FINEST HOUR

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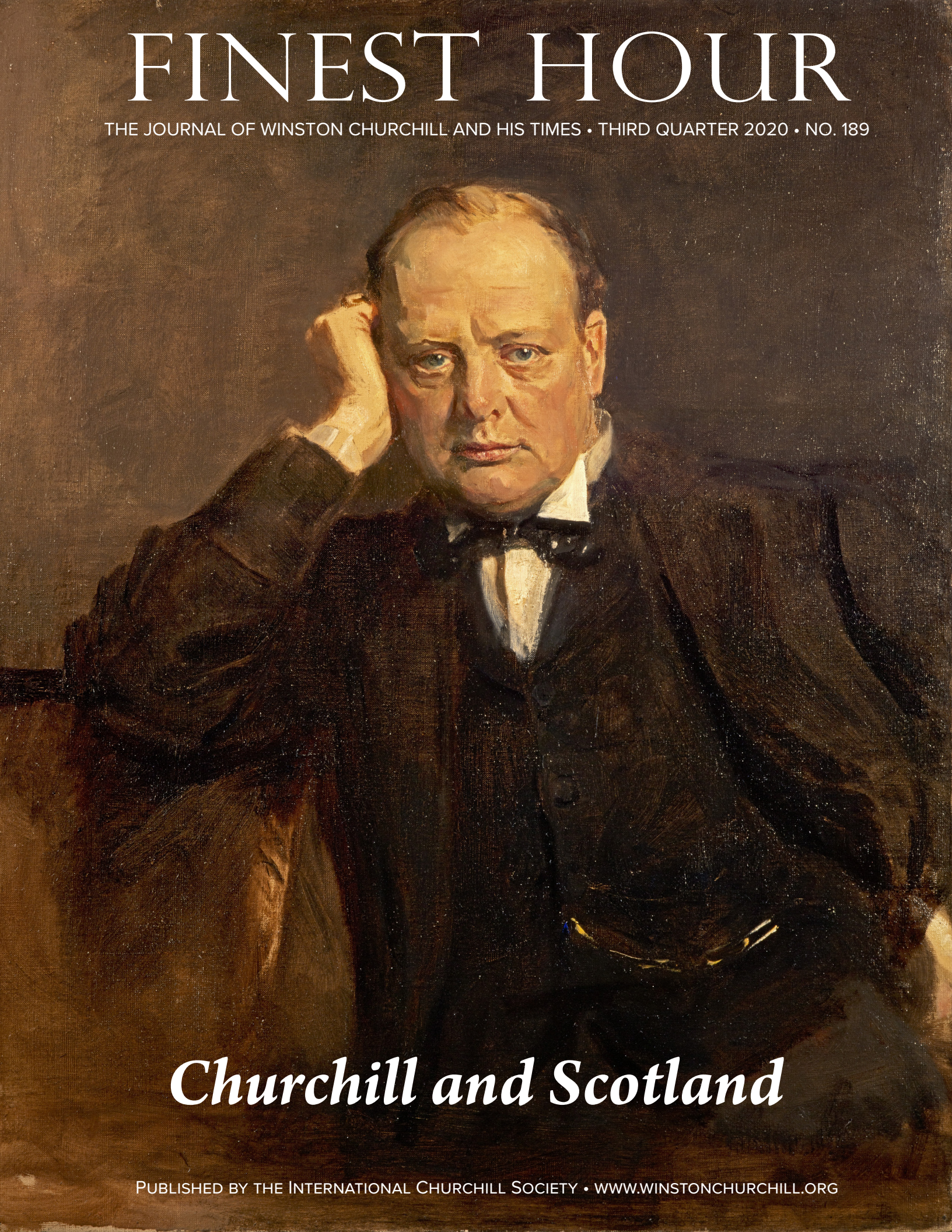

Churchill and Scotland

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Westminster College
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Chairman: Philip Boeckman
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International Churchill Society (UK)

Churchill College
Cambridge
CB3 0DS
info@winstonchurchill.org

International Churchill Society (US)

PO Box 58279
Washington, DC 20037
Tel. (202)-929-0309
info@winstonchurchill.org

International Churchill Society Worldwide Affiliated Chapters and Societies

To find full contact information for these chapters please go to winstonchurchill.org/about/united-states/

Australia
jolsen@churchillcentre.org.au

Canada
randybarber@sympatico.ca

Calgary
mmilke@telus.net

Edmonton
(780) 619-7506

Vancouver
aprilaccola@hotmail.com

Ottawa
churchillsociety@
chartwellcomm.com

Toronto
ro'brien@couttscrane.com

Iceland
arni.sigurdsson@icloud.com

New Zealand
mike.groves@xtra.co.nz

Portugal
jespada@iep.lisboa.ucp.pt

United Kingdom

Essex
anthony.woodhead@virginmedia.com

Kent
icsuk.chartwell@gmail.com

North Yorkshire
dg@ftcg.co.uk

North Wales
higginsrbm@aol.com

United States

Alaska
jwmuller@alaska.edu

California–Bay Area
gbslist@comcast.net

Los Angeles
leonwaszak@aol.com

Colorado
lew@lew1884.com

Washington, D.C.
sankerbrandt@gmail.com

Florida
churchillsocietyofsouthflorida
@gmail.com

Georgia
www.georgiachurchill.com

Illinois
cdrjet@aol.com

Louisiana
ChurchillSocietyNewOrleans.com

Michigan
rcmarsha2@aol.com

Missouri
wella4203@gmail.com

New England
jhern@jhernlaw.com

North Carolina
dcraighorn@carolina.rr.com

Oregon
wdschaubpc@gmail.com

Pennsylvania
earlbaker@idv.net

Tennessee
churchillsocietytn.org

Texas
Actionthisday@satx.rr.com

Wisconsin
stacy@churchillsocietyofwi.org

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Churchill and Scotland

On the Cover

Portrait of Churchill, oil on canvas, circa 1920
by Scotland's Sir James Guthrie (1859–1930)
A study for Guthrie's painting
"Statesmen of the Great War"
at the National Portrait Gallery, London

Photo credit: The National Galleries of Scotland

Lord Rosebery
See story on page 20

Aberdeen's Mitchell Hall
See story on page 38

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Publisher
The International Churchill Society
info@winstonchurchill.org

Editor
David Freeman
dfreeman@winstonchurchill.org

Department of History
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92834-6846

Deputy Editor
Justin Reash

Senior Editors
Paul H. Courtenay, James W. Muller

Contributing Editors
Ronald I. Cohen
Michael McMenamin
Timothy Riley

Contributors
David Stafford *Canada*
Gordon J. Barclay, Piers Brendon,
Robin Brodhurst, Katherine Carter,
Andrew Roberts, Alastair Stewart
United Kingdom
Mark Klobas, Robert L. McLain,
Leon J. Waszak *United States*

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From the Editor

Churchill and Scotland

This is the first in what will be a series of four issues to be published over four years examining Churchill's connections with the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. The rich but scarcely explored field of Scotland comes first, and we are honored to have a foreword from former Prime Minister **Gordon Brown**.

Churchill's affiliations with Scotland began with his birth on 30 November 1874—the feast day of St. Andrew, Scotland's patron saint. Despite the many connections that followed, Scots today have all but forgotten Churchill. **Alastair Stewart** looks at the reasons for this and explains why it would profit the country to embrace the Churchill legacy.

More egregious than collective amnesia has been a campaign of deliberate misrepresentation of Churchill's record in Scotland. **Gordon J. Barclay** untangles the malicious myths that have been fabricated and explains the reasons for the militant assertion of fake history.

In previous issues of *Finest Hour*, we have looked at aspects of Churchill's military connections with Scotland, including his command of the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers during the First World War in *FH* 171. In the same issue, we reported on the construction of the Churchill Barriers at Scapa Flow. In this issue, **Robin Brodhurst** details Churchill's many other nautical connections with Scotland.

On the political side, we looked in our previous issue at Churchill's relationship with Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. In this issue, **Piers Brendon** looks at Churchill's friendship with another Scotsman who made it into 10 Downing Street, the Earl of Rosebery. **David Stafford** helps us to understand why Churchill lost his "seat for life" in Dundee, even though his time as the city's MP saw him functioning at the highest levels of government.

There is far too much about Churchill and Scotland to include in just one issue, but we have room for **Ronald I. Cohen** to show how Churchill's legacy was once greatly valued by the Scots. Finally, we glimpse how the stirrings of nationalism affected the twilight of Churchill's career with the Scottish Pillar Box War.

***David Freeman**, July 2020*

Letters

Email: **info@winstonchurchill.org**

Finest Hour 188

NANTUCKET—I've had a chance to devour the new edition on Churchill's Prime Ministers. Loved the whole issue especially David Cameron's introductory article. Big Congrats! Loved being a minor contributor.—Chris Matthews

TORONTO—Not being either a political or academic historian (my degree was sixty-nine years ago in forestry!), I had but a general concept of British history. This issue has made fascinating reading for me. You managed to collect an impressive lot of authors to detail WSC's connection with 100+ years of varied, often difficult to follow, British parliamentary history. It is a masterful brief survey, for which I congratulate you. It must have been quite a task to tie it all so well together by having the story of each of the ten prime ministers told in a logical sequence. For us amateurs in the field, it is a fascinating read, so thank you.—Fraser M. McKee, CDR, RCNR (Ret.)

BALMORAL—[25 September 1928, to Clementine] My darling One, Here I am not at all tired by a racketing journey....I caught the Scottish Express at 12.45 a.m. at Rugby & motored on here this morning from Perth—a beautiful drive. There is no one here at all except the [Royal] Family, the Household & Queen [i.e., Princess] Elizabeth aged 2. This last is a character. She has an air of authority & reflectiveness astonishing in an infant.

The King [George V] is well—but ageing. He no longer stalks but goes out on the hill where the deer are moved about for him, & it may be that some loyal stag will do his duty. He and the Q [i.e., Queen Mary] asked much after you. With tender love, your devoted —W[inston] ✌

Coming in *Finest Hour* 190: Churchill's Literary World

FOREWORD *By Gordon Brown*

The Right Honourable Gordon Brown *was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Labour Party from 2007 to 2010. Prior to that he served as Chancellor of the Exchequer for ten years. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh and was Member of Parliament for Kirkcaldy and Crowdenbeath for thirty-two years.*

So much has been written about every aspect of Winston Churchill's life that it is surprising that one important area—his relationship with Scotland—has commanded so little attention. That is why it is important that this set of essays in *Finest Hour* starts to rectify this and rescues Churchill's Scottish connections from the condescension of posterity.

Churchill's wife Clementine was born of a Scottish family. His First World War regiment was Scottish. For fourteen years he served as a Scottish Member of Parliament. But there was a political reason why Churchill had no reason to love Scotland. After serving fourteen years from 1908 to 1922 as Member of Parliament for the jute city of Dundee, he was unceremoniously dumped by the East of Scotland electors. Humiliated—he came fourth in the poll—he never set foot in Dundee again and never again stood for a Scottish constituency. Irony of ironies, he was defeated in 1922 in the two-member constituency by a prohibitionist—unsurprisingly, Churchill defended the liquor trade—and by a pacifist. Faced with what he later called "the Order of the Boot," he found little sympathy—only scorn. "What is the use of a WC without a seat?" one critic joked.

His Dundee sojourn, and particularly his last visit to the city, tells us much about the pre-1940 Churchill. Courageous to a fault, he braved ill health—he had just suffered appendicitis and hostile audiences, some 5,000 strong, and the jeers and the taunts of his opponents—when fighting in that election of 1922 for his political life.

His risk-taking was well known: in the year between his disastrous period heading the Admiralty, when he was blamed for the Gallipoli fiasco, and returning as Minister of Munitions in 1917, he chose, while still a sitting MP, to volunteer for military service, serving as Lieutenant Colonel with the 6th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers and fighting on the front line in Belgium.

Churchill had been bold, and perhaps opportunistic too, in his promises to the people of Dundee. When elected first in 1908, he espoused an agenda that was far more radical than Asquith, his Prime Minister, or his Chancellor Lloyd George: championing labour exchanges, unemployment insurance, health insurance, public works to mop up unemployment, and even public ownership of the railways. He was prepared to be radical and forward-looking too on the constitution. In 1913, at the height of Irish home rule agitation, he promised Scottish home rule would follow: "I will run the risk of prophecy and tell you that the day will most certainly come—many of you will live to see it—when a federal system will be established in these Islands which will give Wales and Scotland the control within proper limits of their own Welsh and Scottish affairs."

But Churchill was also foolhardy, even to the point of utter recklessness—a trait that, to their great credit, Martin Gilbert and Paul Addison, who both deserve to be remembered for their genius as historians, bring out in their brilliant books about Churchill.

While fortunate to be offered the Dundee constituency only a few days after he had lost his own English seat in a by-election, Churchill nevertheless took Dundee's support for granted, telling his mother at the outset, "It is a life seat and cheap and easy beyond all experience."

And so, like Asquith who was his next-door neighbour in East Fife (Asquith was thrown out by his Scottish constituents in 1918), Churchill seldom visited the city,

nor did he identify much with the jute workers, whose working conditions were so poor and their security of employment so tenuous that they needed someone to speak in Westminster on their behalf.

It was a measure of how too often Churchill threw caution to the winds that he managed to alienate just about every pressure group in the city: the Suffragettes, the trades unions, and the local business community, including the most important local families. In particular, he fell out with the owner of the two Dundee papers, the *Courier* and the *Advertiser*—one supported the Conservatives and the other the Liberals—and he did it not just once but on a number of occasions, as hitherto unpublished correspondence between the two makes clear. D. C. Thomson, who, along with his elder brother William, owned the Conservative-leaning *Dundee Courier*, acquired the other paper when William married the daughter of the owner of the Liberal *Dundee Advertiser*.

With Lloyd George's approval, Churchill offered to sell D. C. Thomson an honour. Lloyd George's charges for honours ranged from £10,000 (£350,000 today) for a knighthood to £40,000 (£1.23 million today) for a peerage. Then, when this was rebuffed, to the newspaper owner's great credit, Churchill went on to the attack, criticising the newspaper's coverage and even threatening to set up a rival local newspaper.

Lambasting Churchill for his threats, Thomson got the better of the correspondence, replying, "...Any fool of a politician can make a public personal attack on newspaper people at any time, but he can't make it a controversy. Nor can he scare newspaper people....To be quite candid, if you wish to discuss anything with me on friendly lines, cut out all this threat nonsense, and let us discuss matters man to man and from the point of view of the welfare of the people. That is the basis of my policy, and a policy founded on that basis is the only policy worth discussing."

Churchill did not relent and instead went public with his criticisms. At a rowdy meeting in Broughty Ferry just before election day in 1922, he lambasted Thomson for being "very double faced": "You have a Liberal and Conservative newspaper owned by the same man and produced from the same office on the same day. Here is one man, Mr Thomson, selling Liberal opinions with his left hand and Conservative opinions with his right hand...." This from the politician who had gone back and forth himself between the Liberal and Conservative parties!

As his diminished vote revealed, Dundee had fallen out with Churchill, just as Churchill had fallen out with Dundee. Of course, Churchill visited Scotland many times after 1922—as Prime Minister, leader of the opposition, and as an ordinary politician—but never Dundee.

Even in wartime, Churchill's visits demonstrated the same combination of bravery and recklessness. In January 1941, against doctors' orders, he made a famous visit to Scapa Flow, taking with him Americans close to President Roosevelt in order to persuade them of Britain's resolve to win the war and of the Royal Navy's strength, but also of its need for US support. He wanted to show off by personally firing the first of a new set of anti-aircraft missiles. He wanted the Americans, he said, "to see the might, majesty, dominion and power of the British Empire...and how if anything happened to these ships the whole future of the world might be changed."

Two months later, Clydebank was bombed by the *Luftwaffe*, and thousands were killed. But while Churchill visited Coventry after its bombing and visited east London regularly when it was bombed, he did not venture forth to Scotland, nor did the Government let it be known publicly that such a big attack had taken place. He feared both a repeat of the industrial unrest that had happened on the Clyde in the First World War and a Scottish nationalist revival on the backs of the heavy sacrifice being asked of the Scots in war.

When in 1943, to celebrate his memorable wartime triumphs and his inspirational wartime leadership, the City of Dundee offered Churchill the Freedom of the City, the reply came from Downing Street ten days later that "Mr Churchill regrets he is unable to accept the honour." It was perhaps just as well: the city's councilors had voted to offer him their Freedom on a split vote—and by a majority of just one. ✌

Why Have the Scots Forsaken Churchill?

By Alastair Stewart

In the United Kingdom today, there is a debate about our history and our statues. Raised are two perennial questions: what is truth and what is an acceptable legacy? That debate has literally and physically targeted the Ivor Roberts-Jones statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square.

Yet Scots, forever ready for a feisty debate, are left looking around for a comparable statue of Churchill even to protest. While most communities are proud of their connections to significant historical figures, a Dundee historian has said of his city, where Churchill served as the local MP for nearly fifteen years, "A statue of Winston Churchill here would be as welcome for many as a swim through vomit."[1] Does he speak for all Scotland?

The Invisible Man

In 2019, an elected Member of the Scottish Parliament courted controversy and praise when he tweeted that Churchill was a "white supremacist" and a "mass murderer" interspersed with hand-clapping emojis.[2] The shock value aside, the post quickly revealed the pantomime view of Churchill, which underpins his legacy in Scotland.

Pervasive myths continue to abound that Churchill abandoned the 51st Highland Division in 1940, set soldiers of the Black Watch on his Dundee constituency in 1911, sent tanks into Glasgow in 1919, and would have abandoned Scotland if Nazi invasion had come in 1940. (See the following article.)

Of course Churchill said things that are distasteful to modern sensibilities; he was born in the age of the cavalry charge and died when the Beatles were at their zenith. Issues on race, women's suffrage, and Irish Home Rule are all topics that have to be contextualised to be understood.

But Scots are unlikely to be convinced. Social media, sound bites, and ferocious campaigns for Scottish independence and Brexit have bled nuance dry. Churchill is either a bogeyman or a hero, a visceral stand-in for debates on Scottish unionism, or British and Scottish nationalism—usually in 280 characters.

In Dundee, there is barely any acknowledgement that Churchill was there at all. In the lobby of the Queen's Hotel, there is a plaque commemorating his campaign headquarters that went up in 2008. There is also a copy of a letter he sent to Clementine, famously complaining about a maggot in his kipper that "flashed his teeth."[3]

The formal Dundee acknowledgement is dire: there is one plaque. Unveiled in 2008 by Churchill's daughter Lady Soames, the marker commemorates the centenary of Churchill's first election to Parliament from the city in 1908. It has now been vandalised.

There are a smattering of other tributes to be found to Churchill in Scotland, including a bust in the City of Edinburgh Council building and a Churchill suite in the capital's Prestonfield Hotel. At the Dalmeny Estate, the family seat of the Earldom of Rosebery (see story on p. 20), there is a tree planted by Churchill in 1946. And in the Edinburgh Central Library there is a plaque honouring suffragist Elsie Inglis that includes a tribute from Churchill reading, "She will shine forever in history."[4]

In Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, there is a four-foot bronze figure of Churchill by Scots sculptor David McFall. This is a smaller version of the full-size statue erected in Churchill's former constituen-

cy of Woodford in 1959. In the Orkney Islands, Willie Budge's 2011 monument to the Churchill Barriers at Scapa Flow (see story in *FH* 171) is, rather aptly, just a shadow of Churchill made from a rudder.

It is impossible to pronounce in absolutes, but observation, particularly of social media, reveals several core explanations and myths, which reinforce general Scottish despondency over Churchill. First, there is the recurring belief that Churchill simply did not care about, or was at least indifferent to, Scotland. Second, Churchill is seen to have tried to suppress Scottish strikes, an extension of perceived English and aristocratic suppression of the Scottish working class.

Third, the case for Scottish independence is nearly always made in reaction to the British state, Brexit, and British history (of which Churchill is a giant). Fourth, the prevalence of social media, in tandem with the absence of a single source or leading voice speaking about Churchill and Scotland, has allowed grievance politics to fill the void. Fifth, modern Scottish education generally focuses on the deeds of empire, including slavery and colonialism, with no broader context for the time. This moral rigidity makes even passing support for the British Empire or Churchill taboo and implicitly racist.

Troubles Left and Right

There is a persistent myth that Scotland is more left-wing than England. Repeated polls cannot give a definitive answer. "Left-wing about what?" would be a better retort—one can be socially liberal and a hawk on defence without tautology. Still, Scottish exceptionalism is a normative and predominantly nationalist ideology about being a "good global citizen."[5] Scotland is implicitly placed as morally superior to the UK Government, the British Empire, and Churchill.

And yet Scotland, in partnership with England since 1707, built the British Empire. At one stage, Scots were estimated to comprise one-third of all imperial governors.[6] Scots provided vast numbers of traders, administrators, and pioneers, who took a considerable share of the imperial spoils.[7] The extraordinary influence of Scots at nearly all levels of the empire makes today's "acute case of cultural amnesia" all the more puzzling.[8]

Popular history is a supply and demand industry. The popularity and awareness of Scottish tragedies such as the Highland Clearances have bolstered the politics of grievance. Scottish education has never corrected the public imbalance and focuses disproportionately on episodic wars with England led by William Wallace and Robert Bruce. Empire receives perfunctory attention, at best, despite Scotland's central role (Dundee, for example, was the "Juteopolis" of the empire).[9] Churchill, long taken for granted alongside unionism, has fallen out of favour and is now cast as the villain—much like the United Kingdom itself.

Many have noticed the dichotomy between Scottish sentimentalism and rationalism.[10] The Scottish National Party (SNP) has been in power in Scotland since 2007 and has taken the majority of Scottish seats at Westminster since 2015. Yet the independence referendum held in 2014 was defeated 55% to 45%.

Since the referendum, Churchill—the epitome of British and English identity—has become the chief bogeyman. In particular, "Cybernats," the unofficial, online foot soldiers of independence, have put Churchill in their crosshairs over the last decade. Not to be outdone, unionist trolls have made Churchill a reactionary poster boy to independence arguments.

The reasons are not just the lack of education and the prevalence of social media, but the disproportionate number of young people now involved in political discourse. Scotland lowered the voting age to sixteen during the referendum, and most SNP voters were under forty at the 2019 general election. Concurrently, successive polling has shown that most UK students do not know who Churchill was or think he has been made up.[11]

The broader debate around statues that has now emerged compounds existing problems. Headlines reinforce falsehoods because Churchill's life is not taught correctly in schools. He has been reduced to his repertoire of *bon mots*, both real and false, that may have passed into common parlance but which reinforce misperceptions. Scots left, right, and centre hold popular misconceptions about Churchill.

Many think of Churchill as an entertaining drunk, despite

Left
Churchill and fellow officers of the 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers in 1916 at Ploegsteert, Belgium

evidence to the contrary. Some consider him representative of his aristocratic background, not knowing that as a young MP he was considered a traitor to his class for helping to found the welfare state. Others say he was a warmonger and murderer, unaware that in 1916 Churchill led Scottish troops in the trenches, an experience that led to his opposition to a premature cross-channel invasion during the Second World War, which would have resulted in mass slaughter.

Ironically, even some of Churchill's defenders in Scotland rely on an untruth by frequently citing one of the most famous remarks Churchill never made: "Of all the small nations of this Earth, perhaps only the ancient Greeks surpass the Scots in their contribution to mankind." The quote flourishes but with no source—like many myths in the digital age.

Why Scots Should Put a Kilt on Churchill

The £12 billion tourism industry is important to Scotland. Playing up the many Churchill connections could only enhance this. There is even a genuine picture of Churchill sitting in a Glengarry bonnet (above). Yet despite a smattering of Churchill busts and portraits spread across the country (notably the one on the cover of this issue), there is no mad dash to take full advantage of Churchill's extensive connections with Scotland. When actor Brian Cox—a Dundonian himself—played Churchill in a 2017 movie filmed in Edinburgh, the event passed with barely a flutter of excitement. The closest one comes to finding Scottish tourism playing up Churchill is a "Fortress Orkney" site-seeing map.[12]

But there is so much that could be done! In addition to those already mentioned, there are many other connections between Churchill and Scotland; his wife Clementine was of Scottish descent, a granddaughter of the 10th Earl of Airlie; his aptly named first biographer, Alexander MacCallum Scott, was Scottish; he made frequent trips to Balmoral to attend upon the Sovereign; he served as Rector of the University of Edinburgh in 1929; he formed the Commandos from Scotland in 1940 and ordered the creation of the Scapa Flow bridges that same year.

Churchill's son Randolph even (unsuccessfully) contested the Ross and Cromarty by-election in

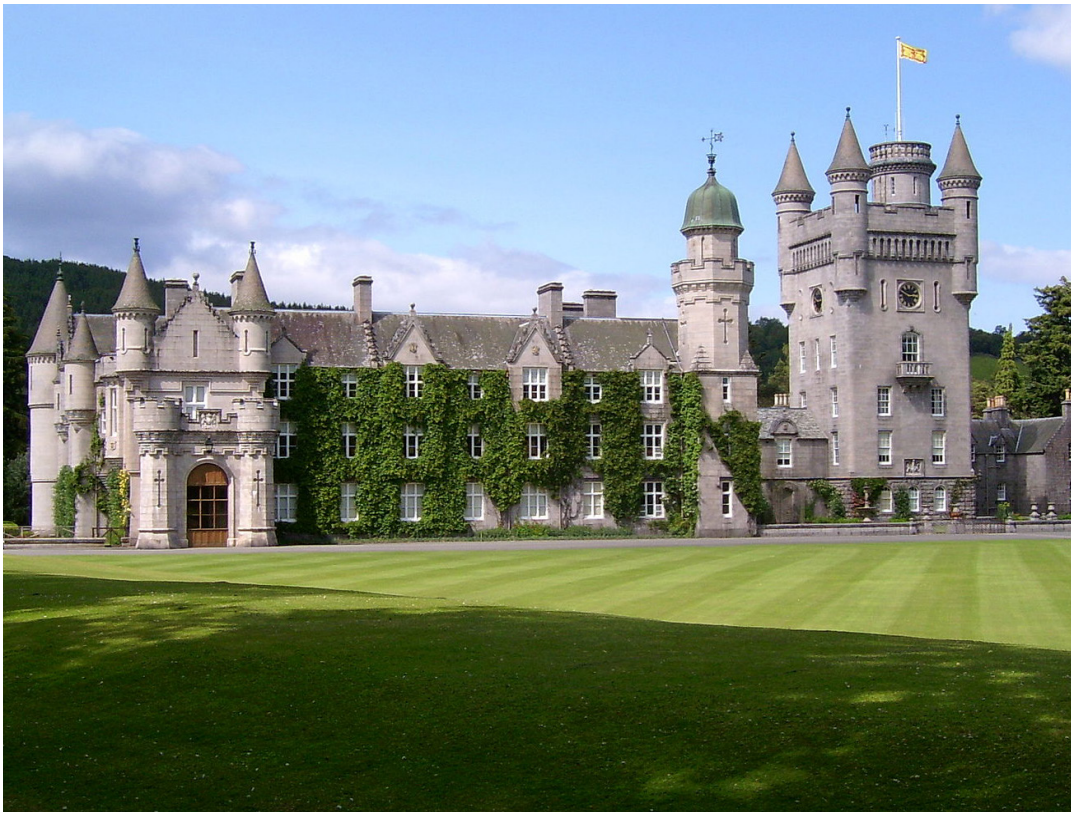
1936. There is also an emotional matter to consider that has not been examined: Churchill was in Scotland when he learned that his daughter Marigold had died in 1921. The saga, then, is replete with anecdotage, anger, joy, sorrow, and adventure. Churchill losing his Scottish seat in 1922 to a prohibitionist candidate is the grandest of punchlines.

And then there is the military history: Churchill's substantial connections with Scotland during the two World Wars (see story on p. 26). During the First World War, Churchill commanded the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers on the Western Front. His Adjutant was Andrew Dewar Gibb (a future Leader of the SNP), who wrote a book about the experience. Gibb recorded Churchill saying to his troops that, "Although an Englishman, it was in Scotland that I found the three best things in my life: my wife, my constituency and my regiment."[13] Churchill's second in command was Archibald Sinclair, who went on to become the Leader of the Liberal Party and a member of Churchill's coalition government starting in 1940. During the Second World War, Churchill proposed a meeting with Roosevelt and Stalin and suggested Invergordon as a venue: "the weather might well be agreeable in Scotland at that time." The US president declined.[14]

More successfully, during the war Churchill appointed a Scot, James Stuart, to serve as Chief Whip. Churchill's four Scottish secretaries of state during the war represented all of the major parties of government: David John Colville (Conservative MP and not to be confused with Churchill's Private Secretary John Colville, himself the grandson of a Scottish peer), Ernest Brown (Liberal), Thomas Johnston (Labour), and the 6th Earl of Rosebery (Liberal).

When trying to persuade Tom Johnston to join his government, Churchill proclaimed, "Good heavens, man, come in here and help me make history!"[15] The Prime Minister picked Johnston because he was left-wing and could help prevent a repeat of the Red Clydesdale disruption that occurred during the First World War.

The Second World War has also generated at least one example of Scots trying to prove a connection with Churchill that



RIGHT
Balmoral Castle

Left
Churchill inspects women auxiliary nurses in Edinburgh in October 1942. He also received the Freedom of the City.

may not be true but would be good for tourism. In 2019, the BBC reported that the Prime Minister purportedly held a secret meeting in Scotland with General Eisenhower in 1944 to discuss the D-Day landings.[16]

There are today Churchill connections good for Scottish trade, including his preference for Johnny Walker whisky, Drambuie liqueur, Dundee cake, and Scottish grouse. He even considered purchasing a small estate near Edinburgh before buying his lifelong home of Chartwell in Kent in 1922.

And where are the books? While there have been many articles and essays published about Churchill in Scotland over the years, including one book about his time in Dundee, there has yet to be even one dedicated volume about Churchill and the Scots. The omission teeters on the bizarre, given the vast library of books on seemingly every facet of Churchill's life.

Despite all of the opportunities, however, the Scots themselves have done little to stake their many claims to Churchill.

The Saltire Bulldog

So, are there any ways for Scots to think of Churchill as one of their own? Yes, many.

First, Churchill sincerely cared about Scotland. During his time as a Scottish MP, he served in a series of senior ministerial posts: President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty, Minister of Munitions, and Secretary of State for both War and Air. All of these ministries deeply involved Scotland. In a 1942 speech in Edinburgh, Churchill reflected that "I still preserve affectionate memories of the banks of the Tay."[17]

Churchill was, in fact, the original nationalist—and a federalist. Unionism and nationalism were always complementary and interchangeable forces in Scotland for the first part of the twentieth century—and Churchill knew this. As early as 1913, he looked forward to the day "when a federal system will be established in these Islands which will give Wales and Scotland the control within proper limits of their own Welsh and Scottish affairs."[18]

A YouTube search for "Churchill and Scotland" yields a trove of British Pathé videos now generally forgotten. Some of the best footage is from 1942, when Edinburgh authorities bestowed the Freedom of the City on Churchill (an honour he also accepted from

Aberdeen, Ayr, Perth, and Stirling). Admittedly, he turned down the same honour from Dundee in 1943. Rejection is hard to forget (see story on p. 32).

Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot?

Why, then, Scotland's persistent rejection of Churchill? Part of the problem is that he is considered an exclusively English figure. His daughter Mary Soames summarized it best in a letter to her father in his final years: "I owe you what every English man, woman and child does—Liberty itself."[19]

Scots are no more cognitively dissonant about their history than any other country, but the UK is confused. Devolution is not mutually exclusive with British identity, but there is an undoubted scramble for the future that struggles to explain figures like Churchill.

In an effort to promote Scottishness, we risk cutting ourselves off from our rich shared tapestry—including Winston Churchill. The rise in English nationalism (fuelled by the absence of its own devolved and exclusive assembly) is as much a challenge to pride, and history, in the UK's story.

But Britain is a colossus. Churchill's time in Scotland and his story with our nation is so much more than the simplistic view of him as a "carpetbagger" who needed a constituency.[20] In 1936, the *Edinburgh Evening News* wrote that Randolph Churchill's Scottish by-election defeat "seems to be regarded as another nail in the political coffin" of his father.[21] Scotland has been wrong before and needs to fix its relationship with Churchill. There is more to Scotland and Churchill than people know. Churchill happily borrowed from Charles Murray when he told his 1942 Edinburgh audience: "Auld Scotland counts for something still."[22]

Alastair Stewart *is a Scottish public affairs consultant and freelance writer. His mum, granny, and grandad gave him a lifelong interest in Winston Churchill.*

Endnotes

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A "Villain for All Seasons"

Churchill and Scottish Mythologies of Grievance

By Gordon J. Barclay

The real, complex, and historically important Churchill is increasingly disappearing behind crudely mythologised versions erected by those who wish to defend a political position or a series of values, and those who wish to attack them. On the one hand there is the faultless secular saint; on the other, a villain for all seasons. Oddly, at both extremes, these positions can often be characterised as "nationalistic." In much of this rhetoric, "Churchill" often seems merely to be a personification of Britain, England, or the Empire for those whose nationalism either idolises or denigrates what they stand or stood for. It appears to have little connection to the real man in the context of the times he lived through.

A particular strand of Scottish nationalism seems to believe that the cause of Scottish independence will be furthered by promoting division and distrust between the Scots and the English. On social media, their rhetoric can cross the line into something like hate speech.

Historical grievances are being resurrected, exaggerated, or just invented. In particular, there are what I have termed the four twentieth-century "military myths," and it will perhaps come as no surprise to the reader that Churchill features in three of them. It is these three that I discuss here. The fourth, claiming that Scotland suffered disproportionately high casualties in the First World War—between 25% and 28% of enlisted men—has been discredited by Patrick Watt.[1]

A comment under an article in the nationalist newspaper the National *during the controversies about Churchill's reputation, early in 2019. By the time I took the screenshot, seventeen people had "liked" it.*

Myth One

On Sunday, 24 March 2013, in the *Mail on Sunday* a myth sprang fully formed from the imagination of a journalist, that in 1940 Scotland was to be sacrificed to the Nazis in the event of a German invasion, in order to protect England. The story was picked up and repeated in the *Daily Express* the next day. Both articles were published in print-only Scottish editions of the respective papers, but the *Mail on Sunday* article is now available on-line.[2]

The problem was, that the article named me and my then about-to-be-published book on the anti-invasion defences of Scotland during the Second World War as the source of this "fact."[3] The book and my research suggest no such thing: the myth was created by assigning words to people who did not say them, quoting things from one context as though they were from another, and leaving out much that undermined the story.

Three days before the article was published, the devolved Scottish Government had announced

One of the posts that set the lie off around the world. It included not only the headline, but the body of the Daily Express *article from 25 March 2013.*

that the referendum on Scottish independence would be held in September 2014. In the atmosphere of increasingly heated debate, the "fact" that in Britain's "finest hour" Field Marshal Ironside, Churchill, Westminster, and "the English" planned to abandon the Scots to the Nazis was seized upon as a splendid stick with which to beat those campaigning to preserve the Union. At 10 p.m. on 25 March a scan of the *Daily Express* article was posted on the Facebook page for "Yes to an Independent Scotland" (see image above). This post received almost 1000 "shares" in a short period. Other widely followed bloggers also posted it, and the lie went off round the world.

At that time, I was not active on social media, and it was some time before I became aware that my book had been misrepresented. I started challenging the mythology as soon as I discovered it, but it continues to appear frequently, even now.

Myth Two

In 2014 I wrote an article describing the creation and political use of the "abandon Scotland" myth. Three years later, I was passing long days beside my wife's hospital bed revising that article, and, while searching for recent occurrences of the first myth, I came upon many social media posts about two others.[4] These were, first, that in 1919 "Churchill sent English troops and tanks to George Square, Glasgow to crush a strike," and, second, that in June 1940, after the end of the Dunkirk evacuation, Churchill "abandoned" or "sacrificed" the men of the 51st Highland Division at St. Valéry-en-Caux "because they were Scots and expendable."

The first of these two is not as mythological as the "abandon Scotland" story, in that it is, to some extent, based on real events, but the "Battle of George Square" is perhaps the most mythologised event in twentieth-century Scottish history. On Friday, 31 January 1919, a demonstration, part of what was known as the "Forty Hours Strike," descended into violence between demonstrators and Glasgow police. The army was not "sent to Glasgow" by Churchill, nor even by the government, but was called in by the Sheriff of Lanarkshire as "military aid to the civil power"; he had previously checked that troops would be available. In fact, the War Cabinet had been reminded on the previous day, 30 January, by the commander of the army in the UK, that the government had no legal powers to send troops onto the streets of a British city, unless martial law was declared which in this case, it was not.[5]

The myth that "Churchill persuaded the Cabinet that troops, machine guns, and tanks should be deployed" seems to have been invented by the Labour politician (and a leader of the Forty Hours Strike) Emanuel Shinwell in his 1973 memoirs *I've Lived Through It All*. Shinwell had blamed "Westminster" in a previous book and would go on to blame the Prime Minister of the time, Lloyd George, in two later books.[6] He provided no evidence for any of these accusations, which indeed are contradicted by the War Cabinet minutes.

A century of myth making about the "Battle" means that the mythology is complex. Other elements include claims that:

- *All of the troops sent were English*. The earliest known date for this claim is 1957, thirty-eight years after the strike. In fact, most of the force was Scots.

- *There were troops, tanks, and a howitzer in George Square on 31 January*. The troops started arriving late that evening; the tanks arrived three days later; the only howitzer in the Square was a German "trophy" weapon from the war.

- *The troops were sent to crush the strike*. The strike continued for twelve days after the "Battle."

The narrative has developed from one of "oppression of the workers by capitalists" into one of an "English invasion." The reality is that the army was called in by the city's own authorities; the army decided to use mainly Scottish troops; in such situations the army decides what force it needs and, fearing perhaps a re-run of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, took six tanks along, which were not used. Not only was this not an "English invasion," the majority of War Cabinet members present at the meeting at which it was agreed to provide troops to the Sheriff, if he needed them, were themselves Scots, and the discussion took place in a room where the majority of politicians and civil servants present also were Scots.

A typical Tweet about Churchill and George Square, with added "cannons" and firing.

The mythology continues to be used as the touchstone of English, Tory, or Westminster oppression, whenever a suitable (or not so suitable) occasion arises. An almost completely mythical version of the event, English troops, tanks in the square and all, continues to appear in Scottish school textbooks.

Myth Three

The third of the myths is more complex. In the period of the "Phoney War" in the west, between September 1939 and May 1940, the British Expeditionary Force was based in northern France, along the frontier with neutral Belgium. It was decided that British formations would be rotated to the French Army, into positions in advance of the Maginot Line, just east of the border with Luxembourg. Here, they would be directly facing the German Army and could gain experience in front-line conditions, for example, undertaking offensive patrolling. Over the winter, nine individual infantry brigades had gained this experience; at the end of the winter, it was decided that a whole division at a time would henceforth be posted to the French on rotation. The 51st (Highland) Division was the first whole division to be sent, late in April 1940. The 51st was a first-line Territorial Army Division comprising nine Scottish infantry battalions and (usually ignored in the narrative of grievance) Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, and other units, some of which were English. The ancillary force sent with the 51st also contained three English infantry battalions.[7]

There is no space here to describe their retreat across France. In the end, one-third of the force did manage to escape through Le Havre. The rest retreated towards St. Valéry-en-Caux. Churchill made a calculated decision to keep the 51st in the line with the French, as part of his efforts to keep them in the fight. Was that a useless "sacrifice"? As General de Gaulle said:

> ...the comradeship in arms experienced on the battlefield of Abbeville in May and June 1940 between the French armoured division

> which I had the honour to command and the valiant 51st Highland Division under General Fortune played its part in the decision which I took to continue fighting on the side of the Allies unto the end, no matter what the course of events.

The commonly employed narrative of grievance about the 51st is not, however, a subtle consideration of Churchill's realpolitik, but a series of claims that the 51st was treated worse *because they were Scots and therefore expendable*. The narrative veers back and forth between "sacrifice" and "abandonment"; the latter is more problematic because it links directly to the frequently made but false assertion that no attempt was made to evacuate the men from St. Valéry. The planned evacuation in more than 200 vessels that had been gathered offshore was made impossible by inadequate communication, fog, and German artillery fire. Some 3,300 men were, however, lifted from a beach at the eastern end of the St. Valéry perimeter. Naturalist Sir Peter Scott, then a naval lieutenant, evacuated injured men from the harbour.[8] As in the other military myths, Churchill is assigned personal blame.

A Scottish veterans' charity posts a version of the "abandoned" myth that places personal blame on Churchill and airbrushes non-Scots from history.

The tamer version of this kind of social media post merely states, for example, "Churchill abandoned the fighting Scots of the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division June 1940." This not only particularises the loss of Scottish troops by ignoring the shared fate of non-Scots, but also promotes the myth of "abandonment," and implies some sort of deliberate act of malice by Churchill. Unfortunately, this problematic post was put up on the Facebook page of a Scottish veterans' charity in May 2019. Objections to the post on Facebook were answered, "it is a matter of record that a number of historians believe 51st Div. were abandoned in order to allow the evacuation of 300,000 combatants from Dunkirk." This is demonstrably untrue: the Dunkirk evacuation, over 200 km away, ended eight days before the surrender at St. Valéry, and the evacuation at Dunkirk was not dependent in any way on the struggle of the 51st. A request to name these "historians" went unanswered, and senior figures in the charity have since defended the decision to keep this post on the site, in the face of objections, as they "have no remit to examine the interpretation of military history" as expressed on their social media feed by their staff. This perhaps indicates how much traction this mythologised version of the past is gaining: a Scottish National Party Member of the Scottish Parliament posted in the following month: "Churchill famously abandoned the Highlanders at St Valéry."

We should remind ourselves that even this relatively mild statement is untrue and airbrushes from history the loss of non-Scottish troops. But this is only the beginning. Others descend to cruder levels: an office-bearer in an organisation affiliated to the Scottish National Party has recently promoted a newly popular and peculiarly unpleasant variant of the mythology, that Scots and Irish troops were selectively abandoned on the beach at Dunkirk, in favour of Englishmen.

Alternative Facts

I have concentrated on fake history on social media, but much of the same mythologised past appears in newspaper articles, TV documentaries, and even popular and academic histories and school history texts. The promotion of this fake history is an interesting study. Three things strike me. First, it is clear from their basic errors of fact that the majority of the people repeating these myths, especially on social media, have almost no knowledge of the historical events to which they supposedly refer. In relation to the 51st, many people clearly believe that the Division (variously described as a "regiment" or "battalion") was lost at Dunkirk, having been left behind as the rear guard to allow the "cowardly English" to escape.

Second, I have been struck by the ways in which people are willing to invent new "facts" or fabricate circumstantial detail to support their own version. Thus, if there were troops and tanks in Glasgow, logically it follows that they must have been "sent... to disperse protestors in George Square," with "orders to shoot to kill," resulting in "hundreds" dead.

Third, the elaborate mythology is not subject to even the most basic critical analysis. No one asks: could this possibly be true? The most strikingly illogical story that I have come across is that Scottish sailors serving on ships during the Dunkirk evacuation were close to mutiny when the news reached them that the 51st was being "abandoned" at St. Valéry. The observant reader will have noticed the flaw: how could sailors on, at the latest, 4 June 1940 threaten to mutiny about an event that would not happen until 11 June? But logic and sense are not the currency of promoters of "alternative facts."

The polarisation of politics and society is perhaps seen at its most extreme on social media. It is here that the most blatant rewriting of reality, past and present, is being carried out. Populist nationalist politics, at both national and devolved levels in the UK and elsewhere in the world, thrive in an atmosphere in which trust has been eroded in traditional sources of information and in which expertise and specialist knowledge are denigrated. This is the context in which the myths I have been describing have developed. "Truth" has become no more than "what I want to you to believe." ✌

Endnotes

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Dr. Gordon J. Barclay
is an archaeologist and historian. His most recent book The Fortification of the Firth of Forth 1880–1977: "the Most Powerful Naval fortress in the British Empire" (*with Ron Morris*) *was published in 2019.*

Scotland's Real Strength

By Winston S. Churchill

In the first volume of A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, *Winston Churchill surveys the final two centuries of medieval Scottish history, when internal strife and periodic battles with England afflicted the lives of many generations, and identifies the true foundation of Scotland's emergent power.*

The disunity of the [Scottish] kingdom, fostered by English policy and perpetuated by the tragedies that befell Scottish sovereigns, was not the only source of Scotland's weakness. The land was divided, in race, in speech, and in culture. The rift between Highlands and Lowlands was more than a geographical distinction. The Lowlands formed part of the feudal world, and, except in the South-West, in Galloway, English was spoken. The Highlands preserved a social order much older than feudalism. In the Lowlands the King of Scots was a feudal magnate; in the Highlands he was the chief of a loose federation of clans. He had, it is true, the notable advantage of blood kinship both with the new Anglo-Norman nobility and with the ancient Celtic kings. The Bruces were undoubted descendants of the first King of Scots in the ninth century, Kenneth MacAlpin, as well as of Alfred the Great; the Stuarts, claimed with some plausibility, to be the descendants of MacBeth's contemporary, Banquo. The lustre of a divine antiquity illumined princes whose pedigree ran back into the Celtic twilight of Irish heroic legend. For all Scots, Lowland and Highland alike, the royal house had a sanctity which commanded reverence through periods when obedience and even loyalty were lacking, and much was excused those in whom royal blood ran.

But reverence was not an effective instrument of government. The Scottish estates did not create the means of fusion of classes that were provided by the English Parliament. In law and fact feudal authority remained far stronger than in England. The King's justice was excluded from a great part of Scottish life, and many of his judges were ineffective competitors with the feudal system. There was no equivalent of the Justice of the Peace or of the Plantagenet justices in eyre.

Over much of the kingdom feudal justice itself fought a doubtful battle with the more ancient clan law. The Highland chiefs might formally owe their lands and power to the Crown and be classified as feudal tenants-in-chief, but their real authority rested on the allegiance of their clansmen. Some clan chiefs, like the great house of Gordon, in the Highlands, were also feudal magnates in the neighboring Lowlands. In the west the rising house of Campbell played either role as it suited them. They were to exercise great influence in the years to come.

Meanwhile the Scots peasant farmer and the thrifty burgess, throughout these two hundred years of political strife pursued their ways and built up the country's real strength in spite of the numerous disputes among their lords and masters. The Church devoted itself to its healing mission, and many good bishops and divines adorn the annals of medieval Scotland. In the fifteenth century three Scots universities were founded, St. Andrew's, Glasgow, and Aberdeen—one more than England had until the nineteenth century. ✌

"He Is a Great Man"

Winston Churchill and Lord Rosebery

By Piers Brendon

On a visit to Lord Rosebery's palatial country house Mentmore in 1880, the radical politician Sir Charles Dilke noted that his host was "the most ambitious man I had ever met." Years later Dilke added a marginal comment, "I have since known Winston Churchill."[1] Needless to say, young Winston *was* ambitious, occasionally telling—and convincing—complete strangers that he was destined to lead his country. But Rosebery's ambitions were more diffuse. They were famously summed up in his expressed desire to marry an heiress, win the Derby and become Prime Minister. Perhaps this story is apocryphal since the three wishes were apparently made at the Mendacious Club, which he formed with the American socialite and political fixer Sam Ward. Yet all three were fulfilled, which did not prevent Rosebery's life from becoming what the journalist A. G. Gardiner called a "tragedy of unfulfilment."[2] That life fascinated Churchill. As he wrote in a sparkling essay on Rosebery in *Great Contemporaries*, "With some at least of those feelings of awe and attraction which led Boswell to Dr. Johnson, I sought occasions to develop the acquaintance of childhood into a grown-up friendship."[3]

Lord Randolph

Archibald Primrose (1847–1929), who became fifth Earl of Rosebery at the age of twenty, had been two years ahead of Winston's father, Lord Randolph Churchill, at Eton. They forged a close bond at Oxford where they were both members of the fast, aristocratic set whose main activities were drinking, gambling and sport. Unlike Lord Randolph, younger son of the Duke of Marlborough, Rosebery was immensely rich, inheriting over 20,000 Scottish acres and a clutch of stately homes to go with them. So while Lord Randolph merely kept his own pack of harriers at Merton College, Rosebery spent a small fortune on the Turf. The Dean of Christ Church was not amused, insisting that Rosebery must either give up his race-horses or his undergraduate studies. Characteristically Rosebery chose to sacrifice the latter, departing from the university without a degree. This was the sort of grand gesture that appealed to Lord Randolph, who shared Rosebery's intense pride of caste whereby, as an Eton contemporary wrote, "a man seems to ascend in a balloon out of earshot every time he is addressed by one not socially his equal."[4]

Rosebery and Lord Randolph, however, had much more in common than patrician hauteur. They were both clever, erratic, sardonic, prickly, self-indulgent, and highly strung. Both were mesmeric orators, captivating huge audiences on the stump and holding sway in parliament, though Rosebery lacked Lord Randolph's common touch and his brutal capacity for invective. Instead, wrote one biographer, Rosebery adopted in the House of Lords "the tone of a very consciously sane chaplain addressing the inmates of a home for imbeciles."[5] As political antagonists they occasionally attacked each other: in 1885 Rosebery declared that since it took forty generations to turn a wild duck into a tame duck "you cannot expect Lord Randolph Churchill to become a serious statesman all at once."[6]

Yet they had some ideas in common: both aspired to be national leaders even at the cost of party loyalty, and, just as the Tory Lord Randolph added Upper Burma to the British Empire, so the

Liberal Rosebery added Uganda. They enjoyed a bantering personal relationship. When Rosebery complained that Lord Randolph's reference to his "enormous and unlimited wealth" would inundate him with mendicants, his friend retorted: "Your letter is most affecting but what can I do? You support that old monster [Gladstone], and therefore you must be fleeced and fined in this world." When Lord Randolph asserted, "If there's one thing I hate and detest it is political intrigue," Rosebery responded with "a solemn and deliberate wink."[7]

Privately Rosebery reckoned that to gain political advantage Lord Randolph would "sell his own soul."[8] But they remained close, though Lord Esher, another Etonian, considered Rosebery incapable of true friendship and "rather of the oyster tribe."[9] In 1906 Rosebery wrote a brief life of Lord Randolph, which was notable alike for its affection, brilliance and candour (tempered by discretion). It had the merit, too, of revealing much about its author, who paid vivid tribute to the wayward charm of his subject. With his weird jay-like laughter, his poached-egg eyes and his jaunty moustache, which had an emotion of its own, Lord Randolph was a "striking combination of the picturesque and the burlesque."

> His demeanour, his unexpectedness, his fits of caressing humility, his impulsiveness, his tinge of violent eccentricity, his apparent dare-devilry, made him a fascinating companion; while his wit, his sarcasm, his piercing personalities, his elaborate irony, and his effective delivery, gave astonishing popularity to his speeches.[10]

Rosebery himself was also freakish and flippant, so much so that he was urged to take a more serious tone by Queen Victoria, one of two people on earth who really frightened him, the other being Bismarck.

Lord Randolph was handicapped, however, by a disease (probably syphilis, though this diagnosis has been challenged), which Rosebery thought was partly responsible for Lord Randolph's fatal resignation as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1886. In the ensuing years, as Rosebery unforgettably wrote, Lord Randolph "died by inches in public...

Left
Lord Rosebery in Harper's Weekly
circa 1902

the chief mourner at his own protracted funeral."[11] His career ended at the very time Rosebery was establishing himself as Gladstone's political heir. Yet Rosebery was handicapped by psychological ills. The spoilt child became an adult prima donna, a creature of moods and whims and crotchets. He was hyper-sensitive and ultra-fastidious. He craved power but refused frequent offers of preferment, disdaining the Westminster hurly-burly and desiring (in the oft-quoted words of his Eton tutor) "the palm without the dust."[12] And when in 1894 he was summoned to fill the vacuum left by Gladstone, Rosebery likened the Prime Ministership to a dunghill. With a divided cabinet, confused policies and minimal achievements, he resigned just over a year later, extricating himself from what he later called an "evil-smelling bog."[13]

Young Winston

In 1896 Rosebery also resigned as leader of the Liberal party, making a speech, which Winston Churchill extolled in a letter to his mother.

> A more statesmanlike & impressive utterance is hard to imagine. He is a great man—and one of these days he will again lead a great party. The only two great men now on the political stage will be drawn irresistibly together. Their political views already coincide and L[or]d Rosebery and Joe Chamberlain would be worthy leaders of Tory Democracy.[14]

It is remarkable that even as a fresh-faced subaltern, just posted to India, Churchill was conjuring with the idea of realising his father's dream of popular conservatism. This would combine perfectly, he thought, with Rosebery's avowed policy of imperialism and social reform, all to be carried out by a new, centrist political coalition. But their adult relationship got off to a rocky start. At a country house party Churchill gave such a voluble and bumptious account of his escape from Boer captivity as to stampede fellow guests from the room. Rosebery complained, "I was almost jammed in the door."[15]

Nevertheless Rosebery congratulated Churchill on his "fruitful and honourable career in South Africa"[16] and invited him to lunch to meet the Duke of Cambridge. When Churchill sent him proofs of his book *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* (1900), Rosebery responded generously: "What a natural wholesome manly record. We heed that particular species as no other European nation does."[17] He was still more effusive in February 1901, shortly after Churchill's election to parliament:

> Let me wish you heartily joy of your maiden speech. It is a great thing to have got it over, for it is a disagreeable though necessary operation, like vaccination circumcision and the like. But it is much more to have achieved a triumph, as you have.[18]

Soon Churchill was visiting Mentmore and the Durdans, Rosebery's Epsom mansion, where the younger man had to apologise for frightening his horses while learning to drive a motorcar. Rosebery also showed concern about his diction and Churchill wrote, "I will take your advice about elocution lessons, though I fear I shall never learn to pronounce my S properly."[19] By the autumn Rosebery was assuring Churchill, "It is a great pleasure to me, both for your father's sake and your own, to see you whenever you like."[20]

For the next few years Churchill tried to persuade Rosebery to take the lead in forming a middle "party wh[ich] shall be free at once from the selfishness & callousness of Toryism on the one hand & the blind appetites of the Radical masses on the other." The risks would be great, Churchill said, and "only the conviction that you are upholding the flag for which my father fought so long & so disastrously would nerve me to take the plunge."[21] Rosebery warned him not to "compromise your career by premature action."[22] He himself was morbidly passive and viscerally unreliable, "not a man to go tiger-shooting with."[23] He cherished his independence and (what Churchill called in a cancelled passage in *Great Contemporaries*) "his superiority to the common truck."[24]

Sometimes Rosebery literally held aloof. In August 1903 he wrote to Churchill from Bad Gastein:

> Here I am on a lonely peak, above but not in sight of all the Kingdoms of the world. It is an unspeakable solitude where the farming policies of [the Duke of] Devonshire and J[oseph] C[hamberlain] appear as phantoms from another world.[25]

This was a facetious reference to Chamberlain's campaign to abandon free trade for imperial protection, the issue that caused Churchill to quit the Tories for the Liberal party in 1904. Rosebery also opposed tariffs, arguing (in a curious anticipation of the anti-Brexit case) that "a great commercial country like ours cannot reverse a commercial system, on which so much prosperity has been built, on a hypothesis."[26] But far from embracing allies, he insisted on ploughing his own furrow.

By 1905 Churchill was becoming disillusioned with Rosebery, who annoyed him by stating that, as a qualification for office, eloquence was worth less than proven administrative ability. Rejecting Churchill's "poisonous insinuation" that this referred to him and Lloyd George, Rosebery professed to favour the promotion of "young talent" rather than "the system by which ministerial Struldbrugs...claim office till they drop into unregretted graves."[27] Worse still, Rosebery withheld crucial assistance over Churchill's biography of his father. He first claimed that he had burned his recollections of Lord Randolph. Later he said that they had turned up but refused to let Winston see them, evidently intent on publishing his own memoir.

Oddly enough, Churchill told a different story in *Great Contemporaries*, asserting that he did not want to incorporate Rosebery's work into his own, particularly as he had described Lord Randolph at school as a "scug."[28] Rosebery tried to mollify Churchill with lavish praise for his "marvellous picture of a gifted, complicated ill-fated lovable being, written with the affection of a son" (though privately he thought it was *too* filial).[29] And he unconvincingly referred to his own memoir as an advertisement for Churchill's biography. But the episode rankled, and years later Rosebery's son was startled by a Churchillian growl: "*Your* father called *my* father a scug."[30]

> ***Here I am on a lonely peak, above but not in sight of all the Kingdoms of the world."*** —Rosebery to Churchill

Churchill was further alienated when, on the eve of what proved to be a crushing Liberal victory at the polls, Rosebery disowned the party's policy of gradual advance towards Irish Home Rule. To his mother Churchill wrote, "Rosebery has I regret to say greatly injured himself by his reckless speech. Parties do not forgive this kind of unnecessary quarrelsomeness at critical moments."[31] They remained on intimate terms. On becoming Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in the new government, Churchill told Rosebery, "They bought me cheap."[32] Rosebery treated him to health bulletins. He was plagued by insomnia: "After a good night I am a man, after a bad night I am a mouse."[33] A month later, in March 1907, Rosebery wrote: "influenza and malaria make a diabolical combination. My only comfort is that I am not in office. In that I thank God hourly if not momentarily."[34] Edward VII himself deplored Rosebery's barren self-isolation. In an involuntary tribute to the Earl's enigmatic character, the King urged him "to rise like a sphinx from your ashes."[35]

In similar vein Sir Edward Grey, Liberal Foreign Secretary, had once said that Rosebery's genius elevated him above the crowd: "It's as if God dangled him amongst us by an invisible thread." But sitting "godlike, above the melée," as Grey's biographer put it, Rosebery became an increasing irrelevance.[36] He was certainly far-sighted. He visualised the Empire as a Commonwealth of Nations, predicted that the *entente cordiale* with France would lead to war with Germany and divined that Liberalism would be squeezed between Conservativism and Socialism. But he was a Whig oligarch among progressive democrats, the last British Prime Minister never to have sat in the Commons. Churchill exclaimed to Gardiner:

> What a mind, what endowments that man has! I feel that if I had his brain I would move mountains. Oh, that he had been in the House of Commons! There is the tragedy. Never

Left
Political cartoon showing Prime Minister William Gladstone dancing with Lord Rosebery, wearing a kilt and a crown

> to have come into contact with realities, never to have felt the pulse of things—that is what is wrong with Rosebery.[37]

This was the burden of Churchill's essay in *Great Contemporaries*. Rosebery carried into "current events an air of ancient majesty."[38]

Still Friends

In person Rosebery remained supremely gracious. When Churchill's engagement to Clementine Hozier was announced, he wrote to Winston:

> I have seen and admired your bride, and honestly believe that you have the fairest prospects of happiness. I am sure too that such a marriage will be an incalculable solace and assistance in your public career, so brilliant and successful and affluent of future distinction...just as an ill-match is hell, so a fortunate one is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.[39]

As Churchill pursued radical social policies, the political gulf between the two men widened. Despite his theoretical dedication to *noblesse oblige,* a dedication Churchill shared, Rosebery opposed the introduction of old age pensions. He also attacked Lloyd George's People's Budget, denouncing it as "Socialistic" and defending dukes as "a poor but honest class."[40] Churchill was scathing about his performance, describing it as ignorant, inaccurate, inconclusive, tedious and feeble beyond words: "He really reminds me of a rich selfish old woman grumbling about her nephew's extravagance."[41]

In 1911, the Parliament Act restricted the power of the House of Lords. After speaking against it and voting for it, Rosebery never again entered that chamber. He became, as the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote, "a complete outsider in national affairs."[42] Churchill saw him occasionally and still delighted in his scintillating talk, which was likened to a fountain playing in the sunlight. He had learnt much from Rosebery, not least from his political failure, his crippling dilettantism, his lack of bulldog spirit. And Rosebery did Churchill one last service, urging him to write about "Duke John,"[43] as he dubbed the victor of Blenheim, and lending him John Paget's *Examen*, a rebuttal of Macaulay's indictment of Marlborough. Churchill told Rosebery that this book had cleared away some of the difficulties he felt about writing a biography of "'Duke John.' (That would be rather a good title wouldn't it?)"[44]

In his final years Rosebery's health deteriorated and he described himself as a "well-preserved corpse."[45] When Prime

Minister he had cheered himself up by humming "Rule Britannia." As Churchill did not fail to mention in *Great Contemporaries*, Rosebery died to the strains, played on the gramophone at his instruction, of the Eton Boating Song.

Piers Brendon *is author of* Churchill's Bestiary: His Life Through Animals *(2018) and former Keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre.*

Endnotes

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2. A. G. Gardiner, *Prophets, Priests, and Kings* (London: Alston Rivers, 1908), p. 278.
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4. Robert Rhodes James, *Rosebery* (London: Phoenix, 1995), p. 25.
5. E. T. Raymond, *The Man of Promise: Lord Rosebery* (London: Unwin, 1921), p. 34.
6. T. F. G. Coates, ed., *Lord Rosebery: His Life and Speeches*, Vol. I (London: Hutchinson, 1900), p. 463.
7. Marquess of Crewe, *Rosebery*, Vol. II (London: John Murray, 1931), pp. 491 and 493.
8. R. F. Foster, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 339–40.
9. James Lees-Milne, *The Enigmatic Edwardian* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988), p. 97.
10. Lord Rosebery, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1906), pp. 34–35 and 120.
11. *Ibid*., pp. 79 and 199.
12. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, p. 11.
13. Crewe, *Rosebery* II, 659. Rosebery's most recent biographer plausibly discounts the theory (advanced in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and elsewhere) that he suffered a nervous and physical breakdown resulting from terror about being implicated in a homosexual scandal at the time of the trial of Oscar Wilde. It is true that Rosebery had been adored by a pederastic schoolmaster at Eton and was reputed in homosexual circles to be what his (and Wilde's) accuser, the Marquess of Queensberry, called a "Snob Queer." He also collected pornography, indulged in smoking-room ribaldry and took care to open his own letters. But Rosebery had been happily married (to Hannah Rothschild), and his health problems seem to have been largely caused by "the unique pressures of his post as Prime Minister." (Leo McKinstry, *Rosebery: Statesman in Turmoil* [London: John Murray, 2006], pp. 363 and 366.)
14. *Churchill* I, p. 313.
15. Rhodes James, *Rosebery*, p. 418.
16. CHAR 1/25/19, Rosebery to Churchill, 21 July 1900, Churchill Archives Centre (CAC), Cambridge.
17. CAC, CHAR 1/25/26, Rosebery to Churchill, 3 September 1900.
18. CAC, CHAR 1/29/7, Rosebery to Churchill, 20 February 1901.
19. McKinstry, *Rosebery*, p. 455.
20. CAC, CHAR 1/29/36, Rosebery to Churchill, 23 September 1901.
21. *Churchill* II, p. 47.
22. CAC, CHAR 2/2/20, Rosebery to Churchill, 12 October 1902.
23. Rhodes James, *Rosebery*, p. 258. This was Tim Healy's verdict.
24. CAC, CHAR 8/579/40.
25. CAC, CHAR 2/8/51, Rosebery to Churchill, 10 August 1903.
26. McKinstry, *Rosebery*, p. 460.
27. CAC, CHAR 2/22/84, Rosebery to Churchill, 4 May 1905. Rosebery's amusing but specious rhetoric led him astray: although Swift's Struldbrugs grew old, they did not die.
28. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, pp. 8–9. "Scug" was Etonian slang for boor.
29. *Churchill* II, p. 141.
30. Rhodes James, *Rosebery*, 215.
31. CAC, CHAR 28/27/48, Churchill to Lady Randolph Churchill, 28 November 1905.
32. Rhodes James, *Rosebery*, p. 462.
33. CAC, CHAR 1/65/11–12, Rosebery to Churchill, 13 February 1907.
34. CAC, CHAR 1/65/23–24, Rosebery to Churchill, 5 March 1907.
35. Rhodes James, *Rosebery*, p. 463.
36. G. M. Trevelyan, *Grey of Falloden* (London: Longmans Green, 1937), pp. 80 and 76.
37. Gardiner, *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*, p. 280.
38. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, p. 9.
39. CAC, CHAR 1/73/70, Rosebery to Churchill, 15 August 1908.
40. Rhodes James, *Rosebery*, p. 465.
41. *Churchill* II, 327.
42. G. K. A. Bell, *Randall Davidson*, vol. II (Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 869.
43. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (London: George G. Harrap, 1947), p. 18.
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45. McKinstry, *Rosebery*, p. 490.

Churchill, the Admiralty, and Scotland

By Robin Brodhurst

It was in Scotland that Winston Churchill was first offered the position of First Lord of the Admiralty. Churchill, as Home Secretary, was staying with Prime Minister H. H. Asquith at Archerfield late in September 1911 and had been playing golf when the Asquith asked him "quite abruptly" whether he would like to go to the Admiralty. Churchill immediately responded that he would. The driving force behind this appointment was the need to impose on the Admiralty a Naval Staff, and the first choice had been Richard Haldane, a Scot, who had created an Army Staff at the War Office. Haldane, however, was by then in the House of Lords, and both Asquith and Churchill deemed it essential that the leader of such a high-spending department should be in the Commons, so Haldane gave way, although holding the view that it would have been better if he had gone to the Admiralty for a year, so as to impose the new Naval Staff, while Churchill held the War Office for that year and then went to the Admiralty.[1]

One of the greatest perks of the job of First Lord was the use of the Admiralty yacht *Enchantress*. She was a purpose-built yacht of 4000 tons, and Churchill used her extensively to visit both Royal Naval bases and fleets throughout his peacetime service as First Lord. In the three years that followed his appointment before war was declared, Churchill spent a total of eight months on board *Enchantress*. She had a crew of ten officers and 186 men and was a sister ship of the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*. Churchill used her for two main purposes. The first, as mentioned, was to visit the Royal Navy, but just as important was to host politicians and friends. We tend to forget, in this age of instant communications via email and sat-phone, that earlier eras did not have that convenience, so Churchill would make a point of meeting politicians and others as he made a voyage by calling in at small ports, embarking them, carrying on his conversations and discussions, and then dropping them off at the next port. Much of this can be followed in his correspondence, as invitations are issued and arrangements are made.

In 1911 Churchill limited his visits on board *Enchantress* to the south coast. *Enchantress*, according to Admiral Fisher, was not a good sailor. He wrote to Churchill on 10 November 1911: "I confess I think it *would* be a good thing if I had a further talk with you and of course I should love the *Enchantress* (*but not* at sea!!!) She's damnable at sea!"[2] Churchill visited Portsmouth four times in November, usually for two nights at a time, once to escort the King and Queen out of Portsmouth harbour on their way to the Delhi Durbar and always to visit naval establishments. He did not, however, venture further than Portsmouth in those early months.

North to Scotland

It was not until the summer of 1912 that Churchill paid his first official visit to Royal Naval establishments in Scotland. He had visited *Enchantress* often in spring 1912, sometimes for a week at a time, but his longest trips in British waters were in August and September. He started on 19 August at Chatham, and worked his way up the east coast, via Sheerness, Harwich, Cromer, and Grimsby, before reaching Rosyth on 29 August. Here he inspected the dockyard before sailing to Dundee and St Andrews and then Cromarty, where he inspected Torpedo Boat Destroyers (TBDs) and submarines on 3 September.[3] *Enchantress* then sailed to Aberdeen, where Churchill disembarked on 5 September,

RIGHT
The USS Wasp (CV-7) in Scapa Flow, 1942

re-joining her two weeks later at Greenock on 13 September for a cruise among the islands of the Inner Hebrides on the west coast, calling at the Clyde shipyards, and then Lamlash on the Isle of Arran, Colonsay, Mull, Oban, and back to Greenock on 24 September. He returned south on *Enchantress* via the shipyards at Barrow-in-Furness and Birkenhead, and then Holyhead and Devonport, before disembarking at Portsmouth on 3 October. Among those who spent time on board during this period were Oliver Locker-Lampson (Conservative MP, who lived at Cromer); J. A. Spender (editor of the *Westminster Gazette*); Sir Edward Grey (the Foreign Secretary); Lord Morley (Lord President of the Council), who joined at Newcastle and stayed until Aberdeen; and Lord Fisher, then a once and future First Sea Lord. On the southward journey *Enchantress* called at Criccieth to embark David Lloyd George, his wife, and daughter for a day's cruise.

Much of Churchill's interest in Cromarty and Scapa Flow was in their defences (as well as those of Hull) since these were likely to be threatened in any war against Germany. There had been discussion in Cabinet on Cromarty and Scapa Flow in July. Churchill was adamant, having "spent a week in this wonderful natural harbour," that Cromarty was "incomparably the finest [harbour] on the East Coast of Great Britain."[4] He was determined that it should have a floating dock and floating workshops so as to maintain and repair heavy ships, as well as defensive batteries, expecting the Treasury to pay up without question. Churchill far preferred Cromarty to Rosyth as a base, writing a Memorandum for the Naval Staff on 5 October explaining that "a fleet leaving Cromarty comes almost immediately into the open sea, instead of having to make its way down 17 or 18 miles of difficult channel, affording many opportunities to mines and submarines.... The docks and dredged channel at Rosyth cannot be counted upon for 4 years; the temporary base at Cromarty could be brought into existence in 6 months."[5] Given the close proximity to the bright lights of Edinburgh, it was not wholly surprising that many Royal Naval officers preferred Rosyth!

Right
Churchill Barrier 1 built at Scapa Flow in response to sinking of HMS Royal Oak

Churchill naturally paid attention to his constituency of Dundee when he paid these official visits, usually managing to fit in a short visit, and he made a major speech in Dundee on 12 September before embarking on the second part of his voyage on board *Enchantress*. In that speech he proposed a form of devolved government to each part of the United Kingdom, forming a sort of federal constitution. Dundee was famous for "Jute, Jam, and Journalism." The last of these included *The Dundee Courier* (founded in 1801 and still in existence), the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* (founded in 1877 and also still in existence), *The Daily Record* (founded 1895), and *The Sunday Post* (founded 1914). Churchill made certain that all his visits and speeches were reported in all of them.

At War

The summer of 1914 was busy, and *Enchantress* was fully used, as in 1913. As far as can be seen from her log, she was confined to the South Coast, with trips across the channel to Cherbourg and Dieppe. There had been plans for Churchill to visit both the Russian navy at Kronstadt and the German navy at Kiel in June, but although the visits by the Royal Navy did go ahead, Churchill did not accompany them. All that is certain is that he did not visit Scotland at this time.

Once war was declared on 4 August, Churchill remained at first in London before his odyssey to Amsterdam. There was as far as can be traced only one visit to Scotland, which is not mentioned in either the Official Biography or *The World Crisis*. In *The Gathering Storm*, however, Churchill recalls visiting the Fleet at Scapa Flow

Left
Cromarty Harbour: "Incomparably the finest [harbour] on the east coast of Britain"—Winston S. Churchill

and Loch Ewe in September 1914 and staying with Admiral Jellicoe so as to visit many ships and meet most of the senior officers. His concentration was firmly fixed elsewhere, initially on Amsterdam, and then on the Dardanelles. This is in contrast to 1939, when he was appointed to the Admiralty on 3 September and immediately visited the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow on 15 September.

Churchill's first visit to the Fleet during the Second World War is well documented. He left London by train late on 14 September and arrived at Wick the next morning, transferring to Scapa and the flagship of the C-in-C, Admiral Sir Charles Forbes, HMS *Nelson*. Here Churchill discussed the naval situation and the safety of the anchorage, which had been a matter of considerable discussion in Cabinet before, on the 17th sailing to Loch Ewe, on the west coast, where most of the Fleet lay at anchor. *Nelson*, to Churchill's surprise, had sailed without an escort because there were not enough destroyers. Churchill reflected that most of the senior officers in the previous conflict had been appointed by him, whereas the present senior officers had all been junior officers in 1914–15 and were mainly unknown to him.[6] The problems, however, all seemed much the same. The principal problem was that Scapa Flow, while the right place to control the northern exit from the North Sea, was not yet safe from attack by U-boat. It had not been safe in 1914 and again was unsafe in 1939. The defences had been starved of money between the wars, like so much else. He stayed a second night on board *Nelson*, disembarked on the 18th, and drove back to Inverness. On his return to London from Inverness, Churchill was met by

the First Sea Lord, to be informed that one of the Royal Navy's seven aircraft carriers, HMS *Courageous*, had been sunk in the Bristol Channel. It was to be closely followed by another disaster, this time in Scotland.

The poor defences of Scapa Flow received their greatest blow in October 1939. Churchill had repeatedly warned that the defences were not secure and he was proven right, when, at one o'clock in the morning of 14 October, Germany's U-47 torpedoed HMS *Royal Oak*, with the loss of 839 lives. In the First World War there had been two attempts by U-boats to enter the anchorage. Both had been defeated. Now, at the first attempt, Kapitänleutnant Gunther Prien, commanding U-47, managed to achieve his great success. Churchill was appalled. As his daughter Mary later said, "[He] felt the loss of life very much. He realised what it all meant, the loss of the great ship, the loss of the men—and what it meant in terms of the war."[7]

It was not until well into the New Year that the First Lord managed another trip to see the Home Fleet in Scotland. Churchill departed from London by train on the evening of 6 March and arrived in Glasgow the next morning. On 7 March, he embarked on board Forbes's flagship and accompanied the Fleet through the Minches and back to its anchorage at Scapa Flow, which was now considered safe, and where they would meet those parts of the Home Fleet that had been based at Rosyth during their absence from Scapa. Churchill paints a marvellous picture in *The Gathering Storm* of their voyage by day and night through these restricted waters, explaining that the waters were narrow and intricate, requiring exact navigation by the Master of the Fleet, the navigating officer of the flagship. Just as they were

UNDER HIS MASTER'S EYE.

Scene—*Mediterranean, on board the Admiralty yacht "Enchantress."*

Mr. Winston Churchill. "ANY HOME NEWS?"

Mr. Asquith. "HOW CAN THERE BE WITH YOU HERE?"

Left
First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill hosts Prime Minister Asquith aboard HMS Enchantress

about to depart at lunch time, this officer was struck down ill, and so "a very young-looking lieutenant who was his assistant came up on to the bridge to take charge of the movement of the Fleet. I was struck by this officer, who without any notice had to undertake so serious a task requiring such perfect science, accuracy and judgement. His composure did not entirely conceal his satisfaction."

Churchill's passage to Scapa Flow was interrupted by an air raid on the anchorage, which dropped mines on the main entrance, forcing Forbes to delay his entrance for twenty-four hours while they were cleared. The delay not being acceptable due to his needing to return to London, Churchill was transferred to a destroyer in a cutter, rowing the mile between ships, and taken into Scapa Flow by what the commanding officer of the destroyer referred to as "the tradesmen's entrance," the Switha Sound.[8] Churchill soon found his way on board HMS *Hood*, where he was entertained by Admiral Whitworth, commanding the Battle Cruiser Squadron, spent the night, and inspected ships and the new defences the next day. He caught the night train to London on the evening of 10 March and, once back at the Admiralty, issued a clutch of minutes reflecting all that he had discussed with both Admirals Forbes and Whitworth. Churchill reported to the Cabinet that he considered the Scapa Flow anchorage to be 80% secure, and that "the German aircraft, which... had been seen dropping objects in one of the entrances to Scapa had been mistaken for our own machines which had been co-operating with the defences for training purposes at the time," a useful lesson for future avoidance of friendly fire incidents.[9]

> ***He realised what it all meant, the loss of the great ship, the loss of the men."***
>
> —Mary Soames on her father

Within days Churchill was caught up first in the planning, and then in the implementation of the Norway campaign, so he had no time to visit Scotland, let alone any other Royal Naval establishment. On 10 May he became Prime Minister and left the Admiralty. As Prime Minister he was to make many journeys to Scotland, both to embark for trans-Atlantic voyages to meet President Roosevelt and to visit Royal Naval facilities, but above all to visit Combined Operations training establishments, which were often based on the west coast of Scotland. Here he could see active preparations being made for the sort of operations he so dearly loved. Scotland, and its Royal Naval ports and bases, were close to the heart of Churchill, and he visited them as often as he could.

Endnotes

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2. Lord Fisher to Churchill, 10 November 1911, in Randolph Churchill, ed., *Winston S. Churchill,* Companion Volume II, Part 2, *1907–1911* (London: Heinemann, 1969), p. 1327.
3. TBDs were the early version of destroyers with the initial purpose of defending the battle fleet from attack by torpedo boats.
4. Churchill to Lord Haldane, 26 September 1912, in Randolph Churchill, ed., *Winston S. Churchill,* Companion Volume II, Part 3, *1911–1914* (London: Heinemann, 1969), p. 1649.
5. *Ibid*., Churchill memorandum, dated 5 October 1912, p. 1652.
6. Forbes had in fact served at the Dardanelles in 1915 as executive officer on board the flagship HMS *Queen Elizabeth* before being appointed Flag Commander to Jellicoe. He remained in the Grand Fleet until the end of the war, ending as Captain of HMS *Galatea*.
7. Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, Vol. VI, *Finest Hour, 1940–1941* (London: Heinemann, 1983), p. 62.
8. Commander J. T. Lean, commanding HMS *Punjabi*.
9. Minutes of the War Cabinet, Martin Gilbert, ed., *The Churchill War Papers,* Vol. I, *At the Admiralty, September 1939–May 1940* (London: Heinemann, 1993) pp. 867–68.

Robin Brodhurst *is author of* Churchill's Anchor: Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound (*Pen and Sword, 2000*)

Churchill in Dundee, 1921

By David Stafford

By 1921 the popularity of Prime Minister David Lloyd George's Liberal-Conservative coalition was waning, and election talk was in the air. As a senior member of the Cabinet, Winston Churchill's own political future was seriously at stake. Since 1908 he had been a Liberal MP for Dundee. He once described it as "a seat for life," but the rise of the Labour Party meant he could no longer take this for granted. The city, Scotland's third largest, was dominated by the jute industry, and the population was heavily working-class. As a result of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, the electorate had tripled and now also included thousands of women. The city's slums were notorious for poor housing; drunkenness was rife; and the post-war slump meant unemployment had reached crisis proportions. Children walked hungry and shoeless in the streets.

Churchill rarely visited the city more than once a year. It was a long and tedious journey by rail from London. Besides, in local businessman Sir George Ritchie, he benefited from an excellent constituency agent who kept him in touch with the city's affairs. By now, however, even the normally sanguine Ritchie was seriously worried about the impact of Labour on local Liberal support. Disenchantment with the Government's austerity programme, he warned Churchill in June, was a serious threat to his seat. The influential Secretary of the Jute Workers' Union in the city, John Sime, thundered publicly and often that Churchill was "born a Tory, is still a Tory, and always will be a Tory." Furthermore, Churchill's violent denunciations of Sinn Fein meant that the city's Irish voters, once his strong supporters, had also turned against him. A local anti-drink campaigner and socialist, Edwin Scrymgeour, had by now emerged as a serious electoral rival.[1]

Thus it was that when Churchill arrived in Dundee for his annual visit that September, he ran into serious hostility. Riots by the unemployed had engulfed city streets only days before. Dozens of shop windows were smashed. A crowd of thousands lustily singing the Red Flag besieged the home of the Lord Provost, and the police made dozens of arrests. Anger at both Churchill and the government in London was palpable. Churchill had hardly checked into the Royal Hotel before he was confronted by a delegation headed by Sime angrily demanding the immediate recall of Parliament and the amendment of the unemployment laws. When Churchill met with the City Council the next day, the atmosphere was likewise frosty. As the local MP, he had his constituents' interest to promote. Being a Cabinet Member, however, meant he also had to defend Government policy. It was an impossible task. The mood was made worse after one of the Council's Labour members began by furiously accusing the Cabinet of a "brutal and callous" response to the unemployed. Churchill hit back by pointing out how much the government had provided in benefits since the war and blaming a recent wave of strikes for weakening the economy.

Yet the fractious and often emotional council meeting left not just its audience dissatisfied. Churchill himself was deeply discomfited. What he had seen with his own eyes had clearly shocked him. Dozens of shops still had windows boarded up. Many children were visibly in what he described as "a savage and starving condition." Back at his hotel he sat down and wrote a heartfelt personal letter to Lloyd George confessing that he had become convinced that there was "very great ground for complaint" about the Government's unemployment policy.[2]

Right
Churchill speaking at Kinnard Hall at 1908 Dundee by-election, when he was first elected the local MP

The Caird Hall Speech

As Colonial Secretary and one of the few Liberal ministers in the Conservative-dominated coalition, Churchill could do little to appease Dundee's anger about economic and social issues. As a national rather than local actor, however, he was able to turn his 1921 visit to Dundee into a personal triumph.

On the following day, Saturday, 24 September, Churchill delivered a speech he had been carefully preparing over the summer at Dunrobin Castle in the Highlands. The venue was the recently completed concert hall named after James Key Caird, a local jute baron and philanthropist who had also sponsored Sir Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic. With its neo-classical grandeur and acoustically top-rated auditorium, Caird Hall held out the hope of a more prosperous future for the city on the River Tay. To ensure a sympathetic audience, Ritchie had made the event a ticketed affair. But this was a radicalized Dundee. Hundreds of entry tickets were forged, and only at the last minute were their holders barred from entering. Outside, a hostile crowd of several thousand sang socialist songs, and an unsuccessful effort was made to rush the hall. A heavy police presence attended the proceedings.

Still, despite an occasional heckler, inside Churchill found a responsive audience as he delivered yet another of his many masterful speeches. More importantly, the national press gave his talk widespread coverage. It was in fact a grand civic event, and the hall swelled with between three and four thousand people. The Lord Provost presided, and the platform included many local worthies, including Sir George Ritchie himself, as well as representatives of the Liberal and Conservative Parties. As a significant straw in the political wind, the Lord Provost opened the evening by stressing that he was chairman only in an official capacity. Personally, along with many others present, he had strongly supported the Government during the war. But since then, he told his listeners, many things had happened of which he did not approve. Here was a worrying portent for the future of the Coalition, as well as for Churchill himself.[3]

Having been alerted—and possibly stimulated—by the Lord

Dunrobin Castle

Provost's provocation, Churchill opened his speech by accepting that the present post-war period was a time of great social distress and anxiety where everyone was still suffering from "the grievous wounds of the war," the imprint of which they would all carry to their graves. From this dark opening, he guided his audience step by step towards a brighter future that echoed familiar sentiments he had been expressing throughout the year. "I look forward confidently," he eventually concluded amidst cheers, "to an ever closer association between the United States and the British Empire, for it is in the unity of the English-speaking peoples that the brightest hopes for the progress of mankind will be found to reside."

How was this future to be reached? Churchill's answer was by following the path of reconciliation. This was the time, he declared after moving on from his sombre opening scene, "for composing differences, for assisting each other, for leaving alone all quarrels and co-operating in the rebuilding as quickly as possible of the threatened prosperity of the country. Classes and nations must help each other." One way was to settle war debts and re-establish a healthy and prosperous system of tariff-free international trade. Another was for the Great Powers of Europe, as well as of the Pacific, to create a climate of peaceful co-operation. Here he looked ahead to the near future and the forthcoming international naval disarmament conference to be held in the American capital. "I have high hopes of this Washington Conference," he told his listeners. "It marks the re-entry of the United States into the responsibilities and difficulties of world politics," and, he added, made him confident of the Anglo-American future.

Of course, perils awaited. Not surprisingly, Churchill pronounced that the greatest of these was Bolshevism. Earlier that month the *Dundee Advertiser* had carried a full-page appeal request-

Caird Hall

ing donations for famine relief in Russia, where millions were starving in the aftermath of the Revolution and Civil War. Children were often abandoned and reduced to eating grass, roots, and rubbish. In total, some thirty-five million Russians were suffering. "One of the world's greatest granaries," Churchill declared, "has been reduced through four years of Socialism and Bolshevism to absolute starvation." Worse, he added, Lenin and Trotsky had killed without mercy all those who opposed them and now lived off the wealth of those they had dispossessed. This claim rang true to his audience. In a despatch from Helsinki, the local paper had recently reported that sixty-one people had been shot in Petrograd for being implicated in the latest "plot" against the regime; most, it seemed, were "men of education, including two professors and a famous sculptor." Churchill's attack on the perils of Bolshevism concluded on a familiar note. Domestic supporters had been doing their best to disrupt the economy through strikes and disputes and "to ruin us here in Britain." Luckily, Churchill added in a typical aside that drew approving laughter, "we always seem to get these foreign diseases in a less acute form."

Churchill then asserted that the more immediate threat lay in Ireland, where a truce between Sinn Fein and Britain in the Irish war of independence had been declared that July. This was the centrepiece of his talk, and the one his audience was most anxious to hear. Again, reconciliation was the central theme. Past quarrels now had to be put aside, and this included, he stressed, differences between the Conservatives and Liberals themselves on how to deal with Ireland. But if the message was reconciliation, his tone was firm. In its offer of Dominion status to southern Ireland, the Government had gone "to the utmost limit possible." So far, the negative response of Eamon de Valera, Sinn Fein's leader, had been disappointing and puzzling. True, he was "riding

a nationalist tiger," and allowance had to be made for that. Nonetheless, Churchill told his audience that he was still uncertain where the Irish leaders stood. "I only know," he said, "where we stand. We have reached the end of our tether." This prompted cheers in the audience.

Churchill then added a sobering note by raising the prospect of an independent Irish Republic and what it would mean. He painted a dark and ominous picture of what could lie ahead: a fortified frontier between north and south with hostile armies on each side; constant fear that the Irish Republic was intriguing with other countries against Britain, possibly by giving them submarine bases; a tariff wall between the two nations; and hundreds of thousands of Irishmen living throughout the Empire immediately being declared "aliens" if war broke out between Britain and Ireland. "What a ludicrous and what an idiotic prospect is unfolded before our eyes," he declared. "What a crime [Sinn Fein] would commit if...they condemn themselves and their children to such misfortunes." To head off this dark future, a conference was clearly needed. It would be wise to be outspoken, and foolish to encourage false or dangerous hopes. It had to be a *successful* conference. "Squander it," he warned in words clearly designed for the ears of de Valera, "and peace is bankrupt."[4] His final words linked Ireland's fate to his broader vision for Britain:

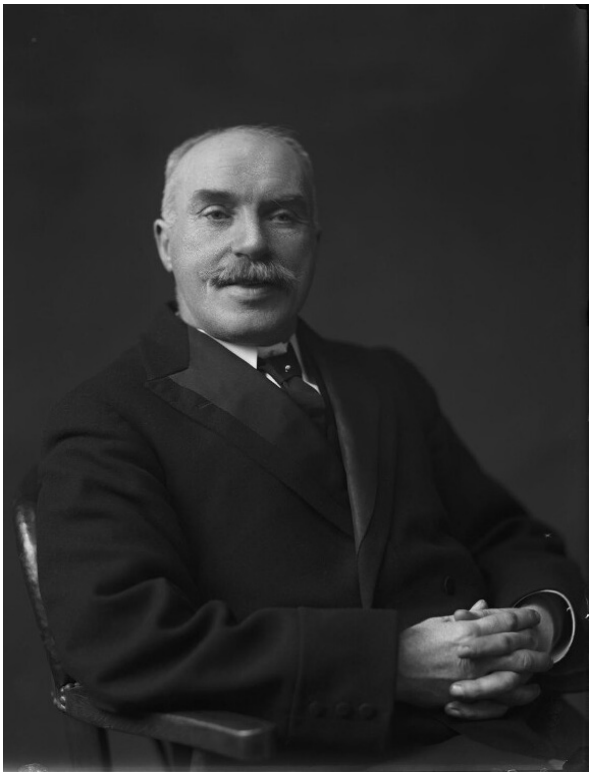
> When in moments of doubt or hours of despondency we fear that the course of events we are pursuing towards the Irish Sinn Feiners is repugnant to some of our feelings...we must cheer ourselves by remembering that a lasting settlement with Ireland—a healing of the old quarrel, a reconciliation between two races—would not only be a blessing in itself inestimable, but with it would be removed the greatest obstacle which has ever existed to Anglo-American unity, and that far across the Atlantic Ocean we should reap a harvest sown in the Emerald Isle.[5]

Peacemaker

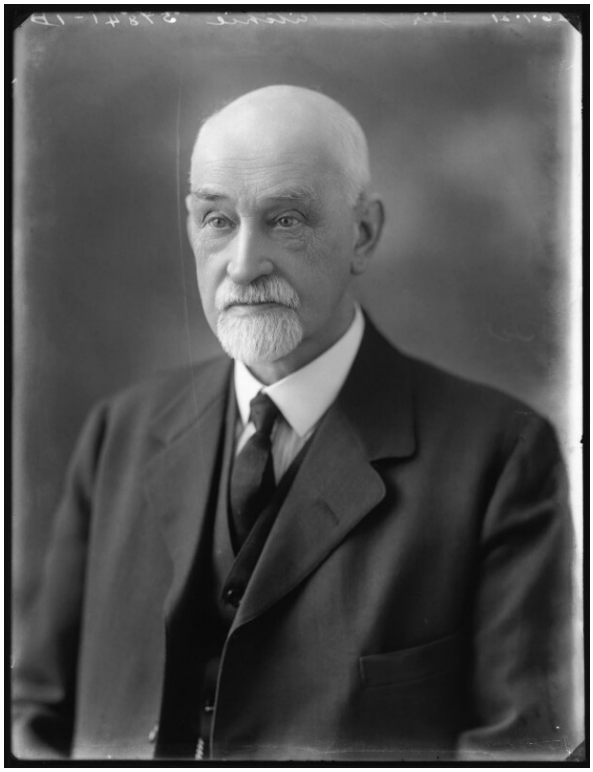
The speech did little to alter minds in Dundee about Churchill's suitability as their MP. After he finished speaking, Churchill had to exit by the back door and be hastily driven to his hotel. More than a year later, the governing coalition collapsed, and Churchill was defeated in the general election that followed. Neither Lloyd George nor the Liberals would ever again head a government in Britain. For the first time, Labour formed the official opposition. Before that, however, Churchill's Caird Hall speech had guaranteed his selection as one of the chief British negotiators in talks with Sinn Fein that culminated in the creation of the Irish Free State. This, along with his settlement of Britain's residual obligations in the Middle East during his time at the Colonial Office, meant that Churchill, contrary to his image as a belligerent warmonger, could now legitimately claim to be a peacemaker.

Churchill's final two years as MP for Dundee marked an important step in his political rehabilitation. It had been sixteen years since his first biographer, Alexander MacCallum Scott, had identified him as a potential prime minister. The Dardanelles campaign in 1915 had put a brutal end to that perception. Yet by the autumn of 1921, the words "statesman" and "leader" were again being attached to Churchill's name. In an editorial entitled "An Essay in Statesmanship," *The Times* declared that "Discarding the debased coinage of party politics," Churchill in his Dundee address "used the nobler currency that once used to pass and will, we trust, pass again between British public men and the British public."[6]

Even more outspoken was an article in the weekly magazine *Outlook*. "Were I an ambitious young backbencher," declared its anonymous author, "I would hitch my wagon to the star of the Colonial Secretary, a star that once seemed to be waning to telescopic dimensions, but of late has rapidly waxed from the third to the second magnitude and, in my opinion, will go on waxing. Winston seems to be the only one in the Cabinet with a sane and comprehensive view of world politics." This was all the more remarkable a declaration because the magazine traditionally supported the Conservatives, who had long loathed Churchill as a traitor to their cause. It was an intriguing straw in the wind hinting at a major shift in the political landscape. Indeed, only three years later, Churchill would return to the Conservative fold—



Left
Ediwn Scrymgeour, Scottish Prohibitionist candidate who defeated Churchill at Dundee in 1922



RIGHT
Sir George Ritchie
Churchill's constituency agent in Dundee

although no longer as a Scottish MP"—proudly don his father's robes as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and confidently imagine that his next major move would be into 10 Downing Street.[7]

Endnotes

1. Sir George Ritchie to Churchill, 17 June 1921, in CHAR 5/24, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge; for a broad overview of Churchill and Dundee, see Tony Paterson, *Churchill: A Seat for Life* (Dundee: David Winter and Son, 1980).
2. Churchill to Lloyd George, 23 September 1921, in CHAR 5/24.
3. *Dundee Advertiser*, 26 September 1921.
4. For the text of the Caird Hall speech, see Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches*, Vol. III, *1914–1922* (New York: Chelsea House, 1974), pp. 3128–31.
5. *Ibid*., p. 3140.
6. *The Times*, 26 September 1921.
7. *Outlook*, 22 October 1921.

David Stafford *is author of* Oblivion or Glory: 1921 and the Making of Winston Churchill *(Yale University Press, 2019), from which this article is adapted. He formerly served as Project Director of the Centre for the Study of the Two World Wars at the University of Edinburgh.*

A Scottish Honorary Degree

By Ronald I. Cohen

Readers will be surprised to learn how few honorary degrees were conferred on Winston Churchill in the course of his long life. Although the practice of granting a degree *honoris causa* is more than five centuries old, the practice was not common until this past century. Even then, when such recognitions began to proliferate, Churchill was granted only fourteen in all. Only one of these came before he was prime minister (he was at the time Chancellor of the Exchequer). Three more came during the Second World War, all from North America, and ten more followed after the hostilities. The first of the post-war degrees that he received from universities in the United Kingdom was presented by the University of Aberdeen.

In some respects, the recognition from Scotland was not surprising. Churchill had already received the Freedom of the City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh in October 1942, the first of forty-two City Freedoms that he ultimately garnered worldwide. On that occasion, Churchill said to the audience in Usher Hall:

> I have myself some ties with Scotland which are to me of great significance—ties precious and lasting. First of all, I decided to be born on St. Andrew's Day—and it was to Scotland I went to find my wife, who is deeply grieved not to be here today through temporary indisposition. I commanded a Scottish battalion of the famous 21st Regiment for five months in the line in France in the last war. I sat for 15 years as the representative of "Bonnie Dundee," and I might be sitting for it still if the matter had rested entirely with me.

Dundee Denial

It did not rest with him. In the general election of 1922, Churchill lost a bitter battle for the seat at Dundee that he had held since 1908, standing fourth of six candidates. "Winston thought his world had come to an end. Not since the days of his lonely childhood, or even at the time he had lost the Admiralty, had he felt such a depression of spirit." He never visited the city again. Years later, in October 1943, the Dundee City Council attempted a rapprochement and voted to "do ourselves and the community great honour by making him a Burgess of the city." In response, Churchill's Private Secretary, T. H. Beck, rebuffed the offer in the following terms:

> I am desired by the Prime Minister to acknowledge your letter of October 8th, inviting him to accept the freedom of the City of Dundee, and to thank you for your courtesy. Mr Churchill regrets he is unable to accept the honour which you have proposed to confer upon him.

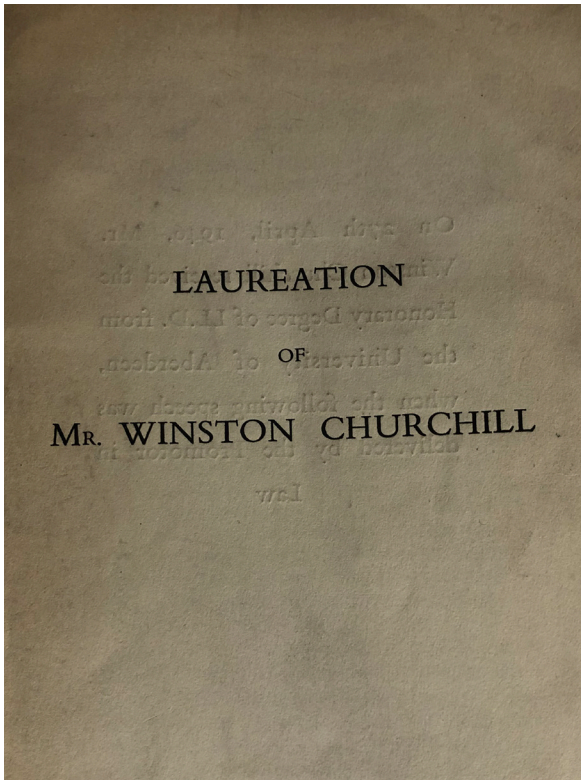
Churchill ultimately became a Freeman of all of the other cities he had ever represented in Parliament and of five Scottish cities, but his bitter electoral disappointment at Dundee after fourteen and a half years as the local MP prevented him from adding Scotland's fourth-largest city to that list.

Aberdeen

Not quite three years after his refusal to become a burgess of Dundee, Churchill happily acceded to the invitation of the Aberdonians. On 27 April 1946, Churchill Day, the city gave him a double-barreled welcome by granting him the Freedom of the City at the Music Hall followed by an Honorary LL.D. at the University's Mitchell Hall. "Wherever he went...there was welcoming laughter and applause, and this swelled to a roar as he moved up in the procession through a packed audience which had waited long and patiently for his arrival."

Churchill spoke at both ceremonies. At the Music Hall he said, "Aberdeen is also famed for warm

RIGHT
Program for honorary degree ceremony at the University of Aberdeen.


LAUREATION
OF
MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL

hearts, keen affection and bright eyes. I am deeply moved by your welcome. I regard it as a special compliment to an Englishman to be invited to receive the Freedom of this City and a degree from its eminent University, and the generosity and kindness which you show me are a joy indeed."

At the university, Professor T. M. Taylor, The Promoter in Law, recalled the observation of Edmund Burke that the ancient spirit, though not always visible, "never fails to come forth whenever it is ritually invoked, ready to perform all the tasks which shall be imposed upon it by public honour." Professor Taylor then fixed Churchill's role:

> In that crisis of our fate, there was but one man who could perform the saving act of ritual invocation: it was his supreme service so to do. Under his leadership, the ancient antithesis between word and deed ceased to hold; great oratory took on the quality of action, and in an hour of defeat the speeches of Mr. Churchill were the equivalent of victory. They fused and integrated our people, raising them to the height of their destiny, till the nation felt itself to be one—one in the face of present peril, one also with the historic and heroic past.

Turning to the Vice-Chancellor, Taylor concluded:

> I do not presume even in summary to assess the contribution which Mr. Churchill made to our final deliverance. That is a task which will occupy the commentators of the future. But this I will say: to-day, we stand—let us all realise it—in the presence of one of the great figures of history. No distinction which we or any other mortal may confer, can add one scintilla to the lustre of his renown; but we may ask to have the honour of entering in the album of our graduates, the name of the greatest living Englishman.

In response, Churchill rose to face what was described as "a tumult of ecstatic cheers" and told the audience:

> The Promoter in Law said a great many things which it is not perhaps good for a man to hear—it is going beyond what he should know or think about himself. I have been profoundly touched by his words. I humbly trust that history may not dissent from some at least of the conclusions which he placed before you.
> ...
> As you know I have never accepted the suggestion that it was I who roused the British nation. I had the great honour and blessing, as I must regard it, to be gifted with those forms of expression, derived from long Parliamentary practice, which enabled me to be the exponent of the feelings which surged through almost every man and woman from Land's End to John O'Groats in those days when we stood alone against the most awful forms of tyranny which had ever been known among men.

Thus ended Churchill's contribution to this very special Aberdeen occasion, which was followed by a procession of students chanting the traditional Scottish verses, "Better lo'ed ye canna be, Will ye no come back again." ✌

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

"Keep Their Silliest People in Order"

Churchill and the Scottish Pillar Box War

By David Freeman

To return to power in 1951, Winston Churchill needed support in Scotland as much as he did anywhere else. During the general election campaign, therefore, he dutifully traveled to Glasgow, where he spoke at St. Andrew's Hall on 17 October. If the Conservatives were to win, Churchill told his audience, "We shall advise the creation of a new Minister of State for Scottish Affairs of Cabinet rank, to work in Scotland as Deputy to the Secretary of State."[1]

The strategy worked. The Tories eked out a seventeen-seat majority in the election by securing thirty-five of the seventy-one Scottish seats. Churchill became prime minister for the second time and appointed his former Chief Whip, James Stuart, as Secretary of State for Scotland. Stuart in turn recommended that Alec Douglas-Home, who had recently succeeded his father to become the 14th Earl of Home, be appointed as the promised Minister of State.

The selection of the middle-aged earl did not appeal to Churchill. As a member of the House of Commons, then styled Lord Dunglass, Douglas-Home had been Parliamentary Private Secretary to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and had accompanied his leader to the infamous Munich Conference, which Churchill had vociferously denounced. Stuart stood firm, however, and Churchill relented. "All right—have your Home sweet Home," he huffed. "The Prime Minister's personal directive to me was characteristic and terse," Douglas-Home later recalled, "'Go and quell those turbulent Scots, and don't come back until you've done it.'"[2] There was indeed to be turbulence.

Less than four months after Churchill's return to Downing Street, King George VI died and was succeeded by his elder daughter. The new sovereign was undoubtedly the second reigning Queen Elizabeth—in England. During the reign of Elizabeth I, however, Scotland had been the independent realm of James VI, who succeeded the Virgin Queen to become King James I of England in 1604. It stood to reason, many Scots believed, that in their country the daughter of George VI was not Elizabeth II but simply Elizabeth Regina with no ordinal designation. The Royal Cypher, therefore, should be "ER" and not "E II R" in the northern kingdom. This fine distinction, however, was initially lost on the Post Office.

The Battle Begins

"On 28 November 1952," historian David McLean writes, "an official party assembled at the junction of Gilmerton Road and Walter Scott Avenue in Edinburgh's newly-built Inch housing estate to formally unveil Scotland's first 'E II R' pillar box." Letters of protest had been sent to local authorities expressing disapproval over what some viewed as an inappropriate Royal Cypher for use on Scottish letterboxes. Consequently, "five police officers were present at the unveiling ceremony."[3]

Despite the box receiving special protection, vandals soon struck. Within thirty-six hours the Royal Cypher had been defaced with tar, and two unsuccessful attempts to blow up the box followed within two months. McLean continues the story:

> Finally, on 12 February 1953 at around 10 pm, the Inch was rocked by an explosion that could be heard a mile away. The three-month-old

Queen Elizabeth II Pillar Boxes
English version (left)
Scottish version (right)

> post box had been completely blown apart courtesy of a gelignite bomb. The next day a small Lion Rampant was discovered draped across its smouldered ruins.[4]

Questions in the House

With the coronation of the new queen approaching, an issue that some regarded as a matter of national pride and others viewed as infinitely trivial reached the floor of the House of Commons. During Prime Minister's Question Time on 1 April 1953, John Rankin, a Labour MP for Glasgow, "asked the Prime Minister if he will arrange that the Royal Cypher is not placed on new pillar boxes." To this Churchill replied, "Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to place any general restriction on the use of the Royal Cypher. Its use for any particular purpose is a matter for detailed decision in relation to the circumstances of the case."

But Rankin had only just started. He now launched into his follow up: "May I ask the Prime Minister if there is any truth in the statement that, in order to strengthen the case for the retention of the numeral, the Government have issued a circular offering £2,000 reward for information leading to the identification of Elizabeth I of Scotland, dead or alive? Is that now Government policy?"

If Rankin was trying to get the Prime Minister worked up, he succeeded. "When I think of the greatness and splendour of Scotland," Churchill answered, "and her wonderful part in the history not only of this island but of the world, I think they really ought to keep their silliest people in order."

Still Rankin kept charging: "Then may I ask the Prime Minister what steps he is taking to discover the authors of this poster?" But Churchill had had enough of this political posturing. "It is not part of my duties as Prime Minister to seek out and work up into all these small ferret holes," he replied. "If the Hon. Gentleman has any information to give to Her Majesty's Government, or to the police, the Secretary of State for Scotland is entirely at his disposal."[5]

Clearly Churchill viewed the controversy as nothing more than a tiresome gadfly. Nevertheless, a resolution was required. The residents of Inch were justifiably concerned about public safety, and nobody wanted the violence to spread. As the Government's "boots on the ground" in Edinburgh, Douglas-Home in conjunction with Stuart back in Westminster quietly arranged that new pillar boxes in Scotland should be decorated only with images of the crown. There would be no Royal Cypher. In time for the coronation, a truce had been established. ✌

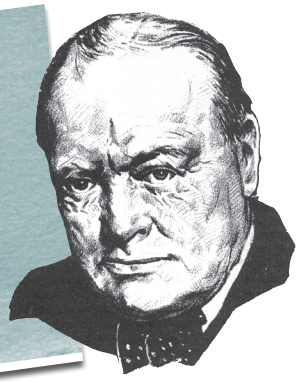
Endnotes

1. Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, *1950–1963* (New York: Chelsea House, 1974), p. 8276.
2. Alec Douglas-Home, *The Way the Wind Blows* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), pp. 102–03.
3. David McLean, "Lost Edinburgh: The Queen and the Exploding Postbox," *The Scotsman*, 3 September 2014.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Parliamentary Debates, 1 April 1953.

David Freeman *is editor of* Finest Hour.

MICHAEL McMENAMIN'S

ACTION THIS DAY



125 Years Ago
Summer 1895 • Age 20
"I Shall Never Know Such a Friend Again"

Mrs. Everest, Winston's beloved childhood nanny, died on 3 July. He wrote to his mother the same day: "She was delighted to see me on Monday and I think my coming made her die happy. Her last words were of Jack. I shall never know such a friend again."

Churchill continued to have his mind on politics and had no intention of making a career in the Army. Writing to his mother on 16 August, he said, "It is a fine game to play—the game of politics—and it is well worth waiting for a good hand—before really plunging....The more I see of soldiering—the more I like it—but the more I feel convinced that it is not my métier. Well, we shall see—my dearest Mama."

On 24 August, Churchill again wrote his mother: "I find I am getting into a state of mental stagnation....It is a state of mind onto which all or nearly all who soldier—fall. From this 'slough of Despond' I try to raise myself by reading & re-reading Papa's speeches—many of which I almost know by heart—but I really cannot find the energy to read any other serious work." He went on to tell her that he intended, once situated in London, to study one or two hours a week with a scholar in Economics or Modern History because "I need someone to point out some specific subject to stimulate & to direct my reading in that subject."

Churchill was keenly aware of the deficiencies in his education. He wrote his mother that "my mind has never received that polish which for instance Oxford or Cambridge gives. At these places one studies questions and sciences with a rather higher object than mere practical utility. One receives in fact a liberal education." Churchill intended to give himself just such an education, which he did throughout his time in India.

100 Years Ago
Summer 1920 • Age 45
"Frightfulness"

A difficult issue for the coalition Government of David Lloyd George that summer was the debate in Parliament over the decision to relieve General Dyer from his command. The previous year, Dyer had ordered his troops to open fire on an unarmed crowd of Indians at Amritsar, killing 300 and wounding 2,000. A Government Commission investigated the incident—the Amritsar Massacre—and, eight months after the tragedy, condemned the general's actions. Dyer was relieved of his command, and Churchill—the Secretary of State for War and still a member of the Liberal Party—had the Army Council refuse Dyer any further command. Many Conservative MPs were upset by these decisions. Although the Tories belonged to the coalition, they had a free-standing majority in the House of Commons and, with it, the power to bring down the Government. Motions were filed by both Conservative MPs and opposition Labour MPs to reduce the salary of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, who was a Liberal and only the third practicing Jewish man to serve in the Cabinet.

Montagu led off the debate for the Government and did poorly. One MP observed in a note to the Prime Minister that "Montagu thoroughly roused most of the latent passions of the stodgy Tories and many of them could have assaulted him physically, they were so angry." Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Ulster Unionists, spoke after Montagu and pointed out that Dyer's actions had been approved at the time by both his Commanding Officer and the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. Andrew Bonar Law, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the Conservative party, who was directing the debate for the Government, thought things were going so badly that he called upon Churchill earlier than he had intended in order to save the day. Churchill proceeded to do just that.

After patiently explaining the procedural process whereby an officer is relieved of command, Churchill suggested that the Government Commission's findings "might furnish the fullest justification for removing him from his appointment." When another Member shouted "No, No!" Churchill replied, "I am expressing my opinion. When my honourable and gallant Friend is called, he will express his opinion. That is the process we call Debate." Turning to the merits of Dyer's dismissal, Churchill said the Amritsar Massacre was "an episode which appears to me to be without precedent or parallel in the modern history of the British Empire....It is an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation." Churchill then described "certain broad lines...every officer had to follow, certain questions he had to ask" and explained that Dyer had failed in this.

After that, Churchill referred to "one general prohibition which we can make. I mean a prohibition against what is called 'frightfulness.' What I mean by frightfulness is the inflicting of great slaughter or massacre upon a particular crowd of people, with the intention of terrorizing not merely the rest of the crowd, but the whole district or the whole country." Churchill then smoothly segued into an attack on Bolshevism, one that he knew would appeal to his Conservative critics. His hatred of Bolshevism, he said, "is not founded on their silly system of economics, or their absurd doctrine of an impossible equality. It arises from the bloody and devastating terrorism which they practice in every land from which they have broken, and by which alone their criminal regime can be maintained."

The Times described Churchill's speech as "amazingly skillful...not only a brilliant speech but one that persuaded and made the result certain." The Government easily defeated the two motions filed against it over Dyer's relief from command.

75 Years Ago
Summer 1945 • Age 70
"A Blessing in Disguise"

With Germany defeated, an election was scheduled for 5 July, the first general election in the United Kingdom for ten years. The results would not be announced until three weeks after the polling day in order to allow the votes of military personnel overseas to be counted. This meant that Churchill would attend the Big Three summit conference in Potsdam that month without knowing the outcome of the election. Consequently, Churchill invited Labour's leader, Clement Attlee, to attend the conference with him in order to provide continuity in the event that the election results did not return the Conservatives to power.

Churchill arrived in Berlin with his daughter Mary on 15 July and had his first meeting with President Truman the next morning. He told his daughter that he liked the new President immensely and was sure he could work with him. At lunch that day with Truman and US Secretary of War Henry Stimson, word was received that the first atomic bomb had been successfully tested. On 18 July, Churchill hosted a lunch for Truman. While they were alone together for two hours, he unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Truman to drop the term "unconditional surrender" conceived by President Roosevelt and to find "some other way" to describe their peace terms to Japan. Notwithstanding their failure to agree on this point, Truman told Churchill that it was "the most enjoyable luncheon that he had had for many years."

That evening, Churchill dined alone with Stalin. At the plenary session that afternoon, Stalin had assured Churchill that there would be free elections in Poland. Now, Stalin gave him the same assurance with respect to the nations of Central Europe. He also told Churchill that the Conservatives would have a majority of eighty in the election. Churchill was skeptical of both the promise and the prediction.

Stimson gave Churchill a private briefing on 22 July about the effects of the atomic bomb test—a one-mile circle of total devastation. On 24 July, Truman finally told Stalin of the successful test. The Soviet leader did not appear surprised, but the explanation for that would only be discovered later. On 25 July, the conference was interrupted for two days so that Churchill and Attlee could return to Britain to learn the results of the election. On 26 July, it was announced that Labour had won in a landslide, with a majority of 146 seats in the House of Commons. Clementine Churchill told her husband that "It may well be a blessing in disguise." "At the moment," Churchill replied, "it seems quite effectively disguised." ✌

Books, Arts, & Curiosities

Delicious Reading

Annie Gray, ***Victory in the Kitchen: The Life of Churchill's Cook***, Profile Books, 2020, 400 pages, £16.99. ISBN 978–1788160445

Review by Katherine Carter

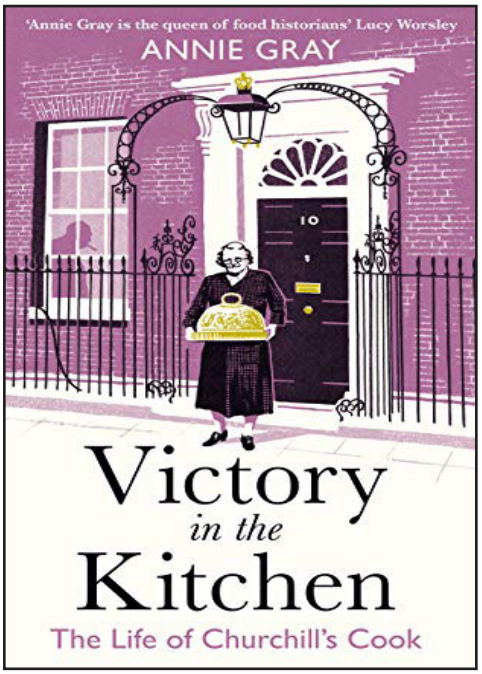
Health Warning: While reading this scrumptious book, be prepared to crave deliciously rich-sounding recipes. I first spoke with Annie Gray early in 2018 when she had got in touch as part of her research for the book she was writing about Georgina Landemare, the Churchills' cook. She was keen to visit Chartwell and get a feel for the house where Mrs. Landemare had spent so much time and where I am fortunate enough to work. Annie wanted to learn what had been the layouts of the house both before and after the Second World War so as to understand what had been the logistics involved in Mrs. Landemare's job.

Many people write about Chartwell, and lots of them visit over the course of their research, but on her first visit I sensed in Annie a real desire to understand Mrs. Landemare's life there. Where had the kitchens been? Which were the stairs she would have used? How close were these in relation to the service lifts, and where had the family dined? Annie was combing meticulously through menus, fridge bills, wine lists, and other archival documents.

The increasing attention to the staff that served the upper classes of early twentieth-century society has been interesting to observe for those of us who run historic houses in Britain. "The Downton Abbey effect," as I call it, means that the team at Chartwell are now asked almost as much about butlers, maids, secretaries, bodyguards, and cooks as about the Churchills themselves. But can the stories of the staff make interesting histories unto themselves? With *Victory in the Kitchen*, Annie Gray emphatically proves that they can.

The start of Mrs. Landemare's life is a fascinating insight into the lives and status of servants in the Victorian era, when working life began in what today we would regard as childhood. And of course the subject of food is never far away. Descriptions of Edwardian dinners and their mind-boggling levels of intricacy—an evening at Blenheim, for example, often included seventeen courses—shows just how pivotal to the aristocracy was the role of food.

The book does have some *longueurs*. The chapter about Mr. Landemare, Georgina's future husband Paul, runs nearly forty pages before he meets his wife-to-be. I can, however, forgive this on account of being introduced at this point to some mouth-watering Parisian dishes, including the heavenly sounding *batons au chocolat* (chocolate and vanilla flavoured almond pastry biscuits dipped in meringue and chopped pistachios).



Mrs. Landemare started working for the Churchills in 1933, initially hired for individual occasions as a "jobbing cook." With Winston's reputation as a lover of food, and the importance of meals to his politicking—es-

pecially during his "wilderness years" of the 1930s—a great deal of pressure came with the role of cook at Chartwell. By the time the Second World War began in 1939, however, Mrs. Landemare had made herself indispensable not only to Winston Churchill but to the entire family.

For the rest of Churchill's career, entertaining remained a vital tool for his political discussions and policy-making. Mrs. Landemare well understood this, as illustrated by her own account of her reluctance to abandon the Downing Street kitchen during an air raid because she was in the middle of preparing a mousseline pudding for the Prime Minister. Perhaps most remarkable was her ability to create delicious and satisfying meals during the war despite rationing (though with the addition of diplomatic coupons and the help of further supplies brought from the productive gardens at Chartwell).

By delving into the life of Mrs. Landemare, we learn how one woman made her mark on history not on the world stage but from the kitchens. Her service and unswerving loyalty to the Churchills made her a vital cog in their lives for more than thirty years. It is little wonder that Winston said that he could not have achieved what he had without her. You can experience why this was so yourself. Expect when you finish Annie Gray's superb book you will next find yourself buying Mrs. Landemare's very own *Recipes from No. 10*.

***Katherine Carter** is the Collections and House Manager at Chartwell.* ✌

That Other Hamilton Woman

Celia Lee, ***Jean, Lady Hamilton 1861–1942: Diaries of a Soldier's Wife***, Pen and Sword, 2020, £19.99.
ISBN 978–1526786585

Review by Andrew Roberts

Readers of *Finest Hour* who are familiar with Winston Churchill's role in initiating the Gallipoli campaign in 1915 will instantly recognise the name of Sir Ian Hamilton, the commander of that tragically doomed expedition. Churchill had recommended Hamilton, a distinguished Edwardian soldier and long acquaintance, to Lord Kitchener, the secretary for war, for that high command, which turned out to be an utterly poisoned chalice.

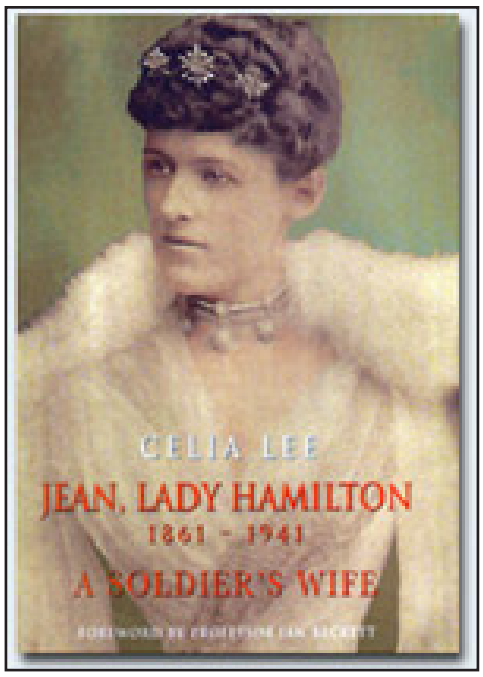
The young cavalry officer had been thrilled to come to the attention of the famous soldier, Ian Hamilton, who was twenty-one years his senior. Churchill's sixth book, *Ian Hamilton's March*, was written to honour his achievements in the South African war. They remained firm friends and shared many of the liberal, and indeed Liberal, beliefs of the day. Both were opposed to harsh peace settlements with the Boers in 1902 and the Germans in 1918.

Celia Lee has an unrivalled knowledge of the invaluable and detailed diaries kept by Jean, Ian Hamilton's wife, and has written a remarkable biography based on those intimate daily records of the life of a member of the Edwardian power elite. Jean, the daughter of a millionaire Scottish entrepreneur, had a profound effect on Hamilton's career at crucial moments. And through her deliciously gossip-ridden diaries we get many wonderful anecdotes about life in that gilded age.

It will be the many diary entries that concern Churchill and his wider family that will be of particular interest to fellow Churchillians. On their first acquaintance, Jean was not greatly taken with the "young man in a hurry," and it did not help that she caught him out in a mild social fib in 1902. Churchill had sent a formal decline of a dinner invitation, signed by his secretary, pleading his busy political schedule. Yet Jean's friend, Pamela Plowden, who Churchill was wooing, had already told her she could not attend because he was taking her out to dinner *à deux* that very evening. Jean mischievously had the letter framed and hung on a wall in her house for many years after.

She quickly warmed to Churchill, however, as he was a constant guest of her husband, and Jean and Winston shared a love of painting. In 1921 Jean paid £50 for a gorgeous picture of Ightam Moat, now a National Trust property in Kent. (Hamilton bequeathed the painting to Ightam Moat in his will.)

The many dinner table stories recounted by Jean in this volume include one from February 1910 that shows, in a way no official record could, the humanitarian in Churchill. As Home Secretary he said it weighed on his mind that he had just signed his first death sentence, on a man who had abducted a girl and brutally cut her throat in an alley. "I was



relieved," Jean wrote, "and said cheerfully: 'That would not weigh on my mind.' 'Think,' he said rather savagely, 'of a society that forces a man to do that.'" The discussion continued about the criminal liability of lunatics; Jean found Winston "sensitive and excitable."

During the First World War, Jean recorded her admiration for the war work conducted by Clementine Churchill, who organised canteens for women working in munitions factories. At a dinner towards the end of the conflict, the pregnant Clementine, worried about her family finances, even offered to give her unborn child to the childless Jean Hamilton. There could hardly be a more graphic example of the closeness of their families and friendship. That child was Marigold who, of course, was not given up but tragically died at the tail end of the Spanish Flu pandemic.

The friendship between the Churchills and the Hamiltons was sealed after the collapse of the Gallipoli catastrophe, when the two men worked hand-in-glove during the inevitable public Inquiry into all the things that had gone so badly wrong in that campaign. As the progenitor of the expedition and its commander, Churchill and Hamilton were in the forefront of the potential criticism, yet through their patient, factual and eloquent explanations of every stage of the operations, closely coordinated between them throughout the Inquiry, they encouraged the Dardanelles Report to place the blame where it deserved to fall, rather than primarily on them.

In 1919, the Hamiltons first rented and then purchased from the Churchills the beautiful country estate of Lullenden in East Grinstead in Sussex. These large-scale expenditures were, of course, entirely due to Jean's inheritance. It is worth noting that Ian Hamilton owned the shooting rights on the Chartwell estate and almost certainly introduced Winston to the property that became the most important to him, and to Churchillians everywhere.

Andrew Roberts' *most recent book is* Leadership in War *(2019).* ✌

The Boffin and The Dam Busters

Max Hastings, ***Operation Chastise: The RAF's Most Brilliant Attack of World War II***, Harper, 2020, 400 pages, $35
ISBN 978-006295363X

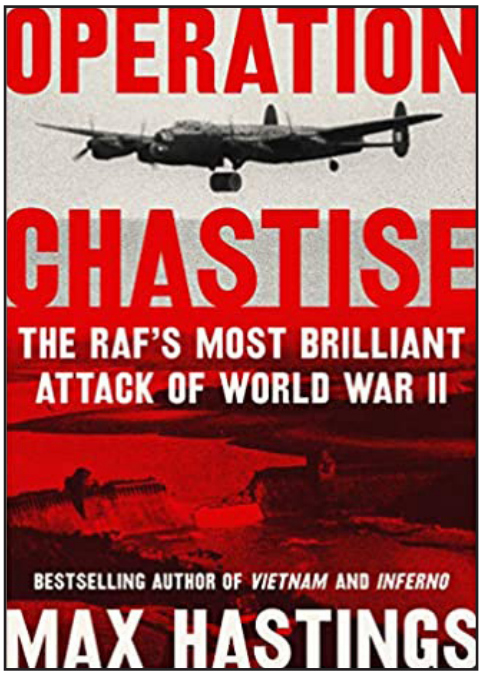
Review by Mark Klobas

Max Hastings' newest book, a history of the British effort to destroy three dams in the Ruhr Valley in May 1943—codenamed Chastise—allows him to draw upon the interviews he conducted for his 1979 classic *Bomber Command*. Building on new archival labors and recently published studies, Hastings provides a more detailed examination of the attack than in his previous book.

The basic facts are familiar to viewers of the 1955 film *The Dam Busters*, which dramatized the attack on the Möhne, Sorpe, and Eder dams. Breaching these three structures, it was argued, would cause enormous devastation in a region important to Germany industry. At the time, however, the airborne munitions capable of destroying the dams did not exist. Enter Barnes Wallis, a brilliant engineer employed by Vickers, who created a weapon called Upkeep, designed to explode in the reservoirs just behind the dams and collapse them under hydrostatic pressure. The attack on 16–17 May partly succeeded. The Möhne and Eder dams were both breached and much death and destruction inflicted in the communities downriver.

Hastings provides a readable overview of the attack from conception to legacy but focuses on three people in particular. The first is Wallis, a driven and eccentric individual whose postwar public persona as a "boffin" obscured his skills as a bureaucratic infighter. He came to the project by way of his work on the never-realized "Victory Bomber," which he envisioned could be equipped with bombs larger than what RAF aircraft of the time could carry. This led Wallis

to explore means for destroying dams and other large structures, moving from his initial vision of deep-penetration "earthquake" bombs (later to be realized with the development of the Tallboy and Grand Slam ordnance) to the idea of employing what amounted to enormous depth-charges. These would be skipped or "bounced" across the water in a way that would avoid torpedo nets and other underwater defenses so as to detonate close to a dam's base.



In 1942 Wallis tested the concept of bouncing bombs, proving their practicality. While the concept had many supporters, others saw it as a wasteful distraction. Foremost in this view was Arthur Harris, the head of Bomber Command and the second person of Hastings' three principals. Harris disdained Wallis' advocacy of precision bombing as a distraction from his own focus on area attacks, which he believed would win the war. In this Harris diverged from Winston Churchill. The Prime Minister saw the value of strategic bombing as a way to weaken the German war effort, but he never believed that it would in itself bring about the enemy's surrender. Harris' commitment to area bombing made him the primary obstacle to making the vision of Wallis a reality. Once, however, RAF chief Charles Portal lent his support to the project in February 1943, Harris ended his opposition.

Hastings notes that once Harris supported the mission to destroy the dams, he only had one significant decision to make: choosing who would lead the attack. The bomber chief's selection of Wing-Commander Guy Gibson, the third major figure in Hastings' account, was crucial. Though only twenty-four, Gibson was an experienced squadron commander with dozens of missions under his belt. The driven Gibson was more admired than loved by his men, but he possessed the skills necessary to organize and train the crew of 617 Squadron for their special mission in the mere two months available before water levels behind the dams reached their spring peak and would be too high for the Wallis plan to succeed. Hastings shows a group often portrayed as a collection of elite flyers to have been in fact a mishmash thrown together with only the barest understanding of what they were being asked to do. Yet in the end Gibson succeeded in training a squadron that enjoyed remarkable success, albeit at a disproportionately high cost in the lives of the men involved.

Hastings ends his book with a description of the *Möhnekatastrophe* caused by the destruction of the dams and an extended consideration of the strategic air offensive in general. While reaffirming his earlier conclusion that the bombing campaign's costs were greater than its value to Britain's war effort, Hastings pays generous tribute to the young airmen who risked their lives. Nowhere does he make his point more effectively than in his criticism of Harris, who failed to follow up on Operation Chastise. Subsequent attacks on the repair efforts to the dams would have required less effort than the initial raid, compounded the damage, and disrupted the Third Reich's war effort far more effectively than the continued pounding of German cities. While Hastings regards the aircrews as victims of the war rather than war criminals, he makes it clear that Harris's own crime was in failing to exploit to the fullest the sacrifices made by the men of 617 Squadron.

Mark Klobas *teaches history at Scottsdale College.*

How Churchill Opened a "Window"

Damien Lewis, ***Churchill's Shadow Raiders: The Race to Develop Radar, WWII's Invisible Secret Weapon***, Citadel Press, 2020, 389 pages, $27.
ISBN 978–0806540634

Review by Robert A. McLain

It is lamentable that the role of technology in the Second World War has received relatively little attention when

compared to major campaigns, particularly given its importance to winning the war. The conflict was fundamentally a technological race for better military intelligence and improved weaponry. In this regard, Damien Lewis's *Churchill's Shadow Raiders* reveals the crucial role of radar in defeating the *Luftwaffe*, itself a precedent for the Anglo-American landings in 1944.

A journalist by training, Lewis has written extensively on special operations. This was furthered in the summer of 2018, when he had the good fortune to gain access to the archives of the Telecommunications Research Establishment [TRE], which was Britain's principal wartime effort at radar intelligence and counterintelligence. R. V. Jones, one of the TRE's key scientists, suspected that the Germans had developed a short-range radar system to complement their longer-range "Freya" units. The deadly short-range *Würzburg* parabolic radars were in fact vectoring German night fighters to RAF bomber streams that resulted in staggering losses for the British. Jones was fascinated by photo reconnaissance and spent significant time at Danesfield House, the manor where young Sarah Churchill served as a skilled interpreter of aerial photos. There, in late 1941, Jones and an assistant examined images that seemingly confirmed the presence of a *Würzburg* emplacement on the French coast at the village of Bruneval.

Jones and his colleagues within the TRE saw a clear opportunity: steal this key technology. The installation sat close to the beach in an isolated area. French operatives, many of whom would be captured and executed later, reported only a thin German presence in the region. Jones shopped the idea of a "snatch and grab" operation to Professor Frederick Lindemann, Churchill's prickly confidant and scientific advisor. In a familiar pattern, Churchill jumped at the bold idea, only to face opposition from his own cabinet.

The opposition stemmed from the failure of Britain's first airborne raid, Operation Colossus, which had sought to hamper the Axis by destroying a key aqueduct in southern Italy. The successful destruction, however, had little effect on the Italian war effort, and Italian forces captured nearly the entire force of thirty-eight men from the newly formed Special Air Service commando team. Lewis spends nearly one-third of the book on Colossus. It makes for gripping reading, yet it detracts from the main subject.

Churchill overcame objections to the proposed assault at Bruneval, codenamed "Biting," by appointing the ardent Lord Louis Mountbatten to oversee special operations. Major John Frost, of the 1st Airborne Division, would lead the raid directly, with a force of 120 men. On the night of 27–28 February 1942, Frost and his paras dropped into the Bruneval area. The most gripping part of Lewis's work tracks the raid itself and the assault on the *Würzburg* installation. Speed was essential, because planners expected that German reinforcements would arrive in the area relatively quickly. The raiders initially cleared German bunkers, while others dismantled the *Würzburg* set under intense German fire. Having secured the key elements of the *Würzburg*, Frost and his men found themselves in a running gun battle as they moved towards the beach for a rendezvous with the boats that would ferry them to destroyers offshore. British commandos had seized a vital piece of Germany's air defense technology, at the cost of two killed and twelve wounded or captured. In stark contrast to Colossus, nearly the entire British force returned safely.

Lewis notes the far-reaching effects of Operation Biting. The resulting intelligence allowed a British scientist and mathematician, Mrs. Joan Curran, to perfect the use of "Window," the dropping of millions of thin aluminum foil strips to blind the *Würzburg* radar system. The only trouble was getting Bomber Command to adopt it as a means of suppressing Germany's deadly system of anti-aircraft guns and the night fighters that were vectored against the bomber streams.

TRE boffins lobbied for more than a year for the widespread adoption of Window, only to be refused out of the fear that the Germans would reciprocate against England's equally susceptible radar network. Jones saw this logic as nonsensical, arguing forcefully to the cabinet that the Germans undoubtedly already knew of Window. Neglecting to use the new system cost lives, as demonstrated by the 11,000 air crewmen and 1,600 planes lost while the political debate played out. These losses, however, settled the matter and resulted in one of the most devastating RAF raids of the war, the bombing of Hamburg in late July 1943.

The Bruneval Raid directly contributed to the success of the Hamburg operation. The losses of the RAF, though still immense, were undoubtedly reduced in future operations. Arthur Harris's prediction that the Nazis would "reap the whirlwind" resulted in large part because of Churchill's vision with regard to special operations.

Robert A. McLain *is Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton.*

The Turn of the Tide

Derek Leebaert, ***Grand Improvisation: America Confronts the British Superpower, 1945–1957***, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019, 612 pages, $35.00. ISBN 978–0374250720

Review by Leon J. Waszak

American leaders at the end of the Second World War, not yet confident of their nation's new role as the principal defender of Western democracy, initially looked to the British for guidance. That Britain thus assumed a role in animating US policy for the remainder of the 1940s and well into the late 1950s is the focus of a new study that author and historian Derek Leebaert calls the "grand improvisation."

Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946 is viewed by Leebaert as a symbolic "passing of the torch," when the gravity of responsibility started to shift from Britain to the US. This was not, however, a cut-and-dried departure. The speech was not widely appreciated at the time on either side of the so-called "special relationship." Many Americans thought that Britain sought to drag the US into yet another foreign entanglement, while British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin attacked Churchill, who had been voted out of office less than a year before, as a dangerous egotist and manipulator: "'E thinks 'e's Prime Minister of the world." Nevertheless, within a few years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which Churchill had more or less called for, had been created.

NATO notwithstanding, the relationship between Britain and the United States was becoming more complicated and led to serious disagreements over a wide range of interests from the Middle East to China, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. The British, for example, were reluctant to commit large numbers of troops to the Korean War in 1950 because they felt exposed in Hong Kong and Singapore and, by extension, in the Middle East. As the war in Korea expanded to include China, the British urged caution and direct negotiations with Mao Zedong, whose ascension to power in 1949 the US refused to recognize but which Britain accepted from the onset. The British also shared a concern that a major setback on the Korean peninsula—or worse, a general war resulting from it—might embolden Joseph Stalin to attack British interests in the Middle East.

Churchill's return to power in October 1951 by no means meant that Anglo-American relations were soon to improve. Many observers at the time believed that the election of Eisenhower in 1952 would usher in better coordination between the two "English-speaking" nations on a wide variety of international issues, given the long-established wartime relationship between Churchill and Ike. In fact, the divisions grew deeper, and the resentments became more evident, although these were not always seen in public.

From the US point of view, the British were a bundle of contradictions—an imperial power in decline subject to US financial underwriting yet having the audacity to assume an aura of moral superiority over the Americans who were paying their bills. This moral position was compromised not long after Churchill retired when Britain colluded with France and Israel to strike at Egypt in the Suez Crisis. Eisenhower's opposition to "Operation Musketeer" resulted in the diminution of both Britain and France as world powers. Leebaert observes that Ike's Vice President, Richard Nixon, saw fit to issue a "declaration of independence" from British authority.

This is history in the grand manner and with dramatic flair. Leebaert's book is a must read for all Churchillians and for those who want to know more, in detail, about Anglo-American relations during the early Cold War period.

Leon J. Waszak *is author of* Agreement in Principle: The Wartime Partnership of Wladyslaw Sikorski and Winston Churchill *(1996).*

Supporter Spotlight

This spring the oldest member of the International Churchill Society celebrated her 100th birthday. Ruth Lavine was born in Germany in 1920. Her family came to the United States when she was thirteen in order to escape the Nazis. Ruth earned her law degree from the University of Southern California in 1943 and became an estate planning attorney.

"My husband was in the US military during the Second World War. When we started dating in 1940, he would read Winston Churchill's most recent speeches to me, and we avidly followed his career. Our son Raymond told us about the Churchill Society, and joining was one of the best decisions we made. We took wonderful trips with other Churchillians and got to meet Lady Soames and Celia Sandys.

"After my husband died in 1994, I continued attending Churchill gatherings. I look forward to each one and meeting with all the wonderful people. I love history, and each conference gives me more insight about one of the greatest statesmen in history." ✌

Ruth Lavine with Mary Soames at the 20th International Churchill Society conference in Bermuda in 2003.

America's National Churchill Museum at Westminster College gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following individuals, corporations, and foundations who made leadership gifts in support of the Museum's 50th Anniversary in 2019. More than $1 million was raised to support ongoing preservation of the Museum and Sir Christopher Wren's church of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury.

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