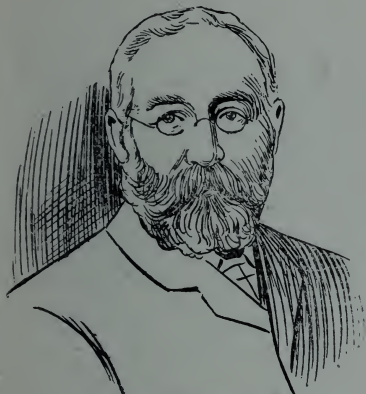


**ROBERT ROBERTSON,  
BLAIRGOWRIE.**



MR R. ROBERTSON.

**OLD TOWN CLERK,  
BANKER, &c.**

## V.

### ROBERT ROBERTSON, BLAIRGOWRIE.

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The subject of the present sketch is a native of Blairgowrie, so was his father, Alexander, and his grandfather, Robert; and from grandfather to grandson—a period of over a century—the family have had much to do with the control of public affairs, and “from precedent to precedent,” with wonderful regularity, have handed on the offices which each has held in turn. Mr Robertson’s grandfather was appointed agent for the Western Bank on 17th August 1832—the first in the town, the Commercial starting within a week afterwards in Brown Street under Mr James Anderson. Alexander Robertson, son of foregoing, was born in 1813, and became joint agent with his father when the Western Bank was incorporated in 1838 with the Bank of Scotland. He was bred to the law, and held the office of Town Clerk for many years, retiring in 1879, and dying in Edinburgh ten years later.

#### THE TOWN CLERKSHIP,

bank agency, legal business, &c., passed on to his son, Mr Robert, who, in fact, had been joint Clerk since 1862. Of the curiously abnormal position which Blairgowrie held with respect to having two municipal bodies—Town Council and Police Commission—in operation since 1876, each independent of the other, and to some extent

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies:

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antagonistic to each other, it is unnecessary to say more here than that the Court of Session in Nov. 1901 decided that the former should give way to the latter, and the closing obsequies took place on 14th December, when the books, &c., were handed over to the new Town Council by Mr Robertson, who had guided the affairs of the old one as Clerk for 40 years. He was born in 1840, and was educated at Blairgowrie, Perth, and Edinburgh. Besides this long spell as Clerk to the Town Council, he acted in a similar capacity for the Police Commission from 1876 till 1893, when he resigned, and has been Clerk to the School Board since its initiation the same year as the former body. From his long family connection with official life, it is only to be expected that Mr Robertson should have many interesting reminiscences to relate. Up till 1873 there were only one Bailie and four Councillors, all elected by the "burgesses," and the "Bailzie o' Blair" was the most important personage by far in the whole district—in his own eyes at any rate.

### THE CANDIDATE

for the coveted honour, however, who wasn't willing to canvass personally and treat liberally hadn't the slightest chance. Burgesses—who required to be feuars and to pay a fee of 15s each—being the only electors, it was the first business of a candidate to negotiate not only all the burgesses likely to vote in his favour, but all the feuars who might be transformed into good, serviceable burgesses! This meant a woful outlay on occasions. Mr Robertson recalls one big contest when over £90 was paid in burgesses' fees—equivalent to 120 new burgesses, all good men and true, most of whom were pledged to particular candidates. It is to be hoped they all voted

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## Robert Robertson, Blairgowrie.

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“straight!” That this did not always happen may be inferred from an incident in which a late Bailie was concerned. He came to the Town Clerk to pay the fee of a certain feuar, and thus get him on the burgess roll. Mr Robertson asked whether he was certain the man was entitled to be put on. “Perfectly certain,” replied the Bailie; “he’s a feuar.” “I am sorry I can’t accept the fee, Bailie,” said the Clerk. “How is that?” “Because,” came the significant reply—“because *some one else has paid it already!*” “What!” exclaimed the Bailie furiously; “then I object to him!” Brown’s Inn was kept busy. On one occasion some one appeared in the Town Hall quite openly with a jar of whisky, and invited “A’ you fellows that voted for Bailie B——” to come there and “get a share o’ what’s gaun!” Of the Bailies themselves amusing stories are told, but the “Green Ladye” demands all the spare room at disposal.

Mr Robertson is a deeply read student of literature and science, and has hobbies various. The Perthshire Society of Natural Science claims him as a member; he is an authority on the flora of the district, is well up in theoretical optics, and possesses an acquaintance with musical statics, ancient modes, and theories of harmony which is wide and accurate. That he can also

### PRODUCE VERSE

of more than ordinary merit is not so generally known; but the fact remains that to Mr Robertson we owe, amongst other things, what is probably the finest bit of ballad-writing ever produced in the district, and which it gives us great pleasure to reproduce here:—

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies:

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### THE GREEN LADYE O' NEWTON.

The ladye Jean sits in her bower,  
Her cheeks are like the snaw,  
She winna work, she canna play,  
Sin' Ronald's gaen awa'.

"Gae bring tae me the crimson silk,  
Gae bring tae me the blue,  
Gae bring my siller-buckled shoon,  
My satyne boddice new.

"An' busk me in my cramasie,  
But an the velvet black,  
My perlins fine an' gowden kame,  
To wile my fause love back."

Up an' spak a grey auld wife,  
Was fourscore years an' mae:—  
"Licht, licht's the luve that can be coft  
Wi' gowd an' buskins gay.

"But an ye be young Ronald's bryde,  
A sair darg ye maun dree,  
For the witchin' claith ye canna buy  
Wi' the red an' white monie.

"Gae cut a bout o' the kirkyard grass,  
An' a branch frae the rowan tree  
That stan's by itsel' on the Gallows Knowe,  
Whar they hang'd the murderers three.

"Gae twist an ell-lang rashy wyth,  
An' tak' them doon alane  
Tae the Coble Pule, 'tween the licht an' the dark,  
An' sit on the Corbie Stane."

She has ta'en a bout o' the kirkyard grass,  
An' a branch frae the rowan tree  
That stan's by itsel' on the Gallows Knowe,  
Whar they hang'd the murderers three.

She has twisted an ell-lang rashy wyth,  
An' sits in her bower alane,  
Wi' her heart in a lowe at the thocht o' her luve,  
An' she waits till the day is gane.

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## Robert Robertson, Blairgowrie.

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An' at nicht she gæd tae the Coble Pule,  
The licht an' the dark atween;  
An' a' that nicht, frae dark tae licht,  
She sat wi' steekit een.

She hadna sat an oor ava,  
Never an oor but ane,  
Whan she heard the win' sough thro' the trees  
Wi' an eerie, eerie grane.

An' next she heard the hoolets' cry  
Within the Saughen Wud,  
An' next the water-kelpies' rout  
Aboon the Ericht's flood.

An' then she heard, just at her lug,  
A gruesome, eldritch lauch;  
An' then a voice cam' up the stream  
Frae oot the Mill o' Haugh:—

“ Warlock Wabsters, ane an a',  
Weave the witchin' claith;  
Warp o' grass an' weft o' rash—  
Weave the wab o' death!”

But aye she sat, an' aye she sat,  
Nor spak' the lang nicht thro'—  
She was deadly cauld, an' her heart was glad  
Whan the early gor-cock crew.

An' at the dawin' o' the day,  
Whan she ope'd her steekit een,  
She was dinket oot frae head tae heel  
In the witchin' claith o' green.

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There's mirth an' daffin' in Newton Ha'—  
The ladye Jean's a bryde;  
She's clad in a gown o' the witchin' claith,  
An' she stan's at Ronald's side.

“ Wae's me for you, my ain true luvie,  
That ever this should be;  
But a mortal cauld is at my heart,  
I fear that I maun dee.

“ An' I hear a soon' I heard afore,  
Whan a' my leafu' lane,  
Thro' the mirk midnight tae the mornin' licht,  
I sat on the Corbie Stane.”

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies.

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They hae ta'en her up tae a chamber hie,  
An' sune she steekit her een;  
They hae streekit her corpse on the brydal bed,  
In her brydal bed o' green.

They hae streekit her oot i' the cauld munelicht,  
An' tae Knockie Hill they hae gane;  
They hae howkit her grave an' happit her doon,  
An' set at her heid a stane.

An' every year at Hallowe'en,  
That stane whan it hears the soon'  
O' the midnight bell frae the Paroch Kirk  
Turns three times roon' an' roon'.

An' the ladye Jean comes oot frae the mools,  
An' doon tae the Newton Ha'—  
Frae sic a sicht on that ghaistly nicht,  
The gude Lord keep us a'!

Mr Robertson was honoured with a public banquet in the Royal Hotel on the 21st March 1902, in recognition of his long connection with the town's affairs.