

CREMS Magic and Witchcraft Conference 2025

What is a Witch?

Online and in person (York, UK)

23-25 June 2025

Monday 23 rd June 2025
9:00-9:30: Registration and coffee
9:30-10:30: Keynote
Julian Goodare, University of Edinburgh, 'What is a witch in Scottish literature?'
10:30 – 10:45: Coffee
10:45 – 12:15: Panel 1: Witchcraft and the Law Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helen Hall and Javier Oliva, How Did Contrasting Perceptions of the figure of the witch influence responses to the prosecution of mystics and mediums under the Witchcraft Act 1735?• Gwendolyne Knight, Before the Witch Trials: Witchcraft as a Legal Concept in the Medieval North• David Magalhães, Legal repression of witchcraft in Portugal. An overview
12:15 – 13:15: Lunch (provided for all speakers and delegates)
During lunch, there will be a witchcraft-themed creative writing workshop with Dr. Jennie Owen
13.15 – 14:45: Panel 2: Palimpsests Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charlotte Trinquet Du Lys, From Helper to Menace: The Political Transformation of the Witch in Rapunzel's Western Literary Versions• Szymon J. Czerski, Deliver us from the evil one: The evolution of the owl and tawny owl cultural motif in Polish folklore in a magical context• Abigail Fraser, The continuity of the witch image from Pharsalia to Daemonologie
14:45 – 15:45: Panel 3: Male witches Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holly Bamford, Husband, Father, Witch: Male Witches in Early Modern England• James Hobbs, "The Devill of our Nation:" Male Witchcraft and Court Scandal in Seventeenth Century England
15:45 – 16:00: Coffee
16:00 – 17:00: Panel 4: Culture clashes Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, A witch to a king? Christian IV and the prosecution of Crippled Heine, 1626-1630• Francesca Vera Romano, Folkloric Witchcraft in Southern Italy during the Early Modern Period

Tuesday 24 th June 2025
9:00-9:15: Registration and coffee
9:15 – 10:45: Panel 5: Witches vs. cunning folk Chair: Tabitha Stanmore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morgan Daimler, Witches, Wise Women, and Fairies in 19th Century Ireland • Gina Snooks, Witches Among Us?!: Witchcraft in Newfoundland Folklore • Luka Šešo, Heretics, Witches or Traditional Healers: Who were Krsniks
10:45 – 11:00: Coffee
11:00 – 12:30: Panel 6: Witchcraft in the antique / late medieval period Chair: Debora Moretti
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Tsitsani, Magical Ways of Strengthening the Position of Defence or Accusation in the Light of Papyri • Vitória Rama, Persecution of witchcraft in the turn of the late 2nd millennium to the late 1st millennium BC in Ancient Mesopotamia • Sotiriou Vasiliki, “The Witch” (=Magissa, μάγισσα) in the Byzantine Empire
12:30 – 13:15: Lunch (provided for all speakers and delegates)
13:15 – 14:15: Keynote
Ceri Houlbrook, University of Hertfordshire, ‘Unstoppering the witch bottle’
14:15 – 15:45: Panel 7: Muddled theory Chair: Cat Stiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neil Tarrant, Witchcraft without Witches?: Robert Bellarmine’s Account of Demonic Power in the <i>Lectiones Lovanienses</i> • Dan Harms, Winds, Witches, and Wicked Spirits: The Association of Witches with Other Dangers in a Late Seventeenth Century British Manuscript • Olivia Garro, Theological construction versus visual representations of witches: gender, a case study, and its apparent contradictions
15:45 – 16:00: Coffee
16:00 – 17:00: Panel 8: A magical miscellany Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paolo Portone, “Witch to Whom?” The Origins of a Modern Myth with Many Facets • Ellie Whitehead, Satan’s Invisible World Discovered: Witchcraft and the Scientific Revolution in Seventeenth-Century Scotland
Conference dinner in the evening (venue TBC)

Wednesday 25 th June 2025
9:00-9:15: Registration and coffee
9:15 – 10:45: Panel 9: Colonialism and witchcraft Chair: Mikki Brock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joanna Paschedag, “Witchcraft” in Hawaii? The imposition of Euro-American views of witchcraft on Native Hawaiian religious practices from 1820 • Nikolas Brusletto, The Norwegian Troll Folk – Witchcraft in Norway from pre-Christian times to the witchcraft proceedings • Ashlyn Cudney, The Witch as Highlander: Cultural Marginalization in the 1662 Bute Trials • Zothanchhingi Khiangte, Demons and witches in the pre-Christian native cultures of Northeast India: Transitions and reinterpretations
10:45 – 11:00: Coffee
11:00 – 12:30: Panel 10: Witchcraft and the body Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irina Husti-Radulet, Blood, Breastmilk, Miscarriages: Maleficium and Female Bodily Functions in Early Modern England • Cat Stiles, Sex Specific: The Witch, Desire & Embodiment in Early Modern Culture • Nataša Polgar, Anchored in law: witch and her body
12:30 – 13:15: Lunch (provided for all speakers and delegates)
13:15 – 14:15: Keynote
Rita Voltmer, University of Trier, ‘Beyond the village witch: The many faces of the European witch’
14:15 – 15:45: Panel 11: Witchcraft as harm Chair: TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Kalkaeva, The danger of Female-Witches and Male-Sorcerers in the folklore tales of 19th century Central and Southern Germany • Łukasz Hajdrych, Social norms, neighbours and accusations of practicing witchcraft in early modern Poland. The case of Kleczew • Jennifer De Biasio, The Judicial and Popular Co-Production of ‘the Witch’ in Lucerne, ca. 1450-1500
15:45 – 16:00: Coffee
16:00 – 17:00: Roundtable
Panellists: Jonathan Barry, Molly Aitken, Charlotte Baker, Mikki Brock