

## Gordon, Alexander Esmé 1910 - 1993



Alexander Esmé Gordon [commonly known as Esmé Gordon] was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 12 September 1910 and studied architecture at Edinburgh College of Art under John Begg, John Summerson, E.A.A. Rowse and A. Bruce Thomson from 1928 to 1934. In 1934 Gordon won the Owen Jones scholarship. He subsequently worked as an architect in private practice and from 1936 was senior partner in the firm Gordon & Bey.

Among projects on which Gordon worked in the 1930s included the head offices of Scottish Life Association, and the head office of the South of Scotland Electricity Board. During World War Two he served in the Royal Engineers and designed Army canteens.

Following the war, he furnished rooms in the 'Enterprise Scotland' exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh in 1947 (a kitchen, a board room and a living room). In 1962 he designed the War Memorial Chapel and Memorial to King George VI in the Chapel of the Order of the Thistle in the High Kirk of St. Giles in Edinburgh.

During the late 1930s and after World War Two, Gordon taught at Edinburgh College of Art. He also worked as a watercolourist, specialising in landscapes and townscapes.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (FRIAS) in 1953 and a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA) in 1956. He was also elected to the Royal Society of Arts in 1967 and later served as the Society's secretary (1973-79). Gordon was the author of 'The Royal Scottish

Academy of Painting Sculpture and Architecture 1826-1976' (Edinburgh: Charles Skilton, 1976), a monograph on Piranesi, and books on church architecture. He died in Edinburgh on 31 May 1993.

Worked in

UK

Bibliography

'Church of Scotland canteen huts' [Architect; Esme Gordon]. Architect & Building News 3 July 1942 pp. 11-12

2. 'Woodwork for St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh' [Designed by Esme Gordon]. Architects' Journal January 1941 p. 84

Links

- Artist Biographies [Subscription service]

<https://www.artbiogs.co.uk/1/artists/gordon-alexander-esme>

- Robert Scott Morton and Anthony Wheeler. 'Obituary: Esme Gordon' The Independent 4 June 1993 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-esme-gordon-1489530.html>

- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/alexander-esme-gordon-b-1910-architect-as-a-child-212231>

- Dictionary of Scottish Architects 1660-1980

[http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=203479](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=203479)

- Royal Scottish Academy <https://www.royalscottishacademy.org/artists/1239-alexander-esme-gordon-rsa/overview/>