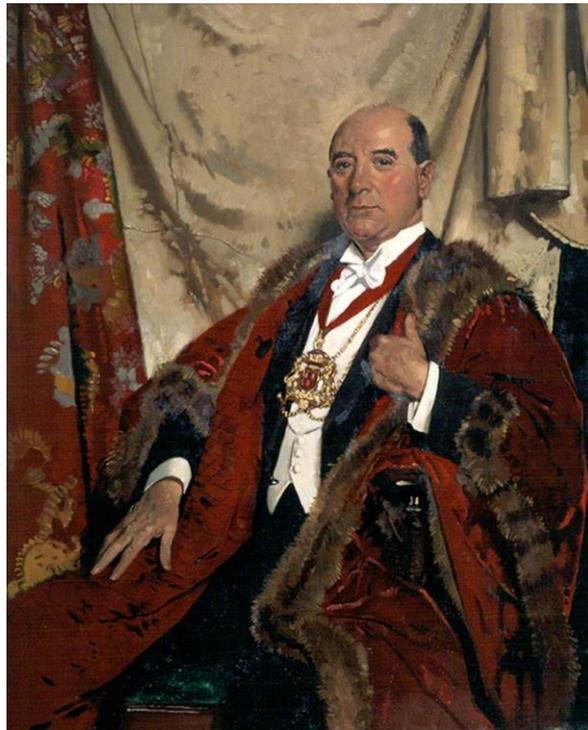


Andrew Lewis

**Lord Provost of Aberdeen - Civic Advocate and Master Fund-Raiser for
the Successful “Joint Hospitals Scheme” Fundraising Campaign**

By Diane May



Sir Andrew Lewis, LLD, Lord Provost of Aberdeen by William Orpen (1878–1931)

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Andrew Lewis, the Lord Provost of Aberdeen from 1925-1929 was a critical figure in the successful development and implementation of the “Joint Hospitals Scheme”. A successful businessman he understood that for the scheme to work the Aberdeen Town Council would need to work in partnership with all the other stakeholders including the hospitals and Aberdeen University. He also understood the importance of creating an inspirational fundraising campaign to engage the public to support the scheme and earned the appreciation of the public for successfully gathering £410,000 in donations in just a two year period to help make the “Joint Hospitals Scheme” a reality. A remarkable man whose

commitment to his native Aberdeen can best be understood through an examination of his life and career in the Granite City.

Andrew Lewis was born in Cove near Aberdeen on the 18th April 1875. He was the son of John Lewis, a wooden boat builder in Cove, and his wife Elizabeth Williams. He was educated at Aberdeen Grammar School before going to work as an apprentice in the family shipbuilding and trawling firm John Lewis & Co.

After the death of his father he took control of the company in 1907 which was renamed John Lewis & Sons Ltd. A talented businessman he built up the business into a successful Marine Engine Production and Repair business in Aberdeen. As part of his commitment to the local shipbuilding and trawling industry he volunteered to serve as harbour commissioner in Aberdeen prior to World War 1 and went on to serve on the Harbour Board for 36 years.

Andrew Lewis also became interested in local government and served on Aberdeen Town Council representing the area of Ferryhill from 1919 until 1929. A popular and capable politician he served as Lord Provost of Aberdeen from 1925 until 1929.

During his time as a local councillor Lewis became an enthusiastic supporter of the "Joint Hospitals Scheme" which had been proposed by Professor Matthew Hay at a meeting of the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society in February 1920. The scheme had foundered since 1920 for a number of political and financial reasons. However, when Andrew Lewis became Lord Provost in 1925, he dedicated himself to the successful implementation of the project.

Lord Provost Lewis, realising the importance of the need for various groups including the hospitals, Aberdeen University and Aberdeen Town Council to work together on the scheme, supported the creation of a conference convened by managers of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to discuss the matter. At a meeting on the 31st January 1927 Provost Lewis, also a Director of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, using his skills as a politician, successfully advocated for the creation of a committee of important participants in the scheme to push forward the plans for the scheme as well as to raise the necessary capital for the project. Provost Lewis himself took on the responsibility for the fundraising part of the plan.

Given that the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital already had undertaken a successful fund raising campaign and that the University of Aberdeen would bear responsibility for raising funds for the Medical School component of the project, Provost Lewis focused the fundraising efforts on raising money for the new Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and new Aberdeen Maternity Hospital. After securing quotes for the cost of building the new Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital from local Architects J.B.

Kelly, as well as supportive running costs for the hospital, he launched a fundraising campaign to collect £400,000 for the project.

The announcement for the initiative was headline news in the local Aberdeen Press and Journal newspaper when it was published on 31st March 1927 and was enthusiastically received by the public. Remarkably, within the short period between the conference and the announcement, Andrew Lewis personally through his own efforts had already secured nearly £200,000 and £100,000 of that was promised by four major benefactors namely Viscount and Viscountess Cowdray of Dunecht respectively, Sir Thomas Jaffray and Mr Robert Williams of Park. The fundraising campaign was hugely successful and popular with the public and exceeded the £400,000 proposed target in just two years.

Lord Provost Lewis was greatly praised for his contribution to the success of the “Joint Hospitals Scheme” and was knighted for his civic work by King George V in 1929. In the same year Aberdeen University acknowledged his work by conferring on him an Honorary degree of LL.D. and he was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Aberdeen.

His contribution to the “Joint Hospitals Scheme” was also acknowledged, along with the contributions of Professor Matthew Hay and the then Provost Edward Watt, by the Duke of York at the opening of the new Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on September 23rd, 1936.

The future King George VI in his speech commended the former Lord Provost Andrew Lewis by saying

“I feel much credit must be given to Sir Andrew Lewis, who as your Lord Provost was so successful in starting a fund and closing it at the magnificent total of £410,000. For this achievement I know that all the citizens of Aberdeen will extend to Sir Andrew their heartfelt gratitude.”

After his time as Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Lewis remained Managing Director of his company and was heavily involved in the business community serving in capacities such as a director of the National Bank of Scotland and Chairman of the Milliom Askam Hematite Company.

He also remained committed to the ship building and trawling industry throughout his life and served in roles such as President of the British Trawlers' Association and Chairman of the Aberdeen Steam Fishing Vessel Owners' Association. Sir Andrew Lewis died at home in Aberdeen on the 2nd February 1952 and fittingly on his death certificate he is recorded as a “Ship Builder”.