

The people behind the philanthropy : an investigation into the lives and motivations of library philanthropists in Scotland between 1800 and 1914.¹

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Abstract:

This study examines Scottish library philanthropists in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century, a key period in the development of the Public Library Service. Utilising a technique known as prosopography, the study provides an insight into the lives of eleven people (nine men and two women) who were involved in gifting money, land or support towards the establishment and maintenance of public libraries in eight towns and hundreds of villages throughout Scotland.

Background:

The period from 1800 until the start of the First World War in 1914 was one of immense social change in Scotland as throughout the rest of Britain. The primarily agrarian society was rapidly evolving into one centred around new industries such as coal mining and ship-building. These new industries, along with increasingly mechanised older industries, were immensely more profitable than farming and thus it became possible for individuals to become rich through their own efforts rather than by inherited wealth. These ‘self-made men’ (and it was largely men) were able to rise to the upper levels of society in a way which had not previously been possible.

Leisure facilities such as art galleries, libraries and parks became more widespread as people had both increased free time and disposable income. Libraries had always been in existence in one form or another but were often highly specialised with “public” libraries often subscription-based and therefore only utilised by the privileged few who could afford them. By the mid-Nineteenth Century, significant moves were also being made to provide better educational opportunities for the working classes. Libraries were considered important in supporting this and after several attempts, the Public Libraries Acts of 1850 (England) and 1853 (Scotland) firmly created a legislative foundation for the establishment of publicly funded libraries. Although a ½d rate of tax (later raised to 1d) was levied to support the creation and maintenance of the new public libraries, the many social needs of the time, such as housing and sanitation meant “cultural” pursuits such as libraries and museums became a lesser priority. It is now widely acknowledged that philanthropists who gifted money or buildings were key in getting libraries built in many areas.

Philanthropy in library history literature:

Library historians have generally paid particularly little attention either to biographical information regarding library philanthropists, or to the factors that may have influenced their actions, the exception to this being the various works devoted to Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). While Carnegie is regarded as the father of library philanthropy, there were numerous other individuals who donated not only money, but also tangible assets such as land or buildings or devoted time to support the new libraries. Works covering these individuals are generally written by local history enthusiasts and do not deal with the subject's life or actions in any comparative way, either with respect to other philanthropists or the general trends of the time.

There is, therefore, an identified need for a detailed study into the lives of some of the individuals behind library philanthropy in Scotland between 1800 and 1914. This paper aims to supplement the current body of literature on public library history in Scotland by going beyond recounting basic biographical details and considers the philanthropists as forming an identifiable group (a technique known as prosopography). As a result, it will be possible to concentrate on the connections and similarities between the individuals. This paper will also move some way to balance the literature on library philanthropy away from the current bias towards Andrew Carnegie, making a more critical study of Carnegie and other philanthropists possible.

Due to the widespread nature of philanthropy as a social phenomenon at this point in history, it will not be possible to identify all the philanthropists that existed. Instead, eleven individuals have been chosen (see below) and factors such as their background, working and private lives, their library gifts and other acts of philanthropy will be examined and compared.

Sir Peter Coats [*]	James Coats
Stephen Mitchell	James Moir
Sir John Usher	James Shepherd
Michael Beveridge	Isabella Elder
Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox	Archibald Sandeman
John Thomson Paton	

^{*} For brief biographical details of each individual, see Appendix.

Comparisons between the individuals:

Family background and early life:

The rapid social change witnessed in the Nineteenth Century meant that philanthropists in general came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Only some details are known about the early life of the group in this study, with a complete picture not available for many of them. All but one of the individuals were Scottish by birth, with Lady Caroline being born in England. Most of the birthplaces were concentrated around the heavily populated areas of Glasgow, Fife and Edinburgh. The only clear exception to this is Shepherd, who was born in Elgin, over 100 miles north of the rest.

Whitaker in his book "*The foundations*"² notes that coming from a poor background characterises many of those who established charitable foundations (whose motivations and actions I propose may not be wholly different to the philanthropists in this study). While it is left up to the reader of Whitaker's work to define exactly what he means by poor, in the cases of Moir, Beveridge and Shepherd, little information is available about their family, suggesting that they were of not much standing. All that is recorded about Shepherd is that he has been described as coming from a "humble" background³, probably a farming family, which in comparison to the industrial cities would certainly have appeared humble.

The rapidly growing industries, especially in the areas around Glasgow and Edinburgh, employed significant numbers of people and the fathers of Peter Coats, James Coats, Mitchell, and Usher were all senior partners or directors in such companies. Sandeman's father also employed in industry (although it is not recorded what position he held) and a sixth individual, Paton, was connected to industry through his mother being the daughter of John Paton, director of Paton's mills.

The two women in the group seem to stand apart from the others in that they came from slightly higher-class backgrounds. Isabella Elder's father was a well known lawyer, working in one of the more affluent parts of Glasgow⁴, while Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox's father was the 6th Duke of Richmond and 1st Duke of Gordon⁵. While the main Gordon Lennox home was at Goodwood in Sussex, the family spent summers at Gordon Castle near Fochabers in the North East of Scotland⁶. The people that Elder and Lady Caroline would have mixed with in social terms would have been very different from those who worked the land in a rural area such as Shepherd's. As was not unusual for the time, many of the individuals came from large families, with Peter Coats, James Coats, Mitchell and Sandeman all having more than nine brothers and sisters. Of all those where family details are known, Mitchell, James Coats and Lady Caroline were the eldest in

their families. Looking at the wider families of the group, the first connection between two of the philanthropists can be made. Peter Coats was uncle to James Coats, through being brother to James' father Thomas.

While the bare facts about the backgrounds can lead to various interpretations about the sort of upbringing the philanthropists had, very little actually has been recorded about their character during childhood. The only thing we really know about any of them is an observation Andrew Coats, younger brother of Peter, makes in his book "*From the cottage to the castle*"⁷. He notes that Peter was more reserved than his other siblings, but was cheerful, extremely kind and not easy to anger.

Education:

Despite primary education not being compulsory until 1872, we know for certain that 5 of the group were educated as far as the end of secondary school, perhaps indicating their parents placed education in high regard. Peter Coats, Usher and Mitchell were obviously good students, gaining prizes for being top in class. Usher was even made dux (top in the whole school)⁸.

Letters written by Elder are very well formed, suggesting she must have had some degree of education, perhaps a private school or governess⁹. Women's education was a very low priority in the Nineteenth Century, so again it may have been something valued by the family. Lady Caroline would have had some degree of private education, probably at home rather than at a school¹⁰.

Whilst basic education was on the increase, the numbers going to full-time university were very low. Of the individuals in this study, only two went to university, Sandeman and Peter Coats. Sandeman was the only one to complete his course, graduating with an MA from Queen's, Cambridge in 1849¹¹. Peter Coats matriculated at Glasgow University in 1824. However, the only record of his attendance is his name on a class list for Latin in 1824-25¹², and this, along with his name not appearing on the graduation rolls, shows he did not complete the course. Although taking part in short classes at university without graduation was common at this time¹³ it is thought this is because he abandoned an early idea of training for the church¹⁴.

Complete lack of a school education was not uncommon and some of the group may not have had any formal education whatsoever, going straight into trade. This may have taken place as soon as they were old enough. With Moir and Shepherd, for example, it was noted that they left home while young¹⁵.

Work life and involvement in local affairs:

By the time the individuals were in their twenties, all but one of the men were in trade and industry, with Sandeman staying in academia, becoming a professor in maths and natural philosophy at Owen's College, Manchester¹⁶. Many of the men, after serving an apprenticeship, went into their father's or the family's business, usually when their father (or in Paton's case, the director) retired. They then became partners or co-directors with their brothers or sometimes cousins. A few enterprising individuals built their own businesses, generally within the sector in which they had been trained. It is here that the next link between another two members of the group comes to light. Beveridge's business knowledge gained in his apprenticeship made him the perfect partner for Shepherd who was founding his linoleum manufacturing business¹⁷. They may have met through family links or business contacts and their partnership was to be a successful one, with the firm soon becoming one of the foremost in the area¹⁸.

Although the unpredictable financial climate of the Nineteenth Century did not greatly affect the individuals in this study, other challenges arose which affected the individuals in this study. For example, Mitchell had to move his business to Glasgow after a change in the customs rules closed the port of Blackness to tobacco trade¹⁹. The move benefited the firm in the long run, with the firm expanding rapidly. The linoleum factory of Beveridge and Shepherd burnt down in 1868 and had to be rebuilt²⁰. The fact the businesses survived these setbacks is testament to the individuals' skill and business flair.

Many of the group took part in local affairs. Usher and Shepherd were involved on a small scale, sitting on committees for school boards, water commissions and banks²¹ while Moir was part of the library committee at the Mitchell library²². Shepherd had been approached on several occasions to stand as an MP, but had refused on the grounds his time was occupied too much by his business²³. Although none of them got involved in national politics, even at a local level some rose to a position of power. Moir became a town councillor in Glasgow, Beveridge firstly a councillor, then the Provost of a newly expanded Kirkcaldy²⁴ and Paton a commissioner in Alloa. Moir and Paton were also involved in the legal workings of their respective towns through being a police commissioner (Moir), magistrates (Moir and Paton) and a Justice of the Peace (Paton). Moir was additionally an active member of the Chartist movement, a political movement that supported, amongst other things, reform of government and the poor laws. Support for Chartism reached a height around the late 1830s, with Moir being one of the main advocates in Glasgow²⁵.

It is known that both Mitchell and James Coats took no part in public life, and indeed James Coats was a virtual recluse in his final years²⁶. Sandeman also had rather a solitary nature as a result

of poor health²⁷.

With the women it was slightly different, as working was not an option for women of the middle/upper classes. Lady Caroline spent much of her time acting as hostess, both at Goodwood and Gordon Castle, and also socialising at her home in London. She also enjoyed outdoor pursuits with the Lady Caroline Spey Fly named after her in honour of her passion for angling²⁸.

Additionally she was a loyal carer to her father and was always seen at his side in his later years, acting as a companion and helper²⁹.

Elder, though, took a more active working role and showed she possessed the required skills for running a business. After her husband died at the age of 45, she single-handedly assumed control of the firm of between 4000 and 5000 employees until her brother John took charge, nine months later³⁰. Widows occasionally took charge of a small business such as a shop, but controlling a factory was virtually unknown³¹. The experience left her drained³² but shows the headstrong strength of character she possessed. In later years, Elder was to become actively involved in supporting several projects covering many areas of social need. Philanthropy was an acceptable way for women to use skills which, had they been men, would have been used in business³³.

Marriage and family:

Social conventions were such that it was generally expected that a man occupying a position of wealth should be married. It is therefore surprising to note that three of the men (Sandeman, Mitchell and James Coats) never married. It was suggested at the time that James Coats was a misogynist but this was dismissed as being unlikely³⁴, indeed it is recorded he may have once been in love³⁵, but without further elaboration we can only wonder as to whom this woman may have been. Whatever led Mitchell and Sandeman to remaining unmarried may have been rooted in their family life as none of Sandeman's six siblings who reached marriageable age and only two of Mitchell's adult siblings married. Lady Caroline also never married, although she would have had the opportunity to mix with many "suitable" people who visited the family estate at Goodwood³⁶. Two of her aunts had married very well, their husbands being Earl of Lucan and Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar³⁷. As a daughter though, the pressure on Lady Caroline to marry would have been very much less than her brothers, as there was no possibility of her inheriting the family estate.

Marriage in the Nineteenth Century often provided the opportunity for both men and women to link with another major industrial family or to move up the social ladder. Women were especially expected to marry well and Elder's match to John Elder would have been a favourable one as he was an enterprising shipbuilder, whose invention of the compound steam engine revolutionised marine trading³⁸. Paton's wife and Beveridge's second wife also were linked to industry being the

daughters of a mill merchant and a linen manufacturer respectively³⁹ (Nothing is recorded about Beveridge's first wife). Peter Coats and Usher married women whose families had military connections, with Peter Coats' father-in-law being a Lieutenant in the 74th Regiment⁴⁰. Through Usher's wife, Mary Balmer, another connection between the philanthropists (although somewhat less direct than previous examples) can be seen. Mary's father was commissioner to the Duke of Richmond, Lady Caroline's father⁴¹.

Just as many of the individuals followed into their father's business, it would be expected that the same would happen with the next generation. A number of Peter Coats' sons followed him into the business, as did Usher's two sons and Shepherd's son⁴². Elder and Beveridge did not have children. It could be that Beveridge was unable to have children as neither of his two marriages produced children, despite both his wives being young when they married. Moir had three children, all of whom died in their early years⁴³. Of those who had children, only Peter Coats and Usher had large families (eleven and seven respectively). The other two, Paton and Shepherd, had one and three respectively. This fits with the general pattern of declining birth rates towards the end of the century⁴⁴.

Religious and political views:

The religious beliefs of the individuals are well documented in sources of the time. Elder, Usher, Paton and Beveridge were noted as having especially strong links to a church, acting as elders or serving on committees. Shepherd was noted as leading a very Christian life, although he never found a denomination that matched his views⁴⁵. Only 16% of the population regularly attended church⁴⁶ and it has been proposed that piety may have influenced philanthropy in the Scottish people to a greater extent than the English⁴⁷. It may be that church commitments were more common amongst philanthropists compared to the general population but this could only be accurately assessed through a much larger study.

Where political views are known, it appears that Liberalism predominates. Liberalism was widespread in Scotland at the time⁴⁸ and the individuals may have been following a trend, although Peter and James Coats had strong family connections to the Liberals with Peter's father being a loyal supporter⁴⁹. Lady Caroline's family were staunch Tories, with her father being MP for West Sussex for 19 years⁵⁰. Some studies show that while Conservatives were not actively against the Public Libraries Act, it was Liberals in general who championed it⁵¹. It is quite likely therefore, individuals who were members of a liberal or radical club, such as Beveridge and Usher, would have debated at times the issue of free public libraries and these discussions may have shaped their thinking in their giving.

Library gift:

TABLE 1 TO BE INSERTED NEAR TO HERE

This section will concentrate on the reason the eleven individuals were selected in the first place - their library gift. Although the size and type of the gifts vary considerably, investigation into the approach taken in their administration enables the individuals to be grouped as shown below.

Planners: Mitchell, Paton, Beveridge, Elder, Peter Coats and Moir.

Reactors: Shepherd, Usher, Lady Caroline and Moir.

Eccentrics: James Coats, Sandeman.

Firstly, there are those who clearly identified their desire to fund a library and planned out their gift very carefully in a trust deed or will (the Planners). Conditions were frequently attached to the acceptance of the gifts or indications made as to how they wished the library to function, a common practice for philanthropists of the time. A lengthy document exists regarding the running of the Mitchell Library, although it is unclear to what extent Mitchell himself dictated these rules⁵². Two of the group, Peter Coats and Paton, insisted the Public Libraries Act had to be adopted if the gift was accepted⁵³ (Paton also gave to two other small village libraries in the area, with the same condition attached). A letter published in the Glasgow Herald at the time of Paton's gift praised this tactic and proposed that had Mitchell, or indeed Moir, made adoption of the Act a condition of their bequest, it would undoubtedly have been done in Glasgow as well⁵⁴. Whether Mitchell and Moir considered this is not recorded. Certainly Moir would have been aware of the arguments for and against the Act, given his positions both as a member of the library committee and as a local councillor. Mitchell may not have been as aware of the particulars of the Act, especially since he died before the movement really gained momentum.

Although through their measured planning the individuals in the first group were very influential in the development of libraries in their area, those in the second group, (labelled the reactors) also made a contribution. They saw an opportunity for a gift to be of use and gave as a result of what they saw. (Moir, by giving to an existing library is slightly different from the rest of the planners, but by waiting to give until after his death shows some of the planning traits and thus straddles the two groups). In all three cases in this group, the gift was connected to a Carnegie bequest. Carnegie's gifts came with the understanding that a suitable site was already provided⁵⁵; therefore by buying the sites, Shepherd and Usher played a significant role in the founding of the libraries. Carnegie also expected a degree of financial commitment from those living in the area and

so Lady Caroline's efforts in instigating and supporting a fund-raising bazaar at the family's Gordon Castle and generally raising the library's profile were important in prompting Carnegie to consider Fochabers suitable for a gift.

While there is less of the formal written planning with the "reactors" compared to the "planners" in group one, it is directed help, given with much careful thought, unlike the approach taken by the two individuals in the third group, James Coats and Sandeman. This group has been titled as "eccentrics", a label given to both of the individuals in pieces written about them⁵⁶. James Coats especially was seen by others in his time as eccentric. Stories exist of him feeding the birds in his garden with bread soaked in champagne!⁵⁷.

Sandeman's gift was given through his will, but the method of administration could not have been more different to the thoroughly constructed documents of group one. The direction for his gift was thus:

"To the Trustees acting under my settlement. Garry Cottage, 12 Dec[embe]r 1891. Gentlemen, I hereby direct you to pay and make over the residue of my estate to the Town Council of Perth for the formation of a Free Library in the City of Perth. I am, yours truly, Archibald Sandeman."⁵⁸

This simple statement was scrawled in pencil on a piece of light blue card measuring 18cm x 11cm and *pinned* to the back of his will! There was some debate at the time as to the legality of this bequest as it had been written in pencil and not formally included in the body of the will. Additionally, a letter to the city council from one of Sandeman's acquaintances reads:

"It is not for me to say whether he was then [at the time of the writing of the card] of sound mind or not, but in my humble opinion, were the case in its whole circumstances, fully brought before the Court of Session, the pencil writing would not stand."⁵⁹.

Much of the argument came from Sandeman's few remaining relatives who had been ignored in the will in favour of other women who had kept house for him. Through some skilled negotiation by the town council however, the bequest was granted largely in its original form with only a few personal items of Sandeman's going to the family⁶⁰.

The total number of James Coat's library benefactions will never be known, but estimates of 4000 libraries costing collectively in the region of over £150,000 are thought not to be unreasonable⁶¹. His gift in most cases consisted of between 300 and 400 books in a standard-sized

bookcase. These were given to villages throughout Scotland, along with outposts such as army barracks and lighthouses⁶² and were often accompanied by extras such as reading glasses or packets of tobacco. Coats' gifts were in addition to the £7000 he gave for an extension to the Paisley Public Library, built by his uncle Peter⁶³.

Civic pride and public need:

By founding or supporting libraries, the philanthropists hoped very much the buildings would appeal and be useful to all members of the town; indeed, many made reference to this in opening speeches. This hope is perhaps especially evident where the library was connected to another amenity such as a town hall or art gallery. Beveridge's views on the need for a public hall and library were recorded in a newspaper article he wrote a year prior to writing his will. He felt the Corn Exchange was unsuitable for the purposes to which it was put and an alternative was required⁶⁴. The final hall was part funded by the subscriptions originally given for the Adam Smith Hall⁶⁵ and partly through Beveridge's gift, with the completed hall being known as the Adam Smith Hall and Beveridge Public Library. Part of the money also went towards the founding of a branch library, called the Beveridge Branch Library. Shepherd at the time of the gift noted that had the library been built during Beveridge's lifetime, he (Beveridge) would have altered his gift to help another cause⁶⁶. This indicates Beveridge was aware of the needs of the city and was ready to respond, whatever they might be, rather than prompted by a definite motivation to provide a library. Paton too included a town hall with his gift and Peter Coats had an art gallery and museum connected to the library. It is perhaps a good indication of the planning that generally went into the buildings that the buildings are still in public use today, although in Beveridge and Paton's cases, the library part has since been rehoused.

Elder some sixteen years previous to the building of the library had laid out the park in which the library stands. The unhealthy working conditions in many industries led to the gifting of parks where workers could exercise⁶⁷. Even at this stage, though, Elder was considering the need for a library, and placed a clause in the deeds allowing for one to be built⁶⁸.

While the locations for James Coats' gifts were, to all appearances, completely random, they tackled the needs of rural communities, something generally overlooked by philanthropists. Rural library provision was not adequately addressed until the Adams report of 1915⁶⁹ and it is unlikely that such a large-scale project would have been undertaken by anyone had Coats not done so. On the whole however the libraries were intended for use by the general public, with schoolhouses often chosen due to their central location in a village or area.

Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox occupies a slightly different position to the rest of the group

in that it would have been very much expected that her family would be supportive of the local community. Her mother had taken a keen interest in libraries and had set up a reading room in Fochabers⁷⁰, with Lady Caroline taking up this interest herself on her mother's death. Although the family were involved in the new library, it was very much 'her' project, with the fund-raising bazaar being instigated at her suggestion.

Maintaining the libraries:

Although the building of a library in an area was celebrated once the libraries had been established, the next issue was their continued maintenance. Elder and Moir took account of this, with Moir indicating the monetary part of his gift was to be used for the purchase of rare or significant books to be added to the original bequest. Of the £27,000 of Elder's gift, £17,000 was earmarked by her for upkeep, an important commitment to the continued working of the library. While Beveridge had left it up to the Burgh of Kirkcaldy to decide upon the apportioning of his bequest and they set aside part of it for upkeep, Perth Council made no such plans for Usher's gift and only a small amount was left after the library had been built and furnished.

James Coats made some effort to maintain his libraries, through sending some new books to them. However, with no financial provision made for them after his death⁷¹, they went largely unmaintained.

Alloa Library (founded by Paton) found the income from tax was insufficient due to both low population numbers and low wages in the area. The number of new titles that could be purchased was minimal, leading to a decline in usage and fears for the library's future. A subscription library was therefore introduced running parallel to the public one for a number of years. Subscribers could enjoy the new titles purchased by their money, which were then made available for public use after a period of twelve months⁷².

Memorials and honours:

The chance to perpetuate one's name for eternity was often promoted as a motivation for people to establish or give generously to a library and the names of six of the individuals in this study are connected to their libraries or collections. Two of them (Mitchell and James Coats) dictated that the libraries bore their name (Coats attached a plate to each book case clearly stating it was a gift from him). Elder, by commemorating her husband also added her own name but she always made it known it was in memory of her husband⁷³. Naming a gifted public building after a husband was very common where women founded libraries, both here and in the United States⁷⁴.

The other three libraries titled after the donor appear to have been named by others.

In contrast to Andrew Carnegie who received many honours bestowed upon him, official recognition of the philanthropists in this study is less high profile. Peter Coats and Usher were knighted with Coats' title a direct result of his bequest⁷⁵. Additionally, there are suggestions that Paton declined being nominated for a knighthood as well as for the new building to be called after him saying, "No...I should never think of such a thing. If the people are benefited I am repaid"⁷⁶. Although Usher and Elder received honorary degrees, this was in response to gifts to the universities involved rather than their library gifts.

Six individuals (Paton, Usher, Elder, Mitchell, Shepherd and Sandeman) have a bust or plaque in their libraries recording their generosity (Elder's bust stands with that of her husband). Statues of Moir, Peter Coats and Elder exist in places other than the libraries, with those of Peter Coats and Elder being full length. The money for Elder's statue came from a public subscription fund started shortly before her death and until 1980 was the only statue of a woman in Glasgow other than Queen Victoria⁷⁷. Elder is also the only woman to be recorded on the memorial gates of Glasgow University⁷⁸ and is further commemorated in a stained glass window in Bute Hall in Glasgow. Beveridge is commemorated in a fountain his wife gifted to the Beveridge Park in 1931⁷⁹.

Two of the individuals though are not commemorated in any way. The nature of James Coats' gifts were such that there was no library building to bear his name or to house a bust. Few of the bookcases still exist and the book collections have generally been broken up and sold off⁸⁰. It appears that no memorial exists in his home town of Paisley either. Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox is also not commemorated in any way despite the family's status⁸¹. It is sad that in these cases neither the libraries nor a monument exists to remind others of their generosity, especially James Coats whose contribution was so widespread.

Philanthropy in the culture of the time:

Philanthropy was an integral part of the culture during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries with a range of organisations aiming to tackle a range of social and moral problems. Indeed, a newspaper article detailing Paton's gift of a gymnasium and public baths to Alloa (his second major gift) noted that "Mr Paton had already discharged...[in giving the library]...his duty to the community as a successful and prosperous townsman"⁸². Books such as Andrew Carnegie's "*The gospel of wealth*"⁸³ emphasised that those who had reaped the economic benefits of the new industries had a moral obligation to support those less fortunate. Additionally, for James Coats, Sandeman, Elder, Beveridge and Moir, with no heirs (and in Sandeman's case no

surviving siblings), there would be no one to inherit their estate upon their deaths. Many of the major philanthropists of the time were childless, and some have proposed this to be the major factor which initiates a philanthropic nature⁸⁴.

A wide range of factors would have influenced the studied philanthropists in their decision to support the libraries. The educational nature of the establishment perhaps may have been in mind, particularly in the latter stages of the Nineteenth Century where the issue of education for all was gaining national support. Some may have had a sense that the building would be well received either through their knowledge of the city and its people to an association with the building itself. Others may have been simply being altruistic in their actions, with no thought of reward or the effect of the gift on their standing in the community. Without that ability to return to the past and understand the full range of society's pressures and expectations, ascribing particular motivations to each individual can only be guessed at, and no firm conclusions can be made.

Conclusion:

Can any broad generalisations therefore be made about the philanthropists in this study? Certainly similarities exist in that eight out of the eleven were employed in industry and all held significant positions of power in their company. This fits neatly with Ditzion's findings in his study of male philanthropists in the United States⁸⁵. Ditzion further proposed that generally philanthropists would have a flair for innovation and often hold a position in a public office. This again matches those in my study as many were involved in public bodies such as school boards or local government. The fact that their businesses were so successful despite the depressions of the time is illustrative of their business flair.

The two women in the study fit with Watson's observations in that lady philanthropists were often long-lived with an interest in the welfare of women and children. This can certainly be applied to Elder, whose passion for the rights of women to have access to higher education and decent maternity care was well renowned. Lady Caroline fits less comfortably with Watson's findings, although this may be due to her position of nobility compared to the mostly untitled women in Watson's study.

The family and private lives of the individuals show less similarity in comparison to each other, with variations in their marital status and number of children. Political views seem to be constant however, as does an involvement with religion (although as noted, religion played a part in society at the time).

The one thing this study has clearly shown though is that to truly understand the lives of the philanthropists involves going beyond the basic biographical details into the wider areas of their

work, family and the social culture of the time in which they lived. The findings of this study provide possibilities for further research, perhaps considering one geographic area in more detail or undertaking a much wider look at those who gave to libraries during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century. The role of philanthropists in the development of rural libraries would be worthy of a study on its own, as would a closer comparison to urban development. Doing this would add to the value of this study, which contributes significantly not only to the history of the individual libraries involved, but also to that of the Public library movement in Scotland as a whole.

Appendix:

Brief biographical information for each of the philanthropists.

Sir Peter Coats.

Born 18th July, 1808, Paisley

Director of J. and P. Coats Thread Mills, Paisley.

James Coats

Born 28th November 1841, Paisley

Senior member of J. and P. Coats Thread Mills, Paisley.

Stephen Mitchell

Born 19th September 1789, Linlithgow

Director of Stephen Mitchell and Son, Tobacco and snuff manufacturer, Glasgow.

James Moir

Born May 1805, Stenhousemuir, Stirlingshire

Owned and ran a tea shop in Glasgow

Sir John Usher

Born 18th January 1828, Edinburgh

Senior partner Andrew Usher and Sons Distillery

James Shepherd

Born 1830?, Elgin

Partner in Nairn and Son Linoleum Company/Shepherd and Beveridge Linoleum Manufacturers, Kirkcaldy.

Michael Beveridge

Born 1836, Kirkcaldy

Partner in Shepherd and Beveridge Linoleum Manufacturers, Kirkcaldy

Isabella Elder

Born 15th March 1828, Glasgow

Wife of John Elder, Shipbuilder.

Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox

Born 12th October 1844, England – exact place unrecorded

Daughter of 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon

Archibald Sandeman

Born 24th July 1822, Perth

Professor of Queen's College and Owen College.

John Thomson Paton

Born 14th July 1831, Alloa

Director of Patons Thread Mills, Alloa

¹ This paper is based on research conducted for an MSc Information and Library Studies at the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. The completed thesis of the same name was submitted by Katrina Sked, under the supervision of Dr Peter Reid.

² B. Whitaker, *The foundations: an anatomy of philanthropy and society* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974).

³ The late Mr James Shepherd, Rossend Castle, *Fifeshire Advertiser* (22 September 1906) 5.

⁴ C.J. McAlpine, *The lady of Claremont House: Isabella Elder, pioneer and philanthropist* (Glendaruel: Argyll, 1997).

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