

## THE EDITOR

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Stuart Ball is Reader in History at the University of Leicester, and the author of *Baldwin and the Conservative Party: the Crisis of 1929-31* (Yale University Press, 1988) and *The Conservative Party and British Politics 1902-51* (Longman, 1995). He has edited the previous volume of these diaries, *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Baldwin and MacDonald: The Headlam Diaries 1923-35* (The Historians' Press, 1992), and *The Conservative Party since 1945* (Manchester University Press, 1998). He has also co-edited, with Anthony Seldon, *Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford University Press, 1994) and *The Heath Government 1970-74* (Longman, 1996).

## THE DIARIST

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Cuthbert Morley Headlam (1876-1964) was a Clerk in the House of Lords from 1897 to 1924, and served on the General Staff in the First World War. He was MP for the marginal seat of Barnard Castle in 1924-29 and 1931-35. The first of the 1924 intake to be given office, he was junior minister at the Admiralty in 1927-29. In the National Government he held junior office at the Ministry of Pensions in 1931-32 and the Ministry of Transport in 1932-34. Disgruntled at being passed over for promotion, he left office in 1934; the first half of his political career (covered in the previous volume) ended with the loss of his seat in the general election of 1935. However, he had become the leading active Conservative in the north east, and was Chairman of the Northern Counties Area 1936-46; he was also Chairman of the National Union in 1941 and sat on its Executive Committee from 1932 to 1946. He returned to the House of Commons as MP for the safe seat of Newcastle North in a by-election in 1940, and sat until his retirement in 1951. He was awarded the D.S.O. in 1918, and was created a Baronet in 1935 and a Privy Councillor in 1945.

*Front cover illustration:*

*Sir Cuthbert Headlam in 1939*

*Rear cover illustration:*

*Cuthbert and Beatrice Headlam at the front door of Holywell Hall, 1950*



**23 June 1942** There is a feeling of grave disquietude in the HofC – and of course all kinds of rumours and gossip are floating about – undoubtedly the opposition to [Churchill's] control is gathering force. Beaverbrook is said to be behind a lot of this – influencing, so they say, Winston's critics who sit on both sides of the House.

**3 October 1944** some of our more active M.P.s seem to think that we should win if there was an election – on what grounds they think so it is hard to determine ... None of us has an inkling of what the P.M. has in mind – what his intentions are and when he is going to disclose them. Never was a party so leaderless as is the Conservative Party today. It is, I think, drifting to its doom ...

**22 June 1948** Harold Macmillan told me that he was ready to take a bet that we should be at war by December or should have a million unemployed – he is inclined to talk in this way – but certainly things are in a bad way ...

**9 November 1949** It strikes me – as a result of conversations, which I engage in or overhear in the Smoking Room – that neither side is very sure what the verdict of a General Election will be. Shinwell, Bevan and Co. may prophesy a victory for Socialism but I doubt whether this is the true opinion of their Party – as for our people, one says one thing, one another – but it largely depends upon the constituency which they represent.

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