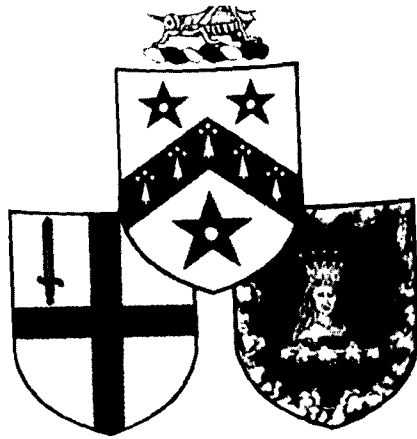


*G R E S H A M*  
*COLLEGE*



PREMIERSHIP

Lecture 9

‘COUNTRY VALUES’:  
ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME, 1963-64

by

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For me it was Alec Home's fellow Etonian and great rival for the premiership in 1963, Quintin Hogg, who best captured the man in a book he wrote just after the war when, given their then inevitable ultimate destinations in the House of Lords, neither could have imagined they would be contenders for the ultimate prize in British politics. In his celebrated 1947 Penguin, The Case for Conservatism, the still-to-be ennobled Mr Hogg declared:

'...Conservatives do not believe that political struggle is the most important thing in life...The simplest among them prefer fox-hunting – the wisest religion.'<sup>1</sup>

I have long thought that Alec Home preferred both – that in Quintin Hogg's terms, he was the essence of natural born Conservative Man, and, as such, a kind of talismanic figure as well as a transitional one in Toryism's long march from the Third Marquess of Salisbury to John Major, from the aristocratical to the democratical, to use the nineteenth century argot.

His colleague and friend, Lord Boyd-Carpenter, reckons that Alec Home, in his heart of hearts, believed that the guidance of British government was best and most safely entrusted to one or two disinterested landed families.<sup>2</sup> But not only did Home adjust to the social and political transformation that gave his party to Ted Heath, Margaret Thatcher and John Major, he was of direct and regular assistance, to the first two at least, by adding his special blue blooded seal of approval to them by his conspicuous loyalty and by his readiness, most autumns, to be wheeled on to the conference

platform just ahead of some tricky debate (on Rhodesia perhaps). His immense popularity and his personal dignity would raise both the cheers and the tone while lowering the temperature to the great advantage of the party managers.

There is a problem in dealing with Alec Home's premiership which lasted a mere 363 days. If Bonar Law, in Asquith's phrase, was 'The Unknown Prime Minister',<sup>3</sup> Home is probably the unremembered Prime Minister. That most affable of Labour left-wingers, Ian Mikardo, said as much, when I went to see him while preparing Alec Home's obituary for BBC Radio 4.

'I think,' said Mik, 'if you stopped, not the first hundred people you met in the street but the first ten thousand people you met in any street in any city in Britain and asked them, "Who was Alec Douglas-Home?" it would surprise me if you got an answer from even two or three of them.' Wasn't this a rather cruel verdict on a very decent man, I suggested? 'I wonder if he might be rather proud of it in a funny old way', Mik replied.<sup>4</sup> Strangely enough, I think he might. Certainly, when I once put it to him that he could be described as the most reluctant Prime Minister of the twentieth century, he let out one of his chuckling laughs and said: 'I'd be inclined to plead guilty to that. Yes, I think so. I was the most unexpected one, not only for myself but for other people.'<sup>5</sup>

It's over five years since I talked to Ian Mikardo so, this autumn, I market-tested once more Alec's trace on the template of memory. The focus group, as one might call it in the jargon of today's political marketing, consisted of two professors of modern history, two professorial wives plus a Frenchman who had been very high in the intelligence services of his country.

The conversation went like this:

PH: What flashes across your mind when I mention the name 'Alec Douglas-Home'?

Professor No.1: The only Prime Minister in the postwar period for whom, if he stopped me in the street and asked me to lend him a fiver as he'd left his money at home, I would have opened my wallet without hesitation.

Professor's wife No.1: The teacher in the Giles' cartoons. What was he called? Chalky!

Professor No.2: Matchsticks.

Professor's wife No.2: His being heckled at a political meeting in Bedford by a man offering to lend him his box of matches.

French intelligence officer: Who?

Professor No.1: The one who came between Macmillan and Wilson.

French Officer: Ah yes.<sup>6</sup>

Let us, as my Eng. Lit. colleagues say, deconstruct that conversational flow. It is quite laden with meaning.

First, an exceptional straightness in a politician and its reflection in a high level of trust. Secondly, the extraordinary appearance which did him no favours in an increasingly televisual political society in the early to mid-1960s. He really did look a bit like the cadaverous Chalky and in his memoirs he recorded a conversation with the young lady making him up before one of his early appearances on television as Prime Minister:

AH: Can you not make me look better than I do on television?

Make Up Lady: No.

AH: Why not?

MUL: Because you have a head like a skull.<sup>7</sup>

'So that was that,' Home mused philosophically. 'The best I could do for the cartoonist was my half-moon spectacles. Elizabeth [Lady Home] always said that they lost the 1964 election. So one cannot win'.<sup>8</sup>

What about the matchsticks? This is code for Home's lack of grounding in economics which contrasted strongly with Harold Wilson's familiarity with both the slide-rule and the techniques of economic management, a prowess which the Leader of the Opposition took every opportunity to flaunt. As Home told me nearly a quarter-of-a-century after leaving No.10, the matchstick phenomenon arose from a session with an Observer journalist whose speciality was long and charming but candid conversations with politicians:

'It was a purely chance remark at lunch because Kenneth Harris said to me "Do you think you could be Prime Minister?" And I said, "I really don't think so because I have to do my economics with matchsticks." But it stuck, of course...Harold Wilson wasn't going to miss something like that (another chuckle).'<sup>9</sup>

This was the early autumn of 1962, three months before press speculation began that the likely constitutional legislation, stimulated by Tony Benn's desire to disclaim his Stansgate Viscountcy,<sup>10</sup> might enable Home to renounce his peerage and emerge as Harold Macmillan's successor, speculation which, according to Richard Thorpe, his official biographer, concentrated Home's mind.<sup>11</sup>

Home suffered badly from hecklers in the 1964 election campaign. His Joint Party Chairman, Lord Blakenham, reckoned his rough handling in the Birmingham Rag Market on 8 October, a week before polling, (which was beamed nationwide on television) was the moment 'that support began to slide away from us.'<sup>12</sup> (The

Bedford speech, where the 'matchsticks' remark haunted him, was the occasion when he spoke for the sitting member in a marginal seat, Christopher Soames, whom he intended to replace the increasingly lethargic 'Rab' Butler<sup>13</sup> at the Foreign Office if the Conservatives won<sup>14</sup>).

The need round the lunch to explain to the former French intelligence officer who Home had been bears witness to his limited impact overseas, as PM at least (his twin spells at the Foreign Office 1960-63 and 1970-74 by contrast built up a considerable reputation in diplomatic circles abroad). But what should he be remembered for as Prime Minister apart from being the 'amiable Lord'<sup>15</sup>, as Clem Attlee called him, who briefly shot across the political landscape as a kind of tweedy blur?

A cricketer of skill and passion, he took over his team in highly unpromising circumstances. There was blood all over the dressing-room walls after the messy fight for the succession to Harold Macmillan. Two members of the First XI, Enoch Powell and Iain Macleod, had taken their bats home and refused to play under the new captain. The wicket was very sticky and in Harold Wilson you had a strike bowler whose effectiveness and hostility outstripped that of any postwar Opposition Leader. And since becoming the Fourteenth Earl of Home when his father died in 1951, the new premier had been playing on the benign wicket of the House of Lords. Not until he won the Kinross and West Perthshire by-election in late October 1963 and returned to the House of Commons did he realise how the intervening 22 years had coarsened its ways in what was already fast becoming the age of the professional politician rather than of the gentlemanly amateur.



This is not the place to reprise the mountain of detail and analysis we now have on the fight for the Conservative succession in 1963 when Macmillan, afflicted by his prostrate, announced his intention of shuffling finally from the stage just in time to inspire a feeding frenzy at the Party Conference in Blackpool when Home, by chance that year Chairman of the National Union, was required to read out the Prime Minister's letter of intent to the party representatives in Blackpool. But I do not think Macmillan usurped the Queen's prerogative of appointment in summing-up the party soundings in favour of Home when, having resigned from his sick bed on 18 October 1963, he offered a memorandum to Her Majesty on whom she might send for.

Some of the canvassing results produced by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Dilhorne, strike me as odd (Macleod could hardly be deemed a supporter of Home's, for example<sup>16</sup>). But Macmillan, having ceased to be her First Minister, was not giving formal 'Advice' with a capital 'A' which had to be acted upon; rather it was informal 'advice', with a lower case 'a' which the Queen could either have refused to hear or declined to act upon.<sup>17</sup> I do not believe with Ben Pimlott, that this was 'the biggest political misjudgment of her reign.'<sup>18</sup> Not to have accepted it, once given, would have been tantamount to saying her premier of six years was lying to his Monarch. And, after hearing of the meeting of possible recusants at Enoch Powell's house in South Eaton Place the night before, he suggested the Queen follow the precedent of 1852 (when Aberdeen accepted Victoria's commission to form an administration a day after it had been offered as he needed to ensure the services of Russell as Foreign Secretary if the coalition was to cohere<sup>19</sup>) by giving Home time to see if he could construct a Cabinet able to carry on the Queen's government.<sup>20</sup>

As Home well knew and as he made plain to Reggie Maudling, he (Maudling) Butler and Hailsham were the key recruits he needed. And, as Maudling put it in his memoirs: 'Alec formed an administration and as it was both the will of the Party and, on the whole, the logic of events that he should do so, the other three of us accepted his invitation to join him.'<sup>21</sup> It is significant, however, that Home believed that Macleod had lost the Conservatives the election a year later having penned his legendarily biting 'magic circle' account of the events of October 1963 in The Spectator in January 1964. (The afternoon Home ceased to be PM, Richard Thorpe recounts, 'he was seen to be pacing the drawing-room floor of Selwyn Lloyd's flat at Buckingham Gate, blaming the defeat on Macleod in language those who were present had not heard him use before.'<sup>22</sup>) Home also tacitly recognised the 'never again' feeling about the 'emergence' of Tory leaders after the 'customary processes of consultation', whether fixed by an alleged 'magic circle' of Etonians and anti-Butlentes or not. After the Conservatives lost office, he set in train the review which led to what was for the Tories the novel practice of electing a Leader with the Parliamentary Conservative Party alone comprising the electoral college<sup>23</sup> thereby diminishing, though not removing altogether, the Monarch's personal prerogative of appointing her First Minister.<sup>24</sup>

Where one has to be careful in dealing even with a man as transparently honest and honourable as Alec Home is in underestimating his ambition and his mettle. Macmiilan had caught the man when he told the Queen after returning from the Nassau Conference in December 1962 that 'Alec Home is steel painted as wood.'<sup>25</sup> For it was about this time, as we discover from Richard Thorpe's new official life, that Home,

stimulated by Tony Howard's perceptively predictive article in the New Statesman speculating on a Home or a Hailsham succession to Macmillan, sat down and contemplated the possibility seriously.<sup>26</sup> And, to this day, one can only sympathise with 'Rab' Butler when he felt the cold steel as he prepared to lunch with Home before standing up in front of the Conservative Party Conference as acting-Leader to make what needed to be the speech of his life (which, of course, it wasn't<sup>27</sup>) only to hear, as Butler recalled later, 'that he was going to see his doctor, which I took to mean he was a possible candidate for the leadership.'<sup>28</sup> Home's timing was perfect. It was as if he had waited for his chief rivals to eliminate themselves – Hailsham by seeming to succumb to a combination of hucksterism and overexuberance from the moment he announced to an overheated fringe meeting at Blackpool that he was renouncing his peerage<sup>29</sup> to 'Rab's' underwhelming performance in the Winter Gardens which cannot have been helped by the very recent knowledge of the calculating Earl's intentions.

For a long time I subscribed fully to the accidental premier theory. I was taken in by what I might call the Peter Thorneycroft view. Thorneycroft, rightly, I think, reckoned that in October 1963, the Tories, in choosing Home took 'the decision to be the Conservative Party',<sup>30</sup> Maudling made the same point when he wrote of the 'extraordinary affection' for Home among the rank-and-file of the party 'who regarded him as the sort of man they would like to be themselves: a good athlete; not brilliant but intelligent, a man of charm, integrity and balance.'<sup>31</sup>

'It's certainly true to say he had no enemies', Lord Thorneycroft told me many years later.

'He was, therefore, the natural compromise candidate. Anybody there, if they were asked "Would it be a disaster if Alec was Prime Minister?" would answer "No. It would not be a disaster." He wasn't a runner in the real sense of the term and he wasn't taking the trouble to make various announcements or pledges...He was just Alec, available as the Duke of Omnium and others have always been available, as aristocrats: perfectly happy to serve his country but equally happy to hunt a pack of hounds.'<sup>32</sup>

Shades of Hailsham's hunting-and-Holy Communion there, I think.

I suspect the Queen felt this way about him too. As one of her secretaries put it to Ben Pimlott, "'Rab" wasn't her cup of tea. When she got the advice to call Alec she thought "Thank God". She loved Alec – he was an old friend. They talked about dogs and shooting together. They were both Scottish landowners, the same sort of people, like old school friends.'<sup>33</sup> Lord Charteris properly went on to point out to Professor Pimlott that the Palace fully appreciated that the constitution prevails over personal preference: 'We all understood that Alec could not form a government unless "Rab" agreed to serve, and, if not, the Queen would have had to call for "Rab".'<sup>34</sup>

I supposed I succumbed finally to the Thorneycroft/HM Queen view in the Spring of 1989, when, waiting with my BBC producer for the taxi to take us from his Border home, the Hirsels, back to Berwick-upon-Tweed and the London train, Lord Home drew my attention to an exquisite magnolia flowering in the Hirsels gardens for the first time in 25 years. The conversation went like this:

PH: You love it here don't you?

LH: Yes

PH: You don't like being away from here do you?

LH: No.

PH: You never really wanted to be Prime Minister did you?

LH: Terrible intrusion in one's private life.<sup>35</sup>

I suspect it was a mixture of duty and ambition that caused him to throw his coronet in the ring in 1963 and, as he once said to me, of course you want to win an election when you've been devoting everything to it. In his last years, however, Home believed it would probably have been better if Butler had succeeded Macmillan as to most of the public he appeared the natural heir apparent.<sup>36</sup> Though Home gave me the impression when I talked to him in his last decade of life that "Rab" may well have lost the 1964 election due to his chronic indecision.

It is significant that, like many political observers, I have spent a good deal of time on the frantic days which led to Alec Home entering No.10 as I think he was both the nicest and the most surprising of the postwar incumbents. Yet the Home premiership

deserves attention for several other reasons even though the long election campaign was already upon him when he finally kissed hands on 19 October 1963 and 'all our policies had been put into place and...there was nothing to do'. as he put it to me in 1985.<sup>37</sup>

For a start there was, as it turned out, one big thing to do – to abolish resale price maintenance when, in the face of powerful Cabinet doubts, he backed Ted Heath in his determination to introduce real competition to the nation's shelves thereby triggering a retail revolution that changed the shopping habits of the country dramatically and irreversibly. This episode was very revealing of his Cabinet Room style – brisk, decisive and consistent once his mind was made up.

Heath, that most presidential of Presidents of the Board of Trade (only Cripps and Heseltine rival him in postwar incarnations of that office) was determined that market efficiency must prevail, whatever its impact on the naturally Conservative, open-all-hours corner shop vote. And, as Home told me many years later in the hypermarket era (though still himself a stranger to the supermarket trolley, I suspect): 'I happened to think that Ted Heath was right on that occasion so I backed him.'<sup>38</sup> On another occasion, while reiterating the correctness of Heath's economic analysis, Home admitted to me that it 'probably cost us seats at the general election'<sup>39</sup> (though the Nuffield anatomisers of the 1964 contest David Butler and Anthony King, found RPM 'figured hardly at all at the election.'<sup>40</sup>)

Politically, of course, it was a different question and one that even Heath, at his most grocer-like would not, I think, have raised in the run-up to a general election but for the coincidence of two private members' bills, one on RPM itself and the other on that backdoor anti-RPM device the Green Shield Stamp (how that little sticky number brings back that particular stage in the consumer history of what Macmillan described as 'this strange people, tortured by material success and affluence' when brooding, interestingly enough, on Home's qualities as a representative of 'the old, governing class at its best.'<sup>41</sup>)

Lord Hailsham especially has been critical of Home over the abolition of RPM as 'Alec allowed it to be forced through by tiny majorities [in the House of Commons] in advance of the election without mandate and without adequate consultation, in the false belief, engendered by one Cabinet Minister, but against the advice of more senior colleagues, that it was an election vote-winner instead of a certain loser.'<sup>42</sup>

It may be that Home believed he could have lost Heath if he, Home, had listened to doubters such as Hailsham, the Chief Whip, Martin Redmayne and the Leader of the House, Selwyn Lloyd.<sup>43</sup> And, with Powell and Macleod having refused to serve in October he could not risk losing another big-hitter from his Cabinet in an election year. When I put this possibility to Home in 1989 he didn't answer the question directly, though he did concede that the measure 'wasn't popular, particularly because...a majority of the Cabinet would rather it hadn't been pressed and certainly our majority in Parliament didn't like the Resale Price Maintenance Bill. But I happened to think it was right. And it wasn't far off an election and I thought we'd better settle it one way

or the other and go for it.<sup>44</sup> Lord Hailsham is certainly right, however, to contrast Home's sureness of touch on foreign affairs with his uncertainty on economic or domestic policy,<sup>45</sup> for all his grooming as Churchill's 'Minister for Drains' in the Scottish Office of the early 1950s.<sup>46</sup>

Quite apart from the Resale Price Maintenance case study, the fleeting premiership of Alec Home has other vignettes which repay attention from students of the top job. He could well lay claim to being, in terms of personal organisation, the most effective postwar premier since Attlee at combatting overload. It is no coincidence that Home and Attlee were the least media-conscious of the occupants of No.10 since 1945. For both of them cricket reports ranked above the political columns in the scale of newspaper importance. Harold Wilson thought Home 'was idle';<sup>47</sup> I think he was sensible and, unlike Wilson and his great contemporary, Sir Alf Ramsey of World Cup fame, Alec Home did not confuse 'work-rate' with effectiveness.

Home did not believe in overwork. He would take time out for the pleasures of the vase. He is without question, the most famous flower-arranger in British political history and there is a charming picture of him at work on the tulips and the daffodils on the back cover of Kenneth Young's 1970 biography.<sup>48</sup> He was careful with food and drink and developed the interesting habit of taking his meals at London times wherever he was in the world.<sup>49</sup>



No.10 was a courteous, stress-free place when the Homes lived there even though their heart lay in the Hirsell rather than in the famous little back- street off Whitehall.

As Alec Home's Principal Private Secretary, Sir Derek Mitchell put it:

He was extraordinarily kind and courteous. He had...a sort of aristocrat's genuine ease in sizing people up, making them comfortable and generally inspiring affection. People also liked the high degree of informality. The girls in the Garden Room liked the fact that there'd be a grandchild parked outside in a pram...And in the flat where he and Elizabeth almost camped out during the week, one saw the flowers that had been brought down from Scotland, the suitcase that lay on the floor, opened but not unpacked, ready for the lid to be closed again on Friday evening when they retired, with some obvious relief, back to the country where they liked to be.<sup>50</sup>

He really was the first thoroughbred countryman in Downing Street since Stanley Baldwin.

Yet there was a moderniser lurking beneath the hacking jacket. As he wrote in his memoirs, The Way the Wind Blows ('this book on fishing', as 'Rab' Butler rather wickedly put it<sup>51</sup>):

'I confess that I would like to have been given a bit longer at No.10 so as to get more grip on the machinery of government.

The keys to this are: short and precise paper-work; a chain of government committees each charged to take decisions, resulting in a Cabinet agenda which is cleared of all but the absolute essentials; Ministers who can be relied upon to insist on these rules....; and lastly a programme of legislation for Parliament which is not overloaded.<sup>52</sup>

He told me that had he won in 1964, he would have invited Enoch Powell to rejoin the Cabinet with a brief to reform Whitehall.<sup>53</sup> What a battle of the titans that would have been with two great national institutions locked in combat.

Home showed his pruning instinct to good effect when, newly arrived as Prime Minister, he trimmed the Cabinet committees he had inherited from Macmillan guided by Sir Burke Trend<sup>54</sup> (who, very privately, found the courteous and decisive Home the best of the four premiers he would work with as Cabinet Secretary<sup>55</sup>). Very sensibly, too, Home reacted to various hints of Wilson's plans for Whitehall reform by permitting the Leader of the Opposition to discuss such matters with permanent secretaries ahead of the election and they are known as the 'Douglas-Home Rules' discussions to this day.<sup>56</sup> (Though Home did not approve of what he called Wilson's 'abracadabra' idea for creating new ministries<sup>57</sup>).

In terms of the folk-memory of the Home premiership, Harold Wilson was and remains the problem. As Peter Clarke puts it simply and baldly in Hope and Glory, his fine study of twentieth century Britain: 'The twelve-month premiership of Sir Alec Douglas-Home in 1963-4 was dominated by Harold Wilson. No previous Leader of the

Opposition, without the authority of being an ex-Prime Minister himself, had enjoyed such an ascendancy.<sup>58</sup> The BBC's greatest ever satirical programme, That Was The Week That Was (which hurt Home, as he admitted in his memoirs<sup>59</sup>) summed up the election contest as 'Dull Alec' versus 'Smart Alec'<sup>60</sup> with some justification. Bill Deedes, Home's media minister, meant much the same thing in a minute written for the Conservative Party Chairman in February 1964 when he said of Home, 'He is in reality much more comparable to Attlee than Wilson. He is not a presidential candidate but a traditional parliamentary leader.'<sup>61</sup>

Home just missed blocking Wilson's allegedly presidential path to No.10 at the last moment. He lost by a whisker – the result was still in doubt on the Friday lunchtime and Derek Mitchell had had to draw-up a game plan for 'Deadlock' in the middle of the night between the polls closing and the final result becoming known.<sup>62</sup> But Home's near miss, perhaps inevitably, was seen as failure and, ever since, parties have looked for alleged telegenic qualities in their leaders – no more aristocrats, skulls or half-moon glasses.

How do I remember Alec Home? Above all for a very revealing memorandum about his personal political philosophy which he wrote over his one Christmas break as PM at the request of Sir Michael Fraser, the éminence grise of the Conservative Research Department. It was, quite simply, a paen of praise for country values – a warning about the future but also a kind of lament for a governing culture, a political landscape already almost gone.

The memorandum was suffused, too, with the melancholy of great powerdom diminished: 'We have shed a terrible lot of power but it is useless to cry over spilt milk' he wrote. Though this did not dissuade him from asserting an already delusory claim to continuing international influence ('...to carry weight we must be in the First XI and not only that but one of the 4 opening batsmen'<sup>63</sup>).

But the passages that resonate for me are the sections on old values: 'I went into politics', Home told Fraser, 'because I felt that it was a form of public service and that as nearly a generation of politicians had been cut down in the first war those who had anything to give in the way of leadership ought to do so.'<sup>64</sup>

He wondered if democracy would last ('touch and go', he thought). The problem of the 'British people' was that they 'decide by instinct rather than reason'. And it was the industrial masses' who presented the difficulty:

'People who live close to nature act by instinct reinforced by deduction. They are natural conservatives [small 'c' here] – slow thinkers but sound. They get pretty close to true values. It is the townspeople with few roots as yet who need constant leadership. It is, however, they, who have the votes which will sway the election decision.

'I took on the job of Prime Minister because throughout my political career I have done what I have been asked to do when I thought it was my duty. But a large part in my decision was the feeling that only by simple straight forward talk to the industrial masses could we hope to defeat the Socialists.'<sup>65</sup>

Just think what sport That Was The Week That Was would have had with this bit of paper had it leaked!

At a distance of 30-plus years, my reaction is rather different. He was the nicest and the last (Willie Whitelaw, possibly, excepted) of an admirable breed. He was like the very last of the steam locomotives which were on their final journies at exactly this time. Perhaps he was a kind of human Coronation Scot. Or more likely, given his country pursuits, he was Mallard pulling one last express from Kings Cross to Edinburgh and sounding its distinctive whistle in a plainative farewell as it crossed the Royal Border Bridge above the River Tweed at Berwick.

**'COUNTRY VALUES':  
ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME, 1963-64.**

**ENDNOTES.**

1. Quintin Hogg, The Case for Conservatism, (Penguin, 1947), p.10.
2. John Boyd-Carpenter,
3. Robert Blake, The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law 1858-1923, (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955).  
The remark which gave Robert Blake his title has been attributed to H.H. Asquith. He is supposed to have said this at Bonar Law's funeral at Westminster Abbey: "It is fitting that we should have buried the Unknown Prime Minister by the side of the Unknown Soldier." Ibid p.13.
4. Peter Hennessy, Muddling Through, Power, Politics and the Quality of Government in Post war Britain, (Gollancz, 1996), p.235.
5. Lord Home interviewed for the BBC Radio 3 Premiership series. Transmitted on 4 October 1989.
6. Private information.
7. Lord Home, The Way the Wind Blows: An Autobiography, (Collins, 1976), p.203.
8. Ibid.
9. Home, Premiership interview; see also D.R.Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, (Sinclair Stevenson, 1996), p.257. Home's exact words were: 'When I have to read economic documents, I have to have a box of matches and start moving them into position to simplify and illustrate the points to myself.' The Observer, 16 September 1962.
10. For this fascinating and interesting story see Tony Benn, Years of Hope: Diaries, Papers and Letters, 1940-1962, (Hutchinson, 1994), pp.356-42; Tony Benn, Out of the Wilderness, Diaries, 1963-67, (Hutchinson, 1987), pp.1-59.
11. Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, pp.260, 287, 289.
12. Home, The Way the Wind Blows, p.215.
13. For 'Rab's' lassitude see Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, p.350.
14. Ibid, p.365.
15. Hennessy, Muddling Through, p.236.
16. Robert Shepherd, Iain Macleod, A Biography, (Hutchinson, 1994), pp.325-7.
17. For the distinction between 'advice' with a capital 'A' and a lower case 'a' (a distinction made for me by a long-serving court official) See Peter Hennessy, The Hidden Wiring: Unearthing the British Constitution, (Indigo, 1996), pp.58, 68.
18. Ben Pimlott, The Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth II, (HarperCollins, 1996), p.335; for an opposite view of the Queen's actions in October 1963 see Vernon Bogdanor, The Monarchy and the Constitution, (OUP, 1995), pp.97-8.
19. Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, p.313.

20. Macmillan's memorandum to the Queen has never been published but Richard Thorpe's account contains all its essentials. Ibid, pp.313-4.
21. Reginald Maudling, Memoirs, (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), pp.129-30.
22. Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, p.344.
23. Ibid, pp.381-3.
24. For the remaining potency of the Queen's prerogative of appointment see Hennessy, The Hidden Wiring, pp.48-63.
25. Quoted by Richard Thorpe while delivering his paper on 'Alec Douglas-Home: The Underrated Prime Minister', to the Twentieth Century British History Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, 9 October 1996.
26. Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, p.289.
27. Anthony Howard, RAB: The Life of R.A. Butler, (Cape, 1987), pp.313-4.
28. Lord Butler, The Art of Memory, (Hodder, 1982), p.109.
29. Macmillan was graphic on this aspect of Hailsham's character in the early draft of the memorandum he prepared for the Queen. Public Record Office, PREM 11/5008.
30. Hennessy, Muddling Through, p.238.
31. Maudling, Memoirs, p.130.
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