



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Centre for History

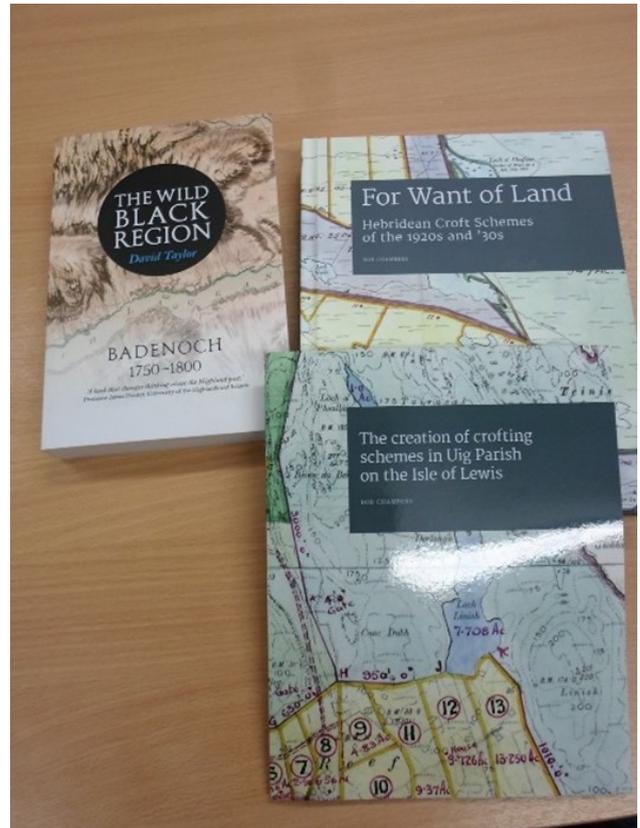
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Centre for History Newsletter—March 2016

There has been no let-up in terms of the action-packed way in which 2015-16 began. Student numbers are up significantly on last year, we have new part-time lecturing staff in place (welcome to Dr Stephen Bowman who joins us from Northumbria University and farewell and best of luck to Dr William Hepburn and Dr Marie-Louise Leonard who have moved on to new positions), while new research students, research projects, articles, books, and public engagement activities have all been to the fore. It's becoming harder and harder to summarise these activities but what's below should give a flavour of what's been happening since September.

PhD Graduates publish books

We arrived at work one early February day to find two packages in the post. The first contained no less than two self-published works, including a hefty, beautifully-presented book, by Bob Chambers, our first PhD graduate at the Centre. This is an immense achievement from Bob and we're looking forward to perusing it in detail. Information on how to order a copy online is available [here](#). The second package also contained a tome, this one by another Centre PhD graduate, Dr David Taylor. [*The Wild Black Region*](#) covers the history of the 'forgotten region' of Badenoch, 1750-1800, and is published by Birlinn. David has been [launching](#) it at the Winter Words book festival in Pitlochry, as well as in Grantown-on-Spey and Kingussie recently, some of these events attracting over 100 people. The book has also been the subject of this feature in [*The Scotsman*](#) and has been described by one reader already as 'outstanding' and 'a seminal work'.



Petre in the Proceedings

MLitt History of the Highlands and Islands student, James Petre, returned to his studies with us this semester. While he was away, James pursued a demanding enough research and publication schedule on medieval Highland themes, producing, for example, [this](#) article on Mingary Castle, Ardnamurchan, that was published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. Well done James!



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Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Ionad Eachdraidh

Theresa's tips for ancestral tourists

We're frequently presented with great examples of how the twenty-first century diaspora is integral to an understanding of the history of the Highlands and Islands. Our British Columbia-based MLitt student, Theresa MacKay, was interviewed for veteran American journalist and Scottish-enthusiast Glen Moyer's 'Under the Tartan Sky' podcast in January, recorded from Louisiana. Theresa did sterling work offering clear, reliable and pragmatic advice on how to prepare for ancestral tourism in Scotland. The podcast interview is available [here](#).



Theresa doing some ancestral tourism of her own in Mackay Country. Photo copyright and courtesy Theresa MacKay.

Morrison MacKay unearths historical background to the legend of the 'Dundee Dragon'

Historians can offer immensely valuable skills when it comes to understanding the social and historical context for myth and legend. This intriguing research project on the 'Nine Maidens and the Dragon', by Morrison MacKay, who is an undergraduate student with us at Perth College UHI, made the [news](#) in Tayside in October, and very deservedly so. Congratulations Morrison!

British Identities on BBC

Here's a great presentation by Dr Jim MacPherson who was interviewed recently for BBC Alba about the quickly-developing Hub for the Study of British Identities. Watch the recording [here](#) on the highly impressive HSBI website and make sure to have a look at some of the other resources available there.



Wade Cormack and Dornoch 400

The new Dornoch400 [website](#) celebrates '400 Years of Golf in Dornoch'. There's plenty of material collated there on our PhD student, Wade Cormack's research, his blog (check out his latest post), his various Royal Dornoch Golf Club, community and school presentations, and also some coverage of the Centre's upcoming 'Firths and Fjords' conference and our part in the August 2016 Dornoch Festival Week. Wade, who is now in his third year of research, has a travel itinerary that stretches beyond the A9 or even the 'North Coast 500'. In April, he will be visiting and presenting on his research at Pinehurst Golf Club in North Carolina, a course designed by a son of Dornoch, Donald Ross, and often described as 'the home of golf in America'. Wade will also visit the St. Andrews Golf Club in New York as one of a broader Dornoch golf history contingent. Not only that, but he has published his first article in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. It's entitled 'Playing By the Rules? Early Modern Sport and Control in the Northern Mainland Royal Burghs of Scotland' and more details can be found [here](#).



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Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Ionad Eachdraidh

Undergraduate Programmes Revalidation

Dr Iain MacInnes has been leading our preparations for the revalidation of all our undergraduate provision in 2017-18. Following initial discussions about this at our Away Day in the summer of 2015, completion of the documentation is now proceeding apace. Iain and the rest of us have begun firming up various changes to the curriculum, which, although not dramatic in their effect, will, we're confident, ensure the programmes remain fully up to speed and as engaging, rigorous and wide-ranging as we can make them. Watch this space!

Dr Kathrin Zickermann replaced for maternity leave period by Dr Linsey Hunter

Kathrin has recently given birth to her second child, Jamie. Congratulations to her and her husband Stuart! Replacing her for this period is Linsey Hunter, an historian of law, charters and landholding in southern Scotland and northern England in the high middle ages. Linsey has done fantastic work since 2013, and continues to, for the Centre, as a teaching assistant, and we're delighted to have secured her as a lecturer over this period.

MLitt Coastal and Maritime Societies and Cultures

"UHI is positioning itself as a world leader with its new online MLitt programme in Coastal and Maritime Societies and Cultures. I believe this programme will become a model for other institutions hoping to create something similar." (Professor Isaac Land, Indiana State University, January 2016)

This online, distance learning programme is the first of its kind, and has just been validated for delivery across the world from September 2017, when it will become the fifth masters-level course led by the Centre. It involves us in a three-way collaboration with UHI's Archaeology Institute and Centre for Nordic Studies, and Dr David Worthington is the Programme Leader. Collaboration at this level is nothing new for us of course. We already offer a joint online programme with the archaeologists, the MLitt History and Archaeology of the Highlands and Islands. Furthermore, another existing, cross-disciplinary award we're a key part of, the MLitt British Studies, involves us working alongside Archaeology, Literature and Philosophy. More detail on all of these is available via the ['Postgraduate'](#) section of our website.

Firths and Fjords

Dr David Worthington (who has just been appointed a Reader by the university - congratulations!) and Alison MacWilliam report that the upcoming [Firths and Fjords](#) conference has attracted a huge level of interest and is now fully booked. The conference has been featured widely in *The Scotsman*, *Press and Journal*, *Northern Times*, and interviews with David on the theme broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland BBC Alba. It will be the biggest and most ambitious such event to have been held in Dornoch, as well as the first ever conference in the steadily-emerging field of Coastal History. Also on the conference steering group panel have been



local artist, Sue Jane Taylor, UHI MLitt graduate, Alison Munro, and Wade Cormack, to whom we're exceptionally thankful. We're looking forward to welcoming the speakers and delegates who will be coming from the USA, Canada, Finland, as well as from across the UK, and places much closer, to attend.



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Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Ionad Eachdraidh

Angela Forbes: James Hunter Dissertation Prize winner for 2015
Congratulations to Angela Forbes on winning the Professor James Hunter Dissertation Prize! Angela, a 2015 Perth College UHI graduate from our BA (Hons) History and Politics degree, received the award as a result of her first-rate dissertation, entitled 'The British Empire and the War Effort: A Comparative Study of the British Honduran Forestry Unit and the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit'. It was supported by a grant Angela received from the Economic History Society, which enabled her to research with original, primary sources in the National Archives in London.



Jim MacPherson in Canada

Following his invited lecture at the UN in New York last year, a major success for the Centre in 2015, Jim's latest overseas visit took him to the School of Canadian-Irish Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, on 15 October and the following day in Ottawa, at the residence of the Irish Ambassador. Jim's lecture ('[The Sash my Mother Wore': Women and the Irish Diaspora in the British World](#)) was given to an audience of academics and members of the public, and was based on research which will be published shortly as a book by Manchester University Press.



PhD Students in Stornoway

In November 2015, Centre PhD students, Mary Souter, Wade Cormack and Linda Ross, represented us at the university's Postgraduate Research Conference currently taking place in Stornoway. The crossings proved to be refreshing to say the least. This was Linda's first presentation as a PhD student, having joined us in October to begin her AHRC-funded collaborative doctorate with Historic Environment Scotland, for which Jim MacPherson is the Director of Studies. There is more on that [here](#).



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Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean Ionad Eachdraidh

Polish Invernessians

David Worthington thoroughly enjoyed meeting the welcoming, friendly and knowledgeable pupils and students at the Polish Saturday School, St Joseph's, Inverness, in early October. Discussion ranged from the waves of Polish migration to Scotland, dual nationality, whisky, and the Scots who went, many centuries earlier, to Poland. David was delighted to meet one of our first year BA (Hons) History students, Ola (Aleksandra) Czarnowska, there.



Great new North Highland College promotional video

Thanks to the North Highland College UHI team and Storyboard Films for this excellent promotional [video](#). It features surfing in Thurso Bay, and various Centre staff (not surfing) from 2.40-3.00 minutes.

New publications by staff

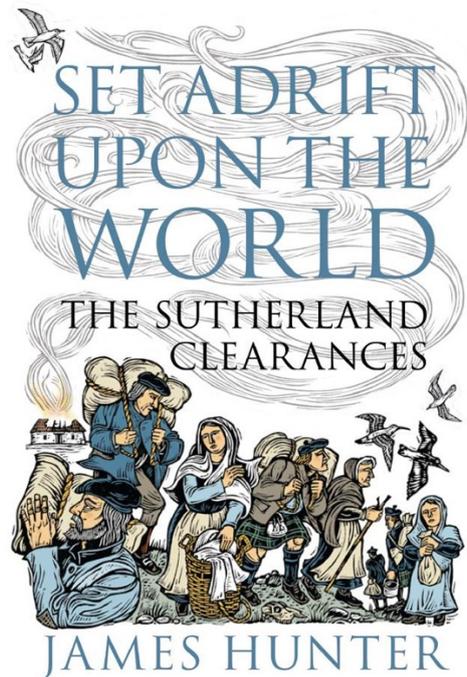
'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes: Injury and Death in Anglo-Scottish Combat, c. 1296 –c.1403' is the evocative title of an excellent-looking [chapter](#) by our own Iain MacInnes in a new volume just published by Brill. David Worthington's article on the Reverend James Fraser (1634-1709) has now been added to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Elizabeth Ritchie also published her magazine article "'Most Anxious to have a Teacher": Gaelic Schools in the Northern Highlands' in the Jan/Feb 2016 issue of *History Scotland*. Our next newsletter will have news of several more articles and at least two single-authored books shortly to be published by centre staff, something exciting to look forward to.

Voices from The Forest

In February, Mairi Stewart, a former researcher at the Centre, published an important and beautifully [illustrated book](#) on the social history of forestry in twentieth century Scotland. This was based on a major research project at the Centre, funded by the Forestry Commission and the Scottish Forestry Trust. Other outputs have included an archive of oral history interviews, deposited in Highland Archive Centre, and the very active ['Forestry Memories'](#) website. Congratulations to Mairi on the book!

Jim Hunter's return to Dornoch

In November, we held a major book launch at our Burghfield House Hotel base for James Hunter's monumental new work, *Set Adrift Upon the World: The Sutherland Clearances*. Elizabeth Ritchie led the discussion for what was a fascinating and moving evening, talking to Jim about his inspiration, the stories of Sutherland folk and what implications these things have for today.





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Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Ionad Eachdraidh

Being Human Workshop on Rousay, Orkney

UHI's Archaeology Institute, invited our own Dr Elizabeth Ritchie to this in November, and there were further contributions by the Orkney Archives and the people of Rousay. Elizabeth has also been active with public talks including one to Clyne Heritage Society in February, based on an article she is currently writing, entitled: 'The Cry of a Young Child: Pregnancy, Infanticide and Community in Nineteenth-Century Sutherland.'



Golspie Inn Ancestral Tourism Project

Everyone knows how important tourism is to the Highland economy. The Golspie Inn is endeavouring to attract more 'ancestral tourists' who wish to explore their family's past. As part of an imaginative range of developments to meet this growing demand and encourage visitors to stay longer in the east Sutherland town, Dr Elizabeth Ritchie was commissioned to make a series of short videos about local history. Working with archaeologist Dr Nick Lindsay of Brora and Iain Copeland of Ayetech Production, ten videos take the visitor around the site of seventeenth century salt pans, pre-clearance villages, and the schoolhouse where crofters met to voice their complaints to the government commission. These were an enormous amount of fun to make and will be used as a teaching resource at the Centre for History. Links to these will appear on the Golspie Inn website later in the Spring.

Successful Seminars

We've had a busy year to date of seminars. Among them was the one pictured below by Dr Iain Robertson, a brilliant outline of 'heritage from below', a theme on which Iain has published extensively, and the Hebridean blackhouse as archive. Besides now organising these seminars, Iain has a full schedule of lectures, mentoring Centre staff's research and settling in to south-east Sutherland, Iain has been hard at work designing and developing several new modules, and pushing forward the Centre's research agenda in new and exciting ways – more to follow. In the meantime, for those in Lewis and Oban, Iain will be talking about land, heritage and blackhouses at North Lochs Historical Society, 22 March ('The Blackhouse as Heritage from Below') and the Laurence Mee Centre, SAMS, Dunollie, 24 March ('Land, Heritage and Identity').





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Highlands and Islands
Centre for History

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Ionad Eachdraidh

Social Networking

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

[Historylinksdornoch blog](#)

Dedicated to exploring the history and archaeology of Dornoch and its neighbouring parishes. It is a collaboration between Historylinks museum and the Centre, co-ordinated by Dr Elizabeth Ritchie. Posts are written either by Elizabeth or by guest contributors.

Centre for History

Facebook: [UHI Centre for History community](#) (629 likes)

[UHI Centre for History Group](#) (281 members)

Twitter: [@UHIHistory](#) (1212 followers)

Hub for the Study of British Identities

[HSBI Blog](#)

Twitter: [@UHIBritStudies](#) (273 followers)

Northern Scotland

Facebook: [Northern Scotland journal community page](#) (1896 likes)

Moray Firth History

Facebook: [Moray Firth History](#) (410 likes)

Twitter: [@Moray_Firth](#) (399 followers)

Focuses on the Moray Firth (Linne Mhoireibh) region. This new Facebook page and associated Twitter feed explore the coastal history of the 'Fraserburgh-Beauly-Wick indented triangle'. Both are administered by Dr David Worthington.

Scottish-Polish Historical Links

Facebook: [ScotlandPoland](#) (838 likes)

Twitter: [@Scottish Polish](#) (446 followers)

For those interested in Scots in Poland and Poles in Scotland, from medieval to modern. It is co-ordinated by Dr Worthington and colleagues at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland).



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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