



The Scotland-Russia Forum

Annual Report

Sept 2007 – August 2008

Aims

The Forum was founded in February 2002, as a successor to the Scottish branch of the Britain-Russia Centre (previously GB-USSR Association).

We aim to promote a clear understanding in Scotland and in Russia and its neighbouring countries of each other's ways of life, cultural and commercial activities and voluntary services, and to create contacts of all kinds between the peoples of these countries.

Officers 2007 - 2008

Hon. President	<i>position vacant</i>
Hon.Vice-President	Lt Commander Dairmid Gunn OBE, Royal Navy (Retd).
Hon.Vice-President	The Baroness Smith of Gilmorehill

Committee 2007 – 2008

Chairperson	Jenny Carr
Treasurer	Ian McGowan
Secretary	Margot Alexander
Committee members	Alan Holmes
	Neville Long
	Anastasia Melnik (resigned March 2008)
	Andrei Rogatchevski
	Irina Voloshinova (resigned May 2008)
Coopted members 2007-8	Wendy Muzlanova (Perth)
	Elena Reid (Highlands)

The Scotland-Russia Forum

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STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 1 SEPT 2007-31 AUG 2008

		2007-08	2006-07	Notes
		To nearest £	To nearest £	1
INCOME				
	Donations incl. Subscriptions	48195	2950	
	Grants	7750		
	Fundraising activities	1483	872	
	Trading receipts	691	81	
	Income from investments	359		
	Other charitable activities	43		
	Total	58521	3903	
EXPENDITURE				
	Payments relating directly to charitable activities	12915	3500	
	Governance costs – legal costs	956		
	Purchases of fixed assets	642		
	Total	14513	3500	
SURPLUS FOR YEAR		44008	403	
CASH FUNDS	Cash and bank balances at start of year	4269	3866	
	Surplus on receipts and payments account	44008	403	
	Cash and bank balances at end of year	48277	4269	

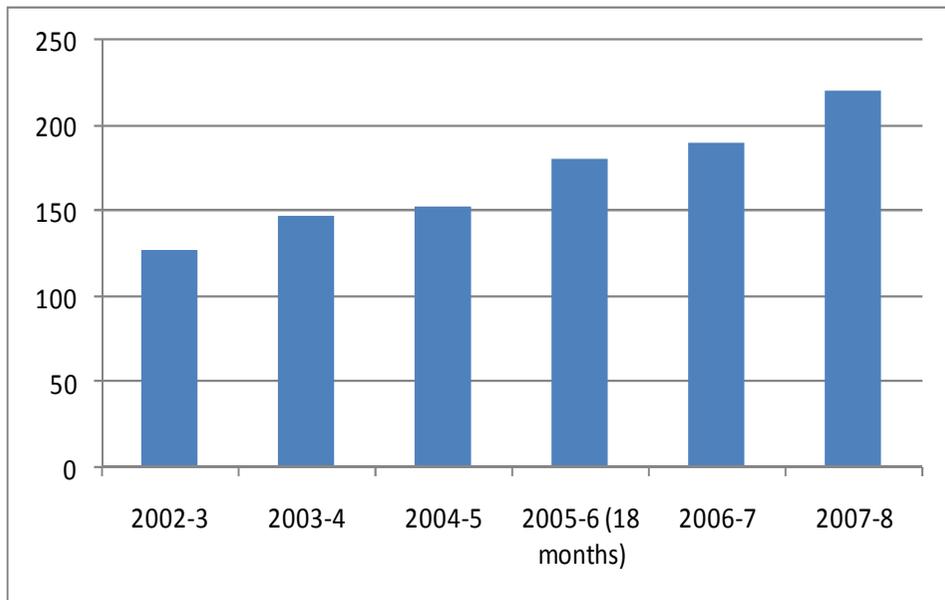
NOTES

1. The figures reflect the breakdown of receipts and payments required by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator in the Forum's annual report to OSCR.

over the last 3 years; and Alan Holmes who not only made the original introduction to S&N but also played a very active part in planning the culture centre at the early stages until his time was claimed by the world of international golf. We are also grateful to two members who retired early during 2007-8: Anastasia Melnik and Irina Pond. And to two coopted members, both very active in promoting the SRF outside Edinburgh: Wendy Muzlanova in Perth and Elena Reid in the Highlands. Wendy's report on the Perth scene is on your chairs. And finally, not on the committee (he now lives in London) but making an extremely valuable contribution to the Forum, thanks to Chris Delaney who with the assistance of Wendy Muzlanova, puts together the increasingly interesting and professional looking "SRF Review". And to our vice-President Dairmid Gunn who writes reviews, attends meetings and is always ready to offer advice and encouragement.

Jenny Carr
Chairperson
November 2008

Membership growth Feb 2002-Sept 2008



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2007-8

TALKS etc

- Sept 07 AGM and talk by Aleksei Kulakov, Russian consul. Followed by video of the Varyag memorial ceremony and Georgian wine tasting.
- Oct 07 Bohdan Yaramenko, general consul of Ukraine "Ukrainian Update"
- Nov 07 Fr Stephen Platt "The Meaning of Icons"
- Dec 07 Christmas Party
- Jan 08 John Massey Stewart "Travels in Siberia"
- Feb 08 Bridget Tempest "Turkmenistan—Land of Artists and Horses"
- Mar 08 Masha Karp "Anna Politkovskaya as an investigative journalist"
- Apr 08 Prof. Geoffrey Swain "Trotsky's role in the Civil War"
- May 08 Rt Hon George Reid "Unfreezing the Conflicts"

OTHER: opening of the Scotland-Russia Institute

We received a generous donation from Scottish & Newcastle plc to pay for three years rental and associated costs for a Russian cultural centre in Edinburgh. Suitable premises were rented in South College St from June 2008 and refurbished over the summer months by several SRF volunteers with some professional help. A grant was received from the Lottery's Awards for All scheme for furniture and equipment. Many donations were also received from members and other wellwishers. We are very grateful to all donors and volunteers.

The official launch of the **Scotland-Russia Institute** was 17 September 2008.

COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter We publish a biannual journal, the **SRF Review**, in June and December. The editorial team in 2007-8 was Chris Delaney (Editor), Emily Justice (Reviews Editor, Dec 2007) and Wendy Muzlanova (Reviews Editor, June 2008). The Review contains mainly feature articles and reviews. It is sent free to all members. £1.50 where sold.

Website www.scotlandrussiaforum.org

Emails approx. weekly bulletins containing events and notices of Scottish/Russian etc interest are sent to around 400 members and non-members

AFFILIATED ACTIVITIES

School for Russian speaking children in Edinburgh run by Russian Edinburgh was founded by the SRF and we continue to take a close interest in its activities.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT at the AGM

A lot has happened since our last AGM in September 2007, not least the opening of our splendid new cultural centre. Most of what I want to say tonight is thanks to all the organisations and individuals who have helped get us to this point but I'll start with a brief summary of all the other things we've been doing over the last 12 months.

REVIEW OF YEAR

Our guest at last year's AGM was Aleksei Kulakov, the Russian senior consul. We also showed a video of the Varyag memorial ceremony earlier that month and finished with a Georgian wine tasting. Meetings for the rest of the year included an update on Ukrainian politics from Bohdan Yaramenko, general consul of Ukraine; a talk on the meaning of icons by Fr Stephen Platt from the Oxford Orthodox church; a description of many years' travels in Siberia by John Massey Stewart (which sent one of our members on an unfortunately unsuccessful search for a lost clan of Stewarts in deepest Siberia which he'd been told about). After that we heard about the artists and horses of Turkmenistan from Bridget Tempest; about Anna Politkovskaya from Masha Karp of the BBC Russian Service; Trotsky from Prof. Geoffrey Swain, and peacemaking efforts in the Caucasus by the Rt Hon George Reid. The usual mixture of countries, topics and venues (German church, Old St Pauls church hall, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh University Students Union, Scottish Arts Club).

We had a memorable Christmas party, continued to publish our newsletter, now renamed the SRF Review and bursting into colour in its Dec 08 issue. And to send out email bulletins of Russo-Scottish events to around 400 people and organisations – some in foreign countries incl Russia, the USA and England.

OPENING OF SRI AND FUTURE PLANS

At the same time we were preparing for the opening of our cultural centre. Members gave us the go-ahead at the AGM and shortly after that we heard that our application for charitable status had been accepted. We contacted our sponsor, S&N, who had offered to fund us for 3 years, with the good news – in the week they learned that they had a takeover battle on their hands. Panic. The money promised was forthcoming however and a working party of SRF members began the search for a suitable property to rent. In June, shortly after S&N lost its battle, we got the keys to 9 South College St and began a summer of renovation – mostly involving a lot of paint and gangs of volunteers of varying expertise. This September we were busy with parties – for members, for the official opening, for students – hence the delayed AGM... In October we opened our doors to the public with a rota of volunteers enabling us to be open 5 days a week, an amazing start.

And the public is coming in – attracted by the exhibitions, curiosity etc. We are adding people to our mailing list on a daily basis and a number have become members.

FUTURE PLANS

Our programme of talks will continue to be as varied as before but not so peripatetic since most will be held here. We have already started a programme of exhibitions. We can now offer rooms to other organisations and individuals. Those who have made use of the centre do far include Russian tutors, a Georgian choir, and (next week) a charity fundraising event and entertainment.

Other plans depend on you! Please give us your suggestions and, even better, offers of organisational help for new initiatives.

THANKS

And finally – a VERY long list of thank yous.

First of all we are very grateful indeed to our main sponsor, S&N plc. As part-owner of Baltic Beer Holdings S&N donated to many Russian events in the UK (Edinburgh University studentships, the Varyag memorial, the Nicholas & Alexandra exhibition at the Royal Museum etc) and we hope that the Scotland-Russian Institute will continue, in a different way, their efforts to promote contact and understanding between Russia and Scotland. Without S&N's donation we would not be here.

Secondly we are grateful to the Lottery's Awards for All who gave very generous funding for furniture and equipment – without them you'd all be sitting on the floor.

And then there are too many private donations of money, books, equipment, and time to list here:

Donations have included—money, a microwave oven, a clock, pictures, display cases, tables, and LOTS of books for the library and for language teaching.

Volunteers have helped with—finding the property, painting and other refurbishing, and now sitting at the desk here and welcoming visitors as well as doing all the other tasks needed to keep things running

A particular thank you to the committee – Ian McGowan the Treasurer who does not blanch at my huge expenses claims as I spend my way through the AfA grant; Margot Alexander the Secretary who has done a myriad of tasks from minute taking to taking a very active part in the refurbishment and now acting as a regular volunteer and “housekeeper”; Andrei Rogatchevski who organised one of our talks this year. And the two who are retiring from the committee: Neville Long who is retiring after 3 years and has also helped with all sorts of things not least recently the difficult task of keeping us on the H&S rails and (for which I tend to be more grateful) suggesting and organising some of our talks