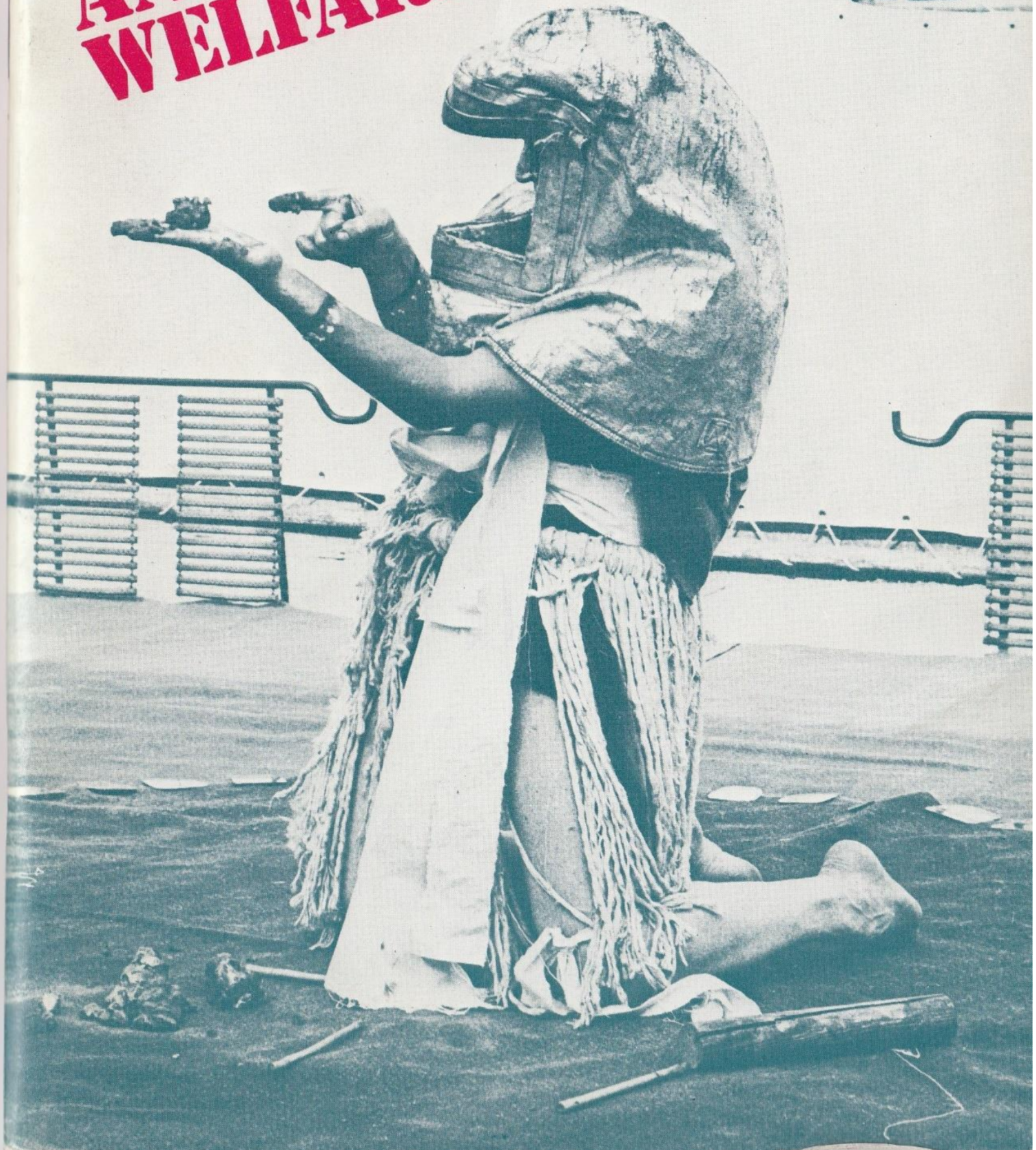


Galactic Smallholdings announce

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF WELFARE STATE





ORIGINS

Founded in Yorkshire in 1968 by John Fox, Welfare State is one of the most influential alternative theatre companies in Britain.

Over the last nine years through a vast body of work at home and abroad, and financial assistance from many public bodies, including the Arts Council of Great Britain, Welfare State has gained an international reputation for pioneering new forms of celebratory theatre in particular social contexts.

Welfare State grew from a street theatre troupe via political parodies, with its own pop group, to a fully mobile village with circus tent, generators, decorated caravans and lorries; and now its own permanent base in Burnley.

In 1972 the company disappeared in a submarine off the Cornish coast. In 1973 it re-emerged in a complex labyrinth of horror on a rubbish tip in Lancashire. In 1974 and 1975 it investigated many traditional mummung and folk forms, often through processions; and constructed innumerable sculptures with fire, ice, plants and earth. In 1976 vigils and 24-hour performances fused landscape-sculptures with focussed symbolist theatre, surreal processions and science fiction themes.

Welfare State has been recognized since 1974 as a major innovatory company with a totally original house-style, noted particularly for extending the boundaries of existing theatre, fusing fine art, living-values and theatrical experience, and creating original theatre of a poetic and mythical nature that is truly popular.

Galactic Smallholdings was registered as a charity in 1973 to act as an umbrella organisation for Welfare State and 'to promote, maintain, improve and advance education and to increase the availability of the Arts'.

The Board of Directors of Galactic Smallholdings is:
Lord Peter Feversham, Boris Howarth, John Fox,
Sue Fox, Jamie Proud, Albert Hunt, Peter Oliver, Michael Scott, Peter Stark.

GENERAL POLICY 1977

Described variously as dream-weavers, purveyors of images, sculptors of visual poetry, civic magicians, and engineers of the imagination; Welfare State, through Galactic, devises handmade ceremonies, namings, memorial services, performances, processions and dances; constructs sideshows, environments and landscape sculptures and arranges workshops and teaching courses for any sympathetic space, situation or season. All the work is original; costumes, props, songs, words and music being created afresh whenever possible.

The company believes that imagination, original art and spontaneous creative energy are being systematically destroyed by the current educational processes, materialism and bureaucratic decision-making of Western large-scale industrial society. Galactic will therefore consider any useful project which aims to counteract such culture of death.

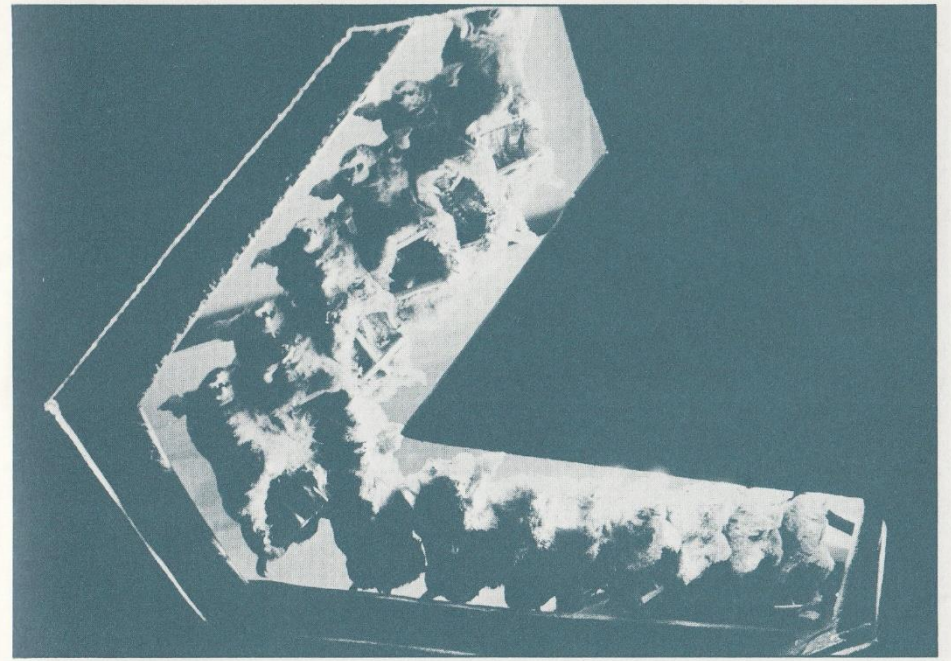
Situations are preferred where there is some chance of long term follow-through, where there is an energetic grass-roots group, or where a residency of at least a month is feasible. Some short stopovers are undertaken where we can provide a useful demonstration of our work or where there is a good opportunity to learn something new. Return visits are often very successful.

In each case ideally the work is new, craft-based and handmade, and often the creative process is demonstrated as part of the event.

Usually commissions require preliminary reconnaissance and research. Most are under the personal direction of John Fox and/or Boris Howarth.

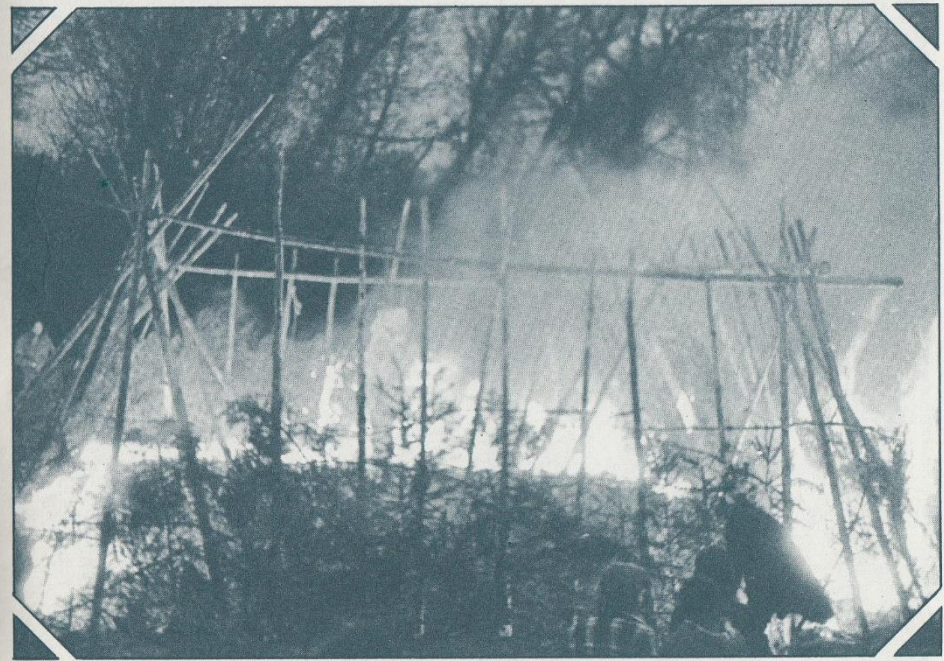
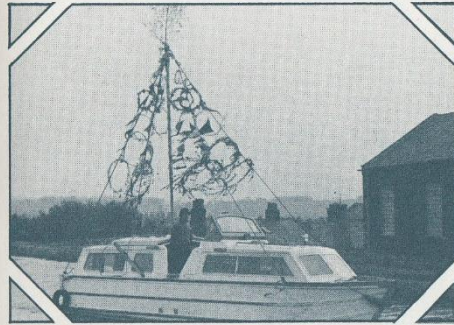
From its Burnley base. . . itself a growing and living art work. . . Galactic Smallholdings initiates research projects into the aesthetics of the alternative.





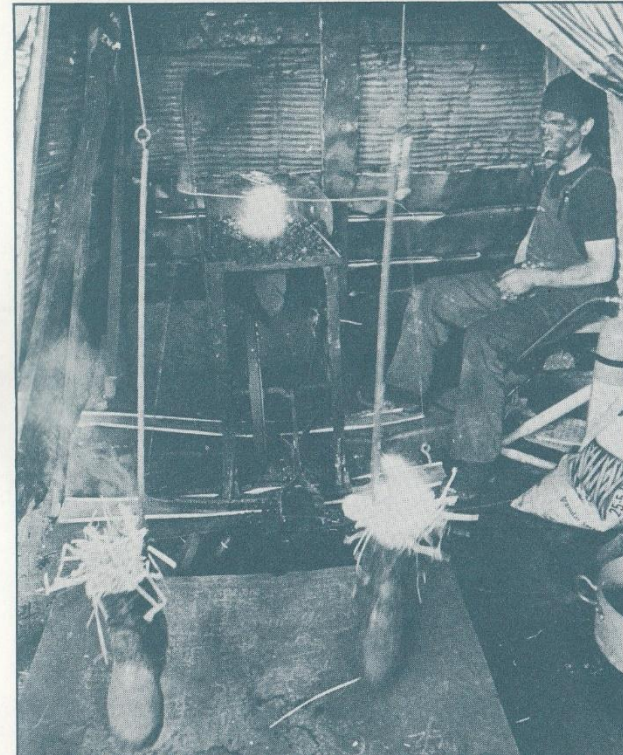
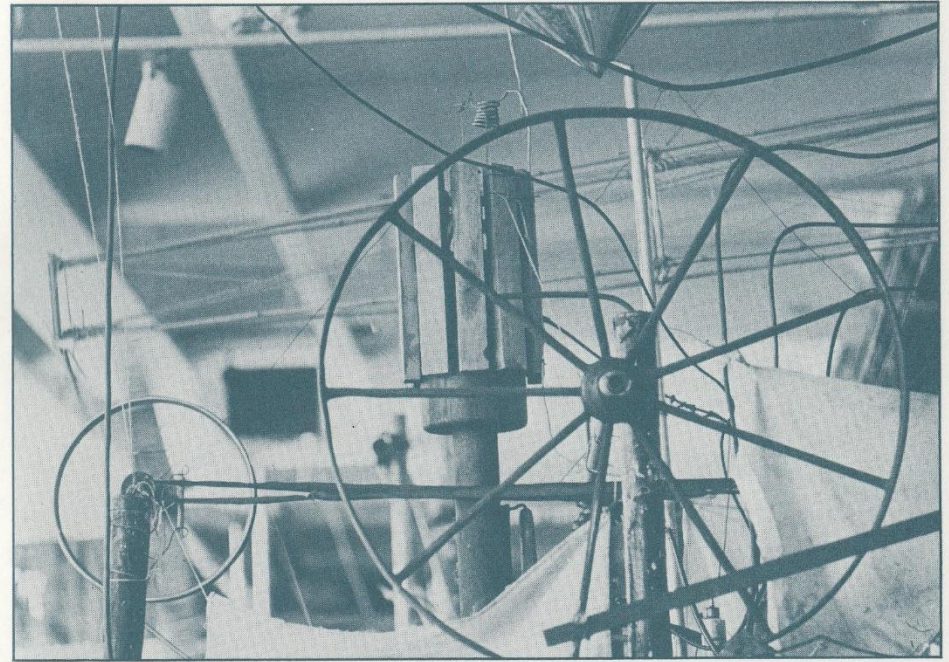
2. 'MAYDAY'

A celebration: morning, noon and evening
in the streets of Burnley. 1st May.





3. 'THE ISLAND OF THE LOST WORLD'
Total environment exhibition built
during one month.
Lijnbaan Centrum. Rotterdam. May.

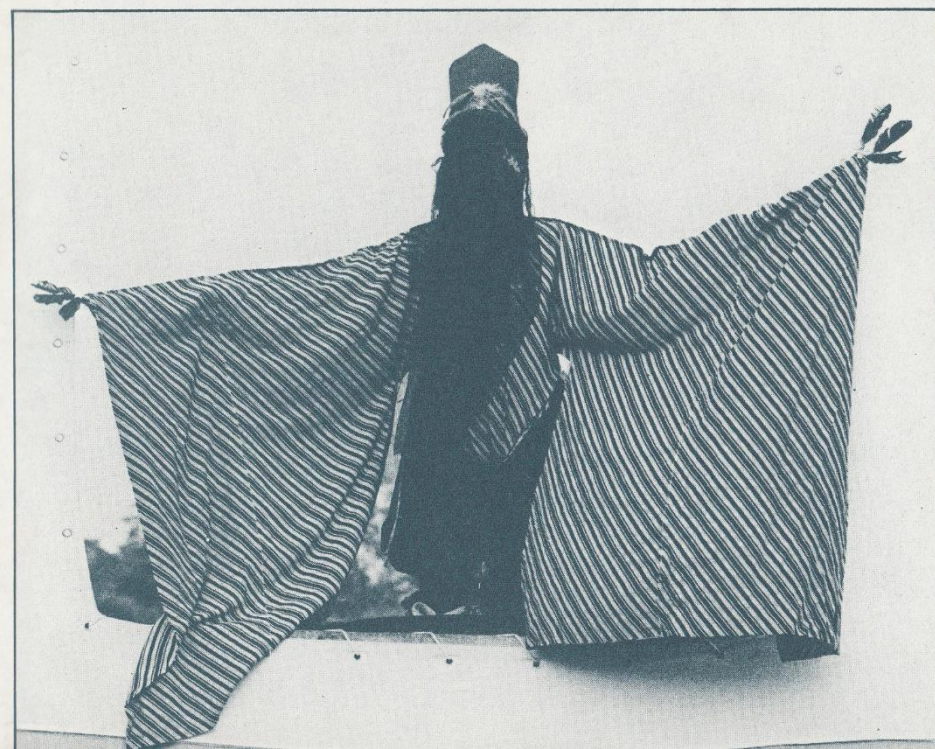
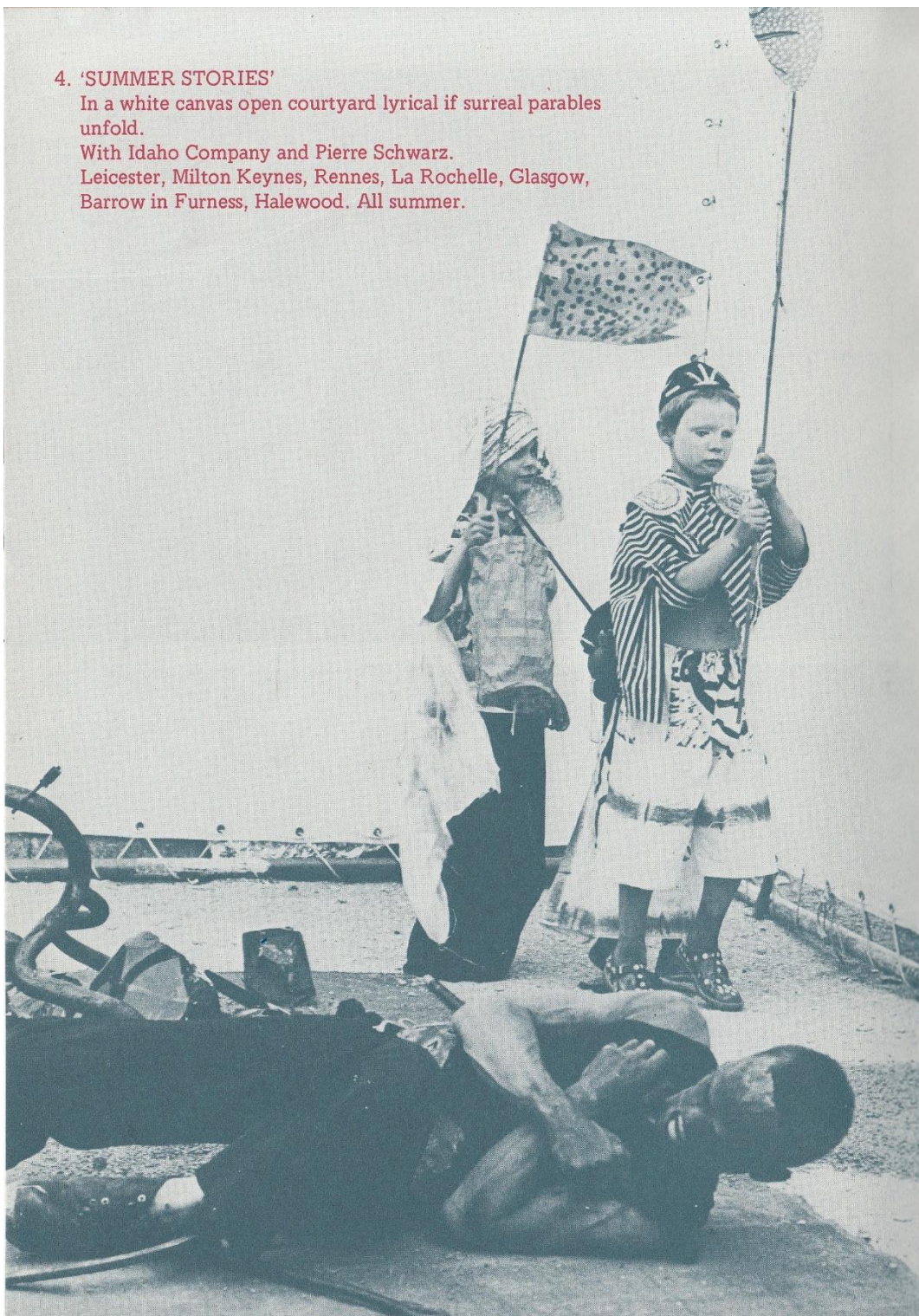


4. 'SUMMER STORIES'

In a white canvas open courtyard lyrical if surreal parables unfold.

With Idaho Company and Pierre Schwarz.

Leicester, Milton Keynes, Rennes, La Rochelle, Glasgow, Barrow in Furness, Halewood. All summer.





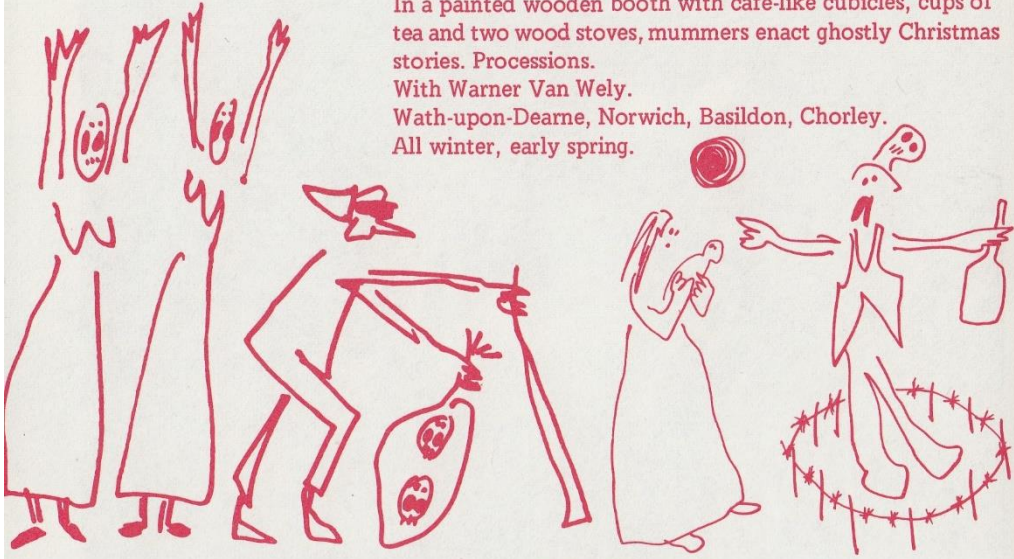
6. 'WINTER STORIES'

In a painted wooden booth with cafe-like cubicles, cups of tea and two wood stoves, mummers enact ghostly Christmas stories. Processions.

With Warner Van Wely.

Wath-upon-Deame, Norwich, Basildon, Chorley.

All winter, early spring.



WELFARE STATE

2 concerts daily
5 p on the door

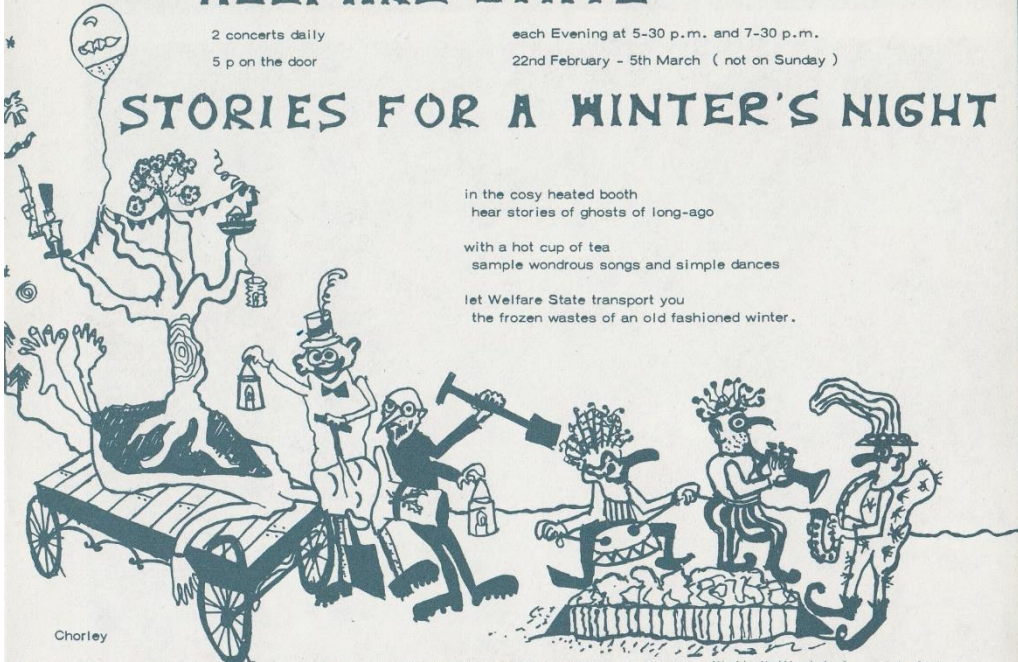
each Evening at 5-30 p.m. and 7-30 p.m.
22nd February - 5th March (not on Sunday)

STORIES FOR A WINTER'S NIGHT

in the cosy heated booth
hear stories of ghosts of long-ago

with a hot cup of tea
sample wondrous songs and simple dances

let Welfare State transport you
the frozen wastes of an old fashioned winter.



Chorley

RANGLЕТTS Recreation Ground

presented by Chorley College Students Union, in ass. with North West A.A. and A.C.G.B.

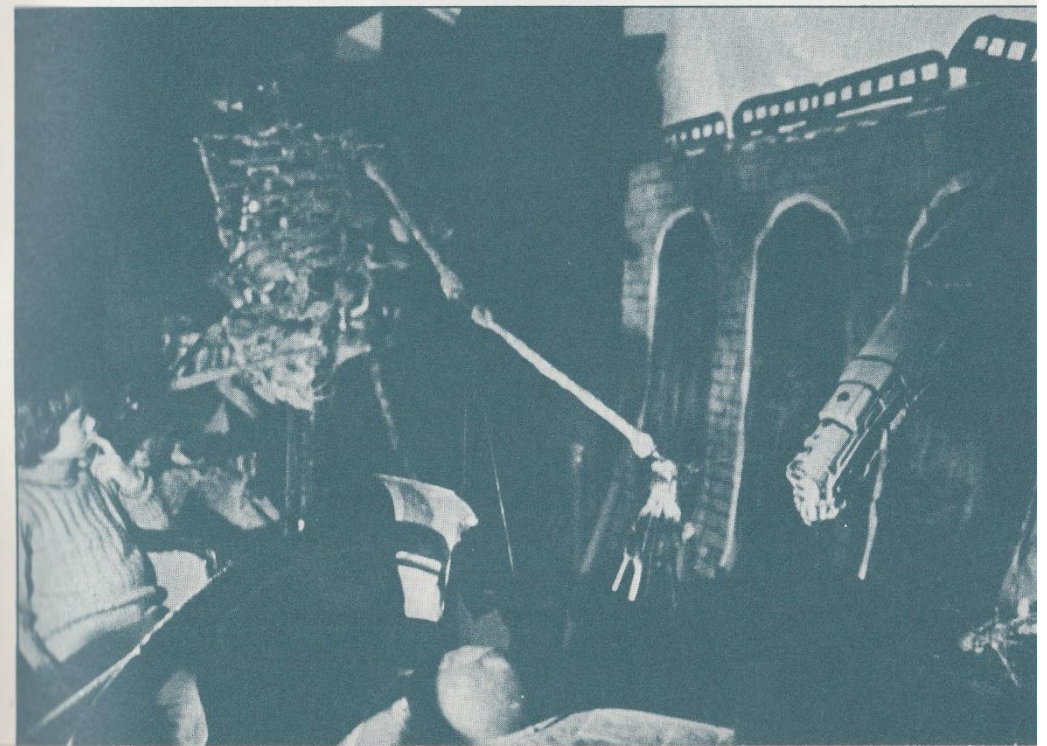
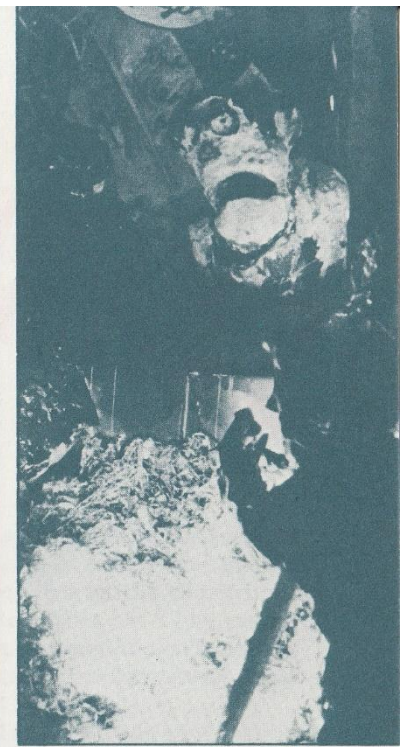
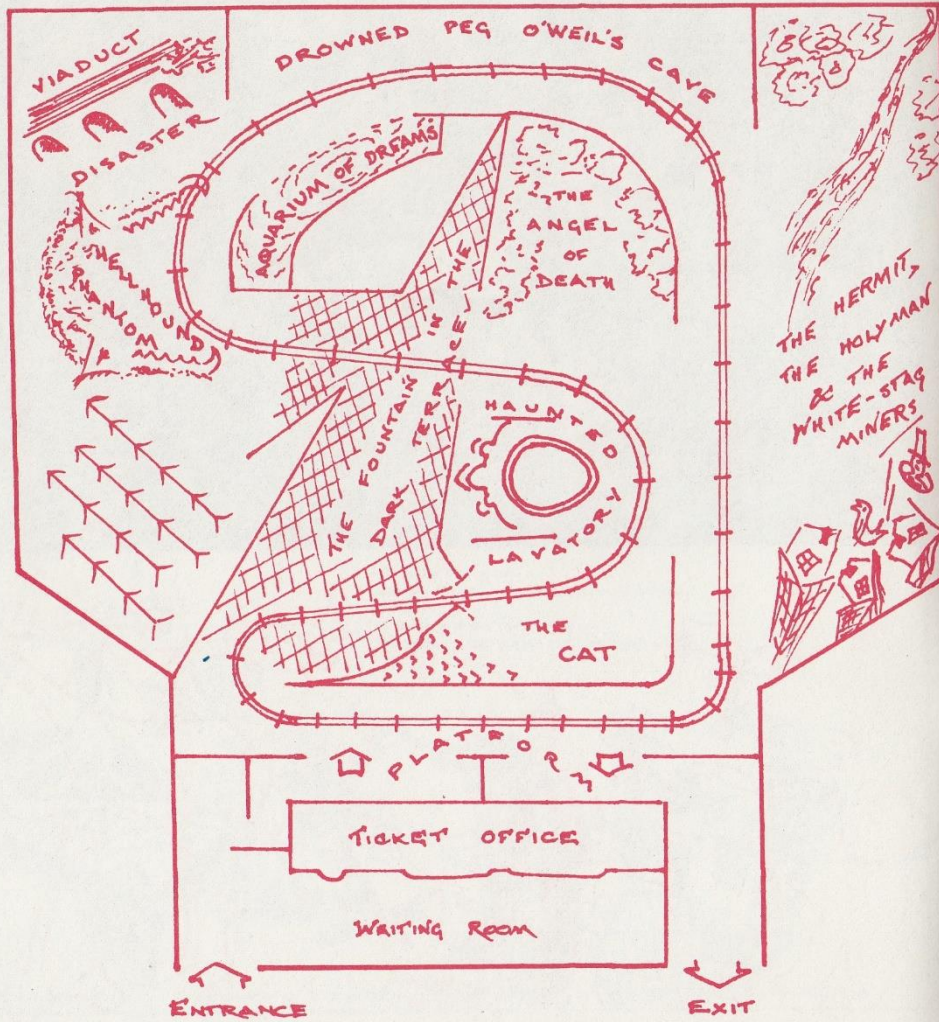


7. 'GHOST TRAIN'

After 3 weeks construction in the Mid-Pennine Gallery, Burnley, a ghost train ride was open every day from 12th - 23rd January.

With Diz Willis and Ron Dewhirst.

Spectators: 3,000.



DOCUMENTATION & STUDENTS

Welfare State receives a large number of enquiries from students writing theses. Welfare State's years of work are thoroughly documented with slides, films, photographs, articles and tapes. Copies of some of this material are for sale: posters, an LP and a digest of the more significant articles and summaries of projects. Three 16 mm colour feature films are available for hire. Other material may be researched in Burnley by arrangement with the librarian.

Welfare State also receives a large number of requests from students and others wishing to work with the company. Accommodation is limited but all written applications – from all ages and experiences – are considered. Applications should be detailed and accompanied by s.a.e. The most we offer at first is a week or a month's trial – usually unpaid – but we do run occasional courses and periodically take unpaid volunteers to assist with the development of the base site.

We are working on a project to run courses in conjunction with certain colleges. Our philosophy is that of an apprenticeship scheme. As far as possible we teach specific skills within a creative environment; we do not offer open-ended art education – rather we make relevant objects within a particular context. We can also organise lectures or "making" teams to visit other situations.

Galactic seeks to maintain an open policy of change. One reason the company is regarded as very stable is paradoxically because over a decade there has been constant invention and experiment.

All fees are negotiable and all interesting possibilities are taken seriously.

Please write to: The Administrator, Galactic Smallholdings Ltd., Heasandford Quarry, Queens Park Road, Burnley, Lancashire. Tel: Burnley 33262

PROVISIONAL PROJECTS 1977-1978

with probable project producers

1. **'THE FOUNTAIN OF CHANGE'**. A sculpture for May constructed over one month in a seventeenth century stock exchange in the centre of Lille. Spring Theatre Festival. Theatre de la Salamandre. With Liz Leyh. (John Fox)
2. **'AUTUMN ILLUSION'**. An epic cycle of stories performed in Burnley, Lancashire within a new canvas courtyard incorporating a specially created film, food, dances, books, fireworks and domestic objects. The whole a total mythical theatrical environment. September/October. (John Fox/Boris Howarth)
3. **TEACHING WEEKENDS**. Residential courses at the Burnley base. November 1977 and possibly February and March 1978. (Jim Smale)
4. **'WINTER CHARADES'**. An intimate set of domestic concerts and seasonal mummings. Rural communities. North Riding. November/December. In conjunction with N. E. Films. (John Fox)
5. **CHRISTMAS CRIB**. A new focus on old magic. An urban theatrical environment. Mid-Pennine area. December. (Bob Frith)
6. **A NEW TOWN RESIDENCY**. Milton Keynes. Six weeks January/February 1978. (Maggie and Boris Howarth)
7. **NEW YEAR JUBILEE**. A celebration for the end of the year. (Boris Howarth)
8. **LANDSCAPING THE BURNLEY BASE**. All year.
9. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION** into the legal aspects of alternative funeral ceremonies. All year. (Lisa Eyckmans)
10. **ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY**. Machynlleth. March 1978. Residency with small team to explore the relationships between alternative theatre and alternative technology. Provisional. Other commissions possible.

PEOPLE

The size and nature of the company varies according to the situation. Galactic has access to a large number of freelance makers, musicians, composers, artists, engineers and performers many of whom have worked with the organisation over a number of years.

The most regular current members are:

- JOHN FOX:** Founder and artistic director of Welfare State. Overall projects director of Galactic Smallholdings. Poet, maker and performer.
- BORIS HOWARTH:** Associate artistic director of Welfare State. Musical co-ordinator. Performer, designer of temples and landscape architect.
- LUK MISHALLE:** Administrator. Accountant. Musician.
- LISA EYCKMANS:** Assistant administrator. Research. Publicity printing.
- SUE FOX:** Archivist. Cook. Performer.
- MAGGIE HOWARTH:** Costume and mask-maker. Design. Garden consultant. Performer.
- JIM SMALE:** Site consolidation and course co-ordinator. Electrician and cameraman.
- DAVE MURRAY:** Technical manager. Transport. Storeman. Explosives.
- BOB FRITH:** Painter, maker, printer.
- JAMIE PROUD:** 'Lancelot Quail', clown, pig farmer.

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1972 “The real strength of Welfare State lies in the extent to which it has ‘re-created’ often quite sophisticated forms of popular entertainment and theatre ‘art’ which have acted powerfully in breaking down British inhibitions about enjoying ourselves communally in public. Their work for social change is in foreseeing a society in which there is room for play, in which art and entertainment and enjoyment are an integral part of daily life . . . not separated from it in little boxes and time slots called theatres, cinemas and TV programmes, but part of a total life experience. And part of this liberation is their use of images from the collective conscious of ordinary people, traditional ‘folk’ and ‘pop’ images and fantasies.”
Theatre Quarterly. October

1973 “The Welfare State is in many ways the most remarkable, mind-blowing group of all. It contains many elements . . . art school, rock culture, music, pagan ritual . . . all fused into a poetic, Dionisiac vision of man liberated by revolution.”
J. Hammond. Theatre Quarterly. October

“. . . they are continuing to produce the most exciting, extreme and popular experimental work in the country . . .”
John Ford. Plays and Players. July

1974 “Even a short glimpse of a group like Welfare State . . . professional, thoughtful and exciting . . . makes you realise that any generalisation about this kind of theatre can be wrong. This group, working inside and outside the cathedral, managed to give a contemporary significance to the old medieval formalisations of secular and religious drama. This is art of a high order, trying to recreate myth, and trying to prove that our century has a spiritual life.”
Birmingham Performance Arts Festival. Guardian report. July

1975 “The Welfare State is another kind of founding father (of ‘fringe’ theatre). With a sustained track record of self-questioning development they have achieved a mastery of their chosen means of expression and offer yardsticks of urgency and intensity in their work which could not have been achieved by ‘straight’ theatre means of production.”
M. Kustow. Plays and Players. July

1976 “In many ways Welfare State are the most daring of the Alternative theatre companies, because they are in the business of yoking together the aesthetic and visceral nature of theatre with a developing political analysis and at the same time, of making that powerful conjunction available to people who have no interest in theatre or plays . . . Welfare State come very close to a buried nerve in the nation’s consciousness and call upon a wide variety of media to express the lurking joys and anxieties that have no outlet in a dehumanising society. The group can use music, people, sculptures, (including sculptures made of ice, fire, water and earth), words, food, weather and time to make their work. It is a much wider variety of means than almost any other theatre would muster.”
Plays and Players. May

1977 “What Welfare State give to their audiences is something playful and strange, rich and humane, and that is a mixture of qualities that is offered nowhere else in today’s theatre, alternative or otherwise.”

Tony Coult. Plays and Players March

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Heasandford Quarry, Queens Park Road,
Burnley. Tel: Burnley 33262

Photographs throughout this booklet by:
Kevin Hogan, Maison de Quartier Mireuil,
Daniel Meadows, Roger Perry and Jenny
Wilson.

Booklet designed by Phil Kay.

