ABSTRACTS and BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Tatiyana Bastet

Water Dwellers, Disaster, and Dolls: Portable Material Culture and Distributed Memory.

Those who live by and with water are often in relationship with the destructive aspects of that element. The 2004 tsunami that took several islands in the Maldives and hurricane Katrina, that devastated as she reclaimed New Orleans for the gulf to name but two. In both cases, handmade dolls became ways to ensure cultural continuity, deposit memory and support the exploration and building of new lives.
Although the manner in which the dolls are made differs, the purpose is to proffer a sense of continuity by distributing affective memory. In the case of the Indian Tsunamika dolls, it is individual and collective, 'the women who live by the ocean' (https://www.tsunamika.org). Whereas Hoodoo dolls are assemblages of familial and cultural memory. As both communities were displaced, the dolls are smaller to allow them to be kept without taking up too much space – just as the immediacy of their situations may sometimes require a keeping without occupying a space of prominence in the mind.
This paper will be an exploration of two disparate cultures, halfway around the world from each other, who took foundationally similar and yet quite different paths to ensure the continuation of their stories and lore. A significant thread of their stories is an understanding of how the devastation might have been mitigated, if not avoided altogether.

Tatiyana Bastet is a doctoral researcher in material and cultural history at the University of Hertfordshire focusing on expressions of myth, memory, and magic as material culture, specifically in dolls. As a first-generation immigrant and someone who has lived and worked in multiple countries, she seeks to follow threads of folkloric and mythic expression via practice, allowing for dynamic cultural intersectionality. She is also on the editorial board of Peace Review Journal as Cultural Curator, opening spaces between folklore and PACS scholarship.

****

John Bjorkman

The Cartography of Placelore: Historic Maps as a Source Material for Understanding Patterns in Folk Belief.

Folklore archives in Finland contain a wealth of records about sites which have been considered to have supernatural properties, to be haunted or inhabited by spirits, or laden with taboos or ritual behaviour. These beliefs have been prevalent up to the shift of the 19th and 20th centuries. My presentation explores what we can learn about these sites by studying them on historic maps. Finnish villages were thoroughly mapped during a major land reform around the shift of the 18th and 19th centuries. These maps have later been digitalized and made publicly available through the national archives of Finland. The maps provide very detailed information about the spatial organization of villages at the time. Pinpointing approximately 100 identifiable sites of folk belief from southwest Finland on such maps points us

towards interesting patterns regarding the sites´ relations to features such as boundaries, travelling routes, water bodies and economic zones.

John Björkman (MA) is a doctoral student in Nordic folklore at Åko Akademi University as well as a museum director.

****

Sarah Jane Boss

Riverine Shrines of the Virgin Mary in the Region of the Bristol Channel.

Evidence from folklore, archaeology and historical documents indicates that there were formerly significant shrines dedicated to the Virgin Mary on the estuarial banks of rivers that flow into the Bristol Channel and Cardigan Bay. This paper presents surviving evidence for foundation legends and cult practices from four of these—at Cardigan (Ceredigion), Kidwelly (Carmarthenshire), Tintern (Monmouthshire), and Hempsted (Gloucestershire). The evidence from Cardigan and Tintern is principally historical, and that from Kidwelly and Hempsted is principally from material remains and folklore. It will be suggested that each of these shrines may have been associated with the tidal movement of the river on whose bank it is situated. At Kidwelly and Hempsted, the sites have holy wells, and popular traditions seem to link the well to the river. The paper will consider ritual action in relation to topographical features.
Almost no research has been conducted into this subject, so this paper presents a first attempt at understanding how the rivers of the region may once have been sacred to the Mother of God for the people who lived and worked with them.

Sarah Jane Boss is a theologian, and specialises in the theology and cult of the Virgin Mary. She is especially interested in the connections between religious practice and the natural world, and in traditions of popular devotion. She is a Lecturer at St Mary's College, Oscott (a Catholic seminary), and librarian of the Centre for Marian Studies at St Mary's University, Twickenham.

****

Richard Bradley

Well Dressings: A Controversial History

Well dressings are elaborate pictorial tableaux produced annually in the summer months using natural materials (chiefly flower petals) pressed into clay which are then sited at local wells, springs and pumps as an offering of gratitude for the essential gift of water. Synonymous with the English county of Derbyshire, the custom also has a pedigree in the neighbouring county of Staffordshire, and in the early 21st Century has spread beyond the traditional locus.
Whilst the practice of well dressing may sit within the modern public consciousness as a rather twee example of rustic folk art, local newspaper the *Buxton Advertiser* was in 1870 moved to describe their own town's wells dressing festival as 'a Saturnalia kept up for the most sordid of purposes'. This presentation will explore the surprising number of times that well dressings have generated controversy over the years – including a local vicar who managed to stamp out well dressings for almost a century on account of the drunken behaviour of his parishioners, the radical designs of the early 1960s tackling themes such as CND and

anti-apartheid, and the royal ruckus generated by Chesterfield's tribute to a late Princess which swiftly went viral for all the wrong reasons.

Since 2014, **Richard Bradley** has been researching, attending and documenting the folklore and customs of his native county of Derbyshire and the wider Peak District. From June 2020 he has written a monthly feature on this topic for *Derbyshire Life* magazine, and has written three local history books through Amberley Books with a fourth, *The A – Z of Curious Derbyshire*, due for publication in March 2023 through The History Press. In 2019 he collaborated with Buxton Museum and Art Gallery on an exhibition 'Weird Derbyshire and Peakland' where his photographs of local customs and traditions were displayed alongside relevant items from the museum's collection. He has given presentations on local customs and folklore to local history and heritage groups across Derbyshire and presented a paper at the inaugural symposium of the Centre for Contemporary Legend at Sheffield Hallam University in 2018.

****

Magdalena Buchczyk

Salvaging Wetlands, Safeguarding Heritage?

This paper uses craft practice to explore the changing relationships between multispecies communities, heritage ecologies and waterscapes in the Mediterranean. Drawing on anthropological research with basket-makers in the Mediterranean wetlands, it examines a tradition under threat from climate change entangled in different claims on sustainability. The artisans harvesting plants for their craft consider themselves the caretakers and gardeners of the lagoons. However, the threat of climate change leads to new environmental policies restricting their access to the waterscapes. In the Ramsar site conservation agenda, traditional makers are increasingly seen as illicitly depleting the natural resources protecting the lagoon from erosion.
This way, traditional craft practice and intangible heritage become an area of contrasting claims about preserving traditions or conserving ecosystems. Craft articulates situated material knowledge and ways of living with the waterscape. However, this knowledge is overlooked in international wetland management. The paper considers notions of multispecies relationality and ownership that emerge from traditional basket-making. It asks what this perspective can offer to develop new ways of living with and managing relations with waterscapes. Weaving appears not simply as a heritage activity but as a practice of making pathways to sustainable futures otherwise.

Magdalena Buchczyk is an anthropologist and Junior Professor in Social Anthropology of Cultural Expressions at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research focuses on material culture, heritage and knowledge production with ethnographic research on collections, making and learning.
She published about making in *Home Cultures, Journal of American Folklore, International Journal of Heritage Studies, Journal of Museum Ethnography, and Textile: Journal of Cloth and Culture*.
Buchczyk's monograph, *Weaving Europe, Crafting the Museum*, will be published with Bloomsbury Academic in 2023.

****

Cahya Gemilang and **Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa**, with **Iqbal H, Lissan**, and **Tssarioh**

Spectral Ecologies of Submergence: Tracing Shrimp, Jasmine, and Ancestral Graves in Java.
This presentation draws from recent fieldwork in Pekalongan, central Java that has long been politicised for its tidal incursions and high rates of land subsidence that have left

settlements in perpetual submergence. Historically, Pekalongan´s identity as a significant trading hub, seaport and centre for jasmine production is captured in its municipal logo—featuring an iconic white flower, a fish and a harbour site.
Today, while vast swathes of land remain fully or partially submerged, residents of Pekalongan live their daily lives according to tidal calendars, when certain hours of the day turn its urban fabric into a veritable waterworld. This presentation contemplates the notion of submergence as a metaphoric and methodological lens for tracing inter-tidal narratives, folklore, and collective memory implicating erased livelihoods, particularly in the context of jasmine farming and shrimping.
We ask how might diverse tidal flows (i.e., perpetual submergence and routinal incursions) be put in conversation with one another, particularly in ways that enliven memories and narratives of lost ecologies and abandonment, the misplaced and the forgotten, the reoccurring and its ethereal? As a way forward, we explore practices around staking claim and belonging to submerged land/seascapes, as state-driven forms of managed retreat remain ever so pervasive, a looming ghostly figure in itself that further threatens local livelihoods and legitimises eviction.
We thus turn to ancestral graves including those ´abandoned´ landscapes of jasmine and shrimp – however hidden or submerged—that offer to be taken as a vantage point with which to trace local practices, folk- and spiritlore around trajectories of dispossession and repossession. Not only do these micro-sites symbolise disappearance of livelihood-based ecologies. 'Graves' in their broadest sense (including discarded spaces and ruins of agricultural fields and ponds), are also generative of other, more fluid ecologies of submergence that trouble dualisms between the grounded and the watery.

Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa is an environmental anthropologist and cultural geographer based at the Dept. of Social Sciences, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), Germany. Much of her work draws on transoceanic thinking, urban political ecology, and more-than-human geographies in archipelagic settings. She co-leads the DFG-funded project BlueUrban, that explores cultural histories and infrastructural futures of living with water amid rising seas in urban Southeast Asia.

Cahya Gemilang, of Legal Lab - Anggraeni and Partners, is a social anthropologist who graduated from Universitas Gadjah Mada in 2021 (cum laude). He is also affiliated to the Resilience Development Initiative's (RDI) research cluster Children, Social Welfare, and Health in Bandung, West Java. His former qualitative research affiliations include the Indonesian Consortium for Agrarian Reform (a marine-agrarian project in Palu, Central Sulawesi), the SMERU Research Institute (on the gendered implications of COVID-19), as well as the University of Amsterdam & UGM joint project Fish for Food (IKAN-F3).

Iqbal H. Lissan, of the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, USA, is a social anthropologist and graduate student in Climate and Society at Columbia University. Iqbal formerly worked as a researcher at the Science Field Shops (SFSs), a collaboration project with universities from South Africa and the United Kingdom, while also having served as a consultant at the Centre for Child Protection & Advocacy (PUSKAPA) at UI.

Tsaairoh, of the Centre for Global and Strategic Studies, Universitas Indonesia, possesses a background in social welfare studies (Universitas Indonesia, 2019). Her main focus rests on disaster risk management, climate change, gender, and child protection while working across diverse project management contexts with stakeholders that crosscut UN agencies, government bodies and NGOs.

****

Vito Carrassi

Flood as a Landscape Creator: From City to Lake (and Something Else).

Varano Lake, in the Gargano peninsula (Apulia, Italy), connotes a peculiar and suggestive landscape, where water is a prominent feature, due to the remarkable closeness between the lake and the sea, separated by a thin land strip. According to a local legend, Varano would be the outcome of a flood, sent by God to punish a powerful and corrupted city, Uria, once flourishing in the place of the lake. In other words, this legend literally draws the geography and the history of the area. Like in other most famous floods, water is not only a destructive but also a regenerating power: on the one hand, the ruins of the sinful city would lie on the bottom of the lake; on the other hand, a little church, overhanging the lake, would be the only building spared by God, being the house of a pious woman, Nunzia. Furthermore, the surrounding towns – whose religious identity is embodied by a Crucifix enshrined in the church – would have been established following Uria's sinking. The hybrid and intermediary figure of Nunzia makes this legend slightly but significantly different from a number of flood stories connected to the origin of a lake spread all around the world, as will be argued by a comparative analysis. Overall, these local legends tell us how water in folklore can give shape and sense to a certain landscape.

Vito Carrassi holds a PhD in Literary Sciences, is an independent scholar, formerly adjunct professor of Folkloristics at the University of Bari, and of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Basilicata. He is an ISFNR and SIEF member. His main field of research are history and theory of folk narrative genres, orality/literacy and folklore/literature interactions, folk beliefs and narrativity, folk rituals and festivals. About these topics he has published two monographs, three edited books and several peer reviewed articles and book chapters.

****

Paul Cowdell

'The sky is too big': Reclaimed Flatlands and their Communities, What Happens When the Edge of the World Becomes its Centre, and Romanticisation in Fieldwork.

Across the east and south-east coast of England there are several areas of drained marshland and reclaimed flatlands. While the histories of these areas vary, many were specifically reclaimed and worked for agricultural purposes, some quite deliberately as remote but resource-rich locations. Romney Marsh, in the south-east corner of Kent, provided rich sheep grazing for upland farmers but was a hostile place not easy of habitation. What happens to such places as demographics, infrastructure and access change? I will reflect here on my own lifelong experiences of the Marsh and on periodic fieldwork conducted in fishing and farming communities as well as among the more recent migrants to what is variously a retreat for artists and a commuting area for Ashford and London. Even in the early 1980s Dungeness was a remote and sparsely populated fishing community, despite the presence of a nuclear power station and a bird observatory. My astonishment at the volume of traffic there these days raises the question of romanticisation in folklore fieldwork, and poses the challenge of how we understand the developing life of those who live there.

Paul Cowdell is a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Hertfordshire, where he earned his PhD for research into contemporary belief in ghosts. Having also written on songs about cannibalism at sea, he has been variously described as 'an expert in morbid eschatology' and 'a cannibalism

celebrity'. He has recently been working on the histories of British folkloristics, particularly as they are reflected in popular culture. Associate Editor of the journal *Folklore*, he currently serves on the Council of the Folklore Society and the Editorial Board of the *Folk Music Journal*.

****

Stuart Dunn

Imagining Atlantis: Challenging Pseudoarchaeology with Maps and Folklore.

1n 1848 the HMS Volgae, under the command of Captain Thomas Graves, surveyed the Aegean Islands and produced a series of beautifully detailed maps for the British Hydrographic Office. The Volgae series includes a map of the volcanic island of Santorini (ancient Thera), which has often been associated with the story of Atlantis, the sunken continent imagined as a metaphor by Plato in his *Kritias* and *Timaios* dialogues. The detail of the Graves map is impressive for the comparisons it allows: it includes a tiny island called Mikro Kaimeni ('Little Furnace'), which no longer exists as it was incorporated into the nearby larger island of Nea Kaimeni ('New Furnace') in the volcanic eruption of 1866. This paper will offer a brief review of the cartographic history of Santorini up to Graves's survey, and a parallel overview of its association with the Atlantis metaphor. By identifying historical facts that can be adduced from the history of its maps—such as the disappearance of Mikro Kaimeni—I will highlight the critical role (in both senses) that the grounded study of folklore has to play as an essential counterpoint to the—often harmful—claims of pseudoarchaeology and pseudohistory.

Stuart Dunn is Professor of Spatial Humanities at King's College London, where he also serves as Head of the Department of Digital Humanities. He is by training an archaeologist, and now works in the history of cartography, digital approaches to landscape studies, and spatial humanities. He is particularly interested in the analysis of texts to explore the rhetoric and expression of place, and this frequently overlaps with the history of mapping. He is also interested in digital placemaking and online mapping: his latest book is entitled *A History of Place in the Digital Age* (Routledge, 2019). Stuart gained an interdisciplinary PhD in Bronze Age palaeovolcanology from the University of Durham in 2002, conducting fieldwork in Melos, Crete and Santorini. His more latter-day work in historic mapping and landscapes led him into the lanes and byways of folklore, especially the folklore of byways and lanes.

****

Cornelia Florea

The Whims of Nature, the Stories of People: The Danube River and Its Materiality.

Freezing rivers or severe floods trigger in many regions of the entire world memories of the hard times. Climate change and its cohort of unpredictable whims contribute further to the revival of memories of riparian population concerning different river environment. A series of such events unfolded in the twentieth century on the Lower Danube River causing a double effect. Freezing Danube in the interwar period was used by Romanian men to cross the river on foot in search of Bulgarian women. Sometimes, the floods caused by the defrosting river led to killing people and the destruction of houses. Having in mind this double effect of the frozen Danube and based on a long-term ethnographic fieldwork in the village of Rast (Romania) focusing on a recent disastrous flood (2006) and the work in different archives, I ruminate on the material composition of ice – the frozen river – and its social positive and

negative effects. Engaging the literature on the anthropology of water and the theories on the new materialism, this paper contributes to the multiple materiality of water and its social effects as set out in historical and ethnographic resources from Southeast Europe.

Cornelia Florea is a researcher at the 'Francisc I. Rainer' Institute of Anthropology of the Romanian Academy. She has a bachelor's degree in Geography (2004), a Masters degree in Ethnology, Cultural Anthropology and Folklore (2015) and a doctorate about Valea Jiului (2019) – *The Anthropology of Miners and Mining in the Jiu Valley. An Approach from Literary Studies*, published under the title *Noroc bun! O antropologie a minerilor şi minelor din Valea Jiului*. Her current field placement is with the 'Francisc I. Rainer' Institute of Anthropology – Danisland Project – State, Communities and Nature of the Lower Danube Islands: An Environmental History (1830-2020), as CS III, and is interested in infrastructure anthropology, anthropology of water and anthropology of tourism.

****

Hanna Geschewski

Circumambulating for the Rain: The Role of Folklore, Spirituality, and Faith in the Farming Practices of Tibetan Refugees in South India.

The entanglement of folkloric, spiritual, and religious beliefs with agricultural land use, manifested among others in rituals, stories, and the cultivation of culturally meaningful crops, has been researched and documented extensively. Such beliefs are often presented as embedded in traditional and/or indigenous knowledge systems based on observations and encounters with the environment over many generations.
But how do agro-spiritual relations and practices evolve when people have had no long-term ties to the land they now inhabit and cultivate, for example, when they have been relocated in the process of displacement? To contribute to this research gap, I explore how Tibetan refugee farmers in South India connect with the land they were resettled on in the 1970s, and how these material and non-material connections have been shaped by knowledge, value, and belief systems from Tibet, but also by the spiritual-cultural capital of host communities. Based on participant observation, interviews, and oral histories, I focus in particular on how farmers have dealt with recent episodes of water stress that have severe impacted local agricultural production. I show how agro-spiritual practices, including communal rain prayers and circumambulation, are a way of coping with, not least adapting to, an increasingly uncertain environment and climate.

Hanna Geschewski is a doctoral researcher in Human Geography at the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) and the University of Bergen, Norway. Her PhD project explores human-environmental relations with a focus on agrarian change in the resettlement of Tibetan refugees in southern India. She has a background in environmental and sustainability studies and has spent many years living in and studying South Asia and the Himalayan region.

****

Adam Grydehøj and **Ping Su**

How Do We Know the Delta? Disappearing Islands, Changing Waterscapes, and Altered Lifeways in China's Pearl River Delta.

Landscapes are often encompassed by processes of heritagisation: Efforts are made to maintain or even remake areas of human settlement so they reflect a temporally specific state. Yet

our knowledge of place will always be a knowledge of the present, and idealised visions of particular pasts do not necessarily have much to do with an area's historical development. This presentation considers the case of China's Pearl River Delta, showing how conceptions of the region have transformed over the millennia as a result of both changes in its physical geography and changes in how various peoples (Dan boat people, land-dwelling Cantonese, European colonisers) have used its waters and islands. As the Pearl River Delta faces the prospect of substantial climate change impacts, it is worth remembering that today's delta is a result of complex anthropogenic processes and that much of what is currently regarded as 'dry land' in the region was either permanently or regularly covered by water just a few centuries ago. While such reflections cannot mitigate the challenges now confronting residents of the Pearl River Delta, they may open up to more flexible conceptions of how this region *ought to* look and be lived in.

Adam Grydehøj is a professor at South China University of Technology's School of Foreign Languages. He holds a PhD in Ethnology from the University of Aberdeen's Elphinstone Institute and is editor-in-chief of *Island Studies Journal*. Professor Grydehøj works at the intersection of Folklore and Human Geography, with his recent research focusing on island communities in China and the Arctic. agrydehoj@islanddynamics.org

Ping Su is a professor at South China University of Technology's School of Foreign Languages. She received her PhD from University of Hong Kong's School of English. Professor Su's current research interests include senses of islandness, Caribbean literature, and the anthropology of migrant and transnational communities. Suping1983@gmail.com

****

Chris Hare

The Encroaching Sea and Dragon Ponds—Aquatic Folklore of the Sussex Coast.

The research conducted for my book *The Secret Shore* (2016) included sending out a team of trained project volunteers to interview their friends, relatives and neighbours about folklore and local superstitions. Over 100 people were interviewed, plus others who emailed me direcly. This paper will look at three elements of that research:
1. Legends of villages 'lost to the sea,' particularly Kingston, Atherington, and Cudlow Forest. Many stories include ideas of church/chapel bells ringing at sea on stormy nights, and water lapping around churches/chapels as the last service was held prior to abandonment. All these stories were of the 'I believe,' 'we have heard' variety—no one claimed that they or even an elderly relative had witnessed such things!
2. Fishermen's superstitions and 'tales.' These are especially fascinating as several interviewees actually claimed to have witnessed strange unworldly (or should that be 'unseaworthy'?) occurrences at sea. Most of what we collected were 'do's' and 'don'ts' concerning conduct at sea and things to avoid doing/seeing before setting sail.
3. Lyminster Knucker Hole and Binsted, and Sompting Knucker Hole. Jacqueline Simpson has, of course, written extensively about the Lyminster Knucker Hole. Indeed, I suspect, several of our interviewees were relaying stories that originated in Jacqueline's book! However, there was also new material. The most memorable was an older woman at one of my public talks who claimed that divers in the 1960s investigated the Lyminster Knucker Hole and discovered evidence that the legend was true. According to newspaper cuttings I had found of these dives—first in 1956, and again in 1970—the divers had found little of note, but the woman, in remembering the real dives, then added evidence to prove the legend true. I am sure she was

not lying or confused; she really believed it and got quite angry with me when I cast some doubt on what she had said. A very memorable encounter, and one that (as an oral historian) reminded me what a clever but devious tool the mind is!

Chris Hare holds a BA in British Studies, and an MA in Life History (Oral History and Mass Observation). He has worked in adult education in Devon, in continuing education at the University of Sussex, and as Climate Change Officer for West Sussex County Council. In 2009, he established History People UK to help secure grant funding for heritage organisations and assist with managing vital heritage projects for, among others, West Sussex Record Office, Worthing Borough Council, Sussex Diocese, Friends of the South Downs (South Downs Society), The Chichester Society, Worthing Heritage Alliance, High-down Gardens, the Sidney Walter Centre, Friends of Broadwater Cemetery, and many schools across Sussex. Since 1991, Chris has written many books and booklets on Sussex history and folklore topics, including *The Secret Shore* (2016), and numerous other titles listed at https://historypeo-ple.co.uk/books-and-publications/.

****

Manuel Ernst Erich Helmus

The Fisherman and his Line in the Anthropocene—Transformative Fishing Practices in Larena, Siquijor Island, Philippines.

This paper presents an anthropological inquiry based on ethnographic research on human water relations in the municipality of Larena on Siquijor Island. In connection to Tim Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' (2000), Gísli Pálsson's 'enskilment at sea' (1994) and the concept of transfigurations (Mattes et al., 2020), it tackles multifaceted, (more-than-)human entanglements within land- and seascapes focusing 'relational affordances' (Chemero 2003). In the Anthropocene, the local fisheries face major challenges as increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, erratic seasonal changes, and coral bleaching. Furthermore, due to sustainable coastal management and ecogovernmental (Seki 2009) limitations, they rely solely on so-called traditional practices. This results in interdependent relations of the fishermen with each other and with their environment demonstrating skilful embodied practices and knowledge following the traces of animal inhabitants by navigating and moving at sea in tiny vessels, sensing the line in the water, and by trudging through the mud at low tide. Through vignettes from my fieldwork, I portray the fisherman and his line as an equivalent to the blind person and her cane (Chemero and Käufer 2016). I argue that these practices blur alleged dichotomies of land- and seascape by rather living in mundane correspondence than in contrast with the (watery) environments.

Manuel Ernst Erich Helmus is a student of MA Development Studies and MA Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna and currently finalizing his theses focusing on human-water relations. In September 2022, he presented his paper 'Designing a River: Hydrosocial transfigurations in the Lower Rhine Valley, Austria,' at Vienna Anthropology Days (VANDA) and presented a similar but different version of that talk at the RAI Film festival 2023 of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in March 2023. In addition to that, he presented a paper on the water infrastructure of Siquijor Island at the conference 'Dealing with Drought: Water Politics, Human (Im)mobilities and Adaptation Strategies,' in Augsburg in April 2023.

****

David Hopkin

The Passions of the Flax, Continued.

People have made textiles (linen) from flax for millennia, but the process of extracting the fibres is tortuous. Flax must be 'drowned… broken and cracked, hackled and scalded' (the words come from Hans Christian Andersen's tale 'The Flax'). The ancient Greeks already used it as a metaphor for torture. In 1948, Robert Eisler gave a lecture to the Folklore Society on 'The Passion of the Flax', connecting these classical references to songs, riddles and tales collected in European folklore: it was published posthumously in 1950. In folktales, either the flax itself complains of its sufferings, or another character relates its history, usually to delay a pursuit or put-off a supernatural threat (tale-type ATU 1199A, motif K555.1.1). These versions probably originated in religious exempla, the aim being to sacralize agricultural tasks (as with the bread and wine of the Last Supper, so also for Christ's linen shroud). My intention is to explore the meanings of these tales in the communities that told them, starting with versions unknown to Eisler. As with analogous narratives—such as the Martyrdom of Saint Bacchus or the song of John Barleycorn—they have a humorous side, but they also acknowledge that agriculture is a form of violence against nature, and a source of suffering for those who engage in it.

David Hopkin is Professor of European Social History at Oxford where his research specialises on oral cultures. He is author of *Soldier and Peasant in French Popular Culture* (2002: Royal Historical Society's Gladstone prize) and *Voices of the People in Nineteenth Century France* (2012: The Folklore Society's Katharine Briggs Award). He is co-editor of *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012) and *Rhythms of Revolt: European Traditions and Memories of Social Conflict in Oral Culture* (2017). He was editor of the journal *Cultural and Social History* and of the book series *Studies in Modern French and Francophone History*. He is writing a book on 'Lacemakers—poverty, religion and gender in a transnational work culture'.
https://www.hertford.ox.ac.uk/about/people/professor-david-hopkin
https://laceincontext.com/

****

Lucy Hornberger

'The Thames is the New Ganges': Hindu *Visarjan* Immersion Rituals and British Rivers.

The rivers of India carry enormous significance within the cosmology and sacred geography of Hindu religion and ritual. How then do British Hindus, geographically separated from an ancestral 'authentic' Indian landscape, maintain their religion and traditions? The past 50 years have seen numerous British rivers adopted, both officially and unofficially, by British Hindus as ritual substitutes for Indian rivers. This paper will consider British Hindu adaptations to the British environment, and consequent issues of place-making, attachment, identity and belonging, through the lens of *visarjan* rituals. *Visarjan* ('immersion') refers to the Hindu ritual practice of disposing of sacred objects by submerging them in flowing water. Among the Hindu diaspora in Britain *visarjan* is practised for three key reasons: the immersion of idols as the culmination of festivals, personal worship and prayer, and the ritual disposal of cremation ashes. *Visarjan* therefore acts as an effective way for British Hindus to enter a process of negotiation with the non-Indian environment by means of the reimagining of ritual via a gradual sanctification of rivers and the building-up of place-based tradition.

Lucy Hornberger is a student on the MA in Folklore Studies programme, University of Hertfordshire.

****

Daniel Keech and **Susie Olczak**

Narratives of the Extreme—Can it Get Any Wetter?

Populations in the Panamanian jungle and the Somerset Levels and Moors have, for centuries, planned their lives around living with water. In Somerset, year-round farming is possible thanks to a network of hi-tech sluices and ancient rhynes that drain what was, essentially, marshy wilderness. Panama's isolated Darien National Park experiences 330 days of rain a year. In our presentation, we examine (beyond the reality of living with water, which in these regions is routine), what happens when the extreme gets wetter. A decade ago, consecutive floods in Somerset caused three months of inundation, leading to physical and social upheaval not experienced for a generation. In Panama the already wet climate is getting wetter. Our different methodological approaches as artist and geographer are united by interest in the idea that climate change is challenging people who live with extremes of water, to cope with more. On one hand, this raises alarms about the urgency of climate change. On the other, people are discussing hopeful and adaptive local futures, too often crowded out by policy and scientific narratives.

Daniel Keech is Senior Research Fellow Countryside and Community Research Institute, University of Gloucestershire dkeech@glos.ac.uk

Susie Olczak is Lecturer in Fine Art, University of Gloucestershire solczak@glos.ac.uk
www.susieolczak.co.uk

****

Rosalind Kerven

Dragon Kings of Drought and Flood: Taming Fears of Climate Disaster in Chinese Folk Narratives.

Living in an area regularly threatened by water-based climate disasters can cause a widespread sense of fatalism and despair. However, storytelling has the power to overcome such negative feelings. By employing symbolism and fantasy, it can inspire the hope of defeating cataclysm by means of human ingenuity and courage. In Chinese folk narratives, this is accomplished by portraying droughts and floods as the work of mythical dragon kings. Though domineering, formidable and often callous, these beings are not invincible. Stories show how their attempts to cause climate disaster can be thwarted by the most humble opponents. Indeed, it is not unusual for such tales to turn traditional social norms upside-down, with the 'climate hero' who saves the world coming from what was once regarded as a very low social status: both young and female. This paper will examine a selection of Chinese dragon king folktales about drought, rainfall and flood, exploring the fantastical constructs within which they are told. It will argue that stories in which 'the weak overcomes the strong' in the face of overwhelming forces of nature can promote emotional wellbeing for both young and old; whilst also encouraging innovative ways of thought to avert disaster.

Rosalind Kerven, Independent researcher and author, graduated from Hull University in sociology and social anthropology several decades ago. This academic background has informed her long-term work of collecting world myths, legends and folktales, and bringing them back to life for modern readers. She has thousands of traditional stories on file, from numerous different countries and cultures. She has written over 70 books published in 22 countries, mostly in this genre, and her work has been highly acclaimed by reviewers – including in the FLS journal, *Folklore*. Her publishers include Batsford, British Museum, British Library, Cambridge University Press, DK, the National Trust, Oxford University

Press and Pearson, as well as her own small imprint, Talking Stone. She first became fascinated by Chinese dragon kings when researching *In the Court of the Jade Emperor: Stories from Old China* (CUP 1993) and more recently worked another such tale into her collection *Dark Fairy Tales of Fearless Women* (Batsford, 2021). She has previously contributed to a number of Folklore Society events. Her website is: workingwithmythsandfairytales.blogspot.com

****

Sophia Kingshill

Bogs and Bog Bodies: Responses to a Landscape.

Over the centuries, many corpses have been dug up from bogland in northern Europe, some dating from the Iron Age, some from even earlier. Remarkably well preserved by natural qualities of peat water and soil, a number of these bodies can tell us that they died by violence. Were they murdered, executed as criminals, or sacrificed to prehistoric gods? The riddle can't be conclusively answered, but theories about these deaths illuminate wider issues about human interaction with the environment. Peat bogs have provided a refuge and livelihood to those who know them well; to others, they have appeared as threatening or repulsive wasteland, at best a source of fuel, and at worst, actively malign, miasmatic, haunted and devouring. Exploitation and 'reclamation' have destroyed much of Europe's marshland. Today, the vital ecological importance of peat bogs is recognized, and projects for preservation and restoration have been undertaken in some places. These shifting perceptions are reflected, to some extent, by the different responses to the bodies found submerged in the bogs.

Sophia Kingshill is the author of *Mermaids* (Little Toller, 2015), and co-author of *The Fabled Coast* (Random House, 2012) and *The Lore of Scotland* (Random House, 2009). She is the Hon. Secretary of the Folklore Society.

****

Devender Kumar

Water and its Folklore in North India: A Case Study in a Haryanvi Village.

Water has played a significant role in the development and sustenance of civilization in India, and the kind of water bodies sustaining civilization in particular regions have given rise to unique cultural practices across the land. Therefore, beginning with the Vedic hymns, all kinds of lore and literature here sing appropriately the praises for *Varun* the water god in Indian mythology. Here in India, mighty rivers are venerated as mothers; wells and ponds are treated as sacred places with divine spirits of their own. In order to instil a sense of responsibility towards preserving the precious water resource, elders of the community wove an intricate pattern of folklore around their water sources, and ensured its passage to younger generation through seasonal rituals. The proposed paper focuses on an ethnographic study of Juglan, a village lying in a semi-arid zone in north India, and studies the folkloric ways which have assisted the community in harvesting the rainwater and ensuring its optimal use around the year. The paper mainly analyzes the creation of folk legends around select water bodies (locally called *Johris*) dotted strategically on the periphery of the village, and their integration in the community life.

Devender Kumar is currently Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. He wrote his Ph. D. thesis on D. H. Lawrence. Besides mainstream literature, his heart lies in Folklore Studies. He has published about 20 papers in various national and international journals of repute so far. One of his papers was published in *Folklore* vol.128, 2017. He participated in

the Folklore Society's annual conference in 2018 held at the University of Reading. He has two books to his credit: *The Unknown Voices: A Translation of Folk Songs of South Haryana* (2011) and *Jakari: Haryanvi Mahilaon ke Sarv-Sulabh Lok Geet* (2015). He has been collecting various folklore items especially women's folk songs from Haryana region for the last 15 years in audio-visual format. He made an ethnographic documentary entitled *Jakari: Life-Songs of Haryanvi Women* and uploaded the same on www.youtube.com on 15 March 2015. In recognition of his contribution to the preservation and dissemination of Haryanvi folk culture in digital format, the Rah Group Foundation, a non-governmental organization, bestowed on him the Haryana Gaurav Award in 2016.

****

Rachel Lobo

The Lake is History: The Visual Culture of Black Mariners on Lake Erie.

Drawing from the photographic archive of the Alvin D. McCurdy fonds at the Archives of Ontario, this paper situates The Black Atlantic (1993) paradigm within Canada by exploring Black lake-faring within the Great Lakes shipping channels during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I craft my argument based on my reading of historic photographs of Black marine cooks and stewards in identification images, formally staged group portraits, and snapshot photographs. This collection was amassed by George McCurdy Jr, father of Alvin D. McCurdy, during his tenure as a marine cook working onboard commercial and leisure lake ships that traversed Lake Erie. I argue that marine workers were engaged in the interplay between boundary maintenance and struggles for egalitarian practices onboard the lake ship. In particular they organized themselves and their lives with and against the social order of the lake ship, cooperating in dangerous environments, and fostering a solidarity necessary for survival.

This paper borrows its title from Derek Walcott's 1979 poem 'The Sea is History'. It is particularly concerned with the final verse in which the reader is invited to move beyond the Eurocentric binaries of culture and nature, space and time: "and in the salt chuckle of rocks / with their sea pools, there was the sound like a rumour without any echo / of History, really beginning".

Pushing back against the spatial logics of European colonization, Caribbean poetry offers the sea as a form of knowing. Inspired by this work, this paper uses the experiences of the Black lake-farer to examine how the Great Lakes functioned both literally and metaphorically as a marker of displacement, belonging, a contact zone, and an imaginative epistemology for world making.

Rachel Lobo, is a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow with the Women & Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto; rachel.lobo@utoronto.ca. Her research explores the history of the domestic workers' movement that unfolded throughout the 1980s and 1990s in Ontario. Rachel received her PhD in Environmental Studies from the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change at York University. Her SSHRC-funded dissertation, entitled 'The Lake is History: Photographic Archives and the Black Atlantic in Essex County,' positioned vernacular photographs as key sites in uncovering transnational networks of kinship and resistance that impacted the political, cultural and social life of Lake Erie. Rachel received her MA in Photographic Preservation and Collections Management from Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), and has held archival internships at the Royal Ontario Museum and the TMU Image Centre. Her research has been published in the *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, and *Archivaria: The Journal for the Association of Canadian Archivists*


[L-R]: Mr. Henry Banks, [ca. 1890]. Alvin D. McCurdy fonds, Archives of Ontario; Ara Wilson, Henry Banks Jr., Roy Banks, Fremont Nelson: cooks aboard a steamboat [ca. 1890]. Alvin D. McCurdy fonds, Archives of Ontario.

****

Briony McDonagh

Welcome and opening words

Briony McDonagh is Director of the Energy & Environment Institute and Professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Hull. Her disciplinary background is in historical geography and environmental history. Her current research interests lie in the green-blue humanities and her work uses place-based, creative and participatory methods to build water and climate action. She has published widely on landscape and environmental change, on histories and cultures of living with water and flood, on women's histories, and on the historical geographies of enclosure, commons and protest.
She is Director of the Leverhulme Centre for Water Cultures, hosted by the University of Hull's Energy & Environment Institute. The Centre pioneers a new, humanities-led, interdisciplinary and transhistorical research area—the 'green-blue humanities'—equipping a new generation of PhD students to take this agenda forward and transform our understanding of humanity's relationships with water in the green-blue regions of the world, past, present and future.
In addition, Briony is Principal Investigator of 'Risky Cities: Living with Water in an Uncertain Future Climate,' a UKRI-funded project learning from the past to build climate awareness today and for the future. Working with project partners including the National Youth Theatre, Absolutely Cultured and the Living with Water Partnership, the project develops learning histories for one flood-prone city (Kingston upon Hull, UK) and uses arts and heritage interventions to engage diverse communities in building flood resilience.
Her book, *Elite Women and the Agricultural Landscape, 1700–1830* (Routledge, 2017), won the Joan Thirsk Memorial Prize and Women's History Network Book Prize. She is co-editor of *Women and the Land*, 1500-1900 (Boydell & Brewer, 2019), *Remembering Protest in Britain since 1500* (Palgrave, 2018) and *Hull: Culture, History, Place* (Liverpool University Press, 2017). She is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Royal Historical Society and Higher Education Academy, and was 2018-2019 President of the British Science Association's Geography Section.

****

Nidhi Mathur

Diverse Roles of River 'Ganga' in Indian Folklore.

This paper will focus on different roles of the Indian national river Ganga in current scenarios. The folklore says that Bhagiratha undertook severe ascetic practices and won the favour of Brahma and Shiva. Brahma allowed Ganga to descend on earth, while Shiva helped. The personification of the river Ganga is worshipped by Indians as the goddess of purification and forgiveness. Known by many names, Ganga is often depicted as a fair, beautiful woman, riding a divine crocodile-like creature called the Makara.

Geographically speaking, the Ganga River originates in the Himalaya Mountains at Gaumukh, the terminus of the Gangotri Glacier. When the ice of this glacier melts, it forms the clear waters of the Bhagirathi River. As the Bhagirathi River flows down the Himalayas, it joins the Alaknanda River, officially forming the Ganga River. This paper will try to analyze the relevance of folklore surrounding Ganga in today's world and examine how human involvement and encroachment have led to the depletion of the Gangetic plains; how the folklore involving Ganga can save the Gangetic plains in northern India and Himalayas; how these folklores can be used by the Government of India to make people aware of their river and major source of livelihood. The paper will also focus on multispecies temporalities, motifs, looking at which aspects might account for the change, at the impact of these changes on nature, and their influence on communities.

Nidhi Mathur is a Research Scholar in the Centre of German Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.

****

Alan Murdie

Water, Extreme Weather Events and Climate—Some Environmental Patterns Reflected in Ghost Folklore.

Some ghost researchers have considered stories of hauntings may arise from floods, high tides and underground water (Guy Lambert, 'The Geography of London Ghosts,' *Journal of the SPR* 40, 397-409, 1959). Misperceived effects of high rainfall and bad weather may be a physical cause and stimulate reports of hauntings in domestic premises. Mapping accounts may provide clues about the impact of weather in specific areas.
Ghostly traditions also cluster around many rivers, lakes and pools, springs and wells across Great Britain. These may express a wider relationship between extreme weather and fluctuating water levels in the environment, including phantoms appearing before floods. (Andrew Green, *Phantom Ladies,* 1977) Interestingly, the great majority of such connected and often prophetic apparitions are female, suggesting a deeper symbolism linking women and water operating in the folk mind.
Suggestive ghost stories connecting wells and high temperatures may correspond with geophysical features (W.G. Clarke, *In Breckland Wilds,* 1925) and there are numerous legendary drowned villages, towns and cities linked with ghostly phenomena. These are pointers to flood inundations and climatic events in earlier eras, often traditionally linked with transgressive human actions (Leslie Grinsell, *The Folklore of Prehistoric Sites in Britain*, 1976).

Alan Murdie is a barrister with a long-standing interest in environmental law and in ghosts and hauntings. He is the author of *Environmental Law and Citizen Action* (1993) and chairman of the Ghost Club. He has written and broadcast extensively on paranormal activities and is publishing a new edition of Andrew Green's *Phantom Ladies* in 2023.

****

Tabitha Peterken

Superstitions and Practice: A Protective Boundary.

During my ethnographic research I have gathered many superstitions, practices and traditions regarding the sea, the foreshore, and the fishermen's boats. Some practices have fallen out of

use but others remain strong from good luck rituals and tokens thrown to the sea gods for a favourable catch to the importance of Shrovetide skipping and football matches. These practices show the importance of the sea, the harbour and the position of the men within their community. For Scarborough the fishers lived in an area called the Bottom End, once a totally self-sufficient community living beside the harbour but socially separate from the rest of Scarborough.
The fishers of my study who fished the coast from the 1950-2000s have worked on many different boats, from wooden cobles to beam trawlers. They started their careers and lives secure in their work, in their identity and welded to their seascape and shoreline. However, in recent years their industry has faltered but their love of the sea and how to save their way of life is still in evidence.

Tabitha Peterken is currently writing-up her PhD with the University of Derby under the supervision of Dr Simon Heywood. She has a background in the arts, script and creative writing. She has a real interest for in-depth interviewing, collecting occupational narrative and life stories. She likes to work within the themes of identity, place, vulnerability and the hopes and dreams people have for their future.

****

Robert Piotrowski

Folk Narrations about Water Bodies in the Southern Baltic Lowland: From Geomythological Interpretations to Examples of Symbolic Eco-Symbiosis.

Symbolic relations between humans and water bodies were studied in a young glacial area in northern Poland, shaped by the last glaciation *(*Vistulian). The points of reference are 19th and early 20th-century folk narrations. The analysed source texts are concerned with the area of Mecklenburg, the Island of Rügen, and Western Pomerania for Germany as well as the Polish part of Pomerania, Kashubia, and Masuria for Poland. Many folk narrations explained in interesting ways the origin of ribbon lakes, their shaping, and specificity. Attention was paid also to water bodies with specific appearance, smell or ecosystem. Many negative characteristics, such as dark colour, sulphur smell, etc. were associated with the supernatural world, especially demonic connotations. Often the narrations referred to dystrophic lakes and wetlands. Some narrations include anthropogenic interpretations of lake changes, mostly their drying as a result of drainage works.
The interpretation and analysis of source texts aims to detect subtle expression of symbolic eco-symbiosis between humans and the aquatic environment as well as geomythological motifs, often resulting from bottom-up interpretation of hydrological phenomena. This makes it possible to capture the relations of tension, dominance, and coexistence of the hydrological ecosystem and humans in symbolic terms in 19th-century folk culture. This work was supported by the National Science Centre, Poland (Grant No. 2019/35/B/HS3/03933).

Robert Piotrowsky holds an MA in Ethnology, is an Assistant at the Department of Environmental Resources and Geohazards, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, Toruń, Poland, and he is a PhD student at the Faculty of Humanities, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland. He is also a member of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR).
Email: *robert@geopan.torun.pl*

****

Kathleen Ragan

The Narrative Map on an Evolutionary Timescale.

Within their cultural traditions, humans have responded to the profound need for stable geographic information by using the oral folk narrative. Among Australian aboriginal peoples, there is a specific connection between the oral narrative and the environment. Mardudjara tales include accurate environmental information like salient landscape features and possible water sources, critical in the arid Australian interior. A Nhunggabarra custodian of traditional stories said, 'Provided a person knew the stories and how to find the links, they could use the stories as a…map to find their way across country even over very long distances.' Examining oral narrative maps as a cultural, information-inheritance system, helps us better understand the human/environment relationship—such as the difference between using a map to get from one place to another, to locate water sources, or to broaden geographic knowledge. Narrative maps are also found in traditional and modern tales from Native Americans and in the Vinland sagas. Examining maps on an evolutionary timescale, from the oral through computer-mediated eras, informs us about ancient environments and the human response to those environments and also gives us perspective regarding the qualities and limitations of our current maps and concepts of environment.

Kathleen Ragan: PhD Macquarie University, Sydney AU. Thesis: *Folktales in an Evolutionary Contex*t. Currently she is an Independent Scholar. Her research crosses multiple interdisciplinary boundaries: Narrative/folktale/folk-and fairy tale studies, oral/literary/electronic communication mediums, cognitive studies, quantitative analysis, systems analysis, and Women's Studies.
Books published: *Fearless Girls, Wise Women and Beloved Sisters, Heroines in Folktales from Around the World; Outfoxing Fear, Folktales from Around the World; Why We Tell Stories—A Human Survival Tool from Folktales to Facebook*.
Academic publications representative of her work include: **'**What Happened to the Heroine in Folktales: An Analysis by Gender of a Multi-Cultural Sample of Published Folktales Collected from Storytellers,' *Marvels and Tales*. Vol 23.2, 2009, pp 227-247; and 'Asymmetry in male and female storyteller priorities: An analysis by gender of sample of published folk narratives collected from storytellers worldwide,' *Politics and Culture,* 2010, pp 1-22.

****

Rajalekshmi G.R.

'Eyes on their Fingertips': A Study on the Social-Ecological Memory Underlying the Ecoliteracy of the Fisherfolk Community of Thiruvananthapuram.

The ecoliterate fishers based in Thiruvananthapuram serve as a repertoire of indigenous knowledge and provide deep insights into the vicissitudes of marine experiences. Years of expedition and experimentation with the sea has created a domain of traditional ecological knowledge systems, inculcating the methods of fishing, the identification of reefs by 'kanicham' (the native art of triangulation), by sea-surface conditions and colour, positions of stars etc.
These exotic knowledge systems of the fisherfolk communities are rooted in their social-ecological memory, as the knowledge production takes place with a collective exchange between the land, sea and person. Their memory associated with the process of fishing and their knowledge about the distinctive nature of different species of fish enable them to identify the fish, caught in the hook underwater, just by the vibrations they feel in their fingertips. The

idea of the sea and its nature is basically understood from the memory of fishers who had a first-hand experience at the sea. Robert Panipilla in *Eyes on their Fingertips* (2015) explores the traditional ecological knowledge system, and memories of the fisherfolk community of Thiruvananthapuram. This paper tries to explore the social-ecological memory in the coastal oral tradition that underlies the ecoliteracy of the fisherfolk community.

Rajalekshmi G.R is a research scholar in English at the PG and Research department of English, Mar Ivanios College (Autonomous) Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The researcher is focused on exploring the coastal folklore of southern Travancore and identifying the innate elements of the fisherfolk culture.

****

Gary Robinson and **Lynda Yorke**

Responding to a Dynamic Environment—A Long View of Coastal and Maritime Communities in North Wales.

This interdisciplinary paper will explore the relationship between traditional ways of environmental understanding, within Welsh coastal and maritime communities, and contemporary perceptions of coastal erosion driven by rising sea-levels and greater storminess at sea. The focus of study will be the coastline of Gwynedd in North Wales. The paper will take a broad chronological view of the topic in order to explore the long-term evidence for changes along the coast and communities' response to these. Within this region physical evidence for coastal change is present within the: Celtic myths of the Cantre'r Gwaelod; submerged forests of Cardigan Bay; erosion of prehistoric and historic landmarks such as Dinas Dinlle; the loss of farmland due to sand inundation and in the proposed total evacuation of the township of Fairbourne. Using methodologies drawn from archaeology, landscape history and physical geography we will explore past, present, and future human responses to life within this dynamic coastal landscape. We will conclude that through human engagement with the maritime and coastal landscape, communities make sense of change by creating historically situated narratives, and that such narratives offer an alternative, and timeless, alternative to the dehumanising logic of science.

Dr Gary Robinson, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, Bangor University, g.robinson@bangor.ac.uk.
Gary's main research interest is the archaeology of maritime and coastal communities in western Britain and Ireland. More recently Gary has become interested in the archaeology of the modern and contemporary world and how this can be used to challenge established historical narratives.
Dr Lynda Yorke, Senior Lecturer in Physical Geography, Bangor University, l.yorke@bangor.ac.uk.
Lynda is a Quaternary geomorphologist, with principal emphasis in fluvial and pro-glacial sequences. She is interested in Quaternary environmental change and fluvial histories, including geoarchaeology, relict glacial environments, and flood risk and hazards.

****

Angelika H. Rüdiger

The Welsh Fairies, Supernatural Characters, and the Meaning of Water in Welsh Literary Motifs from the Middle Ages up to the Present Time.

This paper explores the meaning of water in traditions connected with the Welsh fairies and supernatural characters. The fairies represent otherness, and their abode is depicted as an extra-social domain, a realm often described like an inverted mirror image of the human society.

Therefore, research in these traditions can provide information about human society. Water figures as key element in narrative traditions connected with the fairies. It marks the borders between the human and the supernatural world. It is a liminal place for connecting with the powers of the otherworld, but also an element which denotes otherness. When appearing in the form of mist, it is the image and agent of a change of view, which makes access to the otherworld possible. But water is also a means of supernatural punishment. Flooding of human settlements and cultivated land is both a consequence of transgression against an otherworldly domain, and a marker for misconduct within the human society. Welsh literature connects flooding and motifs of fairy traditions, ranging from medieval poem 'Seithennin' to *Pantglas*, a novel of magic realism by Mihangel Morgan, or the dystopia *Y Dŵr* by Lloyd Jones, all drawing on the suggestive power of the traditional narrative motifs.

Angelika H. Rüdiger: holds a first degree in chemistry, was awarded the title of "Dr. rerum nat." (*summa cum laude*) by the University Braunschweig, and currently teaches physics and chemistry at the Philipp-Matthäus-Hahn Schule, Nürtingen, Germany. She did an MA in the Department of Welsh, University of Bangor with a thesis entitled 'Gwyn ap Nudd. Transfiguration of a character on the way from Medieval Literature to Neo-Pagan Beliefs'. And in 2022, she received her PhD with the thesis 'Y Tylwyth Teg. An Analysis of a Literary Motif' by Bangor University. She has published several articles on Welsh medieval literature, including 'Gwyn ap Nudd: Transfigurations of a character on the way from medieval literature to neo-pagan beliefs,' *Gramarye*, 2, 2012, pp. 29-47; 'Y Tylwyth Teg- Motiffau o'r straeon y Tylwyth Teg mewn gwahanol destunau o'r Oesoedd Canol' ('Motifs of the tales of the fairies in various medieval texts'). *Proceedings of the Association of Celtic Students of Ireland and Britain, I & II*, 2015 pp. 137-147; 'Trawsffurfiadau Gwyn ap Nudd. O Lenyddiaeth Ganoloesol i Gredoau Neo-baganaidd' ('Transformations of Gwyn ap Nudd. From medieval literature to neopagan beliefs'). *Proceedings of the 7th International Colloquium of Societas Celto-Slavica.* 8, 2018, pp. 119-133; and 'Writing Britain's Celtic History in the Nineteenth Century: "The Study of Folk Tradition" by Sir John Rhŷs'. *Proceedings of the Eighth International Colloquium of Societas Celto-Slavica,* 10, 2019, pp. 77-110.

****

Joe Shute

Cultural Daylighting: Using Stories of The Past and Present to Re-Imagine Lost Urban Rivers and Influence Future Regeneration.

Like many post-industrial urban waterways, Manchester's River Irk was once central to the lives of the communities it flowed through. Over the past century, however, it has been built over, culverted, neglected and become 'culturally lost'. Daylighting, the re-opening of lost urban rivers to promote biodiversity, flood prevention and community access, has become a growing global movement in recent decades. But simply revealing rivers is not enough. In order to fully restore a river, we need to reclaim it in people's imaginations, creating new knowledge which draws upon the stories, folklore and history flowing through it.
This paper investigates how co-produced creative writing workshops with community groups along the Irk can unearth and develop stories connected to rivers and reconnect people to lost waterways.
In doing so it aims to create a place-making model which provides a more powerful voice from often marginalised communities to influence future development and create a more equal city.

Joe Shute is a post-graduate researcher at the Leverhulme Unit for the Design of Cities of the Future (LUDeC) at Manchester Metropolitan University. His interdisciplinary research combines creative

writing, creative histories and community engagement, working with local communities to re-imagine Manchester's River Irk. He is a national newspaper journalist and author of creative non-fiction. His books include *A Shadow Above: the fall and rise of the raven* (Bloomsbury, 2018) and *Forecast: a diary of the lost seasons* (Bloomsbury, 2021).

****

Kate Smith

Risky Cities: Using Arts and History for Flood Resilience.

The Risky Cities project (https://riskycities.hull.ac.uk) is part of the Living with Water Partnership, which includes the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and the University of Hull, and which was set up to increase awareness and engagement with flood risks and adaptation measures in the area around Hull. The Risky Cities project's contribution draws on Hull's long history—as recorded in its artistic and cultural heritage—to raise climate awareness and build flood resilience today and for the future.

The project focuses on three areas: first, it investigates how Hull communities have experienced, responded to and learned to live with and manage water and floods over the last 800 years, adapting, sharing knowledge systems and developing resilience; second, it examines 'fictions of flooding', poetry, prose, drama and newsprint, revealing how past communities responded to floods and whether they gained resilience from artistic recording of events; and third, it explores how place-based stories about the past can be used with present day communities to build climate change awareness and flood resilience.

Sharing some of Risky Cities creative and community outputs, this short paper considers this work in the light of broader global responses to changing watery environments, and highlights useful avenues for ways that scholarship within folklore studies can both stay with, and start to deal with, the trouble of climate change.

Kate Smith gained her PhD at the former National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, within the School of English at the University of Sheffield. During her PhD research she taught at Sheffield and the Open University, as well as at Hull York Medical School, and coordinated modules in cultural and environmental anthropology in the department of Social Science and Criminology at Hull. Her research interests span a wide range of interdisciplinary topics in cultural anthropology and sociohydrology, but centre around the interactions between water, people, landscape and identity, and in participatory methodologies and thematic analysis. Her work within the Energy and Environment Institute has included nationally significant research on using mobile technologies for flood warnings, using social value as a way of evaluating flood resilience innovation, and understanding the impact of large-scale public art interventions on people's engagement with action for climate empowerment. Her current role extends the work she started in the Flood Innovation Centre, developing novel and creative ways to engage diverse publics with flood resilience and climate change adaptation, and combines research with teaching on the Energy and Environment Institute's MSc in Flood Risk Management. She is also a member of the Folklore Society's Council.

****

Helen Underhill

Water Cultures: Understanding Dynamic Risk Landscapes Faced by Agricultural Communities Subject to Environmental Changes.

This paper draws on recent (April-May 2023) collaborative fieldwork with a team from universities in the UK (Newcastle, Southampton) and Japan (Tohoku, Osaka). The *Densho-Adapt*

project is developing and testing a participatory workshop model in *Tadami Biosphere Reserve*, a mountainous ecosystem facing some of Japan's heaviest rain and snowfall levels. It combines geospatial modelling of environmental changes, soil and water analysis of rice paddy fields, and Social Cartography workshops to co-construct understandings of implications with affected communities.
This paper focuses on the author's experiences within this interdisciplinary research project drawing together Anthropology, Earth Sciences, and Geospatial/Satellite Imaging.
It will discuss results of fieldwork undertaken to explore relationships between communities and waterscapes in this rural mountainous community, including exploration of water cultures (eg. Shinto belief systems), communication (eg. local stories and words for water), and practices (eg. the materiality of rice farming) through participant observation, and how this knowledge can be brought to bear in co-produced workshop models.
How can holistic ethnographic understandings contribute to successful communication between local community and researchers, as well as to wider academic and practitioner communities, to promote water and food security led by and for communities?

Dr Helen Underhill, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, helen.underhill@newcastle.ac.uk https://www.ncl.ac.uk/apl/people/profile/helenunderhill.html**.** She is a Research Associate in the UKRI GCRF Water Security and Sustainable Development Hub at Newcastle University. Her research engages social and cultural engagements with water as key to successful adaptation strategies for a near future shaped by anthropogenic climate change and water security challenges.

****

Manolis Varvounis

Water Rituals in Greek Folk Culture (19th--20th C.): A Contribution to the Study of Greek Water Cultures.

In this paper, certain rituals concerning the water of springs, rivers and the sea in the customs of the Greek popular religious tradition, will be presented. The material that will be presented comes from folklore archives, which have been recorded from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as from some elements of field research done in the region of Thrace, in Northern Greece, during the period 2010-2016, with the aim to have comparable information, in order to examine the course of these rituals over time. These are customs related to the festivals of the year, which aim at the ritual sanctification of water, and the transmission of sanctification to people and nature through the ritual use of this 'holy' water. Customs related to 'rites de passage' and existing mainly in the agricultural and pastoral populations of the Greek countryside. These rituals reveal the way in which the people in folk culture perceive, ritually handle and protect water sources, showing the ecological consciousness of the people, which can serve as an example for our time. Finally, it is examined how the teaching of these strategies towards water can cultivate, through education, a new ecological consciousness for the perception of the 'sanctity' of the natural environment, and therefore its protection in the future.

Manolis Varvounis is Professor at the Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. He has published extensively on folklore and ethnology and he is editor of the journals *Samian Studies*, of the Cultural Foundation Samos Nikolaos Dimitriou, *Deltion Samiakon Spoudon*, of the Center of Ecclesiastical History and Tradition of Greece, *Ecclesiasticos Faros* of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa and *Epistimoniki Epetirida tis Sxolis Klasikon kai Anthropistikon Spoudon* of Democritus University of Thrace.

****

Femke Vulto

Sailing the Dark; the Cultivation and Productivity of Ignorance amongst Dutch Shrimp Fishers.

In recent years, the threats of climate change and species extinction have generated an influx of research on marine environments from diverse disciplines such as ecology, geography and anthropology. At the same time, Dutch fishermen are largely sceptical of scientific knowledge and often express suspicion about scientists and their methods. Environmental activists and policymakers are frequently frustrated by the refusal of fishermen to engage with the findings and implications of marine research. This paper considers the possibility that the reluctance of fishermen to engage with 'modern' science is not just a 'refusal' of knowledge. Rather, fishers' insistence on 'not knowing' is productive of certain worldviews and values: fishers consider the sea to be inherently unpredictable and treacherous and have developed certain practices and values to adapt to their environment. For instance, qualities like 'boldness', 'audaciousness' and 'adventurousness' are considered laudable attributes for navigating the unpredictable sea. These qualities inform fishermen's values and sense of self. However, scientific practices that render the sea knowable undermine the ontological underpinnings of this set of values, and thereby fishermen's entire worldview. Therefore, engaging fishermen in contemporary debates around marine environments should consider that fishermen's insistence on 'not knowing' is a productive strategy in itself.

Femke Vulto is a DPhil student in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford. Her research project concerns the commodity chain of the brown shrimp and its various sites of production, circulation and consumption, from Morocco to the Netherlands to the European supermarkets. Her ethnographic research amongst fishers, traders, corporate managers, environmental activists and shrimp peelers, aims to illuminate which (more-than-human) entanglements and mutual dependencies constitute this supply chain, and to contribute to a better understanding of global supply chains in a time of rising social inequality and ecological crises. She has just returned from a year's fieldwork and is now writing up her thesis.

****