



JOHN SUMMERSON

Walter Bird

John Newenham Summerson 1904–1992

JOHN NEWENHAM SUMMERSON was born in Darlington on 25 November 1904. His father, Samuel James Summerson, was the manager of a family firm which manufactured rail track. It had been established in the 1840s by Samuel's father Thomas, a working man who had risen to be Inspector of Permanent Way on the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Samuel was in his mid-forties when he married Dorothea Newenham, whose father was a poorly-paid clergyman, but whose forebears were Anglo-Irish gentry from Coolmore in County Cork (as a young man John Summerson was sometimes to use 'Coolmore' as a *nom de plume*). Samuel died in 1907, leaving his widow with an independent income and the responsibility of bringing up their only child. Physically weak, John was sent first to a small preparatory school at Weymouth and then to the more 'bracing' environment of Riber Castle near Matlock, where he rapidly developed both physically and intellectually. The four years he spent as a pupil in this strange, ugly, but not entirely 'unromantic' house on its Derbyshire hilltop were remembered by him as 'among the most luminous and liberating of my life and [those] in which architecture first intruded itself into my adolescent brain'.¹ From Riber he went on to Harrow, which proved less congenial, though the teaching was 'mostly excellent', and it was here that he learned to write what John Betjeman called his 'cool, Harrovian prose'. Here, too, a talent for playing the organ was fostered

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¹ It was in Woore's bookstall in the market at Derby that Summerson bought his first architectural books. The present writer was to do the same in the 1930s.

by the music master, Dr (later Sir) Percy Buck. It was through organ-playing that the boy began to develop a latent interest in architecture. Organs led to organ-cases and organ-cases to the churches that housed them. In the Vaughan Library at Harrow he 'browsed through architectural and topographical literature as an alluring side-issue from my organ studies' and in the holidays he was 'always in and out of cathedrals and churches, playing organs whenever I had the chance'. Buck told Mrs Summerson that if her son took up the organ as a profession, he 'could choose, in effect, between Westminster Abbey and St Paul's', but he was somewhat dismissive of organ-playing as a career and by 1922 it had become clear that architecture, rather than music, was to be the dominant interest of John's life. As architecture could not be studied at Oxford or Cambridge, the offer of a place at Pembroke College in the latter university was given up, and in his eighteenth year he was admitted to the Bartlett School of Architecture at University College London, with the intention of gaining a degree in architecture and in due course practising it as a profession.

Under Albert Richardson and Hector Corfiato the Bartlett School offered a strictly traditional training, sustained by Richardson's enthusiasm for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classicism and by Corfiato's *Beaux-Arts* expertise. Promising students were encouraged to try for a Rome Scholarship at the British School, but Summerson 'did not much like this way of designing and never got anywhere in the competition'.² He did, however, spend a good deal of his time with a fellow student called Denis Mirams sketching and making measured drawings of old buildings in Norfolk, Oxford, Paris and elsewhere. Another student friendship, that was to last for a lifetime, was with Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh, a member of a wealthy Lancashire family, who later wrote a notable guide to the architecture of that county.

In 1926–7 Summerson spent an obligatory six months in an architect's office, that of W. D. Carøe, a specialist in churches who worked for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in Millbank. Here the work was dreary and badly paid and he left with relief in May 1927. Thanks, however, to an allowance from his mother, he was not dependent on his meagre earnings from Carøe's office, and in the summer he joined Fleetwood-Hesketh in a tour of Northern Europe that included

² A 'Design for a College Chapel by Mr J. Summerson (Third Year)', illustrated in the *Builder*, 28 August 1925, 319–20, appears to be the only relic of his architectural pupilage. It is a Gothic design much influenced by Liverpool Cathedral.

Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Berlin and Holland. Back in England, he first joined the office of an obscure architect called Low ('the nearest thing to Scrooge I have ever met') and then that of a famous one in the person of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott R.A. But neither the mediocrity of the former nor the distinction of the latter did anything to make a young man of naturally intellectual tastes into an effective architectural practitioner. His commitment to a conventional career as an architect was in fact wavering. 'I had scraped through my course at the Bartlett with little credit and taken a second-class degree. I had done time in three architects' offices but learnt very little from the experience. . . . I was ambitious to make some sort of mark in architecture but the possibility of practice was not only remote but distasteful. Writing appealed to me but I had no obvious talent for it'.

In this predicament Summerson applied for, and obtained, a junior teaching post at the Edinburgh College of Art. For this his abilities as a draughtsman and designer were, in his own words, 'utterly insufficient'. He was, in fact, much less able than some of his pupils, among whom were Basil Spence and Robert Matthew, young men of his own generation of whose superior ability he was painfully conscious. The appointment was, however, part-time, and Summerson occupied himself by writing, first for the *Architect and Building News* and then for the *Builder*, by learning German, and (in the vacations) by foreign travel. In 1930 the librarianship of the Royal Institute of British Architects fell vacant, and Summerson applied for a post for which he was in many ways well equipped (if not formally qualified). He was short-listed and interviewed, but the job went to another architect, E. O. ('Bobby') Carter. Humiliated by his inadequacy as a teacher, Summerson now resigned the Edinburgh post and returned to London, where his continued dependence on his mother (and hers on him, for she had few friends of her own) was an added source of discontent.

Residence in London did, however, give Summerson the entrée to a more intellectual society than that afforded by architectural schools and offices. Finally emancipating himself from the constraints of his mother's flat in Hampstead, he moved early in 1932 to Bloomsbury, where he met, among others, Geoffrey Grigson, C. E. M. Joad, Hugh Ross Williamson and other journalists and writers. Grigson introduced him to a wider circle which included the novelist Antonia White, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth, her artist husband Ben Nicholson, and her sister Elizabeth, a ballet-dancer, whom he was later to marry. He was now writing fairly regularly for such periodicals as the *Builder*, the

Architect and Building News, *Country Life* and the *Bookman*, and had sporadic employment in architects' offices, including that of Clough Williams-Ellis. He continued to travel, notably in 1931 to Russia, where he was briefly arrested for inadvertently photographing the police headquarters in Moscow.

Then in 1932 the lucky find in a Bloomsbury print-shop of a collection of drawings by John Nash and the Reptons turned Summerson's attention in the direction of architectural history. There ensued an article in the *RIBA Journal* and, more importantly, the idea of a biography of John Nash, the centenary of whose birth would fall in 1935. Writing *John Nash* initiated him into the documentary sources of English architectural history in the British Museum, the Public Record Office and elsewhere. Both readable and scholarly, Summerson's biography of George IV's architect was something new in English literature and at once established its author's reputation as an architectural historian. A full-time job as assistant editor of a weekly periodical, the *Architect and Building News*, precluded any further historical writing for the time being, but Summerson now had an established place in the literary and intellectual society of the 1930s. He was, moreover, a member of the MARS (Modern Architectural Research) Group which pioneered the 'Modern Movement' in England. In 1937 he found time to submit for a RIBA Prize (which he duly won) an essay entitled 'The Tyranny of Intellect: The Mind of Sir Christopher Wren'. Himself an intellectual who had found his *métier* in writing rather than in design, Summerson saw in Wren another intellectual, one in whom freedom of invention was inhibited by an academic and scientific background, and who only gradually responded to the freedom of the baroque and never exploited its possibilities as fully as his pupil Hawksmoor was to do. This was followed in 1939 by 'The Great Landowner's Contribution to Architecture', in which, perhaps not uninfluenced by Marxist insistence on the economic basis of society, he explored the pattern of landownership and patronage which had so largely determined the growth of London outside the City. This preliminary investigation of London's architectural history was to develop later into *Georgian London*, but already in 1939 it showed that Summerson had a grasp of the historical processes which underlie architecture that was unique among historically-minded architects in Britain (in the 1930s there were, of course, scarcely any architecturally-minded historians).

When the Second World War supervened Summerson realised that recording the fabric of the past before it was destroyed had suddenly

become more urgent than investigating its history. It was largely his initiative that led (with the encouragement of Sir Kenneth Clark) to the establishment of the National Buildings Record, with Walter Godfrey as Director and Summerson as his deputy. Broadly speaking Godfrey was responsible for the overall administration, Summerson for the recording of threatened or bomb-damaged buildings, not only in London, but in cities and towns all over England. Many of these dated from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, periods whose architecture had then been little studied, and in selecting buildings for record Summerson had to search periodicals such as the *Builder* and the *Building News* as well as moving round the country in the wake of German bombers. From early in 1941 to the summer of 1945 his life was devoted to the commissioning of drawings and photographs for the Record. A selection of these, with an introduction by J. M. Richards and well-informed notes by Summerson, was published by the Architectural Press in 1942 as *The Bombed Buildings of Britain*.

Then in 1945 the death of A. T. Bolton made vacant the curatorship of Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields — apart from the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, whose remit excluded buildings later than 1714, almost the only post for an architectural historian in the country. Summerson's appointment, already envisaged by the Trustees before Bolton's death at the age of eighty, was effected without delay. Nominally part-time and initially poorly paid, the post gave Summerson a base from which to pursue his career as an architectural historian without unduly restricting his freedom of action. The Soane Museum was to remain the centre of his life for thirty-nine years. In 1945 the immediate problem was the repair of the fabric damaged in the blitz (which he achieved with a grant from the Pilgrim Trust, making the drawings for much of the work himself), and the reinstatement of its contents, evacuated for safety in 1942. Under Bolton the Museum still had the character of a private house to which the public and the scholar had only limited access. The new Curator was determined to open the Museum on a regular basis and to make its contents freely available to students. This the funds at the Trustees' disposal would not permit, and in 1947 Summerson was instrumental in negotiating a Treasury grant which led eventually to a Statutory Order (1969) giving the Museum a status similar to that of the British Museum, entirely dependent on the State financially, but under the control of its own Trustees. In 1968 he persuaded the Trustees and the Treasury to take over the adjoining house, No. 12 Lincoln's Inn

Fields, designed by Soane himself and leased to tenants since 1813, as a much-needed extension that was essential to the proper functioning of the Museum. Meanwhile he and Dorothy Stroud, the Assistant Curator, had initiated weekly lectures for the benefit of visitors and made the great collection of drawings accessible to students, while catalogues of the classical and Egyptian antiquities were commissioned from appropriate experts. When Summerson retired in 1984 there was scope for further cataloguing of drawings, archives and printed books, but his curatorship had seen the transformation of a 'near bankrupt private charity' into a cherished and much-visited museum of international repute.

From 1944 onwards Summerson was to write, lecture³ and broadcast about architecture and architectural history without intermission for some forty years. Although he claimed to 'have no fluency as a writer', he did in fact have an enviable facility for writing what appeared to be effortlessly elegant and lucid prose. But the driving force behind his output was intellectual rather than literary: the incentive was (in his own words) 'always *curiosity*—curiosity about architecture, its roots and branches, its practitioners and expositors and, in the broadest and most elusive sense, its meaning'. Linked with curiosity was 'the desire to crystallise my findings in words which . . . make those findings comprehensible and, if possible, eloquent'. Eloquence in exposition came easily to him, and behind it was a rigorous and penetrating mind that rarely failed to get to the heart of an architectural problem, whether it was the source of a motif or the evolution of a style. But to satisfy curiosity in a manner that was intellectually valid meant research, and one of Summerson's achievements was the way in which, without any historical training, he identified and exploited those documentary sources that were relevant to his current inquiry, whether they were the records of the Crown Estate Commissioners, the Declared Accounts of the Office of Works, or the wills and inventories of a family of Jacobean artisans. With a few honourable exceptions (notably Willis and Clark's *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, published in 1886), such sources had been generally neglected by earlier writers on English architecture, making Summerson's achievement as a self-taught historian the more remarkable. So far as nineteenth-century architecture was concerned, he had as an example

³ He lectured regularly on the History of Architecture at the Architectural Association from 1949 to 1962, and at Birkbeck College from 1950 to 1967.

the work of H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, by whose brilliance as a lecturer and writer he was much impressed, and whose celebrated card-index of Victorian churches was firmly based on contemporary periodical literature and the records of the Incorporated Church Building Society. At the same time he was absorbing the established principles and techniques of art-historical scholarship as they were understood on the Continent. Here the arrival in 1933 of the Warburg Institute was crucial. Summerson regularly attended its seminars at Thames House, Millbank, and sat at the feet of Saxl, Wind, Kurz and above all Wittkower, whose lectures on Palladianism were (he wrote later) 'a turning-point for many of us'. Faced with Wittkower's 'wonderful intuition for discerning the problems behind a building's physiognomy and devising . . . a strategy for solving them', the 'magnetic enthusiasm of a Richardson or even the epigrammatic brilliance of a Goodhart-Rendel seemed to belong to a different and departing world'. When to professionalism in research and unflinching felicity in exposition, whether oral or written, there were added an unusually perceptive eye and a retentive visual memory, Summerson's exceptional equipment as an architectural historian becomes clear.

After *John Nash* came *Georgian London* (1945), perhaps the first study of a European capital that attempted not only to establish the characteristics of its architecture, but also to show how these had been shaped by the ambitions of its landowners, the capabilities of its building trades, and the regulatory restraints of its municipal authorities. Elegantly printed (despite wartime restrictions) by the Cresset Press, its success was immediate, and it remains a classic of British architectural history. A sequel to be entitled *Victorian London* was long on Summerson's agenda, but in the end the investigations needed to make historical sense of so vast a subject proved to be too great for its fulfilment. Articles on 'The London Suburban Villa' (1948), 'The Victorian Rebuilding of the City of London' (1974), 'Charting the Victorian Building World' (1990), a chapter in *The Victorian City* (ed. Dyos and Wolff, 1973), and a lecture on 'The London Building World of the Eighteen-Sixties' (1973) were, however, valuable by-products of this unfulfilled project.

In 1946 Summerson was invited by Nikolaus Pevsner to write the volume on *Architecture in Britain 1530–1830* for the Pelican History of Art. It took six years to write and generated several subordinate studies that are of permanent value in themselves, notably one on the Elizabethan surveyor John Thorpe, whose drawings (in the Soane

Museum) are a key source for the understanding of Elizabethan architecture, and another on the typology of the English country house in the eighteenth century. The volume eventually published in 1953 proved to be a magisterial survey that has provided the framework within which British architectural history from the Renaissance to the Gothic Revival has been studied ever since.

The interest—starting with John Thorpe—that Summerson had shown in Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture led to the invitation to contribute substantially to the third volume of *The History of the King's Works*, edited by the present writer. This involved an investigation both of the organisation and personnel of the royal works from the mid-sixteenth century to the time of Inigo Jones, and of the architectural history of the royal palaces during the same period. The extensive documentation made this a somewhat formidable task which he conscientiously discharged, remarking wryly that it was 'both a penalty and a compensation for never having done a Ph.D. thesis in my youth'. Though 'nothing spectacularly new' emerged from Summerson's involvement in the *King's Works*, it provided the incentive for his lecture on Inigo Jones, delivered in the British Academy's 'Master Mind' series in 1964 and printed in its *Proceedings* for the following year. Much of this paper was absorbed into a Pelican paperback on *Inigo Jones* which was published in 1966.

It was, however, Wren rather than Jones whose architecture was to be for Summerson a lifelong preoccupation. The brilliant prize essay of 1937 was followed in 1953 by a deceptively simple but sophisticated biography in the 'Brief Lives' series, in which proper attention was paid to Wren's scientific work as well as to his architectural achievement; in 1960 by an essay on Wren as President of the Royal Society; in 1961 by an important investigation into the evolution of the design of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral; in 1963 by 'The Sheldonian in its Time' (a lecture given in that building when receiving an Honorary Degree from the University of Oxford); in 1970 by a catalogue of drawings for the London City Churches that (largely as a result of his own intervention) had been acquired by the National Art Collections Fund when they were sold at auction in 1951; and in 1990 by a further paper on the dome of St Paul's. In his work on St Paul's Summerson showed that he could tackle a strictly architectural problem of considerable complexity with the authority that he had doubtless admired in Wittkower's studies of St Peter's, Rome.

Among Summerson's other writings as an architectural historian,

the most notable were his study of the architecture of Sir John Soane, his investigation of the origins of the square and the crescent as characteristic elements in English town planning, and his *Classical Language of Architecture* (1964), a masterly introduction, characteristically free from pedantry or jargon, that has been translated into several foreign languages, including Japanese.

Although it was as an architectural historian that Summerson would eventually achieve celebrity, in his early years as a writer he was as much concerned with contemporary architecture as with that of the past. What is more, he was committed to the 'Modern Movement'. As early as 1930, in an article in the *Scotsman*, he shocked his superiors at the Edinburgh College of Art by evoking a vision of the Princes Street of the future as 'a glittering spectacle of steel, glass, and concrete'. In London his membership of the MARS Group brought him into contact with the leading Modern Movement architects in England, such as Maxwell Fry, Serge Chermayeff and Amyas Connell. It was he who wrote the captions for the Group's famous propagandist exhibition of 1938, attended by Le Corbusier as guest of honour. In 1941 he published an article entitled 'The New Groundwork of Architecture' which was something of a Modernist manifesto. In it he called for the abandonment of tradition as 'architectural Toryism', and with it 'the traditional idea of the architect's place in society—the genteel lackey of the wealthy, the man who turns surplus profits into picturesque country houses and imposing city façades. . . . The architecture of today must be the architecture not of a class but of the community itself.' The 'need for parade' would vanish and new architectural beauties would be rediscovered, 'deeper and subtler than any which the fourteenth or eighteenth centuries knew', though not perhaps the Greeks.

What drew Summerson to the Modern Movement was above all its strongly intellectual character. This was a time when (as he wrote later) 'a good many young men bought themselves black hats and discovered that architects were, or should be, intellectuals' rather than 'gentlemen or scholars'. 'Here', he wrote approvingly of Tecton's High Point flats in Highgate, 'is architecture which sets the standard of intellectual modernity firmly on English soil'. In the 1930s and early 1940s as a broadcaster and architectural journalist he took the Modern Movement very seriously, but as early as December 1940 he privately admitted (in a letter to Ben Nicholson) that the MARS Group had failed in its mission and that the kind of architecture it had preached would never win

general acceptance in Britain. As time went on his own approach became more that of a commentator than of a protagonist, and when in 1957 he attempted to establish a 'Theory of Modern Architecture', the result was an academic essay that was (as he himself subsequently admitted) both 'philosophically unsound' and of doubtful relevance for the British architects of the day. By this time his interests had shifted away from the contemporary towards the historical. Already in 1948 he thought of himself as 'in practice' as much 'an antiquary' as 'an architect', and in 1955 he confessed to having 'scarcely looked at modern stuff' for so long that 'the description and criticism of modern buildings [for an Arts Council exhibition] comes as a quite new problem'. It was, however, perfectly in keeping with his former loyalties that in 1984 he should rather quixotically have championed Peter Palumbo's ill-advised scheme to plant a tower designed by Mies van der Rohe in the heart of the City of London, and on lecturing tours in the United States he continued eagerly to visit the works of Mies, Frank Lloyd Wright and other masters of modern architecture in that country. Back in England he found the 'post-modern' fascinating but regrettably lacking in principle and integrity. However, in his last critical article, on James Stirling's extension to the Tate Gallery, entitled 'Vitruvius Ridens' (*Architectural Review*, June 1987), he conceded that British architecture could not forever have sustained the high seriousness of the Modern Movement and that what Stirling had designed was acceptable as a sophisticated architectural joke that was at the same time 'lucidly and functionally planned'.

It was characteristic of Summerson that although committed to the Modern Movement he did not reject the past (as so many of its adherents did), and that at the same time he viewed the past with a degree of detachment that absolved him (unlike Pevsner) from any suggestion that he saw it through modernist eyes. His paper on 'Butterfield and the Glory of Ugliness' (1945) was written too early to have been, consciously or unconsciously, prompted by the 'New Brutalism', and only in his analysis of the 'personal style' of Sir John Soane can a mind attuned to the studied simplicities of the Modern Movement perhaps be seen searching for similar qualities in the work of a neo-classical architect.

Detachment (though not indifference) characterised Summerson's long involvement in the cause of architectural preservation. In 1937 he was one of the first members of the Georgian Group, and he was an original member both of the Committee for Listed Buildings that

advised the Minister for Housing and Local Government under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1944 and of the Historic Buildings Council (1953). In both these capacities he played an important part in establishing the criteria for State intervention and State aid that are still in force, and from time to time he intervened decisively in favour of some important building that was at risk, such as Arbury Hall when threatened by coal-mining in 1953. Always highly discriminating in his assessment of buildings worth preserving, he enjoyed playing the part of *advocatus diaboli* when some marginally 'outstanding' building came up for consideration. Cool in the face of conservationist enthusiasm, he was particularly mistrustful of an attitude towards the past in which sentiment was not controlled by critical judgement. So, in addressing the Thirties Society in 1983, he gently ridiculed their devotion to a decade so 'lacking in vigour of invention or refinement of style'. More notoriously, his failure, in 1961, to support opposition to the demolition of some houses in one of Dublin's 'longest, dreariest and most monotonous Georgian streets' was never forgiven. Nor did he subscribe to the Ruskinian dictum that 'restoration is destruction', preferring in the last resort to preserve authenticity of design rather than the last vestiges of original craftsmanship. In 1963 he wrote enthusiastically about the way in which historic buildings in Oxford had recovered their architectural identities as a result of refacing. 'Architecture,' he wrote, now 'springs from the past into the present in a way which few can have foreseen.'

Summerson received many honours and awards. He was appointed CBE in 1952. A knighthood followed in 1958 and in 1987 he was appointed Companion of Honour. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1954. In 1976 he was awarded the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, a recognition not only of his eminence as a critic and historian of architecture, but also of his persistent attempt 'to bridge the gap between the architectural profession and the world of Art History'. He was a Fellow of University College London, an Honorary Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and received Honorary Degrees from the Universities of Leicester (1959), Oxford (1963), Edinburgh (1968), Hull (1971) and Newcastle (1973). He was Slade Professor of Fine Art at both Oxford (1958–9) and Cambridge (1966–7) and Ferens Professor of Fine Art at Hull (1960–1). A Festschrift in his honour entitled *The Country Seat* was published by Penguin Books in 1970.

Summerson was a member of nearly all the public bodies connected

with architecture and its history: the Listed Buildings Committee of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (1944–66), of which he was Chairman from 1960 to 1962; the Royal Fine Art Commission (1947–54), whose ‘long and often excessively boring meetings’ he enlivened by an independence of judgement that was sometimes almost perverse (‘Summerson’, declared its Secretary, Godfrey Samuel, ‘just hates being in a majority’); the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England (1953–74), where his expert guidance in the description of classical buildings was particularly valuable; and the Historic Buildings Council (1953–78). He was also a member of the Historical Manuscripts Commission (1959–83) and of the Advisory Council on Public Records (1968–74), and a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery (1966–73). In 1961 he was appointed Chairman of the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design, a body set up to ensure that there was a uniform standard in art education throughout the country. Its decisions were controversial, and although it was an assignment which Summerson fulfilled with credit, it was with relief that he withdrew from it in 1970.

From 1949 to 1965 Summerson was a member (and for much of the time Chairman) of ‘The Critics’, a popular and very successful radio feature in which a panel of critics discussed in turn a book, a play, an art exhibition, a film and a radio programme. His felicitous broadcasting manner was equally evident in the many talks which he gave on various BBC services, the texts of which were often published subsequently in the *Listener*.

In 1938 Summerson married Elizabeth, daughter of H. R. Hepworth and sister of the sculptor Barbara Hepworth. The birth of triplet boys in 1946 was an event which complicated the Summersons’ domestic life for some years thereafter. It necessitated the purchase of the house (No. 1, Eton Villas, on the Chalk Farm estate) in which Summerson was to live for the rest of his life. Lady Summerson died in 1991.

Summerson was a tall, elegant man whose well-groomed appearance and urbane manner gave him an air of patrician assurance. By the 1960s the Bloomsbury intellectual had become part of the English ‘Establishment’: a member of the Athenaeum and the Beefsteak Club a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Society of Antiquaries. Though generally reserved and undemonstrative, he was not in the least pompous: students found him unexpectedly approachable and he could be an agreeable companion and an amusing correspondent. In his late years he was disabled by deafness, emphysema and Parkinson’s Dis

ease, but continued to write with undiminished authority as long as he could hold a pen. He died on 25 November 1992, aged 87.

HOWARD COLVIN
Fellow of the Academy

Note. The earlier part of this memoir is based largely on an unfinished autobiography by Summerson, a copy of which he sent to the Academy expressly for the use of his obituarist. The remainder is derived from personal knowledge, from Summerson's own papers, bequeathed by him to the British Architectural Library, and from his letters to Ben Nicholson in the Tate Gallery Archive. One letter of 1948 to Ernest de Beer (Bodleian Library, MS Eng. c. 3118, f. 145) is referred to. The text has benefited from perusal by Sir Alan Bowness, Professor J. Mordaunt Crook, Dr Mark Girouard, Mr John Harris, Mrs Margaret Richardson and Dr David Watkin.

Select Bibliography

This is an expanded version of the bibliography provided by Summerson himself for the Festschrift of 1970. Not only did that not cover the last twenty-four years of his life, but it omitted several publications of an earlier date that deserved inclusion. Use has been made of a copy of the 1970 bibliography in Sir John Soane's Museum to which Summerson made additions up to 1990. Like the 1970 bibliography this one is 'select' in the sense that it excludes ephemeral journalism and some minor reviews of books, buildings and exhibitions. Books, articles and reviews are listed under each year in that order.

1927

Measured drawing of the London, County and Westminster Bank, Lothbury (by C. R. Cockerell), *Builder*, 17 July 1927, 979; redrawn for inset plate in *Architect and Building News*, 1 March 1935.

1928

'A Small Country House in Sussex planned by Women Architects', *The Queen*, 7 March 1928, 30-1.

1929

'An Early Modernist: James Wild and his Work', *Architects' Journal*, 9 January 1929, 57-62.

1930

- 'The Tweed Bridges from Peebles to the Sea', *Quarterly of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland*, 34 (1930), 44–52.
- 'Modernity in Architecture', *Scotsman*, 21 February 1930, followed by correspondence in 'Points of View' at various dates in February and early March.
- 'Architecture and the Byzantine Genius', *Builder*, 20 June 1930, 1185–6, with sketches by J. S.
- 'A Cubist Architect: Some Recent Schools at Hilversum by W. M. Dudok', *Builder*, 19 December 1930, 1038.

1931

- 'Notes on Architecture in Two Russias', *Master Builder*, January 1931, 16–21.
- 'The Art of the Victorians', *Country Life*, 20 June 1931, 791–2.
- 'The Terrace Houses of Edinburgh', *Builder*, 14 August 1931, 264–5, and 21 August 1931, 302–3.
- 'Primitive Architecture in Ireland', *Quarterly Illustrated of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland*, 1930–1, 6–17 (the 'Quarterly' prize essay for 1930–1).

1932

- 'The Romantic Element in Architecture', *Architectural Design and Construction*, ii, 5, March 1932, 225–9.
- 'Shakespeare Memorial' (the Stratford-on-Avon Theatre), *Scotsman*, 22 April 1932.
- 'Gothic Treasure Island' (Gotland), *Builder*, 1 July 1932, 8–9, with sketches by J. S.
- 'This Age in Architecture', *Bookman*, October 1932, 13–14.

1933

- S. O. Addy, *The Evolution of the English House*, revised and enlarged from the author's notes by J. S. (London, 1933).
- 'A Repton Portfolio', *RIBA Journal*, 25 February 1933, 313–24.

1934

- Architecture Here and Now*, with Clough Williams-Ellis (London, 1934).
- 'The Crown Commissioners' Inheritance', *Architect and Building News*, 12 January 1934, 41–4.
- 'The Work of H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, FRIBA', *Brick Builder*, March 1934, 13–17.
- 'Recent Work of Mr. E. Vincent Harris', *Country Life*, 28 April 1934, 423–6.
- 'Ersham House, Canterbury' (obituary) with measured drawings by J. S., *Architect and Building News*, 1 June 1934 (supplement), unsigned.
- 'Northumberland Tragedy' (obituary of Swarland Hall, with measured drawing by J. S.), *Architect and Building News*, 15 June 1934, 304, unsigned.

- 'Harrow School', *Country Life*, 14 July 1934, 36–42 and 21 July 1934, 64–9.
 'John Nash' (paper read before the RIBA, 3 December 1934, with discussion),
RIBA Journal, 22 December 1934, 225–36.

1935

- John Nash: Architect to King George IV* (London, 1935; rev. ed., 1949).
 'Architecture' in *The Arts Today*, ed. G. Grigson (London 1935), 253–88.
 'An Idealist's Achievement: New College, Finchley Road' (obituary), *Architect and Building News*, 20 September 1935, 338–9, unsigned.
 'General Wade's House: An Obituary', *Architect and Building News*, 11 October 1935, 42, unsigned.

1936

- 'The Strange Case of J. M. Gandy', *Architect and Building News*, 10 January 1936, 38–44.
 'Building a House', *Country Life*, 16 May 1936.
 'Southampton: The Town and the Port', *Architect and Building News*, 19 June 1936, 327–32, unsigned.
 'Theatre Royal, Bristol', *Architectural Review*, November 1936, 167–8.

1937

- 'James Wyatt', in *From Anne to Victoria*, ed. B. Dobrée (London, 1937).
 'Forty Years of British Architecture' (Royal Academy winter exhibition), *Listener*, 13 January 1937, 60–2.
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