

U DX382

**Papers of Winifred Dawson
(nee Arnott and previously Bradshaw)**

1945-1990

Accession number: 2015/01

Biographical Background:

Winifred Dawson (nee Arnott) was born on 5 February 1929 in Stourbridge, Worcestershire to Samuel Clauson Arnott, an electrical engineer, and his wife Bertha (nee Minett). She spent the early part of her life in North East England but was evacuated at the start of the Second World War to Northern Ireland. She lived there with her father's relations before German bombing of Belfast caused her to be evacuated again, this time with fifty other girls to an old Huguenot castle on the Irish Sea coast.

After developing a great love of English poetry and literature at school, Winifred Arnott studied English at Queen's University Belfast, graduating in 1949, and was working in Queen's Great Library as a cataloguer when Philip Larkin arrived in 1950 to take up one of the four sub-librarian posts. Winifred and Larkin became close friends and they continued to exchange correspondence whilst she was studying in London on an archivists' course at Birkbeck College. She returned to Belfast but left shortly after to marry Geoffrey Bradshaw in 1954. The couple moved to London, and later to Christchurch in Dorset, and had three children. The Bradshaw's marriage ended in divorce in 1976, with Winifred remarrying to Grant Dawson on 16 April 1981. She loved to travel, enjoyed hill walking, meeting her many friends and singing in choirs. In her last decade she learnt that she had a blood cancer, which would soon become virulent, but kept this knowledge secret, being determined to spend much of the time she had left researching and then self-publishing the first biography of the pioneering historian Amy Audrey Locke. Winifred succeeded in publishing the biography, *The Porter's Daughter*, just before her death on 22 August 2014, aged 85.

Winifred Arnott inspired five of Philip Larkin's poems, more than any other woman in his life, including 'Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album', 'Latest Face' and 'He Hears That His Beloved Has Become Engaged'. Their relationship has been described as a 'romantic friendship' by Larkin's biographer, James Booth, with Larkin perhaps desiring more from the relationship than Winifred. Proud of her association with Larkin, Winifred Dawson established friendships with other women connected to Larkin, including Maeve Brennan and Jean Hartley, and was a committed member of the Larkin Society.

Custodial history:

Donated by Grant Dawson, widower of Winifred Dawson, Jan 2015.

Description:

This small collection includes a photograph album (1945-1951) compiled by Winifred Arnott; letters from Winifred Arnott/Bradshaw/Dawson to Philip Larkin (1951-1985), and a letter from Gosschalks Solicitors (1991) relating to the return of the letters to Winifred Dawson following Larkin's death in 1985. The photograph album inspired the poem 'Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album' by Philip Larkin.

Extent: 65 items

Related material: Papers of Philip Larkin [U DPL]

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

Hull History Centre: Papers of Winifred Dawson (nee Arnott and previously Bradshaw)

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| U DX382/1 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to enclosed photographs (no longer enclosed), Larkin's holiday, her cousin's wedding, Larkin's photograph of 'the Prices and Mr Proudfoot', Larkin's photographs of her, and her opinion of Larkin's book 'A Girl in Winter'.
1 item | 1 Aug 1951 |
| U DX382/2 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter thanking Larkin for his letter and relating to her attempts to learn the Slavonic and Greek alphabets, reading Douglas C. McMurtrie's 'The Book', enclosing a 'characteristic' photograph of Larkin (no longer enclosed), Larkin's possible visit to the north of England and her possible visit to Belfast, her mother's opinion of Larkin's book 'The Girl in Winter', and how she is missing Belfast. Includes a newspaper cutting of a cartoon featuring two bookworms.
1 item | 5 Sep 1951 |
| U DX382/3 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's visit, news of colleagues and of the University Library in Belfast.
1 item | 11 Sep 1951 |
| U DX382/4 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter thanking Larkin for his last letter and relating to Larkin's recent visit, Larkin's trip to Edinburgh and Glasgow, her first days in London, her student accommodation, her initial opinions of University College London and her course (postgraduate diploma in Librarianship), news of mutual friends, and Larkin's house in Elmwood Avenue. Includes a small newspaper cutting of a review of the Mouse Trap restaurant, London.
1 item | 5 Oct 1951 |
| U DX382/5 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's attempts at cooking, the [University of Belfast] library, news of library colleagues, Belfast politics and the general election, the progress of her course (postgraduate diploma in Librarianship), her time in London, and the library at University College London. Includes a small newspaper cutting relating to the discovery of a book printed by William Caxton in Ripon Cathedral Library.
1 item | 28 Oct 1951 |

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| U DX382/6 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's comments on vacuum cleaners, fried eggs and different types of accommodation in his recent letter, the difficulties of living in rented accommodation, her time in London and the progress of her course (postgraduate diploma in Librarianship), her opinions on the Dewey decimal system, and her indecision about whether to return to Belfast.
1 item | 23 Nov 1951 |
| U DX382/7 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to her work experience at the Courtauld Institute, her current reading matter, the progress of her course (postgraduate diploma in Librarianship) and her time in London, including a recent party she attended.
1 item | 15 Dec 1951 |
| U DX382/8 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's Christmas card, the Christmas holidays, Larkin's visit to London, news of mutual friends, the University of Belfast Library and news of colleagues, her indecision as to whether to return to Belfast, her visit to the dentist, and the history of Leicester University.
1 item | 5 Jan 1952 |
| U DX382/9 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to a pencil (see U DX382/65) sent by Larkin, the University of Belfast Library and her indecision as to whether to return, her work experience at Durham, news of mutual friends, and the progress of her course (postgraduate diploma in Librarianship). Includes a small newspaper cutting relating to the vandalism of books at Loughborough Library.
1 item | 7 Feb 1952 |
| U DX382/10 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to her slowness at replying to Larkin's latest letter, the weather, her lunch with the Librarian at [University Library, Belfast], her visit to Cambridge, a recent party she hosted, the funeral of [King George VI], and her time in London.
1 item | 29 Mar 1952 |
| U DX382/11 | Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin
Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's recent letter, the Easter holiday and visit to Cheltenham, the progress of her course (postgraduate diploma in Librarianship), Larkin's visit to Dublin, and news of mutual friends.
1 item | 22 Apr 1952 |

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U DX382/12	Postcard. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to arrangements for a visit by Larkin. 1 item	19 May 1952
U DX382/13	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her work at the University of Belfast Library, her new accommodation and Larkin's holiday. 1 item	24 Sep 1952
U DX382/14	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her [engagement] and her hopes for their continued friendship. 1 item	4 Jan 1953
U DX382/15	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her work at the University of Belfast Library, news of mutual friends, a collection of songs called 'The Temperance Harp', and Larkin's holiday. 1 item	1 Apr 1953
U DX382/16	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to a recent job interview, her work at the University of Belfast Library, her visit to Nottingham, her current reading material, and thanks for Larkin's recent letter. 1 item	29 May 1953
U DX382/17	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to some photographs sent by Larkin, her visit to London, her current reading material, and the summer weather. 1 item	9 Jun 1953
U DX382/18	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to a visit to mutual friends, news of mutual friends, her current reading material, the weather, and hoping to talk to Larkin soon. 1 item	21 Jul 1953
U DX382/19	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to a job interview and advertised vacancies, news of mutual friends, her mother, and her current reading material. 1 item	24 Jul 1953
U DX382/20	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to a job interview at Birkbeck [College] and her journey to the interview. 1 item	[30 Jul 1953]

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U DX382/21	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to a visit to her aunt, news of her family, a visit to Northumberland, photographs of colleagues at the University of Belfast Library, the season, and a possible visit to see Larkin. 1 item	17 Aug 1953
U DX382/22	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's recent letter, Larkin's poem inspired by her photograph album, and her current reading material. 1 item	22 Aug 1953
U DX382/23	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's recent letter, her old photographs and photographs sent by Larkin, general news, her current reading material, a visit to Scotland, her move to London, and a possible visit to see Larkin. 1 item	26 Aug 1953
U DX382/24	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's recent letter, a possible visit to see Larkin, and her visit to Scotland. 1 item	2 Sep 1953
U DX382/25	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her inability to visit Larkin, news of mutual friends, and her visit to Scotland. 1 item	7 Sep 1953
U DX382/26	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to a chance meeting between her and Larkin, and her sadness at leaving Belfast. 1 item	[27 Sep 1953]
U DX382/27	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her work at Birkbeck [College] and her accommodation. 1 item	5 Oct 1953
U DX382/28	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's recent letter, her accommodation, her work and colleagues at Birkbeck [College], her dislike of London, and her old photographs. Includes a newspaper cutting relating to a court case concerning a disagreement over a collection of penny black stamps, and an index card with a quote from 'The Testament of Joad' by C.E.M. Joad. 3 items	18 Oct 1953

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U DX382/29	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her work and colleagues at Birkbeck [College], her current reading material, her opinion on the keeping of diaries, Larkin's poetry, her accommodation and other general news. 1 item	13 Nov 1953
U DX382/30	Sketch. Location of Turk's Head Pub, Newcastle Pencil sketch by Winifred Arnott of the location of the Turk's Head pub in Newcastle, with a note in Winifred's hand 'Please may I come to the Great Hall for lunch after all?', a typed extract from 'Small Talk at Wreyland' by Cecil Torr and a cutting from the Radio Times relating to Bruce Montgomery. 4 items	c.1953
U DX382/31	Letter. Winifred Arnott to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter suggesting that their correspondence should cease and relating to Larkin's poem about her photograph album, news about Larkin and his friends in the press, her accommodation, her forthcoming wedding, 1 item	1 Apr 1954
U DX382/32	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's poems inspired by her in 'The Less Deceived' and general personal news. 1 item	17 Oct 1957
U DX382/33	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter thanking Larkin for sending a copy of 'English Love Poems' edited by J. Betjeman, her opinion of 'Look Back in Anger' and general personal news. 1 item	29 Nov 1957
U DX382/34	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's poem 'Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album', the enclosed newspaper cutting and general family news. Includes a newspaper cutting relating to a protest at the Library of Queen's University Belfast. 2 items	13 Feb 1958
U DX382/35	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to a possible meeting with Larkin in Southampton. 1 item	20 Mar 1958
U DX382/36	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard providing directions to her house. 1 item	[25 Mar 1958]

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U DX382/37	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to photographs taken of her by Larkin, her visit to Ireland, her pregnancy, Larkin's writing, and a possible visit by Larkin. 1 item	7 Nov 1958
U DX382/38	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's recent letter, general personal news, and the birth of her daughter, Lucy Catherine. 1 item	10 Feb 1959
U DX382/39	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to Larkin's recent letter and a [programme] she had seen relating to 'Princess Gardens'. 1 item	[Sep 1964]
U DX382/40	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's poetry, her old photographs, general personal news, and her children. 1 item	10 Dec 1965
U DX382/41	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to Larkin's birthday and his poetry. 1 item	8 Aug 1972
U DX382/42	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Larkin's birthday, her children, her recent holiday, Larkin's poetry, and general personal news. 1 item	15 Dec 1972
U DX382/43	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to her recent visit to Belfast. 1 item	7 May 1974
U DX382/44	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to general personal news, her children, her opinions on Larkin's recent poetry, and her work as a Justice of the Peace. Includes a copy of a poem by her son, Nick, entitled 'Reflections in the Bath'. 2 items	10 Jul 1975
U DX382/45	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to general personal news and her holiday in Devon. 1 item	1 May 1976

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U DX382/46	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, general personal news, an invitation to Larkin to visit, and Larkin's appearance on Desert Island Discs. 1 item	4 Aug 1976
U DX382/47	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, general personal news, Larkin's recent letter, her work as a Justice of the Peace, Larkin's poetry inspired by her, and a possible visit to London to meet Larkin. 1 item	10 Sep 1976
U DX382/48	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her work as a Justice of the Peace, the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, general personal news, Patsy Strang, Monica [Jones], and a possible meeting with Larkin. 1 item	18 Nov 1976
U DX382/49	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to her temporary job at the Eurocentre Library in Bournemouth, the end of her marriage, and a possible meeting with Larkin. 1 item	24 Jan 1977
U DX382/50	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to their recent meeting, the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, family news, and her recent visit to Liverpool. 1 item	23 Mar 1977
U DX382/51	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, her relationship with Grant [Dawson], and general personal news. 1 item	5 Apr 1977
U DX382/52	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, her relationship with Grant [Dawson], general personal news, Larkin's poem inspired by her photograph album, fashion, a car accident involving Grant's daughter, and her plans for the summer. 1 item	23 Jun 1977
U DX382/53	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to a visit to Weymouth. 1 item	10 Jul 1977

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U DX382/54	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to Eva Larkin's death, her new house, general personal news, general family news, her relationship with Grant [Dawson], and her plans for Christmas. 1 item	30 Nov 1977
U DX382/55	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, her relationship with Grant [Dawson], general family news, her new house, the death of Patsy [Strang], a car accident involving Grant's daughter, and her current reading material. 1 item	15 Jun 1978
U DX382/56	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to suggested reading material for Larkin during a recent illness, Larkin's last letter, Christmas, the end of her marriage to Geoffrey Bradshaw, her temporary work at the Eurocentre Library in Bournemouth, general personal news, Larkin's home in Hull, and her relationship with Grant [Dawson]. 1 item	30 Jan 1979
U DX382/57	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to the death of her father, general personal and family news, and her plans for a holiday. 1 item	29 Jul 1979
U DX382/58	Letter. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to her work at the [Eurocentre] Library, general personal and family news, learning to type, a possible meeting with Larkin in London, her relationship with Grant [Dawson], Larkin's recent letter, and a recent holiday to the Isle of Wight. 1 item	17 Oct 1979
U DX382/59	Postcard. Winifred Bradshaw to Philip Larkin Handwritten postcard relating to a holiday in the Lake District and the death of her mother. 1 item	26 Aug 1980
U DX382/60	Letter. Winifred Dawson to Philip Larkin Handwritten letter relating to their working days at Queen's University Belfast, a recent holiday in Ireland, general personal and family news, and her daughter's wedding. 1 item	28 Oct 1983
U DX382/61	Christmas Card. Winifred [Dawson] to Philip Larkin 1 item	n.d.

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U DX382/62	Christmas Card. Winifred [Dawson] to Philip Larkin 1 item	n.d.
U DX382/63	Letter. Gosschalks Solicitors to Winifred Dawson Typed letter relating to the return of the letters she had written to Philip Larkin, following Larkin's death. 1 item	21 Dec 1990
U DX382/64	Photograph Album compiled by Winifred Arnott Includes small black and white photographs of unidentified individuals assumed to be Winifred Arnott, her family and friends, and one of Philip Larkin next to the caption 'Graduation Day 1951'. Includes captions 'Carrowdore 1945', 'June 1947', 'Summer 1947', 'Londonderry', 'Easter 1948', 'Ballymoney', 'April 1947', 'Bangor', 'June 1948', 'Summer 1948', 'Leeds January 1949', 'Students' Day 1949', 'Riddel Hall', 'Summer Term 1949', 'The Sir William Whitla Hall', 'The Quadrangle', 'Graduation Day 1949', 'Bangor Bay', 'Summer 1949', 'August 1949', 'Students' Day 1950', 'Honours School of English', 'June 1950', 'Graduation Day', 'July 1950', 'Music Society Picnic 1950', 'Carcassone', 'San Sebastian', and 'July 1951'. This album inspired Larkin's poem 'Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album'. 1 volume	1945-1951
U DX382/65	Pencil sent by Philip Larkin to Winifred Arnott Black pencil sent as a present and mentioned in Winifred's letter to Larkin found at U DX382/9. 1 item	c.1952