



## The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990

*Tony Benn , Ruth Winstone (Editor)*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

## The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990

*Tony Benn , Ruth Winstone (Editor)*

**The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990** Tony Benn , Ruth Winstone (Editor)

The Benn Diaries, embracing the years 1940-1990, are already established as a uniquely authoritative, fascinating and readable record of political life. The selected highlights that form this single-volume edition include the most notable events, arguments and personal reflections throughout Benn's long and remarkable career as a leading politician.

The narrative starts with Benn as a schoolboy and takes the reader through his youthful wartime experiences as a trainee pilot, his nervous excitement as a new MP during Clement Atlee's premiership and the tribulations of Labour in the 1950s, when the Conservatives were in firm control. It ends with the Tories again in power, but on the eve of Margaret Thatcher's fall, while Tony Benn is on a mission to Baghdad before the impending Gulf War.

Over the span of fifty years, the public and private turmoil in British and world politics is recorded as Benn himself moves from wartime service to become the baby of the House, Cabinet Minister, and finally the Commons' most senior Labour Member.

### The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990 Details

Date : Published September 5th 2005 by Arrow (first published 1995)

ISBN : 9780099634119

Author : Tony Benn , Ruth Winstone (Editor)

Format : Paperback 720 pages

Genre : Politics, Biography, History, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir

 [Download The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990 ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990 Tony Benn , Ruth Winstone (Editor)**

---

## From Reader Review The Benn Diaries, 1940-1990 for online ebook

### **Kc says**

Fascinating insight into post war politics and the man himself.

---

### **Rod says**

Found the diaries to be pretty dry, not salacious and exciting like the Alan Clark diaries - he was the real life Alan B'stard. Nevertheless, Benn reveals the machinations of inner government in and out of power, he must be admired as a man of principle who always stood up for the working man and stood by his words and beliefs.

---

### **Alex Torres says**

This is the first of the Benn diaries that I have read. On its strength, I will endeavour to read reminiscences of his early life and the later (unabridged) diaries. His style is easy enough to read to suggest that the unabridged diaries will be enjoyable.

---

### **Scott says**

I thought it was a great insight to the machinations of political parties in and out of Government. Also the divides still there today within the Labour party and Jeremy Corbyn gets a mention.

---

### **Frankie\_14\_87 says**

Great insight from one of Britain's great Socialist MPs

---

### **Stephen says**

#### **A life recorded**

Not as good as the individual diaries, but a good read. A review of the major part of Tony Benn's life. I didn't like Benn or what I presumed was his politics. In later years I have appreciated his writings and recognize that his views were misrepresented in the press. This book gives you an idea of how he arrived at his positions.

---

## **Trawets says**

Tony Benn's diaries 1940-90 has been my "bathroom book" for quite a while, not sure I could have read it continually, but bit by bit has been fascinating. It is very much politician's diary with many national and indeed international events getting barely a mention, while some cabinet meetings or party conferences being covered in detail.

I've enjoyed Tony Benn's company in my bathroom over the past few months but I shall a break before reading his next book of diaries, and invite Matthew Parris, one time Tory MP and parliamentary sketch writer to join me in the "smallest room".

---

## **Roger Cottrell says**

That's more like it. Real Labour rather than New Labour. What must Tony (who once tried to talk me into becoming a politician) and Ralph Milliband think of their respective sons?

---

## **Steven Langdon says**

Tony Benn, the irrepressible Labour Party Cabinet minister, MP and anti-war leader, died last month (March 2014) at 88. This sad event pushed me to read this one volume version of his famous diary, covering 40 years as an MP at the heart of British and European politics.

The diary is a remarkable achievement on many levels. Such a longterm perspective provides striking insights into the personalities and philosophies of core Labour Party leaders such as Harold Wilson, Jim Callaghan, Michael Foot and Barbara Castle. The changing focus of cabinet foreign concerns over the years also reveals the gradual reorientation of the UK to the European Community.

The greatest insights, though, are into Benn's own evolution as a political leader. By some halfway through the volume Benn notes how undefined and middle-of-the-road his thinking had been when he was first a minister in the 1964-70 Wilson government. It was only later that he became more strengthened in socialist views, especially through his fights for more public ownership as Minister of Industry in 1974-76 and his increased ties with shop floor militants fighting to save various facilities. One of the most fascinating points that emerges: Benn has never read any Marx until his wife gives him The Communist Manifesto as a Christmas present in 1976 when he is 51! Benn becomes a left wing leader based on the fierceness of his democratic instincts, it becomes clear, and on the strong emotional ties that he builds with those under assault in Britain such as the miners.

As a former MP myself in Canada's counterpart to the Labour Party, Benn's description of life on the left in Parliament recalled so much for me. Battles within the party are so common, with opponents often taking such strong views; it takes a wise and thoughtful leader to work effectively in such a context. Links between trade unions and the parliamentary party often break down. Meanwhile different events and crises just keep flying at you with bewildering speed and you have to shift to react. And, of course, there is always an unpredictable often careless media there to misinterpret your actions.

Tony Benn was often a target of that media in the UK. He wore his heart on his sleeve too often for the cynics. He was often emotional rather than tactically shrewd. But over the years his integrity shone, he fought battles that matter and he stayed true. This diary is a fine reminder of the caring and compassion with

which he lived.

---

### **Simon Ward says**

I finished this book, but was irritated both with Tony Benn and what he didn't achieve. Many will admire him for sticking to his principles, I just felt that he achieved very little in what he actually believed in. I also feel that he didn't actually engage with many of the people he took it on himself to represent, even when they didn't want him to. He comes across to me as self absorbed and a true politico, I.e. one who loves the game, and sticks by his guns. But for all the many causes he aligned himself with, very few actually succeeded. An absorbing book, but if he had spent more time on working for change than recording his very important part in political life, he might have actually been something rather than a large footnote in post war political life.

---

### **Lukrezia Cosimo says**

Disappointed when I realised I'd bought an abridged version. For the rest, it got better and better as I got closer to the times I remembered well. Topically, it was interesting to read what Jeremy Corbyn (and Dennis Skinner) were doing in the Eighties. Both then as principled as they are now.

---

### **Don says**

Although I suspect vainglory as a motive for publishing ones diaries; I have to say that old Wedgie certainly can write. Hugely enjoyable read for those with a bit of familiarity with the post-war British political scene (and even those without it).

---