

# Story Time at the Allen Gallery

with Michael O'Leary and countless young assistants



Michael begins each session himself but encourages the story telling capabilities in all children (and adults). Bringing with him a selection of materials, children are encouraged to make their own character puppets and tell stories in their own words. Above, Wednesday afternoon's group show off their puppets before taking them home and recounting the stories again and again. (photo CM/07)

Below, Friday afternoon's group with their puppets. (photo CM/22)



Michael O'Leary enthralled local children during mid-term as he held two story telling sessions a day in the Allen Gallery.

Michael is an experienced story teller and ex-infant and junior teacher based in Southampton. He tours schools and has been heard on several local radio stations as well.

Stories, listening to them and telling them, have been part of my life for as long as I can remember. When in mid-life I became a teacher, the value of sharing these stories with children, and indeed other adults, became obvious. My style is based on building a rapport with the listeners," he explains.

"Interactive to me doesn't mean expecting



Above, three youngsters listen enthralled as the story telling comes to a close on Friday afternoon. (photo CM/19)  
Right, Michael illustrates a point on Tuesday. (photo CM/15)



the children to make pantomime stock responses, it means discussion and communication.

"I bring my story box and musical instruments which help enliven the session and encourage participants to tell stories, to recognise and develop their own abilities."

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to recognise and develop their own abilities."



Above, one of Thursday's groups gather round at the end of the session. (photo AL/01). Below, at the start of each session, the magic parachute is laid out. Children take off their shoes and gather on the silk to be transported into a land of hobgoblins and genies, Old Nan or Green-fingered Jenny. This Friday morning group were soon spirited away. (photo AL/00)



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