

Scottish Records Association
Scottish Charities No. 008896

Annual Report of the Council for 2015-2016

Council met three times during the year, and thanks are again due to the National Records of Scotland for the use of their facilities at General Register House, Edinburgh. At the Thirty-Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Association held on 6 November 2015, Miss Sophie Volker stepped down as Treasurer, and Ms Josephine Dixon was elected to succeed her. Dr Maria Castrillo, Lady Coulsfield, Dr Alastair Durie and Dr Jan Merchant retired on completing their terms of office as Ordinary Members of Council, and Mr Robin Urquhart, Mr Keith Adam and Miss Sophie Volker were elected as Ordinary Members. Dr Annie Tindley resigned from Council in July 2016 to take up a new position at Newcastle University. Mrs Olive Geddes, Dr Kirsteen Mulhern and Mr Douglas Roberts will step down from Council on completing their terms of office in November 2016. As intimated last year, Mrs Elizabeth Roads will be retiring as Chairman. The Membership Secretary, Mrs Fiona Musk, has also indicated that she will step down in November 2016.

Membership

The total membership currently stands at 266 (181 individual members, 8 student members, 6 honorary members and 71 institutional members). However, numerous individual and institutional members have yet to pay their renewal fees for 2015-2016, and this has impacted upon the Association's finances. Subscription arrears have not been pursued as vigorously as they might have been over the past year, for which the Membership Secretary offers her full apologies. She is now endeavouring to remind those who have yet to pay their 2015-2016 subscriptions to do so. The Membership Secretary and the Treasurer are also working together to improve procedures for keeping track of institutional members and ensuring that they are paying the correct amount.

Finance

The Association ended the financial year with a balance of £1450.11 in the current account and £5331.52 in the savings account. In 2014-2015, the closing balances were £3,306.84 and £5,329.16 respectively. The steep decline in the Association's finances is partly due to unpaid subscription fees for 2015-2016; these are now being pursued. Gift Aid for both 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 has also yet to be claimed, and this will be followed up in the new financial year. As in previous years, the Association's biggest expenditure was on publications: *Retour* cost £960.61, while *Scottish Archives* volume 20, which featured colour illustrations, was more expensive than usual at £3951.67. Printing will, however, revert to black and white for the next volume. While these measures should go some way towards reversing the decline in the Association's funds, Council is aware that it may ultimately be necessary to increase subscription rates. These have remained unchanged for several years.

Conference

This year's Annual Conference took place at the A.K. Bell Library, Perth, on Friday 6 November 2015. Entitled 'On the Move: Researching Scottish Migrants and Immigrants to Scotland', the conference attracted a large audience, many of whom were attending a Scottish Records Association event for the first time. The programme included presentations from eleven speakers, with the morning session chaired by Dr Billy Kenefick of the University of Dundee and the afternoon session chaired by Steve Connelly of Perth and Kinross Council Archives. Council is indebted to everyone who helped to organise the conference, particularly Kirsteen Mulhern, Robin Urquhart and Stefanie Metze; to the conference chairmen and speakers for their excellent contributions, and to the staff of the A.K. Bell Library for their assistance on the day.

Visits

Members of the Association were again afforded the opportunity to visit four fascinating repositories during the summer months. On 17 June, fourteen members and guests spent the morning at the Fergusson Gallery in Perth, which houses the personal archive of the Scottish Colourist, John Duncan Fergusson, as well as that of his partner, Margaret Morris, pioneer of dance. In the afternoon, the group enjoyed a 'behind-the-scenes' tour

of the collection stores at Perth Museum and Art Gallery. On 12 September, eight members and guests explored the Glasgow Women's Library and its archive collections, followed by a most interesting visit to the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Garnethill Synagogue. Council is grateful to Amy Waugh of the Fergusson Gallery; Mark Simmons and Paul Adair of Perth Museum and Art Gallery; Nicola Maksymuik and Elizabeth O'Brien of the Glasgow Women's Library, and Harvey Kaplan of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre for hosting this year's Summer Visits and for giving so generously of their time and expertise.

Publications

During 2015-2016, the Association's website (www.scottishrecordsassociation.org) was accessed by 7,170 users, 86.3 % of whom were first-time visitors. More than half of all visitors (65.5%) accessed the site from within the UK, while 9.33% did so from the USA. Other visitors viewed the site from Australia, Canada, Brazil, China, Russia, Germany and Japan. The most popular page was the homepage, followed by the pages for *Scottish Archives* and the section for latest news and events. Issues 24 and 25 of *Retour*, the Association's newsletter, appeared in autumn 2015 and spring 2016. Suggestions for a change in layout of the newsletter, now that many members are receiving an electronic copy, will be piloted in autumn 2016. *Scottish Archives* volume 20 was published and distributed to members in February 2016. The illustrations were in colour and the volume included indexes of articles by author and by archive repository and record collection for volumes 11-20. Volume 21 is expected shortly.

Representation on and to outside bodies

The Association continues to represent the interests of its members in the care and custody of records as an Organisational Member of the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA).