

Newsletter 8

Autumn 2008

8 THINGS TO CAST A SPELL ON YOU THIS AUTUMN

1. Going, going, gone

On October 16th, The Story Museum dusted off its fairy wings, polished its magic wands and welcomed over 70 guests to our inaugural black tie auction dinner at Gee's restaurant in Oxford. We enjoyed a truly sparkling evening (despite attempts by the stock market to thwart us) starting with a tasting of rare wines and champagne and culminating in an auction of unique lots which money can't (usually) buy. We were amazed by the generosity of the guests and hope that they enjoyed the evening as much as we did. The evening raised nearly £18,000 for the Museum and we would like to thank all those who attended and all who helped make it a night to remember.



3. Free stories for everyone

Throughout September and October, the Story Museum pitched its Storytent in Templars Square Shopping Centre in Cowley, Oxford, to give shoppers the chance to enjoy stories told by professional storytellers, totally free of charge. thanks to a generous donation from the Woodward Foundation. Vergine Gulbenkian, who organised the event and told stories alongside several others, estimated that 500 people had visited the Storytent with families returning regularly to hear a wide variety of stories being told in their local community.



3. The Big Read

We hope those of you who were able to come enjoyed our Big Read Event with Joanna Trollope and Libby Purves. It was a pleasure to welcome everyone to The Corner Club for a very special evening indeed, and it was a real privilege to join two such talented women in such wide-ranging conversation about writing, relationships and changing perspectives on life. Joanna also kindly drew our October Big Book Group draws and we're pleased to announce that Helen Zawadzki and Alexandra Jackson can now choose who they would like to visit both them and their book groups.



4. Flying high at Pegasus

In September Chris Smith and Pie Corbett ran a training event at Pegasus school attended by more than 300 staff from schools in Oxford's most disadvantaged areas. The training demonstrated how learning to tell stories can be a powerful and inspiring way for children to develop language skills, confidence and an enthusiasm for stories, especially those children who struggle with reading and writing. Since the training, seven of the schools have signed up to become pioneer Storytelling Schools, meaning that all the children in the school will become storytellers and learn an ever increasing repertoire of stories as they progress through the school, with the continued support of the Story Museum.





www.storymuseum.org.uk

5. Take five

Hallowe'en is upon us, and what better way to get into the 'spirit' of things than with some spooky stories!

5 books...to charm your children

Funny Bones, Janet & Allan Ahlberg

The Witches, Roald Dahl

Pumpkin Soup, Helen Cooper

Winnie the Witch Collection, Valerie Thomas and Korky Paul

Titchy Witch and the Birthday Broomstick, Rose Impey

And if you prefer silly to scary, how about trying some of these books...

5 books...to tickle your toddler

Make Music (Bing Bunny), Ted Dewan

Ketchup on Your Cornflakes, Nick Sharratt

Bumpus Jumpus Dinosaurumpus, Tony Mitton and Guy Parker Rees

It's the Bear!, Jez Alborough

Pants, Giles Andreae and Nick Sharratt

6. Enter the Barefoot Books Young Storyteller competition

Barefoot Books are running an online video competition for young storytellers with some amazing prizes up for grabs. If you know a young storyteller who might fancy winning a trip for two to New York City and the chance to perform their story live at world-famous toy store FAO Schwarz, you have until November to dig out the video camera and enter at www.barefoot-books.com.



7. Story Museum says no

The Story Museum has added its name to the petition against the age-banding of children's books, a system whereby ages would be printed on all children's books in order to make it easier for less experienced book buyers to pick books (in the absence of a qualified advisor). Authors, including



Philip Pullman, Anne Fine and Michael Rosen, are up in arms about this and we have added our name to the campaign because we agree that age-banding will turn off as many kids as it attracts. It is impossible to age band many books meaningfully and accurately (for example, *Harry Potter*, *Northern Lights*, even *Cat in the Hat*), because

it makes books seem like developmental hurdles to climb. We think it's fine to age-recommend books in other ways (e.g. to have shelves for different age groups) but not to brand this all over the books. If you want to add your name to the petition, or to find out more about who is against age-banding and why, go to www.notoagebanding.org.uk.

8. The Story Museum online

The Story Museum goes on-line this month with a buying facility to make it easier for you to order any of the books that we mention in our newsletters. And, best of all, 5% of each purchase is donated to the Story Museum, at no extra expense to you. Just click on the link below, or if that doesn't work (or if you're viewing this as a print copy!) type the URL into your browser. Happy shopping! <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/thestomus-21>.

The Midcounties Co-operative



Creative Partnerships



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