
THE CHURCHILLIAN

Churchill Society of Tennessee

December 2019

Merry Christmas  Happy New Year!



The dining room at Chartwell set for Christmas dinner

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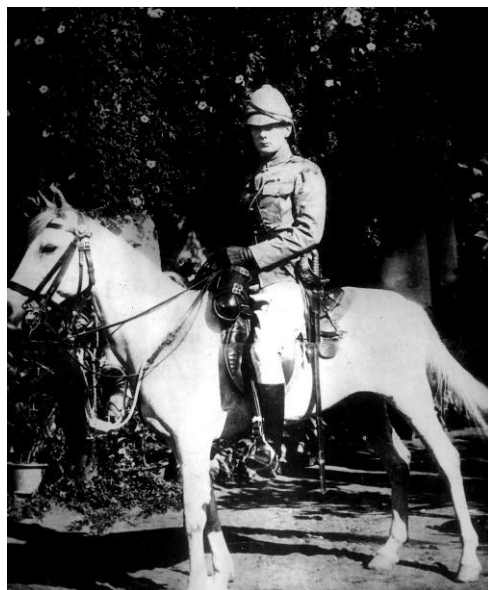
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**The Churchill Society of Tennessee presents
The 2nd Annual Churchill Symposium
“Churchill in War and Peace”
April 4, 2020
at the
Belle Meade Country Club
Mark your calendars - tickets go on sale soon**



**Speakers:
David Freeman PhD
Klaus Larres PhD
Douglas Russell JD**

Address: 815 Belle Meade Blvd, Nashville, TN 37205
Time: Breakfast at 9:00 - Presentations: 10:00 to 13:00
Ticket Price: \$45 per person
Includes breakfast and refreshments
www.churchillsocietytn.org

Christmas at Chartwell House

by Celia Lee

Based on the recollections and research of Mrs. Beryl Nicholson,
guide at Chartwell House, and Chairman of Churchill Chartwell branch.



The Christmas tree that was popularized in England by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, was the centre piece of enjoyment each Christmas at Chartwell House, the country home of Winston and Clementine Churchill, after they took up residence there in 1924, and particularly in between the two world wars and during the post, Second World War period.

Mrs Beryl Nicholson who is today a guide at Chartwell House, and who is one of the volunteers who decorate the Christmas trees each year, says: "We try to use classic decorations as Lady Churchill really only liked natural decorations. Each year, Clementine decorated the Christmas tree herself."

Christmas 1932 is perhaps most noteworthy in the UK for King George V having delivered the first ever Royal Christmas Message, on the new BBC Empire Service radio, that was broadcast live from the royal family's country home, Sandringham House, Norfolk, the text having been written by Rudyard Kipling. That year, the Churchill's family home would also make a different kind of history that was kept quiet from the press, when the Christmas tree went up in flames!

Beryl Nicholson can recount the story that is legendary in the family, about the day the tree caught fire. The **Drawing Room** was decorated to Clementine's taste, with holly and bunches of flowers. The family had assembled, and, across the hall, candles blazed on a tree in the library. It was Christmas eve, when the sight of flames and the smell of burning wax and pine wafted in through the open, drawing room doors. This, explains Beryl, was due to the tradition of real, lighted, wax candles, having been placed on the tree. Recollections are that Clementine shouted 'Fire!' Her younger sister Nellie, Mrs. Romilly, opened the window to let out the smoke but the breeze fanned the flames. The children's nanny, known affectionately as Cousin Moppet, showed practical initiative by grabbing the fire extinguisher! Mary, the Churchill's youngest daughter, rushed in with a basin of water, that was taken from her by her cousin Esmond Romilly, who threw it over the blaze. It was like a cartoon from *Punch*, advertising the

Dickensian novel, *A Christmas Carol*. What followed would be reminiscent of ‘scenes of Christmas past, Christmas present, and Christmas Future.’ Today, when Beryl and the volunteers dress the Christmas trees in honour of the family tradition of bygone days, they use electric candles, thus avoiding history repeating itself.

Beryl has provided a rare insight into the Christmas preparations at Chartwell House in modern times: “A team of volunteers go in the week before we open to the public and decorate the trees and the rooms and, also, make the greenery garlands. This year we have ordered 6 live Christmas trees from *Real Christmas Trees* and they come from Shropshire. Their trees are always fantastic and hold their needles throughout the month.”



The hall tree

The **Hall** tree is at least 7 feet tall, and the other rooms have slightly smaller trees, probably about 5 feet. Mary recalled happy Christmases with a bunch of mistletoe hung from the hall ceiling. During the month of December, part of the house only is open. The public coming into view, are entertained by the guides, who choose a particular Christmas about which stories are told, and the visitors’ book is left open showing that year’s signatures.

Beryl says: “At the beginning of the season, we will be opening two new rooms to the public – one of the rooms that was part of the **nursery wing** to show the story of the Churchill children in pictures – and the **Secretaries Room**, where Winston`s office staff worked.”



The front doors at Chartwell House

The rail of the front entrance to the house is decked with greenery, and there are two wreaths, one on each of the **front doors**, outside of which stand a wooden sledge and a pair of ice skates. The **Hall** has one large tree with electric candle lights and decorations. This is the largest of the trees and, in days gone by, the family`s Christmas parcels were placed around it.



Victorian Christmas cards



Sitting room tree

In keeping with Clementine's preference for natural decorations the **Sitting Room**, as with the other rooms, is decorated with Victorian and older type, traditional Christmas cards. There are two trees with candle lights and tree decorations. The fire is lit, using special, non-smoking logs, providing a warm, cheerful and welcoming atmosphere. Over the mantelpiece a live greenery garland is draped, above which hangs a portrait of Winston.

Greenery was Clementine's favourite decoration and in her day the gardeners collected it from the grounds of the estate where it grows in abundance, including holly with berries, laurel, ivy, and pine trees, that provide both pine and cones. Her great passion was flowers, and there was always a profusion throughout the house.

The **Drawing Room** is open to the public though not decorated, but the guides show conversation in action so that visitors can see something of the work that has been carried out over the winter months when the house is closed.



The Library

The **Library** has an artificial tree and, in 2018, a special tree was created out of old books collected over the months by the volunteers. The **Secretaries Room** has a decorated tree that can be seen from the exterior through the window.

The main staircase is decorated with garlands of fresh greenery. Downstairs is the **Dining Room**, and a decorated and lit Christmas tree graces one corner. The table is set for Christmas tea, with a floral centre piece, as it was when Winston and Clementine and the family once sat around it. As *Pol Roger* was Winston's favourite champagne, Beryl says: "Last year the staff

created a *Pol Roger* tree, made out of small bottles. It looked magnificent with a large bottle on the top as a crowning glory.”

The **Kitchen** is decorated with home-made paper chains, that are strung across the room, in keeping with when the kitchen staff who worked there used to make them. There is a jar of humbugs and gingerbread biscuits, tokens of that time for the visitors to enjoy!

The **Exhibition Room** is open as usual and the visitors exit via this way, and then go on to Winston’s **Studio** in the grounds, laid out as in his time with his paintings, and that too has a decorated tree.

Volunteer guides are present in the rooms, telling the visitors about the decorations and the stories of how the family spent Christmas long ago. Winston was a Christmas enthusiast and liked a party. Guests, both adults and children, stayed in the house over Christmas and joined in the fun. If it snowed, Winston built a snowman with the children, and if the lake froze, they skated on it. He captured Chartwell under a blanket of snow in his painting *Winter Snow*. But he hated Christmas carols probably a throw-back to his school days when they were foisted upon him, and legend has it that when singers presented themselves outside the house to serenate him one Christmas morning, he offered them cups of cocoa to stop! They duly accepted and were themselves entertained to refreshment in the kitchen.

But despite Winston’s aversion to carol singing the children enjoyed a traditional Christmas, singing carols. They all congregated around the huge tree in the library, where his son, Randolph, was dressed as Father Christmas.



*Artist, The Honourable Edwina Sandys,
granddaughter of Sir Winston and Clementine Churchill*

The Honourable Edwina Sandys who is today an artist, can reminisce about stockings being hung up on Christmas eve, and waking up to open them in the morning. There was an abundance of presents for all, handed out after attendance at church on Christmas Day. It was there that Edwina received her first bicycle! What gift to give Grandpapa was a brain teaser, but he loved painting, and received drawings from the children, along with bundles of presents and cards from his adoring public.



*Author, The Honourable Celia Sandys,
granddaughter of Sir Winston and Clementine, Lady Churchill*

Author, The Honourable Celia Sandys, can recall of Chartwell: "My childhood Christmases set high expectations for the following years. Full of fun, family, warmth and love."

For the Secretaries there was no respite and they had to work on Christmas Day, taking Winston's dictation and typing it, that was a practice which went on until he was in his 80s. They were otherwise treated like family and collected their presents that had been left for them under the tree.

There was a feast of seasonal food for all, roast turkey with all the trimmings, followed by a desert of plum pudding ablaze in blue brandy. Sarah Churchill could recall drinking champagne and that one of her father's gifts to her was a wristwatch. The servants were indulged with a 'firkin' of Westerham beer, (72 pints), that had been matured in wood barrels, in a Kent tradition that today goes back 400 years.



The **Dining Room** was large enough to accommodate the children's plays, and they put on pantomime. Dressed in colorful costumes, their faces covered in makeup provided by the local chemist, they entertained all present. The great window drapes acted as stage curtains, and the pantry became a changing room.

In the afternoon, with grandpa, puffing on his famous cigar, the family enjoyed listening to him reciting the poems by his favourites, Macauley and Rudyard Kipling, the latter from IF, that contains the lines:

'IF you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
.....
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!'

In 1941, during the Second World War, when Churchill was Prime Minister, upon delivering his famous Christmas message from the White House, he began: ‘Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play.’

This December, Mrs Beryl Nicholson and the volunteer guides will be awaiting the visitors. The three weekends they are open: 7/8 December 14/15 December, and 21/22 December 2019.

Churchill's Christmas Speech in Washington D.C. 1941

By Jim Drury

December 1941 saw some of the most infamous events of the Second World War. On December 7, the Japanese attacked the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. At the same time Japan, engaged in coordinated strikes against Malaya, Hong Kong, Midway, Guam, Wake Island and the Philippines.

It was against this backdrop that Winston S. Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain, made immediate plans to travel to Washington D.C. to confer with the Empire's closest and most powerful ally the United States of America.

The Crossing

On December 13, 1941 Prime Minister Winston Churchill and an entourage of over eighty arrived at Gourock, Scotland and boarded [HMS Duke of York](#), a 35,000-ton British Battleship. The *Duke of York* was to transport Churchill and company to the United States for a meeting with President Franklin Roosevelt over the Christmas holidays. The meeting, code named *Arcadia*, was the first of several such conferences to take place throughout World War II.

Accompanying Prime Minister Churchill was Lord Beaverbrook, Averell Harriman and the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom Gilbert Winant. The group also included the Chiefs of Staff, private secretaries, photographers and newsreel cameramen. Also attending was Churchill's personal physician Sir Charles Wilson (later Lord Moran).

The following day at 6:00 P.M. HMS *Duke of York*, under the overall command of Admiral Dudley Pound, set sail for North America. The following entry was made in the ship's log in typical Royal Navy parlance: at 6:00pm on Sunday December 14, the ship heading southeast to Bermuda, with a force 9 wind, a shaft speed of 83.3 revolutions per minute, the barometer at 990.7 millibars and falling and a speed of 10.5 knots.¹

It would take almost nine days to make the crossing in very heavy seas with 40-foot waves and 60 knot wind gusts. This time was put to good use, however. The daytime was spent planning wartime strategies and Lend-Lease policies. Churchill was hoping to persuade the Americans to maintain a Europe-first war plan and not turn their attention to the Pacific theater following the

¹ PRO, ADM 53/114155, log HMS Duke of York, December 14, 1941

attack on Pearl Harbor. There were no assurances yet as to how the United States would prosecute the war. This was the big question.



PM Churchill with Lord Beaverbrook aboard HMS Duke of York December 1941

Churchill was billeted high up in the superstructure of the ship in the Admiral's cabin. This location also offered some protection in case of torpedo attack by German U-boats. Winston did not spend much time in his cabin, however. He would wander about the mess decks and other areas of the ship, smoking his ever-present cigar. The Prime Minister kept up with outside events by frequent visits to the radio room. The war news reaching Duke of York was mixed. Hong Kong and Malaya were crumbling. Brighter news was filtering through from North Africa where Major General Richard Nugent O'Connor and the "Desert Rats" were having good success against the Italians who outnumbered them by more than two to one. In the evenings, Churchill insisted on watching movies no matter what the sea state. It was usually not good... His favorites were cowboy westerns and war movies. "He would sit watching, complete with cigar and relays of brandy. Seated by him were some of the bigshots looking very green."²

Meanwhile, HMS *Duke of York* and her escorts pressed on at slow 6 knots, allowing the destroyers to keep up, through appalling weather conditions. Two days out Churchill was growing impatient with the slow pace of the crossing. Admiral Pound decided to shed their destroyer escort and make best possible speed of 20+ knots. He reasoned that in the current weather conditions a U-boat attack would be very unlikely.

² Imperial War museum, London, 87/35/1. Papers of Lt. R. A. Bennett-Levy.

On December 22, the *Duke of York* approached Chesapeake Bay still fighting heavy seas. It was apparent that the ship would not make the final leg of the journey up the Chesapeake and stay on schedule. President Roosevelt had invited Churchill to dinner at the White House that evening and Churchill was getting anxious about the time. Sir Charles Wilson, Churchill's personal physician, made the following entry into his diary. "He was like a child in his impatience to meet the President. He spoke as if every minute counted. It was absurd to waste time; he must fly."³ Churchill wired the British ambassador Lord Halifax with the following message. "Impossible to reach Mouth Potomac before 6:30 P.M. which would be too late... I should like to come by airplane to Washington Airfield reaching you in time for dinner."⁴

The decision was taken to order up an airplane to complete the final leg of the journey to Washington. The White House sprang into action and scrambled a Lockheed Loadstar for the 45-minute flight. Later that day the *Duke of York* docked at Hampton Roads Gate where Churchill, Beaverbrook, Wilson, Portal and Harriman disembarked and boarded the Loadstar. The remainder of Churchill's entourage completed their journey via a special train provided by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

The House Guest

Washington D.C. in early December 1941 was a quiet place for President Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. Their sons Franklin Jr, Elliott, James and John were away serving in the military and daughter Diana was living in Seattle WA. The President, his wife and Falla their black Scottish terrier were going to spend a quiet Christmas alone for the first time in many years. But things were about to change...

On December 7th the [Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor](#) drawing the United States into World War II. Immediately, [British Prime Minister Winston Churchill](#) made immediate plans to go to Washington D.C. to meet with President Roosevelt. There was no time to waist. There were alliances to be secured and war plans to be made. The visit would require significant preparations for travel and security.

Great concerns about security surrounded Churchill's visit. So much so that even Eleanor Roosevelt was kept in the dark for a time. Eleanor remembered being told by the President "that we would be having some guests visit us" that December. "He told me that I could not know who was coming, nor how many, but I must be prepared." In an article written in *The Atlantic* years later she wrote "He added as an afterthought that I must see to it that we had good champagne and brandy in the house and plenty of whiskey."⁵

³ Entry for December 22, 1941. Lord Moran (Sir Charles Wilson), *Winston Churchill: The struggle for survival 1940 – 1965*, London, 1966, p 10.

⁴ Prime Minister to Lord Halifax, 22.12.41. Churchill College, Churchill Archives, Cambridge CHAR 20/47/69

⁵ Eleanor Roosevelt "Churchill at the White House", *The Atlantic*, March 1965,77.

On December 22, Churchill's airplane landed at Anacostia Flats Naval Air Station at around 7:00 P.M. There President Roosevelt greeted the Prime Minister in person and together they drove to the White House.

Eleanor Roosevelt had selected rooms for Churchill and his staff. Winston was assigned to the Lincoln bedroom. This however was deemed unsatisfactory. The bed did not suit him. He then took off scouring the second floor of the White House to secure more suitable quarters. He settled on the Rose room which had been used by Queen Elizabeth during her 1939 visit. The furnishings and bed more closely suited his taste.



The Rose Room on the 2nd floor of the White House as it appeared in 1947.

Now that the accommodations had been settled it was time to get down to business. Dinner was served shortly before 9:00 P.M. and was wrapped in light conversation and banter between the two heads of state. As the meal was ending, President Roosevelt raised his champagne glass: “I have a toast to offer... It has been in my head and on my heart now for a long time. Now it is on the tip of my tongue - *TO THE COMMON CAUSE!*”

When dinner was finished, Roosevelt led Churchill, Halifax, Beaverbrook, Hull, Hopkins and Wells to the Oval office for a chat. Churchill was noticeably anxious for this was probably the moment of truth. One of the main reasons for the whole trip. To have “the” conversation... Roosevelt sensed Churchill's trepidation and sought to quickly allay his fears. He assured Churchill that a Europe-first policy would in fact be the way forward. This was the beginning of the alliance that would ultimately defeat the Nazis. There was still much to be discussed but Winston had achieved his primary goal. A united allied front against Hitler's Third Reich in Europe.



Churchill and FDR during one of several meetings during the 1941/42 Arcadia meeting.

The next couple of days were taken up with meetings and consultations hammering out the details of war fighting. The Christmas spirit was somewhat lacking among the Arcadia participants. However, as dusk approached on Christmas Eve the spirit of the season began to descend on the White House. An estimated 30,000 people had assembled around the grounds by the South portico to catch a glimpse of the President and Prime Minister. The national Christmas tree was going to be lit by the President and it was Churchill's first public appearance since his arrival. Before the grand illumination and speeches everyone sang Christmas carols; Silent Night and O Come All Ye Faithful. Then with the flick of a switch President Roosevelt lit the tree to the great pleasure and acclamation of all. It was not just lighting the Christmas tree it was lighting the spirits, if only for a short while, of the nation.

The Speeches



FDR lighting the Christmas from the south portico of the White House December 24, 1941

Roosevelt spoke first:

“Fellow workers for freedom - when we make ready our hearts for the labor and suffering and the ultimate victory which lie ahead, then we observe Christmas Day with all of its memories and all of its meanings as we should.

We have joined with many other nations and peoples in a very great cause. One of their great leaders stands beside me. He and his people have pointed the way in courage and in sacrifice... and I am asking my associate, my old and good friend, to say a word to the people of America, old and young tonight... .”



Prime Minister Winston Churchill speaking in Washington DC, December 24, 1941

Churchill responded:

[Winston Churchill & FDR - The White House, Christmas Eve speeches, 1941](#)

I spend this anniversary and festival far from my country, far from my family, yet I cannot truthfully say that I feel far from home. Whether it be the ties of blood on my mother's side, or the friendships I have developed here over many years of active life, or the commanding sentiment of comradeship in the common cause of great peoples who speak the same language, who kneel at the same altars and, to a very large extent, pursue the same ideals, I cannot feel myself a stranger here in the centre and at the summit of the United States. I feel a sense of unity and fraternal association which, added to the kindness of your welcome, convinces me that I have a right to sit at your fireside and share your Christmas joys.

This is a strange Christmas Eve. Almost the whole world is locked in deadly struggle, and, with the most terrible weapons which science can devise, the nations advance upon each other. Ill would it be for us this Christmastide if we were not sure that no greed for the land or wealth of any other people, no vulgar ambition, no morbid lust for material gain at the expense of others, had led us to the field. Here, in the midst of war, raging and roaring over all the lands and seas, creeping nearer to our hearts and homes, here, amid all the tumult, we have tonight the peace of the spirit in each cottage home and in every generous heart. Therefore, we may cast aside for this night at least the cares and dangers which beset us and make for the children an evening of happiness in a world of storm. Here, then, for one night only, each home throughout the English-speaking world should be a brightly lighted island of happiness and peace.

Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play. Let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures before we turn again to the stern task and the formidable years that lie before us, resolved that, by our sacrifice and daring, these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied their right to live in a free and decent world.

And so, in God's mercy, a happy Christmas to you all.

Going home

During his 1941/42 trip to America, Churchill had many firsts. He was the first British Prime Minister to visit during wartime, the first foreign head of state to address a [joint session of Congress](#), the first joint press conference of an American and British leader and several more.

The last day of the visit was on January 14, 1942. At 10:00 A.M. a train took Churchill to the airport. Accompanying Churchill on the train to see him off was Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's closest foreign policy advisor. Hopkins gave Churchill a letter to be delivered to his wife Clemmie. The letter read as follows:

“You would have been quite proud of your husband on this trip. First because he was ever so good natured. I didn't see him take anyone's head off and he eats and drinks with his usual vigor and still dislikes the same people. If he had half as good a time as the President did having him about the White House, he surely will carry pleasant memories of the past three weeks.”⁶



BOAC Boeing 314A Clipper "Berwick"

⁶ Roosevelt and Hopkins, Robert E Sherwood, Gossett and Dunlop. 1948. p. 478

It was originally planned for Churchill to return home on the *Duke of York*. However, Britain's deteriorating military position in Malaysia and Hong Kong required his urgent presents back in England. Consequently, arrangements were made to fly home. Churchill first flew to Bermuda where he boarded a BOAC Boeing 314A Clipper called *Berwick*. He was accompanied by Beaverbrook, Portal, Hollis, Wilson and Pound. During the 18-hour flight Churchill, a trained pilot, actually took the controls of the massive aircraft for a time. The flight home was in direct contrast to the Atlantic crossing a few weeks earlier. The *Duke of York* at best could make 20 knots in heaving seas. Whereas the *Berwick* could fly in relative comfort at 19,000 at a cruising speed of 180 knots.

Just a few months earlier, Churchill's leadership saw the country to victory in the Battle of Britain. His own personal strength and his belief in the British people gave the edge needed for that victory. Now he brings another success. He has paved the way forward and solidified an alliance with the United States of America.

When Churchill returned to London he wrote to Roosevelt. "I was terribly sorry to leave you and there was not a moment of it that I did not enjoy."⁷

⁷ Ibid., p. 443

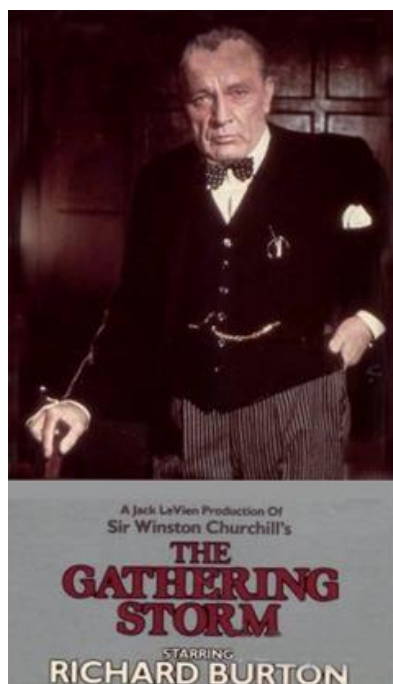
Richard Burton's attack on Sir Winston Churchill reported in the *New York Times*, November 24, 1974

Reviewed by Celia Lee

Richard Burton: 'I hate Churchill and all his kind.'

Anthony Montague Brown: 'Let him go – he's only an actor.'

Sir Winston Churchill: 'For soldiers to fire on the people would be a catastrophe in our national life ...'



The famous actor, Richard Burton CBE, wrote a scandalous article, published in the *New York Times*, November 24, 1974, that was the centenary year of Sir Winston Churchill's birth. Covering two pages and titled "To Play Churchill Is To Hate Him" Burton, who was playing Churchill in a television drama *The Gathering Storm*, based on Volume I of Churchill's war memoirs, to be broadcast by NBC as a Hallmark Hall Of Fame production, Friday, November 29, spilled out a diatribe of nasty observations. 'I hate Churchill and all his kind. I hate them virulently. They have stalked down the corridors of endless power all through history.' Burton rambled on, 'Great men are almost always bad men.' One wonders if Burton would have applied the same rule to himself! Comparing Churchill to a 'bandit king', he objected to his saying he would 'destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime', though the modern historian would have corrected him that there seemed little chance of winning the Second World War (1939-45), by any other means.

Burton alleged that 'Few people were frightened of the massive air attacks on London and Hull and Coventry and Liverpool.' Following witnessing the disabling of a bomb he said, 'I remember seeing a youth of 17, normally timid, and self-effacing; men, dancing in the streets and embracing, when a land-mine a real monster failed to detonate near London's Euston Station. It was a roaring game of death against life.'

Mrs Helen H. Buckley, The Bronx, responded Letters to the Editor, published by the *New York Times*, Sunday, December 8, 1974): ‘As an ambulance driver during the German Holocaust over England from 1939-45, it was Churchill who fired us. And when we thought that we had lost our country, it was Churchill who urged us on, not to give in ... not to surrender ... to keep on to keep trying. My great pride, the Englishman’s great pride and love for “old Winnie” will live forever in the hearts of all of us, particularly the Londoners.’

Alleging that ‘Churchill fought like a bulldog against his own cowardice,’ Burton went on to attack the British Royal Airforce asking: ‘Did Churchill and his idiot air marshals really believe that the Germans would be any more unnerved and intimidated than we were?’ Perhaps not, but they fought till the death to protect our island from Nazi invasion, whilst Churchill stood witness on the roof of what is today the Cabinet War Rooms museum, that then housed his secret, underground, wartime, headquarters.

Burton next set upon Churchill’s use of language; ‘... though you may read Churchill’s famous words in silence and solitude and be aware of the hurl and sweep of his language, you cannot know it as well as the actor who has to learn the bloody lines and speak them to multitudes.’ Ridiculing Churchill’s ‘contortion of syntax’, Burton fumed, ‘there were times when I thought I was going to go mad trying to figure out what the hell he meant.’ Of Churchill’s public speeches in Parliament, Burton held that he was ‘... continually defeated in debate by any man who could think fast and coherently on his feet.’ Parliamentarian Neville Trotter hit back with: ‘It’s a pity we haven’t got more people like Churchill and fewer like Burton.’ [Footnote (1)] Churchill’s famous Fulton, Missouri, ‘iron curtain’ speech (1946) to the United States and indeed to the world, seems to have passed Burton by, when he warned that Russia who had taken over much of Eastern Europe ‘respects strength not weakness.’ Churchill’s grandson ‘young’ Winston who was at this time Conservative Member of Parliament for Stretford and Urmston, exercised great restraint when confronted with this attack on his beloved grandfather. Having spent much of his childhood and early years in his grandparents’ home, Chartwell House, he replied, when asked about Burton’s outburst: ‘I am not at all convinced that this is really Richard Burton’s opinion.’ He had, he said, recently had lunch with Burton, and he had told him: ‘how much he admired Churchill. He almost thought he *was* Churchill.’ [Footnote (2)]

Burton’s rant had now reached the English newspapers in London’s Fleet Street. On the anniversary of his grandfather’s centenary, young Winston’s constituency Conservative Party held a dinner in Sir Winston’s honour. The guest speakers were former Conservative Prime Minister and leader of the Party, Ted Heath, and Winston. Both were cautious in their response to the Burton article. The *Guardian* newspaper’s Dennis Johnson, Saturday, November 30, published that it was ‘relegated to a ridiculous, musical-hall memory.’ Winston told the 250 guests that they were celebrating the birth of a very great English man – ‘no matter what revisionist historians or tired actors have to say.’ The response from the audience was ‘great gales of laughter.’ In his address, Ted Heath referred to Sir Winston as ‘a great performer on the world’s stage – an infinitely greater performer by the way than the actor who recently had the honour of playing Churchill on a smaller stage.’ More gales of laughter.



Left to right: Mr. Frederick Cleary, Chairman of the Garden Committee trust that commissioned the statue; Winston Churchill MP, his daughters Jennie and Marina and son Randolph, at Winston's unveiling of Oscar Nemon's statue to his grandfather Sir Winston Churchill, on his birthday, November 30, 1972, the Pines Garden, St. Margaret's Bay, near Dover, Kent, looking out over the white cliffs. Photo courtesy of Mrs Minnie S. Churchill.

Well-known Churchill biographer, Robert Rhodes James, New York City, dredged up what he believed was really behind Burton's rant. Burton was Welsh and he referred to 'memories of the hatred many Welshmen feel against Churchill because he allegedly used troops to shoot miners in Tonypanyd more than 60 years ago.' He was referring to a miners' strike (1910-1911), in the South-Wales coal fields, when Churchill was Home Secretary. As such, he was responsible for the police force but NOT the army. He is on record in fact as warning consistently that the police must deal with disorder and that the use of troops must be kept to an absolute minimum in support of the civil power. [Footnote (3)] A section of miners went on the rampage, looting shops in the town, and were dealt with, but no miners were shot. Troops were brought into these areas at the behest of the Chief Constable of Glamorgan and were deployed in support of the police. No troops fired on the miners.

Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary to Churchill, (1952-1965), wrote in the *New York Times* that he was 'puzzled' by Burton's 'assumption of close acquaintance with Churchill.' He went on to say, 'I worked for Sir Winston for the last 13 years of his life and saw him daily, and I cannot recollect Mr. Burton ever being in the house. He hit back at Burton's criticisms of Churchill's role during the war, pointing out, '... he was not an active combatant nor did he play any responsible role in the war and he has taken no part in public affairs.' As to Burton's ridiculing Churchill for the bombing of Dresden, he corrected, 'The Dresden raid was carried out at the strident demand – to the Anglo-American Chiefs of Staff – of the Russians who claimed it to be a military intelligence communications centre for the Eastern Front.' Somewhat wittily, he dismissed Burton's flawed

assertions with the words of a Roman Emperor when he was told that someone was having an affair with his wife, ‘Let him go – he’s only an actor.’

Jack Le Vien who was a co-producer of *The Gathering Storm* wrote in the *New York Times* that only a short time before, he and Burton had taken tea with Lady Churchill and he had ‘expressed only the greatest admiration for Sir Winston.’ Le Vien found Burton’s ‘change of attitude incomprehensible to me. Perhaps he thinks it is fashionable to be provocative.’



Jane, Lady Williams of Elvel nee Portal

Jane, Lady Williams *nee* Portal who was Churchill’s secretary from 1949-55, was greatly surprised at Burton’s attack, when I spoke to her on the ‘phone. Jane says “I was appointed as an advisor to Burton on the film *The Valiant Years*. I set up an office in Jermyn Street with Patrick Mcnee. ... I worked every day for hours with Richard Burton. I had the impression that Burton worshiped Sir Winston. He never stopped praising him to me.” In response to the *New York Times* article, Jane says: “It was just the drink – he was rambling in drink.” Jane can recall Burton years earlier, in 1953, acting in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* at the Old Vic theatre, London: “It was quite marvellous, he was a brilliant actor. Winston embarrassed the family by speaking along with Burton during his favourite passages. Richard came down to the front of the stage to speak the great Shakespearean words with Churchill – the audience were ecstatic!” [Footnote (4)]

Richard Langworth CBE, Senior Fellow, Hillsdale College, Churchill Project, wrote of how Churchill, during the interval went in search of the lavatory and ended up in Burton’s dressing room: ‘Burton later recalled the extreme difficulty of performing in front of “this religion, this flag, this *insignia*” especially since the great man was sitting near the front stalls muttering “To be or not to be?”’ [Footnote (5)] Today, Mr Langworth says: “My own view is that Burton gladly took the money for playing WSC (which he did well), then played to the media for the sake of publicity - without very much accuracy or fairness (e.g., the Tonypandy myth). Of course, he was drinking pretty heavily by then, and this too, must have been a factor.” [Footnote (6)]

To quote Hamlet, there was undoubtedly a ‘method to’ Burton’s ‘madness’ that would have fired up Churchill’s admirers and critics alike, leaving them champing at the bit to watch the film on TV and judge for themselves. Burton’s tirade would have sent up the ratings and, in the role of Churchill, he gave a champion performance. There is as ever, much truth in the old assertion that ‘all publicity is good publicity.’

In 1970, on Burton’s 45th birthday, the Queen had ceremonially honoured him with a CBE at Buckingham Palace. He attributed his having not received a knighthood sooner to changing his residence from London to Céligny, Geneva, Switzerland, which country was neutral during the war, and where he was able to avoid paying British taxes.

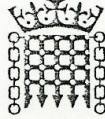
According to his biographer, Robert Sellers, ‘At the height of his boozing in the mid-70s, Burton was knocking back three to four bottles of hard liquor a day.’ By 1974, he was an alcoholic, who reportedly nearly died from excess drinking. [Footnote (7)]

The quarrels over Tonyandy would continue for many years, coming to a head in House of Commons exchanges, during November and December 1978, between the Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, and Sir Winston Churchill’s grandson, Winston Churchill, Conservative Member of Parliament for Stretford and Urmston, Manchester. The text of these letters, reproduced here, is quite clear, and require no commentary from the author of this article. Permission of copyright to reproduce the letters has been granted by Mr Randolph S. Churchill, son of Winston and Minnie, and great-grandson of Sir Winston and Clementine, Lady S. Churchill.



Winston S. Churchill MP for Stretford and Urmston, Manchester, England, and his wife Minnie, pictured in Los Angeles, 1976.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

01-219 3405

30 November 1978

Dear Prime Minister

I am at a loss to understand why you felt impelled, in reply to my question about the monitoring of productivity deals, to indulge in a cheap smear against the late Sir Winston Churchill, which as you must know is wholly without foundation.

In your subsequent remarks you suggested that it may be sometime before the facts of Tonypandy can be established. With respect, that is not so, as you will see from the attached extract of the Churchill Biography Volume II pp. 367 - 378. The suggestion at which you were no doubt hinting that Sir Winston Churchill, as Home Secretary in the Liberal Administration, sent troops to shoot down the miners in Tonypandy is demonstrated to be not only a lie, but indeed the reverse of the truth. The facts are:- however disappointing it may be for the mythology of Socialism:

- (a) Churchill was the one who stopped troops being sent to Tonypandy,
- (b) Churchill was rebuked in The Times of 9 November 1910 for refusing to send troops,
- (c) no miners were shot at Tonypandy.

I am surprised that as a South Wales Member of such long standing and distinction you are not conversant with these facts.

If you have grounds for disputing the facts as set out above I should be glad to know them. If not I feel you might wish to withdraw your, no doubt unintended, slur against a not unrespected former holder of your present office who is no longer able to answer for himself.

The Rt. Hon. James Callaghan, M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

Yours sincerely,

Winston Churchill



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 December 1978

Dear Mr. Churchill,

Thank you for your letter of
30 November about my remarks in the House
on 30 November.

I note what you say in your letter.
For a fuller version you might read the
first volume of R. Page-Arnot's history
of the "South Wales Miners". As for
my remarks in the House of Commons, I
stand by every one of them.

*Yours sincerely
Jim Callaghan*

Winston Churchill, Esq., M.P.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

01-219 3405

14 December 1978

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 11 December. I am obliged to you for your kindness in referring me to the first volume of R. Page-Arnot's history of the "South Wales Miners". Since you advance this work as the authority for your charge that Sir Winston Churchill, and indeed my family as a whole, carried on a "vendetta" against the miners of South Wales, might I suggest that you refresh your memory by yourself reading the volume you recommend.

The only reference to Lord Randolph Churchill (p. 129) shows that he championed the miners' cause in lending "powerful support" to the Eight Hour Bill of 1893, a measure to reduce the number of hours per day miners could legally be required to work. At the time the measure failed to reach the Statute Book, however 15 years later his son took up the same cause. According to Page-Arnot (p. 135/6) unlike Mr. Gladstone who had broken his promise to the miners:

"There was however another Liberal Minister who had espoused the cause of shorter hours and who was less likely to be frightened, and in whom therefore the miners' leaders reposed great confidence at that time. This was Winston Churchill ... he was cordially invited to the Miners' gala held at Porth in the Rhondda ... It is very doubtful whether any liberal or conservative Cabinet Minister had ever again the honour paid to him of an invitation to speak at a miners' gala in South Wales."

Churchill told them of his full support for the Mines' Eight Hours Bill, which he saw on to the Statute Book later that year and he was accorded "thrice-prolonged applause".

So far as the disturbances of November 1910 are concerned, Page-Arnot confirms (p. 187) that as soon as Churchill learned that troops had been dispatched to South Wales "unauthorised by him":

"He promptly arranged that the order be countermanded. This stopped the movement of troops at the railway junction at Swindon in Wiltshire, the breadth of three shires away from Cardiff and still further miles away from Pontypridd."

Only subsequently, when 300 reinforcements of Metropolitan Police, including 100 mounted police, proved unable to control the rioting and there had been numerous police casualties, did he authorise the troops to move forward into the valleys. However such allegations as were made by the strikers about the use of excessive force, were directed against the police not the soldiers. As Page-Arnot's account makes plain no miner was shot upon by the troops, let alone killed, throughout the duration of the dispute. Furthermore he emphasises (p.235) how in the subsequent debate in the House of Commons Churchill went out of his way to exonerate the mining population of South Wales, declaring:

"In my opinion the riots were largely caused by rowdy youths and roughs from outside, foreign to the district, and I think it only just to place that on record in fairness to the miners of South Wales, who have been attacked in a general way by people who know nothing at all about the matter ...

Law and order must be preserved, but I am confident that the House will agree with me that it is a great object of public policy to avoid a collision between soldiers and groups of persons engaged in industrial disputes ...

For soldiers to fire on the people would be a catastrophe in our national life ... And it is well worth while, I venture to think, for the Minister who is responsible to run some risk of broken heads or broken windows ... in order that the shedding of British blood by British soldiers may be averted, as, thank God, it has been successfully averted in South Wales."

In the light of the above quotations and the fact that following the 1926 General Strike, Churchill was foremost in the Baldwin Cabinet in recommending a policy of conciliation towards the miners.

Credits:

Celia Lee would like to thank and pay tribute to Jane, Lady Williams and Richard Langworth CBE, for their invaluable help and insights, and Richard's press articles, that they provide to the enrichment of this review. Also, to Mr Randolph S. Churchill for granting permission for the use of his late father's Winston S. Churchill MP's letters in the matter of Tonypandy.

Footnotes:

- (1) Quoted *The Tulse Tribune*, Oklahoma, November 26, 1974.
- (2) Extract from Neville Trotter's letter pub. *The New York Times*, Sunday, December 8, 1974.
- (3) Quoted Celia Lee and John Lee, *Winton & Jack The Churchill Brothers*, pub. 2007. Also, *Winston S. Churchill* by Randolph S. Churchill YOUNG STATESMAN 1901-14; pps.373; pub. Heinemann London, 1967.
- (4) Jane, Lady Williams *nee* Portal, in conversation with Celia Lee, 18th & 24th October 2019; and letter quoted *Finest Hour* No. 153, supplied by Richard Langworth.
- (5) Richard M. Langworth CBE, Senior Fellow, Hillsdale College, Churchill Project; winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu in an e-mail to Celia Lee, October 17, 2019.
- (6) Richard M. Langworth CBE, former editor *Finest Hour*, quote from No. 154, Spring 2012.

- (7) Robert Sellers; *Hellraisers: The Life and Inebriated Times of Burton, Harris, O'Toole and Reed*; pub. SelfMadeHero, 29 Jan

Leo McKinstry on Churchill and Attlee: A Primer on Political Collegiality

- By RICHARD M. LANGWORTH
- November 29, 2019



*Attlee and Churchill, flanked by Anthony Eden (left) and Herbert Morrison, going to the Church of St. Margaret's Westminster for a thanksgiving service following the defeat of Japan, 17 August 1945. (From the official biography, *Never Despair, 1945-1965*, Hillside College Press)*

[Churchill and Attlee: Allies in War, Adversaries in Peace](#), by Leo McKinstry. New York: London, Atlantic Books, 736 pages, £25, Amazon \$25.66.

The McKinstry Epic

My first reaction to this massive study by Leo McKinstry was: “*Is there this much about Churchill and Attlee?*” As one quickly learns, there is indeed. McKinstry requires 738 pages—twice the size of the [previous Attlee-Churchill book](#). His tome is as thick as an average volume of *The Churchill Documents*. It is not something you should drop on your foot. And it is riveting from cover to cover.

McKinstry is thorough and scrupulously fair. Unlike too many historians today, he goes in with no axes to grind. He simply tells the story, backed by a voluminous bibliography, extensive research and private correspondence. In scope and balance, the book reminds us of [Arthur Herman's *Gandhi and Churchill*](#)—another elegant account of two contentious figures. Like Herman, McKinstry captures Churchill's generosity of spirit and his rival's greatness of soul.



Clement Attlee's distinctive bookplate in his copy of Churchill's book on social reform, *Liberalism and the Social Problem*, 1909. (Ronald I. Cohen Collection, Hillsdale College)

The [Ronald Cohen book collection](#), which Hillsdale is acquiring, includes a first edition of *Liberalism and the Social Problem*. Churchill's 1909 polemic for the Liberal Party's social reforms, it bears the bookplate of Clement Attlee. Leo McKinstry duly reminds us that Attlee was a lifetime Churchill reader. Nearly fifty years later, he was scribbling marginal notes in WSC's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. Most of them, his daughter-in-law quipped, are where "Pa reckoned Churchill was blithering." Attlee himself cracked that *HESP* would have better been called "things in history which have interested me." Yet he read every page.

"Sometimes turbulent, often fruitful, theirs was a relationship unprecedented in the annals of British politics," McKinstry concludes. It was partly "a reflection of Churchill's greatness, and partly of Attlee's patience." It is beautifully written, hard to put down.

Contrasts

Attlee was the longest-serving party leader of the 20th century, Churchill one of the longest-serving prime ministers. From 1940 to 1955, one of them was always PM. There have been other great rivalries, but the bond between them was unique, especially for persons with such opposite views. One spoke for liberty and a "minimum standard" guaranteed by the State. The other declared himself a socialist but practiced a far milder form of socialism than dialectic Marxists. In the war, Churchill had but one goal: defeating Hitler. Attlee, as Deputy Prime Minister (a position Churchill created expressly for him) ran the country. In doing so, he set himself up for his own premiership.

Churchill lived luxuriously; Attlee mowed his own lawn and cleaned his roof gutters. Churchill drank vintage champagne and spirits; Attlee went to bed with a cup of cocoa. Churchill holidayed in Monte Carlo, Attlee in Frinton. WSC had an exalted lineage, was hailed as a genius and pronounced a future prime minister. "No one," says McKinstry, "ever discerned such a prospect for Attlee." [Clementine Churchill](#) once called him "a funny little mouse."

Both wrote autobiographies, but Churchill's [My Early Life](#) is a triumphal progress compared to Attlee's [As It Happened](#). The latter was described as "lamely written, clumsily constructed...as boring as the minutes of a municipal gas undertaking.... Not [exactly] Alcibiades or Churchill."

Both were devoted to their wives, who were much alike: "fiercely loyal but often exhausted by the strain of public life." Clementine suffered from neuritis, Violet from sleeping sickness. Clemmie was a lifelong Liberal. Vi only joined Labour five years after her husband became party leader.

Independent thinkers

Attlee and Churchill were Conservatives in their youth, "devoted to the established social order." Churchill once called a Liberal a "snub-nosed radical." Attlee called Liberals "waffling, unrealistic have-nots." Both became disillusioned with the Conservatives, influenced by the Fabian socialist [H.G. Wells](#). Wells inspired Churchill's belief in the need for the State to act as reserve employer and provide welfare assistance. But while Churchill joined the snub-nosed Liberals, Attlee joined Labour.

Churchill became a crusading reformer, Attlee a welfare worker and activist in London's East End. There he helped implement Churchill's labor exchanges and National Insurance. Deciding that East Enders were "decent people who had been denied fair opportunities," Attlee began questioning the whole organization of society. "The seeds of his socialism had been sown."

Attlee and Churchill were patriots with faith in Britain and the Empire. Both fought in World War I, Churchill in Belgium, Attlee in [Gallipoli](#). The latter always approved of that campaign, which eclipsed Churchill's political career. "I have always regarded the strategic conception as sound [but] it was never adequately supported," Attlee said in 1960. Gallipoli made Attlee admire Churchill as a strategist. This paid dividends when they worked together in another war a quarter of a century later.

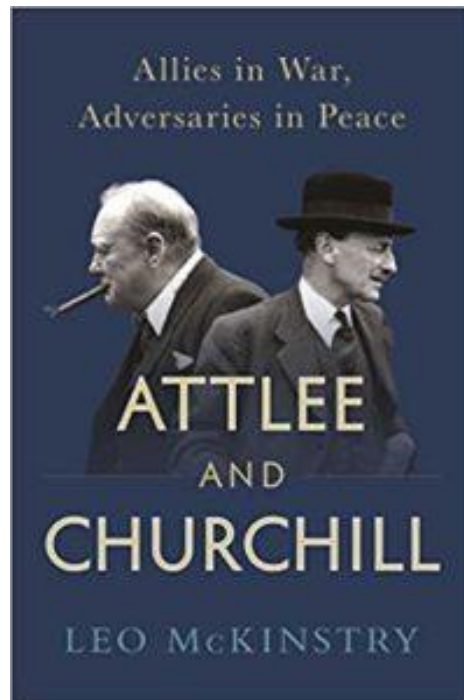
Nailed to their respective masts

By the time the India issue arose in 1930, Churchill had returned to the Conservatives. Attlee believed in Britain's role in India, but supported the reforms of the [India Act](#), which Churchill stridently opposed. From across the aisle, Attlee offered a sympathetic appraisal. "Trouble with Winston: he nails his trousers to the mast and can't climb down."

They also divided over the 1936 Abdication Crisis. By then Attlee was the Labour Party leader, yet he supported [Prime Minister Baldwin](#) versus [King Edward VIII](#). When Baldwin declared that his government would resign rather than agree to the King marrying twice-divorced [Wallis Simpson](#), Attlee promised that Labour would not form an alternative government. Churchill, demanding more time for the King, was shouted down in the Commons. Once again, Attlee thought, Winston had nailed his trousers to a tottering mast.

Neither were they of the same mind about rearmament—particularly air power. Calling Churchill a "brilliant erratic genius," Attlee referred to a Churchill book, [The Aftermath](#). In it, he said, Churchill's "brilliant imagination" envisioned control of military air power by the League of Nations! Churchill snorted that the Nazi threat demanded a national response. "I dread the day when the means of threatening the heart of the British Empire should pass into the hands of the present rulers of Germany."

As Hitler marched on, pro-armament socialists like [Hugh Dalton](#) urged Attlee to tilt toward Churchill. Yet Attlee had to mollify his left, which held Churchill an “uncompromising right-winger.” Meanwhile, Conservative stalwarts [Eden](#) and [Duff Cooper](#) would have no truck with socialists. “Only Churchill was ready to stand with Labour,” McKinstry writes, “but that just emphasized how badly isolated he still was from the Tory political mainstream.”



The Great Coalition

World War II threw them together. McKinstry accurately describes the fateful May 1940 meeting when Attlee refused to join a national government under [Neville Chamberlain](#). This effectively made Churchill prime minister. Attlee took criticism from his left, but responded: “I never believed that Winston had been hostile to the working-classes.”

The PM and his Deputy were an odd couple, wrote [Jock Colville](#): “Temperamentally, Churchill remained a radical just as Attlee by temperament was a conservative.” McKinstry, adds, “Attlee on a personal level was far more of a conformist than Churchill.” The latter sounded like a crusader, said Australia’s PM [Robert Menzies](#), but “Attlee sounded like a company director.”

“They jostled constantly,” writes McKinstry, “though Churchill, with his quicksilver tongue, usually had the last word against the leaden Attlee.” They frequently dined together. Yet Churchill did not invite Attlee to join [The Other Club](#), saying he was not really “clubbable.” Politically, McKinstry explains, Attlee had “to perform a balancing act between the left of the party,” but would do nothing to undermine the Coalition. “I am sufficiently experienced,” he told the outspoken socialist [Harold Laski](#), “to know that a frontal attack with a flourish of trumpets, heartening as it is, is not the best way to secure a position.”

Critic in chief

Their confrontations were pointed, but often amusing. Once Churchill told the Cabinet: “Well, gentlemen, I think we can all agree on this course.” Attlee shot back: “You know, Prime Minister, a monologue by you does not necessarily spell agreement.” [Sir David Hunt](#), a private secretary who served both, said Attlee would accept the explanation, “This is the way we have always done it.” But “you wouldn’t dare say that to Churchill.” He would instantly reply, “That is a very good reason for doing it differently this time.”

Attlee was not averse to telling off the PM in the bluntest language, albeit privately. By himself, he once banged out a letter on his battered typewriter. Churchill’s habits at meetings were disruptive, he complained. He was often unprepared, refusing to read the relevant documents. “I would ask you to put yourself in the position of your colleagues [and ask yourself whether] you would have been as patient as we have been.” Instead of blasting back, Churchill consulted his “familiar.” They all said Attlee was right. Clementine wrote: “I think that’s very brave of Mr. Attlee and I’m sure he’s representing the views of the Cabinet...and indeed all your friends and well-wishers.”

Tactics and strategy

They were united on the big things, but sometimes differed in detail. Early on, Attlee urged Churchill to repeal the [1927 Trade Disputes Act](#), which Labour hated. Churchill as Chancellor had helped pass it. He was sympathetic, but resisted, because he knew it would never get by the Tory-dominated House of Commons. In 1941, Attlee wanted to dismiss [Horace Wilson](#), Chamberlain’s appeasement toady, as head of the Civil Service. Churchill calmly passed. He let Wilson retire gracefully in 1942—reversing the usual image of an impulsive Churchill vs. a careful Attlee.

McKinstry correctly represents (this writer is honored to be quoted) that it was Attlee, not Churchill, who authorized the fire-bombing of Dresden. He cites Stalin’s first question to Churchill at [Yalta](#): “Why haven’t you bombed Dresden?” Attlee, McKinstry writes, had advocated mass bombing since 1940. He “had few qualms about this decision,” but later believed concentrating on specific targets would have been better.

By the last wartime summit conference in [Potsdam](#), the election was on. Votes would be counted before the meeting ended. Churchill, confident of victory, courteously invited Attlee to accompany him. By the way, would Attlee like the services of one of his valets? McKinstry writes: “Attlee, socially conventional if politically radical, felt no guilt about accepting the offer.”

Attlee’s triumph

Before Potsdam in a campaign broadcast, Churchill said a Labour government would need to enforce its programs with “a kind of [Gestapo](#).” The country questioned that language and Attlee took advantage. His responses contrasted Churchill the war leader and Churchill the party leader. About any voters tempted to follow him, Attlee thanked WSC “for having disillusioned them so thoroughly.” (Personal note: A London friend of this writer, lifetime Labour, told me in the ’90s that the acts of certain Labour councils reminded her very much of the Gestapo.)

Churchill was shattered by Attlee's election victory. Yet his basic decency triumphed over moroseness. "We have no right to feel hurt," McKinstry quotes him as saying, "This is democracy. This is what we have been fighting for." The people, he added, "have had a very rough time." To a private secretary he advised: "You must not think of me anymore; your duty is to serve Attlee, if he wishes you to do so." The secretary wept.

Like Churchill, Attlee had no compunctions about using the atomic bomb to end the war. He also consulted with Churchill over Anglo-American joint nuclear research. From Lake Como, where he was nursing his regrets after the election, Churchill wrote Attlee: "My concern...is what the Americans will do. I apprehend they will be increasingly shy of imparting further developments." This, McKinstry notes, referred to the [1943 Quebec agreement](#) on Anglo-US nuclear cooperation.

In the 1950s

Ardent socialists were not content with Attlee's mild, businesslike leadership. Soon they were attempting to replace him. Attlee quietly pushed on with social restructuring and nationalization. McKinstry notes also that like Churchill, he supported the foundation of the State of Israel and opposed British membership in any form of federal Europe.

After the 1951 election Churchill returned to Downing Street. He regarded the Labour domestic record "a mess," but would brook no criticism of his old deputy. Once at Chartwell, a local MP referred to "silly old Attlee." Churchill thundered: "Mr. Attlee is a great patriot. Don't you dare call him 'silly old Attlee' at Chartwell or you won't be invited again." His rival reciprocated—and then some. Churchill, Attlee said, was "the greatest leader in war this country has ever known, [who] stood like a beacon for his country's will to win."

In 1955, just after Churchill resigned as prime minister, Attlee resigned as Leader of the Opposition. Oddly, McKinstry writes, as they entered old age, the voluble Churchill became mute, even taciturn, Attlee more talkative. Some of his words were in admiration of his old political foe. Once, after a 1962 Royal Academy dinner, [Harold Nicolson](#) recorded that Churchill, aged and feeble had almost to be carried out: "'We may never see that again,' said a voice behind me. It was Attlee."

Ave atque vale

Attlee was in the Lords when Churchill died. Aging and enfeebled, he stood to address the House. "We have lost the greatest Englishman of our time," he said. "I think the greatest citizen of the world of our time." McKinstry quotes the *Daily Mail*: "Emotion choked Earl Attlee's voice to near inaudibility as he described the tears rolling down Sir Winston's cheeks when he spoke of the Nazi atrocities."

Attlee and Churchill raises a question worth considering. Must politics always be a vicious cycle of name-calling and vituperation? Churchill and Attlee say otherwise. They flung political charges back and forth, but never insulted each other. Whether on the same or opposite side, they went out of their way to share their views. They didn't use the media to bludgeon each other—and likewise the media didn't use them. Courtesy and respect do not mean surrender. We may learn from their example. We have a way to go.

The author

Richard M. Langworth CBE is Senior Fellow for the Hillsdale College Churchill Project and author or editor of ten books on Winston Churchill.

Further reading

Clement Attlee, "[The Churchill I Knew,](#)" Part 1.

Clement Attlee, "[The Churchill I Knew,](#)" Part 2.

Bradley P. Tolppanen, "[Two Views of Churchill's Relationship with Clement Attlee](#)"

Reprinted by permission of the Hillsdale College Churchill Project, winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu. Founded 2006, the Project serves to propagate a right understanding of Churchill's record. It has published, and keeps in print, all 31 volumes of the Official Biography. It archives the Martin Gilbert Papers and the Ronald Cohen collection of Churchill's writings. The Project promotes Churchill scholarship through national conferences, scholarships, online courses, and an endowed faculty chair. Hillsdale College was founded in 1844 "to spread sound learning so as to help preserve the blessings of civil and religious liberty and intelligent piety"—sentiments it believes were shared and typified by Churchill's life's work.

In emergencies he had no time to brood and scheme, instead channelling all his furious energy into achieving outcomes.'

However, for all Richards's sympathies for Brown, the two figures who bestride this book are Thatcher and Blair. In a way, that's inevitable: they define the modern era of politics because they still cast a long shadow. Neither the rise of Boris Johnson nor that of Jeremy Corbyn can be understood without acknowledging that their parties have yet to come to terms with the legacies of their most successful postwar leaders. To tell the truth, Richards hasn't either. The nearly thirty-year period since the fall of Thatcher gives him some sense of perspective. The mere twelve years since the fall of Blair, however, mean that his legacy is too raw for dispassionate consideration. But that is understandable – journalism is, after all, only the first draft of history.

So what are the lessons of leadership that Richards draws? They are many and various, and a lot of them are smart. 'One of the lessons of leadership', Richards writes, 'is that fashionable assumptions are nearly always wrong'. Elsewhere he states, 'The seeds of leaders' success and downfalls are often the same and are sown very early on', citing the cases of Wilson, Heath and Callaghan, for whom the experience of mass unemployment in the 1930s had a defining influence when it came to economic policy. Some of the points made are much more specific. 'In the UK a formal devaluation kills off political careers', Richards writes, pointing to the examples of Wilson and John Major.

Yet in the end such lessons are too disparate and are never drawn together, in part because Richards does not try to develop a theory of leadership of which they can be part. More importantly, he doesn't have a theory of power, which may well be the single most important aspect of political leadership. Thatcher had one – not her own, but adopted from Sir Keith Joseph. Tony Blair never had one – he had Gordon Brown instead, who had a distinct view of economics and burned to be prime minister. Perhaps that is why it is Thatcher's legacy that still endures, towering over all others.

To order this book from the Literary Review Bookshop, see page 53.

ANDREW ROBERTS

Once More unto the Breach

Working with Winston: The Unsung Women Behind Britain's Greatest Statesman

By Cita Stelzer

(Head of Zeus 377pp £20)

Oblivion or Glory: 1921 and the Making of Winston Churchill

By David Stafford

(Yale University Press 302pp £20)

Winston Churchill: At War and Thinking of War Before 1939

Edited by B J C McKercher & Antoine Capet

(Routledge 206pp £115)

Attlee and Churchill: Allies in War, Adversaries in Peace

By Leo McKinstry

(Atlantic Books 737pp £25)

'Of the writing of Churchill books there shall be no end' is an old publishing saw, and the appearance of these four books underlines it neatly. Each emphasises an important and interesting aspect of Churchill in a useful and scholarly way, and they all break new ground.

Cita Stelzer's *Working with Winston* is about Churchill's relationship with his secretaries and assistants. Concentrating on twelve of them – eleven women and one man – Stelzer expertly weaves a fascinating story of Churchill's interactions with the people who took down and typed up his enormous output, which included thirty-seven books, over eight hundred articles and eight thousand pages of speeches.

Taking dictation from a man who marched around his study to military music, growling words with a sibilant S, often with a cigar in his mouth, was no easy task, as almost all of his assistants attested. As Churchill's biographer Sir Martin Gilbert put it, 'Churchill's extraordinary productivity depended in such large measure upon those unsung labourers in the Churchill vineyard.'

It is noticeable how alike the stories often are: the young woman joins Churchill's staff, nervous because of her new master's reputation as a perfectionist and harsh taskmaster; she makes a mistake that sure enough draws his coruscating ire, sometimes reducing her to tears; she pulls herself together and decides

to soldier on, thinking him an unpleasant tyrant; he apologises later, teases her kindly and treats her with thoughtfulness; she then worships him for the rest of her life. None of them denied his initial toughness towards them; all of them without exception forgave him for it. Stelzer tells their stories with empathy and wit.

David Stafford's *Oblivion or Glory* is subtitled '1921 and the Making of Winston Churchill' and argues – well in time for the centenary of that climactic year – that those twelve months were pivotal for Churchill's political career, leaving him 'a prime minister in the making'. Stafford has already written two good books on Churchill's relationship with the secret services and Franklin Roosevelt, and this one is similarly engaging and well researched.

Churchill began 1921 by inheriting the fortune of a first cousin once removed, Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest, who died in a railway accident in January and left him an Irish estate that provided an income worth around £160,000 a year in today's money. This helped Churchill transform his otherwise rickety finances in his forty-seventh year, giving him more time to concentrate on his burgeoning political career.

During those packed twelve months, Churchill became secretary of state for the colonies, brought peace to Ireland after negotiating independence for the Irish Free State, created Iraq and Jordan at a

conference in Cairo, championed the policy of trying 'to strangle Bolshevism in its cradle' by sending assistance to the Whites in the Russian Civil War, saved the RAF from being split between the Admiralty and War Office, and suffered an extraordinary series of personal tragedies.

In April, Churchill's brother-in-law Bill Hozier shot himself in a Paris hotel room in circumstances that have never adequately been explained, but seem to have involved a combination of gambling debt and depression. In June, Churchill's mother, Jennie, died aged sixty-seven when the main artery in her leg haemorrhaged after an amputation. On 10 August, his faithful manservant Thomas Walden died. Only thirteen days later, Churchill's young daughter Marigold (whom he had nicknamed 'The Duckadilly'), not yet three years old, died of septicaemia. When Marigold breathed her last, her mother, Clementine, 'gave a succession of wild shrieks, like an animal in pain'. Yet for all the family tragedies, Churchill's career went from strength to strength in this period.

Winston Churchill: At War and Thinking of War Before 1939 comprises a series of eight essays expertly edited by B J C McKercher, a history professor at Victoria University in Canada, and Antoine Capet, professor of British studies at Rouen University. They include scholarly contributions by such distinguished historians as James Muller (on the River War in the Sudan), John Maurer (on the German naval challenge before the Great War) and Christopher Bell (on how the British press forced Churchill's resignation over the Gallipoli campaign).

Warren Dockter's essay on Churchill, Islam and the Middle East is similarly readable and impressive. He concludes that Churchill 'saw British power as a means to advance civilisation, which he ultimately believed helped everyone, including Moslems. Although Churchill's views of Islam in many ways can seem patronising and problematic they were nevertheless a great deal more nuanced and sympathetic than is generally appreciated.'

Unlike the majority of the contributors,

who are sympathetic to, if occasionally critical of, Churchill, Richard Toye, in his chapter on Churchill's relations with journalists, offers a raucous rant rather than a serious contribution to the field. Toye's previous works on Churchill have adopted a uniformly sneering tone towards him, so it was hardly likely that he was going to change his approach here.

Instead of concentrating on what made Churchill the best-paid war correspondent in the world and how he used newspapers to promote his policies, Toye tries to drag fashionable modern-day criticisms into what ought to have been an interesting essay. 'Churchill's story tells us much about the origins of the highly problematic media culture that exists today,' he lectures. Except that it doesn't at all. Toye's efforts to convince us that Churchill's supposed attempts to 'browbeat' and 'manipulate' the press and to pursue 'shallow stunts' and 'showmanship' actually tell us more about his own crabbed attitude towards Churchill than anything useful about the British press in the first half of the 20th century, let alone today.

By contrast, Leo McKinstry's fine book on the relationship between Churchill and the Labour leader Clement Attlee is a subtle and nuanced work full of illuminating insights. Attlee had been one of the last men evacuated off the beaches at Gallipoli and always believed that the Dardanelles expedition had been one of the great strategic ideas of the First World War. Similarly, Churchill hugely appreciated Attlee's patriotic refusal to put party advantage before the national interest when he entered Churchill's National Government in May 1940, making no demands for a set number of Cabinet places for the Labour Party.

Of course, in peacetime Churchill and Attlee had to spar in public, as prime ministers and leaders of the opposition must, but in private Churchill would not hear a word against his friend and wartime deputy, and indeed once threatened to expel from Chartwell a Tory MP who had presumed to criticise Attlee. McKinstry has produced a first-class, highly readable account of a key relationship in Churchill's career.

To order these books from the Literary Review Bookshop, see page 53.

Q.
What do Samuel Taylor Coleridge, James Joyce and Ivy Compton-Burnett have in common?



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Save the White House Pub

BLADON COMMUNITY JOINS FORCES TO SAVE PUB WHERE CHURCHILL “LEARNED TO DRINK”

Inspired by the great man himself, locals have formed a “War Cabinet” as they give people the chance to buy shares in the pub– and are being supported in their effort by Sir Winston’s great grandson Randolph Churchill.



Randolph Churchill, great grandson of Sir Winston Churchill added: “Our family is very proud of our association with Bladon and the love and care the community gives towards my great grandfather’s resting place. Your plans very much have our family blessing.”

The White House pub has been at the heart of the Bladon community since the 17th Century and is the last remaining pub and community facility in the village.

It's also the pub where Churchill, who was born at nearby Blenheim Palace, “learned to drink”. With a growing population of just under 1,000 residents and thousands of visiting tourists, this important and historic pub is the lifeblood of the community.

Anticipating that the current owners, Greene King, would try to sell the White House at some point, in June 2019, Bladon Parish Council with the support of Bladon villagers, successfully applied to West Oxfordshire District Council for the pub to be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). The community now has an opportunity to put in a bid to buy and manage the future of the pub. A group of concerned residents have been working hard to determine if this is viable and now plan to make it a reality. **But they have only until March 2020 to raise the £500,000 required to buy the pub for the community and so far, villagers have pledged over £120,000.**

Mike Edwards, of Bladon Community Pub Committee, said: “To quote Sir Winston, we plan to ‘never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never’. Now that Greene King has made the decision to place the pub on

the disposal list, Bladon locals have followed the example of The White House's most revered patron, Sir Winston, by forming our own War Cabinet and society to keep this Churchillian centre to our village open."

In the UK, nearly 100 pubs have been taken over by the community and every one of them continues to thrive. Early and regular engagement with the community through leafleting, public meetings (attended by over 100 residents) and numerous conversations has shown that there is a strong level of support for a community purchase in Bladon.

The community pub bid has widespread support and Dominic Hare, Chief Executive Officer, Blenheim Palace commented: "We are delighted to support the Bladon Community Pub project. The White House has been one of the hubs of community life in Bladon for a very long time and we believe that it is very important for all Bladon residents for it to remain this way. We will support the project team at every step and urge others to do so too."

Robert Courts M.P. commented: "As a local resident of Bladon, I know just how important the White House is to our community. As a village in a rural area too, the pub is a vital resource for those vulnerable residents who may not be able to travel further afield for the services it provides, and it can help to alleviate rural isolation. I am fully behind the campaign to run the White House as a community pub."

The Bladon Community Pub Committee has been in contact with a number of successful community pub groups to gain insight into the challenges and opportunities ahead. It has also joined the Plunkett Foundation – an organisation that supports communities with initiatives like this. Together they will develop a business plan and make the project a success as they have for so many other community pubs.

The Bladon Community Pub Committee has been really encouraged by the wide support for this community purchase, not just from Bladon Residents, but from surrounding villages and further afield. Several individual investors have pledged their support. The White House has enormous potential and could be a social hub for the village offering a whole host of services.

Can you help us save Winston's White House?

Be part of this unique opportunity to own part of the historic White House by becoming an investor. Visit <http://bladoncommunitypub.org/> to buy shares, the share offer is open between 13th December 2019 and 31st January 2020.

Alternatively, you can donate to help save the pub at: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-churchills-white-house>.

Follow our story at <http://bladoncommunitypub.org/> and @Bladon_Pub or join our mailing list.

Website: <http://bladoncommunitypub.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bladoncommunitypub/>

Twitter: @Bladon_Pub

Email: bladoncommunitypub@gmail.com

For more information contact

Rachel Guest Tel: 07960 238530

Email: bladoncommunitypub@gmail.com

From the President



Dear Members,

The board of directors and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We also send special holiday greetings to our sister branch at Chartwell, Westerham, Kent, England.

We hope you enjoyed the wonderful events CSOT put on in 2019. We had a splendid spring picnic, mid-summer tea and our first ever Churchill symposium and formal banquet in the fall. It was a pleasure to see so many of our stalwart members and to greet many new ones.

Looking forward to next year we have just put the finishing touches on our second annual Churchill symposium, "*Churchill in War and Peace*". The symposium will be held on April 4th at the Belle Meade Country Club and will include three top Churchill historians from across the nation. They include David Freeman, Douglas Russell and Klaus Larres. Please mark your calendars now for this exciting event.

Another major event next year is the ICS, UK conference set for October 22 -24 in London, England. There will be more information on this as it comes available.

Finally, please don't forget to renew your membership for 2020. We have a great year planned for you!

Merry Christmas Churchillians,

Jim Drury

THE CHURCHILL SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE



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