



where
words
work

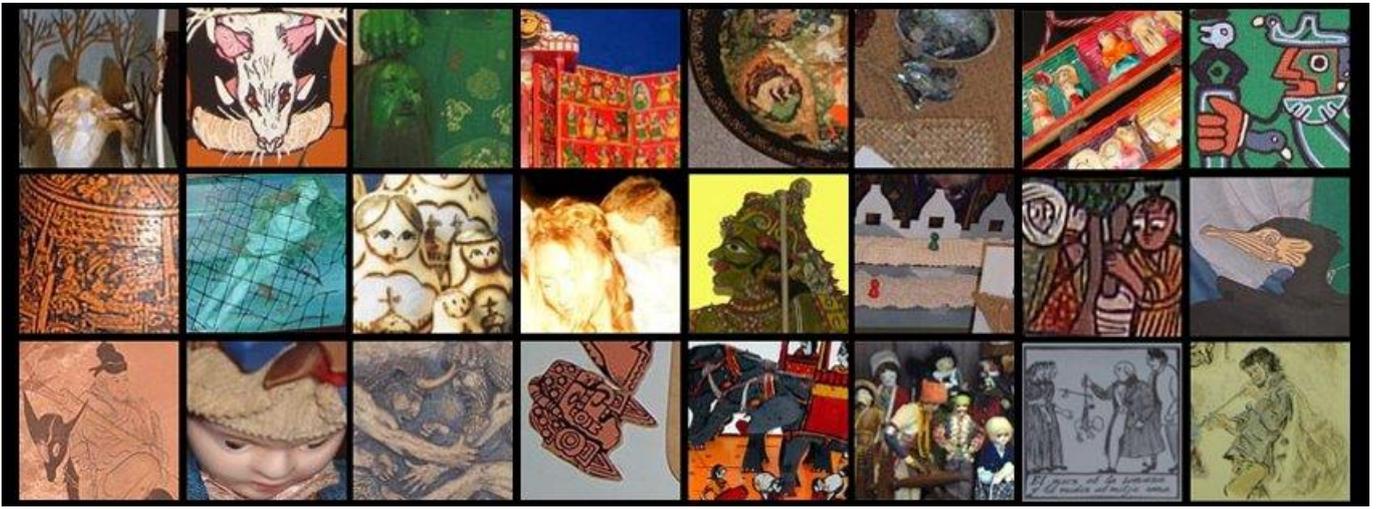
Mythstories

museum of myth and fable

**The Morgan Library
Aston Street
Wem
Shropshire
SY4 5AU**

Charity Reg. No. 1161594

**Annual Report
Year ended 31st March 2018**



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1. About Mythstories

Mythstories works with the spoken word. It is a museum of the intangible. It uses its collection of storytelling artefacts to introduce visitors to legends and folklore, to inspire them to a fuller understanding of the storyteller's craft and to encourage them to be storytellers themselves, passing on oral heritage and keeping it alive. The museum's library incorporates the **Society for Storytelling Library** of books of traditional tales and the study area includes a copy of the audio archive of performance storytelling created by the **London Centre for International Storytelling**. The museum is open free of charge to the public throughout the year. Every visitor experiences a live storytelling. Pre-booked, paying, groups participate in programmes of workshops and storytellings.



www.mythstories.com is a free cross-curricular resource used throughout the world. It disseminates stories and ideas for their use in formal and informal educational settings, shares project outcomes and gives details about the Charity. The story-site is accessible to children working alone or with their partners in education. It is navigated by pictorial icons and features audio versions of stories for those barred by the written word. The web-site front page is regularly updated and has details of storytelling clubs in the UK and storytelling events in the local area as well as news about the museum.

Mythstories has an outreach club for older children and teenagers, at **Wellington Library** in Telford & Wrekin. Club members become skilled storytellers while developing their communication skills by participating in activities in an informal atmosphere within a culture of mutual respect.

The primary focus of **Mythstories** is educational; using storytelling as a gateway to literacy. It achieves this by devising and delivering a wide range of participatory workshops and funded projects. Throughout the year we have kept in mind the **Charity Commission's** guidance on public benefit when designing and delivering our activities.

We are grateful to our volunteers who help in many ways, including staging displays, publicising events, maintaining computers, cataloguing exhibits and assisting the young people who attend our storytelling club.

2. Activities 2017 - 18

During the first four months of the year we continued to work with our former apprentice storyteller, Jake Evans, on a **Walking for Health** project funded under the **Help2Change, Everybody Active** programme. This involved three schools in the local area and a group of home educating families; with four 'closed' storywalks, alongside two 'public' events. One of the walks was the subject of a live local Radio broadcast. All were extremely well attended. Following the evaluation, Mythstories worked with **Energise Shropshire** on a planned roll-out of the programme with families at risk across Shropshire, but unfortunately our joint funding bid to **Sport England** was not successful.



During the year we pulled together a team of volunteers from across North- and Mid-Wales and identified appropriately qualified professionals to help breathe life back into site specific myths of the Montgomeryshire area of Powys using spoken and written word and on-line video. However all attempts to obtain the funding needed to support the project similarly failed. Traditionally this research-based delivery has been an important part of the way Mythstories' has worked and volunteers are continuing to seek the funds needed, indeed an ever-increasing amount of volunteer time is now being spent on fund-raising rather than delivery.



Our **Away With Words young storytellers club** at Wellington Library continued throughout the year, with funding from the **Baron Davenport's Foundation** and **The Thistle Trust**. During this period there were 40 regular meeting days, 3 performances and 2 summer holiday storywalks. In all 19 different young people aged between 9 and 18 participated. By the year end the club was again focused on the 10 - 13 age group, with the older children having left for University or preparing for GCSEs. We remain in contact with many ex-members and are proud to say that two of them, then aged 18 and 19 respectively, were asked to lead workshops at the Young Storyteller of Wales competition in Llandudno in 2017. One has also established a Storytelling Society at the University he now attends.

In July we welcomed a fifteen year old work experience student, Lukasz for a week. He undertook many varied tasks and concluded his time with **Mythstories** with a public performance to the **Away With Words** group and their families telling a story with Kamishibai slides he'd created to illustrate his favourite tale.



Our **Telling Space club** held ten family storywalks in different parts of Shropshire and North Powys. Regular attendees have helped compile a programme of their favourites for repeat visits in 2018/19.

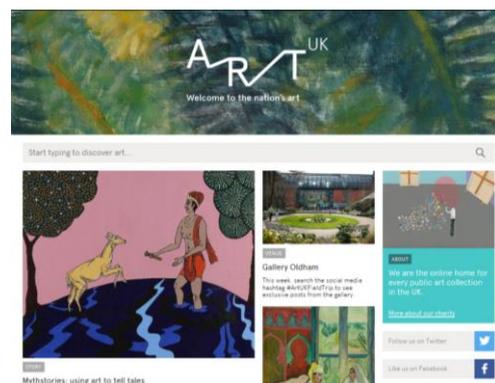
School visits to the museum remained low. **Mythstories** participated in the **West Midlands Museums' Education Audit**, run by the **Arts Council-funded Museums Development team**, which included an external review of our current educational offer. An interim report issued during the year suggested that schools face more barriers in terms of time and cost and are consequently using more on-line resources and/or museum outreach. The final report has been made available since the year-end. It emphasises that a visit to **Mythstories** "would be worthwhile as

- It is suitable for all children
- (there are) Good links to the story telling element of the curriculum
- Storytelling sessions in a museum would give the children real inspiration for writing"

And it highlighted three areas where **Mythstories** could take action to ensure schools make good use of our resources: improvements to museum building facilities, better website navigation and an outreach offer that reflects the museum experience.

In January 2018 funding was obtained from **Arts Council England** which enabled **Mythstories**' key employees to begin a consultation to develop the Charity's strategy, supported by a Critical Friend. This includes – but is not limited to – identifying options for a relocation of the physical museum, the development of a 'pop-up' mini-museum programme for schools and other educational users and a 100% digital museum experience. This exercise continues into 2018/19, **Mythstories**' 20th year.

In February 2018 Mythstories Artist in Residence, Dez Quarréll was interviewed by Art UK (the website and operating name of the **Public Catalogue Foundation**). The feature appeared on their front page to coincide with **National Storytelling Week 2018** and was illustrated with many of the paintings from the **Mythstories Collection**.



In March 2018 we defied the late heavy snows to celebrate World Book Day with students from **Wrekin College** who proved eager and willing to perform to their teachers and peers



3. Financial Review

Mythstories has limited regular funding. In 2017/18 it received £600 from Shropshire Council. Our commercial sponsor, Tiancom, provides free hosting for our extensive website.

The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the museum building, with public opening facilitated by volunteers. Earned income is derived from school visits and outreach. **Mythstories** is primarily project funded and has a reputation for bringing in quality projects on time and within budget while achieving the set targets.

Mythstories aims to hold unrestricted reserves to a maximum of 3 months' non-wage running costs plus 10% of its average annual project funding. At March 2018 it held 38% of this total.

Staff expenditure during the year was minimised: skilled volunteers keep the Charity on course. When the Charity undertakes chargeable work, some of these volunteers are sometimes paid. During 2017/18 Dez and Ali Quarréll were jointly paid £8,500 for schools work in the museum, outreach and project management. Other employee costs relate to the former Apprentice, who remained on payroll during the first part of the year.

4. How Mythstories operates

Mythstories is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by a standard 'Foundation' constitution.

The Trustees are:

Peter John Roscoe (second term – ends 31st March 2020)

David William Reeves (second term – ends 31st March 2020)

Geoffrey Arthur Hardy (first term – ends 31st March 2018)

Pauline Ann Rigby (first term – ends 31st March 2018)

A maximum of 7 Trustees may hold office. Individual Trustees may serve for a maximum of three terms. Following the year end the Trustees are actively recruiting younger members with relevant experience who will help guide Mythstories. In June 2018 the first new Trustee took office and will serve an initial 3 year term.

Contact c/o Mr. Peter J. Roscoe, 19 Victoria Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2HS or info@mythstories.com

Mythstories' trustees are keen that the Charity works in an environmentally-friendly way. Staff, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to use public transport and outside events take account of public transport timetables. The museum is on a 100% renewable energy tariff. Within the museum, staff use environmentally-friendly cleaning products; reduce waste by re-using materials wherever possible and recycle paper, card, metals, plastics and food waste.



Mythstories works in partnership with the **Crick Crack Club** (the **London Centre for International Storytelling**) to promote storytelling in the United Kingdom. It is a member of the **Telford Cultural Education Partnership**. These partnerships between like-minded organisations with complementary aims and objectives are central to **Mythstories'** policy of making best use of available resources, talent and funding.



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Signed for the Board

31st October 2018
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Date