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A W. B. Yeats Chronology

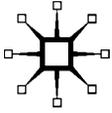
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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2003 978-0-333-46006-1

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First published 2003 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

Companies and representatives throughout the world

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ISBN 978-1-349-38868-4 ISBN 978-0-230-59691-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9780230596917

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Kelly, John S., 1942–

A W. B. Yeats chronology/John S. Kelly
p. cm – (Author chronologies)

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

1. Yeats, W. B. (William Butler), 1865–1939 – Chronology. 2. Poets, Irish – 19th century – Chronology. 3. Poets, Irish – 20th century – Chronology. I. Title. II. Author chronologies (Palgrave Macmillan (Firm))

PR5906 .K45 2003
821'.8–dc21

2002035540

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03

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General Editor's Preface

Most biographies are ill adapted to serve as works of reference – not surprisingly so, since the biographer is likely to regard his function as the devising of a continuous and readable narrative, with excursions into interpretation and speculation, rather than a bald recital of facts. There are times, however, when anyone reading for business or pleasure needs to check a point quickly or to obtain a rapid overview of part of an author's life or career; and at such moments turning over the pages of a biography can be a time-consuming and frustrating occupation. The present series of volumes aims at providing a means whereby the chronological facts of an author's life and career, rather than needing to be prised out of the narrative in which they are (if they appear at all) securely embedded, can be seen at a glance. Moreover whereas biographies are often, and quite understandably, vague over matters of fact (since it makes for tediousness to be forever enumerating details of dates and places), a chronology can be precise whenever it is possible to be precise.

Thanks to the survival, sometimes in very large quantities, of letters, diaries, notebooks and other documents, as well as to thoroughly researched biographies and bibliographies, this material now exists in abundance for many major authors. In the case of, for example, Dickens, we can often ascertain what he was doing in each month and week, and almost on each day, of his prodigiously active working life; and the student of, say, *David Copperfield* is likely to find it fascinating as well as useful to know just when Dickens was at work on each part of that novel, what other literary enterprises he was engaged in at the same time, whom he was meeting, what places he was visiting, and what were the relevant circumstances of his personal and professional life. Such a chronology is not, of course, a substitute for a biography; but its arrangement, in combination with its index, makes it a much more convenient tool for this kind of purpose; and it may be acceptable as a form of 'alternative' biography, with its own distinctive advantages as well as its obvious limitations.

Since information relating to an author's early years is usually scanty and chronologically imprecise, the opening section of some volumes in this series groups together the years of childhood and adolescence. Thereafter each year, and usually each month, is dealt with separately. Information not readily assignable to a specific month or day is given as a general note under the relevant year or month. The first entry for each month carries an indication of the day of the week, so that when necessary this can be readily calculated for other dates. Each volume also contains a bibliography

of the principal sources of information. In the chronology itself, the sources of many of the more specific items, including quotations, are identified, in order that the reader who wishes to do so may consult the original contexts.

NORMAN PAGE

Introduction and Acknowledgements

T. S. Eliot said that Yeats was ‘one of those few whose history is the history of their own time, who are a part of the consciousness of an age which cannot be understood without them’. That age was one of profound and far-reaching change, and this Chronology bears witness not only to Yeats’s deep engagement with poetry, drama and the arts, but also with the historical, social and cultural processes that helped to shape the evolving sensibilities of his time. Keenly aware of the significance of contemporary artistic movements, he embraced as a young man the Pre-Raphaelite rejection of High Victorianism, and in the course of his life was introduced to Aestheticism by Oscar Wilde, Craft Socialism by William Morris, and to French Symbolism by Arthur Symons. Inspired by Standish O’Grady’s mythological histories and John O’Leary’s library of Irish literature, as well as by the contemporary growth of interest in folklore and comparative mythology, he helped to create the movement that became known as the Celtic Twilight. This was superseded by the Irish dramatic movement, which he was chiefly instrumental in transforming from a modest amateur enterprise into the internationally renowned Abbey Theatre Company – a transformation that involved sometimes relentless and often contentious artistic, managerial and administrative demands, as well as the creation of a repertoire of poetic drama. Writing for the stage, together with his friendship with John Synge, H. J. C. Grierson and Ezra Pound, caused him to reshape his poetic style, and he lived through the cultural upheavals of Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Imagism, Futurism and the politicized arts of the thirties. He was personally acquainted with many of the leaders of these and other movements, as well as with G. B. Shaw, Lady Augusta Gregory, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Sean O’Casey: indeed, as this Chronology demonstrates, he seems to have met almost everyone who was a moving force in the literary life of his time.

He was no less alert to political developments, living through the rise and fall of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Imperialist expansion of the late nineteenth century, the Boer War, the First World War, the Easter Rising in Ireland, the Anglo-Irish War and Irish Civil War, and the rise of Soviet Communism, Italian Fascism and the German Nazi Party. It is part of Yeats’s genius that he was peculiarly alert to these historical forces and to their public and private manifestations and this Chronology indicates the extent to which he himself was drawn into the various public debates of the period, meeting leading politicians in Britain, Ireland and the United States. The list of his achievements are awe-inspiring: poet, of course, but also public polemicist, dramatist and theatre director, occultist, literary

critic, lover, Senator, and Nobel laureate who continued to be creative and outspoken to his dying day. The ambition of the present work is not only to trace and register these multiple interests, but also to show how they were pursued simultaneously, and how apparently disparate activities impacted on each other to produce a rich, energetic and ultimately coherent canon.

The main sources for this Chronology are the over 8000 largely unpublished letters by Yeats distributed in libraries and private collections throughout the world – in particular those to the various members of his family and Lady Gregory, but also including correspondence with his publishers T. Fisher Unwin, A. H. Bullen and Macmillan, as well as his agent A. P. Watt, ‘AE’ (George Russell), Mabel Beardsley, Gordon Craig, Edmund Dulac, T. S. Eliot, Frank and William Fay, Maud Gonne, T. W. Horton, James Joyce, Ethel Mannin, Ottoline Morrell, Ezra Pound, John Quinn, Lennox Robinson, J. M. Synge, Shree Purohit Swami, Rabindranath Tagore and Dorothy Wellesley. It also calls heavily upon unpublished and published collections of letters to Yeats – notably those from Lady Gregory, George Yeats, J. B. Yeats, AE, John Quinn, Annie Horniman, T. Sturge Moore and Dorothy Wellesley. Other sources of essential information include, of course, Yeats’s own *Autobiographies* and *Memoirs*, as well as his published and unpublished diaries and Occult Notebooks. Lady Gregory’s Diaries and Journals have also been invaluable, as have the published and unpublished Diaries of Joseph Holloway, Charles Ricketts, William Rothenstein and Sidney Cockerell. I have drawn gratefully on Roy Foster’s magisterial official biography of Yeats and Terence Brown’s *The Life of W. B. Yeats*. George Harper’s detailed work on Yeats’s Vision Notebooks has also been of the greatest value, as have William M. Murphy’s immaculately researched writings on J. B. Yeats and the Yeats family, Ann Saddlemeyer’s splendid editions of Synge’s Letters and Plays, as well as her life of George Yeats and Peter Jochum’s awesomely inclusive *W. B. Yeats: a Classified Bibliography of Criticism*. Besides these, I have also made use of other diaries, reminiscences, autobiographies and biographies of Yeats’s contemporaries too numerous to list.

In locating this material, as well as many smaller collections, I am indebted to librarians in many countries, some of whom have gone to trouble well above and beyond the call of duty. I also owe an immense debt to Michael Yeats, the late Anne Yeats, Joann M. Andrews, Francis A. Brennan, Jim Edwards, Roy Foster, Warwick Gould, Terry Halladay, William F. Halloran, George Harper, Peter Jochum, Declan Kiely, Mark Samuels Lasner, Brenda Maddox, Catherine Morris, William M. Murphy, James Pethica, Ron Schuchard, Colin Smythe, Deirdre Toomey, George Watson and Anna MacBride White.

Given the extent and complexity of Yeats’s canon, the Chronology provides not only dates and details of his first publications (in both periodical

and book form), but also attempts where possible to supply the dates at which individual poems, plays and essays were actually composed. First editions of books published uniquely in America are cited; otherwise, American editions of English publications are not normally listed, nor are minor or 'acting' editions of his various plays. Since Yeats's range of friends and acquaintances was so large, the index gives brief identifying biographies of each of them as they appear in the story and should in this sense be used as an adjunct to the main text. To save unnecessary confusion, the names of Yeats's poems, plays and prose writings are cited and indexed under their final, canonical titles. The titles of Yeats's reviews are given in the text but the authors and names of the books reviewed appear in full in the index.

From late 1917 onward Yeats and wife spent much time taking down the automatic writing which was to form the basis of *A Vision*. So extensive were these sessions that it has only been possible to list the more important of them in this Chronology, and the curious are referred to the splendidly detailed 4-volume edition of *Yeats's Vision Papers* under the general editorship of George Mills Harper (Palgrave 1992–2001) and George Mills Harper's 2-volume *The Making of Yeats's 'A Vision'* (Macmillan, 1987).

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Ah, Sweet Dancer: W. B. Yeats Margot Ruddock, A Correspondence, ed. Roger McHugh (1970).

Autobiographies (1955).

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The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats, vol. 3, eds John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (1994).

Essays and Introductions (1961).

Explorations, sel. Mrs W. B. Yeats (1962).

The Letters of W. B. Yeats, ed. Allan Wade (1954).

Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley, ed. Dorothy Wellesley (1940).

Letters to the New Island, eds George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (New York, 1989).

Memoirs, ed. Denis Donoghue (1972).

Mythologies (1959).

The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, ed. W. B. Yeats (1936).

Prefaces and Introductions, ed. William H. O'Donnell (1988).

The Secret Rose, Stories by W. B. Yeats: a Variorum Edition, ed. Warwick Gould, Phillip L. Marcus and Michael J. Sidnell (1981, rev. 1992).

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Theatre Business, ed. Ann Saddlemyer (1982).

Uncollected Prose, ed. John P. Frayne, vol. 1 (1970), vol. II, eds John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson (1975).

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Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, 2 vols (1919, 1920).

- George Moore, *Hail and Farewell*, ed. Richard Cave (Gerrards Cross, 1976, rev. 1985).
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- W. G. Fay, *The Fays of the Abbey Theatre* (1935), W. G. Fay and Catherine Carswell.
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- Maud Gonne MacBride, *A Servant of the Queen*, rev. edn (Gerrards Cross, 1994); *The Gonne–Yeats Letters 1893–1938*, eds Anna MacBride White and A. Norman Jeffares (1992).
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- W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: The Record of an Occult Friendship*, ed. George Mills Harper (1980).
- Yeats and the Theatre*, eds Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (1975).

List of Abbreviations for Persons, Institutions and Works Cited

Persons frequently referred to

Those listed below appear frequently and are designated by initials after the first entry.

AE George William Russell (1867–1935), poet, journalist and essayist, who wrote under the pseudonym AE, attended the Metropolitan School of Art with WBY and became one of his closest friends. In 1897 he joined the Irish Agricultural Organisation and later edited the Society's journal, the *Irish Homestead*. In 1923 he was appointed editor of the *Irish Statesman*, and he helped WBY found the Irish Academy of Letters in 1932.

FF Florence Farr Emery (1860–1917), actress and author, had divorced her actor husband, Edward Emery, in 1894. WBY discovered her beautiful speaking voice in amateur productions; in 1890 and in 1894 she acted in his *The Land of Heart's Desire*. She was also associated with WBY in the Golden Dawn and from 1900 to 1910 frequently accompanied his experiments in speaking verse to the psaltery, a lyre-like instrument. Between 1905 and 1908 their friendship became a physical relationship and in September 1912 she emigrated to Sri Lanka (Ceylon), where she became the principal of a girls' school, took up vegetarianism and immersed herself in Tamil culture.

AG Lady Augusta Gregory (1852–1932), Irish folklorist and playwright, was WBY's closest friend, patron and correspondent from 1897, when he began to spend his summers at her house, Coole Park, in County Galway. She helped initiate the Irish dramatic movement, became a Director of the Abbey in 1905 and helped organize and oversee a number of transatlantic tours. WBY greatly admired her version of the Irish myths, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* and *Gods and Fighting Men*, and he contributed to her collection of folklore, *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*. Her only son, Robert, was shot down over Italy in 1918 and she devoted the later part of her life to a campaign to have a collection of modern paintings made by her nephew, Hugh Lane, restored to Dublin.

MG Maud Gonne (1866–1953), the daughter of a British army officer, got to know Ireland when her father was stationed in Dublin. Shortly after his death she moved to Paris, where she became the mistress of the lawyer and politician Lucien Millevoye by whom she had two children. She cast herself in the role of an Irish Joan of Arc and met WBY in January 1889. He

fell in love with her immediately, but she turned down his proposals of marriage; he was devastated by her marriage to John MacBride in 1903 and gave her help during its acrimonious break-up in 1905–06. Their relationship seems to have been briefly consummated in 1908 and in 1916, after the execution of MacBride, he again asked her to marry him. She refused and he transferred his affections to Iseult, her daughter by Millevoeye. WBY tried to assist her and her family during the politically troubled times from 1918–23 and thereafter, despite fundamental political differences, they remained distant friends.

ESH Edith Shackleton Heald (1885–1976) became a journalist at the suggestion of her brother Ivan, a well-known humorous writer, and, after a brief period in Manchester, joined the *Evening Standard*, where she wrote editorials and succeeded Arnold Bennett as its main book reviewer. She was introduced to WBY by Edmund Dulac in April 1937 and they immediately became friends and later lovers.

AEFH Annie Elizabeth Fredericka Horniman (1860–1937), occultist and patron of drama, was the daughter of a wealthy Manchester tea merchant. She was a fellow-member of the Golden Dawn and in March 1894 she anonymously put up money for productions of WBY's *The Land of Heart's Desire* and plays by Todhunter and Shaw. In 1904 she became the benefactress of the Abbey Theatre, but quarrelled with members of the Company and finally with WBY and in 1908 she transferred her interest to the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, ceasing to subsidize the Abbey in 1910.

JO'L John O'Leary (1830–1907), President of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who returned to Ireland in 1885 after 20 years in prison and exile for his part in the Fenian movement. He exerted a powerful political, moral and literary influence on WBY, especially in the years 1885–93, during which he loaned him books from his extensive library of Anglo-Irish works, encouraged him to contribute to Irish periodicals, and organized the subscriptions for *The Wanderings of Oisín*.

LR Esmé Stuart Lennox Robinson (1886–1958), writer, playwright and theatre director, grew up in Co. Cork. His first play, *The Clancy Name*, was produced at the Abbey in 1908 and in 1909 he was appointed director and manager of the Theatre. Thereafter he contributed plays regularly to the Abbey and was principal director from 1910 to 1914 and from 1919 to 1934. He was appointed a Director of the Abbey Company in 1923.

OS Olivia Shakespear, née Tucker (1864–1938), novelist and playwright, married Henry Hope Shakespear in 1885. WBY met her in 1894, through her cousin, Lionel Johnson, and had a brief affair with her in 1895–96; thereafter they became close friends and WBY saw her frequently in London. Her daughter, Dorothy, married Ezra Pound in 1914, and her

brother, Henry Tudor Tucker, married Mrs Edith Ellen Hyde-Lees, whose daughter George became WBY's wife in 1917.

KT Katharine Tynan (1859–1931) poet, novelist and journalist, was born near Dublin, the daughter a substantial farmer who encouraged her literary ambitions. WBY met her for the first time in June 1885 and thereafter they saw each other regularly to discuss and review each other's work. WBY began to wonder if it was his duty to marry her but in 1893 she married Henry Hinkson and settled down in London, where she turned her hand to pot-boiling novels, serials and reviews. Although they met less frequently, the friendship with WBY survived, and in 1906 he edited a selection of her poems. In 1914 Hinkson was appointed Removeable Magistrate in Mayo, where KT remained until his death in 1919. In the following years she travelled widely in Britain and on the Continent, occasionally meeting WBY on her visits to Ireland.

DW Dorothy Violet Wellesley, née Ashton (1889–1956), poet, married Lord Gerald Wellesley, the third son of the 4th Duke of Wellington, in 1914. Although estranged from her husband, she became the Duchess of Wellington in 1943. She met WBY in 1934 and quickly became a surrogate Lady Gregory for him; he stayed at Penns in the Rocks, her house in Sussex, on his frequent trips to England, where they discussed poetry and collaborated on various literary projects.

ECY Elizabeth Corbet ('Lolly') Yeats (1868–1940), WBY's second sister, was the third of JBY's surviving children. From 1903 she ran the Cuala Press with WBY as literary advisor, but the relationship between them was often difficult and the enterprise always financially precarious.

GY Bertha Georgie Yeats, née Hyde-Lees (1892–1968), married WBY in November 1917. She was born in Hampshire, and went to school with Dorothy Shakespear, later Mrs Ezra Pound, who remained one of her best friends. She met WBY in 1910 and helped him with a number of psychic experiments before their marriage, and on their honeymoon began the automatic writing which was to constitute *A Vision*. After her marriage she adopted the name 'George' and WBY's nickname for her was 'Dobbs'.

JBY John Butler Yeats (1839–1922) gave up a career as a barrister to become a painter after his marriage to Susan Pollexfen. He moved his family regularly between Ireland and England, but settled more permanently in London from 1887 until Susan Yeats's death in 1900. In October 1901 he returned to Dublin where he was joined by his two daughters. He accompanied SMY on a supposedly brief visit to New York in late 1907, but he remained there for the rest of his life, living mainly off benefactions from the lawyer John Quinn, which WBY helped partly to off-set by the sale of his manuscripts.

SMY. Susan Mary ('Lily') Yeats (1866–1949) was the elder of WBY's two surviving sisters, and particularly close to the poet. She learned embroidery from William Morris and his daughter May, and subsequently designed and executed embroidery work for Cuala Industries.

Institutions frequently referred to

Abbey	The Abbey Theatre, Dublin
IAOS	Irish Agricultural Organisation Society
GD	Order of the Golden Dawn
NLS	National Literary Society, Ireland
INTS	Irish National Theatre Society
ILS	Irish Literary Society, London
ILT	Irish Literary Theatre
INA	Irish National Alliance
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
TCD	Trinity College Dublin

Works frequently referred to

The standard abbreviations for the titles of Yeats's works have been used. They are also identified at their time of first publication by genre and, where appropriate, major reprintings are also cited.

<i>Aut</i>	<i>Autobiographies</i> (1955)
<i>The Countess</i>	<i>The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and</i>
<i>Kathleen</i>	<i>Lyrics</i> (1892)
<i>CP</i>	<i>Collected Poems</i> (1933)
<i>CW</i>	<i>Collected Works</i> , 8 vols (1908–09)
<i>DUR</i>	<i>Dublin University Review</i>
<i>E & I</i>	<i>Essays and Introductions</i> (1961)
<i>Expl</i>	<i>Explorations</i> , sel. Mrs W. B. Yeats (1962)
<i>FFT</i>	<i>Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry</i> (1889)
<i>LNI</i>	<i>Letters to the New Island</i> , ed. George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (New York, 1989)
<i>Mem</i>	<i>Memoirs</i> , ed. Denis Donoghue (1972)
<i>Myth</i>	<i>Mythologies</i> (1959)
<i>OBMV</i>	<i>The Oxford Book of Modern Verse</i> , ed. W. B. Yeats (1936)
<i>Oisín</i>	<i>The Wanderings of Oisín, and Other Poems</i> (1889)
<i>Per Amica</i>	<i>Per Amica Silentia Lunae</i> (1918)
<i>UM</i>	<i>Under the Moon</i> , ed. George Bornstein (1995)
<i>UP I</i>	<i>Uncollected Prose</i> , ed. John P. Frayne, vol. 1 (1970)
<i>UP II</i>	<i>Uncollected Prose</i> , ed. John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson, vol. 2 (1975)

- Visions and Beliefs* *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*, collected and arranged by Lady Gregory (1920)
- VP *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (1957, rev. 1966)
- VPI *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Russell K. Alspach (1966)
- VSR *The Secret Rose, Stories by W. B. Yeats: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Warwick Gould, Phillip L. Marcus, and Michael J. Sidnell (1981, rev. 1992)
- Wade *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade (1954)
- YA *Yeats Annual*
- Yeats Annual* *Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies*.
- YL Edward O'Shea, *A Descriptive Catalog of W. B. Yeats's Library* (New York, 1985)