

# Allanah Harper:

## An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator</b>	Harper, Allanah, 1904-1992
<b>Title</b>	Allanah Harper Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1931-1993
<b>Extent:</b>	5 boxes (2.10 linear feet)
<b>Abstract</b>	The collection chronicles Harper's life from the 1930s through the early 1990s, primarily through Harper's outgoing and incoming correspondence, in addition to clippings, manuscripts, notebooks, and photographs. The collection also contains Sybille Bedford's correspondence, and two manuscripts relating to the work of Aldous Huxley.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-01840
<b>Languages</b>	English, German, and French.
<b>Access</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition</b>	Purchase, 1995 (Reg. No. 13364)
<b>Processed by</b>	Mary Alice Harper, 1998, Laura Gottesman, 1999
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Allanah Harper was born in Brighton, England on the 6th of November, 1904. Her father was a highly successful engineering contractor who served as a consultant for the design of the first Aswan Dam in Egypt, and who built the first railway through the Andes in South America.

Harper grew up in a privileged household and, due to her father's work, traveled extensively as a child. Destinations included Italy, France, Spain, Egypt, South Africa, and even China where she served as bridesmaid in the wedding of one of her mother's friends. As a child she attended school at Miss Wolf's in London and Miss Douglas' at Queen's Gate, and later studied in France. Her education was also enhanced and certainly influenced by her father who had a great love of poetry.

As a young woman in London Harper partook in a rather reckless and carefree lifestyle. She is credited, along with the Jungman sisters, with inventing the "treasure hunt," a rather elaborate game which involved tearing about London in search of items that were dangerously hard to obtain, such as the spectacles of the Archbishop of Canterbury. She was a leading figure in the London social scene of bright, young, and beautiful figures. Her circle of friends included the photographer Cecil Beaton, Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell Sitwell, and Brian Howard.

In her early twenties, Harper moved to France, without much support or encouragement from her family. There, at the age of twenty-five she founded *Echanges*, a French quarterly review, with the goal of exposing English writers to the French and vice versa. The costs of publication were offset by financial support from the Aga Khan, who, along with his family, maintained a long friendship with Harper. She served as editor and selector for the duration of *Echanges* from 1929 to 1931. Through this publication she was responsible for introducing the French to W.H. Auden, Ivy Compton-Burnett, T.S. Eliot, Peter Quennell, Gertrude Stein, and Virginia Woolf, and for introducing the English to Léon Paul Fargue, André Gide, and Henri Michaud, to name a few.

Harper remained in France until the start of World War II. She married Robert Statlender, and in 1941 they moved to America for a time. The couple eventually split and Harper returned to France where she remained for the rest of her life, taking regular trips to London. Harper spent some time investigating different religions, particularly Vedanta, eventually converting to Roman Catholicism. During this period in her life she devoted much time to her primary interests of literature, music, painting, and poetry. She also began working on her autobiography, *All Trivial Fond Records*, which was eventually published in 1950.

Throughout the remainder of her life she continued to pursue her interests and maintained extensive correspondence with her close friends Sybille Bedford, Edith Sitwell, and Lady Amy Smart. Allanah Harper died in England on the 3rd of November 1992.

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## Sources

Harper, Allana. *All Trivial Fond Records* (London: Grey Walls Press, 1950).

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## Scope and Contents

The Allana Harper collection is comprised of two series, I. Allana Harper, 1931-1991 (4 boxes), and II. Sybille Bedford, 1933-1993 (1 box).

The first series chronicles Allana Harper's life from the 1930s through the early 1990s. It is comprised primarily of Harper's outgoing and incoming correspondence, but it also includes clippings, manuscripts, notebooks, and photographs.

The bulk of Harper's correspondence is incoming, but the collection does include seventeen outgoing letters, about half of which are postcards. Recipients include her mother and Amy Smart. Harper's incoming correspondence is comprised of letters from her friends, her mother, and various scholars. Letters are mainly in English, but there is also some correspondence in French. The greatest quantity of letters are from Sybille Bedford, Harper's close friend, and sometime financial supporter. The letters, which are personal in nature, date from 1946 to 1991, bulking in the 1950s to 1970s. Among the other correspondents represented in the approximately 500 letters gathered here are Cecil Beaton, Jane Bowles, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Lawrence Durrell, T.S. Eliot, Martha Gellhorn, Diana Holman Hunt, John Lehmann, Beatrix Pendar, Peter Quennell, Elizabeth Salter, Georgia Sitwell, Osbert Sitwell, Sacheverell Sitwell, Lady Amy Smart, Sir Walter Smart, Robert Statlender (Harper's husband), Pavel Tchelitchev, and Princess Hélène Youssevitz. Also present are letters and contracts with the London literary agency David Higham Associates, Ltd., relating to Harper's contributions to a book project on her friend Edith Sitwell. Included as well are also several folders of unidentified correspondence, which have either incomplete names or indecipherable signatures.

Harper's manuscript of her autobiography, *All Trivial Fond Records* is present along with some manuscripts and notes for a few short works. Also present are seven holographic notebooks which include notes for various works including Notes for an Anthology of Animals, and The Conference of Birds. These notebooks also contain Harper's thoughts on religion, various artists and literary figures, as well as a variety of quotes from authors, including Jean Inge, D.H. Lawrence, Edith Sitwell, George Santayana, and José Garcia Villa.

The second series, comprised primarily of incoming correspondence to Sybille Bedford, also contains some outgoing correspondence, and two manuscripts relating to the work of Aldous Huxley. This material offers a glimpse into Bedford's life. Her outgoing correspondence is primarily to her longtime friend, Eda Lord, during the 1970s. Incoming correspondence from Anna Bernhardt, Bedford's maternal grandmother, is

extensive, numbering 168 letters (40 in German) and dates from 1933 to 1937.

Purchased by the Ransom Center in 1995, the letters in this collection arrived from the dealer in groupings by correspondents in random order. The letters were not arranged alphabetically or by date within these groupings. Other materials were packaged by material type and were similarly identified. During accessioning, correspondence folders were arranged as received from the dealer with the identifications from the original packaging included with the folders when available. The Sybille Bedford papers and the manuscripts were grouped thematically by the dealer and have been housed in that order. During cataloging, correspondence was grouped by author and arranged alphabetically. Within each author grouping, correspondence is now arranged chronologically. One group of materials from the dealer, marked "correspondence and papers relating to Edith Sitwell," which contained manuscript fragments and correspondence was disassembled. These materials were interfiled with the other correspondence of the authors of the letters, and the manuscript fragments were placed with other related manuscript items. A few items, predominantly photographs and obituaries of Harper, were discovered amongst the correspondence but were not obviously related to them. These items were removed and housed separately.

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## Index terms

### Correspondents

Aga Khan III, 1877-1957.  
Beach, Sylvia.  
Beaton, Cecil Walter Hardy, Sir, 1904- .  
Bedford, Sybille, 1911- .  
Bowles, Jane Auer, 1917-1973.  
Compton-Burnett, I. (Ivy), 1884-1969.  
Durrell, Lawrence.  
Eliot, T.S. (Thomas Stearns), 1888-1965.  
Gellhorn, Martha, 1908- .  
Glendinning, Victoria.  
Howard, Brian, 1905-1958.  
Quennell, Peter, 1905- .  
Sitwell, Sacheverell, 1897- .  
David Higham Associates, Ltd.

### Subjects

Authors, English--20th century.



**Series I. Allanah Harper, 1931-1991**

## Subseries A. Correspondence, 1931-1991

Outgoing, 1934-1991 **box 1 folder 1**

## Incoming

## Identified

A-B **box 1 folder 2**

Bedford, Sybille, 1946-1991 **folder 3-5**

Bowles, Jane, n.d. **folder 6**

C-D **folder 7**

E-G **folder 8**

H-K **folder 9**

David Higham Associates, Ltd., 1972-1981 **box 2  
folder 1**

Holman-Hunt, Diana, 1965-1991 **folder 2**

L-Q **folder 3**

Pendar, Beatrix, 1949-1983 **folder 4**

R-Z **folder 5**

Smart, Amy, 1959-1976 **folder 6**

Statlender, Robert, n.d. **folder 7**

Youssevitz, Princess Hélène, 1957-1991 **folder  
8**

## Unidentified

A-D **box 2 folder 9**

E-I **folder 10**

J-Q **box 3 folder 1**

R-Z **folder 2**

Indecipherable **folder 3**

Subseries B. Manuscripts, 1930s-1960s

All Trivial Fond Records **box 3 folder 4-5**

Christmas Story; Conference of the Birds; notes on L.P. Fargue; notes on R.M. Rilke **folder 6**

Notes on the poetry of Edith Sitwell **folder 7**

Policy of the Socialist Party in Britain; miscellaneous typed ms. fragments; Some memories of Brian Howard **folder 8**

Miscellaneous holographic ms. fragments **folder 9**

Seven holographic ms. notebooks, 1950s-1969 **box 4 folder 1-7**

Subseries C. Miscellaneous, 1930-1992

Obituaries; photographs; materials found among correspondence **box 4 folder 8**

## Series II. Sybille Bedford, 1933-1993

### Subseries A. Correspondence, 1933-1993

#### Outgoing

Beauchamp, Barbara, 1966

**box 5 folder 1**

Lord, Eda, 1974-1976

von Rilla, Herr, 1968

#### Incoming

Bernhardt, Anna, 1933-1937

**box 5 folder 2-3**

Hertzberg, Robert, 1990-1993

**folder 4**

Lancaster, Marie Jacqueline, 1966

**folder 5**

### Subseries B. Manuscripts, 1945-1976

Review of *Exhumations*; Introduction to *Brave New World*

**box 5  
folder 6**



**Allanah Harper Papers--Index of Correspondents**

- Abelle, Marcelle A.--1.2 (three in French)
- Aga Khan, Andrée (née Andrée Carron)--1.2 (in French)
- Aga Khan, Habibeh ("Yaky")--1.2
- Aga Khan III, 1877-1957--1.2
- Alleefee, Chaerlie[?]-1.2
- Armbuster, (John and Caroline)--1.2
- Arthur, Esther--1.2
- Ault, Margaret--1.2
- Bagenal, Barbara--1.2
- Baker, Michael--1.2
- Barojer[?], Marilou--1.2
- Barry, Iris--1.2
- Beach, Sylvia--1.2 (printed invitation to a book release party w/ handwritten personal note)
- Beaton, Cecil Walter Hardy, Sir, 1904- --1.2
- Beddington, Charles--2.2 (written at the bottom of a letter from Diana Holman-Hunt)
- Bedford, Sybille, 1911- --1.3-5
- Bernhardt, Anna--5.2, 5.3 (40 in German)
- Birkenhead, Frederick Winston Furneaux Smith, Earl of, 1907-1975--1.2
- Birkenhead, Margaret, Countess of--1.2
- Blackburn, Chloe--1.2
- Blacket-Gill, Frances (David Higham Associates, Ltd.)--2.1
- Blume, Mary--1.2
- Bowker, Gordon--1.2
- Bowles, Jane Auer, 1917-1973--1.6
- Bradford, Sarah--1.2
- Braysen[?], Erika--1.2
- Bunting[?], P.--1.2
- Casey, Maie, Lady--1.7
- Clowes, Enid--1.7
- Clowes, Jeremy--1.7
- Compton-Burnett, I. (Ivy), 1884-1969--1.7
- Courson, Nina--1.7
- Cozzens, E. C.--1.7
- Dashwood, Helen--1.7
- Davenport, John--1.7
- David Higham Associates, Ltd.--2.1
- de C. Brissan, Henriette--1.7
- de Margerie, Jenny (Madame Roland)--1.7
- D'Erlanger, Catherine--1.7
- Drapey, Muriel--1.7
- Dubeen, Ann--1.7
- Durrell, Lawrence--1.7 (to Sir Walter Smart)
- Duthuit, Georges, 1891- (Transition Press)--1.7 (in French)
- Elborn, Geoffrey, 1950- --1.8
- Eliot, T. S. (Thomas Stearns), 1888-1965--1.8
- Felkin, Elliott, 1892-1968--1.8
- Ford, Hugh D., 1925- --1.8
- Flanner, Janet, 1892- --1.8
- Gainesford, Anne--1.8

- Gainesford, Louis--1.8
- Gellhorn, Martha, 1908- --1.8
- Gendel, Evelyn--1.8
- Glendinning, Victoria--1.8
- Gorer, Geoffrey, 1905- --1.8
- Gratry, Usha--1.8
- Green, Anne--1.8
- Guérinier, A.--1.8
- Harari, Manya, 1906-1969 (Harvill Press)--1.9
- Harper, Mrs. (Allana's mother)--1.9
- Harvey, Maud--1.9
- Henry, David--1.
- Hertzberg, Robert--5.49
- Herviot, J.--1.9
- Heyberger, Daphne--1.9
- Heyberger, Jacque Bourgeois--1.9
- Hoare, Philip--1.9
- Holman-Hunt, Diana--2.2
- Howard, Brian, 1905-1958--1.9; see also Lancaster, Marie Jacqueline
- Howe, Eric Graham, 1897- --1.9
- Johnson, Lucia C.--1.9
- Jouvenel, Renaud de--1.9 (in French)
- Kirkpatrick, Pat--1.9
- King-Farlow, Denys--1.9
- King-Farlow, Margaret--1.9
- Laflémy[?], Micheline--2.3 (in French)
- Lancaster, Marie-Jacqueline--2.3 (encloses one to A.H. from Brian Howard); 5.5 (to Sybille Bedford)
- La Rochefoucauld, Edmee de, 1895- --2.3 (in French)
- Lehmann, John, 1907- --2.3
- Lehmann, Rosamond, 1901- --2.3
- Leigh-Fermor, Joan--2.3
- Leslie, Shane, 1885-1971--2.3
- Levy, Basil--2.3
- Lowenstein, Diana--2.3
- Lowenstein, Poldi--2.3 (photograph of a painting enclosed)
- Macdonald, Nesta--2.3
- McManus, Michael E.--2.3
- Madden[?], Anne--2.3
- Mann, Cathleen--2.3
- Maillart, Ella, 1903- --2.3
- Mariel[?], Rona--2.3
- Meyer, Andy--2.3
- Meyer, Kay--2.3
- Milburne, Pamela--2.3
- Montagu, Elizabeth--2.3
- Motter, Paul--2.3
- Osbourne-Hill, Timothy--2.3
- Pendar, Beatrix--2.4
- Prevost, Jean--2.3
- Quennell, Peter, 1905- --2.3 (poem "Inscription")

- Rabaghati, Beatrix--2.5
- Rattray-Taylor, Olga--2.5
- Ritchie[?], Neil--2.5
- Robinson, A. de H.--2.5
- Russell, John (British Embassy. Moscow)--2.5
- Saint-Saens, Madeline--2.5
- Salter, Elizabeth, 1918-1981 (David Higham Associates, Ltd.)--2.1, 2.5
- Scarisbrick, Diane--2.5
- Seymour[?], Michael Culme, Sir--2.5
- Sideref[?], Sherban--2.5 (in French)
- Sister John Baptist--2.5
- Sitwell, Georgia--2.5
- Sitwell, Osbert, 1892-1969--2.5
- Sitwell, Reresby, 1927- --2.5
- Sitwell, Sacheverell, 1897- --2.1, 2.5 (one enclosed w/ letter from David Higham Assoc., Ltd.)
- Smart, Amy (Lady Smart)--2.6
- Smart, Walter, Sir--2.5
- Statlender, Robert--2.7 (one in French)
- Stephens, Nelly--2.5
- Stott, John--2.5
- Sutherland, Mary E. (Labour Party)--2.5
- Tanneur [?], M.--2.5
- Tchelitchew, Pavel, 1898-1957--2.5
- Tetreli, Harriet--2.5
- Topham, Pamela--2.5
- Vickers, Hugo--2.5
- Werner, Michael--2.5
- Wills, B., Miss--2.5
- Wilson, Ivy--2.5
- Yerburgh, Aicia--2.5
- Youssevitz, Helène, Princess (Mrs. Jorge da Cunha Bueno)--2.8