

Irvine Burns Club

Honorary Members 1828 – 2026

Preface

The roll of Honorary Members of Irvine Burns Club contains the names of over 300 men and women from all walks of life. The names of some are still well-known, such as Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi (1869). The names of some were well-known but are now forgotten, such as novelist Frederick Niven (1939). The names of others, though not well-known, include those who served the Club in significant ways – whether by donating a treasured item, such as Alex Gilroy (2016), donor of the Templeton chair, or by giving long and devoted service to a Club now celebrating 200 years of existence, such as Provost Robert Hogg (1926) and his sister Margaret (1960, aged 80), the first lady Honorary Member.

Director Jack Lovie (President 1986) appreciated the need to document the Honorary Members and took up the considerable challenge, checking past minutes against the acceptance letters held in the Club safe. When I (President 1996) joined the devoted body of individuals who take good care of the Club, Jack interested me in this project – I was soon assisting him and, in due course, adding to it by investigating the whys and wherefores of their nomination as Honorary Members.

Once started, the project needed to continue and this collection of biographies and acceptance letters is the result. Entries are of very varying lengths, the longer ones being justified either by the need to rescue some nominees from obscurity or, I freely admit, by my wish to highlight lesser-known lives and achievements – many nuggets of little-known information lie in these pages. I have included a few for whom acceptance letters are not recorded, so may just not have accepted. The end-point of the present collection, 2026, arises from two factors: the bicentenary of the Club coupled with the need for me to stop at some definite point and leave successors to record future Honorary Members in whatever way they decide is best.

All the documents printed here are, in pdf form, on the Irvine Burns Club website, at the Honorary Members page, each clickable, and downloadable, under the appropriate year.

I sincerely thank Jack Lovie for starting the work of documentation, my fellow directors of Irvine Burns Club for their support and my wife Louise for her patience.

Ian J Dickson
President 1996
Honorary Member 2023