Background

By the late 19th century, the two main anti-vivisection groups in Britain were the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) led by Stephen Coleridge and British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) led by Frances Power Cobbe (in essence divided over tactics of gradualism or total abolition).

In the early years of the 20th century, the Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society (ADAVS) was established by Louise Lind af Hageby with much support from Nina Duchess of Hamilton. A supporter of the suffrage group Women’s Freedom League, Lind af Hageby adopted some of the tactics of the suffrage movement such as having shop displays of vivisection and, more notably, exposing animal experiments at University College of London (UCL), known as the ‘old brown dog’ controversy of 1903.

There were also small groups such as the London and Provincial Anti-Vivisection Society led by Sidney Trist. The Royal Commission on Vivisection of 1906 had been seen as an opportunity to change the law but little practical change resulted. The Research Defence Society was formed in 1908 (out of the Physiological Society) specifically to counter the impact of anti-vivisectionists. In the years after the exposure of the old brown dog story and the failure of the Royal Commission to create radical change, there was a loss of impetus / focus amongst anti-vivisectionists although organisations continued to lobby.

The NAVS, rather than the BUAV, was the main group to operate in Scotland. It organised meetings, obtained support from the great and the good, and undertook fund-raising often through ‘at home’ meetings aimed at middle class and wealthy supporters. For example, the influential Miss (later Dame) Louisa Lumsden spoke for the NAVS at an ‘at home’ of Mr and Mrs Brewster Macpherson of Balavil in September 1910. At that time Miss Netta Ivory was secretary of the ‘Scottish branch’ of the NAVS1. In the same year Lady Gibson Craig had chaired a successful NAVS public meeting in March 1910 in Edinburgh at which Liberal MP George Greenwood had spoken2.

The founding of the Scottish Society

The establishment of the new organisation does not seem to have come about over differences around tactics /campaigns against vivisection. A turning point seems – both bizarrely but also rather predictably – the annual NAVS fund-raising Dogs’ Bazaar. The one held in November 1910 was successful. Those present included the Misses Ivory, (honorary secretary and treasurer), Miss Lumsden and Lady Gibson Craig. Miss Lumsden gave a short address saying ‘... they had always hitherto considered that their crusade was against helpless animals. What she wanted to bring before them was the danger to human beings involved in this practice of vivisection...’ 3

There is no reference to the sums of money raised in this report. However, this becomes an issue at the annual general meeting of the Scottish branch of the NAVS in March 1911. According to a report taken from The Aberdeen Journal, the meeting was chaired by Miss Lumsden. She referred to successful work in the past year including subscriptions, donations and sums obtained by ‘special efforts’. She also ‘advocated renting an office and shop in a

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central part of Edinburgh. However, Mr Bell, on behalf of the NAVS Central Committee in London, criticised the branch for having had only three meetings during the year, and for sending only £100 to the central Society. Accordingly, he moved a resolution that the branch ask the central office to organise a widely extended campaign of meetings over Scotland in the summer, and to empower the central office to spend £1,000 in that work. The motion was not seconded. Miss Lumsden gave ‘a spirited reply’ noting the thousands of pounds sent in the previous eight years to London ‘and it was high time to stop that’. She said that they ‘had no cause for shame in what they had done in Scotland’.

In the report in the Zoophilist, the journal of the NAVS, the editor, Stephen Coleridge adds a footnote saying that the Scottish branch had been generous in the past. However, since 1908 although large sums were collected in Scotland the only sums forwarded to the centre had not exceeded the actual expenses ‘exclusively incurred for the branch’.

Early years and the view of the NAVS

By the end of 1911 the first meeting, of what was called the Scottish Co-operative Anti Vivisection Society, was held. The name changed by the second meeting of 5 March 1912. This ‘new’ organisation seems in some way to be a ‘takeover’ of the existing NAVS ‘Scottish branch’, as indicated by the sub-heading of the first annual report ‘formed to take up the work of the National Anti-Vivisection Society Scottish Branch’. The general meeting agreed that honorary members and life members of the ‘late’ Scottish branch of NAVS be elected as honorary members and life members of the Scottish SPV. George Greenwood was elected as a parliamentary representative of the society, as were various vice presidents including Lord Ernest Hamilton.

The language used in these early discussions also refers back to the earlier relationship with the NAVS. Thus on April 23 1912 the organisation agrees to adopt ‘federation’ - not amalgamation - with the Animal Defence and Anti Vivisection Society. The motion refers to ‘friendly cooperation’ and ‘financial independence’.

During the first years of the SSPV existence much attention is paid to the annual dogs’ bazaar. This is clearly a fund-raising event but also, I suggest, refers back to the dispute with the NAVS. It implies that the new organisation is a continuity of the earlier activity (and that the NAVS by implication no longer exists).

Thus the minutes of the annual general meeting of 7 March 1913 state that the bazaar ‘proved this year even better than usual’. Miss Lumsden gave an address referring to meetings all over Scotland and the society’s campaigning caravan. (This campaigning device was not unique to anti vivisectionists, being also adopted by Clarion Club campaigners, suffrage feminists and other progressive campaigners of this period). Attention is paid to activities in various parts of Scotland including Glasgow and Paisley and the existence of a Glasgow branch with an honorary secretary, Miss Balfour of 6 Windsor Terrace.

This, then, is not simply an Edinburgh affair. A contemporary article in the Anti-Vivisection Review, the journal of the ADAVS, refers to a meeting under the aegis of the SSPV, in

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4 The Aberdeen Journal March 29th 1911 reproduced in Zoophilist May 1911 p.115.
5 First annual report Scottish Society for the Prevention of Vivisection, Onekind.
6 Minutes of the first general meeting of the Scottish Co-operative Anti-Vivisection Society 21 December 1911; 5 March 1912, Unpublished Minute Books of SSPV, Onekind.
7 Minutes of the meeting of 23 April 1912, Unpublished Minute Books of SSPV, Onekind.
Glasgow, addressed by Lind af Hageby. She said, ‘The Scottish society has done magnificent work in the past, and is at the present moment waging war on vivisection with unabated energy.’ This suggestion of continuity with previous activity was repeated in the account of the 1912 annual general meeting in the *Anti-Vivisection Review*: ‘Though comparatively young in name, the Scottish people have ten years of solid work behind them, and their organisation extends from the far north to the south of Scotland.’ The *Anti-Vivisection Review* is careful to refer to the work of the Scottish society as ‘co-workers’ or, in 1914, ‘our sister society’ indicating their independent nature.

The people involved in NAVS in 1910 and in SSPV by 1912 are similar. Many on the executive committee of the NAVS including the Ivory sisters, Mr Bowman and Mrs Dovey had become members of the executive of SSPV. Many of the titled also became supporters of SSPV. George Greenwood who had sent a message to the NAVS meeting in December 1910 became a parliamentary representative of SSPV. Greenwood, although a staunch advocate for animal welfare was not a Scottish MP but his seat (for the Liberals) was for Peterborough from 1906 -1918 and he lived in London. He is seen to have been responsible for steering the 1911 Protection of Animals Act through Parliament.

The NAVS was generally hostile to the BUAV for obvious reasons relating to its founding. In an article by Coleridge of 1913 he speaks of those groups to whom he feels well disposed including ‘Miss Lind’s Society [for whom] we have no other feelings but those of kind sympathy’. Coleridge says he is only critical of the BUAV as it is canvassing subscribers and writing venomous attacks upon the NAVS. The article either ignores SSPV entirely or subsumes it within ‘local societies’ towards which, it says, the NAVS has no hostility.

In the same year we note the letter of Nina, Duchess of Hamilton to Miss Ivory, cautioning, ‘counsel patience and an attitude of goodwill towards others... what is good and right must in the end prevail, we must therefore not be too impatient with those who disagree, because they as yet do not see eye to eye...we must not expect too much’. Given the debates at the time this suggests counselling patience towards anti-vivisectionists such as the NAVS – rather than the RDS.

The Dogs’ Bazaar is often referred to in the SSPV minutes. Clearly it was an important fund-raising event but it may have gained ‘internal importance’ because of the allegation around finance that had led to the new organisation. For example, the minutes of 3 December 1912 refer to the Dogs’ Bazaar in aid of the Society. Significantly when the (independent) London and Provisional AVS asks for funds from the bazaar this is rejected as the funds are solely for the SSPV. Incidentally, during the 1914 -18 war, there was some hostility to animal charities’ fund-raising and particularly against dog and cat shows, to the extent that such ventures undertook fund-raising for animal causes and the war. The SSPV was no exception.

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11 See his entry by Richard Ryder in the *Oxford DNB*
12 ‘The strange case of the British Union’ Zoophilist vol 33.no 2 June 1913, p.18.
14 Minutes of Committee meeting 25 March 1914, Unpublished Minute Books of SSPV, Onekind.
The proceeds in 1914 were shared with the Red Cross in Glasgow (and the Council of Justice to Animals).  

Conclusion

While the SSPVS based itself in Edinburgh, the NAVS shifted its geographical base to Glasgow. This became the headquarters for Scotland. The meeting in St Enoch Station Hotel in February 1912 addressed by Stephen Coleridge with apparently 500 people present also inaugurated a new branch in Glasgow. According to the Glasgow News of February 22, 1912, Stephen Coleridge ‘regards the trouble in the Scottish camp lightly... Lovers of animals do not take long to realise that it is only a great society like the NAVS that can really help, and they know that for the present the main work must be done in London, where Parliament assembles.’ According to the report, ‘Mr Coleridge smilingly added: “When Scotland has its own Parliament in Edinburgh that may alter the case!”

Note re people

Sadly, I could not find in fairly obvious published places for women’s suffrage, indications of such activity from members other than Miss Louisa Innes Lumsden LLD born 31 December 1840 in Aberdeen. President (in 1913) of the Aberdeen Society for Women’s Suffrage, she was also a vice president of the Scottish Churches’ League for Woman Suffrage. There is a very full and positive account of her in the Oxford DNB: Girton classicist, former headmistress and former warden of women’s hall of residence at St Andrews, with an Honorary LLD from St Andrews. Her interest in animals is mentioned, including editorship of Our Fellow Mortals but not specifically the SSPV.

Although I could not find out about any suffrage organisation to which novelist Mrs Fyvie Mayo may have belonged, she did contribute an interesting article to The Animals’ Guardian February 1912 pp. 30-32,’Hard Hearts and Soft Heads: women – votes – and cruelty to animals’. Unlike some of her contemporaries she does not suggest that if women obtained the vote then vivisection would be abolished. When suffrage supporter Harold Baillie-Weaver, for example, chaired the agm of the National Canine Defence League in 1910 he declared, ‘the sooner you get women’s suffrage, the sooner will you succeed in emancipating dogs from cruelty’. Rather, she notes that the rise of feminism is leading to some women emulating male scientists by endorsing vivisection. Much of the argument is drawn from religious ideas such as, ‘Can [such a woman] by any force of imagination, picture to herself Jesus playing the part of a vivisector?’ She also criticises the RSPCA for ‘weaken[ing] their position as to the rights of animals when, while they rightly arraign and condemn a poor squalid toiler for working a lame horse, scarcely more pitiable than its driver, that he may earn a bit of bread for his starving children, they keep silence as to prolonged cruelty excused as carried on in the problematic interests of the sot and the libertine – and practised by educated men with an eye to fame and fortune?’ [This was also very much an argument used in the nineteenth by Frances Power Cobbe.] The Oxford DNB entry does include reference to her work for the SSPV.

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15 Committee minutes 30th Dec 1914; see also 19 Jan 1917 re. dogs bazaar. Some of the proceeds went to Princess Louise Scottish Hospital for Limbless Sailors and Soldiers, Unpublished Minute Books of SSPV, Onekind.
16 Correspondence, Zoophilist vol 31 no 11 March 1912 p. 170.
18 As printed in ‘Home intelligence’ Zoophilist vol 31 no 11 March p.178
19 Hilda Kean Oxford DNB entry for Gertrude and Harold Baillie Weaver