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The

CAIRD HALL  
DUNDEE

SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR



● The Old Town Hall, once a familiar landmark to the older generation of Dundonians.

**T**HE Caird Hall of Dundee has reached its Silver Jubilee year.

On 26th October, 1923, the opening ceremony was performed by His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales. Now, on 1st October, 1948, the Jubilee celebrations take the form of a Charities Ball and Cabaret to be held under the auspices of our present civic head, Lord Provost Powrie.

Jubilees are happy times—times for congratulations and gaieties. But they are also occasions upon which we like to look back over past years

Intimation of a gift of £100,000 by Sir James K. Caird, Bart., for the erection of a City Hall and Council Chambers, was made to the citizens of Dundee on 9th April, 1914. Unfortunately, Sir James did not live to see the completion of the building, and now, as we celebrate its Silver Jubilee, we remember the wonderful generosity of Sir James and his sister, Mrs. Marryat. The Caird Hall is a shining memorial to them both . . .

—so let it be on our Caird Hall Jubilee. Let us dwell for a little on our memories of "The Caird," as it is familiarly known, during the past twenty-five years.

First, however, we must go back farther than that to remember the hall's very beginnings.

It was on 9th April, 1914, that the late Sir James K. Caird intimated to the citizens of Dundee his gift of £100,000 for the erection of a City Hall and Council Chambers. This was a gift, even judged by Sir James' own munificent standards, of princely dimensions; was generosity indeed on a right royal scale. And so it has been very befitting, and highly gratifying to the citizens of Dundee, that the Caird Hall has, since its start,

been often honoured by the presence of Royalty.

On 10th July, 1914, Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary laid the foundation stones. This was done in what was at the time considered a very unique and wonderful way. At Sir James Caird's Ashton Works, Hawkhill, Their Majesties, in the presence of Sir James, simply touched electric buttons whereby an ingenious contrivance caused the ponderous stones at Greenmarket, more than a mile away, to shift into place, burying the Memorial Casket underneath.

Then, more than nine years later—the long delay caused by the 1914-18 War—came the opening by the Prince of Wales.

In 1924 our present King and Queen, as Duke and Duchess of York, attended one of the biggest functions ever held in the Caird Hall—the grand Bazaar in aid of the Lord Roberts' Memorial Workshops.

Our city has been honoured by many another Royal visit since then, when the admirable appointments of the Caird Hall enabled us to offer befitting hospitality.

● A view of the Caird Hall and Council Chambers taken from High Street.

For the people of Dundee, too, it is a happy and interesting coincidence that the Jubilee of "The Caird" falls in the same year as Their Majesties' Silver Wedding Anniversary.

Besides these memorable visits from Royalty, the hall holds for us recollections of many most enjoyable entertainments, when we sat entranced, hearing and watching the most gifted and world-famed artistes of the time. To refresh your memories of such delightful evenings, we refer you to the list we give on the back page.

A sad reflection in the midst of our memories is that Sir James Caird did not live to see the opening of the hall.

The upheaval of the 1914-18 war created many unforeseen problems in the construction of the building. It was then that Sir James Caird's



sister, Mrs. Marryat, by a magnificent gift of £75,000, cleared the way for the fulfilment of her brother's wishes.

Sir James Caird and Mrs. Marryat were both wonderful benefactors to Dundee.

Sir James gave £6,000 for the erection of the Maternity Hospital; £24,000 for the Cancer Hospital; £2,400 for a new Out-Patient Department; £5,000 for the Spring Grove Home of Rest for old men; and a sum of £10,000 towards the upkeep of the Sidlaw Sanatorium. In June, 1912, he purchased for £15,000 the Den of Mains and surrounding lands as a pleasure-ground for the public, and a year later he gave an additional £10,000 to complete the great gift of the Caird Park and Golf Course.

Mrs. Marryat provided £20,000 to enable the Directors of the Royal Infirmary to build a new operating theatre, and to her also we owe the gift of Belmont Castle and grounds.

Our indebtedness to them both increases with the years. This is true in particular regarding the Caird Hall. So on this its Silver Jubilee our first duty is to express our deepest gratitude to Sir James K. Caird and Mrs. Marryat.

### THE CAIRD HALL

**A**ND now you will want to know something of the construction

and appointments of the hall.

You have already learned how the first stones were laid. We will now tell you something of the wonderful plan of the huge foundations.

The height and weight of the Hall buildings, the unequal nature of the site, and the nearness to sea level necessitated the use of reinforced concrete piles, and the skeleton of the building, also of reinforced concrete, is carried on these piles. There are sill beams between the heads of the piles carrying the main walls. Many of these piles rest on the walls of the old docks. The concrete pile is, of course, imperishable and immovable, even in the waterlogged ground underlying the site.

The superstructure is entirely carried on a reinforced concrete framework, which supports walls, floors, staircases, balcony, gallery, organ chamber and roof, and this framework has been so arranged that, throughout the whole area of the hall, there are no columns to obstruct vision.

Much of this structural work has been tested up to twice the load it will be required to carry, so that there is no doubt as to the strength of the building.

The main roof is supported on steel trusses of 84 feet span, and the

disposition of these trusses is reflected in the design of the ceiling and walls of the hall interior.

The frontage, well set off by the open City Square, presents a pleasantly dignified and commanding appearance.

There are ten Doric columns in the colonnade, each 4 feet diameter and 32 feet high. The bases of these are of a clever and novel design, so that the progress of crowds is not impeded. The columns are each in seventeen stones, the bases weighing nearly two tons each. The doorways are plain with circled heads filled with stone panelling, the rustication and the shadow cast by the circular recess being in keeping with the colonnade.

The lighting of the colonnade is by lamps in the ceiling, which cast a pleasant glow on the walls behind, and emphasise the outlines of the columns. The yellow stone of the building lends itself well to this effect. From the High Street this has a particularly pleasant appearance, the points of light not being visible, but only the glow behind the columns.

Through the three doorways in the centre of the front is reached the main entrance vestibule, a hall, 60 feet long, 24 feet wide, and 26 feet high, floored with marble and enclosing a handsome marble stair-

way. The ceiling decoration here is noteworthy. There are five coffers with fine moulded cornices, handsomely enriched with modelled work. The capitals to the pilasters are good examples, being based on one of the classical Roman models. The vestibule is lit from the roof with a soft pleasant effect. Special care has been given to the appearance of the ticket boxes, which are of mahogany with enriched mouldings all dull polished.

The corridors are of ample width, and are carried round three sides of the hall. At the four corners of the building are staircases leading to exits, and thus each corridor has a means of exit at both ends. From the north corridor the wide main stairs to the balcony are reached. Adjacent to these upper and lower north corridors are the cloakroom suites, four in all. The floors of the corridors are terazzo, with marble insets and Roman mosaic bands.

The ample corridors form excellent promenading spaces during concert intervals.

In the south wall of the north corridor, facing the central main entrance, is placed the bust of Sir James K. Caird, Bart., LL.D.

The inscription on the bronze record plate is shown on page 8.

The length of time taken in building the hall had at least one satisfac-



● Lord Provost Archibald Powrie, C.B.E., J.P.

tory result. It enabled three Lord Provosts to be directly associated with the scheme. Each of them displayed a keen practical interest in its development under the direction of James Thomson, City Architect.

And so we come into the great hall. The interior is spacious and monumental, but the feature immediately attracting attention is the ceiling,

divided into three great panels or coffers in which are the ventilating grilles, heavily moulded and enriched. Note how the walls reflect the ceiling in that the enriched doorways correspond to the beams in the ceiling, and the panels between the doorways to the ceiling panels. The positions of the doorways are again accentuated by the enriched panels in the balcony front.

The seating accommodation is 3,300. The dimensions of the hall are as follows: length, from facade of organ to back wall, 230 feet; breadth, 82 feet; and height from platform, 50 feet. In view of these dimensions, the natural lighting by clerestory windows is very pleasant and

effective. The artificial lighting is direct. Electroliers are suspended near the ceiling, and in themselves form part of the decorative scheme.

The organ case is another noteworthy feature. The main part of the case is wood, the modelled ornament being in fibrous plaster. All the pipes shown are speaking pipes. In the centre of the case, above the console opening, in the most distinctive position in the hall, is set a

representation of the coat of arms of Dundee.

From behind the platform may be entered the organ chamber, of ample size, wherein is housed what has been described as one of the finest concert organs in the Kingdom.

The platform can accommodate 75 of an orchestra, and, in addition, a choir of 300 voices can be seated in the chorus seats. There are five entrances to the platform from behind, including the central entrance which may or may not be left open. Under the chorus seats is a piano room, reached by removing three of the steps, the piano being placed on the platform with the minimum of handling.

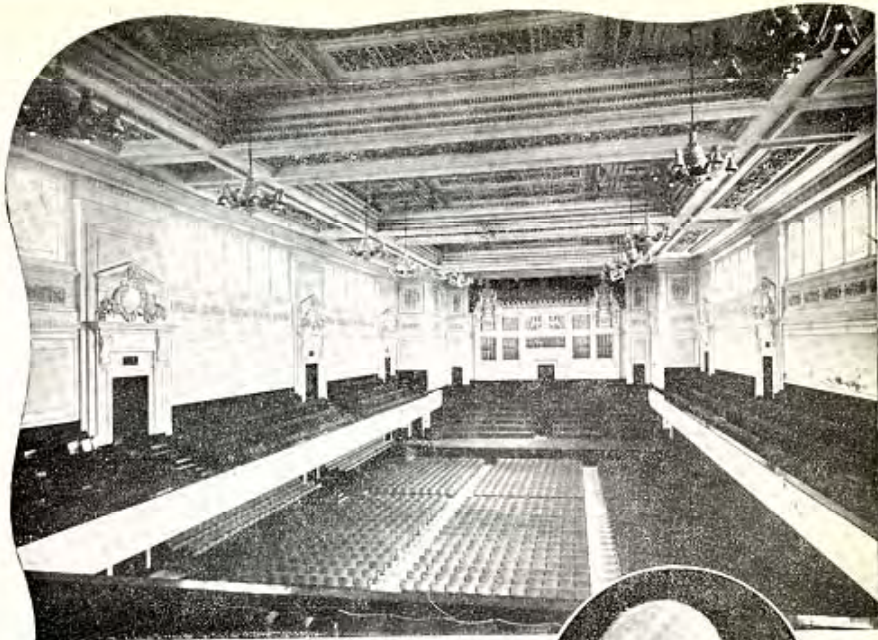
The Caird Hall has admirable arrangements for the convenience and comfort of its artistes. Behind the platform there are two floors of retiring-rooms; on the platform level, an artistes' suite and a platform assembly-room. The suite consists of two dressing-rooms for the principal artistes, entered from a sub-corridor and a parlour where they may meet and rest, and receive their friends after a performance. The



● Lady Provost Powrie.

assembly-room is intended for a platform party, or an orchestra. On the upper floor are two large cloakrooms for chorus, and an assembly-room where the choir may be arranged in order before filing on to the chorus space of the platform. A special corridor and entrance is arranged for artistes.

Perhaps the greatest triumph of the wonderful Caird Hall is that the acoustics are practically perfect.



● A view of the Interior of the Caird Hall.

The following inscription appears below the bust of Sir James Caird, Bart., LL.D.

THE CAIRD HALL  
 was gifted to the Citizens by  
 Sir JAMES K. CAIRD, Bart., LL.D.  
 and his sister  
 Mrs. EMMA GRACE MARRYAT

The foundation stone was laid by  
 KING GEORGE V and QUEEN MARY  
 10th July, 1914

Lord Provost Sir James Urquhart, LL.D

Work carried on during 1914-1920  
 Lord Provost Sir William Don, K.B.E.

THE HALL WAS FORMALLY OPENED  
 on 26th October, 1923 by  
 H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES

Lord Provost Alexander Spence, Lord Lieutenant  
 James Thomson, F.R.I.B.A., Architect  
 Wm. H. Blyth Martin, D.L., Town Clerk



● Sir James K. Caird, Bart., LL.D.

This acoustic clarity is attributed to the hollow walls of the hall, and the sound-absorbing fibrous plaster internal finish in conjunction with the proportion of width to the height of the auditorium.

Another triumph of the hall is its ventilating and heating arrangement,



known as the balanced plenum system.

At the inlet chamber there is a complete series of air filters and washing apparatus, and the filtered air is driven by a large fan with a 20 horse-power motor through the heating battery into the huge metal

ventilation duct in the roof, and into the hall through the ceiling openings. The foul air is extracted through openings in the steps of the balcony and gallery, and in the wall under the balcony ceiling. The side walls of the hall are hollow up to the sills of the windows, and thus a maximum area of foul air upcast shaft is gained. A ring duct under the windows collects the foul air, and it passes through the exhaust fan out to the open. The hall is thus heated by the ventilating air.

Automatic fire detectors are installed all over the building, any fire

● Mrs. Emma Grace Marryat.



● A view of the Interior of the Marryat Hall.



at once causing an alarm at the Fire Station. There is a complete installation of fire hydrants and extincteurs, and in the caretaker's room there is a medical cabinet.

### THE MARRYAT HALL

**F**ROM the west corridor, by the curtained doorways, is entered the Marryat Hall,—“The Mirror Room” as it is sometimes called.

This is an imposing room, 82 feet by 45 feet, decorated in a carefully-designed scheme of the Louis XV or Regency period, with mirrored ends prolonging the room, and so adding to its brilliance. This is used for the City receptions and banquets, and also for private dances and semi-public functions. This hall can be seated for chamber concerts, accommodating an audience of 550. The ventilation is managed by means of inlets under the windows, and outlets through the enriched grills in the ceiling.

Beneath the Marryat Hall is the Lord Provost's Room and the Council Chamber. Both these are splendid examples of the Adam period of decoration, the carpets having been specially designed in that style. Above the Marryat Hall is a kitchen

which, by means of lifts, serves both this lesser hall and the Lord Provost's Room.

It is not possible in such a small booklet to do full justice to the beauty and wonder of the Caird Hall, but here are some other of its contrivances and points of interest:—

There is a bioscope room at the back of the hall, and the screen on a roller lies in a trough under one of the chorus seats in front of the organ. Ropes can be lowered from the ceiling and hooked to the batten of the screen, the whole process of raising taking only a few minutes.

Above the ceiling are winches by which the huge electroliers can be lowered to floor level for cleaning. When in position these electroliers hang by chains as well as by a steel cable, providing absolute safety against accident.

The tip-up chairs in the area are secured in groups of five or six for speedy handling, and the floor can be cleared in six hours. The chair stores are below the platform. A doorway in the platform front can be opened out, and a small light railway laid down, extending farther into the

area as the clearance of the floor proceeds.

The metal ventilation duct in the roof is 10 feet wide by 6 feet high. There are 40,000 rivets in the metal work of this duct.

To the hall itself there are sixteen doorways, eight from the lower corridors into the area, and eight from the upper corridors to the balcony and gallery, and two of the doorways on the lower floor are convenient to the platform.

It is anticipated that at a future time the hall itself will be worthily decorated in colour, and the great panels behind the side balconies and elsewhere will be filled with scenes relating to the history of Dundee. This will greatly enhance the purely architectural value of the interior.

Another plan of the future is the placing of statuary groups on the large pedestals at either end of the colonnade. This will greatly enhance the appearance of the frontage.

In the construction of the hall, Mr. James Thomson, F.R.I.B.A., the Architect, was assisted by Mr. Vernon Con-

stable, A.R.I.B.A., who had general charge of the work including the decoration of the hall; by Mr. James McLellan Brown, A.R.I.B.A., who had charge of the Council suite and public Offices; by Mr. Percy Tomey, engineer for the reinforced concrete work; and by Mr. John Darge, Clerk of Works.

In the first twenty-five years of the existence of the Caird Hall, there have been times of much anxiety and upheaval. Early in its progress towards its Golden Jubilee, may we use its facilities for the enjoyment of the Arts in a more enlightened world!



● A view of the Caird Hall, taken from Shore Terrace.





*Some of the notabilities who have  
visited the Caird Hall, Dundee*

H.M. King George VI (then H.R.H. The Duke of York) -	1924
H.M. Queen Elizabeth (then H.R.H. The Duchess of York) -	1924
The Duke of Windsor (then H.R.H. The Prince of Wales) -	1923
Dame Clara Butt -	1923
Fritz Kreisler -	1923
Sir Thomas Beecham -	1924
Sir Harry Lauder -	1924
J. Ramsay MacDonald -	1924
Lord Roberts -	1924
Sir Henry Wood -	1924
Frank Titterton -	1924
Peter Dawson -	1925
Maggie Teyte -	1925
Neville Chamberlain -	1925
Count John McCormack -	1927
Stanley Baldwin -	1929
Eva Turner -	1932
Paul Robeson -	1934
Sir Adrian Boult -	1935
Richard Tauber -	1935
Geraldo and his Orchestra -	1936
Ambrose -	1938
Rt. Hon. Clement Attlee -	1942
Solomon -	1944
Anne Ziegler -	1944
Webster Booth -	1944
Muir Mathieson -	1945
Albert Sandler -	1945
Rawitz and Landauer -	1946
Grace Moore -	1946
Marjorie Lawrence -	1946
Isador Goodman -	1946
Jose Iturbi -	1947
Reginald Foort -	1948
John Barbirolli -	1948
Sophie Tucker -	1948

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“OLD DUNDEE”  
COLLECTION

THIS COLLECTION, brought together by the late Mr A. C. LAMB, F.S.A. Scot. (died 1897), who devoted many years to the collecting of MSS., BOOKS and PICTURES illustrating the history of Dundee, was acquired in 1901 by EDWARD COX, Esq., M.A., of Cardean, and presented to the Free Library.

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