Troubled Waters: The role of practice-led research in understanding and documenting heritage loss

SARA PENRHYN JONES, BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

PROF. LORNA M. HUGHES, GLASGOW UNIVERSITY
‘The Tongan coat of arms says that God and Tonga will be your inheritance, but it looks like it’s only the heavens we’ll see, because we’ll no longer have a place to call home.’

Sione Taulo Fulivai, Tonga
Interview, Durban (2011)
'The total landmass of all our islands is 300 square Kilometers... we have a coastline of 644 Kilometers. The Maldives is simply a coastline.'

MOHAMED ASLAM, ENVIRONMENT MINISTER (MALDIVES)

INTERVIEW, CANCUN (2010)
‘The way that I see it, the future for my people is ... disappear.’

CLARE ANTEREA, PACIFIC CALLING, KIRIBATI INTERVIEW, CANCUN (2010)
TROUBLED WATERS, STORMY FUTURES: HERITAGE IN TIMES OF ACCELERATED CLIMATE CHANGE

- Coleg Cymraeg
- National Trust
- National Library of Wales
- Cornish Audio Visual Archive
- University of Exeter
- Kings College London
- Monash/ Bath Spa

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Dr Bryony Onciul
Dr Anna Woodham
Prof. Kate Rigby
National
Trust

Our land: for ever, for everyone
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>'It’s important to me that Britain’s coast is kept beautiful for future generations to enjoy'</td>
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<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>'It’s important that the planning system works to protect the beauty of our coastline'</td>
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<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>'I am concerned about the impact of climate change and extreme weather for our coast'</td>
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NATIONAL TRUST - SHIFTING SHORES 2005
CLIMATE CHANGE

- Durgan
- Porthdinllaen
- Kiribati
HISTORIC SITE
WHAT IS HERITAGE?

Natan Itonga, Cultural Officer
Cultural Centre and Museum of Kiribati
This entire country is about to be wiped out by climate change.

It won't be the last

SINKING NATION
Leads the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Initiative (HATII), the home department for Information Studies teaching and research at the University of Glasgow
National Library of Wales: Responsible for documenting the heritage of Wales; keeping collections in trust for the nation, and making them accessible.

Collaboration: Developing a methodology for documenting and archiving multimedia records of Welsh communities threatened by climate change, and archiving these materials.

Research questions:
• What are the archives created by this sort of encounter?
• How can they be made accessible, and re-used?
• What are the ethical issues?
• How does a National Library interact with a ‘living’ archive, and the communities who create it?
• What are the technical issues in accessing hybrid material?
• Where does archive management become cultural mapping?
Content that will be generated by communities under threat from climate change:

- Audio (oral histories, songs, music)
- Video (diaries, oral histories, performance)
- Text (personal papers, diaries, ethnographic materials)
- Artistic works (paintings, drawings, sculpture)
- Photographs (historic, contemporary)
- IT (computer hardware and software)
- Intangible heritage: stories, customs, ideas, etc…
‘Cyberspace is not an uncontested domain. The digital medium contains an ideological base – it is a site of struggle.’ (Michelle Pickover)
• Defining and archiving heritage is an evolving conversation with the relevant community

• There is space for a multiplicity of ‘truths’, and inclusivity is essential

• Strategies must be flexible, co-operative, and locally/culturally specific

• Creative, practice-based, trans-disciplinary & participatory action approaches may work best

• Such an archival project may have intrinsic social importance for the here and now

• We should be prepared to continuously expand/adjust our own sense of ‘heritage’
Prof. Lorna M. Hughes: lorna.m.hughes@gmail.com

Sara Penrhyn Jones: s.jones3@bathspa.ac.uk