THE CONTEMPORARY STORYTELLER IN CONTEXT:
A STUDY OF STORYTELLING IN MODERN SOCIETY

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A submission presented in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements of the University of Glamorgan/Prifysgol Morgannwg
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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APPENDIX I. 'VERBAL' DATA.

Selections from: Observational Journal
Analyses of Storytelling Performances Recorded on Video
Interview Transcripts
Transcripts of Conference Proceedings

Chapter 1.

1.0. Excerpts from transcripts of conference proceedings and two interviews, demonstrating antipathy of professional folklorists to much of what is contemporary storytelling.


Summary: Doc Rowe talked about his methods of collecting folk narrative, and expressed scepticism about the storytelling movement being a revival or renaissance.

Rowe: 'My point is, just what are you reviving? What do you mean? How can you revive something that's already very much alive?'

1.2. Private conversation with Doc Rowe

Summary: Discussion of revivalism in folklore generally and storytelling specifically. Doc observes what he thinks is different and missing from his encounters of traditional tellers in the field and contemporary tellers who've got it 'right' or 'wrong'. The ones who have it 'wrong' possess a self-consciousness, an awkwardness, and/or an insensitivity towards others (or a lack of understanding regarding social contexts and processes and interactions).

1.3 Interview for the study on storytelling, Storytelling in Ireland, A Re-Awakening (Ryan, 1995), with Bairbre Ó' Floinn, Folklorist, Department of Folklore, University College Dublin, Dublin, Republic of Ireland. May 1994. (Transcripts archived with The Verbal Arts Centre, Stable Lane, the Mall Wall, Bishop-Street-Within, Derry/Londonderry, BT14 6PU, N. Ireland)

Ó' Floinn: Revival storytelling sessions have no attraction to me. They don't engage me personally. However, community workers on the ground—librarians, teachers, youth leaders, etc.—who use storytelling in their programmes, I have nothing but respect for the work they do.
2.0. Journal Observations: Two Annual Reports prior to commencement of Ph.D. studies.


PATRICK RYAN—ANNUAL REPORT 1998-99

This period covered the National Year of Reading and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. I only performed at one folk festival in this year, which is unusual. Therefore work involved far more schools, libraries and children than previously.

Number of Days Telling Stories or Leading Workshops:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Days</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>22</td>
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</table>

TOTAL: 203

With 260 potential working days (from which one should take bank holidays, holidays, etc.), this left me with 57 days to take holidays, do administration work, travel, research, write and rehearse. Last year (1997-98) I spent 183 days telling stories and leading workshops.

Number of Days Working Outside England (divided into respective countries toured)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Days</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 63

(NOTE: this does not include days spent travelling--add 8-12 days for this)

Numbers of Days Working in Britain, but Outside London (divided into regions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South/Southeast</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>4</td>
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TOTAL OUTSIDE LONDON: 44
Altogether I had 96 days working in London, 107 working outside London

Number of Listeners

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>31,315*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>2,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>33,970</td>
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</table>

*In previous years I broke this down into primary and secondary school children. This year, however, I worked in significantly fewer secondary schools—the total number of secondary school age children was probably between 5,000 and 6,000. The overall total was down by about 6,000 compared to 1997-98. This was due to having fewer performances at festivals, and the fact that some projects involved smaller groups than the year before.

Proportional Breakdown of Venues

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational (Schools, libraries)</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Venues (Art Centres, Festivals, Clubs, Museums, Galleries)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional (Hospitals, Prisons, Old People's Homes, etc.)</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>

Note: This is a major, significant shift in the patterns of my work. Previous years the breakdown was more like 60% in educational venues, 20% in arts venues, and 20% in institutional venues. The shift can be attributed to the National Year of Reading, which had more events for children and families. However, it is also true that I had more projects focusing on work with younger children than in previous years.

2.2 Summary of Annual Report 1999-2000

PATRICK RYAN--ANNUAL REPORT: July 1999 - June 2000

This working year echoed the previous National Year of Reading. That is many initiatives started in 1998-99 either carried on or inspired similar projects in 1999-2000. Because I was the initiator and/or administrator for a number of storytelling schemes and programmes, I spent an increased amount of time in meetings compared to previous years. A new project for me was the commission to write an anthology of stories for the children’s publisher, Barefoot Books. Much spare time was spent doing research and writing for this endeavour.
Number of Days Telling Stories or Leading Workshops:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July '99</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>January '00</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 181

Number of Days Devoted to Meetings: 15 (not counted in previous years but looking through old diaries this is about double the usual number)

Number of Days Writing/Doing Research 50-100

(It is difficult to determine this-I had around 50 days free to write according to my diary, and those were certainly filled with research and writing; however I also wrote a great deal on weekends, 'on the road' and in the evenings, as most of the writing was done between July and February, months when I was quite busy with storytelling)

With 260 potential working days (from which one should take bank holidays, holidays, etc.), and taking away another 15 days for meetings, this left me with 64 days to take holidays, do administration work, travel, research, write and rehearse. Last year (1998-99) I spent 203 days telling stories and leading workshops, so even with the additional meetings I did have more time for the other activities.

However, the bulk of the extra time was taken up with writing the book for Barefoot Books. In the second half of the year, what free time I had was devoted to attending certain conferences, at which I was not a speaker or workshop leader, that I felt would either add to my knowledge and skills and/or my network for future employment.

Number of Days Working Outside England (divided into respective countries toured)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Isle of Man</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaco</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 58

(Note: this does not include days spent travelling--add 26 days for this)
Numbers of Days Working in the England, but Outside London (divided into regions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Days Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South/Southeast</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL OUTSIDE LONDON: 37

Number of Listeners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Listeners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>22,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>15,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>4,686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 42,471

This is more similar to the total number, and the numbers broken down into age groups, of the years up to 1998-99. In 1998-99 I told to almost no teenagers or adults, as the Year of Reading meant a lot more work with children. Projects in 1999-2000 involved several secondary schools, and so the number of teenage listeners rose. Compared to the previous year, the number of adult listeners doubled; this is because I did very few folk, literature or storytelling festivals in 1998-9 whereas 1999-2000 the number of festivals I performed at was similar to years before 1999.

Proportional Breakdown of Venues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue Type</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational (Schools, libraries)</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Venues (Art Centres, Festivals, Clubs, Museums, Galleries)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional (Hospitals, Prisons, Old People’s Homes, etc.)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.0. Transcripts from private conversations relating to broadsheet reviews of 1989 festival recorded in Journal Observations.

3.1. *Journal Observation*

Visiting Duncan and Linda Williamson in January 1990, Duncan spoke angrily about journalists’ articles and newspaper critics’ reviews covering events at the recent storytelling festival in the Purcell Rooms of the Southbank Complex in London in November 1989. They incorrectly described him as illiterate and, he felt, wrote in an ‘ungentlemanly’ way about some of the female storytellers, which had made the latter cry.
3.2. Transcript of conversation with Doc Rowe when reviewing the video footage of his documentation of the festival, October 2001

Summary. Rowe filmed much of the festival and was present for most events. He commented on that attitude, or atmosphere, that was pervasive regarding that event. Organisers and participants set up a very enjoyable festival, but conveyed that what they were doing was extremely serious and professional, asking to be critiqued on that basis. There was lavish commercial support, with glossy advertising leaflets and posters, programmes, press releases, photo opportunities, and a documentary review on The Late Show, an arts criticism television programme. They assumed it would be a positive critique, but were hurt by negative reactions from professional arts critics and administrators, and dismissive of these criticisms believing they were misunderstood and too avant garde for this journalists.

Analysis: To professional critics, the event was a highly formal one, in a context they were used to when reviewing theatrical plays, mainstream cinema, music concerts, and so on. Their knowledge of storytelling, however, was very abstract, with direct experience with it extremely minimal or non-existent. They made 'mistakes', based on assumptions, and the criteria used to judge the storytelling were mostly based upon comparisons to drama; reviewed as theatre pieces, the critics viewed the storytelling as something experimental or, more often than not, very amateurish.

[Note: Copies of these reviews were sought in the archives of the broadsheets, but the newspapers reported they had been destroyed or were not accessible since they pre-dated the computer cataloguing system.]

4.0. Interview transcripts

4.1. Interview with Taffy Thomas, Whitby Folk Festival, August, 2001

Summary. The first time Taffy Thomas told stories at Dartmoor Folk Club, an elderly local storyteller was there. The latter was very much considered as ‘traditional’ and ‘their’ storyteller by the local community. The idea of telling stories in a more-or-less public forum (the folk club), in comparison to more private venues such as their sitting rooms in the snug in the bar, was alien to most including this local teller. Taffy told ‘traditional’ stories (e.g., complex wonder tales, mostly learned from the folklorist and collector Ruth Tonge). The local teller then got up and told shaggy dog stories, monologues and jokes gleaned from a popular stand-up comic on a recent television variety show.

4.2. Interviews with John Campbell, at his home in Mullaghbain, County Armagh, N. Ireland in June 2001 and at Whitby Folk Festival, August, 2001.
Summary. John Campbell, in his front parlour and/or on walks on Slieve Gullion, his local mountain, will relate conversationally complete, and remnants of, wonder tales. In public he primarily tells short, anecdotal, humorous tales, and often weaves these together with bits of autobiographical stories and local oral history and legend. When asked why, he says the public isn’t really interested in these longer stories, they want the humorous ones. This is a belief shared by many ‘traditional’ tellers, who limit their repertoires in public to monologues, short humorous anecdotes, and imitations of the popular television and radio ‘seanchie’ Eamon Kelly.
Chapter 2.

5.0. Journal Observations: Personal reminiscences and anecdotal report testimony to "becoming" storytellers.

5.1. Personal Reminiscence:

After completing my first degree, in 1978-79 I became involved in activities at the Old Town School of Folk Music and other traditional and folk art venues in Chicago. In the *Reader*, a local listings magazine, I saw a notice for an Irish storytelling course at the Old Town School of Folk Music, run by Frank Sullivan, an Irish-American secondary school teacher. Attending this course, I found that Sullivan was primarily a tour-guide leader who summarised stories of ancient or historic sites in Ireland to Irish American tourists on package holidays helping them find their roots. However, he also provided historical and theoretical knowledge of Irish storytelling and terms and listening to him led me to recognise many stories and scraps of stories that elderly relatives had related or mentioned over the years represented variants of Sullivan's examples. I then started interviewing and recording my elderly great-aunts (my maternal grandfather's sisters) Ellen Dougherty, Katherine Dougherty, Mary Dougherty, and Agnes Kane, as well as my great-uncles (by marriage), Jack Kane and Fergus Reilley (husband of my deceased Great-Aunt Loretta Reilley, née Dougherty).

These related several stories that eventually entered my repertoire as a teller. I had been interested in narrative, performance, reading and books. In secondary school I was in speech and debate teams, participated in school and community drama, and worked in a part time job in the local library (primarily so as to have unlimited access to storybook collections). My first degree had been in educational drama and creative writing, the subjects fit closest to my interests in narrative.

After this course, the Old Town School of Folk Music, the University of Chicago Folk Festival, and Holstein's Pub all had regular courses, workshops and performances on storytelling. I took part in these, and even organised some of them. These brought me into contact with the nascent storytelling revival in North America, including influential individuals such as David Holt, Ellin Greene, The Folktales (Barbara Freeman and Connie Regan-Blake), and the Twelve Moon Storytellers (Elizabeth Ellis and Gayle Ross). I joined NAPPS (the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling) and became involved with local storytelling activities such as the Chicago Storytelling Guild, and befriended local tellers such as Jim May, Alice Rubio, Marcie Tellander, Beth Horner, Andy Leslie and Janice Del Negro. I also helped found the Northlands Storytelling Network, a regional organisation that had impact on NAPPS evolution, with Mark Wragler, Lauren Neimie, Larry Johnson and Elaine Wynne. All these people remain prominent and active in storytelling in North
America: Neimie, for example, is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Storytelling Network (previously known as NAPPS).

This took place over the course of four years, while I did my Masters degree in education, commenced primary school teaching, and spent summer vacations touring Ireland and Britain to collect stories. At the time, my memory is that my focus was on stories which supported and informed my teaching, and was not looking at myself 'becoming' a professional, commercial storyteller. Rather, I saw my aim as to have good stories I could tell well to my students, and, in social circumstances, to my friends in the storytelling guild. The only 'epiphany' moment was Sullivan's original course, and only in that I suddenly realised that what family members had 'shared' for years was storytelling.

5.2. **Workshop and Storytelling Club Examples.**

Over the years, several half-day or one-day workshops have produced new professional storytellers. Professional storytellers who are more experienced have expressed concern at the sudden competition, as well as a possible decline in standards. Yet the model of contemporary storytelling suggests to beginners that everyone is a storyteller, which many take to mean everyone can be a professional storyteller.

5.3. Examples of evidence of this can be seen in debates and discussions carried out in storytelling organisations: *See Appendix II. 1.1-1.9*

6.0. **Interview Transcripts:** Informants discuss need to like stories for them to enter repertoire/be performed.

6.1. **Hugh Lupton, p. 9.**

I think the first thing is that it has to be a story you like. The first rule of storytelling is that you have to have some connection to it. ... (T)hen what I tend to do is go to as many version of it as I can. So, if it's 'The Little Bull Calf', then I might go to 'The White Bear King', and I might go to 'Cupid and Psyche'. You know, there's so many—I go to as many variants as I can find. And then I kind of leave the text behind and let it ferment. And that quite often involves going for walks and just thinking about it. And trying to see the shape of the story or the particular line I want to take with the story.

6.2. **Grace Hallworth, pp. 2-3.**

[Regarding the story 'Death and the Young Man' that Grace tells at the last night of the 1987 Waterman's Arts Centre storytelling festival, recorded on video by Doc Rowe. This story is a variant of 'Godfather Death', in which a poor peasant looks for a godfather for his baby son and selects Death. In]
Grace's story, Death likes the look of a lazy shiftless young man and makes a bargain with him, and this story is more or less the same as the last half of 'Godfather Death'.

Because I have heard that too, and was surprised that that was the case, that there was that [the search for a godfather] to the story. It's in a collection of stories. And this one is supposed to come from Cuba, where the young man is, he does no work, but he's clever. He always has a good idea trickling through his head, and so, Death takes a liking to him.

And then I heard, although I can't remember whom I heard it from, about the person looking for a godfather. But mine came from this collection of stories. Some from Haiti and some from Cuba. But this one I liked.


Well, you know immediately by a person who tells stories out of a book or who does just revivalist stuff. It's...I'm not saying they're not sincere, but it's more of an exercise. A 'Look what I can do!' kind of attitude.

And, fortunately, I suppose most people grow out of that if they're going to keep telling stories. Because after a while, telling stories for an audience can become boring. It can. You're telling stories to yourself, first and foremost, and maybe to the ones closest to you, like your children, whoever. For no good point except to see the delight in their faces, or whatever. [my emphasis]

6.4. Duncan Williamson, p. 4.

Don't bore the people with your story. Do something that they like and that you like, as a kid. One you enjoyed. And the other part—you're going to tell them [stories] the way you heard it. So they have the same enjoyment out of the story as what you got when a child.

7.0. Interview Transcripts: Informants relate certain stories to certain places.

7.1 John Campbell, p. 4.

[Discussing his interest in and relationship to Patrick Kavanagh and his poetry, and their mutual interest in and links to the local topography]

You have to explain once you leave Ireland. You get things called townlands. And you have to explain it, about these townlands. Townlands are small. Townlands are around here, townlands are around 650 acres. But there's other sizes. So townlands and things like about turning the plough, I have to explain.
Kavanagh, it appears, was at home reading the paper, in the middle of the day. And Hitler was on his upper ends, on the continent, ready to march into Poland, on land that didn’t belong to him at all.

And it unnerved Kavanagh. Because Kavanagh began to realise he was the right size, the right age, the right everything to be a good soldier, to die in the trenches of France.... And he didn’t want to be another conscript, dying for a foreign grievance...

But his mother came through the door, and unnerved him some more, and she told him to get up off his backside, put his cap on, there were ditches to be dug and cattle to bring back and so on.

And when he went over the fields, there was a piece of land between the town lands of Gortin and Ballyrush. They were divided by a stream. But the stream come down so far, divided into two streams, went away out and then joined up further down and left a little island of land.

And that island of land, the farmer of Ballyrush and the farmer of Gortin laid claim to that bit of land. And it was an everlasting source of annoyance. For God’s sake, surveyors and solicitors with ordnance surveys were out every generation arguing over this.

The day that Kavanagh was routed in the kitchen by his mother to work ditches, he went over the fields, why he went over the fields, God knows, but he went over the fields and the farmers and a visitor were arguing over the bushes.

Kavanagh made a poem while he was cutting the bushes, thinking to himself. There’s no difference between this row between Great Britain and Ballyrush, the big row on the map. Two children in the schoolyard fall out over a butt of a pencil the size of your finger, or maybe a rubber. Or a glassie marble, or over any other thing, over a chestnut.

That doesn’t matter. The important thing is the row.

And Kavanagh went home, and he wrote this poem, ‘Epic’. [Recites poem]

[proceeds to talk about and tell particular story by Kavanagh that I asked about to start with]

p. 8.

Ah well, I knew Kavanagh’s poem about the land, I know that bit of land and see it, like. I see them there with their pitchforks.
pp. 12-16. **Summary:** John relates some local banshee stories, which include detailed and specific descriptions of local roads, houses and farms, mountains, and banks and ditches.

pp. 23-24. **How John first encountered the work of Michael James Murphy**

Michael J. Murphy was introduced to us at school, by Master Hardy. When he published his first book, he called it *At Slieve Gullion’s Foot*. It was a haphazard book of things he collected on his rounds, and he put them altogether and put them into a book.

And it was published by Tempest in Dundalk and Master Hardy brought them to school. He had so many, and was going to sell them. And you brought thr'pence a week until you had the book paid for. You didn't get the book home until you had paid for it. So I put up me hand and brought in my weekly thr'pence for the book, and bought *At Slieve Gullion’s Foot*. You see, I was keen on the book because I never thought some one from round here could be a writer, or write about these parts. I thought books were all written in London, and America.

7.2. **Duncan Williamson, Summary and analysis**

**Comment.** Duncan’s interview, the first half, particularly, is imbued with places in Scotland he associates with learning his story. He began the interview with an account of his family, and places and people he came to when he left home. These settings figure very much in his stories. The following list gives some idea of the places that had impact in his life:

p. 2., **Childhood home:** A bender tent on the west coast of Argyleshire, in the forest on the estate of the Duke of Argyle. ‘Now we lived in the forest and we attended the little village school. They never accepted us, the local people. They called us Tinkers. The Tinkers up the wood.’

p. 2., **The bender tent:** This features in many of his stories. ‘So, here it was in the forest at night time, especially in the cold winter time. Gales blew through the forest, flapping at the canvas and all you know. And when my grandfather died, my old grandmother, she was a fortune teller, and she would come, she come to live with us. My mother was her youngest daughter. And she helped to take care of the wee ones. And my granny smoked a pipe, and we were going to the village to get a wee poke of tobacco for granny’s pipe so she would tell a story. All we wanted was a story.

p. 5 **Time in Invernerry, as a young man, working on the building site of a hydroelectric dam.**

Yeah, that was great, that was great.
That was a time I got a lot—well, I got a lot o’ stories and songs from Ireland. They called ‘em Navvies but they wasn’t Navvies, it’s not a fair word, it means navigation. …

When they built the Shearer Dam, up in Inverness, they closed a valley six miles across and eight miles wide. Very beautiful farms in the valley.

Now they built a wall across that valley, to make a dam. The army moved out and the Irish workers moved in. We had our own police, our own little post office. And it was only allowed to sell beer, no spirits. The nearest town was Inverness, which was about three or four miles away.

And of course, all the lads—It was three hours, er—three shifts of movement. Because the first group would go and they’d come off and the second group would go and—you couldn’t stop work.

Well, I was in the kitchen. And I was cooking, for McKay, the boss. And these guys were great. Young men, old men, young men like yourself. There was an old chap, Patrick O’Donnell. Comes from somewhere in Ireland. Didn’t know much about Ireland at that time. And I just loved the old man, you know?

And after the kitchen was cleaned up, pieces were made for the guys. I had two girls helping. But the other one give them a night off, you see, and I would make the pieces myself. And you know I—it’s just like a story.

I knew what these guys wanted working the dam all day long. You know, the girls only showed them a wee bit of jam, a wee piece of cheese, a wee bit of sugar in their tea. They had their billy cans for making their tea. I would fix slices of bread, slices of corn beef, slices of cheese, handfuls of tea and handfuls of sugar for the tea. And they’d say, ‘Jesus Christ, Duncan’s on tonight we’ll have something good to eat tomorrow.’

And that was it. Well, Saturday come, Saturday afternoon and I was off Sunday afternoon. And some of the guys were going back to Ireland for a holiday, you know, going back to Ireland for the weekend. And, what was left, gathered in the big army hut. We had three big fireplaces, with bunks all around, you know, just like a hospital.

And this was where the storytelling and the ballads and songs would go on. And I would hear stuff I never heard in my life before, you know?

pp. 7-8. Duncan met up again with the Irish teller and singer, Patrick O’Donnell

That old guy that I worked with, Patrick O’Donnell.
And some years later I met him, he was cutting peat. And I spent two weeks with him, in the hills, cutting peat, with a little hand cutter. And you know something, what was so great about this old man, he was one of the cleverest persons I ever met, in all my travels, in all my life. And there was not a subject under the sun that he couldn’t tell you about. Be that the smallest insect to the largest whale.

And he’d been to many ports abroad. He’d been to Singapore, he’d been to China. And he had only one real drawback. I was rooming with him, while we put the peat up to draw. He says, ‘Duncan,’ he said. ‘I’ve one disadvantage.’

I said, ‘You don’t have any disadvantages as far as I’m concerned.’

He said, ‘I must be honest with you, I cannot read.’ And he said, ‘Will you do one thing for me?’

And I said, ‘Sure.’

He said, ‘Would you read me a wee bit of the bible?’

I said, ‘Sure.’ I said, ‘Tell me what we’ll do every day. You just open the bible wherever you feel like it and I’ll just read a passage, every night.’ Before he went to bed, I read.

We lived in a hut half the size of this [i.e., the tiny yard behind the hotel, where the interview took place] With a stretcher. And we could shift it along as we moved along the peat. And a wee stove in the corner. And a wee box for all the messages. And he took a kit bag and crossed the hills, over to Invernerry, and when he come back there was always two packets of woodbine for me at the top of the bag!

(laughter)

And we’d sit there telling each other stories and singing songs.

8.0 Journal Observations: Experiences with storytelling work with footballers, and storytelling in the educational classrooms in various countries.

8.1. Kick Into Reading: A literacy project training football players, apprentices, and coaches to tell and read stories to 8-11 year olds, providing positive adult male role models to encourage a love of stories, reading and books. A few journal observations made in the course of the project, demonstrating cultural specific vs. universal domain behaviours in storytelling and storytelling.

Peter Rhoades-Brown (Rosie) told a number of personal stories based on his experiences when he played professionally for Chelsea and Oxford United. These autobiographical oral tales were structured very much like Märchen. The stories had elements of metaphor, motif, repetition, digression, and parallelisms. Such aspects encouraged listeners' participation and enjoyment in the stories. Rosie said from the start he got the idea to tell the stories this way from watching and listening to me. (For a detailed analysis, please see article, ‘A Beautiful Game: Oral Narrative and Soccer’, Children's Literature and Education, Vol. 33, Issue 2, 149-63.)


Steve asked, on our first day of telling stories together, could he tell a personal story, which I encouraged.

He told a story of how he wanted to play for the school team when he was nine years old, and got the chance. Though a striker, he never scored and was upset. His parents took him on holiday to Grenada, where his grandmother encouraged him to play football in her garden. There was a donkey in the garden, with whom Steve played ball.

When he returned to London and played for the school team, he managed to score and win the game, thanks to a back kick he learned to do from the donkey.

This summary does not do justice to his telling: it consisted of repetitive language and repetitive plot elements (e.g., trying to strike, and missing, three times). These parallelisms and digressions encouraged the children's participation in the story. They also created a structure very reminiscent of Märchen.

Comment. This suggests a number of possibilities. Steve and Rosie may have picked up the structure of a wonder tale for their stories by listening to me, as Rosie said. However, Steve told his personal story, planned it, before I had told any Märchen. Their facility for constructing these stories orally suggested either that the Märchen is culturally learned and ingrained, or else a universal mental structure for organising personal experiences.

8.2. Storytelling in educational classrooms in various countries a few comparisons demonstrating cultural specific vs. universal domain behaviours in storytelling and storytelling.

December 2001. Working in Italian secondary schools, telling stories in English for students studying the subject as a second language.
Italian teenagers express a similar interest in the same stories that are popular with teenagers who speak English as their mother-tongue. These are mostly contemporary legends/urban myths and traditional ghost stories. In discussions following the stories there are significant differences in attitude to the stories. English-speaking students seem more inclined or willing to believe the stories, or rather, to be eager to join in on the 'spirit' of the telling. They will eagerly 'match' stories, horror for horror, enter debate as to the veracity of the stories and offer 'proof' for them (such as, 'That's true—I heard the same thing from a friend of my friend.' Or 'I know the place where it happened—my dad showed me.'). Italian students, however, are much more sceptical and have never offered a similar story or knowledge of places in their locale that have such stories attached to them. It is possible that the level of English prevents them from articulating such stories. However, most of the groups I see do have very good English, and are aware of such narratives from cinema and television. Whereas the media has had an impact on English speaking teenager's storytelling, this seems not the case in Italy. Due to cultural and pedagogical reasons, the Italian teenager seems to have a more scientific or logical outlook towards life, and there seem to be few or no 'ghost stories' popular within the Italian teenager's repertoires of familiar stories.

September 2000 – June 2001 *Performing in elementary schools in the United States of America, and in primary schools in Britain*

For the youngest children (aged 3-6) I often tell the story 'The Greedy Old Fat Cat'. This has repetitive language, but also includes a phrase directly from pantomime: 'O yes I can!' 'O no you can't!', etc. Although all children join in the refrains naturally, in repeated tellings it was clear that British children, even as young as three, join in on this particular much sooner than American children. This suggests specific cultural aspects of formal language—dramatic and narrative language—is picked up very early on.

*Comment.* Although these journal observations were recorded over the first year of research for my dissertation, they are impressions that have been with me every since I started storytelling, and in fact inspired the questions that led to me embarking on a PhD. course of study.

9.0 Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances, and comparisons with performances of the same teller(s) recorded in Journal Observations and/or Interviews.

9.1. *Francie Kennelly, performing at Waterman's Arts Centre (Analysis of Video Recording of Performance)*

The setting was not the most conducive for storytelling, when compared to the usual setting for a traditional Irish storyteller, which is some one's kitchen or the
snug of a pub. The festival took place in a modern purpose built building, the sort of arts centre developed in the 1960s and 1970s. The venue was an auditorium, with a proscenium stage that had an apron reaching out in front of the arch, and a wide and shallow auditorium that seated around two hundred listeners. Events were sold out. For the Irish night, the stage had a table behind which sat the two tellers, Francie Kennelly and John Campbell, the moderator or host, Tom Munnelly, a folklorist for the Folklore Department at University College Dublin, and a musician, an Irish piper who played tunes between stories. Ben Haggarty, the director of the festival, introduced the evening. There was a microphone but this was not for amplification but recording purposes.

When Francie told he stood fairly still and close to the microphone, used minimal gestures and provided a minimal amount of introductions and explanations to his story. There was almost no frame language. For the most part he kept his arms folded around his chest and looked downwards into mid-air, in one direction. His posture, body language, and speaking tone (conversational in style, rather than declamatory) suggested the sort of attitude Irish countrymen take when standing by the side of the road or a field talking to each other: telling stories, definitely but very much at the lower end of the performance continuum. Most of the audience had difficulty hearing him and understanding him, since his voice was very soft and he has a strong Clare accent. The stories he told were classic representations of folklore and fairylore. He related a story of Biddy Early, a wise woman and witch from County Clare. This was a changeling story, very similar to one Eddie Lenihan also tells. Another story he told regarded the fairy wind, the spiral of dust in a whirlwind that lets you know a band of fairies are passing. Although striking in terms of images and motifs, the delivery was non-dramatic and anti-climactic. He was entirely charming, but at first not very comfortable. One could sense the audience very much wants to hear him and for the stories to enchant them. As they get used to his accent and he warms up to them and becomes more comfortable, he smiles and his eyes sparkle and the stories come to life in this way. Throughout, however, there is very little, in fact, no use of mimetic gestures or direct speech in telling the stories. They are delivered as reported speech and conversationally.

9.2. Francie Kennelly performing in his kitchen, Miltown Malby, County Clare, Republic of Ireland (Analysis made in Journal Observations after audio-recorded interview, June 2001)

I was warmly welcomed to Francie's house, by Francie and his wife, and his sister, daughter and grandchildren who were all visiting in the kitchen. After a bit of social chat, everyone left except Francie and his sister, although she didn't speak much once he began.
The kitchen was an old, traditional one typical of farm cottages in the southwest of Ireland. The setting was as different from Waterman’s Arts Centre as could be possible.

Although I had many questions to ask, Francie was eager to answer everything with a story. He recounted some of the stories told that night fourteen years earlier, specifically his Biddy Early story and the story of the fairy wind. Whereas when telling at the festival he had stood mostly still, arms folded around his chest and his eye contact focused in more of downward direction into the middle distance, the stories he told in his kitchen were lively, almost enacted. He would start a story seated, but would stand up and take a step or two and then sit down again. His eye contact was direct, but he also looked up much more at the ceiling and closed his eyes, imagining the story as he told it.

He also had many longer stories, the sort of wonder tales that the organiser of the Watermans Arts Centre festivals was looking for, but he obviously preferred and felt more comfortable telling these in his home. Another significant difference was that Francie framed the stories when telling them within his own home, whereas he did little in the way of introduction or explanation at the festival. Any introductions or explanations were left to the folklorist, Tom Munnelly.

Francie also told more autobiographical stories, one specifically about how Tom was contacted by the folklore department, asking if he knew any traditional storytellers telling in English. He mentioned this to Francie at a music and singing session at the pub, and Francie said to him, ‘Sure, don’t I know loads of stories, that my father told to me.’ Tom said he’d recommend Francie, then, as there was a trip to London in it for the two of them. Francie told him a few stories but, so far as I could ascertain (and Francie quite enjoyed spinning this story so how much is exaggeration or how much truth is withheld I cannot be sure) he had not told much in public at all, certainly not before going to tell at the festival in London. The contrast throughout was clear, with the stories told in a much more dramatic manner and with delight, comfort and enthusiasm that was not present in the performance at the Watermans Arts Centre festival.

10.0 Interview transcripts and Journal Observations: Comments regarding how contemporary storytellers’ repertoires reflect personality and background.

10.1 Hugh Lupton, p. 20

Well, I suppose I came to storytelling out of ballads, telling originally out of a combination of ballads. (In my teens I discovered the Border Ballads, I fell in love with them.) And…I also…and writing. So, it’s sort of a passion for language, and song that it comes out of. I’ve always loved the stories but I never thought of storytelling until it came together.
And...I suppose to some extent it's quite internal for me. It's... something that I work on internally and shape, and structure, and find words and rhythms and... And it's also a way of...finding forms of emotional expression. But it's not necessarily something I do all the time. So if I'm invited to supper by some one and they're expecting the 'storyteller' and, uh---

PR      You'll be full of anecdotes. (laugh)

Yeah, endless anecdotes, kind of the after dinner speaker. It's really not what I do. You know/ I find that quite difficult. Sometimes that's fine, but sometimes there's that expectation of what the storyteller should be which isn't what I am.

10.2. Eddie Lenihan, p.5.

Sure. Well, if any body reads my children's books carefully, as adult's books, which they intended as, as well as children's books, you'll see what I think of the government and all government figures. The High King is very often scattered with drink, and when he does speak he's an idiot. It's his wife or somebody else that picks up the pieces, or Fionn McCumhaill's wife telling him, 'Look, why don't you take over? You're doing all the bloody work any way.'

...I always like to—when you be coming from a place like Clare, it's only natural to tell a Clare story, just to show people in the audience where you come from and that there are individual stories there.

You see.... But I very much, that is to say, I don't much go to the storytelling festivals any more. I got very bored hearing storytellers telling stories that weren't their own. Just out of books or something like that. They weren't alive. They were just stories with a small 's'. And I just found myself absolutely bored at these telling sessions. Eventually I wouldn't even go. I'd walk around the grounds or something like that. I just got fed up with it.

p. 12.

But that's the difference, you see, between, I suppose, professional tellers—they're too professional sometimes. You'll always know the genuine article. It's like, I suppose, singers or musicians. There's a difference between the ones who are just trained, and who learned a very big repertoire of tunes. They may be very good technically, but there's something missing. And the person who might never have travelled out, but—he mightn't be precise, but by God you know he means it. And I saw the very same thing with set dancing. ..... I've really no interest in dancing, nor really in Irish music. Except when I hear a good player I'll sit down and listen and say, 'By God, that's good!' But I was down one night with some one...down below Miltown Malby, and 'twas in the lounge when there was a crowd dancing. Now there was a mixture of the blow ins and the young people and the old people, but lord, when I saw the old ones
dancing! You'd have to stop and say, 'Jeez! Look at that! They're enjoying themselves!' 'Twasn't to be seen, or it wasn't just to do the dance, 'twas for the pure, sheer enjoyment of it. And I mean if they were draggin' their legs or kicking steps in a way that wasn't precise, well it didn't matter. They were—that was real dancing!

.... And that's the way it should be done. And that's the reason why you get Francie, when he's at home, he behaves like that, because he's in his own place.


Now the main thing that actually dictates my style about telling that story [The Devil's Music, on video of English night of Southbank festival]. If I have a musician with me. .... Because it's a story about a melodeon player. And if I've got a melodeon player, a tame melodeon player with me, then there are various spots in the story that are obvious for a tune. .... But because that story is one of the images on my Tale Coat [an original work of textile art, a large beautiful overcoat with scores of Taffy's stories represented by embroidered illustrations, to which people point to decide what story he will tell next], when people point to that picture on the coat then I have to tell them 'The Devil's Music' story. .... Very often in a situation without a musician. And that obviously leaves a gap where the music usually is, but the structure is slightly different. So it just moves on a bit quicker. .... So rather than, I mean, so I say in the story if they wanted a polka, then he could play them a polka, and then there goes 'dum di dum dum....' But... So, there's a gap there for the music. And then a little later on, if I say, if they fancied something a bit smoothie then he could even play an old time waltz. And then I pick the story up. I obviously don't leave a gap for the music.

PR Of course. Um, you don't leave a gap if there's no music. Do you ever....what I've heard other people do if they tell that story is they will change the instrument to suit them. Now I've never heard you do that and I don't suppose I'd expect you to. But I wondered if you ever thought about it.

No. no. The only reason I personally don't is because for me, the anchor point. I think all storytelling has an anchor. And the anchor is either the person who told you the story, or the image of someone in your head the story is dedicated to or is about. And for the time I lived in Suffolk, my happiest nights were when I was around the pub with Oscar Woods. He was simply the finest English melodeon player there ever was. So when I tell the story, it's Oscar. .... It's dedicated in my head to his memory. And sometimes I dedicate it to his memory to the audience, and even if I don't mention it to the audience, I hold it in my mind.
I have noticed certain patterns to my repertoire and to my choice of stories when I am free to programme them as I choose. Variant stories, stories that are earlier or obscure versions of well known tales or rather, of the tales I learned from my family appeal the most. For example, some of the newer stories I collect and develop for telling are variants of those longest in my repertoire (‘Mollie Whuppie’, ‘Cap-o-Rushes’, ‘Fill the House’ etc.) What does this say about me?

Well, I clearly like stories with characters who go off on their own, get themselve into and out of scrapes, use their wits, and live by the seat of their pants. Does that describe me? Only friends and family could say, but these types of stories—the typical Märchen with a long, episodic magic adventure full of surprises with a hero/heroine who is an underdog certainly feature more than other types of stories. [I am also a Guardian reader so does this indicate anything?]

In a typical one hour performance, which is a primary school audience of around one hundred listeners, I usually tell three stories interspersed with word play. In a full day I do three or four sessions in a school, but don’t repeat any of the stories. Although I don’t have a set programme, I have noticed a pattern to what I choose to tell. I generally start with a variant well-known story. For example ‘Mollie Whuppie’, which is like ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’ and ‘Hansel and Gretel’, or ‘Cap-o-Rushes’, which is like ‘King Lear’ and ‘Cinderella’, or ‘Jack and the Three Wishes’, which is like ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’ and ‘the Three Wishes’. I also always include, or try to include, a story with a strong female protagonist. I always try to have a story that involves active participation. I always have a story from a non-European culture. Now, the first story might have all these traits, or they might be distributed across the three or four stories I tell. In between stories, I have rhyming and singing games, and finger and movement songs and games for listeners aged three to seven years, and rhymes, riddles and conundrums for children eight through eighteen. This pattern makes my choice of stories not entirely a conscious choice, more a quasi-automatic choice, and, I think, reveals something about me and what I think of stories and, more what I think about the world. These thoughts, however, come out much more in my frame language and in my digressions, since my style includes lots of asides and jokes (often about parent-child or teacher-student or conflicts, or sibling rivalry, which are all part of growing up).

11.0 Journal Observations: Instances where listeners (esp. children) reacted emotionally and physiologically as though stories related were real, or at least touched ‘real’ mental associations and emotional states.

We finished the first half of the programme with a selchie story, about a lonely woman who kept a seal prisoner, on a lead, separated from the seal's love. The seal eventually drowned, trying to swim to its partner. The ghosts of the seals returned to haunt the woman, telling her that, unlike them, she would be alone, always alone, a phrase that she continued to hear in the sound of the crashing waves on the shore.

As we ended the story and announced the interval, we noticed an elderly man in the second row weeping uncontrollably. We were very concerned and went to him. He was not angry or upset with us, but thanked us. He said his wife had died a few months before and he had not been able to grieve or let go, until he heard the selchie story. For the first time since the funeral, he was actually able to let go and weep and felt much relieved and lighter for it. He stayed for the rest of the performance and we spoke with him again after, and bought him a drink. He and his friends assured us he was much better, fine in fact.

11.2. 'Annie and Rosie and the Fairy Thorn Tree' and 'The Rathlin Island Fairy Story'

This first tale is a variant of a common motif, regarding siblings who are warned not to touch a fairy thorn tree, and do not, but on coming across one see the fairies ceilidh-ing. One joins them, and is rewarded, and the other is rude and doesn't, and is punished.

The second is a story about a child who does touch a fairy tree and is stolen by the fairies, but he/she is given back because they may only keep a human child they wash completely clean by dawn. The child has a thorn from the blackberry bush stuck under the fingernail, and because of this splinter the child is returned to the mother. It is a reminder that parents should be happy to have their children, even if they are mucky and dirty, for then the fairies won't steal them and the parents will be stuck with them forever.

When I tell these stories to young children in Ireland, even in large cities like Belfast and Dublin, and especially in rural areas, the children accept the story more or less as fact. Older ones will express some scepticism, but all are aware of the folklore regarding fairy trees.

Outside of Ireland, where there is less knowledge of the folklore, it would be expected that children are more sceptical. If anything, the reaction is the reverse. The youngest children bravely claim if they come across a fairy tree, they would test the truth of the story and really touch the tree. If the fairies came to get them, they say they will fight them, hit them, kick them, and/or run away. Because I describe the geographic setting for both stories quite specifically, older children determine they will go there when they get the chance to check if I am telling the truth.
This has been a consistent reaction in all performances of these stories over the past fifteen years or more. It may not be the stories themselves that cause these reactions, and I do not claim that it is solely the nature of the narratives that do so. How I tell them, and the children's own backgrounds, both also determine reactions. However, as I argue that the para-text is an important part of the overall text in performance, how I tell is part of the story and so I think the whole story is responsible for any impact.

11.3. 'Gotcha Stories' or 'Jump Tales'

The stories, for older primary school children and even teenagers and adults, are short, repetitive tales that finish with a loud shout. The content is usually of a 'spooky' nature (a walk on a dark night that leads to a haunted house or a castle, or some one trespassing in a graveyard and taking something home, only to have the ghost come back to fetch what is stolen). Children often ask for a scary story and these satisfy their request, though rather than being gruesome they are mostly humorous and silly. Although initially the narrative text might provide a shiver of fright (mentioning 'Hallowe'en' or 'ghosts' or describing a 'spooky place' usually elicits a gasp or shiver from at least some of the children), it is paralinguistic elements of performances and paratext that really achieve the final effect. Simply by speaking more slowly, deeply and quietly as the repetitive phrases go on, until the teller can barely be heard, and then shouting the last phrase or word makes all the listeners jump and scream.

11.4. 'Cap-O-Rushes', 'More than Salt', 'As Much As Salt', 'The Salt Princess' and 'Catskin'

These are all variants of the 'King Lear' and 'Cinderella' stories. In my repertoire I have over half a dozen that I regularly tell: English, Irish, Scots Traveller, Italian, German, Brazilian, Indian, and Bangladeshi versions.

All conclude with the reconciliation of the exiled daughter and father at the daughter's wedding. In each story, the king at last realises that the child he banished was the one who loved him best of all, and he has lost her forever, at which point the princess reveals her true identity.

Adult listeners have regularly reported to me after tellings of all these versions that this reconciliation moment of the story has brought tears to their eyes. I cannot record that this always happens, but in almost every case where I have had time to meet and talk with audience members after a performance this has been the case. There are times, again, that I think perhaps it is my vocal intonation, paralinguistic features of the performance, that might spark this reaction. However there are times I am tired or not in the best of moods, and don't feel that I have told the story very well and this reaction is still reported.
I’ve concluded that something about the story, the action and image it reports, has something of common experience so as to move so many people.

12.0 Interview Transcripts: Informants’ perceptions of stories in their repertoires and how they have/have not changed over years.

12.1. **Grace Hallworth, pp. 3-4. Summary:** We are discussing the use of digressions, paratext, in connecting to audiences and how this has developed over the years as a part of Grace’s style.

I think that the business of addressing the audience directly or addressing the audience in a less formal way comes out of a... reassessment of what I was doing in the early days... in the late 50s, early 60s. I think I was doing a more ex cathedra performance. It was a ‘performance’ in inverts. .... Where there was little room for the audience because I was focused on doing something polished and rounded and that sort of thing. And that possibly comes from early training and in sense, a sense of... a certain lack of confidence. In that you need more confidence to invite the audience into what you are doing. Because you are going to break up the sequence. The sequence is going to be broken up once you digress from the text to the audience. You’re going to have to be thinking on two levels. You’re going to have to be thinking of the story and how it flows and you’re going to have to be thinking of the audience and how they are going to be let into this... interactive process...

And you need, I think, more confidence to do that. Because you need to feel that the audience will... come in if you invite them. (laughter)

**PR** And so with that, I agree with you, but with that do you... do you always digress in the same place in the story or does it depend on the audience?

It depends on the audience to some extent. I can think of stories where I tend to do it all the time simply because that is such an apt place to do it....

But more or less I think it would depend on the audience. What I’m feeling from the audience and because I am now more latterly wanting the audience to be part of it, in the sense that I am wanting to share more than ‘perform’, I am doing more and more addressing and coercing with the audience, getting them into what I’m doing....

Integrating them, so to speak. ....

And I found that one also discovers things, doing things. One doesn’t necessarily set out to do something but in doing something you discover something. And what I discovered in doing that is that it’s not only more satisfying to me to have that closeness, but it also somehow transforms the story. .... But it also transforms the story.....
The story—the audience's interaction, the participation in that interactive process, somehow transforms the story. You know, it's like another chemical.

PR Yes. And by that do you mean it makes the story more real, more tangible? Or does it make a different quality?

Yes, the audience's interaction somehow imbues, in many ways, imbues the story with something else that enriches it for me. And sometimes I use that again. ... I use what the story has become, again.

PR Yes. For example, I know in some of your stories you used to make a joke—if the devil was in the story you might mention that he reads The Guardian.

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. (laughter)

PR And that would transfer from one story to another.

Yes.

12.2. Hugh Lupton, pp 3-4. Summary: We were discussing a story Hugh tells, that is on the video recording of the last night of the Watermans Arts Centre storytelling festival. It is 'The Cow That Ate the Piper' and we were comparing various versions, how Hugh has told and changed it, and how Willie McPhee, a Scots Traveller, and a primary school boy told versions of it.

PR Do you consciously... I mean, I know it's spontaneous but say if you're performing on your own, would you throw things in like that to make the story relevant to that time and place?

It depends. Not necessarily but sometimes. I think it's important to keep a story loose enough so that there's always the possibility. You know, if there's a thunder clap or you're in a school and some one bursts in. To keep things—to be sufficiently free in the situation, to be able to use the moment.

But I think since then my storytelling has changed. I think probably, my storytelling has become rather more formal than it was then. I kind of went from formal to very informal and back to formality again.

PR Ok. To what do you attribute that? Are you conscious of the process or is it something that just evolves?

I think it's something to do with ... the quality of language. You know I'm more and more interested in the place where story and song and
poetry meet. ... And... in order to make that work there has to be a certain amount of—the material is fairly worked on when I tell it.

PR Would it—does it have to have a musical score, in a way, a basic thread?

Yeah.

PR Maybe places for spontaneity, but because you're working with—because you want to achieve the language, you want to work with a musician or whatever, or you play the music yourself, because I know you do that. But it's more important to be more formal.

It has to be more formal for that to work. But at the same time, as I said, it's hopeless if you're absolutely fixed to something. There has to be, you have to have, that possibility of freedom in any performance.

PR In performance are you aware of what affects that decision? I mean, do you think it's something in the audience, is it a face, is it the room?

What triggers it off, a digression?

PR Yes. Or spontaneous—improvisation to a text.

Yeah. It might be something, if I'm doing an evening with Ben and Pomme, which we're not doing much of at the moment, but there might be another story, something in your story, something in theirs. You see a connection, so you highlight the connection. .... Or, if I'm in a school—oh, I don't know. All sorts of things might trigger it off. A particular dress that a little girl is wearing, you might say, 'Just like the one you're wearing today!'

But I think it's kind of what the effect that has, especially with kids, to make the story 'now and then'. So, the story is happening now even though it happened then. ....

And it's a kind of meeting which I think is central to storytelling.

12.3 Eddie Lenihan, pp. 13-14 Summary: Eddie has written several books of Irish folktales. Many are taken from or based upon field work he did, collecting stories from elderly tellers, many are taken from research, and some he has created in telling stories to his own children. Many of the written versions were told orally in performances by him long before they were written, and continue to be told after publication. I wanted to explore the relationship of these written and oral stories and the effect of the relationship on Eddie's performances.
...we talked about how the audience and the space and your own mood affects the telling and the way of telling and things like that. You mentioned a bit earlier about some of the stories you got from older people and the rest, sometimes the stories were about ten minutes long. That would be a long story. Now, some of the stories you developed for books, you've written them. Now how much does that change, when you're writing a story, when you're developing a story for a book?

Oh, completely. Completely. All that remains, really, is the bones of the story. And, I usually judge the books by, if I can go back to the books about a year later, and still laugh at the jokes, or still feel affected by where there was a serious bit, then I'll feel that I've done a good job. And if not, I mean, I feel I missed out on something there.

But the book is utterly and completely different, it takes on a life of its own.

And once you've written the book, do you keep telling stories that are written in the book, the way they were written? Does that affect any process of the telling?

I wouldn't think so, simply because the writing of them is so different than the spoken version. Because, for example, in the *Humorous Irish Tales for Children*, the story there of how spitting and snotting became an art form in Ireland over the millennium, that story is eighty pages long. I mean the told story of that—all right, it's a long story—but, I mean it's no longer than three quarters of an hour long. So, you wouldn't read eighty pages in three quarters of an hour.

The eighty pages, they don't correspond. And the thing about a written version you can put a lot more plots and subplots in, but if you were speaking them, they would only be distractions. Because, for most audiences nowadays, they're not used to listening to stories. That, unfortunately, is the truth. And if you, if you put in sidelines, which the old storytellers would have all the time—

Sidelines—a story within a story, like, 'Oh, I forgot to tell you that Joe's brother was a fella who...'

That's right. Or a name of a place came up and you'd explain how the place came to have that name. That's the beauty of the Irish. And knowing at least enough Irish to know the meaning of the place names, that can explain a terrible lot. Because for example, in this very parish there's thirty-seven lakes. Every one of them has an Irish name. And sometimes the Irish name gives you a very good hint of the history of the lake. Of what it might—well, contain, sometimes, in the lines of what's down there, what's under the lake, what kind of mysteries
might be here, or stories about the fairies associated with the lakes. Those kind of things which you couldn't do with the English version. Because very often the English version of the lake's place name, if there's any at all, it's only a bastardisation. It isn't a complete translation, it's something somebody sometime made out of the name in landlord times. Which is only a reflection of their values. So, the Irish version is the real version to get, if you can get it, and there's no if. You can. They're all in Irish one way or another. Nearly all.

So the spoken to the written...I'd like to think that the books that I write are extremely readable aloud. And I'm glad to see that without any prompting whatsoever from me, because, I mean, who can do anything like that for reviews? Very often you get no review at all. But Mercier Press they send me occasionally—obviously they watch for them or have somebody watching these things—and they send me a few reviews. The last couple of books, Gruesome Irish Tales for Children, had the critic, the person reviewing, astute enough to see this was a book for reading aloud. And yes, it is, because obviously it's from a told story.

PR Yes, of course.

Even though you couldn't tell a story like that. You can read it like that and it would sound-- The voices would be there, hopefully, because, mainly, they're voices based not so much on description. And if there is description, it's in the voices. The person is telling you 'what', 'where', 'how they are'....

12.4. John Campbell, pp. 20-21

PR So what do you decide to do? Do you take any of these stories that you tell yourself now and in any of the schools, at the pubs, and the festivals, would you choose the version that sounded the best to you when you were telling it, or that felt the best, or would you choose the version that you thought was best from some one else and tell it their way? Do you see what I mean? Or would you change it and make it what you think it should be like?

I would change it. I would change a lot, and sometimes, I would change—well, you know, it would depend on where I'd be sometimes. You know. I would localise it as much as I could. You know what I mean?

PR I know what you mean. ... Because, I heard you tell some stories recently....but I recognised them, I think. 'Oh, that's what they call one of those "world tales".' You know, there's a German version and a French version, but you tell them as they happened just down the road in Forkhill.

Uh, huh. Yes. Aye.
But even with the ones that really happened, where local people have different versions what happened.... You'd make it your own by changing it just the way you think sounds best?

Yes, what sounds the best.

That was the big weekend in the Ardmore Hotel in Newry. And the late Sean O’Boyle was there. I was thinking about this since. The Christian Brother was another man, it was another thing he did. I’ll tell you about him later. ....

Sean O'Boyle was there from...he was really a Belfast man that lived all his life and was a teacher in...in Armagh City. And he did a lot of collecting away...around the time they had to bring a massive van round to make, to cut, the old 78. He recorded a whole lot of old people on the old 78 setting. And it was a big job at the time.

But he was there. And they were all on about styles of music, various styles, and the Clare style, and singing too, even the type of singing. Sean nos singing and all these things were going on. And after everyone had their talk about this whole episode...it was open to the floor, you see.

And Sean O'Boyle was there and he said that... He said it was his opinion that there was no such thing as, we'll say a Lietrim style, or, uh, a Northern style, or anything like that. It was individuality. If, eh, Coleman the Sligo fiddler that made traditional music was on a very high plane in America, while he was in it, it was always known, you see, that that was known as the Sligo style of fiddlin'. But you know, if Coleman had been born in County Louth it would have been the Louth style of fiddlin'. It was Coleman's music, it was...

And then what happens then when some fellow like that gets goin' in that area, some young fellow takes up the fiddle and he immediatley imitates. Imitates. And it's not a good thing to imitate. You should take the music, and then you should make your own of it.

And it's just like the storytelling, Pat. ...

You know that you get the bones of a story, there's no point—you're over in this country now.

Yeah.

Well, there's not really much point in you talking about, in American terms, you know, if you're down in County Clare. You're better trying to get...to where
you are. It’s... Change it, but don’t change the whole story. ... Have the frame of the story and make it your own.

pp. 38-39

But Sean O’Boyle was challenged on the...on his individual styles. Oh, there were two or three took him to pieces on it.

He says, ‘Hold on a minute. There’s a man I want to ask him would he sing a song, and I’m going to ask him to sing...a certain song.

The man was Geordie Hannah. He says, ‘Geordie—‘

You knew him? Oh, you didn’t know Geordie.

PR No. He was a Tyrone man?

He was Sarah Anne O’Neill’s brother.... Says

‘Sean O’Boyle, if I’m fit ‘t’all I’ll sing you the song.’

‘Sing “Dublin’s Flowery Vale”.’ He sung it.

‘Before you sit down,’ says Sean O’Boyle, ‘Where did you learn it?’

‘That was an old song of me father’s’

‘You see? Now, I’m going to ask a woman today that’s here to sing me a song. And, I’m going to ask Sara Anne O’Neill.’ She was way at the back. She had to walk up.

‘Ah, don’t be asking me to sing!’ you know, and she went up....and she said, or, he says, ‘Will you sing?’

‘What’ll I sing?’

‘I want yez to sing the same song.’

‘That’d be a bit too-‘ she says, ‘Sure Geordie, Geordie Hannah’s just after singing that.’

‘But,’ he says, ‘I want to make a point.’

She threw back her head and she started to sing, ‘Dublin’s Flowery Vale’. Same song. Same air. Different phrasing, took a deep breath at different places. Lovely, in fact, she sang it better than Geordie, more lovelier.
'Now,' says Geordie [sic], 'where did you learn that song?'

'Sure, you're after hearing it,' says she. 'That was an old song of my father's.'

You see?

PR Yes

She was put back to her seat any way. He gets out one of those old 78 recordings and puts it down. There was a man singing on it. 'Dublin's Flowery Vale'. Same song, that was it. But different. Different. Noticeably different.

'Now,' says Sean O'Boyle. 'You listened to those three people singing those songs. The first man that sung was Geordie Hannah, and he got the song from his father. The second on that sun was Sarah Anne O'Neill, a sister of Geordie Hannah's and she got the song from the same man. And the man on the recordings was their father.

(laughter)

'Three different versions of the same song, but they listened, they heard their father sing it, and they made their own wee thing of it, their own version. And there you have individuality. In the one house.'

PR The one house... And how did the crowd take it then?

A whole lot of people were convinced, you know?

12.5. Taffy Thomas, p.7

I mean that the other way that I digress is that stories that...in my life as travelling storyteller, that has actually built up stories around stories. I mean, one I use as an example is the one with a child in the audience.

PR The one where you ask do you know what the swine market would be for?

Yes, and also the one in a creation myth. ... Because creation myths always have either a violent image or an erotic image. ... They have to, or they wouldn't be a creation myth, you know. So this young girl is so completely shy she had never seen a naked man. And I was telling it once in Bootle, in Liverpool, and a young girl in the front of the audience said, 'And neither did she want to.' ...

It's a joke, it's funny.
PR. Yeah, and then it falls into later versions of the story.

Yeah. And that becomes the story behind the story. It’s like people make the film behind the film—about how they came to make the film....

Stories are getting longer, because...my experience as a storyteller telling that story, what it draws out of people, is added. And so, in the folk tradition, I think the important thing is that as many people as possible had their hands on it, as it’s gone along. And the more I tell a story, I get comments back, whether it’s heckling or whatever. Communication really. The more people’s hands are on it the more it becomes part of the oral tradition.

12.6. Duncan Williamson, analysis of video recordings of storytelling performances and interview transcript

Duncan and I didn’t get to talk about how he thinks his repertoire or style of telling has changed, or whether he thinks it has. Looking at the video recordings from Doc Rowe’s collection of Duncan’s performances over the years, one can see changes in content of stories, content of repertoire, and style. In the interview, we did discuss how some ‘new’ stories came into the repertoire and how he adapted his telling to tell to listeners outside the Traveller community.

In the videos, one can see and hear that in earlier years, Duncan mostly told stories while sitting in a chair, and still included a great deal of Scots and Traveller dialect in the stories. As the years progress, either because he is telling to a larger audience or because he performs in a larger space, that is a stage in an auditorium seating around 200, he stands and paces back and forth as he tells. He also uses less dialect, and when he does use a dialect word it is for specific effect, and he explains the word either before he starts or within the story (that is, he either uses frame language or digression). More recently, he stands in one place or, if he walks during the performance, it is more like what Alexander and Govrin describe in their study of acting modes in storytelling. That is, Duncan seems to move more with intent, to direct the story at one person in the audience at that point, or to demonstrate, unselfconsciously, some action in the story. Content over the years changes, too, in that he exclusively tells Traveller stories in the earlier performances, but in the more recent ones there are stories in his repertoire clearly learned from revival tellers and which have sources in other cultures.

Interview transcript, Duncan Williamson, p.8.

PR And I noticed that you still teach. Because when we’ve worked together, and told stories to children, the other day, up there at the school...you introduced your stories. You either explained to the children what it was like as a Traveller, or in Scotland, you said, we have this word or that or whatever. ...
Now, did you start doing that when you left the Travellers community. Had you always—

I had to, I had to. I had to when I left the Travellers, like my parents, you see. ... Because I was with another culture. Oh, I went to school and the teacher—the only thing the teacher ever taught me was the alphabet and to put the words together and to read.

But it was the old farmers' wives, and the old farmers and old fishermen and peat cutters, old people like O'Donnell who educated me. You know what I mean? That was my education. ...

pp. 11-12

PR I've two questions for you though. Yesterday at the old people's home you told two stories. One of the wife who had the green box and the key around her neck. Um, and the other one about the tramp on the bridge in Tyneside. ... Now, where did you hear those stories.

Well, the story about the tramp in Tyne was told to me... I used to come to Newcastle upon Tyne. For five years. Michael Green...Malcolm Green. ..... Malcolm would take me to the Sunrise Centre. But I did something besides storytelling, helping children make thatch—knew all about that, used to be a thatcher myself.

And of course, here was something I liked to do. Show a bunch of kids how to make a bender, and then tell a story.

And of course, then, I asked Malcolm to go, to take me, to the old persons' home. And there was an old person called Charlie, you see, about eighty years old. And I would—after I would tell a story to them, I would ask, have any of you got a story for me? And old Charlie, he told me the story about the old beggar. ... Oh, that must have been about fifteen years ago. ... And he says to me, 'Next time you come back, Duncan, I'll have another story for you.' So every time I tell that story....I'm back in Newcastle. I'm back in the old people's home. I'm visualising, here is the same situation where I heard the story first... so I can hit it right in the eye.

PR What about the one with the green box. Do you remember where that came from? [This is Duncan's version of a story commonly known as 'The Star Maiden', a story from Africa. I have a version of it from Nigeria, it was popularised by Laurence Van der Post in one of his books, where he attributed it to the people of the Kalihari Desert]

The one about the box? Well, that was a funny story, that. That came from Birmingham. That was the first time I heard it, Birmingham. And it was not so
long ago, maybe four or five years ago. .... I was in Birmingham. And ‘the Blind Man and the Hunter’. There used to be a blind man, a big man, and he was a coloured man, but he was blind. And he told me the green box one—

PR    Ok. But he also told you ‘The Hunter and the Blindman’?

Oh, he told me that about ten years ago. But now when I’m telling that story—I think I’ve told it to you, ‘The Blindman and the Hunter’, and the wise man and the little sister.

PR    Yeah

I’m back there. I’m back there in Birmingham. Both stories.

13.0  Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: How a wide, varied repertoire of texts allows tellers to ‘shift’ quickly and accommodate ‘difficult’ and ‘challenging’ audiences.


And this was in...Buffalo. And in the morning I had gone to a school. Now I can’t remember if I’d gone to a girls school but the girls were dominant. Which is why I remember them. And they were in their teens, early teens. And I used a story and I can’t remember what the story was, but a more introspective story because I picked up from them that they were thinkers mainly. So I told this story and there was a lovely—straight away, without much effort from my part—there was a lovely response to it. There was...there was very informed comment from these girls, surprising even for their ages, you know. They had a very mature response to the story that I was telling them. And they themselves were going much deeper than one would have expected children of that age to go. Into the story, sort of questioning, analysing....criticising—critical analysis. Um...and arriving at their own...understanding... Not as a unity by any means. You got quite a diversity pf opinions as to what the story meant for certain groups of children. Certain individuals and certain groups. And this was such a lovely thing, that the person who was with me, who was also my hostess, said, ‘Why don’t we do that this afternoon?’

Because they felt that so much came out of that session. ‘Why don’t we, when going to this next school?’ These were boys, same sort of age but these were boys, in another part of Buffalo. And I said, ‘Well, we’ll see.’

I mean, you know, experience has taught me that things hardly happen the same way twice.
So I said, 'Let's not be too hasty. We'll see how it goes, we'll see what they are like.' So we get there, and I was right. I find that this is a school with... in a part of the city where mainly Hispanics live. And these are boys who are not boys who will sit and listen to a story, by no means. These are boys with their hair slicked back, with a forelock here, and wearing heels like—a bit of mime here—shoes with heels like that, tight pants, and belt, and, you know? They're really hip!

And I look at my hostess and she looks at me and I said, 'You don't really think that that story's going to work down here, do you?' And she said, 'Perhaps not.' And I said, 'No, there's no perhaps.'

So straight away I think what can I do? So I start my usual spiel, because it gives me time to assess what I'm dealing with.

(And I meant to say that the first group we had in the library and they had been doing patchwork quilts. And they do these beautiful things that reflect different kinds of things. Like the engagement, or the wedding, or whatever... And so we were sitting surrounded by these beautiful quilts hanging around the library. On the floor, a lovely rug. It was a cozy setting.)

This school, you are in the hall, in the school hall. And lunch had just been—they had just had lunch. And the boys were hyper. And I always start out with a bit of introduction about myself because it gives me time to assess what I'm confronted with and to be deciding how I'm going to approach it without a silence.

So I started to talk and I could see that these boys weren't going to give me a chance to do anything that was like I did in the morning. What they wanted was a story with action. And I thought I could do...three different stories. But...I think it has to be action here. Because they were getting up and sitting down and getting up and sitting down. [a bit more miming] You know, all the time. ...

There was—they were hyperactive! So I said, 'I think what we should do this afternoon is a dance story...’ 'YEAH!' Soon as I said that they were ready to go. I said, 'Remember, I said a dance story. A story with a dance in it.' 'RIGHT!' What is the dance?’ I said, 'Do you remember I said a story?’ Because they wanted to cut straight through to the dance. So I said, 'Remember, we will come to the dance, and everybody will have a turn. But the story...you can't do the dance unless you are prepared to grow with the story. Right?’

So we cut the steel [clap]. They will listen to the story so long as...

So what do I have to do? Cut cut cut cut...through to the boogy dances, the cocomaco. I could not do the whole thing. I had to do the bare bones of the story. And...all that, so we could get to the dance. And of course, in between doing the bare bones I had to demonstrate that the king said, 'I will create a dance.' And he
starts to sing. \(\text{[Grace sings]}\) ‘Coh—kee-ah coh samba Now I dance, Now I dance’

Like this. And to get them quiet and involved—not quiet, but to get their attention, I said, ‘Now, I want you to learn the song. Because you are the orchestra.’

‘WHEN WE GONNA DANCE?’

I said, ‘But we have to have an orchestra, as well as the dance, otherwise how we gonna dance? We have to have music to do the dance, right?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Right. SO who’s going to be the orchestra? We have orchestra, we can dance, then we switch. Dance, orchestra, orchestra, dance; dance, orchestra. Right? So we’re going to half and half. So, now, but everybody has to learn the orchestra part. So, are you with me?’ ‘Yes.’ So, we start the orchestra part.

\(\text{[Some miming/gesturing...incident told as a story, in storytelling mode]}\)

And straight away they were involved. So they had to listen. They had to listen to the words to be able to sing the song to be the orchestra. And then I started doing a—and then ‘WE COULD DO THAT’

And I said, ‘Well, wait. If everybody is rushing up to me, how’re we going to have the orchestra? This is why I said first the story and then the dance.’

So you know, you’re using all kinds of strategies of stories, in your telling of stories. These are teenage boys, they are not babies, they’re teenage boys. But they’re hyperactive. And you’re there to tell them a story, you’re also there to engage them in story. ...

13.2. \textit{Taffy Thomas, p. 10.},

I took a decision fairly early in my storytelling career that I would tell in, that I wouldn’t duck, any situation. That I would tell stories wherever people were. Which has actually had some very bizarre occurrences.

Again, I sometimes when doing a ghost story tell, as a digression or introduction, of the occasion when I was on a garage forecourt in Keele at about 2 o’clock in the morning. And I heard the revving of motorcycles, of Hell’s Angels. And this ‘V’ of Hell’s Angels came up the road, into the petrol station and circled my storyteller’s van and stopped. \(\text{[Taffy travels in a brightly painted van, with an illustration depicting him with a 'Pinocchio' nose and the advertising: Taffy Thomas, Travelling Storyteller]}\) And they leant on their handlebars and said, ‘All right, storyteller. Tell us a story.’
And I thought I can either tell them to piss off, in which case I’m meat. Or I can tell the tightest twenty minutes I’ve ever done in my life.

(Laughter)

So I did a really hairy ghost story for twenty minutes. And, uh, at the end of it they said, ‘We never thought you would, but you did. Great. Thanks.’

And they kicked the boxes alive and they roared up the M4, up the road.

13.3. Journal Observations:

The most important thing I’ve learned telling stories is to have plenty ready, so one can switch at the last moment to one that suits better than whatever was originally planned.

1) Telling at an international school in Paris, once, I was informed about five minutes, or less, before going to tell to a group that two children had lost a parent in the previous year. I realised that some of the stories I had in mind to tell had plots that hinged either on the death or absence of a parent. Without knowing the children, it would be completely inappropriate to bring up such a topic in a story.

2) At Towersey Village Festival one year, I was booked to perform with Chris Coe, a singer musician, Nick Hennessy, a young professional teller, and the New Dartmoor Pixie Band. Rather than plan specifically what I was going to tell, I waited to hear what Chris sang first. Her ballad reminded me of a story I had not told for a long time, which in turn put Nick in mind of a story he hadn’t planned to tell but then did, and these stories affected Chris’s choice as to what other songs she sang that evening. The musicians picked up on the mood of the stories and songs and played tunes that either picked feelings up or calmed them down, depending on whether the stories/ballads were tragic, satirical, humorous, and so on. Only by having hundreds of stories to choose from was I able to improvise the programme repertoire that night.

14.0. Journal Observations: Experiences child audiences in various countries and how the repertoire is programmed/adapted/changed.

14.1. Tours in Italy and Germany, telling stories to middle school and high school students studying English as a foreign language.

The storytelling I do in Italy and Germany is very different in style, and in some ways, content, than the storytelling I do in English speaking countries. In my mind, and the way it feels as I do it, is much more like teaching, like a lesson.
Before I tell a story, I introduce myself, and encourage the students to relax, to not worry if they don’t understand everything I say. I encourage them to listen to all the story, and if they do, they will understand it. I encourage them to ask me questions. Then I refer to a list of words and idioms I have written on the board or shown on an overhead projector. I explain the words and phrases, sometimes even miming or drawing a picture to explain their meaning. I then tell the story. In other instances when I tell, I either remain seated or I stand in one place. I use minimal gestures, and certainly almost no mimetic actions to tell stories. But in Italy, I mime a great deal. I do not stand still, but walk around the room. I realise, now, I do make great use of Alexander and Govrin’s acting modes, in that I consistently face one way and then another to indicate different characters speaking in the story. When I gesture to describe an aspect of setting, say the height or direction of an object, I consistently return to that same gesture and direction so as to make it concrete to the listeners and to myself. I speak more slowly then I normally do when I tell to English speakers. I use far less in the way of dialect words and phrases, I simplify or eliminate details, subplots, and make descriptions as simple and concrete as I can. In some instances, I am asked to focus on a specific verb tense (for example, I must tell a story entirely in present tense for first year language students in scuola media).

I know these changes of text and style ‘work’ by the questions and comments I receive from students after. We (the teachers who invited me and myself) are most pleased when a student asks how I learned to speak such excellent Italian. I tell them my Italian is very poor, I told the story in English, even though they insist it was in Italian. We have learned that when a student says this, for the first time he or she was listening to English and understood it, and did not mentally translate it into Italian. This is why the storytelling residency seems to be so popular, the story helps the language to become internalised and understood in a kind of gestalt.


When telling in America, there are many words and phrases I have now picked up from English and Irish dialect. I must be careful to edit them or explain them in as unobtrusive a way. It is the same when telling to British, Australian, Hong Kong, or Irish audiences, particularly children.

For example, one story I tell to young children is The Big Wide-Mouthed Toad Frog, a well-known joke story about talking too much. My version, from American sources, describes without naming them various animals found only in North America. American children guess them accurately right away. I encourage British and Irish children to guess what the animals are, which to begin with they do with great difficulty. In Australia, I told a number of traditional Irish stories, Märchen that often feature magic peat bogs, or magic talismans taking the hero or heroine over such bogs without harm. I quickly learned that if I mentioned ‘bog’ without qualifying it, there would be plenty of snickers and giggles, as it would be
if I inserted the word 'loo' or 'toilet' for British and Irish children or 'john' for Americans.

15.0 Journal Observations: Performances that resulted in 'cultural dissonance' from mistaken assumptions.

15.1. The First Great Onion Storytelling Festival, Lake Forest, Chicago, Illinois

On a return visit to Chicago, not long after I had begun telling story full time, I was invited to perform at a new storytelling festival. I had not, however, told stories in America for quite a long while.

One concert I was scheduled for was entitled 'Travellers' Tales'. Since I had spent much of the previous ten years befriending Irish and Scottish Travellers and collecting many stories from them, I assumed the organisers knew this and wanted me to perform some of these tales.

I was asked to tell first, and related Jack and the Three Wishes, collected from Sean Gallagher of the Blue Stack Mountains in Donegal. Jack sells the cow for three magic wishes, and his mother is so cross she drags him back to market to find the swindler. They do not find him, but she spies a tin teapot for sale and admiring it, wishes they had it. The wish comes true and the mother is delighted, and finally believes Jack is telling the truth. Jack is so cross he wishes the teapot stuck up his mother's arse. The wish comes true. They must use the last wish to rectify the situation.

In Britain and Ireland, when telling this version to adults, the reaction had always been very positive. At this particular performance, it went over like a lead balloon, there was no laughter, no reaction. I was visibly thrown.

The teller after me was an Australian. He proceeded to tell an autobiographical story about strange way he had travelled, odd places he had gone to, and amusing adventures he had on those journeys. I then realised they had wanted me to tell true, or exaggerated, personal stories about my own travelling.

Afterwards an English storyteller, long based in Chicago, talked to me about how I had been 'thrown' by the audience reaction. I said yes, I'd forgotten the sense of humour is different in different countries, even when they speak the same language. She could see how that story would be popular in Britain and Ireland. However, the venue for the festival was one of the most wealthy, upper-middle class neighbourhoods in the entire Chicago area, and the audience very much reflected that background.
15.2. *Scottish International Storytelling Festival, 1.*

Once booked for the Scottish International Storytelling Festival in the Netherbow Centre in Edinburgh, I shared the programme with two storytellers from Northern Ireland: Tom McDevitt and Billy Ritchie. The Scots storytellers and storytelling audiences seemed to have a slightly different idea of what Irish, particularly Northern Irish, storytelling would be. They enjoyed Tom and Billy immensely, but the storytelling was not what they expected. Billy, particularly, is well known for his recitations, comic and serious monologues he has composed himself or that he has learned from other well known sources. Tom knows many traditional stories, but prefers, in public with a large audience, to tell the humorous anecdotes and to play ‘Barney McCool’, a comic character who tells droll, amusing stories. He created this character and the stories years ago for RTE radio and it was, and still is, immensely popular. Even for two cultures as similar as Ireland and Scotland, and especially Northern Ireland and Scotland, one could see different understandings as to what stories, and storytelling was and is.

15.3. *Scottish International Storytelling Festival, 2.*

Another year I was booked to share an evening performance with an American storyteller I did not know. I’m ashamed to say I cannot remember her name nor find the programme that records it. However, she was very reluctant to share the stage, going back and forth between all the tellers sitting on the platform for the whole evening. This is the usual pattern for Scottish storytelling events. She assumed I would do one half of the evening, and she the other. She also assumed there would be elaborate lighting effects, which was not the case. The lights were normally kept up full, we walked onto the stage and sat down, and the evening started.

Donald Smith, the festival director, assured her that their usual format would be fine and I’d be up to matching anything she told, that we would be quite complementary to each other. The one compromise he made was that for one story she told, he would allow special lighting effects. *[The Netherbow Centre, where the evening events for the festival take place, is a purpose-built arts centre and small theatre space, so the equipment is there for special lighting effects, they are just not used in Scottish storytelling as a rule.]*

For this story, I sat at the edge of the stage, the lights went down completely and one red spotlight lit this other teller’s face and upper body. The story was a transformation story from Kenya, where the teller had lived for a while. It was a good story and well told, but I did not think the lighting effect really necessary nor did it seem to add anything to the overall effectiveness of the performance.

Afterwards, there was quite a bit of quiet criticism and complaining—nothing directed to the teller, but there was uniform agreement that the lights ought not to
have been used. That whatever was the ‘custom’ for storytelling performances in America shouldn’t ‘be allowed’ to dictate ‘their’ festival in Scotland.


On his first visit to Britain, in 1989, on the way to the International Colloquium on Storytelling in Paris, I took Jim to Ben Haggarty’s storytelling club, The Cric Crac Club, in Ladbroke Grove. It was in an upstairs room of a pub at the time. I believe the two tellers booked to perform that night were Ashley Ramsden and Pomme Clayton. The club, unlike others, was a strictly structured performance club, and never, or rarely, had ‘spots’ from the floor. (That is, it did not have the guest storyteller perform for part of the evening, and any one from the audience who wanted to tell a story get up to tell at the other times).

When Jim was introduced to Ben, out of polite respect and curiosity, I believe, he invited Jim to get up and tell a story. Jim introduced himself, stating that he understood that American storytellers had a reputation in England for not telling ‘proper’ folk tales, but for telling ‘personal’ (autobiographical) stories instead. As that is what he did, he would tell a personal story. He related ‘A Bell for Shorty’, a story about his father and Jim’s memory of him when Jim was five years old. It is an extremely moving story, well structured and told. I thought he had done very well. Jim said he felt tension, or antagonism, that he was being judged.

Jim and I have had many long discussions about the differences and similarities of American, British, Irish and other nation’s contemporary storytelling styles, enthusiasm, manners and so on. He has regularly returned to Europe and performed and led workshops. Once, when performing at Sidmouth International Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts, he found a very different reception to his personal stories. When asking was it all right to share such a story, the audience enthusiastically said yes, of course. His workshops on personal storytelling at the festival were oversubscribed. He even got a return booking to do a weekend residency on personal storytelling, one that paid enough that it covered his expenses and provided a good fee.

The enthusiastic reception at Sidmouth could have been that British storytelling has evolved over the past decade to now be more inclusive of other types of storytelling. It could also be that the Sidmouth festival audience, being generally more interested in music and song than in storytelling, is just more relaxed about form and content so long as it is of a good and entertaining standard, meaningful to them. However, again, Jim noticed many different reactions to him and his stories than what he gets in America. He puts these down to vocabulary and dialect, and also to vastly different cultural viewpoints which clearly inform how one tells a story, but also how audiences receive a story and the storyteller.
Journal Observations: Kick Into Reading—How Personal Stories mirror Märchen structures and elements.

[Also refer to Appendix 8.1 – 8.2.] When working with Peter Rhoades-Brown (Rosie), Community Officer for Oxford United, I recorded three of his stories in order to analyse their structures. One, ‘Winning Against Liverpool’, I deconstructed and used as the basis of an article ‘A Beautiful Game: Oral Narrative and Soccer’. Children’s Literature and Education.

This story had the following motifs, matching several hero wonder tales, and also made use of digression, frame language, and parallelisms in the same way orally told Märchen do. The motif structure was as follows:

Chelsea is to play Liverpool in the FA Cup. Rosie is Chelsea player, his father is a Liverpool supporter, so there is potential conflict from the start of the anecdote.

- Propp: Character conflict has a function in all narrative: ‘Function is understood as an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action’ (Propp, p. 20).
- L142.3 Son surpasses father at skill

Rosie calls Liverpool to ask if they will bring something for his dad, a fan, who will be in hospital the day of the match. The Liverpool manager brings him a team shirt, signed by all the Liverpool players.

- 610 The healing fruits or the healing object
- D810 Magic object as gift
- D2161 Magic cure for specific disease

Rosie asks the Chelsea team's physiotherapist to keep it safe. The physio tells him he had a dream: 1) that Rosie was going to get a shirt; 2) that the shirt would be that number; 3) that Rosie was going to score in this match

- 513 Helpers with magic skills
- D1810.2 Information through dream
- M302.7 Prophecy through dream

Propp: Note, as Propp observed, the specific structure of repetition—the dream is in three parts, and the teller’s vocal delivery emphasises this. This
structure is repeated several times, in describing the protagonist's goal, the spectators' jubilation, and going to the hospital to deliver the gift to his father.

*Rosie scores a goal against all the odds, seven minutes into the game.*

- D991.3 Marvellous ball player
- E494 Very special game, in the lower world/fairy world

*Liverpool, the top team in the Premiership, never manage to score. In the last minutes of the game, Chelsea score another goal. Fans invade the pitch and lift Rosie up, at the same time stripping him of his kit.*

- H156.2 Single combat to prove valour
- K2319.2 Warriors in deceptive single combat


17.0. *Journal Observations. Transmigration of ‘The King’s Big Toes’ by Patrick Kavanagh.*

Patrick Kavanagh, the poet, published a newspaper featuring his own writing, including a column for children. John Campbell collected a story from a woman in America, who grew up as a neighbour of Kavanagh and who knew the poet well. He told her a story for an essay she had to write for a nun at school. John believes this story was one published in Kavanagh’s newsletter. He tells the story, framing it with the story of how he met the woman, using the frame story the woman uses on how the poet came to tell the story to her, and then actually telling the story of Brian Boru, the famous Irish king, who wakes up to find his big toes talking to each other. Under their spell, he cuts them off, they run away, and the queen has to hop on a wooden bicycle to chase after them and fetch them back so she and Brian can have their breakfast in peace. After he gets the toes back, Brian always slept with socks on so his toes wouldn’t run away again.

I had heard John relate this several times. Each time, he told the two frame stories before telling the core story, the literary fairy tale of Brian Boru.
Working at a book festival in Portsmouth for the National Year of Reading, I heard a storyteller from Southampton tell the story, but as King Arthur and Queen Guenivere instead of Brian Boru and his queen. There were no frame stories, it started with the king waking up and hearing his big toes arguing. The storyteller did not know it was a literary story by Patrick Kavanagh, under copyright, nor any of the frame story explaining how the story came to be, and how John Campbell came upon it. The teller was sure I was mistaken, that it was a traditional Irish story, not a literary one. He heard an Irish teller relate the story, with the king being Brian Boru, and because it was ‘traditional’ he had changed the character into a famous British king. He couldn’t remember what Irish teller he had heard tell, but he didn’t think it was John Campbell, he was pretty sure it was a woman teller who had related the story. Since then, I have heard three other English tellers relate this story, as ‘King Arthur’s Big Toes’, at storytelling clubs and ‘swaps’ (informal storytelling at festivals). All believe it to be traditional, none of them know its provenance.

18.0 Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: Traditional tellers, esp. in Ireland and Scotland, and literary influences on their storytelling and repertoires

18.1. John Campbell, pp. 26-7

And Murphy had a great life, going around, too... You know that he had different approaches. Different approaches...

But I...the first time I met him. We were introduced. I had his books and all, you see. And the day that that was in the Irish News, the Irish Weekly. ‘Ghosts Be Walking’. I was trying to read it. And it was one of these days when the Cheltenham or some other of the great races was on. And they was running in and out of the bookies, and calling ‘Glass of Bass...glass of Guiness’ not drinking, you see. Really a bloody waste of time, you see, and all.

And this boy runs in and says, ‘Gi’ us a glass of Bass, Mister.’

And I says, ‘Great life in this, this is something I’m reading here.’

‘What?’

‘It’s by Michael J Murphy, a writer.’

‘He’s here.’

(laughter)
Michael James Murphy was coming in for a long time to the bar. I didn’t know who he was.

I took him to be.... He used to come in with other people, sometimes. And he always had this black book, you see, and he used to get this black book and I used to see him writing in this black book....I took him to be a superintendent or selling insurance. *(laughter)*

At the minute, I got rid of the man with the glass of bass and took the paper over to him and says, ‘Did you write this, this article?’

He says, ‘Every bloody word in that.’ And he says, ‘I’m without imagination. Anything I write,’ he says, ‘I have to see it.’

He says, ‘You know, I’m not...that actually happened, that man did see that, or that’s the will of so and so, or that bit of folklore I must have heard it.’

Along with writing to me to get poems for him, some time after he wrote to me from Black Lion to see did I have a copy of *At Slieve Gullion’s Foot*. The master was lost with the publisher and he hadn’t kept a copy of it himself.

*Summary:* The tape ran out at this point, and as John was tired I didn’t ask him to repeat what followed once I had changed it. However, he did find the book for Murphy, which turned out to be a first edition of a rare and limited run, having come out when paper was rationed during the war.

Murphy commissioned John to collect for him, on behalf of the folklore department. Murphy had become so well known it was difficult to collect authentic material by then—informants gave him what they thought he wanted, rather than what may have been the precise example of folklore he was looking for. As a local, and barman, and a young man, and also a relation of many of local potential informants in South Armagh, John was well placed to hear and record material. Although he left school at the age of twelve, John was very well read and took particular interest in history, and local poets and writers. This enabled him to place much of the material he collected, and recognise its relevance and its significance in relation to literature and history.

John also knew several songs, airs, ballads, monologues, recitations, and trivia of local history (such as townland names and how they were determined). By innocently relating these to some of his informants, who often knew variants, he often sparked their memory or pricked their pride, so that they would ‘correct’ him and give their versions, which were, of course the ‘correct’ ones. In this way, John not only collected material for Murphy and the folklore commission, but also for himself and at the same time became known as something of a performer.
Thus it was his interest in local writers, such as Murphy, that led him to be an active receiver of folklore, and in turn that established his reputation as a performer, specifically a storyteller. He has now turned writer himself, and is working with other local storytellers and singers on collections of local ballads, and upon a publication of a collection of his own poems. During the many decades now that John has collected folklore and told stories, he has also written poetry. This was discussed earlier in our interview:

p. 16.

Oh aye, I collected some. In fact, I’ve a thing it’s going to be published.

PR Yes, Patrick (JC’s youngest son) was saying you’ve a book of ballads.

Well, it’s wee bits of ballads. More about the way—the way they were foisted onto me.

I was Murphy wrote to me in three colours of ink. Blue ink. Red ink. And green ink. A wee note! [edited] The pens didn’t last a line. And the bones of the letter the letter’s some place, if could get my hands on it.. But I never remember doing away with it.

Murphy wrote, ‘John—Get a tape recorder and get around the doors and collect a few ballads for me.’ He was working in Blacklion. ‘I neglected—I totally neglected the ballad in our own area. I will be retired in July, that is if I don’t do a “Devon Loch” like the queen’s horse in the National.’

The queen had a horse in the national that just fell a foot from the winning post and broke its neck. Do you remember that?

PR I remember it.

Devon Loch was the name of the horse. Then he wrote, ‘P.S., I know why these pens are called ball pens’ and he put a big stroke under the word ball. (laughter)

Balls of pens!

So [eh] I went round and [eh] I... Well, my mother was living a while up the road at the time and went up to her and asked her would I go to for old ballads. And she says to call Martins.

And I say, ‘Aye, where are they?’
And she says that they're all away every place, they married every place, Daleys married Caseys... and... she says to Casey's up there, near Duncooley. You needn't be telling her who you are just say, 'I'm Minnie Flynn's son."

Jesus, I went up to her and I'd no cause to tell her I was who I was. First words come out of that woman was, 'Well, you're a Flynn, any way.' (laughter)

Before I spoke! Says I, 'I'm not. but my mother was.'

She says, 'Your uncle Paddy Flynn,' she says, 'Will never be dead,' she says, 'and while you're alive.' .... So there you are. She knew my uncle. And that woman had acted in the first plays with Sean O'Casey...

PR      Had she?

Oh, aye. Such a surprise, and such diction. She played in the Forester's Hall in Parnell Square, those plays were done. She rehearsed in Shields' parlour.

Wasn’t I telling a story one night and Thomas McGlanna, the director of the Abbey was there. 'Of course,' he says, ' you know who the Shields's were?'

Says I, 'No.,'

Says he., 'Of course you knew who they were?'

Says I, 'No, I don’t.'

He says, "Well, Barry Fitzgerald was Shields and his brother Arthur Shields never changed his name. He just kept under his name.'

So it was in their house that she was, they...they were rehearsing the plays in their house. Jesus, I couldn’t believe that the woman I was talking to then. Then she gave me out songs, like, you know. She couldn't sing, she'd had an operation three years before on her throat and her singing voice was gone. But she recited them out to me.

18.2.  Duncan Williamson

Summary: In our interview Duncan did not specifically mention any literary influences, though he does mention that he went to school where the main emphasis was on learning to read. He also mentioned that he read the Bible to a
friend, an old Irishman who could not read but who taught Duncan many stories and songs.

However, in his autobiography, The Horsieman, edited by Linda Williamson and Margaret Bennett, and published by Canongate Press, Duncan does mention that he enjoyed reading as a past-time, especially paperback westerns.

Duncan clearly picked up many ideas that come from a wide range of literature. However, in interviews, articles about his life and work, and his autobiography it is unclear how much he read and assimilated these ideas for himself, how many come from oral tradition, and how many come from conversations in encounters with folklorists and revival tellers.

This is one example, however, where Duncan gives a Classical reference without indicating if he read this somewhere, heard it as a belief expressed by Travellers, or gleaned from folklorists and revival tellers. Ever since I have known Duncan he has expressed this belief, and given the impression that it is very much a major belief amongst Scots Travellers.

And see that was the idea. The ancient Greeks believed that long ago. That the only way that a person became immortal, immortalised, was when they left behind something that people would talk about after they were gone. Now, I tell people in the story where I heard the story, and where it came from. And it's the same with a song. And I remember, when I sing a song I learned of Patrick O'Donnell, I'm back there with him.

19.0 Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: Contemporary tellers, esp. and literary influences on their storytelling and repertoires.

19.1 Hugh Lupton, p.11.

PR And I know you've written books as well. Do you find the process of telling a story by writing it, telling a story by speaking radically different? Or are there similarities? How do you feel about that? Obviously it's different to write, but what would you say is the relationship between the two?

I think they are very different.... When I write, I try to keep some of the rhythms, some of the cadences of the spoken in the written. But, I'm always aware of how much more condensed the written story is.... And, I do write as part of a process of finding the shape of the story, but I tend to leave that behind.

PR So that writing would be different, say from the writing you do for a published book?

Yeah. When I look [er] look at the written version of stories they're actually a long way from what I end up telling. There are little phrases and things that stay
there. But a lot of finding out whether a story works or not is trying it out on audiences. I find it takes maybe several months of telling before I find the shape that really works. And with writing, um, most of the stories I write are stories that I tell, actually, so I have a fairly clear idea of how they work orally. But I am aware of paring them back down again.

PR What are the bits you think you pare down, when you prepare a written version? Are you aware of particular things in the story? I suppose like runs or descriptions or formulaic language?

Yeah.

PR Is it about characters, is it dialogue? Is there a pattern I suppose is what I'm asking, that you've noticed at all.

I think things that you do: the music, the music of speech goes. So, for example, uh, I'm trying to think of a good example. 'He ran and he ran and he ran and he ran and he ran... ' Something like that. Repetition that is fine orally suddenly looks very odd on the page. Because you cannot do the play, and the lift and fall, and the cadences of the voice. So, um...

PR What about things like direct address. If you're doing a story orally, quite often people, or storytellers, will say to an audience, 'You know what I mean?' or 'We've all been there.' You know what I mean?

Yeah, yeah.

PR Those direct rhetorical questions we ask the audience, do they go into the writing?

They do sometimes. But I'm not sure about them. In the first book I did for Barefoot, um, the... I do kind of address the reader. They do look a bit funny on the page, I'm still not sure about them now. But, in the Peddler of Swaffham I say, at one point I ask the reader, 'Do you listen to your dreams?' And another point I say, 'What would you have done?' I'm not sure if they work upon the page.

What I wanted to do was write a book that would be useful to people that wanted to tell them as stories. So I sort of put those in as pointers for making a relationship.... But they look a bit odd on the page.

19.2. Grace Hallworth, pp. 30-33

But .... It's very difficult, too. Because unless you.... You are doing it and thinking about what you are doing at the same time...you're splitting yourself, aren't you?
PR
Yes

You have to think, to be into it. This is why you finish it’s like you come out of some other world into the glare around you.....

Because you so submerged yourself into the story.

PR And this is why I think the sense of time is so distorted.

Absolutely timeless. It’s really time out of time. ....

If you could give it a name that didn’t have time in it...you know, I understand the Aborigine dream time because it is like a dream. It has that quality of being elsewhere, of being a place that is totally different. I remember that I used to get that from reading too. And I used to read so much that I would sort of read the book and when I was finished it was as though I had been submerged in a pool of cool, cool water. ....

And I would come out. ....

And I would feel hot. I would need to find—afterwards, I would actually feel hot. I mean it was a physical thing. And think it is something like that when you tell stories.

PR And what about with writing. Is it similar?

Not for me, not for me.

PR Not for you.

Occasionally, because I say I’m not really an author, a writer under duress. So it’s always a special effort for me to write. ....

And of course it’s not really a novel, per se. You know Carnival, the one I did about Carnival is so brief as to be immaterial, but I don’t know what would happen if I were writing a novel with chapters. I mean, when I’m writing folk tales well of course I’m in the folk tale because I’ve told it.....

You know, I’m recapturing that, not very well, to put on the page. But I would imagine that people who do novels would have that feeling of being submerged, into that world of story....

Whatever world they’re creating.
Yes. But I certainly understand about the reading, that's the same experience I've had. And it's what I tell the teachers and parents when I'm working with children.

Or working with teenagers who've not learned to read.

You need to remember, when they listen to a story—and they do—for them, it is maybe the first time they've had that experience that you and I have when reading and one gets lost in the novel.

Yes, yes.

Because they find reading frustrating, they've not had that experience.

They can't get past the phonetics and the technical bits.

Exactly. That's it.

To get right into it.

And so their minds have not had that experience....

...of being out of time and out of space and completely lost in the world of the story, and that is why they need to listen to stories.

That's right, because that breaks through. ....

All those barriers in the text books, and it gives them the chance to go in.

And quite often, I found, when I used to introduce children to the library, when I first went to Hertfordshire and asked if I could do book talks, because I'd first done that in Canada, they said yes. And the teachers said the books you introduce are the ones the non-readers will look for. ....

Because they—we'd already cut though a barrier.

And so if they could get into the book enough, they could perhaps over ride the obstacles, you know, just. ...

Sometimes they still had to make the efforts, but I can remember doing Island of Blue Dolphins and I had to send quickly to County Hall to get copies, because the teacher said, oh, my non-readers, they all want it. Also, because with that book, the print is so good, very well spaced, very clear. So for a person who has problem with text, it's helpful.

The sequences of the events are so exciting that it carries you forwards....
And I had broken through for the first chapter and got to the exciting bit when I always stopped at the exciting bit and said you’ll have to read it to find out what happened....

So that business of breaking through, for the mind to get the space, and you were talking about space and I talked about physical space. But mental space we hadn’t talked about.

PR No But that is part of it as well. You can be in a room that is...that is the most difficult room for telling stories in. But, if you’re lucky, you can still make it work...

And you and the listeners forget you are in a room with traffic outside...

Yes, or noise from the kitchen.

19.3. Eddie Lenihan, pp. 14-15

Well both, both. Because, a character that would only be described could be very wooden. They’re doing things as well, and in doing they’re describing and their surroundings would be described. Fionn McCumhaill, could be giving orders and saying, while we’re here is there a story here. One of them could ask him why did you pick this place for a camp the night. It could be he was here before and he knew something about the place and he didn’t go to that place because that place had an Irish name that showed that place was cursed or something like that....

You know there’s way around all of these. And I don’t mean that they’re artificial. But in writing, you can’t just scribble down scribble down as it said and say it’s finished. That’d be crazy. You couldn’t do that, it would sound silly. Whereas in a story, sometimes you can do that. A told story. You can...I don’t know, it isn’t the right word for it, you can muddle through, you know, that you know that much more about the subject than the audience does and, like the difference between reading and stories and radio and television is, in the stories told, like the radio, it’s gone. It’s gone. And they won’t notice. The audience won’t notice, unless you make a completely stupid mistake that’s inconsistent. Whereas with the book, everything had better be right because the person flicks back the pages and says what is he talking about? Here he is this, here he says that.

So, in a sense, there’s a kind of a partition between the two in your mind, even if you might be writing the same thing, they’re two different things. Now for example the other night I might be talking about, telling stories of Biddy Early, um, Maura Rua, Alice Kytler, or any of those I included in the book of ferocious Irish women, they’d be utterly different as a told story. They would be quite quite different. Likewise with the devil’s stories that I did as a tape and for The Devil is
an Irishman book. Well, for those I didn’t even include the same stories so there’s no question of one being like the other in any way.

But...but...it is... I do my writing in the pub. And very often I’ll come down after a night and there might be two pages written. And you know looking back over them the following day whether the inspiration was with you the night before or if it was not. And when it wasn’t, it’ll be flat. And when it is, there’ll be things there that would come into your mind that never would have occurred to you, well, say, but for the story. And another refinement of something, or something else happening new.

Especially something funny. ..... Funny is the hardest of all.

PR   Especially in writing, do you think?

Yes. Yes. To be funny, to be humorous, is the hardest of all.

19.4.  Journal Observations

In writing stories for publication, particularly Shakespeare’s Storybook, I found the language did have to be markedly different from my telling of the story. Repetitions and, particularly, digressions had to be re-worked or eliminated, usually the latter.

However, that collection contained a mix of stories I had known and told for a very long time, along with new stories that I learned for performance at the same time or after I had written them. Comparing the processes that went on in my imagination and memory while adapting and writing these new stories with the same processes that went on later while learning the stories in order to tell them, I found that both were very similar. What came out was different, and the differences were affected by the medium. What went on mentally, however, and admittedly this is subjective, was much the same.

Reflecting on my childhood and later development as a storyteller, I do recall being an avid reader when in primary school, especially of folk and fairy tales, mythologies. Also I read, and re-read, classical children’s fantasy and adventure literature (Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass, Wizard of Oz, Robinson Crusoe, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, the Narnia books, the books of Madeleine L’Engle, and so on). This was partly due to being the eldest, I believe. I often read to younger siblings or helped them with homework. I also was sent off to spend time with older relations, such as my grandmother, her cousins, and my great-aunts, and they were all avid readers and often put me onto books and stories I probably would never have come across. Many of these books I later encountered in high school and at university, as part of my course work. As I had read them for fun at a younger age, I believe they coloured some of my ideas.
about narrative and encouraged a development in the interest of narrative, language and literature generally.

20.0. Journal Observations: Examples of literary tales performed as traditional works.

Besides the Patrick Kavanagh story about Brian Boru and his big toes (see above, Appendix I., 17.0.), there are a number of popular stories told and passed on as ‘traditional’ stories that are actually literary tales, written in the past fifty years and still under copyright. These are:

*Flossie and the Fox*, by Patricia McCLissock

*Death and the Red Headed Woman*, by Helen Eustis

*The Elephant and the Baby*, by Elfrida DuPont

*Come Again in the Spring*, by Richard Kennedy

*The Dishcloth Concert*, by Richard Kennedy

*Wilford Gordon MacDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox

Some tellers credit the authors of these tales, others do not and, of those who do not, many firmly believe the stories are traditional. They have not researched the sources, nor asked the teller from whom they first heard the story whether it was traditional or original and under copyright. Tellers who do know that the stories are under copyright have not always contacted the publisher or author for permission to use the stories, nor arranged any royalty payments. (This is more common in Britain, whereas in America those tellers who relate any of these or similar literary tales have made such arrangements.)

Stories selected are sometimes literary variants of folk tales, or are writing in a style reminiscent of folk tales, with repetitive language, dialect, folktale motifs, and so on. They are easily learned, remembered and performed using the same mnemonic methods that tellers maintain in performing traditional stories. They are easily mistaken, when told orally and not credited, as traditional folklore.

This does not excuse copyright infringement, but it does demonstrate that in structure and content, literary and oral tales are much closer, or can be, than many realise.

21.0. Interview Transcripts: Grégóir Ó’Dúill’s comments from *Storytelling in Ireland: A Re-Awakening*

*Interview for study on storytelling. Storytelling in Ireland, A Re-Awakening. (Ryan, 1995) with Grégóir Ó’Dúill, poet. (Transcripts archived with the Verbal*
What happened in Irish from 1880 is that literary and oral sources were almost indistinguishable. Novels in Irish were almost always a written form of told tales, as they were told. Major families of writers came from a folklorist environment, the mental training, the creative side were in folklore and music... There is some evidence that when the folklore activities of Donegal began to die out or cease, so too did creative writing, because it was so closely linked to folklore and not strong enough to survive on its own.

22.0. Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: Examples of storytellers presenting personal narratives in performances, gleaned from observations made and written up in the personal journal, and from articles and interviews.

22.1. Duncan Williamson, p. i.

Well you know, the idea that many people, Pat, has asked me in many places where I travel.... It is very rare for a Traveller person, like myself, to travel abroad to so many parts of the world as a storyteller, you see?

I was born in a tent, and brought up on the west coast of Argyle. I was born in 1928, my father was an old soldier in the war. And his captain was—my whole life is a story, you know—his captain was the Duke of Argyle. The guy who owned all of Argyle. And he was of the Travelling People, my father, but he was a good soldier. He survived the war. He lost three brothers, and my mother lost three brothers. He married my mother when she was only fourteen years old. She was expecting her first baby. And, eh, I have to tell you this. And, eh, so it was very hard for him, being a war veteran, because he could not read nor write, you see. But when he needed a place—when he was back to my mother, you see, he was with his pal, with the soldier with him. So the soldier said, 'When you come back, you find a settled base.' In Argyle somewhere where he loved the countryside, the west coast.

So after the war he went to old Duncan Campbell, the Duke of Argyle. And old Duncan Campbell gave him permission to pick a place on his estate. And my father chose the forest. The middle of a huge oak forest with a stream running nearby.

And this is where he brought up, with his sixteen children.

Now though we lived in the forest we attended the little village school. They never accepted us, the local people. They called us Tinkers. The Tinkers up in the wood. But if one carrot or one cabbage went amiss or something was missing, we were accused of it. The persecution was terrible at that time.
So here you've got my family. Parents could no read nor write. No books, no toys. I remember father one Christmas morning taking one single orange, and cutting it up in about—lots of little pieces with his knife and giving each of us a little piece of our own. He turned around and he said, 'Well, children. I wish I could buy you a present. But I haven't got any money.' It was hard times. My mother was just popping into town, selling baskets, my father making them. But he said, 'I'm going to give you the greatest present of all. And I want you to remember this until the day you die.' (cough) Excuse me. 'Because I'm going to tell you a story for Christmas.'

And so he did. And you know, Pat, that was more important to us than anything he could ever give us. 'Because clothes will get worn,' he said, 'Books get destroyed, toys get broken, but a story will live with you forever. If you'll remember my story, long after I'm gone, and it'll give pleasure.' And I did, and put it in my book called Tell Me A Story For Christmas, some of my father's tales. I hope you read it some day.

Comment: This is how Duncan started the interview, not really understanding or listening to my first question. He has been interviewed by folklorists and revival storytellers so many times he automatically goes into a narrative mode. This is clearly a well honed autobiographical tale, often told. Duncan also tells this and similar stories about his life, usually in more abbreviated form, as introductions to his stories or explanations of them after he finishes. Part of his performance is very much to frame his stories, which he changes to be understood by non-Travellers, so that his identity and life as a Traveller is understood by listeners.

22.2. John Campbell, pp. 22-3

PR (conversation stopped for a moment, then continued...looking at family photos now) And so this is when...by that time, you said your grandmother had come from Glenties to here in South Armagh?

That's them, there. That's my Grandmother Flynn. That's my mother's father. Jimmy Flynn's father....Jim Flynn's father.... He was the youngest in that family. My mother was the second oldest. ...

(John's voice is too faint during the rest of the discussion of these portraits. He must have moved away from the microphone without me noticing).

There was a man here, he's still let down in Cullyhannah, called Kevin McMahon (? last name unclear). He was writing a book on the old Troubles. The 1916 days. The facts on the Mullabahin Company of the old IRA, and others who had to do with all that. And he gave that to Michael Quinn. Michael Quinn's father, you see, was Captain of the Old IRA. ... And he give it to Michael Quinn to see was there anything in it that shouldn't be in it, and was there anything left out that should be in it. Because Michael would have a good idea as account of his father.
And, uh, Michael Quinn rung me here one day, a couple of days ago, and he says, ‘Are you doing anything?’

‘No, not at all.’

‘I’ve a book here left at home with me. Kevin McMahon, he gave it to me to read, and the script, he says, is to be published in a book on the old IRA. He’s after ringing me, he wants it over, and he says take John Campbell over with you, I know him.’

And so he did, I knew him from years and years ago, for a bit of craic. So we landed over. And he asked, ‘What do you think of it?’

And Mick says, ‘ ‘Tis great. But you can’t publish it.’

‘And why not?’

‘There’s four people mentioned in that book’ says he, ‘that are still alive.’ ‘Lord Jesus!’ says he. ‘He must be over a hundred!’ (laughter)

He says, ‘They are!’

He says, ‘Who-who’s innit?’

He says, ‘Minnie Quinn.’

‘Aye,’ he says. ‘That’s the woman that flung the stones at Countess Markievicz’

‘Yes.’

‘Now who was she...what Quinn was she?’

‘That’s my Aunt Minnie!’ (laughter)

And he says, ‘And what [why] was she throwing stones at the Countess Markievicz?’

‘She was a Hibernian!’

He says, ‘Wasn’t her father one of the leaders--’

‘I know he was! But that’s not to say she was!’ (laughter)

And then he says, ‘And who else?’

And he says, ‘Minnie Murray.’
And he says, 'Me Aunt Minnie is 101, and Minnie Murray is 100. And the other man you mention there, he's 99.'

And he says, 'There were four mentioned there, you said.'

'Mrs. McCann. She's 99.'

He says, 'You'll have to wait 'til they die.'

Michael (Miceal) Quinn's Aunt Minnie lived until she was 106.

Note: This sort of detailed knowledge is typical of John Campbell and other traditional storytellers. There is minute local and kinship knowledge, and all this is integrated into both para- and narrative texts.

22.3 Taffy Thomas, p. 2

So, for example, if I tell, for example, 'Dividing Apples', which is an apple scrumping story, I think of myself and my mates when I was a little boy scrumping in my grandfather's orchards. ... So it's that, I always say it's the anchor point I move from. Sometimes I might describe it but I don't need to describe it. If I'm carrying that truth then it's there.

PR Yes, it's strong in your mind. Yes. And you tell a lot of fishing stories as well, and I know you worked on a fishing boat out of Padstow. So does that come into it?

It does indeed. I sometimes refer to that in the stories. But even if I don't, actually, again, refer to it I'm likely to think of Tommy Morrisey who was a traditional storyteller and fisherman and singer that I worked for, as his crew. And he's there, as an anchor point for the stories. ....

Journal Observation.

All the traditional storytellers I have observed over the years frame their stories with personal stories. Some of the excerpts from interviews with John Campbell and Duncan Williamson, already listed above, demonstrate this already. Sean Gallagher, George Sheridan, Andy McKinley, Harry Scott, Jack McCann and others all did so.

Jack McCann is a special case in point. He was a solicitor and most of his stories related humorous anecdotes about the law and various characters he had defended. Many of the tales were 'shaggy dog' stories or universal stories involving the downtrodden and the powerful (be they clergy, royalty, aristocracy, landlords, the police, judges, or lawyers). These, however, were woven into his
own experience as a solicitor, with real cases slightly exaggerated and integrated in the fictional accounts.

23.1 Interview Transcript: Examples of phrases migrating (and not working when transplanted) (e.g., Taffy’s ‘He weren’t a local.’ And similar lines)

_Taffy Thomas, pp. 5_

And I think the first traditional teller I ever heard, collecting stories, was Ruth Tonge. [Ruth Tonge was a famous storyteller and folklorist in Somerset]

PR. Yes. I was going to get to that as well. And I think Ruth Tonge died before I came to England. I can't remember when she passed away.

Well I think I was only about—I was just youth. ... I wasn’t twenty, it was before I went to college. And I got taken to meet Miss Tonge and just sat with her all afternoon. And, and, at the end of the afternoon she said, ‘Well Mr. Thomas, I suppose I had better tell you a story.’ And she did.

But, I mean, one of the things that was important to me about Ruth’s stories was that they were told in quite broad Somerset dialect. ... And I tend to avoid dialect in stories. Apart from West Country dialect I grew up with. .... My mother was quite broad. .... And on my grandfather’s farm I used to sit and listen, often bemused, to him and Harry Brake or Cyril Langdon who worked for him, talking over their bread and cheese and their glass of cider at lunch time, you know?

But it was the richness of the language and it’s there and I can do it... The main story I tell of Ruth’s is ‘The Apple Tree Man’. It's my favourite Christmas story. I have heard various tellers telling it without the Somerset dialect. ... And basically what it does is remove the poetry from it. The strength of the story is still there. ... The poetry is in the language.

23.2. Journal Observation

Taffy’s dialect, his way of speaking, is quite pronounced and individual. So influential is he as a performer, especially on the folk festival circuit, that many amateur and beginning storytellers have learned stories from his repertoire. Taffy does encourage this. They have also taken on many of his expressions, imitating (or trying to imitate) his style. To any one who knows Taffy and his stories, these expressions often stick out. For example:

Taffy tells many ‘devil’ stories, with musicians selling their souls to the devil or fishermen tricking the devil with the help of a magic fish. A phrase Taffy commonly uses, after describing a gentleman with pointy horns and a tailcoat with a real tail and hooves for feet, is: ‘Well, he knew he weren’t a local.’ The description and this ‘punch line’ phrase is often imitated, word for word and
pause for pause. It is not, however, delivered in the tone of a Somerset dialect, and usually does not have any effect.

As a teacher, I told stories daily to my students. I became aware of ‘catchphrases’ or ways to telling stories that were typical to me when teaching creative writing. Students absorbed some of my speech patterns. Quite often I describe details of stories by comparison: ‘He had more gold than you could tell me and more gold than I could tell you’ and ‘She was more beautiful than you could tell me and more beautiful than I could tell you’ and so on.

The students picked this up, describing monsters as being ‘uglier than you can tell me and uglier than I can tell you’ and so on. After this I noticed many other, similar, phrases entering their writing. There was never any discussion about doing this, no suggestions given. The story time was separate from the creative writing time, and my told stories were never used as models for written work.

24.0 Video Analysis and Journal Observations

24.1. For the 1987 International Storytelling Festival at Waterman’s Arts Centre, Diane Wolkstein told ‘Elsie Piddock Skips in her Sleep’ by Eleanor Farjeon. This is a literary fairy tale by a famous author of children’s books in England, and Wolkstein encouraged the children to bring their jump ropes (skipping ropes) to skip along to the rhymes written in as part of the story. She did tell the story more or less verbatim.

24.2. Other librarian-storytellers who consider ‘Elsie Piddock’ their ‘signature’ story (that is, a story particularly associated with those tellers) are Eileen Colwell and Ellin Greene. Eileen Colwell told an anecdote several times (at conferences and at private gatherings) of how she met Eleanor Farjeon to gain permission to tell and record the story. Calling the author at her cottage in Hampstead, North London, the writer opened the door and said to Eileen: ‘Stand there, say nothing, let me look at you!’ After looking her over during a long and silent pause, Farjeon announced, ‘Yes, dear. You are Elsie Piddock. You may tell the story.’ With that, they went in to take tea together and the two become very good friends.

25.0 Interview and Journal Observations: Tradition and musicians and composers, observations of popular tunes and songs at festivals and sessions, anecdotes framing and regarding musical performance.

25.1. John Campbell, pp. 36-38

Now, eh, I remember when I was talking to you I thought it was Brother Kenney, and him, and he’s still alive. Now Brother Kenney was there and he was to give a lecture on, on...it was more or less on writing music, and...structuring tunes and things like that. He was a doctor of music and that.
And he got up at the blackboard, you see. These were all musicians talking. We were only listeners there. Couldn't whistle a tune. And he was up, and he wiped the whole blackboard clean. And he drew the lines, you know the five lines, and he put the sign at the side of it and all.

'I want to ask a question,' he says. 'Is there 5 Irish airs, 50 Irish airs, or 500 Irish airs abounding at the minute?'

And some fellow put up his hand. After a while there's always some fellow, maybe it's the fellow organising the thing, better make a....everybody was sitting there like dummies. 'I'd say there's 500,' he says, 'And maybe 5,000.'

And he went and he structured the thing on the....put the notes on it. You see, went over the notes, you see, right along. I forget the tune. It was....aye, he started to sing it:

It a shady nook on moonlight night a leprechaun I spied.
With his scarlet top and coat of green, a crusheen by his side.
'Tic tac tic tac,' his hammer it went upon a wee wee shoe.
Ah, it's side by side we fought and we died in the valley of Lough a Nuir.

[Note—this last line is from another song with the same tune.]

(laughter)

And on the same note, he just phrased it a little bit different. And he went up and he ended up with:

Rare bog, the rattlin' bog, the bog down in the valley of! (laughter)

PR I've heard people do this with 'The Irish Washerwoman' and 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'.

Is that so?

PR They're the same notes.

Is that right?

Well, he had all these, you see. And at the end of it, and then he asked a question. Was it, was he a musical genius that wrote The Derry Air, or Danny Boy? The Derry Air. We knew who wrote the words to Danny Boy but was it a musical genius, eh, what wrote the music... Somebody saw it written down, in
some of the work of great composers, Bach or some of these, that said he would
swap all he had written for to have the title of the man who wrote The Derry Air.

So, uh, people said he was a musical genius.

'No,' he said, 'Whoever he was, he knew nothing at all about music! (laughter)

He went with the air, you see. There's a wee bit of a structure, you see. You start
off here, and you go and you go up, but you always come back to this level, you
know? ....

You come back to that level and so on. But he says, he comes along, you know,
and goes...

    Do dum dum di, dum dee di dee di di dum do..
    Do di dee di, dee di dee di do dum...

Always comes down to the same level...

    Do dum dum di, dum dee...

Up, good enough.

    Do dum di di,
    Dee dum dee di dum dee di dum dee dum.
    Dee dum dee di, dum die
    Dum dum dee di

He's back there again. A musician would say, 'What am I gonna do here?
You know, I'm going to knock the whole tune out...

    Dum dum dee di,
    Dum dum dum DIIII

Away out there! (laughter)

Where a musician, writing music, shouldn't be WAY out there. It wouldn't be the
normal thing to do.

Away out there and be god he got a note! ... It did the trick ... (laughter)

But he says, 'A man writing music for a living, wouldn't, couldn't go there. He
just hit it. It's a chance in a million.'

PR    Right.  How did he think that came about?  Did he say?
Oh no. He didn't. He didn't know, he just discovered it. But the stories come that way—a bit of an accident.

25.2. Duncan Williamson, p. 13

PR And the other question I had from this week was yesterday, we were in the Resolution. And you decided to sing songs, you didn't tell any stories. Do you know why or did you just feel like singing a song?

No, no, I sang a song because other people were there and there was some one else singing before that. ....

You see, it's like this. Maybe you walk into a place and people are singing songs. And somebody sings a song. And I get up. And if I get up and—I would feel it was an insult. Because if I was to go up and to say, 'Well we've had enough of the old songs, I'll tell a story.' It would be a kind of an insult to the last singer, it would be really.

PR You think so? Even though Malcolm [the MC] introduced you and said you were going to tell a story?

Yeah, yeah. It'd be an insult. But if the person before you told a story, you'd have to get up and tell a story. But you would never follow a song with a story. You follow a song with a song, you follow a story with a story.

PR All right. So do you think I was out of place telling that story? They asked me specifically to tell a story.

That's it, but they asked you for a story.

PR But they asked you for one, too.

But I wouldn't tell a story with a singer.

PR Well, there were musicians before me. But Malcolm actually introduced you and said 'Duncan's going to tell us a lovely story now.' And then you sang instead.

Aye, because...

PR Because...

Because of the singer. You see what I mean?

Analysis of the two conversations above:
Comment. Both John Campbell and Duncan Williamson are as renowned for their knowledge and singing of songs and ballads as they are for their stories and storytelling. John certainly recognises similar structures in terms of content and mnemonics in songs and stories. His point in telling me the above anecdote regarding the 'Derry Air', which he referred to in both interviews, was that just as the same tunes can be used for different words, so too can the same images and phrases move from one story to another. And, the fact that they do so, is often an accident, it cannot be done consciously, it cannot be planned.

Duncan insisted it was right for me to tell a story, as I was after a musician, not a singer, and I was known not to be a singer. But this part of the conversation reveals much about how Duncan chooses what to perform, be it story, tune, or song. There is an underlying, quasi-automatic or subconscious etiquette system that determines, in a traditional session or a session like the one at this folk festival, as to when one may have a turn and what one may do when that turn comes.

25.3. Journal Observation. Working with several musicians, I have noticed that many of the introductions they make are anecdotal in nature. They tell a story—perform it—with as much skill and style as they play a piece of music. Discussing performance techniques, how memory works, how one chooses a piece to play (or tell), I've come to believe that their associative thoughts (memories, imaginings, emotions aroused by certain stimuli, etc.) work very much in the same way and on the same level as mine do when learning and telling stories.

One musician I worked with a great deal, Terry Mann, was able to compose tunes and melodies that harmonised with my voice as I told certain stories. Even though the stories might have varied somewhat, his improvisational skills were such that they could compensate for those variations and meld the tune to the tale.

Discussing the traditions and methods of storytelling in various parts of India and Pakistan with Arti Prashar, a storyteller and actress, and Shahrukh Husain, a storyteller and author, I have learned that such collaboration is common with storytellers and musicians there.

26.0 Journal Observation: Anecdote collected from librarian of Vaughan Williams Library

When doing research at the Vaughan-Williams Library, the folklore archive for the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the library Malcolm Taylor told me about an experience he had with a quite influential storyteller in contemporary storytelling. Malcolm had produced a book and audio cassette from the EFDSS archive recordings of storytellers from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, *And That's My Story!*, *Tales, Yarns and Legends of Britain and Ireland*. Field recordings made by Ewan McColl, Peggy Seeger, Charles Parker, Jim Carroll,
Pat MacKenzie, Bob Patten, John Howson and Denis Turner, which for the most part had been very well received.

This contemporary storyteller had come in to discuss this recording with him, particularly the story and storyteller representing Ireland. The contributor was Junior Crehan, a legendary traditional fiddler player, singer and storyteller from near Milltown Malby in County Clare. He related a version of 'Dermiad and Grainne', a classic Irish myth from the Fenian Cycle (Fianna), the collection of legends regarding Fionn McCumhail and his comrades.

The visiting storyteller felt this story should not have been in the collection Malcolm had produced, the reason being that Junior did not tell the story the 'right' way, that is, the with the details of plot, character, theme and so on as they are in various written versions. So strong was the teller’s feelings on the matter that Malcolm and this teller debated the issue, according to Malcolm, for nearly two hours.

It is true the Junior’s version varies tremendously from better known versions of the legend. It is, in fact, much more of a local legend than it is a Fenian romance. However, as Dáithí ÓhÓain points out in his book, Fionn McCumhail, Images of the Gaelic Hero, these written versions are original creations in Middle Irish, inspired by the fashion on the continent for Romance literature in the Middle Ages. They incorporate and were based on folk traditions, and also re-entered the folklore of peasant Ireland. However, most versions published in the last century are based on these literary sources, and are translated and re-interpreted in English. To assume they are the ‘correct’ oral traditional version is a bit dubious.

As Junior was very much acknowledged as a supremely good example of a traditional musician and teller, Malcolm found the attitude strange, but, in his experience, fairly typical of unusual concepts about tradition and folklore that many participants in the folk and storytelling revivals seem to hold.

27.0 Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances and Journal Observations: World stories found in and adapted for traditional teller’s repertoires

27.1. John Campbell, Irish Night, Waterman’s Arts Centre, 1987

Summary of Story: ‘The Big Freeze’ This is a tall tale that starts, as good tall tales do, very realistically. John sets it geographically and historically in South Armagh, giving detailed background description of a hard winter decades ago that is still remembered. He incorporates detailed social observation and commentary on: relations between elderly married couples; local farmers and their parish priest; conflicts with priests, landlords, and the problems of poverty.
and scarcity of food; and, in a very funny digression, connects the past with the current ‘Troubles’.

The man goes out hunting to find food, with the loan of an old musket from the priest. He does not follow the directions and when the gun goes off, he falls over. The ramrod, left in the gun, manages to spear several ducks flying overhead, while the man falls onto a hare and a rabbit. Looking at where the ducks fell, he sees the rod has pierced the frozen lake and speared a salmon. He tries to free the salmon from the ice, the ice breaks and is so sharp it cuts off his head. Having ‘great presence of mind’ the man grabs the head and sticks it back on his neck, and it is so cold it freezes back in place.

He brings back this magnificent catch to the wife and sits by the fire while she prepares the dinner. His nose is runny from the cold. Having no pocket handkerchief, as they hadn’t been invented, John explains, he wipes his nose by pinching two fingers either side of it and squeezing downward on it. As he does so, his head falls off into the fire.

This is a classic tall-tale motif, with folklorists recording versions from several cultures all over the world. John, typically in terms of his style and, from the interview, his own beliefs in and understanding of storytelling, sets it clearly in his own locale, among the types of people he knows well, or knew well growing up. The hyper-realism of the beginning of the tale make the fantastic finish all the more funny; his digressions throughout the story, but especially the first part, warn the listener that something unbelievable is coming, so they are prepared for it and completely entranced in the story by the time the shock finish arrives.
27.2. **Francie Kennelly**, Irish Night, Waterman’s Arts Centre, 1987

*Summary of Story.* Francie related a ‘Changeling’ story. This is tale-type where the fairies, malevolent spirits in this case, exchange a human for a child, spouse or loved one. To get the person back, a relation or lover must follow the very strict instructions of a magical helper, usually a wise old woman. In his story, it is the man’s wife who is exchanged and, seemingly, very ill and dead. Her husband seeks the advice and help of Biddy Early, an historical figure well known in County Clare and all of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. Stories of her are still told around County Clare today.

Again, folklorists have found changeling stories in cultures throughout the world. Francie’s is told in a very realistic and straightforward manner, recounted as history, which it is. Biddy Early did exist and historical records show she was a wise woman and healer who helped many. Even so, this particular story shares many of the same elements as stories such as the Scots ballad *Tam Lin* and the Greek myth *Orpheus and Euridyce*.

27.3. **Duncan Williamson**, Waterman’s Arts Centre, 1987 and various storytelling clubs.

*Summary of story.* In a number of videos, Doc Rowe has recorded Duncan telling ‘Jack and Death in a Nut’. I have heard Duncan tell this story live a number of times, and also Taffy Thomas, who learned the story from Duncan. It is what is referred to as a typical ‘Jack’ tale, in which the hero is a boy not very strong or clever, but a bit lazy and slow.

Jack is upset when his mother tells him she is going to die. He runs away and meets Death on the way to take his mother. Jack is so angry he breaks Death’s scythe and beats him with the handle. Death shrinks in size to become no bigger than Jack’s thumb. Jack then puts him in an empty nut shell, seals it by daubing it with clay and moss, and throws the nut and Death into the sea.

Jack returns to find his mother well. To celebrate, she decides to cook a special breakfast and sends Jack to the butcher for supplies. The butcher cannot give him any meat because nothing can be killed. Jack finds it is the same problem at the greengrocer’s and when he tries to pluck vegetables and fruits from the fields and orchards. He goes and tells his mother what has happened, and she knows it is because Jack got rid of Death. She is angry, chastises him, tells him Death is a friend.

Jack is upset, runs away again. He sees the nut floating on the ocean and opens it up and lets Death out.
There are numerous folktales about Jack, and also about people tricking Death, and reconciling themselves to the concept of death in life. Stories about outwitting Death are found around the world, but Jack tales are more specific to Britain, Ireland, and the United States. There are other versions of Jack triumphing over Death. This version is quite personalised, very specific to Jack and his mother. Usually the hero who beats Death is rewarded with the princess and/or a kingdom. Here, the story is very much about accepting death as a part of life, as a natural order of things in the world.
Chapter 3.

28.0 Journal Observations: Audience response at the first storytelling festival in Kiltimagh, County Mayo, Republic of Ireland

The first storytelling in Kiltimagh was the end of August, 1994. It was organised by local people, for the local community. Paddy O’Brien from Kerry via Cork, Liz Weir from Antrim, Mealda Hall from Roscommon via Belfast, and myself, Patrick Ryan, from America via London and Derry were booked storytellers. In the evening, Eamon Kelly, the famous actor and ‘seanchie’ was booked.

The organisation of the festival was relaxed. Although slots and venues were time tabled, these were often re-arranged at the last minute, so that the storytellers were performing where local people were gathered.

This was a weekend festival, and by the Sunday there was a great interest in and enthusiasm for the storytelling. Gathered in the hotel bar, late in the morning, we weren’t scheduled to tell stories. However, many people had sought the tellers out for more stories, and the tellers wanted to share stories. So an informal session commenced.

Liz Weir got up first. The bar was crowded and noisy, since Mass had ended and many people, who knew nothing about the festival, had come to have Sunday brunch. So she announced loudly, ‘I’m Liz Weir, and I’m a storyteller and I’ve come here to tell you some stories.’ An elderly lady, who had not a clue what was going on and was a bit deaf, turned to her son and loudly explained, ‘Is that woman taken with the drink?’

29.0 Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances and Journal Observations: Francie Kennelly’s and John Campbell’s performances at festivals and at home, compared.

29.1: Analysis of video recording of storytelling performance by Francie Kennelly and John Campbell (with Tom Munnelly, folklorist, doing introductions and an Irish piper playing tunes between stories), Watermans Arts Centre, Storytelling Festival 1987.

What follows is a second analysis I did, in light of my reading of Alexander and Govrin, making use of the acting modes to identify what Francie and John were doing.

After the interval, Munnelly talks more about folklore, particularly pishogues [Munnelly remains seated throughout, very much in a ‘lecturer’ mode].....

Francie tells ‘The Fairy Jockey’.
Starts straight away, no introduction on his part....goes immediately into stance with hands on hips, jacket pushed back....straight into synoptic mode....looking down, not really at audience....gradually twinkles and looks at audience now and then, almost a sly/shy look.

Takes a breath and licks lips at regular intervals, almost rhythmic in its sequencing....in between he speaks very quickly....

When he gets to crux of story, the most dramatic bit, it is then he gestures just a bit.

Dialogue with fairy woman, for example, he extends his arms out, and punctuates the dialogue with a lot of ‘sez he’ and ‘sez she’, etc.....it is reported dialogue an important aesthetic element, making an effect, so he is not really in character mode.... it is definitely proximate mode, retold reported dialogue not a speaking character...

This is the same behaviour when he exchanges dialogue between rider and freemason.

He sits down immediately story is finished.

Munnelly--again, talks about folklore, field work; he goes on and on, continuously creating context, academizing, actually quoting urban myths of folklore process itself.

Any one in audience at the time with knowledge would have heard these stories or read these stories before (e.g., Asked of old Irish farmer: Do you believe in fairies? No but they exist ... etc.).

Talks about man telling story that goes on and on so many hours everyone else falls asleep or drinks too much whiskey, finally finishes, the one listeners says no, you've got it wrong, the hawk came before the bear. Right, I’ll tell it all again says the man....

Then Munnelly goes on to introduce John, saying he's never heard this story but John says he must hear about Paddy the Creel.

John tells ‘Paddy the Creel’. He starts, says Ah, ‘Paddy the Creel’ while still sitting. As he stands up he says there was such a person as Paddy the Creel, I’ve a photograph of him in my house.

(very much in teller mode here.)
Then he stands up and to tell Paddy was the last creel maker, and what a creel maker is and does, and how at the time the job was dying out and he did odd jobs. (synoptic mode).

But John shifts almost imperceptibly into second story: so this is synoptic within synoptic (or teller-synoptic)? It appears, to me, more of the latter. Any way, tells story about Paddy fixing gate at Silverbridge School, while smoking clay pipe (Ben Nevis pipe...he describes and explains what this pipe is)......Paddy’s smoke reaches School master’s nose, who clutches for pipe, realises he hasn’t got it, goes to window and asks Paddy for a pull of his pipe. Teacher’s dialogue is more in proximate mode, more like reported speech, like Francie’s dialogues. But when Paddy speaks he’s definitely in character mode, changing voice slightly to indicate more of a country voice, even lifting his head in a manner reminiscent of some country people, looking askance. He is very much mimicking Paddy it seems to me. Schoolmaster takes out linen handkerchief to ‘clean’ mouthpiece of pipe--John mimes this. John makes joke about having a linen handkerchief just like it in his pocket but he daren’t take it out (so teller in the middle of synoptic). Then pipe is handed back and Paddy breaks an inch of the clay pipe, which is what they’re for, so more than one can healthily pull on it. John mimes this too....a combination of the miming and the timing in his speech raises quite a laugh.

Teller mode: Now I’m only telling you that part of the story to let you see that though Paddy was a humble sort of man he was very particular about what he put in his mouth....(Teller Mode)....at same time, John leans forward (noticed he’s behind table again, possibly leaning on it with hands)....

Then John stands and cuts right away into a new story in the story....[my note: very much a frame story with stories within story, or minor stories used to lead up to main story].....but only a few words in he stops from synoptic mode to teller mode to explain what Silverbridge is and is like, and makes a joke through dialogue between two women, which is more reported speech and proximate mode than character mode....this raises laugh....but it is another story within a story.

Then tells of Paddy going to shop to buy bread, but some one comes to hire him and promises dinner, tea, and a fee, so he doesn’t need the bread but changes it for tobacco. When asked to pay for it he claims he paid by returning the loaf, and when it is pointed out that he didn’t pay for the loaf he says he didn’t want the loaf, that’s why. All this humour, then, is related primarily through dialogue and definitely in character mode. Paddy’s character most defined, man hiring him and shopgirl hinted at, more like mix of proximate and character mode. Drama and laughter achieved by dialogue, however.
In the middle of this though he does go into teller mode, a reverie about lovely tissue paper one once got in shops and how it was kept safe for when guests came and would need to use it.

Also cuts in at point when man comes into shop and tells personal story of going into a hardware shop and women misunderstanding situation....this is teller/proximate mode in a way, I think, in that it’s more reported dialogue.....made to stress point, to provide background and setting to main story still...

But he finishes the story, and draws humour for it, through the dialogue....this sets up a pattern for the next story.

He cuts to this, going very quickly to it by saying now one of the jobs he got was with Conn the Dandy. Then explained/described Conn. Sets him up as a bit of a miser who puts on airs.... but cuts from this to make joke to explain the kind of farmland Conn, and John, lived/live on....when the cuckoo goes across the land in Ireland he goes cuckoo, cuckoo, but when he crosses that farm he sighs, ‘A hah ahhh.’ Uses character mode for cuckoo? Is certain onomatopoeic to express emotion and describe farm at same time, which is more teller mode with a hint of proximate mode?

Cuts definitely to teller mode at this point, after audience laughs, to say ‘Sorry about that Jack’ (direct address to one member of audience) and then explains there’s a man in the audience ‘born in the place, give him a round of applause’ which the audience does, laughing....

Cut from one teller mode to another? Or, rather, from teller mode while playing ‘the teller’ and then going straight to ‘real John’ still using his teller mode.

Goes right back into story, in synoptic mode, gestures a great deal to describe the process of ploughing and the swing plow.

Dialogue, when horse stops, consists of character mode and proximate mode. John mimes, does not gesture, and changes voice so it is character mode completely when Paddy actually looks up and holds Clydesdale horse.

Clinton the Vet who is called for is also well drawn, with a mix of proximate and character mode, or an alternation of these modes....and a bit of synoptic mode as he describes the vet as one who could put back the leg of a horse.

Great deal of miming and vocal change with vet ordering men, the holding up of the tail and the head, inserting the pipe in the horses’ rear, blowing on the pipe, the hand going up to stop the vet when the horse’s eyes roll back, etc.
When horse is stopped again, Paddy is to go to the Vet but Conn stops him, they do it all themselves. Conn blows but can do nothing. Asks Paddy to do it, in dialogue referring to him as a pipe smoker, so tying story back or bringing it back to first story John told (in character, but synoptic reference).

Paddy pulls pipe out to reinsert other end. Humour comes from miming and dialogue, echo of technique in hardware story.

Comment: With these modes, how are they achieved. With both tellers, but the words (text) the tone, pace, voice, gestures etc. --or lack of them--(techniques), and by the degree of miming and vocal change (style)..... differences reflect different relationship/attitude to/with the audience and the space.

Munnelly then asks Francie to tell true personal story with fairy belief.

Francie tells of when he is seventeen years old, but even though it is personal story, about an encounter with the fairies. It is the same body language and vocal delivery, same breathing patterns.....minimal gesture and dialogue, becomes significant only at most dramatic or climactic part of story....doesn't acknowledge audience...drops voice and drops body (e.g., sits down very quickly at end) at punch line or climax of story....Like John, however, he does stop in middle of synoptic mode and goes into teller mode to explain things or insert comments and sometimes to include another brief anecdote...but he doesn't change as much or go into character mode as much as John....but he does more of this in this personal story than in previous ones, that's my impression....more rambling in style, much more like story told in intimate conversational situation...

Munnelly asks John to sing and then asks the piper to play, as they are close to end of time.

John starts singing as he rises, much more eye contact and scanning of the audience than in Francie's case or Munnelly's case....sings a 'Ringa doo a doo dio' sort of nonsense and narrative song. Sits as he finishes song, not after it finishes....because it's a song or because of lack of time?

Piper plays....picture goes a bit, view of audience it seems many have left during the last song or story, since the concert over-ran and people must catch trains.

29.2. Journal Observation, Francie Kennelly telling stories in his kitchen, Milltown Malby, County Clare, Republic of Ireland, June 2001

The first thing I notice is that Francie makes much more direct eye contact, and physical contact (shaking my hand, patting me on the back, and so on) than he did with any one on the stage at the festival concert.
With every question I ask, Francie answers with a story. He re-tells the stories of 'Biddy Early' and 'The Fairy Jockey'. He tells other stories as well. With all of these, he is much more dramatic and theatrical than he was at the Watermans Arts Centre Festival. He starts the stories seated, looking at me. He gets up in exciting and dramatically tense parts of the stories. All the while he looks at me, but he definitively shifts back and forth from teller to synoptic to proximate to character modes all the while. His face takes on the expressions of characters. He gestures greatly with his hands and arms, even bends at his knees, almost to a squatting position, to mimic some actions of the stories. He is very similar to John Campbell's style of delivery and, if anything, more active, as he paces about sometimes in a small area of the kitchen, between the table where we sit and the fire.

29.3. Journal Observation, John Campbell telling stories on the mountain Slieve Gullion, and in his front parlour in Mullaghbawn, South Armagh.

On the occasions I have visited John Campbell to swap stories with him, I have noticed a definite routine. This has only changed as we got to know each other better, and as he and Ethne (his wife) have gotten older and slowed down a bit.

The routine, or ritual, has mostly been this. Until the last two or three years, I would be taken to meet John in the fields on Slieve Gullion where he kept his herd of sheep. John is a sheep farmer, and especially interested in rare breeds of sheep that are being or have been lost to Ireland. He shows me around and we admire the sheep, talk about the market and the price of sheep, the problems they give him, and some of the fairs and exhibitions he has been to, either to show his sheep or to trade sheep or get more information on certain breeds.

This eventually moves into conversational stories about characters at some of these meets, and other sheep farmers, and adventures he's had breeding and caring for sheep and selling sheep (for example, problems when a foot patrol of the British army entered his fields, scared the sheep and damaged some of them, and the compensation.)

He then might move on to relate a few stories of places on the mountain, or will do so with me prompting a question about them. He will tell of the caves that hid the legendary Irish princess, Deirdre of the Sorrows, and Redmond he bureaucratic procedures he had to go through to get co O'Hanlon, the tory (highway robber), and the Calleach Bearra (a hag or witch).

We then retire to the house. I'm shown to the front parlour, which is strictly for company and special events in the family. While I wait, John goes up to change into a good suit, shirt and shoes. (He wears an old suit and boots on the mountain). He then sits down in the parlour with me and we talk about stories again. On my first visit, accompanied by a librarian and storytelling friend, Claire Irvine (now Claire O'Brien), it was pointed out to me he wanted to hear as many
stories from me as I heard from him. It is in these visits we swap stories, and I find that John has an amazing store of Märchen, or wonder tales. He has related a variant of ‘Beauty and the Beast’/‘Bluebeard’, a distinct version of ‘The King of Ireland’s Son’/‘Firebird’/‘Puss in Boots’ and several ghost and banshee stories. These he tells seated, and in a very conversational voice, with very little use of any modes. When I ask if he has ever told these longer stories in public, say at festivals or storytelling clubs, he replies no. He feels they are stories for this more intimate setting, and in public want to hear humorous stories, and stories that are more true to life.

30.0 Journal Observation: Conversation with singer/musician/storyteller Sara Grey, Chippenham Folk Festival, May 2001

Sara Grey, a much respected professional folk singer and musician, and storyteller, is originally from New England but has lived in Britain for forty years. She regularly tours around the world, including performances at several folk and storytelling festivals in North America.

At this festival she told me of a recent tour in the United States. She had been booked at a storytelling festival where she was the only musician. While visiting with the other performers socially, the discussion of fees, working conditions, and contracts came up, as well as ownership and control over use of material for one’s repertoire. Sara was shocked and appalled to hear the American storytellers speaking so aggressively. They quite seriously proclaimed they would sue any one who used stories they developed and performed. They insisted on charging the maximum rate the market could bear, thousands of dollars per day, and that other tellers should charge very high rates as well, so as not to undercut others’ fees.

Sara felt very much there was none of the sharing, the respect for others, that she finds on the British folk scene. Her experience has been a willingness and graciousness between musicians and singers to share material, help each other find sources for new repertoire, and an understanding the fee structures may be flexible and individually determined, or set through cooperation with sponsors, organisers, and community groups.

31.0 Interview Transcripts: Discussion of utopian and subversive views in traditional storytellers’ perspectives

31.1  *John Campbell, p. 32.*

And we were going to something one night...we were doing... Well, we were doing a book. The first grand fleadh in Forkhill were putting out a Fleadh book. And, I was to write a wee thing for it. Mick Quinn was to write a wee thing for it. We were all to write wee bits in it, you see, this fleadh book. And they wanted Michael J Murphy to do the foreword.
And I was asked to go over. I went over to ask him. ‘Ah, gee, certainly,’ says he, ‘I’ll be delighted to do it,’ he says.

Jeez, two night after, I came home and a wee card at the door: ‘Emergency Meeting! Forkhill, Ceolthas.’

We’re all there. And Peter ----- (? last name not clear). And he says, ‘Unless we can have that book in, in Dundalk, by Tuesday morning,’ he says, ‘we won’t be able to get it printed.’

So after the meeting I had gone over to Michael J. Murphy’s any way.

[Diversion with long story here]

*pp. 33-34.*

The thing about it was, was that night when I told him, about the book for the fleadh, he says, ‘Hold on a minute. Hold a bloody minute.’ And he went upstairs and came down with a magazine. And two or three pages in, he showed it to me. It was the foreward!

(laughter)

He’d written the bloody thing in 1944! And we’re doing now, in, like, 1970 something. It was fair enough, he’d show it to you, but he did it. ...

All he had to do with it, he says, he had to refer to us, in the article. He said it was proposed in 1944 and he was pleased to live to see it happened. He only changed a few words. That’s what made me think the man was so far and forward of himself. ...

It was a plea he was making back then. The halls, the society halls as he called him, they’d be like the Foresters Halls and the Hibernian Halls, they should be like an extension of the ceilidh house, and people should go there to those places to listen to the radio and such. It was an extension of the old way. To do the entertainment in public, to share stories and such like. That’s what he was proposing.

He also...he never... (tape not clear--more static).

He said, ‘The Berlin Wall will go. Not in my day. But you see that boy there? It’ll go in his. The young people,’ he says, ‘of West Germany and of East Germany, the wall will not hold him.’

And he was right. And he lived to see it.
PR He did.

He lived about a year after it come down. ... He was right. ...

The man foresaw that happening. And I heard him talking about communism, saying it was a cancerous thing, against human nature. "We're all..." says he, 'Proof of it was,' he says, 'put a two year old child in one corner of the room, and put a two year old child in that corner, and they'll fight at some point. It's human nature. Years and years and years go by, and Christianity or whatever can come along but it doesn't change.'

312. Eddie Lenihan, pp. 3-4

But several of the people that told me the stories that I included in the book said that their grandparents knew her [Biddie Early]. As a small little woman. Some said red haired but there's not to confirm that. But she was always very personable and very kind and very welcoming. Very few stories do you hear of Biddy Early losing her temper except with the priest, for example, or with people who came to her to mock. And very often they'd be professional people, doctors and that. You know, I suppose they felt she was a threat. And maybe she felt they were a threat. Their business was curing.

PR Yes. Um. And were they taught otherwise. I know some of the stories she teaches the clergy a lesson.

Oh yeah. Well, that's the most famous story about her. And, it's the story of the priest's horse. I suppose that it proves that Irish people, even in the 19th century, and well into this century, held the clergy in fear, and also respect. Behind it all, most people, they needed the priest. So best keep in with him, as the saying was. But also, in spite of that a kind of fear, and the priest's curses was very much feared. People, I'd say, by and large, they had respect for them.

And as well as that, though, behind all that, there was this wish to mock them. Which they couldn't do openly. So they put the story over with the mocking by Biddy Early. She was the one who, you know, provided the entertainment with what she did with the priest. No doubt it was what all of them would have loved to do with the vicious priest. There was always the odd one that was, as they said, wicked. And, um, it's remarkable that that story should be so popular.

And yet when you examine it it isn't at all remarkable. Because, in spite of all the respect, there was the other side too. And I suppose with Irish people they were automatically against authority. Whether 'twould be the priest's authority, which could be on their side, or the landlord's authority or the government's authority which was even worse. Because the government's authority was just in power there in the background, which never did you any good.
PR Well I know when I interviewed Imelda Hall, once, about something totally different, she mentioned the story of how—people don't remember or realise that when the government was in total control of the whole island, there was a police barracks or army barracks within 12 miles of any location.

Oh yeah, that is true.

PR Which meant it was a military state. Any trouble, and there could be soldiers or police on you within minutes.

EL That's right. The pictures you see of the Famine, of the Evictions, there are the police there, sometimes the soldiers there. They don't seem to realise that brought the whole apparatus into contempt. Because the soldiers should have been kept out of it... Except in cases of real serious rebellion or something, but they weren't.

PR Mealda told a brilliant story, of a wedding once, and the cottage where they had the wedding was next to, next to, um, a police barracks. And a policeman just wandered in assuming he was invited to the wedding. And the woman of the house wanted to poison him and offered him a drink, putting poison in the drink. The policeman took one sip, but the priest objected because he should be offered a drink, first. He reached over and took the policeman's glass and drank it down, and dropped down dead. The policeman realised it was poison meant for him, he hadn't swallowed, so he spat the drink out and scooped up a handful of fresh butter and filled his mouth with the butter because of the salt, to draw out any poison. But the barracks was empty, he was the only one on duty, and the nearest help was an army barracks 12 miles away. So he ran for that, keeping to the hills so the locals wouldn't stop him and kill him. By the time he came back with the army, the cottage was gone. Completely gone. The body of the priest was vanished and every stone, every stick of furniture moved away so the barracks was standing there on its own at the crossroad. There was no evidence to back his story.

(chuckling)

Sounds like an apocryphal story. Sounds like one of the highwaymen ballads. You know?

PR That's true. That's what Mealda told of the old Roscommon people.

It shows... it shows something of the social background..... And, sure it's come down to our own time. Now the state we're in, the referendum [Ireland had just had a referendum on the European Union Nice treaty and, unexpectedly and to the government's dismay, voted it down], look at the government. 'Fuck the government'. It's still there, very strongly. And I'm glad for it;
And rightly so. I’m delighted to see a thing like that. Government is contemptible by and large.

PR And there was such contempt, such complacency about the whole referendum.

Oh yes. Well they got a kick up the arse. They asked for it. They though they had all these minions and I was delighted to see. ... I was, delighted to see it. Because the crowd that are ruling are such a brainless and scummy crowd, by and large, north and south.

32.0 Journal Observations: Discussion of careers choices and other influences on storyteller identity

Although we failed to discuss this in any of the interviews with the seven tellers, with hindsight I became aware of the fact that many had entered into storytelling through their professions. Much of this information came from earlier conversations and performances I shared with these storytellers before I embarked on studies for a PhD.

32.1 John Campbell. John left school around the age of twelve, and his mother secured him an apprenticeship in the licensing trade (the pubs). John enjoyed reading and writing, and would have preferred to go on with his studies but such was the nature of education at the time that the rigid exam system as well as the fact that secondary education was not universal and free meant he more or less had no choice.

Even so, he kept up his reading, and writing, and working in the pub was an ideal way of getting to know a variety of members in the community, as well as hearing various stories (true and fictional) and familiarising himself with various traditions in singing, music and storytelling. As already mentioned, it also provided him with his introduction to Michael James Murphy, the folklorist and author, which proved a very fruitful friendship and led to John becoming a collector and carrier of folklore traditions.

32.2 Grace Hallworth. Grace was raised in Trinidad in a family that had a great love of stories and books. She grew up with both traditional stories and literary stories. From an early age she wished to be a librarian, and after qualifying set up the first children’s library in Trinidad. She then worked in Toronto, which was a leading library authority with many innovative services to children. She befriended Alice Kane, a librarian and storyteller originally from Northern Ireland who influenced Grace immensely. Grace then moved on to work in Hertfordshire libraries in England as a children’s librarian, and very soon befriended and came under the wing of the master storyteller and innovative children's librarian Eileen Colwell. Taking up Eileen’s mantle of library-
storyteller, Grace trained several librarians in storytelling, spoke on the subject and wrote articles and collections of stories, and took storytelling out of the library and into the community. When she retired, she continued to work, as Eileen Colwell had, as a full time storyteller and author.

32.4. **Duncan Williamson.** Again, see the above: Appendix I, 7.2. These indicate the importance of Duncan's childhood background and lifestyle as a Traveller. However, much of his repertoire came from people he worked with, such as the builders of the dam. After that period, Duncan worked as a horse-trader, even later, in a breaker-yard. These careers, involving a lot of yarn-spinning, one-up-man-ship, haggling and bartering and general socialising over deals honed his skills as a teller and again brought him much material in terms of songs, stories, riddles and jokes.

32.5. **Taffy Thomas** lived in Cornwall and Suffolk, working on fishing boats and for the rural community in his youth and also gigging on the recently revived 'folk scene'. He became involved in alternative theatre, such as The Welfare State, and in street theatre. At folk festivals and clubs he worked primarily as an MC and a caller of folk dances, and a general entertainer. With The Magic Lantern Show he created a company that enacted traditional folk tales and ballads with shadow puppets, accompanied by well known folk musicians such as John Kirkpatrick. He started and performed with the street and community theatre group The Salami Brothers, an anarchic group that included circus acts, storytelling, magic tricks and escapology in their performances.

Elements of all these experiences now feature in Taffy's storytelling, its content and its style.

At a relatively young age Taffy suffered a devastating stroke. He recovered, and attributed that recovery to storytelling, which his speech therapist encouraged. Working as a street theatre entertainer was no longer viable, so he began to emphasise the storytelling he had always included in earlier acts and to expand upon it. His health returned and he was soon again a popular and busy storyteller in folk clubs and festivals, in schools and in community projects. He was one of the first professional storytellers in Britain to develop autobiographical stories as the main narrative texts for public performance, drawing upon personal experiences with his stroke and recovery and linking them to original songs by Jim Woodland and Janet Russell and traditional stories.

*Comments: These brief examples of the above storytellers' autobiographies and clear links to becoming storytellers, as well as to what and how they tell, mirror many of the elements of what biographies and autobiographies we have of previous well known professional storytellers. Over the last hundred years, the lives and work of Ruth Sawyer, Marie Shedlock, Augusta Baker, Sara Cone Bryant, and Eileen Colwell reveal similar characteristics to the above.*
33.0 Interview Transcripts: Social mores impacting on storyteller choices/identity

33.1.a. John Campbell, Interview for the study on storytelling, Storytelling in Ireland, A Re-Awakening. (Transcripts archived with The Verbal Arts Centre, Stable Lane, the Mall Wall, Bishop-Street-Within, Derry/Londonderry, BT14 6PU, N. Ireland)

(regarding what to do with a storyteller who is boring or not very good)

Well, you have to give everyone a go. If someone wants to have a go at a session you have to let them. If he goes on for too long or tells the story badly you just have to put up with it. But you can be sure it'll be a long time before he's called on to do anything again.

It's like the old woman who fell into the bath tub and got stuck there. She didn't like it, but she couldn't help it, or do anything about it, at the time, and when once she got out she made sure it didn't ever happen again.

33.2. George Sheridan, traditional storyteller from Florence Court, County Fermanagh, N. Ireland. Interview for the study on storytelling, Storytelling in Ireland, A Re-Awakening (Ryan, 1995). (Transcripts archived with The Verbal Arts Centre, Stable Lane, the Mall Wall, Bishop-Street-Within, Derry/Londonderry, BT14 6PU, N. Ireland)

Well, I never could sing, so that when we would congregate for an evening, some one would sing a song who could sing a song, some one would tell a story who could tell a story, some one would do a monologue or as we called it, a recitation. Now I think there are natural storytellers and it is a gift, like singing, or any of the arts, and of course the Irish are great for legends and storytelling. It is handed down from the beginning of time. I think it is probably because I am an Irishman that I say this, but I think the Irish have an art of storytelling that you don't get anywhere else.
33.3.  Taffy Thomas, pp. 2-3.

[Summary: Continuation of discussion about having an 'anchor' while telling/to tell.]

Again, but it's slightly more. My main interest, my starting point for storytelling, was Betsy White, the Scots Traveller. And sometimes I feel that if I'm having a difficult time, I almost draw on the spirit of Betsy White, now that she's gone. Because, again, it's a bit of security. Because the one story of hers that I tell, it's like the calvary [Tackity Boots—a story about a man with no story, which is a common genre in traditional and contemporary storytelling...however it has a unique twist, in that to 'get' a story when the man goes out he is turned into a woman and lives a long life as a woman, only to be turned back and run back to the party to find hardly a moment has passed, and he tells all that happened as a woman.] ...but it's also about the importance of having a story. And I think all storytellers have got one of those.

PR I think those stories are very popular. They obviously speak to storytellers quite a bit.

Yeah, like that one you did in our session today.

PR That's right, that's right. And I like that one. [The Boy Without a Story, collected from a prisoner in Portlaoise Prison. An innocent young man looking for work is pitied by a farmer. When he has no story or song or entertainment to contribute to repay for the hospitality, the farmer orders the boy, and the farmer's wife, at gunpoint to strip and get into bed. Once they have done as instructed the farmer puts down the gun and says, 'There now, next time you've got something to tell about.' Because, as you know, there's, uh....

It's ever so slightly naughty! That's why you like it!

34.0. Journal Observations: Examples of 'good' and 'bad' community practices

34.1.  The Verbal Arts Centre, Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Since its inception over ten years ago, the Verbal Arts Centre (VAC) has placed writers, poets, playwrights, historians and storytellers in the community. Rather than have an artist visit just for one day, to perform or read in the VAC (an event that does regularly occur in the VAC's programming), they often have several writers and storytellers in long, extended residencies in schools, libraries, community centres and/or old people's homes. These schemes last for months. The projects might focus on creative writing, local oral history, or storytelling (that is, getting the participants to tell stories orally). Because of a superb and dedicated administrative staff, the projects are successful and run extremely
Artists and the community are therefore keen to take part in any initiatives because of previous successes. [See also: VAC Annual Reports; Word in Action (Report on storytelling in secondary schools), and Listen UP I and II (video documenting storytelling work in primary and secondary schools)]

34.2. **Tall Tales at Broad Green Library**

This scheme was initiated by the children's librarians for Croydon public library. It was a ten-week programme placing a storyteller in a new branch library, to build up its reputation, and the very fact it was there and available, to the local community. The storyteller worked in the library one day a week for ten weeks. Various groups were invited in on these days. Classes from local primary and secondary schools, the elderly, and parents of the school children took part in workshops on storytelling, or were presented with storytelling performances. Local stories were collected from the older users of the library and shared with primary school groups. The children who learned to tell these local stories, and stories they learned from the teller as well as original stories that arose from the workshops. They performed these on the final day of the project, to their families and classmates, as well as the older users involved in the project.

The scheme was successful, having fulfilled all the aims of the project and having been run professionally and efficiently by the librarians.

34.3. **Storytelling in Waylands Prison**

John Rowe, children's author and storytellers was appointed as storyteller in residence at Waylands Prison for one year. The storyteller worked regularly with the prisoners and prison staff, teaching them to tell stories and to create stories orally and through creative writing. Those prisoners with families, particularly children, learned and created stories for them, and were recorded on audio tape and/or video. These were then provided to the families, so that they might keep better contact with the men separated from them. The project also saw increased literacy rates.

The scheme proved so successful that it became a model for other schemes. Now several prisons and young offender units have regularly included storytellers and storytelling activities in their educational and social programmes.

34.4. **Guildford Oral History Project**

The arts officer of Guildford wanted a storytelling residency that brought old age pensioners and local secondary school students together. The plan was to collect oral history from pensioners living in a local old people's home, and use this material with the students, who would develop it into creative writing work and oral performance.
Unfortunately, the project was planned too quickly and with a lack of commitment from the teachers and school involved. It was difficult to meet with the students enough to develop their storytelling skills, their confidence, or their enthusiasm for the project in any meaningful or successful way. When we did meet, teachers refused to stay in the classroom or to take part in the activities, which meant they could not do the follow-up work between visits as we expected them to do. It was also difficult to get teacher cooperation to have enough visits between the students and the elderly.

As a result, the project fizzled out and never really came to any conclusion. The teachers and students felt very hurt and left out, although the pensioners very much enjoyed the chance to hear and tell stories, and to socialise with the students when they did visit.

34.5 Theatres, Theatre Practitioners and Storytelling.

A.) A major national theatre company was awarded a contract to do a community storytelling project in East London. The actors were to collect stories and oral history from pensioners, and then relate these to secondary school students. They were to help the students develop these stories into narratives they could perform orally and/or dramatically.

However, the actors had little or no experience in storytelling, in field work, in working with the elderly, or in working with or teaching young people. At the first meeting with the elderly residents, they panicked, and rather than collect stories from them the actors decided to entertain them with a ‘show’ of recitations, monologues, poetry readings, songs and a sing-song, and standup comedy.

When they subsequently met with the students, they had no material for them. So they decided to use theatre games and have them develop a good old-fashioned Cockney-knees up Music Hall performance for the elderly, consisting of old song and dance routines and monologues. Unfortunately, the majority of the students were of immigrant families, often first or second generation with little English and certainly no understanding of or connection to the old Cockney East London and the Music Hall tradition. Many were Bangladeshi, and found the work irrelevant.

Eventually, the actors gave up and the local social workers and arts officers took over and did all the work, creating some sort of performance for the pensioners.

B.) Another major national theatre company took on a major education and community arts project for most of south London. One project involved using storytellers to work with Bangladeshi and Pakistani elderly women who did not speak English as a first language. The aim was to collect their stories and tell them back, and to do so bilingually so that their English improved. The theatre administrators continually referred to the project as a literacy scheme, when in fact the women were literate (in their native language), but not in English.
Because of the nature of the community, the theatre did approach a storyteller to do the work, one who was of Indian parentage who grew up in south London and had theatre experience as well. She was unable to do the job—but recommended another teller, who specialised in teaching English as a second language as well as using storytelling to support that teaching. They did not bother to approach this teller because he was not of Asian origins nor a theatre practitioner as well as a storyteller. The storyteller approached also criticised the programme organisers for insistently referring to it as a literacy scheme, when she said really it was a scheme to support English as a Second Language (ESL).

Comment. Sadly, these are common experiences. Many national companies, and small companies and individual artists, too, look for important funding and take on or create projects they have not the skills nor interest in doing. The result gives community arts a poor image and often fails to make use of the artists on the ground and within the community, who are best suited to meet any scheme’s primary objectives.

35.0. Interview Transcripts: Excerpts articulating or demonstrating storytelling aesthetic.

35.1. Grace Hallworth, pp. 7-8

It’s a story that I saw and loved in.... was it Jane Yolen’s collection? Yes... She’s done a collection of stories. And this story was in it about the mermaid and the son she bore and so on.... And there is a song in it, which always adds to the story. ...

I think for me it adds that dimension, music. And altogether I thought it was a beautiful story. And I wanted to do it. I didn’t know how well I would do it. Because, when you get so attached to a story, when it means so much to me, to you, you also have the additional concern about whether you can do it justice. And then you owe the story that... whether you can do it justice. And there are a number of stories I’ve never told because I don’t feel I could do them justice. Not that—I want to tell them, but, every time I think of them, when I learn them, realise that whatever that means, I haven’t got.

So it's all that too. How are you going to give this story expression? And so, I kept after it for a while and eventually I thought, yes, I want to tell it. Um, and that night [at the Southbank Festival in 1989] seemed to be right—and I, you know, I don’t why I do these things to myself. Why every so often I will choose to tell a story in a crucial situation. I mean all situations are crucial. But when you have a large audience and you have an audience that, again, you don’t know. You know some people but you don’t know all. It’s not a familiar audience, let’s put it that way...
And there's extra pressures on you. And that's the time when you choose a story like that?!

PR  Logic doesn't suggest you would.

No! No. So you come to conclusion that the story asks—demands—that it be told on that occasion. I can't see any other reason why it should be.... Or maybe you have so—the tension has so accumulated in you with that story that it now is ready. Like a child, like giving birth. ... The nine months is here, you have to give birth, you have to get the story out of you. ... Willy nilly, sink or swim!.

35.2. Taffy Thomas, pp. 6-7

I always say that storytelling is about education but it has to be first and foremost about entertainment. If you don’t entertain you don’t manage the other. ... The one has to do with the other.

PR  I know the example you mean. The young man you talked to about what happens in his school when it's playtime. That's what I mean by a kind of digression, a direct question taking you out of the story into the audience. But there are many different kinds—ways of doing it.

Yep. It's... One of the reasons that is... Well, the main thing I learned form Ruth Tonge, more than anything else, she had a completely conversational style. .... So when I'm telling stories, I actually try and have a conversation with the audience. That way, you know, sometimes I go the other way and leave the story stripped bare. (chuckle)

Both work. It's just, hopefully, choosing the right one. Whether to risk and when not to risk it.

35.3. Duncan Williamson, pp. 2-3

I was brought up with stories from the time I could crawl. And when I became thirteen I run away from home, for to make room for the little ones coming up. And in my time there was no tape recorder like you have today. You couldn’t take a wee piece of paper with you, or a pencil to write things down. And you visited ceilidhs and concerts and get togethers and firesides. And of course, I knew there was a culture that was strange to my own. Because the local fisherman, and farmers and wood carvers and peat cutters were telling stories at the ceilidhs. But here was me, brought up with world of stories, it was all of the travelling people. Stories of the travelling people, stories that were passed down from grandfathers to grandsons to granddaughters and so on.

Now stories were told not just for entertaining they were also told for teaching. ...
So you see, Jack tales were told to boys so that... Fathers knew that some day they will be on their own, you know, and they had to come across a problem. What would Jack have done in this situation? You know? You think back to a story. Now girls were told \((cough)\) girls were told stories by the women, by their mothers and their grannies and their aunties, to comb their hair and to look tidy because some day they might meet their prince, you know? If they didn’t look after it, keep theirselves tidy and clean, well they learned these things from stories.

Stories are very important not only for entertainment. Storytelling among the Travellers’ culture was also for education. You learned from stories. ...

It was an education for you. ... So there we had all those wonderful stories, told to us as Travellers.

Because sometimes, Travelling people would pass by where we live and my father would say, ‘Well come in, stay the night.’

They came and sat up beside my father. And my father gave them permission, and he had permission from the Duke for the land, and we got—we would gather sticks, for the Travelling folk. And just like in Japan: ‘Gather my sticks and I will tell you a story.’

So we would gather sticks, for hundreds and hundreds of stories. Jack tales, wonder tales, fairy tales, stories of pixies, stories of goblins, stories of death, stories of Burkers, you know, the body-snatchers.

You know the Burkers were deterrents, these were deterrent stories. Because, and the Burkers were the body snatchers, they took the bodies, especially of the Travelling people, because they were never registered, you see? And, um, they knew how many there were. I mean, it’s like you take a wild rabbit from a hill nobody knows how many rabbits there were?

**PR**  
Yeah

So the stories were told, they would need a body for research: pick one of the Travelling folk, they’ll not be missed. ... So, then, father and mother and grandmother would have the children sitting all around the fire, telling stories about the Burkers, so that, it would be kind of a deterrent, not to go on the road, not to go off by yourself. And if you see a coach coming, get out of the way. ...

It was a deterrent. Stories were for learning and teaching.
Journal Observations: mentor relationships and their influences upon development of tellers' identities and repertoires

As mentioned earlier [see Appendix L, 5.0], the relationship with elderly relations did influence my identity as a storyteller and my repertoire as well. However, there were other major influences upon me, from my time at university and afterwards while working full time as a teacher.

Just after completing my first degree I signed up for an exchange course that focused on arts, and especially drama, in education at Bretton Hall College in Yorkshire. My tutor there, Peter Harrop, came from Tyneside where his family had long been involved in Monkseaton Rapper (a sword dance team). Peter was himself doing a PhD dissertation at the time on mummers plays, and conducting extensive field work for his research. He took me along, and taught me field work and recording techniques, as well as how to access and use the folk archives. He also insisted I join the sword dance team that he captained, which led me to become involved much more in the English folk scene of festivals, clubs, and morris dance teams.

I applied what I learned from Peter and returned to Britain and Ireland over the summers after I completed my Masters degree in Education at the University of Chicago, and while I was teaching in elementary schools in Chicago. I befriended and collected stories from many tellers I met at that time.

While at the University of Chicago, I had Zena Sutherland as a lecturer. Her expertise was children's literature, but the course required that we tell a story. My success at that assignment led her to introduce me to her colleague, Ellin Greene, who was a specialist in storytelling in libraries. Ellin had been children's librarian for the New York Public libraries and had run its long, well-established and famous storytelling programme. She had been taught and had worked with Augusta Baker, another well-known librarian-storyteller. Together they wrote a book which is still the most influential manual on storytelling for teachers and librarians in North America.

Ellin hired me as a research assistant for her project 'The Illustrator as Storyteller'. This was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and consisted of a conference on and exhibition of prominent illustrators' works for children's picture books—those that had received the Caldecott award or honour. My job was to interview several of the illustrators who were still alive, read up on the lives, work and criticism of all the artists, and to write the copy for the panels explaining each section of the exhibit as well as the labels for each painting or drawing. Throughout we were looking for the links between the visual and the narrative. This taught me to look at storytelling, and to develop a language for talking and thinking about storytelling and all kinds of narrative.
Ellin encouraged me to develop my storytelling skills and to pursue storytelling as a career. When I did so, she helped me to find work.

Another influence from my Chicago days were the professional storytellers I met through folk clubs and the NAPPS organisation and its festivals. These, again, I mentioned in the earlier Appendix item.

However, the most influential individuals were those I collected stories from during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. These, too, were mentioned. Being mostly Irish, or Irish or Scottish Travellers, they were not so much a primary source for material in my repertoire, but for my image of what a storyteller is and does, and for my style and technique.

The majority of my repertoire is now, I would say, derived entirely from research carried out in the Folk Lore Society library, the Folklore Department of University College Dublin, the Linen Hall Library, the Enniskillen Library Irish Collection, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Library, the Guildhall Library, and the British Library. These provided manuscripts and out of print collections for me to trace variants and develop my own versions of stories. A smaller amount of my repertoire comes from the traditional tellers, and an even smaller portion from other 'revival' tellers.

The traditional storytellers showed me how to interpret this material in a conversational style.

37.0 Journal observations and Interview transcripts—cases of identity used in performance, and of identities clashing with expectations of performance

37.1. The Commonwealth Institute. When teaching at an international school, the other teacher and I organised a field trip to the Commonwealth Institute, a museum in London providing educational opportunities that supported our geography curriculum. They offered us a storytelling session. Our nine-year-old students were very used to daily story times that I provided, and enjoyed them, so we agreed.

The two tellers, who are very well-known and established now, were still beginning then. Although they already had a vast knowledge of stories and a fair amount of experience performing, it was clear they did not have much experience or confidence working with children the age ours were. They started by asking them to sit down with legs crossed, 'Red Indian style'. As an international school, many of the pupils were American, and they knew this was a very controversial term. It was also insulting, being the way that 'babies' in nursery school were asked to sit, not 'cool' nine year olds only a year away from finishing primary school. And, it suggested to them that the tellers did not trust them, that the adults thought they were not good listeners or didn’t know how to listen. As they had been having story times with me for nearly an entire school year, and enjoyed
them very much, they were used to stretching out and lounging on the floor as they listened. My students were immediately ready to rebel. Only by giving them the 'teacher evil eye' did they settle down and do as the tellers requested.

The stories they proceeded to tell were good stories, but, again a bit 'baby-ish' for our students. The students also said afterwards that they thought it was strange two very 'English' tellers were telling stories from the Caribbean, Africa, India, and Russia. I pointed out that I sometimes told stories from other cultures and countries than Ireland or America, but the students either didn't register these stories were from other cultures (even though I always discussed this in framing the story), or because they were used to my style of telling.

37.2. Primary School in Coventry. Engaged to tell stories for a primary school's book week, I arrived and the session started in school hall. I had around one hundred children, ages eight to eleven, and their teachers before me. Because it was book week, everyone had dressed in fancy dress, in costumes of their favourite story book characters.

My style of telling in such an assembly is to sit upon a chair with the children gathered around me, and to tell the story conversationally and with few mimetic gestures. All was going well, until one of the mothers dressed in costume as a cat decided to join in. She had come to help with the events of the day. She seemed to misunderstand completely what a storyteller was or did, and to assume I was an actor in a theatre company or some other kind of child entertainer, an 'act' that was all comedy and improvisation. It was all meant to be fun and in a good spirit, but she crawled up on all fours, meowing and purring, and wanting to be patted on the head like a real cat. Needless to say, it completely disrupted the storytelling. Everything had to be stopped, I had to explain I didn't really tell stories with any participation at all. She was mortified and apologised afterwards.

The whole experience impressed upon me the importance of making it clear to everyone involved what I am and what I do when I talk about being a storyteller and/or telling stories.

37.3. Grace Hallworth

Well it's funny you should ask about that thing and about acting because this is what I was talking to Eileen about this yesterday. And I was saying that I hadn't, when I got to Tobago, they were telling me about storytelling competitions. ...

And their idea was that they were going to use me either as some one to judge the competitions, which finish up in Trinidad, but start in Tobago. Or train them for the competition.
And I had then to clarify at the beginning that: I had never gone in for a storytelling competition so I wouldn’t know how to do it. I mean I wouldn’t know what was necessary for a storytelling competition. ...

But also, I think I said, basically, my mode of storytelling is sharing. Because I want to involve people, I want them to recognise that they too can tell stories. They may not get up on a big stage and do it, but they can do it to their children, at a school, to their...you know...

That they could well be put off because they feel they have to do this grand performance. But storytelling isn’t necessarily that. So I said so, that my whole mode of going about it, unless I’m doing a big performance. In Belgium, I had to do performance, because I had to clarify what I was seeing because half the people didn’t understand English, you know.

So I couldn’t do that sharing I had to be very distinctly performing. ... So... Where all things are equal, then that is my chosen method. So that I said my attitude is one of sharing rather than competing. I myself have never been in a competition. And I’m not equipped therefore to train any one for a competition, or to judge a competition. Because I was saying that when we tell stories in England we also sometimes sit on the stage together, or stand on the stage together, which means there’s a kind of support to, and for, each other.

But they said, you see, this is the only way that you’re ever going to get to tell stories.

And I said, well, yes, I’m not arguing about whether you should do it or not. If you feel this is the way, that this is the only way, well... But I’m telling you why I can’t do it, I’m talking about me being equipped to do it.

So, that was cleared up. And then they would still invite me. If they were having their semi-finals, because the finals...whoever was in the finals would go up to Trinidad and they never win. They come back and they’re very grieved but I say I’m not the person to help you any way.

So I watched the children and I was saying to Eileen, ‘You know then they explain to me what is needed. What is done in Trinidad is dramatic storytelling. And they do that in Israel, they dress up in costumes and in Trinidad they don’t dress in costume but they do everything else.’ ... You know, sometimes they run and they do all that sort of thing.

Fine, that’s as it was. But as I said to Eileen they could do all that although it is terribly tiring. But what happens—’ And then she said, ‘It must be terribly distracting from the story.’ I said, ‘That was what I was going to say.’
37.4. **Eddie Lenihan, p. 7.**

I don’t much go to the storytelling festivals any more. I got very very bored hearing storytellers telling stories that weren’t their own. Just out of books or something like that. They weren’t alive. They were just stories with a small ‘s’. And, I just found myself absolutely bored at these telling sessions. Eventually I wouldn’t even go. I’d walk around the grounds or something like that.

38.0 Journal observations and Interviews: Descriptions of the ‘buzz’, ‘adrenaline rush’, and ‘highs’ from storytelling.

38.1. When a storytelling session, or day of sessions, goes well, there is a definite physical change within my body. It’s a combination of lightness, and intense energy, and also of extreme tiredness.

I talk to friends about this, and say that although it is a pleasant feeling, almost addictive, it is also as though my mind and body were ‘out of sync’. My brain is tired, my body is fired up and full of energy. Though I might be sleepy, or think I am sleepy, if I were to lie down I would not be able to sleep. I may well be too exhausted to talk any more, which is both annoying and frustrating. After a telling, there is often a desire in participants, event organisers, and other tellers to continue conversations, to continue swapping stories.

The only way to calm down and find a more relaxed state, that I have found, is to go on a long brisk walk, alone. Or, if there is time and the facility is available, to go for a swim, or a workout in a gym, followed by long, gentle stretching—if possible, in a warm place like a sauna or steam room.

38.2. **Grace Hallworth, pp. 6-7**

But, it happens, too, with children, and it happens, too, with adults in other instances. I remember that because of all the circumstances surrounding the story... So it would stand out in my mind. ....You know? But there’ll be a child who looks....

In ‘99, when I was doing a sort of little morning workshop at the Festival at the Edge there was a young woman there who reminded me of someone I was at school with. This young woman could have been her daughter. .... Their physiognomy was similar. But also she also had a little smile lurking around her mouth, as though to say, ‘You’re enjoying this, aren’t you?’ There was a knowing-ness about the way she was looking at me. .... And I found that look also an encouragement.

**PR**  
Hm hmmm. And sometimes I’ve noticed that this—until you begin to learn the story, you don’t know where those places are. Not only for digressions, but
with the rhythm of the story, it encourages that in your audience and you don’t know the effect it’s going to have...

Yes, yes.

PR ...and then, once you know, it is almost like a circle--

It’s embodied.

PR Yes, but it goes into theirs as well.... You can see the same feeling in your face you begin to see...

You see in theirs!

PR Out of theirs.

Yes, yes.

PR And that feeds back to you.

Yes, yes. It is almost cyclical ....It goes round and round.

38.3 Hugh Lupton, 4-5

You very quickly pick up on what an audience is enjoying. And what they’re not enjoying. When they’re with you and when they’re not with you. And it’s a very subtle thing. And it’s to do with quality of quiet. You know, there’s a dead quiet and there’s an alive quiet. Between you and the audience. And the alive quiet is that community of attention, that storytellers learn how to recognise quite quickly, when an audience is inside the story. And there’s a kind of dead silence, which is a kind of polite quiet.

PR Yes. They might be listening but they’re not hearing.

Yeah. There’s a sort of deadness about that. And I think when you feel that, you need to adjust what you’re doing.

PR How do you think a storyteller feels that? Is that something intuitive and innate in the teller, or is that something that you learn with experience?

It’s difficult to say. But sometimes you can feel the words turning into ashes in your mouth. ..... Sometimes, you can feel that the audience is absolutely inside it and have entered the world of the story and are with you. And if you had a video of it, there would be no difference. ....

You know, it’s something in the dynamic between performer and audience.
39.0. Journal Observation and Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances that 'break' the atmosphere/ambience/buzz of a storytelling session

39.1. Ulster American Folk Museum Festival, August, 2000—after hours ceilidh

It is customary after storytelling festivals, especially in Ireland, that the performers and many of the audience hang around for an informal party or social get together. Food and drink are shared, and conversation. Eventually, however, the circle opens up to another session of storytelling—informal, and the kind where any one can contribute, not just the booked performers.

Such a night was going on at this festival. The majority of participants were Irish, local tellers and booked tellers, but there were a number of visitors from America, New Zealand, Australia, France and England. The ceilidh was going along well. Part of the etiquette of such evenings is not to 'show off' too much. That is, one wouldn't normally do a very long story, or an extremely dramatic piece. The style is low key, informal, conversational. On this one, when the atmosphere was really picking up and it looked like we would be telling stories and singing and chatting all night, a visiting teller took the floor. She told a very long story, extremely dramatically, projecting her voice as though she were in a theatre that held hundreds, not a room with two dozen gathered in a cosy circle. The content of the story was quite epic and new-age-y, like something out of Tolkien. When it was finished, everyone praised the teller and expressed admiration. However, the performance sucked all the life and energy out of the party. No more stories were told. People retired early. A few hardcore partiers stayed on, and there were stories and jokes from them.

The next morning, over breakfast, some were cross at how the ceilidh had finished, though being very Irish and therefore very polite to guests would never say so directly. However, there was much discussion about showing off, and how that story had finished the evening, almost so that teller could shine as the 'star' of the event, even though she was not booked as a performer at the festival.


The session in the Volunteer runs every lunchtime during the seven days of the Sidmouth festival. It is hosted by John Howson and/or Dan Quinn, two respected musicians and folklorists who know just about every traditional artist in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The event is free and lasts for two and a half hours. A different band, booked at the festival, is resident each day. No one else is
scheduled to attend, but all booked artists are encouraged to come and contribute something. The room in the bar is completely packed, people sitting along the side and a huge crowd standing in the middle. In the middle of the crowd, in the middle of the room, are the hosts. As MCs, they call on individuals to sing a song, play a tune, tell a story, or do a little step dance. Every half hour or so, the band plays a musical interlude to allow people to move around and chat.

It is not just booked artists who are called on. Any one attending the festival, season ticket holders, casual visitors with no ticket, any one can be called on. John and Dan encourage storytelling, and try to have two or three stories each afternoon.

Unfortunately, some of the tellers called on don’t always succeed. This includes some of the booked guests. They either choose a story that is too long for the situation—those singers who are eager to sing may not like stories, or resent a long story that takes up singing time. The stories don’t necessarily have to be humorous, extended jokes, but these are more likely to succeed than a serious or allegorical story. The latter have been told, and have succeeded, but one needs very much to judge and be able to judge accurately what fits the song and singer prior to the story, and to be able to ‘switch gears’ at the last minute.

Naturally, less experienced or less talented tellers will share a story that ends up going flat.

39.3 Analysis of Video Recording of Performances in The Volunteer Garden, the Storytelling Sessions, Sidmouth Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts, August 1994

This event is an hour and a half of storytelling. One of the storytellers booked to perform is to tell stories for approximately forty to sixty minutes of the session. The emcee might start with a short story, or fill in time to give the guest teller a rest, and also call up members of the audience to tell a short story or sing a song.

Over the years, the festival organisers began to feel there was a decline in the quality of storytelling from the floor. It was true that about half a dozen amateur storytellers began to dominate, being the only ones willing to get up and tell a story. Rather than accommodate their choice of story and style of telling to the surroundings, they would often use the opportunity to ‘show off’ a bit. The organisers noticed that many of the audience came for the first hour of the session, when it was mostly the guest storyteller performing, and then leave early as floor spots were called up. This led to the event being moved and changed, to an indoor location, where the floor spots are surprise guests booked for other events at the festival whom the emcee coaxes into joining one or two of the storytelling sessions.
40.0. Journal Observations: remarks and comments from children and adults.

40.1. Belfast Summer Scheme, 1985-86. Liz Weir, children's librarian for Belfast Libraries, had a storytelling scheme sending teams of storytellers out to playschemes, playgroups, clubs, church halls, and summer schools during the summer holidays to read and tell stories to children. I participated in the scheme, thanks to a grant from the Women Caring Trust, every summer from 1985 through 1989.

At one scheme, a boy asked when we arrived was I going to read any stories out of a book. I said not, I wasn’t but the other storyteller might. He wanted me to read a book he had, a book accompanying the latest Indiana Jones film. I said, no, I wasn’t very good at reading stories aloud, all my stories came out of my head.

As I finished telling my first story the boy shouted again for me to read his favourite Indiana Jones books. I said no, sorry, I couldn’t. My stories came out of my head. Quickly the boy replied, ‘Och no, mister. Your head’d be empty. Your stories come out of your mouth.’

40.2. Performing in various schools in different countries as a visiting performer and author, as well as a storyteller.

1.) For children and teenagers, my ‘witnessing’ becomes an unexpected part of storytelling. Children who have never been outside of their own region, let alone their own country, often have specific questions about travelling and other places and peoples when they recognise I have a foreign accent.

I was working in a school in Vienna the day Roald Dahl died. Having had the privilege of meeting him at a library book week a few years before, I was able to tell that anecdote to the children, who were quite moved and concerned about the news that morning.

2) Telling stories in a secondary school in Venice, I came across a student who had attended the international school I once had taught in. Although I had not taught her, it was quite touching to make contact and tell her about the teachers she had studied under with whom I was still in contact. At the same session, another student was taking a gap year to study in Northern Ireland before going on to university to study journalism. I had had recent contact with a reporter for the Irish News, a daily Northern Ireland newspaper, who had done an article on a storytelling project I had just completed in Belfast. As it happened, this journalist was Italian, married to an Irish woman from Belfast, and I was able to put the student in touch with him so that he could expand his work experience while there.
3) For students in Britain and America studying World War I or World War II, having toured many of the battle sites and worked on reminiscence projects with elderly who were children or even old enough to participate in those wars, I often have many anecdotes and stories to tell the children. To testify one has actually seen the graves, seen the ruins or concentration camps, and visited historic sites often frame the actual stories in a way that affects the students' memory and understanding of history.

In one project, I related information about the Irish Famine that I'd collected from various folklore sources in Ireland. The English teacher later reported that she and the history teacher always work together, having the students write stories and reports based on what they had just studied in history. For the Famine unit, they did not have to revise anything. Usually they remember nothing of the history they have just studied, but this time, the English teacher said, they were full of facts, just at their fingertips or on the tips of their tongues. She attributed this to the storytelling.

Just after this I met a boy who took part in this project in the stairwell. He stopped to ask if this was the last day of the scheme and I said, sadly it was. He informed me that because of the storytelling, the story he wrote about the Famine for English was nearly six pages long, and he had never written anything longer than one page before. He also received a 'B' for the work, a score he had never achieved in any of his school work.

4) *Listen Up!* was a scheme that went on over three years in some of the most disadvantaged schools in Northern Ireland, in the Western Education and Library Board (Derry/Londonderry, Counties Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh). Four secondary schools and thirteen primary schools were involved. I worked with the secondary schools on the first year of the project. Two of the schools opted to have me train their most difficult remedial students how to tell stories. The students then performed at local primary schools to younger students, who would be feeding into their high schools.

At one school, on the first day we went out to tell stories to the younger children, one particular student, a lovely fellow but extremely hyperactive and excitable, was nearly in tears he was so happy. On the return to school he claimed it was absolutely the very best day in all his life, the best thing ever to happen.

The second school had a boy with a tendency to violence—in fact, the day before we were to go to tell stories to the younger students, he had gotten into a fight and was nearly expelled, but it was decided the storytelling project was too important for him to miss. It so happened his English teacher told me before we went to the primary school that they had received the SAT results in English and all the students on the storytelling
project improved their reading ages by 2.3 to 3.0 years in each case. On the return from the storytelling, this boy who often found himself in trouble thanked us for the project. He was immensely proud of what he had achieved, with good reason—he was unbelievably gentle, kind and nurturing with the younger students, showing a side his teachers and peers never saw, and held the younger students attention with some of the most long, complex and challenging stories. He wanted to thank us because, he said, his reading score had gone up by 3.0 years, and he said that was all due to the storytelling work.

5) Storytelling with the elderly often sparks storytelling reminiscences, and I have collected amazing stories purely by chance in such situations. In Southampton, I told stories about the Belfast shipyards to a group of pensioners at their weekly coffee morning in the library.

I told of 'Tomato Pete', an anecdote related by Stefan Hennigan, a relation of the character and friend of mine, who got caught pilfering tomatoes and was locked in a shed while the management sent for the constabulary. Knowing he would only be found guilty if they had the evidence, he ate every single bite of all the tomatoes in several crates, vines, leaves, seeds and all.

Another story told related to the building of the Titanic. Many houses in Ballymacarrett are decorated with panelling, bathroom fixtures, and lamps pilfered from the Titanic as it was built. Management put the screws on [clamped down, and brought in the Peelers/police] to stop this, threatening to sack any one caught with stolen goods. One lad, Billy, spied a bit of mahogany that would look great as a mantelpiece and the others bet he'd never get it out. The 12th of July was approaching, and on the day of the parade Billy carried a big banner with King Billy on his white horse. Marching out of the yards and up Templemore Avenue, soon as he was out of sight of the management he pulled off the banner, to reveal that the frame was the mahogany he fancied for his fireplace.

This sparked one woman to speak up. She told how her family were very poor. No one knows poverty today like we did then, she said. They didn’t know where the next meal was coming from. Her dad was out of work and searched and searched for a job. One day he came home delighted. He’d got a job, as a ship’s steward, on a brand new ship. ‘What’s the name of the ship?’ asked his wife, the woman’s mother. ‘Titanic.’ ‘That’s a queer name. What’s it mean?’ ‘I think it means “greater than God.”’ The woman’s mother proclaimed, ‘Nothing is greater than God. That ship is cursed, no way are you going on it, no matter how much we need you in a job.’ And as the woman said, her mother was proved right.
40.3. *Repetition, rhythm, and participation.* No matter what the age, from young children through adults, with stories that have repeated phrases, repetitive and rhythmic sounds, the listeners automatically join in. Soon they are anticipating the phrases, saying them before the teller can draw breath to do so.

A friend not familiar with storytelling heard a recording of a session, and heard the audience joining in. He asked how they managed to do that, how did they know what to say? Had they been taught or coached beforehand. I said no, it was an automatic response. If the storytelling was good and going well, the listeners joined in almost without realising they were doing so, as a quasi-automatic response. He didn’t believe it, but could see no other viable explanation.

*Anticipation*

Another aspect of effective storytelling comes when a listener sees what is coming and calls out a warning, or statement, saying so before the teller reaches that point in the narrative. Children regularly do this, but adults have been known to forget themselves and blurt out the ending as well.

41.0. Interview Transcripts: Reaction to and discussion of acting modes.

41.1. *Hugh Lupton*

PR *Just one more area to get back to, then. And that is, in the process of telling a story itself, and I don’t how to put this to you. But I said in my letter about the different modes, and I don’t want to lead you by getting you to say, ‘yes it is that’ or ‘no it isn’t’. Because I certainly wasn’t aware of this method of storytelling analysis before I came across these people. But it did make me think about, are there differences within the story itself? And I don’t mean that within the text, but, like, within the way you think of different parts of the text.*

*And if so, could you break that down to what you think the different parts of the text performance are. Say, you are going to tell a story on your own, I know you do a lot of situations where you tell with the company of storytellers or with a musician or whatever...* 

*But if you’re going to tell a story on your own, um, are you aware of consistent patterns? In the way you introduce it? In mental or emotional shifts? As you go through it, would you be able to express that for me at all?*

Yeah. If I’m doing a programme of stories on my own, then I... I mean, people have talked about this quite a lot in different ways...but I think...there’s a sort of conscious series of stages I take an audience through. I think, you know, you get
them laughing, uh, and then, then you put in something which is kind of--more of a clever, more of a cerebral story. And then you move onto something that's more of a heart story, more of a moving story. And then maybe you take them into something which is, um, more enigmatic. Into a myth or something like that which is, eh, quite challenging. And and...some one described it and I'm sure you heard this before, as before, as ha ha, ah ah, ahh, amen. Or something like that...

I think there's that kind of sequence. But then, I also find myself telling stories which don't do that at all. The stuff I'm doing with Daniel doesn't do that at all. You're thrown straight into some pretty heavy stuff.

But the one thing that I think is important is making the relationship with the audience before you begin. So you know, before we actually start, do a much more informal chat, something humorous, you know, look at the gods and their different qualities and you know, then go into the piece, so that, in a way, you're kind of drawing that storytelling. Human sympathy is there before you go into the piece. Otherwise--

**PR**  Of the Iliad?

Yeah. Otherwise you're stuck under this kind of proscenium arch.

41.2. *Grace Hallworth, pp. 23-24*

Summary: I asked Grace about acting modes in storytelling, describing them generally asking what she thought about them. This sparked the conversation about competitions, which can be found under Appendix L, 38.2. These excerpts touch on her thoughts about acting modes, I believe.

You realise that they [those performing in competitions] have not internalised the story. They have learned it by heart.

**PR**  And the personal connection is not there.

You know what happens? They forget and they are stuck for five minutes trying to remember the next word. ... And that's bound to happen!

**PR**  This happens in Ireland, too. [I then summarise competitions in Ireland, where storytellers imitate the actor storyteller Eamon Kelly. This is very different from what happens in informal sessions in storytelling clubs, where recitations and monologues are popular. Rather than being overly theatrical, as the storytelling competitions are, they seem more like natural speech]

**PR**  And it is, it [the competition story] is a performance, it is dramatic. But interestingly, what I see in Ireland and storytelling is that they are very fond of
recitation. And yet you would think the recitation is more like that drama that you see in the competition.... But in Ireland any way...

It isn't.

PR --the recitation is a conversation.

It's more.

PR It's just like a story, I feel.... It is as much a story as the folk tale or a myth. Whether it's The Shooting of Dan McGrew which they love, or, what's more common in Ireland.....Is that they create an original monologue that comments on their neighbours...

Right.

PR ...their politicians...

Yep, yeah, yeah.

PR And this is what--

This is what Paul Keane, in Trinidad, does. ... But you see, as I said to Eileen, I would accept the heavy acting, if the children internalise the story. Because when that competition is finished, that story is finished. ....A year from now, they can't tell that story. ... Because, you see, they've forgotten it, they've learned another one. .... And to me this is such a waste. ....

pp. 24-25.

And I said, storytelling is also a performance, you do have to imbue it with a sense of drama. You know, it's understanding what you mean, that makes a sense of drama. And who is who said, when people actors act, they act upon a stage. For a storyteller, their whole body is the stage. That's where their stage is. So your hands, your eyes, your face, the tilt of your head, the way you move your feet, all that is part of your performance. You don't have to walk from there to there. And you don't have to fling yourself out against the walls or beat your head. Because somebody said, 'AND HE BEAT HIS HEAD!' and these children are beating their heads! ... You know, you don't have to do that. As Eileen says, it distracts from the story. .... So, it depends on what kind of dramatisation people are talking about. And even the dressing up in costume is lovely.
43.0 Excerpts from response to Gillian Clarke’s article in A470, Storyteller vs. Poets Debate

‘Storytelling is closely related to literature, and at best a distant cousin to drama. I’m not a storyteller because of the plays and television I saw as a child. I’m a storyteller because of the books my mother and father read to me....’

‘Unlike the actor, the storyteller has to conceive imagery, convert that imagery into language, and communicate his/her vision. Yes storytelling involves the skills of the performer, but I am no, and will never be an actor. I don’t enact, I don’t show, I tell. The images inhabit the mind’s eye of the listener, just as they do the reader. Every audience member leaves a storytelling event with his/her own version of the stories. In this sense, a story told is as much ‘private company’ as a story read.’

Daniel Morden.

www.academi-A470 storytellers vs. writers 1-2.

44.0 Interview Transcripts and Journal Observation: Commentary regarding competitions and the effect these have on storytelling ‘styles’ and storyteller identity

44.1 Grace Hallworth, pp. 24-25

Summary: Again, this is part of the conversation about competition (see also Appendix L, 38.2. and 42.2.), which arose out of a question about acting modes.

But you see, as I said to Eileen, I would accept the heavy acting, if the children internalise the story. Because when the competition is finished, the story is finished. ... A year from now, they’ve forgotten it, they’ve learned another one. ... And to me this is such a waste.

And I have said, just before I came, a woman rang me. And she said, ‘Mrs. Hallworth, Simon Parkins has just been talking to me about you. You’re a professional storyteller, you are the person to get my daughter to win the competition in Trinidad.’

I said, ‘Simon Parkins said this?’

‘No, he told me how good you are.’

I said, ‘But I cannot get your daughter to win a competition.’ I said, ‘I am sad that this is a story that is going around Tobago that I can get somebody to win a competition.’ I said, ‘The first thing I did when I came here was to make it quite clear that I have never been in a competition.’ I said, ‘And I’m afraid I can’t do that.’ And I went through it again...
...How I tell stories, that I internalise them, and so on and so forth. I said— She asked, ‘Can’t you help?’ I said, ‘All I can help her to do is to find the meaning of that story inside her. Now if that helps her to win, then so be it.’ ...

But from what I understand in Trinidad they need a dramatic performance. .... And I cannot do it. .....

‘Mrs. Hallworth I know you can help her.’ I said, ‘Well I’m going away in two days time.’

‘Well when are you coming back’ ‘15 September.’ ‘Well, that will be in time because the finals are in December or November.’

I said, ‘Well, if you persist I’m going to write you a letter and I’m going to keep a copy. Because I don’t want them to say Mrs. Hallworth does not want to help’ ...

‘That’s not the point. I’m going to keep a copy outlining exactly what my philosophy is, and how I go about it, therefore how I will pass that on, so that if I should hear anything on this island I will print my copy of the letter.’ She laughed. I said, ‘No, I’m serious. You see, because, oh...’

PR No, I understand completely. Because it’s the same in Ireland. Because it’s such a small place, that some one gets the idea that you can do this and the story gets around that you’ve done something else and...

Yes. They said she’s so good and my daughter didn’t win the competition, she didn’t help her at all. ...

So, you don’t want to understand that I can’t help you to do that. So I will have...you know, I said that they come to storytelling and when they have these competitions the teacher will come with the children or the mother will come, because they know I’m going to say, who would like to come up and tell a story. So they come up and they tell a story and they get the applause and everybody’s delighted because, you know, it’s nice to have that. And then they come to me and say, ‘Can you give her some tips?’ That’s how I know they are there for the competition. ....

I say, ‘Tips for what?’ ‘The competition.’ I said, ‘I can give her some tips so that she goes on being a storyteller. That is it, you get her to go on telling stories. Feed her with stories. Books. Let her go on telling stories.’

And one child came, not last year, not this year, last year, and she was so good, she was natural, you could see she had learned from her grandmother. And oh she was wonderful. And the story had a song. And without her asking all the people there started singing. You see how natural she was? ....
She never said sing it. And that was noticed by the people from abroad. But the song kept repeating itself throughout the story, and by the third time, people were singing the song. ...

And we all... I hugged her and said, ‘Aren’t you wonderful!’ Mother came and she said, ‘Any tips.’ I said, ‘Don’t touch her!’

(chuckling)

I said, ‘This child is a natural. Just give her more stories to do. I mean, she’s done it.’ ... But because she wasn’t doing this that or the other, even the parents don’t believe that the children are good enough for the competition.

44.2. Journal Observations

Sidmouth Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts had, for a long time, a storytelling competition. This started about three decades ago, on a rainy day when many events were cancelled and Packie Manus Byrne suggested they have a lying competition. It proved so popular it became a regular event.

It went on for years but by the mid 1980s the standard had dropped quite a bit. The storytelling was mostly shaggy dog stories, rude jokes, and short, true anecdotes that were quite banal and vulgar. The organisers wanted to raise the standard of storytelling. And, because of the popularity of the competition and the rising popularity of storytelling outside the festival, they decided to incorporate more storytelling performers in the festival, and have them conduct workshops and provide performances as models of good practice.

This was successful and by the 1990s the storytelling was a popular and important element of the festival. However, the competition seems to have turned into a certification process. Many entrants to the competition wanted to use it as a plug on their c.v. or brochure, to launch themselves as a professional storyteller. In fact, the last year of the competition, two of the adjudicators were cornered and asked not only for a general critique of the performance, but for references that could be quoted on publicity so the individuals could market themselves as professional tellers.

The competition had never been meant for this. It was strictly for fun, and continued because of fond memories of Packie’s associations with the festival and it being his creation. Therefore, the competition was dropped.

45.0. Interview Transcripts and Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances: examples confirming characterisation is not mimetic but diegetic, with personation in play in that the speech and actions are exaggerated traits of the teller’s own persona.
And what about within one story itself, would you ever say that you are --I mean, you talk very clearly about how the story is different from the theatre, it’s not acting. ... ...there’s no fourth wall... do you ever feel yourself taking on a character or characters when you tell a story? Is there a difference between bits of narration, the bits of description, and the dialogue of the character? Is there? In your mind, that is?

Yeah, yeah--

How would you describe that?

Well, the characters become extremely real. And there is a sense that I kind of feel I’m embodying characters. When I’m telling. Although I don’t--it’s not a one man show, you know, I’m not ‘becoming’ the characters, putting on the hat and ‘being’ that. And I think there’s a sense, you know....I think storytelling is, any way, a kind of possession.

This thing I love, is a Traveller idea, that when you’re telling the person you heard it from is behind you, and that person is behind them.

So there’s this possession in the sense of you being part of a chain of voices, and it’s speaking through you to your audience there and then at this time.

But also, I do find that with the character, especially when working with some of these big stories, there’s kind of possession. Different characters have very different kinds of energies. So, um, well, there, you know. Because I’ve been working on the Iliad that springs to mind. You know, there’s Hector and Priam, there’s Andromache and Achilles. And they all have very particular energies and when you’re describing or they’re speaking through you, there is a part of you that is possessed by that particular energy.

Would you say that manifests itself physically? I mean, would you consciously be aware, um, that you gesture in a certain way or your voice has a certain tone? Say, when Achilles speaks or--

Yeah. Actually, that....

Or when you talking about Hector?

Yeah. It’s very difficult to define: Because....

Yes, usually you don’t talk about it, so it’s difficult, I realise.
Yeah. It...it’s... I mean, I have an aversion to storytellers who act, who act out a
part. I mean sometimes, you know, there are storytellers like Eddie who will
always be himself, and that’s fine. You know, he’ll be lying on his back and
jumping about and that’s fine. That’s Eddie being himself. But I have a
resistance to storytellers who kind of, um, yeah, who act out character.

PR  Hm hmm. Yes, but I don’t mean...

But there is an element of that in all storytellers.

PR  That the same gesture always seems to come out at certain speeches, for
example?....

And I think it’s this thing of being true to your own voice, never--  What I like
about storytellers is that they’re never not themselves in the telling. But on the
other hand, I certainly find in the telling that there’s a part of me which is kind of
possessed by it. Whether it’s The Cow that Ate the Piper or The Iliad, you
know. There’s a part of me that identifies with the piper, being cold, seeing this
pair of boots. Part of you is inhabited by the situation in the story. But at the
same time, you’re still being yourself. ....

It’s a very fine balance between being a storyteller and being a one-man show.

PR  And keeping upon this but taking a slightly different tack... Do you think
that this is why certain rhythms, certain formulae, certain musicality changes
within a story itself. Are you aware of that?

Oh yeah, yeah. Pace changes, and...yeah...

45.2.  Grace Hallworth, pp. 27-8

PR  Do you think, like an actor, they [storytelling competitors] are
trying to be Jack or are they telling about Jack?

No, they’re trying to be Jack. Because they say, one of the things they
have said, can you teach how to do voices. And I said, ‘I’m terrible at
voices, if I tried to do it, it would be so ludicrous.’ But they want the
voices.

PR  They want the voices. But not those storytellers, but the
storytellers like you and me, or Duncan, or Liz, or storytellers who are not
professional tellers but just telling the story naturally. Do you think they
are making that distinction of characters, taking character on?

Watching the children, you can’t tell. Because what they’re doing...if it’s
an old lady they’ll bend. .... (getting up, acting it out, changing the voice)
They’ll get up and bend and walk and talk and act like an old lady. *(sits down again).* But how do you know where they feel like an old lady or not. ...

And if you’re talking about other people, not these children... ... That’s another a case. Generally, other people telling stories. It’s very difficult to tell with other people whether they’re in fact—whether they’re into the character, whether they’ve assimilated the character into themselves.... or whether they are just reflecting the character. ...

I mean I suppose you can tell....where you can feel the reality of that story, and know that if you felt the reality that they have actually, you know, played that character from within.

I don’t know. I mean...uh...I know when a storyteller has entered the life of a story. And I know when a storyteller is so distracted with ‘I want to sound like’ and ‘I want to look like’ that they’ve lost the character—

*PR*  And the story!

And the story. I know the difference there. But I can’t tell you if they know it. Because you are saying, do you think they know if they have or have not. I don’t know that. Perhaps they *think* that they have...um....they are portraying that character.

46.0. Journal Observations and Interview Transcripts: Social rituals and habits of traditional tellers’ interaction with field workers

46.1. *Journal Observations*

My field work has taken various forms, and many encounters have been entirely accidental, fallen upon by chance. Most referrals have come through librarians. Since public libraries have often hosted story times for children, readings for adults, and oral history society gatherings, the library staff, even if not particularly interested in storytelling, are often able to refer inquiries to local writers, poets, historians and tellers.

One informant, the late Sean Gallagher, was married to a library assistant, Joan Gallagher, in the central library of Derry/Londonderry. Johnny Collins, a marvellous traditional teller of wonder tales, attended an adult literacy course hosted by Finglas Public Library, County Dublin. Ailil O’Shaunaghsy, the librarian in charge, asked why Johnny wanted to learn to read and write, as he’d gotten by quite fine without either skill. He explained he had stories and poems he wanted to write down. Ailil recorded these and transcribed them, so John could learn from his own writing. Ailil realised how rich in folklore the material was
and contacted folklorists at the University College Dublin Folklore Department, and storytellers Liz Weir and myself. Another teller I befriended was George Sheridan, and I was put in touch with him, also, through librarians. George had always been active in local history societies in County Fermanagh, and when Enniskillen Public Library, which hosts an excellent collection of local history, folklore and literature, started having ‘Yarnspinner’ (storytelling) nights, he attended to tell stories there. The librarians put him in touch with Liz Weir, and myself. I would visit George and his wife, who into their late eighties maintained a small village post office as well as a farm. George regularly took me around the mountain glen he was born in and grew up in as a child.

One visit, with my friend the storyteller and academic Mike Wilson, we arrived to find Mrs. Sheridan had just taken out of the oven a wonderful batch of home-made baked soda bread. But, as was and is the custom in rural Ireland, as guests we were treated with the more expensive, special store-bought white-sliced bread with our tea. Each visit to share stories and learn stories is always heavily involved in social activities. Sean and I traded stories regularly in a pub on Waterloo Place, popular with traditional musicians and the stories came between songs and tunes. Johnny insisted on serving bacon, eggs and sausage, even if it wasn’t a meal time or I wasn’t hungry. Food and drink must be offered and imbibed as part of the field work when stories and storytellers come together.

46.2. Eddie Lenihan, pp. 9-10.

And where I come from, with the stories, the story collecting down the years. Money has never been a part of it. Collecting stories, you go to old people. They’d be insulted if there was even mention of money. I wouldn’t mention it any way. The thing that I do, and have done, for the last 16 or 17 years is a folklore column. And the fact that I put down their name, name who told me the story, that’s enough. ....

That’s it. Here, somebody thought enough of my story to print it and add my name to it. They can be quite proud of that. But if you were to offer them money, there, first of all you wouldn’t hear the story. ‘What? Money for a story!’ I think in some ways that is what has fucked up the festivals. All right, Nobody denies that you have to get money for your travel. And you’ve got to be put up. And you have to have a bit of money to spend. Now, of course, there’s a question of how much. But when people start going around believing, ‘Oh, I’m better than you, I deserve twice as much as you.’ Baaa, well, that’s a very subjective thing. Who’s better, whose style is better? It’s hard to say. It’s hard to say whether any style is better than another. As long as the audience is interested, that’s the only matter that decides if the style is good or bad. ....

And, of course, an audience can be 2 people or 200 people. I would say that any thing more than 50 or 60 people for storytelling is gettin’ out of hand. Because
once you have to use p.a., there's something artificial coming in. There's a microphone between you and the audience.

pp. 18

Well, they [television producers wanting to document storytelling] would understand, you see, if they had gone out and talked to the real old storytellers. In their own kitchens, where they weren't pretending anything. See, this is my place, this is my story, if you don't believe it, fuck off. ....

They would see that. And like I told Cahill, here, when he goes out videoing me. The house we're going to, we're the guests. Anything they tell us to do, do it. No matter what that might be, do it. And I saw some of the places where we've been into and they offer the tea and whatever and the hair fat bacon, and, Jee-sus, you'd be sick lookin' at it, you know— (laughter)

And yet, if you refuse to eat it you're insulting them so you are. So you rise and eat it. 'Tis their house.

PR. It's that basic knowledge, it's good manners.

It's respect.

PR I've seen American and English tellers, want-to-be storytellers, saying they want to do field work but who can't be bothered with just the basic decencies. 'Oh no I can't have the bacon, I'm vegetarian'

Yes. Well how do you expect to get a story with that?

PR You're talking to an old farmer, or a traveller?

You can't. You can't.

PR Those are his pigs, or that's meat he spent money on he didn't have.

Well that is why TV people don't get the best out of old people, who have the real experience in their own place, in their own context. Because they're all—well not all, but often—they're prima donnas. ....

'We are the smart ones, we have the clip board, here we are, ta-da!' Pride of Dublin and full of themselves. And very often they don't get the best at all. Oh, they'll get their snip snip and say thank you very much and give a payment. Which of course ruins it for other people. A lot of trouble that Dublin crowd.

PR Oh it's not just the Dublin crowd. It's the London media as well.
It's the same.

PR  They really are convinced that they are the most important thing on the planet.

Which is very very unprofessional.

PR  It's very scary.

Yes, that also. But you'll find the best of these reporters, they don't go with that attitude. They go to see it from the point of view of the person that's telling you the story. That's why they're get such good stories. Because very often they're find out about hunger, misery poverty and then you start to feel it, like you do with a storytelling. It is an outlook that might only be ten miles wide but can contain the whole world. If you go in with a pitying attitude, god help us, you get no where and nothing.

p. 20.

And of course a story. A story told is better than a story in your head. Sure, that's what drives me to collecting all the time. Stories with the old people. They belong to them, they're the ones who can tell them. Because I wouldn't. So, so, put them down, get them down, and at least preserve them. Because I find there now, up in my room, um, just to sit down sometimes at my desk. Just to sit down sometimes and say, to take down a tape, and to play it and listen to some one dead these last 20 years. ...

They're not dead.

They're not dead. It's nice to think they have some little link still with this world, that some body is listening still to that story.

46.3. Duncan Williamon, pp. 5-6.,

I remember, coming to a quarry, away up in Aberdeenshire, some years ago, when I was younger. And there's a group of Travelling people sitting there. And they welcomed me in, because you always done that. Travelling people always welcomed young Travelling folk in, never turned a young Traveller person away from the place, the abode where they stayed. And you got your tea and you got put up for the night, put in the tent or something. And if they were having a ceilidh around the fire, you were asked to participate.

And here was me, sitting around the fire, and the old woman sitting here all night was Aberdeenshire. And she said, 'You sit there all night and you haven't told a story or sung a song.'
And I said, 'I'll tell a story.'

And I begin to tell her a story my father had told me. My father was a piper not a singer. He sometimes told ballads as stories! ....

And he begun, I begun to tell a ballad. I didn't know what a ballad was, I was only seventeen years old. And the old woman said, 'Excuse me a minute.' She took the pipe from her mouth and said, 'Laddie, I'm sorry to interrupt you but that's not a story that's a lang lang song.' (Chuckling)

PR  And you'd always heard it as a story?

See, and I'd always heard it as a story. ....

So, then I realised that all—many of the wonderful things my father had told us. My old grandfather was a fisherman, he was born in Ireland, and he was a full Gaelic speaker, spoke Gaelic. And then I realised my father told me one story about him, most of the stories would be song stories. ....

So then I started finding out and began to ask questions, I went up to Aberdeenshire and talked to the great Jeanie Robertson and then researching on my own. Just find out the truth, among the Travelling folk. And I learned about it—I never forgot the stories, but see, I had an advantage over many people. ....

You see, I was fluent in the Gaelic, and when I started in the Hebrides and in the Western Isles. .... And of course, you see many people wouldn't give you work. But if you, if they thought you could understand the Gaelic you would get a bit of work.

46.4.  John Cambell, pp.28-29

Speaking of the folklorist Michael James Murphy

He always had a black leather bag on his shoulder—you see it in this picture here—but that black leather bag was always on his shoulder, but that was his tape recorder, you know. .... He always seemed to have it on his shoulder, even when as he stood there.

PR  And did he tell any of the stories himself, like when he was well known? When he was on the radio was he reading from the book or telling from memory?

Oh, no, no, no, he was just talking, telling. ....

He would just be talking about other things, telling other stories. About folklore, more about collecting. ....
You know? I remember Gloria Hunnerford came up and interviewed him one time and she says to him, ‘What actually does a folklorist do? What is folklore?’

He says, ‘We’re working... [pause to think/remember] ...at present on a product of the past for the benefit of the future.’

And how quick he said it! (laughter)

You know. That’s what he says. We’re working at present on a product of the past for the benefit of the future.’

pp. 14-16.,

I met a man in Art O’Neill’s in Forkhill. And I had my tape recorder with me. In fact, I knew the man. Sure, but I never would have thought of asking him about—he wasn’t that old of a man—to ask about banshees.

And I was with another fellow, with the two of them. And I put the thing up on the counter and he says, ‘What the hell’s that?’

Says I, ‘That’s a tape recorder.’

‘Jeez,’ he says, ‘you’re not going to start taping us?’

‘Ah, no, I am not. But I was away tonight. I’m collecting information,’ says I, ‘for Michael J. Murphy about the banshee.’

‘Bloody banshee,’ he says.

Says I, ‘Did you ever see one?’

‘I never did,’ he says, ‘and I can tell you I never heard one. But I can tell you this, I smelt one.’

Says I, ‘I want to put it on the tape recorder. Tell me how you smelt her.’

‘Well, Jeez, I’ll tell yeh,’ he says. ‘I’m a stone mason by trade.’

‘Ah sure I know that.’

‘There was auld ditches out around our house,’ he says. ‘And I decided,’ he says, ‘when I come home from me work one day,’ he says, ‘I decided to pull down them ditches,’ he says, ‘and started to build a stone wall. Two nice wee walls,’ he says, ‘around the house.’
'It was a long, drawn out old job. I could only get to it an hour or an hour or two every now and again.' and he says, 'When you get a good run at it,' he says, 'you work on, you work on at night.'

'I looked,' he says, 'at my watch. I discovered that the shop, the wee shop beside us would be closed and I'd no tobacco. And, I'd the daughter,' he says, 'she's about twelve year old at the time.' He says he give her the money and I said to her,

'Go on down to Davey's and get me a plug of tobacco.'

'Jaysus,' he says... *(words not clear)* 'I was ready to drop for a smoke and she never come back for hours. And when she come back--she'd no bloody tobacco!'

And the aunt was with her...her aunt. And he says, 'What's wrong with her?'

'Eh, there was a wee woman stopped her on the road and wouldn't let her past.'

And, the aunt was winking behind her back. And she went down to her aunt, and her aunt looked after her. She said she was afraid to go home, and she couldn't go to the shop.

He says, 'You're getting too bloody conceited to go into the shop for a plug of tobacco for your father. That's what it is,' says he, 'ah, it's bad of yeh.'

And he had the head off her.

That was all of that until the next day. 'I'm after coming from work,' says he, 'and I'm after mixing stuff and laying a few stones. Who lands only Dunker (Duncan?).'

That was the sister of the man who was telling, her husband.

He lands over. He says, 'He doesn't come to ours that much, and he comes down to me.'

'Bejesus,' he says, 'the wee lassie' he said, 'wasn't telling' any lies at all,' he says.

'Why? You're gonna start telling me now?' he says, 'Making up a story for to save her...'

'No,' he says, 'After I heard about the wee woman and all that,' he says, 'I began to think to myself of old Hildon, my neighbour?' says he. 'I didn't see him for three or four days.'
'And I says to myself there after dinner time, bejaysuz, I'll go over, that wee woman might ‘a’ been an omen or something.’ He says, ‘I'll go over to see is the man dead in the house, he's up on eighty.

‘And I went over.’

‘Well, what way was he?’

He says, ‘He was coming with a bucket in his hand, goin’ to feed the cattle. He was all right. There was damn all wrong with him.’

‘But,’ he says, ‘when I told Enda Hildon about the woman, he says the woman, the wee woman was sitting on the ditch between the two bushes,’

‘Ah go on,’ says he, ‘you’re telling me bloody lies.’

And he says, ‘I went out of Hildon, and when I go back she was away,’ he says, ‘But bejaysus, you could smell her.’

‘What d’ye mean, you could smell her?’

‘Jaysus, there was an awful smell of her,’ he says. ‘When I turned in,’ he says, ‘the first thing that took me was the smell of her. I kept walking, I could see the wee woman sitting between the two bushes, in the ditch. But when I come back,’ he says, ‘you could smell her. The smell’s there yet.’

‘Come on over,’ says he, ‘You don’t believe me,’ he says, ‘come over.’ Said he, ‘I returned with him, And then,’ he says, ‘I could smell it.’

I said, ‘What was it like?’

He says, ‘It was like--I was going to say it was like the smell of a buck goat, but there’s certain pleasantness in the smell of a goat. No,’ he says, ‘It was like auld stale piss. You see?’

And so says I, ‘So you never seen her?’

‘No,’ says he. ‘Only—I never seen her,’ says he, ‘--the wee lassie saw her, and whenever I heard her crying and,’ he says, ‘me brother-in-law saw her. And all I done’ he said, ‘was smell her.’

I took the tape, and transcribed it, and took it over the Michael J. Murphy. He looks over it and jumps up. ‘Jesus Christ!’ he says, ‘it was the banshee.’

‘Hold on a minute--it says there “an aroma”. I have that depth of papers transcribed that says that not one of them ever saw the banshee, because when it
come to the aroma they said, "Oh, aye, the smell like a...[unclear] off her." and "It was like the smell of roses off her." and "It was the smell of this that and the other off her". The aroma. There it is there. Stale urine. That was the one word wanted.'

So, John McGinnon was the man's name. John McGinnon he smelt her.

That was the first authentic one he got. Somebody that didn't ever see her, nor heard her. All he could say was he smelled her, and that was so very interesting.

PR So when you see some of these people in the audiences now--not necessarily the ones who gave you these old stories and pishogues and, and old cogs and things—that will often put those into your mind and you'll put those into a story?

That's right.

PR I didn't— I knew you'd work with Michael James Murphy but I didn't realise you'd done recordings for him.

Oh aye, I collected some. In fact, I've a thing it's going to be published.

49.0 Journal Observations: Examples of creative writing workshop activities used by tellers, changing narrational point-of-view.

Memory Story. Participants are asked to think of a specific place that they can remember and describe in detail. It could be a place from their past, a holiday destination, a favourite room or building, garden or park, or wilderness spot. They describe the places to their partners. After the group is gathered together volunteers are asked to tell about their partner's description, not their own. That is, they retell the description they have heard, not the one they told to their partner. The volunteers remember a vast amount of detail, and automatically change the telling from first-person to third-person voice. The partners get to hear their stories in another's voice and words. This can then be carried over to writing: the writer may write the description as they told it the first time, as they heard their partner tell it, or they may write their partner's description in the same or a different voice.

Parodied, Twisted, or Mixed-Up Tales. Well known stories are taken, usually nursery stories (e.g., 'The Three Little Pigs', 'Goldilocks', 'Red Riding Hood', etc.) or Märchen (e.g., 'Cinderella', 'Sleeping Beauty', 'Jack and the Beanstalk', etc.). Depending on the activity, the title might be twisted or changed and a new story made to go with it. Or, the story may be re-worked with a reversal of genders: Cinderella is turned into a male character, Jack into a girl, and so on. And yet another variation is to keep the character the same but change the plot or character traits. These are related orally, sometimes developed as a group.
activity, sometimes individually working in pairs. Some of these ‘games’ lead to writing activities.

Using motifs, rhetorical and figurative language, and other elements of folklore. Twenty to forty motifs are printed on small cards. Participants draw three cards each, and create a story orally making use of those motifs. Genre can be changed: the motifs can be drawn from fairy tales, folk tales, science fiction, murder mystery/thriller, or historical periods. Again, the stories are developed orally in small groups or with partners, collectively or individually. They are performed and, if participants wish, written down. A variation of this activity is to collect specific elements of language: words heard in a told story, phrases (e.g., ‘Once upon a time’, ‘hair black as ebony’, ‘snip, snap, snout the tale is told out’, etc.) and so on. These are then woven together in a new story, developed and performed orally.

47.0. Journal observation—Chris Wood’s seminar at National Folk Festival Education Conference, Sutton Bonnington, Leicestershire, April 2001

Chris Wood, who sings and plays traditional fiddle and guitar in a southern English style, led a seminar at the education conference preceding the National Folk Festival in 2001. He made very clear that he is not a folk musician: ‘Folk music is what I do, not what I am.’ He explained he is many things: a trained graphic artist, a husband and partner, a friend, a father, a brother, a son. These actually inform his identity much more than the fact that he plays a certain kind of music and, in fact, all these aspects of his identity, and many more, inform the music that he plays and how and why he plays it. Chris felt very much that we all need to keep that in mind, whatever art form we practice or use for expression, or make a living from.

This seemed to me a key point in understanding what is ‘wrong’ with those aspects of contemporary storytelling that bother me. Too many people want to ‘be’ storytellers, without thinking about what is it in them, as individuals, in their own special identities, that motivates them to tell stories, and which fills their stories and storytelling with a unique voice and purpose. Many contemporary storytellers seem to be trying to ‘find’ themselves and define themselves through storytelling, often at the expense of audiences and of storytelling itself, which suffers in quality.

It seems to be no accident that the most ‘successful’ tellers—that is, those who work regularly, are respected for their work, and who appear comfortable in their chosen way of life—actually have a fair amount of professional or life experience preceding their work and identity as a storyteller. The traditional storytellers have certainly lived long and eventful lives making a living from some work other than storytelling, which is a pastime and social activity to share amongst family and friends. Successful professional tellers seem mostly to come from education, library, community and street theatre, and similar backgrounds. Varied
experiences inform their storytelling, as well as their approach to working commercially and professionally with the art form.
Chapter 4.

48.0. Journal Observations: Examples of 'clashes' between tellers and audiences because of false assumptions, suggesting the possibility of limited theory of mind

48.1. 'Irish Theme Night'

When I first was in London, I went along to an Irish Theme night run by, I believe, the College of Storytellers. It was advertised that there would be traditional song, as well, presented by 'Irish Gypsies' [sic].

The stories told, for the most part, were Irish jokes. A few traditional Irish tales were told. I remember one woman told 'Hdd and Ddd and Donal O'Neary', a classic Irish variant of 'Big Claus and Little Claus' collected by Jeremiah Curtin and Seamus MacManus among others. The singing, however, was not performed by Irish Travellers, but by two young women from the Royal Academy of Music, dressed in faux 'Gypsy' dress (dirndl, embroidered flowery aprons, frilly white peasant blouses, long blonde hair plaited and bound with brightly coloured ribbons). They sang in an operatic, not traditional, style. The only song I remember was a version of 'The Gypsy Rover', the version popularised in the 1960s by a pop music band that did folk music.

Packie Manus Byrne, a renowned Donegal traditional singer, musician and storyteller, as was Doc Rowe, the folklorist. Speaking to them, they both remember it as a very strange night. We cannot remember if Packie was called up to tell a story—I did not think he had been, Doc thinks that he was, Packie cannot remember. Doc and I agreed that if he was called up, he wasn't that well received. Although he was the only 'real' thing—that is, a tradition bearer—it was the non-Irish performers telling what the audience perceived as Irish stories and storytelling who were most popular.

48.2. Tyneside Community Festival

Billy Teare, a storyteller from Northern Ireland, reported to me that at a festival he performed at in Tyneside, a variety of artists were working in a marquee in a fairly rough estate. Children and teens were climbing up on the roof of the tent, and trying to untie ropes and unclip lights while the performance was going on. However, there was a large crowd of people, especially younger children, sitting before the platform and listening attentively to what was going on.

Just before Billy's spot, a juggler and fire-eating act came on. One of the performers did some fire-eating, and showed the audience how it was done. Using that child-performer tone of voice, where every adult is referred to as 'uncle' and 'auntie', the fire-eater said, 'Now boys and girls, be sure you don't try and do this at home.'
An angelic-looking six year old girl with long curly blonde hair replied, 'Do you think we're fucking stupid?'

Billy quickly assessed these were very street-wise children, and rapidly reconfigured the programme of stories and songs he had in mind. Luckily, his approach never uses that patronising tone of voice any way, so he had a head start over the jugglers and fire-eaters, who quickly lost the audience after that.

48.3. Around the Fire, March 2003, Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre.

This is a storytelling club run by Kate Corkery and Ros Scanlon. They book a wide variety of storyteller guests, performers of a high standard, and also call people from the floor to tell a story. They have a crowd of regulars who are very good tellers in their own right. Sometimes new tellers arrive and Kate calls on them to tell, too. On this night I was booked to tell some stories, and a new storyteller came along. She was very eager to tell, and clearly had done a lot of work preparing her piece.

Kate called on her, and it became clear that, though well intentioned, the woman had not been to many storytelling events of this kind before. She chose to tell the classic Greek myth of Perseus, and had brought along cutouts of beautiful illustrations from books to illustrate the story, hanging them on the wall before, while framing the story, and during the tale as well. It seemed closer to the sort of storytelling one would do in a primary school or nursery school classroom, or a children's after school club or library session. It was not a bad performance at all, but it was significantly different in style and content from what usually was told at this venue as to feel a bit awkward. The audience is a very polite one, and enjoyed the difference, but also felt unsure how to react.


In the summer of 1983 I first attended some performances by English revival storytelling groups. One, the West London Storytelling Unit with Ben Haggarty, Godfrey Duncan Tuup, and Daisy Keable, was in a school or teachers centre. The room had been elaborately decorated with carpets, cushions, hangings, and candles. I thought it charming, and assumed it was because of the barrenness of the classroom at the end of the school/beginning of the summer holidays.

A few weeks later I was at an evening of the College of Storytellers. They, too, had elaborately decorated the room. As with the West London Storytelling Unit, they had laid out Oriental carpets, hung rich hangings and screens on the wall, and laid out elaborate cushions. This I found very strange, for the space was a beautiful Orangery in the midst of a pleasant garden in one of London's most popular parks. I could not understand why they went to all the trouble to make a beautiful and perfectly adequate room more beautiful. As time went on, however,
I found that many storytellers and storytelling groups in England liked to change the rooms they performed in, often doing quite complicated set decoration. I have never understood the purpose for it, other than turning a drab room into something more comfortable. There may also be a psychological explanation with changing a space being a physicalisation of mental preparation. I now believe it may have come from the fact many revival tellers at that time came from teaching and theatre backgrounds. The decorations were very similar in the use of materials and techniques for classroom displays, and the overall effect of exotic cushions, tapestries, rugs and so on reminiscent of how a stage designer might think of a storytelling.

The other matter that struck me on these nights, however, was the type of stories told. Both evenings were wonderfully entertaining, with well told stories. However, all the stories were from places like India, Afghanistan, Persia, Russia, Jamaica and so on. I do not think any stories were told from England or Scotland, and I was expecting many tales from collections of Joseph Jacobs, Katherine Briggs, Andrew Lang and lesser known British folklorists. I asked about this, and some one in the College of Storytellers said they told stories from these other countries because storytelling had died out completely in England and England had no traditional stories of its own.


As mentioned, some English contemporary storytellers have a habit of decorating the storyteller's area, and even the entire environment so that the audience area is decorated, too. Some volunteers did this for the Society for Storytelling Gathering at the University of Exeter. It was quite bright and outrageous, with many patterns and colours and textures.

On arriving and seeing this display, one elderly traditional storyteller asked, 'Where are we telling stories? In a hoors' boudoir?'

[See also Appendix 1, 15., my account of a 'Travellers' Tales' session to a middle class audience at a Chicago festival]

49.0. Journal Observation: Example of audience evaluations, with audience viewpoint differing significantly from teller viewpoint

Ealing Abbey Social Club

Some of my regularly repeated work is at Catholic Parish Clubs. These social clubs are pubs, attached to local parishes, that offer parishioners a place to gather, socialise, network and drink cheap beer. Profits support the activities of the parish. They often organise social nights, charging £10 a head for a fish and chip supper and entertainment. I am booked, sometimes, as the entertainment.
One such job was at St. Benedicts, the Ealing Abbey Social Club. I was booked for Hallowe’en night. These are social evenings, and the audience is there primarily to socialise, and the audiences usually have not only not come for the storytelling specifically (unlike a storytelling festival or storytelling club), and in fact don’t usually have any familiarity with contemporary storytelling. I therefore make sure to tell short, light, funny stories. On this particular evening, because it was Hallowe’en and I had been requested to, I finished the first half with some ghost stories.

The evening was going extremely well and the crowd, a sell-out, enjoyed the stories. One can tell at sessions like this when, during the interval, everyone wants to talk to the storyteller, and insists on buying the performer a drink.

One couple were tremendously excited about what I was doing. They had just seen Connor McPherson’s *The Weir*, a popular new play in the West End. This takes place in a pub in the west of Ireland and consists of the characters telling each other stories. They said to me, ‘What you’re doing, what we’re doing tonight, it’s just like in *The Weir!*’

But the most interesting reaction was a request. One woman said she liked the funny and scary stories, but did I now know any melancholy stories to tell. I was quite touched by the request and said that I did. After the interval, explaining I had a request for melancholy stories that I would tell a few. I was able to tell longer, more complex and sadder stories than I normally would have done for such a group. The result was just as successful as the first half of the evening, and the night went on so I nearly never got home.

50.0 Interview Transcripts, Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances, and Journal Observations: Examples of mediated gestures in contemporary tellers and mimetic gestures in traditional tellers.


PR This is one thing that is fascinating me about the study. It is this connection with emotion and with memory, that the two seem so strong together.

Yes, yes. And the tension, the tension that is there.

PR Yeah. So with that, and this is an obvious question that many people ask storytellers, ‘How do you remember the story?’ Some talk about visions and pictures, images, some hear the words, some imagine the person who told them the story or they see the book they read. Things like this. I’m not so much asking that, I suppose. But…but, whatever image, whatever memory system you have, whatever goes on when you tell a story… how would that relate to a personal memory you have? When you do have a strong recollection of something, is it ever the same or totally different. Do you understand what I’m getting at?
No, not quite, tell me again.

PR  Ok, say you are telling a story... Ok, do you see the pictures, or whatever...

All right.

PR  ....and when you do, might you remember something like having lunch today with Shirley? .... Or remembering the day you and Trevor married. Or remembering leaving school and the thoughts that went through your head then. .... Those strong life experiences. Are they anything like the memories when you learn and tell a story?

GH   I think that what happens with me, and yes I know that business of people who say they draw pictures..and for some things, fairly linear things, fairly—I want to say simple but nothing is wholly simple. Straightforward.

PR  Yes

I sometimes use mnemonical aids. You know, that sort of thing to help me with sequences and so on. ... But for the longer things, the things that are not, the things that are sort of like an onion skin, you know, you take one off and there’s another thing beneath and so on. ... It’s something to do with how much it means. What meanings it has. And the depth of those meanings, the quality of those meanings. ... And it may, it may actually in some way connect up with a life experience. ...

There’s a story that I’m going to try and tell at Jenny Pearson’s thing at Bleddew, about Prince Amalec and a girl, a princess who doesn’t want to get married, and how—the sort of things she does to her suitors, and how he’s directed to go and see a witch that lives down the coast. And, because she’s supposed to be quite clever. And I shall add, she’s supposed to have been to university and all that. But very very kind and so.

And he goes, and he’s expecting some kind of person who has a wart on her nose and squinty eyes, and...bats all around and so on. And what is there is quite an ordinary human being, quite a pleasant faced girl. And she invites him in and makes him a cup of tea and he tells her the task the princess has set him. And she says to him, ‘You know, she’s not going to marry you, you know. She doesn’t really want to get married. And she has a terrible temper. I hear her screaming sometimes, all the way down here.’ (laughter)

And he says, ‘That may well be so but I’m in love with her. You know? I have to try because...’
And you know all of it is so much like life, that story! In all the little nuance that you get, and the vignettes. Of the girl, telling him, 'But I'll still help you.'... And him sort of helplessly and hopelessly in love with the princess. And, um, it does remind me of somebody I know. And that helps... Because what it means is that I have a picture of the princess. But it doesn't start with the life for me. I'm not saying this doesn't happen. ...

But for me it doesn't start with the life thing. It starts because in, in going beneath the surface of the characters—and I don't do that as an analysis—I better hasten to say! It just comes as the story goes into me, deeper and deeper.

PR I understand.

Certain things begin to reveal themselves. You know? Um, without my search, so to speak. But simply because I am open to that story heartwise. ...The heart is open. ... And then the head says, 'OH! But isn't she like... ' And that's how it works with me.

PR And do you think that that means sometimes the stories that appeal to you sometimes have a similarity to other stories?

Yes, that's right. That's right, yes. .... I would say that a lot of them have this quality of constant revelation. And perhaps that's why they appeal to me. Because, I think, you know, when I tell it this time there's one meaning. And the next time I tell it, there's another meaning! ... Not that that one is obliterated. But there's another meaning. ... And you know, it becomes quite fascinating to explore stories like that.

PR And again, it's not, as you said, it's not simple, it's not complex, the meaning comes to you through telling the story.

That's right.

PR But I assume also it comes from the reaction you get from listeners....

Yes, yes.

PR ...that suddenly makes you--see is the wrong word but...

Sense.

PR ...feel and understand...

Yes, yes, sense and understand...

PR Sense and understand.
Yes, yes, yes, that's right. ... Yes. So, when you were saying were there these life events, but, ah, but I don't know if that was what you meant. ... But in a sense— but oh, you might be right. It may be that subconsciously the life events have ...have given the story a special meaning to me. ....

But I am not aware of it until I tell it.

50.2. Analysis of Video Recording of Storytelling Performance.

Grace Hallworth, telling the story of the young man and Death, for the final concert night of the Watermans Arts Centre Storytelling Centre, 1987.

Grace comes and immediately kneels down, on the stage, and it seems a natural and unselfconscious move, an instinct to be as close to the audience as possible. She frames the story with a short introduction, in teller mode, mentioning the time is running out so a short story is required, and linking to previous stories by talking about how there are many ways to deal with other worldly creatures.

She proceeds to tell a story about a young man who was clever and wanted to be rich but didn't want to work. Death 'likes his style' and helps him by telling him to become a doctor. If Death stands at the head of the bed, the sick person belongs to him and will die. If Death is at the foot of the bed, the person will be cured. The young man makes a fortune as a miracle healer, and the king calls him to cure his daughter. The king promises wealth, half the kingdom, and marriage to the princess, but if he fails the man's head will be cut off. The young man is sure he will cure her. But Death is at the head of the bed. The man is horrified, but suddenly has an idea and swings the bed around so that Death is at the foot. It works. Death is angry, however, and after the reward is collected Death takes the young man up into heaven, where there are millions of oil lamps. They represent people on earth, and how much oil determines how long the person lives. The young man's lamp is almost out because of his trick. The man accepts this, but asks Death to put a bit more oil in so he can tell Death a story. Death does. It's a wonderful story, but Death falls asleep. The young man pours oil in his lamp until it overflows, and still lives today to tell the tale.

The story is told almost entirely in synoptic and proximate modes. There is no indication of going into character mode. In fact, this is a case where the modes really do not seem to apply. The story is very much reported, and it is Grace herself not any one else always speaking. There are gestures and facial expressions, but they are only a slight exaggeration of how Grace talks and moves in normal conversational speech. The pauses are longer, more emphasised and dramatic. There are digressions, direct address to the audience, but so integrated into the story that they are hardly digressions, they are natural comments that Grace would make in a conversation. The only actions that come close to 'mimetic' action would be minor ones: she snaps her fingers and says the king
snapped his fingers and ordered the miracle worker to be brought to him at once. When the story reaches climactic moments: curing the princess, Death taking the man up to heaven, the man telling Death a story, she rises on her knees as she relates these things happen, actions that suggest a getting up or a flight. Throughout the story, Grace's natural humour, grace, and thoughtfulness come through very clearly, naturally and subtly. I would describe this as mediated telling, she is the medium between the story and the audience, and she herself, her body and personality, convey the story and link the audience's thoughts to the story. A literal example of this is the point in the story where the man sees Death at the head of the princess's bed. She says the man has a clever thought and she asks the audience, 'Do you know what it was, what he did? I see in your eyes, you do, you do. What did he do?—HELEN, be silent! [this is directed at another teller who relates knows this or a variant of the story] Yes!' And she takes the audience's response, their answer, 'He turns the bed around!'

50.3. John Campbell, p.23.,

PR So was it the collecting that got you telling stories yourself?

Well I always told stories. I worked in a public house, I would tell, and you would hear all the auld folk telling their stories.

I wasn't collecting, just listening, joining in the craic—Michael J. Murphy, you see, used to come into the pub.

[proceeds to tell how he met the folklorist—refer to Appendix I. 18.1]

John Campbell, cont. 25-26,

It's hard, that, to know what I'm going to tell. ... You know? And then you could run...you have stories that you like, that run from one to another, I may do that.

PR It's almost—here, I find people who....as long as you have something interesting to tell, they'll listen to it. But some of the audiences you come across in America, in England, they want you to tell something specific.

Something specific (laughs softly)

PR You know what I mean? Like they want a story with a leprechaun or they want—

That's it!

PR —or a story with a banshee. And, it's—well, I find it very peculiar. Maybe you come across it....but (bells ring) ...it's...uh... You know, I've heard
people interrupt storytellers—(JC laughs)—saying, saying, 'Oh, don't tell that one, I wanted to hear this one!' (laughing)

They wouldn't be very good at the craic. ... It'd stop the flow of it.... I went to... a man was married to my Aunt Katie. I went up there, I was collectin' the songs, see? He says, 'Did you go to McCreek?' I says, 'I did, but I didn't get any songs.' He says, 'Come over to me next Saturday. Bring some drink. We'll go over to McCreek's house.'

So I went up, I took about half a dozen bottles of stout....three stouts, some McArdles. That sort. We went up to McCreek's.

(tape unclear--all about going to Aunt's and finding McCreek there.)

'Jesus, here's some one you don't see,' said McCreek.

But he says, 'I wouldn't be in it today only for this man here.' That's me. He says, 'He wouldn't pass his Aunt Katie's but couldn't not stop for to see her.... (laughter)

'...Because if she heard he was over and didn't call to see her, he'd never live it down.'

And she started to make all these things and he says, 'And where the hell are yez heading any way?'

Says he, 'We're going over to Frank McKenna, here, I wanna get a song off him,' he says, 'This man here's looking for a song off him.'

(laughter)

So says he (McCreek), 'Ah...Frank McKenna, be damned, sure he's no singer.'

You see?

He says, sure, 'It's not the singer it's the song we're after.' (laughter)

He says, 'Sure, I have that bloody song!' You see?

'Well have ye be god?'

'I have, I have.'

'Bejaysus that'll save us a journey. Open that bag and open that stout, we'll not waste it on Frank!' (laughter)
You see? It was not a word of it the truth, we were only putting it on. And we certainly downed the half of it, he wasn’t drinking at the time, a couple of bottles each, you see? And, eh, he sung away, he sung away four or five songs. Because he wouldn’t let old Frank get away with it. Ye see? ...

And then, says he, ‘When we are here, we’ll go over to see Frank, he’s great crack.’

And so he was. Great craic. And we told him. Says he…. ‘I told him all,’ says he, ‘when I was comin’ over to get some songs.’

Says he, ‘Calm yourself, sure I don’t know any songs.’

Says I, ‘Sure, don’t I know?’ (laughter)

And so he says, ‘And only for it, I wouldn’t have got them!’ (laughter)

He started to tell about the selling pigs for his father, and there was this wee grunty pig— you know, the one reared in the back? Every time the boy would lift up the pig on the cart this wee pig would come back, (gwwnnkkk, gwwnnkkk, gwwnnkkk: squealing/grunting sound) it’d put its wee paws up and they’d just pull the thing down again. But there was this wee rubbish of a thing.

He said ‘I was just a wee lump of a lad and I went up along on the cart,’ and I says, ‘There, Connigan was coming down again, he’s buying all the pigs.’

‘Is he, be god?’ he says. And he pulled up the wee thing in the cart, the wee pig he picked up. (gwwnnkkk, gwwnnkkk, gwwnnkkk: squealing/grunting sound)

And we were there in Bullabogue, just there along the canal, and he just caught him by the back and just flung him into the canal. (Laughter)

‘Bastard!’ he says, ‘That was probably the price of the rest of them!’ (laughter)

Ahh, Jesus, such craic I had with them....

50.4. Analysis of Video Recording, John Campbell tells the story of ‘The Big Freeze’, Irish Night, Watermans Arts Centre Festival,

This story has been summarised already in Appendix I., 28.1. It is the universal story, a tall tale about hunting.

John tells this with very much a mix of mediated and mimetic gestures and actions. The majority of the telling is mediated. He is mostly in teller, synoptic, and proximate modes. It is John telling throughout, it is how he speaks in
conversation, which is often full of anecdotes and allusions to various proverbs, verses, and poems. Where he does display mimetic action is in the important business of the gun. The man borrows an old firearm from the parish priest, a kind of musket or shotgun that must be loaded each time before a shot with wadding, powder, ball, ramrod, etc. This John mimes quite accurately, as a country man who would be familiar with old firearms. His posture and body language is, however, the pose one would have after years of working behind a bar, working around the countryside. He stands tall, and relaxed. If a table is nearby he often rests his hands upon the table and leans toward the audience as a barman would lean his hands upon the bar and lean towards a customer. These are quasi-automatic, natural, ingrained behaviours that do much to suggest the authenticity, the truthfulness, of what is told no matter how fantastic. Which, in this case, is the amazing catch and the head being cut off, put back on and frozen in place, and then falling into the fire when the man blows his nose.

50.5. *Journal Observation.* None of the storytellers I interviewed showed any sign of relying primarily upon acting modes and mimetic gestures. The performances are very much of the literary axis, and any oratorical modes are exaggerations of conversational speaking styles.

The only sign of acting modes and mimetic gestures I have seen in storytelling over the past twenty years are in those performers who ‘dress up’ in character and mimic the mannerisms of that character, or what they would imagine the mannerisms of that character would be. The most common instance of this is in storytelling competitions in Ireland, where young boys and girls will dress up like Eamon Kelly, a well known actor and storyteller. The children and teenagers will dress in old tweed waistcoats and grandfather shirts, with flat caps, and a pipe stuck in their teeth, and put on a Kerry accent no matter what their natural native accent is. They will even stoop slightly and walk slowly to suggest arthritic joints, very much a caricature of old age. It is a very ‘stage Irish’ style of telling. There are a few adult storytellers who do this as well, and one or two make a living of it playing not for the Irish, but for Irish Americans on holiday in Ireland or more often, by touring and performing at various Irish festivals in North America.

Another example of this that I have seen in America are tellers who portray storybook characters to tell stories as children’s entertainers. For example, a teller may dress up in costume as Mother Goose, or Alice in Wonderland. Tellers will also dress as historical figures and tell stories in role: as a Native American (when they are not a member of or descended of any Indian tribe or nation), as Davey Crockett or Betsy Ross, or as a Viking. These historical re-enactment characters are somewhat active in local and national storytelling organisations in North America. They are also extant in Britain, but from my experience have very minimal participation, if any, in the British ‘storytelling scene’.
In my own opinion, I do not find these storytelling done in literary or historical personas effective. It is, perhaps, a matter of taste. I don’t find the historical reenactments in museums very interesting, either. In the context of taking on a character for storytelling, they are not effective because they do require mimetic actions, and as the characters are assumed, not derived from personal experience and identity, the mimetic actions (as well as the costumes and hair styles) do not strike me as true. They distract the listener and the teller, who seems more interested in the costume and period detail than the story, and thereby detract from the story and the performance.

51.0. Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: Different kinds of audiences and coping strategies storytellers use to engage difficult individual and groups of listeners

51.1. Grace Hallworth [See item 13. (also 74.1, below), and how she coped with a group of secondary students]

51.2. Eddie Lenihan

But I find that, that, if you go to a school and, we’ll say, under the arts council scheme, and their new catalogue must be very visible because I’ve been asked to more schools this year alone than in the last two years. 

But I found inevitably there is this impatience to get you. ‘Come on, come on, come on… my class next, must get my class next!’ I understand why. But they never think of you as a person. You can only talk so much! And when I come out of a performance, I’m sweating, absolutely. And there’s no case of ‘Do you want a drop of tea?’ Oh, you’ll get the odd teacher who’ll ask you, but the very odd one only. And I find out that the principals are unbelievably and unanimously and invariably hopeless. They don’t understand at all. It’s a case of ‘Oh no, just another dirty bloody disruption to my timetable!’ That’s the impression you get from so many of them.

Summary: Long discussion on my part, about my experiences with the Arts Council scheme in schools, which has been mostly positive.

PR …But it’s projects I’ve had in Northern Ireland, mainly that have gone well. And maybe that’s the good side in Northern Ireland, that there is still a sense of being more relaxed in a school environment and taking time with visitors.

Well that’s good, because that’s the way it should be.

PR But certainly, when I’m going in for several weeks and seeing the same group each time, working with one class, it’s good.

Well that’s the difference. That’s the difference.
PR And I think that's what's brought out this feeling of, of, what I think storytelling should be.

Well, you're gettin' some good there, taking stories in, taking stories to this class, and taking something out, instead of one, two, three drawing, drawing....

PR You're getting something back, not just giving all the time.

It's drawing out. Drawing out of you all the time. And, you haven't got time to hear what they have to say. The kids. Even though I always try to make 7 or 8 minutes at the end of the class. I mean a class period is only 35 minutes any way.

PR And there's often 40 in a class.

And they all want to ask questions, they all have a comment. Some of them very interesting comments. But then you're called to another class and it's a case of 'Come on, come on, I want you, I want my 35 minutes, I have to have my pound of flesh too.' And then when you've done the number of classes that you've come to do, which might be 2 hours, which is a lot of talking in one go. ...

But you have to do it. All the time. And then you get somebody, 'Ah sure, but my class is going to be disappointed if you don't come to them!' Sometimes I feel like saying, 'Get stuffed!' You know? You can't!

Summary. More discussion of specific projects and work in specific schools and areas. The good schools and arts officers give useful and constructive feedback, but this is rare.

Eddie reports his school visits are... extremely free of any come back. So I've no way of knowing. So sometimes it just goes in, and it's a once off, bye bye. What's the point of that?

Or maybe I shouldn't say what's the point of that because I have met people fifteen years later who say to me... In fact, I was in Dublin. I was up two weeks ago, I bloody well had to see the specialist, and I had to get something to eat afterwards. I went into town, where I'd be waiting 3 or 4 hours to come down there'd be time to kill, you know. I was hanging around.

Coming down James Street, I was just up at Claddagh Records to deliver some CDs, and, uh, I was coming down the street. I was hungry, so I just went in where I saw the billboard on the footpath and it looked reasonable.

And, I was only in the door when some one said, 'Oh! Mr. Lenihan.' Mr.! Mr.! And is it an ex-student? And I look, and isn't there a fellow at the counter. Now it's all girls I always taught.
And I said, 'Hi, where—how—who?'

And he said, 'Oh, you called to our school in Passage West, oh, about...' and he named it, about 15 years ago. Lovely fellow, lovely. But...a personable fellow who'd get on well anywhere, he had the gift of the gab.

But he remembered, and you know, that's what'll keep you going. Somewhere, someplace, sometime you made a small impression. And you see, that's why, also, with the books... Books are useful in the sense, they are useful in the sense that knew them, but they're also useful in the sense that you don't know where those books will end up. And I've had letters from people in the most oddest places. Even from Samoa. ...

Somebody who had taken a book back to somebody in Samoa. And, eh, in fact he knew Ireland. And that's a long way out. A long way. It's, uh, oh, I don't know. New Guinea. It's north of New Guinea, there. And that's why, always, I go out of my way. If somebody sends for a single book, even if it doesn't pay, in any circumstances, to send it there, or to get it there, I'll send it on the principle that a book inside there in the storeroom is worthless. It's got to be out there. Likewise with a tape or a cd or anything.

pp. 20-21.

Oh, god yes. And very often when I go to places-- What I do is I keep a list. Especially now, if I don't keep a list...if I'm doing a regular thing I keep a list so that I can go through as many stories as possible in a year's run. ....

I don't repeat myself. At all. I try that, because otherwise you find your repertoire of stories narrowing down, down, down, so they're convenient, and to the right length, those are the ones that are acceptable, we'll say, to a tour guide. I wouldn't do that. I find, for example, that the summer season that I do for Ballyvaughan, that I've done the last ten years, in a pub, which is the only pub I like to do. Because pubs are dicey places. ....

You get more than you bargain for there. But this place there's always been good order, a good number of tourists as well as locals. A nice mixture. But what I do there is I tell one long story and two short ones. And there's music as well, you see, in between....

A lovely mixture, you see. And, you'll get the one long one while they're fresh, at the start, when they're ready to listen, because most of them know what to expect. And then the two shorter ones to finish off—only ten minute stories. But the first one would be half an hour, say, and then the two ten minute stories, there about. I find that's the usual mix; but I keep a strict count of the stories I tell week by week by week. And I don't repeat myself.
Simply because, people might be there on holiday, for three or four weeks. They might come back. All right, you say some stories help to be repeated, because people rarely get all the details on a first hearing, and lots of people ask to repeat them. And of course I will. No problem, no problem. But I treat them as a different audience every night. So you could repeat yourself ...

But I hate to think that I’m repeating myself to the same person who wants to hear a different one. And, ‘twould embarrass me and I saw the face and I thought, Jesus, I told the same story last week to these people. ...

And of course if they came up and asked me, of course I’ll do that. But, eh, in most cases now—and it’s partly for myself and it’s partly for the audience. For myself, because if I don’t tell them, I forget them. Or you begin to stumble over them. And I suppose you never really stumble, but it annoys me to forget the basic plot of the story. ..... 

After that, whatever is added, I say that’s ok. But the basic plot. And it’s the plots I would have heard from the older people and I always feel that I should, for the sake of the older people, keep their story basic, that’s their story, not mine. .... 

But what I make of it after is my version of it, but I like to think of the story that I first heard from somebody that that’s their story. For want of a better word for it, that’s the real story!

51.3. Journal Observation: School programme in New Jersey.

Once I was engaged for the day at a large elementary school in New Jersey. Although I make clear in my information and contracts to schools that I wish the children to be within the same age range for this session, this school ignored the request (but didn’t tell me until the children were coming into the assembly hall). Whoever scheduled my day bowed to teacher requests that they did not miss ‘specialist periods’ (classes where the teachers have free time while their students go to music, art, or physical education). Also, in America, schools schedule kindergarten (reception classes) for half days, with one group attending only in the morning, the other after lunch in the afternoon. The administration wanted to get their money’s worth and be sure every student had an opportunity for story time.

As a result, each of my sessions had a range of students from the age of five through to the age of twelve. The audience size was anything but intimate or informal: there were over three hundred children for each session, and I had to use a school microphone to be heard. This makes it extremely difficult to choose what story to tell, that will hold all the children’s attention so they can enter the storytelling experiences. What will work for five and six year olds will repel the oldest, and what appeals to the eldest may frighten or bore the youngest.
I began by telling ‘The Sleeping Prince’, a long Märchen that is a variant of ‘The Sleeping Beauty’. Because it had many motifs familiar, I hoped, to all the children, even the youngest, and also had a humorous role-reversal, with joking gibes at both sexes (the princess wakens and saves the prince who is asleep) I hoped it would hold the attention of the youngest. It worked. I then asked the eldest to be patient, kind, and responsible as I knew they were, being fairly grown up and cool, and allow me to tell a very silly short story to the youngest, who had sat patiently all through the long story that they had enjoyed. I said if you want, you can join in and help me tell it. This worked. From then, I could do pretty much anything I wished and the attention was there for the remaining hour. The performances then included: riddles for the eldest, a silly singing-finger-game for the youngest; a short allegory with imagery the youngest understood and challenging themes for the older ones to interpret; and finished with a ‘gotcha’ story that was not too frightening for the youngest but corny enough for the eldest to enjoy and feel they got ‘their’ favourite kind of story.

52.0. Journal Observations and Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances: ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ storytelling and how audiences tolerate or disengage from the latter

52.1. Journal Observation. At a week long festival I was once booked at, there was one session scheduled for an hour and a half every day. I was booked at all six sessions. This afternoon of storytelling was aimed at families, so there was an even mix of children of all ages and their parents and grandparents. For the most part, the same families, as season-ticket holders to the festival, came every day. The room was not an easy one to tell one, being a very large and old hall in the seamen’s mission. It was difficult to hold attention of the listeners for an hour and a half, and to tell the stories well.

Other years this event had a mix of tellers and musicians, but this particular season it was just myself and one other teller. The first day, the other performer was Taffy Thomas. Because at another event the children were developing a play based on a folk tale ‘Hook for Skye’, a story about a hero encountering three witches or fairy women, whose magic powers he copies to fly to London where he is unfairly accused of theft and nearly hanged, Taffy told that story. It gave the project a plug and introduced more families to the story, and it was told very well and was well received.

The other five days of the story session, I had five different storytellers. The level of experience and range of repertoire varied. However, for some reason each one told the story ‘Hook for Skye’. They did not bother to check what others had told on previous days. Since Taffy had learned the story from Duncan Williamson, and the other tellers had learned it either from Taffy or Duncan, the story was told almost exactly the same way. In terms of the actual variant, the frame language,
digressions and other para-text, and even in paralinguinal elements such as gestures and pauses, each performance was almost the same.

This, to me, was an example of bad storytelling. It was, no doubt, a good story and each teller may have told it well. But few, if any but Taffy, told it in his or her own way. The tellers also did not appraise themselves of each others’ repertoires, so as to be sure they were always entertaining the listeners with a story they had not yet heard, or at least, a version not yet heard.

The audiences, at least the adult members, were very polite. No one spoke up to say the story had been told already. After the third or fourth telling, however, it became clear the children were restless and bored with it. They began to wander about, to talk, to find things to play with. Rather than attribute this to the story and telling, most tellers thought it was because we were getting later into the week-long festival. They said the children were tired, or over-tired. This may have been true, but the fact no teller tried to change tack so as to involve all the listeners, and left it to me as emcee to try and bring them back into the storytelling experience with my contributions. As MC I did tell performers what had been told, but some arrived too late to be briefed and others seemed not to listen or understand, thinking that a good story can be repeated several times. All this also suggests what many would consider poor storytelling.

52.2. Great Northwest Story Fest, Youth Club, Michael Harvey. Salford and Stockport Education and Library authorities organised a week long storytelling festival. In the evening there were public performances. During the day, storytellers performed in schools, libraries, hospitals, young offender units, and youth clubs.

Michael Harvey, a well established and talented Welsh storyteller, was booked to perform at a youth club in Salford. This was a new venue, the authority had not sent any storytellers to such a youth club before. The teenagers were certainly not experienced with any kind of storytelling or story listening. The leaders seemed to have little experience of managing the group. It was quite noisy and chaotic.

Michael did not panic or stumble. In a very relaxed, conversational style he began talking to the youths. They gradually settled down. I stood at the door so as to keep traffic going in and out at a minimum, and called for order, taking on the role as disciplinarian since the leaders seemed unable to. Michael started with a few urban myths, and so manage to captivate the listeners’ interest that he was able to tell a quite dramatic Welsh wonder tale, with very graphic images appealing to the age group.

This is certainly an example of good storytelling. The teller was not so tied to previous plans that he was inflexible in the situation. By beginning lower down the performance continuum, where the listeners were, and gradually raising them up to more formal, challenging stories by choosing material with imagery that
held the interest is actually a skilled and more difficult task than many give credit for. If it looks and sounds as though the performer is in difficulty, the storytelling experience clearly is not happening and the storytelling is, most likely, not very good. However, if all goes well and the storytelling experience is evident, the impression is that it is something very easy and natural to do. In fact, the steps taken to reach that point, though subtle, are difficult and take tremendous energy and quick-thinking.

52.3. **Sidmouth International Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts, the Storytelling Competition.** One year an entry to the storytelling competition included a teller who was clearly interested in becoming a full-time professional storyteller. This had been indicated in workshops and storytelling swaps during the week. It was also expressed in his clothes: he had taken on the cliched garb of various types of ethnic clothing in bright colours, such as baggy trousers, a waistcoat, a tight-fitting Tibetan cap, and so on.

He also seemed to be trying to develop an individualist and personal style. However, it did not take into account how the audience would perceive this. He chose to tell for the competition 'Molly Whuppie', a wonder tale that is a British and Irish variant of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and 'Hansel and Gretel'. Like many fairy tales, it does contain particularly violent and gruesome elements. These, however, he over exaggerated so that they considerably repelled the audience. He also decided to enact the story—that is, to include many large mimetic gestures, walking all around the storyteller area and into the audience area, at times, suddenly grabbing, not touching, certain listeners. This was very threatening and completely ruined the story and the performance for everyone involved.

Bad storytelling, in my opinion based on my readings of Bruner, Schank, and Kroeber (Bruner, 1983, 1986, 1990; Schank, 2000; Kroeber 1992), arises from an inability to develop adequately a theory of mind that includes or is applicable to their storytelling. That, or else they lack common sense and basic social graces.

52.4. **An Beal Oscailte, the Kiltimagh Storytelling Festival, Paddy O'Brien's performances.** Paddy O'Brien is a young storyteller from County Kerry, a full-time primary school teacher who in the past was also involved in amateur dramatics and very active in Gaelic games. He is also a fluent Irish speaker. All this comes into play when he tells stories. Although he tells traditional stories, such as those of the *Fianna*, he also tells humorous yarns and anecdotes. These, particularly, he does in a style special to him. He would incorporate more mimetic devices, and would clearly display the acting modes Alexander and Govrin recognise. One story he tells that amply demonstrates this is an account of the first motor bus to arrive in Kerry. He describes, most accurately, the actions of a rather well-figured woman in a very tight dress buttoned up the back trying to step up onto the bus.
Paddy was engaged to tell stories at the Kiltimagh Storytelling festival in County Mayo regularly. He was a great success, performing in some of the more difficult venues. For the first festival, this included a night-club venue which was very large, noisy, smoky and with difficult sight lines. He shared the evening with Eamon Kelly, the renowned storyteller, actor and radio performer. Paddy's style and repertoire certainly complemented Eamon's, and met the audience's approval since it fit very much into what they perceived storytelling to be, though Paddy's style was very different from Eamon's, which is the type of storyteller and storytelling they were expecting.

Another difficult venue that Paddy mastered at the festival was the spontaneous, informal sessions in the small pubs that were frequented by locals, not tourists and festival-goers. In these, Paddy's natural temperament and strength of character related to the bar staff and pub regulars, and banter and chat evolves slowly and naturally into telling stories, yarns and jokes. It also drew stories out of the crowd, so that the storytelling was a true sharing, not a one-way performance. This is storytelling at its best, where without the benefit of a specially designated storytelling performance area, or props, costumes, lighting effects, or music, the entire company is gradually but deeply put into the storytelling experience, not as passive participants but active contributors.

53.0. Interview Transcripts: Examples of the listener feeling the teller is telling directly to him/her, and the teller feels the listener is compelling/ urging/ encouraging the story to be told, and told to that listener


Faces in the audience are the things for me. I don't think I'm so conscious, although they may also be factors, but one needs to be conscious of them and maybe it's more of a subconscious thing, the weather, the...

PR The room you're in.

The whole thing... And in this sense I'm thinking, what does it mean telling stories in Tobago, how would that influence what I'm doing in terms of the weather. As distinct from what I'm doing in England or Canada or Israel or wherever. Um... And that for me would be more of a subconscious thing. It may well be there, but it is faces always...that make a difference for me. And I can remember very very clearly, um, when Ben had his festival of storytelling, the storytelling festival at the Festival Hall I think it was...

That time. And, I was doing a story that I had not done before, and, uh,...which meant I didn't know the places where I could relax, the places I could speed up, the places I could...because you gain all that information as you do a story, you develop a mood, a movement, a rhythm. But I hadn't had that before. And foolishly decided to do it this night. ...
And in fact it was also a matter of how much of it I would remember. So I had a lot of things going against me. But I was... somehow, my own eye caught a young woman in the third row. And I couldn't... I couldn't move my eyes from here. Every time I tried to move and look elsewhere, I looked back at her. And it was because it was as though she knew what was going on and she was willing me...

She was giving me that silent support with her eyes. And I needed that so desperately that night... that I stuck with her.

**PR** Yes, yes. So it's not just a visual stimulus but emotional.

It's emotional. Because I could feel.... And afterwards she came to me and she said--she said, 'You know I kept looking at you.' And I said, 'Yes, you were my strong support!'

(chuckle)

You know?... But she—I mean, I think she knew that.

53.2. *Hugh Lupton, pp. 5-6.*

**PR** ....Do faces in the audience ever trigger stories?

I can't think of an occasion when a face has triggered a particular story.

**PR** How about a conversation with a member of the audience?

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Often in the interval you'll get chatting with people and some one will say, if I'm working locally, for example, in East Anglia, which I do quite a lot, some one might say, um, you know, do you know anything about Tom Hickathrift? ... So I'll say, Oh yeah, I'll tell you a story of Tom Hickathrift. So, you know, in the second half you throw in the story of Tom Hickathrift. That happens quite a lot.

53.3. *Eddie Lenihan, p. 10.*

The audience is the thing that matters. Because I know very well, and it happened to me just last week, and it is funny. But, I was talking to a group of Americans, telling them stories, and I noticed this fellow in the audience. I said, 'I met that man before, I know his face!'

Now, as it happened I was completely wrong. I thought he was Irish, even in the audience of Americans. He wasn't, he was one of the Americans who happened to look like my notion of who I was thinking of. But I found myself constantly
telling the story to him, to him, and waiting for his reaction. And he was a funny man, as it happened.

But sometimes, you get the opposite. You get somebody in the audience who’s a fecking sour puss. And I’d concentrate on that person, just to see would I get a reaction. And if I don’t....well, I prefer to believe, ‘Hard luck on you, it’s your fault, you must have constipation or something.’ Rather than that the story is either rubbish. Or besides of that, you’d be getting reaction from other people and you know how the story is.

Any way, after a while, you know what the story, more or less is going to go down as. That, unfortunately, is the sad thing about telling a story over and over again. But the interesting part of that, is, you can tell that story to so different an audience. And the more remarkable thing is that, more often than not, you will get a similar reaction. Be they Irish or American, or city Irish or country Irish. You’d be amazed, how the reaction and how it affects yourself.

You tell the story better, obviously, when you are getting a reaction. And, if the story doesn’t seem to be going well, which I have to admit now, thankfully, it has happened very rarely, I tell it to myself, simple as that. I think of one of the old people I’ve been talking to, when we’re telling it by the fire. I cut off the audience and think, I don’t need you. Now that sounds crazy, that I don’t need you. But I don’t.

When it comes down to it, I have collected now from so many old people, I’ve been to so many of them down the last twenty-seven years, that, that, I can vividly recall some of them. I might find myself talking inside a mental hospital to Jimmy Armstrong, as I did so often. And it’s still very vivid with me, even though that man is dead for years now. Vivid enough, as I say, that if an audience doesn’t seem to be, for whatever reason, reacting as I hope, then I just go off and tell it to him. Doesn’t matter at all.

53.4. John Campbell, p.1.,

PR And I believe that that night—and the only reason I remember is because I’ve seen the video of it now since—

Ah, yes...

PR But I believe in the second half you recognised some one in the audience. I can’t remember who it was but that sparked a story.

I do remember meeting someone there I knew called Jack Dunne and his wife. That put a story in mind... That brought that on.

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Journal Observations: Imagery and thought processes revealed through workshop activities, and in storytelling performances

54.1. *Workshop activities for ‘Telling the Tale Conference’ at Globe Education, 1999, part of ‘All the World’s A Story’ project with the Lion’s part Theatre Company and Southwark community groups.*

1) Arti Prashar, a storyteller and theatre director, led a workshop for a conference I organised that revealed amazing links between words, imagery and thought processes. She told a short, simple story with vivid images to the group. Each person was then to think, silently, of one word they remembered from the story. Participants then made groups of three, and each shared the word they chose to remember with the other two. Together they then had to create a new story orally, using those three words. If they chose the same words, then the word had to be used two or three times. Each group then told the new story to all the participants. The stories that resulted were very powerful, and also represented the associative thoughts individuals had while listening to the first story.

2) Sonia Ritter, classical actor and director, and artistic director of the Lion’s part Theatre Company, led an experiment with words, narrative, and Shakespearian dialogue. She handed out various long speeches from plays in the first folio, but characters’ names and titles of the plays were whited-out. Some of the speeches were well known, but most were not. Each group of three got one speech. This activity was designed completely separately from Arti’s, but shared some elements in that Sonia asked the groups to choose three words from the speech that they felt best represented it or summed it up. They put these words into a sentence, and then took turns reading the speech aloud. Participants did consist of some professional actors, but most were teachers, storytellers, folklorists, or writers. Sonia, and the professional actors, found the readings quite effective and very impressive. What also linked it to Arti’s activity, however, was that the key words chosen triggered common associative thoughts, and part of the quality of the readings came from the accessing of these thoughts to provide meaning, and an internalisation process to produce the speeches.

54.2. *Kindergarten pictures, Mary O’Brien’s class, TASIS International School.*

A friend and fellow teacher, Mary O’Brien, invited me sometimes to tell stories to her class of five-year-old children. She also played a tape of me telling stories. After I told the story ‘Cap-O-Rushes’ one day [summarised before—a variant of Cinderella and King Lear], as an activity, and an experiment, she asked the children to choose the most important parts of the story and draw pictures of them.

She gave no more instructions than that. They had to decide. If they asked her what they should draw, she directed them to think back to the story, close their eyes if need be, and think about what part of the story they remember as being
important. \textit{[Only one out of the entire class required this, however]} The children were by this time of the academic year well used to getting out materials and sitting down to get on task fairly quickly. She was, however, amazed at how quietly and quickly they settled down to work.

What Mary was also fascinated to find was that, although they had no discussions of the story, and none of the children talked to each other while drawing, they all drew more or less the same images, the same moments, from the narrative. Mary had not summarised the story, as teachers often do, or asked questions about characters, conflicts, problems, themes, and so on, as teachers do in class discussions analysing a story they have shared. So it was surprising to see the children come up with almost exactly the same scenes from the story, when they had not consulted each other or been directed in any way.

I found it equally amazing, when I viewed the art work, to see that the images the children had focused on to represent were much the same as the ones I envisage while telling the story. It was almost a ‘spooky’ kind of telepathy.

Since then I have conducted the same experiment as a workshop leader, when doing storytelling activities after a performance. I have asked children of various ages to draw pictures of a story, with the same instructions and methodology Mary initiated. Many times I find that children produce the same images without any directions, consultation or discussion, and that these pictures reflect the images I use in remembering and telling the story.

55.0 Interview transcript, conversation transcript, and journal observation: physical reactions to storytelling.

55.1 \textit{Grace Hallworth}

So that business of breaking through, for the mind to get the space, and you were talking about space and I talked about physical space. But mental space we hadn’t talked about.

\textit{PR} No. But that is part of it as well. \textit{You can be in a room that is...that is the most difficult room for telling stories in. But, if you’re lucky, you can still make it work... And you and the listeners forget you are in a room with traffic outside...}

Yes, or noise from the kitchen.

Yes, and get into that space. I was saying to Eileen... I mean, she was saying, I’m ninety-seven and I’m the first of my family that has lived so long. And I said, Don’t you think that storytelling has something to do with it? I think that it...you see, you are talking about space.
And I remember that when Trevor went into a spiral of depression, I remember the man he went to said 'I cannot cure depression, what I can do is give you injections that will create space for you to work.' ... 

Now that's very interesting. Because connecting with those feelings that creates a space, because he said all those tensions are prowling in the brain and you haven't got the space to do anything. This will remove these tensions, lessen them, so many injections, one for every week, will give you more space and in that space you may work.

*PR And that's interesting. With the relatives that I learned stories from, are the ones who lived the longest in their families, they all lived into their 90s.* 

... *And you look at tellers like Duncan, and Packie Manus Byrne, as well as Eileen.*

I mean, saying that to her I begin to think. You know, the people she said who had been in hospital when she fell and cut her head. And I said, thinking about it now, it makes space in you for you to heal. All sorts of things are healed. In his case it was the depression, in our case it may be all kinds of things.... Things that could fester...

But because we're making space all the time....I mean when I had that stroke, when I moved to Tobago, the following week I went back and the doctor said, What happened? And I said, I've got a way of meditation every day, at 3 o'clock. Well doctors don't want to hear things like that.

*PR No.*

Well, meditation is like storytelling, it's a form of making space. ...

You know? And this week, I couldn't do anything, couldn't fasten anything. Next week, everything was the usual way. ...

She said, I can't understand it I'm still sending you for a scan. And she did, and they said yes you have had, whatever the medical term was, but I think it has to do with the storytelling.

*PR No, I think you're right. It also has to do with the appeal to so many adults who are coming to stories and wanting to hear stories. They talk about all the stress in society now...*

*GH Yes.*
PR  And of course we know if there's stress it does lead to depression... And it leads to anxiety ... And of course adults are looking for those things that take them out of the time-space that they are in...

Take them out of that.

PR  ....that are creating that.

Yes, yes. And crushing in. All, you know.

PR  And which we've always done. But, in the past, people went to Church regularly and there was that sense of meditation and story within the ritual.

Yes.

PR  And also with live entertainment, it's very different...Saying, I'm actually leaving this space I'm in and going to go somewhere where I'll be entertained.... ...be it a cinema, a theatre, a pub, whatever.... Whereas staying in your house, you don't get away...

You don't get away from it.

PR  ...from those things which depress you.

Who was telling me that...some programme, they missed the television breaks because they could always get up and do something, in the kitchen or whatever.

PR  Ah, same idea.

55.2. Conversations with Taffy Thomas

Taffy, having suffered a stroke from which he recovered to establish a career fulltime as a storyteller, is very aware of the physical demands of storytelling. Although it is not nearly so strenuous as his previous work as a street entertainer, and seemingly quite unchallenging in a physical way in that he sits to tell the stories, Taffy has noticed the tremendous amount of energy that storytelling takes, that is entirely internalised during the telling. Afterwards, one is tremendously tired, physically and mentally. During the storytelling and the events surrounding a telling, one may appear quite bright and energetic. As soon as the atmosphere and environment change and one is alone, the exhaustion takes over.

55.3. Journal Observation

I noted that after a storytelling, one is mentally and linguistically exhausted yet the body is quite fresh and restless—that I often need to take
a long walk alone, in silence, after a day of storytelling for mind and body to catch up.

56.0. Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances, Interviews, and Journal Observations: Examples of Ritual Language and when it does and does not 'work'

56.1. Grace Hallworth—video

In the story of the young man and death, Grace uses a repetitive phrase of language twice. After the young man and death have made the bargain and he has become a doctor, she says that, 'The man went on to cure dozens of people. No, no, did I say dozens? No, that is not correct. He cured hundreds of people. Hundreds? No, no, that is not right. He cured thousands. Yes. Thousands and thousands of people.'

After the young man has defied Death, and in anger Death takes him up to heaven, high up in the clouds they come to a place full of lamps. Grace says, 'He saw lamps, little tiny lamps full of oil, burning brightly. There were dozens of lamps. No, no, did I say dozens? No, that is not correct. He saw hundreds of lamps. Hundreds? No, no, that is not right. He saw thousands. Yes. Thousands and thousands of lamps. Ah, no, no, I tell a lie. He saw millions of lamps. Millions and billions and trillions of lamps, yes, that is it.'

Using the same rhythms, the same pauses, the same facial expressions with each phrase, this punctuates the story. Both times brings a response of laughter from the audience, but especially the second time. The repetitive phrasing unifies teller and audience and the story, bringing both parts together (the first half, which ends with the arrangement between the young man and Death, and the second half, which concludes with the young man breaking that bargain).

56.2. Hugh Lupton—video

In 'The Cow That Ate the Piper' Hugh does not repeat phrases of language, creating refrains as some tellers or texts do. He does 'echo' phrases and events or images, both from within the story and from other stories told previously that night. For example, he includes mention of a 'lost gem', which was a major theme in Diane Wolkstein's story, told previously. He also makes mention of a donkey, fallen into a large hole, which was an incident in another teller's tale that night. Within his own story, the 'punchline' involves the 'ghost' of the man whose feet and boots the piper cut off, coming and asking for food and shelter in the same way the piper did on coming to the farm cottage earlier on. This reflection of language and narrative incident draws listeners into the story, prompting them to predict what comes next, causing them to invest in the story and the act of telling itself.
PR  You mentioned the music of language, the rhythm of the language... When you're developing a story that you've decided you want to tell, how do you find that?

How do you find the rhythm, how do you find the music? Do you consciously look for it, do you just play with it. Are you conscious of finding it or is it just there and you know it works?

Well, it's always slightly different for each story. But I think it's those things that only—that you only really find when you start telling to an audience. So I can have a story kind of set and I know where I want it to go and it has formulaic language that seems appropriate to it. It can all be kind of ready to go. But then—and I think it's to do with just internalising it, getting it into your body, as opposed to your head. It can take a while. Several weeks, several months even for it to find its music.

PR  Do you think it becomes easier to do this as you become older and more experienced? Or is it the same amount of effort?

HL  It's still the same amount of effort, I'm just more aware that it takes the time... Recently I—I'm sure you know the story of the fairy ointment. ... You know the fairy ointment that allows the farmer's wife to look into two worlds? Well I found a local, Suffolk version of that story. And I've been wanting to tell that story for years and it was kind of an incentive to add it to the repertoire. And I've been watching how long it's taken to re-find itself. And I first told the story in about March this year. And at the Edge I told it, in July, and I thought, 'Ah! It's beginning to find its proper rhythm.'

PR  It's getting there.

Yes, it's getting there. And that's four months it's taken.

56.4. Journal Observation

This was discussed earlier, regarding different reactions and audience participation determined by cultural influences. [Refer to Appendix I, 8.2., 14.1, and 15.1—15.4.]

56.5. Journal Observation

At one of the Ulster-American Folk Park Storytelling festivals, another storyteller, Dovie Thomason-Sickles, reported to me that some of the local members of the audience had complimented me, saying how much they liked the conversational style of telling that I had. It was as though, they said, I was talking
directly to them. Dovie felt this was quite a compliment for a storyteller to receive, and I agreed, feeling both flattered and a bit awkward.

57.0. Analyses of Video Recordings of Storytelling Performances, Interview Transcripts, and Journal Observations: Programme improvisation based on first encounters with audience

57.1. Eddie Lenihan, Video Recording of Belfast Yarnspinners Evening, at the Linen Hall Library

Liz Weir, organiser and MC, greets everyone. She is in ‘hostess’ mode, with a bit of teller mode....she emphasises several times that all are welcome, stalwarts and new people, that it’s 2 years since the first meeting at the folk museum, that there are great numbers, and sharing, sharing, sharing, sharing stories.....explaining layout of the evening. Tone is self-deprecating and the emphasis is to talk to each other, to share, that all is storytelling. She stands, looks out at all of audiences, gestures just a bit, re-emphasising sharing.

Then Liz introduces Eddie, saying that it is his first time to Belfast, tells a few short anecdotes that tell how she heard of him and finally met him.

Eddie stands, moves, talks slowly, turns to look at all. Says he hopes all can see him as he is small, and talks quietly about visiting N. Ireland, and how he hopes to see the Giant’s Causeway, explains he has stories related to it and will get to those. But first he wants to talk about the south a bit, and the stories he collects in Clare, Galway and Limerick. All frame story stuff: very quiet, almost shy, explaining/defending why he is there, what he hopes to do...teller mode in a way but it's something prior to teller mode...expository mode? Introduces idea of Biddy Early.....all explaining....tells anecdotes of collecting from people who knew about her or whose parents and grandparents knew her...tells about pub in London named after her where strange things happen. Some say she was a witch, but in Irish was a woman of knowledge (gives Irish word....bean fassa)

‘One story’ he starts, beginning a changeling story—right into Synoptic mode, complete change of voice and even body. Voice louder, a bit faster, more expressive, body a bit more tight or tensed...When landlords lay hard south and north (reference to where he is, emphasise north) (throughout many mentions of ‘north’—sometimes defensive, sometimes aggressive/assertive....politics coming through, playing it, testing/pushing boundaries)... Tells of how man is sick and breaks tone to joke about how men are bad patients (teller mode here) right back to synoptic mode.

Some character/proximate mode mix with neighbours, in one voice, asking after husband, woman, in character mode, reporting on his condition. The voice is strident, rhythmic, and louder than expository mode of voice..... body begins to move around more, not just gestures....much of the time though Eddie is telling in
a crouched position—standing, but hunched over, arms out and curled in front of body.

When neighbours tell woman to go to Biddy early, it is dialogue, but one voice speaking...proximate mode, reported speech even though it would be written in direct speech marks.

Eddie uses constant gesturing—reaches the limits of where his arms can stretch. When woman gets to Biddy, Biddy’s speech is proximate/character mode. It is dialogue but more like Eddie’s voice in synoptic/proximate modes. That is, she speaks with authority and there is little change of voice, tempo, tone....

When Biddy says to the wife, You sit down, Eddie sits down himself. There is emotion in the voice—an assured tone, that of Biddy, but when wife speaks, this is more of a character mode, there is meekness in the wife’s voice.

All explanation of what has happened to man and how to cure him is in dialogue. But only the wife’s voice is in character mode. All Biddy says is in proximate and really in synoptic mode.....very little difference in vocal quality and tone, but the style is now in second and third person (this has happened to him, you must do this, then you must do that, etc.)

Eddie mimes what to do, describing with hands the shape of coffin, the arrangement of the four knives that are to be placed on his breast, etc. His eyes look at audience but also at the coffin. The most character modish type of voice for Biddy is the last speech (‘Go away now!), and with this he accompanies it by sweeping his arm and pointing to the distance with his hand, very much a mimed movement.

He again sits down as the narrator, in synoptic mode, describing how the wife goes home and finds all as Biddy told her it would be and does all that Biddy told her to do. Character mode comes in when the neighbours come to the wake—speaking again in one voice, but Eddie puts on their sorrowful sympathetic tone of voice (‘sorry for your trouble’) and actually kneels and crosses himself when he says they were praying around the body all laid out.

All of this is delivered in a very quick pace, it is rhythmic use of voice, body and accent. Both the accent in the voice and the accentuation of rhythm with body movement.

When time to lay the body in the coffin, Eddie explains the coffin was standing in the corner and draws the shape of it with his hands. Explains room was too small to easily manoeuvre and place the coffin. He mimes all this: putting the body into the coffin, moving it and carrying it round, etc.
The four strong men carry the coffin and he mimes them carrying it, shows they did so with great effort. It gets heavier and heavier and as it slips, the wife reaches up automatically to catch it: something she is not to do for Biddy told her not to touch it. Eddie mimes the hand going out. When they get to the crossroad, Eddie mimes in great detail opening the coffin, all of them looking in, the frozen horror on the husband's face, dead, looking out.

Last line drops voice to almost the same tone, speed, tempo of expository mode and sits down immediately on finishing the sentence, so he sat before applause starts and does not really acknowledge it.

Eddie then discusses folklore again, back to expository mode, stands up....says many stories are about coffins and death. Says, let me tell a different type of story entirely. 'St Patrick is buried here,' he says and goes into explanation of Patrick and holy wells and so on. 'There's a story I heard...,' and he identifies the teller. Mentions the O'Connors are in this story, but Eddie wants to offend none of them.

Eddie then starts story with a proverb: 'There are three useless things in the world. Old books don't say how they came to be thus, but I'll tell you.' This is very much teller mode.

He stands and sits constantly in talking about the work of St. Patrick: he is still in the synoptic mode. The gestures are definitely rhythmic, matching and emphasising the rhythm of the voice.

Teller mode is embedded constantly in synoptic mode as he makes comments about St. Patrick's character and the character of the Irish, jokes about religiosity. When St. Patrick talks in story, there is a character mode here, a slight change of voice, strong.

When High King talks, there is a softness, a meekness....subsumed in this mode or tone is a teller mode/anachronism to make a joke, 'sure, I don't even send that crowd a tax form, they don't bother me, so I don't bother them.'

Compared to John Campbell, Eddie's voice seems to be that he is talking faster but if you listen he is not. However his body, his gestures, are much quicker than John's, moving at every beat (whereas John's seems to move on the down beat or strong beat), so it appears Eddie is telling a story more quickly.

When describing St. Patrick's appearance he breaks out of synoptic into teller mode, asking was the big stick a crozier or a mitre, I don't know, do you? asks audience—says it was a big stick in his hand anyway....almost back to natural voice mode.
When Patrick preaches it's in a big voice, arms all outstretched. Lots of laughter from audience. Eddie describes O Connors coming out of the bog, all naked, trying to steal Patrick's clothes, he beats them off. All this is mimed. Humour from the miming but also the rhetorical comments about nakedness and Patrick’s fine clothes,

Patrick rings his bell, O Connors think it is a ceilidh, they start dancing...again mimes this and gets laughs

To emphasise Patrick’s frustration Eddie takes off his glasses and explains how Patrick gave up and was so depressed, and depression wasn’t even heard of in that time. (Big laugh at this switch from synoptic to teller mode, to put in an anachronism.)

There’s lots of Eddie bending over, crouching almost, in the telling of the above sequence.

Change of tone, slower, quieter voice when Patrick returns to Tara and takes to his bed, and the one civilised O'Connor is ordered to sit by the bed and mind him. Eddie again mimes the laying in the bed, the kneeling by the bed, the saying of prayers. St Patrick’s dream of the O’Connors causes him to curse them 3 times--each curse St. Pat wakes and shouts. Here Eddie’s voice is in character mode and he shouts....immediate contrast the young O'Connor's voice is quiet, almost sotto voce, as he counters the curse with a prayer to save his people....

When the cursing is done the young O'Connor tiptoes out quietly and quickly to get permission to leave from King and then leaves: all this is mimed, all the encounter, the dialogue, is in character mode (the King hungover, making references to wanting peace so as to rest for his meeting with the Greeks, and so on). All very amusing.

When O'Connor gets to the bog of the O’Connors, he goes to the crannog of the chief (Eddie makes joke that it was the man’s own private island, just like the private island Charlie Haughey has....again, teller mode in anachronistic comment on modern times, to make modern connection.....and it’s very amusing)..

Vivid descriptions, lots of metaphors and similes, matched with extravagant gestures and mimed actions, all delivered quickly and rhythmically.

Finishes almost anticlimactically but ironically.....mix of teller and synoptic modes.....talks about O'Connors become the most religious and devoted people in the country (over exaggeration.....very ironic.....does get laughs)....but with the overpraise his voice is almost in expository mode. And to finish it Eddie just shrugs, as if to say, what more can I tell you? Do you believe it? Of course not but it's fun isn’t it in my humble opinion. And then he sits down.
Comment. Eddie’s spontaneity is expressed in two ways. First of all in his paratext, in his frame language. Secondly, in his physical style and extensive use of mimetic gestures, which seem as much inspired by the environment as by the story. The text may change a little from one telling of a story to another but the overall impression is that it remains the same. However, Eddie always introduces the story in relation to where he comes from (Clare) and the people he has collected from and the places he has explored to find and understand the stories. He is known to be an extremely physical storyteller, moving all about the storytelling area and even throwing himself across the room at times, leaping up onto tables and chairs, and so on, to mime the action of the story. However, this I find varies tremendously in different told versions of the story. The action depends very much upon the way Eddie is feeling, about himself, the situation, the audience, and so on, and also upon the space that he is in.

For example in the Belfast Yarnspinners, it was his first visit to Northern Ireland and he comments on that, relating common interests and highlighting differences between his part of Ireland and Belfast, and by introducing Irish words and explaining them. He also incorporates the immediate surroundings of the storyteller area in the library when storytelling. The fireplace mantelpiece behind him becomes the mantelpiece or shelf in the story, the chair becomes a height in the story that he climbs up on as the character might, the bookstacks become the wall of the fort or hill a character climbs and peers over: Eddie will use these as props or sets to mime the action of the story.

57.2. Eddie Lenihan, pp. 21-22

Speaking about repeating stories, and how stories change.

But... in most cases now—and it’s partly for myself and it’s partly for the audience. For myself, because if I don’t tell them, I forget them. Or you begin to stumble over them. And I suppose you never really stumble, but it annoys me to forget the basic plot of the story... After that, whatever is added, I say that’s ok. But the basic plot. And it’s the plots I would have heard from the older people and I always feel that I should, for the sake of the older people, keep their story basic, that’s their story, not mine. ...

But what I make of it after is my version of it, but I like to think of the story that I first heard from somebody that that’s their story. For want of a better word for it, that’s the real story. ... Because it was a real story for them. So I mean there’s something personal in all of them. There’s something different, different in telling.

What I thought in fact, I saw it one time in Béaloideas [the Irish folklore journal], which is a pretty respectable journal, even though they going too academic nowadays. They don’t tell stories any more, so it’s dissecting and analysing, which is fine. But, when they have so many stories they should balance it a bit.
But, then they’re academics, I suppose, they have to do their job. But, eh, I remember one, eh, it was the Gaelic storyteller. By Sean O’Sullivan, I think. [note: I think it might have been Sean Delargy, who wrote a talk that was published, entitled ‘The Gaelic Storyteller’.] And Sean O’Sullivan was excellent at his job, you know, he was one of the experts. But I saw the criterion he had laid down for the Gaelic storyteller. About the gestures, the amount of movement possible, the...the... ‘Twas comical! ‘Twas laughable. I was saying to myself, ‘Now, here is a recipe for constipated storytelling.’ And that all of them should be the same? ...

That this was the Gaelic storyteller? I couldn’t believe that, because the storytellers I saw—and were only one stepped removed from Irish. They might as well have been speaking Irish, because they were speaking English with Irish phonology and syntax and all the rest of it. Well, they didn’t behave like that. There might have been some people who were like that, who made various gestures with their hands or, you know, whatever it might be. Small gestures, but sure there were others you had trouble keeping up to with the microphone because they were walking round the house! (laughter)

So, you know, I think to frame things into a formula like that is crazy.

PR Well, I mean it’s dangerous. As I understand it, a lot of the Eamon Kelly clones come along because the Fleadhs have these storytelling competitions....

Ahh...there. They shouldn’t...

PR ...and the standard they set is the Eamon Kelly style.

But actually...

PR It’s not Eamon’s fault, I’ve talked to him about it.

Oh no, ‘tisn’t his fault. No no. But what it proves is, that’s when storytelling died. When I go down now, well, say to where I know reasonably well, West Limerick, and they have a fair bit of tradition in. When I go down now, well, say to where I know West Limerick and they’re trying to preserve it. But, I was down there recently at Strand. They’ve got a lovely public house there. A lovely place and they do a bit of dancing and I told some stories, they had a bit of music. And then a storyteller came on, and I was interested in hear him. You know, just to see what kind of stories he would tell. Jesus! He got an old waistcoat on. The cap—the hat! The watch chain and all....

The Eamon Kelly clone, as you said. And it was pathetic. It was the story about the priest looking in the mirror—you know ‘The First Mirror’. And a couple of other Eamon Kelly stories. And the crowd! You know, they thought, ‘This is—Oh! Home-made stories!’
Now, you know, it’s a great compliment to Eamon Kelly that they think so, but that was because radio and television were in their infancy. Anything that was one was ‘good.’ People were listening to radio, and ‘twa’ radio that killed storytelling in Ireland, not television. It was radio that finished it as a growing thing. And it has stopped developing.

Hugh Lupton, Video

Hugh tells the story ‘The Cow That Ate the Piper’. A piper seeks shelter in a snow storm, and comes across a corpse with a new pair of boots. He cannot remove the boots to replace his own, which are worn out, so he hacks off the feet wearing the boots with a saw he uses to make and mend bagpipes. He asks a farmer and his wife for food and shelter, but they are so mean they refuse him entry into the house but offer the barn, and so he sleeps in their barn, leaning up against their cow for warmth. The farmer warns him the cow bites, to watch out. He has an idea, and shoves the frozen feet and boots of the dead man under the cow, so the heat will thaw them out. Next day, he is able to pull off the boots and put them on his own feet. To play a trick on the mean spirited farmer, he places his old shoes under the cow’s mouth and hides. When the farmer’s wife comes to milk the cow she thinks the cow has eaten the piper and cries out to her husband. So as not to lose the cow as a murderer, they bury the piper’s old shoes in the field. As they sit to breakfast, they hear ghostly music and looking into the mist, see the piper standing above the ‘grave’ playing the pipes. They run away in fear, and the piper goes into their house to help himself to food and a decent kip by the fire.

Hugh tells this story masterfully and with a spirit of enjoyment. His ‘improvisation’ and ‘spontaneity’ is markedly different from other tellers, individualist in that I would venture that it is more literary, at least in this performance. As a teller, in this performance Alexander and Govrin’s acting modes are more evident, particularly the synoptic and proximate modes, as is mimetic representation. He does not ‘become’ a character in the story. However, Hugh stands up and moves to tell the story, mirroring the movement of the action in the narrative. Specific actions in the narrative are acted out. He mimics the reading of a newspaper the piper stuffs in his old boots for warmth, as well as sawing the feet off the frozen corpse and pulling the thawed dismembered feet out of the wet boots. He incorporates ‘sound effects’: the sound of sawing, the squelch of pulling the boots out, the playing of the pipes, and so on.

The improvisation and spontaneity come from paratext references to previous stories in the evening and, interestingly from any formulaic language in the story. In starting the story, he mentions a lost diamond, which featured in the story told by Diane Wolkstein immediately before his. As the tramp crosses a frozen river, he sees a drowned and frozen donkey which, again, has nothing to do with the story he tells but refers to donkey that fell into a hole in an earlier story of the
evening. He mentions that the piper was thirsty and stopped for a drink of water from the river where the ice had broken, and stoops to take a drink of water himself from the carafe and glass on the stage. (This prompts applause from the audience—these three things happen fairly closely to each other, producing a kind of rhythm and a kind of post-modern self-referencing, though clearly Hugh enacts these parts of the story without forethought.)

The formulaic language does not seem to come from Hugh’s natural conversation, but from the wording of the story, and yet also seems to spring up by accident. There is a great deal of alliteration. For example, to explain how the piper has a saw for cutting off the dead man's feet, he mentions that the piper had a wee bag of tools for 'making and mending pipes'. The 'making and mending' is quite lyrical action the piper carries out digging into the snow to find what it is he has fallen over.

Comment. Hugh was reluctant to give permission for me to analyse and include this performance when spoken. Similarly, when he finds the deadman buried in the snow he repeats the same word, saying 'He brushed and brushed and brushed and brushed and brushed the snow.' This gives the effect of the action and the sound of it in the study. He felt it showed his work at a very early stage of development and didn't want his storytelling compared in a critical way to other tellers, particularly traditional or professional tellers with vastly more experience than he had at this point. I emphasised this is not a critical nor a comparative study, but rather an explanation of how mental and emotional processes within individual tellers are expressed in narrative performances through context.

In light of Hugh's interview, I believe his style of telling has changed and developed. As he himself said, it is more formal. The spontaneous formulaic language, as I describe it in the analysis, is, I believe, what he experiments with and looks for as he develops new pieces for performance. By his own account, he does less of the improvisational insertions that he did that night, which in a way was still a phase of experimentation and very much in the spirit of the evening. (Refer to Appendix I 12.2., and below)

57.4. Hugh Lupton, p.2.

PR ...the other thing about that night, on the video, I believe that was the last night and I believe what you had all decided was not to plan exactly who was to go in what order, but that whatever story was told, if that inspired some one else to think of a story, they would get up to take their turn.

So one thing you did, which again you may not remember, but one thing that you did when you told the story was that every now and then you had a digression. Well, I call it a digression. Just a short little line in which, say, you make a reference to a diamond which was in the story Diane told before you told yours, or things like that. Elements of other stories, you included. There was another
point where, early on, you'd been sitting there, but there was a glass of water for people sitting at the front of the stage. So you incorporated the action of drinking the water into the story.

Right.

PR So the piper was very thirsty and so you drank. Now were you conscious of that at the time, or are those things you'd do intuitively as you tell the story?

Well. My memory is a bit vague about that evening but I seem to remember that before we started, let's try and weave into each other's stories. So it was completely spontaneous. But then I remember none of us really did it. (laughter)

PR Some did. They didn't do it within the story, but they did it within the introduction.

Oh right.

57.5. Taffy Thomas, analysis of video recording of storytelling performance English Storytelling night, Southbank Storytelling Festival, Purcell Rooms, November 1989

Taffy tells, among other tales, the story 'The Devil's Music', discussed much in his interview (see Appendix I, 10.3.) He uses it as an example of a story that has a firm anchor in his life, in that it comes from and is set in Suffolk, where he lived during a formative part of his life as a folk collector and performer. His telling of the story incorporates many people, past times and places there.

The story is about a melodion player who can play any sort of tune to dance to except for a hornpipe, and hornpipes are what step dancers dance to in Suffolk. The step dancers make fun of him and he is desperate to please them, but cannot manage to play them a tune. One night he meets the devil at the crossroads, who promises him he'll be able to play hornpipes so long as he signs this contract and remembers to return to the crossroads by midnight. The musician willingly signs the contract. That night, he is able to play hornpipes and they have a great time, late into the night, well after the pub closes. They have such a good time they never remember when the melodion player disappeared, but he was so busy playing he forgot about his meeting. Next morning they find scorch marks where he had been sitting, and a bit of burnt paper with his signature. And next to the seat is a brand new contraption, a shiny machine never seen before, a juke box. And the juke box plays all sorts of things, rock, pop, jazz, rhythm and blues, garage, techno, and country western, but it has never played a hornpipe. And that's how the devil's music came to Suffolk.

Taffy's method of improvisation and spontaneity comes very much from his use of personal story in para-text, particularly digressions. This also connects the
audience to the story, triggers associative memories and thoughts in listeners and
in Taffy, and provides much humour and other contrasting emotions.

For example, the story is set in a real pub, and he mentions the landlord is an
American and names him. There is a bit of anti-American heckling in the
audience and Taffy defends the fellow, explaining he came over with the air force
in the Viet Nam war, and the air force left and he never got around to it, having
fallen in love with an English woman and the English way of life. The way Taffy
phrases it raises a laugh, and makes the pub and story very real.

Similarly, Taffy describes session etiquette, that is, how sessions of music and
dance happen and proceed in pubs, and that the musicians and storytellers and
step dancers are regularly supplied with a free pint of beer. He repeats this phrase
whenever he gets the chance, making it a kind of formulaic chant, and comments,
‘Funny, it always works in other venues.’ Such comments transform the
atmosphere of the formal concert room, suggesting the friendly noisy atmosphere
of a pub. When some one suddenly thrusts pints of beer from out of the black
stage curtain behind Taffy, it quite fits the story and raises a big laugh and cheer.

It should be added that Taffy performs this story with Tim Laycock, the musician.
Tim plays the melodion whenever Taffy mentions and describes the music being
played. So if he mentions a waltz, Tim plays a waltz, and so on, and displays
trouble and many mistakes trying to play a hornpipe until the devil has done the
deal with the musician in the story. Taffy also makes a few jokes about musicians
and dancers at Tim’s expense, and there are facial expressions and quiet
comments exchanged between the two of them.

This is not, however the sort of scripted exchange between actors. In fact the
entire evening was very relaxed and informal. (This concert also featured MC
Duncan Williamson, and storyteller and musician Jim Eldon with Lynette Eldon,
his wife and a champion step dancer). There is no set running order, the
performers talk between themselves between stories, songs and dances asking
who is going next, they move furniture around in front of the audience, speak
directly to the audience throughout introductions and narratives, and so on. The
impression is neither amateurish, nor staged. Rather, it demonstrates performers
very comfortable within themselves and with each other, and by projecting
friendship and informality turn the atmosphere of a very formal space into the sort
that a typical room with a traditional session has, such as the one Taffy describes
in the story.
58.0. Journal Observations: Discussion of perceptions of elitism and power

58.1. Living Stories of the World—a multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary project involving several storytellers, musicians and dancers and primary school children in Camden and Bexley, London

Half of the workshops and performances of this project took place at Cecil Sharp House, the headquarters of The English Folk Dance and Song Society in Camden Town, London. Several of the mothers and teaching assistants who accompanied the children from Camden schools said it was the first time they had entered the building. Because of the title of the organisation on the sign, they felt they were specifically unwelcome to come in and use the building or go to any of the events. It was not only families of Afro-Caribbean, Asian, and other ethnic origins who felt excluded, but also white working class families.

The building is very institutional in style, and dark and cold with no explanation of what it exists for or what goes on inside. As it does have concert and dance halls and regular events, the music and noise can be heard in the neighbourhood, but the impression it gives is that it is a private club, exclusive to the English (white) middle classes.


Arti Prashar, a friend who is a professional storyteller and theatre director, informed me she was engaged by London Arts Board (LAB) to attend theatre and storytelling performances in order to evaluate projects funded by the LAB so as to ensure they were meeting the criteria set for receiving grants. A major objective is social exclusion, and reaching new audiences.

Arti had to report regularly that the only brown face in the audience was her own. At storytelling events, often the only Asian or Afro-Caribbean faces are those of the performers.

This is symptomatic of the storytelling revival, contemporary storytelling, and storytelling organisations generally. Participation in events and membership in organisations are overwhelmingly white and middle class. They fail to reach or reflect the diversity of the region or country. Diversity of traditions is represented by the stories, but not necessarily by the tellers and certainly not by audiences and membership.
59.0. Journal Observations: Means of determining listener participation

59.1. First International Storytelling Festival, Battersea Arts Centre, 1985

This was the first storytelling festival in Britain in modern times, organised by Ben Haggarty with the help of associates in the West London Storytelling Unit. One point that came up in conversation after the event was the reason they had instituted some 'listening games' prior to some storytelling evenings during the festival. Ben and his colleagues were under the impression that storytelling had completely died out in England, and that people were no longer capable of listening to stories. Either storytelling died out because people could no longer listen, or people could no longer listen because storytelling died out. The listening games were to teach them to listen again, to make the listening more acute so they would better experience the stories.

The listening games were basic drama games. The one I remember is that one of the tellers, Pomme Clayton, was blindfolded and sat cross-legged in the middle of the storytelling area. A large set of keys on a ring was set on the floor before her. Individuals from the audience were pointed at, and were to move as quietly as possible and pick up the keys without a sound, without Pomme noticing. If she heard a sound, she was to squeak 'peep', and the individual ‘lost’ the game, had to go back to his or her seat, and another member of the audience had a go. I must admit I found this activity very tedious and, in retrospect, a bit insulting. I felt we all knew we had come to a storytelling and were keen and ready to listen to stories, and such games just took up valuable time that could be spent hearing many more stories by the guest tellers.

59.2. Myths and Legends of Britain and Ireland; Research Writing for Television Documentary.

Among other commissions I have had as a storyteller was the position of research writer, with other storytellers, for a documentary produced by Irish and American television production companies. This documentary focused on legends of Britain and Ireland.

The researchers were Irish or English, Australian (but having lived in Wales most of his adult life) or, in my case, an Irish American who had by then lived most of his adult life in England and Ireland. The script editor was an American, with a long, professional and award-winning record in television and film documentaries.

There was a clash of cultures, or technologies, however, in audience perceptions and how narratives are and can be presented and understood. At one point, the editor told us that the stories were coming in too long and complicated, that we must remember the target audience, which is white working class men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. ‘Write the stories the way you would tell
them to an audience of high school students. You know, only about two or three minutes long.'

We informed him that we regularly performed stories that were anything from ten to sixty minutes long. The editor didn’t really believe us. In the television industry, the accepted ‘fact’ that certain targeted audiences have only a three-minute attention span predicated a certain kind of writing for television. Our experience as successful storytellers to teenagers contradicted this ‘fact’.

60.0 Journal Observations: Imported call and response techniques to engage audience participation

Contemporary storytellers regularly co-opt participatory activities, chants, songs, dances, rhymes, and action-games and integrate them into storytelling performances. These can be paratext, material that frames the stories or breaks up a series of stories to help relax the audience as well as solicit their participation. Some of these are integrated into the story, and are taught prior to telling the story so that the audience knows exactly how to join in. Other participatory activities are so simple, repetitive and enticing that the audience joins in with little encouragement and no instruction.

The most common example of this, in Britain, is the call and response refrain: Cric – Crac. The teller shouts ‘cric’ and the audience shouts back ‘crac’. This can begin the story, or be shouted at any time during a story to test and see if the audience is listening. This is derived from French and Afro-Caribbean, particularly Jamaican, traditions. The historical record tells us English traditions once had call and response beginnings to stories. In the Elizabethen play, The Old Wyves Tale by George Peel in 1593, a group of young gentlemen are lost in the woods at night and take shelter in a peasant’s cottage. When they discover their host is married, they look forward to being entertained by old wives’ tales all the night. The wife agrees, but she warns them that when she ‘heys’ they must ‘ho’ and when she ‘haws’ they must ‘hum’.

Another example of audience participation is found in two popular stories for children. ‘Tapingi’ was collected from Haitian storytellers by Diane Wolkstein and published in her book The Magic Orange Tree. The other, ‘The Freedom Bird’ was collected by David Holt, and has been published in collections in America. Both stories have refrains that the storyteller teaches to the listeners prior to the story. By the time these refrains appear, the listeners need no warning that they are coming and join in automatically.

The third example of participation is that which is not instructed, but arises from a combination of text and style of telling. As already mentioned, oral stories contain repetitive language and imagery, and the listeners, when engaged, constantly reflect on what is or has been told and predict what will come next. Often, even with mature adult audiences, the listeners begin to join in the repeated
phrases and words without even thinking about it or being told to. Those listeners most caught up on the storytelling experience will often blurt out what is coming next, and do so correctly, even when they have never heard the story before. Storytellers take advantage of this audience participation to maintain the liminal state, or states, discussed in the thesis.

61.0 Journal Observation: Multiple interpretations and responses to one story

*Sidmouth International Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts*

Dovie Thomason-Sickles, a traditional storyteller of the Native American cultures of the Lakota and Kiowa Apache, performed a Lakota tale with the audience of a major English folk festival. There were no Lakota in the room, but listeners consisted of a significant mix of English, Irish, and one Indian. Dovie’s story told how the rabbits were persuaded to commit mass suicide because no one feared them, but at the last minute stopped themselves jumping into the river to drown. This was because the frogs heard them coming and were so frightened by the noise of a mass of running rabbits they jumped into the river first. The audience perceived (at least) two distinctively different meanings to this metaphor. English listeners interpreted it as a satirical comment on a recently elected Prime Minister and New Labour politics and methods of spin doctoring. Irish and Indian listeners, with the bitter experience of colonialism, recognised it also as a satirical comment on imperialism, and how the powerful survive at the expense of those they control or intimidate.
Chapter 5.

62.0. Journal Observations and Interview Transcript: Examples of decorated storytelling space, performer and/or listener areas, and reactions to them

61.1. *Journal Observations.*

a.) College of Storytellers, Holland Park Orangery [See Appendix I., 51.4.]

b.) A Bit of Craic, Tynside Storytelling Club

This club meets in the upstairs room of an old pub in Byker Hill. It could not be described as quaint or pretty, it is an old, working-class pub, very dark with stained wooden walls. The club organisers drape all the walls with large hangings of brightly coloured cloths with ethnic patterns and designs, and place lighted candles on the tables.

c.) Storytelling Festival, Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, London, 1985

Ben Haggarty and his associates from the West London Storytelling Unit planned, organised and ran this festival. Taking place in the large theatre space in the Battersea Arts Centre, an old town hall in South London converted to a busy and popular community arts venue, they transformed the space by constructing a tall wall, draped in black, from the door the audience used to enter the space. As they turned the corner around the screen, they saw a highly decorated space. The audience seating area was a series of platforms with chairs, cushions and carpets. The storytelling area was covered with carpets, cushions, and small stools. The most striking visual element to the room was hundreds of common but old objects, mostly antiques (watering cans, lamps, lanterns, dolls, puppets, sewing boxes, tools, etc), hung by wires from the ceiling so that they floated above the listeners’ heads. In an informal discussion with Ben after the event, my understanding of this was that they hoped to spark those associative thoughts creating mental imagery of the narratives that they recognised as part of storytelling.

62.2. Storytelling Festival, Watermans Arts Centre, London, 1987, Analysis of Video Recordings of the Festival made by Doc Rowe, folklorist

This festival took place in a modern, purpose built arts centre. Most of the events took place in the theatre, with raked auditorium and wide stage. The stage with light, but without special effects. Large flats, or panels, were designed by an artist, representing various animals from folk tales on bright coloured backgrounds. For the final concert, and some of the others, the stage was ‘dressed’ with carpets, rugs and cushions.
62.3 The Volunteer Pub, Sidmouth Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts, 1992. Analysis of Video Recordings of the Festival made by Doc Rowe, folklorist

This is a traditional west country pub. The room has a wooden floor, and no special decoration is put up to enhance the performance. There is a display in one corner, above the fireplace, to advertise other folk festivals and clubs, and c.d. and tape cassette recordings of traditional musicians and storytellers produced by one of the MCs, John Howson.

John and the other emcee, Dan Quinn, usually call for at least one or two stories and a recitation every session. As with a singer when it is her/his turn to sing, the teller would perform the story from wherever he/she sat or stood. The teller might move closer to the centre of the room, so as to able to turn round and make eye contact with most listeners. However, wherever one stands it is impossible to make eye contact with everyone, and there are always some audience members standing behind the performer’s back.

This requires certain stories, which generally need to be short and punchy. Humorous stories, extended jokes and shaggy dog stories, are commonly told. However, a short ghost story, allegory, or parable also can be effective and popular. A conversational, self-deprecating and informal style of telling are also more effective than a highly dramatic, stylised telling.

62.4. The Volunteer Pub Garden, Sidmouth Festival of Traditional and Folk Arts, 1992

For several years, one of the main storytelling event at Sidmouth Festival was a session for an hour and a half in the garden behind the Volunteer Pub. This is a large and beautiful garden, with overflowing flowerbeds, shady trees, and high protective walls. For the past five years or so, the landlord has erected a marquee (more of a large gazebo, a canvas roof and no walls) to mark the performance area.

Some listeners took the few benches and garden seats, most sit on the grass. The tellers sat on a bench, usually positioned so that whoever told can throw his or her voice against the wall of the pub or garden, so as to help with projection and to be heard. Usually tellers chose to stand up to tell the story. The MC would tell a tale to start the evening, and a different guest each evening would tell stories for thirty to forty minutes. Then members of the audience would be called to do short spots, usually a story, sometimes a poem, recitation or song. The evening would finish with the guest teller telling a short story.

One unusual aspect of this venue was that the event happened during the dinner hour, from six o’clock to half past seven. The pub served very good food, which could be ordered from a hatch at the back overlooking the garden. Therefore,
throughout the storytelling, bar staff would be calling out orders of food when it was ready, and audience members would eat while listening to the stories.

With a change of landlord, this event has ceased. The storytelling has moved to the arts centre at the Manor Pavilion in the centre of Sidmouth, and has a slightly more formal format.

62.5.  *Eddie Lenihan, p. 22*

I said to you, years ago, I always maintained that you should be able to tell stories in your jeans and t-shirt. Old stories, all stories. And I still feel that. If you have to have an old cobeen and a waistcoat and a pair big boots and a walking stick, that's pathetic.

*PR*  *Well I've said this, I get really annoyed with some of the English storytellers who have to decorate the whole venue. They bring out these curtains and drapes and...*

Ohhhhhhh!!!!

*PR*  *...and candles and.*

You'd think some times it was a fucking seance!

63.0.  Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: How traditional and contemporary storytellers react/adapt to different environments

63.1.  *Duncan Williamson*

*See Appendix L, 12.6.  As these excerpts report, Duncan’s style has evolved over the years, and still varies. If the venue is smaller and more intimate (for example, his living room or kitchen, a classroom, or a small festival or conference venue that would only hold thirty or forty people) he remains seated. If he is in a larger room, telling to a larger group, Duncan will stand.*

At the Battersea Storytelling Festival in 1985, Duncan remained seated mostly when he told stories. In the video recordings by Doc Rowe of the Watermans Arts Centre Storytelling Festival in 1987, and the South Bank Storytelling Festival in 1989, Duncan stands on the stage when he tells stories. In 1987 he paces quite a bit, walking back and forth. This does not seem to be on account of nervousness. It appears his main purpose for this is to make eye contact and be equally close to all the audience as much as possible. There is some of this movement at the 1989 festival, but now Duncan is more focused, that is, it appears he chooses to pinpoint certain faces in the crowd and tell to them.
At a recent performance, at the Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre, Duncan stood to tell his stories, and did move back and forth in the storyteller area, but to make direct eye contact with various people in the audience.

63.2. Francie Kennelly

See Appendix I. 9.1. 9.2. As recorded, Francie’s style of storytelling is quite different depending upon the space he is in. Besides the example of the Watermans Arts Centre Festival, Francie also told stories at an Irish storytelling festival organised by the Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre. The concert was held in a large hall with difficult acoustics for storytelling, and so a microphone was provided. Packie Manus Byrne, another elderly Irish storyteller but who has had a long life as a professional performer, playing in show bands, jazz bands, traditional folk music groups, and as a solo performer (musician, MC, storyteller, and singer) was quite comfortable with the venue, used to microphones and projecting his voice as well. Francie, as at Watermans Arts Centre, preferred to stand and to not use the microphone. With his quiet voice and strong Clare accent, it did make it difficult for the audience to hear him and for him to connect easily with the audience.

63.3. John Campbell, p. 1.,

PR Many of these places have lights now and people don’t realise how off-putting it is.

Aye. Don’t like the lights. I like to see the person, the people’s faces. Sometimes when I would look down at the audience, look down at the people. Sometimes I see—there’s people that resemble other people. A face will remind you of somebody and eventually a story will come to your mind immediately. You’ll think of the day you heard that story or something else will come to mind, something like that.

63.4. Eddie Lenihan, pp 9-10.,

And, of course, an audience can be two people or two hundred people. I would say that any thing more than fifty or sixty people for storytelling is gettin’ out of hand. Because once you have to use p.a., there’s something artificial coming in. There’s a microphone between you and the audience.

PR And similarly, an event—does the space have an effect, not just the audience? Doing it in a theatre with bright lights on you...

Oh yes. Especially with my glasses, they blind me. .... Of course. And the other thing is when there’s bright lights you can’t see the audience, and if you can’t see the audience what’s the point of telling the story? You might as well be in a dark room doing it for radio or doing it for a recording studio.
63.5. Hugh Lupton, pp. 6-7,

PR And what about the physical space? I mean, are there certain spaces that—before we started recording you mentioned that National Trust property you had the festival in, that the house was wonderful but for various reasons they wanted you in the barn.

Hmm hmm, yeah.

PR So how do you cope with that? Does this affect your choice of story and how well the performance goes? And if it's affecting it in a negative way, can you do any thing to compensate for this?

Yeah. ... Spaces vary enormously. And I think a lot of the problems with spaces is the acoustic. So, for example, I try to avoid churches. ... Partly because of the acoustics, you know, you sound like a vicar, the voices. And partly because there’s a whole innate set of responses and behaviours in audiences soon as they set foot in a church, which doesn’t let them relax for some reason. They’re very reluctant to laugh... So the combination of acoustic and behaviour makes it a kind of a non-starter for storytelling, I find. ... [unfinished sentence]

Unless, uh, you know I’m doing very particular stories. Some apocryphal stories from the Old Testament, which work ok in a church but even then the acoustic is tricky. ... [If it’s an unusual building I quite often make some reference to it.]

Um, if it’s a barn or I occasionally work for English Heritage and, again, I try and make a connection between the stories I’m telling and the place I’m in. If it’s a castle, I will tell some of the Arthurian stuff. ... ...there’s an obvious connection.

PR If there’s a physical limitation do you consciously decide a room a certain way? For example, if a festival organiser invites you into an event and wants you to be in a particular room, or to sit on a particular side of a room, um, and you know it’s just not going to work, do you just adapt to what they want or do you go ahead and change the space around?

I always argue to change it. So, for example, ... one of the standard ones is the village hall where there’s a stage at one end of a long room. And I always try and ... argue to put myself in the middle of the long wall, a circle...

PR A shallow arrangement instead of a deep one...

Yes, a shallow. And the shallow audience formation is very important for storytelling because you can make the connection in quite a different way.

PR What if you—I don’t know found this—but do you do any outdoor venues and find yourself where this ability to ,I guess ‘structure’ the shape of the
audience is difficult?

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I cut my teeth doing fairs. ... And audiences come and go, so you have to have a whole repertoire of short stories rather than long ones. It's very hard on the voice, actually, I find outside. Because you're competing with other sounds.

PR  Hmm, marching bands and...

Yeah, and your voice is kind of diffused any way by being outside, unless you have a big wall behind you. ... So it's a lot of hard work. ...

But then there can be more formal outside dos with chairs around you, which are ok.

PR  There's something else as well...let's see. I know, what about in terms of, say lighting? What are your experiences of working in a space with stage lighting, say, in an arts centre? ... [W]hat are your feelings on that? Where the performers are very much lit out and the houselights are brought down. ... Would you question that? What do you find when working that way?

It kind of varies with what performance it is I'm doing. Lights can be terribly strong, you can be just looking at a pitch blackness and have no sense of the audience at all, and I don't like that. I like the house lights to be up sufficiently to see people's faces. Even if they're just pale blurs you get a sense of presence. So I think you know that's very much part of storytelling. This fourth wall that actors talk about. The wall, you know, that blocks the proscenium arch. ...

So you know, the performance is going on very much in its own world—storytelling is very much about breaking that down. You're talking to people and I don't like the sensation of talking at people. And that interaction and exchange is central to storytelling.

PR  And you mention the proscenium. It's not just the lighting effect. I mean, it's what you mention with the village hall, it's not just the arrangement of the audience. But if you're on a platform or behind an arch, that that can be, um, a challenge say to—is it more difficult to reach the audience that way?

I think it is. Yeah. And I think there's a whole set of expectations about theatre that start to impinge. So it takes people--- I mean, I think when storytelling is really working, the storyteller becomes invisible, what's going on inside, the internal pictures and images, are stronger than what they see. But I think as soon as you have the stage, the proscenium arch, the lighting, it takes people longer to stop looking at you. ...

It takes them longer to forget you as a performer and to move inside themselves.
PR  Because the focus is on you, you’re actually in the centre point of the framed space.

Yeah, exactly.

63.6. Journal Observations

The most common space for me to perform in, since much of my work is in schools [see Appendix I, 2.1.-22.] would be a classroom or school hall, usually the latter.

Some teachers ask how I would like the children to be seated. Most simply march the children into the hall and sit them down as they would for assembly. Sometimes, I am invited to wait in the staff room and have a quiet cup of tea while they ‘bring the children and get them seated and ready.’ I always politely decline this offer, as I like to be seated and have the space arranged as I would wish before the children come in. I also like to see the children as they arrive, for one can tell much about the nature of the audience and their ability to listen, or rather, to enter the storytelling experience quickly and easily by how they come into the space.

Even if the common orientation for assembly is to have a long deep audience area as opposed to a wide shallow one, rather than allow the groups to assemble in the usual way I set up my storytelling area so that they will sit in the wide shallow formation. I prefer to sit upon a chair, with the children seated on the floor. If the school has set out chairs (and secondary schools often do, and secondary school students do not like sitting on the floor as a rule), I try to arrange them in that wide, shallow crescent shape. Sometimes fire regulations require an aisle down the middle, through I prefer to avoid this. In classrooms, if there is a carpeted story or sharing area I use that if there is room. If there is no room, I ask to move the tables, desks and chairs to the side. If the floor is clean and comfortable, we sit on the floor. If not, we arrange the chairs in the preferred shape. If it is impossible to move furniture and desks must remain in rows, I perch on the front of the teacher’s desk. I ask the children in the back to pull their chairs up to fill the aisles between the desks in the front rows. I ask children who cannot see from seats behind the front couple of rows to sit on their desks (if teachers allow this). I also try to note light sources, and if the sun is coming in I pull the drapes or arrange the audience area so that listeners’ backs are to the sun and they are not blinded.

When the teachers dictate where the children sit, and it does not suit me, I rarely intervene because I don’t want to appear to be contradicting or confronting the teacher or administrator. Rather, I allow the children to be seated. If they are too far from me, I simply move closer rather than ask all of them to move. Likewise if they are too close I move back a bit. If the lines are too long and straight, I ask
them to move in a little closer. Sometimes I direct how the children will sit, so
the group forms that crescent moon shaped described. On rare occasions, when
the group is too large to arrange in any way to make meaningful contact from a
seated position, I then stand to tell the story, and sometimes pace back and forth
in front of the group.

At festivals and conferences, in festival events and at storytelling clubs, the same
general approaches apply. There are times, especially at festivals when there are
fewer opportunities to re-arrange the space to my liking. I then have to adapt, by
choosing certain stories over others, standing rather than sitting (or vice versa),
and so on.

For example, at the Halifax Traditions Festival in 2001, I was asked to do a ten
minute story from a bandstand in the middle of the large court of the Piece Hall,
an historic market place. It was a vast venue, with hundreds in the audience. I did
have a microphone, but obviously could never make eye contact with everyone
given the size of audience and the distance of many of the listeners from the
stage. I chose a short, allegorical story that could be told simply and directly.
The organisers were very pleased and claimed the spot had gone well—it was the
first time they had included storytelling in that venue, which normally hosts dance
displays and musical concerts

64.0. Journal Observations: Tellers using audience space, and tellers sharing space in
performance area.

64.1. Taffy Thomas

Taffy, with his previous experience in street theatre and street entertainment,
regularly uses the audience area and brings listeners into the teller’s area.

A few years ago he received a lottery grant to commission a work of art, a ‘tale
coat’. [See Appendix I, 10.3]. Hundreds of images from stories in Taffy’s
repertoire are represented in embroidery and artwork on the coat. Taffy enters the
audience or invites one of the audience into the teller area to ask a listener to
choose a picture on the coat. He then tells the story that image represents. Taffy
likens it to a living, walking, walking juke box.

Taffy will also tell stories that require more audience participation than vocal
responses to calls and refrains. When he tells ‘The Grasmere Gingerbread Man’,
for example, not only does he get the audience to call out and repeat the names of
all the people who chase the Gingerbread Man, he also chooses a child from the
audience to sit in front of him to ‘play’ the ‘fox’. (If there is a ginger or red
headed child he usually selects her or him.) When the Gingerbread Man jumps on
the head of the fox to get away, Taffy takes out a real gingerbread man and places
it on the child’s head, and when the fox eats it in the story, hands that biscuit to
the child to eat. He then opens up a biscuit tin and hands out gingerbread men to
all the audience.

Another story like this involves a cow and assorted agricultural characters. Taffy asks for volunteers, and as they come up, he has them take on the characters in the story and put on masks and bits of costume, and hold props or form certain positions in the audience area.

64.2. Another use of space common at folk festivals and storytelling festivals is when several storytellers share the same storyteller area. The audience area may be set up so that whoever tells can make eye contact easily, except with the other tellers. They will be arranged, seated in a row at the back of the storytelling area. This means that the teller can make eye contact with everyone during the story, save the storytellers standing behind him or her. Often, however, there will be interchange in the paraperformance, banter between the tellers, during the story. The teller maintains an awareness of the entire space, of both areas, and makes use of people even when they cannot be seen.

The other tellers usually do, or should, take on a focused listening mode. If teller is clearly bored or inattentive while sitting behind or beside a performing storyteller, the effect is extremely distracting and creates a kind of upstaging. If the tellers do have a clear listening mode, then they act as models which often encourage the audience to enter the storytelling experience more easily, quickly and deeply.

64.3. One more way the 'areas' shift does not involve the teller moving into the audience area, or a listener into the storyteller area. When a teller asks a riddle, for example, or directs a question to the audience such as 'And do you know what he did?' [See Appendix 153.2. and 60.1, the descriptions of Grace Hallworth's story of the Young Man and Death], or when the storytelling involves contributions from everyone, with storytellers coming up from the audience to tell stories, the focus of all participants goes from the storyteller to that other person speaking. If the listener then begins to tell a story, she/he may not step up into the already established storytelling area but remain put, creating a new storyteller area.

Examples of this regularly occur in schools, where children become so involved in the storytelling they are often eager to tell their own stories. It also happens lower on the performance continuum with adults, particularly in traditional settings such as pubs, sitting rooms, and by firesides. In festivals such as the Kiltimagh Storytelling Festival in Mayo, the stories might be formal and the performance higher up the performance continuum. However, the space suggests a social situation more informal. Rather than move back and forth into one storyteller area, or several tellers sharing that area, the tellers will simply tell to the entire gathering from wherever they are seated or standing.

65.0. Journal Observation: Conversation with Mark Rylance regarding audience
responses and actor/audience interaction at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

The first performance in the rebuilt Globe Theatre was Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona. As this play proceeded, I was aware that there was far more interaction between the actors and audience, although the play was not directed nor acted in any way that would obviously encourage it. That is, it was not done in the style of a pantomime or musical hall production.

By the time it came to Proteus's speech, where he reconciles his betrayal of Valentine and Julia so as to love Silvia, the well reasoned argument had many men in the audience shifting uncomfortably with an embarrassed recognition. At the end of the speech, one member of the audience shouted, 'You bastard.'

Reflecting on the interaction between audience and actors, and wondering how it was accomplished, I decided it was because there was no stage lighting and therefore performers and audience had plenty of opportunity for eye contact. As it happened, a few weeks later I was introduced to Mark Rylance, the artistic director of the Globe and the actor who had played Proteus. I asked him if the play had been directed to prompt audience participation. He replied no, that having an audience added forty-five minutes to the playing time because of their responses. He asked me why I thought that was. I replied that the shape of the audience area and the lack of stage lighting made the performance more like a storytelling situation, with the chance for constant eye contact. Rylance agreed, and added that the eye contact is not just between actors and audience. Although the two pillars on the stage suggest a proscenium type performance space in two-dimensional photos of the theatre, the theatre is actually an arena with audience surrounding the performance area. Therefore, the audience is constantly looking past the actors and making eye contact with other audience members as well. This encourages the participation, since audience members communicate not only with the actor but people around them, just as spectators at a sports event do. They mutter comments, explain things to people who didn’t catch what happened or was said, and so on.

This is exactly what happens in a good storytelling session. Often teachers discipline children during a story time for being disruptive during the story. When one examines the children’s speech and body language, it is easy to recognise they are responding totally to the story, not just with mental processes, internal imagery and emotions but with body and voice. This reinforces the concept of materialism in cognitive theory. Within traditional cultures, it is quite common for audience members to comment upon aspects of the story told, addressing their neighbours or the teller. I have seen this quite often at the Wexford Storytelling Festival, for example. The audience is entirely local, and many of the events take place in story houses (called rambling houses and ceilidh houses in other parts of Ireland). In such venues, intimate and cozy, with all the audience knowing each other, there are vocal responses throughout the stories rather than silence among the listeners.
Interview Transcripts and Journal Observations: Problems storytelling in formal, or difficult, spaces

Grace Hallworth, pp. 13-14

PR So any way, getting back. The sense of space, does that have an effect on your telling?

Yes. Yes, the space is very important. And I remember two specific situations where...

One particular case when I was doing the residency in the States. I don't remember which of the towns it was, Buffalo or Binghamton or Albany, but I was working in a school with boys, uh, it must have been they were about fourteen, fifteen, that sort of age. I don't know if it was junior high, senior high, and they were sitting on, you know, the sort of thing that comes down—

PR Oh, the bleachers, yes.

—in this big room. And there were a lot of empty spaces. And I said, would it be possible for you to both fill in the spaces and where you are high up to come down close, because there are a lot of empty spaces up close. And of course, nobody moved. So I said, 'Ok, ... I don't want to force you because this is a very informal session. But I'll start the stories and see how we go.'

So I started the stories. And of course, my stories were going into empty air. And this was true. You could feel them going into nothingness. They just weren't hitting anything. And, I could see them sort of drifting off and I knew this was going to happen.

I said, 'It could be a very boring session, this, and it's an hour. And you could either have an hour of utter boredom, or you could have an hour of a very interactive thing. Because it won't change, no matter what story I tell, it won't change, I promise you that. It'll simply go into empty space.'

And by then the teachers with them must have seen what was happening and they said, 'Come on boys, come down.'

So they moved down. They moved, not as close as I would like, but they did it. And I went quite close and I started another story, and immediately you could feel the difference. Because one of the teachers came to me and said, 'You were right, you were so right.'
And I said, 'Yes. You imagine you are talking in a small room and you have four people and they are scattered. One is there, one is here, one is there and one is there.'

PR It won't reach any one.

There’s no rapport. ... It’s emptiness. So, that was one case where space and the way people sat was important. Space because it was high. I don’t know if it was an auditorium or what, but it was a high ceiling. It was wide, and people were scattered. So the whole space thing, with the number of boys there were--we should have been in a room, really. But it worked a lot better than it was working when I began. It would have worked even better in a classroom or in an informal sitting around on chairs.

The other one was where they sat the children behind desks. As though I was the teacher. ... I was standing behind the table and they were behind their desks. And I said, to the children, 'Are you happy listening to stories where you are?' And some said yes and some said no. And I said, 'And where would you like to be?' And they said, 'On the floor.' (laughter) ... And I said to the teacher, 'Do you mind? Can they move their desks back and can they come and sit on the floor?' Immediately the feeling was--

You know, we started off with, I stood up, I looked at them, I said, 'I'm Grace Hallworth. I've come to share stories with you.' But it was so formal. ... It was so teacher-y...

And I wasn’t there to teach.

66.2. Hugh Lupton [Refer to Appendix I. 71.5.]

66.3. Journal Observation—Unusual venues

1) Garden Festivals and Towersey Village Festival. Outdoor storytelling is particularly difficult, and the difficulty is compounded when there is no defined storytelling area. At the National Garden Festival in Gateshead, Taffy Thomas pioneered the idea of ‘stop me and hear one’, where a storyteller wanders around a large festival site and is stopped by visitors for a story. He has evolved this to where he has devised a large tricycle, the kind used to sell ice creams, that replaces the ice box with a fold down seat, so that the teller can sit there with the audience gathered around.

This idea appealed to many festival organisers. The National Garden Festival in Wales had different storytellers every week for its entire run, who wandered the site waiting for people to stop the teller for a story. As one of the tellers, I found it difficult to attract attention unless the tannoy announced regularly that I was
available, so that visitors understood why I was there. Two places, in a very large site, were best for storytelling. One was a tea-room in an open air gallery of ceramics near the main entrance. It was quiet, allowed one to create a clear focus with a storyteller area and audience area, and had a large number of people passing by to attract, because it was close to the entrance and had the appeal of refreshments available. The other site was one most distant from the entrance, on a hill in a grove, with several huge sculptures, outdoor furniture and terraces woven from strips of willow. It was quiet and idyllic for storytelling, but because it was so distant from other attractions it was difficult to gather any audiences.

Several times I have worked at Towersey Village Festival, a folk festival over the August bank holiday. The festival is spread out over a large site, usually consisting of the village’s rugby fields and cricket pitch. Marquees are set up for large concerts, dances, children’s events, bars, and a market place. A short distance off the site is a small village hall, where intimate concerts take place. The artistic director and the producer are very supportive of storytelling and for this festival like to schedule the storyteller for various venues. They also like the storyteller to wander around the showground for people to stop him or her for a story.

This is an enjoyable, but challenging, gig. Ice cream vans, generators, and music spilling out from the bar, music and dance tents can make it difficult to find a quiet enough place in the field to be heard. If it rains, the ground is too wet and muddy for the audience to sit. I have resorted to various strategies to ease the storytelling for myself and the listeners. Though I never wear a costume, I will, for Towersey, wear bright clothes that suggest I am a performer at a festival, so as to be easily and clearly seen at a distance. I have carried carpets and blankets to spread out on the ground, so that we have a ground cloth to sit on.

2) **Virgin Rail, the Dublin Mail Train.** On the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Dublin Mail Train, Kate Corkery, a storyteller from Cork living in London, and I were booked to tell stories to dignitaries and passengers on a special run of the train. Lord Mayors of all the stops on the line between London and Dublin were invited to London, where Irish dancers and musicians entertained them on the platform. Kate and I were to tell stories in the first class carriages once we left London, until arriving in Crewe, where we changed trains to travel back to London. At each stop, the mayor of that town and his or her party alighted. We were also to tell stories in the standard class carriages.

Telling was a challenge. We had to stand in the aisle, or on a seat, to be seen and heard by any reasonable number of people. The rocking and noise of the train made this difficult. Everyone on the train was aware of the reason for the celebration, and announcements were made that we would be coming through to tell stories. The reception was very positive and in spite of the challenges, we were able to tell stories and hold quite a few people throughout the journey.
3.)  Lion’s part Theatre Festivals for Twelfth Night, May Games, and October Plenty, The Lion’s part Company performs mummers plays associated with harvest, Christmas and May day. As well as the plays, they conduct dances, games, and provide storytelling. These events take place around the Globe Theatre, Bankside and Borough Market.

The storytelling has taken place in various spaces. The first Twelfth Night festivals concluded either in Globe Education or in the lower level of the Globe Theatre, below the box office. These spaces made storytelling easy, with space very similar to an assembly hall or community room.

For one festival we erected a small tent, a type of gazebo meant for a garden, and spread out carpets and rugs along the ground on the pavement overlooking the Thames, just outside the gate to the Globe. Over the course of two days, approximately seven hundred people stopped to sit and listen to a story. It was one of the most successful areas set up for storytelling out of doors.

Recently the festivals have taken place more often in Borough Market. A ‘story orchard’ is set up, with small apple and pear trees framing the storyteller and audience areas. The storytelling draws a good crowd, who listen eagerly and well. The challenge in Borough Market is the noise, the traders hawking and trains running overhead.

67.0. Journal Observations: ‘Found Space’ or Unusual Space working for storytelling performances

67.1. Petworth House, and other National Trust and English Heritage Properties, The National Trust and English Heritage have often booked me, and other storytellers, to perform at their sites. Historic houses prove extremely good spaces for storytelling. The organisation sometimes has a specific idea of what area they would like the teller to perform in. More often, they schedule a planning meeting and allow the teller to find a space that will be suitable.

At Petworth House, several of the large rooms display works of art that illustrate stories, such as classical Greek and Roman myths, or of historic or legendary British characters and scenes. As the rooms are large, with thick carpets, it is easy to create comfortable storytelling and listening areas, and to link the stories to the images in the rooms. Ancient sites, such as ruined castles and abbeys, stone circles and dolmens, and formal gardens also provide wonderful, atmospheric spaces for storytelling.

At other times, the organisations set up the storytelling in a room that is quiet and cut off from the areas where the public walk through. These rooms are usually for invited school groups. The children often enjoy the added thrill of ‘going behind the scenes’ to a room off limits to ordinary visitors.
67.2. Tate Britain, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Minories Gallery, Colchester, Art galleries and museums now have storytelling performances. They usually stipulate what rooms they wish you to perform in, and that you link the stories to certain art works or exhibits, or specific themes.

For example, Tate Britain has worked regularly with IBBY (The International Board of Books for Young People) and had storytellers and authors perform in galleries that are quiet, with few people walking through, and art work that might make a link to the story. School groups are invited in to the gallery through the day, to listen to tellers and meet authors and illustrators.

The Victoria and Albert museum has storytellers for various special exhibitions. I have been booked for Christmas and New Years Eve stories, and asked to perform in the new British Galleries and upon a large stairwell at the top of the building, where acoustics are good. Another booking asked for stories on the theme of colour, and placed me in the India gallery. For their exhibition on Gothic art and architecture, they have asked for Medieval stories and legends that would be contemporary to the works of art. The V & A story events rely on walk-through audiences. They schedule specific half-hour story time sessions and announce these through leaflets and the tannoy system.

67.3. Story Walks, The Festival at the Edge, and a nature centre in Oxfordshire, have booked storytellers for story walks. The storyteller and a guide lead the audience through the countryside. Every now and then the group stops. Usually perching on a stone or log, or the crest of a hill or, sometimes, a bit of sculpture, the teller performs a short story while the audience sits or, depending on the terrain, stands. Sometimes the stories have a link to the site, or the time of day or season of the year.

68.0. Journal Observations and Interview Transcripts: Use of Electronic technology in storytelling especially the standardisation of vocal styles and the use of microphone as a prop

68.1. Eddie Lenihan. [Refer to Appendix I., 38.4]

68.2. Journal Observations. The use of microphones is much more common in America. I have noticed that some tellers have made p.a. systems into a prop. A teller will hold the microphone, and sway or swing with it as he/she tells the story. The teller will also use the microphone to make sound effects, which cannot be made, or be heard, without electronic amplification.

A noticeable style develops by constant use of electronic amplification. Because the teller must allow time for the teller's techniques and 'tricks' of the voice to filter through the system, there is a delay in audience reaction which in turn
affects the teller's timing. While experienced and talented tellers may exhibit unique 'voices', the performance style can become homogeneous.

69.0. Journal Observation: Comments on set decoration and elements gone wrong in storytelling

Having visited some schools to tell stories during book weeks, I have become aware that other storytellers and writers also conduct workshops on how to tell stories. A large part of the activity, however, seems to involve having the children create 'dens' or 'tents' where they can practise the stories, and, then, tell the stories to the other children who visit the dens. It is a charming idea, and I have not been able to discuss the aims and objectives of such activity, nor its efficacy. However, I have noted that some teachers find it too disruptive to the overall needs of the school. This project usually entails several days of preparation, practice, and performing. The dens and tents are set up and fill the school hall for a week or more.

Teaching a storytelling module to first year university students, I encouraged my students to attend any storytelling concerts, clubs or festivals they could manage. One group of students reported going to a storytelling club, and finding the room was highly decorated and lit with candles and burning incense. Some students liked this and found it appealing, others found it a bit affected and unnecessary. Many complained about the candles and incense, claiming they aggravated the scene and prevented comfort, making the room too warm and the air too difficult to breathe.

70.0 Excerpts from private conversations with and observations of other tellers: Examples of managing space

70.1. Liz Weir. Liz Weir, a storyteller and librarian from Northern Ireland with several years of experience in a variety of situations, has countless stories of adapting to and managing difficult spaces. One includes going to tell stories at a summer scheme whose building had burnt down in the Troubles the night before. The organisers assured her the scheme was still going on. She arrived to tell stories to children aged three to sixteen, in a large ruined yard with stones and glass all around. The children listened extremely well, though ran off at one point when an army land rover drove up the street, so they could throw stones and bottles at it. Once out of sight, the children returned to hear the rest of the story.

70.2. Karen Tovell. Karen Tovell, a storyteller from Australia who has worked for many years throughout Britain and Ireland, likes to prepare a space precisely and formally for her storytelling area. Many of her stories are original, and Karen makes use of simple props and origami in many of these stories. She lays them out on a table behind her in a decorative and colourful way, but also in a way that is well-organised and thoroughly thoughtful. The space serves both Karen as a performer and her audience.
She is very careful about sightlines and orientation of the space in relation to the light source. Karen’s approach to managing space is reminiscent of Nancy Schimmel’s requirements.

Schimmel comments in her book *Just Enough to Make a Story*:

Ideally, I like to tell in a fairly quiet but not silent place. I like a barrier behind me so that the audience is not distracted by passersby, but no barrier defining the limits of the audience area, so people feel free to come and go, and listen while pretending not to. Indoors or out, I try to be facing the light source so my audience is not squinting into it. I prefer not to be placed under a clock... Whether I stand, perch on a table or stool, sit in a chair, or sit on the floor depends on the size, age, and formality of the group, but I try to place myself so everybody can see me and vice versa.

(Shimmel, 1995, 35)

71.0 Transcript of Conference Proceedings and Interview Transcripts: Doc Rowe’s experiences with and views on ‘finding’ storytelling in unusual places

71.1. Summary Doc reported how he often has discovered stories by accident. He played a recording of a story he recorded from a man he met by chance in a pub in Liverpool, when he was visiting the city for some other reason. The man told a story about how when he was a lad his mother sent him out to fetch things from the shops for her.

The lad ends up going to sea, and recounting a series of complicated adventures. But by the end of the story, he has returned to Liverpool and, with a passage of several years, manages to pick up what his mother requested and bring it home.

It is an amazing example of an autobiographical tale framing a wonder story and brought back into the form of a personal story. It is told conversationally, across a table in a noisy pub.

Doc’s point was that storytelling never died, but is easily overlooked or missed if storytelling enthusiasts are a bit too specific or rigid in their definitions and what they look for.

71.2. Summary. After this day long conference, many participants retired to a local pub. Customers at another table, mostly young ‘yuppie’ types, city traders and such, noticed our group and, seeing several men with beards, joked about us being a ‘bunch of folkies’. This caught Doc’s attention and he started talking to them, saying, more or less, that we were. They entered into a conversation defining folk music and folk tales as they perceived them, and Doc ended up recording some of them singing ‘All Round My Hat’ and telling urban myths.

Sidmouth Folk Festival storytelling grew out of a rainy day when many events were cancelled. Packie Manus Byrne suggested they have a storytelling or lying competition while they sat around. They were hanging out in the beech hut to stay dry—a sort of large shed, where beach chairs were stored and with a floor of sand. This proved so popular it became formalised and regularly scheduled in following festivals. For years it was inseparably associated with the beach hut.

When the local council tore this down, the competition moved around to various, and more formal, venues: the council chambers, a school hall, and the arts centre. As performance standards and expectations were raised and the festival storytelling became more professionalised, there was a desire to improve the quality of storytelling. This led to more booked ‘professional’ storytellers, and more formal storytelling events (both discrete and also integrated into musical and dance events and workshops) in the festival programme. Eventually the competition was dropped, but the amount of telling expanded and transformed.

Some, however, naturally do miss the more informal and amateurish days of the early storytelling. Their fond memory often mentions the associations with the old hut, and that things started to change when that venue disappeared. It is viewed as a cause, when in fact it was coincidental that it disappeared as the storytelling evolved.

The Ulster Storytelling Festival grew out of a one-day training course on storytelling at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, sponsored by the Northern Ireland Branch of the Youth Library Group. Many non-librarians attended, social and professional contacts were made between traditional and professional tellers, librarians, educators, folklorists, writers, and museum officers.

This led to the formation of the Yarnspinners, an association that organised and hosted storytelling events for adults at a similar historical/cultural institution, the Linen Hall Library of Belfast (and later, the Belfast Arts Centre and other libraries, arts centres, and museums, and pubs and hotels, across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland).

As interest and audience numbers increased, the original venue hosted a storytelling festival, the first in all of modern Ireland. Originally the Ulster Storytelling Festival, held at the Ulster Folk Museum, was a discrete event for storytelling enthusiasts separate from the museum’s regular visitors. Most participants were an equal mix of local traditional, amateur contemporary and professional contemporary tellers, sometimes with guest storytellers from Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and/or America. The storytelling, during the day, took place in the historic buildings around the museum: the firesides of thatched cottages, pubs with snugs, and the old national school. In the evening, a formal
convent, attended by around one to two hundred members of the public, took place
in the Manor House and, when it was built, the Parochial Hall.

The performers, and several of the audience, stayed overnight in the student
accommodation the museum has for school groups visiting the site. Storytelling
and singing would go on through the night, a proper ceilidh.

Over the decade of the festival, this evolved into an event hosted by the museum
more than the Yarnspinners, with participants made up of the general public
visiting the museum (including those coming specifically to listen to stories) and
professional paid (traditional and contemporary) tellers.

The combination of beautiful scenery, charming historic buildings, and the social
bonds established by years of ceilidh-ing in the dorms have supported a strong
community of story tellers and story listeners who come to the festival.


73.1. Museum of East Anglian Rural Life. East Anglia Musical Traditions
engaged me to tell stories for Twelfth Night. The venue for this event, which also
included carol singing, music, and Molly dancing, was a 14th Century Tithe barn
at the Museum of East Anglian Rural Life.

The barn was decorated in a festival manner, and though cold and drafty, was
heated by the large crowd and massive gas heaters imported for the event. It was
a beautiful space, with old wooden beams and arches stretching high overhead.
The story programme I had planned changed, and I was inspired to tell a few
stories I believed to be contemporary to the times the barn was built and first used.

73.2 The Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral. The cathedral hosts a day of
activities for all the Church of England primary schools in Kent. One activity,
organised by Kent libraries, is storytelling in one of the chapels in the crypt. This
space is ancient and atmospheric. It is the perfect place for stories of knights and
adventures, tricks played by and on clergy (such as 'King John and the Abbot of
Canterbury'), and ghost stories.

74.0. Journal Observations: Clash of socio-cultural and psychological/philosophical
views in contemporary storytelling events.

74.1. Siamsa MacManus This storytelling festival, in Mount Charles, Donegal,
rann for four years. It was begun in honour of the memory of Seamus MacManus,
a local writer, folklorist and storyteller. It was the inspiration of 'blow-ins', those
(mostly) young people who had moved to and settled in the area. The locals
whose family had been there generations, many of whom knew MacManus when
he lived, had long wanted to do something but never managed to raise the money,
make contacts, nor organise anything. The new, young professionals, with
energy, enthusiasm and experience, and a desire to join fully in community life, managed to do all that.

The first festival had several storytellers, writers, poets and musicians from outside the area, especially from County Clare, County Cork, Northern Ireland and Dublin. The locals complained afterwards that local people were not there, telling the stories by MacManus. So, the next year, while, again, many booked tellers came from far afield, locals were scheduled to tell or read MacManus’s stories by the village pump, where he had always gathered the local children to tell them stories whenever he returned from travels in the United States.

By the third festival, due to village politics, many members of the committee had resigned due to disagreements with some of the locals over the way the festival was run, and other issues, too. The fourth festival was so badly organised that it failed to survive another year.

The irony was that though the locals complained Seamus MacManus was not represented enough, and locals were not involved, almost all the tellers booked form outside the village owed a great deal to MacManus and his work. Many of the tellers told stories he had collected, or variants of stories in his collections. Personal rivalries in the community prevented a common philosophical and psychological view that would support the festival through regular changes of committee. The locals ‘causing’ the most ‘trouble’, in the eyes of those most active and doing all the work on the committee, only wanted the festival for the potential profits it brought their businesses. The ‘blow-ins’ actually saw the festival as a chance to celebrate a local artist and storytelling generally.

74.2. Cape Clear Storytelling Festival

This festival takes place among a small island community off the coast of County Cork. It was started by an American couple, with the help of locals as well as storytellers and storytelling organisers in Cork city, Dublin, and Northern Ireland.

It has been immensely successful over the years, attracting large crowds to the island. The first storytelling events, however, risked alienating some of the locals who resented the idea that outsiders would be paid for telling stories, something that traditionally, in Ireland, took place as a matter of course without any reward than friendship and hospitality. There was also worry that, as an Irish-speaking island, if a large number of non-Irish speaking visitors came to the festival then English would become predominant over the local language. The organisers were sympathetic to these concerns. They made certain to book Irish-speaking tellers and schedule Irish language storytelling performances and workshops. They booked local storytellers from Cork, so as to be sure that the local accent and local themes were featured. They involved as many locals as possible in the various events, which included activities that were not storytelling. They also made opportunities for locals to tell stories, as well. As the festival attracts so many that
every bed and breakfast, hostel space and campsite is booked out, the income the festival generates has soothed the resentment of paying performers.

75.0. Journal Observation: Parallels with physical and mental space

When telling a story I have told often, and I am very familiar with, I am aware that my telling becomes almost quasi-automatic. I am able to focus more on the listeners and what goes on amongst them. It is a mental sensation or process very similar to when one is driving or walking, taking a journey of any kind that one knows well.

While driving, or walking, a familiar route, the traveller is familiar with the environment, and concentrating on the act of driving or walking. However, because of familiarity with the environs and the process of the act, the mind also wanders or thinks of other things. One is able to have two, or more, thoughts at the same time.

By the same token, when telling a new story that is still being learned or evolved, the mental sensation is very similar to travelling in unfamiliar territory. One might have a map, but often the individual gets lost, looks for landmarks, re-establishes a sense of orientation and muddles through as best as one can. Later a map might be consulted. The basic plot or elements of the story is like the map. The formulaic language, motifs, and the paratext arising from the teller’s own identity are the landmarks that guide the teller through the story.

Classical rhetoricians did recommend plotting a speech or story by placing different parts in different ‘rooms’ in one’s house, or on a map of a terrain one knew well. Storytelling experience and experiments in memory suggest this holds true.

76.0 Journal Observations and Interview Transcripts: Evidence of Causality in Traditional and Contemporary storytelling

76.1. Reviewing the excerpts from the transcripts of the interviews, providing a basic element of the research for this dissertation, reveals that the storytellers identify, consciously or subconsciously, cause and effect, causality, in why they tell stories. My own view, as stated in another journal observation, is that my storytelling is very much coloured by my self-identification as an educator. I believe learning can be fun, and so I entertain but it is a lesser drive, or cause, for me. Taffy, Duncan, and Grace all make clear that storytelling is both education and entertainment. This echoes Walter Benjamin’s statement that storytelling is shared experience. Others’ experience engage and entertain us, but also teach us how to live, how to cope or get by, how to master a craft or trade.
What you’re trying to do now, for your, for your, for your dissertation there, people don’t ask the questions behind the obvious facade. ....

That was like me with the fairy bush down there. Ach, terrible things came up because of that. ‘Twas most interesting because I had to think, ‘Hold on a minute about this...’ and of course it led on to religion. Very clearly on to religion. People didn’t like to be reminded, to be questioned about their religion.

For example, when I said ‘If you don’t believe in the fairies, if you don’t believe that this is a fairy bush, then how can you believe in God. How can you believe in your own religion?’ It doesn’t make sense. Because if the fairies don’t exist, then certainly God doesn’t exist. Or angels, the saints, any of them, or heaven, hell. They don’t exist.

People don’t like to be told that. People are very, very, very catechism minded, you know. ‘Who is God? God is the father in heaven, the maker of all things.’ and that’s it! Don’t think about it any more.

... I found the episode of the fairy bush mighty enlightening. Mighty enlightening. For myself.

PR I know what you mean. Getting back to something you said earlier, but the whole issue of storytelling in politics, you know, cocking a snook at the government or the landlord. I’ve sometimes said that I think one of the reasons so many people like storytelling or become involved with the so called storytelling revival, is that, conscious or not, it’s a reaction to this powerlessness people feel. It’s a very political thing, whether we realise it or not. And the choice we make, ‘Hey, I’m going to get and tell a bunch of strangers a story’ has a political side.

I don’t mean a capitalist or socialist or democratic agenda or that, but that it’s, it’s wanting to assert ourselves with some sort of power. Not over the audience, maybe, but against a greater power... But people don’t want to discuss that either.

I can see why. But I had an even clearer illustration of that when it came to the fairy bush. People were delighted! Delighted that the whole thing had blown up and that the bush had been saved from the council and from the NRA. And it had nothing to do with me, or that I had done this, or whatever, no no. ‘Twas that the government had got a kick in the arse. You know? That they couldn’t do this.

And you know, it showed there is a kind of democracy behind it all. You can do something, if you just, dig in your heels for once and say, ‘No! No.’ And it is something that you believe in. Well, it’s all the better. Not just in theory, but to be able to go down and say to people, ‘Look, if you move that, can you have it on
your conscience, when this is completed and that tree is demolished, and there are
people killed here in this place. How will you think of that? What will you think
of it?

And they don’t like it. Engineers, even, people who work and don’t give a shit
about the landscape and just dig straight through it, may show up to see how the
work is going and all, but they don’t care what they demolish. If a graveyard gets
in the way, dig ‘em up! Go through it. And they don’t like the personal questions
to be put to them. ‘Are you going to take responsibility?’

‘Twas likewise with the fairy fort that was demolished. They did demolish that.
But, as a local man down there put it to them, and I thought it was a good
question. Now, they were only doing their job and they told him that, you know.

‘Yeah,’ he says, ‘I know that. But,’ he said, ‘when you have that demolished, and
if things start going wrong, how are you going to put it back?’

Well there was no answer to that. There is no answer to that. Exactly.
And, I have been laughed at so many times about believing in the fairies.
Because, you have people who come, like yourself. Most of them wouldn’t be
storytellers. But they come and they talk to you about this for two hours. And
then they say at the end of it, ‘But. You don’t really believe in them do you?’

And I say, ‘For fuck’s sake, what have we been talking about for the last 2
hours?’(laughter)

Now, it amazes me... Because, like I say to you, it makes no sense to believing
in religion and all that—and most people are sincere, I wouldn’t knock any one’s
religion—but, if you’re sincere about one thing how can you say that the other
thing can’t exist but then God does exist? That is can’t exist? Doesn’t make
sense.

PR I know. It’s another thing I get angry about. Some of the storytelling
events jump on the bandwagon that storytelling is very spiritual. Now I think that
it is—

It is—well well if it isn’t, don’t do it!

PR But it’s a way of expressing whatever spirituality is. But they jump on the
idea of what’s called new age paganism. They’re all very keen on non-western
religions and pre-christian religions and they will down, down, down
Catholicism, Protestantism, even Judaism, and yet they do not see the connection
that if you do down that belief system then the belief system that you don’t really
know anything about, as a Westerner you’re adopting charlatanism and exoticism
for the sake of it, and only taking the shallow bits of it. And to justify their
storytelling on that belief system, which they don't really know. Now I don't knock them if they really believe it and all—

Well let them do what they like, it 's like the Beatles going with the swami and all that sort of thing.

PR Exactly. But, but, the only thing I take issue on is when they knock or degrade or mock those people I know who still firmly go to Mass every Sunday, follow their childhood beliefs, and that—

I think a lot of that mockery is self—self— what do they call it? They maybe are frightened by the fact that other people do have a general belief, whatever the belief is. .... Be it Judaism or Protestantism or Catholicism. Here there are people very often looking askance at religion, who have nothing themselves.... ...and who are themselves looking for something, and particularly looking for something. And that is where we have all these fadisms. And, when you go into storytelling for that reason, I would say forget it. Don't bother. Or, just do what Eamon Kelly he had to do, just do it as an actor. And if you're doing that, why not be an actor? Go for plays? But if there's nothing behind the storytelling except just getting up in front of an audience and claiming your fee, I would call that a very poor reason for doing it. Because behind all the storytelling, and I can only speak for myself, but I know behind all the going out, telling the stories, to people who I'd rather feel that I was not enlightening, that's almost preaching, but that we're sharing something worthwhile between us. But behind all that, when I am setting out, I'm not just going to old storytellers but going to the places that belong to the stories. Visiting a fairy fort, or whatever it might. That fairy bush down there: it is a strange feeling, but to be able to put a hand on something that has power.

77.0. Interview Transcript and Journal Observation: Ongoing thought, concurrent with thought process of telling story, and causes for these

77.1. Grace Hallworth, pp.15-6

Well, I tell you about what happened just recently, in fact at the Festival at the Edge. I had seen a story...seven years, maybe more....in a collection of North American myths. And as soon as I read....I mean, I read all the stories in the book, or nearly all, but that story, I thought, that story, it's fantastic! That is a—a tremendous experience. And this was being, it had been written by a, a Native American who said he had heard it told at some—you know, in what context he'd heard it, by another. And it made such an impression on him that he went away and retold it. I suppose he did what I do quite often. He rewrote it and picked up his own concerns, keeping close to the meaning of the story and sometimes the text, but imbuing it with his meanings.
And when I read it I felt the same way. You know, I thought, I mean, this is my story, it’s as though I had conceived it. And I must tell it.

So I read it over several times and then I started to learn it and we had to go to Denmark. For the—I can’t remember.

PR Yes, I heard of this festival, I know the one you mean.

And, there was some one there who had connections to the Native Americans. And, as I discovered, I said, you are the one I want to see. I’ve been looking at this story and I had intended telling it then. And, you know, I realised as I started to talk that this was something that was not welcome... By this person, you know, did not welcome the fact that I was talking about the story in terms of telling it. So I put that aside and didn’t tell it there. And I think that must have created a...a schism in my mind with this story. Because this story meant so much to me that I didn’t at any time want to tell the story where I would feel there was a conflict in any way. ....

So I left it. But always it was there. And I went on looking at it and looking at it. Until eventually I thought, you know I have to tell this story. But I did nothing about it because you know there wasn’t an audience to tell it to. In Tobago I didn’t have that kind of audience that I could tell it to. ...

It was a long story, it’s a story, a textured story and so on. And when I came this time I thought, I have to tell that story. You know, I don’t care what happens, I have to tell that story. And so I had a workshop in the morning and we were talking about stories and somebody said, how do you feel about telling stories not from your culture. And I said, well, I’m the sort of person who has...who pays no attention to that sort of thing. Because, I’ve been coming from--where I come from, I feel that all things are a part of me. So, you know, I tell the stories that appeal to me, to my heart, if they touch my heart. ...

I want to tell them. I don’t ask where they come from. I tell them. Because, it’s something that made an attachment of its own to me. And so I, I instanced the story and I have said to myself I must tell the story this time. And I make you a promise that I will try to tell the story this time.

And then we had the final concert in the afternoon and I sat thinking, it was either that or the story of Sedna, the Inuit tale. ...

And both are powerful, one is shorter, but the other one is a much longer story. So part of me cowardly wanted to choose the Sedna story. But all the time there was a clamouring of this story that said, you have to tell me, you have to tell me. I mean, it’s just an insistence .The story actually blots out, eventually. You may start out with the two but eventually that one is completely blotted out and this
one, um, -- It’s like two horses on a racing field, this one is so far ahead, the other one is no where in sight, that you get up and you tell it.

Now the odd thing about that, and I’m telling you because I’m still trying to work it out, is that I got up on the stage and I told-- I had a short one about the man who was seeking truth, which is short. ...

And one I like. I told that. But other story that I was meaning to tell for years has a lot of that in it. And, I, I sat down to tell that. I got up to tell the one that has been clamouring to be told and I collapsed into tears.

PR  Ahhhh!

For the first time in my life.

PR  My goodness!

And I can’t tell you why. The tears just started.

PR  Before you even started the story?

Yes. I held my head down because I didn’t want them to see my crying. But I couldn’t stop. And I opened my mouth. And every time I opened my mouth...when I said that the tension builds up...

PR  Yes, it's there.

And it’s....it’s as though it said, why did you keep me imprisoned all this time? You know? ... It just burst forth.

PR  And it is emotional. The memory is just like remembering, um, a very fond recollection or a very painful one, it’s that strong.

Yes, yes. The power is there.

77.2. Journal Observation

Stories I heard when very young, that I still tell regularly, like Mollie Whuppie, Cap-o-Rushes, and others, as well as newer stories to my repertoire that I tell quite often, for example the ‘football’ stories for the Kick Into Reading project, still reveal associative thoughts every time I tell them. Some memories and associations that come each time are the same, and others are new. The repeated thoughts always reveal some new angle or insight as, of course the new associations do. I am sure this changes the telling subtly. The words and paralingual aspects may remain the same, but the tone and meaning evolves.
Chapter 6

78.0. Journal Observation: The ‘shock’ of live performance

At Chippenham Folk Festival, Pete Castle, storyteller-folk musician, reported that when singing to a class of secondary school students, one girl interrupted him (quite upset) and asked wasn’t he embarrassed to be performing in front of them. The discussion following this revealed that the students were extremely self-conscious and embarrassed by the act of live performance, which they felt was only ‘real’ or ‘legitimate’ in the context of television, c.d. recordings, net-broadcasts or large live commercial concerts in recognised ‘performance’ venues.

79.0. Journal Observation: Elemental storytelling

Duncan and his wife, folklorist Linda Williamson, observed the basic, elemental form of storytelling is telling stories over the kitchen table. This is definitely storytelling lower on the performance curriculum. Many of their visitors (including prominent, well-known professional tellers professing expertise in traditional storytelling) can’t/couldn’t do it. This would seem a deficiency comparable to, for example, an opera singer unable to whistle a tune while going about daily chores, or a star athlete being unable to maintain basic levels of fitness.

80.0. Journal Observation: Examples of contemporary storytellers putting the story first while ignoring the needs and interests of the listeners

I visited a school to tell stories. Previously, they had another storyteller for a book week. This experienced and professional teller insisted on telling a single one-hour long legend to a group of six- and seven-year-old infant school children. The teller’s argument was that by listening to a long story would ‘teach’ children of this age to listen to and appreciate ‘proper’ stories. The teller did not take into account evidence from developmental stories regarding the necessity of physical comfort for children of this age.

Young children can listen to a long story, when it is a small, intimate one-on-one telling between the child and an adult the child knows well, and loves and trusts. Young children must have opportunity to move and shift and stretch, and in a large group an hour-long story without physical and vocal participation of any kind is very difficult for young listeners.

See also Appendix L, 64.1 regarding the playing of ‘theatre games’ to promote and encourage and ‘teach’ listening skills because audiences don’t know how to listen (even though they have paid good money at commercial theatre ticket prices to attend the storytelling performance).
81.0. Review and Journal Observation: Poet’s critique of storytelling, and other artists’ encounters with contemporary storytellers and storytelling events

81.1. Gillian Clark review regarding St Donat’s Festival

**Storytellers & Writers**

In issue 21 of A470, Gillian Clarke contributed a provocative article about the relationship between Storytellers and Writers - not everyone agreed with her point of view.

Read her article below and follow the links at the bottom of the page to read the responses.

**The pen is mightier than the word...**

*Talgarreg poet Gillian Clarke joins the payment-for-authors debate...*

Robert Minhinnick, in comparing the performance fee a writer is paid in Wales with the pittance paid for writing, has opened an important debate. Should we pay writers proper fees for their performance, but far less than the minimum wage for their writing?

First, the Writers on Tour scheme has much to be said for it. It puts literature into classrooms and clubs, money into poet’s hands and increases book sales. It helped win the decades-long battle for the respect of the academic and teaching professions, and inclusion in the WJEC syllabus. Listening has returned many people to reading poetry. But writing is solitary, and not all writers are suited to the extrovert activities of giving readings and workshops.

The problem applies especially to poetry. Some of our finest poets still earn next to nothing for the work for which we revere and will remember them. Successful fiction sells. Poetry doesn't - at least not in large enough numbers to recompense poets. Apart from a tiny few, even the best poets must measure their worth in glory, not...
cash. Even someone like Ted Hughes was surprisingly hard up for a long time after the publication of his fine first collection. Yet we need literature. Somehow the best writing must be fostered, and writers kept going.

Robert asks a provocative supplementary question. "How much of the money" he asks, "that notionally goes to 'writing' is instead passed on to charlatans who call themselves 'storytellers' and phoney poets who claim to be 'poets'."

I don't know what's to be done about phoney poets - let's hope they aren't invited twice - but storytellers? Charlatans or virtuosi, are they paid from the budget for Writers on Tour? Yes, they are. Why? How much? What percentage of the budget? For which language? In Wales, five writers work in English to every three who work in Welsh. For storytellers it is nine to one. The average fee per gig for a storyteller is far more than the average for a writer, almost 25% more than the average poet (editor's note: this is largely because the average storytelling gig is a whole day at a school, rather than an evening reading, therefore the average renumeration is higher for storytellers because the gig is longer). Yet they're not writers. They draw on, as actors do, creatively, inventively, sometimes dazzlingly, our stories. (A few also write, but that's a separate issue.) Storytelling is performance, like dancing, acting. Now that the Academi administers the budget for literature, it is very odd that storytellers, not qualified to be Academi Members, are able to draw on the Writers budget.

The budget was set up by the Literature Department to meet writers' problems. The sums were calculated as partly pay for the day, partly buying time, partly copyright. The money was intended for those who write books, laying down a recorded literature. If you love books, it's the very words you carry with you, not words that vary from speaker to speaker. Books are private company, essential nourishment, crucial growing material, the stuff of education.
On a fine July day this summer I visited, for the first time, Beyond the Border, the International Festival of Storytelling at St Donat's. It is a successful festival drawing an enthusiastic audience. I was invited to give a talk on the use of Welsh mythology in contemporary Welsh writing, and to hold a poetry workshop on the use of story in poetry. We all tell stories. Our lives are stories. My poems are usually true stories. I gave a poetry reading that included an account of how my father told me the Mabinogi as if it were the gospel truth. In the workshop people used the myths of their own lives, as people in workshops always do.

In between my sessions I listened in walled gardens to snatches of stories being told. Some were compelling. Some were poor. Some of the language was powerful, some clichéd. I was struck by the fact that, apart from two storytellers from Wales, I knew nobody, and the occasion was hardly Welsh at all. It wasn't common ground with Hay-on-Wye, the Eisteddfod, Academi's Festival of Literature. With exceptions, storytelling and literature seem to have quite different audiences, and one does not appear to be leading to the other. Even those attending my reading and workshop looked strikingly different from most of those attending the storytelling events.

Good storytelling deserves appropriate payment, but not from a budget designed to serve writers. The percentage of the writers' budget going to storytelling is rising. It is a historical accident that responsibility for storytellers was given to the Literature Department of the Welsh Arts Council, and thence to the Academi, where they benefit from the free-for-all that is the Writers on Tour scheme.

I propose we argue for a budget dedicated to storytelling, perhaps administered by the Drama Department of the Arts Council, a protected budget for writers, administered by the Academi, and a gradual shift of emphasis from pay for performance to pay for writing.
81.2. Ciarran Carson, traditional musician, poet and former Northern Ireland Arts Council Literature Officer is on record criticising the banality and lack of aesthetic worth of revival storytelling (See thesis text, p. --).

81.3. Spalding Gray, a comedian, writer and actor famous for autobiographical monologues including surreal views on contemporary life was booked at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, commented on how he found very little connection between what he did and what he saw the contemporary storytellers at the festival were doing. However, he did feel there was one teller booked at the festival with whom he could relate, and see parallels between his own performance style and the content of his stories, and that was with Ray Hicks, the most traditional storyteller represented at the festival.

82.0. Journal Observation. Association of Festival Organisers Conference

Many of the folk festivals that arose in the 1950s and 1960s started as part of a counter-cultural movement, relying a great deal on volunteers and local good will. There was heated discussion at this conference of how folk music and folk festivals, with the volunteer, egalitarian mentalities of movements in the 60s and 70s, found it difficult to continue in the self-centred egotistic and greed mentalities of the 80s, 90s and early twenty-first century. Health and safety regulations, regulations regarding finance and accounting, and an explosion in arts management degrees meant that arts events required more paid staff than in the past. Even where events could keep going relying on volunteer help, many of the volunteers were ageing and nearing retirement, and found it difficult to recruit younger volunteer organisers who expected good salaries for such work. This makes long-running festivals financially and practically unviable.

83.0. Journal Observations. Insensitive or badly thought-out requests arising from well-meaning intentions. After 9/11, some conference and festival organisers began to enquire asking for recommendations of ‘Muslim’ tellers. Their intent was to present Arabic traditional tellers, as ‘ambassadors’ who would represent their culture/religion, etc., in a positive light and make the organisers’ events inclusive. Misunderstanding is quite clear here: of culture, nationalism, ethnicity, race and religion and points at which they cross with storytelling and tellers. One teller they were already booked (as an African teller) was Muslim. This categorising risks tokenism, and a subtle even form of racism. The question to be asked should be how many Muslims (or people of any minority group, whether disadvantaged, threatened or simply ignored for the most part) are in audiences, involved in community and education projects, and, if they are not, how do organisers involve such individuals and groups in meaningful ways.
84.0. Journal Observations: ‘Living’ and ‘dead’ traditions in contradiction

Many contemporary storytellers in Britain pronounce at gatherings of academics and arts council officials that storytelling as a tradition is completely dead in England. At the same time, other contemporary storytellers and folklorists collect very traditional material. Helen East and Kate Corkery, for example, collected traditional tales from elderly informants resident in Southwark, London while working as storytellers on a community arts festival and reminiscence project. These included a variant of Dick Whittington regarding ‘King Rat’ and a long, complicated tragic love story of star-crossed lovers and a recalcitrant father who faked a funeral similar to elements in the folk song ‘Finnegan’s Wake’. Mike Wilson’s study of storytelling by teenagers revealed several traditional contemporary myths, ghost stories, and variants of ballads. Doc Rowe has recorded numerous stories with traditional elements from working class informants [see Appendix 1., 79.0 for an example].

85.0. Journal Observations. Concerns voiced by librarian storytellers that the emerging professional storyteller as a model will dissuade teachers, librarians and parents from telling stories.

85.1. Ellin Greene, former children’s librarian in New York City, lecturer on storytelling and library science studies at Rutgers University and the University of Chicago, as well as a prominent storyteller and author in her own right, has expressed concern that the ‘slick’ ‘theatrical’ ‘professional’ ‘commercial’ storytellers/storytelling will dissuade teachers and librarians and parents from doing any storytelling at all. Donna Schatt, former librarian of the influential University of Chicago Laboratory School and a consultant for the Zena Sutherland Award, has also expressed dismay that simple straightforward storytelling has, at times, been displaced by the ‘superstar’ style of storytelling.

85.2. Heywood’s thesis reports upon a description of fears among contemporary storytellers who have established themselves professionally already that ‘bad’ and ‘banal’ storytelling will ‘ruin’ chances for others. Such comments naturally feed into feelings that if one is not a full-time professional teller, then one ought not to tell at all. Conversely, those who love to tell and would normally be happy telling on an informal level as part of one’s work in libraries, schools and so on, or as an amateur or volunteer felt a compulsion to become professional, thereby absorbing attendant identities and styles they are not comfortable with nor proficient at.

86.0. Interview Transcript and Journal Observation: Mistaken assumptions on oral and ethnic origins of orally told stories as source material

86.1. Taffy Thomas.

I think I’ve probably made it my business as far as possible to take stories from the oral source. For example, if I find one of Duncan Williamson’s stories in one
of his printed collections, before I tell it, the next time I see Duncan, I ask him to
tell it to me. 'Cause that breathes life into it.

85.2. Journal Observation, made after interviewing Duncan Williamson.

[See Appendix I., 12.6., Duncan Williamson's discussion of where he got two of
the stories I discussed with him.] My impression is that many who rightly revere
Duncan Williamson for his repertoire, style of telling and way of living
unquestioningly assume every story he tells is a Traveller story. However, my
discussions with Duncan indicate clearly that he regularly appropriates stories
from other cultures that he has heard from revival storytellers. Take, for example,
the two stories he learned from an African or Afro-Caribbean teller in
Birmingham that he told at Whitby Folk Festival. Another popular story for many
beginning tellers is ‘The Tailor and the Button’. This relates how a poor tailor
acquires some cloth and makes a coat. When this wears out, he sees some of the
cloth still has some good wear in it and makes that into a waistcoat, and
subsequently a cap, tie, and button. When the button has worn out, he sees that it
reminds him of all his memories about what he has made and worn, and sees that
with the memories there is just enough to make a story, which he does and which
is the story the teller has told to the listeners.

This is regularly credited to Duncan by revival tellers in Britain, and attributed to
the Traveller tradition. Duncan revealed to me years ago, in conversation, that he
first heard and learned the story from storytellers he met in the Pacific Northwest,
either at a festival he attended in Vancouver or Seattle. This means, most likely,
that the story is actually traced back to Nancy Schimmel, who popularised it with
her own telling and with her book, using the story as a model, Just Enough to
Make a Story. Her source for the story was a traditional Yiddish folk song.

86.0. Journal Observation and Interview Transcript.

[See Appendix I., 17.0., John Campbell telling The King's Big Toes, about Brian
Boru (A nonsense story for children based on ancient legends), written by Patrick
Kavanagh, the poet.] This story of John's I heard told by English revival teller
(badly) as a King Arthur story, with no credit given to John or Kavanagh (because
he got it from a rather banal Irish revival teller who didn't credit it, though she
told it as a Brian Boru story)

88.0 Journal Observation, Whitby Folk Festival Discussions and Conference of
Festival Organisers

'Over a series of discussions at the Whitby Folk Festival, it was acknowledged that
by calling Folk Clubs 'clubs', and running them in the manner of a club in terms
of finance, organisation and administration, made them appear unfriendly and
exclusive. Newcomers usually and often found an 'in-crowd' doing all the work,
from selling tickets to providing the MCs and all the performances. Almost all
participants were of the same generation, so younger audiences were repelled by the format and the art form because of this.

At the Conference annually held for Festival Organisers, in Glasgow 2001 it was recognised that the generation which initiated and ran festivals and clubs for the better part of the past forty or fifty years were dying out, or at least arriving at an age where they wanted or had to retire from such activities. There was no new generation to replace them [Refer to Appendix I, 91.0].

89.0 Journal Observation, Projects and schemes not repeated

There have been numerous projects demonstrating the usefulness of storytelling within a community arts setting. A few examples are:

89.1. The National Oracy Project. This was a national study and pilot scheme run by the Department of Education in the 1980s and various Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Various educators, teachers, artists, writers and storytellers developed projects which were studied, videoed, analysed and published. The aim was to improve children's speaking and listening, and the teaching of speaking and listening. Oracy work did not focus solely on oral storytelling, but storytelling and storytellers were both promoted very strongly by their involvement in the National Oracy Project.

89.2. Expanding the Frame, a scheme using oral storytelling within the literacy hour. The Literacy Scheme was a curricular programme implemented by the new Labour government in 1998. Primary schools followed a specific and fairly rigid programme to teach reading and writing. Folk tales, myths, legends, jokes, riddles and other traditional materials were included in this special curriculum, but any oracy work or storytelling connections were implicit rather than explicit. Four London storytellers obtained funding from the London Arts Board to work with seven primary schools spread across three LEAs in London. They worked closely with one teacher and one class in each school for four weeks, developing lesson plans, materials, and teaching the classes to demonstrate how oral activities generally and storytelling specifically could deliver the Literacy Scheme.

89.3. Word in Action, a residency with disadvantaged secondary schools using storytelling across several curriculum topics. This project, based at the Verbal Arts Centre in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland, placed a storyteller in residence with six schools in the area for two six week periods and one four week period. Each school had six full days or twelve half days for the six week periods, and four full days or eight half days during the four week session. The teller was at the disposal of the teachers (mostly teachers of English and school librarians). They requested certain topics and lessons with which they wanted support. The project was, however, cross-curricular so the teller told stories that related to specific themes or curricular topics, and developed activities, follow up materials and other educational tools to support that topic work. English, History,
Geography, Science, Maths, Foreign Languages, Physical Education, Music, Religious Education and IT were all subjects served by this residency.

89.4. Listen Up!, I, II, III, a residency using storytelling to raise self-esteem and self-confidence, along with oracy and literacy, in disadvantaged primary and secondary schools. This project was similar to Word in Action [see Appendix L, 97.3.] but included primary schools and was more focused on working with just one group of students for the entire run of the scheme. It was documented in two videos: Listen Up! and Listen Up! 2 (Verbal Arts Centre, 2001, 2002).

89.5. Waylands Prison Residency, a storytelling scheme with male prisoners, aimed at developing parenting skills and improving communication and relationships between prisoners and their families, as well as literacy and oracy skills. John Rowe, a writer and storyteller, worked with prisoners, teaching them to tell stories and make up stories. He also facilitated the audio and video recordings of fathers telling stories so that recordings could be sent home to the children. Arrangements were made for story times during visiting hours, with stories told by the inmates and/or the resident teller to the prisoners' families.

89.6. Reminiscence projects, where storytellers gather reminiscences and oral history, often developing activities with local school children or younger adults in local history groups. The Verbal Arts Centre in Derry, the Oral History Society's 2002 conference in Milton Keynes, the Southwark Arts Festival and Borough Arts Festival, and the Department of Health in Northern Ireland have all used storytellers, setting up projects that brought primary school children and elders together. The children collect and perform stories from the elderly, and the elderly have their stories recorded, transcribed and adopted by the storytellers and children. The storytellers work not only as performers, but primarily as folklorists and facilitators for the schemes.
Chapter 1.

1.0 Samples of Proposal, Minutes, and Articles from Society for Storytelling (SfS) Proceedings relating to the debate regarding traditional storytelling, and correspondence arising from the motion regarding traditional storytelling.

The Society for Storytelling spent most of its formative years, and indeed the past decade, involved in debate about what traditional storytelling is. The following samples give an indication of this.

1.1 Proposal submitted to the SfS annual general meeting, 18 April 1998, asking 'traditional' storytelling be granted special status.

Members Ballot, Proposed by Ben Haggarty, Seconded by Michael Dacre

I propose to use the following ballot to consult the membership of the Society for Storytelling over a subtle matter of emphasis.

I contend that, whilst family stories, reminiscences, original tales and other personal stories must clearly continue to be included in the general continuum of stories actively supported and promoted by under the umbrella of the Society for Storytelling, it is Traditional Tales*, their telling and their tellers, which are at the heart of the concerns of most of its members. If this is the case, the Directors of the Society need to be made aware of it.

I sense that, in recent years, the ethos governing the Society has tended to favour the promotion of 'applied' or 'utilitarian' aspects of storytelling; that is, where the stories and oral storytelling techniques are used as functional tools to serve external agendas imposed on the material and the activity by the storyteller/facilitator. This is particularly evident in such fields as 'personal growth', 'empowerment', 'therapy' and 'management training'. I suspect that, though appreciative of such worthwhile activities, a significant majority of members joined the SfS because of a primary and specific interest in Traditional stories, their possible meanings, the art of their telling.
and their inherent effects upon their audience. This supposition may well be erroneous but it can only be verified by direct consultation of the membership; hence the two questions below which give members an opportunity to signal a preference of interest if it exists. The response to this ballot may help the incoming Committee of Directors to arrive at decisions over priorities for the future allocation of limited resources.

The Ballot (please tick your answer to both questions)

A) Would you prefer the Society for Storytelling to give more focus to Traditional Tales, their telling and their tellers than at present? YES NO

B) Do you think the present balance of storytelling interests served by the Society for Storytelling is about right? YES NO

*Traditional Tales: diverse narratives, whose originators are generally unknown, first passed orally between people; their vast range spans from short Joke, Urban Legend and Fables, to lengthy Wonder Tales, Epics and Myths.

1.2. Minutes from Annual General Meeting pertaining to debate/discussion surrounding the above proposal.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Society for Storytelling held on Saturday 18th April at St. Fagans, Cardiff

Directors attending:
Tina Bilb6, Jean Edmiston, Michael Harvey, Lynne Kirk, Fiona Moore, Mary Steele, Richard Walker.

Apologies:
Sam Canarozzi Yada, Rob Parkinson, Wendy Dacre, Michael Dacre, Pat Bowen, Alexander Mackenzie.

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting were approved by the membership and signed by the Chair, Jean Edmiston.

2. Matters Arising:
a. Jean Edmiston, Chair, welcomed Harold Rosen as the Society for Storytelling’s new patron.
b. The launch of the Papyrus publication series was acknowledged and welcomed by the Chair.

3. Results of the Postal Ballots re:
a. Director’s term of office being changed from two to three years was passed.
b. Membership fees. Members voted to raise the fees to the smaller of the two proposed increases. These results were announced to the meeting.
The Discussion on the proposal by Ben Haggarty
18th April 1998
St Fagans, Cardiff

Frances Maxey - Found Ben's proposal confusingly written. He agreed with the first part but not with the second. He saw the need for a formal debate of the issues raised with a structure, conclusion and end date.

Christine Willison - Suggested that a conference/gathering is a better vehicle for discussing the issues.

Jenny Stone - Felt a ballot to be an inappropriate format for the issues being raised.

Pamela Gaunt - Had a strong reaction to reading the proposal. Thanked Mary Medlicott for clarifying her thoughts. Does not feel the need for formality.

Jill Jobson - Thought strange the issues were raised in ballot form. Wanted the Proposer to clarify his intentions.

Sally Tonge - Suggested the debate would provide a useful role for Area Contacts and asked for reserves to be ploughed into it.

Harold Rosen - Noted that there are always people in the creative arts who want to create boundaries; who's in who's out, and who want to police these boundaries. He sees it as a waste of intellectual energy that causes a great deal of acrimony.

Mike Dunstan - Referred to the need for democracy, and the difficulties posed by the fact that the Society only meets formally once a year. He suggested that a solicitor should be asked to look into how members deal with debates. He asked whether it is appropriate for a Society of our size to be spending time and energy on this issue.

Alida Gersie - Didn't see it as policing territories but as a desire to talk more about traditional stories.

Cat Weatherill - Stated that her first reaction to the proposal had been that it was elitist. She noted that the SfS is a many headed beast and perhaps it should clarify its route and re-name itself.

Daniel Morden - Agreed with Alida's comments and noted that he was excited and interested by the issues raised in the proposal.

Clive Hopwood - Did not want to belong to several different societies for different aspects of storytelling. He noted that it was a good thing that the debate had been opened up.

Anne White - Pointed out that the Library Association acts as an umbrella for many special interest groups and suggested we could use their structure as a model.

Mike Rust - Did not want anyone to feel that they should leave the SfS because of the issues raised in the proposal.

Pat Ryan - Noted the debate in the very first SfS committee, which he and the proposer were on, to decide whether the SfS should be a society for Storytelling or a society for Storytellers. The former was chosen with the specific aim of being inclusive.

Simon Heywood - Saw it as dangerous for the Society to make a definition of Traditional tales.

Wendy Wharam - Noted that each individual storyteller is multi-faceted.

Fiona Moore - Called upon the Proposer, Ben Haggarty, to clarify his aims.

Ben Haggarty - Originally submitted a proposal with a Yes/No answer but was advised by the committee to alter it. His aim was to discover whether people were drawn to the SfS because they were interested in traditional stories or in lots of kinds of story. He noted that tradition, in its essence, means that you don't know who the originator is.

Helen Gost - Suggested that the ballot had made people talk in a way which might not have happened if another medium of communication had been used, but is a ballot an appropriate way for members to talk.

Mary Medlicott - Would like to see these talks continue in whatever way the committee sees fit.

Ben Haggarty - Agreed to withdraw his proposal on the understanding that debate on it would continue.
1.3.  **Correspondence regarding the proposal, along with second proposal.**

Michael Harvey  
12 Major Road  
Treganna  
Cardiff CF5 1PF

Dear Michael

Since I am not going to be at this year’s Annual Gathering, I am writing to give my apologies for absence at the AGM and to make some points about the minutes. I am afraid I am not able to accept the minutes as an accurate record of last year's AGM and would ask you please to see that appropriate changes are made.

I will concentrate here on the section of the minutes dealing with the part of the meeting where I made a point of order about Ben Haggarty’s postal ballot.

1. The point of order that I presented to the AGM is inaccurately summarised. From the enclosed text (which I read out), you will see that I stated four separate reasons why I was asking the meeting to set aside the postal ballot as null and void. Only the first of these reasons deals with the fact that the ballot papers were sent out unnumbered.

2. The second part of my point of order simply asked that the Society for Storytelling initiate a period of open discussion and debate on the traditional tale and its telling and any related issues. The sentence dealing with this in the minutes does not make sense.

3. After I had put my point of order, comments from the Chair were followed by general discussion and a vote was taken on the first part of my point of order. An overwhelming majority decided in favour of setting aside the postal ballot. This vote has not been mentioned in the minutes.

4. Following further discussion, Ben Haggarty made an initial offer to withdraw his ballot and subsequently did so. As I recall he did not attach as a reason for doing this that it was 'on the understanding that debate on it would continue'.

5. After a lot of people had spoken, I asked for the second part of my point of order to be brought back to the attention of the meeting. During the ensuing discussion, Harold Rosen supported my request by restating what I had said and the meeting finally voted on this restatement by Harold. There was again an overwhelming majority in favour.
6. I think it would have been proper for the minutes to state that my point of order had two seconders - Rob Parkinson and Pat Ryan.

I am sorry to burden you with these points at what must be an incredibly busy time for you. Although I am going to look like Ms. Pedantry herself, pedantry is not my reason for writing. I simply believe that - especially since we are all people who deal in words all the time - we should try to get the words right.

I hope the Annual Gathering goes extremely well. All my best wishes for it.

Yours sincerely,

cc. Tina Bilbé
Dear Jean,

Please forgive the formality of this letter. This is because I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the SfS to set out some serious concerns of mine about the resolution from Ben Haggarty which has been sent out to the SfS membership. My concerns are in two main areas - the content of the resolution and the way it is framed; and the way in which the resolution has been presented to the attention of the membership.

First, the resolution itself. The issues which Ben has raised in his resolution are important issues and worthy of debate. However, it is not at all clear what relationship exists between the questions we have been asked to vote on and the wording of the text which introduces them. The content of that text, which I take to be the main body of the resolution, can be construed as an agenda for change. Nowhere are we asked to say whether we agree, or disagree, with what it says. Instead, we are asked to vote on two other questions. These are presented as an attempt to gauge the views of the SfS membership. But I am worried that people are being asked to vote on them without knowing whether their vote will be taken as validating the opinions expressed in the main body of the resolution and therefore whether an affirmative vote on Question A or a negative vote on Question B may be regarded as a starting-point for effecting any changes in the aims and activities of the SfS that are deemed desirable in consequence.

Secondly, the way the resolution has been presented. In his Electoral Address, Ben has expressed the view that the SfS should provide more of a forum for debate and discussion. I am concerned that Ben has been able to put forward his possibly ground-changing resolution, ambiguously framed as it is, without prior discussion and debate. As currently worded, the SfS Constitution enables him or any other member to do this and therefore possibly to affect the aims and objects of the Society itself without the membership having had a chance to debate the matter beforehand.

In this particular instance, there are some further concerns. One is that Ben has been able to exercise his right to put forward a resolution to be voted upon prior to the Annual Gathering while other members were not informed of their right to do this. While
I fully accept and understand that the situation arose as a result of a mistake, and while I admire your openness in declaring this to the membership, I do feel worried about the messiness of the resulting situation and concerned that, in the circumstances, it may prove impossible properly to assess either the resolution or the results of the ballot. The problem is compounded by the fact that the sheet of paper presenting Ben's resolution is not itself entirely clear — for instance, it does not indicate where it should be sent. More worrying is that, unlike other ballot papers which the SfS has previously sent out, this ballot paper is not numbered. The vote itself is therefore open to abuse and its validity vulnerable to challenge.

I am really sorry to be setting out so many points of concern. I am acutely aware that, with the Annual Gathering coming up, there will be more than enough on your plate already. However, after much reflection, I felt it was important to put my thoughts on paper and to do so in plenty of time before the AGM where I am sure Ben's resolution is bound to become one of the main subjects of discussion.

All best wishes for the run-up to the Gathering. I'll look forward to seeing you there.

With much love,

Mary Medlicott
Jean Edmiston
16 Coronation Ave
Oldfield Park
Bath
BA2 2JN

23 March 1998

Dear Jean

Many thanks for the various ballot forms and reports which arrived this morning. It is very heartening to see so many candidates up for election this year.

However, I felt I should write to the Committee via yourself to raise two points of order concerning the Members’ Ballot on the proposal by Ben and Michael, which concerns me greatly. The first is a minor point in that I don’t seem to be able to find any instruction as to where to send the ballot paper. Presumably it may be handed in at the A.G.M. (although this is not clear), but does this mean that members not attending will be unable to vote?

The second matter is more serious. In my experience it is usual for ballots asking for a policy change to contain statements both for and against the proposal. It seems that here we have only a statement in favour of the proposal. Bearing in mind that many of the assumptions made by the Proposer are ambiguous and superficial, it is certainly a statement that needs to be challenged so that members can make an informed decision. It seems to me that the present form of the ballot does not allow for any measure of informed debate on a proposed major change of emphasis to the Society and, as such, is profoundly undemocratic.

It is also usual for the ballot paper to be on a separate sheet from the two statements so that the actual vote cannot be perceived to be aligned to one side or the other. I am also slightly confused as to why there are two conflicting questions on the ballot paper. What happens if there are two ‘yes’ votes?!

I hope you don’t mind my raising these points - please rest assured that I’m not doing it to cause difficulties and I fully realise that the Directors are doing a great job in trying to steer the Society through its constitutional complexities, but I do have concerns about how this proposal is being put to the membership.

With very best wishes
Dear SfS Member

You will have recently received a ballot questioning the future focus of The Society for Storytelling. The ballot suggests that the central focus for all the members of the Society ought to be on traditional storytelling. The ballot is proposed and seconded by two of this country’s most influential traditional storytellers. The ballot contends that any stories that do not come under the definition of traditional storytelling as described in that document should be held under the “umbrella” of the SfS but are not really the “stuff” of proper stories that most members of the Society are interested in. In a broad sweep, stories that are used for reasons of self development, personal sharing, biographical or become applicable to work situations are stated to belong to a non traditionalist stream and therefore of less interest to the whole of the Society membership. The ballot asks its membership to make a yes or no decision as to whether the nature of the Society is to be changed from its current eclectic approach to storytelling to a society of traditional storytelling. This is a very significant decision especially as the member proposing this ballot is also standing for election into the new SfS Committee this April.

I am a current director in the SfS Committee and a storyteller that includes contemporary approaches to storytelling in my work. I would like to offer some comment to this proposed focus laid out in the ballot. The views described in this letter are my own and not a reflection of the SfS Committee.

Storytelling is nothing if not inclusive. It speaks directly to the imagination and to the heart’s fascination with the world about us. Good storytelling is always meaningful oral communication. It is hard if not impossible to define what a spoken story does for it effects listeners in a variety of ways simultaneously. One may be in awe at the wonderful colour of landscape and character. Another may be moved by the resonance of the image and metaphor and privately ascribe it to their individual circumstances. Traditional classical stories can do this. Contemporary biographical tales can do this. The important and determining factor of a good story is the storyteller. A storyteller who is truly engaged in the story being told, is responsive to the listeners present and motivated by an integrity to be meaningful will invariably be a good storyteller. A personal story that comes from someone with a desperate yearning for attention is often a poor story and dire listening. Professionals are paid good money to work with such patients. However someone who shares from the bounty of their well being, a personal tale however tragic, will invariably make rich listening. Likewise, a wonderful epic such as The Odyssey told by a storyteller that has not engaged with the zest of the quest will corrupt a good tale into dire listening.

Currently, The Society for Storytelling acts as a voice for storytelling in this country. I was asked to put myself up for election two years ago as a representative for the non traditionalist voice of the storytelling community. For some eighteen years I have worked with storytelling in a variety of environments. On the principle that storytelling rejuvenates and encourages meaningfulness I have worked with storytelling in childrens homes, schools, colleges, community projects, prisons and special needs centres. More recently my work has taken me into the business environment where there is a great need and thirst for the quality of human engagement that sharing stories creates. As well as traditional lore I will often work with created stories using both spontaneous metaphor and biographical details to illustrate themes and make up stories that reflect the many perspectives of life. Some of these experiences have quite simply been storytelling at its best and belongs to the central expression of a society that seeks to promote and honour the experience of storytelling today.

So let us not be frightened of diversity seeking refuge in ‘back to basics’ concepts of storytelling that limits and excludes but rather we determine a way forward for storytelling that embraces change and makes the act of storytelling a deeply meaningful spoken exchange between people.

Think carefully before you cast your vote.

Alexander Mackenzie
Two-part resolution

Thank you, Chair, for calling me to speak. I have given you advance notice of this point of order because I didn't think it would be fair simply to spring it on you at this meeting. It is my sincere hope that it will help the Society to put behind us the difficulties that seem to have arisen and to move quickly on to address the issues at the centre of Ben's resolution.

I am speaking for myself, Mary Medlicott, immediate past chair of the SfS, for Rob Parkinson, my predecessor, and for Pat Ryan, the chair before Rob.

Over the last few weeks, we have each had a number of serious concerns about the resolution now on the agenda. Between us, we have also had a number of SfS members expressing very serious concerns to us. The worries have been of two sorts. One is the way the resolution has been presented to the membership. The other relates to confusions arising from the way the resolution has been framed - whether the questions are really more of a survey and, if so, how they relate to the opinions expressed in the resolution and to what actions would or could be taken as a result.

Because of these various confusions, we were concerned that the democracy of the Society was in danger of being compromised. To deal with the problems, we would now like to put forward a new two-part resolution in the interests of the Society and open discussion and debate. I must emphasise that we are not taking this action in any spirit of criticism or censure of our current Committee. Nor do we want to brush aside the important issues contained in the resolution which has been put before us. On the contrary, what we want is to open these issues up for debate and discussion.

The first half of our two-part resolution proposes that the ballot on the resolution under discussion be set aside. This is for the following main reasons.

a. Ballot papers were delivered unnumbered, thus making the whole voting process open to abuse.
b. Ballot papers included no indication of to whom they should be returned or the ballot's closing date.
c. The questions on the ballot paper did not enable people to vote on the opinions expressed in the resolution. Normally speaking, with any resolution, it is usual for people to be asked: Do you agree with the resolution? Do you disagree with the resolution? In this case, two questions were put forward which
did not relate closely to the text of the resolution.
d. Furthermore, the resolution went out to members in a particularly difficult situation where, due to a simple mistake on the part of the Committee, one member had been able to pursue their right to put forward a resolution for ballot prior to the AGM while the membership generally had not been informed of its right to do this.

For all these reasons, and without getting into dreadful constitutional wrangles, we can surely all agree that the ballot has presented problems which make it unacceptable to proceed with it. This new resolution therefore asks you, first, to set aside the current ballot as null and void and second to consider the second half of this two-part resolution as a way of initiating a full and proper debate on the issues involved.

The second part of this resolution comes to the heart of the matter.

We can surely all agree that the Society for Storytelling acknowledges the fundamental importance of the traditional tale and its telling. In recognition of this, the proposal is that, following this meeting, the Society should initiate a period of open discussion and debate, to take place over the coming months, during which members could address any related issues. They might do this in open forum meetings or in the pages of Storylines or in any other way that seems appropriate.

Issues to be addressed could include such matters as:

* how the traditional tale can be defined
* how traditional tales can be brought to greater public awareness
* whether the Society's activities need to give greater attention to traditional tales and how this can be done

There will surely also be many other issues that people would like to raise as part of the process of debate.

That is the proposal. In conclusion, therefore, I now request, first, that a vote be taken to set aside the original ballot and, second, that a vote be taken on this new proposal that as of this meeting the SfS initiates a period of open discussion and debate on the subject of traditional tales.

Mary Medlicott
The debate on "Traditional" storytelling

Whose tradition?
Why is tradition being debated?
What will the members of The Society for Storytelling gain from this discussion?
Who thinks this is an issue that needs to be rigorously and energetically pursued?
Is this relevant to a society that is about to enter the 21st century?
Perhaps more importantly, what will non-members gain from such a debate and how will the general public perceive such a debate?

Why do you want to debate and discuss traditional storytelling and its role?
The debate seems to want to discuss the storytelling "tradition" without defining what 'tradition' means.
Can it be defined? And if so, could you get two enthusiasts to agree on the same definition?
Why raise such a spurious debate anyway?

I can't find a storyteller, listener, librarian, teacher, arts officer, parent or story enthusiast who is even interested in putting this debate on the agenda. They just don't think it's worth discussing! Why not? Oh, for so many obvious reasons.

This type of obscure debate nearly destroyed the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Can we not learn from their experience? Many people hold the - I think mistaken - view that The Folklore Society is for a lot of old 'fuddy-duddies' who speak a foreign language and don't want ordinary non-academic people as members. Do we want that type of image for the SFS?

Storytelling is in itself a minority interest. Trying to define and label parts of it takes a lot of the fun and interest out of it for many people. Ordinary enthusiasts are not interested, do not understand and do not wish to even try to understand a debate that appears so meaningless to them.

Newcomers to the wonderful world of storytelling and beginners learning stories will find this debate both confusing and excluding. Those who already re-tell anecdotes and personal experiences, whether their own or other peoples', are asking why the word 'tradition' is tagged on.

People I have met that have an interest in storytelling want to:

Hear stories
Utilise storytellers
Learn stories themselves
Find stories for their own personal use or
Attend story events.

Apart from discussing stories and the sheer joy they give the most they wish to discuss is:

Where they can hear more stories
Where can they attend workshops
How to attract audiences to events
How to find 'good' storytellers for their venues, etc.

Many of them don't even realise that it is a Society for Storytelling that anyone can join. We need to increase our membership. Encourage everyone with an interest to join now! Encourage all members to pursue their specific area of interest with like-minded people.
Get that message across, start truly disseminating the information that people want to read and hear and you will get a strong, healthy, diverse society.

As the society's founder Secretary, I sat for over two years and took minutes in many meetings - mostly listening to seven storytellers talk, discuss, debate and dream about what the society could and should be. We went out and met people and read all the incoming mail - mountains of it! There were also many telephone calls.

There were two main and very obvious conclusions that were unanimously held by all:

1. That it should be a Society for Storytelling.
2. That it would not exclude any form of storytelling but encompass all aspects of storytelling.

Read the back of any SFS leaflet for a list of the society's AIMS.

I am not opposed to a 'discussion' about traditional storytelling and it's role, but I am surprised and concerned that such a discussion is at the forefront of the Wandsworth Conference. If my concern had not been so great, I would never have put pen to paper about this subject - I have far more interesting things to spend time on.

"A day of workshops and discussions that aims to 'lift the lid' off traditional stories, to open up discussion on their use and to raise questions on the tradition and craft of the storyteller."

You seem to want many things from this day. A debate on 'the tradition and craft of the storyteller' and 'lift the lid off traditional stories' without defining what that tradition is or why you wish to discuss it.

I have spoken to several people who were at the AGM and knew that this subject would be discussed over the next year. But is this conference the place to do that?

I understood, as did many others that the Wandsworth Conference was the public face of the society - a chance to draw in those who know little or nothing about storytelling, as well as story enthusiasts and members. It is an opportunity to give the participants such an enjoyable and informative day that they would be hooked for life and become members, if not already. Judging from the facial reactions and body language of those who I've broached this thorny subject with this debate is not likely to achieve such a result.

So what will the participants gain? I cannot see who your target audience is. I cannot interest anyone, using the information on the front of this leaflet, to go along. You need an audience willing to pay between £25 and £60 for a day that, on paper, appears to be a series of unrelated events. Whilst each storyteller leader is well qualified to bring their own strengths to a conference, you seem to have a whole hotch-potch of aims and objectives and discussion points, but no obvious session in which to discuss each constructively.

Why is 'story making' linked only to 'traditional patterns and archetypes'?
How are these defined in the multi- various world of storytelling?
I do not wish to denigrate people's talents or hard work. I have sat where you are now.
So, may I make some constructive suggestions?
a) Leave the workshop leaders to run their sessions without leading participants into this 'debate'. Set a
time and place aside solely for discussion by those interested.

b) Debate, discuss and research internally before extending such a diversifying and excluding
discussion to non-members.

c) Commission, invite, organise, bamboozle, cajole and otherwise obtain, from ‘storytellers’ who tell
stories, a short account of the type of stories they tell, the people/things that influence them and their
views on the direction of storytelling in the 21st Century. Who has the time or the energy to do this, I
do not know. And how you define or list such ‘storytellers’ or compile the right questions, again, I
don't know. Or perhaps many of us are not really interested in such an exercise.

Such a debate does not belong at Wandsworth, which many of us believe, is an outreach project for the
general public - a conference that was originally devised to promote the SFS and its aims and
activities. Please do not use it for internal concerns.

When I was the society's Secretary, I sat for many hours while whole sentences - or sometimes, just
single words, to be used in the minutes - were endlessly discussed to ensure total clarity. We
painstakingly prepared the wording of the aims and objectives. Spent much, much longer over the
wording of the leaflet and couldn’t get agreement on the format for headed notepaper for two years!
But all that effort was worth it, because these documents are now clear and effective. Please think
carefully about what you put out to the great unknown of the general public – some of whom are just
beginning to think we are not a bunch of weirdoes. Please think about the way you are wording this
debate.

If I hadn’t seen the front of the Wandsworth leaflet I wouldn’t have put pen to paper and joined in with
this debate. There are many, far more interesting, activities that I would rather spend the time on. I
know how much toil goes into running the society and it's many activities. Everyone has achieved so
much. My comments about the conference are not directed at anyone person. I’m sure a lot of very
hard work went into organising it. Each session, on it’s own, looks very interesting. It's just the
premature debate, in public, with this subject as the main theme that I have grave concerns about.
In the unaccustomed role of lecturer delivering a prepared speech, Ben Haggarty stole the show at the end of the Folklore Society/SFS joint conference at Conway Hall in London on May 6th. Ben gave the final talk of the day, a provocative and controversial offering in which he called for the development of high standards in professional storytelling.

In many cultures of the past, there had been a caste of professional storytellers, he maintained, skilled bards who developed the storyteller’s art to high levels at which they could perhaps literally enchant their audiences. Storytellers today too readily attributed an audience’s rapt attention to their own skills when in fact the tales should take the credit, when they themselves were relatively undeveloped as storytellers.

The discussion that followed was heated and wide-ranging, focussing almost exclusively on the many points Ben had raised. Earlier in the afternoon, difficult and equally challenging presentations from Tony Buckley and Doc Rowe, with an entertaining and very welcome interlude of tales and lore from Taffy Thomas, including hot cider for all. Taffy’s fascinating if sotto voce session on belief in folklore and legend begged many questions whilst Doc Rowe’s rumbustious scepticism about the storytelling movement, expressed as part of a talk on his methods of collecting folk narrative etc., deserved more than a casual ear. ‘My point is,’ he insisted afterwards, ‘just what are you reviving? What do you mean? How can you revive something that’s already very much alive?’

The morning had been fascinating too. Daithi O hOgain had begun the day with a keynote speech of immense erudition and gentle charm, outlining the types of narrative known in Irish oral lore. Essential questions, he said in conclusion, were the creation of an awareness in the media that folklore humanises, helps to develop international understanding as well as the confidence of the individual in his or her environment. We had also to consider that the perception and meaning of narrative to modern audiences had changed and to examine the relation between audience and teller so that each appreciated the other fully.

Mary Medlicott’s great clarity in both thought and diction were much appreciated at the end of the morning in a talk examining her work with some Welsh schools on local legends. It was a natural enough process, she implied, for new legends to be created or for old ones to be transposed to the locality in the course of such a project. ‘Just as all places had their legends at some time or another, so also legends do not stop. They are not, or should not be, things only of the distant past.” Legends, she suggested, brought our world to life, made us aware of ‘life possibilities’.

Between Mary’s session and Daithi’s, Dick Leith spoke with infectious enthusiasm on Georgie Stewart’s 1954 and 1983 tellings of The Green Man of Knowledge, as recorded by Hamish Henderson. The story is a classic wonder tale and part of it Daithi had already referred to in its description by some scholars as ‘the megalithic tale’. But Dick was concerned to show how Stewart’s narration, at a Scottish travellers’ ceilidh, had brought it to life, given it meaning, relevance. And that, surely, is the task of both storytellers and folklorists, a large slice of common ground which this day very effectively celebrated.

We hope to publish papers given at the conference in due course. Meanwhile, Doc Rowe recorded the day and has cassettes available. They are well worth listening to and all of the speeches deserve several hearings. Unfortunately Taffy Thomas’s excellent session was not recorded, but all of the other speakers are there, as are the discussion sessions.

There are four cassettes in all, for which Doc is charging the very reasonable sum of £10 plus £1 to cover postage. Please write to Doc at 1 Vesage Court, Leather Lane, London ECIN 7RE, including a cheque made out to ‘London History’. 

Editor
What is 'Tradition'?

by Tina Bilbe

At the Annual Gathering in April it was agreed that we should debate 'Tradition' in the SfS, its position and importance. But what is 'Tradition'? It seems to have become one of those buzz-words that advertisers so love.

My first encounters with storytelling were my mother's humorous anecdotes, often relating to her childhood, and the Bible stories I was told at Sunday school. I went through a phase of reading folktales from all over the world before being seduced away by science fiction.

In my late twenties I became involved in the folk dance and song movements. It was rare for someone to be interested in both but both had their 'Tradition' arguments. I remember being castigated for introducing the songs I sang. "Not traditional to do that." On another occasion the rapper sword dance team who were running a workshop at Whitby Festival informed us all that we should only dance this dance exactly as they did - no variations.

I heard the word 'Tradition' regarding storytelling and the warning bells rang. Unemployment has its advantages however and I took the opportunity of a visit to London to consult the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House. Their excellent catalogue of material was even specific to storytelling.

The folklorists view: There are three meanings of the word 'Tradition'.
1. Materials elements of culture, stories, songs, rituals etc., that have been handed down through time.
2. Communication the handing down of material, an observable act.
3. Process an intra-social process, passing on culture through time and tending to create stability.

The word 'Tradition' is also used to convey certain values. In a world of accelerating change, tradition and the presumed stability and homogeneity of the old culture are viewed as a positive. I remember being castigated for introducing the songs I sang. "Not traditional to do that." On another occasion the rapper sword dance team who were running a workshop at Whitby Festival informed us all that we should only dance this dance exactly as they did - no variations.

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The word 'Tradition' is also used to convey certain values. In a world of accelerating change, tradition and the presumed stability and homogeneity of the old culture are viewed as a positive and nearly lost Golden Age. The idea of tradition as value also raises another question, that of authenticity. I won't diverge along that path now.

The Morris Ring are keen preservers of 'Tradition'. They have recorded and reproduced the dances and tunes collected in the past. They cannot prevent morris sides from reinterpreting those dances or even writing new ones for their own, and others, entertainment. The purists are horrified but even they have to admit that traditions can become established over a relatively short period of time.

In Father, Son and Grandson you have three generations, by the time the grandson is teaching his son you have a new tradition. Folk singers are often in debate over 'Tradition'. The letters pages of folk magazines, all containing folklore papers from Sweden and Ireland, articles by morris dancers, the letters pages of folk magazines, all containing differing views and information. Some of the material was even specific to storytelling.

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3. Process an intra-social process, passing on culture through time and tending to create stability.
Those of you who were present at last April's AGM in the Museum of Welsh Life in St Fagans, Cardiff, will remember the lively and vital discussion prompted by Ben Haggerty's ballot of the membership regarding the place and importance of Traditional Stories.

Unfortunately, as the then Chair, Jean Edmiston, pointed out the ballot papers circulated to members were un-numbered casting doubt on its validity. Mary Medlicott spoke from the floor on a point of order recommending that the ballot be set aside as null and void and that issues raised by the proposed ballot be discussed by the membership.

There followed over twenty contributions from the floor culminating in Ben withdrawing the proposal which was then voted on by those present and it was agreed by 27 votes to 7 (11 abstentions) to set the ballot aside and not announce the results. Harold Rosen, who became a patron at the St Fagans meeting, proposed that there should follow an open debate on the issue of traditional storytelling which was carried unanimously by a show of hands.

It was clear that the issues brought to the fore by the discussion are of paramount importance to many SfS members so the committee are making this area of discussion a priority for this year. Graham Langley is hosting an e-mail discussion (if you have access to e-mail and would like to receive information contact Graham on graham@stories.demon.co.uk) which is helping those taking part focus clearly on the issues involved, the letters page of Storylines is available for anyone who wants to sound off and the Wandsworth Conference, Opening Pandora's Box, will focus specifically on this issue. Regional Rep's will be receiving guidelines on how to host the discussion on a local level and events will be scheduled for the 99 AGM and Annual Gathering in Stockport.

Everyone is free to join the debate in anyway they feel fit and we hope that the electronic, written and oral media used will give the issues around Tradition and Storytelling a good airing and help the SfS clarify its identity and direction both as an organisation for our members and as an advocate for Storytelling.
THE ON-LINE TRAD DEBATE

by Graham Langley

In response to June Peters' article in the last issue of Storylines, The Storytelling cafe has set up an email conference to further the debate on traditional storytelling. It opened on 20 July and will run until 12 September. In order to catch storylines' copy date this is a brief report on the conference up till mid-August. Web pages have been set up on which all postings can be viewed both during and after the conference is over. The address is http://web.bham.ac.uk/p.bishop/storytelling-cafe

June's article and Frankie Armstrong's keynote speech from the Gathering were both posted early in the conference. There have been a number of very powerful postings following two threads.

Specific rather than General There were many postings on this. For some there is a distrust of too closely defining the nature of traditional storytelling, feeling it will lead to an elitist attitude from some tellers who may feel that only tellers who toe the line would be accepted - for membership of SFS perhaps. This would also lead to storytelling being marginalized - even more than it is now - which would discourage audiences and people who book storytellers.

The other viewpoint suggested that by more analysis and understanding of what is encompassed in the term 'traditional storytelling' would we be able to develop the art.

Style and content This thread also began to emerge early on and in some ways began to address the specific nature of traditional storytelling. Was it in the manner and presentation of the storyteller that made it 'traditional' or was it the material that was chosen? Was it both? The traditional context is no longer there for most of us either as listeners or tellers so how can we in any way be traditional.

There is over a month of the conference still to run. Jason Webb is already enthusiastic enough about what is going on to prepare an on-going email newsgroup to continue the discussion on storytelling in the UK. It needs support to be allowed to continue to run so please send messages of support and contributions to the pages. His instructions are:

Point your newsreader at uk.net.news.config, and look for the topic 'RDF uk.arts.storytelling'. I am sure if you need assistance he will gladly offer it. His address is csxjw@ee.surrey.ac.uk
Dear Editor
I've always wanted to be part of the majority, and I've finally made it. For now, like most people, I can't take part in the 'On-line Trad. Debate'. In fact, being strictly off-line, I'm not even sure what the debate is about.

But at least I'm in the majority - even if it is a disenfranchised one. And I'm in there with some jolly good people - only three out of sixteen 'Directors and other contacts' in the last Storylines give an e-mail address, for instance.

And my local library (always the throw-away get-out clause for Internets) is in the majority with me. No intercourse for me there then.

So, my thanks to the relatively affluent minority who have taken on the responsibility of holding this debate without the rest of us. And if they discover that the answer is 42, I shan't be the least surprised.

Chris Sugden

Editor's note: Sorry Chris, I feel a bit of a traitor but my son has just offered to let me share his e-mail address. But, if the answer is 42, I promise to let you know by carrier pigeon or runner with cleft stick within a few months. However, if this is no good, someone at the SFS technical headquarters can run off a hard copy (words on paper) of the complete TRAD DEBATE (some ten or twelve pages) in exchange for a C4 stamped addressed envelope plus four 1st class stamps, for anyone who wants it.

Dear Dave
The trouble with a debate is that it easily becomes an argument in which each side stereotypes the opposing argument and we end up with two ludicrous, simplified points of view.

I do, though, believe there is a debate to be had, because I believe that within the English storytelling scene there is a problem.

On too many occasions I've heard people who have had a brief encounter with this storytelling 'scene' coming away using words like 'twee', or even being quite angry - wondering what right such and such a storyteller had to lift, condense, or trot out such and such a story.

Recently I was privileged to spend a little time on the Isle of Skye with storyteller George MacPherson. He was also less than happy with certain aspects of the storytelling revival. In the magazine Skye Views he said:

The present revival of storytelling should be looked upon with some suspicion as many of the so-called Revivalists are only interested in how much money they can obtain by exploiting the tradition. Many of them learn a few stories and will change them to suit their own conceptions of what is most easily saleable in the present market.

George's comments must, I think, be seen in the context of an island that has been plundered in many ways. However, his comments remind me uncomfortably of comments I have heard in England. Often reactions against such statements as 'This is a story from the Dreamtime' or 'I would like to tell a wonderful Native American story. They are also reactions against the 'New-Age' hyperbole surrounding stories - the claim that stories are all wonderfully life changing, indeed, that stories are necessarily positive. Most of all they are reactions against the claim 'to tell stories from many different cultures.' This can only mean that stories are plucked from books, out of context and meaning, and are turned into neat packaged commodities, the tradition that is being followed is one of ethnocentric plunder from other cultures.

Stories and that vast global pool of motifs, tell us a huge amount about our superficial differences and deep similarities. But we can't serve any vague and ill-defined notion of interculturalism by turning stories into commodities, by ignoring tradition and context.

None of the negative comments that I have heard concerning storytelling has come from academic folktales researchers, but from people listening to stories, sometimes people with a cultural connection with the story. For instance a Punjabi woman too polite to complain to the storyteller about arbitrary changes.

I'm aware that to take this argument to its logical conclusion would mean that no-one could tell tales from outside their own culture, and 'tradition' would be a straight-jacket, not a living, evolving thing. This is not what I'm advocating.

The conclusion, I think, is similar to something Tina Bilbe alluded to in her article 'What is Tradition?' (Storylines Autumn 98) when she talked of quality. If a storyteller is a professional she must take their craft seriously. Plainly they will have always loved stories and must, in one way or another, have served a long apprenticeship - they can't have adopted storytelling because it's a fashion, or because (God help us) it seems 'arty'. Above all they must surely live and breathe their own stories and be led by their stories in such a way that people can't make the comment I've heard, 'I might as well have got the book and read it!' This will mean giving thought to which stories are appropriate to use, which should be left; having the sensitivity not to turn a great epic into a Readers' Digest condensed homely, and to acknowledge and recognise sources.

I'm not sure if I've come any closer to the meaning of 'tradition', but the presence of the debate shows that there is a healthy care being taken by storytellers.

Mike O'Leary
A burning issue emerged from the AGM of this year's gathering. Discussion of the Ballot on Traditional stories led to a well argued and passionate debate. Subsequently the AGM voted to 'have an open debate on traditional storytelling'. Judging by the enormous amount of energetic discussion which this issue created within the membership present at the AGM, the process of extended debate will do much to give the Society the focus and sharp edge that it needs. But before we move too quickly into battle ranks to defend our respective corners I think we need to reflect on our own practice - to ask what it is that we do, why we do it and what we call it when we're doing it and then find out if others call it the same thing - in other words define some terms and offer these in some sort of public forum, asking perhaps at the same time ‘why have these issues become so contentious?’ If this debate is to achieve all it could for the SfS...

* a sharpening of focus around the issues of storytelling
* a sharpening of focus on what it is that we are all trying to achieve within the SfS
* an improved sense of identity to the SfS
* a sharp cutting edge in the SfS’s approach to publicity
* a clear profile for the SfS
* a high profile for the SfS within the community of storytellers and within our society at large
* an emerging sense of ways members can work towards good practice

... then we need a period of time during which we consider defining our terms. For instance... What do we mean by tradition? What is tradition in relation to performance? In relation to story content? In relation to the contexts in which stories are told? Frankie Armstrong's dazzling talk on the Sunday morning of the Gathering gave a historical perspective on the growth of the folk singing movement in this country and its relevance to the world of storytelling. She talked about the way in which she, Ewan McCaill and others spent time listening to, watching, studying tapes of such brilliant traditional performers as Seamus Ennis in his playing, singing and storytelling. Their question was ‘What is it that these great traditional performers are doing?’ I think there's a lot to be gained from bringing this sort of perspective to bare on our case. It seems to me that we need to look to these sorts of experiences to help us develop our own ways of working.

But the Society needs the views of all members. Through this year's forum we can all have a voice in debating what it is the Society stands for. Storylines itself offers a mouthpiece through the new format of ‘guest editor’. If you have a view point you want to put, or if you know someone who is well equipped to put your viewpoint through the role of ‘guest editor’ in forthcoming editions contact Dave. Let the debate continue.
2.0 Sample of abstracts from presentations at storytelling conferences addressing social issues such as homophobia, racism and exclusion, prejudice and discrimination generally in American society. [N.B., These talks were a small part of conferences consisting of approximately 100 events each, but all did make an impact on the organisation's membership.]

2.1. **Abstract: 'OUT LOUD! Storytellers Challenge Homophobia in School',**
*by Cindy Rivka Marshall and Jack Maguire, Storytelling at the Crossroads, National Storytelling Conference, Chicago, July 2003*

Far too often, lesbian and gay experience is overlooked, ridiculed, or misinterpreted in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Lesbian and gay students, many of whom sense their orientation early in childhood, suffer the most. Their straight counterparts, however, also wind up disadvantaged because their ignorance and prejudice goes unchecked.

Students of all ages need to feel respected before they can realize their full learning potential. They also need to understand and tolerate human differences to function responsibly in society. A uniquely effective way to fight homophobia in schools is to tell stories that give students informed and unbiased perspectives on lesbian and gay lives. Here are just a few sample resources to start you thinking about how you can take action.

[There follows an extensive bibliography and list of resources such as websites, audio-visual materials and organisations]

2.2 **Abstract: 'Dismantling Homophobia and Healing All, One Story At A Time',**
*by Rico Rodriguez H.S.A., Storytelling at the Crossroads, National Storytelling Conference, Chicago, July 2003*

[Page 127 of the programme gives a synopsis of statistics regarding homophobia in schools, the home, and communities. Second page presents the following abstract, along with bibliography, websites and audio-visual resources]

**The Use of Storytelling as an Agent to Dismantle Homophobia and Heal Us All**

There is something fundamentally wrong when young (and older) people are excluded, taunted, assaulted, killed and when they are hurting and killing themselves because of their sexual orientation. Homophobia is still rampant and even acceptable as a form of discrimination. Homophobia hurts gays lesbians and bisexuals [sic] immensely but it also hurts all. Personal testimonies of these stories has [sic] has a tremendous impact on powerful components of anti-homophobia work. The telling of these stories has a tremendous impact on the listeners because when we listen to one another [sic] and share our stories we discover our shared humanity. When we connect as humans we start building community. Thus our stories are the healing
agents who will start the process of healing us all and freeing us from the damages of homophobia. We need to dismantle homophobia one story at a time.


‘Marcel Proust says that the true voyage of discovery is not to seek new landscapes but to see with new eyes. This interactive presentation challenges us to use new eyes to see the invisible inequities embedded throughout our society. Filled with compassion and hope, this keynote address will explore the power of story to give voice to critical, unspoken questions.

Chicago-based Susan O’Halloran is author of four books, recipient of the 2002 Spirit of Peace award and national and international video/film honors. Her stories explore the complex issues of race, politics, and social justice. She has led diversity workshops at Fortune 500 companies for the past two decades and has taught at universities and graduate schools of business across the country. One company newsletter called her storytelling “a new approach of politics with soul,” the Chicago Reader’s Critic Choice says she “has mastered the Irish art of telling stories that are funny and heart-wrenching at the same time.” But her best endorsements come from her audiences: “Sue opened our minds to a much broader view of why society excludes or includes different groups and energized us to deepen our commitment to transforming our world.”


Within Native cultures, storytelling was never done just for entertainment. Stories were the oral history, the literature, the teachings of Native cultures. This session will draw on Native storytellers and story singers from various Northeastern Tribal traditions to share their views and beliefs about the role of storytelling in the 21st Century. Trudi Lamb Richmond who represents the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation is Program Manager of Education for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. A Missisquoi Abenaki storyteller and playwright, Marge Bruchac regularly performs northeastern Algonkian Indian songs and stories and is a consultant for Old Sturbridge Village, MA. An author, storyteller and educator, Paula Dove Jennings is from the Narragansett Tribal Nation and has been a curator for the Native American program at the Boston Children’s Museum and a consultant for the Peabody Andover Museum. Sandi Pineault is a member of the Mohegan Tribal Nation, and Julia Jennings (Strong Woman) comes to us from the Wampanoag tradition. These five panelists will lead us to examine how stories connect us to the natural world even in a highly technological age. They will discuss how to find the sacred in Native
American stories and how to honor the motifs, images, traditions, beliefs and healing power therein. They will provide guidance on how to approach and share Native American stories while dispelling the misinformation and myths about their Peoples and their cultures.


The Problem: Homophobia is the last “socially acceptable” form of bigotry. Many lesbians and gay men today still live in fear because their communities do not welcome them or grant them full civil rights. Children still police each other with anti-gay epithets, putting every child at risk and promoting shame and confusion in many. Schools and other institutions typically do not treat intolerance and harassment in the form of homophobic remarks with the zero tolerance policy given to equivalent racist remarks.

A Solution: “How Can We Tell?” is a National Storytelling Conference general session for all attendees. We will honor and celebrate gay and lesbian presence in American communities through a spectrum of stories, and present a panel discussion, with audience involvement, on how the storytelling community can:

- forge a “whole community” approach that brings the issue of sexual identity out of the “gay ghetto! And into the mainstream;
- begin the process of building safe space for sexual identity in our national storytelling network, and beyond that in our national, regional and local communities
- create an affiliative network for those who are engaged in raising positive awareness of gay and lesbian experience in our communities.

A story swap has also been scheduled during the conference to extend the reach of this session. In addition, a Special Interest Group will be formed for those interested in storytelling and sexual orientation.

[Therein follows a page and half of resources: bibliography and websites]

3.0 Samples of conference abstracts, websites, and festival and storyteller publicity demonstrating marketing of ‘Celtic’ traditions.

In Phoenix, AZ, storytellers from different faith traditions and ethnic backgrounds gather regularly to tell stories that transcend dogmatic and cultural differences. Stories about “Food” provide the nourishing, universal metaphor celebrated by Native American, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Celtic storytellers. Christmas, Kwanzaa, Chanukah, Feast of Light, Ramadan and solstice stories communicate a shared longing for the “Light” in the midst of darkness. Where creed and color often divide, storytelling gives a way to transcend differences, overcome conflict and create community within diversity. [my emphases]

Objectives for this workshop include:

- Provide a model for inter/intra-faith, multi-ethnic storytelling that can be replicated elsewhere
- Allow participants to experience the imaginative power of universal metaphors, such as “Food” and “Light”, that transcend dogmatic and cultural difference
- Hear a sample of the stories told at “Winters Light” and “The Feast of Life”
- Discover a deeper capacity for respecting differences, honoring uniqueness and celebrating diversity
- Search for commonalities of faith and experience

[There follows a bibliography]

N.B.: Inclusion of 'Native American' and 'Celtic' as description equivalent of religions such as 'Christian', 'Jewish', 'Muslim', and 'Buddhist', and the assumption of 'solstice' as a religious festival. Native American traditions do have religions as valued and important as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other world religions, but to lump them under this title assumes they are uniform. Similarly, the term 'Celtic' is problematic in that what could or is considered Celtic has varied through the ages and a variety of denominations have existed where inhabitants define themselves or outsiders define regions as 'Celtic'. Little is known about pre-Christian or early Christian Celtic religions, most is speculation and popularised by New Age romantic publications and activities [See Leslie Jones’s ‘The Emergence of The Druid as Celtic Shaman’, Marketing the Tradition, Perspectives on Folklore, Tourism, and the Heritage Industry, ed. Teri Brewer Harsarlik Press]. Many historians now question the concept of 'Celtic' to describe a ubiquitous and uniform culture and language group across Central and Western Europe during the Iron Age. With the advent of Christianity, there was a distinctly 'Celtic' Christianity in Ireland and Scotland, which at the Synod of Whitby was forced to come under the Roman code; more is known
about this strand but there remains much that is speculative. For the vast period of recorded history, Celtic regions shared the same Christianity of the rest of Europe. Since the Reformation, Wales, Cornwall and the Isle of Man have seen Methodism predominant, where in Scotland Presbyterian, Ulster Presbyterian and the rest of Ireland Catholicism predominates, and Breton and Galicia remained Catholic as well. These Christian denominations colour the majority of folklore from these regions, since the earliest written versions were recorded by Medieval Christian monks.

3.2. Websites emphasising 'Celtic' storytelling, a 'Celtic' storyteller or 'Celtic' story in generic form (that is, not specifically Irish, Welsh, Scottish, etc. but an amalgam of various 'Celtic' strains). When doing a search on 'Celtic storyteller' and 'Celtic storytelling' on Google, the site provided over twenty pages of listings. The ones summarised here are typical.

http://www.patrickball.com

Patrick Ball is one of the best known professional storytellers in North America. His style is very theatrical and highly entertaining. Some, particularly native Irish, feel he emphasises the Celtic-ness and Irish-ness too much, almost to the point of 'stage-Irishness'.

http://www.speakershome.com/hall/

Ted Hall's website is typical of a Romantic, New Age view of Celticism and Celtic storytelling. The following copy quoted from his website gives a flavour of this view of storytelling and storytellers.

One does not elect to become a Storyteller, one simply is a Storyteller born, chosen by forces beyond and larger than oneself. As a Celtic Storyteller, I recount the sacred, ancient tales the same way I learned them, through the time-honored medium of oral tradition, word of mouth, one storyteller to another, handed down throughout the ages.

Defying definition, always shifting, The Stories are too powerful, too essential to pin down - you cannot catch the wind, nor carry the mist away from the moors.

Once upon a time, the Storyteller was most venerated, for he represented the only form of entertainment, and even education. The voices of the past breathed life into Celtic history, tradition and lore - the Warriors taught us to value ourselves, the Fairies gave us laughter, and the Giants showed us how to behave. The folk of mythology and the Art of the Story provided the cement of Celtic Cultural identity.

Still today, if you possess any Celtic blood - at all - then look to yourself, deep inside yourself. There you will hear the echoes of my voice, the voice of The Last Giant, the voice of Ossian, calling to you, telling you of the Times of the Giants and the Days and Nights of the Fairy Folk - the mythology and rich history that you Humans name "Side". The Side now live underground, yet their light still shines golden. The Side are
part of the light you above ground dwellers glory in by day, part of the light within yourselves.

So listen well, Humans, listen well, for herein lies the key to your past, and the hopes of your future.

©2000 TED HALL

BIOGRAPHY:

Ted Hall was born in England, of English-Irish and Scottish ancestry, and educated in Australia, where he remained and taught for some time after University. Whilst in Australia, Ted did some roaming, including a time in the Australian Outback prospecting for tin and blue water topaz.

In the vast Outback- where human presence amounts to no more than pinpricks on the landscape, where the starlight is so intensely bright that Ted could work by the light of its glow- Ted became increasingly aware of a "mythological otherness" in nature's domain. Upon returning to England, Ted tried his hand at the odd teaching job here, a stint of Museum work there, even a barrister's office. Eventually, Ted drifted his way to the Highlands of Scotland, and knew he had reached his destiny.

Ted's Celtic blood, once dormant, beginning to flow through his veins like hot lava, tugging on his sense of belonging. There, possessed by a larger spirit and guided by unseen hands, The Stories found their way to Ted. They were told to him as he sat in the Barber's chair, or sipped a beer in a pub. The stories infused themselves in Ted... he remembered them easily and loved re-telling them, their words and chants and cadence flowed through him like life itself. Ted became a messenger of something far greater than he could ever hope to be on his own, Stories that resonate with every living person - a bearer of Celtic pride, certainly, but much more - the essence of what it is to be human and alive. Ted ceased conducting his famous "Badger Tours" and fled the Highlands when he fell ill from witnessing the desecration of the Sacred Places, the basis of the Stories, at the hands of careless visitors to the sites

Ted now lives in a small town, chosen for its location straddling the English, Scottish border. Neither English nor Scottish, Ted calls this "Celtic Twilight" home now, operating a small B&B there. Today Ted offers The Stories to the world, as a Speaker and through his illustrated book and his audio tapes, hoping that all may experience the magic, and that the Stories and the Art of telling them, thrive forever.

http://www.drurypub.com/hackworth/

Dianne Hackworth is fairly typical of an American storyteller's website. Note that 'Celtic' stories is one genre in a long list of genre and skills to advertise, a 'box' to 'tick off'. Also note the emphasis on both a professional qualification (the Masters
degree and professional associations with storytelling organisations) and the claim to ancestry and tradition.

When listening to Dianne Hackworth you will realize immediately why storytelling is once again becoming a popular form of art. The stories she tells creates images in the mind, "better than TV" as one first grader exclaims! Touring throughout the Southeast telling stories for all ages, Dianne brings to life Appalachian and Celtic folktales; stories of fantastic beings, dragons and jugglers; musical tales of cats, monsters, and toads; humorous stories, scary stories, and touching tales.

Although she has honed her skills with a Master's degree in Storytelling, Dianne comes to storytelling naturally, having learned many of her stories from her parents and grandparents. She keeps all these stories alive by passing them on to you! As well as telling stories for programs and festivals, she also shows others their own hidden talent for storytelling. She teaches storytelling classes at John C. Campbell Folkschool, and provides storytelling workshops throughout the southeast region. Dianne is included in the North Carolina Arts Council Artist Directory and is on the South Carolina Arts Commissions Approved Artists Roster and the Tennessee Arts Commissions Arts in Education Artist Roster.

Other websites that provide a sample of how 'Celtic' is used to market storytelling or other events and arts:

http://www.kilgorechamber.com/celticfestival/default.html

http://www.barrabard.com/

http://www.senac.com/forums/9584/

http://www.irishstoryteller.com/

3.3 Publicity from Festivals and Individual Storytellers in Scotland and Ireland

1) Excerpts from Programmes for The Scottish International Storytelling Festivals:

a.) Welcome to the 19990 Scottish Storytelling Festival. We hope that you will come and discover and explore a rich kaleidoscope of international storytelling, and Scotland's special place in the pattern.

A mixture of workshops, storytelling sessions and ceilidhs along with events aimed specially at children, offers a variety of approaches to storytelling, depending on your interest. But remember, storytelling is always crossing boundaries, including those of age!
Wherever or however, we hope that you will find something in our programme to amuse, delight and enthrall.

b.) Welcome to the 1999 Scottish International Storytelling Festival! This year we are celebrating the seasonal customs, festivals, legends & myths of light and darkness, firing the imagination and thrilling the senses with performances and workshops for adults and children across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife.

Storytellers and musicians from home and overseas gather to bring you tales of Hallowe’en, Celtic New Year, All-Saints, Chanukah, Diwali and other wonderful festivals of light from around the world.

As a writer steeped in the traditions of Orkney, the Scottish Storytelling Centre’s founding patron George MacKay Brown acknowledged the significance of our relationship with seasons, time and story. In 1996 George wrote,

"Going over tales I’ve written during the last decade or so, I was not too surprised to see that many of them are calendar tales, that yield their best treasure in midwinter when barns are full.

The mystery of light out of darkness has been with us since the builders of Maeshowe five thousand years ago. The Celtic missionaries gave the mystery breadth and depth. I like to think I am part of that tradition."

From the Foreward to Winter Tales (John Murray, London 1995)

We hope you join us in this special festival celebration as we carry the riches of story and community towards the new millenium.

2) Excerpts from Dublin Storytelling Festival Programme: Scéalta Shamhna/ So What’s the Story? Nov. 1993

So, What’s the Story in Mother Redcaps this November? We are looking out and listening in

Storytellers from as far away as India and Trinidad, as close as Scotland and Devon, will share their tales with Irish Storytellers, Singers and Musicians on Thursday nights in Mother Redcaps Tavern....

The Irish Writers’ Centre will host a storysharing morning for school children on Friday and each Friday evening there will be informal sessions at Club na Múinteoirí, Parnell Square.
3) Excerpts from Storytelling Festivals in Northern Ireland: The Ulster Storytelling Festival at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Giorralonn Beirt Bóthar/Two Shorten the Road, the North West International Storytelling Festival at the Verbal Arts Centre, Derry/Londonderry

a.) The internationally famous storytelling festival at Cultra now enters its third year. This year’s event includes distinguished performers from the United States as well as the cream of storytellers in Ireland.

As before, many of the weekend’s sessions will be held in the picturesque setting of the Folk Museum’s outdoor exhibition. The stories told will reflect the nature of the buildings. Jack McCann, the County Antrim solicitor, will tell stories of his days in the Cushendall Court House, Paddy O’Brien, schoolteacher from Kerry, will tell his famous tall stories in the Ballyveridagh National School, and the inimitable Tom McDevitte will spin yarns in the Lismacloskey Rectory.

In Cultra Manor, visitors from the United States, Pat Ryan and Sue Thomas will join Liz Weir in the workshop sessions telling their own stories, and encouraging other people to tell theirs. Crawford Howard, master of the monologue, will add his distinctively Belfast voice to these proceedings.

The main event of the weekend will be the popular Saturday evening entertainment when John Campbell joins with other storytellers and local musicians in an entertainment of music and good crack.

b.) “The old image of two travellers shortening the road with a tale seems to have little in common with exchanging date on the information superhighway and yet storytelling is an art which celebrates tradition and innovation.

In this, the 7th North West International Storytelling Festival, the Verbal Arts Centre will welcome storytellers drawn together from various cultures to share their stories with local people of all ages. As well as public performances in a range of locations throughout Derry, Donegal and Tyrone the storytellers will present workshops in schools and community venues to encourage people to share their own stories.

Storytelling has been described as the original world-wide web and a warm invitation is extended to listeners, young and old, to join us for a truly international celebration of tales, old and new.” Liz Weir, Festival Director

N.B. Whereas the above websites emphasise a generic, Romantic view of Celticism, this publicity represents a Celtic identity embedded in a modern materialism. It is mentioned in marketing material, but not exploited. It is informative rather than defining or assertive.
This conference brought together practitioners and organisers of storytelling projects and events in 'Celtic' Nations. Delegates and speakers came from the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Cornwall.

Patrick Ryan summarised the findings of his study, giving a preliminary report on the current state of storytelling in all of Ireland and attendant views of those participating in storytelling there. This was later published as 'Storytelling in Ireland: A Re-Awakening' by the Verbal Arts Centre in 1995, and remains a document which the Irish storytelling organisation, the Verbal Arts Centre, and the Arts Councils of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland use as a guideline on their policies for storytelling.

Nuala Hayes, storyteller, actress and director of the Dublin storytelling festival, reported on the Dublin storytelling festival, its origins and ethos.

Liz Weir, storyteller and author, gave an account of storytelling residencies in communities in the Derry area, bringing primary school children and the elderly in the geriatric ward of Altnagelvin Hospital together for a reminiscence project.

Sam Burnside, poet and director of the VAC presented the results of the Waterside Mural and Project, an oral history scheme supporting the last remaining Protestant community on the Cityside of Derry.

Donald Smith, director of the Edinburgh Storytelling Festival and the Netherbow Arts Centre, and founder of the Scottish Storytelling Forum and Scottish Storytelling Centre, spoke about the practicalities of running the festival and other projects, the impact on the community generally and, specifically, means of obtaining multi-agency funding.

Sally Tonge, Literature Officer for Cornwall, explained her work, described some of the writing and storyteller residencies her agency had organised and found funding for, including a storytelling club, and outlined aims and objectives for future projects for the agency.

Mike (Dunstan) Wilson, spoke about his work with the Claygate Oral History and Creative Writing project in a deprived, former industrial area in Cornwall.

Cornish poets and Irish and Scottish storytellers provided entertainment in the form or readings and storytellings.

N.B. In contradistinction to the above, these practitioners focused on practical issues of storytelling embedded in real communities. Issues regarding funding, social
inclusion, self-confidence and self-esteem for individuals in marginalised communities, the importance of culture and communication for both isolated rural communities on the western edge of Europe and socially and economically deprived, multi-cultural urban communities within officially (that is in linguistic, historical, cultural and political terms) Celtic regions were the main focus of the conference.

4.0. Publicity material and websites noting and/or emphasising Romantic elements in contemporary storytelling.

4.1 Programme: Second International Storytelling Festival, An Eight Day Celebration, 18-25 January 1987, Watermans Arts Centre

During the eight eventful days of the Second International Storytelling Festival you will be able to hear traditional tales told for adults, as they were always meant to be, by some of the best storytellers in the world.

Watermans Arts Centre have brought together an exciting combination of the traditional tellers, whose ancient tales have been passed down faithfully from one generation to another, and some of the best of a new generation, professional storytellers, dedicated to liberating stories from between the covers of books. Stories are alive and thrive on a vibrant exchange between tellers and audiences.

The storytellers in this festival represent a wide variety of cultures and traditions will tell in many different styles: some use music, some sing, some tell formally, and some so informally that you will hardly notice the spell that has been woven around you.

The storytelling sessions will be backed by a series of lectures, films, music, family and children’s events and practical workshops. The festival will be a celebration of one of the oldest arts known to humanity. Story is essential. Story is what happens. Once upon a time...


Truth being stranger than fiction, there is a young man bent on freeing the word and “reinstating” the oral tradition of storytelling lost over the last 100 years. Though, says Ben Haggerty [sic], the organiser of the second International Storytelling Festival at Waterman’s Arts Centre...not much of the family [of stories: myth, legend, folk, fairy, fable, and nursery tales] really remains.

“In Europe we have lost our myths, the central core may have been dying since the 12th century and it was really killed off by the Victorians. Their creative influence has been all but lost.”

4.3. Evening Standard, Friday, 10 November 1989. ‘Climbing Ladders to the Moon’, article promoting the Southbank Storytelling Festival
Once upon a time, in every town and village up and down the land, there was a storyteller. Crowds would gather around as he or she—for often they were women—would tell of maidens and warriors, wicked step-mothers and cruel fathers, cheated husbands and beaten wives.

But along came the printing press. Then, later, the new industrial towns drew people away from their roots and, finally, there was television. They all killed the art. ....

The Irish, those other great storytellers, say that for a tale to become traditional it has to pass through three lots of mouths and ears. First, comes the anecdote, then it is retold as “what happened to a man in our town” and, finally, the story begins: “Once there was a man”. They call it the ladder to the moon, each rung leading closer to the magic of myth.

“You can’t tell stories unless you believe in magic,” says Ben Haggarty of the Company of Storytellers. He is not referring to a faith in the fantastic but to the power of the imagination.

4.4. Excerpts from publicity brochure for ‘Rough Magic Storytellers’, a group based in Devon.

TRADITIONAL TALES’ Storytelling is one of the oldest and most satisfying community art forms, weaving a magic web of words and images and it is now enjoying a welcome revival. Folk-tales, fairy-tales, myths and legends, tales of tricksters, magical quests and other worlds......such stories provide a much-needed spiritual nourishment in the present materialistic age. Proud to be part of this rediscovery of the oral tradition is ‘ROUGH MAGIC’, a Devonshire based group telling tales from all over the world—tales that tell us we are brothers and sisters, no matter where we come from.

4.5. Excerpts from publicity brochure for the College of Storytellers

The College of Storytellers was formed to try to help revive the ancient art of storytelling. Its aims are, amongst others, to identify and promote good storytellers in Britain, to stimulate storytelling groups, to maintain and represent a high standard of storytelling and story material, and to encourage research into the finding of materials, so that they can be added to the treasure of storytellers everywhere. ....

4.6. Publicity Material for The Company of Storytellers

In many parts of the world storytelling still plays a powerful role in the community, yet in industrial societies, among adults at least, it has become almost a lost art. There is however, a growing revival of interest in traditional storytelling in Britain which is demonstrating that audiences are as receptive as they always have been to a good story well told. ....
The stories they [The Company of Storytellers] tell are drawn from many cultures and vary in length from a couple of minutes to an hour, leading the listener from the comic to the tragic, from the bawdy to the miraculous, from the puzzling to the terrifying.

4.7. Excerpts from Programme Notes for Third International Festival of Storytelling at Southbank

“Throughout the 80’s adult audiences have been rediscovering the power of ancient myths and epics, folk and wonder tales, through one of the oldest and most natural arts of all traditional storytelling [sic]. The 3rd International Storytelling Festival is probably the grandest gathering of storytellers ever. It features 41 storytellers and musicians from 10 countries, focusing on 6 of the world’s great oral traditions. The festival takes as its theme the mutually supportive relationship between the spontaneous, informal, intimate storytelling of everyday life and the spectacular storytelling of trained bards and minstrels: the relationship between the ‘fireside’ and the ‘professional’ traditions. It also pays tribute to the older generation of storytellers, bearers of our inheritance, and looks at the younger ones who will take their place. It is a truly national festival with 22 events in venues throughout the UK. 3 Gala evenings underpin the festival, the first allows you to sample the ‘fireside’ tradition, the second the ‘professional’ tradition, and the third the state of storytelling in Britain today. During the 15 days there will be opportunity to relish the wealth of repertoires and inventiveness of this extraordinary assembly of performers.” Ben Haggarty, Artistic Director

4.8. Excerpts from Programmes for The Scottish International Storytelling Festivals, 1999

Celtic Fires. Rekindling the flames of Celtic New Year when fires lit the northern skies, Paraig MacNeill from Perthshire, George MacPherson from Skye and Lawrench Tulloch from Shetland share tales of fire ceremonies and legends of the Celts.
4.9. Excerpts from the Programme/publicity for the 29th National Storytelling Festival (Jonesborough, Tennessee, USA)

Listen... the voices of storytellers are once again echoing through the brick-paved streets of Jonesborough. It’s time to gather for the nation’s oldest and most dynamic event dedicated to the oral tradition — the 29th Annual National Storytelling Festival.

Come hear the tales unfold beneath the big festival tents and under the gaze of nighttime stars. This is storytelling at its most magical... a three-day extravaganza of compelling performances by storytellers who have renewed an almost-lost art.

The celebration begins Friday morning, October 5, and continues through Sunday afternoon, October 7. Come listen to the voices and the stories that connect us all. Join us for the 29th Annual National Storytelling Festival.

The Festival Marketplace

Without a doubt, the best place to shop for storytelling books, tapes, clothing and souvenirs is the Festival Marketplace, located in the heart of the festival grounds. You’ll find selections from every featured teller plus the latest storytelling releases. Take home souvenirs that tell the tale of your festival experience.

Festival Favorites

In addition to a weekend full of stories from your favorite tellers, the following popular extra events are all included in festival admission.

At Exchange Place, explore the diversity of American storytelling in this program featuring tellers new to the National Storytelling Festival stage. A revered festival tradition where specially invited storytellers from across the country share their finest tales.

At Youthful Voices, hear the future of storytelling at this special event featuring young performers from across the nation.

At the Swappin’ Ground, anyone can tell a story—just be sure to register ahead of time at festival headquarters.

Call 800-852-8392 for preregistration, or use the enclosed form to preregister by mail.

Historic Jonesborough, Tennessee

The Little Town with the Big Story

Located in the natural beauty of northeastern Tennessee between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains, Jonesborough has played gracious host to the National Storytelling Festival since its inception in 1973. Tennessee’s oldest town offers a combination of historic charm, modern services and small-town hospitality that provides a storybook setting for three days of storytelling festivities. Bring your family and friends to this picturesque place where the storytelling revival began—and where thousands return each year to share the time-honored tradition.

Find out more online at www.storytellingfestival.net

This story seems to be made out of whole cloth. Others are like the Tennessee quilts on sale in Jonesborough’s many craft shops. They weave together past, present, fact and fiction in a tight design both dazzling and unforgettable.” —Smithsonian

The voices of storytellers are once again echoing through the brick-paved streets of Jonesborough. It’s time to gather for the nation’s oldest and most dynamic event dedicated to the oral tradition — the 29th Annual National Storytelling Festival.

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4.9. *Websites*

1) [http://www.beyondtheborder.com/](http://www.beyondtheborder.com/)

Beyond the Border 2003 is celebrating ten years of International Storytelling in Wales. The festival is dedicated to promoting understanding of the world’s pre-literature and oral traditions, and brings together some of the finest storytellers and tradition bearers from around the globe to perform in the prestigious surroundings of St Donats Castle on the South Wales Heritage Coast.

Begun in 1993, Beyond The Border aims to increase understanding and appreciation of the art of storytelling, celebrate the rich and diverse roots of the world’s traditional literature and advance the art and status of storytelling in Wales through contact with vigorous examples of oral traditions from around the world. Innovative in its programming, accessible in presentation, culturally diverse in its scope, Beyond The Border is now regarded as the leading festival of its kind in Britain.

In 1995, the Festival was the centre-piece of a Wales-wide month of Storytelling as part of the UK Year of Literature, since when it has regularly attracted several thousand attenders from all over Wales and the world, and has been accompanied by a programme of community outreach work taking storytellers into schools, hospitals and community centres in Cardiff, Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan. So it is that BTB got to be ten years old. It’s an important milestone on what continues to be an epic journey!

2) [http://www.graz.tales.org](http://www.graz.tales.org)

Folke Tegetthoff presents... *Tales of Graz* is one of the world biggest "Storytelling Festivals" - unique of its kind of converting a whole city into a "tale".

(By the way: In 2003 the city of Graz is the European capital of culture and features its cultural background in numerous events throughout the year.)

Since 1988 the "LONG NIGHTS OF THE STORYTELLERS" have stood for tolerance towards those of other beliefs, for openness and global thinking. Storytellers and musicians from 23 nations have been our guests! TALES OF GRAZ, the unique festival world-wide, presents no show or stage program rather it presents nothing more than LIFE itself...

By the way...in 2003 Graz will be the cultural capital of Europe!
Storytelling is as old as humankind yet as new as this morning's news headlines.

We have told stories since the beginning of time. They are the narratives of life, spanning the centuries and connecting the generations. They are the vessels in which we carry our history and traditions, our values and lessons for living, our hopes and dreams.

Storytelling encompasses virtually every facet of human endeavor. This ancient tradition is at the heart of the human experience and is just as vital today, just as much a thread of our social fabric, as ever before. Inspired by an international renaissance of storytelling, people around the world are turning to the ancient tradition of storytelling to produce positive change in our world.

The International Storytelling Center—to further infuse storytelling into the mainstream of our society—is building on our 30-year history to promote the power of storytelling and its creative applications to build a better world.
activity stories with the very young, and ghost stories with adult audiences. Wendy intersperse folksongs and ballads with her tales.

An American by birth, Wendy has enjoyed life in Tennesee, Los Angeles, Newfoundland, and Germany. She continues to work in the United States and Canada as well as her new home.

Completing her PhD in Folklore, Wendy serves as a consultant to produce concerts and festivals for various organisations. She leads the American Folklore Society’s Storytelling Section, is secretary of Scotland’s Traditional Music and Song Association in Fife, and teaches storytelling courses in Fife College. She appears regularly in festivals at home and abroad.

Duncan Williamson  Duncan Williamson tells wonder tales, fairy stories, Jack and trickster tales, stories of the Seal People, comic tales and fables from a huge natural repertoire gathered over several decades.

Duncan is an entertainer and a teller, who shares something of himself with each story he tells. He is at home with both children and adults alike, and in schools, community centres and festivals. His style is hospitable and natural while revealing a real dramatic gift.

Duncan was born on the shores of Loch Fyne in 1928, one of a family of sixteen. Both sides of his family were famed singers, pipers and storytellers. Although he travelled in all parts of Scotland, Argyll was his centre of gravity until he settled in Fife in later life. Duncan has worked as a drystane dyker, farm labourer, harvester and horse dealer - to name but a few - and many of his stories were gathered from people with whom he worked. A lifelong story collector, it is only in the last two decades that Duncan has become an active champion of his people’s oral culture.

Duncan Williamson is recognised everywhere as a master storyteller. He is an Honorary Founder of the Scottish Storytelling Forum, and has appeared at many festivals both at home and abroad.

5.4 Reports Commissioned on Current Storytelling Practices

1)  http://www.fairbruk.demon.co.uk/SfS/NSW2002.html

2)  Storytelling in Ireland—A Re-awakening, by Patrick Ryan, commissioned by the Verbal Arts Centre, for the arts councils of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and sponsored by Marks and Spencer.
Once you have chosen the storyteller that best suits your event and booked them, it makes sense to ensure that you get full value for your money. Here are a few simple guidelines to help you get the best from your storyteller and to help your event run smoothly.

**Before your storyteller arrives:**

Confirm the booking in writing and outline exactly what you want the storyteller to do. Be sure that you also understand the storyteller’s needs and expectations for the event.

Enclose starting times and the location of the venue, including a map if necessary. Check whether the storyteller will need to be collected from the station if they are using public transport.

If the storytelling is one of a series of events, enclose a programme highlighting when the storyteller will be required.

Let them know what invoicing procedures exist for payment. Telephone a final confirmation the day before the event.

**When your storyteller arrives:**

If possible, have someone there to meet them on arrival. This is particularly important in a large building where a stranger could get lost. Try to arrange a convenient car parking space if one is needed. Arrange for someone to help carry in any props they may bring.

Show the storyteller the facilities, especially the toilets. Offer them refreshments and provide water to hand for the performance later.

Show the storyteller where they will be working, discuss the layout and ensure they have everything they need. If microphones are being used, time must be allocated for a sound check.

**While your storyteller is working:**

Try to ensure that the event starts on time. If you are introducing the storyteller, check the pronunciation of their name. Many storytellers will introduce themselves.
Society for Storytelling

DIRECTORY OF STORYTELLERS

Choosing Storytellers to suit Your Needs

Now, with an ever-increasing variety of storytellers to choose from, how do you find those who will suit you?

Whatever event you are planning, give yourself plenty of time. Many popular storytellers are booked up months in advance.

Have a clear idea of the sort of storyteller you require. Will the event be formal or relaxed? How much audience participation do you want?

Do you want someone to work intimately with a small group or someone to perform to a large audience? What age groups will be in the audience? Has your audience any special needs that the storyteller should be aware of?

Are you looking for stories on a theme, or from a particular culture, or do you need a specially-created programme of stories?

Do you require more than one storyteller? Is the storyteller required for a one-off event or for a residency? How long do you want the storyteller to work for? Will the storyteller be working continuously or in short slots between other events?

What type of venue will the storyteller be working in? Will it be indoors or outdoors? Do you want the storyteller to organise a workshop or reminiscence work?

When you are clear what your requirements are, look through the Directory and make a shortlist of storytellers who seem to be in tune with your ideas and contact them. It is often helpful to make first contact over the phone. You can then discuss the type of event you are planning, ask for suggestions and comments and also ask for references if you think this would help you make a decision.

Ask how much they would charge and, if travelling expenses are charged as well, how they will be calculated. Remember, you do not have to make a firm booking at this stage.

If you wish to see storytellers in action, the Society for Storytelling produces a regular Diary sheet. Storytellers are always happy to chat to members of the audience afterwards. Contact people advertising events in the Storytelling Diary and ask for their recommendations. You may also wish to publicise your event in the Diary: all entries are free.

When booking a storyteller it helps them to know where you heard about them.

Having chosen your storyteller(s) and agreed a date and a fee, always confirm it in writing.

Tina Bilsé
November 1994
After a 25 year teaching career, spanning all sectors from First School to College of Education, I produced "And None Of It Was Nonsense" (Collins Educational 1988) which describes four years of storytelling work in my last full-time post, at a London inner-city boys' comprehensive school. I then became a freelance teacher and storyteller, extending my range to include pre-school, infant, junior and adult (mainly teachers/educationalists) storytelling and workshops. My second book "Shapers And Polishers" (Collins Educational 1992) covers this new area of experience. Both books are unique as testimonies of on-going practice, offering a selection of folk and wonder tales alongside retellings by classroom/workshop participants. I am committed first and foremost to the existence of the storyteller living within each individual person. I never cease to be amazed by the evidence of this (often onlylatent) talent as a source of imaginative and linguistic creativity.

I'm a late developer or perhaps a Johnny-come-lately. My career (lovely word!) has been as a teacher/academic with a major interest in narrative of all kinds including, of course, storytelling. Over recent years that interest has turned more and more to oral autobiographical tales. My book "Troublesome Boy" contains written autobiographical stories which all were originally told orally. BETTY ROSEN (see above) led me into storytelling in schools and workshops often as a double-bill. I'm currently working on a book "Speaking From Memory" which is about all kinds of autobiographical acts. Anyone could guess that I give talks on courses, in colleges and in universities.

I tell Irish traditional stories as illustrations in my teaching folklore at Sac-Oilscoil Dubhlinn - an alternative university aimed at the unqualified academically (for regular third level studies) and the inner city dweller on low incomes. I also tell personal experience stories and have translated a long dramatic 19th century poem "The Midnight Count" - a bawdy battle of the sexes 1060 lines long - which I recite, in whole or part. My repertoire is being developed further - I illustrate traditional treatments of basic themes in Irish storytelling. (I have a degree in folklore.)

Patrick Ryan, B.A., M.S., former primary school teacher, works full time as a storyteller. Born in America, he attended the Universities of Illinois and Chicago. Inspired first by great-aunts telling traditional tales from Ireland, he has collected stories from Ireland, Britain and America, and researched the art of storytelling. Patrick has performed, and lectured and led workshops, for children and adults in venues ranging from schools to festivals, old-people's homes and prisons, throughout Europe and North America. He especially enjoys prison work, and using storytelling to develop literacy and teach English as a foreign language. Author of an important report on storytelling in Ireland (Verbal Arts Centre 1994), he has also contributed to anthologies, including "Tune For Telling" (Kingfisher 1991) and The Virago Book Of Witches" (1993). He has written for and performed on BBC, NPR and RTE programmes include documentaries on Irish storytelling, "Something To Think About", "Storytime" and "Gift Of The Gab".
5.2. National Storytelling Network (USA) Website Storyteller Directory Entries (Partial Sample) and Regional storytelling organisations (USA, Canada) websites storyteller Directory Entries (Partial Sample)

1a) http://www.storynet.org/newdir/index.htm

The National Storytelling Directory online service provides quick, easy, and immediate access to information about the storytelling community. While utilizing a sophisticated search engine, this Directory has been designed for easy use in mind.

There's only one main field for searching, which eliminates guess-work on what field has what you need. Submitting information in this field activates a search of the entire database. This includes the Teller's name, address, e-mail, web site, general text area, keywords, and specialized text box fields (where applicable).

Teller's specialized text boxes may contain product listing information and travel itineraries. What does all this mean to the user?

It means that if a user knows the Teller's name is Jane and she'll be in San Diego in June.....she can search 'Jane' or 'San Diego' or 'June.' If any of these words are in any part of Jane Smith's listing, the user will get a "hit."

Other Questions?

If you have any questions or comments regarding the listing procedure or options, or the National Storytelling Directory in general, please contact: directory@storynet.org or 1-800-525-4514.
Sadari & Amber
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Sadari & Amber, multi-lingual, mother/daughter duo extraordinaire, present a plethora of energetic programs, (English, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, and Sign), promoting international literacy and enhancing global understanding for all ages. Bringing presentations ALIVE! with movement and character voices, they engage audiences into eager participation. Appearances include, Sadam: Exchange Place, National Storytelling Festival 1999; Amber, Grand Storytelling Torchbearer Youthful Voices, National Storytelling Festival 2000. Together, they have performed for hundreds of thousands of children and adults across the country and abroad. Audio recordings: Parents'Choice 2001 winner Shake Your *TALE* Feathers; Finding True North; and Sol Mates. More information: www.globaltales.com

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Acclaimed Australian performing artist delights in sharing the culture of his homeland. Endorsed by Texas, Wyoming, Utah, Nth. and Sth. Dakota Arts Councils. Paul performs "Matilda & the Dreamtime", nationally, to all ages. An exciting blend of story, song, dance and drama featuring the mesmerising didjeridoo. Paul is mentored by Aboriginal custodian Yidunduma Bill Harney and presents "Land of the Lightning Brothers", featuring creation stories, with rock art slides and didjeridoo. Paul's residencies are multi-disciplined featuring story, song, dance, and painting. "Paul has the deep integrity that makes for great community connections." Sharon Benson. Salina Arts Council. KS

International

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Mythopoetica Storytelling presents dynamic events for organizations as well as workshops on 'inviting the muse' and creative community storytelling ritual. A professional Waldorf educator committed to education through imagination, now working with Learning Through the Arts, Abegael creates professional development events for educational, cultural and environmental groups through BC. She is inspired by the transformative power of collective mythic imagination, and is seeking the healing myth for our time. "Storytelling is the essential weaving of life, it seems to me, and in the space of imagining, telling, listening... there dwells a mysterious creation of possibility... that is why I tell!"

Amy Douglas
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Amy is a young Englishwoman, specializing in stories from Shropshire, Britain and beyond. Her subtle wit and gentle humour breath life into her stories, opening doors to other times and possibilities so that somehow, even when she is gone, a gleam of magic still lingers. At 27 she already has 13 years experience of storytelling: including schools; libraries; reminiscence projects; arts consultancy and literacy development initiatives. In 2000 the National Trust awarded her the first artist in residence in the West Midlands. Festivals include "Festival at the Edge", "Whitby Folk Week" in England; "Corn Island" and "Fox Valley" in America.

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Republic of Ireland

England

Ninny is a young British woman, specializing in stories from Shropshire, Britain and beyond. Her subtle wit and gentle humour breath life into her stories, opening doors to other times and possibilities so that somehow, even when she is gone, a gleam of magic still lingers. At 27 she already has 13 years experience of storytelling: including schools; libraries; reminiscence projects; arts consultancy and literacy development initiatives. In 2000 the National Trust awarded her the first artist in residence in the West Midlands. Festivals include "Festival at the Edge", "Whitby Folk Week" in England; "Corn Island" and "Fox Valley" in America.
2) A sample from an American regional storyteller directory website.

http://www.storytelling.org/JimMay/default.htm

Jim May Jim is a storyteller who speaks in the natural, matter-of-fact style of the farmers, horse traders, and small-town raconteurs who populated rural McHenry County, Illinois, where his family has lived since the 1840s.

For adult audiences, he tells original stories of growing up in the tiny Catholic farming community of Spring Grove. These stories that are at once hilarious and touching range from, “How to Become the 'Most Valuable Altar Boy' (MVAB),” to horse trading tales and heart-warming memories of family life.

For children he offers stories from traditional sources. These folk tales, myths, legends and ghost stories from various cultures worldwide have the humor and wisdom of the great tales that have been preserved in every culture and handed down orally from one generation to the next. Jim May’s stories have taken him across the United States and Europe.

He has told at schools, corporations, professional groups, and festivals across the land. Chicagoans kow him from his appearances on WGN’s Roy Leonard Show and from the Studs Terkel radio show on WFMT-FM. He received a 1989 Chicag Emmy award for a WTTW-Channel 11 production of his original story, “A Bell For Shorty.”

In addition to telling stories he offers workshops for professional groups and people of all ages on how to tell stories as well as how to create original stories from family heritage and personal experience.

Praise for Jim May:

"A master storyteller." - Studs Terkel

"You could call Jim May a modern-day Homer if the Greek had told stories about farm life." - The Chicago Sun-Times

3) Samples from Scottish storytelling directory website

http://www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk/

Béa Ferguson. Equally at home with adult, family, children’s and pre-school audiences, Bea Ferguson tells stories from Scotland and all corners of the globe, including folktales wondertales, legends, supernatural tales, and stories of the natural world.

Born and brought up in Lincolnshire, Bea worked as a stage manager in theatre and television before marrying a Scot and moving north and taking up a career in children’s
librarianship. Here Bea developed a love of story and particular awareness of the educational value of storytelling in children’s linguistic and imaginative development. With children and school audiences she encourages a lot of participation with songs, music and rhymes, making sure sessions are fun.

Bea has also worked extensively with adult audiences in a wide variety of settings including major storytelling events and festivals. She is an experienced workshop leader and enjoys passing on her skills to others. Leading workshops and storytelling activities she has worked with teachers, librarians, nursery nurses, drama students in Further and Higher Education, student teachers and visiting foreign students.

Bea has appeared at the Edinburgh Book festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Scottish International Storytelling Festival, Ulster Seacat Storytelling Festival, Mayfest, Eyemouth Seafood Festival, Perth Food Festival, Falkirk Children’s Festival and for Historic Scotland. She is a founder member of the Scottish Storytelling Forum and the Guid Crack Club.

David Campbell  David Cambell’s repertoire of tales ranges from ancient Celtic epics of Ireland and Scotland, through stories of adventure and romance, of faith and love, to humorous anecdotes and quirky comic tales.

David is a warm, flamboyant personality who draws the audience into the drama and heart of his story. He is experienced with all age groups, equally at home in schools, libraries, community centres and festivals. In the firm conviction that there is a storyteller in everyone, David happily leads storycraft sessions, courses and workshops at all levels.

Born in Edinburgh in 1935 and brought up in Ferserburgh, two previous careers as a teacher and as a radio producer for the BBC have prepared David to enter seriously into his third profession drawing on his childhood legacy of the North East and under the influence of Scotland’s Traveller storytellers. Spanning those various careers, he has made imaginative contributions to religious education.

David Campbell is a founder member of the Scottish Storytelling Forum. He appears regularly at storytelling festivals both at home and overseas.

Wendy Welch  Wendy Welch tells folktales, legends and myths from world folklore. She specialises in revisiting well-known fairytales, orienting them to modern concerns for classroom use. She has a unique repertoire of balloon stories that enhance her work with children; sculpted balloons make instant inflatable costumes helping participants to act out parts. Her sessions can be tailored to address various issues, including truancy, child safety and bullying.

Wendy is happy working with people from nursery through to groups of older people and is experienced in a variety of workshop themes informed by her background in journalism, storytelling and folklore. She particularly likes doing
6.0 Samples from Websites from MIT and others regarding brain research and storytelling

Summary. The websites below are a few examples of studies within scientific institutions. These projects, which come under various departments including those of engineering, artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, evolutionary biology, education, and neurology. Narrative is a common theme in these studies, linked with memory, the use of schema and scripts, and issues of identity and how people learn and assimilate new ideas and skills.

http://www.unocoe.unomaha/edubrainbased.html#1.html

http://www.sedl.org/scimath/compass/v03n02/1.html

http://gn.wee.media.mit.edu/gropus/gn/projects.html

http://www.emtech.net/brain_based_learning.html

http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/jensen98book.html
Chapter 2.

7.0 Material Data: Examples of Students’ Writing from Storytelling School Residency Projects.

7.1. Summary of story from Strabane High School students (male), developed orally from storytelling ‘games’: notice influence/use of ‘Troubles’ imagery

Three year nine boys at Strabane High School, County Tyrone, developed a story out of the ‘salad story’ activity. This game has the students draw three cards, each with a different story motif. A story is then created orally using the three motifs in any way and order. The three motifs were a battle, a banished hero, and a hidden treasure. They incorporated recent local events in the story: a joy ride, a robbery, and a gang tit-for-tat killing, which were linked, along with the police tracking the gangsters down. Although the school is a controlled, not maintained school (that is, predominately Protestant not Catholic), the area is not particularly affected by the Troubles. Teenagers in Northern Ireland are, however, well aware of the situation and familiar with low level crime. Primary and secondary school lads also quite regularly incorporate wars, battles, fights and other violent scenes in creative writing and narrative work. However, this group was quite artful at the way they wove the three fairy tale motifs in with contemporary motifs from their own society.

7.2. Storymap from Primary School, Southport: incorporates images from story related by teller and images created by listener and ‘reported’ visually in pictures

Having told a complicated Märchen, ‘The Black Horse’, collected from Irish Traveller Johnny Collins, I asked children in year five and year six primary school at Trinity C of E School, Southport, to make a storymap. This involves dividing a large piece of paper into six sections. One is captioned ‘Characters’, the next ‘Problem’, the next ‘Setting’, and the last three ‘Event 1, 2, 3’ respectively. I then asked the students to draw a picture that they thought best illustrated those parts of the story. They could not draw all of the story (for example, it was a long tale that consisted of more than three events). So they had to decide for themselves what they remembered being the most important, or most interesting.

Obviously most children depicted the same characters—the identities of protagonists and antagonists is always fairly clear in any story, particularly a folk or fairy tale. Deciding what the ‘problem’ was that initiated the action in the story varied, but within a limited parameter. Similarly, the setting was fairly consistent in depictions (students either drew a map of Ireland, since the hero travels across the country with the help of a magic horse to rescue a princess, or they drew the castle in which the princess was imprisoned. The three events varied the most, but usually related to whatever ‘problem’ the children described in that box.
Even though chosen depicted scenes varied, over 60% of the drawings corresponded with key images I use in remembering and telling the story. After the maps were made, they were used as an aide memoire for each student to retell the story in his or her own words. There was very little, in fact, almost no variation in the plot of the story as I told it within their versions, although they told the stories in their own words. Many of the tellings fell into the same word patterns I myself had used.

Some children told on the same day they heard the story, immediately after finishing the storymaps. Others told the story a week later, when I returned to continue the storytelling residency with other activities. On both days, the children retold the story consistently keeping to the original plot with little variation, even though the teacher admitted they had not looked at the storymaps nor tried re-telling the story between my visits. She was quite impressed with the results.

This, and other activities, which I have carried out in hundreds of schools and with which I’ve had similar results suggests the links between narrative, visual image, and short and long term memory, with particular importance to the role of motif/schema in those processes.

7.3. **Kick Into Reading—comments and summarised stories from/by children, footballers, and football coaches participating in storytimes: one story triggers another, participants continually add on to the list of stories by trying to 'top' the one told before with a similar anecdote.**

One of the stories I related was an Irish variant of 'Hansel and Gretel' entitled 'The Seven Swans'. I prefaced it—that is, used frame language—explaining that although children like to play football, but fun as it is, it sometimes gets people in trouble. In this fairy tale, the girl is supposed to mind her baby brother but plays football instead. The swans steal the baby for a witch's breakfast and she must fetch him back. The introduction regularly turned into a discussion, as the children offered stories of troubles they had over football: an angry teacher because they got into arguments over football at playtime; kicking the ball into a neighbour’s garden; balls going onto the school roof; and, the most typical, breaking a window.

The footballers, apprentices, and community coaches who told also stories during these storytimes offered their own true accounts of when they had got into trouble playing football. A few of them developed this short anecdotes into full-blown, dramatic autobiographical stories, complete with structural elements similar to wonder tales: repetition, formulaic language, motifs, and so on.
Copyright and Fair Use of Published Materials

by Heather Forest

Fair Use

Teachers, librarians and educators working within the context of their jobs in an educational setting are free to use material that has a copyright without asking permission of the author. Using the material for personal financial gain by performing it for a fee or by publishing it in any media outside of the educational context requires permission of the copyright holder.

What is a copyright?

In our modern society, according to American copyright law, when an artist claims ownership of an original personally created artistic "work," they can write c with a circle around it, the date beside it, and their name [(c) 1998 Heather Forest] on a "fixed" version of the work, such as a tape or a manuscript. With the copyright notice clearly legible, the documented version of the work could be then kept in a safe retrievable place or, for safekeeping, an artist can officially register the work with the copyright office in Washington D.C. This copyright claim allows an artist to require that others obtain their verbal or written permission to use or reproduce the work or must offer the artist financial compensation for the use or reproduction of the protected work. This extends also to permission to make a derivative version of the copyrighted work such as a film from a novel, a song from an original short story, or a performance piece based on a field-collected folktale that has only one copyrighted translation available in English. The financial compensation is often negotiable and could range from a one-time licensing fee, to a mechanical licensing fee based on the number of copies manufactured, to royalties paid based on the number of manufactured copies sold.

Forms to register works and printed information on copyright basics can be obtained by writing to:


Storytelling Ethics

Some storytellers consider the plots of folktales to be public domain entities and, as such, do not treat them as the property of any individual or group in particular. Other tellers
feel that folktale plots belong to the descendants of the culture from which they derive. Without proper study of the culture and context of the tale, tellers who delve into unfamiliar cultures to find performance material can be like clumsy cultural imperialists, taking plots which have deep meaning in their cultural context and prostituting them for personal gain. There needs to be ongoing discussion on this topic in the storytelling community. Scholarship, intuition, and respect for the plot can help a teller determine if a tale is a proper one to present. Choosing appropriate tales to tell is as much a part of the artistic process as learning to tell the tale. Some tellers say that the tale chooses them. If a tale from an unfamiliar culture resonates within the teller who wishes to be a vehicle for it, then sometimes it can be very appropriate for the teller to attempt to present it. It is a matter of the heart. However, to do justice to a traditional tale, respect and understanding of its cultural context is essential.

Developing Repertoire Based on Folktales in Print or Recorded Media

If a folktale appears in printed or recorded media in multiple versions, each printed or recorded version claims a legal copyright notice. However, this is not for the plot of the folktale, but for the fixed arrangements of the words used to narrate the plot. If a teller uses the exact words of a printed or recorded text, then permission must be obtained from the publisher to use those particular words if the text will be told for pay. Royalties would be due if it were to be recorded or reprinted. If, on the other hand, the teller researches the story, finds all the variants of the tale in print or on tape, adapts it, edits it, and constructs a unique retelling of the tale, then no legal permission is needed to present the new version of the story. The teller can then actually claim copyright, not to the plot, but to their own version of the tale.

Giving Credit

If there is a particular version of a folktale which brought the tale to light for a teller, and which inspired further research or was especially influential in the retelling, often, as an artistic courtesy, tellers will give credit to that source. If there is a particular teller for whom the story is a signature piece, or if the teller heard the tale orally from another, tellers will often cite that teller before telling the tale as well. It is a matter not of law but of conscience. As a community we can choose to respond only to the written law or we can create an atmosphere of fairness and justice among ourselves that goes beyond copyright law. A story is invisible. It feels in some ways like the wind. It can't really be owned. But we each do know what is original with us... what we have honestly invented. We must be aware of what we have brought to the telling of the tale. In the interests of fairness and peace, when we support each other with respect for the time, effort, and invention we each put into our art, then we can alleviate the thorniest issues of tellers lazily or disrespectfully copying ideas, stylistics, or text from others. Part of the work of a storyteller is to personally know or create a body of work that reflects their deepest convictions, passions, interests, and spirit. This takes time, perhaps a lifetime.

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9.0 Past examples: Summaries of Indices, catalogues and similar references.


*Summary:* This Victorian study attempted to link theories of folklore popular at the time to some sort of evolutionary theory. There are elements that today would be considered racist and misinformed. It does provide insight into Victorian
thinking regarding the idea of folk tale diffusion—that is, that folk tale variants had original version in some ancient Indo-European culture or language and travelled outwards from there, changing and evolving as languages and cultures evolved over history, resulting in many variants of the same story.

_The Index to Fairy Tales, Myths and Legends._ Eastman, Mary Huse. (1926), F.W. Faxon Co., Boston.

**Summary:** Indices to aid librarians in the planning of story times and story repertoires. Regularly expanded and re-printed through the 1990s.

Thompson, S. (1958) _The Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, Vol. VI, A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends_, Rosenkilde & Bagger and Indian University Press, Copenhagen and Bloomington Indiana,


**Summaries:** Taxonomies of story-elements have been created, and are still used in the classification and study of traditional and oral narratives. The standard collections are Stith Thompson's motif-index and Antti Aarnes and Stith Thompson's _Types of Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography._

10.0 Lists and Summaries of 'exotic' stories popular with contemporary storytellers in Britain British tellers express great interest in stories of specific regions and/or subcultures (such as Scots, Irish and Roma Travellers), and also of immigrant subcultures, Romanticised collections of ancient literatures, and anthologies of foreign cultures' folklore.

**Jack Tales**

- Trickster and Fool/Simpleton tales generally
- Stories outwitting the Devil
- Stories outwitting Death
- Contemporary myths
- 'Shaggy dog' stories

Sufi stories, including stories of Nasridin.

__Fianna__ stories, epics and legends of the Irish Hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his comrades.
An Tain bo Coolidh, the Cattle Raid of Cooley or Ulster Cycle, epics and legends of Deirdre of the Sorrows, King Conner McNessa, Maeve Queen of Connaught, and Cuchulain, the great warrior hero and 'the hound of Ulster'.

Oral performances of translated works from the various ancient cultures generically described as Mesopotamian (modern Iraq) have been very popular, including especially those of Gilgamesh and Inana. (Example: ziPANG, June Peters, Fiona Collins, Fran Hazelton, STORIES FROM ANCIENT IRAQ, 'Inana's Descent to the Underworld', 'The Death of Enkidu', and 'The Queen of the Underworld and the God of War'. With renowned Kurdish harpist and singer Tara Jaff.)

The Iliad, The Odyssey, and Beowulf are all well known epics that have often been attempted by professional storytellers in North America and Britain. (Example: newspaper article, Chicago Tribune, 6 November 1981, 'A Bard Speaks, and History Lives; Frank Fowle recites Homer's "The Iliad.")

Arthurian legends and The Mabinogian are often represented in British and American contemporary storytelling repertoires.

The Kalevala, a Finnish folk epic, though some studies suggest it is mostly made up and a literary work, created in the 19th century.

Anansi, the trickster-hero spider-man of some west African and Afro-Caribbean traditions features in many stories that are popular in contemporary storytelling repertoires.

Stories, epics, legends, and myths of India are also popular with contemporary storytellers, both those tellers of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins and including those who are not descended from families of the subcontinent. Most of the stories are drawn from the Panchatantra and the Mahabharata. The Arabian Nights is also listed as a source for many contemporary's storytellers repertoires.

French and Belgian storytellers are noted for developing the Romances popularised by medieval Troubadours and Minstrels. Although presented as 'traditional', most historical and literary criticisms of this genre identify it as a literary tradition, examples of the earliest secular literature in Europe.
Chapter 3.

11.0 Web Sites. An indication of the studies in education and pedagogy regarding the use of narrative, especially oral storytelling, over the past one hundred and fifty years.

11.1  
**Froebel:**

http://www.froebelfoundation.org/philosophy.html

Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel was a German educator and philosophy of the German Romantic movement. He developed the concept of kindergartens, beautiful places in nature for children to play and learn at their own rate. A central part of his education system was to provide children with 'gifts' (manipulatives) and 'occupations' (learning games and activities). The philosophy emphasised the social process of learning, and included and encouraged storytelling by adults to children and the oral creation of stories by children, to tell to each other and to their teachers.

11.2  
**Dewey:**

http://www.edheritage.org/articles/artsearch/artsfun98.htm

http://www.thelearningcollaborative.org/market/books/dewe/htm

John Dewey, the American philosopher and educator, said that all learning begins with a "felt difficulty." As an advocate of experiential learning, storytelling was included as an important part of the curriculum throughout a child’s learning. The Laboratory School that he established at the University of Chicago in the 1890s had, from the start, a well resourced library run by professional children’s librarians, whose credentials included experience in all kinds of storytelling. All students in the school have always had storytelling sessions at least once a week, or more often, throughout the academic year.

11.3  
**Reggio Emilia**


Reggio Emilia is a system of early childhood education that is child-centred and experiential, developed in Northern Italy over the last fifty years. Emphasising socialisation and child-focused activities, it includes storytelling as a core part of its curriculum. The Italian journalist and writer, Gianni Rodari, wrote stories for this programme of education and his children’s books are popular with the adults to supervise and teach in this system. Through Jack Zipes, Rodari’s work has gained popularity in English speaking countries’ education and storytelling communities.
12.0 Samples/summaries of pamphlets, leaflets, brochures, websites: demonstrations of backgrounds contributing to formation of storyteller mega-identity

12.1 Pete Castle, Storyteller

'PETE CASTLE' has been a professional storyteller and folk musician since 1978. He tells stories to both adults and children and has worked in every sort of venue imaginable.

Pete's repertoire of stories, like his songs, is based in the English tradition but it goes on to include tall tales, 'shaggy dog stories', urban myths and extended jokes. He has a set of material from Derbyshire where he lives and also a selection of stories from Europe. His children's repertoire is wider and includes material from other countries. In style Pete is a 'fireside teller' rather than a performance artist. In other words he likes an intimate atmosphere where a story can develop from seemingly casual conversation without the audience being aware of it and where on time can link with the next. He doesn't use props or sets or dance around the room or put on voices or costume—he let's [sic] the listeners' 'mind's eye' do the work—probably more difficult but more vivid in the end—in the same way that you get better pictures on the radio.

Over the years Pete has told for adults at folk and storytelling clubs, at festivals and arts centres all over the country, in schools and libraries. He's worked at many non-specialist events—fetes, craft fairs, open days etc. with both children and adults.

12.2 Rosemary Scott Vohs British Storyteller—Educator—Coach—Consultant—Instructor in the Arts of Storytelling, Oral Interpretation of Literature and Speech Communication

Rosemary Scott Vohs was classically trained in performance arts in her native England where she began presenting literature at the age of six with the London Academy for Music and Dramatic Art. An award winning performer, she has told tales in England, Australia, Southeast Asia and Canada as well as the Pacific Northwest. Her forte in storytelling is with traditional British folktales and narrative verse.

Rosemary is an avid gardener, a fan of opera, classical and Celtic music, and enjoys Scottish country dancing, playing the fiddle, and horse riding, when she's not endlessly reading children's books, poetry and folklore.

She lives in Bellingham with her husband and two children.
Baba Yaga is a recurring figure in Russian folklore who represents the primal creative principle underlying nature and the cosmos. The day and night belong to her and she flies through the sky in a pestle and mortar instantly sweeping away her tracks with a broom. She chews on human bones and is portrayed as frightening and horrific. She lives in the deep forest in a hut that dances ecstatically on two giant chicken legs.

Since ancient times this primal universal energy has been personified as a goddess in various aspects and forms. Symbolically, Baba Yaga is linked to many of the ancient goddesses including the Neolithic bird goddesses, Demeter the goddess of corn, life and death of ancient Greece, and the fearsome Hindu goddess Kali who destroys illusion and is seen as the embodiment of fierce compassion.

This is a tale of a young girl’s journey to get fire from Baba Yaga, and in so doing learns how to find and relate to the wild creative principle. The show is a musical event, evoking the emotions and energetic aspects of the tale and told through a poetic script.

The show is devised, composed and performed by Rachel Miller.

Poems and script written by Gwen Woolley.

Rachel Miller is a musician, sound artist and storyteller. Her solo work focuses on weaving tapestries of sound that bring to life ancient and archetypal stories, using a wide variety of instruments including live electronics.

Trained as a flautist, and with a degree in psychology from Oxford University her dual interest in music and psychology led her to train and work for many years as a registered music therapist. It is her experience of profound communication through music that has led her to explore musically the psychological and spiritual aspects of the tales. As a flautist she has performed and recorded with a wide range of different groups including folk, jazz, experimental and electronic music. She has a particular love of folk music from Scandinavia and the Arctic circle. She teaches flute, saxophone and courses in improvisation and lives in Devon on the edge of Dartmoor.

For the past 3 years she has toured extensively in the UK as musician and storyteller with the renowned theatre company PuppetCraft. Her own shows are musical events, creating soundworlds that communicate and evoke the landscapes of the tales.
12.4. **Taffy Thomas**

Taffy Thomas is simply the most experienced English Storyteller who is happy to tell from his repertoire of over 300 stories in almost any situation, i.e., schools, colleges, libraries, festivals or outdoors. His repertoire has been gathered mainly from the oral tradition, learnt at the knee of the likes of Duncan Williamson, Ruth Tongue and Ray Hicks. In addition his remarkable personal story of stroke recovery 'What Goes Around' and his 'Favourite Tales from the Tale Coat' using a unique piece of textile art proved a storming success at Jonesborough '99. He is published by August House.

12.5 **Tales from India or 'Indlish Tales'**

Nico has been telling stories for ten years and has been working with Towncriers for the last two years.

Within her family she is one generation away from a community where storytelling was part of everyday life for adults as well as children, and where many traditions met in one small town.

She believes that 'A good story has legs', Stories have travelled the world with women marrying outside their home towns and villages, and with peddlars, merchants and sailors. But now they travel by air or print (or internet), Has this changed things? [Sic]

Nico discovered Indian folktales when on an extended visit to South India, and has since learnt many from books. She has been telling them ever since.

When she tells stories from such a foreign tradition, are they now genuine Indian tales or the storytelling equivalent of Chicken Tikka Massala [sic]—Indlish Tales?

This is for the listener to decide. But Nico believes that the authenticity of a telling comes from the storytellers creative connection with the stories and his or her thoughtful connection with where the stories come from.

12.6. **Dragonfly Stories**

John Walter is a teacher who is experienced with working with adults and children of all ages and special needs groups. He is a storyteller who draws tales together from all over the world and uses original material which is firmly rooted in the oral tradition.

He is a musician and composer who happily mixes traditional and modern influences from all cultures into his work.
12.7. *Mike Dunstan*

Mike Dunstan was born and brought up in the industrial north-west of England and moved to Devon in 1981 where he trained in drama at Exeter University. Since 1985 he has worked extensively in community theatre in Devon and beyond as a storyteller, actor, writer, director, teacher and animateur. Since 1988 he has been the theatre co-ordinator for the Okehampton based community arts group, the Wren Trust. He was also winner of the Sidmouth International Folklore Festival Storytelling Competition in 1989.

12.8. *Pomme Clayton*

Pomme Clayton, actress and writer, has been telling stories professionally since 1983. She has worked with all levels of education throughout Britain, and teaches the only degree course on the oral tradition in the country, at Middlesex University. She works in television and radio and is currently writing and performing for BBC Schools television. She has performed extensively in venues from arts centres to village halls.

In 1985 she co-founded the Company of Storytellers with Ben Haggarty and Hugh Lupton. The Company is Britain's leading group of storytellers who tell traditional tales for adult audiences. They have toured nationally, in Europe and America, and since 1985 have directed the biannual International Storytelling Festival.

Pomme is interested in the relationship between story and song, and collaborates with singers and musicians. In 1992 she was awarded an Arts Council grant to research Epic song with Helen Chadwick and Claire Hughes.

Pomme has a repertoire of over 200 stories drawn from all over the world. Many of the stories have women at the heart of the adventures, celebrating the Feminine Principle in narrative.

Vivid language is enhanced by atmospheric music to summon the elemental worlds of story. Her work is dynamic and evocative, inviting the listeners to enter a world of wonder and enquiry.

12.9. *Pat Ryan*

Pat Ryan, internationally acclaimed storyteller, tours regularly throughout Britain, Ireland, Europe, Australia and America. He tells stories for all ages in schools, libraries, colleges, clubs, arts centres, festivals, old people's centres, hospital, parks, galleries and prisons. His folktales, wondertales, myths and legends, riddles, rhymes and proverbs are from all around the world, many derived from the traditions of his family and home region in America, as well as from Britain.
and Ireland. Pat provides workshops and performances and is available for long-term residencies, conferences, and courses.

12.10. Speaking to the Stars, Cuddle up to the Cosmos with storyteller and singer Teri West

A heavenly evening—stories, songs and poetry on a celestial theme. From folk tales to creation myth, by way of the songs of Cat Stevens, Neil Young and others, and poetry from AA Milne to Ted Hughes.

Teri West was born within an arrows flight of Stonehenge and began her career in entertainment as a teenage runaway, singing and playing in pubs and clubs and around Salisbury; eventually settling for the Portobello Rd. scene in London in the late 60s, various and diverse means of bring home veggie burgers and later acquisition of a husband and two children. Eventually single parenthood meant finding secure employment and a further variety of occupations. A move to North Devon in the late 70s and a mysterious set of circumstances let [sic] her, in 1992, to Emerson College’s School of Storytelling. Since then Teri continued training, whilst working at clubs, parties, theatres and pubs; festivals, fun-days, play-days and fetes, in schools, halls, arts centres and the streets, around the UK and in Japan.

12.11. http://michaelthestoryteller.com/

Welcome to the website of full-time professional storyteller,

Michael R. Kasony-O'Malley.

With deep laughter, magical visions, intensity, warmth, mischief and love, this one-man storytelling company based in Columbus, Ohio has enchanted tens of thousands of listeners with Slovak & Slavic Stories, Christmas Legends, Irish Tales, and Earth Mother Stories - Tales of Earth Stewardship & Stories of Human Fellowship.

Michael breathes fresh fire into the sacred, ancient art of storytelling with stories for children, for teens & young adults, for families, and for adult audiences. He offers stories sparkling with Christmas spirit and Earth spirit; stories from his blood ancestors and from his spirit ancestors; stories from the heart and from the muse; stories full of deep-well wisdom and stories full of laughing joy. Michael's best advertisement is that folks keep inviting him back for more stories. Over 75 times he has been invited back for additional storytelling performances and programs.


Mary Hamilton, Storyteller
Mary's early adventures in the storytelling spotlight led to a note on her report card, trips to the confessional, and smiles of delight on the faces of her 3rd grade classmates. When it was Mary's turn to stand in front of her class and tell what she had done over the weekend, she did not hesitate to describe how she rode her horse bareback. Carefully, she used her hands to demonstrate how she slid off the rump of her galloping horse, barely grabbing the tail. She showed them how she struggled to climb the tail, then held tight to the mane to finish her ride.

The story was most convincing, especially from a girl who owned no horse. While her classmates were thrilled, her teacher recognized a disturbing lack of truth in need of correction instead of talent in need of encouragement and direction. A note to Mary's parents resulted in reminders that telling stories was sinful. For years Mary confessed her sins and struggled to overcome her talent. Thank goodness, she failed.

In 1983, after brief careers as a high school English teacher and a public library children's librarian, Mary embraced professional storytelling. With her ever-expanding repertoire, Mary delights audiences throughout the USA. She tells tales in a straightforward "just talking" style. Yes, she still uses her hands to help tell the tale. Today, when Mary takes the stage, the show unfolds in the hearts and minds of her audiences - just as it did for her 3rd grade classmates so many years ago.

Mary entertains audiences of adults, families, or children with Kentucky tales, world folk & fairy tales, plus a few myths, legends, true stories, and original fiction.

Her work has been featured at storytelling festivals including the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee; the Hoosier Storytelling Festival, Indianapolis, IN; the Storytelling Festival of Nebraska, and many more. She has performed for university students, entertained families and children in libraries, told tales to accompany museum exhibits, and presented hundreds of school assembly programs. Mary's storytelling is also listed in the Kentucky Performing Arts Directory, a juried directory of Kentucky's finest performers.

For more details on specific past performances, see Mary's Resume. For information on her stories for specific audiences, see Performances.

Mary also teaches the art of storytelling to others. She has trained teachers, librarians, speakers, and her fellow storytellers. Her workshop venues include the International Storytelling Institute at East Tennessee State University, the Florida Storytelling Camp, Arts Unlimited at Bowling Green State University, and many more. To learn more about Mary's workshop venues, see her Resume. To read workshop descriptions, see Workshops.
In addition to teaching teachers through workshops, Mary also encourages teachers to use storytelling techniques in their classrooms through her work as an artist in residence. Since 1989 Mary has promoted storytelling in Kentucky classrooms through her service as a Kentucky Arts Council Residency Artist. Whether she is exploring stories with primary students, helping 4th graders write personal narratives, or teaching middle school students how to use the Artistic Response Process, Mary enjoys working with students and their teachers. To learn more about her favorite residency projects, see Residencies.

The Kentucky School Media Association presented Mary with the 1999-2000 Jesse Stuart Media Award. This award recognizes creative development in any medium of service to Kentucky schools. Mary received the award, not for a specific story or story recording, but for her body of work in the medium of storytelling. Past Jesse Stuart Media Award recipients include children's author and poet George Ella Lyons, the Kentucky Educational Television Network, and Kentucky's largest newspaper, The Louisville Courier-Journal. Mary is the first storyteller to receive this award.

You can also enjoy hearing Mary tell stories on audiocassette and on CD. Two of Mary's recordings, Some Dog and Other Kentucky Wonders and Haunting Tales: Live from Culbertson Mansion, were selected by The Elementary School Library Collection as recommended spoken word recordings for schools throughout the USA and Canada. Two of Mary's stories can be read in the anthologies, Best-Loved Stories Told at the National Storytelling Festival and Telling Stories: Fiction by Kentucky Feminists. To learn more about Mary's work in print and on audio, go to the Story Store.

Mary also encourages the growth of her storytelling colleagues by co-facilitating WOW (Working on Our Work) Storytelling Weekends with Cynthia Changaris. In a small group retreat setting Mary and Cynthia host gatherings of tellers, using an Artistic Response Process to help tellers work on their work together. To learn more, see WOW Weekends.

Mary also counts herself among the many dedicated members of the National Storytelling Network - http://www.storynet.org. Closer to home, Mary helped found two storytelling swap groups - Tale Talk, when she lived in Louisville, and Frankfort Area Storytellers Gatherings since her 1994 move to Frankfort, Kentucky.

Mary and her husband Charles Wright live on a Frankfort, Kentucky hillside. With a wooded view from the windows and frequent deer, groundhogs, squirrels, birds and other wildlife in the yard, Mary and Charles enjoy a peace-filled life.

When asked, "Who is your favorite audience?" Mary's response hasn't changed since 3rd grade. "Whether I'm telling stories, teaching storytelling, or using storytelling in a classroom, my favorite audience is always the group in front of
me." One thing has changed since 3rd grade. Instead of viewing herself as a sinner girl, Mary now proudly claims the title professional storyteller.


TAHIRA is a full time performing artist. She credits her mother for giving her the courage and support to pursue her dreams and her father for instilling her love for her culture.

A storyteller, poet, vocalist and emerging percussionist TAHIRA performs original works, as well as works from the African and African American folklore tradition. Her multiple talents led her to be dubbed a MUSICAL-OLOGIST.

TAHIRA explains that "MUSICAL-OLOGY is a heapin' of the spoken word, a fistful of soul-stirring vocals, flavored with rhythmic percussion for good measure. And there you have it . . . . A BIG OLD POT OF TALENT

Her objective in sharing her gifts is not merely to entertain, but to educate and inspire. TAHIRA affirms that the storyteller is the caretaker of culture, hoarder of history and transmitter of tradition.


Ben Haggarty

"His language is simple to the point of starkness; not metaphorical, driven by action, strong, in harmony with the speech of his body... This listener left wishing that there had been not three halves but three whole nights of tales."

Erica Wagner
The Times

Ben Haggarty has worked as a professional storyteller since 1981 and his repertoire extends to over 300 carefully researched, full-blooded, traditional narratives. They range from brief jests and folktales to 2 hour long fragments of Epic Mythology. He has a particular interest in unveiling the concealed deities that lurk in the shadows of European Wonder Tales. He is also passionate about the Mythology of the Bronze and early Iron ages.

Ben is a founding member of Britain’s premier touring group The Company of Storytellers. He directed Britain’s first ever storytelling festival in 1985, the first of a series of three which culminated in a fifteen day festival in London’s South Bank Centre. He then went on to found the annual Beyond the Border International Storytelling Festival St Donat’s Arts Centre. He is also the founder of the legendary Crick-Crack Club.
Ben has featured on many TV and Radio Programmes and worked with the selection of stories for Jim Henson’s ‘Storyteller’ series. He introduced storytelling to the National Oracy Project (1987 - 1992) and has appeared at Storytelling Festivals across Europe, as well as in Israel, America, Canada, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. He performs and holds workshops regularly at the British Museum, The Barbican and The National Theatre and in 2000 began a two-year lottery funded residency in Gloucester as Britain’s first official ‘City Storyteller.’ He is currently devising a narrative sequence for Cellist Yo Yo Ma’s Family Concerts as part of the 2002 Silk Road Project world tour.

“Haggarty tells his stories with enormous relish and gusto...”Ginny Dougary, The Independent

“... and what a story this one was - not a simple one of unwitting, but a playful one that unravelled itself mischievously in Haggarty’s quietly skilful telling.” Naseem Kahn, The New Statesman

12.15. http://www.pollyhowat-storyteller.co.uk/

Polly Howat

I am a folklorist, performance storyteller and leader of basic oral skills and creative writing workshops, working with adults and children of all ages (nursery-KS5) within the arts and mainstream/special education. My main commissioners are schools, further education, local authorities, charities, voluntary organisations, folk and arts festivals, libraries, play schemes, community arts, community groups, education projects, supermarkets, heritage sites, hospices, village halls and senior citizens. As a professional storyteller, I have travelled to many countries including Peru, Cuba, Morocco, Croatia, Italy, America and Brazil, sharing and collecting stories and artefacts, which combined with simple, unusual musical instruments, add an exciting dimension to my large and varied repertoire.

Nursery-KS1 children enjoy my large hand puppets and interactive stories.
Uncle Eddie says we can go and stay with him over the summer holidays:

Thought I could take them fishing... Maybe a trip to Alton Towers...

Later...

Oh Edward! Tarzan and Guinevere
don't want to be subjected to a
hysterical frenzy
of blood sports
and roller-coaster rides!

Malcolm and I have
got the whole summer
holidays planned out...
We've got a busy
timetable of
cultural activities
for you two.

Organic horticultural
workshops...
Guided nature walks
to learn the native
plants and flowers...

And tonight, of course,
we've got our weekly
meeting of the Canny
Crack Club...
We meet in a room
above a pub for an
evening of storytelling...
Why don't you come
along too, Edward?

I hope your customers are going to
keep the noise down! People are
trying to have some good crack up...

I think they'll be
having 

Welcome! It's really super to see so
many of you here!

That's Arabella...
She's a professional
storyteller... She gets
Arts Council Funding!

I'd like to share this
evening by sharing a
few stories handed
down to me by my
old Grandad... back in Kilkenney...

An hour later...

...and that's how my
Grandad's faithful
rural horse earned the
potato harvest from
burning down...

Thank you!!

Now perhaps, Caradoc could
tell us a story...

This is a tribal
people's creation
myth which I learnt
from a storytelling
workshop in Milton
Keynes. I mean, which
I heard from a
village wise-woman
when I was hitching
around Africa...

You've been going
and sixep the
storytellers
... and yet another
laddie ran out the gold
bridge where hero hidden...
Oh, he, hung on. I should
have told you about
the old lady earlier... It was...
...um... ah... hang on, let me
just look at this book
for a moment...

I'm bored!

...oh yeah... is it, I forget to
say this bit... This came before
he meets the giant
The old ladie came out an old
goldish in the plan, when he...

Tarzan, these tales are
a whole archive of
rural heritage.
Some of their old
stories nearly died out
you know. I'm not surprised.

Yet later...

And now for a real treat...
Our honorary ocenopositor
guest, Archie McDermot, is
going to transport us back
the old days in rural Berkshire...
Share his memories of a time
when folk would gather in the
warmth of the cot, kitchen
hearthside and the warmth
of good company...

You wanna ken about
the old days... well, I'll tell ye...
C

An' he could discipline
his wean too without
any bloody social
workers interfering...

BASTARDS!... They're all bloody
poorfeet... an'...

English bastard!

An' we wouldn't ha' hurt
all them bloody
women being allowed
out for a pub like day...
Nor any blackies
either, ye ken...
And... and... and...

CRASH
Nah! I'd have told it better than her...
I'd have been spellbinding.

You were only going to
make up a load of rubbish
like everyone else anyway...
You've never been to Ireland
in your life!

I've been there in
April... My Great-
great-grandfather
was a quarter Irish.

Anyway, a nope doesn't
have to be true in the
literary sense of the
word... Often even a
far-fetched story
will serve a purpose...
Fulfill a need.

Hm.

Late that night...

The next morning...

Look, this letter's come for you...

I'm not even sure Eunice's got a
valid passport...

Don't worry.
We'll just have to
get there.

I don't understand it... No one was
to meet us at the airport...
And no one seems to know anything
about a storytelling festival!

But we have to find it!
We don't even have enough
money with us to get home!
14.0 Web Sites: A sampling of communication, rhetoric, speech, and oral interpretation courses offered in university education in North America.


Oral Interpretation  Introduction to theories, methodology, and skills; oral and visual presentation of literature for audiences. Offered every year.


ORAL INTERPRETATION
Analysis and presentation of literature. Exploration of emotional reactions, expressive vocal and bodily responses, and performance techniques for effective communication. (FA)


SPCH 362: Introduction to Oral Communication. Introduction to oral interpretation of literature, including excerpts from prose, poetry, and public speeches. Emphasis on analysis of literature, script development, and performance skills.

SPCH 363: Oral Interpretation of the First Person Voice. Focuses on theory and principles of reading literature aloud which is written in the first person voice (i.e., monologue, dramatic poetry, etc.) to illuminate the special properties of this literature when translated from the printed page to the spoken word.

Comment: The comments, situations and characters in this comic strip, though exaggerated, are recognizable to those involved in revival storytelling in Britain. The club and tellers satirised are identifiable to those 'in the know'. As a general description, however, it is also apt for describing many contemporary tellers and storytelling events across Europe and North America.
15.0. Programmes, and personal observations, of storytelling events in North American incorporating oratory and similar forms of rhetoric

15.1. http://www.nacs.uci.edu/indiv/bhudack/toastmst/aboutTM.htm

Welcome to Toastmasters

Toastmasters International is a world-wide organization dedicated to helping its members improve their public speaking abilities. At a typical meeting there are some impromptu speeches, some 5-7 minute prepared speeches, followed by encouraging speech evaluations offering suggestions for improvement.

No matter what your level of speaking ability, Toastmasters has something to offer you! People who are *terrified* of public speaking have learned to master their fears.

New members work on speech projects in the "Basic Communications & Leadership" manual. These include:

- The Ice Breaker
- Speak With Sincerity
- Organize Your Speech
- Show What You Mean
- Vocal Variety Work With Words
- Apply Your Skills
- Add Impact To Your Speech
- Persuade With Power
- Inspire Your Audience

After this, there are fifteen advanced manuals to work on, each with five speaking projects...

- The Entertaining Speaker
- Speaking To Inform
- Public Relations
- The Discussion Leader
- Specialty Speeches
- Speeches By Management
- The Professional Speaker
- Technical Presentations
- The Professional Salesperson
- Communicating on Television
- Storytelling
- Interpretive Reading
- Interpersonal Communications
• Special Occasion Speeches
• Humorously Speaking

For those interested, there are speech contests between clubs as well. We learn to give speeches by practicing. This gives the Toastmasters program a distinct edge over seminars where you only get to see others demonstrate good speaking techniques. Here you get to work out the kinks. A Toastmaster who had charge of a machine shop employing many men gave a demonstration speech showing how he had instructed a new employee. He found, through the observations of his evaluators, that he muddled things up through his explanation, rather than making them clear. After two or three attempts before his club, he was able to report a definite improvement in production from his department simply because he had learned how to give instructions in a more understandable manner.

After you've completed the basic projects, you have a solid body of public speaking skills, and receive a "Competent Toastmaster", or "CTM" award. Many members consider themselves "through" the Toastmasters program and drop out. But this is just a starting point...Dr. Ralph Smedley, the founder of Toastmasters, wrote,

"We have found speech training to be a means, or an instrumentality, by which we have made great gains -unforeseen gains- in our capacity to live and serve. Some of these unexpected gains have proved to be more valuable than the speech ability which was our primary incentive. Each step we have taken has brought us in sight of other steps which would not have been in our reach without the preliminary work..."

15.2. Speech contests The contests are not overly competitive. Their purpose is to provide an opportunity for speakers to improve their speaking abilities and to recognize the best as encouragement to all and to provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training. There is no mention of winners and losers. Everyone's a winner in Toastmasters. Attend a speech contest even if you're not a contestant. They're a lot of fun.


For over twenty years, the Tampa-Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival has presented a unique cultural event which enables children and adults to participate in the ancient art of storytelling.

The Festival has its roots in storytelling competitions that began over fifty years ago in City of Tampa Recreation playgrounds. In 1980, Tampa Recreation and the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library collaborated to create the Tampa-Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival in order to provide children and their families with a city-wide forum which would recognize storytelling as an art form
and provide outstanding national storytellers to be models who would inspire young people to excellence. The children were no longer competing in a contest but were striving to achieve Festival Quality status. Over the years a host of businesses and non-profit agencies have become staunch supporters of this Festival.

In 2000, the Homecoming 2000 Festival was a free, week-long celebration of storytelling. We celebrated stories that have been enjoyed for 50 years on Tampa playgrounds and for 20 years in Hillsborough County through a partnership between libraries, recreation centers and schools that has benefited both children and adults. The culmination of the week was the Twentieth Annual Tampa-Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival on April 15, 2000.

We hope you were able to attend this fun-filled family event. The Festival featured nationally known and Grammy Award winning storyteller and musician David Hol, Twice Upon a Time (Festival Alumnae Kim Rivers and musician Nancy Crockford) as well as local and regional professional tellers and hundreds of Festival Quality Youth Storytellers. Eth-Noh-Tec was unable to attend at the last minute due to a family emergency.)

If you are a teacher, librarian, or youth leader and would like more information on how the children you work with can be part of this Festival next year, see the participant information, call our Festival Hotline at (813) 274-7741, or e-mail us at info@tampastory.org

15.3 http://www.timpfest.org/2003/juniortellers.html

Utah School Districts Competition Winners

Each year, storytelling competitions are held in elementary and junior high schools all around Utah. This year, thousands of children from over 40 schools prepared and told a story to their peers and teachers. That alone is reason enough to call each child a winner! Seventy-three children represented their schools at the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival auditions. Of these many talented youth, 26 were chosen to present their stories at this year's Timpanogos Storytelling Festival.

We congratulate all of the schools and participants for perpetuating the age-old art of storytelling. Be sure to catch their delightful performances throughout the festival!
16.0. Material Data and Journal: Examples titles, themes and topics at a variety of storytelling conferences

16.1. *Wordhoard, Society for Storytelling Annual Gathering*

*Summary:* This conference, which takes place in a different region of England or Wales each year, focused on traditions of East Anglia, that is mostly Saxon traditions. There was a range of activities, including storytelling for beginners, personal stories, storytelling and its uses in therapy and counselling, storytelling with secondary school students, workshops on drumming, and concerts of storytelling.

16.2. *Northlands Storytelling Network Spring Conference*

*Summary:* This conference serves the upper Midwestern region of the United States. The conference consists of key-note speeches, pre-conference intensives (six or three hour-long workshops for beginner to advanced storyteller participants) and conference workshops (ninety minute sessions, for storytellers and non-storyteller participants). There are also concerts of storytelling and panel discussions.

‘The conference welcomes anyone with an interest in storytelling: educators, therapists, librarians, writers, clergy, business executives or performers. Discover Northland’s treasury of learning and enrichment for novice as well as long-time tellers.’


*Summary.* This is one of the largest storytelling conferences in the world, lasting six days and usually attracting more than three hundred participants. It consists of key-note speeches, workshops, panel discussions, and performances. The following ‘welcome letters’ give some idea of the content and spirit of the conference.

1.) What a journey it has been! So many volunteer hours...so many meetings...so many intense discussions...so many ideas...so many laughs. Thanks to everyone for your energy, your enthusiasm, you creativity, and especially your willingness to devote so much of your time to this year’s conference. To all of our volunteers, we send you a hearty and heartfelt thanks.

To all of our members and conference guests...enjoy! This year’s conference is packed full of activities, workshops and performances—some with a distinctly Chicago flavor. We hope you can join us for our Kid’s Concert on Tuesday night,
our Thursday night Chicago experience, “Six City Sites Sizzle with Story,” And all our other events.. We feel there is truly something for everyone. And don’t forget our fantastic keynotes! Just to hear Studs Terkel and Tim Black will be an experience to help us remember how ‘story’ affects our lives. They are consummate “storytellers.”

Have fun! Learn something new! Tell at the swaps! Meet old friends and renew acquaintances. And be sure to greet our new guests. Keep your eyes out for those who are “first timers.” They will be wearing special ribbons on their lanyards. Also look for our young apprentices and youth tellers—they are our future and we are so happy they can join us.

Above all else, if you see our incredible volunteers, give them a hug—they worked hard—they deserve it. Don’t you just love it when a plan comes together!

Warm wishes to all, Linda Gorham, Co-Chair, Judith Heineman, Co-Chair, Nan Kammann-Judd, Honorary Chair.

2. Welcome to “Storytelling at the Crossroads,” the fifth conference produced by National Storytelling Network and regional groups across the United States. From San Diego to Kinsport to Providence to Denver and now Chicago, we have brought exciting programming to not only our members but also to many new friends we have found along the way.

This year will be no different in the opportunities for exploring new aspects of the art, of becoming a stronger advocate for storytelling and embracing friends, new and renewed.

Please join me in saying thank you to our board of directors for their vision, the North Central region volunteers, the conference chairs from Chicago, and my incredible staff who have all made this conference a Reality.

Nancy Kavanaugh, Executive Director

3. Welcome! As Chairman of the National Storytelling Network Board of Directors, and as the Regional Representative of the North Central region, I want to thank you for coming to “Storytelling at the Crossroads.” And we really are at a crossroads. Chicago has always been the meeting place of industry and commerce, race and class. But storytelling is also at a crossroads where the traditions of folk culture meets the platform telling of the storytelling revival—where the transformative power of applied storytelling meets the art of the spoken word.

This conference has made a space for all that and more. Now we are here at the edge of the Windy City, where the railroads connected East and West, and a “hot time in the old town tonight” has historical resonance.
I want to offer my sincere thanks to all those who have worked to make this event possible. This National Storytelling Network conference offers more choices, more diversity and more of what you have asked for than we have ever done. It is the product of countless hours of volunteer time and some fair proportion of tears and laughter as well. Speaking for the Board and the community of storytellers who have worked to make this possible, our hope is that it exceeds your expectations and nourishes your experience of storytelling.

This is a time for learning, for sharing our best efforts, and for celebrating community. Mi casa es su casa!!! This is an opportunity to connect or reconnect with friends and colleagues of our far flung membership. Blessings upon you!! It is a chance to trade stories, tips, and best practices and more. Enjoy!

Loren Niemi, NSN Board Chair

17.0 Summary of Storytelling in Community Projects:

17.1. *Creative Well: Putting Time to Bed.* A media arts project which was established at the New Children’s Hospital at Westmead, Australia. Its purpose is to engage the minds of children and young people admitted into the hospital while they are undergoing intensive medical treatment. It can help these young people to find a place for their active and powerful imagination, which is often denied in medical condition.

The *Creative Well* project operates on the premise that there is a ‘language of well being’, which can act inside a hospital culture. Within the project, *Bedtime Stories* is the writing and illustrating programme for younger children, while *Scene Here* is a film program for adolescents. These programs enable children to ‘tuck in behind the illness’ and discover their own creativity. Often they’re surprised to find it’s still there.

The multi-layered programs are flexible. They can work with individuals or with small groups. Our programs are designed to offer a place for a range of patients. Here the hospital environment takes on a new meaning for a group of film makers. We support by sharing—so adolescent patients may illustrate the stories of younger children, and these stories can then read and be shown to the broader hospital community through the Starlight Channel.

The children, through their own imagination, are affirmed. Sometimes simple things are the most powerful. And children read and tell back, to themselves, their own work. To comfort, to stimulate, to marvel and yes to enjoy.

Helen Zigmond, Project Director
17.2. *One Story—Many Voices*

Finding ways of encouraging people to celebrate their own religious identity, building bridges and working together are the objectives of “One Story—Many Voices”, a project set up by the Church of Scotland.

A small working party is gathering stories of the experiences of groups and individuals in their meeting and interaction with people of other faiths in Scotland.

Through those collected stories the Church wants to find the real picture of what is happening to interfaith relations and the issues and concerns the Church can address to promote an improvement in relationships.

A pilot project was funded from June to September 2001, and the results and the current political climate compel the group to seek further funding for a year-long “One Story Many Voices” plan.

It is also hoped that the project and stories themselves can be used to help bring together groups and individuals throughout Scotland who are engaged in different forms of inter-faith activities.

17.3. *Steps to Storytelling, The Storytelling Workshop*

This scheme involved four inner-city secondary schools in London, in the boroughs of Newham, Islington and Harrow. Storytelling and storytelling activities were used to teach and explore topics across the curriculum. Students and teachers were taught how to develop, learn and tell stories. Surveys and exam results suggested a strong, positive impact of storytelling on student development and teacher effectiveness.
18.0. News list discussion

Even as this thesis is being finished, storytellers in dozens of countries are in discussions regarding the setting up of a World Storytelling Day. Topics debated include the name of the event (a complicated, controversial discussion given the choice of words must be translated meaningful and poetically in several languages) and the use of electronic media. Excerpts from the latter discussion are included below.

1.) From: Larry Johnson

Subject: Fwd: Re: [storytellingday] stories and images

Hi:

I don't want to get people throwing rocks about stories on rocks and discussions leading into multi media, etc. etc. but as a storyteller who has done quite a bit with media, I once wrote an article to the effect that storytelling on video is not storytelling. It's merely a record of one time that storytelling happened. Apparently it was a bit controversial because some folks thought I was saying you shouldn't do storytelling on media or something like that, and really I was just sort of watching more and more folks here think the best way to market their storytelling was to get it on the big time TV shows so people would think its real because unlike the Velveteen Rabbit which is real because its loved, here in America, unfortunately, too often you're real if you're on "real TV" I was thinking about how I like live music, but often times nowadays, at least here, live music is eliminated because its cheaper to use mechanical, and in fact many recordings are not recordings of live performance, but heavily produced pieces that can't be reproduced in live performance. There's nothing particularly wrong with that. I just think its important to maintain an understanding of the distinction.

So if the issue is to just get the story out, then use the media as best you can. But if the issue is to let people see live storytelling, let all manner of media promote it, but beware the media that tries to swallow and devour the live performance. And if this is just babbling and doesn't make any sense, I'm sorry and I'll go to my room.

Larry Johnson

2) From: canarozzi
Hello & bonjour,

In regards to Larry Johnson's comments, I wholly agree. But I must have missed something because I don't know why he made this clarification between a live, performance art and cool media.

In any case, yes we tellers I find must be vigilant. Media for promotion and information yes, but the story is in the telling and what happens between live human beings.

Hallelujah!

Sam

---

From: Ulf Ånström

Subject: Re: [storytellingday] stories and images

Dear All!

A quote and some thoughts about connections in time and space and storytelling:

Sam commented on the rock art/stories from South Africa
This is something Helene at the Rock Art Institute wrote:

Last year two pieces of ochre rock were discovered in southern South Africa that have a sophisticated geometric pattern engraved on them. The so-called Blombos cave find. This rock has been dated to 77 000 years old.

To give you some sense of perspective, the paintings in the Lasqau caves are dated to about 30 000 years ago. And the oldest known San rock painting is dated to 27 000 years ago. Can you imagine the excitement around here?

I can imagine the excitement. I can also imagine the events, the dances and the stories 77 000 years ago.

Which reminds me of something a swedish librarian, Harriette Soederblom, wrote [in translation]:

"In breathtaking moments, the storyteller can feel like a part of an unending chain with links all over the world and going back to ancient
That quote has inspired me ever since I began storytelling in the mid eighties, and I met Harriette. She was at that time almost the "only surviving" storytelling librarian in Stockholm. She had been inspired by another famous librarian who had introduced storytelling in Sweden through her contacts with the American library storytelling tradition. Which should be connected to the National Story League that Larry wrote about.

I'm not entirely satisfied with the translation (or even the original) of the quote, but it is in a way another answer to the question; why a World Storytelling Day?

Best wishes, Ulf

4.) Very interesting what Ulf says about rock drawings. In fact as storyteller Anne Pellowski says, "Who knows how the first stories were told? Who says they were spoken?? They could very probably have been danced, painted, sung or mimed!!"

So our WSD can be multi-media/audio-visual, which in fact for me storytelling is already because you listen to AND see the teller who may move about.

Of course the spoken word is the most important component in the world story tradition, but there are many, many other ways to get the story across don't you think?!!!

-Sam Cannarozzi
19.0. Leaflet advertising performance of Mesopotamian myths, circulated not long before the outbreak of the second Gulf War in Iraq in 2003, with the subtitle: ‘Hear the original early literature of Iraq’.

Saturday 12 July 2003
7.30 pm

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24 OLD GLOUCESTER STREET
LONDON WC1

£10/£5

STORIES
FROM
THE ANCIENT CITY OF URUK

with
Baghdadi percussionist

Farid Zodan

A ZIPANG event organised by the Enheduanna Society
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Dr Mohamed Makiya
Professor Farouk al-Rawi
Michael Rosen
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TRUSTEES
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Robert Smith
Jane Steedman

THE ENHEDUANNA SOCIETY
PO Box 36856
Bloomsbury
London
WC1N 1WB

zipang03@btopenworld.com

Registered Charity No. 1097515
The Enheduanna Society is an educational charity devoted to popularising the literature of ancient Iraq through the art of oral storytelling for adults. It organises regular events at which stories from ancient Iraq are retold in live performance by the ZIPANG trio of English-speaking Mesopotamian storytellers - June Peters, Fran Hazelton and Fiona Collins.

The stories are retold with a Celtic harp and Iraqi musicians perform as special guests - Kurdish harpist and singer Tara Jaff, Baghdadi percussionist, dancer and choreographer Farid Zodan and master of the oud, Ahmed Mukhta.

ZIPANG is the Sumerian word for 'breathing', 'breath' or 'breath of life'. ZIPANG events breathe new life into ancient narrative texts originally written on clay tablets in cuneiform script. They give voice to stories unheard for thousands of years and send them into the modern world by word of mouth.

A ZIPANG c.d. packaged with a booklet by Dr Jeremy Black - "The ASAG - Stories from Ancient Sumer" - is available from Purple Patch Records, 144 Camden High Street, London NW1 0NE {info@purplepatch.com} and from the bookshop in the Great Court of the British Museum.
ZIPANG events are on Saturdays at 7.30pm
The October Gallery, 24 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1
Entrance is £10/£5 for students, pensioners and other concessionaries
DIFFERENT STORIES ARE TOLD AT EACH EVENT

12 July 2003
6 September 2003
11 October 2003
6 December 2003
6 March 2003
24 April 2004
5 June 2004