

Street entertainment

Creative and exciting ideas for:

- Projects for your weekly programme
- Slots in your nights away programme
- Mix and mingle entertainment at events like your AGM
- Public outdoor performances to promote Scouting
- Fundraising opportunities
- Members learning new skills to entertain/ teach younger members and promote linking
- Opportunities to get parents and carers involved in providing one activity
- Ideas for District/Area/County events for young people, workshops for Leaders
- Ideas for getting your local creative community involved
- Gateways to other ideas and issues

Something For Everyone

Street entertainment has been around for a long, long time and revitalised by performers in such places as London's trendy Covent Garden, the Edinburgh Festival, in many other towns and cities, and at exhibitions and shows. On a more large scale slant, imported styles from places like China and the Caribbean (in the form of Chinese New Year and Carnival) have added to the richness and diversity of street entertainment.

The great thing about street entertainment is that there are lots of things to do and there is something for everyone in our 6-25 youth programme. Apart from developing personal and group skills within the weekly programme there is also a great opportunity to put on a display, or show, to really show off one aspect of Scouting to the public.

Contents

The following is a list of some of the most common types of street entertainment skills dealt with in this publication. The purpose is to give you a starting point and hopefully show how easy it can be with a little bit of planning.

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- ...jesters

You can get a general feel of street entertainment by visiting:

www.streetentertainers-association.org

They have a members database that may help you identify a local contact that can help with one or a number of the activities.

...mime / living statues

This is the art of simple drama by using gestures without sound. Apart from traditional mime, there is also the art of living statues.

How Do You Do It?

Miming In Groups

- Split your group in to smaller ones, say 4 to 6 young people in each.
- Write out a number of simple tasks that each person needs to perform to the others (maximum three minutes) within the group e.g.
 - Making a pancake
 - Changing a car tyre
 - Playing a goalkeeper
 - Waking up and washing
 - Making a cup of tea
 - Singing a song
- Ask each act to build in a small problem that they need to deal with
- Or, ask each person to act out the name of a book, film or TV programme in the style of the TV programme 'Give Us A Clue'
- Or, get the group to act out a simple story
- Give some tips - use facial expressions (happiness, sadness, being annoyed), use exaggerated movements.

Living Statues and Objects

This is a great one to use at events like your AGM or in public

- Design a number of characters that people can dress in but with faces disguised by either a mask or face paint e.g. robot, rag doll, toy
- Place them around your event and ask them to stay absolutely still for a few minutes (it could be easier if they are on chairs or props)
- When they need to move, they do so in the style of the character, but only for a short while (10 to 20 seconds) and stay still again.
- Watch peoples faces!!

Advice and Guidance

For other ideas, visit the Theatre Games page of the Twisted Tale Theatre

bms.westport.k12.ct.us/twisted/games.htm

World of Mime Theatre: www.mime.info/

This is an internationally subscribed website that can give you a better insight to the art of miming and resources such as web-sites, videos and workshops.

Food For Thought

Discussion: Mime - A skill of communicating face to face with people without verbal language i.e. those who are deaf or from another country. What gestures could be seen as offensive?

...stilt walking

Leg extensions that allow you to be above the crowd. Street performers do this with great skill and balance, usually dressed in costume. How do they manage to stay so high and up-right without falling over?

How Do You Do It?

The skills can be learned at a lower level, literally. Why not build a couple of pairs of stilts?

Visit Rob's build ya own stilts at www-users.york.ac.uk/~rfs1/juggle/stilts. Also the Juggling Information Service (has information on a range of activities, some with 'Getting Started') www.juggling.org/help/circus-arts/stilts/making

Making stilts can be done as a project at Scout age, or above, or by asking for parental help (chance to use all those expensive tools that are given as presents!). You only need a couple of pairs to get you going, and they can be pulled out every now and again.

The trial and error of doing stilt walking, even at the lower level, is great fun. You might want to use them in relay races!

Advice and Guidance

There is no need to build high stilts to start to learn how to do it, you can start at just a few centimetres for Beavers. You can also make the stilts variable using holes as various heights for the steps to be bolted in to.

To get a person to the stage of doing stilt-walking 'without hands' will need practice, confidence and expert tuition. Find out whether there is a local Circus Skills course that covers this.

Food For Thought

Discussion: How difficult is it for someone to learn to walk with artificial limbs.

...juggling

This is not just about juggling balls, but also scarves, rings, clubs and using diablos or devil sticks. Step-by-step practice makes perfect but it is easy enough to introduce juggling as a filler in your weekly or camp programme. Trying it out is half the fun!

How Do You Do It?

You can start in small groups where the ball/ring/scarf is thrown to each other in a set order. Once they get into the swing, throw in another ball/ring, then another. See how many the group can handle.

Developing individual skill starts with getting one item going around, and later introducing another. Don't expect immediate results but you can build in 'juggling time' in the period before your proper meeting and in free time at camp. It is also a skill that some Circus Skill workshops use.

You don't have to buy items to juggle, they can be made (slit in tennis ball and fill with seed).

Advice and Guidance

There is absolutely stacks on the web, ranging from making items, developing skills, books, videos and games

Making juggling balls

- www.earthcapades.com/makeballs.html
- www.pjb.com.au/jug/leatherballs.html
- www.thomsonlearning.co.uk/cando/coolcreations/sample.pdf
- www.twjc.co.uk/doc007.html

www.juggling.org/

The Juggling Information Service and go to the Jugglers Help button. It takes you into an easy to understand index

www.stiltskin.org.uk/

Low cost step-by-step books Scarf Juggling, Ball Juggling and Club Juggling (and the Complete Juggler) by Dave Finnegan and other resources.

www.juggler.net

A general site with database, FAQ, videos, articles and details on membership clubs (you might just want to hire someone!)

www.kiteworld.co.uk/acatalog/

[Kiteworld_Catalogue_Juggling_and_Circus_Skills_150.html](http://www.kiteworld.co.uk/acatalog/Kiteworld_Catalogue_Juggling_and_Circus_Skills_150.html)

Although most of the site is devoted to kite surfing, kitebuggying, land yachting etc, there is a listing for resources on juggling and circus skills.

...puppet shows

There is a great range of different types of puppets that can be used for entertainment and story telling for all ages - hand/sock puppets, Asian/Oriental shadow puppetry and the more complicated skills of marionettes (puppet on strings). There are also giant puppets that can be used for parades and pageants!

How Do You Do It?

Write a script

- Remember that it is a story.
- Think about a moral to the story.
- Does not have to be traditional characters.
- Get some audience participation (oh no it isn't, oh yes it is!), or join-in songs.
- Don't need to make it too long.
- Think about the narration. It may be muffled behind the stage.

Make your characters

- It can be as simple as using old socks with ping-pong balls for eyes and felt for hair, or using dressed up wooden spoons.

Build a stage

- It can be a large decorated cardboard box, or something more elaborate with a wooden frame and cloth.

Advice and Guidance

PuppeteersUK web site www.puppeteersuk.com/

Links to National Organisations, finding a puppeteer, searching for performances, events, courses and exhibitions.

Making puppets

- www.legendsandlore.com/sockpuppets.html
- www.legendsandlore.com/sackpuppets.html
- familyfun.go.com/crafts/buildmodel/specialfeature/puppets_crafts_sf

Ideas for scripts

- www.puppetresources.com/
- www.legendsandlore.com/scripts.html
- www.punchandjudy.com/scriptsframeset.htm
- www.aesopfables.com/
- teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/index.htm

Introduction and ideas for shadow puppetry

- www.osv.org/kids/crafts2.htm
- www.molli.org.uk/burma/theatre/make.htm

Introduction and ideas for giant puppets

- www.gis.net/~puppetco/

...magic tricks

The art of the street performing magician lies with doing simple tricks near to the audience rather than on stage. Currently the most famous street magician is TV's 'hip-hop Houdini' David Blaine - so, street magic has hit the big-time!

Everyone can learn to do one or two simple tricks and the items needed are not expensive.

How Do You Do It?

- Don't throw a sheet over the mini-bus and shout abracadabra! Mistakes are difficult to undo!
- You will need to obtain ideas for magic tricks, and the equipment to go with them (see Advice and Guidance).
- Get young people into small groups (4 to 6 people) to practice one or two tricks and show the others. You can keep the same set of tricks for different groups.

Once learned, why not visit one of the younger sections and do some performances to small groups, or demonstrate during a mix and mingle at an event like the AGM. Magic tricks are great to use on a stand/fundraising stall for stopping passers-by.

Advice and Guidance

You can buy books with ideas at many bookstores, many aimed at young people.

Ideas on magic tricks

- www.activityvillage.co.uk/magic_tricks.htm
- www.scienceyear.com/text_only/wired/magicbox

Books, video and resources

- www.magictricks.co.uk/
- www.magicbox.uk.com/
- www.magicroom.co.uk/

Food For Thought

Pete McCahon, star of Channel Five's 'Monkey Magic' and 'The Greatest Magic Tricks in the Universe, Ever' first performed in front of his mates at Cubs.

If you want to fry your brain on the algebra of some card tricks, visit plus.maths.org/issue14/features/eastaway

...chinese lion dancing

A traditional way of celebrating the Chinese New Year and other special events can now be seen in many cities in the UK. With a little bit of effort it can be something done within your programme for all ages and wrapped in with other elements of celebrating the Chinese New Year, or other celebrations.

How Do You Do It?

Making the costume can be as easy as painting cardboard or making a papier mache models with paints, and using cloth for the body. You could get teams together to make a number of them and have a competition to see which has the scariest face.

A great way to get a little more involved is to ask someone from your local Chinese community to get involved, not just with the lion dance but also other elements of celebration – banners, lanterns, food and history.

At the more involved end, clubs and teams exist who may be able to help. Your local martial arts club may also be able to point you in the right direction.

Advice and Guidance

Good and fascinating background - history, types of lions, dance sequence, the story and making the team www.stafford-lau-gar.co.uk/articles/liondance1.html (and continue to lion dance page 2)

<http://www.chinatown-online.co.uk/> has a wealth of information including ideas to celebrate the Chinese New Year (lanterns, foods, banners) that will give you ideas for a themed evening.

Further website with history and background
www.cam.ac.uk/societies/ldt/ld.htm

...carnival

The word comes from the celebrations before the Christian season of lent and, in that form, is lavishly celebrated around the world. Traditional carnivals of Verona in Italy, Binche in Belgium and the spectacular Mardi Gras. The idea of celebrating in such a fashion has been adopted for other times and events whose roots may come from other sources - winter celebrations, harvests, special events just to name a few.

Whatever version you care to look at, or where you do it, it is about being spectacular!

How Do You Do It?

If you are taking part in a parade the simple starting point is planning well in advance, probably months. Trying to string something together two weeks beforehand might just not work. So;

- Work out your theme.
- You may not have to go down the route of building a lavish float although you will need to make your slot look and feel fantastic. It is about filling your space with something that people will want to watch.
- Involve costumes, music, sound and a lot of activity (please don't just stick a few balloons on a car and have a small group just following it!).
- Use spectacular exaggeration - eg. making small things really big (environment - giant snails, butterflies, spiders, flowers).
- 2007 - globe and large costumes from around the world.
- You can use some of the ideas contained in other sections of this Street Entertainment resource eg. puppets (giant), face painting, jesters, your version of a Chinese lion.

You may also wish to just hold something like a Mardi Gras evening. Get some ideas from the Mardi Gras pages mentioned under Advice and Guidance.

Advice and Guidance

Many of the larger established carnivals have an established support structure and even Clubs.

You can get a general feel by visiting festivals.com/00-02-february/carnavale/glossary.cfm for a Carnival Glossary (can you mix your Mas with your Mardi Gras?), Carnivals Around the World and links.

More on Mardi Gras on www.mardigras.com (start with the Frequently Asked Questions) and holidays.net/mardigras/story.

Look at the Somerset carnival circuit at somensetcarnivals.co.uk for this West Country celebration.

Ideas on UK city based events at birminghamcarnival.co.uk and www.mynottinghill.co.uk.

...unicycling

Riding along on a one-wheel cycle is as easy as falling off a bike! Looks difficult but can be a really cool new skill!

How Do You Do It?

The most obvious way is to find out if there is a local Circus Skills workshop that includes this. This might be a good way for older members and leaders to learn the basics and consider whether it can be run within Groups, or in the District. Because of the cost of equipment, it would be worthwhile discussing it with your District, or Area/County.

If you want to get stuck in, you will need to buy one or two unicycles (see Advice and Guidance) and practice, practice, practice. If you are running this event within your Group, each individual needs to have the support of either an adult (get the parents to help!) or an older member.

Just like a lot of the other skills mentioned in Street Entertainment, trial and error is half the fun of doing it!

Advice and Guidance

www.juggling.org/help/circus-arts/unicycling/starting gives some hints as to getting started.

For a more general site including buying a unicycle visit www.unicycling.org.

Food For Thought

Unicycling has developed beyond being solely a circus skill. Clubs have been formed for unicycling hockey and off-road skills (Muni). In BMX, there is also 'flatland' which, although involves a two-wheel bike, is about balancing and skills on one-wheel.

...balloon modelling

For those that can stand the fear of an exploding balloon, this is the art of making animals and shapes from specially designed balloons. This is perhaps one of the more popular types of street entertainment seen at many venues.

Whilst first attempts at modelling an animal may not bear any resemblance, at the top end of skill there are some quite complicated and eye-catching models that can be made.

How Do You Do It?

There are a few options to consider.

- Individual balloon modelling kits are now available on various online shopping sites as well as gadgets shops, typically as festive or birthday presents.
- You can hire in a balloon modeller to show you some of the skills. This can be a visit to your Group, or something to spice up a District Leaders meeting.
- If you are using a Circus Skills workshop, ask if this is one subject that is being covered.
- Look at the resources under Advice and Guidance. It might be something that one or two parents might like to handle for a couple of evenings.

Advice and Guidance

If you want a broader understanding and a starting point, visit www.balloonhq.com. Information is available on buying balloons as well as books and videos on how to do it.

...busking

Some of us will conjure up images of the comical one man band playing to a queue, or the out of tune guitarist begging at a railway station. The history of busking, or itinerant musicians and actors, goes well back to medieval times and perhaps further. Today, busking is experiencing something of a revival in the area of street entertainment with some people doing this professionally and selling their CDs in the street.

How Do You Do It?

Wherever you do this in public, you will need the permission of the landowner and consider the legal aspects of public performance.

- Busking can involve a number of different types of entertainment; it is simply performing for money!
- Does your Group have a small bunch of musically talented people that can play in public?
- Learning simple tunes on recorders and penny whistles.
- Christmas carol singing.
- Combining some of the other skills contained in this resource.

Advice and Guidance

www.vocalist.org.uk/busking Easy to understand and comprehensive. Takes you from history to opportunities and technical areas like Music Law.

www.buskersunion.com The National Buskers Union started their Awards in 2003 to cover Best Juggler, Best Mime, Best Musician, Best Statute - which shows the areas that could be considered. Their site also covers their work in helping homeless, Buskers School, and you can even buy a Buskers CD.

Food For Thought

Scouts busking? Look at the work and pictures of Woking District Thailand Jamboree Contingent on their web pages 'Busking Scouts' letsjamboree.org.uk/funds/wait.htm and letsjamboree.org.uk/funds/safe.htm. Apart from playing music, they included juggling as part of their public performance in order to raise funds.

Discussion: Homeless and busking. Visit the buskers' union website mentioned above for a starting point for discussions.

...face painting

We have all seen face painters at children's parties - they are really great! You can also use these skills in a lot of other areas in Street entertainment - see mime/living statues, Chinese lion dancing, carnival and jesters.

How Do You Do It?

- Face painting kits are not expensive and can be purchased online, together with other resources to help.
- You can get some ideas by visiting some of the websites listed under Advice and Guidance.
- Have a go!

Advice and Guidance

A good starting point is the Face Painting Association with pages on Frequently Asked Questions and a Gallery for ideas. This is a worthwhile site if you are thinking about taking this one step further than just a one night session www.facepaint.co.uk.

Face painting kits and other resources can be obtained on;

www.sillyjokes.co.uk/dress-up/make-up

www.partydomain.co.uk/d-commerce/page15.html

www.facepaintshop.co.uk

www.e-pastimes.co.uk/acatalog/e_pastimes_Face_Painting_237.html

www.artfuldodgers.co.uk/Face_Paint/FacePaint0.htm

If you really want a challenge, and with a Chinese theme, see

www.chinesemusic.co.uk/english/opera.htm

...jesters

Acting the joker in a colourful costume!

How Do You Do It?

This is something that young people can do by itself, or combine it with some of the other skills such as mime, stilt walking, juggling, magic tricks or unicycling, or as the link between performances.

But to be a jester, you will need:

- Colourful multi-pointed hat (preferably with small bells at each point).
- Colourful costume.
- A stick with a copy of the jesters head on it, and bells attached to jangle.
- Simple jokes to tell.

Some of the skills learned in miming can help in giving an expressive performance, rather than just standing up and telling jokes. The jester is as much an actor as a joke teller.

Advice and Guidance

Joke books can be obtained from many book shops.

Some web sites to look at are:

www.kidsjokes.co.uk has an A-Z of 'knock-knock' jokes.

www.elephantjokes.co.uk for... Guess!

www.scatty.com for scatty jokes.

There are other websites, but material needs to be checked since they may be either offensive or inappropriate.

Food For Thought

Most of us will associate the jester with medieval entertainment during banquets. He would typically be seated as his master's side and give an amusing, if somewhat cutting, commentary on those at the banquet. He could get away with it since he was treated as a fool and probably had some sort of physical deformity. He was the lucky one since at least he was employed. Other jesters could well have been the 'village idiot', scraping or begging for meals.