The Folklore Society's AGM & Conference 2011, University of Worcester,

"Childlore, and the Folklore of Childhood," 15-17 April 2011

A Report on the conference by Jeremy Harte, followed by the Abstracts of the papers

Spring sunshine glowed on hedgerows studded white with blackthorn and may, swans rode at ease on the broad Severn, and Worcester Cathedral looked down on us as we assembled in this ancient city, home of St. Wulfstan, Fort's mad fishmonger, a haunted mattress and Mikel Koven. It was the last of these who had invited us to rooms on campus where, after the preliminary AGM business, we heard Eddie Cass in his third and last presidential lecture, devoted to James Madison Carpenter, the Mississippi collector whose work Eddie is bringing to publication. In 1928 Carpenter was sent over to England by Kittredge in search of sea shanties and Child ballads, but he got carried away and recorded carols, morris and folk plays (280 texts at the last count). Never much interested in other folklorists, he retired instead to his home town of Boonville and wrote country & western songs until his death in 1983. Collecting was also the theme of Laura Jopson's paper (read by Julia Bishop) on the tape recordings of Iona Opie, which have just been made available on the website for the BL sound archive. Luckily for posterity, Iona kept the tape on all the time, even in the amiable chaos when kids were handing round the microphone. They sang lots that isn't in *The Singing Game*, including sex and scatology (OUP editorial policy went no further than knickers) and borrowings from the media. And so to Damian Webb, who took the photographs for the Opies' books and who has been the subject of research by Susan Brumfield. Father Webb was ordained at Ampleforth, where he revived the local sword dance, making replica swords in the metal workshop; he was a great tinkerer with technology. On a church holiday to Portugal he saw children playing in the streets, wondered if they did it in England, and (being mechanical) went on to take the best sound recordings of his day. And now Julia Bishop, *in propria persona* this time, discussed 'Docky' Ritchie, the Edinburgh schoolmaster whose film *The Singing Street* in 1949 was followed by three collections of childlore. A writer much influenced by the Scots vernacular, he made his books into a haunting evocation of place.

A wine reception and dinner at the Quay concluded the day, and we returned on Saturday to hear James Grayson explain the didactic value of Korean folktales. Seen from a Confucian perspective, 'The Green Frogs' and 'The Bride of the Centipede' are not just a child's fable and a local-legend-cum-horror-story; they exemplify the importance of the five virtues and the proper relations between superior and inferior. Juliette Wood introduced us to Henry Underhill, whose hand-coloured lantern slides are held by the Society. He used them in the 1890s to tell folktales to children in the Band of Hope and the Ragged School. Some backgrounds were taken from the sourcebooks but others came from the Oxford landscape that he loved; most of Bre'r Rabbit takes place in Port Meadow. Images were also important to Laimute Anglickiene's paper on Lithuanian children's horror stories. Furnished with black paper and a little prompting, they revelled in dark imaginings of the Killer Ballerina and family coffins. Older children, posting material online to share with others, gradually begin to construct plots rather than just the scariest bits, and assure each other that 'this story is real and it happened in Lithuania. You can find it in Google'. Older Lithuanian lore was the topic of a paper by Jurgita Macijauskaité-Bonda on children's encounters with dead souls – eerie encounters with close relatives, often not recognised by the children as being dead, and so not frightening them, although the revenants themselves warn of their power for harm. Traditional tales, of the mother whose strangled child comes to play with its siblings, merge into modern accounts of invisible friends and auras. For the next talk, Geoff Holder speculated on the cannibal child of Dundee, saved when her monstrous family were slaughtered for their crimes but hanged later on when her own man-eating tendencies came out. It sounds too good to be true but at least the story wasn't conceived as an ethnic slur against the Scots, unlike the family of Sawney Bean, apparently a reworking of the Dundee tale but entirely fictional despite his flesh-crunching presence at the new Edinburgh Dungeon. And with that it was time for lunch.

We resumed with the dark business of changelings, traced by Jeremy Harte through newspaper accounts of the death of children whose parents had decided they were fairy substitutes unworthy of human attention. But functionalist interpretations of the changeling legend as a charter for killing disabled babies are wide of the mark; the story was applied to many kinds of illness, with violent rituals often survived by the children they meant to

cure. Milagros Torrado-Cespón followed with a survey of evil eye beliefs in the British Isles, bringing together examples of an innocent but maleficent gaze with cases of overlooking by witches. Children and the old were particularly vulnerable. By now we all needed cheering up and fortunately Maureen James was at hand with a survey of children's involvement in Fenland calendar customs, from Plough Witching through Valentine's Day horseplay, communal skipping on Good Friday, May Dolling and Queen Cattern's Day. For May Day the children danced along the road from Hadstock to Linton and back again, six miles each way; they were tough in those days.

Fortified by tea, we returned to hear Matthew Cheeseman on the moral regulation (if any) of undergraduates. Up until the era of youth protest, universities were dominated by corporate life and a hierarchy of ranks. For a brief period, young people ran things for themselves; now the desires of the Sixties have been monetised, student unions are run as night-clubs and the license once confined to the annual carnival of the Rag is spread through the year. A more encouraging cultural picture emerged from Marianthi Kapanoglu's fieldwork in the small town of Velvendos in Greek Macedonia. People talked to her in their houses surrounded by children and grandchildren, known fondly 'my little lamb' and even occasionally 'my little partridge'. Lullabies, counting-out songs, and nonsense verses develop the relations between children and adults. And that was the cue for a joint production between daughter-and-father team Ella and Dick Leath, with family video of a five-year-old Ella hearing the Green Man of Knowledge being told for the first time by a younger Dick. Children aren't passive listeners – they participate, interrupt, contribute detail, and years later will remember the stories with creative differences. Story-telling allows vulnerable children to speak indirectly about things that matter to them. It was a heart-warming affirmation to the power of narrative, and sent us all off in good humour to test real ales at the Plough and so for a meal at Karma where (why do you always find these things out at the last minute?) we discovered that the grandmother of manager Asif Ali knew more about djinns than the rest of us put together.

Sunday dawned fine with a colourful array of Japanese *omamori* assembled by Gunnella Thorgeirsdottir. These amulets/ souvenirs are sold impartially at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines; the two traditions overlap, which is why one census found that 180% of the Japanese population had a religious affiliation. There are *omamori* that ward off evil, help you pass exams, or get pregnant (the last given as a hint by impatient mothers-in-law). Recently the religious element has faded and they are sold in department stores but new traditions about good luck are being formulated. We were now well into the realm of popular culture, and Kate Flynn followed with a talk on Sally Draper, a character in the series *Mad Men*, her horizontal associations with the bogey figures of Charles Manson's girls and her vertical links with the persecuted heroines in Cinderella stories. Trawls through fan responses revealed mythic associations bypassing the conscious intentions of the show's creators. And next Mikel Koven brought us the world of *True Blood*, in which Louisiana vampires have come out of the coffin and are demanding parity with their fellow Americans, along with other beings filched indiscriminately from myth, märchen and the popular clichés that fuse dark fairies with vampires. In an inverted parody of race relations and homophobia, in which the vampire-tolerant Southerners become the good guys, *True Blood* shows that fairylore still has bite.

A quick coffee and back to hear Helen Frisby on death and Victorian children, who if they weren't dying themselves were sharing rooms with bodies, carrying coffins for their playmates, and being dressed in mourning (black-fringed shawls for the babies). Convinced that bringing home the fatal mother-die plant (species variable) would kill a loved one, they went on to re-enact funerals with the corpse-child jumping up at the end to scare the rest. And talk of games brought in Marc Armitage with his exploration of the game of Block, or Hide-and-Seek as it is known to non-Yorkshire-nationalists. Marc has spent decades on the anarchist wing of sociology looking at how kids actually play, and could detect worn drainpipes and dirt cauldrons like a native tracker. There were counting-out rhymes – suddenly the room was a Babel of competing versions as we all remembered different chants. There were rituals for how high you counted, and how fast, and in what sets of numbers. By now we were all gathered in a circle by the nearest approximation to a drainpipe, and at the word Go! we scattered... not around the playground, but to collect our bags and step into the sunshine, looking forward to next year.

ABSTRACTS

Dr Eddie Cass, The Folklore Society President - eddie.cass@btinternet.com

The Presidential Lecture 2011: "The James Madison Carpenter Collection of British Folk Plays"

No Abstract, but Eddie's paper will be published in Folklore.

PANEL 1: "Towards a History of Childlore Collecting in Britain: The Mid-Twentieth Century"

Despite public and academic interest in children's folklore, there is as yet no overview or evaluation of the history of childlore collecting in the UK or beyond. The names of some of the pioneers are well known, others less so, but the literature on even the most famous is surprisingly thin. This panel will begin to address the situation by focusing on four more or less contemporaneous mid-20th century collectors, Iona and Peter Opie, Father Damien Webb, and Dr James T. R. Ritchie. Drawing on previously unstudied data, the presentations will shed light on the methods and motivations of these figures and will touch on some of their inter-connections. Each will consider the scope of their published and unpublished data, contextualising it within their biography and approach, in order to pave the way for a critical understanding of their contributions and spheres of influence.

Dr Laura Jopson – British Library - laura_jopson@hotmail.com

The Opies' Sound Recordings: What's Left to be Heard?

In 1985, Peter and Iona Opie published one of their principal works: 'The Singing Game'. An ambitious exposition, their work surveyed children's skipping, clapping and singing games across the country, exploring individual lyrics, variations and histories. A considerable contribution to the area of children's folklore, much of the book's material drew on a large collection of singing games collected and recorded by the Opies throughout the late 1960s and late 1980s. This collection, now entitled 'The Opie Collection of Children's Games and Songs', is digitised and available through the British Library Sound Archive. Offering a geographically and chronologically diverse collection of songs, the collection brings to life the material that fills the pages of 'The Singing Game'. However, the collections significance lies not simply in the fact that it offers the chance to sample the songs listed in this publication; its material extends far beyond these pages. As this paper shall demonstrate, there is still much left to be heard in the Opie collection. Themes such as the role of play in the inclusion and exclusion of children on the playground; the role of the media in children's play and the appearance of scatological songs and rhymes during playtime, resonate throughout these recordings. These themes shall form the basis of this paper as the Opie recordings are explored and re-represented in light of new studies into childhood studies and children's folklore. Ranging from the 'very plain' girl on a Hampshire playground, only able to turn the rope during skipping games as she was not popular enough to skip, to the boys who spent their playtime pretending to be the character 'Caine' from the popular 1970s television show 'Kung Fu'; this archive contains an assortment of fascinating and entertaining characters and offers the chance to explore themes surrounding children's games and play. That there is still much left to be heard in the Opie sound archive is something this paper will demonstrate.

Dr Susan Brumfield – Texas Tech University - susan.brumfield@ttu.edu

Father Damian Webb: *A Song of Childhood*

As an "amateur" collector, Father Damian Webb's (1918-1990) interest in children's songs and games stemmed from a combination of his work as a parish priest and his hobbies, which included photography, folk music and travel. His meticulously documented collection of photographs and recordings spans nearly thirty years, beginning with pictures taken on a holiday trip to Portugal in the late 1950s. Among the images he captured were those of children playing singing games in the streets. The experience piqued his curiosity as to whether the English children with whom he worked still played singing games. He obtained a tape recorder and began collecting in earnest, eventually recording children's games in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Portugal, Italy, Sardinia, Spain and Africa. This paper will provide an overview of the collection, and explore Fr. Damian's inter-connections with other contemporary collectors, including Peter and Iona Opie and Peter Kennedy.

In the early 1960s, Webb became acquainted with the Opies, whose work had already set the standard for scholarship in the field of children's literature, lore and play. They shared recordings and notes; Fr. Damian provided photographs for the Opies' *Children's Games in Street and Playground, The Singing Game* and *Children's Games with Things*. Like the Opies, Fr. Damian contributed to a BBC recording and collecting scheme, developing a number of radio broadcasts on children's games. During his travels, Damian Webb immersed himself in the daily lives of the families with whom he stayed in both cities and remote villages. He documented these experiences in an unpublished memoir, of which the only known copy was discovered in a box of Iona Opie's personal letters. The memoir, titled *A Song of Childhood,* includes translations and field notes from collecting ventures throughout Europe, and apart from Iona Opie, none of Fr. Damian's living relations or colleagues knew of its existence. It is a fascinating diary, filled with names, dates and locations that have facilitated efforts to re-trace his steps in Scotland, England and Italy, to date. Through an examination of this memoir and other archival materials, this paper will provide a broad overview of Fr. Damian Webb's work as a collector of children's folklore.

Dr Julia C. Bishop – University of Aberdeen - J.C.Bishop@sheffield.ac.uk

'Docky' Ritchie and 'The Bumbee Bell': James T. R. Ritchie as a Collector of Children's Folklore
Dr James T. R. Ritchie (1908-1998) was a secondary school science teacher at Norton Park School, on the Edinburgh-Leith border. He is well-known to childlore researchers for his pioneering film, *The Singing Street* (made with fellow school teachers, Raymond Townsend and Nigel McIsaac in 1951), and his vivid books *The Singing Street* (1964) and *Golden City* (1965) which focus on play and games in the street and the back-green respectively. Now, fifty years on, his third and final book, originally entitled 'The Bumbee Bell', is to be published. This paper will introduce the book which relates primarily to play and verbal wit in the context of the school playground.

As a teacher-collector, 'Docky Ritchie', as he was known to his pupils, amassed a wealth of information on children's play. Almost exactly contemporary with the Opies' early research, it provides comparative data as well as an in-depth view of Scottish, and specifically Leith-Edinburgh, children's traditions at a particular historical moment.
'The Bumbee Bell' also contains insights into Ritchie himself and his views on the social and cultural significance of children's peer culture in relation to Scottish identity and education. The paper will draw on the testimony of family, friends and former pupils to present a more detailed biography of Ritchie and will consider how his situation and outlook shaped his approach and achievements as a collector of children's folklore.

PANEL 2: "Folktales and Children's Education"
Prof. James H. Grayson – Sheffield University - J.H.Grayson@sheffield.ac.uk
Korean Folktales as a Means of Social Education
In the mid-1950s, the American anthropologist William Bascom developed a functional methodology for analyzing folktales which is applied here to a discussion of two very well Korean tales. Although each tale can be seen to have features of each of the four functions which Bascom discussed, a deeper understanding of the meaning of the texts can only be obtained through a knowledge of the value system of traditional Korea. Each of these tales reflects the essential Confucian outlook of Korea which is distinct from some other versions of the same tale type.

Dr Juliette Wood – Cardiff University - WoodJ1@cardiff.ac.uk
Henry Underhill, Visual Folktales as Education
The lantern slides painted by Henry Underhill in the Archives and Collections of The Folklore Society are beautiful reminders of the popular Victorian and Edwardian pastime. They also reflect attitudes towards teaching though play. Underhill not only chose the tales, he illustrated and to some extent edited their meanings for his audience.

PANEL 3: "Legend"
Dr Laimute Anglickiene - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania - l.anglickiene@hmf.vdu.lt
Lithuanian Children's Horror Stories
A horror story is a contemporary genre of children's folklore. The genre exists for almost two hundred years in various countries and appeared in Lithuania in the second half of the twentieth century. Main themes in horror stories and their parodies are international. It is evident that Lithuanian children's horror stories are of a foreign nature, as they are mainly direct translations from Russian; Lithuanian and Russian horror stories share the same subjects and characters. A number of countries have been carrying out a research on the genre for sometime, while in Lithuania the initiative was taken only recently. The major goal of this paper is to introduce Lithuanian children's horror stories describing their form and contents, and explain how these stories spread in nowadays and how this genre of folklore can be collected. It will be shown how the quality of texts differs when we collect them in different way.

Horror stories are not only verbally retold among children but are also narrated in virtual reality. Fans of the genre join online clubs where they tell stories, share experiences and even compete trying to create the scariest story or write the greatest number of them. Stories told verbally and via Internet differ in some respects. Some horror stories may be found on more than one website and contain the same grammatical and stylistic mistakes. Some of them are altered changing minor details. Usually texts posted on websites are longer than stories told by children verbally. The horror effect of online stories is also achieved by the use of various visual aids. Black and red colours dominate texts which are illustrated with drawings or images of cruel murders and blood pools. The language of verbally told stories is less complex; the attention is focused on contents rather than form.

Researchers have discussed reasons behind the existence and popularity of children's horror stories. The stories appear to be reflections of various children's fears which are a result of their wide imagination, receptivity to social environment, unrealistic judgement of reality and inability to distinguish between the real and the imaginary. Horror stories are meant to arouse fear, an emotion which gives children a kind of satisfaction accompanied by emotional catharsis.

Geoff Holder (Independent author) - geoffholder1@mac.com www.geoffholder.com
A Cannibal Child – Just Like Her Dear Old Dad
In the fifteenth century a family of cannibals was executed at Dundee. The only member spared the flames was a one-year-old girl. She was fostered by a Dundee family, but as she grew older her inheritance came through, and she started biting her

fellow children and licking their blood, eventually progressing onto actual eating morsels she had torn off with her teeth. So when she had reached the age of twelve, she too was executed. She turned to her prosecutors and said, "Why chide ye me as if I had committed a crime. Give me credit, if ye had the experience of eating human flesh you would think it so delicious that you would never forbear it again."

The paper explores the possible reality (or not) of the tale, examining dubious historical sources, spurious placename evidence, early Christian descriptions of Caledonian cannibalism, anti-Scottish propaganda, Scottish patriotism, and type relationships with two other Scots cannibals, Christie Cleek and Sawney Bean. The tentative conclusion is that the well-known legend of Sawney Bean and his anthropophagic family may have been derived from the Dundee cannibals, who, given the nature of one of the sources, may have actually existed. But did the infant girl really grow up to be a cannibal just like her dear old dad? This seems more like an agent of *storytelling*, imported into the tale because *that's the way the story should end.* But we'll never really know.

Dr Jurgita Macijauskaité-Bonda - Centre for Research on Contemporary Spirituality and Culture, Vilnius, Lithuania – jurgita_bonda@yahoo.it

Children's Encounters with the Souls of the Dead in Lithuanian Folklore

Many folklore studies have focused on folk narratives about encounters between people and beings from the otherworld. However, these studies have frequently been restricted to the research in folklore representing supernatural experiences of adults, not children. The present paper is dedicated to children's encounters with the souls of the dead in Lithuanian belief legends and memorates. The first legends in consideration were recorded from the Lithuanians from Lithuania Minor – a historic ethnographic region of Prussia, in the end of the 19th century by a famous Lithuanian folklore collector Vilius Kalvaitis. In 20th century such legends were recorded by various folklore collectors in other Lithuanian ethnographic regions and from Lithuanians living in Poland. The most recent material comprises memorates, collected from various internet forums, where, most often, women tell about their children's supernatural experiences. The aim of the present study is to analyse legends and recently recorded memorates where children's encounters with the souls of the dead are represented and to find out whether the tradition of such narratives changes and if so, what changes it has undergone in more than one century. I will also seek to outline the reflections of the emotional experiences of children and to compare them with emotions present in the narratives where the meetings of adults and the dead are described.

PANEL 4: "Customs and Beliefs"

Jeremy Harte – Bourne Hall Museum - jharte@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Murder in Fairyland: A Social History of Changelings"

Over the last six hundred years, in countries stretching from Iceland to Ukraine, fairies have been suspected of stealing young children and leaving a wizened, peevish, ravenous substitute in their place. The changeling story (ML 5085) ends by describing how, by violence or abandonment, this imposter was evicted and the true baby returned. But in real life the outcome was not so happy: the killing of children who were suspected of being changelings is documented in a score of court cases from nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland. Many of these victims appear to have been mentally or physically disabled. Is this the reality behind the legend? We might suspect that the changeling story, for all its picturesque detail, is simply a charter legend for the euthanasia of children with birth defects, devised when Christian teaching on the sanctity of human life came into conflict with the older practice of child abandonment. But functionalist readings of this kind are always a little too narrow for the facts. In the first place, rituals for curing sick children by putting them in danger had existed before the rise of the changeling story, and continued to be practiced independently of it. And then we find that the legend itself engaged audiences, including children, who saw no link with actual exposure and death. The work of turning it from a tale to be enjoyed into a story that could kill was often the work of folk-healers who had to overcome the reluctance of parents in order to make their case. Significantly, when doctors and folklorists encountered 'real changelings' (usually children with learning difficulties) they were up to 8 years old. Murder of the disabled was evidently the exception, not the rule, and our understanding of the diffusion and interpretation of the changeling legend needs to take account of this.

Milagros Torrado-Cespón - Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain - milagros.torrado@usc.es

Children and the Evil Eye in the British Isles: Amulets and Cures

The belief in the evil eye was a strong one all across the British Isles and, probably, still in many rural areas. Among the most affected, children seem to stand out. The main reason for this was the envious feeling of childless women who desired harm to what was unachievable for them. In the view of this, mothers take care of protecting their children so many amulets and protective devices were placed hidden or not on the babies' bodies and clothes. Fairies and witches were also suspected of being envious of healthy human children so the protective measures against witches and fairies were often mixed with those against the evil eye making little or no difference in what was used. The methods used to get rid of this form of incantation which could bring the offspring to death are sometimes common or even the same in many parts of the British Isles from the Hebrides to the Isle of Man and in other countries as far away as India.

Maureen James – University of Glamorgan - tellinghistory@btinternet.com

'From Plough Witches to Hobby Lanterns': Exploring the Children's Calendar Customs of the Fens
This paper will explore the varied childrens customs found in the fens of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk in the nineteenth and twentieth century. It will look back to the time when the year was crowded with traditional customs, many of which required much preparation and community co-operation and most of which involved seeking some reward in sweets or money. The paper will, as well as looking briefly at all of the recorded annual activities, explore in greater depth the variety of May Garland customs carried out by the children in the district which included fixing a line across the middle of the road, pegging an old rag doll to it and throwing "little sawdust balls (painstakingly made by their mothers) at the doll to see if they could turn it over".

PANEL 5: "Stories, Songs and Society"
Matthew Cheeseman – Sheffield University - matt.cheeseman@shef.ac.uk
Moral Regulation and the Discipline of Students in UK Higher Education
This paper addresses images of youth, ideals of adulthood, rules of citizenship and rhetorics of wildness at Higher Education Institutions in the UK. It does so by considering traditional, undergraduate carnivalesque play in the light of the university's maintenance of discipline codes and the historical provision of what might be termed a 'moral education'. While the latter was phased out in the 1970s, after the change to the age of majority in 1969, students are still, to this day, subject to compulsory codes of conduct, which they are routinely punished for transgressing. Why has moral education been phased out and discipline regulations retained? In answering this question the paper establishes three twentieth century phases of student culture and follows the fortunes of carnivalesque and (sometimes) subversive undergraduate play throughout their development. Interviews with staff and students at the University of Sheffield, alongside archival research help understand how these changes are related to wider British society and HE. The paper concludes by considering the implications that the new funding regime might have for ideas of youth and adulthood, discipline and freedom in HE.

Dr **Marianthi Kapanoglou** - University of Athens - mkaplanog@phil.uoa.gr, and Dr Georgios Katsadoros - University of the Aegean, and Dr Anna Katsadoni -Velvendo, Greece
Children's Songs and the Representations of Childhood in Greek Folk Culture: Evidence from a Local Micro-Data Corpus
The role of children as the actual bearers of numerous folk traditions is central in the maintenance, transmission and transformation of folk cultural goods in specific social contexts, especially where folk culture constitutes a living tradition. Children's songs, in its different forms, mediums of diffusion and functions, constitute an important part of oral tradition addressed to children or created by them. This paper discusses the genres, characteristics and content of a corpus of children's folk songs collected in a little town of northern Greece. The paper addresses the primary contexts of childlore diffusion, the home and family, the school environment, the space of a collective work and the game. The aim of this paper is to study these songs as the expressions of children's thought as well as of more general cultural ideas and standards about childhood in the framework of complex family constrains. Apart from the recently collected material, the investigation is based on published and unpublished versions of songs from the archives of the Greek Folklore Society and other Folklore Archives.

Ella Leith– University of Edinburgh - ella.leith@googlemail.com **and Dick Leith**
The Story and the Child: Children as Listeners and Storytellers
The corpus we call 'childlore' includes the stories which children have learnt from the significant adults in their lives. In her account of two adult sisters' differing recollections of the same tale, Masoni (2007) suggests that the emotional state of the listening child may be key to how they remember and conceptualise a story. Our paper develops this insight though exploring a number of case studies: video/audio recordings of children hearing and reproducing stories; adult recollections of childhood storytelling experiences; and current storytellers' accounts of their work in both recreational and therapeutic contexts. We ask how children listen to stories, what they later remember of them, and how they re-tell or otherwise engage with them, whilst emphasising the creative and highly subjective nature of memory as it integrates the fictional, the autobiographical and the emotional. We draw provisional conclusions about how every child may process a story differently according to the emotional, cognitive and physical contexts he or she negotiates, and ask how this may illuminate the concept of 'childlore'.

PANEL 6: "Popular Culture"
Dr Gunnella Thorgeirsdottir (University of Sheffield) --
Japanese Children and *Omamori*: Religious Talisman or Pop Culture Phenomenon
Omamori [お守り] are Japanese amulets found ubiquitously at Shrines and temples in Japan, as well as hanging on rear view mirrors in cars, from schoolbags and even mobile phones. The word *mamoru* means to defend and protect, with *omamori* meaning honourable protector. Falling between being a good luck charm and a religious talisman, the amulet is usually a pouch made of silken cloth possessing a quasi magico-religious power. Lately however the religious significance of these talismans seems to have changed, some argue diminished, along with a constant increase in themed ones featuring characters from popular culture, often being sold in department stores rather than at the temples and shrines, and even featuring a technological gimmick of some sort. A Japanese child´s life has traditionally been touched by *omamori* from before birth throughout, by way of various rituals, and continues to this day. That, coupled with the older beliefs dictating that the child is of the gods until the age of seven and thus in greater danger of attacks from supernatural forces than an adult, when looked

at in context, brings up the question of whether the function of the newer non religion associated *omamori* is the same or whether it has merely become a popular fashion accessory.

Kate Flynn – University of Worcester - k.flynn@worc.ac.uk
The 'Manson Girl' in *Mad Men*'s Paratext: Online Imaginings of Sally Draper's Future
This paper focuses on folkloric constructions of girlhood, sexuality and violence in online discussions of the sixties-set American drama *Mad Men* (2007- ongoing). Taking social media platforms as my source material, I advance possible reasons for the persistent fan suggestion that *Mad Men*'s child characters show latent signs of criminality. In particular I examine claims that Sally Draper has the makings of a "Manson Girl". Though such claims are both diegetically anachronistic and explicitly rejected by the programme's producers, they derive power from lore surrounding the Manson Family murders. Within this interrelated discourse, general indications that Sally might rebel against a sexually repressive upbringing are amplified by fans into an imagined future where she is murderously violent.

Dr Mikel J. Koven – University of Worcester - mjkoven@googlemail.com
'A Fairy? How Lame is *That*?!': HBO's *True Blood* as Fairytale
While clearly fictional narratives, and therefore (according to Bascom) folk/fairy tale-like, *True Blood*, like the "Southern Vampire Mysteries" books by Charlaine Harris the series is based on, draw upon what Bascom identifies as 'truthful' or at least 'believed' genres such as myth and legend. This paper explores the generic transformations which occur when (ostensibly) 'truthful' folk narrative genres are absorbed into a fictive narrative frame. While *True Blood* co-opts myth and legend into its folk/fairy tale diegesis, the discussion of the different folk narrative genres reflects and regracts the variety of traditional meanings associated with the various tale types and motifs drawn upon.

PANEL 7: "Children's Games"
Dr Helen Frisby – University of the West of England, Bristol - helenfrisby@hotmail.com
Ring-O-Roses, Green Gavel and the Lyke Wake: Death, Funerals and Childlore in Victorian England
Atishoo, atishoo! It is widely believed that the popular children's game Ring-o-Roses originates in the Great Plague of 1665-6. However Simpson and Roud find no evidence to substantiate this belief, robustly declaring it to be "almost certainly nonsense." They date it to the 1880s instead, and its origins, death-related or otherwise, remain unclear. However there are other, similar children's games which do have much clearer funerary connotations, and these will be the starting point for this paper. The paper will then broaden out into a more general discussion of Victorian childlore in relation to death, dying and funerals. For example, cow parsley was widely known as "mother-die" (also sometimes as "stepmother's blessing") because of the folk belief that a child who picked this particular plant caused the death of his or her mother.
From the 1860s patterns of morbidity were changing in England, due mainly to improvements in public sanitation and nutrition. However, infancy and early childhood continued to be particular 'danger points' until well into the 1900s. It is therefore probably reasonable to assume that Victorian children were much more familiar with the reality of death, dying and funerals than are their great-great grandchildren. Provided that they themselves survived the hazards of birth and infancy, a child who reached the minimum statutory school-leaving age of ten would most likely have experienced the death of at least one sibling, friend or even quite probably a parent. The family gravestones, with their lists of children who died young, each tell their own sad stories (incidentally, in some areas there was a folk belief that it was unlucky for a child to be christened with the name of a dead sibling). When thus contextualised, the Victorian childlore of death and funerals ceases to be merely morbid, becoming instead testament to an age when, in the midst of life, we were indeed in death.

Dr Marc Armitage – Independent researcher and writer on children's play and the social world of children – marc@marc-armitage.eu
"The Game of Block—More than Just Hiding"
If we attempted to describe the game of Block using our adult, academic, practitioner head we could express it in a number of ways. We could say it is 'a structured form of play', or 'a game with rules' or even 'a high power 'it'/high power physical game with narrative'. But is it not simply a game that involves hiding?
This paper will describe and discuss this one common game – and may even play it – suggesting that as well hiding, there is a little bit more going on here than that which meets the eye.

Dr Doc Rowe – The Folklore Society - doc@docrowe.org.uk
"Have you heard the one about ...?" Unfortunately, Doc couldn't make it to the conference but we hope he'll be able to show us his footage at another event in the near future. Here's what he was going to do:
Doc Rowe shows a selection of footage of Children's games and songs he has shot recently, particularly those that the children have propositioned themselves. It is very clear the once a good relationship has been established with the collector the children are desperate to reveal certain songs and games that are otherwise seen as personal and thought to be 'kept from their teachers'.