

Folklore on the Move



**The Folklore Society's Annual Conference 2026 in collaboration
with the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen
5-7 June in person at, and streamed from, King's College, High Street,
Aberdeen AB24 3SW, UK
and Wednesday 10 June online**



ELPHINSTONE INSTITUTE

studying culture in context

Welcome to Aberdeen from the Elphinstone Institute

Aye, aye, fit like?

We're privileged to join our friends at The Folklore Society in welcoming delegates from around the world to beautiful Aberdeen, variably known as the Granite City, the Silver City with the Golden Sands, or, indeed, by those who refuse to see the granite sparkling on a sunny day, the Grey City. Whichever name you choose, Aberdeen has a rich history including the still-visible 4500-year-old cairns of Tullos Hill, the beautiful pre-reformation King's College Chapel, or, more recently, the world's first full-body Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner, now on display at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

But as folklorists we know that a place is much more than just its built environment. Like everywhere, Aberdeen and the North-East of Scotland truly come to life when you learn about the region's people and folklore. Known for its extremely rich folk song tradition—indeed, David Buchan observed that the North-East was the foremost source of ballads in Scotland—the region is also blessed with marvellous legends, impressive fire festivals, tasty foodways (make sure to try an Aberdeen morning roll before leaving), a distinctive fiddle style, and Doric, the most resilient of all dialects of Scots spoken in Scotland. Beyond that, more than 20% of Aberdeen's population was born outwith the UK, and the city's Polish, Nigerian, Indian, and other communities, bring and shape old and new forms of folklore in a Scottish context.

The Elphinstone Institute, established in 1995 to celebrate the quincentenary of the University of Aberdeen, works as a cultural bridge between the University and the wider region. Through our partnership model, we co-produce research, sustain long-term community projects, and foster diversity, access, and learning in academic and community contexts. The Institute is named after Bishop William Elphinstone, Keeper of the Privy Seal of Scotland, who founded our ancient University in 1495. Beyond his role in the clergy and as Scottish statesman, we celebrate Elphinstone as a proto-folklorist. Indeed, in the process of co-authoring Scotland's first printed book, the *Aberdeen Breviary*, the Bishop put together a now lost legendary, for which he collected legends from across Scotland, including Aberdeen's very own Saint Machar.

Thank you for joining us, whether in person or online. With sunrise around 4am and sunset around 10pm, in-person delegates will have plenty of light before and after the fascinating conference panels to explore Aberdeen. We hope you make the most of your time with friends and colleagues and we look forward to meeting you.

We dedicate the conference to the late Prof. Ian Russell, MBE, former Director of the Elphinstone Institute and former Council member of The Folklore Society.

Nicolas Le Bigre, on behalf of the Elphinstone Institute

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Aberdeen AB24 3SW**

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/campus/maps/view/190/>

and 10 June Online

PROGRAMME

Friday 5th June

13:00–14:00 Registration; tea/coffee

14:00–14:15 Introduction & Welcome (plenary)

14:15–15:45 Session 1 (plenary): Room KCG7

COMMUNITY IN MOVEMENT

Denielle HILL

'Marching for the Dead and the Living': Transgender Memorialization, Protest, and Pride

Daisy HEATH

'Beating the Bounds': The Moving Soundscapes of Southeast London's Morris Dancing Traditions of Contemporary Folklore

Jessica LLOYD MAY

The Role of 'Outsiders' in the Observance of a Community Custom: The Case of the Randwick Wap

15:45–16:15 break for tea/coffee

16:15–17:15 Session 2 (parallel sessions 2A: Room KCG7 and 2B: Room KCF7)

(2A) LEGENDARY FIGURES

Angelika H. RÜDIGER

Wandering on the Mountain of Cloud: Gwyn ap Nudd

Matthew RYAN-EAST

How the Pied Piper Changed his Tune:
Exploring the Encounters of a Travelling
Folktale Figure

**(2B) NARRATIVE AND PERFORMATIVE
TRANSMISSION**

Anastasiya ASTAPOVA

Viral, Fleeting, Repeated: How Conspiracy
Talk Travels among Teenagers

Patrick RYAN

Football Folktales: Elements of Folktale
Morphology in the Memories and Personal
Stories of Football Players and Coaches

18:00–19:00 drinks reception

Saturday 6th June

09:30–11:00 Session 3 (parallel sessions 3A: Room KCG7 and 3B: Room KCF7)

(3A) RITUALS OF DEATH

Stuart DUNN

Corpse Paths and Sites: Rethinking
Approaches to Mobility in Landscapes

Helen FRISBY

Walking With The Dead: English Funeral
Processions, Past and Present

Eira H. BETHELL

Musical Psychopomps: Folklore in Motion
through Sound

(3B) REINTERPRETING THE ARCHIVES

Mimesis Heidi DAHLSVEEN

Archiving the Ephemeral: Movement
Between Memory, Tradition, and the Body

Adina HULUBAŞ

Moving to the Digital Realm: Two Folklore
Archives on a Quest for the Safeguarding of
Childbirth Practices

Chris GREENCORN

‘Like most of their race they are musical’:
Race, Migration and Authenticity in Helen
Creighton’s Collection of Nova Scotian Folk
Culture

11:00–11:30 break for tea/coffee

11:30–13:00 Session 4 (parallel sessions 4A: Room KCG7 and 4B: KCF7)

(4A) MAKERS AND PLAYERS

Jaycee STREETER

The Miscellany as Method: Transmitting
Folklore in MS Ashmole 61

Caleb LEVY

Moving to New Media: Games as a Tool for
the Preservation of Folklore

Phoebe MILLERWHITE

Rewriting the Self-Taught Artist: Market
Mediation, Representation, and the Politics
of Narrative Control

(4B) MATERIAL TRAFFIC

Anastasia A. FLORAKI

From Europe to the Aegean: The Journey and Localization of Filé Lace in Tinos

Lauren HOSSACK

The City Takes the Stage: The Case of the Aberdeen Student Show

Iryna STAVYNSKA

Ukrainian Culture on the Move: The Journey of Folk Dress from Village Tradition to Museum Artifact to Wartime Instagram Trend

13:00–14:00 lunch

14:00–15:30 Session 5 (parallel sessions 5A: Room KCG7 and 5B: Room KCF7)

(5A) MAGIC AND MURDER

Brenna Shay QUINTON

From Cunning Folk to WitchTok: The Benefits and Risks Associated with the Diffusion of Vernacular Religious Belief and Practice on Social Media

Clara DIES VALLS

From Harpy to Sorcery: Geographical and Chronological Evolution of the Iberian Witch

Catherine TOSENBERGER

Via Venefica: Poisonous Women in Roman Tourism

(5B) MOVEMENT OF TALES AND TALES OF MOVEMENT

Martha STEWART

A Lot of Flannel about the Flannans: Folklore, Legend and Myth in the Lighthouse Service

Rory WATERMAN

The Metheringham Lass: Tracing the Origins of a Phantom Hitchhiker

Anastasiia ZHERDIEVA

Research on the Adoption of a Purely European Motif into Crimean Tatar Folklore

15:30–16:00 break

16:00–17.30 Session 6 (parallel sessions 6A: Room KCG7 and 6B: Room KCF7)

(6A) CHILDREN AND THEIR ELDERS

Julia BISHOP

‘We Are but Little Children That Beg from Door to Door’: The Peripatetic Performances of Children and Young People as ‘Child-to-Adult’ Folklore

Mary CANE

The ‘Baby Boomer’ Cohort of Transnational Grandmothers from the Anglo World

Gina ZIMBARDI

Beyond Entertainment: The Public Health Significance of Children’s Folklore

(6B) MESSAGES THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

Ida TOLGENSBARK and Ceri HOULBROOK

‘Santa Claus, c/o Oslo’: Posting wishes from Britain to Norway

Meaghan COLLINS

The Sailors’ Valentine: Moving Tradition Across Oceans, Time, and Trade Routes

Jeremy HARTE

‘Speak, Lord, Thy Servant Heareth’: Heavenly Letters

Sunday 7th June

09:30–11:00 Session 7 (parallel sessions 7A: Room KCG7 and 7B: Room KCF7)

(7A) MIGRATION, MOVEMENT, MEMORY

Kylie AQUILINA

Ġaħan in Motion: Migration, Memory, and Mediterranean Identity

Florina DOBRE BRAT

The Midsummer Folk Traditions of the Romanian Community in Scotland

Molly BAMBROUGH

Transporting Worlds: Migrant Folklore as Ontologies in Motion

(7B) FOLK MUSIC: SHIFTS IN PERCEPTION & PRACTICE

Paul COWDELL

Towards an Autoethnomusicology? Intellectual and Physical Movement, the Idea of Folk Clubs and Understandings of ‘Tradition’

David FAYLE

An Analysis of Potential Changes in Folk-Song Lyrics Between Singers

Abigail GRAHAM

The Addition of Sugar to a Classic ‘British’ Cuppa—Moving towards Diverse Folklore in the UK

11:00–11:30 break

11:30–13:00 Session 8 (parallel sessions 8A: Room KCG7 and 8B: Room KCF7)

(8A) REFRAMING THE SUPERNATURAL

Melissa LA ROSE

Movement of Fairy Lore and Rituals through Generations and Migration

Josiah EAMES

‘Rent a Ghost’: The Impact of Imported Folklore on the Modern English Christmas Tradition

Gemma Róisín JOLLIFFE

Towards an Éireannach Aeolian-Mythology: The Wind(scape) as Performing the *Seanchaí*, Storyteller

(8B) LYRIC, DANCE, REBELLION

Elysia COTTON

Hells Bells: Constructions of Identity in a Northwest Morris Side and an Outlaw Motorcycle Club

Noelia RUFETE-GIL

Flamenco on the Move: Embodied Memory, Displacement, and Reconnection

Julie ZIELSTRA

A Post-Punk Irish Diasporic Bardic Tradition? The Case of Irish Songwriter Cathal Coughlan’s Thatcher-era Ballad *Berties’s Brochures*

13:00: Close of 5–7 June presentations

14:00–16:00: Walking tour of Old Aberdeen with Dr Fiona-Jane Brown: the tour is limited to 30 people and is £10 per person (cash or transfer): if you’d like to book to join the tour, please email thefolkloresociety@gmail.com and we’ll forward your email to Dr Brown.

PROGRAMME for Wednesday 10th June online

9:50 Introduction

10:00–11:30 Session 9 (parallel sessions 9A and 9B)

(9A) REFUGE, EXILE, AND SURVIVAL

Ilaha ASGAROVA

Toponyms in Karabakh Legends and Narratives in the Context of Movement through Forced Displacement in the 1990s

Ulkar YUSIFOVA

The Transformation of Azerbaijani Refugee Folklore under the Influence of Urbanization

Mykola NEBORACHKO

The Migration of Silence and the Inherited Myths of Loyalty: Family Memory and Bureaucratic Folklore in Post-Soviet Space

(9B) PROVERBIAL AND MATERIAL TRANSMISSION

Adetola ABATAN

Proverbs of the Cloth—An Exploration of Yoruba Communal Wisdom in Traditional Textiles

Gaurav SEHRAWAT

Songs that Wander, Proverbs that Settle: Tracing the Life-Course of Haryanavi Oral Culture

Nidhi MATHUR

Moving Traditions: Mobility, Migration, and the Transforming Pathways of Indian Folklore

11:30–12:00 break

12:00–13:00: Session 10 (parallel sessions 10A and 10B)

(10A) TASTE; APPETITE; CONSUMPTION

Teresa MATEUS

Storying Mama Coca: A Transmission and Transmutation in a Leaf's Journey from the Andes to the Diaspora

Sharon CARR-WU

A Takeaway Childhood—Memoir-Narratives of Growing up in a Chinese Takeaway

13:00–13:30 break

(10B) ORAL AND TEXTUAL TRANSMISSION

Anna BERESIN

Moving Material: Following the Paths of Object Play

Mercedes CERÓN

The 'course of folktale wandering' in the Collections of Francis Douce (1757–1834)

13:30–15:00: Session 11 (parallel sessions 11A and 11B)

(11A) STAGE AND SCREEN

Sreenandana C S

From Ballads to Screen: Evolving Narratives and the Recasting of Heroes and Heroines in Vadakkan Pattukal

Subhash KAMALKAR

From Shrine to Stage to Reel: The Moving Life of the Ghumot—A Percussive Heritage

Ekta CHAUHAN and Vandana SHARMA

Bhagats, Bhands and Bahurupiyas: Tracing the Convergent Paradigms of Folk Theatrical Forms of India

(11B) RITUAL AND MOURNING

Francesca DE NARDIS

Folklore on the Move: Intergenerational Transmission and Revitalisation of the Resian Pust

Adam GRYDEHØJ

Shifting Fortunes: Mobility, Economy, and Tradition in the Lives of South China Village Temple Ritual Service Providers

Krzysztof ULANOWSKI

Carrying Belief: The Movement of Bodies, Images, and Ideas in Kashubian Marian Folklore

15:00–15:30 break

15:30–17:00 Session 12 (parallel sessions 12A and 12B and Final plenary)

(12A) IMAGES OF WOMEN

Rosie BARRETT

Reimagining ‘Sarkless Kitty’ and the Women of the North York Moors: Creative Retelling and Ethical Responsibility in Folklore and Public History

Meltem BUZKIRAN SAP

The Female Hero on the Move: A Comparative Perspective from Turkic Epic Tradition

(12B) DANCE AND MUSIC

Trishnamoni PATGIRI and Baburam SAIKIA

Lives Moving in Dance: Tradition, Beliefs and Myths of the Vaishnava Devotees

Athanasios BARMPALEXIS

Folklore in Motion: Reworking Historical Narratives in Contemporary Music Subcultures

16:30–17:00 Final plenary: FOLKLORE ON THE MOVE

Louise PLATT and Sophie PARKES-NIELD

Procession as Place, Form, and Plot: Collective Movement within Everyday Life

17:00–17:30: Concluding remarks and discussion

ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
(in order of appearance on the Programme)

Friday 5th June

14:15–15:45 Session 1 (Plenary): COMMUNITY IN MOVEMENT

Denielle HILL

‘Marching for the Dead and the Living’: Transgender Memorialization, Protest, and Pride

Drawing on fieldwork conducted during Vancouver, British Columbia’s Pride events, this paper examines how marches and drag collectives operate as mobile forms of memorialization and archive. Through chanting, costuming, drag performance, and signage, participants perform and circulate both grief and defiance. Applying Diana Taylor’s *Archive and the Repertoire* and José Esteban Muñoz’s *Cruising Utopia*, I theorize these acts as composing performative archives. These fleeting yet deeply consequential acts make trans memory alive in public space: drag performance and material culture merge mourning with world-making. Queer time is nonlinear; it folds grief, memory, and survival into a cyclical temporality where the dead remain present. Memorial stickers, shot glasses, and other travelling mementos form ‘continuing bonds.’ These objects travel with the living, ensuring that the dead ‘get around.’ This reconfiguration of time and space resists both cis-heteronormative, phasic models of mourning and the cultural fixation on trans death. By examining performance through the lens of utopian performativity, this paper argues that Pride and protest are not only acts of visibility but also are discursive mobile sites of memory work, where the living and the dead are held together.

Denielle Hill (they/them) is a master's candidate of folklore at Memorial University. They have a BA in Anthropology and English Literature from UBC. They are an associate editor for *Culture and Tradition*, the folklore graduate journal and board member of NLQRI (Newfoundland and Labrador Queer Research Initiative). Formerly, they served as Garden Director at Saige Community Foodshare, which is by and for Two-Spirit, Trans and gender diverse folks. They have extensive experience in community organizing, museum work, and collaborative research. Their work foregrounds accessibility and the preservation of 2SLGBTQIA+ histories through community-driven storytelling.

Daisy HEATH

‘Beating the Bounds’: The Moving Soundscapes of Southeast London’s Morris Dancing Traditions of Contemporary Folklore.

The intersection between Blackheath, Greenwich, Lee and Lewisham is bustling with the soundscape of morris dancing. Four active morris sides call this patch their home: Dacre Morris, Blackheath Morris, Greenwich Morris and Quaggy Morris. Lewisham-based Dacre Morris (Est. 1981) has celebrated its namesake roots since 1893 with a procession called ‘Beating the Bounds’ along the old boundaries of the now lost Dacre estate. Since the 1990’s Blackheath Morris (Est. 1960’s) has adopted the ancient tradition of ‘Easter Heaving’ bringing the streets of Greenwich alive. They perform at many of the same landmarks where Greenwich Morris (Est. 1970’s) host their own annual Wassail. Quaggy Morris (Est. 2019) hosts the ‘Lewisham Natureman Stag Tour’ which explores the mysterious contemporary folklore of the thirty white stag murals along the river Quaggy. Through the sequence of these dance routes each static landmark becomes an ephemeral urbanised sonic heritage. This presentation seeks to sound map these community-based celebrations of movement and land. It explores how these morris sides have found their own sonic identity, how have these contemporary traditions evolved over the past few decades and what has been the effect on surrounding soundscape.

Daisy Heath is a musician of traditional music and an avid folklore enthusiast. She has performed with Lila Cita, the UK’s leading Gamelan ensemble, since 2019 and joined Dacre Morris as a melodeon player and dancer in 2024. Daisy received a first-class honours Master’s degree in Musicology at Kings College London in 2022 and was awarded the ‘Adam Prize in Music’ for her dissertation on ‘The Sounds of the Siren: An examination of the symbolic and signifying sonorities of siren iconography in the Christian Latin Medieval manuscript tradition 1150-1320’. She is now looking to pursue a doctorate in folklore and

musical traditions. Her interests and research topics span sonic symbolism in iconography, communal identity and preservation of oral soundscapes and feminism in folklore.

Jessica LLOYD MAY

The Role of ‘Outsiders’ in the Observance of a Community Custom: The Case of the Randwick Wap

English rural folk customs are a rich resource for expressions of history, identity, and relationships. These traditions often become entwined with what it means to be ‘of’ a place—a true resident. This paper examines how such customs have been influenced by persons traditionally considered to be ‘outsiders’ and demonstrates how the current and future performance of customs is being shaped by those entering the community with a fresh perspective.

Using the Randwick Wap, a May custom observed in the village of Randwick, Gloucestershire, I show how a practice central to the village’s cultural identity exists in its current form largely because of outsider involvement. I also explore how proactive engagement in the custom has enabled newcomers to accelerate their acceptance and integration within the community. By tracing the development of the Wap, the paper highlights how newcomers have played a pivotal role in sustaining and reshaping a tradition now seen as quintessentially local. It considers how ‘outsider’ perspectives have revitalised the custom and how participation functions as a pathway to belonging. In doing so, the paper demonstrates the dynamic relationship between mobility, community identity, and the making, and remaking, of tradition within contemporary rural England.

Dr Jessica Lloyd May is a historian and researcher with a deep interest in the intersections of folklore, tradition, and community identity. Her PhD research focuses on the Randwick Wap, a revived folk custom in Gloucestershire, examining how traditions are remembered, reconstructed, and reimagined across time. Through archival study, oral history, and ethnographic fieldwork, she explores the cultural work of revival: how performance, nostalgia, and place shape our understanding of the past. Alongside her academic research, she is Director of Spectre Miniatures, who produce narrative-rich tabletop gaming experiences rooted in contemporary conflict. This work deepens her engagement with history as a tool for storytelling, immersion, and critical reflection. It also brings practical insights into how people interact with historical themes outside traditional academic settings, whether through play, design, or imaginative world-building. She is passionate about making history accessible, relevant, and responsive to the communities it touches. Whether in the field, the archive, or collaborative creative spaces, she brings a critical and interdisciplinary perspective to the past and its presence in everyday life.

16:15–17:15 Parallel Session 2A: LEGENDARY FIGURES

Angelika H. RÜDIGER

Wandering on the Mountain of Cloud: Gwyn ap Nudd as Leader of the Wild Hunt: Origin and Spread of a Narrative Tradition

This paper is a case study of the rise and spread of a narrative motif that becomes assimilated with a character of literature and folklore. During the early twentieth century, Gwyn ap Nudd, a supernatural figure from Welsh tradition, became associated with the Wild Hunt, although a critical reading of the earliest sources does not necessarily support this association. Sir John Rhys provided the key for assimilating Gwyn ap Nudd with the motif of the Spectral Hunt through his interpretation of Gwyn as a God of Carnage and Death hunting souls. Charles Squire propagated the idea of Gwyn ap Nudd as the leader of the Wild Hunt, a concept eagerly embraced by Gerald Gardner, which firmly established Gwyn in modern paganism. The motif of Gwyn ap Nudd as the leader of the Wild Hunt also flourishes in fantasy fiction. In Gwyn’s case, we can witness the birth and spread of a narrative motif in popular culture almost in real time, thanks to the internet. We observe the constant retelling of the tale of a character moving between sky and earth, and the adaptation of this tale into different cultural contexts, ranging from neopagan religion and spirituality to LGBTQ fiction.

Angelika H. Rüdiger holds a first degree in chemistry (Dr. rerum nat.) from 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 and continues researching fairy folklore as independent scholar.

Matthew RYAN-EAST

How the Pied Piper Changed his Tune: Exploring the Encounters of a Travelling Folktale Figure.

Despite his significant contributions to folkloristics, Joseph Jacobs remains under-researched; neglected by scholars. Having published numerous stories for children, including *English Fairy Tales* (1890) and *More English Fairy Tales* (1894), Jacobs is credited with popularising many well-known folktales in late-Victorian Britain. Expressing patriotic intentions to provide English children with fairy tales to cherish as their own, Jacobs challenges the Brothers Grimm's folkloric monopoly by welcoming English children 'home' with an explicitly English version of an already well-known German story: 'The Pied Piper'. Catalysed by my research on the traveller in late-19th century folktale collections, this paper will focus on Jacobs' version of 'The Pied Piper' which relocates the Grimms' legend from Hamelin to the Isle of Wight. Placed alongside its German counterpart to scrutinise its parallels and differences, I will discuss the impact(s) of Jacobs's selection of this 'imported' tale as the gateway into his second collection of English cultural treasures. Having acknowledged Jacobs's (then) radical theories of folktale diffusion, my talk will also interrogate the significance of 'The Pied Piper' as a cultural object that has travelled and 'adapted to local conditions' while representing the experience of the titular 'traveller' who enters and interacts with a settled English community.

Matthew Ryan-East is a PhD student in the English Department at the University of Bristol and a teacher of English up to A level in a Dorset secondary school. He has completed a Research Masters degree at the University of Cambridge, investigating the educational potential of European fairy tales in the A-Level English classroom. His current doctoral project focuses on the figure of the traveller in late-19th century collections of folk and fairy tales, examining representations and experiences of itinerant characters within their various narratives. Matthew believes that by undertaking this research, he will uncover important new insights into the carriers and tellers of these tales as they travelled throughout England, as well as the communities to which they were told, and for whom they were tailored.

16:15–17:15 Parallel Session 2B: NARRATIVE AND PERFORMATIVE TRANSMISSION

Anastasiya ASTAPOVA

Viral, Fleeting, Repeated: How Conspiracy Talk Travels among Teenagers

Teenagers are often portrayed as inhabiting a separate 'information world', saturated with conspiratorial content circulating via platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. Yet focusing on what teenagers believe obscures how conspiratorial ideas actually function in everyday interaction. This paper argues for approaching conspiracy talk through folkloristic genres and modes of transmission, shifting attention from belief to circulation, performance, and reuse.

Drawing on interviews with Estonian schoolteachers, youth-centre educators, librarians, and media literacy practitioners, as well as anecdotal experience from conducting multiple workshops about disinformation and media literacy at high schools, the study examines *second-hand conspiracy narratives*: fragments, jokes, and anecdotes that teenagers repeat, test, and pass along. These narratives frequently originate in global online media but are transmitted locally through face-to-face interaction, humour, and peer performance. As they move, they change genre—appearing as rumour, parody, ostensive play, or comic provocation rather than stable ideological statements.

Approached from this folkloristic perspective, conspiracy talk among teenagers appears less as doctrine than as performance. This shift—from measuring belief to examining circulation and play—challenges prevailing narratives of teenage vulnerability and opens space for more dialogic, culturally informed approaches to media literacy and education.

Anastasiya Astapova is a Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Tartu, an Associate Researcher in Ethnology at Lund University, a Research Fellow at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and a member

of the Estonian Young Academy of Sciences. Her research focuses on conspiracy theories, misinformation, humour, and migration. She is currently a country partner in several international research projects, including **ERC** *Conspirations—Conflicts over Conspiracy Theories*, **Erasmus+** *ConSPIRE: Conspiracy Theories and Radicalization Risks in Europe*, **Horizon Europe** *DELIAH: Democratic Literacy and Humour*, and **Horizon Europe MSCA** *HUMLIT: Developing Humour Literacy*. She is also the Principal Investigator of the Estonian Research Council project *COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories: Contents, Channels, and Target Groups*. In 2024–2025, she was a Stanford–Vabamu Fellow in Security and International Affairs. In addition to numerous peer-reviewed articles, she has co-edited *Conspiracy Theories in Eastern Europe: Tropes and Trends* and co-authored *Conspiracy Theories and the Nordic Countries* (both published by Routledge). She is also the author of *Humor and Rumor in the Post-Soviet Authoritarian State* (Rowman & Littlefield).

Patrick RYAN

Football Folktales: elements of folktale morphology in the memories and personal stories of football players and coaches

Kick into Reading was a football and literacy project developed to encourage 7-to-11 year olds to read for pleasure. Community coaches, academy players (football apprentices) and first team players at professional football clubs were trained to tell stories and share picture books with students invited to local libraries. Several related personal tales based on footballing experiences, instead of traditional stories taught in training. These personal stories evolved naturally, taking the shape and structure of folktales by incorporating motifs, formulaic language, rhythmic and melodic aspects of delivery, and structural synchronization. To learn and rehearse tales, footballers used methods of thinking drawn from mental processes entailed in football training and performance. Situation modelling and mental simulation (e.g. visualisation) occurs when remembering and performing stories. Mental simulation for football folktales replicated and/or mirrored footballers' mental situation models *happening with physical movements expressed in training or a football match*. Analysing some of these football folk tales, this paper looks at how physical patterns and experiences in sport translate into story. It also suggests an understanding of situation modelling provides additional insight into creating folktales and audience responses to them, as well as alternative interpretations for any folktale's meaning and function.

Patrick Ryan is a storyteller and educator who works in schools, libraries, arts centres and festivals all over Ireland, and across Europe and America. A former Research Fellow at the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling, he was writer-in-residence at University of Manitoba's Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture, developed *Good Books Good Companions* (an online children's book project with Irish libraries), and has led innovative storytelling projects (including *Kick into Reading*, which trained professional footballers as storytellers). In 2025 he worked on the Living Legend Project with Narrative4 and Festival in a Van. Currently he is conducting a study of the work of Seumas MacManus, Padraic Colum and Ella Young, three Irish poet-storytellers who conducted most of their careers in the United States in the first half of the 20th century; this research examines the impact of their oeuvre on contemporary storytelling and ideas about and expressions of Irishness and Irish culture. Publications include articles on storytelling, folklore, and literacy, *Shakespeare's Storybook*, and, with Donna Schatt, *Story Listening & Experience in Early Childhood*.

Saturday 6th June

09:30–11:00 Parallel Session 3A RITUALS OF DEATH

Stuart DUNN

Corpse Paths and Sites: Rethinking Approaches to Mobility in Landscapes

Corpse paths were the routes followed by funeral parties across the countryside to bury the dead in consecrated ground, in the era (pre-19thC) before each village had a parish church with such rights. Our evidence for them is sketchy, based mainly on oral traditions which were not written down until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and maps which were similarly not produced until the modern

science of cartography emerged in the same period. Corpse roads caught the imagination, and continue to provide a rich seam of storytelling material in the contemporary digital age, with many YouTube videos and blogs devoted to the topic. Some physical traces of corpse roads linger in the physical landscape, in the form of coffin stones, road and river crossings and, in some cases, modern footpaths. This paper will describe links between these tangible and intangible forms of evidence using three corpse paths as case studies: the Swaledale Corpse Path, the Lych Way on Dartmoor and the Faringdon Corpse Path in Oxfordshire. It will describe how folkloristic approaches to mobility challenge archaeological and historical suppositions that 'sites' are static and motionless entities, and that in fact their relationships with mobility are fundamental to their interpretation.

Stuart Dunn is Professor of Spatial Humanities at King's College London, where he is also Head of Humanities. He has written extensively on the archaeology of mobility, sensory archaeology, and on digital approaches to mapping and cartography. Since 2020 he has been researching and studying corpse paths, mainly in the UK, but also in Scandinavia and Northern Europe. As well as his post at King's, he holds a Visiting Professorship at Riga Technical University in Latvia, and has held visiting or honorary positions at Beijing Normal University, Stanford University and the Scuola IMT Alti Studi in Lucca; and he is a Council Member of the Folklore Society.

Helen FRISBY

Walking With The Dead: English Funeral Processions, Past and Present

This paper explores the folklore of English funeral processions, tracing their symbolic, social, and performative dimensions from the Middle Ages to the present. Historically, funeral processions functioned as communal acts of belief, and expressed shared ideas about death, the afterlife, and social order. Features such as coffin paths, lament traditions, and material culture such as coffins, banners, and candles helped guide a soul's passage from life to afterlife. These things also publicly affirmed kinship and status in public. By embedding protective lore within their choreography, these 'performances on the move' also managed spiritual anxieties. Nowadays, funeral processions remain powerful forms of cultural expression, blending older traditions with more individualised and secular practices. Starting during the 1920s, motorised cortèges particularly exemplify the manner in which mobility and technology are continually reshaping older ritual patterns. Such developments highlight the ongoing relevance of processionary folklore as a way to express belonging, grief, and identity. By examining both long-standing continuities and recent innovations, this paper shows that funeral processions persist as dynamic folkloric spaces where cultural memory, social values, and emotional expression all meet.

Dr Helen Frisby is Hon. Secretary of The Folklore Society, a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Death and Society, University of Bath, and an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Bristol. Since her PhD on Victorian folk funeral customs (Leeds, 2009), she's continued to research, publish and speak on topics relating to death, funerals and bereavement, past and present.

Eira H. BETHELL

Musical Psychopomps: Folklore in Motion through Sound

Folklore has long cast sound as a medium of passage, guiding individuals and communities across thresholds of life, death, and identity. In Irish traditions, keening and laments accompanied funerals and departures, their vocal intensity marking the soul's transition and sustaining collective memory. Over time, these practices shifted in form and context, yet the role of music and voice as psychopompic agents remained constant. This paper traces the transition of sound across ages and settings in Irish folklore, culminating in the example of the Irish Guards band leading soldiers from barracks to battlefield during the First World War. Such processions were not merely ceremonial. They enacted collective departure, transforming motifs of lament into institutional military ritual. By situating traditional Irish music and vocal performances within a broader folkloric continuum, this paper thus highlights how folklore can migrate across generations and contexts through sound, adapting from intimate keening to public performance. Its presentation of Irish music and vocal traditions as folkloric psychopomps, further illustrates how sound embodies 'folklore on the move' by carrying cultural

memory through shifting forms and guiding communities across boundaries of peace and war, life and death.

Eira H. Betthell is a PhD candidate in Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex, with an interdisciplinary research focus that includes symbology, media studies, and the dynamics of resilience in cultural and historical contexts. She also holds an MA in War Studies from Kings College London, and a BA(Hons) in Social Science from the University of Montana Western. Alongside her academic career, Eira has a professional background in education, media, and cultural research, with experience spanning interpretive analysis and archival practice.

09:30–11:00 Parallel Session 3B REINTERPRETING THE ARCHIVES

Mimesis Heidi DAHLSVEEN

Archiving the Ephemeral: Movement Between Memory, Tradition and the Body

This paper is based on a project called ‘Pappa og Primstaven’ in Norwegian (translated as ‘Father/Dad and the Runic Calendar’). According to Brad Haseman, performative research is a third research paradigm in which knowledge is created and communicated through action, practice, and creative expression. It is often practice-led and practice-based (Haseman, *A Manifesto for Performative Research*, 2006). In the project, the performative research unfolded as a movement in the borderland between narrative structure, poetic existentialism, and folklore. Through a combination of personal story and folkloric references, the project examined how memories and experiences are archived and transmitted—not only through words, but also through bodily movement and performative expression. The project was grounded in the folktale ‘The Maiden Without Hands’ (ATU 706), as well as autobiographical memories of fleeing from an abusive father. The folktale carries motifs that reach far back—motifs that have migrated into other literature (Leek, ‘Persecuted Heroine’, *Western Folklore*, 2022) and that formed the seed of this project. The theoretical basis for the inquiry included, among others, Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever* (1995), which discusses the power of archiving. So far, the project has resulted in a performance text. By working with elements from folklore, the text created a hybrid form that reflects how folklore evolves in encounter with movement, both physical and cultural. In addition, the text explores how the body functions as a living archive, in which memories and experiences are transformed through time and movement. The paper presentation will reflect on how motifs from folktales, fragmented narrative, and grotesque realism can be employed as dramaturgical tools to investigate the relationship between the oral, the poetic, and the physical on stage. Furthermore, the presentation considers how movement—in time, space, and form—can challenge traditional storytelling structures and generate new ways of understanding and conveying folklore.

Mimesis Heidi Dahlsveen has worked as a storyteller nationally and internationally since 1996. She is an associate professor in oral storytelling. Dahlsveen has participated in several EU projects that address oral storytelling within different practices. She has published two textbooks and contributed to several anthologies. She works as a storyteller in a primary school in central Oslo. In her artistic research, Dahlsveen focuses on the place of narratives in contemporary times. She does this through work with traditional stories such as myths and folk tales in combination with autobiographical and newly created narratives. She aims to understand the depth of the interaction between the narrative function and the structure and themes of society. For Dahlsveen, artistic research involves explorative methods within storytelling. In the artistic processes, she often starts with a theoretical foundation that she experiments with to create a stage work. Dahlsveen’s stage works are carried out in public contexts, whether it is in elementary school or at a festival. She often works cross-aesthetically with other artists from other fields. The work is project-based often with grants and financial support.

Adina HULUBAŞ

Moving to the Digital Realm. Two Folklore Archives on a Quest for the Safeguarding of Childbirth Practices

Ethnologists from the Folklore Archive of Moldavia and Bukovina, hosted by Romanian Academy, Iaşi Branch, teamed up with colleagues from the folklore archive in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, in an

innovative project aiming to create access to rather exclusivist ethnographic information. The initiative is financed by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research and it seeks to enhance collaboration between the two countries. The final outcome of the project is an interactive digital map of childbirth practices from Moldavia (a North-Eastern region of Romania) and Moldova, since the two geographical zones share similar history, language and traditional culture. A total of 60 villages will populate the map, allowing visitors of the site to discover and understand various ritual meanings in their socio-cultural context. However, folklore archives abound with obsolete variants of rites of passage, so a selection of active childbirth practices should be made before moving them to the digital format. The presentation will discuss methodology and expected results, the concept of 'living heritage' proving itself useful for a more significant impact in the transmission of traditional knowledge.

Adina Hulubaş is a senior researcher working with Romanian Academy, Iaşi Branch, and a facilitator for UNESCO Global Network. She has published five books on Romanian ethnology, and authored numerous scientific articles in journals and books from United Kingdom, Estonia, Poland, Italy, Republic of Moldova and Romania. Based on her activity, her interests are: rites of passage, vernacular architecture, traditional occupations, (digitisation of) intangible cultural heritage, cultural heritage pedagogy. She is actively involved in workshops that raise awareness and foster transmission of local cultural identity.

Chris GREENCORN

'Like most of their race they are musical': Race, Migration, and Authenticity in Helen Creighton's Collection of Nova Scotian Folk Culture

I argue in this paper that a specific, racialised politics of authenticity inflected folklore collecting in Nova Scotia, Canada, which is epitomised in the archives of folklorist Helen Creighton (1899–1989). Creighton is well known locally—and lately, celebrated—for her collecting across European settler, African Nova Scotian, and Mi'kmaq First Nation communities. However, her archival record clearly indicates she did not look upon these respective groups with equal regard. Examining the ways in which she chose to prioritise, disparage, or simply ignore some material over others illustrates how racial discrimination was in fact essential to Creighton's construction of 'the folk'. In short, I show how Creighton allocated authenticity unevenly along obvious racial lines so that folk culture of European origin was naturalised, that of African-diasporic origin conversely derogated, and that of Indigenous origin placed actively under erasure. The movement of people and their folklore to and through Nova Scotia thus had contradictory implications depending on which group was under consideration. In this settler colonial context, the poles of foreignness and indigeneity, and the value attached to either, could be inverted as necessary to reinforce existing racial hierarchies.

Chris Greencorn holds an MA in Ethnomusicology from the University of Toronto and is currently a PhD candidate in History at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. His dissertation research explores the racialized politics of authenticity embedded in Helen Creighton's collection of Nova Scotian folk culture. His dissertation examines the work of women folk culture collectors in 20th-century Canada, and in particular their constructions of 'folk' and 'traditional' music among settler, immigrant and Indigenous peoples in the period leading up to Canada's official multiculturalism policy. He recently received the Folklore Studies Association of Canada's merit prize, the Luc Lacourcière Memorial Scholarship, for this work. Prior to doctoral studies, Chris was the Artistic Director of the Stan Rogers Folk Festival in Canso, Nova Scotia, and he presently sits on the board of Folk Canada, a non-profit folk music industry organisation.

11:30–13:00 Parallel Session 4A MAKERS AND PLAYERS

Jaycee STREETER

The Miscellany as Method: Transmitting Folklore in MS Ashmole 61

This paper argues that medieval manuscript miscellanies offer an underused but methodologically valuable way to study the transmission of folklore, and uses MS Ashmole 61 (Bodleian Library, Oxford) as a focused case study. Here, 'folklore' is defined as mobile narrative culture: stories, motifs, and

imaginative structures that circulated across oral and written forms and across social levels. While miscellanies are often approached as repositories of disparate texts, this paper treats them instead as records of narrative movement, whose compilational logic can reveal how folklore was transmitted, adapted, and redistributed within late-medieval households. Ashmole 61 is especially suited to this approach: copied by a single scribe yet used in multiple lay settings, it gathers romances, saints' lives, and moral narratives that share deep folkloric roots. Through close analysis of Sir Orfeo and Lybeaus Desconus, I trace how oral-derived motifs were selected, reshaped, and positioned within the manuscript to support reading-aloud practices that extended access beyond elite owners. These patterns demonstrate not only how specific narratives moved, but how the miscellany itself functioned as a mechanism for enabling that movement. By foregrounding compilation as evidence, this paper proposes a broader methodological model for using manuscript miscellanies to study folklore in motion.

Jaycee Streeter recently graduated with an MSc in History from the University of Edinburgh. Her dissertation was manuscript-focused and examined the compilation and transmission of texts by women in the immediate aftermath of the Scottish Reformation, with particular attention to devotional and literary culture. She has a strong research interest in late medieval and early modern Scotland, especially the intersections of religion, literature, and manuscript production. Alongside her academic work, Jaycee has experience in public engagement and heritage outreach. She worked as an intern with Edinburgh University Library on the Esther Inglis Project, contributing to an online exhibition of manuscripts and assisting with event planning and audience engagement. She is currently employed at a care home in Edinburgh and volunteers at a second-hand bookshop. She also writes *Into the Archive*, an online essay series that explores a different historical manuscript each week for a general readership. Her work seeks to bridge academic research and public history, exploring how manuscripts and the traditions they preserve continue to move across communities, formats, and audiences.

Caleb LEVY

Moving to new media: games as a tool for the preservation of folklore

Over the past several decades, video games, as a medium, have undergone significant development, both in their technical capacity and their popularity. Alongside this, there has been both an increase in industry knowledge on their development, as well as the establishment of scholarship focused on their analysis. This presentation will argue for the movement of ideas from games, game design, and game studies into the theory and practice of the preservation of intangible heritage, especially folklore and folk belief. It will look at existing games with preservation elements, such as *Never Alone* and *The Mooseman*, as well as at the ways that games can leverage their unique status as ludic objects to preserve aspects of folklore in ways that differ from other mediums.

Caleb Levy is a student of folklore, mythology, and game design at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. His work focuses on the intersection of folklore and games. He has spoken at the Board Game Academics conference on the role of games in the transmission of both folklore and stereotypes, and has a paper on the same topic under peer review with the *connected* journal.

Phoebe MILLERWHITE

Rewriting the Self-Taught Artist: Market Mediation, Representation, and the Politics of Narrative Control

As self-taught artists gain visibility in an increasingly globalized art market, the narratives surrounding their work—often rooted in local experience and vernacular creativity—are set into motion in ways that profoundly reshape their meanings. This presentation examines how the 'movement' of artistic identities from community-based context to high-value commercial circuits generates forms of translation, distortion, and power imbalance. Drawing on over a decade of ethnographic engagement—including teaching in a college museum and gallery setting, years working with neurodiverse artists in a progressive art studio, and experience managing a commercial gallery devoted to folk and self-taught art—I explore how artists' personal narratives travel, are reinterpreted, and at times are strategically rewritten to meet market desires. As these stories circulate—from studios to gallery marketing

materials, art fairs, and museum acquisitions—they accrue layers of exoticism, othering, and commodification that diverge from artists' lived experiences. This mobility often occurs without the artists' awareness or consent, shaping their public identities while limiting their agency over representation. By tracing historical precedents alongside contemporary case studies, this presentation argues that the migration of self-taught artist narratives reveals a broader dynamic: an ability to both elevate and exploit, depending on who controls the story.

Phoebe Millerwhite is a ceramic artist, writer, educator, and folklorist, based in California, whose interdisciplinary practice examines the entanglements of narrative, memory, and material culture. Trained in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, where she earned her MA with honours, Millerwhite's research foregrounds vernacular aesthetics, authorship, and the subtle negotiations of power embedded in handmade traditions. Her sculptural work, informed by collaborations with self-taught and neurodiverse artists, draws on folk belief, mythology, and devotional forms to create objects that function simultaneously as artifacts, interlocutors, and imaginative thresholds. Recent projects incorporate broken or discarded ceramics, extending her inquiry into repair, imperfection, and the storytelling capacities of materials. Millerwhite's scholarly and curatorial work similarly bridges fine art and folklore. As Gallery Director (2022-23) and Adjunct Faculty in Gallery and Museum Studies at Mt. San Antonio College, she curated exhibitions centred on craft, material innovation, and culturally responsive practice while leading DEAI-driven institutional initiatives. She has presented research at the American Folklore Society and the Folklore Studies Association of Canada. Across her roles, Millerwhite remains committed to advancing scholarly and public understanding of vernacular creativity, emphasizing its methodological significance and its critical function within broader conversations on cultural expression and material practice.

11:30–13:00 Parallel Session 4B MATERIAL TRAFFIC

Anastasia A. FLORAKI

From Europe to the Aegean: The Journey and Localization of Filé Lace in Tinos

This paper traces the journey of filé lace from its European origins to its transformation into a distinctive craft tradition on the island of Tinos, Greece. Emerging in France and Italy in the 17th to 18th centuries and later spreading to Central Europe (especially Germany and Austria), filé travelled through maritime routes, trade networks, and pattern books before reaching the Aegean. Once introduced to Tinos, local women reinterpreted the technique, blending imported designs with insular aesthetic codes, symbolic motifs, and community values. Over time, filé became integrated into the island's cultural identity, used to embellish dowries, domestic spaces, and ecclesiastical settings. The paper also follows its movement beyond Tinos, accompanying Tinian migrants and sailors to coastal settlements, Asia Minor, and neighbouring islands, where filé lace continued to mark feminine skill and island belonging. While largely unknown in mainland Greece, it remains a vibrant emblem of Tinian heritage. Drawing from archival and ethnographic sources, the presentation highlights how an imported European craft was localized, indigenized, and preserved through women's creativity and collective memory.

Anastasia A. Floraki is a folklorist, storyteller, and PhD candidate in Folklore Studies at Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. Her research focuses on Cycladic folk culture, women's crafts, and oral narrative traditions. She has authored a monograph on Tinian filé lacework, examining its history, technical characteristics, and symbolic role within the social fabric of the island. She also studies folk tales and narrative motifs in the Greek oral tradition, combining academic research with her practice as a performer and adapter of traditional stories. Her work bridges ethnography and creative expression, aiming to document and revitalize living traditions through writing, fieldwork, and community engagement. She has presented and published on topics related to Greek folklore, island material culture, and the interconnections between craft, storytelling, and collective memory. Her approach integrates scholarly analysis with respect for local knowledge and female artisanal heritage, highlighting the endurance and creative transformations of folk traditions in the contemporary Aegean world.

Lauren HOSSACK

The City takes the Stage: The Case of Aberdeen Student Show

For over a hundred years, audiences have been entertained by Aberdeen's Student Shows, annual theatre performances in which local jokes and references abound, and the region's dialect of Scots plays a prominent role.

Contemporary Student Shows unfold in a hyperreal version of Aberdeen. Events, characters and situations from the lived world merge with elements of mythical Hollywood and megamusical narratives, resulting in original productions from Woodside Storey to Ayetanic.

This presentation will examine how localisation is employed in these more recent productions. This materialises on stage in song, script and costume, building a world in which recognisable and relatable elements of everyday life are interpolated into the fantastical forms of musical theatre. Mapping the moves from the lived to the staged city explores how residents of Aberdeen have imagined the place and who inhabits it over decades.

Lauren Hossack holds a PhD in English and Ethnology and Folklore from the University of Aberdeen. Her thesis explored the relationship between Scots language, comedy and community in student musical theatre productions. She has been part of the Everyday Culture group advocating for greater support for vernacular cultural practices within Culture North East, a Scottish regional arts, culture and heritage development network.

Iryna STAVYNSKA

Ukrainian Culture on the Move: The Journey of Folk Dress from Village Tradition to Museum Artifact to Wartime Instagram Trend

How does folklore move during war? And how can one save—and bring along—material heritage when evacuating from a war-torn country?

Following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian social media saw a sudden upsurge in interest in traditional Ukrainian dress. While previously associated with dusty museums and rural customs, Ukrainian traditional clothing unexpectedly became a popular trend on Instagram, with people posting pictures of their heirlooms, recreating folk jewellery from museum photos, and adapting folkloric styles to everyday life. For many Ukrainians who were forced to evacuate, leaving most of their material possessions behind, such Instagram spaces offered a way to reconnect with their heritage and find inspiration to bring tradition and beauty back to their lives, even amidst the ongoing war.

In this presentation, I will showcase some of the many beautiful, colourful, and inspiring Ukrainian Instagram accounts and posts that recreate, reinvent, and celebrate traditional Ukrainian clothing during wartime. In doing so, I will also discuss the journey of Ukrainian folk dress—from village life to museum artifact to wartime Instagram phenomenon, and the transformation of meanings that accompany it.

Iryna Stavynska is a Ukrainian folklorist currently affiliated with the Study of Religions Department at the University College Cork (Ireland). She holds an MA in Folklore from the University of Oregon (USA), and a BA in Japanese language and culture from Kyiv National Linguistic University (Ukraine). Her research interests include the intersection between folklore, popular culture, and supernatural belief, and the folklore of Ukrainian resistance. She is a recipient of multiple grants and awards, including Fulbright, Irish Research Council, and Japanese government (MEXT) scholarships and awards.

14:00–15:30 Parallel Session 5A MAGIC AND MURDER

Brenna Shay QUINTON

From Cunning Folk to WitchTok: The Benefits and Risks Associated with the Diffusion of Vernacular Religious Belief and Practice on Social Media

This paper explores the influence of short form social media content on the spread of religious and spiritual beliefs on a global scale. This increased availability of and exposure to various belief systems and practices has been praised by Vernacular Religion scholars Sutcliffe and Bowman for the digital world's ability to renew interest in individuals cultivating a personal religio-spiritual identity, by

‘presenting beliefs, groups, practices, ideas and artefacts to a new and wider audience, as well as putting a fresh “spin” on them’ (2000, p.11). However, the issue with some new ‘spins’ is that they can end up disconnected from the spiritual practices they were originally associated with, and push seekers away from that belief system rather than encourage seekers to try it for themselves. Through the experiences of my contributors, collected during ethnographic interviews, I highlight the benefits and risks of the movement of spiritual practices through digital spaces and how misinformation about beliefs is just as likely to be spread as the truth. I specifically focus on the practice of ‘witchcraft’ and examine the differences between its origin as a traditional cunning folk practice to its role as part of the contemporary feminist movement.

Brenna Shay Quinton (BA, MLitt.) is a third year PhD Student with the Elphinstone Institute and the University of Aberdeen. Her research is interdisciplinary, bridging the gap between Folklore and Practical Theology, working to bring recognition and acceptance to individuals who are conscious and intentional about their mixed religio-spiritual practices and whose beliefs can be described as what Brenna has identified as ‘Blended Beliefs’. Brenna is working closely with individuals who have undergone an individualised spiritual journey and adopted multiple, alternative, and/or seemingly opposing belief systems for purposes related to the personal and sacred. Brenna has presented on work related to her doctoral research at conferences for the Society for the Study of Theology, the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, and the conference of Ecclesiology and Ethnography.

Clara DIES VALLS

From Harpy to Sorcery: Geographical and Chronological Evolution of the Iberian Witch

This presentation will explore the evolution of the concept of the witch in its many names, cultural expressions and political and religious persecution throughout history in Spain, paying particular attention to the geographical expansion of it as people fled persecution and brought stories and belief with them. Starting in the 12th-century Pyrenees, the witch will take human form and local folklore will intertwine with modern religious mythology, resulting in some of the earliest examples of witch hunts in Europe. Throughout the worst centuries of the European witch craze (15th to 17th centuries), the concept of the witch will evolve as stories are repeated and belief is spread along the Iberian peninsula, creating new ideas of what a witch is in each geographic region in a crossroads of persecution and migration. In its aftermath, the historical will be indistinguishable from fiction for the 19th- and 20th-century witch folklore, which will have been completely changed by this geographical expansion of belief, fear and mythology.

Clara Dies Valls is an illustrator, writer, and folklore speaker who works and lives in Spain. She graduated at the Universitat Politècnica de València in fine arts, as well as studying production design at the University for the Creative Arts (Surrey) and concept art at the Escola de Cinema de Barcelona, as well as scientific illustration and folklore history. She has published and illustrated several books orbiting folklore, more specifically mythological folklore from a linguistic perspective (*Bestiario de tierra y tinta*, 2021/*Land and Ink*, 2023), witchcraft folklore and history (*Breve viaje por la España de las brujas*, 2023, Ignotus awards for best essay and illustration), queer retellings and folktales (*Salir del camino*, 2024, Ignotus awards for best anthology and article) and ethnobotany (*Herbario de un mundo desaparecido*, 2025). She works as an independent researcher and is a part of the Folklore Without Borders collective.

Catherine TOSENBERGER

Via Venefica: Poisonous Women in Roman Tourism

The most notorious criminal prosecution of seventeenth-century Rome was that of Gironima Spana, the leader of a network of folk healers who provided services to local women—particularly a poison that became known as ‘Acqua Tofana,’ for women who wished to rid themselves of abusive husbands. Spana and five associates were executed in 1659; the prosecution documents were then suppressed for two centuries, allowing legends to flourish unencumbered by facts. These legends have entered the repertoire of the Roman tourist industry.

Drawing on archival research and folkloristic fieldwork, I explore how Roman tourism imagines and locates the case within the physical space of the city. The gang operated across Rome, but the building the tourist industry designates as their headquarters (Via di Monserrato, 162) has no connection to anyone from the trial. It is, however, just down the street from the burial site of Pope Alexander VI Borgia; likewise, it is a few steps away from the Corte Savella prison, where Beatrice Cenci was incarcerated for killing her abusive father. These sites feature on all tours that discuss Acqua Tofana: thus bracketing the poison gang with papal corruption and patriarchal violence, transforming the 'headquarters' into a point on a narrative and physical throughline.

Catherine Tosenberger is Associate Professor of English at the University of Winnipeg, where she teaches courses on folklore and young people's texts and cultures. She has published multiple works on fairy tales, folk narratives, fan cultures, horror media, witchcraft, and modern paganism.

14:00–15:30 Parallel Session 5B MOVEMENT OF TALES AND TALES OF MOVEMENT

Martha STEWART

A Lot of Flannel about the Flannans: Folklore, Legend and Myth in the Lighthouse Service

With the peripatetic nature of the light keepers' employment, the situation of most lighthouses in isolated and often hard to get to places like Neist Point Lighthouse on the Isle of Skye and Cape Wrath on the most North-Westerly tip of Britain gives the working lives of light keepers a breeding ground for folklore and myth on the move. In my presentation I will touch on the history of the Flannan Isles to set the scene. I will then proceed to tell the story of the tragedy that was to come after the Flannan Islands and, more importantly, all the folklore and myths which grew up from the tragedy and persist today after the mystery of the lost light keepers was attributed, by light keepers who I had interviewed, to a tsunami-like wave which washed the keepers away. I will give examples of the continuing perpetuation of myth and legend regarding the tragedy and explain the Island of Lewis residents' attitude to the tragedy and the implications of their religious beliefs versus the facts of the case. Since 28 September 1971, there have been no permanent residents on the island.

Martha Stewart retired from local government two years ago and is a graduate of Aberdeen University. She has a 34-year-old son who lives and works in London and comes home very frequently. Her main interests and hobbies are travelling (she was born into a Traveller family and inherited some Roma DNA from her father, and also has her parents' wanderlust.) She is very interested in the Sami reindeer herders of Scandinavia, is learning the Norwegian language, slowly but surely; she loves reading travel books, loves animals, and history, arts and crafts and music and volunteers one day a week at a Heritage site.

Rory WATERMAN

The Metheringham Lass: Tracing the Origins of a Phantom Hitchhiker

Former RAF Metheringham, Lincolnshire became operational in 1943. Two years later, it was surplus to requirements, and returned to agriculture. A country lane sits atop its one remaining runway.

Bruce Barrymore Halpenny's *Ghost Stations* (1986), a volume of RAF-related ghost sightings allegedly collected by the author, includes 'The Metheringham Lass,' an unusual phantom hitchhiker legend. This became Halpenny's most popular contribution to fiction or folklore studies (depending on perspective), entering public consciousness and attracting countless ghost-hunters. Halpenny claimed to have traced its protagonists, providing a backstory that is regularly repeated.

In this creative-critical paper, involving close analysis of Halpenny's text, historical records, and local interviews, Waterman traces the origins. Who, if anyone, were those protagonists? How and why did the story really gain popularity? Does it share sources with local folk narratives? The paper also asks pertinent questions about ethics, when sites of commemoration and heroism—from which people set out and often did not return—also become popular with those seeking titillation. It ends with a poem by Waterman based on the legends and the habits of some frequent travellers to the site, providing one explanation for her manifestations.

Rory Waterman is Professor of Modern Literature and Creative Writing at Nottingham Trent University. He recently led the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded Research Development and Engagement Fellowship project ‘Lincolnshire Folk Tales: Origins, Legacies, Connections, Futures’ (2024-25), and is currently working on contemporary and historical literary responses to hidden aviation heritage and their transitioning environments. His previous books include *Poets of the Second World War* (2016), *Belonging and Estrangement in the Poetry of Philip Larkin, R.S. Thomas and Charles Causley* (2014), *Wendy Cope* (2021), and, as editor, *W. H. Davies, the True Traveller: A Reader* (2016), *Poetry and Covid-19* (2021), *W. H. Davies: Essays on the Super-tramp Poet* (2021), and *Lincolnshire Folk Tales Reimagined* (with Anna Milon, 2025). He has also published four poetry collections with Carcanet Press, most recently *Come Here to This Gate* (2024). With Nick Everett, he co-edits the poetry pamphlet publisher New Walk Editions. A volume of his reviews and articles for the press, *Endless Present: Selected Reviews, Articles and Dispatches 2010-2023*, was published in 2024, and he writes regularly for the TLS and other publications. His newest book is *Devils in the Details: On Location with Folk Tales in England’s Forgotten County* (2026).

Anastasiia ZHERDIEVA

Research on the Adoption of a Purely European Motif into Crimean Tatar folklore

In 1886, during fieldwork to collect Crimean dialects, W. Radlov recorded a fairy tale called ‘The Padishah’s Youngest Son’ in the Buyuk Lambart area, which is unusual for Crimea. Interestingly, Crimean Tatars brought the same fairy tale to Romania when they emigrated from the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is often believed that the motifs of Turkic fairy tales were borrowed from Iranian Persian folklore. However, in this case, it is obvious that the fairy tale has European roots, which is quite a rare occurrence for Crimea. The paper will discuss the fairy tale motif ATU 316 (The Nix of the Mill-Pond). In our case, a man finds himself in the power of a water-chthonic creature (a water witch), which lifts the kidnapped man above the water a limited number of times, allowing the captive to escape: he flies away, turning into a bird. According to Y. Berezkin, the motif’s range covers Europe from the south, west and north, but does not include the east of the continent. This paper will analyse the fairy tale ‘The Padishah’s Youngest Son’ and offer suggestions as to how it may have been brought to Crimea. This work has been supported by Ankara University Scientific Research Projects, Projects Co-ordination Unit under Grant Number SHD-2025-4439.

Anastasiia Zherdieva is Assistant Professor in the Department of Folklore, Faculty of Language and History-Geography, Ankara University, Turkey. She received her PhD in Cultural Studies from Taurida National Vernadsky University, Ukraine. She is mostly interested in mythology and the study of folklore, especially in Crimean and Turkish legends and fairy tales, but also relationships between legend and ritual, and mythical consciousness in popular culture.

16:00–17:30 Parallel Session 6A CHILDREN AND THEIR ELDERS

Julia BISHOP

‘We Are but Little Children That Beg from Door to Door’: The Peripatetic Performances of Children and Young People as ‘Child-to-Adult’ Folklore

While the musical folklore of children and young people in streets, playgrounds, and peer-group settings has received sustained scholarly attention, their *peripatetic performances*—notably those enacted on doorsteps, thresholds, and through neighbourhood streets—have been far less examined. This paper focuses on such customary encounters, in which children and young people performed songs or rhymes, sometimes with dramatic elements, costume, and material artefacts, in exchange for food, money, or other forms of largesse. Sanctioned by customary practice at particular festivals and seasons, these performances involved movement through neighbourhoods and the circulation of performance practices and repertoire primarily among children and young people. Their tone ranged from benign and celebratory to mock-threatening or coercive, and adult reception was correspondingly variable. As threshold performances, they occupied liminal spaces between public and private, play and obligation, and consent and pressure. The paper attends to how age, gender, and the socially defined status of ‘the child’ shaped the organisation, framing and reception of these performances.

Drawing primarily on historical evidence, it proposes *child-to-adult folklore* as a productive analytical focus, positioning children as active players in the negotiation of space, authority, and exchange.

Dr Julia Bishop is a research associate in the School of Education, University of Sheffield, where she researches into children's and young people's folklore, past and present. Julia focuses on creativity, performance and communication, and how these shape processes of continuity and change. Her research often combines synchronic and diachronic approaches through ethnographic work with children and historical research into archival collections and other historical sources. Her recent publications include contributions to *The Routledge Companion to English Folk Performance*, *Play in a Covid Frame* (2023), and *Playing the Archive: From the Opies to the Digital Playground* (2025).

Mary CANE

The 'Baby Boomer' Cohort of Transnational Grandmothers from the Anglo World

Over the past seventy years, the folklore image of the grandmother has moved from authoritarian to benevolent: for the first time, we can connect in real time via the internet. Through autoethnographic and reflexive practice, I examine my 'Baby Boomer' cohort of transnational grandmothers from the Anglo world. I look at our transnational family relationships, along with the partially concealed difficulties such as how we are staying with family, and how we are sharing/passing on our folklore at a distance.

At a time when young people's emotional resilience is known to be partially predicated on knowledge of their wider family, and grandmothers are the acknowledged kin-keepers, a new subset of family is emerging. A 'transnational grandmother' who, like me, is longer-lived, able to travel, and has access to the internet. However, even with these advantages, we geographically separated grandmothers can still be compromised. Distance is still a challenge, and easy access to material goods means our inherited family treasures may not be needed or wanted. Also, a retinal or picture book version of a grandmother predominates in our culture. I ask how we transnational grandmothers are negotiating these changes.

I also examine the movement within:

- The diachronic versus synchronic acquisition of information by our grandchildren.
- The new ways we are preserving and passing on our family folklore, without our cultural landscape and possessions.

More understanding of these changing issues will contribute to the conversations around how we are able to be significant transnational grandmothers. This is pertinent when women's personal experiences remain under-investigated and under-recorded.

Mary Cane is a PhD student studying Ethnology and Folklore at The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen. She has a background in Occupational Therapy and hospitality, along with an MFA and MLitt. Her three children and grandchildren live on different continents and for the past twenty years she has travelled to visit them. This grandmother experience is central to her research.

Gina ZIMBARDI

Beyond Entertainment: The Public Health Significance of Children's Folklore

This presentation examines the dynamic relationship between nursery rhymes and public health, encapsulating the theme of 'Folklore on the Move' by examining how traditional narratives have historically traversed cultural landscapes to convey vital health lessons. Focusing on the works of Emil Berliner and Dr George Kober, whose 20th-century collaboration produced impactful children's literature on health education, I illustrate how folklore embodies the migratory nature of ideas and practices. Their book *Muddy Jim* serves as a case study, exemplifying how such tales transported public health messages during the United States Progressive Era. My presentation underscores the role of folklore not only in educating future generations but also in reflecting and reshaping societal norms and values.

Gina Zimbardi is a folklorist, writer, and educator based in Ohio, United States. With a focus on children's folklore and public health, Gina examines how nursery rhymes serve as cultural artifacts that convey essential safety lessons across generations. She holds a Master's degree in English and is a strong advocate for medical literacy. Through her research, Gina highlights the impact of storytelling on

community engagement, emphasizing the role of folklore as a transformative force in promoting health awareness and cultural understanding.

16:00–17:30 Parallel Session 6B MESSAGES THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

Ida TOLGENSBARK and Ceri HOULBROOK

'Santa Claus, c/o Oslo': Posting wishes from Britain to Norway

Every year, children from all over the world send letters to a Santa Claus (or his many cousins: Father Christmas, Sinterklaas, Jultomten...), asking this folkloric being to grant them wishes. But how do you transport a letter from the material world to the realm of magic? In our British-Norwegian project, we look at newspapers, memoirs, and delve into archived collections of letters to Santa that have travelled from one country to another. Our focus is the imaginaries of the exotic, the magical, and the material. This paper will discuss the materiality and mobility of letters sent from British children to Norway 1945-2000. How did one of the main destinations for letters to Santa become Oslo, Norway, and what happened to all the letters? What do the letters tell us about British-Norwegian relations after the Second World War, how did the adult world orchestrate the letters and their destinations, and what developments in childlore and transnational Christmas traditions can we read out of the contents of the letters themselves?

Ceri Houlbrook is a Senior Lecturer in Folklore and History at the University of Hertfordshire, and Programme Leader of the Folklore Studies MA. She is primarily interested in the material culture of ritual practices and popular beliefs.

Ida Tolgensbakk is Senior Curator at Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo, Norway. She is a folklorist and migration historian with particular interest in digital folklore and childlore, and has published on such diverse topics as foodways, digital legends, and the transmission of tradition.

Meaghan COLLINS

The Sailors' Valentine: Moving Tradition Across Oceans, Time, and Trade Routes

This paper looks at the movement, via trade routes, of 19th-century Caribbean tourist souvenirs, often referred to as Sailors' Valentines. These curious objects, made of wood and seashells, were crafted by women in Barbados who were recently emancipated from plantation slavery. Often, seashells are embedded to spell out romantic phrases within the interior of the objects. They were sold to sailors from the Global North, trading goods such as codfish for molasses and rum. I ask: in what ways do souvenirs, objects designed to both embody an ephemeral moment from the past while simultaneously looking to the inevitable, yet imaginary future, carry and construct notions of cultural identity, collective memory, and nostalgia? How do souvenirs create interconnectedness across generations and geographical borders? How does the Sailors' Valentine move folkloric and craft traditions across time and space? And, in what ways does the Sailors' Valentine represent and reconcile the ongoing inequalities of the geographical Global South and Global North?

Meaghan Collins is a PhD Candidate in folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, in Canada. She is currently writing her PhD dissertation on Sailors' Valentines, the 19th-century souvenir from Barbados. This work considers constructions of cultural identity and the subversion of souvenir making in the post-emancipated Barbados tourism industry, and the historic connections between the Caribbean and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Jeremy HARTE

'Speak Lord, Thy Servant Heareth:' Heavenly Letters

In ancient times, God spoke to his prophets, but by the sixth century he was despatching letters. Does that have a message for us?—apart from the surface instructions, that is (dress down, and don't work after Saturday sunset). The Heavenly Letter was at once object. practice and rumour. A friend of a friend had seen it fall from the sky. You treasured it as a charm against sickness and fire, for even though the

letter in your hand was physically a copy, it was textually a link sent from God. Though circulating in medieval societies where writing was elite and priestly, Heavenly Letters democratised the divine, for anyone could own one, and their devotional messages required no Church structure to be implemented. The tradition suggests a pre-modern reverence for the written word but today, communication with Heaven has gone two-way: not only can you receive messages from your loved ones in the hereafter, but cemeteries are installing post boxes to collect everything that mourners want to say across the veil. Just when are letters disappearing from our ordinary lived experience, they take on a new life as a spiritual medium.

Jeremy Harte is a researcher into folklore and archaeology, with a particular interest in landscape legends and tales of encounters with the inhabitants of other worlds. His book *Explore Fairy Traditions* won The Katharine Briggs Award of The Folklore Society for 2005, and his other publications include *The Green Man*, *Cloven Country: The Devil and the English Landscape*, and *Treasures on Earth: Buried Wealth in Landscape and Legend*. He sits on the Council of The Folklore Society and organises the society's Legendary Weekends.

Sunday 7th June

09:30–11:00 Parallel Session 7A MIGRATION, MOVEMENT, MEMORY

Kylie AQUILINA

Ġaħan in Motion: Migration, Memory, and Mediterranean Identity

Ġaħan, the wise fool character of the Maltese Islands, is a unique representation of migrating stories. His origin is a challenge to identify, due to the large network of lateral roots across the Mediterranean region. Variations of this trickster include: Giufà, Djeha, Nasreddin, Juan el Tonto and others, which reveal a shared cultural fabric shaped by centuries of migration and exchange. Malta, an island situated at the crossroads of maritime routes, had been desired by many travellers and empires due to its strategic location. This shaped Malta's multicultural identity including folktale characters and the Maltese language itself with Arabic, Romantic and Anglo-Saxon roots. The most popular folklore character in Malta is Ġaħan who is known for his humorous and wise tales. He is a migrating juxtaposition of foolish and wise, present in: children's literature, politics and theatre. His presence in Malta varied from an infantilised child in children's literature, intellectualised in theatre and heroised in politics. Every place in which he travelled, he was either ridiculed or welcomed, either way he adapted to reflect changes in cultures which led to his omnipresence. In this conference I would like to present how Ġaħan had travelled across the Mediterranean and how he shape-shifted to reflect a specific country. I also seek to show how the similarities and differences in each version is a testament to the interconnected spirit evolved through migration which strived to shape national identity.

Kylie Aquilina graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Arts (2022), and an MA in History of Art (2025), both read with the Department of Art and Art History, at the University of Malta. She is a multimedia fine arts practitioner and an Art Historian with a focus on visual culture, national identity, folklore, and illustrations. Kylie worked as a curatorial assistant at The Malta Pavilion 'Diplomazija Astuta' as part of the Venice Biennale 2022 and the APS Mdina Biennale 2023 with the theme of the 'Mediterranean Goddesses'. She recently published an article on Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti titled 'The Presence of Ġaħan in Malta's Visual Culture' (Christmas 2024) which summarises her MA submission titled 'A Study of the Character of Ġaħan as Represented in Malta's Visual Culture (c.1800-c.2000)'. Additionally, she participated in the Three Palaces Festival (2024) where she exhibited one of her digital collages titled 'Invisible Treasures'. This work was inspired by the wise fool Maltese character 'Ġaħan' and on 1st April 2025, in celebration of April Fool's Day, she gave a public lecture titled 'Ġaħan the Wise Fool: A Study Exploring the Character's Immersion in Reality' hosted by the National Library of Malta and Malta Libraries.

Florina DOBRE BRAT

The Midsummer Folk Traditions of the Romanian Community in Scotland

Drăgaica or *Sânziene* is a midsummer Romanian folk festival celebrated around the summer solstice. It is rooted in pagan summer tradition celebrating good harvests, fertility, nature and love. The Orthodox church layered upon it a veneer of Christian significance by celebrating the birth of St John the Baptist on that day, 24 June. In 2013, the online community 'La Blouse roumaine,' named after the famous 1940 Matisse painting, initiated the celebration of the Romanian hand-embroidered traditional blouse (*ia*) on the very same day as *Sânziene* and it became a viral success, being celebrated since by the Romanian diaspora all over the world. The Romanian diaspora present in Scotland observes this tradition as an opportunity to affirm its cultural heritage. For young people, it is a way of connecting with one another and relating to nature through symbolic elements. It is an occasion for people to don the traditional costume, mainly the hand-embroidered traditional blouse (*ia*), to gather together to make lady's bed straw wreaths (*drăgaica*) and celebrate summer at its peak. In this paper, I am outlining the key elements of this midsummer folklore tradition and how those have been passed on and celebrated by the Romanian diaspora for over three decades now. I will also look at how this tradition is related to and shaped by different social and cultural internal and external factors as well as morphing into social media content as an instant and dynamic way of reaching out to a large audience.

Florina Dobre Brat has worked since 2019 as a library assistant for South Lanarkshire Libraries. She has previously worked in various roles but mainly as a librarian for specialised and academic libraries in Romania for over twenty years. Alongside enjoying the (not always) safe haven offered by the libraries she worked for, Florina pursued for many years her passion and commitment for Sanskrit and Indian philosophy. Thus, she spent about four years in India where she read Sanskrit and Indian philosophy and in 2004 she was awarded an MA in Sanskrit from the University of Pune. In 2007 she completed a PhD on Bharṭṛhari, the 5thC CE grammarian-philosopher, at the Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy. From 2011 to 2018 she was a part-time lecturer at the University of Bucharest where she taught courses in Sanskrit, Classical Indian Culture and Civilization, and Indian Classical Literature. Some of the published papers covering her areas of research and expertise are available at <https://unibuc.academia.edu/InaBrat>.

Molly BAMBROUGH

Transporting Worlds: Migrant Folklore as Ontologies in Motion

This presentation asks what exactly moves when folklore travels with migrants. Standard approaches track the circulation of tales, songs or customs across regions; historic-geographic methods and the theory of 'migratory legends' already treat folklore as mobile material. Yet these approaches usually assume a stable background world through which such items pass. Drawing on phenomenology, I argue that for many migrants, intangible heritage does not simply travel in a world; it carries a world with it. Building on Merleau-Ponty's account of myth as an 'obsessive presence' that orients experience prior to reflective belief, I treat rituals, stories, and small repeated gestures (food routines, lullabies, route preferences) as condensed forms of mythic consciousness. They organise time, space, and affect such that a fragmented or hostile environment can be rendered tentatively inhabitable. Rather than reading migrant folklore as nostalgic survival or identity performance, I propose to read it as a mobile infrastructure for orientation. The presentation will sketch this argument theoretically and develop it through a series of brief vignettes from migrant everyday life, showing how folkloric forms sustain, strain, or fail under conditions of enforced movement.

Molly Bambrough is a philosophy student based in the Netherlands, working at the intersection of phenomenology, heritage studies, and political theory. She holds a BA in Philosophy: Global and Comparative Perspectives and an MA in Modern European Philosophy from Leiden University, where her thesis examined love, form, and fragmentation in Georg Simmel's late work. Her emerging research traces how mythic consciousness, place, and memory structure experiences of identity, migration, and cultural heritage. She is particularly interested in intangible heritage as a condition for orienting in the

world: how rituals, stories, songs, and small everyday gestures do not simply represent culture but organise perceptual coherence and collective memory, especially under conditions of displacement or crisis. Alongside her academic work, Molly has long-standing practical experience in heritage environments through sustained involvement with Scottish decorative arts and the Stirling Castle Renaissance Palace project. She also works in public-facing scholarship as the producer and host of two interview-based shows: *Maximizing Leiden*, which brings academic research into conversation with local publics, and *I Know Nothing About Jazz*, a monthly radio programme on jazz histories and scenes. These projects inform her broader interest in how lived narratives, sound, and everyday practices become contemporary folklore.

09:30–11:00 Parallel Session 7B FOLK MUSIC: SHIFTS IN PERCEPTION & PRACTICE

Paul COWDELL

Towards an Autoethnomusicology? Intellectual and Physical Movement, the Idea of Folk Clubs and Understandings of ‘Tradition’

Tradition itself is not static. Talk of movement focuses on physical migration, but ideas and concepts are also in constant motion. The English folk club model emerged as a revival/reinvigoration of traditional song in a complex way. Prioritising one model of performance, it was further finessed to protect particular song forms. Clubs developed numerous lives of their own, sometimes conforming, sometimes diverging from that model, and generated their own folk practices amongst practitioners. This paper will reflect on how ‘non-traditional’ singers view tradition and their relationship with it.

The paper will look at examples from the Isle of Wight (IoW), an area marked by a high and rapid rate of inward migration, posing further challenges to the consolidation and transmission of tradition, local or newly arrived. IoW-born singers have shown interest in historical transmission of songs, while folk scene participants generally have argued about ‘folk’ and ‘tradition’, with a keen concern for transmission issues. The level of self-scrutiny in their reflections could almost be described as autoethnomusicology. This does not exist outside the work of folklorists.

Dr Paul Cowdell is an Honorary Senior Research Associate at the University of Bristol, and currently teaches a History of Folklore Studies course for Oxford University’s Continuing Education. He is Associate Editor of the journal *Folklore* and on the Editorial Board of the *Folk Music Journal*.

David FAYLE

An Analysis of Potential Changes in Folk Song Lyrics Between Singers

The precise wording of folklore is not set in stone—whenever knowledge is passed on informally, it is expressed in the way that the practitioner understands it. In the case of folk songs, even the rules of inheritance are changeable, and singers have been known to memorise their material by exact rote as well as making any number of edits. This presentation concerns potential reasons for such stylistic variation; poetic and/or musical conventions, social attitudes, the personal preferences of the performer, or even repeated mistakes. Through a combination of applied theory and my own fieldwork, I examine how individual tradition-bearing folk singers interpret their own catalogues, how they respond to changes in the performance and wording of songs they know, where the perceived value of these songs lies, and what further changes may be predicted. I have based my research question on Philip Bohlman’s impression of the folk musician as creator, considering methodologies from prior song collectors such as Alan Lomax and A. L. Lloyd to ascertain the relevance of these factors through relatively recent history, while drawing on John Purser and Ian A. Olson to centre the project in a Scottish historical context.

David Fayle has been involved in various research projects involving music, vocalisation, festival performance, regional crafts, and relationships with animals. Earning an MLitt with Distinction in Ethnology and Folklore from the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen in 2023, he has since carried out fieldwork-based research with the Grampian Association of Storytellers (GAS), the Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland (TMSA), and the Stonehaven Fireball Association, and assisted with the running and recording of the Cullerlie Traditional Singing Festival. He currently

serves on the committees for the Aberdeen Folk Club and the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance (SCHA).

Abigail GRAHAM

The Addition of Sugar to a Classic ‘British’ Cuppa: Moving Towards Diverse Folklore in the UK

It is time for the view of what constitutes folklore to change. Within the UK, folklore is too often considered to be fairies, stone circles, and white men playing the fiddle—but it is so much more. British folklore is also Grime music, rum punch (made only with Wray & Nephew rum) and ‘waagwan’ instead of hello. By centering black British traditions, I explore just how vital transmission and movement of culture from the Caribbean has been in creating British folklore—not Caribbean folklore, not African American folklore, black British folklore. Using autoethnography and phenomenology, I focus on the perception of folk music. I look at Angeline Morrison as an example of traditional folk music from a black British perspective, before moving onto Grime artist Kano’s song ‘This Is England.’ I use Mills’s discussion of folk music to assist with the definition of folk music, exploring how Grime music is emblematic of black British folk music. Folk music is not and cannot be perceived as a white genre and it is imperative to notice the contributions that black Caribbean musicians have made to the genre. It is even more important to respect this movement.

Abigail Graham: My mum did a tarot reading for me when I was 11, not knowing how much it would impact my life. I grew up in Hackney, East London, where a love for nature and the occult was rare. My mum’s family instilled in me a love for fairies, bonfires and camping; my dad’s family curated a love of scotch bonnet chillies, lively family parties and pride in my cultural identity. This blend has led to my following of paganism, my love of fantasy novels and an academic focus on Black British Folklore. I live in Scotland with my partner and our daughter; we walk to the Campsie Fells and talk to trees. I will teach my daughter how to choose ripe plantain, and before bed, I’ll ask her if her fairy is wearing an acorn hat or a dress made from bluebells; rituals and traditions passed down through generations. My focus on Black British folklore comes from my lived experience of it—experiences shared by many other Black Britons—which need to be brought to light.

11:30–13:00 Parallel Session 8A REFRAMING THE SUPERNATURAL

Melissa LA ROSE

Movement of Fairy Lore and Rituals through Generations and Migration

Fairies, in all of their guises, have delighted and captivated the imagination for thousands of years. In my PhD research on fairy belief, I have observed that many fairy-related beliefs, rituals, and narratives retain significance in family contexts through the generations and even as family members have moved around the world. These observations are based on more than one-hundred qualitative questionnaires and ethnographic one-to-one interviews with people from twelve countries including the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Afghanistan, and Canada. Participants were asked information on the family members who passed the lore/rituals on to them, from where the lore/rituals originated, and where the lore/rituals are now implemented. The research shows that despite generational shifts and geographical moves in families, fairy belief continues to be strong in the contemporary world, linking families and individuals across time and space.

Melissa La Rose is a PhD student at the University of Aberdeen at the Elphinstone Institute. She is working toward a research degree in Ethnology under the supervision of Dr Thomas McKean. Melissa is originally from a small town in the mountains of northeastern Vermont, USA. She is the proud mother to three amazing children. For her dissertation, Melissa is researching how contemporary society uses fairy belief as part of spirituality in the twenty-first century. She holds a master’s degree in Art Gallery and Museum studies from the University of Leeds in England and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern New Hampshire University, USA, in Social and Cultural Anthropology. She is the president of the Non-Traditional Student Forum, a representative on the student council, and a student ambassador at the University of Aberdeen.

Josiah EAMES

‘Rent a Ghost’: The Impact of Imported Folklore on the Modern English Christmas Tradition

Folklore is fluid and ever-moving, built upon the exchange of expression and culture, that over time allows traditions from disparate communities to blend together, altering existing practices or creating something new and unique. This presentation will explore Jacqueline Simpson’s (1987) assertion that the English ghost story pioneer, M.R. James drew upon and borrowed features of Jutland ghost folklore, as presented by Danish folklorist E.T. Kristensen, to develop his distinct depiction of vengeful spirits. It will, additionally, build upon Simpson’s work by addressing the sustained impact of this cultural exchange on the English Christmas ghost story tradition in television, particularly the BBC’s Ghost Stories for Christmas (1971-1978, 2005-2025) that continue to exhibit some characteristics of Danish folklore, despite separation from their original cultural contexts and, in some cases, the works of M.R. James. This presentation will be informed by Mikel J. Koven’s approach of mass mediated-ostension (2007), further developed by Diane Rodgers (2022), to interrogate symbiotic relationships between the ways that folk traditions are presented in literature/media and how this influences their subsequent practice.

Josiah Eames is in his first year of his PhD in Media and Communications at The Centre for Contemporary Legend, Sheffield Hallam University. He is currently researching the tradition of the Christmas ghost story in televised media. He completed his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in film, both at the University of Bradford. His research interests focus on the convergence of folklore and film/television. Outside of research, he extends this interest to the production of folklore-inspired fiction and short-films, one of which, *Ophelie* (2022), was shown at the Lit Scares International Horror Film Festival in 2023. He lives in Doncaster, where he works as a teaching assistant.

Gemma Róisín JOLLIFFE

Towards an Éireannach Aeolian-Mythology: The Wind(scape) as Performing the *Seanchaí*, Storyteller

Mobilising *wind* as primary ‘moving’ mechanism, this contribution simultaneously engages the aeolian and the banshee (*an bhean sí*; also *badhb*, *babha*, *badhbh*) as two points of departure for (re)considering the position(ing) of F/folklore and the audio(-visual) within the academy. In writing a new cultural geography of wind, this paper develops the ‘windscape’ both as methodological intervention and means of *scéalaíocht*, storytelling. It critically interrogates and problematises the normative use of the wind muff / shield; attempting to apprehend the environment in its ‘chaos’ and ‘excess’. In doing so, it seeks to undo (and deconstruct) the epistemological silencing and sanitisation of wind otherwise. This allows for the conceptualisation of new ways of apprehending and knowing Irish landscapes, emerging from multiple and mutable experiences of dwelling. In learning to perform the *seanchaí*, and in better cultivating practices of story-telling and story-listening, one can more ethically attend to those landscapes in which lurk serious traces of dispossession by the British. Indeed, this more-than-textual work seeks to articulate those ‘strange encounters’ overflowing from the Atlantic Irish coast, testifying to the centrality of *scéalaíocht* and defending an oral tradition carried with, in, and through the wind.

Gemma Róisín Jolliffe is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge’s Department of Geography. They co-convene the Department’s *Geographies of Knowledge* research group, and work within the University’s *Vital Geographies* group to attend to the more-than-human agencies of their research subjects. Throughout their academic career, Gemma has cultivated an appreciation for the art(s) of (emancipatory) storytelling through various mediums; their earlier work was awarded the University of Oxford’s A. J. Herbertson Prize. For this, Gemma articulated a space for the stories of 28 young women to emerge, defending the importance of narrative as a mode of academic knowledge production. They return to this core theme in their current work as they (re)engage with the centrality of Oral tradition(s) to and for an emancipatory politics.

11:30–13:00 Parallel Session 8B LYRIC, DANCE, REBELLION

Elysia COTTON

Hells Bells: Constructions of Identity in a Northwest Morris Side and an Outlaw Motorcycle Club

On first appearances, morris men and outlaw bikers seem to sit worlds apart. But beneath the leather and engine grease, clogs and elaborate floral hats, there are parallels between the two that run deep. This paper establishes an exploration of the commonalities between a north-west morris side and an outlaw motorcycle club. Through ethnographic accounts, we uncover a foundational ethos of tradition, folklore, and authenticity. Both groups enact joining rituals, ascribe to codes of conduct, establish territory, and earn symbolic items of clothing that signify both membership and duty within the group. Each of these similarities is enacted through physical movement, be it the movement of an engine or the dancing body, or the transmission of tradition and folklore to both members and outsiders. The importance of movement culminates in the passage of each group through space, this movement acting as a means of expressing their carefully constructed identities to outsiders. Here we explore two communities rich in tradition, folklore and community, that have movement at their core.

Elysia Cotton is a London-based morris dancer, anthropologist, and museum professional. She holds an MA in Anthropology and Museum Practice from Goldsmiths, University of London, where her research focused on folklore and tradition, the vernacular, and the intersection of material and intangible museum collections with contemporary practice. Her dissertation project undertook an ethnographic exploration of morris dancing collections and how the morris is preserved as a living tradition. Her work orbits the tensions between preservation and progression within folk customs. This Master's research forms the foundations for a future PhD project that would undertake more in-depth ethnography to explore public perceptions of folk customs and the position of folk customs within the UK today. Elysia works in the conservation team at Westminster Abbey, caring for the building's many tombs, monuments, and collections. She is an active Cotswold morris dancer and the current foreman of the Belles of London City.

Noelia RUFETE-GIL

Flamenco on the Move: Embodied Memory, Displacement, and Reconnection

This paper approaches flamenco as an embodied form of folklore shaped through histories of Calé movement, marginalisation, and cultural negotiation within and beyond Andalusia. Writing from my position as a flamenco dancer actively reconnecting with the practice, I examine how rhythm, gesture, posture, and improvisation function as mobile archives of cultural memory. My return to flamenco is not framed as recovery of an 'authentic' past, but as an ongoing negotiation between inherited forms, lived experience, and global flamenco circuits. Engaging the conference theme Folklore on the Move, I understand movement both as historical displacement and as expressive practice through which Calé histories are transmitted, transformed, and sometimes obscured. The paper asks: how does the dancing body carry traces of collective memory? What tensions arise between preservation, appropriation, and personal reconnection? How can practice-based research attend ethically to Romani contributions without essentialising them? Methodologically, the paper combines autoethnography, reflective dance practice, performance analysis, and engagement with oral histories and flamenco scholarship. It contributes to folklore studies by foregrounding embodied knowledge as a critical site of transmission and by positioning flamenco as a living, mobile folklore continually negotiated through dancing bodies.

Noelia Rufete-Gil is a flamenco dancer and practitioner-researcher whose work emerges from lived, embodied engagement rather than from a conventional academic trajectory. Her relationship with flamenco has unfolded through studio training, informal learning environments, performance contexts, and sustained personal practice. She is particularly drawn to compás, improvisation, and the ways emotion, repetition, and physical discipline generate knowledge that is felt before it is articulated. In recent years, her practice has become a site of return and reconnection. She approaches flamenco not as a static tradition to be mastered, but as a living, negotiated form shaped by histories of movement, marginalisation, and cultural exchange, including the profound influence of Calé communities. This

awareness has prompted deeper reflection on her own positionality as a learner, mover, and interpreter within global flamenco circuits. Her research interests focus on folklore as embodied practice, the body as a carrier of cultural memory, and practice-based methodologies such as autoethnography and reflective movement analysis. She positions herself as a practitioner-researcher, valuing experiential and bodily knowledge as essential complements to scholarly inquiry, and remaining attentive to ethical questions of appropriation, authenticity, and responsibility.

Julie ZIELSTRA

A Post-Punk Irish Diasporic Bardic Tradition? The Case of Irish Songwriter Cathal Coughlan's Thatcher-era Ballad *Bertie's Brochures*

The Irish literary revival of the late 19th century took as its inspiration references from Ireland's language, history and folklore, including the traditions of its ancient bards, to place imagination, identity and meaning into the movement to support an emerging nationalism in Ireland during its political separation from England. Using the song and spoken word performance '*Bertie's Brochures*', written by Irish émigré singer and songwriter Cathal Coughlan, the case study will consider if the evidence of an Irish bardic tradition being continued in 1980s London. The presentation will use short film, spoken word, and visual aids.

Julie Zielstra is a retired librarian and digital designer living in Newcastle upon Tyne. She came to England from California in 1980, and has recently completed a short continuing education course on the History of Folklore taken to pursue her interest in Irish migrants in 1980s London from a political context, particularly Antonio Gramsci and the works of Hamish Henderson. Current research is on the migration of potters in 19th-century England between Staffordshire and Northumberland and a locality study of musicians in a particular area of Newcastle called Ouseburn. She is experienced in public speaking and designing presentations for The National Archives (Kew) and conferences on digital and local studies.

ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES for Wednesday 10 June online

10:30–11:30 Parallel Session 9A REFUGE, EXILE, AND SURVIVAL

Ilaha ASGAROVA

Toponyms in Karabakh Legends and Narratives in the Context of Movement through Forced Displacement in the 1990s

This study aims to reveal the interrelation between Karabakh folklore and the concepts of historical memory, space, and movement. As a result of Armenian atrocities and occupation policy, the population of Karabakh was subjected to forced physical movement, i.e., was forcibly expelled from their native lands. This process, in addition to uprooting thousands of people from their places of residence, left deep marks on their social, psychological, and cultural lives. This forced exodus was not confined solely to a change of geographic location; it also caused a severe spiritual and cultural shock in the collective memory of the people. However, although the people of Karabakh left their homeland, they preserved their folkloric memory—myths, legends, narratives, and especially place names. Even though the native land was physically lost, it continued to live on through words and memory. In folklore, toponyms serve not merely as geographical names, but also as carriers of historical-cultural identity, a sense of belonging, and the memory of the land. The motifs of exile and displacement in movement folklore are expressed through themes of journey, separation, longing for return, and hope. In legends and tales, the Karabakh locale is reconstructed through words, the lost homeland lives on in memory and is passed down from generation to generation. This folkloric memory, playing an important role in preserving the spiritual bond with the land, has provided a powerful moral and ideological support for the strengthening of national consciousness, for keeping the idea of freedom alive, and for the liberation of our territories.

Ilaha Shakir Asgarova is an employee of the Presidium Administration of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Folklore of ANAS. As a philologist (folklore researcher) by training, she dedicates her research to the study of Azerbaijani folklore, with a particular focus on the place names (toponyms) found within the folklore of Karabakh—an ancient and historically integral region of Azerbaijan. Her work aims to examine the genesis, semantic layers, mythological dimensions, and ethno-cultural functions of these toponyms, as well as to systematize the existing scholarly knowledge in this area from a broader analytical perspective. Her desire to participate in this conference also stems from these academic goals. She seeks to engage with the international scholarly community in order to deepen the study of Azerbaijan's toponymic heritage in folklore, present the findings of her research, and contribute to the promotion of her country's rich cultural and folkloric legacy.

Ulkar YUSIFOVA

The Transformation of Azerbaijani Refugee Folklore under the Influence of Urbanization

This presentation is about the folklore of Azerbaijani refugees. Between 1988 and 1993, nearly one million Azerbaijanis became refugees in the Karabakh region. After the occupation, the vast majority of these refugees were resettled in various parts of Azerbaijan, resulting in the fragmentation of their collective folkloric traditions. The presentation will focus on the following themes:

- 1) Mythologizing the process and expressing it in mythic language: 'A certain cleric threw a stone, and from that stone onward the Armenians could not pass; the saints did not allow it,' or 'It felt as though someone was protecting us from that rain of bullets; none of the bullets hit us.'
- 2) Women's laments as a means of easing collective trauma: Cursing the occupier, mourning losses, and expressing the desire to return.
- 3) Changes in ritual folklore under the influence of urbanization: How did wedding traditions change? How did mourning practices change? (For example, the lament chanted at my grandmother's funeral, or the structure of women's mourning gatherings)
- 4) Children's games: the play practices of children residing in other buildings differed from those of children living in the refugee housing. Their games were notably louder and more physically dynamic.
- 5) Efforts in collecting the folklore of Karabakh refugees: The work conducted by the Folklore Institute.

Ulkar Yusifova is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Azerbaijani Literature of Baku Slavic University. She teaches several periods of Azerbaijani Literature at Baku Slavic University. She is a PhD student at the Folklore Institute of the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences. She has presented papers on Azerbaijani Literature and folklore at several conferences in Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and the UK.

Mykola NEBORACHKO

The Migration of Silence and the Inherited Myths of Loyalty: Family Memory and Bureaucratic Folklore in Post-Soviet Space

This presentation explores how the legacies of Soviet repression continue to move through generations as intertwined forms of silence and inherited language. Drawing on archival rehabilitation files, including declassified NKVD case files, and family testimonies from Ukraine, the research examines how posthumous rehabilitation during the Khrushchev Thaw transformed state violence into bureaucratic myths of justice and loyalty. These official narrative phrases such as 'absence of criminal offense' or 'restoration of rights' migrated from institutional documents into family speech, becoming part of everyday moral vocabulary and domestic folklore. At the same time, silence itself became a powerful form of transmission: what could not be spoken was still communicated through gesture, omission, or emotional tension. Across decades, these two movements, the migration of silence and the persistence of official language created a hybrid folklore of survival that shaped post-Soviet identities and family memory. By tracing how state-produced rhetoric entered private life and how silence acted as an alternative medium of remembrance, the paper situates both archives and family stories within the broader dynamics of 'folklore on the move,' revealing how trauma and ideology circulate long after the institutions that created them have disappeared.

Mykola Neborachko, a specialist at the Defence Procurement Agency (Kyiv, Ukraine), conducts research on posthumous rehabilitation as a political instrument that transformed state violence into narratives of justice and shaped intergenerational family trauma in the Soviet and post-Soviet context. The current project integrates archival analysis, memory studies, and folklore research to examine how bureaucratic language and silence operate as parallel carriers of cultural memory. Research has been presented at international conferences on trauma, archives, and social history, including the workshop ‘Trauma, Institutional Knowledge, and Social Order: New Perspectives from Eastern and Western Europe during the Cold War.’ Academic interests focus on Soviet institutional culture, post-memory, and the ethics of exhibiting traumatic documents in museums and digital archives. For this ‘Folklore on the Move’ conference, Mykola Neborachko has developed an interactive audiovisual text game which allows players to emotionally experience the subject of his research and gain new insights: the project is live at <https://nebo1104.github.io/memory/>

10:00–11:30 Parallel Session 9B PROVERBIAL AND MATERIAL TRANSMISSION

Adetola ABATAN

Proverbs of the Cloth—An Exploration of Yoruba communal wisdom in Traditional Textiles

Every culture has their own version of folklore and wise tales. The Yoruba are no different, and I grew up in Nigeria listening to stories of trickster animals and vengeful spirits, as well as poetic proverbs that captured communal wisdom in pithy sentences. Proverbs are critical to the Yoruba, who believe ‘*Owe l’essin oro, oro l’essin owe. Ti oro ba sonu owe la fin nwa*’; that is, ‘*a proverb is the workhorse of words, and words are the workhorse of proverbs. When a word [or knowledge] is lost, a proverb is used to find it*’ (Elands 2024; Abiodun, Drewal & Pemberton, 1994). This talk interrogates some of the visual proverbs and folklore found in *Àdirẹ* (a traditional fabric of the Yoruba people from Abeokuta and Oṣogbo in Southwest Nigeria), as well as in *Ankara* (a resist-dyed art form of creating patterned batik cloth, originally from Indonesia and now ubiquitous to Western Africa). The symbols and patterns in these textiles use musical instruments, animals and plants to illustrate proverbs about seeking good fortune, the virtue of patience or navigating crossroads. Thus, these fabrics become the visual workhorses of traditional wisdom which move across geography and time in the African Diaspora.

Adetola Abatan is an artist, musician, curator and public art project manager based in Seattle, WA. She considers herself a polymath with deep interests in art, science, history as well as theology, and sees these disparate fields as complementary modes of knowledge to understand our world. Her collage artwork has featured in the Seattle Deconstructed Art Fair at [Wa Na Wari](#), [Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery](#), [Mini Mart City Park](#), [Bainbridge Island Museum of Art](#), [Bumbershoot](#), [Northwest Folklife](#), [PCC](#) and [PublicDisplayArt](#) magazine. Her curatorial practice casts a critical eye towards arts institutions and questions their role in preserving stagnant ideas of black and brown inferiority, as well as the role of the Creative in challenging these practices. She curated the 2022 [Blue is Our Color](#) exhibit in the Hedreen Gallery and co-curated the 2023 [Future Cosmologies](#) exhibit featuring Priscilla Dobler Dzul at Mad Art Gallery. A 2026 exhibit with the Frye Museum exploring community perspectives is in progress. She currently works with the City of Seattle’s Office of Arts and Culture as a Public Art Project Manager. She holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh as well as an MFA in Arts Leadership from Seattle University.

Gaurav SEHRAWAT

Songs that Wander, Proverbs That Settle: Tracing the Life-Course of Haryanavi Oral Culture

This work aims to dive into Haryanvi oral culture through *Raagni*, *Saang*, and *Kahavatein* as mobile repositories of social wisdom, ethical reasoning, and cultural memory. Drawing on hermeneutic theory inspired by Gadamer and vernacular interpretive traditions, it approaches these forms as wisdom practices that interpret everyday life, social hierarchy, gender relations, and moral conduct. Historically, these traditions ‘wandered’ across villages and generations through itinerant performances and oral transmission, while *Kahavatein* settled into daily speech as condensed ethical commentary. The paper argues that such forms embodied a practical wisdom (*phronesis*) rooted in lived experience, enabling

communities to interpret injustice, negotiate power, and sustain moral balance. In contrast, contemporary Haryanvi popular culture, shaped by commercial music industries, social media, and digital platforms, often transforms these traditions into aesthetic products detached from their interpretive depth. While digital circulation extends reach and visibility, it simultaneously flattens symbolic meaning, weakens dialogic interpretation, and fragments inherited ethical frameworks. Through a comparative hermeneutic reading, the paper shows how oral traditions once functioned as moving sites of collective wisdom, and how modern cultural forms both reconfigure and erode this epistemic role. It concludes by reflecting on folklore's changing relevance in negotiating meaning, memory, and moral understanding in a rapidly mediated cultural landscape.

Gaurav Sehrawat is a researcher working at the intersection of cultural studies, folklore, and sociology, with a focus on oral traditions, everyday resistance, and indigenous knowledge systems. He holds a Master's degree in Sociology and Public Administration and has been associated with research and academic work at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the University of Delhi (DU). His research interests include Haryanvi folk traditions, diaspora and cultural memory, oral epistemologies, performance cultures, and the transformation of vernacular wisdom in the context of modernity and digital media. He is particularly interested in how folk songs, proverbs, and narrative practices function as sites of everyday resistance and moral reasoning, and how these forms adapt, migrate, or erode under contemporary socio-cultural and technological shifts. His broader academic engagement spans questions of culture, governance, identity, and the politics of knowledge in South Asian contexts.

Nidhi MATHUR

Moving Traditions: Mobility, Migration, and the Transforming Pathways of Indian Folklore

India's long history of pilgrimage, seasonal migration, nomadic artistry, and crossregional exchange has shaped an ecosystem where folklore is continuously on the move. This paper explores how mobility—geographical, social, devotional, and digital—drives the transformation and resilience of Indian expressive traditions. Through examples drawn from itinerant communities such as the Banjaras, Naths, and Bauls; the ritual practices of folk healers and charmers; and the movement of oral genres across multilingual regions, the study examines how stories, chants, charms, and metaphors adapt as they travel. Framed through foundational models such as Julius Krohn's historic-geographic method, Reidar Christiansen's migratory legends, and Linda Dégh's concept of conduits of transmission, the paper reconsiders these theories from an Indian perspective where cultural mobility is embedded in everyday life. Case studies include the migration of lullabies with labouring mothers, variants of oral epics circulating between Rajasthan and North India, and charm traditions that persist in both rural healing contexts and new digital platforms. By foregrounding the tension between fluid cultural exchange and contemporary attempts to fix folklore as an identity marker, the paper argues that Indian folklore thrives precisely because it moves—across landscapes, communities, and eras—revealing India's deep history of interconnectedness.

Dr Nidhi Mathur is a scholar of German Studies and Indian folklore, with a PhD specialising in German Folklore and cross-cultural narrative traditions. Her research bridges European folkloristics with South Asian expressive cultures, focusing particularly on charms, healing traditions, and the movement of oral narratives across linguistic and regional boundaries. She has presented widely on comparative folklore, cultural semantics, and migratory traditions, and her current work includes a forthcoming paper on syncretic elements in Indian charming traditions from the 2025 ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming conference. Dr Mathur is also preparing a major study on animal idioms and cultural worldviews for the 19th Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs in Tavira, Portugal. Her academic practice integrates textual scholarship, fieldwork, and interdisciplinary methodologies, drawing from anthropology, linguistics, and performance studies. She is actively engaged in curriculum development in German Studies and contributes to academic initiatives under India's National Education Policy. In addition to her research, she works closely with students in both residential and distance education contexts, and is deeply invested in promoting inclusive, culturally grounded humanities education.

12:00–13:00 Parallel Session 10A TASTE; APPETITE; CONSUMPTION

Teresa MATEUS

Storying Mama Coca: A Transmission and Transmutation in a Leaf's Journey from the Andes to the Diaspora

This presentation examines how the Coca Leaf, known familiarly as Mama Coca in Andean cosmologies, functions as a powerful migratory story-keeper, sustaining Indigenous wisdom and ceremony across political and geographical boundaries. Mama Coca's journey illustrates several modes of folklore movement and transmutation. In her Andean homelands, she is integral to medicine and ceremony, honored as an elder and wisdom-keeper across generations, particularly in Q'eros and Muisca traditions. However, the historical violence and abuse of her essence (the cocaine trade) manifest in her physical boundaries of migration. As she crosses borders, Mama Coca becomes a shapeshifter, transmuting into surrogate plants like the Rose Leaf and Bay Leaf in the diaspora (wider Abya Yala or Americas). Through this trans-territorial transmutation, Mama Coca retains her memory and becomes a conduit of ancestral transmission, enabling Andean peoples across the world to build kinship with Pachamama (Mother Earth) and sustain sovereignty. Ultimately, this presentation employs an embodied ethnography of Mama Coca's story as a decolonial act of resistance against state-manifested borders, demonstrating how the movement of this one leaf is vital for Andean Indigenous cultural survival.

Teresa Mateus, MSW, is a 2nd-year Philosophy PhD student (focusing on Ecology, Spirituality and Religion) at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), specializing in Andean Indigenous cosmology, ecology, and futurism. Born in Muisca territory of the Colombian Andes, she is an initiated Q'ero Paqo (medicine person) from the Peruvian Andes. Her research focuses on Andean Indigenous storytelling, more-than-human narratives, and ceremonial practices as a Decolonial Methodology for sustaining all species kinship across the Andes and Andean diaspora. Her work bridges academic theory with lived Indigenous practice and has been presented at numerous conferences across the Americas. Her literary style intersects Andean mythology and folklore with speculative narrative styles engaging an Indigenized approach to storytelling which includes human and more-than-human narrators as primary authors of their own stories.

Sharon CARR-WU

A Takeaway Childhood: Memoir-Narratives of growing up in a Chinese Takeaway

This paper explores the themes of Chinese migration, identity and transitional food culture as portrayed through the autobiographical and semi-fictional narratives written by second- and third-generation British Chinese children growing up in the family business, namely, the Chinese Takeaway. Often located in predominantly white communities, the Chinese Takeaway, like the Indian Takeaway, were and still are often the targets for violence and intimidation from these communities. Yet, ironically, it is the very food that these takeaway businesses serve their local communities that connects the two cultures. Here, food can be seen as a cultural inheritance through the family recipes that have been adapted to suit the British palate. For these families, food has been a means of survival in earning a living and has acted as an indicator of identity particularly for the children growing up in the working environments of their families' catering businesses. What have been the effects of the food culture of the parents that have been so influential on their children's sense of identity as well as of their role within the family business? Since 2007, there have been several narratives written by British Chinese published that focuses on their lived experiences of growing up in a family-managed catering business in Britain.

Sharon Carr-Wu has a background in social care and is now retired. She has been a traditional storyteller since 2010 with a strong interest in the legends and folktales of Britain particularly Wales where she has family connections. Sharon has performed in museums, festivals, libraries and spoken word events in the Midlands where she lives. More recently she has moved away from storytelling

towards folklore where she has just graduated with an MA in Folklore Studies from the University of Hertfordshire and while there, developed an interest in personal narratives and migration.

12:00–13:00 Parallel Session 10B ORAL AND TEXTUAL TRANSMISSION

Anna BERESIN

Moving Material: Following the Paths of Object Play

This presentation introduces narratives from two play programmes in Sheffield, England that focus on loose parts: one a playground, and one a makerspace. Interviews with adults associated with the Pitsmoor Adventure Playground and the Maker{Futures} mobile makerspace highlight the transgressive and innovative surprises associated with object relocation. The adults in both communities examined photos of children's objects and shared the thrill of object movement in the face of much programmatic rigidity, particularly the rigidity associated with schooling. In a bit of playful combination, the conversations presented did not exist in real time, although are based on verbatim transcriptions and done with the participants' permissions. The author makes the case that the movement of dialogue and of motif are folklore's unrecognized gifts to child study, and that there is much to be learned in the examination of children's intangible cultural heritage. Unlike studies of objects made for children, or purchased on their behalf, here we witness the power of moving material. This project comes out of the author's new book *Make/Unmake: Play at the Centre of Culture Change*, soon to be published by Open Book Publishers. It was based on four months of fieldwork sponsored by the US-UK Fulbright Commission.

Anna Beresin, PhD is professor emerita of psychology and folklore from the now shuttered University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She serves as coeditor of the peer-reviewed *International Journal of Play*, a Taylor and Francis publication. With Dr Julia Bishop, she edited *Play in a Covid Frame: Everyday Pandemic Creativity in a Time of Isolation*, which won the Iona and Peter Opie Award from the American Folklore Society. Her work in that volume also won the Folklore and Science Award from AFS, and she has published on a variety of subjects related to play: recess access, pen tapping, dance improvisation, and animal play signaling. Visit her at annaberesin.com

Mercedes CERÓN

The 'course of folktale wandering' in the Collections of Francis Douce (1757-1834)

In a footnote to his poem *The Lady of the Lake* (1811), Walter Scott referred to his friend the antiquarian collector Francis Douce as an authority on what he called 'the community of fable'. Douce's collections can be considered as a vast repository of information on everyday life. But, according to Scott, the actual subject of Douce's thorough research was the transmission of tales, plots, characters and motifs across geographical borders and chronological periods. In this paper, I will argue that cultural transmission was at the core of the collections that Douce gathered throughout his life: Douce collected manuscripts, rare books, ephemera, prints, drawings, coins, medals, and miscellaneous antiquities in order to understand the circulation and transmission of images. I will also consider how his interests were shared and continued by W. J. Thoms and Thomas Keighley, whom he mentored and assisted in the last years of his life. As Richard M. Dorson once noted, 'through the antiquarian-folk writings of the time Douce's name runs like a thread, in notes, prefaces, and acknowledgments of literary favors; he cleared the blocks and opened up circuits for his colleagues following the course of folktale wandering'.

Dr Mercedes Cerón studied for her BA at the University of Salamanca, before moving to London to complete her MA and PhD at University College London. She was a Junior Research Fellow at Worcester College, University of Oxford, where she studied the print collection of Francis Douce (1757-1834). She has worked as a cataloguer, researcher, and documentation assistant at the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Ashmolean Museum, and the British Library. She is currently a lecturer in Art History at the University of Salamanca. Her book on the collections of Francis Douce will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in early 2026. University of Salamanca, Spain.

Sreenandana C S

From Ballads to Screen: Evolving Narratives and the Recasting of Heroes and Heroines in *Vadakkan Pattukal*

This paper examines the shifting narrative universe of *Vadakkan Pattukal*, ballads of North Malabar, an important part of Kerala's oral folklore tradition. These ballads, originating from the cultural terrain of Kadathanadu, a bygone kingdom in North Malabar, have historically been performed by the itinerant singers known as Panars. Over time, these ballads have travelled across various narrative media, such as literary retellings, cinematic adaptations, performative traditions and social media, often reshaped to serve the changing cultural, ideological and political contexts. Drawing on concepts of 'Lieux de mémoire' ('Sites of Memory') by Pierre Nora and 'Folkloric Memory' by Erol Gülüm Goethe, the study posits that *Vadakkan Pattukal* is evolving as a site of cultural remembrance. Within this broader framework, this paper focuses on the ballads that revolve around Unniyarcha and Chandu, two popular warriors. Chandu, portrayed as a treacherous man driven by envy in the oral tradition, is reimagined as a misunderstood, virtuous character who deserves sympathy in some of the modern adaptations. However, this often occurs at the cost of recasting Unniyarcha, a female warrior, into a seductive and morally ambiguous figure whose influence is depicted as the seed of Chandu's downfall. These adaptations across time and narrative forms exhibit the dynamic nature of folklore, which is often remodelled to fit ideological and political needs and gendered expectations. With this premise, this study attempts to situate *Vadakkan Pattukal* and its retellings within the theoretical framework of Memory Studies to examine the complex process shaping these cultural reproductions.

Sreenandana C S is a PhD student in the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies at Delhi University, New Delhi. Her research focuses on *Vadakkan Pattukal*, or the Ballads of North Malabar, and their adaptations across media and time periods, with particular emphasis on caste, gender, and power structures. Prior to her PhD, she worked as a Research Assistant at IIT Bhubaneswar on the project 'Rituals and Lore of the Kappiri Muthappan: Documenting the Remains of African-Indian Heritage of Malabar', where she conducted fieldwork and documented oral narratives. She completed her Master's in English Literature at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. As part of the program, she worked on a dissertation entitled 'Disrupting the Narrative: The Reimagination of History, Myth and Memory in Eri and Chavu Thullal,' which explored the role of Dalit literature in reconstructing buried histories made invisible by dominant narratives. She has presented papers at conferences such as the International Memory Studies Conference 'Memory, Narrative Designs, and Strategies of Preservation,' organised by the Centre for Memory Studies (IIT Madras); International Conference on Reimagining Indianness: 'Reflections on Society, Culture, and Religion in Indian Writing in English' (N.S.C.B. Govt. College, Odisha, India) and the International Seminar 'Voices, Resistance and Social Inclusion: Rethinking and Rediscovering the Narration of the Marginalized' (Christ College, Autonomous, Kerala, India). A paper entitled 'The Haunting Chain: Postcolonial Ghosts and Subaltern Resistance in Karinthandan's Legend' was published in *LangLit: An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal*.

Subhash KAMALKAR

From Shrine to Stage to Reel: The Moving Life of the Ghumot—A Percussive Heritage

The *ghumot*—a clay-bodied drum traditionally played in Goan temple rituals—has journeyed through multiple cultural conduits, from the sacred shrine to public festivals and now into the digital sphere. This paper traces the movement of the *ghumot* across three intersecting spaces: ritual performance (Suvaari), stage festivalisation (Ghumat Aarti & Mando), and digital remediation on social media platforms. Drawing on Julius Krohn's historic-geographic method and Linda Dégh's concept of the 'conduit,' the study conceptualises the *ghumot* not as a static heritage object but as a migratory performance form that continuously reshapes its social meanings. Through micro-itinerary mapping of select songs and rhythms documented via temple performances, Ghumat Aarti and Mando competitions, and Instagram/YouTube clips, the paper analyses how changes in tempo, gesture, costume, and ensemble reveal shifting dynamics of authority, authenticity, and audience. Short interviews with performers and organisers as well as autoethnographic evidence²⁴ supplement the

performance analysis, while platform metadata serves as digital evidence of circulation. The paper argues that these movements reflect the intertwined processes of patrimonialisation, festivalisation, and platformisation, revealing how state policy, local devotion, and algorithmic visibility co-produce cultural continuity and change.

Subhash Y. Kamalkar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Dnyanprassarak Mandal's College and Research Centre, Assagao, Goa. He has ten years' teaching experience and his research interests include culture studies, subaltern studies, translation studies and postcolonial reading of contemporary art and literature. He has published papers in peer reviewed journals (listed in UGC CARE)/articles in books and has presented papers at various international and national conferences.

Ekta CHAUHAN and Vandana SHARMA

Bhagats, Bhands and Bahurupiyas: Tracing the Convergent Paradigms of Folk Theatrical Forms of India

The convergent trajectories of folk theatrical forms attest to shared rituals, narratives, and characters. Within India's pluralistic yet unified ethos, folk theatre becomes a dynamic medium that travels across regions, adapting to local, cultural and linguistic nuances. These shifting forms inspire improvisations and experimentations. However, there are shared and recurrent patterns. Vladimir Propp viewed these recurring structures as 'stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled', suggesting how recurrent patterns continue to anchor folk performances in a shared universal logic (Propp, *Morphology* trans.Scott, 1968, p.21). Mimicry as a mode of cathartic entertainment as well as sarcastic social commentary has a universal appeal that transcends time, culture, and place. It manifests with various improvisations, names and nuances across the globe. Taking a cue from this, this paper investigates shared patterns in three folk forms from India: Bhagtaan or Bhagat in Jammu, Bhand Pathar in Kashmir and Bahurupiyas in Bengal. Using historical and comparative analysis, the paper aims to explore how the essential idea of mimicry moves through the country, aesthetically dynamic but functionally grounded. Since all these three forms have been traditionally performed by nomadic communities, they embody the dual movement instrumental in shaping and also inherent to folklore.

Prof. Vandana Sharma is Professor of English, Dean School of Languages, Central University of Jammu with 25 years of teaching and research experience. An academic with a wide range of teaching experience, Prof. Sharma has been passionate about teaching a variety of courses such as British Literatures, Eco-Literatures, Indian Writings in English, Women's Writings Across Cultures, Postcolonial literatures, Translation Studies and Indian Knowledge Traditions. Prof. Sharma's research focuses on Postcolonial Literatures, especially Nigerian and Indian writings in English, folklore studies, South Asian literatures, ecofeminist and ecocritical studies and translation studies. As a widely travelled academic who has presented her research nationally and internationally, both as an invited speaker and as a conference participant, Prof. Sharma has visited universities of Oxford, Vienna, Macau, Cambridge, Edinburgh and St. Andrews. Prof. Sharma has published six books, including critical works and translations. As an avid practicing translator, she translated the Dogri Folk play Bawa Jitto, written by Ramnath Shastri in 2011 followed by a collection of Dogri Essays. In 2017, her English translation of Sahitya Akademi awarded short stories was published by Sahitya Akaademi as *Waiting for Neelkanth and Other Stories*. She was awarded Sahitya Akademi Translation project in 2025.

Ekta Chauhan is a research scholar working under the supervision of Prof. Vandana Sharma at the Department of English, Central University of Jammu. She is currently working on the Folk Theatre of Jammu and Kashmir.

13:30–15:00 Parallel Session 11B RITUAL AND MOURNING

Francesca DE NARDIS

Folklore on the Move: Intergenerational Transmission and Revitalisation of the Resian Pust

Located in northeastern Italy, the Resia Valley—officially recognised as a Slovene minority community and renowned for its distinctive choreomusical traditions—offers a compelling context for examining how folklore circulates and adapts across generations. This paper focuses on the Pust, the Resian Carnival, analysing the intergenerational transmission of musical and ritual practices. Its conclusion on Ash Wednesday—featuring the procession, trial, and burning of the Babac, an anthropomorphic puppet blamed for the previous year’s misfortunes—reveals the community’s capacity to reinterpret apotropaic meanings in a contemporary context, where traditional music and dance have become increasingly central. Historically, each of the six villages celebrated the Carnival differently. Depopulation and the 1976 earthquake centralised festivities in San Giorgio. Heritagisation initiatives have sought to revitalise peripheral hamlets, fostering decentralisation and renewed cultural dynamism. These efforts, led by local associations and community members, have increased the participation of children, adolescents, and young adults in Resian oral cultural practices. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork this study highlights the centrality of participatory performance in the Pust, showing how sustained community engagement has contributed to its revitalisation and reinterpretation, while deliberately limiting commodification, spectacularisation, and touristification. The Resian Pust thus exemplifies the negotiation of continuity and change through intergenerational engagement, local revitalisation, and selective resistance to commodification.

Francesca De Nardis graduated in Ethnomusicology from Sapienza University of Rome in January 2025 with a thesis entitled ‘La musica strumentale in Val Resia: una riflessione fra lavoro d’archivio e ricerca sul campo’ (‘The Instrumental Music of the Resia Valley: A Reflection between Archival Research and Fieldwork’), supervised by Professor Giovanni Giuriati. She completed internships at ZRC SAZU Institute of Ethnomusicology (Ljubljana), IRTEM Research Institute for Musical Theatre (Rome), and at the Department of Ethnomusicology, ISI Yogyakarta (Institut Seni Indonesia). From August 2024 to August 2025, she was a recipient of the Darmasiswa scholarship, focusing on Javanese gamelan at ISI Yogyakarta. She has participated in the following conferences: Il Suono Inciso: Reflections on Historical Sound Reproduction in Italy, Second Study Conference of the Italian Society for Historical Sound Reproduction Studies (SOFOS), Rome, 3–4 October 2025, presentation: ‘Patrimonializzazione musicale e reinterpretazione delle fonti d’archivio in Val Resia.’ Simposio de Investigación Musical de Bogotá (SIMBO), Bogotá, Colombia, 11–13 August 2025, presentation: ‘El Archivo-Mediatheca Val Resia: Un Ejemplo de Reconfiguración Identitaria.’ Bridging Worlds: Bridging Digital Anthropology and Ethnography in the Study of Memory, Identity, University of Ljubljana, presentation: ‘The Resia Valley Archive-Mediatheque: An Example of Identity Reconfiguration.’ Ciclo de Arte, Memoria y Resistencia, organised by the Fundación Casa de la Memoria de Nariño, Pasto, Colombia, presentation: ‘Música y Memoria en Val Resia: de la investigación de campo al archivo y a la comunidad.’

Krzysztof ULANOWSKI

Carrying Belief: The Movement of Bodies, Images, and Ideas in Kashubian Marian Folklore

This paper explores the dynamic interplay between physical and symbolic movement in two interconnected Kashubian devotional traditions: the cult of Our Lady of Swarzewo and the ritual of the ‘bowing’ or ‘dancing’ *feretrons* performed during regional pilgrimages. Both phenomena offer a fertile ground for examining how folklore moves—literally, through bodies and ritual choreography, and figuratively, through the transformation, and reinterpretation of cultural meanings.

The Swarzewo cult, centered on a medieval statue repeatedly relocated, hidden, rescued and ceremonially carried across the Puck Bay region, reveals how sacred objects acquire layered narratives through their geographic and historical displacement. These narratives, transmitted orally as legends and miracle stories, reinforce regional identity while simultaneously illustrating the mobility of devotional folklore. Building on Carl Wilhelm von Sydow’s emphasis on the transformations that folklore undergoes as it circulates, the paper shows how both the Swarzewo cult and the *feretron* ritual have been continually reshaped by historical displacement, local reinterpretation, and contemporary heritage frameworks. At the same time, drawing on Linda Dégh’s concept of conduits of transmission, it highlights the networks—pilgrims, ritual specialists (*obraźnicy*), parish communities, and digital media—that sustain and reactivate these practices across generations. By focusing on the circulation of bodies, objects, narratives and mediated representations, the paper argues that Kashubian

devotional traditions exemplify the multidirectional movement of folklore across landscapes, social groups, and communicative channels. Their vitality emerges from the interplay between the enduring weight of tradition and the ongoing negotiation of meaning as stories, gestures, and sacred images travel, subtly reconfigured by the communities that carry them.

Dr Krzysztof Ulanowski is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Gdańsk, Poland. His main scientific interests related not only to anthropology but to Religious Studies, History, Classical and Oriental Studies. This is reflected in both the research topic, i.e. the study on the influences of the Mesopotamian civilization on the Hellenic (and Hellenistic) ones, the differences between religion, magic and divination in history and contemporary times, the anthropology of ancient cultures, the borders between religions and cultures, gender issues in the religious sphere, the differences between holiness and exclusion in the religious sphere and also the problems of religious minorities in Pomerania and magical rites of the contemporary world. He is affiliated to numerous scientific organizations: The Polish Orientalist Society; The Classical Association (London); The Society of Biblical Literature; The International Association for Assyriology; Societas Philologa Polonorum; General Association of Mediterranean Archeology. He is a board member of the international *Melammu* Project, conducted his research both in academic centres Paris, Padua, Athens, and field research in Mexico, Bhutan, Pakistan and Kaszuby, Podlasie (Poland). He is the author of more than fifty publications: books, chapters in books, and articles.

Adam GRYDEHØJ

Shifting Fortunes: Mobility, Economy, and Tradition in the Lives of South China village Temple Ritual Service Providers

Village temples are cornerstones of local communities across South China, serving as sites for sociality, religious activities, and engagements with the sacred. Such temples are dedicated to various locally significant deities, who are in turn locally interpreted. The operations of such village temples frequently depend on the work of ritual service providers (RSPs). These RSPs care for and maintain temples on behalf of the villagers in exchange for having a site in which to run their small businesses offering services such as *bazi* fortune-telling, *feng shui* consultations, fortune stick readings, funerary ceremonies, and facilitation of offerings to the gods. Despite the local rootedness of village temples and the deities they contain, RSPs—many of whom possess traditional knowledge passed down within families—largely come from outside the village or even outside the city in which the temple is located. This ethnography-based presentation explores the complex mix of socioeconomic and religious factors that push ritual specialists to leave home and become RSPs in distant cities, and it asks how their foreignness and their professionalism affect the maintenance of village traditions themselves.

Prof. Adam Grydehøj (PhD, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen) is Professor at South China University of Technology's School of Foreign Languages. Adam is co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Folk, Knowledge, Place*. His current research focuses are (1) the role of deities as social actors in South China and (2) the interactions between culture and space in island and coastal geographies. Affiliation: South China University of Technology's School of Foreign Languages.

15:30–17:00 Parallel Session 12A IMAGES OF WOMEN

Rosie BARRETT

Reimagining 'Sarkless Kitty' and the Women of the North York Moors: Creative Retelling and Ethical Responsibility in Folklore and Public History

The Yorkshire legend of 'Sarkless Kitty', a drowned young woman whose exposed body becomes both spectacle and warning, has circulated in the North York Moors for generations as an entertaining ghost story. Based on a real girl's drowning during the 1780s, by the time it was recorded in the 1810s within a collection of local folklore (the Calvert Manuscript), the story had already been shaped into a misogynistic moral tale. For decades, Kitty's ghost was blamed for further deaths at a dangerous moorland ford.

In my dual roles of contemporary storyteller and museum professional, I have an acute awareness of our responsibilities when presenting inherited folktales, and of the ethical considerations of how we transmit ‘problematic’ folklore. I bring my own background of working with difficult or sensitive histories to this topic, repositioning the stories of women we encounter through folklore—often rooted in victimisation—as essentially ‘difficult heritage’. This paper uses my experience of sharing folktales with public audiences, including the ‘Sarkless Kitty’ legend, to explore how storytellers and public historians might make ethical choices about the stories we repeat, how we contextualise them, and when creative re-voicing can be a necessary and legitimate form of cultural reworking.

Rosie Barrett is a researcher, writer, curator and storyteller who has worked in the museum sector for over a decade. She often delivers training to museum professionals across Scotland and the north of England, helping them to share their stories in more engaging and ethical ways. Rosie has worked part-time at Ryedale Folk Museum in the North York Moors for seven years, discovering the lives of the ‘folk’ of the region as revealed not only through their material culture but also in the glimpses we find in their stories and legends. In 2024, she curated the museum’s exhibition *Believe It or Not?*, exploring magical thinking in the region, including the lives of those labelled as ‘witches’. For this, she drew on her research from a bursary from the Group for Education in Museums (2018) to consider ways to balance popular culture’s tendency to sensationalise stories of witchcraft with ethical retellings of the stories of those accused. As a storyteller, Rosie has performed with Ryedale Festival (2024 and 2025), featured on BBC Radio 4 series *Mythical Creatures* (2023) and developed *Creatures of Curiosity*, a storytelling exhibition based on folktales for the National Trust (2022).

Meltem BUZKIRAN SAP

The Female Hero on the Move: A Comparative Perspective from Turkic Epic Tradition

This paper examines the female warrior (*alp*) type in the Turkic epic tradition through the concepts of movement, trial, and journey, within the framework of the theme ‘folklore on the move.’ The main argument is that the female *alp* figure in Turkic epics is not a static character who becomes fixed after passing a single test, but a heroine whose identity is constructed through continuous processes of trial and movement. The study focuses on Banu Çiçek from the Anatolian *Book of Dede Korkut*, Canil Mirza from the Kyrgyz epic tradition, and Kögüdey Kökşin and Boodoy Koo from the Altai epic corpus. These examples are selected for their representation of different modes of movement associated with the female *alp* type. While Banu Çiçek appears as a figure who tests the male hero and directs narrative movement, Canil Mirza represents a female warrior whose heroism is shaped through physical movement, escape, and struggle. In the Altai narrative of Boodoy Koo, the motif of disguise highlights the flexibility of the female *alp* identity, demonstrating that it is formed through adaptation rather than a fixed role. In the final section, a brief comparative perspective is offered through Brünhild and Hervör from European epic traditions. This comparison shows that the female hero is shaped across different geographies through both shared and culture-specific motifs, revealing folklore as a dynamic and mobile process.

Meltem Buzkiran Sap holds a BA in Turkish Language and Literature from Ege University, where she also completed her MA in Women’s Studies. Her Master’s thesis, entitled ‘Mate Selection and Marriage in Turkic Epics and Anatolian Minstrel Tales,’ explores representations of marriage and gender roles in oral traditions. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Turkish Folklore at the same university. She has received training in storytelling and has shared tales with small audiences. Her research interests include intertextuality, epics, fairy tales, women’s studies, traditional ecological knowledge and intangible cultural heritage.

15:30–17:00 Parallel Session 12B DANCE AND MUSIC

Trishnamoni PATGIRI and Baburam SAIKIA

Lives Moving in Dance: Tradition, Beliefs and Myths of the Vaishnava Devotees

Sattra, Vaishnava monastic institutions of Assam, came into existence as a result of the neo-Vaishnava movement initiated by saint Sankaradeva (1449-1568) during the 15th century. Sattras, especially the

celibate order, are monasteries for boys and adults who are brought to stay in a full residential monastic setup, believed to dedicate their lives to the religious order of Sankaradeva. In Sattras, boys are taught to practice dance as a primary ritual, accompanied by music and theatre, based on devotion and mythical stories. Dance is considered as a means of devotion through which devotees depict mythical stories found in Indian epics. Through dance, devotees express nine emotions, where the aesthetic sentiment of erotic nature is also essential. The male celibate devotees beautifully express the emotions of a mother, a wife and a lover through their dance despite being withheld from all these emotions in their real life. This paper aims to analyse the Sattria tradition with reference to Sattriya dance. It will address questions such as how real life contradicts dance stories. How do Vaishnava devotees value myths in their tradition? How do belief and tradition function between old and new generations?

Trishnamoni Patgiri is a PhD scholar at Majuli University of Culture, Majuli, Assam. She did her Master's in Performing Arts (Sattriya Dance) in 2023 from Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyala, Guwahati, and during her post-graduate period, she passed the UGC-NET examination and qualified for JRF in 2023. Trishna also did a diploma course in Bharatnatyam dance under the guidance of Guru Sumi Ray Baruah. She has contributed to promoting Sattriya by performing the dance form on various prestigious platforms in India.

Baburam Saikia works as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Performing Arts at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya. He is also engaged as a Visiting Professor at Pragjyotishpur University. Saikia received a PhD degree in folklore from the Institute of Culture Research, University of Tartu, Estonia. He was a Visiting International Scholar in the Centre for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society (CSRCS) for the Fall 2019 semester at Elon University, USA. He also worked as a visiting international scholar at the National University of Ireland, Cork. Dr Saikia has presented several papers in National and international seminars. Saikia has three international publications to his credit. Baburam was himself raised in a Sattria (Vaishnava monastery) in Majuli from the age of 5, when his parents sent him to live and learn the Sattriya tradition at the Sattria. He lived there until 2016, when he left to begin his PhD study at the University of Tartu. At the Sattria, he became a full-time practitioner of Sattriya dance, drama, and music, a set of devotional traditions associated with Assamese Vaishnavism. Saikia performed Sattriya dance and conducted workshops in many National and International platforms, including France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, Estonia, Bhutan, Bangladesh and in several states in India.

Athanasios BARMPALEXIS

Folklore in Motion: Reworking Historical Narratives in Contemporary Music Subcultures

This paper examines how folklore and historically grounded narrative motifs are mobilised within contemporary underground music as dynamic cultural resources circulating across time, media, and interpretive contexts. Focusing on three twenty-first-century albums—*Kentucky* by the American atmospheric black metal project Panopticon, *Castles Conquered and Reclaimed* by the Greek black metal artist Ayloss, and *Hunt on the Nazi Necromancer* by the Serbian dungeon synth artist Dungeon Guerrilla—the study analyses how folklore drawn from distinct historical periods and social struggles is reconfigured to address present concerns and future imaginaries within underground music cultures. Drawing on ethnographic and digital research methods, the paper explores how references to medieval popular uprisings and twentieth-century resistance movements are revisited and transformed through folklore-inflected storytelling, symbolic abstraction, and speculative narrative strategies. Across these projects, folklore operates as a medium of transition, enabling elements of the past to circulate within contemporary digital environments where they are reinterpreted and projected forward. The paper argues that these practices show folklore to be a flexible framework for ideological reflection and the negotiation of historical meaning, as underground music scenes actively rework historical narratives rather than hold them in fixed or ossified forms.

Dr Athanasios Barmpalexis is an Associate Researcher at the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens. He holds a PhD in Ethnology/Folklore from the University of Aberdeen, where he is

an Honorary Research Fellow and has served as a Visiting Lecturer since 2021. His research interests encompass Celtic traditions and contemporary Celtic identities, oral traditions of resistance, folklore in underground music cultures, vernacular conceptions of the supernatural, folk medicine and the figure of the vernacular healer, as well as traditional witchcraft.

16:30–17:00 Final Plenary Session: FOLKLORE ON THE MOVE

Louise PLATT and Sophie PARKES-NIELD

Procession as Place, Form and Plot: Collective Movement within Everyday Life

Two interdisciplinary researchers with specialisms in cultural geography, events management, folkloristics, and literature and creative writing come together to examine the procession as a spatial and cultural practice through three interrelated Lenses—procession as place, procession as form, and procession as plot—to show how collective movement generates ritual, rupture and repair within everyday life. This interdisciplinary and practice-led lens is crucial, for it enables us to consider processions not only as repertoires of contention (Tilly, 2008) or as definitional ceremonies (Myerhoff, 1978), but as dynamic entities with generative potential across both real and imagined worlds, in history and in contemporary society. Though the processions and processional cultures we draw upon have different executions and purposes, their ‘family resemblance’ (Wittgenstein, 1953) has aided us in conceptualising what a procession is, what it does, and how it does it.

Alongside a review of academic literature, we foreground our own research—the Whit Walks of Greater Manchester, and the deployment of procession in creative writing—to showcase the common characteristics of procession, its consistent mutability, and a vivid representation of folklore on the move.

Dr Louise Platt is an interdisciplinary researcher and Reader in Place Experiences at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research focus is on placemaking and festivity with a particular focus on walking practices, processional cultures, and experiences of festivals and leisure spaces. Her work draws on cultural geography, dance/performance theory, and poststructural philosophy to elucidate a more fluid understanding of place and community using festivity as a lens. She is currently researching Greater Manchester’s Whit Walks. She is Co-Editor of the *International Journal of Events and Festival Management* and a founding member of the Centre for Processional Culture in the UK CIC.

Dr Sophie Parkes-Nield is a postdoctoral researcher on the AHRC-funded National Folklore Survey for England project at Sheffield Hallam University (nationalfolkloresurvey.co.uk). She completed her practice-based PhD in 2024 at the same university on the representation of calendar customs in contemporary fiction. She is currently under contract by the University of Exeter Press to expand her thesis into a monograph. An award-winning writer of fiction, she teaches Creative Writing at Leeds Arts University. She is a Director of the Centre for Processional Culture in the UK CIC and Co-Reviews Editor of *Folklore*, the journal of The Folklore Society.



The Folklore Society regularly takes its conferences ‘on the move’ and, this year, we are delighted to be hosted by The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen. We welcome everyone participating.

The Folklore Society (FLS), established in 1878, is dedicated to the study of folklore in all its diverse forms. As one of the oldest organisations of its kind in the world, the society has played a crucial role in documenting and analysing the traditional and modern beliefs, customs, and stories that make up our cultural landscape, including ballads, folktales, fairy tales, myths, legends, traditional song and dance, folk plays, games, seasonal events, calendar customs, childlore and children's folklore, folk arts and crafts, popular belief, folk religion, material culture, vernacular language, sayings, proverbs and nursery rhymes, folk medicine, plantlore and weather lore.

Based in London, with an active national and international membership, The Folklore Society welcomes everyone with an interest in these subjects, and offers a wealth of resources and opportunities to explore this fascinating field.

Join as a Member: to receive our flagship journal *Folklore* and our newsletter *FLS News*; to attend events free or at a reduced rate; for online access to back issues of our journal from 1878 onwards, and other journals in the field; for opportunities to deliver a paper online or in person; and to get involved in the running of the Society. Visit our website www.folklore-society.com for more details.

We extend our special thanks to the Elphinstone Institute for hosting us, particularly Nicolas Le Bigre, Tom McKean, Frances Wilkins, and Alison Sharman. We are also very grateful to everyone else who helped to organise the conference: Sophia Kingshill, Ross Macfarlane, Claire Collins, Caroline Oates, Jeremy Harte, and all the eager volunteers at the Elphinstone Institute: Sarah Kremen-Hicks, Kaitlyn Woodruff, Lauren Hossack, Brenna Quinton, Melissa La Rose, Kayleigh Mair, Anne Greig, Bakebillah M D, and Barb Briggs. But most importantly, we wish to thank everyone presenting a paper at ‘Folklore on the Move’ as, without you, there would be no conference.

Prof. David Hopkin, President, The Folklore Society



The Wayfarer, by Hieronymus Bosch
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
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