

**‘REMEMBERING US YEAR AFTER YEAR’:  
THE GLASGOW CHARITY CUP 1876-1966<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract**

Before the First World War Glasgow was the football capital of the world and also the most extensively municipalized city in Britain. Civic pride and enthusiasm for football came together in the promotion of the Glasgow Charity Cup. First played for in 1875, it was the major charity football competition in Britain for almost 90 years, raising the modern equivalent of nearly £11 million. This article will outline the history of the rise and eventual decline of the Glasgow Charity Cup and examine how the organisation of the competition and the disbursement of its revenues were influenced by developments within football and changes in social welfare.

**Keywords:** charity; entertainment tax; fans; football; Glasgow; philanthropy; professional sport; Scotland; social welfare.

**Resumo**

**‘Lembrando-se de nós ano após ano’: a Glasgow Charity Cup 1876-1966**

Antes da Primeira Guerra Mundial, Glasgow era a capital mundial do futebol, assim com a cidade mais extensamente municipalizada na Grã-Bretanha. Orgulho cívico e entusiasmo pelo futebol andavam juntos na promoção da Glasgow Charity Cup (opa Beneficente de Glasgow). Disputada inicialmente em 1875, foi a maior competição beneficente de futebol na Grã-Bretanha por quase 90 anos, arrecadando o equivalente a quase 11 milhões de libras. Esse artigo pretende traçar a história da ascensão e da queda da Glasgow Charity Cup e examinar como a organização da competição e os destinos de sua arrecadação foram influenciados pelo desenvolvimento do futebol e por mudanças nas conquistas sociais.

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**Palavras-chave:** caridade; impostos de entretenimento; torcedores; futebol; Glasgow; filantropia; esporte profissional; Escócia, bem-estar social.

## Introduction

When Glasgow, the second largest urban area in Britain, held its International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art in 1901, the 11.5 million visitors witnessed the city's triumphs not the abject poverty and deprivation that affected many of its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Its industrial economy, heavily dependent on shipbuilding, engineering and the metal trades, created employment in times of boom but was also subject to significant cyclical slumps, as in 1885 when 70 per cent of the shipyards were idle with consequent adverse effects on related sectors.<sup>3</sup> The hardship was aggravated by the Scottish Poor Law which forbade any assistance to an able-bodied man out of work.<sup>4</sup> The slums of the congested urban tenements meant that tuberculosis, bronchitis and pneumonia were significant causes of death, and sickness was an ever-present threat to life and livelihood.<sup>5</sup> Some of the visitors, however, might have watched a football match arranged as part of the Exhibition festivities, perhaps unaware that their gate-money would be used to aid the sick and needy of the city, something that Glasgow football clubs had been doing for nearly thirty years.

Football was a significant element of the city's popular culture. From the 1870s Glasgow was at the epicentre of football development in Scotland. One historian puts it more strongly: writing in a British, if not an international context, Goldblatt argues that

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<sup>2</sup>. CARLS, K. Glasgow 1901. In: FINDLING, J.E.; KIMBERLEY D.P. (Eds.). *Historical dictionary of world's fairs and expositions, 1851-1988*. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood, 1990, p. 172-173.

<sup>3</sup>. For an overview of the Glasgow economy with specific reference to unemployment see TREBLE, J.H. Skilled sectionalism, unemployment and class in Glasgow. In: FRASER D. (Ed.), *Cities, class and communication*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990, 127-151.

<sup>4</sup>. SMOUT, T.C. Scotland 1850-1950. In: THOMPSON, F.M.L. (Ed.). *The Cambridge social history of Britain 1750-1950*. Volume 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 255.

<sup>5</sup>. For general information on Glasgow's history see MAVER, I. *Glasgow*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. On the Scottish economy see SMOUT. Scotland, p. 209-227.

‘... the new sport of football acquired its leading edge, its most modern expression, in a single city. In the years before the First World War that city was Glasgow.’<sup>6</sup> Both the Scottish Football Association (SFA) and the Scottish Football League (SFL), the two organisations that controlled football in Scotland, had been housed in the city since their foundation in 1873 and 1890 respectively. Glasgow teams dominated the competitions organised by these bodies. On its establishment the SFA immediately inaugurated a national cup contest which was won by a Glasgow side twenty-five times before 1914. Moreover, until 1887 when the SFA prohibited its members from participation, some Glasgow clubs also performed creditably in the English FA Cup, Queen’s Park reaching the final on two occasions in the 1880s and Rangers a semi-final. When the SFL was formed five of the ten constituent clubs hailed from Glasgow; a decade later the League had expanded to eleven clubs, seven of which were Glasgow-based. Between 1890/91 and 1913/14 the league trophy left Glasgow on only three occasions. Success brought support. By 1914 the aggregate capacity of the grounds of the SFL clubs in Glasgow was over 300,000.<sup>7</sup> Hampden Park, owned by Queen’s Park, was the largest stadium in the world and in 1906 hosted a crowd of 121,452 for a Scotland versus England match. Ibrox, home to Rangers, could hold some 75,000 and Celtic Park over 63,000. No other country could match these sports stadia as a trio or any city the number of major soccer clubs within its boundaries. Furthermore, in this, the most densely populated city in Britain, a well developed transport infrastructure, including the municipally-owned tramways, made Glasgow’s football grounds accessible.

Most football matches in Glasgow in the 1870s were friendlies, though a few of these were played for local good causes or to raise funds in the aftermath of a specific

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<sup>6</sup>. GOLDBLATT, D. *The ball is round: a global history of football*. London: Viking, 2006. p. 68.

<sup>7</sup>. GOLDBLATT, *The ball is round*. p. 68.

tragedy or disaster such as a major fire at Bridgeton in 1876.<sup>8</sup> In the latter part of that decade, however, the funding of charity through football was put on a formal, regular basis by the inauguration of the Glasgow Charity Cup, the competition which later featured at the International Exhibition.<sup>9</sup> Three years after its foundation the SFA, confident that it had become ‘a very prominent public institution’ and that the matches held under its auspices had given considerable pleasure to thousands of spectators, felt that it would be ‘a graceful as well as a rightful act ... to close the season with a match for the benefit of some Charitable Institution.’ A game was accordingly played in April 1876 between Glasgow and Dumbartonshire which raised £100 for the Glasgow Western Infirmary.<sup>10</sup> Around the same time a group of Glasgow merchants also organised a charity football contest, but by 1878 the two competitions had merged into one which was run by the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee (GCCC), a joint board of merchants and SFA representatives. Often referred to as the Merchants’ Cup, this Glasgow Charity Cup competition spanned nearly ninety years and raised nearly £350,000 (nearly £11 million in 2008 prices) for good causes.<sup>11</sup>

This article outlines the history of the rise and eventual decline of the Glasgow Charity Cup. Divided into three time periods, it examines how the organisation of the competition and the disbursement of its revenues were influenced by developments within football and changes in social welfare.

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<sup>8</sup>. *Glasgow Evening Times*, 17 March 1877.

<sup>9</sup>. So successful had the competition become that the Exhibition organisers paid £1050 to the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee for the right to host the tournament. *Minutes of GCCC*, 5 April 1901. Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow.

<sup>10</sup>. *Scottish Football Association Annual 1876-77*. Glasgow: SFA, 1877, p. 27, 45. The SFA stated that £200 was handed over to charity and this appears in the [retrospective] official records of the Charity Cup. Where the other £100 came from is unknown.

### **Emerging Patterns in Football and Charity 1876-1914**

By 1914 a pattern had emerged of the competition being held post-season in May, with six competing city-based clubs, four of them playing in a first round with the other two joining at the semi-final stage.

In earlier years, however, the number of clubs and who they were could vary from season to season. In 1885 there were five teams, in 1887 eight, but only four in 1889. The choice of teams was at the discretion of the GCCC and no criteria were published. When SFA cup-winners Vale of Leven queried its non-selection in 1890 it was simply told that those chosen were 'the most suitable'.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the 1880s some leading non-Glasgow teams were invited to participate; probably because they would attract Glasgow spectators keen to see how their own sides would fare against elite opposition. Hibernian from Edinburgh played both in 1887 and 1888. Nearer home there were often places for Renton, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven, successful sides from the west of Scotland. Until the 1891 competition, the first after the establishment of the SFL, clubs used SFA meetings to make recommendations about the composition of the charity tournament, but the GCCC, with merchant representation in the majority and in the chair, remained of independent mind. In 1885, for example, there was a movement by a group of clubs to expand the competition to eight clubs. The SFA went so far as to select the eight from ten nominations, but when one of the omitted clubs protested to the GCCC, the Committee refused to join the debate and opted to have only four clubs.

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<sup>11</sup>. For statistics see the Appendix. The actual date of the first acknowledged game for the Glasgow Charity Cup is unclear and is currently being researched by Dr Joyce Kay of the Department of Sports Studies at the University of Stirling.

<sup>12</sup>. *Minutes of SFA*, 28 March 1890. Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow.

Although a few would occasionally refuse to play on grounds of principle or protest, generally clubs wanted to participate in the Glasgow competition. When the Glasgow Charity Cup was first played for there was only one major competition, the Scottish FA Cup, for the Glasgow clubs to enter. Early defeat in this could render the rest of the season meaningless in terms of trophy aspirations. The Charity Cup, scheduled towards the end of the season, offered an opportunity for a club to finish on a high note. This prospect of redemption from earlier failures still remained even after the inauguration of a Glasgow Cup in 1887 and the SFL three years later. However the league competition did offer regular competitive fixtures and this signalled a change in the balance of power within Scottish football with consequences for the Charity Cup.

In 1891, in protest at the GCCC's refusal to alter match dates, the newly-formed SFL insisted that Celtic, Rangers and Third Lanark drop out of the tournament. Without these leading teams, the Charity Cup, consisting of Airdrieonians, Partick Thistle, and Queen's Park who played Northern in the final, raised only £150. Moreover the League flexed its muscles and organised its own charity competition which brought in £820.<sup>13</sup> A lesson learned, the Committee gave way and next season switched its fixtures to dates after the League season ended, but the SFA Annual General Meeting also passed a rule saying that all matches including charities and friendlies had to have their permission.<sup>14</sup> In turn the League dropped its charity tournament and the official records encompass the revenue from both the 1891 charity cups, though labelling the League contribution

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<sup>13</sup>. *Minutes of SFA*, 24 March 1891, 2 April 1891; ROBINSON, R. *History of Queen's Park F.C. 1867-1917*. Glasgow: Hay Nisbet, 1920, p.181-2; Scottish Sport, 5 April 1892, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>. *Minutes of SFA*, 12 May 1891. Ironically, after the Charity Cup Committee faced reality and switched to more suitable dates for the League teams, Queen's Park, a stalwart of the Charity Cup but a club that refused to join the League for a decade, did not play in the 1893 tournament as it ended its season before League fixtures were complete and hence before the Charity Cup competition began. *Minutes of GCCC*, 18 April 1893.

as coming via a supplementary charity committee.<sup>15</sup> Aware of the drawing power of the leading clubs, the GCCC often capitulated to their demands, though usually after a show of resistance. Hence, at the instigation of the clubs, the Committee approved neutral venues (1894), allowed players SFA-cup tied for other clubs to play in the Charity Cup matches (1902) as well as accepting that clubs could switch match dates by mutual agreement.

The establishment of the SFL had other consequences for the charity competition. Those teams with support from virtual village populations could not compete on a regular basis with the city clubs and their resources; so, after only a few years, out of the SFL went twice cup-winners Renton, seven times cup finalists Vale of Leven, and winners of the first two league titles, Dumbarton. This was reflected in the constituent teams of the Glasgow Charity competition which from 1894, with the occasional exception, became Glasgow-based. Celtic, Queen's Park, Rangers and Third Lanark were a regularly chosen quartet. One variation was in 1902, following the disaster at Ibrox in which 26 fans were killed and over 500 injured when a wooden stand collapsed at a Scotland-England match. An attempt to secure more funds for the relief of victims and their families saw the competition broadened 'under the exceptional circumstances' to include St Mirren and Morton from the west and the Edinburgh duo of Heart of Midlothian and eventual winners Hibernian.<sup>16</sup> The experience of the expanded tournament tempted the organisers to add Hibernian and Hearts to the established foursome, but Hearts could not accept the invitation and they were replaced by St Mirren. The 1904 competition reverted to the traditional four

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<sup>15</sup>. *Athletic News Football Annual* 1894, p.109.

<sup>16</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 17 April 1902.

Glasgow clubs, but expansion became permanent with the addition of Partick Thistle the next year and Clyde in 1907.

One other development in Scottish football that had an impact on the fund-raising activities of the charity cup competition was the authorisation of professionalism in 1893. All the competing clubs – except for Queen’s Park who remained staunchly amateur – immediately began to claim for their players’ wages. Initially the Charity Cup Committee insisted that it only pay ‘an allowance towards expenses’, so Rangers’ claim for £49 was reduced to £34, Celtic’s £38 to £25 though Third Lanark was granted its full £15. However by 1896 contributions towards wages were clearly acknowledged. At times they were a significant proportion of the gate-money as in 1903 when wages of £242 took 29% of the £840 gate.<sup>17</sup> Also possibly indicative of a change in attitude by the clubs was that the Committee yielded to them on the matter of refreshments; four years after a policy of ‘no tea to be given after the game’ was declared in 1896, each finalist was receiving a bottle of whisky, a dozen beer and a dozen minerals.<sup>18</sup> Actual donations from the clubs were rare till the twentieth century. In 1899 Celtic donated £15 from its match expenses though no other professional club followed suit till 1906 when most rebated part of their expenses. By 1910 giving back at least 10% was standard practice. Two years later the Secretary of the Charity Cup Committee wrote to all participating clubs requesting them ‘to consider a reduction in your expenses for this season’s competition’. Whether this embarrassed the clubs is a matter of conjecture but in 1914, when unfavourable weather affected the money raised, neither Rangers nor

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<sup>17</sup>. *Cashbook of GCCC*. Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow.

<sup>18</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 4 June 1895, 5 June 1896, 9 April 1896, 18 April 1900.



Celtic charged expenses and the other professional clubs reduced their charges. All clubs also began to provide their own refreshments.<sup>19</sup>

Before 1914 there were less changes on the charity side than on the football one, though there was a special call for help in 1908 when an industrial slump, the worst since 1870s, saw unemployment rise to over 20%. The GCCC gave £200 to the Glasgow Unemployed Distress Relief Fund and £25 for the same cause in Govan and Partick.<sup>20</sup>

As philanthropy historian Prochaska has noted ‘the charitable are free to choose the objects of their concern and make decisions about them independent of external control.’<sup>21</sup> Most money was dispersed at the discretion of the GCCC though, initially, some was allocated to any non-Glasgow teams in the competition who then distributed it to charities of their own choosing. What charities were selected by the GCCC and how much each received was public knowledge, the details being published annually in the Glasgow press. Unfortunately, however, even the GCCC minutes do not reveal how or why the recipients were chosen. References were occasionally made to a Deed of Assignment (alas untraceable) when some requests were turned down. For example, St Mary’s Catholic Institute in Edinburgh was informed that the Deed made ‘no stipulation for other than charitable’ organisations and these could not be outside ‘Glasgow or the West of Scotland’.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 7 June 1899, 9 June 1905, 8 June 1910; letter 23 March 1912; *Glasgow Evening Times*, 10 June 1914.

<sup>20</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 13 May 1908.

<sup>21</sup>. PROCHASKA, F.K. Philanthropy. In: THOMPSON, F.M.L. (Ed.), *The Cambridge social history of Britain 1750-1950* Volume 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 392.

<sup>22</sup>. *Minutes of SFA*, 13 June 1887.

Who was eligible is to an extent discernable from the actual disbursements. The instigators of Glasgow's charity football matches appear to have had two major groups in mind when they drew up the earliest lists of beneficiaries - hospitals and homes. After the initial SFA donation to the Western Infirmary in 1876, the proceeds of the 1877 match (£130) were settled on the Home for Incurables. At the same time £250 was raised via the Merchants' Cup competition, to be divided between the Western and Royal Infirmaries. The same institutions shared the gate monies in 1878. The following year, the first in which a merged competition took place, saw the number of recipients rise to eight, with the addition of Mr Quarrier's Orphan Homes, Dunoon Seaside Homes ('a boon and a blessing for ... many a weary and suffering one'<sup>23</sup>) and charities representing the deaf and dumb, the blind, and the poor of Alexandria (Dumbartonshire). However, more than half the money raised, £300 from a total of £545, was donated to the Glasgow Unemployed Fund, the matches taking place in spring 1879 during the period of economic crisis following the City of Glasgow Bank collapse.

Thereafter the list of charities expanded rapidly with 19-24 beneficiaries in the period 1880-83, two-thirds of which were hospitals or homes. A further aspect of the early distribution list was its emphasis on women and children, always amongst the poorest and most needy in Victorian society. By 1883 the major city infirmaries had been joined by the Lenzie Convalescent Home (where half of the beds were reserved for the Infirmaries' patients), the Maternity Hospital, the Hospital for Sick Children, the Ophthalmic Institution and the separate Eye Infirmary, the Lock Hospital and the Ear Infirmary. The Home for Deserted Mothers, the House for Infirm and Imbecile

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<sup>23</sup>. AIRD, A., *Glimpses of old Glasgow*. Glasgow: Aird & Coghill, 1894, p.203.

Children, and the Night Asylum for the Houseless were among the ‘houses of shelter’ supported by the GCCC. Other charities to benefit at this time included the Dumbarton Benevolent Society, the Magdalen Institution and the Widows’ Friend Society, which relieved ‘destitute Christian widows in Glasgow.’<sup>24</sup>

While most of these were entirely appropriate, others had a hint of the risqué, or were at best unpopular. The Lock Hospitals, located in several British cities, were said to be ‘unattractive to philanthropists’ as their patients were generally prostitutes and a cure for venereal diseases was viewed as an incentive to immorality. Glasgow’s first Magdalen Asylum was established in 1815 and later merged with a second society to form the Magdalen Institution, for the repression of vice and to provide a temporary home for ‘females who have strayed from the paths of virtue.’ Even maternity or lying-in hospitals were said to be a dubious choice for charitable funds as the morally righteous were concerned that some unmarried women were being admitted. But ignorance on the part of donors allowed the Glasgow Eye Infirmary to be ‘warmly regarded by the subscribing public,’ unaware that some of the eye conditions being treated were the result of venereal diseases.<sup>25</sup>

The amounts donated to those institutions lucky enough to be supported by the Glasgow Charity Cup matches were not large but they were regular. Although the annual donation could be as little as £5-10 (roughly £375-750 in current prices), the fact that it could be relied on was probably helpful. Of the 24 charities listed in 1883, three-quarters were funded until either they or the Cup itself ceased to exist. Eight hospitals received money up to the advent of the National Health Service in 1948; the Magdalen Institution was resourced until its closure in 1959; and the Widows’ Friend Society,

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<sup>24</sup>. AIRD, *Glimpses of old Glasgow* p. 202-207.

Dunoon Seaside Home and the Mission to the Outdoor Blind were still obtaining charitable funds in 1966, the final year of the Charity Cup.

Both the scale and the extent of giving continued to grow throughout the late Victorian era but while donations fluctuated widely from year to year, the number of charities receiving aid moved steadily upwards. The 24 charities of 1883 had become 54 by 1890 and 67 by 1900. They peaked at 80 in 1908 and remained at no lower than 72 for the next thirty years. The stability of the distribution list was such that a printed, rather than a handwritten, roll of recipients was pasted annually into the *Charity Cup Minute Books* from the turn of the century. Medical charities and residential homes continued to dominate. St Andrews Ambulance (from 1884), the Dental Hospital - funded wholly by philanthropic effort - the Samaritan Hospital for Women (from 1889), and the Cancer and Skin Institution (from 1896) were amongst the new beneficiaries, along with refuges and orphanages. The young remained a priority with children's day nurseries, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the 'poor children's dinner tables' - providing one hot meal per day - added to the list. The even quainter sounding Children's Fresh Air Fund and the Foundry Boys Fair Holiday Excursion Fund both had their origins in religious movements, the former set up by the Glasgow United Evangelical Association to take children into the country for a fortnight, the latter an initiative of the Foundry Boys' Religious Society - 'for the religious, educational and social elevation of boys and girls'.<sup>26</sup> The highlight of a year spent in drill classes, religious meetings and musical entertainments was the Fair Week trip to a camp at Inveraray Castle, at a cost per child of five shillings (25 pence). The annual

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<sup>25</sup>. CHECKLAND, O., *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980, p. 185, 192-194, 233-237.

<sup>26</sup>. AIRD, *Glimpses of old Glasgow*, p.199.

contribution from the Glasgow Charity Cup would usually have paid for 20 children to participate.

No discussion of football, charity and Scotland can ignore the sectarian issue. Celtic was founded in 1888 specifically to support local Catholic charities and first played in the Glasgow Charity Cup the following year. Immediately the first overtly Catholic charities – the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Children’s Refuge at Whitevale – were added to the list, amidst a general expansion of recipient charities most of which would have been available to the public generally, irrespective of religion. Another eight Catholic charities joined the list before 1914 including, in 1904, the Roman Catholic Discharged Prisoners Aid Society funded alongside a similar named organisation (less the religious descriptor) which had been in operation since 1856 and in receipt of Charity Cup money from 1900.

Charity matches did not just benefit the recipients of the money raised. Many of the fans who paid to watch the games may have belonged to that half of working-class and artisan families who gave regularly to charity in the 1890s but, as well as helping others, they were also consumers purchasing entertainment.<sup>27</sup> The members of the GCCC who disbursed the funds gained power, publicity and additional status by subscribing to voluntary hospitals and residential charities.<sup>28</sup> And what of the football clubs themselves? As well as gaining a favourable image and the chance to win a trophy, there is also the question of whether charity began at home. Alex Wylie, a trustee of the GCCC from 1889, maintained ‘charity was the noblest object that any young man in the full flush of health could devote himself to, and the players had

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<sup>27</sup>. PROCHASKA, F.K. *Philanthropy*, p. 358.

<sup>28</sup>. BERRIDGE, V. Health and medicine. In: THOMPSON, F.M.L. (Ed.) *The Cambridge social history of Britain 1750-1950* Volume 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.204; PROCHASKA, *Philanthropy*, p. 374.

excelled themselves this year in relieving those whose physical condition was in such a marked contrast to their own'.<sup>29</sup> But was it totally disinterested behaviour? The money donated to hospitals and homes was often used as subscriptions for lines which entitled the GCCC and the participating clubs to nominate persons for beds and for convalescence: and this could and did include footballers.<sup>30</sup> In 1882 a letter had been sent to the Western Infirmary asking what they intended to do in the future as several persons sent by the SFA had not been admitted. Whether these were players is not stated, but, thirty years later, the GCCC lambasted the Victoria Infirmary after two players had to wait several weeks for admission despite their injuries.<sup>31</sup> The incident led to a letter being sent to all three major infirmaries asking 'if you are prepared to facilitate the entrance of an injured football player to your institution'.<sup>32</sup>

Although virtually ignored by the historians of philanthropy, the nineteenth-century charity football match was as innovatory a fund-raiser as the 'charity bazaar, flag day or deed of covenant'.<sup>33</sup> The success of the Glasgow Charity Cup spawned a host of imitators and by the end of the 1880s there were at least nineteen other Scottish charity competitions of note being played.<sup>34</sup> Even more significant was the influence south of the border where major charity cups were inaugurated in London, Sheffield and Birmingham modelled on that of Glasgow.<sup>35</sup> Such competitive charity fixtures provided

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<sup>29</sup>. Press cutting in *Minutes of GCCC*, 13 May 1908.

<sup>30</sup>. Letters to Sir John Primrose 12 June 1913 and to Mr Anderson 12 June 1913. *Letter Book of J.K. McDowall*, Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow.

<sup>31</sup>. *Minutes of SFA*, 5 May 1882; *Minutes of GCCC*, 29 May 1913.

<sup>32</sup>. *Letter Book of J.M. McDowall*, 12 March 1913.

<sup>33</sup>. PROCHASKA. *Philanthropy*, p. 384.

<sup>34</sup>. Calculated from *SFA Annuals*.

<sup>35</sup>. This was certainly the case for the Sheffield and London tournaments and most likely for the Birmingham one given the long relationship between the Football Associations in the two cities. JACKSON, N.L. *Association football* London: George Newnes, 1900, p. 153; SPARLING, R.A. *The romance of the Wednesday 1867-1926*. Sheffield: Leng, 1926, p.49.

a symbiotic relationship between football and charity: the teams gained meaningful fixtures and the charities obtained money.

However the Glasgow competition remained the most successful in terms of attendance and fundraising. This can be attributed to the concentration of elite clubs within the conurbation which made many games local derbies. All these clubs had their coterie of fans who identified not just with their club but also the area of the city that the team represented be it, among others, Rangers from Kinning Park and Ibrox (with sizeable support also in Govan and Hyndland), Third Lanark from Govanhall and the Gorbals, Clyde from Bridgeton and Rutherglen, Partick Thistle from Maryhill, Partick and other areas in the west end, and Celtic from Parkhead and Irish catholic communities in the east end and northern districts.<sup>36</sup> A set of communities looked to their team for entertainment, reinforcement of civic pride, and, of course, defeating local rivals. As shown in the appendix small contributions via the turnstile produced significant sums for distribution to charitable activities

### **Marking Time 1915-1946**

The Scottish FA Cup was not held between 1915 and 1919 and, although the Scottish League continued to function during the First World War, the quality suffered as teams were often depleted by having lost men to the services or to war work at home. However, perhaps because of the non-existence of the national knockout competition, the Glasgow Charity Cup continued to attract good crowds. In the immediate post-war years football boomed. The Scottish FA Cup was resurrected; teams were at full-

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<sup>36</sup>. Queen's Park was a special case because of its unique position in Scottish football and its support spread across the south side beyond the Mount Florida district. Moreover by 1914 both Celtic and Rangers, for a variety of reasons, were drawing fans from across Glasgow. For a view of football in the

strength; and spectators, many of them back from the frontline, thronged to watch the games. In line with other tournaments attendance at Glasgow Charity Cup games soared. Inevitably this fell away but good crowds were maintained for most of the inter-war period. A prime reason for this was the dominance of Rangers who won the league title on all but five occasions. Often by late January their triumph was virtually assured and attendances throughout the league declined as matches became meaningless. Even Celtic and Rangers themselves might muster crowds of only 12,000 for such games. In contrast the Glasgow Charity Cup provided some excitement at the end of an often predictable season. There was always a chance in a knockout tournament that luck or a one-off performance could bring victory to any of the Glasgow teams.

There were no innovations in the structure or composition of the Charity Cup throughout this period. However, in 1937 the GCCC took up an invitation from the Corporation of Glasgow to organise an additional match against a team selected by the Rosebery Charity Cup Committee, its Edinburgh equivalent, as part of a sports carnival to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VIII. They were offered £100 towards their funds but negotiated £250 plus the surplus after expenses, eventually receiving £1487.<sup>37</sup>

Although Glasgow's heavy industries made a major contribution to the war effort, the inflexible structure of the city's economy with too large a proportion of resources in traditional, but declining, activities meant that its workers suffered heavily in the inter-war depression and failed to benefit significantly from the growth of new industries in the 1930s. In 1933 three in every ten of the insured population was unemployed.<sup>38</sup> The economic experience exacerbated social problems, particularly those

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life of the Glasgow working man see MUIR, J.H. *Glasgow in 1901*. Glasgow: William Hodge, 1901, p. 192-3.

<sup>37</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 30 March 1937, 12 April 1937, 31 August 1937.

<sup>38</sup>. MAVER. Glasgow, p. 207.



associated with congested living conditions: in 1935 29% of the city's homes were officially designated as overcrowded.<sup>39</sup> Although the National Insurance Act of 1911 began to offer a basic income during sickness and, for some, during unemployment, even by 1939 less than half the population was covered.<sup>40</sup> As always, immorality, crime and alcoholism were both a result of and a contributory factor to poverty and illness. Hence throughout the inter-war years there was a continued demand for charitable relief towards which the revenues of the Glasgow Charity Cup contributed.

The introduction of an entertainment tax in 1916 gave the GCCC an opportunity to extend their charitable donations.<sup>41</sup> The tax, initially a penny on a sixpence entry fee, had to be collected but was later remitted and the GCCC used the lump sums obtained to endow beds first in the infirmaries and then, during the 1920s and early 1930s, in several residential homes and specialist hospitals. The demand for football appears to have been price inelastic and thus provided a windfall gain to the Committee.

The *Glasgow Evening News* in 1930 claimed 'the task of allocating money to 72 different institutions was by no means an easy one'.<sup>42</sup> The continued use of a printed list suggests that this was not the case and most of the charities which received donations before the First World War continued to do so throughout the inter-war years. The minutes of the GCCC show that fresh applications were rarely entertained and certainly not from various miners' organisations who applied for funds to run soup kitchens during their strike in 1921.<sup>43</sup> Of the 76 charities receiving aid in 1914, 63 continued to be funded in 1936 and 53 in 1946. Newcomers in the inter-war period receiving at least

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<sup>39</sup>. MAVER, I. *No mean city: 1914-1950s: neighbourhoods*. Available at <http://www.theglasgowstory>. Accessed 16 May 2008. See also CHECKLAND, S. *The upas tree: Glasgow 1875-1975*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977, p. 35-40.

<sup>40</sup>. BERRIDGE. *Health and medicine*, p. 229.

<sup>41</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 16 April 1916.

<sup>42</sup>. *Glasgow Evening News*, 14 May 1930.

£25 regularly were the David Elder Infirmary, the Elder Cottage Hospital, the Glasgow Nursing Association, and intermittently the St. Vincent de Paul Country Home. New recipients of regular smaller sums were the Anderston Health Association, the Catholic Nursing Society, Garnethill Girls Refuge, St Charles Institute and St Vincent School, Tollcross. Somewhat ironically when the GCCC opted to revise the list in 1941 and included two new organisations, the Scottish Convalescent Home for Children and the Scottish National Homeopathic Hospital, the cheques to both were returned their premises had been taken over for war purposes.<sup>44</sup>

### **A Brave New World 1947- 1966**

The establishment of the National Health Service in Scotland after the Second World War effectively nationalised the majority of voluntary hospitals and thus undermined the basic donation strategy of the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee.<sup>45</sup> In 1946 52.5% of their funds had gone to hospitals. They thus sought and obtained permission from the SFA to depart from their original charter ‘and be allowed to include in their list of donations such organisations, either local or national, recognised as eligible for exemption from the entertainment tax, whose objects are solely to social welfare or the encouragement of youth.’ The immediate decision was to double the level of donations to extant charities on their list with the balance going to organisations concerned with health and fitness (which they regarded as preventative medicine), institutions associated with the treatment of war wounded, and ‘special cases’.<sup>46</sup> Glasgow Corporation itself took steps to reduce another problem. Almost 50,000

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<sup>43</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 18 May 1921.

<sup>44</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 19 June 1941, 14 April 1942, 5 April 1943.

<sup>45</sup>. BERRIDGE. *Health and medicine*, p.238.

<sup>46</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 25 June 1948, 25 March 1949.

municipal homes were built in the immediate post-war period to ease the pressure of accommodation demand and a clearance programme began in the 1950s to redevelop inner-city Glasgow and relocate much of its population.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, despite a state-funded health service and improved housing, letters to the GCCC appealing for funds demonstrate that even in the world of the welfare state there were new demands for financial assistance. Not many were given it. The minutes from the early 1950s are replete with applications not being entertained and reductions in the amounts given to those on the list. The newcomers that replaced the hospitals of the donations list were the Association for Relief of the Incurables, Bellevue Children's Home, the British Empire Cancer Research (replacing the money going to the Cancer Hospital), the Central Council for Physical Recreation, the Children's Holiday Home, the Children's Welfare Home, the City of Glasgow Society for Social Services, Earl Haig Fund, Erskine Hospital (for ex-servicemen), Glasgow Hospital Auxiliaries Association, Hazlewood Nurses Home, the Playing Fields Association, St John Foundation Hospital, Scottish Convalescent Home for Children, Scottish Physiotherapy Hospital, Scottish Veterans Garden City Association and the YMCA Forces Fund. Many of these were eligible under the old criteria.

Like health and housing, football too changed after the war; but not as quickly. The immediate post-war years witnessed huge crowds at competitive soccer matches including the Glasgow Charity Cup with consequent record donations. Yet inexorably its status as a football tournament declined. The League and Scottish Cup titles had always been the more important with the Glasgow Cup and Charity Cup increasingly being seen as consolation competitions. Both the latter tournaments suffered from the

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<sup>47</sup>. GIBB, A. *Glasgow: the making of a city*. London: Croom Helm, 1983, p.160-168.

late 1950s when the glamour (and financial rewards) of playing in European competitions beckoned and neither of these Glasgow-based cups offered an entry route.

By 1961 the Chairman of the Cup Committee was expressing his disappointment and concern at the almost uninterrupted decline in the annual amounts collected over a period of years. The Committee 'generally agreed that the competition no longer achieved its purpose' and it was agreed to play it one more time only with the winners to retain the trophy.<sup>48</sup> Rangers refused to enter so eventually a Glasgow Select game was played against Manchester United though in October rather than the traditional May. Although Glasgow lost, the city's charities gained as, in real terms, more money was distributed than in any year since 1951. No wonder one recipient thought 'the Committee are to be congratulated on the reorganisation of the competition'.<sup>49</sup> This from a single game rather than a cup competition! Moreover both Scottish Television and the BBC paid for broadcasting rights.<sup>50</sup> The Committee seized on this path to salvation and successive seasons witnessed matches against Manchester United again, followed by Chelsea and Tottenham. Each year however, receipts declined. One reason was the difficulty of getting Rangers and Celtic players to participate and they were the 'backbone of the Glasgow XI'.<sup>51</sup> Risking injury to key players in post-season matches had been a different proposition to asking them to play in October when all Scottish titles were still up for competition.

A nadir was reached in 1966 when, after Liverpool were unable to accept an invitation, the second choice of Leeds United failed to ignite any enthusiasm and only £1,072 was available for distribution, the lowest amount in real terms for ninety years.

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<sup>48</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 3 August 1961.

<sup>49</sup>. W. Martin to W.P.Allen, 24 October 1962. *Letter Books of GCCC*.

<sup>50</sup>. D. Paterson to W.P.Allen 13 July 1962; D. Livingston to W.P. Allen 10 August 1962. *Letter Books of GCCC*.

Donations were reduced to only £16 per organisation. William Martin of the British Sailors' Society was philosophical in his acknowledgement to William P. Allan, Secretary of Glasgow Charity Cup Committee:

'I appreciate your remarks regarding the diminishing of receipts but this is a thing over which we have no control and, as you say, possibly next year's match will help'<sup>52</sup>

But there were no further matches. Manchester United declined an invitation. Arsenal agreed to come but the match was cancelled because of atrocious weather and it proved impossible to secure a fresh date.

In vain the Committee invited Real Madrid, Manchester United and its City rival. Spare dates were hard to find especially when the Committee could not offer any financial guarantees. Until the proposed Arsenal match the visiting team had been paid travel and hotel expenses; its players rewarded with £20 each in money orders or premium bonds (so as not to break the maximum wage rules operating in England); and the club itself offered £1,000 to distribute to its chosen charities. However, in view of the 'disappointing return' from the Leeds match 'it was decided not to undertake any commitment to Arsenal FC and to await the outcome before reaching a conclusion.'<sup>53</sup> Although the London side had been willing to take a chance, others were not.<sup>54</sup>

Even had significant opposition been available, fans were not willing to see them play against a Glasgow side weakened by the withdrawal of Old Firm stars. Suggestions to attract fans ranged from the fanciful of having the Portuguese superstar Eusebio as a guest player, through providing extra entertainment via the US Air Force Band playing before the game and a five-a-side match between Celtic and Rangers at

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<sup>51</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 18 July 1968.

<sup>52</sup>. W. Martin to W.P.Allen, 24 December 1966. *Letter Books of GCCC*.

<sup>53</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 8 December 1967.

half-time, to the desperate resort of securing publicity by inviting the local press to cocktails! In July 1968 the Committee discussed ‘the question of the future of the Glasgow Charity Cup and were unanimous in their concern and apprehension’.<sup>55</sup> This was the last entry in the Minute Book.

## Conclusion

The International Exhibition of 1901 culminated several decades of civic pride, exemplified in Glasgow’s architecture, creative cultural life, unrivalled open space and parkland, and municipalisation, the most extensive in Britain which by 1900 included the city’s water, gas and electricity supplies, the tramways and the telephone system.<sup>56</sup> Set in this context, the development of the Charity Cup competition can be seen as a further example of Glasgow’s pioneering efforts to provide for its citizens: relief for the less fortunate and entertainment for the football fans.

It was a cooperative form of benevolence. It gave merchants and other leading citizens the opportunity to overtly demonstrate their philanthropic role whilst most of the money came from working-class football followers who simultaneously bought entertainment and helped others.<sup>57</sup> Once it had become a permanent feature of the fixture list, withdrawing from the Glasgow Charity Cup does not appear to have been contemplated by the football clubs. There would have been too much loss of image and anyway it was a cheap, convenient and overt way for a club to support charity.

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<sup>54</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 14 February 1967.

<sup>55</sup>. *Minutes of GCCC*, 18 July 1968.

<sup>56</sup>. SMOUT. Scotland, p. 252.

<sup>57</sup>. Prochaska, unaware of the nineteenth-century football matches, sees the charity sports event as a modern continuation of the idea of combining charitable activity with recreation as with the jumble sale, dinners and balls, concerts and Sunday School marches [PROCHASKA. *Philanthropy*, p. 383-384].

**Table One:**

Glasgow Charity Cup and FA Charity Shield: Comparison of Money Distributed to Charity (£)

Period	Glasgow Charity Cup	FA Charity Shield
1909-1914	7885	2564
1915-1919	11750	Not played
1920-1929	46630	7587
1930-1939	37500	8981
1940-1948	41165	Not played
1949-1959	102455	37629
1960-1966	50437	56279

*Source:* Calculated from data in *Minutes of Glasgow Charity Cup Committee* and *Minutes of Football Association*.

The Glasgow tournament was the first major charity cup competition and was ‘for long the most successful, in financial terms, local competition in Britain’.<sup>58</sup> Over its existence the Glasgow Charity Cup raised the modern equivalent of nearly £11 million and when compared specifically with the Football Association Charity Shield in England, as shown in Table One, was a substantially greater fundraiser. One reason for this was that, for most of its life, it was a tournament rather than a one-off game which meant that several matches were played, each contributing to the revenue stream. Yet for almost ninety years the generous football fans of Glasgow were prepared to pay to attend these, perhaps because as well as supporting their teams they were aware that the proceeds went to local charities.<sup>59</sup> Philanthropy implies a redistribution of income but in

<sup>58</sup>. ROBERTSON, F.H.C. *The Glasgow merchants’ charity cup*. Association of Football Statisticians Report No. 25, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup>. Glasgow also had the perpetual rivalry between Celtic and Rangers. In 64% of the years when they were drawn together their tie provided over 40% of the total gate revenue for the tournament. Moreover

the case of the Glasgow Charity Cup it did not mean from the rich to the poor but from football supporters to those receiving aid from institutions selected by the Charity Cup Committee. Many recipients, like the Glasgow Home for Deserted Mothers, which had received aid from 1880, were grateful to the GCCC for ‘remembering us year after year.’<sup>60</sup>

### Appendix: Glasgow Charity Cup Statistics 1875-1966

Season beginning	Matches	Gate Receipts* (£)	Tax Rebate (£)	Donations to Charity (£)	Donations (2007£)	Charities Aided
1875		?		200	14400	
1876		?		380	27360	
1877		?		420	30240	
1878		?		545	40875	9
1879		?		510	39780	23
1880		?		520	39000	23
1881		?		450	34200	19
1882		?		750	56250	23
1883		?		345	26220	24
1884	4?	?		600	46800	34
1885	3?	?		520	42120	40
1886	3?	?		380	31160	?
1887	7?	?		1200	98400	?
1888	7?	?		1050	86100	?
1889	3?	?		1700	137700	?
1890	3?	?		900	72900	?
1891	3?	?		970	77600	?
1892	5	1168		1000	80000	58
1893	4	670		540	43200	58
1894	3	1528		1380	113160	61
1895	3	1169		1000	83000	63
1896	3	1380		1100	91300	65
1897	3	1599		1400	114800	66
1898	3	993		750	61500	66
1899	3	1152		950	76950	68
1900	4	1032		825	63525	69
1901	4	1055		810	61560	68
1902	8	950		550	41800	68

average aggregate gate receipts were 5-9% higher when the two played each other and from 1934 they were 16-19% higher when they met in the final..

<sup>60</sup>. M. Jenkins to W.P. Allen, 18 October 1962. *Letter Books of GCCC*.



1903	6	838		500	38000	67
1904	3	1382		1100	83600	69
1905	5	873		600	45600	70
1906	4	997		830	63080	69
1907	5	1657		1400	105000	70
1908	6	2746		2250	168750	80
1909	5	1850		1500	112500	79
1910	5	1245		1000	74000	77
1911	5	1420		1130	83620	77
1912	5	1600		1305	93960	77
1913	5	1833		1500	108000	77
1914	5	1589		1450	104400	77
1915	5	1519		1450	92800	79
1916	5	2092		2000	108000	79
1917	5	2270	401	2150	92450	79
1918	5	2317	700	2150	75250	76
1919	5	4214	1299	4000	128000	76
1920	5	5742	1628	8000	224000	78
1921	5	5405	1589	6400	198400	77
1922	5	4331	1240	6200	223200	79
1923	5	4022	1138	5100	193800	77
1924	5	2787	781	3950	150100	75
1925	5	3027	541	2830	107540	73
1926	5	3327	599	4400	167200	74
1927	5	2653	493	2500	97500	72
1928	5	3661	698	4500	175500	73
1929	5	2881	528	2750	110000	72
1930	5	3832	715	4950	202950	73
1931	5	4335	811	5200	223600	74
1932	5	2925	581	3800	167200	74
1933	5	2444	485	3135	141075	77
1934	5	2821	560	3250	146250	74
1935	5	2325	460	2650	116600	77
1936	5	3233	594	3655	160820	79
1937	5	2540	469	3150	135450	79
1938	5	3625	667	4110	172620	78
1939	5	3167	576	3600	147600	78
1940	5	1986	356	2250	78750	77
1941	5	2058	593	2520	78120	70
1942	5	2590	745	3200	92800	70
1943	5	3492	1788	5130	143640	77
1944	5	3612	2206	5650	152550	79
1945	6	6428	4081	10210	265460	82
1946	5	8173	1847	9800	245000	83
1947	5	7814	1699	9250	222000	81
1948	5	10754	2251	12700	279400	67
1949	5	10189	808	10600	233200	68
1950	5	12841	1071	13576	285096	66
1951	5	11550	887	11904	226176	65
1952	5	8600	686	8720	156960	65
1953	5	7805	1962	9340	168120	65

1954	5	7124	1833	8560	154080	64
1955	5	?	tax ended	7610	129370	64
1956	5	?		6900	110400	64
1957	5	?		10230	163680	66
1958	5	?		5940	89100	66
1959	5	?		9175	137625	66
1960	5	?		4745	71175	65
1961	1	?		3805	57075	64
1962	1	?		14160	198240	67
1963	1	?		7985	111790	66
1964	1	?		12035	156455	68
1965	1	?		6535	84955	67
1966	1	?		1072	12864	67

Source: Calculated from data in *SFA Annuals*, *Minutes of Scottish Football Association*, *Minutes of Glasgow Charity Cup Committee*, and *Glasgow Charity Cup Committee Cash Book*.

Notes: \* excludes entertainment tax

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