Celebrating 200 Years of The Hans Christian Andersen

BY KATHY HELIDONIOTIS

Danish author Hans Christian Andersen wrote some of the most famous fairytales of all time. To recognise the importance of this author and his work, this year the world is celebrating '200 Years of Hans Christian Andersen'.

Ugly Duckling

Hans Christian
Andersen often
wrote about the true
beauty beneath an
ugly **exterior**, possibly
because of his own
self-image. He was **self-**

conscious of his height (he was over 180 centimetres tall) and his large hands and feet (his shoes were 33 centimetres long). He disliked his long nose and considered himself ugly. Despite this, he loved photography and posed for many portraits.

Born in Denmark in 1805, Hans and his brothers and sisters had a poor but happy family life. Hans' father doted on him and often read to him from The Arabian Nights and took him to the theatre.

Searching for Fame

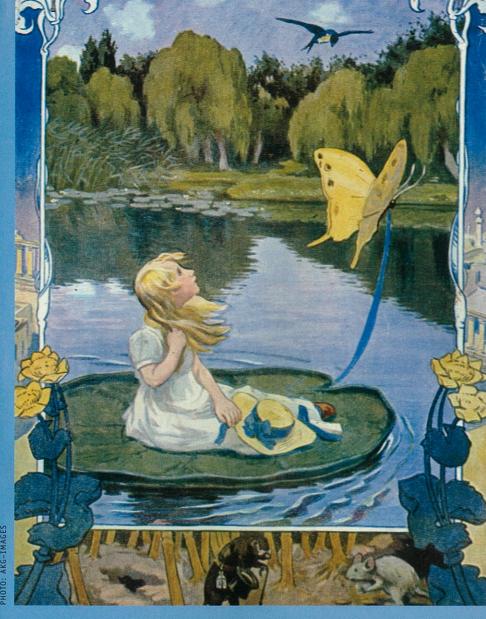
His life changed forever when his father died in 1816. Hans was forced to leave school at age 11 to work in a tobacco factory – which he hated!

At age 14 Hans left home and set off for Copenhagen seeking fame and fortune in the theatre as an actor, singer or dancer. He found neither and nearly starved to death! But he went on to become Denmark's most beloved writer and the father of fairytales.

Hans Christian Andersen 2005

April 2, 2005 marks

200 years since the birth of Hans Christian Andersen. To celebrate, the worldwide Hans Christian Andersen 2005 Festival kicks off in Denmark with an opening ceremony to be broadcast live around the world. The festival will run until 6 December and will feature concerts, films, art exhibitions and even acrobatics displays all based on or inspired by the works of Hans Christian Andersen.

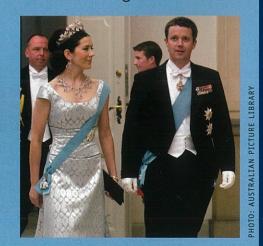


▲ An illustration from the fairytale Thumbelina

During the festival, well-known celebrities from around the world, including Australia's Cathy Freeman, will act as **ambassadors**. They will attend events and promote awareness of Hans Christian Andersen in their own country.

To find out more about Hans
Christian Andersen, you could get
on the next flight to Denmark,
make your way to Odense and
visit the Hans Christian Andersen
Museum, his childhood home
and the 'Tinder-Box' Children's
Cultural Centre where you can
dress up and star in your very
own play. Of course it could be
a bit easier to visit them online!

Take a tour at www.odmus.dk and, if your Danish isn't up to scratch, click on the Union Jack to read it in English.



▲ Denmark's Crown Prince Frederick and Princess Mary will preside over many festival events in different countries.

Try this!



Read a Hans Christian

Andersen fairytale and see if
you can find the moral lesson.

Did you know?

- Did you know that Hans Christian Andersen, not Disney, wrote The Little Mermaid? Other Hans Christian Andersen fairytales include The Ugly Duckling, The Emperor's New Clothes and Thumbelina. Many of these stories contain moral lessons.
- Andersen's fairytales have been translated into over 100 languages – the most translated fiction in history!

Glossary

ambassador representative
of a country

exterior outside

fiction imaginary story

moral lessons stories that teach something about life

self-conscious embarrassed

Check this out!

www.hca2005.com www.andersenfairytales.com www.andersen.sdu.dk (the Hans Christian Andersen Centre)

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▲ Hans Christian Andersen

Name: Hans Christian (HC)

Born: Odense, Denmark,

Died: 4 August 1875

Favourite things to do:

listening to stories, going to

the theatre, putting on puppet

Famous stories: The Princess

and the Pea. The Red Shoes.

The Dream of Little Tuk. The

Steadfast Tin Soldier. Don't

stop with this list - Andersen

wrote at least 156 fairytales!

The Snow Queen, The Shadow,

Fact File

Andersen

2 April 1805

shows at home