

## Quirky installation unveiled in the West End

The team at the Story Museum has made a surprising find at their new Pembroke Street premises in Oxford's West End: a household goods shop catering to an entirely fictional community.

Its current artist-in-residence, Oxford-based author/artist Ted Dewan, recently uncovered the shop "Rochester's Story Supplies" when he removed a plywood hoarding from the window.

"I couldn't believe my eyes," he said. "The shop seems to be intact and full of the weirdest products I've ever seen. There are packets of magic beans, shoe polish for glass slippers, dental floss for giants, even wolf repellent. It looks like someone boarded it up years ago."

Rochester House, which will be transformed over the next four years into a world-class attraction, has been empty for some time. Staff at the Story Museum are baffled by Ted's discovery.

Said director Kim Pickin: "It's in a separate section of the old building which we haven't been renovating. We weren't aware of its existence before, but Oxford enjoys an unusually rich heritage of stories. This might well be the only shop still serving some of these imaginary characters – and it's well worth a look."

As the Story Museum is all about celebrating stories, it will not be relocating the shop or closing it down. "We're very pleased to have it on the premises, while the Story Museum itself is still under wraps", said Kim. "We hope to come across more surprises as our project develops. Passers by never know what they might see as our very own story begins to unfold."

The quirky display has been generating huge interest and now appears to be on the visitor circuit, judging by the number of tourists passing by for a view. To see the mysterious shop front for yourself, walk past Rochester House, 42 Pembroke Street, Oxford OX1 1BX.

### ENDS

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

**The Story Museum** exists to celebrate children's stories and to share 1001 enjoyable ways for young people to learn through stories as they grow. It takes story performances, exhibitions, activities and ideas to schools and communities. In 2014 the Story Museum plans to open a magical new world centre of children's literature and storytelling in the heart of Oxford. The Museum's patrons are Philip Pullman, Michael Morpurgo and Jacqueline Wilson. Its Trustees include publisher David Fickling and award-winning children's playwright David Wood OBE.

**Ted Dewan** is an award-winning illustrator and cartoonist. Since winning the 1992 Mother Goose Award for *Inside the Whale and Other Animals*, he has created both fiction and non-fiction picture books, including *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Top Secret*, and *Crispin, The Pig Who Had It All* (which won the Blue Peter Award). His other work includes the design and building of Oxford's first artist's Christmas Tree, the Cyclemas Tree.