

FINEST HOUR

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Churchill and The Queen





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The International Churchill Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historic legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. For the benefit of scholars, students, and Churchillians, the Society's activities, publications, and programs are conducted through the joint resources of the National Churchill Leadership Center at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and America's National Churchill Museum at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

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Finest Hour

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Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
By Richard Stone, oil-on-canvas, 1992
© Richard Stone
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From the Editor

Churchill and the Queen

The death of **Queen Elizabeth II** closes an era that started, for her, in 1926 when **Winston Churchill** was Chancellor of the Exchequer and ended this year with her name paired with Churchill's as the two Greatest Britons of the past century. Their friendship forms the theme of this, our second special issue of the year.

Our striking cover image is generously supplied by artist **Richard Stone**, who tells the story on our back cover of painting the Queen at the time of her fortieth jubilee in 1992. Thirty years on, the historic reign ended following the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We were extremely fortunate to secure the services of veteran royal biographer **Hugo Vickers** to write our lead feature. During one of the most demanding weeks of his life, Vickers balanced the many calls upon his time to document the long and deep association between the Queen and Churchill, a man described by his wife Clementine as "Monarchical Number One." The remarkable friendship included an affinity for horses, a subject examined for us by **Fred Glueckstein**.

The Queen died at her beloved Balmoral Castle, where by chance she had her first meeting with Churchill in 1928. **Alastair Stewart** shows that there followed many experiences that the Queen and Churchill shared at the Scottish estate, where in her final days the Queen also met her last Prime Minister, **Liz Truss**. Australia was another country with which the Queen had a long and happy association. **Harry Atkinson** explains that the great Commonwealth also connected Churchill with the Queen in several ways now little known.

Churchill College, Cambridge had its own connections with the Queen, and Churchill Archives Director **Allen Packwood** illustrates these with images from the collections, while **Katherine Carter** tells us about the day she guided the new monarch, **King Charles III**, around Chartwell. Finally, **Andrew Roberts** imagines a conversation between Churchill and the late Queen that should inspire us all.

David Freeman, September 2022 🐾

Churchill to the Queen

LONDON—5 February 1962, Madam, At the conclusion of the first decade of your Reign, I would like to express to Your Majesty my fervent hopes and wishes for many happy years to come. It is with pride that I recall that I was your Prime Minister at the inception of these ten years of devoted service to our country. With my humble duty, I remain, Your Majesty's faithful Subject and servant—Winston S. Churchill

The Queen's Message to the House of Lords

LONDON— 25 January 1965, I know that it will be the wish of all my people that the loss which we have all sustained by the death of the Right Honourable Sir Winston Churchill, Knight of the Garter, should be met in the most fitting manner and that they should have an opportunity of expressing their sorrow at

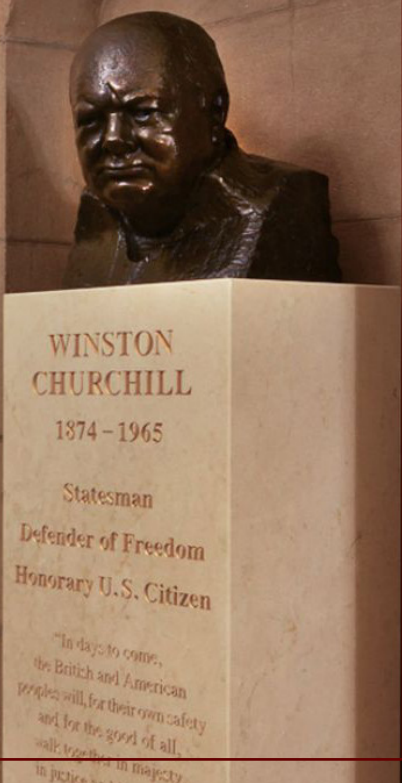
the loss and their veneration of the memory of that outstanding man who, in war and peace, served his country unflinching for more than fifty years and in the hours of our greatest danger was the inspiring leader who strengthened and supported us all. Confident in the support of Parliament for the due acknowledgement of our debt of gratitude and in thanksgiving for the life and example of a national hero, I have directed that Sir Winston's body shall lie in state in Westminster Hall and that thereafter the funeral service shall be held in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.—Elizabeth Regina

Coming in *Finest Hour* 200:
Eightieth Anniversary of the Hinge of Fate

The International Churchill Society (ICS) was founded in 1968 to educate new generations about the continuing relevance of the life and legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. In 2016 the society established the National Churchill Leadership Center (NCLC) at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. to serve as a forum for teaching about the important example of Churchill's leadership.

America's National Churchill Museum (ANCM) opened in 1969 on the campus of Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, where Churchill delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946. The museum was designated by act of Congress in 2009 as the official tribute to Churchill in the United States. The museum has hosted leading dignitaries such as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Madeleine Albright to lecture on Churchill's enduring importance.

Since 2016, ICS and ANCM have worked in strategic partnership in their shared mission to advance Churchill's legacy. Both are private, non-profit, tax-exempt organizations that rely on membership and donations. Please consider making a gift above your membership dues either to ICS, ANCM, or the NCLC so that our vital shared work may continue. Donations can be made by visiting www.winstonchurchill.org/donate.



America's National Churchill Museum

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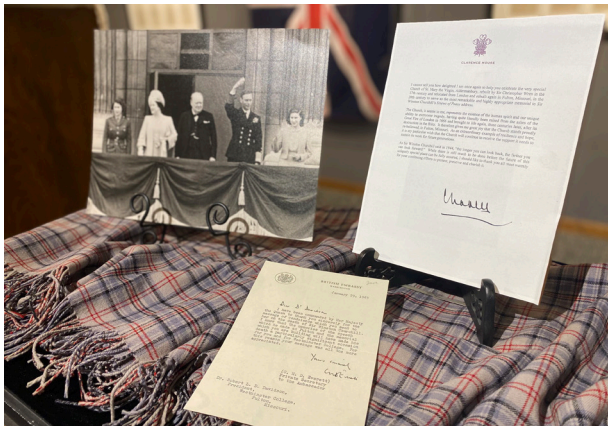
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Ceremony of Remembrance for Queen Elizabeth II at America's National Churchill Museum



and long-time museum member Nancy Tucker Cleveland, who recounted her experience in London during the late Queen's Coronation in 1953. "God Save the King" was played on the church's historic Mander organ, bells tolled, and items from the museum's collection including letters, photographs, and other artifacts from, or related to, the Royal Family were on display in a special exhibition called "A Royal Legacy at America's National Churchill Museum."

On 19 September, as the world watched the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey, an international audience assembled at another Westminster—Westminster College—where America's National Churchill Museum conducted a Ceremony of Remembrance for the late Queen. The ceremony was held in St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, an appropriately stately setting designed and constructed in the 1670s by Royal Architect Sir Christopher Wren.

Churchill Fellow and the Museum's Sandra L. and Monroe E. Trout Director and Chief Curator Timothy Riley presided at the ceremony, which included remarks by students

While the ceremony looked back at the late Queen's extraordinary legacy, Riley concluded the ceremony by reading from a 2019 letter from King Charles III, then the Prince of Wales, to the museum. His Majesty graciously acknowledged the museum's work and gave a Churchillian reminder of the importance of studying the past and using its lessons to build a better future: "As Sir Winston Churchill said in 1944, 'the longer you can look back, the farther you can look forward.' While there is still much to be done before the future of this uniquely special place can be fully assured, I should like to thank you all most warmly for your continuing efforts to protect, preserve and cherish it." God Save the King.

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“Wise Counsel and Also Friendship”

Winston Churchill and HM Queen Elizabeth II

By Hugo Vickers

Sir Winston Churchill was the Queen’s first Prime Minister. He was the first person she met as she descended the steps of the Argonaut Airliner *Atalanta* after a flight of more than nineteen hours from Kenya in 1952, following the death of her father at Sandringham. The relationship between the new, young Sovereign and the elderly Prime Minister developed from his apprehension at her youth and inexperience to genuine and deep love on his part. On her part, the Queen had enormous respect for the former wartime leader and profound gratitude for his wisdom and guidance.

Churchill’s doctor, Lord Moran, wrote that for Winston the history of England was embedded in the Royal House. Moran quoted several comments by his famous patient. Looking at a photograph of the Queen, dressed in white with long white gloves and a radiant smile in February 1953, Churchill said: “Lovely... She’s a pet. I fear they may ask her to do too much. She’s doing so well.”¹ A month later, Churchill added: “Lovely, inspiring. All the film people in the world, if they had

scoured the globe, could not have found anyone so suited to the part.”² And in October 1954, Churchill looked at photographs of the Queen meeting Italian film stars and judged, “She knocks ’em all endways. Lovely she is.”³

Churchill had lost the post-war election in 1945, but had once more become King George VI’s Prime Minister in October 1951, to the King’s delight, when His Majesty was recovering from a serious operation and in failing health. The King died on 6 February 1952, and the news was given to the Prime Minister in person by Sir Edward Ford, one of the King’s private secretaries then in London, who had received the coded message: “Hyde Park Corner.” Jock Colville, Churchill’s private secretary, saw him soon afterwards and tried to cheer him up by saying how well he would get on with the new Queen, “but all he could say was that he did not know her and that she was only a child.”⁴ In the House of Commons, Churchill took a more robust approach:

A fair and youthful figure, Princess, wife and mother is the heir to all our

traditions and glories never greater than in her father’s days, and to all our perplexities and dangers never greater in peacetime than now. She is also heir to all our united strength and loyalty.

She comes to the Throne at a time when a tormented mankind stands uncertainly poised between world catastrophe and a golden age. That it should be a golden age of art and letters, we can only hope—science and machinery have their other tales to tell—but it is certain that if a true and lasting peace can be achieved, and if the nations will only let each other alone, an immense and undreamed of prosperity with culture and leisure ever more widely spread can come, perhaps even easily and swiftly, to the masses of the people in every land.

Let us hope and pray that the accession to our ancient Throne of Queen Elizabeth the Second may be the signal for such a brightening salvation of the human scene.⁵

These were to prove prophetic words as seventy glorious years did indeed stretch before the British people, something that was greatly remarked on following the Queen’s death on 8 September 2022. Churchill may have had a momentary lapse of memory in suggesting he did not know the Queen. And if that is what he



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Queen Elizabeth II and Winston Churchill

really thought, the situation was soon going to change.

First Encounters

In fact, Churchill had first set eyes on the young Queen at Balmoral in 1928. Besides King George V, Queen Mary, and the Household, the only other figure there was “Queen Elizabeth—aged 2.” “The last is a character,” wrote Churchill to his wife, deliberately exaggerating the title of the young princess to emphasize the qualities that he discerned in her. “She has an air of authority and reflectiveness astonishing in an infant.”⁶ Churchill may also have observed the Princess at royal garden parties in 1931 and 1935. They were certainly both present at the same time. By 1937 he had realised that, with her mother’s blood, two royal houses were united. This excited him:

In the heir presumptive to the Crown, the Princess Elizabeth, the Houses of Stuart & Hanover both find a representative of their blood, cheering even to the White Rose League, and

reconciling in the fullness of time one of the most prolonged & poignant quarrels of British history.⁷

Churchill sent the Princess roses on her fifteenth birthday in April 1941, and she sent him a thoughtful and encouraging letter of thanks: “I am afraid you have been having a very worrying time lately, but I am sure things will begin to look up again soon.”⁸

It was not long before Churchill was considering how best he could help prepare the heir to the throne for her eventual role as Queen. In June 1943 he recommended to Lord Simon, the Lord Chancellor, that since she was soon to be eighteen, she should be appointed a member of the Council of State, so that she “should have every opportunity of acquiring experience in affairs.”⁹ This resulted in the Prime Minister going to the bar of the House of Commons to present a message from the King requesting an amendment to the Regency Act of 1937 so that Princess Elizabeth

could become a Counsellor of State. This was arranged, and Princess Elizabeth first acted as such in July 1944, when the King visited the Italian battlefields soon after her eighteenth birthday. But an idea mooted by the Cabinet that Princess Elizabeth should be created Princess of Wales, which rather appealed to Churchill, was vetoed by the King, who understood these things better than his ministers. That would not have been appropriate.

Over the years Churchill heard news of the Princess, and he must have seen her from time to time when he went to see the King and Queen during the Second World War, though those meetings took place largely in Buckingham Palace, while the princesses were living mainly in Windsor Castle. In January 1944 Churchill’s close friend Lady Violet Bonham Carter wrote to him that her son Mark, who had lately escaped from a prisoner of war camp in Italy, had been summoned to Windsor by the Princess, who was Colonel

of his regiment—the Grenadier Guards—to tell her of his experiences. This morphed into a dinner and dance with champagne and music.

On 21 April 1944 Princess Elizabeth reached her eighteenth birthday. And how did Churchill celebrate this? He sent her a copy of his biography of the first Duke of Marlborough. Politely she thanked him: “There is nothing I would rather have than your *Life of Marlborough*, and I thank you most warmly for giving it to me.”¹⁰ (See story p. 29.) In November of the same year, consistent with his wish to prepare her as a future constitutional monarch, Churchill sent the Princess a copy

of the King’s speech that was to be delivered in Parliament the next day. He told her that this was a tradition that had been established in the reign of Queen Victoria. In all these things Churchill was aware of the role Princess Elizabeth would one day play without realising that it would come so soon and that it would be his duty to steer the young Queen through the early years of her reign just as an earlier Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, had done for Queen Victoria.

At the time of Princess Elizabeth’s wedding to Prince Philip in 1947, Churchill praised the bride for her “unerring graciousness and understanding

and the same human simplicity which has endeared the Royal House to the people of this country” and predicted that millions would welcome the wedding as a flash of colour on the hard road the country was then travelling.

Four years later, about ten weeks before the King died, Richard Casey, then Australian Minister for External Affairs, lunched with the heir to the throne. He afterwards told Churchill that he found the Princess so serious that he felt she had been warned or had some instinctive knowledge that she would soon be called upon to serve. Churchill replied: “Yes, there is too much care on that young brow.”¹¹ All too soon this proved correct.

The New Queen

Churchill, by then one of the most senior members of the Privy Council, was present at the Accession Council at St. James’s Palace and afterwards watched the Queen’s proclamation from a window in Friary Court. Naturally, the Prime Minister attended the King’s funeral, and he went for his first official audience of the new Queen at Clarence House on 12 February.

That idiotic television series *The Crown* muddled the professional relationship between Churchill and his Queen, even causing the actress playing her to bestow a kiss on him when he was about to die in 1965. No, that is one of many things that never happened. I hope readers of *Finest Hour* are aware of how important it is to



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Winston Churchill, son Randolph, and grandson Winston following the Queen’s Coronation, 2 June 1953

ignore the misconceptions of that television series. The truth is more interesting.

Various issues arose in those early years, and the young Queen naturally deferred to her distinguished Prime Minister. One of the first concerned the name of the Royal House. Customarily, when a Queen regnant marries, so the name of the Royal House changes, taking the name of the husband. Thus Queen Victoria was the last of the House of Hanover, which became Saxe-Coburg-Gotha when she married Prince Albert. During the First World War, however, anti-German sentiment in Britain inspired Queen Elizabeth II's grandfather, King George V, to adopt the name Windsor in place of the German name inherited from his grandfather.

Soon after the funeral of George VI, Lord Mountbatten, uncle to Prince Philip, boasted over a dinner at Broadlands, not without reason, that the House of Mountbatten now reigned over the land. Prince Ernst August of Hanover was at the table and subsequently reported the remark to Queen Mary, widow of George V. The dowager Queen had a sleepless night over the issue. Soon after, it was decided that the House of Windsor should continue as more appropriate.

Prince Philip wrote a well-crafted protest about this calling for the new House to take the name of Edinburgh, which would have worked no better than Mountbatten. Churchill was annoyed by this and more so by Mountbatten's "tactless



ABOVE
Churchill's daughter Mary Soames in Garter robes

assertion.”¹² The Prime Minister swung it on the young Queen that her grandfather wished it to be the House of Windsor, and that settled the matter.

Nor did Churchill like the idea of the Queen and Prince Philip remaining at Clarence House, which they greatly preferred to do. Churchill insisted that the Sovereign had to live in the Sovereign's official residence. And so it came about that the young Queen took up residence in Buckingham Palace, much of which is taken up by offices and rooms of state.

There is no suggestion that the Queen felt any resentment to these strictures. Brought up with constitutional training, she knew her role was to take advice. Colville found her “at ease and self-possessed” when he dined with her that April.¹³ Churchill enjoyed his weekly meetings with the new Queen, and the two were soon talking about many things, not least about a shared interest in racing. Her first private secretary, Sir Alan Lascelles, wrote of her: “Her serenity was constant, her

wisdom faultless. On the whole I consider her the most remarkable woman I have ever met.” Churchill shared Lascelles' view of the young Queen:

Her immediate grasp of the routine business of kingship was remarkable. She never seemed to need an explanation on any point. Time after time I would submit to her papers on which several decisions were possible. She would look out of the window for half a minute and then say: “The second or third suggestion is the right decision”—and she was invariably right. She had an intuitive grasp of the problems of government and indeed of life generally, that I suppose had descended to her from Queen Victoria.¹⁴

In October 1952 Churchill went to stay with the Queen at Balmoral, having not seen her for two months. She was rather worried what to do with the old man because she had a party of her own generation staying. Aged seventy-eight, Churchill was disappointed not to have been asked to shoot, but he enjoyed talks with the Duke of Edinburgh and found the young Prince Charles developing well: “He is young to think so much.”¹⁵

Churchill also turned his mind to the future of the Queen Mother, who was only fifty-one when she became a widow. In April 1952 he had put forward an idea that she should be appointed Governor General of Australia (see page 27). During the Prime Minister's Balmoral visit, Lady Jean Rankin, one of the Queen Mother's redoubtable ladies-in-waiting, suggested he come over all by himself from the castle to Birkhall. This was an important visit, resulting in the widowed

Queen Mother embracing a new life of service at a time when she might possibly have retreated permanently from public service.

New Honours

It was during a visit to Windsor Castle in April 1953 that the Queen offered Churchill the Garter. Her father had been disappointed that the Prime Minister had not accepted it at the end of the Second World War in 1945. Churchill had felt that it was the wrong time, though subsequently he worried that he had been discourteous. Originally he had preferred to remain plain Mr. Churchill, but he now justified the idea by recalling that the father of the first Duke of Marlborough had also been Sir Winston Churchill.

Furthermore, in 1946, the bestowal of the Order of the Garter had ceased to be on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, like most honours, but returned to being in the gift of the Sovereign. Churchill liked the romance of accepting it from the young Queen. He wrote to his early girlfriend Pamela Plowden, by then the widowed Countess of Lytton: "I took it because it was the Queen's wish. I think she is splendid."¹⁶

The Coronation took place on 2 June 1953. Sir Winston was a popular figure at this great ceremony for which he wore Garter robes, with the Garter star of Lord Castlereagh, loaned by the Marquess of Londonderry, and the famous George, owned by the first Duke of Wellington and generously loaned by the

seventh Duke, even though he was himself a Knight of the Garter and might have liked to wear it. Three days later on 5 June, because Anthony Eden was unwell, Sir Winston presided over the Foreign Secretary's banquet for the Queen at Lancaster House. On that occasion the Prime Minister wore the full dress uniform of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

New Challenges

Soon after the Coronation, Churchill suffered a stroke. This first became evident following a dinner on 23 June for the Italian Prime Minister, Alcide de Gasperi. Churchill found himself unable to move after dinner. The next day he presided at the Cabinet, but spoke with slurred speech and drooping mouth. He retreated to Chartwell, while his health, his recovery, and the timing of his possible retirement became the preoccupation of the Queen (and not only of the Queen, of course) until Churchill finally—eventually—stepped down in April 1955. At the beginning of August 1953 the Prime Minister visited the Queen at Royal Lodge, Windsor and told her that he would make the decision as to whether to retire or not depending on his ability to make the keynote speech at the Conservative Conference in October and to face Parliament.

During the Queen's Commonwealth tour from October 1953 to May 1954, the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret served as Counsellors of State. Churchill paid two visits to the Queen Mother in the way that he would have had an audience of

the Queen. These took place on 10 March and 4 May. The Queen Mother also received Anthony Eden, still Foreign Secretary, on 12 March.

In July 1954 there was a suggestion that the Queen might be persuaded to intervene in a serious dispute in the Cabinet. This concerned Churchill's preoccupation to bring about a summit meeting between the leaders of Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union (then the only three nuclear powers), which he hoped would open the way to agreements about strategic arms reductions and thus avoid nuclear war. Churchill had lately visited Washington and been told that the United States did not warm to the idea but did not object to Britain having bi-lateral meetings with the USSR.

Churchill failed to see that, apart from American ambivalence, the Russians would never enter into such talks until the succession to Stalin had been settled, something that remained years away. Nevertheless, on his return to London, Churchill sent a telegram to Moscow proposing a meeting between himself and a senior Russian leader. This he announced to the Cabinet on 6 July, provoking Lord Salisbury, the Lord Privy Seal, to threaten to resign if the Prime Minister pursued this plan. Harry Crookshank, Leader of the House of Commons, did likewise. Most of the Cabinet supported the American stance, and most of them thought it was time for Churchill to retire.

Churchill felt strongly enough about his initiative that there was some fear he might threaten to resign himself if blocked by his Cabinet, knowing that this would create such an impossible situation it would force a General Election. In this impasse, Lord Swinton, the Commonwealth Secretary, and Lord Simmonds, the Lord Chancellor, both asked Colville independently to explain what was going on to Sir Michael Adeane, the Queen's Private Secretary, with the idea that the Queen might need to intervene. They did so in the belief that it was in the Queen's prerogative to caution her Prime Minister against precipitate action. As it happened, the Russians inadvertently resolved the problem for everyone by calling for multi-lateral meetings, which made Churchill's original proposal redundant. From the point of view of historians, the potential involvement of the Queen remained untested.

On 31 March 1955 Churchill finally sent a private message to the Queen to say that he would resign on 5 April, thus ending a long cat and mouse game he had played with his successor, Anthony Eden. The evening before Churchill's retirement, the Queen and Prince Philip dined at 10 Downing Street. There were about fifty guests, including senior cabinet ministers, figures such as the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, and some key family friends of the Churchills. The next day Churchill put on his frock coat and top hat and made his way to Buckingham Palace for his farewell audience.

Colville had suggested to Adeane that the Queen offer



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Queen Elizabeth II delivering one of her final Christmas broadcasts

Churchill a dukedom. This Colville had done, however, only after having carefully ascertained that Churchill would not accept it, the idea being that the outgoing Prime Minister would be given the distinctive honour of having declined to become a duke. The matter having been carefully arranged, Colville then panicked. He feared Churchill might change his mind, as he had done on so many previous occasions concerning his resignation. Colville recalled:

I was greatly disturbed because as I saw the Prime Minister going off in his frock coat and his top hat and knowing as I did that he was madly in love with the Queen—and this was clear from the fact that his audiences had been dragged out longer and longer as the months went by and very often took an hour and a half, at which I may say racing was not the only topic discussed, I was rather alarmed that sentimental feelings might indeed make him accept at the last moment.¹⁷

Fortunately Sir Winston told the Queen he would prefer to remain

in the House of Commons for the rest of his life. He also thought that a dukedom might ruin the political careers of his son Randolph and grandson Winston. Following his retirement, Churchill left for a holiday in Sicily. As he boarded the plane, he was handed a letter written in the Queen's own hand. It is a well-known letter. Perhaps the key line is that reading: "it would be useless to pretend that either he [Anthony Eden] or any of those successors who may one day follow him in office will ever, for me, be able to hold the place of my first Prime Minister, to whom both my husband and I owe so much and for whose wise guidance during the early years of my reign I shall always be profoundly grateful." She knew that she could always rely on "a wise counsellor" in the future.¹⁸

In response, Sir Winston said that The Queen's letter would always be "one of my most treasured possessions." He paid tribute to her comprehension

**ABOVE***Buckingham Palace*

of “the august duties of a modern Sovereign and the store of knowledge” that she had accumulated thanks to “an upbringing both wise and lively.”¹⁹

Final Years

Thus ended the formal relationship between the Queen and her first Prime Minister. But it was by no means the end of their friendship. Churchill was still able to walk in the 1956 Garter ceremony, though he confessed to his doctor: “I had to sit down during the Service. Even when they sang ‘God Save The Queen’ I did not stand up. My legs felt wobbly. It wasn’t the length of the walk that tired me, but the way they tottered along and dawdled.”²⁰ He last lunched with the Queen and his fellow Garter Knights at Windsor Castle in 1960.

While he was able, Churchill appeared at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. In 1957, when in indifferent health, he received a letter from Sir Michael Adeane saying that the Queen did not wish him “to take the smallest risk” to his health, “by prolonged exposure to November weather.”²¹ Nevertheless, Churchill was able to attend the ceremony. In the same year he was indignant about Lord Altrincham’s famous journalism article “The Monarchy Today,” which, among other things, criticised the Queen’s voice in speeches.

In May 1960 Churchill gave the Queen a painting of Wilton House, where he had been a regular guest at Whitsuntide in earlier times. He was concerned for the Queen’s safety when she insisted on visiting Ghana in October 1961, but she was determined to go, and the visit

passed off well, Ghana remaining in the Commonwealth.

On the tenth anniversary of the Queen’s accession, Churchill congratulated her, and she again thanked him for “the wise counsel and also friendship which I know my father valued so very much as well.”²² He admired the Queen for accepting her role of representing special values and keeping those values safe from what he called “the rancour and asperity of party politics.”

When, in January 1965, it became clear that Churchill was in his last days following a massive stroke, the Queen attended Sunday matins at St Lawrence’s Church, Castle Rising, in Norfolk. Prayers were said for the dying statesman, who passed a week later on 24 January. The Queen had one final honour to bestow: she decreed

that Sir Winston be granted a State Funeral and led the mourners at St Paul's Cathedral. These included more or less the entire British Royal Family, Kings and Queens of Europe, and figures such as President de Gaulle. Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies spoke on the BBC commentary. Churchill's body was conveyed up the Thames in the launch *Havengore* and went later by train to Bladon, in Oxfordshire, for final burial. The Queen's wreath bore words written in her own hand: "From the Nation and the Commonwealth. In grateful remembrance. Elizabeth R."²³

Last Things

In 2005 The Queen bestowed the Order of the Garter upon Churchill's daughter, Lady Soames. Her Majesty told Mary Soames that she was giving her the same collar worn by Sir Winston. Mary said that that could not be because that collar was displayed at Chartwell. The Queen told her she knew this and had arranged to have the collar swapped for another one, an example of the Queen's thoughtful attention to detail.

It may not be inappropriate to mention here that Lady Soames told the present author that she practised her steps for her investiture by the Queen at Windsor Castle. Mary would go out into her garden in her dressing gown, advance, curtsy, and then advance again, perfecting the routine. One day she looked up to spot an astonished neighbour looking down on this curious scene.

The end of the Queen's reign marks the conclusion of a phenomenal span of time. Churchill, her first Prime Minister, was born in 1874. Two days before the Queen died at Balmoral on 8 September 2022, Her Majesty received Liz Truss, who metaphorically kissed hands as the fifteenth different person to serve as her Prime Minister. Truss was born in 1975, more than one hundred years after Churchill. The Queen's own funeral on 19 September was the first full-scale State Funeral in Britain since Churchill's in 1965. The Age of Churchill ended during the Second Elizabethan Age. The Second Elizabethan Age—a golden age—has now also ended.

Perhaps the last word on the Queen should be given to Sir Winston in tribute to the fine association that grew between monarch and first minister. In thanking Her Majesty for her letter to him after his resignation in 1955, Churchill wrote that she had resolved "to serve as well as rule, and indeed rule by serving."²⁴ This is a point that has frequently been made in the days since the Queen's death, albeit less eloquently. There can be few finer epitaphs to the Queen, and it came from a great man.

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“The Excitement and Liveliness of the Turf”

Queen Elizabeth II, Winston Churchill, and Horse Racing

By Fred Glueckstein

Queen Elizabeth II and Winston Churchill had a profound and enduring friendship. Each had a great fondness for horse racing, the sport of kings. Churchill had trained as a cavalry officer at Sandhurst in the days of the Queen’s great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria. He became an avid polo player and twice rode into combat in the saddle, once in India and once in Africa. Not until after the Second World War, however, when he was Leader of the Opposition, did Churchill become an owner of racehorses.

This new preoccupation gave Churchill something in common with the Royal Family and led to a new bond between the royals and the former prime minister. Prior to her ascending the throne, Princess Elizabeth invited the eminent political leader to a luncheon at Hurst Park racecourse in Surrey before the running of the Winston Churchill Stakes on Saturday, 14 May 1951.

The Winston Churchill Stakes was run at a distance of just over one mile. Churchill’s first thoroughbred racehorse, a five-

year-old grey named Colonist II, was one of the runners. Also running was His Majesty King George VI’s black filly Above Board, for which Princess Elizabeth had high regard. Five other challengers included Cantarello II, Fast Fox, Selskar Abbot, Star Spangled Banner, and Tourette.

Despite a cold and dreary afternoon, a large crowd was at Hurst Park. At 3:46 pm the thoroughbreds bolted from the starter’s gate and thundered down the turf. Wearing Churchill’s racing colors, pink with chocolate sleeves and cap, jockey Tommy Gosling and Colonist II took the lead and were in front of the field halfway up the straight.

As the field raced around the course, Colonist II led at the turn. Charging hard was His Majesty’s filly Above Board with W. H. Carr in the saddle. Carr wore the Royal Colors of purple with scarlet sleeves and a black cap with gold tassel. Heading for the winning post, Colonist II was still in the lead, galloping with determination and confidence. Amidst the boisterous cheering of the

racegoers, Churchill’s grey came in first, two lengths ahead of Above Board, with Star Spangled Banner, a black colt, placing third.¹

That evening, the King sent a telegram from Balmoral Castle to Churchill: “Many congratulations on your win.” Churchill replied: “I am deeply grateful for your Majesty’s most kind and gracious telegram.”²

Churchill also wrote a letter to Princess Elizabeth on 20 May. He thanked her for asking him to lunch at Hurst Park the prior Saturday and for the gracious congratulations with which she honored him. Churchill added: “I wish indeed that we could both have been victorious—but that would be no foundation for the excitement and liveliness of the Turf.”³

The Rematch

Two weeks after Colonist II and Above Board first met, they faced each other again on 27 May in the White Rose Stakes at Hurst Park. The race was run at a distance of a little more than a mile. Princess Elizabeth and Churchill were

once again friendly horse racing competitors.

Although it looked like Above Board and another challenger named Pan II could catch and pass Colonist II, the grey and his jockey Gosling pulled away at the end. Galloping across the winning post, Churchill's colt finished ahead of Pan II and Above Board, respectively.⁴

Princess Elizabeth and Churchill each had a genuine appreciation for horse racing. For Churchill it became part of his life, and, despite his busy schedule, he found time to watch Colonist II run. Typical was 4 June 1951, when Churchill left his home at Chartwell for London, saw Colonist II run at Kempton Park racecourse the next day, and dined at Buckingham Palace that night. One must assume that Churchill and Princess Elizabeth discussed Colonist II's performance that day.

After Colonist II and Gosling had won the Jockey Club Cup on 26 October 1950, the racing journals lauded Colonist II and his owner. One racing journal wrote that the season would certainly go down in history as Colonist II's because the tough and determined grey horse had performed miracles. The journal went on to say that no horse in living memory had put up such a sequence of wins in good-class races in one season.

It was further pointed out that Colonist II had achieved eight wins (six in succession, ending with the Jockey Club Cup), once second, and twice fourth in eleven races. Colonist II "reads



ABOVE

The Queen and Prince Philip at Royal Ascot

like something inspired, and that in truth, was just what this horse seemed to be, by the great spirit of his indefatigable owner."⁵ Princess Elizabeth would have been in total agreement.

On 21 July 1951, Colonist II was at Ascot racing in the richest race ever run in Britain, the \$84,000 Festival of Britain Stakes, run at a mile and a half. The King and Queen put up part of the stake money. As a five-year-old, Colonist II was the oldest entry in a crowded field of nineteen.

Churchill saw the race, as did Queen Elizabeth and Princess Elizabeth. Mrs. Vera Lilley's three-year-old Supreme Court, at 100-to-9, finished first. Colonist II, with Gosling again in the saddle, came on a quarter of a mile from home and finished fourth.⁶

Prime Minister Again

On 25 October 1951, the Conservatives defeated Labour in a narrow general-election victory, and Winston Churchill became Prime Minister for the second time. Although Churchill once again bore the demanding duties of high office, he still found time to watch his horses. Churchill regularly discussed his equestrian interests with his son-in-law Christopher Soames, veterinarian Anthony Foster-Carey, and horse trainer Walter Nightingall.

When Nightingall suggested that Churchill put Colonist II out to stud, Churchill vetoed the idea, allegedly by saying: "To stud? And have it said that the Prime Minister of Great Britain is living on the immoral earnings of a horse?"⁷ While it is unknown whether Princess Elizabeth heard Churchill's comment, most likely

**ABOVE**

Churchill with his racehorse *Colonist II*

she would have found it extremely amusing.

At the first anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation, she celebrated by going to the racecourse to cheer on her outstanding brown colt, Landau. It was reported that Prime Minister Churchill cut short a Cabinet meeting so that he and his ministers could join her.⁸

Newchapel Stud

In May 1955, Churchill bought Newchapel Stud, a forty-two acre farm in Surrey, where he and Christopher Soames embarked on a breeding program.⁹ Altogether,

Churchill owned twelve brood mares and thirty-eight thoroughbreds. Among Churchill's great breeding successes at Newchapel was *Colonist II*'s half-brother, *Le Pretendant*. On 28 February 1958, Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret watched the horse win the Ashford novices' hurdle race by twenty lengths at Kempton Park.

Another of Churchill's well-known racehorses was *Vienna*. The thoroughbred was foaled in 1957 out of Churchill's brood mare *Turkish Blood*, sired by Queen Elizabeth's *Aureole*. *Aureole*, a racehorse bred by King George

VI, was the first horse the Queen inherited from her late father.

Aureole's career lasted from August 1952 until July 1954. During that time, he ran fourteen times and won eleven races. At his peak in 1954 he won, as his last race, Britain's most prestigious race, the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes.

In celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, forty jockeys past and present gathered in the Queen's distinctive purple and red colors to form a guard of honor for Her Majesty at the Derby run at Epsom Racecourse. Without question, Sir Winston would have appreciated the pageantry honoring the Queen at the famous racecourse and enjoyed watching the race with Her Majesty at Epsom.

Fred Glueckstein is author of Churchill and Colonist II (2014)

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“A Happy Scene”

Churchill and Balmoral Castle

By Alastair Stewart

When Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died at Balmoral Castle in Aberdeenshire on 8 September 2022, much was made about the location. Not since Scotland was an independent kingdom has any monarch in Great Britain died north of the border. Another footnote to history is that Balmoral was where Winston Churchill first became acquainted with the young princess who would become the United Kingdom’s longest reigning monarch. Even then, Churchill was no stranger to the castle.

British prime ministers have had a varied history with Balmoral. In the final days of her life, Queen Elizabeth II welcomed Liz Truss to the castle and invited her to form a government. Usually the handover takes place at Buckingham Palace. Some media incorrectly reported that Balmoral had never before witnessed such a ceremony. In fact, during the reign of Queen Victoria, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury accepted a commission at Balmoral to form a government in 1885, although the new prime minister subsequently “kissed hands” with the Queen at Windsor.¹

Balmoral has been the Scottish home of the Royal Family since it was purchased for Queen Victoria

by Prince Albert in 1852, having been first leased in 1848. The entire estate boasts approximately 50,000 acres of land. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli complained that “carrying on the government of the country 600 miles from the metropolis doubles the labour.”² On one visit, the Spartan hospitality played havoc with “Dizzy’s” gout and incited an attack of bronchitis.³ Lord Salisbury referred to Balmoral as “Siberia.”⁴

Edward VII

Churchill’s long association with Balmoral echoed his relationships with successive monarchs, but his very first encounter with the name had nothing to do with Scotland. In an ironic twist, after escaping from a Boer prison in South Africa, Churchill took refuge at the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay Collieries at Witbank, near the



ABOVE
Churchill at Balmoral with Prince Charles, 1952

Balmoral railway station. He also passed the mining town of Dundee. The namesake association with Balmoral improved after 1899, although Dundee was to prove a contentious constituency for the future Member of Parliament from 1908 to 1922.⁵

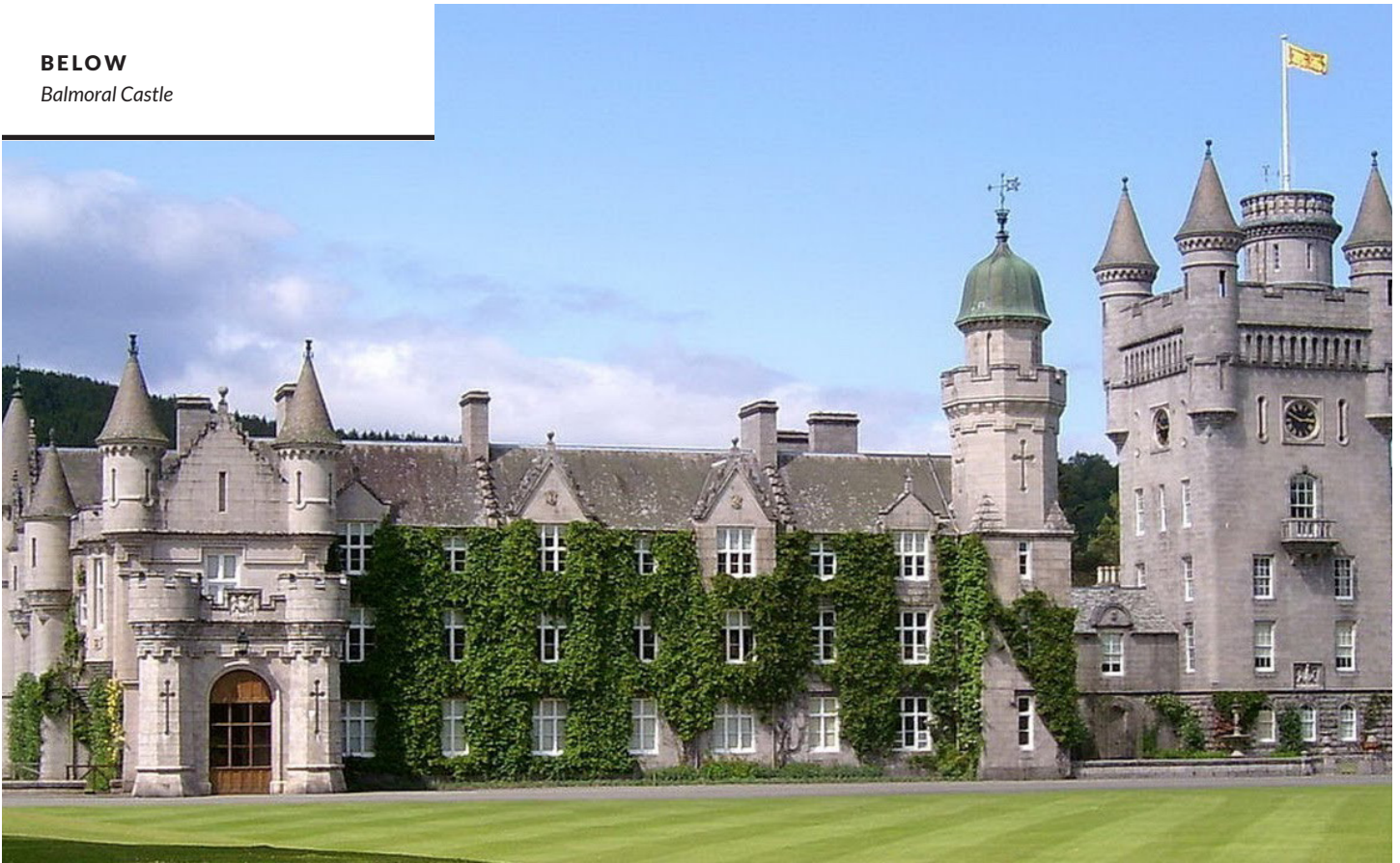
In 1902, Churchill, just twenty-seven and a member of the House of Commons for less than two years, was commanded to Balmoral by King Edward VII. Like the Royal Family, Churchill typically spent the late summer and early autumn in Scotland engaged in social and sporting occasions. The isolation of the Scottish Highlands may have been a favourite of kings and queen, but “Monarchs in those days subjected themselves to more social intercourse with politics.”⁶

In a letter of 27 September 1902 written to his mother, Lady Randolph Churchill, young Winston reported that “the King has gone out of his way to be nice to me.” As a young man in a hurry, Churchill encouraged his mother to “gush [to the King] about my having written to you saying how much etc. I had enjoyed myself there.”⁷

By the following year, Churchill’s fortunes were a bit

BELOW

Balmoral Castle



different. There was increasing disagreement within the Conservative party about protectionist tariffs favouring trade with the British Empire. Churchill was already operating with the Liberals as an ardent free trader before formally crossing the floor from the Conservatives to the Liberals in 1904. “I’m going to Dalmeny [Scotland] tomorrow,” he wrote to his mother. “I have put my name down at Balmoral—but I fear I am still in disgrace.”⁸

George V

Towards the end of September 1911, Churchill, then serving as Home Secretary, was invited to stay once more with a new monarch at Balmoral. Churchill did not at first enjoy the same easy relationship with King George V that he had with Edward VII.⁹ Churchill found George

stiff and humourless. In a letter to Clementine, he described the attendees at Balmoral as “unexciting” and felt “it would be jolly” if she were there. It was not customary for ministers’ wives to be invited, however, and Clementine remained at her own family’s seat in nearby Airlie Castle. Churchill added that “the King talks too much about affairs,” and Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George “made less of a good impression than last year.”¹⁰

The 1911 visit’s high point was the arrival of Churchill’s new red automobile, costing £610. Churchill had intended to drive his fifteen horse-power, four-cylinder Napier Landaulette to Balmoral, but there was a hitch. He had ordered the car to be painted a “Marlborough hue” but did not specify the shade. Consequently, the car was not ready in time.

Instead he drove it to Airlie Castle and through Scotland after his stay at Balmoral while “relishing the Napier’s power and handling.”¹¹

The next day Churchill went to meet Prime Minister H. H. Asquith at Archerfield, the enormous house lent by Asquith’s brother-in-law on the coast of East Lothian. It was here that Asquith invited Churchill to take over as First Lord of the Admiralty.¹²

The following year in mid-August, the First Lord and his family went on a cruise in the official 4,000-tonne Admiralty yacht HMS *Enchantress*. The tour followed the Scottish coast until, in mid-September, Churchill broke their holiday to visit his Dundee constituency. This also enabled Churchill to inspect naval establishments on the River Tyne and Aberdeen Bay, from where

Winston and Clementine were bidden to dine at Balmoral.¹³

In September 1913, there was a repeat cruise up the Scottish coast. Churchill once again stayed at Balmoral, this time overlapping with a visit by Andrew Bonar Law, then in his second year as Conservative leader. Circumstances were fraught. A day before arriving, Churchill received a warning from Asquith that the “Royal mind obsessed” about the Irish question. In March 1912, Bonar Law had sought to involve the Crown in the Irish issue by urging the King to dissolve parliament, an act Asquith called unconstitutional.¹⁴ Aided by the friendliness of the highland air and royal hospitality, however, Churchill used his time at Balmoral to speak with Bonar Law constructively about Ireland. The outcome was a series of secret meetings with Asquith about a special status for Ulster and Home Rule.¹⁵

On a much different topic, Churchill wrote to Clementine: “Last night I had a long talk with the young Prince [of Wales, aged nineteen]. They are worried a little about him, as he has become so v[er]y spartan—rising at 6 & eating hardly anything. He requires to fall in love with a pretty cat, who will prevent him from getting too strenuous.” History can be the judge of that advice about the future King Edward VIII.¹⁶

Sixteen years later and back in the Conservative party, Churchill visited Balmoral on 25 September 1928 in his capacity as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He wrote Clementine to say, “I am tired by

a racketing journey,” but found himself in some isolation with the Royal Family. Poignantly he said, “There is no one here at all except the Family, the Household & Queen [*sic*, Princess] Elizabeth—aged 2. The last is a character. She has an air of authority & reflectiveness astonishing in an infant....”¹⁷

On the 27th, Churchill wrote that he enjoyed a “hardworking day’s stalking 10 till 5.30 always on the move,” and “I killed a good stag 10 pointer.” He added, “The King is really v[er]y kind to me & gives me every day the best of his sport.” But sport and politics were never far removed, and “yesterday we had a most interesting talk after picnic lunch about Guarantees, Baldwin’s Dissolution in 1923, [and Lord] Curzon’s chagrin at not being P.M.” Amusingly, Churchill notes, “H.M. also shares my views about the Yankees & expressed the same unpicturesque language.”¹⁸

George VI

Balmoral played a less significant role during the Second World War when Churchill first became prime minister. The Royal Family did not visit the castle during the first two years of the conflict. They returned for the first time in August 1941 and again in September 1942. In August 1943, the Royal Family stayed for five weeks, the most extended break the King had throughout the war. His breaks were few in those years and never without interruption.¹⁹

Churchill adhered to wartime rationing but benefited from well-wishers worldwide, including food parcels from President Franklin D. Roosevelt and game from

Sandringham and Balmoral sent as personal gifts from the King. Labels were used to ensure the game, freshly shot, arrived in the kitchens of Downing Street.²⁰

In July 1944, Churchill telegraphed Roosevelt twice to urge another Big Three meeting following the 1943 conference with Josef Stalin in Tehran. Churchill suggested “a meeting between us three at Invergordon...where the King could entertain, or at Balmoral.” Roosevelt responded he was “rather keen about the idea of Invergordon or a spot on the West coast of Scotland.” Yalta, however, turned out to be the chosen—and highly disappointing—destination in February 1945.²¹

The death of King George VI in 1952 was a severe blow for Churchill. Not only had he and the King served closely together throughout the war, they had become friends.²² Churchill wrote a note saying “For Valour” that was placed on the King’s coffin.

Elizabeth II

The child that Churchill so rightly described in 1928 now became Queen with Churchill, in his late seventies, as her first prime minister. Churchill’s youngest daughter Mary later told her daughter Emma Soames: “The Queen very quickly captivated him, he fell under her spell. I think he felt early on her immense sense of duty, and he looked forward to his Tuesday afternoon meetings with the young monarch.”²³

Churchill’s official commitments in 1952 kept him away from the new Queen for much of the year. Lord Moran

**ABOVE**

Queen Elizabeth II inspects honour guard

recorded in his diary on 30 September that Churchill was back from a holiday to the south of France and declared, “I am going to Balmoral tomorrow. I felt I ought to see the Queen. I have not seen her for two months.”²⁴

Churchill flew north to Scotland in September to be the Queen’s guest at Balmoral. While there, news reached Downing Street that Britain’s first atom bomb had been successfully detonated on 3 October at Montebello Island, off the northwest coast of Australia (see *FH* 195). The Prime Minister’s fairly new private secretary, Anthony Montague Browne, was advised to call and wake Churchill

to impart the news, “but even at this early stage,” he recalled, “I concluded this would be imprudent!”²⁵

Apart from the historical consequences of the visit, there survives a rare colour film made of Churchill and Clementine on the banks of Loch Muick, on the Balmoral Estate, with the Royal Family that preserves a private moment. The Prime Minister can be seen playing with a piece of driftwood while a three-year-old Prince Charles stands close by.²⁶ After the visit, Churchill wrote the Queen, “I was keenly impressed by the development of Prince Charles as a personality. He

is young to think so much.”²⁷ As he had with our new King’s mother, Churchill identified hidden depths in the future monarch from an early age.

Soon after the coronation of Elizabeth II, Churchill suffered a severe stroke at Downing Street on 23 June 1953. After a month of recovery at Chartwell, he met the Queen for the first time since his attack. She invited her Prime Minister and Clementine to Balmoral. Clementine, however, protested that the long Royal Train journey would undermine her husband’s recovery. Churchill’s doctor, Lord Moran, said to the patient: “The crux is, can you

finish the journey?”²⁸ Clementine believed not and wrote Winston: “you are improving steadily...but rather you must husband your strength.”

Typically, Churchill rose to the challenge and left for Scotland on 11 September. Not only did he survive the journey, he felt fresh and encouraged when he returned home.²⁹ “I went to Church at Balmoral,” he wrote. “It is forty-five years since I was there. Now there were long avenues of people, and they raised their hands, waving and cheering, which I was told had never happened before.”³⁰

Churchill later wrote to the Queen, “I must express to Yr. Majesty the keen pleasure which my wife and I derived from our Northern journey...Balmoral was indeed a happy scene of youth and joy.” He was, however, exhausted by the excursions. The Queen subsequently wrote and included a photograph of the trip.³¹

Winston Churchill’s ties with the Royal Family are many and plentiful across political, social, and ancestral spheres. All of the anecdotes, history, and individual personalities would take a lifetime to chart. As the nation and the Commonwealth mourn the loss of our late Queen, we can all take comfort that Her Majesty and her first Prime Minister are about to resume their Audience after many long years.

Alastair Stewart is a public affairs consultant, freelance writer, and Chair of ICS Scotland.

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Elizabeth the Great

Inside the House of Commons

By Robert Courts

The Member of Parliament for Witney describes the scene inside the House of Commons when news started to break of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

When the tectonic plates of history move, the great living organism that is the House of Commons feels the shift.

On Thursday, 8 September 2022 the House has assembled to hear new Prime Minister Liz Truss open a General Debate on energy costs, one of the most pressing issues of the summer. MPs from both sides of the House are keen to hear the PM explain her new policy and then to raise their constituents' queries.

Yet the Prime Minister has not spoken for long when she sits down. Clearly events are rapidly overtaking. A note is passed directly to freshly appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (a key, coordinating role at the top of Government) Nadhim Zahawi suggesting that something major is happening. He leaves the Chamber, returns, and confers with the Speaker before rushing, swiftly and with head bowed, to confer directly with the Prime Minister. The serious



ABOVE
Robert Courts (seated in lower right-hand corner) watches the new King's broadcast on television monitors in the House of Commons

expressions etched on both their faces make only too clear that this is not a mere policy correction from officials. On the other side of the despatch boxes, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition both leave with similar speed. This is unusual. If the PM is present, so is the Leader of the Opposition. If the Leader leaves, the Deputy stays. For both to leave is a sign most serious. "The Queen?" Murmured rumours ripple around the rapidly emptying benches.

By now it is clear that the Speaker is about to say something. A short statement clutched in his hands, his usually jovial face

etched with tension, he stands to call for order midway through the speech by Scottish National Party leader Ian Blackford. This too is unusual. Normally Mr. Speaker waits until the end of an MP's remarks. But the news is out, tearing round the world, and his statement cannot wait:

I wish to say something about the announcement that has just been made about Her Majesty. I know that I speak on behalf of the entire House when I say that we send our best wishes to Her Majesty the Queen, and that she and the royal family are in our thoughts and prayers at this moment.

The Palace never makes a statement about Her Majesty's health. Never. This must be serious. The debate continues. But the House's thoughts are elsewhere. Silently, members slip away, to speak to each other, to watch the news, to scroll through social media. What can this be? Surely it is not serious. We have been here before. She is elderly but in good health. Why she only saw the new Prime Minister two days ago. She approved new ministerial appointments just yesterday.

Ministers dash back to their departments, checking and cross-checking that the plans for Operation London Bridge—drawn up over many years and regularly



ABOVE

The Queen at one of her final appearances for the State Opening of Parliament

updated—are in first class shape. Nothing must be forgotten. Of course, it probably will come to nothing (it never does, does it?), and Her Majesty shall live forever. But it would be a terrible thing to be wrong. The Queen's family are dashing to Balmoral. This must be something, “a significant event,” says one news source. But hopefully not *that*. Surely not *that*.

Six thirty in the evening now, a damp evening, the blue skies not dispelling the grey that somehow still overhangs. There are spots of rain in the air. The world stops. People on the street, stop. Everywhere people stop and stare at their phones lighting up. Strangers look at each other, not talking—there is nothing to say. It

has happened. The thing that we never wanted to happen but always knew must happen, has happened. She is gone.

First Reactions

All down the Nation's High Street of Whitehall, through a red sunset, flags are lowered to half-mast: at the Foreign Office, the Treasury, Downing Street, and the Ministry of Defence. The mourning has begun. The enormous banner above Parliament's Victoria Tower lowers slowly in the soft breeze. Westminster Hall, that ancient venue of historical activity, stands still, silent, and, for the moment, empty. Soon it will once again be the focus of the world's attention.

The Prime Minister—what a challenging and truly extraordinary first week for her—confirms the sad news in a short speech outside 10 Downing Street. A new Prime Minister and now a new Monarch in one week—unprecedented in all British history.

At Buckingham Palace, thousands are gathering. The huge road leading to the Palace—the Mall—is closed, as multitudes start to stream towards the Palace gates, some clutching flowers, all just wanting to be there, to pay their respects because it is “the right thing to do.” Already the world's media have set up a tented village on one side. This event is seismic: for our country, for us individually, and for the world. It will be the biggest funeral in history.

Friday, 9 September

The next day passes in a blur of activity. There is work to be done. The rolling news reminds us constantly that this is real. All constituency meetings and public ministerial meetings or appearances are cancelled. Every detail of what is to come must be pored over, distilled, challenged, reexamined, confirmed, and carried out. Whether your part is large or small, public or private, everything must be right. For Her, no detail is too small. In the flurry of telephone calls, papers, and meetings, all is as it should be. The plans are in place, the system is working. The glorious majesty of Palace and State combine in sad, yet serene and purposeful activity.

The House meets. Led by the Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons, all observe

**ABOVE**

Prime Minister Liz Truss outside 10 Downing Street announcing the death of the Queen, 8 Sept 2022

a minute's silence in memory of our late sovereign Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Then begin the tributes, led by the Prime Minister, lasting all day and continuing far into the evening, interrupted only by a special broadcast: His Majesty The King will address the nation at six o'clock. It does not sound right, "the King." The old title in its new context underscores the magnitude of events.

His Majesty's sad, dignified face appears on the television screens mounted only two years ago in the House Chamber—a legacy of Covid sitting arrangements. The King's speech is electrifying. He says everything he needs to say and everything we need him to say. Suddenly, powerfully, undoubtedly, he is King, our King—no longer Charles, Prince of Wales but King Charles III. He stuns the House into silence. Normally loud and loquacious MPs are lost for words in the face of their new sovereign's searing grief and towering dignity. "Wow. Wow," says one. "He is going to be a great King," another manages to say. For once, the House agrees. Entirely.

Tributes from the House run for two days, well into Friday and Saturday night. The Speaker, exceptionally, allows Ministers to speak from the backbenches, and many take the opportunity. Normally, when MPs accept ministerial office, they are only allowed to speak from the despatch box on their own ministerial business or, if they are a whip, not at all. But on this occasion all MPs are permitted to speak: for themselves, for their families, and for their constituencies. Such is the weight of numbers that Members are allotted only three minutes each. Three minutes, to say all that you and your constituents want you to say, to explain what seventy years' faithful, faultless service means to everybody. A tall order indeed.

Saturday, 10 September

I am called in the early evening, towards the end of the day's speeches and some six hours into the debate. I describe my constituency's first contact with the young girl who was to become our greatest queen. It came when West Oxfordshire's most famous son, Winston Churchill, stayed with the Royal Family at Balmoral during the reign of George V. To his wife Clementine, he wrote: "There is no one here except the Family, the Household and Queen Elizabeth—aged 2. The last is a character. She has an air of authority and reflectiveness astonishing in an infant..."

"How extraordinary," I say to the House. How incredible—and yet not surprising at all—that the Queen, whose easy authority would make her the most famous and revered woman in the world,

was displaying it at such a young age. How fitting that it was noticed and remarked upon by the man whose destiny it was to be our greatest—and Elizabeth II's first—Prime Minister.

This peerless monarch remained both Olympian and possessed of the common touch, almost as if she were the nation's grandmother as well as the Armed Forces' supreme commander. The Queen was a constant but a unifying constant: the one person whose portrait you could see and which would always bring comfort and inspiration. She somehow remained timeless while always adapting to the times, even as they swirled and changed around her. The blood of the Kings of Wessex may have flowed in her veins, but only she could have pretended to parachute into an Olympic stadium with James Bond.

The House of Commons spoke as one. Her Majesty's United Kingdom spoke as one. The Queen was us, and we were her. But at this moment of sadness, as we mourn what is lost, we gladly greet what is to come. In our new King, we see our late Queen's sense of duty and constancy living strong. Whilst we grieve, we say with strengthened voice that ageless rallying cry, "God Save the King!" And God Bless the Queen. *The Queen—Elizabeth the Great.*

Robert Courts is Member of Parliament for Witney. His constituency includes Bladon, the burial site of Sir Winston Churchill.

The Queen, Australia, and Sir Winston Churchill

By Harry Atkinson

“I have always looked forward to my visit to this country, but now there is the added satisfaction for me that I am able to meet my Australian people as their Queen....”—Queen Elizabeth II, 3 February 1954

HM The Queen had an intimate relationship with Australia that spanned an incredible seven decades. Her first Royal Tour of her largest realm in the southern hemisphere took place when Sir Winston Churchill still served as her first Prime Minister. As the Head of Government, Churchill had to consider such practical matters as the financial costs of the tour and the safety of the monarch.

The Royal Tour of Australia for then Princess Elizabeth and her husband the Duke of Edinburgh was originally planned for 1952. They had in fact begun the tour in February, which involved engagements in Africa on the way to Australia. In Kenya, however, the news came through that King George VI had died. The new Queen and her Prince Consort immediately returned to London, where they were greeted at the airport by Prime Minister Churchill.

Following the King's death, Churchill put forward what he called a private project for the King's widow, now the Queen Mother, to be appointed Governor General of Australia. He discussed the idea with his private secretary, John Colville, and reports indicated that the Queen Mother was keen on the idea. Churchill then consulted Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies, who had the final say on the appointment. A meeting between the two premiers was scheduled for later that year, but the proposal never came to pass. Instead the great British General Sir William Slim received the appointment.

On the morning that the King's death was announced, Churchill held a Cabinet meeting and indicated that the the Queen's Coronation was likely to be held in the spring of 1953. Eventually the date was set for 2 June of that year. The governments of Australia and New Zealand were keen for the Queen to visit both countries after her coronation, so it was decided at the time to pencil in autumn 1953 for the postponed Royal Tour. This was eventually pushed back to late November, when the Royal Couple restarted the tour in Jamaica. They subsequently visited Fiji, Tonga, and New Zealand

before arriving in Australia in February 1954, the hottest month of the year.

On 3 February, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh sailed into Sydney Harbour aboard *SS Gothic*; *HMY Britannia* was still some months away from commissioning. Her Majesty's first steps on Australian territory were at Farm Cove, where Captain Arthur Philip RN, the first Governor of the New South Wales colony, raised the British flag 165 years before during the reign of King George III. The Queen's arrival in Australia stopped the nation. Reports estimated one million people took to the streets of Sydney to welcome her. The entire population of Sydney at the time was 1,863,161.

Just prior to the Royal Couple's visit to Western Australia, an epidemic of polio-myelitis began to unfold. Churchill was very concerned and thought it necessary that the British Cabinet consider urgently the health and safety of the Royals. The Queen's principal medical adviser, Sir Horace Evans, believed that there was only a slight risk. He advised that this could be reduced further by taking sensible precautions, including secure food preparation

**ABOVE**

Queen Elizabeth II with Commonwealth prime ministers (L-R) Sir Sydney Holland of New Zealand, Churchill, Robert Menzies of Australia, and Louis St. Laurent of Canada

and avoiding close contact with large crowds. Sir Horace informed the Cabinet that a second inoculation of gamma globulin could provide the Royal Couple with some immunity for the few weeks they would be in Australia.

Churchill considered two main questions. First, what was the level of risk to the Queen's health? Second, should the visit to Western Australia go ahead as planned, or should it be cancelled? The Prime Minister's perspective was that the Queen would feel reassured by the knowledge that her government had carefully considered the situation and that advice was provided to her.

Others viewed the situation as overstated. The risk that the Queen might catch polio-myelitis was incredibly small. Notably, there had been a lack of precautions put in place for the Royal Family when

an epidemic of polio-myelitis broke out in the United Kingdom in 1947 and again in 1951. Further, the risk was significantly higher for the Queen to be involved in a plane crash during the tour, especially in the 1950s.

Churchill faced a delicate political matter. Constitutionally the Queen had to take advice from her Australian ministers whilst in Australia. Churchill, however, felt justified in sending a private telegram to the governor of Western Australia asking for more information to be provided about the epidemic and guarantees of the Royal Couple's safety. He also sent the same telegram to the British High Commissioner in Canberra but made clear that he did not wish to consult with Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies at that time. Further Cabinet meetings ensued. The Cabinet realised that, even though

no precautions had been taken in 1947 or 1951, the fact remained that the Royal Couple were on a high-profile tour with significant media coverage. The decision was made that it was important to discuss the matter more closely with Menzies and the wider Australian government.

Menzies took heed of Churchill's concern and insisted that the Royal Couple sleep on *SS Gothic* and eat only food prepared on the ship during the Western Australian segment of the tour. Despite this drama, the Royal Tour in Western Australia was a great success. The Queen and the Duke were able to visit not only Perth, but also a number of towns dotted across the state, including Kalgoorlie, Busselton, and Albany.

The first Royal Tour of Australia was an exceptionally busy and well-choreographed event. The Royals visited seventy towns and cities across the island continent during their fifty-eight days in Australia. Conducting an average of five engagements a day, they traversed the harsh and arid landscape by ship, plane, train, and automobile from Cairns in the far north of Queensland to Hobart in the south of Tasmania, as well as travelling to Perth in the far west. They had covered more than 10,000 miles by air and 2,000 miles on the ground by the time they left Australia on 1 April. It was a magnificent tour. The Queen subsequently visited Australia another fifteen times during her reign, each visit just as special as the last.

May she rest in peace.

“Thank You Most Warmly”

Princess Elizabeth Writes the Prime Minister

By Allen Packwood

Churchill College in Cambridge is the British National and Commonwealth Memorial to Sir Winston Churchill, but it is also very much a product of what Churchill termed the second Elizabethan age.

Churchill was prime minister at the time of the death of the late Queen's father King George VI on

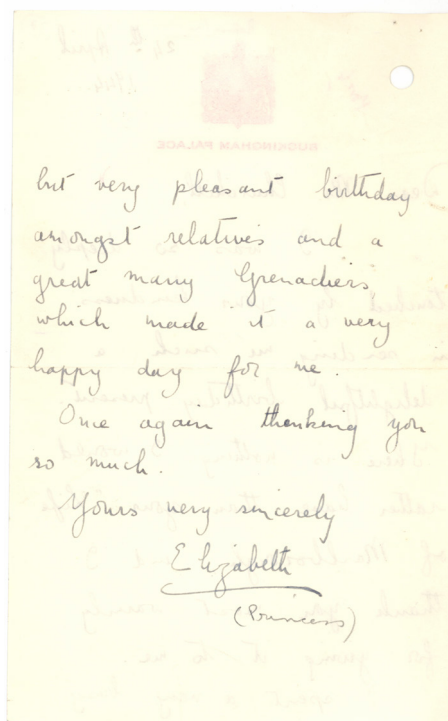
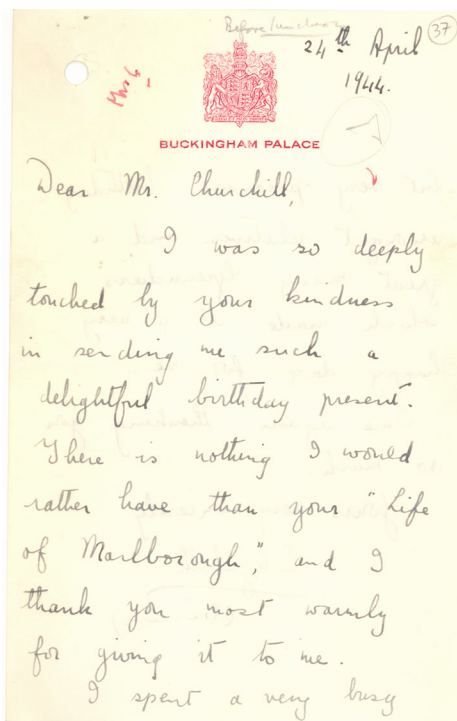
the night of 5–6 February 1952. In his broadcast to the nation on 7 February, in words that seem very poignant today, Churchill described how the sad news “struck a deep and solemn note in our lives which, as it resounded far and wide, stilled the clatter and traffic of twentieth-century life in many lands and made countless millions of human beings pause and look around them. A new

sense of values took, for the time being, possession of human minds and mortal existence presented itself to so many at the same moment in its serenity and in its sorrow, in its splendour and in its pain, in its fortitude and in its suffering.”

Churchill ended by turning to the future and the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II: “Famous have been the reigns of our Queens. Some of the greatest periods in our history have unfolded under their sceptres.”

Churchill was not only the new Queen's first prime minister but, as we now know, the first of fifteen different men and women who served Her Majesty in that capacity. Churchill College has hosted many of them, and the Churchill Archives Centre serves as the repository for the papers of several of those premiers, including most notably Sir Winston himself. Until now, however, the college has ever known only one sovereign.

Her Majesty formally created the college by putting her seal to the charter in 1960. Additionally,



ABOVE
Churchill Archives Centre, CHAR 1 380 37a and CHAR 1 380 37b

**ABOVE**

The Queen Mother and the Queen at the races, Churchill Archives Centre, SALM 1 1A

the Queen's husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, agreed to become the College Visitor, making him an overseer who could give advice as well as determine disputes arising between the college and its members. At the dedication ceremony for the College, Churchill said, "It was singularly appropriate that His Royal Highness should occupy this position." The royal connection continues: after the appointment of the first Master of the College, all subsequent masters have been appointed by the Crown.

Among the many items preserved in the archives that record the long and harmonious relationship between Churchill and the Queen is a thank-you

letter that the Prime Minister received during the Second World War from then Princess Elizabeth on 24 April 1944, just three days after her eighteenth birthday and only weeks before D-Day. Churchill had given the heir to the throne a copy of his biography of the first Duke of Marlborough. The Princess wrote:

I was so deeply touched by your kindness in sending me such a delightful birthday present. There is nothing I would rather have than your "Life of Marlborough," and I thank you most warmly for giving it to me.

I spent a very busy but very pleasant birthday amongst relatives and a great many Grenadiers, which made it a very happy day for me. Once again thank you so much.

Another item of interest is a candid photograph of the Queen relaxing at the races with her mother. The above image survives in a scrapbook kept by Vanda Salmon, who had previously worked as a personal secretary to Sir Winston.

There are other such treasures in the archives that document the friendship and respect between two of the Greatest Britons. Research into this fascinating subject will no doubt go on for many years to come.

Allen Packwood OBE is Director of the Churchill Archives Centre.

The Day the King Came to Chartwell

By Katherine Carter

When King Charles III (then Prince Charles) visited Chartwell in June 2017, he became the third generation of the Royal Family to walk through the grand oak doors of Winston Churchill's country house. Following in the footsteps of his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and his aunt, Princess Margaret, the king-to-be came to see the house of the great statesman who served six monarchs over the course of his long career.

It was an unusually grey and windy day when the car of the Prince of Wales, as he was, pulled through the large wooden gates and onto the driveway at Chartwell. In that moment, I found myself thinking about the members of the Churchills' own staff and how they might have felt upon the arrival of royalty during those visits in the early 1950s. I was once shown an entirely unofficial photograph of Princess Margaret's visit, taken from the top floor of the house, where the kitchen was in the years after the war. I loved the idea of that sense of excitement among those working for the Churchill family and the compulsion to capture the moment with their own cameras for posterity. That feeling of both

awe and anticipation was exactly what my colleagues and I felt awaiting the future king on the doorstep of Churchill's house.

Officially His Royal Highness visited in his capacity as President of the National Trust. We were celebrating the success of our fundraising campaign, which had been undertaken to acquire almost a thousand objects that had been on long-term loan to the trust. One of the items was Chartwell's Visitors Book, an unrivalled historic record of life at Chartwell with more than 750 signatories. We had on display the page of the book recording his grandmother's visit and which simply reads "Elizabeth R." The royal signature

is also beautifully underlined. I had the enormous pleasure and privilege of leading our new King's tour that day, and, though the whole day was memorable, there were a handful of moments that felt extraordinarily special.

As we walked into Sir Winston's bedroom, I remember there being a moment's pause when the Prince saw the size of the room and its modest décor. My response was to point out that, because the room had never been open to the public before, the placement of the objects and pictures remained exactly as they had been when Churchill left his beloved house for the final time in the autumn of 1964.



ABOVE
Katherine Carter shows photograph to Prince Charles, 2017

**ABOVE**

Churchill with the Queen, Princess Anne, and Prince Charles at Balmoral, National Trust

It was at that point that our Royal visitor saw the famous photograph of his grandfather King George VI, the Queen (later Queen Mother), Princess Elizabeth (later Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II), and Princess Margaret as they stood on the balcony of Buckingham Palace during the VE-Day celebrations of 8 May 1945. In the centre of the Royal Family, during the very hour of victory, stood Churchill himself.

“The bedroom was Churchill’s inner sanctum, his most private space,” I remarked, “and the pictures he chose to hang on the walls represent those most special to him, and the ones he wanted to see each morning when he awoke, and each night before he went to bed.” “That’s wonderful,” the Prince replied, “It’s a brilliant photograph.”

We left Churchill’s bedroom and returned to the study—the beating heart of Chartwell. I had a particular surprise up my sleeve for our special guest and asked the group to pause for a moment while we stood on the carefully placed druggel that protects the precious rug given to Churchill by the Shah of Persia. I pulled out the conservator’s gloves from my pocket, put them on, and picked up a photograph from the shelf by Churchill’s desk. “I thought you might enjoy seeing this, Sir,” I said as I brought the photograph to him.

The picture is one from Balmoral, with Churchill standing proudly on the left wearing a spectacular double-breasted coat while holding his hat and cane in one hand. Standing resplendently in the centre is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, with the same heart-warming smile seen in the last

official photographs taken of her before she passed away, also taken at Balmoral. The Queen is even, similar to those final photos, in a tartan skirt, which had been a garment of choice for her Balmoral stays throughout her life. Beside her in the photograph is our new king as a small boy holding the hand of his younger sister, Princess Anne.

I remember noticing that the Prince’s face changed at that point in his visit. He was clearly remembering the time he had spent as a child with Sir Winston. He even pointed out the car featured in the photograph, of which he had fond memories. He thanked me for showing him this wonderful (and signed!) image of his mother as a young queen with her family during the earliest years of her reign. The Prince seemed especially delighted that such a lovely family moment of his now forms a permanent part of our display at Churchill’s house.

There are, of course, countless treasures in Chartwell’s collection, but I think that moment, of showing the Prince a photograph that Churchill himself cherished featuring the future monarch as a young boy, might very well be among the most special interactions I have ever had with an object on display in the house. As Curator of the Churchills’ most favoured residence, it is my job to help people connect with the Churchill family’s beloved possessions, and I feel very proud to have been able to do that on the day the King came to Chartwell.

Katherine Carter is Property Curator at Chartwell.

The Finger of God

By Andrew Roberts

Editor's Note: In the best tradition of historical fiction, biographer Andrew Roberts looks into the future in order to reimagine the past in a way that helps us come to terms with the present.

Extract from Queen Elizabeth II's Private Diary, Andrew Roberts, ed. (Penguin, 2063)

5 April 1955

Since I knew that this would be my last audience with Sir Winston before his resignation, I decided to

try to draw him out on something a little more substantial than the normal witty repartee at which he so excels. I have much enjoyed our weekly conversations over the past three years since Papa's death, and I felt it would be a good opportunity to discuss something weighty, an issue in which (unlike most) we do not see eye to eye. After a brief talk about the 2.30 p.m. race at Uttoxeter tomorrow, in which we both have horses running, I said, 'Prime Minister, you wrote me a very generous letter about the Commonwealth,

but I would like to ask you about something you said in it.' Looking slightly surprised, but his eyes twinkling as ever, he replied, 'Of course, Your Majesty.'

I picked up his letter from the *escritoire* and read out his words: 'I regard it as the most direct mark of God's favour we have ever received in my long life that the whole structure of our new-formed Commonwealth has been linked and illuminated by a sparkling presence at its summit.' (Of course, as Disraeli did with my



ABOVE

The Queen at Balmoral, 6 September 2022



ABOVE

Queen Elizabeth II and Winston Churchill

great-great-grandmother, when Sir Winston flatters me, he lays it on with a trowel.) ‘They are very kind words, Prime Minister, but in your long and eventful life you surely must have seen many direct marks of God’s favour?’ Knowing that he has an at best *soi-distant* relationship with the concept of an Almighty, and none at all with Our Saviour, I was hoping for a theological discussion, something we had never had before, as I recognised that I would see much less of him after Sir Anthony [Eden] became premier.

‘I once left a dug-out at Plug street on the Western Front, Your Majesty,’ Sir Winston replied, ‘and only minutes later it took a direct hit from a German whizz-

bang which killed my batman and everyone else inside. At that time, I felt as if I could hear invisible wings beating over me.’ ‘There you are, Sir Winston,’ I said, ‘you are a believer after all! Viscount Hailsham, who I understand Sir Anthony is considering for postmaster-general, once told me that the one time he has discerned the finger of God in history was when you became Prime Minister in 1940.’ ‘It is very generous of him to say so,’ Sir Winston replied, ‘but I tend to discern the generous words of your father on that memorable occasion more than the finger of God.’

‘Tell me, Your Majesty,’ he continued, ‘do *you* detect the finger of God terribly much in your life?’

‘Every single day,’ I replied, ‘I see it up at Balmoral in the colour of the ferns on the moors; I hear it in the beauty of the rivers and every Sunday at Crathie Kirk; I sense it in the change of wind that warns the 18-pointer red stag of the stalkers’ approach. One day at Balmoral, I hope many years hence, I pray it will be the last thing that I do detect.’

We then turned to the troubling situation developing in Bechuanaland.

Andrew Roberts is author of Churchill: Walking with Destiny (2018) and a trustee of the International Churchill Society

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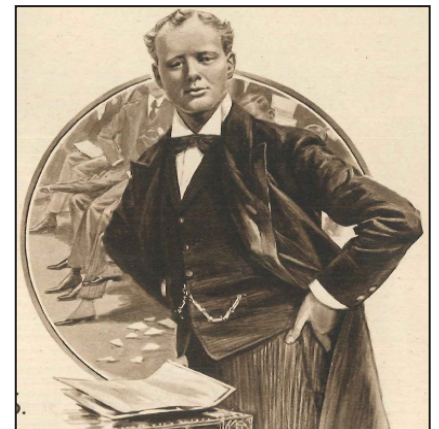
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Painting The Queen

By Richard Stone

On 6 June 1989 I attended the first of my sittings with Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham Palace. Seven one-hour sittings were scheduled for me. An initial approach had been made to the Queen's Private Secretary, Sir Robert Fellowes, enquiring about the possibility of me painting a portrait to commemorate the Borough of Colchester's 800th Charter Anniversary in 1989.

At the first sitting I was able to sketch, both in words and on paper, my thoughts on the general look of the proposed portrait with the Queen. From my initial hesitant sketches, the scale and grandeur of the work developed more confidently through detailed studies to life-size mock-ups of the definitive image. By 6 December, progress was so advanced that the finished study of Her Majesty's head in near profile was released to the world's press. The Queen herself said that it would make a very good stamp.

Sittings were resumed in the early summer of 1990 to concentrate on painting the Regalia and the Robes of State. Gradually the portrait was enlarged to its full size of eight by five feet. Special facilities were created for me to continue work in Her Majesty's absence in the Yellow Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace. A lay figure was used during this period for displaying the robes and George IV's diadem. The final sitting with The Queen took place at 2:30 pm on 12 June 1990. Her Majesty was able to see the impressive scale of the picture, along with a selection of studies that were produced to bring about the life-size work. Encouraged by Her Majesty's approval, I continued to paint in the final details.

The picture was officially unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery, and I subsequently presented it to Colchester Borough Council in February 1992, as a gift to my hometown. It



*Photo by Michael Powell/michaelpowell.com
Sketch courtesy of Richard Stone*

has since been exhibited at Westwood Park, Woburn Abbey, the International Fine Arts and Antiques Fair in Maastricht, and Partridge Fine Arts of Bond Street, London. The portrait can be viewed by appointment in the Colchester Moot Hall.

Richard Stone has painted portraits of the Royal Family for fifty years. His website is richardstoneuk.com