

Oscar Wilde's pronouncement about the Savile Club as "A republic of letters but not a Sovereign among them" was certainly not correct for science. After 125 years of existence from 1868 to 1993, there had been more than 300 Fellows of the Royal Society elected as Members of the Savile, among them eight Presidents, the true 'Sovereigns' of science, if ever such a position can be postulated. Among them was Sir William Thomson, later Baron Kelvin, elected to the Club in 1872, the discoverer of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. He must not be confused with Sir Joseph John (J.J.) Thomson, also a P.R.S. and a Savilian, as well as a Nobel Laureate in physics for his researches on the conductivity of electricity through gases.

The first Savilian who received the Nobel Prize in a scientific discipline for his optical and acoustical researches, was John William Strutt. He was elected President of the Royal Society and his name changed to Lord Rayleigh, 3rd Baron, when his father died, and he inherited his title.

The next Cavendish Professor of Physics at Cambridge University to be a Savilian and Nobel Laureate, as well as President of the Royal Society, was Ernest, Lord Rutherford of Nelson, a New Zealander. He was raised to the Peerage and his title has not been inherited.

Two very distinguished medical scientists, Sir Charles Scott Sherrington and Sir Frederick Gowland-Hopkins were both Nobel Laureates and Presidents of the Royal Society, as well as Members of the Savile Club.

Lord Adrian, electrophysiologist, shared with Sherrington the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1972; he was Master of Trinity College Cambridge and Chancellor of the University. He was elected President of the Royal Society and a Member of the Savile Club. In 1942 he was awarded the Order of Merit, as is customary for the Presidents of the Royal Society, when a vacancy occurs in the Order, limited to 24 Members. [See Title 320]

The eighth and last President of the Royal Society, — at least so far — of these outstanding scientists who were also Members of the Savile Club, was Sir Cyril Hinshelwood. He was elected a Savilian in 1922; a F.R.S. in 1929; and he served as President of the Royal Society from 1955-1960, the customary five year term of office. Apart from being an outstanding chemist, he was a painter of considerable talent, and a great scholar of languages such as German, French, Spanish and Italian in which he was highly proficient. Furthermore he conversed fluently in Russian and Chinese, and was able to use and enjoy his fortune by collecting antique Chinese porcelain.