

## RVW 150 - A Personal Odyssey & Some Rambling Reflections By Rob Barnett

What is it about these significant birthdays and anniversaries? Whatever 'it' is, we dote on celebrations of the passage of years when they come in in resounding multiples: 25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150, 175, 200, 225, 250. Perhaps we even put off practical actions when the numbers are not "rounded": do we stand away from marking 78 years, 83, 163, 200, 241? Do we delay or de-prioritise some practical steps until we are within hailing distance of a resounding multiple? Is it just a marketing measure or a response by publishers, record labels, broadcasters, to the fact that there is so much music and the growth in quantity of it is unstemmable or a response to a motivational stratum that says "I really must have that book or this set" even in an age where houses are usually constructed without acres of floorspace for libraries or oodles of shelving?

Is it a way of bringing us up short? A sort of reflection that says: "we had forgotten that person and what they did". Someone is thinking: "Let's slake our guilt or need by issuing a major set of recordings or a book or film". We have then done our 'bit' and can move on. When it comes to composers, we can then say we have done our bit. This is the more regrettable when the event is truly ephemeral and can only be remembered by those attending or listening to an unrecorded (aurally) radio broadcast. There the sound of the event lives on in memory, in music reviews and in memoirs; a far from perfect record.

Examples in recorded classical music now abound: [Beethoven 250](#), [Mozart 225](#) and Bach 333 but these composers have a longer 'reach' than that of Ralph Vaughan Williams. This aspect has very much been a prolific creature of the compact disc era though there were examples in the era of the long-player including, in the 1970s, DG's Beethoven Edition and, at another extreme, Balkanton's massive boxed set of the music of Pancho Vladigerov (steadily re-emerging on CD on Capriccio). Delius 150 ([EMI](#) and Heritage Classics). Bax 100: BBC in 1983 (37 programmes) and Chandos and Walton and Grainger. There's Decca's Britten set too.

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### Personal journeys

Early on, for me, (1970s) I had my introduction to RVW via a friend at college who had the means to get the two EMI Classics boxed sets of LPs (symphonies and choral works). My first impressions were not desperately favourable. I preferred Bax, who I found a composer of more dangerous and more beautiful music. Vaughan Williams' ecstasy was more mainstream and less pagan. Yet there were works that lodged in my mind and affections. These included the Sixth Symphony which at the time formed the title music for 'A Family at War' on ITV. The Fourth Symphony I went to hear in 1971 in an imperfect, lopsided amateur orchestra performance at a church in the Bristol suburbs. For all its crazed imprecisions and missing instruments this gripped me. As the years passed, while I could not let go of Bax (and grabbed every opportunity to hear everything) it was not a competition and RVW rose in my affections. He did so through works such as *Dona Nobis Pacem* heard in the then Bristol Colston Hall with conductor Clifford Harker. It was many years later that I heard the symphonies in live performance at Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool (Handley), Bridgewater Hall and Salford Quays; surprisingly none in Bristol Cathedral or Colston Hall in the early 1970s when I was in that City as a student at the Polytechnic. Then, many years later there were moving keywords such as *The Five Tudor Portraits* which I heard in Symphony Hall, Birmingham with John Wilson conducting: Wilson always exciting live and only intermittently so in the recording studio.

### RVW among the foremost

Vaughan Williams is amongst the foremost of 20<sup>th</sup> century composers. Let's stick with 'foremost' to avoid desolate debates about greatness. These present a snarling and futile traffic jam otherwise.

Mind you, 'foremost' only avoids that *cul de sac* by the finest of squeaks. 'Foremost', for me, points towards popularity, lasting rewards in listening and the 'juice' that draws the listener back to hear the composer's works again. Let's add also a strong and distinctive idiom and, in RVW's case, an English 'edge' and an immersion in the finest of the country's literature and landscape. Mind you, his Englishry is not to the exclusion of the other voices in three countries nor does it impair the resilience that has the music standing proud in the international stakes

### **Literary resonances and mass culture**

A pupil of both Parry and Stanford, he was well attuned, especially in the case of Parry, to drawing musical kindling from literary sources - especially the Bible. These literary resonances abound and thread through Vaughan Williams' life. They are of a classical bent through both 'High Church' and 'Low' texts: Chaucer, Shakespeare, H G Wells (the subtext to a movement of *A London Symphony* - apart from *The Poisoned Kiss* the single concession to popular culture), Whitman, Bunyan, Housman, J M Synge, Ursula Vaughan Williams, George Herbert, Matthew Arnold, William Blake, Kipling, Thomas Hardy, John Skelton, Edmund Spenser, Tennyson, Rossetti, Barnes, Coleridge, Robert Louis Stevenson, and the eloquent politician, John Bright.

As to mass culture, his 'war work' famously extended to half a dozen or so films for the Allied efforts in World War 2. Many people will have encountered his music for the first time through cinema, and later television, although perhaps few noted the name Vaughan Williams.

### **Mysteries, Eternity and Religion**

He was not a Christian or a devout adherent of any religion unless notes of paper count. Instead, he termed himself a cheerful agnostic. He wanted to be seized by a text although he did journeyman commissions (e.g. Coronation music for two such events: 1937 (Beecham) and 1953 (Boult)) and *The English Hymnal* (working with Percy Dearmer and OUP). Welsh hymns were set for organ and for orchestra. Occasionally he transcended his sources as in the orchestral piece he wrote for the 1939 New York World Fair: the meltingly lovely *Five Variants on 'Dives and Lazarus'*. "He loved the Bible as poetry and as a source from which he could be led and lead to the Divine and Eternal, as Martinů does in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* where expressive means are confounded and the sung narration is reduced to the wondering "I have seen".

### **Radio and tape listening experiences**

1972 saw RVW not only as a composer on a stamp (unthinkable to me in those days) but also broadcasts of the operas and spoken dramas (*Pilgrim's Progress*). Then there was Radio 3's ambitious series of programmes showcasing RVW and his friends and contemporaries: 'England's Green and Pleasant Land'. I list these in summary at the end of this piece because they were, for me, formative. Some of them I taped and played and played ....

### **Works with 'juice'**

Here are works I am drawn back to and in which I hope others might find reward and enrichment. These I recommend in the sense that RVW's friend Gerald Finzi encapsulated in one of his songs setting words by James Elroy Flecker ('To a poet a Thousand Years Hence'):

*O friend unseen, unborn, unknown,  
Student of our sweet English tongue,  
Read out my words at night, alone:  
I was a poet, I was young.*

*Since I can never see your face,  
And never shake you by the hand,*

*I send my soul through time and space  
To greet you. You will understand.*

Here is music I commend ... and some pieces I do not:

### Film music

- The film music (do try the three-CD set from Chandos and the complete *Scott of the Antarctic* from Dutton.
- The prelude from *The 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, especially in the NPO/Bernard Herrmann recording – a wonderfully unhurried unfolding of this piece - everything seems breathless in the sense of holding time in ecstatic check.

### Operas

- *The Poisoned Kiss* - the most succulent writing and replete with life. I think of it in the same breath as Holst's opera *The Perfect Fool*, a work needlessly ensnared in the stocky, stultifying web of satire.
- *Sir John in Love* (Meredith Davies) - filter the attempts at humour and surrender to the many lilting passages

### Symphonies

- Sets: Plenty of versions to choose from but the good include Previn (amongst the oldest (RCA/BMG)) and Haitink (EMI Classics). For edginess, the Melodiya box from Rozhdestvensky.
- Symphony 2 - Handley and Barbirolli (EMI Classics)
- Symphony 3 – a superb symphony - keeps you guessing or readjusting your expectations of a war symphony and is pastoral *par excellence* with an especially fine third movement.
- Symphony 4 - snarling conflict but a gorgeous second subject in the first movement. Nielsen wrote an 'Inextinguishable' and this is RVW's 'Relentless'. Well worth hearing alternative versions from Stokowski, Bernstein, Mitropoulos
- Symphony 5 - sublime
- Symphony 6 - stormy and malcontented but the first movement has a superb string melody that melts the stoniest of hearts - cousin to similar moments in the Fourth and in Havergal Brian's *Gothic* (first movement) and Brian's Fourth (also first movement). Do try to hear the version conducted by Maurice Abravanel with the Utah Symphony.
- Symphony 9 - A work that deepens with every hearing. It has a role for three capering saxophones while the Sixth includes a single joy-inducing saxophone. Such a shame that RVW did not feel moved to write a Saxophone Concerto.

### Other works

- Overture to *The Wasps* - glorious saturated English melody
- In the *Five Mystical Songs* (1909) the very British ecstasy of 'Easter' ('Rise Heart, Thy Lord is Risen') best encountered in the baritone, choir and orchestra version on EMI Classics (Warner).
- The ecstatic benign eagle-swoop of the soprano on the words 'Sweet Harmony' almost at the end of *Serenade to Music* in the EMI/Boult version.
- The '*Tallis' Fantasia*, which at the premiere in Gloucester had Gurney and Howells walking - drunk on music - the night streets of the City (try the Barbirolli version)

### Works that resist my interest or await my hearing an ideal recording

- *Riders to the Sea* - protests too much - furies and sorrows - tiring rather than inspirational
- Oboe Concerto
- Partita for Strings
- The G minor Mass - rather inward and academic. A thing of dry sawdust for me.

- Symphony 1 - good texts and setting of Walt Whitman but the Stanfordian choral aspects are off-putting
- Symphony 8 - has its moments especially in the Romance but otherwise a showpiece of sounds - a concerto for orchestra. Doesn't fit well with the 'Symphony' label.
- *Concerto Accademico* (violin concerto) lacks a full heart
- *Hugh The Drover* - too bluff by half
- *Job - a Masque for Dancing* - saxophone not compensation enough
- *The Lark Ascending* (Hugh Bean; certainly not Jean Pougnet)
- *The Wasps* Suite - rather too quirky-jolly for my tastes but emerges with more mordant satirical depth in the complete music recorded on the Hallé label in 2005
- *Ten Blake Songs*, for tenor and oboe

### Neglected RVW to visit

You might in some cases disagree that these are 'neglected' pieces but here they are to freshen your experience:

- *Three Shakespeare Songs* has clamant demands for your attention in the RCA recording by Swingle II if you can forgive (and you should) the 'pop' balance.
- Three Vocalises for Soprano and Clarinet
- Music for pipes - broadcast many years ago by an ensemble including David Munrow, John Turner, David Pugsley and Alan Lumsden
- Tuba Concerto - central Romance movement - one of the composer's singing gems and proving the tuba not at all the buffoon that we might have taken from clichéd contexts
- *On Wenlock Edge* for tenor with orchestra (Richard Lewis excellent)
- Concerto Grosso for strings - a joyous work initially for amateur string players.
- *Epithalamion* for soloists, choir and orchestra
- Symphony No. 9 (see above)
- *Five Variants on 'Dives and Lazarus'*
- *Harnham Down*
- *Overture Henry V* - either in the original band version or in the orchestration by Martin Yates
- *The Blue Bird* (incidental music to Maeterlinck's play) - packed to the brim with benign and fragile Ravel magic - much as the song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge* (for which try the classic EMI Partridge chamber version)
- *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* (try Hyperion) - the notably poetic part of *Pilgrim's Progress* to contrast with the most problematic - Encounter with Apollyon (pantomime devil) and Vanity Fayre (not very convincing worldly temptations)
- *An Oxford Elegy* for orator and orchestra (classic version with John Westbrook who also recorded Bliss's *Morning Heroes*. Don't forget Nimbus with the excellent but unsung Jack May. A work that has RVW revelling in and intoxicated by the English language and a nostalgia for the countryside. Not sure why such works are regarded as problematic
- *Six Studies in English Folk Song*
- *Four Hymns*
- *Five Tudor Portraits: 'My Pretty Bess'* - a delectable melting ballad - catchy too and paradoxically feels modern
- *Five Tudor Portraits: a most sorrowful extended 'Lament'* building to beauty and the sort of symphonic cortège-like weight found in Alwyn's Symphony No 5 *Hydriotaphia*
- String Quartet No. 1
- *Merciless Beauty*
- *Flos Campi* - for orchestra, chorus and solo viola setting parts of The Song of Songs (EMI Classics version with Cecil Aronowitz preferred)
- *Suite* for viola and orchestra - a series of inventive vignettes (much rearranged) played with great character by Frederick Riddle (viola) on a Chandos 2-for-1

- *Dona Nobis Pacem* – ‘Dirge for Two Veterans’ - setting moving words by Walt Whitman and to be compared with Holst’s version for choir and solo trumpet (the latter on EMI: Baccholian Singers). Abravanel’s Vanguard version with Blanche Christensen is easily overlooked but should not be.
- *Along the Field* - RVW’s ‘other’ Housman song-cycle - this time set for tenor and violin solo. Some very moving songs, including the shivering magic of the song whose title confers the title of the whole cycle: such words and such a setting!  
"Oh who are these that kiss and pass? / A country lover and his lass;  
And sure enough beneath the tree/ There walks another love with me / And overhead the aspen heaves / Its rainy-sounding silver leaves"; RVW’s mastery vies only with the counterpart song by C.W. Orr
- *A Song of Thanksgiving* - An occasional piece but most effective

### Life and Legacy

He was long-lived and productive to the end. He was a survivor ... and more ... George Butterworth (dedicatee of *A London Symphony*) was killed in the Great War. He also outlived his soul-mate Gustav Holst by a quarter century. In large part Bax lived in RVW’s shadow and died five years before RVW’s last year. He even survived the even longer-enduring Sibelius, to whom RVW had dedicated his Fifth Symphony. He continued surviving, bemusing and delighting until towards the end of the decade that preceded the arrival of The Beatles. He cheated the rise of academic, dissonant and inward-looking music of the 1960s and a whole generation of red-brick university elites who could not make it in the eyes of the intelligent ordinary man.

His music found powerful friends in the era of the '78 but blossomed further as the mono and stereo vinyl ages dawned and blossomed. His music found friends with the record labels and it was Decca who captured all but the Ninth of his symphonies in mono - a cycle reissued with pride by Decca and now being revived in enhanced reissues by Pristine Classics. That was in the 1950s but in the 1960s and 1970s his anticipated post-mortem ‘dip’ was side-stepped by Adrian Boult who found favour with the symphonies and many of the choral works through EMI Classics. Such was this effect that whole weighty boxes of the symphonies and choral works (not just Boult) started to populate the shelves of the vinyl record shops in the 1970s.

It is some measure of RVW’s ‘draw’ that old works left incomplete are now being completed and works left in fragments and tatters at life’s end have been edited together, realised and completed by other composers. It is also some reward to modern listeners to hear earlier versions of works that surprise, either in old recordings (Wood’s recording of *A London Symphony*) or new recordings of ‘revamped’ scores painstakingly edited ‘old-new’ versions such as Hickox’s notable project for Chandos; the same company that ushered in recordings of the ‘other’ two *Norfolk Rhapsodies* and much else.

### As to the future ....

Fashion moves in grand wheeling circles. However, the number of recorded cycles of the symphonies continue to be issued unabated. The last decade has seen an astonishing number of cycles. His music is linked to a wide range of instruments which should at least guarantee him a place with musicians tackling competitions. He has a place, for now, in popular culture with *The Lark Ascending* (beloved of Classic FM and beyond) and the *Tallis’ Fantasia*. He may well be seen as one of the quintessential English composers but he has not become associated, for good or ill, with the trappings of Empire. His conductors are variously Dutch, Russian, American as well as generations of Brits. Sir Simon Rattle, famously dismissive of British music I seem to recall, has ventured his Fifth Symphony. His legacy is championed by an extremely active RVW Society and his compositions are still being arranged and revived by labels such as the tirelessly inspired Albion. His music tackles eternal issues

and mysticism. He spoke and speaks to generations abroad, especially in the USA. His music has an elevated beauty of expression. All in all, his chances of not slipping off the agenda in a field ever-increasingly thronged with music are so much better than average. He casts a long shadow as well as much dazzling light.

**Rob Barnett**  
**2022**

**Look also at The Letters of Vaughan Williams**  
5119 letters to be sampled and inspected online  
<http://vaughanwilliams.uk/>

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### **Radio 3's 1972 celebration series: *England's Pleasant Land - a landmark***

The programmes are listed here because they were central to the shaping of my feelings towards Vaughan Williams, his music and 'his circle' They were notable also because the BBC specially recorded the music, which often was not otherwise available. Would that I had recorded all of them. Of similar landmark status was Donald Macleod's wide-ranging four-week (20 programme) series on RVW his life and music in May 2022 on BBC Radio 3.

7th July 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime- period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.' This week, from the West of England, a programme devoted entirely to folk songs, sea songs and carols by Vaughan Williams himself

*You gentlemen of England*, for chorus

*The seeds of love*, for baritone and men's voices

*The turtle dove*, for baritone and chorus

*The jolly plough boy*, for men's voices

Two English folk songs, for baritone and violin: *Searching for lambs: The lawyer*

*Jack the sailor*, for baritone and men's voices

Six studies in English folk song, arr for violin and piano

*The truth sent from above*, for baritone and piano. Hereford Carol, for chorus

*Come all you worthy Christian men*, for chorus

*Sussex Carol*, for chorus

*Cherry Tree Carol* (As Joseph was a-walking), for men's voices *Wassail Song*, for chorus Julian Smith (baritone)

BBC West Of England Singers conductor Philip Moore; Peter Mountain (violin); Angela Dale (piano)

14th July 1972, 09:45

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his life-time - period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.' This week, piano music by some of his friends, played by Benjamin Kaplan

Bax Sonata No 1, in F sharp; Cyril Scott Caprice Chinois; Lotus Land: Tarantula;

Rubbra Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Cyril Scott, Op 69; Ireland Three London Pieces

21st July 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime - a period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.'

Lennox Berkeley Sonata in D minor

Rusen Gunes (viola)

Paul Hamburger (piano)

Elgar Part songs: *Feasting I watch; Love's tempest* Saltarello Choir conducted by Christopher Seaman  
Gordon Jacob Three Pieces Rusen Gunes (viola)

Paul Hamburger (piano)

Elgar Part songs: *Go, song of mine; O wild west wind* Saltarello Choir conducted by Christopher Seaman

Vaughan Williams Musette: Galop (Suite for viola and piano)

Rusen Gunes (viola)

Paul Hamburger (piano)

4th Aug 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime - period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.' This week's programme is devoted to a performance of his Mass in G minor.

Hazel Simkins (soprano)

Ameral Gunson (contralto)

Emlyn Randall-Jones (tenor) Richard Bourne (bass) BBC Chorus conducted by Douglas Robinson (Douglas Robinson broadcasts by permission of the General Administrator. Royal Opera House Covent Garden)

11th Aug 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime - a period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.'

This week piano music by Vaughan Williams himself, and choral pieces by some of his friends.

Bernard Roberts (piano) BBC Chorus conductor Peter Gellhorn

Maconchy *Nocturnal*, for unaccompanied chorus

Vaughan Williams Suite of six short pieces (first three)

Holst Six canons for equal voices

Vaughan Williams Suite of six short pieces

Rubbra *The givers*, for unaccompanied chorus; *Bonny Mary O*, for chorus and piano.

18th Aug 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime. BBC chorus conducted by John Poole

Bax *I sing of a maiden*

Warlock *I saw a fair maiden; Bethlehem Down; A Cornish Christmas Carol; Corpus Christi*

Delius *To be sung of a summer night on the water: The splendour falls on castle walls; On Craig Ddu*

25th Aug 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written during his lifetime - a period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.'

This week chamber music by Vaughan Williams and two of his friends

Nash Ensemble

Martin Jones (piano) Judith Pearee (flute) Antony Pay (clarinet)

Hale Hambleton (clarinet) Robert Hill (clarinet)

Christopher van Kampen (cello) Rodney Slatford (double-bass) Elgar Howarth (trumpet)

Roger Brenner (trombone) Tristan Fry (percussion) conducted by Marcus Dods

Vaughan Williams *Suite de ballet*, for flute and piano; Bax Clarinet Sonata;

Constant Lambert Piano Concerto

1st Sep 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime - period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance'. This week. choral music dating from Victorian times to Benjamin Britten in the 1950s.

Elizabethan Singers conductor Herrick Bunney  
with Steuart Bedford (piano) Victorian Part Songs:  
Frederick Bridge *The goslings; Barnby; Sweet and low*  
Pinsuti *Goodnight beloved*  
Callcott *To all you ladies now on land*  
Sullivan *The long day closes*; Part Songs:  
Warlock *Benedicamus Domino: All the flowers of the spring: The first mercy: The spring of the year:  
As dew in Aprylle*  
Britten *Ballad of little Musgrave and Lady Barnard*

8th Sep 1972, 10:00 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features a variety of music written in England during his lifetime.

Bridge *Journey's end; Golden hair: Come to me in my dreams*  
Britten *A song of enchantment: Autumn; Fish in the unruffled lakes*  
Holst *Persephone; The dream city: The floral bandit*  
Delius *The nightingale has a lyre of gold; The bird's story*  
Clare Walmesley (soprano) with Paul Hamburger (piano)

15th Sep 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime. This week. music by four of his closest friends: one of them, Herbert Howells, pays tribute to him.

Howells Piano Quartet in A minor  
Howells Song-cycle: *In green ways*  
Bax *Lyrical Interlude* for string quintet (first broadcast performance)  
Holst Four Songs, Op 35. for voice and violin  
Patrick Hadley *Scene from The Woodlanders* (first broadcast performance)  
Felicity Palmer (Soprano); Michael Lloyd (piano); Music Group of London

22nd Sep 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This series features music written during his lifetime.

This week songs by Vaughan Williams himself. sung by Oriel Sutherland (contralto) with Roger Vignoles (piano)

29th Sep 1972, 09:45 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime.

This week a programme of songs and folk songs sung by the BBC Chorus conducted by John Poole  
arr Moeran young *The sailor and Nancy*  
Moeran *Weep you no more, sad fountains*  
arr Vaughan Williams *A farmer's son so sweet: Bushes and briars; The lover's ghost*  
Moeran *Songs of springtime*

6th Oct 1972, 14:15 on BBC Radio 3

One hundred years ago next Thursday, Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This series features music written in England during his lifetime. This week choral and chamber music by V. W. himself .

Three Elizabethan part songs  
Phantasy Quintet  
Three Shakespeare songs  
String Quartet in A minor  
BBC West Of England Singers conductor



Philip Moore  
Dartington String Quartet with Brian Hawkins (viola)

13th Oct 1972, 14:00 on BBC Radio 3

One hundred years ago yesterday Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. The two chamber works in this week's programme were part of a centenary tribute given on 30 April at the Highgate Society, and afterwards recorded in the studio.

Ian Partridge (tenor) Nash Ensemble

String Quartet in G minor

Song-cycle: *On Wenlock Edge*, for tenor, string quartet and piano

20th Oct 1972, 14:05 on BBC Radio 3

One hundred years ago last week, Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features a variety of music written in England during his lifetime. This week, from the North of England, a programme of chamber and vocal music by Vaughan Williams and two of his friends.

Ian Partridge (tenor) Wissema String Quartet with David Lloyd (piano)

Howells Fantasy String Quartet

Vaughan Williams *Merciless Beauty*; Violin Sonata in A minor

Ivor Gurney Song-cycle: *Ludlow and Teme* (poems by A. E. Housman)

27th Oct 1972, 14:00 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features music written in England during his lifetime. This week, a programme of songs by some of his friends, sung by Ian Partridge (tenor) accompanied by Jennifer Partridge (piano)

Bliss *Simples*

John Raynor; *Bredon Hill*; *The waking*; *Love me again*; *Down by the river*

Ireland Song-cycle: *The land of lost content*

arr Goossens, Bridge, Bax and Ireland *Variations sur Cadet Roussel*

3rd Nov 1972, 14:00 on BBC Radio 3

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born on 12 October 1872. This centenary series features music written in England during his lifetime - a period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.'

This week music for two pianos played by John Ogdon and Brenda Lucas

Vaughan Williams *Introduction and Fugue*

Britten *Mazurka elegiaca*; *Introduction and Rondo alia burlesca*

10th Nov 1972, 13:55 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features music written in England during his lifetime. This week, a programme of chamber music, performed by the Gabrieli String Quartet  
Kenneth Sillito (violin)

Brendan O'Reilly (violin) Ian Jewel (viola)

Keith Harvey (cello) with John Streets (piano)

Frank Bridge Trio (Rhapsody), for two violins and viola

Elgar Piano Quintet in A minor

17th Nov 1972, 14:15 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features a variety of music written in England during his lifetime. This week, from the North of England, a programme of songs and chamber music by three of his friends Brian Rayner Cook (baritone) Ad Solem Ensemble

Butterworth Song-cycle: *Love blows as the wind blows*, for baritone and string quartet Rubbra Piano Trio

Ivor Gurney Song-cycle: *The Western Playland*, for baritone, string quartet and piano (Poems by A. E. Housman)

21st Nov 1975, 14:05 on BBC Radio 3

Fourth of six programmes of music written in England during Vaughan Williams' s lifetime-a period sometimes called 'The English Renaissance.' This week. chamber music and songs by four of his closest friends: one of them, Herbert Howells , pays tribute to him at the beginning of the programme.

Herbert Howells Piano Quartet in A minor; Song-cycle: *In green ways*

Bax *Lyrical Interlude* for String Quintet

Hoist Four Songs, Op 35, for voice and violin

Patrick Hadley *Scene from The Woodlanders*

Felicity Palmer (soprano) Michael Lloyd (piano) Music Group Of London

24th Nov 1972, 13:55 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features a variety of English music, both by himself and his friends and contemporaries. This week, a programme of choral music performed by the St Margaret's Westminster Singers conductor Richard Hickox with Alastair Ross (organ)

Elgar Psalm 48

Parry *Songs of Farewell*

Howells *Take him, earth, for cherishing*

Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*

1st Dec 1972, 14:05 on BBC Radio 3

On 12 October 1872 Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. This centenary series features a variety of music written in England during his lifetime. also includes a work by the composer he admired most - J. S. Bach

Vaughan Williams *The voice out of the whirlwind: O vos omnes*

Bach *The Spirit also helpeth us*

Vaughan Williams Prelude on the Welsh hymn tune ' Rhosymedre '; *Prayer to the Father of Heaven: Valiant for truth*

BBC West Of England Singers conductor Philip Moore Gareth Benson (organ)

8th Dec 1972, 14:05 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features music written in England during his lifetime. This week. chamber music and songs by Vaughan Williams and four of his friends, performed by Musica Da Camera

Patricia Clark (soprano) Harold Clarke (Bute) Sidney Fell (clarinet) Denis Vigay (cello) Hubert Dawkes (piano and harpsichord)

Eugene Goossens *Water wheel: In the hills; At the fair (Impressions of a Holiday, for flute. cello and piano)*

Vaughan Williams Three Vocalises, for soprano and clarinet

Ireland Fantasy-Sonata, for clarinet and piano

Bliss *Nursery Rhymes: 'The ragwort', for soprano, clarinet and piano: 'The dandelion', for soprano and clarinet*

Rubbra *Cantata pastorale, for soprano. flute, cello and harpsichord*

12th Dec 1972, 14:05 on BBC Radio 3

Last of six programmes of music by Vaughan Williams, his friends and contemporaries  
Ian Partridge (tenor)

Wissema String Quartet Nella Wissema (violin) Fay Campey (violin)

Ludmila Navratil (viola) Paul Ward (cello) with David Lloyd (piano)

Howells Fantasy String Quartet

Vaughan Williams *Merciless Beauty*

Vaughan Williams Violin Sonata in A minor

Ivor Gurney *Ludlow and Teme* (poems by A. E. Housman)

15th Dec 1972, 13:55 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features a variety of music written in England during his lifetime. This week a programme of vocal and orchestral music by Vaughan Williams himself

Bryn Evans (baritone)

Jennifer Partridge (piano)

Cardiff Polyphonic Choir BBC Welsh Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley

*Songs of Travel*

*Five Mystical Songs*, for baritone, chorus and orchestra

22nd Dec 1972, 14:00 on BBC Radio 3

This centenary series for Ralph Vaughan Williams features a variety of music written in England during his lifetime. This week a programme of vocal music by Vaughan Williams himself.

David Humphreys (tenor) Colin Staveley (violin) Geoffrey York (viola) Gordon Hunt (oboe)

BBC Welsh Orchestra leader Colin Staveley conducted by Meredith Davies

*Along the field*: Eight songs of A.E. Housman, for tenor and violin

*Four Hymns*, for tenor, viola and string orchestra

*Ten Blake Songs*, for tenor and oboe

29th Dec 1972, 14:05 on BBC Radio 3

The last programme in this Vaughan Williams centenary series features his letters and his poets read by John Westbrook and Gabriel Woolf with John Noble (baritone) Philip Ledger (piano) Devised by Ursula Vaughan Williams Read By: John Westbrook and Gabriel Woolf