

Acknowledgements

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During the writing of this book, my teacher, mentor, and colleague Vincent Newey passed away. *Wordsworth After War* is dedicated to his memory and to the memory of my dad, Keith Shaw, who told me stories, taught me to write, and gave me books. As ever, I could not end these notes of gratitude without paying tribute to my wife, Sarah Knight: 'In ours, the Vale of Friendship'. The Knight and Shaw families, *ex toto*, are my rock.

I began *Wordsworth After War* in the winter of 2019–2020. Work on the book continued during the COVID-19 pandemic and was brought to completion when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Months later, like most people, I struggle to comprehend these events and wonder just what can be said, with any exactitude, about their long-term effects. This feeling of bewilderment is perhaps a reminder that there is no such thing as a time 'after war', or if there is, then it is not for us. I hope, nevertheless, that readers will find some comfort in this book, which attempts haltingly and against the odds to make time for peace.