

## The Katharine Briggs Award 2017

We are delighted to announce that the winner of this year's Katharine Briggs Award is Christopher Josiffe, for his book *Gef! The Strange Tale of An Extra-Special Talking Mongoose* (published by Strange Attractor)

The runner-up was Dimitra Fimi, for her book *Celtic Myth in Contemporary Children's Fantasy* (Palgrave)

### The Katharine Briggs Award Judges' Comments on the Short Listed Entries:

**Simon Bronner. *Folklore: The Basics*** (Routledge)

This deceptively slim volume well fulfils its aim of introducing methodologies for the identification, documentation, interpretation and application of folklore. In the process a rich, detailed explication of the history, concepts and theories behind the modern study of popular culture is proffered. Recommended for undergraduate reading in particular.

**Mary-Ann Constantine and Eva Guillorel. *Miracles and Murders: An Introductory Anthology of Breton Ballads*** (Oxford University Press):

Readers are treated to a comprehensive, soundly selected body of material hitherto largely inaccessible to Anglophone audiences. Beyond mere anthology however, the authors also offer an insightful account of questions informing the collection and mediation of this material amidst politico-linguistic tensions within the Breton region. Includes CD.

**Owen Davies (ed). *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*.** (Oxford University Press)

In eight accessibly written chapters, leading experts narrate the story of magic from Classical times to Buffy, Harry Potter and beyond. This broad ranging, attractively presented collection of essays particularly appeals as an introduction for those encountering magic as a topic of academic study for the first time.

**Jacqueline Dillion. *Thomas Hardy: Folklore and Resistance*** (Palgrave Macmillan)

Folklore, social history and literary studies weave satisfyingly together here, showing how Hardy's appreciation of contemporary folk customs enabled him realistically to portray the social structures and dynamics of nineteenth century Wessex. Thus, Dillion convincingly argues, Hardy's novels may be understood as ethnographic documents as much as 'mere' fiction.

**Dimitra Fimi. *Celtic Myth in Contemporary Children's Fantasy: Idealization, Identity, Ideology*** (Palgrave Macmillan)

An insightful analysis of the ways in which Lloyd Alexander, Alan Garner and other classic - as well as some lesser-known - modern children's fantasy writers have appropriated and adapted notions of 'Celticity' from Welsh and Irish medieval literature to educate, entertain, and above all enchant generations of children.

**Sara Hannant and Simon Costin. *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic***

100 objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic are exquisitely and evocatively captured on film, with historical and social context provided by the accompanying written commentaries. A veritable visual treat, imploring the casual reader to dip again and again into the mysterious world of magic and folklore.

**Michael Heaney (ed). *Percy Manning: The Man Who Collected Oxfordshire***  
(Archaeopress)

Rather like its subject, this biography of one of England's foremost Victorian county folklorists is modestly but impressively comprehensive. Folklorist, archaeologist and regional historian, Manning is presented realistically but sympathetically as a man both of and outside his own time. Lay readers and scholars alike will find gems aplenty amidst these pages.

**Christopher Josiffe. *Gef! The Strange Tale of An Extra-Special Talking Mongoose***  
(Strange Attractor). A thoroughly clever, enjoyable account of Gef, the talking mongoose who supposedly inhabited the farmhouse at Cashen's Gap, Isle of Man during the 1930s. Avoiding the temptation ultimately to determine whether or not Gef 'really' existed, Josiffe deftly and engagingly elucidates the construction of a piece of distinctively modern, mediated folklore.

**Kelsey Jackson Williams. *The Antiquary: John Aubrey's Historical Scholarship***  
(Oxford University Press)

The work of John Aubrey (1626-1697) has fundamentally shaped the modern academic discipline of folklore. This deeply impressive, significant study elucidates the key themes within Aubrey's hitherto remarkably neglected manuscript notebooks. En route we not only may discern the diverse roots of modern folkloristics, but meet our intellectual great-grandfather himself.