

Winston's Birthday

by Paul Baker



*You cannot mend a
lifetime in a lunchtime.*

- Lady Churchill

Fortune School Resource



Winston's Birthday

By Paul Baker

Directed by Lara Macgregor

Secrets are revealed, resentments released and new understandings formed in this fresh and funny perspective on an iconic and larger-than-life family.

It's 1962 – the Beatles have their first hit, James Bond his first film – and Randolph Churchill is holding a luncheon party to celebrate the 88th birthday of his admired but estranged father. Sir Winston is a fading force and there is unfinished business in his loving but dysfunctional family.

Meanwhile, the socially inept Dr Jenkins, a newly appointed research assistant to Randolph, is pursuing his own agenda and forms a surprising bond with the wily Winston.

Featuring Geoffrey Heath, Yvonne Martin, Jonathan Martin, Hilary Halba and Roy Snow

Please contact us with any thoughts, questions and feedback at: education@fortunetheatre.co.nz

Shannon Colbert
Education Liaison

Contents

Director's Note.....	2
Artistic Director's Note.....	3
Playwright's Note.....	4
About the Playwright.....	9
Set Design.....	10
Meet the Cast.....	13
Meet the Churchills.....	15
In the Press.....	16
Themes and Quotes.....	21
Winston's Speeches.....	23
More Reading.....	24

Many thanks to our Gateway student, Jacinta Compton and our Intern Julie MacDonald for their help with the School Resource.

A Note from the Director



Paul Baker's play is deceptively clever. Like Paul himself. A natural historian, he takes fact and weaves it through his imagination to present us a fictitious account of something you swear could be true.

It was one thing to direct Paul's play over a day as part of The Court's Mid-Winter Reading series, but it's been another to bring it to fuller fruition. Like Paul, when I embarked upon this journey, I had no particular affection for Winston himself, bar an admiration for the leader he came to be, and knew very little of the family that surrounded him. Winston was not exempt from the

eccentricities that plague all our family units, and was renowned for leading a country ahead of tending a family, but as I came to learn through the telling of this imagining, he cared very much for his children. Perhaps too much. This incubated the nastiest of infections - a sense of propriety and lack of awareness for all things other than themselves. Well, at least for the two of his five children portrayed in this story. In Paul's interpretation, it is also clear that both Sarah and Randolph Churchill put their father on the very highest of pedestals... only to be let down when their demands lacked any reason. Paul has taken the

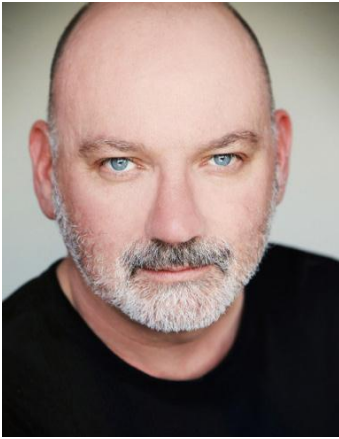
most common drive in all of us - the need for parental approval - and woven a complex play that is part comedy, part drama, part fact and fiction. The actors have masterfully embraced these characters, honoured their past, and run them through their own imaginations.

It is my hope, as a director in search of the playwright's approval, that we serve him well.

Lara Macgregor
Director



A Note from our Artistic Director



I write to you on 'leap day' which feels fitting as I have 'leapt' into the role here, my new home on the Peninsula and many new relationships. This first month has positively flown by!

A couple of weeks ago I popped up to Christchurch and was delighted to see Winston's Birthday in performance. Lara Macgregor and her team have created a terrific piece of entertainment. The cast is relishing discovering the laughs with audiences. Now it's our turn to enjoy this very classy evening from historian and former Waitaki Boy's Rector, Paul Baker.

This play marks another opportunity for us to collaborate with The Court Theatre. It's wonderful to see the work of Peter King head north once again and our own Hilary Halba beautifully inhabit the wild and rebellious Sarah. Collaboration is the key to any theatrical venture, and it's particularly important to pull together to get new

New Zealand work to as many audiences as possible. My thanks to all those in both theatres that have worked especially hard to make this happen.

A warm welcome to our guest cast - in particular iconic Christchurch actors Geoffrey Heath and Yvonne Martin who bring such a depth of experience to Sir and Lady Churchill. This show also marks the visit of assistant director Ahi Karunaharan our first intern on the Engine Room project.

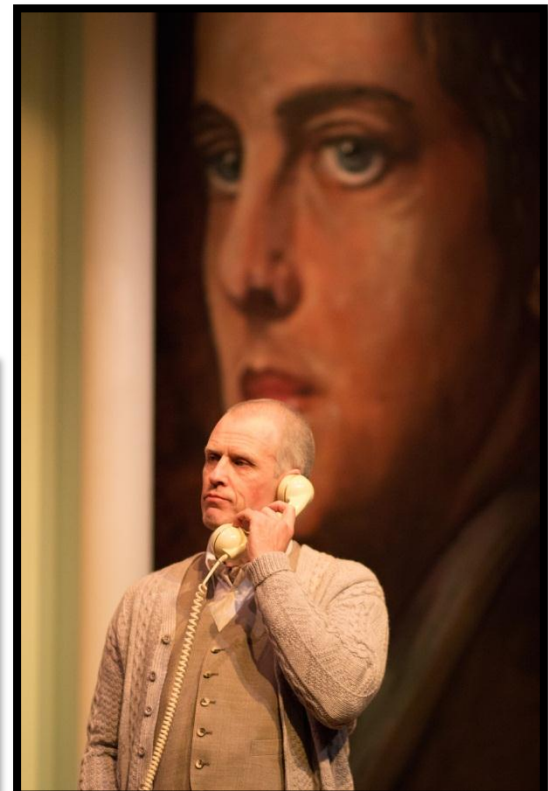
A word of thanks to the people who have welcomed me over the last weeks with their thoughts and passion for the theatre. I've met many of our members, drama teachers, local artists, high school and tertiary students, business people, representatives from funding bodies, the council, other arts organisations and local companies. What strikes me is a sense of connection and belonging to the Fortune. But like all

relationships this needs to be fed and nurtured. I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to build and grow the theatre's work. Your involvement as an audience is key to our success.

So please feel free to email me on

JonathonH@fortunetheatre.co.nz if you have some thinking about what you've seen or want to see. Or better still come up and say 'hi' when at the theatre. I look forward to chatting.

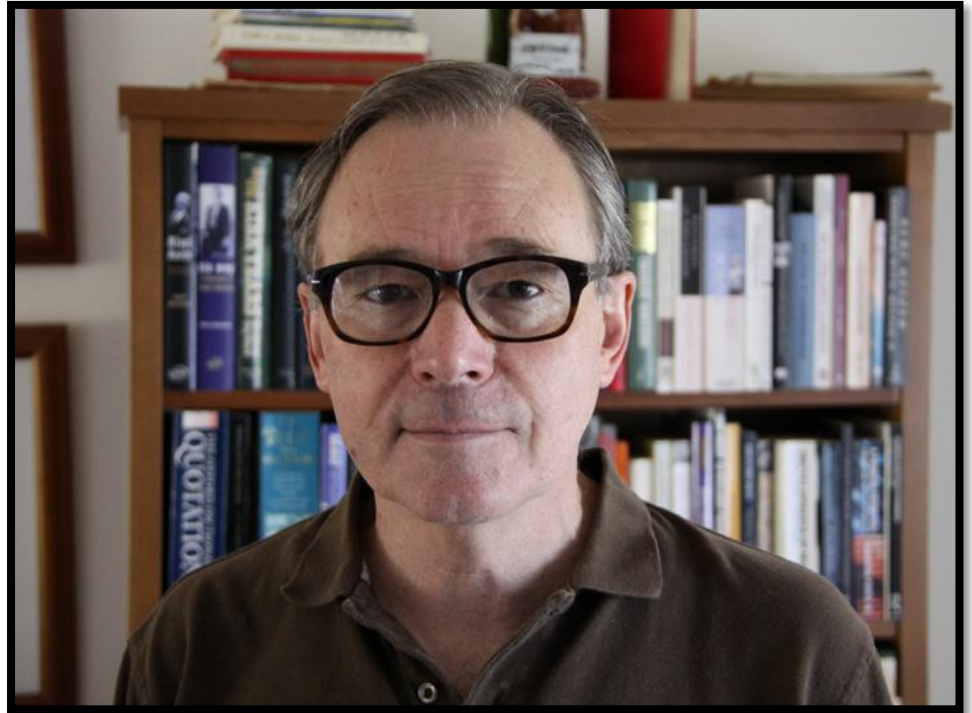
Nga mihi,
Jonty
Artistic Director



A Note from Playwright, Paul Barker

By any definition of greatness, Sir Winston Churchill fits the bill. Yet often behind a grand façade lies domestic turbulence or tragedy. The four Churchills you will meet lived grandly and uncompromisingly, quite lacking in reflective or reformatory qualities. Though never attracting the attention of social services, they were a highly dysfunctional family. Winston, the centrifugal force, contrived to be oblivious to anything domestic. Randolph and Sarah, doomed to live in the shadow of greatness, and with the apparent genetic inheritance of their wayward grandparents, lived conspicuously unfulfilled and undisciplined lives. This was all too much for the perfectionist Clementine, who regularly fled to holiday or hospital.

I have thrown these four excessive personalities into that aristocratic crucible known as 'the luncheon', and, facing Winston's impending demise, made them confront half a century of 'unfinished business' - family lies, evasions, and resentments. What ensues is imagined, but highly plausible. Because the Churchills are so well documented it has not been difficult to dramatize them without excessive license. I have resisted the temptation to draw upon Winston's



'greatest hits'. The 'Churchillianisms' are largely mine and it has been fun writing them.

In 1962 Britain was changing fast. The invented character of Dr Jenkins, in his politics, style of scholarship and social skills, symbolises the new, meritocratic Britain that will soon render the world of the Churchills obsolete.

Winston slid very quickly from being Prime Minister (until 1955) to silent backbencher, with a gloomy view of the world and his own achievements. But occasionally the old triumphalist flame still flickered. This play is set on one of those days.

I did not commence writing this play as a Churchill expert or a particular fan. But the man and his place in history do get under your skin. When watching, for the first time, film of his funeral, I was surprised to find that when those great cranes on the Thames bowed in respect as the funeral barge passed, my

shoulders were heaving with uncontrollable tears.

Did it all happen?

The various resentments, secrets and picaresques dramatised in this play are all well documented, as are the regular family eruptions that ensued. Most of the events referred to occurred between 1960 and 1964.

The dramatist necessarily takes a few liberties. For example, it was Onassis who arranged the King of Greece interview and son-in-law Christopher Soames who led the family charge against Winston standing again for Parliament, but Clementine strongly supported both actions. The wartime trysts and War Cabinet peace talks occurred exactly as outlined. The Halifax Diary and Blenheim Palace dinner are both invented, though plausible. Flat 16, 127 Carshalton Gardens is also invented; the adultery took place at Harriman's flat, and only in Randolph's feverish mind was Churchill complicit.



What happened before?

The rich tapestry of Churchill dysfunction requires a dramatist to be selective. The play excludes many events which shaped and scarred the Churchills.

Winston's magnificent life stands in bold defiance of potted history. Nevertheless: he was born in 1874 to Lord Randolph Churchill, who rose to the rank of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his American wife Jennie Jerome. As a young soldier and journalist Winston enjoyed four wars between 1895 and 1899. He entered Parliament in 1900, and Cabinet in 1908, where he remained, with a few gaps, until 1928. After his 'wilderness years' he re-entered Cabinet in 1939, served as Prime Minister from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. In all, he held seventeen different offices. He was born and died a Tory, crossed the floor in 1904 and 're-ratted' from the Liberals in 1924.

Concurrent achievements included authoring (often

with expert assistance) 43 books, including a two volume biography of his father (1906), five volume history of the years 1911-28 (The World Crisis), four volume Life of Marlborough (John Churchill, his distant antecedent), four volume History of the English Speaking Peoples and six volume History of the Second World War. There were also over 500 paintings; one recently sold for over a million pounds.

Clementine's real birth father was unknown but there are three suspects. Her parents separated and she was raised by her impecunious mother in

France. For Winston to nevertheless have chosen her, suggests that it must have been love.

Clementine's sister Kitty died as a teenager, and brother Bill, a gambler, committed suicide in 1921. Her infant daughter Marigold died suddenly while Clementine and Winston holidayed, for which Clementine felt eternal grief and guilt.

Daughter Diana twice married unfaithful husbands, and had a severe breakdown in 1953. She was apprehended by Randolph with a knife with which she intended to kill Clementine.

By the 1950's Randolph was England's most celebrated failure (a wartime MP only through an uncontested election, and five unsuccessful Parliamentary campaigns, after which he could not even achieve nomination), a combative and litigious journalist, buffoon and boor. Randolph's second wife June (married 1948-60) attempted suicide during their engagement.





Sarah appeared on the cover of Life Magazine, danced with Fred Astaire in Royal Wedding, and hosted The Sarah Churchill Show on American television. The Churchill name undoubtedly opened doors but her talents were too modest to keep them ajar. Her last film role was in 1958, as a repressed spinster attempting to seduce a vicar. Her private life did not help. Sarah's secret wartime lover John Winand (US Ambassador to Britain) and her second husband Antony Beauchamp both suicided shortly after their relationships ended. Between 1958 and 1960 Sarah was arrested five times for variations of assault, drunken and disorderly behaviour in America and Britain, was straight-jacketed in Los Angeles and spent ten days in Holloway Prison. She then exiled herself to Spain, and married the genial gay drunk, poet and former monk Lord Audley, just a year before his death.

This all took its toll on Clementine, who in 1961 (and again in 1963) was

hospitalised for anxiety and exhaustion.

What happened after?

Middle daughter Diana committed suicide in 1963. Neither parent was well enough to attend her funeral. Sir Winston did retire in July 1964, and died in January 1965. His last words were "I'm so bored with it all". After his death Clementine's nervous ailments vanished. She died in December 1977. In 1967 Randolph defied his mother one last time, and died before her. He was 57. When asked the cause of death, his doctor said 'everything, really'. In his papers was found a poem, written in his own hand, and probably his own composition:

*Oh foolish one, why seek to
know the truth
Its agate shroud tokens the
despair
That must be yours when
all is known
Too soon we pass the
threshold of this life
For us to preen ourselves on
knowing all
We nothing know and
nothing care.*

Randolph's second wife June eventually did take her life. His son Winston lost his Cabinet position in a sex scandal, and died aged 69; his daughter Arabella was Debutante of the Year in 1967 but subsequently embraced a hippy lifestyle and then co-founded the Glastonbury Festival. She died in 2007, aged 58, on the day her son (Sir Winston's great grandson) was imprisoned in Australia for drug dealing. There may have been a third child: in 2010 a middle aged Oklahoma woman claimed, with credible evidence, that Randolph was her father, and that the Churchills had covered this up.

In 1971, within days of the death of her second husband, Pamela Churchill contacted old flame Averill Harriman, now 79 and a wealthy Democratic Party grandee. They married months later. After Harriman's death Pamela was appointed U.S. Ambassador to France.

Sarah did return to England, lived alone, and died, aged 67, in 1982. She



was drunk at her father's deathbed, and again at his funeral, but sober for Clementine's weekly visits to her basement flat in Eaton Square. She wrote an autobiography, and several volumes of poetry, cover design by Lobo. Shortly before her death she said that nothing would induce her to live her life again and she did not mind dying "because I know Papa is waiting".

The remarkably normal (and admirable) Mary, Lady Soames died in 2014 at 91. She seems to have inherited all of the family virtues, while the others were left the vices.

Churchill History

Reviews of the first volume of the official biography were generally good. In 1966, just as Randolph's health was faltering, the fifty year embargo on government archives was reduced to thirty years. With vastly more evidence now or shortly available, Randolph knew he would never finish the Great Work. Into his second and final volume, was poured frustration, guilt and unrequited love. Winston

lost his humanity and became a wise, courageous and omniscient superman.

The Churchill biography took Sir Martin Gilbert another six volumes and twenty years to complete. 'Churchill on Churchill' was then resumed. Mary wrote an excellent biography of her mother Clementine. Young Winston did the same for his father Randolph. Sarah wrote an unrevealing autobiography.

And what of Churchill's reputation?

Churchill's nemesis Nye Bevan once said "History itself seemed to come into the chamber when Churchill addressed us". Churchill and modern British history became indistinguishable. The century was just 55 years old when a Churchill biography was entitled *The Man of the Century*.

In Churchill's last decade, public criticism was beyond the pale. But just six years after his death a scholarly work could be entitled *Churchill: A Study in Failure*,

1900-1939 (Robert Rhodes James). It took a little longer and some deeper breaths for the same revisionist claims to be made of his wartime leadership. Eventually, some historians championed Alanbrooke on strategic issues, and Halifax on political. In particular, John Charmley (*Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography*, 1993) portrayed Churchill as an incorrigible warmonger who, in fighting an unnecessary war, destroyed British power.

Iconoclasm now shares bookshelves with iconography, the latter represented most recently by Max Hastings' mesmerizing account *Finest Hours*, Churchill as Warlord 1940-45, GB, 2009. Cognisant of Churchill's many flaws, Hastings nevertheless starts with the words "Winston Churchill was the greatest Englishman and one of the greatest human beings of the 20th Century, indeed of all time"



About the Playwright

Paul Baker was born in England in 1955. He studied history and political science at Auckland University, twice winning the Senior Prize in History. He held an Assistant Lectureship in History and later completed a PhD there which was subsequently published by AUP as *King and Country Call: New Zealanders, Conscription and The Great War*. He then became a secondary school teacher, initially at Auckland Grammar, and was appointed Rector of Waitaki Boys' High School in Oamaru in 1999. He retired from the position in 2011 following a diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease. In addition to scholarly articles he is also the co-author of the history text, *Stalin's Revolution*.

His first play, *Conscience*, was presented in 2003 in the studio auditorium at The Court Theatre in Christchurch. It draws on the research he undertook for his doctoral thesis and follows three New Zealand conscientious objectors sent to the Western Front following the introduction of conscription here in 1916. There they endure persuasion, persecution and

ultimately crucifixion (Field Punishment No. 1) at the hands of two officers.

Baker's most recent play, *The Night Visitors*, was commissioned as part of the Oamaru Scott 100 commemorations in 2013 which marked the centennial of the Terra Nova's clandestine visit to Oamaru on its return journey from Antarctica after Scott's unsuccessful attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole. It is a dramatic speculation inspired by the actual encounter between the Oamaru Harbourmaster and the two Terra Nova crew members charged with coming ashore without attracting attention and relaying the news of Scott's death on the ice to the news agency in London which had the exclusive right to report on the expedition. *The Night Visitors* was Runner Up in the Adam NZ Play Award in 2013.

Winston's Birthday (as *Meet the Churchills*) premiered at Circa Theatre in Wellington in 2011, having been researched and written over a period of

five years during school holidays. The initial impetus for the play was reading a biography of Clementine Churchill. Interviewed by the *Dominion-Post* at the time of the play's Wellington production, Baker noted: "It very quickly became apparent that although on the outside this was a very grand family, on the inside it was seriously dysfunctional – in a tragic and sometimes a comic way. They're all very strong-willed characters. They're used to having their own way. So when the play starts, there's really an awful lot of talking past each other, and making speeches, not conversation. But with the assistance of the fifth character, who's the invented character, they actually start to engage."

Alister McDonald

(Fortune Theatre Dramaturg)



Set Design

The set is dominated by oversized paintings. Set designer Peter King said he was playing with reality and art – looking at the artistic reflection of these very real people as great looming images, as characters in the play, as icons. Peter also wanted the larger than life portraits to accentuate the public life of the characters. They were supersized in the public eye like royalty and movie stars today. They also give a sense of the greatness these characters feel they can never live up to.

Sarah says of the portraits, *“Huh! 1948. That was meant to be me. The Hollywood Star. And that was meant to be you. Young Man of destiny. Churchill the younger.”*

Later she says of Randolph's portrait, *“If I were to puke on a painting, it would be that one.”*

Each portrait started with a famous image projected to a massive size, which was then painted by Julian Southgate of the Court Theatre.



Lord Randolph, Winston's fathers. Look for this portrait watching from the hall.



Randolph's portrait is a copy of this painting, a gift for his 21st birthday.

Look out for another portrait, one of Winston's father, Lord Randolph, which can be seen looking in on his descendants with disapproval from the hall. Peter wanted his presence felt even from a distance. He wanted to reinforce the theme of dysfunction spanning generations and the pattern of son's not living up to their father's expectations.

Peter wanted to reference Winston Churchill's love of painting. Winston painted over 500 paintings, some of which are in art museums all over the world. The landscape painting seen beyond the balcony is a copy of one of Winston's.

This also connects the drawing room to the rest of the setting; a great house



Winston Churchill the painter, complete with cigar and drink.



Winston's portrait is inspired by this Yousuf Karsh photograph

in the English countryside.

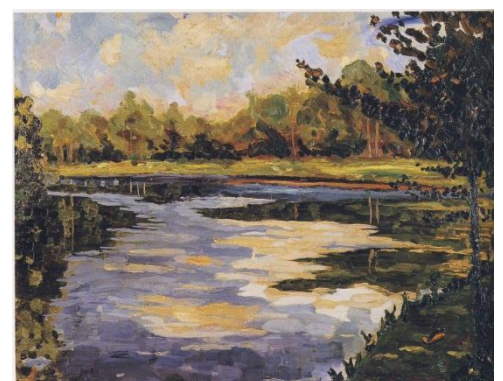
“I think you'll find the view rather charming. Constable Country, you know” as Randolph tells Jenkins.

John Constable painted iconic, romanticised English country landscapes and was born not far from Randolph's home.

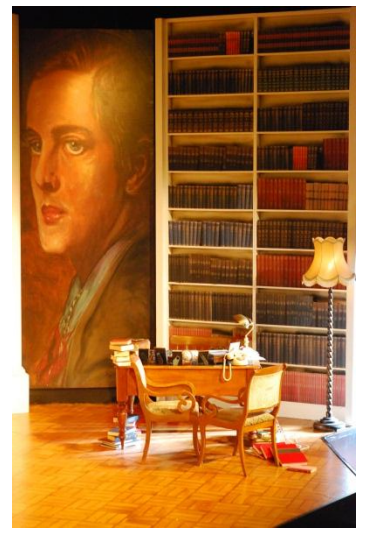
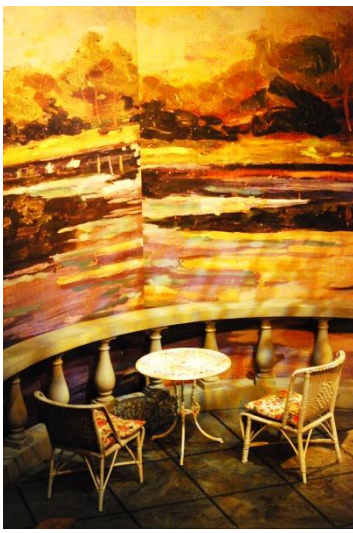
The script asks for at least one wall of books. Peter also wanted to include a bookcase – supersized again to match the portraits. The Churchill's are a family of prolific writers, Randolph is, of course, working on his biography of Winston in the play and while looking at portraits Peter noticed that both Winston and Randolph are almost always photographed in front of bookcases – this



Sarah's is taken from her picture on the cover of Life Magazine



Peter used Lake near Breccles in Autumn by Winston Churchill for the exterior flats.



The set as seen at Fortune Theatre. The Fortune stage is only 9 meters across while The Court stage is double the size at 18 meters. Peter liked the way the set worked in this more compact space and the actors found the tighter blocking in this more intimate setting raised the tension and intensified their interactions.

struck him as telling of the image they wanted to present to the world.

Chartwell is Winston and Lady Churchill's family home but Randolph bought Stour House in Suffolk, a grand house from the age of aristocracy that had all but disappeared by the 1960's. Peter wanted to indicate a Georgian home in the Italianate style. He used bright pastel colours, which fit with both the Georgian and the 60's eras, because he wanted to give the set a lively and cheerful quality of a comedy.

Peter rounded out the room with pillars and an ornate ceiling and chandelier. He likes to include a ceiling to contain the characters, no matter how lofty.

Peter chose button back furniture to indicate the establishment, the upper class and aristocracy of the past, but he also wanted to throw in some slightly crass 1960's style with a marble topped, padded

white leather bar. "A little Dean Martinesque", said Peter. And alcohol is a chronic family vice after all.

Although the actors only use two doors, Peter has included seven doors on the set. This is mostly to create the feeling of a grand and expansive house, but Peter also wanted that magic number of the seven door farce. He wanted to give the audience a feeling of anticipation and play up the farcical element of the show. "The seven doors is probably a joke only I get – but it makes me laugh."

Peter likes to add jokes to his sets. This time the framed family photographs facing upstage on Randolph's desk, actually hold pictures of the backs of crew members heads – so from the actors point of view, it looks as if they are looking out at the audience too.

As *Winston's Birthday* was a collaboration between Fortune Theatre and The Court Theatre in Christchurch, Peter was challenged to create a set that worked in both spaces. Not only did the set have to fit into Fortune's compact



A draft of the set as seen on The Court Theatre stage. Peter uses Google SketchUp, which can be down loaded for free and recommends it for any students wanting to create their own set designs.

main stage and fill the much larger stage at The Court it also had to collapse and fold up into a truck to travel between to two cities.

It went almost without a hitch. At The Court the set was flatter, taking up more space across the stage and the terrace was accessed through the french doors. At Fortune the set is deeper and narrower and the terrace is to the side of the drawing room. Some blocking did have to change. The actors had to make it look as if they were not squeezing to get behind the bar and Winston's wheelchair did not have much room for error on the Fortune stage and the actors had to adjust to a tighter playing area and to being in closer proximity to their fellow actors.



Winston: *Randolph, I pray that you now do something for me.*

Randolph: *Anything, Pa. Say the word.*

Winston: *I desire... a roast beef sandwich.*

Randolph: *But luncheon is only...*

Clementine: *It does not pay to stand between your father and food. (To Jenkins) Ensure that the beef is thick and extends to the edge. Sir Winston doesn't care to bite into a sandwich and find nothing there. Trim the crusts, plenty of butter and horse radish, and just a little greenery.*

Jenkins: *Roast beef, ah...*

Randolph: *This is quite beyond Jenkins. (Jenkins nods in agreement.)*

Clementine: *Well you make it.*

Winston: *Roast beef of old England.*



Meet the Cast

Geoffrey Health Sir Winston Churchill



Geoffrey first performed at Fortune Theatre in 1979 in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. After time in the North Island he has busied himself for the last two decades working in Christchurch at The Court Theatre. He has appeared in such productions as; *The Elephant Man*, *Duet For One*, *Angel in America*, *Single Spies*, *The Wind In The Willows*, *Travels With My Aunt*, *Three Sisters*, *Hay Fever*, *My Fair Lady*, *Noises Off*, *Great Expectations*, *King Lear*, *Calendar Girls* and *Amadeus*.

Geoffrey has performed in many of the country's other professional theatres and his television and film credits include *At The Risk Of Our Lives*, *Shark in the Park*, Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures*, as well as Duggan in William Shatner's mystery television series, *A Twist in the Tale*. He starred in a television documentary

about Sir Ernest Rutherford, and was honoured to be made an Associate of The Court Theatre at the end of 2011.

His most recent productions at Fortune Theatre were *The Things We Do For Love*, Roger Hall's pantomime *Cinderella*, *Heroes and Book Ends*.

Yvonne Martin Lady Clementine Churchill



Yvonne is delighted to be appearing at the Fortune Theatre again after 13 years. Born in Nelson and educated in Dunedin at Queen's High School she has fond memories of the city and her previous appearances here in *Till the Boys Come Home* (1979), *Music and Memories of Gertrude Lawrence* (1980) and *Copenhagen* (2003).

Yvonne has worked at the Court Theatre as an actor/singer/director since 1979, with over 130 shows to her credit. In 1988 she



was created an Associate of The Court. Her Court Theatre acting credits include *Sweeney Todd*; *Oliver*; *Cabaret*; *Gypsy*; *Blood Brothers*; *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; *Mother Courage*; *Doubt*; *August: Osage County*; *When the Rain Stops Falling* and most recently as Juliet's Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Other theatre credits include *Aunty Daisy* (Downstage, Wellington); and *Into the Woods* (Watershed, Auckland). Yvonne's television credits include *A Week of It* and *Shortland Street*.

Her film credits include *Starlight Hotel*. Yvonne directorial credits include *Shadowlands*; *Death and the Maiden*; *Stones in His Pockets*; *Putting it Together*; *Lady Windermere's Fan*; *End of the Rainbow* and *Sweet Charity* for NASDA.

Yvonne is a member of Equity NZ.

Roy Snow
Randolph Churchill



Roy is originally from South Otago. His theatre credits include: Ladies Night; Middle Age Spread; Poor Boy; Hair; Cabaret and The Rocky Horror Show (Auckland Theatre Company); Some Girls; This is How it Goes; The Threepenny Opera and Assassins (Silo Theatre), Anything Goes; Much Ado About Nothing; SNAP!; The Mikado; End of the Rainbow, Blood Brothers; Plum; One Man, Two Guvnors and most recently Prince Escalus in Romeo and Juliet (The Court).

Roy's television appearances include: Shortland Street; Outrageous Fortune; Legend of the Seeker; Orange Roughies; Go Girls (Series 3 & 4); Spartacus – War of the Damned and Shannara. His film credits include: Raising Waylon; Stolen; What Really Happened: Waitangi; Elevation; Serve and Protect; and The Kick and Breakery.

Hilary Halba
Sarah Churchill,
Lady Audley



Hilary studied acting at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City. Her theatre credits include: Backward in High Heels (Circa Theatre); Cherish (Wow! Productions); Mo and Jess Kill Susie (Quartett Theatre Company, European tour); Play; In the Next Room (or the vibrator play); Calendar Girls and Jumpy (Fortune Theatre).

Hilary's television credits include the cornerstone '80s series The Marching Girls. In her other life, Hilary is Senior Lecturer and Head of Theatre Studies at the University of Otago. She has co-created several verbatim theatre pieces including Hush and Be | Longing.

Jonathan Martin
Dr Stephen Jenkins



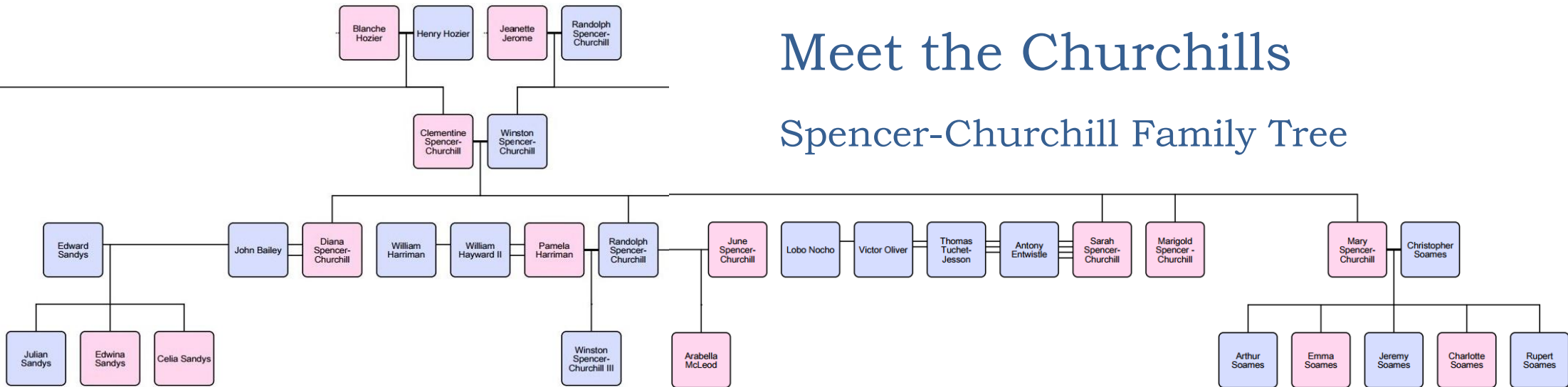
Jonathan is a graduate of the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art. His previous credits at Fortune Theatre include The War Play; Avenue Q and A Slice of Saturday Night. Other credits include Once On Chunuk Bair (Imagine Theatre); A Little Night Music (Canterbury Opera); Duck (A Different Light); Wind in the Willows (Tim Bray Productions) and Oklahoma! (Tauranga Music Theatre).

At The Court Theatre Jonathan has been in The Producers; The History Boys; Arsenic and Old Lace; Baghdad, Baby!; Le Cage Aux Folles; The Seagull; I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change; The Sunshine Boys; Don't Mention Casablanca; Cabaret; One Man, Two Guvnors; Shepherd and most recently Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet.

Jonathan is a proud member of Equity NZ

Meet the Churchills

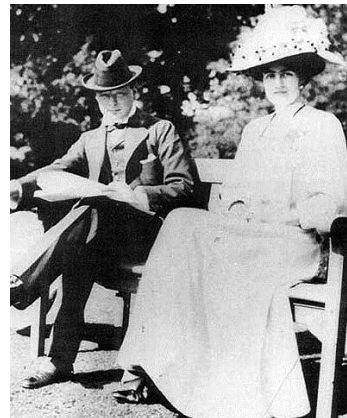
Spencer-Churchill Family Tree



Blanche Hozier

Clementine: *My Mother was impecunious and drank. God Knows who my real father is.*
(Blanche said Clementine's biological father was Capt. William Middleton)

Jeanett Jermome (of New York)
Clementine: *Your mother stole your inheritance... and took lovers of your age.*
Sarah: *I'm a rebel. Like my grannies. Both rebels.*
Clementine: *No dear. Just unhappy women. Wonton, willful and foolish. Perhaps these things skip a generation.*



Sir Winston and Lady Churchill (just before their wedding in 1908)

Clementine: *For fifty years I have supported you. For fifty years I have been loyal. For fifty years I have been faithful.*
Winston: *If forced to choose between family and country I know where my duty lies.*



Randolph Churchill

Clementine: *No-one likes being Randolphed.*
Winston: *You lack the necessary emotional equipment to care for anyone but yourself.*

Pamela and Averill Harriman (right)
Randolph: *Why didn't you protect my marriage?... He was fifty! Pammy was just twenty, dammit. You sacrificed our marriage for America.*



Sarah Churchill

Sarah: *This is what I have chosen
This life so bitter and free
This is what I have chosen
From so much that was offered to me.*

Lobo Nocho and Sarah (right)
Winston: *You are a paramour to a blackamoor!!*
Clementine: *People like Lobo are why we have secrets.*



Lord Randolph Churchill

Winston: *When I was young, my father considered me a good for nothing show off... I absorbed his harsh verdict, craved his approval and launched a course of self-improvement to obtain it.*

In the Press

Larger Than Life

Otago Daily Times

By Rebecca Fox

Thu, 10 Mar 2016

Former rector of Waitaki Boys' High School Dr Paul Baker has turned his hand to writing plays. Rebecca Fox discovers why he cannot let his creation, *Winston's Birthday*, go.

It was a bout of flu that led Paul Baker to write a play about Winston Churchill and his family. While recovering, he read a biography about Winston's wife, Clementine, and inspiration struck.

"It gave me an insight into the domestic life of the Churchills, how tumultuous and unhappy they were. I was pretty confident nobody else had dramatised that part of Churchill and his family life."

Dr Baker, who has Parkinson's, chose to write about the Churchill family gathering for a fictional luncheon to celebrate Winston's 88th birthday in 1962, loosely based on a family cruise on which Winston and son Randolph had a "huge blow-up". However, from that point on, the play took on a life of its own as the characters took over writing the play, he said.

"It can be hugely frustrating as they can take it in a direction you hadn't



anticipated. They dug a couple of holes I had to find my way out of."

As the writer, you came to know the characters and how they would react, but you often felt a sense of amazement when you came to the end of a scene, he said.

"Probably a playwright who takes a more mechanical approach would be aghast, but it's much more exciting and I think the end result is better."

But he does admit there has not really been an end result, as he continued to tinker with it. It had been read or rehearsed in four New Zealand professional theatres in the past five years since its only production at Wellington's Circa Theatre under the title of *Meet the Churchills*, a title described as "naïf" when he was in England, so he changed it.

As a co-production with the Court Theatre, this latest production, which had its Christchurch season in February, features Geoffrey Heath as Sir Winston Churchill, Yvonne Martin as Lady Clementine Churchill, Jonathan Martin

as Dr Stephen Jenkins (a fictional character), Hilary Halba as Sarah Churchill (Lady Audley) and Roy Snow as Randolph Churchill.

"In each of those there has been a process of redrafting and refining the script. Even now, I'm working on small things."

Dr Baker could "carry on forever" tinkering with the play.

"They are endearing in their own horrible way. They are larger than life." Churchill was one of those extraordinary people who had a phenomenal range of skills.

"About two-thirds of the decisions he made were wrong, maybe three-quarters, but the ones he got right were the ones that saved a nation in 1940."

With no shortage of books written on Churchill and his family - he had five children but only two feature in the play - it was not hard to get a picture of the family. He was an extremely self-centred and inconsiderate man,



although a loving father and husband.

"Winston was the sun and they all revolved around him and, if they got too close, they got very, very burnt."

By 1962 when the play was set, Churchill, was old, very tired and quite depressed, a "flicker" of his old self, while his wife Clementine was highly strung and their marriage was loving but littered with huge rows. His daughter Sarah, who had a similar temperament, was a washed-up actress with several drunk and disorderly convictions and an alcohol problem, as did her brother Randolph who, while brighter and more skilled, lived in his father's shadow and failed to live up to expectations.

"It [alcoholism] seemed to run in the family."

In the play, while unhappy, the family were "unhappy in the most entertaining way", he said. "It's not all doom and gloom." It is also not a history lesson.

"Emphatically not. I've worked hard for it not to

be. It is essentially a play about a family struggling to connect; it could be any family."

But it does show the flip side of a very public and famous family, a man considered to be the greatest in British culture.

"It illustrates the price family members pay for somebody's greatness."

Now living in Auckland, close to family and friends, Dr Baker planned to see the play in Dunedin but he no longer did opening nights.

"It's a funny feeling. You are never entirely satisfied. Opening nights are almost never the best performance so I don't go anymore. It's too much of an ordeal."

The Dunedin season would be interesting, given the actors had already played a season in Christchurch.

"Having six weeks is very unusual in New Zealand, so it'll be interesting to see how the actors have developed in the roles."

It would be the last play he wrote as the Parkinson's

had developed to the point where he struggled to read or write.

"My health is not good. I live a very slow life."

Stimulating and Satisfying

Theatre review

by Terry MacTavish,
14 Mar 2016

"My father is a great man," his son Randolph Churchill pontificates at the start of *Winston's Birthday*. A great man, someone whose charisma and wisdom have a profound impact on others, to the point of changing history. But is the public figure what the family sees? If the truth were told, what family secrets might be laid bare? And what sinister political secrets might a determined researcher find in the great man's papers? Are we about to see Winston venerated or reviled?

New Zealanders, even those who are currently voting to drop the Union Jack from our flag, are likely to find this play about the great Sir Winston Churchill as relevant as it is riveting. He was so important to us that in the early 1960s our neighbour, Otago Daily Times editor John Moffat, would not go on holiday without preparing an obituary, in case Winston died while he was away.

I know the paper was on Winston-watch, with daily bulletins, and I'm pretty sure on the day of his death, the front page was edged in black. The clever blending of fact and fiction in *Winston's*

Birthday allows us to rethink the part he played in our war history, as well as reflect on the battlefield that is family life.

There's a case to be made for seeing author Paul Baker as a great man. A former rector of historic Waitaki Boys High, who raised standards and championed culture, as a playwright he is also a role model, for his determination to follow his dream despite ill-health, and for the integrity of his research and the dedication that caused him to strive for perfection in draft after draft of the play which became his passion.* The result is a play of real worth, with characters that come to vivid life in this outstanding Court/Fortune venture.

After the hurly-burly of Fringe Festival, with its exuberant chaotic performances in which anything might happen, sublime or abysmal, and technical glitches are almost guaranteed, the deep deep peace of an utterly professional production is undeniably welcome. Dynamic director Lara Macgregor has excelled as usual, creating entertaining and thought-provoking theatre for the Court, which has been recreated most efficiently at the Fortune by Assistant Director Ahi Karunaharan, superbly supported by Production Manager Lindsay Gordon and his proficient team.

The set is impressive: an English gentleman's gracious library, huge chandelier suspended above curved walls divided by pillared arches, with a generous indication of hallways beyond, and

windows giving onto a Constable landscape, all dominated by gigantic portraits of Winston, Randolph and Sarah. It must have taken all designer Peter King's experience and expertise to contrive a set that would be as effective on the Fortune's stage as on that of the Court Theatre, which is twice the width.

We are immediately hit by a barrage of stunning sound and lighting effects (designed by Giles Tanner and Sean Hawkins respectively) evoking the Battle of Britain with the BBC broadcasting rousing patriotic music and Churchill's famous speeches.

The play however is set not in the period of Winston's power and glory, but in his declining years, in 1962, on his eighty-eighth birthday. The lights go up to reveal spoilt son Randolph, so obnoxious he cannot retain staff, who has achieved little in his life, but is immensely gratified that he has finally been permitted to write Winston's biography. Determined to tax his father with the wrongs he feels have been

done him in the past, he has invited his parents to a birthday dinner. This will be gate-crashed by disgraceful sister Sarah, alcoholic and wanton, but her father's favourite. Also present as witness and catalyst is Dr Jenkins, the young historian Randolph has bullied into carrying out the duties of manservant for the occasion.

The actors bring the glowing assurance of a successful three weeks' run to their roles, each inhabiting his or her part to perfection. The iconic role of Winston is a tour de force for Geoffrey Heath. He has performed at the Fortune before, but has never impressed me more. Heath's presence and mannerisms are uncannily like Churchill's, yet he is also every dignified old person I have ever known facing the indignities of age. His attempts at retaining some control are wily and true to life, and the moment when he succeeds in standing, in order to take responsibility for his actions, is moving. Yvonne Martin is similarly convincing as Lady





Churchill – Clemmy to the husband she loves and rules autocratically – who has decided to treat the gathering as a chance for healing. Flawlessly groomed with immaculately styled grey hair (all right, an extremely expensive wig), Martin subtly reveals Clementine's emotional depths, and delivers some of Baker's best lines with a calm ladylike complacency that almost robs them of their sting.

Roy Snow successfully makes of Randolph an extremely arrogant and annoying man whom it is a positive pleasure for us to dislike, secure in the knowledge that his type is doomed, that the generation of Jenkins is now in the ascendancy. Snow adopts a wonderfully self-important stance and oratorical style of speaking, while just below the surface lurks the insecurity of the child desperately seeking parental approval. Sarah arrives like a whirlwind, singing 'Happy Birthday', just when an injection of energy is needed. Hilary Halba is

fabulous in this gift of a part, flinging herself dramatically round the room as she plots to drop her bombshell, and discovering myriad ways to seat herself. One moment she is kneeling submissively by her father's wheelchair, the next she's upside down with bare feet twirling cheekily in the air. Halba charms us whether singing snatches of the Beatles' latest or tipsily flirting with an alarmed Jenkins.

Young Dr Stephen Jenkins, the historian who puts up with Randolph's condescension only because he is so eager to meet Churchill, is an imagined character, which allows Baker to explore issues like class as well as consider how future generations will regard the heroes of the past. In the role, a strong Northern accent marking him as an outsider, Jonathan Martin is engagingly dogged, determined not to allow Randolph to side-line him. He makes the most of the sensitive scene in which Jenkins coaxes Churchill to

confide in him and the two find they have something in common after all.

The structure of the play is exemplary, each climax arising apparently naturally. The dialogue crackles and the pace, thanks in part to Macgregor and Karunaharan, never flags. Baker's use of language is masterly, some of his acerbic aphorisms as witty as Oscar Wilde's. Every character has their own well-timed moment of bitter self-revelation, their cathartic emotional explosion. Consequently the audience is totally absorbed in a family crisis we can all relate to.

Churchill himself said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." My guest, who has worked extensively with dysfunctional families, points out that today we are far more aware of the consequences of poor parenting, but for the Churchills, there are hard lessons to learn. Will they manage to listen to each other's truth as well as speaking their own? "A great man," repeats Randolph as the lights fade, "but not perfect." Good. Perfect would make for very boring theatre. Neither venerated nor reviled, then, just made fully and convincingly human. Now that's a real achievement, and it's what makes *Winston's Birthday* such stimulating and satisfying theatre.

*It has been *The Marquess of Toodle-oo* as well as *Meet The Churchills*.

Rich Tapestry of Dysfunction

Otago Daily Times

By Helen Watson White
Mon, 14 Mar 2016

Eccentric characters make for engaging theatre, and you don't get more eccentric than retired warhorse Winston Churchill at 88. Adding three more Churchills makes almost a surfeit of eccentricity, since the only non-Churchill in the piece, Jenkins the would-be historian, is also quirky.

Playwright Paul Baker has been selective, however.

Imagining a birthday gathering for the grand old man in 1962, he includes just two of Winston and Clementine's children: Randolph (a hopeless luncheon host) and the extremely disorderly Sarah, who arrives unexpectedly and won't leave until ushered out.

Four feuding family members prove enough to convey Baker's "rich tapestry of Churchill dysfunction". Christchurch actor Geoffrey Heath brings Sir Winston to the curmudgeonly half-life that age and world-weariness have condemned him, stolidly doing his own thing, firing the odd witty shot from a stationary wheelchair. Yvonne

Martin is the perfect match for him, showing Clementine's changing moods: imperious, wheedling, or imperiously wheedling. They're both brilliant.

Roy Snow as Randolph also lives down to the "bad" son's reputation: feckless and faithless. Again, Hilary Halba as Sarah is his perfect counterpart: feckless, faithless ... but adored by her father - until he discovers her current "paramour" is black. In collaboration with Christchurch's Court Theatre, this clever tragic-comedy is ably directed by Lara Macgregor.



Themes and Quotes

Some of the main themes of *Winston's Birthday* are:

- family dysfunction across generations
- failure to live up to your own, your parents and societies expectations of greatness
- truth and fabrication in making history, whether family history or world history
- changing times as the characters move from an age of aristocracy and Empire to “the new meritocratic age”

Here are some quotes that speak to those themes:

Winston: The judge is my father. When I was young, my father considered me a good for nothing show off. I absorbed his harsh verdict, craved his approval and launched a course of self-improvement to obtain it. I have worked hard my whole life to please my father.

Jenkins: Who died when you were 21.

Winston: The die was cast.

Jenkins: (reading letters to and from Lord Randolph and his son a young Winston Churchill) The first... discreditable feature of your performance was missing the infantry, which demonstrated your slovenly, happy go lucky style of work... If you conduct and action at Sandhurst is similar... my responsibility for you is over... You replied: I am very sorry indeed that I have done so badly. Ever your loving son. (*Another letter*) Is there any chance of your coming to see me this term? (*Another*) When do you think you will be able to come and see me? (*Moved*) Oh Sir.

Winston: A dream. It vexes me greatly. I was in my office, directing the nation's great war effort. My father entered. “Look father” I said. “I have made something of myself”

Jenkins: And what did he say?

Winston: Nothing.

Jenkins: Oh Sir

Winston: Nothing

Sarah: I'll be like him. Cursed with guilt. Forever trying to please a dead father.

Winston: If forced to choose between family and country I know where my duty lies.

Winston: You were bad. My son, My heir.

Winston: (To Randolph) You lack the necessary emotional equipment to care for anyone but yourself.

Randolph: You will not leave today unless you speak to me as a father.

Randolph: Pa and I. We are poised on a knife edge.

Clementine: No-one likes being Randolphed.

Randolph: I say that's rather good isn't it. Randolphed.

Clementine: To Abuse or insult without provocation.

Randolph: To engage in witty banter.

Clementine: To attract publicity, controversy or notoriety by contrarianism.

Clementine: People like Lobo are why we have secrets.

Clementine: Isn't it strange? One can adore someone – yet dislike so much about them.

Sarah: I'm an actress. Freeing her birds.

Clementine: Your birds are diseased, deformed, they are ugly birds.

Sarah: you have made them so.

Clementine: This has made them so. *(Grabbing her drink, and handing it to Randolph who downs it.)*

Sarah: I'm not an alcoholic.

Clementine: Then we must find another excuse for your behaviour.

Randolph: We're Churchill's. History's our business. Not current affairs.

Jenkins: Churchill and history, you're... synonymous.

Winston: Well I'm history.

Jenkins: You certainly are, Sir.

Winston: I have created a nation of widows and orphans.

Winston: Nations are as people. Our accumulated failures can be too great to bear. That is where History comes in. It is no mere assemblage of facts. It must serve us. History, is what we know to be true... and what we need to be true.

Jenkins: Ah that's what we call Churchill history ...History as mythology.

Clementine: Please join the 20th century Winston.

Randolph: Welcome the meritocratic age.

Winston: I do not belong to this brave new world. My grandfather, the Duke of Marlborough, had 300 servants. The current Duke lives in a flat and eats television dinners. I do not agree with television.

Clementine: ... We had awful childhoods, you and I. We rose above them. Randolph sunk below.

Winston: *(Looking at Randolph's portrait)* The golden haired boy. Twenty one. The Archbishop was there. The Prince of Wales. That speech.

Clementine: Randolph declared he would be an MP by 23 and prime minister soon after. And do a better job than Mr Baldwin.

Winston: Hear! Hear!

Clementine: Young Master Churchill knew how to put Prime Ministers in their place.

Randolph: Randolph hope and glory, they use to sing.

Winston: We all had high hopes for you.

Randolph: Now you deny me even the appurtenances of greatness. No estate. You refused a peerage so I have no title.

Clementine: One earns a title.

Randolph: Earns? What modern talk is that?

Clementine: What did you wish to be? The Earl of Chartwell?

Winston: The Marquess of ... Toodle-do?

Randolph: No! No Pa. I wanted to be you.



Speeches

Winston Churchill was famous for his speeches. There is a moment in the play when Winston is quoting his famous 'Victory' speech and seems to be transported by his own words back to another time. Jenkins, who sits beside him, and the rest of the set fade away as Winston and his iconic portrait behind him are lit up with a stark blue light and we hear the real Winston Churchill's voice coming through and joining with the words of Geoffrey Heath's Churchill.

Here are some of his famous speeches.

- 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."
- Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

(It is said that immediately after giving the speech, Churchill muttered to a colleague, "And we'll fight them with the butt ends of broken beer bottles because that's bloody well all we've got!") –

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_shall_fight_on_the_beaches

Listen to the "Fight them on the beaches" speech here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkTw3_PmKtc

Read on

Actors, directors and designers do their own reading and research to get insight into the characters and the world of the play. You could fill a library with works written about the Churchills but the following books are a good start for this play.

Writing biographies about your ancestors was a Churchill pastime. Randolph wrote the biography for his father, Sir Winston Churchill, just as Sir Winston had done for his father Lord Randolph Churchill. Mary Soames also wrote a biography of her father; *Winston Churchill: His Life as a Painter* and her Mother, *Clementine Churchill: The Biography of a Marriage*.

Randolph's son, Winston S. Churchill wrote this biography on Randolph's life. It includes wonderful family letters that show, despite the terrible dysfunction, there was a lot of love between the family members:

His Father's Son *The Life of Randolph Churchill* By WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

... tender love to you my sweet one & to both those little kittens & especially that radiant Randolph. Diana is a darling too & I repent to have expressed a preference. But somehow he seems a more genial generous nature, while she is mysterious & self-conscious. They are vy beautiful & will win us honour some day when everyone is admiring her & grumbling about him.

My dearest you are vy precious to me & I rejoice indeed to have won & kept your loving heart. May it never cool towards me is my prayer, & that I may deserve your love my resolve.

Write daily --
Always your loving husband
W

<https://www.nytimes.com/books/first/c/churchill-son.html>

The Weight of Expectation By KENNETH HARRIS

Brilliant but volatile, Randolph Churchill could never measure up to his father's exacting ideal

This book looks at a lot of the incidents alluded to in the play as well as the main theme of dysfunctional family dynamics spanning the generations and the hereditary trait of feeling you cannot live up to your father's expectations.

"Here, Winston S. Churchill records the widely held view that many of Randolph's pathological rows with Sir Winston Churchill were caused by his suspicion that while he was fighting in the Middle East during World War II, his father condoned -- if he did not encourage -- Pamela's adultery with Harriman, who was then Roosevelt's personal representative in London, albeit in the interests of getting better access to the President. Certainly, in the most memorable of all clashes between Randolph and his father -- on Aristotle Onassis' yacht, of all places, in front of many distinguished strangers -- the Harriman affair was the vitriol Randolph flung in his father's face.

After this horrendous episode, Randolph was expelled from the yacht immediately, his face being saved by an unexpected summons to interview the King of Greece, an interview imposed on the unsuspecting monarch at a few hours' notice by the resourceful Onassis.

On his tearful journey from the yacht, Randolph told his companion about his father, **"I do so very much love that man, but something always goes wrong between us."** "

<https://www.nytimes.com/books/97/08/31/reviews/970831.31harr01.html>

Take a look at Paul Addison's top 10 books about Winston Churchill. Paul Addison is director of the centre for second world war studies at the University of Edinburgh and the author of *Churchill: The Unexpected Hero*.

"My Early Life by Winston Churchill: my top 10 have not been arranged in order of merit - but if they had been, this would still be number one. The best source on the making of Winston Churchill is still Churchill himself. Written in late middle age, his autobiography recalled his unhappy childhood and his youthful quest for glory as a soldier and war correspondent. A classic adventure story, it was also a lament for a vanished age of aristocracy and empire.

The competition for the title of best one volume life of Churchill is intense and the result, it seems to me, is a tie between Roy Jenkins and Geoffrey Best. Both authors are comprehensive, accurate, and stylish, but in different ways... By different routes both authors come to the same conclusion, or as Best puts it: His achievements, taken all in all, justify his title to be known as the greatest Englishman of his age...in this later time we are diminished if, admitting Churchill's failings and failures, we can no longer appreciate his virtues and victories."

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/apr/11/top10s.churchill>

