



■ Renowned storyteller Michael O' Leary with sisters 13-year-old Hannah and 10-year-old Naomi-Mai Pilcher, on Beacon Hill  
Ref: 33-4458B

## Sun god Ra adds poignance to the magical art of story-telling

**STORYTELLER** Michael O' Leary brought his magical art to Beacon Hill on a sunny afternoon recently, enhanced by his pipe and flute music.

Part of Basingstoke's annual festival, which finished the same day, the free event attracted about five families, including 17 children, outdoors on the hottest day since records began.

"There would have been more if people hadn't been baking their brains out," he said.

The 5th Earl of Carnarvon, who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922 with Howard Carter, is buried on Beacon Hill, prompting an Egyptian flavour to his tales, starting with the creation of ancient Egypt.

The story revolved around Egyptian sun god, Ra, and how he came into being, according to legend. "It was rather appropriate, given the weather," said Mr O'Leary.

The theme continued with a Egyptian mask making workshop, by park rangers from

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Amanda Robb and Marilyn Davies.

King Arthur and his sleeping warriors under Beacon Hill, and their awakening on midsummer's night in June, when they emerge from underground, was the subject for the second story

The final story, "By yarrow and by rue," was based on the legend of an Irishman who flew from Western Ireland to England, in this case Beacon Hill, travelling on a broomstick.

The entranced audience, including families from Portsmouth and Overton, cooled down in the breeze created by games with a mock parachute, decorated with yellow stars, as it was flung into the air.

Most of the audience climbed to the top of Beacon Hill afterwards, to enjoy a bird's eye view of the area.

Michael O'Leary, an ex-teacher, can be contacted on telephone number (023) 8063 5083, mobile (07733) 326500.