

SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET STUDIES

England & Wales · Charity number 1104012

Details

Other names	SCRSS
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2004-05-28
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Society For Co-Operation in Russian & Soviet Stu 320 Brixton Road London SW9 6AB
Phone	02072742282
Email	ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk
Website	www.scrss.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION, LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE OF, AND TO PROMOTE STUDIES IN THE LANGUAGES, CULTURE, HISTORY AND LIFE OF RUSSIA AND THE OTHER COUNTRIES AND NATIONALITIES FORMERLY CONSTITUTING THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS.

Activities: Reference library, photographic archive and SCRSS archive from 1924, when the society was founded, to present day. Loan library of classic and contemporary Russian fiction and a range of other subjects. Russian language seminars, regular lectures, films and other events. Members' information digest three times a year and events email mailing list of Russian related events.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£35,224	£29,065	-	-
2023-12-31	£23,650	£30,435	-	-
2022-12-31	£25,328	£18,979	-	-
2021-12-31	£23,055	£20,922	-	-
2020-12-31	£21,738	£20,557	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Ralph Gibson	Chair	2005-05-21
Andrew Jameson		2000-05-20
Bethany Aylward		2017-05-20
Christine Barnard		2012-09-22
Christine Lindey		2016-05-21
Claire Weiss		2025-05-17
Diana Elizabeth Turner		2016-05-21
Jane Rosen		2020-05-30
Kate Clark		2009-05-16
Meirian Jump		2023-05-13
Michael Costello		2015-05-16
PROF BILL BOWRING		
Philip Roy Matthews		
Professor Jeremy Hicks		2020-05-30
Wendy Jane Ansley		2023-05-13

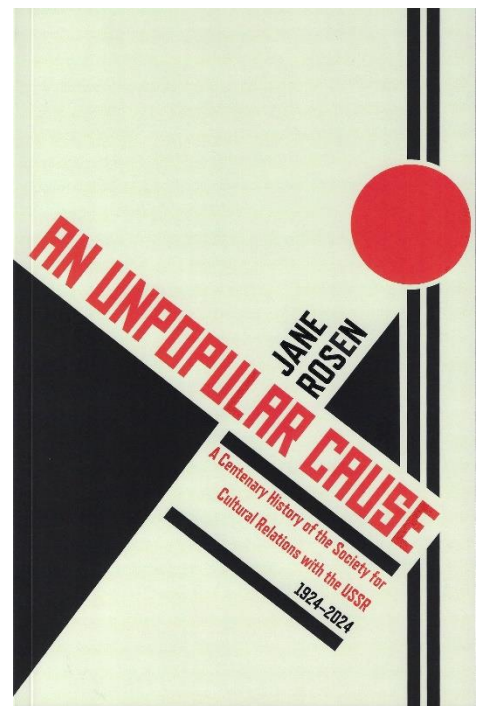
SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET STUDIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1104012

Accounts

Society for Co-operation in
SCRSS
Russian and Soviet Studies

**100th Annual Report of the
Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies
January – December 2024**



See page 2 for captions to these images



Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies

Registered Charity No. 1104012

320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB

Tel: 020 7274 2282 | Eml: ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk

Web: www.scrss.org.uk

Extract from the Rules of the Society:

The Object of the Society shall be the advancement of education, learning and knowledge of, and to promote studies in the languages, culture, history and life of Russia and the other countries and nationalities formerly constituting the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The SCRSS

The Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies (SCRSS) aims to promote knowledge of the culture, language and history of Russia and the former Soviet Union through its activities and unique library.

The SCRSS is a self-funding membership organisation with management vested in Annual General Meetings and regular meetings of its Council.

The SCRSS was founded in 1924 as the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR (referred to simply as “the SCR”), following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Britain and the new Soviet state.

It changed its name to the Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies in 1992 when Russia became the inheritor state of the dissolved USSR.

From 1924 it has continued its work uninterrupted until the present day, including working with, when possible, other states of the former Soviet Union.

The Society became a registered educational charity in May 2004.

The Society was a founder member of the Soviet Memorial Trust Fund in 1997, which changed its name on becoming a charity in 2018 to the Soviet War Memorial Trust (SWMT).

Front page images (clockwise from top left):

- Margarita Mudrak (IAIC Chair), Philip Matthews (SCRSS Chair), and Bill Bowring (SCRSS President) cut the centenary cake at the 6 July celebration (*photo Karl Weiss*)
- The cover of *An Unpopular Cause*, the centenary history of the Society
- View of the introductory section of the centenary exhibition (*photo William McKee*)
- Helen Sharman, the UK’s first person in space at the special event in December to round of the Society’s 100th year (*photo Karl Weiss*)

Annual Report of the Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies January 1 to December 31, 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

At the Annual General Meeting of the SCRSS held on Saturday 18 May 2024 and the subsequent Council meeting, the following officers and Council were elected, or continued to serve:

Honorary Officers

President and EC Member: Professor William Bowring

Vice-Presidents: Dr Kate Hudson, Dr David Lane,
Dr Rachel O'Higgins, Professor Geoffrey Roberts

Executive Committee (EC) and Members of the SCRSS Council

Chair: Philip Matthews

Hon. Secretary: Ralph Gibson

Hon. Treasurer: Jane Rosen

SCRSS Council Members

Wendy Ansley, Bethany Aylward, Kate Clark, Michael Costello, Jeremy Hicks, Andrew Jameson, Meirian Jump (*Vice Chair*), Christine Lindey (*Exhibitions Officer*), Charles Stewart, Diana Turner (*Vice Chair*)

NB: The President and the members of the SCRSS Council are Charity Trustees of the SCRSS, registered with the Charity Commission.

Staff

None.

Auditors

No auditors were appointed for the Society's financial year Jan-Dec 2024. Instead an independent examiner approves the financial statement for forwarding to the Charity Commission, in line with its requirements.

Bank

The Society holds all of its accounts with the Co-operative Bank.

1. The Centenary of the SCRSS

It is entirely appropriate to begin this 100th annual report with a summary of the key projects and events which marked the Society's centenary year 2024.

The year began with the completion of the redecoration of the ground floor, including the front door, following an incredibly generous donation from a member. Visitors throughout the year noted the transformation.

In the first half of the year, work continued on the gathering of materials for the Centenary exhibition, highlighting the history of the Society and its enormous range of activity. Thanks to the heroic efforts of the small team involved, the Centenary celebration in July saw it completed, and much appreciated. The exhibition remained on show until the end of the year, and attracted further visitors on two open evenings, the monthly Library openings, and the final centenary event in December.

Jane Rosen completed work on *An Unpopular Cause* – the centenary history of the Society – and thanks to the copy editing and production scheduling by Diana Turner, copies of the book arrived in good time for sale at the July celebration. Significant donations from members, and sales of the book, mean that the costs of its production were met within the year, and a significant profit made.

On Saturday 6 July, just over 100 members attended the Centenary celebration. We also welcomed Margarita Mudrak and Tatiana Emelyanova from the Inter-regional (St Petersburg) Association for International Co-operation. Though the day started with rain, by the afternoon start the sun was shining (though it remained very windy!). Thanks to the volunteers involved, the food and drink flowed, the centenary cake was cut, a toast was raised, songs were sung, and members took the opportunity to meet and catch up, with many exploring the building and its collections either for the first time – or for the first time in many years.

Autumn saw the publication of the 36pp full-colour special edition of the SCRSS Digest which featured articles highlighting some of the individuals who contributed to the Society from its foundation in 1924.

The final centenary events took place in December. A fascinating audience with Helen Sharman CMG OBE, the UK's first astronaut, who travelled to the Mir space station in 1991, was followed by a party to celebrate the end of the centenary year.

2. Membership

Total membership (including affiliations), as of 31 December 2024, stood at **245 (257)** - including 22 joint memberships. There are five organisations affiliated to the Society (one "commercial" and four "community, voluntary or charity"). The Society received 21 (10) new individual memberships and 0 (0) new affiliations in 2024. (*The respective figures as of 31 Dec 2023 are in brackets.*)

3. Finance

A financial statement for the period 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2024 accompanies this report. There was a significant surplus by the year end (£6159) mainly accounted for by the generous bequest from Jean Turner and the receipt of a GiftAid refund from HMRC covering two years. The Centenary Club gained its final member, who made a single payment of £1000. From its inception in 2019, the 34 members of the Club have contributed more than £35,000 to the Society. Six members continued to make regular contributions totalling almost £300 each month.

Despite the significant year-end balances of £17869 the Society faces the urgent challenge of moving to a long-term, financially stable future. The financial challenge also applies to the building which the Society occupies. As indicated in the 2023 annual report, the building is in need of extensive renovation. Neither the Society, nor its landlord (SCR House Ltd), have the funds to undertake such work, and in the current circumstances neither is likely to secure sufficient outside funding to do so.

4. Library and Archive

Work continues on the online catalogue which is based on the Soutron library management system. This year saw volunteers concentrating on the history and theatre sections, (the main collections of these are now complete), the Second World War, and work began on bringing the art monographs up to the new standards of cataloguing, whilst identifying those as yet not catalogued.

Our library volunteers continued to work in the library regularly on Tuesdays – cataloguing, sorting, class-marking and labelling books and pamphlets. This is reflected in the significant increase in the number of records on the online catalogue which has led to an increase in requests to use the archive. Mel Bach continues to provide advice and support as Hon. Librarian. Due to work for the centenary celebrations, access had to be limited.

Due to the centenary celebrations and the launch of *An Unpopular Cause* work on the archive was also limited in 2024. However, many items from both the Library and the Archive were referenced in the book and appeared in the centenary exhibition.

5. Development

The main focus of the year was the marking of the Society's centenary (see *Item 1. above*). Despite the continuing challenges facing the Society, the SCRSS remains committed to exploring ways of furthering the aims of its **Strategy 100** which was adopted several years ago. The strategy aims to: **Stabilise** finances, including building a reserve fund; **Improve** security; **Open** the centre at least two days per week; **Complete** the cataloguing of the library; **Secure** grants/funding to renovate the building and improve building access and emergency egress; **Increase** income from room hire; **Complete** the digitisation of the photo archive, and increase income from this source; **Run** a more extensive programme of events (talks, film screenings, exhibitions, seminars, etc); **Improve** storage of all collections, especially for rare/old material; **Improve** governance, including training for Council members (who are all Trustees of the charity); **Develop** outreach to increase membership and use of the centre; **Improve** facilities for members, students and researchers; **Develop** plans to increase volunteer participation in all aspects of the work of the Society.

6. Use of the premises

There were no room hires in 2024. Volunteers and keyholders are needed to staff them, and until they are more readily available it seems unlikely that 2025 will see any improvement.

7. Volunteers

The Society is wholly dependent on volunteers.

Members of the SCRSS Council supported the work of the Society on a voluntary basis in many different ways: the day-to-day operation of the Society, including dealing with membership; supporting the work of SCR House Ltd and the Soviet War Memorial Trust; maintenance of the building; work on the archives and library collections; organisation of the events programme; production and distribution of the SCRSS Digest, maintenance of the website and social media; and devoting time to the meetings of the Council and engaging in its work.

Wendy Ansley, Assiya Issemerdiyeva and Christine Lindey provided support for the centenary exhibition. Tracey Gardiner organised, and Wendy, Ilona Gardiner-Gibson, and Andrea Taziker assisted, with the catering for the centenary event.

Len Weiss regularly supported the library openings and continued to work on various aspects of the maintenance of the building and framed/mounted the centenary exhibition. Len also continued to provide a photographic record of the Society's events.

Chris Barnard continued to run a weekly online Russian language class.

Claire Weiss and Gordon Harris continued their weekly sessions cataloguing, classifying, and sorting various collections.

Thanks go to William and Anne McKee for support on the Saturday library openings and to everyone else who has contributed during the year.

The Society is also very grateful to Noel Hannon for the independent examination of the Society's accounts.

8. SCRSS Digest

Trustee Diana Turner is Editor of the journal and two issues were published in 2024, rather than the normal three – to allow for a bumper centenary issue in the autumn. **Issue SD-31, Spring 2024**, included features 'Velimir Khlebnikov and "The Radio of the Future"' by Dr Caroline Wilkins; 'What Are They Up To? The Formation of the SCR, 1924' by Jane Rosen (an edited extract from An Unpopular Cause); and 'Why the USSR Needed "The Golden Ring" Cities' by Dr James C Pearce. The special centenary issue **SD-32, Autumn 2024**, with 36 pages in full colour, included a centenary welcome 'Marking 100 Years' by Honorary Secretary Ralph Gibson, and ten feature articles delving into the life and work of thirteen individuals who have contributed to the Society's work at different times in our history.

The journal is one of the benefits of membership, with printed copies posted to all members (online pdf versions are available one month after publication on the SCRSS website). Postal mailings of the journal are combined with membership renewal materials and other occasional materials. Postage costs have increased significantly over the past few years, although production costs with our long established printer are still competitive for the usual black / white issues. The Editor thanks all contributors in 2024 and welcomes suggestions for future articles or book reviews.

9. SCRSS Website and Social Media

Council member Diana Turner manages the SCRSS website. Usage statistics for 2024 were significantly improved on 2023 with total hits of 11,260 (14% up on 2023 and almost comparable with 2022) and 5,470 unique visitors (11% up on 2023 and almost comparable to 2022). This increase was likely due to the SCRSS centenary. The top five webpages were: Home, Events, Photo Library, Library and Archive, and About Us. Unfortunately, due to pressure of other work in the centenary year, the website has still not been set up with an SSL Certificate (to authenticate the website identity and enable an encrypted connection), and therefore is flagged as 'Not secure' by some web browsers, particularly for document downloads. This needs to be addressed in 2025.

The Society uses Eventbrite for booking functionality for all online events and some in-person events. Fees of approximately 25% are deducted by Eventbrite from income from paying events, but it is still much easier for us to handle the financials and automated emails to attendees using Eventbrite. Free events handled through Eventbrite do not incur any cost. Currently, we have 205 followers on Eventbrite.

Council member Charles Stewart remained responsible for the Society's Facebook page. In 2024, the SCRSS Council adopted a social media policy and plans to connect the page to the Society's email address and focus content on the Society's events. These changes have not yet been completed. In light of the new social media policy, the SCRSS Council has also considered the question of continuing with an account on X (formerly Twitter) or switching to other social media platforms.

10. Russian Language

Christine Barnard's weekly Zoom evening class for good intermediate level students continued in 2024 with five terms. The 2-hour conversation and reading sessions were run at a competitive fee for SCRSS members only, with free one-evening trials for potential new participants. The Society thanks Christine, a longstanding Trustee until May 2024, for continuing this enjoyable class which is a valuable source of income and supports our charitable purpose.

Trustee Diana Turner, responsible for the events programme in 2024, continued the programme of advanced-level Zoom talks in Russian for SCRSS members only in co-operation with the Society's long-term partner in Russia, the Inter-regional Association for International Co-operation (until autumn 2024, the St Petersburg Association for International Co-operation), a non-governmental organisation. There were two talks in spring 2024 on aspects of contemporary Russian literature, given by Associate Professor Nataliya Semenova. See Events for further information.

11. SCRSS Council

The Council met online in January, March, May (in person following the AGM), June, September and November 2024. There was a special online meeting of the Council on 15 May to discuss motions to the AGM.

12. Soviet War Memorial Trust (SWMT)

The SCRSS continues to play a very significant role in the administration of the SWMT. The SCRSS Hon. Secretary fulfils the same role with the Trust. The current SCRSS Chair, Philip Matthews, has been SWMT Chair since 1997. Due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the SWMT did not organise formal Acts of Remembrance during the year, but flowers were laid on behalf of the Society on Holocaust Memorial Day in January, Victory Day in May and Remembrance Sunday in November. The Memorial is located in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, which surrounds the Imperial War Museum in Southwark.

13. Obituaries

The Society was notified of the deaths of several long-standing members during the year: William Harnett (member since 1992); John Massey-Stewart [1932-2023] (member since 1961); Professor Stephen White [1945-2023] (member since 1976) and Roger Bunce.

14. Outreach

The reciprocal Zoom online talks programme between the SCRSS and Inter-regional Association for International Co-operation (formerly the St Petersburg Association for International Co-operation), continued in 2024. All talks are on cultural topics, are for Association or SCRSS members only and free of charge. See **Events**. The Society maintained contacts with Cambridge Russian-Speaking Society (CamRuSS) and the Manchester St-Petersburg Friendship Society, exchanging event information, etc. All the Society's affiliates were represented at the Centenary celebration in July. In December, Jane Rosen delivered the 2024 Sam Johnson memorial lecture at Manchester Central Library organised by Manchester Metropolitan University and Manchester Histories.

15. SCRSS Events in 2024

The regular first-Saturday-of-the-month library openings took place in February, March, April, May, June, August, September, October and November – with the exhibition *A Centenary History of the SCRSS in 100+ Objects* on view from August, following the SCRSS Centenary Celebration.

February:

Online Talk: Professor Bill Bowring on 'Lenin, Self-Determination of Nations and the 1924 Constitution of the USSR'. *1920s USSR series*.

March:

Online Talk in Russian for SCRSS Members: Associate Professor Nataliya Semenova on 'The Nostalgia Trend in Contemporary Russian Literature' (Nostal'gicheskaya tendentsiya v sovremennoi russkoi literature). In partnership with the Inter-regional (St Petersburg) Association for International Co-operation (IAIC).

Online Talk in English for Inter-regional (St Petersburg) Association Members: Helen Mercer on 'The British-Australian Writer James Aldridge'. In partnership with IAIC.

Online Talk: Andrew George on 'Andrei Platonov's "Chevengur" as a Marxist Novel'. *1920s USSR series*.

April:

Online Talk in English for Inter-regional (St Petersburg) Association Members: Vanessa Shone on 'A Literary Tour of London's Early 20th-Century Writers Connected to the SCRSS (Bloomsbury Group)'. In partnership with IAIC.

Online Talk in Russian for SCRSS Members: Associate Professor Nataliya Semenova on 'Moskovsky tekst v sovremennoi russkoi kul'ture' (Moscow Literature in Contemporary Russian Culture). In partnership with IAIC.

Online Talk: Professor Jeremy Hicks on 'Oedipal and Incendiary: Revisiting Pudovkin's Adaptation of Gorky's "Mother" (1926)'. *1920s USSR series*.

May:

SCRSS AGM

In-person Talk: Christine Lindey on 'Alexander Deineka (1899–1969), People's Artist of the USSR'. *1920s USSR series*.

July:

In-person Event: SCRSS Centenary Celebration 1924-2024 for Members (with launch of centenary exhibition 'A Centenary History of the SCRSS in 100+ Objects')

September:

Online Talk: Assiya Issemberdiyeva on 'Imagining Central Asia on Film: The Soviet Folklorisation of Cultural Identity'

October:

Talk in English for Inter-regional (St Petersburg) Association Members: Diana Turner on 'Three London Visitor Attractions: Current Issues and Controversies'. In partnership with IAIC.

Online Lecture in English for SCRSS Members: Dr Olga Arkhipova on 'The State Hermitage Museum'. In partnership with IAIC.

Evening Exhibition Viewing: 'A Centenary History of the SCRSS in 100+ Objects'

November:

In-Person Talk, Book Launch and Exhibition: Jane Rosen on 'An Unpopular Cause: A Centenary History of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR 1924-2024' (in association with Marx Memorial Library and Workers' School)

Evening Exhibition Viewing: 'A Centenary History of the SCRSS in 100+ Objects'

Online Talk in English for Inter-regional (St Petersburg) Association Members: Rosa Turner Wood on 'Newcastle upon Tyne: Urban Landscape and Architecture'. In partnership with IAIC.

December:

In-Person Exclusive Event for SCRSS Members: 'An Audience with Helen Sharman CMG OBE, Britain's First Astronaut in 1991'

In-Person Event for SCRSS Members: End-of-Centenary-Year Celebration

SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET STUDIES

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

1 January to 31 December 2024

	2024	2023	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Membership	3,415	3,513	3,753	3,791
Events	625	662	595	999
Library Sales (inc. pottery) and information	0	663	132	80
Centenary Book (sales & donations)	5,450	630	n/a	n/a
Photolibrary	731	336	584	672
SCRSS Digest / sales / adverts	0	0	0	200
Room Hire	0	0	727	0
Russian Courses / Seminars / Evening Class	520	810	880	2,694
Sundries	0	0	0	0
Regular monthly donations	0	0	0	0
Centenary Club donations	4,241	5,567	6,608	6,555
Bequests	10,000	0	0	0
Agency fees / grants / bank interest / refunds	0	1,800	4,761	0
Donations	4,421	9,670	5,149	5,932
Gift Aid claim / HMRC refund	5,821	0	2,139	2,084
SMTF/SWMT donations made via SCRSS	0	0	0	50
TOTAL	35,224	23,650	25,328	23,055
EXPENDITURE	£	£	£	£
Staff wages / tax / national insurance	0	0	0	0
Electricity / Gas / Telephone / Broadband / Water	5,212	3,043	2,744	2,273
Insurance	1,145	1,067	996	1,049
Maintenance	3,846	14,041	2,483	1,312
Office supplies / equipment / stationery / petty cash / Soutron	5,733	4,752	4,710	6,755
Business Rates (Lambeth)	3,877	3,986	4,147	4,147
Russian Courses / Seminars	0	0	0	344
Postage	724	409	484	882
Events (inc Zoom fees)	156	179	535	408
Fees / debts	0	0	0	1,000
Rent (SCR House Ltd)	2,250	2,000	1,750	1,500
Promotion (Printing / Adverts / Mugs / Donations / Memberships)	2,014	866	1,129	1,202
Centenary Book	4,109	91	n/a	n/a
Transfers of donations to SMTF/SWMT	0	0	0	50
TOTAL	29,065	30,435	18,979	20,922
Deficit/Surplus	6,159	-6,785	6,349	2,133
Bank current and deposit accounts 1st January	11,162	18,339	12,002	9,324
Bank current and deposit accounts 31st December	17,869	11,162	18,339	12,002

SCRSS Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 December 2024

ASSETS

Cash Funds	£
Bank current account	1,792
Bank direct debit account	1,078
Bank reserve account	15,000
	17,869

Other Monetary Assets

Sundry Invoices due	0
---------------------	----------

Fixed Assets

Library	45,000
Electronic Equipment	1,307
Fixtures and Fittings	3,402
	49,709

TOTAL ASSETS

67,578

TOTAL LIABILITIES

Creditors at 31 December	0
--------------------------	----------

Approved at Executive Committee meeting on
Date

Signed:

Chair
Philip Matthews

Hon. Secretary
Ralph Gibson

Independently examined by
Noel Hannon

Date



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies

On accounts for the year
ended

31 December 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1104012

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2024.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Noel Hannon

Date:

2.5.2025

Name:

Noel Hannon

Address:

14 Eastry House

Hartington Road

London
SW8 2HU

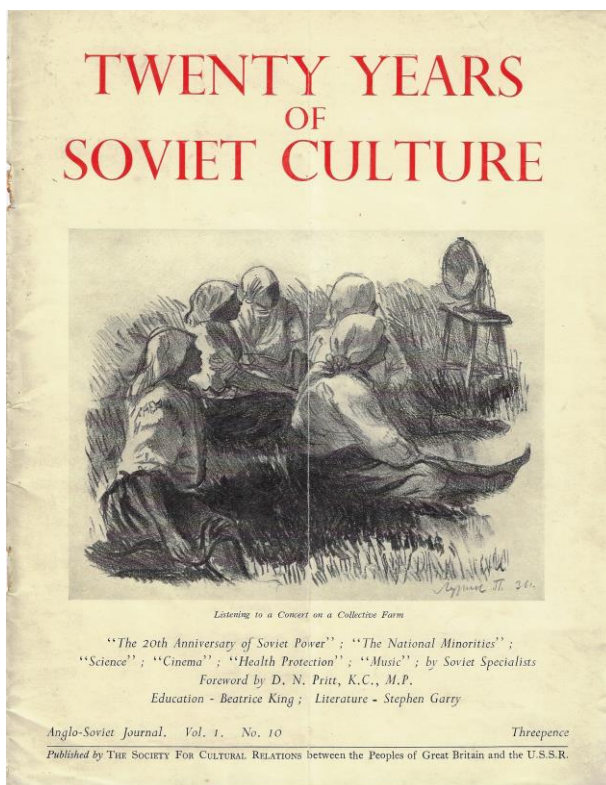
SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET STUDIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1104012

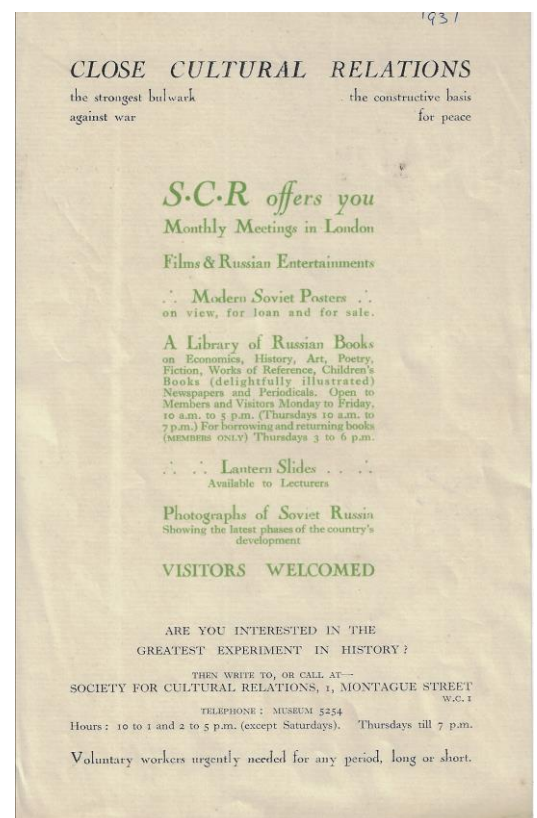
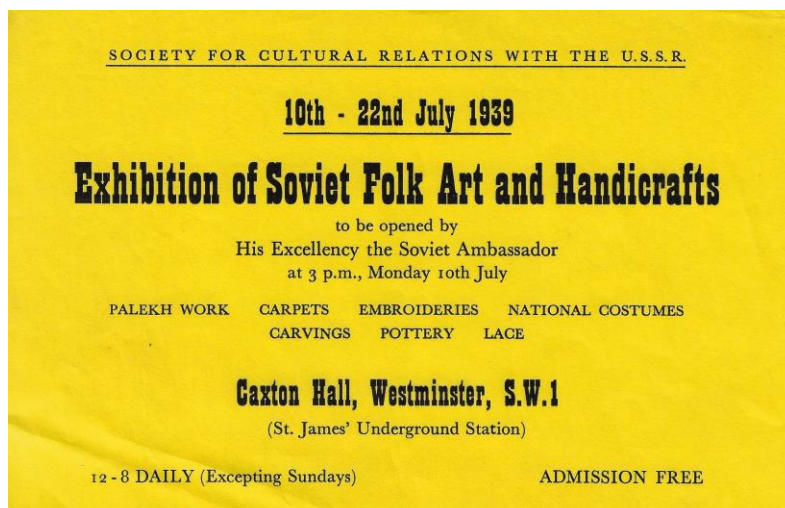
Accounts

Society for Co-operation in
SCRSS
 Russian and Soviet Studies

**98th Annual Report of the
 Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies
 January – December 2022**



See page 2 for captions to these images





Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies
Registered Charity No 1104012
320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB
Tel: 020 7274 2282 | Eml: ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk
Web: www.scrss.org.uk

Extract from the Rules of the Society:

The Object of the Society shall be the advancement of education, learning and knowledge of, and to promote studies in the languages, culture, history and life of Russia and the other countries and nationalities formerly constituting the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Front page images (clockwise from top left):

- A 1937 front cover of the Society's publication *Anglo-Soviet Journal*.
- Jean Turner, Secretary, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer of the Society from 1985 onwards, died in February 2023. This photo, taken by member Vaughan Melzer, was included in the *London-St. Petersburg: City and People* photo exhibition in 2014.
- A promotional leaflet for the Society from 1931, headed "*Close Cultural Relations – the strongest bulwark against war : the constructive basis for peace*".
- A flyer promoting a 1939 exhibition of Soviet folk art and handicrafts organised by the Society.

The SCRSS

The Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies (SCRSS) aims to promote knowledge of the culture, language and history of Russia and the former Soviet Union through its activities and unique library.

The SCRSS is a self-funding membership organisation with management vested in Annual General Meetings and regular meetings of its Council.

The SCRSS was founded in 1924 as the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR (referred to simply as “the SCR”), following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Britain and the new Soviet state.

It changed its name to the Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies in 1992 when Russia became the inheritor state of the dissolved USSR.

From 1924 it has continued its work uninterrupted until the present day, including working with, when possible, other states of the former Soviet Union.

The Society became a registered educational charity in May 2004.

The Society was a founder member of the Soviet Memorial Trust Fund in 1997, which changed its name on becoming a charity in 2018 to the Soviet War Memorial Trust (SWMT).

Annual Report of the Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies January 1 to December 31, 2022

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

At the Annual General Meeting of the SCRSS held on Saturday 21 May 2022 and the subsequent Council meeting, the following officers and Council were elected, or continued to serve:

Honorary Officers

President and EC Member: Professor William Bowring

Vice-Presidents: Dr Kate Hudson, Dr David Lane, Dr Rachel O'Higgins

Executive Committee (EC) and Members of the SCRSS Council

Chair: Philip Matthews

Hon. Secretary: Ralph Gibson

Hon. Treasurer: Jean Turner

SCRSS Council Members

Bethany Aylward, Christine Barnard, Kate Clark, Michael Costello, Jeremy Hicks, Andrew Jameson, Christine Lindey (*Exhibitions Officer*), Jane Rosen, Charles Stewart (*Vice-Chair*), Diana Turner, Leonard Weiss

NB: The President and members of the SCRSS Council are Charity Trustees of the SCRSS, registered with the Charity Commission. The make-up of the EC changed following the adoption of new Rules at AGM 2022.

Staff

None.

Auditors

No auditors were appointed for the Society's financial year Jan-Dec 2022. Instead an independent examiner approves the financial statement for forwarding to the Charity Commission, in line with its requirements.

Bank

The Society holds all of its accounts with the Co-operative Bank.

1. Membership

Total membership (including affiliations), as of 31 December 2022, stood at **269 (279)** - including 25 (26) joint memberships. There are seven organisations affiliated to the Society (one “commercial” and six “community, voluntary or charity”). The Society received 21 (21) new individual memberships and 1 (0) new affiliation in 2022. *(The respective figures as of 31 Dec 2021 are in brackets.)*

2. Finance

A financial statement for the period 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2022 accompanies this report. The end-of-year balances show a good surplus, growth in the reserve and healthy balances in the current and direct debit accounts. These balances will ensure we can celebrate our Centenary in 2024, but beyond that, it will be important for the Society to find a more sustainable financial model. Donations and Centenary Club contributions (including GiftAid) account for over half the Society’s income. The Society also received a one-off refund of its 2021-22 business rates as part of the government’s Covid support programme.

3. Library and Archive

Library open days for members continued in 2022 – on Tuesdays from January to September inclusive, and on the first-Saturday-of-the-month from February to December. The Tuesday openings were discontinued from October, due to insufficient availability of Trustees and volunteer Guardians. However, our volunteers continue to work in the library on Tuesdays – cataloguing, sorting, class-marking and labelling books and pamphlets.

Hon. Librarian Mel Bach worked, with the library volunteers, to launch the SCRSS online library catalogue in February 2022, and deliver training. The catalogue is based on the Soutron library management system. Cataloguing continued throughout the year, particularly on the history and theatre collections.

Hon. Archivist Jane Rosen continued to work sorting out the Archive during the year. Progress was made and amongst the work done was locating and sorting the EC minutes from the 1920s and 1930s. These are now in order and in many cases pages have been reunited with those from the same minutes. They provide a fascinating view of the Society’s history and are particularly valuable for the years that we do not have AGM Reports. These are currently being scanned so that pdfs can be provided for researchers rather than providing the rather fragile originals. Work was also done in locating photographs and these are now being sorted into a section of their own.

Assiya Issemberdiyeva, who began work on a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) in October 2021 with Queen Mary University of London and the SCRSS towards a PhD, is exploring wartime Soviet Cinema for her thesis under the supervision of Professor Jeremy Hicks (who is on the SCRSS Council). As part of the CDA, Assiya visited the SCRSS regularly to research SCR film-related events and other activities during the Second World War, with support from Hon. Archivist Jane Rosen.

4. Development

At its meetings the SCRSS Council continued to discuss and work on the key targets for **Strategy 100** which are: **Stabilise** finances, including building a reserve fund; **Improve** security; **Open** the centre at least two days per week; **Complete** the cataloguing of the library; **Secure** grants/funding to renovate the building and improve building access and emergency egress; **Increase** income from room hire; **Complete** the digitisation of the photo archive, and increase income from this source; **Run** a more extensive programme of events (talks, film screenings, exhibitions, seminars, etc); **Improve** storage of all collections, especially for rare/old material; **Improve** governance, including training for Council members (who are all Trustees of the charity); **Develop** outreach to increase membership and use of the centre; **Improve** facilities for members, students and researchers; **Develop** plans to increase volunteer participation in all aspects of the work of the Society.

Some key developments during the year:

- Revised Rules were approved at the AGM held in May.
- The SCRSS online library catalogue was launched in February.
- The CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Donate portal for online donations was set up in January and is linked from the website.
- Three projects were approved by the SCRSS Council for the 2024 Centenary year: a history of the Society by Jane Rosen; an exhibition dedicated to the Society's history, to run throughout 2024; a centenary celebration at the SCRSS close to the 9 July foundation date.
- Repairs to the front path were carried out over the summer.

5. Use of the premises

The meeting rooms were hired on several occasions during the year, but there has not been a recovery in bookings or income compared to pre-Covid in 2019.

6. Volunteers

The Society is wholly dependent on volunteers.

Members of the SCRSS Council supported the work of the Society on a voluntary basis in many different ways. In particular, Chris Barnard continued to run a weekly online Russian language class. Ralph Gibson continued the day-to-day operation of the Society, also supporting the work of SCR House Ltd and the Soviet War Memorial Trust. Jane Rosen continued regular work on the archives and library collections. Jean Turner continued to provide support and guidance to the Hon. Secretary in his work for the Society, SCR House Ltd and the SWMT. Diana Turner produced the SCRSS Digest, and continued website maintenance, work on the archive of the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, and helped with library openings. Len Weiss also regularly supported the library openings and continued to work on various aspects of the maintenance of the building.

Mel Bach, our Hon. Librarian, devoted time to work on the library and the Soutron library management system. Library volunteers continued work on cataloguing, classifying, and sorting various collections. Thanks go to everyone who has contributed during the year, including members Wendy Ansley, Yaffa Clarke, Gordon Harris, Sara Jolly, Melanie Mauthner, Anne and Billy McKee, Clifford Poole, Olga Sidenkova, Michael Stephens, Claire Weiss and Geoff Weston. Claire Weiss has taken on the responsibility for opening the centre on Tuesdays for library volunteers.

The Society is also very grateful to Noel Hannon for the independent examination of the Society's accounts.

7. SCRSS Digest

Three issues of the *SCRSS Digest* were published in 2022. **SD-25, Spring 2022** with lead articles: 'Vera Mukhina: Queen of Soviet Sculpture' (Christine Lindey), 'Survival and Renewal - The SCR / SCRSS 1991–93' (Jean Turner), 'Russian Film Week Returns in Person' (Donald Gasper). **SD-26, Summer 2022** with lead articles: 'Stalin's Library: A Dictator and His Books' (Geoffrey Roberts), 'Nikolai Andronov and the Severe Style' (Christine Lindey), 'Huntly Carter the "New Spirit" in Soviet Theatre' (Jean Turner & Diana Turner). **SD-27, Autumn 2022** with lead articles: 'Children *Can* Change History: American-Soviet Youth Encounters at the Artek Pioneer Camp' (Matthias Neumann), 'After Russia's 30 Years of Transformation, What Comes Next?' (David Lane), 'Troubles with Titles in Translation' (Andrew Jameson).

Printed copies are posted to members, online pdf versions are available one month after publication on the SCRSS website. The Editor thanks all reviewers and feature article authors for their unpaid but much appreciated contributions, and encourages others to offer articles on Russian and Soviet-related topics in which they have expertise. Unfortunately, advertising in the journal was reduced in 2022 - if members know of organisations that would like to advertise in the *SCRSS Digest*, please contact the Editor.

8. SCRSS Website and Social Media

The SCRSS website is managed by Diana Turner. The statistics for 2022 were slightly down on the previous year: 11,466 total hits (12,928 in 2021). However, the Library & Archive webpage had an increase in visitors, following updates about and a link to the new online library catalogue (Soutron). The Huntly Carter Collection webpage was rewritten with new images to reflect the findings in the article on Huntly Carter in the summer 2022 issue of the *SCRSS Digest*.

2022 saw an impressive SCRSS Facebook page reach to 5,537 accounts, just 5% less than in 2021. We also had 681 page visits, up over 110% on 2021. We have 890 followers. Our audience is two thirds UK based. This includes one third in London. Internationally, our numbers are highest in US and Russia.

Council member Bethany Aylward manages the Society's Twitter account. By the end of the 2022 it had 187 followers.

9. Russian Language

Russian evening classes for good intermediate level

Christine Barnard's weekly Zoom class continued for four terms in 2022, with a loyal group of SCRSS members. Each 2-hour session includes one hour of free conversation and one hour of reading, with a short break in-between. A few places are available and we offer a free taster lesson for anyone considering joining the group. The Society is grateful to Christine for continuing the class which provides a valuable contribution to its annual income, as well as supporting one of the key elements of the Society's charitable purpose.

10. SCRSS Council

The Council met online in January, March, May (in person following the AGM), September and November 2022. Following the adoption of new Rules at the AGM, an Executive Committee was formed of the President, Chair, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. The Council decides on all issues related to the Society in the period between AGMs. All the members of the Council, together with the Society's President, are Charity Trustees of the SCRSS and are registered with the Charity Commission. Members interested in joining, or nominating another member for election to the Council, should contact the Hon. Secretary. Council members are currently elected for three-year terms, and can seek re-election.

11. Soviet War Memorial Trust (SWMT)

The SCRSS continues to play a very significant role in the administration of the SWMT. The SCRSS Hon. Secretary fulfils the same role with the Trust. Holocaust Memorial Day was marked on 27 January, but no events were organised in May and November due to the conflict in Ukraine. Flowers were laid on both occasions on behalf of the Trust and the SCRSS.

The current SCRSS Chair, Philip Matthews, has been SWMT Chair since 1997, and the SCRSS Hon. Treasurer, Jean Turner [1929-2023] who was the Trust's Hon Secretary from 1997-2006, continued her involvement as a Trustee during the year. The Memorial is located in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, which surrounds the Imperial War Museum in Southwark.

12. Obituaries

The Society was notified of the deaths of several long-standing members in 2022, including Anthony Devereux (obituary in *SCRSS Digest* SD-28) and Professor Laura Marcus, Goldsmiths Professor of English Literature and Fellow of New College, Oxford.

13. Outreach

The Society maintained contacts with Cambridge Russian-Speaking Society (CamRuSS) and other affiliated organisations, including Manchester-St. Petersburg Friendship Society, and the North-West Anglo-Russian Friendship Group.

14. SCRSS Events in 2022

February:

Zoom Online Lecture: Andrew Jameson on *Navigating Russian Conversations - The Devices We Use to Manage Conversations*

March:

Zoom Online Lecture: Andrew Jameson on *Tall Tales about Russian Etymologies*

April:

In-person Lecture: Dr Matthias Neumann on *Peace and Friendship: Overcoming the Cold War in the Artek Pioneer Camp*

Zoom Online Lecture: Colin Turbett on *Soviets in Space*

May:

In-person Event: SCRSS Annual General Meeting

In-person Lecture: Dr David Lane on *Russia: 30 Years of Transformation*

October:

Hybrid Lecture: Dr David Lane on *100 Years Since the Founding of the USSR* (joint SCRSS / Marx Memorial Library event)

Zoom Online Lecture: Dr Robert Leach on *Sergei Tretyakov - Modernism and Theatre*

November:

Hybrid Lecture: Professor Geoffrey Roberts on *Stalin's Library: A Dictator and His Books*

In-person Lecture: Christine Lindey on *Representation of Workers in Soviet Art*

SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET STUDIES

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

1 January to 31 December 2022

	2022	2021	2020	2019
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Membership	3,753	3,791	3,887	4,364
Events	595	999	880	848
Library Sales (including pottery) and information	132	80	0	89
Photolibrary	584	672	748	503
SCRSS Digest / sales / adverts	0	200	0	350
Room Hire	727	0	715	1,665
Russian Courses / Seminars	880	2,694	3,145	1,370
Sundries	0	0	0	0
Regular monthly donations	0	0	0	4,450
Centenary Club donations	6,608	6,555	6,743	4,900
Bequests	0	0	0	0
Agency fees / grants / bank interest / refunds	4,761	0	0	400
Donations	5,149	5,932	2,872	5,472
Gift Aid claim / HMRC refund	2,139	2,084	2,748	2,486
SMTF/SWMT donations made via SCRSS	0	50	0	0
TOTAL	25,328	23,055	21,738	26,897

	£	£	£	£
EXPENDITURE				
Staff wages / tax / national insurance	0	0	0	3,237
Electricity / Gas / Telephone / Broadband / Water	2,744	2,273	5,092	4,524
Insurance	996	1,049	1,033	1,136
Maintenance / equipment / stationery / petty cash / Soutron	7,193	8,067	3,900	3,982
Business Rates (Lambeth)	4,147	4,147	4,140	4,047
Russian Courses / Seminars	0	344	2,659	0
Postage	484	882	479	469
Events (inc Zoom fees)	535	408	0	646
Fees / debts	0	1,000	1,120	50
Rent (SCR House Ltd)	1,750	1,500	1,500	1,500
Donations to SCR House Ltd	0	0	0	0
Promotion (Printing / Adverts / Mugs / Donations / Memberships)	1,129	1,202	634	650
Transfers of donations to SMTF/SWMT	0	50	0	0
TOTAL	18,979	20,922	20,557	20,242

Deficit/Surplus	6,349	2,133	1,181	6,655
-----------------	--------------	-------	-------	-------

Bank current and deposit accounts 1st January	12,002	9,324	7,470	896
Bank current and deposit accounts 31st December	18,339	12,002	9,324	7,470

SCRSS Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 December 2022

ASSETS

Cash Funds	£
Bank current account	6,673
Bank direct debit account	1,354
Bank reserve account	10,312
	18,339

Other Monetary Assets

Sundry Invoices due	0
---------------------	----------

Fixed Assets

Library	45,000
Electronic Equipment	1,935
Fixtures and Fittings	5,038
	51,973

TOTAL ASSETS

70,312

TOTAL LIABILITIES

Creditors at 31 December	0
--------------------------	----------

Approved at Executive Committee meeting on

Date 28 April 2023

Signed:



Chair

Philip Matthews

Hon. Secretary
Ralph Gibson



Independently examined by
Noel Hannon



Date 28.4.2023



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Society for Co-operation in
Russian and Soviet Studies

On accounts for the year
ended

31 December 2022

Charity no
(if any)

1104012

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Noel Hannon

Address:

14 Eastry House
Hartington Road
London
SW8 2HU

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.