



4<sup>th</sup> International St Magnus Conference  
Call for Papers  
**Alternative Fact and Actual Fiction: Constructing  
the Social Narrative**

Orkney Islands, Scotland, 16-18 April 2018

The Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands, welcomes abstracts of papers and poster proposals for the 4<sup>th</sup> International St Magnus Conference, which will be held in the Orkney Islands, Scotland, 16-18 April 2018. This year we have a number of invited speakers as well as an open call for papers. The invited speakers are experts from a number of different strands of History, Archaeology and Literature with an emphasis on the medieval and early modern periods, covering a range of geographical areas, such as Scandinavia, Anglo-Saxon England and Scotland. The programme of invited speakers is found below and we will post a new version once the Call for Papers has closed.

The theme of the conference is *Alternative Fact and Actual Fiction: Constructing the Social Narrative*. This idea has been formulated in response to recent political and societal developments, in which training in the Humanities and Social Sciences is seen to be of little value. In the face of growing racism, xenophobia, climate change denial and misrepresentation of the past, it is important to show how expertise in past societies is relevant today.

This conference has two overall strands:

- 1) To examine how learned knowledge has been used – and can be used – in societal debate from the Middle Ages onwards. The two sessions currently in place for this strand are: *Nationalism and Scholarship* and *Identities in the Past and the Present*.
- 2) How humans in the past have dealt with catastrophes that seem to threaten their very existence. The two sessions currently in place for this strand are: *The End of the World 1: The Humanities and Natural Science* and *The End of the World 2: Writing the Narrative*.

If possible, speakers included in both strands should use a few minutes of their allotted time to reflect on how their research is relevant to today's society and social context.

The Committee invites abstracts of no more than 100 words for papers and posters. All proposals should be emailed to [CNS@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:CNS@uhi.ac.uk) by **December 1, 2017**. Conference registration will open on **December 1, 2017**, please see our [website](http://www.nordic.uhi.ac.uk) for this and all other information.

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**Draft Programme**

*Day 1: Field Trip: Guided tour of key sites in Orkney's past*

*Evening: Reception*

*Day 2: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, Kirkwall Town Hall, Kirkwall*

Session 1: Nationalism and Scholarship		
<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Title</i>
Dr Natascha Mehler and Dr Alasdair Brookes	Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology, University of Vienna and head researcher at The German Maritime Museum in Bremerhaven; Heritage Manager for the British Red Cross in London and Honorary Fellow at University of Leicester	'Kilts and Lederhosen: the historical archaeology of nationalism in Bavaria and Scotland or how historical archaeology can help to identify nationalism'.
Dr Christina Lee	Associate Professor, School of English, University of Nottingham	'Unity and Dissent: the role of Norse myth in shaping German nationalism.'
Dr Sarah Semple	Reader, Department of Archaeology, Durham University	'Re-assembled Things: The Reinvention of Early Medieval Assembly Past and Present.'
Dr Oisín Plumb	Lecturer in Nordic Studies, Centre for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands	'Church and state identities in pre-Norse Orkney.'

*Lunch: soup and sandwiches, Supper Room, Kirkwall Town Hall, Kirkwall*

Session 2: Identities in the Past and the Present		
<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Title</i>
Dr Stuart Brookes	Leverhulme Trust Research Associate and Honorary Senior Lecturer, Institute of Archaeology, UCL	'Anglo-Saxon identity and the "other".'

Dr Alex Sanmark and Dr Andrew Jennings	Reader in Medieval Archaeology, Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands; Lecturer Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands	'The views of identity and ethnicity in Norse sources – us them.'
Professor Carl Phelpstead	School of English, communication and philosophy, University of Cardiff	'Mercian identities: past and present.'

*Evening: Whisky reception*

**Day 3: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, Kirkwall Town Hall, Kirkwall**

<b>Session 3: The End of the World 1: the humanities and natural science</b>		
<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Title</i>
Professor Judith Jesch	School of English, University of Nottingham	'Scientists and social scientists studying the Viking Age – how to integrate with humanities-based approaches.'
Professor Thomas H McGovern	Department of Anthropology, Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY)	'Iceland and Greenland in the Comparative Island Ecodynamics Project 2012-2016.'
Dr David Griffiths	Reader in archaeology, Department of Continuing Education, University of Oxford	'Drowning in sand: responses to climate catastrophe in the Middle Ages.'
Professor Andrew J Dugmore	Institute of Geography and the Lived Environment School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh	'Triple Exposure. The challenges of globalisation, global environmental change and migration; lessons for the Norse settlement of the North Atlantic.'

*Lunch: Soup and sandwiches, Supper Room, Kirkwall Town hall, Kirkwall*

<b>Session 4: The End of the World 2: writing the narrative</b>		
<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Title</i>
Dr Elizabeth Boyle	Department of Early Irish (Sean- Ghaeilge) National University of Ireland, Maynooth	'"Foreign Races with Avenging Swords": Catastrophe and Immigration in Medieval Ireland'
Professor Donna Heddle	Director, Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands	'Ragnarok and Reclamation; the narrative of disaster.'
Professor Chris Dyer	Department of History, University of Leicester	'Recovering from catastrophe: some lessons in the Middle Ages.'

Dr Iain Robertson	Reader, Centre for History, University of the Highlands and Islands	'Recovering from the Highland Clearances.'
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*Conference Dinner, Kirkwall Town Hall, Kirkwall*