

# Storytelling in Shropshire

...a guide for teachers

Whether it is the beauty and diversity of our landscapes or the creativity of the people, storytelling has found a natural home in Shropshire. The educational benefits across the curriculum are evidenced in schools across the region everyday.

Storytelling is often a hidden artform working its magic under the surface invisible to the public gaze. This leaflet will help you to optimize the benefits of storytelling and utilize your local storytelling resources to the full.

## Shaping words to fit ears

Storytelling is a unique artform; the teller shapes the tale for each audience. Ears are all shapes and sizes and their owners have differing needs, tellings are created in the space between the listeners and the storyteller ensuring suitability for all ages from very young to more mature ears. Stories can be fashioned to relate to all recipients. The tales are given relevance to let them speak and allow the audience to explore their own responses in a safe and secure environment.

now read on...

# Using the local resources

Our area is blessed with a wealth of stories to suit all tastes. It has a wealth of fine professional tellers too, and boasts the world's first story museum and Britain's longest running international storytelling festival.

There are so many opportunities; bring a teller to your school; take your class on a visit to the museum; meet a storyteller at the site of a story (a castle, a hill or a lake); ask a storyteller to take your group on a storywalk.

Keep in touch with your local organisations. National & International Storytelling stars are visiting Shropshire throughout the year and there may be an opportunity for them to visit your school while they are here.

Festival at the Edge run regular professional development workshops at Mythstories in Wem. They are ideal for teachers, teaching assistants and parents interested in honing their storytelling skills.

There are monthly clubs throughout the county where you can try storytelling for yourself in a friendly and supportive setting.

The Society for Storytelling Reference Library is housed in Mythstories museum, and is an ideal place to research stories to tell from all around the world.

## and using the internet too...

A storytelling session can enrich any area of the curriculum and you don't need to re-invent the wheel searching for inspiration.

Mythstories museum's website has a wealth of ideas for projects large and small. The ideas are there for you to use and adapt as you please. And most importantly it's a free resource, all you need to do is type in **[www.mythstories.com](http://www.mythstories.com)** –click and you're on your way.

Your pupils can even send in their own stories and pictures for display on the website gallery.

# Keeping the stories flowing

Storytelling is the most inclusive of artforms. There is no copyright on oral stories. The tales need to be passed on and repeated to keep them alive. It is the biggest compliment to a storyteller to hear their stories being told by someone else.

## It's time to tell yourself...

Listening is not enough, it's time you started telling yourself, and encouraging your pupils to become storytellers too. Telling their own stories, building word power and confidence, pupils can open new doors to literacy skills. Why not start a school storytelling club, you'll never believe the benefits until you see them, or hear them.

Young storytellers are now featured at all the major storytelling festivals and there is even a Young Storyteller of the Year Award. The current holder of the under 18 award and the runner up are both from Shropshire.

## Hints for telling stories

- 1. don't learn the story by heart*
- 2. know the plot and characters inside out*
- 3. the story you tell is your story – don't worry if you change things so long as the story makes sense*
- 4. consider your timing – when to pause, whether to move the story along quickly or slowly, and how to build the story to a climax*
- 5. practice – the more you tell, the better you get*
- 6. experiment with using the range of your voice*
- 7. use movement and gesture when appropriate*
- 8. look at your audience when telling – eye contact makes them involved and gives you instant feedback*
- 9. tell your story at least three times aloud to yourself before you try it on an audience, by then it will be your story*
- 10. relax and enjoy yourself – if you do, so will your audience*
- 11. Most importantly only tell stories you enjoy yourself!*

# Storytelling organisations

**Mythstories museum of myth and fable** the World's first story museum  
The Morgan Library, Aston Street, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5AU  
**01939 235500 / info@mythstories.com / www.mythstories.com**

**Festival At The Edge** an annual International Storytelling Festival on Wenlock Edge  
plus events year round, share the office at The Morgan Library (address above)  
**01939 236626 / info@festivalattheedge.org / www.festivalattheedge.org**

## Local Storytellers

<b>Peter Chand</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01902 428685</b>
<b>Fiona Collins</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01490 430551</b>
<b>Amy Douglas (on maternity leave until April 2008)</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01588 638497</b>
<b>Helen East &amp; Rick Wilson</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01691 791333</b>
<b>Clive Hopwood &amp; Pauline Bennett</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01938 811355</b>
<b>Dawn Powell</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01743 350505</b>
<b>Dez &amp; Ali Quarréll</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01939 235500</b>
<b>Sally Tonge &amp; Fran O'Boyle</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<b>01743 792993</b>

## Storyclubs nearby

**The Swan Club** meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month at 8.00pm  
at The Newhampton Inn, Wolverhampton **contact chandstory@tiscali.co.uk**

**Tales at the Edge** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month except August at 8.00pm at  
the Cinnamon Café, Bridgnorth **contact Mike Rust 01694 771379**

**Telling Space** meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm  
at Mythstories museum, Wem **contact Ali or Dez Quarréll 01939 235500**

**Rhymes & Tells** meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month (not BH w/ends) at 8.00pm  
at The Six Bells, Bishops Castle **contact Mike or Teri Greene 01694 771379**

**and for families there's**

**The Family Telling Place** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 11.00am  
at Mythstories museum, Wem **contact Ali or Dez Quarréll 01939 235500**