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ARTICLE



## Churchill's Sea Power 'Apprenticeship': Chris Bell and the Reappraisal of British Naval Policy Before the First World War

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the contribution of the late Professor Christopher M. Bell to our understanding of British naval policy in the run-up to the First World War. Despite the fact that Bell's major intellectual and chronological focus was on the interwar years and the Second World War, he made an important, if somewhat inadvertent, intervention in the debates about British sea power before 1914 in a monograph and a series of articles that significantly sharpened our understanding of Churchill's role in this crucial period.

Professor Christopher Martin Bell – Chris to those who knew him – made an outsized contribution to the study of British naval policy before the First World War.<sup>1</sup> In one sense, this was hardly surprising. Chris was an outstanding scholar with an uncanny talent for identifying critical issues, finding the documents that best illuminated their nuances and complexities, and then presenting the resultant findings in a clear and readily comprehensible manner. Given this ability, it is hardly to be wondered that in turning his hand to the pre-1914 era, he should have made a major impact. What was surprising was his decision to look at this era in the first place. Chris had made a name for himself through an impressive body of work on the interwar period.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter, his chronological direction of travel was essentially forward looking as illustrated by his sadly unfinished project on the mid-Atlantic air gap in the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> It had never been part of his original academic plan to row backwards into the deeply contested terrain of the First World War and its preceding years. Yet, ultimately, he did so and the impetus for this came not from a specific desire to engage with this period, but from his interest in Winston Churchill.

Chris had long been fascinated by this titan of twentieth century British history, but, like almost everyone else, he had initially accepted that so much had been written about this political colossus that it was seemingly impossible

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to have anything new to say about him, let alone to identify anything so grand as a full-scale lacuna in the literature. However, as he reflected on the matter, Chris became aware that there was one aspect of this towering political figure that had not received the attention that was its due and that was his relationship to sea power. While almost every facet of Churchill had been dissected endlessly and in detail, his broader concept of Britain's relationship to the sea and the way in which this manifested in his strategic thinking had been addressed only infrequently and then often just in passing while historians were focusing on specific – often controversial – incidents within Churchill's career.<sup>4</sup> He, therefore, set out to correct this omission, offering to Oxford University Press a big new study that became the highly acclaimed *Churchill and Sea Power*.<sup>5</sup> Of course, while such a work would need to concentrate heavily on areas that were very familiar to Chris – for example, Churchill's outlook and spending plans as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1920s, his stance on the appeasement of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and his role as the executor and directing hand behind British strategy, including, of course, maritime strategy, in the Second World War – it would necessarily also have to address the period in which Churchill initially became aware of and first formulated his ideas on sea power, and that was in the era before the First World War. That this was territory that Chris did not normally cover was evident, but equally once he decided to cast his discerning eye over the period, it was naturally to be expected that the process would yield considerable results.

## I

The terrain into which Chris now innocently wandered was hotly contested ground. The historiography had long been dominated by an interpretive framework that had been laid down by the American historian Arthur J. Marder in a series of important works published in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.<sup>6</sup> These had stressed the role of Admiral of the Fleet Sir John ('Jacky') Fisher in modernising the Royal Navy. In Marder's view, Fisher had deliberately unleashed a series of naval revolutions that responded to the increasingly tectonic technological and global geopolitical shifts of the period by refocusing British naval strength on the North Sea, endowing it with a fleet of dreadnought battleships with which to control that particular maritime domain, and thereby preparing it for battle with a new and formidable adversary on the other side of these waters, namely the German Empire. Many other historians concurred, adding new layers to Marder's perspective and establishing a seemingly unassailable orthodoxy, the evident validity of which appeared to be further backed by the outbreak of Anglo-German conflict in 1914, the very struggle for which Fisher, according to Marder, had devoted all his efforts.<sup>7</sup> In short, everything neatly linked together: the threat of an Anglo-

German war leading first to preparations for an Anglo-German war and then to the actuality of an Anglo-German war. Yet, if this interpretation seemed sure and settled, beginning in 1989 with the publication of Jon Sumida's important study, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*, a revisionist alternative began to emerge.<sup>8</sup> Like Marder, Sumida and those revisionists who built on his analysis, emphasised the importance of Jacky Fisher, but they gave to his supposed naval revolution a quite different character.<sup>9</sup> Where Marder had accentuated the transformative quality of the emergent German threat, Sumida argued for the lasting importance and endurance of competition with France and Russia. Where Marder had highlighted the revolution in materiel caused by HMS *Dreadnought*, Sumida argued that Fisher had actually wanted to abolish the battleship and replace it with the battle cruiser, the warship type best suited to a global cruiser war. Where Marder had cast a spotlight on Fisher's desire to dominate the North Sea with the battle fleet he was building, the revisionists countered that the real home waters strategy was sea denial through torpedo craft, a method that was evocatively labelled 'Flotilla Defence'. And so the differences grew. Of course, by this stage Marder was dead and, with nobody mounting an active defence of his ideas, the revisionist view quickly became dominant. However, over time, doubts begun to surface about some of its more extravagant claims, leading to the appearance, tentative at first, but increasingly confident, of a literature (later dubbed 'post-revisionist' by Chris) seeking to act as a corrective to these perceived excesses. Fortuitously, the first such works in this genre went into print just before Chris began to cast his eye over the era, giving him an awareness that the historiography was once again in flux and open to refinement.<sup>10</sup> He decided to seize the moment.

If this was the state of the scholarship when Chris commenced his investigations into Churchill's first stint as First Lord of the Admiralty (October 1911 to May 1915), it should be strongly emphasised that at this stage Chris had no intention of becoming a lasting participant in this debate, let alone a leading figure within it. He was personally neither orthodox nor revisionist nor seeking to carve out a new position for himself; he was simply a scholar with an interest in an adjacent area, namely Churchill's formative exposure to British naval policy prior to August 1914. Of course, that did not make him a disinterested party. Churchill's maritime 'Apprenticeship', as Chris would subsequently term it, was when and where this political colossus first began to think about those concepts relating to sea power that would later become central to his ever evolving strategic thinking.<sup>11</sup> Thus, while but a small part of Chris's overall Churchillian story arc, the period nevertheless provided important background context to his general argument. As such, it had to be covered, but it could be covered in brief. It would be one chapter (of 37 pages) in a volume of eleven chapters (and 429 pages), the purpose of which was largely to set the scene for the rest of the book. Yet, even apparently

peripheral matters can yield significant results, and in undertaking the research for this chapter, Chris had an historiographic epiphany. While not yet meaningfully out of sync with the revisionist paradigm, which at this stage he still largely accepted, he decided that there were areas of it, insofar as they related to Winston Churchill, that did not stack up and needed to be modified and improved. These would, of course, be touched upon in the opening chapter of *Churchill and Seapower*, but as they were only tangential to the main thrust of the book and there was not the space therein to explain them in depth, Chris decided that, rather than focusing on them in detail there, he would pen a one-off article that outlined how the revisionist interpretation could and should, in his view, be improved to take into account a deeper understanding of Churchill's views on sea power. This was the origin of his article 'Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered', a piece that largely owing to the response it evoked would not be Chris's first and only journal contribution to pre-First World War naval history, as he had expected and intended, but the first of several meaningful interventions.<sup>12</sup>

## II

In many respects, the heart of the problem that Chris wanted to address in this article, albeit one that he would articulate more explicitly in a latter publication, was the relationship between Fisher and Churchill. This was because the concept of a pre-First World War naval revolution was then and always has been inextricably tied to Jacky Fisher. It was Fisher who instigated the design and construction of the new-type dreadnought battleships and their faster counterparts, the battle cruisers; it was Fisher who oversaw the redistribution of the British fleets and their ultimate concentration in home waters; and it was Fisher, according to Sumida and the revisionists, who wanted to use these new ships and their new deployments to revolutionise the entire force structure, doctrine and posture of the Royal Navy. The problem was that Fisher resigned as First Sea Lord in 1910 and, at the point that he left office, the architecture and configuration of British naval power was not noticeably revolutionary. It was predicated on fleets made up largely of battleships and their attendant support vessels, located on stations of long pedigree that, if their manoeuvres were anything to go by, intended to wage war in a manner that would have been instantly recognisable to several previous generations of naval leaders. Thus, if a Fisher inspired naval revolution was going to take place, this could only be because the admiral's radical ideas would subsequently be adopted and pushed forward by one of his successors. With the immediate inheritors of the position of First Sea Lord being either conservative in outlook – Sir Arthur Wilson – or short lived in office – Sir Francis Bridgeman – or clearly lacking any revolutionary zeal – Prince Louis of Battenberg – the only possible candidate for this distinction was the young,

assured and dynamic First Lord of the Admiralty appointed in October 1911 and usefully still in office in August 1914, Winston Churchill. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that in much of the revisionist literature, Churchill fulfils the role of the inheritor of Fisher's plans and the agent and torchbearer of his revolution.<sup>13</sup> But was this really so?

In some respects, this is not an entirely unreasonable proposition. Churchill knew Fisher and greatly admired him. Indeed, one might even say that, like many of his contemporaries, he was drawn to Fisher's magnetic personality, found Fisher's exuberant mode of expression hypnotic and, at times, considered his arguments for radical change both appealing and compelling. Yet, it is a far cry to extrapolate from this that Churchill was Fisher's proxy. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence that although exposed to many of Radical Jack's schemes, Churchill exercised independent judgement on their merits and frequently took no interest in advancing them further. This was certainly Chris's view, and, at this moment, it led him to dissent from one particular facet of the revisionists' naval revolution thesis. The facet in question was the theory that, inspired by Fisher's ideas, in the summer of 1914 Churchill intended to abandon the battleship standard that had been central to determinations of British naval strength for many years, cancel two battleships from 1914 to 1915 naval construction programme, use the money thus freed up to build torpedo craft for service in the North Sea, and thereby make the security of the British Isles dependent upon 'flotilla defence'. It should be said immediately that there is general agreement from both the proponents of this idea and its critics that no such scheme ever saw the light of day. But was this because the outbreak of war in August 1914 intervened and rendered it *non possumus*, as the revisionists maintain, or was it, as Chris contended, because no such scheme had ever been contemplated?

The case Chris advanced was actually very mindful of the revisionist position and was really a refinement rather than a refutation of many of their arguments. He accepted, for example, that Fisher had long been a strong proponent of a sea denial strategy and that he was also a powerful advocate for torpedo craft, especially submarines. He likewise agreed that Churchill was aware of these arguments, saw how they could be applied to Britain's advantage, and envisaged using them in 1914 as a means of solving a particular budget and deployment problem. There was, thus, quite a lot of overlap in the respective positions. The main differences related to the theatre in which 'flotilla defence' would be operationalised, what this said about Churchill's views on sea power, and whether or not what was being considered could really be described as 'revolutionary'. In the revisionist canon, Churchill was substituting battleships for torpedo craft in order to begin a radical shift in force structure that would utterly transform the defence arrangements for the British Isles. In Chris's view, however, Churchill's immediate interest in submarines was

much more limited. His plan for dealing with the German threat was to pull back the navy's existing force of capital ships from the Mediterranean in order to strengthen the battle fleet in the North Sea. Building more submarines and sending them to Malta would allow this to happen without endangering British possessions there. In other words, Churchill's goal in 1914 was not a fundamental departure from the then prevailing thinking, but rather a buttressing of existing policy norms. Sea power would be concentrated in the main theatre – home waters – and in order to achieve this, major assets would be withdrawn from a subsidiary theatre, the Mediterranean, where they would be replaced by flotilla craft. This meant that British naval power would be expressed in battleships in the North Sea and in submarines in the Middle Sea. As Churchill evocatively put it in a memorandum cited by Chris, 'while in the North Sea we rely on the gun as our first weapon, we must in the Mediterranean fall back mainly on the torpedo'.<sup>14</sup> While this would obviously represent a change in the Royal Navy's then existing order of battle, it was neither a radical departure nor a revolutionary transformation.

### III

'Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered' came out in the July 2011 edition of *War in History*. Its mild tone and moderate suggestions for an updating of the existing scholarship, especially where it related to Churchill, meant that it aroused genuine interest from practitioners of naval history, but its wider impact and readership was initially probably quite limited. What put it more firmly on the historiographic map was the rejoinder from revisionist historian Nicholas Lambert which appeared in the April 2012 number of the same journal. Entitled 'On Standards: A Reply to Christopher Bell', its tone and content made it abundantly clear that Lambert for one saw Chris's article not as a constructive contribution to a debate in progress, but as a major and unwelcome challenge that needed to be swatted forthwith.<sup>15</sup>

Those who knew Chris at the time, such as the present author, can testify to the surprise and disappointment that this evoked in him. Chris, as the conscientious scholar that he was, was always ready for robust discussion and happy to defend his views or, should the need arise, modify them, but he had not anticipated that his summary of the revisionist arguments would be labelled 'a travesty'. Nor had he expected that his arguments and methodology would be described in these unusually strident terms:

He [Bell] misunderstands the contemporary meaning (or understanding) of key terms and makes errors on points of detail that cannot be dismissed as trivialities or regarded as legitimate differences of interpretation. . . . Lacking the context he might have gained

from a more extensive consultation of the archives, he thus can only misinterpret the limited evidence he has seen. . . . Bell's arguments are predicated upon a superficial consideration of the broader contexts.<sup>16</sup>

However, perhaps most shocking to Chris, given its unmistakable implications, was Lambert's final paragraph, which ran:

In his acknowledgements Professor Bell thanks me for discussing my work with him and 'answering numerous queries'. From this, a reader might reasonably infer that, in requesting and accepting my assistance, the author apprised me of the draft article he was circulating for comment. He did not. In agreeing to help him, indeed, I was given the impression I was aiding in the production of a monograph on Winston Churchill and sea power focused on the 1919–43 period. My 'contribution' to Professor Bell's article was thus involuntary. This is regrettable: because if I had known of it then I might have been able to contribute constructively to his understanding of admittedly complex issues.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever one thinks of Lambert's rejoinder, it obviously made it impossible, at that moment anyway, for Chris simply to retreat from pre-1914 naval policy. At the very least, he now had to explain his position in the light of Lambert's criticisms; where the seriousness of the accusations necessitated it, and they frequently did, he would also have to mount a detailed defence. If that was not exactly welcome to Chris, there was, at least, one silver lining for the broader scholarly community: in doing so, he would have the opportunity to reflect further on the period and to sharpen and refine his general thesis.

Chris's reply appeared in the July 2013 edition of *War in History*.<sup>18</sup> It was studiously polite, acknowledging the contribution that Lambert's work had made to the discipline, ignoring the 'barbed comments' in Lambert's critique, and, without any visible rancour, pointing out that Lambert might have chosen to take Chris's interest in his work 'as a compliment rather than an insult'.<sup>19</sup> It was also an extremely effective rebuttal. It is not necessary to dwell here on the ways in which Chris systematically demolished the charges that had been levelled against him; what is important is the conclusion that he reached. The central issue was still the twin and related questions of whether or not changes allegedly underway in Admiralty policy in 1914 were directly inspired by Fisher and whether or not they justified the tag 'revolutionary'. Chris answered in the negative to both questions. In doing so, however, he articulated with clarity a concept that was going to become central to the emerging post-revisionist position on pre-1914 naval policy, namely that what the revisionists had termed a 'naval revolution' in fact referred to a form of gradual incremental change based upon existing precedents and already prevailing directions of travel that was better understood as a type of evolution.<sup>20</sup> As Chris succinctly put it, 'we need to question the very use of the term "naval revolution" to describe changes that were essentially evolutionary in nature'.<sup>21</sup> This was a core insight that has since been taken considerably further and become central to the post-revisionist message.<sup>22</sup>

## IV

'On Standards and Scholarship' did not receive a rejoinder and so effectively ended this particular discussion. However, the process of engaging with Lambert had left Chris with a desire to focus in greater depth on two specific points of contention that had also been part of their debate, but which had not been highlighted as explicitly as he would have liked in these initial exchanges. They were the role played by the emerging dominion navies in British naval policy and the precise nature of the relationship between Churchill's agenda and Fisher's ideas. Both were significant to his overall thesis about the period and, for this reason, he would go on to explore them fully in two further articles.

The first of these, covering the part played by the naval policies of Australia, New Zealand, and, especially, Canada in the formulation of Churchill's plans, was the subject of an article that appeared in early 2015 in *The International History Review*.<sup>23</sup> The relevance of this issue was that it went to the heart of Churchill's concern over the concentration of force in the main theatre. Autonomous dominion navies, especially if they were deployed in distant waters and for local defence, threatened to undermine Churchill's efforts to maximise British sea power in the location – namely the British Isles – where the German danger was most salient. Unfortunately, under an agreement made at the 1909 Imperial Conference, it had been determined that three battle cruisers would be stationed in eastern waters, to be supplied, respectively, by Britain, New Zealand and Australia. Churchill was not at all eager to deploy such powerful warships on a distant station and upon taking office sought to cancel this arrangement even if this caused friction, as was inevitably the case, with the two Pacific dominions. As Chris explained, this was a clear sign that 'under Churchill's leadership the Admiralty's overriding concern was to concentrate British *and* Dominion warships in European waters, and ideally in the North Sea, to meet the German threat, even if this meant running risks in distant theatres'.<sup>24</sup> This represented a marked difference between him and Jon Sumida and this time he spelt it out explicitly.

There was an additional consideration in respect of Canada. The new Conservative administration under Robert Borden was keen to make a contribution to imperial defence, and to this end, it had been proposed that Canada would pay for the construction of three dreadnought battleships that could be deployed to the Mediterranean in lieu of British vessels that could then return to home waters. This would ensure that for the foreseeable future, Britain remained strong in both the North Sea and in the Middle Sea. The problem was that Canadian parliamentary politics prevented this arrangement from being fulfilled, a setback that cast an additional spotlight on the tensions that existed between the needs of the centre versus the needs of the periphery. As Chris reiterated in this article, with Britain unable to deploy

capital ships everywhere, the loss of the Canadian dreadnoughts forced a decision. Churchill's solution was to concentrate major assets in home waters and to rely on submarines in secondary theatres. As such, the exploration of dominion policy reinforced the argument of 'Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered' that what Churchill was proposing was anything but revolutionary. Concentration of force to enable an existing paradigm – sea control by a battle fleet – was the order of the day.

Chris followed up the article on dominion navies with a study specifically focusing on the revisionist claim that Churchill was 'the agent of change' who had decided to instigate the naval revolution that Fisher was unable to bring about himself and who would have succeeded in this endeavour had the outbreak of war not intervened. This was an issue that was, of course, directly relevant to all of Chris's writings on the pre-1914 period, and it had been an integral if not always prominent component in all of the articles discussed above. However, this was the first occasion on which he made this topic the explicit focus and central matter of contention of a bespoke piece. The article, 'The Myth of a Naval Revolution by Proxy', appeared in 2015 in *The Journal of Strategic Studies* in a special edition of that journal that Chris's work had done much to inspire, that was fittingly entitled 'New Interpretations of the Royal Navy in the Fisher Era'.<sup>25</sup>

Chris's target was the idea, advocated by all revisionist historians and clearly expressed in this passage from Nicholas Lambert, that 'even though Fisher's immediate successors at the Admiralty abandoned flotilla defence and altered much of his strategic policy after his retirement in 1910, within two years worsening financial problems led to them being resurrected by a dynamic new civilian head of the Admiralty – Winston S. Churchill'.<sup>26</sup> As Chris pointed out, for this contention to be true, Churchill would have needed to know about Fisher's ideas, it would have been necessary for him to have agreed with them, not just superficially but also conceptually, and it would also obviously have been a requirement that he actively sought to implement them. The first element was not, in fact, in dispute. Fisher had frequently shared with Churchill his thoughts on naval strategy and policy, albeit not necessarily fully and honestly, and while this may not have included every element of his thinking, it can be conceded that the new First Lord had as good an understanding as anyone else of many of Fisher's ideas. However, that he agreed with them is, as Chris pointed out, an entirely different matter. The problem here is that much of the evidence presented in support of the idea that Churchill had been converted to Fisher's way of thinking does not actually sustain this contention. For example, Churchill may well have toyed with the idea of building more battle cruisers, as Sumida contends, but, a procurement choice, especially one that was subsequently abandoned, is not a guarantee of strategic direction. As Chris accurately

elaborated, Churchill's short-lived interest in more battle cruisers, even if inspired by Fisher, 'does not mean he automatically accepted Fisher's alleged views on how these ships should be employed'.<sup>27</sup> Only if Churchill wanted them for service in distant waters would this have conformed to the revisionist concept of a Fisher-inspired naval revolution, but there is no actual documentary proof for this and the battleships that were eventually ordered in their place were all intended for and actually served in the North Sea. The same point applies to submarines. That Fisher was an enthusiastic advocate for underwater craft is well known, as is the fact that Churchill wished to order more of such vessels in 1914, but the question is why? If this was to enable the defence of the British Isles to be entrusted to the sea denial strategy that was 'flotilla defence' then this Churchillian interest in submarines might give grounds for suggesting that this was a revolutionary step undertaken at Fisher's behest. However, as Chris noted, the flaw in the argument advanced was that the revisionists, both Sumida and Lambert, seemed 'to assume that the case for flotilla defence can be made simply by demonstrating Churchill's interest in submarines'.<sup>28</sup> Yet, as Chris had argued in 'Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered' and now reiterated in greater detail, there were other more plausible explanations for why Churchill wanted more of these craft. Mediterranean considerations were one, but the desire to station vessels off the German coast that could mount an observational blockade was another. This would have been anything but revolutionary. Submarines warning of a sortie by the German fleet would have enabled the British battle fleet to be vectored to intercept it, a role that would have meant that 'battleships, not coastal flotilla forces, were still regarded in 1914 as the best means to defeat an enemy attack on British shores'.<sup>29</sup> This was a far cry from what Fisher was allegedly advocating, in no sense revolutionary, and proof once again that procurement choices on their own are not guaranteed signs of strategic direction. Chris's conclusion was stark: 'A forensic examination of the evidence for a Fisher-inspired revolution-by-proxy in 1914 reveals serious flaws in the revisionists' research and methodology'. There was, in fact, no revolution, either Fisher-inspired or otherwise. Instead, 'the Navy's war plans and force structure were only being modified, not radically overhauled, in light of evolving strategic policies and operational requirements'.<sup>30</sup> Evolution not revolution was what was most evident.

## V

'The Myth of a Naval Revolution by Proxy' was Chris's last major article on this topic, but it was not his final contribution. The January 2016 edition of *War in History* featured an extended review essay in which Chris surveyed

some of the latest releases on pre-1914 naval history, which, ironically enough, included re-issues of both Marder's *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* and Sumida's *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*. Chris's thoughts on this were as ever incisive, but perhaps of greatest interest was his conclusion, which in summing up the differences between the various schools of thought, outlined his belief in why it was necessary to look again at the era. It ran:

The most notable feature of the emerging 'post-revisionist' literature is the shift towards an 'evolutionary' paradigm. Orthodox and revisionist scholars alike have characterized the Fisher era as a period of naval *revolution*, even though they disagree on whether it stemmed from an aggregation of conventional reforms or a secret radical agenda. Moreover, both see the decision-making machinery as revolving around a single larger-than-life figure, Sir John Fisher, rather than as a complex and diffuse bureaucratic process. And both assume that Fisher's overall influence was a positive one. There are strong grounds for rejecting Marder's caricature of the Royal Navy as a deeply reactionary organization that had to be single-handedly reformed by Fisher, but it is also time to question whether British naval policy was really animated for over a decade by the same figure's alleged secret agenda. The continuities in British naval policy from the 1880s to 1914 are essential to understanding the service that entered the First World War, and the obvious challenge for scholars of the 'Fisher era' navy will be forcing the eponymous admiral out of the spotlight.<sup>31</sup>

This was surely correct and shows why a scholar who wrote but one chapter, four articles and a review article on this topic could still make such an impact.

## Notes

1. Much of this article is based upon my recollection of in-person conversations with Chris Bell across more than a decade for which, unfortunately, little or no documentation exists. While memory is, of course, an imperfect instrument, I believe that I have captured the essence of what Chris said and meant.
2. See, for example, Christopher M. Bell, "How are We Going to Make War?: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond and British Far Eastern War Plans," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 20 (1997); Christopher M. Bell, *The Royal Navy, Seapower and Strategy Between the Wars* (London: Macmillan, 2000); Christopher M. Bell, "The Royal Navy, War Planning and Intelligence Assessments of Japan Between the Wars," in *Intelligence and Statecraft: The Use and Limits of Intelligence in International Society*, ed. Peter Jackson and Jennifer Siegel (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005); Christopher M. Bell, "Winston Churchill and the Ten-Year Rule," *Journal of Military History* 74, (2010); and John H. Maurer and Christopher M. Bell ed. *At the Crossroads Between Peace and War: The London Naval Conference of 1930* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2014).
3. Early outputs from this project include Christopher M. Bell, "Air Power and the Battle of the Atlantic: Very Long Range Aircraft and the Delay in Closing the Atlantic 'Air Gap'," *The Journal of Military History* 79, (2015); and Marcus Faulkner and Christopher M. Bell, ed. *Decision in the Atlantic: The Allies and the Longest Campaign of the Second World War* (Lexington, KT: University Press of Kentucky, 2019).
4. Potential exceptions include Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Gretton, *Former Naval Person: Winston Churchill and the Royal Navy* (London: Cassell, 1968); and Stephen Roskill,

*Churchill and the Admirals* (London: Collins, 1977). Both, however, are more about Churchill's interaction with naval and political leaders than about his philosophy of sea power. Moreover, the latter in particular is arguably as much an indictment as it is a study.

5. Christopher M. Bell, *Churchill and Sea Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
6. Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880–1905* (New York: Knopf, 1940); Arthur J. Marder, ed. *Fear God and Dread Nought: The Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone* 3 Vols, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952–59); and Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume I: The Road to War, 1904–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).
7. For example, Peter Padfield, *The Great Naval Race: The Anglo-German Rivalry, 1900–1914* (New York: David McKay Company, 1974); and Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Allen Lane, 1976).
8. Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy, 1889–1914* (London: Routledge, 1993). It can be argued that the revisionist position actually began much earlier with Ruddock F. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). However, while Mackay took a different stance to Marder on several issues, he neither explicitly challenged his overall framework nor disputed his general hypothesis.
9. Key revisionist works from this time include Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr., “The Origins of the Dreadnought Revolution: A Historiographical Essay,” *The International History Review* 12, (1991); Jon Tetsuro Sumida, “Sir John Fisher and the Dreadnought: The Sources of Naval Mythology,” *The Journal of Military History* 59, (1995); Nicholas Lambert, “Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defence, 1904–1909,” *The Journal of Military History* 59, (1995); and Nicholas A. Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999).
10. See, for example, John Brooks, *Dreadnought Gunnery and the Battle of Jutland: The Question of Fire Control* (London: Routledge, 2005); Matthew S. Seligmann, “Switching Horses: The Admiralty's Recognition of the Threat from Germany, 1900–1905” and “New Weapons for New Targets: Sir John Fisher, the Threat from Germany, and the Building of H. M. S. *Dreadnought* and H. M. S. *Invincible*, 1902–1907,” both in *The International History Review* 30, (2008).
11. “Apprenticeship, 1900–14” was the title Chris gave to Chapter 1 of *Churchill and Sea Power*.
12. Christopher M. Bell, “Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered: Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, 1911–1914,” *War in History* 18, (2011).
13. Jon Sumida, “Churchill and British Sea Power, 1908–29,” in *Winston Churchill: Studies in Statesmanship*, ed. R. A. C. Parker (London: Brassey's, 1995); and Jon Sumida, “Fisher's Naval Revolution,” *Naval History* 10, (1996).
14. Churchill Memorandum, June 15, 1912. Quoted in Bell, “Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered,” 338.
15. Nicholas A. Lambert, “On Standards: A Reply to Christopher Bell,” *War in History* 19, (2012).
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