



ANDREW COATES – Benefactor of the Society and of Perth

Andrew Coates of Pitcullen House, Kinnoull died on the 10th February, 1900. He was the son of James Coats, cotton spinner, who was a member of the later famous 'Coats Thread' family of Paisley. There was a large family of sons and at that time the thread factory had not reached the height of its success. While Andrew's brothers worked in the family business it was decided to send Andrew to America as an agent for Coats Thread in that country.

Mr. Coates was born in Paisley in 1814, married Agnes Hamilton Stirling in 1855 and had a family of one daughter, Margaret and two sons James and Henry.

Andrew Coates considered following a legal profession but soon discovered his flare and enthusiasm for business. Henry was born during his father's period of 20 years in America. Andrew Coates always recalled, with pleasure, meeting Audubon, the American ornithologist and conversing with him about the birds of Scotland.

Andrew Coates had a hard life in America in advertising and trying to gain traders to import reels of thread from Scotland although Andrew well knew that his family's product was far superior to thread manufactured in America. One American firm copied and tried to "steal" the name of Coats Thread but Andrew took legal action fought his battle over the theft and won. An honest trader and a decent Scotsman Andrew Coates won the respect of American merchants and the exports of Paisley thread to America increased year by year.

Andrew having gained a reputation for selling a good product at a fair price decided to start a small business himself. That too prospered and he amassed a respectable fortune before returning to Perth. Here in Perth Andrew Coates worked long and hard to support the aged, the orphan and to aid the sick and suffering. He was a powerful and steadfast friend. All admired his quiet generosity and not one of the many organisations in the town was forgotten by Mr. Coates in his philanthropic work. On coming to Perth Andrew Coates went into partnership with Lawrence Pullar who had set up a business manufacturing lady's dress material. On Lawrence Pullar's retiral the Coates – Andrew, James and Henry carried on manufacturing carpets – jute backing with coloured wool loops knotted by machine. The loops were cut and formed the carpet pile. This was an entirely new carpet and rug making process.

Andrew Coates gave much support to Hillside Homes, Fechny Boys' School and served on the Board of Perth Savings Bank. When the PSNS was building its new premises, in Tay Street Andrew Coates and Robert Pullar were the main donors of most of the financial aid. Andrew Coates became a member of the Society in 1869.

