

Opening Event Salisbury International Arts Festival

Salisbury Market Place, 21st May 2010

It was very interesting to observe, as a roving reporter, the behind-the-scenes preparation on the afternoon of the opening event of the Salisbury International Arts Festival - even if it did take away some element of surprise for the actual show!

A good crowd of all ages had gathered in the Market Place as the magical Heliosphere took to the air above our heads. This amazing balloon carried an aerialist over and around the crowd, and she tumbled and twisted in a beautiful routine which delighted everyone. She showered confetti over the new White Horse, made by apprentices from QinetiQ at Boscombe Down, and came back to earth after drawing our attention to a rickety-looking bandstand on one side of the Market Place. From this emerged a band of musicians, from the French company Zic Zazou, who played some rousing party music before, eventually, the bandstand started to move around through the crowd.

Even though I knew they were coming, I must say the pyrotechnics were still a surprise when the bandstand came back to its original place. Fireworks and a cloud of red smoke were so effective that for a second I thought they might have set it on fire!

It was a very enjoyable event, and one I would certainly go to again. I liked the way it was set out and the fact that it was obviously well organised, with plenty of stewards and police in attendance. For me the Heliosphere was one of the highlights, and I couldn't help thinking, wouldn't it be great to have three or four of them drifting above the crowd all at once?

Kevin Follett
as told to Gill Roberts