

David Forrester Wilson RSA

RSA Obituary transcribed from the 1950 RSA Annual Report

David Forrester Wilson was born in Glasgow in 1873. On leaving school he began his working life as a traveller in tea and attended Gorbals Public School evening classes under R. Louis Sutherland who had other students who afterwards made a name for themselves including Sir William Reid Dick, R.A.

In 1899 he gave up his business career and went to the Glasgow School of Art where he studied under Professor Delville and won the Haldane Scholarship in 1901. In 1905 he went to Europe and continued his study of painting in Italy, Belgium, Paris and London. When he returned to Glasgow he was invited by Fra H. Newbery, the Director of the Glasgow School of Art, to join the staff of the Drawing and Painting section of the School under Professor Maurice Greiffenhagen. When Professor Greiffenhagen retired in 1931 Mr. Wilson was appointed his successor, and held this post until his retirement from teaching in 1938.

During the greater part of his teaching life Mr. Wilson resided at Milngavie, near Glasgow, which supplied him with models for some of his most important works. He later went to live in Glasgow with Mr. Tom Scott, dentist, 13 Newton Place, C. 3, who possesses many of his best works. Later he resided in Ayr.

In 1922 he was made an Associate member of the Royal Scottish Academy and a full member ten years later. In 1942 he chose to go on the retired list of Members. Mr. Wilson's works were shown mostly at the Royal Scottish Academy exhibitions and the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts, but he showed works also in Chicago, Pittsburgh and Buffalo City, U.S.A.

One of his most important works is a lunette entitled "Time and History," which forms a part of a mural scheme decorating the banqueting Hall of the Glasgow City Chambers which the Glasgow Corporation commissioned in 1911. In this scheme he collaborated with Sir John Lavery, R.S.A., R.A., E. A. Walton, R.S.A., and Alexander Roche, R.S.A.

His paintings are to be found in various collections throughout the kingdom. "Faggots," a large painting in oil showing the influence of Bastien Le Page, is the property of Glasgow Corporation. The Royal Scottish Academy Thorburn Ross Memorial Fund possesses "An Islay Woman," and the Royal Scottish Academy Diploma Collection "The Young Shepherd." Many of his works are in the hands of private owners.

His painting is characterised by refined drawing and colour and a strong sense of decoration. It is poetical in feeling which he often expressed through allegory. All his work is founded in the best historical traditions.

He was twice married. By his first marriage he had three sons, one of whom is now farming in Islay. When over 70 years of age he married again. He died at Abbotsford, Bruichladdich, Islay, on Sunday, 8th January 1950. He is survived by his widow.