



## **Migration History Talk**

—

**Thursday, 2 March 2023**

**Appointment in Geneva: Refugees' Encounters with UNHCR, 1951-1975**

—

**Peter Gatrell, Emeritus Professor, University of Manchester**

17:30 – 19:00 h

This talk will be held in person at the University of Neuchâtel, Espace Tilo Frey (FLSH), room R.N.04, on WEBEX ([link](#)), as well as live-streamed on the nccr – on the move YouTube channel ([link](#)).

The Migration History Talks are co-organized by the History Department of the University of Neuchâtel and the nccr – on the move.

For any further information, please contact [jean-thomas.arrighi@unine.ch](mailto:jean-thomas.arrighi@unine.ch).

### Abstract

In this talk, Peter Gatrell draws on the confidential individual case files generated by UNHCR between 1951 and 1975 to analyse the encounters between its eligibility officers and refugees from different vintages and backgrounds (European and non-European) who sought its assistance and protection. These case files provide an opportunity to see UNHCR in operation in Geneva and beyond during the quarter century since its creation, including its relations with states and non-governmental organisations. The paths of refugees and officials usually crossed only for a few moments, but Gatrell argues that they left an imprint on both. Gatrell shall therefore discuss what refugees learned from their interaction with UNHCR, and vice-versa. His talk is thus a contribution to the historiography of the international refugee regime and to the growing field of refugee history.

### About the Speaker

Peter Gatrell taught modern history and economic history at the University of Manchester from 1976 until his retirement in 2021. He was a founding member of the University's Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute. He directed several collaborative research projects including between 2018 and 2021 the AHRC-funded research project, "Reckoning with refugeedom: refugee voices in modern history, 1919-1975". He is a Fellow of the British Academy, a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

### Selected Publications

- Banko, Lauren, Katarzyna Nowak, and Peter Gatrell. "What is refugee history, now?". *Journal of Global History* 17, no. 1 (2022): 1–19.
- Gatrell, Peter. *The Unsettling of Europe: the Great Migration, 1945 to the Present*. London: Penguin Books & New York: Basic Books, 2019.
- Gatrell, Peter. *The Making of the Modern Refugee*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Gatrell, Peter. *Free World? The Campaign to Save the World's Refugees, 1956-1963*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Gatrell, Peter. *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War 1*. (Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.