A Chronology of Wyndham Lewis

1882  Percy Wyndham Lewis born, Amherst Nova Scotia
1888-93 Isle of Wight
1897-8 Rugby School
1898-1901 Slade School of Art (expelled)
1902 Visits Madrid with Spencer Gore, copying Goya in the Prado
1906 Munich (February – July).
1906-7 Paris
1907 Ends relationship with Ida
1908 – 11 Writes first draught of Tarr, a satirical depiction of Bohemian life in Paris
1908 London
1909 First published writing, ‘The “Pole”’, English Review
1911 Member of Camden Town Group. ‘Cubist’ self-portrait drawings
1912 Decorates ‘Cave of the Golden Calf’ nightclub
Exhibits ‘cubist’ paintings and illustrations to Timon of Athens at ‘Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition’
1913 Joins Fry’s Omega Workshops; walks out of Omega in October with Frederick Etchells, Edward Wadsworth and Cuthbert Hamilton after quarrel with Fry. Portfolio, Timon of Athens published. Begins close artistic association with Ezra Pound
1914 Director, ‘Rebel Art Centre’, Great Ormond Street (March – July)
Dissociates self from Futurism and disrupts lecture by Marinetti at Doré Gallery (June)
Vorticism launched in Blast (July; edited by Lewis)
Introduced to T. S. Eliot by Pound
1915 Venereal infection; Blast no. 2 (June); completes Tarr
1916-18 War service in Artillery, including Third Battle of Ypres and as Official War Artist for Canada and Great Britain

1918-21 With Iris Barry, with whom he has two children

1918 *Tarr* published. It is praised in reviews by Pound, Eliot and Rebecca West

Meets future wife, Gladys Hoskins


Writes *The Caliph’s Design: Architects! Where is your Vortex?*, a pamphlet urging the continuance of modernism in art and its spread to architecture and town-planning.

1920 Forms ‘X Group’ of artists in attempt to restore the avant-garde momentum of Vorticism in opposition to Bloomsbury conservatism.

Holiday in France with T. S. Eliot; meets James Joyce

1921 Meets Sidney Schiff. Edits *The Tyro*, no. 1, a ‘review of art and literature’; ‘Tyros and Portraits’ exhibition at Leicester Galleries

Drinking sessions with Joyce in Paris (May – June)


Commissioned to paint portrait of Edwin Evans

Affair with Nancy Cunard; visits Venice with her and the Sitwells

Starts work on portrait of Violet Schiff

1923-6 Writing major works of the 1920s, and producing fewer paintings


1925 (February) Submits ‘500,000 word book’, ‘The Man of the World’ submitted unsuccessfully to publishers. This was split up, revised and extended into separate books.

1926 *The Art of Being Ruled*, a work of political theory and analysis, attempting to distinguish sources of revolutionary change in society. Visits Joyce in eye clinic.
1927 Launches new magazine which he largely writes: *The Enemy*. no. 1, containing critiques of literary avant-garde (including Pound and Joyce) for the political and philosophical naivety of their work

*Time and Western Man* (which reprints essays from *Enemy* and extends critique to cover contemporary metaphysical theory).

*Enemy* no. 2 (on the cult of the ‘primitive’ in D. H. Lawrence and Sherwood Anderson); *The Lion and the Fox* (a study of Shakespeare); *The Wild Body* (revisions of early short stories set in Brittany and Spain)

1928 *The Childermass: Section 1*, a fantasy of posthumous existence ‘outside Heaven’. Revised version of *Tarr*

1929 *Paleface: The Philosophy of the Melting Pot* (reprints and extends essays in *Enemy*, no. 2); *The Enemy*, no. 3 (critique of Paris avant-garde)

Meets W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender


1931 Compiles *Hitler* from articles written for *Time and Tide* derived from visit to Berlin; argues that Hitler is a ‘man of peace’

May-July, visits Morocco

1932 *Thirty Personalities and a Self Portrait* (portfolio) and ‘Thirty Personalities’ exhibition, Lefevre Gallery.

*Snooty Baronet*, a comic novel satirising behaviourism (banned by Smiths and Boots lending libraries)

*Filibusters in Barbary* (travel book based on Moroccan experiences) and *Doom of Youth* (a study of ‘youth-politics); both suppressed after libel actions

1933 Resumes painting in oils after 10 years

*One-Way Song*, a book of poems

1934 Bladder operation. *Men without Art* published, with critiques of T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway

Begins composing *The Revenge for Love*
1935 Collaborates with Naomi Mitchison on illustrated fantasy, *Beyond this Limit*

1936 Second and third operations

*Left Wings over Europe*, an anti-war book

Paints *The Surrender of Barcelona* (Tate Gallery)

1937 *The Revenge for Love* (a tragic novel concerning deluded political commitments of the fashionable left-wing in the run-up to the Spanish Civil War)

*Count Your Dead: They are Alive!* (anti-war book concerning Spanish Civil War: sympathetic to fascist side)

*Blasting and Bombardiering* (an autobiography)

Exhibition of portraits, drawings and paintings on metaphysical, historical and other themes at Leicester Galleries; visits Berlin and Warsaw

Declares he has been ‘much deceived in politicians’ in the special ‘Wyndham Lewis’ issue of *Twentieth Century Verse* (edited by Julian Symons)

1938 Painting of T.S. Eliot rejected by R.A.

Donates a painting for auction in aid of republican Spain

(June – July) Exhibition, Beaux Arts Gallery

*The Mysterious Mr Bull* (a study of British character, praised by George Orwell: ‘I do not think it is unfair to say that Mr. Wyndham Lewis has “gone left.” ’

(December) Ezra Pound visits London; begins portrait of him

1939 (March) Attacks Anti-Semitism in *The Jews: Are they Human?*

Collects writings on art in *Wyndham Lewis the Artist*, including a new essay advocating a return to nature (though not to naturalism)

(September) Lewis and Froanna leave for North America

(October – November) Buffalo, New York. Paints Chancellor Samuel Capen

*The Hitler Cult: and How it will End*
1939-40 Dec. – May: New York City

1940 June-Oct: Sag Harbor, finishing *The Vulgar Streak*

1940-43 Toronto, Tudor Hotel, Sherbourne St

1941-42 Series of fantastic watercolours on themes of creation, crucifixion, gestation and bathing scenes

1941 *Anglosaxony: A League that Works* published by Lorne Pierce at the Ryerson Press


*The Vulgar Streak*, a novel set at the time of Munich and criticising English class prejudice published in London

Notices severe deterioration in eyesight


1943 Meets Marshall McLuhan

1944 February – July, St Louis. Paints Nobel Prize winner Dr Joseph Erlanger and Mrs Ernest Stix

1945 August, Lewis and Froanna return to UK, with financial assistance from Malcolm MacDonald

1945-1957 Lives in Notting Hill

1948 *America and Cosmic Man*, a study of American history and society

1949 – 1951 Art Critic for *The Listener*: praises work of Michael Ayrton, Francis Bacon, Robert Colquhoun and other young British painters.

1949 March – April, works on Portrait of T. S. Eliot

May, Retrospective exhibition, Redfern Gallery

1950 *Rude Assignment*, an autobiography

1951 Announces blindness in final *Listener* article as art critic

*Rotting Hill*: short stories on life in England during the period of ‘austerity’ presided over by Sir Stafford Cripps
1952  *The Writer and the Absolute*: essays on Sartre, Malraux, Camus and Orwell

1954  *Self Condemned*, a novel based on the Lewises’ Canadian ‘exile’ in Toronto in 1942-3

1955  BBC broadcast dramatised sequels to *The Childermass*; published as *The Human Age, Books 2 and 3*: *Monstre Gai and Malign Fiesta*

1956  *The Red Priest*, a novel about a boxing high churchman who kills his curate.

‘Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism’, retrospective exhibition at Tate Gallery

1957  March 7: dies in Westminster Hospital