

George J Walker

George James Walker, the eldest son of Robert Walker, was born in December 1837. He inherited many of his father's characteristics and qualities and, over his lifetime, probably even surpassed his father in terms of popularity with the local populace around Portlethen. He also inherited his father's business acumen and followed in his footsteps in respect to land valuation, farming, breeding and showing cattle. Like generations of the Walker family before him, he continued to live in the Portlethen area, in his farm houses at Mains of Portlethen or at Hillside House.

George J Walker succeeded his father as a land valuator and with his qualities of industry, perseverance, honesty, integrity, a conciliatory disposition, easiness of access and above all else, sound common sense, his firm of Walker and Duncan, who were renowned as engineers, surveyors and architects became very prosperous and well-known throughout the north of Scotland.

Mr Walker's services as factor were much valued, his factorial assignments including the Earl of Aberdeen's Cromar estate, Ballogie, Midstrath and Balnacraig estate and the Techmuiry estate all in Aberdeenshire; Berryhill, Newtonhill, Gillybrands, Findon, Netherley and Fawsyde estates in Kincardineshire and at one time the

Balnespick and Clune estates in Inverness-shire. He was also land adviser to the Governors of Robert Gordon's College and the Aberdeenshire Educational Trust. His firm of Walker and Duncan had extensive experience of the valuing of estates and farms all over Scotland.

As an agriculturist, Mr Walker was well known in farming circles throughout Scotland, much of that fame due to his connection to the Portlethen herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle and his knowledge of this breed caused his services to be much in demand as a judge around a variety of cattle shows and fairs, including the Highland Society's Show in Edinburgh in 1893.

When the Volunteer movement was in its infancy, Mr Walker took the initiative, along with his father Robert and Captain Ross of Netherley, in the formation of the Portlethen Company of Volunteers, of which he was for some time, captain. Mr Walker was a crack shot with a rifle, and brought great credit to both the company and himself by winning the Queen's Cup at the Aberdeen Wapinschaw in 1871. In addition to local competitions, Mr Walker also represented Scotland in international competitions in the 1860s. He commanded the first volunteer camp in Scotland on the Hill of Clochandichter in June 1869.

Mr Walker proved to be a wonderful benefactor to the people of Banchory Devenick, and, particularly, in

respect to the welfare of the parishioners of the Portlethen district, he took a deep and active interest.

He was chairman of the Parish Council, a member of the School Board, a member of the Church of Scotland and an elder of the Kirk at Portlethen. As well as this he was a generous friend and helper of the congregation and his gifts included communion vessels in 1886, a harmonium in 1889, a new roadway to the church in 1897 and a pipe organ in 1898. Additionally, Mr Walker was also responsible for the design of the Jubilee Hall, the foundation stone of which was laid in 1889.

His interest in the parish and his great services on its behalf were publicly recognised in 1898, when he was presented with an address from the people of Portlethen that was held in the Jubilee Hall. The fact that there were over 800 subscribers, strictly confined to the parish, gives some indication of the popularity of this presentation. It was originally intended that Mr Walker should be presented with a portrait, painted by an eminent artist, but Mr Walker, having heard that such a movement was afoot, gave it to be understood that he would be gratified with a simple expression of goodwill on the part of his friends. This address given to Mr Walker sums up the depth of feeling and the respect held for him by the people of Portlethen.

Mr Walker died in February 1914 and his funeral at Portlethen was attended by upwards of 700 people

The resting place of George J Walker

At

Portlethen Kirkyard

