

Promoter Don't Panic Pack

(adapted from Villages in Action's own Pack)

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Introduction



Big State Theatre 'Fetch'

To make this pack simpler we have assumed several things:

- You are a novice promoter. However, there is something in this Pack for everyone – the learning never stops!
- You are promoting a one-night, small-scale, professional touring performance.
- This Pack should also be useful if you are running any public event.

If you are a new Promoter:

- Talk to others in your community – you could well find other closet promoters.
- Contact other nearby promoters; they will be very pleased to give advice.
- Your touring scheme will have the answers to most things – do ask questions, however basic they may seem.
- Ask a question on the NRTF website discussion forums (<http://www.ruraltouring.org/discussions/promoters>). You can get advice from the growing network of NRTF promoter members across the country. Sign up to this network via your touring scheme or join as an individual associate member.

Rural touring is principally about offering a whole range of venues – both rural and semi-rural – the opportunity to access a range of live performing arts. It's exceptional, exciting, often a unique experience and it's professional – rural touring is not the poor relation of work seen in other dedicated arts venues. It's about communities being able to meet and socialise in their own space and it's imperative that it's a quality artistic experience that reaches as many people in the community as possible of all ages, backgrounds, and tastes.

How rural touring works

Most villages have a village hall committee planning activities for their community. Many villages have a handful of enthusiastic volunteers, or a passionate individual, who wish to see high quality arts events taking place in their village. These are the local voluntary promoters and they are at the heart of rural touring. Uniting these groups is a desire to keep their villages 'alive and kicking' and without these key and committed people rural and community touring SIMPLY WOULD NOT HAPPEN!

Touring schemes vary in size and entity. Some cover one or more county areas and are limited companies and registered charities; others cover one or more district areas and are run through local authority arts departments. Many, but not all, are funded by Arts Council England as National Portfolio Organisations.

There are approximately 40 touring schemes across the country. You can see the touring scheme members of NRTF here: <http://www.ruraltouring.org/members>

The touring schemes are all different and have their own ways of doing things but they mostly collate menus of live arts shows for a touring season based on their programming policy, e.g. quotas for art forms and local demand. Some schemes have one season, running from autumn to spring, others have two, running autumn to winter and then spring to early summer and so produce two menus a year.

A menu is a filtered choice of artists and companies, selected by the scheme staff, reflecting a variety of artforms, a range of work (familiar through to more challenging) at different price levels. Menus are sent to the schemes' network of promoters - usually volunteers such as a village hall committee.

Depending on the size of their scheme and the subsidies available, promoters choose one or more shows for each season to suit their community.

If you are part of a touring scheme they will have their own way of doing things, contracting, taking fees etc. If you are not sure how it works get in touch with your local touring scheme and ask. They mostly offer the following:

- A shortlist of companies and their availability.
- Financial support to offset possible financial risk.
- Marketing support, providing posters, tickets and publicity.
- Drawing up contracts between promoters and artists.
- Paying artists and billing local promoting groups.

Being a Promoter

Just be Yourself

- Your performers and your audiences will enjoy the evening if you do! Treat them like friends or VIPs and they will come back for more.

Go it Alone or An Organising Group – What Works for You?

- Lone promoters are often very effective. Being separate may give flexibility in using other venues and 'non-hall' people.
- Groups of friends can make meetings, over lunch or coffee, very sociable.
- A promoting group might grow from the hall committee, parent-teacher association, drama club or WI group.
- Share your enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise.
- Try not to let the group get bogged down in bureaucracy. Keep decision making simple, sometimes you may need a quick decision by one or two accessible people. Make sure that everyone knows what the decisions are.
- Build a relationship with your helpers; some may not like being on committees but like to help – some people love having visitors.

"One of the bonuses is having people to stay. We had the Old Rope String Band for the night and it was such a laugh it definitely added to the experience. Promoting these events is quite a lot of fun, once it's happening or once it's over! "

What About a Contract?

- Your touring scheme will have a Promoter Agreement form or contract. This is a crucial part of the booking process.
- It is very important that your telephone contact has an answer-phone and someone willing to return calls promptly.

Venue Information Sheet

- Your touring scheme will need up to date detailed information about each venue.

Licensed – for What?

- In general your venue should have a Theatre Licence or Public Entertainments licence.
- Check with your Touring scheme what licences are required.
- Your venue may have this, or you may need to encourage them to get one.
- If you are planning to sell alcohol the venue must have an Alcohol Licence. If not you may consider paying for a temporary licence from your local council.
- Licensing laws changed in 2005 ask the Licensing Officer of your local authority who will have up to date information.

Accessibility

- The Disability Discrimination Act is the current legislation on access for everyone.
- Some halls are temporarily exempt and have time to meet requirements.
- New buildings must provide full access.
- Don't panic about any of this. It is unlikely to affect your promoting.
- Check with your touring scheme or your hall committee if you are unsure.
- Your local District Council will have full information and leaflets available.
- Or contact your community council or local authority.
- Please ask your touring scheme if you are unsure.

Choosing events

Create a Varied and Balanced Programme

- Always choose something that makes **you** happy to persuade others to come along to.
- A repeat visit from a successful company can increase your audience BUT it is always worth trying something different.
- Don't try and please everyone – it will lead to bland programming.
- You could broaden their tastes – it does not always matter if it is not quite what they expected or are used to.

Choosing Your Day

- You may have no choice! Village halls are increasingly popular, it may be easier to identify which nights your hall is generally available.
- Sunday afternoons have proved popular for some shows in some villages.
- Not everyone can have Friday or Saturday nights.

Avoid Local Clashes (if you can!)

- Once you have booked your venue make sure there is nothing else taking place locally close to your date – village life often allows for only one 'night out' a week.
- Use your Parish News, or a calendar on display at the venue, to avoid potential clashes and alert people to your special night.

"After a while we arranged to have our events on a Tuesday night. Our audience got used to 'Tuesday night is Performance Night' and liked the regularity."

Choosing a Start Time – What to Consider

- Who the show is aimed at – children, adults, families, older people.
- What time it will get dark in winter.

- Length of the show, then add time for interval, raffle, introduction.
- Distances people may be travelling and local parking conditions.
- If you are not a parent of young children check with a few parents about start times – they may prefer to come straight from school or to go home for tea first.

Different Venues

- Your main venue may not be the best place for all your events.
- Even when fund-raising for your venue, you may attract more people by using another venue.
- Try using the church, the public room of a large house, or an unusual venue – a farm building, bandstand or outdoors.

"For me, all the effort suddenly becomes worth-while when, twenty seconds into the show, I realise 'we've done it! Some people who have just moved here were pleased to have the chance, after the show, to meet other families. I love the tea afterwards because the social side is so much part of it"

Making the evening both 'special' and profitable for your group

A few suggestions:

- Dress up the venue and/or your helpers.
- 'Cabaret style' seating, but check with the Company that it is appropriate for the performance and if they are happy for people to get up for drinks during the performance.
- A 'bar' can make good profits but make sure you have the appropriate alcohol licence.
- Including a light supper in the ticket price is often popular though it is more difficult for calculating numbers and amounts.
- Extras such as a few nibbles are appreciated.
- Think hard before selling crisps, especially to an audience of children (noisy & messy!). Home made cakes always go down well and are very quiet!
- Remember not to start rattling cups etc while the show is on.

Preparation & Planning

- Keep everyone informed about how it is all going.
- Try to enthuse people outside your group.
- Have enough helpers, but not too many, who are well briefed before the event and who understand what is required of them.

"When I discovered that a very popular person in the village had arranged a big 'do' for their 80th birthday then I knew I had no chance. Everyone was invited . . . it was just one of those unavoidable things." (despite this the audience was over 50)

Check the Venue

- Ensure the Company has enough space including height.
- Are other people using other rooms at the venue that night – talk to them about your event – choir practice next to your quiet event could be a problem!
- Check the venue is available, for the ‘get-in’ before the show, some Companies need half a day.
- Check that other rooms are available for changing.
- You must know the maximum seating capacity of your hall.

"We forgot the room upstairs was booked for short-mat bowls. Luckily the play was about World War II, so the noise of the bowls sounded like the blitz!"

The Costs

Your touring scheme will explain how they work the costs, fees, box office and any subsidy that comes with the booking.

Don't forget to take into account that you may need to meet some of these expenses:

Cost of Hall Hire, electricity, equipment hire, ticket printing, overprinting posters, temporary licence, meals and accommodation.

Some Touring Schemes provide support for your event, publicity material, press releases and tickets and they will all offer advice along the way.

Lighting

A little lighting greatly enhances many shows, even if they are not special theatre lights.

- Theatre companies may bring stage lights and use them even if your venue has some.
- Performers with lights and/or sound will need several 13amp electric sockets, preferably on several different circuits – better still, but not essential, a 32 amp or 63 amp socket (often called a C-form socket).
- Music groups are unlikely to tour with lights.
- Ask ahead and help to create a welcoming atmosphere, either using the hall lights, candles in jars (check first how sensitive the smoke alarms are!) or even a few table lamps. This is a chance for you to be creative. . One village brought in a large rug, a standard lamp, some large plants and two easy chairs for a music duo; it made a very special evening.

Blackout

This may be essential for some shows – check with the Company.

- If necessary you can use cloth, or black bin-bags, if these can be safely and easily taped over windows.
- Check for bright street lights outside, other internal lights, (apart from Fire Exit signs) or heaters in the room that might glow (infra-red type).

Sound Systems

- Touring groups will usually bring sound (p.a.) equipment.
- Musicians may not need a sound system – amplification may be unnecessary in a small venue.

Working with the Company

~ they will need to know

- How to get to you (make a map if needed) and approximate time/distance from nearest big town.
- If anyone will be there to let them in, give them some refreshments etc.
- If there is anyone available to help carry equipment (not always needed).

~ you will want to know

- Set up time (or get-in).
- Clear up time.
- Is there an interval.
- Do they need food, accommodation etc.
- A mobile phone number for the company.

The Raffle

– the Benefits

- It raises funds
- It can get other people involved – local businesses are sometimes happy to donate but be careful, they may get a lot of requests
- No village hall event is right without a raffle!

– the Problems

- It can lengthen the evening (try few but worthwhile prizes)
- The noise of tearing raffle tickets can be distracting
- The same people always win!

Talking to the Media

- Contact your local paper and local radio station. Find a contact. You may be able to arrange for a photographer or an interview.
- Think of photo opportunities to sell it to them.
- Or an unusual angle for them to use, eg your first event, your 10th event, sold out before, Regional / National or High Profile performers etc.
- Contact specialist sites and journals or publications eg music.
- Use the NRTF discussion site to profile your event <http://www.ruraltouring.org/discussions>.
- Invite them to write a review and put the review on to the NRTF site in 'reviews' to let everyone know how it went!

- Information in the paper after the event will help raise your profile as a promoter, and that of rural touring and your scheme for the next time.
- Afterwards, if they do a good feature on your venue, telephone and thank the editor; better still, pop in to their office and meet them.
- Find out about special arts pages in your local press. Use these to sell your special stories.
- Local Radio stations often have a dedicated arts programme, find out if yours does and get in touch with them.

“The really good thing about Villages in Action events in our hall is that it is so nice just to be able to walk there and see something fantastic.”

Selling Your Show

Your Greatest Asset is Yourself

- Be positive and enthusiastic: "The show will be good; Your touring scheme only offers the best. Rural Touring brings high quality arts events to small rural and community venues!"
- People will believe **you**, more than a piece of paper.
- Just because you know about the event, does not mean everyone else does.

Promote the Event as an Experience

- Sell the night as an 'occasion' or 'treat'.
- Be confident, or at least act confident.
- Welcome people as you would like to be welcomed.
- Create a welcoming ambience: warm with gentle lighting and a little background music are small things that all add up to create a 'special evening'.
- If you have a bar or refreshments it will be a sociable evening.
- **Word of mouth is the best and cheapest way of selling the show.**
- Create a 'buzz' – with friends, acquaintances, key people in local groups.
- Rural Touring events are anticipated in many villages as a great night out.

“For our first film, we set low prices to attract a new audience. Over 100 people came, but we did not cover costs. Next time we raised the price and everyone was still very happy! ”

Ticket Prices

Ticket prices cause more discussion and worry than anything else!

Remember, this is a professional performance from people who do this for a living.

- The price is only part of the reason people come (or not).
- Price your tickets according to the show, your touring scheme will advise you.
- Neither too high 'that's too expensive for a village show'
- Or too low 'it's cheap it can't be up to much': you undervalue the event and the Company.
- Compare your prices with cinema, the bowling alley, hourly plumbers' costs and in nearby Theatres (!)
- 'I can't afford £6' can mean 'I choose not to spend £6 for your event' (fair enough!)
- People are much more likely to turn up (especially on a wet and windy night) if they have already paid for a ticket. You could make tickets cheaper in advance.
- Keep your pricing simple for your own sanity
- Offer family tickets and don't be too rigid about what constitutes a family
- Offer party bookings, but set a challenge (e.g. a discount for ten or more people or 10 for the price of 9).
- Be clear about 'concessions'.
- Decide your policy on tickets for companions of people with disabilities and your own helpers: set a policy and be firm, but reasonable, at the door.
- Your touring scheme will not be 'judging' you on your turn-out; effort is all we ask.

Selling Tickets

- Make it easy for people to buy tickets
- Always have an answer-phone on your contact line and respond quickly
- Make it easy for shops, or other people to sell them
- Make sure everyone knows what and who the concessions are for.

Your Ticket Sellers

Give simple instructions for ticket sellers, it won't always be the same person

- You could give out number 35 first to give the impression tickets are selling fast
- Make sure they know as much about the show as possible
- Who is eligible for discounts
- Who cheques are payable to
- Collect in all unsold tickets at the last minute to have for door sales

Your biggest fear is probably that you won't sell 'enough' seats. Don't worry if you don't fill the venue. Enjoyment by those who are there is far more important than sheer numbers

- When asked always say, 'tickets are selling well or 'as well as expected at this stage'
- Negative comments travel fastest – at all stages!

Direct Sales

- BEST OF ALL – they have their ticket, you have their money – job done!
- Village shops, pubs or other local businesses can be good outlets
- Consider online ticket sales talk to your scheme about this option.

Telephone Bookings

- Try hard to get people to pay up front, it is much easier not to turn up if you haven't paid! Offer a way of paying you in advance – by post, by cheque.
- If you can't get them to pay in advance. Be firm – ask those who do not pay in advance to let you know if they are not coming and stress this as important.
- Bring the list along to the box-office for payment on the night.
- If you run this sort of system, don't turn people away on the night until you are sure you are full.

Spend as much time in selling the show as arranging it. You could:-

- Consider recruiting some to be responsible for this job! Someone with a little PR knowledge and reasonable computer skills.
- Put as many posters as possible in windows in your village and others nearby.
- Leave piles of flyers in strategic places, shop, pub, hall foyer etc.
- Better still try to give out flyers at the end of the school day (may need to check with school head first).
- Contact groups such as WI, Youth Groups etc and ask them to announce your event.
- Parish magazines are very useful but often need lots of advance notice: sometimes they will add your flyer to their mail out.
- Consider sending flyers via local newspaper deliveries or, if you still have one, the milkman.
- If you have time and confidence you could go and speak at local coffee mornings or other gatherings.
- Try a large display of posters in a shop window, pub wall or hall foyer will be very effective.
- TICKETS AVAILABLE HERE sign on shop/pub window.
- Try a 'Coming Soon' flyer at events prior to yours.
- Door to door delivery can be very effective.
- 'T' boards on the road into the village can be very effective.

Posters

- Put posters up, usually about 3 weeks before your event.
- Too much earlier and they fall down or get covered and lose impact.

- Consider laminating posters or putting them in an upside down transparent plastic sleeves (so the rain doesn't get in). There is nothing worse than soggy posters!

Putting Them up in Advance - Indoors

- Always take sellotape, blu tack and drawing pins with you.
- Ask if you can put the poster up, now, yourself: it may be forgotten or lost if you don't.

Putting Them up in Advance - Outdoors

- Use ordinary wall-paper paste, it is excellent for posters on smooth surfaces, staple-gun or drawing pins.
- Make it reasonably strong and it won't come off in the rain.
- Afterwards plain water will get them off.
- Sellotape won't last and brown parcel tape is difficult to remove, leaving marks.

On the day

- On the day add 'TONIGHT' stickers if you can.
- You could use fluorescent paper.
- A-frames, particularly around the venue as a last minute reminder.

Always Remove Outdoor Posters After Your Event

On the Night

Make sure the Company has an emergency contact number for you and that you have one for them

Dressing Rooms

- A clean, warm space to change.
- A place for hanging costumes, chairs, table or similar flat area, and a mirror please.
- Access to the kitchen when setting up if possible.

Accommodation – if Needed

- Balance the Company's needs with what is available.
- Check if it's acceptable for them to share rooms.
- Ensure they meet their hosts before the show and check details, eg if smoking is acceptable etc.
- They might come in late after a show: do they need a key?

Food

- What food, if any, is needed?
- Do they have special diets?
- When will they eat? Performers often prefer to eat after the show – will food be available at 11pm? – try to arrange to feed them before the show.
- A decent meal is appreciated by performers who probably eat far too many sandwiches!

John Etheridge played in our hall. He was fantastic. Afterwards we went to the pub and John jammed with a local musician. The man was 'made up' that he had actually played with John Etheridge. He is a guitar legend after all."

Setting Up

- Wait until the Company has arrived before laying out your seats, or check beforehand with your Company contact.
- A theatre company could need all day, a musical group only three hours and a poet only 30 minutes. Check how much time they actually need as your hall may charge by the hour and the company may not need as long as they initially say.
- Set a time to meet or a system so that neither party is hanging around waiting for the other.
- They may not want to use your stage, many Companies prefer to be nearer their audience.
- Will there be noises off – tea being made; other venue users; next door pub.
- Tell them if you are running a raffle, if there is a bar etc.
- Check what time you can let the audience in.
- Who will introduce the show and who will acknowledge the Scheme.
- Check if late-comers will disturb the show.



Sssshhhhhh!!!

Puppetcraft Theatre, 'The Mousehole Cat' (a very quiet show!)

Front of House

The box office is the first welcome your audience has ~ be prepared!

- Fill your cash box with a large float – lots of £1 coins, 50p pieces if your prices are not in whole pounds and some fivers – everyone will give you a £10 or £20 note!
- For people paying by cheque decide in advance who the payee will be.
- Keep a separate float for the tickets, the raffle and refreshments.
- Allow those carrying pre-paid tickets to by-pass the box-office.
- Have pre-booked tickets ready for collection, in alphabetical order.

Arrange things so that:

- You offer a good personal welcome ensuring that the audience feels valued.
- Have the attitude that the customer is always right.
- Your box office is easily accessible and does not create a queue to block the entrance.
- Programmes and raffle-tickets are sold well away from the bottle-neck at the tickets.
- Different people are responsible for different things: tickets, raffle and refreshments.
- If you have a bar or refreshments available before the show, point it out to people before they take their seats.
- Offer pre-paid interval drinks and have someone taking those orders.
- If ticket sales are low consider re-arranging the seats, perhaps to cabaret style or to make a more intimate setting to make the room look fuller!

“Thank you both so much for all the support you have given me in this first year and also for offering such first class performers, willing to come out to these remote corners and entertain us all”

Helpers should –

- Arrive at the venue before the audience does – at least 45 minutes before the start time – try to have a quick briefing before you begin, it can save a lot of time in the long run.
- Don’t underestimate how long it takes to get ready.
- And be prepared for some people to turn up before you!
- Know the location of entrances, exits, toilets and cloakrooms.
- Know some details about the show, so they can tell the public if asked.
- Know when the audience can take their seats – the Company might well need the space up to ten minutes before the show, especially if there is no separate warm-up room.

- Know when the interval is and when the show finishes (for those needing a taxi or lift).
- Make clear signs showing prices and payee for cheques (decide before how to do this!).
- Be clear how many seats you can sell and if people are allowed to stand at the back.
- Be secure – keep the money locked away during the show.

Signs are Important

They can be re-usable laminated A4 sheets – many schools and offices have a laminator that you may be able to use.

Signs to Your Venue

Encourage your Parish Council to put up a sign-post to the village hall

- Ensure that people can find the venue easily, especially from the main road.
- Entrance signs need to be large and well placed.
- ‘Car park this way’ is a useful one, it is not always obvious especially on a dark night.
- Don’t forget to have as much lighting outside as you can.
- ‘Way In’ signs make it easier for newcomers.
- Disabled access signs need to be visible.
- If parking is inadequate you could have a volunteer outside with a torch and a big smile!
- Are there signs for late-comers?

Signs Inside the Venue

- Fire exits must be clearly marked and visible.
- Ensure toilets are well signed.
- Start and finish times are useful for your audience to know – a quick notice is easy to do.

Health & Safety On the Night

You should find answers to some basic questions:

- Where is the first aid kit?
- Where is the phone and does it work?
- Who has first-aid training?
- Who to contact in an emergency?
- Are the seats safe – should they be clipped together ?
- Are aisles at least one metre wide?
- Are fire exits clear of chairs, light stands and equipment?
- Are all fire doors clearly marked and unlocked?

- Are all heaters and electrical appliances turned off before you leave?

Layout

- Let the Company decide how they will use the venue and be prepared to be flexible.
- They may turn the whole thing round – put the audience on the stage, or use a side-door for the public entrance.
- Keep seats away from fire-doors, light-stands and electrical equipment.
- Empty seats indicate to the audience you have undersold – 25 people in 40 seats does not look bad; spread out over 100 seats, it looks thin!
- If you have too many seats, the audience will sit at the back and the front rows will be empty.
- It is impressive to have to put out more seats as the audience arrives – it tells the audience the event is popular and aren't they glad they came!

“During a show, the lights suddenly went out. I knew the mains were a bit dicky so I leapt from my seat and turned on the house lights – but it was part of the plot. One embarrassed promoter!”

Technical

- Check if the Company use smoke machines, bare flames, flashes or cigarettes and if it will set off your fire alarms.
- Know how to reset the alarm if it does go off, Health & Safety is very important.
- Make sure your team knows where fire-extinguishers are and how to use them.

Get the Audience Seated

- Check fire-exits and any possible hazards.
- Allocate space for wheel-chairs, for those who cannot climb steps or need more leg-room.
- Check if you can let in late-comers and keep some seats for them near the door (not at the front, very irritating for those who were early!).
- Try to reserve seats for people with disabilities by the exit and on the end of rows.

Start on Time

- Short delays are acceptable to everyone, especially if due to queues at the door.
- More than ten minutes is discourteous to those who have arrived early and to the performers.
- Check outside for late-comers just before you start.

Public Announcements

- A brief welcome is appropriate, but check with the Company first.

- Make yourself known and make it clear that this is a Rural Touring Event – give the name of your touring scheme!
- Always try to acknowledge your District Council ~ a little appreciation goes a long way!
- Use the interval for other announcements – what's on next, raffle, etc.
- Speak again at the end only if appropriate – be very careful not to spoil the magic!

During the Show

- Enjoy the show, but be alert – you are responsible for the audience and performers.
- Do a discreet head count of the audience, in case the ticket sales were not quite accurate.

Children

A young audience gives you extra responsibility. Many children will never have seen a live performance before

- You can sit children on mats at the front with space between them and the show.
- You will need to have an adult nearby to keep order!
- They may talk among themselves or want to move to be with parents, keep this to a minimum if possible but remember.....

Children are your audience of the future – this could be that magic moment for them!

Do We Pay the Company?

- All touring schemes are different, check with your touring scheme how this will be managed.

Clearing Up

- Make sure someone is designated to offer the company a drink of some kind at the end of the performance and encourage the audience to interact with the company. It gives the audience a sense of ownership and personalisation and can help with ticket sales next time!
- There are always things to do afterwards – organise help for the end of the night well in advance. It can become a long, late and lonesome job by yourself.
- The Company will do their own clearing up but you could offer to help.
- They will appreciate it if you gently, but firmly, clear the hall of people.

After the Event

Evaluation

Don't be afraid to ask your audience what they thought about the event

- You could just chat afterwards and pick up clues.

- Written forms can be useful but only if you ask the right questions and use the information. Many schemes have their own evaluation forms. Either way you will need to ask the audience to fill them in rather than hope that they will – and make sure you have a good supply of pens.

Paperwork

All touring schemes are different and will have different requirements. Your touring scheme may be funded by the Arts Council England or Wales or Creative Scotland and may have specific information they need your help collecting.

Tell Everyone Afterwards

- Report back to other committee members who may not have been there.
- Report back to your touring scheme – your comments are the only way they know what you think, good or bad.
- Talk a lot after the event – people will feel they have missed out and be first in the next queue!
- Share your feedback with the national network via the rural touring website www.ruraltouring.org either in the Discussion/Review section or in the Discussion/General – you can get a log in from your touring scheme.
- Talk about the professional aspects, the quality and the fact that these shows may not be seen in larger venues – they are special.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Send in forms and payment as soon as possible.

Please be honest with your touring scheme about any problems, good points or other issues. They are there to help and support you.

Selling the Next Show

- Tonight's audience is half your next one, make sure they know what's coming next.
- Try a flyer, or a simple slip you make yourself, on each chair before the start.
- An announcement at the end of the show.
- You could write a report for the local paper on the event – how many people came, a synopsis of the show, audience reaction and date of next event.

Appendix I

Ways of Selling Your Show

- Word of mouth – **most effective**
- Posters
- Leaflets & Flyers
- Events listings
- A-frames
- Parish Newsletters

Where to Put up Your Posters

- At the venue, Village shops & Post offices
- Cafes
- Tourist Offices
- Museums & Libraries
- Advice centres
- Council buildings
- Schools & Colleges
- Surgeries & Hospitals
- Mail-out (your own or with parish magazine)
- Hotels & Bed and Breakfasts
- Lamp-posts, telegraph poles, bus-shelters & hoardings, (should be taken down again)
- Local theatres & Arts centres
- Churches
- Pubs
- Recreation centres
- Parish notice-board

Appendix II

Getting the Support you Need

Your touring scheme is a member of **The National Rural Touring Forum** which is a member-led organisation that represents a number of mainly rural touring schemes and rural arts development agencies, principally across England.

Have a look at the website www.ruraltouring.org. To get the most from the website join as an associate promoter via your touring scheme – this is free to voluntary promoting groups. You can ask for help and advice from NRTF's growing network of voluntary promoters via the promoter discussion area of the rural touring website. You are part of a nationwide network of touring schemes and other voluntary promoters. There is an enormous amount of collective knowledge and experience available.

- The organisation was formally constituted in 1997 and is a registered charity.
- It is also a company limited by guarantee.
- The National Rural Touring Forum (NRTF) aims to encourage the touring of high quality professional arts performances and events to rural communities and to help meet the needs of the member schemes.
- There are approximately 40 Touring Schemes that are members of the NRTF.
- Indirectly, you benefit from, and are part of, the nationwide network of other local promoters. Directly you can access resources, discussions and reviews via the website. You can attend NRTF conference and showcase events and put yourself forward to sit on the NRTF board.

- The NRTF Board is elected by the membership and serves in an unpaid capacity .
- NRTF employs a part time co-ordinator and development director.

Actively Enlisting Your Local Councillors

- Your local District, County and Parish Councillors will be very pleased to know that you are a rural touring Promoter.
- Try to invite them, by letter ideally, to each of your events.
- They may not be able to attend but you will be keeping them informed.
- If you happen to know them personally then try to get them along to what will be a unique community event on their patch.
- This is a very important aspect of keeping your rural touring scheme in everyone's minds as a valued provider of arts in small rural venues.
- When funding cuts are discussed these are the people who are important!

Useful Points to Make to Your Councillors

- Rural Touring events bring the community together, all ages.
- A healthy cultural life is the key to sustainable communities.
- It inspires and motivates young people to become involved.
- It brings money into the community through direct profits and use of other services, eg pub, shop, garage etc.
- It brings experiences to the community that it would not be able to afford independently.

Raising Money for Other Causes

- You may use arts events as a means of fund-raising.
- Please remember that the cost is subsidised by your touring scheme through local authority grants and Arts Council.
- It is important that you reflect the quality of this professional performance in your ticket price.
- A good audience, raffles, bars and refreshments can make a profit for you.
- If one event loses money, don't worry – the next one may make a profit.

But above all remember



Have a good
time!!!

The Guild of Fabulists

Many thanks to Villages in Action for their original version written by Jill Greig and also to our NRTF promoter reps Janet Ollier and Barbara Tremewan for their input and advice.



This document comes from an original written by Jill Greig in 2006.

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