

Sir Winston Churchill: treatment for pneumonia in 1943 and 1944

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Abstract

This paper reviews Churchill's illnesses in February 1943 and August/September 1944 when he developed pneumonia; on the first occasion this followed a cold and sore throat. Churchill was managed at home by Sir Charles Wilson (later Lord Moran) with the assistance of two nurses and the expert advice of Dr Geoffrey Marshall, Brigadier Lionel Whitby and Colonel Robert Drew. A sulphonamide (sulphathiazole on the first occasion) was prescribed for both illnesses. Churchill recovered, and despite his illnesses continued to direct the affairs of State from his bed. On the second occasion, Churchill's illness was not made public.

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Introduction

We review Churchill's illnesses in February 1943 and August/September 1944 and their management, and discuss whether Churchill's ability to direct the affairs of State was compromised during these illnesses.

Methods

Information regarding Churchill's illnesses was available from various sources. Foremost were Churchill himself^{1,2} and his personal physician, Sir Charles Wilson [later Lord Moran],^{3–5} although Churchill's family added other personal details.^{6,7} By courtesy of the present Lord Moran and the Wellcome Library, we have had access to his grandfather's original papers regarding these illnesses and the handwritten and typed diaries. However, permission to include information not previously in the public domain was not granted. The unpublished diary of Nurse Dorothy Pugh yielded additional important information regarding both illnesses, as did the letters from Nurse Doris Miles to her husband in regard to the first illness, kindly made available by her daughter, Jill Rose. Gilbert,^{8–10} Churchill's main biographer, added further clinical details. Churchill's staff provided contemporaneous notes: those of Churchill's Private Secretaries, Colville,¹¹ Martin,¹² and Peck,¹³ were particularly useful. Commander Thompson, Churchill's aide-de-camp,^{14–16} added additional insights. Churchill's political^{17–22} and military^{23,24} colleagues were close observers of these events.

February 1943

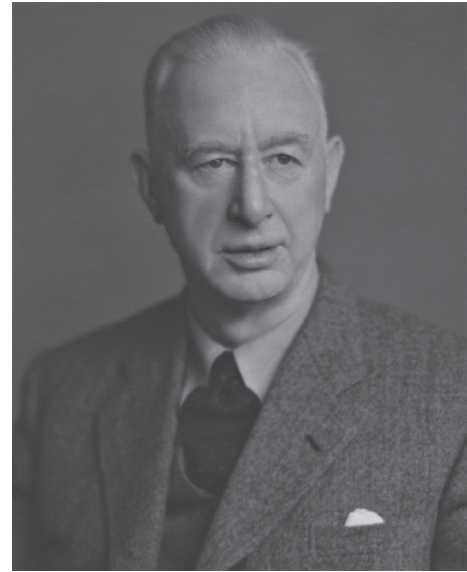
Churchill returned from Algiers to Britain on Sunday 7 February 1943, a flight of eight and a half hours, and later presided over his first War Cabinet in four weeks.

Following his return, Churchill maintained his customary work output and gave a two hour speech¹ in the House of Commons on 11 February 1943 on the war situation, specifically the Conference at Casablanca.²⁵ However, when Churchill addressed the Commons, he was 'far from well, with a heavy cold and a sore throat' noted Thompson.¹⁴ Churchill admitted later that 'I was more tired by my journeying than I had realized at the time, and I must have caught a chill. A few days later a cold and sore throat obliged me to lie up.'¹

Mary Churchill recorded on 12 February that her father 'developed a temperature'⁶ 'PM still in bed', Martin [Principal Private Secretary] recorded on 13 and 14 February.¹² Brooke [Chief of the Imperial General Staff] noted that Churchill was present at the Cabinet meeting at 6 pm on 15 February and had a 'very bad sore throat and cold.'²³

While dining alone with his wife on 16 February, Churchill felt ill and found his temperature had soared.⁶ Sir Charles Wilson (Figure 1) was summoned and recorded that, '... during the evening of February 16 his temperature shot up, and, after examining his chest, I had to tell him that he had a patch at the base of the left lung.' 'What do you mean by a patch? Have I got pneumonia?' asked Churchill.⁴

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Figure 1 Lord Moran in 1943. Credit: Wellcome Library, London**Figure 2** Sir Geoffrey Marshall in 1952 © National Portrait Gallery

Dr Geoffrey Marshall [Senior Physician, Guy's Hospital (Figure 2)] was invited by Wilson to give a second opinion. Marshall described his entry into the Prime Minister's bedroom as being filled with important men and tobacco smoke.²⁶ Winston was chesty and feverish and Marshall had difficulty in clearing the room before he diagnosed pneumonia. 'You will have to relinquish the conduct of affairs for a fortnight', Marshall pronounced. 'How dare you', retorted Churchill, 'the war is at a critical stage.' 'Very well', Marshall replied, 'but you know what we call this illness, we call it old man's friend because you fade away so gradually that you arrive in the next world before you know you've left this one!' 'Am I as ill as that?' said Churchill. 'You certainly are.' 'Very well, then I'll do as you say.' A sulphonamide [sulphathiazole] was prescribed by Marshall, according to Nurse Miles.

Wilson recorded, 'He [Marshall] was soon established high in the PM.'s favour'.⁴ Churchill recalled that on this day 'elaborate photographs' (X-rays) were taken and confirmed the diagnosis.¹

'Up to this point', Churchill also recalled, 'all my work had come to me hour by hour at the Annexe, and I had maintained my usual output though feeling far from well. But now I became aware of a marked reduction in the number of papers which reached me. When I protested the doctors, supported by my wife, argued that I ought to quit my work entirely. I would not agree to this. What should I have done all day?'¹ Churchill wrote that he reached an agreement with Marshall that he was only to have the most important and interesting papers sent to him and to read a novel. 'On this basis I passed the next week in fever and discomfort, and I sometimes felt very ill.'¹

Churchill was too ill for his regular lunch with King George VI on 17 February,⁸ but no medical bulletin was issued until 18 February which stated that the Prime Minister had been suffering from a feverish cold and was confined to bed.

Cadogan [Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office] wrote in his diary, 'PM. still has temperature of 101 [°F] so our trip, fixed for Monday, is put off.'¹⁸ Churchill was assessed by Wilson and Marshall, and a medical bulletin was signed by them. It stated, 'The Prime Minister is confined to bed with an acute catarrh of the upper respiratory passages.'

On 19 February Wilson hired two staff nurses from the private wing at St. Mary's Hospital to attend Churchill: Doris Miles (Figure 3) and Dorothy Pugh (Figure 4). Nurse Pugh recorded that she received a phone call from her Matron at 7.30 pm. 'Am to go out on a case tomorrow. Doris M as night nurse. All very exciting.'²⁷ Nurse Pugh arrived at Storey's Gate Buildings [the location of Churchill's underground bunker during WWII] early on the morning of 20 February. There she met Wilson who introduced her to the Prime Minister and Mrs Churchill. 'Both of them very nice indeed'.²⁷

Peck [Private Secretary], recalled being summoned by Churchill to his bedroom on 20 February. 'The Prime Minister was sitting up in bed, looking sulky.'¹³ Wilson was 'trying to look at ease and master of the situation...A row of some magnitude was evidently in progress.'¹³ Wilson had told the Churchills that he would have to issue a bulletin, and Churchill had instantly demanded to see it.¹³ Wilson had not yet drafted the bulletin but when he did so Churchill said it was 'alarmist', which would cause confusion and despondency and was, in any case, untrue.¹³ Churchill, therefore, dictated his own bulletin. 'On seeing it in type he was hugely pleased with his first effort in a new genre', but Wilson said it was inaccurate and misleading and he could not possibly sign it.¹³

Peck was given the task of rewriting the bulletin.¹³ He took the view that it was for the doctor to say what was the matter with his patient and for Churchill to pronounce on the political implications. So Peck tried reversing the phrases in Moran's bulletin, in the hope that the substance would remain the same but that the nuance could meet the Prime Minister's objection. 'It worked', Peck later recalled 'and after some

Figure 3 Nurse Doris Miles receiving the Gold Medal for Excellence in Nursing



minor negotiations on drafting and medical niceties'¹³ the bulletin was issued. The medical bulletin was signed by Wilson and Marshall and read 'The Prime Minister has had a comfortable day. There is a small area of inflammation in one lung, but the fever is lower, and his general condition is not unsatisfactory.'

Nurse Miles recorded in a letter to her husband on 21 February that Churchill had 'congestion of the right base' (Wilson had reported signs at the left base) and the organisms isolated were haemolytic streptococci and that M&B 760 (May & Baker, sulphathiazole) had been prescribed with the addition of potassium citrate to prevent sulphonamide-induced crystalluria.

Nurse Pugh recorded in her diary on 21 February, 'PM. had a better night...Saw Sir Charles...A. Eden came just before lunch. Talked to Dr Marshall re visitors. General Ismay [Churchill's Chief Military Assistant] arrived...Mr Churchill [probably Churchill's brother, John ['Jack']] came to see WSC. Consultation at 6 pm with Sir Charles, Dr M[arshall], Lionel Whitby [Brigadier LEH Whitby [Director of the Army Blood Transfusion Service and expert on sulphonamides (Figure 5)] and Dr Bratton [probably Dr Allen Bratton MC DSO, Senior Assistant Pathologist at Archway Hospital]. All very interesting. Met Mrs Sands [Diana Spencer-Churchill] and Miss Mary [Churchill]...Am going to live in as it's a rush to get here in the morning.'²⁷ Following the clinical assessment of Churchill at 6 pm,²⁷ a blood count was taken by Whitby, which was normal. A medical bulletin was signed by Wilson, Marshall and Whitby. It stated, 'The condition of the Prime Minister has improved. There has been no extension of inflammation in the lung.'

On 22 February Nurse Pugh wrote in her diary, 'Fairly busy day. PM kept finger on bell pretty well all day. Better day on the whole-temp even all day. Now up slightly at night. 101°F. Much consternation in the camp. Met Mr D. Sandys [Duncan Sandys MP and husband of Diana Spencer-Churchill]... PM told me that Tunisia will be O.K. now.'²⁷

Figure 4 Nurse Dorothy Pugh



Churchill had to cancel the following day's lunch with King George VI. 'PM's health is still stationary'.¹⁵ Churchill was in bed with a temperature of 102°F when the King's three page handwritten letter reached him on 23 February. 'I am very sorry to hear that you are ill,' the King wrote, 'and I hope that you will soon be well again. But do please take this opportunity for a rest. And I trust you will not forget that you have earned one after your last tour, and you must get back your strength for the strenuous coming months...'¹

Churchill dictated his reply at once, and at length, the first part a strong defence of Anglo-American policy in North Africa. 'Sir, it is very good of Your Majesty to write with your own hand to me. I do not feel seriously disturbed by the course of events in North Africa, either political or even military, although naturally there is much about both aspects which I would rather have different. I have been reading all the key telegrams with attention up till two days ago, when I must admit I have fallen a little behind...'.¹ Churchill's final paragraph reiterated this. 'Although, I have been hampered by a high fever from reading all the telegrams, I think I have the picture truly in my mind, and I wish indeed that I could have given this account to Your Majesty verbally at luncheon. I send this instead.'¹

On 23 February Nurse Pugh recorded, 'PM seems better. Mrs Sandys and Pamela [Digby, Churchill's daughter-in-law] came in...this morning. PM had a fair day on the whole – a little restive at times. Usual consultation at 6 pm. Seemed much longer today. Bed bathed PM with Bevir [Anthony Bevir, Churchill's Private Secretary] and Mrs C as an audience – not a very pleasant job – still all was well. PM very sweet.'²⁷

She recorded on 24 February 'Condition of PM improved. T[emperature] coming down very nicely. Saw B[rendan] Bracken. Usual consultation at 6 pm. Not quite so long this time.'²⁷ Following this consultation, a medical bulletin was issued signed by Wilson, Marshall and Whitby. It stated, 'There is general improvement in the Prime Minister's condition. The pneumonia is clearing, but the temperature has not yet settled.'

Figure 5 Sir Lionel Whitby in 1947 © National Portrait Gallery

Eden called on Churchill on his way to the House of Commons on 25 February. 'He [Churchill] looked flushed and clearly had a fever.'²¹ After referring to one or two matters of business, Eden added, 'By the way, about that telegram you thought of sending last night to Algiers.'²¹ 'Thought of sending? What do you mean? I sent it', said Churchill.²¹ Eden replied: 'No, it hasn't gone yet. I wanted to talk to you about it first.'²¹ Churchill gripped the counterpane with both hands and growled: 'By what right do you interfere with my private correspondence?'²¹ Eden retorted that the message was not private and that the Foreign Secretary sees all important messages.²¹ 'As his temperature was clearly mounting by leaps and bounds I said, 'All right, we'll talk about it later.'²¹

At length, after the House rose, Eden called in to see Churchill, who was reclining benignly in bed with the telegram on the counterpane.²¹ 'He asked after my day in the House...before at last he glanced at the telegram and added: 'Oh, by the way, you remember that message I intended to send? Perhaps we had better not send it.'²¹ Eden added in his diary, 'This was characteristic of Mr Churchill and of something very lovable in him. First the indignation sparked by fever, then reflection and a generous acceptance expressed without half-tones or hesitation; these were the successive stages which endeared him to those whom he berated.'²¹

Wilson had himself developed a 'slight temperature' and had been told off by Churchill because he had spent most of the day at the Royal College of Physicians [Nurse Miles wrote in a letter to her husband]. She also recorded that Churchill had ordered Marshall to examine Wilson 'and pack him off to bed'. 'So I have got three patients now' [Churchill, Wilson and Mrs Churchill who had 'burnt her hand two nights ago and I dress that for her every night']. Churchill's temperature was down to 97.2°F at 9 am on 25 February and his condition was 'good'.²⁷ Eden had visited Churchill.²⁷ A medical bulletin was issued by Wilson, Marshall and Whitby stating 'The Prime Minister's condition continues to improve'.

Churchill was in 'very good form' on 26 February and Wilson

Figure 6 Lt Gen Sir Robert Drew in 1967 © National Portrait Gallery

was better too.²⁷ A further chest X-ray and blood count were taken and the usual consultation took place at 6 pm.²⁷ Nurse Pugh noted that this would be the last of Brig Whitby's professional visits and that he was a 'very nice person'.²⁷ A further bulletin was issued later that day by Wilson, Marshall and Whitby. It stated, 'There has been a further improvement in the Prime Minister's condition, and there has been no fever for 24 hours.' Churchill was again in very good form on 27 February and had slept well. After the usual consultation a further bulletin was issued stating 'The Prime Minister's condition continues to be satisfactory, and no bulletin will be issued until Monday [1 March 1943].' On Sunday 28 February Churchill was observed to be in 'very good form'.²⁷ A final medical bulletin was issued on 1 March by Wilson and Marshall stating 'The Prime Minister's condition is improving daily. He is getting up, and no further bulletins will be issued.'

On 3 March Churchill was well enough to go to Chequers (the country house of the Prime Minister). Nurse Miles wrote. 'It was a question of making him do chest exercises, and giving him various medicines. I had to march into the dining room after dinner [all male] and present him with a red capsule [a barbiturate hypnotic, quinalbarbitone 100 mg²⁸] on a large silver tray – I was then told: 'The price of a good woman is above rubies.'⁸

President Roosevelt wrote to Churchill, 'Please, please, for the sake of the world, don't overdo these days. You must remember that it takes about a month of occasional let-ups to get back your full strength. Tell Mrs Churchill that when I was laid up I was a thoroughly model patient, and that I hope you will live down the reputation in our Press of having been the 'world's worst patient'.²⁹

August/September 1944

Churchill had been in Italy since 10 August and was accompanied by Moran throughout his trip.⁹ On the afternoon of 28 August he left Naples and at about 5.30 pm the plane ran into a thunderstorm. After seven hours in the air, the

Avro York landed at Rabat. Thompson recorded that Churchill was so ill after the flight that Moran advised him to stay in Rabat for the night.¹⁶ Furthermore, further thunderstorms were reported on the route.⁹ The rest refreshed Churchill and next day they flew on to Northolt.¹⁶

After about six hours in the air on 29 August, and two hours from Britain, Churchill developed a 'sudden attack of my former malady with a temperature of between 103 and 104 degrees [F]'.⁹ Mrs Churchill wrote that the Avro York 'made a lovely landing [at 6 pm] and taxied right up to where everyone was waiting...Lord Moran emerged and ran across the tarmac to the car where I was sitting and said: 'He has a temperature of 103. We must get him back quickly and get him to bed.'⁷ The Chiefs of Staff, Colville and special correspondents were also there to meet Churchill.¹¹ Admiral Cunningham [First Sea Lord] noted: 'The PM was hurried to his car by Moran. He certainly looked ill.'⁹ Colville recorded that Moran emerged from the aircraft 'looking agitated and we found that the PM. had a temperature of 103 degrees, developed since luncheon.'¹¹ Churchill 'emerged looking crumpled and feverish' and was rushed to London leaving everyone stunned and astonished.⁷

The War Cabinet had been fixed for 6.30 pm on 29 August, in order 'that W [Winston] should have time to get there'.²² Eden walked into Churchill in the 'passage as I was leaving for Cabinet. He seized my hand. 'Ah, there you are, dear Anthony, come into my room, I want to talk to you.'²² This was followed by Mrs Churchill informing Eden that Churchill had a temperature of 103°F. Eden recorded that while Churchill was undressing and tumbling into bed, he told him he had developed a sudden chill a few hours from home.²² 'Extracted myself as soon as I could for he showed every desire to discuss all our problems and I felt the whirl of approaching doctors, etc.' Eden left and sent Moran in and went down to Cabinet.²²

Moran recorded that Churchill was chesty for some days after developing the temperature and that the chest X-rays revealed a shadow at the base of the lung.⁵ He described the illness as the 'third dose, though a very mild one, of pneumonia'⁵ (the other episodes of pneumonia treated by Moran were as described above and December 1943³⁰). This may explain why no medical bulletins were issued and only the 'smallest circle of people knew he was ill'.⁷

Marshall was again invited to give a second opinion.⁷ He took blood tests and X-rays and gave a sulphonamide.⁷ 'It is a slight attack – there is a small shadow on one lung, but in himself he is well.'⁷ Nurse Pugh recorded in her diary, 'Call from Matron. Am to go to Storey's Gate – PM just landed – slight chill – I hope nothing more. Welcomed by them all – as an old friend.'³¹

On 30 August Churchill was better, his temperature had fallen and he did a certain amount of work in bed.¹¹ He was assessed by Moran, Marshall and Colonel Drew [medical officer to the War Cabinet Offices (Figure 6)].³¹ Brooke was

sent for by Churchill at 7 pm and 'found him looking ill'.²⁴ Churchill also saw General Eisenhower [Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force] about the change in command in Normandy and Eisenhower 'stayed very late'.³¹

'A very marked improvement' in Churchill's condition was noted by Colville¹¹ on 31 August and Nurse Pugh stated that he was 'in very good form'.³¹ It was agreed that the arrangements for OCTAGON [the coming conference with the US President], should be allowed to stand. King George VI came to see Churchill for an hour^{11,31} and signed a submission creating General Montgomery a Field Marshal. Brooke, Eden and Lord Camrose [Editor-in-Chief, *Daily Telegraph*] also visited.¹⁰

Churchill was assessed by Moran and Marshall on 1 September. Churchill's temperature was normal, and he was 'in tearing form'¹¹ having entirely emptied his red box (used by ministers to carry their documents). Churchill gave Colville a survey of the road to D-Day and beyond.¹¹ Brooke recorded that 'Winston is improving rapidly and it looks as if we should all be starting for Quebec on Monday [4 September] evening.'²⁴ Churchill saw the Polish Prime Minister in the evening.²⁰ Churchill telegraphed to President Roosevelt that, 'I am much better though still eating masses of M and B [May & Baker, manufacturer of sulphonamides]'.¹⁰

On 2 September Churchill was assessed by Moran, Marshall and Whitby.³¹ Although he was 'much better' on 3 September and was 'up for lunch and supper',³¹ he was unable to attend the War Cabinet, which met in his absence.³²

Churchill still had a high temperature on 4 September, but insisted on getting up to attend a Cabinet meeting on the Warsaw crisis.^{24,32} Nurse Pugh was told by Moran at 6.30 pm that she was required to go on the trip to Canada with Churchill.³¹

'There had been some doubt whether he would be fit to set off on another trip so soon,' wrote Moran. 'I decided at the last moment to ask Lionel Whitby and a nurse to come with us.'⁵ The presence of Whitby and Nurse Pugh was to be kept secret, Downing Street informed the British Secretariat in Quebec. 'For your information only, Whitby is specialist and colleague of Moran but it is most important this should not be known nor any deductions drawn. Mrs Pugh is a nurse. This also is not to be made known.'¹⁰

Churchill was in 'low spirits and not very well,' Mrs Churchill wrote to her daughter Mary. 'I hope it is just the M & B working off and perhaps some anti-malaria tablets [mepacrine]...'¹⁰ Churchill took the mepacrine as prescribed until discontinued by Moran on 12 September.⁵ 'I am stopping the mepacrine... The PM. makes very heavy weather about the tablets; he ascribes to them his bad turn on the ship. Besides, mepacrine gives you a yellow cachectic look, as if you had cancer, and people like Brendan [Bracken MP] say to him: 'You ought to stop that stuff; it's making you ill.'⁵

Mrs Churchill¹⁰ and Colville¹¹ recorded that Churchill's temperature went up again on 9 September at 3 pm.¹⁰ He became 'thoroughly rattled and bad tempered', Moran recorded, until Whitby restored morale by finding that he had a normal blood count.⁵

Colville discussed Churchill's rise in temperature with Moran, who 'does not think seriously of it, probably it is the heat'.¹¹ Moran told Colville 'that he does not give him a long life and he thinks that when he goes it will be either a stroke or the heart trouble which first shewed itself at Carthage last winter'.¹¹ Colville commented: 'May he at least live to see victory, complete and absolute, in both hemispheres and to receive his great share of the acclamations. Perhaps it would be as well that he should escape the aftermath.'¹¹

Churchill's illnesses and treatment

Churchill was 69 in February 1943 and 70 in August 1944. While the overall mortality from pneumonia in the early 1940s with sulphonamides was 10%, the mortality was 20% in those aged 60–69 and 40% in those aged 70 years or over.³³

The 1943 edition of the *National War Formulary*³⁴ includes only three sulphonamides (sulphanilamide, sulphapyridine and sulphathiazole) and recommends sulphanilamide as 'the most generally useful'. It is known that in February 1943 Churchill was treated with sulphathiazole for pneumonia due to haemolytic streptococci. We have shown that in December 1943 Churchill was treated for pneumonia with sulphadiazine.³⁰ It is not known with certainty with which sulphonamide Churchill was treated in August 1944, though by this time sulphadiazine was the preferred choice, but not generally available in the UK.

Medical and nursing care

Moran records only that Marshall was invited to give a second opinion in February 1943 and August 1944.⁴ However, the fact that Whitby signed three medical bulletins suggests otherwise. Furthermore, Nurse Pugh confirms Whitby's involvement in both illnesses^{27,31} and Nurse Miles confirms the first. Whitby was also invited by Moran to accompany Churchill to the Quebec Conference.

Wilson had become Churchill's doctor on 24 May 1940 (two weeks into Churchill's first term as Prime Minister) and remained his personal physician until Churchill's death in 1965.³⁵ He was appointed Dean of the Medical School at St Mary's in 1920, a post he held until 1945. He was knighted in 1938 and created Baron Moran of Manton (in Wiltshire) on 8 March 1943. He was President of the Royal College of Physicians of London from 1941–1950.³⁵

In 1919 Marshall was appointed Physician to Guy's Hospital, with a special interest in tuberculosis, and recognised as one of the leading physicians in diseases of the chest.^{26,36} In 1934 he was invited to join the staff of the Brompton Hospital and during WWII was Physician-in-Charge. 'He was

magnificent in consultation, radiating confidence to the patient, who felt better at once. He had the ability to create within the doctor-patient relationship a feeling of warmth and friendship, which clearly existed between himself and the late King George VI...'²⁶ In 1951 he was knighted for his services to King George VI.

Whitby was appointed assistant pathologist in the Bland-Sutton Institute of Pathology at the Middlesex Hospital, London, and worked there until 1939. His work was initially bacteriological and he conducted experimental studies on the new sulphonamide compounds. These culminated in the introduction of sulphapyridine (M&B 693) for clinical use.^{37,38} He took charge of the Army Blood Transfusion Service at the outbreak of WWII with the rank of Brigadier. He was knighted in 1945 and appointed Regius Professor of Physic (Medicine) at Cambridge.

Drew joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1931, serving in India from 1932 to 1937 where he acquired great experience in tropical medicine.³⁹ After command of a field ambulance in the 4th British Division in WWII, he was given the task of training all the Army's medical officers in tropical diseases while he was Assistant Professor of Tropical Medicine at the Royal Army Medical College, London. He also acted as medical officer to the War Cabinet and gave vaccinations to Churchill, Eden and the others. It is probably in this role that he assessed Churchill with Moran, Marshall and Whitby on at least one occasion, though his special expertise in treating infections would have made his opinion even more valuable and relevant. He rose to become Director-General Army Medical Services and Vice-President of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and was knighted in 1965.

Nurse Miles trained at St Mary's Hospital, where her father had been Senior Surgeon⁴⁰ and Dean. She was described as a 'cultivated and charming nurse' and won the Gold Medal for Excellence in Nursing (Jill Rose, personal communication). In 1942 she married Roger Miles, also a St Mary's graduate (1940).⁴⁰ Interestingly, it was after Wilson saw Roger Miles give a riveting performance (in Greek) as Clytemnestra in the school play at Bradfield College, that he offered him a place to study medicine at St Mary's; such offers were usually confined to rugby players!⁴⁰ In 1942 Roger Miles joined the Royal Navy as Surgeon Lieutenant RNVR serving in Arctic and Malta convoys.⁴⁰ After the War he trained in surgery at St Mary's and was appointed as consultant surgeon to the Royal West Sussex and St Richard's Hospitals in Chichester.⁴⁰

Nurse Pugh trained at St Mary's Hospital and worked as a nurse on the Private Wing. She was not allowed to work on the general wards because she had married in 1942. Her husband, Roger, had qualified as a doctor at St Mary's in 1940 and served in the RAF as a Squadron Leader in the Mediterranean (including Libya and Greece) from 1942–1946. He became a distinguished urological pathologist after WWII.^{41,42}

Affairs of State

Moran wrote that 'It is one of Winston's foibles to pretend that he never allowed any of his illnesses to interfere with his work'. Thompson observed: 'Since he [Churchill] regarded even temporary capitulation to any ailment as a sign of weakness he was an impossible patient. In a high fever he would sit up in bed reading State papers and drafting memoranda.'¹⁵

During the February 1943 illness, Churchill claimed initially he had maintained his 'usual output', though feeling far from well.¹ Churchill later reached an agreement with Marshall that 'I was only to have the most important and interesting papers sent me'.¹ Churchill admitted there was a blank in his flow of minutes from 19–25 February,¹ and this is confirmed

by the *Churchill Documents*,^{29,43} though his letter to the King was a notable exception.¹ Although the flow of documents which reached his bedside was drastically curtailed, not a day passed when Churchill did not put in several hours' work.¹⁵ There is good evidence that Churchill maintained his 'usual output' during the August/September 1944 illness, almost certainly because his illness was shorter and less severe. ❶

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