**Changes in YELLOW**

**Production Team**

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**Welcome. (REPLACE WITH THIS NEW VERSION)**

An exhibition is a poem made from objects, and like a poem, it is open to individual interpretation.

The objects on display all came from Larkin’s house at 105 Newland Park when it was cleared in 2003, 17 years after his death. We do not know why Philip Larkin chose to keep these items but we do know from his writing, and the recollection of his friends, that he found meaning in them and arranged them thoughtfully.

We invite you to think about what he kept, and also what is missing or was destroyed. We hope the exhibition provokes your curiosity.

This sheet provides clues about how and why we have chosen to display these things in this way, but we want you to have your own experience of this exhibition. There is no right or wrong response

Gallery Assistants (GA) have further information and can guide you to relevant reference books for browsing, so please do share any questions with them.

**New Eyes Each Year**[No content required]

**Time and time over**  
Philip Larkin’s biographical timeline showing destinations, publications and relationships.

**What are days for?**  
After Philip Larkin died in 1985 some of his books were sold. The remaining books were retrieved after the death of Monica Jones in 2003 and are, as far as possible, displayed here in the shelving sequence he used in his home. The codes on the coloured paper slips indicate their former location - bedroom, lounge, hallway etc. (Ask a GA to see the full booklist)

Bay 10.   
Thomas Hardy was a favourite of both Philip and his father, Sydney Larkin. Some of these books may have been passed from father to son.

Bay 11.   
As a young man Larkin was much influenced by D.H.Lawrence. In a letter to his friend, Jim Sutton, he said that he could see *Sons and Lovers* breathing on the shelf. Look up ~~carefully~~ and you will see a first edition of *Lady Chatterlery’s Lover*. Is it breathing?

On a tea towel you will see the ~~This~~ famous quote from Dr. Samuel Johnson that begins ‘Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London.’ Although he visited frequently, Larkin chose never to live in London.

There were more than 30 souvenir tea towels retrieved from Larkin’s home.

Bay 15. Top shelf material.Both the books and underwear displayed here are typical of items found. We have chosen to display them on the top shelf.

**Reading Habits.**While putting the books on display, we found that many contained annotations, additions, clippings and collages.They’ve been left in place**.**

BAY NUMBER Between the books we’ve placed objects related to people in Larkin’s life such as these china figurines, stationary and textiles depicting Beatrix potter characters. Larkin often assigned animal characters to friends and family members.

BAY NUMBER ~~Larkin was a frequent correspondent and~~ In this box is a small sample of a vast collection of unused cards and stationary that was found in the house.Notice the list of Christmas cards sent and received between 1979 and 1981. Although ambivalent about religion he collected many souvenirs from the churches he frequently visited.

**Study-Storehouse.**Bay 27  
Philip Larkin’s fascination with Jazz, which began in his teenage years, continued throughout his life and is represented by books, records and his subscription to various music publications.

Bay 28.   
All of the books in this bay were given by Philip Larkin to Monica Jones and are inscribed with personal messages. In her copy of *Whitsun Weddings*, a poem, *Rabbit with a Rolliflex* highlights both their fascination with taking photographs and her pet name of Bunnikins.

Bay 29.  
Items in this bay represent Larkin’s school days and his lifelong use of schoolboy humour.

Bay 30-33

As librarian of the University of Hull for 30 years Larkin was primarily responsible for its architecture, contents and ethos and for introducing photography as well as special collections. These Super 8mm films featuring staff, made by university photographer Alan Marshall, are being shown here for the first time.

**A Writer**These shelves contain Philip Larkin’s oeuvre comprising of two novels, some ‘slim volumes of poetry’ and seven bound volumes of University Library Committee minutes from his thirty-year tenure.

**Self’s the Man.**In this installation we can see how Philip Larkin projected his physical image to the world, through his choice of clothes and his photographic self-portraits. The challenges presented by his poor hearing and eyesight, speech impediment and concerns about his weight were significant pre-occupations evident in his doodles and his private letters.

**Success Story**

Trollies 051 – 054

On these trollies you will find Philip Larkin’s works and a selection of the many books written about him. Feel free to take a seat and browse but please return the books to the trolley.

**Letters and Numbers**

(Display tables)

55

Larkin wrote to his mother, Eva, every day on a variety of materials from letters to postcards. The letters that she sent to him were filed by him in shoeboxes.

56

The Hull History Centre holds 11,000 pieces of correspondence, many of which are yet to be catalogued. These two boxes represent a small sample of this vast collection.

57

The Larkin family correspondence shows his fascination with colour, pattern and texture.

58

On his death, Larkin ordered his diaries to be destroyed. The contents were shredded by his secretary, Betty Mackereth, but the covers remain, revealing examples of his private thoughts and fascinations. We can only imagine their contents.

**Tree of Ties**

59

119 of Larkin’s ties are suspended overhead, ranging from his school days to his adult interest in fashion textiles and professional associations. Do you recognise any of the insignias? (Full list available)

**Beyond all this**

End Panel - Anthony Thwaite

In this bay are images and publications representing Larkin’s professional peers, rivals and colleagues. Three of these, John Betjeman, Anthony Thwaite and Andrew Motion have, through their writings and documentaries, been largely responsible for establishing how Larkin’s personal life has been perceived. Many of their works are available on the trollies.

**Home is so sad**

End panel – Sydney Larkin

The recording in this area was made in 1961 when Eva Larkin visited Hull to care for Philip after his collapse at the Library Committee Meeting earlier that year. The photographs represent his grandparents, parents, sister – Kitty, and niece – Rosemary. The figure of Hitler, which has been much commented upon, is a souvenir of the visits made by Sydney Larkin with Philip to Nazi Germany in the late 1930s.

**Talking in bed**

End panel – Monica Jones

At one time Philip Larkin was maintaining a relationship with three women – Monica Jones (whom he had met at the University of Leicester), Maeve Brennan and Betty Mackereth (both of whom he worked with at the University of Hull). Each of them knew that they were not his only partner.

Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim* established a caricature of Monica which was only overturned on the posthumous publication of her letters, revealing her role in Larkin’s work to be that of both muse and editor. The objects we have chosen to display speak to us of her personality.

Maeve Brennan’s *The Philip Larkin I Knew* provides a first person account of their relationship.

Betty Mackereth survives them all and remains a significant figure in Larkin’s life, work and legacy.

**Send no money**

End panel – Kingsley Amis

In this area are Larkin’s photographs of his friends from school and university together with some of their publications – Jim Sutton (artist and childhood friend), Philip Brown (fellow student and object of affection), Bruce Montgomery (aka Edmund Crispin, author and composer of music for the *Carry On* Films), John Wain (poet, novelist and peer in *The Movement*) and Kingsley Amis (novelist, satirist and professional rival).

**Wild oats**

End panel- Ruth Bowman

Larkin’s sexual relationships have been the subject of much conjecture. Biographers have scrutinised his letters and photographs for traces of romantic connection. Many of the images in this section have been previously misattributed and are now catalogued as ‘unknown women.’

Objects tell their own story. The pink hand-decorated cloth, found in a bag of tea towels, appears to be a treasure from a significant time. We suggest this may be a souvenir of the visits Philip Larkin made to his then fiancée, Ruth Bowman, in 1945. We will never know.

**Music.**Philip Larkin famously said he could go for a week without poetry but not a day without jazz. The music you have been listening to is a sample of his favourites, as selected for the *Larkin’s Jazz* boxset. The LP’s in this section are a selection of his 1,469 records from the Hull History Centre. Larkin’s *Desert Island Discs*, which can be heard online, indicate his eclectic taste not only for early jazz but also for English pastoral, north country folk music and The Beatles. Look closely to see the annotations he made to the back of his albums.

**Dear Philip Letters**

Philip Larkin was particular about his writing materials, preferring fine stationary for letters and a 2B pencil for writing poetry. We invite you to compose a letter to Philip comprised of writing, poetry or drawing as you wish. Please attach your page to the wall for the enjoyment of other visitors. These will be collected and may be used for publication.