

# *SPECIAL GUEST SEMINAR*

(11:30am, 18 March 2014, Life Sciences Centre, Room 242, Dalhousie University)

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## Norse/Native Contact in Arctic Canada

Dr Patricia Sutherland

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**Abstract:** Recently identified archaeological finds from Canada's eastern Arctic suggest the existence of a little known chapter in North American history. Artefacts resembling those used by Europeans of the Viking and Medieval periods have been recognized in several archaeological collections from Baffin Island and the adjacent regions of northern Labrador. These collections are from site locations occupied by the Dorset culture Palaeo-Eskimos, a distinct population that inhabited Arctic Canada before the arrival of ancestral Inuit from their Alaskan homeland. Investigations undertaken as part of the Helluland Archaeological Project have also yielded other lines of evidence which suggest that the Norse, who had founded colonies in southwest Greenland, may have had a significant presence in Arctic Canada. Interactions with the Dorset culture people during the centuries around 1000 A.D. appear to have been more frequent, more widespread and more complex than has previously been believed. Relations between the Norse and the early Inuit were likely more sporadic and opportunistic.

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**Brief Biography:** Dr. Sutherland has been involved in archaeological research in the Canadian Arctic since 1975 and has collaborated on a number of projects in Greenland. Her studies have included the Inuit and pre-Inuit occupations of the Arctic Islands and the Mackenzie Delta; the art and culture of the Dorset people; and the lost Franklin Expedition. She has published and lectured widely on her research. Her most recent project has focused on the question of Norse/Aboriginal contact in the Eastern Arctic in the centuries around 1000 A.D. This research was featured in *National Geographic* (Nov 2012) and was the subject of a 2012 documentary on CBC TV's *The Nature of Things*. She has received the Canadian Museums Association's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research and the Distinguished Service Award for significant contributions in museum work. Until recently she held the position of Curator of Arctic Archaeology at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

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