**10 YEARS OF CISPP**

The Carnivals In Somerset Promotion Project (CISPP) was formed early in 2009 by a small group of carnival folk who were very concerned that the unique heritage of our Somerset Illuminated Carnivals could be lost in the future unless efforts were made to encourage more people to take part.

The aims of the group are to promote the historical and contemporary importance of the unique West Country illuminated carnivals, disseminate an interactive mobile carnival exhibition unit so that communities can experience the heritage and culture of West Country illuminated carnivals, create educational and entertaining DVDs to portray the carnival experience, and develop partnerships with interested groups to ensure the future of our carnivals.

In 2009 the CISPP group took 9 months to put together a grant application to The Heritage Lottery Fund to purchase a van and kit it out for use as an exhibition vehicle. The application was successful and after a great deal of work, the van was launched on the Cathedral Green at Wells in August 2010 and filmed by the BBC.

In February 2011 CISPP put on an Oral Histories day in Castle Cary where the young and older people involved in carnival talked together and shared experiences. These conversations were recorded and now form part of an archive of oral recordings and stored at the Somerset Heritage Centre with the DVD’s we have made.

In October 2011 we were filmed with Cary Comedians CC at Ilminster carnival for an episode of Britain’s Heritage Heroes with John Craven and Jules Hudson for the BBC. This episode was shown on BBC2 in February 2012 and is available online and on our website.

Throughout 2011 and 2012 two members of the CISPP team, John Dando and Gordon Stockman, were part of the South West team that organised the opening ceremony of the Weymouth Olympiad. CISPP took part in the opening ceremony on 28th July at Weymouth where a short 10-minute film, which we had made and produced showcasing the Somerset Illuminated carnivals, was shown in the ICCI 360 degree dome for the 2 weeks of the Olympics.

Also during 2013 CISPP made and produced a 90-minute DVD featuring the history and evolution of carnival carts over the years called Film of the Decades. A copy was sent to HM Queen for her 60th anniversary of her reign and we received a letter of thanks from her at Sandringham in December. This was updated in 2017.

The film had its premiere at The Ritz theatre at Burnham-on-sea on 21st April 2013.

In August 2013, CISPP attained a second lottery grant to make another DVD “Walking into Somerset Carnivals” depicting the history and evolution of masqueraders in our processions from 1605 to 2014. The film was shown at Wells Cinema and Shaftesbury Arts Centre to packed audiences.

Late 2018 CISPP produce a souvenir heritage DVD of past Xmas carts. In 2019 CISPP produced a “Scary Carts” Halloween themed DVD and are developing a Circus/Shows DVD and a Bygone Clubs DVD covering past folded clubs.

CISPP has helped to set up carnival exhibitions in Wells, Radstock and Castle Cary museums.

In 2015 CISPP obtained a third lottery grant to buy a satellite dish and to have training to run live webcasts from our carnivals which continued in 2018.

Every year the CISPP van visits outside events throughout the summer and autumn to help promote our carnivals and give out thousands of leaflets showing the dates and times of all our carnivals which we produce each year with help from sponsorship from a local firms and some carnival towns.

**Our work in schools** - We have visited over 70 different schools in Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Devon (many of these multiple times) since 2011.

Overall, the visits are action packed and full of anticipation and excitement for both pupils and staff who also get fully involved dressing up and joining in the activities we provide.

