

Cambridge Storytellers Annual Report 2016-17



This year at Cambridge Storytellers has been more than usually varied and exciting. This year we helped promote not one but two storytelling performances at the Junction – *Fire in the North Sky*, and *Hunting the Giant's Daughter*, both big epic pieces with world class storytellers and musicians.

Shows with music were a feature this year: Tuup's *Tales from the Rainforest*, and Michael Dacre's very different tour de force, *The Haunted Inn*. But storytelling doesn't have to be more than one person with a tale to tell, as was shown by Cath Little's 'Lady of the Orchard' and our own Glenys Newton's 'Scars in their Eyes' – two more shows both utterly compelling in their own way.

We continued our tradition of group performances, with an evening of stories about luck at the Scott Polar Museum, and our regular appearances at Stourbridge Fair and Mill Road Winter Fair. Members of the group also performed at the East Anglian Storytelling Festival.

Our story round has found a new home at the Blue Moon pub – and we have found a second venue for occasional early evening events at Stir Café. We are proud that now we put on our shows only at venues with disabled access, after a long search for affordable places that also accommodate our audience's other needs – acoustics and accessible parking/transport.

There have been some other new developments this year: we have changed to a more accessible bank account which enables us to use online ticketing. And this year I am stepping down as chairman after ten years: so it seems a good moment to look back at what we've done over the last decade.

We've had an incredible variety of storytellers from all over the world visit Cambridge since 2007: we've weathered peaks and troughs of audience support and are beginning to build good-size audiences that allow us to break even. We've set up the Story Round as a friendly and safe space for people to try out telling stories and where you are guaranteed an eclectic and surprising mix of tales. We've run workshops that have encouraged new storytellers: we've set up monthly children's storytelling sessions, and we've mentored young tellers for the 'Young Storyteller of the Year' competition. We've built up partnerships with the Cambridge Junction and the production company Adverse Camber. We've developed local stories: shows of Fen legends and stories about Cambridge in the Second World War collected from local elders. We have an extremely healthy budget, and the happy dilemma of having to work out how best to use our funds for the future. But above all, the thing I have appreciated the most is the amazing committee, who have put themselves out to get things running smoothly, supported each other and most of all me, and who I've really enjoyed spending time with. They know how much I appreciate them!

I'm looking forward to a new committee with amazing new ideas, much better organisational skills, and to Cambridge Storytellers going places in the near future.