

CARNIVALS IN SOMERSET PROMOTION PROJECT: OUR WORK IN SCHOOLS

This is a description of what a day of carnival activities may contain on a CISPP school visit. We have visited over 70 different schools in Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Devon (many of these multiple times) since 2011. The following activities take place at schools on these visits:

- 1) Brief introduction of CISPP personnel who are dressed in carnival costume**
- 2) CISPP personnel tell the story of the history of West Country illuminated carnival**
 - What happened in 1605 involving Guy Fawkes?
 - What led to the first ever Bridgwater procession?
 - What did Guy Fawkes do to upset the King?
 - Why did the people of Bridgwater burn an effigy of Guy Fawkes?
 - Why do we have bonfires today on 5th November?
 - What did people use before electricity to light the processions?
 - How did carnival spread across the West Country?
- 3) Brief history of the school's local carnivals and their importance**
 - Highlighting the history of the local carnival and how to get involved and have fun.
- 4) Watching and having fun at today's carnivals and safety aspects**
 - Why are the barriers there and why should we stay behind them?
 - Who are the people wearing the bright yellow jackets and what do they do?
 - When and where should we throw our coins?
 - Consequences of running out into the road to pick up coins that have missed the collection vehicles.
 - Having a safe and fun time at the carnival.
- 5) Children have the experience of four different carnival activities**
 - Experience the van exhibition and watch an animated film showing the history of West Country carnivals. This film has various segments such as carnivals today, how the competition is run, how to safely watch a carnival, fun at carnivals, how carts are built in carnival sheds, walking your way into carnival, and ending with the future of carnivals.
 - Looking at intricate costumes with a costume maker and her walking masquerader partner, talking about how they decide on the theme for the year, how they design the costume, how they source the materials, what materials they have used, and how the costumes are made.
 - Learning a simple carnival dance routine and then making up their own carnival dance.
 - Dressing up in real carnival costumes taken from large boxes of costumes donated by carnival clubs, and large boxes of hats and wigs.
 - Children also make up acrostic poems, write newspaper articles, and make carnival cart models from, including moving parts and lights which are then later judged as part of competitions.

Overall, the visits are action packed and full of anticipation and excitement for both pupils and staff who also get fully involved dressing up and joining in the activities. School booking forms and information can be found at www.cispp.org.uk.