



Press Release

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Winston Churchill, War Lord and... Tree-Hugger?

A document unearthed today as part of Archive Awareness Campaign reveals that Winston Churchill was not only a fearsome wartime leader but also a keen environmentalist.

A concerned member of the public wrote to Churchill in 1954 to warn him of the decimation of forests throughout Surrey as well as the lopping of trees in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Churchill was sufficiently concerned to request a "special note" on this subject. He wrote to the Minister of Works:

"What is this you have been doing in the parks? Let me have a special note. It is a dreadful thing to cut down a tree which has life in it."

The Minister of Works replied straight away, defending the lopping and chopping as necessary. When trees were in old age, diseased or were dangerous they would be destroyed but replanting was going on at the same time. The document, held at The National Archives in Kew, west London, records the whole correspondence and shows that Churchill was satisfied that responsible tree-felling was taking place.

Lucy Fulton, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer, said, "Churchill is known largely for his military achievements in the Second World War but he was also concerned about maintaining the natural environment. This document is evidence of Churchill's determination to protect the nation, right down to its trees. Archives across the UK are opening up their doors to the public this winter, allowing anyone to search for fascinating documents such as this one."

To find an Archive Awareness Campaign event near you log on to www.archiveawareness.com

Notes to Editors

For further information on any of the above please contact Lucy Fulton on 020 8392 5237

Archive Awareness Campaign is run by partners the National Council on Archives, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and The National Archives. For more information about Archive Awareness Campaign please visit www.archiveawareness.com or contact Lucy Fulton, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer Tel: 020 8392 5237 Email: lucy.fulton@nationalarchives.gov.uk

The National Archives, Kew, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history, from Domesday Book to newly released government papers. The free museum and research rooms in Kew, west London, are open to the public 6 days a week.