

Contents

List of illustrations	xvi
Acknowledgements	xviii
Prologue	1
1 The early years	9
The birthplace	9
Family tensions	11
Fun (or lack of it)	14
First school	17
Fatherly inspiration	19
Reflection	24
2 The war, grammar school and fighting her headmistress	27
Grantham at war	27
KGGS	31
Getting her own way	34
Reflection	38
3 Oxford, boyfriends and political ambition	40
Early unhappiness at Oxford	40
Stirrings of romance	44
Success in OUCA politics	47
Reflection	52
4 First steps in politics	54
Young Conservative	54
Mentored by Alfred Bossom MP	55

Young candidate	57
Three men on a string	61
The general election of 1950	63
Frustration, consolidation and engagement	65
Reflection	70
5 Marriage, motherhood and Finchley	71
Marriage	71
Motherhood	74
The bumpy road to Finchley	77
Elected	83
Reflection	85
6 First years in Parliament 1959–1964	87
The lucky legislator	87
Making her way in the House	94
Junior minister	98
In the constituency	101
Family life	103
Reflection	108
7 Front-bench opposition	109
Entering opposition	109
Iain Macleod's no. 2	113
Joining the shadow cabinet	116
Woody by the Americans, dismayed by the Soviets	118
Preparing for government	120
Reflection	124
8 Secretary of State for Education	126
First moves	126
Milk snatcher	131
Saved by the Prime Minister	134
Wider than education	137
Reflection	140

9 Heath on the ropes	142
The twilight of a Tory leader	142
The phoney war in the party	148
The rise and fall of Sir Keith Joseph	151
Reflection	154
10 Winning the leadership	156
Deciding to run	156
Toffs for Thatcher and other surprises	158
A deal with Edward du Cann	161
Enter Airey Neave	167
A stunning result on the first ballot	169
Reflection	174
11 Leader of the Opposition: a fragile beginning	176
Winning the final round	176
An uncertain start	178
Personal glimpses	186
Reflection	192
12 Three frustrating years	194
Party conferences and foreign visits	194
Outmanoeuvred by James Callaghan	198
New policies and philosophies	201
Reflection	209
13 Last lap to the election	211
The importance of the laughing boys	211
The winter of discontent	219
The vote of no confidence	222
Reflection	228
14 The final ascent to No. 10	229
Waiting before the off	229
Soft-centre campaigning	233

On the eve of power	237
Victory	243
Reflection	247
15 First moves as Prime Minister	248
Making a start	248
Handling her cabinet	252
Challenging the civil service	255
Reflection	259
16 The learning curve	261
Inside No. 10	261
Bridge builders and voices	266
Old Stripey and stubbornness	272
A favour for Rupert Murdoch	275
Personality traits on and off duty	277
Dog days on Islay	279
Reflection	281
17 First steps in foreign affairs	283
Learning from Lord Carrington	283
Rhodesia	289
Europe	291
A slow start to the Special Relationship	296
Reflection	297
18 Storm clouds on the economy and in the cabinet	300
The gathering storm	300
Outflanking Jim Prior	303
The courage of the 1981 Budget	308
The vulnerable Prime Minister	312
Blockbusted into reshuffling the cabinet	315
Reflection	319

7	19 The Falklands War I: the prelude	321
3	Sabotaging the leaseback option	321
7	Parliament's war	325
	Seeing off Haig	334
8	Reflection	341
8		
2	20 The Falklands War II: into the fighting	344
5	Military and political preparations	344
9	South Georgia, the <i>Belgrano</i> and the <i>Sheffield</i>	346
	More diplomatic wobbles	350
1	Reflection	358
1		
6	21 The Falklands War III: victory	359
2	The battle for the Falklands	359
5	Victory	367
7	Reflection	370
9		
1	22 After the Falklands	372
	The changing of the political landscape	372
3	The economy and the unions	376
3	The beginnings of privatisation	380
9	The suicide of the opposition	382
1	A landslide victory	386
6	Reflection	389
7		
	23 Stumbling into the second term	390
0	Cecil Parkinson and the Speaker	390
0	Other early glitches	395
3	Difficult problems	398
8	Her blue-eyed Chancellor	401
12	Reflection	404
15		
19	24 Terrorism, Ireland and Hong Kong	407
	Facing down terrorism	407
	The Anglo-Irish Agreement	415

Accepting reality in Hong Kong	420
Reflection	424
25 Batting for Britain in Saudi Arabia	426
The deal of the century	426
Fighting the French	427
The Denis back channel	429
Difficult hurdles to overcome	432
The motivation of the Prime Minister	435
Reflection	436
26 Unions and miners	439
Stepping stones towards solving the problem	439
Arthur Scargill's challenge	443
David Hart: her secret Blue Pimpernel	448
The NACODS crisis and the collapse of the strike	452
Losers but no victors	455
Reflection	458
27 Strengthening the Special Relationship with Ronald Reagan	460
The gold seam and the fault-line	460
The personal chemistry	462
Islands and tensions	465
The bombing of Libya	470
Reflection	473
28 Starting to win the Cold War	474
Why the Iron Lady was for turning	474
The Chequers overture to Mikhail Gorbachev	480
Bridge building between Moscow and Washington	485
Differences with Reagan over SDI and Reykjavik	488
Star performance in Moscow	493
Reflection	497

29	Rumblings of discontent	500
	Tensions with ministers	500
	Clashing with Heseltine	505
	The Westland crisis explodes	509
	That Bloody Woman	516
	Reflection	519
30	Into the third term	521
	Approaching the 1987 election	521
	Winning for the third time	523
	A bold but flawed beginning	529
	Life without Whitelaw	532
	Reflection	536
31	Trouble with Nigel Lawson	538
	Flashpoints of personality	538
	First clash over the ERM	540
	Shadowing the Deutschmark	542
	The boom or bust Budget	546
	Howe stirs the ERM dispute	550
	Reflection	552
32	Swinging towards Euroscepticism	555
	Always a doubter	555
	Diddled by the Single European Act (SEA)	557
	Disillusionment with Geoffrey Howe	561
	The Bruges speech	565
	Reflection	568
33	Boiling over on Europe	569
	The fall-out from Bruges	569
	High noon in Madrid	573
	The dismissal of Geoffrey Howe	576
	Reflection	579

34 Exit the Chancellor, enter the stalking horse	582
Trying to stabilise the government	582
The problem of Alan Walters	584
Lawson snaps	586
The stalking horse	589
Greater events	591
Reflection	595
35 Countdown to the coup	598
The invasion of Kuwait	598
The poison of the poll tax	602
Her last row on Europe	604
Howe prepares to strike	608
Reflection	614
36 End game	617
Howe goes for the jugular	617
Heseltine enters the ring	621
Peter Morrison's complacency	623
A hard day's night in Paris	628
Reflection	631
37 Exit	633
First soundings	633
The cabinet defects	636
A bravura farewell performance	642
The election of a new leader	645
Reflection	649
38 The agony after the fall	653
Trauma and tantrums	653
Travelling, speech-making and writing	656
Last months as a Member of Parliament	660
Sabotaging her successor	663
Reflection	667

39 Snapshots of her retirement years	668
Strategic ideas and personal conversations	668
Still batting for Britain	672
A break in the Highlands	675
Seventieth birthday	678
Finding her spiritual home	679
Epilogue	683
<i>Decline</i>	683
Fading out with dignity	688
Farewell	690
Bibliography	693
Principal sources	698
Notes describing sources	701
Index	749