

Honorary members of 1925-1928

1925 Sir Robert Bruce, Prof. Alexander Mair

**1926: (*Irvine Burns Club Centenary year*) R F Longmuir, Provost R M Hogg,
Lord Stonehaven, J M Bulloch**

(the 1926 minutes also mention Charles Murray, author of 'Hamewith')

1927 Stanley Baldwin, Sir James Crichton Browne

1928 Lord Irwin, Col. Walter Scott

1925: Sir Robert Bruce (1871-1955)

Sir Robert, a native of Alloa, began his journalistic career on the 'Alloa Advertiser', became the first London correspondent of the 'Aberdeen Journal', transferred to the 'Glasgow Herald' and rose to become Editor from 1917 to 1936. He received his knighthood in 1918 for political services and received Honorary LL.D. degrees from the Universities of St Andrews, Glasgow and Toronto.

He served as President of the Burns Federation from 1923 to 1927, doing much to encourage the study of the Scottish vernacular, particularly in elementary and secondary schools. He was a Deputy Lieutenant of Glasgow and a J.P., served as President of the Institute of Journalists in 1926, served as a Scottish director of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Co. and of the Yorkshire Insurance Co., was a member of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, a trustee of the Scottish National Library, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Letter of acceptance, written from The Glasgow Herald, on Jan. 19, 1925

Dear Mr Hogg,

I have just received your letter of this date informing me that Irvine Burns Club have elected me an honorary member. This is a great honour which I much appreciate and I should like you to tell the members of the Club how gratified I feel.

Next time I am in Irvine I shall certainly call upon you and ask you to show me the treasures you mention.

Give my greetings to your fellow members when you gather to celebrate the Birthday. Tell them also that I look to them to help the Federation in its campaign for the encouragement of the study of the Vernacular in the elementary and secondary schools. If the children are not helped in this we should soon have a generation which will know nothing of our vernacular literature and that is unthinkable.

Sincerely yours

Robert Bruce, President of Burns Federation

Notes:

The letter is on Glasgow Herald headed paper, with the printed side-heading "From Sir Robert Bruce".

1925: Prof. Alexander Mair (1870-1927)

Prof. Alexander Mair, who died at the comparatively early age of 57, had occupied the chair of philosophy at the University of Liverpool since 1910. Although he made no direct contribution to purely scientific research, he was always keenly interested in recent developments of scientific theory, and extremely appreciative of their wider philosophic implications. He was the author of the articles on "Hallucination" and "Belief" in "The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics," of "Philosophy and Reality" (published 1911), and of "Immanence and Transcendence," and "The Idea of Transcendent Deity," in recent volumes of the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society.

(information from www.nature.com)

At the Club's Centenary Dinner in 1926, President J N Hall said: "For months past the pleasure of being here has been a constant delight to him, but, alas, serious illness intervened and precluded absolutely the possibility of fulfilling his promise. The best wishes of all members of the Irvine Burns Club go out to Professor Mair, and we hope that at some time not far distant we will have the great joy of listening to him who adorns his office greatly and wears his honours lightly as a flower."

Although he refers in his acceptance letter to his "many ties of memory and friendship with Irvine", we do not (yet) know what those ties were.

Letter of acceptance, written from The University of Liverpool, on 21 Jan 1925

Dear Sir

I appreciate to the full the distinction which the members of the Irvine Burns Club have conferred upon me by making me an Honorary Member. I have many ties of memory and friendship with Irvine; this new tie which has been made by the generosity of your members binds me still more closely to the old town. Will you please convey to them my hearty acknowledgement of their goodness?

I am much obliged to you for your offer to let me see the precious MSS. I did see them once on a previous visit to Irvine but I should greatly like to see them again, if the opportunity arose.

Yours sincerely and gratefully

Alexander Mair

Notes:

The letter is on The University of Liverpool headed paper, bearing the university crest.

1926: Robert F Longmuir (1864-1942)

Robert Findlay Longmuir served as Treasurer of Irvine Burns Club for an astonishingly long period of over 40 years, from 1894 to after 1939, well worthy of being nominated as an

Honorary member for his many years of service to the Club. A shipbroker, with employees, he lived at 'Roseville', Bridgegate. He served as President in 1901 and, because the 1901 dinner was cancelled due to the recent death of Queen Victoria, again in 1902.

At the Club's Centenary Dinner in 1926, Provost Hogg, the Hon. Secretary, said: "As to the financial side of the Club, it never was in a more prosperous condition, but when they remembered the type of man they had as Hon. Treasurer, they would not be surprised at that." Robert Longmuir's photo is on that page of the Centenary booklet.

His family served Irvine Burns Club well. His father Alexander Longmuir, a corn merchant, and agent for the Clydesdale Bank, was Hon. Treasurer in and around 1862 and President in 1865. His brother, James F Longmuir, a grain merchant and a member of the Irvine Company of Ayrshire Rifles, was President in 1892.

Letter of acceptance, written from 'Roseville', Irvine, on 16 Jany 1926

Dear Mr Hogg,

Many thanks for yours of 14th inst, intimating to me, that I have been elected an Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club. I gratefully appreciate the honour that has been conferred upon me, and return my sincere thanks to the members. I have always held the Irvine Burns Club in the highest regard, and have always had a very warm side to it.

Sincerely Yours,
Robt F Longmuir

1926: R M Hogg (1868-1930)

The unique collection of books in the Wellwood library was begun by Robert McCulloch Hogg, a Provost of Irvine (1923-28) and the 1905 President of Irvine Burns Club, and there are many interesting volumes, many not related to Robert Burns but possibly no longer extant elsewhere, and many of local and/or literary interest. After Hogg's death in 1930, his brother John Hogg, Hon. Secretary of the club, set aside a room in his Bank St home, keeping the precious manuscripts in a safe there, to house the library and host meetings of the directors of the club. After his death in 1936, the surviving sister Miss Margaret Hogg continued the arrangement until her death in 1962.

A native of Riccarton, he came to Bank Street (primary) School from Galston as an assistant in 1891. He took charge of the evening continuation classes at the Academy and became recognized as an authority on vocational education. He was also superintendent of the Parish Church Sunday School, helped found an Irvine Ramblers' Field Club, became secretary of Irvine Burns Club, and entered the Town Council in 1908. In 1913, he became headmaster of Bank Street School.

As Provost, when the old washing house on the Golffields had to be demolished in 1924, he saved the slates for the restoration of the Powder House; in 1925 he had the Jockey Club's date for races at Bogside altered to avoid a clash with Marymass; in 1925 there was a fire in

the Glasgow Vennel house where Burns had lodged, so when it was repaired in 1926 he organised the presentation of a plaque from Irvine Burns Club to mark the building, and the council recognised the Club's centenary by presenting the chairs once occupied by David Sillar and Dr John Mackenzie when councillors; in 1927 he had the burgh coat of arms properly registered.

His letter, if written, is not extant.

1926: John Baird, Lord Stonehaven (1874-1941)

John Lawrence Baird had recently (Oct. 1925) been appointed 8th Governor-General of Australia and was created Baron Stonehaven of Ury (in Kincardine); he served till 1930. An Australian biography records that "Believing that 'the Representative of the King should live on a different footing and in a different atmosphere from other people', he was an ostentatious viceroy whose lavish entertainments drew criticism from the Labor Opposition." His quasi-diplomatic role as the channel of communication with the British government ended after the Imperial Conference of 1926.

From 1931-36, Stonehaven was chairman of the Conservative Party. In 1938 he was elevated to become 1st Viscount Stonehaven of Ury and retired to his ancestral seat.

Letter of acceptance, written from Admiralty House, North Sydney, New South Wales, on 28th April, 1926

Dear Mr Hogg,

I appreciate very much the honour of being elected an Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club, of which you have notified me in your letter of the 1st March.

Would you please express my sincere thanks to the Members for their kindly thought.

Yours very truly,
Stonehaven

Notes:

The letter bears the crest of Governor-General, Commonwealth of Australia.
It is typewritten except for his single name signature.

1926: J M Bulloch (1867-1938)

John Malcolm Bulloch, born at Old Machar and educated in Aberdeen, was a Scottish journalist and magazine editor, known also as a genealogist and a literary and theatre critic. He began his career on the 'Aberdeen Free Press', moved to an editorial position in London at 'The Sketch', and from 1909 to 1924 edited 'The Graphic'. He became noted in London for his 'unquenchable' Doric dialect and did not approve of the 'Albyn Place English' taught in

some Aberdeenshire schools. He encouraged the 'new illustrated journalism' as engravings began to give way to halftone photographs.

Becoming literary critic for Allied Newspapers Ltd in 1924, he went on to write between 500 and 600 book reviews annually, adding to his prodigious output as a theatre critic, keeping the programmes bound and indexed.

Letter of acceptance, written from the 'Daily Graphic' Editorial Department, PO Box 167, Tallis Street, London E C 4, on 5th March 1926

My dear Sir,

I feel honoured by the honour you have conferred on me by making me an honorary member of your club, which must be one of the oldest in the Kingdom. I was up in Glasgow the other day, and if I had known of your club, I should have liked to have met you. As it is I do not know when I shall be down your way again, but I am very proud to become a member of so old an organisation.

Yours very truly

J M Bulloch

Notes:

The letter is on Daily Graphic Editorial Dept. headed paper.
It is typed apart from the signature.

1927: Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947)

In this case, the career of the Private Secretary has some interest. Edith Margaret Watson was successively Private Secretary to Prime Ministers Stanley Baldwin (twice), J. Ramsay Macdonald, Neville Chamberlain and Churchill. By the outbreak of war in 1939 she was thus something of an institution at Downing Street. As such she would have been a close observer of deliberations during such historic events as the Abdication Crisis of 1936, The Munich Crisis of 1938, and the darkest days of the Second World War. Miss Watson was awarded the C.B.E. in 1919 and the C.V.O. in 1937.

Letter of acceptance, written from 10 Downing Street, Whitehall, on 19th January, 1927

Dear Sir,

The Prime Minister desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th January and to thank you for the compliment which you pay him in electing him an honorary member of the Irvine Burns Club.

Yours faithfully,

E M Watson

Notes:

The reply is typed on official notepaper and signed by his Private Secretary.

1927: James Crichton-Browne (1840-1938)

Sir James Crichton-Browne, who spent much of his childhood in Dumfries where his father was the medical superintendent at The Crichton Royal, became a leading Scottish psychiatrist, neurologist and eugenicist. He was one of Charles Darwin's leading collaborators (from 1869 to 1875) and a pioneer of neuropsychiatric photography. From 1875 to 1922, he served as the Lord Chancellor's Medical Visitor in Lunacy. From 1889 to 1926, he served as Treasurer and Vice-President of the Royal Institution, making friendships in the literary world, including with Thomas Carlyle (Hon. Member 1863), whose marital reputation he defended against the allegations of James Anthony Froude (Hon. Member 1890), and with Thomas Hardy (Hon. Member 1892).

Crichton-Browne gave an account of the poet Robert Burns' medical decline in his book "Burns From A New Point Of View" (1925). He was anxious to defend Burns, another man with Dumfries associations, from the charge that he had been drunk and dissolute, and had died from the effects of alcohol or syphilis. This was possibly the prompt for his nomination as an Honorary Member. Earlier, in 1912, he wrote of his fears (reported "by Marconi Transatlantic Wireless Telegraph to The New York Times") that the Globe Tavern, which was at that time up for sale, would be bought by Americans and possibly removed to New York or Chicago.

In 2015, UNESCO listed Crichton-Browne's clinical papers and photographs (about 5,000 items in all) as items of international cultural importance.

Letter of acceptance, written from Crindau, Dumfries N.B., on 14 January 1927

Dear Provost Hogg

I beg to thank you for the gratifying announcement contained in your letter of the 12th inst. that I have been elected an Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club. I consider it a special honour to be identified with a Club representing the place associated with a critical epoch in Burns' career.

Pray assure the Club of my appreciation of the compliment they have paid me in recognition of my endeavour to clear from unjust obloquoy, the fair fame of our great and beloved National Poet.

Believe me

Yours very faithfully

James Crichton Browne

Notes:

The N.B. in the address is for North Britain - how Scotland was postally known in those days.

1928: Lord Irwin (1881-1959)

Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, son of the 2nd Viscount Halifax, was brought up in a world of religion and hunting. After Eton and Oxford (including the Bullingdon Club) he entered politics as Conservative for Ripon in 1910. While President of the Board of Education (1922-

24), he spent two days hunting each week. In 1926 he took up his appointment as Viceroy and Governor-General of India, a position held until 1931. Appointed in Oct. 1925, he was created Baron Irwin, of Kirby Underdale in the County of York, in Dec. 1925. Irwin enjoyed the pomp of the Viceroyalty; several attempts were made to assassinate him; he urged an end to communal violence between Hindus and Muslims.

Having received, in 1926, the acceptance of the nomination of the Governor-General of Australia as an Honorary Member, one wonders whether the directors of Irvine Burns Club thought they should follow that up with the Governor-General of India!

The Irwin Declaration of 1929 committed Britain to eventual Dominion status for India. Gandhi now began a campaign of civil disobedience with a view to achieving complete independence. Irwin had to use his emergency powers to ban public gatherings and crush opposition. After the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 1931, he returned to British politics with significant prestige.

In 1934 he inherited his father's titles, being The Viscount Halifax from 1934 until 1944, when he was created Earl of Halifax, the fourth creation of the title. He was a central figure in politics throughout the 1930s and 1940s, latterly serving as Ambassador to the United States 1940-1946.

Letter of acceptance, written from the Viceregal Lodge, Delhi, on 20th February, 1928:

Dear Mr Provost,

I have to thank you very much for your letter of the 25th of January in which you inform me that the Irvine Burns Club has been good enough to elect me as an Honorary Member. I should be greatly obliged if you will convey my appreciation and thanks to the members of the Club for their action.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

Irwin

Notes:

The letter is typed on official notepaper, apart from the single name signature. The Club Secretary, Robert Hogg, was Provost of Irvine at this time (1923-28).

1928: Col. Walter Scott (1861-1935)

The donor of the Medal for Valour in the Garda Síochána, a businessman and noted philanthropist, friend of the international police community (Honorary Police Commissioner of New York), leader in the Order of Scottish Clans in the United States and Canada, he was born in Montreal in 1861, of Scots-Canadian parents, Walter and Mary (Sharp) Scott. He served in WWI as Colonel of the New York Scottish Highlanders. Manager of a fruit stall at aged ten, he joined Butler Brothers and stayed with them for 55 years until retirement.

In 1924, he recorded his 'shock' that relics of Robert Louis Stevenson had been removed from rooms which had become a shrine in the Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Cottage (at Saranac Lake, Essex County, in upstate New York) and his suggestion that "Quick action should be taken on securing the shrine." Through his efforts, the Stevenson Society of America purchased the house in the following years.

He was a knight of the French Legion of Honour, a member of the Belgian Order of Leopold and held the Silver Grand Cross of Austria. He assisted many institutions and endowed many scholarships, a true philanthropist.

The prompt for his nomination was his friendship with Dr Harry Lumsden (Clerk to the Trades House of Glasgow from 1896 for 43 years); Walter Scott was admitted to the Hammermen Craft. He stayed with Harry and his wife stayed in 1924/25 (prob. Aug. 1924). Harry proposed him for Honorary Membership of Irvine Burns Club, and five years later, in 1933, he sent a donation of \$100 to the Club, which was planning a museum, to fund the nucleus of a museum fund.

For more information, see

www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/opinion/columns/2022/12/col-walter-scott-part-ii/ and parts i and iii of the same series, written by Mike Delahant (Dec 1, 8 & 15, 2022).

Letter of acceptance, written from 860 Broadway, New York, on February 14, 1928:

My dear Provost:

It is with more than ordinary pleasure that I hasten to acknowledge receipt of your letter containing such wonderful news, which was written on the anniversary of the birth of the World's Poet.

I was indeed proud to know that the Irvine Burns Club had honored me to the extent of Honorary Membership in their historic association, and would that I could convey to your members and yourself the deep appreciation that I feel. It is accepted gratefully, and I trust that my life ever will be such that you will have no cause to regret your action is doing honor to one who is far away from your Club in body, but always near you in spirit in everything that has to do with that remarkable being who was born in Scotland, but who now belongs to the whole world. His monument is one of Love – enshrined in the hearts of the people – and it will last far longer than any that could be built of bronze or granite.

It was the great pleasure of my daughter and myself to visit your interesting city about three years ago as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lumsden, and you may rest assured that if God spares me to visit Scotland again I shall be only too happy to pay my respects to the Irvine Burns Club and to the Provost.

With deep appreciation and personal regards,

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

Walter Scott

Notes:

The letter is, apart from his signature, typed, and addressed to Provost Hogg.