

Academic Archers: Analyses of life in rural Borsetshire conference schedule*

Abstracts and speaker biographies, by schedule order

Session One: Ambridgonomics - Planning and Economic Development in Ambridge

Part 1: The Housing Crisis in Borsetshire

Rich Relatives or Ambridge Fairy? Patronage and expectation in Ambridge housing pathways, from Claire Astbury, Head of Housing Strategy & Development at Luton Borough Council

Abstract

At a national level, housing is a key cause of socio-economic inequality, and inter-generational inequality. In my presentation I will take a pathway approach to demonstrate the role of intergenerational wealth transfer in the housing journeys of key characters.

The presentation will highlight the role of inheritance and patronage as a solution to housing crises in Ambridge and consider the extent to which these reflect reality or demonstrate the existence of the "Ambridge Fairy".

My overall conclusions will include:

1. Just as in the world outside Ambridge, parental owner occupation/asset wealth and inheritance are a strong determinant for housing stability (eg the Aldridge children, Roy Tucker).
2. Patronage and hosting are especially important in Ambridge not just in terms of tied accommodation such as Will enjoys, but house sharing and hosting (eg Jim/Jazzer; Bert/Fairbrothers; Peggy/Christine/Harrison & Fallon).
3. Despite the dependence on patronage, those investing in housing as a commodity (eg Amside rentals, the properties inherited by Hazel Woolley and Justin's new development) are not under significant social pressure to provide appropriate accommodation for local people as part of the fabric of the community.
4. Forms of affordable housing which have reduced nationally, and particularly in rural areas, remain in short supply and expectation of state provision has shrunk. Those suffering housing strain are not looking to politics as a solution to this, another indication of the dependence on patronage.

Biography

Claire Astbury started her housing career in 1995, allocating homes for a housing association. Subsequent experience includes frontline, policy and board roles within councils, housing associations and the National Housing Federation. She is currently Head of Housing Strategy & Development at Luton Borough Council and chair of her village's Neighbourhood Plan group. She holds a postgraduate diploma in housing policy & practice (1998, Sheffield Hallam University) and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing. She has been an Archers listener for a paltry 15 years and especially enjoys a housing storyline.

Staying in the Spare Room: Social Connectedness and Household Co-residence in The Archers, from Paula Fomby, Research Associate Professor in the Survey Research Center and Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

Abstract

This presentation explores the circumstances under which Ambridge residents live together outside of nuclear families. Fewer than 5% of UK households are composed of extended or multiple families (i.e., coresidence with one's own parents, adult siblings, or grown children) or unrelated adults such as friends or roommates (Office for National Statistics 2015, Table 9). An informal accounting suggests the prevalence of such living arrangements is substantially higher in Ambridge. I review the primary explanations from the field of family demography to explain extended and non-kin coresidence, including economic need, poor physical health, and cultural norms. I then posit two additional factors that fit the Ambridge model of coresidence and which may be applicable to rural communities more broadly: a collective strategy to ward off loneliness and a response to a tightly constrained housing market.

Biography

I am a research associate professor at the Survey Research Center and Population Studies Center at University of Michigan. I hold a PhD in Sociology with an emphasis in social demography from University of Wisconsin. My research is in the field of family demography. I study the social, economic, and interpersonal factors that lead to family formation and dissolution and investigate the influence of family composition change on children's well-being across the early life course. I have been a committed Archers fan since 2009. Favorite characters: Neil for his heart, Lynda for her complexity, Charlie Thomas for his voice.

Part 2: Placemaking and shaping

Set in aspic?: Ambridge rural placemaking in a place of contested politics and conflicted identity, from Dr Cara Courage

Abstract

This paper will focus on the placemaking activity of the people of Ambridge as an expression of place identity and place attachment at a time when rural land and living is a contested domain. This will be informed by research and practice in rural placemaking, and will offer examples from locations globally that engage in rural placemaking activity.

Placemaking is both an approach and a set of tools that places the community at the heart of place-based development (Courage, 2017); it will include work with artists and creative processes and outputs; and is predominantly focused to date on urban areas. A growing body of research (Fluharty and Barrett, 2016; Nikitin, 2016; Soloman, 2013) and practice is locating placemaking in the rural context.

This paper uses Ambridge to explore the role(s) of rural placemaking, focussing on; placemaking activity, place identity and place attachment of villagers and argues that rural land, living and

livelihoods are no less contested than those of their metropolitan cousins. It will challenge the preconception of rural place identity as fixed and outmoded (as Brian alluded to on 9th July 2017, Ambridge would be 'Set in aspic if the NIMBYs have their way') and presents it instead as a place where planning and policy issues are continuous and fast-paced and where local communities are active in cultural activity that celebrates place and works to improve material and lived conditions.

This paper places Ambridge in that context and will consider its traditional placemaking (the village fete for example), its contemporary placemaking (Lynda and Elizabeth's guerrilla gardening, the Flood Bar and Loxfest for example) and will consider the potential for a placemaking approach in future Ambridge (such as with the Bridge Farm housing development and pig unit). It will also consider aspects of rural planning, such as Local Plans, that could help Ambridge retain and develop its sense of place in the pressurised rural context.

Examples to offer the conference delegates and the people of Ambridge will include whole towns that adopt an arts-based approach to community cohesion and place identity (Deveron UK; Wassaic and Marfa, USA); to architect and community designed rural accommodation (Rural Studio, USA) and ecological architecture (bird hides, M12 Studio, Australia); and the re-use of closed or perilous rural amenity buildings for community-use (post office project, Ireland; pub project, UK).

Biography

Cara is a placemaking academic and arts consultant, writer/commentator, curator and project manager. She is author of *Arts in Place: The Arts, the Urban and Social Practice* (Routledge, 2017), and works as an Adjunct at University of Virginia, researching and developing creative placemaking metrics and as a strategist at Futurecity, as well as running her own placemaking projects. Cara is a member of the Placemaking Leadership Council, Fellow of the RSA and Academician of Academy of Urbanism, and member of Royal Geographic Society and American Association of Geographers. Her career spans 17 years, working in arts in the public realm and public engagement with the built environment, active across all artforms in this and working as a consultant and project manager for public and private clients, as well as having my own arts-led built environment and placemaking practice.

***Can rural proofing make life in Ambridge better?*, from Sally Shortall, Duke of Northumberland Professor of Rural Economy at Newcastle University and Anne Liddon, Science Communications Manager, Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University**

Abstract

A move to the countryside is the aspiration of many people the UK, and we see relatively well-off households making a deliberate choice to relocate from town to country, as Robert and Lynda Snell did in the 1980s. At the same time, life in rural areas involves obvious penalties. Hospitals, GP surgeries, schools and other essential facilities may be difficult to access and public transport is often lacking. As country cottages are snapped up by commuters and retirees, prices rise, pushing even rented housing out of the reach of young people in Ambridge. Rural proofing is a concept originating with the English Rural White Paper in 2000 that aims to reduce such inequalities between town and country. It's a process whereby all policymaking is subject to a rural lens designed to

ensure it does not focus solely on city-based needs. But is such an approach sufficiently targeted? Keira Grundy may need more of a hand up to get to Oxford than Phoebe Aldridge did, and Robert Snell had more skills and capital upon which to draw, even after the failure of his business, than Ed Grundy could muster even before his cows were stolen.

Biographies

Sally Shortall is Duke of Northumberland Professor of Rural Economy at Newcastle University. She has published widely on rural development policy and practice, the role of women on farms and in rural development, social changes in farming practice and the links between evidence and policy. She has worked with the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Food and Agricultural Organisation. Her current research considers rural proofing in Northern Ireland and women in agriculture in Scotland. Contact sally.shortall@ncl.ac.uk

Anne Liddon is Science Communications Manager, Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University. From 2007-2013 she was Science Communications Manager for the UK Research Councils' £25 million Rural Economy and Land Use Programme. Contact anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk

Session Two: Wildcards

Ambridgology and Counter-insurgency doctrine, from James Armstrong, political advisor to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan

Abstract

Britain 2026. In a dystopian future, a minority government with a precarious mandate is struggling to maintain control. A radical insurgent movement, led by a charismatic bearded fanatic with links to international terror groups, has challenged government writ throughout the United Kingdom. In response to the growing emergency, international forces have deployed to support the struggling government.

The US 82 Airborne Division, coming out of distinguished tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been deployed to Regional Command Borcestshire. The II Platoon, 4 Company are halfway through a difficult tour at FOB Felpisham. A growing number of credible intelligence reports suggest that Ambridge, a small population centre 12 clicks south, is a hub of insurgent activity. II Platoon are sent to investigate...

This paper will unite the unfashionable disciplines of Archers Studies and Counter-Insurgency Doctrine. Specifically it will seek to apply the US Army Counter-Insurgency Manual to a simulated insurgency in Ambridge. Western militaries have struggled to develop realistic simulations for counter-insurgency training and Ambridge represents an extremely sophisticated model village. It is hoped that the paper will demonstrate the difficulties of applying a universal counter-insurgency approach.

Biography

I currently work as a political advisor to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan. I have been working for NATO on Afghanistan-related issues since 2010 and have deployed to Afghanistan in a number of different roles during this period. I have been an *Archers* listener since the early '90s. During my deployments to Afghanistan I find my daily *Archers* fix a very comforting reminder of home.

***Heavy Petting: An Examination of Metaphoric Relationships with Pets*, from Rachel Daniels, Deputy Head and Group Leader, Barrington Library, Cranfield University, and Dr Annie Maddison Warren, Senior Lecturer in Information Systems, Centre for Electronic Warfare, Information and Cyber, Cranfield University**

Abstract

Descartes described nonhuman animals as dumb machines that can be disposed of without feeling (Regan and Singer, 1976). Arguably, animals feature more frequently in *The Archers* than in any other serial drama. However, the roles assigned to them differ: some are viewed as valuable products, such as David's cows or Tom's pigs, thus confirming Descartes' assertion; others are valued friends, such as Lynda's dog, Scruffy or Peggy's cat, Bill. And then there is Hilda Ogden. These distinctive roles raise questions about the relationships that characters have with their animals, particularly their pets, and whether these relationships are reflective of pet ownership in general.

Belk (1996) identified five metaphors of pet ownership: pets as pleasures, problems, parts of self, members of the family and toys. He also noted that views vacillate, with pets either being seen as human and civilised or animalistic and chaotic. This paper uses discourse analysis of interactions with pets and references to them in *The Archers*, in-depth interviews with pet owners and employs auto-ethnography to re-test Belk's (1996) study. The findings demonstrate how these mixed metaphors enable the audience to better understand and empathise with characters in *The Archers*, whilst providing insights into Britain's fascination with pets.

Biographies

Rachel is Deputy Head and Group Leader for Academic Liaison at Barrington Library, which supports Cranfield Defence and Security, a school of Cranfield University, where she has spent 24 happy years. She has a Master's degree from Aberystwyth University and is an unashamed fan of Jazzer. Her responsibilities and professional interests include: developing Cranfield University's Alumni Library Online service; academic liaison, especially research support; establishing and managing the Russian Military Studies Archive. She is the current Chair and co-founder of the Alumni Library Forum, engaging the UK HE community to provide alumni library services. Rachel is a former pet owner, who now takes the cheaper, less heart-breaking, if slightly sinister route of bribing local cats into her garden.

Dr Annie Maddison Warren is the Academic Lead for the Doctoral Community at Cranfield Defence and Security, a school of Cranfield University, and a Senior Lecturer in Information Systems in the Centre for Electronic Warfare, Information and Cyber. She has worked in academia throughout her

career, gaining a Masters in Corporate Management and a PhD from Cranfield University. Her research is on the management of major public sector IT projects with a particular interest in how context drives human behaviour. She had an animalistic and chaotic relationship with a cat called Cuffer before discovering dogs, in the form of Sprocket, who is treated as human and civilized – but widdles on the coconut mat when no one is looking.

Session Three: Said and Unsaid

Jim Lloyd: Quomodo Latine loqui facit? [how does he speak/pronounce Latin?], from Dr Catherine Sangster, ex BBC Pronunciation Unit

Abstract

As the biggest Archers fan among the staff of the BBC Pronunciation Unit (2002-2010), it typically fell to me to provide advice to the programme's production team and actors on any pronunciations required. Queries ranged from veterinary terms to place names. When Professor Jim Lloyd arrived in Ambridge, one of his character notes was his fondness for spouting Latin. Who could forget the 2009 fete, at which he performed Marcus Porcius Cato's treatise on the medicinal uses of cabbage while wearing a toga?

Latin presents a particular challenge when it comes to pronunciation advice, because it can be spoken aloud in so many ways: reconstructed Classical, very anglicised "schoolboy", or the sort of pronunciation heard in ecclesiastical, legal, or scientific circles. In this quick presentation I will explain and illustrate, with some real examples from scripts, the sort of Latin that I felt most appropriate for Jim, and why I chose to use it in the Unit's recommendations.

Biography

Dr Catherine Sangster is Head of Pronunciations for Oxford Dictionaries. Her academic background is in sociolinguistics and phonetics and, before making the move into lexicography, she worked in the BBC Pronunciation Unit for nine years. Research interests include language and gender/sexuality, accents and dialects, Latin and Germanic languages, conlangs, and forensic phonetics. She also enjoys feminist activism, comics, knitting, swimming in the sea, board games, and *The Archers*.

Foucault, Freda Fry and the power of silent characters on the radio, from Rebecca Wood, Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham in the Department of Disability, Inclusion and Special Needs

Abstract

The Archers is a much-loved soap opera which relies entirely on audio outputs: on actors speaking, and listeners listening. Despite this, 15 silent characters are quietly listed on its website, constituting an astonishing 12.5% of those catalogued. And that doesn't even include those naughty Button girls. In fact, from Rosaline in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, to Godot in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and not forgetting Tracey the barmaid in *Eastenders*, silent characters have long played a crucial role

in drama, an influence all the more acutely felt if they are unseen as well as unheard. Meanwhile, informed by the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty, Acheson (2008) describes the profound role non-speaking can play in some communities. Similarly, if Foucault argued that language cannot be separated from power, his idea about 'pauses' indicates that silence can permit truths to emerge (Humphry, 2013). Using key examples such as Freda Fry and Sabrina Thwaite, invoking philosophies of language and silence, and drawing comparisons with non-spoken communication such as Brian's newspaper rustling and Lynda's sniffs, I will explore the expanding role of the silent characters in *The Archers*, and suggest they have an influence and potency in the storylines that speaking actors should envy.

Biography

Rebecca Wood is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham in the Department of Disability, Inclusion and Special Needs, where she researches autism and education. Her particular interest is in the language, communication and silence of autistic children. Rebecca has been listening to 'The Archers' for 25 years and looks forward to the arrival of an autistic character in Ambridge. Her co-authored chapter 'Bag of the devil: the disablement of Rob Titchener' is published in 'Culverts, Custard and Cake' (Courage and Headlam, 2017).

Accent and identity in Ambridge, from Dr Rob Drummond, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at Manchester Metropolitan University

Abstract

Spoken language plays a vital role in the construction and performance of identity, both in terms of how we see ourselves, but also in how we are perceived by others. When listening to people speak, we routinely pick up on numerous linguistic features that provide information not only about likely regional background, but also about other factors such as social class, gender, sexuality, and personality. Clearly, radio dramas such as *The Archers* rely on the link between voice, accent, and identity more than any other form of drama, with personalities and attitudes needing to be readily identifiable by their characters' voices. As a researcher in the area of language and identity, I am interested in this link.

Regular *Archers* listeners already have the characters firmly fixed in their minds, but this perception is based on what the characters say and do as much as their voice. In order to study the voice aspect specifically, I am investigating the views of non-*Archers* listeners by using isolated speech samples to measure perceived personality/character. By comparing these views with what we already know, we can gain insights into the character-building process. The results should be of interest to listeners, sociolinguists, and programme makers.

Biography

I am a Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at Manchester Metropolitan University. I work in sociolinguistics, specialising in the study of accents, dialects and identity. Recent and current projects involve urban adolescent speech, Manchester accents and dialects, the accents of Grime music, and now accent and identity in *The Archers*. I publish in academic journals/books (a book entitled *Researching urban*

youth language and identity is due out in 2018), but I also do a lot of non-academic work, including media work on language-related topics, and publications for A-level English teachers and students.

Session Four: Wildcards

Their Names Liveth Forevermore: Recreating the Ambridge War Memorial, from Dr Jessica Meyer, University of Leeds

Abstract

In my 2016 Academic Archers conference paper, I noted the difficulty I was having in locating the Ambridge War Memorial. A keen-eyed research associate subsequently uncovered records of the memorial in Historic England's documentation on listing war memorials. I propose to present a recreation of the war memorial and discuss its relevance in to the symbolism and politics of remembrance in the context of Alex King's 1998 study *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*.

I will also use the opportunity to outline ideas for grant application, either to the Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War: Then and Now scheme or to the Gateways to the First World War Centenary Commemoration Centre, to undertake further research into the war memorial, the names listed and the work of the Ambridge Memorial Committee in the 1920s, the papers of which I am hopeful of uncovering either in the Borsetshire Local Archives (now located in Felpersham Library) or the attics of Lower Loxley. This project will provide training in local and family history for the Academic Archers community while uncovering a vital, but as yet hidden, local story of the legacy of the First World War.

Biography

Jessica Meyer is Associate Professor of Modern British History at the University of Leeds. A historian of gender, medicine and the First World War, she is part of the network of academic researchers attached to the Gateways to the First World War Centenary Commemoration Centre, based at the University of Kent and funded by the AHRC. She has been involved with a variety of community research and engagement projects throughout the centenary of the First World War, including several collaborations with the BBC, although not The Archers as yet, something she hopes to remedy in 2018.

Unique Borsetshire climate or exemplary sun protection?, from Dr Nicola Boyle, Harlaxton College, Dr Tanya Bleiker, Clinical Vice President of the British Association of Dermatologists, Dr Nick Levell, dermatologist and Nina Goad

Abstract

With a rapidly increasing incidence of sun related skin cancer in the UK we could learn much from Ambridge. A predominantly farming community spanning all socio-economic groups one would predict a significant number of skin cancers. Non-melanoma skin cancers are common with a low mortality rate, but are often multiple and require surgery. Susan Carter would surely comment upon

such cosmetic disfigurement; it is therefore presumed that the Ambridge skin cancer rate is below that expected.

Is sun protection needed in Ambridge? Elizabeth Pargetter does not insist on the twins applying sun cream; the fruit pickers are advised to drink plenty but do they wear hats? The only character to develop skin cancer was Siobhan Donavan, a Borsetshire immigrant, whose Celtic fair skin increased her risk of melanoma skin cancer. Genetic factors may be important. Perhaps the whole population is descended from immigrants from tropical areas, thus explaining the phenomenon. Perhaps the sun never shines in Ambridge; unlikely as the effect on the herbal lays would be catastrophic. Perhaps in this subculture, everyone wears full body clothing for reasons of modesty or religion. Or perhaps they are all wearing sunscreen, and a hat, and demonstrating exemplary behaviour?

Biographies

Dr Nicola Boyle is a Teaching Fellow at Harlaxton College. Her research interests are in early modern theatre history.

Dr Tanya Bleiker is a Dermatologist in Derby. She is Editor of Rook's Textbook of Dermatology, past Editor of the British Journal of Dermatology and Clinical Vice President of the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD). Both are avid listeners of *The Archers*.

Dr Nick Levell (Dermatologist Norfolk) and Mrs Nina Goad, with whom we have written this quick pitch, are president and head of communications of the BAD.

The Morris in The Archers – and The Archers in The Morris, from Helen Burrows, social worker

Abstract

Barwick Green, the theme tune for *The Archers*, was originally written as a maypole dance tune (Hodgson, 2014) and fits a standard format for British ritual dance music, where the dance has 'verses' and 'choruses', as do Morris tunes. Morris dance sides play a small but significant part in Ambridge village life, performing at fetes and festival days, and more recently being heard performing at a neo-pagan wassailing ceremony. However, despite being located close both to the Cotswolds and the Welsh Borders, both of which have their own distinctive dance styles, Ambridge does not have a Morris side, the nearest being based in Edgeley. This paper, firstly, presents the results of a small research project exploring who might join the Ambridge Morris if it was formed, what roles each resident might play (eg Squire, Bagman, Fool) and what style of Morris they would dance. Secondly, experience suggests that many Morris dancers are fans of *The Archers*, and several sides dance to Barwick Green. This paper will also present results of a survey of 'fan dancers', mapping such performances to dance style and geographical location, and concluding with a live performance of Barwick Green danced in the Border style.

Biography

Experienced as a senior lecturer and researcher in social work, Helen M Burrows is a Registered Social Worker, who works in the East Midlands both as an independent practice educator and as an Outreach domestic abuse support worker. She is also a former Morris Dancer and occasional

musician with two Midlands Border Morris sides. She has been listening to *The Archers* since 1964, and as a member of the Archers Anarchists, admits to an almost unhealthy obsession with the village of Ambridge and its inhabitants, to the point of considering undertaking doctoral studies into Archers fandom.

Session Five: Ambridgistas - Women of Ambridge

Part 1: Lives of Ambridge Women

***Does The Archers reflect contemporary values on gender, and sexuality?*, from Bill Pitt, social researcher**

Abstract

Much changes in 66 years. From post war recovery and rationing through to the sexual revolution in the '60s, individualism in the '80s and the rise and plateau of globalism in the 21st century. Throughout this time *The Archers* has remained a stalwart of British culture but how is social change explored in Ambridge? Is *The Archers* an outdated anachronism or does it reflect contemporary values on gender, and sexuality?

I will answer this through primary and secondary research drawing conclusions on the ways in which contemporary values are (or are not) portrayed in *The Archers*. Using results from publicly available data sets I will benchmark British values relating to gender and sexuality. I will then develop a questionnaire designed to explore listener perceptions of key characters' values in each area within *The Archers*. Where relevant I will also draw on storylines and conversations about *The Archers* on social media to enrich the analysis. I will then draw conclusions on the way in which contemporary values are represented in *The Archers* and comment on the role of literature and social change in public consciousness.

Biography

Bill Pitt is a social researcher based in a world leading research agency in London. He works across a range of policy areas and has an interest in gender and sexuality. He's a mixed methods practitioner who is passionate about data agnostic research and using evidence to advocate for social change. An avid fan of *The Archers*, Bill has listened daily for (almost) a third of his life. He holds a BA in Anthropology & Psychology from the University of Sydney, Australia and an Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice from the MRS in London.

***'I am woman, hear me roar - and now watch me play cricket!*', from Katharine Hoskyn, Auckland University of Technology**

Abstract

In March 2017 women roared into the Ambridge Cricket Team. Their debut was brought on, not by an inherent desire to have women in the team, but a shortage of male players and a belief that the

team could be at risk. The coach negotiates a slippery path of integrating women into the team – at times with seemingly no friends, with women vocal in their criticism of his efforts and division amongst the men. This presentation highlights key events in the decision to include women in the team; the selection of women and the integration of women in the team. An interpretative approach (Hammond, 2013) is used which identifies the differing perspectives of key people in the situation.

The transition of the village cricket team is set against a backdrop of long-term success for England in women's cricket and parallels high profile events in other sports in the United Kingdom. The issues for women in cricket in Ambridge reflect wider experience in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (Velija, 2015).

Biography

Katharine Hoskyn spent her childhood and part of her adult life in Britain and now lives in New Zealand. She currently teaches on contract at the Auckland University of Technology, whilst completing a PhD, after teaching full-time for 20 years and supervising students on work placement. She has an undergraduate degree in social sciences, a Graduate Diploma in Business and a MPhil on sports events and participation. Her doctoral studies investigate membership of sports clubs. She is currently assists an advisory group for the delivery of sport by clubs in a local community. She has been listening to *The Archers* since 1968.

Sow's ears and silk purses: upcycling and The Archers, from Madeleine Lefebvre is Chief Librarian of Ryerson University in Toronto

Abstract

Upcycling – the transforming of useless or unwanted products into those of better quality - has been evident in *The Archers* for some time. Bert Fry's eggmobile was originally an old caravan. Eddie Grundy built Lynda Snell's shepherd's hut from farmyard scrap. Josh Archer expanded his online farm equipment sales to include old items refurbished and sold for profit. At Bridge Farm café, all Fallon Rogers' upcycled furniture, objects, etc., are available for purchase.

Upcycling implies that the original item is now worthless, which can be in tension with nostalgia. David Archer preserves his grandfather's horse-drawn plough as is, while Tony Archer is lovingly restoring his vintage tractor, for the sheer pleasure of contemplating a relic of a bygone age; a dichotomy perhaps between the values of older Ambridge residents and the younger set. Upcycling is also evident in a metaphorical sense: Lilian Bellamy regularly upcycles herself with the aid of Botox. However, perhaps the most sinister example is that of Rob Titchener, who set about upcycling Helen into the image he wanted.

Biography

Madeleine Lefebvre is Chief Librarian of Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. Born in the UK, she holds an MA from Edinburgh University as well as MA and MLS degrees from the University of Alberta. She is a Fellow of the UK Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and an Associate of the Australian Library and Information Association. Her book, *The Romance of*

Libraries, was published by Scarecrow Press in 2005. In 2015 Madeleine was appointed a trustee of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, and is passionate about the role public libraries play in the community.

Strong or Silenced? The Under-Representation of Mental Health Problems in Ambridge's Women, from Elizabeth Campion, University of Cambridge

Abstract

Alongside its miraculously low incidence of metabolic disorders, the population of Ambridge appears also to benefit from uniformly good mental health. When mental health-based storylines do occur, they tend to involve brief episodes of illness which are relatively quickly and permanently treated. This trend is particularly noticeable among the women of Ambridge, given that women are much more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety or depression. The high-profile story of Helen's abuse at the hands of Rob Titchener is particularly notable in this respect, as Helen and Henry appear to be suffering no lasting effects. The under-representation of individuals managing long-term mental health difficulties on a daily basis is a missed opportunity to highlight problems they might face, such as a stigma and obstacles to accessing treatment, and in Helen's case to demonstrate the real and lasting harm caused by coercive and controlling abuse.

Biography

Elizabeth has returned to the University of Cambridge to complete an LLM in 2018-19, having previously worked in two City law firms. She was a proud participant in the 2018 Academic Archers conference.

Part 2: Women's Talk?

In praise of gossip – why tongue-wagging and the rumour mill are important in Ambridge, from Louise Gillies, King's College, London

Abstract

Whilst Socrates stated “strong minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events and weak minds discuss people”, it has been noted that there is nothing to do except “shag, gossip and take drugs” in rural village life (Dent, 2016). Because living in close proximity to others can make privacy difficult, the result is that every event comes to be regarded as public property (Pitt-Rivers, 1971). Gossip has been employed by women in small communities since the beginning of recorded time, is a means of gaining social mobility and has been used positively to keep people on the straight and narrow for fear of what is said about them.

Village shops are known staging posts for picking up gossip as well as groceries, and this is where Susan Carter engages in ‘providing news of the doings, virtues and vices of others’ (Gluckman, 1963). Susan claims she is “not a gossip” (18/06/17), but she is a key player in informing not only fellow

villagers of the latest goings on in Ambridge, but also the listeners. Yet despite the useful service that she provides, she is reviled on a weekly basis for her tittle-tattling and tongue-wagging.

This paper discusses the thesis - no gossip, no Ambridge. From a production point of view, rumour is how we learn much of what is happening about the everyday lives of Ambridge country folk. However, gossip is also the backbone of village life throughout the country, having an important part to play within such communities. And at the end of the day, we are all quidnuncs when it comes to *The Archers*.

Biography

Growing up in a small village in Lancashire, the feelings of suffocation of village gossip massively hindered and stifled any fun that may have been sought out during childhood. It was only in later life that I realised that the rumour mill kept us children safe and free to explore the village and surrounding countryside. As a grown up, I live in a different village where everyone knows what everyone else is doing. The answer is a PhD on family communication and genetic disease whilst listening, of course, to *The Archers*. Ambridge families have been used as part of my degree-based learning throughout my second student slog.

Neighbourhood Watch: Gossip, Power and the Working-Class Matriarch in The Archers, from Claire Mortimer, University of East Anglia

Abstract

As the foremost gossip in Ambridge, Susan Carter can lay claim to being the most powerful character in *The Archers*. Ridiculed for her social aspirations, Susan is bolstered by her proximity to the world of privilege through her son's marriage to Alice Archer, and her husband's status as chairman of the parish council. Within the village Susan is both feared and ridiculed, giving her an ambivalent status in the narrative, yet she is pivotal in her role at the heart of the 'information superhighway' of gossip within the community. Her role is tantamount to that of a Greek chorus, commenting on, and judging the actions of her acquaintances, her position aided by her job as manager of the village shop, at the heart of village dealings.

This paper will locate Susan within a tradition of gossips in British popular culture, exploring discourses centring on middle-aged femininities and working-class cultures. I will examine how Susan's character is informed by the comic tradition of the unruly working-class matriarch, who is both strong and powerful, yet whose excessive talk reinforces the social divide that she longs to overcome.

Biography

I am a PhD student in the School of Film, Television and Media at the University of East Anglia, my research being on ageing actresses in British film comedy of the twentieth century. My publications include: *Romantic Comedy* (Routledge Guidebook), *Doing Film Studies* (Routledge), and a chapter on Alexander Mackendrick in *Film Comedy* (Wiley Blackwell). I have also published pieces on Dora Bryan, Margaret Rutherford and Peggy Mount.

Discussant: Charlotte Martin (actor) aka Dr Charlotte Connor (Research Psychologist)

Session Six: Pot Pouri

***It's Not Cricket: Fibbing in The Archers*, from Dr Ruth Heilbronn and Dr Rosalind Janssen, University College London, Institute of Education**

Abstract

In front of the entire cricket team, a seething Will Grundy discloses Harrison Burns's lie about Darrington wanting to merge with Ambridge. 'He lied to us all at the AGM'. Even worse they now have women on the team. Harrison says 'it was the only way to save the team'. More seriously according to Will, PC Burns is a dishonest police officer who should now resign as team captain. His public integrity is compromised.

Taking Bok's (1978) account of lying as a moral choice in private and public life, and a large literature including Augustine, Aquinas, and Kant, we consider if lying undermines social values and if it is sometimes justifiable. Is Ambridge a moral quagmire or does it represent social life everywhere? Who owns up to lying in *The Archers* and who hides deception? With what implications? To explore these questions we consider examples such as Shula lying to the police to protect the hunt; Justin covering up Rob's blocking of the culvert; Joe and Ed lying about the pigs on the SSI, and Pip and the escape of the cows, as well those numerous Little White Lies (the name of Fallon's former band).

Biographies

Ruth Heilbronn lectures and researches at the UCL Institute of Education, specialising in teacher education, linguistics and philosophy of education. She taught in London schools for many years, has held LEA advisory posts and written on practice, mentoring, practical judgement and ethical teacher education, which is her current concern. Among her latest publications are 'Freedoms and Perils: Academy Schools in England' in *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*, and *Dewey in Our Time: Learning from Dewey for Trans-cultural Practice* (UCL IoE Press)

Rosalind Janssen is a Lecturer in Education at UCL's Institute of Education. She works on the Master of Teaching programme where she first met her co-author Ruth Heilbronn, and discovered their mutual love of *The Archers*. Rosalind has been an avid listener since the 1960s. An Egyptologist by profession, she was previously a Curator in UCL's Petrie Museum and then a Lecturer in Egyptology at UCL's Institute of Archaeology. She currently teaches Egyptology classes at Oxford University and the City Lit. She even has a course – 'The Archers of Antiquity' – revolving around daily life at a unique New Kingdom Village.

Fear, fecklessness and flapjacks: imagining Ambridge's offenders, from Charlotte Bilby, Reader in Criminology, Northumbria University

Abstract

Our perceptions of real crime, law and justice can be manipulated by portrayals in fiction. This paper addresses whether *The Archers* helps us better understand today's offenders and their law breaking. While PC Burns' job normally focuses on rural community policing from a Golden Age, rather than major incidents of nearby Midsomer, and serious offences seem to be committed by Ambridge's 'outsiders', who may leave for Costa Rica sometimes to return, to what extent do we question any of this when interpreting Dorsetshire's crime, criminals, victims and criminal justice agencies?

Charlotte will investigate Ambridge's resident and outside offenders, and will consider if *The Archers* perpetuates or subverts usual criminal storylines and characters seen and heard elsewhere. To help this discussion, former and current criminals will be split into three categories. The fear of Rob Titchener and Roy Tucker, will be contrasted with the perceived fecklessness of the Grundys and the Horrobins; and questions will be raised as to whether the crimes of the socially privileged (Jill, David and Tom Archer) are always brushed away as being 'only a flapjack'. These examples will be contrasted with what we know about offenders' profiles and how different people and offences are treated by the State and home communities in contemporary Britain.

Biography

Charlotte Bilby is a Reader in Criminology, with research interests in arts and creativity in criminal justice systems, images of offenders as well as evidence based criminal justice policy making. She has carried out research for the Home Office, the NHS and the Northern Ireland Office looking at the impact of psychological interventions on reducing re-offending. It was during a particularly difficult period in an evaluation of offending behaviour programmes for the Ministry of Justice that she wondered whether Ed Grundy had been sentenced to the correct community penalty for his risk of reoffending.

Paths to the polling station at the village hall: Social networks and voting in Ambridge, from Dr Timothy Vercellotti, professor of political science, Western New England University in Springfield, Massachusetts

Abstract

Previous research in political socialization finds that we learn citizenship habits first from our elders and then from our peers. This is particularly true when it comes to voting. Social networks play a key role in determining whether we value the act of voting, and whether we have the civic knowledge needed to vote.

A content analysis of *Archers* episodes in the week preceding and on the day of UK general elections in 2010, 2015, and 2017 finds ample evidence of these dynamics. Family elders (Peggy Woolley, David and Ruth Archer, and Elizabeth Pargetter) set positive examples for younger family members (Helen Archer, Pip Archer, and Freddie Pargetter respectively) through their words and actions. Peer

interaction, on the other hand, has mixed effects, suggesting that equality of status mediates peer influence. Retired history professor Jim Lloyd fails to convince retired tenant farmer Joe Grundy to vote. University-educated Pip Archer, on the other hand, succeeds in getting farmhand Jazzer McCreary to the polling station, both for the first time, despite their class differences. This occurs after a day of shearing sheep together, illustrating that perceived equal status, even on a temporary basis, may strengthen peer influence when it comes to voting.

Biography

Dr. Timothy Vercellotti is a professor of political science at Western New England University in Springfield, Massachusetts, and director of the university's London summer program. He teaches courses on political behavior, media and politics, and national identity. His current research projects focus on public perceptions of public schools in the United States, the links between political efficacy and campaign activism in the UK, and how political conversations across class divisions can shape voting behavior. Dr. Vercellotti holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**correct at time of publishing – additional guests TBC and times may be subject to change*