

# PLACES OF SIGNIFICANCE TO RVW AND HIS WORKS

(Prepared by Graham Muncy, Trustee of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society)

## ENGLAND

### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

- **High Wycombe Town Hall.** RVW Adjudicated at Beds, Bucks and Oxon Competitive Musical Festival, 1907.
- **Slough Public Hall,** 1911.

### CAMBRIDGE

- **Trinity College.** RVW took his main degrees in music 1894, history in 1895 and his D.Mus. later. He gained performance experience as choral conductor and several early smaller pieces were performed by Cambridge University Music Society.
- **The Wasps** incidental music commissioned by the University Greek Play Committee and first performed at New Theatre, 26/11/1909.
- **Old King Cole** first performed at Nevile's Court, Trinity College, 5/6/1923.

### CAMBRIDGSHIRE

- **Ely Cathedral.** In his student years, RVW often cycled to hear Sunday services. He was inspired by the sight of the cathedral and the sound of the choir.

### CORNWALL

- **NEWQUAY.** Ralph and Ursula had a short stay in April 1955. Took bus trips including to Padstow. Weather poor.

### CUMBERLAND (CUMBRIA)

- **Seatoller, Borrowdale.** RVW along with George Macaulay Trevelyan, George E. Moore and Maurice Amos held reading parties in 1895.
- **Keswick.** Keswick Musical Festival. Apr. 1912. RVW adjudicated.

### DORSET

- **Canford Cliffs.** Short stay (10 days) New Year, 1929.
- **Bournemouth.** Pokesdown Technical School, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth. In the winter of 1902, RVW lectured on Folk and National Song.
- **Bournemouth Winter Gardens.** Old Winter Gardens demolished 1935. Several of RVW's early orchestral works were first performed here by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, under Dan Godfrey:
  - Serenade in A minor. 1898. (4/4/1901)
  - Bucolic Suite. 1900. (10/3/1902)
  - Symphonic Rhapsody. 1904. (7/3/1904)
- **Bridport, Cerne and Dorset Coast.** Short holiday tour with Ursula and Joy Finzi – August 1958.

### ESSEX

- **Bishop's Stortford.** RVW billeted with musical family (the Machrays). Lots of music-making.

- **Danbury.** Rented house next to that of C. Armstrong Gibbs. Summer 1923.
- **Ingrave (near Brentwood).** RVW collected his first folk songs (including **Bushes and Briars**) here from labourer, Charles Pottipher – 4/12/1903. He returned on later collecting visits.
- **Saffron Walden.** RVW Billeted in the town during army training in May 1915. Played the organ of St. Mary's for church parades and music making with comrades.

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE

- **Down Ampney - The Vicarage.** Ralph Vaughan Williams was born here (now a private residence) 12/10/1872. Ralph and Ursula visited the village on return journey from Worcester Three Choirs Festival, 1948.
- **Down Ampney - All Saint's Church.** RVW's father, Rev. Arthur Vaughan Williams was Vicar here from 1868 until his death, 9/2/1875 and is buried in the churchyard. There is a permanent display (provided by RVW Society) at the base of church tower.
- **Gloucester Cathedral.** Main venue for Three Choirs Festival (one year in three). RVW attended the Festival most years.
  - **Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis** famously premiered here 6/9/1910.
  - Premiers of **Introduction and Scene – Poisoned Kiss'** (County Hall, 1937) and **Fantasia on the Old 104th.** (1950).
- **Chosen Hill.** Visited with Gerald Finzi and family after Three Choirs Festival 1956.
- **Stinchcombe.** RVW attended a competitive music festival in 1922.

## HAMPSHIRE

- **Bordon.** RVW stationed here before travelling to France, March 1918.
- **Petersfield.** RVW adjudicated at Musical Festivals between 1907 and 1912. (Drill Hall).
- **New Forest.** Adeline's family lived at Brockenhurst and RVW knew the area well, walking and cycling. He composed various Forest-related short orchestral pieces.

## HEREFORDSHIRE

- **Hereford Cathedral.** Venue for Three Choirs Festival (one year in three). **Fantasia on Christmas Carols** premiered 12/9/1912. RVW attended most years.
- **Weobley, Dilwin, Monnington-on-Wye.** RVW visited in 1909 to assist local folklorist, Ella Leather to collect and notate songs and carols from the local area. Notable results were such songs as **The Truth Sent from Above** and **The Unquiet Grave.**

## HERTFORDSHIRE

- **Meldreth, Nr. Royston.** RVW and Adeline stayed, July – Aug. 1907.
- **Watford.** RVW stationed here for ambulance training. April 1915. (Billeted at 76 Cassio Rd.)

## ISLE OF WIGHT

- **Freshwater.** RVW spent 3 weeks here in August 1911 working on his Ballad Opera, **Hugh the Drover.**

## KENT

- **Romney Marsh/Lydd.** Artillery training on ranges, Nov. 1917. Ralph and Ursula visited Hythe, Winchelsea, Rye, Dungeness and Lydd on holiday, autumn 1951.
- **Margate.** RVW, Adeline and Ralph's mother, Margaret, stayed in the town just after the outbreak of war in August 1914. (RVW was arrested on the nearby cliffs by a boy scout for allegedly drawing maps which could assist the enemy!)

## LEICESTERSHIRE

- **Whitwick.** Charnwood Festival and Competition, Holy Cross Schools. RVW adjudicated, April 1909.

## LINCOLNSHIRE

- **Gunby Hall – Near Spilsby (National Trust).** Home of Ralph's cousin, Diana Montgomery-Massingberd. Ralph composed **Happy Day at Gumby** for performance here in 1892. Ralph and Ursula visited again in June 1958 on a tour of the eastern counties also visiting Lincoln, Boston, Spalding and Peterborough.

## LONDON

- **10 Barton Street – Westminster.** Ralph and Adeline moved here after their marriage in 1897, moving out in 1905 to Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. Work on the **English Hymnal** commenced here.
- **The British Library – Euston Road.** Ursula Vaughan Williams donated most of Ralph's manuscripts, papers and letters to the music collections.
- **13 Cheyne Walk – Chelsea.** Main home for Ralph and Adeline between 1905 and 1929. (House now demolished!) Many major works composed here. For example: **On Wenlock Edge, Tallis Fantasia, London Symphony, Hugh the Drover.**
- **Embankment Gardens, Chelsea.** Bust of RVW by Paul Farmer, unveiled in 2012.
- **English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS).** 2, Regent's Park Road, London, NW1 7AY. ([www.efdss.org.uk](http://www.efdss.org.uk)) RVW was a member from early on, contributing to the Journal and later becoming President. The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library is a treasure-trove of documentation with manuscripts and recordings covering RVW's collecting activities
- **10 Hanover Terrace (Regent's Park).** Ralph and Ursula moved here on their marriage in 1953 and Ralph died here 26/8/1958. Blue plaque. Major works composed here: **Hodie, Symphonies 8 and 9.**
- **Queen's Hall, Langham Place.** (Now St. George's Hotel.) London's premier concert hall, opened 1893 and original home of the Proms, destroyed by bombing in 1941. Many RVW works were premiered here: **1st. Norfolk Rhapsody (1906), London Symphony (1914) Pastoral Symphony (1922), Flos Campi (1925), Piano Concerto, (1933), Suite for Viola and Orchestra (1934), Symphony No. 4 (1935), Flourish for a Coronation (1937).**
- **Royal College of Music (South Kensington).** RVW had two periods of study here 1890-1892 /1894-1895. He taught composition here in 1920s-1940s and two of his operas were first produced here: **Hugh the Drover** and **Sir John in Love.**
- **Royal College of Organists Building (South Kensington)** Now in private ownership. This was the original building of the Royal College of Music and where VW first met Gustav Holst.
- **Royal Festival Hall (South Bank Centre).** Major London concert venue built as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain. Ralph's 85th. birthday celebrations and concert held here and the premiere of the **9th. Symphony (2/4/1958)**
- **Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.** Premiere of **The Pilgrim's Progress**, conducted by Leonard Hancock, 26/4/1951.
- **St. Barnabas Church, South Lambeth.** RVW's only paid post was as Organist and Choirmaster here between 1895 and 1899. He had rooms in the nearby St. Barnabas Villas.
- **Westminster Abbey.** For the 1937 Coronation, RVW composed the **Festival Te Deum in F Major.** For the 1953 Coronation, he produced his arrangement of the **Old Hundredth Psalm Tune (All People That on Earth Do Dwell), O Taste and See** and sections from **Communion Service in G minor.** On 17th September 1958, his ashes were buried in the

Abbey during a special memorial service. Those of Ursula joined her husband's ashes in 2008.

## MANCHESTER

- **Free Trade Hall.** Earlier home of the Halle Orchestra. Hall sold in 1977 and developed as an hotel but retaining many original features including original façade. Now Radisson Edwardian Hotel. Premiere of RVW's **Symphony No.8 in D Minor**, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli – (2/5/1956)

## NORFOLK

- **Heacham.** RVW stayed with his friend, composer Patrick Hadley, July 1952. Also visited Saffron Waldon and Ely and King's Lynn Festival; lecture and performance of **Symphony No. 5.**
- **King's Lynn.** In early 1905, RVW stayed in the town and collected many songs from sailors and fishermen, including **Spanish Ladies, On Board the Ninety-Eight** and **The Captain's Apprentice.**
- **Sheringham.** Ralph and Adeline rented houses and apartments here 1919-21 where much of **A Pastoral Symphony** was composed. Plaque on house.

## NORTHUMBERLAND

- **Hexham.** Tynedale Musical Festival. March, 1911. RVW Adjudicated.

## OXFORDSHIRE

- **Oxford Town Hall.** Beds, Bucks and Oxon Competitive Musical Festival, 1908. RVW adjudicated, May 1908, April 1913.
- **Oxford Sheldonian Theatre.** Premiere of the Oratorio, **Sancta Civitas** by Oxford Bach Choir, soloists and orchestra, conducted by Hugh Allen, 7/5/1926.
- **Oxford Queen's College.** First public performance of **An Oxford Elegy** directed by Bernard Rose, 19/6/1952.
- **Tetsworth (Thane).** Ralph and Adeline stayed at Wheatfield the house of the Curles (Adeline's sister's family), while they were in France – July, 1922.

## SOMERSET

- **Bristol.** RVW awarded Honorary Degree, presented by Winston Churchill. Late 1951.
- **Klive, Exmoor** Adeline, Ralph and Ralph's mother stayed here in 1901. Long walks and composing.
- **Midsomer Norton.** RVW adjudicated at Shepton Mallet Musical Competitions, May 1908.

## SHROPSHIRE

- RVW and Ursula visited Wenlock Edge and Stokesay during Worcester Three Choirs Festival, 1948.

## STAFFORDSHIRE

- **Wolverhampton** (Town Hall?). RVW attended performances of **Mass in G minor** and **Riders to the Sea**, 1950.

## SUFFOLK

- **Southwold – Suffolk.** RVW visited Southwold and surrounding areas on a folk song collecting expedition with George Butterworth in December 1911. Songs collected included **The Royal George.**

## SURREY

- **Charterhouse School, Godalming.** RVW was a pupil here 1887–1890. The school has a Vaughan Williams Music Centre and a copy of the bronze relief of the composer by David McFall.
- **Christ Church, Coldharbour (near Dorking).** RVW's parents (Arthur Vaughan Williams and Margaret Wedgwood) married here (22/2/1868). Various Vaughan Williams and Wedgwood family graves in churchyard. RVW occasionally played the earlier organ. (Current instrument installed from Margaret Vaughan Williams bequest).
- **Leith Hill Place, Coldharbour (near Dorking).** Home of the Wedgwood family. RVW lived here with his mother and siblings from 1874 until he first settled in London. He was a frequent visitor throughout his life. After inheriting the house in 1944, he quickly passed ownership to The National Trust. When open to the public, the house holds various displays and events relating to the composer, together with a small permanent exhibition, including his working/composing piano.
- **Tanhurst, Coldharbour (near Dorking).** Former home of Vaughan Williams' paternal family. Close to Leith Hill Place.
- **Dorking: Dorking Halls.** RVW was a prime mover in the provision of this venue. the Leith Hill Musical Festival moving there when it opened in 1931. Bronze relief of RVW by David McFall (1961) in the foyer Falls and a fine statue of composer outside by William Fawke. Unveiled by Ursula Vaughan Williams (19/4/2001) ([www.dorkinghalls.co.uk](http://www.dorkinghalls.co.uk)). Leith Hill Musical Festival held annually in March/April as "A living memorial" to the composer.
- **Dorking, Drill Hall, Drill Hall Road.** Home of the Leith Hill Musical Festival (conducted by RVW), between 1922 and 1930. Important for housing premieres of three RVW works at the 1930 festival: **Benedicite, Three Choral Hymns** and **The Hundredth Psalm**.
- **Dorking Museum, off West Street.** Small town museum with exhibits and documents relating to RVW.
- **Dorking, Mount Street.** RVW billeted at a house in January 1915 while in basic Royal Army Medical Corp training.
- **Dorking, St. Martin's Church.** Designed by Henry Woodyer and completed in 1877, RVW directed many concerts here during World War 2, including performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion. Copy of McFall bronze relief of composer in porch and an interesting collection of hassocks inspired by RVW's compositions in the Lady Chapel.
- **Dorking, Public Hall, West Street.** Built originally in 1871-2, this was the original home of the Leith Hill Musical Festival, (10/5/1905) and conducted by RVW. Now retail premises.
- **Dorking, The White Gates, Nutcombe Lane (off Wescott Rd.)** Site of only remaining. Apart from the views and general location, there is regrettably now nothing to see of RVW's former home between 1929 and 1953). The large bungalow in its own extensive grounds was demolished in 1964. Among works composed here were **Symphonies 4 to 7, Serenade to Music, Five Tudor Portraits, Dona Nobis Pacem**, the **film music** and much of **The Pilgrim's Progress**.
- **Dorking, White Horse Hotel, High Street.** RVW rehearsed the Leith Hill Music Festival here during WW2. and initiated a lunchtime chamber music recital series.
- **Reigate - Reigate Priory.** Premier of music for **The Pilgrim's Progress** (as part of dramatization) directed by RVW, 1/12/1906.

## EAST SUSSEX

- **Brighton.** Short stay with Ursula. Visited old prep. School in Rottingdean. 1957.(spring).
- **Brighton, Rottingdean.** RVW attended prep. School, Field House (now closed) High St. (1883-1886)
- **Hove, All Saints Parish Church.** RVW married Adeline Fisher here, 9/10/1897.

## WEST SUSSEX

- **Maresfield.** RVW started Officer Training here, Aug 1917.
- **Rusper, Horsham. The Plough Inn.** RVW collected folk songs from here, 1907-08. He heard the landlord, Mr. Penfold, sing **What Hurricane Wind**, **Green Broom**, **The Miller of the Dee**, **The Turtle Dove** and **The trees they do grow high**.

## WARWICKSHIRE

- **Leamington.** Leamington and County Open Competitive Musical Festival. May 1913. RVW Adjudicated.
- **Stratford-upon-Avon.** RVW was musical director for Sir Frank Benson's Shakespeare season 1913. **Pan's Anniversary**, a **Masque** by Ben Jonson with music arranged by Holst and RVW composing choral items, was first performed here 24/4/1905. (Probably its only performance).

## WILTSHIRE

- **Wiltshire Downs.** RVW stayed in a cottage while suffering from writers' block and walked into Salisbury one evening to meet the cathedral organist, Walter Alcock. August 1938.
- **Salisbury.** Boating trip to Christchurch / Visit to Stonehenge, 1903. Collected songs from workhouse and cycled to Coombe Bassett, Ramsbury and Stratford Tony. 1904.
- **Old Sarum.** Short tour with Ursula and Joy Finzi plus visiting Old Sarum and Stonehenge. Sep.1958.
- **Stapleford, Salisbury.** VW rented 'Rose Cottage' in July 1938 while suffering from writer's block. He would often walk into Salisbury.
- **Warminster, Sutton Veny.** Army training camp, 1916. RVW lived in huts from early in year until leaving for France in June.

## WORCESTERSHIRE

- **Malvern.** Worcestershire Musical Competitions, May 1914. RVW adjudicated. Walking holiday around Malvern Hills with Holst and W.G. Whittaker after the September 1921 Hereford Three Choirs Festival.
- **Worcester Cathedral.** Main venue for Three Choirs Festival (one year in three).\_Premiers of **Five Mystical Songs**, 14/9/1911; **Magnificat**, 8/9/1932 and **Hodie**, 8/9/1954. All conducted by RVW. RVW attended most years. Ralph and Ursula visited Dorchester, Tewksbury, Malvern, Symonds Yat and Tintern during 1951 festival.

## YORKSHIRE

- **Leeds Town Hall.** The Leeds Festival Chorus premiered two important RVW choral works as part of the Leeds Festival: **Toward the Unknown Region**, (10/10/1907) and **A Sea Symphony**. (12/10/1910)
- **Hooton Roberts.** Stayed with Gatty family, 1898. First singing of **Linden Lea** and **Blackmore by Stour**.

## SCOTLAND

### ABERDEEN

- **Haddo House.** RVW and Ursula stayed for a performance of **The Sea Symphony** with mainly local forces and directed by June Gordon. May 1957.

### FYFE

- **St Andrews.** Drill Hall, Fyfe Musical Festival. March 1911, 1912, Volunteer Hall 1913. Hope Park U.F. Church Hall. RVW adjudicated in each occasion.

## ISLE OF SKYE

- **Student summer reading party** from Cambridge. RVW stayed on Skye. 1893.

## WALES

- **Swansea University.** RVW awarded Hon. Doctor of Music degree, 1930.
- **Llanthony / Black Mountains.** Visited with Ursula during 1952 Three Choirs Festival. A day tour in a Rolls Royce.

## AUSTRIA

- **Innsbruck / Zell-am-see/ Salzburg.** Ralph and Ursula spent an early and not particularly successful holiday early in 1957, returning via Munich.
- **Tyrol, Toblach/Cortina.** RVW stayed in July 1913.
- **Salzburg.** Visited on way back from ISCM Festival in Prague, Spring, 1925.

## BELGIUM

- **Malines.** Visited cathedral to hear **Mass in G** and to hear carillon. October 1928.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

- **Prague.** Short visit by Adeline and Ralph whilst staying in Berlin, 1899. Financed by RVW's mother (£50). Stayed at 'Gran Hotel' (it no longer exists) and attended an opera by Dvorak. Attended ISCM Festival, May 1925. Performance of **Pastoral Symphony** and attended and enjoyed Janacek's opera Cunning Little Vixen.

## FRANCE

- **Paris.** RVW spent about three months while studying with Ravel from December 1907 to March 1908. He stayed at Hôtel de L'Univers et du Portugal, Rue Croix des Petits-Champs.
- **Ecoivres, near Abbeville.** RVW stationed here with Field ambulance in June 1916
- **Le Havre, Rouen, Fontaine-les-Croiselles, Bullecourt.** RVW as 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lieutenant, Royal Garrison Artillery, summer 1918.
- **Valenciennes.** Based here as Director of Music, 1<sup>st</sup>. Army. 1919.
- **Touring holiday with Ursula,** 1952. Flying to Paris and on to Chartres, St.Malo, Mon. St. Michel, Rouen and Le Havre.

## GERMANY

- **Hamburg.** - RVW was awarded the 'Shakespeare Prize' by the University of Hamburg in 1938. Initially reluctant to accept because of the difficult political situation, he eventually sailed to the city to collect it. He attended a special concert of his works; **Tallis Fantasia** and **London Symphony**, conducted by Eugen Jochum.
- **Berlin.** RVW and Adeline stayed in the city for on their honeymoon (1897) and while there RVW had composition lessons from Max Bruch. Also had German lessons and sightseeing. The newlyweds spent about 6 months in Berlin also visiting Dresden and Genoa while there.

## GREECE

- **Thessaloniki, Salonica.** RVW stationed here with the ambulance corps from autumn 1916 following duties at the western front, sailing from Marseilles. Camp at Dudular/Vromeri.

- **Tour of Greece.** Ralph and Ursula took a long tour in September 1955, visiting Daphni, Mycenae, Nauplia, Epi Daurus, Tiryns, Corinth, Olympia, Patras, Delphi and Athens. They returned through Crete to visit Knossos and travelled home via Venice and France.

## NETHERLANDS

- **RVW visited, spring 1922** to hear Bach's St. Matthew Passion and to meet Percy Grainger.

## IRELAND

- **Cork.** RVW gave the Arnold Bax Memorial Lecture at Cork University. 1955.
- **Dublin.** Visited the city in 1955 and while there searched for C.V.Stanford's birthplace.
- **Waterford.** Visited in August 1913 with Randolph Wedgwood and did a cycle tour taking in Munster and County Clare.

## ITALY

- **Naples.** Ralph and Ursula had a holiday in spring 1958. Visited Herculaneum and then stayed on Ischia with the Waltons. Visited Capri, Sorrento and Amalfi.
- **Ospedaletti, Italian Riviera.** Spent Christmas 1913 here with his wife Adeline and others of her family (the Fishers).
- **Venice/Dolomites.** Visited and toured, Spring 1923.
- **Holiday with Ursula, 1953.** They visited Bergamo, Desenzano, Sirmione, Verona, Padua, Venice and Milan.
- **Holiday with Ursula, May 1954.** They visited Pisa, Florence, Siena, San Gimignano and Rome.

## SPAIN

- **Canaries – Las Palmas.** RVW sailed out to help Adeline's family members after the death of her brother-in-law, Fred Maitland. December, 1906.
- **Majorca, Palma.** Holiday with Ursula in September 1956, working on **8<sup>th</sup> Symphony**. They met Robert Graves but left early after hearing of death of Gerald Finzi.

## USA

- **Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.** RVW gave the Mary Flexner Lecture Series at Penn. State University. His topic **National Music**, 1932.
- **Norfolk, Connecticut.** RVW conducted **Pastoral Symphony** at a Festival in May 1922.
- **New York City.** Ralph and Adeline stayed at the Plaza Hotel and toured New England in 1922. Stayed again in 1932 after lecture series at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. They were very impressed with cityscapes.
- **Ithaca, NY.** Lecture series at Cornell University in Fall/Autumn 1954. This was followed by a major tour of the USA and Canada, in which Ralph and Ursula visited Toronto, Niagara, Buffalo, Ann Arbor, Chicago, St. Louis, (3-day train journey) Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and the Grand Canyon, after which they had a week in New York before returning to Britain on the Queen Mary.