



THE BARBARA CASTLE CABINET DIARIES : collection description

Special Collections, J.B. Priestley Library

Reference code

GB 0532 CAS

Title

The Barbara Castle Cabinet Diaries

Dates

1965-1976

Level of description

Fonds

Extent

7 boxes

Name of creator

Barbara Castle, politician, 1910-2002

Administrative/biographical history

Barbara Anne Betts was born in Chesterfield in 1910. Her father, a civil servant, was a member of the Independent Labour Party and became a contributor to the ILP journal, *The Bradford Pioneer*, which he later edited. Barbara was educated at Bradford Girls' Grammar School and St Hugh's College, Oxford. A left-wing member of the Labour Party, Castle was one of the founders of *Tribune*, the socialist weekly. In the 1945 General Election Barbara Castle (she had married Ted Castle, a journalist, in 1944) was elected M.P. for Blackburn, a seat that she retained for 34 years. Following the Labour victory in 1964, Prime Minister Harold Wilson put Castle in charge of the newly-created Ministry of Overseas Development.

“I decided on 26 January that I ought to start keeping a regular record of what was happening” : begun in January 1965, she maintained this political diary throughout her periods in office. Her success at this Ministry was recognised and she was made Minister of Transport in 1965, where she was responsible for the introduction of breathalysers, compulsory seat belts and national speed limits. In 1968 Castle became Secretary of State for Employment : she worked on equal pay legislation, redundancy payments, and on prices and incomes policy. Much of this was received favourably, but the partial implementation of the 1969 white paper on industrial relations, *In Place of Strife*, brought conflict with the trades unions and from within the Labour Party.

Labour lost power in the General Election of 1970 but returned to government in 1974. Castle was made Secretary of State for Social Services, and in this post she introduced payment of child benefit to mothers and worked on the State Earnings Related Pensions Scheme. Her attempt to equalise services in the National Health Service with abolition of pay beds met with considerable opposition, and legislation was still in process when Harold Wilson resigned as prime minister in 1976. His successor, James Callaghan, dropped Castle from the cabinet, ostensibly on the grounds of age.

Castle was a Member of the European Parliament from 1979 to 1989. In 1990 she entered the House of Lords as Baroness Castle of Blackburn. She continued to campaign on a range of issues, particularly on pension rights. She died on the 3rd May 2002.

Immediate source of acquisition

This archive was bequeathed to the University Library by Barbara Castle and was received in January 2003.

Scope and content

- The Cabinet diaries : typed by Barbara Castle from her shorthand notes, covering the periods January 1965-March 1971 and January 1974-April 1976.
- Transcripts : typed transcripts of the originals.
- Photocopies : photocopies of some of the originals and some of the transcripts, marked for editing and publication.
- “The Bradford Pioneer” : bound volume for 1925.

Access conditions

Available to researchers, by appointment. Access to archive material is subject to preservation requirements and must also conform to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act and any other appropriate legislation.

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permission to make published use of any material should be directed to the Special Collections Librarian in the first instance. The Library will assist where possible with identifying copyright owners but responsibility for ensuring copyright clearance rests with the user of the material.

Language of material

English. Some shorthand.

Finding aids

Unpublished handlist.

Existence of copies

This collection includes transcripts of the original diaries, photocopies of parts of the originals and photocopies of parts of the transcripts.

Related units of description

It is understood that a collection of Barbara Castle's personal and literary papers has been left to the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford.

Publication note

These papers were used by Barbara Castle for her publications *The Castle diaries 1974-76* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), *The Castle diaries 1964-70* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984) and her autobiography *Fighting all the way* (London: MacMillan, 1993).

Archivist's note

Described by John Brooker

Rules or conventions

ISAD(G) 2nd ed.

Date(s) of description

17 January 2003

Indexing

Persons

Castle, Barbara, 1910-2002

Subjects

Great Britain – Politics and government – 1964-

Stateswomen – Great Britain – Biography

Special Collections
J.B. Priestley Library
University of Bradford
Bradford. BD7 1DP.

E-mail: special-collections@bradford.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0) 1274 235256

Fax: +44 (0) 1274 233398

Web site: <http://www.bradford.ac.uk/library/special>

For further information, see the web page for this Archive:

<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/library/special/castle.php>