

July 2011

Welcome to the June newsletter!

This month we're focusing on all things Peake but we also have news of upcoming conferences, a report from the George MacDonald Conference in St Andrews and details of our fabulous joint conference with the Folklore Society in 2012.

For more details about the conference or to book your ticket go to:

<http://www.chiuni.ac.uk/conference/mervyn.cfm>



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Let us know if you have any upcoming events, talks or publications you would like us to mention in our next issue

Email Jane Carroll at J.Carroll@chi.ac.uk





Mervyn Peake and the Fantasy Tradition

July 15th-17th

Programme

Thursday, July 14th

19:00 – Reception in Council Chambers for Early Bird Delegates.

Friday, July 15th

9:30 – 10:30 – Registration, tea & coffee, opportunity to visit the Otter Gallery

10:30 – 11:30 – Keynote Lecture: Peter Winnington

11:30-12:00 – Break

12:00-13:30 – Parallel Session A

Panel One: The Fantastic and the Gothic

- Charlie White: “‘O little revolution in great shades!’ Peake and the Gothic”
- Nahid Shahbazi Moghadam “The Grotesque in ‘Danse Macabre’”
- Pierre François: “Success and failure of the mythopoeic element in the *Titus* books”

Panel Two: Madness and Otherness

- Sophie Aymes-Stokes: “I’m on a piece of floating ice the size of Kent”: eccentricity in Mervyn Peake’s Work”
- Matthew Sangster: “Peake and Vulnerability”
- Jeremy Sampson: “Towards a Hermeneutics of Otherness: A comparative study of “The Hall of Bright Carvings” in Mervyn Peake’s *Titus Groan* and Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*”

13:30-15:00 – Lunch

15:00- 16:00 – Keynote Lecture: Colin Manlove, “The Artists in Titus Groan”

16:00-17:00 – Parallel Session B

Panel One: Genre

- Larisa Prokhorova: “Algorithm of Disenchantment: Anti-Tale”
- Joseph Rex Young: “But Are They Fantasy?: Peake’s *Titus* Novels and Modern Fantasy Theory”

Panel Two: Drawings and Illustrations

- Francesca Bell: “The Fleeting Line”
- Zoë Wilcox: “The Imagination at Work: A Study of the Drawings in the *Gormenghast* Manuscripts”

17:00- 18:30 – Tours of the Otter Gallery

18:30-20:00 – Dinner

20:00-21:00 – Keynote Lecture: Joanne Harris, “The Inspirational Mervyn Peake” (ticketed event open to the public).

Saturday, July 16th

10:00-11:30 Parallel Session C:

Panel One: Landscape/Space

- Simon Eckstein: "There's No Place like Home"
- Edward Carey: "Architecture and Space"
- Irene Martyniuk: "(In)visible Black Holes: The Aporias of Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* Trilogy"

Panel Two: Poetry

- Robert Maslen: "Peake and Nonsense Poetry"
- Sara Wasson: "Sentient Ruins and the Ventriloquised Dead: Mervyn Peake's War-time Poetry"
- John Bachelor: "Peake and Tennyson"

11:30-12:00 Break

12:00-13:00 – Keynote Lecture: Farah Mendelssohn,

13:00-14:30 – Lunch

14:30 -15:30 – Keynote Lecture: Sebastian Peake

15:30-16:00 – Tea & coffee

16:00-17:30 – Parallel Session D:

Panel One: Peake and the Canon

- Mark Andresen: "A Painter's Ecstasy"
- Gaby Steinke, "Pirates and Explorers: Mervyn Peake in and beyond the 'Boys' Own' Tradition"
- John Vernon Lord, "A Tutorial with Mervyn Peake"

Panel Two: Performing Peake

- Kim Pearce: "Adapting *Boy in Darkness*"
- Aaron Paterson, Blue Elephant Theatre: "Performing Peake"

17:30-18:30- Keynote Lecture: · Katherine Langrish: 'Exchanging Certainty for Uncertainty: Mervyn Peake Explores the Realms of Children's Fiction'.

18:30-20:00 – Dinner

20:00 – Performance: *Boy In Darkness* written by Tim Franklin, directed by Kim Pearce (ticketed event open to the public)

Sunday, July 17th

11:00 – 12:00 Keynote Lecture: Brian Sibley, "Titus Aloud"

12:00- 13:00 Performances

- Stuart Olesker: "Adhesive Smiles: Nonsense and a Taste for Language in Peake's Poetry. A Reading of a Range of Peake's Nonsense and Serious Poetry"

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:00 Performance: Jaw Rattle Productions: "Mervyn Peake: As I See It"

15:00 – 16:00 Prudence Chamberlain, Blackshaw Theatre: "Adapting Titus Groan: Creating the 'Sublime Character' Through Collaborative Writing" followed by rehearsed readings of new

Register Now!

Book weekend tickets, tickets for single events and accommodation with our conference office

<http://www.chiuni.ac.uk/conference/mervyn.cfm>

And check out the conference blog for news and events

<http://mervynpeakeconference2011.blogspot.com/>

Evening Event—Friday July 15th
8pm Mitre Theatre

Joanne Harris, “The Inspirational Mervyn Peake”



Photo: Takazumi Uemura

Joanne Harris was born in Barnsley in 1964, of a French mother and an English father. She studied Modern and Mediaeval Languages at St Catharine’s College, Cambridge and was a teacher for fifteen years, during which time she published three novels, including *Chocolat* (1999), which was made into an Oscar-nominated film starring Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp.

In 2000 Joanne gave up teaching to become a full-time writer and since then she has written seven more novels, a book for older children/young adults, a collection of short stories and, with cookery writer Fran Warde, two cookbooks: *The French Kitchen* and *The French Market*. Her books are now published in over 40 countries and have won a number of British and international awards. In 2004, Joanne was one of the judges of the Whitbread prize (categories; first novel and overall winner); and in 2005 she was a judge of the Orange prize.

She also plays bass guitar in a band first formed when she was 16, is currently studying Old Norse and lives with her husband, Kevin and her 18-year-old daughter Anouchka, in Huddersfield.

Tickets: £ 12 available from the conference office
<http://www.chiuni.ac.uk/conference/mervyn.cfm>
or call Jane on (01243) 8166479

Evening Event – Saturday July 16th
8pm, Dance Studio One

Boy in Darkness

Directed by Kim Pearce

Adaptation by Tim Franklin and Liz Sands

A fantastic new production of Tim Franklin and Liz Sands' adaptation of Mervyn Peake's *Boy in Darkness*, directed by Kim Pearce. By turns tender and nightmarish, funny and unsettling, the play offers a thrilling new experience of Peake's story.

‘Everything about Boy in Darkness shines with quality and imagination[...] This is extraordinary theatre.’-**The Stage** for the 2009 Edinburgh production of *Boy of Darkness*

Tickets: £ 12 available from the conference office
<http://www.chiuni.ac.uk/conference/mervyn.cfm>
or call Jane on (01243) 8166479



Otter Gallery Exhibition

Mervyn Peake Centenary Celebration Otter Gallery,
26 May–17 July



A fantastic and fun exhibition at the Otter Gallery, University of Chichester, focusing on Peake's nonsense and poetry illustrations including 'The Hunting of the Snark' and 'Rhymes without Reason'. *Free entry*

Mervyn Peake Tour Thursday 30 June, 2pm

Bill Gray will lead a free public tour of the Otter Gallery exhibition. *Please book on 01243 816098.*

Other Events

Pallant House Gallery

Most famous for his best-selling Gormenghast series of Gothic fantasies, Mervyn Peake was one of the most multi-talented artists of the twentieth century. Painter, novelist, author, war artist, poet and dramatist, he also illustrated classic works such as *Treasure Island* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. To mark the centenary of his birth, the Sussex Centre for Folklore Fairy Tales and Fantasy will hold an international conference July 15th-17th 2011. The Conference will be accompanied by art exhibitions, talks and other events in Chichester.

Pallant House Gallery presents a display of Peake's most famous illustrations. A related exhibition runs at the Otter Gallery from 26 May to 17 July.

Exhibition Tour: Mervyn Peake: A Centenary Celebration Thursday 30 June, 11am

Professor Bill Gray, Professor of Literary History at the University of Chichester, and Director of the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy, provides his perspective on Peake's iconic illustrations and prints.

£8 (students £4)

THEMED WORKSHOPS

A programme of children's story-making and young artists' illustration workshops accompanies the exhibition. For more details contact Pallant House Gallery on 01243 774557



Conference Review:

George MacDonald Among His Contemporaries Daniel Gabelman (University of St Andrews)

On 30 March 2011, scholars from around the United Kingdom and North America gathered in the ancient university town of St Andrews for the first major academic conference on George MacDonald in almost six years. The aim of the one day event was to place MacDonald solidly within his historical context and to explore the ways in which he engaged with the people, movements and ideas of his time. Hosted by the School of English in Kennedy Hall, the conference was originally envisaged by Ginger Stelle who then enlisted the aid of John Patrick Pazdziora to help organize the event with assistance and oversight provided by their academic advisor, Dr Christopher MacLachlan.

The morning began with a plenary session delivered by Professor Stephen Prickett (University of Kent, Canterbury), discussing 'George MacDonald and the Idea of Tradition'. Professor Prickett drew from his recent book *Modernity and Reinvention of Tradition: Backing into the Future* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) the argument that the word 'tradition' almost entirely disappeared from usage during the eighteenth century but that it was revived in the nineteenth century as the Enlightenment distrust of inherited ideas began to come into question. Instead of 'tradition' having a purely negative connotation, writers in the nineteenth century took more varied and nuanced views of how past ideas affect the present. Professor Prickett suggested that George MacDonald chiefly reflected on the uses and importance of tradition through the image of the library. Focusing on the centrality of the library in *Lilith*, Professor Prickett then argued that MacDonald viewed tradition as a mode of thinking that is both valuable but also potentially dangerous. Tradition for MacDonald is in some sense a gift of previous generations that each individual needs to internalize, yet tradition can also potentially be a poison as illustrated by the mangled book containing Lilith's soul. According to Professor Prickett's reading, MacDonald dialectically insists that tradition is both valuable and valueless.

After the plenary, participants had to make difficult choices on which three of the six excellent panel sessions to attend. In the panel on 'Natural and Supernatural', a paper discussing how MacDonald received and modified the tradition of Coleridge and F. D. Maurice on the significance of miracles was followed by a stimulating paper by Alison Crockford (University of Edinburgh) on MacDonald's use of the divine child figure and extra-linguistic modes of communication. Simultaneously, the panel on 'Social Conscience and Imagination' discussed how MacDonald's works and ideas related to other major Victorian writers like John Ruskin and Christina Rossetti and how all these authors used imaginative creations to criticize and help modify their time and culture.

Following lunch, the programme resumed with panels on 'George MacDonald in Scotland' and 'Victorian Media'. In the first, two papers explored MacDonald's Scottishness. Kirstin Jeffrey Johnson (St Andrews), with an *in absentia* paper read by Ginger Stelle, offered a biographical sketch

of MacDonald's maternal uncle MacIntosh MacKay who was a scholar, friend of Walter Scott, and involved in the formation of the Free Church of Scotland. John Patrick Pazdziora then presented a paper that placed MacDonald's fairytale 'The Light Princess' in dialogue with 'Prince Prigio' by fellow-Scotsman Andrew Lang. Meanwhile, the panel on 'Victorian Media' discussed MacDonald in relationship to contemporary artists like the pre-Raphaelites and looked at the effects that serialization had upon the themes and genres of *At the Back of the North Wind*.

The raciest pair of panels was reserved for the last as participants chose between sexuality and the gothic. A nice balance was struck in the panel on 'Gendering Authority' as the first paper by Philip Hickok (University of Aberdeen) on 'Deifying the Feminine' in *Robert Falconer* was counterweighted by Jenny Neophytou (Brunel University), who presented on masculinity in 'The Broken Swords'. Concurrently, in the panel on 'Gothic Romanticism', Jennifer Koopman (McGill University) and David Melville Wingrove (University of Edinburgh) gave two of the most animated papers of the day exploring the eerie side of MacDonald's writings, particularly in *Donal Grant* and *Lilith*. Koopman argued that MacDonald recast Romantic figures like Shelley and Byron into the narrative landscape of *Donal Grant* while Wingrove examined *Lilith* as a vampire story and showed the ways in which it both conformed to and deviated from this dark genre.



The final session was a plenary given by Dr David Robb (University of Dundee) entitled 'George MacDonald and the Grave Livers'. Reflecting on a phrase from Wordsworth's poem 'Resolution and Independence'—'Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use, / Religious men, who give to God and man their dues'—Dr Robb observed how frequently in MacDonald's novels and particularly in *David Elginbrod* there seems to be an assumption that one must be Scottish in order to improve things. According to Dr Robb, this image of impressively holy Scots was a popular English view of their northern neighbours during the nineteenth century. Writers like MacDonald drew upon this picture of Scotland as a spiritual and moral place to give fictional characters and settings a readily recognizable gravitas. Dr Robb then provided examples of this image as widely diverse as English newspaper accounts of the 1843 Disruption that led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland to George Eliot's dislike of a Thomas Chalmers' description of the spiritual wisdom of the Scottish peasantry. Though as Dr Robb admitted this evidence was not exhaustive, it convincingly showed that the trope of the solemnly religious Scot was prevalent within Victorian culture.

Overall, the conference made the most of its brief time and presented a nuanced portrait of George MacDonald the Victorian writer, preacher, thinker, and friend who was thoroughly a part of his age. *George MacDonald Among His Contemporaries* was an important step in correcting the still dominant view of him as the timeless grandfather of modern fantasy literature.



MERVYN PEAKE CENTENARY

To celebrate the centenary of his birth I will be issuing a catalogue entirely devoted to works by and about Mervyn Peake in the summer of 2011.

Consisting of acquisitions made during the last 10 years it will be the largest single catalogue devoted to him that I have issued to date, with over 200 items.

The range of items includes 1st Editions, significant re-issues, exhibition catalogues, ephemera and original artwork including drawings, watercolours and oil paintings.

I will also be exhibiting at:
**Mervyn Peake and the Fantasy Tradition:
A Centenary Conference**
15th and 16th July
Bishop Otter Campus, Chichester.

To be included in the mailing for this catalogue, contact me:

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Call for Papers



The Folklore Society and the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy are delighted to announce details of a joint conference on Folklore & Fantasy which will take place on 13-15 April 2012 at the University of Chichester.



Many folktales are closely related to the fantastic – through subject matter, content and impulse. Folklore often deals with the fantastic, or turns to the supernatural to provide explanations for extraordinary events. Similarly, folklore has long been a major source of inspiration for fantasy literature, from authors like Kevin Crossley-Holland and Angela Carter and graphic novelists like Neil Gaiman and Bill Willingham who take on and re-present traditional stories, to authors like Lloyd Alexander Susan Cooper, Kate Thompson who draw on established tropes, to authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien, Susanna Clarke and Terry Pratchett who invent their own folk traditions.

This two-day event will explore, investigate and celebrate the relationship between folklore and fantasy. We welcome papers on all aspects of folklore and fantasy from the medieval to the modern and the post-modern.

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Folklore of the fantastic
- Invented Folklore in Epic Fantasy
- Graphic novels
- Urban Legends
- Superstitions
- The Gothic Tradition
- Monsters, Bogies and Boggarts
- Real and invented folk history
- Medieval and Modern Travellers' Tales
- Folklore in Children's Literature
- World Folklore in American Fantasy
- Celtic folklore in Popular Culture
- Folklore on the Stage or on the Screen
- The Commodification and 'Disneyfication' of Traditional Stories
- Folklore in Art

Abstracts of 250 words for 20-minute papers should be sent to c.oates@talk21.com and J.Carroll@chi.ac.uk before January 27th 2012