



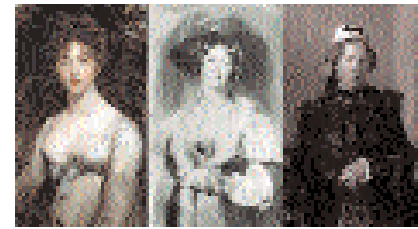
# Prime Ministers' Wives – and One Husband

MARK HICHENS

NON-FICTION/BIOGRAPHY/POLITICS

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PRIME MINISTERS'  
**WIVES**  
— AND ONE HUSBAND



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**Much is required of a prime minister's wife. As a hostess, sympathetic ear and adviser, she must ensure her husband never puts a foot wrong (and never do so herself). Arguably she has one of the hardest jobs in politics – without ever stepping into the House of Commons.**

Of the wives from the past two centuries featured in this book, nearly all have given their husbands unqualified support in political matters, two notable exceptions being **Emily Palmerston** and **Clementine Churchill**, who were always ready to dissent. And, until **Audrey Callaghan** and **Cherie Blair**, none had careers of their own.

They came from a variety of backgrounds: some, such as **Emily Palmerston**, **Caroline Lamb**, **Catherine Gladstone** and **Dorothy Macmillan**, from the ruling classes. Two – **Clementine Churchill** and **Margot Asquith** – had aristocratic connections, while **Lucy Baldwin's** father was a scientist, **Mary Ann Disraeli's** was a junior naval officer and **Margaret Lloyd George's** a Welsh hill farmer. In terms of their marriages, some were secure, some wobbly and one actually broke down. In the case of **Clementine Churchill**, her marriage to **Winston** of fifty-seven years was a particularly remarkable achievement.

Mark Hichens examines these women – and one husband, **Denis Thatcher** – in the light of their personalities and achievements as well as the roles they have indirectly played in British history.

**'Prime ministerial consorts beware: a new book called *Prime Ministers' Wives – and One Husband* is coming and since the author has been working on it for ten years there should be no skeletons left unrattled.'** – *Independent*

**'Mark Hichens throws a great deal of light upon the wives (and in one case, husband) of those who have guided the political destiny of the country . . . He has wisely avoided the fictions of press cuttings and made a genuine attempt to get behind the public façade. He paints a sympathetic and convincing picture of Prime Ministers' spouses from Catherine Walpole to Cherie Blair.'**

– **Norma Major, *Mail on Sunday***

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