

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

21 today, 21 today  
We've got the key of the door,  
Never been 21 before...

This edition marks the 21st birthday of F&F—82 issues and never a one missing! Pretty good eh? (I've only been responsible for 13 of those years.) This means, of course, that F&F was founded a year before the UK Society for Storytelling in the very first years of the storytelling revival.

21 is still a significant birthday even though the age of majority has been dropped to 18. Young people today seem to celebrate both but there are still some things you can't do before you are 21—stand as an MP, adopt a child, become a commercial airline pilot for example.

2012 is a fitting year to mark that achievement because it is a year of all kinds of anniversaries: the 200th anniversaries of the birth of Dickens and of the Grimm's book of fairy tales (both marked elsewhere in this edition); the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic (remembered last time) and of Scott's expedition to the South Pole—one of those glorious British failures which has gone down in folklore and become a story in its own right. Bram Stoker, responsible for Dracula and the popularity of vampires, also died in 1912.

What is it about the years 1812 and 1912? We all know the signature tune to 1812, the one for 1912 could be Blow the Wind Southerly sung by Kathleen Ferrier who was born in that year or perhaps something by Woody Guthrie, also born then. What happened in 1813 or 1911? Surely something must have! On a personal note the two pictures on this page are of the East Mill in Belper, where I live (my house was built in the same year to serve the mill) and a Christmas card with a picture of my great uncle who had nothing to do with Scott or expeditions (he was a hair dresser!) but obviously wanted to be associated with the event.

Not quite on the same time line but worth mentioning is that it was also the 80th anniversary of the Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout; all sing: "I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way..."

But back to Facts & Fiction (this section could be called 'where are they now?'): The magazine was started by Richard Montague in autumn 1991. I know nothing of Richard at all, he edited the first 6 editions and then disappeared. Regular contributors to those six included Ben Haggarty, who is obviously still very active and influential; Barbara Neville and Tony Addison. There were also several articles by Richard Walker who then took over as editor. Richard continued in that role until his sudden and unexpected death just after the winter 1998 issue.

Regular contributors for Richard included Genevieve Tudor whose 'Gen On...' interviews continue in



the form of 'Pete Meets...' and Des Charnley. Gen continued to do her series in my early issues but then her work as folk presenter on Radio Shropshire took over. In that role she's gone from strength to strength having now about the only folk show left on local radio and also doing odd bits nationally. (I'll have to come over again some time, Gen!) Des died in the mid 2000s. Other names that cropped up regularly were Andrew Peters (is he still telling?) Chuck Kruger (then organiser of the Cape Clear Festival) and Roy Dyson (still on the committee at Flying Donkeys). Many other people contributed occasional articles and have continued to do so. Many thanks to you all.

During my tenure we've built up another group of regulars without whom it wouldn't happen. I won't name you for fear of leaving someone out and causing offence—but you know who you are!

A very warm Thank you!

One of the things I've tried to do in my time as editor is to make the magazine relevant to the real world. Too often storytelling exists in a little bubble of its own where everything is nice and the problems of everyday life play second fiddle to those of fairyland or some mythical paradise. Storytelling, even if you stick to traditional stories, can reflect what is going on in the world today—it always has in traditional cultures, it's been an engine for subversion and change—so I've tried to mention current affairs and things that the world is talking about; hence the last two issues dedicated in part to the Olympics and the Titanic (although I'm glad I got in early with both as by now I'm suffering from overload on both topics and guess you probably are too!) In the past we've also featured stories from areas in the news—Iraq and Bosnia when wars there were at their height, SE Asia after the Tsunami and so on.

We've had many interviews with people involved in storytelling—tellers, listeners and organisers and I'm always open to offers for more of those whether face to face meetings or virtual ones.

I keep plugging away asking people to send in their contributions for 'The Tales That Made the Teller' in which you can tell us about stories or books which influenced you when you were young. We haven't had many items in that series yet but the offer is still open. A Day in the Life (or it could be a week or a month or whatever...) is another occasional series in which you can tell us all about something you've been doing. It could be an exciting week when you're on tour; it could be an account of how you researched and put together a show or book; it could be a hazardous trip trying to get from one gig to another... or even a boring month when you had no work and felt like giving up the whole thing! (But written interestingly of course!)

Send them in and help us fill the next 21 years!




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## STORYTELLING AS POLITICAL CARTOON

DIE MARCHENTANTE  
(The storytelling aunt)

Storytelling aunty Bismarck tells little Germania a fairy tale about golden mountains.

The caption at the bottom reads:

"Dear Germania! Then the poor man will be rich and happy and will have no sorrow. And if he does not die until then, he will perhaps even experience it."

(I'm not sure what that is all about... do you know? If so please explain.)