

No Mean Glasgow

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the story of life in the gorbals a run down slum district of glasgow now mostly demolished but re built in a contemporary style with the hard men and the razor gangs

in his last book the real gorbals story colin macfarlane detailed how he witnessed a once great area home to wonderful characters and grand old buildings disappear before his eyes by the time macfarlane s tenement was knocked down in the early 1970s he had left school and been rehoused in another part of the city in an attempt to extricate himself from his gorbals gang days he took a job as an apprentice chef at one of glasgow s top restaurants where he soon discovered that his colleagues were just as insane as those he had mixed with on the city streets meanwhile macfarlane struggled to integrate into the more affluent area that his family had been moved to and soon found himself returning to his old haunts and back in trouble again in no mean glasgow macfarlane charts his eventful fun packed passage from gorbals street boy to grown man on the brink of a new beginning he describes his adventures with a mixture of humour sadness and delight it is a book for those people living all over the world who remember the old glasgow a city teeming with warmth passion patter and characters who could brighten up even the darkest of days

few cities in the world abound with so many extraordinary stories as glasgow the city has been the silent witness to some of the most significant events of the past century from major triumphs to cataclysmic calamities and the best of these anecdotes are compiled here to form this unique collection amongst the notable events revisited are the launching of the queen mary which captivated the city s inhabitants in 1934 the victorious 16 month work in campaign by the upper clyde

shipbuilders in the early 1970s the ibrox disaster of 1971 and the plague that gripped the gorbals in 1900 some of glasgow s most successful people are also covered including clydeside revolutionary john maclean founder of the barras maggie mciver and the inimitable billy connolly whose humour and colourful personality are synonymous with the city from the battle of george square to the bravery of the glasgow people during the blitz great glasgow stories provides an all encompassing view of the city throughout the eras

includes fascinating stories about billy fullerton leader of the billy boys featured in the latest series of bbc s peaky blinders a new type of criminal is in our midst a dangerous ruthless well armed man who will stick at nothing not even murder he is introducing into this country the gangster methods of chicago and new york trade depression has thrown into unemployment thousands of unskilled youths who have nothing to do but lounge about the street corners of our slums in gangs john bull weekly newspaper 1932 during the 1920s and 1930s glasgow gained an unenviable and enduring notoriety as britain s gang city the scottish chicago now andrew davies author of the acclaimed the gangs of manchester brings to life the reign of terror exerted on glasgow by gangs like the billy boys the kent star the savoy arcadians and the south side stickers out of the most dilapidated and overcrowded tenements in britain stepped young men and women dressed like hollywood gangsters and their molls on the city s streets they took centre stage in dramas of their own making fighting territorial battles laced with religious sectarianism and running protection rackets modelled on those of the american underworld drawing on fifteen years of original research andrew davies provides compelling portraits of legendary figures such as razor king john ross and billy fullerton leader of the billy boys described as the al capone of the city s east end he sheds new light on the way the city s police and judiciary dealt with the gangs and reveals the fascinating role played by the media in creating myths of the underworld during what the daily express described as the war on the gang glasgow s police were led by chief constable percy sillitoe who later became head of m15 determined to maintain the image as a tough gang busting cop he had forged in sheffield during the 1920s this dramatic story played out against the backdrop of the most volatile of britain s cities provides a new window onto the most turbulent period in modern british history and a timely reminder of how deprivation unemployment and religious bigotry are a toxic cocktail in any era

walter norval was a man marked by destiny to be a career criminal in one of britain s hardest cities as a boy he grew up in a world of illegal betting violent canal bank pitch and toss schools sleazy dance halls brothels and bars where the denizens of the slums in the north side of glasgow slaked gargantuan thirsts and plotted murder and mayhem before he had reached his teens close relatives had died as blood was spilled in the streets as a youngster he ran messages for the toughest gangsters in the city and stood guard over the pots of cash in illegal gambling schools it was a remarkable apprenticeship dangerous and sometimes deadly it honed a latent toughness and a talent for lawbreaking that saw him emerge in the seventies as the first of a succession of glasgow godfathers dressed in pinstriped style he controlled his foot soldiers with fearsome fists and planned robberies with the attention to detail of a military general he organised various glasgow fighting factions into a single gang which pulled off a spectacular series of robberies but unlike his successors he abhorred drugs and drug dealing and in a remarkable twist he joined the anti drugs war in later life his story told by the best selling crime historian robert jeffrey provides a fascinating insight into the making of a criminal mastermind from boy to man

in this personal history and celebration of glasgow allan massie uses contemporary accounts to trace the history from its 6th century founding through its victorian heyday and 20th century decline to its current resurgence marked by its selection as the 1990 cultural capital of europe

this work considers how myth collective memory and history interact in the construction of place based identities in the city and how such identities become crucial stakes in determining the future of particular areas neighbourhoods and districts by analysing two case studies of public protest against urban planning projects the author looks at how dominant discourses promoted by urban elites have been challenged by groups with little experience of participating in urban governance

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