



# The Operative Mason Lodge of Dundee No. 47

## Opening of the Baxter Park

At Dundee 9<sup>th</sup> September 1864

This being the day appointed for the formal opening of the magnificent Park gifted to the people of Dundee by Sir David Baxter, Bart of Kilmarnon preparations were made for many weeks previous to its arrival to ensure a demonstration worthily of such an occasion. These preparations were eminently successful and in their results far outshone anything of the kind ever before witnessed in Dundee and it will require an event of no little importance to evoke a similar expression of joy and gratitude.

The „Baxter“ or „Peoples“ Park is situated on the estate of Wester Craigie at the eastern extremity of the town it comprised of about 40 acres for the which the purchase price was £15,000 the whole cost of this princely gift including the cost of pavilion, lodges, planning, laying out &c and a sum of £10,000 invested by the generous donor for maintenance of the park &c was about £45,000.



The preparations for the ceremony as already stated were on the most extensive and magnificent scale. The day was observed as a holiday and at an early hour in the morning strangers commenced to arrive by the trains and every other imaginable mode of conveyance. The whole town was decorated, flags waving in every direction and the street being perfect avenues of evergreens. Triumphal arches were erected at Panmure Street, Cowgate, King Street, Dens Brae, foot of Crescent Lane, top of Wallace Street, Pitkerrow Road, and at Ellengowan Gate, to attempt a description of these would be almost useless, they were almost all of imposing and tasteful designs, being adorned with evergreens and floral devices and all bore suitable mottos and inscriptions, several of them were hung with Chinese lamps and various beautiful transparencies, which when illuminated at night had a very beautiful effect. In addition to these various smaller arches and floral and other decorations of every description lined the route arranged to be taken by the procession.

At the north and south gates of the Park were erected two large and elegant arches, that at the north being a castellated one in the Scottish baronial style, the south one being somewhat similar differing only a little in the detail in order to harmonise with the adjoining Lodge these were decked out with gay flowers and flags and beautified with busts and statues. Innumerable gas brackets and coloured lamps were affixed all over these arches which, when night fell were lighted and produced a most brilliant effect. All along the line of the procession in the park were erected at intervals of twenty or thirty yards, lofty poles covered with evergreens and from these festoons of artificial flowers were suspended across the walks. Fir trees were also planted at distances along each side. The whole of the park was adorned in various ways and an enormous platform was erected in front of the pavilion on which a large number of the principle inhabitants of Dundee & neighbourhood were accommodated.



# The Operative Mason Lodge of Dundee No. 47

The procession was arranged to meet , for the purpose of being marshalled, in the Barrack Park, where various excellent arrangements had been made to facilitate matters. Most of the bodies previous to proceeding there, lunched together, the Freemasons meeting in the Exchange Rooms, Castle Street, R.W.M. Geekie of No. 47 occupied the chair and gave a number of appropriate toasts, having been joined there by many brethren from distances, the Lodge to the number of five hundred brethren proceeded to the Barrack Park. The procession having been marshalled by Mr William Small and assistants left the Barrack Park at 2.15 p.m. in the following order.

Forfar & Kincardine Militia Artillery Band  
Seamen of the Royal Naval Reserve  
Members of Seamen Fraternity & Masters & seaman  
of vessels presently in the harbour  
Broughty Ferry Artillery Band  
Dundee and Broughty Ferry Artillery Volunteers  
Dundee Rifle Volunteer Band  
Dundee Rifle Volunteer Battalion & Highland Company  
Band & Pipers of the Aberdeen Rifle Volunteers  
Carriage containing  
The Earl of Dalhousie, Earl of Camperdown  
and Earl Russell (Secy of State for Foreign Affairs)  
Carriage containing  
Provost Parker and the Town Clerks, the trustees invested with the management of the park,  
The Town Council & members of the Guildry Incorp.  
The Nine Trades of Dundee  
The Three Incorporated Trades of Dundee  
The Chamber of Commerce  
The School Teachers  
Citizens  
Post Office Officials  
Anstruther Rifle Volunteer Band  
Masonic Lodges

No 3 Scone and Perth	Br Thomas Duncan
No 8 Journeymen, Edinburgh	Br James Smith
No. 15 Kilwinning, Montrose	Br James Stobbie (acting)
No. 19 St John's, Cupar, Fife	Br J.C. Orr
No 25, St Andrew's, St Andrew's	Br Jas Paterson (acting)
No. 47, Operative, Dundee	Br John Geekie, Jun
No 49 Ancient	Br James Fyffe
No. 66 St Ninian's, Brechin	Br C Hampton
No 78 St David's, Dundee	Br John Hutton (Dep Master)
No 106 Lindores, Newburgh	Br J. Lawrie
No 121 Auchtermuchty	Br John Muckersie
No 158, Thistle Operative, Dundee	Br Adam Dow
No. 225, Forfar & Kncardine, Dundee	Br James Robertson
No 254, Caledonian, Dundee	Br William Newton
No. 317, Camperdown, Dundee	Br J.D. Wears

Crispin Lodges  
No 2, Montrose Lodge  
No 6, Perth Lodge



## The Operative Mason Lodge of Dundee No. 47

No. 10, Dundee Lodge  
Bonhill Volunteer Band Dumbarton  
Workers at Dens Works (Baxter Bros & Coy) wearing white rosettes  
Hilltown Band  
Workers at Constable Works, crimson and white rosettes  
Arbroath Volunteer Band  
Workers at Bowbridge Works, Blue rosettes with gold centre  
St Andrew's City Band  
Workers at Mr O.G. Miller's Mills, crimson rosettes  
Strathmore Band  
The moulders with white & blue aprons & blue and crimson rosettes  
The Thistle Band  
The Foundrymen, 1<sup>st</sup> detachment  
The Dundee Band  
The Foundrymen 2<sup>nd</sup> detachment, blue and white rosettes  
The Shipwrights, pink and white rosettes  
Three Pipers  
The Shore Porters  
Workers at Rosebank Factory, white ribbons in button holes  
Flute Band  
The Calanderers, pink and blue rosettes  
Lochee Band  
Lochee Union Weavers Lodge, crimson & white aprons and rosettes  
Auchtermuchty Band  
Operative Bakers with white aprons, red nightcaps  
& green and white ribbons  
The Tanners, brown aprons & blue rosettes  
The Curriers, blue aprons & blue rosettes  
The Closers, buff aprons trimmed with red  
The Corkcutters  
The Freegardeners in costume  
Workers at Heathfield Works and Law Mill, blue rosettes  
Workers at Belmont Factory, red, white & blue ribbons  
The Painters, white rosettes

An ornamental van containing a lithographic press kept constantly at work throwing off cards commemorative of the opening of the Park, these were distributed among the crowd. The number of persons composing the procession was estimated at 7500. The Seamen and Volunteers marched four and the other bodies six abreast. Leaving the Barrack Park the procession proceeded by Somerville Place, Constitution Road, Ward Road, North and South Tay Street, Nethergate, Reform Street, Panmure Street, Cowgate, King Street, Princes Street, and Albert Street to the North Gate of the Park. Having arrived there the Seamen and Volunteers halted, opened out, faced inwards, and presented arms to the Lord Lieutenant, whose carriage passed through the ranks, as also did the Trustees of the Park, the Town Council and the Guildry. The North Gate, which before was shut was opened by Sir David Baxter at twenty minutes to four o'clock and the carriage containing the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Russell and the Earl of Camperdown was driven into the front of a small covered platform, where their Lordships alighted, and after saluting Sir David took up their positions alongside him to witness the passing of the procession. The whole body then



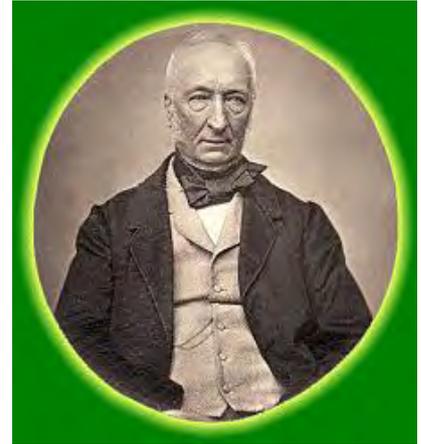
## The Operative Mason Lodge of Dundee No. 47

advanced by the east walk, passing down to the South End of the Park, where it crossed to the west, and marched up to the south side of the grand platform in front of the pavilion and then separated. Along the whole line of the route ever imaginable spot from which a suitable view of the proceedings could be had was occupied. Platforms, some for private and some for public benefit – and erections were put up at every convenient space and windows and balconies were crowded with eager onlookers.

The Earl of Dalhousie, Earl Russell, the Earl of Camperdown and the other distinguished visitors who accompanied Sir David having taken their places on the front part of the platform. A Doxology was sung to the tune of „Old Hundred“ and the Rev Mr Lang offered up a prayer.

Sir David Baxter then addressed the assemblage and concluded by handing the keys and title deeds of the Park to the Earl of Dalhousie as representing the trustees. This was followed by enthusiastic cheering for Sir David and his sisters Misses Eleanor, & Mary Ann Baxter who were associated with him in the gift.

The Earl of Dalhousie then replied on behalf of the Trustees, Mr John Leng, Treasurer and convenor of the committee of subscribers to the handsome marble statue of Sir David Baxter, which had been placed in the pavilion at a cost of £1100, subscribed by 17 subscribers, then read an address to Sir David. Sir David having replied.



Mr W Thoms addressed Mr Steel the sculptor of the statue and Mr Steel having replied Sir David Baxter called for three hearty cheers for our “beloved Queen, wishing her long life and happiness”, these were heartily given.

The Earl of Dalhousie proposed “Long life, health and happiness to Sir David Baxter, and the Misses Baxter, which was enthusiastically responded to.

Sir David Baxter proposed “long life, health and happiness to the Earl of Dalhousie and the trustees” which was also well received.

The Earl of Camperdown called in a short speech, for three cheers, for Earl Russell, which was warmly given, and the noble Earl in an excellent speech returned thanks. The platform proceedings then terminated. During these, salutes were fired at Broughty Castle, Newport and from a battery of new brass guns placed in the Park for the occasion, and the bands played appropriate tunes.

The after part of the day was spent by the crowds who had congregated in the Park in the happiest manner. A number of balloons were let off during the afternoon. It had been arranged that Mr Coxwell the celebrated aeronaut should ascend in his mammoth balloon, unfortunately a strong westerly wind prevailed, which increased to a gale in the evening, a pilot balloon having been sent up, it was at once carried in an easterly direction and was soon above the German Ocean, which proved that it would be madness in Mr Coxwell to attempt the ascent which accordingly did not take place.



## The Operative Mason Lodge of Dundee No. 47

When the shades of evening set in a brilliant display of fireworks & miniature bombardment took place. The arches in the Park and throughout the town were beautifully fully illuminated and every one seemed to enjoy the proceedings, which cannot soon be forgot by those who witnessed them

About 7,000 strangers arrived in town during the day by the railways alone, and vast numbers came in other conveyances.

Before the proceedings of the day commenced Earl Russell was presented with the freedom of the town in the Corn Exchange.

The Operative Lodge as usual had a numerous and respectable turnout at the procession.

The weather during the day was very fine.

(signed) John Geekie, Jun

