



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Centre for History

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean  
Ionad Eachdraidh

## Centre for History Newsletter—September 2017



### **New Offices, New Academic Year**

As well as enjoying travel 'for travel's sake', Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote, more simply, that 'the great affair is to move'. As you will see, some of the Centre for History team have been on the road extensively since the spring, but, in the last month, all of us have also shifted into new offices. We're still at the same address, but now occupy five rooms one floor further up (no sign of ivory towers yet) at Burghfield House in Dornoch.

Now we've started to settle again, we've begun preparing for the 2017-18 academic year and, so, to writing this newsletter. It's organised into three sections: Teaching, Public Engagement and Research. Inevitably, life at the Centre for History isn't quite like that, and these three areas interact and overlap considerably within an average working day. However, we hope that what follows will give you a flavour of what has been happening, with the usual focus on both students and staff, as well as our broader networks. Let us know what you think!



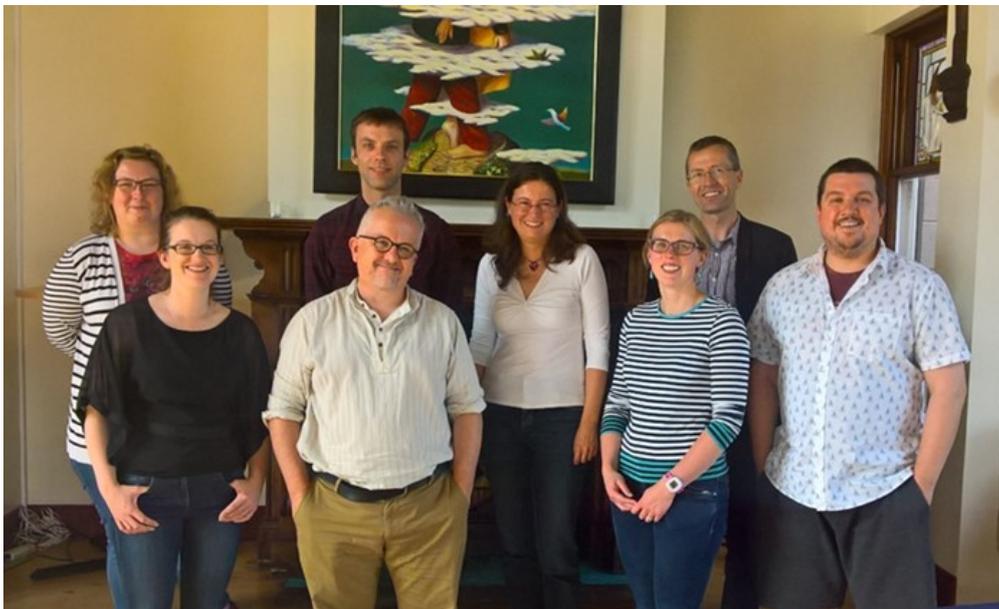
## Teaching

### *Some Staff Activities 'Behind the Scenes'*

The Centre for History now leads on nineteen degrees, fourteen at undergraduate level and five at masters level. Dr Iain MacInnes has, since 2009, played a huge part in overseeing the undergraduate element, and with twelve of the fourteen programmes at that level being joint ones, has developed extensive skills in terms of collaboration and communication across several subject areas and the entire geographical network of the partnership. This has been recognised by the university with Iain stepping into Subject Network Leader duties currently, while Dr Brian Boag covers the Dean of Faculty role temporarily. We have redistributed programme leadership duties at undergraduate level for Semester One of 2017-18 accordingly. In terms of any changes, students will notice, for example, that we are implementing fully the GradeMark facility on Blackboard, for which Dr Lucy Dean has been our lead; we will be in close communications with all concerned about that. Meanwhile, Alison MacWilliam, the Centre for History Curriculum and Research Officer, moved into her eleventh year of work for the university this year. Alison has taken on a variety of different and more challenging tasks in recent times, and has initiated several new procedures within the Centre, in particular, to keep a better track of student attendance and retention, and to improve Exam Board organisation.

### *Teaching Day*

All of the above, and more, was discussed at our latest teaching-focused staff development day, which we held in August in Dornoch. It was a delight to see two of our existing part-time, permanent staff there, Dr Linsey Hunter and Dr Stephen Bowman, and also to welcome Dr Alison Chand and Dr Amy Hayes. They, alongside Dr Victoria Hodgson, comprise our three new teaching assistants for 2017-18. Unfortunately, we don't have a group picture from the day showing Dr Dean (who took this photo) or Alison MacWilliam, or, indeed, of the others in the lecturing team for 2017-18 (Dr Jim MacPherson, Dr Kathrin Zickermann and Linda Ross) who, unfortunately, couldn't attend on the day.





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#### *Prizes for Val Ash*

Congratulations to all our students who are graduating this year. One of them will be Kathleen (Val) Ash who has shown great perseverance and persistence since beginning her studies with us several years back, and before most of the current Centre staff began working here. Val will receive a 'First Class' BA Honours Scottish History from Moray College UHI this autumn. She will also be the recipient of the Highland Society of London undergraduate prize for 2016-17, for her dissertation on the temperance movement in the Highlands and

Islands, an extremely impressive and promising piece of work, in fact, so good, that it warrants her receiving a second award, our Professor James Hunter Dissertation Prize.

From Perth to Thurso, Kirkwall to Elgin and Inverness, we have seen more ordinary and honours degree graduates emerge from Centre for History-led programmes in 2016-17 than in any year previously. These include twenty-four students from our single or joint honours degrees featuring History or Scottish History: Adele Bartram, Alasdair Stuart, Duncan McCabe, Emily Simpson, Erin Hall, Euan Thomson, Gary MacLachlan, Geoffrey Foreman, Graeme MacLeod, Grant Wilson, John Lyons, Kayleigh McCartney, Lewis Cairns, Liam Babington, Linda MacKenzie, Lorna Fraser, Morrison McKay, Niall Hutchison, Ray Simpson, Sam Baillie, Sam Murdoch, Tracy Shaw and Val Ash, along with four students who completed PG Certs or PGDips at the taught postgraduate level: Angus MacLeod, Ron Hill, Sarah Hunter and Sean Rigby.

Congratulations to all – we hope you had a great day!

#### *Lunch with an Alumnus*

We had a great lunch with our MLitt Highlands and Islands graduate, Graham Hannaford, in Dornoch earlier this month. Graham, who studied with us online from Australia, is now a PhD student at Federation University, and our own Dr Elizabeth Ritchie is a member of the supervisory team.





Public Engagement

*James I of Scots*

As ever, we've been getting out and about over the spring and summer. Dr Lucy Dean made the front page of the Dundee Courier in relation to her work on the 'James I of Scots' project. As well as the quest for James's lost burial-place, the project's activities focus on Perth's central place in the realm of the early Stewart Kings of Scotland. The photo below shows Dr Dean being interviewed earlier this year by Andrew Anderson of BBC Scotland at the AK Bell Library, Perth, about the project.



*Emeritus and Visiting Professorial Staff*

Emeritus Professor James Hunter's *Set Adrift upon the World* book continues to attract extremely positive feedback:

'James Hunter's work has analysed with utter thoroughness the culture of the Highlands and the diaspora that was forced on it. In his latest book ... he lays out the way systematic dispossession was managed, legally, by the class who engineered the process ... Hunter unravels it and leads us through it with the sharpest of eyes for telling details to be found in national and regional archives ... [His] account is detailed and unsparing ... [He] is careful to present the evidence for all he records.' – *London Review of Books*.

Professor Hunter has also spoken to large audiences on 'Wild Land, Rewilding and Repeopling' at Edinburgh University, at Rannoch History Society, Colonsay Book Festival and the Spirit of Moray Book Festival. He contributed to the Hitchhiker's Guide to Scottish Literature podcast on Iain Crichton Smith's novel *Consider the Lillies*. He has assisted with Community Land Scotland's oral history project on Harris, which culminates in September in a two-week long exhibition at Talla na Mara, West Harris Trust's new community and business centre, and spoke at CLS's workshop on landscape, rewilding and related matters at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye. In August 2017, he was interviewed about community purchase of croft land around Helmsdale for a BBC Radio 4 Farming Today programme devoted entirely to this topic. Following that, he was interviewed in Ullapool in connection with forthcoming BBC Scotland TV series, *Scotland from the Air*, this dealing with planned villages like Ullapool. In August, he took part in an HIE seminar on possible futures for community ownership, and in September was in Helmsdale to give a talk, 'Rewilding and Repeopling', to Scottish Natural Heritage's Rural Resources Group.



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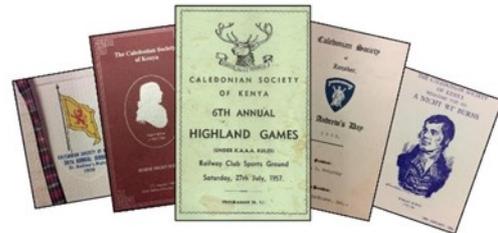
Professor Marjory Harper, visiting professor at the Centre for History, is continuing to do a hugely impressive amount of work in the field of 'mental health and migration'. We can only begin to summarise that here, but watch this space. One sign of the impact of her work in this area came in early September, however, when the World Health Organization invited her to UN City in Copenhagen to participate in a webinar, joining a panel that was looking at the issue.

On 26 September, with our friends at the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness, we hosted an afternoon and evening of activities at their Bught Park repository and reading rooms. The first part of the afternoon comprised an introductory session for Centre for History/UHI students on how to use the searchroom and catalogues there, this followed by a public lecture by Professor John MacKenzie, visiting professor at the Centre for History. Following that, the archive staff organised a display and discussion of material from the archive of the Caledonian Societies of Kenya and Zanzibar, material drawn on by Professor MacKenzie in his lecture.



**Associationalism, Empire and the Archive of the Caledonian Societies of Kenya and Zanzibar: Workshop and Lecture**

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017  
Highland Archive Centre, Bught Rd, Inverness



3.45-4.45pm - Introductory session for Centre for History/UHI students: how to use the searchroom and catalogues at the Highland Archive Centre.

5.00-6.15pm - Public Lecture by Professor John MacKenzie (Visiting Professor, UHI Centre for History) - 'Associationalism in the British Empire'

6.15-6.45pm - Display and discussion of material from the archive of the Caledonian Societies of Kenya and Zanzibar, held at Highland Archive Centre.

All are welcome but bookings are required for the lecture, and, for UHI students, the afternoon workshop. Should you wish to attend one or both, please contact [historyevents@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:historyevents@uhi.ac.uk).

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*'Gordonbush Estate: Setting the Archives in Context'*

On the subject of archives, back in June, Clyne Heritage Society and the Centre for Scotland's Land Futures presented an evening of free talks and discussion in Brora on the Gordonbush Estate, Strath Brora, involving the Centre for History's Dr Iain Robertson talking about the Sutherland Land Rebels, 1918-39, alongside a lecture by Dr Annie Tindley (Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University)



### 'Iolaire' Commemorations

Speaking of Dr Robertson, he has travelled extensively in recent months, for example, to Lewis for his work on the 'Visualising the Iolaire' project. This has involved speaking to a number of local history societies, part of an AHRC project that aims, in partnership with Dr Iain Donald of the University of Abertay, to create an app memorialising this terrible disaster that has relevance for the 21st century. As Iain writes: 'The project will be 'interweaving a deep mapping of the impact of the disaster on the wider Lewis/Harris community with memories and stories (my bit) of when and how, or not, knowledge of individual loss passed down the generations. Ultimately, we are exploring the ways in which the community coped with and recovered from (again, or not) this collective trauma.'



Iain has also been in Orkney, where he delivered a recorded [public lecture](#) at the Centre for Nordic Studies on the ruined blackhouse of the Outer Hebrides as an intrinsic part of cultural memory in relation to crofting.

### Polish Workshop



Photo courtesy of Marcin Kufka

David followed this up, in June, with the 'Unheard Voices, Unseen Communities: Perspectives on Polish Ethnicity in Scotland' workshop, also in Inverness. It featured widely on BBC Radio Scotland, the [BBC News website](#) and in the [Press and Journal](#). David subsequently wrote up a Thinkuhi [blog post](#) summarising that, and some of the positive feedback the event received.

A bouncy castle and face painting were among the activities at Inverness's first ever Polish Heritage day. It took place at Clachnacuddin Football Club in Inverness in May, and Dr David Worthington turned quizmaster and prize-giver for a few hours.



From left to right: Dr David Worthington, Krystyna Szumelukowa, David Stewart MSP, Maree Todd MSP at the 'Unheard Voices' workshop.



### JISC Map

Finally, for this section, it was nice to have our crowdsourced interactive [map](#) of 'physical archives' in the Highlands and Islands added to Jisc's ArchivesHub site a couple of months back.

### Research

Our postgraduate research students are at the heart of our research activity, a background from which Dr Jim MacPherson organised our latest Postgraduate Research Day in May.



This involved presentations by our PhD students, Joanna Rodgers, Maureen Hammond, Linda Ross, Mary Souter, and also from Mel Mainwaring-Mackay of Inverness College UHI (co-supervised by Jim). We also had a video-conference link-up to Graham Hannaford, and heard excellent presentations by Duncan Simpson and Brian Symons, two of our taught postgraduate students. It was a bonus to have numerous of the supervisors from the supervisory teams present in Dornoch for the day too.

### Elizabeth in Vancouver

Dr Elizabeth Ritchie has travelled further than any other member of staff this year to date. She received a prestigious invite to Simon Fraser University of Vancouver this spring to speak at their Tartan Day. In connection with that, having obtained funding from Inverness Field Club to finance fieldwork for her current 'Highland masculinity and Evangelicalism' project, she was able to present the initial results at the Gender and Scottish Studies seminar at the same university.





### New ESF-funded PhD Studentships

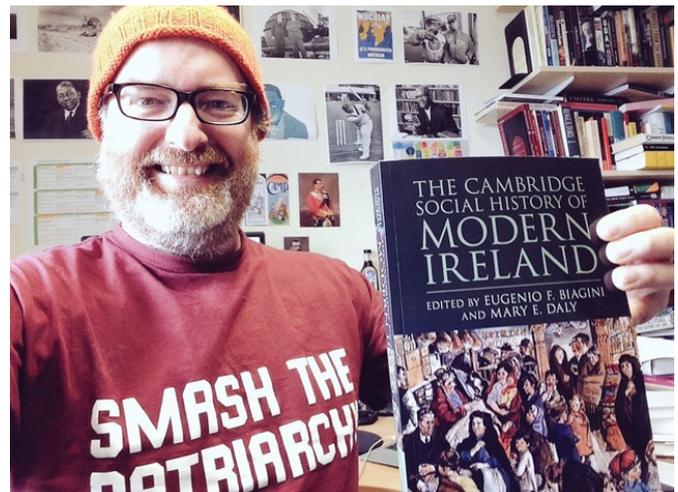
Our research student community is growing considerably. We have two new ESF-funded PhD students joining us this autumn. Ann MacDonald will join us for one on 'Archiving the Nuclear Past: exploring the nuclear energy industry and its community impact in Britain', for which Jim MacPherson will be Director of Studies, while Jane Thomas takes up the position for the studentship on 'Historical and archaeological evidence for the social, cultural and economic position of salmon in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, c.1400-c.1800'. David Worthington is Director of Studies for this latter studentship. Elizabeth Ritchie will join the team for a further ESF-funded collaborative studentship with the Archaeology Institute on the history of distilling in the Highlands.

### Conferences and Selected Recent Publications



Iain MacInnes attended the International Medieval Congress (IMC) 2017 at the University of Leeds in July, the largest gathering of medieval scholars in Europe. There he presented a paper on 'The Scottish Other', considering those who supported the Balliol claim to the throne during the period of the Second Scottish War of Independence (1332-1357).

The busy-ness does not end there. Well done to Jim MacPherson, who has a chapter on the diaspora and cultural transmission in the fabulous-looking new Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland.



Elizabeth Ritchie has two new articles out on emigration and farming. One appeared in [Ontario History](#) and the other in the [Agricultural History Review](#). Also exciting is news that the papers from 'Land and People in Northern Scotland – the Strathnaver Conference', from September 2014, have been published in a new special issue of Northern Scotland now available [online](#) to all subscribers. Meanwhile, the university's recently-published 'Research Review 2016' has a two-page [feature](#) (in English and Gaelic, pp.6-7) on last year's 'Firths and Fjords' conference.



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### Centre for History Social Networking

The Centre for History is very active in social networking. The following sites are all run by staff:

*UHI Centre for History community page*

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/UHI-Centre-for-History/137321449670658?fref=ts>

@UHIHistory

*UHI Centre for History group*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/91416853553/>

*Northern Scotland*

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Northern-Scotland/454289977980405>

@NorthernScotEUP

*HistoryLinksDornoch blog*

<https://historylinksdornoch.wordpress.com/>

*Hub for the Study of British Identities*

<https://britishidentities.wordpress.com/>

@UHIBritStudies

*Moray Firth History*

[www.facebook.com/MorayFirthHistory](http://www.facebook.com/MorayFirthHistory)

@Moray\_Firth

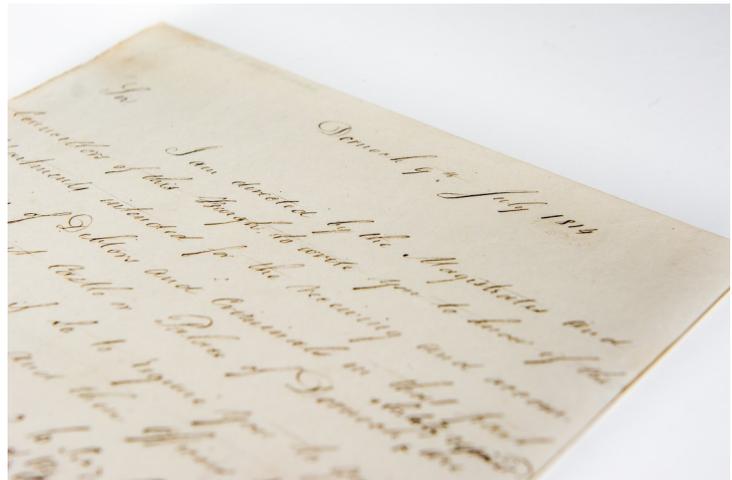
*Firths and Fjords: A Coastal History Page*

<https://www.facebook.com/FirthsandFjords/>

*Scottish-Polish Historical Links*

[www.facebook.com/ScotlandPoland?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/ScotlandPoland?fref=ts)

@ScottishPolish



### Contact the Centre for History

For further information about our undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes, or for additional details about any of the above articles, please contact us:

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