

U DX354 Letters from Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap 1975-2003

Biographical Background:

Philip Arthur Larkin was born in the Coventry suburb of Radford on 9 August 1922. Larkin began writing while still at school and became joint editor of his school magazine. He went on to study at St John's College Oxford, gaining a First Class Degree in English Literature. After university he took the job of librarian at the public library in Wellington, Shropshire, before moving to the library at University College, Leicester in 1946. Also in 1946, his novel *Jill* was published by the Fortune Press and his second novel *A Girl in Winter* appeared on the Faber list to good reviews.

In 1950 he was offered the job of sub-librarian at Queen's University, Belfast. It was whilst he was in Ireland that he had one of his most productive periods as a writer starting two unfinished novels and many of the poems which were to be included in *The Less Deceived*, such as 'Church Going'. He had a small collection, *XX Poems*, privately produced by a Belfast printer in an edition of 100 copies in 1951. Larkin's return to England in 1955 to his new appointment as librarian of Hull University coincided with the publication of his first collection of poems *The Less Deceived*, issued by the Marvell Press, of Hessle, near Hull, owned by George Hartley.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Larkin kept writing poetry. He constantly received requests for poems from editors of magazines and newspapers. Although he refused most of these requests, filing the letters away in refusal files, many of these people become good friends. The most intriguing aspect to emerge from the collection of magazines and journals which published poems by Larkin is their wide political spectrum. Larkin had no problem allowing poems to appear in the right wing *Spectator*, the left wing *New Statesman* or less mainstream journals such as the *New Humanist*. What is clear is that he liked to cultivate the 'poet of the people' impression which continued to grow with his increasing fame. Thus, he gave interviews, judged local poetry competitions as well as national ones, and answered most of the many fan letters he received.

In 1964 *The Whitsun Weddings* was published by Faber and Faber to excellent reviews. *High Windows* was published in 1975 and received universally favourable reviews and for the first time Larkin achieved success in the American market. 'Aubade', Larkin's last great poem, was published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1977.

Larkin received numerous awards, including the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry (1965), seven honorary doctorates, a CBE (1975), the Companion of Literature (1978) and, most significantly, the Companion of Honour (1985). Despite serious illness, Larkin's labours continued practically to the end of his life, with his former library secretary employed to do the typing. His death from cancer on 2 December 1985 produced an enormous outpouring of grief from friends, colleagues, and lovers of his poetry. He remains widely recognised as one of the most significant writers of modern poetry in English, and as an extremely successful university librarian.

Campbell Crichton Mackinnon Burnap was born on 10 September 1939 in Derby and later became a noted jazz trombonist as well as a vocalist and broadcaster. Initially mastering the washboard and playing in a skiffle band as a teenager, he moved to New Zealand when he was 19 and began playing the trombone with the Omega Jazz Band. He played in bands all

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over the world, but particularly in Australia, the US and the UK and collaborated with various individuals and groups including Hot Sands Jazz Band, Geoff Bull's Olympia Jazz Band, Terry Lightfoot and Monty Sunshine, Ian Armit, Alan Elsdon, Alex Welsh and Acker Bilk. In 1988, Burnap began hosting jazz shows on BBC radio and Jazz FM. He died in May 2008 of cancer.

Custodial history: Deposited March/April 2005

Description:

This small collection includes four photocopies of letters from Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap and one from Larkin's secretary to Burnap. U DX354/1-2 relate to Burnap's dissertation on Larkin and his work. U DX354/3-4 relate to Larkin's work as well as their shared interest in jazz and cricket.

Extent: 10 items

Related material:

Papers of Philip Larkin [U DPL]

Philip Larkin's photograph collection [DLV]

Papers of the Larkin family [DLN]

Correspondence with numerous friends, fellow poets, colleagues etc, including: Barry Bloomfield {U DX/213}, Colin Gunner [U DP/179], Brenda Moon, [U DX/257], Andrew Motion [U DP/207], James Sutton [U DP/174 and U DP/182], Ted Tarling [U DP/177], Anthony Thwaite [U DP/181]

Papers of Anthony Thwaite relating to his editorship of "Larkin at Sixty" [U DP/188] and as literary executor to Philip Larkin [U DAT, uncatalogued]

Papers of Monica Jones [U DMA uncatalogued]

Photocopies of letters from Larkin to Monica Jones (collated by Anthony Thwaite as part of his research) [U DX/341]

Papers of Maeve Brennan [U DMB uncatalogued and closed to 2033]

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX354/1	Photocopy. Typed letter from Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap Thanks for his letter and a recording of Burnap playing the trombone and response to a request by Burnap for some quotes from Larkin to be used in his dissertation on Larkin and his work. 1 item	1 Dec 1975
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| U DX354/2 | Photocopy. Typed letter from Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap (2 copies)
Thanks for his letter and questions sent in response to Burnap's request for quotes (see U DX354/1). Answers relate to the poem 'Love' and the likelihood that Larkin will not have collected enough poems for another publication until at least 1984.
2 items | 26 Apr 1976 |
| U DX354/3 | Photocopy. Handwritten letter from Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap (2 copies)
Thoughts on the jazz album sent by Burnap, thanks for the birthday greetings and mention that he may be seeing the cricket at Lord's again soon.
2 items | 6 Jul 1982 |
| U DX354/4 | Photocopy. Handwritten letter from Philip Larkin to Campbell Burnap (2 copies)
Thanks for his letter and the story about 'Wild Bill' Davison, thanks for his comments on [Required Writing] and Larkin's thoughts on the book, mention of test matches at Lord's, comments on a jazz concert coming to Hull and hopes that Burnap will play Hull.
2 items | 29 Dec 1983 |
| U DX354/5 | Photocopy. Typed letter from M. Elliott, Secretary to Professor Larkin, to Campbell Burnap (2 copies)
Thanks for the well wishes following Larkin's recent illness and hopes that Larkin will be able to respond personally soon.
2 items | 3 Jul 1985 |
| U DX354/6 | Photocopy. Handwritten letter from Campbell Burnap to Wendy Cole, depositor of U DX354
Enclosing the photocopies of Larkin's letters, mention of the anecdote about 'Wild Bill' Davison (see U DX354/4) and comment on context of his dissertation (see U DX354/1-2).
1 item | 3 Feb 2003 |