

## **Charles Pulsford ARSA**

### ***RSA Obituary by J.C. RSA, transcribed from the 1989 RSA Annual Report***

It was with much sadness that we learnt of the death of Charles Pulsford, A.R.S.A., on 3rd March, 1989 in Suffolk.

Born in Leek, Staffordshire, in 1912, Charles Pulsford moved to Scotland as a small child and he attended Aberdour Primary School and Dunfermline High School. His mother was a trained opera singer and he himself had a fine tenor voice, but he was soon to reveal other skills and chose to become a student at Edinburgh College of Art in 1933. He was later awarded a post-graduate scholarship followed by a travelling scholarship and in 1939 he received a Fellowship, unfortunately to be interrupted by the war years.

After the war, Charles Pulsford returned to Edinburgh College of Art to take up the Fellowship and his combined skills as a superb draughtsman and composer were most evident in an outstanding exhibition of his mature work, mounted during his appointment as a part-time lecturer in 1947. Later, he took up a permanent appointment in the Painting School, where he remained until 1960.

Independent of mind, with certain anti-establishment views, he was elected an Associate Member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1959. In 1960 he returned to England, first to teach at Loughborough College of Art and then to become head of fine art in Wolverhampton Polytechnic, taking early retirement in 1972.

At this time, he published privately *The Creative Cell*, expounding his theory of art philosophy and educative method. Drawn from a lifetime's experience and from profound insights, he believed and encouraged students to look beyond the confines of the studio and adopt a more contemplative attitude to the practice of painting.

His own work reflected timelessness, metaphysical and mystical concepts deriving from Greco-Roman mythology and Christian themata. As a painter following through the Classical tradition of European Art, abstraction came naturally to him and his strictures were often executed in richly coloured geometric compositions wrought by heavy impasto of paint.

His later and final works were a testimony to hard-fought-for simplicity and purity of colour, giving some indication of a new approach and sense of purpose along with a tranquillity of mind. In 1960 Charles Pulsford married the stained-glass artist Bronwyn Gordon and he is survived by his wife and three children, all of whom are artists.