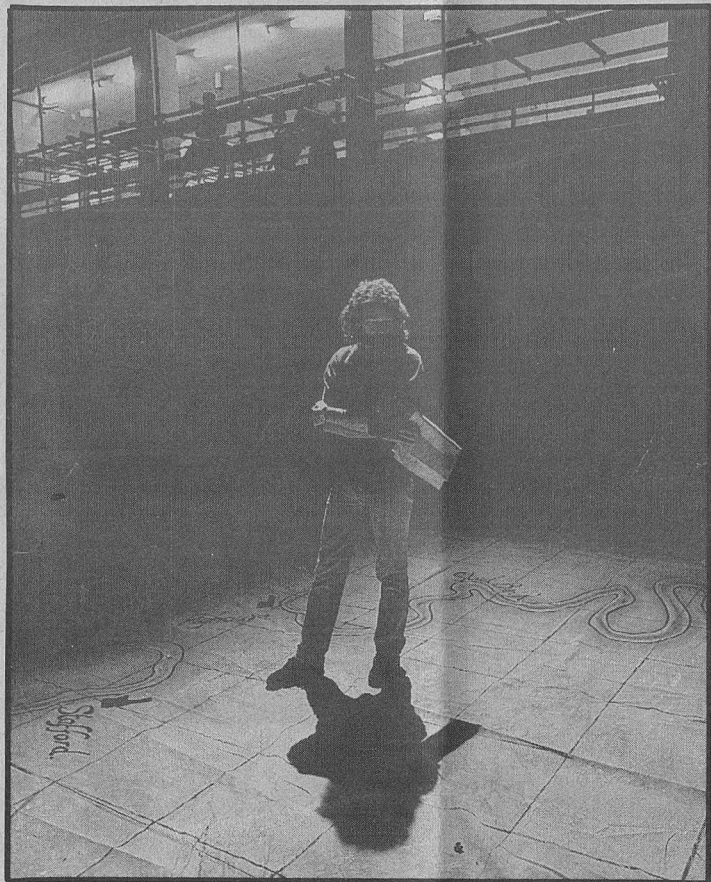


Curtain up on the finishing touches to a major theatrical work

# Stage set for historic community production



■ Lighting director Carl Hulme in pensive mood as he studies the setting for the play.

ONE of the biggest community events ever held in Stroud opens on Monday after more than a year of planning.

The names of around 600 local people who have helped with the town's Community Play will be listed in the programme and will include 150 actors, 30 musicians and a core choir of 70.

The finishing touches are now being put to the giant 30ft by 60ft stage set at the Stratford Park Leisure Centre where more than 5,000 people will see the show.

The play, Making Up Time, is the brainchild of the town's Dr Foster's Travelling Theatre and is a series of stories set at the beginning of the 19th century when Stroud was a bustling mill town.

It has grown from the writing talents of Bristol-based Jane Buckler, one of the few "foreigners" involved in the scheme, and a group of enthusiastic local history researchers.

Co-ordinator Camilla Hale said: "The play itself says a lot about the history of Stroud but it is not a dry documentary."





■ **Top** – play designer Michael Spencer takes a well-earned break with Martha Playne – the production's tough mill owner who appears to have come to a rather sticky end. Over 1,000 costumes have had to be hand painted for the event.



■ **Centre** – Clare Southern gets to work on the costume for a pregnant woman.

■ **Left** – the Old Convent in Stroud has been used by artists to paint the play's many sets.