



INTRODUCTION

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A collection of essays in memory of a deceased colleague and friend (as he was to all the contributors to this volume) is a very peculiar *genre* in that it owes its existence to his death – a sad event, of course – but at the same revives fond memories of past encounters in which intensely serious academic sessions were often preceded or followed by more down-to-earth activities, with lively conversation on less arduous topics often round a table of *bon viveurs* – and no doubt Paul was one.

The accepted French word for such a collection is (or was, since the practice seems to be declining) *Mélanges* (*'Mélanges offerts à X...'*): technically, an inappropriate word if one wants to pay tribute to a respected colleague, with its overtones of 'mixed bag' or 'hotchpotch'. When preparing the present volume, however, I came to realise how fitting it was as a description of the different angles from which it was possible to evoke the interests and intellectual evolution of the person, and above all how Paul had provided inspiration, not for unquestioning imitation, but for further lines of research in the considerable span of his publications, extending from 1971 to 2020 – exactly fifty years.

I recalled in fact the long title of a book of *Mélanges offerts à Churchill*, as detailed as *Winston Spencer Churchill : Servant of Crown and Commonwealth : A Tribute by Various Hands presented to him on his Eightieth Birthday*.¹ 'Some "Various Hands"!', Churchill must have thought, since they included no less than a Prince, four Viscounts, four Knights, three former, current or future Prime Ministers, a Dame of the British Empire, an Admiral, the Director of the Tate Gallery and the former President of the British Academy (with only one University Professor).

We cannot quite match this – though we have a Baron and a former Prime Minister: we are one up however on the diversity of nationalities and generations among the contributors. What unites them, beyond their durably pleasant experience of friendly contacts with Paul Addison, is their interest in Churchill and British political history, and especially the strong impression which both *The Road to 1945*

¹ Edited by Sir James Marchant K.B.E. London: Cassell, 1954.

and *Churchill on the Home Front* made on them, above all his other fine works, which are all listed at the end of this collection. If I may be allowed an intrusion into my personal experience, I will never forget the revelation – there is no other word – brought about by Paul's image in *The Road to 1945* of Churchill assimilated to an island surrounded by an irresistibly mounting tide, that of claims for social reform, when I was preparing my *Thèse d'État* on 'Les classes dirigeantes britanniques et la réforme sociale, 1931-1951' (long ago – it was submitted in 1987). No doubt all the contributors – who immediately agreed to join the undertaking – would have similar personal memories to cite (and some allude to them, in fact).

Why should this tribute appear in a journal published by a team from the University of Rouen, it may be asked? The answer is that Paul Addison was a regular speaker, chairman or attendee to the series of conferences on Twentieth-Century British History which it regularly organised in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The most memorable is probably the Annual Conference of the Social History Society, which was hosted by the University in January 2004. Two of the present contributors, Lord Morgan and Roland Quinault, were present, as well as the late John Ramsden. Ben Pimlott was on the list of speakers – but we learnt at the last minute that he would not come, since he was suddenly affected by the terminal illness which was to take him away only a few weeks later. No doubt these two deceased colleagues would have enthusiastically contributed to the present collection if the Old Man, as Churchill sometimes called his Creator, had decided otherwise.

Rather than ending on this sad note, however, we must rejoice that so many of Paul's colleagues and friends have survived to honour his memory. The *Cercles* team can only extend its gratitude to them in his name.