



SCSC

**SUPERNATURAL IN
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY
CONFERENCE 2018**

Conference Programme

23-24th August 2018

Robert Gordon University

Aberdeen, Scotland

#SCSC2018

Thursday 23rd August

Morning

Welcome

Keynote: Professor Dennis Waskul

Let's Summon Demons! The Promise of the Supernatural

Panel 1: Supernatural Past and Present: Ghosts, folklore and heritage

Understanding History and Causality through the Television Ghost Story

Dr Derek Johnston

From Veiled to Displayed. A tour through Madrid's enchanted landscape

Dr Leticia Cortina

Archaeological Perspectivism and 'Spiritscapes': The Ontology of Hauntings as
Cosmopolitan Cultural Heritage

John Sabol

*The ancient dame, the given ground and the quaking fever: the enduring legacy of
witchcraft and superstition in the fishing communities of North-East Scotland*

Professor Peter Reid

Lunch

Afternoon

Short Case Study Panel

Witchcraft in the Malawian Newspaper: Fact and Fiction

Dr Chisomo Kalinga

Haunted Newfoundland and Cultural Tourism

Dale Jarvis

Scotland's Haunted Heritage

Dr Rachael Ironside

Panel 2: Making Sense of the Supernatural

Experiencing the Extraordinary: Encounters of the Supernatural in and around Aberdeen

Wibke Reimer

Slender Man and the Unacknowledged Common Experience of the Supernatural

Dr Andrea Kitta

"Imagine if Someone Saw Us!": The Role of Doubt, Play,
and Humor in Making Sense of the Paranormal

Dr Michelle Hanks

Dinner, Entertainment and Industry Panel at Crathes Castle

Friday 24th August

Morning

Parallel Panel 3A: Supernatural as Reflection and Influence: Society and Popular Culture

The *postvampire*: How do the non-traditional representations of vampires in Octavia Butler's *Fledgling* reflect the emergence and concerns of a posthuman society?

Adam Teall

The Devil rides in: 'Cinematic Satanism', 'the swinging sixties', and the idea of evil in civil society

Dr Tom Clark

The Mummy's Curse and Imperial Patriarchy in Universal's The Mummy movie franchise

Daisy Butcher

"Build your own god and let it loose" – British Comics as Magic

Cord-Christian Casper

Parallel Panel 3B: Supernatural Forms and Interpretations: Challenges and Opportunities

"Blood has been spilt on that spot": exploring the relationship between the supernatural and the library and information sciences

Dr Graeme Baxter & Hayley Lockerbie

Ghosts, extraterrestrials and re-enchantment: Possibilities and challenges in regional tourism

Dr Eva Kingsepp

Science or Religion? Framing within the Bigfoot Subculture

Dr Christopher Bader

Keynote: Dr David Clarke

"What's all this stuff about flying saucers?": Extraordinary personal experiences from The National Archives UFO Project

Lunch

On Thursday evening we will be visiting Crathes Castle, a 16C tower house with a rich history and its very own Green Lady ghost!

Our visit will include an industry panel discussion with key individuals in the heritage and tourism sector to discuss the future of the Supernatural in these sectors. We will also enjoy dinner and entertainment in the grounds of Crathes Castle.



Friday 24th August

Afternoon

Parallel Panel 4A: Studying the Supernatural: Approaches, Threads and New Perspectives

Anomalistics and Ecology: Exploring the Threads

Dr Jack Hunter

Intimate entanglements and social action

Professor Robin Wooffitt

Haunted Houses, Haunted Minds: Psychological Research, psychoanalysis, and the Philip Experiment

Filip Andjelkovic

Parallel Panel 4B: Place and the Supernatural

“A guide to the geography of Ghostland”: Ghost Tourism Narratives and the Mapping of ‘Haunted London’

Alicia Edwards

There’s No Place Like Home: Domestic Dystopias and Gothic Tourism in Ireland

Dr Tracy Fahey

Releasing Earthbound Spirits from Hospitals

Dr Terence Palmer

Panel 5: The Supernatural as Profession

Victorian Ghost Hunters in the 21st Century: Conflict, Continuity and the Society for Psychological Research

Dr Leo Ruickbie

The Liminality of Modern Day Exorcists

Paula Fenn

Events management for the end of life

Chantal Laws

Discussion & Final Remarks

Close of Conference

Keynote Speakers



Dr David Clarke

Research Fellow in Journalism at Sheffield Hallam University

Dr David Clarke completed his PhD in English Cultural Tradition and Folklore at the University of Sheffield in 1999 whilst forging a career as an investigative journalist. He joined Sheffield Hallam University in 2006 as Course Leader on the BA (Hons) in Journalism and became Reader in Journalism in 2015. His publications and wide experience as a broadcaster and consultant/curator for The National Archives UFO project (2008-2013) brought international recognition to the university as a centre of expertise in the study of contemporary legends. His high international profile as an

expert in contemporary legend and investigative reporting has resulted in on-going collaborations and consultancy work with both the BBC and The National Archives. He is the author of ten books including *The Angel of Mons* (2004) and *How UFOs Conquered the World: a history of a modern myth* (2015).

In 1952 the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, wrote to his advisors for an inquiry into reports of flying saucers asking: "What can it mean? What is the truth?" For 60 years the Ministry of Defence quietly collected accounts of sightings from military personnel and stories sent to them by ordinary people from all walks of life. From 2008 to 2013 David Clarke worked as the consultant for an open government project that led to the online release of more than 200 of these files and 60,000 pages of reports and correspondence on UFOs at Britain's National Archives. Dubbed 'Britain's X-Files' by the media these reports of encounters with strange flying objects in the sky - and sometimes on the ground - form the largest collection of personal experience narratives outside the archives of the Society for Psychical Research. David will be discussing his research from the National Archives UFO Project during his keynote.

Professor Dennis Waskul

Professor of Sociology and Distinguished Faculty Scholar at Minnesota State University Mankato



Dennis Waskul is a Professor of Sociology and Distinguished Faculty Scholar at Minnesota State University Mankato. He has authored or co-authored three books including *Ghostly Encounters* (with Michele Waskul, 2016, Temple University Press), *The Senses in Self, Culture, and Society* (with Phillip Vannini and Simon Gottschalk, 2011, Routledge), and *Self-Games and Body Play* (2003, Peter Lang). Dennis has edited or co-edited four books; *The Supernatural in Society, Culture, and History* (with Marc Eaton, 2018, Temple University Press), *Popular Culture as Everyday Life* (with Phillip Vannini, 2016, Routledge), *Body/Embodiment* (with Phillip Vannini, 2006, Ashgate), and *net.seXXX* (2004, Peter Lang). Dennis has published over fifty empirical studies, book chapters, observational essays, or theoretical works, has served as President of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, on the editorial board for multiple journals including *Sexualities*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, and *The Sociological Quarterly*, he is also a former associate editor of *Symbolic Interaction*.

In his keynote, Dennis will be summoning a call for scholarship on the supernatural, discussing both its promises and risks. Yet, to do so productively Dennis argues that it is crucial to proceed with clearer definitions and parameters. Drawing from distinctions that he and Marc Eaton articulate in *The Supernatural in Society Culture and History* (2018, Temple University Press) he argues that the supernatural ought to be understood as a distinct set of phenomena apart from both religious experiences and alleged paranormal abilities. Waskul comments on the status of existing supernatural research, and calls for greater attention on the actual experiences that people claim to have with supernatural phenomena.

SCSC Information

Conference Registration

Information about registration and conference rates can be found on the SCSC website.

www.rgu.ac.uk/scsc

Full conference and day rates are available, and student discounts offered at a 20% reduction.

Travel and Accommodation

SCSC is located on the beautiful North-East coast of Scotland in Aberdeen. The conference will be hosted at **Robert Gordon University**.

You can travel to Aberdeen by rail, air and car.

A range of accommodation offers are available both in the city of Aberdeen, and close to the University campus. We have arranged discounted rates for accommodation during SCSC.

For information on travelling to the conference and accommodation offers please visit our website.



Any Questions?

If you have any questions about SCSC please contact conference organiser, Dr Rachael Ironside, on scsc@rgu.ac.uk.

You can also follow us on our social media pages.



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