

Alastair Smart RSA

RSA Obituary by A.R. Ross

Transcribed from the 1992 RSA Annual Report

The artistic community at large in Scotland and the art of sculpture in particular suffered a tragic loss with the sudden and untimely death of Alastair Smart at his home in Muirhead, by Dundee on 30th June, 1992.

A distinguished graduate of Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, Alastair was a sculptor of singular ability; a fact recognised by the numerous awards which he received both during his time as a student and in his subsequent career as a practising sculptor. He was also a much-valued member of both the Academy and the Royal Society of British Sculptors.

Two of his best-known public works in the Dundee area are the bronze figure of Peter Pan in Kirriemuir and the "Whale's Teeth" sculpture at Polepark Junction, Lochee Road, Dundee, although many other examples of his work are to be found, both in this country and abroad.

Ironically, by a cruel twist of fate, Alastair was awarded a major commission for a large bronze sculpture in Dundee city centre only the day before he died. However, plans are presently afoot to execute the full-scale sculpture with a former student of Alastair's working faithfully from his maquette.

He was a man of great modesty as far as his own work was concerned but he was generous and wholehearted in his praise of other sculptors whose work he admired.

After a spell of school teaching in Huntly, he taught sculpture at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee for 28 years where his unique contribution will be long remembered by countless students both past and present.

Highly articulate, but never verbose, his studio "crits" to students were succinct and entirely apposite to the work being reviewed. He also possessed the rare gift of never leaving a student's work without a final word of encouragement, delivered in his own inimitable "couthy" way.

Undoubtedly one of the finest studio teachers in any Scottish Art College, he was held in universal, high regard by his students whom he looked on as close friends - a sentiment entirely reciprocated.

He gave unstintingly of his time and talents to others and was a highly respected colleague and true friend. All of us who were privileged to know him feel a deep and abiding sense of loss. We shall not readily see his like again.

The very large attendance at Alastair's funeral at Dundee Crematorium, which was packed to overflowing on Monday 6th July was a most moving testimony to the widespread esteem in which he was held and the affection with which he was regarded. A great many former as well as present students travelled long distances to pay their last respects.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his family, who were always at the centre of his thoughts and actions - Elizabeth and children, Hilary, John and Lindsay and grandchildren, Laurie and Louis.