

# BROADSHEET

Magazine of the Scottish Council on Archives  
[scottisharchives.org.uk](http://scottisharchives.org.uk)

Winter 2018



## WELCOME

It has been another very busy year for the SCA, with conferences, cultural consultations, and collaboration with partners from across the country.

This issue features a number of articles based on presentations from the first of our Why Archives Matter events in October. They offer a timely reminder of the societal impact archives can have, in combating isolation, tackling mental health issues, and supporting those with dementia. Archives, as you all know, are a fantastic resource but as we are in the season of celebration, it bears repeating.

As part of the Why Archives Matter event, we commissioned a short film, kindly supported by the Archives and Records Association Research, Development and Advocacy Fund, from recent graduates of the University of Edinburgh MSc in Film, Exhibition and Curation. It is available to view [here](#), and we hope you enjoy it. You may also notice that the SCA website has undergone a bit of a transformation.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members, sponsors, and followers for their continued support throughout the year, and wish everyone a happy festive season and a wonderful New Year.

Scottish Council on Archives

## PROJECT UPDATE

SCA is developing a new portal to access Scotland's online archive collections. This new resource will be a major development of the Scottish Archive Network ([www.scan.org.uk](http://www.scan.org.uk)) project which currently provides a searchable online union catalogue of over fifty archives at mostly collection level. The project will improve the level of access to archive collections available to current and potential users and provide more opportunities for engagement both physically and virtually with archives. We will be working with Jisc/Archives Hub on the project.

An eight-month pilot project, starting in January 2019, will involve ingesting descriptions into Archives Hub from a selection of repositories across Scotland, with a view to a full ingest from Scottish repositories managed by local authorities, universities, businesses and others. The idea is to hold all the descriptions in the Archives Hub but also provide them to the new portal which SCA will create. This means that descriptions can be searched in both the Archives Hub and the new portal. The pilot project will aim to ascertain what sort of challenges there are in ingesting descriptions from across Scottish repositories, what sort of time it will take, and what the best approach will be.

If you would like to know more about the project then please contact [John Pelan, SCA Director](#).

## COVER IMAGE

A Shetland fisherman's cap, using small amounts of dyed wool. Such brightly-coloured caps made fishermen in open boats more visible to other crews and loved ones on land.

Discover more about Shetland's stunning knitting heritage on [page 17 of this issue](#).

Image courtesy of Shetland Museum and Archives.

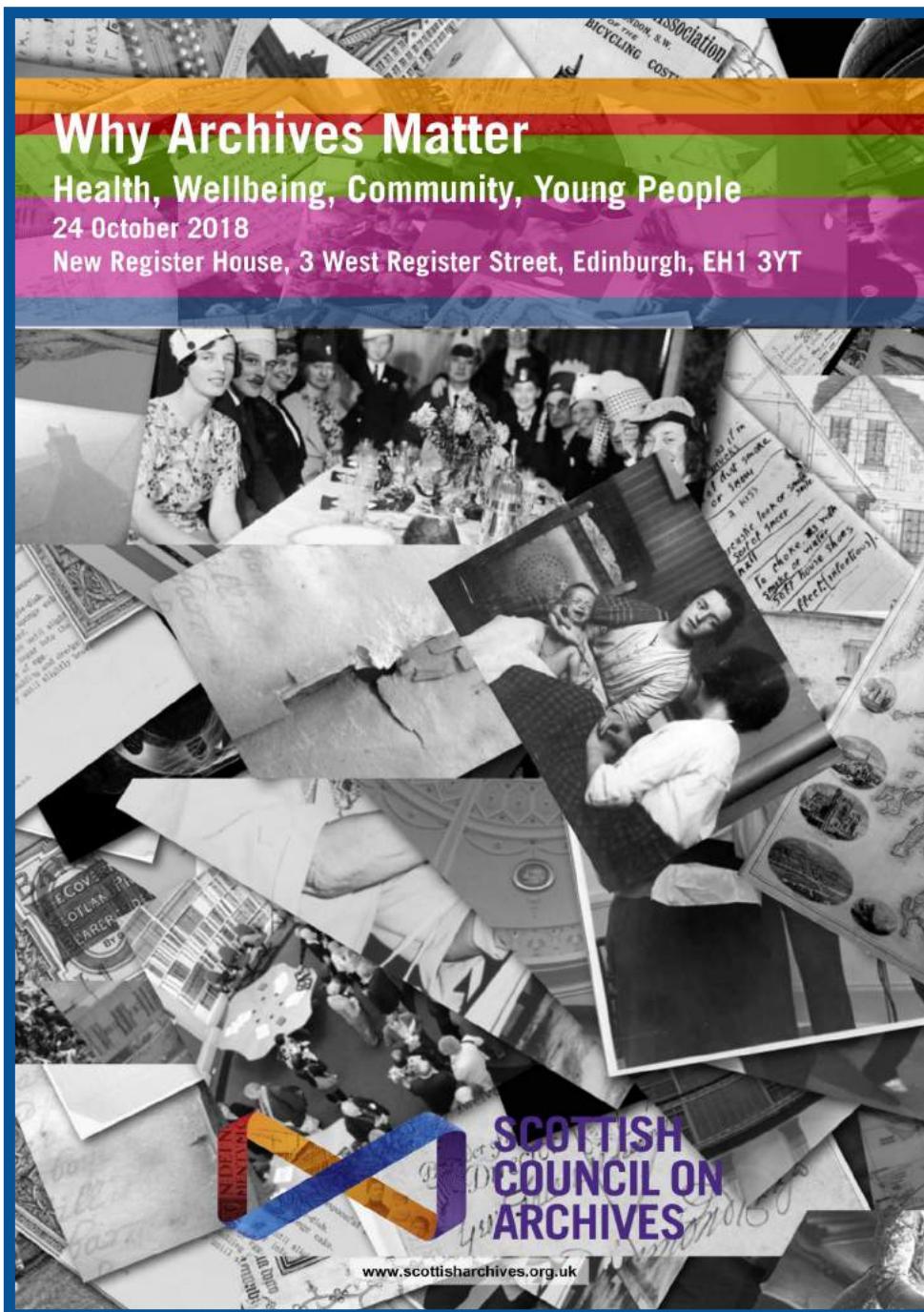
## CONTRIBUTORS

Lynn Bruce, Olivia Howarth, Hugh Dan MacLennan, Emily Munro, John Pelan, Brian Smith, Lorna Steele, and Michael White.

We are always keen to highlight your latest projects and news, and welcome submissions for articles. Please [email the SCA office](#) if you would like to contribute an item for a future edition.

# WHY ARCHIVES MATTER: HEALTH, WELLBEING, COMMUNITY, YOUNG PEOPLE

Scotland's archives are the documented memory of the nation. They tell our stories, enrich our lives, connect us with the past and give us a sense of identity. They may be used to provide evidence of our rights as individuals, organisations and communities and, through them, we can hold authorities to account. Archives can bring families and communities together by telling us who we are and where we come from. They are an antidote to fake news and 'alternative facts'.



Archives come in many forms—handwritten, printed, photographic, audio, visual, film and digital— influencing and informing almost every aspect of life. Their impact, economic, social and cultural, is wide-reaching. Archives inform the future by helping us to learn from the past. To highlight their importance the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) is holding a series of conferences to demonstrate how Scotland's archives not only provide the bedrock of society but offer an incredible resource of material for use in a wide range of situations and environments. They can be used to promote mental wellbeing by building confidence and helping people with dementia. They attract visitors and boost the

economy by supporting ancestral tourism. They underpin every aspect of education, science, health, culture, law and the historic environment.

The first of the Why Archives Matter events took place in Edinburgh on Wednesday 24 October. It featured a range of presentations showing how archival material is used to assist the work of professionals and volunteers in the health sectors and to help engage with diverse communities, old and young. This included a transformative archival adventure for people from Norfolk who live with mental health conditions; combating dementia with screen and sporting memories; sharing stories of local communities through film, photography and oral histories; and encouraging young people to have a voice through connecting with people from the past.

Approximately 60 delegates from a wide range of organisations including mental health, dementia and wellbeing charities, educators and archivists, attended and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

## SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

A selection of the presentations are reproduced on the following pages of this issue, others on the day included:

Laura Drysdale, Director of [The Restoration Trust](#), a Norfolk-based charity which promotes the use of culture therapies, spoke about the Change Minds project. Change Minds is an ongoing programme which engages people with mental health conditions with patients' stories from the 19th century Norfolk County Asylum archives. By talking, learning and sharing, the project has demonstrated numerous benefits including improved self-esteem and hope as well as better management of mental health conditions. The presentation highlighted the enormous potential of archives to help with a range of conditions and pointed to the need for a national programme.

Pam Nicol, archivist at [Stirling Council Archives](#), provided an overview of the successful Re:Collections project. Recognising that their archive had virtually no photographs from the 1950s onwards, Pam and her team invited members of the public to 'bring in their memories'. The result has been a series of 'memory boxes' using over 1100 scanned images and oral histories based on forty-two recorded interviews. Re-Collections is still ongoing and offers a very interesting model for other local archive services to follow as it has clearly been very well received by the community.

William Kilbride, [Digital Preservation Coalition](#), Executive Director of the Digital Preservation Coalition highlighted the vulnerability of much of the digital estate including photographs, documents, emails, social media posts and much more. Although it could be argued that 'data was the new oil driving the information revolution' digital materials were at risk from a wide range of factors including: media obsolescence, data theft, lack of back-ups, poor file-naming and many others. For young people, lack of awareness of the at-risk nature of the digital material which forms the backdrops to their lives could lead to problems in the future. Digital preservation is not about the past. It's about the future.

Alex Hamilton, Chair of the [Scottish Society for the History of Photography](#) (SSHoP) looked back at Scotland's almost 180-year-old connection with the medium from the pioneers David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson to today's photographers, including Higher Photography students whose work will feature in a new exhibition at the Scottish Parliament building. There is a clear problem that most images are not being catalogued and stored and, therefore, will not be accessible to future generations. This is an important issue for today's young people.

Paula Larkin, archivist, spoke about the [Govanhill Baths Archive](#) which was established in 2014 as part of the centenary celebration of the laying of the foundation stone. The archives were part of a much bigger project which also included the creation of a permanent exhibition space, a new website and the publication, 100 Years of Govanhill Baths. Since then the archive has focused its energies on exhibition, access, conservation and preservation. The community participation in this project including a range of activities from recorded interviews with people who had worked in 'the Steamie' to the sharing of memories, photographs and other material to grow the archive.

A specially-commissioned short film, [Why Archives Matter](#), was shown during the conference. The film was produced and edited by Amanda Rogers and Anni Asikainen, graduates of the University of Edinburgh MSc in Film, Exhibition and Curation. The film was made possible by a generous grant from the Archives and Records Association Research, Development and Advocacy Fund.

**John Pelan, Director, SCA**

Our second Why Archives Matter event will take place in Spring 2019, at the Engine Shed in Stirling. Its focus will be on Heritage, Memory, and Identity. More information will be announced in the new year.

# RELIVING A NIGHT AT THE PICTURES

*An innovative charity is proving that there's truth in the old adage- "Once seen, never forgotten."*

From Orkney to Stranraer, memories of a night at "The Pictures" are being rekindled by a dedicated team of volunteers. In day centres, community settings, hospitals, care homes and in the amazing Screen Machine itself, older people are transported back to the days of the Golden Age of Cinema. Memories are triggered by stills, posters and film memorabilia and then showings of iconic trailers and local archive film recreate the magic of the cinema experience. Some of the stories that have emerged are fascinating. You could write a book – or maybe even make a documentary -about the memories that have come flooding back- and the organisers are already thinking about doing just that.

One man in Falkirk recalled seeing the original King Kong film with his mother and described the whole experience in the most vivid details. From what he said, he must have been talking about 1936! Many of the stories are amazing, like the one we heard in Arran about a man who had danced during his war-time service with the "charming and beautiful" Vivien Leigh, but didn't think so highly of her then husband. A lady in Lochcarron remembered sitting in the very railway station where *Brief Encounter* had been filmed, and wearing a very similar hat to that worn by Celia Johnson. In Elgin, the story was one of mistaken identity, with a young lady being the envy of all her friends when they believed she was going out with Robert Taylor, a heart-throb at the time. In truth, she was the girlfriend of the film star's cousin, who bore a remarkable resemblance to the star of *Ivanhoe*. One care home resident, a sprightly 102 year -old could recall seeing film star Vera Hopkins make a personal appearance in Glasgow.

There is always an element of humour in the sessions and the room is usually full of laughter and hilarity. The Nazis were blamed for denying one young lady her Mickey Mouse Club badge by starting the war in September -and her birthday, which would have triggered the receipt of the prized badge, was in October. She was still annoyed 80 years later. Efforts are underway to find a badge for

her. In one session, the discussion turned to pin-up posters and the declared favourites included Cary Grant, Clark Gable and Gregory Peck. One member selected a picture of her own favourite and held it lovingly to her cheek. The supreme accolade followed- "He could have had his slippers under my bed at any time."

The men in the groups were keen on foreign stars such as Brigitte Bardot, Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida and Claudia Cardinale. One wife was slightly perturbed at her husband's recall of Mme. Bardot's charms. The groups sometimes stage a mock Oscars event and vote on their favourite films of all time. While the order of the list can vary, the same titles are nominated from every part of the country. *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Casablanca* are hugely popular and even bits of dialogue are remembered. The biggest variation comes in the choices of favourite comedies. While some loved the Three Stooges and Abbot and Costello, the overwhelming choice is the Marx Brothers. The one scene that is universally popular is the crowded cabin scene from *A Night at The Opera*.

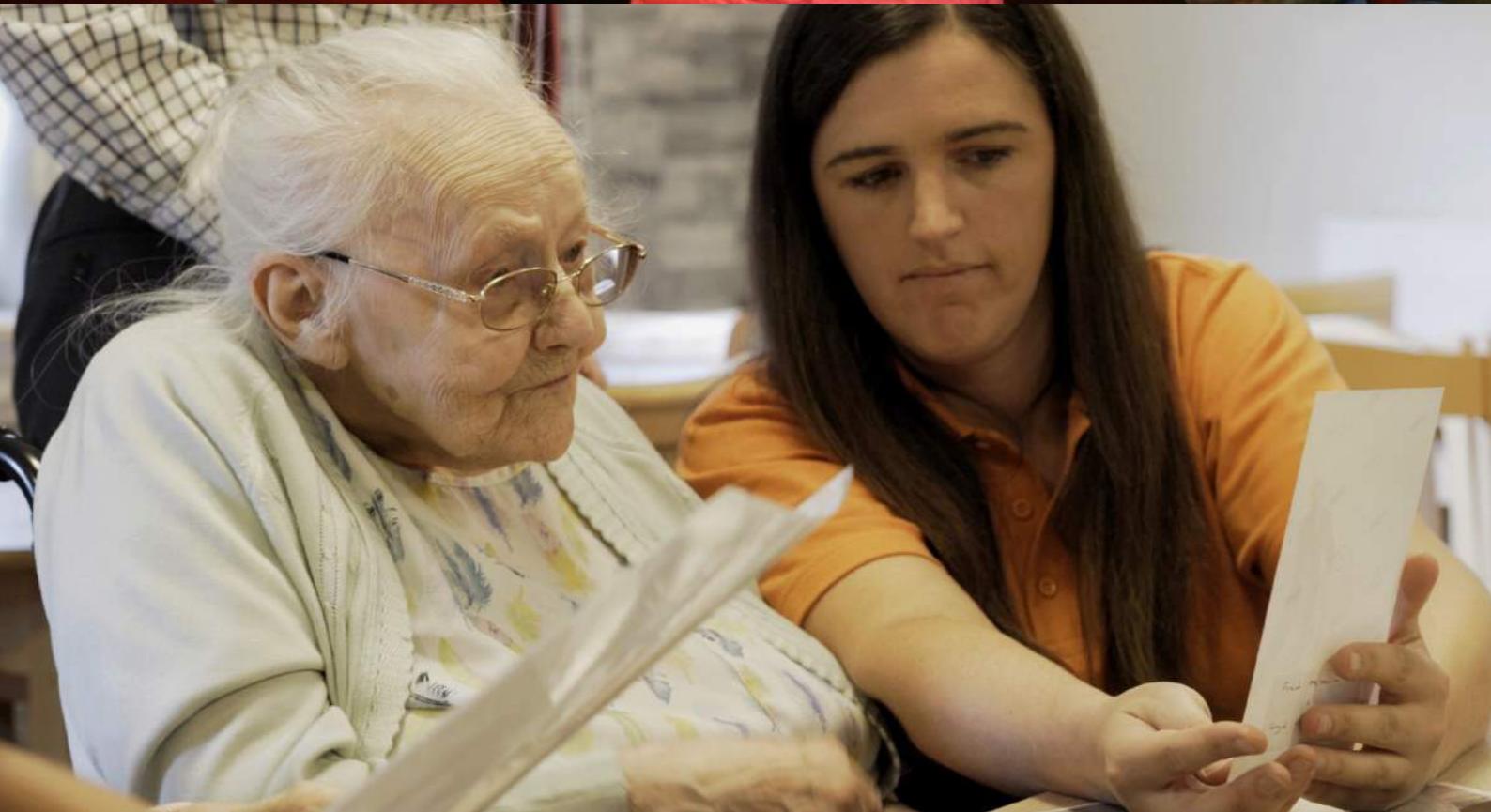
Some groups have attempted to recreate iconic scenes from films and scripts have been issued for those who want to have a go. In Dumfries, the vessel with the pestle scene from *The Court Jester* had many in tears of laughter, while in Kirkwall the end scene of *Gone with the Wind* drew deserved applause.

The memories that are being revived are powerful ones and even though many group members may be struggling with recent recall, their times at "The Pictures" have given them strong and vivid memories. The project will continue to develop and show that it can bring back happy and moving experiences of the days of the Saturday morning matinees, the jeelie jar admissions, the heroes and villains, the epics -and prove conclusively that these images once seen (again) will never be forgotten.

**Michael White, Screen Memories**

To find out more about Screen Memories and the Screen Machine visit

<https://screenmemoriescotland.com/>



# Moving Memory

In the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive we preserve films dating from the earliest days of filmmaking to the present. Most of the films we look after were created during the mid-twentieth century and can be described as documentaries. Much of the footage we hold was shot by amateurs, a term which, for us, contains no value judgement but is merely a classification. These films come to us – in boxes, biscuit tins and suitcases - like messages from the past, although that may be far from the filmmaker's original intention. But unlike written letters, which are almost always addressed to a specific reader at a single point in time and have a clear beginning, middle and end, often the films we collect appear to be open texts and can be fragments.

They may originally have been made for family members to view, to remember a caravan holiday or a trip 'doon the watter'. They may have been made for cinema audiences, to promote life in a new town or to sell an idea, public health initiative or product. They might have been made to encourage people into the cinema, by showing the audience themselves (people in the past, like people today, loved to see images of themselves on screens). It is our privilege to have become the custodians of personal memories, captured (or made?) by 'home movies'. That these films are still accessible to us today and can be watched - not always but often - without the need of specialist knowledge, training or qualifications to interpret them, is something extraordinary. It is perhaps even a little disruptive. Even with more than a century-long heritage, moving images are still young rebels in the archive world.

Psychologists have long used the metaphor of the archive to describe memory. But since the 1990s the field of memory studies has questioned this metaphor and its core concept that memories are simply stored and then retrieved by the individual, unhindered and unprompted by others. Psychologist and memory theorist Jens Brockmeier has called this shift a 'memory crisis'; it is a turning point fuelled by wider post-structuralist debates about truth, authenticity and trauma which continue today. Brockmeier is interested in the social and cultural organisation of memory. He considers memories as interactive, open and negotiable rather than fixed. Remembering replaces memory and is regarded as a process rather than an entity.

When we bring people together around our collections we learn how they make meaning from heritage objects and texts. Most do it by enacting processes of remembering, imagining, interpretation and negotiation. Perhaps I'm fortunate in that there is something immediate about film which draws people in, absorbs them and encourages conversation and reflection. The impact we have needn't depend on

the interaction between an individual's thoughts and the communal experience, but when we are working with a medium such as film - that was designed to be shown to an audience - then a group setting often makes sense. The group dynamic always influences the way in which 'making meaning' is done and affects the end result.

One of the most important social acts of remembering is intergenerational transmission. This can be especially relevant where there has been a traumatic event in a community, directly experienced by one generation and carried, indirectly, by the next. In Glasgow and west central Scotland, the greatest collective trauma to have taken place in the past century (excluding the two world wars but arguably as impactful as these) is deindustrialisation. The process of deindustrialisation has created an ongoing (and, for politicians, seemingly unsolvable) legacy of depravation for many people in Scotland. Not only were jobs lost when the factories closed. Communities were displaced and fractured, then brought together in unfamiliar configurations; place and space were rearranged and continue to be so under the new rubric of 'regeneration'. Footage from the past can be a powerful medicine for helping to understand these changes and to unlock the narratives of belonging and loss that have underpinned the displacement of working-class communities within our country.

We are left with the benefit of hindsight. We have a little hope that things can be improved. We have some films but we are a long way off having everything and we shouldn't be afraid to admit this. As we work we also need to keep in check the symbolic power of the archive by which I mean power over access, power to mediate, power over collective memory and that contestable term 'national memory'. It is our duty as archivists in the twenty-first century to acknowledge and address where we can the exclusions that have occurred in collecting and distributing information. When we engage with the public we need to join together in a circle of remembering and accept that we may be more useful to the communities we work with as collaborators rather than teachers. As we administer to them, so they do to us. We need them to make our collections better.

## Further Reading:

- Brockmeier, J. (2010) After the Archive: Remapping Memory. *Culture & Psychology*, 16 (1), 5-35
- Schwartz, J.M. & Cook, T. (2002) Archive, Records and Power: the making of modern memory. *Archival Science*, 2, 1-19

**Dr Emily Munro, National Library of Scotland  
Moving Image Archive**



**National Library of Scotland**  
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba



# RESOURCING SHINTY'S (AND OTHER SPORTS') MEMORIES

In December 2016, the Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park was awarded partnership funding from Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) to create a one-year project which aimed to support reminiscence projects for four sports that formed part of the Sports Heritage Scotland network: rugby, golf, shinty and cricket. The project's aims and objectives were set as follows:

- ◆ To identify and preserve Scotland's sporting heritage
- ◆ To develop and maintain a digital archive/resource covering all sporting activity within Scotland
- ◆ To make content of the archive/resource available to all members through a website and other electronic media in English and Gaelic
- ◆ To support the roll out of the sports reminiscence project by encouraging the establishment of local groups throughout Scotland and by providing access to digitised resources
- ◆ To develop a strategy that will make the archive/resource accessible to encourage reminiscence activity amongst non dementia groups
- ◆ To provide effective communication between members of the network to share expertise/knowledge
- ◆ To communicate and liaise with other bodies within and furth of Scotland (where appropriate) in furtherance of the aims of the project
- ◆ Provide access to appropriate education/training opportunities for members
- ◆ Promote the work of Sports Heritage Scotland within Scotland
- ◆ To support exhibitions for each of the sports.

A target of 30 'non-football' reminiscence groups was set along with a digitisation target of 5,000 non-football images which would help to support the groups. Reminiscence resource packs and a Sports Heritage Scotland resource website were also to be created to support the groups with their delivery of reminiscence sessions. Under the guidelines established by the project, the football reminiscence programme was also to benefit through the creation of new reminiscence resource packs.

In January 2017, the project planning phase started with the advertisements for two posts; the Project Administrator and Resource Coordinator. A steering group was also established and in March 2017, the

The poster features a central illustration of a shinty player in mid-air, performing a shot or pass. The background is a dark blue with stylized white leaf patterns. In the top right corner is the logo for the Camanachd Association, which consists of a white stylized antler or deer head design above the text "CAMANACHD ASSOCIATION" and "COMANN NA CAMANACHD". At the bottom left, the text "SHINTY MEMORIES SCOTLAND" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom right, there is a "SPONSORED BY" section with logos for "Tulloch Homes", "Alzheimer Scotland", and "highlife health".

project was officially launched at Hampden Park, with work starting to digitise collections from across Scotland and to create and coordinate reminiscence groups for rugby, golf, shinty and cricket.

## Coordination

The Sports Heritage Scotland committee created a steering group to oversee the planning and delivery of the project. A successful PR strategy was seen as vital to support the roll out of the project: From writing articles and taking part in interviews, to the official launch, we took every opportunity to publicise the project effectively. All of the participating sporting bodies agreed to promote the project through their social media accounts. Articles were placed in match programmes and local newspapers and a two-page feature appeared in one of the national newspapers. Ongoing events like the annual seminar on Sport, Mental Health & Dementia also helped to add profile along with former players connected to the different sports who became "Project Ambassadors", encouraging clubs and other organisations to sign up. The new Sports Heritage Scotland website as well as holding the digital resource for the reminiscence groups proved to be an excellent promotional tool for the Memories project.

The project was also promoted at the Sport, Mental Health & Dementia Seminar at Hampden Park in November 2017

## Resources

Reminiscence resource packs were created for each of the participating sports and photographs were collected and digitised to build up a large digital archive to further support the reminiscence groups. Additional resource packs were created above and beyond the target of 30 groups providing resources to support the continued expansion of the reminiscence project as additional organisations, clubs and individuals sign up. The two headline targets of signing up 30 non-football reminiscence groups and digitising a minimum of 5,000 images were achieved over the course of the year. In total 5,771 non-football digital images were created and a bonus to the football reminiscence project was that 1,013 football images were also added to the resource website meaning that in total 6,784 images were digitised.

Images were sourced through the national sporting bodies, through clubs and through various personal archives. Cricket, in particular benefited from the fact that work was commencing on a cricket exhibition at the Scottish Football Museum. The British Golf Museum was instrumental in organising and providing images for the golf project and Scottish Rugby had a similarly important role in making a significant contribution towards the rugby project. An added challenge for this project was that a number of the

target areas were in remote and rural locations. Having a strong connection to each sport through the national sporting bodies was identified as a key aspect to meeting the target of 30 groups.

## Innovation and Sustainability

An important area that the project tried to address was to create a sustainable model so that groups could continue to run once the project had come to an end. This helped to crystallise the idea behind an innovative project which generated income to create and distribute memory boxes (costing around £250 each) to reminiscence groups across Scotland. From a networking perspective, the project brought together representatives from Sports Heritage Scotland and the Highland Folk Museum and subsequent discussions have taken place to bring this important museum with a recognised collection of national significance into the Sports Heritage Scotland fold. There was clear evidence here of the potential role for further collaboration with the various archival services and institutions could bring to bear on this, and other, projects.

## Looking Ahead

Although the Memories Project came to a natural conclusion with the end of project seminar at BT Murrayfield towards the end of April 2018, the work undertaken has created a foundation from which to continue to build a sustainable project supporting the sports that already form part of the Sports Heritage Scotland network and reaching out to new sports.

A positive development over the last year has been the interest of the speedway community in Scotland to join Sports Heritage Scotland and set up Speedway Memory Groups. A large collection and archive has also been identified and there is clearly a lot of potential to bring a new sport formally into the Sports Heritage Scotland family.

We represent football, cricket, rugby, curling, shinty and golf in a unique collaboration where the Governing Bodies have probably stepped outside their comfort zone to deal with mental health issues. So much of our effort is channelled through volunteers who recognise the importance of heritage, identity and community in supporting friends and colleagues living with loneliness and challenges such as memory loss and dementia. This is work of national significance in a whole range of areas such as mental health, sports history and community engagement. We have come a very long way in an extremely short time. This shows what we could do if additional resources could be found and further engagement with Scotland's outstanding local and national archives.

**Dr Hugh Dan McLennan, Professional Fellow,  
Academy of Sport, University of Edinburgh, and  
Sports Heritage Scotland**

For further Information visit: [www.sportsheritagescotland.co.uk](http://www.sportsheritagescotland.co.uk)

Alternatively, the reminiscence resource websites can be accessed independently for each sport: [football](#), [golf](#), [cricket](#), [shinty](#), and [rugby](#).

# THE SPIRIT OF EMIGRATION:

## A partnership between the Highland Archive Service and High Life Highland Adult Learning

"The Spirit of Emigration to America still continues in the Highlands and is daily spreading and gaining strength. Many hundreds are going over this year from the Aird, Urquhart, Glenmoriston, Glengarry, Kintail and other parts..."

High Life Highland is a charity formed by The Highland Council to develop and promote opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing across nine services throughout the Highlands. The Highland Archive Service and Adult Learning Services both sit under this umbrella organisation and "The Spirit of Emigration" was a joint project delivered in partnership.

The Highland Archive Service's collections date from the 1200s to the present day. They are of a very diverse nature, from family and estate papers to business and local government records, a fact which means they lend themselves to a limitless number of engagement possibilities!

In this instance it was the tendency of Highlanders to migrate (both for reasons of choice and necessity) that led to the idea for the project. The collections contain a number of letters written home by those who left the Highlands in past centuries. Some went in search of work or a better life, others followed family members to make a new home, others still went because the situation at home offered little hope. It seemed striking that many of the people who currently use High Life Highland's Adult Learning Services for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) had faced the same difficult decision to leave their homeland, and sometimes for the same reasons.

"The Spirit of Emigration" (the title taken from a 1775 letter) took the form of a series of sessions delivered at the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness. Using documents from the collections Highland Archives' Community Engagement Officer, Lorna Steele, gave a weekly themed presentation which was followed by a group discussion led by tutor, Paul Shanks, and supported by Community Language and Learning Support Worker (ESOL), Anna Holda. Each week, attendees had the opportunity to share their own stories, learn about experiences and emotions shared across centuries and handle the original documents which featured in the presentations. It was key from an Adult Learning point of view that the individuals involved should not only benefit from the content of the workshops but also become familiar with the archive service as a concept and as a place of local interest, empowering them to feel part of the community.

The first week looked at themes of a practical nature – travelling to a new country, finding work, experiencing a different climate and coming to terms

with new surroundings. Everyone in the group, from staff to attendees, suggested words that they thought represented those experiences which the tutor, Paul, then brought together in a group poem.

The next week tackled the emotional side of emigration. Letters from the 1700s and 1800s spoke of missed family moments, bereavements dealt with from a distance and the pain of the generations who are unsure where they belong. These sentiments were shared by members of the group, with some tears being shed as stories were told. One lady said "these feelings in this letter...they are also my feelings." She said it made her feel better to know that so many others had gone through the same emotional process before her. Others could identify with the letters which spoke of a new country giving them the means to support family back home, and a sense of starting to belong in a new place. It was interesting for those of us who had not moved countries, to hear that the Highlands and Highlanders had generally been very welcoming to those coming in.

Subsequent sessions examined the themes of religion and symbolism. To the Highlanders who left Scotland in the 1800s, religion was an all-present reality which pervaded every aspect of life, from business to family life, and this is evident in the letters they sent home. It was interesting to hear from those in the group about the role that religion played in their homelands and the positives and negatives they associated with that, along with their feelings about religion in both the Highlands and the UK. A discussion on symbolism (looking at the Inverness town crest and the symbols associated with the Highlands) led to a fascinating discussion about the extent to which the symbols and images that surround you can define or represent you, sometimes without you being aware of it. Each group member then took some time to fill a page with symbols and sketches that they thought represented themselves.

"The Spirit of Emigration" was a fascinating project to work on. It was a privilege to hear some of the stories which emerged, to share with the group some of the many diverse items we care for, and see the real and meaningful impact that interaction with archives can bring. We are planning to run another series in 2019.

**Lorna Steele, Community Engagement Officer**

**[High Life Highland](#)**

## **GETTING THERE**

**hope** leaving family, leaving

What will I take? (I just don't know what to expect)

I'll miss you...  
Goodbye :{

what will I take? What will I leave?  
airports, planes, boats, bus journeys  
(past, future, fear, belief planning,  
admin, money - I miss

*lonely  
and so tired*

**but excited!**

Inverness is...

a small city  
(*a nice city!*)

with river and bridges:

it's green and lush, fresh, mature nature, mountains,

surrounded by  
mountains...

places are close/walking distance/ handy and the countryside  
is near

historical architecture,  
churches  
and flocks of sheep

**but not enough vegetables!**

friendly people, live music,  
bands

Kilts for  
hire!

*(at last!)*

*it all starts to feel normal*



Top: The students' poem; above, Lorna showing the group original materials.

# POIGNANT AND INSPIRING VOICES FROM THE FRONT

*“Dear Mother, just a line or two to let you know I am in the pink of condition...”*

So begins almost every letter written by James Boyd, from Milngavie, between 1915 and his release from a German POW camp in early 1919. James was one of three Boyd brothers who were posted out to the trenches and wrote letters up to three times a week back home to their parents. The letters are detailed and personal, plotting three journeys through war-torn France and Belgium, through near-miss and injury, humour, exhilaration and deep despondency. Like many letter collections they stop abruptly at the end of the War, omitting the small detail of three full lives continuing on in Milngavie until 1976, when all three died peacefully within six weeks of each other.

In November, 100 years on from the Armistice, groups of S3-S6 students from two high schools in East Dunbartonshire brought the Boyds' letters to life, along with the memoir and diaries of two local nurses who served in France. In powerful stage performances, using only words from the original records, students evoked the wartime experiences of people who had lived only a few miles from their school, and had been only a few years older than the students themselves.

Meanwhile in Stonehaven, near Aberdeen, Mackie Academy students were also working on a performance project, using records from their local area. This all-female group of senior students took the stories of Christian Watt Marshall, a local herring-woman, and Robert Stephen, a young soldier from Aberdeen who fought at Vimy Ridge, along with the military tribunal records of Stonehaven man William Main, and created their own script telling a local story of wartime experiences. Working with two theatre professionals they created a riveting and flowing performance for the audience packed into the performance space. Amongst that audience was Aberdeenshire Council CEO Jim Savege, who wrote afterwards of the “poignant and inspiring” performance.

East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Archives, and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives, worked with the Scottish Council on Archives, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to undertake these innovative theatre education projects during October and November 2018.

SCA's Education Development Officer Douglas Roberts and professional actor Scott Noble facilitated the projects in all three schools, in collaboration with archivists Janice Miller and Ruaraidh Wishart, network librarian Debbie Barclay and teaching staff from the schools. They prepared initial scripts from the archived records for the students to edit and arrange. Over a five-day period in each school they

worked with the students to devise simple dramatic scenes into which they read the first-hand accounts of the soldiers and nurses, using only a table, chair, coat stand and a large linen cloth as props, and a collection of reproduction military uniforms as costume. Students from the schools also designed and operated lighting and sound effects for the performances.

“The focus throughout has been on the students taking ownership of the performance and deciding how the memory of these local people is presented to their audience” Douglas said. “Each group made very different choices about editing the scripts, and how to stage them. At Boclair Academy we arranged the audience chairs in a poppy shape surrounding the stage area, and performed the play in the round, while in Mackie Academy we took the military tribunal out into the audience, drawing them all in to the argument. Students also directed many of the scenes. Our job was to give them the skills and the confidence to be creative. Self-confidence is the bedrock of achievement in school and beyond, and this project shows how giving creative freedom to young people has a wide-ranging effect on their self-esteem”

“For the most part they are not drama students.” explained Scott, “We took young people with an interest in history and put them through an intensive five day process of acting, voice training and production skills. They grew in confidence, found their voices and gradually took charge of the performance.”

One Boclair student said that she had never performed on stage before. “I've lived in a shell for the past six years. Since the performance I've had a confidence that I've never had before, to go up and talk to people”. Audience members at all three schools were full of praise for the students' performances. At Turnbull High School one parent said her daughter had a new love for history, and another said her shy son had pushed himself to speak out in the character of a soldier.

Over 200 parents, staff and guests from the local communities watched the finished performances, some of which included live music from students, exhibitions of archive material and wartime memorabilia, and home-baked cakes and tea afterwards.

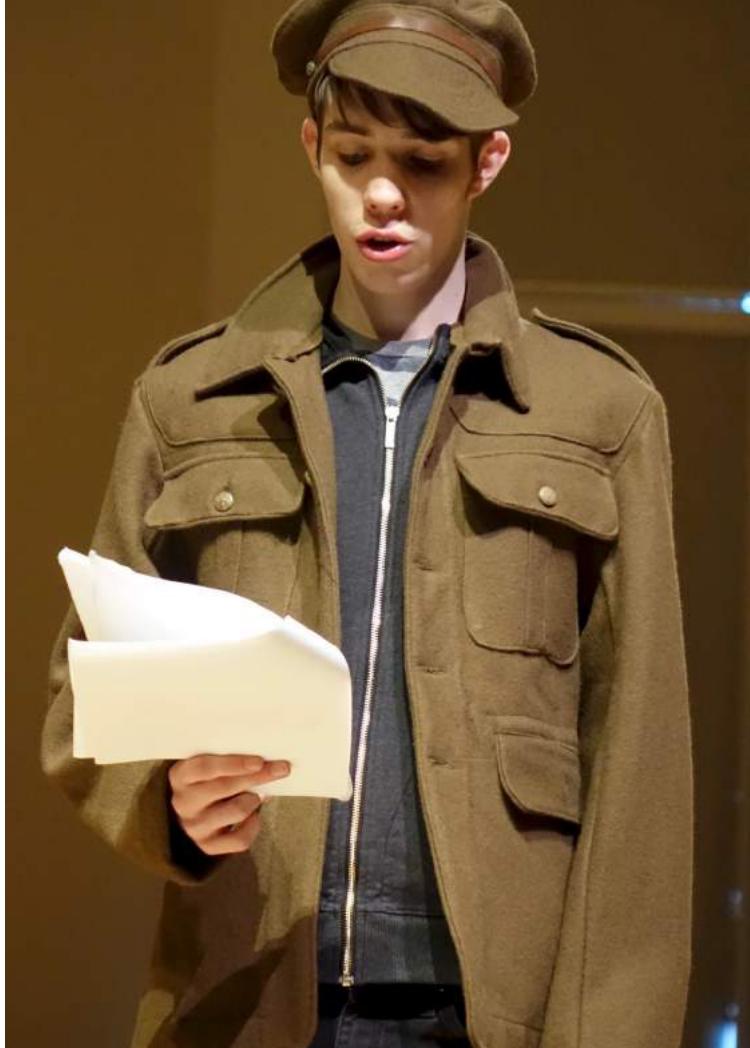
Audience members at Mackie Academy spoke of being moved to tears by the account of Christian Marshall learning of the death of her fiancée via a returned letter stamped “deceased”, while audiences

in East Dunbartonshire winced at the graphic account of a bullet being extracted from behind John Boyd's eye by a surgeon while he sat wide awake on a stool. Eileen Kennedy, Head Teacher at Turnbull High School, was impressed by the impact the project had on the students involved, linking powerfully to their studies and raising their self-confidence. Teacher Catherine Conn from Boclair spoke movingly about how the students had given an authentic voice to the personal experiences of nurses and soldiers from the First World War.

James Boyd's letters, spoken aloud by young men in distinct northern Glasgow accents at Boclair Academy, had a special significance for audience member Barbie Handley. She is James Boyd's granddaughter, who had travelled specially to see the performance that gave a voice to her grandfather's and great uncles' 100-year old wartime experiences. "I know these letters" she said, "but hearing them spoken aloud like this was incredibly moving; these young people have honoured his memory."

**Douglas Roberts, SCA Education Development Officer**

Students from Turnbull High School, Mackie Academy, and Boclair Academy rehearsing Theatre of Remembrance





# WW1 PENSIONS APPEAL PROJECT

The Wellcome Trust funded project at National Records of Scotland (NRS) to catalogue Scotland's First World War Pensions Appeal Tribunal record has been in progress for almost a year. It aims to catalogue and preserve fascinating documents that until now have remained an untapped resource for medical historians, genealogists and other researchers interested in those who survived the First World War.

Men who had served during the First World War could claim a pension from the Ministry of Pensions on the basis that the War had adversely affected their health. Dependents of deceased servicemen were also entitled to pensions. Men and their dependents had to prove that illness or injury had been caused or aggravated by service but, if their claim to a pension was denied, they could challenge this decision through the Pensions Appeals Tribunal.

Pensions Appeal Tribunals were established under the War Pensions Act 1920. Dating from 1919 to 1932, the PT6 series contains case files for around 30,000 Scottish ex-servicemen whose appeals were heard by the Tribunal. The records include medical information, service histories and employment details from before, during and after the War. They often contain detailed statements about the men's time in service. The men were overwhelmingly ordinary soldiers and sailors and the records offer a unique insight into their experiences of War and the struggles they faced trying to resume their civilian lives after it ended.

The records are being catalogued using a custom-built

database which will be publicly available free of charge at the end of the project. One of the distinctive cataloguing features is the use of Medical Subject Heading (MeSH) codes to index medical conditions. These codes are internationally recognised and used by medical research historians as they standardise terminology. This is significantly enhancing the research scope of the collection and creating the potential for future statistical analysis. The codes also enable historians to investigate how illnesses were diagnosed and treated at the time, and the ongoing impact of the War on ordinary servicemen.

Cataloguing has revealed how environmental conditions affected servicemen's health. Men were exposed to harsh winters and inadequate clothing, both in the UK and on the frontline. Three of the most common conditions in the records are rheumatism, myalgia and bronchitis, which were all exacerbated by exposure. However, many men had occupations such as mining or labouring, which may also have contributed to their poor health. The Tribunal had to untangle each man's case and decide the extent to which the conditions of service played a part. This difficulty meant that only a limited number of appeals were successful.

Nevertheless, the records show the devastating effect of warfare. Private Andrew Robertson of the Black Watch died of pneumonia after losing his leg at the Battle of Loos. The appeal of his widow, Ann Robertson, describes Andrew's brave actions during the battle. Although badly wounded, Andrew crawled to a dead comrade and took his water bottle in order

to give his fatally injured commander, Colonel Harry Walker, a drink. Men's mental health could also be severely affected. In his appeal, James Kerr, a Pioneer with the Royal Engineers, described how he was manning a gun when three of his comrades were killed beside him, causing him to abandon his unit. He was so scared to return to the frontline that he carried ammunition in his pocket 'intending to do himself bodily harm rather than go to France again'.

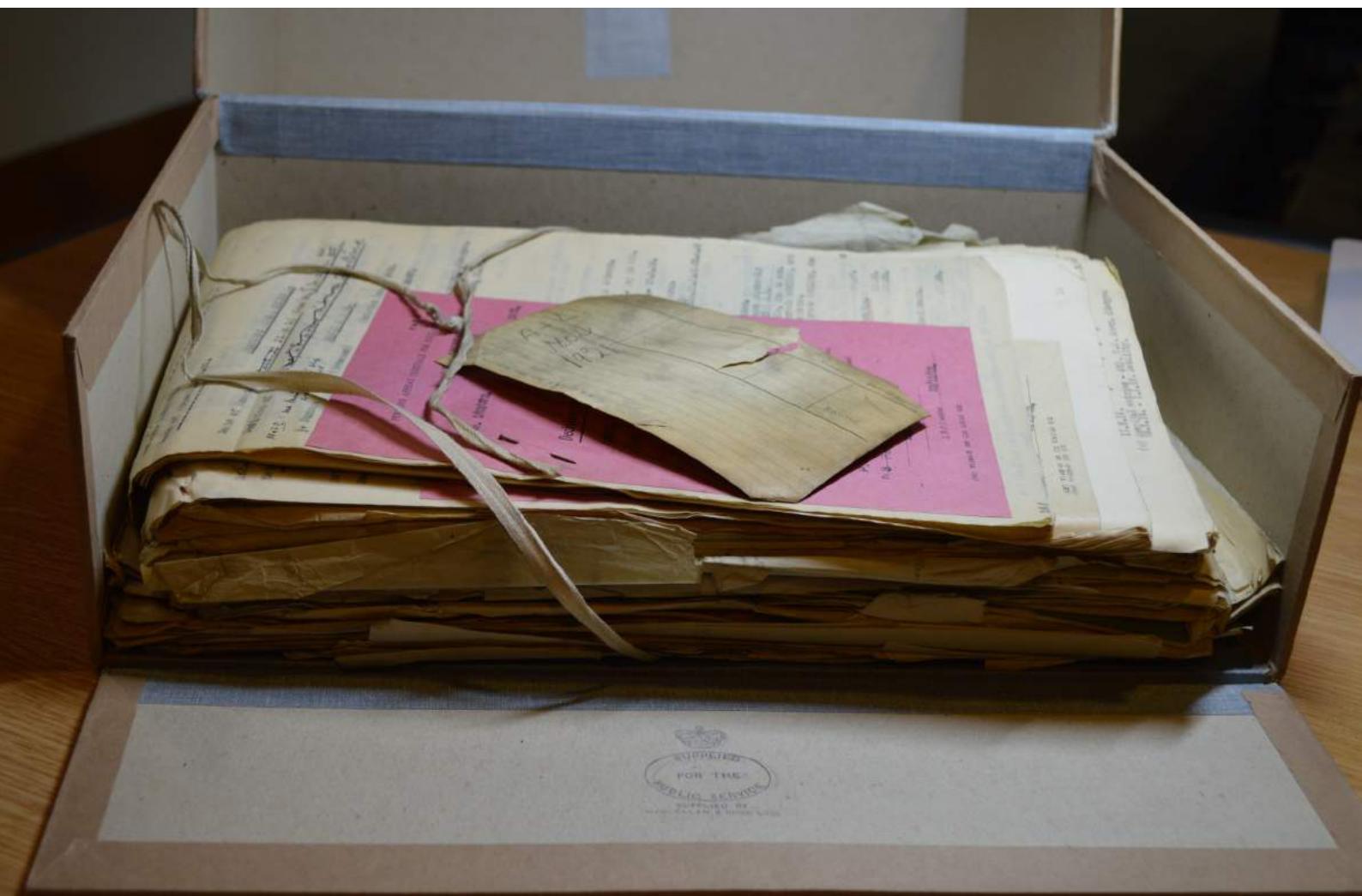
Both Ann and James won their appeal, but others were not so fortunate. Men were denied pensions on the basis of misconduct or negligence, and their character and conduct on service was examined alongside their medical conditions. Decisions were often swayed by official prejudice and preconceptions about the 'predispositions' of soldiers, based upon their physiognomy and other factors. Claims were also dismissed because injuries were not recorded or because too much time had elapsed between a man's service ending and his condition being diagnosed. John Lehany, a Private in the Cameron Highlanders, had shot a fellow soldier as part of a firing squad. His appeal for paranoid schizophrenia was disallowed because the Ministry of Pensions believed that 'if the effects of that experience were going to be as serious as is alleged it would certainly be expected to manifest itself at a much earlier date.'

Because of their health problems and the economic depression of the 1920s, many of the men struggled in civil life. Often a military pension was their last resort before poor relief. Correspondence written by the men

often emphasises their destitution and the impact of poverty and unemployment on their families. The PT6 collection demonstrates the importance of charity and community support during the interwar period. Correspondence includes letters from MPs enquiring about cases which had roused 'local passion' and from charities who provided financial support and represented applicants in the appeals process. Men were helped into new areas of employment by organisations such as Erskine House, the British Legion and various regimental associations. One claimant, Walter Anderson, who had been a Private in the Royal Scots and who became visually impaired during his service, spent his stay at the Royal Hospital for the Blind training to become a poultry farmer as well as learning to read braille.

These records bring together the administrative and the personal histories of ex-servicemen. This intersectionality is one of the collection's unique features, and one which will provide a rich resource for researchers to explore. Cataloguing has brought to light hidden stories of disability in the inter-war period and shows how working-class men and their families responded to challenges of illness and poverty. Although the project is ongoing, there have already been some revealing discoveries, and many poignant personal stories about the battles faced by soldiers both at the front and upon their return to Scotland.

**Lynn Bruce & Olivia Howarth, Project Cataloguers,  
National Records of Scotland**



# SHETLAND'S KNITTED HISTORY

Shetland knitwear is famous all over the globe. For the past century, perhaps longer, it has been fashionable in all sorts of ways. Royalty has sported Shetland woollen garments. Hundreds of people attend Shetland's Wool Week each year to receive tuition in techniques or to listen to lectures.

How do we research the history of this important home industry? It isn't as straightforward as you might expect. First of all there are myths to dispel. Those who imagine that the techniques and patterns derive from Shetland's one-time Scandinavian culture are wrong. As we shall see, Shetland's knitwear history begins in the late sixteenth century, precisely when that Nordic connexion was coming to a close.

In the same way, shipwrecked sailors from the Spanish Armada in Fair Isle didn't while away the long evenings teaching their hosts Iberian knitting patterns. The history of those island motifs is far more complex, and not yet properly understood.

The early history of Shetland knitwear is retrievable, but with difficulty. During the middle ages Shetlanders had paid their taxes and rents in cloth. Shetland was a poor community, but it was a land of sheep. No-one valued Shetland cloth, neither, the producers or the

recipients. It was poor in quality, and the fulling and weaving of it was a laborious task each year.

Everything changed in the late 16th century. Dutch fishermen started to come to Shetland in large numbers, in pursuit of herring. They yearned for Shetland socks. Women in the islands transferred their attention from cloth to stockings and mittens. They began to knit thousands of them, in return for cash from the Dutchmen. They got money in return, far more than had circulated in Shetland up till then. Meanwhile, the tax collectors much preferred to receive money from the Shetlanders rather than bales of cloth.

It was, pre-eminently, a home industry. There were no Shetland knitwear factories. As a result, the records are sparse; during the early centuries they usually consist of chance references in records. The historian of Shetland knitwear must burrow in all sorts of collections. It's a paradox, because the industry was a vital part of the economy: arguably as important as fish, Shetland's other great product. As the years passed, merchants in Scotland and England also began to covet and buy Shetland knitwear, and large cargoes of it left the islands.

Below: A woman's *spencer*, a woollen undershirt using the softest, loftiest wool from Shetland sheep; knitted in their thousands during the nineteenth century, often by children because the design was simple. The shaping allows the garment to fit under bodices with whalebone stays. (Courtesy Shetland Museum & Archives)



There was another great change after the Napoleonic Wars. A merchant in Lerwick began to contract with Shetland women to knit for him, and others followed his example. Once again, the records of this new arrangement are difficult to find. Why? A colleague of mine at the Shetland Archives has suggested to me that it is because the trade between the hosiery merchants and their knitters was semi-legal. The relationship between the two parties was based on 'truck': the merchants paid the knitters in goods from their shops, often fripperies which the women then had to sell on to make a living.

As a result, one of the best sources of information about the trade isn't the ledgers of the merchants, which have mostly disappeared. It is evidence in British Parliamentary Papers, when commissioners investigated what was going on in Lerwick's truck-shops. The racket, as a local antiquary once called it, went on until the Second World War. As late as that Shetland women had to approach buyers willing to

give money after dark, to avoid detection by jealous truck-merchants!

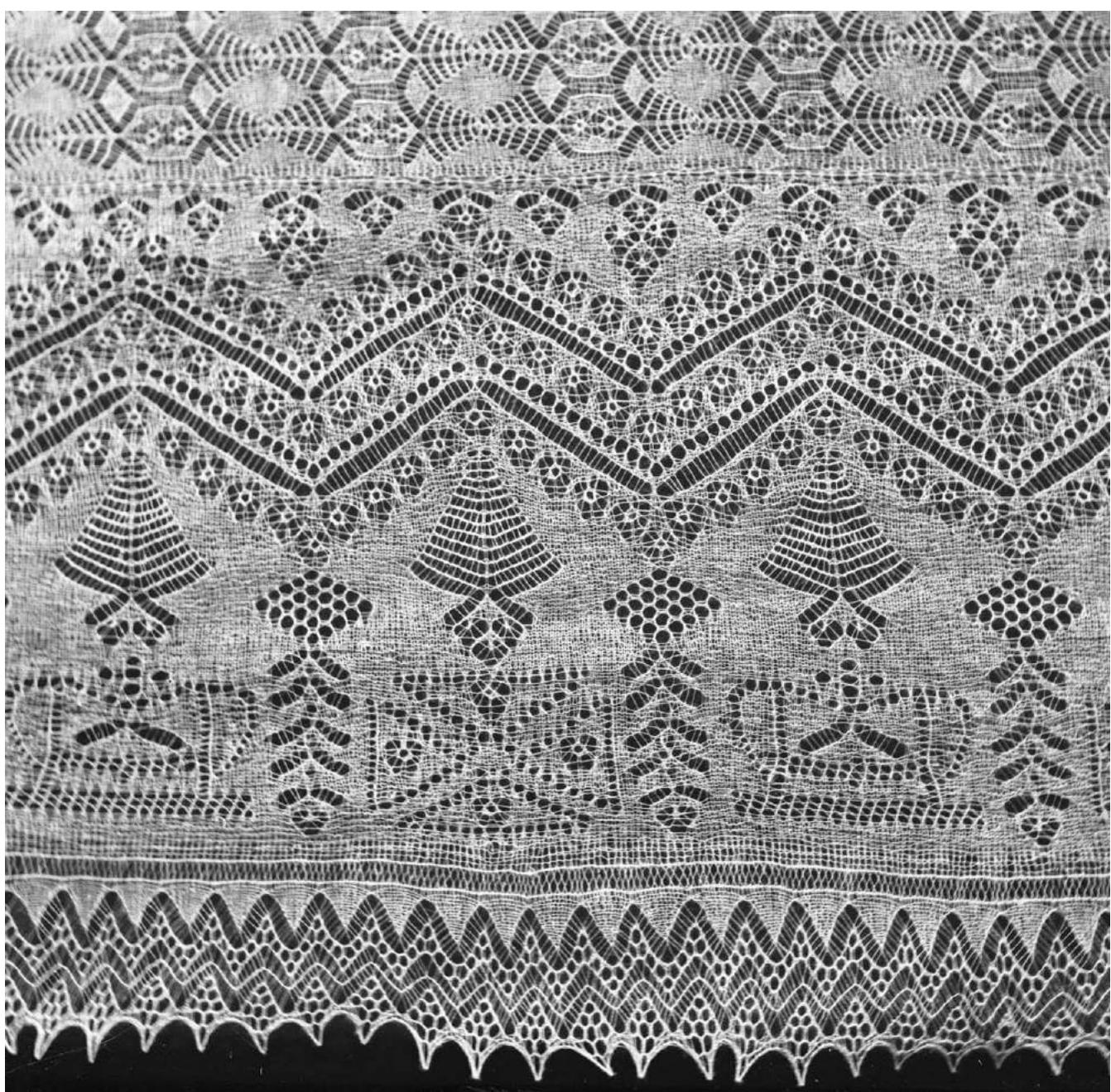
War altered everything. Servicemen were willing to buy knitwear for cash. Activists set up a co-operative company to break the stranglehold of the merchants. One merchant broke ranks and offered the knitters money. They flocked to his shop, and left his colleagues high and dry.

Shetland's knitwear history is dramatic, but, as I say, the sources are difficult to track down. For a splendid overview of the history, and the current state of the trade, see the essays in Sarah Laurenson, ed., *Shetland Textiles: 800 BC to the present* (Lerwick 2013). It is beautifully illustrated.

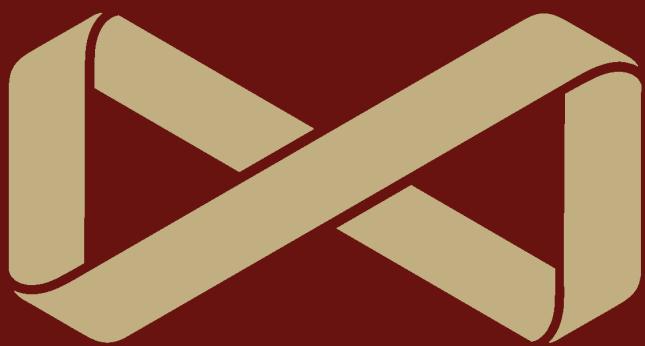
Brian Smith, Archivist, Shetland Museum & Archives

Image captions by Dr Carol Christiansen, Curator,

[Shetland Museum & Archives](#)



Above: Detail of Shetland lace knitting, which developed in the late 1830s. So exquisite was this type of knitting that shawls and other garments were gifted to and purchased by royalty. This shawl has a border with a crown in the design, a mark that this was the prototype for a shawl destined as a royal gift. (Courtesy Shetland Museum & Archives)



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