



Internationally renowned for our research and teaching in Highland, Scottish and wider world history.

Newsletter - Spring 2019

Welcome to our Spring 2019 newsletter which I hope captures the range and energy of our activity over the last six months.

I've recently been comparing our student numbers (see below) with figures for 2014-15. Our undergraduate numbers have gone up by over a quarter, taught postgraduate numbers have more than tripled, and research student numbers have nearly doubled over these last five years. It's a relief to me that staff numbers have also increased, by more than 40%!

This all leads to significant change, but there has been continuity too.

I'm as proud as ever of the extraordinary work that our staff and students have been turning out and am sure that this newsletter will give you a very satisfying flavour of that.

Dr David Worthington
Director, UHI Centre for History



Dornoch staff clockwise from top right: Iain MacInnes, Philippa Woodcock, Lucy Dean, Elizabeth Ritchie, David Worthington, Alison MacWilliam, Alison Munro, Iain Robertson and Jim MacPherson.

NB figures include part-time staff & students

Around **250** undergraduate students
 Over **50** masters students
8 PhD students
16 members of staff
 (9 in Dornoch)

www.history.uhi.ac.uk

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Iolaire memorial events

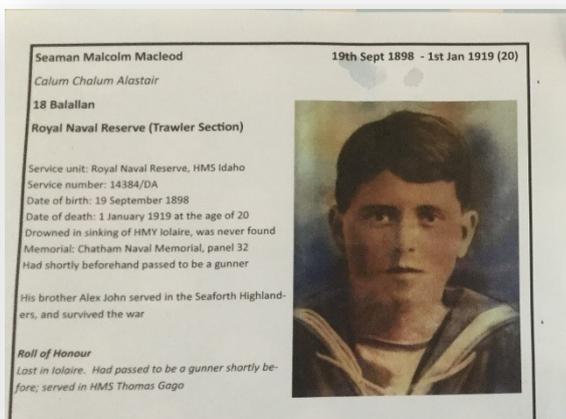
100 years ago, the Iolaire foundered on rocks and sank near Stornoway harbour. It was 1st January 1919 and 205 returning soldiers died, 181 of them from Lewis and Harris.



Over the last year the Centre's Dr Iain Robertson has been working with local heritage societies on Lewis to identify the impact the tragedy had on the islands. People shared their memories of 'the silence, of the widow's share and of the joy felt when sisters and cousins returning from working in Dundee were no longer dressed in mourning black.'

Together with colleagues from Abertay University, Iain has gathered information for a free online resource – the **Living Legacies 1914-1918, Visualising the Iolaire** app – which you can find at <http://bit.ly/IolaireApp>.

Iain also attended the National Service of Thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey to mark the Centenary of the Armistice and in January was invited to 'An Treas Suaile' (The Third Wave) in Inverness, a moving commemoration of the tragedy by folk musicians Julie Fowlis and Duncan Chisholm.



Malcolm Macleod, drowned in the sinking of the Iolaire, aged 20. His body was never recovered.

Napier Commission online at www.history.uhi.ac.uk

In 1884 the Napier Commission published its *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*.

The Report contains five volumes of spoken testimony, given in English and Gaelic, which was made to the Commissioners as they travelled from village to village.

We are very pleased to be hosting the online version of the report which was originally digitised by West Highland College UHI, but has now passed into our care. You can dip into the volumes on our website or use the index to find the person or place you're interested in.



It's the most important 19th century historical resource for the Highlands and Islands, but it's also an amazing read for anyone interested in family history. You can almost hear the voices of individual named tenants as they respond to the commissioners' questions.

Since the report came into our care, more than a thousand people have been able to use it through our website – see <http://bit.ly/NapierCommission>.

Image: Haymaking in the Highlands from Historylinks museum in Dornoch. If you can't make it to the museum, their online archive is an excellent resource.

See <http://www.historylinksarchive.org.uk>.

STUDENT NEWS

Highland childhood research

While studying the module *Gender and Family in the Highlands and Islands*, two of our MLitt students conducted new research into pre-Clearance childhoods. Now Helen Barton and Neil Bruce (below), have published blogs about their research on the official Statistical Accounts of Scotland website.

Helen and Neil based their research on the Old Statistical Accounts, which were published by Sir John Sinclair of Caithness in 1799. Sir John believed that *"every individual ... shall have the means of enjoying as much real happiness as the imperfect condition of human nature will admit"*. He launched Scotland's first statistical survey to find out as much as he could about the population. Today the Old Statistical Accounts are a fantastic historical resource for scholars and students, especially on the hidden people in history – the poor and the very young.



Read Helen and Neil's fascinating blogs at <http://bit.ly/Childhood1>

Making history public

Our undergraduate module **Public History** has been welcoming a wide range of museum, archive and heritage guests over the last two months.

The third-year module is the brainchild of Dr Jim MacPherson and was led this spring by Dr Lucy Dean. It takes an exciting new approach - as well as undertaking independent research projects, students examine the different ways historical research can be taken to, and co-created with the public, through museums, archives, historic sites and other less obvious routes.

Students have been meeting and hearing from practitioners from the Highland Folk Museum, Highland Archive, SimVis (the School of Simulation and Visualisation at the Glasgow School of Art) as well as from Helen Grant, a well-known historical fiction author from Perth.

Emigration in the archives

Students from Dr Elizabeth Ritchie's **Emigration from the Highlands and Islands** third year module have been spotted using the archives near where they live. Some have become such regular visitors that staff at the Highland and Orkney Archives know who they are! We love it when our students begin exploring these amazing free resources for themselves. Our public archives are open to all, so pop along to your local one and see what's going on....

PhD students

Our newest PhD researcher is **Julian Grant** from Vermont in the US, who will be examining the living landscapes of the North Coast 500. Julian is based in Dornoch, but his research will carry him along all 500 miles of the scenic route, talking and listening to heritage groups and small museums.



Maureen Shaw has spent the last two summers growing and processing flax as part of her PhD research. In September she held a flax event at the Highland Folk Museum where participants wore 18th century outfits. Flax was used to make paint, oil and cloth, and Maureen has made all three!



We're delighted to hear that **Joanna Rodgers** is taking on responsibilities beyond her heritage tourism PhD and is on the organising committee for the UHI Ruination and Decay conference being held in Inverness later this year.

Linda Ross has been busy writing up her research on the built historic environment of Dounreay. She's become an expert on 'atomic houses', the homes built for workers at the nuclear plant.



Meanwhile Jane Thomas will speak on 'Borders and boundaries: salmon fishing rights and disputes in 18th century Scotland' at the 'Zones and Lines, Water and Land: New Conversations on Borders' conference at Cardiff University in May. Jane is just 18 months into her PhD research.

CENTRE FOR HISTORY RESEARCH

New research website

Our academic staff continue to produce internationally-significant research on a wide range of topics and we're very pleased to be able to highlight some of this effort in the new research section of our website.

We're focusing on eight key strands – our 'research alliances' – and building interconnecting strengths between different staff members.

From **Land, Landscape and Memories to Maritime, Coastal and Riverine Histories and Cultures**, we're very proud of the sheer range and depth of our research interests.



Take a look at the amazing work our academics are doing on top of their demanding teaching commitments - <http://bit.ly/CfHresearch>

EVENTS & TALKS

Centre for History seminar series

In November, we welcomed Dr Alison Chand to Dornoch to explore Clydeside men in reserved occupations during the Second World War. In December, Hamish Johnston introduced us to his inspiring great-great-grandfather, Matthew Forster Heddle, an exceptional geologist and the first Munroist. In February, Dr Susan Kruse took us through 2000 years of Highland heritage in an hour! Her talk blended history and archaeology, weaving in strands of human settlement which don't often get discussed together.



All our public talks are recorded, so if you miss one you can catch it later.

Go to www.youtube.com and search for UHI Centre for History.

Out and about

Dr David Worthington gave a lecture in Inverness on the links between **Sugar and Slavery in the Highlands**, a fascinating talk which generated a Scotsman article on the topic.

Dr Iain Robertson spoke in Gairloch and Skye about the impact of the **1919 Land Settlement (Scotland) Act** in the Highlands – the Act's centenary will be marked with a conference in Lewis later this year.

Dr Iain MacInnes gave a talk on the **Scottish Wars of Independence** to the Assynt community in an innovative day of history and story-telling.

Forthcoming...

Dr David Worthington will be in conversation with Donnie Munro, former lead singer of Runrig, before a live Edinburgh audience in July. The **Runrig and Highland History** event is part of the National Museum of Scotland's new **Wild and Majestic** exhibition. See <http://bit.ly/RunrigEvent>

On screen

Dr Lucy Dean helped with the new multimedia visitor interpretation at Holyrood Abbey and a short video of her appears on the new hand-held guides there. At a special event at the Abbey this spring, Lucy will be speaking about Royal Ceremony and how the Abbey was used by the Scottish kings.

On war

Our European History Lecturer, Dr Philippa Woodcock is on the founding committee of a new community of scholars – the **Society for the History of War**. A conference has been organised for July (for which postgraduate bursaries are available) and there's a new blog **On War** – well worth a read!

Find out more at <https://www.show.org.uk/>

Scotland – Poland

A new exhibition celebrating Scotland's historic links with Poland began touring this spring. The **Robert Porteous exhibition** celebrates the life and legacy of a 17th century Scottish merchant who became the wealthiest Scot in Poland by importing wine from Hungary.



After giving a keynote lecture on Porteous at an international conference last June, Dr David Worthington worked with the Portius Society, Krosno State College and HighLife Highland to bring the exhibition to Scotland. It opened at the Highland Archive in Inverness, moving to Aberdeen Arts Centre in May.

We created a short Polish language video which mentions Robert Porteous and introduces the Centre's courses and research opportunities to prospective Polish students in their own language. You can view it at <http://bit.ly/Polishvideo>.

Parlez-vous français?

Our staff speak a fair number of languages apart from Polish – including German, Spanish, French and Portuguese – and, while we always teach in English, we welcome students from everywhere in the world.

PUBLICATIONS

History Scotland magazine

The new **Mary Queen of Scots** movie (starring Saoirse Ronan) was released in the same month that the popular magazine *History Scotland* featured an article from Dr Lucy Dean. Lucy's research examines Scottish royalty and the article looked at a crisis point in Mary's reign following her defeat at Carberry Hill in 1567. It suggested that Mary's hostile reception from Edinburgh laid the foundations for future coronations to be held in Stirling.



In January, two more Centre for History scholars featured in *History Scotland*. Our part time lecturer, Dr Amy Hayes, contributed the fourth part of her series about **Mary of Guelders**, the wife of James II, and the first Scottish consort to use her position as the king's wife for political ends.

Former student Dr David Taylor shared his research on the **Robertsons of Alvie**, who made their fortunes in Australia. After retiring from teaching David took a PhD with the Centre which led to his book *The Wild Black Region: Badenoch 1750-1800* (Birlinn, 2016). We're delighted at his continuing academic success.

In March, Dr David Worthington made it a full house with another *History Scotland* article: *Straits, Sounds and Sea Lochs* !

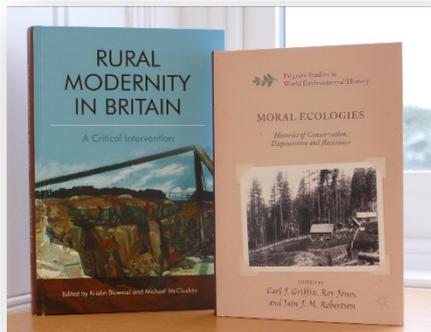


Books, chapters and journals

Dr Jim MacPherson celebrated the publication of his long-awaited chapter on Irish protestant masculinities and Orangewomen in Scotland, Canada and England. *Ireland and Masculinities in History* was published in February by Palgrave Macmillan - four years in the making!



Dr Iain Robertson was delighted to receive two publications this spring. He's co-authored a chapter in *Rural Modernity in Britain*, published by Edinburgh University Press, as well as co-editing *Moral Ecologies: Histories of Conservation, Dispossession and Resistance* with Carl Griffin and Roy Jones.



Journal of British Identities

In January, the second issue of the Journal of British Identities (JBI) was released online at <https://jbi.scholasticahq.com/issue/1103>.

JBI's editor, Dr Jim MacPherson, describes it as "a free, peer-reviewed, open access, online interdisciplinary journal which aims to encourage public debate about Britishness."



JBI issue 2 focuses on *Borders, Boundaries and Brexit: Perspectives on British Identities in an Uncertain World* and includes a very well-received photo-article from the Centre's Dr Elizabeth Ritchie on the visual afterlife of the Scottish Independence Referendum.

Want to find out more?

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@UHIHistory

01847 889621
history@uhi.ac.uk

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UHI Centre for History
Burghfield House, Dornoch IV25 3HN

High-quality research and teaching