

# News

UHI Centre for History



We have had our challenges this year, as was reported in the last newsletter. However, as this one shows, this spring has involved strong signs of our determined and increasingly strategic response to this. Our students have been outstanding, in their contribution to classes, their commitment to their coursework, in winning prizes, and much else, assisted by our exceptional alumni community.

I have also been signing off on more staff travel expense forms than has been the case for years, for research and in-person conferences, and involving staff journeys to Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy and the USA. We have been reaching out to friends and networks far and wide. Across the UK, we have strengthened our wonderful, growing collaboration with the Centre for the History of People, Place and Community at the Institute of Historical Research in London. We have also enhanced institutional links across both the North Sea and the Atlantic, and been involved in some hugely exciting public engagement and collaboration here in our region, and in Dornoch itself.

This combination of the local and the international, embracing the medieval to the modern, is a huge part of what makes us tick.

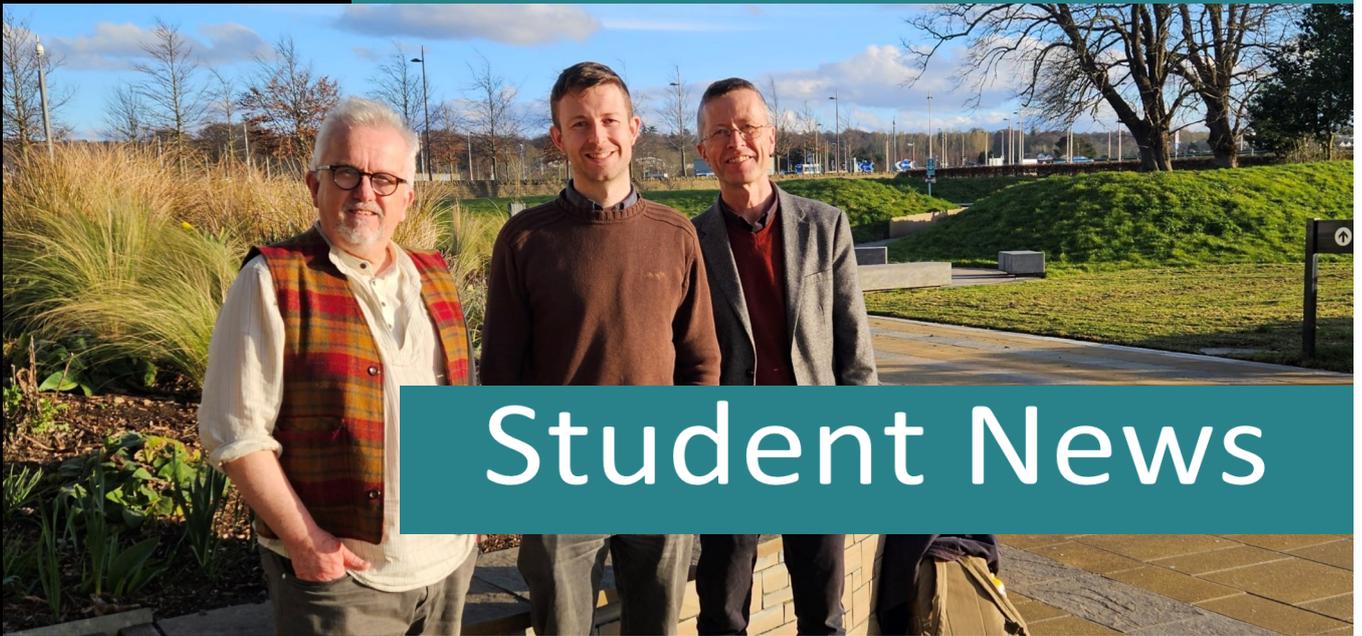
**David Worthington**, *Head of Centre for History*



## Summer 2024

The **UHI Centre for History** has been a proud partner of UHI since 2005 and has contributed to the University's success through our internationally renowned research and teaching in Highland, Scottish and wider world history.

We are based in the cathedral town of Dornoch in Sutherland, where our offices look out over the town and coast. You can follow our news updates on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) channels or contact us directly via [email](#).



# Student News

## Award-winning Writing

Congratulations to **Iain Duncan Cameron**, who was awarded the [2023 Magnus Magnusson Essay prize](#) for his work "*Farmers, Fishermen and Ferryloopers*": *The Influence of the Scottish Presbyterian Church on Northern Isles Society and Culture in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*.

Iain is currently [working on his PhD](#) at the Centre for History and is also a graduate of our MLitt History of the Highlands and Islands programme, graduating with a distinction in September 2022.

Iain is the fourteenth winner of this prize, which is named in memory of Magnus Magnusson KBE, scholar and journalist of the northern world, and his essay will be published in an upcoming volume of *Northern Studies*, the journal of the [Scottish Society for Northern Studies](#).

## PhD Viva Successes

Congratulations to Centre for History PhD student, **Liz Forrest** (front right) for her highly successful defence of her doctoral thesis *Shepherds wanted: Wester Ross pioneers to Patagonia, 1880 – 1930*, in Dornoch in February. The picture shows also her Director of Studies, **Dr Elizabeth Ritchie**, fellow supervisor and Visiting Professor at the Centre, **Professor Marjory Harper** and **Dr Jamie Grant** of Highland Theological College, who was the examination chair.



We had been forced to postpone the 'viva' examination in January due to adverse weather, so we were delighted for more pleasant, less turbulent conditions this time round.

It was also a delight to celebrate another Centre for History PhD viva success in March in the sunshine of Inverness - huge congratulations to **Julian Grant!**

His PhD research focussed on the themes at the intersection between tourism and local communities around the North Coast 500 touring route in the far north of Scotland. You can [find out more about Julian's research on our website](#). He is pictured in the top image with two members of his supervisory team, **Dr Iain Robertson** (L) and **Prof David Worthington** (R).

A big thank you to external examiner **Prof Sian Jones** (University of Stirling), internal examiner **Dr Jim MacPherson** (UHI Centre for History) and viva chair **Dr Steve Taylor** (UHI North, West and Hebrides).



# Staff News

## Scandinavian Connections



**Dr Kathrin Zickermann** has continued our successful collaboration with the [Swedish Defence University](#) (SEDU). She was in Orkney in November 2023, meeting with colleagues from the UHI Institute for Northern Studies and a delegation from the SEDU to discuss future research and teaching collaborations. They were joined online by other colleagues from UHI, including colleagues from Centre for History, and Sweden. In April 2024, Dr Zickermann facilitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the SEDU on research and teaching exchanges, that we hope will be rolled out soon.

Dr Zickermann has also been awarded an Honorary Readership (Docent) at the SEDU.

## Staff Spotlight

Our Undergraduate Programme Leader and Lecturer, **Dr Nicola Martin**, has had a busy spring conducting research and delivering talks relating to her forthcoming book, *The British Army in Scotland and North America: Militarisation on the Fringes of the Empire, 1745-1775* (Palgrave MacMillan).



She gave the keynote lecture at the 25th [Scottish Association for the Study of America](#) conference at the University of Stirling on 2 March. In the run up to the United States' Semiquincentennial in 2026, Dr Martin's paper – 'Army, Empire, 'Others': the British army and the coming of the American Revolution' – focused on some of the longer-term, military, social, and cultural encounters that played a role in the outbreak of the Revolution.

In April, Dr Martin made a two-week research trip to the [William L. Clements Library](#) in Ann Arbor (Michigan), funded by the [Strathmartine Trust](#), conducting further research on General Thomas Gage (10 March 1718/19 – 2 April 1787), British commander-in-chief in the early days of the American Revolution.

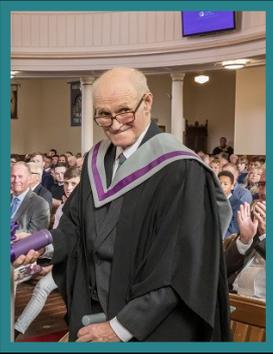
In late May, Dr Martin also delivered a paper titled 'The Laws of War and Imperial Aftermath of the Forty-Five' at the [Jacobite Studies Trust](#) Conference in Florence, Italy.



## Fellowship News

Congratulations to **Dr Lucy Dean** who has recently become a Senior Fellow of the [Higher Education Academy](#) (FHEA)!

## John Macdonald: a Tribute to a Historian, Musician, Crofter and Postie



We were saddened to hear, at the very end of 2023, of the death of Rogart man, **John Macdonald**. John and I often used to sit together at the back of the hall during Thursday night practices of the Sutherland Accordion and Fiddle Club. I soon appreciated the depth of his knowledge of local people and places stretching back over the generations. As we chatted during the tea breaks I strained to hear his soft voice among the laughter and clatter of tea cups and it frequently took me a few moments to figure out if he was telling me about some current news or an event that happened two hundred years ago.

John had an unrivalled knowledge of the people and places of the parish of Rogart, in Sutherland. In recent years he and his collaborators, particularly Christina Perera, worked hard to ensure that this knowledge was shared. This has resulted in a stream of books, most notably *Rogart: The Story of a Sutherland Crofting Parish* (2006), *The Empty Stells: Shepherds and Sheep Farms of Sutherland* (2020) and his memoirs *Looking Back from the Croft Gate* (2022).

John was also a supporter of the University of the Highlands and Islands' Centre for History, taking staff and students round deserted townships – including Aberscross from whence his ancestors were cleared - and teaching them to see what was there. John was also active in the establishment of the Crofters Union and the Sutherland Accordion and Fiddle Club, all of this fitted in around his work delivering the post, working his croft and writing tunes. In 2019 John's contribution to the cultural, social and political life of Sutherland, especially his native parish of Rogart, was formally recognised through the presentation of an honorary degree by the University of the Highlands and Islands.

We said goodbye in crisp winter weather, surrounded by John's friends and in his own church of St Callans. As he was laid to rest in sight of his own croft a pair of kestrels circled overhead, giving him a final fly past.

*Elizabeth Ritchie, May 2024*

### Saltire Society's History Book of the Year

Congratulations to **Dr David Taylor**, our second ever PhD graduate, who won the [Saltire Society's History Book of the Year award](#) with his monograph, *'The People Are Not There': The Transformation of Badenoch 1800 - 1863*. Dr Taylor said: "I feel as if I am floating well above cloud nine at the present! None of this would have happened without UHI who gave me the opportunity to undertake my PhD and the Centre for History in particular whose supervisory team provided all the support and encouragement I could possibly have asked for over my five years of study."

### Celebrating the Glenorchy Bard

Our graduate **Liesbeth Van Hulle's** work has been published in the spring issue of [History Scotland](#). Titled 'For the love of the land: Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir', her research focuses on Duncan Ban MacIntyre (20 March 1724 – 14 May 1812), the famous Gaelic poet dubbed the Glenorchy bard, and marked the 300th anniversary of his birth. She has also collaborated with Dalmally Historical Association to produce a booklet on Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir.





# Public Engagement

## November

**Dr Lucy Dean** hosted two archival workshops on 7 November and 2 December with [Culture Perth and Kinross](#) titled 'From Foundations to Echoes', providing an introduction to working with early modern archival materials, and charters in particular.

## December

**Dr Elizabeth Ritchie** delivered a talk titled 'The township, the church and the pregnant girl' on 2 December at Nairn Literary Society.

**Dr Louisa Taylor** was at the Ceredigion Historical Society on 2 December to deliver a talk titled 'Discovering Medieval Aberystwyth: Community, Identity, and Connection'.

## January

**Prof David Worthington** gave a talk titled 'A New Perspective on the North of Scotland in the Century Before Culloden: The Life-Writing of Rev. James Fraser (1634-1709), the 'Curious Cleric' to the Moray Society at Elgin Museum on 12 January.

**Dr Iain Robertson** hosted Prof Ewen Cameron (University of Edinburgh) for a hybrid event with a talk titled '[The Scottish Office and the revival of the idea of a university for the Highlands and Islands in the 1990s](#)' on the 25 January.

**Prof Worthington** was interviewed for a series of articles running in *The Herald* on the clearances in the Highlands and Islands.

## February

**Prof Worthington** held a 'History at the Heart'-event in early February, discussing fact and fiction

in the past with author Shona MacLean.

**Dr Iain MacInnes** featured on a new BBC Sounds podcast. '[House of the Lion: A Blood Soaked Throne](#)', exploring the bloody struggles for the throne of medieval Scotland. Dr MacInnes can be heard on episodes 2 and 3.

## March

**Dr Nicola Martin** and **Prof Worthington** represented Centre for History at the annual [ARCH Highland](#) Heritage Day held in Dingwall on 23 March.

**Dr Katy Turton** gave a talk on 20 March at [Nairn U3A](#) on Russia and Revolution.

**Prof Worthington** and **Dr Jim MacPherson** hosted attendees of ARCH Highland's 'Exploring Dornoch Heritage' -course for a visit at the Burghfield House on 28 March. The course aimed to share memories, learn about sites, finds and heritage of the local area.

## May

**Dr MacPherson** coordinated a joint event with Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, hosting Neville Kirk (Prof Emeritus, Manchester Metropolitan University) for a talk titled 'UK and Britain in crisis from the 1970s to the present day' on 7 May.

**Prof Worthington** co-hosted a workshop with Dr Steve Taylor (Director of Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research at UHI North, West & Hebrides) on research and knowledge exchange initiatives in Health, Humanities and Social Sciences on 23 May in Inverness.



## New Book

Congratulations to **Dr Lucy Dean** whose new book, [\*Death and the Royal Succession: Scottish Funerals, Coronations and Weddings, c. 1214–1543\*](#), will be out in late July and is now available for pre-order!

**Dr Philippa Woodcock** has a chapter in *Early Modern European Diplomacy – A Handbook*, Dorothee Goetze and Lena Oetzel eds. (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2024). Co-authored with Hannes Ziegler, the chapter is titled 'Emotions in Early Modern Diplomacy'

**Dr Jim MacPherson's** article 'Fraser in Fearn: Migration, Diaspora, and the Ghosts of Empire in the Return Visits of Peter Fraser (New Zealand Prime Minister) to the Highlands, 1935–1949' was published in [\*Northern Scotland\*, \(14:2 \(2023\), pp. 170-93\)](#). His newest book, *Macpherson the Historian*, co-written with Dr Mairi MacPherson, is [now available online to read as an ebook](#).

**Dr Louisa Taylor** was in Warsaw, Poland, in early February for a workshop focussing on the medieval centre-periphery paradigm, delivering a paper titled "Cultural transfer" and the centre-periphery model'.

**Dr Kathrin Zickermann** has co-authored an article with Prof Steve Murdoch titled 'The Battle of Lemgo, 17 October 1638: An Empirical Reevaluation' in *Militaerhistorisk Tidsskrift* (2023), pp. 81-94.

**Dr Iain MacInnes** was the guest speaker of University of Stirling's History, Heritage & Politics division's research seminar series in early April with a paper titled "'Massacre at Agincourt": Comics Medievalism, the Battle of Agincourt, and the Korean War'.

**Dr Linsey Hunter** delivered a paper titled 'The Vice of Treachery, Worst of All Vices': Disloyalty, Status, Gender, and Politics in the Scotichronicon' at the Loyalty in the Medieval World Conference, organised at the University of Lincoln on 5-7 April.

**Prof David Worthington** was one of the panellists at the Environmental Histories of Scotland: Mapping Out a Way Forward Conference, held at the University of Stirling on 16 April, with a paper titled 'The rural coast: a new route for Coastal History in Scotland'.

**Dr Iain Robertson** was at Aarhus University, Denmark, in April to deliver a seminar on 'The phantasmagorical heritage of fences and the landscape of North West Scotland'. While there, he also held a masterclass on 'Heritage from Below' to the Masters students.

**Dr Elizabeth Ritchie** was one of the speakers at Highland Theological College's conference, Outlanders for the Faith. Titled 'The English thrusting out the Gaelic', her paper examined the attitudes of the Evangelical Gaelic schools to language in 1811-72.

**Dr Alison Chand** was in London in mid-May for a seminar organised by Royal College of Physicians, discussing experiences of oral history interviewing during Covid-19. She joined a panel discussion with representatives from NHS at 70: NHS Voices of Covid- 19, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Association of Anaesthetists and National Life Stories.

**Dr Lucy Dean** and **Dr Philippa Woodcock** both delivered papers at the [Royal Studies Network's](#) conference, Kings and Queens 13, that took place in Paris on 27-28 May. Dr Woodcock's paper was titled 'Impolite Refusals: Problematic Gifts from Versailles to Venice' and Dr Dean discussed the topic of 'Gift-Giving, Material Communication and Self-Fashioning in the French Adventures of James V, 1536-1537'.