



# ISISA

## Newsletter

Volume 25, Number 1, January 2021

Published by the  
International Small Islands Studies Association



### EDITORIAL

This newsletter gives you a quick insight as to what to expect in the 17th *Islands of the World* Virtual Conference happening in June. Registrations are open and you still have a chance to send in an abstract to present at the conference. Apart from this, you will find a number of articles from our ISISA members around the globe.

Anyone who has something to say or share about islands and Island Studies, or can submit a review about a suitable book, is welcome to send them over to me, to be considered for the next issue of the ISISA Newsletter.

*Kindly send over material for the July 2021 Newsletter by not later than June 15, 2021.*

Thank you for your continued support and contributions.

Anna Baldacchino  
ISISA Newsletter Editor  
[abaldacchino59@gmail.com](mailto:abaldacchino59@gmail.com)

## ISISA

### 17<sup>th</sup> *Islands of the World* Virtual Conference:

14 – 18 June, 2021

From musicals to policy discussions, ISISA's 2021 online conference has something for everyone. We have just ended the year 2020, a year none of us will particularly want to remember, but won't to be able to forget.

We were supposed to spend some time together this past summer in St. John's, Newfoundland and instead we ended up organizing the very first Global Island Studies Webinar. The folks at the Harris Centre, the organizer of the 2020 ISISA conference, are determined that in 2021, even if we cannot get together in person, we will get to show each other what we are up to on-line.

And we are building a fabulous lineup for you this June. We are excited to confirm a panel featuring actress Petrina Bromley and former Mayor of Gander, Derm Flynn, who will join us to discuss the events of 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland, that inspired the international musical sensation *Come From Away*. Just how good is *Come From*

Away? Very, VERY, good. Here is a little taste of it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcIIEKE01S0>

Of course, there is going to be plenty of other presentations, panels, and talks. And there is still time for you to submit your idea. Just go to <https://www.mun.ca/wearehere/isisa.php> and submit your abstract. Deadline to submit is 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

We are particularly excited about the New Researchers Forum: a special, facilitated session for newly minted researchers and current students who will have an opportunity to meet with their more seasoned colleagues and talk about island studies and challenges ahead of them.

For more information, check the conference webpage: <https://www.mun.ca/wearehere/isisa.php> and follow ISISA on social media. We will be making more exciting announcements throughout the next months. You can also register for the conference through the website.

### **BOJAN FÜRST**

(Member of the ISISA 2021 organising Team)

**ISISA, in association with the Leslie Harris Centre of Memorial University of Newfoundland, are pleased to announce and introduce these keynote speakers for the 17<sup>th</sup> 'Islands of the World' Conference: the first to be held virtually, over ZOOM, during June 14-18, 2021.**



**Michael Crummey** (1965 - ) is an acclaimed poet and novelist whose work often includes a focus on his home island of Newfoundland, Canada. He won the Gregory J. Power Poetry Contest at Memorial University in 1986, and published his first work in *TickleAce*, a literary magazine based in St. John's, Newfoundland. He won the Bronwen Wallace Award for Poetry in 1994, a national prize for young writers who had not yet been published in book form. His poetry collection *Arguments with Gravity* appeared in 1996 and won the Writer's Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador Book Award for Poetry.

In his later career, Crummey has put more emphasis on writing fiction. His novels include *River Thieves* (2001), which was shortlisted for the Giller Award; and *Galore* (2009), which won both the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Caribbean & Canada) and the Canadian Authors' Association Literary Award. Crummey's novel *Sweetland* was shortlisted for the 2014 Governor General's Award in Literature.

**Mimi Sheller** (1967- ) is professor of sociology and founding Director of the Center for Mobilities Research and Policy at Drexel University, New York, USA. She is co-editor of the journal *Mobilities*, which she co-founded in 2006, and associate editor of *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies*.



Her books include *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes* (2018); *Aluminium Dreams: The Making of Light Modernity* (2014) and *Citizenship from Below* (2012). Her co-edited volumes include *Mobilities and Complexities* (2018); *Mobilities Intersections* (2018); *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (2013) and *Mobility and Locative Media* (2014).

She has helped to establish mobility/ies as a new interdisciplinary field of research.

Her most recent book *Island Futures: Caribbean Survival in the Anthropocene* (2020) deals with post-disaster recovery and climate adaptation facing Caribbean small island states, with a focus on the (half) island state of Haiti.



ISISA  
18<sup>th</sup> *Islands of the World*  
Conference:  
13 – 19 June, 2022  
Zadar, Croatia

## Is the World Islanded?

*Ilan Kelman*

Are we all islanders now? The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 curtailed travel, stopped many of us meeting each other in person, and led to numerous lockdowns restricting movement from

one's home. In a sense, we have all been islanded. But only if we accept physical distance as an island characteristic.

The notion that islands and islanders are isolated and marginalised, while lacking connections with others, is challenged as much as it is demonstrated. Some inhabited islands have few transportation links and some have small population numbers. Others are international hubs or are characterised by continual travel in and out. Some islanders have dealt with limited physical connections by embracing the online world, a situation which many of us privileged enough were easily able to do when COVID-19 emerged. Those left behind, whether due to COVID-19 or not, result more from standard social difficulties of poverty, inequity, and lack of external support than due to being an island or islander--or not.

As always, degrees of physical and non-physical connectedness might or might not be reflective of being islanded. As always, those with resources and options can generate or avoid opportunities, as they wish. This can mean islanding or de-islanding oneself, as per specific preferences, depending also on what being "islanded" means. We must still improve support for those who lack choices, whether those opportunities are for more isolation or for more connectivity.



Islanded two metres apart (photo: Ilan Kelman)

**Laura Dierksmeier** sent us a note about an island studies conference held in November 2019 in Germany. The conference report was published online in September 2020 (link to the report below). You may be interested in reading the short report.

Conference: European Islands between Isolated and Interconnected Life Worlds.  
Interdisciplinary Long-Term Perspectives Conference  
Organized by: Frerich Schön / Laura Dierksmeier / Annika Condit / Valerie Palmowski / Anna Kouremenos, Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 1070, Universität Tübingen  
Dates: Nov. 15, 2019 - Nov. 16, 2019  
<https://www.hsozkult.de/searching/id/tagungsberichte-8795?title=european-islands-between-isolated-and-interconnected-life-worlds-interdisciplinary-long-term-perspectives-conference&q=Laura%20Dierksmeier&sort=&fq=&total=15&recno=1&subType=fdkn>



**Island Studies Journal** (ISSN: 1715-2593) was set up in 2006 as a freely downloadable, peer reviewed, scholarly and interdisciplinary journal dedicated to the study of islands and island life.

**ISJ** is institutionally housed at the Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada: [www.islandstudies.com](http://www.islandstudies.com)

**ISJ** is, since June 2012, the official journal of ISISA and, since 2013, the official journal of RETI (the Network of Island Universities).

Manuscripts to be considered for publication are welcome at: [isj@upei.ca](mailto:isj@upei.ca) Website: [www.islandstudies.ca/journal](http://www.islandstudies.ca/journal)

## ...until stocks last

Karl Agius

The notice on the door of the butcher's store reads "*Chiuso per esaurimento merce*". Stocks on the island of Pantelleria, also known as "the black pearl of the Mediterranean" have run out and some shops have had to close (See Figure 1). Bad weather has led to the suspension of the ferry service for over 14 days and food replenishment from the nearby island of Sicily has been blocked. Meat is not the only item to have run out. The island is not self-sufficient and most terraced fields are dedicated to vine growing to produce wines such as Zibibbo and Passito of Pantelleria, a process which has been granted UNESCO heritage status. Thus, vegetables and fruit have also started to run out. Local communities are usually used to these unforeseen events

but there are limitations to how much they can stock food and products, especially in the case of perishables. The island is not connected to the Italian electricity grid and supply still depends on a power plant operating with diesel which needs to be imported from mainland. As a result, electricity costs are high and local shops have refrained from investing in stockholding facilities, such as cold stores, that will further increase the price of products that are already relatively more expensive than on the mainland due to transport costs.

The volcanic island, situated in the central Mediterranean Sea has already had to face an economic turmoil because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) which has left an impact on tourism activity (a major economic sector on the island) throughout the summer months. Islands were quick to limit connectivity services and used insularity to deter the virus and keep the number of cases nil for several months. This allowed them to brand the island as COVID-19 free and relaunch tourism quickly. Once the restrictions were lifted, they attracted numerous tourists, albeit a lower number than usual. However, insularity has come back to haunt the island.

A few kilometres away, the Aegadian Islands have faced a similar case a few weeks ago. Locals were quick to point their fingers at the captains of the hydrofoils for not operating the service that connects the archipelago (consisting of 3 main inhabited islands) to the port of Trapani, Sicily. The company had to issue a public letter stating that the safety of passengers had to be given utmost consideration (See Figure 2).

Back to Pantelleria, as it often happens, the connectivity crisis, quickly turned into a political crisis with local political movements blaming each other and higher levels of government for not taking concrete actions to address a familiar problem. Islanders are quick to offer short-term and long-term solutions including holding a protest in the island's main square, upgrading the port to allow ships to berth (a major issue that deters the ferry boats from operating) but also other practical solutions such as to deploy military planes by the central government to transport goods to the island. In recent days, the local government has announced a new line: Mazara del Vallo (Sicily) – Pantelleria – Kelibia (Tunisia) but opponents have accused the mayor of propaganda at a time when locals expected all but political discourse.

In the meantime, locals have to make ends meet as they can with the provisions that are still available. A new shopping frenzy, similar to that experienced by food markets during the early days of the pandemic, has kicked in. Customers are flocking to stores shopping whatever they need and find until stocks last.

*This article presents a snapshot of the situation on the island of Pantelleria as of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020.*

Karl Agius teaches Island Tourism at the University of Malta  
agiuskarl@gmail.com

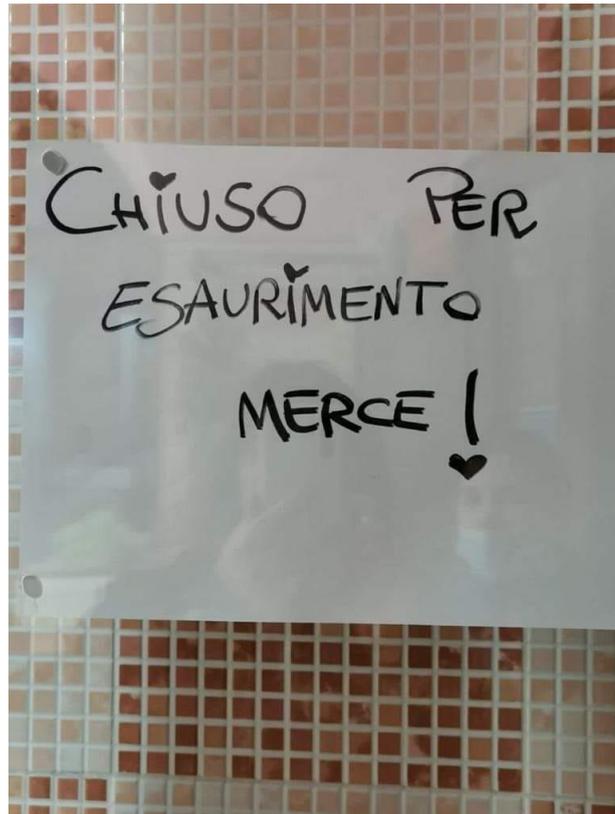


Figure 1: Notice on the door of a butcher store informing customers that the shop will be closed due to lack of provisions. Permission granted by owner of the photo.



Figure 2: Letter issued by the captains of a company linking the Aegadian Islands with Sicily, insisting that the service was suspended due to bad weather.

# **Recovery and Regrowth: What's Happening with the Kangaroo Island Children's Bushfire Fund**

It is six months since we last wrote to you about how your generous donations are being spent. It is with a great deal of pleasure that we write again to share some of the special ways the funds have been used over this period. As you too have experienced the uncertainties of living with Covid-19, you'll well realize that it has been a difficult time for Islanders especially coming on top of the drought and the destructive summer fires of 2019-2020.

We had exciting plans to fund a wide range of Recovery Activities during a carefully planned Health and Wellbeing Week at Parndana School. That, however, coincided with South Australia's second Covid-19 wave and shutdown. Not discouraged, the School Campus Head came up with alternative COVID Safe plans.

## **Initiative I: Class Christmas Parties**

Every class in the Parndana School will have a COVID-19 safe Class Christmas Party in their classrooms in the last week of the school term. Your donations will enable each class to cater for their party using local food providers. Hopefully there will be some extra treats as well!

To quote Matt Linn, the Campus Head, 'This is about the only celebration we can organize now... This will allow each class to hold a small celebration together to recognize that, as a school community, we have successfully completed a big year.'

## **Initiative 2: Parndana School Staff Celebration**

Matt also suggested that he would like to use the fund to organize the end of year celebratory staff dinner. 'This', says Matt, 'would be in recognition of all that has been done for our young people by our incredible staff team this year.'

Bob and I have been delighted to say a resounding 'Yes' to these two initiatives.

## **Initiative 3: Fees for Vacation Swimming Lessons**

A small group of KI leaders directly associated with the campus recently met with us to work out what sort of initiatives could best support the children at Parndana School. As we shared ideas, we realized that last summer the usual things that families do just did not happen because of the bushfires. So, we've decided to pay the fee of every student who wishes to be involved in Vac.-Swim.

This is a summer activity held at KI's lovely Emu Bay Beach. Children are taught to swim or shown how to improve their swimming technique. Professional swimming teachers run this program and it is much enjoyed by all who attend.

## **Initiative 4: Wrap Around Comfort Blankets**

As we weathered the winter, it was not surprising that post fire mental health issues emerged. Combined with memories of fire and no permanent new home, some children were finding they could not sleep. The school psychologist, having read and researched widely, came up with the idea of purchasing a specially designed wrap around, comfort blanket that helped

children sleep. We were able to purchase some of these blankets and we know they have provided comfort and help to the children who received them.

### **Initiative 5: The Parndana School Lunchtime Lego Club**

The children at Parndana School came up with this idea. We were able to purchase an extensive range of 'free range' Lego and mount boards. As well as the very popular Lunchtime Lego Club conducted in the School Library, the school psychologist has been able to get children talking as they sit together to create Lego masterpieces.

### **Initiative 6 Harmonicas**

The Drum Kit mentioned in our first newsletter has been much loved and much used. Now we've purchased two good quality harmonicas for students showing musical talent. Maybe soon we'll have a band!

**To conclude, a dramatic student fire photo displayed at the Parndana Show**



Again, our sincere thanks for helping us through the Bushfire Recovery Process.

**Dr Bob Teasdale** Deputy Mayor of KI

**Jennie Teasdale**



# Anthropocene Islands

Website address for the ‘Anthropocene Islands’ project

<https://www.anthropoceneislands.online/>

Led by Jonathan Pugh, Reader in Island Studies, Newcastle University, UK.

[Jonathan.Pugh@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Pugh@ncl.ac.uk)

The island has become a key figure of the Anthropocene – an epoch in which human entanglements with nature come to the fore. For a long time islands were romanticised or marginalised, seen as lacking modernity’s capacities for progress, vulnerable to the effects of catastrophic climate change and the afterlives of empire and coloniality. Today, however, the island is increasingly central to both policy-oriented and critical imaginaries that seek to more positively draw upon the island’s liminal and disruptive capacities, especially the relational entanglements and sensitivities its peoples and modes of life are said to exhibit.

The ‘Anthropocene Islands’ initiative gains its initial impetus from the forthcoming (2021) book *Anthropocene Islands: Entangled Worlds* (written by [Jonathan Pugh](#) and [David Chandler](#)). It explores the widespread turn to working with islands for the generation of approaches to critical thinking, knowledge and policy practices associated with the Anthropocene. Through establishing a [new monthly zoom reading group](#) (starting April 2021), [special section of Island Studies Journal](#), streams at conferences, workshops, and producing [agenda-setting publications](#) and [talks](#), the ‘Anthropocene Islands’ initiative will examine why and how engaging islands has become important for the generation of some of the core frameworks of contemporary Anthropocene thinking. A useful addition to the approach will also be outlined in the forthcoming (2021) *Dialogues in Human Geography* paper and discussion forum: ‘Anthropocene Islands: there are only islands after the end of the world’.

Please feel free to contact [Jonathan Pugh](#) and/or [David Chandler](#) if you would like us to give a talk on the ‘Anthropocene Islands’ project (virtually or in person).

Email [Jonathan.Pugh@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Pugh@ncl.ac.uk) to join the islands philosophy email list, a place to discuss all things related to islands theory and philosophy

Follow on Twitter @jonnpugh1974 @DavidCh27992090 #AnthropoceneIslands

## Book Release

Bren Simmers, UPEI, Canada

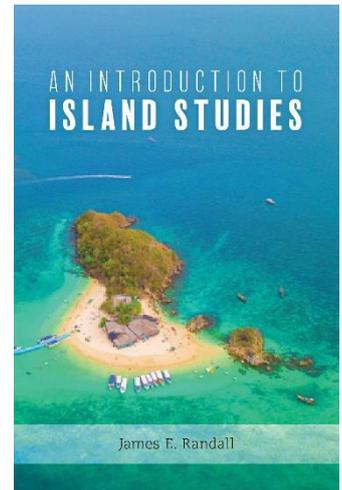
A new book by UPEI professor Dr. James Randall offers up island studies as a tool to better understand our own world of islands. *An Introduction to Island Studies* is an approachable look at this interdisciplinary field—from islands as biodiversity hotspots, their settlement, human migration and occupation through to the place of islands in the popular imagination.



Featuring geopolitical, social and economic frameworks, Randall gives a bottom-up guide to this most modern area of study. From the struggles and concerns of the Anthropocene—climate change, vulnerability and resilience, sustainable development, through to policy making and local environments—*island studies* has the potential to change the debate.

*An Introduction to Island Studies* is co-published by Island Studies Press and Rowman & Littlefield. Available in eBook (US\$30.95), paperback (US\$32.50), and hardcover formats (US\$120), the book is available for purchase [here](#).

Dr. James (Jim) Randall teaches at UPEI, where he is the UNESCO Chair in Island Studies and Sustainability. A geographer by training, Jim developed a love of island studies late in his career. His research spans many aspects of this interdisciplinary field, with a special interest in development, quality-of-life, and islander-newcomer relationships on small islands.



## You can reach ISISA through:

Listserv: [ISISA@groups.io](mailto:ISISA@groups.io)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Isisa-International-Small-Islands-Studies-Association/126009170815354>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/intSISA>

Details of the Individual Executive Committee members are at:

<https://www.isisa.org/index.php?c=executive-committee>



How has the coronavirus impacted many island states and territories around the world?

ISISA is offering a service to its readers with statistical updates every 10 days – courtesy of Iain Orr & Bruce Potter.

Visit the ISISA home page: [www.isisa.org](http://www.isisa.org)