



**PARLIAMENT AND POLITICS
IN THE AGE OF
CHURCHILL AND ATTLEE**

THE HEADLAM DIARIES 1935–1951

EDITED BY STUART BALL

CAMDEN FIFTH SERIES VOLUME 14

PARLIAMENT AND POLITICS IN THE AGE
OF CHURCHILL AND ATTLEE
THE HEADLAM DIARIES 1935–51

The Headlam diary opens a unique window upon British public life in the second quarter of the 20th century. The extensive daily entries were written with shrewd insight, and range across the issues, events and personalities of the day. Although never intended for publication, the result is a fascinating and very readable journal, rich in character and atmosphere.

Headlam recorded not just his own thoughts, but the mood of the House of Commons and the gossip of the lobbies. He chronicled the rise and fall of the reputations of Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin and a host of other ministers and MPs.

Previously a junior minister in the 1920s and early 1930s, Sir Cuthbert Headlam was a senior Conservative MP from his return in an unusual wartime by-election in 1940 until retirement in 1951. He had a wide range of contacts, and was on friendly terms with most of the rising group of Conservative leaders – Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Oliver Stanley and Oliver Lyttelton. Headlam also held significant offices in the Conservative Party organisation as Chairman of the Northern Counties Area from 1936 to 1946 and Chairman of the National Union in 1941.

The period covered in this volume opens with appeasement and the growing shadow of war in the 1930s. The diary contains a vivid account of politics and strategy during the Second World War from the threat of invasion in 1940, through victory in North Africa in 1943, to growing fear of Russia's advance in 1945. After a break, the diary resumes in 1947 with the Labour government facing the bitter winter and economic pressure. It concludes with the coming of the Cold War and the Conservative recovery of 1950–51.

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