

Connecting Scotland's Sounds

project summary



Unheard Of podcast session, Orkney



Archiving Oral History course, Glasgow



**SCOTLAND'S
SOUNDS**

connecting our audio heritage

About Connecting Scotland's Sounds

Connecting Scotland's Sounds was a 2 year project championing Scotland's heritage audio recordings. It was largely funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and coordinated by the National Library of Scotland. The project delivered an interlinked programme of knowledge exchange and public engagement activities which took place across Scotland during 2016 and 2017.

Connecting Scotland's Sounds was overseen by the National Library of Scotland's Sound Collections Curator and a project Engagement & Learning Coordinator (part-time), and was governed by a project board with representatives from five key stakeholder organisations.



The project drew on partnerships with the Scotland's Sounds network, which includes a range of people from museums, libraries, archives, community organisations and private collections who are working together to preserve and share Scotland's heritage recorded sounds. Regular stakeholder meetings are coordinated by the National Library of Scotland in order to strengthen ties between organisations caring for sound collections and to share responsibility for their sustainable access for the benefit of the public.



Project activity

Public engagement: It is estimated that 3056 individuals attended one or more of the project's 80 public engagement sessions (including 8 initiated outwith the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project). These activities showcased recordings from 25 different collections with support from an estimated 146 people representing 90 organisations or freelancers, including 14 academic researchers, 38 volunteers and 20 artists. Approximately 5,000 further people have passed through the Pier Waiting Room on the Isle of Canna and have enjoyed archive audio recordings as part of the Fuaim na Mara / Sound of the Sea project.

Links to the podcasts, animations and films created as part of the project can be found at www.scotlandssounds.org

Knowledge exchange: 555 knowledge exchange places were filled during 34 knowledge exchange activities, including 12 on-site visits (for coaching or research purposes) and 3 activities initiated outwith the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project. The programme delivery was supported by 64 people representing 41 different organisations or freelancers.

Most of the Connecting Scotland's Sounds knowledge exchange activities were evaluated on the day via feedback forms, and response was extremely positive. The quality and content of the sessions were highly regarded, as was the opportunity to learn from others. Attenders also mentioned feeling inspired to take positive action as a consequence of attending. Some attenders would have liked to have more time to cover the topics and access to resources outside the sessions.

Public engagement programmes



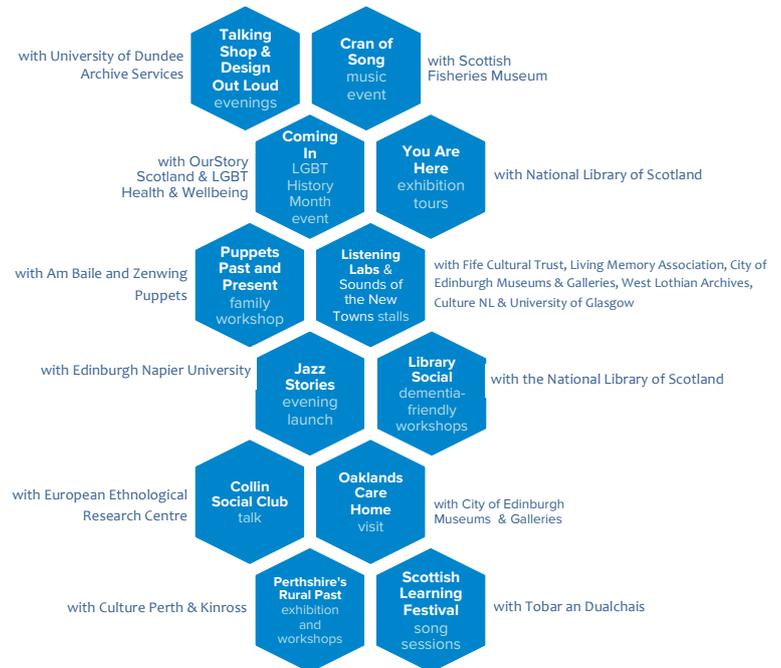
3,056

individuals attended one or more of **80** public engagement sessions

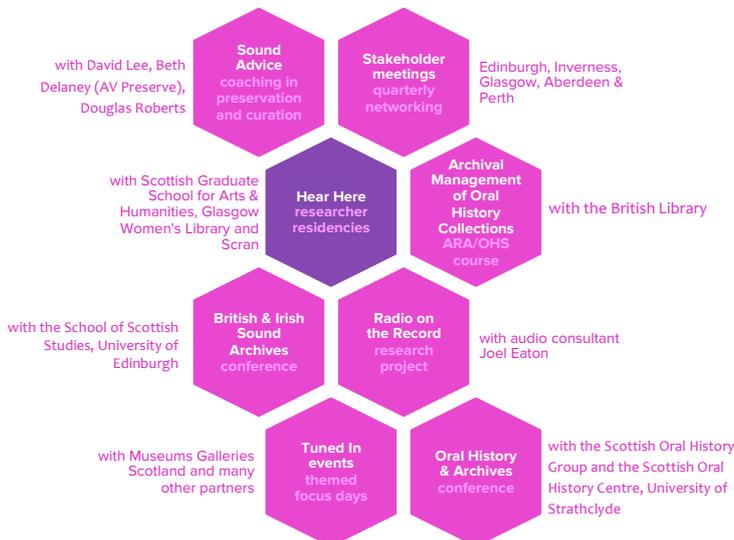
Public engagement events

25

different audio collections were showcased with support from **146** people



Knowledge exchange events



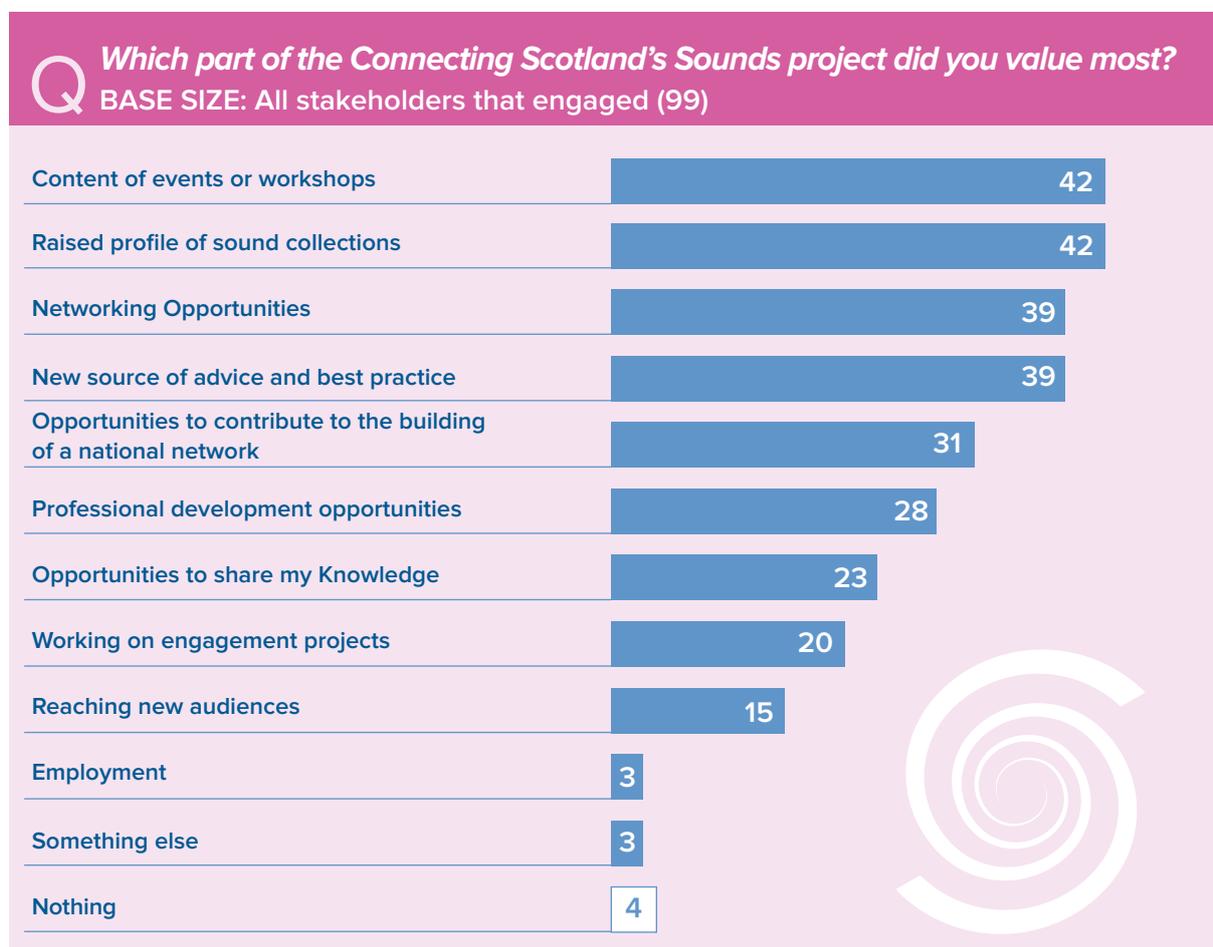
555

knowledge exchange places were filled during **34** knowledge exchange activities

Evaluating the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project

An evaluation survey was completed by 105 Scotland's Sounds network stakeholders at the close of the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project, and the findings from this help us to understand attitudes towards the project overall.

The stakeholders were asked what they valued most about the project.



The stakeholders most often said that they valued the content of the events and the raised profile of sound collections (both 42%) followed by networking opportunities and having a new source of advice and best practice (both 39%).

Connecting Scotland's Sounds was considered to have offered high quality support and training which had not been otherwise available.

"This advice is not available anywhere else."

"There are so few opportunities to gain practical - and relevant - training."

A key component of the project has been building the Scotland's Sounds network, and the response to this has been very positive:

- **79%** of the stakeholders found Connecting Scotland's Sounds to be a useful networking opportunity.
- **79%** of the stakeholders made new contacts through Connecting Scotland's Sounds.



All Ears audience engagement day, Dundee



Sounding Borders animation workshop, Hawick

The impact of Connecting Scotland's Sounds on audiences

The Connecting Scotland's Sounds project enabled many stakeholders to grow their audiences through the use of sound collections. Where members of the public were exposed to sound recordings as part of Connecting Scotland's Sounds public engagement projects, the importance and relevance of audio archives was often highlighted. For example:



"It is very moving to hear the authentic voices from the past."

"The young folk revelled in the chance to engage with stories from their town."

"Irrespective of age of participant or archive content, all participants were instantly able to relate to the material."



The impact of Connecting Scotland's Sounds on stakeholders

Overall, 55% of the stakeholders agreed that the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project had increased the priority that they give to sound collections. Many commented that Connecting Scotland's Sounds had changed the way that they thought about their archive sound recordings, either through giving them greater belief in the value and relevance of their collections or demonstrating a wider audience interest in their sound collections.



"The project has perhaps strengthened my belief in the value of sound collections and what they can achieve."

"Feel more positive that there is an audience for them, and that more should be done to collect, preserve them and make them accessible."

"It has really hammered home the importance of preserving sound collections before they disappear from neglect."

Many of the stakeholders also said that Connecting Scotland's Sounds had prompted them to change their preservation practices either through having a better understanding of the issues, making plans for the future or taking practical actions. Additionally, many stakeholders said that they had been inspired to change their access and engagement practices through exposure to new and creative ways of using sound collections.



Performance against project aims

The stakeholders felt strongly that the project has performed very well against its original aims.

AIM 1: Increased skills and expertise in sound archiving, including digitisation

- **75%** (69 out of 91) agreed that people have increased their skills and expertise in sound archiving as a result of the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project.

AIM 2: People will learn about and enjoy Scotland's sound heritage

- **79%** (72 out of 91) agreed that people have learned about Scotland's sound heritage through the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project.
- **76%** (70 out of 91) agreed that people have enjoyed Scotland's sound heritage through the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project.

AIM 3: A wider range of audiences will have engaged with Scotland's sound heritage

- **72%** (65 out of 91) agreed that a wider range of audiences has engaged with Scotland's sound heritage as a result of the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project.
- **48%** (41 out of 85 where applicable) of the stakeholders engaged with new audiences as a result of Connecting Scotland's Sounds.



Considering the future of Scotland's Sounds

At the close of the project, the stakeholders felt that there was a place for maintaining the work of Connecting Scotland's Sounds, and that the following support would be appreciated:

- Sustaining developments in networking, support, training and knowledge exchange;
- Greater access to support around best practice;
- Advocacy for sound collections, to continue to raise the profile of the work;
- Greater national sharing of and access to sound collections, through linking of projects and collections, digitisation and online cataloguing;
- More funding may be necessary to fund activities sustaining the momentum of this project.



Hands-on Digitisation Day, Edinburgh



Hear Here listening station, Oban

Concluding remarks

Connecting Scotland's Sounds has been relevant, timely, and unique.

The key developments led by the Connecting Scotland's Sounds project have been:

- Building a network of stakeholders;
- Successfully identifying the needs of these stakeholders;
- Addressing these needs by providing high quality training and support, which has been a source of best practice guidance, confidence-building and encouragement;
- Providing a variety of interesting and engaging opportunities for the public to engage with sound collections.

As a consequence, relevant stakeholders now have:

- A greater understanding of the importance and potential of sound collections;
- Been prompted to take action around maintaining and showcasing their collections;
- Been inspired to use sound collections creatively;
- Built and engaged new audiences;
- Created a sustainable legacy through enhanced networks and actions taken.

As the project draws to a close it is hoped that the network will be self-sustaining by way of connections made and actions taken, however there is certainly a call for a continuation of in-person and online support and a concern that adequate finances and resources will not be available to fuel the ambitious activity stimulated by Connecting Scotland's Sounds.

'It was great. Nice to see the museum with sounds in it – and amongst interested people.'

Cran of Song event, Scottish Fisheries Museum

'The video exhibition is a powerful combination of old and new with wonderful musical background. We sat entranced to the end.'

Fuaim na Mara / The Sound of the Sea, Canna

'Much more engaging than reading, especially hearing the different accents. Stories come across best when you hear them.'

Edinburgh International Book Festival

'My pupils learned more about local heritage in the four workshops than I could ever have imagined.'

Finding Our Voices, Dundee

With warmest thanks to all our project partners:

3TFM
AK Bell Library
Am Baile
Animation Garden
An Radio
Anne Ryland, Poet
AV Preserve
Balmullo Primary School
BBC Alba
BBC Radio Orkney
BBC Radio Scotland
BBC Scotland
Black Diamond FM
Borders Book Festival
Borders Youth Theatre
British Library
British & Irish Sound Archives committee
Camglen Radio
Canna Community
Celtic Music Radio
City of Edinburgh Museums & Galleries
Collin Social Club
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Clack and Yak, Platform
Craigiebarns Primary School
Crail Primary School
Crystal FM
Cuillins FM
Culture NL
Culture Perth & Kinross
David Lee, AV Preservation Tutor
Dawn Berry, Film-maker
Diageo
Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic
Digital Preservation Coalition
Douglas Roberts, Education Consultant
Dr Paul Maloney, Academic Researcher
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Edinburgh International Science Festival
Edinburgh Jazz Archive
Edinburgh Napier University
Elgin Library
Elphinstone Institute
European Ethnological Research Centre
Ewan McVicar, Storyteller and Song-maker
Fife Archives
Forthill Primary School
Gairloch Museum
Gillebride Macmillan, Lecturer and Singer
Glasgow City Archives
Glasgow Women's Library
Golspie High School
Hawick Library
Hear Here researchers: Naomi Harvey,
Lorna Barton & Jamie Lawson
Heriot-Watt University
Heritage Education Forum
Hidden Aberdeen Tours
Highlife Highland
Historic Environment Scotland

Inverbrothock Primary School
Inverness Museum & Art Gallery
Joel Eaton, Audio Consultant
K107 FM
Kelso Library
Lauder Library
Lennon Design
Leuchars Primary School
LevenMouth Rail Campaign Group
LGBT Health & Wellbeing
Lisa Stapleton, BSL Interpreter
Living Memory Association
Local Voices
Loch Broom FM
Mearns FM
Media Education
Michal Jankowski, Sound Engineer
Museums Galleries Scotland
National Library of Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
Ness Historical Society
Oban Communities Trust
Original 106 FM
Orkney Library & Archive
OurStory Scotland
Peebles Library
Pittenweem Primary School
Platform
Quarriers
Radiant and Brighter
Radiophrenia
Radio Saltire
Red Facilities
Regal Radio
Resourcing Scotland's Heritage
RNIB Connect Radio
Raretones
Robert Small's Print Works
Royal College of Nursing Archives
Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh
Ruthless Research
School of Scottish Studies Archives,
University of Edinburgh
Scots Language Centre
Scots Radio
Scottish Borders Archives
Scottish Council on Archives
Scottish Fisheries Museum
Scottish Maritime Museum
Scottish Music Centre
Scottish Oral History Centre at the
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Scottish Oral History Group
Scottish Working People's History Trust
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Stronsay Junior High
Stronsay Community
Sue Morrison, Oral History Consultant
Sunny Govan Radio
Taigh na Gaidhlig
TAYTA (Terrifically Adventurous Youth
Theatre Association)
The Scottish Graduate School for
Arts and Humanities
Timespan
Tobar an Dualchais
Tom Murray, Poet
Tomintoul & Glenlivet Partnership
Traverse Theatre
University of Aberdeen
Special Collections & Music Departments
University of Dundee Archive Services
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
University of Oxford
University of St Andrews
University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde
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Amy McDonald, Connecting Scotland's Sounds

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The Connecting Scotland's Sounds project board:

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