

SOMERSET ILLUMINATED CARNIVALS

Carnival facts!

- *'Carnival' derives from the Italian carne levare meaning 'to remove meat', referring to abstinence during Lent.*
- *Somerset carnivals are thought to be the largest illuminated parades in the world.*
- *Carnival floats are commonly referred to as 'carts' in Somerset as they were historically horse-drawn vehicles.*
- *Up to around 50 giant illuminated carts and around 50 masquerading entries parade in each carnival.*
- *Feature carts are all-action life and movement shows, tableau carts portray a motionless scene, and comic feature carts aim to amuse the crowds.*
- *Carnivals take over 2 hours to pass any one spot on a two-mile route, and usually start at around 7.00pm and finish at around 10.00pm.*
- *Carts can cost around £20,000 to construct, and organising committees spend between £10,000 and £30,000 to stage each carnival annually.*
- *Around 50 cups awarded at each carnival and presented at events after the season.*
- *Bridgwater carnival culminates in the unique squibbing display of over 150 giant squibs attached to coshes being let off simultaneously.*
- *Over £100,000 was collected at the Somerset County carnivals in 2010 and went towards the costs of staging the carnivals, and to local charities and organisations.*
- *Over 500,000 coins can be collected on a carnival night.*
- *Carnival carts are judged on cart build-up; presentation and general effect; musical appropriateness; life and movement or*

stillness or comedy content; lighting; costume and make up; and originality and entertainment value.

Andrew Tallon, March 2011