



Ross-on-Wye Town Council

James Metcalfe



Based on an article in the Ross Gazette, 8 March 1956

James Metcalfe, who could claim to be the “father” of Ross Urban Council, was a councillor for 35 years.

He was born in Burnley, Lancashire, the only son of a proprietor of a butcher’s shop. He married Elizabeth Annie Barter, daughter of W J Barter, whose family brought a fish and fruit business to Ross in the 1840s, when the railway was being built. James entered his father-in-law’s business after marriage. The firm, which took his name moved from High Street to premises in Gloucester Road in 1930.

During the whole time he was in Ross, James Metcalfe was closely connected with the business organisations of the town. He was a founder member of the Ross Traders’ Association in 1909 and was president in 1925 of its successor, the Ross Improvement and Publicity Society which a few years later took on its present name of Ross Chamber of Commerce.

James Metcalfe was chairman of the urban council for two years and headed the poll in the local elections of 1951. He had also been a member of Ross Primary School Managers for many years, and chairman from 1949 to 1952.

In his public and private life, James Metcalfe was a champion and generous helper of those who were not so fortunately placed as the majority. He had been local secretary of the Herefordshire Association for the Blind, a member of the committee of Webbes Almshouses and the British and Foreign School Charity, and a keen supporter of the Red Cross Old People’s Club. When the county council opened an old people’s home at the Chestnuts in 1955, the urban council found James Metcalfe an obvious choice as one of its representatives.

James Metcalfe was devoted to Henry Street Gospel Hall and his religious work included being secretary of the Ross auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society for many years.