

SIEF Working Group “Place Wisdom” Business Meeting

SIEF2021 15th Congress. Helsinki, Finland 19-24 June 2021

Date and Time: Saturday 19 June 2021, 12:45 – 14:30 UTC+3

Location: Zoom

Participants:

Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahti - University of Eastern Finland and Finland Futures Research Centre, Forestscape

Cáit McCullagh* - Heriot-Watt University, Waterscapes, Doctoral Thesis

Kirsi Laurén - University of Eastern Finland, Mire trend project, Forestscape

Katriina Siivonen - University of Turku and Finland Futures Research Centre, Forestscape Waterscapes

Ullrich Kockel – Heriot-Watt University (Emeritus Professor) and Visiting Professor at Latvian Academy of Culture, Waterscapes

Máiréad Nic Craith – Heriot-Watt University (Emeritus Professor), Waterscapes

Anne Dippel -University of Jena, New Member

Maria Ormonde, Museu de Angra do Heroísmo, Prospective Member

Mare Kõiva - Estonian Literary Museum, dept. of folkloristics, New Member

Minutes

1. Appointment of note-taker for the meeting: Cáit McCullagh

2. The foundation of the Place Wisdom Working Group

Katriina Siivonen invited Ullrich Kockel to share a summary of the history of the foundation of the Place Wisdom Working Group. Professor Kockel referred members to a series of articles in AJEC 2010, Vol, 19 (2),

<https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/ajec/19/2/ajec.19.issue-2.xml>

3. Report on activities since SIEF Santiago 2019

Katriina Siivonen reported that members of ‘Place Wisdom’ have continued to work on the following themes:

- **“Waterscapes”** led by Prof. Ullrich Kockel (Heriot-Watt university, Edinburgh)
- **“Scales of Home in Today’s Europe”** (<http://www.scalesofhome.eu/>) led by Dr Stella Butter (Universität Koblenz, Landau, Germany) and Dr Nourit Melcer-Padon (Hebrew University)
- **“Forestscape”** led by Adj. prof., PhD Katriina Siivonen

A defining characteristic of a **‘waterscape’** – in contrast to a ‘landscape’ – perspective is the absence of any firm, stable vantage point for the narrative. The aim is better to understand fluctuating developments by looking at them quasi “from the inside” through a range of local lenses. Current PhD project: <http://irc.hw.ac.uk/research/sgsah-arcs.html>

The research project **“Scales of Home”** in today’s Europe concentrates on how scales of home are imagined and socially constructed in Europe since the 1990s. For further information, please visit our website: www.scalesofhome.eu

“Forestscape” is a research network for researchers working on Human-Forest Relationship in different contexts. One central theme for the network is to work with and understand different forms of cultural sustainability and the role of cultural heritage in relation to it.

Katriina Silvoenen invited Ullrich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Cáit McCullagh to share about the emergent “**Creative Ethnology**” network founded in Scotland. Professor Kockel shared that the group had come together after the inaugural lecture of Professor Gary West at the University of Edinburgh, inspired by his theme and interested to explore and develop the concept of working at the interface of the arts and ethnology. The network is identifying and eliciting new ways of engaging with communities, including people active in creative expression through diverse forms (examples include fine art, filmmaking, songwriting, composition and performance, poetry) to expand ethnological imaginations, knowledge and resources. A key foundation of the concept is awareness of the ongoing tradition of synergy between people and places, including Patrick Geddes’ conceptualisation of the notation of life ‘Place, Work, Folk’. See: Kockel, U. and McFadyen, M. (2019) ‘On the carrying stream into the European mountain Roots and routes of creative (Scottish) ethnology’, *Anuac*, 8(2), 189-211 and McCullagh, C. (2020) "Fraying Edges 'Upon the Utmost Corners of the world'", UHI The Edge Seminar, 30 November 2020 [online], available: <https://youtu.be/NlpKwRcKTb0>

a. Conferences etc.

Unlike other WGs, the focus of the Place Wisdom Working Group has not been to facilitate inter-congress conferences but on the development of collaborative research themes.

A Selection of events and activities (2019 -2021)

- SIEF 2021: Panel and Round Table ”New rules for the engagement with nature: human ecology and emerging heritage futures” (Stream: Environment)
- Forestscape Research Project: “Dynamic Museum and Heritage Futures Workshop as instruments for ecological reconstruction”, led by WG member Adj. Prof.Katriina Siivonen (University of Turku), WG member Adj. Prof. Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahtiis one of the researchers. See: <https://sites.utu.fi/dynamo/en/>
- Forestscape Research Project: ”MireTrend”, led by WG member Adj. Prof Kirsi Laurén (University of Eastern Finland)), WG member Adj. Prof.Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahtiis one of the researchers. See: <https://uefconnect.uef.fi/en/group/mire-trend-research-project/>
- Research bid for a network and programme of activities around land-based learning, bringing together indigenous and non-indigenous participants, WG member Prof. Ullrich Kockel (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh) together with the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience
- Research project “New Connections Across the Northern Isles”. Led by WG member Cáit McCullagh (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh), co-curationg maritime community heritages and the co-production of a Virtual Museum. See <https://irc.hw.ac.uk/new-connections.html>
- Televised performance of ‘Rivers of Our Being’ (2020). The oratorio is the result of the collaborative cultural heritage research project “CoHERE – Critical Heritages: performing and representing identities in Europe”. Professor Valdis Muktupavels in dialogue with Place Wisdom WG members, and “Waterscapes” theme researchers, Ullrich Kockel and Máiréad Nic Craith wove the research findings into artistic form, creating a new genre of work – the folk-oratorio. See: <https://youtu.be/-75wVu2dRVI>
- Research Initiative in Scotland: Creative Ethnology (with ‘Place Wisdom’ as one of its key foci).

b. A selection of publications (2019-2021)

The Place Wisdom Working Group did not publish any common publications in the period since 2019. However, members have published the following, which relate to and are informed by their involvement in the research themes:

- Birke, D. and Butter, S. eds. (2020) *Comfort in Contemporary Culture: The Challenges of a Concept*, Bielefeld: Verlag – (“Scales of Home in Today’s Europe”). This book includes contributions by Place Wisdom WG members S. Butter (co-editor), Z. Bułat-Silva (article) and N. Melcer-Padon (article).
- Nic Craith, M. (2020) *The Vanishing World of The Islandman: Narrative and Nostalgia*, London: Palgrave – (“Waterscapes”).
- New Connections Across the Northern Isles (2020) *New Connections across the Northern Isles A project linking people and heritage through the maritime cultures of Orkney and Shetland: Seven Co-Produced Films researched, directed and edited by C. McCullagh* [online], available: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5946154> - (“Waterscapes”).
- Kouri, J., Räsänen, T. and Tynkkynen, N. eds. (2020) *Muutoksen tyrskyt ja kotirannan mainingit: Kulttuurisia näkökulmia merentutkimukseen*, Helsinki: FSE – (“Waterscapes”). English translation: The storms of change and the rollers of the home shore. Cultural perspectives on maritime research. A volume of essays with contributions by the WG members J. Kouri (co-editor, co-authored article), K. Siivonen (co-authored article), and P. Latvala-Harvilahti (article).

c. Grant applications

Members of the Working Group have been developing the following grant applications:

- Research project ongoing Alliance for Indigenous Organisations, with the possibility of Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) UK funding, WG member Ullrich Kockel is developing a partnership with organisations in Canada to facilitate two Place wisdom workshops themed around place-based learning and indigenous knowledge, one in Canada and one in Scotland. There may be some opportunity to align with the proposed Place Wisdom Working Group interim conference in 2022.
- Research proposal to investigate Royal society of Edinburgh funding stream for projects that support Scottish scholars to work with European colleagues (an important post-Brexit emphasis) to develop research themes. WG member Ullrich Kockel is leading on this and has also discussed possible themes with members of the Creative Ethnology network, which also includes Place wisdom WG members Máiréad Nic Craith and Cáit McCullagh

d. Other activities

None noted at the meeting.

4. Plans for 2021-2023

Unlike other WGs, the focus of Working Group Place Wisdom has not been to facilitate inter-congress conferences but on the development of collaborative research theme and the organisation of thematic workshops.

At the meeting this precedent was revisited, partly in light of the recent experience of many members in delivering and participating in virtual events, due to the constrictions on face-to-face meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic, and also in light of a felt need to share more across common and complimentary research interests.

The following actions arose out of an energetic and inspiring discussion:

a. Interim Conference

The WG will aim to hold an interim conference in 2022. The co-chairs will progress this idea with members, including the identification and appointment of a conference organising group. Depending on the development or cessation of the pandemic, it is hoped that the conference will be in-person. The conference will present an opportunity for WG members to present their work,

strengthen cooperation and potential collaborations between members, open-up potential research themes and alliances (including with external partners and funding bodies).

Ullrich Kockel proposed that there may be the possibility of aligning with the AHRC's possible interest in workshops exploring place-based learning and indigenous knowledges. This could make funding available for the conference.

b. Virtual networking, knowledge and experience sharing and online repository

The WG will hold occasional virtual gatherings between now and the 2023 SIEF Congress. It is proposed that WG members will gather twice for virtual facilitated discussions on pertinent themes as an opportunity to become familiar with each other's work and interests, explore emergent and related themes, and strengthen fellow feeling among the members.

The proposed format is to offer something between a reading group and webinar experience – one or two members will be invited to present a reading / current research to initiate a facilitated discussion. It is hoped that these discussions will be generative of new research proposals and collaborative funding bids.

- The co-chairs will progress this theme the membership, initially inviting members to share what they would be happy to bring and / or lead on for these gatherings.
- The gatherings will be online via a virtual platform – possibly Microsoft Teams.
- The co-chairs will consult with Katriina Siivonen and Ullrich Kockel on establishing a stable membership list, reflecting current active and interested membership.
- The co-chairs will investigate the best platform for the WG virtual sessions – including consulting with Mare Kõiva - Estonian Literary Museum, dept. of folkloristics – who may be able to give access to the Teams platform gratis.
- At the meeting it was proposed that two such sessions might be sufficient, but also that an occasional pattern of once a quarter with no obligation upon members to be present might also be useful.
- At the meeting it was proposed that emergent themes might include: the complexities of indigeneity in diverse contexts; 'degrowth' and 'postgrowth' intersections with place knowledges and learning.

C. Repository of multi-media records and resources

The research agenda of the working group is situated at the interface of human ecology, geography, anthropology, art, archaeology, performance studies, literature, linguistics, futures research and philosophy and it has been an ongoing project of the group to establish a centrally accessible repository of records and resources that reflect this.

- At the meeting it was proposed that this resource could be aligned with the virtual platform for gatherings. WG members mentioned having success at establishing similar resources via Teams and Google Docs.
- A key proposal is to include a section which covers the narrative of the Place Wisdom working Group from its inception and foundation. Ullrich Kockel was able to share on these themes.

- The co-chairs will investigate possible platforms through polling members. They will also progress a process for establishing a Repository Group to maintain and facilitate the resource.

b. Publications

The Group will continue to publish under the of collaborative research themes of Working Group of Place Wisdom.

- Proposed to develop a special edition journal publication from our SIEF 2021: Panel and Round Table "New rules for the engagement with nature: human ecology and emerging heritage futures" (Stream: Environment).
- The co-chairs will progress this proposal with panel members.

c. Grant applications

There is a desire from the members to develop an active research programme, and to engage with research users outside academia. To this end, we encourage and plan to keep developing collaborative international research projects with the potential to attract significant financial support. The group aims to initiate collaborative research projects under the WG research themes and emergent themes generated through our occasional meetings and Interim Conference. Please also see point 3.1, above.

d. Other activities

None mentioned at the meeting, but please see point 4.b above for proposed generation of future activities.

5. Review of operation (ref: 2014 Statutes)

a. Mission/vision of the group

Please see Section 3. Plans for 2021 - 2023 and the attached poster of the WG on Place Wisdom.

b. Membership

The Place Wisdom Working Group was founded in 2008 by colleagues associated with the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages (University of Ulster), the Ethnological Research Unit (UWE Bristol), and the Centre for Human Ecology (University of Strathclyde). Currently the WG has 50 members located in various universities and other institutions (e.g. museums) across Europe.

- At the meeting it was agreed that it would be helpful to review the membership list and consider a process for clarifying that those who have had historic membership of the WG wish to maintain their membership and which interests and themes that reflect, may wish to explore / develop. The co-chairs will consult with Ullrich Kockel (founder member) and Katriina Siivonen (outgoing chair) in the first instance.

c. Web presence

<https://www.siefhome.org/wg/wis/index.shtml>

- A fair presentation of publications and events on the WG web pages will be examined by the co-chairs.

6. Election of at least two co-chairs and a secretary (who can be one of the co-chairs) for 2021-2023

Adjunct Professor, PhD Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahti and Ms. Cáit McCullagh* accepted nomination as Co-Chairs.

7. Vote of thanks to outgoing co-chairs

Cáit McCullagh proposed a vote of thanks to Katriina Siivonen and Stella Butter for their diligence and inspiration in holding the Place Wisdom Working Group since 2015, especially the ‘canopy of care’ that they have offered for the membership, work and development of the group’s aims and objectives.

* Otherwise known as Catherine McCullagh

Minutes recorded by CJM, 19.06.21