



GLASGOW 1990 to 2014

Legacy of the city, developing perceptions and brand



Philip Harcourt, Head of Development Consulting, introduces this article by Paul Stallan of RMJM, by explaining how his impressions of Glasgow have changed over the years "As an immigrant to Britain from New Zealand, my early impressions of Scotland

were founded on rugby, Loch Ness monsters, whisky and exported trade unionists. Even after coming to the UK the impression gained from the English was that Scotland was almost as remote as New Zealand, and that Glasgow was too dangerous a place to contemplate visiting.

These impressions were tempered by the knowledge that Glasgow was home to a considerable quantity of art by my great great uncle the pre-Raphaelite Sir John Everett Millais. This in itself led me to Glasgow where I found a city that quietly dispelled all my adolescent notions. A city of friendly people and diverse social and cultural mix; a city in which, over the years, I have been royally entertained, and which has embraced an exciting range of new development alongside old, and where progress is on everyone's agenda. Attending the Waterfront Expo in 2006, which Colliers CRE sponsored, I recognised the Glasgow described by Paul Stallan from RMJM. Our work with Glasgow Clyde Gateway on enhancing the Glasgow waterfront can

only further serve to establish Glasgow not only as destination but as a waterfront destination."

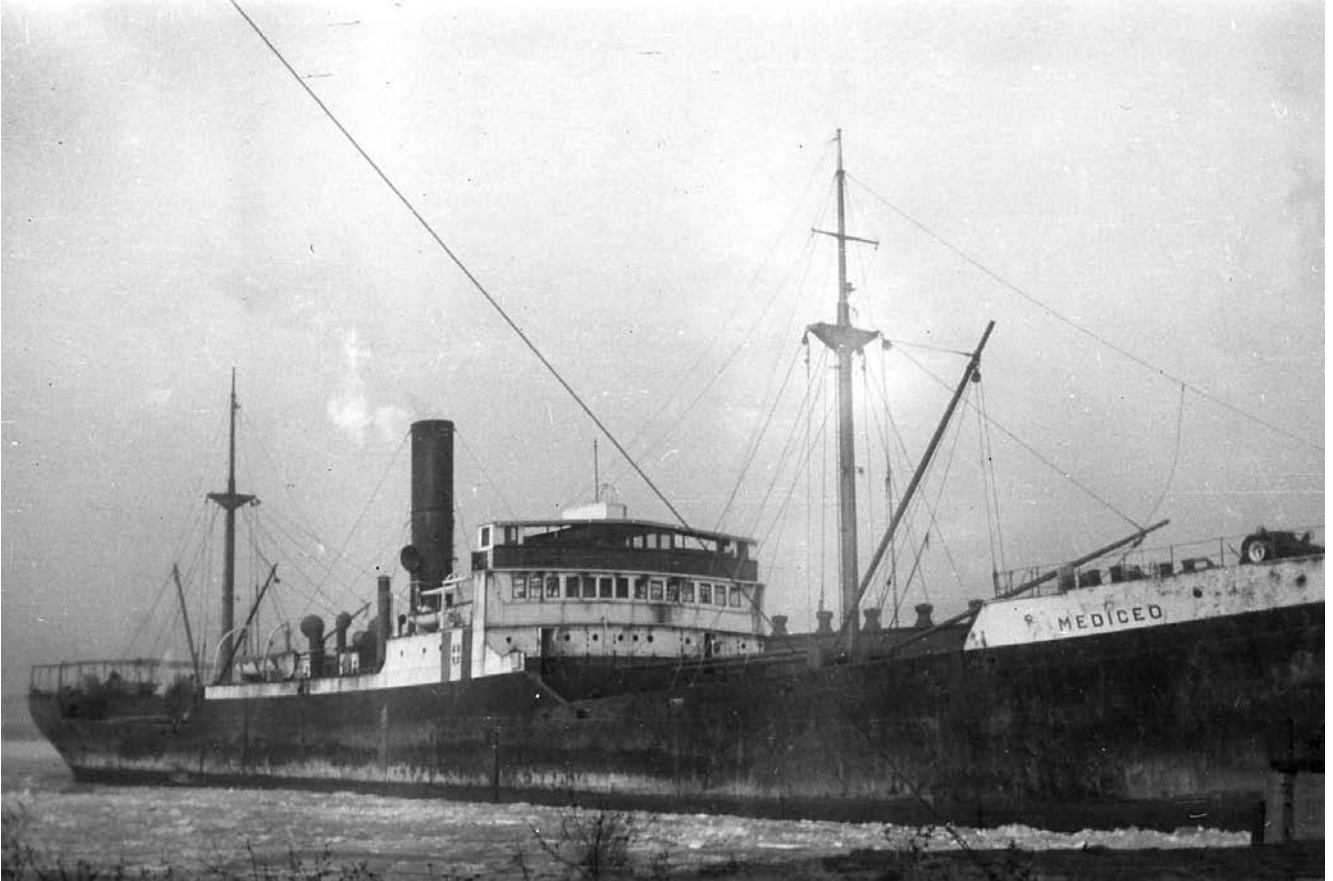
Paul Stallan, European Design Director of RMJM describes how innovative and creative new thinking can attract people and money to places and how the future of Glasgow rests with its people.

Glasgow on an International Stage

Glasgow will host the Commonwealth Games in 2014. This achievement is hugely important for the City of Glasgow and provides a real and positive focus to drive forward large-scale regeneration and attract significant investment. The Commonwealth Games for Glasgow is as important as the Olympic Games are to London in 2012. The question, therefore, is how Glasgow can really capitalise on the forthcoming Games and continue to raise its profile internationally to benefit the local economy? Those of us in the local RMJM Glasgow Office are excited about the city's prospects and the ambitious urban design opportunities that exist to accommodate an expanding population base and robust Scottish economy.

To appreciate fully the opportunities, we first need to look beyond the fanfare of the Games and appreciate the 'Glasgow reality'. We need to consult the ghosts! Like refurbishing a beautiful old house, in this case a beautiful post-industrial city, we need historical context.

Images of Galsgow's rich history



'Rewind' – The British Empire & The Commonwealth

Glasgow the second city of the British Empire was the United Kingdom's 'power house'. Trains, ships, engines and bridges, the tools of the industrialised world, were manufactured along the city's famous river. From the River Clyde's extensive docks large ships exported and imported materials and goods to and from all corners of the world. Glasgow's strategic access to the North Atlantic, coupled with a motivated and organised labour force, ensured the city's massive industrial output at the turn of the nineteenth century was unrivalled.

What, therefore, is the relevance in this historical perspective? Glasgow clearly did in the past what many cities want to do now i.e. 'attract people and money'.



Ghosts of a Bygone Time

Glasgow in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was prosperous for some and consequently the city attracted many people. Some came reluctantly like the many crofters from the North of Scotland who, because of the controversial Highland clearances of the day, were robbed of their land and their livelihood. Many more came in search of work, like the large Irish Catholic population who were encouraged to emigrate to Scotland for the chance of a better life. It was however a hard-working community and conditions were less than ideal for many.

The pace of industrialisation across the world by the middle of the twentieth century meant that many more countries became self-sufficient and less reliant on imports. The glory days of the British Empire waned and Glasgow slipped into serious decline. In a nutshell, Glasgow failed to stay on top of its market and lost significant ground to competing international cities. The challenge for Glasgow in the last 30 to 40 years has been how to arrest the decline!





Urban Struggle

The twentieth century for Glasgow will be remembered as time of struggle. Through two world wars and the trauma of a catastrophic industrial decline, the city wrestled with its future and its place in the world. Glasgow also suffered further in the 1960s from the ravages of an inhumane planning policy and some of the worst social housing projects in Europe. Huge slum clearance programs swept away beautiful Victorian tenements; whole streets and neighbourhoods were gone forever. There were times in the near past when all seemed lost. Thankfully, due to the sheer scale and grandeur of the city's merchant and industrial architecture, many parts of historic Glasgow have not only survived but have been rediscovered for new uses.

Victorian Glasgow is clearly beautiful and increasingly marketed as an attraction internationally. From early art nouveau architecture to the grandeur of the merchant banks and warehouses, the city provides a rich backdrop for the insertion of clever contemporary design and metropolitan living. The city increasingly attracts young professionals and the creative industries and also boasts one of the most successful and progressive visual art scenes in the world.

Beyond Industry

Slowly then, over the last thirty years, the citizens of Glasgow have reinvented not only their physical environment but themselves. The city was 'the poster boy' for all post-industrial cities boasting it had more gangs, more murders, and more crime than anywhere.



The city was undoubtedly violent, a cruel place with few prospects, where Glaswegians enjoyed the 'hype' of being tough. Glasgow perversely plays on its 'bad boy turned good' image, especially for the tourists!

Socially and physically the city is clearly more open and less depressed. Glasgow is no longer angry and guilt-laden. Sure there are still many ghosts and levels of dysfunction but these are now the 'brand building' constituents; this is what differentiates Glasgow, provides character and creates myth.

Glasgow different Edinburgh

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, a small country of 5 million people with a prosperous economy that contributes significantly to the United Kingdom's GDP. Glasgow, seen within the Scottish context, also undoubtedly benefits from an international appreciation of all things Scottish and the fact that Scots are generally as a nation well- liked (even by our immediate friends the English, who especially

like us when they win any game that involves a ball).

It is also worth highlighting that Glasgow is completely different from its sister city Edinburgh, Scotland's other major internationally recognised destination. The differences between the two friendly rival cities are wholly positive providing a fantastic opportunity for each city to promote their own unique experience; Edinburgh is beautiful, Glasgow is not, Edinburgh is boring, Glasgow isn't!

Cultural Development

The UK and Scottish context also benefits Glasgow by providing both economic stability and access to Europe. European relationships are very strong and were imaginatively celebrated when Glasgow won the European City of Culture in 1990, a point in time that marked for many the beginning of Glasgow's renaissance from a hard post-industrial city with no prospects to a fashionable progressive urban centre that went on to win the prestigious accolade as City of Architecture & Design in 1999.

Glasgow Fact Box

- Annual economic output: £13.5 billion and 431,000 jobs
- 22% increase in jobs since 1995
- UK's 2nd most popular destination in terms of comparison spend
- Steady growth in visitor numbers, expenditure and overnight stays in last 20 years
- 2.8 million trips in 2005, with expenditure of £700 million
- 40% increase in hotel beds in the last 6 years

Source: Glasgow City Council, Experian Retail



“ So what type of future can Glasgow have? ”

Glasgow has also continued to strengthen relations with its European neighbours further to the formation of the new Scottish Parliament. Greater political independence has provided an opportunity to promote Scotland much more succinctly as encapsulated by the former Scottish Executive's strap line which proclaimed 'Scotland - the best small country in the world'.

Scotland, a boutique, perfectly formed country with an astonishing history, heritage and culture - and then there's 'Glasgow'!

A Restless Place

To have further confidence in the 'Glasgow brand' and the cultural drivers that propel the City forward, it is crucial to reflect on local people's work ethic, their appetite for betterment and the Glaswegian 'can do' attitude. Glasgow is a restless place that despite having only an immediate population of around 800,000 still manages to have a disproportionate impact and presence globally; in short, Glasgow punches well above its weight!

Take Glasgow's two major football clubs; Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers.

Both these clubs are global phenomena with Glasgow Celtic having the largest fan base in the world, outstripping the likes of Manchester United. It is impossible to imagine Glasgow without football, although there are times when many Glaswegians would wish to!

Economic Stability and the future

For those involved in the 'regeneration game' and interested in investing in the city, it might also provide some comfort to understand that the Greater Glasgow area, like much of Scotland, has never experienced an average downturn in residential property prices, unlike the boom and bang of the London market. Compared with the South of England, the Glasgow market is both slower and more conservative, but has generally proven to be safer and more stable - great for the banks!

But forget all the socio-demographic stuff, the real brand capital that Glasgow has beyond a million other places is its deep rooted heritage, its romance and most importantly its people. It is its people who somehow reflect in their measured optimism

an understanding of the hardship and the struggle of Glasgow's past, but who also possess a pride in achieving and celebrating success.

Glasgow's future will encompass diverse and dynamic communities, where the promises of a good education, rewarding employment and genuine prosperity are all possible!

Paul Stallan

RMJM European Design Director