

# U3A Storytelling Newsletter – May 2019

Greetings to Storytellers wherever you are.

I recently received a heart warming email from a U3A member, Brian McGovern, telling me of his recent storytelling event and thought you would like to read it too. I hope it encourages you to think how you can continue carrying the torch for Oral Storytelling.

## Chilling Tales

We sat in a circle. All eighteen of us. It was dark. It was cold, just 10C. A fire burned furiously in the middle. A faint reflection of the flames were evident in people's faces. All were huddled and sporting multiple layers to stave off the winter temperature. It was late January. I remember thinking, not everyone hunkers down and watches TV, every night.

Lanterns made from tin cans, stuffed with rags soaked in paraffin and suspended on broomsticks, illuminated the area with a warm soft light. The faint waft of burning fuel added to the atmosphere.

The area is bounded on two sides by a high wall. These walls have been painted in the form of murals by local artists, one of them a young art college graduate. Her work 'Gateway to Exmoor' is stunning. Measuring approximately 20' x 10' it includes a large stag whose eyes follow you wherever you go! In the dim light of the storytelling it is very eerie.

Suitably fortified by a glass or two of mulled wine, the stories began to be told. Some true, some invented, One lady called Iris produced three, all of which went down well. Another offering by a retired GP told a story from his childhood that was totally riveting. It was two hours later that all was done and folk drifted off to their homes, replete.

As a result of this our local library supervisor has arranged to have a storytelling once a month and all of this at South Molton, on the edge of the Exmoor National Park.

*Think about what kind of stories you like to hear and tell. Create your own narrative and share it. If you don't try, you will never know how good you are.*

### [Storytelling news/Clubs and Events around the country.](#)

The Society for Storytellers (sfs) was founded in 1993 and is now in it's 26<sup>th</sup> year. It is a UK based society which support the art of oral storytelling. Check it out. It has a chat forum run by the sfs and has resource and fact sheets that can be downloaded. Go to <https://sfs.uk/resources/factsheets> or just google 'The Society for Storytellers'.

#### **Storytelling Retreat 9-14 September**

The week-long course will be exploring the mythology surrounding the Goddess and visiting ancient sites and walking the beautiful landscapes of north Wales. To book contact

[www.tynewydd.wales/course/storytelling-retreat-2019/](http://www.tynewydd.wales/course/storytelling-retreat-2019/)

#### **Cape Clear Storytelling Festival - 30<sup>th</sup> August to 1<sup>st</sup> September**

Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork

Contact official website [www.capeclearstorytelling.com](http://www.capeclearstorytelling.com)

**Malvern Storytellers Programme** meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday 8pm at the Great Malvern Hotel starting in the 11<sup>th</sup> September after the summer break.

For more information Tel. Tim Willcocks on 01684 567721

**Success Stories Club** – meets at the Sale Excelsior Club, 64 Chapel Road, Sale, M33 7EG. Meets Monthly on a Monday.

[www.thesuccessstoriesclub.wordpress.com](http://www.thesuccessstoriesclub.wordpress.com)

**International School of Storytelling, Emerson College, Sussex.**

For a full list of courses visit: [www.emerson.org.uk/storytelling](http://www.emerson.org.uk/storytelling)

**Leicestershire Guild of Storytelling:** Enquiries

[leicesterstorytelling@gmail.com](mailto:leicesterstorytelling@gmail.com) or [www.leicesterstorytelling.com](http://www.leicesterstorytelling.com)

**The Traditional Arts Team** runs sessions at the Prince of Wales, Alcester Road, Birmingham M13 8EE every month at 8pm except August. More information at [tradartsteam.co.uk/sessions.html](http://tradartsteam.co.uk/sessions.html)

**Courses With Stella Kassimati** at the Hellenic Centre, London, W1U 5AS  
Contact [www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/short-courses/first-steps-in-storytelling](http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/short-courses/first-steps-in-storytelling)

**Around the Fire Storytelling**, Irish Cultural Centre, Black Road,  
Hammersmith, London W6 9DT. Contact [www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk](http://www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk)

**Scottish Storytelling Centre**, 43-45 High Street, Edinburgh  
Contact [www.reception@scottishstorytellingcentre.com](mailto:www.reception@scottishstorytellingcentre.com)

**Tales at the Watermill**, Shepshed, Leicestershire  
For ticket information ring 01162 363739 or email [nickfathers@sky.com](mailto:nickfathers@sky.com)

### **Tales in Trust at Halsway Manor**

18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October. Book your place: call Halsway Manor 01984618274 ext. 1 and ask for Vivien or email [office@halswaymanor.org.uk](mailto:office@halswaymanor.org.uk)

### **Bath Storytelling Circle**

They meet each month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 8.00pm upstairs at the The Raven (Queen St. Bath). Entry free. Next meetings 17<sup>th</sup> June, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 19<sup>th</sup> August.

**Workshops for experienced storytellers with Nick & Emily Hennessey**  
28<sup>th</sup> August - 1<sup>st</sup> September. Minimum of 8 participants.  
[info@nickhennessy.co.uk](mailto:info@nickhennessy.co.uk)

### **The Bleddfa week of storytelling-retreat 8-14<sup>th</sup> July.**

A course for all levels. Full immersion in storytelling including tuition, visiting storytellers and the chance to tell in public.

<https://storytellingatbleddfa.com/intensive-performance-course/>  
[storytellingatbleddfa.com](http://storytellingatbleddfa.com)

**If there is nothing that interest you in your area, google storytelling events in the area of your choice for more information.**

### **Recent Books to check out**

#### **Socialist Fairy Tales, and Allegories from Great Britain**

Princeton University press. ISBN 978-0-691-17534-8

London Folk ales for Children by Anne Johnson & Sef Townsend

The History Press £9.99 ISBN 978-0-750986-89-2

[www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk)

#### **The Pilgrimage of Piltdown Man by Mike O'leary**

Triarchy Press ISBN 978-1-911193-57-9

[www.triarchypress.net/piltdown](http://www.triarchypress.net/piltdown)

#### **The Anthology Of English Folk Tales**

The History Press ISBN 978-0-7509-9004-2

**The Glass Woman by Caroline Lea**

Michael Joseph ISBN 978-0-718-18897-9

[www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk)

**Irish Gothic Fairy Stories from 32 counties of Ireland**

By Steve Lally & Paula Flynn Lally

The History Press Ireland ISBN 978-0-7509-8698-4

[www.thehistorypress](http://www.thehistorypress)

**I hope you all have a great year and that you are able to find something of interest in the above. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information or help in setting up your storytelling groups. I would love to hear how you are all getting on.**

**I would like to finish by reminding you of a text drawn from the African Bambara Oral tradition of storytelling. For those of you who did not see it before, I am repeating it, as I believe it speaks volumes about the essence of storytelling.**

*The spoken word is everything*

*It cuts, it flays*

*It models, it modulates*

*It disturbs, it maddens*

*It heals or kills outright*

*It is louder or softer as willed*

*It excites or calms the soul.*

**Wishing you all a creative and fun loving time with your storytelling groups.**

**Elizabeth Toon**

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