

Summary of Chair's report, Scotland-Russia Forum AGM. Edinburgh, 8.12.2014

Jenny Carr

Introductory remarks

Thank you to everyone who has come this evening. We are delighted to welcome the vice-consul of the Russian Consulate General Timofey Kunitsky. I am sorry that Mykhaylo Osnach, the Ukrainian Consul General, also an honorary member of the SRF and a good supporter of ours, is not here this evening. He sent his apologies.

This has been a difficult year politically and looks like getting more difficult. We are of course particularly distressed by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The SRF is committed to continuing to promote Scottish interest not only in Russia but also in Ukraine and the other countries which used to be part of the USSR.

Lack of interest can only mean ignorance, apathy and isolation all of which threaten international relations.

The SRF believes that it is important to debate issues as openly and as open-mindedly as possible. As an independent organisation we believe our role is to encourage such debate.

We believe that cultural exchange is an important way to keep communication going and I will conclude these introductory remarks with the words of Mikhail Shvydkoy, Mr Putin's special representative: "Culture is becoming an instrument to preserve some kind of contacts, some kind of atmosphere that might help revive a feeling of trust" (*The Times*, 8 Dec 2014).

Text of presentation. (Slides can be [downloaded](#))

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1. The distinct role of the SRF

- Educational charity
- Tries to promote understanding of all the countries of the FSU
- Broad range of interests
 - *"the respective ways of life, history, heritage and the cultural and commercial activities and voluntary services of the said countries and through the creation of educational contacts of all kinds between the peoples of these educational contacts of all kinds between the peoples of these countries"* SRF Constitution 3.2
- Independent
- Voluntary

2. Activities



We are now based at Summerhall. We have a small office which also houses our lending library.

We try to interest in as many people as possible in Russia and its “neighbours”.

- Promotion of events related to those countries
- Our journal, available in print and online
- Organise occasional events, social and informational
- Work with many other organisations and individuals (advice, promotion of events, collaboration)
- Try to get Russian / Russian culture into schools

Main activities during 2014:

Tasters, Siberian Ballet reception, LGBT discussions and films (with others), Lermontov exhibition and reception in Parliament (with others), Events listings , NEW!! Website for children



3. What do our members think?

- Should we keep our office? *62% said Yes*
- Do you use the Library and should we keep it? *Only 4% use it but 38% of non-users want to keep it*
- What do you think of the E-bulletin? *91% said it was very valuable*
- What do you think of the Review? *73% always read it*
- Other suggestions? *Keep going!*

4. Our reach

- Membership 180 now (210 at end 2013-14)
- Website av.7760 visits pcm
- Circulation of e-bulletin 1100
- Review 500cc circulated
- Facebook “likes” 756
- Twitter “followers” 378

The 10 most visited pages on our website

	Top 10 most popular pages in 2014	Av Clicks per month
1.	Home	3254
2.	Exhibitions	563
3.	Language classes	430
4.	What’s On	378
5.	Links	356
6.	Talks	263
7.	Ukraine	230
8.	About us	219
9.	Keep school exams	212
10.	Notices	203

Benchmarking our social media following

	Facebook	Twitter
Academia Rossica	10286	1798
Rosstrudnichestvo UK	3935	14
Pushkin House	2682	1696
AUGB	2523	732
Russian Art & Culture	1134	2198
SRF	756	378
Dashkova Centre	462	190
Westminster Russia Forum	191	925
SCRSS	171	0
RCS Haven	114	23
GB-Russia Soc	29	10

5. Thanks to:

- Officers and committee
- Members
- Supporters, moral and financial
- SRF Review team
- Чай н Чат organisers
- Language tutors