

Derek Parker:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Parker, Derek, 1932-
Title	Derek Parker Collection
Dates:	1955-1970
Extent:	5.5 boxes (2.29 linear feet), 1 galley folder
Abstract:	This collection consists primarily of materials relating to Parker's editorship of the <i>Poetry Review</i> as well as correspondence, production files, and printed materials relating to Parker's literary career.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-03160
Language:	English.
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchases, 1969-1974 (R4966, R5857, R6110)
Processed by	Katie Salzmann, 1995; Sarah Demb, 1996
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Derek Parker, critic, interviewer, author, and editor, was born in Looe, Cornwall, England, in 1932. He attended schools in England until the age of seventeen. Parker describes himself as "primarily a journalistic hack with perhaps a flair for interpreting the poetry of others; an occasional poet, an editor with widely catholic tastes."

Parker is a prolific writer and has been published in many forms, including verse, essays, and monographs, but he is perhaps best known for his work with the British Broadcasting Corporation and for his career as an editor. He has edited anthologies of poetry, letters, and journals, including *Poetry Review* (1966-1970) and *The Author* (1986-).

The *Poetry Review* is the official journal of the Poetry Society which was founded in 1909 to promote poetry, and publishes poetry, critical essays on poetry and poetics, and reviews. Derek Parker assumed editorship in 1966, and under his guidance, the journal published work by poets such as W. H. Auden, Robert Graves, John Heath-Stubbs, and Hugh MacDiarmid. Members of the Poetry Society who were active during Parker's editorship include: Presidents Neville Coghill and William Plomer; Vice Presidents Robert Armstrong, Sir John Betjeman, Sir Francis Meynell, and Margaret Rawlings; and Chairmen Geoffrey Handly-Taylor and Norman Hidden.

During his tenure as editor of the *Poetry Review*, Parker was involved in several other literary activities, including his editorship with John Lehmann of *Selected Letters of Edith Sitwell* (1970), his contributions to *Contemporary Poets of the English Language* and *Liberté*, and his British Broadcasting Corporation interview programs.

Since leaving the *Poetry Review*, Parker has been active in other literary ventures, often collaborating with his wife, Julia Louise Parker.

Throughout his career, Parker has been involved in many literary and artistic societies. He has been a member of the Radiowriter's Association, has served on the council of the Society of Authors, on the grand council of the Royal Academy of Dancing, and as registrar of the Royal Literary Fund.

Scope and Contents

The Derek Parker Collection, 1955-1970, consists of correspondence, production files, and printed materials relating to Parker's literary career. The bulk of the collection documents Parker's editorship of the *Poetry Review* from 1966-1970. Two series form the collection: Parker's editorial files for the *Poetry Review*, 1965-1970 (4.5 boxes), and documents relating to Parker's other literary activities, 1955-1970 (1 box).

Of the two series, Parker's editorial files for the *Poetry Review* is the largest and potentially most important. It is subdivided into three subseries: Correspondence, 1966-1970; Production Materials, 1966-1970; and the Poetry Society, 1965-1968. These three subseries document the contributions to and editorship and production of the *Poetry Review* as well as other activities of its sponsoring organization, the Poetry Society. The Correspondence subseries includes both outgoing and incoming mail and highlights Parker's role as editor. The material primarily regards contributions to the *Poetry Review*. The Production Material subseries comprises the bulk of the collection. A combination of copy, paste-up, and galley proof files of each issue published during Parker's editorship document the editing and publishing process of the *Poetry Review*.

The second series, Literary Activities, represents Parker's wide range of literary interests. The series is arranged in two subseries, General Correspondence, 1955-1970, and Projects, 1960-1970. The Projects subseries is arranged alphabetically by project, including BBC Interviews, 1963-1969, Civil List Pension for Jack Clemo, 1960-1961, *Contemporary Poets of the English Language*, 1969, *Edith Sitwell: Selected Letters*, 1965-1970, and *Liberté*, 1967. This subseries consists almost solely of correspondence relating to these various projects, documenting Parker's role in them. Significant correspondents in this series include W. H. Auden, Gavin Bantock, Ronald Bottrall, Richard Church, Noel Coward, Bonamy Dobree, Valerie Eliot, Richard Garnett, Robert Graves, Sir Alec Guinness, Christopher Isherwood, George Wilson Knight, John Lehmann, Laurence Olivier, Osbert Sitwell, Stevie Smith, Stephen Spender, and A. J. P. Taylor.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Editor, *Poetry Review*, 1965-1970, 4.5 boxes

This series is arranged in three subseries: Correspondence, Production Materials, and Poetry Society. The Correspondence subseries is divided into outgoing and incoming correspondence, both arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Included is correspondence relating to the hire and release of Parker as editor, concerning the production of the *Poetry Review*, and from numerous contributors to the magazine. Among the contributors were a number of significant poets and critics active in Britain in the late 1960s, notably, W. H. Auden, Gavin Bantock, John Heath-Stubbs, Elizabeth Jennings, Edward Lucie-Smith, Hugh MacDiarmid, A. L. Rowse, and Sacheverell Sitwell. Most of this correspondence is in reference to contributions to the *Poetry Review*. Also of interest is correspondence between Parker and Ian Hamilton Finlay concerning Finlay's legal and ethical dispute with Fulcrum Press. Production Materials, the second and largest subseries, comprises the bulk of the collection. All issues of the *Poetry Review* produced under Parker's editorship are represented by a combination of copy, paste-up, and galley proof files. The copy folders may be of greatest interest. There is one for each issue containing the contributor's manuscripts with editor's marks. Files are arranged alphabetically by contributor unless a previous order was implied by either a table of contents or numbered pages. Many of these manuscripts match up with correspondence filed in the previous subseries. Fee lists are supplied in several of the copy folders, outlining Parker's suggested payments to each of the contributors. The third subseries, Poetry Society, relates to the production of the *Poetry Review*, and is divided into Business Records and Correspondence. The Business Records consist of three items: Annual Accounts, 1965, Chairman's Report, 1966, and Minutes of the 57th Annual General Meeting, 1966. The correspondence relates to the installation of a plaque honoring Lord Byron in Westminster Abbey. Responses to a petition are included as well

as correspondence from interested parties such as Charles Causley, the Dean of Westminster, the Duke of Wellington, Geoffrey Handly-Taylor, and G. Wilson Knight.

Series II. Literary Activities, 1955-1970, 1 box

This series is arranged in two subseries: General Correspondence and Projects. The General Correspondence documents many of Parker's early literary interests and relationships. There are significant numbers of letters from Ronald Bottrall, Charles Causley, Jack Clemo, and A. L. Rowse. The Projects subseries represents several of Parker's other literary interests before and during his tenure as editor of the *Poetry Review*, including BBC Interviews, Civil List Pension for Jack Clemo, *Contemporary Poets of the English Language*, *Edith Sitwell: Selected Letters*, and *Liberté*. The subseries consist primarily of correspondence relating to these works. BBC Interviews consists primarily of responses to requests by Parker for interviews from such figures as John Masefield, Romola Nijinsky, Wallace Nichols, and others. Correspondence from Parker, Charles Causley, Richard Church, and the Prime Minister's Office in an effort to insure a Civil List Pension for poet Jack Clemo represents another project. There is corresponding mention of these efforts by Jack Clemo in the General Correspondence subseries. Another project is *Contemporary Poets of the English Language*, a biographical dictionary of poets edited by Rosalie Murphy. It consists of correspondence between Parker and Murphy regarding his contributions. *Edith Sitwell: Selected Letters* is the best documented of Parker's projects. It highlights efforts by Parker and his co-editor John Lehmann to collect Edith Sitwell's correspondence from her friends and relatives, and includes correspondence from Philip Caraman, Noel Coward, Bonamy Dobrée, and Graham Greene. *Liberté* contains incoming correspondence highlighting Parker's involvement in this Canadian anthology of poetry.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Abbott, Eric S.
 Aberconway, Christabel Mary Macnaghten McLaren, Baroness, 1890-
 Auden, W.H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973
 Bantock, Gavin, 1939-
 Barker, George, 1913-
 Betjman, John, Sir, 1906-
 Blunden, Edmund, 1896-1974
 Bottrall, Ronald, 1906-
 Bryher, Winifred, 1894-
 Carman, Philip, 1911-
 Causley, Charles, 1917-
 Church, Richard
 Clark, Leonard

Clemo, Jack R., 1916-
Coward, Noel, 1899-1973
Day, Lewis, C. (Cecil), 1904-1972
Dobree, Bonamy, 1891-
Eberhart, Richard, 1904-
Eliot, Valerie
Enright, D.J. (Dennis Joseph), 1920-
Finlay, Ian Hamilton
Garnett, Richard
Graves, Robert, 1895-
Greene, Graham, 1904-
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Gunn, Thom
Heath-Stubbs, John Francis Alexander, 1918-
Hepworth, Barbara, Dame, 1903-1975
Hollo, Anselm, 1934-
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Isherwood, Christopher, 1926-
Jennings, Elizabeth, 1926-
Kirkup, James, 1918-
Knight, George Wilson, 1897-
Larkin, Philip, 1924-
Lehmann, John, 1907-
Lindsay, Jack, 1900-
Lucie-Smith, Edward, 1933-
Macbeth, George
MacDiarmid, Hugh, 1892-1978
MacInnes, Colin
Middleton, Christopher, 1926-
Moore, Gerald, 1923-
Nance, R. Morton (Robert Morton)
Nijinsky, Romola de Pulszky

Olivier, Laurence, 1907-
Pilon, Jean-Guy
Pinter, Harold, 1930-
Plomer, William, 1903-1973
Powell, Anthony, 1905-
Pudney, John, 1909-1977
Purdy, James
Quennell, Peter, 1905-
Raine, Kathleen, 1908-
Rawlings, Margaret
Roche, Paul, 1927
Rowse, A.L. (Alfred Leslie)
Sassoon, Siegfried, 1886-1967
Singleton, Geoffrey
Sitwell, Francis
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Sitwell, Osbert, 1892-1969
Sitwell, Sacheve
Smith, Stevie, 1902-1971
Spender, Stephen
Stanford, Derek
Taylor, A.J.P. (Alan John Percival), 1906-
Thomas, D.M.
Tippett, Michael, 1905-
Waley, Alison
Watkins, Vernon Phillips, 1906-1967
Wellington, Gerald Wellesley, 7th Duke of, 1885-1972
Whicker, Lawrence R.
Whyte, Lancelot Law, 1896-
Wilson, Colin, 1931-

Subjects

Sitwell, Edith, Dame, 1887-1964

Poetry Society

Poetry Review (London, England: 1912)

Poetry--Editing

>Poetry--History and criticism

Poetry, Modern--20th century

Poetry--Periodicals

Poetry, English

Document Types

Christmas cards

Galley proofs

Petitions

Poems

Postcards

Series I. Editor, *Poetry Review*, 1965-1970, 4.5 boxes

Subseries A. Correspondence, 1966-1970

Outgoing, 1966, 1969-1970 **box 1 folder 1**

Incoming, 1966-1970

A-H **folder 2**J-R **folder 3**S-W **folder 4**

Subseries B. Production Materials, 1966-1970

Volume 57

No. 1 Spring 1966 copy **folder 5**No. 2 Summer 1966 copy **folder 6**No. 3 Autumn 1966 copy **folder 7**No. 4 Winter 1966/67 copy **folder 8**

Volume 58

No. 1 Spring 1967 copy **box 2 folder 1**No. 2 Summer 1967 copy **folder 2**No. 3 Autumn 1967 copy **folder 3**No. 4 Winter 1967/68 copy **folder 4**

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No. 1 Spring 1968

Copy **folder 5**

Galley proofs (removed to galley files)

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Copy **folder 6**

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Galley proofs	folder 2
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No. 1 Spring 1969 copy	folder 4
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Paste-up	folder 6
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Series II. Literary Activities, 1955-1970, 1 box

Subseries A. General Correspondence, 1955-1970

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Subseries B. Projects, 1960-1970

BBC Interviews, 1963-1969	box 6 folder 1
Civil List for Jack Clemo, 1960-1961	folder 2
Contemporary Poets of the English Language, 1969	folder 3
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Third-party correspondence, 1965, 1967-1970	folder 5
Liberté, 1967	folder 6

Derek Parker Collection--Index of Correspondents

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- Balston, Thomas--6.4
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- Barker, George, 1913- --1.1-2
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- Berry, Francis, Prof.--6.4
- Betjeman, John, Sir, 1906- --1.2, 5.6
- Blackburn, Thomas--1.2
- Bliss, Arthur, Sir, 1891-1975--6.1
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- Boothby, Lord--5.3
- Bottrall, Ronald, 1906- --5.6
- Bright-Holmes, John--1.1
- Browning, John Durham--6.1
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- Campbell, Mary--6.4
- Caraman, Philip, 1911- --6.4
- Carpenter, Maurice--1.2, 5.6
- Causley, Charles, 1917- --5.3, 5.7, 6.2
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- Coghill, Nevill, 1899- --1.2
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- Conn, Stewart--1.2
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- Craig, Alec--5.8
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- Cullum, Jeremy W. [Secretary to Benjamin Britten]--6.1, 6.4
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- Wilson, Colin, 1931- --1.1, 1.4