

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING

October 21 2017

Following the unfortunate cancellation of our September meeting, this was the first meeting of the group since the summer break. To start we were given a very interesting and informative presentation by **Alistair Bell (Sounds Collections Curator at the National Library of Scotland) about the Library's involvement with sound recordings**. Rather than establishing a national sound archive, which would be beyond its means, the Library (NLS) has recently been undertaking the 'Connecting Scotland's Sounds' project to bring together all the archives in Scotland holding sounds collections. A wide range of museums, archives community groups and independent collection holders have been identified, events have been held throughout the country, expertise has been shared and coaching programmes on preservation and sound curation have been held. For those interested, the website for more information is www.scotlandssounds.org

This particular project finishes at the end of 2017 and it is unfortunate that our group was not involved earlier. However the project is effectively being rolled forward as part of a UK wide project 'Unlocking Our Sound Heritage' starting next year and run from the British Library. This will set up 10 digitisation hubs across the UK which will allow online and onsite access to a digital repository of sounds. The NLS will be the Scottish hub. New staff are being appointed and work will begin by digitising material from 17 different organisations from Scotland's Sounds network. Initially this will mainly deal with oral history and interview material on formats such as tapes, mini discs etc which are in immediate danger of obsolescence through degradation of the medium or the difficulty of finding playback equipment (apparently 78s are ok in this respect!).

Alistair finished by mentioning some of the recordings held by the NLS itself. These include about 8000 78s and 50 cylinders. The main one of particular interest to our Society is the Dean-Myatt collection of 5000 Scottish vernacular recordings and the NLS has now begun digitising these for inclusion on its website. We heard digitised versions of two – a 1909 cylinder of the fiddler James Scott Skinner and a Tommy Lorne Beltona of 'Am I a Man or Am I a Mouse'. The presentation obviously raised a lot of queries as it was followed by a lengthy discussion with Alistair.

Following a brief refreshment break, we were greatly entertained by records of a 'fruity' nature brought along by members. There was a surprising range, including 'Apple Sauce' by the Virginians, Peter Sellers with 'Boiled Bananas and Carrots', a very amusing Jack Hodges (the Raspberry King), 'I Like Bananas 'Cos they Have No Bones' by the Original Hoosier Hotshots, Louis Armstrong singing 'Blueberry Hill', the beautiful 'Apple Blossoms' by Joe Venuti and 'When It's Peach Picking Time in Georgia' sung by Jimmie Rodgers.

Ken Jobling