

Honorary members of 1967 – 1969

1967 Thomas W Dalglish, F C Sillar, Clement Wilson,

Edward Odling, Yehudi Menuhin

1968 Sir Francis Chichester, Sir Thomas Moore

1969 Prof. William Barclay, James Kinsley

1967 Thomas W Dalglish (1902-1970)

Tom Dalglish, the son of a shepherd in Peeblesshire, became head forester at Coldstream, then on the Kilmarnock Estates, before (in 1946) setting up as a free-lance forestry consultant, building up a business which did work all over Britain. His interest in Burns began when he was, as a young man, a member of a church choir. He was a life member of the Scottish Forestry Society, serving as its first working forester president in 1947.

During ten years as Secretary (1960-69) and Treasurer (1961-69) of the Burns Federation, he gave new life to the international aspect of the Federation, bringing to the office his expertise and capacity for management. Highlights of his work were his speeches in America in 1965 and his world tour, including Australia, of Burns Clubs in 1966. The invitation by Irvine Burns Club was prompted by President Sam Gaw, who since also played a large part in Federation affairs, and it can be seen in the light of Tom Dalglish's worldwide efforts of 1965-66. He led the fund-raising for the restoration of the Burns House Museum in Mauchline, opened in 1969.

In May 1970, by then an OBE, he was honoured by a function to celebrate not only his work for the Federation but also his many kindnesses, hospitality and friendship. The presentation was made by Mrs Jane Burgoyne, senior Vice-President of the Federation.

Letter of acceptance, written from 'Drymlia', 11a Climie Place, Kilmarnock in January 1967, to Wm Phillips, Esq., MA, FEIS, Hon. Secretary:

Dear Mr Phillips,

Very many thanks for your letter of 10th January 1967 intimating that the Irvine Burns Club have unanimously elected me as an Honorary Member

Please convey to your President and Members my most grateful thanks for this very high honour which I shall cherish so long as I live.

This adds to my list one of the oldest Clubs with continued functions since its inception. I have been greatly honoured by Burns Clubs in many parts of the world including Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand and Australia and of course being a past president of Kilmarnock No. 0.

During my fifty years with close associations with Burnsiana I have reaped rich rewards but none greater than to be made an honorary member of your Burns Club.

Yours sincerely

Thos. W Dalglish

1967 F C Sillar (1895-1978)

Frederick Cameron Sillar was a great-great-grandson of David Sillar, the 'Dainty Davie' friend of Robert Burns, the first Vice President of Irvine Burns Club, and was obviously proud of his literary background and his own works. He seems to have been employed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. He had no issue.

In 1964, on 24th January, he presented Irvine Burns Club with the silver tankard given by Davie Sillar to his grandson Wm Cameron Sillar as a hansel gift in 1822. Davie's son Zachariah had married Mary Cameron (a minister's daughter), hence the middle name of their son and grandson and great-grandson F C Sillar.

In his letter, he mentions his book 'Cats Ancient and Modern' (reprinted in 1976). He also wrote 'Elephants, Ancient and Modern' (The Viking Press, New York, 1968) and 'Skye' (in the Islands series). All three were co-written with Ruth M Meyler (1916?-d.2007, aged 91, Dumfries).

(Another Sillar relation (on a different branch of the family), Revd D Sillar, a great-great-grandson of 'Dainty Davie', attended the 1974 Annual Celebration, bringing with him letters from Burns to Sillar, later given to the Club, the spectacles of David Sillar (with which he read the letters) and the MS of the poem "The Hopeless Lover". In 1975, he enabled Irvine Burns Club to purchase the Burns letters at a reasonable price.)

Letter of acceptance, written from his home at Kirkmulloch, Dalry, Castle-Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 12th January 1967
The **Bold** in the transcript is ours, to highlight a line of authorship in the family.

Dear Hon. Secretary,

I cannot tell you how delighted and honoured I am to be elected an Honorary Member of Irvine Burns Club - especially as I really cannot claim distinction under any of the categories you name in your letter notifying me of the honour. But it is delightful all the same, particularly being a great-great-grandson of the famous Davie.

Curiously enough, when doing some research in the National Library in Edinburgh last week for my next book, the catalogue volume in which I was looking up something fell open and my eye instantly caught sight of the name David Sillar. It was in reference to **Davie's book of poems** - and next it was the name of my grandfather **William Cameron Sillar, Davie's grandson, who wrote a book on Usury**. In a later volume of the Catalogue my father's name - also **William Cameron Sillar** - **appears as the author of a technical book on his own subject, Materia Medica** - and on the cards not yet included in the printed catalogue, my mother's name, **Eleanor Fanny Sillar appears as the author of 'Edinburgh's Child'**. My own follows, with **my books 'The Symbolic Pig' and 'Cats Ancient and Modern'**. So Davie, his grandson, his great-grandson and his great-great-grandson have all been authors of a kind, but I cannot find whether Davie's son Zachariah wrote anything. Perhaps the Club knows.

Please report to the Club my great satisfaction at the honour they have done me.

Yours sincerely,

F C Sillar

1967 Clement Wilson (1903-1975)

The Wilson family were Hugenots who settled as farmers at Loch Goin (formerly Goine, then Goyne) near Fenwick. Before moving into food mass production, on watching the exploits of Armand and Michaela Dennis on TV (1957-65), Clement Wilson noted that their animal specimens, on killing, ate the offal first - a substance held in surplus by the company. This prompted him to hire consultants to utilise this offal. His subsequent usage through his factory then realised the sum of 7 million pounds for the right to produce their Kennomeat and Kattomeat brands - some offal!

Robert Clement Wilson, President of Irvine Burns Club in 1970-71, claimed his family were Covenantors. Loch Goin was famous for this and he proved a connection by showing swords.

An ancestor, Ayrshire farmer James Wilson, rearing pigs and producing ham in c.1820, introduced the Ayrshire Cure. He was the first to introduce the present Ayrshire method in the factory at the Burns in Dunlop. Pig raising in that area was probably fairly extensive, as in the first half of the 20th century there were about thirteen ham curers operating in the village, one of whom was Robert Wilson, founder of Robert Wilson & Sons (1859) Limited.

Robert Wilson's ham factory continued until the 1930s. At the start of the 2nd World War, the factory changed from ham production to H.M. factory for the process and store of gun cotton. A disastrous fire saw this burned out at the war's end and in the early 1950s Robert Wilson gifted a rest garden on the site of the original factory at Dunlop, in Lugton Road, to remember those predecessors who had left the family fortune.

Robert's son Clement converted the Eglinton Castle stable block into a factory in 1953, choosing Eglinton as a headquarters for "Wilson's of Scotland" because he believed that work should always be done in a satisfying environment. The manufacture of processed and canned foods then expanded greatly, using the name 'Newforge', the company becoming nationally recognised, Kennomeat and Kattomeat gaining 20% of the market. It was sold to rival manufacturers, Spillers, in 1964.

Because he also believed that industry should play a significant role in improving that environment, 'this man of vision' (as he was described by John Strawhorn in 'The History of Irvine') not only lavishly enhanced Eglinton Park but created in 1965 a Clement Wilson Foundation to support a variety of worthy causes locally and beyond. When he died in 1975, his son James W Wilson continued to employ 350 at Eglinton in line with his father's philosophy. The factory was closed in 1997.

Some of the above recollections were recounted by Clement Wilson at the Directors' table during his year as President (1970-71), and we are indebted to Sam Gaw (Past President 1966-67) for passing them on for inclusion in this brief biography.

The Wilson family gifted the grounds of Eglinton Park to the local authority, then Cunninghame District Council, in 1978. In the early 1980s, the Clement Wilson Foundation was a major contributor to the restoration of the Heckling Shop in Irvine's Glasgow Vennel - the building where Burns had worked in 1781. The Foundation's successor, the Barcapel Foundation, continues to sponsor projects in Irvine and elsewhere, supporting projects for health, for heritage, and for youth. A recent grant is a substantial contribution to the creation of the Burns National Heritage Park in 2009.

In South Belfast in 1929, the family firm Wilson Management Ltd bought a former clog factory and 25 acres of land to produce soft fruit for canning. Staff, unable to travel back into the city for lunch, enjoyed lunch break walks around the surrounding fields. Clement Wilson noticed this and decided to landscape the grounds into gardens, creating the first 'factory garden' in Northern Ireland. The factory closed during World War II, the council bought the land for a public park in the 1970s, and Clement Wilson Park was officially opened in 1975. Some of its grassland, beside Newforge Lane, was occupied by orchards in pre-war years.

Letter of acceptance, written from Skelmorlie Castle, Ayrshire, on 17th Jan. 1967, to William Phillips, Hon. Secy:

Dear Mr Phillips,

Please convey to the President and all members of the Irvine Burns Club my sincere thanks and appreciation of the great honour they have conferred upon me by electing me an Honorary Member.

Knowing something of the history of the Club and its long list of distinguished Honorary Members I, as an Ayrshire man, feel particularly grateful to the members for electing me to an Office, which has been filled for so long by so many men of National and International eminence.

Robert Burns, his qualities, philosophy and genius, have been an inspiration to me since my early youth.

He had the unique gift of explaining human feelings, human failings and human motivations with the minimum of words in Poems, Songs, and Letters.

For the foregoing reasons and for many others which I find it difficult to put into words, I accept with gratitude Honorary Membership of The Irvine Burns Club.

Yours sincerely

R Clement Wilson

1967 Edward Odling (1921-2007)

Ted and Elizabeth Odling met at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) in 1949 and married in 1952. They lived and worked on the west of Scotland throughout their long careers as artists, both at GSA and as free-lance artists on commissions for, amongst others, the BBC and The National Trust for Scotland.

Ted was a landscape painter, and produced an impressive collection of painting in watercolour, oil and pastel of the west coast of Scotland. He was also keenly interested in science and technology and generated many new ideas by combining his artistic background with advances in optics, photography, film, and music. Elizabeth won the Newbery Medal as top student of her year at the Glasgow School of Art in 1945. Her work is marked by a close attention to detail, particularly seen in her wood and copper engravings, drawings of natural objects and life drawing, watercolours of flowers, embroidery and quilts.

Throughout their careers, Ted and Elizabeth often worked as a team producing murals for the Burns Club in Irvine, the Burns Museum at Alloway and Chatelherault, near Glasgow. In 1965, they created a large mural covering the walls (and some of the ceiling) of a room in

the Burns Club and Museum in Irvine illustrating the life of Robert Burns. This includes scenes from Burns' life and his tales and poems which were arranged to disguise the room's corners and included a false door and shelf. These were so life-like that one visiting dignitary at the opening was caught trying to put his glass down on the false shelf. Ted was appointed Honorary member of the Irvine Burns Club in 1967 and the Burns Club murals exist to this day.

As a result of the success of these murals, Ted and Elizabeth also took part in the refurbishment of the Burns Museum at Burns cottage in Alloway in 1985-86, a project coordinated by John Mott, where they worked with Jack Kilgour in constructing two murals, one on Burns' work which featured Tam o' Shanter and was set in the Ayrshire landscape, and the other illustrating his way of life and selected events such as the publishing of the Kilmarnock edition of 'Poems Chiefly in the Scottish dialect'.

Ted and Elizabeth retired to Lismore in Argyll in 1981 where they spent 25 years, and for many of these years continued to work as free-lance artists. She passed away in 2004, he in 2007. Irvine Burns Club is indebted to their daughter Noelle for this appreciation of the artists.

Letter of acceptance, written from 19 Craigendoran Avenue, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire, on January 22nd 1967, to William Phillips, Hon. Secy:

Dear Mr Phillips,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I accept the honorary membership of the Irvine Burns Club.

The enthusiasm, energy and vigour with which the club pursues its studies of the poet and his works, express that vitality and warmth to be found so conspicuously in the man and his writings. I am mindful of the importance of your most kind gesture toward me in asking me to be associated with your endeavours in this way.

For this honour, please convey to the club my warmest thanks.

I am, most sincerely yours

Edward Odling

1967 Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999)

Yehudi Menuhin was an American-born British violinist and conductor who spent most of his performing career in Britain. During World War II he performed for Allied soldiers and, in 1945, for the surviving inmates of a number of concentration camps.

It is possible that his nomination was prompted by his establishment, in 1962, of the Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey or possibly by the award, in 1965, of an honorary knighthood. He became an honorary citizen of Switzerland in 1971 and of the United Kingdom in 1985.

His mother named him 'Yehudi', meaning 'Jew', so that he would proclaim his race to the world, but he respected all peoples, not just his own. When accepting an award from the Israeli Government in 1991, speaking in the Knesset, he criticised Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank, saying: "this steady asphyxiation of a dependent people

should be the very last means to be adopted by those who themselves know too well the awful significance, the unforgettable suffering of such an existence”.

Letter of acceptance, written from the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten (Restaurant Walterspiel), Maximilianstrasse, Munich, on 15th January 1967, to William Phillips, Hon. Secy

Dear Sir,

I am most honoured to learn from your kind letter that I have been by now, in accordance with your most optimistic and flattering prognostication, that I am by now a unanimously elected Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club.

I do sincerely trust the voting members were not unduly brainwashed and that there was a modicum of spontaneity in the proceedings of Jan 10th last!

Hoping I may some day visit the Club at Irvine, with all my thanks and good wishes,

Yours faithfully,

Yehudi Menuhin

1968 Sir Francis Chichester (1901-1972)

Francis Chichester, a sailor and aviator, was the first person to single-handedly sail around the world, making only one stop (in Sydney), in 1966-67, on ‘Gipsy Moth IV’; a few weeks later, he was knighted. He was also honoured on a 1967 postage stamp, picturing him and his yacht, unusual at the time, as convention was to picture only members of the royal family and persons who were dead.

Letter of acceptance, written from Francis Chichester Ltd, 9 St James Place, London, S.W.1, on 10th January, 1968, to William Phillips, Hon. Secy:

Dear Mr Phillips,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th December and I must apologise for the long delay in replying.

I greatly appreciate the honour you have done me by making me an Honorary Member of the Irvine Burns Club. I hope you will not mind my adding that I have many commitments and will unfortunately not be able to play any active part in the activities of the Club.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Francis Chichester

1968 Sir Thomas Moore (1886-1971)

Lieut.-Col. Sir Thomas Moore, Bart., C.B.E. (the heading on his notepaper) was elected M.P. for Ayr Burghs, which included the Burgh of Irvine, in 1925. When constituency

reorganisation took place in 1950, he was elected M.P. for Ayr. This he held until 1964. He was President of Irvine Burns Club in 1945.

In the mid-1930s, when a Colonel in the British Army, he wrote widely in the UK press in support of Adolf Hitler and the policies of Nazism (Pryce-Jones, 'Unity Mitford', 1976, *to be checked*).

Letter of acceptance, written from 87 Harley House, London, N.W.1, on 22nd January, 1968, to William Phillips, Hon. Secy

Dear Mr Phillips,

I hear from both my secretary and my wife that you have been worried about not having had a reply to your letter inviting me to become an honorary member of the Irvine Burns Club. Well, the reason is that your letter never arrived and, therefore, I could not answer it. But, of course, as my secretary told your wife on the telephone I will be very happy indeed to be an honorary member of your Club and will look forward to maintaining my association and interest in all your activities.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Moore

1969 Prof. William Barclay (1907-1978)

William Barclay CBE was a Scottish author, radio and television presenter, a Church of Scotland minister, and the Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow. He wrote a popular set of Bible commentaries on the New Testament that sold 1.5 million copies.

Letter of acceptance, written from the Department of Divinity and Biblical Criticism, The University, Glasgow, W2, to Hon. Secy. Andrew Hood

Dear Mr Hood,

Thank you very much indeed for your very kind invitation to become an honorary member of Irvine Burns Club. This is a very great honour, and I appreciate it very much indeed, although I feel that my name is not worthy to stand beside the great names you mention. I shall be very privileged to accept the honorary membership which you so kindly offer, and I hope that on occasion I may have some small part in the activities of the Club.

Please convey to your committee my very sincere thanks for the honour they do me, and my most grateful acceptance of it.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely

William Barclay.

Notes: His letter is undated.

His letter is handwritten on notepaper of his Department.

1969 James Kinsley (1922-1984)

Professor Kinsley was Head of English from 1961 to 1984 at Nottingham University, where he established a chair of English language and, in his history of the School written in 1980, outlined that his intention was to "assert the unity of the linguistic-literary English discipline, medieval and modern, in a single school".

He was passionate about extending library provision, particularly in the Arts, and was instrumental in the plans for the University's Hallward Library opened in 1973. Student admissions rose and Joint Honours courses were introduced with American Studies (resulting in the formation of a new department), History, Theology, Art History, Linguistics and Archaeology. The teaching of drama was developed and the Department established links with the Nottingham Playhouse in the late 1960s. By the 1970s the performing arts theatre was being established and drama developed as a subject and eventual section in the School.

Professor Kinsley died suddenly in 1984 and his work and contribution to not only the Department but also the University was recorded by the British Academy in 1988.

James Kinsley published a definitive three-volume edition "The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns" in 1968, prompting his honorary membership at Irvine. He also published "Burns and the Peasantry 1785" in the Proceedings of the British Academy 60 (1974). The Burns edition was described by Robert Crawford as "the standard reference text of the poet's work". Kinsley wrote that Burns saw "the rustic society about him with the sympathy and critical clarity of a Brueghel".

Letter of acceptance, written from the School of English Studies, The University, Nottingham, on 16 Jany 1969, to Hon Secy Andrew Hood

Dear Mr Hood,

Your letter of 10 January does me a great and quite unexpected honour, which I accept with gratitude - and may I in turn acknowledge the generosity with which Irvine Burns Club made its fine collection of MSS available to me years ago. - I hope indeed that I have given some service to Scottish letters in my edition of Burns: but in the end it was not only a large labour finished, but a long debt paid.

I hope to visit Irvine again before long, as I get ahead with my editions of John Galt.

Sincerely yours,

James Kinsley

Notes:

He published an edition of Galt's 1821 "Annals of the Parish" in 1967.