

# News

UHI Centre for History



## Greetings from UHI Centre for History

It has been a whirlwind of a year, in which the Centre celebrated its twentieth anniversary amongst many other spectacular achievements. Despite continuing challenges, there is much to celebrate as the contents of this newsletter firmly attests.



Our students, postgraduate researchers and alumni continue to make us proud and reminds us regularly of the importance of the Centre as a community space in which students from within and beyond the Highlands and Islands regions can come together and achieve fantastic and inspiring things. From publications and funding grant successes to launching new programmes and organising exciting conferences, from community outreach to individual career development and fellowship achievements, the team continue to demonstrate that they are a truly proactive, dedicated and dynamic group. I heartily congratulate one and all for their contributions.

**Dr Lucy Dean**

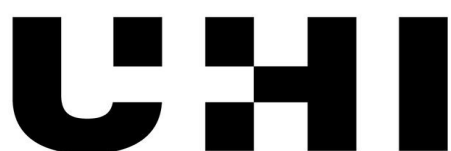
Interim Head of UHI Centre for History

## Summer 2025

The Centre was established in 2005 as something slightly more than a traditional university department with a strong desire to support communities across the UHI region. 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 news updates on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and or contact us directly via [email](#).



Centre for History  
Ionad Eachdraidh



# Student and Alumni

## PGR Day in Dornoch

We had the great pleasure of hosting our annual PGR Day in April (picture above), with eight of our current researchers discussing their work and journeys in person and online. From Riverdance to dynastic images, estuarine fish traps to cartographic crafts and thatched housing, you can find out [more about their research on our website](#).

## Dorothy Dunnet Centenary Award Win

Congratulations to **Siobhán**

**Beatson**, one of our PG

Researchers, upon her win of

this year's Dorothy Dunnet Centenary Award! Supported by the Dorothy Dunnett Society, the Awards comprise of two annual awards for research in history, politics, culture or religion in the 11th, 15th and 16th centuries, and aim to continue the author's long-lasting legacy. Siobhán is currently working on her PhD research, with the topic 'Life on the Margins: A socio-economic analysis of the sea loch communities of the northwest Highlands in the sixteenth century.'



## Student of the Year win

Each year the University and its academic partners celebrate the amazing students and we would like to congratulate **Taron**

**Hansen**, 1st year undergraduate History and Archaeology (BAH) student, who has won the title of EO/ Directly Enrolled Student of the Year! Taron is an international student, based in Canada, and you can read more about their UHI journey [on the university's website](#).



## Publication Success

Congratulations to **Neil Bruce**, alumnus of our MLitt History of the Highlands and Islands programme, as his recent article, 'The priest, the crofters, and the Uist rocket range' attracted a great deal of national attention and featured heavily on BBC after its [publication in the Innes Review](#) in February. To learn more about the BBC coverage and Neil's article, you can find further information [in Gaelic](#) or [in English](#).





# Staff News

## Interim Head of Centre

**Dr Lucy Dean's** post as the Interim Head of Centre for History has been extended until summer 2026, while **Prof David Worthington** remains as the Acting Dean of Arts, Humanities, Business and Education for UHI. Dr Dean has been in her current post since August 2024.

## Fellowship Announcements



**Dr Iain Robertson and Alison Chand** were both recently elected as Fellows of the Royal Historical Society, recognising their contribution to historical scholarship.



Congratulations to **Dr Linsey Hunter** who has been awarded a Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.



Congratulations to **Dr Philippa Woodcock**, who has recently been awarded the [David Berry Fellowship for the History of Scotland and the Scottish People](#) by the Royal Historical Society. This funding will support her research on the project "They wept together": Investigating miscarriage, taboo and support in early modern Scotland'.

## Staffing changes

We were sorry to say goodbye to **Dr Louisa Taylor** in February, as she accepted a full-time post with Aberystwyth University. We hope to keep in touch with her, and staff already have some interesting collaborative projects in mind!

**Alison MacWilliam**, our Curriculum and Research Officer (CRO) has reduced her hours as part of a flexible retirement plan, while our current Administrative Assistant, **Sanna Cameron** has moved into a job-share of the CRO role. We have recently also welcomed **Isla Cameron** into the role of Administrative Assistant.

## Aurora leadership Programme

Our Undergraduate Programme Leader and Lecturer, **Dr Nicola**

**Martin**, is one of this year's five UHI Aurorans, participating in the Leadership Development Programme for women. The programme will offer many opportunities to engage in learning; to reflect, to network, to take part in mentoring, to build capabilities and confidence in leadership and to contribute to building leadership capacity within and beyond the university.





# Events and News

## Centre for History 20th Anniversary

We celebrated our anniversary in April, with an afternoon of roundtables and reminiscences. We were delighted to see so many students, alumni, friends and colleagues join us on the day. **Professor Jim Hunter**, who founded the Centre in 2005, noted 'So much work has been done (and sacrifices made) to take the Centre to the point it's now reached. And clearly plans for more are well advanced...At the start of 2005, I wouldn't have dared forecast such success.'

To follow us through the years, [here is a short video to showcase a timeline of our history](#).

## New MLitt Programme launched

We are very excited to partner with UHI Institute for Northern Studies, UHI Archaeology Institute and Highland Theological College to deliver a multidisciplinary postgraduate course in [Early Modern European Studies](#) (EMES). The EMES programme has been designed to provide students with an overarching understanding of the European early modern period, while allowing for individual specialisation and interest.

Enrolment for 2025-26 is now open, and you can find [further information on the Institute of Northern Studies website](#), or through this [useful video](#), prepared by the teams involved in the delivery of the programme.



Centre for History staff pictured in 2009. L-R: Dr Elizabeth Ritchie, Prof David Wothington, Dr Karly Kehoe, Dr Karen Cullen and Prof Jim Hunter.

## Conference organising success

**Dr Iain Robertson** teamed up with **Dr Laura Denning** (independent artist, and University of Plymouth) to organise a symposium this April, titled [Island narratives of kinship, place, and the weather](#). The event took place both in person in South Uist, hosted by Ceòlas and UHI North, West and Hebrides, and online, drawing attendees and speakers from all over the world.

**Dr Kathrin Zickermann** was one of the key organisers of the [inaugural REMRA online conference, Northern Narratives](#), on 11-13 June. The alliance focusses on Renaissance and Early Modern research, and the conference saw more than 80 attendees take part across three days, with several Centre for History staff delivering papers, including a [keynote by Dr Lucy Dean](#).





# Public Engagement

## Continued collaboration with the Centre for History of People, Place and Community

We are thrilled to continue our collaboration with the [Centre for the History of People, Place and Community](#) (CHPPC) at the [Institute of Historical Research](#). In April, our **Dr Iain Robertson**, **Dr Philippa Woodcock**, **Dr Linsey Hunter** and **Dr Juliette Desportes** travelled to Newcastle for a workshop on place-based public history (pictured above). Organised together by our **Dr Robertson** and **Dr Ruth Slatter** (CHPPC), the event brought together historians from various backgrounds, united by a commitment to the importance of enabling historical research to be done by and be available to everyone who is interested in the past. You can [find out more about the event on the CHPPC blog](#).

### January

**Dr Nicola Martin** was [interviewed for a BBC article](#) on the future of Fort George, to the north-east of Inverness.

### March

**Dr Philippa Woodcock** gave a paper for The Society of Court Studies seminar series on 24 March, titled 'Fire and Water on the Seine: the Venetian Ambassador's Fireworks Party of January 1649.'

### April

**Dr Nicola Martin** and **Prof David Worthington** led events for the first Dornoch Spring Highland

Festival Fortnight, with walks and talks focussing on Jacobites, witches and the coast of Dornoch.

### May

**Dr Jim MacPherson** was one of the panellists exploring the historical roots of the film *1745: An Untold Story of Slavery* after a special screening on 17 May at Eden Court, Inverness.

### June

**Dr Jim MacPherson** delivered a talk at Tarbat Discovery Centre on 20 June, exploring the connections between one Easter Ross family and the British Empire.

## Legacies of Slavery Project

**Dr Jim MacPherson** continues to collaborate with the Church of Scotland on his project [Legacies of Slavery: Churches, Communities and Building a Fairer Future](#). The project works with communities in Aberlour, and has so far included sessions with local schools, textile workshops and a talk by **Dr MacPherson** focussing on slavery and Aberlour. You can follow the project on our website and also learn more through a [blog provided by one of the collaborators](#), sewing charity Làmhán.



Stained glass window designs produced by the Young Curators Club, Dornoch

# Research and Publications

## Leverhulme Trust Funding Success

Congratulations to **Dr Iain Robertson**, who has secured [Leverhulme Trust](#) funding for his project 'Resistance to 'improvement' in the Highlands and Islands, 1750 – c. 1820'. This collaborative project will see Dr Robertson working with **Prof Carl Griffin** (University of Sussex and visiting professor at UHI Centre for History) and **Dr**

**Juliette Desportes**, who joined the Centre for History as a Post-Doctoral Research Assistant in March 2025.

The project investigates how rural workers in the Highlands sought to defend their livelihoods and ways of life in the age of radical 'improvements' which transformed the social and economic basis of Scottish agriculture. The project will use archives from across the Highlands and Islands and in Edinburgh to look for evidence of resistance of all sorts and forms, not just riots.



**Dr Linsey Hunter** and **Dr Kathrin Zickermann** helped to coordinate a networking day for the [Renaissance and Early Modern Research Alliance](#) (REMRA) and [Medieval Studies Hub](#) (MeSH) in Perth and online on 16 May. The day of dialogue between hub members and external representatives from the heritage, museums and archives sector was extremely productive and has laid groundwork for future collaboration across the UHI partnership and beyond.

**Dr Iain MacInnes'** article "[Under Occupation? The Scottish Urban Experience of War with England, 1332-57](#)" was published in the latest volume of *Journal of Medieval Military History*.

**Dr Rachel Davis's** article '[Lock Her Up! Elite Women, Treason and Imprisonment in Late Medieval Scotland](#)' was published in the latest volume of *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*.

## New book published

We are excited to announce the publication of **Dr Nicola Martin's** first monograph, [The British Army in Scotland and North America 1745-1775: Militarisation of the Fringes of the Empire](#). Employing a

transatlantic, case study approach, it investigates the overarching cultural frameworks, individual circumstances, and local conditions guiding the actions and understandings of British army officers.

