

EXPLORE FOLKLORE

Bob Trubshaw



CONTENTS

1: INTRODUCTION	1
What is folklore?	1
Three 'levels' of folklore	3
Folk-somethings are processes	4
The scope of this book	4
Origins of the word 'folklore'	5
The 'otherness' of the 'folk'	5
Defining the other defines ourselves	7
Making people 'primitive'	7
Folklore and time	8
Western causality is weird	9
2: HISTORY OF BRITISH FOLKLORE STUDIES	10
Comparative folklore	10
The county collectors	11
Gentrification and bowdlerisation	12
Twentieth century British folklore studies	14
Popular British folklore	15
3: FOLKLORE THEORY	17
Cultural evolution	18
Theory follows fashions	19
British insularity	21
Theory in archaeology	22
Theory in American folklore studies	25
Excessive psychology	27
Context sensitivity	29
Theory in history	29
Rethinking social history	31
Narrative voices	32
Cognitive Linguistics	33
Where have we got to?	35
Future of folklore theory	35
4: PROBLEMS WITH 'POPULAR FOLKLORE'	37
'Evolved, adopted and fabricated'	37
Paganisation of folklore	37
The maestro of mix and match	39
'Prechristian pagans' and 'popular Christianity'	41

Continuity	43
Distinguishing individual from collective memory	43
Memories shape culture	43
Memories must be 'worked on'	44
Culture shapes memory	44
Remembering and forgetting	45
Continuity in folklore	46
All is change	47
The Celtic conundrum	48
'Celtic' – a people, a group of languages, or a style of art?	49
5: FOLK NARRATIVE	53
Oral/aural and written	53
'Wonder tales'	54
'Myths'	54
'Legend'	56
'Tales'	57
Origins of folk tales	57
Interaction of oral and printed literature	58
The origins of fairy stories	59
The evolution of 'wonder tales' into 'nursery tales'	60
Women and children to the fore	61
Feminism and fairy tales	62
Fairies ain't what they used to be	65
Once upon a time...	67
...and they lived happily ever after	67
'Closure'	67
Framing	69
Riddles and proverbs	70
6: CONTEMPORARY FOLKLORE	73
We are all folk	74
Twenty reasons why chocolate is better than sex	75
Oral narrative as performance	76
FOAFs	77
Organ thieves	78
Contemporary legends	79
Contemporary legend studies	80
Contamination and contemporaneity	81
Recovered childhood memories	82
It's all around us	84

7: MODERN FOLK NARRATIVES	85
Horror and fantasy	85
Wicker men and megalithic monuments	86
Folklore, magic and science	87
Adapting to the times	88
Us and Them	90
Role playing and zapping	90
Postmodern folklorists	91
Modern storytelling	93
8: FOLKLORE AND BELIEF	96
Superstitions, folk beliefs and belief legends	97
Beliefs are basic	98
Plants and animals	99
Anomalous animals and cryptozoology	102
Folk cures and charms	103
Weather lore	106
Legends about places	107
Holy wells and springs	109
Archaeologists and place-related folklore	111
The afterlife	112
A unified theory of anomalous phenomena?	113
The Old Hag	114
Ghosts	116
Fairies and their kin	117
Saints and deities	120
Will o' the wisps and 'earthlights'	121
Elf-infested spaces	122
Hollow hills and abductions	123
Close encounters with UFOs and their occupants	124
And that's not all ...	126
9: FOLK CUSTOMS AND FESTIVALS	127
Seasonal festivities	128
Castleton Garland Ceremony	129
Hallaton Bottle Kicking and Hare Pie Scramble	130
Hallaton adapts	133
The growing calendar of curious customs	134
Folklore in social customs	136
Royal rituals	136
Wayside memorials	137

Imported customs	138
Children's playground games	138
Adapting and mutating healthily	139
10: FOLK DANCE AND DRAMA	140
The mirage of morris	141
Social dancing	143
Revival versus tradition	144
Mumming and mummers' plays	144
Punch and Judy	146
11: FOLK SONG	148
One, two or three?	148
Ye hae broken the charm noo	148
Ballads reassessed	150
Sharp's stamp	151
Folk protest	152
Folk revives	153
The folk doth protest too much	153
Folk music by the folk	154
You can never expect the unexpected	155
Eclectic excesses	155
Bhangra and beyond	157
12: FOLK CRAFT AND ART	159
Tradition and revival	162
A preliminary list of British folk crafts	163
Folk crafts and folk groups	166
13: WHERE NEXT?	167
Don't just sit there ...	169
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED	171
INDEX	187