

This be the verse...



A GUIDE TO PHILIP LARKIN COLLECTIONS  
AT HULL HISTORY CENTRE

# In this guide...

This is a guide to Philip Larkin related collections held at Hull History Centre. It is arranged thematically according to key aspects of Larkin's life and interests. A bibliographical list of all Larkin related collections is provided at the end of the guide for quick reference.

The following themes are covered:

- Student years (pp.3-4)
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- Photography (pp.7-8)
- All what jazz (pp.9-10)
- The librarian (pp.11-12)
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- Self image (pp.21-22)



Larkin at Pearson Park flat, c.1957-1958 [U DLV/3/93]



Larkin, taken whilst on holiday, c.1957-1958 [U DLV/3/93]

*'And the widening river's  
slow presence,  
The piled gold clouds,  
the shining gull-marked  
mud...'*

*PAL, Here*



Birthday card, James Sutton to Larkin, 1942 [U DPL2/3/63/36]

## Bio:

Name Philip Arthur Larkin  
Occupation Poet and Librarian  
Born Coventry, 9 August 1922  
Died Hull, 2 December 1985

## Larkin and Hull...

Philip Arthur Larkin, the renowned poet and librarian, moved to Hull in 1955.

Aged 32, he was appointed to the post of Librarian at the University of Hull. He held this position until his death in 1985, not yet having reached his retirement. Larkin spent more than half his lifetime in the city, though his association with the region actually began before he moved to Hull.

In 1954, the Marvell Press of Hessle published his poem 'Toads' in the poetry magazine 'Listen'. 'Toads' would become one of Larkin's most well-known and best loved poems. It was Marvell Press again who, in October 1955, were responsible for publishing 'The Less Deceived', a collection of poetry that was instrumental in building Larkin's reputation as one of the most significant poets of the 20th century.



Larkin, self portrait, taken at 32 Pearson Park, 1957 [U DLV/3/47]

Hull is the only place in the world where Larkin students and scholars have such a unique opportunity to study the man in his own words.

Upon his death, Larkin's surviving archive was deposited with the University of Hull, where he had spent most of his working life. Further material was added to the collection following the death of Larkin's long-term partner, Monica Jones. Subsequently, Hull University Archives has sought to acquire any at risk material, such as correspondence between Larkin and various acquaintances, in order to enhance and develop the collection. In addition, the University Library has been responsible for creating possibly the most comprehensive reference collection of works ever compiled by and about Larkin.

# Student years...



Larkin spent his school years in Coventry before moving to Oxford for University.

Between 1930 and 1940, he attended King Henry VIII School in Coventry, first as a school student and then as a sixth-former. During this time, he wrote for the school newspaper, developed close friendships with James Sutton and Colin Gunner, and participated in a trip to Brussels in April 1939. After a promising academic start, Larkin's grades began to reflect that most of his time and effort was focused on his favoured subjects of History and English.

Larkin, Wellington Square, Oxford, 1943 [U DLV/2/1/24]

In 1940, he received a scholarship to study English Literature and Language at St John's College, Oxford University.

He arrived at St John's in October 1940 and was assigned Gavin Bone as an academic tutor. During his time at Oxford, he became acquainted with, amongst others, Norman Illes, Kingsley Amis, Bruce Montgomery and Diana Gollancz. Whilst many of his contemporaries were called up during World War II, Larkin was rejected for military service on medical grounds, and was able to complete his degree uninterrupted. He graduated in 1943 with a first-class degree.

## Education:

King Henry VIII School, Coventry (1930-1940)  
St John's College, Oxford University (1940-1943)

Larkin's school results  
[U DPL2/3/63]

NAME.	
Larkin	
A	ENG. LAN.
C	ENG. LIT.
C	HIST.
	GEOG.
E	FRENCH.
	GREEK.
D	LATIN.
D	MATHS.
E	PHYSICS.
E	CHEM.
	ART.



Oxford friends outside St John's College, 1942  
[U DLV/2/1/5]

## Spotlight on...

Oxford journal, 1940-1943  
[U DPL/4/3]

So it all came to an end. I had a medical exam and an eye-test, and term finished. Everybody -that is, Norman, Philip, Nick, and Kingsley- gave me a Bessie Smith record each, which touched me more deeply than I showed. I was staying on till Christmas, firewatching, and I saw Philip and Norman off. They missed the first train and we hung about waiting for the next, eating a Welsh rarebit and coffee in a snack bar in George Street. The parting was one of the most harrowing things I had to go through, and I returned blindly to college in the December gloom, to play a record or two before dinner.

A bright spot at Christmas was Jim, who was luckily stationed near Oxford, and who came in illegally for Christmas and Boxing Day. We tried to be drunk continuously, and nearly were. On Christmas morning after breakfast I remember fetching a dozen bottles from the Buttery to tide us over till the pubs opened. On Boxing night he in particular became fearfully drunk and I got him into college with the greatest difficulty. There were college festivities, of course, dinner and music, but I consigned those to the realms of Shitedom, except the dinner, when I tried to talk intelligently about the Collee architecture with a don's wife. I returned home about the day after.

On New Year's Day I received my hideous letter marked O.H.M.S. in bed. It informed me that my medical category was IV. Never have I, except at the news of the Munich agreement, felt ~~more~~ relieved.

Extract from Larkin's Oxford journal, 1943 [U DPL/4/3]

In October 1943, having completed his degree, Larkin sat down to write an account of his time at Oxford.

Extending to fifteen pages, the account covers the whole period, from taking an entrance exam in March 1940, to celebrating with friends upon completing his degree in July 1943.

It is a valuable resource allowing researchers to understand his experiences during these formative years of his life.

## Relevant material:

- [U DPL174] Letters from Larkin to James Sutton, includes references to school teachers and time at Oxford
- [U DPL2/1/2/7] Diary covering the period 1936-1937, whilst still at school
- [U DPL2/3/63] Bundle of papers relating to progress at school and in Oxford
- [U DPL2/1/1/11] Letter relating to Oxford entrance exam
- [U DPL2/1/1/12] Typescript 'Story I', being a piece about college life, written whilst at Oxford
- [U DPL2/1/4/6] Press cuttings concerning King Henry VIII School
- [U DLN/6] Letters from Larkin to family whilst at King Henry VIII School and St John's College, Oxford

**'I am now a Sixth-Form 'man' plus honours plus glory plus a locker plus a blasted place on the Rugger second team which I don't want.'**

PAL, Letter to Pop and Mop, 21 Sep 1938



# Photography...

Larkin was a keen and skilled amateur photographer. His approach to photography seems akin to that of his writing. Having shown an interest in photography from a young age, Larkin was encouraged and given a camera to use by his father. He took to the hobby with enthusiasm and, in a 1947 letter to his friend Jim Sutton, he mentions having bought himself his own camera.

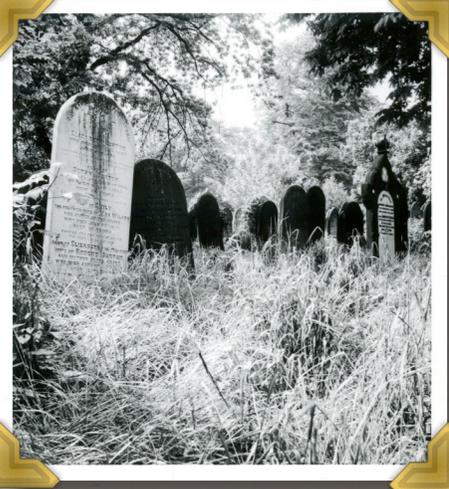


Self-portrait, Hull University Library site, 1960s [U DLV/3/82]



Larkin photographing his sister, taken by their father, c.1930s [U DLNV/4/2]

Spring Bank Cemetery, Hull, c.1960s [U DLNV/4/2]



His photographs skilfully capture the experience of everyday life according to fundamental principles of photographic composition.

His subjects often include self-portraits, rural landscapes, church yards, and the friends, family and women in his life.



Earliest known photograph taken by Larkin, 1930s [U DLV/3/1/1]

## Relevant material:

- [U DMA] Monica Jones Collection, including photographs taken by and of Larkin, 1940s-1980s
- [U DLN/4] Photographs within the Larkin Family Collection, including some taken by Larkin and many of Larkin

## Spotlight on...

### Photographic collection of Philip Larkin, 20th cent.

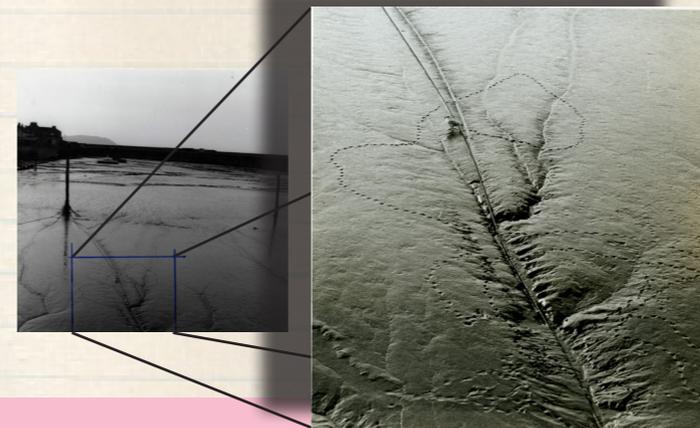
[U DLV]

The collection contains photographic negatives and prints, mostly taken by Larkin. Images record his time at Oxford, family and friends, the women in his life, day trips and holidays, and his working life and colleagues.

Timer delayed photograph of Larkin and Monica Jones on holiday, possibly in Northumberland, 1960s [U DLV/2/5/42]



The surviving negatives and prints also provide us with evidence that Larkin marked up his own photographs for cropping, editing and enlargement, and it is common to find pencil or pen markings showing framed sections of an image which he had selected.



Original photograph [U DLV/3/91/4] and enlarged print [U DLV/2/5/32], taken along the banks of the River Humber and showing the famous 'gull-marked mud' which inspired the poem 'Here'



Self-portrait of Larkin, taken using a mirror, 1947 [U DLV/2/2/12]

## Cameras:

- ◇ First camera, a Houghton-Butcher Ensign Carbine No.5, given by his father
- ◇ Purchased a Purma Special with accessories in 1947
- ◇ Famously used a Rolleiflex from the late 1950s

# All what jazz...

One more breakfast gone the way of all breakfasts. I heard two Artie Shaw sides yesterday - "Deep Purple" and "Beguine the Beguine" (or something like that). The band strikes me as being a very good commercial band. That brass team packs a drive to lift the roof-hot, but hot! I still like Shaw's clarinet, but the band seems to lack soloists. One day you must hear one of their records.

By the way, Francis Whitty's tenor solo on "He's a Different Type of Guy" is strictly jive, uh? Same goes for Kelly's bit as well.

I bought "Rhythm"...hope you haven't. If you have, just skip the next bit.

Basie ("Rockabye, Basie")...lot of muted trpt. (1) ("Baby, don't tell on me")...blues..piano chs.. two trpt chrses...riffs..three blues complete by rushing. (2) ("Lark Capture")...blues..Young..good tune ("Don't You Miss your Baby")... blues..Basie..Clayton.. rushing..ensemble&trpt.

He likes both and praises everyone. Not a single carp. (Shall we have to shell out six bob?)

Red Mackenzie & the Lound Cy. Blue Blowers.

Red Mackenzie...Blue blower. Al Morgan....bass  
P-W Russell....Clarinet. Erupa.....drums  
Hawkins.....tenor. Jack Bland....guitar  
Glenn Miller...trbne. Condon....banjo

November 1929.

(Fisby, huh? No trumpet or piano.)  
"One Hour"...rhapsodic..Haw..led..Russel in Tesch  
"Hello Lola"...exciting..Russell & Hawk v.good.  
tradition..Miller.

"You must buy it, of course!"  
Pause for laughter. Somehow the combo doesn't entice me much.

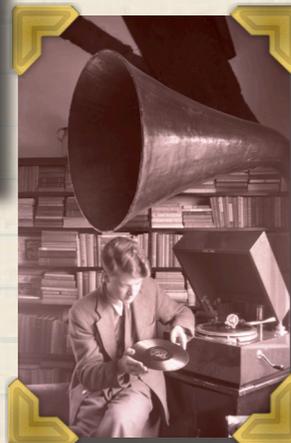
Louis. "West End Blues"...the usual Hibbs blurbs.  
"If It's Good...."

Extract from a letter written by Larkin to James Sutton, 6 Sep 1939 [U DP174/2/8]

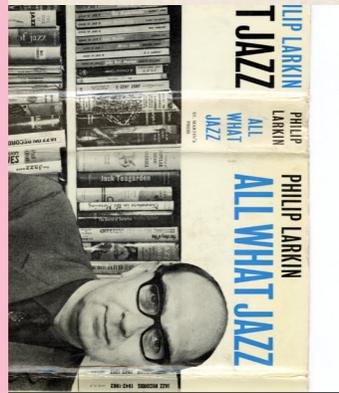
Photograph of Kingsley Amis taken by Larkin, c.1942 [U DLV/3/25]

Jazz music was a passion for Larkin throughout his lifetime. His father had encouraged his son's interest as a small boy, subscribing to Downbeat magazine on his behalf.

One of the earliest archival references to this interest can be found in a letter written by Larkin to his childhood friend Jim Sutton in August 1938. The pair corresponded regularly in their youth, discussing their favourite artists, tracks and latest record purchases. Larkin particularly rated the artists Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet



Front cover of 'All What Jazz', written by Larkin and published in 1970



## Music facts:

A number of Larkin's poems have been set to music by the composer Bryan Blyth Daubney.

Additionally, Larkin was commissioned to write lyrics for a piece titled 'Bridge for the Living' to mark the opening of the Humber Bridge.

and Count Basie. His correspondence with various acquaintances often touches on the subject of jazz, and there are several anecdotes indicating that he was happy to converse with University of Hull colleagues and students on the subject, providing opinions and recommendations.

During the 1960s he wrote regular jazz reviews for The Telegraph, which were later collated into a book by Larkin, 'All What Jazz: A Record Diary, 1961-1968'. The book was well received and extensively reviewed. Material relating to the writing, publication and reception of the book can be found within surviving archival material held at Hull.



## Relevant material:

- [U DP174/2] Letters from Larkin to James Sutton, many discussing records and artists [see particularly U DP174/2/1-3, 6-8, 20, 24-26, 28, 33, 35, 38, 40, 43, 44, 51, 52, 54, 58, 67, 69, 72, 74, 77, 84-85, 93-94, 97, 104, 110, 119, 122-123, 219, 222]
- [U DP182] Letters from James Sutton to Larkin, many discussing records and artists [see particularly U DP182/1/1, 6, 13, 16, 17, 34, 36, 41, 54, 63, 68, 75, 80, U DP182/2/24, U DP182/3/3]
- [U DPL/1/3/27, 34, 51] Manuscript drafts of the poem 'For Sidney Bechet'
- [U PLRC/1/42-48] Published editions of 'All What Jazz: a record diary 1961-1968'
- [U DPL2/1/3/10] Typescript essay and two poems 'The Art of Jazz', written by Larkin
- [U DP190] Letters from Larkin to John White, many discussing jazz [see particularly U DP190/1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9]
- [U DP193] Correspondence between Larkin and A.T. Tolley, some discussing jazz [see particularly U DP193/1-2, 12]
- [U DP194] Letters from Philip Larkin to Michael Shera discussing jazz
- [U DX358] Sheet music by Bryan Blyth Daubney (lyrics taken from poems by Larkin)
- [U DPL/1/8/21] Manuscript drafts of 'Bridge for the Living' lyrics by Larkin
- There are numerous references to jazz within the Papers of Philip Arthur Larkin [search U DPL using the keyword 'jazz']

## Spotlight on...

### Record collection of Philip Larkin, 20th cent.

The collection contains vinyl records purchased and gifted to Larkin during his lifetime. An index is available onsite at the History Centre.



Selection of records from Larkin's personal record library

Artists represented include Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, The Beatles, Sidney Bechet, Duke Ellington, Johnny Hodges, Billie Holiday, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Fats Waller and Bessie Smith, amongst many others. There also appear to be records that were given to Larkin for reviewing purposes.

*'On me your voice falls as they say love should,  
Like an enormous yes'  
PAL, For Sidney Bechet*

# Librarianship...

As well as being a poet, Larkin was a professional librarian. His working life famously inspired his poetry, resulting in poems such as 'Toads' and 'Toads Revisted'.

In March 1955, Larkin started working as Librarian for the University College of Hull (later University of Hull). He spent the majority of his working life in this role and was responsible for, huge changes and forward motion at the University.



Larkin and his secretary Betty Mackereth in his office at Hull, c.1942 [U DLV/2/5/17]



Larkin selecting wallpaper for the new University of Hull Library, c.1959 [U DLV/2/5/17]

Under his leadership, the library grew from a small operation in a series of makeshift spaces, to a purpose built and sector leading academic library. By collaborating with academic colleagues, he helped establish the University as a repository for internationally significant archives. As a member of the University's Senate, he steered governance of the University, and he served as Chairman of the University's Bookshop Committee, helping to establish the first campus bookshop.

Prior to Hull, his first job after graduation was as Librarian at Wellington Public Library in Shropshire. In 1946 he began work as the Assistant Librarian (issues and periodicals) at the University College of Leicester. During his time at Leicester, he was studying for a professional qualification in librarianship, which he completed in 1949, becoming an Associate of the Library Association. After Leicester, he was appointed to the post of Sub-Librarian at Queens University, Belfast, and was responsible for the supervision of 18 members of staff.

## Employment record:

- ◇ Wellington Public Library, Librarian (Nov 1943-Aug 1946)
- ◇ University College of Leicester, Assistant Librarian (Sep 1946-Sep 1950)
- ◇ Queens University Belfast, Sub-Librarian (Oct 1950-Mar 1955)
- ◇ University of Hull, Librarian (Mar 1955-1985)

## Spotlight on...

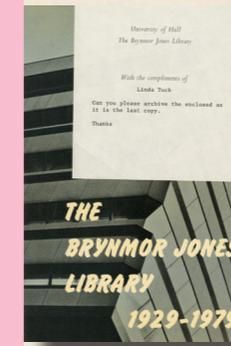
Brynmor Jones Library Archive,  
20th cent. [U LIB]

### Relevant material:

- U PHO - University of Hull Photographic Collection, 1928-present. Includes images of Larkin, library staff and library redevelopment under Larkin.
- U PLRC - Pamphlet written by Philip Larkin, 'The Brynmor Jones Library, 1929-1979: a short account'
- U PHR/1/292 - University of Hull personnel file for Philip Arthur Larkin, 1954-1985 [U PHR/1/292]
- U DJS/2/1/70 - Correspondence between John Saville and Philip Arthur Larkin, 15 Mar 1956-18 Oct 1999
- U DP174 - Letters of Philip Larkin to Jim Sutton, c.1938-1952. Includes periods at Wellington, Leicester and Belfast.
- U DPL2/3/93 - File. Wellington Public Library, 1944-1946
- U DPL2/1/4/19 - Manuscript pages from Philip Larkin's Wellington Journal no.6, 1943-1946
- U DLV/2/5/10 and U DLV/3/23-24 - Photographs relating to Larkin's time at Wellington, 1943-1946
- U DLV/2/2/11, 12, 16, 33, 35 - Photographs relating to Larkin's time at Leicester, 1948-1950
- U DLV/3/32, 36, 84, 89 - Photographs relating to Larkin's time at Queens University, Belfast, 1950-1953
- U DPL2/1/56/37 - Article relating to Queens University Belfast in The Literary Supplement 84, 'The library I came to' by Philip Larkin, Feb 1984



Caricature self-portrait of Larkin [U LIB/7/30]



Pamphlet written by Larkin, 1979 [U LIB/8/35]

*shall have to begin whisking round again like a dutiful creature. It's been monstrously hot in the Temporary Library - wooden huts - and my movements have been very slow and measured, very dignified and monumental.*

Extract from letter, Larkin to his mother, sent from Belfast, 1952 [U DLN/1952/52]

*'How little our careers express what lies in us, and yet how much time they take up. It's sad, really'*  
PAL, Letter to Monica Jones

The collections contains administrative records created by staff working at the University Library in Hull. Records include correspondence and subject files created by Larkin during his time as librarian. Items within this collection give us a unique perspective on Larkin's professional life and his interactions with colleagues.

# Family life...



Cartoon drawn by Larkin depicting a 'typical' evening in the Larkin household, 1939 [U DP174/2/8]

Larkin claimed his own childhood, and his parents relationship, as reasons why he chose not to marry and have children. However, his early years appear to have been happy and his letters show he held great affection for his family.

He was a very dutiful son, writing regularly to his parents whilst his father was alive, and then to his mother following Sydney's death.

Although, in letters to Monica Jones, he professed frustration that his mother was not more independent following her husband's death.

## Family:

- ◇ Mother - Eva Larkin (nee Day), born 10 Jan 1886, died 17 Nov 1977 aged 91, considered becoming a librarian but instead became a teacher for a short time
- ◇ Father - Sydney Larkin, born 25 Apr 1884, died 1948 aged 63, City Treasurer of Coventry (1922 to 1944)
- ◇ Sister - Catherine 'Kitty' Hewett (nee Larkin), born Aug 1912, died 1992, Teacher (Art), one child (Rosemary) with husband Walter Hewett

Born on 22 August 1922 to Eva and Sydney Larkin, Larkin was the younger of two children. His sister Catherine, also known as Kitty, was ten years older than him. Throughout his childhood and school years the family lived in Coventry. Larkin often refers to his home life and family relationships in letters written to childhood friends, particularly when writing to his school friend James Sutton.



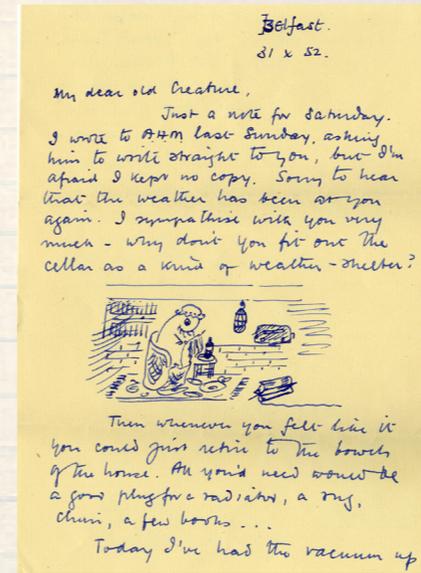
Larkin and his mother Eva, c.1957-1958 [U DLV/3/93]

## Spotlight on...

### Records of the Larkin Family, 1890-1983 [U DLN]

The collection contains correspondence, photographs, and other family papers relating to the Larkin family, predominantly Eva, Sydney, Kitty and Philip. Amongst the correspondence are many letters written by Larkin to various members of his family.

In these letters, he refers to his father as 'Pop', whilst his mother is styled 'Mop' or 'Old Creature'.



Letter written by Larkin to his mother from Belfast, 1952 [U DLN/1952/86]



Sidney and Eva Larkin reading in the garden, 1940s [U DLN/4/1]

Larkin with his sister Kitty and mother Eva at the seaside, c.1920s [U DLN/4/2]



As well as news of his health and everyday life, Larkin often includes small doodles, designed to amuse his mother, in which he depicts both Eva and himself as cartoon seals.

The collection also includes a series of Sidney's diaries, covering the period 1933-1943 and providing details of family holidays.

## Relevant material:

- [U DP174] Letters from Larkin to James Sutton, includes references to Larkin's homelife.
- [U DLV] Photographs of Philip Larkin, 20th cent. Includes photographic prints and negatives showing Larkin family members.

**'Man hands on misery to man. It deepens like a coastal shelf. Get out as early as you can, And don't have any kids yourself'**

PAL, This be the verse

# Friendships...

Larkin's earliest recorded friendships began at King Henry VIII School, Coventry, where he met Colin Gunner and James Sutton.

His friendship with Sutton was based on shared interests, whilst Gunner allowed Larkin to express his more mischievous side.

At Oxford, Larkin became friends with Norman Illes, Kingsley Amis, Philip Brown, Mervyn Russell, Graham Parkes, David Williams, James Wilcox, Edward du Cann, Nick Russell, Frank Dixon and Dick Kinder. Some of the friends formed 'The Seven', a literary group and dinner society. Larkin and Amis developed a friendship which lasted a lifetime.



Kingsley Amis  
[U DLV/3/3/10]

It was also in Oxford that Larkin met Bruce Montgomery, who became another close friend. The pair met up regularly for drinking sessions whilst Larkin was working at Wellington and Montgomery was living in Shrewsbury.

During his working life, Larkin became friendly with several couples, including Colin and Patsy Strang in Belfast, and

George and Jean Hartley, who lived in Hesse and were responsible for establishing the Marvell Press. Larkin and George had originally met whilst studying in Oxford.

In later years, Larkin also developed friendships with the poets Douglas Dunn, Anthony Thwaite, and Andrew Motion, the historian and poet Robert Conquest, and the librarian Brenda Moon.



Bruce Montgomery [U DLV/2/5/10]



The Three Poets, Douglas Dunn, Andrew Motion and Larkin at Hull, c.1980s [U PHO/A4634]

## Relevant material:

- [U DDD] Douglas Eaglesham Dunn Collection, 1967-1996
- [U DJE] Jean Hartley Collection, 1916-2011
- [U DX353] Brenda Little Collection, 1957-2011
- [U DX376] Janet Carby-Hall Collection, 1960s
- [U DX257] Correspondence. Larkin and Brenda Moon, 1962-1985
- [U DP207] Correspondence. Larkin and Andrew Motion, 1978-1985
- [U DP177] Letters. Larkin and Douglas Dunn to Ted Tarling, 1970-1997
- [U DP181] Correspondence. Larkin and Anthony Thwaite, 1958-1985
- [U DP214] Letters. Larkin and Stevie Smith to Anthony and Ann Thwaite, 1955-1983
- [U DX354] Letters. Larkin to Campbell Burnap, 1975-2003
- [U DP176] Letters. Larkin to John Norton-Smith, 1964-[1985]
- [U DX370] Letters. Larkin and Roger Bowen, 1975-1976

- [U DX290] Letters. Larkin to Ken Eborall, 1979-1985
- [U DX274] Correspondence. Larkin and Bath University Librarians, 1970-1983
- [U DX261] Correspondence between Larkin and Arthur Davies, 1977-1982
- [U DX213] Letters. Larkin to Barry Bloomfield, 1946-1985
- [U DX204] Letters. Larkin to Professor Bruce Martin, 1976-1978
- [U DX252] Letter. Larkin to Mrs Constance Saville, 1956
- [U DX203] Letter. Larkin to Lawrence Lerner, 1956
- [U DX193] Correspondence. Larkin and Janice Rossen, 1976-1985
- [U DX176] Letters. Larkin to Kenneth Hibbert, 1933-1985
- [U DP199] Letter. Larkin to G.G. Hough, 1956
- [U DP198] Letters. Larkin and Gavin Ewart, 1963-1984
- [U DP194] Letters from Larkin to Michael Shera, 1977-1979
- [U DP193] Correspondence. A.T. Tolley and Larkin, 1981-1986
- [U DP190] Letters. Larkin to John White, 1983-1985
- [U DX92] Correspondence. Larkin and Roger McGough, 1974-1983
- [U DP179] Correspondence. Larkin and Colin Gunner, 1939-1990
- [U DX335] Correspondence. Joan Bakewell and Larkin, 1984
- [U DX291] Letters. Larkin to Norman Staveley, 1978-1985

## Spotlight on...

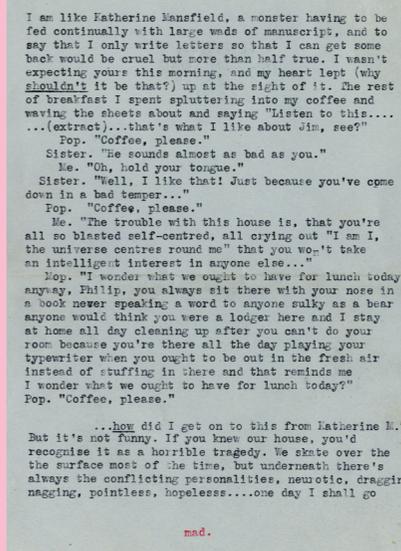
### Correspondence of Larkin and James Sutton, 1939-1985 [U DP174 & U DP182]

These two collections contain letters sent between Larkin and Sutton, largely in the period 1938-1952. The letters are a great resource for examining Larkin's formative years at home, school and university, as well as his early career years.

James Sutton in Army uniform, c.1943 [U DLV/2/1/16]  
Larkin to Sutton, 16 Aug 1943 [U DP174/2/74]



Larkin and Sutton often discussed home life, books, jazz, friends, and their creative endeavours. As working life took over in the early 1950s, their correspondence dwindled.



**'I have no enemies. But my friends don't like me'**

PAL

Larkin to Sutton, 1940 [U DP174/2/9]

# Relationships...

## Ruth Bowman

Shortly after starting work at Wellington Library, Larkin met 16-year-old Ruth Bowman. She was a regular borrower who wished to study English. Their relationship continued at a distance when Larkin moved to Leicester in 1946 and they became engaged in 1948. However, when Larkin moved to Belfast for work in 1950 Ruth declined to go and ended their engagement.

Ruth Bowman, 1947 [U DLV/3/8/17]



## Patsy Strang

In Belfast, Larkin met Colin Strang, a lecturer in Philosophy at Queens University, and his wife Patsy. Larkin and Patsy began an affair in 1951.



Patsy Strang and Larkin, 1952 [U DLV/3/35]

The Strangs' marriage ended in 1954 and Patsy moved to Paris, where she soon received an offer of marriage. She wrote to inform Larkin, saying that she would refuse the offer and return to him in Belfast. He wrote back advising her to accept the proposal, shortly before moving to Hull.

## Relevant material:

- [U DLV] Photographs of Bowman [2/1/22, 25; 3/7; 3/8/5, 3/17-20; 3/11/7, 14; 3/19, 21, 27, 86, 89, 257]
- [U DP174/2 - 132, 134, 154, 175-178, 180, 184, 186, 196, 199-203, 208, 210] Letters. Larkin to James Sutton references to Bowman
- [U DPL2/1/4/12] Hotel bills. Larkin and Bowman, 1941
- [U DPL2/1/4/19] Pages from Larkin's Wellington journal, references to Bowman, 1940s
- [U DPL4/5/5] Correspondence. Larkin and Bowman, 1954-1985
- [U DP182/1/45, 55, 58, 60, 64, 66-68] Letters. James Sutton to Larkin, references to Bowman
- [U DJE/1/19/5] Letters. Ruth Siverns (nee Bowman) to Jean Hartley, 2003-2004
- [U DPL3/1/3] Letters. Hilly Amis to Larkin, references to Bowman, 1947-1965
- [U DLN/2/4] Letter. Bowman to Eva Larkin on the death of Sydney Larkin, 1948

## Relevant material:

- [U DLV] Photographs of Strang [3/29, 30, 35-36, 54, 77, 172]
- [U DPL3/1/3] Letters. Hilly Amis to Larkin, reference to Strang, 1947-1965
- [U DPL3/1/6] Letters. Bruce Montgomery to Larkin, reference to Strang, 1956-1960
- [U DPL3/1/22/28] Letter. Hilly Shackleton Baily (formerly Amis) to Larkin, reference to Patsy Murphy (formerly Strang), 1969
- [U DX382/48 and 55] Letters. Winifred Bradshaw to Larkin, reference to Strang, 1976

## Spotlight on...

### Monica Jones Collection 1940s-1990s [U DMA]

Jones and Larkin in Sark, 1960s [U DLV/2/5/6]



Monica Jones, c.1947 [U DMA]

The collection includes letters and cards sent between Larkin and Jones, receipts and miscellaneous items documenting their lives, photographs, Jones' correspondence with others, and papers relating to Larkin's estate.

## Monica Jones

Whilst still with Ruth Bowman, Larkin met Monica Jones, who became arguably the biggest female influence in his life. She graduated with a First in English from Oxford in the same year as Larkin. She was a lecturer at Leicester University College (1946-1981), and it was here they first met in autumn 1946.

Theirs was a union of independently-minded individuals which lasted a lifetime. Though never marrying or living together until Larkin's final years, the pair travelled the UK and corresponded frequently. In his letters he often depicted Monica as a rabbit. The letters also reveal that Larkin frequently sought her opinion on his poetry drafts.

## Relevant material:

- [U DLV] Photographs of Jones [1/16, 19, 22-23, 25; 2/1/30; 2/2/14; 2/4/5-6, 10, 12, 15, 31, 37; 2/5/1, 3-6, 13, 19, 26-27, 38, 42, 45, 48, 51, 54-55, 57, 59; 2/6/1-3; 3/3/2, 15; 3/11/12; 3/19, 22, 24, 27-29, 33-34, 36-37, 39, 41-42, 44-45, 47, 49, 52-53, 55, 59, 60, 63, 65-66, 69, 72, 75, 79, 81, 83, 85-86, 88-89, 96-97, 99, 103-128, 130-131, 133, 135, 137-138, 140-141, 143-144, 147, 150-153, 156-159, 162-169, 171, 173-175, 178-181, 184-189, 192, 194-196, 199, 202-205, 209-216, 218-221, 223-225, 227, 230-232, 237-241, 243-246, 248, 256, 260-267, 269-270]
- [U DX341] Letters. Larkin to Jones
- [U DJE/4/6/4] Articles and obituaries re Jones and her relationship with Larkin
- [U DLN/5/8] Letter. Jones to Catherine Larkin, c.1970
- [U DP179/1/30] Letter. Larkin to Colin Gummer, reference to Jones, 1984
- [U DP181] Letters. Larkin to Anthony Thwaite, references to Jones, 1970s-1980s [1/73, 78, 89, 116, 124, 127-129, 136, 138, 140; 2/14, 24]
- [U DP182/3/4-7] Correspondence. Larkin and James Sutton, references to Jones, 1980s
- [U DP190/1, 6] Letters. Larkin to John White, references to Jones, 1983
- [U DP207] Letters. Larkin to Andrew Motion, references to Jones, 1982-1985 [18-19, 23-26, 32, 34, 63, 72]
- [U DPL/9/5] Photographs of Jones, early 1950s
- [U DPL4/1] Holiday diaries of Larkin and Jones
- [U DPL2] Includes material relating to Jones [1/4/11; 2/3/12, 14; 3/28/12; 3/103/3]
- [U DPL3] Includes material relating to Jones [1/3, 5-6, 10, 14, 16; 1/22/28; 1/23/6, 13; 4/1; 6/1]
- [U DPL4] Includes material relating to Jones [8/8, 20-21, 28, 31-51, 56]

# Relationships...

## Relevant material:

- [U DLV] Photographs of Arnott [3/3/11; 3/79]
- [U DPL/1/3/8, 14 and 28] Manuscript drafts of Larkin's poem 'Lines on a young lady's photograph album', inspired by Arnott, 1953
- [U DX382] Papers of Winifred Dawson (nee Arnott), includes letters to Larkin, photo album referenced in poem, 1945-1990
- [U DX402] Portrait of Arnott by Inge Bachrich, 1950
- [U DX382/34] Letter. Arnott to Larkin, 1958
- [U DJE/1/19/2] Letters. Arnott to Jean Hartley, 1997-2005
- [U DPL4/5/21] Letter. Dawson to Larkin, c.1984-1985
- [U DX342/14] Transcripts of an interview with Dawson for Oxford TV show 'Larkin', 2003

## Relevant material:

- [U DLV] Photographs of Mackereth [2/4/13-14, 19-21, 28, 36; 2/5/17, 23; 3/3, 144, 197, 211, 217, 226, 236, 242, 256, 260]
- [U DX372] Betty Mackereth Collection, 1957-2010. Includes correspondence with Larkin, rough sketches by Larkin, and an untitled manuscript poem by Larkin
- [U LIB/2/257] Includes photographs of Mackereth during filming of the BBC Monitor programme, 1964
- [U LIB/3/3] Memo. Larkin to his 'Super-Secretary', 1962
- [U LIB/7/16] Self-portrait of Mackereth, 1963
- [U DP179/1/27] Letter. Larkin to Colin Gunner, reference to Mackereth, 1984
- [U DP181/2/15] Letter. Larkin to Anthony Thwaite, reference to Mackereth, 1974
- [U DP207/31] Letter. Larkin to Andrew Motion, reference to Mackereth, 1969
- [U DPL2/2/3/13] Postcard from Mackereth to Larkin, 1969
- [U DPL4/8/30] Larkin's wallet with photograph of Mackereth

## Winifred Arnott

Whilst in Belfast Larkin also entered into a flirtatious friendship with Winifred Arnott (later Bradford then Dawson), but she soon became engaged to another man.

Winifred is the inspiration for his poems 'Lines on a young lady's photograph album' and 'Maiden name'.



Winifred Arnott, c.1956-1958  
[U DLV/3/79]



Betty Mackereth in Larkin's office at Hull [U DLV/2/5/23]

## Betty Mackereth

In March 1975, Larkin began a relationship with his long-term secretary Betty Mackereth. Their relationship was erratic and petered out when Monica Jones moved to Hull in 1983. Betty knew of both Monica and Maeve. The poem 'We met at the end of the party' was written to her. In his letters to her, Larkin often depicts Betty as a whale.

## Spotlight on...

### Maeve Brennan Collection, 1960-2003

#### [U DMB]

The collection contains papers relating to the life of Maeve Brennan, particularly her relationship with Larkin. Papers include Brennan's personal diaries and correspondence with Larkin, as well as copies of letters from Larkin to Monica Jones and others, material relating to his work for the University Library at Hull, and audio-visual material relating to Larkin. The collection also contains material relating to the Philip Larkin Society and its journal 'About Larkin', correspondence relating to the acquisition of the Larkin and James Sutton correspondence, and scripts, correspondence and other papers relating to the television programmes 'Love Again' and 'Love and Death in Hull'.

Maeve Brennan, 1960s [U DLV/3/269]



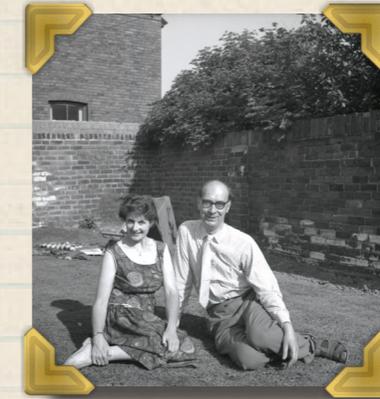
## Maeve Brennan

Maeve was working at the University Library in Hull when Larkin arrived in 1955.

They began a friendship which developed into a physical relationship 1961-1971. Both Maeve and Monica Jones knew of each other.

Their relationship was rekindled in 1974 and by 1977 was all but over again. Larkin dedicated the poem 'Broadcast' to her, and an unfinished poem, 'The dance', was written about an evening spent together. In his letters to her, Larkin often depicts Maeve as a mouse.

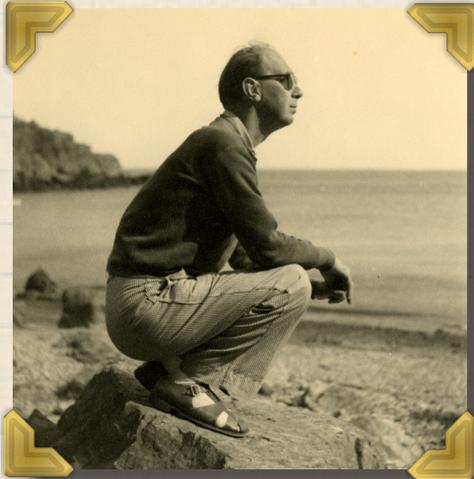
Brennan and Larkin, 1960s  
[U DLV/3/145]



## Relevant material:

- [U DLV] Photographs of Brennan [2/4/1, 3-4, 28; 2/5/11, 12, 16, 18, 22, 24, 40, 46, 47; 3/3/6-7, 9, 12; 3/97, 106, 115, 118-119, 122, 131-132, 136, 139, 145-148, 182-183, 193, 198, 200-201, 234, 263, 269]
- [U DLV/3/3/14] Note. Brennan to Larkin
- [U LIB/7/16] Library staff self-portraits, including one of Brennan, 1963
- [U DJE/1/3] Correspondence, typescripts for 'The Philip Larkin I Knew' and other papers re Brennan
- [U DJE/4/1/1] Letters. Brennan to Jean Hartley, 1992-1999
- [U DJE/4/1/2] Letter. Brennan to Ben Brown re the script for 'Larkin with Women', 1999
- [U DJE/4/1/5] Notes written by Brennan for an interview about her relationship with Larkin, 1990s
- [U DPL3/4/2] Card. Brennan to Larkin, congratulations on receipt of Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, 1965

# Self-image...



Self portrait, Larkin in Sark, c.1961 [U DLV/2/5/49]

raucous and competitive friendship. His letters to his mother Eva, who struggled with mental health issues, are filled with attempts to buoy her up and news of his life. His letters to Monica Jones are honest, often brutally so, reflecting the frankness of their relationship.

To the outside world, he cultivated a reserved, curmudgeonly and intellectual persona, perhaps as a way of deflecting the attention that came with his success as a poet. However, anecdotes provided by his former colleagues and users of the University Library at Hull show him to have been genial, capable of compassion for and interest in others, helpful, and conscientious in his professional work.

## Fact:

Larkin left one instruction regarding his papers; that, following his death, his diaries be destroyed.

Much has been made in the scholarship surrounding Larkin of his self-representation.

As a letter writer, he was selective in what he chose to write to the people in his life, carefully creating curated versions of himself that he felt comfortable sharing with a given person, and which it seems he believed the other person needed to see. For instance, his letters to childhood friend James Sutton are deeper and more self-analytical than those written to Kingsley

Amis, with whom he shared a more

raucous and competitive friendship. His letters to his mother Eva, who struggled with mental health issues, are filled with attempts to buoy her up and news of his life. His letters to Monica Jones are honest, often brutally so, reflecting the frankness of their relationship.

Photographs of Larkin, 1940s-1970s [U DLV]



The new Common Room: Colin & Patsy brought - at long last - the steaks & kidney pudding, & I had prepared potatoes, sprouts, & carrots: also purchased a doz. stout. We did not really want to go to the Common Room, but we did, & really it was very enjoyable, with plenty of drink & company, & really I quite enjoyed it. Then the Strangs & the Morrisons - Clare & Archie - came back to here: it was a "mix-hue", for the Strangs are v. English & the Morrisons v. Irish, but to my delight it was quite successful & as I say lasted his 2 without boring anyone, as far as I could see. I feel a very social & adept creature! Needless to say I feel a bit flat today, & a bit doleful about my future, & life, & all the rest of it.

Letter, Larkin to his mother, 1952 [U DLN/1952/18]  
Letter, Larkin to Anthony Thwaite, 8 Jan 1974 [U DP181/1/67]



Funny anecdote. I am now, at the request of the Library Committee, Curator of the to-be-formed Philip Larkin Collection. So if you want to flog your letters, name yr price. There will then be an inexplicable fire... I don't reckon I'll let them have much.

**'When getting my nose in a book cured most things short of school, It was worth ruining my eyes To know I could still keep cool, And deal out the old right hook To dirty dogs twice my size'**  
PAL, A study of reading habits

## Relevant material:

- [U DX341/18] Cutting of interview with Larkin, printed in 'Torchlight', University of Hull, 23 Feb 1961
- [U DPL2/3/78/1] Proofs of interview. 'A Conversation with Philip Larkin' by Neil Powell, printed in 'Tracks', University of Warwick, 1967
- [U DPL2/2/9/123] Correspondence and draft typescript re interview by Frances Hill for the 'Times Educational Supplement', Mar-May 1972
- [U DPL/6/2] Interview. 'A sharp - edged view: Francis Hill talks to Philip Larkin', printed in the 'Times Educational Supplement', 19 May 1972
- [U DPL/6/3] Interview. 'Poet who captures the music of daily life' by Douglas Oliver, in the 'Coventry Evening Telegraph', 6 Oct 1972
- [U DPL/6/4] Photocopied typescript with annotations of an interview by Miriam Gross, 'A voice for our time' in 'The Observer', Nov 1979
- [U DPL2/3/65/10] Proofs for interview by Miriam Gross to appear in 'The Observer', 1979
- [U DPL2/1/56/29] Press cutting of interview. 'A voice for our times' by Miriam Gross, published in the 'Observer Review', 16 Dec 1979
- [U DPL2/2/10/59] Correspondence and typescript copy re interview John Haffenden, Dec 1979-Jan 1980
- [U DPL2/2/19/2] Correspondence, list of questions and typescript answers re interview for 'The Paris Review', Nov 1981-Jan 1982
- [U DPL2/1/56/32] Interview. 'Philip Larkin talks to Eboracum' in 'Eboracum' no.10, 1982
- [U DPL2/2/22/69] Letters, typescript and press cutting re interview in 'The Sunday Express', Aug 1984
- [U DPL2/1/2/7] Diary, 1936-1937
- [U DLV] Photographs taken by Larkin, including many self-portraits, c.1940s-1970s

# Bibliography...

To search the catalogue visit  
<https://catalogue.hullhistorycentre.org.uk>

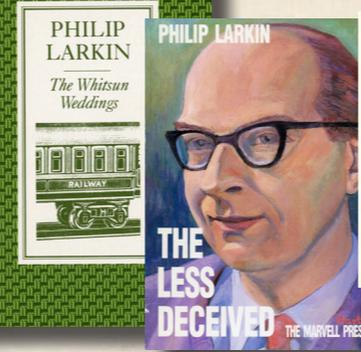
The following is a comprehensive list of material referred to in this source guide.

It is arranged alphabetically by reference number to allow you to easily search for further descriptions using our online catalogue.

- U DAT Anthony Thwaite as Larkin's literary executor, 1985-2012
- U DDD Douglas Eaglesham Dunn Collection, 1967-1996
- U DJE Jean Hartley Collection, 1916-2011
- U DJS/2/1/70 File. Correspondence between Larkin and John Saville, 1956-1980s
- U DLN Larkin Family Archive
- U DLV Photographic Archive of Philip Arthur Larkin, 20th cent.
- U DMA Records of Monica Jones, 1940s-1990s
- U DMB Maeve Brennan Collection, 1960-2003
- U LIB Administrative Records of the University Library
- U DP174 Letters. Philip Arthur Larkin to James Ballard Sutton, c.1938-1952
- U DP176 Letters. Philip Larkin to John Norton-Smith, 1964-1985
- U DP177 Letters. Philip Larkin and Douglas Dunn to Ted Tarling, 1970-1997
- U DP179 Correspondence. Philip Larkin and Colin Gunner, 1939-1985
- U DP181 Correspondence. Philip Arthur Larkin and Anthony Thwaite, 1958-1985
- U DP182 Letters. James Ballard Sutton to Philip Arthur Larkin, 1938-1985
- U DP190 Letters. Philip Larkin to John White, 1983-1985
- U DP193 Correspondence. A.T. Tolley and Philip Larkin, 1981-1986
- U DP194 Letters from Philip Larkin to Michael Shera, 1977-1979
- U DP193 Correspondence Larkin to A.T. Tolley
- U DP194 Letters from Larkin to Michael Shera
- U DP198 Letters. Philip Larkin and Gavin Ewart, 1963-1984
- U DP199 Letter. Philip Larkin to G.G. Hough, 1956
- U DP207 Correspondence. Philip Larkin and Andrew Motion, 1978-1985
- U DP214 Letters. Philip Larkin and Stevie Smith to Anthony and Ann Thwaite, 1955-1983



*With best wishes,  
Philip -*



47 The Chairman said that he had received representations 47  
that the Brynmor Jones Library should institute a Philip Larkin  
Collection, and was personally in support of the suggestion. He  
understood that it was intended that the Collection should be of both  
published and unpublished material, in original or copy form.

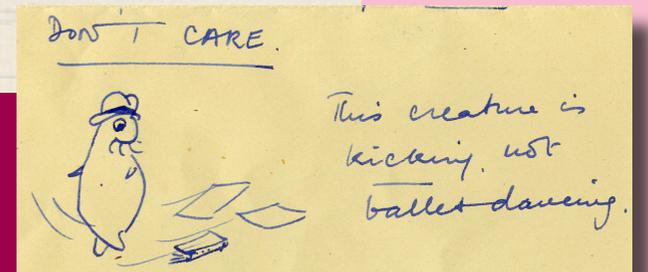
During discussion the Committee welcomed the proposal on  
condition that it was clear that no obligation was placed on Dr. Larkin  
to contribute material to the Collection against his inclination. The  
Librarian agreed to discuss the matter further with Professor Chapple.

Extract from minutes, University of Hull Library Committee, Dec 1973 [U PHR/1/292]

- U PHO Photographic Archive of the University of Hull
- U PHR/1/292 Personnel File. Philip Arthur Larkin
- U DPL Papers of Philip Arthur Larkin, 1816-1992
- U DPLS Philip Larkin Society Archive
- U DX92 Correspondence. Philip Larkin and Roger McGough, 1974-1983
- U DX176 Letters. Philip Larkin to Kenneth Hibbert, 1933-1985
- U DX193 Correspondence. Philip Larkin and Janice Rossen, 1976-1985
- U DX203 Letter. Philip Larkin to Lawrence Lerner, 1956
- U DX204 Letters. Philip Larkin to Professor Bruce Martin, 1976-1978
- U DX213 Letters. Philip Larkin to Barry Bloomfield, 1946-1985
- U DX252 Letter. Philip Larkin to Mrs Constance Saville, 1956
- U DX257 Correspondence. Philip Larkin and Brenda Moon, 1962-1985
- U DX261 Correspondence between Philip Larkin and Arthur Davies, 1977-1982
- U DX274 Correspondence. Philip Larkin and Bath University Library, 1970-1983
- U DX281 Transcriptions of workbooks by Professor A.T. Tolley, 1981-2001
- U DX290 Letters. Philip Larkin to Ken Eborall, 1979-1985
- U DX291 Letters from Philip Larkin to Norman Staveley, 1978-1985
- U DX335 Correspondence. Joan Bakewell and Phillip Larkin, 1984
- U DX353 Brenda Little Collection, 1957-2011
- U DX354 Letters. Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap, 1975-2003
- U DX370 Letters. Philip Larkin to Roger Bowen, 1975-1976
- U DX372 Betty Mackereth Collection, 1957-2010
- U DX376 Janet Carby Hall Collection, 1960s

**'Sometimes you hear, fifth-hand, As epitaph:  
He chucked up everything And just cleared off'**

PAL, Poetry of Departures



## Additional material:

Please note that the following collections are not described on the Online Catalogue:

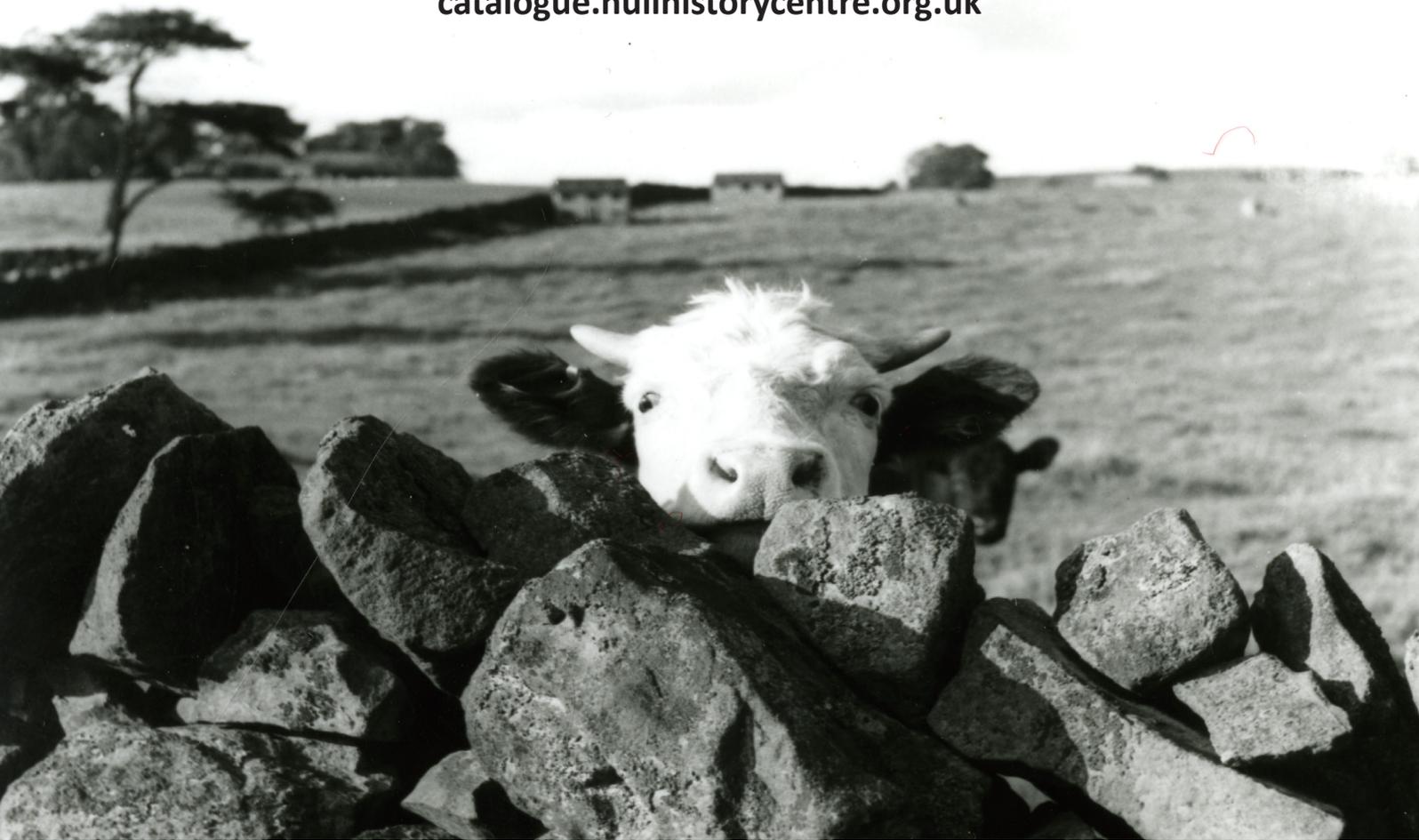
- Larkin Reference Collection
- Larkin Library
- Larkin Record Collection
- Larkin Object Collection

Contact us for further information:  
[archives@hull.ac.uk](mailto:archives@hull.ac.uk)



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