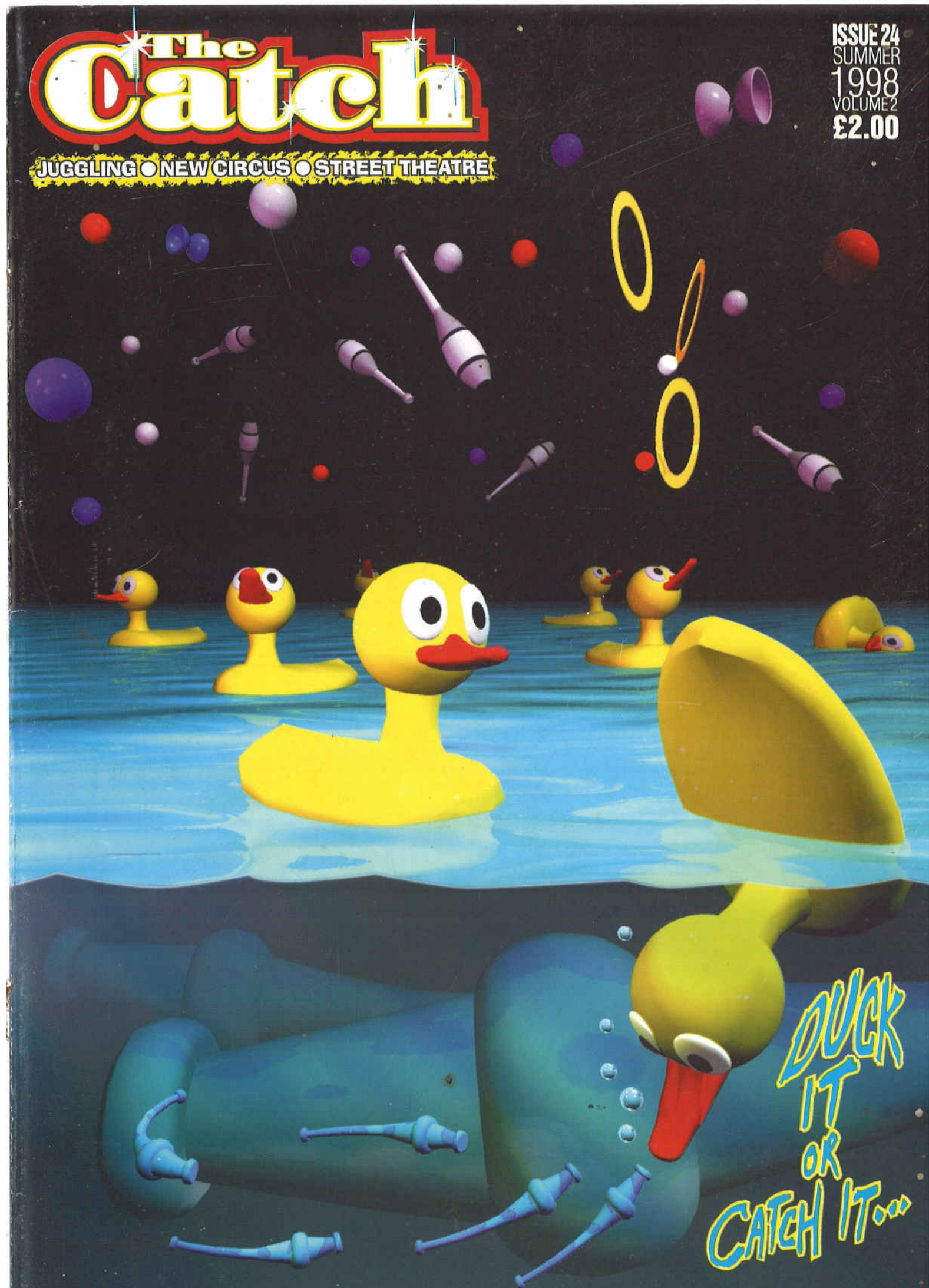


The Catch

JUGGLING • NEW CIRCUS • STREET THEATRE

ISSUE 24
SUMMER
1998
VOLUME 2
£2.00



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credits & contents

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ART OF THE STATE

That indefatigable circus in South Wales heads in new directions. Steve Henwood listens to a state of the (No Fit) State statement.

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Jason Maverick does more telly than you've ever even seen and still manages a street show and a laugh. He tells a special friend (and you) how he managed it. Turn over to Jason.

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Men of letters. And Snakeyhips. Literacy is a wonderful thing, you know.

CLUBS

So there really are still juggling workshops out there. Thanks!

FAT'S YOUR LOT

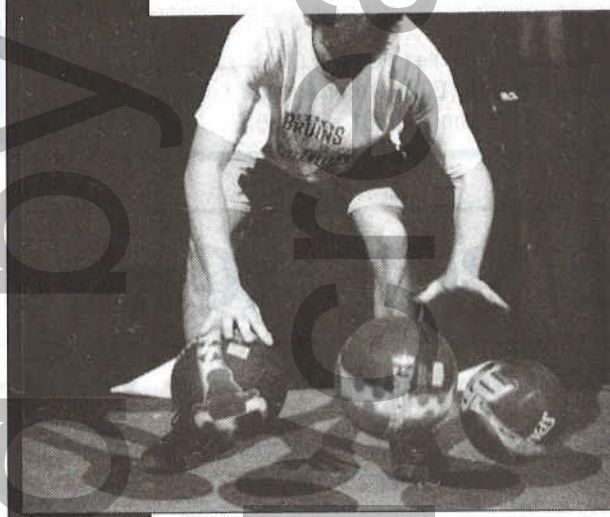
Having the heavy bit at the back balances the airy language upfront: Robbie has that Busker Gut feeling.

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ISSUE TWENTY FOUR SUMMER 1998

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Pretty bits on top: Sebright, Bristol.

The appearance of the Oracle are only supposed to be regular by those without a deep understanding of the rhythms of the Spirit World. But followers of *The Cult of The Catch* have been found with the possibly irrational belief that if they assemble information, articles, and other matters of which this mysterious creature is said to be fond before the significant date of November 5th, then they may be miraculously featured in the next (Winter) edition. Like all primitive practitioners of sympathetic magic, they think that gathering such offerings may persuade their Oracle to manifest.

The identities of the inner priesthood, or contributors are frequently a mystery, but nevertheless their sanctity (known as copyright) is maintained by these shadowy beings themselves. Sometimes they can be invoked by addressing oneself to the Inner Temple, Chew Magna. Try it if you believe strongly enough.

Belief is a curious thing. Offering such as articles, reviews, photos, cartoons, news, are regularly received and used with thanks, and the cult itself continues to encourage would-be initiates to submit them, though eventual appearance is very much as we would say "in the hand of the Gods". Many new converts start with the more accessible categories of 'Letters' and 'Drops'. Many apparent buresies are entertained, even encouraged, and sometimes it seems that the more unlikely they be, the more likely are they to find favour with the priesthood, though indeed none profess to know the priorities of these persons, nor they to acknowledge any responsibility for the words and deeds of their acolytes. This is a legal matter, apparently. It is known as the Holy Disclaimer.

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3 SMALL STEPS

ONE GIANT LEAP

“The size at which NoFitState operates is no longer economic.” Founder NFSC member Tom Rack is in tell-it-like-it-is mode; he’s just been in session with the Welsh Arts Council and the pot is still boiling over.

“It’s the state of funding [who’s to say state of the economy?—d]. Arts Council money is getting tighter; Local Authority events don’t have the same budget they used to. A few years ago we could work out a core programme of summer festivals who would guarantee us some money, effectively underwrite the costs of the production; now all they can afford is to give us a free site on which to self-promote. It can’t be done.”

Hence no touring NFSC show this summer. You might have seen the tent or some of the vehicles out earning their upkeep, but that’s it. You won’t have seen the current NFS team; they crouched over handsets and keyboards in their office, they’ve been planning the next move.

Yup, that’s right. There *is* a next move. If this were opera, they’d have just gone crying to the government for more money. If this were theatre, they’d have had the arts page headlines and petitions. If it were some still-less-commercial artform, they’d have gone home years ago. But it’s circus: the show must go on, yes, yet there’s a sense of commercial reality that comes with owning a big tent. Tom’s been doing his homework: “Look at the people who make a financial success of touring circus shows; look at the Cottles and Philip Gandey [*Circus of Horrors*, *Cirque Surreal*, *Chinese State*, etc.] if you like; look at *Cirque du Soleil* [or the French groups—d]; look at great British groups like *Burlesque*, who

failed. What do you see? Very high production values, yes; and an audience capacity of 800-1000, big enough to produce the marketing campaign to sell it properly. We hardly stood a chance.”

The constant attrition, the exhausting funding rounds, the regretfully broken commitments (you’ll find these in any artform, but ask anyone who’s been in Circus or Street Theatre for long...) had proved enough for some NFSC old hands, even those who had stuck by for most of its 12 years had simply got worn down: of the long-term hardcore, there’s only Tom and the utterly solid foundation that is Ali Williams left. Some have to move on, some do it naturally, some simply had to make a living - most conspicuous among these is Pete Gregory, still organising shows and workshops and more from Cardiff, and still appearing as a freelance in any show he can manage: *The Fool*.

So is this time to throw in the towel? Time to take it back to M&S for a refund? No, sorry: it’s time to THINK BIG!

If you’ve been paying attention to *Catches* past, you’ll know this part of the story already. Working as hired hands spicing up a couple of Welsh National Opera productions gave the NoFitters a taste for community collaborative arts. Sure, that’s something you don’t even have to be in Wales to find there’s funding in, nobody denies that; but it’s also something the workshop/skills-share culture of this wave of NewCircusTheatre holds close to its heart, it’s show NoFit learned their mutual trades to start with.

Nice borrowed title (thanks Tim) for a story which not only gets us up to date with the state of **No Fit State**, one of Britain’s few remaining tented ‘New’ Circus groups, but shows us there is a big future for Circus Skills and visions in Community Arts, and maybe just describes the beginning of a genuinely new and British angle on **Spectacle**, the artform that caps them all. **Steve Henwood** goes to the pub (it’s OK, it’s where their office is, honest).

**Pics from “Prophecy”
1997’s
NFSC/Community Show**



1995

's show built around Heathcote Williams' still-timely *'Autogeddon'* [see *Catch issue 16*] was a dramatic beginning, very dramatic. It gave Tom, Ali & the others a start in a unique combination of multi-media arts and teaching skills: teach dozens of local performers new skills, draft in musicians and visual artists from the community, blag a handful of young professionals to focus the most critical bits, spend some money on visionary direction and production, get yourself one hell (i use that word advisedly) of a show.

Last winter saw *'Prophecy'*, three hundred and fifty people working together to transform "the warehouse at the end of the world" into another time-zone and transform themselves as they went. Talk about grass-roots collaborations: NFSC went to every city arts organisation they could get a word in with, not with a script needing decoration but looking for ideas. With only a theme (the future viewed from the past, hence the title) to go by, participating organisations were given issues to investigate and a free rein to write their own contributions. Local professional companies, a battle re-enaction society, community & youth groups, schools, college courses and of course the local community circus (Splott State!) all came up with parts of the spectacle, some self-contained narratives, some single themes explored in

depth, some single moments. Individuals were invited to come and join specially-formed groups of dancers, drummers, chorus, crowds, and also stars. In all cases, experienced workshop tutors, from NFSC associates like Pete Gregory to inspirational voice Frankie Armstrong, worked with every group to build the skills they'd need to make their ideas performable, and whatever facilities they wanted were provided. The set/environment designers (local artists, students, recent graduates) worked in a similar way.

The job of the coordinators, directors, production team was to work all these contributions together into a whole, given a frame by a handful of professional actors and

guests from the year before's *Circomedia* course, making sure everything could carry the weight put upon it. This last point is integral not only to create a show that works without suffering from community show syndrome (sitting through performances of all standards given equal stage space, not always artistically satisfying), but also to get such a degree of community involvement to start with. Tom makes a point that's obvious if you think about it - "many people who do dance classes or circus workshops are going to be nervous of the spotlight, they're often going to say "no" unless you can assure them there are 300 other performers and the whole thing's not going to be resting on them. Equally you've got to be able to see if something's going to be really good and put the right focus on that too."

For such a project to work it's got to tap into the enthusiasm and artistic aspirations of so many people. Tom's still riding so high on it you just know it was a show, an event, like nothing else. "We've always been in the way of taking performances to people and places where there's no theatre, no theatre tradition." Equally, like any travelling group, they've workshopped wherever they went, introducing possibilities and skills





3 SMALL
STEPS

ONE GIANT LEAP

to those who have had no access to them, or any others for that matter. It's part of NFSC's professed ambition that a selection of the performers from the community who have been drawn to participate in these events will become the professional core of the shows that are to follow. "These will be exactly the sort of performers we'll most want to use. They already are. The local groups love it!"

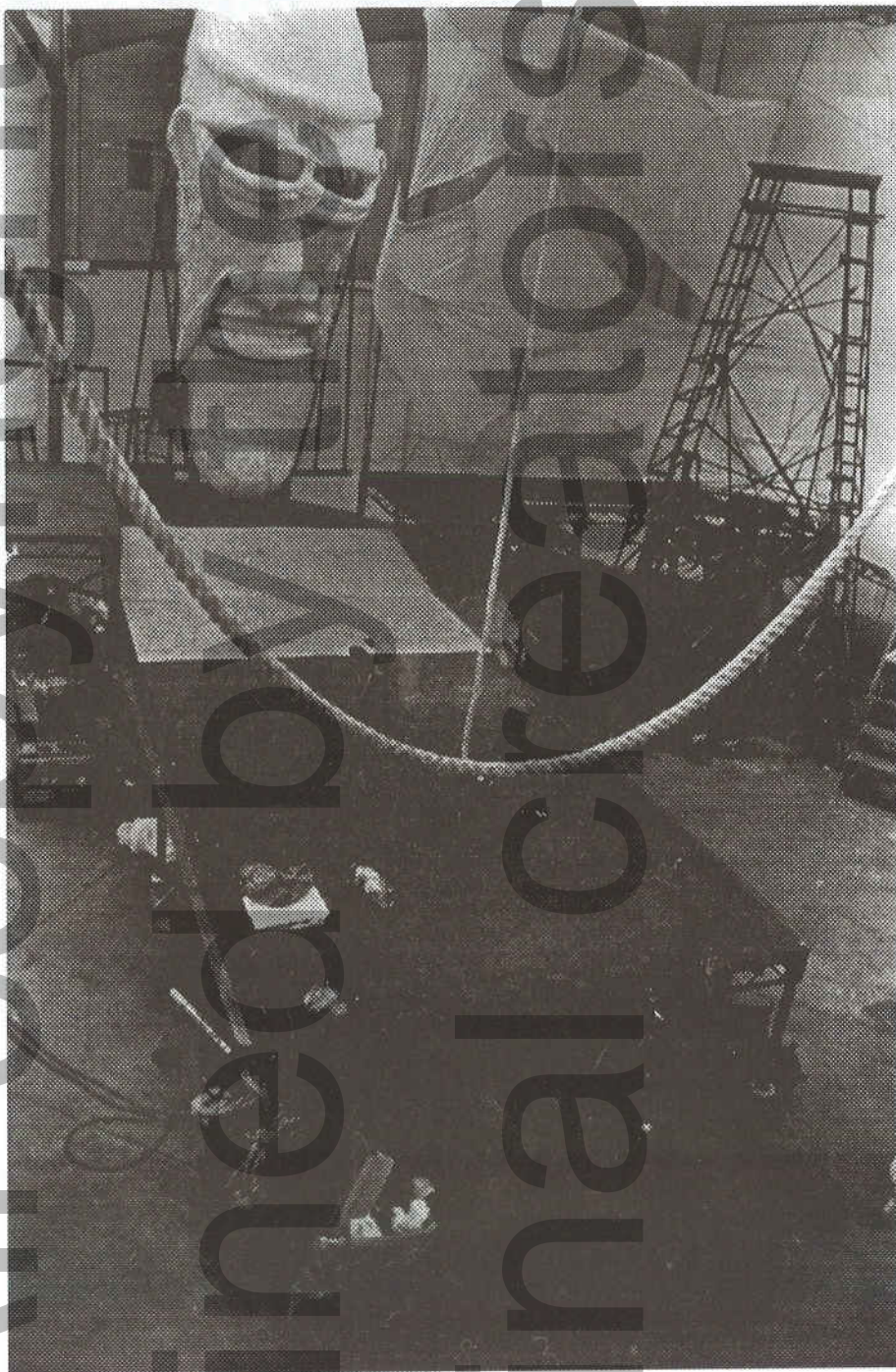
Shows to follow? I was getting to that... Why do you think they were talking to the Arts Council? 'Prophecy' was designed as the first of a series of three shows - yes, we do feel a millennium project coming on - broadly titled 'Yesterday Today Tomorrow', a past-present-future trilogy, growing bigger as it develops and the skills of performers producers and other protagonists grows. Step 2 is currently in discussions with funding organisations: like 'Prophecy', it will be collectively devised and that process won't start until scale and participants are decided. Unlike the last one, ideally it would happen in a tent, firstly so it can happen nearer the centre of the city, secondly to give the production some idea of how to make such a thing work under canvas, because step 3 has to move. It has to move because they've got no intention of restricting the project to just Cardiff (maybe 3 interrelated shows are envisaged based in different towns) and because after that, it's going to tour.

Even though a touring show can't conceivably have the same massive community cast every day, it can retain the community input, particularly when state-of-the-art audio/visual and electronic imaging get in on the game. As, frankly, they should. No Fit are quietly off in the corner planning a *Spectacle* of the earth-tremoring size and style of the best and wildest continental projects, that could happily tour Britain and the EC after it has done the round of every Welsh millennium celebration they could fit in. No Fit? One size fits all as long as it's HUGE!

Circus/Theatre is the multimedia art-form of the next millennium - the New Rock & Roll as it will doubtless be dubbed when the

style magazines get hold of the idea. But, uncharacteristically, that cliché is true. From the way it has embraced new technology, new music, new props, new techniques, without losing its ability to be small (focusing on a personal drama) as well as bloody big [thanx Tim again

d]. It's no accident that Tom has spent the last four years on a multimedia arts course. It could be an accident of disastrous proportions if the idea isn't followed. You will gather that it's the sort of plan that gets people's enthusiasm running very high very quickly.



So what of No Fit State Circus and the circus of keeping a circus going? Will they have to be changing their name? Ali's directing Community Circus in the States, Tom's doing a multimedia/internet project with Welsh über-art pioneers *Brith Gof* (lucky so'n'so), the rest of the team (Hi Liz, Lyn) are



bigger to do so! "We're going for something that could run a few years, could tour the States. Something Soleil-sized. We're going for Gold."

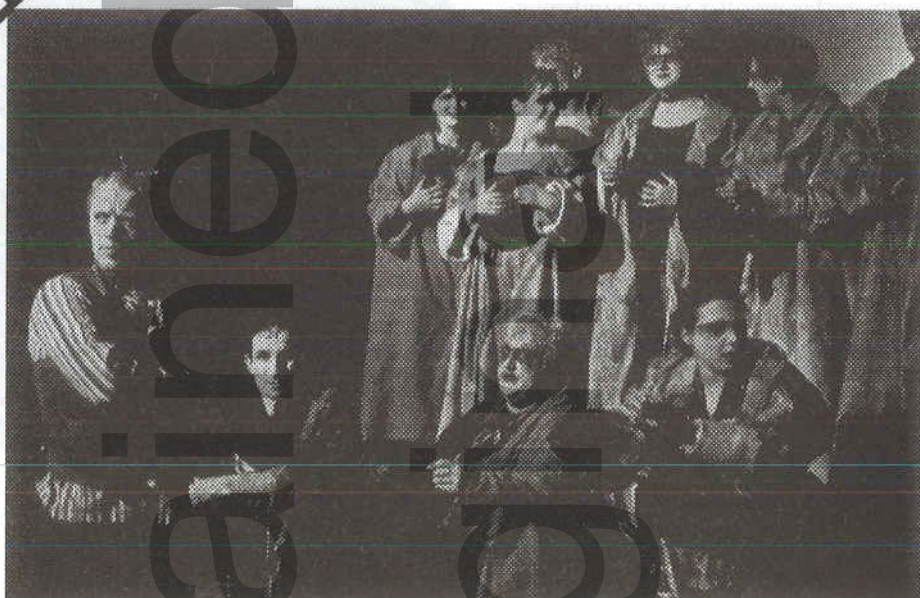
You know it's Welsh Gold in the British crown?



You too could be in on next winter's show. Local participants of all sorts are needed, and also a core of young professionals (past teams have come from recent Circus Space or Circmedia graduates). The catch is, you guessed it, there's not a lot of money in it. If at all. Call NFSC on 01222 488734. Tell 'em we sent you.

work
ing on a
touring
cabaret-style
setup for next
summer with the old
tent as a venue, to better respond
to what the arts & community fes-
tivals are looking for at the moment,
maybe a 'No Fit State Circus
presents...'

"Maybe if we hadn't had this summer off, half of these ideas wouldn't have developed so far" - Tom has had long experience in looking on the bright side. "No Fit State lives on - if enough of this works out, we'll have a show that is economically sustainable (a good word)" [maybe it's ironic it has to be



With the manic energy that only kids and kids TV presenters have, **Jason Maverick** has managed to devise & anchor 156 editions of Channel 5's **Havakazoo** while keeping a career in Cabaret, walkabout, corporates, paid street work and the rest. *And* he's a former Junior Welsh Hammer Champion. *AND* he offered to write an article for **The Catch**. Curious to know how he does it, we said yes, so here he is in conversation with a Mystery Questioner we shall have to call Ms.Q. Nice to see you again, Suzy. [Insert crazy kids TV-type catchphrase]...and here's Jason!

Banana pic by **Lietta Granato**

How long have you been a performer?

About 8 years

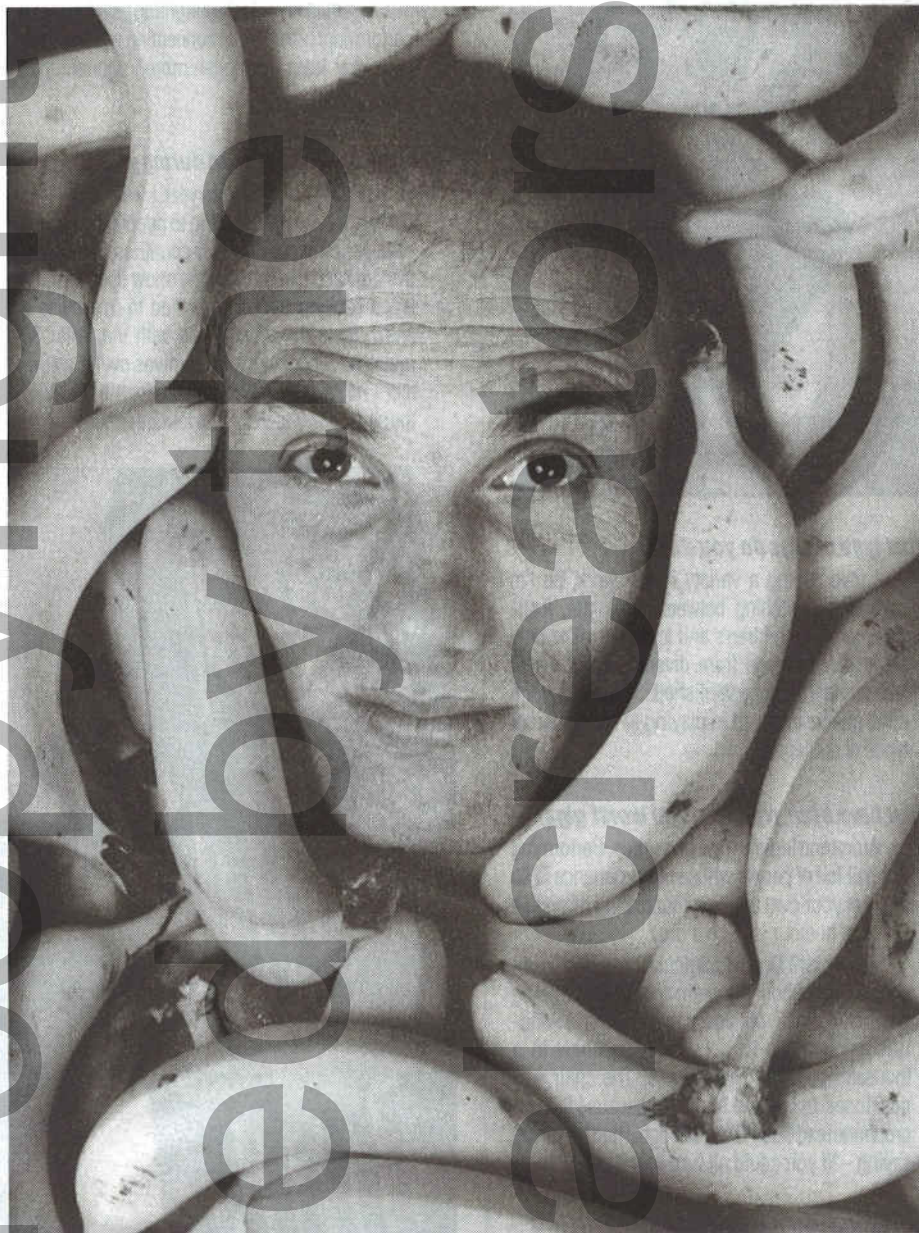
What did you do before that?

From 16-22 years old I concentrated on sports, and represented Wales in athletics and body-building

Athlete to mime artist! That's an odd transition isn't it?

Not really. We all have different aspects and quirks to our personalities which stamp us as individuals - I don't drink, smoke or take drugs but I do like getting a buzz out of life. Athletics and performing both satisfy that need. I decided not to pursue a career in sport and so I tried various jobs and whilst working as a child care officer I saw the mime artist Les Bubb at the Glastonbury festival. I left Wales and moved to London to study mime.

this boy's

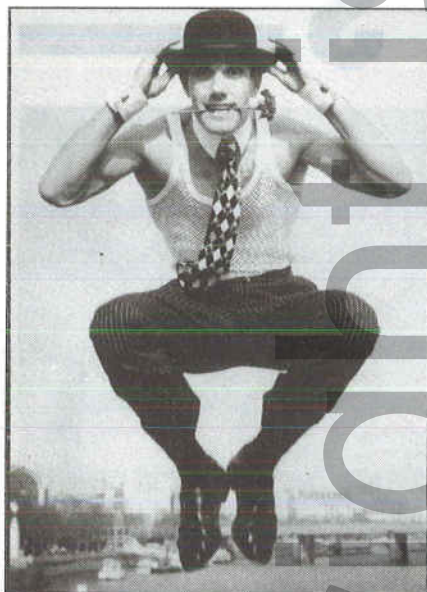


Bananas

Where did you study?

The Desmond Jones school of mime and physical theatre. I'd recommend it to anyone. Ironically my favourite part of the course was the application of sound - and now some of my cabaret pieces use synchronised sound and move-

ment. In Britain mime is still bound and gagged by the white-face stripy-shirt image which is a pity because there's some excellent work being produced by companies under the physical theatre umbrella.



What type of gigs do you do?

I love having a variety in my work, so I'm constantly switching between corporate, festivals, cabaret, children's and television. The only slight disadvantage from diversifying is that it takes longer to get established... But I enjoy the mind games involved in playing to very different types of audiences.

What have been your best and worst gigs?

Africa and India are my favourites. Performing to a hall full of people whose life experience is so far from your own and communicating through a sense of humour is such a buzz.

The worst? One in particular. Merthyr Tydfil bonfire night about six years ago. I was standing on a plastic chair, outside in the dark with a hand-held microphone to do a juggling show to a thousand people. It gets worse. The chair was positioned *behind* the audience because the microphone lead wasn't long enough. I had to start by saying - "If you could all turn round..."

So how did you get into television?

My promotional video had been put up for a different programme and was seen by the head of children's TV at Meridian Broadcasting. I auditioned and it was good fortune that I could utilise a collection of poems for children I'd written 15 years ago. I was offered the job of co-presenting and devising for 78 half hour programmes. We've recently finished filming 156 programmes including approximately 90 solo 3 minute performances. Massively demanding, frequently rewarding, an amazing experience but I still prefer live gigs!

What performers have influenced you?

Les Bubb - for his technical ability and imagination. *Skate Naked* - for being on the edge, over the edge and bloody funny.

Strawberry the clown - for intelligent understated clowning

The Gandinis for going against the flow

Jonathan Kay - for highlighting psychology in performing! proving that connecting with an audience is at least , and often more important than your level of skill.

Any odd things happened during your shows?

Plenty. In April of this year I was working in Botswana. I was performing to people who hadn't seen performers from other countries. The sound system hadn't arrived and my show used specific taped backing tracks. I decided to improvise a show using the props I had with me. After 30 minutes I thought I'd juggle knives over a volunteer - he saw the knives and ran for his life. After the show, the director of the tour informed me that

some of the locals had recently been kidnapped and been hacked to death with machetes. Another time during a street show I finished the robotic routine. The music stopped, I froze into a final position awaited some applause... at which point a seagull shat on my head. One way to get a laugh I suppose!

Ambitions for the future?

I've just devised a children's theatre show - *Jason Maverick Goes Bananas* - kids are so unpredictable, frequently very funny and steal the show. Which I think is a good thing. I want to put more work into cabaret but I'll keep the children's side going. For the moment I want to carry on enjoying performing by continually evolving my material.



skinning the cat

do a phoenix



If **The Catch** was a daily (goddess forbid) this would have been front-page news: Britain's best looking aerial act in arson attack! Chances are if you saw **STC** this summer you wouldn't have known anything was wrong, but here for the (Daily) record is the full story from **Jill Truman:** The Hell we went through. >>>

“W

e drove round the corner and saw a smouldering heap of twisted metal. The truck was still on fire. The caravan was melted. Where the rig had been, there was nothing but a burnt patch on the concrete.”

A few hours earlier, the Skinning the Cat team of aerial performers: Becky Truman, Helen Fagelman, Claire Baldwin, Jackie Crosher, and Zoe Ellis had left their rig, truck, caravan, sound and lighting equipment, set up ready for the show the next day and in the care of the police and CCTV cameras. It had taken the usual eight hours to unload and rig, and, as always, the process had attracted small groups of passers-by. Two boys, about sixteen years old, had talked to Helen for quite a long time, asking about the show. Nice kids.

It was the first gig of the season. An excellent tour was planned. Italy, France and Austria was scheduled for the next ten days. But now it was time to sleep: it had been a long drive from Bradford and a long day's work. Back at the hotel though, they were kept awake by a rock band and then by a football team of 11 year olds from Newcastle, rioting along the corridors, slamming doors, yelling.....

When they finally managed to get to sleep, they were immediately awakened by banging on the door. It got louder and louder. There was shouting as well. Claire, hearing radios, was the first to realise it was the police. Her first thought was “something's happened to those football kids.” She leapt out of bed angrily, pulling on a T-shirt. They had had enough trouble getting off to sleep - now what?

Policeman: “Is there anyone in your caravan?”

“eh?”

“Because your caravan's burnt. The truck's on fire. The pole fell on it.”

“What pole?”

“YOU MEAN OUR RIG?”

Everyone was dashing around now, pulling on clothes. Helen remembers thinking “I'm not wearing any knickers” as she talked to the policeman. Zoe stood rigid, her fists clenched, shaking all over.

Everybody remembers their first thoughts

“It's all over. We're finished. Everything's over.”

“Is Becky going to be alright? What will this do to her?”

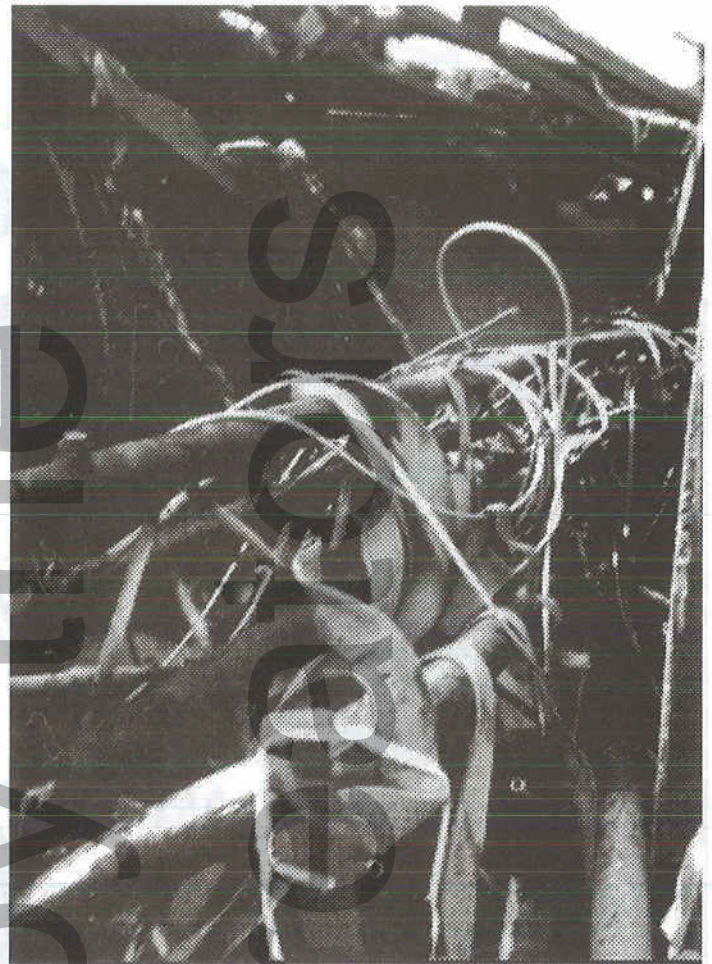
“It can't, it can't be that bad.”

“I can't find my knickers!”

“What does it matter, really, as long as all of us are unharmed?”

Apparently, the police had seen the rig smouldering and had summoned fire extinguishing equipment. But, within seconds, whoosh! - there was a funnel of fire. Everything that the Skinning the Cat team had worked on, created over months, was gone in three minutes. Arriving at the scene of the devastation, they stood staring speechless. This could not have happened. It was impossible, everything had been thoroughly flame-proofed. They had not done even one show. Beryl, who had booked the festival, was in tears.

The two sixteen-year-old boys who had been so interested in the show were caught later, as they torched the local shopping centre. They boasted to the police that they had set fire to Skinning the Cat, as well - they were particularly proud of this because it had been so difficult, because of the flame-proofing. They had worked at it for a very long time, hidden from the police patrol and CCTV cameras between the truck and the rig.



T

he women began to wander about, inspecting the twisted and smouldering remains of their show, in silent despair. Then Zoe, who was grubbing about in what remained of the truck, called out “I can see the gold trunk! The gold trunk is okay!”

That was the moment of the first faint flicker of hope. The gold trunk contained some of the most complex props. Props which take months to make. The tone of the conversation began to change - “this needs painting” “so-and-so might give us those” “will we be able to buy a truck?” “is there anyone who will give us money?” “who can make one of these?” Could they possibly, get the show back together? Of course not. They were due in Italy in three days. The 1998 tour would have to be cancelled. Probably this was the end of Skinning the Cat.

It was light by the time they returned to the hotel. They turned on the TV and, amazingly went to sleep. It was that kind of sleep you force on yourself when you want to shut out the world. When reality is unbear-

able. When the very worst has happened and there is nothing to be done. No point in worrying or planning: find forgetfulness in sleep.

But when they woke up, they all remembered that, unusually, they had taken the costumes back with them to the hotel. As anyone who has seen the show knows, the Skinning the Cat costumes are the company. Flamboyant, eclectic, individual, they cannot be copied or reproduced. Other equipment can be made, bought, borrowed, but the costumes, the skin of the cat, are their identity. They cannot perform without them. They take months to design and make. Money cannot buy them.

After a day of questions and statements and evaluations and assessments that was just the beginning of what was to come, they returned to their hotel exhausted, wanting to lie down and die. But Becky got out the traditional first-night champagne. There had not been a first night. There might never be another first night. But they drank the champagne anyway.

By the next morning, even before the meeting they held to discuss the situation, everyone knew they would carry on.

They loved that show. Ending it would be like a death. Sometimes now, looking back, they are surprised at themselves. It would have been easier, far easier, to take what insurance money there was and have the summer off. Find other jobs. Forget Skinning the Cat. And if they had known just how gruelling would be the weeks that lay ahead, how depressing, how exhausting, would the decision have been different?

The Italy gig had to be cancelled. Bookers react hysterically to cancellation, because Skinning the Cat is generally central to their events. So, arrangements were made for one of the smaller Skinning the Cat shows to deputize in France and Austria.

Then followed a week from hell in the Skinning the Cat office and three weeks of a muddier kind of hell in the construction and rehearsal space, which had flooded in the

heavy rains. The team made drawings, ordered equipment, purchased and constructed rigging, designed electrics.... Jan, the administrator was as determined as anybody to carry on. Friends, colleagues and businesses rallied round, offering equipment, cutting prices. There was no time to answer the phone, which never stopped ringing with offers of help and condolence, so the directors took over this task. Then No Fit State offered lighting equipment and the loan of a van....

The show was triumphantly re-launched at a celebration for Bradford Council. All the important people were there, friends and supporters. The Skinning the Cat team were exhausted, but somehow found the energy to perform. Helen (the techie) had to use a brand new light and sound system that there had been no time to rehearse. But never has there been such a brilliant first show of the season. It was unbelievable. Unforgettable. They had got it all together in four weeks. Looking at the hundreds of people watching, they realised this would be one of the most memorable experiences of their lives.



Antiques Roadshow

What the best vaudevillians (vaudevillains?) took out on the music hall & end-of-the-pier circuit in 1908, from the last word on the subject, 'The Art of Modern Juggling' by Angela J Horton & James J Middleton. What am I bid for Pearce Halfpenny?

CLUBS

These are similar in shape to the ordinary gymnastic clubs, but, of course, are made very much lighter, in three sections, and are properly balanced, so that when juggled the handles will present themselves to the hand. Very much lighter wood is employed in the manufacture of these clubs, and they are hollowed out as much as is consistent with their being of fair strength. There is no particular difficulty in the use of them; it is all straightforward juggling. The only thing that you must be careful about is when catching them at the finish. It must be remembered that they are not over strong, and that therefore they must not be banged together too hard for fear of splitting them. It is best, therefore, to catch the second club in the left and transfer it to the right hand, and then catch and retain the third one in the left, as it would be far too risky to attempt to catch the third club while holding the second in the same hand. They are invariably handsomely decorated in various ways; such as, for instance, 'black, with gold stars', 'red, with gold line and stars', or 'red and blue picked out with gold', and, of course, in many other ways.



Juggling Cigar.

Made in soft wood so as not to hurt the teeth. Can be smoked like a real cigar and is finished to look exactly like one. "Faked" for resting on brim of hat.

5/- each.

CIGARS

These are somewhat small for large stage work but look very well, especially if four or five of them are juggled at once. You can use either the weighted kind or the ordinary article. The former are, needless to say, the easier to use, but have the disadvantage that

you cannot actually give them to the audience for examination to prove they are unprepared as, of course, you can the real ones. The weighted ones are made of a small brass tube covered with either cork or rubber, so that when they fall they will sound like a genuine cigar, and covered with paper or leaf to exactly represent one. In one end you place a little tobacco which you can light and smoke as you would a pipe, and this, of course, gives the audience the impression that you have a sample of the real article.



Rolling Ball on Stick.

Apparently a fine feat of balancing, but really quite simple. Requires but little practice.

7/6

CANNON BALL, PAPER BALL, AND WALKING STICK

As with the preceding feat, this also requires a considerable amount of juggling, as the difference in weight between the three is somewhat greater. The cannon ball is made of metal in two sections, but these two are joined together so well and closely that after the ball has been properly nickelled the join is indistinguishable. Beyond the fact of the cannon ball being hollow the articles are not prepared in any way. The paper ball is an ordinary piece of tissue paper which is screwed up and then should be unperceivedly chewed between the teeth; this not only renders the ball harder, but also the moisture derived from the tongue adds a certain amount, and a very useful amount, of additional weight. The pattern and size of the waling stick are immaterial. Notwithstanding, however, the fact of the cannon ball being considerably lighter than were it solid, as it is pretended to be, it will be found that the difference in weight of the articles is, at any rate at first, somewhat disconcerting, and in order to overcome the strangeness of it, it will be necessary to indulge in a fair amount of careful and studious practice. The cannon ball should be resting on a stand specially constructed for the purpose, and to prove that there is no deception and that it is quite solid.



Plate and Bottle Trick

Specially made wooden bottle, finished to look like the real thing. Correctly weighted. Splendid for preliminary practice. The bottle and metal plate

10/6

CUP, SAUCER AND TEAPOT.

These look very well indeed, and there is a particularly fine finish which I shall describe later on. The cup and saucer may be either of the enamelled tin variety, or, better still, of china. At any rate, at first it is advisable to use the former, as otherwise it may prove rather an expensive experiment. Start by taking the teapot and throwing it up, then take the cup and juggle the two, then the saucer and juggle the three, and then if desired a lump of sugar.

The teapot is in reality full of tea, but is so arranged that the tea cannot come out until a special button, situated on the top of the pot and near the handle, is pressed. The lid also fits tightly in by means of a washer of flannel or some similar substance. It is most necessary in these experiments to break the fall of the articles, especially the teapot, and at the finish it is imperative, because the saucer is the first caught, and the cup on the saucer, then the teapot, and finally the lump of sugar in the cup. To do this considerable practice is required, because if china utensils are used, either the cup or the saucer, and perhaps both, will inevitably be broken unless great care is taken to "break the fall". The cup and saucer and lump of sugar are caught in the left hand and the teapot in the right, and immediately tea should be poured out from the teapot into the cup.

This, if nicely done, is one of the prettiest effects that I know of in juggling; but of course it is nothing unless very nicely done.

THE BUSINESS OF SHOWS

Many **Catches** ago, **Steve Rawlings** wrote us a general guide to street techniques: jolly useful it was too, because few how-to books exist in that line of twine, and it has to be admitted that Steve himself knows a thing or two, whether it's *Street International* or *TV Variety*, or anything in between. Talking to him just the other day, we found he'd written more, much more (must be all those spare weeks incapacitated) and that struck us as a very good idea; so we've bagged more, and much more. And here's Part 1 of an ongoing series: some ideas on how to put a show together. The stage is yours, Steve.

"Fervently practising things in dark corners is all very well, but it can worry the neighbours and I'm not sure it's good for you."

You don't have to be a professional performer to do shows, you can be an amateur or an enthusiastic hobbyist; if you have a skill that you've been working on why not put an act together and show people what you're made of? If you have a talent for something it would seem a shame to waste it and you might make some money into the bargain. Fervently practising things in dark corners is all very well, but it can worry the neighbours and I'm not sure it's good for you. It can also lead to things becoming quite stale and boring for you. Going out, doing a show, and getting appreciation for what you're doing can give you quite a kick and send you rushing back to your dark

corner with renewed enthusiasm to get that little bit better for the next one. Alternatively you may reason that if you're going to be bored you may as well go and bore everyone else as well.

Whatever your reason, if you're going to perform you're going to need a costume. Bear in mind that what looks disgustingly lurid, loud and over-the-top in daylight can actually look - dare I say - quite fetching on stage. Now don't get me wrong here, I'm not recommending you go rushing off to buy those sequined outfits you've always secretly wanted. Find a style that seems to fit you and your character and try it out, not forgetting the limitations your type of act can put on the clothes you choose. For instance baggy clothes and loose sleeves would be a nightmare for a juggler to work in, whereas a magician would wear a loose jacket to hide production items in until they are needed.

Whatever you wear, whatever style, you must make sure that your clothes are immaculate. Even if your character is a tramp clown you must give the appearance of being dirty and dishevelled without actually being so. Your appearance at a show says a lot about you and you'd be surprised how many people notice if you're not up to scratch.

Now that we've got that sorted let's get on with the show. A lot of people make the mistake of waiting for that next big trick before they start doing shows, in the belief that the audience will really like it and you'll do a good first show as a result. This may be true, but it's also a good way of giving yourself a perfectly logical reason for not performing just yet. For some people there will always be one more trick, but the best trick in the world will get very little reaction if it's badly presented, and the only way to learn to do that is in front of a live audience. The skills in your act are the thread that holds it together, but it's your character and how well you perform that will make it something special. Once you've reached a certain level of competence in your act it's time to screw your courage to the sticking place and get out there and see if anyone likes what you're doing.

The standard structure of a speciality act is a big opening trick and a big closing trick, with your filler material in the middle. A big opening trick doesn't necessarily mean you have to pull an elephant out of thin air, it merely means using some of your strongest material in order to get the audience's attention and hopefully have them on your side for the rest of the show. If you start well and end well a crowd will always go away thinking you were good even if the routines in the middle weren't so much. The strong opening should get them, and a strong ending will leave them thinking you were good because the last thing they saw you do was excellent. Your filler material (ie. the main part of your act) should be as good as you can make it without being better than your finishing routine, and your act should flow as smoothly as possible from one routine to another, building up to your finish. Try and keep your routines as tight as possible, don't pad things out to make your show longer. It's hard enough to keep people's interest as it is, don't make things harder for yourself by flannelling.

Choosing the kind of tricks that you present in your show is very important: remember you are performing to the audience not to fellow artistes, and what another performer will be impressed by will leave an audience stone cold; and vice versa. A trick like juggling two balls

and an apple, eating the apple at the same time, may seem very old hat to another juggler, but the average audience will probably never have seen it before [*wanna bet, Steve? -d*] and would thoroughly enjoy watching it.

It's also a good idea to specialise in a certain area of your chosen artform rather than waste time and energy trying to do everything. In a nutshell, it's much better to excel at a few things than to be vaguely interesting at lots. I'm not saying don't try other things, far from it. I do think that when you start you should have a go at everything you can get your sticky little hands on, but once you've found what you're good at, stick with it and drop the rest. A mistake that jugglers often make (and this applies right across the board) is having learned a few good tricks - say for the sake of argument, behind the back, under the leg and columns - then they go and repeat these moves with each set of props they use, right through the show. It is not enough just to change props, you have to vary the routines as well - unless your act is based on boring people to death. I once saw a juggler do a routine with a devil stick, then repeat it with a mop and then do it all again in case anyone missed it with a fire devil. It went from being quite a nice skilful routine to being barely tolerated by the crowd.

Even that may not be enough; if everything you pick up you throw, that too becomes boring. The more predictable your show is, the less interesting it will be to watch. In my own show I've mixed juggling, magic, balancing and clown-

"if you're enjoying yourself the chances are everyone else will too."

ing to create a well balanced show [*if not a well-balanced performer -d*] that runs smoothly for 40 minutes without too many repetitions. No need to make things hard for yourself! Mixing your skills to provide variety has the added advantage of surprise. The last thing a crowd expects from a juggler is a magic trick: you can get away with the most outrageously bad handling of an illusion or sleight simply because no one is expecting it. If a magician picks up a knife he is either going to stick it through his arm or push it magically through something; whereas if a juggler picks up three knives he is expected to juggle them, not start cutting his hands off. By doing this he has not only shocked and surprised his audience but wrong-footed them and shaken them out of their complacency: they now no longer know what to expect from him.

You don't have to be that skilled to vary your show. A magician need only do the most basic juggling or balancing trick to get a good reaction, and - believe it or not - people will remember you for it. Anything

that makes your act stand out from the others is definitely a plus.

The very successful comedian Brian Conley has got mixing skills down to a fine art. Not only does he sing, dance and tell jokes in his shows but he also joins in with his support acts as well. Even though at best he's only capable of a poor forward roll and can barely juggle, he'll do routines with both the jugglers and the acrobats. When people leave they won't be thinking what a bad juggler he was, they'll be thinking that not only did he do his own show, but he did juggling and acrobatics as well, and very impressed they'll be too.

One of the best pieces of advice I've ever had was: if you're pleased that a trick has worked, show it, leap about ecstatically and scream with joy; your feeling of achievement will carry over to the crowd and they'll appreciate you all the more. Try and make everything you say and do seem like it's for the first time and not like you're reciting it from memory. As you get on in this business you'll learn to fake these things better than any actor ever could, but for now it should all be fresh enough for you not to have to fake things at all. Go out and enjoy yourself and have a good time: if you're enjoying yourself the chances are everyone else will too.

Finding your performing persona is a very long and drawn-out business and certainly won't happen overnight. If you've thought of a character you'd like to try out, the best way to do it is to find that part of your *own* character that fits, and exaggerate it, make it bigger. If you haven't, I think the best way is just to get out there and see what comes out. You may find that you go through all sorts of characters before you find what works for you - it may even be as simple as just going on and being yourself - but the search is worth it: it's your character which dictates how you perform and makes your show different from everyone else's.

It takes at least five years to put together a really strong show so don't be put off if you don't take the world by storm straight away. No one does good shows to start with, although there are plenty who'll tell you they did; you can take it from me these people are lying outrageously, probably to make you feel small and build up their own egos [*for there shows still aren't any better! -d*]. Just ask around until you find someone who saw them in their early days and store up the information for an opportune moment.

My own first show was appalling; it was in a crèche in Brixton for a dozen mothers and babies. I'd practised like a loon beforehand and was the saddest-looking clown you ever saw. I did the show twice as quickly as I'd meant to because the babies were all over the place and no-one was watching anyway. I came away with five pounds and a pocket full of sandwiches, but whether that was for doing a good show or not killing any of the children I'll never know.

Once you get the running order of your show sorted out, it's time to start rehearsing. Run through your act until you know it inside-out and it seems to run smoothly (you can always stick a running order on the inside of your prop case in case of emergencies). Go through all your movements and what you're going to say, try to make the links from one trick to another as smooth as you can; familiarise yourself with the verbal so you've got one less thing to worry about come the big day. Most acts can rehearse in front of a mirror to get some idea how they look; except, of course, jugglers, who'd go boss-eyed trying to juggle and watch themselves at the same time. There is really no substitute for getting friends and family (who you trust to talk straight and not give you platitudes) to watch and give you an honest opinion of what you're doing, what's working, and what's not, and why. Don't forget that the easiest trick can look really impressive to an average crowd and the most difficult can leave them cold. The trick is to take an easy trick and make it look difficult, not the other way around. You should get just as much applause if you sell it well enough.

When you're happy, off you go. It doesn't matter if you're not being paid although you could always try for expenses; at this stage of the game it's experience that counts, the cash comes later. Fêtes, schools and children's parties are usually only too happy to let you come and have a go. Failing that you could always

give street performing a try. *[Of course some people's acts are made for the street in the first place -d].*

Make sure you arrive early to set up your

"The trick is to take an easy trick and make it look difficult, not the other way around. You should get just as much applause if you sell it well enough."

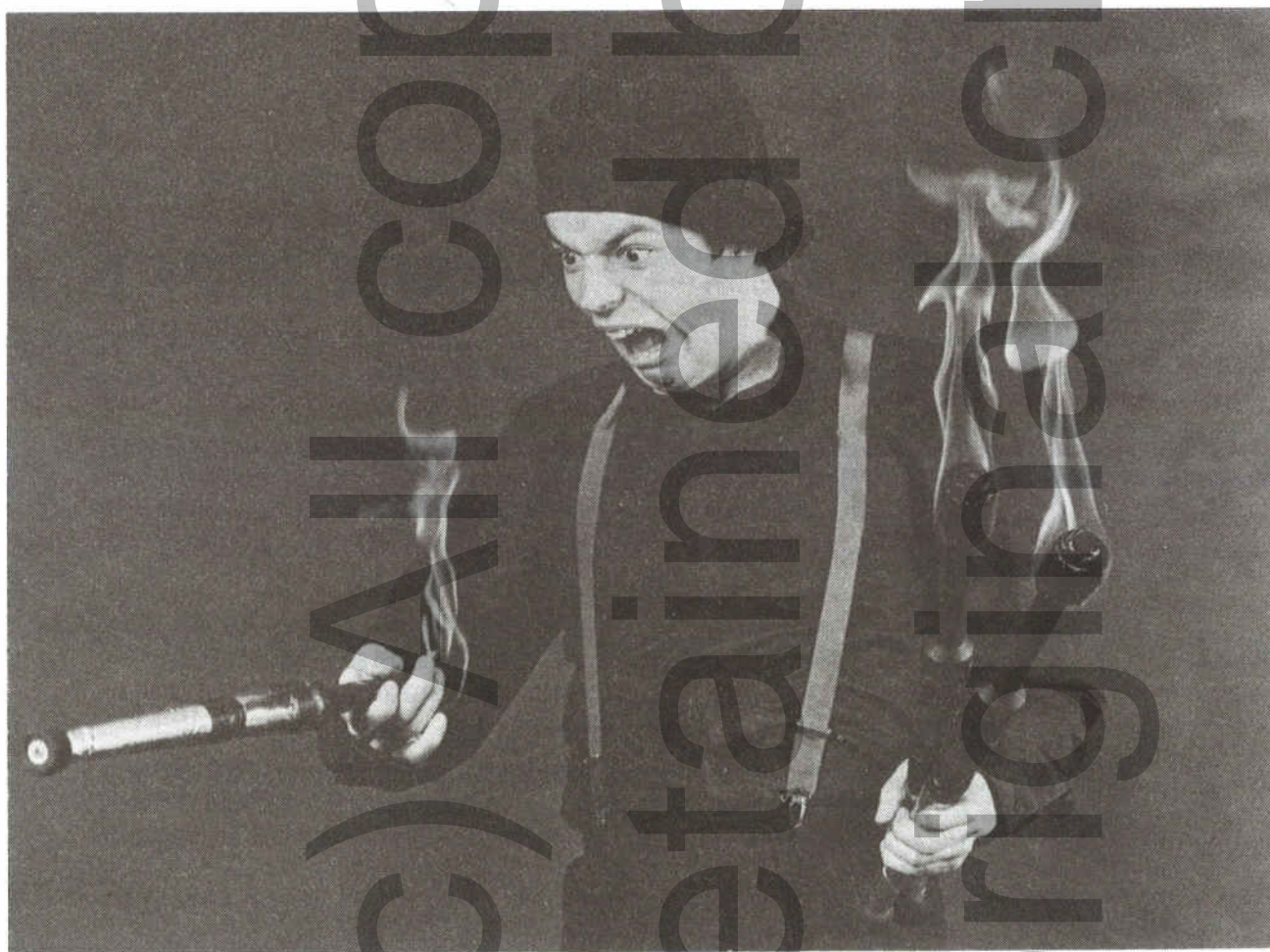
props and have a look at the crowd. If you're a juggler or acrobat you'll need to warm up first, but don't practise for too long or you'll be too tired to do a good show. Don't risk going on cold and pulling any muscles - I recommend a maximum of half an hour to leave you raring to go. For jugglers, just going through the motions of some of your tricks without the props can be a good warm-up.

You're bound to get butterflies before you go on but just keep telling yourself that you're there because you want to be there and you're going

to enjoy yourself. If you're still worried about the shows get together a few like-minded friends and do a group show: it's just as much fun without the pain of going solo. Personally, when I started, if I had a show in the evening I found it impossible to eat after midday, until I'd done the show in the evening and my nerves had calmed down. I remember meeting an excellent comedy magician called Clive Webb and being totally in awe of him because he was tucking into a chicken leg just before he went on.

As a first-time performer you are bound to make mistakes, but you must bear in mind that the audience don't know your show and therefore they don't know what you meant to do, or not. Whatever goes wrong, don't let it bother you - as long as it doesn't bother you it won't bother the audience. The moment you show genuine irritation the crowd will become uncomfortable with it; if a trick won't work after two or three attempts, you must move on or risk losing the crowd. You can always make it a running gag by coming back to it every now and then; and if by chance it works you should get a really good round of applause for achieving an obviously difficult trick.

After the show when you've finally stopped babbling about it to everyone who'll listen, go through your show again like you did in rehearsal and see what worked and what didn't and why, then start looking at how you can improve it for the next time.



WHIPS

- The Cream

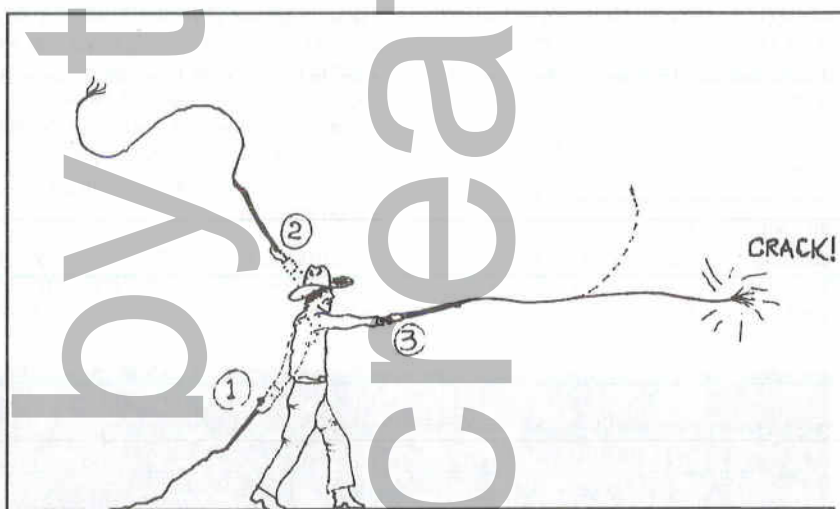
*Dunno about all this guns'n'stuff (playing archetypes? scalp that NewAge cowboy) but watch the conventions and solo shows and you'll see that some of the stock-in-trade of the old Wild West Shows is enjoying renewed interest. To save us the worst of the clichés, for expert we chose noted Australian (that surprised you) cowpoke **Alex Green**, chewed up and spat out the right size by our pardner **JA Slade** of the Wild West Arts Club, UK chapter. Give me Doris Day any night.*

The two most used whips are the Australian Stock-Whip used by the stockman to control horses and cattle, and the American Bull-Whip. The Bull-Whip is used by many Western artistes world-wide, available in 4, 8, 12 and even 16-plait, in Rawhide, Leather, Kangaroo and even Nylon. They come in lengths from 4-foot to whatever length is required depending on what the artiste wants to use it for: 6 or 8-foot are ideal for target work and indoor use. Longer whips are required for wrap-around tricks, multiple cracking and more spectacular tricks.

For record-breaking attempts the length depends on the skill of the artiste. The late Frank Dean cracked a giant 80-foot whip and cut a piece of paper held in his hand as the lash came whistling back towards him!

Whip-crackers should be aware of the speed of the 'cracker'; the pop or crack occurs when the end of the whip exceeds the speed of sound: 1400ft per second. Safety first - always ensure there is no one close enough to be hit as the whip is manipulated around the body.

There is much to learn. Choosing a whip; making a 'Cracker'; and fixing it to the fall of the whip [note JM doesn't explain this bit... Curses! Will have to buy the video after all -d]; how to set up stunts; how to practise safely; care and storage of the whip; making practice targets etc. etc.



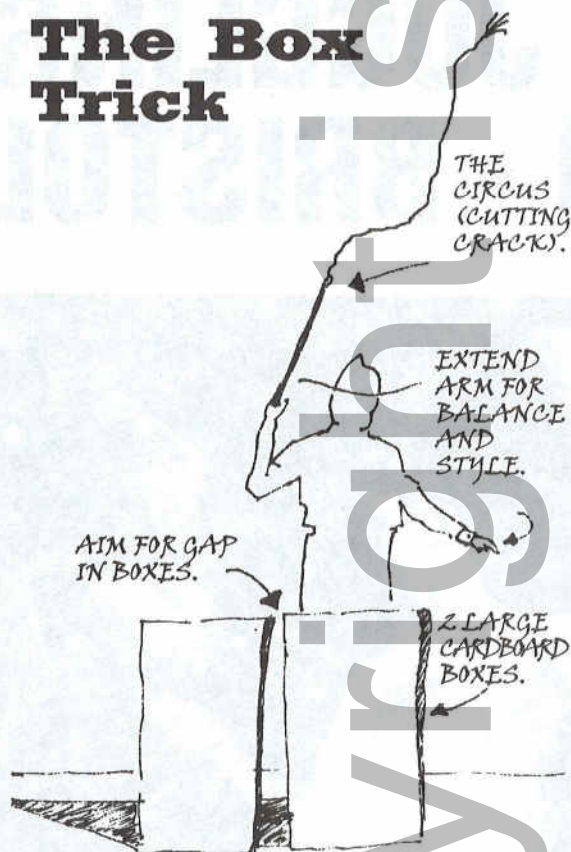
This is the first move: **The 'Circus Crack'**

- (1) Whip trails straight out behind
- (2) With one smooth upward swing bring the whip up over the head and then straight out in front. Just before (3) the arm is parallel with the ground, the wrist 'snaps' down with the arm parallel with the ground. This should be done smoothly but gently. The whip pops or cracks as the lash is pulled up with the wrist movement.

Later increase the speed for louder 'crack'. It's good to aim the whip at an imaginary target about waist-high directly in front. The whip arm stays parallel to the ground at the end of the forward movement.

This is the crack used for cutting paper or targets held by an assistant. Once this basic crack is perfected it is time to move on to the horizontal, overhead and intricate combinations of all three.

The Box Trick



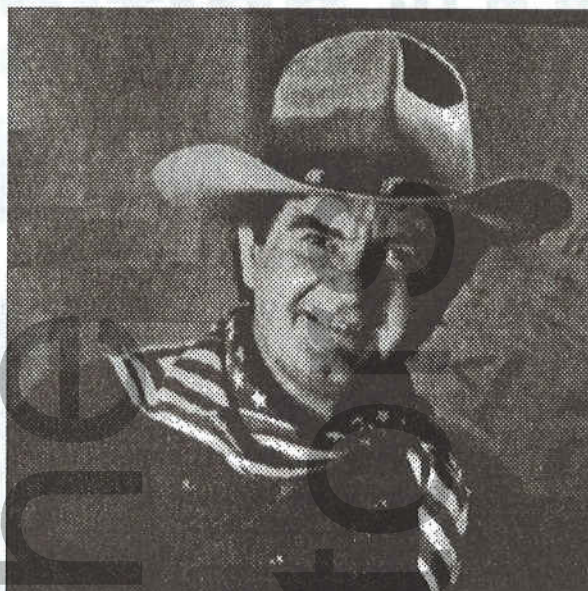
Excellent practice for accuracy. Keep moving boxes closer together, take one step forward for each crack. Don't hurry it's one smooth up-over and forward movement.

Hand Position

USE THUMB POSITION MOST COMFORTABLE FOR YOU.



All whip action and movement is from the hand, wrist and arm. Hold whip firmly. One inch variation of the hand means at least four inches off the end of an eight foot long whip.



Alex Green

Alex was born in Australia and was taught whip-handling by an old native Australian on a cattle station when 8 or 9 years old. He later worked on a cattle station putting his whip-cracking skills to good use.

Like all boys of his generation he enjoyed watching Western movies. It was after seeing the famous movie 'Red River' that Alex decided what he wished to do with his life: he would go to America and become a Western stuntman for the movies.

Fortunately he was introduced to a famous cowboy actor/stuntman, Red Redwing, who taught Alex to handle guns and perfect the Hollywood 'Fast Draw'.

Alex continued to hone his skills with whips, guns, horses and later motor cars. But his first love was and still is Western movies. As stunt coordinator on scores of westerns he has set up whip fights and fancy stunts, gun fights, horse falls and knife and hatchet stunts. He has worked with most of the top international and Hollywood stars and doubled for many including Charles Bronson, Burt Lancaster, Omar Sharif (*Sherrif*?) and more. He is at present under contract to double for Sir Anthony Hopkins. We will soon be able to appreciate his skill with the whips in the remake of the 'Zorro' movie with Sir Anthony, Antonio Banderas and Katherine Zeta Jones.

With over 100 movies, TV shows, wild west shows and cabaret performances Alex truly deserves his title 'The Legend with the whip'.

If you want to know more, we can only recommend Alex's videos available from the Wild West Arts Club's videos (see advert p.36). Full colour, using overhead and slow motion camera action: Whip Cracking No.s I & II; Hollywood Fast Draw and Fancy Gun Handling I & II. Also available: Trick & Fancy Rope Spinning I & II, 'The Art Of the Bull Whip' featuring the world's best whip handlers, 'Gun Play', the best of the Hollywood Gun-Toting Cowboys and a film with John Brady, Australian and the fastest in the world with the stock whip or bull whip.

11TH BRITISH JUGGLING CONVENTION - BRISTOL

Remember April? Wet, cold, hailstones? And yes, the Juggling Convention.

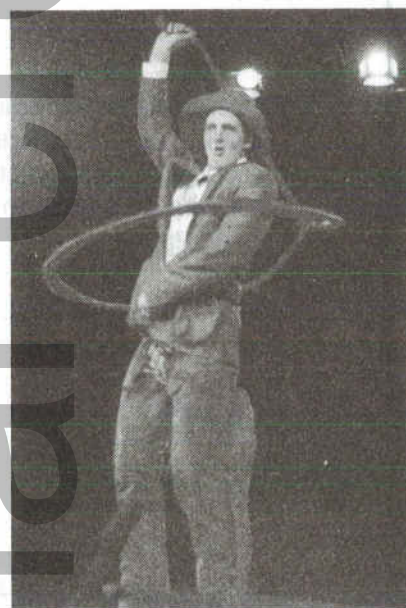
Pieces of security fencing scurried along in one direction, caravans bumped by the other. Fairy lights snaked alongside the walkways. Slowly the scene changed from an empty field to a village of Big Tops and Marquees. Soggy, blue-fingered jugglers beavered away. And still the rain fell, and still the water refused to drain away.

The first night's entertainment, the *Cosmic Sausages*, hit just the right note to put you in mind for three days of fun. The first *Renegade* followed. *PeeWee* lead the proceedings, but there were very few volunteers and the show was quite short: most people had only just arrived and weren't settled in enough to think about doing a spot of entertaining themselves. There was certainly no shortage of people the next two nights. However, the first *Renegade* did give *Peter Panic* from *Never Never Land*, via the USA, the chance to display his wit and talent [and ditto the heckler experts -d]. Peter had unwittingly stumbled across



the convention on his way to Ireland, only to find himself signed up for the Public Show the next day.

Pre-show, the audience were warmed up by the eccentric *Splott Brothers* as the usual balloon model grew around the auditorium. *Noel Britten*, superb as ever, was relaxed and in control as he compered us through a show with a lot of high-energy numbers. *Los Asceros* (*The Men Of Steel* - you bet ya! [does Cathy know something more about them? do tell! -d]) had jaws dropping with their powerful acrobatic balancing - seamlessly choreographed. *Dual Impact* similarly



caused more than a few gasps as they tumbled around the trapeze with a six-pack pumping performance. The women were well represented with two solo pieces: the engaging *Meika* on diablo half-singing a soulful poem; then *Katya* used the passion of operatic soprano voice to enhance her graceful ring juggling. More passion, of the raunchy kind, as *Higher Emotion* snarled and growled at each other through their doubles trapeze. The sight-lines were obscured for a lot of people for *Tom Baker's* floor juggling, but judging by the reaction of

those who could see, it was excellent stuff. I just loved Louie Lichtenstein's quirky cowboy - whipcrackingly good. Luke rounded up the entertainment with his plain white clubs. Nothing plain about the juggling though.

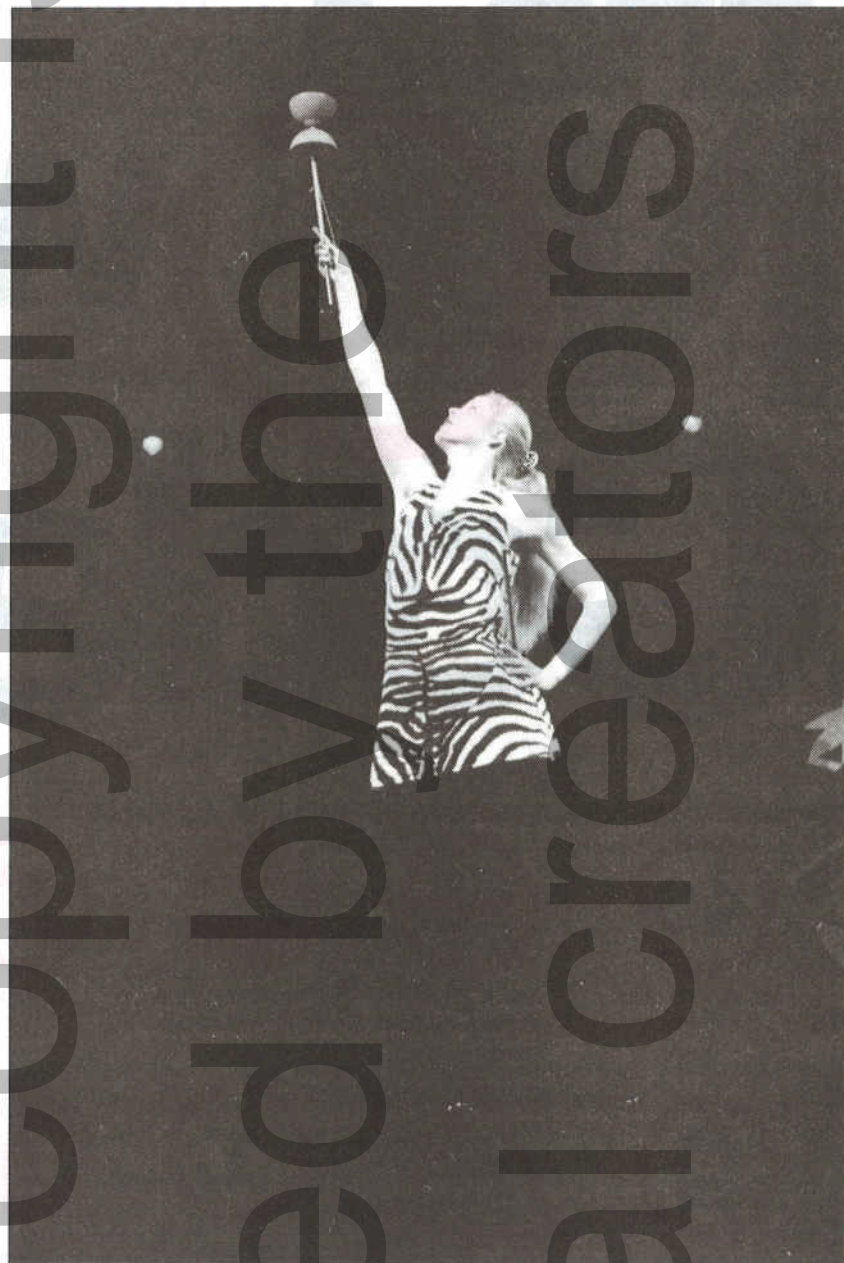
More treats were anticipated the next night with **Stretch People**. Although I felt myself wanting to fast-forward the action at times, there were some wonderfully surreal moments, worth waiting for, especially the vacuum cleaner formation flying display.

Both shows were followed by Renegades in the solar-powered *Croissant Neuf* tent, under Mr. Jules, then PeeWee again. Particular highlights were the return of Margot and also Nick's glitter-gstring snapping at a crucial moment: carrying on regardless showed true heroism. However I could write whatever I like, 'cos judging by the mountains of bottles and cans that we took to the recycling bank, none of you will remember anything!

It's nice to see a green influence at the Convention. As well as *Croissant Neuf*, *Rinky-Dink* pedalled away on their bicycle-powered PA system in the *Hat & Feather* beer tent, which also featured the occasional show.

This year's *Springboard* awards did not produce an outstanding newcomer, but most had basic skills well above what would normally be expected for their age. I particularly enjoyed Errol's diabolo which showed good awareness of music and choreography and yes, Luke, we're all gob-smacked that you can even get on a giraffe unicycle at the age of 8, let alone ride it. Lots of prizes were generously donated by traders, and also for the games. Unfortunately, the games, workshops, and general meeting all suffered from having to be contained within the main hall because of the weather, and there wasn't quite the energy and enthusiasm as outside in warm spring sunshine.

Never mind. It was one of the best conventions yet. And the people without whom none of us would be throwing plastic objects at each other non-stop for three days once a year? Roger Drop, Charlie Dancey and Haggis McCleod (who will be due for their juggling pensions before too long); well-known faces like Tarim (you know, the one who keeps trying to make you pass left-handed) and a whole host of others; and Claire Jackson, the lady brave enough to put up her hand and say "We can do it".



I was curious to know why so many jugglers from the USA and Europe are willing to travel so far to the British Convention. The overwhelming answer was "It's the most fun one of the lot!"

Cathy Jones

hey we remembered some other things

- * Tom spinning balls - he's good that boy...
- * The Pissed Fruits (Bruised? they should be!)
- * That grand *Renegade* tradition of ripping the piss out of the headline acts: in this case, the 'men of steel', wonderfully taken

off with especial attention to the modelling balloons.

- * Juggler trashes computer live on stage! Up yours, siteswappers!
- * The virtual Edinburgh Convention complete with *Catch* on sale & Devilstick Peat in Reception. And who was that girl? Will i meet her for real? Does she do siteswap?
- * Utterly pissed/incoherent/stupid hecklers. Someone really should run that heckling workshop. Or we should heckle the hecklers a bit harder.
- * Ted Underhill
- * Mohican Ducks
- * The most 'festival-y' convention in years - what else do you expect out west?

the No way Code



caution: youth circus
- no oldies



caution: adult circus
(formerly: condom
machines ahead)



competitive frisbee
enthusiasts ahead



no boomerangs



no bar



caution: cycle
circus



danger: Archaos wannabes



danger: overweight
skateboarders ahead
(Camden)



caution: difficult passing
partners ahead



showers only



danger - ultimate wheelers



danger - someone's
trying to rehabilitate the
pogo-stick



snakeboard zone



danger - speeding
skateboards



MUni route



danger: passing zone



bar



bar: convention
organisers only



danger: boring family
show



danger: kids' show -
adults may be offended

OK so we know there's exams in circus, and there's some people want more, but we've always thought there should be a basic proficiency test before people are allowed out in public with dangerous things like Radical Fish, let alone 13' Giraffe Unis. And that suggests there ought to be some signage to help others avoid situations and equipment they really can't handle. All of which is a cue to do one of those recaptioning road-signs gags like i remember from the 1965 Beano annual and every rag mag since. We haven't done one before, tho'...



warning: UV show -
be prepared



danger: unstable
multiplexing ahead



rollerskating rink



danger: opinionated
workshop session



3-count feed zone

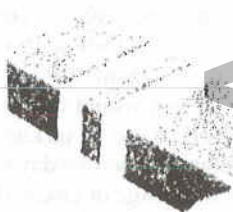


danger: sorted professional
performers' camping only



"ON THE KERB OR AT THE EDGE OF THE CARRIAGEWAY" Busking restrictions

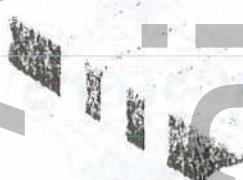
During every working day



For example

No busking
Mon - Sat
8.30 am-6.30 pm

During every working day,
and additional times



For example

No busking
at any time

During any other periods



For example

No busking
at any
useful time

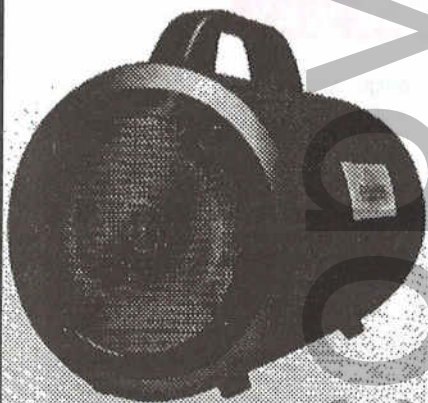
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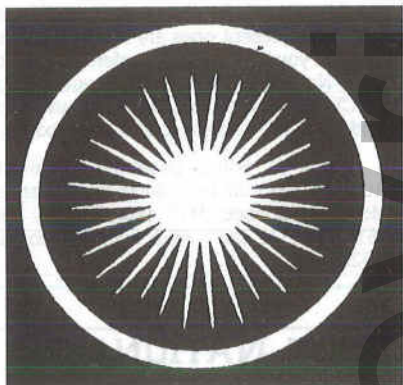
Market Place
Ambleside LA 22 9BU
Tel.: 01539 434243



CATCH THIS NEWS

IF YOU PAY PEANUT(S)

Bread & Circuses in Leeds are cooking up a full menu of projects in the famous Chapeltown (the only bit of Leeds I've heard of, anyway) & Harehills inner city areas. Pete 'Peanut' Turner, B&C emperor, had made some excellent headway & profile with **Leeds Children's Circus** in the early '90s, local TV programmes, British Council trips to *L'École sans Filet* 'n' all. Falling as so many do under the shifting hurdles of funding, LCC is still a weekly children's circus club that has had upwards of 300 kids through its doors, not half bad for a voluntary organisation.



Subsequently, a project called **Circus City** has been projected (!) to start in September '98, providing training to NVQ standard for 16-26 year-olds (half-funded through the Single Regeneration Budget, for those who keep an eye on such things) in the same districts, where unemployment, crime and single parent households touch twice the city-wide average. A 1992 B&C project (covered in *The Catch* issue 6) worked with 40 long term adult unemployed and a visible degree of success. The potential highest point of the lot is still in the research stage: **The Circus School for Children**, a 'community business' combining the aspirations, skills and successes of the other two projects.

While funding is still in major shortfall - SRB only provides 50% funding, the Children's Circus is in a perpetual underfunding trap, current estimates demand £25,000 be raised in '98/99 - there's also lots of potential for fundraising, vision, development, bringing new energies on board. If any of this sounds exciting to you, (and it should), they'd like to hear from you, they'd like councils & funding bodies to hear from you, and most of all they want, says Pete, "best wishes and blessings from the new circus community". Well then. They've got some impressive bits of paper and track record, but these are better (and can be!) turned into impressive realities.

B&C when they come to earth are to be found at/on 6 Vicar's Terrace, LEEDS LS8 5AP West Yorkshire 0113 240 6486.

UMBRELLA MUSHROOMS

Training projects are mushrooming under various finance initiatives (well, the buildings/capital bits are...) and we got more news the other day from **Brolli**, the £1.2m project at The Clocktower, Mostyn, Flintshire, which will combine a performing arts centre (the accent on popular arts) with a training facility whose particular speciality will be the techniques and traditions of street entertainment, complementing nicely the more circus arts & street theatre orientation of established centres of excellence. With renowned street performer / teachers Dave Southern & David Alexander topping the bill, the centre will provide short & long residential courses of all sorts styles and levels. It's not going to be all stuck there, either - major outreach work, tours and shows everywhere they can get to are also in the plan. The builders are still in and not expected to be finished till November, so we'll put off the full story till then, but, just so you know it's still coming... If you can't wait till then and live in the area (Mostyn is on the west corner of the Dee estuary, very well placed for plenty) you could call the project on 01745 560011.

THE JOINERS' UNION

Dave Southern's name crops up again on another line, this time the nascent **British Guild of Street Entertainers**, seriously mooted at last year's Covent Garden Festival. Not that we're finding a theme here or anything (and we'd be fine ones to talk) but this one too is still under wraps for the moment, and we can expect more news come the next *Catch* (not as far away as you're thinking, eh?). Many valuable ideas are circulating, representation to local authorities (the uncooperative, the clamping-down, or even the "we'd like to develop" kind) being high on the list, as well as a deal on Public Liability Insurance, of increasing essentialness even for unpaid street acts, as many are finding. Watch this space.

This news comes as a contrast to that from **The National Association of Street Entertainers**, whose lottery application for office equipment was turned down, despite their case that street entertainers' takings have dropped by an average 1/3 because of the lottery (we'll ignore the comments about "social security scroungers twanging guitars to supplement their benefits", shall we?). The NASE brings together performers of all sorts, and as such is certainly a *good thing*, says we. More details from 'Shaky Jake' Arno at 221 Webb Rise, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 5QQ, 01438 364427.

Still on the organisational front, a large group of Street Arts bookers, and a smaller collection of performers, exchanged information and views at the **Second Street Arts Meeting** held at the opening of the National Street Arts Festival in Brighton back in May. These meetings too are a *good idea*, they just ought to happen more

often. News came there of another group of festival directors, programmers, performers and "street arts practitioners" [where's *Grillo Parafuso* when we need this terminology exploding? -d] who had met a couple of weeks before in London. Names included the directors of Stockton Riverside, Manchester Streets Ahead, Winchester, Birmingham & Canary Wharf/Docklands Festivals. This **Independent Street Arts Network** looks like a powerful collective too, we'll give you the full monty when they get round to telling us (OK, everyone in that line of work is pretty busy at this time of year), or you can get them c/o Entertainments & Special Events, PO Box 2122, Baskerville House, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2NE, Chubb@technologist.com

Finally associatively we picked up news of a group bringing together artists in physical & visual theatre, which includes a lot of outdoor and circus arts & performance. More information can be had from Dorothy Max Prior, 237 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JD, 01273 385928, or Phil Gunderson 01273 382211. We just loved the name: it's the **Bodily Functions Forum**...

BRIGHTON ROCKS BRITAIN

Unveiled with a good dose of some of the best Brit/Euro street stuff in Brighton back in May (**Monsieur Culbuto** is one of the best things you know-it-all editor saw all year), the **National Festival of Street Arts**, coordinated by **Zap Productions** who have been extending out of their home town for a few years now, is many things in many places. Some are old events with a bit more pizzazz or simple booking expertise thrown in to give 'em a lift, some are new events in places that could do with something strange in the street. Possibly best of all it's a whole sheet of new work for which they've found funding and ambitious companies, for most of whom it's a first step into purpose-design, and for whom it's potentially a step into the front line, where there are too few British Companies. Good things all round, then.

Whether it's going to corner all the Lottery & Arts Council money for street work for the next few years is a question (whether there was anything like enough money before they put a proposal together is another one), but whatever the consequences, many fine acts have been decorating many amusing towns all summer. Production difficulties meant we missed telling you about them in advance, but we hope you didn't miss them.

NEW WAYS TO HURT YOURSELF DEPT.

It had to happen: someone's come up with the All-Terrain Board (ATB), sort of like a mountainbike skateboard, with potential

Catch This - NEWS

Catch This - NEWS

CATCH THIS NEWS

to give snowboarders something to do when & where there's no snow (I thought that was time for the famous relaxation activities, guys?). If the hillsides can handle more traffic, it sounds like fun, now where's the Snakeboard version?

You can find out more from MaxTrack of Ledbury, Herefordshire, on 01531 635564 fax ...674.

WORLD DROP FEVER

In amongst the letters from juggling workshops (some of you are on the ball at least) was one from Andrew Quick of Birkenhead. Apparently he and mates from **Dragon Community Circus** are plotting something called 'Juggle the World 2000', involving juggling in every country in the world, unsurprisingly; this to be achieved not by one giant holiday for AQ & chums, but by spreading juggling workshop fever to all 200+ countries. We've already had doubts about this boy's sanity, now we're sure: to talk him out of it (or yourself in?) try Andrew at 17 Prenton Village Road, Prenton, Birkenhead, Merseyside, L43 0TF, 0151 608 2029. At least this provides a nice link to:

INTERNATIONAL SECTION

Germany

The EU is putting more money into the already-prestigious **European Festival of Young Artists**, the other circus competition after *Cirque du Demain*, and probably the one with the more Euro style. The competition is open to EC residents aged 5-22 (2 groups, 5-15, 16-22) and takes place in Wiesbaden, Germany, Nov. 6-8. There are cash prizes into 4-figure sums (£ or DM!) and the chance to become part of the **European Youth Circus** (otherwise just for graduates from the Circus Schools). Accommodation & food are free, but travel isn't; send a VHS video of only the act you wish to perform (if you want to enter more acts, send more vids), 3 colour photos and a personal profile (experience, performances); the event will be filmed for TV and an entry is taken as consent to this. Do it NOW!

You can get the full SP from: Landeshauptstadt Wiesbaden, Kulturamt, Wilhelmstr. 32, 65183 Wiesbaden, Germany +49 611 313773.

Denmark

Cirkus Arli of Copenhagen deserve our undying thanks for keeping **Donald Grant** off the streets, stages, book-stands and convention bars of these islands. If you find yourself in that wonderful wonderful city (Christiana?) you could pop in and thank them personally: *Cirkus Arli*, Hulgårdsvej 17, 2400 København NV. Denmark.

France

The **Parc de la Villette** in Paris has stepped up its commitment to the very finest Circus Arts (no, not just the French ones), co-commissioning some spectacular new shows, and is fast becoming an essential stop on any visit to the capital - it's a pretty walk about the place too. Forthcoming shows announced are: Sep. 24-Nov. 1: 'Ningen', the new show from the too-too-beautiful *Cirque Baroque*; Nov. 18-Dec. 31 there's aerial ballet *Les Arts Sauts* (luckily occasionally seen over in GeeBee) in 'Kayassine'. January will see a new piece from 'the Circus Conservatoire', CNAC. Now it's safe to go back across the channel, we suggest you drop in if you can.

Horslesmurs, ultimate source of the most reliable information on what's going on in France and further, on the street and in the ring, have moved offices and also managed to revamp their paper output. *Arts de la Piste* has now become an A4 format glossy, bilingual French/English, and frankly the look of it is enough to turn the entire *Catch* team green with gangrenous envy. I don't even get the smug feeling of being exclusive by understanding the French edition any more. The photography is superb and the articles fascinating: a study of why the circus is historically so important to the circus, anyone?

There's also a French-only glossy, *Rue de la Folie*, dealing with street & spectacle acts, plus a quarterly bulletin with all the professional news and festival calendar. If you have any interest in the French or international scenes we suggest you get a look at one or the other; you might find their directories, *Goliath* for street arts, *The International Professional Directory of Circus Arts* for the others, worth the investment too: a year of one of the mags plus the directory is 250FF, both directories 300FF or just the circus for 190FF.

They've also got a specialist bookshop, archives, heritage collections, documentary resource centre and a bilingual www site. We'll try and scrape the money together to go over and tell you all about it sometime; for now you'll have to do it through:

horslesmurs, 68, rue de la Folie-Méricourt, 75011 PARIS, tel. +1 55 28 10 10, fax ...11, www.horslesmurs.asso.fr ...allez!

MULTINATIONAL

Reckon yourself, do you? Wanna run away and join **Cirque du Soleil**?

If you're tired of waiting for the talent scouts to spot you (a substantial proportion of *Soleil* performers are indeed approached by the circus themselves), but reckon you've got the (let's face it) outstanding skills and ability to develop a show for months and play it for maybe years, there is another way. With four new shows in the pipeline (a new tour in 1999, two new permanent shows in the States and another in Berlin) they're always on the lookout for new speciality acts, singers, musicians, dancers, actors. They're also very much on the case for picking up recently-'retired' athletes - about 45% of their performers are top athletes whose careers in gymnastics, acrobatic sports, synchro-swimming or diving have come to an end (such are the pressures) but have many years of perfect condition left to them.

If that's you (sure as heck ain't me) there are auditions throughout the world throughout the year, from which the catalogue of possible performers for future shows and stand-ins for the present ones are formed. It's just that first you have to be considered for one of them. Nothing to do but pack off your portfolio, CV, relevant vid or audio tapes, and wait. And wait. The address to fantasise about is:

Cirque du Soleil, Casting Department, Audition CoOrdinator, 8400 2nd Avenue, Montreal, Quebec, H1Z 4M6 Canada. Tel. +514 722 2324, fax: ...3692, audition info line ...5255.

POST-NATIONALIST

The French route of the **Serious Road Trip** are still very much in business, with a project gearing up to get going in **Western Romania** (Timisoara area) in March '99, the classic-pattern short (12 week) tour followed by long-term cultural development programme reaching schools, cultural centres and even professional artists.

They've also just finished their first project in France, *Juggling Under the Moon*, a UV/ music/skills show developed with workers and directors from institutes for handicapped people, which toured every relevant facility in their home area (Orléans district), 18 shows, and was so successful they're going to do it again in another region very soon.



TSRT-CHF can be found as always at 108 rue de Bourgogne, 45000 Orléans, France, tel. +33 02 38 53 23 11, fax: ...75, tsrt.chf@wanadoo.fr, and a brand new website in English & French on http://perso.wanadoo.fr/tsrt.chf/

CATCH THIS EVENTS

Sep.22-Oct.3 **7th Festival Internacional de Trobadors i Joglars** Granollers, Catalunya, Spain. Not quite what you're thinking, but a bit of history instead & jolly interesting if the presence of Lluís Llach is any indication. tel.+93 879 6190

Oct.2-4 **3rd International Street Theatre Festival** Getafe, (just south of) Madrid, Spain. Chokka with Hispanic-style clowns, mimes & circus including Nanny Cogorno & friends from Argentina. Tel./fax +91 6837755 & +91 6818212 during fest. Crazyness guaranteed.

Oct.2-4 **Augsburg Juggling Convention** Bavaria, Germany. University New Sports Centre. tel.+49 821 661 508

Oct.4 **7th East Midlands Juggling Convention** Corby **CANCELLED**

Oct.8-18 **14th Olot Theatre Forum** Olot, Catalunya, Spain (Pyrennees). It's a nice town in the middle of some dead wierd landscape, I can vouch for that, and they've got the likes of *Ilotpie*, *Scarabeus* (?), the utterly magnificent *Primitives*, *Les Bubb*, *Kevin Brooking* along, which makes for an entertaining time too.

Oct.9-12 **10th Annual Lodi Juggling Festival** Mice Grove Park and Zoo, Lodi, California, US.

Oct.10 **Durham Juggling Festival** Convivial session with a good show, cheap beer and fluorescent pink signposts. These points may be connected. Offers & information to/from Mini 01642 897191 or Roger 01642 890934.

Oct.15-17 **3rd Show & Event** Stuttgart, Germany. Show market, halls 11-14 of the Messegelände Stuttgart, info from gedu-Verlag, Hanfäckerweg 29, 71069 Sindelfingen, Germany tel.+49 7031 73880 fax:...738820

Oct.16-18 **Bremen Juggling Convention** Germany. University. tel.+49 421 218 3467

Oct.28-30 **Balloon Modelling Convention**, Melle, Germany (near Osnabruck). Venue Feirhalle & Gonenberg Park. Only charges are food & accommodation. Rüdiger Paulsen, Bahnhofstr. 90, 33829 Borgholzhausen, tel.+49 5425 6551 fax:...7549.

Oct.31 **5th Lancaster Hallowe'en Juggling Convention**. Well-rated bash with the students & the Pendle witches. www.lancs.ac.uk/socs/sluj sluj@lancaster.ac.uk.

Nov.? **3rd South American Convention** Buenos Aires. Ffi. Chacovachi, Uspallata 986, 1268 Buenos Aires, Argentina, t/f +541 361 0520 chacovachi@giga.com.ar

Nov.6-8 **European Festival of Young Artists** Wiesbaden, Germany. See *Catch This News*. +49 611 313773.

Nov.14-15 **20th Borsa Internazionale**

dello Spettacolo Milano, Italy. Show market with potentially lots of interest to offer. Performers apply *immediately* the deadline's running close. For spectators the address is Palazzina Liberty & Largo Marinai d'Italia, tel. APPI @ +2 255 190545/6/fax:...7

Nov.27-28+ **Belfast International Festival**. It might be a bit cold for street stuff but there's some clown/physical comedy, installation shows and more amid the programme.

Nov.26-29 **Erlangen Juggling Convention** near Nürnberg, Germany. tel.+49 911 512345.

Feb.14-21 **15th Hawaiian Juggling Festival** Tours, music, workshops, kayak, canoe, sail, surf, dolphin swims, whale watch, and juggling if you can take the time. \$215 before Jan.14, \$240 after. \$185 'optional meal plan'. Tom Kidwell, 145 Surfside, Santa Cruz, CA 95069, +408 426 7343, fax ...5 7996 tom@renegadejuggling.com Fritz Brehm, Untermainkai 84, D-60329 Frankfurt/M, Germany tel/fax +49 69 252265.

Feb.18-21 **7th New Zealand Juggling Convention** Picton, South Island. Just on the Cook Strait between the islands and run by the irrepressible (we've tried) Garry, Pauline & Ferg from the Jugglers' Rest. Lots on the beach and they've got a swimming pool too if you can't be bothered, the area is famous for its landscape and its wine. Sounds somewhat irresistible. Call JR on +03 348 5876, if you're going get hold of a *Flying Kiwi* for some more accounts of nice things to do.

Mar.15-18 **11th Freiburg Performing Arts Fair** Germany. Cabaret trade fair for organisers & performers. Apply before end Oct. to Kulturamt der Stadt Freiburg, Postfach, D-79095 Freiburg, +761 201 2115 or ...08, fax:...99.

Mar.20 **Taunton Juggling Convention** Ladymead School, Taunton, 10-10, workshops, cabaret, renegade, top fun. Sally 01823 480998

Apr.2-4 **Isla Vista Juggling Festival** near Santa Barbara, California, USofA. Robertson Gym & Anisq'Oyo Park. Jeff Walsh, +805 685 4140.

.....
Apr.8-11 12th British Juggling Convention Durham (Graham Sports Centre, Maiden Castle, to be precise). More info on a flyer which might have flown out of your copy so we repeat some: everything you have a right to expect from your national convention (we know the Durham-brains can do it) including pleasant (dog free! NB!) riverside camping & quiet family areas (be sure to book early) as well as 24-hour madness, kites & Uni jousting and fab Saturday night show. Rooms plus brekky £63 for 3 days, convention fees being as follows (pre-reg before Mar.5, on-the-day rate in brackets): Adults £36.50 (£42), 10-16s £20 (£25), family 2+2 £100 (£120), all payable to DCJ Events Management with a sae. and a spare 26p stamp, via 7 Front Street, Coxhoe, County Durham, DH6 4DB, tel. 01642 297014 fax:... 897192 bjc12@bigfoot.com
.....

May 13-16(prov) **Trapezi** Reus, nr. Tarragona, Catalunya, Spain. Circus fair/festival in the heat of it run by the lunatics from *Escarlata Circus*. Pilar Llauradó or Alfred Fort, Institut Municipal d'Accio Cultural, Carrer de Sant Joan 27 (Casa Rull), E-43201 Reus, Spain. +34 977 338047, fax:...322046, pllaurado@imacreus.org

Jun. **16th Marató de l'Espectacle** Barcelona, Catalunya, Spain. International fair/market of 'scenic arts' including Circus & Cabaret. Last year brought 250 acts before 100 programmers and this year's is throwing its doors open more internationally. Trafalgar 78, 1-1, 08010 Barcelona, Spain, tel.+34 93 268 1868 fax:...2424, marato.espect@marato.com www.marato.com/marato.espect

Jul.(early) **4th Israel International Street Theatre Festival** c/o Jacky Bachar Production, 12 David Ha'Melech Street, Tel Aviv, 64953 Israel, tel.+972 3 691 4144, fax:...3540, jack_b@netvision.net.il

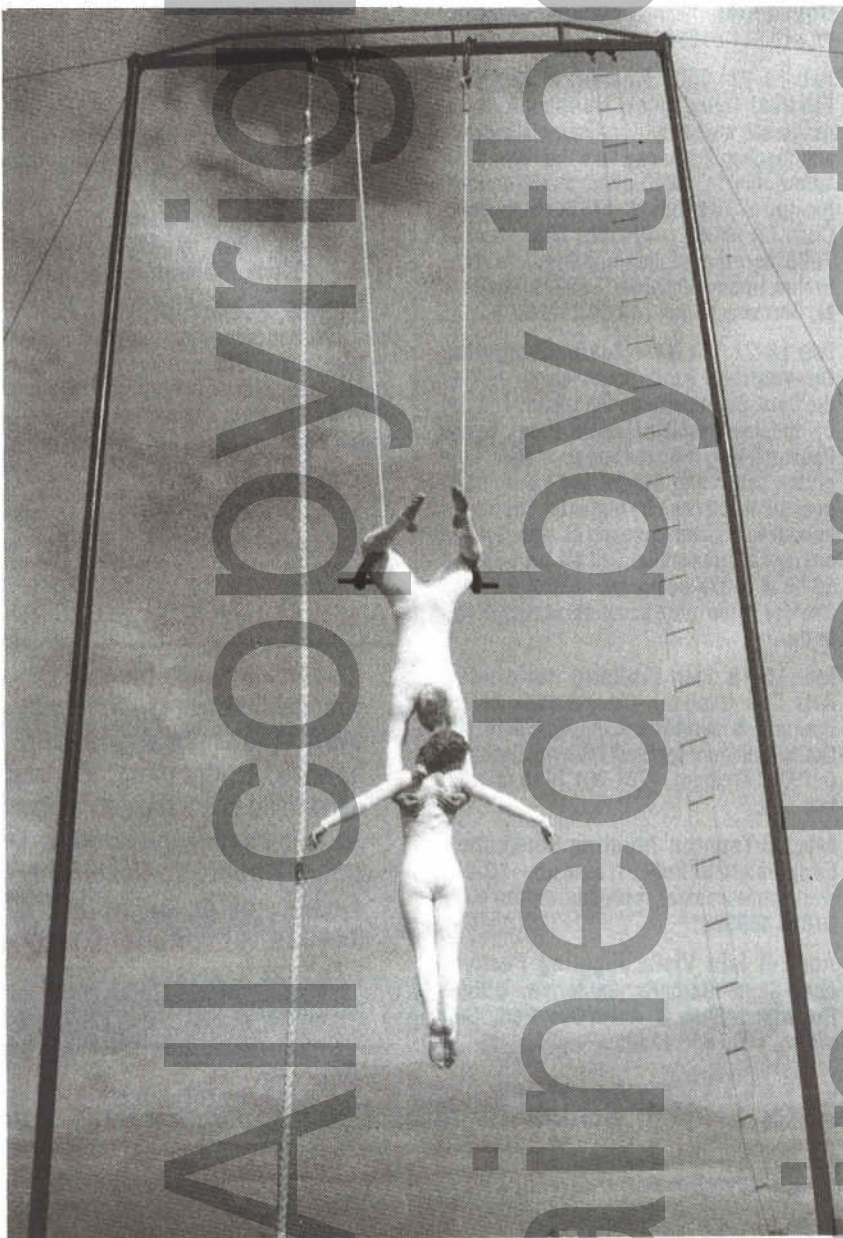
Aug.23-29 **Ferrara Buskers Festival** Italy. 170-odd (some very odd) acts, 800,000 punters and immeasurable lunacy: if live music (acoustic or battery-powered amps only) makes up a substantial part of your show and you can hat effectively we recommend it most highly. Write with tapes vids etc. to: Ferrara Buskers Festival, via De'Romei 3, 44100 Ferrara, Italy, tel.+0532 249337, www.4net.com/buskers/ and tell 'em we sent you.

It's a technological miracle! Get your details on the web without even (necessarily) being hotwired to the thing: all you need to do is get the gen to the JIS (Juggling Information Service) either Rupert.Voelcker@bt-sys.bt.co.uk or fax on 01473 644649 or phone 01394 278556. weally wather wonderful.

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State-of-the-Art performance from the stilt-of-the-art collective.
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Oct. Olot Theatre Festival, Catalunya, Spain.
Dec. Roma Congressi, Italy



HEIR OF INSANITY

Consistently good-looking aerial show with busy-growing date sheet
Oct.31 Halloween Event, Suffolk
Dec.10-Jan.9 Mother Goose, Theatre Royal, Brighton

NO FIT STATE CIRCUS

phase 2 of *Yesterday Today Tomorrow*, NFSC's ground-breaking *spectacle*-cum-community project. See pages 5-8 for the absolute hype.

December 8-12, venue, time and price tbc. You're just going to have to call 01222 488734 to find out more.

Unless you're in it - in which case call them earlier!

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

No, they've gone. If you're lucky, you could catch Allegria at:

Sep.17-on Zurich

Nov.5-on Hamburg

or Quidam at:

Sep.17-on Washington

Oct.29-on Atlanta.

CIRQUE PLUME

Not in this country either, dangit, but they're one of Europe's beat right now, so if you're anywhere near...

Oct.6-11 Vesoul, France

Dec. Grenoble, France

To keep up with trad. circuses you don't need to go scouring the country for gaily-painted trad trailers (*sic*), you can ring the *Kingpole* (Trad. Circus mag) information line on 0891 343341. It's a premium charge line but it does get updated every Monday so the info's a bit fresher than ours.

c a b a r e t s

Norwich Circus Centre Cabaret

St. Gregory's, Oct.16&17

as part of Norwich Festival. More details nearer or on 01603 740011.

o n e - o f f s

ZACA Showcase Performance

Oct.22 2.30pm. The Big Top, Clissold Park, Green Lanes, Stoke Newington, London N16.

End-of-term show for Zippo's students, and we always get good reports on the standard: top for talent-spotting!

CATCH THIS COURSES

ZIPPO'S ACADEMY OF CIRCUS ARTS

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Unique travelling Circus School, places limited, intensive 6-month apprenticeship in *everything*, with real-life performance experience built-in. This year's course is running May 1-Oct.31 so the same next year is not improbable. Ring David Hibling on 07050 282624 for more info. Full whack fees are currently £1750 but you can get Student Loans and Training for Work funding, enquire to ZACA.

CIRCOMEDIA

Academy of Circus Arts & Physical Theatre, Bristol.

Unit 14, The Old School House, Kingswood Foundation, Britannia Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 2DB. Enquiries for classes on 0117 947 7042 or write 43 Kingsway Avenue Kingswood Bristol BS15 2AN.

Based in the refurbished premises of a Victorian school in its own grounds, Circomedia offers professional training with particular emphasis on the integration of technique training with performance, attracting students from Japan, Sweden, America and Europe, as well as Britain on to their One Year Intensive and 11 Week Foundation Courses.

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Introduction to the basics of the 1-year course

Sep.28-Dec.18 Fee £1400

weekly classes

Juggling with Gentleman Juggler Rod Laver, with added opportunities for a crack at Uni, RolaBola, Stilts. Equipment available. Every Wednesday 7-9 £2.50. Ring Rod on 0117 977 3028.

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L'ESPACE CATASTROPHE

We've been sent details of an autumn programme at this Brussels circus/dance/impro/clown school, so what better to do than pass them on to you...

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European Juggling Convention 1998: Edinburgh

Catch out

It's hard to write about your own convention. For starters, it could well end up being a little biased. But, more importantly, you're not there for so much of it. Well, you *are* there, just not in the same way as everybody else. From all boys and girls up here in bonny Scotland, we wish you all the best and have put this together from comments received and impressions gained over what was a magical week for us all.

We hope everybody enjoyed themselves. Over the last few days there was a steady stream, of people coming to Registration and thanking the team for their hard work. In that it's more unusual for someone to mention a jolly good time than it is to complain about a specific problem, this was taken to be a good thing. Watch out for details of a revived annual Scottish Convention; now we are done with British & European Conventions it's time to get back to basics!

One of the most pleasing aspects of the week was that everything that was meant to happen *did* happen, except for the Big Picnic - 'cos of inclement weather.

The Ceilidhs were a smash (overheard:

"why don't they have Scottish dancing at all European Conventions?

The Parade along Princes Street was huge! And there must have been at least 2000 jugglers and Edinburghers watching the City Centre Show under the castle afterwards.

The evening Cabarets were well worth watching, but probably to the detriment of *Renegade*. Is this tradition dying, or were you all just 'showed-out'?

The UV Room was one of the most popular areas, lots of space and loads and loads of UV light.

As was the Fire Show, the most talked-about. Edinburgh's folly provided a spectacular backdrop for 200 jugglers to wow the city. And wow them you did: Fire Control received twelve 999 calls about Calton Hill being set alight.

The Games were held in the arena used for the 1970 & 1986 Commonwealth Games. can't we get '5 Soap-Bar Endurance' and 'Gandini Gladiators' seen by a larger audience? the traditional sporting world doesn't know what it's missing!

Workshops were a well-organised success, with a timetable of classes and get-togethers organised for every single activity, level of skill and degree of seriousness. I personally only caught one Masterclass Workshop (Connie Cotter's, and her boys unicycling) but if the others were half as good then they were all amazing.

The 5th British Unicycle Convention happened at the same time. We really enjoyed having you chaps, you really should consider holding the conventions in tandem again. The Unicycle Ceilidh was a particular scream - as was the downhill section of the race up Arthur's Seat, but for different reasons!

The Circus Spectacular (or Public Show) went off without a hitch. it was lovely to have the performers around for the whole week, they all worked really hard and gave so much.

On a personal level, we would like to thank those jugglers who turned up to camp on Friday and Saturday evenings and had to put up with the grass verge outside the centre next to the A1! The police and security who ensured camping right in the centre of Edinburgh was as safe as it could be - anything stolen, unfortunately, was by jugglers from jugglers. And **all the staff** at Meadowbank. They have hoisted some of the largest sporting events in the world, meetings of Commonwealth Heads of State and a Prince Concert, but they admitted never having seen or enjoyed anything like you lot.

Thanks to all those who helped in whatever way they did. You know who you are and even if you don't, we do. Everybody who did anything to make EJC98 more than just 2000 people turning up to juggle should allow themselves a warm smile and a pat on the back. We thought it was great, and it was you who made it so.

Slainte

The Scottish Juggling & Circus Skills Association;
James, Johnny & Dave and EJC98

NO SITE FOR 1999 ALERT!

Karlsruhe, Germany, will host in the year 2000, but what about next year? A provisional Portuguese bid failed to materialise and no-one else came forward. As alternatives, there was talk of a professional company organising next year in The Netherlands. A Spanish option has been mentioned since, but as we write there's nothing definite to report. The European Juggling association, a body of past organisers and interested parties which exists to help set up the conventions, is meeting in November to discuss the issue. If you have any ideas or suggestions, contact them asap. (see *Catchphrases* for addresses).



GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL OF PERFORMING HUMANS

You don't want to know what the weather was like. Never mind that every other magazine & TV station in the country has already told you what the weather was like, you just don't want to know what the weather was like, OK?

No, what you *do* want to connect to is what the acts were like at Britain's biggest Circus/Street show - is that a contentious statement? Pilton certainly has the most acts this side of Edinburgh Fringe, pages of them, in very small writing... If only the Ashman kids hadn't pinched the programme, we might remember who some of them were...

Well my dear, we occasionally managed to drag ourselves out of the Green Room Cocktail Bar (usually when Mike's entertainment came on) and the very opportune Hat & Feather (see half the best bands of the festival without leaving the backstage compound? that'll do nicely in this weather) often enough to catch a good slice of what was going on, even though timetables were severely askew and a lot of people couldn't show at all or at least not when anyone was expecting it.

The Outside Circus Stage manages to sum up a lot of what's best about the circus/street/festival culture. It does it every year, but under these conditions it came off better than most scenes with facilities that cost 100 times as much. Famos Bramwells kept the babble level higher than the mud, and the acts, the

acts... It's the street performers' stage, really, and, as we know, good street performers can deal with *anything* when it comes to distractions and audience-in-interesting-conditions. Never was such an assertion tested so soundly, and never did it prove to be more true. You guys, and the growing number of girls who are big enough to take it on, you're heroes. The whole lot of you.

In the Circus Tent, Windsor kept up his constant level of enthusiasm to keep the audience response level correspondingly high. Where does he get his energy from? (No, on second thoughts, don't tell me. Is there a budget for that?) It was so important under conditions like these, when people came in zombied by their trudge through the swamp, to sit in front of anything as long as it was dry, that the compère keeps the feeling up, and the acts are of the quality to work it. Both of which were much more often the case than not...

I don't expect you're supposed to sit in Circus all day (it's OK, i didn't), so i expect that accounts for a lack of variety in the bulk of the acts. Unless too many people are doing similar things anyway. Aerial work in particular is suffering from a lot of sameness: particularly when it comes to finding 'motivation', as circus/theatre demands, for all that nonsense to take place. StageFright impressed me yet again with a neat routine, some nice twists and some dif-

ferent business. Higher than the Sun, this time a solo, did nothing to damage their toppest of the quality rep. The Cornish mermaid double with Bindle Jones (and someone else whose name I can't find, dangit) managed to find a frame for the whole thing even down to the standard-it-seems erotic overtones (which don't work so well on her piece as Higher Emotion, it's beginning to feel a bit hack, that stuff), and made a show that really worked, congratulations. Outside, Skinning the Cat's new show (see story upfront) was, in shape, well, another STC show, but even in these conditions they retained the sense of wonder and the gorgeous costumes/visuals that are their signature and their deserved reputation.

Solo speciality acts were crowned by Niels' very proficient fancy juggling (liked the telescopic fishing rod bits) and he managed to keep the crowd with him on some quite techie juggling. Liked Joel's new hair, too. Big surprise was Spacehoppers, an exceptionally-silly piece of ensemble dance with character/mime/physical business performed entirely on back of aforementioned horned beasts. The Black Eagles not only had a lot for the girls to ogle, some of their acro stuff verges on Chinese-style stunning (routines copped, but these guys are noticeably bigger), and the presentation has enough *esprit du corps* and Spirit of the Dance not to be cheesy.

Do i have to mention Circus of Horrors? Alright, you asked for it... Tho' probably a better show than the last version, this show deserves little of the hype that's so lavishly and professionally ladled onto it. An Archaos-style opening (without the outlaw danger of the French originals) leads into a presentation which slowly deflates its promise and its premise. When the old 'box trick' is repeated no less than three times (the dwarf does his acro number 3 times in different costumes too) you begin to think you're being patronised. A couple of illusions (one last seen with Cirque Surreal, if i remember aright), a flash of female bod and some decent clown business don't make for the leading edge of anything much; they use the assault-the-planted-audience-member amputation gag again from the last show (which was the latter's highpoint), which works well enough; and The Wasp Boy (aka. The Bastard Son of Tommy Cooper) stops where the Jim Rose sideshow mob start (possibly a good thing).

The best bit, choreographed UV bungee trapeze, is pretty good i must confess, tho' there's still more to be had off that gear and there's a simply marvellous opportunity that they miss - to have the bodies *fall* before we realise what's going on. The worst bit is every time ringmaster Haze opens his mouth to sing. He tells some extravagant 'origin tale', but i can guess the truth: Haze is about the age to have thrilled to Alice Cooper, then felt a little shiver of decadence when the Rocky Horror Show first hit. He's always wanted to be either, if not both, and a rock'n'roll singer for sure; trouble is he just wouldn't cut it outside on any of the music stages: his material, voice and character are simply too weak. Nor is he arch enough to be funny. Both the aforementioned '70s highlights, and the Hammer Horrors this show also evokes in vain, had some understanding, however rudimentary, of some of the 'c-words' like 'camp', 'kitsch', 'chic'. Put them together this way and all you get is 'quiche' - an over-egged flabby pudding.

Don't start me on *Kiss My Axe* now, will you? Tanks? Opera? More expensive fireworks? Why not spend the money on some actors? Bring back *Naphtaline!*

The Theatre Marquee had the inevitable & inevitably-excellent *Spectral FX*, the inexplicably wonderful *Jonathan Kay* experience (how does he do it? why does it work? where else could you get away with it?); i was also rather struck one afternoon by *Hybrid*, a dance-into-aerial piece with three very watchable performers, lots of silk-work (always a hit around here), a good visual arts sense, and not too many bits of plot framing/padding - it could do with a bit of a trim and a sharpening, but this is a company in the Momentary Fusion mould with promise.

Outside, well, outside... Some people tried. Some of it even worked. Honorary Pilton Knighthoods to *The Natural Theatre* (if anyone's practised in these conditions i guess it's them), the *Tea Ladies* (where would Glastonbury be without them?), *Clive Fish & crew*, and the maniacs who designed built and worked that incredible leech. I hope that makes it back next year. I hope it all does. It's such a shame that all that work gets all-but wasted. And speaking of wasted, i'm just off to the healing cider therapy tent. See you next year.

McKinley Morganfield



Heaven

Circomedia end-of-year performance

Bristol June 1998

This is at least the third of these shows i've been to myself, and i have little hesitation in saying it's likely the best yet. Several students show clearly by their speciality routines which teachers have most affected them, especially in juggling and aerial; what's more heartening is that some could come out with pretty original material, difficult enough for the professionals, as a glance at eg. the Glastonbury programme shows. I'm not going to mention every act, it would be tedious for those not there, sorry; some of these performers are going to go forwards to Circus & Spectacle, some are going to take the skills on to use in other styles of theatre, performance, teaching, and for that reason didn't make as much of a splash tonight. No mention doesn't equal no merit. So here we go.

The 'Heaven' theme allowed imaginations to run wild and free, and the show was all the better for it. Nicely framed by Helen Crocker & the company's ensemble pieces which managed to steer clear of most of the profound traps of attempting profundity, there were opportunities to go off at odd angles, like the sketch on reincarnation, which got some great animal performances (the frog, the lizard) out of students who might not have pushed themselves forward into high-profile roles.

But some of it was pretty deep, like the 'forgetting'

'remembering' diptych that wrapped things up, insight and poignancy with the originality that comes out in the best student shows of all disciplines, daring not to mask ideas with irrelevant skills; it's difficult to know who was responsible (all participants carried and contributed to the flow) but there's clearly some excellent work going into devising. To counterbalance that, there were some routines, particularly aerial ones, which seemed to be too firmly based on classic acts that are still being done. I know that every act starts by emulating, but this is supposed to be a finals show...

Stars in Heaven? Sharon Haddock is clearly a very good juggler with the visual imagination to take the form on into dance, it's no surprise she's already signed for the *Gandini Project*, although she'd do quite well as a solo speciality already; her duo clowning with Anna Hewitt worked well. Anja Zuber pulled off a most effective classic routine with silks, my favourite aerial form at the moment, she has those obscure qualities of grace and watchability that are essential to success in the higher arts. Martha Fournier too has presence and considerable skills in manipulation and flashes of character clowning; Jonathan Priest is tempted to overstretch his abilities but mostly carries it off, i'm interested to see he's been working with *Spores*, one of the more individual and interesting street projects i've seen this summer. Guy Bellingham contributed a UV slot with some nice touches and should be snapped up by any show needing a bit of sparkle. The least typical routine, 'Girls Like Us' (Kate Webb, Emma Young, Freddie Orsoni, Tove Karoliussen), was, for that, perhaps the most moving, at least in story, and stands at the end here because it's indicative of the strength of the whole show: rarely bogged-down in stereotypical skills work. Great stuff and great stuff to come.

Steve Henwood

STRANGE FEATS AND CLEVER TURNS

compiled by Charlie Holland

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gers Juggling Equipment

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that you know is too ridiculous to learn, let alone think of. Well Charlie of *Circus Space* fame has been known to hang around bars and he'll talk to anyone, with a little bit of library research it turns out the old bloke was right and a brill book hits the streets - just in time for Christmas! Well wha'd'ya know?

If you're into this stuff, which I am, this book has a silicone ball rating. It includes some old *Catch* favourites that have graced our *Passed* pages such as Everhart the hoop roller, Cinquevalli (or Paul to his mates), and it's stacked out with pics to prove that this material ain't no fiction. Can you believe John Higgins (no fancy name needed here) jumping in and out of a tub of water placed on a table without touching the bottom? or DeWitt & Burns who climb a twenty foot pole with tricks while the other balances it on his chest?



"LUNG-POLE" IN THE 19th CENTURY. RECENTLY REPRODUCED FROM A PHOTO BY W. HIGGINS & BURNS, NEWCASTLE.

You can spend your life thinking of weird ways to perform something; most of my best ideas have come from nowhere, inspiration is rarely available at Tesco's. When you attempt that new concept it is usually met by the 'you're a nutter' look. I've stopped giving kids Stanley knives as a reward for helping me - modelling balloons are cheaper but somehow get a bland reaction from the crowd.

Of course it was different a hundred years ago - no telly or other distractions. It's lucky that old bloke who used to sit in the corner of the pub is long dead. It would cost you a fortune in drinks to listen to Bert drone on all night about the good old music hall acts doing stuff



Acro people: learn the human alphabet but don't cross Nell Swallow, who can shoot a rifle over her shoulder blindfolded and split the seven of hearts edgewise, oh yes! Animal lovers: don't even think about the diving horses, of course they love it, at least they didn't have to go over Niagara like poor old Captain Webb. He deserved to die, no-barrel-no-life-jacket-no-way, but the dog

orchestra must have been pissed to dress like that... typical musos!

I could go on all night about side-shows, clay hurling, human python, manipulators and contortionists, but remember, the book's not over until the strong lady sings. Wanna borrow it? Getcher own!

Essay by SA

A "Special Price" Offer of £9.99 + £1.50 p&p is now available until 30th October 1998 - SEE FLYER IN MAG

The Bath and Bristol Jugglers present:

THE ELEVENTH BRITISH JUGGLING CONVENTION VIDEO

£12.50 plus £1.50 p&p. (see page 30 for ad.)

This year's British Convention rendezvous was cleverly recorded on video by *Western Eye*, giving a flavour of the weekend's activities, capturing moments of amazing juggling, unicycling and acrobatic skills, partying, brilliant cabaret, more partying, late night renegade - and even more partying! (see convention review).

Ducks featured prominently amongst the cast of many organisers, and the video actually showed moments of these (latter) poor souls taking time out and having fun - this must be unheard of! It would have been nice to have heard a little more from other performers and the general public, but no doubt they were off somewhere having too much fun. This is an essential addition to any juggling memorabilia collection - if you want to relive some great moments, spectacular cabaret, or memories of old friends, fun and festivities then this could be the video for you ...or what about that Xmas present...

JA from JA

DROPS OF CLUBS & HEARTS & TRUMPS

In another episode of the everyday tales of ordinary circus folk, our (extraordinary) heroine «Pof!» FACES up to a few things, hits the road, the road hits her, she gets round another way and prepares for the most difficult trick of all...

It occurs to me as I sit here enjoying the pissing rain and below-seasonal temperatures, wet-arsed from a trip in a motor with a dodgy sun-roof - sun! Ha! - that I should be words of wyrd for you lot (diminished readership tho' you be).

I am, for the record, in Scotland; in a particularly bizzarely-accented part of it too. We're broken down just outside Falkirk with two dead vehicles and no electricity, so our esteemed editor will have to decipher my finest biro-scrrawl-by-candlelight to bring you this piece. (So you'd better appreciate it).

So where did I leave you last? And where am I going - other than nowhere fast... Oh yeah. I got sent to suss out FACE "oops-never-mind-we've-already-got-that-info" - cheers guys. Do you have any idea what kind of detours I have to make to be a newshound sometimes? We're talking circuitous here [and i thought we were talking Circus -d].

Mind you, having taken that particular roundieboot route I did decide to join the club, so to speak, (yes, I know it's a trade association) and, when we'd finished 'billing' for a while and I had the luxury of an address for a few weeks, I sent off me hard-won tenner.

The tenner, I might add, is not an annual sub - this ain't the T&G - its a test fee. These people are pretty shit-hot painters, and they've all proved their worth in practical and aural examination. I took the test in December, finally (they might be the shit-hottest painters around but their admin deserves a darn good «Pof!»-ing), and quite simply it was more nail-biting than any audition I ever did! I was surprised, when it came to it, how scary it is to be asked to paint a bunch of kids under such scrutiny and was well relieved when it was over. (It's a bit odd to have someone with a clip-board go over your kit tool).

I got the result within the promised time. I'm in! «Pof!», gobber of paraffin, mistress of rings and shoveller of shite, is FACE member 097. "So mazeltov, already" I hear some of you mutter, but it's nice to be told sometimes that

you're good at what you do. In any case, the FACE logo on my new biz cards was enough to win back my stolen pitch from the poaching scruff-arse with the crayons and get more and better work with nicer conditions. Ha-bloody-ha and yah-boo-sucks!

So, club-joining being the apparent theme of this piece, where the bloody hell have all the jugglers gone?? And who's got all the kit from the clubs and workshops they used to run? I bet there's some club politics simmering somewhere if I know organisers. Go on! Get the aggro out in the open! I could use a laugh right now.

There was a time when I couldn't turn a corner anywhere without stumbling across some bloke doing it in the street with his balls in the air; when every kid on the block could out-juggle the rest of us with one hand behind his back and a unicycle on his head. Now, suddenly the Mad Hat is old hat and the myriad groups of like-minded souls have diminished to the point of obscurity.

I admit that I'm saying this from a point of relative isolation; life on the road being too time-consuming & labour intensive to investigate the juggling scene in every town we pass thru', but I must also say that its not so self-evident as it once was. I remember our 1992/3 winter season being the one most peppered with kids willing to join us in the ring and strut their stuff with pride. It was great fun for us, and for the proud parents, and gave us an unusual spot in each show when even we didn't know what to expect. Mind you, I didn't come across many shows who'd deliberately include a 'renegade' spot for audience members to show off such finely-honed talents. Its a form of risk-taking outside the parameters of most circuses, who, let's face it, want the punters to gasp in awe at the god-like figures in the ring.

I also remember the 1995 season being the one when we were all told - by our boss, who, oddly, never seemed to leave the tober other than to pull through to the next - to buy whatever juggling props we were likely to need, as the end of the juggling-shop-in-every-town phenomenon was in sight. (Which begs the question, if the ostrich-like chiefs of Trad. could see which way the wind was blowing, how come some

drops «pof!»

drops «pof!»

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of you are so surprised all this time on?)

Being utterly skint, I didn't buy that new fire-devil I'd been lusting after. The old one - spectacularly old, now - is still giving good service, and anyway 'tis the devil I know. Being god-like in the ring was never my strong point in any case, and props I'm exceedingly comfortable with are still the best. I love all that fakirng about with fire and swords and spikes and nails and stuff, and I did the act because I had fun. I worked on a new version all winter, with madder music and lots more all-togetherness with the girls. I want more going on in the ring rather than one person doing 'her' trick and then stepping back for the rest. This is pretty ground-breaking stuff for Trad. Circus - no, don't laugh, they're all pretty bogged-down in the "how it's always been done" mode of thinking, and it can be a bit of a battle to get a new slant on an old act - particularly one as established as the 'Eastern'.

Unfortunately, having got all fired up with enthusiasm after a long spell of being too poorly to work, the great comeback has been postponed. We'd writ the act, designed the cossies, ordered the sequins, glitz and feathers, and found some utterly excellent music, when i found myself a member of a much less exclusive club. I'm pregnant. *[Thought you were hinting something with all that testing, too -d/]* I cut an egg-shaped figure in the ring - and everywhere else, come to that. I look crap in

CONTINUED DROPS

ring-tails, bizarre in costume, and my T-shirts have a particular Winnie The Poohishness about them too these days!

I am, however on the road - mainly because the farm we were living on was sold from under us and the place we'd arranged to rent in its stead fell through in a very literal sense when the bedroom floor collapsed taking the bathroom and kitchen out with it! I'm a tad cheesed about that. It was a good spot to work out the remainder of the season and I'm not at all sure how we're going to make ends meet from our current outpost! But, like I said, we're on the road.

To be precise we're on the side of the Slamannan Road into Falkirk. We've been here a week, due to vehicle failure, and just as things were looking up the bloody car broke down. The engine, now reduced to its component parts, lies about the back of our truck. Its a nice old truck - a big green and silver Austin of great age and dignity, and near enough where I began this piece, so I'll sort of slip out quietly now...

If you see us, honk your horn. Hassle us for a cuppa, even. Just don't bloody leave us here with the skunk of fate firmly wedged in the air conditioning of destiny and no handy tit-bit with which to tempt it out again. Diesel mechanics will be made especially welcome... as, at this rate, will midwives.

Lots of love!

Pof!

«POF!» DROPS

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POLICE FIVE-OH

STOLEN AT BRITISH CONVENTION Bruce Wilson bought 2 very large white Babache Performer Diabolos on Saturday - they were stolen from the squash courts at 1am. that night. They're the only 2 of their kind in Britain at the moment (value £50-£60), at least until Butterfingers get more. If you spot them contact *The Catch*.

MESSAGES

HELLO THERE MARE: Mare Anna Luna is all of a third of a year old *already*...

CORBY CONVENTION has been cancelled due to lack of support. Apologies to those who wanted to come. Will try again next year.

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221 Webb Rise, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 5QQ.

EJA - EUROPEAN JUGGLING ASSOCIATION
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diababble

It was amazing, the number of questionnaires we received and the time people had taken in telling us what they thought we should do - and how much of this agreed with what we were hoping...

Sometimes the word *community* that is bandied around with respect to these arts actually means something. Supporting each other.

Thank you all - lets hope we can get something good going as a result.

diabolo

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cat chphrases

cat chphrases

New-fangled Kinematograph

Here is something more from Norman's Cuttings & Compost service.

Just before Easter the Museum Of The Moving Image got together with Circus Space to give a programme of circus films from the archive.

It was a great show in the MOMI cinema which was packed full of enthusiastic enthusiasts [!-d]. Fraser Hooper introduced the films and got us all applauding the acts from 1896-1959.

An act of 1910 showed us that in those days big acts were enlarged with scenery and a large cast to fill the second half of the bill.

I was pleased to remember some of the filmed acts: a motorcycle trapeze act; Joe Jackson with his cycle that falls to pieces; *Grock*; and the *Gray Brothers*. That was *Monsewer Eddie Gray* (of the Crazy Gang) and some of his brothers. Now it so happens that the youngest of the Grays, who is now about 86 years old, lives just a few doors from me. It's a pity we didn't know his family were to be featured. Johnny Grey comes from a large family of jugglers, he also had three sisters, all jugglers.

I have noticed a change in the language since my younger days. The word 'Circus' is now used to cover stage acts that used to be known as 'Variety', 'Concert Party' or 'Music Hall'.

All the best to The Catch. Some of us thought it might be becoming an annual!

Norman Blackburn
Harrow

A hardy annual? A hardly annual? Always wished I knew more about Eddie Grey & the Crazy Gang myself - they keep turning up in books about British Comedy but there seems to be so little actual evidence - were they just a pale British Marx Brothers? Or much more? At The Catch we'd really like some more material on the Variety roots of contemporary clown as well as the trad. circus bit, and indeed all the performers of that era. Somebody must have written a good thesis or know a good book... And on the terminology front: sometimes it seems it might be more helpful to take the circus label off some acts - certainly Physical Theatre/Comedy seems to be as much clowning as anything else. Over to you, please.

One pissed-off Clown

Does any other performer in the West of England have a problem with the mafia of cultural snobs who seem to be on a power trip, namely running the Bath Fringe and similar events? If you don't do 7 clubs you are persona non gratis [uh? not free of charge?-d]. Glastonbury and the Edinburgh Festivals are over-rated gargantuan events where the audiences suffer from a surfeit of shows which often turns people into gawping zombies always intent on catching the next main event!

Who decides who to book and for what what reasons would seem to be a question worthy of analysis. Why do the aforementioned "mafia" name-no-names always like to bring people down - is it a desire to humiliate or to elevate their own egos?

Anyway, see you at the next small gathering like the Big Green

Rob Stredder
Wiltshire

Sure, booking policy is something worth discussing. We'll try and make it part of some festival profile articles in the future. From here it seems as though any 'star system' there might seem to be has something to do with the standard and experience of acts, and that's what the Street & Renegade are for - to push people through into the top standard - it works like breaking into Comedy, only admittedly not as fast or as high. If this should be a debate, we need other contributions...

The Phoenix & the Double Eagle

Many thanks for an excellent magazine that has been a way of keeping in contact with the running of things in the UK since my arrival in Austria. I was pleasantly surprised to see my good friends Spectral on the cover of the latest *Catch*, and hope this coverage will do them some good as they are a group of people who deserve the best and full respect to them.

Something in their article rang true, and that was the exodus of British performers to the continent (maybe a subject for a future article) which is definitely the case of myself. After struggling for a long while in England I made the big move

and now find myself in Vienna, Austria. This has been an essential move in furthering my aims and ambitions. The Europeans are much more respectful towards performers and as a consequence my rate has tripled that which I got in Britain (if I got paid at all) also the competition is not so intense (or virtually non-existent as it is in Austria). I have been able to use the surplus cash to invest in various aspects of the show (technical equipment, costumes, video, props etc. not up my nose). I believe if I had stayed in the UK I'd still be on welfare, so maybe it would be worth encouraging performers to take that huge intimidating step of taking off for the mainland (or even an article on busking areas in Europe, major city regulations (in Vienna you can only busk on Thursday etc. etc.

Back to the point of this letter, I have invested a horrid amount in new promo material [very nice it was too -d] and would like to send some out and about. At present I am working in the Austrian/German Party & Discotech scene, which is about as much fun as enduring an Austrian Folk Festival and would like to dilute it with a dosage of artistic work (as opposed to providing visuals to a bunch of gumming kids) and wondered if you had a list of festivals/conventions/venues that book shows etc. that I could send this promo to. I know this is a lot to ask but it would definitely save my soul.

PS any info on European Arts Grants would be well received (how about an article on getting money out of the system)

Marc Brouard
The Phoenix
Vienna

Just the sort of thing we'd like to put on our projected Web Site and into professional information bulletins, Marc. We'd print more international news & views if we had it, it's all relevant to what people might want to do, even if only as a working holiday. In the absence of anything soon, we assume you know the relevant German press (is Stage still published?), and of course the French magazines (see Catch This News) are good if obviously sometimes restricted to explaining the situation in their country - which is complex enough.

Elvis Writes (from beyond the Tyne)

If you set up a Web site with all the information that normally goes in The Catch then people won't buy your magazine. Remember how they moaned about the 50p increase. Anyway, how about giving me my own page - you know - "Tony tells it like it is" etc. One thing I think about your mag is it needs more humour I mean ruck me fagged all those articles about unicycling and Christ knows how you managed to get four pages on stiltwalking. Good article about Circus Symposium I myself have never felt the need to suck up to the great corporate tit of the Arts Council or the National Lottery. The sort of stuff I do would never get funding, never in a month of days, but that's what its like when you're a visionary on the cutting edge of performance. I'LL TELL YOU THAT FOR NOWT, MATE.

By the way, see last issue page 39 Anonymous Hype Dept. That bloke is my friend Toby Walker a shit hot juggler. He was at ZACA with Tony Romantica (trapeze artist) and i reviewed the end of term show for Catch in 96 by the way. He invented a club move called Toby's Turmoil which has a variation on mills mess and i invented one called the SnakeyHips Shuttle.

Anyway, stay tuned for the next press release, plans are afoot.

Press Release:

Elvis Presley has risen from the Grave

Cult cabaret star Dead Elvis - alias Tony 'Slasher' Hickson - has done his own special tribute to The King, which involves rising from his coffin in full Las Vegas gear. Tony recently appeared in the Scottish world cup video impersonating Elvis with Del-Amriti but is more at home doing his controversial after death Elvis act singing a few songs including 'Spirit In The Sky', 'My Favourite Things' (Julie Andrews) [John Coltrane surely - typist] and rounds off with 'My Way' by Sid Vicious [bit of a dead popstar special, that one -d]. The act also includes fire eating, juggling afterbirth, the world famous colostomy bag gag, and some fun with a chain saw. For the big finish

he sits on an exploding toilet called the Cosmic Karsey. He also has a Virgin Mary statue, which cries as he sings [know the feeling -d].

Tony says; "...most people impersonate Elvis as he was when alive, I do him after being dead for 20 years, but it's in the best possible taste. I also hope to take the Dead Elvis Show to Edinburgh."

PS. Catch me on Eurotrash in the Autumn.

The next Press Release details how an outraged (whether by the act or the standard) Cabaret Host, one Jeff Innocent, locked Snakey into his coffin during the finale. The deluge of paper continues.

Tony also seems to have it in, charmingly, for some fellow called The Masked Magician (we assume this is someone on daytime TV) who's been claiming that knife acts are faked with a trick board. Readers of the last Catch and in particular Joe Fool of the Foolhardy Folk will know different. "If the Masked Magician thinks I fake my act, let him stand at my board of fear," sneers The Slasher, "although I think his trousers might turn into a fudge factory when the first knife hits the board. I've got another good trick and I'd like to show him how it's done. It's called the boot up the arse trick..."

So, what about it readers? Should we allow Snakey the space to sound off in his typically delicate manner. Or should we have him put a sock in/on it? Hero or Zero? Belly laugh or Pain in the bum? Elvis or Alvin? Give us your votes before we do anything rash...

Innuface

Some people have missed my input to this organ and have been wondering if I have been stuffed in a box somewhere. Hell no, I stand proud as a competent contact juggler. This skill is new to me and it has taken some time to learn I can tell you, particularly the passing routine. I've always liked the game with the orange at Christmas, but taking an acrylic ball from behind is hard on your partner, so here's a handy tip: take the balloon

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pump out of your clown suit pocket.

I've had a good season doing the camps, but I'm trying not to name drop all the time. Dropping names in public can be embarrassing, so I try to cover it up with lines like "it's all part of the show, the part I should have practiced... ..with CoCo! Ooops!" Like they say: "if you're not name dropping, you're not learning." Anyway, I've been working with Dodgy the Clown and we had a great summer squirting stuff all over the kids, how we laughed, but that's a story for another day. Keep it up Catch, we're all right behind you!

Innuface the Clown

Airhead Mail

Another thing we didn't need to know was sent in from the New York Post by Braidy, who we thought was such a nice kid. We're not telling you what it is, but we hope with him that Stretch People are aware of the risks and practise safe Hoover.

Well, we did it... We did some of it. Thanks to all of you who wrote in or added to our list at the Brit/Brist Convention. No thanks at all to whoever it was wrote on the back of their questionnaire that "the stunt with the workshop listings was really offensive & stupid, especially as the info you published was even more out of date than the previous issue's was", and then didn't tell us any corrections. Sometimes you wonder what it is you're supposed to do. Until we get our hot link into that US spy satellite & phone-tap programme (so we know exactly what all you careless people who aren't watching TV or football, like you're supposed to, are up to - as if we can't guess) we're not aware of what you're doing unless you tell us. I know you must have a high opinion of us [errr...] but it doesn't run to goddesslike omniscience. Despite that, we know there's more of you out there, just look at the places missing - just look for yours, and tell us something we don't know. Normal service resumed when you lot resume yours...

Most workshops charge, usually just to cover hall hire costs. When we know how much, we've put it in. Many have assorted equipment available, those that don't advertise kids' sessions are usually happy for juniors to come along accompanied, but do ring & ask. Student clubs may have been moved for a jolly rag jape or cancelled through establishment cuts, maann - ring & check them too.

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IPSWICH

Merlin's Juggling Workshop (& closeup magic!)
Handford Hall School, Gatacre Road
Tuesdays 6-8, £2/hour.
Merlin 01473 461804

IPSWICH

Suffolk Deaf Centre, 49 Fonnereau Road
Thursdays 7-9 £2
Richard 01473 273478

NORWICH

Norwich Circus Centre
Skills Swap, Bignold First School
Thursdays 7.30-9.30, £2/£1

01603 740011
nccfl@netcom.co.uk
See also *Catch This* courses page.

ROMFORD
Rhythm & Balls
Century Youth House, Albert Road
Mondays 7.15-9.30, 50p
Alan 0181 551 1926, 0802 434454

IN THE MIDDLE

AYLESBURY
Queen's Park Centre
Mondays 7-9.30pm £2.50
David 01296 331226

AYLESBURY
Saint Mary's
Thursdays 7.30-9.30 £2
Anja 01296 428518
BANBURY

BEDFORD
Saint Bede's School, Bromham Road
Thursdays 7.25-9.25 £1.50
Kate 01234 328322

CORBY
Balls Up Juggling Club
Connaught Centre,
Coltingham Road
Mondays 7.30-9.30
Steve 01536 516697, Andy 01536 761251

COVENTRY
Artspace Studios, Lower Holyhead Road
Tuesdays 6.30-8 (families, kids, beginners), 8-9.30 (experts, showoffs)
Wolly 01203 230068

DERBY
2 workshops soon, regular ones in varied venues now, more details from:
Adrian Wilson, Just Another Circus 01332 382813, 0402 304953

LINCOLN
Croft Street Community Centre
Thursdays 7.30-9
Barry Davis 01673 860556

LUTON
Mad Hatter Circus
Chapel Langley, Russel Street
Tuesdays 7-9 £1
Maggie 01582 484167 Geoff 01582 416950

MILTON KEYNES
Jugglers Anonymous
Great Linford Memorial Hall
Wednesdays 7-10, £2
Graham Patey 01908 210264

NORTHAMPTON
Drop Shop
Bective Youth Centre,
Kingsthorpe
Wednesdays 7-9
Lawrence & Keira 01327 361600, 07970 325110

NOTTINGHAM
The Forest School, Forest Fields
Tuesdays
Ed 0115 950 3744

NOTTINGHAM
Saint Peter's Church Hall, Radford
Wednesdays 7-9
Tony 0115 951 9061

STOKE ON TRENT
Dragon Community Circus,
Booth Street Recreation Centre
Wednesdays 7-9 £2/1.50/£1
Neil & Deb 01782 747867

STOURBRIDGE
Amblecote Parish Hall
Every other Tuesday
Tony 01384 869360

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
The Warehouse, Greenhall Street
Tuesdays 7-9
Adam 01905 351733

BIRMINGHAM

SELLY OAK
Selly Oak Centre, 648 Bristol Road
Saturdays 10-12 noon
Mark 0121 459 6658

MANCHESTER

FALLOWFIELD
Squirrel Bar, Oak House, University
Thursdays in termtime 7-9
Matt Baker 0161 225 2179

NORTH

BIRKENHEAD
Jugglers' Ampit
c/o Andrew Quick 0151 608 2029

CARLISLE
The Youth Enquiry Service,
Abbey Street
Tuesdays 7-9.30

DURHAM
University Circus Club
Vane Tempest Hall (visible from the bridge?)

Thursdays in termtime 8-10, all welcome

DURHAM
Durham City Jugglers
Shakespeare Hall
Thursdays 7-9, £1.50
Mini 01642 897191

HEBDEN BRIDGE
The Ground Floor Centre, Holme Street
Wednesdays 7.15-9.30
Martin 01422 846693 Alex 01422 842742

MACCLESFIELD
Therapeutic Juggling Club
Henbury High School
Thursdays 7-9 (termtime) u-12s bring an adult
Andy 0161 881 0920 Bill 01625 433337 Shaun 0161 442 8477

MIDDLESBROUGH
Cleveland Community Circus
Saint Mary's Centre, Corporation Road.
Thursdays 6-8, £1.50 (concs £1)
Fl: 01642 861412

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Dockray House (formerly 'West End Boys' Club!') Fenham
Thursdays 7-10 £1.50
Andy Fraser 0191 281 9691

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Newcastle University Juggling Club
Meeting Room, Students' Union
Tuesdays termtime
Balls@ncl.ac.uk

SCARBOROUGH
Westborough Church
Tuesdays 7.30-10, lots of kit, £1
Brian 01723 581067

SOLIHULL
Solihull Anti-Gravity Club
Langley School, Olton
Thursdays 7-9 £2.50
Blair 0956 842702

WARRINGTON
Warrington Community Circus
Bewsey Gym Buildings
Wednesdays 6.30-9.30, £1
Rob Taylor 01925 602544

WIRRAL
Venue varies
contact Andrew Quick 0151 608 2029

YORK
York Cemetery Chapel
Priory Street Centre
Tuesdays 7-9.30 £1.50/£1 conc.)
Rob Stone 01904 414032

SHEFFIELD

SHEFFIELD
Jesters Juggling Club
Hunters Bar Junior School
Wednesdays 6-7.30 under 13, 8-10 the rest
Jak & Mo Hirst 0114 256 9505

SHEFFIELD
Flying Teapot Circus
Saint Andrew's Church,
Hanover Way
Mondays 7-9 (Uni termtime)
free to members
Tim 0114 268 48241 Dave 0114 268 5233

SHEFFIELD
Walkley Community Centre,
Fir Street
Wednesdays 7-9 (every week)
£1.50
Tim 0114 268 48241 Dave 0114 268 5233

SHEFFIELD
Greentop Circus Centre
Greentop, Saint Thomas Church Holywell Road
Sundays 7-9 £2
Kate 0114 281 8350

LIVERPOOL

CENTRAL
Liverpool University Students' Union, Gilmour Hall
Wednesdays 7.30-10
Nick 0151 287 2917

TOXTETH
Toxteth Sports Centre
Thursdays 8-10
Max 0151 727 1074

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH
Edinburgh University Juggling Society
Ochil Room, Pleasance Societies Centre
Thursdays in termtime 8.30-10
Luke 0131 667 1968
juggling@holyrood.ed.ac.uk

GLASGOW
North Kelvinside Community Centre
Wednesdays 7.30-9.30
u-16s accompanied, please
Graham Benson 0141 334 3777

INVERNESS
Merkinch Community Centre
Mondays 7.30-10
Dave 01463 220165

SKYE

Skeabost Memorial Hall, Skeabost Bridge
Wednesdays 7-9
Dave Patfield 01470 562377

WALES

BANGOR
Syracs Circus
Old Catholic Church, High Street
Tuesdays 6-7.30 Aerial workshop with Stagelright
Wednesdays 6-7 Youth Circus, 7.30-9.30 Adults
Thursdays 7.30-10 Trapeze etc.
Everything £1, shows and other w/s all year.
James Carpenter 01248 351111/372239

BARRY
Italian Gardens, The Knap
Sunday nights in good weather!
Peter 01446 747176

CARDIFF
Juggling, Circus & performance with No Fit State
Adamsdown Community Centre, Metal Street
Tuesdays 7.30-9.30 £1.20
Ali @ NFSC 01222 488734

LAMPETER
Cwmann Village Hall
Thursdays 6.30-8.30
01570 480022

IRELAND

BELFAST
Belfast Circus School
Crescent Arts Centre, University Road
Youth Circus (8 upwards) Saturdays 10-12.30 £3/2
Adult Circus at Fountainville Avenue Methodist Hall, Wednesdays 7-9.30, £3/2
Contact Jo or Will, 01232 236007

BELFAST
Circus 1 to 3
Saint Patrick's Training School, Glen Road
Tuesdays 6-8
Pat Duggan 01232 301123

DUBLIN
The Boneyard (basement), Saint Audoen's Church
Mondays 6.30-9.30
Owen 01 288 7856

CHANNEL ISLANDS

ALDERNEY
Masonic Hall, Alderney
Wednesdays 7-8
Moira 01481 822246

Autumnal Offerings from Butterfingers

Performer Diabolo

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Glo-Devilstick

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Splitting the Atom and Other Yo-Yo Stuff...

the best little Yo-Yo instruction book in town, now has a sister: Introducing Yo Honey, coooolest Yo-Yo player around, demonstrating new tricks, string cradles, two-handed tricks, picture tricks. Richie Windsor brings you

The Hydrogen Bomb and even more Yo-Yo Stuff

Strange Feats and Clever Turns

Charlie Holland's wonderful collection of weird and wacky speciality acts in Vaudeville and Variety.

Eleventh British Juggling Convention Video

A gritty and well-presented record of the Bristol event this Easter, and an entertaining hour of film. Packed with numerous appearances of Haggis.

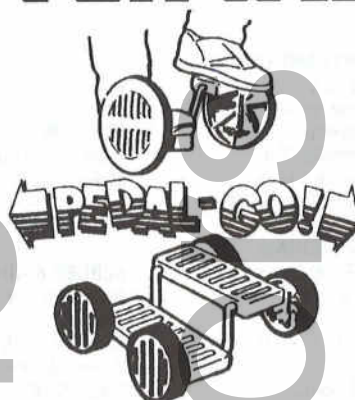
Lots of other new stuff in the pipeline, like a long-overdue user-friendly unicycling book and an updated version of Anna Jillings' "Modern ClubSwinging"

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BUSKER TRIES HIS HAND

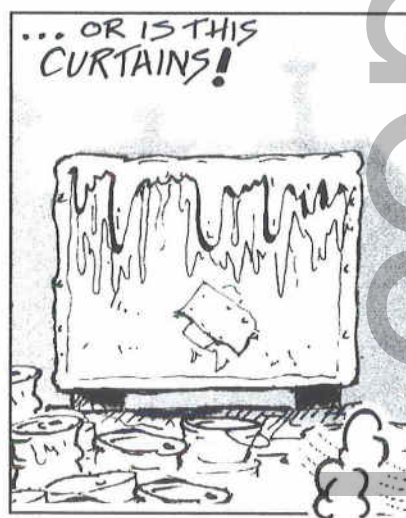
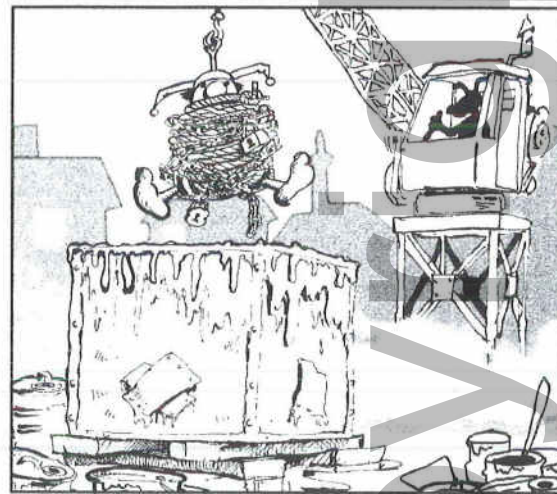
AT ESCAPE ART

BUT REALLY IT'S BECAUSE HE JUST
LIKES BEING TIED UP
WHAT'S ALL THIS GOO STUFF?

SECURELY BOUND OUR HERO IS
LOWERED INTO A VAT OF VERY
DUBIOUS LOOKING LIQUID

VALIANTLY HE STRUGGLES
IN THE MURKY DEPTHS
TO FREE HIS BONDS

STILL HE STRUGGLES
CLINGING TO BREATH.
BUT CAN HE HOLD ON?...



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