

# Chronology

COMPILED BY HEATHER DE SAVAGE

Information for this chronology has been drawn from a variety of sources. Works are listed by the year of their first performance except where otherwise indicated; given the extent of the composer's *oeuvre*, only major works or those that represent an important phase of broader compositional activity are included. For a complete listing, see *KC* or the entry on Vaughan Williams in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Additional information on Vaughan Williams's family background may be found in Chapter 1.

Year	Life	Works
1872	Born in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, 12 October.	
1875	Death of father; family moves from Down Ampney to Leith Hill Place, Surrey.	
1878	Begins music lessons with his aunt Sophy Wedgwood; first composition (four bars), <i>The Robin's Nest</i> .	
1879	Begins violin lessons.	
1880	Passes a correspondence course in music theory.	
1883–6	Attends Field House School, Rottingdean, Sussex.	
1887–90	Attends Charterhouse School, Godalming, Surrey. In August 1888 plays violin in performance of his Piano Trio in G major in school concert.	Piano Trio in G major (lost).
1890–2	Attends Royal College of Music, London (RCM); studies theory with F. E. Gladstone, composition with Hubert Parry and organ with Walter Parratt.	Composes <i>Three Elizabethan Songs</i> ?1891–6.
1892–5	Attends Trinity College, Cambridge (Mus. Bac. 1894, BA in History, 2nd-class honours, 1895); continues lessons with Parry; also studies with Charles Wood (composition) and Alan Gray (organ).	'The Virgin's Cradle Song' 1894. Completes Piano Trio in C major 1895.
1895–6	Returns to RCM, studies composition with Stanford. Becomes friends with Gustav Holst. Appointed organist at St Barnabas Church, South Lambeth.	Begins <i>Fantasia for Pianoforte and Orchestra</i> (completed 1904).
1897	Marries Adeline Fisher, 9 October; honeymoon spent mostly in Berlin, where RVW studies composition for several months with Max Bruch.	Composes String Quartet in C minor 1897–8.
1898	Returns to London; lives at several addresses in Westminster, finally settling at 10 Barton Street early in 1899. Passes exams to become Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO).	Composes <i>Serenade in A minor</i> .

Year	Life	Works
1899		Completes <i>The Garden of Proserpine</i> and Mass submitted for Cambridge Mus. Doc. Degree.
1900		Completes <i>Bucolic Suite</i> .
1901	Awarded Mus. Doc., Cambridge; first performances of orchestral music, <i>Heroic Elegy</i> in London, Serenade in A minor in Bournemouth.	<i>Heroic Elegy and Triumphant Epilogue</i> .
1902	First work published, 'Linden Lea'; first University Extension Lectures; first articles for <i>The Vocalist</i> magazine.	'Rest'; 'Whither Must I Wander'.
1903	Receives enthusiastic critical notices from Edwin Evans and several other writers; begins work on <i>A Sea Symphony</i> ; in December begins collecting folksongs.	<i>Willow-Wood; The Solent</i> ; completes Piano Quintet in C minor.
1904	Begins work as editor of <i>The English Hymnal</i> , which will continue until 1906; publishes articles on fugue and conducting in <i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> (2nd edn).	<i>The House of Life; Songs of Travel</i> ; completes first version of <i>In the Fen Country</i> .
1905	Assists in founding of Leith Hill Festival and is appointed Principal Conductor; continues in this position until 1953. Edits first volume of Purcell's <i>Welcome Songs</i> for the Purcell Society. On November 1 Vaughan Williamses move to 13 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where they live until 1929.	<i>Pan's Anniversary</i> .
1906	Publication of <i>The English Hymnal</i> , which includes original contributions from RVW.	<i>Norfolk Rhapsody</i> No. 1; incidental music for <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> .
1907	In mid-December travels to Paris to begin study with Maurice Ravel.	<i>Toward the Unknown Region; Boldre Wood; Harnham Down; Norfolk Rhapsodies</i> Nos. 2 & 3.
1908	Returns from Paris in late February.	Completes <i>Three Nocturnes</i> based on poems of Whitman. Publishes <i>Folksongs from Eastern Counties</i> , arrangements of songs collected by the composer between 1903 and 1906.
1909	Ravel stays with Vaughan Williamses on first visit to London.	Incidental music for <i>The Wasps</i> ; String Quartet in G minor; <i>On Wenlock Edge</i> .
1910	Edits second volume of Purcell's <i>Welcome Songs</i> ; conducts premieres of <i>Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis</i> (September) and <i>A Sea Symphony</i> (October).	<i>Fantasia on English Folk Song; Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis; A Sea Symphony</i> . Begins work on first opera, <i>Hugh the Drover</i> , completed in vocal score 1914.
1911		<i>Five Mystical Songs</i> ; incidental music to <i>Iphigenia in Tauris, The Bacchae</i> and <i>Electra</i> ; begins work on <i>A London Symphony</i> , completed 1913.
1912		<i>Fantasia on Christmas Carols</i> ; composes Phantasy Quintet.
1913	Works with F. R. Benson on Shakespeare productions at Stratford-upon-Avon.	Incidental music for a number of Stratford Shakespeare productions and plays by Maeterlinck; <i>Five English Folk Songs</i> .
1914–19	War declared 4 August 1914; enlists as Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps; serves as wagon orderly in 2/4 London Field Ambulance, sees action in France and Greece in 1916; given commission as Lieutenant in Royal Garrison Artillery in 1917, sees action in France in 1918; after Armistice is made Director of Music, First	1914: <i>A London Symphony</i> ; composes <i>Four Hymns</i> and <i>The Lark Ascending</i> (version for violin and piano).

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Year	Life	Works
1919	Army of the British Expeditionary Force, France. Demobilized February 1919. Awarded honorary D.Mus degree by Oxford University; begins teaching composition at the RCM.	
1920	Revised version of <i>A London Symphony</i> published; performed in London (May) and New York (December).	<i>Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes</i> ; 'O Clap Your Hands'; <i>Twelve Traditional Carols from Herefordshire</i> .
1921	Appointed conductor of the Bach Choir; resigns position in 1928.	<i>The Lark Ascending</i> (version for violin and orchestra); <i>Merciless Beauty</i> .
1922	In late May embarks on first visit to the USA, to conduct American premiere of <i>A Pastoral Symphony</i> in Norfolk, CT; sees New York, Boston and Niagara Falls.	<i>A Pastoral Symphony</i> ; Mass in G minor; <i>The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains</i> .
1923		<i>English Folk Songs</i> (Suite for Military Band); <i>Old King Cole</i> .
1924	<i>On Wenlock Edge</i> performed at International Society for Contemporary Music festival in Salzburg.	First performances of <i>Hugh the Drover</i> (RCM). Begins work on <i>Sir John in Love</i> , completed 1928.
1925	Begins relationship with Oxford University Press. <i>A Pastoral Symphony</i> performed at ISCM festival in Prague; <i>Merciless Beauty</i> performed at ISCM festival in Venice. Conducts recordings of Overture to <i>The Wasps</i> and <i>Old King Cole</i> .	Concerto in D minor ( <i>Concerto Accademico</i> ), violin and orchestra; <i>Flos Campi</i> ; <i>Four poems by Fredegond Shove</i> ; <i>Three Poems by Walt Whitman</i> ; begins work on <i>Riders to the Sea</i> , completed 1932.
1926		<i>Six Studies in English Folksong</i> ; <i>On Christmas Night</i> ; <i>Sancta Civitas</i> . Composes first two movements of Concerto in C major for Pianoforte and Orchestra, completed 1931.
1927		<i>Along the Field</i> .
1928	Publication of <i>The Oxford Book of Carols</i> , the music edited by RVW and Martin Shaw, and including original contributions from the composer.	Te Deum in G.
1929	In October Vaughan Williamses move out of London to The White Gates, Dorking. <i>Flos Campi</i> performed at the ISCM festival in Geneva.	<i>Sir John in Love</i> .
1930	Awarded Cobbett Medal; receives Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society.	<i>Job</i> (orchestral version); <i>Benedicite</i> ; <i>Fantasia on Sussex Folk Tunes</i> .
1931	<i>Benedicite</i> at ISCM Festival, London; <i>Job</i> staged at Cambridge Theatre, London.	<i>Job</i> (staged ballet).
1932	Elected President of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. In September begins second trip to USA, to lecture at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania; returns December.	<i>Magnificat</i> .
1933		Concerto in C major for Pianoforte and Orchestra.
1934	Death of Gustav Holst. Awarded Collard Life Fellowship; <i>National Music</i> published.	<i>The Running Set</i> ; Suite for Viola; <i>Fantasia on 'Greensleeves'</i> .
1935	Accepts the Order of Merit.	Symphony No. 4.
1936		<i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i> ; <i>The Poisoned Kiss</i> ; <i>Five Tudor Portraits</i> .
1937	Conducts recording of the Fourth Symphony; awarded first Shakespeare Prize by University of Hamburg; Festival Te Deum performed at King George VI's coronation.	<i>Riders to the Sea</i> ; <i>Flourish for a Coronation</i> ; Festival Te Deum.

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Year	Life	Works
1938	Meets Ursula Wood, whom he will later marry.	<i>Double Trio; Serenade to Music</i> ; begins work on Symphony No. 5, completed in 1943.
1939	RVW's music banned by the Nazis. Active member of Dorking Committee for Refugees from Nazi Oppression; assists Myra Hess with organization of National Gallery Concerts instituted at outbreak of war.	<i>Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'</i> .
1940	Composes first film score, for <i>49th Parallel</i> . Appointed Chair of Home Office Committee for the Release of Interned Alien Musicians.	<i>Six Choral Songs to be Sung in the Time of War</i> .
1941	Appointed to Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA).	<i>Household Music; England, My England</i> .
1942		'Valiant for Truth'; <i>Coastal Command</i> .
1943	Conducts premiere of Symphony No. 5 at the Proms.	Symphony No. 5; <i>The People's Land; The Flemish Farm</i> .
1944		Concerto in A minor for Oboe and Strings; String Quartet in A minor.
1945		<i>Thanksgiving for Victory; Stricken Peninsula</i> .
1946		Introduction and Fugue for Two Pianos.
1947		<i>The Loves of Joanna Godden; The Souls of the Righteous</i> ; 'The Voice out of the Whirlwind'.
1948		Symphony No. 6; <i>Scott of the Antarctic</i> ; 'Prayer to the Father of Heaven'.
1949	Sits for Epstein bust.	<i>Dim Little Island; Fantasia (quasi variazione) on the 'Old 104th' Psalm Tune; An Oxford Elegy</i> .
1950	First full-length book on RVW published, <i>Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study</i> by Hubert Foss.	<i>Folksongs of the Four Seasons; Bitter Springs; The Sons of Light</i> ; Concerto Grosso.
1951	Death of Adeline Vaughan Williams; <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> staged as part of Festival of Britain.	<i>The Pilgrim's Progress; Three Shakespeare Songs</i> .
1952		<i>O Taste and See</i> .
1953	Marries Ursula Wood, 7 February; leaves Dorking and moves back to London, living at 10 Hanover Square, Regent's Park. Arrangement of <i>Old Hundredth Psalm Tune</i> performed at coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.	<i>Sinfonia Antartica</i> ; 'Silence and Music'; <i>The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune</i> .
1954	In September embarks on third visit to the USA, at invitation of Cornell University; lectures there and at other institutions across the country; receives Howland Memorial Prize from Yale University. Vaughan Williams Trust established.	<i>Hodie</i> ; Sonata in A minor for Violin and Pianoforte; Concerto in F minor for Bass Tuba and Orchestra.
1955	<i>The Making of Music</i> published.	
1956		Symphony No. 8; 'A Vision of Aeroplanes'; <i>The England of Elizabeth</i> .
1957		<i>Ten Blake Songs; Epithalamion</i> ; Variations for Brass Band.
1958	Dies suddenly at London home, 26 August.	Symphony No. 9; <i>The First Nowell</i> (completed by Roy Douglas).