



Call Out for Contemporary Cyfarwyddion for the Mycelium Story Hub

YEAR 2

Remuneration

Fee: £7,750 for 12 months, based on 58 days of funded time, worked flexibly over that time plus £1,000 towards developing your own practice (ring-fenced time for your own creative work) and £500 towards professional development (mentoring, coaching, shadowing, courses)

Dates of the post

January 2023-January 2024

Useful information

What is the Mycelium Story Hub?

The aim of the Mycelium Story Hub is to develop a **storytelling ecosystem** rooted in local communities that will connect to a larger ecosystem across Wales. What we mean by a storytelling ecosystem is a network of ongoing storytelling activities taking place across the country, supporting and enriching communities and providing regular work to storytellers. Our goal is to see oral storytelling as an art form grow and flourish across Wales and for storytellers and people who work with storytellers to thrive.

Currently, as part of Year 1 of our project, we have seven postholders in place that we are supporting to work in their communities across Wales. These people are storytellers (Cyfarwyddion) and Producers. Examples of their work are included later in this pack.

Our Hub is made up of various partners who want to support the development of storytelling as an art form across Wales. They support the Cyfarwyddion and the Producers in their roles. Currently, represented on the Hub are Beyond the Border International Storytelling Festival, Citrus Arts, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru, Menter Iaith Cymru and PeopleSpeakUp. Also supporting the project are Theatr Soar and Head4Arts.

The Hub meets regularly and is involved in recruiting new Cyfarwyddion and Producers for the project and supporting them in their roles.

The Hub's work is supported by Arts Council Wales Connect & Flourish funding.

What is the role of the Cyfarwydd?

We are recruiting two storytellers to develop programmes of storytelling activity which reach widely and deeply into communities, as part of Year 2 of the Mycelium Story Hub project.

Background: In medieval Wales, the role of the "Cyfarwydd", the old Welsh storytellers, was to capture and reflect what was happening in their communities, offering subtle guidance through the stories they told. Starting as an apprentice, the Cyfarwydd would have become a highly respected member of society, travelling and bringing news back to the courts, and reflecting the society of their time through their stories – so a networking figure in many ways.

As a **Contemporary Cyfarwydd**, you will develop a programme of storytelling activity, including storytelling performances and engagement, which reaches more widely and deeply into the community where your residency is based. Some communities will be geographic, but we are also open to applications based on communities of interest. Over the course of your role, your work will:

- enable more partners from across your community to connect creatively with storytelling
- enable more people to experience storytelling as a meaningful part of their daily lives
- enable more people to develop creativity and confidence in engaging with storytelling
- enable the expansion and deepening of your own practice and skills through the work you initiate and focused time on your own artistic development.

You will have ownership to develop your own ideas and programme in partnership with your community and to respond to the needs and potential of your area. Oral storytelling is a very diverse practice, and we are open to applications that reflect that diversity including across a broad range of work, health and wellbeing, language learning, education, performance, nurturing new artists, and training.

As part of your application, we will ask you to specify the communities you are most keen to work with. These could be:

- Community of interest (people linked by a shared interest/work) e.g. working with Women's Refuges across Wales, or working within a healthcare setting.
- Communities of identity (shared culture or experience) e.g. working with South Asian communities.

- Geographical Community (town/street/area) e.g. working in Rhondda Cynon Taff.
- Communities of Circumstance (people knitted together by a shared experience) e.g. working with people who have experienced grief and loss.

For more examples, please look at the work completed by our current postholders towards the end of this recruitment pack.

As a Contemporary Cyfarwydd, you will fulfil the role of storyteller within your specific community, responding to community needs and potential, fostering diverse cultural partnerships while also nurturing your own artistic growth.

We are especially keen to hear from artists who are interested in working through co-creative principles, working with or alongside people and communities to develop skills and showcase people's capabilities. We would also like to prioritise the involvement and experience of young people and families, D/deaf and disabled people, Black, Asian and global majority people, the LGBTQIA+ community, and Welsh speakers.

Fees: Each Cyfarwydd will be guaranteed a starting fund of £7,750 (paid monthly), approximately quarter of the average annual UK salary for around 58 days of funded time. Organisations that wish to develop projects working with you will be encouraged to augment these fees and expenses, in negotiation with the postholder, based on the scale and ambitions of their projects and their access to resources. You will have discretion to allocate your time and negotiate fees within a suggested framework. You will be supported in finding additional funds and making funding applications where appropriate by BTB and Hub partners.

Person Specification for the role of Contemporary Cyfarwydd

Essential:

- Experience of developing and delivering participatory storytelling activities with people from a variety of backgrounds
- An understanding of a community development approach
- Experienced storyteller or performer with an understanding of a wide range of audiences/participants
- Experience of developing effective working relationships with partners
- Experience of fulfilling project outcomes
- Has experience of monitoring and evaluating projects
- Is self-motivated and has the capacity to be administratively self-sufficient
- Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection
- Imaginative, enthusiastic and flexible approach
- Great communication skills
- Is committed to equal opportunities and social justice
- Is able to represent Beyond the Border Wales' International Storytelling Festival at all levels

Desirable:

- Has existing creative networks within communities in Wales
- Has capacity to offer training and mentoring to other storytellers
- Experience negotiating partnerships and fundraising
- Capacity to work in Welsh language

The successful candidate will be subject to a DBS check and satisfactory references.

We warmly welcome applications from those who are significantly underrepresented in our sector, such as disabled people, Welsh speakers and individuals from LGBTQIA+, Black, Asian and Global Majority Communities.

We will offer support to people making applications. We will run an open session for people to find out more and can chat about the role. We will offer guaranteed interviews to Welsh speakers, and LGBTQIA+, Black, Asian and Global Majority and Disabled applicants.

Support and Networking: The Mycelium Hub, made up of a number of partners, will support your work. You will also be supported by a member of Beyond the Border's team who will arrange regular chats and points of contact with you.

Evaluation: BTB has appointed an independent evaluator to help document and evaluate the strengths and learning from this initiative, to help shape future opportunities. Contribution to evaluation will be a requirement for all postholders.

To Apply:

Send your CV with a letter of application to us:

Please include:

1. Your relevant skills and experience as a storyteller.
2. What you are interested in exploring as a Contemporary Cyfarwydd, in relation to both community activities and your own development
3. Details of the community you are particularly keen to be based within – whether community of interest, identity, geography or circumstance
4. A short explainer of why oral storytelling as an art form is important to you, and why you want to do it.

You can also apply by video, filming yourself answering these questions.

Please send your application to recruitment@beyondtheborder.com by **Monday 10th October** at **5pm**.

We will be holding two online webinars to share information about the project and the jobs available on these dates:

What is the Mycelium Hub and the jobs available? Including a Q&A with the BTB team. August 25th, 7-8pm, on Zoom.

How to be a storyteller, September 7th, 7-8.30pm, on Zoom.

If you have any questions about the role that you would like to discuss before sending your application, please email recruitment@beyondtheborder.com.

If you have any accessibility requests that we can put in place to support your application, please email us too.

Current examples of Contemporary Cyfarwyddion projects

Deb Winter (in partnership with PeopleSpeakUp)

Deb Winter is a storyteller and a writer based in West Wales. She has also worked for many years in the voluntary sector, leading training courses for volunteers, staff, trustees and service-users of charities. She specialises in confidence-building, communication skills, public speaking, training & group-facilitation skills and is known for running supportive workshops that are welcoming to all. Because of her voluntary sector background she brings the experience of working with vulnerable people into her work in the field of 'applied storytelling' as an Associate Storyteller with PeopleSpeakUp and Beyond the Border.

Currently, as part of her role as Cyfarwydd, Deb is creating new 'green' shows, inspired by a love of the wild and rising to the challenge of using storytelling to raise awareness of climate change, working on new stories about rising sea levels, deforestation and the impact of 'fast fashion', in partnership with environmental groups. She's also creating links with local groups to promote the use of storytelling in the area of mental health and well-being, particularly for isolated and/or vulnerable people. Finally, she is continuing her work with Fishguard Storytelling, building and consolidating work she was already doing as a storyteller.

Watch a video of Deb's work here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=453292259936894>

Phil Okwedy (in partnership with PeopleSpeakUp)

Phil is a performance storyteller and myth-maker based in Tenby who draws deeply on his dual heritage and multiple cultures. He regularly performs in storytelling clubs and festivals across Wales, as well as at Kea Festival in Greece and Fabula Festival in Sweden. His first book, *Will & the Welsh Black Cattle*, is a set of Welsh folktales that are woven together and framed around the mythology of the ancient cattle drovers. Phil has recently been working with National Theatre Wales on *Go Tell the Bees* and was commissioned as part of Literature Wales' *Representing Wales, Developing Writers of Colour* programme.

Like Deb, Phil had already worked with PeopleSpeakUp as a storyteller before he became a Contemporary Cyfarwydd. He has worked on a number of projects that were personally important to him part of his role, including the *Men in Conversation* project, supporting groups to explore and talk about things they would not normally talk about.

Watch more here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BTBStorytelling/videos/1143577409775478/>

Jo Munton & Sandra Evans

Jo Munton is a storytelling puppeteer from Mid Wales who has performed from Spain to Siberia, from Ynys Mon to Bridgend.

Her latest online show, "The Tales I was Told Tell" was as part of an international puppeteer residency, and then supported by Moving Parts Newcastle Puppet Festival.

She is a passionate Welsh learner but has found the process slow. "Being dyslexic, I know my progress might be slower than most. I've repeated the same course a few times to really allow the learning to settle."

She is collaborating with experienced Welsh tutor Sandra Evans as part of her Contemporary Cyfarwydd residency to offer a series of workshops for Welsh learners to support their development and language acquisition through storytelling. Some of these workshops take place in-person – across the length and breadth of Wales – and some online. At the end of the project, she intends to have a celebration of storytelling by Welsh learners. She is working with a pan-Wales community – even an international one at times! – in her work with Welsh learners.

Mair Tomos Ifans

Mair has been a storyteller for the past twenty years, concentrating on presenting stories, songs, and the traditional practices of Wales. Born and raised in Meirionnydd, she works the length and breadth of Wales and further afield, and since Covid-19 has been presenting aspects of the ancient culture through new technology. She works in Welsh and English, using music and song to enhance her storytelling.

As part of the Mycelium Storytelling Hub, she is working in Mawddwy and Mawddach: the south part of Meirionnydd County. This area encompasses the south of the Mawddach Valley, Bro Dysynni, Dyffryn Dulas, and the northern banks of the Dyfi River and Cwmwd Mawddwy. Her work is hyper-local: she is gathering local stories and finding ways of sharing them with her community, both in Welsh and English, and is collecting people in cafes for small storytelling sessions, as well as riding around on her trusty bike visiting ancient story sites.

