ISISA

Newsletter

EDITORIAL

The ISISA Conference experience returns in 2020 with the 17ᵗʰ *Islands of the World* ISISA conference in St. John's Newfoundland, Canada, over June 22-26.

This issue of the ISISA Newsletter brings you, once again, island news and views from around the world.

Anyone who has something to say, or share about Islands, Island Studies or Book Reviews about Islands, is welcome to send them over to me, to be considered for the next issue.

*Kindly send over material for the July 2020 Newsletter **by not later than June 15, 2020.***

Thank you for your continued support and contributions.

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ISISA 2020 Conference: "Sharing Lessons, Sharing Stories"

We are pleased to welcome delegates from around the world to the International Small Islands Studies Association 2020 Conference: "Sharing Lessons, Sharing Stories," taking place at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

The conference, which is being hosted by Memorial's Harris Centre, will take place from June 22ⁿᵈ to June 26ᵗʰ at the beautiful Signal Hill Campus (Emera Innovation Exchange), in downtown St. John's. Island studies scholars and practitioners from around the globe will have an opportunity to hear and share stories and lessons, while being treated to keynote speakers, community tours - and some of the best food Atlantic Canada has to offer.

(S)trolling urban islands

Ilan Kelman

Finding myself at a tourism research conference presenting on disaster tourism begged the question: What about the islands? Varna, Bulgaria was the venue, so to examine vulnerability along the Black Sea coast and the Bulgaria-Romania border, I planned a day trip to Mangalia, Romania. Would I be stuck with the inevitable assumptions of urban islands which, some have the audacity (odd city, get it?) to complain, is merely me trolling urban island studies?

I was certain that I could do better--by doing what geographers are renowned for avoiding: I looked at a map. Lo and behold, island ho! Each of the two cities sported an obvious island: for Bulgaria, Ostrova (Острова), also referred to as the Ostrova Industrial Zone of Varna (Варна), while my Romanian island fix was to be Insula Mangalia.

Strolling around Ostrova required just a few hours walking total, starting and ending at my Varna hotel. One road bridge heads right over the island, so the key (not that Ostrova is a

key/cay) is finding the back-route bridge which reaches the island. Insula Mangalia is also reached by a bridge, with only short strolls possible.

What did I gain, other than two short photo essays (see the links above) and odd looks from the locals (not photographed)? Certainly, discussion points at the conference. Some Varna residents had never been to their prominent island, even if they had driven over it. Insula Mangalia seemed to be a peaceful picnic spot for locals.

Could or should either island be of interest for tourism development? What are the physical and social connections of the islands, and any islanders, with their neighbouring cities and urban neighbours? How much island history and culture exists in each locale?

Or is this merely seeking excuses to set one foot after another around yet more islands, ultimately with little substantive contribution to island studies, policies, and practices? Until we try examining aspects of islandness, we do not necessarily know what we might find. First steps to understanding an island include literature searches and strolling about. A simple exploration of a place seen on a map does not mean trolling the island--apart from, perhaps, trolling for island ideas, information, and inspiration.

Living places of Ostrova, Bulgaria (photo by Ilan Kelman)

Bridge to Insula Mangalia, Romania (photo by Ilan Kelman)