

# THE CENTRE FOR THE NORTH

APRIL 2026

Celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year we feel we're off to a great start! We welcomed new internal and external board members, held several Research Notes events, participated in the Scottish Arctic Network Annual Conference in St Andrews, and next month will host our joint event *Many Norths*.

While the snowstorm at the start of the year left Aberdeen feeling suitably Arctic, the coastal storms that followed revealed for the first time, **rare 2,000-year-old footprints at a nearby Angus beach**. In severe conditions of 55mph sandstorm windspeeds and crashing waves, Kate Britton with a team from the university, led an effort to capture these footprints before they disappeared again. Meanwhile, hydrology Reader, Josie Geris, explained in ***The Conversation*** how learning to cope with heavy rain in Scotland's whisky country could help save precious water for drier summer months.

As Spring takes hold, we are enjoying **Aberdeen Artworlds: The Linklater Collection**, which opened in the Sir Duncan Rice Library earlier in February. This exhibition, running throughout the year, celebrates 50 years of the Linklater Collection featuring work by Scotland's most important 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist artists. Co-curated by Catriona McAra, Joanne Anderson, Hans Hönes of the Art History Department, alongside University Collections, the exhibition is also part of RSA 200: Celebrating Together [here](#).

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the Centre for The North.  
We hope to hear from you soon!

*Dr Isabelle Gapp and Dr Rob Wishart (on behalf of The Centre for the North)*

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

## Climate and Cryosphere Research Group

The *From the Floe Edge* project, led by Isabelle Gapp, hosted a multidisciplinary sea ice workshop in February. The event hosted 17 academics from various disciplines focused on sea ice, with attendees travelling from Canada, Alaska, Japan, and the Netherlands among other places. The first day was filled with presentations, including talks from CCC group members PhD student Jacob Seston. The second day was focused on discussing the fragmentation of sea ice research and possible methods to promote more interdisciplinarity within the field.



**ABERDEEN  
CLIMATE AND  
CRYOSPHERE  
RESEARCH GROUP**



*Niamh Doherty on fieldwork training at the terminus of the surging Scheelebreen glacier in Rindersbukta.*

PhD student Niamh Doherty spent two months in Svalbard, participating in the AG-825 PhD Glaciology course led by Prof. Andy Hodson at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS) during January and February. She gained a better understanding of the complex thermal regimes of Svalbard's glaciers and their influence on hydrological processes and ice dynamics, including glacier surging.

## New Publication ::

### **Rhynie, A Powerful Place of Pictland\_**

Now a new crowd-funded book *Rhynie, A Powerful Place of Pictland*, edited by Gordon Noble, has been published that will bring to life the people and settlements that once covered the dramatic hilltop settlement of Tap o' Noth and the Upper Strathbogie Valley. Over 10 years, excavations led by the University of Aberdeen's Northern Picts project have transformed understanding of Rhynie and its role in the emergence of early medieval power in northern Britain, revealing the scale and sophistication of Pictish settlements and reshaping the accepted history of early medieval Scotland. Read e-book or buy physical copy [here](#).

## New Publication ::

### Færøerne 1894 – en fotograf kommer forbi.

Emeritus Professor Kevin Edwards' recent book, co-authored with Steffen Stummann Hansen. Over 130 photographs taken in 1894 in the Faroe Islands by a German-born medical doctor Karl Grossmann, then living in Liverpool. Grossmann had a keen interest in geology, landscape, and ethnography. The text is bi-lingual (Danish and English), and the collection represents the oldest substantial corpus of photographs from the archipelago, including the earliest known from the remote islands of Mykines, Svínøy and Fugloy. More details [here](#).

## Scottish Arctic Network Annual Conference

Members from The Centre for the North participated in the 2026 Scottish Arctic Conference and ScAN Annual Meeting in St Andrews on 5-6 March. Rob Wishart, Isabelle Gapp and Liz Curtis were among 60 attendees from across Scotland and beyond for two days of discussions, presentations and collaborative planning.



We participated in an Early Career Researcher panel on Starting a Career in Arctic Research, after which we heard from Lauren Johnstone from the Scottish Government, who gave attendees a preview into the assessment of the government's Arctic Connections Policy Framework, prior to its publication in late March. This was followed by a panel discussion on UArctic Thematic Networks, and the first day concluded with a research showcase highlighting the breadth of Scottish Arctic scholarship across ScAN member institutions.

On day two, we participated in a ScAN strategic planning session. These discussions generated a wealth of constructive ideas and both short- and long-term priorities for ScAN. This was followed by the ScAN AGM, with Rob Wishart now representing Aberdeen on the Steering Group alongside David Anderson.

## EXHIBITIONS

### **Arctic Fever: Image and Narrative in North Circumpolar Voyaging of the Long Nineteenth Century**

Co-curated by Isabelle Gapp and Mark A. Cheetham (University of Toronto), Arctic Fever opened on January 26<sup>th</sup> at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. It featured both in **The Guardian International** and received a full-page spread in the UK print edition. A full book-length catalogue was also produced.

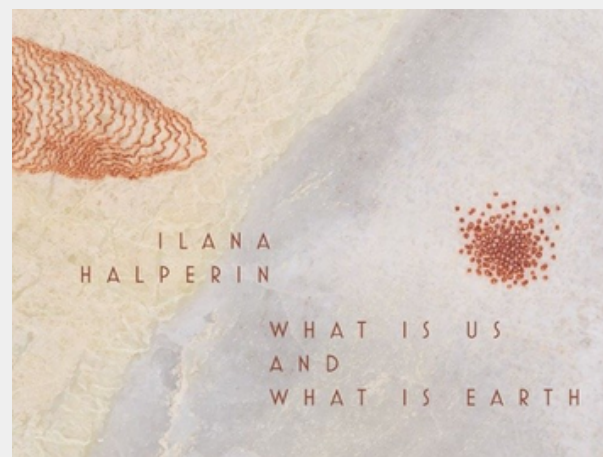


The Arctic is feverishly topical now because of the pressures of climate change on the north circumpolar ecosystem and its Indigenous communities. The phrase 'Arctic fever', however, arose in the 19th century to describe the unquenchable passion for Arctic exploration. The exhibition brings these urgencies together through visual and textual accounts of the circumpolar Arctic in the nineteenth century

### **Ilana Halperin: What is Us and What is Earth ::**

#### ***An Art History of Mars***

Dr Catriona McAra and Dr Claire Cousins (University of St Andrews) have just published the research output 'An Art History of Mars' for The Fruitmarket Gallery catalogue to What is Earth and What is Us featuring queer conceptual artist Ilana Halperin. This is the culmination of three years of field research in Orkney and



Iceland using analogue sites on Earth to explore the distant red, yellow and blue planetary sibling Mars. This began life as an STFC-funded Knowledge Exchange project lying at the art-science interface called 'From Extraterrestrial to Cultural Landscapes'. Other outputs and KE on this journey have included a BBC Radio Open Country episode (by Ruth Sanderson and Rose Ferraby), a public in-conversation at National Galleries of Scotland, and an exhibit at Listasafn Árnesinga Art Museum in Hveragerdi, South Iceland.

# OPPORTUNITIES

- **ScAN seeks ECR to join ScAN Steering Group.** [Submission deadline 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2026](#) for a one-page reflection. Email [scan@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:scan@st-andrews.ac.uk) with 'ScAN ECR Rep' in subject line. As an ECR Representative you would contribute to Steering Group discussions on network direction & activities. Time commitment/term – 3 hours per month including one hour Steering Group meeting for a term of 2 years.
- **Call for Nominations: Arctic Academic Action** now being accepted. Creative ideas sought from academics, scholars, community groups, and organisations, which are action-and results-orientated and at early development stage that address causes/impacts of Arctic climate change. Particularly those involving Indigenous peoples/Arctic residents [before 30 April 2026](#)
- **Call for Proposals - Edinburgh Companion to Modern Scottish Political History. From Union of 1707 to early 21st century.** Editors seek chapter proposals in themes and empirical case studies sections that address: Culture, Religion, Emotions, Scotland's relations with Europe and wider world, Regional and local social and economic conditions. Sole and co-authored chapters welcomed using approx. 8,000 words including notes. Deadline for chapter drafts late spring 2027, final drafts due 2028 for publication in 2030. Proposals of c.500 words with submission deadline 5pm, Monday 18 May 2026
- **UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector roster creation of experts.** potentially to work in areas related to UNESCO's science mandate. No deadline. Submit interest online.
- **IPY-5 Project Endorsement.** A system of project endorsements will highlight and connect initiatives that contribute to IPY-5 from 2026 onwards. [Spring 2026.](#)
- **European Polar Board - Open Call Invitation to Support and Sign** for resolute, long-term funding instrument for polar research (2028-2034).
- **Research/networking opportunity: Visiting artist Shoji Funakawa** is in Scotland till January 2027 keen to research weather scores, lore and oral traditions including seaweed, gardens uninhabited islands in Japan/Scotland, climate, culture and record sounds of aurora borealis/volcanic rocks and a particular interest in 14<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Duns Scotus ideas of "thisness". Email: [shojifunakawa@gmail.com](mailto:shojifunakawa@gmail.com).

# UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Nuart Aberdeen** street art festival runs from **22-26 April 2026**. Conference taking place at University of Aberdeen, 24 April 2026.
- **Environment and Arts Network Film Screening - *Saliqmiut***. **6-7.30pm, 22 April 2026**, The Anatomy Rooms, Shoe Lane, Marischal College (free to attend). *Saliqmiut* (Alan Marcus, 2025) explores the impact of climate change on coastal communities from Los Angeles to Tuktoyaktuk.
- **UArctic 2026 Webinar Series** explores key issues affecting Arctic & Northern communities. Registration essential. Ethics in Northern Indigenous Research **22 April**. Small & Northern Colleges: Community Impact, Capacity, & Regional Resilience **24 June**. Arctic Waste: Challenges & Community Solutions **23 September**. Arctic Security & Northern Resilience **18 November**. Any questions, email [lisa.goulet@uarctic.org](mailto:lisa.goulet@uarctic.org).
- **Centre for the North Works in Progress Series**. **1-2pm, 30 April 2026**, Interdisciplinary Lounge. In this third event, Izzy Crawford (RGU) will speak about the COIL@UArctic thematic network on collaborative online international learning.
- **Many Norths**. **2-4pm, 8 May 2026, CB009, 50/52 College Bounds**. Join us for talks and conversations on the subject of the north. Speakers: Sam Ainsley, Katie Lone Craney, Peter Davidson, Solveig Einarsdottir, Isabelle Gapp, and Catriona McAra.
- **ARCPaC: Arctic Research Community - Past Changes for Future**. **26-29 May 2026**, Aarhus, Denmark. The first annual conference of ARCPaC is organised by Aarhus University (AU) and Geological Survey of Greenland and Denmark (GEUS).
- **International Glaciological Society British Branch - Aberdeen**. **Save the Date: 7-8 September 2026**. The Aberdeen Climate and Cryosphere Group will be hosting the next IGSBB meeting. This annual gathering of UK-based glaciologists is usually a lively affair with 100+ participants expected to attend. Stay tuned for more details.

If you would like to see your research/project/event, published paper, blog, podcast, exhibition, photos or fieldwork etc. featured on The Centre for the North website and newsletter please get in touch!

**KEEP IN TOUCH: THE CENTRE FOR THE NORTH**

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