

# Perthshire Society of Natural Science

## Dr. FRANCIS BUCHANAN WHITE

Dr. Francis Buchanan White was the first President of the Society and the prime mover in the founding of Perthshire's Natural History Museum. He worked hard to bring it to completion sparing neither time nor effort. Many of the founder members helped by donating personal collections or extending existing collections so that the Museum could be as complete as possible. Dr. Buchanan White was always ready to share his scientific knowledge.

Dr. Buchanan White wrote many articles for Scientific Journals and particularly for the 'Scottish Naturalist'. He was much in demand as a Lecturer and spoke in 1889 to the Linnaean Society on 'A Revision of British Willows' – one of his special interests.

Born in 1842 in Perth he attended a school at St. Ninian's Cathedral and also had a private tutor. He studied and graduated in medicine at Edinburgh in 1864. In 1866 he married Margaret Juliet Corrie of Stielston, Dumfries. With his wife he travelled in Europe visiting France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, most time being spent in Switzerland and Italy. The couple returned home to Perth and later when living at Annat Lodge on Kinnoull Hill he created a magnificent Rock Garden of alpine plants.

A preliminary meeting of like-minded gentlemen was held in the back room of King James VI Golf Club at 6 Charlotte Street on 28th February 1867 and they formally founded a Society for the practical study of the natural history of Perth and Perthshire. On 7th March 1867 the first meeting was held stating as the society's main aim to further the study of the county's natural history by exploration, research and recording. Perthshire was an area of plains and mountains, valleys and hills.

Extensive collections of specimens were to be made for the proposed Museum. Dr. Buchanan White himself undertook a detailed and particular study of the Geology of Perthshire, a subject which he had not previously regarded except in relation to the flora and fauna.

Dr. Francis Buchanan White died in 1894. As a founder member his energy and perseverance with his extensive scientific knowledge established the reputation of the Society and the foundation of its Natural History Museum. The Museum represents years of thought, patient labour and care. Dr. Buchanan White was an authority on Willows, Lepidoptera and Coleoptera and he had worked assiduously on the flora of Perthshire – the title of the book published after his death and edited by Professor Trail of Aberdeen.