



SPOOKY TALES: Story teller Mike O'Leary.

Chilling tales by the campfire

COME and listen to the chilling tale of Marrowbones Hill, or the mystery of the River of Blood — you'll be glad of the warmth of the campfire.

These New Forest stories — both with an icy kernel of truth — will be told by master storyteller Mike O'Leary, visiting Hartwood Wood near Beaulieu for a session of yarns in the dark.

Mike, who used to teach at Newlands Infants School in Millbrook, now dedicates most of his time to researching and relating stories from all over the world.

"I tell a lot of legends from Ireland, especially about Finn McCool, but my roots are a mixture of Irish, Welsh and English," he said.

Some of Mike's tales are well-known, but others are based on his own life or anecdotes from people he's met.

"Marrowbones Hill is near Picket Post, and a chap who is now a middle-aged farmer had a creepy experience there as a little boy in the 1950s," said Mike.

"He was exploring a ruined house and followed a trail of whistles and pipes to the hill, which had become hollow and transparent . . .

"And the River of Blood story is based on something that happened to me when I was sleeping out in the Forest near the Rufus Stone," he said.

The event has been organised by the Countryside Education Trust, and takes place tonight at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £5 including a hot drink, and can be booked on 01590 612401.