

YOUNG TONGUES @ FESTIVAL AT THE EDGE

Become a storyteller at England's leading storytelling festival.



Learn about storytelling and avoid putting up the tent at the same time. Storytellers Graham Langley and Fiona Collins will be running two training sessions for young storytellers at this year's Festival at the Edge. These are open to all young people aged 14 and above. If you have never told stories before then we will be giving you ways of starting off. If you have already made a start we will help you to develop your storytelling and performance skills. We will then be around during the weekend if you want support and encouragement in telling in the story round or at the campfires.

Where to listen to more storytellers

The Society for Storytelling website – www.sfs.org.uk – is a great starting point for information about storytelling. It also contains a wide-ranging list of storytelling events across the country where you can listen to stories, tell your own story or get ideas from other storytellers.

YOUNG STORYTELLER OF WALES 2008

2007 saw the first Young Storyteller of Wales competition at Llangollen. The winners entered the Young Storyteller of the Year in Birmingham. Most of the young tellers came from NE Wales and it was a great and exciting afternoon of storytelling. The search will be on for more young storytellers in Wales on 27 January 08. Contact Fiona to find out more.

A busy time for Young Storytellers of the Year in 2007

As part of their award the winners Rachel Rose Reid, Rebecca Nixon, Tim Ralphs and Jo Blake with musician Gregg Cave received a platform at Festival at the Edge, England's premier storytelling festival. Rachel, Tim and Jo were also invited to perform at Beyond the Borders festival in Wales as part of a growing demand for lively young performers.

Since she first entered the competition in 2005 Jo has been in increasing demand as a storyteller in the Midlands. See more about the progress of storytelling group Annamation elsewhere in the newsletter. Young people are creating a new buzz in the storytelling world.



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Rachel Rose Reid receives the Young Storyteller 2007 award

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Whitby Folk Festival, 18 – 24 August

As always Whitby Folk Festival will play host to a programme of storytelling events. The daily storytelling sessions are a great kicking off point for anyone wanting to dip their toes into storytelling. This friendly, easy-going session allows you to build up your skills and confidence as the week goes by. You will be sure to meet up with other young storytellers who have taken part in previous Young Storyteller of the Year events.

The Story of Annamation

Anna O'Brien

In early 2005 Birmingham-based storytelling group Annamation was at its budding stage. That was when we met Graham Langley, whose mission to bring storytelling back to adult audiences and passion to train up young storytellers opened our eyes to a realm of inspiration and opportunity we had never imagined. In February 2005 we took part, somewhat nervously, in the Young Storyteller of the Year 2005, came home greatly encouraged and with the First prize and a 'Highly Commended' between us.

Two years passed when Annamation, as a company of storytellers, learned and grew. Graham then turned our attention to training other young storytellers and so in March 2007 we had the great privilege of training new enthusiasts to take part in the Young Storyteller Award. The calibre of storytelling was so high and the atmosphere so electric that everybody left with a great sense of achievement. Compèring the event was a real joy and it helped us see how much had happened over the last two years.

We're very excited about the future of storytelling and the part we can play in it. We have plans to tour a new show in March 2008 funded by the Arts Council and in association with Midlands Arts Centre. So watch this space!

Burton Borough School, Newport, Shropshire *Amy Douglas*

Burton Borough after-school reading club decided they would like to take part in the Young Storyteller of the Year 2007 Birmingham. Over six sessions, with lots of silly games, laughter, hard work and occasional frustration and nerves, we explored where to find stories, transferring tales from page to tongue, turning shy whispers into voices ringing around the library, body language and presentation.

At last the day of the competition dawned. All the group were interested and impressed to hear the other entrants as the only storytellers they had heard up until this point were me and, of course, each other. After a great day it was time to climb back aboard the minibus and head home. There was a wonderful buzz on the bus. We had won the group competition and been highly commended in the solo competition!

Young Storyteller of the Year 2008

8 March

Birmingham Library Theatre

Next year Birmingham City Council will host the Young Storyteller of the Year on 8 March at the Library Theatre in the middle of the city. Get this date in your diary and start practising NOW. There will be awards for the best under-18 and under-25. There will also be other awards including best group. Because the day is International Women's Day there will be a special award for the best young woman storyteller.

You can enter as an individual or through a school or other group. You will need to tell a traditional story lasting no more than ten minutes. Contact us if you want more information or if you would like help in developing your storytelling or in starting a group.



Young storytellers gather together in the Foyer at the *mac's* Hexagon Theatre during a break at the Young Storyteller of the Year 2007. A total of 26 young storytellers took part.