FINEST HOUR
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CHURCHILL AND NEW ZEALAND

"Let Freedom Reign": Churchill in the Netherlands
Gibraltar's Barbary Macaques • Revisiting Bladon
How Canada Saw Churchill (and Vice-Versa)

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New Zealand's flag and coat of arms. Cover design by Charlotte Thibault.
**Despatch Box**

**Official Biography**

May we have an update on the difficulties encountered in completing the remaining Companion Volumes of Sir Martin Gilbert’s masterwork? Mr. Allen Packwood has said that he feels the interest in and knowledge of WSC is perhaps waning. The years pass and the audience is depleted by death. Please accept my compliments. *Finest Hour* is an excellent read.

P. Allen, Ilminster, Somerset

**Editor’s response:** Thanks for the kind words. As you know, Sir Martin’s illness (*Finest Hour* 158: 9) has prevented his continued active collaboration and added to the delays. We have however received good news from Mr. Soren Geiger, research assistant to President Larry Arnn at Hillsdale, who wrote on 7 October: “By mid-October, the research team at Hillsdale College expects to send to the press Volume 17 of *The Churchill Documents*, covering the year 1942. The goal for the completion of the remaining volumes is the summer of 2016.”

**Dreadnoughts and All That**

Do you know the book *Fisher, Churchill and the Dardanelles* by Geoffrey Penn? It is very anti-Churchill. Also, I must say that it does not make a very easy read.

*CYRIL MAZANSKY, NEWTON, MASS.*

**Editor’s Response:** It was reviewed by the naval historian Barry Gough in *Finest Hour* 107, Summer 2001. Professor Gough did not give it high marks: “Penn is critical of the received view of historians on Fisher, but he errs in failing to cite them specifically or to analyze their perspectives. Arthur Marder’s distinguished work on this subject, though mentioned, seems set aside. Penn’s judgement invariably supports Fisher against Churchill, and readers will find this a persistent problem. However, toward the end of the book Churchill gets his due and is partially salvaged. This work lacks rigorous analysis and is a heavy read.”

Christopher Bell’s *Churchill and Sea Power* (reviewed *FH* 158) is much more balanced and reflective. So is Gough’s *Historical Dreadnoughts* (*FH* 151), which contrasts the conclusions of the two great naval historians, Marder and Roskill.

**Defending Baboons?**

I was astonished to hear in a recent lecture that Winston Churchill once proposed to guarantee the Bolshevik Revolution. Is this true?

*JAMES MACK, FAIRFIELD, OHIO*

**Editor’s response:** Yes! Martin Gilbert published this in *Churchill: A Life* (1991): After Lenin seized power and took Russia out of World War I, Churchill proposed sending what he called a “commissar” to Moscow (he nominated Theodore Roosevelt). And there, in exchange for Lenin agreeing to re-enter the war, the Allies would “safeguard the permanent fruits of the Revolution!” From my paper on Churchill and the pre-FDR Presidents, Washington Conference, 2013:

“Churchill explained that ‘Lenin and Trotsky are fighting with ropes round their necks. They will leave office for the grave. Show them any real chance of consolidating their power… and they would be non-human not to embrace it.’”

Churchill’s radical notion proved rather too imaginative for his colleagues, and he soon concluded that the Bolsheviks actually were non-human after all. “Baboons” was his preferred expression. But the incident serves to display how singleminded he was about defeating the enemy at hand—and the depth of his regard for Theodore Roosevelt.

Sir Martin told me he first broke this astounding revelation in a Moscow lecture to an audience of high-ranking Soviet officers. “You could have heard a pin drop,” he said. 📚
TOPPING THE INSULTS
LONDON, OCTOBER 15TH—Sir Winston has seen off competition from Barack Obama and Liberace to top the poll for the best insult of all time, unfortunately misquoted by the press. It was his 1946 response to Bessie Braddock MP when accused of being drunk (which he was not), witnessed by bodyguard Ronald Golding.

The correct wording was: “Bessie, my dear, you are ugly, and what’s more, you are disgustingly ugly. But tomorrow I shall be sober and you will still be disgustingly ugly.” WSC was editing a line he’d heard in the W.C. Fields movie It’s a Gift, when Fields’s character says, “Yeah, and you’re crazy. But I’ll be sober tomorrow and you’ll be crazy the rest of your life.” See Churchill in His Own Words, amzn.to/churchillquote.

A vulgar alleged quotation supposedly uttered by Churchill also finished fifth. Although it is very funny and would have been quite devastating, we can find no authoritative source to prove he ever said it, so it will not be repeated here.

Somehow, the poll missed our favorite insult to Churchill, inadvertently delivered by the Duke of Windsor, the former King Edward VIII: “Dear Winston, Thank-you for the copy of your new book. I have placed it on the shelf alongside all the others.” Clementine Churchill and his family roared at that one.

DATING LINES

THE AMERICAN] NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IS SUCH THAT THE BIGGER THE IDEA THE MORE WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND OBSTINATELY DO THEY THROW THEMSELVES INTO MAKING IT A SUCCESS. IT IS AN ADMIRABLE CHARACTERISTIC, PROVIDING THE IDEA IS GOOD.”

—WSC, CLOSING THE RING 1952

INSULT CONTEST
Finest Hour offers space here for your favorite Churchill insults. Senior Editor John Plumpton nominates WSC’s response to the question, “Have you read my new book?”: “Not at all,” said Churchill: “I only read for pleasure or profit” (1940, to Lord Londonderry).

The editor offers: “I can well understand the Hon. Member speaking for practice, which he badly needs” (1920, directed toward Oswald Moseley MP).

BEST ARTICLE 2012-13
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 1ST—The winner of the 2013 Somervell Award, for the best article in the preceding four issues of Finest Hour (156-59, Autumn 2012 through Summer 2013) is Hal Klepak of Ontario, for “Cuba, 1895: First Full Signs of the Man He Was to Become” in FH 159. His award was accepted on his behalf by Ronald Cohen, and the award was later shipped to him in Ottawa.

Prof. Klepak received seven votes out of nine cast by the Finest Hour editorial board. Several mentioned his plowing of new ground from an obscure period, and the research he provided (with more to come as the project goes on) as key qualities.

Also receiving the 2012 Somervell Award in Washington (FH 152-55, 2011-12) was Allen Packwood for his finely researched article on an earlier conference theme, “How Young Winston Made and Wrote News,” in Finest Hour 152, Autumn 2011.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE: THE UBIQUITOUS MR. CHURCHILL
SACRAMENTO, CALIF., 1972—It is not just because our eye is particularly sensitive to the name “Churchill” that we constantly run across it in the media. Sir Winston is one of the most quoted men of our, or any, day. Not only that, but his fame seems to grow even while that of some of his great contemporaries fades. His quotations are often found on editorial pages, but more than that, in letters to and questions of the editor. His life and times still seem to have an immediacy to the reader.

Of course, a good deal of this arises from the fact that he, alone among >>
the leaders of the Free World, recognized early and urgently the perfidy and danger of tyranny, and, moreover, spoke out again and again and again. But he is also found in witty quotations, in sage advice. I have a copy of an antique dealer’s magazine which features on the cover a fine old carved oak four-poster bed. The caption informs us that it is located in Hearst’s San Simeon Castle and was once slept in by Churchill. A brochure from an office furniture company uses a picture of WSC writing at his stand-up desk at Chartwell to illustrate a point they wish to make.

Granting that Churchill issued an enormous number of opinions on a vast array of subjects, it remains amazing that so many of his thoughts remain valid and timely. Few outside of France can quote anything de Gaulle ever said. No one claims “Coolidge slept in this bed.” Stalin’s words have been expunged from Russian history—and what did he say? Even FDR seems dimmer than a short time ago. Excepting his “All we have to fear is fear itself” and his “Four Freedoms,” few can quote that great man to any extent; he seems increasingly of the past. But Churchill is yet of the present and of the future. It is our opinion that he will remain “of the present” in ages to come.

—DALTON NEWFIELD, EDITOR, FINEST HOUR 24, APRIL-JUNE 1972

Churchill Op-Eds
MINNEAPOLIS, SEPTEMBER 21ST— The recent op-ed columns by Vladimir Putin and Hassan Rouhani, in The New York Times and the Washington Post respectively, have me wondering: What would a Times or Post op-ed column by Adolf Hitler have looked like in 1936 or 1937?

We don’t have to wonder what a column by Winston Churchill would have looked like. He was regularly cranking out columns as his wilderness years reached their culmination, struggling mightily to awaken his slumbering countrymen. His 1939 book Step By Step collects columns from the preceding three years.

Churchill’s prewar columns are, as you might guess, slightly interesting. The publisher’s note to the 1947 edition observes: “At the time of their first appearance the articles made a profound and disquieting impression on the public, but they now gain immeasurably in significance since they can be read in the context of the events which were then veiled from our sight.”

Here is the somber opening of Churchill’s bitter column, “Gathering Storm,” dated 30 October 1936: “If we look back only across the year that has nearly passed since the General Election, the most thoughtless person will be shocked at the ceaseless degeneration abroad, and also of our own interests on the Continent.”

—SCOTT JOHNSON, POWERLINE BLOG.
READ MORE AT HTTP://XRL.US/BPU46O

“Don’t Let’s Be Beastly to the Germans”
LONDON, OCTOBER 12TH— The Bank of England seriously thought twice about putting Churchill on the five-pound note (FH 159: 6) because “they didn’t want to upset the Germans,” according to Chris Hastings in the Daily Mail.

This puts us in mind of the Faulty Towers episode with the visiting German tourists, “Don’t Talk about the War.” Or a favorite song of Churchill’s reported last issue: Noël Coward’s “Don’t Let’s Be Beastly to the Germans.”

Former Bank of England Governor Mervyn King was warned by unnamed “officials” that “the recentness of World War II is a living memory for many here and on the Continent.” Other comments, which relate to Britain’s relationship with its former wartime enemies, have been redacted from the files. A source at the Bank said: “Public bodies are obliged to redact any material which might impact on Britain’s international relations with another country, and this is what has happened here.”

Historian Andrew Roberts put paid to this bit of nonsense: “The comments redacted would have been about irritating the Germans. I don’t think a German or Japanese tourist would be in the slightest bit put off by the fact there is Churchill on a £5 note, and he is the man who flattened Dresden and Hiroshima. They appreciate he’s the greatest Englishman who ever lived so you put him on the currency. It’s surprising this hasn’t happened earlier.”

Bulldog Gin?
TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 19TH— An odd choice of name: “Launched in 2007 and new to Ontario, Bulldog was founded by a former investment banker Anshuman Vohra, as a creative exit from Wall Street. According to the Globe and Mail, “the name was inspired by the ‘bulldog spirit’ embodied by that famous gin guzzler Winston Churchill.”

We beg to submit that Winston Churchill did not drink gin, and was known to dispose of Franklin Roosevelt’s notorious martinis (admittedly laced heavily with vermouth) in nearby White House flower pots. A rumor once circulated that WSC refused to pay for Clementine Churchill’s gin, which their grandson Winston refused. Neither of them, he said, was a gin drinker. Her “favourite tipple,” he said, “was Dubonnet….so the story is absurd on its face.”

Bodyguard of Lies
LONDON, OCTOBER 10TH— The New Statesman (“Should we hang Mr. Churchill or not?”) republished a 1926 piece by its first editor, inaccurately claiming Churchill and various allies
A BBC documentary claimed to have found proof that the WW2 broadcaster J.B. Priestley was sacked by Winston Churchill for antiWSC statements. Historian Richard North said this occurred after Priestley “became increasingly vocal in his criticism of the Conservative government.” Wait! It was a coalition not a Conservative government. Since we never heard of the story, we asked a British colleague: “It contravened the BBC charter to be political,” he wrote, “so if Priestley was criticising the government it was against the BBC Charter and regulations, and he deserved everything he got.”

*****

A Syrious Situation: Will Durst (http://xrl.us/bpsngf) wrote: “Everyone pretends not to be knee-deep in the icky, tricky, sticky Syria situation. You might say Washington is in a Semi-Syrious mode right now...This whole affair is riddled with enigmas and mysteries enough to make Winston Churchill spin his conundrums right off. And rumor has it, he harbored huge conundrums.”

Radio talk-show host Hugh Hewitt (http://xrl.us/bpsngw) said today’s lead-from-behind USA is not the one Churchill spoke of in 1943 at Harvard (“the price of greatness is responsibility”). But syndicated columnist and Churchillian Charles Krauthammer cautioned against comparing World War II to Syria: “There is a difference of scale....That was an existential struggle where the future of civilization was surely in the balance. It could be that Syria will develop into a world conflict, but that is fairly unlikely right now. It is not a conflict in which the existence of ways of life is at stake.”

Blogger Brent Budowsky, comparing Barack Obama to WSC, said the President had “made a hard call,” just like Churchill over the Spanish Civil War, and was all for war if Syria didn’t stop using chemical weapons (http://xrl.us/bpyp90). This prompted an avalanche of comments, none agreeing with him. One poster wanted to know: Had Bashar al-Assad annexed the Sudetenland? Marched on Poland? Bombed London? Our interest was Churchill: only one post called him a racist. We must be making progress.

Really, these Churchill comparisons need to stop. Churchill took no sides on the Spanish Civil War. Although appalled by its slaughter, his focus was on the main danger, Nazi Germany. We cannot say what Churchill would do over Syria. But we may perhaps suggest that in today’s Middle East, his focus would be on the main danger. The world leader who figures out who that is might just rate a Churchillian comparison. Benjamin Netanyahu has figured it out, but he is not a world leader.

*****

Not to be outdone by these modest commentators, Father Terrance Klein, a priest writing in the Jesuit magazine America (http://xrl.us/bpxwe4), cited Churchill’s destruction of the Vichy-French fleet in 1940 as “an example of gratuitous violence, like abortion or capital punishment.” We presume Father Klein was not sentient and a resident of London in 1940.

Including Neville Chamberlain and Leo Amery had forced Baldwin’s hand over the General Strike that year:

“When the Prime Minister proposed nevertheless to go forward with the negotiations and avert the strike, he was faced with the immediate resignation of seven of his colleagues—Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, Bridgeman, Amery, Jix’ [Joyson-Hicks], Cunliffe-Lister, and one other of whose identity we are not sure. So he gave way. He ought not to have given way, of course, but excuses may perhaps be found for an utterly exhausted man who, having fought the Trade Unions for days and nights, found himself called upon at the last moment to fight his own colleagues. Mr. Churchill was the villain of the piece. He is reported to have remarked that he thought ‘a little blood-letting’ would be all to the good. Whether he actually used this phrase or not there is no doubt about his tireless efforts to seize the providential opportunity for a fight.”

The editors should have read the facts, published thirty-seven years ago by Martin Gilbert:

• 1 May 1926 Cabinet meeting: “The civil servant J.C.C. Davidson wrote...‘It has often been written that the extremists forced Baldwin’s hand, but nothing could be further from the truth.’ The unanimity of the Cabinet in breaking off negotiations was unknown to the public. Indeed, it was widely believed, especially in Labour circles, that a ‘peace party’ led by Baldwin, Birkenhead and Steel-Maitland had been defeated by a ‘war party,’ led by Churchill, Neville Chamberlain and Cunliffe-Lister, whose aim was said to have been confrontation and bloodshed. ‘There were no divisions among Ministers,’ [Sir Samuel] Hoare noted in his diary a few weeks later, ‘and it is incorrect to say that a Churchill-Birkenhead >>
DATELINES

section was determined upon a fight to the finish.’ Baldwin himself had been determined to uphold parliamentary democracy in the face of what he believed was an unconstitutional attempt to undermine it.”

• 3 May 1926 Commons debate:
“It was not wages that were being imperiled, [Baldwin] warned, ‘it is the freedom of our very Constitution.’ When Churchill spoke his tone was conciliatory. Commenting on the moderate tone of the Labour MPs who had spoken...Churchill went on to praise the ‘efforts for peace’ which had been made by the Trade Union leaders....In particular, he said, J.H. Thomas had tried ‘with all the compulsive and persuasive powers of his nature and of his experience to bring about a warring off of this shocking disaster in our national life.’”

—MARTIN GILBERT, WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, vol. 5, THE PROPHET OF TRUTH (LONDON: HEINEMANN, 1976, 1999. More coins will be added shortly, such as the new £5 coin that will bear the text “HM Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Gibraltar.”

For more on local inhabitants of the famous Rock, see “Churchill and the Barbary Macaques,” page 53.

Escaped Desperado
NANTWICH, CHESHIRE, SEPTEMBER
15TH— Following their recent successes in the Nantwich Theatre Festival, the Players again hosted a production from Cheshire Rural Touring Arts. Winston on the Run tells the story of a young Churchill, portrayed by Freddie Machin. Told by a young man at the cusp of greatness, the play is a dramatic story of adventure, audacity and imperial folly.

It is 1899 and escaped prisoner-of-war Churchill is in a spot of bother, lost in the African savannah, wanted “Dead or Alive,” and hounded by the scathing words of his dead father. A gripping, hilarious and often poignant one-man-show, the 25-year-old Winston takes the audience deep into his confidence, sharing his experiences of electoral failure, capture and daring escape.

The production, at the Love Lane Theatre, was followed by a presentation and Q&A session from writer and performer Freddie Machin on the historical material that inspired the show’s creation.

—NANTWICH DABBLER, WWW.THEDABBER.CO.UK

★★★

It’s in the discussions afterwards that the urbane Freddie Machin and his collaborator John Walton show how much deliberation, care and research has gone into Winston on the Run. Based on Churchill’s early memoirs, it’s a one-man show in which Machin emerges—arguably too ponderously—from his blackened coal mine hideaway, sporting a distracting curly red-blonde wig which the director seems over-keen on.

Churchill never knew whether he would emerge from the South African

Hungarian Rhapsody

Never Give In
GIBRALTAR, SEPTEMBER 20TH— Having produced a £5 Churchill coin in 2004, Gibraltar has minted a £20 coin with the slogan, “We shall never surrender” (to Spain we presume) and a relief portrait of WSC. On the obverse is the Sovereign with the inscription, “Queen of Gibraltar.” Todd Ronnei, on Churchillchat, remarked, “this may be less a symbolic defiance of Spain’s perpetual claim to the Rock and more a not-so-symbolic grab for cash from coin collectors.” Whatever it is, we like their spirit.

Gibraltar Philatelic offers Gibraltar coins on its website. There is a wide range of coins available ranging from complete year sets of circulating coins to various commemorative crowns issued by the Gibraltar government. Gibraltar has its own currency, the Gibraltar pound, which is pegged with the pound sterling at par. As a consequence, the Gibraltar government mints its own coins. The coins are made with the same planchets as the British pound. Denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 pence and £1 were introduced which bore specific designs for and the name of Gibraltar. They were the same sizes and compositions as the corresponding British coins. Two-pound coins were introduced in
war as soldier or journalist, as a hero or the contents of a body bag. But emerge he did, and went on in 1900 to win Oldham for the Conservatives.

The only “action” is the famous train ambush which almost won Churchill the Victoria Cross. The rest is Machin entertaining us with the witty, headstrong young genius’s self-serving exploits and trysts with death.

Machin is engaging, moves vividly, varies pace and performs effortlessly. It’s a deuced good show. This is a thirty-four-venue tour, so there’s a chance British Churchillians caught it.

—RODERIC DUNNET IN THE STAGE.CO.UK

Amery, Honorary Indian

DELHI, SEPTEMBER 18TH— Unlike the British one-law-for-all approach, we should find our course of action in our own confused, messy way.

Leopold Amery was a tragic 20th century éminence grise. Born in Gorakhpur, he would today be eligible for the numerous tax exemptions that are provided to non-resident Indians. As an aside, my friend Kamal Sharma assures me that the only eminent persons who are born these days in Gorakhpur or in Motihari (George Orwell’s birthplace) are criminals who masquerade as legislators. So much for the glories of free India!

Amery studied at Harrow where he was a contemporary of Winston Churchill. But unlike young Churchill, who was always at the bottom of the class, Amery went to Oxford and was made a Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford. He had the distinction of being among the few Conservatives, along with Churchill, Eden and Macmillan, resolutely to oppose Chamberlain’s appeasement policies. He led the attack when Chamberlain’s leadership was debated in the House of Commons (“A Time for Old Men,” FH 150). Leopold Amery was appointed Secretary of State for India, reviving his connections with the land of his birth. He had a reasonable position on India but was impatient with his intransigent leader. He once said: “Winston knows as much about India as George III knew about the American colonies.”

—JAI THIR RAO, FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Global Warning

BRISBANE, SEPTEMBER 7TH— Winston Churchill would be a global-warming activist had he been alive in the present, writes Clive Hamilton in Earth Masters: Playing God with the Climate (Allen & Unwin, $24.99), citing Churchill’s willingness to defy comforting political fictions.

The Churchill analogy overstates the influence of naysayers in the great climate debate, but there is no doubting the sharp downturn in prevailing attitudes in the past few years—less in outright denial of global warming science, in my view, but rather a plunge in popular willingness to pay for the costs of tackling the consequences. But Hamilton’s invoking of Churchill reinforces the point that there will be consequences from climate change. Some of the worst might result from ill-thought measures taken in the search for a solution.

Hamilton’s opening lines invite readers to consider the concept of tinkering with a deliberate “plan” to transform the planet after the unintended effects of pumping out masses of carbon dioxide. Chainsaws, bulldozers and heavy industry might have brought the world to this point, and while “growing trees is good, it cannot save us from climate change.” The zeal of billionaires Bill Gates and Richard Branson in seeking a “techno fix” and possible profit is also explored.

Hamilton is partly right that there is “something deeply perverse” in massive industrial solutions for massive industrial problems, “when we could just stop burning fossil fuels.” But he sees the potential for commercial conspiracy when the temptation to solve a problem might be the result of weak politicians refusing to act.

The discussion drifts, regrettably, to the culture war surrounding climate science in a way that can appear descending (detailing the apparent embarrassment of the wife of a climate skeptic, for example). Hamilton is on strongest ground when warning that interfering in complex environmental systems runs the risk of unintended side-effects—a lesson, he claims, that should already be obvious.

—DANIEL FLITTON, BRISBANE TIMES
Riddles
Mysteries
Enigmas

Who Was Edgar Speyer?

I was referred to you by a Cambridge academic, Professor Tony Lentin, whose book about Sir Edgar Speyer features Churchill prominently. I helped Tony with a website (http://xrl.us/bpyi32) to promote his book, which is being considered for a BBC documentary.

—ELLEE SEYMOUR, VIA EMAIL

Sir Edgar Speyer (1862-1932) was an American-born British subject (from 1892), a financier and philanthropist, chairman of Speyer Brothers, the British branch of his family’s international finance house. From 1906 to 1915 he was chairman of the Underground Electric Railways Company of London, forerunner of the London Underground, which he saved from bankruptcy. He did the same for Henry Wood’s Promenade Concerts in 1902, gave generously to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Poplar Hospital, and supported anti-poverty causes and charities in London’s East End.

On 24 July 1914, Martin Gilbert wrote, Churchill left London for Pear Tree Cottage, Overstrand, Norfolk, to join his pregnant wife and two children on holiday. Once arrived, anxious about the situation in Europe, he tried to telephone the Admiralty, but his instrument didn’t work, so he walked next door to his neighbor, Edgar Speyer, who loaned him his phone. It was not a good line but Churchill made out from his First Sea Lord, Prince Louis of Battenberg, that Serbia had accepted the Austrian ultimatum, which nobody expected she would. “I went to bed with a feeling things might blow over,” Churchill recalled. But the next morning, again with Speyer’s help, he telephoned London and was told that Austria, egged on by Germany, was still not satisfied, and that war was likely.

Poor Speyer was not loved for long, as Tony Lentin revealed in his book, Banker, Traitor, Scapegoat, Spy? Speyer’s German-Jewish ancestry made him a target for bigots; former friends denounced him as “notoriously German,” and the popular press drove “the unmasked Hun” into exile. He moved to Boston, which he liked because it reminded him of London.

Reviewer Stephen Halliday wrote that Speyer should be judged by his friends: Churchill, Edward Elgar, H.H. Asquith, George Bernard Shaw, Edvard Grieg, Claude Debussy, Richard Strauss, Percy Grainger and Robert Falcon Scott, “whose polar expedition would never have sailed without Speyer’s support.”

King George V, outraged over Speyer’s resignation from the Privy Council, and referring to his own German ancestry, said: “Let them take me first. Let me be interned before Speyer.”

“New World Order”

Q Can you give me information on a speech Mr. Winston Churchill gave in New York City on 26 January 1930? I believe the title of the speech was something like, “The New World Order and the future of the white man.”

—ROBERT NOWAKOWSKI, VIA EMAIL

A Churchill’s theme on his 1931-32 North American lecture tour was the economic outlook, Anglo-American cooperation and “the future of the English-Speaking Peoples.” Many white people do not speak English. The words “New World Order” and “the future of the white man” are not in his recorded remarks.

Martin Gilbert’s Churchill and America notes that Churchill arrived in New York on December 11th, was knocked down and nearly killed by a car two days later, and went to Nassau on the 31st to recover. He returned to New York on January 22nd, was interviewed on January 25th but did not speak on the 26th. His first lecture was in Brooklyn on January 28th.

There are no complete transcripts of these lectures, only excerpts, in Robert Rhodes James, ed., Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches 1897-1963, 8 vols. (New York: Bowker, 1974). Interested readers may contact the editor by email to receive a compilation of everything the Complete Speeches contains for this period. It is possible that the words you seek were in some parts not recorded, though “New World Order” is not part of his ordinary language. Transcripts might exist in the archives of newspapers of cities where he spoke. ☰
“God Defend Our Free Land”

RICHARD M. LANGWORTH
Twitter @rmlangworth • www.richardlangworth.com

Long ago when Finest Hour and its editor were young, we planned an issue for each of the “Great Dominions.” FH 44 was our “Canada Number” in 1984, with a sequel, FH 154, in 2012. In 1988, FH 59 covered Australia, but then we lost the thread, and only now offer readers the “New Zealand Number.”

Why? Churchill never visited here. It is thousands of miles from anywhere, with only 4.5 million souls. Churchill didn’t visit Australia, either, yet we found much to say about that relationship, as this one.

Accordingly we contacted Mike Groves in Auckland. We’ve had New Zealand members for most of our history. Today Mike’s “Churchill Dining Club” brings North Islanders together thrice a year to dine, talk Churchill, enjoy lively repartee and, if they choose, to end the evening with brandy and a cigar.

Mike not only wrote the lead article, but introduced us to diplomat and writer Gerald Hensley, who compares the working partnership of Prime Ministers Churchill and Fraser—politically worlds apart, who found in each other a paragon and paladin. Intrinsic to his story is the illustrious General Bernard Freyberg, whom Churchill greeted after First Alamein with “thank God you are here,” and recommended for the Garter, to go along with his Victoria Cross.

These features are followed logically by some on Holland, whose people play a vital role in New Zealand life, as Mike Groves informs us: “The first European known to have seen New Zealand was a Dutchman, Abel Tasman, in 1642. After World War II, when things were grim in Holland, there was considerable emigration to New Zealand. Indeed from 1951 to 1968, the Dutch were the largest single group of non-British immigrants. The Wellington government encouraged this because the country needed skilled workers, the Dutch were very hard-working, and they integrated easily into our national life. The Dutch remain a very significant group.” (See “The Case of Dutch Kiwis,” by Suzan van der Pas and Jacques Poot: http://bit.ly/17jPJDJ.)

Churchill connections aside, the theme appealed personally. I have long admired New Zealand. I hope to get there before I die. You may come to think, as you read these pages, that this is a special place. To have forged prosperity with sensible combinations of enterprise and government; to have provided for all the people without burdening their heirs with endless debt—these are notable accomplishments. Among the great democracies, New Zealand may well be the outstanding model for the world today.

In Holland in 1946 (page 28), Churchill posed questions to test the existence of freedom:

“Does the Government in any country rest upon a free, constitutional basis?...Is there the right of free expression of opinion, free support, free opposition, free advocacy and free criticism of the Government of the day? Are there Courts of Justice free from interference by the Executive or from threats of mob violence, and free from all association with particular political parties?...Will there be fair play for the poor as well as for the rich? Will there be fair play for private persons as well as for Government officials? Will the rights of the individual, subject to his duties to the State, be maintained, asserted and exalted? In short, do the Government own the people, or do the people own the Government?”

Here in this distant land under the Southern Cross are arrayed what Churchill called the “title-deeds” upon which liberty is founded.
“New Zealand has never put a foot wrong from the start.” —WSC

Winston Churchill never visited New Zealand. Yet he thought so much of the country as to remark, during a visit by N.Z. Deputy Prime Minister Keith Holyoake, that since India had become a republic, it was his view that New Zealand was now “the brightest gem in the British crown.”

Mr. Groves is founder of the Churchill Dining Club of Auckland (FH 158:7). He retired in 2010 from twenty-two years in teaching and management work at the University of Auckland Business School, before which he had a career in marketing.
Churchill’s earliest known involvement with New Zealand was in 1893, when he was sitting the Sandhurst entrance exam for the third time. He had been told that there would be a question on one particular country in the following day’s exam. Young Winston put the names of all the countries in the atlas into a hat and drew out New Zealand:

I applied my good memory to the geography of that Dominion. Sure enough the first question in the paper was: ‘Draw a map of New Zealand.’ This was what is called at Monte Carlo an en plein, and I ought to have been paid thirty-five times my stake. However, I certainly got paid very high marks for my paper.2

Thus, aided by New Zealand from the very start, Churchill was admitted to Sandhurst. We can only speculate on how history might have been different if that question had not been asked—but we do know that his success in the exam helped launch him on a successful military career, and all that flowed from that.

Churchill is greatly admired in these South Sea islands. Rarely does a week go by without a favourable reference to him in the media. The mere use of his name suggests leadership, oratory, statesmanship, courage, bulldog spirit and all the best characteristics of Englishmen. There are about one hundred streets bearing Churchill’s name, and others with related names, such as Chartwell. His name is a benchmark against which politicians of all nations are measured. Quite simply, to be “Churchillian” is to deserve high respect and praise. He casts a very long shadow.

An example of that shadow was a 2011 story in Auckland’s daily newspaper. The front page banner read, “Churchill Aged by Kiwi’s Bravery.” The article, headlined “Bravery Humbled Churchill,” was about 22-year-old Sergeant Jimmy Ward, serving with 75 (New Zealand) Squadron in World War II, who had climbed onto the wing of a flaming Wellington bomber and doused the flames, allowing the plane to return safely home. Ward received the VC for his act, and was summoned to Downing Street, where Churchill reportedly said: “You must feel very humble and awkward in my presence.” When Ward replied that he did, Churchill said: “Then you can imagine how humble and awkward I feel in yours.” Kiwis love stories like that one.3

In his final volume of A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, Churchill wrote of New Zealand’s political and economic development, noting that the island nation had faced and mastered all the problems of federal government thirty years before Australia did: “the tradition and prejudices of the past weighed less heavily than in older countries.” When the 1906 Liberal government in Britain introduced radical social innovations, he continued, they were in fact no more than had been enacted in New Zealand years earlier. These reforms, he noted, testified “to the survival and fertility even in the remote and unfamiliar islands of the Pacific, of the British political genius.”4

Churchill’s later relations with New Zealand were largely defined by military events: the Anglo-Boer War, World War I, the Chanak Crisis of 1922, defensive preparations in the 1920s and 1930s (particularly over the navy and the defence of Singapore), World War II and the Korean War.

Churchill always saw New Zealand as a strong, loyal, positive and uncomplaining supporter. He must have loved Prime Minister Michael J. Savage’s declaration of war, immediately after Britain’s in September 1939:

I am satisfied that nowhere will the issue be more clearly understood than in New Zealand—where, for almost a century, behind the sure shield of Britain, we have enjoyed and cherished freedom and self-government. Both with gratitude for the past and confidence in the future, we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go. Where she stands, we stand. We are only a small and young nation, but we are one and all a band of brothers and we march forward with union of hearts and will to a common destiny.5

While there is no record of Churchill meeting New Zealanders during the Boer War, there is every chance that he would have been aware of their fighting alongside Britons against the Boers, and he may have met some individually. The New Zealanders were a mounted division and Churchill was an accomplished horseman, so there would have been common ground. New Zealand sent 6500 men (230 of whom died) and 8000 horses to the Boer War—a large commitment for a young country with a population at that time of just a million. >>
Between the Wars

In 1922 Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, was keen to resist the Turkish advance on Chanak, in the occupied neutral zone of the Dardanelles, and asked all dominion prime ministers for support. New Zealand agreed. Her positive response and willingness to rally to Britain’s side left a positive and favourable impression in Churchill’s mind.

Churchill was concerned to maintain Singapore as a major base to defend Australia and New Zealand, which he felt received insufficient attention by Britain, and which might fall into the American sphere of influence. But Japan was a blind spot. In 1924, while Chancellor of the Exchequer, he wrangled with the service chiefs over defence expenditure: “A war with Japan! Why should there be a war with Japan? I do not believe there is the slightest chance of it in our lifetime....I am therefore convinced that war with Japan is not a possibility any reasonable government need to take into account.”

How wrong he was, and how things change in twenty years. By 1940 he was more resolute. Should Japan attack a British Dominion, he said, “we should at once come to
Unfortunately the weather was unseasonably bad, and Clementine was not greatly impressed by what she saw. She visited the mountains and coasts, Wellington, Napier, the Thermal Region, Rotorua, Waitomo, Bay of Islands, Auckland and Russell, but didn’t enjoy it. She quickly “exhausted the charms of Wellington” and wrote of a “horrible gale” which raged for a day and a night, of “torrents of rain” along a “wild and lonely stretch of coast….I felt faint and wanted food…so sick I could only drink claret and suck some very strong peppermints.” On 26 February “the weather at Bay of Islands was atrocious.” With that sort of feedback she may have discouraged her husband, a notorious lover of warm and “paintaceous” climes.

World War II

The New Zealand Expeditionary Force left Wellington in January 1940 for Egypt, where it would help guard the Suez Canal and counter any Italian threat in north and east Africa. Two months later, Peter Fraser became Prime Minister. Shortly after Churchill succeeded Chamberlain in Britain, Fraser told the British High Commissioner that he would personally rather die than yield to Nazi domination. This greatly impressed Churchill. “I am deeply touched by your message,” Churchill cabled, “which is only in keeping with all that the Mother Country has received in peace and war from New Zealand.” Later, he told a colleague, “New Zealand has never put a foot wrong from the start.”

Soon after their arrival in Egypt, the New Zealanders were despatched to Greece, where Churchill had hoped to support Greek resistance to the Italians and Germans. Fraser, the effective prime minister with Savage terminally ill, gave his support, and Churchill cabled him: “We are deeply moved by your reply, which, whatever the fortunes of war may be, will shine in the history of New Zealand and be admired by future generations of free men in every quarter of the globe.”

When Britain had to evacuate Greece, the New Zealand Division moved to Crete. Again Churchill cabled Fraser: “I have so greatly admired the grandeur of the attitude of your government, and my thoughts turn many times a day to the fortunes of your own splendid New Zealand Division and of my heroic friend Freyberg.”

the assistance of that Dominion with all the forces we could make available. For this purpose we should be prepared, if necessary, to abandon our position in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.” These good intentions soon proved unrealistic. Confronted simultaneously by Germany, Italy and Japan, it was not possible to match deeds to those words. Stunning early defeats like Singapore and the sinking of HMS Repulse and Prince of Wales (FH 139: 40-49) caused great alarm in New Zealand and influenced Wellington to move away from dependence on Britain towards greater involvement with the USA, a shift Churchill observed with regret.

Unlike her husband, Clementine Churchill did visit the country, arriving at Wellington in February 1935 on the yacht Rosaura, hosted by their friend Lord Moyne (Walter Guinness). Moyne had captured for the London Zoo specimens of the Komodo Dragon, the world’s largest lizard, found only on five small islands in Indonesia. From that expedition they sailed along the coast of Australia and eventually found their way to New Zealand. They arrived at Auckland on February 20th.
Greece and Crete were failures which cost many New Zealand casualties, but again Churchill was not blamed. Rather, he was seen as the man who had opposed appeasement and whose advice, if taken earlier, might have prevented such disasters before they happened.

After Crete, the New Zealand army went on to fight with distinction in North Africa. Churchill wrote of "the most generous manner in which you have responded to our appeal to allow the glorious New Zealand Division to represent the Dominion on the African battlefield." Those splendid troops, he continued, "gave me utmost confidence in the part they will play in the near future...and renewed all my feeling of gratitude to New Zealand for the high and broad strategic conception which has enabled her sons to fight in the vanguard of the victorious desert army."  

Churchill visited Tripoli in February 1943, where he addressed the New Zealand Division: "All are filled with admiration for the Desert Army. All are full of gratitude to the people of New Zealand who have sent this splendid Division to win fame and honour across the oceans." It is not hard to imagine New Zealand hearts swelling with pride whenever those words were quoted.

By late 1942 there was real fear that New Zealand and Australia might be attacked by Japan. Churchill asked the two Dominions to leave their troops in North Africa, where fighting continued and victory was not yet certain. Fraser agreed, but in return American troops were based in New Zealand, and the swing away from Britain towards America had begun. Fears redoubled in early May, when the Japanese bombed Darwin, Australia. But almost simultaneously, the North African campaign ended with a complete Allied victory.

By 1944 the New Zealand army had moved on to Italy, where Churchill hoped to press on, forestalling the Russians in central Europe. New Zealand troops sustained severe casualties in Italy, especially during the battle for Monte Cassino. (See page 38.)

Postwar Years
Clearly Churchill held warm feelings towards New Zealand by the end of the war, particularly for Fraser and Freyberg (although neither was New Zealand-born). He had enormous respect for the island nation’s contribution to victory which, like Canada’s, was far out of proportion to her population—militarily and economically as a supplier of much-needed food. He probably thought of New Zealand as a very English sort of place, but a long way away and inhabited by a very small population.

It is tempting to think that he would have liked to visit, despite his wife’s grim experience in 1935. There is no doubt that he would have received a rapturous welcome. The exhibition of his paintings, which toured New Zealand in 1958, a year before it was shown in London, attracted big crowds in the four cities it visited. Prime Minister Walter Nash, at the opening of the Wellington exhibit, described Churchill as “the greatest man of his age if not of all time in the English-speaking world.” Opposition leader Keith Holyoake called him “the greatest commoner of our time.” Undoubtedly they represented a widely-held view.

In 1954, New Zealanders contributed generously to Churchill’s 80th birthday appeal, which helped to launch Churchill College in Cambridge. After receiving greetings on his 90th birthday ten years later, Sir Winston responded: “I will never forget the staunch friendship and unswerving courage of our brothers and comrades in arms in New Zealand.” During his funeral a few weeks later, New Zealanders observed a two-minute silence, during which trains and traffic stopped, while race meetings and a cricket test match were rescheduled to avoid the day altogether.

Following his death, a New Zealand branch of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust was organized with funds raised from government, business and the public. It allowed up to fifteen New Zealanders annually to travel overseas for educational and vocational purposes, following Churchill’s belief that world peace and understanding can be furthered by ordinary people travelling to other countries and experiencing other cultures, as he did so comprehensively.

It was left to Prime Minister Keith Holyoake to summarize New Zealand’s view of Sir Winston: “I think we all felt during that tremendous time in history that so long as the heart of this great man continued to beat and Big Ben continued to toll the hours, the heart of Empire and the free world was still beating and the world was safe for democracy.”
Endnotes

1. Keith Holyoake, New Zealand House of Representatives, 4 August 1964, in John Ramsden, Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and His Legend Since 1945 (London: HarperCollins, 2002), 416-17. Ramsden added: “It is unlikely that he ever made this remark in the presence of [Australian Prime Minister] Bob Menzies, but the distinction was nevertheless a real one in his mind, and it is significant that the lifelong Cavalier Churchill saw it as the Crown’s role in the Commonwealth to be the glue that held the gems together.”


11. Chartwell Papers, CHAR 20/14, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge. Peter Fraser CH (1884-1950) served in office from 27 March 1940 until 13 December 1949. A major figure in the history of the New Zealand Labour Party, he held office longer than any other Labour prime minister, and is to date the fourth-longest serving Prime Minister.

12. Ibid.; Lord Caldecote to Sir Harry Batterbee (Dominions Office), 26 July 1940, Michael King Papers, MS 2096, Folder 2, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.

13. WSC to Prime Minister of New Zealand, 12 March 1941, in Winston S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (London: Cassell, 1950), 95. Prime Minister Savage was terminally ill, so the cable was received and read by Fraser.

14. WSC to Fraser, 22 April 1941. Churchill discarded a Dominions Office draft and wrote his own, more expansive note. Prime Minister’s Office Papers, 3/206/1, National Archives, Kew, London. Gerald Hensley, Beyond the Battlefield: New Zealand and Its Allies 1939-45 (London: Penguin Viking, 2009), 117. Lieutenant-General Bernard Cyril Freyberg, 1st Baron Freyberg VC GCMG KCB KBE DSO KStJ (1889-1963), British-born New Zealand soldier and Victoria Cross recipient; he later served as the seventh Governor-General of New Zealand.

15. Hensley, Beyond the Battlefield, 221 and RG84, Wellington Legation 1941-42, United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland. Hensley wrote: “Churchill in the flowery mode he liked for these occasions expressed the British Government’s gratitude…. The date was around 8 December 1942, since Roosevelt is quoted in the same paragraph on that date, saying to Fraser: “I believe you have done the right thing. It is altogether generous.”

16. Complete Speeches, VI 6742.

17. Ramsden, Man of the Century, 416.
They couldn’t have been more different in outlook and in background—yet Winston Churchill and Peter Fraser had greatness, a quality more easily recognised than pinned down, but which might be summed up as the ability to rise to any large occasion.
Both Britain and New Zealand acquired their true war leaders after war had broken out—and both almost by accident. Neither Winston Churchill nor Peter Fraser had been heads of government, and both were distrusted by large elements of their own parties. But for both countries, half the globe away from each other, World War II was the direst emergency of their existence. Both sensed the need for someone who could rise to the challenge, and both were lucky that the lottery of politics threw up the right answers.

When the war began New Zealand’s premier was Michael Savage, a sweet-natured optimist who believed that the world’s problems could be solved by discussion and was reluctant to prepare for war. His departmental head, who liked him, said he was “the most Christ-like figure I have ever known and an absolute ninny.” As Savage lay dying of cancer, Fraser, his tough-minded deputy, stepped in and won his nation’s trust as war leader, months before he formally became prime minister.

Fraser and Churchill were entirely different in outlook and background. In contrast to Churchill’s comfortable upper-class upbringing, Fraser had emigrated from Scotland to New Zealand as a penniless young man. He was a committed socialist, working for radical change in New Zealand society, and was universally seen by friends and enemies as a dour, authoritarian Scot whose politics were those of dogmatic conviction. He was also a shy, rather unsociable man, and a sparing drinker. In the evenings he occasionally spent with Churchill at Chequers, it is hard to see him sparkling over the champagne and brandy.

Yet they understood one another and formed a bond which survived the stresses of six years of war. Fraser’s tact in managing the differing relationships with Roosevelt and Churchill was an important part of the glue which held the United States and Britain and its four Dominions together in one of history’s most successful partnerships.

Both were wide readers, conscious of History on their shoulders. Against Winston Churchill’s long experience of affairs, Peter Fraser’s intelligence and practicality enabled him quickly to grasp the issues of the wider world into which he had suddenly been propelled. Both could be exasperatingly wayward, autocratic and opinionated—common complaints about strong-minded leaders. Each was a loner, reluctant to share power, though each had an unvarying trust in his parliament and a constant care to confide in it.

Of the two, Churchill was the better office manager. Fraser’s War Cabinet never started on time and rarely had an agenda. Most of its time, according to its secretary, who claimed it gave him an ulcer, was spent “in a kind of dreamy and leisurely rumination on the obvious,” with decisions bundled hastily together at the close.

None of these shortcomings mattered very much (except to the harassed staff) because of the firm judgment and political skills of both men. They were not there as office managers, but as men who could unite and motivate their countries. So for all the grumbles about their shortcomings, they won the unreserved trust, if not always the love, of their fellow countrymen. They had greatness, a quality more easily recognised than pinned down, but which might be summed up as the ability to rise to any large occasion.

On his journey to Buckingham Palace to accept the seals of office, Churchill muttered to his bodyguard, “I hope it is not too late. I am very much afraid it is.” It wasn’t—because his resolve carried the English-speaking world on his shoulders for the whole of 1940. Fraser had something of the same tenacity. Faced with bad news (and that was the only news there was for the first two years of the war), “he rubbed his great nose, thought it over for a minute or two—and just carried on.”

A comfortable understanding seems to have been established when they first met in November 1939, when neither was yet prime minister. New Zealand was about to send off its hastily-raised Expeditionary Force and there was an argument over its naval escort. The Admiralty thought a light cruiser adequate for the initial stages; Fraser, then in London, demanded a battleship. Churchill, then First Lord, saw the political imperative at once and horrified the Admiralty by agreeing that a battleship was “a splendid suggestion.” So the elderly battleship Ramillies, which as so often with the elderly had trouble with its boilers on long journeys, managed to get to Wellington, its grey bulk and huge guns proclaiming that the utmost care was being taken of New Zealand’s departing sons.
Fraser and Churchill....

It was, however, the fall of France six months later which sealed the regard Churchill and Fraser had for each other. The disaster meant that Britain faced imminent invasion and could henceforth concentrate only on its own defence. If Japan moved against the Antipodes, the dire telegram told Wellington, “it is most improbable that we could send adequate reinforcements.” The increasingly anaemic hope that Britain could defend two hemispheres with a one-hemisphere navy collapsed, and with it Australia’s and New Zealand’s reliance on Fortress Singapore as the pivot of their defence against Japanese aggression. For the first time in their short history the two Dominions were directly threatened.

In this crisis Fraser may have rubbed his great nose, but he showed his largeness of character by his next step. He sent a personal message to Churchill saying that he was not a military expert and could not guess the chances of victory. He hoped the British Government would fight on but (in words his London readers were not the only ones to find moving), “Whatever decision the British Government took in the difficult circumstances in which it found itself would be understood, accepted and supported by New Zealand to the very end.” Churchill was “deeply touched,” and the two men’s mutual regard was forever established.

The partnership comfortably survived its first test. The entry of Italy into the war changed the Middle East into a battleground. Egypt, where the New Zealand Division was training, was surrounded by half a million Italian troops and the Vichy-controlled French North African territories. But it was the German invasion of Greece in the spring of 1941 which brought a major challenge. There were good reasons for trying to defend Greece but as it happened none of them was military. Only three inexperienced divisions, British, Australian and New Zealand, were available. The planners thought they needed ten. Churchill, though increasingly pessimistic, thought the task must be faced. Britain had given Greece a guarantee in easier times and could hardly walk away now; and the world (especially the United States) had to see that Britain was still in the field and able to fight.

Fraser too never wavered on this, even after the defeat which cost the New Zealand Division almost 40% of its strength. He had no illusions about the prospect of success, asking London some hard questions about air cover, artillery and armour which went unanswered, but in his view to stand aside and keep safe would destroy “the moral basis of our cause and risk greater future damage than the failure of this operation.”4
The loss of Crete after a three-week battle commanded by a New Zealand general, Bernard Freyberg, raised more delicate questions (see sidebar). The island, held by a scratch force without air cover, could never have been defended for long. It was lost when the New Zealand battalion commanders failed to retake Maleme Airfield, but some of them, veterans of World War I, complained about Freyberg’s leadership, which troubled both Fraser (then in Cairo) and Churchill.

Freyberg, a New Zealander who had won a Victoria Cross and become a major-general in the British army, had earlier been chosen by Fraser to command the division his country was raising. Now there were doubts as to whether he was the right choice. With Parliament in Wellington about to debate the Crete debacle, Fraser bustled about Cairo, making a characteristically thorough investigation. Freyberg’s British commanders, Wavell and Auchinleck, were unanimous in their praise: if New Zealand did not want him, they did. Fraser, untroubled by the sort of media campaign which would today have been demanding that Freyberg be sacked, decided to keep him on. He never regretted his decision.

Churchill took longer to be convinced. He had a romantic view of Freyberg, “that battle-scared warrior,” and had earlier told Fraser he could not have chosen a better man. But he worried about the New Zealander’s handling of the Crete battle. It took him some months to overcome his doubts, but Freyberg’s role in stemming the retreat at Mersa Matruh, and in the allies’ first victory at El Alamein, revived his confidence. Reviewing a parade at Tripoli he got out of his car, put his arm round Freyberg’s waist and said, “Thank God you are here.” At the end of the war he unsuccessfully hinted to the King that Freyberg should be given the Garter as a “hero of the British Empire.”

The partnership between the two prime ministers ran on straightforward lines as long as the war in the West was solely the burden of Britain supported by the Commonwealth. Yet it was the creation of Lend-Lease, bringing to bear the enormous productive capacity of the United States, that increasingly kept the democracies in the field. In August 1941 Churchill, who from his experience of the earlier war had always believed that this war could not be won without the United States, sailed to meet President Roosevelt in a bay off Newfoundland. Together they proclaimed the aims for which the Allies were fighting to reassure the world and especially the people of the United States of (in Churchill’s words) “the rectitude of our purpose.”

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**THE EVACUATION FROM CRETE**

After Crete was lost, the evacuation of Allied troops proved almost as costly as the fighting. When half the Mediterranean Fleet had been crippled or lost, the Admiralty ordered the evacuation to stop. Fraser, then in Egypt, could not agree to abandoning the New Zealanders still there and made an eloquent plea in Alexandria to Admiral Cunningham, the naval commander. When he finished speaking the ensuing silence was broken by Cunningham: “Mr. Fraser is right.”

The Admiral resolved to ignore his orders and make one last attempt: “It takes the Navy three years to build a new ship. It will take 300 years to build a new tradition.” If the light cruiser HMS Phoebe got back to Egypt, Cunningham said, she would be sent back for one last effort.

In the darkness that night, Fraser and Cunningham stood on the dock at Alexandria, waiting in the hope that HMS Phoebe would arrive. It was nearly midnight before they could make out the faint loom of the ship as she ghosted in. Cunningham told the captain to return to Crete and pack in as many New Zealanders as possible. With a scratch crew, the cruiser left at dawn. She returned safely the next day, though HMS Calcutta, sent out to escort her, was sunk. She brought 3700 soldiers from Sphakia. Cunningham and the Royal Navy, said Fraser, were “beyond praise.”

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2. Fraser to his deputy and eventual successor Walter Nash, 2 June 1941. NZ Documents, I 313.

PHOTOGRAPHS: NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM
Fraser and Churchill....

The statement became the Atlantic Charter. Churchill radioed the draft back to London in the middle of the night, asking for approval by breakfast-time: “grave and vital interests” were at stake and it was important for Roosevelt to release it at once. Attlee, Churchill’s deputy, called a meeting of the War Cabinet in the small hours, getting Fraser out of bed at the Dorchester Hotel. Fraser was the only Dominion Prime Minister there, so his views were vital, particularly over giving up the Empire preferences which governed Commonwealth trade, which the Americans disliked. Fortunately he took a generous view, commenting that “the importance of having a joint declaration far outweighs any possible subsequent difficulties.” Then as a Labour leader he urged a clause on economic advancement and social security, which went into the Charter unchanged. Churchill was left to thank the War Cabinet for “their amazingly swift reply.”

For the first time in history the Allies (one of whom was not yet even a combatant) outlined the desired shape of the postwar world, and they did so with remarkable prescience. They also made clear the growing involvement of the United States in the war. London was fading as the centre of gravity for the British Dominions, and when the Pacific war broke out the hitherto untroubled partnership between the two prime ministers had also to encompass the huge presence of the American president.

The simultaneous Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and Malaya were a turning point for New Zealand. The country found itself defenceless as Japanese forces swept south (“we do not have a single fighter aircraft in the country”7) and reliant on the still-unknown intentions of the United States.

At the beginning of January 1942, Fraser spelt out the new reality in a message to Churchill. New Zealand, he said, had always tried to see the problems of the war from the widest point of view and had been content to abide by the decisions of Britain when the war was in Europe. Now that the war “has moved to our doorstep” it was essential to know Washington’s intentions as well as London’s: “We feel that we must have an eye, an ear and a voice wherever decisions affecting New Zealand are to be made.”8

Thus began a tussle by the two southern Dominions —expressed bluntly by Australia, more gently though no less persistently by New Zealand—for a voice in how the United States would run the Pacific war. Churchill was unenthusiastic. He felt that the war should be run by himself and the President, in the partnership he had been assiduously building since he came to power. British influence would be best sustained if he spoke to the President with the authority of the entire Commonwealth. Rather illogically, since Britain was no longer fighting in the Pacific, he proposed that a Pacific War Council sit in London and he would convey its views to the President.

This had some attractions for Roosevelt. He understood the importance of reassuring Australia and New Zealand but liked the thought that Churchill would manage the Allies in London while he ran the war in Washington. The argument, sometimes irritable, ran on for weeks, while Japan conquered the whole of Southeast Asia. The Australian Prime Minister, in angry and sometimes strident messages, berated Churchill for failing to understand the danger. Fraser tactfully praised the “inestimable advantages” of Churchill’s chairing a council in London but insisted that New Zealand must have a seat at the table in Washington. Churchill was unresponsive, and tempers rose to the point where the King felt compelled to suggest to him that something should be done to meet the wishes of the Dominion governments.9
with the huge wartime bureaucracy in Washington.

The pull of the Pacific, however, put increasing pressure on New Zealand’s limited manpower. It seemed odd to many in the country that its main fighting force was in North Africa rather than closer to home. Australia, fighting malaria and disease as well as the Japanese in New Guinea, was increasingly aggrieved that its sister Dominion had not rallied to its side. Fraser, too, felt that his country would have to make a bigger contribution in the Pacific if it was ever to have a voice in the peace settlement. An effort was made to raise another division, which did fight for a time in the Solomons, but keeping forces in the Mediterranean while feeding Britain and the increasing American armies in the Pacific was too great a stretch to be maintained. In a reverse Lend-Lease, the country was feeding half a million American soldiers by the end of the war and the need for farm labour was such that a tactless American admiral said that New Zealand could best help the Allies by withdrawing from the fighting and producing food.

The only practical solution was to bring the division home from the Mediterranean and a majority in Parliament and Fraser’s Cabinet favoured this. Churchill did not. The New Zealand Division was rated by its supreme commanders, Eisenhower and Alexander, and by the German commander, Rommel, as the best in the Eighth Army. Two Australian divisions had left and if the New Zealanders followed the Allied army would have lost its most experienced troops. Churchill, perhaps sensing Fraser’s own ambivalence, played a subtle hand: “I should very much regret to see the New Zealand Division quit the scene of its glories,” but he said he understood the difficulties, particularly after the Australians had gone home. Instead he suggested that Washington’s opinion should be sought.

This was shrewd because the Americans were no keener than the British to see the division moved. The huge increase of American forces in the Pacific was under way and there was little need for further numbers there. The chiefs of staff in Washington saw no military logic in weakening the North African front as it was turning in favour of the Allies. General George Marshall argued strongly that the shipping needed to move the division home would cost 40,000 American troops in the buildup to the invasion of France. Fraser, after carefully arranging for Churchill to send a stirring message, secured from his Parliament a unanimous decision for the division to stay. Both the British Prime Minister and the President cabled their praise, Roosevelt saying “I believe you have done the right thing. It is altogether generous.”

Even though victory was far from won, the Allies began to turn their thoughts to the shape of the >>
postwar world. Churchill told the Dominion Prime Ministers in April 1943: “We must devote serious thought to the planning of the future world organisation.” The Allies had been caught unprepared by the end of the war in 1918; now they had the chance and the experience to arrange something better. The fall of Mussolini later that year emphasised, as Roosevelt pointed out, the need to have detailed plans worked out and ready.

The Anglo-American discussions which followed settled the framework of the future United Nations (Roosevelt’s inspired name) and its specialised agencies, but since Britain had to consult the Dominions on all important points, they had some influence on the final drafts. Thinking back to the failures of the Thirties, New Zealand was eager for the strongest possible world organisation to protect the peace and the independence of the smaller countries and had done a considerable amount of thinking about its form. Churchill favoured a rather eccentric arrangement of three regional councils, covering Europe, Asia and the Americas, and was suspected of doing so to enable Britain to oversee the future of Europe.

Fraser was vehemently opposed to dividing the world into regional blocs. New Zealand had no region into which it could easily fit and he argued convincingly that security from aggression was a world problem—that treating the invasions of Manchuria and Abyssinia in the Thirties as purely regional issues had been the start of the slide into world war. So, while there was never a rift, the thinking of Fraser and Churchill began to take differing paths. On the need for a strong Security Council, and for international supervision of colonies, Fraser’s views were much closer to Washington’s. At the San Francisco conference, which drafted the UN Charter, he chaired the committee on the future of colonial territories and entrenched the principle of international accountability for their administration and political progress.

There was, however, a final demonstration of that steadiness in the face of a crisis which had brought the two leaders together in the first place. In the closing days of the war it became clear that Marshal Tito’s Yugoslav partisans aimed to occupy Trieste and its hinterland, which had been Italian since the earlier war. Churchill was gratified that the new American president, Truman, saw this as land-grabbing “all too reminiscent of those of Hitler and Japan.” The New Zealand Division, racing through North Italy, was the nearest allied force, and Churchill asked Fraser in San Francisco if it could forestall the Yugoslavs. It was midnight in San Francisco when his cable was read to the shortsighted Fraser. He agreed before the reading was finished, telling Churchill that if New Zealand did not respond “all that we have won during five and a half years of fighting will be lost.”

His Cabinet at home were not so sure. People were war-weary, waiting expectantly for their troops to return. In such a delicate situation New Zealand might find that far from ending the long hostilities, it had started World War III. Fraser became incandescent over the hesitations of his colleagues, and Churchill would have rumbled his appreciation to hear Fraser declare, “in a crisis public opinion must not be feared, it must be met.” When Fraser hinted that he would resign, the Cabinet backed down. The New Zealand Division took the surrender of the German forces in Trieste and, after a tense period when the opposing forces patrolled the streets fully-armed, Tito withdrew. It was the last time the two Prime Ministers worked together, and a last flash of the firmness of purpose which they understood and shared.

**Endnotes**

1. Sir Carl Berendsen KCMG (1890-1973), New Zealand civil servant and diplomat, head of the Prime Minister’s Department, 1935-43.
4. Fraser to Churchill, 9 March 1941, War Cabinet Minutes, National Archives.
6. Fraser reporting to Wellington, 12 August 1941, Archives New Zealand.
7. Fraser to Churchill, 19 February 1942, Archives New Zealand.
8. Fraser to Churchill, 12 January 1942. A printed version was circulated to the British War Cabinet and Chiefs of Staff and Churchill kept a copy, now in the Churchill Archives, Cambridge.
9. Exchange of letters between the King and Prime Minister, 22 January 1942, British National Archives.
10. Discussions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Washington, 20 November and 5 December 1942, and Roosevelt to Fraser, 8 December 1942, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
11. Churchill to Fraser, 15 April 1943, Archives New Zealand.
13. Fraser to his deputy, Walter Nash, in Wellington, 22 May 1945, Archives New Zealand.
New Zealand emerged from the Second World War with two convictions: the hope that international peace could be maintained and the importance of maintaining the alliance between the United States and Great Britain. The hope of collective security under the UN was quickly crippled by Soviet vetoes and the second aim became as dominant as it had been during the war.

For a few years New Zealand clung nostalgically to the hope that an imperial system of security could be reestablished. This was impractical: Britain was a fading power and the security of the Pacific clearly depended on the United States. So New Zealand joined Australia in seeking a guarantee from Washington. The U.S. was reluctant to take on a new burden but finally agreed to the 1951 ANZUS treaty as the price of getting the two southern countries to agree to a Japanese peace treaty.

New Zealand still sought regional security by working closely with Britain, again agreeing to contribute a division to British forces in the Middle East to counter an assumed Russian thrust towards the oilfields. At a prime ministers’ conference in 1953, however, Churchill pointed out that the possession by both sides of the hydrogen bomb made future war unthinkable. Australia and New Zealand, he argued, should ensure that regional “brushfire” wars did not ignite a global catastrophe.

In 1955 New Zealand and Australia joined Britain in fighting the Communist insurgency in Malaya. Southeast Asia, caught in the transition between colonialism and independence, seemed perilously vulnerable, and though Malayan operations ended successfully in a stable independence, a N.Z. battalion stayed in the region until 1989, by far the country’s longest deployment overseas.

With the United States preoccupied in stabilising Western Europe, ANZUS remained an unused insurance policy. This changed as Vietnam became a Cold War battleground. By 1965 Southeast Asia seemed more shaky than ever. Several countries faced Communist insurrections. Singapore and Indonesia were facing Communist coups. Chairman Mao thought, as did many others, that after Vietnam the newly-independent countries to the south would one by one fall to Communism.

New Zealand and Australia knew a stable and open Southeast Asia was vital, but who could guarantee it? Without the United States the two southern countries would face the coming turmoil alone. To maintain American involvement in the region it became important to help it in the struggle over Vietnam, though Wellington was distinctly doubtful about its success.

Vietnam had significant consequences for New Zealand, which overshadowed the fact that its main aim—to stabilise Southeast Asia—was successful. The region south of Indochina was transformed. Protected by American military power, it made good use of the enormous sums spent on the war and access to the American market for its fledgling industries. Where in 1965 there had been weak governments of doubtful durability, the end of the fighting revealed five stable and self-confident countries bound as a counter to Vietnamese power and rapidly growing in wealth. As Singapore’s first prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, said to an American ambassador, “You did what you were supposed to do, you gave us time for us to get our own houses in order.…”*

But America’s internal divisions about Vietnam spilled over into New Zealand, where a vocal number of leftists, and the young, saw the ANZUS alliance as committing New Zealand to American adventures overseas. They began to call for an “independent” foreign policy, detached from Washington’s wishes. This became linked with a wider antipathy to nuclear weapons and to an arms race. Labour Party conferences began annually to call for a nuclear-free New Zealand, out of ANZUS.

The Labour Government elected in 1984 pledged not to leave ANZUS, but to make New Zealand nuclear-free, even to ban visits by ships which might be nuclear-armed. Since almost all these were American warships, this led to a quarrel with Washington. American (and British) policy was not to confirm or deny the possible presence of nuclear weapons. The New Zealand government, in thrall to its Left, could not accept even the temporary possibility of their presence. Ironically, successive polls showed that three-quarters of those questioned wanted their country to be both nuclear-free and a full member of ANZUS.

Prime Minister David Lange arranged for a visit by a carefully-chosen U.S. destroyer but was out of the country when the news broke, and allowed it to be sent away. Temper rose. Americans felt they had been humiliated and accused New Zealand of wanting the benefits >>

*Quoted by John H. Holdridge in Frontline Diplomacy, Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Washington.
“New Zealandness” in the Postwar World...
of an alliance without even welcoming one of their ships. Given similar urgings by Australia, Japan and anti-nuclear NATO partners, Washington could not bow to New Zealand’s wishes without endangering its structure of alliances. New Zealanders for their part felt national pride was at stake—surely it was New Zealand’s business to decide what ships it should have in its harbours.

Two years of desultory negotiations failed to bridge the gap. In 1986, the United States suspended its security guarantee and New Zealand was out of ANZUS. It caused little public stir. Instability in Southeast Asia had been the country’s only security worry for years. With this threat gone, did New Zealand really need a security alliance, with its irksome obligations and attendant risks?

The independent foreign policy lived on as a political slogan over two decades, but New Zealand did not drift into non-alignment. It remained firmly Western in its outlook and, in keeping with the path outlined by Peter Fraser, it was unwavering in its support for the United Nations and international institutions. With the end of the Cold War, this took the form of increased involvement in peacekeeping, which became the main task of its armed forces—in places as far-flung as Lebanon, Bosnia, Zimbabwe, East Timor and the Pacific.

Yet the country found by experience that it could not manage its foreign policy without a comfortable relationship with the United States. Under governments of both the Right and Left, Wellington spent the next twenty-five years trying to get back roughly to where it started. But there was a difference. Although the United States took all nuclear weapons off its surface ships, the New Zealand policy enshrined in law remained. It had become a distinctive flag of New Zealandness, like hakas and kiwifruit, and in the absence of any threat there was no disposition to abandon it. Like those who would rather live together than accept the bonds of matrimony, New Zealanders turned out to prefer an informal partnership with America to the formality of an alliance.

—Gerald Hensley

Mr. and Mrs. Fischl have scuba-dived all over the world but keep coming back to Eleuthera, Bahamas, where they make their home half the year, spending the rest of their time in Long Island, New York.

TRAVELLERS IN NEW ZEALAND

BARBARA AND ALAN FISCHL

The west side of the South Island is spectacular. Milford Sound, Te Anau and Queenstown are all exquisite. If you are wishing to spend a couple of days, Nugget Point, just outside of Queenstown, is one of the best hotels we have ever stayed in. As far as the North Island is concerned, Auckland is a charming city (Wellington less so) and the Coromandel Peninsula opposite Auckland is worth seeing. Also not to be missed are Bay of Islands and Cape Reinga, northernmost point of the North Island.

On both of our visits, probably the most exciting experiences entailed charter flights. The first, on the South Island, was in a small plane flying into Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, right over the two highest peaks, Mount Cook and Mount Tasman. The vast panorama of glaciers and mountains was awe-inspiring. It truly took our breath away. The second was a charter flight up from Bay of Islands to Cape Reinga, where we spent the better part of a day before flying back later that afternoon. Cape Reinga is one of the most spectacular places on earth: the juncture of the Pacific and Tasman Sea. High up on cliffs, the visitor stares into eternity. Our daughter, who took a year off to travel around the world, loved New Zealand so much that she is seriously considering permanently relocating there after her children finish college.

Mr. and Mrs. Fischl have scuba-dived all over the world but keep coming back to Eleuthera, Bahamas, where they make their home half the year, spending the rest of their time in Long Island, New York.
The Trust was established in 1965 with funds from both the government and the public. Since then, net income earned from investments has been used to award up to fifteen Churchill fellowships each year. There are also Winston Churchill Memorial Trusts in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Sir Winston Churchill believed that world peace and greater international understanding could be promoted through ordinary people travelling to other countries and experiencing other cultures. In his honour, the Memorial Trust assists New Zealanders to travel overseas to learn and to investigate topics that will help them to increase their contribution to the community and their trade, industry, profession or business. In 2012, the Trust received a generous donation from Sir James and Lady McNeish, who wanted to encourage promising young writers and journalists to travel and live in other cultures. A McNeish Writer’s Fellowship will give promising writers a unique opportunity and launching pad for their careers. The first of these was offered in 2013 for travel in 2014.

Patron of the New Zealand Trust is His Excellency Lieutenant General The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, Governor-General of New Zealand. Every two years the Governor-General hosts an award ceremony for Fellows who have recently completed their Fellowship. The latest event was held on October 3rd.

The Trust Board encourages applicants from all sectors, regions and cultures, and is keen to encourage more applications from beyond the three largest New Zealand cities. When developing their proposals and planning their itinerary, applicants for Fellowships are encouraged to think about the learning potential from cultures not only in Europe or North America but in the Pacific and Asia. The aim is that a variety of New Zealanders from all walks of life may bring back with them new insights and understanding that will enrich their community and New Zealand as a whole.

Churchill Fellowships are intended for overseas travel between three weeks and three months in duration, and are awarded in the year immediately after the year of application. Fellowships are granted for travel outside New Zealand only. Short courses which form part of an eligible project may also be considered.

Winston Churchill and Winston Churchill McNeish Writer’s Fellowship applications close on 31 July each year. The Board places great importance on the benefits of the project to New Zealand. Applicants must therefore state clearly what the benefit will be, and how they are qualified to discover and promote that benefit.

The Trust will make a contribution to the all-inclusive costs of travel of successful applicants, who are expected to meet not less than 20 percent of the total estimated costs, and to contribute more if they are able. While consideration will be given for Fellowships of up to $10,000, the average is from $5000 to $7000.

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of New Zealand is administered by the Department of Internal Affairs, 46 Waring Taylor Street, Wellington 6011, N.Z, email address community.matters@dia.govt.nz. ☎
I was born in the Netherlands on 16 April 1943 in the midst of the German occupation. After the war Mr. Churchill received an invitation to accept an honorary doctorate of laws at the University of Leiden, and spent five days visiting Holland, together with his wife and daughter Mary.

The Churchills flew to Holland on 8 May 1946. Extra police protection was provided because wherever he went there were thousands of people, hoping for a glimpse of the great man. In Amsterdam he was received by Queen Wilhelmina, and together they marked the first anniversary of VE-Day. In the evening there was a dinner in their honor at the royal palace, the Soestdijk. On May 9th Churchill was scheduled to speak to the Dutch parliament in The Hague at 12:30 pm. Word spread that he might make a quick stop to greet people at the small town of Sassenheim. My parents lived only about four miles from this stopping point. I was too young, but my mother rode there on her bicycle with my 4 1/2-year-old brother riding in front. She retold the story many times, because when I was old enough to know something of history, I ques-
tation her frequently, wishing to know every detail.

At about noon the Churchills’ open Packard came by, stopping beside the highway. Mr. Churchill stood up, doffed his hat and gave his famous V-sign. A small crowd of about 100 cheered enthusiastically. When the cars were ready to leave, Churchill tossed his cigar on the ground. My mother was able to pick it up, and kept it as a souvenir. Alas that was a long time ago and she later lost track of the artifact.

My mother’s experience made me a lifelong Churchillian. I am still proud to recall it, and still jealous of my brother. (He remembers the occasion very well, but was too small to realize what all the fuss was about!)

That afternoon Churchill spoke to our parliament, the States-General, in The Hague—a notable speech about European recovery—and then returned to Amsterdam. The next day was the presentation of his degree.

The University of Leiden is the oldest in The Netherlands, founded in 1575 by William of Orange, leader of the Dutch revolt against Spain in the Eighty Years’ War, in honor of Leiden’s resistance during a Spanish siege. The people almost starved, but they never surrendered. Leiden’s spirit of resistance was celebrated that day by Britain’s—six years to the day that Churchill had become prime minister, after France and the Low Countries had been attacked by Hitler.

Churchill’s honorary doctorate of law was presented by Professor and Rector-Magnificus Dr. B.G. Escher, who cited the degree’s three areas of qualification. The third of these, Escher said, applied to Mr. Churchill: “For his moral qualities and strong character that influenced history in a positive manner.” The recipient gave an eloquent speech of thanks. >>
Churchill’s Visit to Holland...

On Saturday May 11th, Churchill received Amsterdam’s Gold Medal and took a cruise through the city’s canals. On Sunday the Churchills were guests of the Royal Family at the Soestdijk. On the 13th they visited Rotterdam, the first city to have been bombed in the war. Huge crowds turned out and Mr. Churchill was proclaimed an honorary citizen. Late that afternoon Mr. Churchill flew back to England from the small airport of Valkenburg, while his wife and daughter stayed behind to spend a few days with the British ambassador.

At the 2004 Portsmouth Churchill conference I met bookseller Mark Weber, who had a copy of Winston Churchill bezoekt Nederland, one of several commemorative booklets issued to mark Churchill’s visit. Since it was in Dutch, few could read it, but Mark asked if I was interested and of course I was. Although it contains only sixty-four pages, it is well-illustrated with photos of the Churchill visit, which Finest Hour scanned for publication here, while arranging to have Lady Soames inscribe my copy.
A remarkable number of books about Churchill, not counting his own, have appeared in Dutch. The numbers herein are from Curt Zoller’s Annotated Bibliography of Works about Sir Winston Churchill (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004). All texts are in Dutch. Omitted are Dutch translations of works first published in other languages. Churchill’s 1946 visit to Holland was covered by four individual works.

An anonymous biography.

The most complete book about Churchill’s 1946 visit, detailing each day, almost by the hour, of his five days in Holland. Written in the more formal style of the day, it refers always to “Mrs. Churchill” and “Miss Mary Churchill”—a good documentary which expressed the excitement of the Dutch people face to face with their hero. —JM

A113. Kees Hazelzet, *Churchill: De Man die het niet opgaf*. Wageningen: Zomer & Keuning’s Uitgeversmij, 1946, 64 pp., illus., hardbound.
A pocket-size book in paper-covered illustrated boards containing tributes following the Second World War.

The most elaborate illustrated documentary of Churchill’s visit to the Netherlands, landscape format and profusely illustrated with photographs, bound in decorated paper wrappers.

Unlisted. “Patricam,” *De Zegeocht van Churchill* Haarlem: Boom-Ruygrok N.V., 1946, 36 pp., illus., softbound.
A well-illustrated booklet documenting the Churchill visit.

A condensed biography.

A short biography.

An annotated compilation of Churchill’s 1938-45 speeches.

A new and well written, generally positive biography by a Dutch journalist, reviewed by Jack Mens, page 47. 

Bibliography of Churchill Books in Dutch

Curt Zoller
Mr. Speaker,
You do me great honour in inviting me to speak to the States-General today. I see in all this the regard which you have for my dear country and the relief which you had especially in gaining liberty against the invader. I thank you. Personally I have always worked for the cause of liberty against tyranny and for the steady advancement of the causes of the weak and poor.

This is not, as you know, the first time I have had the opportunity of addressing august or famous Assemblies. I have already addressed the Congress of the United States, the Parliaments of Canada and Belgium, the General Assembly of Virginia and besides these there is always the House of Commons at home, where, from time to time, I venture still to speak a word or two.

Let me in my turn present you my compliments upon the progress made in this country since the expulsion of the German invaders. Holland has regained stability and strength in Europe with great rapidity. I offer my respectful congratulations to all public men who, without regard to Party or interests, have contributed to this achievement. The stability of the Constitution of the Netherlands, centering upon the union of Crown and people, is an example to many countries. I trust that your affairs abroad will prosper equally with those at home.

In Britain we know and value the services which Holland has rendered to European freedom in ancient and in recent times. The Four Freedoms which the great President Roosevelt proclaimed have always been cherished in Holland and were carried by his forebears in their blood to the New World. Even in the days of the Roman Empire, the Batavian Republic had established a unique position. In the long, fierce convulsions in Europe which followed the
Reformation, Holland and England were united as the foremost champions of Freedom. In those struggles after that change in the human mind which followed the Reformation long after the collapse of the Roman Empire, Holland and England were left as the foremost upholders of freedom. Our ancestors stood together on the bloody dykes, and there are few cities in the Netherlands which do not enshrine the memories of brave resolves and famous feats of arms. Bitter were the struggles of those old days and desperate were the odds you had to face. Looking across the generations I like to feel how Britain’s stand in 1940 and 1941 resembled the glorious hour when William the Silent declared that rather than surrender, the Dutch would die on the last dyke. Holland gave us King William the Third, who led both our countries against the overweening tyranny of Louis XIV. And after him John Churchill was Commander-in-Chief not only of the British but of the far larger armies maintained by the Dutch Republic, when she had risen through freedom and independence to power and greatness 250 years ago.

Her Majesty the Queen and the Government of the Netherlands have made me a gift which will be for me for ever an honour and a treasure. They have presented me with the 613 letters which John Churchill wrote to the Grand Pensionary during the long ten years of the Grand Alliance, which alliance he directed, largely formed and finally crowned with victory. I express again to this meeting of both your Houses my gratitude and that of my family for this extraordinary mark of your kindness to me.

Since the bygone struggles between Protestants and Catholics of the 16th and 17th centuries, there is at least one profound and beneficent new fact of which all should take account. The Church of Rome has ranged itself with those who defend the rights and dignity of the individual, and the cause of personal freedom throughout the world. I speak of course as one born of a Protestant and Episcopalian family, and I rejoice to see the new and ever-growing unity in lay matters, and not perhaps in lay matters only, between all the Christian churches with those liberalising forces which must ever light the onward march of man.

Let me pay my tribute to the part borne by Holland in the overthrow of Hitler’s hideous tyranny. After your troops and water defences had been overwhelmed by the sudden, treacherous onslaught, which happened six years ago tomorrow, the Dutch people had no longer the means to maintain organised armies in the field, but the will power and firmness of character shown during the grim years of foreign oppression and occupation were definite factors in the ultimate downfall of Nazism, and the Resistance Movement, for which so many thousands of patriots gave their lives, played an even more important part. In Britain we understand how you must have suffered in these years of torment of soul and mind to which starvation and bombardment were lesser afflictions. All honour to those who perished for the cause. May their memory cement the unity of all true Dutchmen. I thank you on behalf of Great Britain for your work. I am glad to meet here my friend, Professor Gerbrandy, the former Prime Minister, who was in Britain with us in all the dark days and who was so vigilant and faithful a champion of the rights and interests of the Netherlands.

Speaking here today, where my words may carry far and wide, it is my first duty to affirm the sanctity of the rights of smaller States. In affirming these rights, I base myself upon that grand figure of Victorian Liberalism, >>

"Looking across the generations, I like to feel how Britain’s stand in 1940 and 1941 resembled the glorious hour when William the Silent declared that rather than surrender, the Dutch would die on the last dyke."


**States-General of the Netherlands...**

Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone, in his third Midlothian speech, said on 27 November 1879:

The sound and the sacred principle that Christendom is formed of a band of nations who are united to one another in the bonds of right; that they are without distinction of great and small; there is an absolute equality between them—the same sacredness defends the narrow limits of Belgium [and of course Holland] as attaches to the extended frontiers of Russia, or Germany, or France. I hold that he who by act or word brings that principle into peril or disparagement is endangering the peace and all the most fundamental interests of a Christian society.

The duty, Mr. Speaker, of the large powers of the modern world is to see that those rights of every nation are jealously and strictly protected. The purpose of the United Nations Organisation is to give them the sanction of international law, for which Holland and Grotius are so justly famous, and also to make sure that the force of right will, in the ultimate issue, be protected by the right of force.

**Nationalism**

I will now, Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me, if I do not trespass too long upon your courtesy and goodwill, speak of nationalism. Is it an evil or is it a virtue? Where nationalism means the lust for pride and power, the craze for supreme domination by weight or force; where it is the senseless urge to be the biggest in the world, it is a danger and a vice. Where it means love of country and readiness to die for country; where it means love of tradition and culture and the gradual building up across the centuries of a social entity dignified by nationhood, then it is the first of virtues. It is indeed the foundation of a progressive and happy family of nations.

Some of our shallow thinkers and false guides—and there are many today—do not distinguish between these two separate and opposing conceptions. They mix them together and use all arguments according as their fancy or their interest prompts them. They condemn nationalism as an old-world obsession and seek to reduce us all, both countries and individuals, to one uniform pattern with nothing but material satisfactions as our goal. Or again, or sometimes with almost the same breath, they pervert the noble sentiments of patriotism to the hideous, aggressive expansion of old-world imperialism, and to the obliteraton by force or by wrongful teaching of all the varieties and special cultures, all those dear thoughts of home and country without which existence, however logically planned, would be dreary and barren beyond thought or imagination.

**The Tragedy of Europe**

After the end of the great conflict from 1914 to 1918 it was hoped that the wars were over. Yet we have witnessed an even more destructive world-wide struggle. Need we have done so? I have no doubt whatever that firm guidance and united action on the part of the Victorious Powers could have prevented this last catastrophe. If the United States had taken an active part in the League of Nations, and if the League of Nations had been prepared to use concerted force, even had it only been European force, in order to prevent the rearmament of Germany, there was no need for further serious bloodshed. Let us, Sir, profit at least by this terrible lesson. In vain did I try to teach it before the War.

Mr. Speaker, the tragedy of Europe shocks mankind. Well, as you said in your Address, “Europe is totally ravaged.” The tragedy darkens the pages of human history. It will excite the amazement and horror of future generations. Here in these beautiful, fertile and temperate lands, where so many of the noblest parent races of mankind have developed their character, their arts and their literature, we have twice in our own lifetime seen all rent asunder and torn to pieces in frightful convulsions which have left their mark in blackened devastation through the entire continent. And had not Europe’s children of earlier times come back across the Atlantic Ocean with strong and rescuing arms, all the peoples of Europe might have fallen into the long night of Nazi totalitarian despotism. Upon Britain fell the proud but awful responsibility of keeping the Flag of Freedom flying in the old world till the forces of the new world could arrive. But now the tornado has passed away. The thunder of the cannons has ceased, the terror from the skies is over, the oppressors are cast out and broken. We may be wounded and impoverished. But we are still alive and free. The future stands before us, to make or mar.

**Holland’s Role**

Two supreme tasks confront us. We have to revive the prosperity of Europe; and European civilisation must rise again from the chaos and carnage into which it has been plunged; and at the same time we have to devise those measures of world security which will prevent disaster descending upon us again. In both these tasks Holland has an important part to play. The restoration and rebuilding of Europe, both physical and moral, as you have pointed out in your Address, Mr. Speaker, is animated and guided by the kindred themes of Liberty and Democracy. These words are on every lip. They have cheered us and helped to unify us in the struggle. They inspire our rejoicings in the hour of victory. But now that the fighting is over, it is necessary to define these glorious
war cries with a little more fullness and precision.

You will pardon me, I trust, if I come a little closer to the conception of free democracy based upon the people's will and expressing itself through representative assemblies under generally accepted constitutional forms.

There are certain simple, practical tests by which the virtue and reality of any political democracy may be measured. Does the Government in any country rest upon a free, constitutional basis, assuring the people the right to vote according to their will, for whatever candidates they choose? Is there the right of free expression of opinion, free support, free opposition, free advocacy and free criticism of the Government of the day? Are there Courts of Justice free from interference by the Executive or from threats of mob violence, and free from all association with particular political parties? Will these Courts administer public and well-established laws associated in the human mind with the broad principles of fair play and justice? Will there be fair play for the poor as well as for the rich? Will there be fair play for private persons as well as for Government officials? Will the rights of the individual, subject to his duties to the State, be maintained, asserted and exalted? In short, do the Government own the people, or do the people own the Government? There is the test. Here are some of the more obvious tests by which the political health and soundness of any community may be ascertained.

The Supreme Task

Now let us think of our other supreme task, the building of a world instrument of security, in which all peoples have a vital interest, and assuredly none more than those in these sorely-tried Low Countries, which have sometimes been called the cockpit of Europe.

The more closely the largest Powers of today are bound together in bonds of faith and friendship the more effective will be the safeguards against war and the higher the security of all other states and nations. It is evident of course that the affairs of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth and Empire, are becoming ever more closely interwoven with those of the United States, and that an underlying unity of thought and conviction increasingly pervades the English-speaking world. There can be nothing but advantage to the whole world from such a vast and benevolent synthesis. But we also in Britain have our Twenty Years' Treaty with Soviet Russia, which in no way conflicts with other associations, but which we hope may prove one of the sure anchors of world peace.

We trust that in due course the natural unity and alliance between Great Britain and France will find reaffirmation in a new instrument. We welcome every step towards strength and freedom taken by the French people. We rejoice to see France moving forward to her old place in which if there were a void, Europe would be vitally wounded. We hope that the Western democracies of Europe may draw together in ever closer amity and ever closer association. This is a matter which should be very carefully considered and if found wise should be pressed from many angles with the utmost perseverance.

Special associations within the circle of the United Nations, such as those of which I have been speaking, or like the great unity of the British Empire and Commonwealth, or like the association which prevails throughout the Americas, North and South, far from weakening the structure of the supreme body of U.N.O., should all be capable of being fused together in such a way as to make U.N.O. indivisible and invincible; above all there must be tolerance, the recognition of the charm of variety, and the respect for the rights of minorities.

There was a time when the Age of Faith endeavoured to prevent the Age of Reason, and another time when the Age of Reason endeavoured to destroy the Age of Faith. Tolerance was one of the chief features of the great liberalising movements which were the glory of the latter part of the 19th century, by which states of society were reached where the most fervent devotion to religion subsisted side by side with the fullest exercise of free thought. We may well recur to those bygone days, from whose standards of enlightenment, compassion and hopeful progress, the terrible 20th century has fallen so far.

I say here as I said at Brussels last year that I see no reason why, under the guardianship of the world organisation, there should not ultimately arise the United States of Europe, both those of the East and those of the West which will unify this Continent in a manner never known since the fall of the Roman Empire, and within which all its peoples may dwell together in prosperity, in justice and in peace. Let Freedom Reign.
University of Leiden, 10 May 1946

"The rector has explained how rarely this distinction is given, and especially in cases like mine."

The decision to make me a Doctor of Laws is deeply valued by me. The Rector has explained how rarely this distinction is given, and especially in cases like mine. It has to be proved that the recipient, by his moral qualities, his attitude, and character has influenced the course of history in a favourable sense.

I felt this might be a rather difficult task for the promoter to prove, but the promoter’s reasoning with his logic and deduction seems to be very good. As he proceeded my natural modesty was undermined, and I will confess to this august assembly that I allowed myself to be convinced by him. [Laughter.]

Six years ago on this very day of the week the treacherous onslaught was made on Holland. In the morning this onslaught was made. In our country I became prime minister that evening. I think of all we have gone through in our different ways since then—our trial in Britain and yours over here. Yours was to be restrained and dominated for those long five years by vile and brutal tyranny, to have all the evils of oppression, and to find solace only in the glories of revolt and secret association and preparation.

The nightmare has ended. The land is clear, the tyrant is overthrown. The victors have overthrown the arbiters. The great wheel has swung full circle. One can see the awful finger of destiny or providence working here in this sphere of transient life, where generations so swiftly succeed one another, carrying forward their message and bearing their tribulation as they can.

Rector Magnificus, a great responsibility is felt by you and those associated with you in guiding this torch to young men and women at universities. You have indeed at this time a special measure of responsibility. We must make sure that one form of tyranny is not succeeded by another.

I am opposed, and always have been, to tyranny in every guise. It makes no difference to me what dress it wears, what slogans it mouths. I consider it a supreme duty of the individual subject or citizen to do his utmost to guard not only the liberty of his country, but the liberty of the individuals dwelling under the constitution of his native land. The motto of your university, which is among the most ancient and most democratic of the universities, is: “Let Freedom Reign.” That is the motto I will accept for myself with the diploma you have so kindly just given me.
Dr. Thijs Gras in Amsterdam is editing war memoirs of a Dutch ambulance driver, who mentions a 1941 speech in which Churchill speaks of “Quislings.” Translating the Dutch, the driver recalls a Churchill speech: “the day will dawn on which the crazy attempt to settle a Prussian supremacy based on racial hatred, armoured vehicles, secret police, alien tyrants and even more despicable Quislings, will dissolve like a bad dream.” Dr. Gras wishes the exact wording, and asks how a Dutch ambulance driver might have heard Churchill’s words.

Quislings and That Ilk: A Dutchman Remembers

The lines came in Churchill’s broadcast “To the Polish People” on 3 May 1941. From Churchill, The Unrelenting Struggle (London: Cassell, 1942), pages 103-04:

It is to you Poles, in Poland, who bear the full brunt of the Nazi oppression—at once pitiless and venal—that the hearts of the British and American Democracies go out in a full and generous tide. We send you our message of hope and encouragement tonight, knowing that the Poles will never despair, and that the soul of Poland will remain unconquerable.

This war against the mechanized barbarians, who, slave-hearted themselves, are fitted only to carry their curse to others—this war will be long and hard. But the end is sure; the end will reward all toil, all disappointments, all suffering in those who faithfully serve the cause of European and world freedom. A day will dawn, perhaps sooner than we now have a right to hope, when the insane attempt to found a Prussian domination on racial hatred, on the armoured vehicle, on the secret police, on the alien overseer, and on still more filthy Quislings, will pass like a monstrous dream. And in that morning of hope and freedom not only the embattled and at last well-armed Democracies, but all that is noble and fearless in the New World as well as in the Old, will salute the rise of Poland to be a nation once again.

The Dutch ambulance driver might have heard this speech over the wireless. Churchill directed broadcasts to the French, Polish and Italian people, but since they were beamed over the BBC World Service, they would have been heard in Holland as well as, or perhaps better than, in Poland.

The driver also might have read the speech in the paperback collection of Churchill’s War Speeches (including the 3 May 1941 speech) which was published in Dutch as well as English by Cassell in London. The Dutch edition, Winston Churchill’s Oorlogsredevoeringen, was actually published first, in 1945. Thus it was the first world edition of this particular title, which was not published in English until 1946.

Vidkun Quisling (1887–1945), a Norwegian army officer and fascist politician, was Minister-President of occupied Norway in 1942–45 and was executed for treason at the end of the war. He actually was awarded a CBE (1929, revoked 1940) for his earlier aid to British interests in Russia. Churchill made his name famous as a synonym for “traitor.”

Churchill was very familiar with the slogan, “a nation once again,” the motto of the Irish Nationalists. In 1921, WSC had helped to write the treaty which established the Irish Free State, although it was spurned by one prominent Irish leader, Eamonn de Valera. On 8 December 1941, in an attempt to woo Ireland to join the Allies, he telegraphed de Valera: “Now is your chance. Now or never. A nation once again.” De Valera did not reply, saying that Churchill must have been drunk. Of course he was quite sober. It was typical of Churchill’s quixotic nature and generosity—and his memory for a good phrase.
I have some questions about Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s silence over the 1944 bombing of Monte Cassino Abbey, and his later, contradictory reconstruction of facts.

(1) Immediately after the bombing, on 15 February 1944, Churchill officially said nothing about an event on newspaper front pages all over the world. By contrast, Roosevelt tried to explain it in the White House press conference by revealing an Eisenhower letter about Italian historical monuments versus military necessity.

(2) Churchill remained silent about the bombing of the Abbey in his speech in Parliament on 22 February, although he went into great detail about the Italian military and political situation.

(3) As far as I know, Churchill described the Monte Cassino bombing only after the war, in The Second World War. “The monastery dominated the whole battlefield, and naturally General Freyberg, the Corps Commander concerned, worked to have it heavily bombarded from the air before he launched the infantry attack. The army commander, General Mark Clark, unwillingly sought and obtained permission from General Alexander, who accepted the responsibility....”

This is very different from what Mark Clark claimed in his book, Calculated Risk. Clark wrote that the bombing was a “tragic mistake.” This was echoed in the U.S. Army official history by Martin Blumenson, whose account of Monte Cassino was based on the diary of Gen. Alfred Gruenther, Clark’s chief of staff.

—NANCO TASCIOTTI

May I recommend Total War: The Story of World War II by Calvocoressi, Wint and Pritchard (London: Penguin, 1985). A tragic mistake it may have been, but these authors state that most of the Abbey’s treasures had been removed before its destruction.

See also Martin Gilbert, Winston S. Churchill, volume 7, Road to Victory 1942-1945 (London: Heinemann, 1986), available in Italian, for a full account of Monte Cassino. Some excerpts are attached.

Churchill was the only major World War II leader to question strategic bombing. In February 1945, Dresden was bombed at the request of the Soviets, who repeatedly asked why it hadn’t been bombed yet. (See the Churchill Centre website: http://xrl.us/bgy3hy/.)

In May 1944, after the bombing of French railway marshaling yards, at Roosevelt’s request, Churchill wrote to Eden, “Terrible things are being done.” When Air Chief Marshal Tedder told him they were picking “the best targets,” Churchill replied: “You are piling up an awful load of hatred.” (Gilbert, 784.) There is no doubt about Churchill’s moral qualms over such bombings.

On 15 February 1944, after three days of intense attacks, Monte Cassino remained in German hands. Meanwhile the Germans launched their counterattack on the Anzio bridgehead. On the 18th, Churchill was grilled about Anzio (but not Monte Cassino) during Question Time. Anzio was the issue for Parliament.

Despite American claims that they were doing all the fighting in Italy, Churchill noted in February that over 50,000 British and Canadian troops were engaged. His private secretary, John Colville, wrote in his diary, “...it is

Mr. Tasciotti is a journalist and researcher in Rome.
the unenterprising behaviour of the American Command at Anzio that has lost us our great opportunity there.” (Gilbert, 681). Mark Clark had his critics, too.

In answer to your questions (1) and (2), Churchill was receiving intense press and political grilling over the Italian campaign when Monte Cassino was bombed. His friend Harold Nicolson wrote in his diary:

I am sickened by the absence of gratitude towards him. The fact is that the country is terribly war-weary, and the ill-success of Anzio and Cassino is for them a sad augury of what will happen when the Second Front begins. (Gilbert, 720-21)

As Minister of Defence, Churchill was more directly involved in operations than Roosevelt, and far less likely to call press conferences. Unlike presidents, prime ministers have to answer questions in Parliament.

On question (3): Churchill did mention Cassino before his war memoirs. In April 1944, for example:

“Although the fighting at the bridgehead and on the Cassino front has brought many disappointments,” Churchill told Marshall in his telegram of April 12, “you will I trust recognize that at least eight extra German divisions have been brought into Italy down to the south of Rome and heavily mauled there.” The Enigma decrypts, Churchill pointed out, showed that Hitler had been saying “that his defeats in South Russia are due to the treacherous Badoglio collapse of Italy which has involved thirty-five divisions.” (Gilbert, 736-37)

Churchill again referred to the fall of Cassino in May. He may not publicly have mourned the destruction, but he did consider the larger picture:

On May 18, after severe fighting which had lasted for six days, the town and monastery of Monte Cassino fell at last...He hoped, Churchill commented, that between thirty to thirty-five German divisions would be kept in the Italian theatre and “away from Overlord.” (Gilbert, 774)

If by “tragic mistake” Mark Clark meant that General Eaker was wrong in concluding that the Abbey was not occupied or fortified, you need to determine who was right. Calvocoressi’s book appeared much later than Clark’s, and had the advantage of later information:

General Ira C. Eaker, who was one of a number of senior commanders to make a personal air reconnaissance, reported that he had seen German troops in the Abbey. The allied command declared that the Abbey would no longer be spared... (Calvocoressi, 536)

I think we tend to look at these matters knowing what we know now, rather than what was known at the time. For instance, who knew then that the Abbey was evacuated of its treasures and most of its personnel? You say it is clear the Germans weren’t in the Abbey. Clear then, or clear now?

The leveling of a historic and religious symbol was a tragic event. So was the leveling of Coventry Cathedral by the Luftwaffe in November 1940. War is hell, which is why we try so hard to avoid it. War is also, as Churchill said, a “catalogue of blunders.” But I think it wrong to consider Churchill culpable over Monte Cassino. —RML

★★★

Only on 22 February did Churchill speak about the Italian military and political situation (Badoglio government, etc.), not mentioning Monte Cassino at all—his silence noted by the Nazi- and fascist-controlled Italian newspapers. Historians have documented Gen. Eaker’s flight over the Abbey, when he confused the building’s many lightning conductors with German radio antennas. The question remains: who made the final decision? All the many books I read avoid this decisive aspect.

Calvocoressi writes: “The allied command declared that the Abbey would no longer be spared and although American, British and French generals opposed its bombardment it was attacked.” Who were they? If they opposed it, who overruled them? It is well documented that the Indian Gen. Tuker and New Zealand Corps Commander Gen. Freyberg requested the bombing. The chain of command was: Gen. Clark, Field Marshals Alexander and Wilson.

I would appreciate information to explain Churchill’s silence. Granting Hitler’s enormous primary responsibility in provoking the event, the fact remains that there were no German troops in the Abbey. This is historically clear, as is Gen. Eaker’s blunder. Naturally, Italians remain grateful to the Allied leaders and their soldiers who sacrificed their lives for our liberty. —NT

★★★

I do not understand why such emphasis is placed on Churchill’s “silence” over the bombing of the Abbey. I am convinced neither that he was silent, nor that the bombing of Monte Cassino outweighed everything else in the Italian campaign, chiefly Anzio. It is natural that German propaganda made the most of it—but the Germans were hardly innocent bystanders.

In fact, much was said in Parliament about Monte Cassino. Given what most Members said, we have a clear picture of how the British regarded it at the time—which may differ from how we regard it in hindsight.

Here are excerpts from Hansard (Commons and Lords) during and after the attacks:

16 February 1944, House of Lords: Viscount Simon quoted Churchill directly. While admitting that there was “no excuse” for believing works of art do not matter, >>
Simon quoted, “it is universally accepted and everywhere understood that the necessities of war must be put far in front of any consideration of special historical or cultural value at all… the necessity of getting victory—victory as complete and as quickly as possible—make it ridiculous to compare the needs of that claimant with any artistic or cultural matter whatever.”

Simon also quoted Eisenhower’s order to troops in the Italian Campaign (the same quoted by Roosevelt): “If we have to choose between destroying a famous building and sacrificing our own men, then our men’s lives count infinitely more and the buildings must go.” There is nothing wrong in saying this, Simon concluded: “But…the choice is not always so clear-cut as that.”

22 February 1944: Churchill himself spoke about Monte Cassino: “The bitterness and fierceness of the fighting now going on both in the bridgehead and at the Cassino front surpass all previous experience.” (Italics mine.) If that was true, it seems logical that he would not want to get into the bombing debate, since this was an ongoing operation which did not end until May.

Churchill scarcely needed to comment when another MP said the same day: “We ought not to have thought about ancient monuments or anything like that. If it is a matter of military tactics to get our men through, then warn the people to get out and get on with the job… When our men are fighting and sacrificing everything and then we say ‘We cannot attack a certain place because of its historical value,’ and we sacrifice men’s lives because of that, I claim that that is wrong to the men we are asking to give so much to the nation.”

7 March 1944: The Secretary of State for War, Sir James Grigg, was asked if the Abbey was yet occupied by Allied troops. He replied, “No, Sir.”

20 March 1944: Churchill questioned the bombing of the Abbey in a telegram to Gen. Alexander: “I wish you would explain to me why this passage by Cassino Monastery Hill, all on a front of 2 or 3 miles is the only place which you must keep butting at… It seems very hard to understand why this most strongly defended point is the only passage forward.” Alexander replied:

Along the whole main battle front from Adriatic to south coast there is only Liri Valley leading direct to Rome which is suitable terrain for deployment of our superiority in artillery and armour. The main highway known as route six is [the] only road except cart-tracks which lead from the mountains where we are into Liri valley over Rapido river and this exit into plain is blocked and dominated by Monte Cassino on which stands the Monastery. (Churchill Archives, CHAR 20/160)

Now, we may choose to reject Alexander’s conclusions, but this was what he believed at the time. It seems relatively unimportant “who gave the order.” This was what the commanders thought. The order would have worked its way through the chain of command to the U.S. Army Air Corps, which sent the B-17s.

6 June 1944: At Question Time, a question was asked about restoring Monte Cassino Abbey as a memorial. Churchill was not present and Mr. Attlee replied on his behalf that the question was premature.

October 1944: It became apparent that German troops had looted churches and art treasures throughout Italy virtually at will. While the Germans had claimed to have moved Monte Cassino’s treasures out of harm’s way, the boxes were “opened by people who had the inventories at their disposal and knew very well what they were doing, and the best of their contents removed, generally to be replaced by something that the experts did not consider worth taking.” A long list of filched art treasures followed.

Churchill’s critics state that the monastery was not militarized and that Gen. Eaker mistook lightning rods for radio antennae. I read numerous statements in Hansard and elsewhere stating that the Germans were in the Abbey and firing on Allied troops from its commanding heights. I have yet to read a source that disputes the statements in Parliament, or the books I have cited.

It seems fair to consider that Monte Cassino was a tragic episode in a military campaign that helped end a terrible war. German propaganda took full advantage of the Abbey’s destruction, promoting the image of Allied vandalism when they themselves were the vandals. Goebbels was a clever man. But that does not outweigh the fact that the commanders at the time thought there was no other way to advance in that sector.

Perhaps a more appropriate investigation should be of the Nazis, who made propaganda out of the supposed vandalism they had purposely set up, while stealing the pick of the Abbey’s collection.
It is often said that on 4 August 1914, the night World War I began, Churchill dined with Lloyd George at the Carlton Hotel, where Ho Chi Minh was employed as a cook. We recall seeing a plaque on the building, now New Zealand House. But senior editor John Plumpton points to the official biography, vol. 3 (30-31), where Martin Gilbert writes that Churchill dined with his mother, brother and the editor of The Times in Admiralty House, and later met with Lloyd George and Asquith. What are the facts?

Our first guess is that Sir Martin had the vol. 3 date wrong and learned about Ho later, but before his talk to the Second Churchill Tour, 17 September 1985, published as Churchill’s London, http://xrl.us/bpyib9:

One of the most bizarre stories I came across was when I tried to find where Churchill was on the night war was declared in August 1914....The Cabinet had broken up at about 9-9:15, and Churchill and Lloyd George had a favourite restaurant within walking distance of 10 Downing Street—the Carlton Hotel at the bottom of the Haymarket, unfortunately later destroyed by Hitler’s bombs. (Its replacement is New Zealand House, a modern building)...And in the Churchill Papers—such is their wealth—is the Carlton Hotel bill of what they ate and drank, a pleasant repast. But what is bizarre: the register of the staff at the Hotel survives, and among the vegetable cooks at the bottom, well under the chefs and anybody of culinary significance, was a recent recruit to the staff from French Indo-China: Ho Chi Minh. Yes, Ho Chi Minh had been in London as a vegetable cook on the outbreak of war, when he had gone to the French Embassy in London to volunteer his services to fight, as a patriotic Indo-Chinaman (as they were then called). He was turned down, crossed the Channel to Paris, and began his career of disgruntlement and revolution.

Aside from conflicting with vol. 3, the young Ho was known then as Nguyen That Thanh (see Wikipedia). Of course, that might have been the name Sir Martin found on the Carlton records, and researched to learn that he later became Ho Chi Minh. But the plaque on New Zealand House states that Ho was a waiter, not a cook, and in 1913, not 1914. Plaques can be wrong. We do know Sir Martin was quite serious in 1985. Perhaps he was referring to the night of the 2nd or 3rd? (On the 5th WSC dined with the Other Club). There are no other references in his other books. Or, could he have been correcting vol. 3, published nine years earlier?

That volume also says the Cabinet met on the evening of August 2nd, when Britain issued its ultimatum to Germany. The next Cabinet was the evening of August 4th; at 11pm the ultimatum expired and war was on. In 1985 Sir Martin said: “The Cabinet had broken up at about 9-9:25....” Clearly Churchill had already dined by then.

Carlton Hotel vs. Carlton Club

The Carlton Hotel stood on the corner of Pall Mall and the Haymarket, the site of today’s New Zealand House. It is often confused with the Carlton Club, a famous Conservative Party bastion. Both hotel and club were damaged by German bombs on 14 October 1940, but it was to the hotel that Churchill and Lloyd George would go for dinner. Liberals would not go to the Carlton Club which, after the bombing, moved to its current premises at 69 St. James’s Street.

Many droll stories emerged from that fiery night on Pall Mall. The historian Andrew Roberts recalls Lord Hailsham (Quentin Hogg) telling him of carrying his father out of the burning Carlton Club, which Hailsham compared to Aeneas carrying Anchises from the ruins of Troy. Simon Schama wrote of the simultaneous demolition of the Reform Club next door, whose butler answered telephoned requests for information with a Jeevesian “The Club is burning, sir.”

Ho’s Movements

Born in 1890, Nguyen That Thanh was a student in Hue when he became involved in his first social uprising, on behalf of poor peasants. His student status in jeopardy, he traveled abroad, working as a kitchen helper aboard French liners. In 1913-19, he lived in West Ealing, and later in Crouch End, Hornsey. He may have been a chef or dishwasher at the Drayton Court Hotel in West Ealing. At the Carlton Hotel it has been said that he trained as a pastry chef under August Escoffier, but there is scant evidence to support this. But New Zealand House’s plaque says only that he was a waiter in 1913.

The mystery remains unresolved.
MICHAEL McMENAMIN'S

ACTION THIS DAY

125 YEARS AGO
Winter 1888-89 • Age 14
“My holidays are utterly spoilt”

Winston spent Christmas at home with his brother Jack and their parents. Lord Randolph wrote to his mother, the Duchess of Marlborough, on 30 December that “Of course the boys have made themselves ill with their Christmassing, & yesterday both were in bed…Jack is better this morning but Winston has a sore throat & some fever.” WSC’s son writes in the Official Biography that “this did not seem to have prevented Lord and Lady Randolph from going away.”

Winston kept his mother advised, writing on January 2nd: “My throat is still painful & swelled - I get very hot in the night - & have very little appetite to speak of…How slow the time goes - I am horribly bored - & slightly irritable - no wonder my liver is still bad – Medicine 6 times a day is a horrible nuisance. I am looking forward to your return with ‘feelings, better imagined than described.’”

He was soon feeling better and making a presumably futile attempt to return to school late: “...the Dr says I ought to go to the seaside, & then I shan’t see you at all. My holidays are utterly spoilt, a week in one room that leaves little more than a fortnight. 2 or 3 days in the park & 1 week at the seaside leaves 1 week & that one week you will be away...I don’t know what to do. I think I ought to have it made up to me and go back a week late…a week would make no difference to anyone but you & me.”

100 YEARS AGO
Winter 1913-14 • Age 39
“The sledge is bare of babies”

That Churchill had many enemies in the Conservative Party goes without saying. That he had many within the Liberal Party is not so well known. The battle over 1914-15 Naval Estimates gave his Liberal critics an opportunity to force his resignation if the Cabinet rejected his plan to build four dreadnoughts and reduced their number to two. On January 5th Sir Francis Hopwood wrote to Lord Stamfordham, the King’s Private Secretary: “The fact is the Cabinet is sick of Churchill’s perpetually undermining & exploiting its policy and are picking a quarrel with him. As a colleague he is a great trial to them… The whole affair may blow over but it looks very ugly. Winston writes that he has his ‘back against the wall.’”

Before Christmas Lloyd George made known his opposition to WSC’s Naval Estimates. On Christmas Day, Churchill wrote Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey: “I see my duty quite plainly and am willing to pay any forfeit the fates may exact while on that path.” Churchill asked Grey to consider the effect backing down from the already announced four battleships “would have upon the position of England in Europe.” The Cabinet had approved his statements on naval construction, Churchill went on, “in the name of Britain. We have offered the Germans to reduce or drop our quota if they will do the same. They have refused: and now it is suggested—seriously that we should do for nothing what only last October we said we would not do except they do the same. The country will be made ridiculous before the whole world.”

At one point, Lloyd George said he would support Churchill’s 1914-15 estimates if he would commit to the substantial reductions for 1915-16. Both Churchill and his Cabinet critics rejected the compromise. Asquith appealed to the Cabinet for a “spirit of mutual accommodation.” On February 1st he wrote WSC: “Very largely in deference to my appeal, the critical pack (who know well that they have behind them a large body of party opinion) have slackened their pursuit. I think that you on your side should… show a corresponding disposition and throw a baby or two out of the sledge.”

Churchill wrote back the next day: “The sledge is bare of babies, & though the pack may crunch the driver’s bones, the winter will not be ended.”

On March 9th Asquith introduced a compromise bill enabling each Ulster county to opt out of Home Rule for six years from the date of its enactment. This was intended to give Tories two general elections in which to reverse Home Rule. But Ulster leader Edward Carson called it a “sentence of death with a stay of execution for six years.”

But when Churchill’s colleagues needed him, they didn’t hesitate to call on him. When reports indicated Ulster volunteers intended to seize police and military barracks and depots of arms and ammunition. The Cabinet decided that a specific warning needed to be given, and Churchill was their man. Lloyd George reportedly told him: “This is your opportunity. Providence has arranged it for you. You can make a speech that will ring down the corridors of history. I could not do it. You are the only member of the Cabinet who could make such a speech.”

Churchill’s speech at Bradford on March 14th may not have rung down history’s corridors, but the Tories certainly remembered it several years later when they demanded Churchill’s scalp as the price for entering a coalition government: “As long as it affects the workingman in England or nationalist peasants in Ireland, there is no measure
of military force which the Tory party will not readily employ. They denounce all violence except their own. They uphold all law except the law they choose to break. They are to select from the Statute Book the laws they will obey and the laws they will resist… The veto of violence has replaced the veto of privilege…If all the loose, wanton and reckless chatter…is in the end to disclose a sinister revolutionary purpose, then I can only say to you ‘Let us go forward and put these grave matters to the proof.”

75 YEARS AGO
Winter 1938-39 • Age 64
“We should have been far better off”

On his way to the South of France early in January, Churchill stopped in Paris where he met with French Finance Minister Paul Reynaud and former Prime Minister Leon Blum. His talks convinced him that his proposals to resist German aggression before Munich had been correct. He wrote to Clementine, who was cruising the West Indies on Lord Moyne’s yacht, that the French had told him “the Germans had hardly any soldiers at all on the French Frontier during the Crisis” and that the French Generals Gamelin and Georges “were confident that they could have broken through the weak, unfinished German line, almost unguarded as it was, by the fifteenth day at the latest.”

Churchill concluded that “if the Czechs had held out only for that short fortnight, the German armies would have had to go back to face invasion.” As a consequence, Churchill wrote his wife, “I have no doubt that a firm attitude by England and France would have prevented war, and I believe history will incline to the view that if the worst had come to worst, we should have been far better off than we may be at some future date.”

Until the rump of Czechoslovakia was occupied by Germans, however, Chamberlain disagreed. He wrote to his sister on February 19th: “All the information I get seems to point in the direction of peace & I repeat once more that I believe we have at last got on top of the dictators. Of course that doesn’t mean that I want to bully them as they have tried to bully us; on the contrary I think they have had good cause to ask for consideration of their grievances, & if they had asked nicely after I appeared on the scene they might already have got some satisfaction.”

Chamberlain favorably mentioned Hitler’s 30 January Reichstag speech, when he said: “It would be fortunate for the whole world if our two peoples could cooperate in full confidence with one another.” Chamberlain told his sister he had “full confidence” in Hitler: “These words of the Fuehrer were all the more impressive because they were spoken at the end of a year which was full of international tension & crises, yet that year found solutions for problems which seemed almost insuperable…[I am] convinced that a new & fruitful element for cooperation between the nations has been established.”

“Solutions for problems” was a seemingly innocent phrase, yet Hitler had used it in a far more menacing way where he boasted of having “settle[d] the Jewish problem” in Germany. He added that if Jewish financiers “succeed in plundering the nations once more into a world war, then the result…[will be] the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.” Chamberlain made no mention of this in his letter. Instead, the day before, Chamberlain had told the press that “the international situation now seems to give less cause for anxiety than for some time in the past.”

Home Secretary Samuel Hoare said that Europe was at the dawn of a new “Golden Age.”

On 15 March, the German Army occupied Prague and Hitler slept that night in the Hráčany Palace.

Churchill wrote the next day to Horace Rumbold, British Ambassador to Germany: “I have had several difficult and depressing situations to deal with in the course of my career and I have, on the whole, been inclined to optimism. But I have never felt so depressed or nauseated as I feel now…. I can only hope it will not enter the PM’s head to pay Hitler another visit.”

50 YEARS AGO
Winter 1963-64 • Age 89
“Astonishing Comeback”

Churchill began 1964 with what his Private Secretary Anthony Montague Browne described to Lord Beaverbrook in a 17 January letter as an “astonishing comeback.” While Churchill “has basically been in decline,” Anthony Montague Browne wrote Lord Beaverbrook, he “suddenly staged one of those astonishing comebacks with which he has so often surprised us. Last night, for instance, he talked to me clearly and connectively about the Prime Minister’s speech in the House, to which he had listened. So one simply cannot tell but I do rather wish that he would not go to the House, so that people will remember him from his great days.”

If Churchill knew of his Private Secretary’s wishes in this regard, he paid them no heed. He visited the House of Commons on 20 January and 20 February and dined at the Other Club on 23 January and 20 February. Harold Macmillan came to lunch with Churchill in February and Sir Winston’s dinner guests in February included Randolph Churchill, Jock and Lady Margaret Colville, and seven others, old friends all.

Erratum (FH 160):

This column last issue. Page 42, lower right, for “Wimbourne” read WIMBorne. Page 43, last paragraph, for “Douglas-Hume” read Douglas-Home. ☯
cast—not the least Martin Freeman and Joanna Page, who meet as body doubles for movie sex scenes. One says (while naked and simulating sex): “it is nice to have someone I can just chat to.” They fall for each other and she takes him home and invites him in. He says, “Are you sure this is all right? I’ve never done this before.”

In the midst of the melee, Prime Minister Grant receives the President of the United States (Billy Bob Thornton)—a real snarky piece of work, whom he finds trying to seduce Natalie (Martine McKutcheon), one of his aides. The President tells Hugh the U.S. has an agenda he plans to follow, whatever Britain thinks. So...at the obligatory press conference in Number Ten, the President mouths the usual platitudes about the Special Relationship and the PM tells him off in public. Naturally, Churchill gets a mention. This is an entertaining scene for those of us who think the “special relationship” tends often to be a one-way street. Watch it on YouTube: http://bit.ly/1gf9Hml.

Of course Hugh also gets the girl. When she sends him a Christmas card professing her love, he calls for his Jaguar and heads for her street in Wandsworth (“the dodgy end”) where he goes door to door asking, “Does Natalie live here?” One resident asks, “Aren’t you the Prime Minister?” “Yes I am—sorry for all the cock-ups, my cabinet is absolute crap, we’ll try to do better next year.”

A tip of the hat in passing to Prime Minister David Cameron, who recently said much the same thing, though not with Hugh Grant’s panache: ttp://bit.ly/1gfafZw. ⚫

Love Actually, starring Hugh Grant, written and directed by Richard Curtis, music by Craig Armstrong. Working Title Films, Universal Pictures, 2003, 135 minutes.

Many American friends of Britain (and, we trust, vice versa) think the “Special Relationship” invented by Churchill tends nowadays to work in only one direction. I was reminded of this by an unlikely source, Hugh Grant, playing the British Prime Minister, in a syrupy, sentimental but amusing ten-year-old comedy. Variety described it as “doggedly cheery,” with “cheeky wit, impossibly attractive cast, and sure-handed professionalism.”

Love Actually is a multiple romance about ten different love affairs going on simultaneously around Christmastime in London, with an accomplished cast: Colin Firth (The King’s Speech), Rowan Atkinson (Mr. Bean, the mute comic), Emma Thompson (Shakespeare to Harry Potter). There’s also Liam Neeson, who for once isn’t killing the Ungodly but trying to be a good step-dad to his ten-year-old son, who is in love with an American 10-year-old. Quite a

Franklin’s Five Enablers


Australian Michael Fullilove offers an extremely readable and illuminating history of the crucial months leading up to America’s entry in World War II. From September 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland, to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, America remained staunchly isolationist. The Neutrality Acts largely prevented President Roosevelt from aiding Great Britain and France, despite his sympathy for those besieged

Ms. Hopkins, the granddaughter of Harry Hopkins, wrote “Churchill and Hopkins” in Finest Hour 160.
nations. Nevertheless, he did engage the U.S. in actions “short of war” to contribute to the British war effort.

With meticulous research and graceful prose, Fullilove explains how Roosevelt bypassed Congress and the State Department and directed foreign policy through five personal envoys: Undersecretary of State Sumner Wells; Colonel William J. Donovan; Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie; businessman Averell Harriman; and presidential aide and confidante Harry Hopkins. Their role was to gather information and open lines of communication with Prime Minister Churchill and, after June of 1941, Marshal Stalin. Thus the President furthered his foreign policy agenda while avoiding official channels. To Fullilove this was FDR’s style of governance: aversion to bureaucracy, and political practicality.

Fullilove’s five men do make his point about Roosevelt’s creative and flexible style. Wells, “a casting director’s dream of a diplomat” (21), was the President’s good friend, who traveled to Rome, Berlin, Paris, and London in February 1940 as FDR’s envoy to the heads of state. The President assured the public that this was an unofficial, “fact-finding trip.” Fullilove speculates that it failed on an international level—there were no peace negotiations—but news coverage might have piqued America’s interest in the war in Europe.

When Churchill became prime minister and called for American aid to help Britain hold off the Germans, Roosevelt turned to William J. Donovan, relatively unknown at the time, who later became “America’s wartime spymaster” (66). After meeting with the cabinet, Donovan arrived in Britain just in time for the fall of France. Given full courtesies by the British, he told the President that with U.S. help, Britain could survive.

Fullilove devotes two chapters to the missions of Harry Hopkins, whom he regards as the most significant of Roosevelt’s envoys. Hopkins’ missions to London and Moscow in 1941 established the foundation for the wartime alliance. Describing Hopkins as a “marriage broker,” Fullilove suggests that Hopkins set the stage for the “special relationship” between Churchill and Roosevelt. After Germany invaded the USSR, Hopkins flew to Moscow to meet Stalin and answer the same question: could the Red Army hold out? Hopkins concluded it could and promised Stalin Lend-Lease assistance. Mutual need held the three Allied powers together.

Republican Wendell Willkie’s trip to Britain overlapped with Hopkins’ first visit in early 1941. Willkie, however, insisted that he was not the president’s envoy, but merely wanted to see conditions for himself. He too supported American assistance and although this was not an official mission, its effects reverberated in the United States and in Great Britain.

In mid-1941, Roosevelt sent wealthy businessman Averell Harriman as his personal envoy to London in order to expedite Lend-Lease shipments. Fullilove describes Harriman as an expert facilitator and problem solver whose effectiveness improved Britain’s ability to fight the Germans. Although critics accused Harriman of encouraging U.S. involvement in the war, his mandate from the President was so vague that he felt few limitations on his interactions with the British.

Fullilove’s use of these five individuals and their missions explains how America broke out of isolationism in those crucial months. Whether or not these five actually drew the U.S. into the war is debatable. Much of the history is necessarily left out. But this study, however narrow in scope, broadens our understanding of presidential politics and of America’s entry into the Grand Alliance.

Afghan Imbroglios, Then and Now

PAUL H. COURTENAY


C on Coughlin is the Daily Telegraph’s Defence editor, who well understands the current conflict in Afghanistan. His book is a well-informed study of the turbulent North West Frontier of the former Indian empire, now part of Muslim Pakistan, and how Churchill came to become involved there in 1897.

The first chapter has Churchill commissioned in 4th Queen’s Own Hussars (valuable for those new to his youth); four more chapters marry his early years as a cavalry officer with the background of the Frontier’s instability and turmoil. We then reach the nub of the story and learn in detail about his first direct experience of active military operations (not counting two weeks in Cuba in 1895—more like an occasionally dangerous holiday).

While this book has gleaned praise, let us set out a few complaints. The individual observations are all petty, but there are so many solecisms that they cannot entirely be ignored. A few examples: Lord Randolph Churchill was not a peer, and he and his wife were not Lord and Lady Churchill; until September 1939 Sandhurst was the Royal Military College (not the Royal Military Academy, >>
Churchill’s First War...

which was at Woolwich); Churchill was not heir to the Marlborough dukedom from birth—only from the death of his father in 1895 and until his cousin the Ninth Duke had a son in 1897; the “4th Dragoons” were actually the 4th Dragoon Guards; Churchill was appointed Colonel, 4th Hussars (not Colonel-in-Chief, a royal appointment); Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, was not involved in Churchill’s choice of regiment—that was Prince George, Duke of Cambridge, Connaught’s mother’s cousin, not his brother; Duchess Lily’s 1895 wedding was to Lord William Beresford (not Lord Beresford, which was a peerage awarded in 1916 to his eldest brother, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford); Edward Law son was a hereditary, not a life peer; Kincaid-Smith did not command 4th Hussars until 1901—in 1897 he commanded one of the regiment’s squadrons.

I won’t prolong the agony, but such errors dent one’s confidence in the author’s ability to write accurate history. There! Having got that off my chest, I shall concede that these errors are peripheral to the theme of the work, which quickly restores one’s trust in what Coughlin has to tell us.

The Frontier is a wild place, both in terrain and the character of the population. Coughlin skilfully steers the reader through the mountainous region and the confusing medley of tribes—each distinctive, though from the same stock, united as Pashtuns and Pushto-speakers. An international frontier means nothing to them: many live in Afghanistan, adjacent to their cousins across the border.

The British, concerned over possible Russian infiltration into India, had adopted a “forward policy,” by which they aimed to intercept and deter such activity; their presence in tribal areas was thus considered necessary, even though it might conflict with tribal sensitivities. The forward policy meant that a permanent frontier between British India and Afghanistan must be imposed, but this created a serious problem in that some tribes were split, their villages being on one side of the border, their fields on the other. Created in 1893, this same line causes instability today.

Coughlin considers Churchill’s Malakand Field Force (1898) and My Early Life (1930), with books by other participants, so that a balanced view is achieved. He has even succeeded in exploring the region himself, which adds to the first-hand authenticity.

When Churchill arrived in August 1897, the war was fully in its stride. Confessing that he wanted to be noticed, he wrote: “I rode my grey pony all along the skirmish lines where everyone else was lying down in cover.” Exposed to very close-quarter fighting, Churchill concluded that the tribes were united by two bonds, Muslim faith and opposition to British control. He had no respect for the mullahs, who exploited the superstitious tribesmen; great respect for the tribes’ fighting prowess; and outrage over their habit of trading their womenfolk to buy rifles. He wrote of their “degradation of mind…unrelieved by a single elevated sentiment….It is impossible to imagine a lower type of beings or a more dreadful state of barbarism.”

The Malakand Field Force commander, General Sir Bindon Blood, wrote that the brigade commander to whom he had been attached praised Churchill’s courage and resolution, noting that “he made himself useful at a critical moment.” (It is interesting that after Churchill left India in 1899, he never returned.)

Coughlin appears to have broken new ground in comparing the 1897 tribesmen with the modern Taliban on both sides of the border. He notes that in 1897 British political officers would talk to the tribes, hoping to pre-empt rebellious activity. Contemporary NATO commanders, he writes, find that no matter how many Taliban fighters are killed, peace remains elusive so long as Coalition forces put more emphasis on fighting them than talking to them. Time will tell whether this is a fair judgment.

I was pleased to read in Coughlin’s conclusion one of Churchill’s most thought-provoking remarks, which deserves to be better known. It was not made in India in 1897, but in a newspaper article sent from South Africa in January 1900, after Churchill had encountered the site of a recent ambush with dead bodies strewn around: “Ah, horrible war, amazing medley of the glorious and the squalid, the pitiful and the sublime, if modern men of light and leading saw your face closer, simple folk would see it hardly ever.”

One of His Greatest Achievements

DAVID FREEMAN

Destiny in the Desert: The Road to El Alamein—The Battle That Turned the Tide of World War II, by Jonathan Dimbleby. Pegasus, 384 pp., $35, member price $28. Also available in a superb video.

On 13 September 1940, Mussolini ordered the Italian army across the border from the Italian colony of Libya into Egypt. The dictator’s son-in-law dryly noted, “Never has a military operation been undertaken so much against the will of the commanders.” Thus began the war in the Western Desert.

The BBC assigned correspondent Richard Dimbleby to cover the campaign. Over seventy years later his son >>
Jonathan, also a well-known broadcaster, has set down an engrossing account of the long, hard slog that unfolded in the brutal sands of North Africa. Churchill is its main character.

Inspired by his father’s experiences, Dimbleby set out to make sense for himself of the campaign that culminated with the Battle of El Alamein. So much has been written, by professionals and amateurs alike, that confusion and controversy cloud the story. What was it really all about? Was it necessary? Was anything meaningful accomplished? Was it of significance to the outcome? Dimbleby provides reasoned answers to these questions based on a thorough examination of many sources.

Setting the campaign in the wider context of the entire war, Dimbleby begins his story with Churchill coming to power and taking the decision to fight on at all costs. Thus, when Mussolini ordered a campaign to capture Egypt just as the Battle of Britain reached its climax, Churchill made the supremely important decision to commit substantial forces to the war in North Africa.

The Suez Canal formed the carotid artery of empire. Britain’s lifeline to Middle East oil, and to the manpower and resources from India and the Antipodes, had to be safeguarded or all was lost. These facts were not disputed within his government, but Churchill had to struggle for over two years to scrape together the necessary resources, many of which he knew would have to come from America. That Churchill accomplished this, Dimbleby concludes, was one of his greatest achievements in the war.

The story is told so as to keep the big picture in mind while relating the personal experience of those involved. The perspective of political warlords, military commanders, subordinate officers and common soldiers from all countries involved are woven into a pulsing narrative that keeps the reader eager to learn more.

Certainly this now stands as the most accessible account of the war in Libya and Egypt, and the best book for anyone new to the subject. Yet even those who are already familiar with the campaign will be impressed by Dimbleby’s multifaceted approach and sure handling of the facts.

A final note: the author’s father was recalled from Egypt by the BBC without explanation in the summer of 1942, a victim really of the kind of miscommunication that besets all wars. But Richard Dimbleby continued to have a distinguished broadcasting career. Indeed, the BBC thought him best suited to cover Churchill’s funeral.

As mourners passed by Churchill’s coffin in Westminster Hall, Dimbleby commented: “We shall never see Winston Churchill again, but we may do well to print this scene deep in our memories, for many will talk of him that are yet unborn.” And it was Dimbleby, too, who read, in a breaking voice, the valedictory poem “At Bladon,” as Churchill’s casket was lowered into the earth (back cover, Finaest Hour 152).

Churchill’s Speeches: The Dutch Experience

**JACK MENS**


May 10th, 1940 is of dual importance: this was the day Hitler launched his assault on France and the Low Countries, and the day Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of Great Britain. Hitler expected the Dutch, a Germanic race, to believe in and accept his New Order, and welcome them into their country. But only 1/2% of the population were members of the Dutch NSB Party (equivalent to the National Socialists). The rest hated the Nazis and all they stood for.

Harry van Wijnen (born 1937) served as parliamentary editor for the Amsterdam daily *Het Parool*, and editor of the prestigious *NRC Handelsblad*. He was also Professor of Media at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. His previous works include books on the Dutch press and monarchy and a biography of the Rotterdam tycoon D.G. van Beuringen.

As a boy, van Wijnen experienced the hardships of German occupation. Jews were forced out of government and academic positions. The feared Gestapo rounded up young men for forced labor in Germany. The media, newspapers and radio became German propaganda tools, and listening to the BBC was illegal. The regime tried to confiscate all radios, but about half of them went underground, hidden in attics and barns, so that Dutchmen at given times could tune in to London and Radio Orange, the proscribed Dutch Resistance program. To these furtive listeners, the speeches of Winston Churchill were an inspiration and hope.

Van Wijnen describes Churchill as they saw him from across the Channel, a titanic figure of calm and strength among the busy, nervous denizens of >>

Mr. Mens, of Frederick, Maryland, wrote “Churchill’s Visit to Holland, 1946,” on page 28.
‘Blood, Sweat and Tears’…

Whitehall. For a year, only Britain and the Empire stood between Germany and total victory, and in the center of it stood the embattled prime minister.

Van Wijnen, an admirer, is not without criticism. For example, he notes the outrage of Sir Hugh Dowding, chief of Fighter Command, when Churchill proposed to send sixty more fighter planes to France in late May 1940. Dowding argued that Britain would need every plane for home defense, and the War Cabinet supported him. According to Dowding’s biographer Robert Wright, it was the only time during the war that Churchill reversed a taken decision, and van Wijnen says the Prime Minister took this very hard.

But he does illustrate, through Dutch eyes, how Churchill’s leadership, energy and above all courage were able to unite the parties, the country and the allies. Many books have been written about this grim period. Van Wijnen, a scholar of England, combines a stirring “underground history” of wartime London with a fascinating view of Churchill during the crucial years 1940 and 1941. He explores Churchill’s radio speeches, and many archives and diaries from Britons both prominent and unknown, the source of the fighting mentality and resolve that determined them to destroy Nazism. He also focuses on the social aspect—what the bombing of the East End did to the poor, the enormous shortage of shelter and housing—while noting how the more affluent were able to leave London and find comfort in the countryside or even in Scotland.

Reading in my native Dutch, I found it hard to put this book down, enjoying the author’s skillful narration and his clear focus on Churchill. After the 1941 bombing and destruction of the House of Commons, for example, he writes of how Churchill personally ensured that the Commons chamber would be rebuilt just as it was, reflecting Parliament’s rich history.

The London Blitz destroyed much beside the Commons, but van Wijnen reflects on the cool demeanor of the British, writing of how Henry “Chips” Channon kept entertaining his guests even after the front of his mansion was blown away. The strength of the book is its lively storytelling. Van Wijnen deploys many eye-witnesses to describe people and events which bring the reader close to the tale. He quotes from the diaries and writings of people who lived in London to offer firsthand accounts of what their experiences were like. Among luminaries, he quotes Edward R. Murrow, the unflappable CBS reporter broadcasting in the midst of the bombing, with his laconic opening, “This is London”; of George Orwell in the Home Guard; of J.B. Priestley, the socialist broadcaster; of Vera Brittain, the pacifist author of Testament of Youth; of the famous diarists Harold Nicolson and John Colville. Together, they keep the story moving at a lively pace with color and diversity. The author has plenty to criticize, but that is to be expected in a balanced history. And after all, as the saying goes in Holland, “without Churchill we might all be speaking German.” This book is a fine addition to any Churchill book collection.

Letters for the Envious Young

Richard M. Langworth

Darling Monster: The Letters of Lady Diana Cooper to her Son John Julius Norwich 1939-1952, Chatto & Windus, 520pp., £12.99, available from Amazon UK.

Lady Diana Duff Cooper, “the most beautiful woman in England,” had a penetrating mind and brilliant pen, capable as few others of capturing a time, early last century, when women considered the world laden with opportunity for fulfillment. This she proved with her famous seven-year performance in Max Reinhardt’s The Miracle, her able collaboration with Duff Cooper’s ambassadorship to France, her notable trilogy of memoirs. Sir Alfred Duff Cooper was one of Churchill’s most stalwart friends and allies, serving loyally as his first wartime Minister of Information and then as his liaison to de Gaulle. The end of the war found him as Britain’s ambassador in Paris.

Now their son John Julius (Lord Norwich) has published Darling Monster, the letters to him from his mother. Many of Lady Diana’s letters offer wonderful and droll views of Churchill as she was so able to write them: 18 October 1940: “Papa [Duff] came home all right at about nine [after dining at Number 10], as Winston dines at seven in a little blue sort of workman’s overall suit. He looks exactly like the good pig who built his house of bricks.” 19 February 1941: “Great excitement last weekend. We went to Ditchley where Winston was staying….Winston does nearly all his work from his bed. It keeps him rested and young….We had two lovely films after dinner—one was called Escape and the other was a very light comedy called Quiet Wedding. There were also several short reels from Papa’s Ministry. Winston managed to cry through all of them, including the comedy.
9 January 1944: “There was our old baby in his rompers [boiler suit], ten-gallon cowboy hat and very ragged oriental dressing gown, health, vigour and excellent spirits.”

13 January 1944 (at a picnic): The Colonel [Churchill’s codename] is immediately sat on a comfortable chair, rugs are swathed round his legs and a pillow put on his lap to act as table, book-rest, etc. A rather alarming succession of whiskies and brandies go down….[Churchill then insisted on descending a gorge, and had to be heaved up with a rope.] Clemmie said nothing, but watched him with me like a lenient mother who does not wish to spoil her child’s fun.”

14 November 1944, Paris: The first night we dined…with the Duckling [WSC] at the Quai d’Orsay. It was rather boring. Clemmie was sleepy and Winston as difficult as he always is until the champagne has warmed him….but after the feast, in the Napoleon III salon, with English [Scotch!] whisky dropping on the exquisite Savonnerie carpet, his old magic took charge of us all as he heaved his slang and his pure English into a fantastic pattern.”

Lady Diana was a worldly woman who took no notice of Duff’s many affairs: “Why should I mind if they made him happy? I always knew: they were the flowers, I was the tree.” She left her son with practical advice (31 December 1957): “Drink less for your health and looks and charm’s sake, beware of unclean whores, love your mother and sleep deep.”

Her “Winston and Clementine,” first published in The Atlantic just after Sir Winston’s death, was unknown to her son, Lord Norwich, who graciously gave us permission to publish it as our cover story in Finest Hour 87, as fine a tribute to the Churchill marriage as we have ever read. If you don’t have that issue, search our website or email me for a copy. It is not a piece to be missed.

Diana and Duff were two bright lights of the Churchill era. It is a joy to read their correspondence in A Durable Fire: The Letters of Duff and Diana Cooper 1913-1950 (London and New York, 1983, edited by their granddaughter Artemis), if only to preserve such writing as this, Diana to Duff in the trenches, 1918:

“It is I that must read [our letters] to the envious young—hauntingly, exultantly—and when they hear yours they’ll dream well that night, and waking crave for such a mythical supreme lover and regret that they are born in the wrong age—as once I did before I saw your light, crying for Gods and wooers…”

Shortly after they met, Duff wrote to Diana: “Bores with God’s help we will never be.” They weren’t.

From the Badlands of the Internet?

ROBERT COURTS


Can any new Churchill quotation book justify shelf space? After over half a century of the genre, from the large (Czarnomski) to the tiny (Jarrold’s), from the reliable to the myth-perpetuators, the market is full. The elegant Sutcliffe volume is not a new book, last seen in Duckworth’s “Sayings” series in 1992. A step up from that rather workaday booklet, this is an attractive hardback with dustcover and clean design, but retains the original’s topical chapter headings.

It offers the familiar selection of quotes about people from speeches and published works, largely well-sourced and accurate. There is the odd mistake in attribution: “Young men have often been ruined through owning horses.” is from My Early Life not Great Contemporaries, whilst the archetypal red herring, “jaw-jaw is better than to war-war,”—Macmillan’s line on a similar theme from Churchill, makes its unabashed appearance. To the book’s credit, some of these dubious entries are marked “Attrib.”—such as, “a sheep in sheep’s clothing” which Churchill denied saying about Attlee.

But although the quotations are mainly correct, the book adopts the strange practice of attributing easily sourced entries to secondary sources. Churchill’s famous phrase “So we had won after all…” when recounting his reaction to Pearl Harbor, is easily found in The Second World War rather than in Piers Brendon’s short biography. This is unhelpful in a book of quotations, suggesting a lazy and slapdash approach on the part of the author that sits ill with the otherwise fairly accurate attribution.

Another of these is also misquoted: Churchill’s radio broadcast on the death of King George VI and accession of Queen Elizabeth II, which is sourced from Lewis Broad’s >>

Mr. Courts is a longtime contributor to Finest Hour and, as a member of the Bladon Parochial Church Council, assists in the maintenance of the Churchill gravesite (see page 57).
**Sayings and Wit...**

Winston Churchill. Perhaps Broad had it wrong, but we won’t repeat the mistake. What WSC actually said was: “I, whose youth was passed in the august, unchallenged and tranquil glories of the Victorian Era, may well feel a thrill in invoking, once more, the prayer and the Anthem, ‘God Save the Queen!”

Sutcliffe doesn’t fall for many misquotations from what I call “the Badlands of the Internet,” but he misses opportunities. The chapter on Lord Randolph Churchill has as its first entry: “A swiftly-fading shadow”—and no more—attributed to Violet Bonham-Carter. The attribution should be My Early Life, but more substantively, the quote on its own tells us nothing about either Winston or his father. It is neither a “saying” nor is it “essential.” Quoting the previous words would have told something of Winston’s filial angst; on its own it is meaningless, leaving the reader wondering whether this is a comment on Randolph’s character or career, or his son’s view of him.

It may be unfair to criticise this book for a flaw common to any quotation book, the limiting of excerpts; but the Churchill world does not lack for small quotation books, whilst there would be a market for a small book that tells you something a little different, with a little more insight, leaving the reader a little wiser.

Faults aside, this is an acceptable starter reference work, but it is difficult to raise much enthusiasm for a slim volume of quotations when, for only two or three pounds or dollars more, one can buy bigger, better, more reliable and more finely organized quotation books.

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At the novelty end of the scale is Edward Green’s A Little Bit of Churchill Wit, again from a series of the same name. The size of a playing card, it is aimed squarely at the casual reader, cutting out, as Green puts it, “the boring bits.” (Or the bits deemed boring by Mr. Green.)

The danger with novelty humour books is that they tend to the sensational without the “boring bits” of attribution or accuracy, relying a lot on the Internet Badlands. It is quite a collection of false trails: “the best argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter”… “a fanatic is one who won’t change his mind and won’t change the subject.” Then there are quotes repeated by Churchill but not his words: “the young sow wild oats, the old grow sage.” Just plain wrong is “I’d put poison in your coffee….I’d drink it,” the exchange between Nancy Astor and F.E. Smith.

It is pleasing for a small book to have obscure quotes attributed, such as: “The reason for having diplomatic relations is not to confer a compliment, but to secure a convenience,” (on recognising the People’s Republic of China, 17 November 1949). And the book does well to include, “golf is like chasing a quinine pill around a cow pasture,” eschewing the false one in which golf clubs are “singularly ill-designed for the purpose.”

It is easy for those well acquainted with “The Saga” to forget the value of an easily accessible book that requires little investment in terms of time. Why not introduce those who would not pick up larger books to such phrases as: “the inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries”? Or: “A nation trying to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handles”? Such are the clear, cool waters of Churchillian prose, explaining eternal concepts quickly and with panache.

This is not a book for the well initiated, but if you are looking for a bite-sized stocking filler for someone in the Playstation generation, it costs less than the price of a pint of beer. ®

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**Roars and Bleats, Imperialists and Europeans**

**PAUL ADDISON**


When Roosevelt asked one of his advisers who Churchill’s speechwriter was, he was told, “Mr President, he rolls his own.” After the revelation that parts of his war memoirs and much of his History of the English-Speaking Peoples was ghosted, I half expected Richard Toye to bring us the news that many of Churchill’s speeches were too, with Churchill adding the rhetorical flourish. Not so: he really did write them himself. He was brief, of course, by relevant government departments. If he spoke on foreign affairs, the Foreign Office would usually be asked to comment, though not if he was in the mood to slip some controversial statement past them. When he spoke on military matters,

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Professor Addison (University of Edinburgh) wrote the seminal _Churchill and the Home Front_ along with two highly praised brief lives of Sir Winston, and participated in the colloquium which produced the Churchill Centre book _Churchill as Peacemaker_ (1997). This review first appeared in _The Literary Review_.

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he did so as Minister of Defence, an office he combined with Prime Minister, in collaboration with the chiefs of staff. As a policymaker Churchill was never a one-man band, but the structure, style and rhetoric of his speeches were all his own.

Churchill had always depended on the force of his oratory to compensate for the mistrust he often inspired. Whenever his fortunes were at a low ebb, he could hope to restore them with a formidable display of debating power in the House of Commons. It did not always work. On several occasions during the 1930s the verbal artillery misfired and he was written off as a failure. Then came the war and the surprising discovery that his oratory was once again in demand. By the autumn of 1940 his mastery of the Commons was complete and his popularity soaring.

Toye is the first historian to explore the response to Churchill’s speeches in depth. He deals with reactions in the Commons as well as the popular reception. Much of what he writes about the former will be familiar to readers of the diaries of Harold Nicolson and Chips Channon. More original is the analysis of popular opinion, which is largely based on material generated by two main sources: Mass Observation and the Home Intelligence branch of the Ministry of Information.

The evidence, Toye claims, exposes a myth: “The conventional story—that Churchill’s oratory produced unanimous or near unanimous rapture—is therefore unsatisfactory.” Some speeches, he argues, were a bit of a flop. Others gave rise to anxiety or disappointment. Critics and dissenters were more numerous than previously thought. Some disliked Churchill as a warmonger. Others thought his language vulgar, or denounced him as a showman or dictator. His speech impediment (and, sometimes, his irritability with having to rebroadcast what he had delivered with greater effect in the Commons), led some to think he was drunk at the microphone.

All this has long been documented, but does it add up to a radical revision? The answer is that much depends on the expectations readers bring to the subject. The myth as Toye defines it is essentially the myth of Britain’s finest hour, conflated in popular memory with the rest of the war years. Doubtless there are still corners of the English psyche where the qualifications introduced by Toye come as something of a shock. But for anyone with a more realistic sense of the past, his findings are much in line with what they might have expected.

For decades now historians have been revising the history of the home front to free it from the legacies of wartime propaganda and postwar nostalgia. Of course there were sceptics and dissenters. They were as much a part of the social fabric as the suet puddings and old maids of Orwell’s “The Lion and the Unicorn.” But is there any reason to doubt the impact of Churchill on mainstream opinion?

Between July 1940 and May 1945 Churchill’s approval rating in the monthly Gallup Polls never fell below 78%. Toye tries to chip away at the figures. Polling, he writes, was still in its infancy; social pressures may have dictated a “patriotic” response.

Yet Toye himself quotes Mass Observation as reporting in November 1942 that Churchill’s normal approval rating was around 80%, which tends to corroborate Gallup. M.O. maintained that his popularity was much lower at times than Gallup indicated, but also that it soon returned to its normal level.

There is another case to be made in Gallup’s favour. From 1943 onwards, at the same time as they were monitoring Churchill’s approval ratings, Gallup were predicting a Labour victory at the next general election. Voters, in other words, were quite capable of distinguishing between Churchill’s qualities as a war leader and his limitations as a peace-time politician and leader of the Tory Party. Much of the evidence Toye presents actually tends to confirm the breadth, depth and durability of the esteem in which Churchill was held.

Revisionist claims are well worth airing, but the main strength of _The Roar of the Lion_ lies elsewhere—in its patiently researched micro-histories of the speeches. Toye pinpoints the contexts in which they were written, the calculations that lay behind them, and their reception not just at home but also overseas. It is easy to forget that Churchill was addressing enemies and neutrals as well as allies and the British public. When he spoke of Britain’s relations with the United States and the Soviet Union he was dancing on eggshells. As Toye reflects, Churchill is often regarded as a hothead. But his speeches reveal the cool, calculating statecraft of a propagandist more subtle than Goebbels.


The British people, generally speaking, were fighting in defence of their own country. Their aim was to beat the Nazis and return to a quiet life. For Churchill himself the aim was larger and more elevated: the preservation of Britain’s empire and the Great Power status it conferred. He was, and always had been, a passionate imperialist, a rich biographical theme >>
POEMS CHURCHILL LOVED
St. Crispin’s Day

This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say “To-morrow is Saint Crispian”:
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say “These wounds I had on Crispin’s day.”

Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he’ll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember’d.

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember’d;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.

—Henry V, William Shakespeare
In October 2012, my wife and I visited Gibraltar, the famous rock at the entrance to the Mediterranean, British since 1713. We looked forward to seeing the legendary Gibraltar apes, about which I had read so much. Seeing the monkeys up close on a sunny autumn day was a magnificent experience. The handsome macaques were on the rocks overlooking the strait that separates Gibraltar from Morocco in Africa. We were impressed that they were friendly and cute. The macaques were inquisitive and liked food, as witnessed by one jumping and grabbing a bag of popcorn from a tourist. Another one had no reservations about climbing inside a tour bus, presumably also foraging. Most impressive was their large, prospering population, which would have been a relief to Winston Churchill.

On 2 September 1944, the Prime Minister sent a directive to the Colonial Secretary: “The establishment of the apes on Gibraltar should be twenty-four, and every effort should be made to reach this number as soon as possible and maintain it thereafter.” —WSC.

Admiral George Rooke took Gibraltar for England in 1704, when he led an Anglo-Dutch force in the War of the Spanish Succession. The Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 ceded Gibraltar to the British Crown in perpetuity. An important Royal Navy base, Gibraltar is on the southern end of the Iberian Peninsula at the entrance to the Mediterranean.

What are commonly called Barbary apes live on the upper Rock. However, they are not apes but macaques (Macaca sylvanus), or tailless monkeys. Where the original Gibraltar macaques came from has been a longtime mystery. Some scientists think they were brought from Algeria and Morocco as pets by the >>

Mr. Glueckstein is a frequent FH contributor. This article expands on our first story about the Gibraltar Macaques in Finest Hour 125, Winter 2004-05.
Moors, who occupied Spain between 711 and 1492. Others believe they were a remnant of macaques that lived throughout Southern Europe 5.5 million years ago and as recently as the 1800s in Spain. Some believe that the colony, also called “rock monkeys,” goes back to the animals introduced by the British in 1740 for shooting practice.

After Britain took control of the Rock, a belief emerged that Gibraltar would remain under British rule for as long as the Barbary apes were still there: when the apes leave the Rock, so too will the British. In the 20th Century, concern about the legend was witnessed in 1913 when the apes had dwindled to only ten. The governor of Gibraltar, Sir Alexander Godley, quickly brought eight young female apes from North Africa.

That same year saw the apes incorporated in the Gibraltar fortress’s military establishment, which was given responsibility for their feeding and care. The army accounted for apes in military fashion, and the records contain rather amusing entries:

Fortress Orders (Restricted) No. 225—reference Fortress Order No. 216 Rock Apes, birth: “The sex of the apelet has now been ascertained as male. He has been given the name Roy. (FHQ-GIB/313/A).”

The Army appointed a non-commissioned officer from the Gibraltar Regiment as officer-in-charge of the Apes, to supervise their welfare and a food allowance of fruit, vegetables and nuts, all carefully included in the budget. Much of his duties and responsibilities is known from Sgt. Alfred Holmes, who held the position for over thirty-eight years. Holmes knew all of them by the names he had given them, mostly taken after governors, brigadiers, and high-ranking officers as well as their children. If any young monkeys were orphaned he would take them to his wife to rear them at home. Sick or injured monkeys he took to the Royal Naval Hospital where they would receive the same level of care as enlisted soldiers.

Churchill, who had visited Gibraltar, was keenly aware of the legend. During the early days of the Second World War, learning that the ape population was down to seven, he gave instructions to have five females brought in quickly from Morocco, named Daisy, Beatrice, Jane, Kathleen, and Madeline. In September 1944, Churchill followed up with a directive to maintain the population at twenty-four. To carry out his instructions, a troop transport was dispatched to North Africa and additional apes were brought to Gibraltar.

Churchill’s determination to prevent the apes from disappearing from the Rock was not altogether superstitious. He knew that the apes had become symbolically important to British morale; their disappearance might demoralize the populace, many of whom had been evacuated with possibility of an attack by Germany. Certainly also, Churchill’s love of animals played a part.

In later years, Churchill’s interest in the apes received frequent attention by officials in Gibraltar and even in Parliament. In a letter dated 30 October 1952 the governor, Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon M.A. Macmillan, wrote to his brother-in-law, Lt. Col. Michael Hughes-Young: “Shortly after I arrived here in May 1952, the Prime Minister was attacked in the House of Commons on the grounds that the army was being extravagant in employing no less than six soldiers to ‘look after Monkeys.’ This, of course, was monstrously untrue and I was able to refute the accusation completely in a letter which I sent to the Adjutant-General on the 28th May 1952.”

Macmillan added that ape population had reached forty-nine, “greater than is desirable because if they are too numerous they are liable to stray into town and become a nuisance. I
am therefore in the process of offering a few to zoos and private individuals who might like them.”

It must be assumed that Churchill was informed by the governor that the ape population was being reduced for this reason. On 6 November 1952, Hughes-Young sent Jo Sturdee, Churchill’s private secretary, photographs from his brother-in-law the governor: “I think you are the right person to deal with this, and if it is not a matter of interest, perhaps you would return the correspondence and photographs to me.” Churchill wrote on the letter to Sturdee: “Write a nice letter which I will sign. I am most interested.”

In 1954, H.M. the Queen visited Gibraltar. Time magazine reported that the Ape pack numbered forty, and that “one among them, an amiable grey coated fellow named Winston, was easily the most popular ape…proud Winston was granted an official audience with Prince Charles and Princess Anne.”

Alas, in early December 1955, Winston, who was never late for meals, failed to come to eat. A search party was organized to comb every crevice and called for him loudly by name. Winston was not found. In late January, officials issued a sad bulletin: “Rock ape Winston has been missing since ninth December and must now be presumed dead. He is, accordingly, struck off the strength of the fortress from that date.” It is not known if Winston’s fate was confided to the Royal Family or the recently retired prime minister. In 1960, Churchill, on a Mediterranean cruise with his friend Aristotle Onassis, stopped in Gibraltar to visit the apes.

Seven years later, according to documents released at the National Archives in Kew, the ape population was again declining, and there was an imbalance of males and females: the Middle Hill clan had too few males and the Queen’s Gate group too few females. During a time of political concern with Spain over their claim to Gibraltar, Saville Garner, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Commonwealth Relations Office, swiftly sent Gibraltar’s Governor, Sir Gerald Lathbury, a telegram:

“We’re a little bit perturbed about the apes, After studying their sizes and their shapes. As we see it, at first glance There seems at least some chance Of lesbianism, or sodomy, or rapes. Nine girls of Middle Hill may well decide They can’t by five mere males be satisfied. While the Queen’s Gate lads, one fears, May become a bunch of queers If by sex imbalance nature is denied. So can you plan migration? Or get up A party for the apes who feel Het up. A welfare state for apes has been decreed Where each of them is mated (and de-flead) Then let Franco rage in vain, Your immunity from Spain Is by simian eugenics Guaranteed.”

Sir Gerald calmed Sir Saville’s fears by replying in like fashion:

So long as we have Joe (Born at Queen’s Gate in fifty-eight) No female ape need pine Or lesbian-ate. And of course there’s Harold too, And Hercules of Middle Hill Though comparatively new He knows a thing or two.

Sir Gerald proved right: “A few years later, the Queens Gate group had heard pitter patter of tiny monkey feet and welcomed Jimmy, Roger and Bob to the clan. Middle Hill put out the pink bunting for Sybil, Olga, Marie-Claire and Rosemary, named after the wife of the new governor, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Varyl Begg.”

British military authorities cared for the apes until July 1992, when the government took over their care. The monkeys are currently managed by the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society. In 2005, the mystery of where the apes Churchill had ordered to Gibraltar came from was finally solved. According to research detailed in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers had analyzed the Gibraltar monkeys’ DNA and learned that they were descended from macaques in both Algeria and Morocco.

Today, the famous Barbary Macaque population in Gibraltar is the only one on the whole of the European continent. Churchill would be pleased to know that the apes still thrive. They are greatly enjoyed by visitors whom they freely approach and sometimes climb onto. Most importantly Sir Winston would be pleased at their numbers: some 230 to 240 live in six packs ranging between 25 and 70 animals. Certainly, Churchill would approve of such a number, ensuring that the Gibraltar’s loss is still not in prospect—as long as the apes have anything to do with it.

### Endnotes

4. Ibid.
5. Alfred Holmes (1931-1994), a Gibraltar-born sergeant in the Gibraltar Regiment, held the position of Officer-in-Charge of the Apes from 1954 to 1992. His knowledge and experience was invaluable to researchers. Without his attention the 250-year tradition would be far more obscure.
6. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
thought my analysis of scarce issues of Churchill’s first book, The Story of the Malakand Field Force (FH 141), had covered the waterfront until Marc Kuritz showed me another anomaly. Marc had a copy “ostensibly of a Silver Library edition, but the title page doesn’t match any Silver Library edition.” He added that the volume included an errata slip—odd, since the purpose of this edition was to correct first edition errata. Why an errata slip at all?

Curiouser and curiouser, Marc’s errata slip was not the domestic but the more obscure Indian version. Finally, the book included a Longmans Green catalogue dated 12/97, rather than the later (expected) 3/98 catalogue.

What, he asked, were we facing?

It took some sleuthing to identify and date this anomalous and surely one-of-a-kind copy.

Its length, the title page and paper gave it away. At 335 printed pages, this was the same length as the first edition. The Silver Library (second) edition, with all its revisions, was 337 printed pages. The title page was identical to that of the first edition, down to the name of the author, Winston L. Spencer Churchill. (The “L.” was dropped on the Silver Library title page.) Among other changes, the printed sheets were on thicker wove, not thinner laid, paper. Both the Colonial Library issue of the first edition and the Silver Library edition were printed on laid paper.

Clearly, the inside of the book was a set of first edition sheets. Why then a Silver Library case (which also differed in small respects from the final second edition cases)?

I believe that the publisher was planning the new edition and working on the design of the new binding. Remember that the second edition succeeded the first in only nine months. Longmans was seeking an entirely new look for the book, the first edition of which contained an embarrassment of errors, and the new sheets were not ready. So they used the sheets at hand—namely, the original, faulty edition.

Why then the errata slip and the catalogue? I think the binder picked up each of the pieces that he expected matter of which date; all he needed was a catalogue).

I concluded that this book was a publisher’s dummy—not a traveller’s or salesman’s dummy to take on the road, but rather an in-house model that would enable decisions to be made about the ultimate appearance of the Silver Library volume.

What about the date? I think the book was made sometime between May and October 1898—not before April, when there were no errata slips; they were printed either in the second or third week of April. The presence of an Indian errata slip suggests that time had elapsed after printing, since the slip would have had to get from the sub-continent to London, which is why I suggest no earlier than May.

It was likely no later than October, since that was the date when the transfer of sheets from the domestic issue to the Colonial Library occurred. Moreover, since the Silver Library was being planned (it was published on 1 January 1899), it would likely have been at least a few months before the production process was initiated.

Since the catalogue included was an earlier one (12/97), this book was presumably assembled at a relatively early date in the May-October period, when copies of the 12/97 catalogue had not yet been totally exhausted.

A curiosity, to be sure, this is likely to be one-of-a-kind—the kind of piece that keeps collectors vigilant. ☞

Mr. Cohen received The Churchill Centre’s Farrow Award for his Bibliography of the Writings of Sir Winston Churchill (2006). The author of our Bibliography column, he is co-founder and president of the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Ottawa and a senior fellow on the faculty of Public Affairs, Carleton University.
Bladon Today

Sir Winston Lies Where He Wished, in a Visual Reminder of the Long Continuity of History

Bladon, near Woodstock, is a quiet Oxfordshire village with a lot of visitors. The Parochial Church Council and the Churchill family together ensure those who come to pay their respects to Sir Winston find a gravesite that is dignified. Every now and again, one sees ill-informed speculation on the Internet that suggests the grave is in a poor condition. It is fitting therefore that an update on its condition be made for those who are not able to visit in person.

Bladon is a typical English country churchyard, and in fact it is closed to new burials. The gravestones and memorials are old, in many cases considerably exceeding 100 years, and the stones are well weathered, with substantial growth of lichen. The scene is one of gentle weathering; of monuments that are in keeping with a church some 150 years old, in a place where a church has existed in one form or another since medieval times.

The exception to this is the Churchill family plot, which is of more formal presentation, “paved” and more neatly maintained by the Churchill family and the Parochial Church Council. Sir Winston’s plot was thoroughly cleaned and restored in 2006. It remains clean and tidy today, although a routine cleaning will shortly take place to remove slight lichen growth, and, like the surrounding graves, some small grass growth in the paving. The Churchill plot is perfectly in keeping with its surroundings: it is not gleaming white, nor is it a picture of decay. It fits in with the surrounding family plots, with their traditional stone and gentle weathering. Sir Winston and Lady Churchill lie where they wished, in a traditional English churchyard, a plot that is a visual reminder of the long continuity of history.

ROBERT COURTS

Bladon is a typical English country churchyard, and in fact it is closed to new burials. The gravestones and memorials are old, in many cases considerably exceeding 100 years, and the stones are well weathered, with substantial growth of lichen. The scene is

Mr. Courts, a longtime member of the Churchill Centre UK, is also a member of the St. Martin’s Parochial Church Council in Bladon.
The result of the First World War was a redrawing of the map of continental Europe. The United States entering the war had been, in Churchill’s words, decisive in the defeat of Germany, and Canada emerged as an independent power in her own right.

When King George V had declared war in 1914 Canada was automatically at war. However as R.H. Thomson recounted this morning, the country lost 68,000 in the war from a population of just eight million, and at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Canada’s Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, insisted that Canada should sign separately from Britain.

This first gesture of Canadian independence was followed by a second, three years later. Turkey, a German ally in the war, had signed a separate treaty which abolished the Ottoman Empire. But a charismatic and brilliant military leader, Mustafa Kemel, “Ataturk,” led resistance to the Treaty, formed a provisional government and in 1922 routed the occupying Greeks from Turkish soil.

Kemel’s troops then marched on the small British contingent stationed in the town of Chanak on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles.

Canada’s newly elected prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, was about to go into the temple of peace at Sharon, north of Toronto, when he was confronted by a Toronto Star reporter who asked him about Britain’s request that Canada join a military action against the Turks. King knew nothing about it but diplomatically replied that any representation from Britain would be
addressed by the Canadian Cabinet when he returned to Ottawa. There he was given a cable from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill, sent via the normal time-wasting route through the Governor General. King replied to Churchill that the request would have to be addressed by the Canadian Parliament, which would require the recalling of the Members, and this would take some time. Actually King had no intention of recalling Parliament, knowing the public “were in no mood for further blood letting.”

Churchill was not satisfied with the response and a follow-up came from the Prime Minister himself, David Lloyd George, who wrote that “the attitude of Canada is most important: a definite statement that Canada will stand by the Empire will do much to ensure the maintenance of peace.” Eventually Chanak was settled without military intervention, and without a Canadian decision on the request Canada had received.

Interestingly, Churchill in his book The Aftermath stretched the truth by writing: “Nevertheless all the Dominions responded to the call and declared their readiness, if a great emergency arose, to bear their part, subject of course to the consent of their Parliaments.”

Mackenzie King was a strong Anglophile, but he was suspicious that the British were determined that Canada should continue in a subservient position. Two years later in 1923 he would encounter further evidence. At an Imperial Conference in London the autocratic British foreign minister, Lord Curzon, proposed “that the Foreign Minister of Britain, when he speaks, may speak not for Britain alone, but for the whole of the British Empire.” Australia and New Zealand supported the motion, since they looked to Britain for protection; Canada did not. King stated that any policy would be decided by the Canadian Parliament.

King won that round and in the next conference in 1926 he put forward a motion, recalling the Chanak request, that all communications between Britain and a Dominion government would come direct and not through the Governor General. This was adopted. Further progress in Canada’s independence was the appointment in 1927 of its first minister to the United States.

Churchill was not in favour of watering down the ties of the dominions to the mother country. But the subsequent Treaty of Westminster stated that the dominions were “autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status and in no way subordinate one to another, in any respect.” Churchill actually voted for that legislation, but his comments in the House of Commons, showed his disappointment: “If large numbers of our fellow-subjects in the Dominions like to think, and like to see it in print, that the bonds of Empire rest only upon tradition, good will and good sense, it is not our policy—except as I shall hereafter mention—it is not our policy or our interest to gainsay them.”

Canadian ears may have pricked at the exception, but he quickly explained: “Canada, for instance, stipulates that nothing in this Act shall be deemed to apply to the repeal, amendment, or alteration of the various British North America Acts from 1867 to 1930....They assert the inviolability, so far as they are concerned, of the Imperial Statutes upon which their houses are founded.”

Fair enough, most probably concluded: but with the Treaty of Westminster, Canada had political independence and the 1930s would see the country move closer to the United States, which supplanted Britain as her largest trading partner.

Churchill’s political career was in the ascendency in the mid-1920s, when he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, a position he held for almost five years. But he received a setback in May 1929, when the Conservative Party lost in a general election. Churchill won his own seat in Epping, but he was now out of office. He took advantage of what he hoped would be a brief lull in his upward trajectory by embarking on a journey to Canada and the United States with his son Randolph, brother Jack and nephew Johnny.

The Canadian Pacific Railway offered a special rail car for their use when travelling across the country, and Churchill received a great reception at all his stops. He wrote to his wife of “the immense size of this country which goes on for thousands of miles of good fertile land, well watered, well wooded, unlimited in possibilities. How silly for people to live crowded up in particular parts of the empire, when there is so much larger and better a life open here for millions.”

He spoke in Montreal and Ottawa and on 16 August 1929 arrived in Toronto, to speak—here in the Royal York Hotel, which had only been >>
open for two months and at that time was the tallest building in the British Empire.

The Toronto Star reported that well before his speech, long queues formed outside the hall, with a further 3000 listening by way of loudspeakers placed outside the hotel: “He roused his vast audience to applause as he spoke of the ties of love that bind the overseas dominions to the Motherland.”

Churchill continued his journey across the country. From the Banff Springs Hotel he wrote to Clementine: “Darling I am greatly attracted to this country. Immense developments are going forward. There are fortunes to be made in many directions. The tide is flowing strongly. I have made up my mind that if Neville Chamberlain is made leader of the Conservative Party or anyone else of that kind, I clear out of politics and see if I can make you and the kittens a little more comfortable before I die. Only one goal attracts me [he meant of course the premiership] and if that were barred I should quit the dreary field for pastures new....However the time to take decision is not yet.”

Was Churchill serious? If he was, he had ample reasons to emigrate in the years ahead.

After speaking in Vancouver, Churchill’s Canadian journey ended. His son Randolph wrote in his diary, “We are now on a ship bound for Seattle: American soil and Prohibition. But we are well equipped. My big flask is full of whisky and the little one contains brandy, and I have reserves of both in medicine bottles.” The trip concluded with a week in New York City, which coincided with the Wall Street Crash; Churchill opined incorrectly that this was a passing episode.

When he returned to Britain he was faced with a situation which he could not accept: dominion status for India. This was put forward by the ruling Labour Party and supported by the official Conservative opposition. Churchill’s strong stance against the plan led to him being stripped of his position as Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer; and thus the start of his so-called Wilderness Years.

In the 1920s Churchill stated that the foremost enemy facing the English-speaking peoples was the Soviet Union and communism. Shortly into the next decade he changed his opinion, the foremost enemy now being Germany and fascism. Churchill became a lone voice with his demands for increased military spending and a tougher attitude by the British government. In 1934 he told the House of Commons: “I dread the day when the means of threatening the heart of the British Empire should pass into the hands of the present rulers of Germany....I dread that day, but it is not perhaps, far distant.”

In October 1936 in London, Mackenzie King sat next to Churchill at a dinner and was told, as he recorded, that “England was never in greater danger and it was possible that inside five years Britain would be a vassal state of Germany.” The following month Churchill berated the government in the Commons: “Thus they go in a strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.”

In May 1937, when Mackenzie King was in England for the coronation of King George VI, he met with the German Ambassador to Britain, Herr von Ribbentrop, who suggested that King go to Berlin to meet Hitler. This was duly arranged and the two met on June 29th.

King’s diary of the meeting makes fascinating reading. Hitler, he wrote, went to great lengths to show he was a man of peace. “We have no desire for war,” Hitler told King: “our people don’t want war and we don’t want war. Remember that I, myself, have been through a war. We know what a terrible thing war is, and not one of us wants to see another war.”

As we now know, Hitler was not being entirely dishonest—as long as he got what he wanted, there would indeed be no war. While King was obviously impressed with Hitler, to his credit he did state that if war came, Canada would be at Britain’s side.

On 12 March 1938 Churchill met with von Ribbentrop. The occasion was a formal luncheon given by the British government for the German ambassador. Churchill was surprised to be invited, but, as he said to someone at the function, “I suppose they invited me to show him that if they couldn’t bark themselves, they kept a dog who could bark and might bite.”

At the same function Ribbentrop is reported to have said to Churchill: “Don’t forget that if there is a war we will have the Italians on our side.” This elicited WSC’s alleged response (not proven) recalling World War I: “It is only fair. We had them last time.” We do know Churchill warned Ribbentrop that if Germany should plunge the
globe into war, Britain would “bring the whole world against you, like last time.”

In his earlier civil service and political life Mackenzie King had made his reputation in negotiating and settling labour disputes, and he strongly supported the Appeasement policy of Neville Chamberlain. In September-October 1938, when Chamberlain flew to see Hitler and signed the infamous Munich Agreement, King recorded in his diary: “It is well for Chamberlain that he was born into this world, and for the world he was born into. His name will go down in history as one of the greatest men who ever lived—a great conciliator.”

One British politician who took another view was Churchill, declaring in the House of Commons: “The German dictator, instead of snatching his victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course....And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigour, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time.”

Churchill’s predictions of Germany’s unappeased further ambitions came true six months later, when in March 1939 German troops occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Looking back at this time, it seems to many that Chamberlain, then realizing that his appeasement policy had failed, would have resigned. But there was little pressure on him to do so. He was still widely trusted, supported by a vast majority in Parliament. He had—which is little remembered—begun to rearm, at a much faster pace than Britain before the Great War. And when on 31 March 1939 he announced that Britain had guaranteed Polish independence, this was applauded from every quarter, including Winston Churchill. Most didn’t notice that Poland was far less defensible and supportable than the Czechs of 1938, who at least had had a strong fortress line, a powerful modern military machine and a potent armaments industry.

Chamberlain considered bringing Churchill back into the government but as he wrote to his sister, the benefits to having Churchill on the front bench would be outweighed by the damage he could do in the Cabinet itself, where he would wear down Chamberlain with “rash suggestions.” And Chamberlain was no mean politician; even with the darkening scene, he knew he had strong control. Bringing in potential rivals such as Churchill and also Anthony Eden could only serve to weaken it.

On 20 April 1939 Churchill spoke at a Canada Club dinner in London for former Canadian Prime Minister R.B. Bennett. Churchill said: “We all hope for a peaceful outcome, but everyone can see that danger is afoot. It may not be long before the British Empire will have, once again, to marshal and reveal its latent strength.”

As he had observed in the First World War the importance of a close relationship with the United States was essential for the European democracies, and Canada was the key, as Churchill continued: “Canada has a great part to play in the relations of Great Britain and the United States. She spans the Atlantic Ocean with her loyalties; she claps the American hand with her faith and goodwill. That long frontier from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans, guarded only by neighbourly respect and honourable obligations, is an example to every country and a pattern for the future of the world.”

Canada had grown steadily closer to the United States, economically and also culturally. However the attitude of the vast majority of the population to the Mother Country had not changed. Except in the province of Quebec the people were strongly attached to Britain and the Imperial Crown.

This attachment became even stronger in May 1939, when, in spite of war clouds gathering, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth kept a previous commitment, arriving for a royal tour of Canada. It was a great success and augmented the ties of Canada to Britain.

When Britain declared war on 3 September 1939, there was a short debate in the Canadian Parliament, with Prime Minister King, speaking of the task ahead, uttering Churchillian phrases:

“When it comes to a fight between good and evil, when the evil forces of the world are let loose upon mankind, are those of us who believe in the tenets of Christianity, and all that Christianity means, going to allow evil forces to triumph without, if necessary, opposing them by our very lives?” With almost unanimous support in Parliament, Canada was once more at war at Great Britain’s side.
Each quiz offers questions in six categories: Churchill contemporaries (C), literary matters (L), miscellaneous (M), personal details (P), statesmanship (S) and war (W), the easier questions first. Can you reach Level 1?

LEVEL 4

1. To whom in 1924 did Churchill think of asking, “Will the bloody duck swim?” (Actually he said: “This fulfils my ambition. I still have my father’s robe… I shall be proud to serve you in this splendid office.”) (M)

2. “I was met on the quay by… a great friend of my American relations, who had most kindly undertaken to look after me…” Who met Winston in New York in 1895? (C)

3. “Our long months of preparation and planning for the greatest amphibious operation in history ended on D Day” are the first words in which of Churchill’s books? (L)

4. Which country did Churchill say in 1937 was “being eaten by Japan like an artichoke, leaf by leaf”? (W)

5. Where did Churchill, in a speech of thanks, say: “It was a nation and race dwelling all round the globe that had the lion heart. I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar”? (S)

6. Recalling 10 May 1940, WSC wrote: “It only takes two minutes to drive there from the Admiralty along the Mall.” Where was “there”? (S)

LEVEL 3

7. For which book did Churchill receive the Sunday Times Literary Award in 1938? (L)

8. What word did Churchill write in the Visitors’ Book when he left Chequers following his defeat in the July 1945 general election? (P)


10. Did young Winston ever consider trying for Oxford University? (P)

11. Which Churchill private secretary declined a CBE in 1965, later writing: “I am not companionable, and there is no British Empire”?

LEVEL 2

13. WSC in the House, 12 March 1931: “When — went to the seashore a year ago [in India] to make salt he was not looking for salt, he was looking for trouble.” Fill the blank. (M)

14. Who used to end his letters to Churchill, “Yours to a cinder,” “Yours till Hell freezes,” or “Yours till charcoal sprouts”? (C)

15. Which turning point in the Second World War did Churchill refer to as the First Climacteric? (W)

16. Which turning point in the Second World War did WSC refer to as the Fourth Climacteric? (W)

17. On his 62nd birthday, 1936, what prompted WSC to remark: “This is the end of an age”? (M)

18. Noel Coward visited Chequers twice during the Second World War. Which of his songs was he asked to perform on both occasions? (M)

LEVEL 1

19. When Clementine asked her husband to hurry so as not to miss the train, he usually replied: “I’ve never missed a train in my life.” How did his wife usually respond? (P)

20. What is the title of the World Crisis volume which Churchill describes in his Preface as “…unhappily for the most part a chronicle of misfortune and tragedy”? (L)

21. Why did Churchill call the 9th Duke of Marlborough “Sunny”? (P)

22. Which newspaper proprietor supplied Churchill with a box of excellent cigars every Christmas in the 1920s and 1930s? (M)

23. Once Churchill arrived early at Cherkley, the home of Lord Beaverbrook, whose doorman said: “Good morning, Sir Winston. My Lord is in the garden.” How did Churchill respond? (C)

24. Which Churchill wrote “The Farewell” in 1764, including the lines: “Be England what she will With all her faults, she is my country still”? (L)
Sit down with a cuppa and have a squiz at our display of number 8 wire ingenuity as we skite about New Zealand.

The nation of New Zealand is:
• a proudly independent parliamentary democracy
• two main islands: South Island ("the Mainland") and North Island; along with many small islands
• one of the last places settled by humans, 1250-1300 AD
• in Maori, Aotearoa ("land of the long white cloud")
• a boohai place: 1500km (900m) east of Australia, 1000km (600mi) south of Fiji, 10,500km (6200m) from Los Angeles
• mountainous, owing to tectonic uplift and volcanoes

Which explains why:
• only 2% of the land is arable (USA is 19%, UK 25%)
• time is +12 hours on London, +17 on New York
• most of the 4.5 million people live in urban areas near the coast; nowhere is more than 130km from the sea

Roughly the size of the UK at 269,000 sq-km (103,000 sq-mi), N.Z. has only 16 people per sq-km (UK 255, USA 32). Thus:
• there are seven times as many sheep as people
• N.Z. leads the world in exports of mutton and lamb
• tourism is the #2 generator of foreign exchange
• New Zealanders and Australians fought in the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps. ANZAC Day is April 25th.

ELSEWHERE ARE ROCKS, NOT JUST ANY ROCKS BUT:
• Mt. Cook (Aoraki), the highest at 3754m (12,300ft)
• a lot of gold and coal, and vast offshore resources
• unique fauna, notably the kiwi, a flightless bird symbolic of New Zealanders; and the now-extinct moa

In statistical terms, Kiwis have it better than most:
• per capita income US$27,500, among the world's highest
• debt per capita, at US$16,000 (Canada is $18,000, Britain $28,000, USA $54,000), is among the world's lowest
• life expectancy (men 79, women 83) among the highest
• the New Zealand dollar (US 85¢, UK 52p) is one of the world's most stable currencies
• all eight universities are in the world's top 500
• 0.1% of earth's population produces 0.3% of its goods

Small wonder that New Zealand ranks:
• fifth on the Legatum Prosperity Index, #1 in economy
• third on the U.N. Human Development Index
• high in humour: 1980s Prime Minister Muldoon was asked about New Zealanders leaving to work in Australia; he said they were raising the average IQ of both countries
• prominent in sailing: Team New Zealand competed in the 2013 America's Cup in San Francisco
• big on rugby, the national sport, cricket, tennis, soccer
• important for the film industry: The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit were filmed here
• significant in achievers, including Sir Edmund Hillary (first to climb Mt. Everest); Sir Keith Park (Battle of Britain hero); Charles Upham (the only double VC winner in WW2); Nancy Wake (the Gestapo's most-wanted person and Allies' most-decorated servicewoman); Dame Kiri Te Kanawa (opera singer); and Katherine Mansfield (writer)

• diverse in amusements: Kiwis enjoy Footrot Flats (a cartoon of rural life), bungy jumping, and the "Haka," a Maori ceremonial war-dance performed before rugby games

The Head of State is Queen Elizabeth II. The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, signed with over 500 Maori chiefs, is N.Z.'s founding document. Waitangi Day is Feb. 6th. In 1893, New Zealand became the first country to give the vote to women, who now comprise 34% of Parliament, and there have been two woman prime ministers. New Zealander Sir Ernest Rutherford was the "father of nuclear physics," but N.Z. banned nuclear plants and weapons in 1987. New Zealanders and Australians fought in the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps. ANZAC Day is April 25th.

Only a wally would think this land is less than grouse, so shout them a handle, mate, and they'll think you're a bit of a dag.

HOW TO SPEAK KIWI
Bach—holiday home, North Island
Bit of a dag—all right; a good joker
Bludge—to sponge off others
Boohai—out of the way or non-existent place
Chilly bin—picnic cooler
Crib—holiday home, South Island
Cuppa—cup of tea
Ditch—the Tasman Sea, between N.Z. and Australia
Dreaded lurgy—cold or flu
Footpath—sidewalk or pavement
Greasies—fish and chips
Grouse—fine, excellent
Handle—pint of beer
Hard case—joker, funny person
Home and hosed—successfully completed
Hosing down—raining heavily
Jandals—flip-flops
Ka pai—good job (Maori origin)
Number 8 wire—Kiwi ingenuity
Ocker—Australian
Pakeha—non-Maori person
Pohutukawa—New Zealand Christmas tree
Scarfie—university student
Shout—buy a round of drinks
Skite—brag, show off
Squiz—a look ("have a squiz")
Smoko—break or rest period
Sooky—silly, scared
Spit the dummy—throw a tantrum
Sprog—child
Stuffed—really tired
T ogs—bathing suit
Two sammies short of a picnic—a bit thick
Up the duff—pregnant
Wally—fool or loser
Wharfie—stevedore
Yonks—a long time, forever &