

U DX402

Portrait of Winifred Arnott, by Inge Bachrich

Jun 1950

Accession number: 2018/29

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.

Whilst evacuated in Ireland Winifred began a lifelong friendship with Inge Glaser (later Inge Bachrich), a Jewish refugee from Germany. Winifred and Inge remained close friends throughout their time at Queen's University Belfast, and their friendship continued until Winifred's death.

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 Bradshaws' 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.

Inge Bachrich graduated from Queen's University Belfast and later moved to London, where she worked as a translator, editor and writer, translating poetry and fiction. Inge and her husband Jakob Bachrich emigrated to Vancouver, Canada, in 1959, where she continued her interest in art, and where she continues to live.

Custodial history: The portrait was in the possession of the artist until it was given to Grant Dawson, who offered it to Hull University Archives with the agreement of Inge Bachrich.

Description: Black and white portrait in charcoal or pastel of Winifred Arnott, later Dawson. The sketch was made during an evening visit in Belfast, in June 1950.

Extent: 1 item

Hull History Centre: Portrait of Winifred Arnott

Related material: Papers of Winifred Dawson (nee Arnott and previously Bradshaw) [U DX382]

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

Copyright: Gifted to HUA

U DX402/1

Portrait of Winifred Arnott, by Inge Bachrich
Black and white portrait in charcoal or pastel of
Winifred Arnott, later Dawson.
1 item

Jun 1950