

WV

GLENDALE CHAPEL

is rediscovered by two curious owners and has once again connected a community

Langdon Huffman
© 198

Duncan Sandys is the great-grandson of Sir Winston Churchill, and has been a key collaborator on "The Art of Diplomacy: Winston Churchill and the Pursuit of Painting" at the Millennium Gate Museum. We had a chance to interview him about his thoughts on the exhibition, and on his memories about growing up in the Churchill family.

Millennium Gate Museum (MG): So, Duncan, we're very excited to have you with us today, and to have had so much of your help on this exhibition. Can you tell our readers a little bit about how the exhibition came about?

Duncan Sandys (DS): Certainly. The exhibition has been a really exciting project—

significant collection of Churchill's paintings. We also realized that January 2015 was going to mark the 50th anniversary of Winston's passing, and so this exhibition just seemed like the perfect idea.

MG: We think so, too. Now, there have been a number of other exhibitions of Winston Churchill's paintings, the largest being the 1998 Sotheby's show in London. The last show in the U.S. that was this big was in 1965. How is this show different? Is it any different?

DS: We're going to be exhibiting many pieces that haven't been shown before, so that's different. But the really important difference is our angle on the paintings: we worked with you [the Gate] to do a lot of research, both about Churchill and his relationship to painting,



An interview with Duncan Sandys

Winston Churchill's great grandson, former mayor of Westminster, and Atlanta resident



and about the Churchill family's relationship with Georgia. We found that the Churchills have been involved with Georgia in varying capacities for about 300 years: Winston's ancestor, the first Duke of Marlborough, for instance, gave James Oglethorpe [founder of the Colony of Georgia] an early opportunity in his military career. During our research we also learned that painting had been even more important for Winston's career as a statesman than previous shows had suggested: based on

think it's going to be a landmark show. It sort of came about by chance: Rodney [Mims Cook, Jr.], your founder, happened to know Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill, my cousin, who introduced us. While we were talk-ing, the concept for The Art of Diplomacy just came up naturally and Rodney was looking for an idea for a major exhibition at the Gate. He was intrigued by my family's

his writings, we think his work as a painter had a lot to do with his ability to handle the incredible stress he was under. It also seems to have given him a kind of space of mental clarity in which to reason through decisions. He also drew parallels between fighting battles and making paintings: in some ways they seemed very similar to him. So the show tries to highlight those ideas.

MG: Great. Could you tell us a little bit about your experience as Winston Churchill's great-grandson? Did you ever meet him? What was he like?

DS: I never met him but my father was the eldest grandchild and was [age] 28 when Churchill died. He shared many family stories over the years. I was born several years after his death but have known others who knew him. From what I have been told, it is clear to me that he was a warm and loving family man – and thoughtful of others. I am very proud of my family history and have had opportunities to experience some unique occasions, and to meet some interesting people. My heritage, of course, partly shapes who I am but I also see it as important to plough one's own furrow in life.

MG: That makes sense. Thanks for taking the time to tell us a little bit about the show, and about your experiences.

DS: My pleasure. I hope everyone enjoys seeing the show as much as we enjoyed preparing it.

Interview courtesy of Millennium Gate Museum