

**Nominees of 1838 & 1839 (no acceptance letters extant) –  
(1838) Robert Chambers, William Chambers, Lord James Stuart, MP,  
(1839) Alexander Rodger, Robert Gilfillan**

These nominees are minuted, but no acceptances from them are on file, so we can not include them in our official list of Honorary Members.

**Robert Chambers (1802-1871)**, the Edinburgh publisher and author, who had started as a bookseller at age 16. He published a Life of Sir Walter Scott in 1832, and in that year launched Chamber's Edinburgh Journal. He was in whole or in part the author of the Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen (4 vols., Glasgow, 1832–1835), the Cyclopaedia of English Literature (1844), and the Life and Works of Robert Burns (4 vols., 1851); he published at the rate of one book every year or so. We have his letter of 1842 thanking Irvine Burns Club for its contribution to a fund he had set up to benefit the sister of Burns' 'Chloris' (Jean Lorimer).

**William Chambers**, Robert's brother (1800-1883), publisher and politician. He opened his own shop in 1819, branched out into printing, and joined his brother in W & R Chambers. Chambers' Encyclopaedia was published in 1859. As Lord Provost of Edinburgh (1865-69), he was responsible for the restoration of St Giles Cathedral. He is commemorated by a statue in Chambers Street, Edinburgh.

**Lord James Stuart, MP** (1794-1859), MP for the Ayr District of Burghs (1835-52 and 1857-his death) and Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Bute. "His estimable public life and private virtues had secured for him . . . honour for his memory far beyond the county where he was so intimately known, and which in Parliament he so faithfully represented."

**Alexander Rodger** (1784-1846), the Glasgow Radical poet, and merriest of the contributors to Whistle-binkie. Resident in Glasgow from teenage years, he was famous for politics, lyrical letters and poetry - "every adversary who fell from the attack of his pen may be said to have perished in a paroxysm of laughter". His efforts led to establishing a public footpath on the banks of the Clyde. He contributed to the Liberator, a Radical weekly, and later worked for The Reformer's Gazette. His poetry reflected his racy and genial humour, and included some well-known love-lyrics. He was a friend of William Motherwell (honorary member 1829) - though opposed in politics, they shared a common interest in publishing, editing and local humour. He is buried in the Glasgow Necropolis, not far from his friend Motherwell. One of his short poems is:

"The greatest sumphs in a' our core,  
Are sure to be promoted,  
While men of mettle are passed o'er,  
And scarcely ever noted.  
This truth may seem a paradox,  
But mark ye how I'll clear it,  
Promotion amang Highland folks  
Gangs mair by \_Mac\_ than merit."

**Robert Gilfillan** (1798-1850), poet, resident for much of his life in Leith. At first, he enjoyed the popularity of his songs, unpublished, though circulated over the whole of Scotland, and sung both at public festivals and at social and domestic gatherings. He dedicated his first, small, 1831 collection of songs to Allan Cunningham (see honorary member entry for 1829), bringing out new editions in 1835 and 1839. He became a frequent contributor to the Edinburgh Journal and the Dublin University Magazine. His admirers subscribed to a monument for his grave in South Leith churchyard. "A Rhythmical Rhapsody addressed to Robert Gilfillan, Leith (to be sung to a new Tune called 'The Social Three')" (by our 1829 Hon. Member William Tennant?) was written into our Minute Book (p.92) - it was also printed in the Dublin University Magazine of 1834.