

News

UHI Centre for History



Winter 2024

As the teaching semester hurtles towards the Christmas break, it is always good to pause and take stock. Despite facing continued challenges (both for UHI and the Higher Education sector more broadly), we have maintained and surpassed previous results in student satisfaction surveys and welcomed four new doctoral researchers to the Centre.



Our students and postgraduate researchers have continued to prove their resilience and excellence in ways that make us beam with pride on a regular basis, with everything from everyday victories (such as nailing a skill that they have struggled with) to winning prizes, securing funding, curating exhibitions and organising conferences. Moreover, the staff have been proactive in securing funded research and scholarship awards, contributing to a wide range of collaborations, publishing and presenting to varied audiences about their research and pedagogical practices.

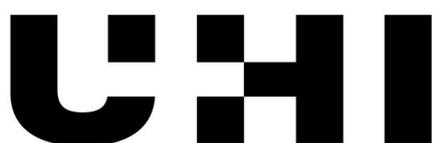
As you can see, it remains a tricky task to summarise all the exciting achievements of the Centre for History team of staff, students and postgraduate research community over the past six months, but we hope our newsletter gives you a good taster!

Lucy Dean, Interim Head of Centre for History

The Centre was established in 2005 as something slightly more than a traditional university department. Today, we are internationally renowned for research and teaching in Highland, Scottish and wider world history.

We are based in the cathedral town of Dornoch in Sutherland, from where our staff teach a wide range of undergraduate programmes to students in campuses across the university region as well as, from 2024-25, internationally online.

You can follow our [Facebook](#), [X](#) or [Bluesky](#) channels or contact us directly via [email](#).



Centre for History
Ionad Eachdraidh



Congratulations to our class of 2024

Our staff had the great pleasure of attending ceremonies across the UHI region, celebrating the brilliant achievements of our graduating students. **Dr Lucy Dean** was at Perth, **Dr Nicola Martin** in Inverness, **Dr Iain Robertson** in Thurso and **Dr Elizabeth Ritchie** at the Stornoway celebration event. We would like to send our heartfelt congratulations to all our graduates—it's been a pleasure to be a part of your academic journey!

Outstanding Results

The Centre for History has received excellent feedback in recent sector-wide surveys. In the National Student Survey (NSS), completed by final year undergraduate students, BA (Hons) History received an amazing 100% in Student Satisfaction. In the [Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey](#) (PTES) the MLitt History of the Highlands and Islands programme also received a full 100% in overall student satisfaction.

History in Action!

The Centre successfully secured Curriculum Development funding in early 2024 to design two new residential and networking events (online and in-person) that will allow students to develop their skills beyond the classroom and form useful connections with experts in the field and peers across the cohorts.

Our first event, a fully online workshop, History in Action: Developing your Skills, took place in October, and we were excited to team up with [XPO North](#) who delivered a fascinating session on 'Spoken History as Digital Storytelling', followed by a panel discussion with Public History experts from [Ullapool Museum](#), [Culture Perth and Kinross](#) and the [Highland Archive Centre](#).

James Hunter Dissertation Prize

We are thrilled to announce **Ewan Armstrong** as this year's winner of the James Hunter Dissertation Prize!

Ewan's dissertation, *A Perfumed Legacy: Scent, Identity and Interaction within the Environments of Madame de Pompadour* was described by one marker as “an outstanding dissertation which combines originality, methodological rigour (even for the analysis of the intangible) and abundant, unusual primary sources...”

Ewan graduated with First Class Honours in BA (Hons) History, and is currently studying a postgraduate degree with UHI Centre for History.

You can [read a recent interview with Ewan](#) on our website.



Staff News

Funding Successes

The Centre for History staff have been highly successful in securing funding in the past six months.

- + **Dr Jim MacPherson** was recognised for his innovative and impactful work through the [Royal Society of Edinburgh](#) Research Awards programme, securing funding for his project 'Traces of Empire: Sites of Coloniality in the Eastern Highlands'.
- + **Dr Iain Robertson, Dr Lucy Dean and Dr Kathrin Zickermann** were all awarded grants by the [Strathmartine Trust](#). Dr Zickermann's award funded a research trip to Northern Germany and Poland to investigate the early modern Scottish communities and Alexander Erskine, and is part of the research for her upcoming monograph, *Complex Identities and Cultural Integration: Alexander Erskine (1598 - 1656) and Swedish Service* with Brill Publishing. Dr Dean received funding towards the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Surveys as part of the [Perth Charterhouse Project](#), delivered together with University of Stirling, Culture Perth and Kinross and Dr Gavin Lindsay. Dr Iain Robertson's award will fund further collaborations with [Centre for the History of People, Place and Community](#) (Institute of Historical Research) focussing on Public History in the Highlands and Islands.
- + **Dr Linsey Hunter** was awarded one of this year's [Jinty Nelson Teaching Fellowships](#) by the [Royal Historical Society](#) to support her project, 'Short pilot study to explore best teaching practice of student-led co-design of undergraduate history modules at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)'.

Fellowship Announcement

Congratulations to **Dr Kathrin Zickermann**, who has recently been elected a Fellow of the [Royal Historical Society](#)!



[Dr Zickermann](#) is an early modern historian of Northern Europe who researches and teaches on military and social history (particularly the Thirty Years War), maritime history, and the history of the Orkney and Shetland Islands.

HISA Awards Win

Congratulations to **Dr Iain Robertson**, who won the title of 'Best Research or Dissertation Supervisor' at this year's [HISA Awards](#), receiving his award at the UHI North, West and Hebrides' Thurso graduation ceremony.

The Centre for History team received several nominations and **Dr Alison Chand** was 'Highly Commended' in the category of 'Best Personal/Academic Learning Support'.





Postgraduate Updates

Welcome to New PGRs

Our PGR Co-ordinator, **Dr Jim MacPherson** noted: 'We are delighted to have welcomed four new PhD researchers, [Siobhán Beatson](#), [Greg Cotton](#), **Melanie Manwaring-McKay** and [Mhairi Ferrier](#), to the Centre for History in the past few months. Their diverse and exciting topics demonstrate the vibrancy of research culture at the Centre and we look forward to helping them develop their projects over the coming years.' Mhairi joins us on a [Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities](#) funded Collaborative Doctoral Award, delivered in partnership with [UHI North, West and Hebrides](#) and [Ceòlas Uibhist](#).

PGR Curators

We were thrilled to see our Postgraduate Researchers actively engaging with their local community history by curating exhibitions.

Frances Irene Liddle, was the key curator of a [recent exhibition](#) commemorating the Hauxley Lifeboat



Service that operated from 1851 to 1939. The exhibition also coincided with the 200th anniversary of the RNLi. Frances Irene completed an MLitt with the Centre for History in 2019, and is currently focussing on her PhD research with us.



Dr Liz Forrest, who graduated in September, curated an exhibition for [Gairloch Museum](#) on Wester Ross shepherds emigrating to Patagonia in 1880-1930. The exhibition built on the research conducted for her PhD, and she also delivered a talk on 7 October, discussing her findings.

Conference Coordination

Dr Lucy Dean (Centre for History) and **Dr Lesley Mickel** (UHI Inverness) were invited to speak at the [European Association for Dance History](#) Conference, Women in Dance:

Patronage, Performance, Pedagogy, which took

place at the French Institute in Edinburgh, 18-20

October. The invitation came from **Alena Shmakova**, a current History MLitt student who helped to organise the conference. Alena also delivered a talk on the topic of 'The circus princess: Versatile Mrs Parker between Edinburgh, Dublin and London'.

Drs Mickel and Dean worked with Alena to prepare information for display boards focussing on women in dance in the Renaissance and Early Modern periods and delivered presentations during the conference reception. Recordings of the talks will be uploaded with digital versions of the display boards as part of the conference legacy, and the boards themselves will be on display in libraries and dance venues in Scotland.

Alena's contribution to the conference and preparation of display boards was supported by the [UHI Student Development Fund](#).





Public Engagement

Transatlantic Connections

We had a brilliant time hosting students from [Trent University](#), Canada, in June. The visit included a trip to the Highland Archive Centre and a visit to Culloden Battlefield with our **Dr Nicola Martin**.

In Dornoch, the students stayed at UHI student residences and attended workshops at Burghfield House, led by our **Dr Alison Chand** and **Dr Lucy Dean**. To finish the two-day programme, **Prof David Worthington** took the visitors for a historical beach walk, exploring the coastline of Dornoch. What a busy but brilliant programme, and we look forward to further collaborations.

In addition to our connections with Trent University, we will also be hosting visiting students from [Penn State University](#) in summer 2025.



June

Dr Jim MacPherson delivered a public talk at the Milton Local History Group on the topic of 'History in Public: From Research to Communities—and back again!' on 10 June.

August

Dr Lucy Dean delivered a sold out talk on 29 August at Perth Art Gallery for [Culture Perth and Kinross](#). Titled 'Return of the King' the talk explored the relationship between King James I and the city of Perth during his reign.

Dr Iain MacInnes featured on the BBC Radio 4 podcast, ['You're Dead to Me'](#) in early August, discussing Robert Bruce.

October

Dr Jim MacPherson met with Church of Scotland representatives in Aberlour to discuss the Legacies of Slavery project.

Dr Louisa Taylor delivered a talk for the [Welsh](#)

[Arts and Humanities Alliance](#) on 11 October, on 'Discovering Medieval Aberystwyth'.

Dr MacInnes delivered a talk on 17 October for the [Society of Highland and Island Historical Research](#), titled 'The King in the North', focussing on David Strathbogie, the Earl of Atholl.

Dr Alison Chand spent two days with the [Glenachulish Preservation Trust](#) on 17-18 October, delivering training for their oral history project.

November

Dr Dean delivered a talk for [History Scotland](#) on 'Royal ceremony in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period' on 26 November.

December

Dr Iain Robertson, **Dr Elizabeth Ritchie** and **Dr MacPherson** all gave talks for a webinar on 4 December, delivered in collaboration with the [Centre for History of People, Place and Community](#), focussing on public and community-based history research in the Highlands and Islands.

Research and Publications

Aviemore Research Gathering

In August, the Centre for History staff gathered in Aviemore to discuss research developments and planning. This was with a keen eye towards preparations for REF 2029, but also with a shared desire to focus on our research ecology and how we nurture this, particularly in an increasingly challenging funding environment. We were pleased to welcome **Dr Andrew MacKillop**, Senior Lecturer in Scottish History at the University of Glasgow and External Examiner for the Centre to observe and contribute to our discussions. Several actions followed from the meeting, including reinstating lunchtime research workshops and the aim to work towards fuller integration between staff and postgraduate researchers.

New Publications

Big congratulations to our **Dr Lucy Dean** on the publication of her new book *Death and the Royal Succession in Scotland c.1214-c.1543 - Ritual, Ceremony and Power!* The book is now available through [Boydell & Brewer](#) with the discount code BB135 (35% off).



Dr Rachel Davis, Dr Lucy Dean and Dr Iain MacInnes all contributed to the recently published *Gender in Scotland, 1200-1800: Place, Faith and Politics* (ed. Janay Nugent, Cathryn Spence and Mairi Cowan. EUP, 2024). The book engages with the latest scholarship on gender and history to provide a nuanced understanding of premodern Scotland.

Dr Kathrin Zickermann completed a research trip to Stralsund and Greifswald, Germany, during the summer.

Dr Linsey Hunter was a panellist at the Leeds [International Medieval Congress](#) on 2 July, discussing 'Teaching Medieval History after COVID'.

Dr Hunter also delivered a paper at University of Northampton's Politicised Nostalgias workshop on 5 July on the topic "...that profound moment of moral clarity, almost a thousand years ago": conflicting nostalgias, comedy, and abortion rights campaigning in the USA.'

Prof David Worthington delivered a paper titled 'The ane in the west, and the vther in the northe'. Spanish interventions in the Highlands and Islands 1588 – 1633' at the inaugural conference, the Sixteenth Century in the Highlands, organised by the [Society of Highland and Island Historical Research](#) on 5 July.

Dr Jim MacPherson's jointly authored article, with Rhona Ramsay, 'Jamie Macpherson's Fiddle: Decolonisation, and Representing Gypsy/Traveller Communities in the Clan Macpherson Museum' was included in Edinburgh University Press' cross-journal feature [Race and Racism in Scotland](#).

Dr Louisa Taylor gave a paper at the Aberystwyth History and Welsh History Research Seminar on 30 October, on 'Defining Violence: A Medieval Perspective'.

Dr Elizabeth Ritchie's article 'The Private & the Public Man: The Masculinities of Highlanders & Islanders in the Nineteenth Century' was published in the *Transactions* of the [Gaelic Society of Inverness](#) in October.

Dr Philippa Woodcock will deliver a talk for the [UHI Humanities and Arts Research Cluster](#) (HARC) on 19 December on the topic 'Fertile negotiators: the Venetian father-ambassador at the court of Louis XIV'.