

Working group on Ethnoastronomy & Intangible Astronomical Heritage  
Jarita Holbrook (RAS & UK) Chair & Johnson Urama (Nigeria) Vice Chair

Our working group is part of [Division C Education, Outreach and Heritage](#). We share affinities with [the Astronomy in Culture working group](#) and the Culturally Sensitive Sites committee. Ethnoastronomy is the branch of Cultural Astronomy that has been concerned with studying the astronomy of Indigenous peoples in Indigenous settings. Primary data collection methods are drawn from anthropology and folklore but can include surveys (sociology). Intangible Cultural Heritage is defined by UNESCO: “It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts (see <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>).” The Astronomy and World Heritage UNESCO Initiative began in 2005 and several sites related to astronomy have been inducted as world heritage sites (see <https://www.iau.org/news/announcements/detail/ann19049/?lang>). However, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Astronomy has been less successful with efforts to bridge this via Dark Sky Preserves, but which falls under IAU working group: [WG Dark and Quiet Sky Protection](#). 2022 was a busy year with two ethnoastronomy conferences and participation in the IAU General Assembly in Busan, Korea. The first conference was [International Indigenous Astronomy Conference](#) in Mahikeng, South Africa at the end of July. WG members Duane Hamacher, Jarita Holbrook and Thebe Medupe participated. The other was the [Oxford conference on Archaeoastronomy](#) in La Plata, Argentina in November. Nearly every WG member attended. Holbrook, Hamacher and Annette S Lee organized a panel “[Embodying The Technoscientific Future Of Astrophysics And Planetary Science](#)” for the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST) annual meeting in Madrid, Spain. The panel had wonderful presentations submitted, however even for presenting remotely the registration fee was prohibitive so many had to withdraw. **This highlights the issue of scientists from poor countries and those that are retired; we need to be able to waive their registration fees to ensure participation.**

Our immediate future goal was to organize meeting funded by the IAU. It was decided to submit a focus meeting proposal that would occur during the next IAU GA in Cape Town, South Africa. “[Gendered Astronomy, Gendered Sky](#)”, in partnership with the Office for Astronomy Outreach and the Women in Astronomy WG was submitted and is under consideration. Urama is taking the lead on submitting a panel to the annual meeting of the Society for the Social Studies of Science in Honolulu, Hawaii. The conference theme is “Sea, Sky, And Land: Engaging In Solidarity In Endangered Ecologies.” We encourage our WG members to submit abstracts for this November conference. Though a small working group, our members are quite active giving public talks, podcasts, and interviews. Here are their 2022 activities:

1. Agustina Altman and Alejandro López

ETNÓGRAFOS VIAJEROS. Crónicas de investigación (Chaco - EEUU), 2022

<https://youtu.be/gqHaRa5-pZw>

2. Jarita Holbrook talks cultural astronomy, Kielder Observatory Podcast:

<https://podtail.com/podcast/kielder-observatory-podcast/dr-jarita-holbrook-cultural-astronomy/>

3. Jarita Holbrook. The Science Tourists Episode: Standing Stones, 2022

<https://youtu.be/nk3sOGojZKU>

4. Clive Ruggles on Dark Sky Conversations:

<https://www.bitesz.com/show/dark-sky-conversations/professor-clive-ruggles-talks-archaeoastronomy/>

6. Duane Hamacher on Indigenous Astronomy

[https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/ho-w-indigenous-elders-read-the-stars-duane-](https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/ho-w-indigenous-elders-read-the-stars-duane-hamacher/id1464668928?i=10005532676)

[hamacher/id1464668928?i=10005532676](https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/ho-w-indigenous-elders-read-the-stars-duane-hamacher/id1464668928?i=10005532676)  
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