**A CHRONOLOGY OF SHAW'S LIFE**

Provided by A. M. Gibbs, whose A Bernard Shaw Chronology (Palgrave, 2001) is the most complete and authoritative available. <http://www.shawsociety.org/Shaw-Chronology.htm>

For other online chronologies, see http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~ccarpen/shaw.htm and “Online Criticism & Biography” at http://chuma.cas.usf.edu/~dietrich/shawbizness.html .

**“SHAW’S LIFE: SOME KEY EVENTS”**

1856 George Bernard Shaw **born on 26 July at 33 Synge Street Dublin**, the son of George Carr Shaw, gentleman corn merchant and Lucinda Elizabeth Shaw, a leading amateur mezzo-soprano and concert performer. Shaw has two elder sisters, Agnes, who died at 21 of tuberculosis, and Lucy who became a musical-comedy star.

1866 The Shaw family begins sharing houses at 1 Hatch Street, Dublin and ‘Torca Cottage’, Dalkey with musical conductor and entrepreneur George Vandeleur Lee.

1867-71 Attends various schools in Dublin before leaving at fifteen to work first as office-boy and later chief cashier in a ‘highly genteel’ firm of land agents. He is already deeply interested in and knowledgeable about literature, music, art and theatre.

1873 Leaving her husband and son in lodgings in Dublin, Shaw’s mother goes to live in London where she becomes a singing teacher.

1876 Resigns his post in Dublin and **moves to London** following the death of his sister Agnes.

1876-82 **Writes five novels** and has occasional work in London as a music critic, and for a brief period, in the newly established Edison Telephone Company.

1884 **Joins the recently established Fabian Society**, and becomes one of its leading members and most effective public spokesperson. Spends much time during the 1880s and 1890s as a ‘platform spellbinder’, regularly lecturing at numerous venues on socialist topics.

1885 Surrenders his virginity on his 29th birthday to a passionate Irish widow, Mrs Jane Patterson, a friend of the Shaw family. [. . . . His fairly short-lived career as a philanderer begins. It ends with his marriage, pretty much.]

1885-8 Becomes a regular book-reviewer for the Pall Mall Gazette, and writes music and art criticism for various periodicals

1888 Becomes music critic for The Star, inventing the pen-name Corno-di-Bassetto.

1892 **Shaw’s first publicly performed play Widowers’ Houses** presented by the Independent Theatre Company.

1892-1900 Shaw completes all seven of the plays in the Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant group and his Three Plays for Puritans.

1894 Opening night (21 April) at the Avenue Theatre of **Arms and the Man** the first of Shaw’s plays to have immediate theatrical success. [. . . .]

1895 Beginning of Shaw’s famous epistolary romance with actress Ellen Terry, and of Shaw’s appointment as theatre critic for the Saturday Review.

1898 **Marries Charlotte Payne-Townshend**, a wealthy Irish heiress and supporter of socialist causes and feminism, born in County Cork. The mostly happy marriage was without issue, and possibly unconsummated.

1901-03 Shaw composes his ‘Comedy and Philosophy’ **Man and Superman** in which he first gives expression to his ‘religion’ of Creative Evolution and ideas about the Life Force.

1904-7 Principal playwright in the Vedrenne-Barker seasons at the Court Theatre, London. New plays composed and presented during this period were **John Bull’s Other Island, Major Barbara,** How He Lied to Her Husband and The Doctor’s Dilemma.

1912 Falls in love with actress Stella (Mrs Patrick) Campbell, who will create the role of Eliza Doolittle in Pygmalion. The affair with Stella comes close to physical consummation and threatens Shaw’s marriage. [Then she runs off and marries someone else, comes back to play Eliza Doolittle to great acclaim. Their famous love letters were later turned into a play, *Dear Liar*]

1914 Opening on 11 April of first English production of **Pygmalion**, the play having been first performed in German translation in Vienna on 16 October 1913. Publication in November as a Special War Supplement to the New Statesman of Shaw’s hard-hitting pamphlet **Common Sense About the War**. The controversial work creates an uproar and temporary ostracism from some circles for Shaw.

1916-17 Writes **Heartbreak House**, and in 1917 visits the war zone in France as an invited guest of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the Western front.

1920 Completes his five-play cycle on evolutionary themes, **Back to Methuselah**.[This is the play Shaw chose as a “world classic” when Oxford Press asked him to contribute one play to its series, though it has not been seen as his greatest work by anyone else.]

1923 Completes **Saint Joan**, which is first presented in December by the Theater Guild at the Garrick Theater, New York, and has its London première the following year with Sybil Thorndike in the leading role.

1925 **Nobel Prize for Literature** (awarded 1926).

1928 Publication of **The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Socialism and Capitalism**, a major political work written for Shaw’s sister-in-law.

1929 Career as a dramatist resumes with ‘Political Extravaganza’ The Apple Cart, in which his affair with Stella Campbell is recalled. This work inaugurates the Malvern Festival, in which plays by Shaw become the major attractions in its future years. He continued writing plays until the last year of his life.

1931 Shaw makes a celebrated visit to Russia in a touring party which includes his friend, the first female Member of Parliament in Britain, Nancy Astor.

1933 In one of a series of international voyages on ocean liners in the 1930s with his wife Charlotte, Shaw makes his **first visit to America**, where he meets Randolph Hearst, Charlie Chaplin and other celebrities, and delivers a public address in New York. [. . . .]

1938 Première of Gabriel Pascal and Anthony Asquith’s **film version of Pygmalion**, starring Leslie Howard as Henry Higgins and Wendy Hiller as Eliza Doolittle. [Shaw won an Oscar for the screenplay.]

1941 Première of Gabriel Pascal’s **film of Major Barbara**. The star-studded cast includes Robert Morley as Undershaft, Wendy Hiller as Major Barbara, Rex Harrison as Cusins, and Robert Newton as Bill Walker. Deborah Kerr made her screen debut in the film in the role of Jenny Hill. [This was filmed while London withstood the bombing raids of Hitler.]

1943 **Death of Shaw’s wife Charlotte**, after suffering for a long period of time from osteitis deformans, a chronic bone disease. [. . . .]

1946 Made a Freeman of Dublin by the Dublin City Council.

1949 [. . . .] Publishes a collection of autobiographical essays, several of them revised versions of earlier pieces, entitled **Sixteen Self Sketches**.

1950 Writes his last play Why She Would Not in July. In September he has a fall while attempting to prune a tree in the garden at Ayot St Lawrence. The ensuing trauma and illness lead to **his death** [. . .] 2 November. The event attracts huge coverage in the international media, the lights of Broadway are dimmed, and theatre audiences stand in silence as marks of respect.

1956 Loewe and Lerner’s musical **My Fair Lady**, an adaptation of Shaw’s Pygmalion, opens and runs for more than nine years.

**[Note: Material omitted and added by your professor are indicated by brackets.]**