

Aunt Agony set to split sore sides

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Moat Brae, Scotland's National Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling, in Dumfries, is welcoming a spectacular cast of characters for a brand-new promenade performance, NeverWonderland.

Every Thursday and Saturday at 11am and 2pm, Alice, the Mad Hatter and the White Rabbit from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* will take on supervillain Aunt Agony, with the power of stories and a little help from visitors.

The performance was entirely devised by Moat Brae's Storyweavers, a group of emerging practitioners who have been supported to spend a year developing their skills at the venue by the Holywood Trust.

Flora Burns, chairwoman of Moat Brae, said: "We are thrilled to welcome visitors to this exciting promenade performance and proud as punch of our Storyweaver team who have devised it."

Karen Ward Boyd, director of the Holywood Trust, added: "We are delighted to support the development of the Storyweavers project at Moat Brae. The young people involved in this project are developing their skills in script writing, performance, and event planning and management and it is bringing great new energy to Moat Brae."

"We look forward to experiencing more of their performances and seeing the impact of their work within the community."

Moat Brae will be open throughout the summer holidays for a fun family day out with storytelling sessions and workshops every day, the Neverland Discovery Garden, café and gift shop, as well as the Enchanted Journeys: *Adventures in Storytelling* exhibition by Studio MinaLima.

Meanwhile, Moat Brae recently welcomed local Ukrainian families as the first visitors when it reopened.

The guests were invited to the brand new exhibition of beloved children's stories.

They were able to take a seat at Carroll's Mad Hatter's tea party, walk along Baum's yellow brick road, bring Collodi's Pinocchio to life by pulling the puppet's strings or find Tinkerbell in the Darling house.

Each child also received a book from Moat Brae's Adopt a Book initiative.

Dame Joanna Lumley, patron of the Moat Brae Trust, said: "To have a brand new exhibition from the inimitable Studio MinaLima come to Moat Brae this summer is an absolute dream come true."

"What it offers for book lovers, young and old, from near and far, is a chance to explore these classics of children's literature in a unique and truly exhilarating way and to create precious memories to stand the test of time, just as the stories have themselves."

Robin Stapley and Eddie Newquist, the creative leads for Studio MinaLima, said: "Each element of Studio MinaLima's *Enchanted Journeys* exhibition is designed to invite visitors to enter into the scene and to experience each classic story afresh, creating

a truly memorable family experience."

The project was led by Studio MinaLima's experiential designers, Robin Stapley and Eddie Newquist, who have a rich history of creating successful experiences for the Walt Disney Company and Universal Studios as well as notable museums and cultural, public and retail spaces around the world.

Moat Brae will be open throughout the summer holidays for a fun family day out with storytelling sessions from Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm.



Promenade performance NeverWonderland launches at Moat Brae





House characters Storytelling by Studio Minalima at Moat Brae

