

Honorary members of 1960 – 1962

1960 Samuil Marshak, Margaret M Hogg, John Grierson,

Tom J Honeyman, Albert Schweitzer

1961 Commander Sir Stephen King Hall

1962 A Bernard Lovell, Prof J De Lancey Ferguson

1960 Samuil Marshak (1887-1964)

Samuil Marshak was a Soviet writer of Belarusian Jewish origin, translator and poet who wrote for both children and adults. He translated the Sonnets and some of the works of Shakespeare. He visited Ellisland and other Burns locations in Ayrshire in 1955.

In 1912 he moved to England and studied philosophy at the University of London. He fell in love with English culture and with poetry written in English. In his senior year at the University, he published his translations of the poems written by William Blake, Robert Burns and William Wordsworth, published in Russia. Shortly before World War I, in 1914, he returned to Russia and devoted himself to translation.

His first translation from Burns was done in 1924, and for more than three decades he provided Soviet readers with new translations from Burns each year. Volume four of his Selected Works (1960) contains additional "new translations" consisting of thirteen poems.

Yang De-you of Shanxi University, China, has written: "Marshak allowed himself a great deal of freedom which is more like independent creative writing than creative translation. Then, in 1963, Fedotov's translation was published. The merit of his version lies in its greater accuracy. Having the two translations available allows Russian readers to compare the very different ways in which Marshak and Fedotov understood the same poem."

[<https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1186&context=ssl>]

Letter of acceptance, written from Moscow, B-64, Chkalor Str. 14/16, on January 7th, 1960, to Hon. Secy William Phillips:

Gentlemen,

Your letter informing me that I am to be elected an Honorary Member of the Irvine Club came to me as a most gratifying and moving surprise.

It is indeed a privilege to be a member of the most venerable Burns Club and to enjoy the company of such illustrious men as Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens and Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

May this be a new bond of friendship between our two countries.

Allow me, dear Sirs, to express my gratitude to you and to all the members of your Club who found it suitable to bestow this honour upon such an ardent admirer of Burns as myself.

Yours faithfully

S. Marshak

Notes:

We cannot for sure count Sir Walter Scott as an Honorary Member - though nominated in 1830, there is no evidence of his acceptance. [Col. Walter Scott of New York accepted honorary membership in 1928.]

1960 Margaret M Hogg (1879-1962)

Margaret McCulloch Hogg kept the collection of books of her late brother Robert in her home at 21 Bank Street after her other brother James died in 1936 – the collection formed the nucleus of today's Wellwood Burns Centre library in the Hogg Room.

In the year of her nomination, Miss Hogg was aged 80. She was pleased that the directors of Irvine Burns club so greatly appreciated her conservation of the library that they broke the long tradition of solely male nominations! Another half a century would pass before they appointed one of the fair sex as President!

Letter of acceptance, written from 21 Bank Street, Irvine, on 12th January, 1960, to Hon. Secy William Phillips

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 7th inst. intimating that I have been elected an Honorary Member of the Club. I consider this to be a very high honour indeed and a unique one in that I am the first lady to be elected.

Would you please convey to the Directors my grateful thanks for this token of appreciation of my services to the Club.

Yours faithfully,

M. M. Hogg

1960 John Grierson (1898-1972)

John Grierson was a pioneering Scottish documentary maker, often considered the father of British and Canadian documentary film - in 1926, Grierson coined the term "documentary". He was one of the first to see the potential of motion pictures to shape people's attitudes toward life and to urge the use of films for educational purposes. His many 1930s films included 'Industrial Britain' and 'Cargo from Jamaica'. In his film on John Knox, he was the voice of Knox.

At the time of his nomination, his series 'This Wonderful World' (1957-1967; later titled 'John Grierson Presents') was in the top ten programmes for the week in the UK. He said: "I see myself as a preacher and the cinema is my pulpit."

Letter of acceptance, written from Tog Hill, Calstone, Calne, Wilts, on 25/1/60, to Hon Secy William Phillips, Esq:

Dear Sir,

On this day, to be invited to such a company & in such a manner is as great an honour as I could seek or would want.

I am

Yours faithfully

John Grierson

1960 Tom J Honeyman (1891-1971)

Thomas John Honeyman was an art dealer and gallery director, becoming the most acclaimed director of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow. As an art dealer in Glasgow and London he met many great artists and when Glasgow Corporation were looking for a new Director for their Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum they consulted Honeyman about possible candidates. He eventually decided he might like the job, and took up the post in 1939.

Honeyman went on to make an enormous contribution to artistic and cultural life of Glasgow during his 15 years in the post. He greatly increased the standing and profile of the Glasgow Art Galleries & Museums through high profile publicity and successful exhibitions which, for example, brought queues to see Van Gogh's paintings, and numerous other special exhibitions. In 1952, Honeyman became famous for his purchase of Salvador Dalí's Christ of St. John of the Cross – a controversial purchase at the time, both because of its exceptional cost (£8,200) and contemporary style, it hung for many years in Kelvingrove.

Letter of acceptance, written from 20 Queens Gate, Dowanhill Street, Glasgow W2, on 7th November 1960, to Hon Secy Mr Phillips

Dear Mr Phillips

Irvine Burns Club

Your letter intimating the proposal to elect me as an Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club was received and read with very great pleasure.

To be associated in this manner with such a famous Burns Club & to be included in such excellent and distinguished company are distinctions far beyond my merits. It is impossible for me to imagine that I possess the power to see myself as the Irvine Burns Club appears to see me - But I can assure you and your fellow members that I shall do my utmost to live up to the high calling, and, especially do what I can to advance the day - so brilliantly prophesised [sic] by our great poet.

With renewed thanks

T J Honeyman

1960 Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965)

Schweitzer was the son of a Lutheran-Evangelical pastor in Germany, grew up in an exceptional environment of religious tolerance, and developed the belief that true Christianity should work towards a unity of faith and purpose. He studied Protestant theology in Strasbourg and became a prominent musical scholar and organist, dedicated also to the rescue, restoration and study of historic pipe organs, publishing the pamphlet "The Art of Organ Building and Organ Playing in Germany and France" (1906). On leaving for Lambaréné in 1913, he was presented with a pedal piano built especially for the tropics (delivered by river in a huge dug-out canoe).

Schweitzer felt obliged as a Christian to repay to the world something for the happiness which it had given to him, and determined that he would pursue his younger interests until the age of thirty and then give himself to serving humanity, with Jesus serving as his example. In 1905, he re-entered the University as a student in a punishing seven-year course towards the degree of a Doctorate in Medicine. In 1912, he graduated and married, and applied to the Paris Missionary Society to go as a medical doctor to Lambaréné in what was then the French colony of Gabon.

Richard Holloway, Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh 1986-2000, has written: "Schweitzer believed Jesus had died mistaken and forsaken. This conclusion drove him from the study of theology to the work of practical love. He wrote of this period in his life: 'I wanted to be a doctor that I might be able to work without having to talk. For years I had been giving myself out in words . . . this new form of activity I could not represent to myself as being talking about the religion of love, but only as an actual putting it into practice.' In 1913 he went to Lambaréné. He spent his life there, no longer talking about Jesus but still trying to follow him." Schweitzer received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952.

Letter of acceptance, from Lambaréné, Gabon, Afrique Équatoriale Française, on 25 Juli 1960

An den Herrn Presidenten des Irvine Burns Club

Sehr geehrter Herr President,

Der Irvine Burns Club hat mich zum Honorary Member des Clubs ernannt. Lassen Sie mich Ihnen sagen, wie sehr ich die Ehre die in mir erweist und die Sympathie, die es mir bekundet, zu schätzen weiss. Ich danke Ihnen herzlich.

Verzeihen Sie mir, dass ich Ihnen nicht auf Englisch schreibe. Ich beherrsche diese Sprache nicht genug, um Ihnen meine Gedanken richtig aussprechen zu Können. Verzeihen Sie mir auch dass ich so spät antworte. Die grosse und so vielfältige Arbeit, die ich zu tun habe, lässt mich nicht zum Schreiben kommen, wie ich sollte und möchte. Versagen Sie mir bitte Ihre Nachsicht nicht.

Leider fürchte ich, dass ich nicht Gelegenheit haben werde, mit Ihnen persönlich bekannt zu werden. Gerne möchte ich wieder die Freunde in U.S.A., von denen so viele mein Spital unterstützen, besuchen. Aber ich darf nicht an reisen denken. Alle freie Zeit, über die ich noch verfügen kann, muss ich dazu verwenden, Arbeiten, die mir am Herzen liegen, besonders die auf philosophischen Gebiete, noch fertig zu stellen. Wollen Sie, bitte, Herr President meine besten Grüsse den Mitgliedern Irvine Burns Club übermitteln.

Mit besten Gedanken Ihr ergebener

Albert Schweitzer

Translation:

To the Presidents of Irvine Burns Club

Dear Sir, Mr President,

The Irvine Burns Club has appointed me honorary member of the Club. I would like to say how much I appreciate the honour which has been bestowed on me and the expression of support which it conveys. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Please excuse me for not writing to you in English. I do not have sufficient command of this language to be able to express my thoughts to you properly. Pardon me also for my delay in replying. The sheer amount and diversity of the work which I have to do prevents me from writing as I ought to and would wish to. Please forgive me.

Unfortunately, I fear that I will not have the opportunity to get to know you personally. I would like to visit again friends in the USA, so many of whom support my hospital. But I must not think of travelling. I must use any free time which still remains at my disposal to complete works which are close to my heart, especially in the field of philosophy. Mr President, would you please convey my sincere greetings to the members of Irvine Burns Club.

With best wishes, respectfully yours,
Albert Schweitzer.

Notes:

A covering letter in English, written on 15th May by a Dutch nurse on his staff at his request, acknowledges President David Shaw's letter of 15th December, 1959, explains that Dr Schweitzer had been in Europe when it arrived and had found a great amount of work to be done on his return, and reports that he gladly accepts the honour and that our letter will be among the first to be answered.

1961 Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall (1893-1966)

William Stephen Richard King-Hall, Baron King-Hall of Headley was a British naval officer, writer, politician and playwright who served as the member of parliament for Ormskirk from 1939 to 1945. A knight at the time of his nomination, he was created a life peer in 1966, and died less than six months later.

King-Hall was founder and editor of a world-famous newsletter and also appeared on radio and television programmes. He wrote many books on the history of the first half of the 20th century, beginning with "A Naval Lieutenant 1914-1918", and including "Imperial Defence", "The China of To-day", "Total Victory" (1941) and "Defence in the Nuclear Age" (1958). His 1961 book was a best-seller: "Our Times 1900-1960" – its flycover stated: "The sworn enemy of humbug, wishful thinking and pomposity, his observations are often garnished with sardonic touches of humour".

Letter of acceptance, written from King-Hall News-Letter, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1, on 18th November (1960), to Mr Phillips, Hon. Secy..

Dear Mr Phillips,

Will you please inform your colleagues that I am honoured by your action in making me a member of the Irvine Burns Club.

Yours sincerely

Stephen King-Hall

Notes:

His letter is handwritten on official King-Hall News-Letter notepaper.

1962 Sir A Bernard Lovell (1913-2012)

Sir Alfred Charles Bernard Lovell OBE FRS was an English physicist and radio astronomer. He was the first director of Jodrell Bank Observatory, from 1945 to 1980. The prompt for his nomination may have been his knighthood of 1961; it may also have been that in 1958, Lovell was invited by the BBC to deliver the annual Reith Lectures, a series of six radio broadcasts called *The Individual and the Universe*, in which he examined the history of enquiry into the solar system and the origin of the universe, or even that in 1959, he was invited to deliver the MacMillan Memorial Lecture to the Organization of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Scotland, on the subject "Radio Astronomy and the Structure of the Universe"; it may have been that, in 1959, using the Jodrell Bank telescope to track 'Lunik 2', he was able to confirm that the Soviet spacecraft aimed at the Moon had actually hit it.

In later years, he became the grand old man of astronomy and the oldest working astronomer, still carrying out studies into his nineties.

Letter of acceptance, written from the University of Manchester Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories, Jodrell Bank, Macclesfield, Cheshire, on Jany 18, 1962, to Hon Secy Mr Phillips:

Dear Mr Phillips,

I receive your letter of 5th Jany with much pleasure and I write to say how honoured I feel on the occasion of being elected an Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club. At some time in the future when I am in Scotland I hope it will be possible for me to visit you.

Yours sincerely

A B Lovell

Notes:

His letter, handwritten on Jodrell Bank notepaper, includes his printed name and position as Professor of Radio Astronomy and Director of the Experimental Station.

1962 Prof John DeLancey Ferguson (1888-1966)

Born at Scottsville, New York, Ferguson attended Rutgers and Columbia universities and started his teaching career in 1914 at Heidelberg College, going thereafter to Ohio Wesleyan and Western Reserve University before Brooklyn College, serving there from 1944 until retirement in 1954. He was a Guggenheim Fellow, a member of the Modern Language Association, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

His chief interest was Scottish literature, particularly Robert Burns, the first of his many important contributions to the 'Burns Chronicle' being "Cancelled Passages in the letters of Robert Burns to George Thomson" in 1929. He was the first to publish all known letters of Burns - his two-volume edition of 'The Letters of Robert Burns' appeared in 1931, and his biography of Burns, 'Pride and Passion', in 1938. He worked with James Barke and Sydney Goodsir Smith to publish 'The Merry Muses of Caledonia' in 1959.

Professor Ferguson became recognised as the foremost 20th-century authority on Robert Burns. A generous scholar, he aided others like Snyder, Carswell and Daiches. A demanding professor, he intelligently trained a generation of American students in Robert Burns.

Letter of acceptance, written from Sugar Hill Road, Falls Village, Conn., on January 15, 1962, to Hon Secy William Phillips:

Dear Mr Phillips,

I find it very flattering to be chosen as an honorary member of the Irvine Burns Club. Reading the list of your past honorary members makes me feel that I have wandered into a major league by mistake.

Unfortunately I cannot write the holograph letter you asked for. The spirit is willing and even eager, but my hand is too much crippled to produce anything legible.

Thank you-- and through you the whole membership of the Club-- again for the compliment you have paid me.

Very sincerely yours,

DeLancey Ferguson

Notes:

His letter explains why only the signature is handwritten - he succumbed to Parkinson's in 1966.