



leader: pragmatic and focused, and adept at mediating friction with the army. This again should sound familiar, in a time when the organization of large collaborations and research projects is almost as essential as well-executed research.

As the physicists in the play watch the Trinity test and contemplate the end of the world, we feel the tension of the moment in history. And although it was less dramatic, I was reminded of scientists recently making history with the discovery of the Higgs boson, or the Rosetta mission landing. I went to see *Oppenheimer* expecting a dull discourse on the moral dilemmas of science. Instead I left with a connection — a feeling of kinship with Oppie and his boys. □

REVIEWED BY IULIA GEORGESCU

■ *Oppenheimer* is at the Royal Shakespeare Company Swan Theatre, Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7LS, UK, until 7 March 2015.

Strange bedfellows

EXHIBITION

Events will be taking place across the United Kingdom throughout 2015 to commemorate the achievements, 50 years after his death, of one of the twentieth century's most distinctive characters. Although regarded as a great wartime leader, Winston Churchill's legacy

extends far beyond politics. And although the Nobel Prize winning author had well-known artistic talents, his enthusiasm for science generally flies under the radar. But now, with artefacts, film footage, letters and photographs, the exhibition *Churchill's Scientists* tells the lesser-known story of Churchill's relationship with science, and how he fostered an environment that led to several ground-breaking discoveries.

After many years away from the frontline, Britain's declaration of war on Germany in 1939 saw Churchill return to the cabinet and the forefront of British politics. Within one year he was appointed prime minister and immediately began recruiting British science to the war effort. By enlisting his close friend and University of Oxford professor of physics Frederick Lindemann — known as the Prof — as an aid, he became the first UK prime minister to appoint a scientific adviser. His relationship with Lindemann, who he



would see almost daily during the war, runs throughout the exhibit, starting with the important role Lindemann's special statistics branch played in providing Churchill with fast accurate data on fuel reserves, food production and convoy movements.

But the exhibition features many other intriguing characters and shows how Churchill's championing of innovation, technology and discovery helped lead

to advances in radio astronomy, nuclear physics, nerve and brain functions, molecular genetics and robotics. The exhibition combines pieces on well-known projects such as Robert Watson-Watt's development of radar and Bernard Lovell's construction of the world's largest radio telescope, with lesser-known works such as Dorothy Hodgkin's unravelling of the structure of penicillin and Elsie Widdowson establishing the nutrition of the restricted wartime diet. It reminds us that Britain once had the world's largest atomic weapons programme and for a while was the nation with the greatest proportion of electricity generated from nuclear sources.

An intimate connection to Churchill is maintained throughout, with the inclusion of many personal items, such as the cigar he smoked when he heard the news of his re-election in 1951, and a green velvet siren suit he wore during air raids. Although perhaps lacking a little depth due to the sheer number of characters involved, the exhibition provides a unique view of the environment that allowed science to flourish under Churchill during and after the war. □

REVIEWED BY LUKE FLEET

■ *Churchill's Scientists* is at the Science Museum in London from 23 January 2015 until March 2016.