



*2007 was hectic but happy for the Story Museum, with exciting progress on many fronts. Here are a few highlights.*

**10 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT 2007**

**1 Becoming a 'preferred outcome'**

These two words came to mean a lot to us. The Story Museum is now a 'preferred outcome' in Oxford City Council's planning framework for the west end of the city centre, an important step towards a permanent home.

**2 Switching on a six-year-old**



The best feedback is unsolicited, like this email from an enthusiastic mum whose son enjoyed our new 'Stories to join in with' storyday for younger schoolchildren: "My 6-year-old

came home so inspired! ... Well done and keep going! It was amazing to see him so switched on – he hates school but said how fast yesterday had gone."



**3 Gaining a Laureate**

Former Children's Laureate, Michael Morpurgo joined Philip Pullman and Jacqueline Wilson, also a former laureate, as a patron of the Story Museum.



Like us, Michael believes that it's

important to help parents encourage their children to read: "Books are not just for clever dicks. Stories belong to us all. The only people who can get that over are the parents."

**4 Making storytelling as easy as Pie**

Pie Corbett - government advisor, author and expert on the use of storytelling in education - joined our research and outreach team. Pie's training sessions for teachers and parents make storytelling simple and fill our files with rave reviews: "inspirational", "brilliant", "best ever".



**5 Auctioning an illustrator**

Well nearly. Korcky Paul kindly agreed to auction online the opportunity to appear in his next *Winnie the Witch* book to raise money for the Story Museum. The winning bid came from a Californian dad whose daughter is a keen Winnie fan. "Thankyou," he wrote, "for turning me into a hero."



**6 Filling schools with stories**

We are working with Oxfordshire County Council's Educational Effectiveness Unit in 5 primary schools to research the impact of



spending more time learning through story. Stage 1 of this 2-year project is about filling the teachers with stories, something they all seem to enjoy.



## 7 Celebrating Alice



On 07.07.07 we coordinated a citywide celebration of the first telling, in Oxford, of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a big moment for children's literature.

Museums, galleries, theatres, libraries, gardens, shops, cafés and even boats hosted 32 family events, most of which were free. We counted 8,000 people - but they would keep moving.



## 8 Introducing climate change

In collaboration with Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute we created and piloted *The Hottest Story*, a modern myth that introduces primary children to the ideas surrounding climate change. We have just received funding to create an accompanying interactive exhibition which will start touring next May.



## 9 Finding financial fairies

Financing and creating a major centre for children's story in Oxford will cost many millions so we have been busy putting a strong fundraising team and advisory panel into place. Our new fundraising fairies are currently finding £400,000 to pay for our development work over the next two years and are now over half-way.



## 10 Releasing a Little Red Hen

If you don't know the story of the little red hen, visit East Oxford. Following our partnership with the Isis schools cluster it seemed that every teacher, then child, then parent learned the tale of the busy hen who decides to "just do it myself".

## And one thing we didn't like

In November, Britain fell from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> in an international comparison of 'reading literacy' (the PIRLS study). Today's ten-year-olds read less well and less often and feel less positive about reading than their counterparts in 2001.



There is a lot of evidence that hearing, telling, reading and writing stories is good for children. It builds language and reasoning, imagination and empathy. And unlike many things that are good for them, children enjoy stories. But spoken and written stories are being displaced in children's lives. 37% now play computer games for three or more hours a day, something that concerns many parents, teachers and policy makers.

That's one reason why we're working hard to create The Story Museum, a showcase for 1001 ways of inspiring children through stories.

We hope you'll join us on the next stage of our journey towards this goal. In 2008 we'll be working with children and architects to create a model of the museum, launching our Big Book Group, producing our first book, revamping our website and celebrating the National Year of Reading.

Until then, we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

*The Story Museum team*