



where
words
work

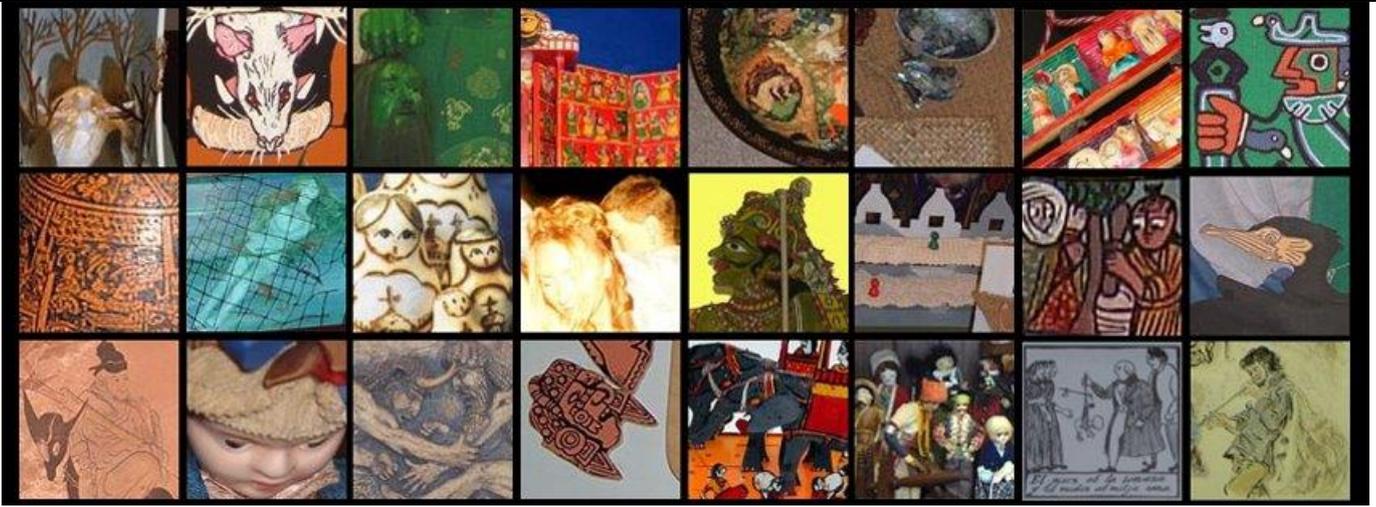
Mythstories

museum of myth and fable

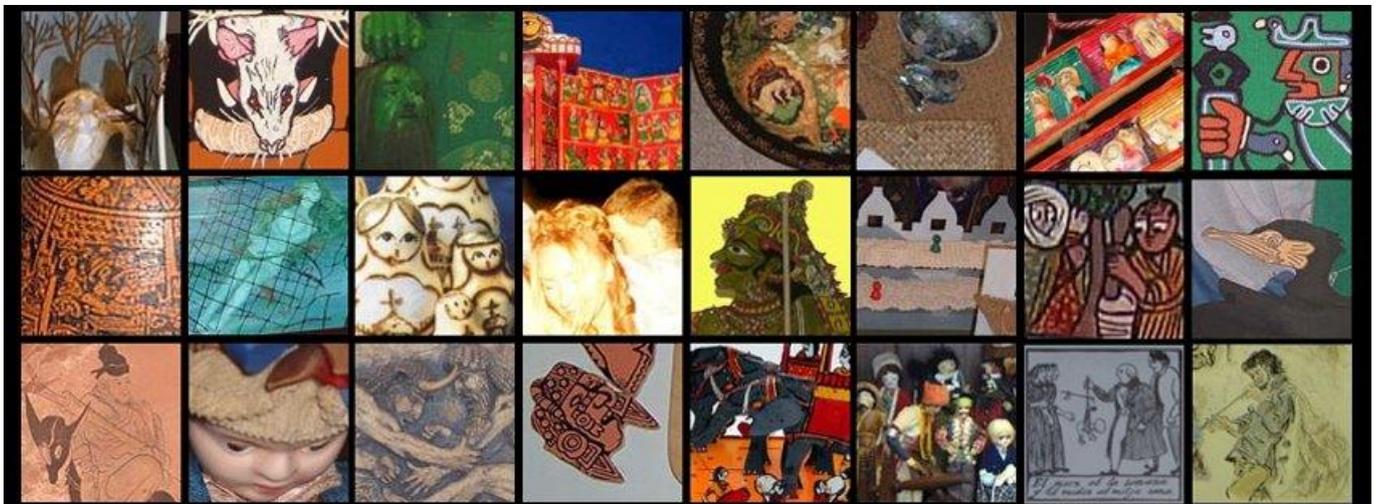
**University Centre Shrewsbury
Guildhall
Frankwell Quay
Shrewsbury
SY3 8HQ**

Charity Reg. No. 1161594

**Annual Report
Year ended 31st March 2019**



1. Our Mission	page 3
2. Status of the Charity	page 3
3. Governance and Management	page 3
4. Objectives	page 4
5. Achievements and Performance	page 4
6. Staff and Volunteers	page 7
7. Marketing	page 7
8. Financial Review	page 8
9. The Future	page 9



1. Our Mission

Mythstories works with the spoken word; in a museum and in outreach projects.

We encourage our users to be storytellers themselves, passing on oral heritage and keeping it alive.

2. Status of the Charity

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

Mythstories began as a website in June 1998, before opening as a museum in February 1999. The original Charity was created by a Deed of Trust in 2001 and merged with the CIO in 2015.

3. Governance and Management

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

During the year 5 Trustees held office:

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

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

Geoffrey Arthur Hardy (second term – ends 31st March 2021)

Pauline Ann Rigby (second term – ends 31st March 2021)

Jacob Edward Owen Williams (first term – ends 15th May 2021)

After year end, on 11th July 2019 Dave Reeves died. He had been ill for several months. Dave was a founding Trustee, a writer, musician, historian and a true friend. His sage advice will be sorely missed.

The trustees covered the following skill areas: business management, legal expertise, child & vulnerable adult protection, verbal arts practice, young storyteller experience. During the year the Trustees received additional advice from a Consultant specialising in Change in Charities.

Trustees meet electronically to conduct business, with two Trustees approving all financial transactions. Day-to-day management is delegated to two key employees.

A maximum of 7 Trustees may hold office. The Trustees are actively recruiting two additional board members, with experience of working with the University sector.

4. Objectives

The primary focus of **Mythstories** is educational; preserving and disseminating traditional tales. It does this by:

A Maintaining a publically accessible collection of storytelling artefacts which introduce visitors to traditional tales and folklore and a library which includes volumes of stories as well as books on the theory and application of storytelling. The current collection incorporates the **Society for Storytelling Library** and a copy of the audio archive of performance storytelling created by the **London Centre for International Storytelling**.

B Maintaining a website, free at the point of use, disseminating traditional tales and ideas for their use in formal and informal educational settings.

C Initiating outreach projects in the Shropshire/Mid-Wales borders area, which focus on the region's oral heritage.

D Working with other organisations to promote storytelling in the United Kingdom.

E Exploring the educational uses of storytelling, as a gateway to literacy and to develop 'soft' life-skills.

The Trustees and management keep in mind the **Charity Commission's** guidance on public benefit when designing and delivering activities that flow from this objective.

5. Achievements and Performance

Thanks to an organisational development grant from Arts Council England key employees were able to take time to consider Mythstories' longer term sustainability. They met face-to-face with many of the people Mythstories had worked with over the past 20 years: local government officials, arts organisations, teachers, museums and arts professionals, storytellers, museum users and young people and with potential new partners; and had e-mail discussions with many others. A 'critical friend', Donald Ritchie,

who specialises in assisting small charities in the arts and educational sectors supported this process.

Following the consultation, it was agreed that Mythstories would work collaboratively with University Centre Shrewsbury, part of the University of Chester, to relocate the collection to the University premises in Shrewsbury - with a target date of October 2019 - and to ensure continuing public access. After the year-end, in May 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two parties.



The **Away With Words young storytellers club** at Wellington Library held its final session in July 2018, with a storywalk in Telford Town Park led by the young storytellers. This club, originally fully-funded, had been run by volunteers during its final months and was closed when, despite appeals to many local-to-Wellington trusts, Mythstories could not source funding to meet volunteer travelling expenses.

Across the summer and autumn, thanks to funding from the **Co-op Community Fund**, the museum hosted a series of free story and craft activities, which attracted a family audience.



For World Heritage Day in September, **Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust** engaged Mythstories to put on a raft of storytelling activities bringing multi-cultural tales to life at their Coalbrookdale site. Eight artists were involved.

In October 2018 Mythstories was awarded funding from **Heritage Lottery Fund** and work began on an outreach project on site-specific myths of the Montgomeryshire area of Powys. This project involves volunteers from Llangollen Stori Caffi, who will visit and record the sites of the stories and liaise with an illustrator to produce pictures of each; young people from Bangor University Story Soc., who will provide précis of each story, children attending Llandudno Story Circle and a storyteller and artist who will establish a new storytelling club for young people in Newtown, Powys. The project outputs will be an on-line resource for local schools to replace a 1947 textbook - produced by the Montgomeryshire



Schools' History Committee - and a series of postcards that will be distributed to storytelling clubs across Wales.



Mythstories' programme of outreach activities based at University Centre Shrewsbury began in February 2019, with a public event for the **Darwin Festival** comparing the folkloric and scientific explanations of the origin of The Wrekin. We are especially grateful to **Steve Cale**, geography master at **Concorde College**, who volunteered his time and contributed the science. The event uncovered a surprising level of agreement between the two explanations and was much enjoyed by the capacity audience.

Also in February, Mythstories organised a free family Pirate Day, to commemorate both the 20th anniversary of the opening of Mythstories Museum and the life of Shropshire storyteller, Richard 'Mogsy' Walker. Again hosted at University Centre Shrewsbury, this event attracted families with children of all ages who participated in making sessions, a pirate parade along the banks of the River Severn and an afternoon storytelling. The Pirate Day was again supported by the **Co-op Community Fund** and also by **The Skinners Lady Neville Charitable Foundation** with **Arts Council England**, who continue to fund the UCS outreach programme into 2019/20.



During the year the **Telling Space** family storytelling club held ten storywalks in different parts of Shropshire and North Powys, where Mythstories' volunteers and members of the audience tell tales inspired by the landscape.

Mythstories supports environmentally-friendly ways of working. Our staff, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to use public transport, with opening hours and outside events being timed to minimise the need for travel by car. The museum in Wem is on a 100% renewable energy tariff. Staff use environmentally-friendly cleaning products and recycle all materials only when re-use is not possible.

6. Staff and Volunteers

The major task for our key employees, Dez & Ali Quarréll, this year was to undertake the consultation exercise. They also delivered the family-focused celebratory sessions in the museum and began work co-ordinating the Montgomery Folktales Project. In their voluntary capacity they continue to carry out day-to-day administration of the charity as well as facilitating public opening, working with Away With Words young storytellers and leading the Telling Space storywalks.

During the year they were joined by a key volunteer, Suzanne Thomas, an emerging storyteller. Suzanne assisted with public opening, with the planning, preparation and delivery of the family sessions and many of the tasks associated with marketing the museum and its activities.

During the year 61 volunteers helped at our events or behind the scenes.

In March, Ali and Suzanne attended the first sessions of a training course on the Narrative Immersion approach to planning museum visits, organised by the West Midlands Museums Development team. The course continues into April 2019.

Ali also attended the West Midlands Museums Conference.

7. Marketing

In May 2018 a former member of the Away With Words young storyteller club redesigned the non-story part of **www.mythstories.com**. Another volunteer then learnt additional coding skills to put the design into effect, with the new and much improved site going live in December 2018.



Mythstories' Facebook page has seen increased activity, thanks to the work of our key volunteer.

Events, including free events, are now advertised via Eventbrite and this resulted in both the Darwin 'Lecture' and the Pirate Day being fully-booked.

Mythstories' marketing and advertising activity is increasingly moving on-line and this trend will continue into 2019, when it will support our programme of activities designed to celebrate our 20-year history of activity and to attract new audiences for the next 20 years.

8. Financial Review

Mythstories has no guaranteed regular funding, but has traditionally benefited from Shropshire Council's Arts Organisations Revenue Grant. In 2018/19 it received £1,000. Opportunities for earned income were very limited during the year, as the museum was closed for school visits.

The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the museum building. A commercial sponsor, Tiancom, provides free hosting for our extensive website. Skilled volunteers keep the Charity on course, with key employee costs for 2018/19 amounting to £9,500 and relating to work on funded projects.

Mythstories is primarily project funded and has a reputation for bringing in quality projects on time and within budget while achieving the set targets. During the year it received £2,500 from smaller trusts towards community events, an initial £14,950 from **Heritage Lottery Fund** on account of the Montgomeryshire Folktales project together with £500 from **Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council** for storytelling showcases to schools to publicise that project, and **Arts Council England**

funding relating to the consultation exercise and to the up-coming programme to celebrate our 20th anniversary and our new location.

Mythstories aims to hold unrestricted reserves to a maximum of 3 months' non-wage running costs plus 10% of its average annual project funding. Most of these reserves will be expended on relocation during the coming year and the fund will need to be rebuilt once Mythstories is again fully operational.

9. The Future

2019-20 will be a pivotal year for the Charity, with the physical relocation of the collection followed by establishing new working methods to maximise the benefit from collaborating with UCS.

Arts Council England have funded a programme of outreach which extends to October 2019, with activities focused on potential new users. New audience development and retention will continue to be a priority for the year and beyond.

Mythstories will also need to develop museum visit offers that respond to the new layout of the collection, which will be dispersed throughout the UCS Guildhall campus.

Approved by the Board 3rd November 2019 (date)

Signed: Peter Rascoe
(trustee)

Signed: [Signature]
(trustee)