

Newsletter 11

Autumn 2010

OPENING WINDOWS INTO OTHER WORLDS

Story Museum team moves into Rochester House



Almost unpacked: The Story Museum offices

In September – and with great delight – the Story Museum team took up residence in magnificent offices on the ground floor of Rochester House. Not only is it wonderful to be working under one roof for the first time, but the setting is inspirational, deep in the historic city centre and overlooked by the rooms in Christ Church where Lewis Carroll wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The remaining ninety per cent of the building, 'the unoccupied territories', is now a bit cleaner, safer and drier too. The major roof leaks seem to be cured and we are busy repairing gutterings and windows to keep out the winter. We are hugely grateful to the generous donors and industrious volunteers who have made all this possible.

Supported by Arts Council England South East, The Kathleen Hannay Memorial Charity, Jessica & Peter Frankopan and Ginny & Humphrey Battcock.



Opening doors into the past

When we bought the building we knew about its previous life as a telephone exchange, postal offices, store and canteen. Since then volunteer Jane Cockcroft has been researching its earlier history with the help of Merton College archive, the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Oxford Jewish Heritage and our building advisors.

Together we're gradually piecing together the extraordinary history of the site for the past 1,000 years. We now know that it played an important part in the founding of the university, providing the first purpose-built student accommodation for Merton, arguably Oxford's oldest college.



Oxford's automatic telephone exchange in the 1930s

During September some 650 people toured the building as part of the Open Doors Weekend coordinated by Oxford Preservation Trust. Several of our visitors had worked in the building as GPO employees and were able to explain some of its stranger features and name faces in old photographs. We're now planning to record their reminiscences.

Another chance to see inside

If you missed Open Doors Weekend but would like a look our next open morning is on **Saturday, 20th November**. Drop in at 10.30 am for a brief tour.

The Story Museum
Rochester House
42 Pembroke Street
Oxford
OX1 1BP

For directions see: www.storymuseum.org.uk/contact-us/map-and-directions

Let your hair down in aid of The Story Museum!

What could be a better pre-Christmas treat than a warm rug, a delicious crepe and a comical tale in the sparkling setting of Creation Theatre's fabulous Mirror Tent? We hope you'll join us on Friday, 3rd December for a special performance in aid of The Story Museum of *Rapunzel – or The Magic Pig!* This lively version of the traditional fairytale was written by Annie Siddons for Kneehigh Theatre. Its bloodthirsty villains, idealistic prince, feisty heroine and – of course - magic pig will delight everyone from 6 to 96.

You'll find the tent at the MINI Plant in Cowley, Oxford, well signposted and with plentiful



parking. The performance starts at 7.30pm and lasts 2 hours 30 minutes including a 20-minute interval. You can order one of Michel's gourmet crêpes – savoury or sweet – to enjoy before or during the show. Tickets start from £11.50 with various offers available.

Book online at www.creationtheatre.co.uk or via Creation's box office on 01865 766266 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm). We'll all be there and look forward to seeing you.

We are very grateful to Creation Theatre for generously offering to donate profits from the evening to The Story Museum's capital appeal.



Shopping happily ever after



Have you ever wondered how Cinderella shines her sparkly slippers or giants clean their teeth? Ted Dewan, our first artist-in-residence, plans to fill a gap in the market with Rochester's

Story Supplies, a convenience store open only to fictional folk. As you pass through Oxford city centre before Christmas don't forget to check out the new shop window in Pembroke Street for Midnight Brand Glass Slipper Polish, Fee Fi Fo Gum and other story-land staples. One day humans may be able to shop there too. But only if they're very, very good.

Your Story Museum needs YOU

We're looking for energetic volunteers to help The Story Museum come true. Do you enjoy research? Do you like organising or hosting events? Can you write or subedit? Or update web pages? Could you help us maintain our images library or contact database? Are you a photographer or web designer or teacher? Or could we borrow your DIY skills for a while? If you think you might be interested in helping regularly or just occasionally please email sarah@storymuseum.org.uk for details.



Teachers TV

In June Story Museum trainer Adam Guillain lead a session with Year 4 pupils from Pegasus Primary School and The Dragon School to show 'Storytelling for Writing' working its magic. Filmed by Teachers TV as an example of good practice Adam used 'mapping' and 'stepping' techniques to help the two groups of children write imaginative stories together. To see a 5-minute clip visit www.teachers.tv/videos/good-practice-talk-to-write-3-developing-a-story-together.



And finally ...

If you are thinking about supporting the Story Museum with a donation (of any size) and would like to come and see the building and learn more about any aspects of our work, Sally Yeomans would be delighted to hear from you.

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tel: 01865 790050
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You can also give online at: <http://www.storymuseum.org.uk/the-story-museum/make-a-donation>

Thank you

www.storymuseum.org.uk