

## RSA Obituary, transcribed from the 1996 RSA Annual Report

“Time, the deer, is in the wood of Hallaig”

On 30<sup>th</sup> November 1996 a cross party group of MP’s presented a House of Commons Motion that read “This House, while noting with sadness and condolences the passing of Sorley Maclean, believes it right to mark with gratitude his immense contribution to the Gaelic literature of the twentieth century, further draws attention to the distinguished life of public service, through active military service and injury in world war II, his career in commitment to the sport of shinty, and express the hope that in due course the nation will see fit to establish a fitting memorial to his personal memory and landmark legacy”.

Sorley was very proud of his Honorary membership of the Academy. When he was admitted to Broadford hospital on the Isle of Skye he had with him his invitation to the Members’ Dinner of 1996. This was to have been his first introduction to the Memvers and it is particularly sad that we were not able on that occasion to enjoy the warmth and charm of his personality, his dignity and his wisdom.

He was one of the great figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century Scottish literature; High McDairmid, Seamus Heaney, and Ian Crichton Smith were amongst those who acknowledged his stature as a great bard. He fought tirelessly for recognition of his native tongue in education and the arts.

His loss is felt not only in Scotland but also in the Gaelic communities in Ireland, in Canada and in Australia, but the legacy of his poetry is left to guide future generations.

Sorley Maclean died on 24 November; he is survived by his wife Renee and his daughters Ishbel and Mary.

Will Maclean RSA