

The death of Sydney Stewart at his home, Prince Charlie's Cottage, Duddingston, Edinburgh, on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1976, brought sadly to a close the professional career of a gifted sculptor and teacher. His was a declining illness, painfully endured over a long period and bravely faced with great courage.

A native of Peterhead, Sydney Stewart was educated at the Academy there, before studying Sculpture at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen. He was a distinguished student and followed a year of postgraduate study by winning a major Travelling Scholarship. In 1938 he entered the Royal College of Art, where he was to work until the outbreak of the war.

He served with the Royal Armoured Corps for a year, when he was invalided out, and after a short period in Newcastle, returned to complete his studies at the Royal College. He was awarded the Gold Medal for Sculpture in his final year and the R.C.A. Travelling Scholarship.

He taught in Hammersmith School of Art, Maidstone College of Art and St Martin's School of Art, London, before finally, in 1953, he took up his appointment as Superintendent of Evening School in Edinburgh College of Art.

In that role and as a colleague in the Drawing and Painting School and the School of Sculpture, where he gave much of himself as a draughtsman and tutor, his warm personality and kindness endeared him to both staff and students. Sydney was quiet of manner, without an affectation, working hard and consistently at all he undertook, and it was no secret to his friends that he felt an intense pride in the honour members had done him by his election to the Academy.

He will be remembered mainly for his prolific figurative works in bronze and for his carvings and constructions in wood, a medium in which he excelled as a fine craftsman. He will also be remembered for the last series of drawings and paintings he made, which were spontaneous in execution and most lively in expression.

The President himself wishes to stress a personal point regarding Sydney Stewart's contribution - and personal sacrifice - to the cause of his Art. The note is written in consideration of the time-consuming responsibilities devolving on his work as a Teacher and latterly Supervisor of Evening Classes.

"Those who witnessed his enthusiastic approach to what must be the most difficult assignment in any creative institution, namely to develop a school of significance dealing in the main with amateur talent and, at the same time, share responsibility at the student level in teaching both sculpture and painting and drawing, admire immensely his tolerance and determination. He drew from this task the friendship and respect of a host of equally dedicated people and he gleaned from it, the substance of his own considerable achievement."

The death of Sydney Stewart, a loyal and dependable colleague, is a great loss to the Academy and to his many friends. He leaves behind him his widow and a son and daughter.

***RSA Obituary by James Cumming RSA. Transcribed from the 1976 RSA Annual Report***