

Fred's Thread

September 2009

Ernest Gammell

Born in London in 1804, Ernest Gammell was the eighth child and the youngest son of *Lt. General Andrew Gammell and Martha Stageldoir. Unlike his brothers, Ernest did not join the Army when he was of age, but appears, from the start, to have led the life of a gentleman of leisure. This was made possible by the fact that at the age of nineteen, he was presented by his Grandfather, James Gammell (The founder and senior partner of the Greenock Bank), with the Lands and Barony of Portlethen in Kincardineshire, Scotland. Portlethen was an estate of about 850 acres and included the village of Portlethen, situated on the coast between Aberdeen and Stonehaven.

There being no official residence on the estate, Ernest took little interest in the estate other than the income it generated, and lived the whole of his life in England. Elizabeth Gammell, his first wife, died in Chelsea on 8th November 1846. On 12th March 1850 Ernest married for the second time. His bride was Rosa Ann Bertram who was born in Middlesex, the daughter of London Wine Merchant Charles Bertram. There were no children by this marriage and Ernest died in the spring of 1855 at Twyford in Berkshire leaving his entire estate, including the lands of Portlethen, to his wife Rosa.

After Ernest's death, Rosa married for a second time on 20th August 1857 in Hampstead. Her husband was a surgeon by the name of James Taylor (Fell. R.C.S. London.) They had four children – James Ernest, Emily, Bertram and Harcourt who were all born in Wargrave, Berkshire.

Rosa Ann Taylor, Baroness of Portlethen was extremely interested in helping and improving the quality of life for the local people in Portlethen. She gifted to the people of Portlethen, the land on which to build a village hall. Her conditions were simply that the land was not to be used for various noisy, polluting or intoxicating purposes:

“And my said disponees and their foresaids are hereby expressly prohibited from erecting or allowing to be erected on any part of the said piece of ground any tannery, distillery, brewery, slaughter-house, soap work, candle work, glue work, glass work, skin work, dye work, oil work, or any noisy or noxious manufacture of whatever kind”.

Perhaps on a significantly more generous note, Rosa Ann gave over this land for the price of **ONE PENNY** sterling in the name of feuduty at the term of Whitsunday yearly.

The Village Hall was designed by a local man, George J Walker of Hillside House. On 12th August 1889, his wife laid the foundation stone of what is now the Portlethen Jubilee Hall.

*Lt General Andrew Gammell is buried at Westminster Abbey

For more information, please visit **Portlethen Library**
or email Fred at Fred.Stewart@tphs.org.uk