

## FOREWORD

Our commitment to host the 15th International Radiocarbon Conference in 1994 in Glasgow made us first honoured that the bid had been accepted, and then more than a little nervous about the responsibility we had assumed. Could we possibly maintain the standard that had been set in the previous conferences? Consequently, for the best part of three years following the Tucson Conference, we did a deal of hoping and praying. First, that Scottish hospitality and the inherent friendliness of the average Glaswegian would prevail and second, that the local cuisine and not least the ever-fickle climate would not let us down. In the matter of climate there can be no doubt that rarely before has the west of Scotland suffered two weeks entirely devoid of rainfall. We should have realized that the ultimate success of the meeting would be largely determined by its participants. In the event, the collective support was nothing short of magnificent.

For we organisers, the week of the conference was a busy one; no time to ponder or to worry. We had been ambitious in hosting LSC 94 the previous week, and in organising a series of pre-conference workshops. By the time that the main conference programme was launched formally on Monday morning, the adrenaline was certainly flowing, and we were immediately encouraged further by the enthusiasm with which participants embarked, as presenters and discussants, on the task at hand. We were also pleased to note that a deliberate attempt to mix young and old exponents of the  $^{14}\text{C}$  method in the plenary and oral presentations was paying off handsomely *via* lively discussion. In essence, we are indebted to the conference participants who ensured the highest quality of scientific presentation and debate. We provided the opportunity and our many friends, old and new, responded in full.

“Man cannot live by bread alone”, and so an active social programme was inevitable to balance the intellectual pressures of the scientific sessions. In this respect, we were determined to impart a flavour of something Scottish. The programme started off with informal receptions on both Sunday and Monday evenings; an opportunity for old acquaintances to be renewed and new friendships forged. On Tuesday we enlisted the corporate might of the Glasgow City Council who hosted a reception in the Victorian magnificence of the City Chambers. Wednesday afternoon and evening were given to the traditional conference outing. Afternoon tea at Drymen, with an opportunity to view “the bonny banks of Loch Lomand”, followed by a guided tour and reception at Stirling Castle and ending for most as spectators at the military tattoo on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. Everyone seemed to enjoy the exceptionally good weather (for Scotland), some historic scenery and a day out that was rounded off with a colourful, if noisy, spectacle. Most important and perhaps equally surprising was the fact that, given the wealth of opportunities for exploration, we failed to lose any of our more inquisitive brethren. Glasgow’s new Royal Concert Hall provided the venue for the final event, the conference dinner on Thursday evening.

Our collective reflections on that third week in August 1994 are shadowed by the rapid passage of available time. How often other priorities loomed when a particularly interesting paper was about to be presented. This is, of course, the pleasure of being host, and it was with some considerable sadness that we officiated during the business meeting and closing session on Friday afternoon. We look forward to three years hence to the next Radiocarbon Conference in Groningen. Our congratulations and best wishes for the nominated hosts for the 16th International Radiocarbon Conference.

It remains to sign off this *résumé* of the Glasgow conference with a reassurance to our many friends that they are welcome at any time. We say, “haste ye back”.

*Gordon Cook, Doug Harkness, Brian Miller and Marian Scott*