



PAPER

Sir Winston Churchill

Summary: Winston Churchill – celebrated war-leader.

Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was an illustrious politician, army officer, a great traveller, a talented painter, a prolific writer and orator, and a Freemason. A world statesman, he was renowned for *'his bulldog-spirit, for his love of cigars, brandy and Pol-Roger champagne his distinctive dress sense and his famous V for Victory salute'*.¹ He was twice Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1940–1945 & 1951–1955), became a Knight of the Garter (1953), won the Nobel Prize for Literature² (1953), and was awarded Honorary US Citizenship (1963).

Born on 30th November 1874, at Blenheim Palace³ in Oxfordshire, his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was the second son of the Duke of Marlborough, and his mother, Jeanette 'Jennie' Jerome, was the daughter of Leonard Jerome, a business tycoon and owner-editor of the New York Times. Young Winston was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst, and commissioned as a cavalry officer in the 4th Hussars. He later served in Cuba, the North-West Frontier of India, and the Sudan; where he took part in what was probably the last true cavalry charge. To raise his public profile and fund his lifestyle, he used his military exploits as basis for newspaper articles and books, but failed in his bid to follow father into politics at his first-attempt in 1898. Not deterred, he became a war correspondent covering the Boer-War. His capture and miraculous escape made him a 'household-name', and got him elected as the Conservative MP for Oldham in 1900 and his subsequent political-life was both dazzling and controversial, much like that of his father before him.

He 'crossed the floor', not once but twice, from conservative to liberal and back again. He enjoyed high-office, becoming President of the Board of Trade in 1908, Home Secretary in 1910, and First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911. Failure soon followed with his disastrous campaign in 'Gallipoli'. He resigned and joined the war as a soldier. However, by 1924 his career seemingly recovered and he was appointed the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a conservative government; then faltered, following defeat in the 1929 election. He spent much of the next eleven years out of office, supporting his financial and political ambitions through writing and speaking. The outbreak of war changed everything. Following Neville Chamberlain's departure in 1940, Churchill became Prime-Minister of an 'all-party' government. In retrospect, it was truly his finest hour, though at times both he and the nation struggled to survive; buoyed-up by some of his most memorable speeches.

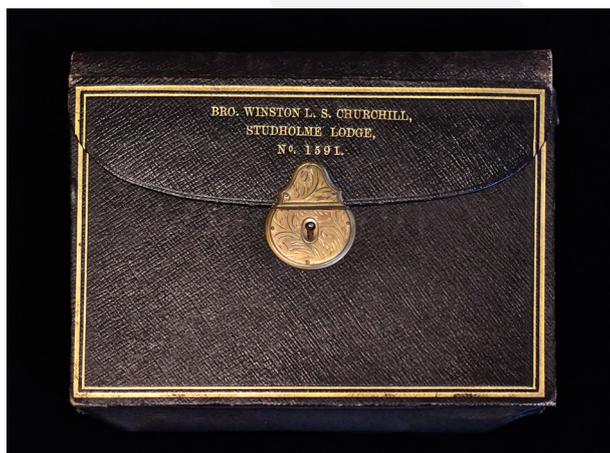


*Sir Winston Churchill by Yousuf Karsh
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In 1945, his political fortunes changed again with the election of Clement Attlee. Once again, he turned to writing and public speaking, but this time on a world stage, on which he famously warned the free-world that *'From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent.'* But by 1951, he was back, becoming Prime Minister for a second time, though ageing and unwell he was in the words of Roy Jenkins,⁴ *'gloriously unfit for office'* and in 1955, he resigned citing his poor health and retired to his beloved Chartwell.⁵

Sadly, Churchill's Masonic career never blossomed. He joined the Studholme Lodge No. 1591 (now the United Studholme Alliance Lodge⁶) in London on 24th May 1901; following a family tradition.⁷ Churchill completed

his Second Degree nearly two months later on 19th July and was then made a Master Mason⁸ on 5th March 1902. It was not by chance, that as a promising politician, he be invited to join the Studholme⁹ Lodge. Its summonses read like a 'Who's Who' of the aristocracy and social elite. The guest list for the Lodge's 21st Installation Banquet in 1897 included 17 Members of Parliament and numerous Lords, Earls, Knights and high-ranking members of the armed forces.¹⁰ In 1912, war with Germany was on the horizon, and Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was charged, *'to put the fleet into an instant and contact readiness for war.'*¹¹ Knowing that his time was now precious, and that he must devote all energies to the nation, Churchill resigned from Studholme Lodge and became an unattached Mason. That said, he did retain a



Churchill's Masonic Regalia Pouch,
on public display in the Museum of Freemasonry.
©Museum of Freemasonry



Churchill's personal Masonic apron, is on public display in the
Museum of Freemasonry at Freemasons' Hall, London.
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strong connection with the craft, via correspondence. For example, in 1918 when the Minister of Munitions, he was one of 95 petitioners who sponsored the *Ministry of Munitions Lodge*; which petition was initially refused, re-submitted, and granted later that year, thereby creating the *Armament Lodge*, No. 3898, which still meets today.¹²

In a Masonic paper entitled *Winston Churchill - A famous Man and Freemason*,¹³ Yasha Beresiner argued that Winston's overall Masonic activity was perfectly captured in a quote by Sir Sidney A White, the Grand Secretary (1937–1957).

'Winston Churchill was Initiated as young man, but never progressed in the Order and has taken no part for many years.'



Beresiner added,

*'that this does not, detract little from the pride we as Freemasons derive in the knowledge that Winston Churchill was a Freemason and descended from a long line of active and distinguished Brethren of the Craft.'*¹⁴

Sir Winston Churchill died on 24th January 1965, at the age of 91, seventy years to the day after the death of his father. He received the greatest state funeral given to a commoner, since that of the Duke of Wellington. He was buried in Blaydon churchyard beside his parents and within sight of his birthplace, Blenheim Palace. He was survived by his dear wife Clemmie, whom he married in 1908, and three of their five children; Randolph, Sarah and Mary (Mrs. Christopher Soames).

One of his many quotations reads like his epitaph:

*'What is the use of living, if it not be to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?'*¹⁵

Sir Winston Churchill

References

1. Winston Churchill memorial Trust - www.wcmt.org.uk
2. The Nobel Prize in Literature 1953. 'For his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values' NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2019. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1953/summary/>
3. Blenheim Palace is a 17th century, monumental country house, built in the Baroque style. A world Heritage site her set in 2000 acres of grounds and gardens designed by Capability Brown and the principal residence of the Dukes of Marlborough.
4. www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/winston-churchill
5. Chartwell House and Garden is the home of the late Winston Churchill, and is set on a hill with magnificent views over the Weald. He designed the ground and gardens and includes a golden rose walk created in 1958 by his children. <https://www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk/england/item/chartwell-house-and-gardens.html>
6. Studholme Lodge amalgamated in 1959 with United Lodge No. 1629 to form United Studholme Lodge, and amalgamated again in 1976 with Alliance Lodge No. 1827 to attain its present status as Studholme Alliance Lodge, retaining its original number 1591. phoenixmasonry.org/masonicmuseum/winston_churchills_masonic_apron.htm
7. Winston's father, Lord Randolph Churchill, and his uncle George Charles Spencer Churchill, the Marquis of Blandford, were both initiated into the Churchill Lodge on 9th February 1871 and his cousin, Charles Richard John Spencer Churchill, ninth Duke of Marlborough, was similarly initiated on 7th May 1871. <http://www.mqmagazine.co.uk/issue-3/p-08.php>
8. Charles Clive Bigham, Viscount Mersey, whose entry in the Studholme Lodge register, next to that of Churchill, has caused some confusion about his taking his Third Degree in Rosemary Lodge, gives an insight into the scene on the day. In his autobiography, published by John Murray in London in 1941, *A Picture of Life 1872–1940*, he states on page 188: 'that month I was initiated as a free mason at Studholme Lodge (1591). While waiting for the ceremony I walked round and round Golden Square with Winston Churchill, another candidate'. Within two months, on 19 July, Winston was passed to the Second Degree, and on 5 March 1902 he became a Master Mason; all three ceremonies being conducted in Studholme Lodge. An unfortunate communication in 1955, by the then librarian of Grand Lodge, W I Grantham, to his counterpart in Iowa, USA, has led to the erroneous reports that Churchill was raised in Rosemary Lodge No. 2851. This occurred because the Studholme Lodge register has the name Geoffrey C Glyn above, and Charles Clive Bigham below that of Churchill. Further along the line against both these names is the entry 'Raised in No 2851, 11th Nov 1901'. This entry was also wrongly attributed to Churchill. His raising was by special dispensation applied for by the Lodge secretary, Henry James Fitzroy, the Earl of Euston, Provincial Grand Master for Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, and conducted by the Master, J C F Tower – Ibid.
9. John Studholme Brownrigg, Provincial Grand Master for Surrey, consecrated the Lodge on 31 January 1876, in 1881 the Lodge moved from Surbiton, in Surrey, to London - Ibid
10. Ibid.
11. Yasha Beresiner, *Winston Churchill - A famous Man and Freemason* in Petrie stones www.churchillarchive.com/collection-highlights/churchills-first-world-war
12. 'In November 1917, the Royal Colonial Institute Lodge No 3556 readily agreed to sponsor a petition for the *Ministry of Munitions Lodge*. As a result, a petition signed by 95 brethren was presented to UGLE on 4th January 1918. This petition was refused on 14th January on the ground that the Grand Master's advisers were unable to recommend the granting of a Warrant for a new Lodge where the membership may be restricted to members of any particular department of the Civil Service of the Crown. Amongst the signatories to this original petition were Sir Winston Churchill (then Minister of Munitions) and Sir Laming Worthington-Evans (then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry). A new petition was successfully re-submitted on 30th October 1918 under the name of *Armament Lodge*. This petition stated that membership would not be confined to brethren connected to the Ministry of Munitions or any other government department. It was granted on 19th November 1918'. Extract from the Lodge history compiled for its centenary, courtesy of Garry Bignell.
13. Ibid.
14. <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/beresiner7.html>
15. From a speech given at Kinnaird Hall, Dundee, Scotland on 10 October 1908 where Churchill was elected Member of Parliament.
16. Harper, Paul, *Famous Freemasons - A Prologue*, <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=2084>

Recommended use of Papers

Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
 - Followed by 'any questions'
 - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
 - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version unless otherwise specified.

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: *'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'*. Rudyard Kipling

If used as part of an event, the paper should be advertised and promoted by way of trailers, flyers and announcements, in summonses, letters, emails, notice boards, and on social media.

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