

## Carnival season already underway



Carnival time in Shepton Mallet

THE main Somerset carnivals may be held in November, but this year's carnival season actually began in Sturminster Newton – in August!

Sturminster Newton is part of the Wessex Grand Prix circuit, which also includes Frome and Castle Cary.

Frome's procession will be held on Saturday, September 25th and Castle Cary's on Saturday, October 16th. Frome's children's carnival will be held on the afternoon of the 25th; Castle Cary's children's carnival takes place on Saturday, October 9th.

September and October also see the South Somerset Federation carnivals, covering Wellington, Ilminster, Chard and Taunton before the main processions – part of the Somerset County Guy Fawkes Carnival Association – get underway, starting in Bridgwater, on Friday, November 5th.

North Petherton follows Bridgwater on Saturday, November 6th, followed by:

- Burnham-on-Sea: Monday, November 8th
- Shepton Mallet: Wednesday, November 10th
- Wells: Friday, November 12th
- Glastonbury: Saturday, November 13th
- Weston-super-Mare: Monday, November 15th

An independent carnival is also held in Midsomer Norton, on Thursday, November 12th. Organisers one day hope they will be allowed to return to the main Somerset circuit.

Together, the carnivals raise thousands of pounds for charity each year. Organisers say just a £1 donation from each spectator would mean a massive boost to the amount they collect.

# It's Carnival

*A Group of carnival enthusiasts has w  
celebrate the region's unique tradition  
annual processions to visitors. Mark A*

CONCERNS that the heritage of Somerset's famous illuminated carnivals could be lost unless more people are encouraged to take part in the tradition led to a group of volunteers launching a new campaign.

Carnival in Somerset Promotion Project believes the value of the annual event is overlooked. The campaigners say traditional Somerset carnivals offer a range of economic, social and cultural benefits – together, the carnivals bring in an estimated £40 million of tourist and other revenue each year.

CISPP chairman John Dando, a member of the Glastonbury Carnival Committee, said: "We want to impress upon the county and district councils the importance of carnival to the local economy.

"But we also feel that much of the history of carnival has been lost, so we are keen to get people to tell us their stories and show us their memorabilia."

Around 10,000 people are thought to be involved in carnival and there are more than 50 clubs which produce floats each year and another 100 or so other clubs who enter as walking groups or individuals.

CISPP says carnival is also a valuable community resource, which provides training in practical skills.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded CISPP £41,000 to promote and conserve carnival heritage. It has allowed the volunteers to buy a van which they have fitted out as an exhibition



Ready to hit the road – members of the carnival project outside Wells Cathedral

# time

on a £41,000 grant to  
and to promote the  
dler reports

unit to four every carnival in Somerset,  
North Dorset and West Wiltshire.

John added: "The HLF has described our  
work as 'iconic' which means they  
consider it part of Somerset's cultural  
heritage."

The van, which has been wrapped with  
an image of a carnival cart, was unveiled in  
Wells. Inside, an exhibition depicts the  
history, heritage, culture and community of  
the carnivals through images, videos, text  
and memorabilia. The van also houses a  
large widescreen monitor with surround  
sound and also a recording facility to  
collect oral histories and memories.

A DVD and educational package for  
schools is in the pipeline and CISPP has  
produced and distributed 12,000 promotion  
and information leaflets, sponsored by  
solicitors Bartlett, Gooding and Weelen.

The group will also collect carnival  
memorabilia and oral histories for the  
archives in the new Somerset Heritage and  
Records Offices at Taunton. CISPP would  
like to hear from anyone with memorabilia

**For more information about the  
Carnivals In Somerset Promotion  
Project, please visit:  
[www.cispp.org.uk](http://www.cispp.org.uk) or e-mail:  
[sue@cispp.org.uk](mailto:sue@cispp.org.uk)**



Stand and deliver – Carnival stalwart Dave Arney in full Samurai outfit with CISPP chairman John Dando, holding a traditional Bridgewater squibs from the 1930s.



## Frome needs you!

**ORGANISERS** of Frome Carnival are appealing for volunteers to help ensure this year's event is a success.

They would like to hear from anyone who can sell programmes, collect money, act as crowd stewards or road closure marshals on Saturday, September 25th. Frome's childrens' carnival procession takes place at 2.30pm, starting and ending at the town's Victoria Park. The evening procession begins at 6.30pm from Marston Trading Estate and goes through the town centre, finishing at Frome football ground.

Two fundraising events take place in September ahead of carnival day: a quiz will be held at the South Parade Club on Friday, September 16th with a duck race, from the Westway Centre, at 1pm on Saturday, September 17th.

Left: One of the floats which took part in last year's Frome Carnival

For more information, visit: [www.fromecarnival.org.uk](http://www.fromecarnival.org.uk)