

JANUARY 2026

UHI CENTRE FOR HISTORY

NEWSLETTER

Student News

Congratulations to our class of 2025

Congratulations to graduates, our staff had the great pleasure of attending ceremonies across the UHI region, celebrating the brilliant achievements of our graduating students. 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!



Big congratulations to **Dr Alex Dold**, on the completion of her PhD! Her doctoral thesis explored the narrative strategies in *Outlander* and historical fiction as public history, and she is pictured here with her supervisors **Dr Jim MacPherson** and **Dr Lesley Mickel** at her viva in June 2025.

James Hunter Dissertation Prize

We are delighted to announce **Joy Rollinson** as this year's winner of the James Hunter Dissertation Prize.

Joy's dissertation *Propaganda in the Cinemas: Short Films as a Method of Propaganda in Britain during the Second World War (1939-1945)* examines how the Ministry of Information infused key propaganda messages with comedy and drama, reaching a large number of people through the popularity of the cinema. These short films, the central focus of Joy's dissertation, are not a particularly well-known part of the British government's wartime communication strategies, and Joy has delved into their content to explore what they tell us, offering a unique contribution to Second World War propaganda history. Joy graduated with First Class Honours in BA (Hons) History.

You can [read more about Joy and her award-winning dissertation on our website](#).



Staff News

+ Congratulations to our **Dr Alison Chand** who recently secured a British Academy/ Leverhulme Small Research Grant for initial work on her next oral history project: "[Beyond the Rainbow: Oral Histories of Teenagers and Young Adults in Scotland During the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)".



+ **Dr Nicola Martin** was appointed as a trustee for Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands ([ARCH](#)). ARCH provides opportunities to encourage people with diverse interests and abilities in the Highlands to learn about, record and participate in celebrating and increasing knowledge of their local heritage.



Outstanding Results

National Student Survey

[UHI Centre for History](#) is very proud to announce that [UHI](#) has come second in Scotland in the NSS (National Student Survey) 2024-25 for overall satisfaction in the history category.

HISA Awards

This is aptly reflected in the ten HISA (Highlands and Islands Students Association) nominations and highly commended awards received by the team across four different categories: Best Research or Dissertation Supervisor, Most Inspiring Lecturer, Above and Beyond – Staff Award, and Most Engaging Online Delivery. Well done to our excellent team of staff for all they do in teaching, supporting, and encouraging our students!

Postgraduate Programmes

The postgraduate programmes also had another amazing result in 2025, as MLitt History scored a perfect 100% in overall student satisfaction in this year's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).

Public Engagement

July



On 8 July, [UHI Centre for History](#) colleagues, Interim Head **Dr Lucy Dean** and **Dr Rachel Davis** and good friends of the Centre **Dr Louisa**

Taylor ([Aberystwyth University](#)) and **Morvern French** ([Historic Environment Scotland](#)) attended the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds where they led a round table discussion - Gender in Medieval Scotland.

September

On 20 September, over 60 people came to Aberlour Parish Church of Scotland for the unveiling of textile banners addressing the legacies of slavery in the local area. This event is part of **Dr Jim MacPherson's** research project, '[Legacies of Slavery: Churches, Communities and Building a Fairer Future](#)'.



Dr Elizabeth Ritchie was one of the guests on the new three-part podcast series, [Highlands Reimagined](#).

[UHI Centre for History](#) and [UHI Archaeology Institute](#) joined forces on 27 and 28 September to promote [UHI](#) at the [Highland Archaeology Festival](#) (HAF).



This was a brilliant opportunity to chat to attendees and share details about the cutting edge research and Humanities study options at [UHI](#).

Dr Elizabeth Ritchie and [UHI Centre for History](#) PhD graduate **Dr Joanna Rodgers**

both presented at the 'Outer Hebrides Emigration Conference' in Stornoway, held at Lews Castle, Stornoway, on 30 September - 2 October.



October

Our **Dr Juliette Desportes**

gave a talk at Edinburgh

University's Scottish history

history seminar on 16 October, focusing on uncovering Highland estate tenants' attitudes towards agrarian 'improvement' in the mid-eighteenth century.

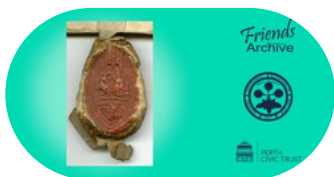


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On 27 October [UHI Centre for History](#) celebrated the publication of two new books by our staff **Dr Lucy Dean** and **Dr Nicola Martin**. This was followed by an opportunity to discuss these exciting new pieces of research with their authors or learn about the journey from research to publication. You can now [watch the recording](#) on our website.

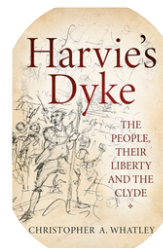
November

On 20 November, **Dr Lucy Dean** presented on the Perth Charterhouse Project for the “Rhoda Fothergill Annual Memorial Lecture” which was co-organised by the Perthshire Society of Natural Science, Friends of the Archives and Perth Civic Trust. You can now [watch the recording](#).



December

On 9 December **Christopher Whatley**, Professor Emeritus in Scottish History, [University of Dundee](#) gave a talk on ‘Harvie’s Dyke, 1823: The People, Their Liberty and the Radicalism of Place’ as part of the **History Talks Live series**. You can now [watch the recording](#) on our website.



January

On 28 January 2026, **Dr Linsey Hunter** will be presenting research at the Institute of Historical Research, London entitled ‘Landscapes and Location in the Retellings of the Legend of Finella, Lady of the Mearns, c.1900-c.1960’. [Find out more and book your place.](#)

Dornoch Autumn Highland Festival

We were very excited to be part of the Dornoch Autumn Highland Festival Fortnight, following the success of events in the spring.

On the 24 October our **Dr Nicola Martin** gave a talk - Jacobitism and Clanship in the North Highlands. This talk explored the North Highlands’ experiences of the Jacobite era (1688-1766), considering what drove clans, or individuals, to declare for one side or another and how this changed over the eighteenth century.



Dr Jim MacPherson provided a talk and walking tour of Dornoch on 28 October to discover how the town and its people were involved in the British Empire since the eighteenth century.



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Research and Publications

Landscapes of Protest Project

We are excited to share first updates on our Leverhulme Trust funded project, [Landscapes of Protest](#). It is led by **Dr Iain Robertson** ([UHI](#)) and **Professor Carl Griffin** ([Sussex](#)) and supported by Postdoctoral Research Assistant **Dr Juliette Desportes** ([UHI](#)). The collaborative project investigates how rural workers in the Highlands and Islands defended their livelihoods and ways of life in the age of radical 'improvements' which transformed the social and economic basis of Scottish agriculture, 1750 – c. 1820.

Every month (or so), we share a [blog](#) post or personal reflections on histories and geographies of protest and resistance in Scotland and further afield from an expert in the field.

Dr Iain Robertson, **Prof Carl Griffin** and **Dr Juliette Desportes** recently spent a week in Argyll where they visited Inveraray Castle archives and the archive of Argyll and Bute Council in Lochgilphead.

Dr Iain Robertson and **Dr Juliette Desportes** both delivered papers at this year's Scottish Local History Forum (SLHF) conference, 'Popular Protest in a Scottish Local History Context', held in Paisley on Saturday 25 October.



Staff Spotlight

Our Postgraduate Programme Leader and Lecturer, **Dr Philippa Woodcock** continues her research on "[They wept together](#)": [Investigating miscarriage, taboo and support in early modern Scotland](#), where you can follow the project and visits **Dr Woodcock** has conducted.



Dr Woodcock is one of the contributors to the newly published *Performing Diplomacy in the Early Modern World*, with her chapter 'The Ambassadors' Fireworks Parties: Public and Private Performance in Bourbon Paris' featuring in the section discussing Parisian Diplomatic Stages.

Dr Woodcock also has a new article in *The Court Historian*. 'Fertile Negotiators: The Venetian Family-Embassies at the Court of Louis XIV' is [now available to read in full on open access](#).

You can [keep up-to-date with Dr Woodcock](#)

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Research and Publications

In October one of our PGRs, **Mhairi Ferrier**, presented a paper at the [Scottish Archaeological Forum](#)'s conference, [Building Bridges: Connecting Scotland's Archaeological Community](#), in Edinburgh.

Mhairi discussed elements of her PhD research in her paper, 'A Thatched House in Torlum: Exploring the Boundaries of Archaeological Practice'. By reflecting on a day of archaeological fieldwork, Mhairi considered the multidisciplinary approach of her project and what it means to complete emotionally engaged archaeology. The paper formed part of a panel called '(In)Tangible Pasts' which included other colleagues working on elements of Gaelic and Hebridean heritage, culture and archaeology. You can [find out more about Mhairi's PhD](#).



Dr Iain MacInnes had a busy few weeks presenting at conferences in October/November. Firstly he attended the Annual Baltic Military History Conference at the University of Tartu, Estonia 30-31 October, where he was speaking on the theme of "Different theatre, different rules? War and the urban environment during the Second Scottish War of Independence (1332-1357)." You can now [watch the recording](#). He then attended another conference - Landscapes of War and Fear in Oslo Norway from the 4-5 November, speaking on the topic of "A (lack of) wartime defence? Scotland's urban communities and their response to war during the Second Scottish War of Independence(1332-1357)." He finished up by speaking at the Society of Highland & Island Historical Research event on 13 November.



Our **Dr Nicola Martin** was in Stockholm on 1 October to deliver a paper at the Department of Military History, [Swedish Defence University](#). Her talk examined how the concept of the Laws of War, while promoting moderation, also served to justify state-sponsored violence in both conventional and unconventional warfare.



This was a brilliant opportunity to continue developing the special relationship between UHI Centre for History and the Swedish Defence University, and follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2024, facilitated by our **Dr Kathrin Zickermann**.

Dr Nicola Martin was also at the [University of St Andrews](#) on 13 November to deliver a talk as part of the Institute of Scottish Historical Research's seminar programme. Her paper 'Principle, Politics, Patronage? Highland Whig Loyalism during the Jacobite era' links to her current research interests.