Glasgow’s Riverside Museum opens to the public

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The opening ceremony was conducted by Glasgow City Council Leader, Gordon Matheson, who smashed a bottle of champagne on the side of the building as befits the latest launch on the Clyde.

The Riverside Museum houses more than 3,000 exhibits, in over 150 interactive displays telling the stories of the people who made the term ‘Clyde Built’ one which travelled the world and spoke volumes about unbeatable quality. From massive steam locomotives, to the recreation of a city street during the 1900s, the cathedral-like structure provides a stunning backdrop to showcase the innovation and ambition of what was the ‘Second City of the Empire’

The Riverside Museum was designed by Zaha Hadid, arguably the world’s most in-demand architect. The £74million museum is Hadid’s first major public commission to open in the UK. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded £21.6 million, it's largest ever grant in Scotland to the project. Further funding came from Glasgow City Council and the Riverside Museum Appeal. Like all of Glasgow’s 10 civic museums, entry is free.

Outside, The Tall Ship Glenlee is moored in front of the museum’s dramatic south façade, bringing her together, for the very first time, with the city’s unrivalled ship model collection, and creating a dramatic and iconic international destination. The Glenlee is one of only five Clyde-built sailing vessels afloat in the world today and the only one in the UK. The Tall Ship which recently underwent a £1.5m refurbishment also opened to the public on 21 June.

Councillor Gordon Matheson, the Leader of Glasgow City Council, said: “I am delighted to be welcoming people to Glasgow’s latest star attraction. The Riverside Museum is a breathtaking new home for our internationally renowned transport collection. The exhibits inside this magnificent new building have been given a further lease of life thanks to some stunning new displays that not only show off the trains, cars, trams and bikes but also tell the stories of the people who made them, bought them, used them and loved them.

“Having The Tall Ship berthed right outside adds even further incentive to take a visit to enjoy Glasgow’s transport treasures. This project gives Glasgow an iconic new building, a new museum that further highlights the city’s rich heritage and continues our ambition to be at the forefront of the cultural and tourist markets in Britain and a destination that we can all be rightly proud of.”

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: “What we see with Riverside is a new symbol of Glasgow – leading-edge design and technology combine to tell the fascinating story of the city’s heritage to the world.

“The Riverside Museum shares HLF’s passion in preserving our past in a way that makes it appealing for people to explore; surprising and delighting their senses. It is not every day that Scotland opens a brand new world-class museum and this one surpasses all expectations. We are very proud to be a partner in making it happen and look forward to Scotland reaping the benefits of this significant tourist
destination.”

More than 1,200 people have worked on the project, since it was given the initial go-ahead in 2002 and work on-site at the historic Pointhouse Quay, began in 2007. The main contractors, BAM, described the building of the massive, 2,500 tonnes steel roof, without any internal supporting columns, as the most challenging engineering feat in the UK today. An

additional 3,000 people worked on the various construction contracts to build the museum and quayside public realm.

The museum reveals the rich and varied stories of Glasgow's great achievements and vibrant spirit; of technological breakthroughs and heartbreaking tragedies; of local heroes and global giants. Many of these tales are told through audiovisual displays, hands-on interactive and digital touch screens. The displays will be accessible and many are designed to engage children and young people and to give a better experience for disabled visitors.

The museum's major attractions have been designed and built into the structure of the building – with some arriving before the completion of the structure, such is their size. Highlights include, the *Wall of Cars*, the hanging *Bicycle Velodrome*, *South African Locomotive*, *No9 Tank Engine*, *Motorbike Deck*, *Ship Launch Show*, the *Rest and Be Thankful*, and three re-created period streets.

As well as the old, there are more recent star attractions, including Graeme Obree's hand-made bikes which made him a world-champion and the late Colin McRae's Subaru Impreza that he drove to win the World Rally Car Championship. Danny MacAskill became a YouTube sensation after the release of his terrifying video Way Back Home. At the museum, visitors can see the bike made famous through gravity defying stunts and social media.

The Riverside Museum Appeal (RMA) is a charitable trust established to raise £5million in sponsorship and donations from companies, trusts and individuals for the development of the new Riverside Museum. To date, it has raised almost £4.6million, during one of the worst economic downturns in recent memory.

Lord Smith of Kelvin, Chair of the Riverside Museum Appeal Trustees, said: "The Riverside Museum Appeal has received incredible support with over 6000 individual donations helping us past the £4.5m mark. Every one of those donations is commemorated in the Riverside Museum and anyone who comes to visit over the coming months and gives money to the appeal will be recognised. This museum will quickly become one of Scotland's top attractions and I am proud the appeal has played such a key role in its creation."