

U DX278

Philip Larkin letter

1975

Biographical Background:

Born in Coventry in 1922 and educated at King Henry VIII School there, Philip Larkin first showed his literary talent in regular contributions to the school magazine, *The Coventrian*. He gained a first class honours degree in English at St John's College, Oxford, in 1943. He then became a librarian, working successively in the public library at Wellington, and the libraries of Leicester University College and, from 1950, Queen's University, Belfast.

In 1955 he was appointed Librarian of the University of Hull, where he remained until his death at the age of 63 in 1985. His first poem to achieve a national circulation was 'Ultimatum' in *The Listener* in 1940. Other poems were published in anthologies of Oxford poetry before his first personal collection, 'The north ship', appeared in 1945. This was followed by two novels, 'Jill' (1946) and 'A girl in winter' (1947). A lean period followed after the rejection by publishers of 'In the Grip of Light' (1948), but he continued to write, and his next collection, 'The less deceived' (1955) established him as a major poet. 'The Whitsun weddings' (1964) won him the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He edited *The Oxford book of twentieth-century English verse* (1973), and the last collection of his poems, 'High windows', appeared in 1974.

The posthumous publication of his *Collected poems* (1988) and *Selected letters* (1989) revealed a much more prolific writer than had previously been imagined. He received many honours, including the CBE in 1975 and the Order of the Companion of Honour just before his death in 1985.

Custodial history:

Donated by Mrs MR Barker, West Ella, 31 March 2000

Description:

Letter from Philip Larkin to Sidney Hainsworth replying to a letter congratulating Larkin on being awarded the CBE

Extent: 1 item

Related material:

Correspondence with No 10 Downing Street before the award and letters of congratulation after the award was announced are amongst the Larkin Papers [Ref U DPL]

Access conditions:

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX278/1	Philip Larkin to Sidney Hainsworth ALS. Larkin's receipt of the CBE, he includes the comment "I'm afraid it will be the end of me as a poet, but it is a good way to go" 1 item	19 Jun 1975
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