

HENRY 'CHIPS' CHANNON

THE DIARIES
1938-43

'A masterpiece'
ROBERT HARRIS

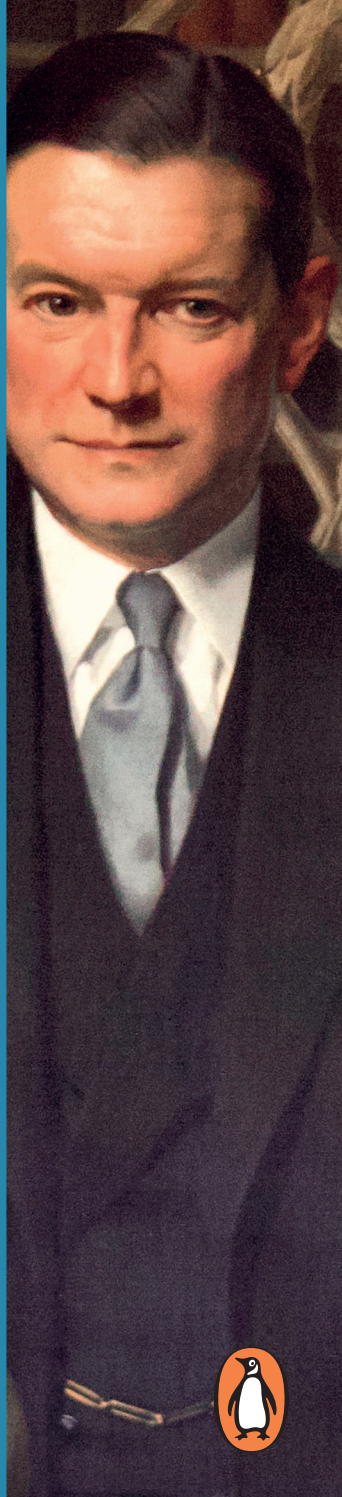
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EDITED BY
SIMON HEFFER



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Henry 'Chips' Channon
The Diaries: 1938–43

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'Even more gripping than the first volume . . . [Channon's] record is of great value, not only for historical detail and literary flair, but because it shows why appeasement often feels right, and why it can be so dangerous.'
Charles Moore, *Daily Telegraph*

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'Mr Heffer has undertaken a painstaking appraisal of the original manuscript . . . Anyone interested in the social and political life of Britain of the period should enjoy his effort.' Christopher Pincher, *The Critic*

'Channon was a rich, catty snob whose entertaining diaries are a portrait of a vanished epoch.' *Country and Town House*

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'In the diaries of Henry "Chips" Channon, edited with colossal thoroughness by Simon Heffer, we have a disgracefully enjoyable contribution to modern social history.' Noel Malcolm, Books of the Year, *TLS*

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'One of our juiciest memoirs of the year . . . Volume II of the unexpurgated diaries of Conservative MP Henry "Chips" Channon is every bit as gripping, jaw-droppingly snobbish, whiningly self-obsessed and disarmingly frank as Volume I.' Ysenda Maxtone-Graham, *Daily Mail*

'Waspish high campery.' *Mail on Sunday*

'Meticulous, witty and informative. The great strength of the diaries is Channon's position at the heart of government. A valuable source for historians of the period.' Andrew Lownie, *History Today*

'This remarkable book, bursting with gossip, sex scandals and royal barbs, is a brilliant portrait of champagne-fuelled London life on the eve of war and in its early years . . . Utterly compelling reading.' *Daily Mail*

ABOUT THE EDITOR

SIMON HEFFER has written a number of highly acclaimed works of biography and history, most recently the series *High Minds*, *The Age of Decadence*, *Staring at God* and *Sing As We Go*, covering British history from 1838 to 1939. He read English at Cambridge University and then took a PhD in history there. In a long career in Fleet Street he was deputy editor of *The Spectator* and of *The Daily Telegraph*. Since 2017 he has been a Professorial Research Fellow in the Humanities Research Department of the University of Buckingham and is a columnist for the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph*.

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Henry 'Chips' Channon

The Diaries:
1938–43

Edited by
Simon Heffer

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Foreword to Volume 2

We are very pleased now to be able to publish this second volume of our grandfather's diaries and with this volume we have again had help and advice from Robin Howard, our co-trustee; Georgina Capel, our literary agent; Nigel Wilcockson, associate publisher at our publishers, Penguin Random House; and Hugo Vickers. However, as with the first volume, our greatest debt of gratitude goes to Professor Simon Heffer, who has continued to bring to the task of editing this volume the same outstanding skills, knowledge, dedication and great enthusiasm he brought to editing the first volume.

We would also like to acknowledge again the contribution made by Helen Howard in preparing copies of the manuscripts and then helping to check their transcription, and to offer our thanks to the transcribers who worked on this volume: Consuela Barker, Fergus Burnand, Alex Colville, Domenica Dunne, Ned Dunne and Luke Regan.

We have asked the publishers to reproduce after this foreword our foreword to Volume 1, so that readers of this second volume can fully understand the background to the publication of what will ultimately be a three-volume version of our grandfather's diaries. We would also like to bring to readers' attention the two important points we made in the last paragraph which equally apply to this volume.

Georgia Fanshawe and Henry Channon

General Foreword

Our grandfather's diaries have been part of our lives since we have been old enough to be aware of them. During the lifetime of our father, Paul Channon, Lord Kelvedon, we knew he was approached a number of times over the years about publishing them in full. However, we were also aware of the dilemma he faced, given the initial negative reaction to the heavily abridged edition that was published in 1967, and the fact that many people mentioned in the diaries – members of the wider family, friends and acquaintances – were still alive.

The last time our father gave serious consideration to publishing a full version was in 2004, when he asked Kenneth Rose to review those diaries that had not been represented in the published abridgement (1918 and 1923–28, and also the diaries for the years 1954 and 1958 which had turned up in a car boot sale a few years earlier). He also discussed the matter, and Kenneth's review, with us and with Robin Howard, who is our co-trustee for the diaries, and who has acted as an adviser to the Guinness family for many years. He told Robin that he was still in two minds about what to do, but urged that if he had not arranged publication of the full diaries during his lifetime, Robin should encourage us to do so. The fact that a clause in our grandfather's will expressed the hope that the full diaries would be published sixty years after his death – in other words, in 2018 – added to the expectation that a full version would eventually see the light of day.

We are therefore very pleased that we have been able to realise our grandfather's and our father's ambition. This would not have been possible, however, without the considerable help and advice of Robin, who, after we had held some abortive discussions with another editor in 2012, offered in late 2016 to take on the task of arranging the full transcription of the diaries. He has gone on to help us agree the appointment of our literary agent, editor and publisher.

The other person we are greatly indebted to is Professor Simon Heffer, who has brought to the task of editing the diaries his outstanding skills and knowledge, as well as great enthusiasm and application. It has been an enormous pleasure working with him.

We would also like to acknowledge the help we have received from Dr Oliver Cox and David Howell of Oxford University, who gave us advice on the handling of the manuscript diaries and other archive material; Alan Williams, who gave us advice on various legal agreements; our literary agent, Georgina Capel; Nigel Wilcockson, publishing director at our publishers, Penguin Random House; and Hugo Vickers, who kindly agreed to read the text of Volume 1 and who made some very helpful comments. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Helen Howard, who has assisted Robin by preparing

copies of the manuscript diaries for use by the transcribers and Simon and then checking and correcting the transcriptions, and we offer our thanks to the transcribers who worked on Volume 1: Ralph Lopes, Isabella Darby, Haseeb Iqbal and Gabriella Dawson.

Finally, we would like to mention two important points about this new edition. Firstly, given the historical value of the diaries, we felt it vital that Simon should have full editorial control over what to include. Secondly, as Simon discusses more fully in his Introduction, we wish to stress that because the diaries inevitably reflect the attitudes of the time they were written, they include some language and opinions that are now rightly considered to be outdated and offensive. They also contain sometimes critical or disparaging comments and disclosures about the parents and relatives of members of our wider family and friends. We want to make it clear that such material has been retained solely to ensure the editorial integrity of the diaries, and that its inclusion does not mean that we in any way condone it, or wish to cause embarrassment or offence.

Georgia Fanshawe and Henry Channon

Editor's Introduction

This second of the three volumes of the unexpurgated diaries of Henry 'Chips' Channon (1897–1958) covers a period of just under five years; five of the most dramatic and tumultuous years in British history. The diaries open in October 1938, just as Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of the National Government that has ruled since 1931, has returned from Munich, and his meeting with Hitler at which the Sudetenland was carved out of Czechoslovakia and given to the Nazi Reich. Channon, as an appeaser and a deeply loyal devotee of Chamberlain, is relieved and delighted, describing Chamberlain in the entry for 1 October 1938 as 'the man of the age'. The volume ends in late July 1943, as Mussolini is toppled and the Allies, having forced the Germans out of North Africa, are fighting their way through Sicily. By that stage Channon has witnessed the fall of Chamberlain, the rise of Churchill, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz. There have been massive changes in the world, and in Channon's life and character.

When the volume opens Channon is about to complete three years as Conservative MP for Southend, in Essex, a seat he inherited from his mother-in-law, the Countess of Iveagh. He had since the previous March been parliamentary private secretary to R. A. 'Rab' Butler, Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office and Conservative MP for Saffron Walden, in the corner of Essex diagonally opposite Southend. Butler was more significant than most ministers of his rank because the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax (Channon's uncle by marriage), was in the House of Lords, which meant Butler answered for the department in the Commons. Although the post gave Butler, who was only 35, experience far ahead of his years, it also had the misfortune of linking him specifically to Chamberlain's and Halifax's appeasement policy. This would affect perceptions of him for the rest of his career, and twice – in 1957 and 1963 – prevent him from becoming leader and Prime Minister.

Never in his own political career would Channon be so close to the heart of politics as in this period. However, in 1941 Butler was promoted to the presidency of the Board of Education, where he set about designing his revolutionary 1944 Education Act. There was never any question of Channon accompanying Butler to his new billet: the two men's relations were perfectly good, but the next step for Channon would either have been to move to a junior ministerial post or to revert to the back benches. Churchill did not regard him as suitable for promotion. Their social interactions had been somewhat artificial. Channon hated Churchill's son Randolph – 'he ought to be hamstrung . . . he has no redeeming qualities and his . . . heart beats with jealousy of me particularly. I will do him in eventually,' wrote Channon on 12 April 1939. But above all Channon's ultra-Chamberlainite,

pro-appeasement history would have created the greatest mistrust, and Channon did not have the intellectual rigour and record of administrative competence that made Butler useful to Churchill.

In this volume we see Channon first of all disillusioned by the eventual adoption of the path to war that he thought Chamberlain had avoided; and then by the failure of Chamberlain (who was, by early 1940, in any case mortally ill) to manage his party through the uneasy period of the Phoney War. He is slow to be reconciled to Churchill ('that angry bullfrog, slave of a prejudice' as he calls him on 3 October 1938), not least because of his continuing animosity towards Randolph, but also because of his distaste for many of the people with whom Churchill surrounds himself; and he is not slow to criticise him, or them, in the diaries. For example Duff Cooper, also on 3 October 1938, is 'plump, conceited, tiresome . . . a little strutting cunt-struck bantam cock'. Channon favoured appeasement partly because he felt Hitler's Germany was the only hope of keeping Stalin and Bolshevism at bay, something about which he regarded Britain as being too pusillanimous; and partly because, like many of his generation, the thought of another war horrified him.

Once Channon has ceased to be a PPS and has left the Foreign Office, politics becomes less important in his life, and he reverts more to the personality he exhibited before he went into the Commons, in which his social life becomes central to his existence. While the likes of Lady Cunard and Mrs Corrigan and their salons never left his orbit, they and others like them become more central to Channon's life once it is clear to him that he has gone as far in politics as he is likely to. And, indeed, it is the fact that Channon was, in political terms, to be something of an outsider in perpetuity that caused his diaries to be so candid and revealing as they are. It is hard to imagine his having the time to keep them had he held a demanding office of state, or to have taken the risk of stating what he really felt about his colleagues and the officials with whom he worked.

After 1941, and before his partner Peter Coats (see below) returns from the war, Channon is a somewhat lonely figure, searching for and finding friendship and companionship mainly in his political colleagues, notably his brother-in-law Alan Lennox-Boyd, but also Harold Balfour. Once he and his wife split up he is also left to contemplate the full effect of the absence of his son Paul, to whom he was unaffectedly devoted – 'my delectable dauphin' as he refers to him on 18 July 1939 – and who was evacuated to America in 1940. On 27 September 1942, a month after his friend and neighbour the Duke of Kent was killed on active service and with Channon still reeling from this, the diarist notes that 'Almost everything that I loved has disappeared in under three years'. But he is defiant nonetheless, his spirit to survive and will to live evident as ever. 'I have only my adorable dauphin, Peter [Coats], and a few other friends, my money and, as Cyrano put it, "*mon panache*"!

His loyalty to those friends, though, is striking, and it persists through good times and bad. He stands by Prince Fritz of Prussia, in exile in England by the Second World War, even though such a friendship is politically inexpedient. He anxiously follows the fate of Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, to whom he has been devoted since Oxford days, after the Prince is ousted from power. When Paul Latham, MP for Scarborough and Whitby, is imprisoned over a homosexual scandal, Channon is among the very few not to forsake him. Friendships can also modify prejudices. Though, for example, the diaries betray an anti-Semitic attitude sadly not untypical of his time and class, Channon is devoted to Leslie Hore-Belisha and he slowly comes round to the Amery family, forging a relationship with them that will become more obvious in Volume 3. Ultimately, when confronted with the wicked actions of the Nazis against the Jews, he concedes how appalling this is. On 17 December 1942, when Eden shared with the Commons details about the Nazi death camps, Channon has, at last, a *moment révélateur*:

Yesterday one despaired of democracy, it behaved so querulously; today it was sublime. Anthony read out a statement in regard to the extermination of Jews in East Europe; whereupon Jimmie de Rothschild rose and with immense dignity and his voice vibrating with emotion, spoke for five minutes in moving terms on the plight of these peoples. There were tears in his eyes and I feared that he might break down; the House caught the spirit and was deeply moved. Somebody suggested that we stand to pay our respects to those suffering peoples; and the House as a whole rose and stood for a few frozen seconds in silence. My back tingled – it was a fine moment

II

The key changes in Channon's private life in these years are the break-up of his marriage and his forming of a close attachment with another man. Channon met Peter Coats (1910–90) at a ball given by Lord Kemsley at Chandos House on 3 July 1939, two months before war broke out. Four days later they met again at Blenheim, and Channon was immediately, and powerfully, attracted to him, finding him 'a . . . Pierrot of charm and Aryan good looks'. Channon showed his regard in the way that came most naturally to him: he notes on 3 January 1940, six months after they had met, that he has spent £1,000 on him: equivalent to around £55,000 in 2021 prices.

Coats was an Old Etonian from a Scottish textile family, who had grown up in Ayrshire. Before the war he became popular in London society as an invaluable spare man, not only with the necessary looks and manners but also no threat to any of the young women who might meet him. He wrote for *House and Garden* in

the 1930s; he was an officer in the Territorial Army and as such was mobilised on the eve of war; and he spent that war in the Middle East, North Africa and India. He was recruited to the staff of General Sir Archibald Wavell (later Field Marshal Earl Wavell) and served as his aide-de-camp when he was Commander-in-Chief, Middle East and as his Comptroller when he was Viceroy of India. When Coats was demobilised in 1946 he went to live with Channon in Belgrave Square, served on *Vogue's* editorial staff and worked in interior decoration and garden design; he survived Channon by more than thirty years. Never as well regarded in London society as Channon, and seen by some of Channon's friends as rather leeching off him, Coats was known as 'Petticoats', or by the most waspish as 'Mrs Chips'. However, Coats cannot be faulted in his efforts to protect Channon's posthumous reputation, and his loyalty to him was not in question.

In the highly abridged first published version of these diaries, prepared by Coats, edited by Robert Rhodes James and published in 1967, the end of the Channons' marriage is presented as a vague matter of fact, with an almost complete absence of detail. In the unexpurgated diaries, the realities of the disintegration of the Channon marriage are laid out long before Coats enters Channon's life. On 3 October 1938 Channon writes of his wife that 'she is in a highly inflammable state, and I try my very utmost to do everything not only to soothe her, but to make her happier. *Que faire?*' Three weeks later, on 25 October, he writes: 'Honor in a depressing, gloomy mood which cuts my heart and drenches my hopes.' On 29 October he says that 'for Honor, I would do anything', and his sincerity is not to be doubted. But Lady Honor, who was 29 and twelve years his junior, was bored with him and had already, as recounted in Volume 1, had adventures with a priapic Hungarian count and a ski-instructor. A month later he is close to admitting defeat: 'She is eccentric, undemonstrative, yet I love her still. I don't think she loves me now.' After a miserable Christmas spent with the Guinnesses, Channon records (27 December 1938) that 'she wants to go skiing again to Switzerland at once and spend three months there. She will end badly: there is something rather brutal about it, so crude and fierce and she is *mal-entourée* there. I am convinced of that ...' On 8 January 1939 he notes: 'Honor in an endocrine mood, hard, selfish, uninterested, tonight. Said she would never have more children: I must look elsewhere for them. Evening ended on an unpleasant note.' Six months later, days after he met Coats and with Lady Honor away on a July skiing expedition, he records (13 July 1939): 'A very curt, cold, brief little letter from Honor. I am sad and apprehensive about her: but *quoi faire?* I fear trouble ultimately.'

As I mentioned in the introduction to Volume 1, Rhodes James never saw Channon's original manuscript, but worked on his edition using a document prepared over several years, after Channon's death in October 1958, that Coats distilled from the manuscript. This document was heavily abridged and sanitised, not least because of the laws of libel and assertions Channon had made about many people who, at the time of publication in 1967, were very much still alive

and holding serious public or social positions. In addition to these prolific acts of sanitisation there were two major ones. Coats went to pains to conceal the truth about the end of Channon's marriage and about his relationship with him, and for two very good reasons. First, Lady Honor Svejdar (as she had become after her second marriage) was still alive, and indeed was sent the proofs to read and to amend where she felt necessary; second, Coats (who hardly features in the Rhodes James edition, despite having been central to Channon's life for its last nineteen years) appears not to have desired the recognition he was due for the part he played in that life. Channon is never explicit about his relationship with Coats, whether in this volume or in the subsequent one, but it is highly probable that it was at times an actively homosexual one: though in the period covered in this volume the two men were largely separated by Coats's absence overseas on military service. However, the relationship between them was for its duration stigmatised by its illegality, illegality that ended only in the year Rhodes James's edition was published. Coats, who was a fastidious man, was certainly not ready to reveal that relationship to a wider world, even had Channon's family wanted him to.

It was generally supposed, before the publication of this volume, that Coats's arrival in Channon's life was what broke up his marriage. The diaries show this was not true. Lady Honor's various infidelities began to be catalogued in Volume 1; in this volume she finally leaves Channon for a horse dealer, or horse-coper, from a neighbouring village in Essex. There were hints in Volume 1 of Channon's romantic interest in some men, notably Viscount Gage and Prince Paul of Yugoslavia. He never made it clear in Volume 1 whether these relationships went beyond a romantic dream, and whether any sexual activity took place. Once he meets Coats he seems to become explicitly bisexual; Channon describes without any inhibition his feelings for Coats, and how important Coats is in his life, but he also writes sometimes of how alluring he finds some of the women he meets. As will become clear in the third and final volume, his sexual journey still had some way to go.

III

It may be helpful if I say a little about my editorial methods. I have attempted to give everyone who appears in the diaries a footnote: this has not been possible in some cases for those who did not have a public life and who are not easily traceable. I have, for the most part, repeated footnotes from Volume 1 for those whose biographical details also appear there, and for the most significant characters there is a *dramatis personae* at the start of this volume. Footnotes ending in an asterisk (*) are concise versions of longer footnotes to be found in Volume 1. In deciding what to leave out, I have sought to leave in everything of historical significance, and anything that illustrates important developments in

Channon's character or the characters of his close associates and family. I have usually left out repetitions, lists of those attending social events, and so on: this volume contains around 440,000 words of Channon's texts, representing over three-quarters of what he recorded in that period. These early years of the war were the years in which he wrote most. Some of the ellipses in the diaries are for a series of words that are indecipherable; where an individual word is illegible, this is specified in parentheses. Sometimes Channon uses ellipses himself, and these are presented by three dots. Where I have eliminated material I have indicated this with an ellipsis of four dots. Channon's spelling was good, and I have silently corrected his rare errors. My correction of his very occasional grammatical mistakes is usually silent too.

As with Volume 1, it is important to remind readers that this is a historical document, and must be treated as such. Homosexuality, divorce and promiscuity, all of which feature in the diaries, offended and outraged many of Channon's generation. Casual racism, to which few paid close attention until after the Second World War, is expressed with less restraint. Channon sometimes uses deeply offensive terms about, for example, black and Jewish people that are rightly condemned today, and would indeed have been distasteful to many when he wrote them; some of his remarks about Jews, deeply unpleasant in any context, are all the more so given the horrors being executed in Germany and the countries it had conquered at the very time Channon was writing. As with such incidences in Volume 1, the Trustees, editor and publisher deliberated at length whether to include or exclude such passages from this edition. After careful consideration, it was decided to leave them in, while seeking, through the footnotes, to contextualise them. The diaries are a valuable historical document, and it was felt the text should not be falsified to create a sanitised and therefore unhistorical and anachronistic picture not just of how Channon wrote and spoke, but of how many others in the society in which he lived also wrote and spoke.

I have censored nothing except one detail that adds nothing to historical knowledge but would cause distress to people who are still alive. Where Channon has made a disobliging reference to or claim about someone or something that is known to be wrong, this is pointed out in a footnote. It has not been the intention or desire of the editor, Trustees or publishers to offend or misrepresent anyone, dead or alive, but to try to achieve that often elusive aim of history, to search for and establish the truth – which, the Bible tells us, is great and shall prevail. One can only hope that sharing Chips Channon's account of these five years, like the rest of his diaries, makes some contribution to that truth, as well as entertaining those who read him, and greatly illuminating the age in which he lived and the people he knew.

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Editor's Acknowledgements

My first debt is to the Trustees of the literary estate of Sir Henry Channon – his grandchildren Georgia Fanshawe and Henry Channon, and Robin Howard – for asking me to edit these *Diaries*. I could not have wanted to work with more considerate, helpful and understanding people, and they, and Katie Channon, have made the entire project a huge pleasure for me. To edit a complete edition had been a much sought-after task by generations of writers and historians ever since the heavily abridged and redacted *Diaries* appeared in 1967, and I am sensible of the honour done me in inviting me to take up this highly enjoyable and fascinating challenge.

I am also deeply grateful to Hugo Vickers, who generously made available to me his enormous expertise in the social and royal history of the period to help me avoid either lacunae or egregious errors in the footnotes, for reading the proofs with great care and being available on many occasions to answer enquiries I made of him. Such errors as remain are entirely mine. Sue Brealey also read the proofs to great effect with her customary meticulousness. Emily Ward made a crucial introduction and Shannon Mullen suggested an important refinement to the presentation of the work. The Trustees employed a team of painstaking transcribers who made a digital version of a manuscript, over the three volumes, of around two million words, which made my task as Editor infinitely easier than it would otherwise have been, and I thank them sincerely. At the publisher's, Amy Musgrave was responsible for the superb design of the cover and Peter Ward designed the text; David Milner copy-edited the manuscript with exemplary skill, and Jonathan Wadman's proof reading was of the same calibre. Alex Bell created a superb index.

My thanks, too, to my editor and publisher, Nigel Wilcockson, for seeing this project through. My agent, Georgina Capel, who also acted for the Trustees, was tireless in her support of us and as always she has my profound gratitude. Above all, my work in editing the *Diaries* was eased and supported from beginning to end by my wife Diana, and I valued too the constant contribution to my morale by my sons, Fred and Johnnie. And Chips – with whom I feel on sobriquet terms after all we have been through together – has been an enriching presence in my life for the last three years. I salute his memory for having the wit to write his magnificent *Diaries*, and to write them so well. I hope he would find the finished product, to use one of his favourite terms, *réussi*.

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Simon Heffer
Great Leighs
15 April 2021

Dramatis Personae

Names are given first in the form most commonly adopted in the diaries.

Family

Lady Honor Channon (1909–76). Honor Dorothy Mary Guinness, Channon's wife from 1933 and eldest daughter of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh.

Paul Channon (1935–2007). Henry Paul Guinness Channon, Channon's son. Educated at Eton and, like his father, Christ Church, Oxford. While still a second-year undergraduate he succeeded his father as Conservative MP for Southend West, a seat he held from 1959 (when he was Baby of the House) until raised to the peerage as Baron Kelvedon (life peer) in 1997. Like his father, he acted as parliamentary private secretary to R. A. Butler and served in junior ministerial jobs in Edward Heath's administration. Under Mrs Thatcher he served as Minister of State for the Civil Service, the Arts and then for Trade and Industry before joining the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Trade in 1986. He became Transport Secretary in 1987 and served until 1989. He married, in 1963, Ingrid Olivia Georgia Wyndham, who had been married to his cousin Jonathan Guinness, 3rd Baron Moyne.

Lord Iveagh (1874–1967). Rupert Edward Cecil Lee Guinness, 2nd Earl of Iveagh, Channon's father-in-law. He succeeded his own father as Chairman of the Guinness brewery, holding the post for thirty-five years and overseeing a period of great expansion and success in the business. He was also a distinguished agriculturalist who greatly improved his estate at Elveden in Suffolk; part of his extensive philanthropy (in both Britain and Ireland) was to fund agricultural research. He was awarded the Garter in 1955 and made a fellow of the Royal Society in 1964.

Lady Iveagh (1881–1966). Lady Gwendolen Florence Mary Onslow, wife of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh, and Channon's mother-in-law. Daughter of the 4th Earl of Onslow, she succeeded her husband as MP for Southend from 1927 until 1935.

Patsy Guinness (1918–2001). Lady Patricia Florence Susan Guinness, second daughter of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh and Channon's sister-in-law.

Brigid Guinness (1920–95). Lady Brigid Katharine Rachel Guinness, third and youngest daughter of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh, and Channon's sister-in-law.

Close friends, associates and political colleagues

Attlee, Clement Richard (1883–1967). Led the Labour Party from 1935 to 1955, was Lord Privy Seal in Churchill's coalition administration from 1940 to 1942, Deputy Prime Minister from 1942 to 1945 and Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951.

Balfour, Harold Harington (1897–1988). A regular officer in the RAF, and before that a fighter ace in the Royal Flying Corps, in which he reached the rank of major and

- won the Military Cross, and Bar. He was Conservative MP for the Isle of Thanet from 1929 to 1945, and Under-Secretary of State for Air from 1938 to 1944. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Balfour of Inchrye in 1945.
- Buccleuch, Molly (1900–93). Vreda Esther Mary ‘Molly’ Lascelles married in 1921 Walter Montagu Douglas Scott (*vide infra*) and in 1935 became Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry.
- Buccleuch, Walter (1894–1973). Walter John Montagu Douglas Scott, by courtesy Earl of Dalkeith from 1914 to 1935, when he succeeded his father as 8th Duke of Buccleuch and 10th Duke of Queensberry. He married, in 1921, Vreda Esther Mary Lascelles (1900–93), daughter of Major William Lascelles and granddaughter of the 10th Duke of St Albans.
- Butler, Richard Austen (‘Rab’) (1902–82). One of the most influential politicians of the mid-twentieth century, though his support for appeasement and unbridled quick wit helped ensure he never became leader of the Conservative Party, despite being in the frame in 1957 to succeed Anthony Eden, and in 1963 to succeed Macmillan. MP for Saffron Walden from 1929 to 1965, he would, as under-secretary at the Foreign Office at the time of Munich, play a significant part in Channon’s political career. He went on to be a great reforming Minister of Education from 1941 to 1945. He married, firstly, in 1926, Sydney Elizabeth Courtauld (1902–54), and, secondly, in 1959, Mollie Courtauld (*née* Montgomerie) (1908–2009), widow of his first wife’s cousin.
- Chamberlain, (Arthur) Neville (1869–1940). Son of Joseph Chamberlain and half-brother of Sir Austen, he was Conservative MP for Birmingham Ladywood from 1918 to 1929 and for Birmingham Edgbaston from 1929 to 1940. From 1922 onwards he held various Cabinet posts, notably as Minister for Health from 1924 to 1929 and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1931 to 1937. He succeeded Stanley Baldwin as Prime Minister in 1937, serving until 1940. He led the country into the Second World War, his policy of appeasing Hitler – exemplified by the Munich Agreement – having failed, but resigned in May 1940. He remained leader of the Conservative Party during Churchill’s premiership, until his death in November 1940. Channon admired him enormously.
- Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer (1874–1965). Elected as a Conservative MP for Oldham in 1900, he crossed the floor in 1904 to become a Liberal, before rejoining the Conservatives as MP for Epping from 1924 to 1945 and for Woodford from 1945 to 1964. He held numerous Cabinet posts from 1908 to 1929, and was a vigorous opponent of appeasement during the 1930s (hence, in part, Channon’s hostility to him). After Neville Chamberlain’s resignation in 1940, Churchill became Prime Minister, serving in this role until 1945 and from 1951 to 1955. He married in 1908 Clementine Ogilvy Hozier (1885–1977).
- Coats, Peter (1910–90). A garden writer, photographer and designer, he met Channon in 1939 and became an intimate friend. During the Second World War, he served as aide-de-camp to General Wavell.
- Cooper, Lady Diana (1892–1986). Diana Orinda Winifred Maud Manners, by courtesy Lady Diana Manners, the youngest daughter of the 8th Duke of Rutland, though

probably the daughter of Harry Cust, one of the Souls, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and Conservative MP. Celebrated as one of the most beautiful women in England, she was a member of the Coterie, her generation's equivalent of the Souls, where she met Duff Cooper, whom she married much against the wishes of her family. She appeared in some silent films and was asked to play the Madonna in Karl Vollmöller's wordless stage spectacle *The Miracle*, directed by Max Reinhardt, to huge acclaim: she toured the production for twelve years. The money she made allowed Cooper to enter politics and her many absences facilitated his womanising, which she tolerated. When he was ennobled as Viscount Norwich she continued to be known as Lady Diana Cooper, on the grounds that 'Norwich' sounded to her like 'porridge'.

Cooper, (Alfred) Duff (1890–1954). Joined the Diplomatic Service in 1913 and served in the Grenadier Guards for the last eighteen months of the First World War, being awarded the DSO. He married Lady Diana Manners in 1919 but was a career womaniser. He became Conservative MP for Oldham in 1924 but lost in 1929, returning to Parliament having won the Westminster St George's by-election in 1931, holding the seat until 1945. He quickly attained junior office and in 1935 became Secretary of State for War. In 1937 he became First Lord of the Admiralty but resigned in 1938 over the Munich agreement. Churchill deployed him in various roles between 1940 and 1944, when he became Ambassador to Paris, a post he held until 1948. He was knighted in 1948 and raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Norwich in 1952.

Cripps, (Richard) Stafford (1889–1952). Labour MP for Bristol East from 1931 to 1950. He briefly served as Solicitor-General in the 1931 Labour government, and was knighted. He held several posts in the coalition Cabinet from 1942 to 1945 and in the Attlee government, and was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1947 to 1950. He was a nephew of Beatrice Webb and made a reputation as one of the party's foremost intellectuals.

Cunard, Emerald (1872–1948). Maud Alice Burke, born in San Francisco, married in 1895 Sir Bache Cunard, 3rd Bt (1851–1925), grandson of the shipping line's founder. They lived largely apart from 1911, Cunard basing himself in Leicestershire where he enjoyed field sports. In London with their daughter Nancy Clara (1896–1965), Lady Cunard – who after her husband's death became known as 'Emerald' – established one of the leading salons of the era, which thrived until the Second World War. After separating from her husband she became the mistress of Sir Thomas Beecham, the conductor, and funded many of his musical projects.

Dufferin, Basil (1909–45). Basil Sheridan Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, by courtesy Earl of Ava, until he succeeded his father as 4th Marquess of Dufferin and Ava in 1930. Perpetuating the family curse of premature death (his father died in a plane crash; one uncle perished in the Second Boer War and another in the First World War), he was killed when a Japanese shell landed on him in Burma in March 1945.

Dufferin, Maureen (1907–98). Maureen Constance Guinness, a cousin of Channon's wife Honor, married Basil Dufferin in 1930.

Dunglass, Alec (1903–95). Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home, by courtesy Lord Dunglass from 1918 to 1951, when he succeeded his father as 14th Earl of Home. He

renounced his hereditary peerage in 1963 to become leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister, serving until 1964. He was Conservative MP for Lanark from 1931 to 1945 and from 1950 to 1951, and for Kinross and Western Perthshire from 1963 to 1974. He was Commonwealth Secretary from 1955 to 1960 and Foreign Secretary from 1960 to 1963 and from 1970 to 1974. He became Chamberlain's PPS in 1936 and served until 1940. He was created Baron Home of the Hirsel (life peerage) in 1974.

Eden, (Robert) Anthony (1897–1977). Son of Sir William Eden, Bt, of County Durham. He won the Military Cross in the Great War and became in 1918 the youngest brigade major in the Army. He was MP for Warwick and Leamington from 1923 to 1957 and became Lord Privy Seal in 1933. Later in 1935 he became Foreign Secretary, until resigning over appeasement in 1938 (hence, in part, Channon's hostility to him). Churchill appointed him Secretary of State for War in 1940 and, later that year, Foreign Secretary. He returned to that post in 1951 and was Prime Minister from 1955 to 1957. He became a Knight of the Garter in 1954 and was raised to the peerage as 1st Earl of Avon in 1961.

Halifax, Lord (1881–1959). Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, son of the 2nd Viscount Halifax. He was a fellow of All Souls from 1903 to 1910, then MP for Ripon from 1910 to 1925, becoming a Cabinet minister as President of the Board of Education in 1922 and, from 1924, Minister of Agriculture. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Irwin in 1925 on accepting the Viceroyalty of India, which he held from 1926 until 1931, and succeeded his father as 3rd Viscount Halifax in 1934. He became a Knight of the Garter in 1931. He served again at Education from 1932 to 1935, then as Secretary of State for War from 1935 and as Foreign Secretary in 1938, when he became closely identified with appeasement. He almost became Prime Minister in 1940; but instead went as Ambassador to the United States from 1941 to 1946. He married, in 1908, Lady Dorothy Evelyn Augusta Onslow (1885–1976), daughter of the 4th Earl of Onslow, and later Channon's aunt by marriage. Halifax was advanced to an earldom in 1944. For many years Alexandra 'Baba' Curzon was his mistress.

Henderson, Nevile (1882–1942). Joined the Foreign Office in 1905 and served as Minister Plenipotentiary to Yugoslavia from 1929 to 1935, as Ambassador to Argentina from 1935 to 1937, and as Ambassador to Germany from 1937 to 1939. He was knighted in 1932. A firm believer in appeasement, and highly sympathetic to German nationalism, he played a significant role in persuading Chamberlain not to provoke Hitler into a war. Against the advice of the Foreign Office and to the fury of Robert Vansittart, Henderson attended the Nuremberg Rally in September 1937; and after attending the next one, in September 1938, strongly advised Chamberlain to enter into the Munich Agreement, and took Germany's part in arguments with the Foreign Office up to the declaration of war.

Hoare, Samuel John Gurney ('Sam') (1880–1959). Succeeded his father as 2nd Bt in 1915. He was Conservative MP for Chelsea from 1910 to 1944 and successively Secretary of State for Air (three times), Secretary of State for India, Foreign Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty, Home Secretary and Lord Privy Seal. An appeaser, he was sent to Madrid by Churchill as Ambassador to Spain in 1940. He was raised to the peerage as Viscount Templewood in 1944.

- Hore-Belisha, (Isaac) Leslie (1893–1957). Son of Jacob Isaac Belisha, he came from a Sephardic Jewish family that had settled in Manchester in the eighteenth century. Elected Liberal MP for Plymouth Devonport in 1923, he aligned himself with Sir John Simon at the time of the formation of the National Government in 1931, and in 1932 became Financial Secretary to the Treasury. Appointed Minister of Transport in 1934, he invented the Belisha beacon to highlight the existence of zebra crossings, and took trunk roads under the control of central government to help develop an improved national road network. He was Secretary of State for War from 1937 to 1940, when he was sacked because of his poor relations with senior officers. One of Channon's closest friends.
- Kent, Duchess of (1906–68). Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark, daughter of Prince Nicholas of Greece. She married the Duke of Kent in 1934.
- Kent, Duke of (1902–42). Prince George Edward Alexander Edmund, fourth son of King George V and Queen Mary, created Duke of Kent 1934; married in 1934 Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark. Although known before his marriage to have had a number of mistresses he was also believed to be bisexual, and became one of Channon's closest friends. He was killed on active service with the RAF in 1942 when his flying boat crashed into a hillside in Caithness.
- Lennox-Boyd, Alan (1904–83). Conservative MP for Mid-Bedfordshire from 1931 to 1960, he served as Minister of Transport from 1952 to 1954 and Colonial Secretary from 1954 to 1959. He then became managing director of Arthur Guinness and Sons, a post he held until 1967. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Boyd of Merton in 1960. Married to Channon's sister-in-law, Patricia Florence Susan Guinness (1918–2001), he was one of Channon's most intimate friends.
- Llewellyn, John Jestyn ('Jay') (1893–1957). MP for Uxbridge from 1929 to 1945; he held several posts in the wartime coalition government and was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Llewellyn in 1945. A good friend of Channon's.
- Lloyd George, David (1863–1945). Liberal MP for Caernarvon Boroughs from 1890 to 1945, Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1916 to 1922, and of Ireland from 1916 to 1921, and leader of the Liberal Party from 1926 to 1931. Largely a spent force by the later 1930s, he was raised to an earldom in 1945 but died before he could take his seat in the House of Lords.
- Londonderry, Lady (1878–1959). Edith Helen 'Circe' Chaplin, daughter of the 1st Viscount Chaplin, married Viscount Castlereagh (later 7th Marquess of Londonderry) in 1899. There was much talk in society about her friendship with James Ramsay MacDonald, the widowed leader of the Labour Party; and she was a passionate gardener.
- Londonderry, Lord (1878–1949). Charles Stewart Henry Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 7th Marquess of Londonderry. He was appointed a Knight of the Garter in 1919 and served as Secretary of State for Air from 1931 to 1935. He went out of favour because of his close links with, and apparent regard for, the Nazis in Germany.
- Margesson, (Henry) David Reginald (1890–1965). Conservative MP from 1922 to 1942. From 1931 to 1940 he was government Chief Whip, renowned for his occasionally menacing and bullying approach, and from 1940 to 1942 was Secretary of State for

War. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Margesson in 1942, having been sacked from the Cabinet and replaced by his Permanent Secretary.

Morrison, Herbert Stanley (1888–1965). A local Labour politician in London before being elected to Parliament in 1923 for Hackney South, he lost his seat in 1924 but returned in 1929, serving as Minister of Transport. He lost his seat in 1931 and resumed a career in London politics, becoming leader of the London County Council in 1934. His legacy was substantial: he created London Transport, established the Green Belt and oversaw the building of numerous housing estates in the inner London suburbs. Returned to Parliament in 1935, he sat for Hackney South until 1945 and then for Lewisham East from 1945 to 1950 and Lewisham South from 1950 to 1959. He was briefly Minister of Supply in Churchill's wartime coalition, then Home Secretary from 1940 to 1945. He was deputy leader of the Labour Party from 1945 to 1956, and served as Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Council from 1945 to 1951, then briefly Foreign Secretary. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Morrison of Lambeth (life peer) in 1959. For all his success, he was widely disliked by both opponents and colleagues.

Morrison, William Shepherd ('Shakes') (1893–1961). A Scotsman, he was educated in Edinburgh, and was MP for Cirencester and Tewkesbury from 1929 to 1959, as a Conservative until 1951 and then as Speaker of the House of Commons. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Dunrossil in 1959, and served as Governor-General of Australia from 1960 until his sudden death a year later. He held several ministerial posts, culminating in the Postmaster-Generalship from 1940 to 1942, but lacked the trust of Churchill and so failed to achieve the high expectations Channon and others had of him. He was known as 'Shakes' because of his fondness for quoting Shakespeare in his speeches. He married, in 1924, Catherine Allison Swan (1898–1983).

Prince Paul of Yugoslavia (1893–1976). Prince Regent of Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) from 1934 to 1941 during the minority of Peter II. He and Channon met at Oxford and become close friends. He was the nephew of King Peter I and married Princess Olga of Greece and Denmark (1903–97), sister-in-law of another of Channon's close friends, the Duke of Kent. After treating with the Germans in 1941 Paul was forced from Yugoslavia and forbidden ever to return; the post-war Communist regime stripped him of his property and proclaimed him an enemy of the state. Until 1945 the British authorities held him in Kenya under house arrest. Serbia rehabilitated him posthumously in 2011, after which he was reburied with Princess Olga and their son Nicholas.

Simon, John Allsebrook (1873–1954). Son of a Manchester Congregationalist minister, he was a remarkable survivor: Liberal MP for Walthamstow from 1906 to 1918 and for Spen Valley from 1922 to 1940. He was Solicitor-General, Attorney-General, Home Secretary twice, Foreign Secretary (at the time of the visit to Hitler), Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Chancellor. He was remarkably unpopular with parliamentary colleagues. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Simon in 1940.

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Thomas, James Henry ('Jim') (1874–1949). General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen from 1916 to 1931 and Labour MP for Derby from 1910 to 1936. He

served as Colonial Secretary in the first Labour government, as Lord Privy Seal from 1929 to 1930, Dominions Secretary from 1930 to 1935, and Colonial Secretary again from 1935 to 1936. Much liked by King George V, Thomas was forced to resign from the government and Parliament in 1936 after being accused of giving inside information on proposed tax changes to stock-market investors.

Wavell, Archibald Percival (1883–1950). A career soldier, who, at the beginning of the Second World War, was General Officer Commanding in Palestine, before briefly being given Southern Command in Britain and, in February 1940, becoming Commander-in-Chief Middle East. In 1941 he became C-in-C in India, and was promoted to field marshal in 1943. Peter Coats served as his aide-de-camp, and he became good friends with Channon.

Wedderburn, Jim (1902–83). Henry James Scrymgeour-Wedderburn, Unionist MP for West Renfrewshire from 1931 to 1945. He held junior ministerial office in the Chamberlain, Churchill and Macmillan administrations. In 1952 the House of Lords upheld his claim to the dormant viscounty of Dudhope and Scrymgeour in the peerage of Scotland and, the following year, to the dormant earldom of Dundee and Inverkeithing, when he became 11th Earl of Dundee.

Wood, (Howard) Kingsley (1881–1943). Son of a Methodist minister, he was an insurance lawyer – of such eminence that he was knighted for his work in 1918 – and was Conservative MP for Woolwich West from 1918 to 1943. A close confidant of Neville Chamberlain, he held office from 1931 to 1943 as, successively, Postmaster-General, Minister of Health, Secretary of State for Air, Lord Privy Seal and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

1938

This volume of the diary opens on the day after Neville Chamberlain's return from his meeting with Hitler at Munich, at which he believed he had secured 'peace in our time'.

SATURDAY 1ST OCTOBER

Chamberlain has had more ovations. He is the man of the age . . . Duff [Cooper] has resigned in a well-written letter. The PM immediately accepted the resignation. All this hinted to him in very plain language that his services were no longer required. We shall hear more of this . . . personally my reactions are mixed. I am sorry for Diana [Cooper]: they give up £5,000 per annum, and a lovely house – and for what? Duff thinks he will make money at literature? How? His Haig was a failure and his much-heralded Talleyrand, while highly readable, was really only a condensed cut from the famous four-vol. life of Talleyrand.¹

The House of Stanley is unfortunate; poor Edward² is slowly dying of a malignant disease; Lord Derby³ is ill from anxiety and last night Portia⁴ (drunk, as usual, I am told) fell and broke some of her joints. The great fortune, complicatedly divided, will suffer enormously if either Lord Derby, or dear red-nosed Edward, should die.

Emerald [Cunard] had a heart attack and nearly died a fortnight ago. She is better now and rang me up to gossip.

SUNDAY 2ND OCTOBER

KELVEDON⁵

A miserable wet day: now that there is no war one feels *désœuvré*,⁶ and weak. A big week before me. I fear the poor divine PM will have to face a battery of critics

1 Cooper's book on Field Marshal Earl Haig had been published in 1935. The *Spectator* review described it as 'a model of elegant biography, though it did not go very deep'. The life of Talleyrand to which Channon refers is presumably that by the duc de Broglie, published in 1891. He later says it had three volumes.

2 Edward Montagu Cavendish Stanley (1894–1938), by courtesy Lord Stanley, eldest son of the 17th Earl of Derby (*vide infra*). He had been appointed Dominions Secretary five months previously.*

3 Edward George Villiers Stanley (1865–1948), 17th Earl of Derby, Conservative politician and diplomat.*

4 Sibyl Louise Beatrix 'Portia' Cadogan (1893–1969), wife of Lord Stanley.*

5 Kelvedon Hall, the Channons' country house in Essex.

6 At a loose end.

in the House of Commons next week. The Iveaghs plus Brigid¹ came to dine *en route* from Elveden² to London. All very charming. Much political talk. I asked them to warn 'Master' (as we call Lord Halifax) that there is still an attempt, or rather a wish, in the FO to sabotage him and the PM.

MONDAY 3RD OCTOBER

5 BELGRAVE SQUARE³

Honor⁴ and I motored up and I rushed to the Foreign Office. The storm breaks over the government this afternoon for having preserved peace!

I was out of sorts and unsuccessful. With great difficulty I obtained a ticket for the Commons for my mother-in-law, who wanted to hear the PM. As I was waiting for her I ran into Eric Duncannon,⁵ who wanted something to eat. I took him to the Strangers' dining room, and in the course of our talk he admitted that he hoped for Chichester, to succeed Jack Courtauld.⁶ A gorgeous seat, better even than Southend. One day, but not at the present rate, Eric and I may be the only Tories left in the H of C. When my mother-in-law arrived there was no ticket. In a frenzy I rushed about and at last found her one.

The big debate began: I could scarcely control my rage against the wicked insurgents who from ambition, stupidity and hatred of Chamberlain, would now upset the govt. They are led by Winston Churchill, that angry bullfrog, slave of a prejudice, and, of course, that ass Anthony Eden who is one of the most unaware, ill-informed people I have ever known. It is a sad reflection on democracy that he is still popular with a certain section. Actually he is being used by the communists – communism working upwards!

The crowded House was restless, and when the PM took his seat directly in front of me, there was cheering, but not the hysterical enthusiasm of last Wednesday. Duff Cooper rose from the seat traditionally kept for retiring, resigning ministers, the third corner seat immediately below the gangway . . . my plump, conceited, tiresome Duff. He did not impress the House; his arguments were flat, inconclusive, although he had marshalled them, by committing them to memory. Only once he paused. The House took the speech as a dignified farewell from a man whom they are tired of. Duff is not a parliamentarian: he is a little

1 Lady Brigid Katharine Rachel Guinness (1920–95), third and youngest daughter of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh, sister of Channon's wife Honor (qv).

2 The Iveaghs' estate in Suffolk.

3 The Channons' London house.

4 Lady Honor Dorothy Mary Guinness (1909–76), eldest daughter of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh (qv). She and Channon married in 1933.

5 Frederick Edward Neuflyze 'Eric' Ponsonby (1913–93), by courtesy Viscount Duncannon from 1920 to 1956, when he succeeded his father as 10th Earl of Bessborough. He was a diplomat and a banker.

6 John Sewell Courtauld (1880–1942) won the MC in the Great War and sat as Conservative MP for Chichester from 1924 until his death. Duncannon did not succeed him.

strutting cunt-struck bantam cock, outrageously conceited and bad-mannered. I have tried unsuccessfully (and at times with fleeting success) to like him now for twenty years. He has qualities, a wonderfully retentive memory for passages in literature, and he is quick to see the point. But he is charmless, unkind even to Diana, and a bore. His real defect is a lack of imagination, and thus he is a poor writer, although his English is distinguished. Diana was in the Weeping Gallery, Mrs FitzRoy's¹ enclosure, as were the Kents.² He was over the clock. I met the Duchess of Kent coming out of Mrs FitzRoy's enclosure and we had a chat. She was looking radiantly sad, as she often does.

The PM followed Duff's rather contradictory personal explanation; the PM was calm, and parliamentary; but he was tired and Wednesday's glow had gone. We settled down to an endless debate – the greatest man of all time will hear himself abused; but Attlee who answered him was mild and unconvincing. The Opposition fear a general election which would wipe them out of existence. Eden followed; he was charmless, looked old, and almost wicked. His glamour has gone, and he now shares the St Helena³ bench (third below the gangway) with his old enemy Duff Cooper. There was always jealousy and antipathy between them, and I have cleverly and unsuspectingly played on it, succeeding in pitting Diana C against Eden, which, as he is so impersonal, so humanless [*sic*], was not difficult. Will they now sink their differences? Anthony made a platitudinous address, which was neither violent or interesting. Jim Thomas, Anthony's jackal, watched and listened with rapt admiration. Jim T is now the Chief Whip of the Shadow government, of which Winston is the Prime Minister and Arch Intriguer. I met Winston in the lavatory behind the Rialto⁴ and forced him to talk to me, making a few remarks praising his nephew, Johnny Churchill's work here at Kelvedon. Winston, who for a great man confuses his personal relations with his politics to a surprising degree, was half-nettled, half-disarmed, and we chatted with amiability. That ass Ronnie Cartland,⁵ whom I personally like, I overheard say to Grenfell,⁶ the Labour member, that the Con govt had not gone to war because we feared our dividends would suffer!! He is a sex-starved, intense, honest, narrow, dangerous little boy whose only enjoyment is voting against the govt.

1 Muriel Douglas-Pennant (1869–1962), married in 1928 the Speaker of the House of Commons, Edward FitzRoy (qv).

2 Prince George, Duke of Kent (1902–42), and Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark, Duchess of Kent (1906–68).*

3 Napoleon's place of exile.

4 Slang for the Commons' Members' Lobby.

5 John Ronald Hamilton Cartland (1907–40), Conservative MP, anti-appeaser and brother of the romantic novelist Barbara Cartland (qv). He was killed at the Battle of Dunkirk.

6 David Rhys 'Dai' Grenfell (1881–1968) was Labour MP for Gower from 1922 to 1959. He had become a coal miner at the age of 12 but put himself through night school to obtain the qualifications needed to join the management of a mine. He served as Secretary for Mines at the Board of Trade from 1940 to 1945.

I rang up Honor at dinner time, we are staying in London tonight, and was horrified to hear that Dr Law¹ had prescribed a three-months' trip abroad. He wants her to leave immediately; otherwise he will not be responsible for her nervous consequences. Certainly she is in a highly inflammable state, and I try my very utmost to do everything not only to soothe her, but to make her happier. *Que faire?*² . . . I had no dinner, sat on the bench, and worried about my wife. The House buzzed with intrigue, but I bet that there would not be a serious revolt against the govt, at least not a revolt which would be reflected in the division lobbies . . . Yet already one hears the pattering footsteps of the Francophiles, who wanted a war – even when France did not. Most of these people come from the same group, London society; they are brought up in the Quai d'Orsay³ traditions, and are enraged that they are no longer the ruling group in the H of C. They will blow their foolish heads off this week for their collapse . . . Sam Hoare wound up for the govt in the best speech he has made in the present parliament.

TUESDAY 4TH OCTOBER

Life is too full, too nervous. In the rush of the FO work there is my poor wife who is ill, nervous, worn out (from doing nothing). Today she went to Holker⁴ to stay with the Cavendishes, as Diana Cavendish,⁵ ex-Boothby, who has made a mess of her own life, is now trying to make a mess of Honor's. I saw my mother-in-law at the H of C and we had a confidential talk; she, too, is upset about Honor. Perhaps she had better go away and ski – but there is no snow. I then led Lady Iveagh to the Lords; in the lobby we met Lady Halifax, very chic and gay, walking with George Gage.⁶ I followed them into the Chamber and heard Lord Baldwin⁷ make his maiden speech. He spoke from the front bench below the gangway; wearing a grey suit, leaning on his hickory stick, he looked the country gentleman and his

1 Their general practitioner.

2 What's to be done?

3 The French Foreign Ministry.

4 A property of the Cavendish family near Grange-over-Sands in Cumbria.

5 Diana Cavendish (1909–92), daughter of Lord Richard Cavendish and niece of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, married in 1935 Robert Boothby (qv), whose mistress, Lady Dorothy Macmillan, was her first cousin. In 1971 she would become the third wife of Viscount Gage (*vide infra*).

6 Henry Rainald 'George' Gage (1895–1982) had succeeded his father as 6th Viscount Gage in 1912. He had fought in the Coldstream Guards during the Great War, reaching the rank of captain, and became an active peer for the Conservative Party, and a courtier. In 1931 he married Imogen Grenfell*, daughter of Lord and Lady Desborough*. Channon and he had been very close, especially in Channon's immediate post-Oxford years.

7 Stanley Baldwin (1867–1947), Worcestershire ironmaster, was Conservative MP for Bewdley from 1908 to 1937. He became leader of his party in 1923 and was Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1923 to 1924, 1924 to 1929, and 1935 to 1937. On his retirement he was raised to the peerage as 1st Earl Baldwin of Bewdley and Viscount Corvedale.

speech was a House of Commons one, and it was a tribute to the Prime Minister. The Lords lapped it up: I hurried back to our Chamber and passed a note to the PM letting him know of 'SB's' speech. He turned and gave one of his intoxicating smiles, a touch tired, but his dark eyes flashed appreciation. He is so curiously susceptible to attention and flattery from the young. So long as the Chamberlain reign continues, and nothing goes amiss, I am on the fairway.

Tom Inskip,¹ big, burly, immense, made an impressive speech, winding up. He was in good form. 'Worth the crisis,' was my verdict which re-echoed down the lobbies. Chamberlain is tired today; the debate has gone against us, and all the people who a week ago were in a funk, are now belittling their saviour . . . I am disgusted by the lack of gratitude.

I dined with Euan Wallace,² David Margesson, Walter Elliot³ and Rob Bernays⁴ . . . Rab [Butler] didn't come but remained on the bench. John Simon to my surprise asked me to dine with him: he has these sudden flashes of geniality. Diana was to have been with us, but at the last moment she deserted us to join Winston . . . is it part of the Insurgents Party policy? Already the Coopers regret their forced retirement. I don't really know whether Diana knows the full truth: or whether she is genuinely convinced that Duff has resigned because of his high principles. She must know her little ex-Sea Lord too well. David Margesson at dinner was divine but distant; is he on the wing? Will he be First Lord? Does he hear the lapping of the waves? I don't think that Chamberlain will let him go now.

WEDNESDAY 5TH OCTOBER

A scramble this morning at the FO with a huge batch of Questions; and on top of it the whips rang me at 11.30 to say that the PM wanted Rab to wind up tonight. I helped Rab all day with his speech etc. The dreary debate continued: Winston's contribution enlivened the House, discomfited the front bench but did not [illegible] weaken the govt's excellent case. Winston went on *ad nauseam*

- 1 Thomas Inskip (1876–1947) was a lawyer and Conservative MP whose career culminated in his being first Lord Chancellor, and then, from 1940 to 1946, Lord Chief Justice of England.
- 2 David Euan Wallace (1892–1941) was a Conservative MP from 1922 to 1923 and from 1924 to 1941. He held several ministerial appointments. Both his sons by his first marriage and one from his second were killed in action in the Second World War, and another died while on active service.
- 3 Walter Elliot Elliot (1888–1958) was educated in Glasgow, where he qualified as a doctor. Apart from breaks in 1923–4 and 1945–6 he sat for Scottish seats as a Conservative from 1915 until 1958. He was Secretary of State for Scotland from 1936 to 1938, and Minister of Health from 1938 to 1940.
- 4 Robert Hamilton Bernays (1902–45) was National Liberal MP for Bristol North from 1931 to 1945. He held junior office in the Chamberlain government in the ministries of Health and Transport from 1937 to 1940. He was a close friend of Harold Nicolson (qv), and may have had a homosexual affair with him. He was killed in a plane crash while flying to visit British troops overseas in 1945.

deploring that we had not taken stronger action against the dictators. However much he twists his words, he was really saying – as Duff has said privately to anyone who would listen for years – ‘Why not war in my time?’ (and with the natural corollary, with me in office?). Simon made a magnificent speech, quoting Shelley’s great lines about ‘Hope’.¹ Anthony Eden, his dignity gone, is seen shuffling along corridors fraternising with the Labour Party and his own little band of sycophants.

THURSDAY 6TH OCTOBER

We met at eleven and for some anxious hours we listened to the dwindling debate. Would the PM do well? Would the Eden–Cooper conclave actually vote against us and persuade many others to do so? At 3.13 the PM rose: he was quietly magnificent (and I looked up at Mrs Chamberlain in the Speaker’s Gallery where she has sat for four long days) and made so moving an appeal, so devoid of resentment or bitterness, that I should have thought he would have led a unanimous House behind him into the division lobby. He even had time to make a gay reference to Winston Churchill, with whom he had crossed swords earlier in the day, when he called his utterances ‘unworthy’ of him, and Winston was howled down, unable for a minute or two to get a hearing. This was the reception given to the Arch Intriguer who saw himself as the new PM. It was the second time in my brief career that I have heard him howled down, the former occasion was at the time of the abdication. I was sitting just behind the PM throughout the debate, and early on, when he snubbed Winston, there was a flash of rage in his dark eyes, they actually sparkled with anger. The House was with him and he was aware of the strength of his following. All day the political atmosphere was clearing and even the St Vitus antics of the Conservative Opposition were powerless to stem the Chamberlain tide, which swelled and swelled until he rose to speak: there was then a hush and his speech was magnificent. At length he sat down, and the fateful divisions began, the first was the Socialist Amendment and the figures were 369 for the govt, 130 against peace and the govt.

I was almost the first to congratulate the PM. I followed him to the Rialto and after murmuring a few bromides I whispered to him my message from the Prince Regent² to the effect that Yugoslavia would always be on our side, as much as ever she dared during Paul’s regime, and I added that the Regent thought him the greatest man in history. The PM, who had first made one of the most remarkable speeches in the whole history of the House, put out his hand and tapped my arm,

1 From the end of his verse drama *Prometheus Unbound* – ‘to hope till Hope creates / from its own wreck the thing it contemplates; / Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent; / This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be / Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free; / This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.’

2 Prince Paul of Yugoslavia.

and beamed with pleasure. There were two red spots on his cheeks, he looked positively jubilant. I left him to vote. The figures were received with cheers, but the Churchillian Group conspicuous for their disloyalty sat glum, sullen and wrong. Old Winston looked like an angry Buddha. The figures for the next division, which was the main Question, were better still: 366 for us, 144 for war.

As they were read out it was obvious that while some of our members abstained, a few Labour people had done likewise, Thurtle¹ for one. Cheers greeted the result, we shouted, we waved our handkerchiefs, there were deafening roars of 'Hear! Hear!' There was pandemonium and the PM quietly, with his usual gentle dignity, walked out followed, or rather shepherded, by Alec Dunglass, whom he adores. Alec is the ideal PPS, and there is a curious quiet sympathy between them. We had won; but it might have been a better victory. The French were about unanimous (only 73 against, and of these 71 were communists) in their support of Daladier² in the Chamber yesterday.

I motored back to the beauty and peace of Kelvedon.

FRIDAY 7TH OCTOBER

Honor is crossing today in an appalling gale to be at Clandeboye³ for the christening of the Dufferins' daughter.⁴ I woke early to peruse Hansard and try and detect the Glamour Boys⁵ who either voted against us, or abstained. They were not so numerous: Winston; Anthony Eden; Cranborne⁶ who is particularly irritating and mad at the moment; Sidney Herbert;⁷ Duff Cooper; Jim Thomas; that ass, who is a joke in the House because of his stupidity, Derrick Gunston;⁸ and

1 Ernest Thurtle (1884–1954) was Labour MP for Shoreditch from 1923 to 1931 and from 1935 to 1954. He had fought with distinction in the Great War and been badly wounded at Cambrai.

2 Édouard Daladier (1884–1970), Prime Minister of France in 1933, 1934, and from 1938–40.

3 The seat of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, in Co. Down.

4 He means son; the Dufferins' only son Sheridan Frederick Terence Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (1938–88) had been born the previous July. He was Earl of Ava by courtesy until he succeeded his father as 5th Marquess in 1945.

5 The name Neville Chamberlain gave to the group of anti-appeasers, largely followers of Eden, who increasingly spoke out against Hitler and the threat they perceived he posed.

6 Robert Arthur James Gascoyne-Cecil (1893–1972), by courtesy Viscount Cranborne from 1903 to 1947, when he succeeded his father as 5th Marquess of Salisbury. Known as 'Bobbety', he was Conservative MP for South Dorset from 1929 to 1941, when he was summoned to the House of Lords by a writ of acceleration in the Barony of Cecil of Essendon, one of his father's titles. He was Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1935 to 1938, when he resigned over appeasement; and served in several Cabinet posts during the post-war coalition, leading the Conservative Party in the House of Lords from 1942 to 1957.

7 Sir Sidney Herbert (1890–1935); 1st Bt.

8 Derrick Wellesley Gunston (1891–1985) was awarded the Military Cross in the Great War and was Unionist MP for Thornbury from 1924 until 1945. He was created 1st Bt in 1938.

Hubert Duggan.¹ I cannot ever forgive him our old friendship which I deliberately killed (and I have qualms of conscience about my action) and is now buried. The little ass; I have always had a contempt for him; of recent years we have tried to keep up the appearances of friendship, and nothing is so unsatisfactory. I shall stop him getting financial assistance from Central Office at the next election.

They say that Edward Stanley has resigned as he is so ill: he need not have bothered. He will die, I have always said so. His illness is so mysterious. It will kill Portia not being Lady Derby.

I had a banquet in Southend; but I could not concentrate on preparing a speech, and so went, as it were, empty-handed. The result was one of the best speeches I have ever made, it was a fascinating defence of the PM and I was greeted with thunderous applause. He is King of the World now. I was self-confident, and a little drunk.

SUNDAY 9TH OCTOBER

As I dressed, Patsy² sat with me and said she was seeing too much of Alan [Lennox-Boyd], and that she was going to break with him . . . As I was going to bed – I had been sick – and it was 1 a.m. – Alan burst into my room. He had had a scene with Patsy, a quarrel, and he had proposed marriage and been refused. All very upsetting and he much upset.

My little boy is 3 today.

MONDAY 10TH OCTOBER

KELVEDON

Before I was properly awake Patsy Guinness, with the eyes of one who has not slept, burst into my room. Yes, she had told Alan she would see him no more – except as a friend on formal occasions – for some time. He had been upset, pounced upon her, kissed her and asked her to marry him! They had been wandering about in the moonlight by the pavilion and then came into the drawing room and talked half the night. She vowed she was furious – but I doubted it. To prove her point she waved a note from him to the effect that he was returning here tomorrow to fetch her . . . She called him Henlein,³ says she feels like Czechoslovakia. Later she and I drove to Southend and all the way I praised Alan, pleaded his suit, assuming that she had or would accept him. She was obdurate: at the General Hospital I

1 Hubert John Duggan (1904–43) was Conservative MP for Acton from 1931 to 1943. He was the son of Lady Curzon (qv) by her first marriage to Alfredo Huberto Duggan (1875–1915), a wealthy Irish Argentinian.

2 Lady Patricia Florence Susan Guinness (1918–2001), second daughter of the 2nd Earl of Iveagh. She was Channon's sister-in-law.

3 Konrad Henlein (1898–1945) was the Nazi Gauleiter of the Sudetenland territories of Czechoslovakia, annexed by Germany at this time.

stayed half an hour seeing the staff, making arrangements for the royal visit on Wednesday. When I came out I noticed a difference in Patsy. Why not accept him? she said. All afternoon she was in a very different mood and came round more and more to the prospect. The difference in age – he is fourteen years older – she does not mind. She would have a nice long widowhood in which to recover!

TUESDAY 11TH OCTOBER

Honor came back this morning from Clandeboye . . . I sent H a note to the station to prepare her for the patrician developments. Of course she was thrilled and urged Patsy to accept him.

We had a little tea party in the dining room with a cake to celebrate Paul's third birthday. Alan gave him an impressive tricycle. Sunday was really Paul's birthday, but Honor was not here. I put it out of my mind and only today are we celebrating. He is an affectionate, most loving, loveable mite, highly sensitive and intelligent, with a determined will of his own (mine!) plus some good Guinness obstinacy. I love him deeply, and he loves me first, although he is becoming more fond of Honor, and she of him, lately.

Patsy was nervous and fidgeting and refused to greet Alan in public after their row on Sunday night – they had not communicated since. Honor and I contrived to be out of the way when they met. The meeting must have been a success, for they went away smiling. The engagement, I prophesy, will be public within a week!

WEDNESDAY 12TH OCTOBER

KELVEDON

I did not sleep, flushed with last night's success. There are moments when I am self-confident, triumphant, and this very feeling of success seems to beget new success.

Up early, as we had the royal visit. The lodges were furnished, or at least nearly so, and the front drive was used. At eleven o'clock the Iveaghs arrived, and I cheered them with an optimistic account of Patsy's intentions and a telegram in code came to me to prepare them for an engagement. The Duchess of Kent accompanied by Marjorie Brecknock² arrived ten minutes early. I presented the party and we went into lunch, which was excellent and well served and done. Confidential talk with the Duchess: she is very pro-Chamberlain, rabid against Eden. I begged her to influence the King and Queen against Eden; she replied that she had done so; the King was sound; the Queen less so, as she quite liked Anthony. The Duchess added shrewdly that she herself was so violently pro-Chamberlain

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1 She in fact survived him by eighteen years.

2 Marjorie Minna Jenkins (1900–89) married in 1920 John Charles Henry Pratt (1899–1983), by courtesy Earl of Brecknock. She was lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Kent (qv).

that she did her case harm. She was lovely, glowing with aristocratic beauty, but her hair was a bit scrawny at the back. She wore four ropes of pearls and a vast clip. After luncheon we showed her over the house and then left, preceding her by five minutes.

Hock and royalty were too much for Victor Raikes¹ and he tried to kiss Honor in the car – with me present! Our car was cheered all along the route to Rochford as it was mistaken for the royal one. There were two ceremonies (and as I had invited the Duchess, I had to arrange them, soothing the ruffled and jealous feelings of the rival authorities); and Rochford being the more official passed off with clock-like precision. The Duchess was beautiful, gracious, dignified, superb . . . Honor and I and the others left before her so as to be at the Southend Hospital in time to receive her. Much enthusiasm and confusion at Southend, excited nurses, pandemonic [*sic*] matron etc. . . . all passed off successfully, but the Mayor's feelings were ruffled. Luckily, but only at the last second, I remembered to include the Mayoress in the private ladies' tea party . . . [which also included] the matron whose one ambition seemed to be that the HRH should use her lavatory seat, which she had had especially painted. She whispered her difficulties to Honor, who intimated to Princess Marina, and the Duchess did go. Home at six, exhausted. The Iveaghs stayed the night and we again discussed Patsy's matrimonial plans. Honor rang her up, and it now seems certain that she will marry Alan! I am overjoyed. This engagement is my creation and my dream: I hope I shall not be let down. Honor is feeling better, but tired; however she is more normal.

SUNDAY 16TH OCTOBER

KELVEDON

Edward Stanley died this afternoon from his mysterious long-drawn-out illness. He has been kept alive by morphia for weeks now . . . He was only 44, always seemed older. He was courteous, almost handsome, gentle, genial, gay, simple and loyal. He enjoyed fun and society, but was quite unmalicious, and good, stolid, rather German (all Lord Derby's three children are German, and show strongly the inheritance of their grandmother, the old 'Double Duchess' *alten geboren* – a Hanoverian family).² The past few months Edward had lost his spirits and gaiety and looked morose and miserable. He was often in our house, always accepted our every invitation; fundamentally I wonder whether he was not unhappy? His growing deafness disturbed him and threatened to restrict his political career, but

1 Henry Victor Alpin MacKinnon Raikes (1901–86) was Conservative MP for South East Essex, a neighbouring constituency to Channon's.

2 Channon refers to Luise Friederike Auguste, Countess von Alten (1832–1911), who married in 1852 the 7th Duke of Manchester and, after his death in 1890, married in 1892 the 8th Duke of Devonshire, hence her sobriquet. Stanley's mother – the 17th Earl of Derby's wife – was Lady Alice Montagu (1862–1957), the Double Duchess's daughter by Manchester. '*Geboren*' means 'born'.

it was Portia, his half-mad, always drunk, yet amusing, gay, loyal, curious wife, who upset him. He was anxious about her, terrified of her, ashamed of her . . . at times. Her biting tongue and bullying character eclipsed and frightened him. Oddly enough neither Portia nor Edward cared much for their two eldest boys, John and Richard, who are both charming. They both worshipped the youngest, Hughie, who is rather spoilt. John is now Lord Stanley, soon¹ to be Lord Derby; but owing to the unfortunate ramifications of death duties, settlements to avoid them, and the tricky three-year clause, I fear that the great Derby wealth is now a closed chapter.

MONDAY 17TH OCTOBER

A long, long but highly successful day at Southend with meetings, and interviews etc. I am more rested; but this morning an appalling scene took place. Paul was maddeningly disobedient, and finally in a rage I shook him and scolded him – he was frightened, poor darling mite and lay on the floor sobbing out his little heart, screaming ‘Naughty Daddy,’ and wanting his Nannie. I thought I should die of remorse: for half an hour I begged him to play with me again, and suddenly he leapt up, put his tear-stained little face against my unshaven one, and told me he loved me. I felt a great wave of tenderness for him rising within me. I love him to a point of folly.

Tassilo Fürstenberg² is today marrying Clara Agnelli,³ that wild darkey girl whom he will never be able to hold for long. Still she wanted him; and he was willing. I introduced them, and at her mother’s urgent request bullied him into marrying her. Two marriages I have made.

The Iveaghs wrote that they were very grateful for what we had done about Patsy and Alan. That engagement was formally announced this morning. What will Jim Thomas think in his jealous black heart?⁴ How many will detect my hand?

TUESDAY 18TH OCTOBER

The great question now is: who will get govt jobs?⁵ Will there be a major reshuffle? My candidate for the Admiralty is Ivor Plymouth.⁶ I have taken steps but probably

1 He would not succeed his grandfather until 1948.

2 Prince Tassilo zu Fürstenberg (1903–87).*

3 Clara Jeanne Agnelli (1920–2016) was the granddaughter of Giovanni Agnelli, the founder of Fiat.

4 Channon was clearly under the impression, perhaps correctly, that Thomas and Lennox-Boyd had had a sexual relationship.

5 Following Cooper’s resignation from the Admiralty and Stanley’s death: the latter had been Dominions Secretary.

6 Ivor Miles Windsor-Clive (1889–1943) succeeded his father as 2nd Earl of Plymouth in 1923. He was Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office from 1936 to 1939.*

too late. I have an appalling premonition that Rab Butler will be promoted from the Foreign Office. I should have to go too: and no other job would sort of please me so much. What if he were made Minister of Agriculture? I should accept a whipship. I cannot stir up much enthusiasm, however, as I should, at least for a little, infinitely prefer to remain at the Foreign Office.

THURSDAY 20TH OCTOBER

A long day: Victor Raikes and I motored to London; I looked in at the Foreign Office where the atmosphere, as usual, in that Garden of Anthony Eden, is distinctly chilly towards Chamberlain. Rab hard at work with a committee . . . including Wogan Philipps,¹ once a handsome playboy, who whilst about to be engaged to Daphne Vivian (now Weymouth)² fell on a fence and was impaled. For some years he was impotent, and later, recovering, married Rosamond Lehmann³ the novelist. Since then he has become increasingly left wing, and his shabby clothes today revealed his leanings.

Thence to the Abbey to attend Edward Stanley's magnificent memorial service. It was crowded out: a more fashionable congregation, although heavily in black, was never before in the Abbey . . . Mr Attlee sat with the Edens and Anthony's hair looked bleached. Just before the choir entered, the Chamberlains arrived and he took his seat in the first stall, and prayed a long time. I watched him throughout the ceremony, he looked very alive and sad, and when a sunbeam fell on him he seemed, what he is, a saint!! He seemed profoundly moved, and I wonder whether he could be only thinking of Edward, whom he liked but could not have loved: I suspected his thoughts were further away, in Munich and to the calamity he had averted. Leslie Belisha also in a stall, looked gay and debonaire: he is being less hideous, the procession of clergy, all looked older than the man in whose memory the service was. I joined Patsy and Alan L[ennox]-B[oyn]d . . . they looked positively beaming, Alan very handsome indeed. I drove them to the Carlton Club, and in the members' yard whilst waiting for the car Mr Attlee came up and congratulated the engaged couple. His eyes were red with weeping: the service, he said simply, had got him down. No wonder: the 'Last

1 Wogan Philipps (1902–93) succeeded his father as 2nd Baron Milford in 1962. He married, first, in 1928 Rosamond Lehmann (*vide infra*). He became an ambulance driver on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, joined the Communist Party of Great Britain shortly after his return, and was the first and so far only member of the CPGB to sit in the House of Lords.

2 Daphne Winifred Louise Vivian (1904–97), daughter of the 4th Baron Vivian, married in 1927 Henry Frederick Thynne, Viscount Weymouth (qv).*

3 Rosamond Nina Lehmann (1901–90) married as her second husband Wogan Philipps in 1928 and bore him two children; she had an affair with Cecil Day-Lewis and she and Philipps divorced in 1944. Following the success of her first novel, *Dusty Answer*, in 1927 she made a success as a novelist, and also as a vociferous anti-fascist.

Post' followed by Chopin was immensely moving. I never liked Mr Attlee so much before. I lunched alone with Patsy: she is madly in love with Alan now. Later we adjourned to Cartier's where I bought her a gold cigarette case as an engagement present, and diamond buttons for him. And I selected a dressing case for him as a present from Patsy. A rush and change at Belgrave Square, and I caught the 5.30 train for Clacton with Sam Hoare and Rab, and Mrs Rab. At Clacton there was an enormous pro-government rally and Sam and Rab, who spoke (none too well, I thought; just adequate) were much cheered. I drove back to Kelvedon in a thick fog, a typical Essex night – two hours' drive, dangerous and cold.

FRIDAY 21ST OCTOBER

I presided at a Trafalgar dinner¹ in Southend and attended several other functions. The sands are running out: I am exhausted. I shall die young, and while it will be consoling to be buried in little Kelvedon church, I shall hate to leave Paul . . . and this lovely place, and my dear, not always happy, wife.

SATURDAY 22ND OCTOBER

Honor came back [from Holker], seemingly better. Alan and Patsy also here: he and I drove to Southend, where we were professionally charming at three functions and spoke. One of my ex-opponents in Southend, a puce-faced man, Victor Tattersall,² who so resembles Ribbentrop,³ asked me if I was 'on the Square', and wanted me to join a Lodge. I am rather intrigued by the idea: I should enjoy the masochistic initiation ceremonies I think!

MONDAY 24TH OCTOBER

I am dreading Rab's possible appointment to the Ministry of Agriculture.

TUESDAY 25TH OCTOBER

Honor in a depressing, gloomy mood which cuts my heart and drenches my hopes. I spent the whole day with her and arranged for her to ride. We walked home from Kelvedon Hatch,⁴ a cold, wet-ish gloomy night. It was *Wuthering*

1 It was the 133rd anniversary of the battle in 1805.

2 Victor Tattersall (1899–1959) was Mayor of Southend in 1931–2. He never opposed Channon in an election, so in describing him as an opponent Channon must be indicating that Tattersall was a member of the Liberal Party.

3 Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946) was Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany from 1938 to 1945 and was hanged at Nuremberg the following year.*

4 The nearby village.

Heights – once back Honor's mood changed. Perhaps it is exercise she needs most. I don't understand the delay over the appointments, or rather of the Cabinet reshuffle.

WEDNESDAY 26TH OCTOBER

Honor still in the dumps: at luncheon my poor worn-out tummy turned and I could not eat. Thus I was not at my best in Southend at a bazaar and a meeting. Later I recovered and was warmed and touched by a riotous reception I received at the Leigh Conservative Club where I addressed 500 people.

A long confidential talk with Alderman Tweedy-Smith,¹ the head of the local Liberals, confirmed my impression that the man is an opinionated ass, light metal, no danger to us, and personally well disposed towards me. He believes in birching boys, 'a well-tanned bottom', he said, 'is often the foundation of a great career'. Birching is back, coming in again.² Personally I am in favour of it, so long as it is neither cruel, too severe or administered in a spirit of revenge. I never respected my father in the least; had he had the courage to give me a couple of well-deserved whippings, I should not have had all my life the greatest contempt for him.

At midnight I heard the news: 'Lucky Jim' Stanhope³ has been given the Admiralty and Buck De La Warr,⁴ the great opportunist of modern times, has been transferred from the Privy [Council] to the Board of Education. A very uninspiring and probably only preliminary change.

- 1 Robert Tweedy-Smith (1864–1948) was a Justice of the Peace and had been Mayor of Southend-on-Sea in 1932–3.
- 2 Judicial corporal punishment had not been abolished, but had since the Great War fallen out of favour with some more progressive magistrates and judges. It was removed from the statute book for criminal offences in 1948.
- 3 James Richard Stanhope (1880–1967), by courtesy Viscount Mahon until 1905, when he succeeded his father as 7th Earl Stanhope. He held junior ministerial office under Lloyd George and Baldwin and in the National Government, joining the Cabinet as First Commissioner of Works in 1936, becoming Leader of the Lords in February 1938. He was replaced at the Admiralty by Churchill in 1939, and, regarded as an arch appeaser, did not serve in the Churchill administration after 1940. He became a Knight of the Garter in 1934. In 1952 he succeeded a kinsman as 13th Earl of Chesterfield, though never used the title. He left Chevening, in Kent, to the nation and it is used as a grace-and-favour weekend house for holders of great offices of state.
- 4 Herbrand Edward Dundonald Brassey Sackville, known as 'Buck' or 'Buckie' (1900–76), by courtesy Lord Buckhurst until 1915, when he succeeded his father as 9th Earl De La Warr. He was the first hereditary peer to join the Labour Party and became a Lord in Waiting, or whip in the House of Lords, in Ramsay MacDonald's first administration in 1924. He later joined the Conservative Party and was Postmaster-General in Churchill's administration between 1951 and 1955.

THURSDAY 27TH OCTOBER

Honor very well, and we are happy together again. She rode again today and enjoyed herself. Quintin Hogg¹ has won the Oxford by-election; he had only [blank] votes less than did his predecessor Bob Bourne;² and he was subjected to the most fierce and wicked by-election fought for years. It is a govt triumph.

FRIDAY 28TH OCTOBER

We went up to London, lunched at the Belgian Embassy to meet the Crown Princess of Italy.³ She is like Honor, fair, good-looking, rather grandiose in manner, hates society, and loves mountaineering, and all forms of violent exercise. Of course she is unhappily married: wives of Glamour Boys usually are . . . The Princess had been at school⁴ in Brentwood – four miles from here [Kelvedon] – and only a few days ago had been to see the venerable Mother Superior aged over 80, whom she had known, loved and feared as a child. The Princess remembered me quite well; I danced with her twelve years ago at Eileen Sutherland's⁵ ball, and played tennis with her, too, in Belgrave Square! She has not been to England since. She is a restless, under-served sexually woman. Lunch was too drawn out – the Athlones,⁶ both very amiable, and annoyed at the prospect of King Carol's⁷ visit. Princess Alice was vituperative

- 1 Quintin McGarel Hogg (1907–2001) succeeded his father (qv) as 2nd Viscount Hailsham in 1950. He held various ministerial and Cabinet posts in the Conservative governments between 1951 and 1964, being Leader of the Lords from 1960 to 1963, when he renounced his peerage in order to contest the leadership of his party. He was unsuccessful. In 1970 he was raised again to the peerage as Baron Hailsham of St Marylebone and served as Lord Chancellor until 1974, resuming the office between 1979 and 1987. He became a Knight of the Garter in 1988. The Oxford by-election became a micro-referendum on Munich; Patrick Gordon Walker, the Labour candidate, withdrew, as did the Liberal, and both parties supported Alexander Dunlop 'Sandie' Lindsay (1879–1952), the Master of Balliol, who stood as an Independent Progressive. Hogg – whose opponents used the slogan 'a vote for Hogg is a vote for Hitler' – won by 15,797 votes to 12,363, the Tory vote down by just 6.7 per cent on the 1935 election. Lindsay, who was Professor of Moral Philosophy in the university, was supported by Churchill and Harold Macmillan; in 1945 he was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Lindsay of Birker.
- 2 Robert Croft Bourne (1888–1938) was a former Olympic oarsman who sat for Oxford as a Conservative from 1924 to 1938, and was Deputy Speaker of the Commons from 1931 until his sudden death.
- 3 Formerly Princess Marie-José of Belgium.*
- 4 At the Ursuline Convent School there: she and her family were evacuated to England during the Great War.
- 5 Eileen Gwladys Butler (1891–1943), daughter of the 7th Earl of Lanesborough and wife of the 5th Duke of Sutherland.
- 6 The Earl and Countess of Athlone – Prince Alexander of Teck (1874–1957), Queen Mary's brother, and Princess Alice (1883–1981).*
- 7 King Carol II of Romania.*

about him. I happened to say that he had bought the *Nahlin*,¹ the Duke of Windsor's old yacht. 'He would!' Princess Alice retorted. Much kissing between the royalties . . . The Princess of Piedmont² stayed until 3.30, and by then Honor was in despair. At last we got away. Pompous royal functions can be very exhausting. Honor went to see Anne Feversham and her baby daughter Clarissa – or Marina.³ Honor and the Duchess of Kent are to be godmothers! Those poor Kents – three years in Australia.⁴ I am glad for her sake. She will get him back, make a man of him. He will not be able to shop on a grand scale, nor drink so much, nor sit up all night with Glamour Boys! I shall miss them however . . .

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER

Honor rode. We are recovering from yesterday! We have a mad plan of dashing suddenly and now to the USA for three weeks, taking Paul with us. Honor could go on to Ketchum in Idaho to ski whilst I would take Paul to see my mother. I wonder whether I can get away. Of course I don't want to leave the FO, Rab, Kelvedon and all. It would be an uncomfortable and expensive uprooting. Still . . . for Honor, I would do anything.

SUNDAY 30TH OCTOBER

*Va-et-vient*⁵ at Kelvedon. Prince Fritz⁶ of Prussia came here for the day: he is first back from Germany via Doorn, where he stayed with the Kaiser⁷ whom he loves. Fritz looks bronzed and strong and the weeks of work in the army have improved him. He had been terrified of war; all Germany had feared it. The army and the Potsdam Group are averse to it and are growing increasingly

1 The yacht had been lent to the then King in the summer of 1936, and he had taken Mrs Simpson, the Duff Coopers and others with him on a cruise that confirmed his determination to marry his mistress.

2 Another title of the Crown Princess.

3 Anne Feversham (1910–95) was the daughter of the 1st Earl of Halifax* and in 1936 married 'Sim' Duncombe, 3rd Earl of Feversham*. She was first cousin to Lady Honor Channon: their mothers were sisters. The child, born on 11 October 1938, was Lady Clarissa Duncombe.

4 It had just been announced that the Duke of Kent would take up the post of Governor-General of Australia in November 1939. Shortly after the outbreak of war the following September it was announced that the appointment had been postponed.

5 Comings and goings.

6 Prince Friedrich Georg Wilhelm Christoph of Prussia (1911–56) was a grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm II. He would marry, in 1945 after a war spent in internment camps, Lady Brigid Guinness (qv).

7 Kaiser Wilhelm II, in exile there since his abdication in November 1918.

hostile to the Hitler¹ regime – the regime more than the man. Himmler and Ribbentrop are the dangers . . . Fritz is laying siege, a slow-waiting siege to the throne. We shall live to see him emperor. I have always said so, and have worked for the restoration of the Hohenzollern dynasty . . . Fritz thinks the Nazi leaders will eventually devour one another and then there will be a *coup d'état* by the army, which while not breaking with the Nazis completely, will restore the dynasty and the old Junker regime.² Fritz had to rush back to London to have tea with Queen Mary, who dotes on him. He has been working, and at last succeeded, in once more establishing good relations between her and his grandfather. The exile at Doorn now writes regularly to Queen Mary, and to his old uncle, the Duke of Connaught.³ They are in the twilight of their lives and it is pleasant that between them at least there is no more war bitterness. The Kaiser told Fritz only last week that he is still haunted by the fate which befell the Tsar and his family. He had sent the Tsar a telegram offering him a free and protected passage through Germany, or an escort of battleships, had he wished to escape by sea. This was at the moment when the Tsar had tried to get to England. It was Lloyd George who spoilt and stopped everything and the late King had been weak with him thinking the danger not immediate.⁴ Their responsibility in the matter has been like a millstone hanging on the necks of both Queen Mary and King George. Their failure to help their poor Russian relations in the hour of danger is the one blot on their lives. Of late, Queen Mary has been sorely conscience-stricken.

- 1 Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) was born in Austria but moved to Germany in 1913. He had a conception of German history embodied in his idea of a Reich of German-speaking Teutons that included German and Austrian lands but expressly excluded Jews, Slavs and non-white races. A racially motivated nationalist, he led the Nazi party from 1921 to 1945, was Chancellor of Germany from 1933 and *Führer*, or leader, of the German people from 1934. His decision to invade Poland in 1939 started the Second World War; his decision to invade Russia in 1941 ensured he lost it. Having narrowly avoided assassination in 1944, he committed suicide in April 1945.
- 2 Channon refers to the situation in Imperial Germany from 1871 to 1918 when the Kaiser ruled, as his forebears the kings of Prussia had done, with the assistance of the old Prussian aristocracy.
- 3 Prince Arthur William Patrick Albert (1850–1942), 1st Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, was the third son of Queen Victoria, younger brother of the late Kaiserin (mother of Wilhelm II), and uncle of King George V.
- 4 This is not true. Lloyd George had been happy to grant asylum to the Tsar and his family, as the head of state of a major British ally in the fight against Germany. The King was willing at first to take his Prime Minister's advice but was talked out of doing so by Lord Stamfordham, his private secretary, who feared it would spark a workers' revolt in Britain to have a man the labour movement regarded as a despot given a haven among them. King George V and Queen Mary did, indeed, regret the fate of the Romanovs, but there is no evidence they regretted the decision.

MONDAY 31ST OCTOBER

KELVEDON

My last day here in peace and I am not ready for Parliament, nor London life. I feel old, run-down, and my heart occasionally thumps. I don't want to die until I am a peer, and Kelvedon has been made perfection, a paradise for Paul. It is nearly so now. I love the [illegible] furniture, the details, the old brewery now used as our Austrian room. Alan and Patsy came here for the night. Patsy talking of nothing but her babies to come, and her husband-to-be was much shocked, but secretly pleased, as any man would be. I wish I could look forward to more.

TUESDAY 1ST NOVEMBER

I drove up to London with Alan L-B, and rushed to the Foreign Office. We are inundated with work and today the Opposition raise Munich and what has happened since the Adjournment. Lunched with Harold [Balfour] at the Savoy and Helen Fitzgerald¹ came too. They are much in love and Harold's prestige amongst the boys had consequently soared, but an *amour* means a great expense in time and money and in H's case is certainly not worth it!! Harold delightful. Thence to the H of C, and was pleased to see everyone again certainly. Much rushing about, and I caught the Opposition plotting. By Opposition nowadays, I mean, of course, that little group of Glamour Boys who, drenched in stupidity, tinged with sedition, are attempting to torpedo the Prime Minister. He is too lenient with them.

The debate proceeded, and the PM, sitting directly in front of me, looked somewhat aged and his hair needed cutting. He is greyer than before Munich. He still mutters little asides to David Margesson, to Rab, or whoever is next to him. It was a desultory debate. Vyvyan Adams,² who is much opposed to us, complained to me that he had not been called by the Speaker³ for nine months. I went to the Speaker and after a little preliminary flattery suggested that he call Adams. He promised that he would, and later he did. Adams attacked us violently! Thus are things done in democratic England. Later Bill Astor⁴ spoke well of his recent experiences in Sudeten Land [*sic*] and impressed the House. He is so sound, so sensible, and so shrewd, although he lacks grace and charm. As [Oliver] Stanley

1 Helen Gascoigne Drury (1896–1957), daughter of Major General Charles Drury, of Nova Scotia, and sister of Lady Beaverbrook, had married in 1923 Evelyn Charles Fitzgerald (qv). They remained married at this time.

2 Samuel Vyvyan Trerice Adams (1900–51) was Conservative MP for Leeds West from 1931 to 1945.

3 Edward Algernon FitzRoy (1869–1943), second son of the 3rd Baron Southampton, was a Conservative MP from 1900 to 1928, when he was elected Speaker of the House of Commons.

4 William Waldorf Astor (1907–66) succeeded his father as 3rd Viscount Astor in 1952. He was Conservative MP for Fulham East from 1935 to 1945 and for Wycombe from 1951 to 1952. From 1936 to 1937 he was PPS to Samuel Hoare (qv).

was winding-up,¹ Bill, Harold and I slipped away to the Savoy, where exhausted and sleepy, we drank much champagne and flitted from table to table and found each group more maddening than the others – a lot of pro-Jewish, irresponsible people² – Noël Coward³ was with Venetia Montagu⁴ and they had been dining at the Admiralty with the Coopers [who] are limpet-like in their determination not to evacuate their lovely house (apparently Lady Stanhope⁵ shows no desire to move in); Sibyl Colefax⁶ was with Oliver Messel⁷ – two anti-Chamberlain tables, and then another Jim Thomas and Ronnie Cartland, ‘little people’, there. Home – too tired to drive the great Rolls well, I bumped the mudguard. Alan not in yet: Honor at Kelvedon. We are still toying with the idea of going to the USA next week. Quintin Hogg took his seat today; he looked grim but gay. Lord Hailsham⁸ watched from the gallery. I thought of my poor Edward Marjoribanks⁹ and his sad life.

WEDNESDAY 2ND NOVEMBER

The long-proposed debate on the Italian agreement came at last today. The PM, who is becoming increasingly dictatorial (and fortunately always right) wants to

- 1 Left blank in the text, as presumably Channon could not recall who wound up for the government, and forgot to fill in the name later. Hansard records it was Oliver Frederick George Stanley (1896–1950), second son of the 17th Earl of Derby and younger brother of Edward, Lord Stanley, who had died two weeks earlier (qqv). Oliver sat in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade from 1937 to 1940.
- 2 Channon only occasionally challenges his own casual anti-Semitism – sadly not untypical of people of his class – in the late 1930s and early 1940s, though he comes to be shocked by revelations of the extremes of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. See his diary entries for 21 November 1938 (following Kristallnacht) and 17 December 1942 (following a speech by Rothschild in the Commons about the fate of Eastern European Jews). On this latter occasion, Channon is among the MPs who rises in silent tribute.
- 3 Noël Peirce Coward (1889–1973), writer, director and actor.*
- 4 Beatrice Venetia Stanley (1887–1948), daughter of the 4th Baron Sheffield and 4th Baron Stanley of Alderley, had been the love-object of H. H. Asquith in the years before 1915. Asquith was unhinged when, that May, she announced her engagement to his junior ministerial colleague, Edwin Montagu, whom she married that summer.
- 5 Lady Eileen Agatha Browne (1889–1940), daughter of the 6th Marquess of Sligo, married the 7th Earl Stanhope in 1921.
- 6 Lady Colefax, the celebrated interior designer.*
- 7 Oliver Messel was a leading stage, ballet and film-set designer.
- 8 Douglas McGarel Hogg KC (1872–1950) had been Attorney-General in Bonar Law’s administration and then in Baldwin’s, became Lord Chancellor in March 1928 and served until the following June, then again from 1935 until 1938. He was Leader of the House of Lords and Secretary of State for War in the National Government from 1931 to 1935. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Hailsham in 1928 and advanced to a viscounty in 1929.
- 9 Edward Marjoribanks (1900–32) was 1st Viscount Hailsham’s stepson; he committed suicide by shooting himself in Hailsham’s billiard room after having been jilted for a second time.

reward Signor Mussolini for his help at Munich, and it is the ratification of this agreement which the Duce wants, as it will confer recognition on the King of Italy as Emperor of Abyssinia. I helped Rab at the FO in the morning and we talked about the idea of Chamberlain and Halifax going to Paris on an official visit. Lunched with Harold, young Giovanni Agnelli,¹ Alan and Patsy. All the afternoon I was on the bench taking notes, running errands, fagging. The PM made a brilliant speech . . . But the debate was singularly lifeless, dull and foregone. The official Opposition are madly pro-war – with anybody. Towards the end of the afternoon Anthony Eden got up and he filled the House. He made a bitter but polite attack on the govt. How wicked he can look! There is a left leer in his eye, even his clothes lack the patrician suavity of old.

As the division had approached I found myself alone on the second bench, with Ernest Brown² the sole occupant of the front bench. Suddenly a hand was placed on my shoulder and looking up I saw that my friend was Anthony Eden. We had an easy, friendly, whispered even affectionate talk. Then he murmured 'Come out a moment,' and I followed him into the Aye lobby³ and we went into the lavatory and we p----d together. He was charm itself; he had not seen much of me all these years, he had been so busy; did I love the Foreign Office, I was, he had heard it said, a great success there. Were we in our Essex house yet? We must meet soon; it was 'lovely' to dine out in peace; he was really enjoying his freedom (if so, why his frantic efforts to get back into power by any possible means, honest or otherwise?); he would never again raise his voice about foreign affairs in the House. We had a surprisingly warm reconciliation and I left him aglow with appeasement; I have always liked him, always thought him 'simple', and do still. Why he should have selected this moment to want to make an advance I don't know. Possibly he thought I would intimate to high grandees his determination never to refer again to foreign affairs. If he thought so, he was, for once in his disastrous career, right; for I rushed to the Prime Minister's room and told him! He smiled, murmured 'I am glad to hear it.' I returned to the bench and when one of the Opposition began to clamour for a member of the government I scanned all the ministers' rooms. Sam Hoare was charming but refused to come to the rescue as he had a conference. Eventually I found both Oliver Stanley and Walter Elliot, who resumed their places on the bench. The debate was desultory,

1 Giovanni 'Gianni' Agnelli (1921–2003) was the grandson of the founder of Fiat, the motor company of which he assumed control in 1966. He was at this stage studying law at the University of Turin. In the war he was wounded twice on the Eastern Front, and once in a bar in North Africa in a fight with a German officer over a woman.

2 Alfred Ernest Brown (1881–1962) was Liberal MP for Rugby from 1923 to 1924 and for Leith from 1927 to 1945. He was Minister of Labour from 1935 to 1940 and held a succession of ministerial appointments in the Churchill coalition from 1940 to 1945. He sat as a Liberal National from 1931 and led the Liberal National Party from 1940 to 1945.

3 The passage through which, when a division is held, MPs walk to register support of the motion.

nobody was much interested; everyone wants friendships with Italy, that is all save a few frenzied enemies of Mussolini, and of course, the Labour Party. Rab wound up and very bad he was, too; but the Opposition were in a noisy, rather drunken, hilarious mood and gave him a rough passage.

At 11.30 I looked in at Sibyl Colefax's, where she had a small supper party. Very Red atmosphere: soon we shall have a certain section of London society, café society and the intelligentsia leading the Communist Party or leading the self-same doctrines! This is what happened in Russia, in France, in Spain before the revolutions. It is dangerous – except that in England everything passes eventually. I drove Duff and Diana back to the Admiralty, where they are still living. Duff voted with the govt tonight. He could hardly do otherwise, as he was a member of the govt when the Italian agreement was negotiated. The figures were high and now the Italian episode is ended – what a triumph for Sam Hoare!! He is vindicated at long last. Dropping the Coopers, I forlornly returned to Sibyl Colefax's and I soon found myself arguing with Noël Coward, who has set himself up as a political hostess!! He is violently anti-German, anti-Italian, anti-Franco and *ipso facto* neo-Russian. He is bitten by communism – he has tried almost everything else! It is the last adventure of the emotionally bankrupt – one should never argue with the irresponsible . . . I left rather than continue the argument.

The recent government changes please nobody, and augur for an early election.

THURSDAY 3RD NOVEMBER

Morning at the FO. I did not have the courage to tell Rab that he had spoken badly. The debate was on air-raid precautions and took the form of a vote of censure. At twelve noon came a message that the PM had a tummy upset as he had eaten rich food last night. It was given out to the newspapers that he had a slight chill. I think he is tired and couldn't face the long debate today, which began with a speech by Herbert Morrison which lasted one hour forty minutes. I hate him; he is so cocksure, so rude, and unattractive. Certainly he is quick and able. I went back to No. 5 [Belgrave Square] to see Fritz of Prussia who entrusted to me a secret letter from his father the Crown Prince for the PM. I promised to deliver it and did.

Diana Cooper rang me up and later got her agent to do so trying to find out who is standing against Duff in the next election. I played her. It is, of course, Kenneth de Courcy,¹ who might well get in. The Coopers are terrified. It will do them good. But I cannot interfere, as I don't choose to lose the Coopers' friendship – yet! But I am tired to death of them.

1 Kenneth Hugh de Courcy (1909–99) was a Galway-born businessman who edited *Intelligence Digest*. A committed appeaser, he was active in the Imperial Policy Group, whose membership included a number of right-wing Tory MPs, and so close a supporter of King Edward VIII that he was associated with plots to restore him to the throne. He was imprisoned for fraud in the 1960s, though there was some doubt about the safety of his conviction.

I dined with the Euan Wallaces. Euan is in a sulk because he has not been put into the Cabinet. (I happen to know that Neville C dislikes him, or at least has the lowest opinion of his qualifications.) Probably it is not desirable to have another Edenite in the Cabinet now. Barbie Wallace¹ is frankly Edenite and had spent the afternoon with all the Glamour Boys buzzing about talking at Noël Coward's studio, where he had a cocktail party for the 'Opposition'; it is v undignified for this group to revolve around Noël and betrays their silliness. He is about the best they can produce. There is a cleavage in London society about Chamberlain; but the ranks may come together again when we are faced with an election. Barbie said that the Eden-Cranborne-Thomas-Churchill group were jubilant today because the govt had had a bad day, as Herbert Morrison's speech was v damning to us. What loyalty! What judgement! Her sympathies all lie in that direction and no doubt she does Euan harm. I drove back to Kelvedon arriving here just after midnight.

I looked into the Lords; Lord Crewe² was speaking and told the House that he remembered the fuss when Queen Victoria assumed the Imperial dignity of India. He is old,³ Lord Crewe, v handsome and distinguished, with his cheeks so red we wondered if they were painted. He nearly bought Kelvedon five years ago.

MONDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

KELVEDON

Lord Camrose's⁴ long illness explains the recent opposition of the *Telegraph* to peace, Chamberlain and the govt. Perhaps his recovery will bring about a change of policy. Seymour,⁵ snobbish and capitalistic, is very Red, or rather, pro-Winston. More he had been influenced by Virginia Cowles,⁶ that female journalist whom I suspect of being a communist agent. She seduces the youth of England: sleeps with them and infects them with Eden-itis. She ought to be deported. It is curious that over the crisis the rival houses, the Astors and the Berrys,⁷ who often see

1 Barbara Lutyens (1898-1981), daughter of Sir Edwin Lutyens, married Euan Wallace (qv) in 1920.

2 Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes (1858-1945) succeeded his father as 2nd Baron Houghton in 1885 and was advanced to the earldom of Crewe in 1895.*

3 Crewe was 80.

4 William Ewart Berry (1879-1954) was born in Merthyr Tydfil and set up his own local newspaper in 1901. He became proprietor of the *Sunday Times* in 1915, the *Financial Times* in 1919 and of the *Daily Telegraph* in 1927, which he amalgamated with the *Morning Post* when he bought the latter in 1937. He was a strong financial supporter of Churchill. He was created 1st Bt in 1921 and raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Camrose in 1929; and was advanced to a viscountcy in 1941. He married, in 1905, Mary Agnes Corns, with whom he had eight children.

5 John Seymour Berry (1909-95) was Deputy Chairman of the *Daily Telegraph* from 1939 to 1987. He succeeded his father as 2nd Viscount Camrose in 1954. He married in 1986 Joan Yarde-Buller*, whose previous two husbands were Loel Guinness and Prince Ali Khan*.

6 Harriet Virginia Spencer Cowles (1910-83), of Vermont, made her name as a correspondent covering the Spanish Civil War, and went on to write a number of acclaimed novels.

7 John Jacob Astor V (1886-1971) had bought *The Times* in 1922. The *Daily Telegraph*, owned by Lord Camrose (qv) and the Berry family, was its great commercial rival.

eye to eye, have disagreed. And it is the Astors who have won. They were united over the abdication, and largely engineered it. But as I say, the Berrys have been handicapped over the crisis by their chief's illness. They are a dreadful family: I regret having made friends with them. Their crudeness, metallic unaristocratic point of view reminds one of not quite first-rate yet accepted Americans.

I have made elaborate arrangements for my papers, put them in a safe in the basement, in a special room.

Brigid Guinness came to see us for a moment *en route* from Elveden to Paris. She was wearing a blue belt marked 'Vive Chamberlain'.

There is still so much to do here at Kelvedon that I despair of the outside, of the grounds, ever being lovely.

TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

The fourth session of this most fateful, eventful parliament opened today. I wonder what it will unfold for us? A war? An election? In the past three years we have had everything else, scandals, political strife, resignations, abdication and coronation . . .

I motored up early, and came directly to the House. The usual hum, the usual top hats; and I took my place in the East Gallery of the Lords. Already the peeresses were pouring in, and Grace Curzon¹ on the marchionesses' bench looked like a great meringue, vast, sugary and imposing. Lady Baldwin is thinner; since she became a countess, perhaps she wears tighter stays. The duchesses with few exceptions looked drab: the Somerset² looked like a housekeeper, the little Richmond³ of no account, but the chic duchesses, Eileen and Mollie⁴ were ablaze. Kakoo Rutland⁵ wore scarlet and was a touch cheap: the honours were all Moucher Devonshire's,⁶ who sat there for the first time. She looked extraordinarily imposing in black with the Devonshire tiara . . . On the whole the display was less than usual, the peeresses more obscure . . . Margot Oxford⁷ looked like a Spectre

1 Grace Elvina Hinds (1885–1958), from Alabama, married in 1917 by her second husband Earl (later 1st Marquess) Curzon of Kedleston (qv).*

2 Edith Mary Parker (1883–1962), married in 1906 Evelyn Francis Edward Seymour (1882–1954), Lord Seymour by courtesy from 1923 to 1931, when he succeeded his father as 17th Duke of Somerset.

3 Elizabeth Grace Hudson (1900–92), married in 1927 Frederick Charles Gordon-Lennox (1904–89), Lord Settrington by courtesy until 1928 and Earl of March by courtesy from then until 1935 when he succeeded his father as 9th Duke of Richmond, 9th Duke of Lennox and 4th Duke of Gordon.

4 The Duchess of Sutherland and the Dowager Duchess of Buccleuch (widow of the 7th Duke) respectively.

5 Kathleen 'Kakoo' Tennant (1894–1989), wife of the 9th Duke of Rutland*.

6 Mary Alice 'Moucher' Gascoyne-Cecil (1895–1988), wife of the 10th Duke of Devonshire*.

7 Emma Alice Margaret 'Margot' Tennant (1864–1945), wife of H. H. Asquith; with his elevation to an earldom in 1925 she became Countess of Oxford and Asquith.

of Death, and she moved animatedly about. The Sovereigns¹ were a little late, and Queen Elizabeth² was obviously nervous and ill at ease, but she looked well, if more solemn than usual. The King, after the first appalling pause when in an agony one wonders whether he will ever get the words out, read the speech in a clear voice with barely any trace of effort. The words are especially selected for him, as some consonants he cannot cope with. It was all quickly over and the Sovereigns bowed and departed in a blaze of red and jewels. There was not last year's splendour, nor any of the sad fey atmosphere of the time when Edward VIII looking like a beautiful child, was the cynosure of every admiring eye . . . Today that dreadful old Archbishop was still prancing about.

Alan [Lennox-Boyd] seems happy, not mad. He is a Will O' the Wisp, and scatters his forces. He knows nothing of the opposite sex and is quite uninterested in it. A queer augury for marital life.

I thought about the Opening of Parliament tonight and the curious way in which the English (who are certainly mad at the moment) cling to their traditions. It was, as ever, an Alice in Wonderland scene.

WEDNESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER

The wave of anti-Chamberlain feeling, largely confined to London society, seems to be growing. Honor, 'nervy', motored back to Kelvedon after dinner. My father would have been 70 today were he alive.

THURSDAY 10TH NOVEMBER

H of C all day. I am the supreme attender. I am tired, though: I sense the sands running out. Perhaps I shall die young.

MONDAY 14TH NOVEMBER

Up to London and to the FO. Many Questions. Rab went to Bridgwater to speak in the by-election and I secretly wanted to accompany him.³ It was in Bridgwater that my Channon grandfather, the first Henry, was born, although his family

1 Channon occasionally uses this solecism to describe the King and Queen. The King was the Sovereign; the Queen his consort.

2 Lady Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon (1900–2002), daughter of the 14th and 1st Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, married in 1923 Prince Albert, Duke of York, who in 1936 became King George VI.

3 The Bridgwater by-election, in Somerset, caused by the appointment of the sitting Conservative MP as a High Court judge, took place on 17 November, and proved a disaster for the government. Vernon Bartlett (1894–1983), a well-known journalist, stood as an Independent Progressive candidate on an anti-appeasement ticket with the support of the Labour and Liberal parties. On an 82 per cent turnout Bartlett won by 2,332 votes.

came from Ottery St Mary. This evening Arthur Henderson¹ warned me that he was raising Winterton's² recent indiscretions over Russia in the House. I hurried to the telephone, warned the FO and asked for a brief for the Prime Minister. He came to the H of C at 9.30, read the memo prepared by the FO and asked me, 'What do I do now?' with that strange little smile which makes me love him. I then tackled Arthur Henderson and by means of cajolery and clumsy flattery, he showed me the notes for his speech and told me all that he was going to say. I walked slowly away, but once out of his sight, dashed to the PM's room. He was alone, and smiled as I walked in. I reported, rather flurriedly [*sic*], all that Arthur Henderson (he is an amiable lightweight) had told me and the PM beamed. He was thus able to draw up his case and he thoroughly trounced poor Arthur, who squirmed uncomfortably all unconscious of my Judas action.

TUESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER

The pogroms in Germany³ and the persecutions there have roused much indignation everywhere. Hitler never helps us and always makes Chamberlain's task more difficult. One cannot say so, but the sympathies of many people are not altogether with the unfortunate Jews. Indeed, many important members of their race do not attempt to deny their disappointment that there was not a world war in September, which would have crushed Nazidom.

WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER

Honor and I dined in her room: she was in excellent spirits. We dressed afterwards and went on to Buckingham Palace. Honor looked magnificent, ablaze with many sapphires and diamonds. The reception was very mixed: a third list, I fear: hardly any of our friends. We stood about with the Butlers (Rab looking

- 1 Arthur Henderson (1893–1968), the son of Arthur Henderson, former leader of the Labour Party, was a Labour MP. After holding junior office in the coalition and Attlee governments he was Secretary of State for Air from 1947 to 1951. He was raised to a life peerage in 1966 as Baron Rowley.
- 2 Edward Turnour (1883–1962) succeeded his father as 6th Earl Winterton in 1907. As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, he had embarrassed the government by suggesting Russia had been no help at all during the Munich crisis.*
- 3 Channon refers to Kristallnacht, when in Germany on the night of 9–10 November thugs led by Sturmabteilung paramilitaries wrecked synagogues and shops, businesses and houses owned by Jews, without any interference from the authorities. The alleged provocation for the pogrom was the assassination in Paris on 9 November of Ernst vom Rath (1909–38), a German diplomat, by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Jewish boy who had just heard of the deportation of his parents from Germany to Poland, where they were placed in a refugee camp on the border. Even appeasers of the Nazis, including *The Times*, registered their horror at what had happened.

tired, Sydney¹ very underdressed) for half an hour. The young Norfolks joined us. About eleven the Household Officers began wandering about and presently, very slowly, with no fuss, the King and Queen appeared. She looked well in a crinoline and he was grinning and looked very young as all his family do. I saw him gossiping with Gerry Wellesley² and I looked away, as I know it would give Gerry too much pleasure if he knew I had seen them together. The King and Queen advanced, talked to the Norfolks and went the length of the long room, stopping now and then to chat with friends. Queen Mary entered from the opposite door and was much more dignified. She glittered with five diamond necklaces about her throat and neck. Pamela Berry³ whispered to me 'She has bagged all the best jewels.' She has. Walter Buccleuch joked with Honor as he waited. The little Queen looked well, and gave me a dazzling blue smile with her wide lapis eyes. The King continued to grin. At last they disappeared into another room, and George Gage entered piloting the King of Romania⁴ who is gross, flashy, gay and rather fun. Honor and I were presented. Then the Kents came in and walked up to us: she outshone everyone as usual: she was glamorously lovely, slender and glittering, with that distinction and glow of her own. She asked us to luncheon on Wednesday next, said that Paul and Olga⁵ would arrive on Monday and we had a long gossip. Rab and Mrs Rab were immediately opposite and commented on our royal favour. Princess Marina introduced me to Crown Prince Michael,⁶ an extraordinarily handsome tall youth. He is shy and bored; but when he smiles two dimples appear. He has some of his mother's charm, and little of his father's flashiness. The Duchess of Gloucester looked sweet and demure and elegant in a crinoline dress not unlike the Queen's. Queen Mary advanced upon us, and beside her all royalties except the Kents look second-rate. She shook hands with Honor and me and joked with Mr Kennedy,⁷ the American Ambassador, who was immediately behind us. He presented two of his daughters – entranced they looked – to her. She was in blue with mountains of jewels . . . The royalties moved into the gallery and Honor began to get tired and we soon left. Below we

1 Sydney Elizabeth Courtauld (1902–54) married Butler in 1926. She was the daughter of Samuel Courtauld*, founder of the Courtauld Institute of Art.

2 Gerald Wellesley (1885–1972), by courtesy Lord Gerald until 1943 when he succeeded his nephew as 7th Duke of Wellington.

3 Lady Pamela Margaret Elizabeth Smith (1915–82), daughter of the 1st Earl of Birkenhead, married in 1936 William Berry, younger brother of Seymour Berry (qqv).

4 King Carol II (1893–1953).*

5 Prince and Princess Paul of Yugoslavia, the latter the Duchess of Kent's (qv) sister.

6 King Michael I (1921–2017).*

7 Joseph Patrick Kennedy (1888–1969), father of the future American President John F. Kennedy (qv).*

found the Pembrokes¹ and the Anthony Edens waiting for their cars. 'The worst of being sacked is, you can never find your car,' Anthony laughed. I introduced him to Honor. Lady Pembroke wore the tiara with the huge sapphire. We were back at Belgrave Square at 12.30 and H left immediately for Kelvedon.

THURSDAY 17TH NOVEMBER

Diana Cooper rang me early to hear all about the BP party, to which they had not been invited. Was it, she wondered, because Duff had resigned, or because she had curtsied to the Duchess of Windsor in Paris? . . . the Coopers – *enfin*² – are leaving the Admiralty today, and will stay for a time with Emerald [Cunard] . . .

A long day at the House: it was the day when the Glamour Boys hoped to damage us, and Winston Churchill made a terrific attack on the govt, and he begged fifty Conservatives to follow him into the lobby.³ Actually only Messrs Macmillan⁴ and Bob Boothby⁵ did go, the figures, a majority of 196 for the govt, were satisfactory. The PM spoke for one hour one minute, very well, clearly, and amusingly, answering his critics, defending his Defence fears and refusing to create a Ministry of Supply. He retorted to Winston, and the House laughed. But the surprise of the day was Duff Cooper's sycophantic speech in which he praised the Prime Minister, and generally did a sugary suck-up to the govt, which he seemed so eager to leave a few weeks ago. Is he alarmed by the alliance of his constituents, or does he regret his harsh and rude words to the PM which resulted in his downfall? Everyone, says the proverb, pushes over a falling fence, and maybe he is humiliated by his recent snub. He refused to follow Winston, much to the latter's disappointment; on the other hand I am

1 Reginald Herbert (1880–1960), by courtesy Lord Herbert from 1895 to 1913, when he succeeded his father as 15th Earl of Pembroke and 12th Earl of Montgomery, married, in 1904, Lady Beatrice Eleanor Paget (1883–1973), daughter of Lord Alexander Victor Paget and sister of the 6th Marquess of Anglesey.

2 At last.

3 It was the debate on the King's Speech, in which anti-appeasers strove to draw attention to how underpowered Britain's defences were.

4 Maurice Harold Macmillan (1894–1986) was Conservative MP for Stockton-on-Tees from 1924 to 1929 and from 1931 to 1945, and for Bromley from 1945 to 1964. He became a fierce critic of Neville Chamberlain and was given office by Winston Churchill in 1940. He ended up as Minister of Defence, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer and, from 1957 to 1963, Prime Minister. He was awarded the Order of Merit and, in 1984, raised to the peerage as 1st Earl of Stockton.

5 Robert John Graham Boothby (1900–86) was a Conservative MP in Aberdeenshire from 1924 to 1958. He married, in 1935, Diana Cavendish (qv); they were divorced in 1937. He was created a life peer in 1958 by Harold Macmillan, whose wife, Lady Dorothy, had been Boothby's mistress since 1930.

not sure that the govt, more especially the PM, was pleased at the unexpected support. Tired, I let myself be taken to Jim Wedderburn's house to drink with him and Bill Astor.

FRIDAY 18TH NOVEMBER

Alan's 34th birthday . . . Wayward, weak, intoxicating Alan . . .

I returned to the H of C and was dumbfounded by the news of the Bridgwater election. Vernon Bartlett, standing as an Independent, had a great victory over the govt candidate. This is the worst blow the govt has had since 1935. Of course there are extenuating explanations, but these are meagre comfort. The Central Office machine is cumbersome, inefficient, and wants overhauling. Otherwise we shall lose the election; but poor comfort for the Socialists . . .

SATURDAY 19TH NOVEMBER

We are appalled by Alan's off-hand manner, indeed his neglect of Patsy. He has not gone to Elveden this weekend to the royal party and she is there alone . . . too cavalier of him.

That gawky good-tongued absurd hoyden Viola Tree¹ has followed her husband to the grave. She was young, immense, funny and kindly. I have never liked Trees of any description. And Lord Beauchamp² died in New York, aged only 66. What a turbulent life. Rank, riches, arrogance, intelligence, achievement, high office, seven children, the god's gifts at his feet, and he *gaspillé*-ed³ them all for the most sterile of all vices – footmen!! There has never been such a scandal in England, and yet people, on the whole, minded very little. The whole story very Roman, classic. That large, pompous, humourless Lord Beauchamp, a deep radical who flaunted his garter and his privileges, who adored his adoring, doting, silly, sentimental, gushing wife, fathered her seven children, and suddenly unmasked! The Duke of Westminster, his vindictive brother-in-law, pursued him, hounded him out of the country – he was allowed to go. But King George V, when told, remarked 'I thought those sort of people shot themselves.' The cruelty, the hypocrisy of the whole drama is a long book. At last he was allowed to return, had a ball, and left again. Now it is over! Lady Beauchamp, I hope punished by her Maker, is languishing in Purgatory,⁴ and fat

1 Viola Tree (1884–1938), a noted Edwardian beauty, actress and singer, was a daughter of Herbert Beerbohm Tree, the celebrated actor-manager. Her husband, Alan Parsons, a drama critic, had died in 1933 at the age of 44.

2 William Lygon (1872–1938) had succeeded his father as 7th Earl Beauchamp in 1891.*

3 *Gaspiller* is a French verb meaning to squander.

4 Lady Beauchamp had died in 1936.

Elmley¹ becomes an earl and funnier still his Dutch flamboyant childless wife a countess. *Finis* can be written at the end of the declension of one of England's most patrician houses. But their sensuality, their beauty, their misfortunes will be long remembered. All sensuous and oversexed, all Lygons homosexual.

MONDAY 21ST NOVEMBER

I drove up in the fog, and we are now resuming residence in London. I was quite miserable to leave my hauntingly lovely schloss. The glorious weather has changed. I gave old Josh Wedgwood² a small present of a plaque I found in an antique shop: it is of his ancestor, the original potter. He was enchanted. Foreign Office much the same, except that now that Rex Leeper³ has had the sack as the result of a long intrigue on my part, I have much more power and can influence the press. The newspapers splash the arrival of the Regent, my dearly beloved Paul who comes this evening!

Rab was tired today. Queen Maud of Norway died last night aged 69, the last child of King Edward's. The race is not long-lived, the ones I mean of the Danish strain.⁴ Seven years have taken the Princess Royal, Princess Victoria, George V and now the Queen who was the youngest of all. She was the least dull of the three sisters, which is saying much. She had no friends, but liked dancing, and was thin, gaunt, dull but good. We have a month's Court mourning. I seem to wear a black tie for such queer unexpected people. Queen Victoria's grandchildren do not show the same stamina as characterised the older generation. I wonder whether the prophecy made to me by a fortune-teller years ago will come true, 'You will survive all Queen Victoria's grandchildren by seven years, seven weeks and seven days.' There were dozens of them, but now I am becoming rather

- 1 William Lygon (1903–79), by courtesy Viscount Elmley until he succeeded his father as 8th Earl Beauchamp. He married, in 1936, Else 'Mona' Schiwe (1895–1989), the daughter of a Danish, not Dutch, actor. Their marriage remained childless and the Beauchamp peerages became extinct with the 8th Earl's death.
- 2 Josiah 'Josh' Clement Wedgwood (1872–1943) was the Labour MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, for which constituency he had also sat as a Liberal and Independent Labour MP. He was created 1st Baron Wedgwood in 1942. The potter Josiah Wedgwood was his great-great-grandfather.
- 3 Reginald Wildig Allen 'Rex' Leeper (1888–1968), a counsellor in the Foreign Office, later Ambassador to Greece and to the Argentine Republic. He was also responsible for founding the British Council. Channon had long disapproved of him because of his anti-appeasement sympathies.
- 4 The 'Danish strain' had little to do with it. The mother of Edward VII's children, Queen Alexandra, died just before her 81st birthday; the King, undermined by nicotine and gluttony, died at 68, younger even than his daughter, but at least not so young as his father, Prince Albert, who died at 42.

alarmed. I suppose the Queen of Spain and Drino Carisbrooke¹ are my best hopes of longevity.

No one ever accused me of being anti-German; but really I can no longer cope with the present regime, which seems to have lost all sense and reason. Are they mad? The Jewish persecutions carried to such a fiendish degree are short-sighted, cruel and unnecessary, and now, so newspapers tell us, we shall have Roman Catholic persecutions. The secret telegrams, too, do not give a very roseate account of Hitler's present attitude. He is becoming increasingly morose, and anti-English generally. He quite likes Chamberlain but thinks we are an effete, finished race. He is right, of course. We shall be a second Holland – in time. But the Dominions are still full of vigour.

The PM is in excellent fettle, not at all downcast by the Bridgwater result.

We dined altogether at the House of C, Patsy, Alan, Honor and I, and our guests, Peter Loxley,² Rab Butler, and Ernest Brown, that great frog of a man with a booming voice, fine blue eyes and a warm heart. He is teetotal and a non-smoker and gaily pleasant and full of repartee. Rab told Honor that I had great gifts, the chief being my writing: that he feared he was preventing me from writing, and was afraid my pen would become rusty. Honor was very pleased; neither knew that I pen you, Diary, depository of my secrets.

TUESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER

I woke worn out. Morning at the FO, lunched with Honor, and after Questions at the House of Commons, I went to Cartier's to meet the Prince Regent:³ he was with the Duke of Kent who looked played out, worn and not as exquisite as usual. He cannot afford not to look exquisite. I bought a Victorian emerald brooch, a sort of spray for Alan L-B to give to Patsy as a wedding present.

Diana Cavendish . . . came up to see me: Duff Cooper, she tells me, is becoming very obstreperous; last week he actually attacked George Herbert,⁴ tried to throttle him, and on Sunday he had a violent quarrel with Daisy

- 1 The Queen of Spain (Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg)* survived Channon by eleven years. Prince Alexander 'Drino' of Battenberg (1886–1960), 1st Marquess of Carisbrooke, died less than eighteen months after Channon, but was nonetheless Queen Victoria's last surviving grandson. Her last surviving granddaughter, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone (qv), died in her 98th year in 1981. Had Channon survived to the age of 91 the prophecy would have been true.
- 2 Peter Noel Loxley (1905–45) was a career diplomat who, while a First Secretary in the Foreign Office, was killed in a plane crash in Malta on the way to the Yalta 'Big Three' conference in 1945.
- 3 Prince Paul of Yugoslavia.
- 4 George Sidney Herbert (1886–1942), younger son of the 14th Earl of Pembroke, joined the Royal Household in 1928 as Gentleman Usher to King George V. He became an aide-de-camp to King Edward VIII in 1936 and a Groom-in-Waiting to King George VI in 1937, being created 1st Bt the same year.

Fellowes¹ at Crichel. He is a very second-rate fellow is Master Cooper: I have always known it. Others weren't so sure.

My mother is rather on my mind lately: usually I rarely give her a thought. She is the most exasperating human being, without a redeeming quality, that I have ever met. But she is persistent, and will always sacrifice all to an end that is not worthwhile. I am sorry for her: at times I have actively hated her. With the years any antipathy has cooled, now I pity her, and want never to see her, but my conscience tells me that I must go to the USA once again before she dies. She will be 70 next July 19th.

WEDNESDAY 23RD NOVEMBER

I only feel well and fit with an empty stomach: I was magnificent this morning, and gaily drove to the FO, thus missing the Prince Regent's visit to No. 5 [Belgrave Square], where he waited for some time. There I lunched with Honor and ever since I am *congestionné*,² ill, absurdly stale. Is it exercise I need, or a jolly thorough fornication, or what?

The PM and Lord Halifax and their consorts crossed the Channel in an appalling gale. The visit to the French government will lack *Stimmung*³ and success: everyone is against it. The Germans are annoyed, and France at the threshold or rather at the crossroads is not eager for it. France now must either perish with an unpredictable future or rally further around Daladier and his govt. I fear for France's future, and sometimes for our own.

They are beginning to fear me now at the FO, and Rex Leeper actually asked me to do him a favour! I miss Kelvedon.

I talked to the Prince Regent on the telephone: the whole royal family at the unearthly hour of 9 a.m. had attended a memorial service for Queen Maud in the Marlborough House Chapel. Royalties love obsequies, anything to do with Court mourning.

I am trying to do a favour for every MP, and building up a position here of considerable popularity. Why? Rab is shrewd, calculating, and his [illegible] mind, while never flashy or meretricious, is alert and far-sighted. He treats everyone as an oriental and is playing with us all. He sometimes looks, acts and appears as most ingenuous, even naif, but he would be a fool who was deceived. If he had more outward gifts he might be PM. Yesterday he talked to me about his wife, her brutal frankness, blunt honesty which often caused him heart burnings. His

1 Marguerite Séverine Philippine Decazes de Glücksberg (1890–1962) married in 1919 as her second husband. Reginald Allwyn Fellowes (1884–1953), after which she was known as Daisy Fellowes. A *grande horizontale*, she had had an affair with Duff Cooper and tried to seduce Winston Churchill, whose cousin her second husband was.

2 Congested, or flushed.

3 Mood, atmosphere or tone.

brother is soon to be married to a dull girl from the Isle of Man, and the wedding is to take place there. Sydney Butler not only refuses to go, but worse, she won't hear of Rab going. Yesterday I met his parents, his father, the [blank], is a fat, little fellow of 60, but Lady Butler I thought a grand old girl, rather overdressed, grey, and not a day over 58.¹ She is tall, jingles when she walks, worships Rab, who – and this is the most charming incident I have observed of him – could not resist showing off his impressed parents. They sat alone in our room, 21 D, and after Questions Rab, followed by the faithful Peter Loxley and me, joined them. He gave us all orders, quickly, rather Napoleonically interviewed three MPs who were brusquely dismissed, business was dispatched, documents were signed . . . and the parents sat gasping with pleasure.

Shall I give a banquet for the Prince Regent? Diana Cooper complained to me on the telephone that I had dropped her: they are feeling the adverse wind. It is so difficult (I find at least) to be easy, gay, affectionate and above all natural with people when one violently disapproves of actions they have taken, or even disagrees on an important issue. Worse for me: I know the truth and have a contempt for Duff in consequence. He lost his temper in the Cabinet, flew in a rage at several ministers, insulted Chamberlain, and later . . . he observed Chamberlain's very manner towards him immediately after his return from Munich; and so Duff resigned, pretending to the world, the House, to Diana, possibly to himself, that he resigned on an issue, 'to hold up his head', etc., all that nonsense. He resigned simply because in an hour or so he would have been dismissed. The hint to go was plain enough. Duff himself has referred to the evident relief of everyone at his departure. There he was right, I will move heaven and earth to prevent his return to High Politics. It would be dangerous for this country. Above all he wanted 'war in my time'² when he was Sec of State for War or 1st Lord of the Admiralty. We might have won, and he would have been a hero; we might have lost and he would have gone down to history in either case. Now he is a rather second-rate journalist who has an overpaid contract with the *Evening Standard*, and his articles are dull and unread.

I dined with Emerald, and what in theory sounds an entrancing party, was incredibly tiring: Leslie Hore-Belisha, the Abdys,³ the Coopers, Naps Alington,⁴

1 Butler's father, Montagu Sherard Dawes Butler (1873–1952), had been a provincial Indian governor from 1925 to 1933 and until 1937 Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, when he became Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. He was knighted in 1924. He married, in 1901, Ann Gertrude Smith (1876–1954). When Channon met them they were 65 and 62 respectively.

2 A parody of Chamberlain's 'peace in our time' slogan.

3 Robert Henry Edward Abdy (1896–1976), who had succeeded his father as 5th Bt in 1921, married in 1930 as his second wife Helen Diana Bridgeman (1907–67), daughter of the 5th Earl of Bradford, and by courtesy Lady Diana.

4 Napier George Henry Sturt (1896–1940), who in 1919 succeeded his father as 3rd Baron Alington of Crichel.

Venetia Montagu, old Placci,¹ Lady Ribblesdale,² eleven in all: mostly anti-Chamberlain, anti-government, pro-Red, pro-Barcelona . . . I kept my temper and my silence and left immediately I could decently do so. The atmosphere was too civilised, the flickering candles, the anti-German diatribes. But blows were avoided: they are not always. Duff, I hear, assaulted George Herbert about a fortnight ago,³ after a political argument, and throttled him. They made it up officially but George Herbert, that tall courtier and Slavic Conservative, has still a stiff neck.

THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER

I rose exhausted and rushed to Buck's Club to await the Prince Regent: we shopped together at Cartier's etc., walked up and down Bond Street, had oysters at Prunier's, and gossiped to our heart's content. At one o'clock we drove in my car to Buckingham Palace to the private Belgian door, and Paul showed me the so-called 'Belgian suite' where he and Olga are living. It is hideously Edwardian, but comfortable, with Buhl furniture from Kensington Palace etc. but actually wallpaper on the walls. It is nearly period, and in twenty years such decor will be thought the *dernier cri*.⁴ Princess Olga has new emeralds, some reset. We drove to the Kents' where we lunched, a large party, the Duchess lovely and affectionate; the Duke playful and pleasant; Hannah Gubbay,⁵ the Regent and Olga; Emerald Cunard; 'Teenie' Cazalet;⁶ Malcolm Bullock;⁷ Sir Kenneth and Lady Clark (a most irritating bogus couple);⁸ Alice Hofmannsthal⁹ . . . Food excellent, party *gemütlich*,¹⁰ atmosphere gay. After luncheon I stood in the window with the Duke and he gossiped. I told him that his Australian governorship would save him £500,000, or more, the money he would have spent in shops. Melbourne, nor Sydney, has no Cartier, or Rochelle Thomas or a Moss Harris¹¹ – none of the

1 Carlo Placci (1861–1941) was a London-born Italian man of letters.

2 Ava Lowie Willing (1868–1958), who married in 1919 the 4th Baron Ribblesdale. Her first husband had been John Jacob Astor IV (1864–1912), who went down with the *Titanic*.

3 This clearly fascinated Channon so much he mentions it for a second time.

4 The height of fashion.

5 Hannah Gubbay was a close friend of Sir Philip Sassoon (qv) and the main beneficiary of his will.

6 Victor Alexander 'Teenie' Cazalet MC (1896–1943) had sat on the Supreme War Council at Versailles after the Great War. He was Conservative MP for Chippenham from 1924 to 1943.

7 Harold Malcolm Bullock (1889–1966), Conservative MP.

8 Kenneth Mackenzie Clark (1903–83) was from 1934 to 1946 Director of the National Gallery. He became a famous broadcaster presenting the BBC television series *Civilisation* in 1969. He married, in 1927, Elizabeth Winifred 'Jane' Martin (1902–76). He was knighted in 1938 and raised to the peerage as Baron Clark (life peer) in 1969.*

9 Ava Alice Muriel Astor (1902–56), who in 1933 had married as her second husband Raimund von Hofmannsthal (qv).*

10 Cheerful and pleasant.

11 J. Rochelle Thomas and Moss Harris & Sons were leading antique dealers whose main showrooms in the 1930s were in St James's.

shops where he spends hours and thousands. He laughed. The royal children came in: Edward has a pretty but sulky face, and he told me that he has kissed my Paul this morning on his return. Alexandra is a Meissen Miss, a dream of doll-like beauty, and she smiles, smiles, shows her teeth and smiles again. They both have lovely golden curly hair. Edward is not so large, so lively, so intelligent or so conversational as my Paul, but he has an older face, perhaps more bred. Rather a Nattier¹ expression. After luncheon there was a tea party for children at Mrs Cazalet's for the Prime Minister's grandchildren. Paul went and was the success of the afternoon; but he spent most of his time kissing Prince Edward. They are too sweet together. And Edward, so pleased is he at Paul returning, has told the policeman!!

David Margesson at lunch announced that the Duchess of Atholl has applied for the Chiltern Hundreds,² thereby cleverly forcing a by-election. It is a shrewd move which she is entitled to take, and I hear she will win a by-election. She is mad, unbalanced and quite cracked; but she is no fool, and she may embarrass us . . .

The Regent has aged a little, not much: he is more charming than ever, but a touch more serious.

FRIDAY 25TH NOVEMBER

Telephoned to the Regent and went with him to Buckingham Palace. Home for luncheon with Honor and later drove her to Victoria where I said 'goodbye'. We were both, I think, moved and certainly embarrassed. I could think of nothing to say, and dreaded the long wait before the train slipped out. At last I kissed her 'goodbye'. 'Take good care of Paul,' she smiled coldly. 'You need have no fear of that,' I assured and walked away. Now she is alone and *en route* for Innsbruck on a dreary expedition. She is eccentric, undemonstrative, yet I love her still. I don't think she loves me now.

I was in a rage with Alice Hofmannsthal, who promised to be here at 7.50. I waited until 8.10 and then drove off without her to Buckingham Palace to pick up Paul and Olga and we went to a most fatiguing revue with Leslie Henson.³ Alice joined us there very late, but looked distinguished and was very chic. She is amazingly well-bred always. Afterwards we went to the Savoy to supper. The royals

1 Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766) was a French portrait painter.

2 An office of profit under the Crown, for which a Member of Parliament who wishes to retire other than after a dissolution of Parliament applies in order to disqualify him or herself from staying in the House of Commons.

3 Leslie Lincoln Henson (1891–1957) had enjoyed a long career as a music-hall turn before branching out into acting and film and theatre production. He would be one of the founders of the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), which entertained troops during the Second World War. His second wife, Gladys Henson (*née* Gunn) (1897–1982), was a stalwart of Ealing Studios' films.

are enjoying their semi-mourning which while it precludes society, allows them to dine out with intimates. Long conversation and one of the happiest evenings I have ever had, although we were up until 2 a.m. Alice so sweet, as was Olga who gave her an ikon from 'Mamma and me' to bring her happiness. Poor Alice, her matrimonial affairs again crashed, she so soon to divorce her flashy, *cabotin*,¹ semi-servile husband² so that he can legalise his liaisons with lovely Liz Paget.³

I drove the royals back to Buckingham Palace and went in for a moment of affectionate chat, into the Belgian suite, and thereon home.

SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

KELVEDON

After a night of wet dreams (really at my age it is surprising and perhaps reassuring) I woke weak: Paul climbed into my bed; he is always asking questions about spanking – does he want one? Then breakfast and the newspapers. That Red ass, bore, and tiresome woman the Duchess of Atholl is to be opposed after all by a local Chamberlain Conservative! She will win, thanks to her local backing and the election will be considered an anti-Chamberlain victory.

I came here for the day, it is cold, but lovely. Batsi, I think, is pregnant, but will they have two puppies? She is more affectionate than my adored Bundi.

Emerald rang me up; she was offended because I said that she was surrounded by 'Bolshies' meaning the Coopers and others. She is anti-Duff, although he is living there. She thinks him foolish to have resigned, and tried to pretend that he resigned over the League of Nations. He hasn't struck anyone lately, the wild little turkey-cock. All my dislike of him for fifteen years is now showing itself.

Kelvedon looks lovely, but it is cold. The estate is smaller in the winter with the leaves gone. Only the sheldrake remain.

Wolkoff⁴ saw Anthony Eden go into the Red Embassy on Friday: what has Maisky⁵ to say to Eden?

Emerald says that Noël Coward is so old-fashioned, and out of date. She is right.

MONDAY 28TH NOVEMBER

A full-ish grand day. Early to the Foreign Office, and then a luncheon party at Lord Halifax's. He had been with Prince Paul for an hour at Buck House this

1 Poseur.

2 Raimund von Hofmannsthal (1906–74).*

3 Lady Elizabeth Paget (1916–80), daughter of the 6th Marquess of Anglesey.

4 Admiral Nikolai Wolkoff (1870–1954) was Imperial Russia's last naval attaché in London. He stayed in London after the revolution and became a British subject in 1935. He and his daughter were organisers of the London community of White Russians but both came under suspicion as Nazi sympathisers.

5 Ivan Maisky (1884–1975), the Soviet Ambassador to London.

morning and both told me afterwards how very much he liked the other. At lunch there were: Londonderrys, Willingdons,¹ Birkenheads,² and the Portuguese Ambassador;³ I was between the Ambassadors and Sheila Birkenhead. Atrocious food, hideous but still rather grandiose and musty house . . . Lord H has more charm than any worldly man: she is amiable, a touch whimsical, which my mother-in-law⁴ is not. She is a lighter metal, more glittering, less solid . . . I rushed back for Questions, but I am not somehow taking the House as seriously as usual this week. Everything must go by the board when the Regent is here.

I came home about five o'clock as I had a cocktail party. I feared that no one would turn up: it was, however, a riotous success, only a touch too grand. Emerald arrived an hour early, and was followed by the Yugoslav Minister⁵ and Mme Kassidolatz, and Sheila Milbanke,⁶ an appalling mixture. Then appeared Charles Peake,⁷ my bonnie Charlie of the Foreign Office, Lady Oxford,⁸ looking like a death mask but Emerald greeted her, 'Look at little Margot. Isn't she looking refreshing?' Then the Yugoslav, Paul and Princess Olga, dignified, royal and amiable. After that about fifty people came, including the King of Greece who stayed for an hour, as did the Buccleuchs. Walter Buccleuch very gay and fun. Paul had first a long *entretien*⁹ with Charles Peake, then with Margot, and lastly with Rab, who was impressed by meeting so many royalties and duchesses. First I introduced him to the King of Greece; and afterwards he sat down with Paul on a sofa and had a political crack. People wandered about – Mary Herbert¹⁰ very pregnant, the Hambledens¹¹ charming, etc. Naps Alington; Diana C underdressed in a tweed; Fritzi of Prussia too stimulating and exciting for words (Rab had a talk with him too) . . . many others. None of the MPs came, but I had only asked three

1 Freeman Freeman-Thomas (1866–1941), 1st Marquess of Willingdon, had been Viceroy of India from 1931 to 1936. In 1892 he married Marie Adelaide Brassey (1875–1960).*

2 Frederick Winston Furneaux Smith (1907–75), by courtesy Viscount Furneaux from 1922 to 1930, when he succeeded his father* as 2nd Earl Birkenhead. He married in 1935 Sheila Berry (1913–92), daughter of the 1st Viscount Camrose (qv).

3 Dr Armindo Rodrigues de Sittau Monteiro (1896–1955) was a university professor who became Portuguese Ambassador to the United Kingdom in 1936 and served until 1943. He married, in 1925, Lúcia Rebelo Cancela Infante de Lacerda (1903–80).

4 Lady Iveagh was the sister of Lady Halifax (qv).

5 Dragomir Kassidolatz.

6 Margaret Sheila Mackellar Chisholm (1895–1969), from New South Wales, had been pursued by the Duke of York before his marriage, despite being married herself at the time to Lord Loughborough. Her second marriage was to Sir John 'Buffles' Milbanke (qv).

7 Charles Brinsley Pemberton Peake (1897–1958) was a senior diplomat, later becoming Ambassador to Yugoslavia (1946–51) and to Greece (1951–7).

8 Formerly Mrs Asquith.

9 Interview.

10 Mary Dorothea Hope (1903–95), by courtesy Lady Mary Hope, married in 1936 Sidney Herbert, by courtesy Lord Herbert (qv).

11 William Henry Smith and the former Lady Patricia Herbert.

or four. Alan, I kept away, as his brother Francis¹ has come down with scarlet fever. If Alan gets it the wedding will be off or postponed. As it is he nearly drives poor Patsy insane with his rushings about, goings and comings . . .

It was eight o'clock (and by then I was drunk) before the royalties left. Paul rang me immediately from Buckingham Palace to thank me: they had enjoyed themselves. The rooms look lovely, particularly the dining room heavy with Meissen and food in the candlelight. I refused to give Diana C dinner and joined Harold [Balfour] at the H of Commons and we dined together. Diana meanwhile had picked up Euan [Wallace] and David Margesson and were embarrassingly near at the next table. Tommy Dugdale² was with them.

A word about Tommy Dugdale: he is the govt spy. He was Baldwin's PPS and now is being groomed for the future Chief Whip, of that I am convinced. He is good, good-natured, good-hearted, but treacherous all right. He reports every conversation to the PM or to David and his role is to pump people. Poor Jim Thomas is his pawn, or dupe. Previous to the abdication he listened in to all the ex-King's telephone conversations and reported them. I was shocked when I discovered that: how did the govt dare to do such a thing? . . . Of course we are living in a semi-fascist era.

After dinner I went home and changed and joined Prince Paul, Princess Olga, Teenie Cazalet, the two Buccleuchs and the Jock Balfours³ at the Savoy where we had an enjoyable supper party. I am quite dizzy with the success of my cocktail party, if so royal a function could be so frivolously described. Only Mrs Chamberlain didn't come.

WEDNESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

A Southend party to see the H of C. Shopped with the Regent; we idled in Bond Street, we went to shops, we laughed like our ancient selves, sauntered in a rakish manner, evading the detectives. He loves me, deeply, I think. Not as much as I love him. We went to Spink's,⁴ Cartier's, Rochelle Thomas, elsewhere. I have ordered a [illegible] inkstand for his Christmas present from Spink's.

- 1 Francis Gordon Lennox-Boyd (1909–44). He was the second of Alan Lennox-Boyd's brothers to die in the war, being killed on D-Day while commanding the 22nd Independent Parachute Company, and the third to die prematurely.
- 2 Thomas Lionel Dugdale (1897–1977) was Conservative MP for Richmond from 1929 to 1959. He was Stanley Baldwin's parliamentary private secretary; and was Minister of Agriculture from 1951 to 1954, when he resigned over his technical responsibility for the Crichel Down affair, where the government was forced to hand back land acquired from the Alington family. He was created 1st Bt in 1945 and raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Crathorne in 1959.
- 3 John Balfour (1894–1984) was a diplomat who, despite his antipathy to the Franco regime, served as British Ambassador to Spain from 1951 to 1954. He married, in 1933, Frances van Millingen (1904–99), daughter of Prof. Alexander van Millingen.
- 4 The celebrated coin and medal dealer, then in St James's.

THURSDAY 1ST DECEMBER

A long time at the House. In the evening, I dined at home by myself and then dressed and joined the Regent, Princess Olga, Prince Fritz of Prussia, Mollie Buccleuch, the Hambledens . . . at Ciro's. A gay evening in this place where so much of our youth, the Regent's and mine, has been spent. Mollie Buccleuch is very Chamberlain, very against Betty Cranborne¹ and her other Cavendish cousins who are too Red for her. Both Betty Cranborne and Beatrice Eden² go about saying that they are ashamed to be English that we are not at war! The whole Cecil family has behaved outrageously, even dishonestly over the crisis! Mollie Buccleuch told me that she knows that Joe Kennedy, that [illegible] charlatan the American Ambassador, has been disloyal to Halifax and Chamberlain. He is an Edenite.³ Anthony told Mollie so when she met him at Eton at St Andrew's Day. We stayed late at Ciro's and I drove everyone home late. Princess Olga had sat last night at dinner at BP next to Lord Halifax and had been much under his spell. Luckily I had run into Lord H this afternoon coming out of the Foreign Office and had walked with him for a little – he gave me an envoy to him from someone connected with the King of Greece. I asked him if his 'flirtation' with the Regent continued – they had been together for an hour on Monday, and he replied that he had another conversation with him last night at Buckingham Palace, and also that he had found Princess Paul absolutely charming . . . so tonight I was able to repeat to her his praises and she was pleased . . . The Queen arranged a small dinner for them in the absence of the King who is shooting duck at Sandringham. She didn't ask me I notice!!!

Drank too much and home too late – royalty is a heady wine.

FRIDAY 2ND DECEMBER

Anthony Eden was to have sailed tomorrow in the *Nomadic* accompanied by [his wife] Beatrice, her brother and Ronnie Tree,⁴ and the Hinchingsbrookes,⁵ but –

- 1 Elizabeth Vere Cavendish (1897–1982) married in 1915 Robert 'Bobbety' Gascoyne-Cecil, Viscount Cranborne, later 5th Marquess of Salisbury*.
- 2 Beatrice Helen Beckett (1905–57), daughter of Sir William Beckett, banker, married in 1923 Anthony Eden (qv). They divorced in 1950.
- 3 This observation was not well informed. Kennedy was pro-Hitler and pro-appeasement, and was ultimately removed by Roosevelt partly because of his disloyalty to a president whom he hoped to succeed, and partly because of his increasingly loud defeatism.
- 4 Arthur Ronald Lambert Field Tree (1897–1976) was Conservative MP for Harborough from 1933 to 1945. A strong anti-appeaser, he would become a close associate of Churchill in the later 1930s. He later developed the Sandy Lane resort in Barbados.
- 5 Alexander Victor Edward Paulet Montagu (1906–95) was by courtesy Viscount Hinchingsbrooke from 1916 to 1962, when he succeeded his father as 10th Earl of Sandwich; he disclaimed his peerages in 1964. He was Conservative MP for South Dorset from 1941 to 1962. He married, in 1934, Maud Rosemary Peto (1916–98); they were divorced in 1958, and he remarried. Despite this, and having fathered seven children with his first wife, he was predominantly homosexual, and accused by his youngest son of being a serial paedophile.

owing to the very troubled conditions in France – the great democracy Anthony admires so much was unable to man her finest ship, and he has had to transfer to the *Aquitania*! Much amused comment – why couldn't he sail in a British ship in the first place? The Insurgents' cause is abating: they are all sixes and sevens – Chamberlain reigns almost supreme.

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER

I found on my return late last night a message to ring the Regent but it was too late to do so. However he rang me early this morning and I met him at Spink's at 11 a.m. He made several purchases – often he looks at everything, buys nothing and goes away. It is only when he is shopping, appraising, that he becomes like an *antiquaire*. I drove back with him to Buckingham Palace and talked of the Windsors, whom no one remembers now, or wouldn't if Barbie Wallace and Diana Cooper had not taken it in their heads to curtsy to her when they were last in Paris! Diana has changed since her fall from power. A quiet evening . . . Paul and Olga left for Coppins¹ about six. I arranged to join them tomorrow.

SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER

Channon visits Eton to see Prince Paul's son Alexander, who was studying there, then returns to Coppins.

I left for London to attend to my dinner party. The hour before a dinner is always confusing, and until 8 p.m. I didn't know whether or not to expect Basil Dufferin² who is notoriously slack about his social engagements. I tried to persuade the royals to come, but they refused.

A most gay, *réussi*³ evening. The Chief Whip was in wine and freely announced, in answer to a question from Lady Cunard, that he was backing Lord Halifax to be Prime Minister should Chamberlain suddenly die, be shot, or resign. We discussed all the Cabinet, the possibility of reshuffle etc. He and Emerald and Loelia Westminster⁴ left at 2.05! Poppy Thursby⁵ had had too much to drink, quite obviously, and she became lachrymose, and then made the most amazing, and wicked confidence, which shows that people are gossiping about Honor and me, as I have sometimes feared. Poppy said that the Eden people in London went about last year saying that Honor neglected her child, did not care for it, and that I had attempted to turn the Iveaghs against her! A monstrous *potin*.⁶ I only want

1 The Buckinghamshire country house of the Duke and Duchess of Kent.

2 Basil Sheridan Hamilton Temple-Blackwood (1909–45), 4th Marquess of Dufferin and Ava.*

3 Successful.

4 Loelia Mary Ponsonby (1902–93), wife of the 2nd Duke of Westminster.

5 Helen Azalea 'Poppy' Baring (1901–80) married in 1928 William Piers 'Peter' Thursby (1904–77)*.

6 Piece of gossip.

them to help to prevent my wife doing anything foolish, for decidedly she is not normal now. And I never once mentioned her to her parents until last October, and then only gently in reference to her going abroad for three months, as she was ordered to do – and didn't – by our Dr Law, who looks like a German U-boat commander . . . these remarks of Poppy's rather poisoned my party. I loathe criticism and it upsets me always.

MONDAY 5TH DECEMBER

This afternoon the Regent rang me, and I arranged for Sir Alex Cadogan¹ to call on him at Buckingham Palace at six o'clock. It was a flattering coup at the Foreign Office for me, and frankly I enjoyed it. Later I met him for a second and he was very polite. I shopped with the Regent – that is I rushed away directly Questions were over, and picked him up at his dentist's. Long talks. He is now definitely very pro-Bertie and Elizabeth,² with whom he is still staying. He is bored by them secretly, thinks them dull-ish and a touch bourgeois, but realises that they have done their job well and saved the monarchy. He feels that he has behaved shabbily to the Windsors and doesn't know what to do. Royalties are curious in their personal relations with one another . . .

Last night we all discussed Duff and I asked Helen Fitzgerald, who had been staying at Lavington with the Wallaces, and only motored up in time to dine, whether there had been any incidents, as I knew the Coopers were also weekending there (there had been a shoot). Helen laughingly retorted that no one had been even struck, that Duff was as quiet as a lamb, apparently on his good behaviour since fighting so many people, and striking at least two . . . I would have forgotten this conversation had today not brought the news of a full-dress row last night at Lavington after dinner. Lady Pembroke made some deprecatory remark about Diana and Barbie Wallace dropping curtsies to the Windsors; whereupon Duff flew into a rage and insulted Lady Pembroke, called her a snob, and a bloody bitch etc. etc. Buffles³ had wanted to restrain him and had to be held back. The evening practically ended in a *mêlée* and Barbie Wallace, the distraught but innocent hostess, retired to bed in indignant self-defence.

TUESDAY 6TH DECEMBER

A full day. London with its complications. I rushed to the Foreign Office, thence to Victoria to take leave of the Regent, who arrived smiling and debonair, with

1 Alexander Montagu George Cadogan (1884–1968) was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1938 to 1946. Channon often refers to him using the diminutive 'Alec' *.

2 The King and Queen.

3 John Charles Peniston 'Buffles' Milbanke (1902–47) succeeded as 11th Bt in 1915 after his father's death on active service in the Dardanelles.

Princess Olga, very royal. The royal waiting room was full of diplomats, Corbin¹ the Frenchman, and the large staff of blacks from the Yugoslav Legation! We were all greeted ceremoniously and there was first the hint of a twinkle in the Regent's eye . . . Then he got into the train. There were at least fifty policemen, more than usual, I noticed. He stood in the doorway of the carriage chatting to us all, and, as usual, I had the sinking feeling which I always had when he leaves – for the day he will go away and never return, the victim of some fanatic's aim. The train pulled out, 'Goodbye Chips,' he half whispered and I turned away . . . then I drove Jock Balfour, who is really very rich, back to the Foreign Office.

When I got back to the FO I heard that there was a report that Croat desperadoes were arriving here in order to shoot my beloved Prince Paul, my alter ego, the human being with whom I feel the most in tune in the whole world . . . and my heart sank. Luckily he is gone . . .

I dined with Emerald and picked up Loelia Westminster to escort there. She was resplendent in furs and jewels . . . Portia Stanley in a fiendish temper. She is so dazed and unhappy, and she still limps . . . her life came to a full-stop with Edward's death but she will recover . . . I drove Loelia home eventually; it was nearly one o'clock and she suggested, or rather hinted, that I take her to the Embassy Club to supper and dance. How queer I am: I pretended to misunderstand and having left her, as it was 'cold', I suddenly told the chauffeur to drive me to Jim Thomas's around the corner. He was in and charming. We talked late, and I pumped him, and got much Eden news.

WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER

I lunched with Jim Wedderburn, who adores me now, is my slave. He rings me up constantly, makes scenes of jealousy, and he is becoming increasingly complicated and a problem. He asked the Tommy Dugdales and John Colville² to meet me, at my request. Tommy Dugdale is the mystery man of the govt. He has no opinions, he is not an intriguer, is a good sort and yet he is the arch informer. He listens, listens, offends no one and reports all . . . It was he, I have since found out, who listened in, who tapped all the late King's private telephone calls at the time of the abdication, and, of course, reported them all to Baldwin. Tommy is square, short, smiling and shrewd. He has merry brown eyes, white teeth, black shining hair, and always wears a double-breasted pinhead grey suiting. He is married to

1 Charles Corbin (1881–1970) was French Ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1933 to 1940.

2 David John Colville (1894–1954) was a Scottish ironmaster who sat as a National Liberal MP for Midlothian and Peebles Northern from 1929 to 1943, when he was appointed Governor of Bombay. He was Secretary of State for Scotland from 1938 to 1940 and was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Clydesmuir in 1948.

Nancy Tennant¹ . . . half-sister of Lady Oxford. She is a good, dull, plain female. I quite liked her. Tommy's great dupe is Jim Thomas, my poor friend, who trusts him and tells him everything. John Colville, the Sec of State for Scotland, has an enormous bottom, is friendly and quite able; but he is unexciting.

FRIDAY 9TH DECEMBER

I drove to Southend to attend the West Country Dance. I was late, bad-tempered and worn out. The Patsy–Alan romance wears me, and worries me; he rushes about so, isn't in love with her, and she hysterically half-suspects his indifference.

MONDAY 12TH DECEMBER

I lunched with the Butlers at 2 Smith Square. Rab now knows that he is to be a Privy Counsellor and he is delighted. So is she. They give me some of the credit for it . . . The PM was very in the 'dumps': I have never known him so tired and depressed. He seemed quite miserable and the smile he gave . . . The spirits of the Edenites and Churchillians rose, and Dunglass² looked miserable. Later he (Dunglass) cornered Rab and Geoffrey Lloyd³ for an hour and asked their help and advice.

TUESDAY 13TH DECEMBER

A full day again. It began by Rab telling me that he feared, indeed, almost prophesied an immediate general election, that is directly after the Rome visit,⁴ or more probably still early in February. The PM is toying with the idea of meeting the House and then dissolving it . . . it seems that when Rob Hudson⁵ went to him and threatened to resign if Belisha were not sacked from the War Office, he said that four other under-secretaries would go with him; the PM retorted that if Hudson persisted in his threats he would have an election now. Hudson backed down somewhat . . . Rab told me this (I had already picked it up, but wanting details, pretended to know nothing, as that is the best policy to adopt when

1 Nancy Tennant (1904–69) was the daughter of Sir Charles Tennant, 1st Bt, and married Dugdale (qv) in 1936 as her second husband.

2 Lord Dunglass was Chamberlain's parliamentary private secretary.

3 Geoffrey William Lloyd (1902–84) was a Conservative MP for seats in Birmingham from 1931 to 1945 and from 1950 to 1974. He had been private secretary and then parliamentary private secretary to Stanley Baldwin. He held junior office throughout the period from 1935 to 1945, was Minister of Fuel and Power from 1951 to 1955 and Minister of Education from 1957 to 1959. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Geoffrey-Lloyd (life peer) in 1974.

4 Chamberlain would visit Mussolini in Rome from 11 to 14 January 1939.

5 Robert Spear Hudson (1886–1957) was at this time Secretary for Overseas Trade. He was increasingly anti-appeasement and had expressed reservations to Chamberlain in the preceding days about the government's level of preparedness for war, reservations shared by several others. He did not resign, but his actions were noted and he had sufficient of Churchill's confidence to serve in the wartime coalition.

one wants to paste together bits of a story, particularly when one's informant is longing to confide in one); I listened and promised to say nothing. It was the day of my biggest propaganda luncheon party, eighteen or nineteen men . . . I walked across to 10 Downing Street ostensibly to ask Dunglass to luncheon, but also to pick up any stray bits . . . I ran into Mrs Chamberlain who looked rather *affairee*;¹ she smiled and rushed by, very well dressed. Alec Dunglass put me on a sofa under the staircase and we had a confidential chat: he asked me what I thought *re* any immediate election etc. I canvassed the cause of agriculture. I feel it is foolish to jeopardise the agricultural seats, which is to play the Socialist game, and I told him so. He agreed . . . He could not lunch and asked who was coming. He smiled when I said 'Rob Hudson' – and I knew!! When I got back to Belgrave Square I found a note from Hudson to the effect that he had gastric flu and couldn't come!! He doesn't want to identify himself apparently with the propaganda of the govt of which he is a member!!

In the evening I changed and went to the Wallaces' party. It was given by Barbie and Helen Fitzgerald, an impromptu affair, but all London – all my old London that once I loved, feared, envied and moved about in. The only newcomers are the Butlers, who looked out of place . . . I saw Lady Pembroke nod slightly to Duff Cooper, who reddened and returned the bow. Very *grande dame* of her. She now says that she had fully expected Duff to strike her. The story got out by Diana letting Randolph [Churchill] know,² who instantly published it in the *Standard*.

Channon then includes the following passage, which seems to have been gestating for some time:

Random reflections:

Over the Czech crisis and its sensible solution the Astor dynasty not only had its way but led the movement: the Rothermere³ and Beaverbrook⁴

1 Busy, preoccupied.

2 Randolph Frederick Edward Spencer-Churchill (1911–68), son of Sir Winston Churchill, spent his life in his father's shadow, and with few of his qualities and little of his talent. He mostly earned his living by writing and from 1940 to 1945 was a Conservative Member of Parliament, before being defeated in the Labour landslide. In 1939 he married Pamela Digby (qv).

3 Harold Sidney Harmsworth (1868–1940), younger brother of Alfred Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe, was co-founder with him of the *Daily Mail* and various other newspapers and periodicals, in which he acquired a controlling interest on Northcliffe's death in 1922. He became 1st Bt in 1910, was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Rothermere in 1914, and advanced to a viscounty in 1919. He and his newspapers would become strong advocates of appeasement and he was a fervent admirer of Hitler.

4 William Maxwell Aitken (1879–1964), from Ontario, Canada, had through his business dealings and friendships with Andrew Bonar Law and David Lloyd George acquired astonishing political influence. A Unionist MP from 1911 to 1916, he was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Beaverbrook in 1917 very much against the wishes of King George V, and served in Lloyd George's War Cabinet – and, from 1940 to 1945, in Churchill's. He became proprietor of the *Daily Express* in 1916.

press followed suit enthusiastically – the powerful Berry clan and Press were, however, opposed to Munich, critical of Chamberlain, and have continued so, although K(?), a realist, is giving in; and Camrose, in all justice, has been very ill. Nevertheless over this crisis the Astors have won, and the Berrys have lost. The Rothermere and Beaverbrook press have merely joined and supported the winning side. Over the abdication the Astors and Berrys vied with each other in traducing Edward VIII and intrigued against him for months: he had, however (and still has at heart), both the Rothermere and Beaverbrook factions. The Astors and Berrys are fundamentally strait-laced, and puritanical: there they converge. But the Astors want peace with Germany thank God. I think it is largely Lothian's¹ influence on Lady Astor.² In any case the Jewish blood, and origin of the Astors is much more remote than in the Berrys where, I suppose, it is fairly recent.

Again over the abdication and the Czech crisis, one cannot help but be struck by the fact that we had in each case the right man for the job. I doubt whether Chamberlain would have been equally successful with the abdication problem – Baldwin's touch was masterly, whatever one's sympathies!! Certainly Baldwin as Prime Minister during these recent weeks would not have behaved in the superhuman way that Chamberlain did. He could not have flown to Berchtesgaden – not he! He wouldn't have known where it was!

*In the MS Channon has ended this passage with 'MORE TO COME'.
There are two entries for the next day.*

WEDNESDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Day began with an early message that my beloved Batsi, my Bundarch bitch, had one puppy in the night, born dead – as so often happens with only one. The vet has been sent for, and she has been taken by him to Chelmsford to be watched in case there are more, and for complications. She is supposed to be all right. Naturally I am disappointed, as we had wanted to breed this intoxicating breed in Essex. Perhaps next time I shall be luckier. I believe Lady Halifax's bitch also produced a dead puppy, and next time had ten healthy ones.

1 Philip Henry Kerr (1882–1940) succeeded his cousin as 11th Marquess of Lothian in 1930. He had been a member of Lord Milner's 'kindergarten' in South Africa and became Lloyd George's private secretary in 1916. In the 1930s he was a prominent appeaser; and was appointed as the United Kingdom Ambassador to America in 1939.

2 Nancy Witcher Langhorne (1879–1964), of Danville, Virginia, married in 1906 as her second husband Waldorf Astor (1879–1952). When he succeeded in 1919 to his father's viscountcy she succeeded him as Conservative MP for Plymouth Sutton, which she represented until 1945.

WEDNESDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Very early a.m.

Very foolishly I stayed at the Wallaces' party last night until 4 a.m., and drank too much champagne – as, indeed, did everyone else. The Butlers were there, he in his black waistcoat, as befitted a minister in mourning, had come on from the foreign-press banquet where Chamberlain had made a very great speech in which he gently castigated the German press. The German Ambassador and the German press correspondents stayed away, boycotted the banquet at the last moment, thus creating a bad impression. They are too tactless always: yet I sympathise with their point of view; we constantly attack Germany so why should she not attack our statesmen? The PM's stock rose tonight perhaps enough to prevent or postpone an election. The Wallace collection¹ was a riotous, smart affair, all one's friends, all the companions of my youth. I sat with the Butlers for a bit as they were fish out of water and knew no one. Maureen Stanley² was tipsy as usual. All the flight, the gay, the careless . . . I danced with Sheila Milbanke, Mary Herbert, others . . . They played 'The Lambeth Walk' . . . Diana Cooper told me that people were trying to make trouble between her and me that I had spread stories about Duff etc. I denied it, as I had tried to be careful not to become entangled in this business.

Home at four. Alan L-B already asleep.

A message came this morning that the Duchess of Kent wanted me to take her to the theatre tonight, but I couldn't, as I must attend a Law Society banquet in Southend, and do not dare 'chuck' so near an election.

Later

Many Questions, and Rab is exhausted. However I spoke to David Margesson again and he assures me that following his promise to me, he has arranged for Rab to be made a Privy Counsellor in the New Year's Honours. I came home early, but was upset to hear that the Duchess of Kent wanted supper, and I had no time in which to arrange it: hurriedly I ordered blinis etc., and sent off half a dozen messages and then dressing in a white tie I left for Southend at 5.20. Soon I was caught in a thick fog near Epping, and for the rest of the way we crawled, feeling our way, inch by inch. By the Fortune of War, a pub, fourteen miles this side of Southend, I got out, seeing a light, and walked to it. It was the pub: and from there I telephoned to Southend to say that I could not get there.

1 A pun on the London gallery and museum of the same name.

2 Maureen Helen Vane-Tempest-Stewart (1900–42), eldest daughter of the 7th Marquess of Londonderry, and from 1915 Lady Maureen by courtesy, married in 1920 the Conservative MP Oliver Stanley, younger brother of Edward, Lord Stanley (qqv).*

Once again I have had to 'chuck' the Law Society. In the warmth of the pub I drank, parleyed with the locals, and began to glow with port and relief. After a pause, we started back and I was at Belgrave Square by ten, but *sans* banquet, *sans* dinner, *sans* anything. At eleven the Duchess, accompanied by Princess Olga and Mme Ralli¹ arrived, soon to be followed by David Herbert² and Michael Duff³ and we were a friendly gay sextette [*sic*]. The Duchess was . . . delicious, warm-hearted, chic and sensible. We discussed Lady Pembroke's recent row with Duff Cooper, and the Duchess said that both Diana Cooper and Barbie Wallace were '*des crétines*':⁴ it is all over this curtseying business to the Duchess of Windsor. Everyone deplores the incident: I think she should be made an HRH and that would be an end to the matter. They left me at 1.30 after caviar, champagne and chatter, and I immediately went on to the Londonderry House ball, which was still in progress. Diana Cooper, looking now like a frail small Bernhardt,⁵ again accused me of intriguing against Duff. Of course I strongly denied the charge and she can have no real knowledge of how far I did plot against him. He is a third-rate little fellow, a peppery parakeet. Gage admitted to me that he had let out to Diana things, that he had been trapped into betraying me. I am tired of Diana: I get bored with people always after seven years; and our great friendship has lasted just seven and a half years.

I sat with Leslie Hore-Belisha drinking sweet champagne and at length drove him home to Stratford Place where he lives: I went in with him and we were both drunk, confidential and intimate. We confessed to each other that we had both slept with Isabelle Clow⁶ years ago, and others. He showed me over his eccentric house with [illegible] medallions, plaques and portraits of his mother. It is smug, luxurious, *boîte*⁷ of a well-kept tart! And it is a touch Jewish. He is getting fat and gross, but very nice, warm, friendly and brilliant . . . he doesn't allow himself to become too self-assured. Home at 5.45 with a headache and exhausted. What an evening! Six hours lost in the fog on the arterial road! Two hours with the glowing, glamorous Duchess of Kent, *un mauvais quart d'heure*⁸ at Londonderry House, and then the dawn hours on a sofa drinking hot Ovaltine with the Minister of War.

1 Julie Marie 'Lilia' Pringo (1901–78), who married in 1921 Jean Ralli, was a lifelong friend of the Duchess of Kent and Princess Olga, and became close to Cecil Beaton. Channon usually calls her 'Lelia'.

2 David Alexander Reginald Herbert (1908–95), second son of the 15th Earl of Pembroke. After Eton he had stints as an actor and cabaret performer. He lived for half a century in Tangier, being nicknamed 'The Queen of Tangier' by Ian Fleming (qv).

3 Charles Michael Robert Vivian Duff (1907–80), succeeded his father as 3rd Bt in 1914.

4 Fools.

5 He alludes to the French actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923).

6 Isabelle Patchin Mann (1887–1959), wife of William Clow Jr.

7 Usually used to mean a nightclub, here a boudoir.

8 An unpleasant, but brief, experience.

THURSDAY 15TH DECEMBER

A less insane day, but I woke with a head of lead, ill, old and hunched . . . lazily I loafed *au lit* until ten, and then to the FO, where I had a confidential chat with Rab, who thinks Shakespeare Morrison¹ a v poor fellow . . . In the afternoon I looked in at 11 Downing Street to an 'At Home' given by Lady Simon,² a simple *Hausfrau* who is obsessed by slavery and has campaigned against it all her life. 'Hasn't my wife made this house charming?' the Chancellor asked of me. And the guests were requested to file out through his study so that they might look at his mother's portrait by Gerald Kelly.³ A remarkable old lady, she looks like Simon's twin, with a touch of Sargent's⁴ mother about this striking picture. Simon worshipped her; he is as mother-mad as Belisha.

FRIDAY 16TH DECEMBER

I am a little perturbed by Alan who is so obviously not in love with Patsy and yet likes her. She is mad about him, insanely, devoutly, possessively, licentiously, tactlessly in love with him. *Que faire?* I hope he will be sweet to her.

SUNDAY 18TH DECEMBER

LEEDS CASTLE⁵

Leeds all day, morning in bed, conversations with Geoffrey Lloyd, who as usual, has a Brazilian lady in tow – he can never resist the darkly romantic dago type. He finds them dashing but Kay Norton⁶ tells me that he doesn't go to bed with them or anyone else – that he is in fact: a virgin. I have my private doubts. Pauline Winn,⁷ who

- 1 William Shepherd Morrison (1893–1961) was a senior Conservative MP who later became Speaker of the House of Commons and Governor-General of Australia. His nickname 'Shakes' came from his fondness for quoting Shakespeare.*
- 2 Kathleen Rochard Harvey (1869–1955) had been governess to the children of the widowed Sir John Simon, and they married in 1917.
- 3 Gerald Festus Kelly (1879–1972) was an acclaimed British portraitist. He painted Somerset Maugham (qv) eighteen times, and also did notable portraits of T. S. Eliot (qv) and Ralph Vaughan Williams. He was knighted in 1945 and served as President of the Royal Academy from 1949 to 1954.
- 4 Coats appears to have crossed this out and written 'Whistler's' instead; which was as Rhodes James published it.
- 5 Near Maidstone in Kent.
- 6 Katharine 'Kay' Edith Carlotta Norton (1883–1961) was the daughter of the 5th Baron Grantley.
- 7 Her mother Olive, Lady Baillie (qv), was the daughter of Almeric Paget, 1st Baron Queenborough (qv), and had been married to Charles Winn until their divorce in 1925. Her aunt Dorothy Wyndham Paget (1905–60) owned racehorses and was a prodigious gambler, and also sponsored the Bentley motor racing team in the late 1920s. Because of her nocturnal existence her bookmaker employed someone to take her telephone calls during the night, often for her to put money on horses in races that had already happened. She gave her word she did not know the result and, on the grounds that many horses she backed had already lost, her bookmakers believed her and paid out when she won.

is already just like her mother, was amusing about her mother's mad sister, Dorothy Paget, who is a famous eccentric. The woman lives alone in Balfour Place, eats like a horse, gets up at 7 p.m., dines at 6 a.m., keeps a double staff of servants to administer to her eccentricities. Occasionally she goes to a play, takes a large box, sits alone, and is always accompanied by a hamper of food which she munches during the play.

Alan, Patsy and Brigid, marvellously beautiful, dined with me. Afterwards an unpleasant half-joking *scène de jalousie*¹ on Patsy's part. She is so *unsoignée*² and very much on Alan's nerves. He is on the point of breaking off the engagement. She, poor darling, is so in love. It is that. I pleaded with him to follow her home to St James's Square, and he did – and is there now as I write . . .

MONDAY 19TH DECEMBER

A parliamentary day, fireworks and fun, but a governmental triumph. All the morning we prepared fifty Questions which is a record for any dept. I walked over to the House at one o'clock and received fifty Indians and showed them over the Palace of Westminster; a boring chore, to please Lord Halifax.

I took the Questions into the PM's room and found the little man as usual alone. (His secretaries are second-rate and slack in my opinion.) 'May I give you your Questions, sir?' 'Yes, come in,' he smiled and I followed him. We had a few words and I left . . . The debate, a vote of censure moved by the Opposition,³ began with a diatribe by Dalton.⁴ The PM followed and was at his very best, tolerant, easy, smiling but important. He has now learned all the rhetorical tricks and used them all. But it is a very personal government . . . very one man! He held and thrilled the House . . . He was followed by Archie Sinclair,⁵ who always

1 Jealous tiff.

2 Ungroomed.

3 The motion was that 'this House has no confidence in the Foreign Policy of His Majesty's Government'.

4 Edward Hugh John Neale Dalton (1887–1962), known as Hugh, was the son of Queen Victoria's chaplain, who also acted as tutor to King George V when the latter was a boy. Educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, Dalton was a socialist from his adolescence and was elected Labour MP for Peckham in 1924, and sat for Bishop Auckland from 1929 to 1931. He lost the seat that year but regained it in 1935, holding it until 1959. He held a junior Foreign Office post in the 1929–31 Labour government, and in the Churchill coalition was Minister for Economic Warfare from 1940 to 1942 and President of the Board of Trade from 1942 to 1945. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1945 to 1947, when he had to resign after a Budget leak. He returned to the Cabinet six months later as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Dalton (life peer) in 1960.

5 Archibald Henry Macdonald Sinclair (1890–1970) succeeded his grandfather as 4th Bt in 1912. He had been Churchill's second-in-command on the Western Front in 1916 and his military secretary when Churchill was Secretary of State for War. He was Liberal MP for Caithness and Sutherland from 1922 to 1945, Scottish Secretary from 1931 to 1932 and Secretary of State for Air from 1940 to 1945. He led the Liberal Party from 1935 to 1945 and was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Thurso in 1952.

provides a pleasant interval during which one can go out for a drink or a cup of tea . . . then by young Quintin Hogg who made his second speech since his recent election. It was soon stiff, oratorical, and debating, but the House, whilst recognising its obvious merits, was not altogether pleased that so new and young a member should be so self-assured. He stood behind me, and swayed as he spoke but betrayed no modesty, no nervousness. Lloyd George, who followed, was frankly funny, and he convulsed the House, as he twitted the Prime Minister, but he said little of value. The PM roared with genuine laughter as the arrows hit him.

Cranborne, as usual, disingenuous, wordy, and I think, foolish, made a non-committal speech. I am very anti-Cecil, a dreadful race of clerics with tepid water diluting their indigo blood . . . I had stolen out to dine with Jim Wedderburn and Shakes Morrison. We ate oysters and drank stout in the Strangers' Room, and Shakes, with his beautiful sensitive mouth, recited poetry. He had always recited poetry, he told us, and that was why at school he was nicknamed 'Shakes'. He talked of his four sons: it is the second he loves, the cleverest; the elder, he described as a nice laddie but 'dull and stupid'. I went back to the bench and found that Rab had had no dinner and was consequently irritable. He had been closeted with [Sir John] Simon for an hour or more preparing the wind-up. I made him get out and have oysters and a drink . . . All day I did errands and chores and flitted about amongst the Great.

The late edition of the *Evening Standard* devoted the whole front page to the alleged govt revolt, led by Rob Hudson against Leslie Belisha. I tore off the page and passed it to the PM, who was on the front bench. He read it, took off his spectacles, sniffed, and smiled quietly. Later I ran into Rob Hudson in the lavatory. 'I see the *Standard* has spilt the beans,' he said. He is guilty!! On my way to our room I saw Leslie Belisha who took my arm, and I led him aside and told him of the article, which he had not yet seen. Then he told me the whole story: it was apparently true. It seems that Rob Hudson and Donald Strathcona,¹ supported by Basil Dufferin, had lodged a protest through Rob Hudson on Monday the 12th, to the effect that unless Belisha went, they turned. Such treachery on the part of Strathcona, who is a decent fellow, is surprising . . . The PM had parried Rob's remarks with the threat of an immediate election . . . This was the day that the PM was so depressed, although he knew of the revolt – as did we all – a few days before, for he resented such tactics. Hudson, who is a shit, and a time-server and personal enemy of David Margesson's, was at last mortified. How the story got out now after ten days, is, of course, due to

1 Donald Sterling Palmer Howard (1891–1959) was elected Conservative MP for Cumberland North in 1922, holding the seat until he succeeded his mother in 1926 as 3rd Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal. He was Under-Secretary of State for War from 1934 to 1939, latterly serving under Belisha.

Randolph Churchill who causes most of the trouble, or rather reveals it, political and social in London. Belisha was summoned to see the PM in his room at 9.30 and took the hearty line that it was outrageous for subordinates to blackmail the PM etc. The Prime Minister, who never relishes disloyalty, was impressed and decided to stand by him. David Margesson, who was dining with his three children, is anxious.

TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER

The whole story of the revolt by young ministers is now out: it seems that Rob Hudson, Strathcona and Basil Dufferin – who is now in danger of losing his wife, his money and his job all at one fell swoop – took an oath of secrecy and determined to get rid of Belisha. It is particularly caddish of Strathcona, who is Belisha's chief,¹ and he had never once complained to him direct. Hudson was the prime mover and he went to the PM last week, threatened him with these resignations, and this was the day when the PM was so depressed and dismayed. The PM counter-attacked with the threat of an immediate election. The secret was fairly well kept until on Sunday night Basil in his cups confided in Randolph, who rang Beaverbrook in Paris. Beaverbrook said 'publish', and so last night we had the story in full. It has made a most unfortunate impression. Belisha is cheerful, however. I went along to the Lords' Library with Gage for a drink and there I found huddled together my lords Dufferin and Strathcona on a sofa splitting a whisky and soda! We caught them red-handed and they looked sheepish, indeed, like naughty schoolboys.

I dined with Pamela Berry, a party for some ball which she is organising, which I did not attend. I was between Venetia [Montagu] and Maureen [Dufferin²]; the latter left the dining room to talk to Eddie Devonshire³ with whom she is having a hot affair! Venetia very anti-Chamberlain: it is a revolting exhibition of religious and racial prejudice! I hate her for it.

I returned to the House for an Adjournment [debate] on Spain. Rab, who wound up skilfully, bamboozled the Opposition.

WEDNESDAY 21ST DECEMBER

A miserable day of waiting. The weather is appalling, trains delayed.

Snow everywhere . . . Honor was due back at 3.20, and the car waited, whilst I telephoned frantically. At eight o'clock she had not yet come and I went to dine

1 It was the other way round: Strathcona answered to Belisha.

2 Maureen Constance Guinness (1907–98), a cousin of Channon's wife Honor, married in 1930 the 4th Marquess of Dufferin and Ava*.

3 Edward William Spencer Cavendish (1895–1950), by courtesy Marquess of Hartington from 1908 to 1938, when he succeeded his father as 10th Duke of Devonshire.*

with Alfred Beit¹ without her! A large dinner, but scarcely people one would invite to meet the Kents!! Princess Paul and Princess Marina both looking dreams of loveliness, arrived punctually. I was between the Duchess of Kent and Winnie Portarlington.² The house is fantastic, I like it. It is a touch vulgar, but blatantly foreign . . . The lights change during dinner and light up the Murillos³ . . . Bad food . . . Duchess divine. Honor rang me during dinner and I got up to talk to her. Later I came back to Belgrave Square to see her. She was already half asleep, and no better. That I saw at once, and was consequently miserable.

I joined the Kents (he had come on), and we went to Ciro's, where we stayed for all hours of the night!! Home at 4.30, sharing a taxi with them.

The Kents gave me a fine pair of Dresden vases with links for a Christmas present. We are taking them to Kelvedon. Prince and Princess Paul have sent an enamel box, pink and *dix-huitième*,⁴ a dream of beauty.

THURSDAY 22ND DECEMBER

All day at the H of C, and at the Foreign Office, intriguing and setting up. I fear in my bones that today may be my last one at the Foreign Office! So does Rab. Or almost the last. I dined there, too . . . an enchanting evening. I was most amusing and gay, and adored it. Happier than I have been for months.

Honor shopped and is already worn out with London.

It has now transpired that the Dufferins spent last weekend with the Elvedens at the Old Rectory, Elveden. They left there by car too late to have dined with Randolph. Basil either had supper with him on Sunday night or revealed the plot to him on Monday before lunch. I think the former theory is true. I must find out.

FRIDAY 23RD DECEMBER

A nervous irritation [*sic*] day, everything went wrong: weather, stupid servants . . . At length Honor left for Elveden, she is far from well, and looks worn out, after three weeks' holiday skiing. I fear there is something organically wrong with her.

SATURDAY 24TH DECEMBER

I left at noon for Elveden. Alan, the flighty bridegroom, jumps about, runs in and out, like a lunatic . . . he went to Henlow⁵ for the night to spend Christmas Eve with his mother.

1 Alfred Lane Beit (1903–94) succeeded his father as 2nd Bt in 1930. From 1931 to 1945 he was Conservative MP for St Pancras South East, and served in Bomber Command in the Second World War. He was a noted philanthropist.

2 Winnifreda Yuill (1886–1975) married in 1907 the 6th Earl of Portarlington*.

3 Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–82) was a leading painter of the Spanish baroque.

4 Eighteenth century.

5 A Bedfordshire village and location of the Lennox-Boyd family house.

Here there are Lord and Lady Iveagh, pleased as Punch about the wedding and the arrangements, the people, the fuss . . .

I sent the Duchess of Kent an exquisite Fabergé reading-glass, which I was lucky enough to find. I wanted it so much myself . . .

SUNDAY 25TH DECEMBER

I went with the family and the Elvedens to church. Honor stayed behind in a bad temper. She is always sulky and surly now . . . Patsy came down in her green Salzburg clothes which she has been wearing for weeks, with a deplorable lack of vanity. They irritate Alan, and I begged Honor to get her into something else, which she did.

Arthur Elveden,¹ enormous again, read the lessons and later we went to the Old Rectory for family Christmas luncheon. They have made the old Suffolk house charming: it is gay, liveable, pleasant and rather American. Delicious food, and we stuffed.

Breakfast was a function and a feature. Even Honor came down and there was a big present distribution. I gave Honor three Fabergé cigarette cases, and had them marked and arranged. One I had given her years ago I had converted by Cartier into a vanity case. She has now two complete sets, a white one, and a blue one of great value and beauty. She gave me a pair of emerald links which I am to return to have made into ruby ones, which I want . . . Lady Iveagh gave me a watch that had belonged to the Sultan; whilst Patsy and Alan gave me a beautiful blue watch with a fountain on it, a real *bibelot*.² Paul had many presents from Princess Olga, the Kents, his godmothers, others . . .

More food, crackers and fun. Appalling weather: we are snowed up. And what of the wedding?

TUESDAY 27TH DECEMBER

ELVEDEN

Risking the treacherous roads Honor and I drove here in the snow after luncheon, and arranged the house for the honeymooners³ who are to come here on Thursday. H in a gay, delicious mood . . . and I wonder . . . I wondered then . . . but it passed, as I saw I was being got round; she wants to go skiing again to Switzerland at once and spend three months there. She will end badly: there is

1 Arthur Onslow Edward Guinness (1912–45), by courtesy from 1927 Viscount Elveden, the younger brother of Channon's wife, Honor. He served as a major in the 55th Anti-Tank Regiment and was killed in action in the Netherlands when a V1 rocket hit the officers' mess.

2 An ornament or trinket.

3 Lennox-Boyd and Lady Patricia Guinness were due to marry on 29 December.

something rather brutal about it, so crude and fierce and she is *mal-entourée*¹ there. I am convinced of that . . .

WEDNESDAY 28TH DECEMBER

ELVEDEN

We came back here, after I had chucked the Old People's Dinner at Southend. There was really too much to do . . . Elveden *en fête*, the whole house open. And we are thirty-seven to dine. Mrs Lennox-Boyd,² the domineering mother who looks like a crumpet, [and] the eldest son, George³ who is a rotter and a poseur, I think are staying in the house. Alan and Donald⁴ are with the Elvedens as is Jim Wedderburn – much to his annoyance as he is in love with Brigid now . . . Ernest Brown, who booms with his great preacher's voice, has taken charge of the celebrations. He has been given the King's room. Then there are Freya Stark,⁵ who is the Lady Hester Stanhope⁶ of the age, and wears bizarre square clothes; Lord and Lady Brocket,⁷ overdressed and young and fresh – she is called 'Lilac Time'; dear Mr Bland;⁸ Lady Halifax; Harold Balfour, [and] many more . . . Dinner was fantastic. Lady Halifax and I had a most confidential talk and I told her of the treacheries in the FO. She was non-committal but not surprised. At the end of dinner Ernest Brown rose and in a bombastic speech proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom. He called Patsy 'Pat', and welcomed her to the

- 1 Surrounded by bad people or influences. It is clear from Channon's musings earlier in the entry that he again suspects Lady Honor of conducting an affair.
- 2 Florence Annie Warburton Begbie (1871–1949), married in 1901 as his second wife Alan Walter Boyd (1855–1934), who changed his surname by deed poll to Lennox-Boyd in 1925.
- 3 George 'Geordie' Lennox-Boyd (1902–43) was the first of two of Alan Lennox-Boyd's brothers to die in the Second World War. He served in the Highland Light Infantry and was repatriated in November 1943 to a military hospital in Scotland, suffering from pneumonia, of which he died.
- 4 Donald Breay Hague Lennox-Boyd (1906–39) was visiting Germany in April 1939 with his brother George when the Nazis arrested them in Stuttgart. He died in custody. He was arrested during a raid on a homosexual bar, having gone off on an assignment with a storm trooper (see entries for 4–8 April 1939). His death notice in *The Times* said simply 'suddenly, when abroad'.
- 5 Freya Madeline Stark (1893–1993) gained a reputation as an intrepid traveller and travel writer, undertaking dangerous expeditions to the Middle East and Afghanistan. She was a close friend of Donald Lennox-Boyd and of the family, and had a circle of mainly homosexual male friends. She served with distinction in the Ministry of Information during the Second World War and was awarded the DBE in 1972.
- 6 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope (1776–1839), daughter of the 3rd Earl Stanhope, was a prodigious archaeologist and traveller.
- 7 Arthur Ronald Nall Nall-Cain (1904–67) was Conservative MP for Wavertree from 1931 to 1934, when he succeeded his father as 2nd Baron Brocket. He was a Nazi sympathiser, a friend of Ribbentrop (q.v.), an occasional go-between for the British and German governments, and a notorious absentee landlord in regard to his Scottish estates. He married in 1927 Angela Beatrix Pennyman (1906–75).
- 8 Christopher Harry Bland (1867–1947), the Guinness family's man of affairs.

Ministry. He was good, if perhaps embarrassing. Alan followed him and was his usual charming self, and he made affectionate references to me, which touched me. Patsy, blushing, was forced to her feet, and she was adequately facetious – said that when Alan reached Downing Street she would ask us all to tea!! Then we all filed into the library to see the presents: there were an impressive lot, except for presents given by the constituents.

Patsy [had] from her mother a diamond tiara much refurbished. This tiara . . . was Lady Iveagh's third, and was given to her by her father, old Lord Onslow, when she married. There is now a large diamond on the top which Bland had found in an envelope amongst the papers of the late Lord Iveagh years after he died. It was so carefully put away, and separate from his many jewels, that it may have some history.

Jim Wedderburn nearly tearful at dinner. He regrets now that he didn't marry Patsy himself. The usual remorse of the left-behind. Poor Jim. And Brigid won't have him.

And so at last to bed – the disjointed party separated. The evening went with a swing. I felt an emotion of power: I had brought it about; I had brought Alan into our lives, and encouraged him to marry Patsy, made it possible, brought them together at the fatal weekend at Kelvedon in October. May I never regret it.

THURSDAY 29TH DECEMBER

The great wedding day began with a message from Jim Wedderburn that he must see me and soon he arrived from the other house. We paced the snow-covered drive and he expressed himself clumsily: he is unhappy; he wanted to marry Patsy . . . then he became attracted by Brigid, and now has lost both. Also he loves me more than any man. All this he told me, as I shivered coatless outside Elveden . . . then we went in, and I advised him to take a holiday and try and forget his troubles. He is too introspective, probably, like any Scottish young laird, he is a virgin.

As Jim and I were talking inside there was very nearly a serious accident, as a car suddenly started, the door flew open, struck Lady Iveagh and crushed her against the pillar of the *porte-cochère*.¹ She was bruised somewhat and badly shaken. Only a fraction of an inch and a second saved her from being crushed to death. It is too horrible to think about . . . I walked with Jim in the icy cold to the Old Rectory to call on Alan. We found him still in bed talking to his rather amiable but zany feckless brother Donald. (Alan loves Francis . . . the best, but he is a victim of scarlet fever and so unable to come to the wedding.) I ordered two bottles of champagne, the bridegroom, Harold, Jim, Donald and I all drank

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1 The porch extending outwards from a great house, wide enough for a carriage or coach to be driven underneath it.

. . . Alan lay back in white pyjamas unshaved and excited. At last we left him to change and returned to Elvedon. An early lunch at twelve o'clock, and soon afterwards MPs and others began to arrive in spite of the Russian weather. At 1.30 I went over to the church and already it was crowded with tenants of the Iveaghs and constituents of Alan's. These came in eight charabancs, out for a treat. The wedding passed off well enough . . . Paul was an enchanting page, but he had trouble with his top hat at the door and a friendly policeman helped him. We waited for a little as the special train from London was delayed. Eventually the church was crammed and Patsy, dignified and handsome, arrived on the arm of her father. Alan, meanwhile, had arrived with his brother George, who was his best man, and the service began. Benjamin Guinness, Arthur's altogether delectable child, who is only nineteen months, was restless and eventually sat on my knees. Then a *sauve qui peut*¹ to the house and a queue of hundreds to congratulate the pair – the very fortunate, very rich pair!! . . . I looked after the MPs etc. and eventually led everyone up to the room (Lady Iveagh's sitting room) where Alan was changing. We were about a dozen . . . We all drank more champagne from the loving cup he had [been] given. Soon Honor, too, joined us. (She can rarely bring herself nowadays to be civil to ordinary mortals, but one must be gentle and tolerant, as she is not yet well.) Bridgid was very attracted to Patrick Buchan-Hepburn,² Alan now wants to pull that off!! At last they left in a rain of rice and confetti and rose petals – for Kelvedon where I have made elaborate arrangements for the bridal pair. Patsy, who has been nervous lately, and overtired and overstrung, looked radiant. The other guests lingered on . . .

Dinner was small and we discussed the wedding: parents happy. Lady Iveagh, to the amusement of all, busy making plans for Bridgid's marriage!

FRIDAY 30TH DECEMBER

I awoke with a splitting head after too much champagne and excitement. Honor wanted to go to London in spite of the filthy road and I fear I was ungracious, even bad-tempered. It seemed madness to go up to London for no reason, and sulkily I refused. H didn't seem to mind, and went alone. She rang me about six o'clock in good temper, and she has selected the car she wants.

I slept long and am almost recovered. I was literally 'out' for four hours this afternoon.

1 Every man for himself.

2 Patrick George Thomas Buchan-Hepburn (1901–74) was Conservative MP for East Toxteth from 1931 to 1950 and for Beckenham from 1950 to 1957. He was the party's Chief Whip from 1948 to 1955, and from 1958 to 1962 was the first and only Governor of the West Indies Federation. He was raised to the peerage in 1957 as 1st Baron Hailes.

SATURDAY 31ST DECEMBER

KELVEDON

We all assembled here, Arthur and Elizabeth Elveden from London; Honor from London; the Iveaghs, Brigid and I from Elveden; the honeymooners were here – or rather had been up to London and came in soon after we did, both looking well. The honeymoon so far has been a success. Patsy told Honor that Alan was in a state After a time he went back to his bed both nights. They occupy the Empire suite. I deplore such tactics, the double bed is the secret of marriage and all my troubles began from the date that I deserted it. Alan confided to me that all had been well! He is still overexcited . . .

A pleasant dinner and how happy and satisfied the Iveaghs must have been, surrounded by all their four children and their new in-laws whom they like – only the mites, the tiny grandsons, are absent and they are not far away at Elveden . . . We drank much, had claret cup, and again rum punch at midnight. All very happy and a touch tipsy, I thought.

This formidable year is dead.

1939

The first weeks of the 1939 diary were recorded on loose pages torn from a writing book, and as a result some pages have been lost. Thus there are a few gaps in the diary for this month. Channon started a new bound writing book on 31 January 1939.

SUNDAY 1ST JANUARY

I woke with the traditional New Year's headache, and Alan Lennox-Boyd barged into my bedroom, a rather radiant, exuberant bridegroom. He and Patsy left here at 10 a.m. to catch the Paris plane, and it was a great send-off they had, with lots of luggage, excitement, and cheering relatives. It was lovely for the Iveaghs to be surrounded by their four children and three-in-laws, all of whom they luckily like. Only the tiny grandsons were absent from the family reunion, and they are snugly at Elveden not far away. None of us had slept and the house was too hot. The Elvedens, impressed by the beauty of our house, left in the evening Honor bought a new car, a blue Packard for skiing.

MONDAY 2ND JANUARY

The Channons leave for Elveden, where there is a house party in honour of the Prime Minister.

The Iveaghs left early, and Honor and I and Brigid followed in the afternoon. Bad weather. Much talk on the now all-engrossing problem: who is Brigid to marry? She is such a dazzling girl, so lovely, so classic, so unspoilt, Greek and intelligent.

I am quite schoolgirlish in my hysterical, almost fanatical worship of the PM; and was enchanted when Lord Iveagh asked me to meet him at the front door and escort him to his room. I did with glee. I paced the front hall restlessly until at last his car, very late, arrived. He had come from Ely. He said 'Hello, Chips!' as he got out, and stumbled on the steps, without hurting himself. He refused a drink, and I led him to the King's beds and sitting room We waited for a clumsy footman to unpack and he and I talked for twenty dazzling minutes!! I was intoxicated with his charm. He was so pleased about the Duchess of Atholl,¹

1 The Duchess claimed to have been deserted by her constituency Unionist party in Kinross and West Perthshire over her profound opposition to appeasement, and in November 1938 she resigned the seat. A by-election was called for 21 December in which she stood as an independent; she lost.

so looking forward to his Rome visit. He is quite unperturbed about the future, is calm, self-assured and very amusing. I told him that Jim Wedderburn had sent off twelve Chamberlain dolls to some recalcitrant MPs and he was amused when I quoted the replies. At 9.30 I led him into the Big Hall where the party was assembled. Everyone twitted me with having drawn his bath and perhaps rubbed him down! My passion for Neville is well known. I was next to bad Maud Hoare¹ at dinner; when the men left Lord Iveagh moved across the table and sat between the PM and Sam Hoare. I made George Herbert tell the story of how Duff Cooper had recently assaulted him, throttled him and got on his chest all because he had defended the PM. The scene occurred a few weekends ago staying with Sidney Herbert.² The PM was much amused and proceeded to abuse Duff rather violently, and said that he was 'no man for teamwork'. Sam Hoare chipped in that he could not write: '*Haig* was unreadable and *Talleyrand* a good, indeed, an adequate abridgement of a three-volume work on Talleyrand in French . . .'. The PM scoffingly told us that Duff had written to him on New Year's Day wishing him health and happiness and apologising for anything that he may have written which could have given him offence; it was not his fault, Duff had explained, it was his constitution. The PM obviously dislikes him . . . The PM was most affectionate to me.

Sam Hoare told Honor a riveting secret story: he was in Italy in charge of our propaganda during the war, and after the defeat at Caporetto³ where half Italy wished to retire from the war, he struggled to keep her in. He was told that there was a powerful Socialist, a fellow called Mussolini in Milan, who owned a newspaper there. He might be able to keep Italy in the war, at least he would be able to guarantee Milan and the North if sufficiently bribed. Sam Hoare 'for a very considerable sum, indeed' did buy the newspaper, Mussolini kept his bargain, and arranged for processions of beaten-up gangsters and thugs to process the streets in Milan with placards [reading] '*Mutilati della Guerra*'.⁴ Already a brilliant showman, he skilfully arranged war propaganda. The money was used to form the Fascist party and to finance the March on Rome.⁵ Thus English government cash created in an important way the Fascist revolution. This is very secret, and Mussolini when he meets Sam Hoare now is inclined to

1 Lady Maud Lygon (1882–1962), daughter of the 6th Earl Beauchamp, had married in 1909 Sir Samuel Hoare*.

2 Sidney Herbert (1906–69), by courtesy Lord Herbert, succeeded his father as 16th Earl of Pembroke and 13th Earl of Montgomery in 1960. He became equerry to the Duke of Kent in 1935 and, after the Duke's death in 1942, private secretary to the Duchess.

3 Now in Slovenia (and called Kobarid), the scene of the Central Powers' rout of the Italian army in October–November 1917.

4 War-wounded.

5 In October 1922, the prelude to Mussolini's taking power.

gloss over the former meeting. 'Yes, we once met,' he said. Sam Hoare still has in his private possession documents relating to this curious transaction.

His [Chamberlain's] dislike of Duff is obvious, his contempt for Anthony Eden rather more concealed, but still quite apparent. What fools are these two young men not to appreciate the greatest man of all time. Sam Hoare obsequious to Honor and wants her [illegible] on his side in his plot and plan to become PM, to succeed Neville. I think he will fail for we shall back Halifax in the saddle and I am working to that end.

Rab was, this morning, made a Privy Counsellor. It was in the honours list along with the same distinction for Harry Crookshank.¹ I knew, of course, and had David [Margesson]'s promise long ago. Yes I am delighted, for his is a well-deserved honour. No one has worked so hard. When I hinted to Sam Hoare that I hoped that Rab would not be moved to the Ministry of Agriculture or elsewhere, he replied to my intense relief that Rab would remain at the FO during the lifetime of the present parliament as he had become so necessary to the PM.

TUESDAY 3RD JANUARY

I was up at eight, down at nine; the excitement of proximity to my god prevented me from sleeping. He is in the room opposite my own. He was gay at breakfast, talked of the House, of MPs, etc. At 10.30 we went out shooting, a lovely but cold Norfolk day, and the flat bleak country and woods looked lovely and still. The PM shot well, indeed with amazing accuracy, but was excelled by Sam Hoare. I stood with them for two drives: and I was able to drop a little poison against [Rex] Leeper to both. Sam Hoare agrees and says so, he admitted him to be a danger but added that Halifax did not realise nor recognise the importance of loyal underlings. The PM smiled understandingly but said nothing. He did say, however, that he hoped Franco would not win too quickly. What did he mean by that, in the midst of Franco's greatest, and, we hope, decisive advance?² We discussed Rome, and he asked me what was the atmosphere there, and did I like Mussolini?

We came back to the house for luncheon, and fearing lest I had been a touch pushing with Neville I avoided him: it was unnecessary as he went out of the

1 Harry Frederick Comfort Crookshank (1893–1961) had been badly wounded in the Great War, being castrated by a shrapnel blast in 1916. After serving in the Foreign Office he was elected Conservative MP for Gainsborough in 1924, holding the seat until 1956 when he was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Crookshank. At the time of his appointment to the Privy Council he was Secretary for Mines; he served as Financial Secretary to the Treasury from 1939 to 1943 and as Postmaster-General from 1943 to 1945. In Churchill's peacetime administration he was Minister of Health, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons.

2 Franco was in the process of conquering Catalonia. On 27 February the British government, and the French, would recognise his regime.

way to be charming to me. The day was a great success, a bag of 818 without the 'pick-up'. The head keeper, Turner, who is a martinet and no respecter of persons, as usual, rode his pony and conducted the manoeuvres in a Napoleonic manner. He gave the order to shoot everything except English partridges. Many French ones were consequently shot, and someone slipped up somewhere as one English one was shot and it was placed surreptitiously with the PM's 'bag'. He [Chamberlain] pointed this out and with mock indignation declared that his Home Secretary was under suspicion.

THURSDAY 5TH JANUARY

KELVEDON

All day in Southend, and came back to dine with Honor, who had been in London all day. She was morose and uncommunicative.

I hope Hitler won't take too much this year: 1938 gave him both Austria and Czechoslovakia. Roosevelt in a wild diatribe¹ last night harangued Congress in a speech of shocking taste: all my sympathies were with the people he attacked so crudely; nevertheless his sermon may serve as a useful warning to the dictators, and perhaps we shall have peace throughout 1939.

SATURDAY 7TH JANUARY

Franco is making rapid advances, his offensive being cleverly timed to impress Chamberlain, and to strengthen Mussolini's hand next week: he may be able to claim that the war is practically over.

SUNDAY 8TH JANUARY

Honor and I motored to Stanstead Hall, Halstead, to lunch with the Butlers. He is so pleased at being a PC [Privy Counsellor], which he said he owed largely to me. She was gay, and pleasant and I am glad to relate on better terms with Honor, who really detests her appalling food in a dreadful house – but I smiled when I met their three little boys, particularly the youngest James, a fat apple of two, who at first bellowed when he saw us, and later made friends. I had sent him a Chamberlain [doll] for Christmas – Rab remarked to his wife: 'He is the first of your children, Sydney.' He quite obviously likes his youngest best.

Home for tea, and played with my own adorable little boy, who came back yesterday from Elveden. He is ever so beguiling, so affectionate. This morning he cried because he could not find me. Honor read to him. She teases him at times! My God, how I ache for more like him . . .

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1 His State of the Union address, in which he warned that the world was at danger from war.

Honor in an endocrine mood, hard, selfish, uninterested, tonight. Said she would never have more children: I must look elsewhere for them. Evening ended on an unpleasant note.

MONDAY 9TH JANUARY

When H is so disgruntled and unappreciative, I, in consequence, become uneasy, nervous. I long now for next Monday when I shall be alone for a fortnight. How salutary is solitude. Sleepy tonight. Honor read H. A. L. Fisher's brilliant history of Europe.¹ She was in a better mood . . . still far from satisfactory.

TUESDAY 10TH JANUARY

I dreamt that I was married to Rachel Howard² and had, by her, many unattractive wall-eyed Catholic brats: that I was a tyrant in the home, feared and adored by all. Is this suppression?

I drove up to London, called at the Foreign Office, and was in rage with a note which I found permitted by Orme Sargent.³ He is one of the *worst* of the Foreign Office mandarins, Red and Edenite, traitorous . . . I reported him to Butler: what good will that do? Rab is weak with them as is Halifax. Lunched alone at the Carlton Club. Still feel frustrated.

Dined with Sir Patrick Hannon,⁴ a large dinner of men, and talked to Nevile Henderson, whom I found changed. He has had cancer of the throat and seems very ill indeed. He seemed fragile, but charming, and very distinguished. He told the assembled gleefully that he was going to Sandringham for a week to recuperate. He thinks my Paul, the Regent, the cleverest diplomat in Europe . . . At dinner there were several conversations on Germany and questions were just to Henderson. Rob Hudson was caddish, as usual, and said that only 25 per cent of the country were behind Chamberlain – this from a member of the government!! Henderson was scathing and suggested that there ought to be concentration camps in this country to get rid of the gov't's enemies!! Henderson gave vivid pictures of Germany, and said how he once lost his temper last year

1 Probably Fisher's *History of Europe*, published in 1935.

2 Mary Rachel Fitzalan-Howard (1905–92), Lady Rachel by courtesy, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk.*

3 Harold Orme Garton Sargent (1884–1962) joined the Foreign Office in 1906 and served at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. He was a strong anti-appeaser and was Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1946 to 1949. It is not clear what note he permitted to be circulated, but it seems to have challenged the appeasement orthodoxy to which Butler and Channon subscribed. His nickname was 'Moley'.

4 Patrick Joseph Henry Hannon (1874–1963) had been an Irish agriculturalist before sitting as Unionist MP for Birmingham Moseley from 1921 to 1950. He had been a supporter of the British Fascists in the 1920s. He was knighted in 1935.

with Ribbentrop in front of Hitler, and told Ribbentrop that he knew nothing of England, nothing at all. When he recovered he was surprised to see Hitler roaring with laughter: the Führer had evidently enjoyed hearing his jackal attacked! Henderson went on, praised Goebbels¹ slightly; but remains true to Göring² whom he definitely likes.

Someone asked what would have happened had Chamberlain not made the Munich Agreement: Germany would have marched immediately into Prague, and there would have been general war directly the French marched – there was always the possibility that the French would not have marched! Hitler's stock, while high, very high, is probably declining, and definitely less than last year for all his territorial and diplomatic successes. The cheers are less. Chamberlain gets the cheers in Germany today. Henderson thinks that Winston Churchill and Duff Cooper are a menace to world peace. He asked Göring recently what the field marshal thought would happen had there been a war, and Göring replied 'We should have been beaten, of course; but there would not have been a Czech left!' All Henderson's arguments reinforce and commend Chamberlain's attitude . . . how foolish he makes Duff Cooper look . . . Duff has an article in tonight's *Evening Standard* in which he throws bouquets at Neville and Halifax – he is trying to worm himself back into Cabinet circles again. And he will not succeed.

The PM and Halifax . . . left for Rome this morning. There was an unfortunate demonstration at Victoria, where a gang of the unemployed appeared with a coffin bearing a placard 'Appease the unemployed, not Mussolini'. This unimportant but unfortunate incident will create a bad impression abroad. Sir Herbert Smith,³ also a Birmingham bigwig, was next to me, and he attacked Ronnie Cartland

- 1 Paul Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945) was Hitler's Minister of Propaganda from 1933 to 1945, and one of the main drivers of the campaign against the Jews. He exerted an iron control over the German press and radio, and exploited the relatively new medium of film. He had taken a PhD in nineteenth-century drama from Heidelberg in 1921; he was also an insatiable womaniser, and an exhaustive diarist; he nearly became a Catholic priest. He married, in 1931, Johanna Maria Magdalena 'Magda' Quandt, *née* Ritschel (1901–45), a devoted Nazi and close friend of Hitler. Together they poisoned their six children in May 1945 before killing themselves as the Russians advanced on Berlin.
- 2 Hermann Wilhelm Göring (1893–1946) had been a fighter pilot of distinction in the Great War. He was an early Nazi party member, wounded in the Munich Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, and became a morphine addict to manage the pain of his injuries. He joined Hitler's government after the latter's victory in 1933 and as one of his first acts organised the creation of the Gestapo, the Nazi secret police. He was an economic minister after 1936 and in charge of the Luftwaffe, the German air force. Hitler nominated him in 1941 as his heir. He became notorious for looting art treasures from murdered Jews and conquered nations. Sentenced to death at Nuremberg, he managed to commit suicide using a concealed cyanide pill the night before he was to be hanged.
- 3 Herbert Smith (1872–1943) was a Kidderminster carpet manufacturer. One of Lloyd George's 'new men', he served on various industry bodies during the Great War and was created 1st Bt in 1920.

with violence. He told me that Ronnie has been severely dressed-down by his constituents, that he had arranged a general meeting and asked for a vote of confidence; instead the meeting passed a resolution in favour of Chamberlain. He is unpopular in King's Norton and may not get in again. I was secretly pleased, as Ronnie has been so stupidly anti-Chamberlain. He gets a sexual kick by voting against the government.

FRIDAY 13TH JANUARY

I went to the Foreign Office to see Rab. They were without real news of the Rome visit; but the general impression is that it has not exactly come off, although it improved our relations with that fascinating and important power . . . I lunched alone with Rab off pork and port at Smith Square. He repeats himself, is very sly and subtle, but not meretricious . . . reserve-reserve, all the way is his motto. Today he was more expansive: he never takes a bachelor seriously, he is an incomplete man; Rob Hudson is a shit, a second-rater; Shakes Morrison . . . an amiable individual who isn't 'up to it'; Shakes will never go far . . . these were his confidences to me . . . there will be no major reshuffle in the immediate prospect. Tommy Dugdale rang him on the telephone from Yorkshire to tell him so. Rab thinks Anthony Eden is played out, has fallen flat . . . Halifax is really too cynical . . . these are his reflections. The PM, he knows, was furious at going to see the Pope today. His Unitarian conscience is offended: and he fears a loss of votes!!

I drove Rab to the station, and parted with the 'Rt Hon. Gentleman' at Victoria, where joined by Peter Loxley and others of the press, they left for Geneva. I am glad I am not going. I want to be alone. I am exhausted today.

Rab and I both secretly fear that the Germans have designs on Holland; we shall hear more from that quarter, always they have 'trumped up' a silly incident.

SATURDAY 14TH JANUARY

All day at Southend, as I was moved by the poor children playing at the Estuary Club.¹ I talked to the one mute, scarcely older than Paul, a little girl called Mary Collet – I wonder what will happen to her? She tried to lisp her full name and address, and had I been able to understand her, I should have sent her a present tomorrow. She was one of eight children of an unemployed house-painter. Honor doesn't realise how other people live. She is fundamentally warped. I almost envied that unemployed house-painter with eight children and the dole – I, with my dauphin² and our millions. Home about eight, and a peaceful evening.

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1 A social club in Leigh-on-Sea, founded in 1932.

2 His 3-year-old son, Paul.

SUNDAY 15TH JANUARY

All day by myself. I thought about me, my past, amazing; my future doubtful . . . I feel that 1939 may not be a lucky year for me. I seem to have lost my grasp, and my luck. The day began badly as the chef gave me notice as he cannot get on with Nannie. No news of Honor¹ . . . Franco is forging ahead towards Barcelona . . .

Old Brolly [Chamberlain] got back from Rome, his status enhanced, his prestige increased. He is winning through and will probably be Premier for years to come. He was well received in London.

MONDAY 16TH JANUARY

Franco took Zaragoza last evening, thank God!

TUESDAY 17TH JANUARY

At ten I left in the green chariot² for London. At the Foreign Office I found myself alone in our office, and I enjoyed myself hugely. I opened boxes, read 'most secret' dispatches, wrote letters and did chores. My friend Harold Caccia³ was also alone in the Permanent Under-Secretary's room as Lord Halifax is *en route* for Geneva, and returns only tonight. Caccia and I signed the letters. He is a charmer, looks like an inflated cherub, speaks Chinese to his cook, and was best man to Peter Loxley. He has gay blue eyes and is friendly to all . . . looked in at the Carlton Club in search of news and found none . . . lunched with Emerald, who was fantastic, gay, whimsical, absurd, she danced about in her conversation trying to keep it off anything controversial as the Coopers were there. Duff was quite pleasant and didn't strike anyone . . . He was ill at ease with the Duke of Alba,⁴ as he has recently said that a Franco victory would be a disaster. Alba was very *grand seigneur* and asked him if he had written any new books lately – 'You ought to write,' he smiled. Duff gulped taking the remark to mean that the Duke had not read his really twaddleish articles in the *Evening Standard*. Diana, just back from Montgenèvre, looked lovely and lithe, really remarkably beautiful. Like Emerald and Lady Curzon she likes a ridiculously small hat.

Grace Curzon was fat, ample, lavishly dressed like an over-ripe Tiepolo.⁵ She lied a lot: said that the Argentine government had just paid her £3,000 for

1 She had gone two days earlier to Gstaad to ski.

2 Channon's Rolls-Royce.

3 Harold Anthony Caccia (1905–90) was a career diplomat who became Ambassador to Austria in 1951, serving until 1954, and then Ambassador to the United States from 1956 to 1961. He was knighted in 1950 and raised to the peerage as Baron Caccia (life peer) in 1965.*

4 Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart y Falco (1878–1953), 17th Duke of Alba, since 1936 Franco's man in London.*

5 The Venetian painter.

a portrait of Canning by Lawrence. I remember it well, first at Montacute and later at Hackwood.¹ She has a similar portrait of Pitt attributed to Hoppner:² these were purchases of Lord Curzon.³ Shall I try to buy the Pitt? How well it would look in the drawing room. We managed to keep off France and Munich as luncheon proceeded.

Charming and humorous letter from Honor written on Saturday.

WEDNESDAY 18TH JANUARY

To the Foreign Office in the morning, and I saw a smallish crowd assembled outside No. 10 waiting to watch the Cabinet ministers go in. I wished. How pleasant is the office when the masters are away. Walked to the Carlton Club where I went down alone to lunch, but was quickly joined by Shakes Morrison, with his charming gay manner. He talked all during luncheon, gay, flowing charm, and we were soon joined by Walter Elliot: I thus had two Cabinet ministers as my companions, and as they had just left the Cabinet I tried to pump them. I was not successful, except I gathered they were in good spirits, and that Brolly was boisterously happy. Thus no election. There is gloom, however, at the Foreign Office. This is the year, they keep on saying just as they did last year – as it so nearly was.

FRIDAY 20TH JANUARY

Esmond Harmsworth,⁴ handsome, simple, a touch dull, but charming, a little deaf . . . arrived here for the weekend bringing his lady love, Ann O'Neill.⁵ The charming Charteris sisters are practically 'tarts' but distinguished ones.

Went to Southend to see the Mayor, and I have started an appeal to help the local unemployed.

1 Montacute House in Somerset, and Hackwood Park in Hampshire, residences of the Curzon family.

2 John Hoppner (1758–1810), English portraitist.

3 George Nathaniel Curzon (1859–1925) was one of the great proconsuls and statesmen of his age. He was Conservative MP for Southport from 1886 to 1898, when he was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Curzon of Kedleston (in the Irish peerage, so he could sit again in the House of Commons) on his appointment as Viceroy of India; he was advanced to an earldom as Earl Curzon of Kedleston in 1911; and finally to a marquessate as Marquess Curzon of Kedleston in 1921.*

4 Esmond Cecil Harmsworth (1898–1978) succeeded his father as 2nd Viscount Rothermere in 1940. He was Chairman of the Daily Mail and General Trust Ltd from 1938 until his death.

5 Ann Geraldine Mary Charteris (1912–81) married in 1932 Shane Edward Robert O'Neill (1907–44), 3rd Baron O'Neill. After he was killed in action, in 1945 she married Esmond Harmsworth, 2nd Viscount Rothermere (*vide supra*), and after their divorce in 1952, Ian Fleming (qv).

SUNDAY 22ND JANUARY

I rang Honor . . . and she sounded gay, well and happy. I love her.

MONDAY 23RD JANUARY

At the Foreign Office most of the day, and helped Rab to receive a deputation of angry ladies who we feared, at one moment, would clock him. They are the pro-Red fanatics, Violet Bonham Carter,¹ Miss Sylvia Pankhurst² – a desperate left-wing individual, angry, short-haired and lesbian, Jennie Lee,³ Rosamond Lehmann in bright red, many more communistical-inclined females . . . Rab told me that at Geneva last week Lord Halifax once more raised the question of whether Anthony Eden should be allowed 'back'. He is in favour of his restoration, but the PM is against it. Rab convinced him that it would be a mistake.

SATURDAY 28TH JANUARY

KELVEDON

Harold [Balfour] and Rob Bernays arrived to stay, ministers both, but not friends. They are getting on better. Bernays is very vicious sexually I have discovered. His secret is well-kept.⁴

SUNDAY 29TH JANUARY

The new Cabinet changes were announced: Reggie Dorman-Smith⁵ is to be Minister of Agriculture in place of Shakes Morrison: it will be a popular, although surprising appointment. Reggie at 39 in the Cabinet and a Right Honourable. It is an astonishing risk (he has never done anything in the House) which may

1 Helen Violet Asquith (1887–1969) married in 1915 Maurice Bonham Carter (1880–1960) who was H. H. Asquith's private secretary when Asquith was Prime Minister. From 1925 she was by courtesy Lady Violet Bonham Carter, after her father was created an earl.

2 Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960) had like her mother Emmeline and sister Christabel been a leading suffragette, but unlike them was a committed supporter of the labour movement. An early member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, she was expelled over doctrinal differences. In the late 1930s she was a militant opponent of Italian policy in Abyssinia, and her activities were monitored by MI5.

3 Janet 'Jennie' Lee (1904–88) was Labour MP for North Lanarkshire from 1929 to 1931 and for Cannock from 1945 to 1970. She was Minister for the Arts from 1964 to 1970, when she was raised to the peerage as Baroness Lee of Asheridge (life peerage). She married Aneurin Bevan (1897–1960) in 1934.

4 He was a flagellomaniac.

5 Reginald Hugh Dorman-Smith (1899–1977) had been a professional soldier before becoming a farmer, and was president of the National Farmers Union by the age of 32. His popularity among his fellow farmers was a key reason for his appointment. He was Conservative MP for Petersfield from 1935 to 1941, when he became the Governor of Burma, a post he held until 1946. He was knighted in 1937.

placate the farmers and the whole agricultural vote! Chatfield¹ becomes Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence in lieu [of] Inskip,² who refusing the Woolsack goes to the Dominions Office. [Earl] Winterton dropped almost altogether, dismissed from the Cabinet and fobbed off with Paymaster-Generalship, an unpaid sinecure. Shakes becomes Chancellor of the Duchy, where he will do defence work. Master Munster³ succeeds Strathcona, who has got the sack for his recent disloyalty. Quite sensational change.

Very late with Rob Bernays discussing his vices and unsatisfied lusts. He is perfectly hideous, yet has an attractive smile and his sensitive face lights up with intelligence.

MONDAY 30TH JANUARY

I thought of my wife the whole evening. Bless her. I wish she were here, I wish she were happier.

I am sad to leave Kelvedon in the morning, sorry to leave my dear dogs, so trusting and attractive and miserable at leaving this lovely house smelling of hyacinths . . . it is midnight, and for the third time I felt a slightly uncanny atmosphere . . . but I don't credit the tales of headless nuns, and queer elementals . . . Kelvedon has much atmosphere, but it is never unpleasant – it is dignified and distinguished.

Hitler's great speech⁴ has proved not to be so alarming as the pessimists warned us . . .

TUESDAY 31ST JANUARY

I left Kelvedon reluctantly this morning, and sat, bored and overdressed in a stuffy businessmen's train from Brentwood . . . the Foreign Office were in two

- 1 Alfred Ernle Montacute Chatfield (1873–1967) had a distinguished naval career that culminated in his becoming First Sea Lord in 1933 and serving until 1938. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Chatfield in 1937. As Admiral Beatty's flag captain at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 it was he to whom Beatty made his famous remark that 'there seems to be something wrong with our bloody ships today'.
- 2 Thomas Inskip.* He would not be able to avoid the Woolsack for long, being moved there the day war broke out in September 1939.
- 3 Geoffrey William Richard Hugh FitzClarence (1906–75) succeeded his uncle as 5th Earl of Munster in 1928. Prior to becoming Under-Secretary of State for War in this reshuffle, he had been Paymaster-General since the previous June. He served in both of Churchill's administrations, and in Eden's.
- 4 Hitler addressed the Reichstag on 30 January 1939, the sixth anniversary of his coming to power, making what has become known as his 'prophecy' speech, in which he forecast that if a war broke out it would portend the annihilation of European Jewry. As much of his speech was devoted to a tedious account of the glorious history of the Nazi Party, the threat to Europe's Jews was less noted than it might otherwise have been.

moods, relief at Hitler's really reasonable and quieting speech last night, and on some sides, regret and resentful at being proved fake prophets . . . the same people who went about warning us [of] Hitler's dastardly intentions, now complain that his speech was too mild. The English are definitely mad, and in their decadence it becomes more transparent.

[In the Commons] The PM had first read out a statement about his Rome visit. His speech was modulated, and the Speaker was weak with the ill-mannered and noisy Opposition. Archie Sinclair was ridiculous for over an hour. Anthony Eden lounged about, looking old, tired and disqualified and hideous . . .

Winston Churchill came in only for a moment, late . . . Lloyd George sat fumbling with his notes, and at last scenting that the occasion was not sufficiently important for him to speak, left . . . I sat all day and evening on the PPS's bench, darting about with messages. Rab rose at 10.25 and spoke well but was too friendly to the Spanish 'Reds' – it was a gesture to the man who was down, and rather [illegible] as he is in sympathy with Franco. The PM is cockahoop, and sat chuckling immediately in front of me. He is so pleased with the recent turn of events that there is danger now of an election. His new optimism is dangerous . . .

There was an attack on Duff in the Smoking Room: one of his sillier and more ill-timed articles appeared in this evening's *Standard*. Communists demonstrated outside the House demanding 'Arms for Spain'. Poor Shakes Morrison is down and discouraged but he will revive soon enough . . .

Home late and very tired. Of course I forgot to eat all day. I talked to Honor on the telephone at Mürren and she seemed well, but less amiable than last time.

WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY

I walked to the Foreign Office and later escorted Rab to the Privy Council, where he rehearsed tomorrow's ceremony where he is to be introduced. As I left him I ran into Reggie Dorman-Smith, who was extraordinarily social and pleased with himself – he was, too, on the way to the rehearsal. As he is not yet a Privy Counsellor until tomorrow he could not attend this morning's Cabinet meeting as the Cabinet is technically a committee of the Privy Council. He can scarcely credit his meteoric rise to dizzy eminence, but it will not alter him.

I went into Charles Peake's room and there I found grey, bilious Leeper who, to my rage and surprise called me 'Chips'. He is a deplorable creature and I cannot get the Foreign Office to oust these pink traitors, all of them still infatuated with Eden. Oh! Eden, what crimes are committed in thy name.

The Foreign Office wants a purge and a reorganisation. Bill Astor is to withdraw, he says, from the St George's Conservative Association so strongly does he disapprove of Duff Cooper and his inflammatory articles . . . The annual ward meeting of the Con. Assoc. was arranged for next Wednesday, as usual at Lord Hambleden's house. In the past the member, Duff, has been either too busy,

or has not bothered to attend. However, he recently announced that he would appear on Wednesday whereupon Billy Hambleden withdrew his invitation to the ward, as he will not have Duff in his house. It is partly political, and partly because of Duff's insulting behaviour to Lady Pembroke . . . he is a tactless fellow, our inflated conceited turkey-cock of a Cooper. I am very against him and fan every flame.

THURSDAY 2ND FEBRUARY

Gage proposed himself to luncheon and we had a long intimate talk. He has long since lost any charm for me, yet I have a sneaking sort of protective affection for him; but I'm not devoid of an itch to tease and prick him. Today I dealt him a masterly blow, and have been chuckling with delight all day. He asked me in the autumn to use my powers of intrigue, and my persuasion with the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax, to get him a job – he has been Lord in Waiting now since 1924, with one short Labour interval, and not unnaturally he thinks he ought to be given an under-secretaryship since he is as able probably as Sim Feversham.¹ I had promised to do what I could, which I didn't for a variety of reasons: (a) that I should probably fail; (b) that it suits me better for him to remain at Court; (c) why should I break my neck, everything considered for him? . . . but I told him none of these things just hinted rather crudely that he had been passed over because he was suspected of 'Eden-itis'! He has been seen often with Eden, and has played with Ronnie Tree off and on for years. My prick was a thunderbolt and he was indignant but impressed. I prophesy that he will now drop Ronnie Tree, who irritates me more and more . . . I drove him to the Houses of Parliament. This afternoon I slept for two hours in the library and my own snores awoke me . . . and I found that we had reached the fantastic Pension scheme, a plan to provide indigent MPs over 60, or their widows, with an income of £150 per annum. In other words we are asked to dock members £12 per annum for the benefit of others, as it is inconceivable that many of us should not have at least £130 a year to live on. Still we never know!! Like almost everyone on our side I was resolved to vote against the measures, which in any case, were clumsily drafted, and a half-baked sentimental bit of legislation. The PM rose, and made a brilliant cunning contribution supporting the measure, whilst insisting that it was a free vote. He was humorous, and then made a Baldwinian effort to placate the Labour Party – and succeeded. They were stunned by his logic, his humour and sympathy and, I think, liked him for the first time. He swayed some votes undoubtedly, and I then decided to abstain. Then Duff rose,

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¹ Charles William Slingsby 'Sim' Duncombe (1906–63), Viscount Helmsley from 1915 to 1916, when he succeeded his father as 3rd Earl of Feversham, was Halifax's son-in-law. He had been Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries since 1936.*

staging a 'comeback' and in a pompous absurd little declaration, which showed that he had not read his brief, he harangued against the scheme, thus at once offending both the Labour people and the PM. He was shouted at by various indignant members, 'NO! NO! Read the bill!' The speech was so maddening that I promptly went into the division lobby and voted for the bill. I was glad I did; my action pleased the Labour Party, and also it ill behoves the very rich to vote against the measure. I saw Oliver Stanley and Euan Wallace with me. The very rich behaved well.

Then I rushed home, and dressed in a rush, with the result that I cut myself shaving, and went to dine with the Duke of Kent . . . just off.

FRIDAY 3RD FEBRUARY

I sat up so late last night that I could neither face my diary nor do my daily exercises this morning – both of which so contribute to my well-being for the rest of the day.

I arrived at No. 3 [Belgrave Square] with the Duke of Kent for dinner and found a most ill-assorted party of fourteen people, social waifs and strays evidently, collected by the Duke to amuse himself during the Duchess's absence – she is in Athens. The most surprising guest (and the most delighted to be there) was Mr Rootes,¹ the motor magnate millionaire, ex-lover of Lady Castlerosse. Bad food, but glorious china for the usual *bibelots*. We went on to a private cinema performance in Wardour Street and at 1.30 as it ended my old enemy (but recently reconciled), Freda Casa Maury,² asked me back to her house for a drink and foolishly I went. A modern affair, is this freshly constructed villa in modest Hamilton Terrace.³ There is one huge room, white with much glass, and modern things. It is gay and attractive but no atmosphere, no *bibelots* . . . Freda is happily married to . . . Bobby Casa Maury; and although she is a grandmother she doesn't look 40, and is still languorously in love – I am told that passion is not all spent yet in that *ménage*. *Qui sait?*⁴ There was champagne, and an Augustus John-looking [illegible] who sang and played badly for two hours . . . I left at 5.30,

1 William Edward Rootes (1894–1964) was trained as an apprentice by Singer cars and in 1913 set up his own car dealership; he also helped with the maintenance of aero engines during the Great War. In the Second World War he oversaw production of aircraft and their engines, and helped supply military vehicles. He was knighted in 1942 and created 1st Baron Rootes in 1959.

2 Winifred May 'Freda' Birkin (1894–1983) married in 1913 William Dudley Ward MP; she was mistress of the Prince of Wales from 1918 until supplanted by Mrs Simpson in 1934. She married in 1937 Pedro José Isidro Manuel Ricardo Montes (1895–1968), Marqués de Casa Maury.

3 Between Maida Vale and St John's Wood.

4 Who knows?

the Duke remaining still. Edwina Mountbatten¹ eclipsed the other professional beauties as she always does. Dickie Mountbatten² has lost his looks, charm and glamour, but is still pleasant.

Today I feel weak. I am too old a bird for these late nights. I went to the Foreign Office, then the House of Commons, and in a daze lunched with Mike Wardell³ at the *Evening Standard* offices. I tried to do some pro-Chamberlain, anti-Cooper, anti-Churchill work, but am not sure that Mike was responsive. He is like a child, so excited with his new building which has cost a packet and will not be ready for some months yet. The *Standard* is doing well, very well. Beaverbrook is ill, has had a slight operation. Then I drove to the House of Commons, picked up Ronnie Cartland and we went shopping. He is an amiable gossip and I gave him a second-rate sauce boat. He said that that bald-headed ass, Paul Emrys-Evans,⁴ had attacked him for staying with me – ‘one of the enemy’, he called me, because I am anti-Eden. It is really too silly. Ronnie, who is one of them, agrees that such a faction can never go far.

Bed at 6.30 and I had hope to sleep for twelve hours or more.

There have been serious explosions, bombs found in the Underground; a reign of terror has gone on for weeks now. It is alleged to be the work of Irish extremists.⁵

SATURDAY 4TH FEBRUARY

I drove to the House of Commons, and found it heavily guarded, with a policeman before every door, so great is the fear of explosions. I talked to Honor on the telephone. I wonder whether she and Diana [Cavendish] are not for the first time a touch bored? They come back on February 18th.

- 1 Edwina Cynthia Annette Ashley (1901–60) married in 1922 Lord Louis Mountbatten (*vide infra*).
- 2 Louis Francis Albert Victor Nicholas Mountbatten (1900–79), son of Prince Louis Alexander of Battenberg, and from 1917 Lord Louis Mountbatten by courtesy. His family nickname was ‘Dickie’. He was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Mountbatten of Burma in 1946, and advanced to an earldom the following year on his resignation as Viceroy of India. He also became an admiral of the fleet, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Defence Staff. He was assassinated by the IRA.*
- 3 A senior lieutenant of Lord Beaverbrook*.
- 4 Paul Vychan Emrys-Evans (1894–1967) was Conservative MP for South Derbyshire from 1931 to 1945, and was Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs from 1942 to 1945.
- 5 It was the work of the Irish Republican Army, and was known as the S-Plan, or Sabotage Plan. The IRA had declared war on Britain on 12 January 1939, justifying its action by deeming Britain the occupying power of Northern Ireland, and a bombing campaign on the mainland started on 16 January. The two bombs on the Underground to which Channon refers were at Tottenham Court Road and Leicester Square stations and were triggered on 4 February, the day after the date of this diary entry. Two people were injured. The campaign continued until the late winter of 1940 and two IRA men were hanged in February 1940 for the murder of a 21-year-old woman in an attack on Coventry in August 1939.

SUNDAY 5TH FEBRUARY

Up late, did exercise, had a massage and none of these things relieved my acute indigestion and blown-out feeling. What can I do?

Harold Balfour to luncheon and we gossiped just about politics and then his love affairs – the last two both began in this house, first with Virginia Agnelli, with whom he had a sharp quick affair, terminated by absence and distance, and then just a year ago he met Helen Fitzgerald in this house and very soon it was a liaison, which now, after a year, it still is. His family know nothing. Of course he is very attractive, and handsome and a touch dashing . . . he works too hard.

The government had a good press today. It is Chamberlain Sunday. All is well in Paradise. Anyone who opposes him comes a cropper. Look at that supreme ass Derrick Gunston, his former PPS, who has had the impudence and temerity to oppose him – he has broken his back skating or tobogganing, and now I read that Ronnie Tree, of whom curiously enough I dreamt last night, was badly hurt out hunting yesterday . . . Life for the moment is lovely.

MONDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

The Iveaghs to lunch, very affectionate and friendly, and I went to the House of Commons. As I was standing at the Bar of the House Anthony Eden came up to me and said angrily, 'I hear, Chips, you say that my American trip was a failure and that I am a disaster.'¹ Surprised, I weakly retorted 'That's news to me.' 'Well thank you for your tribute,' he announced and walked away. I am sorry, really sorry to have offended him; but I consider him a menace to the future of the world, but a diminishing menace. I wrote him a cool little note and later when we met he smiled. I came home here at 6.30 and am going to bed, as I feel ill.

SUNDAY 12TH FEBRUARY

I have been ill since last Monday with flu, high temperatures and depression. Today I got up. Alan and Patsy, Harold, and Rob Bernays all came to see me. Honor telephoned that she has gone to Kitzbühel. The Iveaghs very kind and loving and both rang me every day on the telephone to inquire. I love them.

MONDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

I went for a while to my two Paradises, the Foreign Office, and the House of Commons – but weak and dejected I returned to my bed.

1 Eden had visited America in December 1938 at the invitation of the National Association of Manufacturers, and had delivered a keynote speech in New York to an audience of 4,000 people on the subject of 'the gathering storm' – a phrase Churchill purloined for his volume on the build-up to war. His trip was widely deemed a great diplomatic success, and he had private talks with Roosevelt while there.

THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY

A hectic afternoon. I took [illegible] constituents to Mrs Chamberlain's for tea and then rushed back to the House of Commons to hear Lord Halifax address the Foreign Office Committee. He was brilliant, beguiled them, led them up the garden path, played them, impressed them with his charm, sincerity and high ideals. He fascinates and bamboozles everyone. Is he saint turned worldling, or worldling become saint?

FRIDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

Too down all the week to record my thoughts; flu leaves one working at half-cock. Today I had twenty-one men to luncheon, the lobby journalists who have been amiable to me, and as guests of honour, Alec Cadogan – correct, suave, Edwardian – and Rab. I put the two Under-Secretaries of State one at each end of the table.¹ It was a great success.

Jim Thomas dined with me and spilt his animal spirit and charm. He is a weakling without judgement, without honour, but somehow loveable. I am always, alas, attracted by weakness. He stayed very, very late, and we talked until we were hungry; then went to the kitchen and cooked eggs . . . Bed at four. Foolishly. How Jim loathes Alan; and how jealous he is of him.

SATURDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

I was a hopeless case all day. Honor rang me from Paris, and later arrived with Diana Cavendish by air at Croydon. Honor is amazing, good looks, quite lovely and gay. I am sad and disappointed to be down and lifeless and listless. I am ageing; I must write my will; and meanwhile recover my spirits.

SUNDAY 19TH FEBRUARY

Honor and I drove to Kelvedon which looked lovely. We walked about the gardens . . .

We had a dinner party for 21; it was successful. I was between Loelia Westminster and Sheila Birkenhead. Duff amiable and on his best behaviour drinking only red wine . . . Everyone stayed until 1.30, and I persuaded Loelia to agree to dispose of her house to the Lennox-Boys – 1 Little College Street,² a house I have always loved. I knew it well in the Stanleys' regime and at various

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1 Sir Alexander Cadogan was a Permanent Under-Secretary; Butler was Parliamentary Under-Secretary.

2 Elsewhere he writes No 8, which was correct.

times it was let to Spears,¹ and to the Dufferins – they were living there when he was killed² . . . now Alan and Patsy are installed there luxuriously.

Honor looked a vision of beauty. She has got her looks back, and her health and spirits.

MONDAY 20TH FEBRUARY

Again I felt ill and had to come home to recover. Perhaps it was a hangover? About eight I took my temperature and it was 99.4; but too late to chuck our royal dinner party at the Kents. I nearly fainted at dinner; but luckily I had taken the precaution of having a footman ring up to say that I must return immediately to the H of C. I got the message, bore it bravely, with cold sweat pouring down my body, counting the minutes. At last I could bear it no more, and apologised to the Duke, saying I was going back to the House of Commons – I rushed home and was violently sick. Then I rang up the doctor who came at once. I foresaw a bad bout of flu, or a recurrence . . . but he said it was only an upset of the tummy, and so it proved to be. Too much champagne last night.

I watch the PM and others in their full vigour at 70,³ and I weak and tired at 40. It is deplorable.

THURSDAY 23RD FEBRUARY

Honor and I dined at the House of Commons. We were to have gone to see [the] Chamberlains 'At Home', but there was a comedy at the House of Commons which kept me busy, and I could not get away. The Socialists lost their temper and kept us late. Home at 2.30, worn out. I don't like late nights at the House anymore. It gets so cold. All-night sittings have at least some *Stimmung!* But just to be kept up because the Socialists are in a bad temper, or because one has been fool enough not to leave, is boring.

FRIDAY 24TH FEBRUARY

What a flop, Anthony Eden. We were discussing his declension today. And it is a year and nearly a week since we manoeuvred to get him out. I cannot take the credit – I wish I could – for his fall. He engineered that himself; but certainly my campaign against him bore fruit and helped prepare the ground. For six months not a day passed that I did not drop poison into ministerial ears about the lies of

1 Edward Louis Spears had been a senior liaison officer between the British and French armies in the Great War, and was now Conservative MP for Carlisle.*

2 The 3rd Marquess, who was killed in a plane crash on 21 July 1930.

3 Chamberlain would be dead by the end of 1940.

the Eden influence . . . I am not as able as Anthony, but am more resolute, subtler, and cleverer.

Honor and I lunched with Grace Curzon of Kedleston in a private suite at the Dorchester, a luxurious meal . . . We waited some time for the Duke of Alba who did not arrive. Perhaps he is being recognised; we all laughed. (We have decided to recognise Franco next Monday simultaneously with the French – two years too late!)

MONDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

Alan, rushing about like an inspired lunatic, had a nasty accident yesterday at Henlow: he fell sixteen feet, fractured his foot, bruised his ribs, and was knocked for a second unconscious. Poor Patsy she has indeed taken on a career in marrying him . . .

We dined *en famille*, the Iveaghs, us, all at 8 Little College Street with Patsy and Alan. My mother-in-law was charm itself, gentle, affectionate, understanding, and a touch distant to Honor whose long absences she deploras. I returned to the House after dinner as there was the threat of an adjournment. I had to gauge the situation: at 10.15 I concluded that there might be trouble, and I rang up the Ritz where Rab was dining with the Arabs, got him to the telephone and warned him. He returned just in time . . . and I also produced two people from the Foreign Office. Promptly at 11.06 Arthur Henderson rose and we had our Libyan debate. The Italians . . . I hate saying it . . . are letting us down in the spirit, if not in the letter of Anglo-Italian agreement by sending reinforcements to Libya. So we were on a bad wicket . . . came home but Honor was already asleep.

TUESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY

A big day. Honor, accompanied by Diana and Sibyl Cavendish¹ (she supports them both now), left at 2 p.m. for Mürren. She seemed pleased to go, which is always worrying; but she was gentle and sweet and the visit has been a success. I was cold, cold as only I can be, to Lady Moyra Cavendish² who came to Victoria to see them off. She is a rabid anti-Chamberlain critic, a pro-Cranborne fanatic. He, by the way, has jaundice. I think he is having a change of life.

1 Sibyl Moyra Cavendish (1915–2004), fifth daughter of Lord Richard Cavendish (*vide infra*) and younger sister of Diana Cavendish (qv). She married, in 1941, Revd Lawrence Gregson Fell Dykes (1906–93).

2 Lady Moyra de Vere Beauclerk (1876–1942), daughter of the 10th Duke of St Albans, married in 1895 Lord Richard Cavendish (1871–1946), younger brother of the 9th Duke of Devonshire.

After I left Victoria I was sad, melancholy and wished things were not as they are . . . soon I was plunged into the activities of the big debate. For yesterday – two years too late – we recognised Franco, and the Socialists had their last snarl today. Attlee opened the debate, which took the form of a vote of censure. He renewed his pusillanimous attack on the Prime Minister, in so doing that he lost the respect of the House, for he said little about the subject before the House. The PM rose, and never have I so admired him, for at first, I feared he would retaliate as he looked annoyed. Instead with almost sublime restraint he coolly remarked that he would resist the temptation to castigate the Leader of the Opposition, and he then proceeded to state the government's case for the recognition of the Spanish Nationalists as the legitimate government of Spain. He was devastatingly clear, and made an iron-clad case which our opponents found difficult, indeed impossible to answer. Their only reply was rage and abuse. When Anthony Eden got up, they looked more hopeful; but he made a calm, conciliatory speech (dull and platitudinous like everything he says) in favour of the govt, so that there was little kick left in the Opposition. I had prepared Rab to wind up and he was busy preparing his speech when about 3.15 David Margesson sent for him to say that after all he was going to put up old Inskip, since the Labour Party demanded a Cabinet minister to wind up. I hurriedly informed Rab that he would not be required. He had complained of overwork, and now when relieved he seemed disappointed as people always are. I am rather sorry he did not wind up as the House was easy and good-humoured; I had thought it would be otherwise. All day I was at the bench, running errands . . . fagging, occasionally rewarded by one of those intoxicating careless smiles from the PM. I sat, as always, immediately behind him. No lunch: no tea: no dinner: only excited snacks in the lobby Bar. The hours passed and it became increasingly clear that the House was sick unto death of Spain, that it recognised the necessity, indeed the urgency, of establishing friendly relations with Franco – the sooner the better. When fat, funny Inskip rose to wind up he had an easy passage; and he was both firm and humorous. At last we went home after a huge government majority and even the Edenites all voted for us, a troupe of middle-aged ballerinas. How foolish they must now look. What a fool is Jim Thomas: I must thrust him out of my life, but somehow cannot bring myself to do so.

Home – worn out – late. *Viva Franco! Viva España.*

WEDNESDAY 1ST MARCH

I woke dreaming still of our amazing little god, the PM, so courageous, humorous, sound, and amiable. Not even England has ever produced such a man.

I felt ill, worn out with emotions and work and late nights. I must sometimes be alone, and I am that never.

SUNDAY 5TH MARCH

My strength is really failing me. I am so tired sometimes. Yet I must be attractive still as never before have I had so much sexual success as during the past few weeks. I haven't the time to follow it up.

TUESDAY 7TH MARCH

My birthday. No presents except Honor's picture of the House of Commons, the Hogarth one, a satin reading-stand from Alan and Patsy, and a bloodstone *bibelot* from my *belle-mère*.¹

We had Foreign Office estimates, which meant a long day at the House with an unbearable amount of fagging . . . I was run off my feet. Luckily they came to an end at eight, and I was able to dine with a select party of the MPs – the 1936 Club – who entertained the Prime Minister. He was jolly, enjoying himself and amazingly open and confiding. Members plied him with questions. He smiled, sometimes roared with laughter, answered each one with humorous precision. Someone asked him if it was true that Hitler disliked him, and he retorted that he had heard many contradictory reports on this subject, his last interview with Hitler was very friendly. The PM foresees no crisis on the horizon, all is well; he thinks the Russian peril receding, and the dangers of a German war are less every day, as our rearmament expands. An intoxicating evening.

THURSDAY 9TH MARCH

Lunching with the Cazalets. They have a remarkable collection of glorious Augustus Johns. Mrs Cazalet² is indignant, as indeed we all are, at the treachery of that charming, gay, low-born fellow Louis Bromfield,³ whom we have all cosseted, taken up, spoiled, slept with, and launched in London. He has, in his recent return to the States, published an infamous pamphlet attacking this country, in which he insults Lord Halifax and the PM and others. He thinks England is dead and beat. He is right, of course; it is the swan song of this enchanted island but it is bad taste, indeed unpardonable to say so. I am apprehensive of the future, very. Appeasement cannot last indefinitely. The Boche or the Italians will surely let us down. The situation in Palestine is grave.⁴

1 Mother-in-law.

2 Maud Lucia Heron-Maxwell (1868–1952). Her husband had died in 1932, so Channon's reference to 'the Cazalets' is presumably to her and her son Victor and possibly her daughter Thelma (qqv).*

3 Louis Bromfield (1896–1956) born Brunfield, was a novelist and agriculturalist from Ohio.

4 Palestine had been ruled by a British mandate since 1920; there had been an Arab revolt there since 1936. Since 7 February, a conference had been taking place at St James's Palace to discuss how the territory could be ruled once the mandate ended.

Jim Thomas came home with me for a drink and chat. He is so amiable now and rather 'sucking up'.

SATURDAY 11TH MARCH

A rest: a Turkish bath, a visit to the American Consulate – to sign a power-of-attorney, as I gather, there is an excellent chance of my American property improving. Higher rentals.

The Coopers dined as did the Abdys, Emerald and Harold Balfour: I made the mistake of including Georg Federer,¹ the Second Secretary of the German Embassy, who had been recommended to me . . . as a handsome *charmeur*.² He is neither, but quite adequate. The Coopers were rude to him.

MONDAY 13TH MARCH

Very big dinner party. I wanted to enjoy it in peace and also to keep Rab free, so I manoeuvred to have the business of the House instead – at least I had not that to worry about. All yesterday I telephoned frantically to get men, and now this morning early Portia Stanley chucked me, and was two women short. I . . . sent an SOS to Jean Norton³ and Kitty Brownlow⁴ who both came. I felt ill all day, which was a disadvantage.

Having finally adjusted my dinner party by 4.30, I went to the Bath Club for a 'Turker' in fear and trembling that perhaps a man might chuck me. Luckily none did and the house looked a vista of beauty, flowers, candlelight and general loveliness. The Duke of Alba arrived first and I introduced him as the Spanish Ambassador. It was the first party he had attended in his new official capacity. Rab was next to the Duchess of Kent and they liked each other, for each partly to please me, and partly from mutual curiosity turned their full charms on the others. Mollie Buccleuch was bored: there is always the guest bored at every party. The Duke of Kent was happy and both Shakespeare Morrison and Alba 'over the port' monopolised him. Dinner was excellent; the dining room was a dream of rococo beauty, and all went well. Afterwards there was a slight *gêne*⁵ until I got the bridge four consisting of the Duke of Kent, Jean Norton, Loelia

1 Georg Federer (1905–84) was a German career diplomat. He had served in Riga before joining the London Embassy in 1938, and spent much of the war in Switzerland. His career continued after the war in America and Egypt.

2 Charmer.

3 Jean Mary Kinloch (1898–1945) was married to Richard Henry Brinsley Norton (1892–1954), who succeeded his father in 1943 as 6th Baron Grantley. She was Lord Beaverbrook's mistress for twenty years, though shared that role with numerous others. Their affair is believed to have precipitated the early death of Lady Beaverbrook in 1927.

4 Katherine Harriet Kinloch (1906–52) married in 1927 the 6th Baron Brownlow (qv).

5 Moment of embarrassment.

Westminster and Teenie Cazalet settled. Even then, a pause until I could get people seated. I led different men to talk to the Duchess of K. Shakes was clumsy, to my surprise he treated her like a public meeting. Then Alba and he went off together and liked each other. And I put Duncannon there. Emerald, looking like Mme de Pompadour, joined us at midnight. She had been dining with the Lytteltons.¹ She was in a bad temper and would not do 'her stuff'. I think Rab, who by now was a touch tipsy . . . (I had arranged the dinner to divert him, as he has been far too hard-working of late, leading a double life with his Foreign Office work and the Palestine Conference on his shoulders as well), alarmed her. He was very gay and we heard his famous pheasant cackle, which means that he is amused . . . he has so little fun; but he doesn't like it. The social side of his scheme of life are [*sic*] amateurishly arranged and [his wife] Sydney is without social sense: and his secretariat is unskilled. These few details may prevent his rise to the heights. Otherwise his course to No. 10 is a straight one. The Kents . . . enjoyed themselves. They did not leave until 1.30, nor did anyone else. The Duke remarked after winning 30 shillings 'they can't play at all'. All the women – yes, even the government's wives – were well dressed, but I insisted that the men wear black ties, since the Duke prefers it. There is no halfway house with royalties really: it is either black ties, or tails and decorations. The Duchess of Kent did not go to 'the ladies' – how does she manage? All royalties have amazing bladders. The last few minutes are a haze: I had drunk too much champagne and was tired, but the evening, a mixture of society and the government, was a success. I must repeat it soon. But it is such a complicated business ensuring that we are not needed at the House of Commons. Today I was lucky, or rather far-sighted as I managed to arrange the business of the House.

TUESDAY 14TH MARCH

There were rumblings at the Foreign Office of renewed trouble in Czechoslovakia. We did not at first take them v seriously; but learned that the Czech government had resigned and that Hitler had summoned the President to Berlin. It looks as if he is going to break the Munich Agreement, and throw Chamberlain over, and become an international gangster.

1 Oliver Lyttelton (1893–1972) became Managing Director of the British Metals Corporation and from 1940 to 1954 was Conservative MP for Aldershot. He was one of the businessmen brought into the government by Churchill, and served as President of the Board of Trade from 1940 to 1941 and in the 'caretaker' government of 1945. He was resident minister in the Middle East from 1941 to 1942 and Minister of Production from 1942 to 1945. From 1951 to 1954 he was Colonial Secretary and in the latter year was raised to the peerage as 1st Viscount Chandos. In 1920 he married Lady Moira Godolphin Osborne, daughter of the 10th Duke of Leeds.

At Question Time there were questions about the Czech situation and news came via the tape that German soldiers had invaded Czechoslovakia; that Ruthenia was proclaimed independent. We have another crisis. Beware of the Ides of March! It is just a year today since German troops entered and took poor languid, helpless, prostrate Austria. Hitler is never helpful – to his friends!

WEDNESDAY 15TH MARCH

Hitler has entered Prague apparently, and Czechoslovakia has ceased to exist.¹ No balder, bolder defiance of the written bond has ever been committed in History. I don't mind what he did; but the manner of it surpasses comprehension, and his callous desertion of the Prime Minister is stupefying. I can never forgive him for making his enemies become both prophets and right. It is a great day for the Socialists and for the Edenites. The PM is discouraged, horrified. He acceded to the demand of the Opposition for a debate, and the business of the House was altered. The PM rose and calmly, but with a broken heart, made a frank statement of the facts as he knew them. The reports were largely unconfirmed, and based on press reports; consequently the PM was obliged to be cool and so was accused of being unmoved by events. Whenever he is aloof, he is said to be heartless when he is only being cautious. I thought he looked miserable. His whole policy of appeasement is in ruins. Munich is a torn-up episode; yet never has he been proved more abundantly right, for he gave us six months of peace in which we rearmed; so he was right to try appeasement, rather than the warlike policy. I was relieved at how little personal criticism there was of the Apostle of Peace, and Grenfell,² who opened for the Opposition, was more impressive than Atlee; he was saner, more manly, more eloquent and he held the attention and regard of the House.

Later I came home here with Jim Thomas and we had a cold supper, brilliantly prepared, together and talked late.

Rab was irritable and worn out. My dinner party, although it was a change and amused him, fatigued him. Rab is in a rage, too, with recent events, indignant at Hitler's methods, rather than with his accomplishments. And he said rightly enough that the *Drang nach Osten*³ which his new policy seemed to indicate was a relief, a disguised blessing to the Empire. Hitler was going towards the East instead of snarling at us. I agreed, and deplore the senseless hysteria. The Cabinet sat and I am told they were like a lot of angry frustrated hens. Simon in an appalling

1 The previous day the Slovak state, a client of Germany, had been proclaimed. On 15 March the Wehrmacht occupied the rest of the former Czechoslovakia and the Germans proclaimed the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

2 David 'Dai' Grenfell. *

3 Drive to the East, a term first used in the nineteenth century about the most likely nature of German expansionism.

winding-up speech which was ill-prepared and badly received, seemed to pour water on any return to collective security which our 'left-wingers' are clamouring for. The country is stirred to its depths . . . the rage against Germany is rising. Few realise that for all his aggressions he has acquired nothing new, nothing that was not – not an inch, not an acre – within the compass of the old Germanic empires before the war. But he has broken his solemn pledges, and recanted his great theory of self-determination, and his social theories of only wanting Germans. Rab and I alone are hopeful that the situation may be sound, at least for some time longer.

My poor dearly beloved little Neville. He looked borne down [upon] today.

Jim Thomas, that political weathercock, already was a little less obsequious tonight for his hopes soar once more. He dined and fagged Anthony, who by the way, was not hostile to the government and he took me by the arm at one moment.

A day of shattered hopes.

THURSDAY 16TH MARCH

No one can now prophesy what will happen: of course there are the usual wild rumours of mobilisation, calling-up and of leave stopped. People are shuddering lest London be bombed this weekend. Why?

In the course of the Navy estimates this afternoon Duff lost his temper and called Hitler 'a thrice-mouthed perjurer, a breaker of oaths' etc. Therein will be more trouble.

The Foreign Affairs Committee meeting passed off peacefully enough and there was no criticism of the Prime Minister. On the contrary, I rang up No. 10 and left a message for him saying that all was well. I wanted to cheer him as he is depressed – almost broken-hearted today. No wonder. He had, however, to attend the Court tonight. His energy is staggering.

FRIDAY 17TH MARCH

After lunching with Emerald – David Margesson; Loelia Westminster; Grace Curzon, who tried to sell me everything she still possesses – I drove to the H of C. The lobby was in a turmoil as a rumour had reached it that there was serious difference of opinion between Neville and Edward.¹ It is lunchtime: they are as one, although there have been recent indications that Edward H is becoming mildly influenced by the Foreign Office mandarins.

The crisis news seemed somewhat better. At least not worse. I don't believe in the approaching war. I drove to Southend, telephoning before to arrange for the

1 Lord Halifax.

PM's great Birmingham speech to be relayed. My big meeting at Southend went well and we were all well received. Proceedings opened with the relaying of the PM's speech which lasted forty minutes. It was strong meat, it was magnificent and held us spellbound. He told in polite but decisive language the whole story of his negotiations with Hitler and his treachery. The PM hinted at a new policy, or rather of a return to an old faded friend, Collective Security. Lady Iveagh and I spoke well; as I was leaving, having been professionally gracious for an hour, the Mayor sent me a message to come to the Cricket Ball. I went, was gay, and intelligent and no doubt made a good impression.

Back to the hotel worn out at 1.35 a.m. What a day. The country is solidly behind Chamberlain now: criticism is temporarily stilled.

SATURDAY 18TH MARCH

I drove, after a Southend meeting, to Kelvedon, and *en route*, I thought about the PM's magnificent speech of last night in which he was not too proud to reveal his disappointment, his hopes so hugely shattered by Hitler. All he said was a heady wine. I trust somehow policy will not go too far the other way.

Kelvedon disappointed me – I find it lovely perhaps, but small and not sufficiently splendid. And the work seems so slow. Will the gardens and planting ever be finished? Then I came up to London, rather reluctant to leave my white Bundi behind. London, I found, was in a fever of excitement. The Cabinet was sitting still: the newspapers talked of a German ultimatum to Romania. I rang various ministers and now know the strange truth. Rob Bernays, an excitable, pleasant youth, sensitive and Semitic, left-wing and intensely anti-German, had yesterday to make a big speech. *En route* to the station he dropped in at the Ritz to have tea with Princess Marthe Bibesco,¹ a famous *mondaine*,² exotic, writer and *amoureuse*³ – she was the mistress of Lord Thomson,⁴ and later wrote his biography after he was killed in the R101 disaster. One can picture the scene, the reclining, luxurious lady in a tea-gown and pearls, surrounded by roses, and the impressed young under-secretary dazzled by the *mise en scène*. She coyly trapped him and told him that she knew that King Carol had had an ultimatum from the

1 Marthe Lahovary.*

2 Socialite.

3 A romantic.

4 Christopher Birdwood Thomson (1875–1930) came from a distinguished military family and had been a soldier himself, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel. He joined the Labour Party and twice failed to be elected as an MP, but was raised to the peerage in 1924 when becoming Secretary of State for Air in Ramsay MacDonald's first administration. When MacDonald returned to power in 1929 Thomson was restored to the same office and, as Channon correctly says, was killed in the R101 disaster of October 1930, which led to the cancellation of the British airship programme. He had met Princess Bibesco in 1915 when serving as British military attaché to Romania.

German government, saying that they would invade Romania etc. etc. How could she get the news to the English government? She knew no one . . . Bernays believed her, not realising that the ordinary channels existed for carrying such information, were it true. He rushed to a call box and frantically poured out the tale to Walter Elliot, who immediately rang up Oliver Stanley at the Foreign Office. Stanley knowing nothing sent for Tilea,¹ the Romanian Minister, who is Marthe Bibesco's tool, her appointee, and probably, although not certainly, her lover. Tilea, perhaps in the plot, was guarded, and thinking that the FO either knew too much, or too little, led them to believe the Bibesco's [*sic*] romance: he seemed to acquiesce, at least not to deny her fabrication. No. 10 was informed, Cabinet ministers cancelled their weekend plans and this evening there was a Cabinet called to consider the emergency situation which had arisen. Were we to guarantee the Romanian oil fields, her frontiers against German aggression?? Meanwhile, late this afternoon a message came from Sir R. Hoare,² our Minister at Bucharest, saying nothing was known in Romania of such an ultimatum. This is the bald truth: but it is midnight now and this country believes what it has read in the evening newspaper and has gone to bed hating Germany more than ever, and resigned to the inevitability of war. It has taken me all evening to piece this tale together. I have rung the Foreign Office, I have talked with both Loxley and the resident clerks, and I have had three telephone conversations with Bernays who himself confessed and admitted the whole tale. He defends himself by saying it was his duty to warn the government. Perhaps it was, but he has made us ridiculous in the eyes of Europe, I fear. I shall send in a secret report to the PM of this shady story.

Now we have begun to flirt with Russia. We must be in very low water indeed to have to do that.

I might add that Tilea, very recently sent here by King Carol, is a crony of Harold Nicolson,³ and rather 'suspect'.⁴

SUNDAY 19TH MARCH

Whilst the Chancelleries of Europe had hummed with diplomatic activity, whilst HMG has been struggling to create an anti-German bloc, I had been touring Bedfordshire. At Silsoe I met the Lennox-Boydys by arrangement and we went

1 Viorel Virgil Tilea (1896–1972) was Romania's Ambassador to Britain from 1938 to 1940.

2 Reginald Henry Hoare (1882–1954) was British Minister at Teheran from 1931 to 1934 and then at Bucharest until 1941. He was knighted in 1933.

3 Harold George Nicolson (1886–1968), son of the 1st Baron Carnock, worked in the Foreign Office from 1909 to 1929, before becoming a full-time writer and journalist. He joined the New Party of Oswald Mosley (qv) but left when Mosley became a fascist; he sat as National Labour MP for Leicester-West from 1935 to 1945 and was an early anti-appeaser. After Channon he is probably the most renowned diarist of the era, and like him was bisexual.*

4 Tilea has come to be regarded by history as the architect of this scare. By 'suspect' Channon indicates that he considered the Ambassador an anti-appeaser, thanks not least to the company he kept.

first to inspect Wrest Park, the ancient home of the dukes of Kent – non-royal ones.¹ I fell in love with the place: its bogus rococo, its grandeur, its water and temples, its avenues of Portuguese laurels, its statues and splendid suite of rooms all make me dissatisfied with Kelvedon which I was beginning to love. Never have I wanted a house so much as Wrest . . . And never will [it] be mine. Alan wants Wrest; but Patsy, cautious and unimaginative, does not. Never in all England have I been so captivated by a place, and to think we might have had it; it would have been unpractical, far from Southend and too expensive to keep up . . . we went on to Ampthill House,² where Loelia Westminster joined us, to lunch with an absurd old walrus, Sir Anthony Wingfield,³ who is an octogenarian vulgarian in love, although a widower with a family, with Alan! He was enchanted to entertain a Duchess: we sat through a pompous meal of eight courses. There were stray Russell relations impressed that we were Woburn-bound.

At three o'clock the Lennox-Boys, Loelia and I in three grand cars arrived at Woburn Abbey, and one was immediately stuck by the well-kept-up splendour . . . We were shown in and received by the Duke, aged 84!⁴ He wore grey trousers and a white satin tie, and seemed ageless but aged, withered, colourless, but *grand seigneur*. Lady Ampthill⁵ was acting as hostess and the pair of them showed us over the palace, room after room, with fires in each. Many were very fine, very famous pictures; but the general effect is spoilt by having too many. Eighteen full-length Sir Joshuas⁶ in one room! Forty Canalettos in another! One room entirely painted by Van Dyck.⁷ One clearly looked impressed but the general effect is not beautiful nor pleasing. But the long views from the windows of the lakes and ducks are. I was disappointed but conscious, too, of the atmosphere, of the feudal magnificence and ceremonial that is maintained. There were thirty cars and chauffeurs, none are ever used; there are fires in all the twenty or more drawing rooms where no one ever sits. The Duke is silent, dull, and is interested only in his staggering possessions. There was a pompous tea party, which, alas!

1 The present house was built to designs of its then owner, 2nd Earl de Grey, in the 1830s. The park was laid out for the 1st Duke of Kent (1671–1740), who was raised to a dukedom having succeeded his father as 12th Earl of Kent, and who served in several high offices at the court of Queen Anne.

2 A house of the 1680s in a Capability Brown park, now divided up into flats.

3 Sir Anthony Wingfield (1857–1952) was a Bedfordshire landowner and sometime High Sheriff of the county.

4 The Duke was in fact 81: Herbrand Arthur Russell (1858–1940), Lord Herbrand Russell from 1872 until 1893, when he succeeded his brother as 11th Duke of Bedford. He was married, in 1888, to Mary du Caurroy Tribe (1865–1937).

5 Margaret Lygon (1874–1957), Lady Margaret by courtesy, was the daughter of the 6th Earl Beauchamp. She married the 2nd Baron Ampthill (1869–1935) in 1894.

6 Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–92) was an English painter and first President of the Royal Academy.

7 Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), a Flemish painter famous for his portraits of the English Court.

took too much time and we did not see the famous Chinese dairy which interested me more than the fish. His wealth is incalculable, I suppose. He must be nearly as rich as my father-in-law!

Home at 2 a.m. London was not being bombed. That, I suppose, is something.

MONDAY 20TH MARCH

Nevile Henderson was recalled yesterday from Berlin, and Herr Dirksen,¹ the German Ambassador, left London. The situation is grave. We must restrain our right-wingers or they may go too far the other way.

TUESDAY 21ST MARCH

Frog Week² began this weekend . . . I walked back [from St James's] to the House of Commons and we arrived just in time to watch the procession arrive. The Lebruns looked well, and Mme [Lebrun] was dressed like the Queen, in clinging grey and furs. Much cheering from the crowds. Hitler has guaranteed the success of this week.

I was worn out, and went to bed for three hours. Rob Bernays came to dine with me, and at considerable cost. I was able to get the whole Tilea tale out of him again. It is all too true, desperately true. What I didn't tell him is that Alec Cadogan has sent for Tilea and rebuked him for giving false information. What an extraordinary situation and incident.

The Lebruns are dining at Buckingham Palace at a great banquet to which my Rab and his humourless Frau were not invited.

Thanks to Hitler Frog Week will be a tremendous success. Rob Bernays is really the earnest political creature that walks – or rather talks. I didn't even think I liked him: he is so Jewish in his outlook, appearance, and shuffling manner. But he has charm and a sudden smile and a sharp brain if an unbalanced one. Rab has the greatest contempt for him.

Sidney Herbert³ has died in the south of France. No loss to me: little to anyone else. He has been ill for years. Self-indulgent, intolerant, a bore, common, he has too long been overrated and conceited, like all of his gay pre-war group who survived. He was violently hostile to Chamberlain and resented the new regime.

WEDNESDAY 22ND MARCH

Our attention is now riveted on foreign affairs again. An absurd round robin is being hawked around Europe asking Poland (who was cautious in her reply),

1 Eduard von Dirksen.*

2 The state visit to Britain of Albert Lebrun, the President of France, and Mme Lebrun.

3 Sir Sidney Herbert the Conservative MP, not Sidney Herbert who would become the 16th Earl of Pembroke (qqv).

Yugoslavia, Romania and perhaps others to join in a non-aggression pact. We shall enormously enlarge our commitments and reap little advantage, except possibly prestige and strategic value. The smaller nations are chary, particularly my Paul's regime in remote Belgrade.

The Iveaghs to lunch and I talked to my wife on the telephone. She is still philandering mysteriously at Breuil.¹

Memel was today ceded to Germany by the Lithuanian government under threats of invasion and aerial bombardment. Tactless of Hitler to force us into a general holy alliance against him. A few unconverted people are hoping even until now, since the Czech excitement after a week has somewhat abated, to avoid such a course. But Memel, not in itself very important, is the camel-breaking straw and the Cabinet is now unanimous that 'something must be done'. The PM has been pressed in the House to be more explicit – so far he has refused to be drawn since his heart is not in it. At Birmingham when he made his magnificent speech he was still smarting with rage and resentment against the German Chancellor, and moreover he wanted to consolidate Conservative opinion. Now this mood is passing . . . but Halifax, a touch influenced by the mandarins in the Forbidden City, i.e., the Foreign Office, is beginning to hate the Devil more than his works; and clever people at the FO knowing his religious tendencies have been stressing tales of Church persecution in Germany. I had tried to offset them.

Tonight was the grand Great Gala at Covent Garden for the Frogs. I wore my court dress – I am only happy in velvet really – and escorted Loelia Westminster to Emerald's, where we all dined. I had taken a box @ £26 and invited Loelia and the Lennox-Boys as my guests. Emerald's dinner was a good sight – about ten *faubourg*² Frogs . . . our beauties, literally covered with jewels made a much better show. The first person I saw was my v old friend Achille Murat,³ the boon companion of my youth – it is twenty years since I last saw him and he has not changed an iota. The same singularity of manner which reminds one of his maternal grandmother that remarkable old duchesse de Rohan; the same quiet sly smile which suggests his mother, the annoying Marie Murat of my youth (now comtesse de Chambrun): and he looks young. He recognised me immediately, fell on my neck, and we talked of old days. I asked him what had happened to

1 A ski resort on the Italian–French border.

2 The '*faubourg*' was a synonym for the French nobility, and the highest echelon of Parisian society. It began as shorthand for the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in what is now the 7th arrondissement of the city, on the *rive gauche*. It is the location of the French National Assembly, many government offices and embassies, and since the time of Louis XIV has been the home of the aristocracy in the capital, usually in spectacular *hôtels particuliers*, or grand town houses.

3 Achille Alain Joachim Napoléon Murat (1898–1987), nephew by marriage of Princesse Eugène Murat, who had befriended Channon in Paris.

him: 'I fell out of a balloon, married, had had six children, and two "misses":¹ thus he summed up his career. I was genuinely delighted to see him: his wife is a gay *poseur*,² and like his mother, *une jolie laide*.³ I was between two French women at dinner: one Princesse Galitzine (*née* Gramont)⁴ wore fine jewels which could not possibly have been cleaned since the French Revolution, and as she turned I saw the blue rim on her bosom made by the dirty gold! How shabby Frenchwomen are, at least aristocratic ones, when compared with our English ones. A distinguished dinner, Circe Londonderry⁵ draped in diamonds and turquoises, Belgian Ambassador, Loelia Westminster, Diana Cooper – looking a touch Sadler's Wells, and not grand enough for the occasion. She rarely wears grand *tenuë*⁶ and gold does not suit her; and, of course, the Frogs. We went on to the Opera in our finery, and the roads were well policed so we arrived easily. Covent Garden was breathtaking in its magnificence. There was a vast Royal Box in the centre, designed by Rex Whistler⁷ . . . It was light, gay, pretty but a touch [illegible]⁸ and nightclubbish. I didn't approve of it. To the left was the government box; to the right the diplomatic one, we were next but one, only the Camroses between us. Slowly the whole spectacle opened before us; and we had the greatest fun watching the arrivals. HMG was fantastic, they arrived swiftly in pairs, the little drab Attlees sitting in the far corner in dull evening clothes . . . Lady Maugham⁹ with a curl on her wrinkled forehead, Simon separated from his wife by a gangway. Bernays escorted Mrs Walter Elliot¹⁰ in Walter's absence: . . . Diana De La Warr,¹¹ ever the gushing governess, made a point of going to talk to the Attlees to make them feel at home, and in so doing stripped their isolation . . .

1 Thus in the MS; perhaps Murat was alluding to his wife having twice miscarried.

2 Channon's French is usually better than this: he means *poseuse*.

3 A French expression describing a woman who is apparently plain but can appear attractive.

4 Antonie Claude Corisande de Gramont (1885–1942), married in 1918 Prince Augustin Petrovich Galitzine.

5 Edith Helen 'Circe' Chaplin (1878–1959), daughter of the 1st Viscount Chaplin, married in 1899 the 7th Marquess of Londonderry.

6 Clothes.

7 Reginald John 'Rex' Whistler (1905–44) was hugely in demand as a designer of stage sets, posters and books, and also of murals and *trompe l'oeil*. He was killed in the Battle of Normandy in 1944.

8 Rhodes James (p. 188) has 'tinselly', which it certainly is not: the much shorter illegible word looks more like 'filthy' or 'dirty'.

9 Helen Mary Romer (1872–1950) married in 1896 Frederic Herbert Maugham (1866–1958), who was Lord Chancellor from 1938 to 1939. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Maugham (life peer) in 1935 and advanced to a viscountcy in 1939. He was the elder brother of Somerset Maugham*.

10 Katharine Tennant (1903–94), daughter of Sir Charles Tennant, 1st Bt, and half-sister of Margot Asquith, Countess of Oxford and Asquith (qv), married Walter Elliot (qv) as his second wife in 1934. Active herself in charitable and political work she was elevated to the peerage as Baroness Elliot of Harwood in 1958, one of the first women life peers.

11 Formerly Diana Leigh.*

At last the Prime Minister and Mrs Chamberlain, who looked like a Gunther's cake in pale pink with a pink boa, arrived. Alan [Lennox-Boyd] and I applauded, cheered, and the grand well-bred audience took up the cheers, and he had a rousing reception which pleased him and we had his now famous smile. The Halifaxes were the last to come: they had been at the French Embassy banquet. These functions do not tire him, and he is fundamentally social, but they are an added strain to the poor PM, already overworked. He looked worn out this morning. Meantime the ambassadors filed in. Of course, the German is away – Alba was much the handsomest. Firstly at ten o'clock arrived the royal family with the Lebruns. They filled the large box and were given a reception almost as rousing as the Chamberlains. The Queen looked lovely and distinguished. Queen Mary grey and hard. I watched her for a long time. She is ageing. Lebrun sat between the two queens, his wife between the King and the Duke of Kent. They all looked well, even glamorous, but of course Princess Marina extinguished them all, with her shimmering slimness and glowing looks. Mme Lebrun behaved with a simple dignity which was warmly commended. Her clothes had been made by Worth and a jeweller in the rue de la Paix lent her a few ornaments to wear. She looked all right. Below the box was the public and a few people whom the K and Q had invited as their guests, Edens, Baldwins, and surprisingly enough the Weymouths – why? – Grace Curzon and others. It was very foolish of them not to include the Butlers, to whom I offered the good stalls, but they somewhat indignantly spurned them.

Almost everyone in the Opera House was in levee dress or uniform; half the women wore tiaras; it was a brave sight, enough to impress the Frogs and excite the envy of the Germans. Shall we ever see so grand a gala again? I think so . . . the Kents smilingly waved to us . . . Anthony Eden, I am told, was cheered by the crowd outside, which if true, is a pity, and their foolish ovations incite him to make more platitudinous speeches and intrigue clumsily against the government. He is the architect of all our misfortunes . . . at last the curtain went up, and we had the first interminable act of *The Sleeping Princess*.¹ Well done, but infinitely boring. Then a long interval when Thomas Beecham² conducted a too long piece³ which bored the restless, snobbish audience. I enjoyed it as I could watch the 'Sleeping Government' opposite. The Chamberlains stepped unobviously away . . . there was now conversation, staring at the royalties, flashing of tiaras. Then the third act of the same ballet. It would save so much hassle and money had there been no programme at all. People only wanted to stare at one another.

1 Better known as *The Sleeping Beauty*, by Tchaikovsky.

2 Thomas Beecham (1879–1961) succeeded his father as 2nd Bt in 1916. He used his inherited fortune, from the family business making laxative pills, to promote concerts that he conducted, and became one of the most celebrated conductors in the world. Lady Cunard was his mistress for many years.

3 Debussy's *Ibéria*.

There was appalling traffic trouble finding our cars. Literally hundreds of people wandered about on the coldest night of the week looking and waiting for footmen. What the local people must have thought, much display and ostentation I don't know, except that English crowds always like a grand show. Home at 1 a.m. A grand day. The *ancien régime* dies hard in England – and we are not dead yet.

THURSDAY 23RD MARCH

I am glugged with the great. An early start, as I had invited Mrs Gaterhill, a constituent,¹ to Westminster Hall to see the Big Frogs. The little woman gurgled with Gallic glee, as we drove up to the great doors in my green Rolls. All the great of England filed in, and at the top of the steps sat the Cabinet, the Speaker, the Lord Chancellor and others. At eleven o'clock bugles blew, the North doors were opened and the Lebruns entered escorted by Lord Ancaster,² as Great Chamberlain of the Palace of Westminster. We rose, and there were probably 1,500 of us, as the little party passed. Mme Lebrun, who looked self-possessed and amiable, indeed even chic and having considerable *chien*³ for an old bourgeoisie, smiled, and conducted herself with dignity. The President (who, I am assured calls her 'Pom-Pom') was immaculately dressed. One of the overenthusiastic MPs shouted out '*Vive le Président!*' There was much hand-clapping and cheering. Hitler is responsible for the success of this rally, certainly. The Lord Chamberlain made a slightly fatuous speech of welcome and was followed by the Speaker who was quite excellent. He so rarely speaks, it is always a surprise to hear him do it so well! But the President in rousing oratorical French eclipsed them both. He 'orated' his thanks in French and all the well-known words and clichés came tumbling out . . . '*chaleureuse*',⁴ '*bon accueil*'⁵ etc. etc. After the 'Marseillaise' and 'God Save the King' had been played the presidential party proceeded into the Houses of Parliament. I and very shy Mrs Gaterhill followed and we met then the Lebruns, being escorted by the Chamberlains and David Margesson from out of the Chamber itself. It is absurd to look as French as President Lebrun! I caught his brown eye! From here they left for Windsor Castle to lunch with the Monarchs!⁶ They are having such a success with our Royal Family that he is certain to be

1 In another hand, presumably Peter Coats's, the word 'French' has been inserted before 'constituent'.

2 Gilbert Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby (1867–1951), by courtesy Lord Willoughby de Eresby until 1910, when he succeeded his father as 2nd Earl of Ancaster.

3 *Avoir du chien* is a French idiom meaning 'has some allure'.

4 Warm.

5 A good, or warm, welcome.

6 *Sic*. As so often, Channon forgets there is only one monarch, who has a consort.