



## **History MA Thesis Defence**

**Student:** Suzanne Hagarty

**Date:** Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026

**Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Place:** Virtual (contact  
[hstacademic@uoguelph.ca](mailto:hstacademic@uoguelph.ca) for Teams Link)

### **“Love, Loss and Legacy: The Widows of the Eyemouth Fishing Disaster of October 1881”**

#### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the fishing town of Eyemouth in the Scottish Borders Region, its history and circumstances surrounding a storm on October 14, 1881, in which one-third of its male population – all fishermen – died. Published research about this fishing disaster focuses on the fishermen, with some mention of their wives and families. An opportunity existed to research the Eyemouth widows in more detail, using archival sources from 1841-1921, and to share more about their individual and collective experiences. An analysis of local history reveals what life was like for a fishwife on the East Coast of Scotland in the late nineteenth century and contextualizes the Eyemouth widows in this setting. It offers opportunities for further research about this fascinating community of women.

#### **Advisor:**

Dr. Linda Mahood

#### **Committee:**

Dr. Kevin James

Dr. Bill Cormack

Dr. Alan McDougall (Chair)