Chapter three

The County Surveyors' Society in Scotland was not formed until 1931. What happened before then and what was the forerunner Society?

I was fortunate in being given a copy of the following book by Tom Hunter, the last County Surveyor of Angus (1958-1975) - 'Proceedings of the Association of Road Surveyors of Scotland from the Formation of the Association in 1884 to 1889'. This was extremely useful in clarifying the earlier historical position following the enactment of the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act 1878 establishing County Road Trustees and the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889 just eleven years later that established County Councils in Scotland.

At a meeting of 26 Road Surveyors at the Queens Hotel, George Square, Glasgow on 7 May 1884 it is recorded in 'The Proceedings':

'This Meeting resolve to form an Association of Road Surveyors for Scotland, having for its object the encouragement and advancement of all matters connected with Road Management, and to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas among its members'.

At a General Meeting of the Association held in Turner's Ship Hotel, Edinburgh on the second day of the Highland and Agricultural Society's Show on 23 July 1884 they approved the Rules and Regulations of the Association and elected Office Bearers and Committee.

At the meeting the List of Members to that date was read, the number being 54. (Unfortunately, this List is not included in the Proceedings and only those attending this and subsequent meetings are listed together with the names of new members elected).

The first President of the Association was David Patrick, Surveyor, Dalry, Ayr and the two Vice-Presidents were Mr John Clarke, Uddingston and Mr William Mitchell, Dundee. Mr Allan Stevenson, Ayr was appointed Secretary and Treasurer.

Road Surveyors' Association

The meeting also resolved that the next Annual General Meeting be held in the Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen on 29 July 1885, on the second day of the Highland Society's Show.

The first mention of subscriptions appears in the Minute of the Annual General Meeting held at Glasgow on 25 July 1888, when it was agreed to reduce the Members' Subscriptions to Five Shillings per annum. At the same meeting the Treasurer submitted his account for the year, showing balance in hand of £48 0s 1d; and arrears of subscription, 1885-86 £8:8s:5d; 1886-87 £11:0s:6d.

The Proceedings are most interesting and reproduce twelve papers on various subjects by members. Unfortunately we have been unable to trace copies of any subsequent Proceedings and it is not known for how long the Association existed although it can be assumed that it continued probably until overtaken by the County Surveyors' Society in 1931.

In the Appendix to this book listing the County Surveyors of the various Counties up to 1975, it should be noted that the majority of County Surveyors in Scotland were appointed after the passing of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1929. Some appointments were made earlier after the passing of the Roads & Bridges (Scotland) Act 1878, with the establishment of County Road Trustees, and some after 1889 when County Councils were constituted and took over from the former County Road Trustees. Most of the Road Surveyors became District Surveyors or District Road Surveyors responsible directly to County District Committees, although some were designated County Road Surveyors but not necessarily for the whole County but for only a part of the County.

In the same Appendix it is interesting to note that some of the County Surveyors listed were members of the Association of Road Surveyors of Scotland and that some of those who are listed were in actual fact District Road Surveyors.
Some examples are:

Robert Sanders Anderson, Road Surveyor, Peebles was the County Surveyor of Peebles-shire and was a Founder Member of the Association in 1884.

Henry Lake, Road Surveyor, Alloa from 1885 was the County Surveyor of Clackmannanshire and was elected a Member of the Association in 1887.

Archibald Wilson, Dumbarton, 1891 was a Founder Member of the Association in 1884 and was listed as the Road Surveyor, Bonhill, Near Dumbarton.

John Baxter, Sutherland, 1891 was elected a Member of the Association in 1888 as the Road Surveyor, Brora.

David Laidlaw (Linlithgow), 1890 - Founder Member of the Association in 1884.

*Robert M Reid (Central), 1890 - Road Surveyor, St Ninians, Stirling.

*William Ballantine (Eastern), 1890 - Road Surveyor, Falkirk.

*W Paul (Western), 1890.

* These three County Road Surveyors are clearly District Road Surveyors in Stirling County, although listed as County Surveyors in the parent body book. The first two were Founder Members of the Association in 1884.

Street Scene, C 1969
Chapter four

In the early 1900's, County Surveyors where appointed, and more particularly, District Road Surveyors where no County Surveyor existed. They were very important persons in the community, having considerable status and influence and held in high regard. Most appointees were called 'County Road Surveyor' with the word 'Road' being gradually phased out in the later 1950's and early 1960's to become 'County Surveyor'.

The early Surveyors would travel in a horse and trap and for which an allowance would be given and would be some of the early people to have cars. A number of these early Surveyors, particularly following the First World War and again following the Second World War were military officers and it was standard format at the Annual Dinner that 'medals shall be worn'.

What can be confusing is that in some Counties they had two or more designated 'County Road Surveyors'. In actual fact they were more properly District or Area Surveyors within a County with no one Surveyor having overall or sole control of the County. For that reason, and as otherwise explained, some of the first 'County Surveyors' listed in Allen Smith's book were strictly speaking District or Area Surveyors. Up until the start of the Second World War, the County Surveyors and District Road Surveyors, had considerable power and independence and often carried out their duties under wide delegated powers. A good example is that of Major W L Gibson, Road Surveyor of the Western District of Perth & Kinross Joint County Council based at Dunblane. He was Chief Engineer for the building, widening and reconstruction of the Aberfoyle to Trossachs Road in 1931-32, a scheme wholly grant-aided by the Government as part of their Unemployment Programme. The length of road was 5.8 miles, cost £60,000 and was supervised by a Resident Engineer. The scheme was a lump-sum contract based on a rough schedule of quantities. The Contractor established two camps on the site to accommodate 320 men and each man was charged 2s 9d per day for full food and 6d per night for lodgings.

County Surveyors were responsible for the maintenance and construction of all roads and bridges. However, many also had additional wide ranging responsibilities. These arose from new legislation, transfer of a function from one department to another, or because the nature of the function was such that it naturally fell to the County Surveyor as the Council's principal or sole engineering officer. Such additional responsibilities could include street lighting, car parking, burial grounds, coast protection, harbours, piers, jetties, ferries and airstrips. Where Counties developed their own roadstone sources, then quarries also became a responsibility and this function was virtually exclusively restricted to Scotland. In a few Counties the County Surveyor was in fact the 'County Surveyor and Engineer' and had responsibility for water and drainage. Up until 1942 the County Road Surveyor for Inverness-shire was also the County Engineer and County Architect. Similarly, John Smith was County Surveyor and Engineer in Argyll County and as such was responsible for water and drainage (sewerage) up until 1968 when the Argyll Water Board was established. Thereupon, he continued as County Surveyor and Engineer for Argyll County Council and Engineer to the Water Board up until regionalisation in 1975.
Appendix 8 lists the County Road Surveyors/County Surveyors of all the Counties up to 1975. It would have been very appropriate to highlight some of these former Surveyors and to include photographs but this has proved to be somewhat difficult and not without considerable time and effort. However one who must be highlighted is Col T U Wilson, CBE, who was County Surveyor of Lanarkshire from 1945 to 1966. He is the only Scottish County Surveyor who became President of the National Society (1956-57).

The designation 'County Surveyor' disappeared in Scotland in 1975 when all new Regional Council Chief Officers were designated 'Directors', and for roads functions were designated variously 'Director of Roads', 'Director of Roads and Transport', 'Director of Roads and Transportation', etc.

One of the more recent Surveyors who should be mentioned is R I Hill who was the longest serving Member of the Society from 1972 to 1998. Dick has served as a past Chairman of the Branch and served twice as former Secretary for 9 years in total. He has the distinction of having served as a Chief Officer in three different local government structures, viz,

1972-75 County Surveyor, Selkirk County Council
1975-96 Director of Roads and Transportation, Borders Regional Council
1996-99 Director of Technical Services, Scottish Borders Council

In contrast to the fact that many of the early Surveyors were former military men, more recent County Surveyors and more particularly Regional Directors of Roads, could be Doctors or Professors. On such person was Don Carruthers a very dynamic, dedicated and active person. Don was the Senior Depute Director of Roads for Strathclyde Region from 1982-1989 and was Director of 1989-1996. He served as Branch Secretary and Branch Chairman, was the driving force in establishing and running the Graduate Training Courses for Scotland, and served on a wide range of committees and other bodies. Don was appointed Visiting Professor of Civil Engineering at Strathclyde University.

Banff County Council's first pavers working on the A97 in 1962
Chapter five

The Society in Scotland

A meeting was held in the North British Hotel, Edinburgh on Thursday 28th May 1931, attended by 13 County Road Surveyors when:

A full discussion took place on the necessity for the County Surveyors of Scotland forming themselves into a Society for the purpose of discussing all the matters pertaining to County Highway Administration and it was unanimously decided to form such Society, and that the first meeting should take place in the North British Hotel, Edinburgh on 23rd June at 2.30pm.

Signed Allan V Hart Chairman

The first and inaugural meeting then took place on Tuesday 23rd June 1931 in the North British Hotel, Edinburgh and those present were:

Mr A Anderson, Peebles
D J Bell, Kincardine
Geo. Calvert, East Lothian
Wm Chapman, Lanarkshire
J S Cree, Ross & Cromarty
A Forbes, Roxburgh
R Gibson, Kirkcudbright
T Gourlay, Berwickshire
A V Hart, Dumfries
M Heddie, Aberdeen
A Jeffries, Moray
A S McVey, Selkirk
R Robertson, Inverness being 13 in total

The meeting appointed Allan V Hart of Dumfries as Chairman and George Calvert, East Lothian as Secretary.

The County Surveyors' Society for England and Wales was formed on 19 November 1885 'for the purpose of watching over all matters affecting the office of County Surveyor'.

The Scottish County Surveyors' Society amalgamated with the English and Welsh parent body in February 1937 (Allen Smith's book states that in June 1937 it was finally agreed that the Scottish County Surveyors and their Deputies should join the Society after representatives of the two Societies had met at a special Conference).

The Society in Scotland thereafter operated as a Branch under the parent body for England and Wales. It appointed representatives to sit on the various committees of the parent body and they reported back to the Scottish Branch. Whilst frequently many of the items discussed at these committee meetings were relevant only to England and Wales, there were on the other hand issues whilst only applicable to England and Wales, were items that often were likely to come into operation in Scotland at a later date. To that extent attendance at parent committees was useful. The Branch in Scotland tended to deal with more domestic Scottish matters and benefited from papers and policy documents produced by the parent body.

Scotland had a good relationship and interface with the Government through the Scottish Office, inasmuch as the Chief Road Engineer (CRE) attended at the end of each Branch meeting for an interchange of information.

Membership of the Society is divided into the following classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Chief Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Members</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Officers and equivalent Senior Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Honorary Members</td>
<td>Retired Members who are in private employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorary Members</td>
<td>Retired Members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be pointed out that in England and Wales the Senior Manager below the Chief Officer was titled 'Deputy' whereas in Scotland he was designated 'Depute'.

Each County was allowed one Member and one Associate Member. Although from 1975 there
Chapter five

were only twelve highway authorities (9 Regional Councils and 3 Islands Authorities), membership of the Society was still restricted to one Member and one Associate Member per authority, with the exception of Strathclyde which was permitted two Associate Members because of its size, and the Island Authorities restricted to one Member only.

Following reorganisation in 1975, a number of authorities appointed two or more Deputies and frequently one of these was designated 'Senior Depute'. When Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) was introduced for engineering design services, many Departments restructured with the creation of separate managers in charge of Client and Consultancy functions and for that reason Associate Members was extended to include 'equivalent Senior Managers' where no Depute exists.

In the light of the Local Government Reorganisation in 1996 when many Counties had disappeared, the parent body agreed to rename the Society 'CSS'. From 1 January 1997, the CSS would serve and advise the Local Authorities in England and Wales and the Department of the Environment (NI) Roads Service.

In Scotland the members formed a new association called Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS), which was affiliated to the CSS as from 1 January 1997, paying an affiliation fee as a body to CSS. Delegates from each organisation may attend meetings organised by the other but without voting powers.

In Wales, the Welsh Association of Technical Officers (WATO) was formed as an independent association. However individuals are eligible to be members of CSS and a Welsh Branch of CSS was formed with the Chairman of the Welsh Branch becoming a member of the CSS President's Committee.

In Northern Ireland, matters remained unchanged, with individual membership of CSS and the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Branch becoming a member of the CSS President's Committee.

This then marked the end of the County Surveyors' Society in Scotland and the end of an interesting era. However with the formation of a Scottish Parliament, the creation of SCOTS is of particular significance and bodes well for the future.

The minutes of the Scottish Branch of the County Surveyors' Society give a detailed insight of events and in the early days covered a wide range of maintenance and administrative matters. It is difficult to extract all relevant items from minutes and put it in a readable format but this has been attempted notwithstanding the shortcomings of such an exercise.

Minutes 1931 to 29 September 1950

At the inaugural meeting in 1931 it was agreed that the subscription be one guinea per annum payable at 15 May each year (this corresponded to the Scottish local government financial year that continued until reorganisation in 1975).

The Society’s minutes from 1931 to September 1950 are contained in 437 foolscap pages, all handwritten in ink, in a leather-bound lined book with beautiful old-fashioned marbled edge markings.

The first meeting discussed the new Local Government Act of 1929 as affecting Classified Roads in Burghs and in particular such issues as snowclearing, cleaning gullies, liability for a share of the cost of new sewers, taking over of pavements and building lines.

At its second meeting on 30 July 1931, attended by only five members, it was intimated that the Society was invited to appoint three members to act on a Highways Executive Committee of the County Councils Association and this they did. It was also agreed that the Secretary be allowed the sum of three guineas annually for clerical assistance.
Chapter five

The Society held one to three meetings a year up until 1939 with none in 1933 and 1935 although six sub-committee meetings were held during the two years 1933 and 1934.

The meetings were usually on Fridays or Saturdays and were held at the North British Hotel, Edinburgh up until 1948 and thereafter at the Divisional Road Engineer’s Office, Ministry of Transport, Edinburgh, until the last recorded minute held on 9 June 1950. The items discussed when at the DRE’s Office were quite extensive and the minute of each meeting comprised 12 to 15 pages all hand written in ink - quite an exercise for the Secretary.

Bureaucracy was no stranger to the early Council Road Surveyors. In 1933 considerable discussion took place with a view to simplifying the Classification Grant forms and requisitions, plant charges and various Government Circulars, etc. Following a meeting with the Chief Road Engineer in Edinburgh, the Society members were advised that for audit purposes the 29 different forms of returns had to be maintained to enable completion of the Ministry Returns.

From 1931 to 1937 when the Scottish Society amalgamated with the English Society, the Chairman of the Society was minuted as the 'President' although he signed the minutes as 'Chairman'.

By 1936 the members were discussing the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act 1935, the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1932 and the Trunk Roads Bill that established the first Trunk Roads in Great Britain with the subsequent Trunk Roads Act 1935.

It was at the Annual General Meeting in November 1936, attended by 9 members, that the Society decided to get in touch with the County Surveyors' Society in England with a view to a possible amalgamation. In the submissions it was stated that the Society had 21 County Surveyors in Scotland.

(Whilst there were 33 Counties in Scotland not all had appointed County Surveyors for the whole County as there were still Counties who had County Road Surveyors or District Road Surveyors reporting to and accountable to a District Committee of the County Council).

At the Society meeting in April 1937, members were advised that amalgamation had been agreed in principle and at the next meeting in February 1938, the minutes refer to the 'Scottish Branch of the County Surveyors' Society' but with no reference to the date of amalgamation. (Allen Smith's book on the Parent Body states that in June 1937 it was finally agreed that the Scottish County Surveyors and their Deputies should join the Society).

The first reference to new National Motorways was first discussed in February 1938 and after considerable discussion on the proposal to submit two motorway routes in Scotland (Edinburgh to Newcastle and Glasgow to Carlisle), it was finally agreed to put forward just one motorway for Scotland from Carlisle and extending north to join with the Edinburgh-Glasgow Road. (This eventually proved to become the M74 from Gretna Green to Glasgow completed in 1999 - 60 years later).

The World War years of 1939-1945 did not reduce the number of meetings - an average of three per year held in the North British Hotel, Edinburgh with attendance varying from 6 to 13 members. New organisations referred to were the War Department, the Ministry of War Transport and the Petroleum Board, the latter of which dealt with the rationing of tar and bitumen supplies and petrol allowances for Surveyors. Most of the usual topics continued to be discussed, particularly the vexed question of snowclearing of Classified Roads in Small Burghs and as to whether the County Council was directly responsible or whether it was a Burgh cleansing function to which the County Council paid a contribution and on which the County Council received a Government Grant appropriate to the classification of the road. Systems of payments and grants for extraordinary war traffic damages and damage to roads and bridges by tanks also continued to be a discussion item.
Discussion on material ranged from the damage and return of empty tar barrels to the new BS 1152/1944 'War Emergency British Standard for Rolled Asphalt'.

The intimation from the Ministry of War Transport, London setting out the roads they proposed to add to the Trunk Road mileage caused considerable concern as the County Councils had not been consulted and certain roads were listed that were not those desired by the County Councils. This issue was the precursor of the Trunk Roads Act 1946.

The first statement of membership in 1946 included:

5 Honorary Members
29 Ordinary Members
3 Associate Members

Total 37

In 1944, a report by the Joint Committee set up by the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers, set out what was to become the TME Scheme for Apprentice Engineers. Whilst this was adopted and implemented, discussions continued for several years thereafter on items such as the number of apprentices, periods and nature of training, salaries payable, etc. The writer was indentured under this scheme in 1948 for a five year period at the age of 18 at an annual salary of £75 plus £23:8s:0d War Bonus.

18 Counties operated a 5½ day week throughout the year and 10 Counties operated a 5 day week during the summer months and a 5½ day working week for the winter months.

(The writer who was a Divisional Surveyor with Perth & Kinross Joint County Council states that in the early 1960's, the roadmen still worked a 5½ day week and he recalls very vividly that the men still worked on Christmas Day).

In 1948, the Association of County Councils first considered the Proposed Scheme for the Grading and Conditions of Service for Roac Employees, prepared by the National Joint Industrial Council for Local Authority Services. Reference was made to the increase of holidays with pay to three normal working weeks per annum, which period to include all local and public holidays, the provision of protective clothing for inclement weather and the payment of wages weekly in cash.

On the legislative front there were the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947, the Highways (Provision of Cattle Grids) Bill in 1950 and the Public Utilities Street Works Bill also in 1950.

On social welfare issues, the proposal to reduce the working week from 48 hours to 44 hours figured prominently, whilst the proposal to introduce a 5 day working week was strenuously opposed by the Association of County Councils. In 1948, an Arbitration Award was made under the JIC Conditions whereby the Employers were successful in resisting the 5 day working week. A review in 1950 of 28 Counties who had replied indicated that:

A very early snow blower used at Boynie Aerodrome during World War II
The severe and widespread snowstorms in early 1947 virtually paralysed traffic in Scotland. Consequently snowclearing equipment was being requested 'to minimise the necessity for handcutting'. It was fortuitous therefore that the Ministry of Supply had surplus ex War Department Mack tractors, these were offered to County Councils at knockdown prices. In addition the Ministry of Transport issued seventeen Mack tractors with heavy duty ploughs, free for use on Trunk Roads (one of these is known to have been still in use in the late 1980's).

In 1948, Col T U Wilson of Lanarkshire reported on the successful trials that had been made in that County with the use of 'Wireless transmitting and receiving apparatus' for snowclearing operations, etc. Large numbers were then available from surplus ex Government War Department stocks and the approximate costs were £135 for mobile sets and £175 for the central control set.

In January 1948, the Ministry of Transport intimated a 20% reduction in funds for trunk roads maintenance, a 15% reduction for classified road maintenance and minor improvement works and an intended reduction of 22% on maintenance personnel for those under 50 years of age for transfer to work in other industries. The Society expressed grave concern and each surveyor was to advise their Councils accordingly.

Again in 1948 the Road Research Laboratory held a meeting with the Scottish Branch to consider the extension of their activities to Scotland at a laboratory at East Kilbride in Lanarkshire. As a result of surplus ex War Department equipment, the Ministry of Transport set up a stock of Bailey bridging material in Scotland, primarily for Trunk Road bridges. At the other extreme the cost of the provision of maintenance of bus stop signs continued to be an issue for discussion.

Unfortunately the minutes for 1950-1966 are missing.

**Minutes 1966-1994**

In 1966 the Branch submitted their report to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Scotland (Wheatley Commission). They stated that whilst the existing Highway Authorities were quite adequate to deal with the work which devolved upon them when set up in 1930, this historical situation bore little relation to the real needs of the situation in 1966, or the likely needs of the future. They considered that the new authorities required sufficient financial resources to discharge the full range of functions with economy in men, materials and plant. They considered that many Counties were too small and that the new highway authorities should include all the Large and Small Burghs within their boundaries together with the Cities of Aberdeen and Dundee but excluding the Cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. They submitted that the number of new authorities (excluding Edinburgh and Glasgow), should be about eleven, implying a variation in population per highway authority of from 750,000 down to 250,000 or a total road mileage of from 5,500 down to 2,000. In the event in 1975 there was established nine Regional Councils and three all-purpose Islands Councils, making twelve highway authorities in Scotland, so that the Society’s foresight was fairly near the mark in so far as the number of authorities was concerned. However both Glasgow and Edinburgh were absorbed into Strathclyde and Lothian Regions respectively.

The Branch’s finances for the year ending 31 December 1966 showed a credit balance of £6:1:8d with the parent body contributing £25 for the year. In the next financial year the contribution was increased to £40.

Winter Maintenance has always been an important function in Scotland and it is not surprising that this issue arose regularly. In 1966 winter maintenance vehicles used on Trunk Roads were owned by the Scottish Development Department (SDD) and operated by the County Councils. Most of these vehicles were ex-American Army Mack vehicles that had been issued shortly after the Second World War and were now about 20 years old. The SDD
advised that they originally had cost about £400 each and to replace them with new Mack's imported from America would cost about £13,000 each. The Ministry of Transport (MOT) were developing a Bedford and an Atkinson and the SDD intimated that they would be acquiring 14 Atkins for use in Scotland.

In 1967 the SDD intimated that they would be issuing a circular to raise from £10,000 to £25,000 the limit of cost of minor grant-aided improvements on principal roads which at that time attracted a grant of 75%.

At this time discussion took place on the 1st and 2nd Lofthouse Committee Reports on 'Efficiency in Road Construction' and it was intimated that 'the Society must anticipate the adoption of an incentive bonus scheme for County Roadmen in two to three years time'.

In 1969 it was estimated that 30% of authorities were still using grit or salt/grit mixtures with SDD-owned winter maintenance vehicles, when it was stipulated that only salt should be used in such vehicles.

A major step forward took place with the publication of the White Paper 'Scottish Roads in the '70s', which detailed proposals for the advance repARATION of both Trunk and Principal road schemes for a period of five years ahead.

Scottish members were very grateful to hear that by resolution of the Society at its Annual General Meeting on 30th June 1970, it was agreed that in future the Chairman of the Scottish Branch should, during his period of office, be also described as Vice-President of the Society.

The Society in Scotland was held in high regard and in addition to sending representatives to various Society committee meetings of the parent body, was also represented on other specific ad-hoc committees established to consider specific issues or legislation. The Branch sent representatives to the Association of County Councils in Scotland, and from 1975 to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). The Branch enjoyed good relations with the Chief Road Engineer of the Scottish Office who was invited to attend Branch meetings at the end of formal business so that he could inform members of issues and proposed legislation that was currently exercising the minds of the Scottish Office, and also enabled members to raise items of concern with him. The Chief Road Engineer was then invited as a guest to join Branch members at lunch thereafter. This was a relationship that members appreciated, and which was not enjoyed in a like manner by their English colleagues south of the Border until very much later.

It was in 1971 that the Scottish Office first intimated their intention to carry out a pilot survey of the condition of all Trunk Roads in Scotland in the summer of 1971 based on the maintenance rating system in the Marshall Report. It was also intimated...
that the Society had agreed to the Department's request to carry out an inventory survey of all Trunk Roads.

It was also in 1971 that the Branch expressed a strong wish to be actively involved at an early date in any working parties set up to consider the wide range of issues arising from the White Paper on the Reform of Local Government in Scotland - Organisation and Management Structures (Wheatley Report).

In 1972, the SDD, after consultation and agreement with the Society, intimated their intention to disband the Scottish Office’s Winter Maintenance Unit with the fleet of such vehicles as Macks, Atkinsons, Bedford and Unimogs being transferred to the respective Counties and this came into effect on 1 August 1973.

The effect of Local Government Reorganisation on the Society was raised in 1974 when the Branch agreed that each Region would be entitled to one Full Member and one Associate Member, with the three Island Authorities having one full Member only and that special consideration would have to be given to Strathclyde Region. It was eventually agreed that Strathclyde would have two Associate Members.

The System of grants for highways, public transport infrastructure etc was scrapped in 1975 when the new Regional Authorities came into being and was replaced by the Transport Policies and Programmes system (TPP).

On 9 April 1975, the last meeting of the Branch was held of the old County Surveyors and their Deputies, attended by 38 members and the first meeting of the new Regional Directors and Deputies was held on 6 June when 10 members attended with five apologies. Meetings had generally been held in the offices of the Association of County Councils in Scotland, Forres Street, Edinburgh and briefly thereafter at the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) offices at the same address. Eventually meetings were held at various Regional centres but mostly at the offices of Lothian Regional Council in George IV Bridge, Edinburgh.

In the old Branch, the Chairman held office for two years with the election held in December of each alternate year but in June 1976, it was agreed that henceforth the Chairman would be elected annually in June.

Considerable effort continued to be put into the COSLA Scottish Standing Committee on Co-operation between Local Authorities and Statutory Undertakers. The Branch also sent representatives to the three standing committees of the parent body, and representatives nominated by COSLA to outside bodies including the Standing Committee on Highway Maintenance, the British Standards Institution and the PUSWA Conference.

In 1983, the Branch established, and ran, Graduate Training Modules of one week duration in order to meet the Institution of Civil Engineers Chilver requirements. These proved highly successful and were run on an annual basis and indirectly were also successful financially for the Branch funds, so much so that by 1985, the usual donation of £150 per year from the parent body was no longer required.

1979 saw the Government’s thinking and proposals for the new Direct Labour Organisations (DLO’s) and which eventually, fundamentally and dramatically changed the absolute right of local authorities to carry out all road maintenance work with their own men. The tendering thresholds were progressively reduced so that by the early 1990’s practically all maintenance work was the subject of competitive tender by both the DLO’s and outside private contractors.

The Branch put considerable effort over several years into the drafting of a new Bill culminating in the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. This superseded the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act 1878, which had formed the basis of highway law in Scotland for almost a century.

National Road Maintenance Condition Annual Surveys had been carried out in Scotland from 1979. In the late 1980’s saw the introduction of the first Code of Practice for Routine Highway Maintenance and one for Winter Maintenance.
Chapter five

Quality Assurance also came into being and the first scheme for safety fencing came into effect in 1988. The late 80's and early 90's were periods of great change, and the subject of privately financed road and bridge schemes were also being mooted. It was evident that the future role of local authorities was being progressively changed from being the 'provider' to being the 'enabler' and was not a change that was welcomed by the County Surveyors.

The Scottish Office was also changing. The Scottish Development Department (SDD) became the Scottish Office Environment Department and the Roads Directorate thereafter became part of the Scottish Office Industry Department.

1991 saw the publication by the Secretary of State for Scotland on proposals for Local Government Reform in Scotland followed later by the consultation document on 'The Structure of Local Government in Scotland - Shaping the New Councils'.

The Branch, in conjunction with the Scottish Office, mounted a Conference in Dundee in 1992 on 'Roads, Bridges and Traffic in the Countryside' and which was opened by HRH The Prince of Wales. The changes continued and 1994 saw the publication of the consultation document on 'Competing for Better Roads - The Future Management and Maintenance of Scotland's Trunk Road Network'.

Construction of the A98 at Palmer Grove, Macduff 1820 - 1930
(Reproduced by kind permission of A E Boides, Photographers, Banff)
Chapter six

Unitary Councils

Unlike the previous re-organisation in 1975, the local government re-organisation of 1996 did not have the benefit of a Royal Commission or any other process of identifying the possible effects on service delivery.

As a result, many of the former regional roads departments were disaggregated into units too small to support sufficient numbers of professional staff with the full range of expertise to carry out all of the functions to the previous high standards. In some cases, the roads staff were combined with other unrelated activities some under senior managers unfamiliar with the complexities and the resources required for the proper maintenance of the road network in particular. As the government had grossly underestimated the costs of re-organisation in its grant settlement to councils, many of them saw reductions in their road maintenance budgets as a relatively easy solution to their financial problems.

At the same time, the Scottish Office assumed a lack of expertise and resources in some of the new councils and took the opportunity to change the arrangements for the management and maintenance of Scotland's motorway and trunk road network.

The existing trunk road agency agreements were terminated and replaced by new contractual arrangements following a competition held under EU procurement regulations. Although consortia of local authorities won all of the first tranche contracts in 1996, by 2001 they had all been won by the private sector.

The privatisation of the management and maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network had long been feared by the Regional Roads Directors but it was still a devastating blow to local government officers who had managed, maintained, and improved, the trunk road network efficiently and effectively for 60 years.

The New Millennium

The loss of the trunk road contracts compounded the financial difficulties faced by the local roads authorities who had relied upon the economies of scale in managing and maintaining the complete network of public roads in their areas. This was particularly true of remote rural areas where a long stretch of trunk road might be the only connection between different parts of the local road network. Efficiency and effectiveness were severely compromised in such circumstances.

It was ironic that this situation arose shortly after the government's commitment to the repeal of compulsory competitive tendering legislation and its replacement with a duty of best value and community planning. This was finally put in place by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

The duty of community planning requires a Council to co-ordinate the work of all public service providers in its area, and best value requires a Council to consult all relevant stakeholders about the provision of services and to examine all possible ways of delivering local service for the benefit of the Community. The Scottish Executive was also actively promoting partnership working between the public and private sectors as a more efficient way of providing services.

It is clear that the Scottish Executive itself had completely ignored all of these principles in the way in which it approached the management and maintenance of its motorway and trunk road network.

Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS)

Only about 3 or 4 former members or associate members of the CSS (Scottish Branch) took up office in the new unitary councils, and late in 1996, Directors and Heads of Service with responsibility for local authority roads and transport met to discuss the future.

It had long proved difficult to persuade the public and other agencies in Scotland of the role and relevance of the County Surveyors Society,
not least because there hadn't been a County Surveyor in post in Scotland for over 20 years. Local government officers eventually agreed that the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland better reflected their new roles, which were increasingly taking on a wider transportation brief in line with the government's emerging transport policy.

Since the 1950's and 60's, new road building had been a primary objective of the predict and provide philosophy. During the late 80's and 90's the government had been persuaded that such an approach was not sustainable and not in line with the international commitments it had entered into in response to issues such CO2 emissions and global warming.

The Transport Act Scotland 2002 reinforced the government's commitment to improving public transport, and to reducing traffic congestion in urban areas.

Although the technical aspects of road and bridge maintenance and traffic management continue to be an important part of the Society's work through its Engineering Committee, SCOTS main focus is to provide policy advice and support on a national basis to both central and local government and other organisations involved in the development and promotion of transportation.

In pursuit of many of the emerging national transportation objectives a number of Councils have formed themselves into voluntary Regional Transport Partnerships.

After a difficult birth in the immediate aftermath and confusion of local government re-organisation and loss of trunk road agency work, SCOTS has worked hard to build positive working relationships with the Scottish Executive and others, and is moving forward to play a full part in developing Scotland's transport systems for the future.