



What is the Nagasaki Crane?

Built in 1909, the Nagasaki crane stands at a shipyard on the Japanese island of Kyushu. The style of crane was pioneered in Scotland, as shipyards and docks expanded in the early 20th century, finding new ways of working. These cranes are designed to carry heavy loads like ship boilers and engines, from the dockside to ships that are being built or repaired. Though there were several examples of cranes of this kind around the world, the Nagasaki crane is the last of its kind in working use, having been operational for over 100 years.

How was the Nagasaki Crane made?

The Nagasaki crane was designed by the Glasgow Electric Crane and Hoist Company and constructed by the Motherwell Bridge Company. It was built in parts in Scotland, and then shipped to Japan to be put together. The crane can lift around 150 tons, which is roughly the same as 30 adult elephants!

The crane is made of steel which makes it very strong. During World War Two, the United States of America detonated an atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki, though the crane remained undamaged.

How to explore the Nagasaki Crane?

The crane is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and was 3D scanned as part of the Scottish Ten project involving Historic Environment Scotland and Glasgow School of Art.

You can download the free Historic Environment Scotland “Digital Documentation Companion” app from the Apple App Store on iOS devices and the Google Play on Android devices. Use the app to explore a digital model of the Nagasaki crane.

There are other examples of cranes of this kind to be found in Scotland, such as the Finnieston crane in the centre of Glasgow, and the ‘Titan’ crane in Clydebank which is now a heritage centre and museum.

