

**The Lord of Misrule: misbehaving badly in a Cornish town**

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# Folklore On Screen



**Friday 13th - Saturday 14th  
September 2019**

# FEAR THE



## Folklore on Screen

A 2-day international conference  
with a hauntological music event

Friday 13th- Saturday 14th  
September 2019

The 'Folklore on Screen' conference brings together scholars for two days of discussion about folklore in its many forms: its history, present and complex future in relation to cinema, television, photography, digital and online media studies. The conference aims to explore the meaning, import and relevance of folklore in the media and its representation, communication and perpetuation. The multidisciplinary nature of the conference is aimed at a broad spectrum of scholars with either a particular specialism in folklore or an interest in folklore studies as pertaining to their own subject.

Talks will present topics including:

- UFOs
- hauntology
- urban digital & online contemporary legends
- 'creepypastas'
- folklore in film
- art and photography
- folk horror landscapes
- folklore in British television and many more.

The Centre for Contemporary Legend research group is led by Sheffield Hallam University colleagues Dr. David Clarke (Reader & Principal Lecturer in Journalism), Andrew Robinson (Senior Lecturer in Photography) and Diane A. Rodgers (Senior Lecturer in Media & PhD Researcher).

# FOLKLORE ON SCREEN

The Centre for Contemporary Legend

A 2-day international conference with a hauntological music event  
Friday 13th- Saturday 14th September 2019

## FRIDAY MORNING

11:00-11:30 - Cantor 9130

Introductions - welcome from the CCL/ C3Ri

11:30 -12:30 - Cantor 9130

OPENING KEYNOTE - **MIKEL KOVEN**

Return of the Living Slave: Jordan Peele's Get Out as Zombie Film

## FRIDAY AFTERNOON

13:30 -15:00 - Cantor 9130

FEATURED PANEL (A) - Monster Mash

**Matthew Cheeseman** (University of Derby) - Dracula's Fangs / **Craig Ian Mann** (Sheffield Hallam University) - Pack Mentality: A Cultural Approach to the Werewolf Film in the 1970s / **Rebecca Bannon** (Queens University Belfast) - Ghosts of the Past: Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street and liminality

15:30 -17:00 - Cantor 9130

PANEL (1a) - Ghosts in the Machine

**Stella Gaynor** (University of Salford) - Momo and the Simulation of the Real: A Digital Urban Legend / **Kerry Dodd** (Lancaster University) - You Are Not in Control: Glitch Horror and User Agency in the Information Age / **Joe Ondrak** (Sheffield Hallam University) - How to Kill a Ghost: The Hauntological Internet, Creepypasta and Online Misinformation

15:30 -17:00 - Cantor 9135

PANEL (1b): I Want to Believe

**Jake Edwards** (University of Warwick) Alien Qualities: Unidentified Flying Objects and the Photographic Image / **David Clarke** (Sheffield Hallam University) Tears for Fears: Haunted Artwork on Screen / **Lynn Brunet** (Australia) A Sheffield Dreaming: The Art of Peter Booth.

## FRIDAY EVENING

17:00 -19:30 - EVENING MEAL

19:30 - THE HUBS

(Sheffield Hallam University Student's Union)

CCL & Heretics' Folk Club present a hauntological music event featuring  
**Sharron Kraus / Cath Tyler / Hawthonn**

## SATURDAY MORNING

10:00 - 11:30 - Cantor 9130

FEATURED PANEL B: The Haunted Generation

**David Southwell** (Hookland) - Receiving the Ghost Transmissions: Factual Broadcasting as Cathode Terror / **Andy Paciorek** (Wyrd Harvest Press) - Urban Wyrd / **Bob Fischer** (Fortean Times) - The Haunted Generation

11:30 - 13:00 - Cantor 9130

PANEL (2a) : The Devil Rides Out

**Tom Clark** (University of Sheffield) - The Devil Made Me Do it: The Development of Satanic Narratives in Contemporary Culture / **Timothy Jones** (University of Stirling) - Imaginary Revivals: Folk Horror and Twentieth Century Occulture / **Brenna E. Tuel** (Montreal) - Removing the Iron Bars: Belonging, Encroachment , and Fairy-lore in The Hallow (2015)

11:30 - 13:00 - Cantor 9135

PANEL (2b) - The Village of the Damned

**Diane A. Rodgers** - (Sheffield Hallam University) - Beasts, Monoliths & Witchcraft - the Unsung Nigel Kneale / **Andrew Robinson** (Sheffield Hallam University) - The Lord of Misrule: misbehaving badly in a Cornish town / **Gail-Nina Anderson** (Newcastle) - The Wicker Man and the misuses of Folklore

## SATURDAY AFTERNOON

14:00 - 15:30 - Cantor 9130

PANEL (3a) - Island of lost souls

**Evelyn Koch** (University of Bayreuth, Germany) - Cyclic Time in Folk Horror / **Amy Harris** (De Montfort University, Leicester) - Following the Wicca Man: Addressing the Invisible Women behind Contemporary British Folk Horror Cinema / **Ceri Houlbrook** (University of Hertfordshire) - Our Love Will Last Forever: The Love-Lock Motif on Screen

14:00 - 15:30 - Cantor 9135

Panel (3b) - At the Mountains of Madness: (Hollywood and Beyond)

**Sandy Hobbs** (University of the West of Scotland) - Val Lewton at RKO: Horror or Folklore? / **James Williamson** (Goldsmiths, University of London) - Challenging Sight and Sense: Tracking the UFO in Science Fiction Cinema / **Ekaterina Netchitailova** (Sheffield Hallam University) - Holy-foolishness in Russian Culture, from Holy Fool to the Modern God-driven Eccentric

16:00- 17:00 - Cantor 9130

CLOSING KEYNOTE - **HELEN WHEATLEY** (University of Warwick)

Haunted Landscapes: Trauma and Grief in the Contemporary Television Ghost story

FRIDAY MORNING



11:00-11:30 - Cantor 9130

## INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome from the CCL/ C3Ri

11:30 -12:30 - Cantor 9130

## OPENING KEYNOTE

**MIKEL KOVEN (University of Worcester)**

Return of the Living Slave: Jordan Peele's *Get Out* as Zombie Film

Jordan Peele's 2017 horror film, *Get Out*, seems quite removed from either the gut-munching visceral horrors of George A. Romero's now-seminal zombie films or ground-breaking television series like *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 2010-present). In fact, Peele's film doesn't have a single resurrected corpse anywhere in it. So how is this a "zombie movie"? To illustrate this, we will examine the zombie slave motifs which emerge (primarily) from Haitian folklore, and which graced the silver screen in films such as *White Zombie* (Victor Halperin, 1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (Jacques Tourneur, 1943).

*Mikel Koven* is senior lecturer and course leader in film studies at the University of Worcester. While much of his research explores Italian horror and exploitation cinema in a variety of guises, specifically the giallo, he also writes on the interstices between folklore and popular cinema. He is the author of *La Dolce Morte: Vernacular Cinema and the Italian giallo film* (2006), *Film, Folklore, and Urban Legends* (2008), and *Blaxploitation Films* (2010).



A rare example of the AIRFIX 'Ghost and Ghouls' series of HO-OO figures, three sets were released in 1972 with a further three planned for 1973 however they were withdrawn without explanation to be replaced by Robin Hood.

This item and the other posters, publications and ephemera contained herein have been kindly provided by the FAUX HORROR ARCHIVE, a collection of rare and out of print material relating to folklore and the horror genre.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON



13:30 -15:00 - Cantor 9130  
FEATURED PANEL (A)

Monster Mash

**Matthew Cheeseman (University of Derby)**

Dracula's Fangs

Derby has a central role in the story of Count Dracula, for it was in this city that the very first performance of the wildly successful authorised adaptation was staged, when it opened at the Grand Theatre in 1924. The building still stands in the centre of Derby: it closed as a theatre in 1950 and spent decades as a dance hall (Pink Floyd played there in the summer of love, 1967). After many years as a nightclub, in 2007 it became an all-you-can eat Chinese buffet called May Sum, which eventually closed its doors in late 2018. In the spring of this year the venue reopened as an adult-only crazy golf bar with glow-in-the-dark graffiti, table tennis and Jamaican 'street food'. Now you can eat jerk chicken and play indoor golf on the very stage where Dracula first crossed over into the theatre. The place is called (suitably) 'The House of Holes' and is decorated with images of giant bats, dildos and sex mannequins. Any reading of these as an explicit homage to the Count would be misplaced, however, as they are references to Bacardi and hen dos. Dracula has long flown this particular roost, although this paper attempts to raise a series of hauntological, cinematic, correspondences in an attempt to demonstrate, perhaps, that old habits might die hard.

**Matthew Cheeseman** is Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Derby, where he is the Programme Leader for both MA Creative Writing and BA Writing and Publishing. Previously he was a Senior Lecturer in Cultural Theory at Southampton Solent University and University Teacher in English at the University of Sheffield. From a base in creative writing he works across fiction, non-fiction and art writing, drawing on critical theory and cultural studies. He writes and publishes creatively and also edits and publishes the work of others via his press, Spirit Duplicator. A folklorist, he researches both the visual and material culture of writing and neoliberalism in post-war popular culture.

1121  
6<sup>D</sup>

All new garlic impregnated Children's vests

Protect your little ones from the night terrors

Despite beneficial properties beyond the culinary, in 1950s Britain garlic was considered by many as a 'continental' product and the Garlic Marketing Board's creative attempts to diversify were largely unsuccessful.

## Craig Ian Mann (Sheffield Hallam University)

### Pack Mentality

#### A Cultural Approach to the Werewolf Film in the 1970s

While in-depth cultural histories have been devoted to understanding other classic monsters in relation to their shifting cultural contexts, including the vampire, the zombie and Frankenstein's tragic creature, the werewolf has traditionally been understood by scholars as a manifestation of the 'beast within,' or the dark side of man. Accepted thinking on horror cinema would have it that countercultural 'New Horror' films such as George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972) and Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) marked a turning point in the genre's importance, proving that it could be a site for social, cultural and political debate. Yet, while individual films – such as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957) and *Ginger Snaps* (2000) – have been afforded a reasonable amount of scholarly attention outside of psychoanalytic discourse, the werewolf film is still generally regarded as a sub-genre with little cultural resonance and continues to be framed in the context of the 'beast within.'

This paper will concentrate on the werewolf films of the 1970s: *Werewolves on Wheels* (1971), *The Boy Who Cried Werewolf* (1973) and *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973). By drawing on these subversive werewolf narratives as illustrative case studies – closely linked as they are with 'New Horror' – it will redress the balance by discussing the werewolf film in the context of its cultural moment: a product of the era surrounding the Vietnam War, the birth of the counterculture and the Watergate scandal. In doing so, it will explore how we can begin to understand werewolves, wolf-men and she-wolves as rich and versatile metaphors for the pervading cultural fears of their times.

**Craig Ian Mann** is an Associate Lecturer in Film & Television Studies and Film & Media Production at Sheffield Hallam University. His first monograph, titled *Phases of the Moon: A Cultural History of the Werewolf Film*, is forthcoming from Edinburgh University Press. His work on genre cinema has been published in the *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, *Horror Studies* and *Science Fiction Film and Television* as well as several edited collections. He is co-organiser of *Fear 2000*, a conference series dedicated to contemporary horror media.

## Rebecca Bannon (Queens University Belfast)

### Ghosts of the Past

#### Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street and liminality

This paper will explore the 2007 film *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* focusing on the titular character, his obsession with the past and his own liminal state within the film. From Todd's return to the city his visage visibly alters, he becomes ghost like in appearance. This ghostly aesthetic continues for the remainder of the film and at several points in the narrative Todd is visually separated from the other characters. The isolation of Todd, centres on his obsession with the past and his quest for revenge for the injustices he endured.

The paper will examine the costume and aesthetics of the titular character, the "Epiphany" scene where Todd moves through the city unobserved or in a ghost like manner and the "By the Sea" scene in which Todd appears like a spectre or prisoner within the fantasy of Mrs. Lovett. It will also discuss the importance of the flashback and fantasy scene for exploring the idea of the ghosts of the past and the liminality of the titular character who is trapped between the idealised memory of his past life and his reluctance to be part of his new reality. Whilst not being a traditional ghost story, the *Sweeney Todd* film is one that is haunted by the past and uncertain about the future, creating a ghost of its titular character who is trapped between the past and the present.

**Rebecca Bannon** has a background in English Literature, specialising in Renaissance Literature, and Film Studies. I am currently a PhD candidate at Queen's University Belfast. My research is focused on 21st Century Hollywood Cinema and concentrates on mash-ups and remakes. This research examines films which engage with literary adaptations and fairy tales such as *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. The paper for this conference will discuss another film from this research, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (Burton, 2007), and will investigate the topic of liminality which is a common feature of all of these films.



15:30 -17:00 - Cantor 9130

PANEL (1a)  
Ghosts in the Machine

**Stella Gaynor (University of Salford)**

Momo and the Simulation of the Real  
A Digital Urban Legend

February 2019 saw a surge of posts on social media, articles in the press, mentions on daytime television and even letters and emails from schools to parents, regarding the dangers of the so called Momo Challenge. Concerned people shared the story across social media, with posts filled with terrifying claims that Momo had caused the death of young people on a global scale, and that the monster was lurking in content aimed at children on YouTube. The Momo moral panic burned bright and it burned fast; the sudden deluge of posts warning parents about the dangers of Momo disappeared as quickly as they arrived, as Momo and the allegations were rapidly dismissed as a hoax.

This paper will ask what was it about Momo in particular that caused such a stir - after all the internet is packed with things that might be harmful to children - and consider Momo as a digital urban legend through the lens of Baudrillard's works on the simulation of the real. We arguably live in a time of mass simulation, with the blurring of boundaries between what is real and what is not real increasingly hard to define and decipher. We would like to think that we would recognise a hoax story, or a creepypasta that has filtered into mainstream press and social media, but as Momo demonstrated, when a digital urban legend speaks to our deepest fears, fears around child safety, even the most level headed amongst us, can get caught up in the moral panic.

**Stella Gaynor** is an associate lecturer at The University of Salford in the Television and Radio Dept. She has recently completed her PhD "Made for TV Monsters," which explores the rise of horror serialization on US television. She has written a chapter on the distribution of *The Walking Dead* for the upcoming edited collection *Global TV Horror*. She is a regular blogger for *Critical Studies in Television*, and has done guest lectures at Liverpool John Moores University on screen horror across film, television and digital media.



Recognising the popularity of field recordings (mainly transport and spoken word) respected sound recordist Eric Handfull founded Transpirit and released a series of 'spirit recordings' until arrested at an unregistered Exorcism.

## Kerry Dodd (Lancaster University)

### You Are Not in Control Glitch Horror and User Agency in the Information Age

Network systems often the attraction of seamless connectivity, an almost utopian ideal which allows the individual user to access and encounter the collective. Yet such interconnectivity has a much more sinister underside, in which the creation of personal data – of the places we visit, the objects we buy, and the people we contact – becomes a commodified asset for the unseen institutions behind these structures. The emergence of this reality is often encoded as a moment of horror, the point in which the user questions their agency within the network, one where the, often unsaid, implications of such ‘exchanges’ rise to the surface. For, as James Bridle has argued in *New Dark Age*, the sheer volume of inscrutable data available to system users coalesces into the terrifying concept of ‘a world of ever-increasing incomprehension’.

In this paper I argue that technological urban myths such as the Polybius arcade machine – suggested to be part of a government-run psychological experiment – represent a form of digital Folk Horror that reflects the terror of lost agency and user panic in the information age. Focusing on the *Black Mirror* episode ‘Bandersnatch’ (2019), I argue that the presentation of bifurcating and entrapping narrative pathways seeks to represent the terror of such agent realisations but cannot help but fall into the same anthropocentric visions it precisely aims to avoid. Indeed, it is the presence of the glitch that allows the user to glimpse the system beneath the render, one transposed to reveal the agencies behind the data we create. Yet as glitches have become aestheticised, has this very notion been assimilated into the commodified system it sought to subvert? This paper thus discusses digital ‘folk’ myths and glitch horror as processes that I suggest may help conceptualise a ‘digital-orientated ontology’ that offers a more nuanced appreciation of network interaction to help re-mediate notions of user-agency.

**Kerry Dodd** is a PhD researcher at Lancaster University, UK and Acting Head Editor for *Fantastika Journal*. His thesis, entitled “*The Archaeological Weird: Excavating the Non-human*,” examines the intersection between archaeology and Weird fiction. Utilising a post-structural framework, his thesis focuses on how archaeological framings can offer a re-conceptualisation of object-orientated ontology through the *Weird*. Kerry also works more widely in the fields of: Science Fiction (particularly Cosmic Horror and Cyberpunk), the Gothic, and glitch aesthetics.

## Joe Ondrak (Sheffield Hallam University)

### How to Kill a Ghost The Hauntological Internet, Creepypasta and Online Misinformation

The networked Internet is a space that has empowered new forms of digital fiction to find readership, grow, and thrive. However, this new narrative frontier is not without its risks as works play with authenticity and the post-postmodern sincerity needed for social media and Web2.0 platforms to function and prosper. The mechanics by which new forms of folk-like fiction such as creepypasta elicit thrills in readers and spread across social media are the same methods by which deliberate and ideologically-fuelled misinformation can propagate and spread, radicalising and recruiting readers to hateful causes. In this paper, I argue that the Internet is a hauntological space, with both fact and fiction ‘ontologically flattened’ to the same spectral textual signifier. Through Mark Fisher’s view that hauntology can best be understood as “the agency of the virtual... that which acts without physically existing” (2014; 18), I argue that as we cannot truly verify the existence of that which is textually represented online without physically seeing it external to its textual representation, the effects and reactions provoked by that which we interact with online can be read as the agency of the virtual – it is our sincere belief in “the apparently real” (Kirby 2009; 139) that underpins all we see online.

I will conclude the paper with a double reading of Kris Straub’s 2009 creepypasta narrative, *Candle Cove*, and the rise of ‘fake news’. This reading will highlight how both creepypasta and online misinformation rely on the same underpinnings of sincerity and hauntological states in order to function, though when encroaching upon the virtual/real border, the ghost at the heart of *Candle Cove* can be ‘killed’ whereas the monster created by ‘fake news’ only grows stronger.

**Joe Ondrak** is an Associate Lecturer and doctoral candidate in English at Sheffield Hallam University. His research aims to establish creepypasta as an emergent genre specific to the form of digital fiction, define its key generic traits and develop a systematic methodology for its analysis that is attuned to its textual and cultural properties. His PhD study is a continuation of his MRes dissertation, which sought to analyse contemporary print remediations of digital textuality.



15:30 -17:00 - Cantor 9135

Panel (ib)

## I WANT TO BELIEVE

**Jake Edwards (University of Warwick)**

Alien Qualities

### Unidentified Flying Objects and the Photographic Image

In *The Life of Forms In Art* (1934), art historian Henri Focillon argues for a dissolution of the conventional aesthetic distinction between form and content, synthesising an alternative approach to the study of images in which the two are enmeshed with one another. Integral to this claim is his call for an accompanying dissolution of the distinction between art and life. In his view, this holistic conceptualisation of form allows for an appreciation of art as an impulse that courses through life, in which forms evolve in the manner of living organisms, invested with the vitality of precedence and antecedence within a broad continuum of images and image-making. Accordingly, Focillon warns against the imposition of what he describes as an “alien quality” upon forms, extrinsic connotations that “incrust” around images, threatening to “drain” them of meaning, or “turn [them] from [their] course.”

In foregrounding the inextricability of art from the flow and substance of life, Focillon’s theorisation of the “life of forms” is replete with complimentary avenues for the study of UFOs (unidentified flying objects). Not only does it provide ample justification for addressing the UFO phenomenon from a cultural studies perspective, it also seems to gesture towards a speculative explanation for the way in which photographic images contribute to the formation and continuation of the UFO phenomenon as a contemporary legend. As such, in the spirit of Focillon, this paper will explore the unique aesthetic configuration of the UFO photograph, demystifying the “alien qualities” imposed upon the UFO, while also examining the “alien qualities” UFOs reveal as having “incrust” around the medium of photography.

**Jake Edwards** is a PhD student at the University of Warwick, where he is writing his thesis on photographic images of unidentified flying objects. This project is focused on the manner in which these images complicate conventional understandings of how photography is believed to function, and how these complications are treated in the representation of UFOs in the visual arts. His research interests include a range of topics relating to the specificities of photographic representation, and he has previously undertaken research projects on the films of Harmony Korine, and images of celluloid decay in cinema.



Birthday candles were probably to be avoided at any parties where guests were wearing ‘Crying Boy’ masks, popular for a short time in the mid 1980s and still seen occasionally at demonstrations and sit-ins.

## Lynn Brunet (Australia)

### A Sheffield Dreaming The Art of Peter Booth

Peter Booth (b. 1940) is one of Australia's leading contemporary artists. A prolific artist, much of his powerful imagery contains dark subject matter and disturbing themes, and is filled with ghastly and repulsive figures, apocalyptic scenes and dense layers of inexplicable symbolism. The artist has never been able to explain his images but has always maintained that they are based on his childhood dreams and nightmares as well as visions perceived during epileptic seizures. Booth was born into a working-class family in Sheffield and his father worked in the steelworks. The family emigrated to Melbourne when Peter was seventeen.

The world depicted in much of Peter Booth's art is a world of men. Many of his images depict men in groups watching bizarre performances and wearing frightening masks and costumes. Often the men appear to be engaged in ordeals, tests or competitions and some are wearing blindfolds. In some of his images there are children watching these bizarre performances. Groups of naked male figures appear throughout his entire oeuvre. My study of Peter Booth's work, entitled *A Sheffield Dreaming*, is a close examination of his iconography through the lens of the myths, legends and folklore that have existed in this part of England throughout its history. In particular, it examines the artist's images alongside the ritual practices of the working men of the Sheffield region, including the initiatory practices of fraternal orders and friendly societies, revealing traces of a complex layering of pagan and Christian beliefs that were particularly relevant to the workers in Sheffield's metal-working industry.

The argument I propose is that it looks like Peter Booth has been a boy witness to a type of secret men's business amongst the Sheffield workers in the postwar period. Due to the traumatic nature of these encounters the artist cannot verbally describe their origin but it appears that their traces have been indelibly printed on his visual memory, thus supplying an endless source of powerful imagery throughout his entire artistic career. This paper will examine several of Booth's paintings and drawings in the light of the folklore, beliefs and traditions that have played an important role amongst the Sheffield workers during the industrialisation of this part of England.

*Lynn Brunet (PhD 2007) is an art historian and former lecturer at the University of Wollongong and the University of Newcastle in Australia. Her research addresses the work of particular artists and writers who deal with disturbing or bizarre imagery and themes and asks whether it might be telling us something about initiatory practices conducted within various fraternities, religious groups, secret societies or cults. Her published books include Answer to Jung: Making Sense of the Red Book (Routledge, 2019) and A Course of Severe and Arduous Trials: Bacon, Beckett and Spurious Freemasonry in Early Twentieth Century Ireland (Peter Lang, 2009).*

## David Clarke (Sheffield Hallam University)

### Tears for Fears Haunted Artwork on Screen

The plot of the 2019 Netflix horror film *Velvet Buzzsaw* features a number of latent folklore motifs associated with haunted artwork. These include stories of death, injury and misfortune associated with their movement, sale and exhibition, corrupted childhoods and a link with inexplicable fires. The Crying Boy, a mass-produced sentimental print that was popular from the 1970s in working class families in the UK, is a contemporary example of 'folk art' with a haunting tradition.

In 1985 British tabloid *The Sun* published a series of hyperbolic stories reporting the existence of an alleged jinx associated with the mysterious artist who was responsible for painting the original series. The source of the stories was attributed to fire fighters who had noted the frequent occurrence of the print at domestic property fires in one English community. The intervention of journalists added a supernatural element to the story and created a proto-legend. This paper examines how TCB and other examples of 'uncanny artwork' have acquired elaborate narratives and migrated from print to online media platforms to produce a 'multiple fusion narrative' (Koven 2008).

*Dr David Clarke is a founder member of the Centre for Contemporary Legend at Sheffield Hallam University where he is a Reader and Principal Lecturer in Journalism. His PhD in British Folklore was completed at the former National Centre for English Cultural Tradition (NATCECT), University of Sheffield, under the supervision of Professor JDA Widdowson. He is the author of The Angel of Mons (2004) and How UFOs Conquered the World (2015). From 2008 to 2013 he was consultant and curator for open government project that oversaw the transfer of the Ministry of Defence UFO archives to The National Archives in Kew, London. His research interests include supernatural folklore and legend narratives, wartime rumour legends and landscape folklore.*

## The Centre for Contemporary Legend and Heretics' Folk Club present:

An evening of hauntological music at The Hubs,  
Friday 13th September 2019

**Sharron Kraus** is a singer of folk songs, a songwriter and multi-instrumentalist whose solo work and collaborations offer a dark and subversive take on traditional music. As well as drawing on the folk traditions of England and Appalachia, her music is influenced by gothic literature, surrealism, myth and magick. Her songs tell intricate tales of rootless souls, dark secrets and earthly joys, the lyrics plucked as sonorously as her acoustic guitar. She has released seven solo albums, the first of which, 'Beautiful Twisted', was named by Rolling Stone in their Critics' Top Albums of 2002.

<http://www.sharronkraus.com/>

**Cath & Phil Tyler** play Anglo-American folk music using guitar, banjo, voice and fiddle. Coming together musically through a shared love of traditional narrative song, full voiced sacred harp singing and sparse mountain banjo, they have performed on stages as diverse as the Royal Opera House in London and a dank tower in the old city walls of Newcastle.

<https://cathandphilyler.bandcamp.com>

**Hawthonn** are the Leeds-based duo and shameless heathens/dual star daemons of Layla and Phil Legard, who play 21st-Century Moon Musick and Underground spectralism. Their latest record, entitled Red Goddess: Of This Men Shall Know Nothing, sees the duo blend synthesised field recordings with themes of the occult as well as ambient music.

<https://xetb.bandcamp.com/album/hawthonn>

FREE ENTRY FOR FOLKLORE ON SCREEN DELEGATES

Heretics' Folk Club & The Centre for Contemporary Legend Presents



Sharron Kraus & Justin Hopper perform Chanctonbury Rings

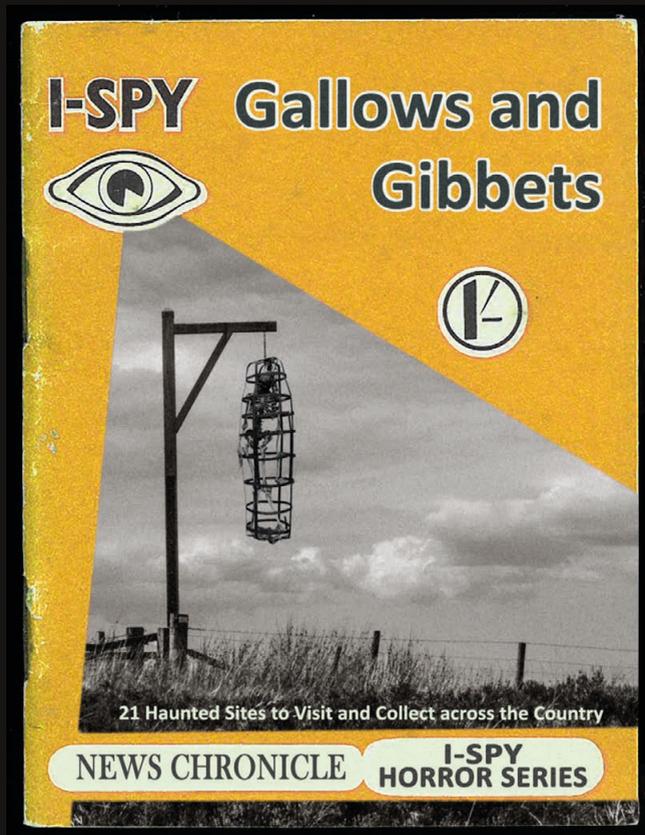
Cath & Phil Tyler

Hawthonn

Friday 13th September 2019, 19:30  
Sheffield Hallam Students' Union, S1 2QQ

£7 adv via Party For The People. Free entry for CCL Folklore on Screen Delegates





Whilst beloved by most children, I-SPY's 'Horror' series proved problematic for many parents and saw only one short print run. Other titles included 'Haunted Houses', 'Murderer's Graves' and 'Instruments of Death'.

SATURDAY MORNING



10:00 - 11:30 - Cantor 9130

FEATURED PANEL (B)

The Haunted Generation

David Southwell (Hookland)

Receiving the Ghost Transmissions  
Factual Broadcasting as Cathode Terror

There is often a struggle to find adequate definitions of folk horror and urban wyrd, but one often adopted by artists creating new work in the field is 'an active infection of the past'. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on a somewhat neglected infection vector – the influence of television factual reporting the occult, UFOs and psychic research in the 1970s in the creation of contemporary manifestations of these closely related genres. While new works of folk horror and the urban wyrd are hardly alone in standing on the shoulders of works from the past, there can be an assumption that they rely largely on the shoulders of not only folkloric giants, but key fictional works such *Quatermass*, *The Wicker Man*, *Children of the Stones*, *Blood On Satan's Claw* et al. The present text explores from a practitioner perspective how the impact of television news and documentary output in terms of content, tone and frequency needs to be considered alongside the fictional canon of the same period in creation of contemporary work.

By reviewing key examples between 1970-1980 including *Nationwide*, *The Ghost Hunters*, *Out of This World*, *Power of The Witch* and Southern Television broadcast interruption, the text explores how broadcast news and documentary coverage of the paranormal during this period is frequently an underlying dynamic force in the shaping of shared cultural memory and language through which new folk horror and urban wyrd material manifests.

This paper will highlight for both researchers and practitioners, how the temporal television shades of old news and factual representation are still sending signals which are being received and incorporated in the now and future project of those currently ploughing the ghost soil of hauntological media.

## Andy Paciorek (Wyrd Harvest Press)

### Urban Wyrd

My talk will outline what is meant by 'Urban Wyrd' with respect to the mode first proposed by author and filmmaker Adam Scovell in his Celluloid Wicker Man web article, and explore the further development of the concept which occurred through conversation with Scovell and with regard to the multi-contributor Folk Horror Revival: Urban Wyrd book (conceived and edited by myself and due for release summer 2019).

In particular the proposed talk will concentrate upon the evolution of moralistic and cautionary narratives from their folk/fairy tale origins to modern times. Whilst covering folk horror / urban-legend inspired films such as *Candyman* and *The Ring*, I would mostly discuss the fear-inducing, hauntology-inspiring matter of Public Information Films and Dystopian drama. This pertains also to a Fortean Times article I wrote for the 35th Anniversary of the BBC nuclear war drama *Threads* (published spring 2019) which would be a fitting topic both for the location of Sheffield and for the anniversary month of its first television broadcast. I will also look at other British apocalyptic television series and films such as *Doomwatch*, *The Changes*, *When the Wind Blows* and *The Last Train* amongst others. I would deliver such a talk in representation of the Folk Horror Revival multimedia project, which I created several years ago and currently run their non-profit publishing arm Wyrd Harvest Press.

**Andy Paciorek** is an artist and author of the *Beautiful~Grotesque*, *Strange Lands*, *Human Chimaera*, *Black Earth*, and other curious things. He is the creator of the Folk Horror Revival multimedia project and is the founder and creative director of the non-profit publishing house Wyrd Harvest Press.

## Bob Fischer (Fortean Times)

### The Haunted Generation

Are you craving the oddly warm reassurance of Cold War paranoia? Is it impossible for you to walk past an electrical substation without recalling crackly Public Information Films, and 16-year-old Jimmy's stray frisbee wedged into a tower of humming transformers? Do you still feel mild disquiet at the sight of the faceless Edwardian children in the opening titles of *Bagpuss*? Chances are, you're one of the 'Haunted Generation'.

In this presentation, Bob Fischer will attempt to unravel the tangled strands of folklore, literature, music and inappropriate children's television that made the 1970s such a uniquely unsettling decade to be a child. An era when analogue technology became the chief disseminator of traditional folk story; when primary-school age children were seen as the core audience for experiments in avant-garde electronica; and when Britain itself was a strange, dark place: dotted with dangerous wasteland and abandoned factories, defined by half-day closing and power cuts; where stark, Brutalist 'new towns' played host to childhoods scarred by mumps, measles and Programmes For Schools and Colleges. He will also examine the potent influence of these disquieting feelings on the 21st century hauntology movement; from Ghost Box Records to Scarfolk, from Look Around You to Hookland.

**Bob Fischer** is a writer and broadcaster with an interest in folklore and 20th century pop culture. He writes regularly for the Fortean Times magazine, where his 'Haunted Generation' column rounds up news from the parallel worlds of popular hauntology, and his book 'Wiffle Lever To Full!', an exploration of science fiction fandom, was reissued by Hodder & Stoughton in 2018. He blogs weekly at [www.hauntedgeneration.co.uk](http://www.hauntedgeneration.co.uk), and presents music and arts coverage for BBC Tees, in his native North-East.



11:30 - 13:00 - Cantor 9130  
Panel (2a)  
The Devil Rides Out

**Tom Clark (University of Sheffield)**

The Devil Made Me Do it  
The Development of Satanic Narratives in Contemporary Culture

There is now much needed scholarly attention being directed toward folklore and cinema, particularly in respect to 'folk horror' (Hutchings, 1993; Sherman and Koven, 2007; FHR, 2017). Elsewhere, there has been much interest in the Satanic panics of the 1980s and 1990s (Jenkins, 1992; Victor, 1993; and La Fontaine, 1998). However, there remains a paucity of literature that has critically explored the development of Satanic narratives in contemporary culture. This paper examines the relationship between the Satanic cycle of films produced in the UK between 1957 and 1976 and the representation of Satanism in the British print media.

Charting the development of the Satanic film and the Satanic news story over time, the paper will demonstrate how Satanic folklore was realised differently across the two mediums. But, reflecting familiar social divisions of the day - sexuality, age, religion, gender, and even ethnicity - and decorated with trappings of unambiguous dualist metaphysics, the paper will argue that when placed side-by-side the films and news stories provided powerful cultural signals regarding what to fear and where to find it. Exploited by a deeply conservative white patriarchal hegemony of screen-writers, directors, journalists and publishers, Satanism was constructed to be an organised, nascent threat to the whole of society. In turn, this provided part of the cultural bricolage necessary for a social problem to be discovered in the form of the Satanic panics of the 1980s and 1990s.

*Dr Tom Clark is a Lecturer in Research Methods at the University of Sheffield, UK. Interested in all aspects of research method and methodology, he is popularly known for his work on Myra Hindley's 'prison files' and is currently writing a book on the sociology of evil. His textbook 'How to do your social science dissertation or research project' will be published by Oxford University Press in October, 2019.*

# ONE BITE MEANS DEATH



EVERY FULL MOON PEOPLE DIE  
**CURSED  
BLOOD  
IS A KILLER**

If you would like further information send for a booklet to:  
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
Werewolf Control Division  
Silver House  
Tudworth, Surrey, FN9 6GG  
Telephone - 01 688 9871

Published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Office of Demon Control, © 1974. Printed in England by Her Majesty's Stationery Office for the public good.

A typically direct and sensational poster campaign by the Office of Demon Control during the Werewolf scare of the early 1970s. After numerous complaints later versions omitted both the dripping blood and claw marks.

## Timothy Jones (University of Stirling)

### Imaginary Revivals Folk Horror and Twentieth Century Occulture

Folk horror has enjoyed what is often construed as a revival over the last decade. Films of the sixties and seventies such as *Witchfinder General*, *Blood on Satan's Claw* and *The Wicker Man* have found new audiences and rapt critical attention. At the same time, a wide range of associated cultural phenomena have been read with reference to the notion of folk horror.

Yet as Raymond Williams knew, tradition is a creation of the present moment; folk horror discovers its tradition retrospectively. Folk horror itself, like many 'folk' traditions puts forward the idea of a survival – something old and authentic has found its way down the generations. This is a notion that Georgina Boyes has taken issue with; for her, the traditions that purport to survive are basically inauthentic. Folk horror texts potentially imagine folk cultures more than they report them.

Nevertheless, there is a thread of something that sits between folk and popular cultures that runs through folk horror. Rather than looking to a distant folk tradition, this paper will argue that folk horror looks to a more recent form of folk knowledge, situated somewhere between the coffee table book, supposedly esoteric bestsellers, breathless tabloid reporting about goings-on in Highgate in the late sixties, and authentic forms of occulture. In doing so, it will touch on half-forgotten works of pop occultism and speculative anthropology – *The Morning of the Magicians*, *Witchcraft Today*, *The God of the Witches*, and various entries in Dennis Wheatley's Library of the Occult series.

*Timothy Jones* teaches the Gothic Imagination at the University of Stirling. His book, *The Gothic and the Carnavalesque in American Culture* (University of Wales Press) received the Allan Lloyd-Smith prize in 2017. He is the Associate Editor of *Gothic Studies*. Recent publications have treated the fictions of Alan Garner and Robert Aickman, the weird tale, the mythologisation of Aleister Crowley, and the photography of Clarence John Laughlin.

## Brenna E. Tuel (Montreal)

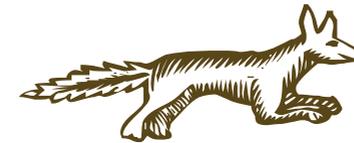
### Removing the Iron Bars Belonging, Encroachment, and Fairy-lore in *The Hallow*

This paper addresses the complex relationships between Irish fairy-lore, landscape, belonging and trespassing in the 2015 folk horror film *The Hallow*. Adam and Claire, the married couple at the centre of the film's plot, encounter seemingly normal difficulties after relocating to Ireland from London. After repeatedly ignoring the warnings of locals, the newcomers are labelled as unwanted outsiders and quickly find themselves in a power-play with both neighbours and otherworldly creatures for their home and newly born son, Finn. The ancient inhabitants of the forest are grotesque in appearance, with root-like appendages and gaping mouths. These are not the fairies found in Victorian paintings, but ancient beings capable of violence, manipulation, and death.

The further Adam and Claire trespass into the claustrophobic, dark world of the Hallow and resist forming bonds with their neighbours, the more their lives unravel and fall apart. Beginning with an analysis of the film's opening quote, I present answers to the following inquiries: How does fairy-lore translate into this contemporary story? How does its rules build upon the dichotomy of belonging and encroachment? What role does landscape play in visualizing this dichotomy? And how are the characters punished for their encroachment in human and non-human realms?

*The Hallow* presents fairies as fleshy entities in a tangible environment. Using texts on folk horror, fairy-lore, and theories of the fantastic, this paper explores how folklore and the rules of the fae translate into contemporary frames.

*Brenna E. Tuel* is a recent graduate of the Art History Masters Program at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her research intertwines folk art, American history, identity construction, craft, and alternative religions and political groups. Currently working out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she is also passionate about folklore and its impact on daily life. In addition to the research shared in this presentation, Brenna is working on a project that involves craft, folklore, and food.



11:30 - 13:00 - Cantor 9130

Panel (2b)

The Village of the Damned

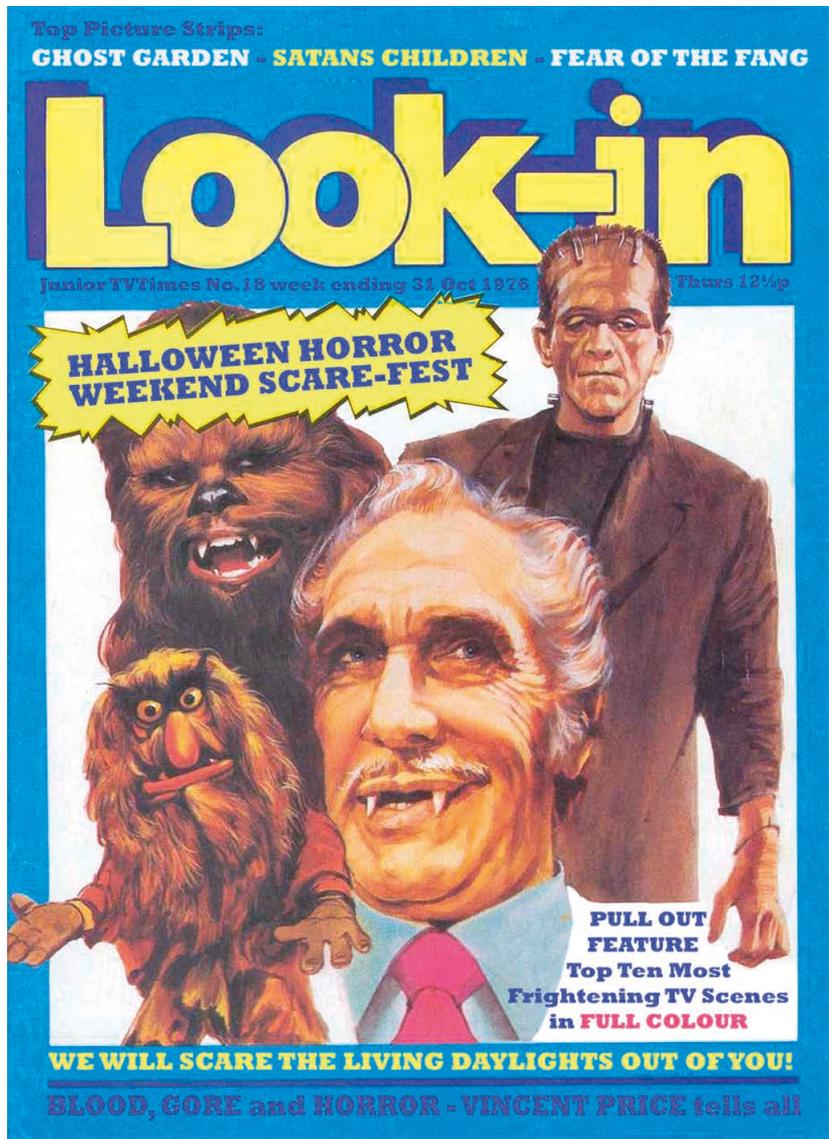
Diane Rogers - (Sheffield Hallam University)

Beasts, Monoliths & Witchcraft - the Unsung Nigel Kneale

Nigel Kneale, a British screen writer who worked extensively (and almost exclusively) in television, has been generally overlooked and underappreciated in comparison with playwrights like Dennis Potter, whose work has enjoyed much more artistic acclaim. Kneale's work, however, has a devoted cult following and he has been described as "one of the most influential writers of the 20th century" (Simpson 2007). Kneale frequently used folklore and contemporary legend in his screen narratives and has been lauded by writers such as Mark Fisher for his notably distinct "sense of the eerie" (2016, 83). Kneale grafts elements of supernatural horror and science fiction together, effectively creating a new subgenre that combines all that is *wyrd*, often examining what we understand as 'the supernatural', and subverting the tropes of ghost story fiction.

Many artists whose film and television work espouses the folk horror sub-genre (from the 1970s and well into the continuing 2010s folk horror revival) cite Nigel Kneale as one of the most significant influences on their own work. Devotees and colleagues describe Kneale variously as "having invented popular television" (Mark Gatiss, 2006), as one of "the most substantial writers who wanted to use the supernatural element" (Piers Haggard, 2017) and as an unacknowledged, underappreciated "lens or a prism through which much television passes" (Jeremy Dyson, 2018). Drawing upon my own research interviews with some such television writers and directors, I will present brief examples of Kneale's most impactful work such as *The Stone Tape* (1972) and *Beasts* (1976) from the perspective of those he has influenced.

*Diane A. Rodgers is Senior Lecturer in Media, Arts and Communications and a founder member of the Centre for Contemporary Legend Research Group at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. She specialises in teaching alternative media (including cult TV, films, music and comics), and storytelling in film and television, including textual analysis and folklore. Diane is currently conducting PhD research in 1970s British Film and Television folk-horror and hauntology, and recently had her research article 'Something Wyrd This Ways Comes: Folklore and British Television' published in Folklore journal.*



Children's magazines (such as this 'Look In' halloween special from 1976) saw dramatic increases in sales when Cassidy, Bolan and Essex were replaced by Count Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster and other similar ghouls.

## Andrew Robinson (Sheffield Hallam University)

### The Lord of Misrule Misbehaving badly in a Cornish town

This paper will examine the representation of folk custom within the narrative structure of the rarely seen 1996 TV Film *The Lord of Misrule* a feature length, made for TV comedy film, written and directed by Guy Jenkin (*Drop the Dead Donkey*, *Ballot Monkeys*), produced by Hat Trick Productions and aired on the BBC.

The story centres around the chaos that ensues when former Lord Chancellor Bill Webster (Richard Wilson) decides to sell his memoirs to a tabloid newspaper in order to raise money to save his crumbling Cornish house. This poses a threat to national security which leads to the involvement of the PM, a Minister of State, MI5 and a tabloid journalist all of whom are forced to leave the comfort of their metropolitan lives to descend on a remote village ultimately resulting in the PM fighting with tabloid journalists over a briefcase containing half a million pounds in a village duck pond.

The action takes place over two days in a small Cornish coastal village where the annual 'Lord of Misrule' custom and a related carnival is taking place. The portrayal of this fictional custom draws heavily on a number of English season customs and is intertwined with the developing narrative throughout the film, interfering with the action, acting as a comedic foil and providing a metaphoric parallel to the chaotic matters of state and the national misrule this represents.

Whilst perhaps falling outside folk horror, this overlooked and largely forgotten slice of 90s television drama shares tropes with many film and television works closely associated with the genre which will be reviewed and discussed.

**Andrew Robinson** is a Photographer, Artist and Senior Lecturer in Photography at Sheffield Hallam University, England. Andrew's photographic practice investigates notions of individual and communal identity through a visual anthropology of people, place and trace applying creative strategies that integrate still and moving imagery along with text, audio and found materials. Andrew is a founder member of the Centre for Contemporary Legend, the Walking Arts Research Group and the Northern Light Research Group all at Sheffield Hallam University and is the creator and curator of the online photobook resource *Photobibliophile*.

## Gail-Nina Anderson (Newcastle)

### The Wicker Man and the misuses of Folklore

While the 1973 horror film *The Wicker Man* is usually seen as a dramatic vehicle in which the power and survival of the oral traditions of folklore are accorded centre stage, especially as an oppositional force to a puritanical version of Christianity, this paper looks at the themes of cynicism and manipulation that underlie this popular thesis. Far from enforcing the power of pre-Christian modes of "natural" belief and religious practice, the film deliberately undercuts them in favour of a completely artificial use of folklore for purposes of economic and feudal control.

The "folklore" of the film is the product of a confusing bricolage of culturally unrelated motifs brought together in a fashion more resembling the disciplines of Comparative Religious Studies than the patterns of genuine localised folklore. The success and subsequent cult status of the film have helped fuel the notion, in popular cultural and social media, that "folklore" is an assemblage of motifs that can be dipped into at random, making apparent connections outside historical or geographic context in order to fuel a pre-existing theories about the (apparently universal) nature of primitive and non-literate religious beliefs.

The power of the film stems not from its revelation of dark religious origins (as, for example, happens in the TV play *Robin Redbreast*) but from the diametrically oppositional notion that folklore motifs, once written down and academically "known", become useful commodities in the economics of modern cultural exchange.

**Dr. Gail-Nina Anderson** runs independent courses on art history and literature in Newcastle. A prolific public lecturer, she has also organised and written the catalogues for two exhibitions of Victorian painting at Nottingham University, while recent publications include essays on Norman Cornish, Tessa Farmer, William Burroughs and M.R.James, plus an article on Folk Horror for *The Fortean Times*. An active member of the Folklore Society, she delivered the 33rd Katharine Briggs lecture (published in *Folklore*) on "Art-lore", a theme she is developing into a book. A collection of her ghost stories is also planned for 2020, plus a third exhibition of postcards from her collection.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON



14:00 - 15:30 - Cantor 9130

Panel (3a)

Island of lost souls

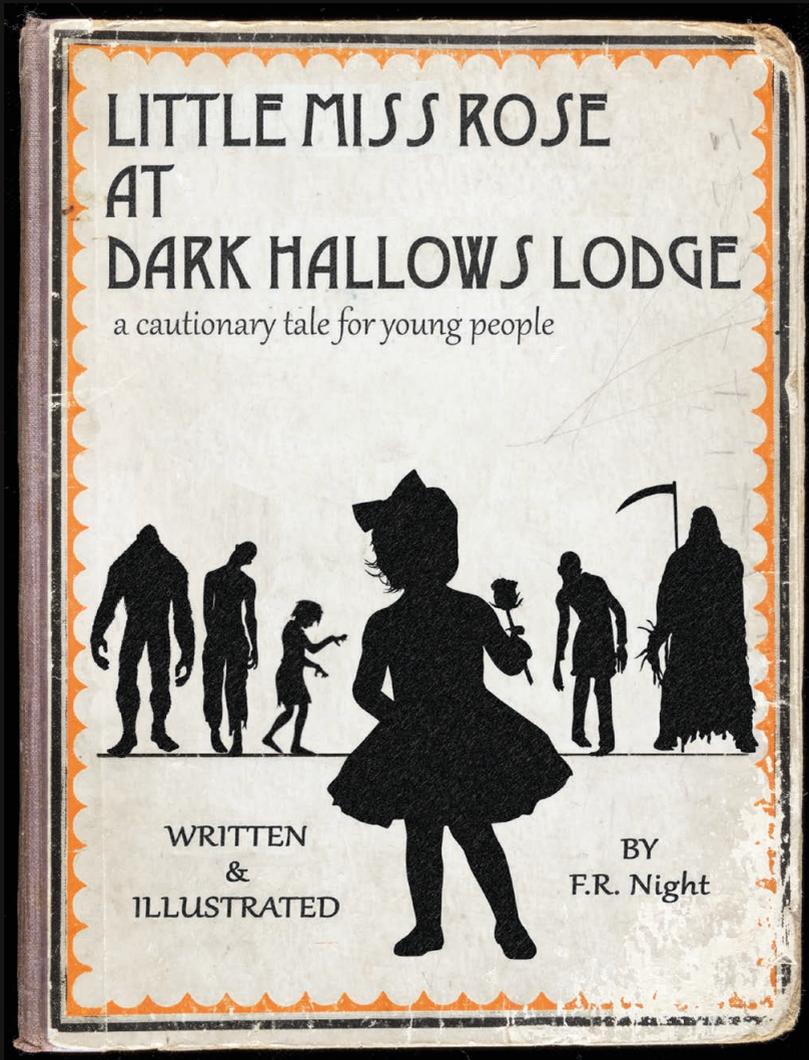
**Evelyn Koch (University of Bayreuth, Germany)**

Cyclic Time in Folk Horror

One of the traits that sets Folk Horror apart from other genres is its particular use of non-linear time. Whereas in Gothic fiction the past has a bearing on the present, Folk Horror develops this theme even further by using cyclic time, a concept derived from folktales, folklore and myth which corresponds to the Ancient Greek concept of *Aiōn*. Cyclic time creates the illusion of being removed from the consequences of linear time, i.e. events and even deaths are reversible, for example. Folk Horror television series such as *The Owl Service* (1969) and *Children of the Stones* (1977) employ the concept of cyclic time and even films like *The Wicker Man* (1973) suggest the cyclical re-enactment of certain rituals in accordance with the cyclical re-occurrence of the seasons.

In Folk Horror, cyclic time has the function of creating a sense of fairy-tale-removedness of time once the space of an isolated community has been entered which sets a stark contrast to the linear time flow of modernity. Another function is to usher in evil and due to its cyclical nature it may be defeated for now by single protagonists, but it will never vanish completely, only until the next cycle is starting again. For instance, in *The Owl Service*, a fateful love triangle from the Welsh folk tales of the Fourth Branch of the *Mabinogi* is cyclically re-enacted every generation, i.e. the protagonists are trapped in a non-linear time convoluting mythical, historical and present times, resulting inevitably in the misery and even death of all involved. Contrary to the book, the television series' ending suggests that the cycle will start again. This suggests that in Folk Horror evil cannot be ultimately defeated.

*Evelyn Koch holds an M.A. in English and American Studies from the University of Jena, Germany. She wrote her MA thesis on "The Eerie English Landscape in Literature and Film" and is a research assistant and doctoral candidate ("World-building and the New Astronomy in Seventeenth-century Prose Fictions of Cosmic Voyage") in English Literature at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. Her further research interests include early modern and medieval literature, science and literature, landscape in literature, as well as horror, fantasy and weird fiction. In the summer term of 2017, she taught a seminar on "Folk Horror" at the University of Jena.*



The original 1926 children's picture book, based on a traditional Nordic story, which inspired the hugely influential hand tinted silhouette animation 'Dark Hallows Hall' which terrified children across Europe during the 1930s.

## Amy Harris (De Montfort University, Leicester)

### Following the Wicca Man Addressing the Invisible Women behind Contemporary British Folk Horror Cinema

The new millennium has enthusiastically welcomed a rebirth of British Horror films. Many of these films explore urban myths and legends of witches, fairies, bogarts and devils. Films such as *Kill List* (2011) have been widely celebrated in academia, and yet essential work on the impact that women filmmakers have on the genre remains overlooked. Certainly, there is a continuous lack of gender equality within the film industry, exemplified most recently by UK research project 'Calling the Shots.' This conference is a novel opportunity to highlight examples of women's undervalued work in British Folk Horror cinema and it offers a platform to discuss women's unique take on the genre's revival in the UK. In seeking to address why these films have received minimal critical and academic attention, I have created a database to log the lack of information on works such as *The Daisy Chain* (2008) and *The Devil's Doorway* (2018). Having logged 50 unique British Horror films released between 2000 and 2018, I am excited to share some of these titles at the conference. In particular those which offer unique representations pertaining to British folklore.

Interestingly, only three months into my research, I have already noticed how difficult it is to acquire some of these films due to their limited online release and narrow festival distribution. This raises questions about how restricted distribution opportunities available to female directors can inhibit the critical attention they receive. This has also prompted me to explore new ways of obtaining information for my research, such as through festivals, fan sites or approaching filmmakers directly. Therefore, this is a challenging and original project with the potential to contribute an essential gendered perspective on contemporary British Folk Horror cinema and I would be delighted to participate in a conference amongst expert researchers of British folklore to further my own understanding of these unstudied films.

*Amy Harris completed a BA and MA in Film at UoS and then developed her interest in gender studies and Horror film at DMU. She is currently working on a PhD focusing on contemporary British Horror films made by women and documents her PhD journey on Instagram, where she sometimes features amateur SFX makeup looks and information about UK Horror conventions and conferences. She has previously presented conference papers that, like her current research, engage with the progressiveness of Horror films made by women.*

## Ceri Houlbrook (University of Hertfordshire)

### Our Love Will Last Forever The Love-Lock Motif on Screen

If you walk over a major bridge in a Western city chances are you will come across at least one or two love-locks: padlocks inscribed with names or initials, typically deposited as a statement of romantic commitment.

This has become a truly global phenomenon, with over 400 love-lock assemblages catalogued worldwide, and although it was practiced prior to the 21st century, it did not gain widespread popularity until the mid-2000s – sparked, this paper contends, by an Italian teenage romance novel and subsequent film. This paper explores this transition from popular culture to popular (or folk) custom – and the reverse. As the love-lock custom gained popularity and familiarity, it became an established folk motif in films and on television, and this paper considers what these transitions demonstrate about the relationship between popular custom and popular culture.

*Dr Ceri Houlbrook is a Research Fellow in Folklore and History at the University of Hertfordshire, having attained a doctorate in Archaeology at the University of Manchester in 2014. Her primary interests are contemporary British folklore and the material culture of ritual practices and popular beliefs. She has co-edited a volume on *The Materiality of Magic*; published a book on *The Magic of Coin-Trees from Religion to Recreation*; and is currently penning one on the global phenomenon of love-locks. She co-manages the *Concealed and Revealed Project*, which explores domestic concealment in the post-medieval home, focusing on contemporary engagements with concealed deposits.*



14:00 - 15:30 - Cantor 9130  
 Panel (3b)

At the Mountains of Madness:  
 (Hollywood and Beyond)

Sandy Hobbs (University of the West of Scotland)

Val Lewton at RKO  
 Horror or Folklore?

This paper deals with films made in Hollywood in the early and middle 1940s. Although, conventionally, the director is treated as the primary author of a film, the films from RKO studio's low-budget unit are usually treated as the works of the producer, Val Lewton. Most of them are discussed as examples of the "horror" genre. However, I suggest that some of them are better seen as incorporating folklore. Taking, for example, the first made, *Cat People* (1942), we find that the main female character, an immigrant to the United States from Serbia, is under the influence of a folk belief she encountered in her native village. She fears that when emotionally aroused she may turn into a cat, whereas her America lover calls this a "fairy tale". Similar themes are present in other of Lewton's films, including *I Walked With a Zombie* (1943), *The Leopard Man* (1943) and *Isle of the Dead* (1945).

FLESHER FILMS' attempt to mix horror and folklore motifs with hippy inspired, free love and sexual liberation fell foul of the censor and was only released two years later after numerous cuts renamed as 'Pagan Brides of Satan'

## James Williamson (Goldsmiths, University of London)

### Challenging Sight and Sense Tracking the UFO in Science Fiction Cinema

This paper will address the emergence of the UFO as an icon in folklore as represented in the science fiction films of the 1950s, and how they have influenced the evolution of later SF cinema both visually and thematically. As both an icon and a symbol, the UFO is purely folkloric in its phantasmagorical presence but also an immediately recognisable product of a specific historical period marked by seismic technological and scientific advancements. The popular narratives that are produced around these images often reveal both paranoid fears and utopian hopes, from *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *Forbidden Planet* (1956) to *The War of the Worlds* (1953) and *This Island Earth* (1955).

These encounters can range from the absurd to the sublime and melancholic. Even as they signal moments of dramatic change for individual characters and whole civilizations, they often also communicate a profound sense of loss. From these earlier films emerges a distinction between the iconography of these early images and narratives of UFOs and their original sensibility. This is a trend that carries through the late 20th and into the early 21st centuries, as this sensibility evolves into recognisable thematic elements of 'intellectual' SF film, from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) to *Under the Skin* (2014), and the iconography into 'popular' SF blockbusters and franchises such as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* – with revealing points of convergence in films such as *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and *Arrival* (2016).

By first exploring the emergence and codification of UFO narratives through and within science fiction cinema, and then tracing their thematic and iconographic resonance in later films, this paper will excavate one path of folkloric evolution in popular culture and its manifestation on screen.

**James Williamson** is a researcher specialising in film & screen media, science fiction, and genre studies. He recently completed his PhD in Media and Communications at Goldsmiths on the mythic and melancholic aspects of American science fiction films of the 1950s. He also holds an MA in Film and Screen Studies. His further areas of interest include the evolution of cybernetics and post-humanist theories and their representations in popular culture, and he is currently working on an article entitled 'Cybernetic Life-cycles: The Sound and the Psychology of *Forbidden Planet*'.

## Ekaterina Netchitailova (Sheffield Hallam University)

### Holy-foolishness in Russian Culture from Holy Fool to the Modern God-driven Eccentric

Holy-fool was a well-known 'character' in Russian culture. A firm image of the mediaeval times of the old Rus, he was a 'wondering' Christian, a mad in appearance vagabond who would renounce the world for the sake of Christ. The justification of the 'holy fool' can be found in the Bible, and 36 known holy fools of Russia were proclaimed as saints by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The interest in the phenomenon of 'holy-foolishness' has been growing in Russia in the past years. This can be explained by the turbulent times that the country has experienced before and since the collapse of the Soviet Union, by the uncertainty on the political and economical level, and by the phenomenal rise of the Christianity. The 'Holy-Fool' has become an image of Christianity but also a peculiar symbol of Russian culture, where nothing is certain, but one always believes in the fate of God, and in something more profound than the materialism of this world.

This character has found a new profound interest in both Christian and academic literature, but also in the modern cinema, and even music. The films of Lungin (*Taxi-Blues*, *the Island*) burrow and even base their story line on the Russian 'Holy Fool'. Looking at these movies and the actor who played the main role in both movies, Pyotr Mamonov, this paper argues that the character of 'Holy Fool' is still alive and present in the modern days in Russia, re-adjusted, however, to the current age and current discourse on madness and eccentricity.

**Dr. Ekaterina Netchitailova** did her PhD in digital media (Facebook). She teaches digital media, and media studies. Her current research is in discourse on madness, positioning it in a bigger debate on diversity; Russian culture, and mad studies. Originally from Russia, Ekaterina lived in 4 countries and speaks 4 languages.



16:00- 17:00 - Cantor 9130  
CLOSING KEYNOTE

**HELEN WHEATLEY (University of Warwick)**

Haunted Landscapes  
Trauma and Grief in the Contemporary Television Ghost story

Maria del Pilar Blanco, writing about North American literature, proposes that to 'ghost-watch implies a vigilant perception of the landscapes depicted within [a text]' (2012: 1) and suggests that ghosts are always 'embedded in the story about a place' (ibid: 8). This paper explores these suggestions in relation to recent British television narratives of haunting, including *Marchlands* (ITV1, 2011), *The Secret of Crickley Hall* (BBC1, 2012) *Lightfields* (ITV1, 2013), *Remember Me* (BBC1, 2014) and *The Enfield Haunting* (Sky Living, 2015), and *The Living and the Dead* (BBC1, 2016). I argue that in these ghost melodramas, place carries a great weight of signification. Both haunted houses and haunted landscapes in the ghost drama are imbued with the narrative themes of grief, loss, trauma and the search for truth and reconciliation. This work on the ghost story is part of a broader project I am pursuing on television and death (*Television/Death* will be published by EUP in 2023), that thinks about the centrality of the medium in working through our thoughts and feelings about death and dying, and how we might cope with bereavement.

The paper explores the structuring of these ghost dramas around the complex short-form serial narrative, in which a series of folkloric narrative enigmas, often tied to hidden familial trauma and/or historical injustices, are established in impressionistic ways at the start of the drama, and must be worked through or worked out by a detective-like protagonist. It thus thinks about the analysis of these series' internal folkloric 'texts'.

**Helen Wheatley** is Reader in Film and Television Studies at the University of Warwick, where she is Deputy Chair of the Faculty of Arts. She has published extensively on television history and aesthetics, including the monographs *Gothic Television* (Manchester University Press, 2007) and *Spectacular Television* (I.B. Tauris, 2016), which won the BAFTSS award for Monograph of the Year in 2017. She is currently working on the book *Television/Death* which will be published by Edinburgh University Press in 2023.



## what to do when toys talk back...



### **A guide for worried parents**

**Compiled from case studies and published reports of hauntings, toy polterguists and harmful imaginary friends.**

**A Self Help Leaflet From**

**The PARENT'S INFORMATION SERVICE**

## The Centre for Contemporary Legend

The city of Sheffield has an international reputation as a centre for folklore and legend scholarship that can be traced back to 1964. The academic study of Contemporary Legends began at the University of Sheffield in the 1982 with a series of conferences and publications in the Perspectives on Contemporary Legend series.

We want to build upon these foundations working with friends and partners to reinvigorate folklore and legend studies in the 21st century. We aim to create an institutional research group within the Cultural, Communication and Computing Research Institute (C3Ri) at Sheffield Hallam University that can act as a focal point for all those working in the field of folklore and legend studies..

Diane Rodgers, Dr David Clarke and Andrew Robinson



This Symposium has been organised by:

Diane Rodgers, Dr David Clarke and Andrew Robinson  
Department of Media Arts and Communication  
Sheffield Hallam University.

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Kathy Doherty, Amy Lander.

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[www.contemporarylegend.co.uk](http://www.contemporarylegend.co.uk)

Booklet designed by Andrew Robinson

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**FOLK**

# Folklore On Screen



**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University**

Cultural, Communication  
and Computing  
Research Institute