

WESTMINSTER ABBEY



ORDER OF SERVICE

In Memory of

PHILIP ARTHUR LARKIN

CH, CBE

1922-1985

Friday 14th February 1986

noon

PHILIP LARKIN was born in Coventry on 9 August 1922, the year his father was appointed City Treasurer. From 1930 until 1940 he attended King Henry VIII School, Coventry, after which he read English at St John's College, Oxford. He took a first class degree in 1943, and soon afterwards was appointed librarian at the Public Library in Wellington, Shropshire, where he stayed for the next three years. In 1945 several of his poems were included in *Poetry from Oxford in Wartime*, published by the Fortune Press, which also published his first full-length collection, *The North Ship*, the same year, and his first novel, *Jill*, in 1946. By the time his second novel, *A Girl in Winter*, was published by Faber the following year, he had moved to University College, Leicester, where he stayed until 1950 when he became sub-librarian at Queen's University, Belfast. In 1951 he had *XX Poems* privately published in Belfast, and in 1955 his second full-length collection, *The Less Deceived*, was published by the Marvell Press in Hull. The following year he was appointed Librarian at the University of Hull, a post he held until the end of his life. His third collection, *The Whitsun Weddings*, was published by Faber (who thereafter published all his books) in 1964. From 1961 until 1971 he was jazz correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*; in 1970 a collection of his jazz criticism, *All What Jazz*, was published; in 1973 he edited the *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*; in 1974 he published a fourth collection of poems, *High Windows*; and in 1983 he collected his miscellaneous prose pieces in *Required Writing*.

Among the many honours he received were the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, the Shakespeare Prize of the FVS Foundation of Hamburg and the W. H. Smith Literary Award; he was also given honorary doctorates by the Universities of Belfast, Leicester, St Andrews, Sussex, Warwick, Ulster and Oxford. He spent six months as a Visiting Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford; and was an honorary Fellow of St John's College, Oxford. He served on the Literature Panel of the Arts Council of Great Britain; helped to establish the National Manuscript Collection of Contemporary Writers; was Chairman of the Poetry Book Society; was chairman of the judges for the Booker McConnell Prize in 1977; and was a member of the Standing Conference of National and University Librarians. He was made C.B.E. in 1975 and Companion of Honour in 1985. Early in the morning of 2 December 1985 he died in Hull, after an illness which had lasted six months.

*Music before the Service, played by Harry Bicket,
Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey:*

Adagio from the First Symphony *Elgar*
Chaconne in E minor *Buxtehude*

The Jazz pieces are played by:

Alan Elsdon	—	<i>trumpet</i>
John Barnes	—	<i>reeds</i>
Pete Strange	—	<i>trombone</i>
Jim Douglas	—	<i>guitar</i>
Dave Green	—	<i>bass</i>
Laurie Chescoe	—	<i>drums</i>

*Love Songs in Age and An Arundel Tomb are printed by per-
mission of Faber and Faber Limited and Church Going by
permission of the Marvell Press.*

ORDER OF SERVICE

At 12 noon the Procession moves from the West End of the Church as the Choir sings these Sentences:

I AM the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St. John 11: 25, 26

I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Job 19: 25-27

WE brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

1 Timothy 6: 7 Job 1: 21

William Croft (1678-1727)

Organist of Westminster Abbey (1708-27)

The Sub-Dean, standing at the High Altar, says

THE BIDDING

WE have come together in the presence of God to worship Him, to pray as well for others as for ourselves, to give thanks for all His blessings and especially for His gifts and talents bestowed upon His children.

In particular on this day we commemorate with thanksgiving Philip Larkin who, possessing outstanding literary gifts, combined distinction with rare humility. We give thanks for his intellectual integrity which would not allow him to accept the consolations of a faith which he could not share and which would have delivered him from a fear of dying by which all his life he was haunted. Of this he frequently wrote or spoke and never more movingly than in the lines:

“This is a special way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try
That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die.”

Now we commend him to the God who is the loving Father of all, of those who cannot yet believe in Him as well as of those who do, with the assurance that, his fears dispelled, he now shares our rejoicing in eternal life, the gift of that Risen Lord whom here on earth he did not yet know.

All remain standing for the Choir to sing

PSALM 39

I SAID, I will take heed to my ways: that I offend not in my tongue.

I will keep my mouth as it were with a bridle: while the ungodly is in my sight.

I held my tongue, and spake nothing: I kept silence, yea, even from good words; but it was pain and grief to me.

My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled: and at the last I spake with my tongue;

Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days: that I may be certified how long I have to live.

Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long: and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee; and verily every man living is altogether vanity.

For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

And now, Lord, what is my hope: truly my hope is even in thee.

Deliver me from all mine offences: and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish.

I became dumb, and opened not my mouth: for it was thy doing.

Take thy plague away from me: I am even consumed by the means of thy heavy hand.

When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man therefore is but vanity.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling: hold not thy peace at my tears.

For I am a stranger with thee: and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength: before I go hence, and be no more seen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

All sit for the Lesson, read by Mr Ted Hughes O.B.E., the Poet Laureate.

ECCLESIASTICUS 44: 1-15

LET us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning. Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies: leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions: such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing: rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations: all these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported. And some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born; and their children after them. But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten. With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their children are within the covenant. Their seed standeth fast, and their children for their sakes. Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out. Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore. The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will shew forth their praise.

All remain seated for the Choir to sing the Anthem:

LIFT up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is the King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye ever-

lasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Psalm 24: 7-10
from 'Messiah'

*All kneel for the Prayers led by the Reverend Alan Luff,
Precentor and Sacrist of Westminster Abbey:*

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is
in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us
our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever
and ever. *Amen.*

V. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord;

R. *For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

V. Grant unto him eternal rest;

R. *And let perpetual light shine upon him.*

V. We believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord;

R. *In the land of the living.*

V. O Lord, hear our prayer;

R. *And let our cry come unto thee.*

Let us keep silence for a space as we remember Philip before
God with gratitude, affection and respect.

OFATHER of all, we pray to thee for those whom we
love, but see no longer. Grant them thy peace; let light
perpetual shine upon them; and in thy loving wisdom and
almighty power work in them the good purpose of thy perfect
will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

We pray for the University of Hull.

ALMIGHTY God, we beseech thee with thy gracious favour to behold our universities, colleges and schools, that knowledge may be increased among us, and all good learning flourish and abound. Bless all who teach and all who learn, and grant that in humility of heart they may ever look unto thee, who art the fountain of all wisdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O GOD, who by thy Spirit in our hearts dost lead men to desire thy perfection, to seek for truth, and to rejoice in beauty: Illuminate and inspire, we beseech thee, all thinkers, writers, artists, and craftsmen; that, in whatsoever is true and pure and lovely, thy name may be hallowed and thy kingdom come on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

All stand to sing the Hymn:

LEAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost a while.

Alberta 215(i) AMNS
W. H. Harris (1883-1973)

J. H. Newman (1801-1890)

All sit for an act of commemoration and thanksgiving for Philip Larkin in his own words and in the music which he appreciated so well.

Jill Balcon reads from the Preface to All What Jazz.

The Jazz group plays

Blue Horizon Sidney Bechet

Jill Balcon reads

Love Songs in Age

SHE kept her songs, they took so little space,
The covers pleased her :
One bleached from lying in a sunny place,
One marked in circles by a vase of water,
One mended, when a tidy fit had seized her,
And coloured, by her daughter—
So they had waited, till in widowhood
She found them, looking for something else, and stood

Relearning how each frank submissive chord
Had ushered in
Word after sprawling hyphenated word,
And the unfailing sense of being young
Spread out like a spring-woken tree, wherein
That hidden freshness, sung,
That certainty of time laid up in store
As when she played them first. But, even more,

The glare of that much-mentioned brilliance, love,
Broke out, to show
Its bright incipience sailing above,
Still promising to solve, and satisfy,
And set unchangeably in order. So
To pile them back, to cry,
Was hard, without lamely admitting how
It had not done so then, and could not now.

Church Going

ONCE I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door thud shut.
Another church: matting, seats, and stone,
And little books; sprawlings of flowers, cut
For Sunday, brownish now; some brass and stuff
Up at the holy end; the small neat organ;
And a tense, musty, unignorable silence,
Brewed God knows how long. Hatless, I take off
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence,

Move forward, run my hand around the font.
From where I stand, the roof looks almost new—
Cleaned, or restored? Someone would know: I don't.
Mounting the lectern, I peruse a few
Hectoring large-scale verses, and pronounce
'Here endeth' much more loudly than I'd meant.
The echoes snigger briefly. Back at the door
I sign the book, donate an Irish sixpence,
Reflect the place was not worth stopping for.

Yet stop I did: in fact I often do,
And always end much at a loss like this,
Wondering what to look for; wondering, too,
When churches fall completely out of use
What we shall turn them into, if we shall keep
A few cathedrals chronically on show,
Their parchment, plate and pyx in locked cases,
And let the rest rent-free to rain and sheep.
Shall we avoid them as unlucky places?

Or, after dark, will dubious women come
To make their children touch a particular stone;
Pick simples for a cancer; or on some
Advised night see walking a dead one?
Power of some sort or other will go on
In games, in riddles, seemingly at random;
But superstition, like belief, must die,
And what remains when disbelief has gone?
Grass, weedy pavement, brambles, buttress, sky,

A shape less recognisable each week,
A purpose more obscure. I wonder who
Will be the last, the very last, to seek
This place for what it was; one of the crew
That tap and jot and know what rood-lofts were?
Some ruin-bibber, randy for antique,
Or Christmas-addict, counting on a whiff
Of gowns-and-bands and organ-pipes and myrrh?
Or will he be my representative,

Bored, uninformed, knowing the ghostly silt
Dispersed, yet tending to this cross of ground
Through suburb scrub because it held unspilt
So long and equably what since is found
Only in separation — marriage, and birth,
And death, and thoughts of these — for which was built
This special shell? For, though I've no idea
What this accoutred frowsty barn is worth,
It pleases me to stand in silence here;

A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round.

An Arundel Tomb

SIDE by side, their faces blurred,
The earl and countess lie in stone,
Their proper habits vaguely shown
As jointed armour, stiffened pleat,
And that faint hint of the absurd—
The little dogs under their feet.

Such plainness of the pre-baroque
Hardly involves the eye, until
It meets his left-hand gauntlet, still
Clasped empty in the other; and
One sees, with a sharp tender shock,
His hand withdrawn, holding her hand.

They would not think to lie so long.
Such faithfulness in effigy
Was just a detail friends would see:
A sculptor's sweet commissioned grace
Thrown off in helping to prolong
The Latin names around the base.

They would not guess how early in
Their supine stationary voyage
The air would change to soundless damage,
Turn the old tenantry away;
How soon succeeding eyes begin
To look, not read. Rigidly they

Persisted, linked, through lengths and breadths
Of time. Snow fell, undated. Light
Each summer thronged the glass. A bright
Litter of birdcalls strewed the same
Bone-riddled ground. And up the paths
The endless altered people came,

Washing at their identity.
Now, helpless in the hollow of
An unarmorial age, a trough
Of smoke in slow suspended skeins
Above their scrap of history,
Only an attitude remains:

Time has transfigured them into
Untruth. The stone fidelity
They hardly meant has come to be
Their final blazon, and to prove
Our almost-instinct almost true:
What will survive of us is love.

The Jazz group plays

Davenport Blues *Bix Beiderbecke*

After a brief silence all stand to sing the Hymn:

ABIDE with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Eventide 13 AMNS

H. F. Lyte (1793-1847)

W. H. Monk (1823-89)

All kneel for the Prayer:

BRING us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of thy Majesty and thy glory, world without end. *Amen.*

John Donne

The Sub-Dean gives

THE BLESSING

All sit for Alan Elsdon to play:

A Closer Walk With Thee *Traditional*

and for the Sub-Organist to play:

Chorale Prelude: Ich ruf zu dir *J. S. Bach*

All stand for the Procession of the Collegiate Body to move to the West End of the Church.

Music after the Service

Prelude and Fugue in C major (The Great) *J. S. Bach*

The Bells of the Abbey Church are now rung.

Members of the Congregation are requested to remain in their places until directed to leave by the Stewards.