



**DaCNet**  
Interdisciplinary Death & Culture Research



## DEATH & CULTURE II

6 & 7 September 2018

**Venue:** Alcuin Research Resource Centre, University of York



### Keynote speakers:

Professor Dina Kapaeva, Professor Joanna Bourke,  
Professor Stephen Regan, Professor Dorthe Refslund Christensen

**You are cordially invited to attend informal drinks and death-related board games on Wednesday 5 September from 8pm at the Eagle & Child, 9 High Petergate, York YO1 7EN.**



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# Emerald Studies in Death and Culture



Emerald Studies in Death and Culture provides an outlet for interdisciplinary research that approaches death from a cultural perspective.

## Out now

### Death, the Dead and Popular Culture

by Ruth Penfold-Mounce, University of York | 9781787430549 | 160 pages | June 2018 | £40 \$64

**Death, Memorialization and Deviant Spaces** by Matthew Spokes, Jack Denham, and Benedikt Lehmann, all at York St. John University | 9781787565746 | 146 pages | August 2018 | £40 \$64

**The Evolution of the British Funeral Industry in the 20th Century** by Brian Parsons | 9781787436305 | 280 pages | March 2018 | £60 \$95



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**Emotion and the Researcher: Sites, Subjectivities, and Relationships** edited by Tracey Loughran and Dawn Mannay | 9781787146129 | 242 pages | August 2018 | £66.95 \$114.95

**Big Data?: Qualitative Approaches to Digital Research** edited by Martin Hand and Sam Hillyard | 9781784410513 | 250 pages | November 2014 | £85.99 \$145.99

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## 1. CONFERENCE CONVENORS

### DR JACK DENHAM



Jack Denham is a lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at York St John University. He is a co-editor of the book series Emerald Studies in Death and Culture, and is currently publishing work from his PhD thesis '*Deviant authenticities: criminal memorabilia and consumer culture: an ethnographic study in "murderabilia"*'. He specialises in the research of crime in popular culture, death objects, the sociology of consumption and death. His published and drafted work focuses on 'imaginative criminology', mostly through ethnographic work in crime museums. Twitter: @JackPDenham

### DR RUTH PENFOLD-MOUNCE



Ruth Penfold-Mounce is Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of York. She is a co-leader of the Death and Culture Network (DaCNet) and an editor of the Emerald Series in Death and Culture. Her latest book is *Death, the Dead and Popular Culture* (2018). Ruth is a passionate about public engagement and regularly writes for digital platforms, as well as appearing on radio and television. She is also a keen member of the twitter community @DeathandCulture Twitter: @RuthPenfoldMoun

DR BEN POORE



Ben Poore is a Senior Lecturer in Theatre, Film and Television at the University of York. As a researcher, he has written on the adaptation of texts between page, stage and screen, and on the cultural afterlives of Victorian fictional characters, authors, and other historical figures. His books include *Heritage, Nostalgia and Modern British Theatre: Staging the Victorians*, and *Theatre & Empire*.

DR JULIE RUGG



Julie Rugg is a Senior Research Fellow in Social Policy and Social Work, and as part of the Cemetery Research Group publishes widely on cemetery and burial topics, and topics relating to the dead body. Her monograph *Churchyard and Cemetery: Tradition and Modernity in Rural North Yorkshire* was published by Manchester University Press in 2013. *Funerary Practices in England and Wales* (2018) written with Brian Parsons, is the first in the Funerary International book series, published by Emerald.

MR MATT COWARD



Matt Coward is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology, University of York, and is the administrator of DaCNet. His PhD thesis '*UK Tabletop Gaming Communities*' explores community formation and interaction within UK tabletop gaming via a qualitative ethnographic approach grounded in ritual theory. Outside of his PhD, Matt's research focuses on gamers and games and their interactions with death, the undead, contemporary religion and popular culture. Twitter: @mattcoward\_

# Death Studies at Emerald



We are an award-winning, independent, academic publisher, proud to support the vibrant and growing field of death studies. Visit our stand at **Death and Culture II** to learn more about our three dedicated book series: Emerald Studies in Death and Culture, Sharing Death Online, and Funerary International.

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## Sharing Death Online

Humans face and deal with death and loss through media and technologies at hand. *Sharing Death Online* is a new book series embracing the fact that death is both a basic human condition that humans share socially and an event in human life that calls people to be intimate and to share their human experiences.

Themes and issues may include:

- Online mourning communities and peer support
- Online memorial sites
- Handling of digital heritage
- R.I.P. pages on social media
- Changing relationships to the dead
- Afterlife beliefs and practices online
- Digital commercialization of death
- Suicide - counseling and crisis communication online
- Remediations of death practices online
- Dead bodies and materialities online
- Death, avatars and relations in fictional worlds
- New digital designs meeting the challenges of death

### Forthcoming in this series

**The Language of Illness and Death on Social Media: An Affective Approach**  
by Carsten Stage and Tina Thode Hougaard, both of Aarhus University School of Communication and Culture | 9781787694828 | 144 pages | October 2018 | £40 \$64

**Parental Grief and Photographic Remembrance**  
by Felicity T.C. Hamer, Concordia University | Spring 2019 | Details forthcoming

**Interested in writing for this series?** The series editors Dorthe Refslund Christensen (nordrc@cc.au.dk) and Kjetil Sandvik (sandvik@hum.ku.dk) are now seeking proposals. Get in touch to discuss your idea.

## Funerary International

Each book in this new monograph series constitutes an essential reference text for funerary activity in a given country. Each book answers a standard framework of topics including:

- History
- Funerary Culture: Frameworks
- Funeral
- Ownership and legal framework
- Burial
- Grave tenure and use
- Cremation
- Monumentation/commemoration
- Tradition
- Funerary heritage

Each monograph also includes a list of reports and articles essential to understanding funerals in the country in question.

### Out now

**Funerary Practices in England and Wales** by Matthew Spokes, Jack Denham, and Benedikt Lehmann, all at York St. John University | 9781787692268 | 175 pages | August 2018 | £40 \$64

**Interested in writing for this series?** Please contact Philippa Grand, Executive Publisher (pgrand@emeraldgroup.com) for more information.

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## 2. CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

### Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September

8:00-9:00	Registration – Alcuin Research Research Centre (ARRC) - Foyer		
9:00-9:15	Welcome – Ruth Penfold-Mounce		
9:15-10:00	Keynote 1 (ARRC Auditorium) Professor Dina Kapaeva - Death as a cultural condition		
10:00-11:30	1. Disenfranchised and Marginal Deaths #1 (A/A/019/20) CHAIR: Heather Conway	2. Constructing Death Spaces (A/RC/010) CHAIR: Julie Rugg	3. Death's Doubles (ARRC Auditorium) CHAIR: Lindsey King
10:00-10:30	Natalie Jones <i>Death, disposal and dissent: how foetal remains remain</i>	Matthew Spokes, Jack Denham and Benedikt Lehmann <i>Death, memorialization and deviant spaces</i>	Clare Gittings <i>Visualising royal funerals in Early Modern Europe: a shared culture conveying different messages</i>
10:30-11:00	Judith López-Peñaloza <i>Disenfranchised grief and the experience of clandestine abortion</i>	Alison Starr <i>Never coming home: mourning and commemoration of war dead on enemy territory</i>	Jacque Lynn Foltyn <i>Touring heaven: near-death experiences of celebrities and their fans</i>
11:00-11:30		Gian Luca Amadei <i>Graves and housing: the London Necropolis Company new offices at 121 Westminster Bridge Road</i>	Abie Hadjitarkhani <i>On doubles and the unreality of death in alternate timelines</i>

11:30-12:00	BREAK		
12:00-1:30	<b>4. Disenfranchised and Marginal Deaths #2 (A/A/019/20)</b> CHAIR: Matt Spokes	<b>5. The Unwanted Dead (A/RC/010)</b> CHAIR: Jack Denham	<b>6. Digital Afterlives (ARRC Auditorium)</b> CHAIR: Julie Rugg
12:00-12:30	Maggie Mayhem <i>The lifeguards of the River Styx: overdose responders on the front line of the fentanyl crisis</i>	Heather Conway and Ruth Penfold-Mounce <i>The evil dead: the law and disposing of the criminal corpse</i>	Philip Wane <i>From Motörhead to Mortal Dead: the livestreaming of Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister's funeral service</i>
12:30-1:00	Carol Robinson <i>Dying inside: the governance of mortality in prison</i>	Daniel Robins and Rosie Smith <i>(Dis)posing of monsters: justice and the 'inhuman' dead</i>	Rachel Connor <i>How to curate a life: death, decluttering and data management</i>
1:00-1:30		Julia Banwell <i>Echoes of the absent: Teresa Margolles' work with afterlives of bodies, objects and spaces</i>	Debra Bassett <i>Digital persistence of the dead: the changing landscape of the uncanny valley</i>
1:30-2:30	LUNCH		
2:30-4:00	<b>7. Belief and Practice (A/A/019/20)</b> CHAIR: Helen Frisby	<b>8. Childhood and Death (A/RC/010)</b> CHAIR: Catherine Bell	<b>9. Cultural Negotiations (ARRC Auditorium)</b> CHAIR: Neil Washbourne
2:30-3:00	Jennifer Uzzell <i>'Playing with the ancestors': funerary ritual in contemporary British Druidry</i>	Maggie Jackson <i>Death and children's picture books</i>	Beth Michael-Fox <i>'You're still you. Dead or alive'. Death and the self in cultural imagination</i>
3:00-3:30	Rodica Arpasanu <i>A 'happy' encounter with mortality in Săpânța's popular imagination: The Merry Cemetery</i>	Meridith Burles <i>Writing the unthinkable: exploring parents' constructions of mortality in online narratives about caring for a child with cancer</i>	Emily Wright <i>Dead bodies, lived fictions: understanding changing funerary practices in archaeology</i>

3:30-4:00	Ania Paluch <i>Piękna Śmierć: the translation of death rituals from Poland into Polonia</i>	Emily Rothwell <i>Blood beneath the buttercups: Victorian childhoods, gardens, cemeteries and the grievable and ungrievable dead</i>	Lois Lee <i>The existential in culture and new critical approaches to Death Studies</i>
4:00-4:30	TEA		
4:30-5:30	<b>10. Creativity and Death (A/A/019/20)</b> <b>CHAIR: Jan Draper</b>	<b>11. Death and the Challenge of Meaning (A/RC/010)</b> <b>CHAIR: Abie Hadjitarkhani</b>	<b>12. Material Histories (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>CHAIR: Julie Rugg</b>
4:30-5:00	Catherine Bell <i>Death relics and reflections: facilitating socially-engaged mark and object making with palliative care staff in hospice settings</i>	Aleksandra Kotlova <i>The ontological contradiction in altruistic suicide</i>	Claire Wood <i>Ordering meaning in the Victorian memorial card</i>
5:00-5:30	Tom Bromwell <i>Stanley and Hilda: creativity, death and mourning</i>	Neil Washbourne <i>Irvin Yalom's cultural and individual understandings of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'death of god' in his existential therapy, popular writings and novels</i>	Helen Frisby <i>Representing gravediggers in nineteenth and twentieth century popular culture</i>
7:15-8:00	<b>Keynote 2 (King's Manor)</b> <b>Professor Joanna Bourke - Carved into the body: forensic science, truth, and the female corpse</b>		
8:00-10:30	<i>Wine reception and conference meal</i>		

## Friday 7<sup>th</sup> September

<b>8:30-9:00</b>	<i>Registration for day delegates</i> – Alcuin Research Resource Centre (ARRC) - Foyer		
<b>9:00-11:00</b>	<b>13. Pets, Selfhood and the Limits of Mourning (A/A/019/20)</b> <b>CHAIR: Claire Gittings</b>	<b>14. Corpses in Cabinets (A/RC/010)</b> <b>CHAIR: Jack Denham</b>	<b>15. Death and Performance (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>CHAIR: Ben Poore</b>
<b>9:00-9:30</b>	Terri Sabatos <i>'A comforter in mourning and sorrow': Caesar of Notts and the mourning of Edward VII</i>	Melissa Schrift <i>Race, bodies and spectacle in 19th century living exhibitions</i>	Anna Furse <i>An anatomy act: on death, anatomy and the status of the cadaver</i>
<b>9:30-10:00</b>	Bethany Robertson <i>To get attached, or not to get attached, that is the question: making sense of pet loss</i>	Katie Clary <i>Death and display: human remains in museums</i>	Louie Jenkins <i>Transparency: shame, grief and performative memorialisation</i>
<b>10:00-10:30</b>	Racheal Harris <i>Echoes and imitations: taxidermy and tattoo as memento mori</i>	Jenny Bergman and Kicki Eldh <i>Death – a concern?</i>	Majeed Mohammed Midhin <i>Death and Howard Barker's concept of theatre</i>
<b>10:30-11:00</b>	Montse Morcate <i>Taxidermy, or how to turn a corpse into art</i>	Katherine Baxter and Ruth Martin <i>Displaying the dead: public reactions to human skeletons in museums</i>	Nikki Salkeld and Ashley Rudolph <i>MOTH: Design and Death</i>
<b>11:00-11:30</b>	<i>COFFEE</i>		

<b>11:30-12:15</b>	<b>Keynote 3 (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>Professor Stephen Regan - 'Inventions of farewell': mourning the dead in modern elegy</b>		
<b>12:15-1:45</b>	<b>16. Evolving Funerary Practice (A/A/019/20)</b> <b>CHAIR: Julie Rugg</b>	<b>17. Walking with the Dead (A/RC/010)</b> <b>CHAIR: Kami Fletcher</b>	<b>18. Bodies on View (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>CHAIR: Melissa Schrift</b>
<b>12:15-12:45</b>	Janieke Bruin-Mollenhorst <i>The algorithm of the personal funeral: understanding personalized funerals in a digitalizing society through the lens of funeral music</i>	Janine Marriott <i>Entertaining the living amongst the dead</i>	Agata Korecka <i>Death, dying and light entertainment</i>
<b>12:45-1:15</b>	Brian Parsons <i>'Go direct to the crematorium; do not pass through the chapel, pay £1,000 and collect the ashes.'</i> Exploring the phenomenon of direct cremation	Romany Reagan <i>Abney Rambles: reconceiving a Victorian garden cemetery for contemporary communities by way of an audio walking practice</i>	Nadia De Vries <i>Sexing the corpse: the dead body as pornographic object</i>
<b>1:15-1:45</b>	Marie Pecorari <i>Cleaning up their (final) act: dead bodies and changing perceptions of good taste and purity</i>	Ruth Penfold-Mounce and Matt Coward <i>Creative methodologies: walking with death in York</i>	Kelsey Perreault <i>The Church of Bones and the human rights of the dead</i>
<b>1:45-2:30</b>	LUNCH		
<b>2:30-4:00</b>	<b>19. Death Narratives (A/A/019/20)</b> <b>CHAIR: Stephen Regan</b>	<b>20. Death Professionals #1 (A/RC/010)</b> <b>CHAIR: Ben Poore</b>	<b>21. Cultural Constructions (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>CHAIR: Marie Pecorari</b>
<b>2:30-3:00</b>	Morven Cook <i>Deathbeds then and now: where's the fiction?</i>	Mark Subryan <i>Knock, knock: journalists deal with how they handle coverage of death</i>	Giorgio Scalici <i>'They are playing': controlled violence in Wana funerals, Indonesia</i>

3:00-3:30	Rozane R. Rebechi <i>Brazilian and North-American cultures unveiled by obituaries: a corpus-based study</i>	Crouch, Katherine <i>Excavation and emotion: archaeology as deathwork</i>	Chao Fang <i>Bereavement and motivation in three contrasting cultures: Britain, Japan and China</i>
3:30-4:00	TEA		
4:00-5:00	<b>22. Spiritual Mediation (A/A/019/20)</b> <b>CHAIR: Melissa Schrift</b>	<b>23. Death Professionals #2 (A/RC/010)</b> <b>CHAIR: Ben Poore</b>	<b>24. Digital Re-imaginings (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>CHAIR: Julie Rugg</b>
4:00-4:30	Lindsey King <i>The cost of survival: the ex-voto tradition in Candidé</i>	Jan Draper and Kerry Jones <i>'On the edge of life': caring for the dying and the dead</i>	Kelly Richards <i>Reimagining the personification of Death in popular culture</i>
4:30-5:00	Khyati Tripathi <i>MahaBrahmins and their relationship with death in Hinduism</i>	Kami Fletcher <i>Giants walk among us: black women funeral directors and embalmers in Baltimore, MD</i>	Matt Coward <i>Cemeteries, consoles and corpses: burial ground ethnography in gameplay environments</i>
5:00-5:45	<b>Keynote 4 (ARRC Auditorium)</b> <b>Professor Dorthe Refslund Christensen - Parents' bereavement practices and beyond: performing parenthood in periods of grief and in everyday life</b>		
5:45	Concluding remarks, conference ends		
8:00	<i>Drinks and informal meal in York city centre</i>		

### 3. ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

**Amadei, Gian Luca** (Department of Sociology, University of York, UK)

[gla5@kentforlife.net](mailto:gla5@kentforlife.net)

**Panel 2, 11:00-11:30, Thursday**

*Graves and housing: the London Necropolis Company new offices at 121 Westminster Bridge Road*

In 1902, the London Necropolis Company relocated to a new purpose-built complex of offices, workshops and a private railway station at 121 Westminster Bridge Road, near Waterloo Station in London. These functional, yet sophisticated, new spaces were the brainchild of surveyor Cyril Bazett Tubbs (1858-1927) who designed them in 1899. The introduction of such an innovative combination of interior spaces, architecture and engineering was a complete departure for the London Necropolis Company that, one can speculate, recalibrated the Company's Victorian heritage to the needs of London's burgeoning Edwardian elites. In their new premises, the Company's design team, not only captured the imagination of their clients with graves and memorials, they also offered new housing stock in Surrey's leafy suburbs. The business model pioneered by the London Necropolis Company throws open a series of questions on the matter of spatial design and urban planning, burial rituals and the perception of death in Edwardian London. Furthermore, it also makes us reflect on its relevance to the contemporary context of burial provision for the Capital. This paper will attempt to speculate and shed light on how and why Tubbs and the London Necropolis Company arrived to formulate such a densely complex set of interior spaces and how these complemented the Company's new identity.

*No bibliography provided.*

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**Arpasanu, Rodica** (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

[rodi.arpasanu@gmail.com](mailto:rodi.arpasanu@gmail.com)

**Panel 7, 3:00-3:30, Thursday**

*A 'happy' encounter with mortality in Săpânța's popular imagination: The Merry Cemetery*

Grieving, remembrance and death are common to all humans. However, how these are experienced, performed and understood varies with the cultural and religious norms of

different societies. In Romania, customs surrounding death are governed by teachings originating from the Christian Orthodox Church. Burial ceremonies and memorial masses follow a prescribed religious canon, which concentrates on preparing the immortal soul to pass into the afterlife, face the last judgment and await resurrection. Burial grounds in Romania appear to be predominately 'gloomy', overcrowded and populated by white and grey funeral crosses marking the final resting place of the deceased. That is not the case of the Merry Cemetery. Drawing mixed qualitative research, this paper looks at the 'Merry' Cemetery, to examine how the cultural workings of Săpânța's society shaped how the dead are remembered. Unique in the world, the 'Merry' Cemetery in Săpânța, Romania, is a cemetery in which the graves of the deceased are marked by colourful funeral crosses, carved portraits and dark humoured epitaph. The findings suggest that 'Merry' cemetery is deeply rooted in the routines and rituals of the local society that embraced its ancestral heritage in a narrative, which despite appearances, preserves its Christian eloquence.

*Rodica Arpasanu is a PhD student in Human Geography (supervised by Craig Young) and associate lecturer at the Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom. Her PhD research explores cultural variations of contemporary expressions and encounters with mortality in the context of death tourism. Specifically, her research investigates if and how modern individuals engage with and reflect upon the idea of death (their own or others) while visiting sites of and associated with death, disaster and human tragedy.*

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**Banwell, Julia** (School of Languages and Cultures, University of Sheffield, UK)

[J.Banwell@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:J.Banwell@sheffield.ac.uk)

**Panel 5, 1:00-1:30, Thursday**

*Echoes of the absent: Teresa Margolles' work with the afterlives of bodies, objects, and spaces*

The Mexican artist Teresa Margolles (b.1963) is also a qualified forensic technician. An archaeologist of trauma, she uncovers evidence of crimes and atrocities. Her early works were strongly connected with the morgue and invited the spectator into this restricted space. More recently, her work has moved out of the morgue, a shift that reflects the increase in violence related to the narcotics trade, the War on Drugs and the presence of death and bodies in public spaces. All of Margolles' work is concerned with memory, visibility and the re-materialisation of bodily traces and remains, or via the creation of objects and images that document and testify. She confronts the spectator with the Kristevan notion of the abject in its most extreme form - death and the dead body - and also in a broader sense in that the abject is also waste, the discarded, the Other that threatens a stable sense of identity and therefore must be eliminated. This paper will explore the relationship between image, object and text in a selection of Margolles' works

in various media. Discussion will focus on the artist's use of space and emptiness, the performance of bodies and of ruins, and the notion of 'waste'.

*Julia Banwell is currently a Lecturer in Hispanic Studies in the University of Sheffield's School of Languages and Cultures. Her research focuses primarily on the depiction and representation of death and corpses in Mexican photography and contemporary art. Her monograph on the artist Teresa Margolles was published in 2015 and she has also published papers on the photography of the Mexican Revolution, and the visual representation of death and injury in sports.*

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**Bassett, Debra** (University of Warwick, UK)

[D.J.Bassett@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.J.Bassett@warwick.ac.uk)

**Panel 6, 1:00-1:30, Thursday**

*Digital persistence of the dead: the changing landscape of the uncanny valley*

Digital afterlives enabled by the Internet have become a growing area of research. My current study explores whether posthumous digital memories and messages affect how people grieve. This qualitative study explores the creation and inheritance of Facebook pages, thanablogs, posthumous chatbots, posthumous messages and posthumous in-game avatars. It adds to and moves beyond existing research by interviewing participants from 3 distinct areas: Digital Creators; Digital Inheritors and Service Providers, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how people create and experience the social lives of the dead. In 1970 Mori coined the term "uncanny valley" to describe how encounters with phenomena that are too human-like, are perceived as creepy and eerie. Much early research into posthumous profiles on platforms, such as Facebook found this to be true. However, my on-going research shows that this landscape is changing, resulting in what I describe as a shallowing of the uncanny valley. My research has seen a growing acceptance of the dead popping up on the Internet and remaining socially active. Moreover, for many who are bereaved, these digital memories and messages provide comfort rather than revulsion.

*Debra Bassett is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Warwick. Her qualitative research into human-computer interaction looks at how the Internet enables the creation of posthumous digital memories and messages with blogs, vlogs, avatar creation and social network sites and how this digital endurance may affect how people grieve. Debra's paper "Who Wants to Live Forever? Living Dying and grieving in our Digital Society" was published in Social Sciences in 2015.*

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**Baxter, Katherine and Martin, Ruth** (Leeds City Museums and Galleries, UK)

[Katherine.Baxter@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Katherine.Baxter@leeds.gov.uk)

**Panel 14, 10:30-11:00, Friday**

*Displaying the dead: public reactions to human skeletons in museums*

From September 2017 – January 2018 Leeds City Museum was the final venue for the UK tour of the 'Skeletons: Our Buried Bones' exhibition, a partnership project with Wellcome Collection and the Museum of London. The exhibition unearthed the stories of twelve people from Yorkshire and London through the study of their skeletons. Together they provided a rare glimpse into the lives and health of the individuals who have gone before us and the history beneath our feet. As part of the exhibition we conducted research with our visitors, finding out more about how they engaged with human remains on display. We asked how visitors felt about museums having and displaying human remains, and whether they thought we should allow visitors to take photographs and share them on social media. We explored what factors may affect feelings about skeletons on display – from religion, to the age or provenance of the skeletons, to feelings of personal connection or people's own attitudes to death and dying. We are currently compiling a final report, and this paper will present the highlights of these findings. It will consider how 21<sup>st</sup> century museum visitors have responded to the display of human remains, how they interpret the ethics concerning the collection and display of human remains, and how museum policy can in turn respond to these attitudes.

*Katherine Baxter is Curator of Archaeology at Leeds Museums and Galleries, and is responsible for both British and overseas archaeological collections, including human remains. She is secretary of the Society for Museum Archaeology, and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for Medieval Studies at Leeds University. One of her main interests is the ethics and care of human remains in museums.*

*Ruth Martin is Exhibitions Curator at Leeds City Museum and is responsible for the programme of temporary exhibitions at the museum. She has over 10 years' experience of interpreting the past within museum settings, and is particularly interested in how objects can be used to create emotional responses from visitors.*

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**Bell, Catherine** (Faculty of Arts and Education, Australian Catholic University, Australia)

[Catherine.Bell@acu.edu.au](mailto:Catherine.Bell@acu.edu.au)

**Panel 10, 4:30-5:00, Thursday**

*Death relics and reflections: facilitating socially-engaged mark and object making with palliative care staff in hospice settings*

*We Die As We Live*, is an art in health research project that positions palliative care staff, working in myriad capacities in hospital and hospice settings, as 'Death Elders', because of their expert knowledge and accumulated experience of death, and dying. This paper speculates on the commemorative dimensions of death, dying and bereavement as embodied in socially-engaged artistic processes. The weekly art workshops I organised, during my yearlong artist residency at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, were designed to solicit meaningful reflection about death and its impact on the staff; using craft materials, mediums and processes that engaged the participant's senses, and encouraged open discussion about mortality and impermanence. The creative outcomes make tangible personal memories of death and are used as prompts to reflect on those experiences. These death relics have multiple objectives; they are artefacts that commemorate the meaningful exchange between artist and participant, honour significant patients and loved ones who have passed, and speak to how the participants want to be remembered. When these collective works on paper and ephemeral sculptures are presented in St Vincent's Hospital foyer, they illustrate that every death is unique and every experience of death is unique, reinforce we are all connected by this universal truth, and invite public discussion and reflection about the pervasive influence of death. The catalogue documenting this project can be found at the following link:

[https://issuu.com/cebell/docs/catherine\\_bell\\_we\\_die\\_as\\_we\\_live](https://issuu.com/cebell/docs/catherine_bell_we_die_as_we_live)

*Dr Catherine Bell is a multi-disciplinary artist and Associate Professor teaching visual art in the Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University. She holds a BA (Art History & English Literature) from the University of Queensland, Bachelor of Visual Arts (Sculpture) from Queensland University of Technology, MFA (Sculpture) from RMIT University, DPhil (Fine Art) from Monash University, and was a research fellow at the Ruskin School of Fine Art, Oxford University (2001-02). Her creative-led research is focused on the role of the artist in the archive and healthcare setting, art on the margins, socially-engaged, participatory and relational art practices, redefining the female in contemporary society and challenging taboos surrounding death and dying. She is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne.*

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**Bergman, Jenny** (Lund University, Sweden) and **Eldh, Kicki** (Swedish National Heritage Board, Sweden)

[jenny.bergman@luhm.lu.se](mailto:jenny.bergman@luhm.lu.se)

**Panel 14, 10:00-10:30, Friday**

*Death – a concern?*

This presentation deals with the on-going discussion concerning human remains in museums in Sweden. In 1995, the Anatomical Department at Lund University was shut down and part of the anatomical collection, a collection containing about 2000 human remains, was transferred to the Historical Museum. Since 1995, parts of the collection have been subject to repatriation, burial, seminars, inventory, media coverage, complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen, research projects and exhibitions. The exhibition 'Death – a concern?' introduced the anatomical collection to a broader public, telling the history and opening a discussion. Our paper focuses on the reactions from the public, the media, visitors, researchers, colleagues and university management. A quotation from the exhibitions introductory text:

'Death – A Concern?

Above the entrance to the Anatomical Museum of the old Department of Anatomy on Biskopsgaten in Lund it is written:

HIC LOCUS EST UBI MORS GAUDET SUCCERRERE VITAE –

THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE DEATH IS HAPPY TO ASSIST LIFE

All people have had experience of death, but in different ways. Usually death is associated with something difficult, painful and personal. For understandable reasons, death often becomes a concern. Your task as a visitor is to react and reflect on what you see!'

*Jenny Bergman is Curator of the Anatomical Collection at the Historical Museum at Lund University. She was a project participant in the 'Death – a concern?' project and participant in the research project 'The bioarchaeology of social marginalism: a bio-cultural investigation of the influence of social factors on human skeletal biology amongst the nineteenth-century working classes'.*

*Kicki Eldh, Visby, Sweden is an architect and was conservator and exhibition manager at Lund University 2006-2018. She is an Advisor at the Swedish National Heritage Board, 2018-present, and at the moment is working on a project on guidelines for human remains in museum collections.*

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**Bourke, Joanna** (Birkbeck, University of London, UK)

[j.bourke@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:j.bourke@bbk.ac.uk)

**Thursday, 7:15-8:00, King's Manor**

***KEYNOTE 2: Carved into the body: forensic science, truth, and the female corpse***

Since the late nineteenth century, forensic science has become one of the dominant languages to describe, interpret, and give meaning to the dead body. As a scientific culture, it has not simply 'inscribed' its text on a 'natural' or pre-social body, but has collaborated in the creation of physiological bodies and metaphoric systems. In this paper, I focus on attempts by forensic scientists to 'read' the bodies of women who had been subjected to extreme violence. The belief that forensic scientists could generate objective truth from assessing and measuring physical markers changed dramatically over the centuries. Forensic assessments of the physiological body reiterated its constructed rather than intrinsic nature, periodically throwing the science into crisis mode.

*Joanna Bourke is Professor of History in the [Department of History, Classics and Archaeology at Birkbeck College](#), where she has taught since 1992. She is a Fellow of the British Academy. Over the years, her books have ranged from the social and economic history of Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to social histories of the British working classes between 1860 and 1960s, to cultural histories of military conflict between the Anglo-Boer war and the present. She has worked on the history of the emotions, particularly fear and hatred, and the history of sexual violence. In the past few years, her research has focused on questions of humanity, militarisation, and pain. She wrote a book entitled What It Means to Be Human. In 2014, she published two books: Wounding the World. How Military Violence and War Games Invade Our World and The Story of Pain: From Prayer to Painkillers. Her primary focus has been on British, American, and Australian societies from the 1760s to today.*

**Bromwell, Tom** (History of Art, University of York, UK)

[tb971@york.ac.uk](mailto:tb971@york.ac.uk)

**Panel 10, 5:00-5:30, Thursday**

*Stanley and Hilda: creativity, death, and mourning*

Sir Stanley Spencer R.A. (b.1891, d.1959), one of the most eminent British artists of the twentieth century, explored an idiosyncratic philosophy in his paintings that often addressed the biggest themes: religion, death and love. He continued to paint pictures of and write letters to his estranged first wife, the artist Hilda Carline (b.1889) following her death in 1950. Carline had also trained at the renowned Slade School of Art, yet she frequently interrupted her practice throughout the duration of their marriage, having wedded in 1925 and divorced in 1937, while Spencer remarried that same year. Spencer and Carline's relationship is identified in current scholarship as a tragic biographical narrative. This paper will refocus attention onto the material artefacts that remain. Drawing upon the thousands of pages of letters that are known to exist from throughout their thirty-year correspondence and Spencer's painting of Carline, with particular attention placed upon the sources produced between the terminal illness and death of Hilda Carline in 1950 and his own death in 1959, this paper addresses Spencer's personal, public, and private response to the death of his fellow artist, lover, and muse, identifying it as a case study in creativity, death, and mourning.

*Tom Bromwell is a PhD candidate in the History of Art Department at the University of York. His research interests include Inter-war British art and the apocalypse, and he has previously published on twentieth-century British artists including Sir Stanley Spencer with the National Trust and Apollo: The International Arts Magazine, and David Jones. Earlier this year Tom completed an AHRC IPS Fellowship at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.*

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**Bruin-Mollenhorst, Janieke** (Department of Culture Studies, Tilburg University, The Netherlands)[j.h.bruin@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:j.h.bruin@tilburguniversity.edu)

**Panel 16, 12:15-12:45, Friday**

*The algorithm of the personal funeral: understanding personalized funerals in a digitalizing society through the lens of funeral music*

During contemporary personalized funerals in the Netherlands, music plays an important role in recalling the deceased's life. Often, next of kin select funeral music that reminds them of the deceased, for example because it was the favourite music of the deceased. This 'personal music' is an important tool for personalizing funerals. This 'personal music' is increasingly affected by digital and online mechanisms, as people increasingly make use of

online sources, such as YouTube and Spotify. These online music services suggest music based on the listening behaviour of the user. As such, algorithms of online environments influence the music people listen to in everyday life. As funeral music is related to this music from everyday life, online environments influence 'offline' memorials. Then again, crematoria and funeral organisations create playlists with the most frequently played funeral music. These playlists are put on their websites as a source of inspiration for next of kin who do not know what music to select. In this paper, the concept of 'algorithmic culture' will be related to processes of personalization and digitalization of funerary rituals.

*Janieke Bruin-Mollenhorst MA (\*1988) studied Religion and Ritual at Tilburg University and organ and church music at the conservatory of Enschede (the Netherlands). She is a PhD candidate at the Department of Culture Studies at Tilburg University. In her PhD research she studies music during funeral rituals. She also works as a professional musician.*

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**Burles, Meridith** (College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada)  
[meridith.burles@usask.ca](mailto:meridith.burles@usask.ca)

**Panel 8, 3:00-3:30, Thursday**

*Writing the unthinkable: exploring parents' construction of mortality in online narratives about caring for a child with cancer*

Contemporary constructions of the life course in Western cultures reflect average life expectancies and anticipation of living into old age. As such, life-threatening illness in a child is particularly shocking and distressing. Families of children with cancer and other serious conditions face an emotional rollercoaster as they navigate diagnosis, treatment, and the uncertainty of the future. While appropriate words for conveying feelings often elude parents, some find it comforting and meaningful to narrate their experiences in the digital realm. Namely, some parents share narratives via blogs, social media, and organizational websites as a means for communicating with others, obtaining social support, and making sense of their experiences. To better understand how parents make sense of childhood cancer and their child's mortality, personal narratives shared publicly in online settings were examined qualitatively. Using an unobtrusive, narrative approach, data analysis explored the nature of family experiences, the narrative structures and metaphors adopted, and digital engagement with others. This presentation will focus on how parents' construct their child's mortality and possible or actual death in online narratives, and the role of the digital realm in making sense of what is often deemed the 'unthinkable' in Western culture, the death of a child.

*Meridith Burles is a postdoctoral fellow with the College of Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada. She completed her doctorate in the Sociology of Health,*

*Illness, and Health Care in 2010. Her current research draws on sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives, and utilizes qualitative and mixed methods approaches to explore personal and family experiences of illness, cancer portrayals, and end-of-life care for vulnerable populations. She is interested in all aspects of qualitative research, including methodological and ethical considerations for research involving creative practices and technology.*

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**Christensen, Dorthe** (Aarhus University, Denmark)

[nordrc@cc.au.dk](mailto:nordrc@cc.au.dk)

**Friday, 5 :30-6 :15, ARRC Auditorium**

***KEYNOTE 4: Parents' bereavement practices and beyond: performing parenthood in periods of grief and in everyday life***

Losing a child prior to, during or shortly after birth is emotionally challenging to the parents: their identity as parents-to-be and all preparations for becoming-parents as well as all hopes and dreams for the future are rendered meaningless when the child dies. In this situation, the process of grief becomes a way of reinstalling meaning by establishing an on-going relationship to the dead child by which the child – who in life was barely there – gains existence and through which the identity as parents (however to a dead child) is established, communicated and socially acknowledged.

In this talk, I present the research we have done for the past ten years, on parents' bereavement- and everyday life practices as parents to a dead child. Our empirical focuses have moved from parents' online practices to their ritualizations on graves and to their everyday life routines continuously including the dead child in their family life. Methodologically, we have done ethnographic observational fieldwork on children's graves, on dedicated websites and Facebook groups and interviews with bereaved parents. Theoretically, we have drawn on, for instance, conceptualizations on timework (Michael Flaherty); heterotopia (Michael Foucault) and ritualizations (Catherine Bell, and more), and the use of material objects as media (Joshua Meyrowitz and more).

*Dorthe Refslund Christensen, PhD, is Associate Professor at the School of Culture and Communication, Aarhus University. Her research fields include social negotiations of identity and the use of ritualizations in identity work with a particular focus on modern grief practices. Since 2008, together with Kjetil Sandvick, she has research on and offline grief and everyday life practices amongst parents that lost a baby before, during or shortly after birth. She is Editor in Chief of two international book series: Sharing Death Online (Emerald; with Kjetil Sandvik) and Studies in Death, Materiality and Time (Routledge; with Rane Willersley, the National Museum of Denmark).*

**Clary, Katie** (Coastal Carolina University, Conway, South Carolina, USA)

[mclary@coastal.edu](mailto:mclary@coastal.edu); Website: <https://katiestringerclary.com>

**Panel 14, 9:30-10:00, Friday**

*Death and display: human remains in museums*

In this presentation I plan to explore the legacy of freak shows and cabinets of curiosities on the current guidelines and ethics of museums in regard to the display of human remains. Topics I am investigating include: ethics, public reactions, and responsibilities of public historians with regards to the display and exhibition of human remains. I will present on the racial, ablest, and class implications of displaying human remains in natural history, history and medical museums. I will also tackle issues, such as cultural patrimony of objects, as well as human remains as museum objects: how old do human remains have to be to be considered 'objects' and no longer people? How do visitors react to various human remains on display, from mummies to Victorian hair wreath memorials, to skeletons or cremated remains? Human remains have been part of exhibitions since the first museums opened in various forms; from the case of Sarah Baartman and nineteenth-century freak shows to modern displays of mummies and medical specimens, the human body has often been a source of emotion, intrigue and education. Have museums moved beyond the 'freak show' or are current human remains displays merely an extension of the spectacle of the earliest museum?

*Katie Stringer Clary, PhD, teaches history and public history at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina USA. Clary has worked with museums in various capacities from docent to executive director. In her times at museums she focussed on museum education and inclusion, especially for people with special needs. This research culminated in her 2014 manuscript Programming for People with Special Needs: A Guide for Museums and Historic Sites. Through her work, she continues to advocate for accessibility equality in museums and historic sites. Clary is also interested in the history of museums, museum administration, digital histories and community engagement. Currently Clary is researching the role museum history and views on death play in the display of human remains in exhibits.*

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**Connor, Rachel** (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

[R.A.Connor@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:R.A.Connor@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

**Panel 6, 12:30-1:00, Thursday**

*How to curate a life: death, decluttering and data management*

The exponential rise in our online presence and the growth in ownership of our digital estate brings with it a series of questions: when we die, who owns the self in virtual form – the deceased person, or the next of kin? Are we truly dead if we leave traces of ourselves in images and our exchanges online? And once the body has expired, might we regard our online footprint as a repository of the soul? My presentation weaves creative practice – through reading selected extracts from my own short story 'How to Curate a Life' - with cultural and critical reflections on the management of digital management before and after death. 'How to Curate a Life' is set in a near-future world in which the digital estate of a person is subject to strict legal constraints. The story explores the relationship between a digital death manager and a deceased client, and interrogates notions of ownership of identity, presence and desire. The presentation contextualizes these issues within contemporary discourses around decluttering, especially in relation to Margareta Magnusson's [The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning](#). In so doing, it explores how digital management shapes our cultural perceptions both of death and life and asks to what extent our digital data 'matters.'

*Dr Rachel Connor teaches creative writing at Leeds Beckett University, where she is Course Director of the English with Creative Writing programme and leads the 'Practices of Writing' research strand of the Centre for Culture and the Arts. She is a published novelist, short story writer and dramatist, as well as a literary critic. Her story 'How to Curate a Life' was awarded first place in the international Storgy competition and is published in the anthology Exit Earth. Her piece 'Swedish death cleaning: how to declutter your home and life' was recently published in The Conversation.*

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**Conway, Heather** (Queen's University, Belfast, UK) and **Penfold-Mounce, Ruth** (University of York, UK)

[h.conway@qub.ac.uk](mailto:h.conway@qub.ac.uk), [ruth.penfold-mounce@york.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.penfold-mounce@york.ac.uk)

**Panel 5, 12:00-12:30, Thursday**

*The evil dead: the law and disposing of the criminal corpse*

The human response to mortality is reflected, in many ways, in the law's response to death and the treatment of human remains. When someone dies there is a legal duty to 'dispose' of the body in a dignified manner, and as quickly as possible; there are strict legal rules

around burial and cremation; and criminal law imposes offences for things like preventing the lawful burial of a body or mutilating a corpse. In short, the basic societal mantra of 'respect for the dead' infuses and influences the law. But what if the person who died is not deserving of respect – where obscenities and evil deeds that they committed in life are reasons for denying them the basic human courtesy that has existed since time immemorial? Moors Murderer, Ian Brady, is the perfect example. Almost six months after his death in May 2017, Brady's corpse was taken to Southport crematorium and incinerated at 10pm, with no music or ceremony and no mourners present; his remains were taken out to sea in the dead of night and placed in a weighted urn. Specific conditions were imposed by a court order (the first legal ruling of its kind), and only made public after the cremation had taken place. Focusing on the litigation surrounding Brady's funeral arrangements, this paper argues that the law plays into socio-cultural norms and superstitions around the 'evil dead' by denying established funeral rites, inflicting further punishment on the individual (beyond lifetime imprisonment) and ensuring that 'toxic' remains are segregated and removed from decent society.

*Dr Heather Conway is a Senior Lecturer in the Law School at Queen's University Belfast. Her research focuses on the substantive laws surrounding the treatment of the dead, the fate of corpses and who has decision-making powers over human remains. Her areas of interest include the resolution of family disputes surrounding funerals, exhumation and commemoration, and their underlying reasons; the legal status of funeral instructions; and the legal and financial issues posed by pre-paid funeral plans. Heather is the author of *The Law and the Dead* (Routledge, 2016).*

*Dr Ruth Penfold-Mounce is a Senior Lecturer at the University of York, and one of the conference convenors.*

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**Cook, Morven** (University of Liverpool, UK)

[Morven.Cook@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Morven.Cook@liverpool.ac.uk)

**Panel 19, 2:30-3:00, Friday**

*Deathbeds then and now: where's the fiction?*

Much has been written about the iconic Victorian deathbed scene as fortifying an expectation on how the dying should behave and what should be revealed and imparted to us when witnessing the death of loved ones. Famously appearing in novels by Charles Dickens, Louise May Alcott and Charlotte Brontë these scenes are viewed as a dramatizing of the 'ars moriendi' in which Christians are taught how to die well. At the centre of these depictions is the character's ability to embrace traditional notions of femininity and

promote qualities, such as self-denial, patience and endurance. Ultimately, these scenes established an aesthetic which transformed the difficult circumstances of death into a spectacle of sacredness and beauty. To modern sensibilities, these scenes seem mawkish and unrealistic. Recent scholarship has accused Dickens, Alcott and Brontë with fetishizing female invalids by making them into passive objects of admiration. In this paper, I compare these depictions with an eclectic range of contemporary works from Lionel Shriver to Christopher Reid, which disrupt these angelic images. I consider how their texts establish female characters who refuse or are unable to act out the role of the pious invalid and thus offer a less ritualistic portrayal of dying. They are an attempt to normalise that which makes us uncomfortable whilst still retaining that sense of human connection and compassion. By looking at memoirs and fiction from both periods, I consider how we build narratives into and out of death.

*Morven Cook's current research focuses on representations of end of life decisions in contemporary British and American narratives. Morven's PhD is funded by the centre as part of a 'Changing Cultures in Health and Medicine' studentship. Morven is supervised by Dr Will Slocombe and Professor Mari Lloyd-Williams.*

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**Coward, Matt** (Department of Sociology, University of York, UK)

[matt.coward@york.ac.uk](mailto:matt.coward@york.ac.uk)

**Panel 24, 4:30-5:00, Friday**

*Cemeteries, consoles and corpses: burial ground ethnography in gameplay environments*

The formal spaces in which corpses are disposed of are known by a series of different terms including the graveyard, churchyard or cemetery. All, nevertheless, hold a similar purpose: the housing of the deceased. Over the course of this paper I will use the phrase 'burial ground' as an encompassing term for these formalised spaces of disposal. The burial ground in the twenty-first century is an infrequently visited space for quiet contemplation, grief and memorialisation. For many, these formalised spaces are places to be avoided. However, within digital gaming environments the likes of: *Assassin's Creed: Origins* (2017), *BioShock Infinite* (2013), *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998), and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (2015), the burial ground in its myriad of forms are sites to be actively sought, explored, and engaged with. By sampling the use of the burial ground as a traversable location of interactive play across the history of digital games, I will question the nuanced roles, purposes and value of the burial ground within the context of digital game play: questioning its effect, if any, on cultural perceptions of formal spaces of disposal.

*Matt Coward is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology (University of York) and is the administrator of DaCNet. His PhD thesis 'UK Tabletop Gaming Communities' explores community formation and interaction within UK tabletop gaming via a qualitative ethnographic approach grounded in ritual theory. Outside of his PhD, Matt's research focuses on gamers and games, and their interactions with death, the undead, contemporary religion and popular culture.*

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**Crouch, Katherine** (University of Manchester, UK)

[Katherine.Crouch@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Katherine.Crouch@hotmail.co.uk)

**Panel 20, 3:00-3:30, Friday**

*Excavation and emotion: archaeology as deathwork*

This paper explores the practice of UK mortuary archaeology—the investigation of past practices and beliefs relating to death, dying and the dead using archaeological theories, methods and techniques—and the impact of this work upon archaeologists and the remains of the dead they encounter. Situating mortuary archaeology within the broader spectrum of “deathwork” occupations, this paper examines the “triggers” that typically underlie affective encounters between archaeologists and human remains, together with how these professionals “come to terms” with the work that they do - the disturbance of the dead - which may be facilitated both by the transformative process of archaeology itself, but also the cognitive techniques utilised by individual practitioners that serve to either objectify or re-humanise the remains of the dead. In studying the attitudes that surround professional engagement with archaeological human remains and the ways in which these may affect professional practice, this paper addresses a number of fundamental questions surrounding the visibility and handling of death and the dead in a society in which the tactile experience of handling the materiality of mortality is arguably located at the periphery of “normal” human experience.

*Katherine Crouch completed her PhD on the emotive impact of “digging up” the dead on archaeology practitioners at the University of Manchester in 2018. Her further research interests include the ethical and legislative challenges of excavating, curating, studying and displaying the remains of the dead, as well as the role of mortuary archaeology in facilitating discussions pertaining to contemporary issues of mortality.*

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**Denham, Jack** (York St John University, York, UK)

[j.denham@yorksja.ac.uk](mailto:j.denham@yorksja.ac.uk)

**Panel 2, 10:00-10:30, Thursday. See SPOKES, Matthew and LEHMANN, Benedikt.**

*Death, memorialization and deviant spaces*

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**de Vries, Nadia** (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

[N.deVries@uva.nl](mailto:N.deVries@uva.nl)

**Panel 18, 12:45-1:15, Friday**

*Sexing the corpse: the dead body as pornographic object*

In *Girlhood and the Plastic Image* (2009), Heather-Warren Crow asserts that “[i]mages are pliable; they can be sculpted like clay and circulated like money” (2). While this pliability of images is commonly accepted in the context of advertising and visual art, it is not so accepted in the context of the dead human body. Yet in web-based communities, such as [Rotten.com](http://Rotten.com), the human corpse is often presented as a source of pleasure. Online, the dead human body is made an entertaining spectacle through not only the gaze of *Schadenfreude*, but also through an almost pornographic approach. This paper discusses the porno-fication of the human corpse in online culture. It explores the various ways in which the dead human body is exploited as a source of pleasure in virtual space, and aims to question the aesthetic and ethical territory that the porno-fied human corpse occupies. What does this pornographic approach to the human corpse mean for the way in which it is witnessed, mourned, and remembered?

*Nadia de Vries is a PhD candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Her research focuses on representations of the human corpse in online culture. She teaches at the University of Amsterdam, and also writes poetry and non-fiction.*

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**Draper, Jan and Jones, Kerry** (The Open University, UK)

[jan.draper@open.ac.uk](mailto:jan.draper@open.ac.uk); [kerry.jones@open.ac.uk](mailto:kerry.jones@open.ac.uk)

**Panel 23, 4:00-4:30, Friday**

*'On the edge of life' – caring for the dying and the dead*

End of life care is high on policy and political agendas (DH 2016) and in interdisciplinary academic and practice debates (Higginson 2016). Healthcare policy over the last 10 years

has consistently highlighted deficiencies in the quality of end of life healthcare and identified a range of strategies – across disciplines and settings – to improve the experience of care for patients and their families (NP&EoLCP, 2015). Nurses are at the forefront of this care, caring for dying patients, ‘managing’ the dead body, and dealing with the corporeal, emotional and relational dimensions of death. Whilst nurses are ‘taught’ the theory and practice of end of life care, we know little about their prior experiences of death, dying and the corpse and how these shape their subsequent professional engagement and practice. This paper presents the findings of a scoping literature review to explore nurses’ first encounters with, and reactions to, dying, death and mortality, and how these formative experiences shaped their understandings and influenced their practice. We suggest implications for research, practice and education and, in particular, how giving legitimate space to surface such experiences might enrich our teaching of death and dying.

Department of Health (2016) *Our commitment to you for end of life care. The Government response to the Review of Choice in End of Life Care*, Department of Health, London.

Higginson, I.J. (2016) Research challenges in palliative and end of life care, *British Medical Journal Supportive and Palliative Care*, 6, pp.2-4.

National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership (2015) *Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: A national framework for local action 2015-2020*, London.

*Jan Draper is Professor of Nursing at The Open University. Following a clinical career, Jan entered higher education in the late 1980s and has taught nurses at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels. Her research interests concern life course transitions, the sociology of the body and the impact of learning on practice.*

*Kerry Jones is Lecturer in End of Life Care at The Open University. Her research focusses on death, dying and bereavement over the life course, including how professionals are affected by working with the dying and how this influences practice. She was academic consultant for A Time to Live, a BBC2 documentary of 12 individuals who shared their experience of ‘living while dying’.*

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**Eldh, Kicki** (Swedish National Heritage Board, Sweden)

Email not provided.

**Panel 14, 10:00-10:30, Friday. See BERGMAN, Jenny.**

*Death – a concern?*

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**Fang, Chao** (Centre for the Study of Death and Society, University of Bath, UK)

[C.Fang@bath.ac.uk](mailto:C.Fang@bath.ac.uk)

**Panel 21, 3:00-3:30, Friday**

*Bereavement and motivation in three contrasting cultures: Britain, Japan and China*

Bereavement is a common human experience across cultures; however, how people face and deal with their loss are largely shaped by socio-cultural background. Furthermore, to carry on their ongoing lives, bereaved people are often involved with various thoughts and actions in order to recover their lives as orderly and meaningful from loss of a loved one. Therefore, this presentation argues motivation can be seen as a social tool that enables bereaved people to engage and negotiate with available norms and values in society to recover meaning in their ongoing lives. In order to explore how bereavement and motivation shape and are shaped by individual bereavement experiences, I analyse qualitative narratives collected from Britain, Japan and China. According to the findings, the bereaved people in Britain tended to be motivated by values on autonomy and individual agency; the Japanese people were more likely to be shaped by competing discourses from both collective and individualistic values; the Chinese people were still largely motivated by traditional and family-centred values. By developing a comparative framework, I look at how motivation of these bereaved people from the three cultures were socio-culturally constructed.

*Chao Fang is finishing his PhD degree in sociology in the Centre for Death and Society (CDAS), University of Bath. His PhD thesis is developing a new approach to bereavement research by introducing a sociological concept of 'motivation' to explore individual bereavement experience, based on qualitative data collected from Britain, Japan and China. Apart from his academic engagements, Chao has also actively been involving a range of developments of international collaborations. In 2016, Chao helped CDAS open up a ground-breaking dialogue with the Chinese Academy of Social Science.*

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**Fletcher, Kami** (Delaware State University, USA)

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**Panel 23, 4:30-5:00, Friday**

*Giants walk among us: black women funeral directors and embalmers in Baltimore, MD*

Nineteenth century gendered norms within American society shaped early black undertaking often omitting black women from this history. Individual success stories

positioned early African American undertakers as freedmen who, once slavery ended, used opportunity and need to thrive. As skilled workers within a field where one's last name was one's undertaking business, the wife who co-founded and worked as an undertaker was invisible within the androcentricism. The compulsory patriarchal nature of nineteenth century labor combined with the strict division of labor resulted in male undertakers out front with female undertakers in the home defined as help mates, if any role at all. Although historically, death was gendered female – the mourning, the domestication of death and death work it was viewed as emotional work – undertaking (coffin making, grave digging) was gendered male. But as bookkeepers, managers, hair stylists, undertaker's assistants, financial investors and cleaners and preparers of the body, black women were undertakers and not just married to one. "Giants Walk Among Us" inserts black women back into the very narrative of undertaking that they helped to create and sustain. It was the wives who helped to start these undertaking entrepreneurial efforts, and it was the wives, daughters, and sisters who sustained and furthered its legacy after the patriarch passed away.

*Dr Kami Fletcher is an Assistant Professor of African American History at Delaware State University. She received her PhD in History from Morgan State University in 2013. Her research centers on African American burial grounds and late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century black male and female undertakers. She is the author of 'Real Business: Maryland's First Black Cemetery Journey's into the Enterprise of Death, 1807-1920' (Thanatological Studies, April 2015). She is also the co-editor of two forthcoming volumes Till Death Do Us Part: American Ethnic Cemeteries as Borders Uncrossed (University Press of Mississippi, 2019) and Southern Cemeteries, Imprints of Southern Culture. Dr Fletcher's work has been featured in Black Perspectives, The Order of the Good Death, Death and the Maiden, The Rise of Charm City.*

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**Foltyn, Jacque Lynn** (Department of Sociology, National University, La Jolla, California, USA)

[jfoltyn@nu.edu](mailto:jfoltyn@nu.edu)

**Panel 3, 10:30-11:00, Thursday**

*Touring heaven: near-death experiences of celebrities and their fans*

Accounts of near-death experiences (NDE) are exceptionally popular, a subcategory of the increasing beguilement with death in the popular imagination. Memoirs by Christians, atheists, and physicians follow an expected script (Fischer and Mitchell-Yellin, 2016). Claims about hovering over brain-dead bodies; meetings with angels and deceased loved ones; travelling in a tunnel towards a celestial light; a glorious afterlife; and a reluctant return to the living have made these memoirs bestsellers and subjects for documentary and Hollywood filmmakers. Seeking to understand the phenomenon and its history, which

reaches back to antiquity, there are NDE workshops and conferences, and articles published in the *Journal of Near Death Studies*. Scientists propose materialist rather than supernatural explanations for NDE, with theories of disintegrating consciousness, oxygen depletion, misfiring neurological cells, etc. Highly profitable, stories about NDE had been folded into the consumer-entertainment-celebrity-industrial complex. Renowned actors star in NDE films, and celebrities, such as Sharon Stone, Ozzy Osbourne, Jane Seymour, George Foreman, Tony Bennett, Elizabeth Taylor, Johnny Cash and Tracy Morgan have shared their NDE experiences with the press. The celebrity dead as spiritual entity now figure in the NDEs of fans who claim to have discovered deceased icons, such as Elvis Presley and Kurt Cobain. A recognized social category, the NDE has testimonial and cultural expectations. This paper uses content analysis of celebrity and fan NDE accounts to investigate whether 1) theories of immortality-based belief systems, rather than science, shape these recollections, and 2) these storytellings follow an expected script that frame them as transformative journeys, a familiar narrative structure found in mythology (Campbell, 1949).

*Jacque Lynn Foltyn is a cultural critic, social theorist, book author, media expert and keynote speaker with diverse scholarly interests. These come together in her influential studies of celebrity death/corpses, corpse chic, quasi-widowhood, and in 'The Corpse in Contemporary Culture: Identifying, Transacting and Recording the Dead Body in the Twenty-First Century', which she guest-edited for the journal Mortality. Foltyn has been honoured by the American Sociological Association; featured in documentaries and text books, appeared on NBC Today, CNN, CBS 48 Hours and BBC, and been interviewed by the New York Times among other publications.*

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**Frisby, Helen** (Archaeology & Anthropology, University of Bristol, UK)

[Helen.Frisby@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Frisby@uwe.ac.uk)

**Panel 12, 5:00-5:30, Thursday**

*Representing gravediggers in nineteenth and twentieth century popular culture*

This paper explores imaginings and representations of gravediggers and gravedigging through a range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglophone popular cultural media – art, literature, folklore, film and even music. Much has been said by social, cultural and art historians, literary and other scholars about how funerary professionals – notably undertakers – have been imagined and represented over time. However, the gravedigger remains remarkably neglected within this academic discourse to date. Popular culture, on the other hand, has been more forthcoming in this respect, with gravediggers variously portrayed as Romanticised rustic, as a sinister but also often as a comic figure. In this presentation, I will contend that these apparently diverse representations of gravediggers

and their work in popular culture are in fact different sides of the same coin. Whether we romanticise or demonise the gravedigger, mock him – or indeed ignore him altogether – all, I will suggest, are socially situated strategies for coping with the psychological discomfort engendered by 'knowing' our own mortality. This historical-cultural perspective will be complemented with reflections from present-day gravediggers, gathered as part of a recent pilot research project, on their own feelings about their work and how they manage others' reactions to what they do for a living.

*Helen Frisby is an Honorary Research Associate in Archaeology & Anthropology at the University of Bristol, and also works at UWE, Bristol. Her PhD was on Victorian/early twentieth century popular ritualisations of death, dying and bereavement, and her current research (with Dr Stuart Prior) is investigating the occupational lore of gravediggers. Helen is Secretary of the Association for the Study of Death & Society (ASDS), a Council Member of the Folklore Society and member of the Royal Historical Society.*

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**Furse, Anna** (Goldsmiths, University of London, UK)

[A.Furse@gold.ac.uk](mailto:A.Furse@gold.ac.uk); [www.athletesoftheheart.org](http://www.athletesoftheheart.org)

**Panel 15, 9:00-9:30, Friday**

*An anatomy act: on death, anatomy and the status of the cadaver*

This illustrated presentation will share ideas about Furse's current Arts Council/EU funded PaR that has focused on the topic of Death and the Culture: *Anna Furse Performs an Anatomy Act: A Show and Tell*. Conflating her roles as a theatre director, writer, and Professor, Furse's vivid animated lecture is accompanied by saw playing and video. She weaves a narrative that intersects morbidity, anxiety about death, the status of the cadaver and the body politic, taking in issues of class and race along the way. Her research, conducted with the Donor Scheme at Trinity College, Dublin and The Anatomy School's Dissecting Lab at Kings College, refers to, amongst others, the cultural-historical work of Foucault, Sawday, Ebenstein, Richardson, Van Dijk, Cartwright, Barker and Bronfen, as she stretches her consideration of the anatomical gaze from the Renaissance to today. Furse has recently completed a Residency at Trinity College, Dublin with their Wellcome funded ISSF Neurohumanities Project and the Provost's Fund for the Visual and Performing Arts, performing and lecturing. She also gave a keynote address at Ireland's National Annual Conference for Medicine and the Arts in Cork. Both of these included workshops with medical and arts professionals, *Interiority: Writing the Body*.

*Professor Anna Furse: award-winning director/writer of over 50 international touring productions including Paines Plough (Artistic Director, 1990-1995). Her arts and medicine works - funded by the Wellcome Trust, ACE and the EU - delve into eating disorders, hysterias,*

*(sub)fertility, anatomy, and women in the medical gaze. I'm Not a Piece of Meat (June 2018) commissioned by CREATE Ireland, CAPP EU, is a digital artwork elaborating research for her lecture-performance An Anatomy Act (2016). At Goldsmiths, Furse directs the MA in Performance Making and co-directs The Centre of the Body. She is a regular conference speaker and publisher of creative and critical texts.*

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**Gittings, Clare** (Independent scholar, UK)

[claresgittings@gmail.com](mailto:claresgittings@gmail.com)

**Panel 3, 10:00-10:30, Thursday**

*Visualising royal funerals in Early Modern Europe: a shared culture conveying different messages*

The starting point for this paper is the well-known theory of Kantorowicz concerning the king's two bodies and the dilemma posed when the monarch dies. European royalty in the early modern period had, by and large, a shared culture of visual imagery employed in these moments of potential crisis. This included the use of heraldry; a temporary hearse or catafalque erected in front of the altar; the presence of horses in the ritual; and even the deceased appearing to take part in their own funeral ceremony. This presentation, combining visual and written sources, compares striking images and rituals relating to the funerals of monarchs in England, France and Poland. It asks why, in Polish royal funerals, these cultural symbols, held in common across Europe, were used differently in ritual performance and postulates that the unique nature of monarchy in Poland, passing not by hereditary succession but by election, required the symbols in the funeral ritual to give alternative messages from those in the more typical hereditary monarchies. Was the use of these symbols primarily to suggest continuity and that death has caused no break, or were they also deployed to underscore one monarch's reign ending and a new one beginning?

*Clare Gittings has been researching and writing for several decades about aspects of the history of death, in particular about funeral rituals, including Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England (1984) and using visual sources as evidence. She taught on the Death and Society masters courses at the universities of Reading and Bath, where she is a visiting research fellow at CDAS. She is also on the editorial board of Mortality. For many years, she worked at the National Portrait Gallery in London, teaching, lecturing and curating occasional exhibitions.*

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**Hadjitarkhani, Abie** (Independent scholar, USA)

[abie@obistertius.com](mailto:abie@obistertius.com)

**Panel 3, 11:00-11:30, Thursday**

*On doubles and the unreality of death in alternate timelines*

The OED's word of the year in 2016 was 'post-truth' – both a symptom of the explicit crisis of facts in political discourse and an implicit recognition that the 'real' seems less real than ever. It isn't just fans of speculative fiction who imagine, wishfully, that there may be alternate timelines in which this election or that referendum turned out differently, or that this loved one isn't dead, or even that one's own death need not be so final. These fantasies and anxieties coalesce in longform television narratives like *Dark* a time-travel mystery centred around the disappearances and deaths of children in a small town, and *Counterpart*, a thriller about a parallel dimension centred around the interactions between the individuals who are permitted to travel between the worlds and their doppelgängers on the other side. Informed by Freud's work on doubles and the uncanny and Deleuze and Guattari's theory of double articulation, this talk will focus specifically on how the potential space of alternate timelines alters these characters' relationship to death, both the deaths of loved ones and their own deaths, and how those experiences allow us to explore our own relationships to death, one of the most challenging 'realities' for us to accommodate.

*Abie Hadjitarkhani holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Stanford University and an MA in Counselling Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute. He has taught semiotics at San Francisco State University and worked as a psychotherapist in residential recovery programs and private practice. He currently works at the intersection of Silicon Valley and Hollywood on intelligent assistants and text-to-speech synthesis.*

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**Harris, Racheal** (Australian Catholic University, Australia)

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**Panel 13, 10:00-10:30, Friday**

*Echoes and imitations: taxidermy and tattoo as memento mori*

When considering the ways in which the dead are memorialised by those who loved them, discussion is often limited to relationships between romantic partners, close friends and family members. Less often is consideration given to the relationships that exist between humans and their pets. Yet animals have played a prominent role in how we, as humans, understand and experience death and mourning. Pet owners often refer to their animals not just as members of the family, but as "babies" or "best friends". This is especially true of

Generation Y and Millennials, who are increasingly turning away from traditional family and parenting roles in favour of co-habitation with one or multiple “fur-children”. Unable to understand or protest their humanisation, animals are increasingly understood through personality traits that have little to do with their animal nature, but rather service the needs of their human owners. As a consequence, their inevitable deaths present a grief, which while significant, is often difficult to translate personally or to the outside world. When we are faced with having to mourn our animals, our feelings are often in conflict with traditional cultural beliefs about death, dying and memorialisation. Taking this idea as my primary focus, in this discussion I consider how animals have been memorialised and how historic forms of pet inspired memento mori compare to those of the current era. Of specific focus will be Victorian Era taxidermy, which will be used as a comparison to the modern practice of tattooing.

*Racheal Harris completed her Bachelor of Historical Inquiry and Practice, Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and Master of Arts at the University of New England (Australia). She is currently under consideration for PhD Candidature at the Australian Catholic University. Racheal has contributed to several up-coming collections, including Death in Supernatural and A Critical Companion to James Cameron, both of which are due for publication in 2018. Racheal is also a regular speaker at academic conferences and has recently presented papers on Elvis in Tattoo Culture (Kent University, U.K.) and Ethics in the Syfy series 12 Monkeys (Monash University, Aust.).*

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**Jackson, Maggie** (Teesside University, UK)

[m.j.jackson@tees.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.jackson@tees.ac.uk)

**Panel 8, 2:30-3:00, Thursday**

*Death and children's picture books*

Anthony (1940), contended “death, whatever it may mean to children, comes readily into their fantasy thought” (p.43), despite this it often seems to be a troublesome subject for many adults to address with children. One book provoked vehement reactions calling it a creeping trend among children's authors to focus on the unthinkable. Despite this, the subject of death has become a much more regular feature of the children's picture book. Here I consider how death has been presented to children through picture books for the under 8s. Often these stories offer gentle comforting ideas about loss – those we love continue to live on in our hearts. Others, though still comforting, would appear to be much more direct, not to say brutal, in the way they address the subject of death. This is not simply connected to age. Here I consider a range of picture books that address death in a clear and direct way and offer some thoughts on why this might have become to be an

acceptable way of dealing with the subject despite the reluctance of many adults (Gutierrez *et al.*, 2014) to accept that death is a natural a part of the children's lives as birth.

Anthony, S. (1940) *The Child's Discovery of Death*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.

Gutierrez, I.T., Miller, P.J., Rosengren, K.S., and Schein, S.S. (2014) 'Affective dimensions of death: children's books, questions, and understandings', *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 79:1, 43-61.

*Maggie Jackson has worked as a specialist social worker in an educational psychology service where her interest in working with children who had experienced losses of varying sorts began. She has been involved in a school projects helping to support teachers addressing the subject of loss and death to children. As a lecturer she continued her interest in death and loss teaching across a range of programmes and has recently begun to focus on the how picture books address the subject of death for the very young child. Her publications include The Teacher's Handbook of Death (2001) London: JKP.*

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**Jenkins, Louie** (Theatre Department, University of Chichester, UK)

[L.Jenkins@chi.ac.uk](mailto:L.Jenkins@chi.ac.uk)

**Panel 15, 9:30-10:00, Friday**

*Transparency: shame, grief and performative memorialisation*

This paper engages with and critiques shame-affect (Tomkins, 1962), positing that ideo-affective postures (Tomkins, 1995) impact the writing and performance of autobiographical narratives of mourning. Grief is understood as the result of disrupted attachments not simply with those that have died, but with family, friendships, love and community; it ruptures social narratives, belief systems and the sense of self that is formed and sustained in relation to others (Herman, 2001 p. 51). The disruption of interconnectedness is significant for the bereaved because 'to be a social outcast in one's grief, is to experience one's grief and thereby oneself, to be shameful' (Kauffman, 2010 p. 11). This paper reflects on the writing and development of *Time Piece* (2012-2014), a solo autobiographical performance of mourning narratives: mum, dad and partner. I engage with two questions: If the experience of dying, death and mourning are socially constructed, how does shame-affect complicate the processes of autobiographical performance making? Secondly, how might the shame/identity index be subverted through autobiographical performance? The questions emerged in response to the 'disjunctions that occur between one's own experience and the official narratives set out to explain it' (Muncey, 2010 p. 10). I investigate whether my own experience of loss, in contrast to the culturally sanctioned expression of loss (or Muncey's 'it'), is mediated through shame-affect and putative cultural

rituals. I explore if shame as a relational embodied affect complicates the processes of interpreting, writing, developing and performing autobiographical narratives.

*Dr Louie Jenkins is a Senior Lecturer in the Theatre Department at the University of Chichester, UK. Her research focuses on shame, class, queer performativity and the art and performance of mourning. The solo autobiographical performances of mourning narratives: Moth, Five Fragments and Time Piece have been performed throughout the UK and in San Francisco and Minneapolis, USA. At present she is developing the Trace Project, which aims to develop performative memorialisation practices. She has a chapter in the upcoming publication by Palgrave Macmillan Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration (2018).*

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**Jones, Kerry** (The Open University, UK)

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**Panel 23, 4:00-4:30, Friday. See DRAPER, Jan.**

*'On the edge of life' – caring for the dying and the dead*

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**Jones, Natalie** (Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Warwick, UK)

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**Panel 1, 10:00-10:30, Thursday**

*Death, disposal and dissent: how foetal remains remain*

Within the field of death studies, the disposal of foetal remains resulting from pregnancy loss and termination remains a contentious and complex issue. In the UK, guidance from organisations, such as the Human Tissue Authority regarding foetal tissue disposal direct practice and policy, while in the US recent proposals for laws governing foetal tissue disposal remain pending. In neither case are these guidelines or recommendations absolutely set in stone. While much has been written regarding the legal and socio-political resonance of this issue, this paper will instead take up the question of a culture of 'prescribed mourning', offering a more radical theoretical intervention into the question of how, and why, foetal tissue 'remains' - in medical and disposal practices, but also in the cultural psyche. The remains of foetal death will be considered to also remain aesthetically and conceptually in contemporary theories of the meanings of death, as well as in literature and foetal representation. Drawing on the work of philosophers, such as Gerburg Treusch-Dieter and Jean-Michel Rabaté, the possibility of a stubborn 'remainder' after death will be thought of as problematic, but also as a potential for dissent; a different way in to the relationship between death and culture.

*Dr Natalie Linda Jones is an interdisciplinary scholar based in the Centre for the History of Medicine at the University of Warwick. Her work intersects with the fields of medicine, law and literature, with a particular focus on the relationship between abortion and aesthetics. She has presented internationally on the representation of abortion within art and culture, with recent and forthcoming publications including work, such as 'Dying for our Biographies: The Abortion Act 1967' (Women's Legal Landmarks, 2018) and 'Cultural Violence and Familiar Silence?: 50 Years of the Abortion Act' (European Journal of English Studies, 2018).*

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**Khapaeva, Dina** (Georgia Tech, Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, USA)

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**Thursday, 9:15-10:00, ARRC Auditorium**

***KEYNOTE 1: Death as a cultural condition***

In the mid-1990s, a unique new way of engaging with death crystallized in Western culture: the mounting fascination with the “violent delights” of fictionalized death on screen and in fiction resurrected the Gothic and apocalyptic genres, galvanized horror with torture porn, slasher movies, and BDSM, and turned murderous monsters – vampires, zombies, serial killers, cannibals – into the new cultural idols. These artistic developments coincided with unprecedented and sweeping changes in funeral rituals, the spread of death symbolism in fashion, the invention of dark tourism and the marketing of murderabilia, the establishment of death education curricula, the proliferation of new concepts related to death, and the stunning popularity of Halloween celebration and the worship of *Santa Muerte* (“Saint Death”). I propose a theoretical framework that connects interpretations of the simulated world of fiction and movies to social and cultural change, and considers the demand for images of violent death and the dramatic transformations in death-related practices as aspects of a single movement. I suggest that the new attitudes toward human beings articulated in the representations of popular culture should guide our understanding of the meaning invested in the new rituals, seasonal celebrations, vocabulary, educational initiatives, and commercial ventures. The cult of death, as I conceptualize this movement, reconsiders the place of humans in the spectrum of species, rejects human exceptionalism, and redefines our understanding of humanism and humanity in the secular value system. It offers antihumanism as a new popular cultural commodity. In my talk, I will discuss the most important stages in the development of this movement from the late 1970s to the 2010s. The popular culture images altering our basic food taboo on eating humans will be the focus of my attention. This historical and cultural analysis will address the importance of the mortality studies to an understanding of the present cultural condition.

*Dina Kapaeva joined the School of Modern Languages in 2012. She received a PhD in Classical Studies from St Petersburg State University, St Petersburg, Russia. She studies Russian literature and culture, including the grand literary tradition and Soviet and post-Soviet fiction and film. Her research and teaching interests lie in the intersection of cultural studies, memory studies, medievalism, history of emotions and death studies. Her most recent book project The Celebration of Death in Russia and America (forthcoming at the University of Michigan Press) compares the ways of engaging with death and representations of violent death in Russian and American popular culture.*

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**King, Lindsey** (Department of Anthropology, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, USA)

[KINGCL@etsu.edu](mailto:KINGCL@etsu.edu)

**Panel 22, 4:00-4:30, Friday**

*The cost of survival: the ex-voto tradition in Canindé*

Would you be willing to pay the supernatural to keep you alive and in good health? People have been doing it for thousands of years. In the ancient Greek and Roman Empires, a tradition developed where supplicants entered into an agreement with the supernatural to do just that. This tradition traveled across the world and is still a vital tradition in many locales, having changed little throughout the centuries. This paper discusses the evolution of this pre-Christian tradition from its beginnings, its diffusion through Europe with the Roman Empire, to one of its contemporary incarnations in Brazil. Each year hundreds of people travel to the small Roman Catholic shrine honouring *Saõ Francisco das Chagas* (St. Francis of Wounds) in Canindé, Brazil to pay the saint for ensuring their survival of a myriad of social and physical ills. This research discusses the artistry of the self-made mimetic offerings used as payment, the catharsis inherent in the crafting of the offerings, and the symbolic importance of this tradition to the social health of a marginalized population who have few options to choose from for the survival of their families and themselves.

*A long-time researcher of material culture, Lindsey King is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. Having completed over fifteen years of research on pilgrimage in Brazil and publishing a monograph of this work, *Spiritual Currency in Northeast Brazil* with the University of New Mexico Press in 2014, her work in pilgrimage and the negotiations with the supernatural for health and survival continue in new locales, including, most recently, *St. Nectan's Glen* in Cornwall and *St. Roch Cemetery Chapel* in New Orleans, Louisiana.*

**Korecka, Agata** (Media, Communications and Performing Arts, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, UK)

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**Panel 18, 12:15-12:45, Friday**

*Death, dying and light entertainment*

Medical Reality Television (MedRTV) is defined as an entertainment Reality TV genre concerned with health treatment narratives, foregrounding graphic, bodily depictions of medical examination and invasive/non-invasive surgical procedures. Progressing from the cosmetic Makeover strand, this less aesthetics-driven format invites the public to self-examine and scrutinise others undergoing treatment for both mundane-turned-extreme ailments and rare conditions. Death surfaces as a recurring element in MedRTV. Though it rarely occurs in the narratives themselves, and never onscreen, it is framed as an inevitability of the patients' original condition/lifestyle, and a possibility of treatment remedying it. A small but significant body of autopsy programmes further showcases death as a result of poor lifestyle choices. These broadcasts invariably prompt controversy and a public discussion of the ethics regarding the treatment of dead bodies. They raise questions echoing pre-Anatomy Act of 1832 concerns about dignity, the appropriate treatment of the dead, the ownership of the body. Crucially, these programmes also point to the absence of death in the everyday sphere.

*Agata Korecka is a second year PhD candidate at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh in the division of Media, Communications and Performing Arts. 'Open Body as Entertainment' is an exploratory, qualitative study investigating the genre of Medical Reality Television through reader-guided textual analysis which draws on naturally-occurring audience conversations across online platforms as a source of analytical themes.*

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**Kotlova, Aleksandra** (Faculty of Philosophy, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia)

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**Panel 11, 4:30-5:00, Thursday**

*The ontological contradiction in altruistic suicide*

This paper is devoted to the philosophical examination of the phenomenon of altruistic suicide. The author refers to the specific historical examples of such cases in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (such as the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland's Maze prison, self-immolations of Tibetans and both of these suicidal acts committed by Russian and Ukrainian civil activists) when the suicides were used as means of political struggle. The aim is to highlight the

ontological contradiction inherent in this cultural phenomenon. In order to change the political situation the actor is ready to destroy his own body and therefore deny his own existence, his ontological presence in this world (the world that may be changed but will inevitably cease to exist for the actor as well). The living body thus becomes an object with its own value that can be exchanged for some material or political goods and also can lose or increase in symbolic price depending on number, way and frequency of suicides. The phenomenon will be examined in the philosophical context of early Heideggerian phenomenology, French phenomenology of Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion and contemporary neo-Marxism (Peter Osborne, Moishe Postone). The research strategy includes hermeneutical and philosophical/theoretical approaches.

*Aleksandra Kotlova is a PhD student at the Lomonosov Moscow State University (Faculty of Philosophy, Chair of Ontology and the Theory of Knowledge). She specializes in phenomenology and philosophical theology. She is primarily interested in 20th century continental philosophy, specifically the philosophical problems concerning death and human finitude. She wrote her Master's thesis on the ontological and axiological meanings of human death and currently is working on her doctoral thesis on the ontology of death in religious metaphysics.*

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**Lee, Lois** (Religious Studies, University of Kent, UK)

[L.A.Lee@kent.ac.uk](mailto:L.A.Lee@kent.ac.uk)

**Panel 9, 3:30-4:00, Thursday**

*The existential in culture and new critical approaches to Death Studies*

In the mid-twentieth century, Hannah Arendt developed a critique of what she saw as death-centred philosophical approaches. Arendt sought to rebalance this emphasis on mortality by calling attention to the philosophical significance of creation – of natality. This paper reflects on the rapid growth of death studies in the social sciences and humanities with this critical approach in mind. It draws on new work in the sociology of religion and related fields that investigates ways of reframing the field for extensively nonreligionised contexts like the UK, and understands the growth of death studies as in part a response to these same changing contexts. It argues that new sociologies – of the sacred, of existential culture and of worldview – offer helpful perspectives for studies of death and culture, because they suggest ways in which death can be usefully understood as just one of several existentially significant phenomena. From this vantage point, we can ask: Is death privileged in popular culture compared to other existential experiences, such as birth and other processes of creation? What does this tell us about how death is imagined in culture?

How should death studies itself account for its own popularity compared to other areas of existential research?

*Lois Lee is Research Fellow in Religious Studies at the University of Kent, and PI on the £2.3m Understanding Unbelief research programme. Her books include Recognizing the Non-religious: Reimagining the Secular (OUP, 2015), The Oxford Dictionary of Atheism (2016, with Stephen Bullivant), and the co-edited volumes Secularity & Non-religion (Routledge, 2015) and Negotiating Religion: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives (Routledge, 2017). She co-directs the Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network (NSRN), and co-edits its journal, Secularism and Nonreligion (S&N).*

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**Lehmann, Benedikt** (York St John University, York, UK)

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**Panel 2, 10:00-10:30, Thursday. See SPOKES, Matthew and DENHAM, Jack.**

*Death, memorialization and deviant spaces*

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**López-Peñaloza, Judith** (School of Psychology, University of Michoacan, Mexico)

[judith.lopez.2003@gmail.com](mailto:judith.lopez.2003@gmail.com)

**Panel 1, 10:30-11:00, Thursday**

*Disenfranchised grief and the experience of clandestine abortion*

There are certain losses whose acknowledgment is not socially and culturally permitted, due to the unusual circumstances in which they take place, leaving the bereaved without a place where they can recognize, validate and express their sorrow. The resulting disenfranchised grief (Doka, 2002), presents unique characteristics, such as lack of rituals, absence of social support, presence of shame and guilt, among others, which significantly impairs the process of resilient grief-coping and its eventual resolution. The present research had as its main objective to learn how disenfranchised grief was manifested by nine Mexican women who have undergone clandestine abortions, given that abortion is not legally permitted in Michoacán, their state of residence. Among the main results obtained through depth interviewing of these women, followed by content analysis of the resulting discourses, showed that the lack of social acknowledgment of their loss not only inhibits their own self-confronting of such loss, making them feel ashamed and guilty, but makes them question their own worth in terms of self-image, self-esteem and their conceptions of

motherhood, in a cultural context in which motherhood is revered as an integral part of being a Mexican woman.

*Judith López-Peñaloza is a Clinical Psychologist by the California State University, USA, has a PhD in Psychology by UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Currently she works as a tenured Researcher and Professor at the School of Psychology at University of Michoacan, Mexico. She is the recipient of several distinctions and awards and belongs to the National System of Researchers, a distinction given to recognized researchers of Mexico by the Council of Science and Technology of the Mexican Government. She is a frequent speaker on her research topics: death, grief and trauma.*

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**Marriott, Janine** (Public Engagement Manager, Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, UK)

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**Panel 17, 12:15-12:45, Friday**

*Entertaining the living amongst the dead*

Cemeteries and graveyards have traditionally had one role, however during the last 40 years many have evolved from historic burial space to cultural destination. It is now possible to watch a film, see a circus performance, view art, take a tour or watch theatre in a place of the dead in the UK and Ireland. How did this transition from a space with one defined purpose, to site of entertainment occur? Is the presence of the human remains part of the draw to these sites, or a hindrance to their new, alternative use? Drawing from experiences working in heritage sites, this paper explores the transition of a range of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century sites and examine why many of these cities of the dead have moved from being a place of burial to a place for the living.

*Janine Marriott is the Public Engagement Manager at Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol, UK. Her role involves encouraging visitors into the cemetery and providing opportunities to engage with the place, the stories held there and the historic landscape. She began her career in teaching, moved on to museum education and has worked in a range of museums and heritage sites. Janine is now undertaking a part-time Doctorate in Heritage at the University of Hertfordshire, exploring public engagement in sites of memorialisation.*

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**Martin, Ruth** (Leeds City Museums and Galleries, UK)

Email not provided.

**Panel 14, 10:30-11:00, Friday. See BAXTER, Katherine.**

*Displaying the dead: public reactions to human skeletons in museums*

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**Mayhem, Maggie** (Independent scholar, USA)

[Maggie@maggiemayhem.com](mailto:Maggie@maggiemayhem.com); Website: [MaggieMayhem.Com](http://MaggieMayhem.Com)

**Panel 4, 12:00-12:30, Thursday**

*The lifeguards of the River Styx: overdose responders on the front line of the fentanyl crisis*

In San Francisco in the summer of 2015, it was not uncommon to hear someone urgently cry out, "Does anyone have Narcan?!" Narcan or Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that halts an overdose in progress. At first there had only been isolated incidents but that summer a string of 75 consecutive overdoses in San Francisco and tragic reports from across the country and around the globe made it clear that Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 50-100 times more potent than street heroin now dominated the supply chain and was beginning to appear in counterfeit pharmaceuticals for anxiety. Unlike many other cities, however, San Francisco was braced for impact. Trainings on overdose response were widely held at shelters, needle exchanges, and alley ways. The overdose antidote Narcan was freely distributed in many forms. In that summer of overdoses, not one life was lost. In a stunning case study of the power of mutual aid, these "lifeguards on the River Styx" proved that despite the immense stigma and lack of faith granted to those facing homelessness and chemical dependency, drug users are the best first responders in the overdose crisis. This talk will cover public perception of overdose deaths, share dispatches from the front lines of harm reduction, and discuss experiences with administering Narcan and reviving someone from an overdose.

*Maggie Mayhem has been involved in the field of harm reduction since 2003 and currently works as a full spectrum doula in San Francisco, CA. She is an international advocate for sex worker rights and reproductive justice.*

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**Michael-Fox, Beth** (University of Winchester, UK)

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**Panel 9, 2:30-3:00, Thursday**

*'You're still you. Dead or alive.' Death and the self in the cultural imagination*

This paper examines contemporary cultural responses that negotiate the relationship between death and the idea of the 'self'. It will focus on the writing and critical commentary of British authors Julian Barnes, Jenny Diski and Will Self as well as drawing on diverse examples from visual, aural and screen cultures to consider how academic and scientific discourses about the instability of the 'self', in particular in a secular context, shape and inform cultural negotiations of death. As Julian Barnes puts it, if individuality or personality is just "a story the brain tells itself", then how can we approach death? Is, as Will Self suggests, death less scary if there is less 'I', or if you are less attached to that 'I'? What understandings do cultural negotiations of death, such as Jenny Diski's cancer diary offer for what she described as the prospect of "infinity, but without you"? How does one respond to the inevitability of death when the idea of a unified self that will die has been undermined? These questions will be addressed by bringing together and examining a range of twenty-first century negotiations of death and dying in the cultural imagination.

*Beth Michael-Fox is a PhD student at the University of Winchester in the final stages of completing a thesis on death and late postmodern culture. The thesis argues that death is both central to an understanding of what she defines as late postmodern culture and explores death in the late postmodern cultural imagination. Beth was a lecturer in the School of Education and English Language at the University of Bedfordshire from 2011-2018, when she relocated to Cornwall with her husband and daughter. Beth currently work as an Associate Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the Open University.*

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**Midhin, Majeed Mohammed** (University of Anbar, Iraq)

[al\\_aubaidymajeed@yahoo.com](mailto:al_aubaidymajeed@yahoo.com)

**Panel 15, 10:00-10:30, Friday**

*Death and Howard Barker's concept of theatre*

Known for his influential views on theatre, Howard Barker is one of those contemporary British playwrights who uses theatre as a place for mysticism or obscurantism. These two terms are closely related to death and mortality. He is against those people who see death as a perishing entity. In modern theatre, Barker sees that dead is not experienced spiritually. So, modern theatre is retreated because it does not take death as its main subject. In contrast, it has become engaged with mundane projects of political and social issues. In an influential collection of essays, encapsulated in particular in his books *Arguments for a Theatre* (1989) and *Death: The One and the Art of Theatre* (2005), Barker reveals his own powerful theatre theory. In his view of what is so-called 'Theatre of Catastrophe', Barker wishes to introduce a theatre, which is fear-inspiring by presenting as crucially an art of death. The present study is an attempt to shed light on Barker's view of

death and how it should be employed in theatre. Looking closer at Barker's tragic plays, we see that the protagonist embraces death not only with joy, but also with acceptance.

*Majeed Mohammed Midhin is from Iraq. Majeed has an MA from the University of Baghdad College of Languages in 2002. In 2017 Majeed got a PhD in Literature from the University of Essex. It was under the supervision of Dr Clare Finburgh and Dr Elizabeth J. Kuti. Majeed's field of interest is contemporary and modern British drama which touches the immediate needs of people in society. Majeed has participated in many colloquia, conferences and seminars inside and outside the UK, and is now a teacher at the University of Anbar, Iraq.*

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**Morcate, Montse** (University of Barcelona, Spain)

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**Panel 13, 10:30-11:00, Friday**

*Taxidermy, or how to turn a corpse into art*

This photographic essay – based on academic research on the representation of death, grief and science – deals with the new resurgence of taxidermy in New York, where new generations of artists and artisans explore the aesthetic possibilities and the ethical limits of this practice. We live in a society where animal rights are becoming increasingly prominent. Every possible angle of the issue is now up for debate: bullfighting and the use of animals in traditional festivals, unethical practices in farming or the benefits of an alternative lifestyle free of animal cruelty. However, taxidermy is often kept outside this debate because it deals with lifeless bodies of animals and because it would inevitably force us to tackle the ultimate taboo: death. Different perspectives of this practice are analysed being the classical taxidermy, the anthropomorphic style or contemporary art based on taxidermy practise some of them, in order to address questions, such as: Is it possible ethical taxidermy? Is a commemorative taxidermy of a beloved pet acceptable? Is taxidermy controversial just because it questions the limits of life, death and decay?

*Montse Morcate is an artist, and photography professor at University of Barcelona. Her research and art projects deal with photographic representations of death and grief. Recently, she has been a Visiting scholar at Columbia University and at the Morbid Anatomy Museum in New York and at the Department of History of Science in CSIC in Madrid. She is also the co-founder of the research project "Sharing pain and grief online: the self-referential digital image of illness and death as a means of destigmatization, connection, visibilization and copresence" awarded with a research grant on digital humanities by the BBVA Foundation.*

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**Paluch, Ania** (Cultural Mediations at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada)

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**Panel 7, 3:30-4:00, Thursday**

*Piękna Śmierć: the translation of death rituals from Poland into Polonia*

What do graves tell us? What significance do we attach to them from our burial practices? The burial practices of the Polish community, though technically considered 'Western', is unique; in Poland it is highly common for all graves to include above-ground plots of concrete whereas Canadian graves are placed in highly curated plots of land. How do Polish communities in Ottawa, Canada work around these limitations? How do limitations in these diasporic spaces, such as Ottawa cemeteries banning decor (candles, flowers, etc.), affect the ability for Polish-Canadians to properly mourn their dead? In order to trace the transnational burial practices of Polonia, I will address the core traditions found in Poland, and the fetish of death that perpetuates in the Polish psyche. Did the romantization of death in 19th century Polish art and literature (such as Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady*) have any influence on the Polish mentality towards death? How do these historical instances affect cultural practices? How do these histories, traumas, mentalities, and associations with heritage, cultural and language play a role in the burial practices of Polish-Canadians? To answer this, I will present a case study involving ceremonies in and around the days of All Hallows Eve and All Soul's Day, and what these days look like for the Polish community in Ottawa.

*Anna (Ania) Paluch is a PhD student in Cultural Mediations at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Her research focus is on Indigenous and Slavic Futurism, specifically how each community uses science fiction films to retell traditional oral stories and legends, as well as how artists use images from pop-culture and traditional motifs in visual art. Her independent research focuses on post-memory in the diaspora, specifically around diasporic and mixed identity within a Canadian setting. She is a curator, mixed-media artist and co-director of the International Indigenous Festival in Ottawa, connecting diasporic/immigrant communities with local Indigenous communities through art and culture.*

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**Parsons, Brian** (Independent scholar, UK)

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**Panel 16, 12:45-1:15, Friday**

*'Go direct to the crematorium; do not pass through the chapel, pay £1,000 and collect the ashes'. Exploring the phenomenon of direct cremation*

Contemporary publicity concerning 'funeral poverty' (also termed 'funeral affordability') invariably cites 'direct cremation' as a way of reducing expenditure. Although problematic in terms of a definition, 'direct cremation' is often considered to be cremation of a coffin with the absence of any ceremony or mourners. Research shows, however, that such committal arrangements have occurred in the UK since Woking Crematorium was used for the first time in March 1885, a situation suggesting that the decision to organise a 'direct cremation' may not necessarily be financial. This paper explores not only the variety of interpretations of the term 'direct cremation' but also the reasons why families opt for this mode of disposal. After considering such cremations in the context of what is a funeral, the concluding observations focus on issues concerning 'direct cremation' from the perspective of funeral directors and crematoria.

*Brian Parsons has worked in the funeral industry in London since 1982. His PhD focussing on change within the British funeral service during the twentieth century has recently been published by Emerald. He is also the author of Committed to the Cleansing Flame: the Development of Cremation in the Nineteenth Century, The Undertaker at Work 1900-1950 and (with Hugh Meller) London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer.*

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**Pecorari, Marie** (Sorbonne University, Paris, France)

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**Panel 16, 1:15-1:45, Friday**

*Cleaning up their (final) act: dead bodies and changing perceptions of good taste and purity*

Among the changes undergone by the contemporary funeral industry, embalming is on the way out, and green burials are on the rise. Embalming involves invasive preparation and chemical sterilization, while eco-burials reject prior intervention on the body. Yesterday's safe, sanitized, beautiful 'memory picture' becomes tomorrow's kitschy, plastic-looking doll; disgust toward dirt turns into wonder and respect at nature's power to recycle its elements. This contribution offers to work at the intersection of these two practices by looking at the changing perceptions of good taste and purity surrounding their adoption and assessment as ethical behaviors. It examines how two practices seemingly at odds are justified in different time periods as ways to achieve the same desirable result: a clean corpse. Borrowing from discourses on taste in fashion and interior design — reflecting the cadaver's ambiguous status as a subject/object —, it will show how perceptions of purity in matters of disposal reflect the more general shift from preoccupations with hygiene, scientific progress, and aesthetic perfection, to notions of simplicity, minimalism, and eco-imaginaries. Primary sources include trade publications, publicity material, and popular

culture representations; the theoretical framing is grounded in the concept of kitsch. As befits an analysis of taste, the temporal boundaries are rather loose, yet the shift roughly corresponds to the turn of the 21st century. Although this paper reflects its author's expertise as a United States scholar, points of comparison with the situation in the UK will be offered whenever relevant.

*Marie Pecorari has been Associate Professor of North American Studies at Sorbonne Université since 2009, and is currently on research leave as a junior fellow at the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies in Warsaw. Originally a theatre and drama scholar, with a special focus on post-WWII, queer and African-American theatre (Tennessee Williams, Suzan-Lori Parks, Charles Ludlam and Tony Kushner), she is now investigating funeral ceremonies and modes of disposal from a performance studies perspective, with a contemporary North American or comparative focus.*

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**Penfold-Mounce, Ruth and Coward, Matt** (University of York, UK)

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**Panel 17, 1:15-1:45, Friday**

*Creative methodologies: walking with death in York*

In this paper, we build upon earlier work that combines walking as a method to generate knowledge and understanding about death in sensory and corporeal ways. We argue for the need to develop publicly engaging and mobile scholarship that offers a critical and cultural approach to death. Walking is both an innovative, timely and imaginative method for conducting a critical recovery of the histories of death, dying and the dead in the present. In this paper, we share the development of an interdisciplinary collaborative York Death Walk, designed as critical pedagogic method for teaching and learning at the University of York as well as an impactful tool for disseminating research and knowledge to the public. In doing so, we suggest that through walking we are able to get in touch with past, present and future of death in ways that foster 'understanding' through critical pedagogy, across time and through space. Walking through the city, engaging with spaces and places associated with death, dying and the dead is a way of seeing and feeling the history of mortality in the present, and a critical and imaginative method for doing death scholarship in societies on the move.

*Ruth Penfold-Mounce is one of the conference convenors.*

*Matt Coward is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology (University of York) and is the administrator of DaCNet. His PhD thesis 'UK Tabletop Gaming Communities' explores community formation and interaction within UK tabletop gaming via a qualitative*

*ethnographic approach grounded in ritual theory. Outside of his PhD, Matt's research focuses on gamers and games and their interactions with death, the undead, contemporary religion and popular culture.*

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**Perreault, Kelsey** (Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art, and Culture, Carleton University, USA)

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**Panel 18, 1:15-1:45, Friday**

*The Church of Bones and the human rights of the dead*

In *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, Thomas Laqueur argues that the work of the dead is carried out through the living who remember, honour, and mourn the dead. To treat the dead body as if it does not matter or as if it were ordinary organic matter would be to deny its humanity. From Laqueur's point of view, the dead are believed to have rights and dignities that are upheld through the cultural rituals, practices, and beliefs of the living. Drawing on dark tourism scholarship, heritage ethics and cultural memory theory, this paper examines the display of human bones at Sedlec Ossuary, Czech Republic and the tourist culture that has built up around the site, calling into question the commoditization of burial places as a conceivable violation of the human rights of the dead. What is it that draws tourists to burial grounds and how do heritage sites negotiate visitor experiences? What are the ethical boundaries when a final resting place with bodies on display is also marketed as a tourist site? Do the dead have human rights and how are the living responsible for preserving those rights?

*Kelsey Perreault is a PhD student in the Cultural Mediations program at the Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art, and Culture at Carleton University. Kelsey holds a BA (2016) and MA (2017) in Art History from Western University in London, Canada. She has been the recipient of multiple essay and travel awards and a SSHRC Masters scholarship in 2016 for her thesis "Remembrance as Presence: Promoting Learning from Difficult Knowledge at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights". Currently, Kelsey's research is situated at the intersections of memory studies, museums, contemporary art, and human rights.*

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**Reagan, Romany** (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)

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**Panel 17, 12:45-1:15, Friday**

*Abney Rambles: reconceiving a Victorian garden cemetery for contemporary communities by way of an audio walking practice*

Cemeteries offer a place to house grief – giving structure and locality to personal grief, and communal links between mourners for shared grief. However, with families and other community networks increasingly moving and disbursing over wider areas, and different countries, the community networks that defined local cemeteries are fracturing. To keep our Victorian garden cemeteries – or indeed community cemeteries of any age – relevant, cared for, and bringing in much-needed revenue for upkeep, we should diversify our idea of what these spaces mean, and open our minds to a wider view of what a cemetery can offer its community. Through the medium of an audio walking practice within Abney Park cemetery, a Victorian garden cemetery in north London, I have endeavoured to engage the community of visitors who come to the cemetery to see the space in a new way. The audio walking project, titled 'Abney Rambles', is comprised of four diverse audio walks representing different aspects of Abney Park, through a mix of storytelling and factual account, that are available to stream on my website [abneyrambles.com](https://abneyrambles.com). The audio walks are an invitation for visitors to rethink the space of Abney Park and aim to show the multifaceted value these spaces hold for our communities. If cemeteries are to remain relevant to our contemporary communities, especially Victorian garden cemeteries, then there should to be a repositioning of what these spaces can offer our communities. This paper will present an overview of my PhD project Abney Rambles and my findings via community responses to the project.

*Romany Reagan is a final-year PhD candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her thesis centres around the layers of meaning that coexist within a cemetery space. By way of an audio walking practice, artistic interpretations of outdoor archive, nonhuman networks, and mourning practices are explored in Abney Park cemetery in London. Areas of research encompass: psychogeography, mourning practices, 'The Good Death', anachronistic space, heterotopias, gothic sensibility, liminal spaces, the uncanny, and the Victorian 'Cult of the Dead'. Her walk 'Crossing Paths/Different Worlds in Abney Park Cemetery' was published in Ways to Wander (Triarchy Press, 2015).*

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**Rebechi, Rozane R.** (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil)

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**Panel 19, 3:00-3:30, Friday**

*Brazilian and North-American cultures unveiled by obituaries: a corpus-based study*

Sooner or later death will affect everyone, everywhere. However, this harsh reality is dealt with differently across cultures. Using corpus linguistics as our methodology, we investigate to what extent obituaries reveal differences in how Brazilians and North-Americans face death. In order to accomplish our aim, we selected edited and paid death notices published in online newspapers in Brazil and in the United States in 2016 and 2017. The corpus compilation *per se* confirmed that while the genre is well-established in the United States, it is scarce in Brazil, where a bibliography of the deceased is almost solely dedicated to notorious people's deaths. We quantitatively processed 200 texts in each language, and retrieved single and compound keywords, i.e. words (tokens) which recur significantly more often in the study corpus. Among other findings, results showed that (i) texts in English are longer than their counterparts in Portuguese; (ii) patterns of future and past structures in English and Portuguese, respectively, confirm that Brazilians tend to abbreviate the presence of the dead; (iii) some terms and phraseologies used to refer to different steps of North-American funerals do not have equivalents in Brazilian Portuguese; and (iv) functional equivalents in both languages reveal different perspectives about loss.

*Rozane Rebechi has a degree in Translation and a Master's and a PhD in English Language and Literature from Universidade de São Paulo. She is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Language and Literature of Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. She teaches Translation and English to undergraduate students, and Linguistic Studies with Corpus to postgraduate students. Her main areas of interest are Translation, EFL, English for Special Purpose, Terminology, Cultural Studies and Discourse, with a focus on Corpus Linguistics as a methodology. She supervises postgraduate students and acts as an examiner of Master's and PhD theses.*

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**Regan, Stephen** (Department of English Studies, University of Durham, UK)

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**Friday, 11:30-12:15, ARRC Auditorium**

**KEYNOTE 3: 'Inventions of farewell': mourning the dead in modern elegy**

Elegy, as a poetic form traditionally associated with mourning the dead, has always questioned its own efficacy in assuaging grief and offering consolation to the bereaved. To make the dead live again has been the perpetual aim of elegy, and that audacious gesture has prompted both wonder and scepticism. Whether in the classical myths of seasonal renewal, in the Christian miracle of resurrection, or in the secular realm of memory, elegy has sought transcendence in the face of death. At the same time, an assertion of doubt about the compensatory power of song and lyric has been a persistent feature of the genre, as much a convention of the elegy as the imagined laying of flowers or the customary conversation with the dead. In recent times, and especially since 1945, the tendency of the elegy to question its own verbal adequacy and its own ethical, compensatory value has intensified. The idealising memorial tendencies associated with elegy have been sceptically regarded, if not brutally rejected, in a good deal of post-war poetry. This is hardly surprising, given the overwhelming loss of life in two world wars and the gradual erosion of traditional religious observance. Even so, there has been a deeply felt public need in our own time for sustaining rituals of mourning and a persistent readiness to draw upon the consoling powers of art and song in the face of loss. This lecture will explore the powerful ways in which modern poets since 1945 have created a language and a style in which to mourn the dead. In showing how modern poetry can be both consoling and self-questioning, it will draw upon some of the most moving and compelling elegies by recent British, Irish, and American writers.

*Stephen Regan was born in Durham and taught at several British and overseas universities before joining the Department of English Studies in 2004. Previously, he was Lecturer in Modern Poetry at Royal Holloway, University of London, and also worked at Ruskin College, Oxford and The Open University. He was a Visiting Scholar in the Department of English at Harvard University in 2011-12. He has worked for the British Council in Poland, former Yugoslavia, Morocco, and Tunisia. His main teaching and research interests are modern poetry, modern Irish literature and literary theory. His publications include essays on W.B. Yeats, Seamus Heaney and Robert Frost, two books on Philip Larkin, an edition of George Meredith's *Modern Love*, and a forthcoming critical study of the sonnet from Shakespeare to Heaney. He is the editor of *Irish Writing: An Anthology of Irish Literature in English 1789-1939* in the *Oxford World's Classics* series. Stephen Regan is Director of *The Centre for Poetry and Poetics*, which encourages research on the Basil Bunting Archive and other poetry archives in the Palace Green Library at Durham.*

**Richards, Kelly** (University of York, UK)

[kellylourichards@gmail.com](mailto:kellylourichards@gmail.com)

**Panel 24, 4:00-4:30, Friday**

*Reimagining the personification of Death in popular culture*

Visions of the personification of death permeate our culture from cinema to comic books. However, through our popular imaginings we have constructed a personification that represents our worst fears. Invariably envisioned in a similar fashion; tall, skeletal, and clothed in black, Death stands as an uncanny representation of something of which we are taught to be afraid. This idea is subverted in Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, and its sister series *Death*, in which Death is reimagined both visually and in terms of her role. Presented as young and female, Death is placed into role more akin to a caretaker, arriving not only to chaperone those who are dying but also to greet the newly born. Through this reimagination, Gaiman has taken what has long been a figure of fear and transformed them into one of comfort, a friend to help you along the way. Through this paper, I am proposing that through the reimagining of the personification of Death we can work to reduce some of the subliminal fears associated with dying by repositioning Death within the cultural landscape as a point of consolation rather than one of terror.

*Kelly Richards is a current PhD student at the University of York. Her thesis focuses on the gendered presentation of death within contemporary comic books. Kelly's research interests include comic studies, fandom, popular culture, death.*

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**Robertson, Bethany** (Department of Sociology, University of York, UK)

[br602@york.ac.uk](mailto:br602@york.ac.uk)

**Panel 13, 9:30-10:00, Friday**

*To get attached, or not to get attached, that is the question: making sense of pet loss*

The pet death industry is often cited as being symbolic of the intimate relationships shared with pets and their treatment as family members who are embedded in our everyday lives (Chur-Hansen *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, Redmalm (2015) states that the personalities attached to our pets qualify them as grievable and irreplaceable. This paper draws upon a comparison to relations with livestock, to consider the ways in which naming, longevity and closeness inform how we understand and manage the loss of a pet. Therefore, a sociological perspective can reveal the nuances of human-animal relationships both during life and after death. For example, a case study of Chris Packham illustrates the contradictory status of his dog as person and possession during life and the subsequent tensions between materiality and meaning as a response to his loss. This raises the question; to what extent does the reciprocity of a human-animal relationship affect the

practices surrounding their loss? As a result, the grievability of pets draws attention to the liminal position between human and animal.

Chur-Hansen, A., Black, A., Gierasch, A., Pletna, A. and Winefield, H. (2011). Cremation Services upon the Death of a Companion Animal: Views of Service Providers and Service Users. *Society and Animals*, 19 (3), pp. 248-260.

Redmalm, D. (2015). Pet Grief: When is Non-Human Life Grievable? *The Sociological Review*, 63 (1), pp. 19-35.

*Bethany Robertson is a PhD researcher in the Department of Sociology at the University of York. Her PhD explores the gender identities of women in farming but her wider research interests include human/animal relations, specifically livestock, pet-keeping and identity work.*

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**Robins, Daniel** (Department of Sociology, University of York, UK) and **Smith, Rosie** (Sociology and Criminology, York St John University, UK)

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**Panel 5, 12:30-1:00, Thursday**

*(Dis)posing of monsters: justice and the 'inhuman' dead*

This paper will explore how justice is 'done' to the 'inhuman' dead bodies of serial killer Ian Brady, and the Manchester bomber, Salman Abedi. These dead bodies are considered 'inhuman' because of the exceptional character of their crimes. We will examine how heinous criminality, socio-political context, and the state of bodily remains affects how the public 'do' justice to these 'inhuman' actors. This will be envisioned through the contemporary quarantining methods involving the sequestration of infamous dead bodies. The housing of these dead bodies is underpinned by a cultural 'quarantine', via the construction of the 'monster morgue'. Such spaces offer society a place in which the dangerous dead can be controlled, social power regained, and threats eliminated. In essence, this paper analyses how 'inhuman' dead bodies upset the politics of disposal by asking what disposal is, and what it is trying to achieve. Traditional understandings of disposal view it as an endpoint, something finite. However, applying this to the 'inhuman' actor is more complex than this model can account for. The paper aims to start a discussion over how dead 'inhuman' bodies intersect with the Death Industry, and how this then affects how justice is 'done'.

*Daniel Robins is an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of York. His research explores how the 'waste' materials of a corpse can best be recycled. Predominantly, he is asking 'what is the value of necro-waste'? This intersects Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology, and Philosophy.*

*Rosie Smith is a Lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at York St John University. Her research explores the concept of 'Spectacular Justice', combining interests in visual criminology, sociological and criminological theory, punishment, and media studies.*

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**Robinson, Carol** (Department of Sociology, University of York, UK)

[carol.robinson@york.ac.uk](mailto:carol.robinson@york.ac.uk)

**Panel 4, 12:30-1:00, Thursday**

*Dying inside: the governance of mortality in prison*

With an ageing prison population and longer prison sentences, more prisoners are dying of natural causes in England and Wales than ever before. Previous studies of these 'ordinary' deaths have focused narrowly on prisoner's palliative care and their individual fears and experiences of being terminally ill in prison. With forecasts suggesting that these deaths will continue to be more frequent, wider questions around what determines the responses of prison regimes and prison personnel to dying prisoners become important. This paper explores how deaths from natural causes in prison are governed. It uses data from ethnographic research in two contrasting prisons in the north of England, together with detailed analysis of prison rules and regulations and semi-structured interviews with prison staff in a range of roles. It considers the perennial debate about balancing discipline and care within the prison, and the importance placed on the use of discretion in the context of prisoners dying of natural causes. In doing so, we are provided with an insight into the ways in which prison regimes, prison rules and prison staff contribute to how death from natural causes occurs in prison.

*Carol Robinson is a Sociology PhD student at the University of York. Her doctoral research, funded by the ESRC, explores the impact on prison regimes, cultures and relationships of prisoners dying of natural causes. She uses ethnographic methods to examine what factors influence the responses of prison regimes and personnel to dying prisoners. Carol has presented her research at the PORCH/CrimNet conference 'Deaths in the Criminal Justice System', the CDAS Conference 'Deaths at the Margins of the State' and the British Society of Criminology Conference 2017. She was a finalist in the York 'Three Minute Thesis competition'.*

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**Rothwell, Emily** (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)

[ejrothwell@gmail.com](mailto:ejrothwell@gmail.com)

**Panel 8, 3:30-4:00, Thursday**

*Blood beneath the buttercups: Victorian childhoods, gardens, cemeteries, and the grievable and ungrievable dead*

In his recent cultural history, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, historian Thomas Lacquer asks: what was “the cultural work” that dead bodies engendered? Drawing from Lacquer, this interdisciplinary paper will trace the cultural histories that unfolded in Victorian England’s reframing of death: the invention of the garden cemetery. Yet, at the same time, this paper will also ask: which bodies were sanctioned to be publicly grieved and, as Judith Butler asks, which bodies were deemed “ungrievable” dead? Within this larger conversation, this paper will also chart the co-emergence of the invention of “modern childhood” and Victorian representations of childhood death. The paper’s first section will focus on the shift from the early modern churchyard to the cemetery garden movement; the second section traces literary and visual representations of childhood death; finally, the epilogue section merges these two cultural phenomena to explore the way in which children of the “Black Atlantic” diaspora were often deemed ungrievable in historic literary and visual practices. In each section, the thread of inquiry will consistently ask: which children were represented as the grievable dead and which were represented as the ungrievable dead in each of these unfolding contexts.

*Emily Rothwell is a second-year PhD candidate in an interdisciplinary humanities doctoral program, Cultural Mediations, at The Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art & Culture, at Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada), as well as a teaching and research assistant. Her research focuses on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visual culture/art histories, intellectual histories, decolonial and gender studies, the built environment, children’s literature, print culture, global child studies and literary fairy tales. Someday she also hopes to pursue a research-creation practice in conjunction with her academic research and teaching.*

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**Rudolph, Ashley** (Falmouth University, UK)

[ashley.rudolph@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.rudolph@falmouth.ac.uk)

**Panel 15, 10:30-11:00, Friday. See SALKELD, Nikki**

*MOTH: Design and Death*

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**Sabatos, Terri** (Longwood University, Virginia, USA)

[tsabatos@gmail.com](mailto:tsabatos@gmail.com); [sabatostr@longwood.edu](mailto:sabatostr@longwood.edu)

**Panel 13, 9:00-9:30, Friday**

*'A comforter in loneliness and sorrow': Caesar of Notts and the mourning of Edward VII*

As the coffin of Edward VII made its way through London on the morning of 20 May 1910 observers were moved to see a small wire-haired fox terrier trotting obediently behind the gun carriage with his handler. The dog was Caesar, the king's favourite canine and constant companion for the past eight years. Queen Alexander had requested that the faithful little dog be included in the royal funeral procession. Caesar became an instant celebrity and an emblem of the nation in mourning. His picture appeared in the popular press and he was featured in a wealth of material objects. Books, poems, photographs, sculptures, toys, paintings and prints all celebrated Caesar's great love for the king, and highlighted his deep and abiding mourning. Other monarchs were dog enthusiasts, including the king's mother Queen Victoria, but no other royal canine had before (or since) become so prominent a symbol of mourning as Caesar. This paper will explore how and why Caesar became a symbol for the public and private mourning of Edward VII and dissect the role he played in shaping public memory of the king.

*Terri Sabatos is an Associate Professor of Art History of Longwood University and her research focusses on death and mourning. She has presented numerous conference papers on various aspects of death, mourning and visual culture and her publications including articles on vendetta portraits in early Scotland, images of widowers in Victorian painting, and Victorian images of the massacre of Glencoe. Dr Sabatos' latest research explores images of dogs mourning their owners in the long nineteenth century.*

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**Salkeld, Nikki and Rudolph, Ashley** (Falmouth University, UK)

[nicola.salkeld@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.salkeld@falmouth.ac.uk); [ashley.rudolph@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.rudolph@falmouth.ac.uk)

**Panel 15, 10:30-11:00, Friday**

*MOTH: Design and Death*

MOTH is a research project, which investigates the skills and contributions, which communication designers can make to death studies and end of life experiences. In our most recent project *Good Grief* we investigated the aesthetics of mortality through the conventions of Still life and Mourning.

Part 1. A Still Life in 100 objects. In collaboration with Michael Petry, artist, curator MOCA &

author: *Nature Morte, Contemporary Artists Reinvigorate the Still-Life Tradition. Thames & Hudson, 2016*. We examined the aesthetics of the Still life tradition and explored identity and legacy through collections, classification & curatorship of objects. How objects have history, which shape us in particular ways and how during stages of our lives we continue to search for objects that we can experience as both within and outside the self.

Part 2. Ars Moriendi: The Art of Dying. Working with Charlotte Heal (editorial, packaging, brand identity designer), we examined the potential benefits of Mourning, externalizing grief to aid transition through the bereavement process. How design can create opportunities: *services, products, platforms* to re-consider conventions in future-thinking how mourning in (a largely secular) contemporary society can be made visual and have meaningful impact.

*Ashley Rudolph and Nikki Salkeld are Senior Lecturers in Graphic Design at Falmouth University. Over the last five years they have established MOTH which seeks to unhide death. Collaborative practice is central to all of their activities, working with designers, artists, writers, philosophers, sociologists, medics and students as equal partners in discovery and communication. They see themselves as emerging researchers in this field with an expertise in graphic design and an interest in graphic anthropology: how design shapes, and is shaped by cultural values and social practices with particular relevance to our relationship with death.*  
<http://moth.falmouth.ac.uk/> Instagram: moth\_design\_death

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**Scalici, Giorgio** (Department of Theology and Religion, University of Durham, UK)

[giorgio.scalici@durham.ac.uk](mailto:giorgio.scalici@durham.ac.uk)

**Panel 21, 2:30-3:00, Friday**

*'They are playing': controlled violence in Wana funerals, Indonesia*

Death is a critical moment for a community. It breaks the delicate balance inside it and it casts a shadow of insignificance on life and social rules. To avoid being overwhelmed by the emotional wave caused by an unexpected loss and to retrieve the social balance, the Wana people of Morowali organize a ritual called kayori. In the last two days of the ritual, hundreds of people gather to drink, joke, flirt and sing, generating a playful atmosphere that reaffirms the value of life over the negativity of death of the ritual. This playfulness is interrupted by explosions of violence, called mandeke, during which women and men hurt themselves and destroy the ritual hut. The first time I saw it, I was shocked but what surprised me most was one of my informers telling me: "mereka bermain" (they are playing). By examining the violent episodes, I want to explore the relationship among controlled violence, play and death, to see how those episodes help the community in

managing the emotion related to death, to reinforce the rules of the community in a moment of crisis and balance negativity with playfulness.

*Giorgio Scalici is a PhD student in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Durham. His fields of interest include anthropology, the study of religion, ethnomusicology, mythology, funerary rites, music and trance, shamanism, and religion and comic books. Born in Palermo (Italy), he obtained his BA in Music at the University of Palermo and his MA in Ethnomusicology at the University of Rome "La Sapienza". His current PhD continues his studies on Wana culture.*

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**Schrift, Melissa** (Department of Anthropology, East Tennessee State University, Tennessee, USA)

[SCHRIFT@etsu.edu](mailto:SCHRIFT@etsu.edu)

**Panel 14, 9:00-9:30, Friday**

*Race, bodies and medical spectacle in 19<sup>th</sup> century living exhibitions*

This paper focuses on the historical display of ethnic and/or foreign bodies as popular entertainment and medical curiosities in western 19<sup>th</sup> century sideshows. The paper will address the marketing, presentation and public discussion of racialized bodies as "living exhibits" through newspapers, broadsides, advertisements, letters, medical publications and diaries. Consideration will be given to the ways in which racialized spectacle presented a particularly profound dehumanization and lack of agency in an era of unapologetic colonial expansion and racism. To be sure, depersonalization was a common denominator in the lives of most sideshow performers. However, ethnic and foreign bodies occupied the most inferior space in the hierarchy of degradation, owing to the fact that they typically bore a triple burden of physical aberration, "primitive," immigrant, or outsider status and racial otherness at a time of deep racial anxieties. In addition, racialized bodies were embroiled in the overlapping realms of popular entertainment, scientific and anthropological discourse and medical inquiry. In this way, ethnic bodies served as specimen as much as spectacle. This topic addresses dual notions related to death, including the concept of social death and the afterlife of dead bodies that continue to carry significance in relation to medical experimentation and exploitation.

*Dr Melissa Schrift is a Professor of Anthropology at East Tennessee State University with expertise in areas of cultural and medical anthropology. Research interests focus on the anthropology of the body, social death, and culture and death. Most recently, she served as editor for a special issue of Mortality on the criminal body in the west. Dr Schrift is the author*

*of two books and multiple articles. She also serves on the editorial board of the new books series, Emerald Studies in Death and Culture.*

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**Smith, Rosie** (Sociology and Criminology, York St John University, UK)

[r.smith7@yorksja.ac.uk](mailto:r.smith7@yorksja.ac.uk)

**Panel 5, 1:00-1:30, Thursday. See ROBINS, Daniel.**

*(Dis)posing of monsters: justice and the 'inhuman' dead*

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**Spokes, Matthew, Denham, Jack and Lehmann, Benedikt** (York St John University, York, UK)

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**Panel 2, 10:00-10:30, Thursday**

*Death, memorialization and deviant spaces*

This paper offers a theoretical exploration of three sites of infamous atrocity and their differing memorialization (or lack thereof). 'Dark tourism' research has studied the consumerization of spaces associated with death and barbarity, whilst 'difficult heritage' has looked at politicized, national debates that surround the preservation of death. This paper applies spatial theory on a scalar level, particularly through the work of Henri Lefebvre. It uses escalating case studies to situate memorialisation, and the multifarious demands of politics, consumption and community, with a framework that rearticulates 'lived', 'perceived' and 'conceived' aspects of deviant spaces ranging from small (a bench) to the very large (a city). Ultimately, by attending to the issue of scale in heritage, the book seeks to develop a new way of unpacking and understanding the heteroglossic nature of deviant space and memorialization.

*Dr Matthew Spokes is a lecturer in Sociology at York St John University. His research principally focuses on the intersections between culture, space and death, especially in relation to interactive entertainment. He has published in videogames as a proxy for dialogic concerns around death and dying and his current research involves how procedural rhetoric can help us understand conceptual approaches to North Korea. He is also exploring a monograph on theoretical and conceptual approaches to the 'virtual sublime', exploring video game culture through the philosophy of Kant, Deleuze and Bergson.*

*Dr Jack Denham is one of the conference convenors.*

*Benedikt Lehmann is a lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at York St John University. His research interests concentrate on social and criminological theory, financial markets and automation technology, and the politics of public space. He has published work on high-speed algorithmic trading in financial markets dealing with the sociotechnical constitution of trader subjectivities under new anomic conditions.*

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**Starr, Alison** (School of Architecture, The University of Queensland, Australia)

[a.starr@uq.edu.au](mailto:a.starr@uq.edu.au)

**Panel 2, 10:30-11:00, Thursday**

*Never coming home: mourning and commemoration of war dead on enemy territory*

With Australia's war participation having mostly taken place in overseas locations, few war dead were repatriated and the culture of war commemoration that developed in the Interwar years was focussed on the war memorials that are still evident in most towns and cities. With most human remains interred close to where they fell, far from home, the commemoration process was absent of the materiality of war remains. Among the few war dead in cemeteries within Australia, there are war dead of former belligerents. War dead from Italy and Germany are found on former enemy territory in the UK, Belgium, and France, with Allied war dead interred in Japan and in many locations throughout the Asia Pacific theatre of war. There is just a single official location for Japanese war dead beyond Japan, and unusually, that war cemetery holds the remains of both Australian and Japanese war dead. This paper looks at the Cowra War Cemeteries, investigating how former enemies approached commemoration within a common mortuary space, and how the war's outcome constrains or sanctions commemoration of war dead, including what role the materiality of human remains plays in the continuing evolution of war memory into the post-memory phase (Hirsch 2008).

*Alison Starr works in the public sector as a built heritage specialist, with a discipline background in architecture and Asian Studies. She is undertaking her doctorate through the School of Architecture at the University of Queensland, and her research is focussed on war memory, post-war reconciliation and military mortuary practices of the Asia Pacific War. Looking at the significance and memory associated with the human remains of war located on enemy territory by mapping how mortuary spaces are used, Alison's case studies include Japanese war remains on Australian territory and Allied remains in Japan.*

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**Subryan, Mark** (Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

[Mark.G.Subryan@student.shu.ac.uk](mailto:Mark.G.Subryan@student.shu.ac.uk)

**Panel 20, 2:30-3:00, Friday**

*Knock, knock: journalists deal with how they handle coverage of death*

The death knock is the most undesirable task a journalist can be asked to do. Usually done within hours of a death, a journalist is assigned to visit the grieving family to write a story, especially if the death is high profile or follows a disturbing trend, such as teenaged suicides. They are also a staple of coverage for horrific events of mass murder, such as the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing. While the practice is frowned upon by the public, it is subject to three or four of the 16 clauses that make up a journalist's editors' code of conduct. Detractors are widespread, but supporters point to great value in the practice because it allows the family to grieve through narrative and be the ones to speak about their lost love one and have journalists rely on social media (Duncan & Newton, 2010; Duncan, 2012; Duncan & Newton, 2012; Newton & Duncan, 2012). Despite online criticism of the practice in the aftermath of the Manchester bombing and the negative portrayal of the press by the Kerslake Inquiry, this presentation will demonstrate how journalists frame their defence of the death knock story as a vital part of news coverage.

*Mark Subryan is a former Canadian journalist who left the profession in 2014 to pursue an MA in International Journalism at Sheffield Hallam University. Mark followed this up with a PhD study that aims to understand the professional identities and newsroom practices of print journalists in the UK in the post-Leveson journalistic landscape. Evidence used as part of his presentation is drawn from the data sets that serve the larger scope of Mark's PhD research. He is currently in the final draft stages of his PhD with the hope of defending his viva in the latter half of 2018.*

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**Tripathi, Khyati** (Department of Psychology, University of Delhi, India)

[Kyatitripathi27@gmail.com](mailto:Kyatitripathi27@gmail.com)

**Panel 22, 4:30-5:00, Friday**

*MahaBrahmins and their relationship with death in Hinduism*

In Hinduism, Death rituals are looked at as a process through which the spirit of the deceased attains salvation. The embodiment of this hope for salvation of the spirit is a *MahaBrahmin*. MahaBrahmin is a Hindu death priest who presides over the rituals on the eleventh day after death. Deemed inauspicious otherwise, a MahaBrahmin is served with great offerings on the eleventh day of death because he is considered as the ghost of the

deceased and the only medium to appease the spirit of the dead. This paper brings together the Hindu conception of the sacred and profane and how MahaBrahmins make a part of this conception. My contention in this paper is to bring to the fore a) context and b) object based sacredness and profanity arguing that it is not just the object which is sacred or profane but also the context which in turn creates two different worlds of the sacred and profane. In this paper, I throw light on how MahaBrahmins in Hinduism transitioned from a context based sacredness to the object based profanity and got pinned in a permanent state of pollution and *liminality* (Turner, 1967).

*Khyati Tripathi is a Senior Research Fellow and PhD Scholar in the Department of Psychology at the University of Delhi, India. She was awarded the Commonwealth split-site scholarship 2016-17 to spend a year of her PhD in the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. After completing her B.A (H) and M.A in Psychology from the University of Delhi, she completed an MPhil in Social Anthropology. She is currently working on an interdisciplinary project for her PhD which focuses on social construction of the dead in a culture through culture specific death rituals and mortuary techniques.*

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**Uzzell, Jennifer** (Centre of Life and Death Studies, University of Durham, UK)

[j.s.uzzell@durham.ac.uk](mailto:j.s.uzzell@durham.ac.uk)

**Panel 7, 2:30-3:00, Thursday**

*'Playing with the ancestors': funerary ritual in contemporary British Druidry*

Pagan Druidry as it is practiced in the UK today arguably has its roots in the 1970s-80s. As a result its followers find themselves in a position where they are increasingly conscious of their own mortality and of the need to address this in a way that is in keeping with their beliefs and values. Over the last fifteen years or so there has also been a small but significant movement in wider society towards more 'authentic' funerals, whether this be imagined in terms of 'natural burial', 'home funerals' or a bewildering array of civil celebrants offering an alternative to both organized religion and Humanist services. This paper will examine some of the ways in which contemporary Pagan Druidry, in its various forms, has responded to these new approaches and has engaged in the creative innovation of funeral and other rituals. There is a wide variety of afterlife belief within contemporary Druidry, but almost all Druids share a deep concern for 'the Ancestors' and the landscape in which they find themselves. These concerns are reflected in the new funerary tradition that is beginning to emerge among them. For some there is also a deeper engagement with the body of the person who has died than has generally been the case in British funeral practice. The paper will examine Druidic funerary ritual as an aesthetic response to death framed within an alternative way of looking at religion, death and funerals.

*Jennifer Uzzell is a PhD student at Durham University working under the auspices of the Centre for Death and Life Studies and based in the Department of Theology and Religion. She is conducting research into death rites among contemporary Druids in the UK including funeral ritual and natural burial. In addition to her PhD research, which she is conducting on a part time basis, she is also co-owner and director of a funeral home that forms part of a growing movement in the UK towards greater openness, honesty and authenticity in the way funerals are arranged and conducted. In this capacity she has helped to re-imagine and design funeral rituals that are relevant to those involved and has provided help and advice with 'home funerals'. She is also a senior examiner in Religious Studies with a major awarding body and was a teacher of religious education for many years.*

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**Wane, Philip** (Department of Sociology, Nottingham Trent University, UK)

[philip.wane@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:philip.wane@ntu.ac.uk)

**Panel 6, 12:00-12:30, Thursday**

*From Motörhead to Mortal Dead: the livestreaming of Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister's funeral service*

The live streaming of funerals and a wider public interest in celebrity deaths are two areas that have previously been explored by academics, but the live streaming of a celebrity funeral offers new intersectional social scientific opportunities. The service of remembrance for 'Lemmy' from Motörhead was live streamed and offered a unique opportunity to reflected upon the importance of an artist, their artefacts and how they were remembered by their inner social circle. The decision to live stream the services offers the opportunity to make observations encompassing both networked digital technology and the resulting ethnographic observational opportunities. While addressing ethical concerns the paper ponders the ethnographic insights presented by the broadcast of unguarded personal reactions and editorial decisions using examples from the live stream. These need to be viewed in the light of potential ethical concerns about encroaching on a private event made public. This paper will highlight potential concerns arising for this specific event that may be applicable to more general concerns about live streaming, privacy, emotional exploitation and the possibilities for abuse (intentional or otherwise) afforded by technologies, such as live streaming and mobile phones.

*Philip Wane is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Nottingham Trent University. He has a special interest in how digital technology may influence the cultural, social and technical practices of death, memory and remembrance, one example being his research into the potential role of Augmented Reality (AR) in the areas of memory and remembrance, including both private and public memorials. He is also interested in other aspects of the*

*sociology of technology and thanatology, especially the historical and potential role of technology in the making of memories and technology's role in remembrance.*

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**Washbourne, Neil** (School of Cultural Studies and Humanities, Leeds Beckett University, UK)

[N.Washbourne@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:N.Washbourne@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

**Panel 11, 5:00-5:30, Thursday**

*Irvin Yalom's cultural and individual understandings of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'death of god' in his existential therapy, popular writings and novels*

In this paper I take Friedrich Nietzsche's declaration of the 'death of god' in his writings from the 1880s (*The Gay Science, Thus Spake Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil*) and his embodied reflection on it to instance and predict deep cultural crises since that death of the transcendental and metaphysical guarantor of 'our' prior certainties and the ontological security of (many) humans is thereby undercut. Many thinkers have noted this challenge and interpreted the nature of this challenge with regard to our cultural interrelationships and with the quality of the spirit of our times as aid or hindrance. I explore the existential psychotherapist and pioneer of group therapy, Irvin Yalom's, varied attempts since the 1970s to address and come to terms with the challenges this brings to us. We must, he asserts, come to terms with and live up to our freedom and responsibility in living in the shadow both of that 'death of god' and our own mortality. He treats our mortality as the end that requires us, enjoins us, to create meaningful existences. I argue that in part Yalom displaces this challenge onto the, nevertheless crucial, task of our relations to others, without quite centrally acknowledging (and even side-lining and deferring) our being-unto-death. Yalom's work displays a compelling ongoing attempt to turn the cultural task raised by Nietzsche into lifeworld tasks for us, individually, and in our relationships and (small) groups. Yalom does so through existential therapy textbooks, popular writings, storytelling from his career in therapy and his novels - including *When Nietzsche Wept* - in which the Nietzsche of the time of his declaration of the 'death of god' is surreptitiously given therapy by Dr Breuer (Freud's friend, colleague and mentor).

*Dr Neil Washbourne is a Senior Lecturer in Media Studies in the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities at Leeds Beckett University. He is degree convenor of the MA Media. He has written widely on media and politics and journalism and public relations. He is increasingly interested in the history and contemporary roles of celebrities, in comedy and also in philosophy of film. His interest in Nietzsche is long-standing and was the subject of an early publication concerning 'Nietzsche's Bestiary'. He serves on the editorial boards of both Celebrity Studies and Media Education Research Journal. He teaches on the modules BBC*

*Radio: cultural talk, public purposes; Interpreting New Media; Cinematic Identities; Media Celebrity and Film Stardom and Comedy, Media and Diversity.*

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**Wood, Claire** (University of Leicester, UK)

[claire.wood@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:claire.wood@leicester.ac.uk)

**Panel 12, 4:30-5:00, Thursday**

*Ordering meaning in the Victorian memorial card*

This paper engages with a ubiquitous, but oft overlooked item of funerals – Victorian memorial cards – in order to reappraise the creative possibilities of a seemingly formulaic memorial art form. Typically distributed to relatives and friends after burial had taken place, these cards featured a variety of stock textual, pictorial, typographic, and sculptural elements. While some simply stated the name and age of the deceased within a black-bordered frame, others featured elaborate blind-embossed and pierced 'lace' paper designs. Writing in the 1920s, funeral historian Bertram Puckle was dismissive of a memorial form inherited with relatively few changes from the Victorians. In his opinion, mourning cards exhibited an 'elementary lack of taste' and had little to say about the individual being commemorated. Yet as this paper will argue, the stock nature of memorial cards does not necessarily preclude meaningful memorialisation. Drawing upon collections at St Fagans National History Museum and the Museum of London, I will examine the ways in which memorial cards stage the intermingling of spiritual, affective, aspirational and commercial values and contemplate the different motivations that might frame the production and consumption of cards produced to commemorate private individuals, celebrity figures and national tragedies.

*Claire Wood is Lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Leicester. Her research centres on Victorian fiction and death culture, with a particular focus upon the contradictions and complexities inherent in the Victorian 'celebration of death'. She is the author of Dickens and the Business of Death (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and is currently working on 'Dead Funny', a project that examines what is and isn't funny about death, burial, and commemoration in the work of Dickens and other nineteenth-century writers.*

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**Wright, Emily** (Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, UK)

[ew447@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ew447@cam.ac.uk)

**Panel 9, 3:00-3:30, Thursday**

*Dead bodies, lived fictions: understanding changing funerary practices in archaeology*

Mortuary contexts have long been used by archaeologists simply as a source of evidence for reconstructing the past. The recent ontological turn in archaeological theory offers a necessary critique: “there is a connection between one’s underlying ontological beliefs about the nature of dying and the dead body, and the ways in which the physical remains of the body are handled, processed, and treated” (Robb, 2013 p. 442). Funerary practices, ancient and modern, are appropriate responses to the universal phenomenon of death and the problem of the dead body that death creates. Drawing on my doctoral research, this paper will present ‘ways of knowing’ and ‘ways of *not* knowing’ as fundamental to understanding how and why funerary practices change. Underlying this approach is a reassessment of how archaeologists think about culture, de-emphasising materials and their concomitant culture-historical, diffusionist narratives to highlight the significance of the immaterial, of human relations and behaviours. I introduce a conception of culture as shared constructed and experienced realities, or lived fictions. How one chooses to dispose of a dead body becomes a question of the efficacy of fiction and its ability to maintain the illusion of knowledge in the face of unknowable death.

*Emily Wright a PhD candidate in Archaeology at the University of Cambridge, investigating the relationship between cremation and inhumation practices in the Mediterranean, 1500-500BC. Between studying for her undergraduate and Masters degrees at UCL, she worked for several UK commercial archaeology companies – latterly as a Senior Archaeologist for Museum of London Archaeology where she supervised a number of post-medieval cemetery excavations. During her doctoral research she also lead the excavations at a Mycenaean chamber tomb cemetery at Prosilio in Boeotia, Greece in association with the British School at Athens.*

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## 4. USEFUL INFORMATION

Maps, directions and travel information can be found at:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/maps/>

### Public transport

There is a regular bus service running between York Railway Station/York City Centre and the University of York - bus number 66. Alight the bus on University Road at the JB Morrell Library bus stop. It is then a short walk to the Alcuin Research Resource Centre (ARRC building). Alternatively, there are also a number of taxi companies available (see list of telephone numbers below). When ordering a taxi, you should ask to be dropped off/picked up from the Campus North Carpark (opposite the National Science Learning Centre and the Hull York Medical School buildings), at the University of York, Campus **West** (see maps at the end of the booklet).

### Taxi companies

Station	01904 623 332 (taxi rank at the front of York Railway Station)
Streamline	01904 656 565
659	01904 659 659
York & Ebor	01904 641 441

### Parking

Parking on campus is limited, and any visitors wishing to park at the University of York will need to use one of the pay and display carparks, which costs £1 per hour (£6 per day), or display a parking permit. Pay and display tickets can only be purchased by the day, and are restricted to pay and display car parks only. You can also pay with a mobile using [RingGo Cashless Parking](#). The [RingGo app](#) is easy to use and the City of York Council now uses RingGo across all of their pay and display car parks. Owners of vehicles which do not display a valid pay and display ticket or parking permit will be fined.

The nearest pay and display carparks to the venue are the Campus North Carpark and Campus Central Carparks (see map). Please note that these carparks do get busy so alternative travel is recommended.

All car parks have bays reserved for disabled badge holders, for whom parking is free.

If you require any further general advice, direction or information whilst on campus, please contact the Information Centre, Market Square, Heslington Campus West (see map). Office hours: Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm. Tel: 01904 32 2222.

#### Walking

It is approximately a 30 minute walk from York City Centre to the University of York, Heslington, Campus West.

#### Personal property

The University of York does not accept responsibility for the loss of or damage to personal property. Conference delegates are advised to keep their personal possessions with them at all times when on campus.

#### Security Services

Security staff are on duty 24-hours a day. Should you need to contact them, please ring the Security Control Room on 01904 32 4444 if you are ringing from an external telephone, and 4444 from an internal telephone.

In the event of an emergency the telephone number is 01904 32 3333 if you are ringing from an external telephone, and 3333 from an internal telephone. External freephone emergency number 0800 43 3333.

If for some reason you cannot get through, 9-999 from any internal phone will connect you to the emergency services.

Should an accident, theft or other incident occur on the University premises, it must be reported immediately to the Security Control Room (see above).

#### Medical assistance

Conference delegates in need of medical assistance should contact a designated first aider, or the Alcuin Porters, Alcuin D Block (see telephone number below) who will arrange the appropriate medical help. In the event of an emergency, ring 999.

#### Shops/banks

There is a Nisa Local supermarket situated in Market Square on Campus West as well as a Santander bank and ATM cash machines, and a barbers/hairdressers. A Post Office and general store, as well as other banks, and pubs serving food are situated in Heslington village (see map).

### Campus food and bars

There are a number of food outlets near to the conference venue selling coffee, sandwiches, light meals and snacks. These are Alcuin Bistro café, situated in Alcuin D Block, The Kitchen, situated in the Seebohm Rowntree building, and the library café at JB Morrell library. See website for further information: <https://www.york.ac.uk/food-and-bars/>

### Alcuin Porters

Alcuin Porters, Alcuin D Block (see map):

Tel: 01904 32 3300 if you are ringing from an external telephone, and 3300 from an internal telephone.

### Contact details

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