

THE CHURCHILLIAN

Churchill Society of Tennessee



Winter 2025/2026 Edition

THE CHURCHILL SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE



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From the President

Dear Fellow Churchillians,

As we enter a new year, we have an exciting lineup of activities for CSOT.



Please don't forget to renew your membership. Any additional generous donations you can make will be put to good use in providing us with the best possible events in 2026.

You can resubscribe on our website - <https://churchillsocietytn.org/join-csot-pay-dues-1>

Calendar of events so far for 2026:

- March 28 Tea - Gary Stiles will discuss his new book "*A Prelude to Immortality, My Early Life*".
- June 14 Garden Party at the Beavers.
- July 18 Coffee with Winston featuring Tim Boyd
- August Coffee with Winston TBA
- October 15-17 ICS Conference in Philadelphia. Tickets: <https://winstonchurchill.org/2026-international-churchill-conference/>
- November 13 Annual Gala at Belle Meade. Keynote speaker TBA.
- November 29 Sir Winston's Birthday Party.

Additional events may be added.

Our membership continues to grow. With every event we pick up new folks. Please tell your friends and family about us so we can continue to thrive and preserve our history and the legacy of Sir Winston Churchill.

I look forward to seeing you all in the coming year. Until then be well and "Keep Bugging On"!

Yours ever,
Jim Drury



Churchill

2025 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

42nd International Churchill Society Conference

Washington, DC, October 9-11, 2025

A Summary of the Proceedings

Paul E. Forte PhD

Opening Session and Introductory Sessions

The 42nd Annual ICS conference, October 9-11, 2025, was held in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Capitol was the perfect venue to reflect on Churchill's time in Washington, especially his important visit from December 22, 1941, to January 14, 1942, when the Grand Alliance of which he dreamed actually took shape. It was also the perfect venue to underscore what might well be the salient issue of our time — leadership and how we may benefit from Churchill's example. The Alliance, which was built by unparalleled leadership, would prove the essential factor in Allied victory in Europe in 1945, and it would determine the course of post-war Europe through the remainder of the century. As ICS Chairman Jean-Paul Montupet put it: "Leadership, which encompasses a set of habits and disciplines, matters." National Churchill Museum Director Tim Riley observed that since its beginning in 1968, ICS has advocated leadership based on the principles of Western democracy — the rule of law, maintenance of free elections, and belief that liberty will triumph over tyranny — and will continue to advocate for such leadership. These principles, and the recognition that they are best secured by solid alliances — offer the best path to peace and stability for nations which desire to live freely in the 21st century.

The following is a summary of some of the sessions of the conference.

Mellon versus Churchill

Jill Eicher, Independent Scholar; Adam Howard PhD, Moderator

Jill Eicher gave a presentation on a little-explored facet of Churchill's career, namely his time as Chancellor of the Exchequer and his contentious relationship with Andrew Mellon, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury (1921-1932). Churchill was then still struggling to emerge personally and professionally from the disaster of the Dardanelles, which cost him his position as First Lord of the Admiralty and damaged his reputation. Mellon, an elder statesman, was at the height of his powers. The crisis unfolded over Britain's repayment of war debts, which Mellon insisted on and Churchill argued Britain was not in a position to do. Mellon didn't want to break Britain or drive it into bankruptcy, but feared that failure of a creditor to collect repayment would set a bad precedent. He was supported by American Conservative Republicans who averred that entanglement in European financial affairs would lead to great expense and prevent the U.S. from pursuing its own interests. Why a restructuring of the debt that would not kill the British economy could not be achieved remains unclear, as such far-reaching ideas as the transfer of colonies was briefly on the table, but it contributed to one of the worst decisions of Churchill's career, viz., returning Britain to the gold standard. Though not his decision alone — many longed to restore the imperial, pre-war status of the pound sterling as the world's reserve currency — pegging the pound to the pre-war U.S. exchange rate of \$4.85 was the wrong move. Britain's exports became expensive. Revenues fell, jobs were lost, domestic living standards worsened. Eicher's recreation of this period is a helpful reminder that while the U.S. has ultimately saved the troubled continent of Europe twice, and then spent immense amounts rebuilding it, it has always driven a tough bargain where finances are concerned, just as it is doing today with the Ukraine, which has been repeatedly told it must offer certain tangibles in exchange for badly needed military armaments.

Did Winston Churchill suffer a heart attack in Washington DC?

Allister Vale MD

British physician, toxicologist, professor, and Past-Censor of the Royal College of Physicians, Allister Vale gave an excellent and witty presentation aimed at reviewing the evidence used by Lord Moran (Charles McMoran Wilson), Churchill's personal doctor from 1940 until his death in 1965, to determine that Churchill had suffered a heart attack during his famous visit to Washington in late December 1941-Jan/Feb 1942, after Pearl



Harbor and Germany's declaration of war on the U.S., when he tried to pry open a stubborn window in the middle of the night. Moran's diagnosis had called much attention to himself in *Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival* (1966). Vale refutes Moran's conclusion. Allister Vale and John Scadding, the authors of *Winston Churchill's Illnesses: Courage, Resilience, Determination* (2018), conclude that Churchill did not suffer a heart attack on that night. Vale argues persuasively that while Churchill as the preeminent war leader and a man under great duress, not to mention his self-indulgent habits, meets the pre-test probability for a heart attack, his discomfort, which did not incapacitate him or return, was more likely angina or musculoskeletal pain. Vale cites various pieces of evidence, medical and circumstantial, to substantiate his claim. And he goes into overlooked medical archives containing the largely unread letters and papers of

relatives, and in addition to consulting the clinical notes of Sir John Parkinson, an expert on myocardial infarction who had personally examined Churchill in the weeks following the incident. Why Moran did not tell Parkinson that Churchill had experienced pain radiating down his left arm is odd. In any event, the heart attack diagnosis leaves us at pains to explain how Churchill could fly down to Florida the next day to bathe and swim, get himself back to the White House for more meetings afterwards, and later, on returning from Bermuda to England, even take control of the plane in which he, Moran, and others were traveling. The significance of this health episode is far from trivial. An actual heart attack would have confined Churchill to bed rest for weeks, caused alarm throughout the Alliance, affected the success of the North Africa campaign, resulted in jockeying for succession, and caused confused signals at a time when allied unity was paramount. Those interested in getting the whole story and understanding the early weeks of 1942 within the larger context of the war, as well as informing themselves about other controversial aspects of Churchill's health, should read Vale's now classic account.

Keynote Luncheon Address

Daniel Yergin PhD

Daniel Yergin provided an overview of a subject in which he has long been in command—oil as a system and lever of power. After a brief history of oil as a global commodity and source of energy, Yergin touched on themes familiar to readers since *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (1991), for which he won a Pulitzer. Churchill was among the first to see oil as the strategic asset it would become and pushed hard as First Lord of the Admiralty to acquire it for the Royal Navy on the eve of WWI. Churchill rightly recognized that Britain, an island nation with rich coal deposits but no oil, needed to convert its fleet to compete with Germany's. But oil shipments required a powerful navy and strong alliances. Yergin notes this move as analogous to Disraeli's earlier investment in the Suez Canal. Churchill saw oil as a critical success factor if a state was to attain "commanding heights," a position of mastery that annoyed Stalin. The history of the world would prove Churchill prescient in valorizing the need for oil, and in arguing that oil and energy more generally be drawn not from one but from multiple sources, for only in this way could it secure safety and prosperity. If Churchill were alive today, he would doubtless encourage the development of alternative sources of energy such as fusion and perhaps even wind and solar. For he was a man of science and technology who knew the energy needs of the future would be great, and that advanced planning was the key to survival.

Queen's Royal Hussars

Lt Louis Hoffman, Queen's Royal Hussars

The Queen's Royal Hussars have been an especially pleasing attraction at the ICS annual conferences in recent years. Churchill, who has been described as 'the greatest Hussar of

them all', was commissioned into the 4th Hussars in 1895, a predecessor of the current regiment. We enjoyed the remarks of Louis Hoffman, a young Dubliner who completed his studies at Trinity College and worked as a Parliamentary speechwriter before moving from the officer reserve to Sandhurst and a coveted place with QRH in 2023. Hoffman explained what it is like to live and eat in the halls in which Churchill lived and served, how the life of a Hussar is ruled by tradition, how peer pressure is exerted not only by the living but also by the dead. The Hussars of the past, their insignia, their weapons, their exemplary deeds all hang from the walls of their regimental headquarters. Hussars are united not just by their qualities and their values but by their origins, for units, even regiments, are recruited from the same regions. The Hussars, which have passed through many iterations since Churchill's time, are now commissioned as a mobile armored squadron whose main battle model will be Challenger 3, equipped with new weapons and protection systems, which it is expected will make it the most lethal tank in NATO. It is on the shoulders of young men like Hoffman that the future of democracy in Europe depends.

Stephen and Jane Poss Distinguished Churchill Lecture **Arthur Herman PhD**



The 2025 Poss Lecture was delivered by Arthur Hermann, historian and author of several acclaimed books, who set himself the task of discussing Churchill's legacy in light of the special relationship Churchill believed existed between the U.S. and the British Empire. This relationship was based on:

- 1) strategic unity, which was forged via the Atlantic Alliance;
- 2) the joining of science and technology, which in 1940 brought together British science and technology and U.S. industrial means and capabilities; and
- 3) the Anglosphere — the shared language, culture, and sense of values, which the U.S. inherited from Britain but made its own and which was held fast by the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

The relationship has had its ups and downs. Herman mentions such incidents as the challenges of prosecuting wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, where American commanders did not always know what they were doing; concerns at the National Security Council that China, which has been building out its telecommunications networks, might be accessing information from Britain; and various political developments that have caused strain, such as Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Brexit in early 2020, the future of NATO, and the war in Gaza. Yet, the two countries continue to remain strategic allies, as the recent \$42 billion

agreement between the U.S. and the UK to build out AI quantum technology, quantum sensing, and nuclear technology indicates. This is not likely to change, as there is much shared culture, strengthened by shared language, that binds them together.

My Early Life—Churchill's Autobiography

James W. Muller PhD, Hon. Douglas Russell, John Maurer PhD

Distinguished historian and Churchill editor James W. Muller led a panel focused on Churchill's *My Early Life: A Roving Commission*, newly edited by Muller and easily the most popular of Churchill's 43 books. Muller was joined by the Hon. Douglas Russell, author of *Winston Churchill As A Soldier: The Military Life of A Gentleman at War* (2025), and John Maurer, historian and author of books on the outbreak of WWI, Churchill's Grand Strategy, and the competition between Japan and the United States for control of the Pacific that led to Pearl Harbor. The panel discussed the detective work necessary to get at the truths about Churchill's career, such as his academic records, his awards and recognitions, and the way he actually evolved from certain positions, viz., his ambition to enter political life before his military service, his anti-Americanism before 1929, his opposition to naval disarmament and debt payments after WWI.

Literary Churchill: Shaping Leadership and Public Memory

Jonathan Rose PhD; Adam Howard PhD, Moderator



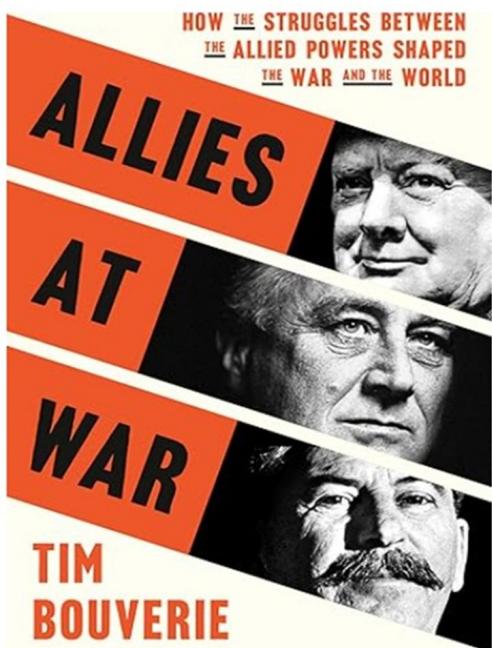
Jonathan Rose offered a refreshing take on Churchill. Rose is a literary scholar, not an historian or an economist or a political philosopher. He comes at Churchill as a writer and an artist. The difference in perspective is not trivial, because while Churchill is still regarded as the war leader *par excellence*, he chose to spend much of his free time with persons of non-military creative and scientific genius, including Charlie Chaplin, T.E. Lawrence, and Albert Einstein. And he was fond of theatre, which he made a point of attending. Rose underscores Churchill's curious and open mind, which helps to explain that while Churchill subscribed to many conservative positions, he stood with David Lloyd George and the Liberals for a decade, men who believed that the time had come to do more for the common people of the British nation than had Gladstone or Joseph Chamberlain. Indeed, Churchill helped to install such important social programs as Old Age Pensions, Disability Pensions, and National Health Insurance, which had their roots in Disraeli's Tory Democracy and which became the foundation of the modern British welfare state. Rose's perspective on Churchill restores a dimension often missing in today's rancorous discussions of British politics, namely, the humanism and broadmindedness that are a part of the Churchill legacy of leadership no less than the hawkish courage and determination to fight rather than yield.

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Other Churchillian Conversations

Randolph Churchill, President of the ICS Board of Directors, called attention to the new statue of Sir Winston Churchill to be erected at the Normandy British Memorial overlooking Gold Beach. The statue depicts Churchill saluting the more than 22,000 British soldiers, as well as American, Canadian, and other soldiers who gave their lives on June 6, 1944 and the days that followed to ensure the freedom of Europe. Designed by noted sculptor Paul Rafferty, it will enhance the structure designed by architect Liam O'Connor, which was erected in 2015 in response to the desires of veterans for a lasting tribute. Those interested in sponsorship opportunities are invited to contact the Normandy Memorial Trust.

Executive Director Adam Howard stressed the importance of studying history, which is critical if Churchill is really to be known. Without such study, Churchill's many decisions cannot be understood within their proper context. Howard noted that ICS will be relaunching its podcasts and partnering with universities to create inspiring public forums that feature Churchillian decision-making and leadership based on archival research.



Oxford historian Tim Bouverie spoke by video about his new book, *Allies at War: How the Struggles Between the Allied Powers Shaped the War and the World* (2025). As the title of his book suggests, Bouverie tells a different story than the one most of us are familiar with, with the big three coming together to defeat an unparalleled menace. He is admiring of the way the Allies worked toward a common cause but unsparing in his observations of the way in which various interests divided them, putting the Alliance at risk. Indeed, he states flatly that there was a "fundamental contradiction" at the heart of it, with the British and Americans fighting "an aggressive, totalitarian, ideological, and murderous, hegemonic power in the name of liberty, democracy, and the rights of small nations," while aligning with the Soviet Union, another "totalitarian, ideological and murderous power with hegemonic potential." This contradiction resulted in an uneasy state of affairs, which at times impaired joint action and explains why the Alliance broke up at the end of the war, and a long, cold war commenced. The issues that fractured the Alliance continue to divide West and East today.

Malcolm Venville, Director of *Churchill at War* (Netflix, 2024), spoke with Catherine Grace Katz, author of *Daughters of Yalta* (2020), about the craftsmanship and production process that mark his new film. In addition to interesting comments on the process by which his firm evolved, Venville explained his use of artificial intelligence, which enabled colorization of old black and white footage and the expedited the studio work necessary to the whole.

Presidents and Prime Ministers

Ann Compton, journalist and former ABC News Correspondent; Kate Anderson Brower, journalist and author of *The Residence*; Angela Ostrom, Moderator

This panel compared the roles, authority, and performance of British prime ministers and American presidents in the post-war era. Prime Ministers are more vulnerable because they lead a party, must build parliamentary coalitions to form a government, and can be ousted for non-confidence, while Presidents are largely secure in the time they are in office, having received at least a theoretical mandate from the people. Yet both types of leaders have been "slaves to crises." The relationship between them can prosper if both are on the same page, not necessarily of the same political persuasion, such as that of JFK and Harold Macmillan, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, George W. Bush and Tony Blair, potentially Donald Trump and Keir Starmer.

The speakers also discussed the way that developments are reported by the media. As long-time journalists who have worked with live coverage, film, videotape, personal correspondence and printed reports located in archives like the Miller Center at the University of Virginia and the Smithsonian, Compton and Brower both raised concerns about direct electronic media platforms, which do not so much create content as select it according to algorithms, shaping perspective. This sparked catcalls from some in the audience, who clearly distrust journalists and editors and think that social media has improved our understanding of events. This attendee found such behavior hard to countenance, not only on grounds of decorum, but also by the blatant disregard of falsehoods passing for truth that are daily generated by social media platforms and that are stifling informed decision-making, corrupting public discourse, and undermining governmental institutions.

Conversation: General H.R. McMaster PhD, with Robert Costa, CBS



H.R. McMaster, a four-star Army General who served as the 25th assistant to the President for National Security from 2017 to 2018, joined in conversation with Robert Costa of CBS after the gala dinner at the National Cathedral. McMaster's perspective is informed by his experience as NSC Chair, a position he held from February 2017 to March 2018. McMaster's was a very crowded hour in which many things happened that shed light on Donald Trump's leadership style. As McMaster relates in his 2024 book, *At War with Ourselves: My Tour of Duty in the Trump White House*, President Trump made some effective reversals of Obama/Biden policies, such as enforcing security along the Mexican border, supporting the plan for a U.S.- Canada pipeline versus Russia's Nordstream 2 pipeline, sanctioning Iran and Venezuela as providers of oil and gas, and dealing more forcibly with the Houthis in Yemen and Hamas. Yet Trump seems to have abandoned certain elements of his foreign policy

after his first year in office, and his inconsistency, followed by Biden's fecklessness, made the world a more dangerous place, with positions on Russia, North Korea, Iran, Venezuela, and China all shifting. Trump killed Qasem Soleimani and his terrorist Iraqi puppet, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, but he ignored subsequent Iranian and Iranian proxy-force attacks on the U.S. and allied forces. He also shifted from engagement with China to competition with it. This was partly due to the neo-isolationist alt-right *personae* who advised him, playing upon Trump's anxieties and insecurities to get what they wanted and ironically using the same talking points as Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In the end, McMaster argues, Presidential character, together with Trump's lack of "basic knowledge of how the government runs," his impatience in learning about it, and confusion about the roles his senior officials should play, resulted in a "tragic ending" to his Presidency in January 2021. Trump's sense of aggrievement and betrayal led him to abandon his oath to "support and defend the Constitution."

None of this was directly voiced by McMaster in his gala talk, no doubt out of deference to the sitting President who fired him, but those familiar with McMaster's book and its precursor, *Dereliction of Duty* (1997), about U.S. failure in the management of the Vietnam War, could draw their own conclusions, especially with respect to genuine leadership. McMaster makes some tough calls. Still, he says that despite its vagaries and frustrations, its disappointments and lost opportunities, public service offers "tremendous rewards." This is because the nation is larger than any one individual. "Those who undertake such service should "rise above faction in their desire to work for the common good."

Social highlights

The 2025 ICS conference was distinguished, as have so many others, by the quality and majesty of its venues. The Ritz-Carlton offered excellent base conference facilities and amenities. Larz Anderson House was the site of the first reception. Anderson is a stunning former stone diplomatic mansion now serving as a museum and the home of the Society of the Cincinnati, the country's oldest patriotic organization and one which extended hereditary membership to Churchill himself in 1947.

The second reception, on Friday evening, was held at the British Ambassador's residence. This spacious building accommodated guests who took in artwork by Churchill himself and wandered the lovely private garden.



The final reception and gala dinner were at the National Cathedral, fully restored to its former glory after the earthquake of August 2011. While Churchill liked to think of himself as a flying buttress of the church rather than a pillar holding it up from within, this setting served to bring together the secular and the sacred in a moving and inspiring way.



2026 ICS Annual Conference

The 2026 Annual Conference will be held in Philadelphia, timed to coincide with the 250th celebration of the American Revolution and the birth of the United States. Hopefully, the Philadelphia conference will serve as a reminder both of the values Americans share with citizens of the United Kingdom, which Churchill personally embodied, and of the sacrifices both nations have made for the sake of liberty in a world which seems to be turning away from democracy and the rule of law.

The 2025 Churchill Society of Tennessee Annual Gala

By Robin Sinclair



The Churchill Society held its annual gala at the Belle Meade Country Club on November 7. During the cocktail hour, members and their guests enjoyed conversation and were able to purchase signed copies of our speaker's Timothy Pleydell-Bouverie's new book *Allies at War: The Politics of Defeating Hitler*. The beautiful ballroom featured tables decorated with long-stemmed red roses arranged in holders impressed with The Churchill Society's logo.



Members enjoying cocktail hour!



The beautiful ballroom featured tables decorated with long-stemmed red roses arranged in holders impressed with The Churchill Society's logo.



Social hour is always a big hit!





A bonnie piper leads us to dinner.



CSOT President Jim Drury welcomes everyone and proposes the loyal toast.



Jim Drury introduces a video message from our patron and International Churchill Society President Randolph Churchill. Then invites ICS Executive Director Adam Howard to the podium.



Adam Howard addresses CSOT.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Our speaker, Timothy Pleydell-Bouverie, is a renowned historian. His previous book, *Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*, broke new ground by drawing on previously unseen sources to prove repeated mistakes lead directly to war. His latest book focuses on political maneuvering among Britain's Allies before and during the War. While the cooperation with the United States is well-documented, this volume deals with difficulties faced by Churchill in dealing with other Allies. Pleydell-Bouverie's insights into the differing goals gives the reader a new understanding of the immense struggle to achieve a united front among the Allies. Churchill's work to preserve the alliance is proven to be as great a struggle as any he faced in the War.



Tim Bouverie graciously signed many copies of his new book with an assist from CSOT Executive Assistant, Lynne Siesser



With special thanks to our sponsors for the gala, Jack and Barbara Bovender, Ted and Arlyn Cherey, and Waymon Tipton. Our thanks as well to Lynne Siesser, Chis Byrne, and Beth Fisher for setting-up the welcome and the dinner tables.



A very special thank you to Tim Bouverie!