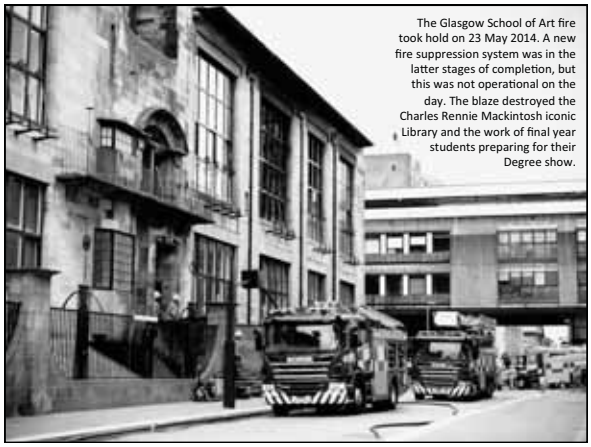
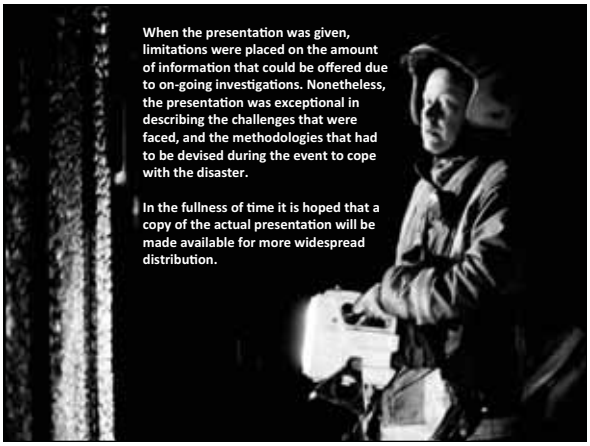
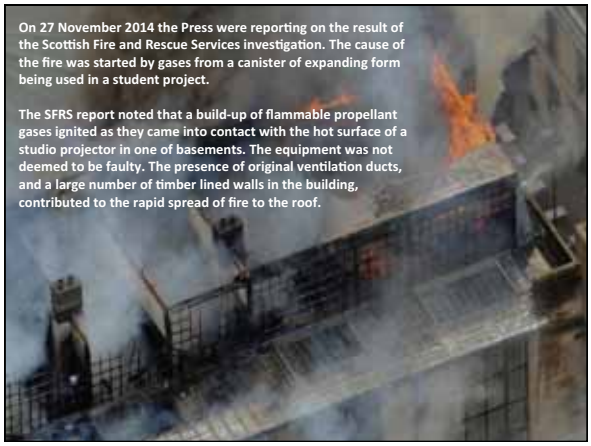
The Glasgow School of Art Fire: Lessons Learn
David Mitchell + Chris McGregor
Historic Scotland


The Glasgow School of Art fire took hold on 23 May 2014. A new fire suppression system was in the latter stages of completion, but this was not operational on the day. The blaze destroyed the Charles Rennie Mackintosh iconic Library and the work of final year students preparing for their Degree show.


When the presentation was given, limitations were placed on the amount of information that could be offered due to on-going investigations. Nonetheless, the presentation was exceptional in describing the challenges that were faced, and the methodologies that had to be devised during the event to cope with the disaster.
In the fullness of time it is hoped that a copy of the actual presentation will be made available for more widespread distribution.


On 27 November 2014 the Press were reporting on the result of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services investigation. The cause of the fire was started by gases from a canister of expanding form being used in a student project.
The SFRS report noted that a build-up of flammable propellant gases ignited as they came into contact with the hot surface of a studio projector in one of basements. The equipment was not deemed to be faulty. The presence of original ventilation ducts, and a large number of timber lined walls in the building, contributed to the rapid spread of fire to the roof.

The fire spread when flames caught foam panelling which formed part of an exhibition piece that was pinned to the wall directly behind the projector. Whilst a member of staff tried to put the fire out with a handheld extinguisher they were forced to evacuate as flames spread throughout the building. The incident occurred despite the Schools' Health and Safety Policy and Guidelines, which indicates that aerosols shouldn't be used in studios.

Progress is being made on plans to restore the building and, as at November 2014, an Appeal Fund has already raised or pledged £12 million.
FIRE
&
RESCUE

ROAD
CLOSED