



## **Scottish Records Association Annual Report of the Council for 2021-2022**

Following the removal of all Coronavirus restrictions, this year saw the Association resume certain core activities that had been suspended or moved to an online format during the pandemic. Group visits to archive repositories were arranged for members of the Association for the first time since 2019, while our Annual Conference was staged as a hybrid event, with some of the presenters and delegates attending the sessions in person and some participating online via Zoom. Other activities, including the Association's palaeography training sessions and the regular meetings of Council, remained online, with the Council meeting three times via Zoom during the year.

At the Forty-Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Association, held online on 26 November 2021, Ms Keren Guthrie and Ms Marietta Crichton Stuart were elected as Ordinary Members of Council, and Mrs Bridget Cameron (Lady Coulsfield), Ms Ishbel MacKinnon, Professor Graeme Morton and Ms Veronica Schreuder all stepped down from Council, having completed their terms of office as Ordinary Members. Council co-opted two further Ordinary Members, Ms Fiona MacLeod and Mr Phil Astley, during the year. Ms Tracy Smith resigned as Newsletter Editor in April 2022, having made an invaluable contribution to the work of the Association, and we are currently seeking a successor to her. Five Ordinary Members of Council – Dr Iain Hutchison, Dr Douglas Lockhart, Ms Catherine Maxwell Stuart, Dr Ronnie Scott and Mrs Ingrid Thomson – will retire on completing their terms of office in November 2022. The Treasurer, Ms Liz Course, and the Membership Secretary, Mrs Elizabeth Roads, have also indicated their intention to step down in November 2022.

### *Membership*

Membership of the Association currently stands at 192, comprising 110 full individual members; 7 honorary individual members; 8 student/unwaged individual members; 9 reduced (no journal) members; and 58 full institutional members. This represents a modest increase on the total membership figure for 2020-2021 (175). However, it must be noted that a considerable number of individual members are in arrears with their subscriptions, including 10 people who are more than one year behind with payment. All have been reminded on at least two occasions and if there is no response to a further approach their names will be removed from the membership list. This could decrease the number of individual members significantly. It should also be noted that the category of 'unwaged', which Council decided to abolish several years ago, had remained on the membership application form in error, and not all those paying the 'student/unwaged' subscription rate are students. A tactful approach to these members will be required to address this issue. The number of institutional members has increased, largely due to former subscribers re-surfacing. However, nine institutional subscriptions remain unpaid for 2022, and six others remain unpaid for more than one year, despite reminders.

### *Finance*

The Association ended the financial year 2021-2022 with £10,583.65 in the current account and £5,343.39 in the savings account, making a profit of £1,936.85. This is significantly lower than last

year's profit (£2,879.44) due to the expense of hosting the Annual Conference in hybrid format and the decision to set delegates' fees at the low rate of £8 for members and £10 for non-members to boost attendance and encourage new people to join the Association. In addition, no Gift Aid repayment was received this year owing to a delay in submitting the claim. This will be included in next year's accounts. The Association was still able to make a profit thanks to a continued increase in sales of back issues of the journal and to the absence of travel expenditure, all Council meetings having taken place online.

Last year's Annual Report highlighted an outstanding invoice for accommodation and catering costs associated with the 2019 Annual Conference, held in conjunction with the Centre for Scottish Culture (CSC) at the University of Dundee, which had yet to be received and paid by the Association. Despite several approaches to the CSC, the Association has still not received this invoice and the Treasurer continues to pursue the matter.

The 2021-2022 Annual Conference generated an income of £328. Associated expenditure totalled £798.34, most of which (£757.66) was paid to Culture Perth and Kinross for accommodation, catering, and staff charges. Council considers the loss of £470.34 on the conference to be acceptable in view of the overheads involved in hosting a hybrid event and the deliberately low registration fees for delegates.

As in previous years, the Association's biggest outlay was on publications. Production and distribution of *Scottish Archives* volume 27 cost £3,317.73, compared to £3,951.93 for last year's combined volume 25/26. Production and distribution of *Retour* cost £332.20. Sales of back issues of the journal increased by £460.66 this year, generating £1,213.59 overall. As usual, the total income and expenditure figures for the journal include the sum of £250 received from Thomas Tunnock Ltd for the annual Tunnock Prize and awarded to the winner.

### *Conference*

This year's annual conference, held on 18 May 2022, took place simultaneously at the Souter Theatre within the AK Bell Library, Perth and online. The topic was 'Spoken Record: communities and their sound archives', and the presentations explored how personal testimony is used to record the experiences of people who are connected by similarities in their working lives, geographical location, or other 'communities of interest'. Members who attended in Perth expressed themselves happy to return to an in-person event, after the restrictions of the pandemic, but the simultaneous online broadcast allowed people to attend from many parts of the UK and beyond. The Association is indebted to Veronica Schreuder for organising the event and to Ishbel MacKinnon and Sarah Wilcock at Perth and Kinross Archives, and their colleagues at Culture Perth and Kinross, for managing the technical services required for a hybrid event featuring audio recordings. The Association is also grateful to Chris Whatley, Iain Hutchison and Yvonne McFadden for chairing the sessions and to the speakers for their lively and informative contributions.

### *Visits*

After a two-year hiatus, the Association's visits to archive repositories around Scotland resumed this summer. On 14 June, a group of five members and guests of the Association spent the day at the Edinburgh Academy Archive, where they enjoyed an illustrated talk on the history of the school from the Honorary Archivist, Andrew McMillan, followed by an opportunity to explore the Archive rooms and browse a display of items from the collections. The event culminated with a guided tour of the Senior School Campus. On 31 August, 10 members and guests visited the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum and Archive at Stirling Castle, where the Curator, Rod

McKenzie, explained the history of the regiment and outlined some of his ongoing projects before showing the group around the Archive and highlighting some of its treasures. The remainder of the afternoon was spent exploring the Museum and the Castle. We are grateful to Andrew McMillan, Samantha Byers and Guy Cartwright of the Edinburgh Academy, and to Rod McKenzie and Harvey Carruthers of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum and Archive for hosting this year's Summer Visits and for giving so generously of their time, expertise and hospitality.

#### *Palaeography Training Sessions*

The Association holds occasional palaeography training sessions for small groups, which can be delivered either on-site or online. Between November 2021 and February 2022, the Association ran a total of six free online sessions comprising four beginners' palaeography workshops and two more advanced workshops based on private household records, which were attended by a mixture of individual researchers, archive staff and volunteers in archives. The Association is grateful to Alison Diamond, Ingrid Thomson and Robert Urquhart for leading the sessions and to Highland Council Archives and Argyll Estate Archives for hosting them online. Both the introductory and the advanced workshops will be offered again this winter.

#### *Publications*

During 2021-2022, the Association's website ([www.scottishrecordsassociation.org](http://www.scottishrecordsassociation.org)) was viewed 6,842 times, which is a slight increase on the 2020-2021 figure of 6,763 visits. Like last year, most visitors accessed the site from within the UK, but there was also some interest from the USA, Canada and Australia. Articles from *Scottish Archives* volume 25/26 were published on the website and made available to all visitors. The winner of the Tunnock Prize 2021 was announced on the website and details of the Tunnock Prize competition for 2022 were also made available to potential entrants.

At the beginning of 2022, a new digital leaflet was produced for the Association, based on the updated website design that was introduced in 2020-2021. The leaflet was distributed to conference delegates and will be used to publicise the Association going forward.

Issues 36 and 37 of *Retour*, the Association's newsletter, appeared in autumn 2021 and spring 2022. *Scottish Archives*, volume 27, was published and distributed to members in March 2022. Volume 28 is expected early in 2023.

#### *Tunnock Prize*

The Association's annual essay competition for postgraduate students and early career researchers is kindly sponsored by Thomas Tunnock Ltd. The 2021 Tunnock Prize was awarded to Robert Fell, a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh, for an essay drawing upon oral history recordings of Travellers held by the School of Scottish Studies Archives at the University of Edinburgh. Robert provided a presentation based on his research at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in November 2021 and his winning essay will be published in *Scottish Archives* volume 28.

The closing date for the 2022 Tunnock Prize competition was 1 September, and the winner will be announced at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

#### *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).