

Blow, Detmar Jellings 1867 - 1939



Detmar Jellings Blow [commonly known as Detmar Blow] was born at Two Ashes, Forest Hill, Sydenham, Kent, England on 24 November 1867. He was articled to Andrew Wilson and Thomas William Aldwinckle (1843?-1920) of Wilson Son & Aldwinckle in London, and later to [Philip Webb](#) (1831-1915). He also attended South Kensington School of Art from 1883 and took evening classes Architectural Association Schools in London from 1887. In 1888 he was awarded an Architectural Association travelling scholarship and went to France. Whilst in Abbeville he met [John Ruskin](#) and spent six months travelling with him. Ruskin proved to be an important influence on Blow's subsequent career as an architect.

Following Blow's return to England he met William Morris and Philip Webb whose ideas on architectural preservation he absorbed and led to a long association with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), for whom he subsequently worked on a number of conservation and restoration projects. Such was his closeness to Morris that he was at his deathbed in 1896 and drove his garland-bedecked wagon to his grave.

By the early 1890s Blow had commenced independent practice and over the next decade or so, whilst based in London he operated as an itinerant architect working on the repair and restoration of buildings as well as new builds throughout England.

Photographs of Blow's work as a mason on cottages designed by Ernest Gimson were shown in the 6th exhibition of the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society in London

in 1899.

During the early years of his career Blow sometimes collaborated with other architects including Ernest Gimson (1864-1919) and Alfred Powell (1865-1960). From 1899 to c.1907 [Basil Thorold Stallybrass](#) (1879-1922) worked as his chief assistant. From 1905 to 1924 Blow was in partnership with French architect [Fernand Billerey](#) (1878-1951) as [Blow & Billerey](#).

In the first decade of Blow's partnership with Billerey, the practice worked on a high number of commissions "rivalling Lutyens in the country house market" [Michael Drury. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography]. In c.1910 Blow became friends with Hugh Grosvenor, 2nd Duke of Westminster, owner of the Grosvenor Estate in London, and over the next twenty-three years he and his practice worked on numerous architectural projects on the estate. From 1928 Blow appointed was the estate's surveyor, a position he held until 1933.

Blow exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1924, and the Blow and Billery partnership exhibited at the Royal Academy on seven occasions between 1911 and 1925.

Blow was elected a member of the Art Workers Guild in 1892 and a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA) in 1906.

In 1933 retired to Hilles, near Painswick, Gloucestershire where he died on 7 February 1939

A biographical file on Detmar Blow is available on request from the Enquiry Desk, Royal Institute of British Architects Library, London

Worked in

UK

Works

Philip Webb introduced Blow to his first client, Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley, for whom he built Mill Hill (1891), a small house in Brandsby, Yorkshire. Other projects on which he worked included the Old Post Office, a medieval manor house in Tintagel, Cornwall (1896); restoration of Lake House, near Salisbury, Wiltshire (1898); restoration of tower of St Peter and St Paul's Church, Clare, in Clare, Suffolk (1899); repair to Stonehenge, Wiltshire (1900); Stonewell in Ulverscroft, Leicestershire, in collaboration with Ernest Gimson (1899); Happisburgh Manor, Happisburgh, Norfolk (1900); repair to Stonehenge, Wiltshire (1900); Little Ridge,

Fonthill, Wiltshire (1904–06) for Hugh Morrison; Wilsford Manor, Wiltshire (1906); All Saints' Chapel, Avon Tyrell House, Sopley, Hampshire (1906); Bovey Castle, Devon (1907); Billesley Manor, near Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire (1906–13); Hatch House, Newtown, Wiltshire (1908) Horwood House, Little Horwood, Buckinghamshire, with Fernand Billery (1912); Château Woolsack, Mimizan, France (1912); Hilles, Harescombe, Gloucestershire (1913); Schloss Kranzbach, Krün, near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany (1913–15); and renovation of Broome Park, Barham, Kent (1915–16).

See also:

[Historic England](#)

[British Listed Buildings](#)

[Country Life Picture Library](#)

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