



Working for Play

A History of IPA Scotland
to mark 21 years

1994-2015

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Introduction

IPA Scotland is a branch of the International Play Association - Promoting the Child's Right to Play, commonly known by its acronym IPA. Originally called the International Playground Association and then the International Association for the Child's Right to Play, it was established in Denmark in 1961 and has grown to have members in around 50 countries throughout the world. Its aim is to provide an international forum to promote and improve the development of play environments, leisure time facilities and programmes for children and youth in all countries. In particular it promotes article 31 of the United Nations Convention on Children's Rights which enshrines the child's right to play and leisure.

The Scotland branch of IPA was formally constituted in 1994 as 'IPA Scotland'. But its history goes back several decades before that and owes much to the enthusiasm and dedication of Brian Ashley and the late Nancy Ovens MBE. As Warden of the Edinburgh University Settlement, Brian had started the Craigmillar Adventure Playground in Edinburgh and with other UK delegates attended the 1958 seminar on playgrounds in Stockholm which led to the establishment of IPA in Denmark in 1961. That same year Brian was appointed to Moray House College of Education in Edinburgh to develop youth work training. He continued his IPA involvement there and appointed Nancy to his staff in 1965. (The writer worked there with Brian from 1961 to 1965)

Over the years that followed, Nancy also became involved internationally with IPA, attending the 8th International Triennial World Conference in Ottawa in 1978. A meeting of the IPA Board and Council was held at the Moray House School of Community Studies in September 1980 with a work/study programme on aspects of play.

Brian left Scotland in 1985 but Nancy, now specialising in playwork training in charge of the National Centre for Play in Edinburgh (the forerunner of The Scottish Play Council and Play Scotland), went on to be both international Secretary and Vice President. She worked hard to recruit IPA members in Scotland and set up a branch separate from the UK branch, which was then called 'IPA UK (less Scotland)' or 'IPA UK (except Scotland)' - the caveat changed from time to time! Only after IPA Scotland was constituted, did IPA UK adopt the name 'IPA EWNI' (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) with a new charitable constitution.

Led by its committee and office bearers, IPA Scotland has maintained an annual programme of activities and events at home and abroad. Its membership has numbered between thirty and fifty, made up of both individuals and organisations. Many have attended conferences around the world and the branch been well represented on IPA's international Council and Board, helping to shape their decision-making and work programmes.

Events

The following have been selected from annual reports and records:

1993. The 12th IPA world conference took place in Melbourne, Australia. It had the title *'World Play Summit'* and was held jointly with the International Toy Library Association (ITLA). The *'Article 31 Right to Play Award Programme'* was launched. (See Note B below)

Alan Rees attended the conference, having taken over from Christine Ferguson as Scotland's national representative.

1994. IPA Scotland's constitution was adopted in March. Its objects and provisions were based on those of the International Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA) as it was then called. As a branch of another body, it did not qualify for recognition by the Inland Revenue as a charity in Scotland.

The United Nations had nominated this as the *'International Year of the Family'* and the branch organised an IPA European Regional Conference in Edinburgh on the theme *'Creative Play. Meeting the Needs of Families'*. An IPA flag was made and flown outside the Assembly Rooms in George Street, the main conference venue.

At the conference, IPA's *'Declaration on the Child's Right to Play'* ('The Malta Declaration') produced in 1977, was highlighted. Based on the experience in organising this conference, a set of notes was produced which later helped to draw up guidelines for IPA's world conferences.

1995. A paper *'Children's Play in Scotland - Towards a National Strategy'* was produced by the Association of Directors of Recreation, Leisure and Tourism (ADRLT) with the support of eight other organisations, including IPA Scotland, to highlight the need for "an overview in relation to children's play and recreation". It said the problem was "exacerbated by the lack of leadership by the Scottish Office and the lack of a coordinating body which could influence play at the national level."

1996. The world reacted in horror at the shooting of children at the primary school in Dunblane in March. The branch submitted evidence to the Cullen Inquiry on the child's right to safety and protection but also to play.

A *'Play Strategy for Scotland'* (a consultative document looking at options for the future) was produced by the National Centre for Play and launched at a seminar in March by a working party representing ten Scottish play organisations, including IPA Scotland. The strategy called for government funding for play projects in Scotland and an *'Alliance for Scottish Play'* to bring together the main national agencies to exchange information, co-ordinate activity and set

standards.

The 13th IPA World Conference was held in Espo, Helsinki, Finland, on *'The Dimensions of Play'*. Nancy Ovens, Theresa Casey and Alan Rees ran workshops. The IPA flag from Scotland was flown on stage in the conference venue.

1997. A feasibility study to set up Play Scotland was produced and the National Centre for Play and Fair Play for Scotland were merged.

IPA Scotland established the PlayRight Scotland Trust as an associated Scottish charity. (See Note A below)

1998. An IPA Council Meeting was held in Antwerp at which a revised IPA constitution and world conference guidelines were approved.

In May, a Fun Run was organised in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh, to raise money for the PlayRight Scotland Trust. It was repeated the following year.

On 16th September, Play Scotland was established as a national charity 'to support the child's right to play and make children's play rights a reality in Scotland'.

1999. The Scottish Parliament was established and a *'Play Agenda for the Scottish Parliament'* was produced by Play Scotland, supported by IPA Scotland and part funded by the PlayRight Scotland Trust.

The 14th IPA World Conference was held in Lisbon on *'The Community of Play'*.

Theresa Casey started a two-and-a-half year Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) assignment with the Foundation for Child Development in Bangkok, Thailand.

2000. Two groups from Scotland took part in the Millennium Festival Project *'Playfest 2000'* in Cardiff and a conference *'Celebrating Play'* took place in Glenrothes in collaboration with the Fife Childcare Partnership.

The branch contributed an entry on article 31 to *'All Children, All Ages'*, the NGO Alternative Report (Scotland) to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child produced by the Scottish Alliance on Children's Rights (SACR). On article 31, the report said the Government had failed to give it sufficient attention or address the issues across the range of its responsibilities.

Help was given to the mounting of an exhibition *'A Hundred Languages of Children'* at the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.

2001. The branch promoted the Children's Rights and Habitat Declaration

prepared by an Expert Seminar convened by UNICEF. Under the auspices of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Children and Young People, and in the context of new housing legislation, it held a seminar in June entitled '*Children's Housing - Beyond the Bill*'.

2002. Nancy Oven's sudden and untimely death this year led her family, friends and colleagues to form The Nancy Ovens Trust to make annual awards for play projects in Scotland.

The branch continued to campaign on housing and ran a second seminar called '*Children, Young People and Housing. Action Beyond the Act.*'

15th IPA World Conference took place in Sao Paulo, Brazil - the first in Latin America. The theme was '*Culture and Play in Open Spaces*' and five Scotland representatives made contributions. The branch made a strong bid to host the 2005 world conference in Edinburgh which would have been a 'first' for Scotland. But the vote narrowly went in favour of Berlin.

2003. The Scottish Parliament passed legislation to establish the post of Children's Commissioner for Scotland and Kathleen Marshall was appointed.

Open Space was established at the Edinburgh College of Art as a research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments. The branch helped with the organisation of a conference entitled '*Open Space- People Space*' at The Hub, Edinburgh.

2005. The 16th IPA World Conference took place in Berlin on the theme '*Play: Learning for Life*'. Margaret Westwood was elected as International Secretary.

Theresa Casey was appointed to chair a working group to undertake a comprehensive review of IPA's constitution in consultation with members worldwide. The proposed simplified structure was subsequently put to the IPA General Meeting in Hong Kong in a resolution for it to be adopted at a special meeting.

The branch campaigned for a national play policy and strategy for Scotland to provide the context for UK government funding through the National Lottery for children's play opportunities.

2006. A seminar on national and international play was held with the AGM in June at which Ute Navidi, Director of London Play and Chair of the IPA England, Wales and Northern Ireland branch (EWNI) was the principal speaker.

Members took part in a lobby of the Scottish Parliament on the need for a national policy and strategy for play in Scotland.

2007. There were hut building workshops at the Scotland Yard Adventure Centre in Edinburgh and at Fordell Firs in Fife. They were led by Lothar Ober, an experienced playground worker from Stuttgart in Germany.

'People Play Together More', a handbook for supporting inclusive play produced by a team led by Susan McIntyre, was launched in March at The Yard (the shortened name now used for the Scotland Yard Adventure Centre). It followed the 'Play Inclusive Project' which had won an IPA Right to Play award in 2005.

2008. The 17th IPA World Conference was held in Hong Kong, the theme being *'Play in a Changing World'*. The Branch helped to sponsor Ouro Tchatchedre of 'Africa Play' in Togo as a keynote speaker.

Theresa Casey was elected as President and Margaret Westwood re-elected as Secretary. A Motion to the Scottish Parliament "warmly congratulated Theresa on her election as President, an appointment which recognised her longstanding membership of IPA, her years as Chair of the Scotland Branch, and her high personal standing as a practitioner, consultant and writer on children's play with her special interest in inclusion, play environments and children's rights."

IPA members discussed the need for a General Comment from the United Nations on article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. An 'action step' to pursue this goal was approved by Council and included in IPA's 2008 – 2011 strategic plan. With the support of eight other international organisations, IPA made the initial request for a General Comment to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in May 2008.

There was a study visit to Scotland by a group from The Life Skills Development Foundation in Thailand.

Two international seminars were held with speakers from Thailand and Nicaragua on *'The child's right to play: international perspectives, local action'*.

2009. There was a return visit to Thailand by four Scottish playworkers during which play opportunities were developed and training provided. A report was published on the first stage of the study exchange.

Ivan Harper and Susan McIntyre visited the Africa Play *'Children Smiling'* project in Togo, West Africa, which had constructed a nursery playground. They introduced 'loose parts' of junk resources and trained teachers in play and advocacy for play.

A major project was launched by IPA in 2009/2010 to gather information to support the need for a General Comment on article 31 and to raise awareness of the importance of play. Consultations on Children's Right to Play were held in South Africa, Kenya, Bulgaria, Lebanon, India, Thailand, Japan and Mexico. A

report on these findings was made directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in September 2010.

The news that the UN Committee had agreed to produce a General Comment on article 31 was received in February 2011.

2010. IPA representatives attended a Special General Meeting of IPA members in Karlsted, Sweden, convened to discuss constitutional matters.

'The child's right to play: capturing children's voices on article 31' was a partnership project with the Children's Parliament, using creative methods to engage children on the meaning and importance of play in their lives. 379 children participated from throughout Scotland. A report, posters and postcards were produced and disseminated.

Funds were raised to support the development of a playground at the School of Hope in Chiang Dao, Thailand.

One of the IPA members participating in the 2009 exchange raised funds for a further visit to support some of the projects in Thailand.

There was a *'Creating space'* workshop on developing outdoor environments for play. A international seminar was held in Dumbarton on *'Scottish Playwork Adventures Overseas – Tales of Playwork Outreach in Thailand, Togo and Romania'* and a *'special curators tour'* for IPA members of playful exhibitions took place at the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow.

2011. The 18th and 50th IPA Anniversary World Conference was held in Cardiff. Theresa Casey was re-elected as International President for a second term and Margaret Westwood was re-elected as International Secretary. IPA Scotland sponsored the attendance of delegates from Thailand and hosted a post-conference tour in Scotland for them and delegates from Australia.

A new IPA international flag was made by an IPA Scotland member and flew outside Cardiff City Hall during the conference. It was flown again in Istanbul in 2014 and will be in Calgary in 2017.

To mark IPA's 50th anniversary, a reception was held in the Scottish Parliament, hosted by Robin Harper MSP.

The Branch and Trust were merged to form IPA Scotland as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) (See Note B below).

A seminar on *'Understanding article 31 - play, culture and the arts in 21st century childhood'* was held in the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow and another on *'Untangling article 31 - play, culture and arts in 21st century childhood'*.

2012. Public Petition PE1440 was lodged with the Scottish Parliament by Play Scotland, the BMA and IPA calling for a statutory duty to be placed on local authorities to provide play opportunities for children. IPA Scotland was called to give evidence.

A joint event with Together (the Scottish Alliance on Children's Rights) entitled '*Untangling Article 31 - Children's Rights to Play, Culture and the Arts*' was held at the Scottish Parliament in August as part of its annual Festival of Politics.

2013. After consultation, the Scottish Government produced '*A Play Strategy and Action Plan for Scotland: Our Vision*' and '*A Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan*'. A representative of IPA Scotland was a member of the Working Group which drafted the strategy. The branch is now represented on the Play Strategy Implementation Group.

The Scottish Play Council was formed under the wing of Play Scotland and IPA Scotland is a member.

IPA Scotland formed a group with five other organisations to promote the UN's General Comment on article 31 of the Convention on Children's Rights. It was launched at an event in March at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh and was sponsored by Creative Scotland and the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP). Entitled '*A Richer Understanding of Article 31*' it was attended by some 200 people.

2014. The 19th World Conference took place in Istanbul. Theresa Casey was re-elected as International President for a third three year term and Margaret Westwood was re-elected as International Secretary.

The office of the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People published '*Children's right to play, culture and the arts. A review of article 31 in Scotland.*'

The '*Children and Young People (Scotland) Act*' was passed. Originally proposed in 2011 as the Rights of Children and Young People Bill, the Act places a duty on Scottish Ministers to consider steps to effect the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) and take into account the views of children.

The Scottish Play Council was formed under the wing of Play Scotland to take over from the Scottish Play Policy Forum (2008-13) of which IPA Scotland was a member.

2015. The year marks 21 years since the IPA Scotland branch was first formally constituted. It has come of age!

Notes

A. The PlayRight Scotland Trust and IPA Scotland

The Trust was established as a Scottish charity (SC026909) by the IPA Scotland branch on 17th July 1997. The signatories to the Trust Deed were Susan Milne, Alan Rees and Brenda Wilson, witnessed by Andrew Swan. It was associated with IPA Scotland and the ex-officio Trustees were the chairman of the branch, the vice chairman, and the secretary (and their successors in these offices). They appointed two other Trustees, one an IPA branch member and one an independent non-member.

The charitable purposes of the Trust were set out in the Trust Deed as follows:
“To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and programmes for play and recreation and other leisure time occupation for children and young people in Scotland and internationally in the interests of their social welfare or which will advance their education, encourage their personal development and further their health.”

The Trustees acted as fundraisers when appropriate and took responsibility for fund management and investment. They sought ways of increasing the fund and made disbursements in accordance with the purposes of the Trust and in liaison with the IPA Scotland branch committee.

However in 2012 it was decided to amalgamate the Trust with the IPA Scotland branch to take advantage of a new form of Scottish charity, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), which had just been provided for in legislation. Although now separately constituted in its own right, it continued to be recognised as a branch of the international body under an agreement of association. The name 'International Play Association Scotland - Promoting the Child's Right to Play' was adopted with the abbreviated title 'IPA Scotland'.

The organisation's charitable purpose is “to protect, preserve and promote the child's right to play as a fundamental human right, as set out in article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child“. The organisation will do this by advancing knowledge and raising awareness of the child's right to play; providing or assisting in the provision of facilities and programmes for play, recreation and leisure for children and young people; supporting the objective and activities of the International Play Association - Promoting the Child's Right to Play'.

B. The IPA Article 31 Play Right Recognition Programme: Awards made to Scottish projects at Triennial World Conferences

1996 Helsinki

To Play Scotland for its National Play Strategy. Received by Nancy Ovens.
To the Scotland Yard Adventure Centre, Edinburgh. Received by Theresa Casey and Alan Rees.

1999 Lisbon

To the Reidvale Adventure Play Association for its playground in Denniston, Glasgow. Received and later delivered to them by Alan Rees.

2002 Sao Paulo

To GAINS for its Europie Dunes Project, Lewis. Received and later delivered to them by Alan Rees.

2005 Berlin

To Theresa Casey and Susan MacIntyre for the Play Inclusive Action Research Project. Received by them.

2008 Hong Kong

To the Loanhead Community Learning Centre for its community garden.
Received by Irene Hogg.

2011 Wales

To the Midlothian Association of Play (MAP) for its Free2Play project. Received by Susan MacIntyre and Irene Hogg..

Publications quoted

'Declaration on the Child's Right to Play' . International Association for the Child's Right to Play. 1977

'Children's Play in Scotland - Towards a National Strategy' . The Association of Directors of Recreation, Leisure and Tourism. (ADRLT)

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