

Fools job description – although any fool could do this job!!

Preparing for future performances

Practising for the event with the rest of the team with particular emphasis on special effects or new introductions

If both the lead and another fool are attending the event – liaising with them and establishing the roles each will take during the day/ event.

Delegating responsibilities (in consultation with the tour leader) bearing in mind the nature of the audience and the gig

Before the performance

Interacting with the “crowd”

Creating a space for the set

Making the audience aware of what is going to happen

Interacting individually with members of the crowd and warming them to the event (making comments to individuals on hair, clothes, why they are here etc)

Communicating and building rapport with the crowd by going round and talking to the audience

Declaiming interesting, relevant and up to date introductions to the dancing rather than “ this is a Brackley dance”

Acting as MC

Researching background or introductions to each dance

Developing and delivering relevant and interesting “patter” to introduce each dance and cover delays

Liaising and interacting with other sides and fools where they are present to create a performance

Working out joint routines with other fools

Creating a performance from a display by making it amusing, relevant and tailored to the occasion e.g. paid gigs

During the dance

Interacting with the dancers.

Knowing all the dances so as not get in the way of the dancers

Interacting with the dancers at all times while every dance is in progress

Picking up difficulties (hankies falling, sticks fallen, bee stings) and putting them right or covering up for them as soon as possible

Verbally guiding the set and mouthing directions to the muddled (“hey”, “lines” “up” “out” etc)

Acting as a large non verbal clue about action, and direction

In case of difficulty or crisis (sprained ankle etc) being able to “stand in” any position– if only for a short time or arrange another stand in

Dancing/ moving through the set and interacting with the dancers

Complementing the shape of the dance by accentuating shapes, corners, moves etc.

Doing “tricks” with the dance which complement the dances and the side’s appearance?

Interacting with the musicians

Picking up any difficulties i.e. straps falling off, notes sticking down, tune being forgotten
Verbally and non verbally communicating between dancers & musicians (slow down, speed up etc)
Telling musicians which dance has been decided before its commencement

Interacting with crowd

Keeping them aware what is going on
Making them aware of the shapes being made by the set
Pointing out good dancing
Covering up poor dancing/dancers (usually by blaming someone else)
Giving non verbal cues when the dance is starting or finishing
Carrying out crowd control (drunks or other antisocial elements) and traffic control
Reducing danger for the dancers– heading off prams, bicycles and traffic from the set

Between dances

Collecting

Working the crowd and collecting money continuously when not dancing
Organising other collectors if the audience is large.
Guarding the collecting tins during the day (or delegating) and handing over proceeds to the “bag” or tour leader at the end of the day.

Issuing publicity

Liaising with publicity and handing out literature
Targeting potential recruits for the side, issuing side or course leaflets to them and introducing them to a side member so that their details can be captured

Liaising with others

Showing interest in other sides and liaising with them regarding order of events.
Continually talking to the crowd
Establishing the order dances will be danced

After the dance

Thanking the crowd
Letting them know about next appearances
Thanking the landlord/ event organiser/ venue host

General

Kit

Sourcing and blowing up balloons and bladders (when available)
Making and maintaining kit which complements the side’s image, values and culture
Making and maintaining collecting tins or sourcing them if they have not been brought to the gig

Cherry Simmons, Fool to Windsor Morris from 1978 to date (2014).