Folklore, Learning and Literacies
The Annual Conference of the Folklore Society

Friday 24 to Sunday 26 April 2020, London

Lore is learning: folklore is a body of knowledge and a means of transmission. Vernacular knowledge, and vernacular transmission, each rooted in language.

Languages of sign, symbol and the body confront us daily, some time-honoured, some very new, and how we read them informs how we act, whether to conform, or to rebel. Folklore socialises us into a community of knowledge, but not all communities are generous. Modern media produce myths and reproduce memes, their speed and reach unprecedented. Rumour, misinformation and conspiracy theory have results – from climate-change denial to vaccination scares – which are anything but imaginary.

Formal education and training is no more – or less – formative than the informal, everyday vernacular literacies that we absorb from our peer groups or families. A proverb is a condensed lesson; a ballad or a fairy-tale has a moral more often than not; a rite of passage may encapsulate a trade’s culture. And the landscape, whether rural or urban, is a theatre of memory and the backdrop of local legend.

So yes, lore is learning. But how do we learn folklore? How do we learn about folklore? This conference of the Folklore Society will address issues such as:

- The uses of traditional folklore in formal education
- The relationship between formal education and vernacular practices
- Informal learning structures in trades and professions
- Family and kin as transmitters of songs and performance traditions
- School idiolects, customs and costumes
- Children’s lore and language: topical rhymes, parodies, the child’s calendar
- Mnemonics and tongue-twisters
- Proverbs and how they are learnt...or mislearnt
- Acquiring verbal fluency; for example, flying and rapping
- Schoolchildren in folklore, from Little St. Hugh to the Worst Witch....
- Supernatural beings who impart skills and knowledge
- Folklore in children’s literature, television, films, and computer games.

Proposals for papers of twenty minutes should be sent to the Folklore Society at thefolkloresociety@gmail.com, or 50 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5BT, UK, telephone +44 (0) 203 915 3034, by 12th January 2020

The conference will begin at 2pm on Friday 24th April (registration from 1pm) and will end at lunchtime on Sunday 26th.

Conference fee:
Concessions: £110 (speakers, Folklore Society members)
Standard rate: £160
Fee includes lunches on Saturday and Sunday.
Single day rates available.