

## **Hidden Streams – Buxton’s waters, their folklore and influence.**

ROBINSON, Andrew <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4834-7719>>

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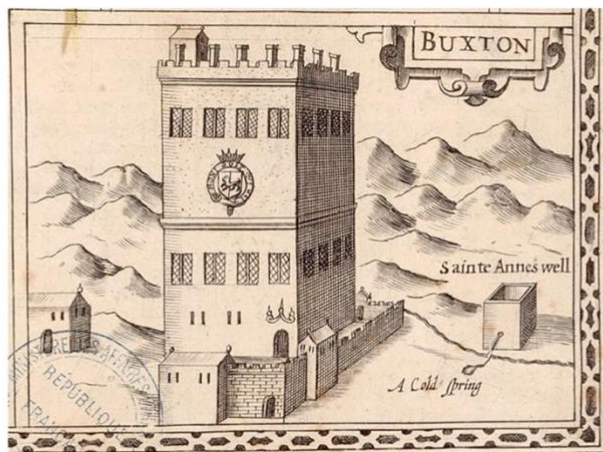
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**SACRED WATERS: An International Transdisciplinary Conference**  
Buxton, England, 30<sup>th</sup> June – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024.

**‘Hidden Streams – Buxton’s waters, their folklore and influence’**  
**Andrew Robinson, Centre for Contemporary Legend,**  
**Sheffield Hallam University.**



**ABSTRACT**

In his 84 page poem *De Mirabilibus Pecci*, (1636), the philosopher Thomas Hobbes described Seven Wonders of the High Peak rather unflatteringly as "Two founts, two caves. One pallace, mount and pit." Water features in five of these wonders, two of which, St Anne’s Well and Poole’s Cavern, are in Buxton, at the time a small hamlet ignored by most maps and of little interest beyond its Roman well and nearby Hall. If the Seven Wonders provided first a pilgrimage route for young aristocrats and more recently a handy tourist itinerary for the ever-increasing travellers to the High Peak, Buxton’s sacred well and healing waters have been instrumental in both its establishment as a Spa Town and its growth and continuing survival as a tourist destination.

This paper will explore Buxton’s celebrated well, springs and hidden streams and consider their important role in the development of the town. Using material from the author’s extensive archive of photographs and related ephemera we will travel underneath the Opera House and inside the unrestored Crescent and Mineral Baths before visiting the town’s wells and following the Dukes Drive to nearby Lover’s Leap at the mouth of the sublime Shirebrook Dell and mysterious Poole’s Cavern to explore the topographies, histories and folklore associated with Buxton’s Waters.

**Andrew Robinson** is a photographer, artist, and senior lecturer in photography at Sheffield Hallam University, where he co-founded the Centre for Contemporary Legend (CCL) with Dr David Clarke and Dr Diane Rodgers. His art practice investigates expressions of identity and material culture through a visual anthropology of people, place, and trace. Research interests include: the visual representation of vernacular English custom and tradition; the folklore, myth and legend associated with photographs and photographers; and photography in print and archive. Recent outputs have explored subjects as diverse as the Photography of the Crimean War; Lover’s Leap Legends; English Calendar Customs; A.I Generated Imagery, and the Calvine UFO.

Recent publications include chapters in; ‘Behind the Mask: Vernacular Culture in the Time of COVID’ (Utah State University Press, 2023) and ‘Folklore and Nation in Britain and Ireland’, (Routledge 2021) along with papers presented at ‘Off The Shelf Literary Festival’ (Nov 23) ‘AI and Photography’ Royal Photographic Society (Oct 2023); ‘International Society of Contemporary Legend Research Annual Conference’ (June 2023).

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