

Sturgeon

Jim

1932 - 2006

His Life

James Sturgeon (Jim) is widely known as ‘The Galloway Colourist’.

He was born on 20 August 1932, the only child of Robert John and Jane Sturgeon (ms Cowden). He attended St Peter’s School in Dalbeattie. At the age of 18, he enlisted for National Service, and was sent to Korea and Hong Kong with the Kings’ Own Scottish Borderers.

His father Robert Sturgeon had been a regular soldier and was a survivor of the Somme during WW1.

While out in the Far East, Jim took a month’s leave in Japan. It was at this time that Jim showed his real artistic talent through the medium of colour crayon.

During the 1950s, Jim was encouraged in his painting by John Maxwell RSA, the Dalbeattie-born painter who retired back to the town in the 1940s. Jim’s chief mentor was the Scottish Colourist Donald Bain (1904-1979). Bain was a member of the New Scottish Group of Artists formed in the 1940s, a group which included J.D. Ferguson, and Polish artists Jankel Adler and Josef Herman. Jim was invited by J.D. Ferguson to exhibit at the Celtic School of Ballet, run by Ferguson’s wife, Meg Morris. Donald Bain first saw Jim’s paintings exhibited at the Glasgow Civic Arts Exhibition and exposure to Bain and the Scottish Colourists contributed largely to Jim’s style and his earning the reputation as Galloway’s Colourist.

National Service over, Jim took up employment with Footwear Development at Heathhall. He took a year off in 1957 and travelled to Canada, where he studied the work of the Canadian artists known as the Group of Seven, based in Toronto. At this time in his life, he took himself off on his scooter during holiday times to the Highlands, and hitch-hiked on the Continent. Where ever he went, he would make pencil sketches, working them up into oil paintings. In the 1960s, Jim’s musical talent also came to the fore. He became a member of the local Folk singing group, The Layabouts, singing to his own banjo accompaniment.

Jim became a full-time artist in 1967, and opened The Doocote gallery and gift shop in Dalbeattie’s High Street. As he had done from his earliest years, Jim spent his leisure time in Dalbeattie Forest by the Plantain Loch, and around the Solway Coast, where he found inspiration for many of his paintings. In the mid-1970s, Woodside Studio Gallery, Jim’s own studio and exhibition space was opened where he initially showed his own work and that of other local artists, and provided a custom framing service for local artists and residents.

Jim was a long-term member of the Dumfries and Galloway Fine Arts Society based at the Gracefield Arts Centre in Dumfries and served as a Council member in the 1960s. In April 2006, Jim was made an honorary Life Member of the Society in recognition of his 51 years of membership and his contribution to Scottish Colourist Arts.

On his highly individual and instantly recognisable style, Jim once said to an interviewer, “If I take up my brush and decide to paint a blue tree, I will not use any other colour to balance that elsewhere in the painting. It is not what my eyes see, but what my brain and soul translates as the balance that I require at that time.”

Following a stroke in 2004, which affected his right hand and arm, Jim learned both to write and paint with his left hand, successfully completing a number of paintings, all of which are now owned privately. The onset of Motor Neurone Disease was diagnosed in early 2006. Although he was not able to continue painting, he continued to exhibit locally.

James Sturgeon died on 15 November 2006.

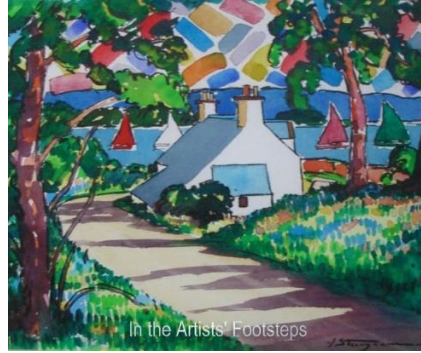
His Work

Try following the links to find examples of this artist's work.. When you have viewed the contents, remember to use your browser's "back" button to return to this page.

[In the Artists Footsteps](#)



Galloway Cottage



Galloway Cottage



Cottage by the Sea