## THE CHURCHILLIAN

Churchill Society of Tennessee

1<sup>st</sup> Summer Edition 2020

## Churchill Rising!

"Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength."



On Friday May 10, 1940 Winston S Churchill becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain.

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### From the President



Dear Members,

I hope you are all doing well as we move through these challenging times.

It is always good to have interests that divert from the day to day and uplift our minds and spirits. It is our hope that the newsletter offers such a diversion.

Studying history and how our forebear dealt with crisis can be inspirational and fortifying. It can give us the boost we need to get on with things.

Few people in history exemplify inspiration more than Sir Winston Churchill. In the early days of World War II, and virtually alone, he guided Great Britain through the greatest challenge to its freedom in modern times.

In Churchill's first speech to the Commons after being elected Prime Minister in May 1940, he offered up his answer to the grave threat facing the nation. It was first and foremost a message of hope.

'You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.'

This of course was not a specific roadmap to victory. Churchill knew first he had to make the country believe and have the confidence to go on. He knew that without that belief there was little hope. Fortunately, Churchill's belief in country and the strength of his leadership was infectious. The people rallied!

This edition also contains three detailed articles looking into the more personal aspects of Churchill's life. First is the Allister Vale and John Scadding account of Churchill's fractured hip while in the South of France and Winston telling Montague Browne - 'Remember, I want

to die in England'. This is an introduction to the second article by "Sunny Gill" Morton whose personal account of nursing Churchill back from his hip injury gives us a fascinating peek behind the medical curtain (so to speak). Finally, Celia Lee gives us a detailed look into the personal diaries of Jean, Lady Hamilton, wife of General Sir Ian Hamilton, and their close relationship the Churchill family.



As you know, all our CSOT events are on hold pending reboot of the economy and getting people moving around again post pandemic. So... we have decided to publish two issues of the Churchillian this summer to make up for our forced lack of events.

The second summer issue will feature, among other things, the gardens of Chartwell House. This will also include history about the gardens from our sister ICS branch at Chartwell. Chartwell National Trust has also granted the unusual privilege of allowing us to publish many of their beautiful photographs in the article.

As most of us are not able to travel to this summer we thought it would be nice to bring the Chartwell gardens to you.

It is easy to let things go by the wayside in these challenging times. Please do not forget to renew your membership and invite your friends to join the CSOT.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

Respectfully yours,

Jim Drury

### **Churchill Speech Series**

On Monday May 13, 1940, Winston Churchill delivered his first speech as Prime Minister. The speech was given at 3pm which is why Big Ben displays that time on the £5 note featuring Churchill.

Click on the five-pound note to hear the speech.





With Churchill taking over as Prime Minister, the British people finally had hope. Churchill commented to General Ismay: "Poor people, poor people. They trust me, and I can give them nothing but disaster for quite a long time."

The House of Commons, May 13, 1940.

I beg to move,

That this House welcomes the formation of a Government representing the united and inflexible resolve of the nation to prosecute the war with Germany to a victorious conclusion.

Mr. Speaker,

On Friday evening last I received His Majesty's Commission to form a new Administration. It as the evident wish and will of Parliament and the nation that this should be conceived on the broadest possible basis and that it should include all parties, both those who supported the late Government and also the parties of the Opposition. I have completed the most important part of this task. A War Cabinet has been formed of five Members, representing, with the Opposition Liberals, the unity of the nation. The three party Leaders have agreed to serve, either in the War Cabinet or in high executive office. The three Fighting Services have been filled. It was necessary that this should be done in one single day, on account of the extreme urgency and rigour of events. A number of other positions, key positions, were filled yesterday, and I am submitting a further list to His Majesty tonight. I hope to complete the appointment of the principal Ministers during tomorrow. The appointment of the other Ministers usually takes a little longer, but I trust that, when Parliament meets again, this part of my task will be completed, and that the administration will be complete in all respects.

I considered it in the public interest to suggest that the House should be summoned to meet today. Mr Speaker agreed, and took the necessary steps, in accordance with the powers conferred upon him by the Resolution of the House. At the end of the proceedings today, the Adjournment of the House will be proposed until Tuesday, 21st May, with, of course, provision for earlier meeting, if need be. The business to be considered during that week will be notified to Members at the earliest opportunity. I now invite the House, by the Motion which stands in my name, to record its approval of the steps taken and to declare its confidence in the new Government.

To form an Administration of this scale and complexity is a serious undertaking in itself, but it must be remembered that we are in the preliminary stage of one of the greatest battles in history, that we are in action at many other points in Norway and in Holland, that we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean, that the air battle is continuous and that many preparations, such as have been indicated by my hon. Friend below the Gangway, have to be made here at home. In this crisis I hope I may be pardoned if I do not address the House at any length today. I hope that any of my friends and colleagues, or former colleagues, who are affected by the political reconstruction, will make allowance, all allowance, for any lack of ceremony with which it has been necessary to act. I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this Government: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realised; no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal. But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, "Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength."

Winston Churchill May 13, 1940 First Speech as Prime Minister To the House of Commons

### Sir Winston Churchill fractures his hip in the south of France on 28 June 1962 "Remember, I want to die in England" 1

#### Allister Vale and John Scadding OBE

In Sir Winston Churchill's later years, the Mediterranean warmth and light, particularly that of the south of France, became more and more important to him. On 26 June 1962, Churchill flew from London to Nice for a fortnight's holiday in an eighth-floor suite at the Hôtel de Paris. Churchill was accompanied by Celia Sandys (his granddaughter), Anthony Montague Browne (his Private Secretary), two nurses (Roy Howells and Miss Robin Powell) and Sgt Edmund Murray, his detective.

Shortly before 6 am on 28 June Nurse Powell was on duty and was sitting outside Churchill's room reading a book when she heard a crash and a thud in the bedroom. She ran in and found Churchill lying on the floor. The crash Powell heard was the noise of the anglepoise lamp being knocked off the glass-topped bedside table; the thud was Churchill hitting the floor.

Powell telephoned Howells who was asleep on the third floor. Howells told her to telephone Montague Browne and Dr Roberts (Churchill's general practitioner in Monte Carlo), who lived at Cap d'Ail, 2 miles away. Howells ran upstairs to Churchill's suite. He found Churchill lying on the floor in his bedroom covered by a blanket with his head propped up by a mound of pillows. He recalled that Churchill seemed reasonably calm and said: 'I think I've hurt my leg.'<sup>2</sup>

Montague Browne recorded that Howells woke him up and told him that Churchill had had a fall and was seriously injured. 'I found WSC lying silently on the floor, propped up on pillows. He was conscious and dignified, but obviously in pain. The rather trite analogy of a wounded stag crossed my mind.'

X-rays confirmed that Churchill's fracture was in the upper third of the femur. Churchill, still lying on the floor, was made as comfortable as possible and Roberts put his leg in a splint. Montague Browne has recorded that when Churchill had recovered from the application of a huge plaster cast: 'I went to see him. I thought he was dozing, but after a minute he greeted me with a smile. I sat in silence and after a further interval he asked, quite courteously, that the others present should leave the room. He told me in an almost inaudible voice to make sure that they had gone, then said in a strong tone: "Remember, I want to die in England. Promise me that you will see to it." I gave the required promise unhesitatingly, but privately wondered if I would be able to carry it out, for he seemed mortally stricken.'

Montague Browne telephoned Number Ten (the Prime Minister's Office and residence), and within a very short time, Harold Macmillan (the Prime Minister) had ordered an RAF Comet ambulance, based at RAF Lyneham, Wiltshire, to fly to Nice to bring Churchill home. Celia Sandys wrote that: 'Strapped into the stretcher bed in the body of the Comet, he looked even more fragile. I sat and held his hand, and could only hope and pray that he would make it home.' Lady Churchill, her son Randolph, Lord Moran (Churchill's personal physician) and Mr Philip Yeoman (senior orthopaedic registrar) had been waiting at the North Terminal, Heathrow Airport for half an hour before the aircraft touched down and taxied to the apron at 1.30 pm on 29 June.

Churchill was then taken by ambulance to the Middlesex Hospital, London. On arrival at the side entrance, the street was jammed with people and Churchill 'received a fantastic reception when he was carried out giving his familiar V-sign.'<sup>2</sup>

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Abstracted from Vale JA and Scadding JW. Sir Winston Churchill KG: hip fracture in Monte Carlo ('Remember, I want to die in England') on 28 June 1962, femoral vein thrombosis and jaundice in London. J R Soc Med 2019; 112: 96-108.

## Recollections of nursing Sir Winston Churchill in June-July 1962 at the Middlesex Hospital, London

#### **Gill Morton**



I was working very happily and very hard on an oncology ward at the Middlesex Hospital, London. On the afternoon of Thursday 28 June 1962, I received a message to go to Matron's office. I approached her office with a degree of anxiety, as we were only sent to see Matron, Miss Marjorie Marriott, when something was wrong!

However, she was absolutely charming and told me that the following day Friday I must be ready to 'special' Sir Winston Churchill. He was being admitted to the Woolavington Wing, the Private Wing of the Middlesex Hospital, with a fractured hip. The term 'special' was used when you gave a patient one-to-one attention and you were exempt from other ward duties. This was in the time before we had High Dependency Units.

She told me he had fractured his left hip in a fall in France and that the RAF was flying him to the Middlesex Hospital the next day to arrive during the early afternoon. She told me I was not to mention it to anyone! I explained that as it was to be my weekend off, I would be travelling home to Nottingham to see my parents and fiancé, and that they would be at the station to meet me. Her reply was that I could only inform my parents about what was happening! She told me I was never to leave his room when I was on duty, and if I needed anything, I was to ring the bell. There is always the risk when nursing an old, confused person that they may fall out of bed! It doesn't bear thinking about!

The ward I was working on was extremely busy at that time and I still had to get through Thursday evening and the Friday morning until I could handover to the Ward Sister coming on duty for the weekend, then have some lunch and be ready to report to the Woolavington Wing.

On arrival, Sister Hilda Smith, Staff Nurse Sally Sinclair and I were taken into the garden to be interviewed by the BBC TV News. I managed a quick phone call to my parents to tell them to put the television on! We then waited in the front hall for the arrival of the ambulance. An enormous crowd had gathered outside in Riding House Street to wait for the arrival of Sir Winston Churchill.

I vividly remember Miss Marriot looking at me (with those piercing eyes) and saying: 'When the ambulance arrives you must go out and greet him and I will take care of Lady Churchill.' I thought that sounded easy but I found myself suddenly trapped in a noisy, jostling crowd and it was with difficulty that I pushed my way through to the stretcher coming out of the ambulance. It was a futile exercise because as soon as Sir Winston heard the cheering crowd he responded and used his well-known V sign which caused even more cheering!



Sister Morton (née Keefe) greets Sir Winston Churchill on arrival at the Middlesex Hospital, London © Getty Images (106756723)

Sir Winston was taken to his room on B floor. It was a relatively small room with big windows overlooking a lovely garden. No en suite facilities existed in those days! The rest of the afternoon was taken up with the orthopaedic consultants and anaesthetists examining Sir Winston and making their final plans. I knew the two Middlesex men, Mr. Phillip (Pip) Newman, Orthopaedic Surgeon, and Dr Peter Cope, Anaesthetist. After x-rays were taken the decision to operate went into action during the early evening.

I went off duty at 4.30 pm feeling rather weary. My nursing colleagues were all wonderfully supportive and dragged me off to watch the BBC News on TV, including the interview filmed before Churchill's arrival.

I went on duty the next morning knowing that good nursing care was fundamental and that my responsibility was to return this VIP to good health. When you immobilize an octogenarian, there are the risks of the patient developing a DVT (deep vein thrombosis), stroke, chest infection, pneumonia, urine infection, constipation, bed sores and mental confusion. Close observation, early mobilization, and a good fluid intake are essential.

With the transfer of Sir Winston from France, immobilized in a heavy plaster, and then an operation, followed by a night's sleep, we needed to get going. I had a very dozy and reluctant patient on my hands! It was not going to be easy! As I stood by the bed, he became very restless and I realized he wanted to pass urine. I turned to reach for a urine bottle, when he shouted, 'God damn it woman, I want to pump ship!' I gather this is a well-known Naval term!

Sir Winston already had a medical history that predisposed him to some of the aforementioned complications. He did develop thrombophlebitis and pneumonia. However, the story has a happy ending and he was finally discharged on his feet as well as he was ever going to be!

The Press were an absolute nuisance. I was naive and didn't realize how intrusive they could be. During Sir Winton's hospitalisation, The Press hung around the hospital entrances every day, so I decided to use the underground passage that connected the hospital with the Nurses' Home in Foley Street, some two streets away.

The *Daily Express* headlines the next morning were 'Sunny Gill nursing Winston. She was born in 1939......Father says she has a sunny nature.'

I rang my parents asking why they had spoken to the press! My mother calmed me down, saying, they had been watching the television as Churchill arrived at the hospital. The press invaded their bungalow and took photographs of them. It was summertime and my parents would have had the doors and windows of their bungalow open. She told me my father was angry with the intrusion and the press kept asking questions about me. He said I had a sunny nature! The press also stated that I had rung my parents the night before to say that I wouldn't be coming home and why. I used a call box in the nurses' home, and to this day I do not know how they managed to get that information!

'Sunny Gill' became my nickname and people always said it with a cheeky grin. However, it had a sweet sequel. After a couple of days, when Sir Winston was beginning to feel better, he wanted to look at the newspapers. They were brought in every day by Sir Anthony Montague Browne, his Private Secretary. Sir Winston seemed to really only want to read about himself and he wanted to see at least five of the well-known papers, which had already been pared down by his Private Secretary. This was a rare quiet moment, so I pulled up a high stool to help him turn the pages. He started with the *Daily Express* with the caption, 'He comes under watchful eye of nurse Gillian "Sunny" Keefe and my age, 'born 1939.' He stabbed the paper with his index finger and said, 'Is that you? Huh, mere baby.' I laughed and said, 'Maybe, but I know how to look after you.'

That produced a chuckle, a sweet smile and a twinkle in his eye. He did have the sweetest smile and I was to see it many more times. This was good after the inevitably miserable first two days of post operation depression when he had looked at me with bottom lip pursed and said, 'I want to go home.' He looked so sad and vulnerable; who wouldn't be, a man of 82 years with his leg in plaster, flown home from France, operated on, now in discomfort and in hospital. Here I have to admit I gave him a hug.

The first day after the operation, following lunch, Lady Churchill arrived. Sir Winston was dozing and on hearing her voice his face literally lit up, as he extended his arm. 'My darling Clemmie, darling,' he cried. They were always very affectionate to one another, but she was very firm with him if she needed to be. After greeting her I always left the room and sat outside the door until she was ready to go.

Hospital days start early, and it is well known from history that our special patient was not an early riser! One of the reasons for the early start is that medication has to be given regularly around the clock. I was the last person he wanted to see at 7.30am! Sir Winston thought he could go back to sleep, even though I had delayed breakfast as long as I could, but for him it was all too early! The more so because I wanted him to take some tablets. 'Damn it woman go away!'

I was being quite firm when to my surprise I turned to see Mr Philip Newman, Orthopaedic Surgeon, standing behind me with a bemused smile. He had decided to pop in to see his patient before his busy morning rounds began. I explained the early morning difficulties. He reiterated to Sir Winston the importance of the medication. After that we still had a battle in the morning, but not quite so vehement! It came back to me via the grapevine that Mr Newman had said to a Doctor friend of mine, 'my goodness Sister Keefe has Churchill under her thumb.'

Being used to having his own way, he couldn't or wouldn't comprehend that the mornings were filled with washing and shaving, physiotherapy (more about that later) and a daily visit

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from his private secretary, and a consultants' round. All before lunch and more medication, though that was taken fairly well!

Lunch was not eaten quickly by Sir Winston and a further glance at a newspaper delayed things further. I would go for my lunch and return to have the patient ready for visiting time, including a struggle to clean his fingernails, which he disliked. Occasionally he wanted a cigar after lunch, which pushed us very close to our 2 pm deadline. He would often be snoozing when Lady C arrived, but as soon as he heard her voice he would say: 'My darling Clemmie, darling,' holding an outstretched arm to her and waiting to be kissed. It was always very touching to see.

He really hated his physiotherapy and was not very communicative with the physiotherapist. She tried very patiently. When he and I were alone and I was encouraging him to do a simple straight leg raising exercise and he was staring me out, I threatened to tickle his foot. Obviously, I would never actually do that, but to my delight he suddenly chuckled and raised his leg! I am not sure who was having who on!

Sir Anthony Montague Brown, came daily, to tell him who his planned visitors were for the day and other information of interest to Sir Winston. He also brought all the popular newspapers. Eventually I asked Sir Anthony to put the papers in the wardrobe so I could give them out later after we had done physiotherapy.

His room was full of flowers and I thought they looked beautiful. However, as Lady Churchill left she waved her hand over the flowers and said, 'Some of these flowers are dead. I never want to see dead flowers again,' and swept out. I was quite shocked; a few flowers might have been 'faded.' The hospital was inundated with flowers for Sir Winston, from all over the world. A special room was opened to receive them, and Lady Churchill decided which ones should be sent to his room.

Cigars were the bane of my life for those few weeks! He would take 2 or 3 puffs, then rest his hand over the ash tray and let the cigar smoulder. The free fingertips would lie in the ash. He might take a few more puffs but the butt of the cigar would be about 3 inches long. Often much of the cigar had just smouldered away. I had to ensure he did not doze off. The mornings were busy with physiotherapy and Doctors' visits, so only one cigar would be smoked in the morning.

Lady Churchill had said that she did not want him to drop ash on his silk vests as it made holes. Evidently it happened so often they had to be darned! She also asked me to make sure that he did not have ash under his fingernails at visiting time! He hated me cleaning his nails and got very cross. He would sometimes ask for a cigar after lunch, but I would try to distract him away from that for the above reasons! Another time he might smoke was when the afternoon visitors had left. During my eight-hour daytime shift at the most three cigars were not fully smoked. I am sure the evenings were different, when he played cards, watched a film and had a drink.

Although I have a very good 'picture memory,' I cannot remember how we lit the cigars! I think it was with matches, but did he hold the match or did I? I know to me the whole thing was fraught with danger!! First thing in the morning I would put the waste basket outside the door to be emptied, and the 'vultures' descended for the cigar butts! I was horrified and retreated quickly! Obviously, I was a bit unworldly!

As well as the hundreds of bouquets of flowers and vast numbers of cigars that arrived as gifts, I remember some free-range eggs being flown in from South Africa from a farmer who had been with Sir Winston during the war. Also, a bottle of brandy arrived the same age as Sir Winston! Unfortunately, I cannot remember from whom it came.

Every afternoon was taken up with visitors. This was very fascinating for me. Lady Churchill always introduced me to the visitor. Then I would sit outside the room with Sergeant Murray, the private Detective, until the visitors and Lady C left. The Detective was a very jovial man and kept me amused. He also told me he was armed! I didn't believe him, so he proved it one day by showing me a neat little gun in a holster under his left armpit! I remember being very shocked. I had never seen a gun!

Lady Churchill visited every afternoon and only missed once as I remember. Their daughter, Mary Soames was the next most frequent visitor and once brought her three small children. Sir Winston was sitting in an armchair and they would reach to kiss him and called him 'Grandpapa.' He gave them that very sweet smile, which I loved to see, his whole face lit up and his eyes twinkled. Christopher Soames MP, and son-in-law, was a fairly frequent visitor. 'Young Winston' son of Randolph Churchill and grandson of Sir Winston Churchill, an MP from 1970 until 1983, came to visit. 'Young Winston' was the right description, he was 22 years old, he looked like a schoolboy and was very charming.

I met Sir Anthony Eden, Prime Minister 1955 -1957 (I was surprised at his limp handshake), Sir Edward Heath, Prime Minister 1970-1974, and Duncan Sandys member of Churchill's World War 2 Cabinet and Churchill's son-in-law. I also remember Sarah Churchill, Lady Audley, came with her husband and sat next to me and Sergeant Murray waiting to see her father. She never spoke to me although I introduced myself and explained that Sir Winston had his wife and another visitor in his room at that time.

There was a discussion between Lady Churchill and Sir Anthony Montague Browne (as he arranged the visitors for her) as to whether Monty [Field Marshall Montgomery] should be allowed to visit. Sir Winston was now on anticoagulants for his thrombophlebitis and there was a concern that he might have another stroke. Evidently Sir Winston and Monty had very heated discussions when they met and the concern was that it may cause a rise in his blood pressure and the possibility of a stroke. It was decided that Monty should not visit. Interestingly, Sir Winston's son, Randolph Churchill was not allowed to visit for the same reason.

Then came General Eisenhower, the one person I wanted to meet, and it was on a Friday afternoon and I had been given, at last, a weekend off. My disappointment was short-lived as I was going to meet my fiancé, who I hadn't seen for many weeks, as Matron had cancelled my leave the weekend Sir Winston arrived.

Late one afternoon, Baroness Asquith, Helen Violet Bonham Carter, arrived, on an unplanned visit. He was so delighted to see her; he immediately became very animated. It was a joy to see. I didn't know then that they were incredibly close friends of many years. She was like a tonic.

Sir Keith Joseph MP visited one afternoon. He had just returned from Brussels, having attended a meeting regarding the Common Market. He was delighted to be able to see Sir Winston as it was very early days post op. I witnessed something I was to see repeated over and over again, Sir Winston's ability to 'switch on,' from a dozing old man in his eighties to a very

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attentive man, able to hold a lucid and animated conversation when he wished.

Another lovely example of this was when we had to have the door window blind repaired. The hospital carpenter arrived and quickly did the job. As he picked up his bag to leave, Churchill suddenly came to and proffered his right hand saying, 'thank you my man.' The carpenter shook hands with him and said, 'I was at El Alamein with you sir.' Sir Winston became animated and they had a brief chat. The carpenter's eyes welled up and he left fumbling for his handkerchief! Me too.

On one day a small bottle of Pol Roger champagne arrived and I was left to open it. I had never opened a bottle of champagne, but realized you had to twist the wire undone to release the cork. However, I had begun to twist the wire the wrong way! On realizing my mistake, I turned my back on him whilst I attacked the wire again, I then looked up, straight into the mirror above the wash basin and saw he was watching me with much amusement. I smiled back and was treated to one of those lovely smiles that completely light up his face and we both laughed!

Sir Winston had several private nurses at his home, including Roy Howells, the only male nurse, who had been with him for many years. It had been suggested by the household that the nurses come to the hospital to help. Matron decided that was not what we needed, but the male nurse would come in to help with shaving and personal toilet procedures during the morning.

I think nurse Howells returned in the evening, I am not sure, as I never worked in the evening. Matron put me on to straight day shifts, that is commencing at 7.30 am until 4.30 pm, to give Sir Winston some continuity of staff.

The evenings I know very little about, except that they became very sociable! Sir Winston played Canasta; I suspect with his Private Secretary. They put up a screen and watched films until very late (a well-known habit of Churchill's), enjoyed drinks and cigars were smoked.

Sir Winston would normally have gone home after six weeks when the fractured hip was healed. However, this was not possible, because the lift that was being installed at his home in Hyde Park Gate, was not ready. Lady Churchill asked the hospital if her husband could remain at The Middlesex Hospital until it was ready.

Matron Marjorie Marriott told me she was taking me away from Sir Winston and asked me to inform Lady Churchill. On the day before he was leaving, I told Lady Churchill. She thanked me profusely but asked me not to tell him, until I actually said, 'Goodbye.' She said, he would not want me to go and would make a fuss! I was not entirely happy about this, but I conformed.

Sir Anthony Montague Browne approached me, offering me a nursing post at Hyde Park Gate. I had no hesitation in declining, this was not the kind of nursing I wanted to do. I enjoyed the challenges of hospital nursing, in a prestigious London teaching hospital.

I will always be grateful to The Middlesex Hospital for giving me the opportunity to care for 'the Great Man' himself and all the interesting people I met. I am quite proud that we were able to send that precious gentleman home in the best condition he could be, for his age and his inherent health problems.

When the time came, to say 'goodbye' Sir Winston was sitting in a low armchair after lunch. I had got into a habit of sitting on a footstool on the floor beside him, to be at his level. This

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improved communication, on a one-to-one basis, especially as his hearing was impaired. When he was in bed, I used a tall stool. This was how I told him I was leaving. He stroked my cheek and said, 'my pet lamb' and then held my hand, and with complete eye to eye contact, said 'Thank you.' It was a beautiful rewarding moment for me, never to be forgotten.

I went on holiday and returned to find an invitation from Lady Churchill to visit their home at Hyde Park Gate, to receive a gift from Sir Winston. I discovered before my visit that some people had received a signed book, and others a signed photograph of Sir Winston.

On my arrival, I was greeted by Lady Churchill, and then I was taken by a member of staff to see Sir Winston in his bedroom. He was asleep in bed with his dog beside him. He handed me a signed photograph of himself and shook hands. I honestly don't think he recognized me, though this was not surprising as a few weeks had passed and I was not in uniform.

In January 1965, on the day of Churchill's funeral I sat with my parents in Nottingham in their home waiting to watch the ceremony. The doorbell rang, it was the local press, asking my mother if they knew where I was. I was very reluctant to see to them, my father suggested I said something in order to get rid of them. They wanted to know if he had been a difficult patient! In fact, they were very good, not too pushy and with a little information, they left. The report in the local paper was short and accurate.

# THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE HAMILTONS AND THE CHURCHILLS

#### Celia Lee

Miss Jean Muir, daughter of the Scottish millionaire, Sir John Muir, and Margaret *née* Kay, whose father was a partner in the tea manufacturing business of James Finlay & Co., married the penniless but brilliant soldier, Major Ian Hamilton. The wedding was a high society affair in St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta 1887, followed by a lavish wedding reception. Afterwards the young couple were whisked away on the vice-regal motor-launch to Lord William Beresford's villa in the lovely, romantic surroundings of Barrackpore, where they began their honeymoon.

The early years of the Hamiltons' married life was spent in India, where they lived in a bungalow at Simla. Much of Jean's activities involved appearing like a mannequin, her tall, slim figure, immaculately dressed in the fashions of the day, attending dinners and balls, her head dazzling in a tiara, ropes of pearls around her neck, and missing no opportunity amongst the hierarchy of the British army to further her husband's career.



Miss Jean Muir on her wedding morning 1887 By kind permission of Ian Hamilton Photo enhancement: John David Olsen



Major Ian Hamilton, 1887 By kind permission of Ian Hamilton

#### Hamilton and Churchill in India

Major Ian Hamilton and Winston Churchill had met on the North-West Frontier, India, 1897, when the British were going to war against the tribesmen. The friendship between the two men struck up then, would last for the rest of their lives. Twenty-one years spanned the difference in their ages, and there can be little doubt that young Winston, just 23 years old, looked up to the experienced 44-year-old soldier as a kind of father figure, his own father, Lord Randolph having died two years earlier. But for Jean's diaries the closeness of the friendship would have remained relatively unknown.

The Churchillian

When Hamilton was given command of a brigade in the Tirah province, on the north west frontier of India, Winston wired him, pleading for his help in obtaining an interview with Sir William Lockhart. Hamilton made the arrangements and Sir William was persuaded to take Winston on as an extra aide-de-camp. Sir William then took up his own duties as Commander-in-Chief India. Winston remained in the Bara Valley, going out with parties that were guarding the hill-tops and learning much about active soldiering.

Winston returned home on leave in August and, with the help of Sir Evelyn Wood, who had served as a lieutenant during the Indian Mutiny (1857), got onto Kitchener's Khartoum campaign. Before leaving, he appealed to Hamilton in a letter, asking him again to help further his career:

'I am anxious to get something at home after Egypt as I do not want to leave the army until I am fixed in politics. But what? The only thing I can think of is the I.B. [Intelligence Branch.] I have no qualifications. But perhaps you would know whether this was in any way possible. It would interest me, and I believe I might be of use, as my pen is mightier than my sword .... Au revoir, my dear general - may we meet again when rifles are loaded and swords sharpened – if possible before an audience which will include 40 centuries.' [Quoted: Hamilton, General Sir Ian, Listening for the Drums, pub. Faber 1944, p.238.]

Winston is here making reference to the upcoming campaign in Egypt and the Sudan, and to Napoleon Bonaparte's famous address to his troops at the battle of the Pyramids, when he told them that forty centuries of history looked down upon them.

Ian Hamilton went to England to take up the position of Commandant at the School of Musketry, Hythe, Kent. Winston sent with him his manuscript of his novel *Savrola* that Hamilton delivered into the hands of his mother, Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill, who was to pursue publication on his behalf. From the ship, Hamilton wrote a fatherly letter to the younger man, warning him:

"... you will only be losing time and training if you continue to hang between two or three avenues which radiate from your feet and lead towards fame each in its own way."

He urged Winston, in whom he clearly saw great promise, to decide between the army or politics and to put all his efforts behind one or the other.

#### Hamilton and Churchill in the Boer War

Hamilton and Winston were to see action again, during the South African Boer War (1899-1902). Hamilton was in the thick of the fighting from the very start, winning fame at the battles of Elandslaagte and Ladysmith. Winston came out as a war correspondent, was captured by the Boers, and made a dramatic escape with a price on his head - wanted dead or alive - eventually making his way back to the army, where he served as an officer in the South African Light Horse, and was for a while attached to Hamilton's command. When Winston went home to England, he was greeted as a war hero, ripe for political advancement to stand for a Conservative Party parliamentary seat.

#### Return to London

By 1900, the Hamiltons had set up home at No.3 Chesterfield Street, in London's prestigious Mayfair. Jean was obliged to befriend Winston for her husband's sake, and he would frequent their various homes. Winston published his Boer War dispatches, entitled *Ian Hamilton's March*, adding greatly to Ian's fame, and Jean invited him to dine with them. They got off to rather a bad start as she later told her family over dinner one day at her own family home, Deanston House, Doune, near Perthshire, recording in her diary the reply she had received:

"… as Mr Churchill is so much engaged by his political work I write to say he is sorry", … and signed by a secretary. I was furious at this impertinence, and had it framed and placed in my drawing-room.' (27 April 1902, Deanston House, Doune.)

The letter hung on the wall for years! The reason for Jean's fury was she knew Winston's then girlfriend, Pamela Plowden (later Lady Lytton), who a few days later had quite unwittingly mentioned to her that Winston had taken her out to dine that same day. But the relationship between Jean and Winston improved due to their shared love of painting. Although it has been widely believed that Winston never sold a painting, Jean was able to record in her diary he made his first sale to her of one she had admired:

'Winston ... has been painting a lovely picture of the Barn, with brilliant sunshine and shade effects all day. ... Winston brought his picture of 'Ightam Moat' ... I paid him £50 for it.' (16 October 1921, Lullenden Manor, East Grinstead).

Ian, in his Will, bequeathed it to Ightam Moat, that is a beautiful, idyllic, medieval, moated <u>manor house</u> in Kent. Ian also bequeathed to Winston a statue of a black buddha that he 'acquired' in Burma, 1886, and which had adorned the Hamilton's staircase. It for a time, in turn, adorned the staircase at Chartwell House, until someone accidentally knocked it over and it smashed, surviving today only as a painting by Winston.

On a much earlier occasion Jean and Winston were at loggerheads over the death penalty, he, having been just made Home Secretary. She wrote in her diary that he told her over dinner, "I have had to sign a death warrant for the first time to-day, and it weighed on me." When she enquired about the crime, he told her it was for "A man who took a little child up a side street and brutally cut her throat." Jean's sharp reply was, "That would *not weigh* on my mind." (21 February 1910, 6 Seamore Place, London.)

Ian Hamilton was knighted for his heroic war service, January 2, 1901, and they became known as Sir Ian and Lady Hamilton. Jean found that becoming a titled lady elevated them to new heights in society and opened even more doors for her as well as for her husband.

Winston Churchill married, September 1908, Clementine Hozier, and soon brought her along and introduced her to Jean. What the Hamiltons and Churchills had in common was soldiering, battles and wars and, of course, politics. In all of this (excepting the actual battlefields) the women were almost as much involved as the men. No chance was passed up by the wives to further their husbands' careers at dinners and house parties, in the presence of senior army officers. The women could argue as good as the gentlemen on the subject of politics.

With Winston's advancement in politics the situation turned around. Having been appointed Home Secretary, February 1910, to be followed, October 1911 with elevation to First Lord

of the Admiralty, Winston assisted Hamilton to be given the post of General Officer Commanding at Malta, where he and Jean lived in the splendid San Antonio Palace, Valletta. During that time Winston visited and witnessed Hamilton's secret amphibious exercises that he carried out there. The experience would crucially influence Hamilton's involvement in the future Dardanelles Campaign during the First World War.

Whilst home on leave in London, Hamilton went shopping at the royal jewellers for a present for Clementine Churchill, Jean wrote in her diary:

'Yesterday evening he told me he had been to Asprey's to buy a blue enamelled brooch and mirror for Clemmie Churchill - he never can be bothered choosing anything for a present or entering a shop, I don't know what has come over him, it seems as though some other soul has come to inhabit his body for a time, such a rage for life and pleasure possesses him! (22 December, 1911).

The Hamiltons returned to live in London in 1914, setting up home at another mansion, No. 1 Hyde Park Gardens, overlooking Hyde Park, just prior to the outbreak of the First World War. As Jean received a handsome allowance from her father's estate, she could put on lavish dinner parties and balls to which she invited Edwardian high society. Jean was shy of the British royalty as she did not like curtseying, but both they and foreign royalty and embassy dignitaries, peopled her life and her home.

#### Outbreak of the First World War (1914-18)

A major war would alter the lives of the Hamiltons and Churchills for the future. Britain's entry into the First World War (1914-18) was a shock to everyone. No one was prepared and that included these two families.

There was instantly a meeting of minds between Winston and Hamilton and the Liberal Party Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, that would lead to the fated Dardanelles campaign and the disastrous amphibious landings on the Gallipoli peninsula.

The initial suggestion for an attack elsewhere than on the main theatre of war, the Western Front, was first mooted by Maurice Hankey, a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Marines who, as Secretary to the War Council in 1914, produced the *Boxing Day Memorandum*, in which he favoured an attack on Turkey, through the Dardanelles as an alternative to the trench stalemate in France and Flanders.

Winston Churchill took up the idea, in response to an appeal from the Russians early in January 1915, as a means of diverting Turkish forces away from their offensive in the Caucasus, and he suggested the attack should take place at Gallipoli.

The actual attack was made by the Royal Navy alone, but the guns in the Turkish forts guarding the Dardanelles, the sea passage between the Gallipoli peninsula and Asia Minor, proved too much for the fleet. The warships were unable to suppress their fire long enough for the minesweepers to clear the minefields in the Dardanelles Straits. As the Navy got into increasing difficulty, it was finally realised that troops would be needed to complete the operation.

The newly-appointed War Secretary, Earl Kitchener of Khartoum, approved the release of troops from England and Egypt, and placed General Sir Ian Hamilton in command of the Constantinople Expeditionary Force (later renamed the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force), then gathering in the eastern Mediterranean. Initially, Hamilton's orders were only to support

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the navy in its operations. The major naval attack, March 18, 1915, ran into an undetected new minefield and was broken off after heavy loss of ships.

At a meeting between Hamilton and the commander of the fleet, Admiral de Robeck, it was decided that the army would attack the Gallipoli peninsula and clear it of Turkish guns and forts before the navy would renew its efforts. Together, they would clear the way for the expeditionary force to reach and capture Constantinople and put Turkey out of the war. However, the Dardanelles campaign – the joint naval and military operation – soon became the Gallipoli campaign, Hamilton's purely military effort to clear the way before the fleet would renew its attack.

The main theme of Jean's diaries throughout the Gallipoli campaign is her complete faith in her husband and her total conviction that he could have won there and moved on to take Constantinople, which would have gone some way towards winning the war for Britain. The failure at Gallipoli is a highly controversial subject and there are bodies of military historians with varying opinions and, today, it is still a hotly debated subject. Hamilton and Churchill were, however, 'in it together' and they had to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in defence of their actions – a point Jean also made in her diary.

The press abused the campaign, apportioning blame on both Hamilton and Churchill, and Lord Kitchener was viewed as indecisive and not up to the job of Secretary for War. Baying for a sacrifice, some wanted General Sir Ian Hamilton court-martialled. It was not until after his recall and his return to England that Hamilton realised fully the damage done to him and the campaign by the journalists, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett and Keith Murdoch, by what they had published in the newspapers. Considering the enormity of his struggle to win at Gallipoli, and the traumatic effect on both his wife and him, of being recalled, to face humiliation, the suggestion can only be viewed as outrageous.

Winston had to resign as First Lord of the Admiralty. He went back into uniform as lieutenant-colonel of the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots Fusiliers, commanding the battalion at Ploegsteert, near Ypres, Belgium. Hamilton was left unemployed, his hitherto unblemished career now hanging in the balance and under scrutiny.

In 1916, the Hamiltons had taken Postlip Hall, Winchcombe, in the Cotswolds, Gloucestershire, for a holiday, and Winston was staying with them. Jean wrote of an after-dinner scene:

'We had a *very* exciting dinner. Winston after two large goblets of iced champagne, became very communicative. ... Afterwards in the drawing-room, he walked about the room, declaiming, shouting, trying his oratory on me, as lan says. He was terribly excited, talking about Lord Kitchener, said he had a spitting toad inside his head, he pressed his hands hard over his own head and eyes to show the baffled weariness of trying to deal with such a fool.' (29 May 1916, Postlip Hall).

It was during this difficult time, when Winston and Clementine Churchill were homeless and relatively penniless, that Clementine offered to give away her fourth unborn child, (later named Marigold Frances), to Jean Hamilton, who had left it too late to be able to conceive. The actual date was June 18, 1918 as recorded in Jean's diary.

#### The Dardanelles Commission of Inquiry

Due to the failure of the Dardanelles Campaign, Hamilton and Churchill had to face an official Dardanelles Commission of Inquiry, that was set up in 1916, by Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, the final report of which was withheld, meaning it hung over their heads for many months, until after the war was over. Hamilton and Churchill stuck together to defend their reputations and those of the men who served under them.

On June 6, 1916, Hamilton lunched with Winston Churchill and Clementine at their home in 33 Eccleston Square, London. The meeting was to enable them to go through something in the region of twenty cables that had been sent from Gallipoli to Kitchener, appealing for men and munitions in support of the active operations there. The cables had been held by Kitchener and never replied to or shown to the Cabinet, constituting negligence on his part. Hamilton and Churchill were planning to use these to expose Kitchener, and in support of themselves and their actions, in relation to the Dardanelles campaign.

Whilst they were thus engaged a news boy visible from the window, ran along the pavement shouting: 'Kitchener drowned! No survivors!' Earl Kitchener had drowned, June 5, whilst on his way to Russia on HMS *Hampshire* to attend negotiations with Tsar Nicholas II. The ship struck a German mine 1.5 miles (2.4 km) west of Orkney and sank with the loss of over 700 lives. Kitchener's body was never recovered.

Hamilton described their reaction to the news: 'We looked at one another with wild surmise like Cortes at the Pacific from the heights of Darien. ... Had I put the idea of going to Russia into his head?' There had been talk of Hamilton going to 'Russia to give the Czar his field-marshal's baton ... .' It had been decided that Kitchener should go instead. 'When we came into the dining-room, Winston signed to everyone to be seated and then, before taking his own seat, very solemnly quoted: "Fortunate was he in the moment of his death!" It was now impossible for Hamilton and Churchill to implicate Kitchener in the way that they should, and his failure to support the campaign went unsaid.

The delay in publishing the Report on the Dardanelles Commission of Inquiry would seem to have been deliberate, probably to save the reputations of the War Cabinet and absolve them of any blame. Hamilton was never again employed in active service and, somewhat ironically, was offered and accepted the post of Constable of the Tower of London, that he held until his retirement. Winston Churchill who was then in his early-40s had to entirely rebuild his career and his credibility as a politician, which he did to an incredible degree – but he never forgot what he owed to Hamilton.

#### Friendship during the Second World War

During the Second World War, (1939-45), Hamilton was writing his memoirs *Listening for the Drums*. In a chapter about Winston he said:

"... no-body, not even Lord Bobs in all his glory, has touched my life at so many points as Winston Churchill. So much indeed has he done so that were my pages to give no glimpses of his strange voyage through the years, showing him sometimes as the Flying Dutchman, scudding along under bare poles; sometimes as the Ancient Mariner under flapping canvas in a flat calm; sometimes as a small boy playing with goldfish; my story would not be complete. As a sample – on the 6th January '41 Bardia had



Left to right: General Sir Ian Hamilton and Mr Winston Churchill, at a reunion of the Royal Naval Division, Crystal Palace, London, 1938.

fallen; - red-hot news. Before it began to cool it must be hammered into all sorts of shapes and handed out through many channels leading to Finance, Parliament, and the World. Every second was priceless yet he paused to let his mind fly back to forty-one years to end a special message to an old comrade of the wars who had long since ceased to interest the Press, Parliament of Finance." [Quoted: Hamilton, General Sir Ian, Listening for the Drums, pub. Faber & Faber 1944, p.238.]

Lord Bobs was the Hamiltons' nick-name for Frederick, Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India. Hamilton's reference to 'Bardia' was to the British capture of Bardia in Libva from the Italians.

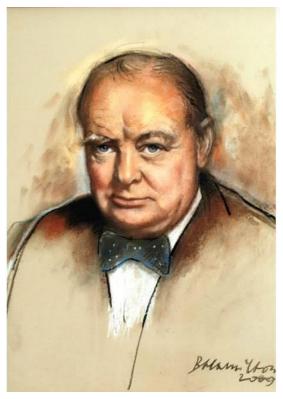
Hamilton then went on to quote a telegram he had received from Winston, January 6, 1941:

"I am thinking of you and Wagon Hill when another January 6<sup>th</sup> brings news of a fine feat of arms. Winston."

It was to Winston's credit as British wartime Prime Minister, that he remembered his mentor of an earlier time. The relevance of the date, January 6 was that it was on that date in 1900, during the South African Boer War, that Hamilton defeated the Boers at Wagon Hill in the siege of Ladysmith.

Ten days after receipt of the telegram, January 16, was Hamilton's 88th birthday. Jean and lan were staying at her brother Sir Alexander Kay Muir's home, Blair Drummond Castle, partly to escape the bombing in London, but much more-so because Jean was dying of cancer. Churchill's thoughtfulness must have come as a comfort to Hamilton at such a time. Jean held on throughout February 22, their fifty-fourth wedding anniversary, and slipped away the following day.

The friendship between the Hamiltons and the Churchills has continued to the present day. Mrs Barbara Kaczmarowska Hamilton painted a portrait of Sir Winston Churchill that enjoys pride of place, hung in the room at Blenheim Palace where he was born.



Sir Winston Churchill portrait at Blenheim Palace by kind permission of the artist Mrs Barbara Kaczmarowska Hamilton.

#### To read the complete article please click here.

#### Sources

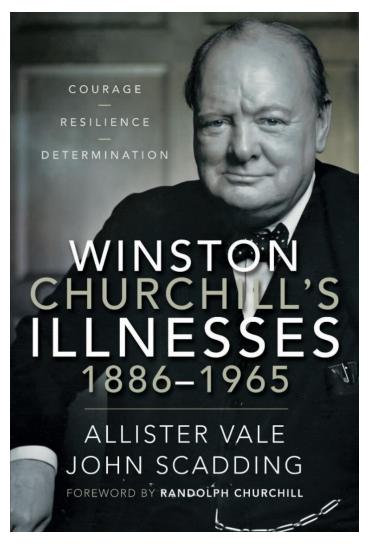
Celia Lee. Jean, Lady Hamilton (1861-1941) Diaries of A Soldiers Wife. Pen & Sword, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, UK, and 1950 Lawrence Road, Havertown, PA 19083, USA, 2020.

John Lee. A Soldier's Life: General Sir Ian Hamilton 1853-1947, Pen & Sword, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, UK, and Havertown, PA 19083, USA, 2021.

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General Sir Ian Hamilton. Listening for the Drums; Faber & Faber, 1944.

Vale A, Scadding J. Winston Churchill's illnesses 1886-1965: Courage, resilience and determination. Barnsley, UK and Havertown PA, USA: Frontline Books, October 2020.



Sir Winston Churchill was arguably the greatest statesman of the twentieth century. His political life spanned more than sixty years and he held high office for much of this time. He is generally regarded as the man through whose military and political skill, diplomacy, inspiration and powers of persuasion the Second World War was won.

Much has already been written about Churchill's health, though little that has been published is evidenced based, for example the suggestion that he suffered from a bipolar disorder. Churchill became ill at critical moments in British and world history, so it is legitimate both to understand the effects of his many illnesses on him and to consider his ability to continue in high office during them. Perhaps the most relevant illnesses in this respect relate to his gradually increasing cerebrovascular disease. manifested by a series of strokes, the first occurring in 1949, some fifteen years before his death at the

age of 90. Churchill's long life also spanned an era in which major advances in medical science and clinical practice occurred, not least the introduction of antibiotics.

Allister Vale and John Scadding have written the definitive account of Churchill's illnesses and document all Churchill's major illnesses, from an episode of childhood pneumonia in 1886 until his death in 1965. They have adopted a thorough approach in gaining access to numerous sources of medical information and have cited extensively from the clinical records of the numerous distinguished physicians and surgeons invited to consult on Churchill during his many episodes of illness. These include not only objective clinical data, but also personal reflections by Churchill's family, friends and political colleagues.

My great-grandfather suffered bouts of poor health. After obtaining access to several closed medical archives, as well as unearthing some that were unknown previously, Allister Vale and John Scadding have written the definitive account of Churchill's illnesses. Their expertise as physicians has been brought to bear on the interpretation of the evidence, much of it available for the first time. I would like to pay tribute to them for their dedication and determination to spend thousands of hours setting the history of Churchill's medical challenges into modern day context.

They have already published some of their meticulous research on his illnesses in the medical press. That these papers have met with acclaim in the medical community does not surprise me; I have read them all with great interest too. As a result of their research the authors have corrected many repeatedly perpetuated errors. For example, we now know that Churchill did not suffer a heart attack in Washington over Christmas and New Year in 1941. The ECG taken shortly after the event confirms this and is published for the first time in the book with the detailed notes of Sir John Parkinson, Churchill's cardiologist.

Similarly, there has always been much talk about Churchill's 'black dog' (although Churchill only ever mentioned it in one letter, in 1911). In our family we always felt that he was referring to his personal low moments –unsurprising, perhaps, given the great stress and pressure he often worked under. He was fortunate to be supported by his wife, Clementine, to whom he was devoted. Their correspondence shows the extraordinary support that she gave him. At times Churchill would cry, and he could be emotional in both happiness and sorrow. But it was never felt in the family that he suffered from clinical depression and this volume confirms that view.

Vale and Scadding have produced a well-researched and highly readable book that will be essential reading for Churchillians and other historians of the period, as it provides so much new material and many new insights. Clinicians and general readers alike who wish to understand the impact of illness on arguably the greatest leader of the twentieth century will also find the book of great interest.

#### From the Foreword by Randolph Churchill

In this meticulously researched volume, Allister Vale and John Scadding provide a uniquely comprehensive and readable account of Churchill's many medical problems, from childhood to his terminal illness, set in the context of his life as one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century. Pneumonia threatened Churchill's life on several occasions and in his later decades he suffered multiple strokes; his ability to continue in high office during these illnesses was exceptional, aided by some of the most distinguished specialists of their time. Drawing on many medical and non-medical sources, the clinical, political and personal aspects of his many illnesses are woven seamlessly together. A superbly rounded account of the great man emerges in a most engaging narrative.

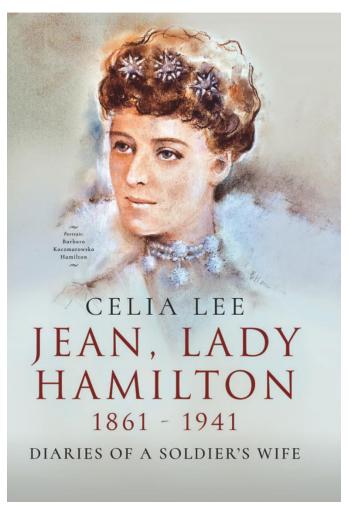
#### Andrew Roberts, author of Churchill: Walking with Destiny

Much has been written about Churchill's health and much has been rumour and speculation. This is the definitive work on the subject, written by experts and grounded in the evidence.

Allen Packwood, author of How Churchill Waged War

#### JEAN, LADY HAMILTON 1861-1941 BY CELIA LEE

This is an updated and expanded text, originally dubbed Book of the Week by The Spectator (2001), and featured in The Sunday Telegraph and The Times.



Jean, Lady Hamilton's diaries remained forgotten and hidden in the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London, for fifty years. The story begins with the young couples' wedding, a dazzling bride, Jean Muir, marrying a starstruck Major lan Hamilton. The daughter of the millionaire businessman Sir John Muir, Jean had all the money whilst Hamilton was penniless.

Jean chronicled lan's long army career that culminated in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915. The failure there ended her husband's distinguished career and almost ended Churchill's as he had to leave his job as First Lord of the Admiralty. From new evidence it is possible to judge how close the campaign came to succeeding and the failure seems greatly due to the absence of fresh troops not being supplied by Lord Kitchener to the peninsula

Winston Churchill in particular was like family in the Hamiltons' home, he used to go there and practice his speeches, and painted alongside Jean to whom he sold his first painting. Because the Churchills were in

genteel poverty, Clementine could not afford the £25 fee to enter a nursing home to give birth to her 4th child Marigold. Unable to conceive, Jean adopted two children, Harry Knight, who had been abandoned on the doorstep of the creche of which she was President, and Phyllis Ursula James that she preferred to call Rosaleen and who was nicknamed Fodie in the family. Fodie's mother was unmarried and abandoned by her soldier lover during the First World War. Harry was killed in action in the Libyan desert during the Second World War. Fodie, having been sent to be educated at a private school was trapped in war-torn Europe and never returned home again.

These intimate diaries of a leading woman in the Edwardian power elite provides us with a fascinating insight into their world. Intelligent, perceptive, well-written and occasionally very funny, Jean Hamilton's letters are an important historical treasure trove that the distinguished historian Celia Lee has mined with acuity and diligence.

The fact that Jean's husband, General Sir Ian Hamilton, commanded the Gallipoli Expedition give Jean's writings an extra poignancy, and incidentally, they explode the myth of First World War generals being unfeeling dunderheads.

Andrew Roberts, author: Churchill: Walking with Destiny March 4, 2020.

A splendid and entertaining presentation of my aunt Jean's life from her diaries.

Ian Hamilton, great nephew of General Sir Ian and Jean, Lady Hamilton, March 4, 2020

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