



ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER CLYDE

GLASGOW OFFERS A BLEND OF FASCINATING MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES, STUNNING ARCHITECTURE, VIBRANT NIGHTLIFE AND A DIVERSE RANGE OF RESTAURANTS AND BARS. [GISELLE WHITEAKER TACKLES SCOTLAND'S LARGEST CITY.](#)



More than a decade ago, I spent Hogmanay in Glasgow. It's immediately apparent that the city has undergone some significant change on this visit. Even Glasgow Central Station looks unfamiliar, after its 2010 expansion. With yellow sunlight filtering through the glass roof, the stunning old building evokes a nostalgic image of the heyday of rail travel, despite its contemporary elements.

Central Station Glasgow was opened in 1879 and the adjacent Grand Central Hotel came shortly after in 1883. Originally designed by Robert Rowand Anderson in Queen Anne style, with its picturesque details, intricate gables and multi-paned windows, the hotel has undergone a multi-million pound restoration, and its plush lobby beckons.

The Grand Central Hotel took its place in history as the venue to which the world's first long-distance television pictures were transmitted on 24 May 1927, by John Logie Baird. The soaring ceilings certainly instill a sense of grandeur as does the Hollywood guest list – Laurel and Hardy, Frank Sinatra and Roy Rogers have all laid their heads here. My friend Darryl and I are soon to join them.

Our corner suite is light and bright and I'm tempted to fill the claw-foot tub with bubble bath and while away the afternoon there, but Glasgow is calling. The winter days are not long enough for us to dally, so we abandon our unpacking and head outside. It's chilly, but the sky is a deep blue and the sun is casting a warm glow over this historic city.

We pause for a moment at the *Citizen Firefighter* statue directly outside the hotel's entrance. The somewhat intimidating bronze

statue stands as a symbol of recognition for firefighters past and present. Leaving our hero to protect the hotel, we following the curves of the station to the large glass-walled bridge nicknamed Hielanman's [Highlandman's] Umbrella.

During the Highland clearances in the 19th century, 30,000 Highlanders came to Glasgow to find work. They often met under the bridge, mostly at weekends. The moniker came from this, paired with the city's inclement weather. Today, underneath the umbrella is a bustling array of shops and bars that could keep any Highlander entertained.

We wander through the city, following whim and fancy with no particular destination in mind. As the sun begins to fade, we find

ourselves at the medieval Glasgow Cathedral. Technically, it's not really a cathedral, but the title is honorific and deservedly so. The history of the cathedral is linked with that of the city, and allegedly it is on the spot where the patron saint of Glasgow, Saint Mungo, built his church. After a circuit of the impressive façade, the final beams of daylight peek past the grey stone spire and we take our leave, ready for a bite to eat and a night of stand-up comedy in lilting Glaswegian accents.

The following morning again dawns bright and sunny. After a generous breakfast at The Grand Central Hotel, we stroll to the banks of the River Clyde. More than 70 bridges crisscross the river from the estuary to its source and our walk of discovery takes us past several. Few are known locally by their proper names. The



Clockwise from bottom left: A room in The Grand Central Hotel; the spectacular facade of The Grand Central Hotel; Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum; the bar at The Grand Central Hotel overlooks the station concourse.



Top: Tempus Restaurant at The Grand Central Hotel.
Middle: The Clyde Arc.
Bottom: Bell's Bridge, leading to the Clyde Auditorium.

The Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow is part of PH Hotels. It is a luxury 4-star hotel which has recently undergone a £20 million refurbishment. For more information see www.thgrandcentralhotel.co.uk or call +44 141 240 3700.

Tradeston pedestrian bridge, an interesting modern construction formed of two angled triangles, is known as the Squiggy Bridge. The Clyde Arc, a curved dome that hints of the Gateway Arch in St Louis, Missouri, is known as the Squinty Bridge, likely due to its angular path across the river. Bell's Bridge, on the other hand, is named for the Bell's & Sons whisky company, who sponsored its construction. It seems fitting that whisky should be linked with the construction of Glasgow.

This section of the river is particularly picturesque. The disused Finnieston Crane, a giant cantilever crane that is retained as a symbol of the city's engineering heritage, looms over the water, just along the bank from the Clyde Auditorium. It's not hard to see why the Auditorium is known as The Armadillo, although its arches were in fact inspired by an interlocking series of ship's hulls, in reference to the Clyde's shipbuilding heritage. The SSE Hydro performance arena nearby looks for all the world like an alien spacecraft, hunkering on a circle of grass. On the opposite bank, the bulbous crescent of the Glasgow Science Centre reflects the sun on its titanium-clad frame and the squat, oblong BBC Scotland building mirrors The Armadillo in a perfect reflection on its windows.

From here, it's a mile's walk to the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, housing one of Europe's great art collections. Before we start, we grab a bite at the KG Café in the Museum's basement. The building is as impressive as the collection, built in a Spanish Baroque style, and following the Glaswegian tradition of using Locharbriggs red sandstone. It is immense, and wandering its 8,000 exhibits takes us all the way to dinner.

In the Tempus Restaurant at The Grand Central Hotel, over heaped bowls of hearty Wild Boar Bolognese, we consider our plans for the evening. Glasgow's nightlife has much to offer, but so does The Grand Central Hotel, and it's the hotel that wins. The end of the evening sees us sipping cocktails at the Tempus Bar overlooking the station concourse, as we plan our next trip to Glasgow. ■

If you're looking for the perfect northern base, let these properties pique your interest.



Waterbeck, Thornbarrow Road, Windermere, LA23 2DG

Waterbeck is a fine example of Arts and Crafts design in the heart of the Lake District and being the major portion of a substantial residence; it remains a significant property in the district with gardens set out by well-known landscape designer Thomas Mawson. Situated at the head of a sweeping drive and created by the renowned architect Dolman in 1914, Waterbeck has retained nearly all of its original designs and features.

Price: £985,000
Email: sales@fineandcountry-lakes.co.uk

Brook Lea, Saves Lane, Ireleth, Askam-in-Furness, LA16 7EH

Brook Lea is a fabulous, Grade II Listed late Georgian family home which has been renovated and enlarged and sits on a generous mature garden plot. A desirable village home in this popular area on the Furness Peninsula, close to the Lake District National Park and the beautiful coastline, Brook Lea's reception space flows across the ground level. Six bedrooms and three bathrooms are on the upper floors. The grounds offer peace in a series of lawns, planted areas, an orchard and a small area of woodland.

Price: £785,000
Email: sales@fineandcountry-lakes.co.uk



Terry Bank, Old Town, Mansergh, Kirkby Lonsdale, Lancashire LA6 2EP

This is a simply stunning, stone-built, period family home; extensively and sympathetically restored to its original splendour, together with a detached converted barn, detached luxury guest suite and approximately 20 acres of gardens, woodland and grazing land. It occupies an elevated position on the outskirts of Kirkby Lonsdale, with expansive, panoramic views of the Howgills.

Price: £1,950,000
Email: sales@fineandcountry-lancaster.co.uk



Orchard Farm, Moor Monkton, York, YO26 8JA

Orchard Farm is a rare property: a traditional Georgian village farmhouse, with a wealth of original features, yet with all the modern luxuries. It sits on the main village street of this sought-after commuter village, within easy reach of York and convenient for Harrogate and the motorway network, and includes 2.2 acres of grounds. The property has been the subject of an extensive programme of modernisation, extension and restoration and is tailor-made for the modern family.

Price: £945,000
Email: york@fineandcountry.com

