

### *Obituary, 1961 RSA Annual Report*

John Macdonald Aiken died on 11th December 1961, aged 81. He was a native of the City of Aberdeen, where his father worked as a carpenter. After schooling at Robert Gordon's College, he served six years' apprenticeship as a draughtsman in a Granite Merchant's office. He received his Art training at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, going on to the Royal College of Art, South Kensington with a Scholarship—later he studied in Florence.

From 1911-1914, he was Head of Gray's School of Art. During the 1914-18 War he joined the Royal Engineers and served with them in the Middle East—continuing after hostilities with the rank of sergeant-instructor to conduct Drawing Classes for the troops. During this time he was commissioned to make a chalk drawing of General Lord Allenby and a water-colour of Lady Allenby.

He was elected an Associate in 1923 and became a full Member in 1935; he was also a Member of the Royal Institute in 1944. He painted many portraits of well-known persons, chiefly in the north-east of Scotland; his portrait of the late Harry Townend, one-time Director of the Art Gallery, Aberdeen, was awarded the Medaille d'Argent when exhibited at the Paris Salon.

A man of intense application, he worked in a variety of media, besides painting some fine landscapes in oil and water-colour. Elected Associate of the Royal Society of Etchers in 1935, he was an etcher of distinction and also designed and made notable stained-glass.

Perhaps his greatest work in the latter medium, was that done for the West Church of St. Andrew in Aberdeen—it consists of twelve windows depicting the story of the Life of Christ and which took him some sixteen years to complete. 12 As a painter, he was active till a year before his death, which occurred in hospital at Aberdeen. He was predeceased by his wife, who died a little over a year before.