



Mr. WILLIAM BARCLAY – President of the Society

Mr. William Barclay was born at Tulloch on 19th March, 1846 and was the second oldest in a family of six. He received his early education at one of the National Schools in Perth. There were two National Schools in Perth – one in the New Row and one in the Watergate both established in 1835. Deciding to become a teacher he became a pupil teacher under Mr. James Thomson of Kinnoull.

At the age of 18 years he entered the Church of Scotland Training College at Edinburgh after taking first place in the entrance examination. On completing his training he was appointed to Glenrinnies School, Banffshire, part of his "salary" being a glebe where he kept a cow! While there he married Janet M'Conachie daughter of a local farmer. In 1871 Mr. Barclay was appointed Head Master of Watergate School, Perth and occupied the post until he removed to the new Western District School (now Craigie) in 1884 where he remained until he retired in 1911. There was widespread respect for Mr. Barclay fully expressed in presentations and complimentary dinner.

Mr. Barclay was a keen and enthusiastic naturalist and devoted much of his leisure time to that pursuit. Indeed shortly before his death in 1923 he received the honour of appointment as Associate of the Linnaean Society.

It was as a botanist that William Barclay was best known and The Journal of Botany carried an obituary in September, 1923. He joined the Society in 1883 and from 1895 to 1907 he was editor of the Society's Transactions and Proceedings. From 1907 to 1918 he was President of the Society. However, fishing not botany was his first hobby but botanical science has benefited from his study. He was one of the active workers who associated with Dr. Buchanan White in preparing the 'Flora of Perthshire'. Mr. Barclay himself contributed articles to the Society's Journal of Proceedings and Transactions.

For the later years of his life Mr. Barclay had considerable interest in antiquarian matters studying the Town Council Minutes of by-gone periods, extracting much valuable information. He always required incontrovertible proof of any theory.

His activities in the city of Perth were not confined to natural science. He took a prominent part in educational matters and was at one time Secretary and Treasurer of the Educational Institute of Scotland. He was a member of Committee of the Mechanics Institute and was Convenor of the Book Committee when the Sandeman Library was established in 1898. He was also a Director of the Royal Infirmary and a member of the Royal Horticultural Society of Perthshire.

As a member of PSNS he was a regular attender and his wide knowledge made him an excellent guide, mentor and philosopher!

He lived up to the Society's motto "prove all things" and endeavoured at all times to "hold fast that which is good".

He died at his home in Friar Street on 10th February, 1923.

