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Smith, Sydney Goodsir  
Poet, 1915-1975

Sydney Goodsir Smith, 1915-1975

Includes correspondence, typescript and holograph poem drafts, sketches and print either by or about the Scottish poet Sydney Goodsir Smith. Some material relates to his wife Hazel Smith.

Extent: 1 box (5 cm)

Biographical information from the National Library of Scotland website:

<http://digital.nls.uk/writestuff/smith.html>

Sydney Goodsir Smith was a significant figure in the 20th-century revival of poetry in Scots. His masterpiece, *Under the Eildon Tree* (1948), comprising 23 variations on the subject of love, draws parallels between his personal experience and that of great lovers in history and mythology. It is one of the great love poems in Scots. Sydney Goodsir Smith spent his first years in New Zealand, then in 1928 moved with his family to Edinburgh. From the outset he chose Scots as the language for his poetry. Three collections appeared in the 1940s: *Skail Wind* (1941), *The Wanderer* (1944) and *The Deevil's Waltz* (1946). A humorous novel, *Carotid Cornucopius*, followed in 1947. In the 1950s, with the publication of *So Late Into the Night* (1952) *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1955), and *Figs and Thistles* (1959), he was hailed as the best Lallans poet after MacDiarmid. His play, *The Wallace*, was staged at the 1960 Edinburgh Festival. *Kynd Kittock's Land* (1965) gives an affectionate portrait of Edinburgh.

From wikipedia entry on 'Lallans':

The term *Lallans* was also used during the Scottish Renaissance of the early 20th century to refer to what Hugh MacDiarmid called synthetic Scots, i.e., a synthesis integrating, blending, and combining various forms of the Scots language, both vernacular and archaic. This was intended as a classical, standard Scots for a world-class literature, although it was more often than not Scots words grafted on to a standard English grammatical structure somewhat removed from traditional spoken Scots, its main practitioners not being habitual Lowland Scots speakers themselves.

"In addition, the present century has seen the conscious creation of a 'mainstream' variety of Scots—a standard literary variety, [...] referred to as 'synthetic Scots', now generally goes under the name Lallans (= 'Lowlands'). [...] In its grammar and spelling, it shows the marked influence of Standard English, more so than other Scots dialects." [6] MacDiarmid's detractors often referred to it as plastic Scots — a word play on synthetic as in synthetic plastics — to emphasize its artificiality. William Shakespeare also indulged in similar activities using the English language but has never been accused of writing synthetic or plastic English. With this in mind Sydney Goodsir Smith answered critics in his Epistle to John Guthrie:

We've come intil a gey queer time

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Whan scrievin Scots is near a crime,  
'There's no one speaks like that', they flee,  
-But wha the deil spoke like King Lear?

Box 1 25 folders	Correspondence Sketches Print Poem drafts  Note: contents of folders 1-9 removed from Fisher copy of <i>Figs and Thistles</i> . 1959 catalogued as: Bissell .S558 F545 1959  Note: contents of folders 10-25 purchased from John Updike Rare Books, Edinburgh
Folder 1	Ink sketches of poets Norman MacCaig and Sydney Goodsir Smith by 'Dickman' 1958
Folder 2	"Late", signed 'SGS' typescript poem with holograph revisions
Folder 3	"Xmas Carol 1966" typescript poem
Folder 4	"Mars and Venus at Hogmanay 1942" typescript poem
Folder 5	"'Three Men Make a Revolution'—Lenin" typescript poem
Folder 6	"Song: She Fills the Heart" typescript poem
Folder 7	"Winter" typescript poem
Folder 8	"Wale O'Ilka Toun" typescript poem with holograph revisions and holograph initials

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Folder 9	“Seal Poem” typescript poem with holograph revisions and holograph initials
Folder 10	Telegram with envelope Garech Browne to Sydney Goodsir Smith
Folder 11	Sydney Goodsir Smith to his wife, Hazel ALS
Folder 12	“In Memoriam Sydney Goodsir Smith (1915-1975)” by Duncan Glen, in <i>akros</i> , supplement to Volume 9, No. 27, April 1975
Folder 13	Newspaper clippings re: Sydney Goodsir Smith
Folder 14	To Hazel Smith, envelope from Bank of Scotland
Folder 15	Pencil drawing of cats by Sydney Goodsir Smith
Folder 16	Holograph note from Sydney Goodsir Smith announcing a present for Hazel
Folder 17	British Council envelope covered in holograph notes in the hand of Sydney Goodsir Smith
Folder 18	Hazel Smith to the editor of <i>The Scotsman</i> Re: printing error ALS draft November 16, 1975
Folder 19	Eric B. Mackay, editor, <i>The Scotsman</i> TLS reply to Hazel Smith November 19, 1975 With manuscript note on verso [possibly in Hazel’s hand?]
Folder 20	Edinburgh International Festival programme August 21-September 10, 1960

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Folder 21	World premiere of "The Wallace: a Triumph in Five Acts" by Sydney Goodsir Smith, Edinburgh International Festival 1960 programme
Folder 22	Robert [Nye?] ALS, 16-1-61 Wallace Monument Luncheon menu June 24, 1961
Folder 23	Sydney Goodsir Smith to Professor DeLancey Ferguson TLS November 18, 1955
Folder 24	"The Nightmare" holograph poem with revisions
Folder 25	"Requiem for the Living" typescript poem with holograph revisions and envelope