Churchill's detractors resurrected that Great War image of Churchill — a man who was moved by impulse and intuition; a gambler, no less, who had been blamed for the Gallipoli disaster.

General Lord Ismay aspired to counter this negative image of Churchill in his *Ismay Memoirs* published in 1960. Churchill's wartime Chief of Staff and right-hand man, General Ismay was anxious to defend his chief from the irreverent charges leveled by Churchill doubters. "Not once during the whole war," insisted Ismay, "did he [Churchill] overrule his military advisers on a purely military question." Ismay avowed that Churchill "stood head and shoulders above his professional advisers" with his grasp of the broad sweep of strategy.<sup>4</sup>

The military debate over the merit of Churchill as a strategist was soon joined by historians. Robert Rhodes James', *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, published in 1970, served to correct the mistaken image of Churchill as the infallible prophet of the 1930s. James wrote that Churchill was out of touch with recent developments in military thinking and that he anticipated another war of fortifications and digging. Although he had played a major role in promoting the tank in World War I, Churchill overestimated the effect of the anti-tank gun in the 1930s, and as a result he did not anticipate the future success of mechanized armor. He was mistaken again in thinking that asdic (the device used to locate submarines) had "mastered" the submarine. Of course, these misconceptions did not belong exclusively to Churchill. "On the main issue he was right," declared James, namely, that Hitler was the greatest danger since Napoleon.<sup>5</sup>

Before Churchill succeeded Chamberlain as Prime Minister in 1940 he held the post that had been his a quarter of a century earlier. His return to the Admiralty as First Lord had not been welcomed by all the admirals. Naval historian Stephen Roskill, in his study *Churchill and the Admirals*, wrote that a number of admirals had serious misgivings about a man whom they considered a meddler in naval operations.<sup>6</sup> The late Arthur Marder, the Mahan of modern British naval history, rejected the notion that Churchill interfered in naval operations. Marder argued that the First Lord rarely failed to accept expert advice even if he often thought that the admirals were too plodding and lacking in sufficient fire.<sup>7</sup> Without a doubt, Churchill's desire for offensive action could be annoying to a hard-pressed commander. Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, in his memoirs, *A Sailor's Odyssey*, complained about Churchill's "prodding" messages when Cunningham's Mediterranean fleet consisted of few ships and overworked crews.<sup>8</sup>

During his time at the Admiralty, Churchill recognized the vital importance of trade defense and emphasized destroyer and small craft construction. He admitted in his memoirs, however, that he could not rest contentedly with a policy of convoy and blockade. He wanted an "offensive strategy" which led to the formation of "attacking" or "hunting" groups of destroyers to seek out and destroy U-boats. The Admiralty shared Churchill's excessive confidence in asdic as well as the belief in an "aggressive" strategy as opposed to waiting to counter-attack when convoys were attacked. Marder wrote that the offensive sweeps were "almost a complete failure" and resulted in heavier convoy losses because of reduced convoy escorts.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, once

conclusive evidence demonstrated the effectiveness of the convoy system, Churchill accepted it without reservation. Moreover, by 1943 sufficient escorts were available for both convoy duty and for action in hunter-killer groups.

The German occupation of Norway in 1940 led one of Churchill's severest critics, military historian Sir Basil Liddell Hart, to call the First Lord "the main contributor" to the Norwegian disaster.<sup>10</sup> Marder's judgment is less damning as he sees Churchill only as "a" contributor to the Norwegian failure.<sup>11</sup> Considering the German advantages of surprise and geography, Marder's conclusion would seem to be the more balanced assessment.

As a result of the Norwegian episode, any idea of implementing Churchill's prewar scheme of sending a fleet into the Baltic was scotched. This was fortunate perhaps since German aircraft might have played havoc with a fleet as it sailed through the Skagerrak and Kattegat." A mitigating factor on Churchill's behalf is that naval experts themselves had blind confidence in the ability of ships armed with anti-aircraft guns to withstand air attack. Marder concludes that Churchill's eight months at the Admiralty "were in the main extremely beneficial."<sup>13</sup>

**I**N May 1940, Churchill succeeded Chamberlain as Prime Minister. That same month the German blitzkrieg descended on France, and with the collapse of the French army came the end of the commonly-held assumption that Britain would have time to build up a large army. Churchill had shared that assumption. Surrounding the closing stages of the fall of France, a myth has arisen concerning Churchill and the RAF. Robert Wright's *Dowding and the Battle of Britain*, published in 1970, argued that but for the opposition of Hugh Dowding, the Chief of Fighter Command, Churchill would have "squandered" the RAF's remaining squadrons in a futile effort to save France.<sup>14</sup> A friend of Dowding's, Wright believed that the Air Marshal had been ill-treated by Churchill.

In the second volume of his war memoirs, *Their Finest Hour*, Churchill did not ignore Dowding. Far from it, he expressed the greatest admiration for Dowding's dispositions of Fighter Command. "We must regard the generalship here shown," wrote Churchill, "as an example of genius in the art of war." Although Churchill was emotionally attached to France, he had rejected his friend General Smuts' advice that Britain should send the bulk of its fighters to the battle of France. Churchill reasoned that the battle of France was not the decisive point of the war: that moment would come when the Luftwaffe attacked Britain.<sup>15</sup> Ronald Lewin's 1973 study, *Churchill the Warlord*, which incorporated the recently-opened Cabinet Papers for 1940, revealed that Churchill had sought an acceptable number of aircraft which might fit his dual responsibility both to France and Britain. Churchill did have the misconception, however, that Dowding had told him the minimum requirement for home defense was only 25 squadrons whereas Dowding had mentioned a higher figure.<sup>18</sup>

Recovering quickly from the shock of Germany's stunning defeat of France, Churchill vetoed the Admiralty's proposal to abandon the Mediterranean and "seal up the ends." His decision was made at a time when Italy had yet to prove its inability to use its predominant air and sea power there. With the Battle of Britain in full swing and British military authorities worried about an invasion, Churchill showed equal faith and courage in sending half of Britain's remaining armor to the Middle East.<sup>17</sup>

These bold actions, however, did not satisfy the Prime Minister who dreaded a stalemate that might lead to a negotiated peace and a "final spring of the tiger" in a few years time. Churchill recognized that a large-scale British invasion of the Continent was out of the question for the foreseeable future, but he did call for plans to be made for small-scale coastal raids. For the present, he

turned to an overwhelming air attack on Germany as his best offensive weapon.

Churchill's initial reliance upon the bomber has been criticized as an example of his misplaced offensive spirit. Without any other major offensive weapon at hand, however, it is not surprising that he used Bomber Command. Furthermore, he was not wedded to the strategy that the bomber alone could win the war. He disapproved of placing unbounded confidence in any one method of winning a war between equals in strength. His eventual skepticism of the bombing campaign was conveyed in his statement to Sir Charles Portal, the Chief of the Air Staff, "that in war it was not necessary to be nice, only to be right. Area bombing had the double effect of being thoroughly nasty and wrong."<sup>18</sup> Churchill's dramatic turn of phrase underestimates the effectiveness of bombing after 1943 when the availability of long-range fighter escorts permitted the bombers to wreak havoc on Germany's industrial capacity.

A criticism frequently leveled at Churchill is that of "rashness," an example of which cited by Liddell Hart was Britain's aid to Greece in 1941.<sup>19</sup> However, Ronald Lewin's recent study of General Wavell, Britain's Commander in the Middle East, rejects the myth that Wavell was forced into Greece by an obsessed and obdurate Prime Minister. The decision to aid Greece was not Churchill's alone, nor was it taken rashly. Though jealous of British honor, Churchill was reluctant to commit troops to Greece as a mere gesture. He was not eager for another Norwegian fiasco, and the decision was made only after lengthy consultations with political and military authorities. General Wavell went into Greece believing that the operation was militarily feasible; instead, another evacuation soon followed.<sup>20</sup>

In December 1941, Japan attacked not only Pearl Harbor but also British possessions in the Far East. Again Britain suffered a series of disasters. Churchill admitted in his memoirs that, "I do not pretend to have measured accurately the martial might of Japan, but now as this very moment I knew the United States was in the war, up to the neck and in to the death. So we had won after all!"<sup>21</sup> As late as 1939, Churchill had been "certain" that Japan would not attack Singapore, and that even if such an attack occurred it would be "easy" to defend against.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, he had not "measured accurately" Japan's military capability.

Historian Correlli Barnett blames Churchill's policies as Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1924 and 1929 for Britain's loss of Hong Kong and Malaya to Japan. Barnett argues that Churchill's policy of strict economy had long-term disastrous consequences for the Empire.<sup>23</sup> Seeking a less remote answer for why the Japanese conquered Malaya, Liddell Hart blames Churchill's concentration upon the Middle Eastern theater.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the Middle East was of vital economic and strategic importance. In addition, the North African campaign drew some of Germany's air forces away from the Russian front.

Churchill's dispatch of the capital ships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* to the Far East where they were sunk by Japanese aircraft on 10 December 1941, has been cited as another Churchillian blunder. Despite the doubts of the Admiralty, Churchill sent these two powerful ships in the hope that they would act as a deterrent on the Japanese. If war did occur, Churchill was attracted to the idea of the battleships vanishing into the Pacific and operating as a vague menace, "like rogue elephants."<sup>25</sup> There was no time for such measures, however, as Japanese planes proved to be as effective as elephant guns.

Churchill was not oblivious to the importance of air power as can be seen in a memorandum he wrote in November 1940: "It is absolutely necessary to have a comparatively small number of really fast fighter aircraft on our carriers. Without these the entire movement of our ships is hampered."<sup>26</sup> But in late 1941, whatever the merits of the "deterrent" argument, Churchill underestimated the dangers posed by Japanese air power.

OF all the misconceptions concerning Churchillian strategy, one of the most persistent is that he was an advocate of the so-called "indirect approach" to conducting war; namely, that he championed a Mediterranean strategy in opposition to the launching of a Second Front in France. During the war, General George C. Marshall, who said that Mediterranean operations were "like throwing snowballs into hell," believed Churchill opposed a Second Front and favored what the American Secretary of War Henry Stimson called "pinprick warfare." In Stimson's view, "The shadows of Dunquerque and Passchendaele" hung too heavily over Churchill's strategy.<sup>27</sup>

If Marshall and Stimson felt Churchill's strategy was determined by history, the Soviets see Churchill as motivated by an ideological hatred of communism. Soviet author V. G. Trukhanovsky dismisses Churchill's promises of a Second Front as "sheer fraud," an example of "Churchillian hypocrisy" designed to mask the political motives of his strategy which was to block the Red Army in the Balkans and establish "reactionary regimes."<sup>28</sup> Trukhanovsky's selective use of sources and ideological bias reflect Soviet dogma that Anglo-American strategy was to have the USSR and Germany exhaust each other in a protracted war. In reality, not until late in the war were political considerations uppermost in Churchill's strategic thinking.

On the British side, besides Liddell Hart, historian A. J. P. Taylor has portrayed Churchill as a proponent of the indirect approach. Bombing, blockade, and a "back door" Balkan offensive, Taylor has written, were all desperate efforts by Churchill to avoid another World War I-type bloodbath. In Taylor's opinion, Churchill had a "Mediterranean obsession," and regarded the European balance of power as an almost "irrelevant distraction."<sup>29</sup> As recently as 1976, Paul Kennedy asserted in his study, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, that the North African and Italian campaigns were "mere sideshows in the Churchill-Lloyd George tradition of avoiding the slaughter of frontal attack."<sup>30</sup>

As early as 1956, in his volume *Grand Strategy*, John Ehrman rejected the "myth" that Churchill was following in the footsteps of Lloyd George who in World War I had urged a Balkan strategy. Ehrman reiterated that Churchill in recognizing military realities saw the impossibility of a major Balkan campaign unlike his friend General Smuts, who favored the Lloyd George strategy instead of a cross-Channel attack.<sup>31</sup> In his 1968 study, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War*, Michael Howard argued that Churchill's advocacy of the North African campaign, rather than displaying an obsession with "sideshows," was more an indication of his eagerness to grapple with the Germans on land at the only place then available where Britain had a real chance of success. Churchill's continuing interest in the Mediterranean theater, wrote Howard, stemmed in large measure from a natural desire to exploit Anglo-American successes there, and not from an aversion to a Second Front.<sup>32</sup>

Despite Churchill's unfortunate use of the "soft underbelly" metaphor, which he employed on his visit to Stalin in 1942 to explain why there would be no immediate Second Front ("it was our intention," said Churchill, "to attack the soft belly of the crocodile as we attacked his hard snout"), he did not view the Mediterranean operations as an easy way into Europe or as a way of forestalling the Russians in the Balkans. The desire to give immediate and continuing help to the Russians by drawing enemy forces to the south was a major argument for fighting land battles in the Mediterranean theater, at least until a cross-Channel invasion was feasible. Late in the war, when political considerations became paramount, Churchill would no doubt have preferred a long-drawn out battle between the two totalitarian regimes on the Dnieper River.

Far from being "pushed," to use Liddell Hart's expression, into a Second Front, Churchill had ordered the drawing up of plans for a cross-Channel invasion after the Russo-German War began in 1941. He rejected the advice of those military experts who wished to rely on bombing. The Allied peoples must be promised, he said, "the mass invasion of the Continent of Europe as the goal."<sup>33</sup> In May 1942, he ordered the construction of floating piers to be used in the cross-Channel invasion. Alanbrooke complained in his diary at the end of 1942: "Long harangue by PM that the Army must in 1943 fight the Germany Army."<sup>34</sup> Churchill had expected a quick end to the North African campaign, and he only reluctantly abandoned the idea of a Second Front in 1943.

ALTHOUGH possessing a romantic temperament which showed clearly in his devotion to such institutions as the Empire and monarchy, in the conduct of military strategy Churchill generally displayed a sense of realism. A man of powerful emotions, he usually had them under control. With tears in his eyes, he had informed the House of Commons of the attack on the French fleet at Oran; however, Churchill's emotional attachment to France had not prevented him from making the personally repugnant decision to sink the French ships.

Liddell Hart's view of Churchill as an impetuous man dominated by his emotions, a man who was only restrained from doing more harm than he did by the wisdom of his advisers, is a serious distortion. Outstanding as Churchill's military advisers were in contrast to Hitler's subservient lackeys, they were not infallible. The expectation of the Chiefs of Staff that Russia would collapse in 1941 was not shared by Churchill, nor did he share the deep pessimism of Alanbrooke that D-Day might be "the most ghastly disaster of the war."

Churchill's ability to see issues in the cold hard light of reality was sometimes clouded by his eagerness to take the initiative. His zeal and confidence in improvisation had contributed to the Norwegian failure. Toward the Far East, he had shown an imperfect grasp of Japanese strength. Yet, on the most important strategic questions, his sense of realism prevailed over other considerations. He did not hark back to his World War I experiences, as he might have done, nor did he adhere to a theory of war like the indirect approach. Whether refusing to throw any more aircraft into the battle for France, or preventing a premature Second Front, Churchill's realism checked the incautiousness of others. Of all the Prime Ministers who have conducted Britain's forces through the ordeal of battle, Churchill must surely rank as one of their most successful military strategists.

Reprinted from MILITARY AFFAIRS, February 1983 edn., with permission. Copyright 1983 by the American Military Institute. No additional copies made without the express permission of the author, and of the editor of MILITARY AFFAIRS. Col in F. Baxter has been an Associate Professor of History at E.T.S.U. since 1971. His published articles have concentrated on British naval history. Our thanks to Robin Higham, Editor M.A.

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26. Geoffrey Till, *Air Power and the Royal Navy 1914-1945* (London: Jane's Publishing Company, 1979), 106.

27. Grigg, 134.

28. V. G. Trukhanovsky, *Winston Churchill* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 287.

29. A. J. P. Taylor, et al., *Churchill Revised: A Critical Assessment* (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1969), 48-50.

30. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 307-310.

31. John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), V, 113-117.

32. Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 31-32.

33. Lewin, 128.

34. Bryant, 432.



Strategist & Leader! Nicaragua SG #1903/1562

# About Books

## A Churchill Library on a Budget

BY RICHARD M. LANGWORTH

THIS ARTICLE is devoted to all the Churchill bibliophiles who would like to build a complete library of Sir Winston's works-but are floored by the prices of first editions.

It's not everybody who cares to lay out \$250 for a set of *Marlborough*. You may be pleased to know, however, that you don't have to. A near-complete collection of Churchill can be amassed for as little as \$300-and I speak of *hardbound books*, not paperbacks. Over the course of three years, that's less than \$10 per month.

Nor is such a collection in any way unworthy. Build it, and you will have an heirloom you'll be proud to pass along to future generations. Sir Winston, for one, would certainly approve. He always encouraged his publishers to release popular-priced editions, book club and other low cost versions. Happily for today's collectors, many of them are still available at very low prices.

WSC's first four non-fiction titles, *Malakand Field Force*, *River War*, *London to Lady Smith* and *Ian Hamilton's March*, comprise a formidable objective for the first edition collector. Typical prices: \$750, \$500, \$200 and \$300 respectively. But did you know that these four vivid accounts of England's Colonial wars were abridged by Frederick Woods in 1962, and published in one inexpensive volume? It's *Frontiers and Wars* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London), and it is not uncommon, particularly in England. Typical price for a very good copy is \$15.

The full text of *London to Ladysmith* is also back in print, courtesy the Griggs Co. of Durban, South Africa. This is a facsimile of the original English edition, down even to the armored train artwork on the top board. It is available for \$19.50 from the Churchill Book Club (see below).

*Savrola*, Churchill's only novel, can command up to \$750 in first edition form, particularly the American edition, which actually preceded the English. Happily for us, Random House published a new American edition (with a very amusing new foreword by WSC) in 1956. Most booksellers treat this as one of the "modern firsts." This means it commands a premium over most 1956 books, but is not at all out of reach. About \$20-30.



Key books for the budget library. Stacked are the Harvest paperback *Lady Smith I Hamilton*, the Churchilliana Co.'s *Free Trade* and *Brodrick*, Spearman's *My African Journey* and Haskell's *Liberalism*. At left, Random House's *Savrola* (1956) and Taplinger's *Peoples Rights* (still in print).

The first of WSC's great biographies was his two-volume life of his father, *Lord Randolph Churchill*. Both English and American firsts can cost up to \$150. But Odhams, a London publisher who reprinted many Churchill titles postwar, produced a very fine one-volume edition in 1952, based on the original abridgement by WSC himself. \$10-\$20 will buy one.

No Churchill book collection is complete without *Mr. Brodrick's Army* (Woods A6b) and *For Free Trade* (A9). But originals are ultra-rare: only about ten of the former and 25 of the latter are known, and they can cost \$2,000 each. The answer here is the Churchilliana Company's 1977 'first American editions': meticulous facsimiles with a new preface by Dr. Manfred Weidhorn. The pair costs only \$28.50 (library binding) or \$32.50 (half-buckram collectors binding).

*My African Journey* (1908) was Churchill's only travel book, and the English edition is probably the most colorfully bound of anything he ever wrote. It is also colorfully priced; a Los Angeles bookstore listed one at \$275 recently. But the budget collector may turn happily to a 1962 reprint by Neville Spearman—relatively commonplace, and rarely priced over \$10.

Two early speech books which are among the rarest of the first editions are *Liberalism and the Social Problem* (1909) and *The People's Rights* (1910). Here we see a young, radical, Liberal WSC, speaking out against the Edwardian Establishment. Both these brilliant but extremely rare titles were reprinted, and both are still in *Books in Print*: the Haskell House *Liberalism* (\$45), and the Taplinger *Peoples Rights* (\$9). You should be able to order them through any shop dealing in new books.

*The World Crisis* presents problems to the collector of both first and later editions, particularly the last volume (*Unknown War/Eastern Front*). Fortunately, Scribners and Thornton-Butterworth one-volume abridgements (Woods

A31b) are not uncommon, and may be acquired for \$20-\$30. (There are also paperback versions of this dramatic history of World War I, though paperback collectors have pushed the prices up to as much as \$10.) Scribners itself published postwar editions of the full five-volume set, but these will cost probably \$30-\$40 even though they are not 'firsts.' Another good *World Crisis* set is the two-volume Odhams (1938-postwar), common in England and as little as £8-10.

*Marlborough*, WSC's second great biography, costs first edition collectors from \$100 up. But you have two good alternatives here: the expertly abridged Scribners one volume edition with new introduction by Henry Steele Commager (still in print, \$33 from Churchill Book Club, half that for used copies); or the excellent Scribners boxed four-volume paperback editions (\$10-20).

After *Marlborough*, things get easy. Odhams' handsome postwar reprints were published for *My Early Life*, *Thoughts and Adventures*, *Great Contemporaries*, *Arms and the Covenant*, *Step by Step* and *Painting as a Pastime*. Aside from the *Covenant*, all these are available in other popular-priced editions or book club reprints; *MEL* is still in print at 16.95 from the Churchill Book Club. And if *Arms and the Covenant* eludes you, the American version is *While England Slept*, still not too uncommon in used book shops.

First editions of the WW2 speech books (*Into Battle/Blood*, *Sweat and Tears*, *The Unrelenting Struggle*, *The End of the Beginning*, *Onwards to Victory*, *the Dawn of Liberation* and *Victory*) are beginning to move up in price. But later editions are abundant, especially the English (Cassell) titles; and there are scores of Book Club editions of *Blood*, *Sweat* around for as little as \$2. I have often seen non-first-edition speech books at £1 in English bookshops, and not much more than that in the USA.

*Secret Session Speeches* (Woods A1 14), the softbound *War Speeches* (A113), and the definitive three-volume *War Speeches*

*continued page 9*

(A136) are trickier to obtain, though first editions of A114 are not expensive. But don't give up on postwar speech books (*Sinews of Peace, Europe Unite, In the Balance, Stemming the Tide, The Unwritten Alliance*^). Although none were published in large quantities, and *Alliance* had no U. S. edition, many antiquarian bookshops turn them up on occasion. Few seem to have realized how scarce they are. For the beginning collector, these titles should be among your *top priorities* — not because they are really rare yet, but because most saw only one printing, and there have been no later editions. When the supply runs low. . .

*The Second World War* (Woods A1 23) is certainly Sir Winston's best known work. Though abridgements and paperbacks abound, there is no need for the budget collector to pass up the full six-volume set. Avoid first editions (550-100) and pick up the old Book-of-the-Month Club version. It has almost the same binding, and contains the exact same words from start to finish. Cost, from as little as \$1 per volume to \$20 for a really fine set. For the English Edition (the American was the true first in this title), copies are plentiful in the UK for around the same prices. Last year I bought nearly two full sets at 50 pence per book, and all were first editions!

Another hot tip—and this is for the consummate collector as well. Houghton-Mifflin and Book-of-the-Month Club have teamed to produce a beautiful new "Chartwell Edition" of *The Second World War*, only \$27.50 if you join BOMC. See "International Updates," page 3.

Once again in the case of *History of the English Speaking Peoples*, there are many low-cost alternatives to the expensive first editions. The best is the Book-of-the-Month Club's four volumes, which look almost identical to the first edition but have unstained top page ends and lack headbands. They contain the same words as the trade editions, but sell for as little as \$15 a set. And \$6.98 buys the new one-volume edition. (See "International Updates.")

WSC wrote several "spin-off" titles from H. E. S. P. which the advanced collector insists on having, but if you stop here, you will have on your shelf just about every word of his that appeared between hard covers—a brilliant panoply of late 19th and 20th Century history, several famous biographies, and the finest speeches in the English language. Just about everything, with two exceptions:

*India and The Unknown War/The Eastern Front*. I believe these are as hard to find as *Malakand*. *India*, a set of speeches defending the Raj, obviously didn't appeal to latterday publishers and was never reprinted after its second edition in 1931; *Unknown War*, Volume V of *World Crisis*, came so long after the other volumes that relatively few were printed, and most sets of WC lack it.

Even without these two rare birds, however, you can amass a near-complete set of Churchill. And, if you follow the simple instructions above, you can do it for \$300-400. Considering that you'll acquire in the process eight million of the finest words ever strung together by a writer of English, that's quite a bargain.

SOURCES OF CHURCHILL BOOKS.

- Booth's Bookshop, Lion Street, Hay-on-Wye, Hereford, England.*
- Chartwell Booksellers, Park Avenue Plaza, 55 E. 52nd St., New York, NY 10055.*
- Churchill Book Club, Burrage Road, Contoocook, New Hampshire 03229.*
- Churchilliana Company, 4629 Sunset Drive, Sacramento, California 95822.*
- Maggs Brothers Ltd., 50 Berkeley Square, London W.1, England.*
- Jon Richardson, 47 Old Farm Road, Bedford, New Hampshire 03102.*
- Sawyer, Charles J., No. 1 Graf ton St., London W1X3LB, England.*

MORE ON "MY EARLY LIFE"

Thanks to F.B. Watt and Eleanor Newfield, we can add to our list of editions of this book (FA#-41, p.13), and we have also simplified the numbering:

English Editions

- 13a. *Thomton-Butterworth: five impns, six states. 20 Oct 1930 to Sep 1931.*
- 13b. *T-B/Keystone: three impns, 20 Feb 1934. Jan 1937, Jan 1940.*
- 13c. *Macmillan: at least two impns, Dec 1940 (published 1941), 1942.*
- 13d. *Reprint Society: one known impn in 1944. More impns likely.*
- 13e. *Odhams: at least seven impns, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1957, 1958, 1965 (new binding), 1966.*
- 13f. *Odhams School Edition: at least 13 impns, 10/58, 2/59, 11/59, 3/60, 10/60, 3/61, 10/61, 4/62, 10/62, 2/63, 7/63, 12/63 and 7/64.*
- 13g. *Fontana paperback: 14 impns, from 1960 through 1980.*
- 13h. *Library of Imperial History, Collected Works, Vol 1. 1974.*

American Editions

- 13i. *Scribners First Edn: at least four impns. 23 Oct 1930 [code A/, late 1930, 1931, post-1931 in grey-blue cloth.*
- 13j. *Scribners New Edn: at least four impns, 1939 IAAI, 1939/BBJ, 1940, 1941.*
- 13k. *Scribners Third Edn: at least four impns. 1949, 1951, 195?, 1968.*
- 13L. *Scribners/Hudson River Edn: two impns. 1977. circa 1980.*

Other Editions

- Sweden: "*Min Ungdom*," published by Vingforlaget, Stockholm, 1955: patterned papered boards, bone white buckram spine.
- Holland: "*Mijn Jonge Jaren*," published by Allert de Lange, Amsterdam, 1947: white paper covered board, brown spine, no dust jacket.
- Canada: one edn known; data?

LA PEINTURE MON PASSE-TEMPS

. . . is a French translation of PAINTING AS A PASTIME we've just found, published by Editions de la Paix, Paris, 1949. My copy is marked #=1722 of 3000. The binding is similar to the English edition, but slightly smaller. Does anyone have any more information on this French edition?

Despatch Box

A NEW HONORARY MEMBER

Thank you very much for your letter of December, and for enclosing *Finest Hour*, which I look forward to reading with interest. I renew my thanks to the Society for the compliment they have paid me.

- Anthony Montague Browne, London

*Mr. Browne was Sir Winston's personal private secretary from 1955 to 1965, devoting himself singlemindedly to handling the Great Man's affairs. He was unanimously named an ICS Honorary Member by the Board of Directors, whose invitation was extended by Ronald W. Downey of Vancouver.*

MORE NOTES ON RARE BOOKS

I have a copy of the softbound IAN HAMILTON'S MARCH, and a similar edition of LADYSMITH. I cannot agree that they are review copies, for mine has the Montreal News Co. on the spine, which indicates they were sold on trains and in stations. I have seen probably 20 of these in recent years with various titles but they are scarce because of the nature of the wrappers.

I note also your mention of the two Dalton Newfield reprints, MR BRODRICK'S ARMY and FOR FREE TRADE, where you say the first editions fetch remarkable prices in London auctions. I wonder where or when these came up because the last good copy went for, I believe, about \$2000 (BRODRICK). Another poor copy sold for under \$1000. I haven't seen FREE TRADE recently, but I bought mine in London about two years ago for less than \$2000. I'd be delighted to think they are worth more than 510,000 each, but somehow I think that is very high and indeed frightens collectors away.

- F.B. Watt. Toronto

*Our reference came from the ad on page 12, Finest Hour #i4. We stand corrected.*

CANNING CORRECTION

I hope you won't mind my drawing your attention to a misquote of Canning's poem which I quoted at the end of my speech in the Pinafore Room at the Savoy [FH #41 p. 9]. The last word in the first line should be 'rise' and the second line should read, 'The dawning of peace should fresh darkness deform'. In the last line, for 'should', read 'shall'. With all good wishes to you and the Society,

-Sir John Colville. Stockbridge. Hants.

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# Action This Day

BY JOHN PLUMPTON  
130 Collingsbrook Blvd.  
Agincourt, Ontario M1W 1M7

## WINTER 1883-1884: AGE 9

During the first term of 1884 young Winston finally exhibited an improved performance at St. George's School. His Division Master was "more satisfied with him than I have ever been," but cautioned that there was still much room for improvement. His Head Master commented that perhaps Winston was "beginning to realize that school means work and discipline," but complained that Winston was "rather greedy at meals." Many years later WSC's son and biographer defended his father's culinary behavior with some rather caustic judgments of the food at English public (private) schools.

Meanwhile, Lord Randolph Churchill's withdrawal from public life proved unpermanent. At Blenheim he plotted an attack on the Central Committee of the Conservative Party formed chiefly, according to WSC, "of members of the Carlton Club." The first step was to gain control of the Council of the National Union of Conservative Associations. But Lord Randolph maintained cordial relations with Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, the Conservative leaders in the Lords and Commons respectively, and concentrated his attacks on Liberal leader William Gladstone. The most famous occasion was the "chips speech," alluding to Gladstone's hobby of cutting trees, leaving only wooden chips: "To all who leaned upon Mr. Gladstone, who trusted in him, and who hoped for something from him — chips, nothing but chips — hard, dry, un nourishing, indigestible chips!"

## WINTER 1908-1909: AGE 34

Randolph called this period his father's "new departure." Was he truly "an architect of the modern welfare state" or merely a defender of traditional class society? Historians disagree. RSC referred to the reciprocal fascination, friendship and partnership between WSC and Lloyd George. But Margot Asquith wrote, "From Lloyd George he was to learn the language of Radicalism. It was Lloyd George's native tongue, but it was not his own, and despite his efforts he spoke it with a difference." Margot wrote him frequently, usually encouraging his support for her husband, the Prime Minister, even asking him to intervene with the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* because of its critical stand. But Churchill replied that papers had better be left alone.

Churchill planned to visit Paris, but Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey made him promise not to meddle in foreign policy. Grey warned him that he could not discuss politics abroad as a private individual: "Importance will be attached to all you say."

WSC published *My African Journey* (Woods A12), a longer version of his account in *Vie Strand* (A35), but with only 45,000 words it had large type. It sold for 5/. He bought and sold many books via Eddie Marsh, who considered Newman's *Sermons*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Macauley's *History of England*, Gibbon, Froude and Carlyle. Nearly 200 books were bought and sold.

## WINTER 1933-1934: AGE 59

Churchill's major concerns, India and Europe, were linked in a speech which tied Baldwin's Conservatives to MacDonald's Labourites. "Well might Sir John Simon exclaim," he said, "We are all Socialists now." The essence of his feelings on India was revealed in a review of *Clive of India* (Woods C228): "Now, in this period of exhaustion after so many triumphs, when our very right to reign and rule in the East is assailed by morbid subversives or featherheaded sentimentalists, it is refreshing and, indeed, inspiring to review our contact with the splendid vigour of our forbears."

In February, to derisive laughter, he defiantly told the Oxford University Conservative Association that Germany had been responsible for the Great War and warned that "the hideous curse of war from the air has fallen on the world. While critics accused him of contributing to anarchy and ruin, many were rallying to him on the European issue. Sir Maurice Hankey wrote him that "we badly need some leadership on this subject just now and it is a better horse than India."

He worked as frequently as possible on Volume II of *Marlborough* (A40). He worried about his lack of formal academic training but the great historian Lewis Namier wrote that "... there is no-one alive engaged in history work with your experience of politics, government and war. Please do not write history as other historians do, but do it in your own way."

## WINTER 1958-1959: AGE 84

Lady Churchill had again suffered from shingles, but as usual organized a splendid Christmas and New Year's at Chartwell, and a family outing, including Sir Winston, to see Sarah perform in *Peter Pan* in London. They then wintered in Marrakech, to which many changes, unfavorable in their view, had occurred since their visits of the late 1940s. But the visits of family and friends seemed to raise Sir Winston's spirits. Lady Churchill wrote Mary, "... Papa is blooming in his health. His memory fails a little more day by day and he is getting deaf. But he is well. I have learnt to play poker and enjoy it very much."

Two years before at Beaverbrook's villa, WSC had met Aristotle Onassis and his wife Tina. Onassis greatly admired WSC and invited him to cruise on his yacht, *Christina*, a converted British frigate. On 29 February they boarded the vessel for an Atlantic cruise which eventually took them to the Canary Islands.

Prior to leaving for the south, the senior Conservative leader had told the Executive of his Woodford Conservative Association that the party should do what it thought was right, "not what it fancies will be immediately popular." From his own experience he had learned that "the British people are reluctant to give any party a vote of gratitude for what has been done."

# Churchillophilately



## The Lundy Churchill Locals

BY ROGERS. CICHORZ

Lundy is a small island in the Bristol Channel about 20 miles off the West Devonshire Coast of England. The island, a high-cliffed block of granite just over three miles long and a half mile wide, boasts three lighthouses, a colorful recorded history that dates back to the 9th Century A.D., and a permanent year-round population of about 35 inhabitants.

Regular British postal service was established on Lundy in 1886 and terminated in 1927 when the Post Office and telegraph cable facilities were abandoned, as the G. P. O. decided that it was no longer economically feasible to maintain services. The then-owner of the island, London financier Martin Coles Harman, took over responsibility for the mail delivery to and from Lundy. In 1929, he decided to charge a fee for his carriage services by introducing a set of local stamps that would be required to prepay his postal charges.

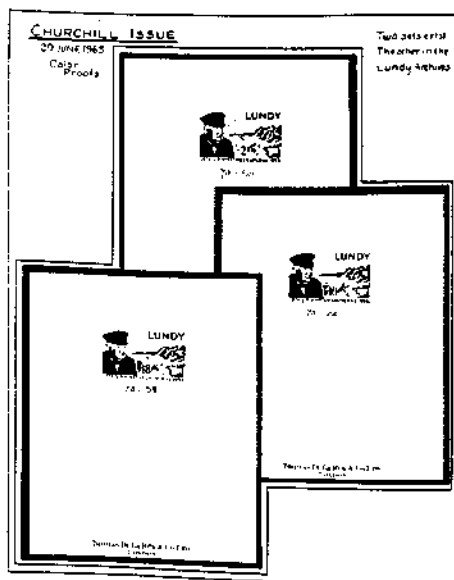
Since its 1929 stamps were released, Lundy has maintained a conservative stamp-issuance policy with most post-1953 issues either depicting scenes, landmarks, or events of the island or important British and International themes. Curiously, Lundy locals are denominated in "puffins" (1 puffin is equivalent to 1 British penny)-a monetary unit named for the bird that in the past had inhabited Lundy and whose feathers in antiquity had served as a means of monetary exchange for the islanders.

The Lundy postal service is the oldest continuously operating local post in the world and is considered by many philatelists to be quite necessary and legitimate. Lundy airmail adhesives and those of a private air service that carried mails to and from the island during the 1930s are listed in the *Sanabria World Air Mail Catalogue*.

During the period from 1961 to 1966, Lundy succumbed to issuing five sets of stamps that appeared to be exploitive of

collectors because the stamp subjects had nothing to do with the island's history. These comprised such popular philatelic themes as EUROPA (the Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications Administrations), the 1962 United Nations World Health Organization's Anti-Malaria Campaign, and commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare. Continuing this tradition, Lundy released a Sir Winston Churchill memorial set of three stamps on 29 June 1965.

Lundyphiles maintain that Churchill and Lundy had no direct connection and, therefore, these stamps were superfluous - but perhaps an ICS historian could prove them wrong? The argument that Lundy is a British Isle and is, therefore, paying homage to Sir Winston, is tenuous at best. Martin Coles Harman had always maintained that his ownership charter obtained from the Crown recognized Lundy's own sovereignty and separation from the British mainland, and, indeed, by that



charter, the island's inhabitants were exempt from paying British income tax.)

The Lundy Churchill memorial issue was produced by Thomas DeLaRue & Co., Ltd., London security printers, in sheets of 48, but issued in four different panes of 12 with the firm's imprint appearing on the bottom margin of each pane. The stamps are of one design, depicting a bust of Sir Winston Churchill in cap and jacket of Trinity House and, to the right, a view of a portion of Lundy. At the bottom of the design is the inscription, "1874 SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL 1965."

The denominations and colors are: —

2 puffin mulberry, die printed; burnt orange, lithographed

10 puffin deep blue, die printed; magenta, lithographed

18 puffin black, die printed; violet, lithographed

The stamp size is 40mm x 25mm, and the stamps are perforated 13x14%. The issue consisted of 30,000 sets, plus an extra 6000 of the 2-puffin value. In addition, 85 panes of all three denominations, 1020 sets, were issued imperforate (technically, color proofs). No errors or constant plate varieties exist, which is a tribute to the stamp-printing ability and integrity of the DeLaRue firm.

Felix W. Gade, the Lundy postal agent from 1929, wrote in the 1965 supplement to his *The Postal History of Lundy*: "A departure was made in that one colour is die printed and the other lithographed. Hitherto, except the issues printed by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co., Ltd., all Lundy issues have been lithographed. Die printing one colour of the Sir Winston Churchill stamps made it possible to use a superior and thinner quality of paper. The design and colours of the stamps met with unqualified approval, and the British Sir Winston stamps suffered badly by comparison."

Apparently, there were two sets of die proofs in the stamps' issued colors produced by the DeLaRue firm. One of these is in the collection of a Lundy specialist who obtained it in the early 1970s from the J. Sanders firm in Southampton, England. The whereabouts of the second set is unknown. Anyone having information about this item is encouraged to write the *FH* Editor.

### LUNDY GETS PTS/BPA BLESSING

Collectors of Churchill Locals (privately issued labels to pay for local carriage of mail where no regular postal service exists) will be interested to learn that the Philatelic Status Committee of the British Philatelic Traders Society and the British Philatelic Association, has ruled on the legitimacy of several local entities. Drake's Island, Lundy, post-1972 Pabay and Summer Isles are all bona fide local mail services, says the

## CHURCHILLOPHILATELY *confd.*

Committee. The labels of Davaar and Eynhallow, however, are meaningless. Eynhaliow labels are marketed by a stamp dealer, while Davaar, which ceased issuing in 1973, never had a local mail service. Some Davaar covers were cancelled on the Campbeltown ferry, but this was as near to reality as they came.

The Committee has also cited certain well-known locals as "publicity labels"—items produced with the territory owner's consent but not guaranteeing the carriage of mail by any regular or seasonal service from the place inscribed on the label. These issues appear not to imply that they are stamps, and are issued for worthy causes. Included in this group are Bardsey, North Wales; Bernera Islands, Hebrides; Caldey, South Wales; Canna (Eileen Chanaidh), Hebrides; Gairsay Orkney; Grunay, Shetlands; Shuna, Argyll; Staffa, Hebrides; and Steep Holm, Bristol Channel. Pabay issues before 1973 also fall into this category. Funds from sales of these labels go either to the support of a trust, or island maintenance by a private owner. Some of the entities sell stamps to tourists who post them on the islands, but the use of the labels is not mandatory.

## Updates *continued. . .*

### SMOKE SIGNALS

Three of WSC's cigars were offered at Christie's last October by nursing Sister Muriel Thomson, who cared for him in 1960-62. One of his own cigars once went for £320, a world record that still stands. Sister Thomson was unlucky, as the cigars failed to sell. (A Norwich surveyor who presided at a sale in 1972 for the Norfolk Cheshire Home recalls that a cigar presented by Stalin to Churchill in 1942, and authenticated by a letter from Lady Churchill, once went for £470.)

### NEW DIAGNOSIS

A 1983 issue of *MD* magazine contained an engrossing article entitled "The Doctor Who Stood Up to Churchill" by John Ahearn, apparently derived mainly from Lord Moran's *CHURCHILL: THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL*. Dr. William T. Foley of New York later wrote that after analyzing WSC's various complaints, he had concluded that Moran and others had made the wrong diagnosis.

"Churchill's two episodes of pneumonia were associated with acute auricular fibrillation," writes Foley. "Later, his minor strokes were also associated with the same problem. Finally, on his last visit to the White House, when he developed gangrene on the fifth left finger, the same symptoms reoccurred. Having specialized in thromboembolism

## Riddles, Mysteries, Enigmas

(A) More on WSC's height and weight from Paul Mullett, Louisville, Kentucky: "Reference is made on p.309 of Manchester's *LAST LION* to the Boer descriptions of fugitive WSC in 1899 as 'five ft 8 in tall.'"

(Q) *Anent WSC's height and weight (FH#=41), you mention Churchill asking Lindemann about the force with which he was hit in the 1931 New York accident. What did the Prof say?*

(A) "Collision equivalent falling 30 feet onto pavement, equal 6000 footpounds of energy. Equivalent stopping 10 pound brick dropped 600 feet, or two charges buckshot pointblank range. Shock probably proportional rate energy transferred. Rate inversely proportional thickness cushion surrounding skeleton and give of frame. If assume average one inch, your body transferred during impact at rate 8000 horsepower. Congratulations on preparing suitable cushion, and skill in taking bump."

(Q) *Can you advise whether Churchill was responsible for this quote: "You cannot deal with the most serious things in the world unless you also understand the most amusing."*

(A) Yes, it is WSC's quote, but we don't know where or when. We have asked Ms. Kay Murphy Halle, ICS patron member, who used it in the frontispiece to her marvelous book, *IRREPRES-SIBLE CHURCHILL* (NY, World 1966.)

(Q) *I am looking for English first editions of WHILE ENGLAND SLEPT, A ROVING COMMISSION, AMID THESE STORMS and BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS. Can you help?*

(A) These don't exist in English editions as they are the American titles, respectively, of *ARMS AND THE COVENANT*, *MY EARLY LIFE, THOUGHTS AND ADVENTURES* and *INTO BATTLE*. All but the last are much scarcer in English form than in American edition/title.

(Q) *Is it still possible to obtain the 36-vol COLLECTED WORKS OF WINSTON CHURCHILL?*

for many decades, I can only conclude that Churchill was probably suffering from multiple emboli, first to the lungs, later to the brain, and then to the finger.

"I personally interviewed Churchill's surgeon, Dr. Charles Rob, and queried him concerning the possibility that he and Lord Moran and others had made the wrong diagnosis and that Churchill was probably suffering from multiple emboli.



*WSC was stocky, but not nearly as pudgy as is commonly believed. Here he is viewing London damage during the Blitz, the man at his right wearing a Civil Defence armband. Anent the answer below, concerning Library of Imperial History's four-volume Collected Essays, can we have a reading on whether you would like this set? It is the only compilation of WSC's newspaper & magazine articles. Drop us a card.*

(A) The sets occasionally come up at Christie's for about £900, almost half the original asking price, which is not surprising since they are essentially handsome reprints. Some were published out of order (*EARLY LIFE* and *AFRICAN JOURNEY* shared volume I), and some were edited, and are not true texts. The original publisher, the Library of Imperial History, has since become defunct, and the projected 5000 copies were reduced to 2500 before then. We are informed that 200-300 remain unsold, but the successor company is asking \$2500 for these. We wrote that firm for details on these, along with the *L.I.H. COLLECTED ESSAYS* (a 4-vol set that is really important), only to learn that they have left their Tunbridge Wells address. Nearby member Tom Thomas is checking into their whereabouts.

Dr. Rob agreed." (From the letters column of *MD*, July 1983.)

### WINSTON FREDERICK CHURCHILL GUEST

. . . died in January at the age of 78. The son of WSC's cousin Freddie Guest and WSC's godson, W.F.C. Guest lived at his estate on Long Island. His father Freddie died in 1937.

# THE CHURCHILLIAD

## Martin Gilbert's Finest Hour

FINEST HOUR: WINSTON S. CHURCHILL 1939-1941  
Volume VI of the Official Biography  
BY MARTIN GILBERT

BY SIMON SCHAMA

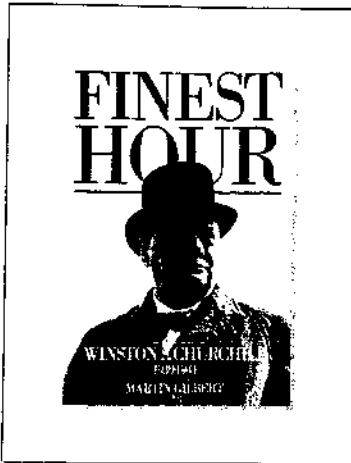
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Contoocook NH 03229 for \$33ppd either ednl

There are two heroes in this story: Winston Churchill and Martin Gilbert. The Promethean career of the one has inspired the Herculean labors of the other. In fact, in comparison with Gilbert's epic toil, Hercules got off lightly. When Gilbert took over the biography, following Randolph Churchill's death in 1968, the series was a mere two volumes and 1400 pages long. It had reached 1914. Since then Gilbert has logged in four more volumes, between them 5000 pages, not to mention eight Companion Volumes of documents, 10,000 pages more--plus a TV series, books to go with the TV series, and so on. This prodigious output and Gilbert has written amply on contemporary and Jewish history as well--is likely to send most historians, more at ease with the judicious footnote or the learned article, running for their smelling salts.

But Martin Gilbert is not like most historians. He happily abandoned a teaching career for the Churchill commission and repaired to a house near Oxford which he custom-designed for the job. This became the freelance historian's dream palace, filled with manuscript tables, charts, tracked lighting, an academic version of Churchill's Operations Room. Still, for all this production-line efficiency, he is really a throwback to the heroic grand tradition of 19th Century multi-tomed political biography. He has constructed a colossal historical mausoleum from millions of minute bricks of information, all impeccably arranged according to the strictest laws of chronological narrative. It need hardly be said that this titanic style of historical biography is unfashionable. Few working historians nowadays have the time to contemplate anything as grandiose. Even fewer, though, have the inclination. Instead they favor precisely the opposite approach, in which small episodes are invested with exemplary significance, and are more often on social than political topics. Death is altogether a more fashionable subject these days than war or taxes. The panoramic canvas has been replaced by the historiographical mirco-chip.

Immured in his commission, Gilbert is fantastically and unapologetically positivist, setting down almost every known fact about his hero, and in some cases many competing versions of a single event. No aspect of Churchill's politics, or his conduct of the war, or his working methods, or even his family life has been omitted. The color of his siren suits (blue or red), the strength of his whiskies and soda (surprisingly weak)--all is presented for us to sift and sort, retain or dismiss, as we see fit. This is history not just as chronicle but as total recall. It is also deliberately impersonal, a presentation in which the historian abdicates the role of commentator, critic, or interpreter. Gilbert writes as if Tacitus and Gibbon had never penned a line. There are no judgments, not the merest hint of a cavil. Nor are there the conventional literary framings--no fanfare at the outset, nor drumroll at the conclusion. The narrative simply begins: "At eleven o'clock on the morning of September 3rd 1939..." and goes on like that for another 1274 pages. It is a Churchillliad, and Gilbert is its bard.

What is it like to read? Reading is not really what one does with a Gilbert Churchill, any more than with say, Pepys' diary. Confronted with this mighty ocean of narrative the only possible response is total immersion. The great tidal wave of detail plunges the reader almost involuntarily into Churchill's life during the first two grim years of the war. One does not so much read the life, one accompanies it, as if peering over Churchill's burly shoulder. Of course the life itself is not without interest. It has already drawn biographers like moths to the flame, and they have usually been



badly singed. In the past year alone, the humdrum Ted Morgan and the portentous William Manchester have both made an effort to capture the young Churchill. Manchester's slapdash study, with its cartoon-strip account of British politics and culture and its rhinestone-studded prose, looks particularly gaudy alongside the Churchillliad.

Gilbert has been faithful to Randolph Churchill's injunction--"he shall be his own biographer"--and allowed his subject to tell much of the story through speeches, conversations and letters, as well as official documents. The recollections of personal secretaries, civil servants, young staff aides, and the good use of memoirs lend intimacy and immediacy to Gilbert's vast collective portrait. There are unforgettable vignettes: receiving an assistant during the Blitz "wrapped only in a huge bath towel looking like one of the later Roman Emperors"; singing "Ole Man River" in his car after speaking in Parliament of the Anglo-American relationship that "like the Mississippi just keeps rolling along";

pressing the revolting concoction of Bovril and sardines on a politely amenable aide; rapping on a front door and greeting the butler with a cheery "Goebbels and Goering here to report"; and dictating to his secretary from his flower-chintzed four-poster, chewing a cigar, sipping soda water and fidgeting his toes beneath the bedclothes.

The history, though, is not just chatty gossip. Against all odds, it succeeds in conveying the frightening bleakness of the spring of 1940, when Hitler seemed unstoppable and European democracy appeared to be closing down for the season. What followed in Britain for the remainder of that year is one of the most stirring chronicles of modern history, the majestic moral dimension of which has been blown away by Woukian winds of cliché and the debasement of Churchillian rhetoric. (A Congressman was recently heard to say that the invasion of Grenada was America's "finest hour.") Amidst all folk memories of Britain Can Take It and the comforting irrevocability of Churchill's eventual triumph, it is easy to forget just how desperate the crisis was when he became Prime Minister. That May 10th was one of the worst days of the war, when the Germans invaded Belgium and Holland and the awesome power of the Blitzkrieg was made apparent in the West. The "phoney war" had culminated in the miserable fiasco of the Norwegian landings, and consternation had replaced uncertainty as the dominant mood of the country. The effect of Churchill's appointment to the supreme office he had always coveted was electrifying. By sheer force of personality, transmitted to the British Parliament and to the people through radio broadcasts, he turned fear into fortitude. By telling the truth he actually made things seem better, not worse. As Harold Nicolson shrewdly noted, the same words in Neville Chamberlain's mouth would have left his audience in a mood of dejection; in Churchill's they sounded a note of hope and defiance. There is no question that this was one of the rare moments in history when the presence of a single man altered what was, and was not, possible.

How did he make that difference? Precisely because of its painstaking elaboration of detail, Martin Gilbert's book is the only account that can show the mechanics of inspiration at work. In essence they were the result of the extraordinary effect that Churchill's own unambiguous dedication and his jaunty bravura had on others--on immediate colleagues, on junior ministers, on the people at large. This peculiar chemistry, the essence of Churchillian charisma, can be reduced to four elements.

The first indispensable component of his leadership was staggeringly and indefatigably hard work. Churchill was 61 when he became Prime Minister, but his hours and his devotion to detail left his bright young assistants dropping in their tracks. In the 1930s he had mastered the most intricate military information, so that he could out-brief the government

ministers he harried so mercilessly in the House of Commons. When he was First Lord of the Admiralty at the outset of the war, and beset with naval emergency, he discovered somehow that there was an insufficient supply of fish being caught off the coast. In went the details; out went the famous order, "We must have a policy of utmost fish. Report before midnight." His capacity to absorb, analyze, and act on mountains of material was an immense asset. It meant that he delegated work as sense rather than laziness commanded. It also instilled a healthy respect among subordinates for their chief's omniscience.

The second element in Churchill's leadership was his impressively detailed grasp of military strategy. It is easy to overlook the obvious fact that, more than any of the other war leaders, and certainly more than either Stalin or the warlords in Berlin and Rome, Churchill was in his own right a great commander. This is not to say that he did not commit blunders during the war—he was perhaps still too much haunted by the ghosts of Gallipoli and too much attracted to "sideshows" in the Balkans and the Aegean. But he had an unerring nose for fine commanders, and he stuck by them even when they were drawing flack from their staff. Sir Hugh Dowding, the chief of Fighter Command, still for the most part unsung in Britain, was both a genius and a hero, and Churchill only let him go after the contest for British skies had been won and Dowding was plainly pros- trated by the effort. Most of all, Churchill's detailed grasp of logistics and strategy meant that he could talk to his generals and admirals directly, and construct with them at each moment of the war a careful order of priorities.

The third component of Churchill's charisma was that for which he is most remembered: the passion and the dignity of his rhetoric. Martin Gilbert cites many of his speeches, familiar and unfamiliar, at pleasing length and in full metaphorical ripeness. The thickness of this documentation makes it possible to see just how the great orations were put together from the capacious filing cabinet of his literary memory and the emotional impetus of the moment. The notion of anything so intellectually supine as a speech writer, let alone a bank of them, would have appalled Churchill, not only because his feeling for the cadences and the inflections of the language was so fine, but because during the war rhetoric was not manipulated for personal promotion. It is apparent that Churchill's speeches broke the crust of the British class system and brought together those divided by accent, manners, education and fortune. He played on his oratory like some mighty brass instrument, muting and swelling as occasion demanded. When he addressed the French—"Français, c'est moi, Churchill qui vous parle"—he conscripted the ghost of Napoleon exhorting his troops against the Prussians, but was tactful enough not to mention that the occasion was Waterloo. At least one of his listeners thought, "every word was like a transfusion of drops of blood."

None of this could have been accomplished by mere technical facility. Churchill made his listeners brave because his own moral clarity led him to attribute the best possible motives to his compatriots. Thus he associated them with his own resoluteness. "If this island story of ours is to end, let it end only when each of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground."

The last quality of Churchill's was, in the end, that on which the rest depended: his unswerving moral decency. This shines through the pages of Gilbert's account, without any effort by the author to canonize his subject. For Churchill's goodness was not to be confused with saintliness. He savored power and authority as he did a fat cigar, and during his long career had made more than his share of blunders. He was not wartless—but his warts were just that, imperfections on the face of virtue.

Winston Churchill emerges as a generous man, even to a fault. He despised vindictiveness and stood loyally by some who did not always deserve his kindness. He showed exceptional tenderness to Neville Chamberlain, and through the long period of his cancer never neglected to brief Chamberlain on every piece of business. When Chamberlain died in November 1940, Churchill cried at his bier, and reserved one of his most moving speeches for the memorial service. All this was transparently sincere and deeply felt.

Churchill, who had so protean a career, remained hopeless as a party tactician. He had never really felt comfortable with the clubland Tories, and was as near to a

populist as any British politician can come. His wife was quite right in her attempt to persuade him to decline the leadership of the Conservatives when Chamberlain died. She understood that for better or worse he had acquired iconic status as a symbol of the endurance of British culture.

This was because Churchill embodied, without ever meaning to, a glorious illusion about British history: that at its heart lay a family bond that transcended all divisions of class and party. It was typical that although he loathed his old school, Harrow, he consented to visit it on condition that the boys sang the school songs; he went away watery-eyed, with the feeling that he had touched the national spirit once more. In retrospect it seems almost a historical miracle that, at a time when they were so mercilessly tested, the western democracies managed to throw up two leaders—Roosevelt, of course, the other—who inspired not only respect but love.

None of this adds up to a definitive answer as to why Britain survived. There are more impersonal reasons to be found in this book, and in others: Hitler's folly in abandoning the strikes on airfields for the cities; the German failure to press an invasion in the summer of 1940; their inability to close the Atlantic routes. There are other, quieter heroes: Dowding; the long-suffering Pug Ismay who served as Chief of Staff in the most gloomy times; Harry Hopkins, on whom Churchill pinned his hopes for an Anglo-American alliance. There are the unsung and the anonymous: fighter pilots without whose inexhaustible courage the battle for the skies over Britain would have been lost. There are inimitable stiff upper lips all over the place, the stiffest of all belonging to the butler of the Reform Club who answered the phone the night that Pall Mall was put to the torch and responded to a request for information with a Jeevesian "The Club is burning, sir."

In all these circumstances and contingencies, however, nothing stands out from Gilbert's monumental account more clearly than Churchill's own part in moving his countrymen to extraordinary efforts and sacrifices. He told the millions who hung on every word that issued from the wireless that "the curse of Nazism will be lifted from the brow of mankind" and "that wicked man, the repository and embodiment of many forms of soul-destroying hatred" would be vanquished. In private, Churchill was not always so sanguine. He forced himself and others, he admitted, to be brave "because everyone realised how near death and ruin we stood. Not only individual death which is the universal experience, but incomparably more commanding the life of Britain, her message and her glory."

The terror of imminent extinction flickers intermittently through Martin Gilbert's crowded narrative. But whenever it begins to rise with the tempo of accumulating disasters, Churchill's presence, too, rises above the panic, like a great granite cliff. I suppose that is what our parents felt and what sustained them in the nightmare of 1940. This is a rare thing then: a vast biography in which the stature of its subject is enhanced rather than diminished with every page and every document. The only somber reflection on putting it down is the certainty that we shall not look upon his like again. •

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Reprinted by permission of THE NEW REPUBLIC, (c) 1983, The New Republic, Inc., and by permission of the author. Simon Schama is a professor of history at Harvard University. This review was brought to our attention by Mr. F. B. Watt of Toronto, and of all the many praises heaped upon Martin Gilbert's epic Volume VI, we found this by far the most deserving of your attention.

Unable to host Martin Gilbert during our 1983 tour of "Churchill's England" due to schedule conflicts, we took pride in sending him one of a series of gold Centenary Medallions (cover, FH #40), set in a special display holder by member Don Payne of Southampton. The inscription on the holder reads:

PRESENTED FOR CONSPICUOUS SERVICE IN PRESERVING  
THE MEMORY 5 LEGACY OF THE RT HON SIR WINSTON S.  
CHURCHILL, KG, OM WITH GRATEFUL THANKS BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL CHURCHILL SOCIETY"

Identical presentations were also made to The Marquess of Bath, The Lady Soames, and Sir John Colville. All, we are very sure, have been richly earned. •

# Inside the Journals

## WSC in Popular and Academic Periodical Literature

BY JOHN PLUMPTON

*This new occasional column by "Action This Day" editor John Plumpton covers a relatively obscure branch of Churchill scholarship: abstracts of what is and was written about WSC in periodical literature. Many historians never get their work into books but do considerable writing in journals. John emphasizes that he is providing abstracts rather than reviews, outlining the author's theses rather than critiquing the article.* — RML

*Lucy Masterman: "Churchill: The Liberal Phase"*  
*Published in History Today, 14 (11) and (12), 1964.*

These mini-memoirs of Lucy Masterman draw on letters and diaries written when her husband, Charles, was a colleague of Winston Churchill in the Asquith Government.

She remembers a Winston with a sense of mission ("full of the poor whom he has just discovered"), a loquacious nature ("dinner talk didn't flow from anyone but Winston who poured out ideas in an undigested form") and, most importantly, an unrestrained ambition ("sometimes I don't seem to care about anything but my career").

Churchill's ambition was reflected in his lifelong fascination with Napoleon which became, at times, cause for anxiety among his friends. He was always, to his own detriment, comparing a position he had reached with what Napoleon was doing at his age. It led to constant combativeness which his friends attributed to a fear of being forgotten, caused by his relationship with his father.

It was suspected that what he really enjoyed was the "rhetorical potentialities" in any situation. He was perceived to be "in the Greek sense a Rhetorician, the slave of the words which his mind forms about ideas. He sets ideas to Rhetoric as muscians set theirs to music."

His ambition was a constant concern to political colleagues. Sir Edward Grey commented that Churchill would "very soon become incapable from sheer activity of mind of being anything in a Cabinet but Prime Minister." Even his very good friend, Lloyd George, admitted that he found it difficult not to be jealous of the younger Winston.

They also found in him a true dichotomy. His passion for democracy and liberty was considered sincere but they also knew he was fundamentally an aristocrat. What they feared was that someday the two Churchills would come into sharp conflict.

Many expected that Churchill would eventually become Prime Minister. In 1910, Lucy Masterman commented "... if he does rise to the leadership of the Party he won't lead it for long or successfully. The function of a leader is to lead public opinion. Winston follows it, often a little late, and very often does not know his own mind."

In 1964, she admitted that the comment may seem absurd in light of his war premiership.

*Manfred Weidhorn: "Churchill and Conservatism" Published in Southern Humanities Review, 10(1), 1976.*

"Will the real Winston Churchill please stand up?" is the theme of Weidhorn's study. Through a very long career Churchill faced many objurgations from all points on the political spectrum. Weidhorn's search for the real Winston Churchill considers his party affiliation, domestic policy, foreign policy, political processes, cultural heritage and philosophical tendencies.

His party affiliation changed many times but his domestic policy was somewhat more stable. Essentially, he was a Conservative with liberal inclinations: a Tory Democrat who did not "trust the people."

He was both more conservative yet more equivocal on foreign

policy matters. A reactionary on the question of Empire, he believed in Britain's civilizing mission and position as world leader. During World War II, many Americans perceived him as a symbol of dim Imperial past striving to maintain, or revive, Victorian grandeur. His view of Russia, both Czarist and Bolshevik, was also equivocal. This is attributed to Churchill's sense of history and understanding of the importance of alliances, despite his fear of the Russian bear and loathing of Communist ideology.

Politically, he was a democrat with a dilemma. He thought the one man, one vote doctrine was valid only after everyone had been educated but feared that too much education was dangerous. The statesman should have "his eyes on the stars rather than his ear to the ground." He was decidedly nostalgic for the days when Britain had a "real political democracy led by a hierarchy of statesmen" headed, of course, by a constitutional monarch.

His Victorian paternalism was offended by the sight of women involved in the First World War. Later, although somewhat mellowed by his wife's progressive views on the issue, he still considered the feminist movement part of the tide of modern barbarism.

The young liberal Churchill liked to legislate and experiment; the old conservative Churchill preferred passivity. Reform must give tradition its due. National traditions are built "slowly and noiselessly." What Labour called the "mess of centuries," he called tradition. He repeatedly insisted that "all wisdom is not new wisdom" and that the past should be studied if the future is to be successfully encountered. Yet, he once asserted that had he lived in the past he would have opposed Buddha, Christ and Mohammed because of the turmoil they caused.

His own life was also one of turmoil largely because "his traditional impulses were always in conflict with his progressive instincts."

*Gordon K. Lewis: "On the Character and Achievement of Sir Winston Churchill." Published in the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 23 (2), May 1957: 173-174.*

In the pantheon of characters who sum up in themselves the supreme embodiment of the English spirit indisputably belongs Winston Churchill. The aristocrat-politician personified the English national hero-figure of John Bull, just as Abraham Lincoln came to embody the American symbol of Uncle Sam. Churchill's achievements were considerable: politician, warrior, historian, artist, orator. But he tempted fate often, particularly by switching political parties. That this was without penalty he deemed to be a right to which the descendent of the Duke of Marlborough was entitled, both by nature and by history.

He began his career in the twilight of the Victorian epoch and ended it as almost the last splendid survivor of that era. Because he bridged two discrete periods of English history he was the spokesman for neither. There will be no "Age of Churchill."

A life-long politician, he is best remembered for his exploits in war. His success as a warrior is partly attributable to his knowledge of the relationship between war and politics. He learned to fight hard and to forgive readily: "I have always been against the pacifists during the quarrel and against the Jingoists at its close."

He was an aristocrat with all the aristocrat's virtues: loyalty, magnanimity, imagination and pity in the grand manner. Yet he also had the defects of the great man. He exaggerated events; he invented melodrama. He provoked intense antagonism. He was a man of action with a belief in Tory democracy and a sense of history as the record of its great men. As is common with most great men, Churchill's outstanding moments came at times of national crises.

The fostering of the Anglo-American alliance was the cornerstone of his life and policy, but it also illustrated his lack of insight into fundamental truths of the modern age. He saw the United States as a romanticized republic in the classical mold. He was knowledgeable about American history but knew nothing of the American people and their problems. The irony was that the 18th century aristocrat-politician chose the great American democracy as the final safeguard of Anglo-Saxon society he so treasured.

# Churchilliana Auction 1/34

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