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Step into Stories with Bewdley Festival is back for another amazing year on April 25th 2026. We are so excited to share our stories with you - especially as it is the National Year of Reading this year. If you're ready to Go All In then come and join us to meet amazing authors, poets, illustrators and more!

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So why should you try to STEP INTO STORIES? Well there is lots of research out there to say that stories are a great way to develop all sorts of skills like empathy (understanding your own and others feelings and points of view), memory, creativity and curiosity. Stories are mirrors where we see ourselves, but they are also windows into other worlds where we can meet and get to know characters who are different to us too. Stories let us travel to many worlds even if we can't travel there in real life. But most of all we think you should step into stories with us because it is such good FUN!

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CinderGorilla: The Musical

CinderGorilla wants to go to the jungle disco ball, but her Aunt Linda & her cousins Gertrude & Grace won't allow it. They all want to dance with Travis, the Disco Prince but Cinder just wants to boogie. And then the Hairy Godmother (an orangutan with a wand) arrives on the scene. Cinder shall go to the ball and you are invited to join her & be a part of this unique event in which writer/performer/musician Gareth P Jones transforms his picture book into a musical extravaganza!

Also, you'll hear about Gareth's brand new book, Chicken Vs. Egg, a picture book that finally answers the question: Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

Fiona is a picture book author whose writing has been translated into over 10 different languages. With a mixture of wonder and humour, Fiona's books are sure to bring joy to all. In her session at Step into Stories, Fiona will be reading A Swift Return and Do NOT Eat the Egg. Fiona's events are always very interactive and this one will include some signing, a bit of singing, a quiz and a craft.

Join Jellycat author Meredith as she reads from her picture book for the iconic soft toy, Odell Octopus! Stretch and wiggle with Odell as she learns to love the things that make her unique. And who knows, perhaps Odell's good friend Bartholomew Bear might also make an appearance!

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All aboard for the ghost ride of your life! Join author Emily Randall Jones as she takes you on a whistlestop tour of old English folklore, steam-filled carriages and ghostly folk tunes with a mysterious conductor known as Cribbins. You'll get to meet Emily and have your books signed, hear all about her eerie train themed adventure story, before climbing aboard a real life heritage train to travel from Kidderminster to Bewdley, where you can enjoy the rest of the day at our Step into Stories Festival. Return tickets to Kidderminster are included.

Join Jennifer Killick, bestselling author of the Dread Wood books, for an hour of chills and thrills, as she introduces her latest series Serial Chillers, your newest spooky obsession.

Join award-winning children's author and playwright Piers Torday for an inspiring session on how he turned the discovery of a real-life mysterious long-lost map into an enthralling epic adventure for younger readers with his latest series, Midnight Treasure and Wolf Crown. Follow Piers on his travels in Transylvania, learn what to do when you meet a wolf, and how to create your own monster of the night...

Step into the world between the rain, where shadows hold secrets and everyday items might just be portals to another world! Join Susan Cahill, author of *The World Between the Rain*, for an interactive storytelling adventure exploring portals, emotions, and the power of imagination—what happens when we step into the unknown, and how stories help us understand ourselves.

Dommy B will take you on a wild ride telling you all about his dino pals - a one man poetry adventure involving a lot of noise, a lot of fun and most of all...a lot of dinosaurs!!! Watch out! Dinosaurs about!

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Create Your Own Story Illustration will be an open activity which encourages creative freedom in a collective artwork. Visitors will be welcomed to sketch and doodle on a large blank space and by the end of the festival a collaborative illustration mural will represent the event. Bec Tonks will assist and encourage an outpouring of doodles and illustrations alongside adding her own as we explore drawing and visual storytelling together.

Ian Douglas is a Storyteller and Theatre Maker who works extensively across the British Isles. With over 20 years of experience delivering storytelling, performance and theatre activities for schools, arts organisations, communities, and festivals across Britain, he has developed a practise approach which mixes sensitivity, comedic energy and wit leading to a style all of his own.

The origins of Ian's work are steeped in the traditions of street theatre which has helped him

develop his unique storytelling style. His work has been described as 'truly inspirational' and draws upon a rich vein of British folk tales and world myths.

Matthew tells some of his favourite stories for families. Travel with him to India to meet a Raja who, above all else, loves cheese. Or perhaps a trip to Japan where lives the smallest boy in the world.

And Matthew will also be doing his new one man show Forest Tales of the Olden World, a storytelling show.

In a far future, a young girl reflects on her grandmother's stories. Stories of an ancient, forgotten world. Our world.

This show may be unsuitable for children under 9 years old due to some scarier scenes.

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We are very excited to be able to share even more free events with you this year! Come to our amazing drop in events at St George's Hall. You can swap your old book for a different one at our Big Bewdley Book Swap Shop, write part of a new story about our festival mascot Trickys Troll, pick up your story tale trail and collect your prize afterwards and maybe even meet Trickys Troll himself! You can take part in Be Tonks mural workshop, use our dressing up box to create your own story tale character or visit our official book shop in their mobile book van! And if you're all tired out and need a little break, why not have a seat in our quiet corner to share a book or two with someone your adult or friends.

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It is going to be a truly magical day so be sure to buy your tickets as soon as you can. We can't wait to step into stories with you all on April 25th 2026!