

William Golding: a chronological account

Unless otherwise stated, all Golding's books are published by Faber and Faber. For a fuller account of Golding's life, see 'A Biographical sketch' by Judy Carver in Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: a Critical Study* (3rd revised edition, London: Faber, 2002. For a fuller account of Golding's published works, see R A Gekoski and P A Grogan, *William Golding: a bibliography* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1994).

- 1911 On 19 September William Gerald Golding was born in Cornwall.
- 1921-30 Golding went to Marlborough Grammar School, where his father Alec was science master.
- 1930 Golding went to Brasenose College, Oxford, to read Natural Sciences.
- 1932 He changed to English Literature.
- 1934 Golding gained a second-class degree in June of this year. In the autumn, Macmillan published his *Poems*.
- 1935 In the autumn he became a teacher at Michael Hall, a Steiner school then in Streatham, South London, staying there two years.
- 1937 In the autumn Golding went back to Oxford to study for a Dip.Ed.
- 1938 In January he started his teaching practice at Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, and in June of that year passed his exams. In September, he took a post at Maidstone Grammar School. He met Ann Brookfield, and they fell in love.
- 1939 In September, a few weeks after the declaration of war, they were married in Maidstone Registry Office.
- 1940 In April, Golding took up a post at Bishop Wordsworth's School, and he and his wife moved into a cottage in the Wiltshire village of Bowerchalke. In September, the Goldings' first child, David, was born. In December Golding left Bishop Wordsworth to join the navy.
- 1941-5 Golding's first active service was in HMS Galatea in the North Atlantic. He then went to Liverpool where he spent many hours on guard duty in the Gladstone Dock. In the spring of 1942 he was seconded to MD1, a weapons research unit then in Buckinghamshire. However, in early 1943 he returned to sea at his own request, and soon after was sent to New York to help bring minesweepers back to the UK after they had been built in the New Jersey dockyards. Later he was trained in Landing Crafts equipped with rocket guns, and it was in command of such vessels that he took part in the naval support for the D Day landings and the invasion of Walcheren.
- 1945 In July the Goldings' second and last child, Judith Diana, was born. In

- September Golding left the navy and returned to Bishop Wordsworth's School.
- 1946 The Goldings moved to Salisbury.
- 1952 He began work on a novel he called 'Strangers from Within'.
- 1953 In January he started sending the novel to publishers. Many rejected it, until in September Golding sent it to Faber and Faber, where it was eventually accepted.
- 1954 In September, after changes to the text, it was published as *Lord of the Flies*.
1955 *The Inheritors* was published.
- 1956 *Pincher Martin* was published. Golding also contributed the story 'Envoy Extraordinary' to *Sometime, Never: three tales of the imagination* (published by Eyre and Spottiswoode). The other two stories were by John Wyndham and Mervyn Peake.
- 1956-7 By now Golding had some involvement with literary life in London. He started writing for *The Bookman* and *The Listener*, and began broadcasting.
- 1958 *The Brass Butterfly*, his play starring Alistair Sim and adapted from his story 'Envoy Extraordinary', opened in Oxford on 24 February, toured the provinces, and then ran for a month in London. The text of the play was published in July. In autumn the Goldings moved back to the village of Bowerchalke. In November, Golding's father Alec was diagnosed with cancer, and following an operation to remove the cancer he died suddenly of a heart attack in hospital on 12 December.
- 1959 In October *Free Fall* was published.
- 1960 August his mother died.
- 1961 In the autumn Golding and his wife went to the USA, to Hollins, a women's liberal arts college, in Virginia.
- 1962 While in America Golding worked on drafts of *The Spire*, as well as delivering the first version of his lecture 'Fable', on *Lord of the Flies*. During this year, he resigned from Bishop Wordsworth's School, and became a full time writer.
- 1963 In May, Peter Brook's film of *Lord of the Flies* was shown at Cannes.
- 1964 *The Spire* was published in April.
- 1965 Golding collected some of his essays and reviews in *The Hot Gates*.
- 1967 *The Pyramid* was published in book form in June.
- 1968-70 Golding again began to find it difficult to write.

- 1971 *The Scorpion God*, which reprinted 'Envoy Extraordinary' and added two new stories, was published in October. From the autumn of 1971 he kept a journal, which started as a record of dreams but gradually became an account of his attempts to write, and of personal experiences.
- 1979 *Darkness Visible* was published, winning the James Tait Black Memorial Prize.
- 1980 *Rites of Passage* was published, winning the Booker McConnell Prize.
- 1982 *A Moving Target*, a new collection of essays and reviews, was published.
- 1983 This year, Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- 1984 *The Paper Men* was published.
- 1985 *An Egyptian Journal* was published. The Goldings moved to Cornwall.
- 1986 Faber and Faber published *William Golding: The Man and his Books. A Tribute on his 75th Birthday*, edited by John Carey.
- 1987 *Close Quarters* was published, a sequel to *Rites of Passage*.
- 1988 Golding was knighted.
- 1989 *Fire Down Below*, the final novel of the Sea Trilogy, was published, bringing its hero Edmund Talbot to Australia.
- 1991 Golding celebrated his eightieth birthday. He revised the separate volumes of his Sea Trilogy, to make a single volume, *To the Ends of the Earth*.
- 1992 In the autumn Golding was told he had a malignant melanoma on his face, and in December, just after Christmas, it was removed.
- 1993 In January Golding began work on a new novel. However, early on the morning of 19 June he died of heart failure. Five days later, on Midsummer's Day, he was buried in the churchyard at Bowerchalke.
- 1994 In November Golding was remembered at a memorial service in Salisbury Cathedral.
- 1995 Ann Golding died on New Year's Day, eighteen months after her husband, and was buried beside him in the graveyard at Bowerchalke. In June Golding's last novel, *The Double Tongue*, was published.