



2021-2

ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT SAHA

The Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance (SAHA) was established in 2019 to give a public and collective voice to the arts and humanities in the context of Higher Education.

Scotland has a rich arts and humanities heritage and an impressive history of arts and humanities education. We believe that the arts and humanities are a public good with a central role to play in meeting the challenges of contemporary society. They help individuals and society by shaping our cultural, political and inner lives, equipping us with the critical skills to engage with a changing social and geopolitical landscape, helping us to identify and learn from the patterns of the past and to imagine new ways forward. They also play a key role in areas of design, digital development and the economy. The arts and humanities are, therefore, a necessary part of 21st-century debates on issues such as climate change, the Creative and Cultural Industries, wellbeing, diversity and shaping a post-Covid-19 future. SAHA is uniquely positioned to give voice to the value and diversity of Arts and Humanities education in Scotland and to foster further collaboration across and beyond institutions to provide a coherent perspective on the challenges facing Scottish society.

SAHA works in the context of [SHAPE](#), [STEAM](#) and internationally with partners in the Irish, European, Australian, Canadian and North American Humanities alliances. The Alliance aims to enhance public and governmental understanding of the intellectual, creative and social, as well as economic, contribution of the arts and humanities to the well-being and advancement of Scottish society. It provides a forum for examining and collaborating on current and future challenges, for influence on government education policy, and for public advocacy of the arts and humanities in a specifically Scottish context. It engages with stakeholders within the educational, business, cultural and civil sectors and delivers a coordinated arts and humanities standpoint on issues relating to education and research in Scotland and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

During the first year of funded activity, SAHA has made considerable progress in advancing its mission of positioning the Alliance as the representative body for Arts and Humanities in Scotland. These efforts drove an increase in membership and the availability of dedicated human and financial resources has led to a step-change in engagement efforts. As we explain in the report below, we have also made considerable progress in setting SAHA as a key interlocutor in relation to A&H for key policymakers and funders at the Scottish and UK level.

Moreover, SAHA has started developing an international footprint, developing connections and partnerships with key A&H organisations from across the UK, Ireland, the EU, USA, Canada and Australia. In the second year of funded activity, we will continue to foster collaboration on key issues of interest for the sector at the international level through a variety of channels, as discussed in the final section of this report.

In the latter part of 2021, SAHA's efforts were dedicated to setting the appropriate channels to ensure professional branding and communications are in place that will facilitate the development of its programme of activities for years to come.

Given that the activity of the Alliance is supported voluntarily by the co-chairs, steering group and staff at member institutions who generously give their time and expertise to advancing the aims of SAHA, considerable progress was achieved during the period reported here.

STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

SAHA has 14 members now and the current membership is formed by:

- Heriot-Watt University (HWU)
- Queen Margaret University (QMU)
- Robert Gordon University (RGU)
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS)
- Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)
- Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH)
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh

- University of Glasgow
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)

During the year of activity reported here, two new members have joined SAHA, respectively the University of Dundee (October 2021) and Robert Gordon University (March 2022). Administrative matters continue to be overseen by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) which acts as a host institution. The relationship between the RSE and SAHA was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding, its content was approved by the RSE Council and the SAHA Steering Committee.

The overarching and day-to-day coordination of SAHA is provided by the SAHA co-chairs, current co-chairs are Prof Murray Pittock MAE FRSE (Pro Vice-Principal, Special Projects, University of Glasgow) and Prof Catherine O'Leary (incoming Dean of Arts and Divinity, University of St Andrews). Prof Pittock and Prof O'Leary have replaced Dr Widdowfield who acted as chair at the beginning. Prof O'Leary had acted as a member of the steering group since the start of its activities.

Each of the SAHA members is entitled to designate one person to sit on the steering group. The steering group meets 4 times a year to discuss SAHA activity. Steering Committee membership has had changes during the period reported here. The following members have joined the governing body in 2021-22: Prof Tanja Bueltmann (Chair in International History, Strathclyde), Dr Andrew Dilley (Senior Lecturer, Dean for Academic Research Partnerships & Research Governance, Aberdeen), Dr Lesley-Ann Dickson (Lecturer in Film and Media, Associate Head of Division for Media, Communication and Performing Arts, QMU), Prof Jo Gill (Vice-Principal & Head of the College of Arts, Glasgow) and Professor Stephen Reicher (Vice President - Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, RSE). The remaining universities are represented by Prof Ullrich Kockel (Emeritus Professor, School of Social Sciences, HWU), Dr Jon Blackwood (Reader in Contemporary Art & Research Lead, Gray's School of Art, RGU), Prof Stephen Broad (Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, RCS), Prof Claire Squires (Director, SGSAH), Dr Murray Frame (Reader in History, School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law, Dundee), Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson (Administrative Manager, Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH), Edinburgh), Prof Adrian Hadland (Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Stirling), Dr Brian Boag (Interim Dean of Arts, Humanities and Business, UHI).

Supported by the university commitments, a SAHA Policy and Communications Officer, Dr Cristina Clopot, was recruited who supports the Alliance activities on a part-time basis (80% FTE). She is hosted by the RSE, as a member of their Policy team.

DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

Ever since its establishment, SAHA has actively pursued its objectives to establish the Alliance as a representative and neutral collective body for arts and humanities in Scotland. An overview of the main activities conducted at the Scottish level is included below.

WORKING GROUPS

SAHA's activity programme is grouped under four main themes, supported by separate working groups. Working groups include both steering group members and other experts from SAHA member institutions and beyond. The current themes are: education policy, climate change, post-covid-19 society and cultural and digital economies.

During the reported period, steering group members have worked on dedicated guidelines and formalized the conditions and expectations for working group activities and in the next working period, the programme of activities for each group will be strengthened.

The climate change working group has prepared a statement reflecting on the state of play in climate-related research, and what further steps could be taken in arts and humanities research to address this global challenge. At the time of writing, working group members are engaged in consultations to finalise and make this statement publicly available.

Other specific activities developed by different working groups are represented in different sections of this report.

SAHA – SGSAH COP 26 KEYNOTE LECTURE WITH PROF JULIA CORBETT



In response to the COP26 event which took place in October-November 2021 in Glasgow, SAHA prepared and delivered a keynote lecture in collaboration with SGSAH.

The event was held virtually, over Zoom, on the 10th of November. Julia Corbett, Professor Emerita in the Department of Communication and Environmental Humanities at the University of Utah, delivered a keynote based on her long-term research. Professor

Figure 1 COP26 Lecture Cover Page

Corbett spoke about the importance of the arts and humanities in communicating and addressing the climate crisis. The lecture was integrated into SGSAH's ongoing GREEN/GRADUATE initiative which included a series of events timed to coincide with COP26 in Glasgow.

<https://saha.scot/saha-sgsah-cop26-keynote-lecture-julia-corbett/>

SAHA POSTDOC

In November 2021, in partnership with the University of Edinburgh (IASH), the first SAHA postdoctoral fellowship was awarded to Dr Timothy Riding. His project focuses on a particular moment in Scottish history, the failed Darien scheme that sought to establish a colony in Panama in the 17th century. His work will investigate how the Scheme is presented in schools. His work will result in a set of toolkits for teachers to teach pupils to read sources against the grain and also to improve the diversity of sources considered, including indigenous views. The project is expected to conclude in August 2022.

DOMESTIC POLICY ENVIRONMENT

As a new organization, although there was no precedent set in participating in the policy-making process, SAHA succeeded in positioning itself as a valuable interlocutor. Policy interventions made a mark on key debates in different Scottish policy areas, including culture, tourism and international affairs. One element of this strand of activity is responding to formal consultations opened by the Scottish Government and Parliament.

CONSULTATIONS AND POLICY ADVICE PAPERS

A consultation on Funding for culture post-Covid was issued by the Culture, Europe and External Affairs Committee in the Scottish Parliament in September 2021. Facilitated by the Post-Covid Society working group and the SAHA Policy & Communications Officer, SAHA submitted an advice paper for this consultation. <https://saha.scot/funding-for-culture-post-covid-consultation/>

The contribution was focused on arts-related education, proposing measures such as creating and maintaining a dedicated arts and culture pipeline across different education levels to future-proof the sector. It also outlined the need to build stronger links with academia to facilitate work in the cultural sector, especially in relation to evaluations. SAHA also proposed some measures to facilitate skills development in the sector responsive to emerging needs in the sector (including digital skills for hybrid models of cultural production). The Parliamentary Committee received more than 50

submissions for this consultation, yet SAHA's input was featured prominently in the SPICE analysis presented to the Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/~/media/committ/788> (Annexe C).

In November 2021, SAHA submitted a written contribution to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee's consultation on the Scottish Government's international work. <https://saha.scot/sahas-contribution-to-the-scottish-governments-international-work-consultation/> The contribution outlined the necessity of maintaining two-way mobility in education as well as the need to better showcase Scotland's strengths abroad. The implementation of the Scottish – Irish bilateral review was also discussed in the submission. Further to submitting the contribution, SAHA's Co-chair, Murray Pittock, presented oral evidence at the committee meeting held on the 25th of November. A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/constitution-europe-external-affairs-and-culture-committee-november-25-2021>.

The written contribution is available to read in the meeting agenda notes available here <https://www.parliament.scot/~/media/committ/1506>. The contribution was also mentioned in a debate that was organised in Parliament on the 10th of May 2022, a recording of which is available at the following address:

<https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/constitution-europe-external-affairs-and-culture-committee-debate-inquiry-into-the-scottish-governments-international-work-may-10-2022>

A third advice paper that was prepared in 2021-2 was responding to the Scottish Government's call for evidence through the '[Local food for everyone – a discussion](#)' Consultation closed in November 2021. This consultation was prepared by the digital and cultural economy working group members and SAHA's recommendations focused on heritage and tourism mainly. The proposals focused on strengthening engagement with the tourism industry. Branding and the strategic use of Scottish iconic historic personalities and landmarks in marketing efforts, such as Robert Burns, were also set forward as useful tools to support local economies. <https://saha.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/local-food-consultation-SAHA-contribution.pdf>

MEETINGS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICY-MAKERS

Apart from formal advice papers and briefings, the Alliance has already established positive working relations and has secured regular private meetings with high-level representatives in key organisations of interest. During the reporting period, several meetings were held to discuss issues of interest to SAHA members, advocate for arts

and humanities and to promote SAHA's activity more generally. These meetings included key actors such as the Scottish Funding Council, UKRI – Arts and Humanities Research Council, Scottish Government. Moreover, SAHA regularly participates in meetings of the Vice Principals of Arts and Humanities Russell Group Network to represent a Scottish perspective on topical issues discussed at the UK level. In each of these meetings, SAHA representatives have encountered an interested and engaged audience. These opportunities to advocate for SAHA's members and the arts and humanities more generally further emphasise the importance to continue SAHA's engagement in policy-making processes in the next year.

SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

With input from the steering members, SAHA prepared a submission for the SFC call on Alliances for Research Coalitions following the organisation's invitation. The proposal focused on climate change and sustainability benefited from broad participation across SAHA membership and was submitted in June 2022. While the proposal was not selected, it is expected that SAHA will engage in this work by participating in other coalitions formed through this programme. Should the proposal be successful, SAHA intends to develop shared work with external partners also and this activity will contribute to key areas of interest for policy-making of the SFC, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament.

Following a competitive call for applications, Claire Squires, director of SGSAH and steering group member, has recently been elected to sit on SFC's new Advisory Group on Supporting Scotland's Postgraduate Students.

COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING

Significant progress was achieved during the reported period in developing a distinctive visual and communications identity. A communications strategy was developed and continues to be implemented. If at the beginning of this period, SAHA only had a page on the main RSE website, now SAHA has a dedicated separate website <https://saha.scot> which will act as the main channel to represent the organisation. SAHA is actively using several social media channels ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) to promote its activities and the activities of its members. Twitter is the main communications channel, with an active and engaged audience.

A distinct visual identity was created for SAHA also, with a dedicated logo, which will be further used in all communications materials. The website, which follows current best practices in accessibility and functionality, is aligned with the visual identity and was prepared in collaboration with a communications agency. SAHA strategically chose

to use a dedicated Scottish domain for its hosting. The website was the focus of a spotlight feature on the dotSCOT website, the official holders of the .scot domains <https://dot.scot/stories/12101/>.

PODCASTS

A dedicated SAHA podcast series, SAHA Conversations, was prepared, to promote the diversity of skills and career trajectories of arts and humanities graduates. The selected speakers were leaders from diverse backgrounds who also had a good overview of the state of play in their field and could reflect on the contribution of A&H to the



Figure 2: SAHA Conversations Example
Podcast Cover

development of their area and their careers. Most of them were also alumni of SAHA member institutions and reflected kindly on their university experience. Guests also shared reflections on their career trajectory and recommendations for students intending to study A&H and for those who are recent graduates. The episode series included:

- Dr Clark McGinn (CEO, Helicopter Uplift) – banking & helicopter industry
- Dr Bridget McConnell CBE FRSE (Then CEO, Glasgow Life) – culture & creative industries
- Prof Dame Sally Mapstone FRSE (Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of St Andrews) – literature and education
- Christine Wilson FRSA (Interim Director of Research and Policy Insight, British Council) – international relations, research
- Adam Bruce (Head of Corporate Affairs, Mainstream Renewable Power) – energy
- Catherine Stihler, OBE FRSE (CEO, Creative Commons) – technology, copyright
- Dr Fiona Hill (Senior Research Fellow, Brookings Institution) – international affairs and geopolitics
- Jane McCulloch (Irish Consul-General in Edinburgh) – international relations
- Amina Shah (CEO and National Librarian, National Library of Scotland) – libraries
- Philip Long OBE FRSE (CEO of National Trust for Scotland) – heritage and creative industries

Promotional materials were prepared to advertise each of the podcasts including a personalised cover page and an audiogram with highlights from the episode. The podcast series was also mentioned in articles in national media including The Telegraph, The Times and the Daily Mail.

<https://saha.scot/podcasts/>

Following the March 2022 steering group meeting, the governing body decided to create a dedicated SAHA podcast in response to the developments in Ukraine to offer a more nuanced interpretation of historical events which have led to the Russian invasion. Produced by the SAHA Policy and Communications Officer and moderated by Dr Jon Blackwood (RGU), the podcast included historians with different interests in the region, with attendance from other SAHA member institutions: Dr Murray Frame (Dundee), Professor Robert Frost and Professor Anthony (Tony) Heywood (Aberdeen), Dr Thomas Marsden (Stirling) and Professor Catherine O'Leary (St Andrews). *SAHA Insights – Ukraine* explored contested narratives of the past and what these mean for our understanding of the Ukrainian/Russian conflict. They also discussed the importance of narratives of national identity and why religious, economic, and political legacies still matter if we are to reach greater insight into this complex region and the ongoing invasion of Ukraine. The podcast was promoted through an online social media campaign also, reaching over 120,000 people across Twitter and Facebook.

<https://saha.scot/new-podcast-saha-insights-ukraine/>



Figure 3 SAHA Insights Podcast Cover

SAHA STATEMENTS

Two official SAHA statements were issued in the 2021-2 period. The first statement was related to the situation in Ukraine, condemning Russia's actions and emphasizing SAHA's solidarity with those affected, especially Ukrainian students and academics. The statement is available here: <https://saha.scot/scottish-arts-and-humanities-alliance-statement-on-ukraine/>

A second statement was linked with the publication of REF results in June 2022 and is focused on the achievements of the Scottish arts and humanities sector, celebrating the world-class research conducted at SAHA member institutions in arts and humanities: <https://saha.scot/scottish-arts-and-humanities-shining-bright-in-the-latest-ref-results/>.

INTERNAL PROMOTION OF SAHA

Steps were taken to familiarize staff with SAHA at the institutional level also. The SAHA Policy and Communications Officer sought to develop working relationships with

communications departments in each institution. In response to these engagement activities, several members prepared internal newsletter announcements related to SAHA. As these are internal messages they cannot be linked here. Public announcements include:

- A news item was prepared by the University of Glasgow:
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/aboutus/news/headline_814335_en.html
- A news item prepared by Robert Gordon University:
<https://www.rgu.ac.uk/rgview/impactful-research/4989-spotlight-on-arts-and-humanities-as-rgu-joins-the-scottish-arts-and-humanities-alliance>

Communications departments across SAHA membership have been collaborating with the Policy and Communications Officer, including through cross-promoting content on social media.

DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL LINKS

The international profile of SAHA is growing exponentially. External partnerships have been established with relevant arts and humanities international organisations in 2021-22: Irish Humanities Alliance, European Alliance of Social Sciences and Humanities, National Humanities Alliance (US), Australian Humanities Academy, Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) and the Royal Society of Canada.

IRISH HUMANITIES ALLIANCE (IHA)

IHA has now become a close collaborator to SAHA, with the two Alliance teams working together on different initiatives as discussed throughout this report. In May 2022, IHA and the University of Limerick organized a symposium focused on European studies throughout the education system: *The European Dimension in Irish Education after Brexit - A national symposium*. SAHA's co-chair Catherine O'Leary represented SAHA in a hybrid session coordinated by the IHA which focused on the state of play at the third level of education. It is expected that follow on discussions will be considered by conference organisers, further strengthening SAHA's links with Irish arts and humanities representatives.

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (EASSH)

SAHA has officially become a member and active contributor to EASSH. This membership is key to allowing SAHA to keep track of the developments in European policy and research funding that are relevant to our areas of work. It will also allow SAHA to contribute to shared European work on A&H during the turbulent period of

transition after the UK left the European Union. EASSH's work is of great importance in shaping research at the EU level and through its membership, SAHA can have a voice in such matters.

Further efforts on supporting European research were made, SAHA has also backed, with the agreement of the steering group, the Stick to Science international campaign. This European-wide campaign developed by the research community was created to advocate for UK and Switzerland to finalise the accession agreement for Horizon Europe. <https://stick-to-science.eu/>

NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE (US)

SAHA met with the National Humanities Alliance leads in 2021. The organization has similar aims to SAHA, in advocating for humanities at the US level, although its remit is broader as it incorporates dedicated research also. The General Director of NHA joined the SAHA steering group meeting in June 2022. Similarly to the other organisations presented here, plans for future shared work are in development.

AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL OF DEANS OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (DASSH)

DASSH was formally introduced by the Royal Society of Edinburgh with the engagement of the Academy of the Humanities in Australia. Several meetings were held with DASSH, the first one involved the DASSH director and SAHA co-chairs. Subsequent meetings included DASSH Director, IHA Director and SAHA Policy and Communications Officer. Together with IHA, DASSH is likely to become a close partner to SAHA, with several projects in development, including events, podcasts and a potential international statement on arts and humanities.

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES (AHA)

SAHA's coordinators met with the AHA director, policy manager and communications manager to exchange views on the opportunities and challenges faced by arts and humanities in our respective areas. The AHA team will collaborate with SAHA on different initiatives in the future.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (RSC)

An introductory meeting took place with the President of the Arts and Humanities Academy and the coordinator of the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists in the Royal Society of Canada. RSC partners were especially interested in pursuing projects focused on two themes: narratives (especially misinformation) and the

relationship with the ocean, the trans-Atlantic link. It is expected that SAHA will pursue different avenues to explore these themes in the next year of activity.

FORWARD LOOK - FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

In the next period, SAHA will continue to promote the activities of its members and highlight the multiple impacts of the Scottish research community's world-leading research on topics of national and international relevance. It will also seek to serve the interests of its members in interaction with policymakers and key stakeholders. In 2022-23, the Alliance will aim to expand its activities through dedicated internal projects, some of which are outlined below. It will also continue to develop the positive relationships established with its partners and prepare shared initiatives to advocate for the arts and humanities at a global level.

IMPACT CASE STUDIES BOOKLET

This project will seek to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the publication of the Research Excellence Framework results in 2022. Each of SAHA's member institutions will be given an opportunity to promote their research based on the impact case studies submitted for REF. These one-page, easy-read, case studies will be showcased in a dedicated digital and printed booklet promoting the diversity of work conducted in Scottish arts and humanities. A key policy-maker with an interest in arts and humanities will be asked to provide the foreword. The project is anticipated to be launched in the autumn of 2022.

SAHA IN RUSSELL GROUP NETWORK REPORT

Several case studies from SAHA members were submitted for a call launched through the Russell Group network in 2021 for a dedicated report to capture the impact of arts and humanities at the UK level. A dedicated database of impact case studies, in collaboration with the British Academy, was also discussed. It is expected that the report will be prepared over the summer and discussions on the database are ongoing.

ADVICE PAPER ON TEACHING HISTORY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In collaboration with SAHA members, the SAHA Postdoctoral Fellow associated with the Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) at the University of Edinburgh, will prepare an advice paper. The advice paper will reflect key recommendations for education policy based on the research conducted for the project and will aim to contribute to key education policy discussions.

DIGITAL WORKING GROUP MEETING IN JUNE

Two members of the Digital and Creative Economy Working Group, Lindsay Middleton and Rachel McCormack, have set up a University of Glasgow Catalyst project on Food, Sustainability, Health, Heritage and Tourism, with an initial meeting with academic and industry input planned for the 18 August 2022. SAHA may subsequently develop a joint event to focus on relevant themes.

An introductory video from co-chair Murray Pittock is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpuFAM3C2I>.

NEW PODCAST SERIES

As a follow-on to the successful first series of the SAHA podcasts, in the autumn of 2022, a new series will be prepared. While the scope and details (including promotional tools) for this series are still under development, it is envisaged that the series will include interviews with key organisations championing A&H at the international level. The general aim of this series will be to reflect on the impact of arts and humanities in their respective countries/geographical regions as well as shared challenges that are relevant beyond their national, and regional areas. It is expected that this will be the first podcast series of this type and it will facilitate a global conversation on the complexities of the arts & humanities field.

SAHA-RSE-IHA EVENT

This event will be the first hybrid event organised by SAHA and it will take place at the RSE on October 11th. The event will focus on the [Ireland-Scotland Joint Bilateral Review](#), exploring themes such as cultural diplomacy/relations, culture, diaspora and soft power. The event has already generated interest from key stakeholders and policymakers in both countries, with the current and former Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture and the Irish General Consul in Edinburgh having already confirmed their attendance. A showcase of arts and humanities Irish-Scottish research projects funded through several joint funding schemes will be included also.

SAHA-DASSH-IHA EVENT

Developed in partnership with DASSH and the IHA, this online event will take place in the autumn (proposed timing – October 2022). The proposed theme for this event is a facilitated conversation on the contribution of arts and humanities to addressing climate change. With representation from each of the event partners, the event is expected to facilitate topical discussions and advance thinking on the major global challenge we are facing.

As these short outlines suggest, the work programme for SAHA will continue to step up in 2022-23. It is expected that each of these activities and further projects to be developed in 2023 will significantly advance the mission assumed. They will also further consolidate the Alliance's position as the representative Arts & Humanities umbrella organization for Scotland.



www.saha.scot