

Scottish Records Association
Scottish Charities No. 008896

Annual Report of the Council for 2017-2018

Council met three times during the year and thanks are due to the National Records of Scotland for the use of their facilities at General Register House, Edinburgh. Sadly, the Chairman of Council, Dr Alastair Durie, died on 5 October 2017 following a period of illness. A tribute to him will be published in *Scottish Archives* volume 23. We are indebted to Dr Jan Merchant for serving as Acting Chairman until a successor to Dr Durie, Professor Chris Whatley, was co-opted on 4 September 2018. At the Fortieth Annual General Meeting of the Association held on 10 November 2017, Dr Stefanie Metze stood down as Web Editor and Mr Dawid Palgan was elected to succeed her. Mr Andrew Nicoll resigned as an Ordinary Member of Council on 14 February 2018, and Professor Graeme Morton was co-opted by Council on 20 March to replace him. Mr Keith Adam, Lady Hopetoun, Mrs Ingrid Thomson, Mr Robin Urquhart and Miss Sophie Volker will all retire from Council on completing their terms of office as Ordinary Members in November 2018. The Newsletter Editor, Mrs Alison Diamond, has also indicated her intention to step down in November 2018.

Membership

Membership of the Association currently stands at 204. This comprises 119 full individual members; 7 honorary individual members; 6 student/unwaged individual members; 6 reduced (no journal) members; 2 full overseas individual members; 55 full institutional members, and 9 journal only institutional members. This represents a slight increase on the total membership figure for 2016-2017 (189). As approved by members at the Fortieth Annual General meeting, subscription fees will rise from autumn 2018 for both institutional and individual members. The impact of this will likely not be apparent until next year, but it is hoped that the higher rates will boost the funds of the Association without impacting negatively upon membership numbers.

Finance

The Association ended the financial year with £2,593.61 in the current account and £5,336.84 in the savings account and made a small profit of £711.55, which is an increase on last year's profit of £340.95. However, the increase is largely due to the receipt of retrospective Gift Aid payments from HMRC. Three claims were submitted, amounting to £170.35 for the period 2014-2016, £407.23 for the year 2016-2017, and £307.58 for the year 2017-2018. Going forward, the Association will submit an annual Gift Aid claim in April each year. Council is grateful to all members who have completed Gift Aid declaration forms, thereby allowing the Association to reclaim 0.25p in every £1. We are similarly grateful to members who pay their subscriptions by Standing Order for amending these to reflect the increased subscription rates effective from autumn 2018. The Treasurer has investigated the possibility of enabling members to pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit, but this would involve considerable expense for the Association and is therefore not a valid option.

As in previous years, the Association's biggest expenditure was on publications, with *Scottish Archives* costing £3604.92 and *Retour* costing £297.76. Council remains committed to producing these high quality publications and it is hoped that members will find the expense justified.

Whilst it is pleasing to again be able to report a modest profit this year, it should be remembered that this arises from the retrospective submission of several years' worth of Gift Aid claims. It remains imperative for all members to actively encourage the recruitment of new members to ensure that the Association remains financially viable.

Conference

This year's Annual Conference took place in the Dome Seminar Facility at New Register House, Edinburgh, on 10 November 2017. Entitled 'Putting on the Writs: Scottish Court and Legal Records', the event proved to be very successful, with an appreciative audience enjoying eight presentations on various aspects of Civil and Ecclesiastical Court records, Sheriff and Franchise Court records, and burgh records. Several of the presentations will appear as articles in *Scottish Archives* volume 24. Council is indebted to everyone who helped to organise the conference, particularly Amy Blakeway and Robin Urquhart; to the speakers and chairmen for their excellent contributions, and to the staff of New Register House for their assistance on the day.

Visits

Visits to three different archive repositories were arranged for members of the Association during the summer months. On 22 June, eight members and guests spent the morning exploring Perth and Kinross Council Archive, where they enjoyed an introductory talk from the Archivist, a guided tour of the store, and a specially selected display of maps and plans from the collections. The afternoon was spent at the Royal Scottish Geographical Society's headquarters and Visitor Centre, where the group was again privileged to receive an introductory talk and tour of the facilities, followed by the chance to view a display of records from the archive. On 3 September, eight members and guests visited East Lothian Council Archives within the John Gray Centre, Haddington. Following an introductory talk and tour of the archive, they were treated to lunch and a public talk on 'Haddington Burgh Records in the Time of Mary, Queen of Scots', delivered by Dr Amy Blakeway. Most of the group then took the opportunity to join the Archivists for an excursion to the nearby St Mary's Parish Church. Council is grateful to Ishbel MacKinnon of Perth and Kinross Council Archive; Margaret Wilkes, Jo Woolf, Andrew Cook and Anne McKillop of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, and Fran Woodrow and Ruth Fyfe of East Lothian Council Archives for hosting this year's Summer Visits and for giving so generously of their time, enthusiasm and hospitality.

Publications

During 2017-2018, the Association's website (www.scottishrecordsassociation.org) was viewed 4,604 times. Just over three quarters of visitors were new to the site. Most people accessed the site from within the UK and the USA, but there was also interest from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Since the website was moved onto a new content management system in March 2017, it has been running smoothly and the technical support facility has quickly resolved any minor issues. Issues 28 and 29 of *Retour*, the Association's newsletter, appeared in autumn 2017 and spring 2018. *Scottish Archives* volume 22 was published and distributed to members in February 2018. Volume 23 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).

