

**U DX399**

**Papers of Barbara Canham Turner**

**1936-1945**

**Accession number:** 2018/05

**Biographical Background:**

Barbara Canham Turner was born on 16 October 1921 at 11 Dryden Street, Hull, to parents Frank and Annie Turner. Her father was the grandson of the well-known, Drifffield-based engraver and printer Benjamin Fawcett (1808-1893). She was born with a form of cerebral palsy that affected her speech development and co-ordination.

She initially attended a private primary school, before continuing her education at Malet Lambert secondary school. Her aim was to study at Oxford University. However, a failure to provide suitable adjustments during her final exams in consideration of her medical conditions, meant that she did not achieve the grades required to apply for a State Scholarship. Instead, she attended Hull University College between 1939 and 1942, graduating with a First in English. She was also awarded several prizes during her studies. These prizes were often books, one of which can be found in this collection at U DX399/1. Her studies at Hull were followed by a few years at St Hilda's College Oxford working towards a B. Litt. This was awarded on 3 March 1945 for the thesis 'The Polite Novel after Jane Austen' (U DX399/2).

Barbara then took a job at the British Council in central London. She looked after the Council's supply of periodicals, journals and books, progressing through her career to become Head of Periodicals and later Assistant Director of the Libraries Department. She retired in 1981 and moved in with her parents at Ickenham near Ruislip, where they had moved following her father's own retirement. She never married or had any children, preferring to pursue her vast range of hobbies and interests including music, travel, history, opera, ballet, art and literature. She travelled widely, enjoying trips to India, China, Egypt, the USA, Spain, Italy, Austria, France and Switzerland. Her friend Peter Dunlevy, writing after her death, described her personality: "Barbara had a natural interest and enthusiasm for people. She was both generous with her time and hungry for stimulating company. Intensely private yet perceptive, she was also modest and self-deprecating, with a finely honed sense of humour. Despite her handicap, she was a confident, self-assured and resilient woman devoted to her interests and hobbies."

Barbara lived with her parents until 1982 and later bought a flat in Pinkerton Place in South London. Whilst living there, she corresponded with the typographer Ruari McLean concerning his biography of her great-grandfather, the engraver Benjamin Fawcett. The biography was published in 1988, followed by a second volume in 1992.

In 2012, following a long stay in hospital, Barbara reluctantly left her flat and moved to Sunrise of Banstead residential home, Surrey, where she became a popular resident. Her health worsened in the summer of 2015 and in early October she was diagnosed with inoperable stomach cancer. Barbara Turner died at St Helier Hospital, Carshalton on 21 October 2015. She was cremated and her ashes interred in Hillingdon Cemetery, West London next to her parents.

Barbara left a significant financial bequest to the University of Hull in her will. This money was used to support various projects, including the refurbishment of Staff House, which was renamed Canham Turner in her honour.

**Custodial history:**

Thesis and prize deposited via Development office (27 Jan 2018) and diaries from Peter Dunlevy (29 May 2018).

**Description:**

This small collection contains a copy of Barbara Canham Turner's B.Litt thesis entitled 'The Polite Novel After Jane Austen', a book awarded as the Senate Prize to Barbara Canham Turner (1941), and four handwritten diaries. The diaries contain notes relating to her daily life in Hull, her time as a student at Malet Lambert Secondary School and later at University College Hull, family holidays, and her experiences of the Second World War.

**Extent:** 6 items

**Access conditions:**

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX399/1	Senate Prize awarded to Barbara Canham Turner Includes a published copy of 'The Poetical Works of John Keats' edited by H. Buxton Forman, awarded as the Senate Prize (1941-1942) to Barbara Canham Turner by the University College of Hull. 1 volume	1941
U DX399/2	Thesis by Barbara Canham Turner Includes a typed copy of a thesis entitled 'The Polite Novel After Jane Austen' submitted for the Degree of B. Litt. by Barbara Canham Turner, St Hilda's College Oxford. 1 volume	1945
U DX399/3	Diary Includes a diary containing handwritten notes by Barbara Canham Turner relating to her daily life in Hull, her time as a student at Malet Lambert Secondary School, and her concerns about an impending war. Transcriptions of the diaries (copyright Peter Dunlevy) are available in the Hull History Centre Search Room. 1 volume	8 Jun 1938-4 Apr 1939

Hull History Centre: Papers of Barbara Canham Turner

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| U DX399/4 | <p>Diary<br/>Includes a diary containing handwritten notes by Barbara Canham Turner relating to her daily life in Hull, her experience of the Second World War, and her time as a student at Malet Lambert Secondary School and University College Hull. Transcriptions of the diaries (copyright Peter Dunlevy) are available in the Hull History Centre Search Room.<br/>1 volume</p>   | 5 Apr 1939-<br>21 Jul 1940  |
| U DX399/5 | <p>Diary<br/>Includes a diary containing handwritten notes by Barbara Canham Turner relating to a family holiday in Oxford, preparations for war, evacuation from Hull and daily life in Hull. Transcriptions of the diaries (copyright Peter Dunlevy) are available in the Hull History Centre Search Room.<br/>1 volume</p>   | 12 Aug 1939-<br>28 Sep 1939 |
| U DX399/6 | <p>Diary<br/>Includes a diary containing handwritten notes by Barbara Canham Turner relating to daily life in Hull (1941-1942), her experience of the Second World War and her time as a student at University College Hull, with some earlier notes relating to various amusing anecdotes (1936-1938), and a programme for a symphony concert by the London Philharmonic Orchestra at Hull City Hall (20 Jan 1938). Transcriptions of the diaries (copyright Peter Dunlevy) are available in the Hull History Centre Search Room.<br/>1 volume</p> | 1936-19 Sep<br>1942         |