

John Betjeman – A Chronology 1906 to 1984

1900s

1906 Born Highgate, London, 28 August, son of Ernest and Mabel Bess (née Dawson) Betjemann.

1910s

1911 Byron House Montessori School, Highgate.
1915 Highgate Junior School.
1917 Dragon School, Oxford.

1920s

1920 Marlborough College, Wiltshire.
1925 Magdalen College, Oxford.
1928 Schoolmaster at Thorpe House Prep. School, Gerrards Cross, for one term.
1929 Private Secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett for two months.
1929-30 Schoolmaster at Heddon Court Prep. School, East Barnet.

1930s

1930-34 Assistant Editor, *Architectural Review*.
1931 *Mount Zion* (The James Press).
1932 Conceives *Shell Guides* for Shell Oil Company.
Cornwall Illustrated (Shell).
Lifetime involvement with BBC begins.
1933 *Ghastly Good Taste* (Chapman and Hall).
Marries Penelope Chetwode, 29 July.
1934 Moves to Garrards Farm, Uffington, Berkshire.
1934-35 Film critic to *Evening Standard*.
1935-39 Works in Shell Publicity Department, Shell-Mex House.
1936 *Devon: A Shell Guide* (The Architectural Press).
1937 *Continual Dew* (John Murray).
Son Paul born.
1938 *An Oxford University* (John Miles).
1939 *Antiquarian Prejudice* (Hogarth Press).

1940s

1940 Works for Ministry of Information.
Old Lights for New Chancels (John Murray).
1941 United Kingdom Press Attaché, Dublin, Ireland.
1942 *Vintage London* (Collins).
Daughter Candida born.
1943 Returns to Uffington from Ireland.
English Cities and Small Towns (William Collins).
Resumes job with Ministry of Information.
1944 Serves with Publications Branch of the Admiralty in Bath.

- English Scottish and Welsh Landscape* with Geoffrey Taylor and illustrated by John Piper (Frederick Muller).
- 1944-51 Regular book reviewer for *Daily Herald*.
- 1945 Moves to Farnborough, Wantage, Berkshire.
Works for British Council in Oxford and Blenheim.
New Bats in Old Belfries (John Murray).
- 1946-48 Secretary of Oxford Preservation Trust three days a week.
- 1946-78 Serves on the Oxford Diocesan Advisory Committee.
- 1947 *Slick, But Not Streamlined* (Doubleday, New York).
- 1947-50 Edits *Watergate Children's Classics* for Sidgwick & Jackson.
- 1948 *Selected Poems* (John Murray).
Murray's Buckinghamshire Architectural Guide.
- 1948-63 Serves on the London Diocesan Advisory Committee.
- 1949 *Murray's Berkshire Architectural Guide*.
- 1949-54 Literary Adviser/Editor to *Time and Tide*.
- 1950s**
- 1950 *Collected Poems* (John Murray).
- 1951 Moves to The Mead, Wantage, Berkshire.
The English Scene (Cambridge University Press).
Shropshire: A Shell Guide (Faber and Faber) with John Piper.
- 1951-59 Weekly book reviews for *Daily Telegraph*.
- 1952 *First and Last Loves* (John Murray).
- 1952-62 'Men and Buildings' column for *Daily Telegraph*.
- 1952-70 Serves on Royal Fine Art Commission.
- 1954 *Poems in the Porch* (John Murray).
A Few Late Chrysanthemums (John Murray).
Rents 43 Cloth Fair, London.
- 1954-58 Weekly column 'City and Suburban' for *Spectator*.
- 1954-77 Serves on committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.
- 1955 'Discovering Britain', a series of twenty-six short films (Shell).
Foyle Poetry Prize for *A Few Late Chrysanthemums*.
- 1956 *The English Town in the Last Hundred Years*.
'Our National Heritage: Stained Glass at Fairford' (BP/Shell).
Loines Award for poetry.
- 1957 *English Love Poems* edited with Geoffrey Taylor (Faber and Faber).
'Beauty in Trust' (BP/Shell).
Poet in Residence at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA.
Honorary Associate, Royal Institute of British Architects.
- 1958 *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches* (Collins).
Collected Poems (John Murray).
Duff Cooper Memorial Prize for *Collected Poems*.
Founds the Victorian Society with Anne Rosse.
- 1958-84 Vice-chairman and committee member of the Victorian Society.
- 1959 *Altar and Pew* (John Murray).
Foyle Poetry Prize for *Collected Poems*.
Honorary D. Litt., Reading University.
- 1960s**
- 1960 *Summoned by Bells* (John Murray).

- A Hundred Sonnets by Charles Tennyson Turner*, selected in collaboration with Sir Charles Tennyson (Hart-Davis).
 ‘Our National Heritage: journey into the Weald of Kent’ (BP/Shell).
 Queen’s Gold Medal for Poetry (for *Collected Poems*).
 Commander, Order of the British Empire.
 Buys Treen, Trebetherick, Cornwall.
- 1960-68 ‘ABC of Churches’, a series of twenty-six films (BBC).
 1961 Visits Australia (five weeks).
 1961-62 Euston Arch demolished.
Collected Poems (with additional poems, John Murray).
A Ring of Bells (John Murray).
 ‘Steam and Stained Glass’ (ATV).
 ‘Wales and the West’, a series of six films (TWW).
 Coal Exchange demolished.
- 1963 ‘A Hundred Years Underground’ (London Transport).
 ‘Wales and the West’, a further series of four films (TWW).
 1964 *Cornwall: A Shell Guide* (updated, Faber and Faber).
 ‘Discovering Britain with John Betjeman’, a series of five films (BP/Shell).
 1964-67 Regular feature for *Weekend Telegraph*.
 1965 *The City of London Churches* (Pitkin Pictorials).
 Honorary LL.D, Aberdeen University.
- 1966 *High and Low* (John Murray).
 ‘Journey to Bethlehem’ (BBC).
 ‘Betjeman at Random’, a series of four films (BBC).
 1967 ‘The Picture Theatre’ (BBC).
 ‘Tale of Canterbury’ (Rediffusion).
 ‘Betjeman’s London’, a series of six films (Rediffusion).
Six Betjeman Songs (Duckworth).
- 1968 ‘Contrasts: Tennyson: A Beginning and an End’ (BBC).
 ‘Footprints: the Finest Work in England: Isambard Kingdom Brunel’ (BBC).
 Companion of Literature, Royal Society of Literature.
- 1969 *Victorian and Edwardian London* (Batsford).
 ‘Bird’s Eye View: Beside the Seaside’ (BBC).
 ‘Bird’s Eye View: The Englishman’s Home’ (BBC).
 Knight Bachelor.
 Commissioner of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments.
- 1970s**
- 1970 *Collected Poems* (enlarged third edition, John Murray).
Ghastly Good Taste (second edition, Anthony Blond).
Ten Wren Churches (Editions Alecto).
 ‘Four with Betjeman: Victoria Architects and Architecture’.
 ‘Look Stranger: John Betjeman on the Isle of Man’.
 ‘Railways For Ever’.
- 1971 *Victorian and Edwardian Oxford* (Batsford).
 ‘That Well Known Store in Knightsbridge’ (BBC).
 ‘The Isle of Wight’ (BBC).
 ‘Bird’s Eye View: A Land for All Seasons’ (BBC).
 Honorary Fellow, Royal Institute of British Architects.

- Visits Australia (three months).
 1972 *Victorian and Edwardian Brighton* (Batsford).
London's Historic Railway Stations (John Murray).
A Pictorial History of English Architecture (John Murray).
 'Betjeman in Australia', a series of four films (BBC/ABC).
 'Thank God it's Sunday', a series of two films (BBC).
 Poet Laureate, 10 October.
 The Mead sold.
- 1973 'Metro-land' (BBC).
 Rents 29 Radnor Walk, London.
- 1974 *A Nip in the Air* (John Murray).
Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall (Batsford).
 'A Passion for Churches' (BBC).
- 1975 Visits Canada for Macdonald Stuart Foundation.
- 1976 'Summoned by Bells' (BBC).
 'Vicar of this Parish: Betjeman on Kilvert' (BBC).
- 1977 *Metroland* (Warren).
Archie and the Strict Baptists, illustrated by Phillida Gili (John Murray).
 'The Queen's Realm' (BBC).
- 1978 *The Best of Betjeman* (John Murray).
- 1979 'John Betjeman's Dublin' (BBC).
 'John Betjeman's Belfast' (BBC).
- 1980s**
- 1980 *Church Poems* (John Murray).
 'Nationwide: Southend Pier' (BBC).
 'Betjeman's Britain' (Anglia TV).
 'Late Flowering Love' (Charles Wallace Picture Co).
- 1981 'Nationwide: St Mary le Strand' (BBC).
- 1982 *Uncollected Poems* (John Murray).
- 1983 'Time with Betjeman', a series of seven films (BBC).
- 1984 Dies, Trebetherick, 19 May.