

# 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](http://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



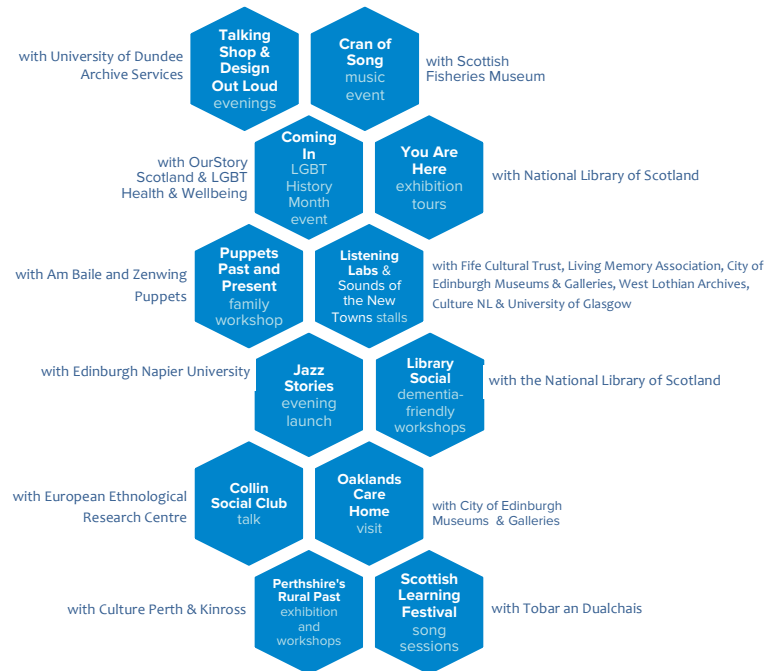
**3,056**

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



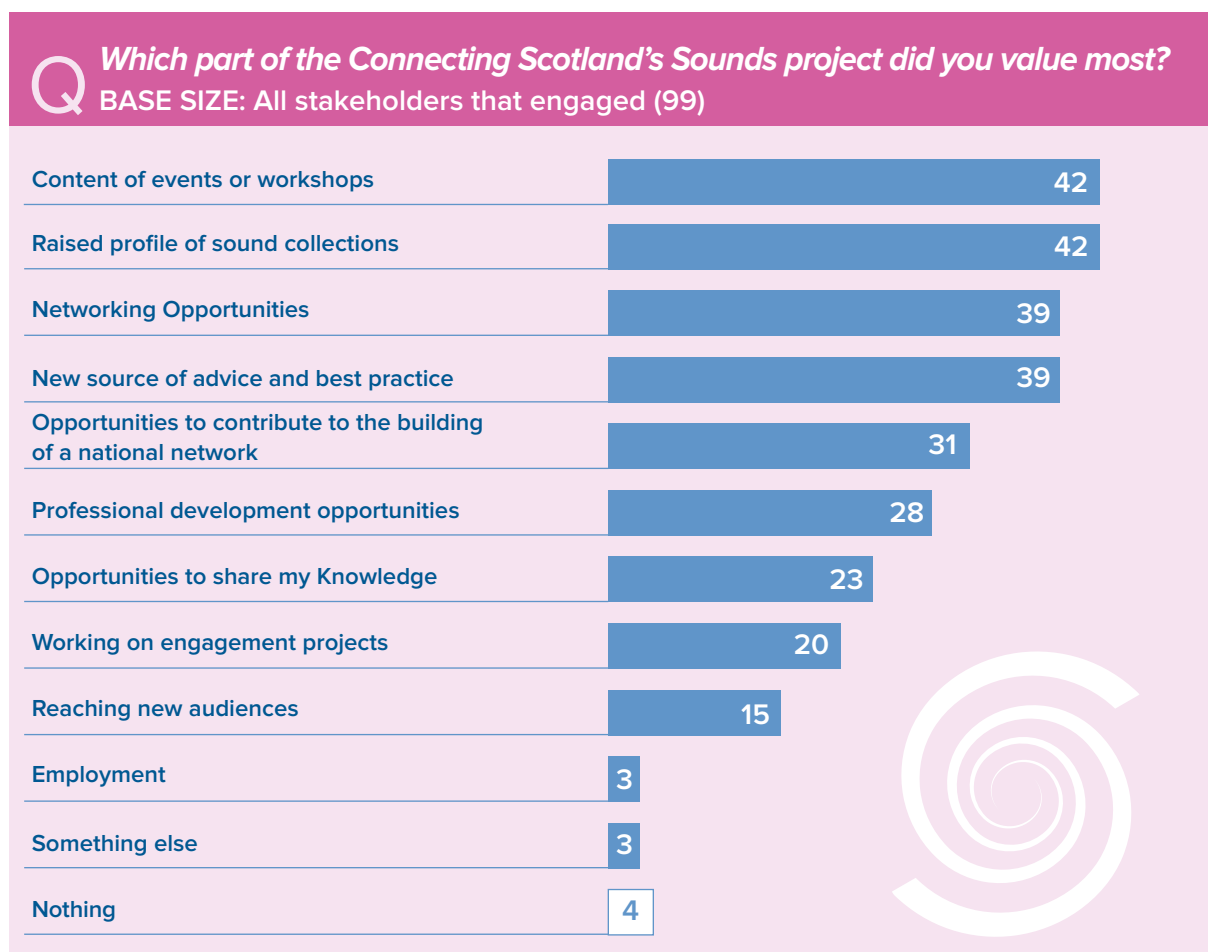
**555**

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  
Raretunes  
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  
University of Strathclyde  
Scottish Oral History Group  
Scottish Working People's History Trust  
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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  
Vanishing Scotland  
Verdant Works  
Volunteer Scotland  
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Amy McDonald, Connecting Scotland's Sounds

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**The Connecting Scotland's Sounds project board:**

Douglas Roberts, Scottish Council on Archives  
Gary West, School of Scottish Studies,  
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Loretta Mordi, Museums Galleries Scotland  
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