

Simpson, John William 1858 - 1933



John William Simpson was born in Brighton, Sussex, England on 9 August 1858. Both his father, Thomas Simpson (1826-?), and his brother, Gilbert Murray Simpson (1869-1954) were architects. By the 1860s he was living in Brighton, Sussex, England, where his father had a practice. He was articled to his father in 1875 and in 1879 entered the Royal Academy Schools in London where he studied under [Richard Phené Spiers](#) (1838-1916).

From 1881 to 1884, Simpson was in partnership in London with Michael Prendergast Manning. In 1887 he formed a partnership with Edmund John Milner Allen (1859-1912), and between 1905 and 1928 was in partnership with [Ormrod Maxwell Ayrton](#) (1874-1960).

Much of Simpson's most significant work was undertaken during the [Simpson & Ayrton](#) partnership, although it would seem that Ayrton was largely responsible for many of the designs.

Following the dissolution of the Simpson & Ayrton partnership in 1928, Ayrton continued in independent practice and Simpson went into partnership with Frank W. Knight and Henley Cornford.

Simpson was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (ARIBA) in 1882, and Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA) in 1900.

He was actively involved in the administration of the Royal Institute of British Architects and from 1919 to 1921 was its President (PRIBA). He was Officier de l'Instruction Publique. Membre Correspondant de la Société des Architectes Français, Secrétaire du Comité Permanent International des Architectes. Secretary General of Town Planning Conference, London. 1910, a member of Board of Professional Defence, and a member of Council, British School at Rome. He was also Vice President of the Royal West of England Academy and Vice President of the British Society of Master Glass Painters. In 1889 he was elected a member of the Art Workers Guild (AWG). In 1924 he was knighted for his work on British Empire Exhibition 1924-25.

Simpson exhibited at the Royal Academy in London and the Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts between 1881 and 1904. He died at his home, 39 Brookfield, West Hill, Highgate, Middlesex, on 30 March 1933.

Worked in

UK

Works

Works by Simpson prior to his partnership with Ayrton included Victoria Institute, Worcester, Worcestershire (1896); West Downs School, Winchester, Hampshire (1897-98); Roedean School (1898-1911). In 1902 he designed monuments for the painter and sculptor Edward Onslow Ford (1852-1901) and for Margaret Sophie Waterlow (1856-1899), the wife of the painter Sir Ernest Albert Waterlow (1850-1919), both of which were erected in London; and from 1900 to 1903 he designed the Cartwright Memorial Gallery and Museum, Lister Park, Bradford, Yorkshire. Much of Simpson's most significant work was undertaken during the Simpson & Ayrton partnership, although it would seem that Ayrton was largely responsible for many of the designs. This included Audley House, 9-12 Margaret Street, Marylebone, London (1907); Clare College, Mission Church, Filston Grove, Bermondsey, London (1911); extensions to Haileybury College, London Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire (1905-08, 1912-14); Chapel, Gresham School, Holt, Norfolk (1912-16); offices of Crown Agents for Colonies, Milbank, London (1914-16); Brighton War Memorial, Brighton, Sussex (1921-22); the British Government Pavilion and other buildings at the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25 (including Wembley Stadium, originally known as the Empire Stadium); Tuke Buildings, Bedford College for Women in Regent's Park, London; new buildings for the National Institute for Medical Research in Mill Hill, London; new offices for the Presbyterian Church in Cheam and Bloomsbury, London; and bridges at Twickenham, Lea Valley, Barking Creek, Wanford, Findhorn, Spey.

Bibliography

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'Obituary'. RIBA Journal vol. 40, 29 April 1933 pp. 514-515

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'Wembley Stadium' [Architects: J. W. Simpson & Maxwell Ayrton] The Builder January 1923 pp. 143-150

'Wembley Stadium' [Architects: J. W. Simpson & Maxwell Ayrton] American Architect vol. 125, 7 May 1924 pp. 427-430.

'Wembley Stadium' [Architects: J. W. Simpson & Maxwell Ayrton] The Builder 20 October 1922 pp. 569, 577, 581, 588, 589, 596.

Links

- W. G. Allen, revised by John Elliott. Sir John William Simpson. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [Subscription service]
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36103>
- Dictionary of Scottish Architects 1660-1980
http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200100
- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/sir-john-william-simpson-18581933-priba-216380>
- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_William_Simpson
- Wikimedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:John_William_Simpson
- Parks & Gardens <https://www.parksandgardens.org/people/john-william-simpson>
- Historic England - Victoria Memorial, Bradford, Yorkshire
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1132899>
- Historic England - Cartwright Memorial Hall, Bradford, West Yorkshire
<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/educational-images/cartwright-memorial-hall-bradford-5531>
- Historic England - Gates and gate piers to Lister Park North Road and gates and piers to Lister Park, Bradford, Yorkshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the->

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- Historic England - Oak Lane Gatesm gate piers and losge to Lister Park, Bradford, Yorkshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1133049>
- Historic England - The Carwright Memorial Hall (Art Gallery and Museum) in Lister Park, Bradford, Yorkshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1133051>
- Historic England - Main quadrangle and Memorial Hall attached, at Haileybury and Imperial Service College, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1084375>
- Historic England - Bradford War Memorial, including steps, screen wall and terminal blocks <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1434527>
- Historic England - Form Room Block, at Haileybury and Imperial Service College, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1078780>
- Historic England - Connaught Road School, Brighton <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1393480>
- Glasgow Sculpture Database https://glasgowsculpture.com/pg_biography.php?sub=simpson-allen